

SIR FRANCIS PITTIS.

By Brian Greening

If one was asked to name the family that has had not only the longest association with Newport and the Island in general and contributed the most with regard to service, it would have in my opinion to be that of the Pittis family. Back in 1683 the Rev. Thomas Pittis was Rector of Gatcombe and members of the family have through the years been buried in Niton and Whippingham churchyards and Newport cemeteries.

The most famous of the family has to be Sir Francis Pittis who was educated at a private school in Quay Street that at the time was under the patronage of Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent. He spent a lifetime in the auctioneering business and his name lingers to this day within the town. He was a member of the town council for over forty years and was mayor of Newport on no less than eight occasions. Indeed, when it was known that Queen Victoria's Jubilee was imminent it was a unanimous decision of all members of the town council, irrespective of political allegiances, that he be elected for that year. Thus it was also that on August 12th 1887 that Alderman Pittis was asked to attend Osborne House and returned later that day as Sir Francis Pittis. His wife never lived to see him knighted for she died in 1878. His funeral was a grand affair and the service in St. Thomas church was attended by the towns great and the good whilst inhabitants lined the streets. The church service would have been enhanced with the presence of the girls from the Blue school who would have looked splendid in their school uniforms with suitable touches of black. Shops closed their shutters in respect and numerous horse drawn carriages were led by the Town sergeants carrying the town maces draped in black crepe, His grave in Newport cemetery could be described as a modest one and he was laid to rest between his mother and his late wife.

1881 census, Newport House, 48 Crocker Street, Newport

<i>Francis Pittis</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Widr</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>Alderman,</i>	<i>Newport, Isle of Wight</i>
				<i>Justice of the Peace & Auctioneer</i>	
Jane Pittis	Daughter		39	Auctioneers	Newport, Isle of Wight
				Daughter	
Annie James	Servant		31	Cook	Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight
Elizabeth Pendrigh	Servant Mar		44	Housemaid	St. James', Piccadilly, London
Harriett Williams	Servant		25	Parlor Maid	Newport, Isle of Wight

National Probate Calendar

Sir PITTIS Francis Knt 7 January 1890. The Will of Sir Francis Pittis late of Newport House Newport in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton Knight who died 3 November 1889 at Newport House was proved at the Principal Registry by Francis Pitt of Holmbrook Newport Auctioneer the Son and Mary Anne Waterworth (Wife of Thomas Henry Waterworth, M.D.) of the New-Kent-road in the County of Surrey and Jane Pittis of Newport House Spinster the Daughters the Executors.

Personal Estate £1,710 16s. 8d. (*Equivalent to approx. £215,600 in 2018*)

Additional research by Tony Barton for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries.