

Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

HEYSHAM VILLAGE

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 60

At the heart of modern Heysham – with its busy harbour, two power stations, industrial areas and new housing estate – lies old Lower Heysham, a small village with a long history.

Before Heysham was joined for local government purposes with, first, Morecambe in 1928 and then Lancaster in 1974, it was a separate settlement of farmers and a few fisherfolk. By the 1820s, the sea air and excellent views across Morecambe Bay were recognised by those interested in sea bathing in the sheltered Half Moon Bay and it become a fashionable spot to visit. It still attracts many visitors.

The visitors would be keen to visit St Peter's Church. The stone work on the west side is Anglo-Saxon as are parts of other walls. The rest of the church is a little newer. The chancel and south window are Decorated Gothic in style (around 1300). The south aisle and chapel are 15th century, the south porch 17th century and a north aisle was added in 1864. Despite these elements covering nearly 1000 years of building, overall the church retains a unity of style as the area's oldest church architecturally, overlooking the Bay. The hogback tombstone inside the church is a fusion of Norse style and Christian symbols. The churchyard overlooks the Bay and contains the base of an Anglo-Saxon cross.



St Peter's Church, Heysham

Next to the church are the ruins of St Patrick's Chapel dating from the 8th or 9th centuries and again Anglo-Saxon in style. The current ruins may well be an expansion of an even older church. Next to the chapel are six 'graves' cut into the rock, perhaps places for storing relics as there was a more conventional cemetery nearby.



St Patrick's Chapel



Rock-cut graves

The approach to the Church is along Main Street where the properties (like those on Bailey Lane) date from the 17th and 18th centuries, as attested by their date-stones.

Many on Main Street are now houses, shops and eateries. Nos 1–5 comprised the Old Rectory dating from around 1680.



Off Main Street, Heysham

Other interesting buildings to look out for in Heysham are Old Hall Inn on Heysham Road (originally built in 1598 and extended in 1898), the Manor House near the church, and Heysham Head House and its Lodge House on Barrow Lane which was built in the early 19th century.

Heysham Tower was built in 1836/7 and has had a varied life since the family moved out, including as a hotel and then a holiday camp.

A delightful and scenic way to reach Heysham is to walk along the sea-front promenade from Morecambe.



Lower Heysham in 1911 (OS map, 1:10,560)



Lower Heysham in 1845 (OS Map 1;10.560).

Guide 92 in this series describes the growth of Heysham Harbour in the 20th century.

Further information

Heysham Heritage Association – http://www.heyshamheritage.org.uk/ This website has a wide range of additional information and photographs.

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