

Fascinating Heritage on Water and Land

Morecambe Bay has tremendous cultural richness and is nationally important for its maritime and First and Second World War heritage, rich archaeology and concentration of ritual and religious sites.

For generations the communities have earned livelihoods from fishing, seafaring, trade and farming the coastal fringes. This has helped shape the landscape and created a unique history and tremendous cultural richness.

People have used the rivers for transport, trade and industry, farmed and managed the land and sea for food, and sourced fuel and building materials from the woodlands.

It's important to share our heritage with visitors because it helps them to understand the landscape as they explore. Some interesting industrial heritage to point out to your guests might include:

- Shipbuilding for fishing around Ulverston.
- Fishing by horse and cart from Flookburgh.
- Trading by Sea from Sunderland Point and Glasson Docks.
- Working Woodlands along the northern side of the Bay.
- Quarries and Kilns in Arnside & Silverdale AONB.
- Water Mills like Heron Corn Mill
- Farming has always been an important part of the area's heritage.
- Tell intriguing and quirky stories.
- Point out historical clues in the landscape.
- Relate the history of Morecambe Bay to other events and people that visitors may have heard of.
- Recommend a Blue Badge Guide to your visitors if they want to know more.
- Ask your visitor what they think about a local myth or legend.
- Find out more from local history societies.

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

Patty's Barn

It's important to show off the local area, and Chris and Margaret Parry at Patty's Barn know that facts and figures are not the only way to do it. When they describe things to do in the area, they focus on what's right on the doorstep and throw in a few stories too. Take this enticing yet informative snippet about a nearby heritage attraction for example:

"Heron Corn Mill is on the bank of the River Bela in Beetham; Near Carnforth just off the A6. It is one of the few working mills in the area, and has been a base for local industry powered by renewable energy for over 900 years. Good walks on a marked footpath. You may also see a kingfisher, wagtail and dipper, as well as swallows and swifts."



© Tony Riden

Heritage Around the Bay

There are strong links between natural and cultural heritage with the settlements around the Bay reflecting their coastal location. For generations the communities have been involved in fishing, seafaring, trade, mining, quarrying and farming.

Here are some places where you and your visitors can see how our culture and heritage have shaped our landscape:

- Barrow grew as a port and centre for shipbuilding and is important today as a port base for offshore wind farms. But many other smaller quays and creeks supported maritime trade in the past. Can your visitors spot the remains at Hest Bank, Sunderland Point, Arnside and Sandside?
- Ulverston's link to the coast and sea is mainly historic; being a little distance inland with the link formerly provided by a short canal long since severed, but the Hoad Monument stands proud above the town. It was designed to look like the Eddystone lighthouse, but was built as a viewing tower to commemorate Sir John Barrow.
- Grange and Arnside grew as holiday resorts with the arrival of the railway, and Carnforth established itself as an important railway town, flourishing at the junction of three lines. Visitors can still see the Victorian influence in the buildings that survive in these towns and explore its railway heritage at Carnforth Station Heritage Centre.
- Morecambe's popularity as a holiday resort dates from the 1850s when the railways arrived, connecting the town to the industrial centres of northern England, with visitors drawn to the clean air, beautiful scenery and the sea. There is still a strong tradition for people to visit here from towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire.
- From about 1680 Lancaster gained momentum as a thriving trading port. Its heyday was the latter part of the eighteenth century when it was second only to Liverpool in both coastal and overseas trade. The tall warehouses and the fine Customs House (now the Maritime Museum) of St. George's Quay date to 1795 are reminders of this golden age.
- Smaller settlements grew around fishing communities at Flookburgh, Sunderland Point and Glasson. The fishing heritage still survives in many of these places.
- The Lancaster Canal was extended to Glasson in 1826 making it one of the few locked docks in the country from where goods could move from the sea by canal to Lancaster, Kendal, Preston and beyond.
- Farming has always been an important part of the area's heritage.
- Woodlands have been coppiced for generations producing firewood and coppice wood products. In the 18th and 19th centuries they provided charcoal for iron works, gunpowder works and limekilns
- Mining iron ore and quarrying stone and other materials have left their mark on the landscape but now provide havens for nature following abandonment, such as Trowbarrow quarry.

FASCINATING FACTS

Housewives would use Reckett's Blue to get their laundry white. It was made in a factory where The Motor Museum in Backbarrow is now, and is why the museum is painted blue. Reckett's Blue was a manmade mineral ground to powder, and the mineral can still be found on the banks of the Levens. There were no colour photographs at that time, but locals say that factory workers were covered in blue; you could tell where they lived by following the blue footprints.



Life on the Sands

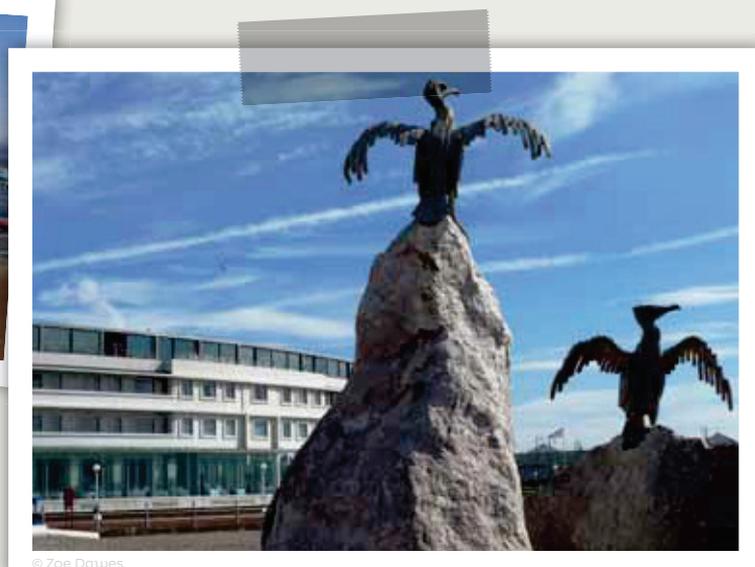
One of the most obvious parts of our heritage is the maritime history. From Fleetwood to Barrow, there is a strong maritime heritage of shipbuilding, ports and fishing. This is reflected in the local food that can be enjoyed around the Bay. Local people have earned their livelihoods from fishing in Morecambe Bay for generations. A wide variety of techniques are used.

Fishing and Shipbuilding

The most notable traditional boat used for fishing locally is a Lancashire nobby – a form of clinker-built boat with overlapping planks. Traditional fishing techniques include setting a whammel net – a kind of drift net.

You can still see signs of our fishing heritage today.

- At Sunderland Point you'll see posts along the sea wall. These were for hanging nets out to dry, because if nets were left wet they would rot. At The Fishermans Arms at Baycliff, look for a hook on the wall in the tap room, which was used in a game called "the bull ring". In this old fisherman's game, a bull ring was thrown around to land on the hook. Often it was used to obtain drinks from visitors.
- Ulverston was a shipbuilding town before Barrow, and Hearts of Oak was the last boat built in Ulverston in 1912. It's a traditional nobby or Morecambe Bay Prawner and was restored to its former glory in 2008.
- Barrow is a significant shipbuilding town, and has been important since WWI for constructing defence vessels. It now specialises in submarines.
- Visitors can have a great day out at Barrow Dock Museum exploring fascinating exhibits on the history of shipbuilding in the area.



One of the most important and unique features of Morecambe Bay are the traditions of fishing on foot or with horse and cart or tractor and trailer. Shrimping for brown shrimps at low tide with nets pulled through the channels by tractor, or until as recently as the 1960s with horse and cart, is a speciality of the Furness fishermen working out of Flookburgh and smaller settlements such as Aldingham. The brown shrimp is picked and potted locally to provide the well-known delicacy of Morecambe Bay potted shrimps. The beautiful film "Moonsmen" gives an insight into what life on the sands was like.

Cockles and mussels are also found in the Bay; the sands of the Bay are sometimes said to be 'singing' when the wind blows through massed banks of cockles. Cockles have been harvested from the intertidal sands for generations, using a jumbo (the board) and a craam (the rake).

Another local tradition – also practised on the Solway is to use a haaf-net in which the fisherman stands in the water holding a large net on a wooden structure. Haaf net licences are strictly controlled and only a small number are granted. We are proud that the only woman in the UK with a haaf-net license lives on Sunderland Point and still fishes using this method.

Our unique fishing heritage of working the sands on foot rather than by boat is nationally significant. Though fishing by boat has, and does, occur.



haaf netting © Susannah Bleakley

FASCINATING FACTS

Cuttlefish, octopus and squid are regularly caught by fishermen, and there's a notorious lobster called Larry who lives off Roa Island Reef.

Trading by Sea

Not surprisingly, many places around the Bay became significant hubs for the import and export of goods, and recently long lost wharfs at Hest Bank and Silverdale have become exposed as the sands have moved. Goods were brought there by boat across the bay from Cartmel and onto the canals and further afield.

The quayside at Sunderland Point was the first legal quay before 1739, anything landing outside this boundary from abroad was classed as smuggling. You can still see the mooring posts for gunpowder boats. Their loads were then taken by horse and cart to Powder House Lane in Lancaster – horses had copper shoes to prevent sparks. On the other side of the bay, a cobble donkey path from Chapel Island to the old gunpowder works at Bardsea can emerge in the right conditions, and was last seen in 2008.

As trade developed, so did regulation and many coastal towns here have a Customs House. In Lindale, the old police station had a cell for mariners they arrested, but Lindale became cut off from the sea after the railway was built and sediment piled up behind.

The most commonly traded goods were spices and slaves. Lancaster was the fourth biggest slave trade port in England. There is a 'captured Africans' slave trade memorial on the quay at Lancaster, sculpted by Kevin Dalton-Johnson, as part of the Slave Trade Arts Memorial Project. At Sunderland Point you can visit the grave of a boy called Sambo, who arrived on a slave ship.

Visitors can find out more on a great day out at Lancaster Maritime Museum.

Life on the Land

While exploring the Bay, you will notice that people have also found ways to make a living on land too. Farming, coppicing, mining, and milling have all left their mark on the landscape.

Working Woodlands

Coppicing is the special practice of managing woodlands for fuel and products which makes space for more growth allowing regeneration of the trees. Our ancestors were on to a good thing, and forest managers today recognise that this is the best way to work with nature.

The coppiced wood was used to make products, like charcoal to support iron works at Cartmel and Backbarrow, the gunpowder works at Haverthwaite and Bouth, lime making in limekilns, and swill baskets, fencing and hurdles. Swill baskets were used for pretty much everything, including holding your caught fish and cockles.

You can see coppicing in

- Woodlands of Arnside Silverdale AONB.
- Witherslack and Eggerslack Woods near Grange over Sands.
- Woodlands around Sizergh Castle.

Quarries and Kilns

The area has been mined and quarried and the stones processed to create many different products. You could point out some of this heritage to your visitors::

- Lime kilns - used to break down the limestone rocks to make a fertiliser for farming.
- Ditches - where peat was cut to provide water and fuel for Iron Furnaces.
- The “shelter stone” in Trowbarrow quarry near Silverdale, quarry men sheltered behind it during blasting in the main quarry.
- The coal and ash plant at Carnforth which was the last coaling plant in country.

“Visit the quirky Limeburners Arms pub in Nether Kellet - the name reflects the history of lime burning in the area.”



Jenny Brown's Point © Tony Riden

Water Mills

The four rivers that flow into the bay were, unsurprisingly, used as a source of energy to power mills to grind cotton and corn. In the 17-18th century, Cark was a village of mills of cotton and then corn. Boats used to come up the river Aye when it was a sea going river. The last mill burned down in 1930s. Holme Mills produced jute, lino and carpets, and Lancashire cotton mill owners built many of the grand houses in the area.

Why not visit:

- Heron Bank Corn Mill, a restored and working mill that now grinds organic flour.
- Gleaston Mill, a water mill and heritage museum.
- Marsh Mill, Thornton (heritage cornmill and largest tower in Europe).

Farming

The land around the Bay has been farmed for thousands of years and this has helped shaped what we can see and explore today. Some farmers have embraced lower-input farming, providing more space for nature while operating a successful business. This might be through using traditional breeds for grazing, restoring and managing hedgerows or leaving seed crops for birds to feed on over winter. These farms provide vital stepping stones for wildlife - connecting up the reserves and nature sites found around the Bay.

Visitors might like to follow public rights of way near some of these areas. Many offer great opportunities for nature watching and walking too. There are some great examples in the Rusland Valley, at Witherslack, the Lyth Valley, Arnside & Silverdale AONB, the Lune Valley and Cockerham

Visitors can look out for traditional cows like the hairy belted Galloway, Shorthorns and Highland which help provide habitat for birds and flowers as well as providing high quality beef which is sold locally.

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

Abbots Reading Farm and Octolodges

For farmer Tony Wood and his wife Sharon, farming hand-in-hand with nature is at the heart of their business. They are passionate about producing a top quality eating product from their traditional, native breeds of livestock and have always farmed in a way that provides habitats for a wide variety of wildlife. They have a bird hide and pond and a viewing point installed overlooking the farm and the surrounding area including stunning views across to the Coniston mountains.

“In recent years we have diversified to offer a fantastic glamping experience which enables people to enjoy a blend of 'getting closer to nature' with a few home comforts. We have six 'octolodges' which are in an idyllic location to enjoy the beautiful surrounding area. Many of our visitors are interested in wildlife and nature and we enjoy spending time talking with them. We are always on hand to give advice about places to go, whether it be about a walk from the farm or maybe a little further afield, to enjoy some of the spectacular, fascinating and interesting places around the Morecambe Bay area. We are delighted that we have many return visitors and also that many of our bookings are from recommendations from those who have enjoyed their stay.”



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