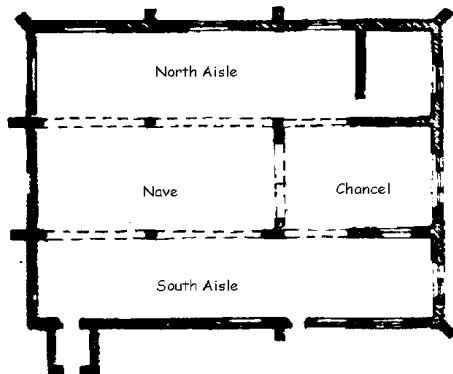


Rectors

c.1190 Ralph	1638 William Ward
c.1250 Roger	1671 John Briggs
c.1301 Thomas Grenewode	1674 Richard Taylor
c.1335 Thomas de Gaylesthorpe	1698 William Bushell
1349 Thomas de la More	1735 Thomas Clarkson
1352 John de Hornby	1738 James Fenton
1353 John Dibbleda	1756 Thomas Clarkson
1369 Robert de Farington	1789 Charles Buck
1370 Roger de Farington	1791 John Widdett
1383 John Coly	1794 Thomas Clarkson
1387 Ralph Gentyl	1800 Thomas Clarkson
1394 Robert Brownfleet	1813 Thomas Dunham Whitaker
1396 Thomas Greenwood	1819 Thomas Clarkson
1409 Robert Bolt	1824 Thomas Yates Ridley
1410 Thomas Whitacre	1838 Robinson Shuttleworth Barton
1434 Henry Highfield	1858 John Royds
1488 Philip Halstead	1865 Charles Twemlow Royds
c.1517 John Waller	1900 Stirling C. Voules
c.1522 John Singleston	1908 Charles Craddock Twemlow Royds
c.1535 Roger Bradshaw	1943 John Richard Hudson Royds
1568 Edward Croft	1956 Albert Joseph Gillespie
1583 William Thorpe	1978 Angus Alexander Welsh
1591 Matthew Kitchen	1988 Eric Lacey
1606 Thomas Calvert	1998 David Arthur Tickner MBE



A Brief Guide to St Peter's Church Heysham



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Price 30 p

The present church was consecrated in 967 AD. The oldest parts of the church date from the 8th century although there is evidence that there was an earlier wooden church nearer the sea. A reconstruction probably took place about the middle of the 10th century.

It was a barn-like building with masonry of rude axe-hewn stones, wide-jointed, with almost imperishable mortar, and small doorways with single-stone arched headings. These doorways were on the north, south, and west sides; that on the west being the only survivor in-situ. The east end would probably have had a screen wall with a small archway. The present chancel with its beautiful east and south windows was erected about 1340-50.



In the 15th century the south aisle was added, the Anglo-Saxon wall being pierced by the Gothic arches and pillars which today support the roof. The windows in the bouter wall show the continued use of the round-headed Norman pattern. It is thought that the south aisle and the chancel arch were rebuilt between 1500 and 1540, judging from the mouldings and slight indications of perpendicular work. If so, much of the rough-hewn stone, and to some extent the original type of work, have been employed over again.

Some remains of the early work are in the west wall of the nave,

St. Patrick. In April 1977, there took place an excavation within the chapel, and on that part between the south wall of the chapel and the wall facing it. There is a small plaque which gives some of the details of the archaeologists' findings. The area within and without the chapel was once a burial site. The experts dated the site at late sixth or early seventh century, but admit the clues are meagre. The skeletons found in the burial plots were, after carbon dating, found to be not earlier than 10th century. At the end of the excavation, the bones were re-buried in the churchyard. The stone coffins overlooking the cliff are a feature of Heysham. Any information is speculation. There is a rebate in the top of each to take a lid, and a hole at the top to take a cross. It is unlikely that they were burial places, they were not big enough, but they could have been repositories for bones.



In April 1993, a further excavation took place, on the land below the stone coffins. This time the archaeologists set out to discover how long people had lived there, and what sorts of lives they had led. There were no human remains, any human bones had disappeared centuries before, but they found more than 1200 artefacts within a very small area, which archaeologists were able to date and tell us that people had lived in the area about twelve thousand years ago. It is probably the best Neolithic site in Northern Europe. The site was returned to what it had been, for other archaeologists to discover at a time in the distant future.

(representing the Trinity) and a fish.

The fine stained glass East window depicts three scenes from the Crucifixion and Resurrection whilst the West window shows four scenes from the early life of Christ. These windows are in memory of members of the Royds family.

There is in the churchyard, near the front gate, the remains of an Anglo-Saxon cross. It is ornamented with foliage scroll work, but on each side there is a different depiction. It shows a gabled building nearest the path with a swathed figure (Lazarus?) on the east side and a haloed figure (Mary?) with the baby Jesus in her arms on the west side. There are also in the churchyard interesting grave covers of various dates. One of the graves with railings is of the two teenage girls who were drowned on the incoming tide during the 19th century. Others among the older graves give the names of those Heysham families who have been established longer than even they can remember. The first recorded mention of Heysham but not the church is in the Domesday Book. Parish registers began in 1658 but are now kept in the County Records Office at Preston.

Since 1858 the Rectory and Advowson (right of patronage) have been in the hands of the Royds family. The last member of the Royds family, Everard, to live, in Heysham, died in October 1995 at his home in Glasbury. The patronage is still with the Royds family.



At the top of the headland, and above the churchyard, stands the tiny chapel of

where the blocked up doorway is to be seen. Notice the difference in height of the doorway inside and out. (The original floor was lower than the present one).

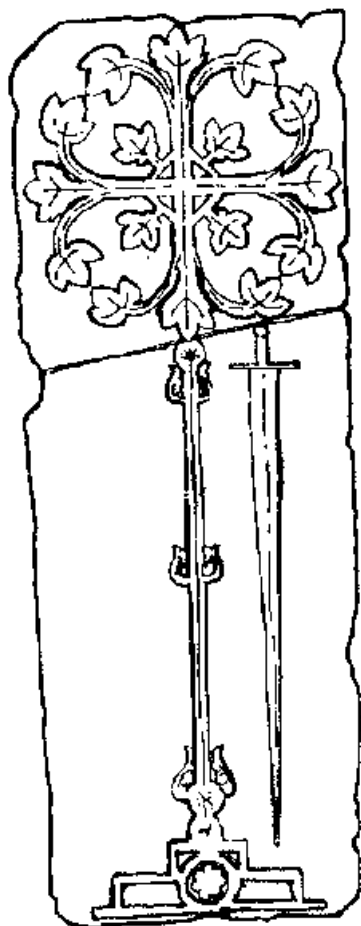
The north aisle was added in 1864 when the church was extended and restored. An Anglo-Saxon doorway, discovered during these building operations, was rebuilt in the churchyard, stone by stone, by Rev. John Royds. Whitewash, which had covered the church was removed, and inside, two galleries, with their own entrances, erected as private pews, were taken down.

The font is red sandstone, octagonal in shape, quite plain, and may be fifteenth century. The cover is modern made in the Jacobean style by an earnest curate in the 19th century.



The oak screen, which now stands below the chancel is believed to have come from Cockersands Abbey in the 17th century but there is no confirmation of this.

At the west end of the north aisle, is a mediaeval sepulchral slab with floriated cross and sword, and on the south-east wall of the south aisle are two seventeenth century gravestones with raised lettering. There is another built into the east wall of the chancel in memory of William Ward, pastor of this church (dated 1670). He was noted in the Oliverian survey as a 'painful pastor of his



people'. It was he who built the Old Rectory, later called Greese (meaning 'steps') House, which is adjacent to the churchyard.

The cushions and kneelers were made in 1966 by the ladies of the parish as part of their contribution to the one thousandth anniversary of Heysham; traditionally the church was founded in 967. The designs were created by Mr. Guy Barton of Hornby. Examination will show their connection with Heysham. The kneelers near the altar represent the three figures of Our Lord, His Mother and St. John, while at the communion rail they show the emblems of the four saints of the parish, St. Peter, the triple crown, St. James, the cockle shell, St. Andrew, the cross and fishing boat, and St. Patrick, serpent and shamrock. The choir cushions depict local industry and the sea, while the sedilla cushions have representations of the bread

and wine of the communion. The cushions on the Chancel side of the screen represent the four beasts of Revelation 4

The Bishop's chair cushion displays the arms of the diocese of Blackburn, Manchester and Chester, all surmounted by a mitre. Since 1926 Heysham has been in the diocese of Blackburn but in the early times was part of the others.

The two bells are dated early eighteenth century. (1723 and 1724).

The stone coffin (now standing beside the path in the churchyard) was found under the south window of the chancel, and contained the remains of a body, presumed to be a former rector; on his breast was the portion of a small chalice, now preserved in a niche in the north-east wall of the south aisle, near the Book of Remembrance. The remains are buried under the floor adjacent to the chalice.

East Face



West Face



The hog-back stone, near the centre south door, was found in the churchyard, but was taken inside the church in the 1960s to prevent further erosion. It is Viking in origin and dates it in the 10th century. It is not unique - there are other hog-backs in Penrith churchyard and at Gosforth, but what makes it special is its perfection. It is perhaps the best example in the country. It is believed that the West side represents the story of Sigmund and the East side the story of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer from Norse legends. The stone also bears the Christian symbols of a trefoil