

# Vibrant Culture of Arts and Festivals

Today, Morecambe Bay is host to some impressive pieces of architecture, a packed calendar of festivals, and has long been a destination for tourism and spiritual discovery. To give your visitors a richer experience you could:

- Share interesting facts about our culture.
- Tell them how to make the most of our tranquil destination.
- Highlight what locals do today to relax, such as a local fair or market.
- Point out your favourite museum or gallery.
- Highlight local arts and crafts for souvenirs.
- Point out where they can join in at a festival.

## Arts and Architecture

Morecambe Bay is privileged to be the home of many famous pieces of architecture, and once you know what you are looking for you will be able to discover some gems. Edwin Lutyens who famously designed the Midland Bank in Manchester, also designed The Abbey House Hotel in Barrow

The Midland Hotel in Morecambe was built in 1932–33 in Art Deco style by the London Midland & Scottish Railway to the design of Oliver Hill and included works by Eric Gill, Marion Dorn and Eric Ravilious. Eric Gill produced two seahorses for the outside entrance, a round plaster relief on the ceiling of the circular staircase inside the hotel, a decorative wall map of the north west of England, and a large stone relief of Odysseus being welcomed from the sea by Nausicaa. The hotel is as iconic and fashionable today as it was over 80 years ago. Marine Hall, Fleetwood is another Art Deco building of note where people can dance the afternoon away.

Two designers Paley and Austin designed many of the churches and railway stations around Morecambe Bay. Paley and Austin also designed the Grange Hotel, which was built to match the railway station. These will be highlighted on the forthcoming Seldom Seem series of maps developed by Art Gene for Morecambe Bay Partnership. These will include many fascinating stories to entice visitors to explore and return to enjoy our rich sense of place.

### BUSINESS CASE STUDY

#### Gibraltar Farm Campsite

Gibraltar Farm campsite know they are lucky enough to be in a stunning location, and they provide information on their website to encourage visitors to explore and get the most out of their stay in the area. This goes beyond just enjoying the outdoors and they provide links to events in the area too. Not only do they encourage people to discover the arts and crafts of the annual Silverdale and Arnsdale Art and Craft Trail, they encourage people to seek out the artists that work in the area throughout the year too and provide links on their website to artists galleries, workshops and shows.

## Entertainment and Festivals

Entertainment is something that Morecambe Bay does well. Eric Morecambe the comedian (of Morecambe and Wise) was born and bred in Morecambe, and his statue on Morecambe promenade features in many visitors' photos. At the other end of the Bay and a few years earlier, Stan Laurel (of Laurel and Hardy) was born in Ulverston. The statue here too is also popular, along with the Laurel and Hardy Museum. Morecambe Bay's entertainment history goes back even further - in the 18th Century, Ulverston was known as "Emporium of Furness" or "London of the North" as it had so many theatres.

Today there is plenty of culture to experience :

- Enjoy a Play in the Park in the outdoor theatre, Williamson Park, Lancaster.
- Visit the Ruskin library at Lancaster University.
- Follow the Silverdale and Arnside art and craft trail.
- Check out the acts at The Forum, Barrow-in-Furness.

And there is sure to be an arts festival for everyone :

- Lancaster Music Festival
- Ulverston Lantern Festival
- Morecambe Sandcastle Festival
- Morecambe Seaside Festival
- Morecambe Variety Festival
- Ulverston Dickensian Festival



## Holiday Heritage

Morecambe Bay is by no means a new tourist destination. And the motivations for tourism in the past were not much different than they are today. People want to admire the views, take in the fresh air, and enjoy a relaxing trip. Encourage your visitors to experience Morecambe Bay through the eyes of a Victorian or Edwardian.

- The giants' seat, near Silverdale, was made by locals in the 19th century as a grand nature viewpoint out across the bay. Steamers and ferries used to travel around the Bay in Victorian and Edwardian years. Popular destinations were Morecambe, Grange-Over-Sands, and Sunderland Point.
- Morecambe changed rapidly from a small village to a busy resort with the building of the railway. Today many visitors enjoy the nostalgia of a trip to Morecambe, and Happy Mount Park with its exotic Japanese gardens, waterways and bridges to explore is still popular today. Afternoon tea at the Midland Hotel and an ice cream at Brucciani's are other popular nostalgic experiences.
- The pretty town of Grange-Over-Sands has cafes, a promenade, a bandstand and railway station. The bandstand was built on the promenade originally but had to be moved away from the railway line as ladies complained about getting soot on their dresses.
- Arnside is another pretty Victorian influenced town which looks across to Grange. The promenade and pier provide great viewing places, and several shops and cafes sit under the Victorian parade. All just a short walk from the railway station. The station house is now home to Arnside & Silverdale AONB visitor centre – pop in to find out what you can do in the area.
- The hospices and sanatoriums at Meathop, Hazelwood and Hampsfell were sited here because of the bracing fresh air.
- After Sunderland Point collapsed as a port, people came to drink the sea water and bathe in bath houses. It became affectionately known as "Little Brighton on Lune". Upsteps Cottage was a bath house advertised as having "hot and cold seawater showers" – all the mod-cons.
- Fleetwood was the first planned Victorian town designed by Decimus Burton. The North Euston Hotel was built in a crescent to take in the fine views of the Bay. Fleetwood is the only town in the UK to boast 3 lighthouses, two of which are in the town and are still functional.



## Holidays and Holy Days

Spirituality and tourism are not completely separate entities – in fact, the word holiday derives from Holy Day. The vast seascapes, tranquillity and access to the sea have made Morecambe Bay a place of contemplation and it is home to an impressive number and diversity of spiritual sites, both old and new.

Here are some fascinating facts and places for your visitors to explore:

- In 1672 the first of the Quaker meeting houses was built in Cartmel, it had a small upper lookout window as they were still being persecuted.
- There are active Quaker meeting houses at Yealand Conyers and Ulverston.
- The Bronze Age stone circles on Birkkrigg Common are well worth a visit for the breathtaking views over Morecambe Bay.
- Conishead Priory and Furness Abbey were strongholds of Cistercian monks, and are connected to Cartmel Priory by the Cistercian Way. All are open to the public.
- The village of Forton was a Methodist enclave, and you couldn't get a pub licence.
- In the graveyard at St. Patrick's Chapel in Heysham are fascinating Viking rock cut graves.
- The Manjushri Temple at Conishead Priory is one of the most important Buddhist temples in the UK.

People today still find connection and meaning when admiring the nature and landscape of the area. Make it easy for your visitors to slow down, take it easy and get away from it all. Perhaps you can tell them about your favourite spot that gives you inspiration.

Locals said some of their favourite places are:

- Piel Island
- Birkkrigg Common Stone Circle
- Hampsfell Hospice
- Humphrey Head
- Helsington Barrows
- Jubilee Pepperpot, Eaves Wood
- Warton Crag Iron Age hill fort
- Heysham Head and St Patricks Chapel
- Half Moon Bay
- Nicky Nook
- Cockersands Abbey



## The Science Behind the Seaside Holiday

Recent research by the University of Central Lancashire into the motivation of visitors to Morecambe concludes that wellness, spirituality and a connection to the past are the core elements of seaside sense of place or seaisideness. These themes were directly influenced by the seaside environment and especially the perception of the Bay as timeless, dynamic and awe inspiring. This natural space was considered to be relaxing, a tonic, and even offered a new perspective that encouraged expanded thought. Visits were highly valued by visitors who felt an attachment to the seascape and the Bay. Other studies involving the University of Plymouth show that living and staying near the sea is good for our wellbeing too.