

EUROPE 2023

4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs | 2 grand-boys



Heysham

Boning up on some of the history and background of places we visit can be quite enlightening. Heysham Head, for example, is described as offering stunning views of the bay and the Lake District. It is also supposedly a great place to live, with its picturesque views of the countryside and its friendly village atmosphere. But then the reality sets in - Heysham is also on record as among the top 10 most dangerous small towns in Lancashire, and is the 43rd most dangerous overall out of Lancashire's 236 towns, villages, and cities. The overall crime rate in Heysham in 2022 was 69 crimes per 1,000 people. Armed with this sort of information you will see groups of Australians walking around holding their bags with eyes peeled for bag snatchers and other criminals.

As for parking, Heysham offers no long term parking opportunities for tourists. And what short term parking is available is restricted to vehicles no higher than 2 metres. £2 per hour is particularly steep. The locals seem happy for you to come and look, but not for long.

As for "other" attractions, besides the 8th century church, saxon burial grounds and stunning views there is always the Heysham Nuclear Power Station tour you can go on. Heysham tries to make the most of everything.

Maybe best to go further on and pay a visit to Silverdale? No so. Just like Heysham there are dangers lurking here too. The low water mark means wide expanses of exposed sand to make lots of sand castles but the tide comes in faster than a horse can run - a lethal mix of rapid inflow of the sea, shifting quick sands, treacherous channels and sheer unpredictability that have trapped the unwary over many centuries.

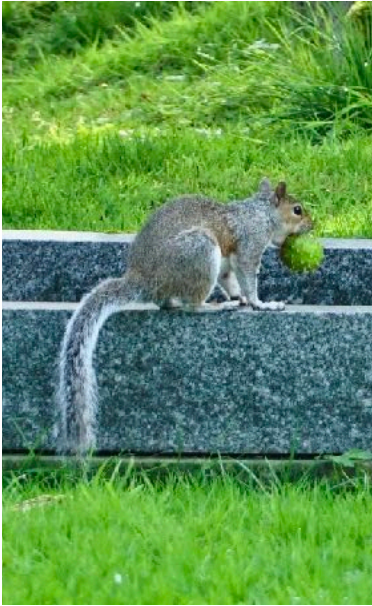


Big Skies & Small Lanes

On our last day travelling this region we decided upon a trip up the coast to the far north of Lancashire, nudging into the Lakes District. Maddi was not feeling the best so she and Deakin stayed home.

Without competition, Blayze bagged the front seat and "enjoyed" the close scrapes through the narrow lanes. We drove to two National Trust locations. The first, Heysham, is a beautiful site on a rocky coast. We parked in the pretty village and walked through the narrow streets to the oldest fully functional church we have ever seen. Some parts of the current structure has been here since about 1340. The walls are actually wonky and the view of the ocean from the windows is magic. Blayze was not impressed to see another church!

A walk up the hill then took us to the ruins of a saxon age church dating from the 10th century. The most amazing thing was the graves carved into stone. Imagine how long that would have taken! I wonder where they would have kept the bodies until their final resting place was ready! We walked along the sea front and then made our way up the coast via secondary roads.



The next destination was supposed to be a cliff location at Arnside/ Silverdale. This site was never located, but we had a great trip through the very pretty countryside. These roads were again enclosed by hedges but even smaller than the ones further south - if that is possible.!

The most brilliant contrast occurred when we popped out of this “forest” to the huge skies and vast muddy beach flats of Arnside. We thought that this area would be overrun with people in summer - we then giggled at ourselves because it IS summer! The weather is just not co-operating. Very grand, two storey houses lined the seas side. A stroll along the beach and a pasty at the corner pastry store before we headed back south.

The major takeaway from today’s trip was the beautiful muted colours of this coastline and the views of distant Lancashire where Maddi and Deakin were enjoying their rest day.

