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Heversham Marsh



This is one of a series of short walks around the villages of Heversham and Leasgill, near Milnthorpe, Cumbria.

Clock bearings: To simplify descriptions, some directions are given as if viewing a horizontal clock face - eg 12 o'clock is straight ahead, 11 o'clock slightly to the left, 1 o'clock slightly to the right.

Disclaimer: Walkers are responsible for their own safety, particularly when on public roads, and are asked to observe the country code when crossing farmland.

Starting Point: The Athenaeum village hall on the main village street Leasgill LA7 7ET. The hall has a car park, but this is intended for users of the hall. There is free parking on the surrounding roads.

Terrain: 3.5km / 2.2 miles. Tarmac, mostly flat. The walk involves crossing the busy A6 twice. Also the moss road is a popular cycle route, so beware of cyclists approaching silently at speed.

1 From the Athenaeum, head south down the main village street for approximately 700m until reaching the bend by St Peter's Church.

Points of interest on this leg:

- The village street. This was once the main road from Lancaster to Scotland
- Victorian postbox set into the wall at the far end of the Athenaeum car park.
- Plumtree Hall, grade II listed house built by around 1815 by the mayor of Kendal, Joseph Braithwaite, now retirement flats. You are now passing from Leasgill into Heversham.
- St Mary's Well: set in the wall on the left of the road as you approach the churchyard. The name refers St Mary's Abbey in York, which came to own much of the village in the 11th century.
- You are now entering the old part of Heversham village, which once boasted three pubs, a post office and other businesses, all now private houses.

- St Peter's church. Grade II* This has been a religious site since the 7th century; part of a cross from that time is in the church porch. The present church dates from the 11th century and has been expanded and remodelled many times, particularly in the 19th century, when the tower was rebuilt and the interior restored by Lancaster architects Paley & Austin. Hubert Austin lived in Heversham House opposite the church.



2 At the church, turn right down the short lane leading to the A6, opposite the Heversham Hotel.

- The A6 is known as Prince's Way, opened in 1927 by Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) as a bypass, taking the traffic to and from Scotland off the village street. Locals claim that the prince arrived late and tipsy, having enjoyed a good lunch in Kendal.



- Heversham Hotel. Previously the vicarage, this was known as the Blue Bell pub. That name was transferred from the previous Blue Bell, which had been near the church, but closed in 1949.

3 Cross the A6 and proceed straight ahead down the lane for 800 metres

Points of interest:

- Heversham Hall. Set back among the first set of farm buildings on the left of the lane, this grade II* stone house was built in the 14th century and extended in the 16th. Not open to the public.



- Heversham Marsh. After passing the S-bend at the second farm, Moss Side Farm, the lane drops down onto the drained marshland, traditionally used as seasonal pasture. You are now more or less at sea level, but the sea is hidden behind flood prevention banks.
- Arnside and its hill, Arnside Knot, are at 10 o'clock, across the estuaries at this top corner of Morecambe Bay.
- Whitbarrow is the large hill with exposed cliffs at 1 o'clock. This is a limestone escarpment, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. You are looking across the estuary of the River Kent (again unseen from this low level), on the far side of which is Foulshaw Moss nature reserve, where ospreys come to breed. These large fish-eating raptors spend the winter in East Africa, the summer in Cumbria. You may see them in the distance if you're lucky.



- 4** Turn right immediately after crossing a small bridge onto another straight lane. Continue 700 metres to the T-junction opposite College Green Farm.



- At 11 o'clock you can see up the Lyth valley as far as the hills north of Windermere
- At 1 o'clock in the middle distance is the village of Levens

- 5** Turn right at College Green Farm. Continue 900 metres to A6

- College Green. This area owes its name to Trinity College, Cambridge, who came to own the land after the dissolution of St Mary's Abbey, York.
- Heversham Head. This is the large hill at 1 o'clock. Although only 123 metres (400 feet) high there are excellent views from the top, where there is a stone view marker to tell you what you are looking at. (See Walk no. 2). The summit is frequently used for beacons to commemorate important events.
- Eversley. This is the large house in front of woodland at 11 o'clock. This was built in the mid 19th century by Frank Argles, a wealthy Liverpool businessman, who converted a barn and workshop in Leasgill into a penny library, which he named the Athenaeum, after the club in Liverpool of which he was a member. Eversley is now split into four residences. The Athenaeum is now the village hall for Leasgill and Heversham.

- 6** Cross the A6 with care and go directly ahead up the steep lane to rejoin the Leasgill village street. Turn right.

- Boundary stone on the right, opposite Leasgill cottage. Indicating Levens to the north, Heversham to the south, probably dating from the turnpike improvements of 1804, when this was the main road to Scotland.



Continue 200 metres to return to the Athenaeum

End of walk



St Mary's Well near the church

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