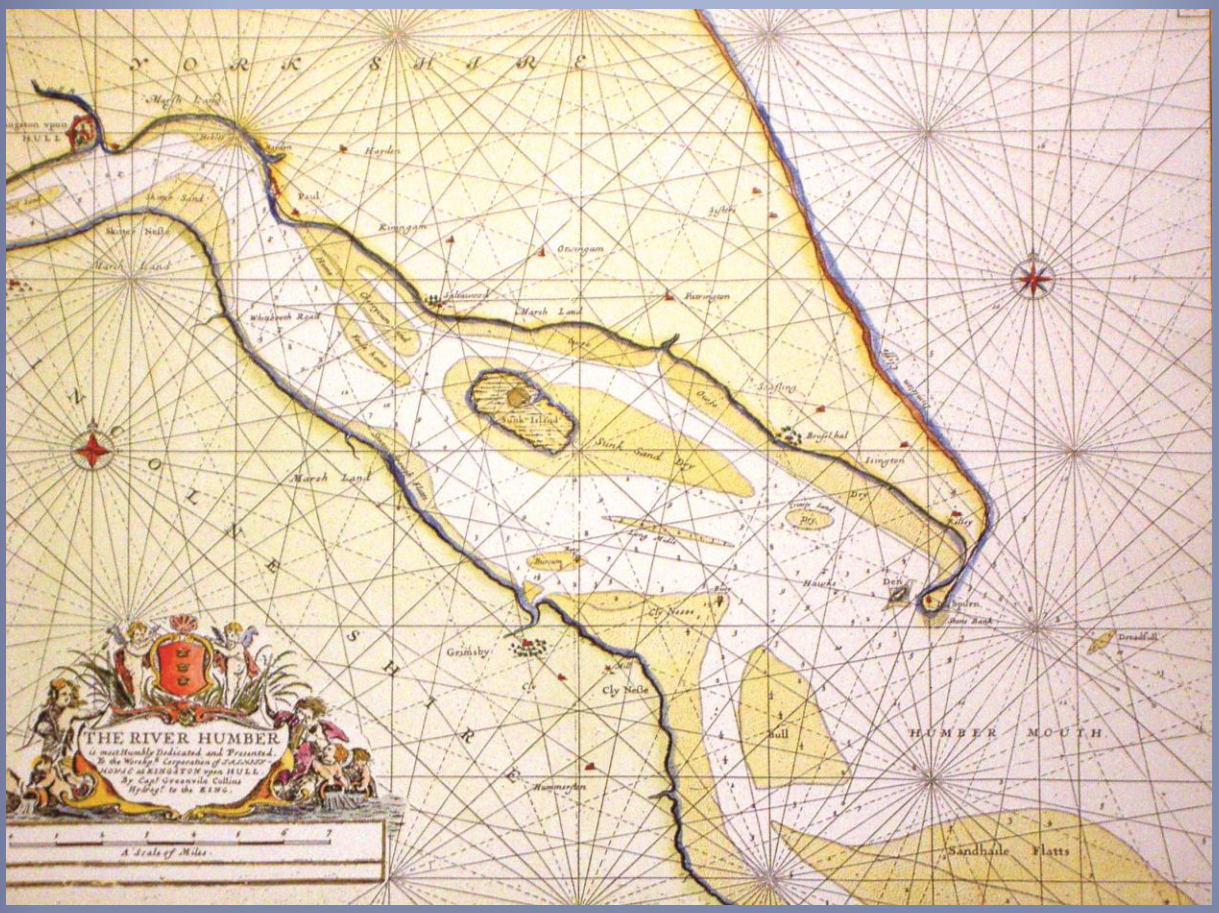


Landmarks and Beacons

Churches of the Humber Estuary, their history and function as medieval and early modern aids to navigation

Richard Clarke

Landmarks and Beacons – churches of the Humber Estuary, their history and function as medieval and early modern aids to navigation.

Canaletto's 1749 painting of the baroque St. Paul's cathedral dominating the cityscape of London[1] (Fig. 1) seems almost unreal to the modern eye when, today, the same building is almost dwarfed by towering office and residential blocks. Even though the painting depicts the occasion of the Georgian 'Lord Mayor's Parade' it nevertheless shows clearly the River Thames as the metropolis's highway, the profusion of shallow-hulled rowing boats being almost as prolific as the modern-day 'black cabs' on the city's roads. Similarly images of the pre 1666 City show the Old St. Paul's dominating the scene, especially so if pre 1550s when the spire atop the crossing tower still pierced the skyline. Also pre 1666 scenes show the towers and spires of the city's gothic churches, which pre-dated Wren's rebuilding, as prominent buildings visible from a distance (Fig. 2).[2] As with Canaletto the river is shown as a bustling highway where, if church steeples were used by Thames' mariners as 'landmarks', the problem would have been distinguishing one from another.

Fig. 1 Canaletto's painting of the River Thames on the occasion of the 'Lord Mayor's Day', painted 1748/49.

[1]Canaletto Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto), 1697 - 1768, was an Italian painter of landscapes and townscapes who lived and worked in England between 1746 and 1755. His works provide a detailed record of contemporary life, especially the fashionable Baroque architecture.

[2] Wenceslaus Hollar (1607 – 1677), was a Dutch engraver who moved to England in 1636. His maps of Hull and London (as well as many other places) were etched on copper plate and then printed.

Fig. 2 Hollar's engraving of London Bridge and the City beyond as viewed from Southwark, *c*. 1650. Image created for inclusion in Howell's *Londinopolis*.

Throughout historic time the Humber Estuary has been a larger, more diverse and more dangerous to navigators than the River Thames. For most of its course the Humber Estuary bisects areas of inter-glacial and post-glacial deposition, only between the parishes of Barton and South Ferriby on the south bank and those of Hessle, North Ferriby and Welton on the north bank is the Estuary backed by rising land in the form of the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Wolds, and, to a lesser extent and further west, the limestone escarpments of the Lincolnshire Heights. Consequently neither the bed of the Estuary nor its banks are characterized by jagged rocky outcrops dangerous to navigation. However the problem when navigating the Humber has always been the vast areas of mudflats ('sandbanks') accumulated from silt held in suspension and carried back and forth on strong tidal currents.[3] These mudflats lie just below the surface at high tide and, particularly west of the Humber Bridge, are revealed at low tide – hence the perception of the Humber as a 'dirty river'. Navigating the Humber has therefore been about plying the channels between mudflats, the latter being an insidious threat to shipping in that a

[3] Until research at Hull University in the 1970s proved otherwise it was thought that this silt was mainly carried into the Humber by the rivers Trent and Ouse (and, to a lesser extent, by the tributary rivers Hull, Foulness, Ancholme and Skitter). However it was shown that most of the Humber's silt load comes from the erosion of the Holderness coast, the material carried in solution south by long-shore drift and into the Estuary on the flowing tide.

ship once lodged on a mudflat, if it cannot be released on the next tide, was in danger of becoming permanently stuck and 'breaking its back' with consequent loss of cargo.

The further complication in relation to navigation was that the configuration of hazards in the Humber changed over time as deeper water channels diverted and mudflats grew, or were eroded by tidal action. Today regular ultra-sound surveys chart the changing 'map' of the Humber bed while for the early navigation charts cartographers plotted the 'sandbanks' visible at low tide and the depths of navigable channels using a plumb-line (or 'lead-line').[4] Throughout time these mudflats and channels were given names familiar to contemporary navigators but which varied across the centuries.

The phrase 'lower Humber' refers to the Estuary east and south-east of its narrowest point, approximately where the Humber Bridge now stands.[5] Up to the 20th century charts of the lower Humber were used mainly to navigate the deep water channels leading to the ports of Hull and Grimsby. The 'upper Humber', that is the more inland section from Trent Falls at the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Trent to the Barton – Hessle axis, was less surveyed for navigational purposes until the second quarter of the 19th century following the opening of Goole Docks in 1826. Previously the upper Humber had been navigated by craft trading between Hull and York, or Gainsborough and beyond, but this trade had been conducted in craft such as keels with a comparatively shallow draught so navigation had relied entirely upon local knowledge (see Fig. 9). Also foreign vessels rarely sailed further up 'river'[6] than Barton and thus didn't need instruction in navigating the upper Humber until the opening of Goole Docks.[7]

[4] I am grateful to Rodney Clapson for advice on this and other points related to navigation.
[5] Unusually the general shape of the Humber Estuary is that of a 'dog-leg' rather than the more common 'trumpet' configuration. The bend occurs between Paull on the north bank and Goxhill Marsh on the south. For an explanation of this feature see Clarke, R. (forthcoming).
[6] The Humber is an estuary, however the word 'river' is in such common usage to identify it that it is hard to avoid some use of the term.
[7] For an invaluable study of medieval shipping navigating the Humber as well as a study of the imports and exports transported and of the merchants who organised the trade see Wendy Childs, *The Trade and Shipping of Hull, 1300-*

Plate 6 Part of the Burleigh chart of the Humber, showing sandbanks and the position and depth in fathoms of the navigation channel (*c.* 1560).

Fig. 3 Part of the Burleigh chart of the Humber, showing sandbanks and the position and depth in fathoms of the navigation channel, *c*. 1560. From Jones, N.V., 1988.

Burleigh's chart, *c*.1560 (Fig. 3), shows the vast 'sands' (sandbanks) of the late 16th century although the names are difficult to decipher. His chart also shows the main deep-water channel of the lower Humber leading from Spurn Point to the port of Hull, and beyond, with depths in fathoms.[8] The sketch of a three-mast ship near the northern shore suggests that there may have been a navigable channel between the then south coast of Holderness and the mudflats off-shore (later to become the reclaimed land of Cherry Cob Sands and Sunk Island, see later).

1500. Ralph Davis' study *The Trade and Shipping of Hull, 1500-1700* continues the story. It was across these four centuries (and before) that church towers and spires were important as aids to navigation.

[8] This presumably at low tide as the Estuary today has a tidal range of over 20 feet.

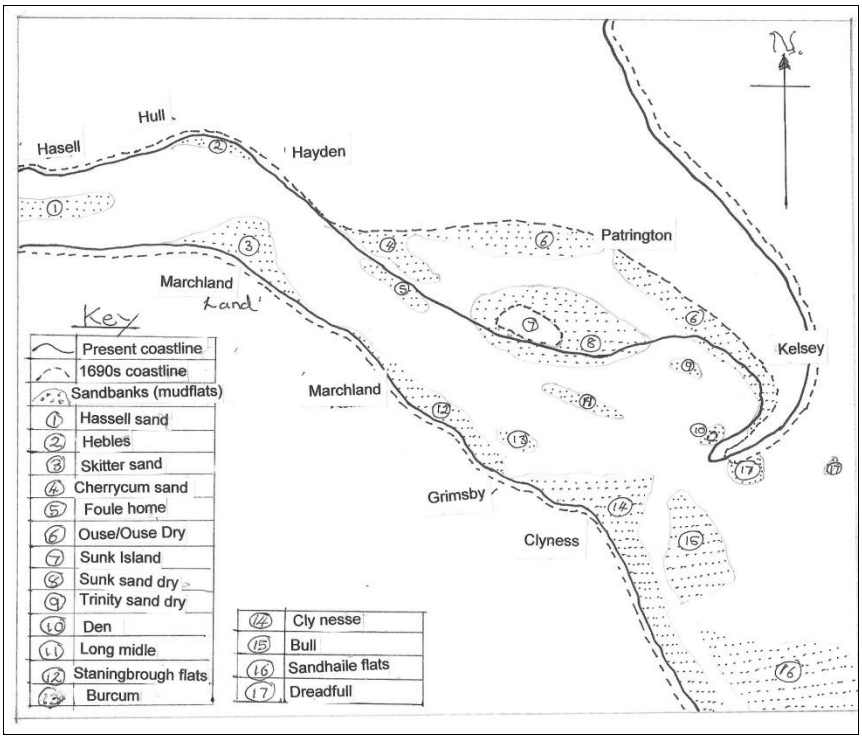


Fig. 4 Transcription of Collins' map (Fig. 5) highlighting the principal hazards to navigation in the lower Humber by the late 17th century.

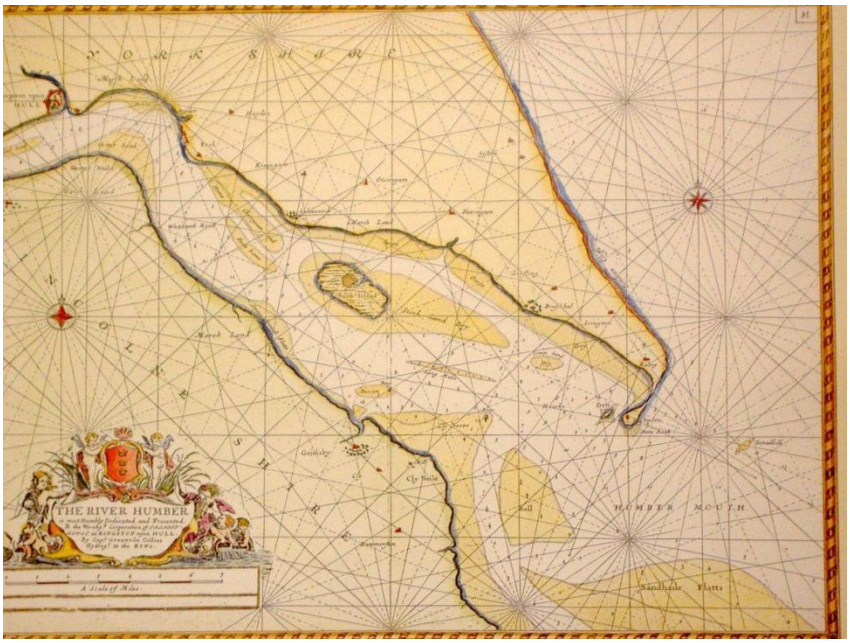


Fig. 5 Collins' chart, 1681, the inscription reads 'The River Humber is most Humbly Dedicated and Presented. To the Worship. Corporation of TRINITY-HOUSE at KINGSTON upon HULL. By Capt. Greenvile Collins Hydrologer to the KING' (Charles II initially).

Fig. 4 shows the location and names of mudflats in the lower Humber as shown on Greenville Collins' chart of 1681 (Fig. 5). Clearly the curiously named 'Ouse Dry' prohibited navigation close to the then south Holderness coastline except at the entry to Patrington Haven Drain, however there was clear water around 'Sunk Sand Dry', albeit shallow. Sunk Island had become vegetated and inhabited in the way that Ravenser Odd had been four centuries earlier and Reed's Island was to be two centuries later. The 'Den' is shown as being an island also. Whether the terms 'sand', 'dry', 'nesse' and 'flatts' were localized variations on a single theme or whether they were different in some way is not known.

Collins' identification of 'Whitebooth Road' off East Halton 'marsh'[9] confirms this as part of the deep water channel to be navigated from Spurn to Hull ('road' being a term for a navigable channel). Having negotiated the channel between 'Sunk Sand Dry' and 'Staningbrough Flatts' Whitebooth Road was navigated up to the deep water channel off Paull at which point Hull Roads, between 'Hebles' and 'Skitter Sand', could be navigated west to Hull.

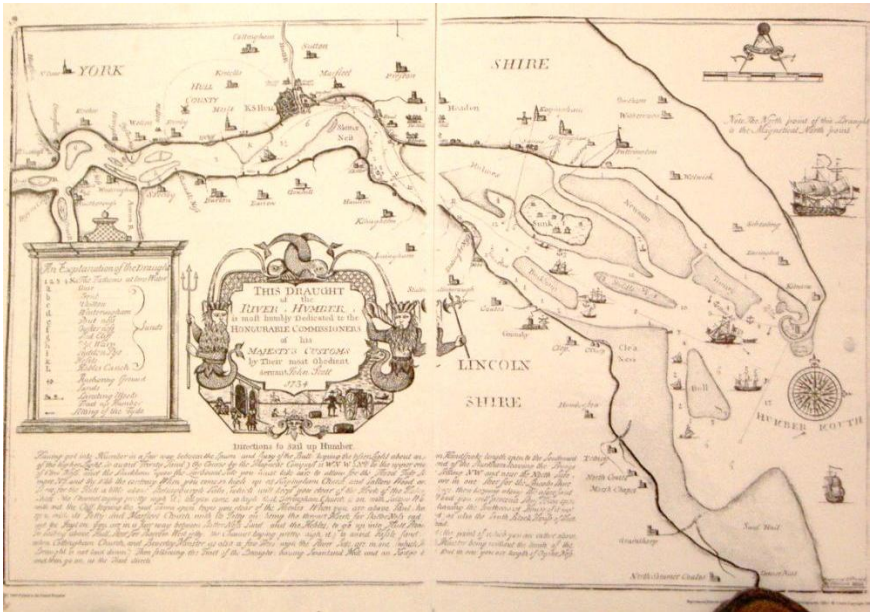


Fig. 6 Scott's chart, 1734.

[9] The term 'marsh' in this context historically referred to the reclaimed estuarine lowlands along the south bank of the Humber and south along the North Sea coast of Lincolnshire.

Fig. 7 The dedication and cartouche from John Scott's chart.

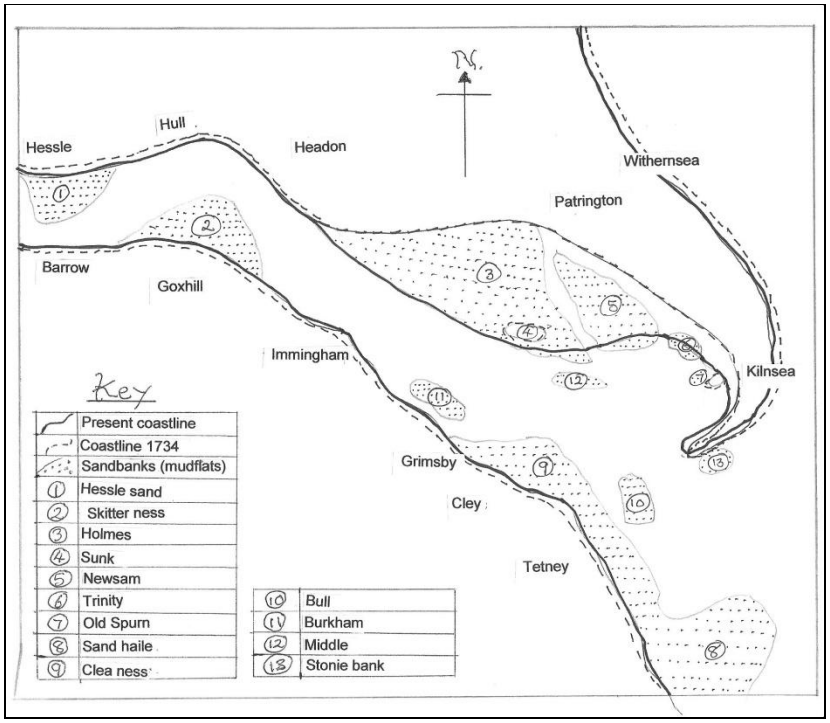


Fig. 8 Transcription of Scott's map highlighting the principal early to mid-18th century hazards to navigation in the 'lower Humber'.

By the early-mid 18th century (see Figs. 6 and 8) 'Hebles' presented less of an obstacle to Hull Roads, as would be expected along the outside of the

Humber's 'dog-leg' meander. 'Old Spurn' is portrayed in the same way as Sunk (Island) and was perhaps the remnant of the 'Den' of Collins' map. Having negotiated the channel between Spurn[10] and 'Bull', ships bound for Hull set sail west-north-west for the inshore deep-water channel off Killingholme 'marsh' (north of Immingham) from where they might ply Whitebooth Roads. If bound for Grimsby vessels had to round 'Clea ness' and negotiate the channel between it and 'Burkham' to access the mouth of the River Freshney.

As regards the 'upper Humber' beyond Barton, and from an elevated point along the coast, the Estuary might have appeared at low tide to be an almost continuous mudflat, as it often does today (see Fig. 11). The navigable channels between the parishes of Welton and South Ferriby[11] might become very narrow (see Fig. 9) as might the channels off Winteringham and Whitton.

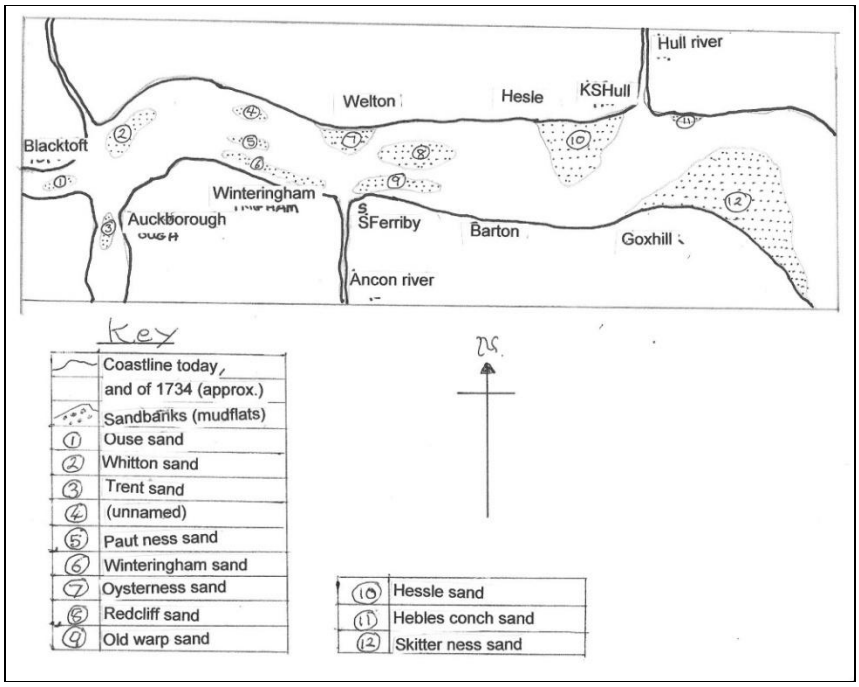


Fig. 9 Transcription of Scott's map (Fig. 6) highlighting the principal hazards to navigation in the 'upper Humber', early-mid-18th century.

[10] 'Stonie Bank' off Spurn Head was, certainly in the 19th century, often visited by keels and sloops which would be anchored and wait to be beached at low tide. The crew would then shovel the gravel (deposited by longshore drift) into the hold and transport it home on the high tide.

[11] 'Old Warp Sand' later evolved to create Reads Island, now being rapidly eroded although the descendant of the mudflat is vast and 'growing'.

For the ‘upper Humber’ the history of pilotage, and the establishment of navigational aids, dates from the 1820s following the construction of Goole Docks, and the associated new town, by the Aire and Calder Navigation (Company).[12] In 1828 the ‘Navigation’ requested that Trinity House, Hull ‘secure navigation’ from Hull to Goole which involved liaising with the members of the Corporation of the City of York who were ‘conservators’ of the River Ouse up river to York and the ‘trustees’ of the Rivers Aire and Calder.[13] For centuries market boats, packet boats, keels and sloops had sailed the upper Humber by means of the sailor’s unrecorded local knowledge. However the prospect of ships with a draught of ten feet or more requiring passage from the lower Humber to Goole required the compilation of detailed navigation charts for the ‘upper Humber’, the first being that of John Hall, Warden of Trinity House, Hull in 1828 – which, incidentally, does not show local churches!

During the second half of the 19th century many additional aids to navigation were installed along the shores of the upper Humber, this including ‘high and low lights’ (see later) at both Winteringham and Whitton in the 1860s and at Hessle in the following decade.[14] Although churches do not seem to have continued as crucial points of reference the Buoyage and Beaconage Committee of Trinity House, Hull did, in the 1860s, refer to Swanland mill (tower wind-mill, see later) and Brough railway station as locations significant (visible) to navigators of the upper Humber. The fact that the upper Humber remained hazardous is confirmed by a newspaper cutting of March 1886 ‘During the last 35 years seven sea going vessels, with the loss of two lives, and 12 river craft have been wrecked with the loss of 11 lives on Whitton Sands’ (Cutting preserved in records of Trinity House, Hull and referenced by Storey 1971, 116 and see Fig. 9)).

Until relatively modern times the environment on both banks of the Humber was rural except for the town and port of ‘Wyk supra Hull’ developing on the

[12] Information at this point comes entirely from Storey 1971, chapters 3 and 4.
[13] In 1851 the body then to be called the River Humber Conservancy Commissioners was created with responsibility for the management of the whole Estuary.
[14] If the clay bank is walked from Winteringham Haven west to Humber Bank Farm, Whitton two disused beacons (probably low lights) are passed on the seaward side of the clay bank. The one opposite Winteringham Marsh has lost its ‘top’ (beacon) although the angle-iron legs survive in tripod form, the one nearer Whitton retains its beacon.

west bank of the lower River Hull from the 13th century onwards.[15] Medieval Humberside ports developed alongside inlets which flowed into the Estuary, thereby giving some shelter for vessels from the treacherous tidal channels and stormy conditions of the Estuary itself. As with London (see Figs. 1 and 2), by the 14th century the townscape of Kingston upon Hull was dominated by the crossing tower of Holy Trinity church (see later) and continued so well into the 19th century (see Fig. 10). Even today the crossing tower is a very visible component of the cityscape from the south Humber bank and from the rising land of the Yorkshire Wolds dip slope to the west of the Hull valley.

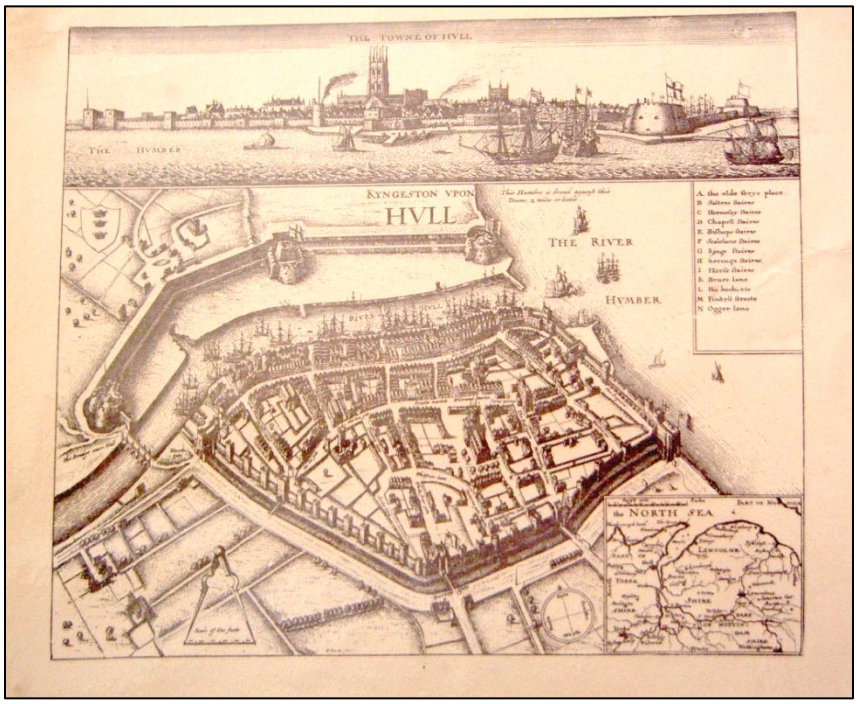


Fig. 10 Hollar's engraving of Hull viewed from the Humber and map of the town and port, *c*. 1642.

Ferrer in his contribution to *A Dynamic Estuary: Man, Nature and the Humber* (Jones 1988, 98 – 112) discussed some of the various historic Humber navigation charts that survive from the 16th to the 20th centuries, some of which are listed in the Appendix (also see Fig. 3).

[15] See Clarke, R. *Hull in the Beginning* (East Yorkshire Local History Society Newsletter, 2013).

Fig. 11 View looking north-west over the 'upper Humber', taken from a point at the western end of Westfield Road, Barton, near the parish boundary with South Ferriby.

Usually the historic navigation charts for the Humber up to the mid 19th century show the parish churches for most of the shoreline parishes, generally in an accurate form which can be cross-referenced with other contemporary evidence of Humberside churches.[16] Some charts, for example Scott's of 1734, include 'sight lines' taken from visible shoreline church steeples while Storey in his study of 18th century Humber Pilot's Examination books shows that one quarter of the test questions referred to, or required the candidate to refer to, Humberside parish churches (Storey 1971, 5 & 125).[17] Obviously for the centuries of Humber navigation prior to surviving charts shoreline churches, as enduring features visible in the landscape, must have served as principal aids to navigation although there seems little supporting contemporary documentary evidence. It might also be wondered whether some church towers supported an additional landmark 'for many centuries the principal guiding lights on much of our coastline were braziers lit on top of church towers' (Credland 2003, 19). Churches with a low pitch roof to

[16] By contrast early county maps often represent churches in a stylised form.
[17] These included churches at Drypool, Marfleet, 'Patterington', Grimsby and 'Chappell on the Island' (Sunk Island).

the tower surrounded by a castellated wall would certainly provide a surface on which a brazier could stand and around which it could be tended.[18]

Clearly navigation by significant shoreline objects was prey to bad weather in the form of fog, low cloud or haze. Similarly at night navigation would be compromised unless the 'waymark' incorporated a lighted beacon, 'During daylight hours church towers … were important as sea marks on coasts and within river estuaries' (Credland 2003, 19). Before the invention, or installation, of lighthouses and light-buoys it seems likely that, wherever possible, ships would ride at anchor overnight unless a full moon in a cloudless sky lit their way.

For centuries the administration of pilotage and purpose-built aids to navigation in the Humber was the preserve of the Hull Trinity House organization.[19] This organization had evolved from the medieval Guild of Holy Trinity, founded in 1369 for the purpose of appointing chantry priests and to promote mutual support amongst 'Brethren'. By the 15th century the Guild was dominated by shipmaster 'brethren' and step-by-step its ecclesiastical purpose was overtaken by a secular one of particular interest to the members. So in 1581 Elizabeth I ordered the re-naming of the Guild to 'The Guild or Fraternity of Masters and Pilots, Seamen of Kingston upon Hull'. Previously in 1512 the 'Masters of Hulks'[20] had asked of the Guild 'that they (masters) might be assigned by the said Aldermen ('brethren') and their successors from time to time good men and able to bring in their ships called Hulks into the Port of Hull'.[21] The 'Brethren' seized the moment to declare that no man in Hull be allowed to work as an independent pilot, there still then being no purpose-built aids to navigation in the Estuary, or official charts.

[18] An opportunity to examine church tower roofs for any remnant evidence rarely arises. The job of man-handling the fuel (usually sea-coal) up the tower steps could not have been one for the faint-hearted. A modern 'beacon' was until recently fixed to the top of Winteringham church tower and used by Associated British Ports (see later).
[19] Much of the following information comes from Storey, 1971 and Naish 1985.
[20] 'Hulks' has come to mean various things at various times. From the 17th century it came to mean de-commissioned ships without their rigging, as such they were put to various uses such as; accommodation (for example for impressed sailors), prisons, coal barges, storage or to sink as anchorages for jetties etc. In earlier times, as in this quotation, it defined coastal sailing craft (as opposed to those that crossed the North Sea).
[21] This then being the 'Old Harbour', the west bank of the lower River Hull, with associated jetties and wharves.

As monarchs both Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I determined to improve sea navigation both nationally and locally to the Humber. In 1514 Henry issued a charter to Trinity House confirming its status as the pilotage authority for the nation, while two Elizabethan acts (1566 and 1593) gave Trinity House responsibility for improving sea-marking[22] and for defining principal navigation channels. Furthermore the preamble to the 1566 Act states clearly the continuing importance of churches as seamarks by stating 'For as much as by the taking away of certain steeples, woods and other marks standing upon the main shores adjoining to the sea coasts of the Realm of England and Wales, being as beacons and marks of ancient time accustomed for seafaring men … have by lack of such marks of late years have been miscarried … to the detriment and hurt of the common wealth and the perishing of no small number of people'.

During Henry VIII's two visits to Hull in the course of the 'Northern Progress' of 1541 he clearly took a particular interest in the port. Having watched foreign ships sailing into the Haven he later ordered that all foreign ships entering the Haven be required to hand over to a 'Lodesman' (pilot) and to pay rates according to the tonnage of the ship (Storey 1971, 2).[23]

An Elizabethan royal Charter of 1585, signed by the Lord High Admiral, confirmed that the 'Trinity House of Kingston-upon-Hull, for the better conduct, safeguard and passing of ships in and out of the River Humber … are presently to erect, make, set-up, keep, have and maintain two other buoys and two beacons in the same river to their great expense and charge'. The use of the word 'other' is explained by the fact that a previous 'beacon' had been built at Paull in 1567, this following the national Act of the previous year which entitled Trinity House to erect 'beacons, markes and signes of the sea'. In 1585

[22] *The International Dictionary of Aids to Marine Navigation* defines seamarks as 'An artificial or natural object of easily recognisable shape or colour or both, situated in such a position that it may be identified on a chart or related to a known navigational instruction'.

[23] Henry further ordered that the east bank of the Haven be defended although the three forts and curtain wall built some years later were not built to the design envisaged by Henry. In the 17th century this structure in Drypool parish was re-configured to form the 'Citadel', it in turn being demolished in the 19th century.

Elizabeth ordered a 'charge' of six pence per ton on 'alien' ships of more than 60 tons, four pence per ton on 'alien' ships 30 – 60 tons, while English ships paid half tolls, this to fund future purpose-built aids to navigation.

Ashley's London publication of 1588, *The Mariner's Mirrour*, (see Appendix re Waghenaer's chart) suggests that 'when so ever any shipmaster or mariner shall set forth from land out of any river or haven, diligently to mark what buildings, castles, towers, churches, hills, downes, windmills and other marks are standing upon the land … (and) let him portray with his pen' (see Naish 1985, 14). It seems likely that some mariners regularly plying the Humber may well have sketched their own homespun navigation chart rather than just relying on memory or word of mouth. However, the first formal map of the Humber to survive is the manuscript, *c*. 1560, from the papers of Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's Secretary of State (see Jones 1988, Plate 6 and Fig 3).

So from late Tudor times Humber navigation began to be assisted by purpose built 'seamarks'[24] and piloting services. Purpose-built aids to navigation ('seamarks') took various forms depending on their location and purpose. 'Beacons' were often identified in Trinity House records and usually located on navigational charts. Beacons were land based and came in various forms such as pointed structures supporting an identification-mark or cauldron, 'swapes' and 'leading lights'.

Early spire beacons may have been solid, later ones were created from a skeleton of metal angle-irons. Ones supporting a cauldron had to be accessed by a ladder so coal (the preferred fuel) could be taken up to replenish the fire – this much like the alarm beacons that heralded invasions such as the Spanish Armada, 1588. 'Swapes' were a more inventive form of raised cauldron whereby a great beam was pivoted on a metal tripod so that when the rope at one end of the beam was pulled down the brazier at the other end, once lit at ground level, was raised up. Leading lights in England were pioneered at Tynemouth in the late 16th

[24] Often used as a collective term for purpose built aids to navigation whether erected on shore or in the navigated channel.

century[25] but, apart from on Spurn Point (see below), there were none beside the Humber until the 19th century.[26] Leading lights were essentially two detached 'lights', one lower, the other higher (literally) so that once the eye of the navigator had them in line then he could navigate the deep water channel. In the Humber the leading lights at Killingholme guided vessels up-Estuary from Spurn and from there the ones at Thorngumbald and Saltend guided vessels into the deepwater channel of Hull Roads (see above). Leading lights might take the form of small lighthouses enclosing a coal fired brazier or oil fired lamps fuelled by colza oil (from crushed oilseed rape seeds) or whale oil. In part the establishment of leading lights was a response to the increasing number of steam ships navigating the Humber from the 1820s onwards, steamships being more independent of tides and more likely to continue their journey during darkness.

Buoys were water based aids to navigation and were particularly vital in the Humber Estuary as it was 'a difficult tidal river with constantly shifting shoals' (Naish 1985, 76). The first Humber 'canne' (buoy) is recorded as being off Spurn in 1584 and by 1834 19 buoys were anchored in the lower Humber. Technologically, barrel-buoys evolved to conical-buoys, these in turn being replaced by metal ones. Later buoys were colour coded and topped by symbols of significance to navigators. In 1783 the first 'buoy yacht' was recorded anchored in the lower Humber. Buoys, of course needed a chain and anchor to stay in place and there are many records in the Trinity House archives of buoys having to be re-positioned, or repaired, after storms. To be repaired they were taken back to the 'Yard', near the later entrance to Victoria Dock, off the River Hull.

Successive Spurn lighthouses lit the mariner's entry to the Humber from the North Sea (see de Boar and Crowther). In the 1420s Henry VI granted the mayor of Hull the right to collect dues from incoming ships to pay for Richard Reedbarrow's lit 'tower' on Spurn.[27] In 1674 Justinian

[25] See Greenville Collins' chart of the mouth of the River Tyne reproduced by Naish 1985, 72.
[26] Naish 1985, 88 'By the end of the 17th century there were ten pairs of leading lights on the East coast of England'. It seems these were in the Yarmouth Roads area (east Norfolk), the Wash, Boston channel and, possibly, the Thames.
[27] Reedbarrow was a religious hermit occupying the 'Chapell of our Lady and Seint Ann ate Ravensersporne'. For some consideration of the terms Ravenser, Ravenser Odd and Ravenspurn see Clarke 'Hull in the Beginning'

Angell, a Spurn Point land-owner, had erected on the spit a pair of leading lights, the tower for the 'high light' standing about 60 feet in height. On the top of the tower was a pivoted 'swape' which enabled the burning cauldron (once lit) to be raised a further 14 feet.[28] As silt accretion enlarged the southern end of the spit the 'low light' had to be periodically moved, this leading to a decision in the early 1770s to build a lighthouse and the engineer John Smeaton agreed to manage the project. Initially the 112 feet high lighthouse (1776 – 1895) was topped by an open-to-air coal fired cauldron which was later replaced by an enclosed oil lamp (lantern). In 1895 Smeaton's lighthouse was replaced by the existing brick-built lighthouse which, when in use (de-commissioned 1980s), stood 128 feet high. The other 90 feet high conical brick tower still standing was the last in a series of 'low lights' from which the lantern was removed in 1895. John Hall's 1835 navigation chart for the lower Humber plots Spurn's 'high light' and 'low light' (see Fig. 12).

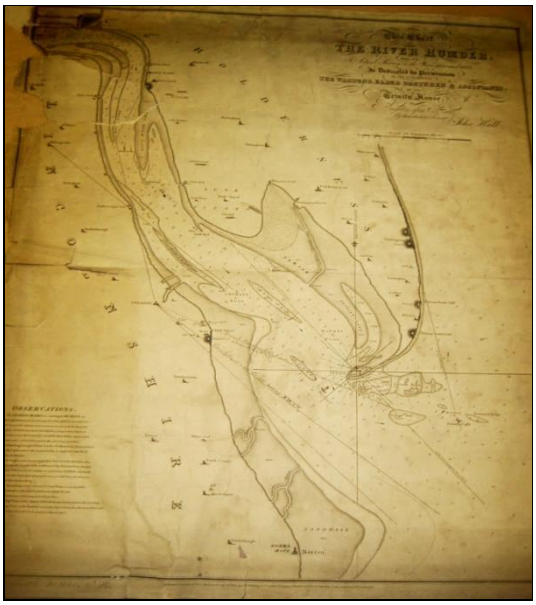


Fig. 12 John Hall's chart of the lower Humber, 1835.

(EYLHS Newsletter, 2013). There were a number of navigation lights manned by religious hermits around the coast of medieval England, it being considered a charitable and virtuous pursuit. Another example, not so far distant, was the hermitage and 'light' above the cliffs where the East Anglian Heights met the coast of the Wash. In the 19th century this point was promoted by the Le Strange family as the seaside resort of Hunstanton.

[28] This would have made the hoisted cauldron about the same height above ground level as many Humberside church towers.

Humberside church historiography.

Sources relevant to the study of individual churches of the Humberside shoreline parishes are, unfortunately, largely different for the two banks. Certainly there are common sources, the 'Pevsner' *The Buildings of England* county gazetteers being one, especially so as the text concentrates on church description and analysis. Periodically 'Pevsners' get updated by authors anxious to convey changing circumstances and by doing so to perpetuate the publication's importance, the 2005 revision of *Yorkshire: York and the East Riding* by David Neave being a particularly good example. The second edition of the *Lincolnshire* gazetteer dates from 1989 and deals with the 'historic county', that is north to the Humber estuary. Earlier county gazetteers such as Shell Guides or those by Arthur Mee tended to be less detailed on local churches. Unlike Norfolk, for example, neither Lincolnshire nor East Yorkshire has been the subject of specialist county church studies.[29]

Of course some churches in East Yorkshire and North, and North East, Lincolnshire may well figure in national church study publications across time from Thomas Rickman's *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture* (1817) to the present day, these too numerous to catalogue here.[30]

For the parish churches of the south bank of the Humber three earlier sources of evidence exist which, if they can be accessed, have the potential to illuminate the study of individual churches. Firstly in the 1790s most local churches were sketched by Jean-Claude Nattes (not his real name), a once well-known painter of water colours. These are not drawings of architectural accuracy, and indeed he may have completed more than one a day despite walking between sites, but they do describe, and give a flavour of, the building from the angle he chose. These have been catalogued by Lincoln Central Library and are relatively accessible.

[29]Munro Cautley's *Norfolk Churches* published in the 1940s and Mortlock and Roberts three volume *Popular Guide to Norfolk Churches* published in the 1980s being two well known examples.
[30]However, three to be recommended are; Platt, C. *The Parish Churches of Medieval England* (1981), Morris, R. *Churches in the Landscape* (1989) and Rodwell, W. *The Archaeology of the English Church* (1981).

Less accessible are the hand-written 'Church Notes' of John Henry Loft who, following a distinguished military career during the Napoleonic Wars and being M.P. for Grimsby between 1807 and 1812, rambled round north Lincolnshire in the 1820s recording and sketching (some) local churches. However there are two big problems with using his evidence, firstly all his notes have never been brought together in one archive or publication, secondly, he tended to concentrate on memorials (personalities) rather than the building – but not always.

Also instructive are the written descriptions of local churches as recorded by Henry Kaye Bonney who, as Archdeacon to the Diocese of Lincoln in the 1840s, recorded church descriptions during his parochial visitations. These have been transcribed[31] and published in a book of the 1930s entitled *Bonney's Notes,* a rare and valuable work but available in some libraries.

One potential advantage to be gained from access to these sources is that they often show the church as it existed prior to 19th century 'Gothic Revival' restorations. Indeed Bonney, on occasions, records restoration work in progress.

Unlike church students in Lincolnshire, those in the East Riding are well served by the Victoria County History.[32] During the late 20th century, and ongoing, the Victoria County History (henceforth VCH) for East Yorkshire has been upgraded and re-published in a series of volumes with, for the purpose of studying north bank churches, Vol. 1 for Hull (1969) and Vol. 5 for South Holderness (1984) being the most relevant. Unfortunately no modern volume yet exists for the north bank parishes west of Hull. In collating the VCH volumes the authors have accessed sources from the Diocesan Record Office at the Borthwick Institute in York and so saved the researcher much work.

Also for the north bank many early published sources exist which may give contemporary accounts of some relevant churches. Particularly

[31] Compiled by the Rev. N. S. Harding.
[32] The one volume for Lincolnshire being published in 1906, and not covering the whole county, has yet to be updated.

valuable in this respect is George Poulson's *History and Antiquities of the Seignary of Holderness*, published in two volumes in the 1840s and thus contemporary with Bonney's writings.[33]

In the context of churches as possible aids to navigation it is the tower which is the most significant part of the building. Clearly a lofty tower could be a prominent feature in the landscape, especially so in a pre-industrial landscape. The origin of towers as a basic element in church construction lay in Saxon times, and across the centuries church towers had various functions including the housing for bells which conveyed a series of audible messages across the parish the meaning of which would be known to contemporary parishioners.[34] Early towers might incorporate a priest's lodgings and towers were considered a place of resort in times of danger. It is possible that medieval church towers were built to serve a further secular function as aids to navigation along the coast and as aids to overland travel inland.

Spires could enhance the church's navigational function by adding height to the tower. Church spires have often been described as having no ecclesiastical function, a decorative feature born out of fashion, wealth and one-upmanship. Spires come in two forms, broach spires where alternate 'faces' (sides) are supported at the base of the spire by wedges, and needle spires which rest against and rely on the tower walls. Broach spires are usually shorter, and less acute, than needle spires.[35] Church towers with a parapet around the base of the spire allowed repair work to be carried out more safely. Early medieval church spires were constructed of wood and were often replaced later

[33] Holy Trinity, Hull and St. Mary, Lowgate figure in the traditional histories of that town such as those by G. Hadley (1788), Rev. J. Tickell (1798), J.J. Sheahan (1866), T. Gent (1869) and Tindall-Wildridge (various, late 19th century).
Also useful for parishes west of Hull are, Thompson, T. *Welton and its Neighbourhood* (1870) and Hall, J.G. *A History of South Cave and other parishes* (1892).

[34] Francis Drake (18th century churchman, not the 16th century explorer) wrote in *Eboracum* published in 1736 that in the 1050s a late Saxon archbishop of York 'added a tower to the church of St. John of Beverley and placed in it two great bells and directed that other churches should be furnished with bells'. This crossing tower later collapsed in 1188 and it was the replacement church, built across two-and-a-half centuries, that is seen today. Thomas Thompson in his early 19th century book on Swine parish recorded that the church bells were tolled to signal the death (not funeral) of parishioners, three times for a child, seven for a woman and nine for a man.

[35] Louth church, for example, has a late medieval needle spire that slopes only 10 degrees from the vertical.

with stone. Spires put a great strain on the tower below and were therefore often relatively temporary medieval structures. Decorative openings in the fabric of the spire, known as spire ‘lights’, aided stability by reducing wind resistance.

Some consideration of Humberside churches and their function as aids to navigation.

The following sequence of church studies starts at the mouth of the Humber on the south bank, then working west. Crossing at Trent Falls the north bank sequence passes west to east, ending at the mouth of the Humber.

Holy Trinity, Old Clee (Cleethorpes).

Old Clee church is cruciform in ground plan with a crossing tower, and a much taller west tower (see Fig. 13). Apart from the west tower the church underwent a thorough ‘Gothic Revival’ restoration in the 19th century, mostly in the Early English style. Apart from the Perpendicular battlements and pinnacles at its top the west tower is entirely of a late-Saxon build (see Fig. 14) and must have been prominent in the landscape well before the Norman invasion.

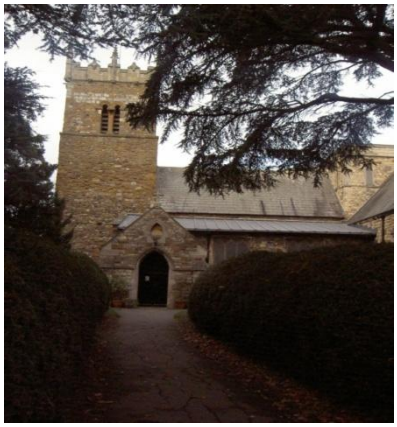


Fig. 13 Holy Trinity, Old Clee as viewed from the south-west. The churchyard is quite constricted, wooded and surrounded by private housing. Although too low to be identified by map contours the church appears to have been built on rising ground.

Fig. 14 Holy Trinity, Old Clee west tower as viewed from the roadside beyond the churchyard retaining wall.

The west tower comprises two unequal parts the belfry section having on each of its four faces a two-light late Saxon opening. The two semicircular-headed lights are divided by a rounded shaft, or baluster, on top of which is a supporting stone plate, or impost. There are two semicircular-headed, narrow 'keyhole' openings each with a single splay at the sill, while at the base of the west wall of the tower is a fine late Saxon west door with imposts at the top of each jamb supporting two semicircular courses of voussoir freestones (see Fig. 14).

The lower section of the west tower was built of large cobbles[36], roughly coursed and set in a thick mortar with ironstone quoins.[37] Above this is coursed rubble walling of ironstone/sandstone while five courses down from the later castellation are two courses of chalk blocks with chalk quoins above (see Fig. 14). Unless related to simply what was available for some intermediate rebuild, it might have been the case that the chalk was incorporated to improve visibility from a distance.

[36] These presumably accessed from the shore-line.

[37] Ironstone from a 'Formation' found in the scarp slope of the chalk escarpment was used in the building of a number of local churches including Caistor and Nettleton (a few miles east of Old Clee). During the 19th century the ore was briefly mined commercially and the iron extracted. Today a quarry still exists near Caistor,

Like its neighbouring church of St. James, Grimsby, a mile or so to the north, Holy Trinity would have been a much more prominent feature in the landscape before industrialization and suburbanization. Both churches are situated on the Lincolnshire 'Marsh' coastal lowlands (estuarine alluvium), on land below the 10 meter contour and where the natural sea defences were sand dunes and a mile-wide inter-tidal expanse beyond Old Clee, and, expansive salt-marsh beyond Grimsby. On such a lowland coastline Holy Trinity's west tower must have been as prominent in the medieval landscape as, for example, the 19th century lighthouse on Spurn Point is today.[38] Obscured by a sea of by-law and suburban housing and nearby trees, the visitor to Holy Trinity today has to search for the church and its cluster of nearby 19th century estate cottages.

Collins' navigational chart of the lower Humber, 1681, shows a navigational sight-line using both Holy Trinity and St. James, Grimsby as focus points, this, it would seem, to assist navigation into the Humber from the south in the channels between 'Sandhaile Flatts', 'Bull' and 'Cly Ness' (see Fig. 4). Interestingly Collins' chart also shows a windmill near Thorpe(s) which also served as an official aid to navigation – this not the only example of such around the Estuary.[39] Scott's map of 1734 shows 'CThorp' as two coastal cottages and Holy Trinity, 'Cley' as a church with a west tower but not as a crossing church. Clearly churches as represented on such charts cannot be assumed to be architecturally accurate. The Trinity House chart of the lower Humber, 1836, also shows a sight-line passing through 'Clee' and 'Great Grimsby' churches while the phrase 'Clee Beacons' along the coast seems to refer to two windmills.

St. James, Grimsby.

As at Old Clee, the church of St. James, Grimsby is no longer prominent in the landscape of the coastal lowlands. This impressive cruciform

[38] Land around in the form of open fields or common land would have had far fewer trees growing in the landscape than we see today. Thorpe(s) was a small fishing base nestling in the sand-dunes.
[39] Windmills of this date must have been post-mills, pre-dating any tower mills, this showing how in such lowland areas quite modest built structures could be prominent.

church was much restored at the time of the ‘Gothic Revival’, again in the early 20th century and also following Second World War bomb damage, this resulting in much of the building fabric being relatively modern (see Fig. 15). Externally physical evidence of its early medieval origins may be seen in the round-headed west door (see Fig. 16) to the nave and the two Early English south entrances, one to the south transept the other to the nave.

Fig. 15 St. James’ church, Grimsby as viewed from the north across St. James’ Square. The sculpture in the foreground is a modern commemoration to fishermen from the town lost at sea.

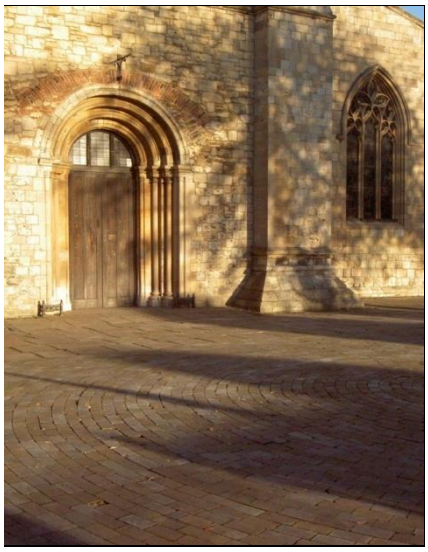


Fig. 16 The west door to the nave of St. James’, Grimsby.

The early medieval settlement of Grimsby lay virtually at sea level immediately west of a stream, ‘The Old Haven’, which then flowed north

across the salt-marsh and inter-tidal mudflats to the lower Humber Estuary. Thus like all medieval Humberside ports Grimsby developed inland from the Estuary bank and beside a water course fed by spring line streams, thereby taking advantage of a sheltered site. References in the Viking legends of Grim and Havelock may explain Grimsby's origins and the Domesday Book of 1086 records Great Grimsby as having a church with a priest, a mill and a ferry.[40] By the early 1100s Grimsby had two churches, St. James and St. Mary, but by the 1580s the latter had been demolished so surviving navigational charts must refer to St. James. Medieval Grimsby was home to two friaries, an abbey for Augustinian canons and a nunnery but, although it survived competition from Ravenser Odd in the 1300s (see later), it declined in the 15th and16th centuries.

It seems that in the middle ages the 'Old Harbour'[41] silted up and a lower point on the bank of the stream became the port, this at the southern part of what became the Victorian Haven Company Dock. Furthermore it seems that in the 1300s the course of the River Freshney, previously to the west of Grimsby, was diverted and canalized to flow into Grimsby's stream to help keep it scoured (see Gillett, 1970, 324 (map) and 21). Today the River Freshney flows alongside the Freshney Centre in the modern town centre. The relatively low medieval buildings of Grimsby and the absence of trees would have resulted in St. James' crossing tower being prominent in the landscape.[42] As previously stated, St. James' church is located on Collin's navigational chart of 1681, Scott's chart of 1734 (which correctly shows St. James as a cruciform building) and the chart compiled in 1836.

The navigational charts show that the head of water from the diverted River Freshney maintained a channel through the west end of 'Cly

[40] Certainly in later centuries ferries sailed to Hull but if this was the case in 1086 it must have been to the River rather than the town (see Clarke, R. 'Hull in the Beginning'.). Interestingly a few later references imply the existence of a ferry to Spurn.

[41] This being roughly where the bus station and Town Hall now stand.

[42] However Collins' chart of 1681 shows Grimsby church half-circled by trees on its south side, a feature repeated for Barton, 'Hasell' and two obscure points on the north bank 'Saltawood' (Ottringham marsh) and 'Bruselhal' (Skeffling marsh and see later). The same feature is repeated in the west part of the still walled town of Hull where post-medieval gardens/allotments are known to have survived. So the exact definition of this symbol is unclear.

Nesse' sandbank to the open channel south of 'Burcom' sandbank (see Fig. 4). This channel shown on Collins chart as being between one and a half and three fathoms deep was later known as 'Grimsby Roads', probably navigable independent of tides.

St. Nicholas, Great Coates.

Identified on Scott's chart and that of 1836, but not on Collins' chart, this medieval church stood west of the River Freshney. The village of 'Coates' benefitted from springs emerging from the base of the dip slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds, these in turn feeding streams flowing to the Humber. Although today obscured by suburban housing estates and Humber-bank industrial sites the lofty west tower of St. Nicholas would have been clearly visible in the pre-industrial landscape of the Lincolnshire 'Marsh' (see Fig. 17). The west tower was constructed from ironstone and limestone ashlar, the latter being immediately below the Perpendicular top freeze (see Fig. 18). The clear change in building material for the belfry stage strongly suggests that this was a late medieval addition to a pre-existing tower, although the continuous string course around the base of both tower and the five stage diagonal buttresses date even the lower tower stage to the 14th century. Possibly the tower was raised in white, easily visible limestone in the late middle ages to improve its visibility as an aid to navigation. The nearest source of quality limestone would have been the quarry at Newbald in East Yorkshire, this involving overland transport at the beginning and end of the journey along the Humber and thus greatly increasing the cost of incorporating this stone in the building of the west tower.

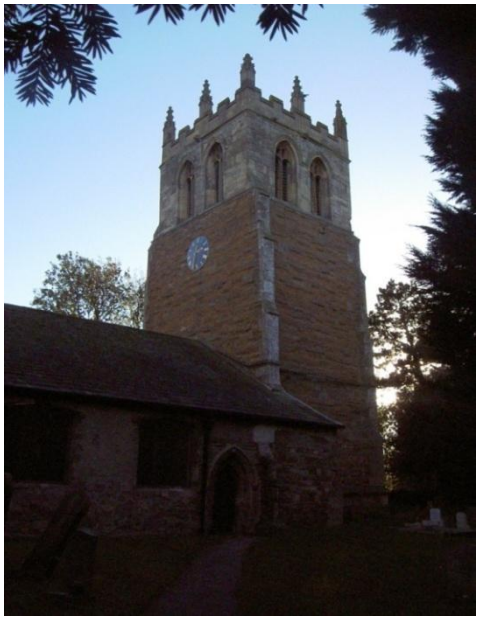


Fig. 17 West tower of St. Nicolas, Great Coates as viewed from the north-east. Also showing are the north door and part of the north aisle.

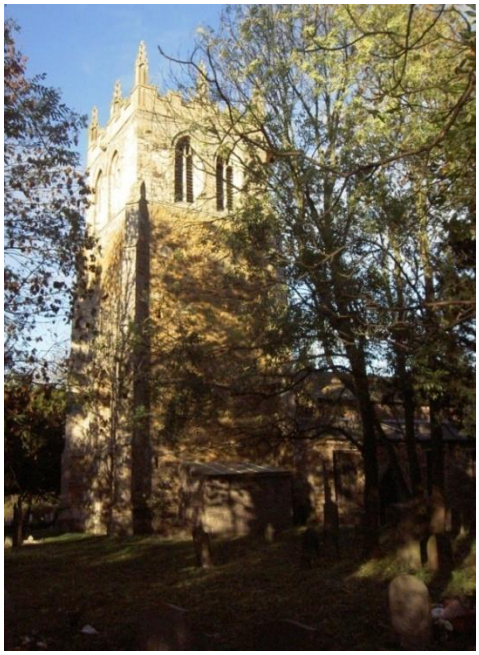


Fig. 18 West tower of St Nicolas, Great Coates as viewed from the south-west. Medieval churchyards would not have been as wooded as many are today.

Of course during medieval periods of repair, rebuilding or extension church builders would use whatever was available and affordable as walling material. Although relatively local, chalk escarpment ironstone

involved cumbersome overland transport whereas more distant sources of limestone could, at least for part of the journey, benefit from water-borne transport down the Humber. Also, if the completed wall was to be white-washed then from a distance one walling material might not be distinguishable from another, although any friable stone would be harder to effectively coat and more readily weathered, this reducing the effect of the white-wash.

St. Peter and St. Paul, Stallingborough.

The Trinity House chart of 1836 identifies Stallingborough church even though symbol must refer to the brick-built church of 1780 with its modest west tower which could not have been a very visible feature (see Fig. 19). The simple illustration on Scott's chart of 1734 must portray the earlier church, shown as having a west tower. The brick built walls of the Georgian church seen today stand on a plinth of freestone blocks, the courses varying from four to seven above ground depending on the immediate lie of the land. It seems quite possible that these blocks may have been re-used from the fabric of the preceding medieval church and, if so, suggesting that the earlier church incorporated stone to enhance its visibility.[43]

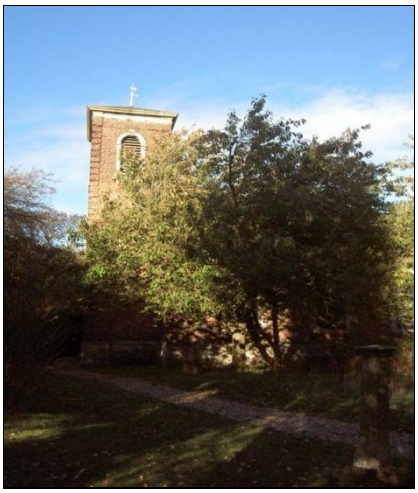


Fig. 19 A glimpse of the west tower of the Georgian church on the edge of the modern village at Stallingborough.

[43] Daisy Cottage, a short distance south of the church, is a long single-storey property with walls (visible from the road) entirely of limestone ashlar – possibly again re-used from the previous church.

Apart from the church at Goxhill that at Stallingborough must have been the furthest inland from the present coastline. Although historically the coastline would have been further inland across at least part of the 'Marsh' nevertheless ships would not have sailed close to the shore owing to the linear 'Stallingborough Flatts' portrayed as a coastal sandbank on Collins' chart (see Fig. 4). Furthermore the south side of the mid Humber main channel was only shallow, as shown on Scott's chart (see Fig. 6). Although Collins' chart shows very little detail along the south bank of the Humber between Grimsby and Barton one of two red dots may well be the site of Stallingborough church, here a sight-line to Patrington church is shown with Sunk Island chapel being mid-way along the line.

West of the church is a rectangular field, now permanent pasture, once the site of the medieval village and manor house[44] of Stallingborough. Skirting this site is a stream which then flows to the Humber. Historically this may well have been navigable and the principal means of trade and long-distance transport for villagers. If so the secular function of church towers as aids to navigation would have been appreciated by local people and, although they had no way of charging mariners directly for this asset, nevertheless benefactors to church building may well have seen this as their contribution to regional welfare.

Today a continuous concrete promenade from Pywipe, Grimsby to the mouth of Skitter Beck defines the coast while inland large scale industrial sites, a gas-fired power station and the intervening M180 prevent all but fleeting glimpses of the distant inland spring-line communities.[45]

[44] A number of 17th century monuments relating to members of the Ayscough family, then lords of the manor, were re-sited in the Georgian church.

[45] This promenade provides the quickest route from East Halton to Grimsby for cyclists and walkers. Unfortunately Immingham Dock cannot be passed through and has to be skirted round (see Clarke, R., 2002).

St. Andrew, Immingham.

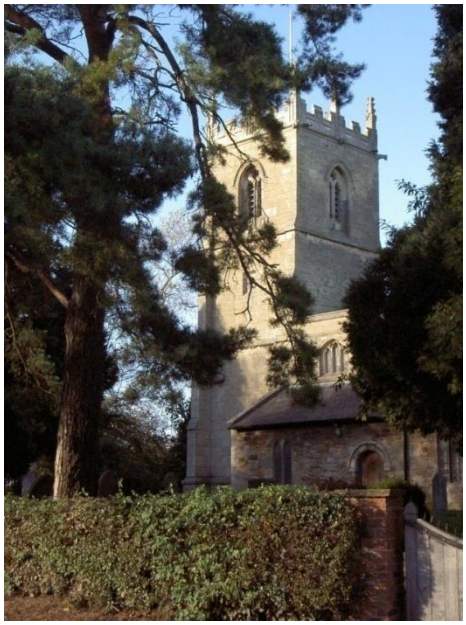


Fig. 20 Immingham church tower, clerestorey, south aisle and south door as viewed from near the churchyard gate.

Pevsner identifies some internal evidence for a Norman predecessor to the present church at Immingham (1989, 404). The south aisle with its various building materials, pair of original lancet windows and round headed south door being, most probably, of the early 13th century (see Fig. 20). Inside the Early English tower arch and responds suggest that the elegant late Perpendicular west tower, built all of limestone ashlar, had a late 13th century predecessor.

This fine west tower of three stages is supported by 90 degree corner buttresses, each of five stages and extending up to the level of the belfry lights, the belfry having two-light openings on each of its four faces. The castellation, gargoyles and fine Perpendicular west window near the base of the tower may all have been part of the original 15th century build, rather than later additions.

Capt. Andrew Armstrong's county map of Lincolnshire surveyed in 1776-'78 and published in 1778 shows the church and scattered village sited near a stream flowing to the Humber. This stream still exists, today little more than a drainage ditch it is crossed by the road leading to the west

entrance of Immingham Dock complex.[46] Immingham Dock, first opened in 1912, and the 20th century town that developed between it and the medieval village site blot out any view of the church from the coast today. However at the time of Armstrong's map, and for centuries before, only the lowland 'Marsh' and coastal linear saltmarsh (on the landward side of 'Stallingborough Flatts') separated Immingham church from mariners negotiating the Estuary. In clear weather, and particularly in sunny conditions, the limestone tower and clerestory must have stood-out in the landscape – this especially so if the stonework had been whitewashed. Furthermore as small medieval coasting vessels may well have been able to navigate the stream leading inland to Immingham village so costly and cumbersome overland transport of bulky building stone could have been avoided.

St. Denis, North Killingholme.

Fig. 21 North Killingholme church viewed from the south and showing the west tower, exterior of the south aisle, the south porch and the south wall of the chancel. The modern lych-gate was donated by Lindsey Oil Refinery (see Fig. 22) as part of the Millennium celebrations, 2000.

[46] A display in Immingham Museum, recently re-sited to the Civic Centre, highlights the significance of this channel in the early history of the 'Pilgrim Fathers'. In so doing it highlights the potential of such spring-line fed streams in bygone centuries to be navigable whereas today they can have no such use.

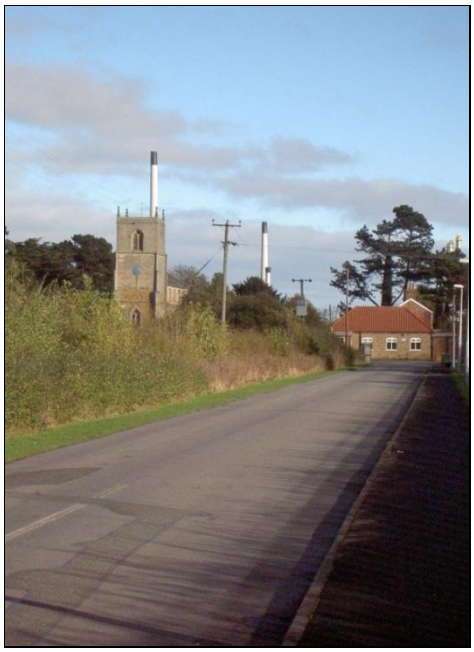


Fig. 22 North Killingholme church viewed from the west with the backdrop of one small part of Lindsey Oil Refinery sited on land between the church and the coast.

The late Norman tower arch inside St. Denis' church suggests that the various building stones (mostly ironstone) of the lower walls of the west tower may be Norman, while the limestone ashlar of the middle and upper stages of the west tower evidence a 15th century (Perpendicular) replacement or addition. Probably of the same upgrading are the four-stage 'angled' tower buttresses which extend up to the belfry and which must post-date the lower Norman walling. The more local building stones of ironstone (quoins) and chalk have been incorporated into the walling of the south aisle but the import of limestone for the upper tower suggests that navigational factors played a part in the church's late–medieval building programme.

Thus like many Humberside churches St. Denis displays evidence in its fabric of successive medieval building programmes. The round-headed priest's door (see Fig. 21) is probably late 12th century while the very fine intersecting and reticulated tracery windows of the north aisle are presumably of the 14th century. The plain windows of the church probably date the clerestory to post-Reformation times.

Today any possibility of seeing North Killingholme church from the coast is obliterated by the Lindsey Oil Refinery complex (see Fig. 22), the westward extension of Immingham Dock and the Killingholme Dock complex west of Immingham Dock. However there is considerable evidence to prove the importance Killingholme church once had as a landmark across the then open landscape of the Lincolnshire 'Marsh'.

Killingholme church stood inland of a particularly important point in the Humber Estuary, this resulting from the 'dogleg' shape of the lower Humber. The advantage enjoyed by the port of Hull was that it was approached by a deep-water channel, 'Hull Roads', created by the scouring on the ebb tide around the outside of the 'dogleg' bend. From the beginnings of the trading station at Wyk in Myton in the 12th century through to the construction of the 'Town Docks' in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and to the building of docks directly off the Humber the port of Hull always benefitted from this deep-water channel. 'Hull Roads' could be navigated from Paull and between Paull and the mouth of the Estuary the main deep-water channel angled south-east to the Killingholme area and then east-south-east and out to sea between Spurn Point and Sand Hail 'sandbank' (see Fig. 4). Scott shows the channel between Paull and Killingholme as being between six and ten fathoms deep, that between Killingholme and the North Sea as being between four and eleven fathoms deep. Scott also shows the deepest point in the Humber as being 15 fathoms off Immingham parish, this determining the location of Immingham Dock in the 20th century.

The significance of Killingholme church tower is reinforced by references in the records of Trinity House. In 1828 the Brethren of Trinity House, Hull wrote to the vicar of Killingholme asking that he cut down trees near the church 'as they prevented it being used as a sea-mark, as it has been for a great number of years' (Storey 1971, 34).[47] Seven years later the 'Brethren' paid the £7 cost of having Killingholme church tower whitewashed (Storey 1971, 36). However by the 1830s Trinity House was increasingly supplementing shore-line landmarks as aids to

[47] The resulting correspondence showed that the trees actually belonged to two local residents who agreed to fell them. The incumbent seemed keen to show his recognition of the church tower as a landmark and aid to navigation.

navigation with purpose-built structures. By 1836 19 buoys were anchored in the lower Humber and in 1835 the first lighthouses, other than those on Spurn Point (see before), were erected at Killingholme Marsh. These two 'leading lights' (high and low lights – see before), incorporating lighthouse keeper's cottages, survive (see Fig. 23).[48] In 1851 a third lighthouse (a second lowlight) was built nearby to aid the passage down the lower Estuary (see Fig. 24). This one, standing beside the modern concrete sea defence, is still occupied.

Fig. 23 The two 'leading lights' of Killingholme Marsh, built in 1835. The lower light seen in the foreground (still having a light) showing evidence of the staircases by which the 'keeper' and his family accessed their home. Two hundred yards away the 'upper light' was more like a traditional lighthouse. Both were built of brick, one painted the other rendered. By lining-up the two lights mariners sailing up the Humber could navigate the deep-water channel.

[48] As does the contemporary one at Paull (see later).

Fig. 24 The second 'low light' built in 1851. The earlier 'low light' is just discernible centre-left, in front of the buildings and coal storage at the western end of the Immingham Dock complex.

St. Peter, East Halton.

Although East Halton church has a relatively low west tower nevertheless it is included on Scott's map ('Haulton') and was the nearest church to the mouth of Skitter Beck. Alongside this substantial river were three medieval monastic sites, most significantly that of the Augustinian cannons at Thornton.[49] Much of the wool from monastic granges in north Lincolnshire was transported to Hull along this river and the Cistercian monks of Meaux, east of Beverley, maintained a ferry to Skitter from Paull. The west tower was built/ repaired with ironstone and chalk, roughly coursed (see Fig. 25). Although veiled by mature trees today it does stand on a low prominence and does not stand (in a straight line) as far from the shoreline as neighbouring churches. Pevsner considered much of the church to be Norman in origin (Pevsner 1989, 263).

[49] The other two monastic sites being the Premonstratensian community at Brocklesby and the Cistercian nunnery near the present-day village of Keelby.

Fig. 25 East Halton church, viewed from the south. Nearby is the site of a deserted medieval village, a springline settlement at the base of the dip-slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds.

All Saints, Goxhill.

The west tower of Goxhill church remains a prominent landmark, especially when reflecting sunshine, visible from most points on the dip slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds and from the north bank foreshore between Hull and Paull. Described in Pevsner as ‘prosperous-looking’ and ‘all ashlar faced’ (Pevsner 1989, 312) the church building incorporates evidence of Norman and Early English architecture but is mostly of the Perpendicular style of architecture, especially the tall, four-stage west tower (see Figs. 26 and 27). The present-day stream flowing into the Humber at ‘Goxhill Ferry’ is no longer navigable and was re-routed after Parliamentary Enclosure of the parish (see Russell E. and R. 1982, 91-94). Nevertheless in the 15th century boats bringing the limestone ashlar blocks may well have sailed up this stream from the Humber to the village, standing now over a mile inland of the reinforced clay-bank flood defence.

Fig. 26 Goxhill church viewed from the north. The window tracery of the clerestory, north aisle and belfry are all Perpendicular in style, as are the multi-stage corner buttresses to the west tower built all of freestone.

Fig. 27 Goxhill church as viewed from the south-east. Restored in the 1870s, the Gothic Revival chancel contrasts in style with the 15th century architecture of the clerestory, south aisle and west tower.

Standing on the Humber bank at ‘Goxhill Ferry’ the crossing tower of Holy Trinity church in Hull’s ‘Old Town’ and Goxhill church’s west tower are approximately equidistant, the latter being somewhat obscured today by nearby trees. Historically both church towers must have been visible from each other, especially if the smooth building stone had been freshly cleaned and whitewashed.

Holy Trinity, Barrow-on-Humber.

West of the Hull-Goxhill axis the question is to what extent church towers were landmarks and beacons to mariners negotiating the 'upper' Humber Estuary?

Scott's chart of 1734 shows a relatively deep water channel crossing the Estuary from the Barton/Barrow foreshore area to Hull Roads between 'Hessle Sands' and the westward extension of 'Skitter Ness Sands'. Still today the freestone west tower of Barrow church remains a prominent feature in the landscape, only partially obscured by trees and residential development. Given reasonable visibility the church towers of Goxhill, Barrow and Barton can be seen from the Humber Bridge and from the north bank between Hessle Foreshore and St. Andrew's Quay retail park.

As with a number of other medieval churches in the Humberside region Barrow church was situated on a local prominence relative to the surrounding area. The church incorporates evidence of its Norman and 13th century predecessor and evidences regional building stones especially ironstone, chalk and friable limestone (see Fig. 28). Better quality limestone freestone (ashlar) was reserved for the west tower, the upper part of which was constructed in the 15th century Perpendicular style. In Pevsner the tower is defined as 'ashlar faced' (Pevsner 1989, 119), that is a wall of two vertical layers, the inner of locally available stone and relatively inexpensive, the outer layer of quality smooth stone brought to the locality for this specific purpose, and at considerable expense. Of course it may have been that factors such as fashion in architecture, available wealth, local competition and the like played a part in determining whether or not a local church tower should be made a prominent medieval landscape feature but again at All Saints, Barrow is seen the use of expensive freestone in a late-medieval parish church extension.

Fig. 28 Barrow church viewed from the south-east. The priest's door in the south wall of the chancel probably dates from the early 13th century, the plate tracery of the window lighting the altar somewhat later and the large window with perpendicular tracery probably contemporary with the upper tower. Nattes sketch of Barrow church, 1796, (see Russell 1988, 70) shows the church from the same angle. Geoff. Bryant, who wrote the chapter on Barrow church in Rex Russell's 1988 book on Barrow-on-Humber goes on to analyse the changes made to Barrow church across the 18th and 19th centuries by cross-referencing evidence from Nattes, Loft and Bonney (see before). The late-medieval church tower remained unchanged.

Barrow had a medieval out-port where the straggling settlement of Barrow Haven is now sited. This out-port evolved near the site of the Norman motte and bailey castle the earthworks of which remain beside Hann Lane at a location known for centuries as the 'Castles'. Up to the 17th century ships could sail up part of this 'Haven' at high tide so it would have been a convenient way to bring-in the freestone for the church.[50]

St. Mary's and St. Peter's churches, Barton on Humber.

Both Barton churches have ancient west towers and both stand prominently on rising land inland of the coastal 'Marsh' (see Fig. 29). The tower of St. Peter's church has stood unchanged for over a

[50] Two ships of the royal fleet brought Henry VIII and his entourage across the Humber from Hull in early October during his Northern Progress of 1541. They disembarked in Barrow Haven before progressing to Thornton Abbey.

thousand years and may well have been the first prominent, built landmark in the Humberside region. Robert Brown's speculative reconstruction of the original St. Peter's, then an Anglo-Saxon manorial chapel, shows the ground floor of the surviving tower to have been the nave (see Fig. 30). Fig. 31 shows the church today incorporating the various medieval eastward extensions.

Fig. 29 Barton as viewed from the southern end of the Humber Bridge, the two medieval churches standing proud, St. Peter's on the left, St. Mary's to the right. With the demise of the malting and agricultural fertilizer industrial sites which previously were sited near the Humber bank and the conversion of the site in the early 21st century to a country park, the churches are again visible from the north Humber bank.

Fig. 30 Robert Brown's speculative sketch of the Anglo-Saxon church of St. Peter's, Barton, before the addition of the mid 11th century chalk-walled belfry.

Fig. 31 St. Peter's church today, administered by English Heritage and said to be the most thoroughly excavated parish church in England. Following the excavations of the 1980s and subsequent research a very comprehensive study of the church and its community has recently been published by Professor Rodwell and Caroline Atkins (see Bibliography).

St. Mary's church probably stands over the foundations of a 12th century predecessor but the west tower is, except for the parapet and pinnacles, a build of the mid 13th century in what became known as the Early English style of architecture (see Fig. 32). As such it demonstrates the private wealth invested in the fabric of their parish church by early medieval merchants and mariners based in Barton. Soon after the building of St Mary's west tower the trading settlements of 'Wyk in Mitune upon Hull' (see later) and Ravenser Odd (see later) were beginning to dominate the trade of the Estuary. Thus Barton's heyday was passing, but the port retained some medieval trade along its canalized Haven and it seems inconceivable that in negotiating their comings and goings from the Haven that mariners did not use these church-tower landmarks as aids to navigation.

Fig. 32 St. Mary's church, viewed from the south-east from across a spring-fed pond in the Beck Hill area of Barton. The Geometric tracery of the east window is thought to have followed close on the heels of similar tracery in the east window of the late 13th century Angel Choir at Lincoln Minster.

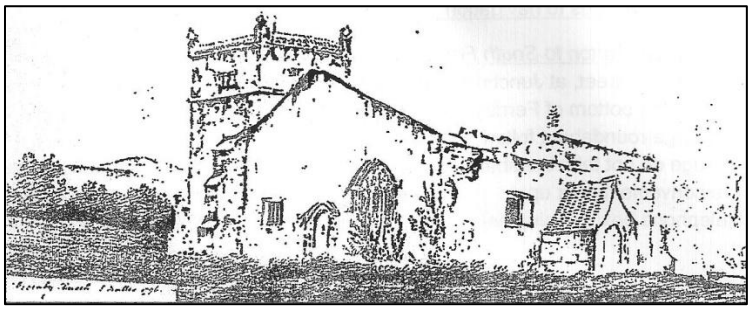
The west tower of St. Mary's church incorporated classic features of Early English architecture such as the two-light belfry lancet openings under a pointed arch with hood moulding, 'stiff leaf' capitals and 'water-holding' bases to decorative columns around the west door as well as further 'orders' of decoration.

Equally important to Barton's medieval trade was its position as a ferry terminus. The Domesday Survey evidence shows that even by the late 11th century the Barton to Hessle ferry service across the Estuary generated more income for the lord of the manor than any other Lincolnshire ferry. After 1307 a second jetty at the mouth of the Haven served the Barton to Kingston upon Hull ferry. Like the merchants, ferrymen may well have used Barton's church towers as landmarks by which they could navigate around treacherous mud-flats.

Scott's navigation chart of 1734 shows just one church at Barton. As the sketch does not include a baptistery on the west side of the tower it might be that St. Mary's had become the more recognized landmark. However the sketches are stylized to an extent and, as the churches were so close, it may have just been an economy on the part of the cartographer.

St. Nicholas, South Ferriby.

Perched high on the steep scarp slope above the site of the medieval village St. Nicholas is one of the smallest Humberside churches but one with a most complex architectural history. By the time Nattes sketched the church in 1796 the nave had been re-orientated to lie north-south, following the contour of the scarp slope. This was a response to the partial collapse of the earlier church which had a traditional orientation resulting in the west end being undermined. If it is assumed that the earlier church had a west tower then this had been replaced by a brick-built tower on the north-west side of the nave shown in Nattes sketch and surviving (see Figs. 33 and 34). The east end of the original church had been retained for as Archdeacon Bonney recorded in his parochial visitation of 1846 the 'chancel is at right angles to the nave'. This original chancel is now the vestry as in 1889 the south-facing nave was extended to create a new chancel described, unsympathetically, in Pevsner as 'a very poor brick piece' (Pevsner 1989, 663).



Figs. 33 and 34 Nattes sketch of South Ferriby church and the present church viewed from the same point in the churchyard.

A great variety of building stone and brick of various ages is evidenced in the walling of South Ferriby church. Clearly, as was often the case, to reduce costs on-site building materials were re-used wherever possible for restorations, re-orientations and re-buildings. For the late 19th century work on the church machine-cut bricks (mass produced) and limestone from the Lincoln Edge across the Vale of Ancholme were brought to the site. Hand-made brick of the 18th century (some maybe earlier) is much in evidence in the walling of the nave and tower, this pre-dating the development of the capitalist brick making industry along the estuarine lowlands in Barton parish, and beside the canalized River Ancholme in South Ferriby parish. Of further interest is the freestone blocks of quality limestone re-used as a walling material in relatively modern changes to the building. Might it not be that centuries ago these had been transported to the site from far away and incorporated in the earlier west tower to act as a visible landmark, this going some way to explaining the peculiar and precarious site chosen for the church.

Today South Ferriby church is not a prominent building despite its position, this largely a result of the dark brick hue blending with the surrounding woodland. However this woodland was planted in the late 19th century and there is no reason to assume that the scarp slope has always been wooded. If grazed, for example, then the church would have been a very prominent landmark.

The church recorded at ‘Ferrebi’ in 1086 may not have been the medieval predecessor of the one seen today but another on a site lost to Humber erosion. The Romano-British settlement, successor to the Bronze/Iron Age settlement, stood on land long ago washed away by the strong tidal current close to shore (for a detailed study of the effect of this erosion across the last 400 years see Carey, p.76-77, also see Fig. 35).[51] The predecessor of the present church may well have been built for the community (and manor) further south, ‘South’ Ferriby.

[51] The ‘Ferriby boats’, prehistoric plank-boats plucked from the foreshore mud of North Ferriby between the 1940s and 1980s almost certainly crossed the Humber to the lost community of South Ferriby. The story of these boats and their excavation is well told by exhibits in the Hull and East Riding Museum, High St., Hull.

Fig. 35 The 'Cadwell' area of South Ferriby parish viewed from the east, this once well inland of the Romano-British settlement. Just as 'Hull Roads' is a product of the scouring effect of an 'outside of the bend' estuary current so here the erosion has been caused by a current sweeping round south of Reed's Island.

Today some evidence of South Ferriby's medieval port, mooring and the meanders of the original lower course of the River Ancholme may be seen in a permanent pasture field immediately south of Sluice Road and east of Marsh Road. An embankment east of this medieval site once linked port and village.

<u>All Saints, Winteringham.</u>

The church lies at the western end of the village on the rising land of the dip slope of the upper Lias escarpment (limestone). To the north of the church a reclaimed expanse of estuarine alluvium stretches to the modern Humber bank, this land being periodically inundated common land until Parliamentary Enclosure in the 1760s. A spring-fed stream crosses this farmland and feeds the canalized haven with the marina moorings near its mouth. Centuries ago this stream may well have been navigable, perhaps as far inland as the church and if so then village and haven would have been close-by the church (see Figs. 36).[52]

[52] A similar situation may have existed in Barton before the surviving Haven was canalised (which, as in Beverley, may have been as early as the 12th century) whereby a stream draining from the Beck Hill area formed the haven for

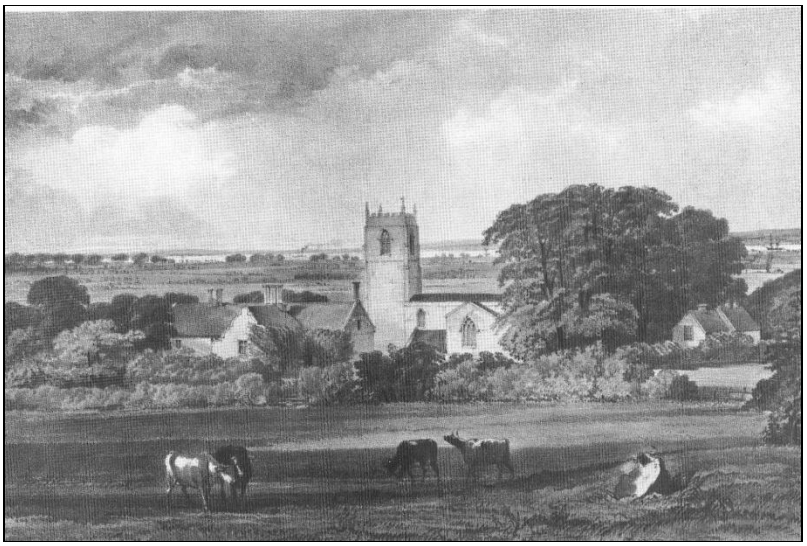


Fig. 36 Copy of a lithograph of uncertain origin but thought to date from the 1840s and showing a view north from rising land south of Winteringham church with the Humber in the distance, along which is sailing a steam-boat (visible just left of the belfry), and East Yorkshire beyond. Here mature deciduous trees compete with the church tower as landmarks but they appear to be south of the church and not obscuring the view of it from the Humber. By the 1840s there was much increased shipping in the upper Humber following the development of Goole Docks (see before).

Later in the Middle Ages trade and village life was centred on the canalized lower haven and along Lower and Higher Burgage, this leaving the church somewhat detached to the west but still the most prominent landmark.

Pevsner describes All Saints, Winteringham as having an ‘impressive’ west tower. The lower two thirds of the tower may well date from the 11th century and incorporates massive re-used Roman grit-stone blocks (see Fig. 37). Other building stone is mostly freestone with a high ore content, probably from the limestone escarpment on which it stands rather than from the chalk escarpment as with south-bank churches further east (see before). The belfry is a later addition, built of high quality freestone brought to the site, it and the contemporary diagonal buttresses probably date from the early 15th century. Here again the

early medieval trade, this further explaining the site of the two medieval churches. If so the channel must have silted-up so stimulating the canalisation of the present Haven.

quality freestone used in the late medieval building programme would have greatly enhanced the church as a landmark (see Fig. 38).

Fig. 37 The large dark coloured grit-stone blocks seen here near the base of Winteringham church tower originated in the Pennines, were used in some building of the Romano-British era and, some centuries later, brought to Winteringham. It is generally thought that they were removed from Roman ruins in York and transported by boat down the River Ouse and into the upper Humber. The coursed rubble walling of the south aisle takes advantage of local building stone set into a heavy lime mortar and dating, on the evidence of some window tracery and the south arcade, to the late 13th century. The large Perpendicular west window is a much later addition.

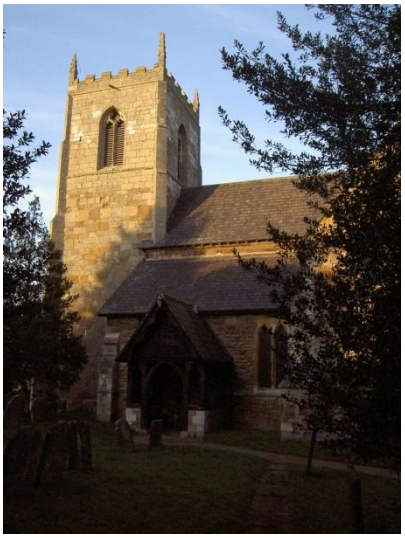


Fig. 38 The west tower, south aisle and south porch of Winteringham church showing sunlight reflected from the freestone belfry.

Until the 1990s the roof of the west tower of Winteringham church had mounted on it, and supervised by Associated British Ports,[53] a digital/radio device to assist modern navigation systems. Presumably, even in the 20th century, some advantage was gained from a lofty location.

St. John, Whitton.

Whitton church stood close-by one of the most treacherous sections of the Humber Estuary for mariners (see before and Fig. 9). Here, and off Winteringham Marsh, the upper Estuary was (and is) cluttered with mudflats between which the deeper water channels were narrow and ever-changing. After the 1820s many vessels negotiating Whitton Ness were bound for Goole, intent on negotiating the meanders of the lower River Ouse on a flow tide. In earlier centuries craft entered the River Ouse bound for Selby, York[54] or points further up river and also river ports up the navigable River Aire. Other vessels would be sailing up the River Trent to the various river ports beside it and its tributaries.[55] Alkborough 'Flatts' at the mouth of the River Trent (Trent Falls) was later reclaimed and separated from the Humber by a clay bank. Early in the 21st century this clay bank was deliberately breached by the Environment Agency in order to create an area of 'managed retreat' in compliance with the Humber Flood Management Scheme and to encourage a new area of saltmarsh to grow to compensate for areas lost to industrial development elsewhere along the Humber foreshore.

Unlike in the lower Humber, most of the silt forming the mudflats of the upper Humber has been transported there by the tidal rivers Ouse and Trent, and, until its lower course was canalized, the Old River Don.[56]

[53] Associated British Ports (ABP) is the organisation with responsibility for navigation on the Humber since 1982 when the British Transport Docks Board was privatised.
[54] Even by the 13th century the trading settlement at Wyk in the berewick of Myton (Kingstown upon Hull by the following century) served as a transit port for much of York's trade, this more so when Hull became a 'wool staple' port (see Childs, 1990 and Clarke 2013).
[55] Here again Hull functioned a transit port for much of this medieval trade, including the export of lead from Derbyshire mines.
[56] Between 1626 and 1635 the course of the Old River Don was re-routed away from Hatfield Chase and north to form a tributary of the River Ouse with the confluence at Goole.

The west tower of St. John the Baptist, Alkborough stands very prominently on top of the lower Lias (Jurassic limestone) scarp slope above the mouth of the River Trent. Although not clearly visible to shipping sailing the upper Humber it may have assisted shipping sailing out of the River Ouse to navigate the channel south of Whitton Sands.

The north bank of the Humber Estuary, west to east.

For the most inland section of the upper Humber Estuary there is a contrast between the scarp and vale landscape of the south bank and the north bank landscape of extensive lowland formed by the south-eastern quarter of Wallingfen and lowlands of estuarine alluvium. In such a landscape modest buildings (in height), such as the lock-keeper's house at the mouth of the Market Weighton Canal, built in the 1770s and mostly of freestone, became landmarks.[57]

Holy Trinity, Blacktoft.

Blacktoft, a linear village nestling in the estuarine lowlands, benefits from panoramic views south to the escarpments of the south Humber bank and north to the scarp slope and southern 'Dales' (valleys) of the Yorkshire Wolds. Holy Trinity, built in 1841-2, comprises a modest north-west side tower, nave and chancel (Fig. 39). The walling is of coursed rubble limestone from the nearby escarpment, the short tower being strengthened with alternating freestone quoins. The steep pyramidal spire, of almost equal height to the tower, is tile hung and therefore not a prominent feature despite it being set in a lowland landscape.

[57] The Market Weighton Canal, essentially the canalisation of the lower River Foulness, was dug in the 1770s. Similarities with the canalised River Ancholme continue in that they were both navigation and drainage canals (initially) with very similarly constructed lock and sluice structures at their mouth of each. Sloops transported the celebrated 'Newport white' bricks down the Market Weighton Canal into the Humber.

Fig. 39 Holy Trinity, Blacktoft as viewed from the main street of the linear village. Beyond this churchyard lies fertile reclaimed warpland, with the headwaters of the Humber Estuary in the distance.

Some building stone from a previous church was re-used, 'old stone was used below the sill' (Pevsner 2005, 332). Sheahan refers to the church being 'rebuilt' (Sheahan and Wheelan 1856, 611) in 1841. As well as recording that the earlier church had benefitted from Queen Anne's Bounty[58] Sheahan notes that there was a staith in the parish from which a ferry ran (to where?) and that 'steam packets from York, Selby and Hull 'pass daily' (Sheahan 1856, 611). Scott's chart, 1734, (see Fig. 9) records the parish of Broomfleet but gives no church symbol, thus giving no status (for navigation) to the pre-1841 church.

St. Ann, Ellerker.

Comprising a nave, chancel and bell-cote St. Ann's church is described in Pevsner as a 'chapel of ease' (Pevsner 2005, 400), being one of the first churches designed by J.L. Pearson and built in 1843-4. The chapel seen today 'replaced a modest medieval chapel' (Pevsner 2005, 400), this shown in stylized form on Scott's chart as having a west tower (see Fig. 9). Sheahan confirms that the medieval church was 'rebuilt and enlarged in 1844' (Sheahan 1856, 531). The medieval church may have

[58] A royal re-distribution of the income paid in tax by the clergy.

dated back to the early 12th century when John Ellerker built a chapel (private to the Ellerker family?) locally, the church retaining connections with the Ellerker family through to the 16th century.

All Saints, Brantingham and St. Mary, Elloughton.

Neither of these churches is prominent today in the vista from the Humber to the south, however St. Mary's (see Fig. 40) is visible from the headwaters of the Humber beyond Blacktoft and from Whitton village on the south bank and may have served as a landmark when navigating round 'Whitton Sands' (see Fig. 9).[59] All Saints, although above the village of Brantingham and nestling in the 'Dale', is today obscured by relatively modern plantation woodland, in a more open, grazed environment it would have been more prominent (see Fig. 41). Neither is referenced on Scott's chart, 1734.

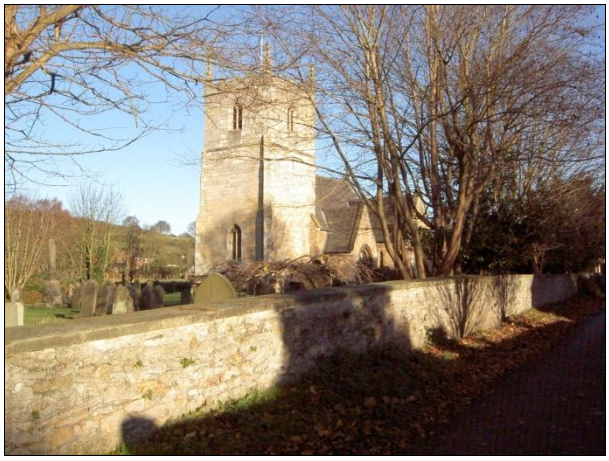


Fig. 40 Elloughton church as viewed from the south-west and showing the three-stage, embattled west tower with corner pinnacles and three-stage diagonal buttresses. The Y tracery of the belfry lights and the west window would, if original, be of the 13th century – although the buttresses would be of a later date.

[59]One way of testing the potential for church towers to have been medieval aids to navigation is to walk the Estuary foreshore and record those on the opposite bank visible from sea level and those which would have been visible prior to industrial, residential and landscaping developments across the last two centuries. This the writer has done as most of the Humber's flood defenses are public rights of way. On the south bank only Grimsby and Immingham Docks and a section of clay bank from Low Farm, South Ferriby to Old Winteringham are not public rights of way. On the north bank only Saltend industrial complex is not accessible although detours inland have to be taken round Hedon and Patrington Havens. A section of clay bank in Blacktoft parish is only open certain times in the year as it is part of a nature reserve. This activity is best undertaken when the weather affords good visibility (preferably also when sunshine picks-out the freestone) and with the aid of an OS map (also see Clarke, 2002).

All Saints, Brantingham was rebuilt in 1872 although much of the masonry from the previous church was retained and the west tower left as was. Here the coursed limestone rubble walling is strengthened by freestone quoins, the tower topped by crocketed pinnacles and castellation. Sheahan records (in 1856) that the medieval church had been repaired in1839 and that internally it retained (1856) an oak chancel screen and west gallery.

Fig. 41 Brantingham church, standing solitary and incongruous, sited in the lower 'Dale' and to the north of the village.

St. Helen, Welton.

Most of the early navigation charts of the upper Humber pin-point Welton church. Despite much residential and business park development on land between Welton village and the Humber foreshore St. Helens remains distinctive in the landscape, although not always easy to pick-out. The church seen today was comprehensively restored in 1862-3 'in the geometric style of the late 13th century' (Pevsner 2005, 739) to the plans of G.G. Scott (see Fig. 42).[60] The earlier church was 'of the same proportions as at present' (Pevsner 2005, 739), this including the central tower which in Pevsner is said to have been

[60] The 'block' or 'bar' tracery of the Geometric style of church architecture has been described as the transitional style between that of the Early English and the later, more florid, Decorated. 'Block' tracery was where the 'light' openings were carved out of solid blocks of stone whereas 'bar' tracery was where the stone was carved to encircle the 'light', the latter being lighter and allowing for larger areas of glass or openings.

'predominantly Decorated'. Sheahan writing in 1856 describes this pre-restoration church as having nave, chancel, north aisle and south transept but considered it built in the style of William II's reign (mid-Norman?), the church then having a 'large embattled tower rising from the centre' (Sheahan 1856, 553). Of whichever style, the church tower had clearly stood proud in the landscape for hundreds of years.

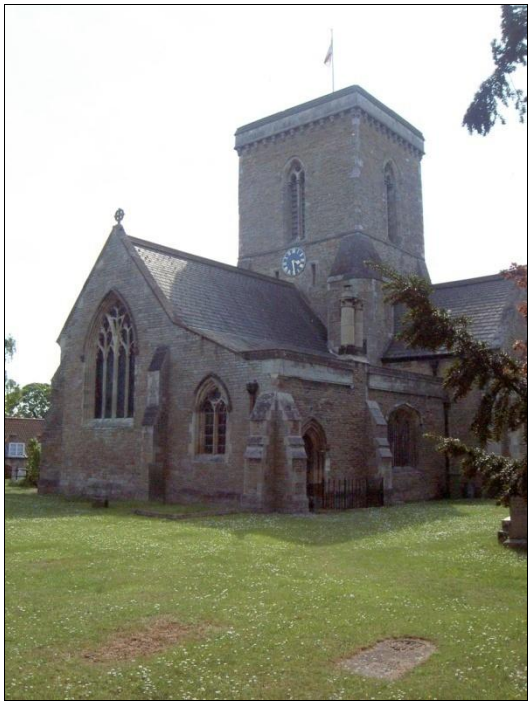


Fig. 42 Welton church with its flat-roofed, squat tower decorated only by a single order of corbel heads. Might this tower of modest height have once had a spire?

Sheahan went on to wax lyrical about the locality and village which, he stated, was 1½ miles from the Humber 'of which it commands many beautiful views' (Sheahan 1856, 553). Furthermore, he states that on the road between Welton and Brantingham (today on the hillside above the A63) 'are some of the most extensive and varied prospects in the county' … 'from one point the minsters of York, Lincoln, Beverley and Howden are visible to the naked eye on a clear day'.[61]

[61] Despite extensive walking in the area the writer has yet to discover this 'point'.

Further evidence about Welton church comes from Thomas Thompson's book on the history and character of the village, published in 1870.[62] Although published after the comprehensive restoration Thompson does include a sketch of the exterior of the pre-restoration church (Thompson 1870, frontispiece) and the interior (p. 42) with which he was familiar (see Fig. 43).[63] Fig. 42 shows the present church from a similar angle and the many differences shown makes this a good example of the sort of 'root and branch' Victorian restoration undertaken at some churches.

Fig. 43 Sketch of Welton church from Thomas Thompson's book showing the church before the 1860s restoration. The apparently continuous north aisle was swept away and a north transept created. Roof lines, windows and various features of the crossing tower (possibly not the belfry lights) were re-configured. Just south of the east wall of the chancel stands the table tomb of Thomas Thompson.

[62] Thompson, a wealthy Hull banker and avid antiquarian also published a history of Swine Nunnery and Swine church and village in Holderness, the geophysical area of Holderness contrasting with that of the Yorkshire Wolds, on the lower slopes of which Welton was sited.

[63] From his researches Thompson goes on to discuss the history of the church and its incumbents on pages 41-53.

All Saints, North Ferriby.

Little evidence survives as to the details of the medieval church, replaced on the same site, by the present church in 1849.[64] This 'ancient edifice' (Sheahan 1856, 548) was clearly the parish church as opposed to any pre-Reformation church attached to the Augustinian priory founded on a nearby site *c* 1140. Sheahan described the church seen today including its west tower 'surmounted by an octagonal tower'. This 'tower' (spire) remains prominent in the Humberside landscape (see Fig. 44).

Fig. 44 The broach spire of North Ferriby church viewed from the south-east from a spot near the Humber foreshore. This fine spire complimented with spire lights was tile-hung with dark tiles, a decision which much reduced its visibility.

Scott's map of 1734 shows the then church at North Ferriby as having a west tower – although represented in stylized form it nevertheless shows that the medieval church had a west tower (this agreeing with Hall's depiction) which, given the site, would have been a prominent landmark. Scott's map also shows the principal 'Tract up Humber', this showing

[64] J.G. Hall in his book *A History of South Cave*, published in 1892, includes a sketch of the old 'All Saints Church … Before its Restoration in 1849' (page 236). It shows a two-stage west tower with Transitional two-light belfry openings and a low castellated parapet.

that vessels sailing up-Estuary having sailed round the southern tip of ‘Hessle Sand’ between Barrow and Barton set out in a west-north-west direction across the Estuary and in sight of North Ferriby church in order to then navigate the channel between the north foreshore and ‘Red Cliff Sand’ (see Fig. 9).

As with Welton and Brantingham Sheahan describes Swanland township (then in the parish of North Ferriby) as ‘delightfully situated’ (Sheahan 1856, 548) and that from the ‘mill’ in that township ‘are seen the shores of both the Trent and the Humber and the low country of Holderness, as far as the eye can reach’. By the 1850s this mill would almost certainly have been a corn grinding tower mill (a tower mill, like a church tower, being a prominent landmark), however the mill shown on Scott’s map in the Swanland area would have been a post mill.[65] Even so Scott saw fit to include it on his navigational chart.

North Ferriby was a vast parish which had once extended east to the River Hull and in which, until the 17th century, St. Mary, Lowgate church had been a chapel of ease. Still in the 1850s it included ‘Dairy Cotes, Wold-Ings and Newington’ (Sheahan 1856, 548), later to become parts of west Hull.

[65] The earliest tower mills date from the late 18th century. Early tower lighthouses, built to the same principles as tower mills, pre-date early tower mills.

All Saints, Hessle.

Fig. 45 Hessle church, viewed from the north-east.

Hessle church, an elegant stone-built church in the centre of the now suburban community, exhibits elements of Early English[66], Decorated[67] and Perpendicular features but was radically changed by a succession of three programs of restoration between 1840 and 1871. Sheahan saw evidence of the first two but not the third and most radical – he records the church as still having 'nave galleries and an organ at the west end' (Sheahan 1856, 543). The core of the church seen today dates from the 13th century and, presumably, replaced a late-Saxon predecessor recorded in the 1086 'Domesday Survey' standing on a nearby site. The church's octagonal steeple (with spire lights, see below) probably dates from the 15th century and was built in the Perpendicular style.

Hessle church, like those at Ottringham and Patrington, incorporated a lofty needle spire built in very visible freestone (see Fig. 45). Spires have often been described as having no ecclesiastical function, often born of fashion or a desire of one parish to outdo its neighbours – one local example being the determination of Lord Hotham to outdo Scorborough church when having his remarkable church at South Dalton built in the 1860s. Nevertheless church spires were landmarks

[66] As may be seen in the western aisle arcades and the south and north doors.
[67] As may be seen in the window tracery of the north aisle.

and available reference points for medieval sailors and travelers – the ‘cluster’ of church spires extending from the east Midlands across the central Fenland to the Wash certainly served as such for Fenland travellers.

Technologically spire construction became possible from the early 13th century onwards although building techniques became more refined over the following three centuries. Initially all spires were built of timber, and remained so in areas with timber but no nearby freestone. By the late Middle Ages there were many more timber spires than seen today, fire and collapse, for example, destroying those that once towered above the cathedrals of Lincoln, Durham, Worcester and Ely. By the 14th century it was possible to build stone spires where supplies of freestone were available and where skilled master masons were affordable.

There were basically two types of spires; a broach spire was sturdy but modest in height with each alternate face supported by a stone base. Needle spires were usually built to a much more acute angle, were of four or eight faces and built of mortared slabs of freestone of increasing thinness as the building programme rose. Although precarious to build needle spires could be easier to repair from a walkway round its base on the roof of the tower, and, if decorated with crockets along its angles, these could be used as stepping stones by masons. Spire ‘lights’ could be built into either type of spire, these being unglazed openings at points on a face to add decorative interest and to allow the passage of wind through points in the structure to reduce potential instability in gales.

Spires, especially needle spires, were often a later elaboration on a pre-existing church tower as, for example, at Norwich and Salisbury cathedrals.

<u>Holy Trinity, Hull.</u>

The crossing tower of this stately parish church remains a landmark in the townscape despite modern developments. The transepts, the earliest part of the existing building and dating from the early 14th

century, were initially extensions to an earlier chapel of ease in Hessle parish and probably dated from the later 13th century (see Gillett and MacMahon 1989, 7). The chancel of Holy Trinity was added later in the 14th century and provides a fine example of the Decorated style of church architecture whilst the nave of the early 15th century examples the Perpendicular style. The lower stage of the crossing tower was built of medieval brick and was probably contemporary with the transepts, the upper stages were built of freestone during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. By the Tudor century Holy Trinity's crossing tower must have been a very striking landmark standing four miles due east from the needle spire of the mother church at Hessle across the undeveloped estuarine lowlands of Hessle and Myton commons. Because of the 'dogleg' of the lower Humber Holy Trinity was not visible until incoming vessels had reached 'Hull Roads', from which point they could navigate to the mouth of 'The Haven' by keeping in line with Holy Trinity's crossing tower.[68]

Fig. 46 Holy Trinity, Hull, viewed from the north-west and showing the Perpendicular tracery of the west windows, a glimpse of the clerestory and the early 16th century crossing tower.

[68] From the late 12th century to the early 1800s the port of Hull was the warehouses, staithes and jetties on the west bank of the lower River Hull. The opening of The Dock in 1778 (re-named Queen's Dock in the 1850s) still meant that all ships had to pass through the Haven.

Interestingly Mitchell's navigational chart of the lower Humber dated 1778 (reproduced by Storey 1971, 30) shows Hull (still mostly confined by the concourse of its medieval town defensive walls) but not specifically Holy Trinity.[69] Furthermore over the next half century a number of newly built churches, built for congregations in the expanding town, vied with Holy Trinity for landmark status. St. John the Evangelist church, Queen Victoria Square was opened in 1793 although the prominent west tower was not added until 1803 (see Malet Lambert Reprints No 82, near final page). This prominent landmark only a few hundred yards west of Holy Trinity stood on the site occupied since 1924 by Ferens Art Gallery (see picture and text Neave 1991, 32). Slightly to the west but closer to the Humber bank St. James, Lister Street was opened in 1831 (see picture and text Neave 1991, 32). Built of Wallingfen 'whites' (bricks) and freestone it must have been a striking landmark, so-much-so that the Brethren of Trinity House offered £100 towards the building of a spire on the west tower, a proposition which, for whatever reason, was never followed through (referenced in Storey 1971, 34).

Most prominent of all was St. Stephen's church (see picture and text Neave 1991, 44), opened in 1845 and described by Sheahan as being near Canning Street and 'is an elegant cut stone structure … with a tower and spire 200 feet high' (Sheahan 1856, 137). Although dwarfing in height both Holy Trinity's crossing tower and Hessle's needle spire the spire of St Stephen's church was more a product of fashion and the desire by the Established church to regain the initiative from Nonconformity than to be a landmark for secular purposes – land based leading lights (see before) were, by the 1840s, superseding churches as landmarks.

[69] Robert Mitchell's chart does plot the following churches; Clee, Grimsby, Great Cotes, Immingham, Killingholme, Haulton (Halton), Marfleet, Paull, Hedon, Ottringham, Sunk Island chapel, Patrington, Schevling (Skeffling), Easington and Kilnsea.

St. Peter, Drypool.

As with St. Stephen's and St. James the site of the former St. Peter's church, Drypool is today a grassed area, a pleasant, if ill maintained, garden just off Garrison Road and sandwiched between St. Peter's St. and Citadel Way. Poulson reproduces an engraving of the medieval church (Poulson 1841, and see Fig. 47) as does Neave (Neave 1991, 56), both showing the church from the same north-west angle, but not identical (!). With its proximity to Holy Trinity it seems unlikely that the medieval St. Peters had particular significance to mariners although a representation is included on Scott's chart of 1732 (see Fig. 6). The squat west tower seems to have been little more than 50 feet high but is shown topped by a flagpole (beacon?). As with a number of west Holderness parishes the prioress of Swine Nunnery appointed the vicars and took the great tithes of Drypool church.

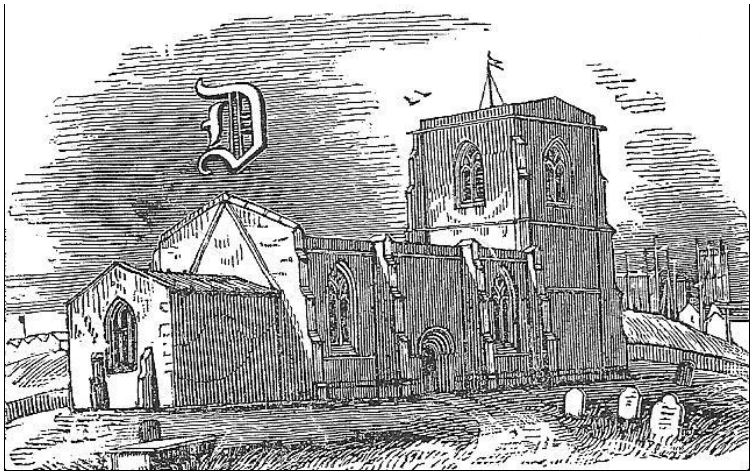


Fig. 47 Poulson's illustration of St. Peters, Drypool (Poulson 1841, 341).

The medieval church was demolished in 1822, Sheahan having described it as being an 'ancient structure which had long been in a dilapidated state, having stood since the early part of the 14th century' (Sheahan 1856, 56). The new church on the same site was opened in1823, this time with a lofty four storey west tower, was brick-built and rendered in imitation of freestone, a fashion which presents a potential pitfall when studying the building materials of a church. This late-

Georgian church was severely damaged during the Hull Blitz of 1941 although the tower survived to the 1950s (see Neave 1991, 57).

St. Giles, Marfleet.

The present church, standing just east of Marfleet Lane, was built in 1884 it being the third church to be built on the same, or nearby, site. Neave includes an engraving of the preceding Georgian church (1793 – 1884) which incorporated a cupola belfry (Neave 1991, 66) and he states that no illustration of the first (medieval) church is known. However the representation on Scott's chart, a curious structure with a cone-shaped steeple over a narrow west tower and unlike any other shown, must be of the medieval church (see Figs. 6 and 48). This earliest church certainly had navigational significance Scott showing a navigational line to it for vessels navigating the channel between 'Hebles Canch' and 'Skitter Ness' (see Fig. 8) and Storey recording it as figuring in the 18th century Humber Pilot's Examination (Storey 1971, 5 and 125). The medieval church was a chapel of ease in the large parish of Paull but by the late 17th century Marfleet was an independent parish.

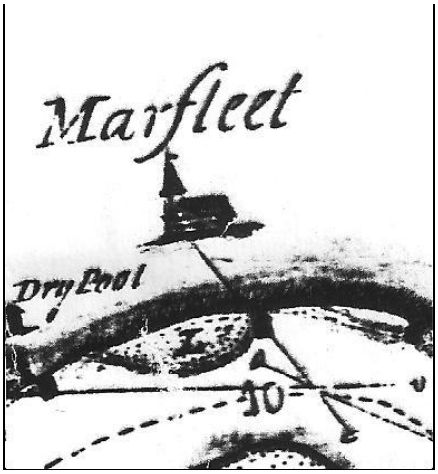


Fig. 48 An enlargement of Scott's representation of the earliest of the churches of Marfleet, a chapel of ease in the parish of Paull up to the 18th century.

The parishes of south Holderness.

Like the shoreline of the upper Humber from Barton to Alkborough the south Holderness coastline as seen today would be recognizable to a

medieval mariner except that the villages would then have been much closer to the coastline. The navigable channels sailed by medieval traders are now arable farmland, this since the piecemeal reclamation of Cherry Cobb Sands and Sunk Island. Nevertheless the church towers and spires remain landmarks (in contrast to the south bank, see before), the spires of Ottringham and Patrington being visible from all points along the south foreshore from Humberstone to Goxhill Marsh. The crossing towers of Paull and Hedon churches stand clear as landmarks when viewed from East Halton Marsh round to New Holland.

St. Andrew, Paull.

The parish church of St. Andrew, Paull comprises a chancel, crossing tower, short transepts and an aisled nave. Poulson referenced evidence that the present church was 'de novo construenda' in 1336 (Poulson 1841, 483) and certainly the crossing tower built of freestone or 'hewn stone' (Sheahan 1856, 645) is of that time. Over the centuries Paull foreshore has been eroded by the estuarine currents of 'Hull Roads'. An earlier church was almost certainly lost in this way and the site of the present church on a 'considerable eminance' (Poulson 1841, 485), although detached from the village, may reflect some navigational significance (see Fig. 49). Paull village itself may well have re-located over the centuries for the same reason.

Fig. 49 Paull church viewed from the south-east.

The earlier church and initially the 14th century church were the property of Aumale Abbey (France), the Holderness properties of which were administered by Burstall Priory in the parish of Skeffling (see later). In 1396 the church and tithes were purchased by Kirkstall Abbey (West Yorkshire) and retained until 1539. This monastic connection may well explain why the new church was built as a crossing church. The records of tithes include those of fish showing that for centuries part of the village's population navigated the Estuary.[70]

The landmark status of Paull church may well have been compromised by the 'fine old trees' (Poulson 1841, 485 and Sheahan 1856, 645) to the south of the churchyard. Their descendents survive,[71] but the church tower remains clearly visible from the foreshore and from the south Humber bank (see Fig. 49).

In 1836 Trinity House, Hull funded the building of a lighthouse and lighthouse-keeper's house south of the village, this contemporary with those at Killingholme (see before). An intended 'lower light' was never built at Paull, nevertheless the new lighthouse and those at Killingholme now commanded the crossing point of the lower Estuary and the landmark status of Paull church ceased to be significant.

St. Augustine, Hedon.

Although not a Humber-side church St. Augustine's Perpendicular crossing tower has been a landmark visible from the Humber since the early 15th century. By the early 13th century Hedon's three churches were chapels of ease to Preston, the 'home' parish of the Lords of Holderness and it was the Norman baron William Le Gros who, in the mid 12th century, had granted these churches to Aumale Abbey ('home' abbey to the early Lords of Holderness, see later). By Tudor times St Augustine's had become a parish church while, as at Grimsby, the other early medieval churches had been abandoned.

[70] In centuries past the Humber was a rich source of fish, including salmon in their spring spawning 'runs'. In the 19th century Paull shrimp boats were a visitor attraction. Poulson refers to an old 'battery', now the site of Paull Fort and a nearby deserted shipyard where battleships (sailing) had been built during the Napoleonic Wars (Poulson 1841, 487).

[71] Now part of a churchyard nature reserve.

As with other great churches of the region such as Holy Trinity, Hull and Beverley Minster the building programme at St. Augustine evolved from east to west over a period of time that resulted in changing architectural styles being incorporated. The chancel and transepts at St. Augustine were contemporary with the development of Hedon by the Lords of Holderness in the early 13th century as an inland port serving the rich, diverse and densely populated region of Holderness. St. Augustine's stood testament to this ambition, one never quite achieved.

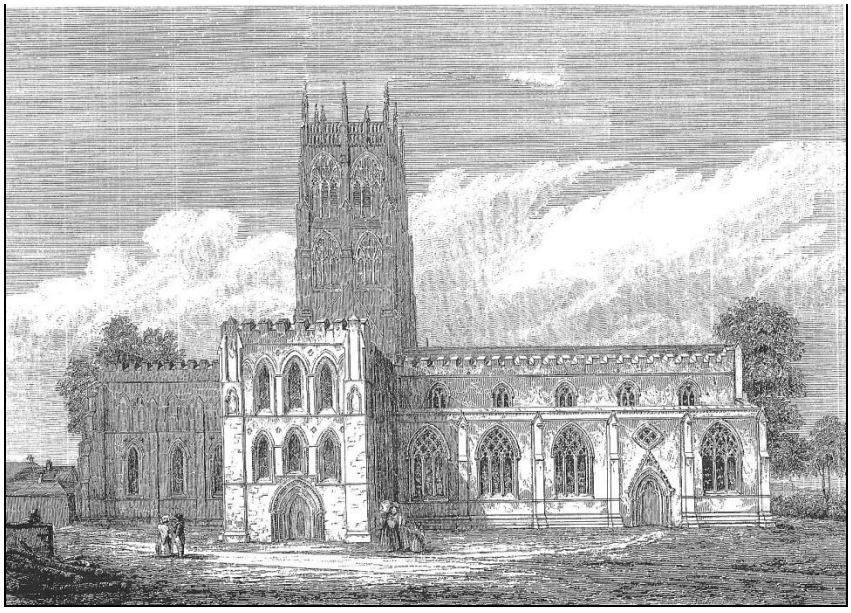


Fig. 50 Lithograph of St. Augustine's, Hedon as viewed from Market Hill, taken from Poulson 1841, 168.

St. Nicholas, Keyingham.

Both a sketch of St. Nicholas from the east included by Tindall Wildridge (Wildridge 1886, 58 and see Fig. 51) and a view from the south-west given by Poulson (Poulson 1841, 419) show the west tower topped by a spire which was not removed until 1969 (VCH Vol. V 1984, 64). The church as represented on Scott's chart (1734) is shown as having a spire while the VCH speculates that the upper section of the west tower and spire were built in 1396, along with other repairs, this work documented as following storm damage.

The spire appears to have been a type of broach spire (see Fig. 51) described as a ‘plain but rather heavy octagonal spire’ (Poulson 1841, 418). The church, no longer clearly visible in the landscape except from the west, stands on a relatively prominent natural mound and back in 1841 ‘there is (was) an extensive prospect from the churchyard, in every direction, particularly of the Humber and the Lincolnshire Wolds in the distance’ (Poulson 1841, 420).

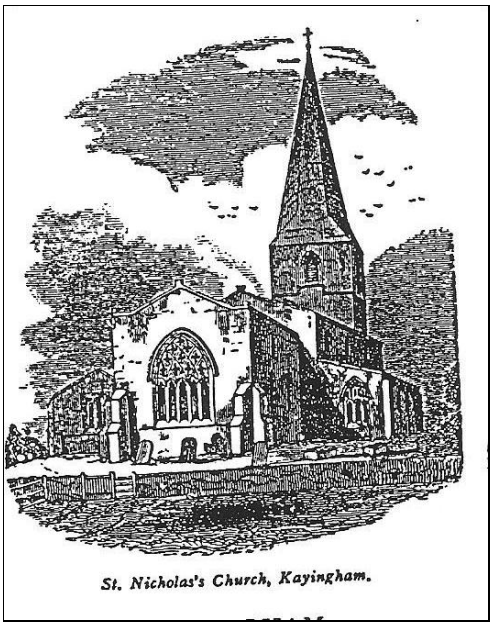


Fig. 51 Sketch of Keyingham church, (Tindall Wildridge 1886, 58).

Fig. 52 View of St Nicholas from a similar position to that seen in Fig. 51.

The navigational significance of Keyingham church is underlined by its inclusion on many Humber navigational charts and by Poulson's statement that 'this church (Keyingham), with Ottringham and Patrington are of use to mariners as landmarks and are the only spires in Holderness' (Poulson 1841, 420).

A church was recorded here in 1086 and in 1337 the advowson was transferred from Aumale Abbey to Meaux Abbey. Apart from the freestone seen in the tower and north aisle other building materials incorporated are early brick and heavily mortared coursed rubble. Y tracery, a frequently recurring architectural feature of many Humberside churches, may be seen in the chancel windows while at the east end of the north aisle is a large three-light Perpendicular window (see Figs. 51 and 52). The parapet on top of the west tower was added when the spire was taken down.

St. Wilfrid, Ottringham.

The church of St. Wilfrid, Ottringham has a west tower and spire built entirely of freestone. The spire is long-lived having been built, along with the tower, in the early 1300s (VCH Vol. V, 84), this longevity assisted by repairs in 1810 and 1897, the latter after storm damage. From a distance the spire looks like a needle spire, the 'light and elegant spire' admired by Poulson (Poulson 1841, 432), but Figs. 53 and 54 show that alternate faces are reinforced at their bases by prism shaped supports (broach spire).

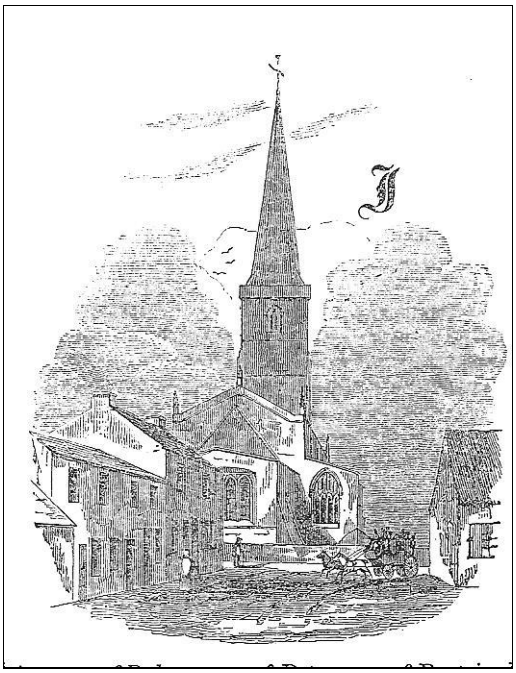


Fig. 53 Sketch of Ottringham church (Poulson 1841, 423).

Fig. 54 View of Ottringham church from the same point today.

Ottringham church spire was almost certainly the first built of the trio of south Holderness church spires, those of Keyingham and Patrington being dated to the late 1300s (Neave 2005, 574 and 641 respectively).

Irrespective of any navigational purpose, surely here can be seen an outbreak of parochial jealousy, where the financier of Patrington's spire were determined to outdo their neighbour and with Keyingham coming-in a noteworthy third. Whatever the motivation, this spire cluster was unique in Holderness.

Poulson's concise but detailed description of the west tower records it as having six stages with a basement moulding while the upper stage of each face incorporated pointed belfry windows of two lights with trefoil openings (in the spandrels). At each corner 'angled buttresses' (diagonal buttresses) supported the tower and reached to the tower's fifth stage. The 102 feet high octagonal spire was (in 1841) topped by a weather vane and 'crown'(?).

St. Patrick, Patrington.

The 'unity of style' (VCH Vol. V, 108), large size and 'graceful, light and airy spire' (Poulson 1841, 450) have all combined to raise the profile of this fine church which sits so elegantly in the Holderness landscape. John Betjeman, poet laureate and ecclesiologist, wrote of St. Patrick's church that 'it sails in honey-coloured limestone like a ship over the flat estuary land at the mouth of the Humber' (quoted by Markham 1994, 66). Winifred Holtby, who wrote her famous novel *South Riding* while renting a cottage at Withernsea in the early 1930s, was probably thinking of Patrington when describing her heroine's bus journey to 'Kiplington' (Withernsea) where 'from point to point on the horizon her eye could pick out the clustering trees and dark spire or tower marking a village'.

Patrington church was built entirely of limestone freestone transported, presumably, up Patrington Haven Drain, a significant medieval water-course. The majestic 190 feet high west tower and steeple was given further navigational prominence by being regularly whitewashed, evidence from the Patrington Town Book being cited by Poulson that 'John Burdass painted Patrington church steeple in the month of July, and put up fane (flag or pennant) on ye 14 day of August, 1715' (Poulson 1841, 443). For 'painted' we can almost certainly read

whitewashed, the minute, unfortunately, giving no clues as to how he achieved this feat (in the absence of crockets and see Figs. 55 and 56).

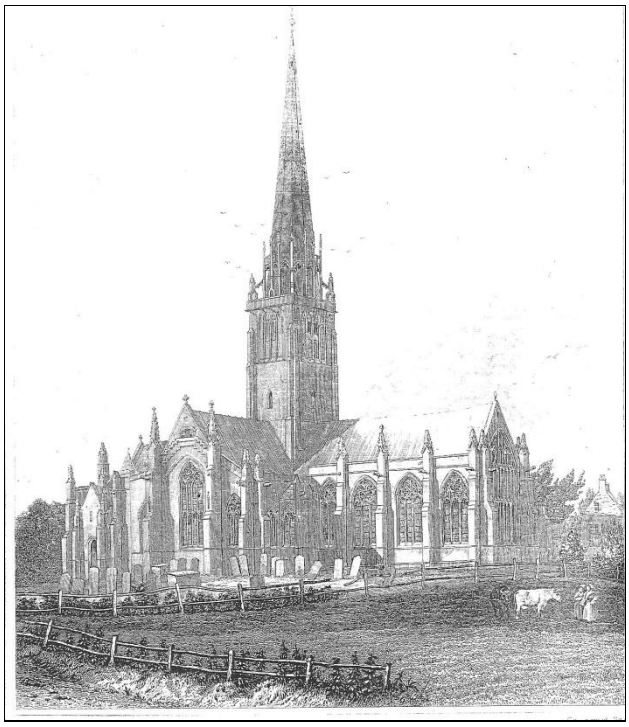


Fig. 55 The full page illustration of Patrington church as seen from the south-east forms the frontispiece to Poulson's Vol. I with the credit 'To Charles Frost Esq. F.S.A., Author of '*Notices of the Early History of Hull*'.

Fig. 56 Patrington church as viewed from the same point.

The newly built/re-built church dates from the late 1200s and early 1300s in the style later termed ‘Geometric’, transitional between Early English and Decorated.[72] The church although not monastic was built in the manner of such, having aisled transepts and nave. For most of the Middle Ages the church and manor were in the possession of the Archbishops of York and later the Provest of St. John’s Minster, Beverley. The building programme for St. Patricks must have been comparatively intense as experts believe that the transepts and crossing tower were built first followed by the nave and lastly chancel, this the other way round to more long-term rebuilds (see before). Possibly funds ran out before final completion as the vaults planned for the aisles were not completed until the Victorian restorations.

The spire and octagonal corona around its base, as well as the replacement east window, are thought to date from the late 1300s/early 1400s.

Holy Trinity, Sunk Island.

Long before formal maps were compiled the Estuary-side sections of Ottringham and Patrington parishes formed a coastline similar to that of Sunk Island today. The berewick of Tharlesthorp (first mentioned 1086) and the area to its east called Frismersk were rich grazing lands for flocks of sheep in the 12th and 13th centuries. The main source of evidence about these low-lying areas of south Holderness was the Meaux Chronicle from which later historians such as Poulson, Boyle and others garnered their information.

However, most of Abbot Burton’s references to these areas for the 13th and 14th centuries were bewailing the loss of land and property from ‘innundations’, that being the over-flooding of embankments with the consequent destruction and erosion of pasture-land. The story of the gradual loss of these areas to the Humber is well told by Boyle in *Lost Towns of the Humber*, pp 66-82. Boyle also references the Meaux

[72] No church was recorded in 1086 but there are references to an earlier 13th century church. Poulson considered the church to be all of the Decorated style, built during the reign of Edward II (early 14th century) (Poulson 1841, 443).

Chronicle in recounting the story of the great flood of the 1250s whereby 'the sea inundated … almost throughout the whole eastern part of England; and the Humber exceeding its limits … we (Meaux Abbey) lost all our moveable goods, nearly all the buildings, besides men and lower animals' (Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, II, 91). By buildings Abbot Burton meant monastic granges scattered along the coastal lowlands from Myton to Patrington Haven, by 'lower animals' he, disparagingly, meant sheep.

Intensive sheep rearing was the most common land-use on the rich grasslands of the estuarine lowlands. The medieval trade in wool, and by the 15th century that of woolen cloth, was England's main export and many of the sailing craft sailing down the Estuary were transporting that cargo from the staple at Hull.

Returning to the lost land at the south of Ottringham and Patrington parishes, from the 16th century onwards the story is reversed in that Sunk Island develops and was expanded by successive reclamation and embanking.[73]

The evolving community on Sunk Island was served by three successive places of worship. A 'chapel', first documented in 1743 (VCH Vol. V, 138) and shown on Scott's chart of 1734, served the 'extra parochial district' rather than being a chapel of ease to a nearby parish. The site of this 'chapel' now forms part of the farm at Old Hall, Sunk Island (see Fig. 57). In 1802 a replacement chapel was built and an independent parish created in 1830. Holy Trinity, the building seen today, was built in 1876-7 incorporating a modest brick tower rising above the south porch. In the 1980s this church, having been closed for worship, became a local heritage centre. It seems unlikely that any of these places of worship had navigational significance but any building on such low-lying land would have been prominent.[74]

[73] This story well told by Poulson 1841, 464-466.
[74] Its position was recorded on a number of charts (see above) and it figured in the 18th century Humber pilot's examination (see above).

Fig. 57 Old Hall, Sunk Island, viewed fro the Humber clay-bank to its south. House and farm buildings are obscured by a mature shelter belt.

St. Mary, Welwick.

The S bend in the country lane around Welwick churchyard demands the driver's attention so that the features of this 'well worth visiting church' (Neave 2005, 743) may go unnoticed. The existing low west tower is not prominent in the landscape although Poulson records that 'a spire, it is thought, once surmounted the tower' (Poulson 1841, 509). Did St. Mary's once compete for attention with its neighbours to the west?

Much of Welwick church dates from a building programme of the mid 14th century thus making it a good 'case study' for the Decorated period of church architecture. A church here was recorded in 1086 and the Transitional tower arch of the mid 13th century shows that a church tower had long existed on the site. Poulson describes the tower as 'built of sea cobbles', this being the local vernacular building material of Holderness. Stones, usually rounded by abrasion, were picked from the land or beach and set roughly coursed in a thick lime mortar (see Figs. 58 and 60). The various colours of the cobbles were a result of their geological diversity, they having been plucked and transported by advancing glaciers and then deposited post-glacially. Freestone was incorporated into the tower as quoins only, the remaining freestone seen

in the church fabric having been brought to the site for the 14th century re-building, which did not include the west tower.

Fig 58 View of Welwick church from the nearby road, notice the west tower with 'stone dressings', the north aisle and the largely freestone clerestory.

As in Patrington and Ottringham coastal lowlands in Welwick parish were 'lost to the Humber' (Poulson 1841, 518) in the early 14th century in the hamlet then called Orwithfleet, this with much loss of stock to Meaux Abbey. Having been reclaimed in modern times this area now forms the part of Sunk Island east of Patrington Haven Drain. Poulson records that 300 sheep pastured on 46 acres of meadow perished in Orwithfleet (Poulson 1841, 518 referencing Meaux Chronicle, Vol. II, 298). Normally sheep were grazed on meadow after it had been cut for hay in May/June and, although the figure for pasture may have been slightly less, nevertheless, the average of six sheep per acre, rolled-out across all the estuarine lowland grasslands between Hessle and Easington, would have produced vast flocks.

St. Helen, Skeffling.

In the 19th century the west tower of Skeffling church, the whole church being the product of a 1460s re-build, 'commands views along and over the Humber' (Poulson 1841, 501). Today the view of the west tower is obscured by mature deciduous trees. The church's predecessor stood

elsewhere although the exact site is unknown.[75] This earlier church was in the possession of Burstall Priory which stood at a point near the then Humber bank (again the exact site is unknown). Burstall was an alien cell of the Benedictine Abbey of Albemarle (Aumale) in Normandy and dated from the early 13th century when monks were sent from France to administer the church lands in Holderness and Lincolnshire which had been endowed to the Abbey of Albemarle. This situation was a result of the Norman Lords of Holderness sharing their wealth in the conquered nation with their monastery back-home.

The buildings of the alien cell were destroyed by 'the frightful encroachments of the sea' (Poulson 1841, 505), although this may have been at a relatively late date as Burleigh's chart of *c*. 1560 shows a complex of buildings beside the Humber bank at 'Bursftall' (see Fig. 3). Furthermore one of the few inland details given on Collins' chart of 1681is a representation of a building surrounded by trees at 'Brufelhal', south-west of the church at 'Scafling'. The only other points so shown on Collins' chart are at; Grimsby, Barton, 'Hafell' and 'Saltawood' (?) on the then coast in 'Kiringam' parish. In 1395, during the French Wars, lands endowed to the Abbey of Albemarle across 30 Holderness parishes were confiscated by the Crown and granted to Kirkstall Abbey.

Certainly from the 1470s onwards the cobble with stone dressings of the Perpendicular west tower at Skeffling would have been prominent in the landscape, and the church features on a number of early charts.

[75] Poulson quotes from a church archive when stating 'the church was translated from the old place and newly rebuilding upon another foundation' (Poulson 1841 , 501)

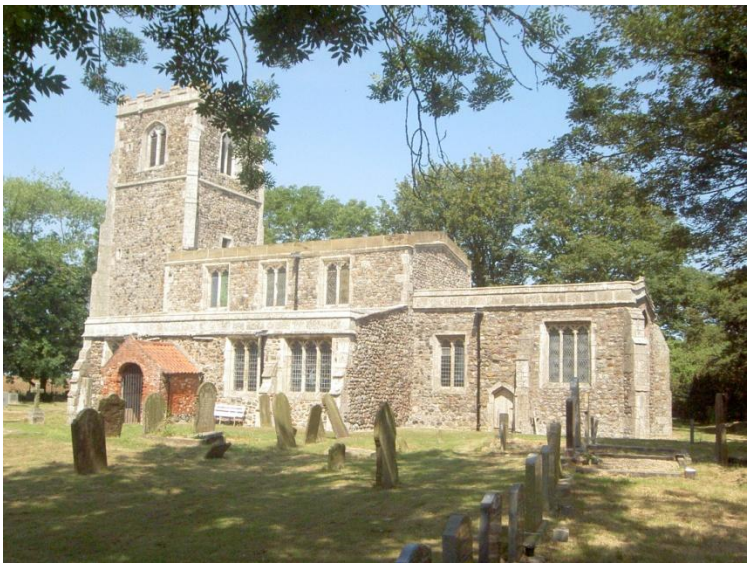


Fig. 59 Skeffling church as viewed from the south-east – a delightful church and site. Notice the Georgian south porch of brick and tile, the church's only post-medieval addition.

Fig. 60 The gable end of the north aisle of Skeffling church showing the roughly coursed 'sea cobbles' and the heavy mortar.

All Saints, Easington.

This fine church, sited on a prominence at the centre of the village and next to the village square, incorporates evidence of successive building programmes from the 12th to the 16th centuries. The lofty west tower, mostly built of freestone and with diagonal buttresses, dates from the

14th century (see Fig. 61), with a later Perpendicular window inserted in the west wall.[76] Despite its loftiness Easington church tower is surprisingly difficult to locate in the landscape, this partly a result of trees planted around the surrounding churchyard. Historically it must have been significant for navigation as it is shown on a number of charts, Collins, for example, showing sight-lines radiating from it to the 'Humber Mouth'.

Fig. 61 Easington church viewed from near the gate accessing the churchyard from the Market Place.

The churchyard, although of modest extent, has across time been swelled by interments from two sources other than the village. In the 1350s mortal remains from the eroding churchyard at Ravenser Odd were re-interred at Easington as were some from the eroding churchyard at Kilnsea in the 1820s. These re-interments were probably in mass graves. A chapel of ease to Easington church at Out Newton was also lost to erosion in the early 20th century but its site may never have acquired burial rights.

[76] Poulson describes the west tower as built of 'Roche Abbey stone' (p 376). Stone for the building of Roche Abbey, near Maltby in South Yorkshire, was quarried on site, this stone also used in some other high status later medieval building programmes. Mexborough stone, quarried nearby, was often used as a facing stone in 19th century church buildings. In the same area a large quarry, between Doncaster and Conisbrough, is still worked. If Roche stone was used to build Easington church tower it was most probably transported down the Old River Don to Trent Falls and into the Humber.

Ravenser Odd rapidly developed as an island port near the mouth of the Humber from the mid 13th century onwards. By late century it had expanded as a site where merchants and seamen both worked and lived and as such, by 1274, a church had been built, 'dedicated to the Virgin … with the consent of the vicar of Kilnsea was annexed to Easington rectory' (VCH Vol. V, 72). Quite probably this church was a product of a single building programme, whether stone-built or wood (initially) is uncertain but it quickly gained the privileges of a parish church and it would have been customary for the local commercial class to invest some of their wealth in the local church. Ravenser Odd suffered the same fate as other south Holderness coastal lands in the 14th century, being eroded by the Estuary's changing currents, its commercial class taking to Hull the business that might otherwise have come to dominate the trade of the Humber.

St. Helen, Kilnsea.

A church and priest were recorded for Kilnsea in1086 and the church fabric incorporated Y tracery in the clerestory and belfry with flat-headed windows (possibly Tudor) in the south aisle. Although the medieval church was eventually destroyed by coastal erosion there are references to its 'ruinous' fabric from the reign of Elizabeth I onwards (see VCH Vol. V, 73), then a result of 'the poverty of the inhabitants'. In 1737 Trinity House, Hull stepped in and paid £10 'for the repairing of Kilnsea church steeple, being a very useful sea mark' (quoted by Poulson 1841, 523). In 1823 services were abandoned as the church was 'dilapidated and in danger of going over the cliff' (see Fig. 62), a threat which became reality in 1826 except for part of the west tower which stood perilously until 1831 (see VCH Vol. V, 73 and Poulson 1841, 520).[77]

[77]Poulson writes of the church being 'dismantled' in 1826, suggesting some rescuing of building materials. Certainly moveable items such as church plate, the font (now in the Victorian church) and one bell were saved. Also he writes that the 'old grey tower … the seaman's landmark, was the last portion of the holy fane which fell … the work of Norman hands'.

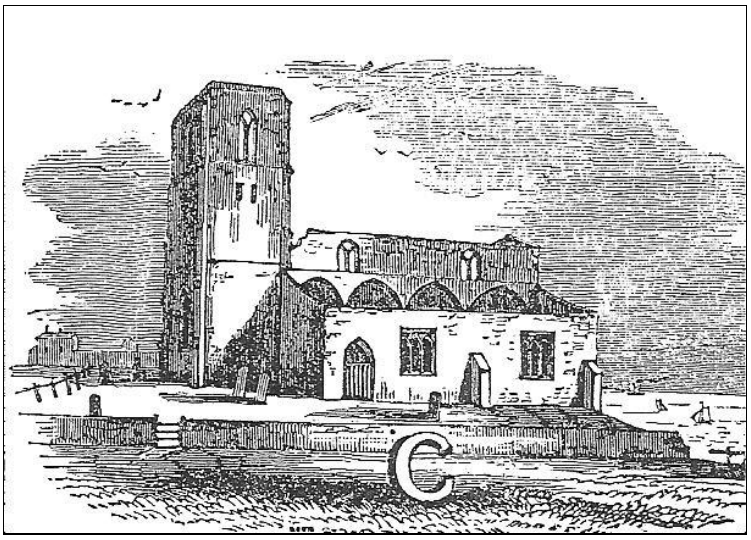


Fig. 62 A copy of a sketch of Kilnsea church in its last days, from Poulson, Vol II, 519).

The site of the medieval village, just inland of the church, must also have been lost to coastal erosion by the mid 19th century.[78]

For a generation Kilnsea had no purpose-built place of worship. The existing church was built in 1864-5, west of the current straggling community nearer the cliff-top. Standing beside this small red-brick church and looking south through, in winter, the leafless hawthorn bushes one's imagination might conjure-up an image of the bustling 14th century commercial community of Ravenser Odd, alternatively, and more prosaically, one can pick out the landmarks of Cleethorpes and Grimsby and try to locate the west tower of Old Clee church – the start of this journey.

Conclusion.

Clearly across medieval and early modern times church steeples that were visible along estuary shores and lowland coasts would have been utilised by mariners as 'seamarks'. Towering over other built structures in pre-industrial times they would have been foci in coastal landscapes

[78] Miles and Richardson (1911) include a 'Plan of part of Old Kilnsea Township' (p. 95) showing the site of the old village and church. It appears to be part of an Enclosure map, but Kilnsea wasn't enclosed until 1838(?) The map extract plots the Blue Bell Inn on the corner of Easington Road and North Marsh Road so the present coastline (2014) could also be plotted.

in a way often hard to visualise today. Justinian Angell's tower and swape constructed on Spurn Point in 1674, and its medieval predecessor, show that it was seen as a virtuous public act to warn shipping of hazards to navigation, even though there was no direct system for charging to recompense the capital outlay. The alarm at the loss of church steeples referenced in the preamble to the 1566 Act reinforces the point. Responsibility for the building, extension and repair of church steeples was traditionally that of the parishioners, this body perhaps more mindful of the public/secular benefits of steeples than rectors.

However were any medieval church steeples built or extended specifically to establish or improve their function as seamarks? The fact that successive Humber navigation charts from the 17th to the 19th centuries plot Estuary-side churches shows that they had navigational significance but was this relationship coincidental or deliberate?

Of the 36 churches here studied (14 on the south bank of the Humber and 22 on the north bank) almost all, along with the communities they served, were built on or around the ten meter contour.[79] This enabled parishioners to escape Spring-tide floods but still have ease of access to the natural resources of the coastal lowlands, and, except in Holderness and the lower Hull valley, it also usually meant that they were on or near the spring-line for a reliable source of fresh water. However for lowland areas maps with a ten meter contour interval, even a five meter interval, do not show what on the ground can seem like a prominent mound. In this context 22% [80] of the churches studied were built on local prominences, a point often noted by antiquarians. Various ideas have been debated as to why a medieval church might have been built on the highest point locally but here the contention is that it was to enhance visibility.

[79] Of the four other churches considered in the section on Holy Trinity, Hull only St. James Lister Street has been included in this total. Only churches higher up the slopes of the chalk escarpment – South Ferriby and Brantingham – fall outside this height generalisation.
[80] East Halton, Barrow, Barton (especially St. Peters), Whitton, Paull, Keyingham and Easington.

Building material must also be considered in this context. Most frequently when churches needed rebuilding or repairing it was in the financial interests of the parishioners that walling materials were re-used as much as possible. If then they chose instead to import to the site stone from far away and thus incurring the expense involved then there must have been specific reasons for so doing. Such reasons might vary from parish to parish but of the churches here studied four church steeples were built or heightened in the 14th century with expensive freestone[81] while the figure for the following century is 14[82], that is 11% and 38%, a total of over 50% across approximately 150 years or five-six generations.[83]

The freestone surface, if periodically cleaned, reflected light in such a way that the structure so built stood-out in a landscape of mostly natural colours.[84] Also the smooth surface of freestone meant that if whitewash bonded then its visibility could be further enhanced and the surface would not weather as rapidly as would more friable and uneven stone, thus perhaps seen as a better long-term investment. References to such whitewashing of towers and spires in the Trinity House archives, as well as occasional references in local archives, suggest that external whitewashing was common. The incorporation of a band of chalk walling near the top of the tower of Old Clee church hints at an earlier method of achieving the same end.

The proportion of churches with spires along both banks of the Estuary, although not as high as across the Fens and East Midlands for example, is higher than is the case further inland – indeed in late medieval times the number of spires may well have been greater - this adding further weight to the hypothesis that there was a direct causal relationship between medieval steeple building and navigation.

[81] Paull, Keyingham, Ottringham and Easington.
[82] Great Coates, Immingham, Killingholme, Goxhill, Barrow, Winteringham, Hessle, Holy Trinity, Hull, Hedon, Patrington and Skeffling.
[83] South and North Ferriby churches have been included in this total although both are speculative.
[84] In this context a heavy covering of snow across the landscape would compromise such building's status as aids to navigation.

It is hard to conceive of reasons why parishioners centuries ago should have gone to the trouble and expense of enhancing church steeples when there was no system in place for charging those who benefitted to repay those who had funded the structure. But then from a utilitarian point of view it is hard to understand why they might go to such trouble and expense to outdo a neighbouring parish. Perhaps here a rational perspective is failing to recognize a medieval collective mindset whereby the parish perceived a social and economic responsibility to the region, if they could afford to do so. It may also have been that influential parishioners in the parishes around the Estuary were aware of the increase in trade, shipping and the size of ships in the 14th and 15th centuries up to the 1460s (see Childs, 1990) and that they saw their parish church as playing a part in that expansion. Some indeed may have been merchants and mariners with a personal commitment to improved regional navigation.

Appendix.

- Lord Burleigh's chart *c*. 1560.
- Waghenaer's (Dutch) chart of the east coast between Norfolk and Scarborough, translated by A. Ashley of the Privy Council, 1588.
- W. Blaeu's (Dutch) 'Sea Beacon' chart of the Humber, 1643.
- John Seller's 'The English Pilot', 1671.
- Capt. Greenville Collins survey of the Humber from his survey of the coast of England 'Great Britain's Coasting Pilot', 1681. Further editions through to 1792.
- John Scott's chart of the Humber, 1734.
- William Bligh's map, 1805.
- (First Ordnance Survey one inch to one mile maps, 1820s. Not navigation maps but do show principal mudflats).

- John Hall's map of the lower Humber, early 1820s with various further editions up to the 1850s.
- Capt. Hewett's (of the national Hydrographic Office) chart, 1823.
- John Hall's chart of the upper Humber, 1828.
- Capt. Calver's map of the lower Humber, 1851.
- Capt. Calver's map of the upper Humber, 1861.
- Commander Parson's map of the lower Humber, 1875.
- Capt. Richards' map of the lower Humber, 1899.

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