





Lytham Estuary

# Lytham & The Fylde Coast

by Peter Laurence

With thanks to the Fishermen of Lytham

For our family, and particularly my Father, who would have been so pleased to see his picture printed.

Supporters of the Lytham Heritage Group –  
“Preserving the Past..... for the Future”

First Published 2019, by Peter Laurence Books  
Hardback ISBN : 978-1-9160331-1-5

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Lytham Pier, taken by my Father in the 1950's

## INTRODUCTION

Our family has had ties with Lytham going back over 60 years, though it wasn't until 2001 that I actually moved here from the Ribble Valley. Whilst producing a book was never planned, its origins stemmed from my interest in photographing the fishermen of Lytham early in 2006. The book is by no means an exhaustive illustration of the area, but more a collection of images that connect people with the Fylde coast.

Initially I was trying to capture a part of Lytham's heritage as a working fishing settlement. Something that has become mostly lost, amidst the proliferation of cars and suburbia of today. However, you can still get a feel for the old Lytham, simply by walking a short distance down the pebble causeway to where the shrimp and bass boats are moored. Here you feel a quieter more natural world. The traffic noise becomes lost, giving way to a stillness that allows the distant echoey sound of wader birds and lapping water to be heard.

Looking back, the promenade appears raised, as gone are the red tiled roofs, leaving only silhouetted walkers in the distance. Looking to the estuary you are surrounded by the River Ribble's mud flats, with views across the channel to far off Banks and Formby Point. In the early morning and evenings, Herons can be seen standing close by the fishing boats, their bows facing the moving tide. This is where the real Lytham is, close to the estuary. Yet, hardly anyone ventures there from the promenade, not realising what a change a couple of hundred yards can make.

During my numerous visits to the Ribble estuary I got to know some of the fishermen, who were most helpful to me. I think it fair to say that they may not concur with an onlookers more romantic view of Lytham, as they work in all manner of challenging conditions, and unsociable times thanks to the ever changing cycle of tides.

A little research showed that Shrimping has a long history in the area, dating back to the Domesday Book. Up until the 1950s there were about 20 shrimpers, however more recently this has dwindled to one or two. It is possible that in years to come there will be no fishing from Lytham.

In Victorian times Lytham became a fashionable marine resort with its own baths, a stark contrast to its somewhat noisier neighbour, Blackpool. Whilst Blackpool's popularity was unsurpassed at the time, it has declined dramatically in recent years, though retains many of its iconic attractions.

More recently I have visited other areas of the Fylde as part of a growing interest in land issues. The current controversy over proposed fracking at Westby and Roseacre has become a matter of national debate and the ensuing protests have been widely broadcast. Any threat to privacy, the environment and impact on house values is naturally a major issue for local residents, irrespective of any potential national benefit. One hopes that due process will see a fair outcome should fracking ultimately be allowed. This leaves the Government to balance the ethics of managing climate change and meeting our demand for affordable and sustainable energy.

Further challenges are also in the melting pot in nearby Morecambe Bay. Heysham nuclear power station is currently included in the government's National Policy Statement for sites strategically suitable for new nuclear power stations by 2025. Additionally, there are plans to extend the life of Heysham 1 beyond 2019 in 2015, and Heysham 2 beyond 2023 in 2020.

Nuclear power does not seem to attract the protests it once did, though that makes it no less hazardous. The spotlight is definitely on fracking for the moment. However, if sustainable energy sources can be further developed to meet our energy needs, there may be no need for fracking in the future.

So it is, from fishing boats of Lytham, to nuclear plants like Heysham that light Blackpool for the tourists each year. The Fylde evolves through the advance of technology, just as any region will, leaving its footprint for us to see, debate and wonder.

P. Laurence

We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea,  
whether it is to sail or to watch -  
we are going back from whence we came.

John F. Kennedy,





Shrimpers tender, Lytham beach



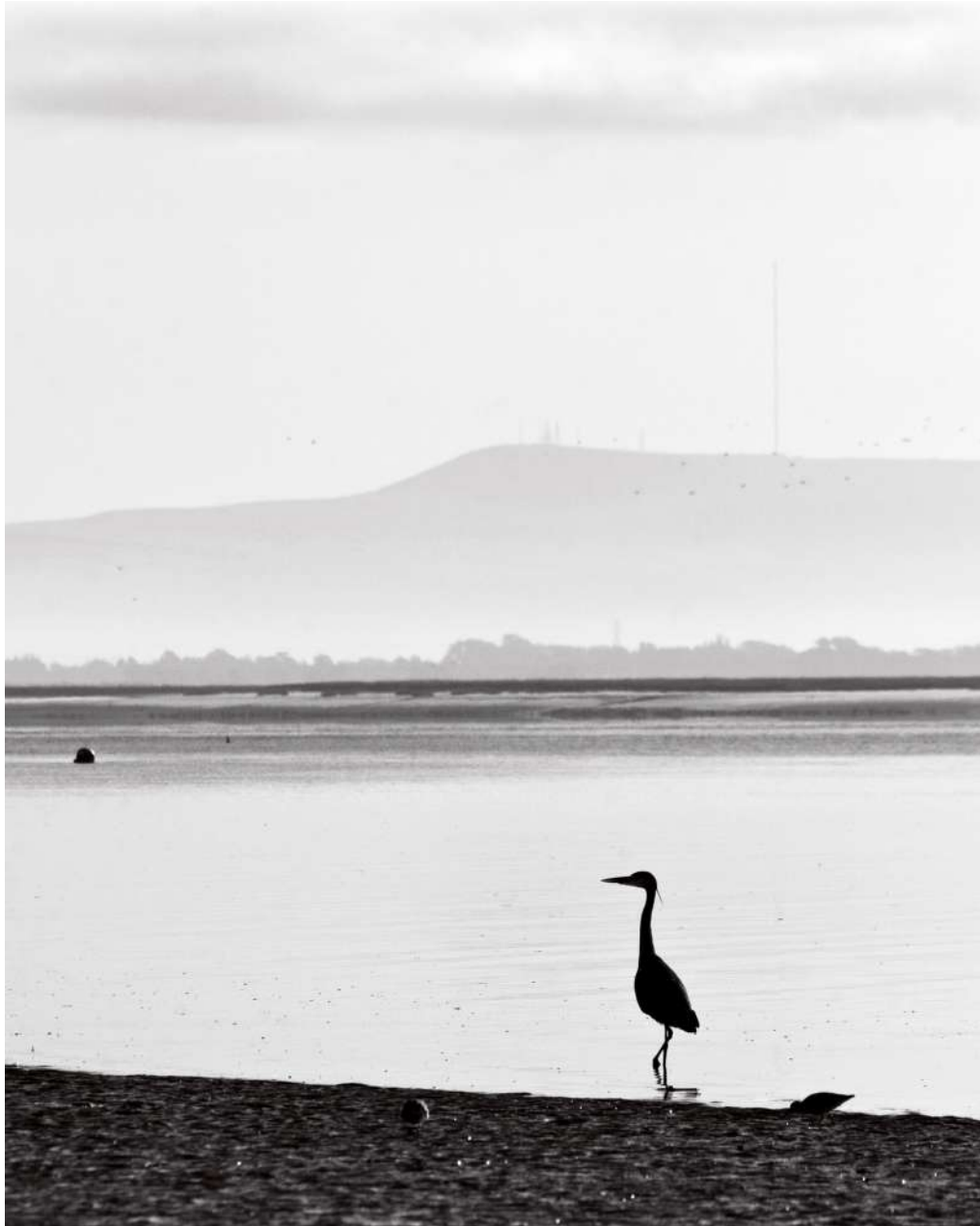
Russell Wignall, tending his boat, with Winter Hill beyond



Russell Wignall, Lytham shrimper

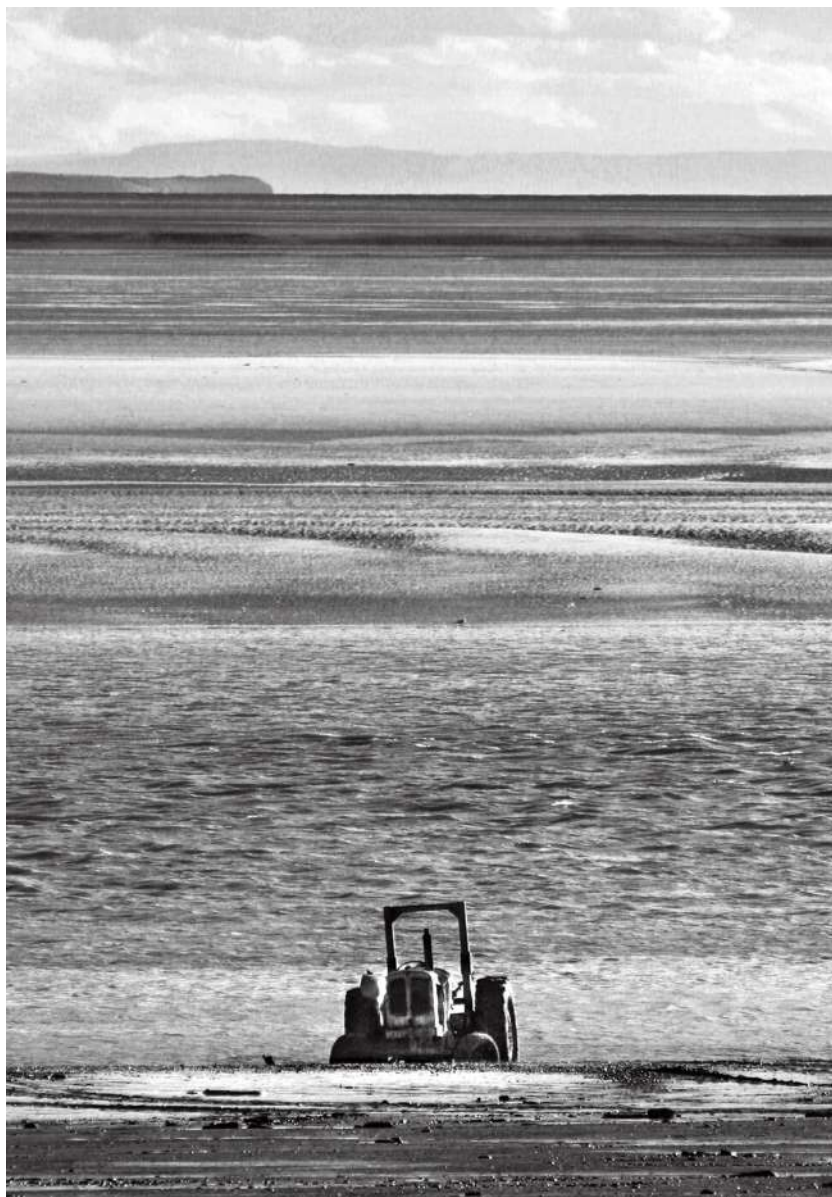


Fishing off the Black Swan, Lytham



Looking for a catch, Lytham estuary





Lytham shrimpers tractor, view to Formby Point



Lytham shrimp boat, view to Southport



Low tide at Lytham, distant Winter Hill





Lytham Beach



A still winter morning, Lytham



Tractor Dave returning shrimps to shore at Lytham



Autumnal skies over Lytham



Russell working on his boat



Shrimpers tractor, Lytham beach

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might:  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright -  
And this was very odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Lewis Carroll





Lytham fishermans dog





Tractor Dave boiling shrimps



Freezing fog over Lytham jetty



Moonrise over Banks from Lytham



Winter fun, St. Anne`s Pier



Windy afternoon, St. Anne's pier





Lytham Hall



Christmas, Lytham Hall



Lytham Hall, Autumn





Winter Walk, Lytham Green



Bess, enjoying high tide at Lytham

To the beach, my dog and I run,  
Play catch frisbees, just for fun.  
Umbrella's to block the sun,  
Waves crash upon the sand.  
My dog chases gulls that try to land. Sky so blue, sand so white,  
My dog and I, were up at daylight.  
Winds are warm and blowing slight,  
Ocean sprays, dog strays,  
Sand blows, through our toes. It gets cool, the sun goes down,  
My dog and I, head back to town.  
It's time we leave the beach to rest.  
After all, we were just a guest.  
All the birds have flown away.  
We will come back, another day.  
Just me and my dog, to play.

Me, My Dog, And The Beach  
Karen Curcio



The Ribble Reaper, Lytham estuary





Spring tide, Lytham



Amazing Grace III, On Lytham Green



Lytham Green



Channel markers, Lytham estuary





Photographer Jeanie and her dogs on Lytham Jetty



Cocklers returning to Lytham, 6th August 2013

A little ship goes out to sea  
As soon as we have finished tea;  
Off yonder where the big moon glows  
This tiny little vessel goes,  
But never grown-up eyes have seen  
The ports to which this ship has been;  
Upon the shore the old folks stand  
Till morning brings it back to land.

In search of smiles this little ship  
Each evening starts upon a trip;  
Just smiles enough to last the day  
Is it allowed to bring away;  
So nightly to some golden shore  
It must set out alone for more,  
And sail the rippling sea for miles  
Until the hold is full of smiles.

By gentle hands the sails are spread;  
The stars are glistening overhead  
And in that hour when tiny ships  
Prepare to make their evening trips  
The sea becomes a wondrous place,  
As beautiful as mother's face;  
And all the day's disturbing cries  
Give way to soothing lullabies.

No clang of bell or warning shout  
Is heard on shore when they put out;  
The little vessels slip away  
As silently as does the day.  
And all night long on sands of gold  
They cast their nets, and fill the hold  
With smiles and joys beyond compare,  
To cheer a world that's sad with care.

Little Fishermen  
Edgar Albert Guest



Evening ebb, Lytham



Winter morning, Ribble estuary, Lytham





Gales at St. Anne's Pier





Josh, on St. Anne's beach



St. Cuthberts, Lytham



Lytham skyline and shrimp boat



Windy Evening, St. Anne's Pier



Pier Head, St. Anne`s



Blackpool storm, December 2006



A white mist drifts across the shrouds,  
A wild moon in this wintry sky  
Gleams like an angry lion's eye  
Out of a mane of tawny clouds.

The muffled steersman at the wheel  
Is but a shadow in the gloom; -  
And in the throbbing engine-room  
Leap the long rods of polished steel.

The shattered storm has left its trace  
Upon this huge and heaving dome,  
For the thin threads of yellow foam  
Float on the waves like ravelled lace.

LA MER by Oscar Wilde



The Glitter Ball, Blackpool seafront



Blackpool Shelter, sadly taken down, during the rebuilding of sea defences



Wyre estuary, Fleetwood, view to Black Combe in the Western Lake District



The Promenade, Blackpool

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,  
The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;  
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
Dear child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,  
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free  
By William Wordsworth





Low tide, Blackpool



Evening high tide Blackpool



Heysham Nuclear power station from Knott End



St. Anne`s Pier, looking to the distant Welsh mountains



Fleetwood Lighthouse from Knott End





A Groovy Kind Of Love, Blackpool promenade





The White Tower, Blackpool



Gone swimming



Shipwreck memorial, Cleveleys. It lists all of the vessels which have met a tragic end off the Fylde Coast, including the Abana and more recently the Riverdance ferry.



Riverdance, beached off Blackpool, 31st January 2008  
The vessel couldn't be refloated and was subsequently scrapped where it lay.





The Welcome Home sculpture, Fleetwood



Morecambe Bay gas platform, from Lytham





Roseacre



Ballam

Lets be CARBON free,

BAA! to coal,  
BAA! to fracking,  
BAA! to nuclear,

The house is dark, the air is cold,  
and all are blindly freezing to death.  
There are no planes to St. Tropez,  
no cars to Dover, and no boats to Calais.

Lets build a barage over Morecambe bay,  
surely that would be ok.  
Lest we all stop breathing to help the planet on its way.

Carbon Free  
Peter Laurence



H.M.S. Inskip with Parlick Pike in the background



