



**LS Lowry: Modern  
Life  
Coast to Coast  
Large Print Guide**

## Coast to Coast

From childhood to old age, the sea was a source of fascination for Lowry. As a boy he drew yachts off the coast at Rhyl or Lytham St Anne's, on holiday with his parents. In the 1930s, caring for his mother while working full time, his doctor recommended that he take a break and he visited Berwick-upon-Tweed. The North Sea and the North East coast continued to attract him for the rest of his life and he spent long periods of time at the Seaburn Hotel north of Sunderland where he could watch the sea and the shipping from the window of his room.

Sometimes Lowry described painting seascapes as an escape, or relaxation, but he also described them as expressions of loneliness. His emptiest views - simply water, horizon and sky - reflect his feeling that the sea was both wonderful and terrible and he imagined an apocalyptic view of what would happen if the incoming tide never turned - 'That would be the end of it all.' His lone ships and fantastic rock formations rising from the waves capture feelings of isolation as much as the downtrodden residents of his city streets do.

Yachts, 1959

Watercolour on paper

The Lowry Collection, Salford

Adopt a Lowry: adopted in loving memory of Stephen Buttler,  
architect (1948-2014)

TOP

## Rhyl Harbour, 1925

Pencil on paper

The Lowry Collection, Salford

Adopt a Lowry: adopted by Tara Joghataie and Ryan Joghataei

BOTTOM LEFT

## Figures by the Sea, undated

Pencil on paper

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

BOTTOM RIGHT

## Study of Lytham, about 1920

Pencil on paper

Until about 1927, Lowry spent holidays with his mother, and sometimes also his father. Easter was spent in Lytham St Anne's and their summer trip was to Rhyl on the coast of North Wales. After 1927 Lowry travelled alone.

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

## Sailing Boats, about 1912

Oil on canvas

Paintings of sailing boats were, Lowry said, the only subjects that his mother had liked and he gave one or two pictures away as gifts to other family members. This particular painting, the only version of this subject in The Lowry Collection which is in oils, belonged to one of Lowry's cousins and is likely to have been given to him by Lowry as a wedding present in 1920.

The Lowry Collection, Salford

TOP

## Maryport, 1968

Pencil on The Elms notepaper

Lowry visited Maryport on the Cumbrian coast regularly while his friend Geoffrey Bennett was manager of the NatWest bank there. Bennett shared Lowry's interest in art, painted in his spare time and became an important collector of his friend's work. He eventually left banking to retrain as a minister and officiated at Lowry's funeral in 1976.

The Lowry Collection, Salford

BOTTOM

## Blackpool Tower, 1923

Chalk and pencil on paper

The distinctive landmark of Blackpool Tower can be seen, on clear days, from many miles away. Drawn on blue toned paper, Lowry shows the Tower indistinctly, as little more than a barely seen vertical line, on a cloudy, or hazy, day.

On loan from a private collection

TOP

## Study of Maryport, undated

Pencil on paper

Lowry combines a coastal view, with figures and dogs on the beach, with a contrasting row of industrial chimneys beyond the shoreline, possibly inspired by the town's gasworks.

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

BOTTOM

## Boats, 1956

Pencil on paper

The Lowry Collection, Salford

Adopt a Lowry: adopted by Royston and Pam Futter

TOP

## Wreck at South Shields, 1961

Pencil on paper

The cargo ship *Adelfotis II* was wrecked on 20 January 1963. Lowry, who sometimes dated his works long after they were completed, has written 1961 on the drawing.

Before the wreck was eventually broken up on the shore it became a local attraction. Valerie Hamill, whose family lived in South Shields, visited the site as a child. This photograph was taken by her father and shows Valerie's mother and two sisters, Pauline and Barbara, with *Adelfotis II* in the background. Valerie is on the right of the group.

The Lowry Collection, Salford

Adopt a Lowry: adopted by Valerie Hamill

BOTTOM

## Sea Tests off South Shields, about 1965

Blue ballpoint pen on paper

Lowry has sketched this scene in a few scribbled pen strokes. He regularly visited the North East of England, usually staying at the Seaburn Hotel in Sunderland. Sea trials, to test the performance and seaworthiness of vessels, took place in open water off the coast. In this instance smoke appears to be rising from the ship

The Lowry Collection, Salford



## A Tower at Sea, undated

Oil on board

This view could also be seen as rows of terraced house roofs looking towards a church spire.

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

## Beach at Penarth, 1960

Oil on canvas

Lowry is sometimes described as rarely painting the weather – his landscapes can often seem quite still, airless and unreal – but *The Beach at Penarth* has a real sense of wind blowing in off the sea on a brisk, blustery afternoon. People are walking their dogs on the shore, pushing prams, or simply chatting to friends

On loan from a private collection

## Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, 1966

Oil on canvas

On the North East coast, Newbiggin is a small town, once important for shipping grain and coal mining. Lowry painted the area on several occasions, particularly a distinctive footbridge by the sea. The church shown – St Bartholomew's – occupies a very visible position, slightly apart from the town, on a promontory of land overlooking the shore.

On loan from a private collection

## Seascape, 1952

Oil on canvas

Purchased by Salford Art Gallery for 54 guineas, *Seascape* had a hostile reception from some councillors and members of the public for its apparent lack of subject matter. Lowry declared, 'I never expected the picture to be very popular. It took me 18 months to paint and I think it is one of the best things I've done.'

The Lowry Collection, Salford

## Seascape, 1943

Oil on canvas

Lowry sometimes described his empty seascapes as 'sidelines' to his main work and, at others, as expressions of loneliness. For many their endless, open space is unsettling but the poet Sir John Betjeman claimed, 'The loneliness of Lowry doesn't make us shiver. It exults in the vastness of our surroundings.'

On loan from a private collection

# The Sea, 1947

Oil on canvas

Lowry wrote about his seascapes, 'It's the battle of life - the turbulence of the sea – and life's pretty turbulent, isn't it?'

On loan from a private collection

## Sea at Sunderland, 1965

Oil on board

In the early 1940s Lowry took a trip to Anglesey: 'A month after I got home I started to paint the sea, nothing but the sea. But a sea with no shore and nobody sailing on it... they're an expression of my own loneliness.' Lowry's later seascapes were inspired by the North Sea but retain the sense of infinite empty space and the emotional charge of his earlier works.

On loan from a private collection

## Beach Scene, Lancashire, 1947

Oil on canvas

When this picture was exhibited in the 1940s it was simply known as *Beach Scene*, with no specific location mentioned. The two foreground figures on the promenade look out at a view of yachts in the distance, partially blocked by industrial shipping nearer the shore.

On loan from a private collection



TOP

A Cliff in Mist, undated

Oil on board

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

BOTTOM

Stormy Sea, 1968

Oil on board

On loan from a private collection

## Study of a Monument Rising from Water, 1970

Pencil on paper

One of Lowry's last ideas for new subject matter may have developed from his drawings of strange rock formations in the water: '...a self-portrait [as] a tall straight pillar standing up in the middle of the sea, waiting for the sea of life to finish it off.'

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

## In the Sea, about 1970

Pencil on paper

Lowry's imaginary rock formations bend with the same stooped posture of the figures in his industrial landscapes. Some almost appear to have faces, similar to the surreal animal-like shapes of some of the characters in his late drawings.

The Lowry Collection, Salford

TOP

Seascape, 1944

Pencil on paper

On loan from a private collection

BOTTOM

A Ship, about 1965

Pencil on paper

The Lowry Collection, Salford

## Ship Entering Prince's Dock, Glasgow, 1947

Oil on board

'I'm particularly fond of watching large ships coming into harbour, or being brought down a river on a tug. ... Yet somehow I just can't paint a ship entering a harbour as I would like to. I've never mastered it and it worries me.' The ships in these paintings are often enigmatic, black, slightly sinister silhouettes.

On loan from a private collection

TOP

Untitled (Ship Entering Harbour), 1960

Pencil on paper

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

BOTTOM

At Sandsend, 1955

Pencil on paper

On loan from the Estate of LS Lowry

## The Notice Board, 1972

Black felt tip pen and pencil on paper

The railings along a promenade, separating people from the sand and sea beyond, occur frequently in Lowry's beach scenes. Here the promenade is empty but for the birds. In the distance sailing boats and promontories of land are just visible.

The Lowry Collection, Salford

## A Landmark, 1936

Oil on canvas

Lowry's 'lonely landscapes', as he called them, are companions to his empty seascapes. Silent and unwelcoming, these landscapes seem still and airless. Natural forms are often reduced to simple overlapping shapes rather like a stage set. Although their initial inspiration may lie in the landscape of Cumbria or the Peak District, they are ultimately imagined scenes whose abstracted forms also echo those of the female nude.

In the 1930s, looking after his mother after his father's death, Lowry described many of his paintings as being a way of 'letting off steam'. His lonely landscapes reveal much about his state of mind at the time: 'All the paintings of that period were done under stress and tension and they were all based on myself'.

The Lowry Collection, Salford