

# GARROWBY HILL

BY  
DAVID HOCKNEY

Rev. Michael Burley



David Hockney, born in 1937 in Bradford, gained fame in the 1960s for his American “Pop Art” works. Known for painting California life and swimming pools, his art from that period is now sold for small fortunes.



Mr. and Mrs Clarke and Percy 1971



A Bigger Splash 1967

# BRIDLINGTON

In the 1970s his family began migrating eastward from Bradford.

His older brother, Paul, bought a house at Flamborough and his sister, Margaret, moved to nearby Bridlington.

In 1989 when his mother joined Margaret, David Hockney bought them a larger house on the outskirts of the town on Kingston Road and became a regular visitor there.

His mother died in 1999.

After his mother's death, he returned to Los Angeles and began painting Yorkshire scenes from memory. But in 2005 he decided to move back to Bridlington.

Bridlington suited Hockney. One reason was that it was easier on his hearing. The increasingly deaf artist said, *"You arrange your life accordingly. I'm not antisocial. I like people. But you stop going to very big events, because you can't really hear anybody there unless you go right outside."*

He became a familiar figure in the town, but there his celebrity was down-played and privacy respected. He would often be seen walking his dog on the beach. Another bonus for him was the light-filled 10,000-square-foot factory studio on Bessingby industrial estate .

He lived in Bridlington between 2005 and 2013 a particularly creative time for him. This period marked a significant shift in his artistic inspiration, drawing from the landscapes of the Yorkshire Wolds. His work from this era is characterised by a vibrant palette and assertive brushwork reminiscent of Matisse and Van Gogh, contrasting with the carefully detailed compositions that defined his earlier oeuvre. He developed his massive canvases in a factory unit in Bridlington and started to use an iPad to paint. He could be seen out and about with a truck taking multiple photographs.



His house Kingston Road Bridlington



Red roofs in Bridlington – the view from his studio - 2005

David Hockney created many pieces inspired by his travels from his home in Bridlington to York, where he visited his friend the businessman Jonathan Silver during Jonathan's illness and eventual death. Jonathan, who also attended Bradford Grammar School, established Salts Mill in Shipley. Today, Salts Mill displays a substantial collection of David Hockney's artworks and opera sets.



David Hockney

Salts Mill Saltaire Yorkshire

# GARROWBY HILL

Garrowby Hill is located on the A166 between Driffield and York and is easily the steepest incline in the region. (although probably not as steep as Hockney paints). At its base, you'll find a historic run-off area for vehicles with brake issues. Once you reach the bottom, you'll see an unusual and charming traditional AA box. Alongside the road stands a crucifix dedicated to King George VI by the Halifax family, who own much of the land in the painting. None of these extra details feature in the paintings which are marked with a wonderful simplicity. All his various paintings of Garrowby Hill seem to be from the perspective of a car driver moving along the road.



# THE 1998 PAINTING OF GARROWBY HILL

Perched atop the hill, the artist paints the Bishop Wilton Wolds leading down to the plain of York, capturing its distant, mosaic-like landscape. The Pennines are faintly visible in the background, and in the Boston version, York Minster makes an appearance. David Hockney painted this picture at his studio in Los Angeles from memory in 1998. At the same time, he was painting his huge Grand Canyon canvases which I think heavily influence this painting giving the view great grandeur. There is a lot of artistic license, imagination and a wonderful use of colour. Rather than simply depicting the scenery, Hockney integrates personal memory, a sense of familiarity, and evident affection for the location into this masterpiece.

The original painting now hangs at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, USA. and is considered a major landmark in the history of art. The painting represents a significant shift in Hockney's artistic development. Following an extended period of living and working primarily in the United States, his depiction of Garrowby Hill signals a renewed engagement with the English landscape. There followed many paintings and installations inspired by the Yorkshire Wolds.

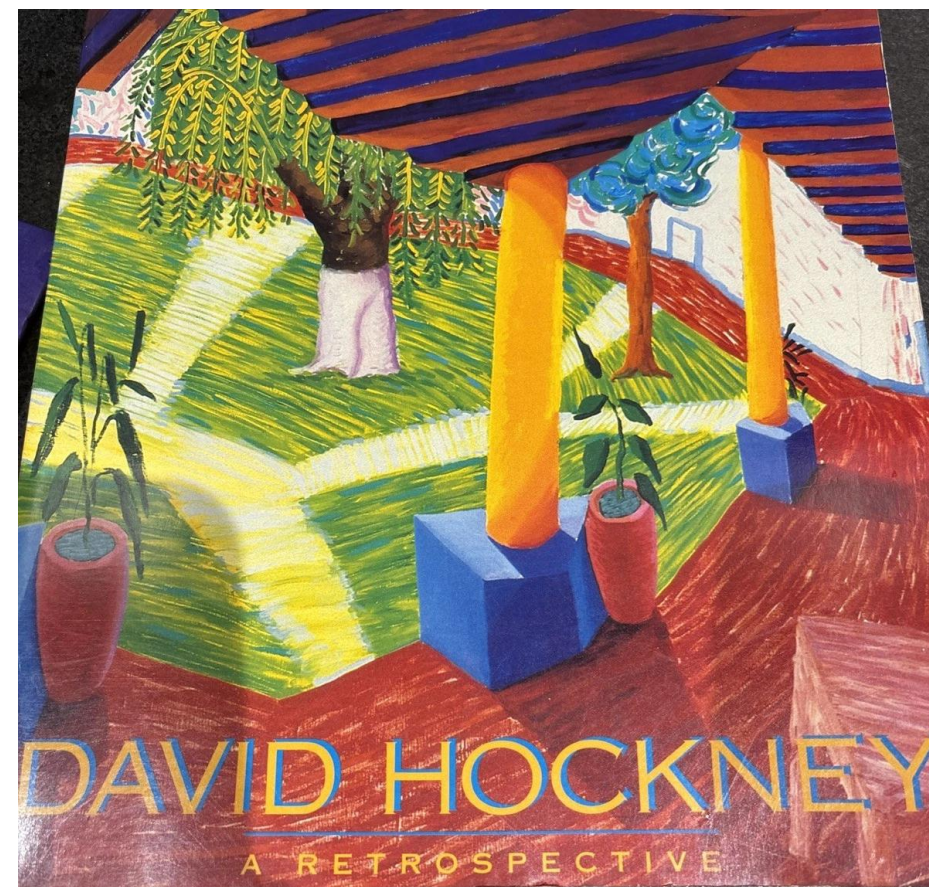


# THE 2017 PAINTING OF GARROWBY HILL

A second version (the purple road version) was created in 2017.

Hockney had a major retrospective at Tate Britain, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the Met in New York. He revisited his Yorkshire landscapes including his painting of Garrowby Hill in a new version. The exhibitions played a major role in reinforcing him as a vibrant late-career colourist.

The 2017 version was auctioned at Sotheby's where it sold to a private buyer (*on 2 March 2022 (Lot 124)*) for £14,093,950 (with fees / buyer's premium).





# HYMN TO THE HILLS

To accompany the sale, Sotheby's produced a video description titled "Hymn to the Hills."

The link is

<https://youtu.be/KNxXYA91sds://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hzj1cBkMo8>

I encourage you to copy this link this link and see the beauty of Yorkshire and Hockney's skill in representing this countryside through his artwork.



# GOING UP GARROWBY HILL

There are other paintings by David Hockney of Garrowby Hill.

In the year 2000 he painted *“Going Up Garrowby Hill”* -

when asked about the subject he said :-

*“I’ve known this countryside quite intimately since the early fifties, when I came here to work on a farm during breaks from school.” Hockney said. “I cycled around, and I discovered it was rather beautiful.”*

Quote New Yorker Magazine 9/6/2025

As a teenager he spent two summers stacking corn on a farm in Huggate (a village at the top of the hill.

*“It made me fall in love with this part of the world,” he said. “I cycled all over it. And cycling, you really do realize it’s quite hilly. It’s not flat at all.”*

# GOING UP GARROWBY HILL



NONE OF HIS PAINTINGS  
SHOW THE NEARBY  
VILLAGES OF BISHOP  
WILTON,  
KIRBY UNDERDALE,  
BUGTHORPE,  
FULL SUTTON, AND  
SKIRPENBECK.

The area is a wonderful place to visit. I invite you to come and walk around Garrowby Hill and the Wolds.

The churches are just about to get a new Rector:-

Do come and call in on us.

