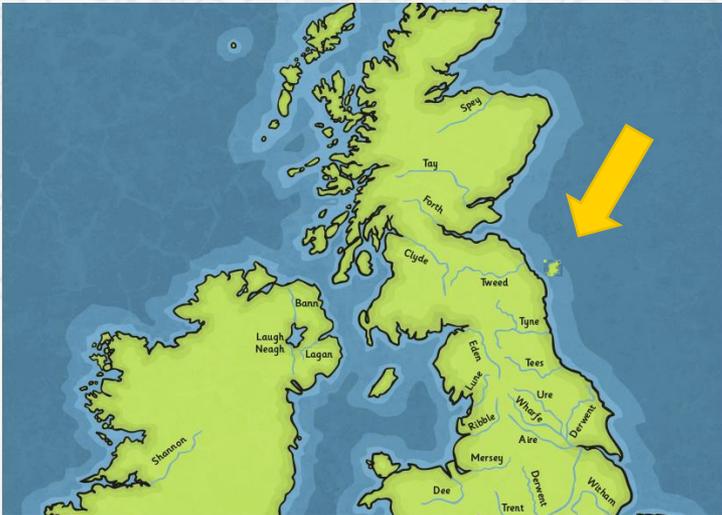


The Holy Island of Lindisfarne



Where Is Lindisfarne?

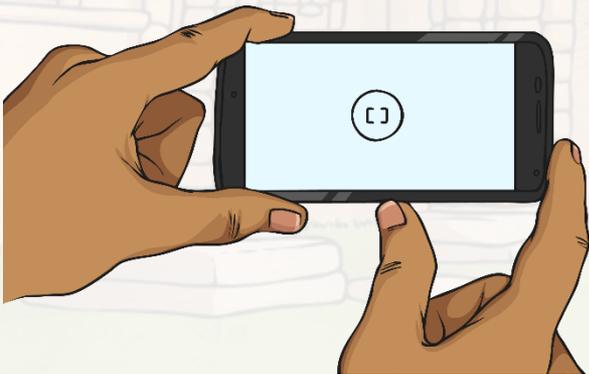
Lindisfarne is in the north-east of England, near Berwick-upon-Tweed and close to Hadrian's Wall. It is a tidal island, which means twice in every 24 hours, the tide cuts the island off from the mainland and the only way to reach Lindisfarne is via boat.



There is a paved causeway to walk across when the tide is out.

Facts

- There are only 160 residents on Lindisfarne, but the island has approximately 650,000 visitors each year.
- The Anglo-Saxon name is Lindisfarne, whilst the Holy Island part of the name derives from the Viking raids.
- The island is 4.8km east to west and 2.4km north to south.



From the Beginning

The Romans living in England did not affect Lindisfarne.

In AD634, the priory was founded by an Irish monk called St. Aidan. He had been sent there by King Oswald, King of Northumbria.

He stayed there until he died in AD651.

A monk is a person who gives up their life for the work of God. Monks live in monasteries and serve the community. They spend their days in prayer, worship and in service to others.



Saint Cuthbert

Northumberland's patron saint, St. Cuthbert, was an abbot of the monastery, and later the bishop. He was known for his charm and generosity to the poor, and often performed healing miracles and gave people advice about their problems. He became known as 'The Wonder Worker of Britain'.

There is a long trail called St. Cuthbert's Way which visitors can walk along.



Mead:

The monks became well-known for brewing an alcoholic drink called mead. To this day, the recipe is still kept a secret by the people who make Lindisfarne Mead.

The Viking Raids

Around the time when the Vikings landed on Lindisfarne, the local community of Anglo-Saxons were not behaving in a very Christian way.

The writer Alcuin recorded:

“Either this is the beginning of greater tribulation, or else the sins of the inhabitants have called it upon them. Truly it has not happened by chance, but it is a sign that it was well merited by someone”.

He believed that the Viking landings were a punishment for the local people's behaviour.



The Vikings Have Landed



On 8th June AD793, the Vikings landed on Lindisfarne. They had sailed across the North Sea from Denmark and Norway. They rampaged through the island and killed monks in the priory. They stole gold and silver, and caused destruction and death.

Vikings are usually described as savages with a love of killing. However, it is likely that they had made pre-attack visits to the island and knew it would have a lot of wealth for them to steal.



Did you know?

The Vikings were more orderly than first thought, and would go back to their own homes with their hoards, and come back to other parts of the UK to continue their raids.

Holy Island

Alcuin reported on the Viking raids at Lindisfarne.

“The heathens poured out the blood of saints around the altar, and trampled on the bodies of saints in the temple of God, like dung in the streets”.

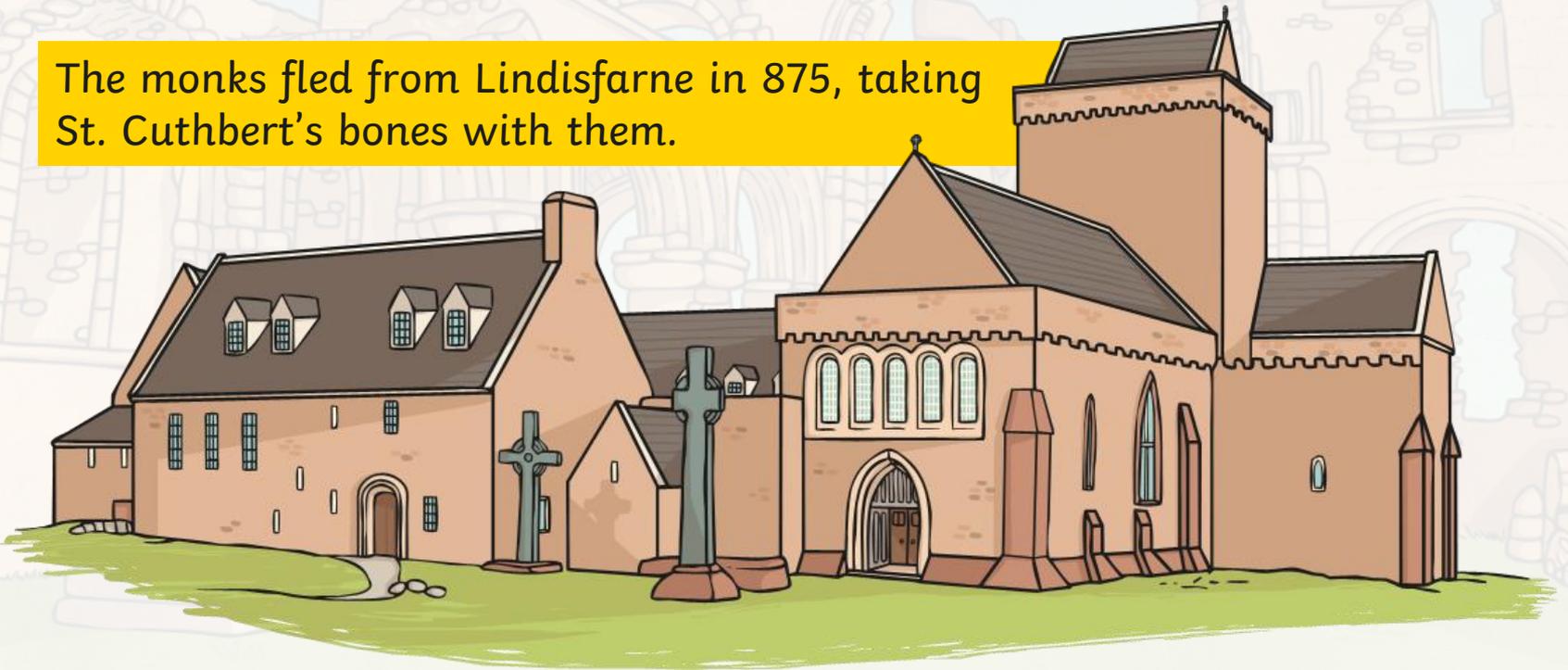


From then on, the island was known as Holy Island.

A Priory without Monks

In the years following the raids, the Danes were living in York. Their army moved into Northumberland and caused the collapse of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

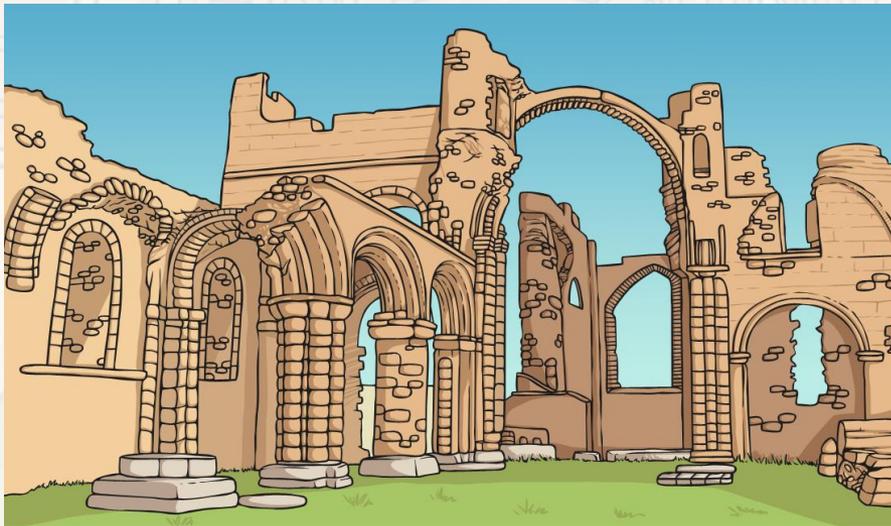
The monks fled from Lindisfarne in 875, taking St. Cuthbert's bones with them.



From Normans to Tudors

In 1093, the Normans turned the priory into a Benedictine house, so it still had a religious purpose. This continued until 1536, when King Henry VIII reformed the Catholic Church and ordered all religious houses to be destroyed.

The priory was left in ruins. There is part of the rainbow arch still standing.



Lindisfarne Castle

The castle was built around 1550. This was around the time the priory was no longer being used. Some of the stones from the priory were used to build the castle.

The castle is very small and is more of a fort. When James I was King of England and Scotland, it was no longer needed for defence and instead was used to protect the harbour.



A Beautiful Attraction

In 1901, the castle was bought by Edward Hudson and he had it refurbished by the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. It is now owned by the National Trust and is an important visitor's attraction, standing majestically on the hill overlooking the sea.



Lime Kilns

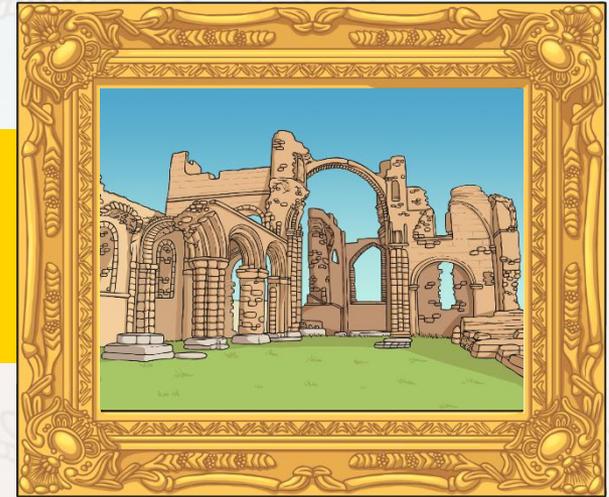
In the 1860s, a Dundee company built lime kilns on the island. Lime was burnt there until the end of the 19th century. They are still standing and are an interesting reminder of the island's industrial past.



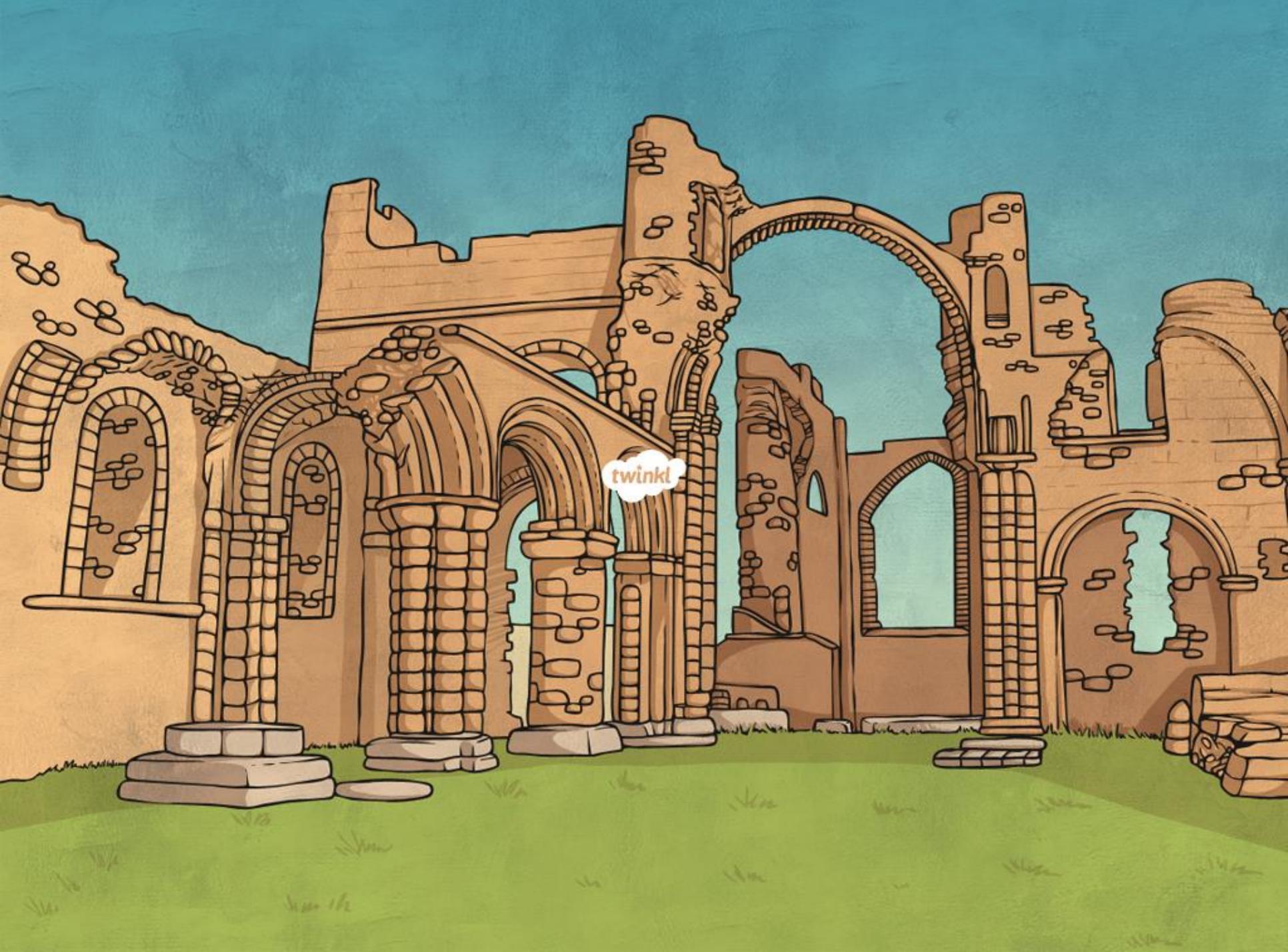
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Celebrity Status

The artists J.M.W. Turner and Charles Rennie Mackintosh have both produced art work from visiting the island.



It has been used as a filming location for a number of films and a televised series.



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