

Lindisfarne Fact File

Lindisfarne is in the northeast 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 you cannot get across unless you have a boat. There is a paved causeway, which is like a path, to walk across at low tide.

Facts:

- There are only 160 residents on Lindisfarne but the island has approximately 650,000 visitors each year.
- The Anglo-Saxon name is Lindisfarne, while the Holy Island part of the name came from the Viking raids.
- The island measures 4.8km east to west and 2.4km north to south.
- The Romans living in England did not affect Lindisfarne.
- In AD634, the priory was founded by an Irish monk called Saint Aiden. He had been sent there by King Oswald of Northumbria.
- Saint Aiden stayed there until he died in AD651.



Northumberland's patron saint (Saint Cuthbert) was an abbot of the monastery, and later the bishop. He was known for his charm and generosity to the poor. He 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.

What is a monk?

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 service to others.

The Viking Raids

At the time of the Vikings landing 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.

On 11th January 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 that it would have a lot of wealth for them to steal.

300 Years Later

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 when 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. It was used by Henry VIII to prevent attacks from Scotland.

When James I was King of England and Scotland together, it was no longer needed for defence and instead just protected the harbour.

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 attraction, standing majestically on the hill overlooking the sea.

