

Grace Darling Museum

Welcome to the RNLI Grace Darling Museum

In the true spirit of the lifeboat service, Grace Horsley Darling (1815–42) risked her life to rescue others from certain death in a terrible storm. Grace's heroism earned her the first RNLI Medal for Gallantry to be awarded to a woman. Grace died of tuberculosis only 4 years later but her fame remains. The museum tells the story of the fearless girl who became a reluctant celebrity.

The original Grace Darling Museum opened on this site in 1938. Over 75 years later, the building has been completely redeveloped using external funding. The stylish, environmentally friendly new building retains the intimacy of the old museum, and adds facilities for school visits, exhibitions, and events.

The museum illustrates Grace's upbringing and life in the lighthouse, the events of the rescue and her subsequent fame. Grace's story is told through personal items, including letters, family portraits and the famous coble. The museum also features atmospheric audio-visual interpretation and a stunning model of the Longstone lighthouse.

National heroine, Northumbrian icon

Grace Darling saw the SS Forfarshire, an early paddle steamer, wrecked on Big Harcour rock. The lighthouse keeper's daughter vowed to help. Grace and her father rowed out to sea in their small open boat, or coble, to rescue nine survivors clinging onto the rock. Grace held the coble steady in the raging seas while William helped the passengers. Soon news of Grace's deed spread nationwide and her name became associated with courage and humanity.

Grace and her father demonstrated the same qualities as lifeboat crews today: they risked their lives to save others in the face of great danger. Over 175 years later, a lifeboat named Grace Darling operates at nearby Seahouses Lifeboat Station.

The RNLI is the registered charity that saves lives at sea. Since its formation in 1824 its volunteer crews and since 2001 its lifeguards, have saved more than 140,000 lives.



The Rescue of the Forfarshire, after FS Lowther, c1840. Image: RNLI



Grace Darling by Thomas Brooks, c1866.
Image: RNLI

RNLI Heritage

RNLI Heritage is the never-ending story of our people. The Heritage Team's aim is to inspire current and future generations of supporters and lifesavers to enable the RNLI to continue to save lives at sea.

In order to do this we:

- collect objects, archives and pictures
- preserve them, their implications and their narratives
- connect with and in doing so, inspire others.

How to find us: in the village, opposite St Aidan's church and a short walk from the castle. The large car park is opposite the castle, with public toilets near the museum.

Free entry

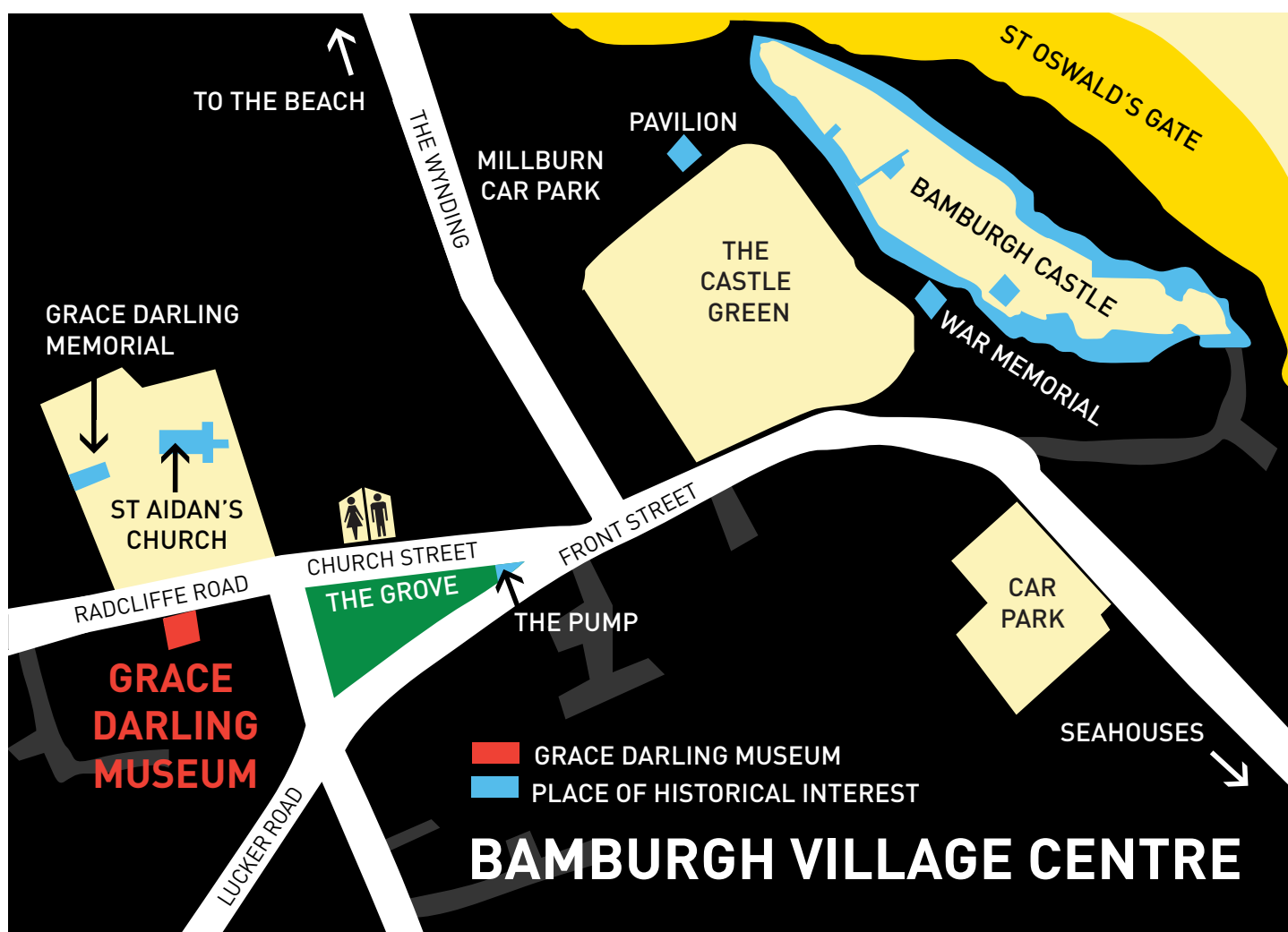
Opening times:

Easter to September: Mon–Sun 10am–5pm (last entry 4.15pm)

October to Easter: Tues–Sun 10am–4pm (last entry 3.30pm)

Please check with the museum for Bank Holiday opening times, group visits or to hire our Lantern Room, which is available for research and meetings.

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Lifeboats

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