

# Grace Darling



# Early Life

- Grace Darling was born on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1815, in Bamburgh, Northumberland.
- Grace's father, William Darling, was a lighthouse keeper on Brownsman Island.
- This island was one of the largest of the Farne Islands, which are off the north coast of Northumberland.



# Early Life

- Grace lived on Brownsman Island with her family. No trees grew on the island, but there was lots of grass for their goats and sheep
- Grace and her siblings would often row out in their boat and explore the cliffs and caves. Sometimes the bad weather made this dangerous, but Grace knew enough about the area to stay safe.
- Occasionally, passing ships and boats would crash into the rocks and William Darling and his sons would go to rescue the sailors and collect parts of the broken boats.



# Moving to Longstone

- The lighthouse at Brownsman Island was important for boats travelling to the Farne islands. It's bright light was a signal to show them where the cliffs and dangerous waters were.
- However, it couldn't warn boats of the dangers at the nearby islands of Knavestone, Longstone and Harcars.
- William Darling sent a message to the people responsible for keeping boats safe (Trinity House), and they built a lighthouse on Longstone.
- The family moved to this new lighthouse in 1825, when Grace was ten. It was a lonely place, and this is where Grace would live for the rest of her life.



# Living in a Lighthouse

- In the top of the lighthouse lantern, William taught his children how to recognise the different kinds of sea vessels, where they were heading, and what they were carrying. He told them to keep an eye out for anything that looked unusual.
- For a long time, Grace helped her mother with chores and she could run the lighthouse all by herself.
- When Grace turned 15, she and her younger twin brothers were the only remaining children living at home. Because of this, Grace had to row back and forth between the islands to fetch food and help her father.
- Grace became her father's assistant and was capable of maintaining the lantern, mending fishing nets and keeping a watch out for vessels in danger.

# The Rescue

- On 7<sup>th</sup> September 1838, the paddle steamer SS Forfarshire was travelling from Hull to Dundee carrying 60 passengers.
- It was a stormy night and the Forfarshire was having trouble with its engine boilers.
- Suddenly disaster struck, and it hit the rocks off the coast of the Farne Islands!
- Almost all 60 passengers died in the accident, except for 4 passengers and 5 crew members who had clung to nearby rocks. 9 crew members and 1 passenger also escaped in a lifeboat.



# The Rescue

- As morning drew closer, the survivors were still clinging to the rocks. William and Grace Darling decided to row out to rescue them.
- William climbed the rocks to reach the sailors, and Grace stayed in control of the boat.
- The storm raged on, but Grace fought hard to keep the boat away from the rocks while her father rescued the survivors.
- William and Grace helped all of the survivors onto the boat, until all of them were safe.
- They took the survivors back to the lighthouse, where they treated their injuries and looked after them for 3 days, until the storm had finally passed.



# After the Rescue

- After the rescue, Grace Darling became a heroine. The Victorian newspapers loved the story of her outstanding bravery. After publishing her story, Grace became a celebrity.
- Word had spread to Queen Victoria, and in November 1838 Grace received a personal letter from her with a reward of £50! She also got a lot of post sent to her, requesting to visit her. She got money and gifts sent to her too.
- In Victorian England, it was possible to buy plates, postcards and even boxes of chocolates with Grace's face on them.
- Grace sadly died three years after the rescue aged 26. She is still remembered by many across the world today.



# Grace's Memory

- In 1880, 'Grace Darling: Her True Story' was published that accurately retells her life.
- In 1938, the RNLi Grace Darling Museum opens to remember the life of who some people consider Victorian Britain's greatest heroine. The museum guides you through Grace's early life and the events of the rescue.





twinkl