



TIMBERBUSH
TOURS

HOLY ISLAND, ALNWICK & THE KINGDOM OF NORTHUMBRIA

Please note that this tour includes a crossing over to Holy Island via a causeway. Sometimes this route will be taken in reverse, depending on tidal timings.

After leaving the city we travel through a county called East Lothian, full of rich farmland with a range of hills away to the right, the **Lammermuirs**. We pass by the town of **Musselburgh**, home of the world's oldest golf course – it dates back to 1672 and has been the venue for the Open Championship six times. At **Prestonpans** a battle took place in 1745 between a government army and one led by a famous figure in Scottish history, **Bonnie Prince Charlie**. This was the fifth and last Jacobite Uprising which were attempts to regain the throne for the deposed House of Stewart. All the uprisings ultimately failed but this battle was won by the Jacobites.

At this point you will see the **Firth of Forth** over to the left. This is an inlet of the North Sea that separates Britain from mainland Europe. Soon we drive inland and pass **Haddington** on our right, the county town for East Lothian and a pleasant market town.

Soon we pass **Dunbar** away to our left. It has a ruined castle overlooking the harbour. There were two battles fought close to Dunbar in 1296 & 1650, both defeats for the Scots. A man called **John Muir** was born in Dunbar in 1838 - he emigrated to the USA aged 11 with his family and was to become a world-famous naturalist, environmentalist, explorer & geologist – he is known as the '**Father of World Conservation**'.

Two fairly ugly buildings appear soon, the first is a concrete-making factory, the second is **Torness**, one of Scotland's two nuclear power stations, opened in 1988. We now drive inland again, passing a few small villages and later a sign to the port of **Eyemouth** : it has a busy lifeboat station and used to be a centre for smuggling as it is the nearest Scottish port to mainland Europe. Once we get back to the coast, look out for the large sign on the left that shows that we have crossed the border into England (you won't need your passport!).



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Berwick-on-Tweed lies just a few kilometres into England but it changed hands 14 times between the two countries between the 13th and 15thc. This was because of its strategic position – to Scotland it was an important commercial port for trading with Europe while for England it was a garrison town for their armies and a gateway into Scotland. Walls around the town dating to the 13th & 16th c. still stand as does a fine bridge over the river Tweed, built in 1611 and still in use.

Not far from Berwick is the causeway that takes us over to **Holy Island** (also known by the Celtic name of **Lindisfarne**). The island is cut off from the mainland twice a day by the sea and on the right of the causeway you can see posts that mark the old 'Pilgrims Route' that has been used since the 11thc. Holy Island's religious history goes back to 635 when St Aidan set up a Christian community here but it was his successor, St Cuthbert, who was to become its most famous bishop. Most of the island is a nature reserve but in the village you can visit the ruins of the **Lindisfarne Priory**, dating back to 1082 and the attractive **Lindisfarne Castle** (built 1550) that stands on a small hill about 1½ km away.

Now we head into **Alnwick**, a market town but also full of history – two Scottish armies were defeated in battles here in 1093 & 1174. It is home to the magnificent **Alnwick Castle** – the oldest part dates back to 1096 and for many centuries it was home to a powerful family of barons called the Percys who were later given the title of Duke of Northumberland. The current Duke and his family still live in the castle for part of the year and it was his wife, the Duchess, who was responsible for the creation of the attractive **Alnwick Gardens** which are situated near the castle.

Because of the castle's superb appearance it has been used in a number of films including 'Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves', 'Mary Queen of Scots' & 'Elizabeth', but it is best known for representing Hogwarts School in some of the **Harry Potter** films.

After spending time in Alnwick we start our return journey, this time heading inland and through farming country. The Cheviot Hills will appear before long – they straddle the border country of both Scotland & England, the highest point being 815 metres. We drive through another market town called **Wooler** and soon afterwards we leave the main road to reach the site of one of the most disastrous battles in Scottish history (time permitting). This was the **Battle of Flodden** in 1513 when the Scots, led by King James IV, were heavily defeated by an English army and 10,000 Scots were killed including



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the king. Where he was killed there is now a large granite cross with an inscription which reads “To the Brave of Both Nations”.

We cross over the river Tweed (the bridge was built in 1766) and we are now back in Scotland. The town on the Scottish side is **Coldstream** and in the 19thc. it was a popular place for runaway couples from England wanting to marry, the age of consent being lower in Scotland.

Our drive northwards is through pleasant farming country and over the **Lammermuir Hills** until eventually the outline of Edinburgh comes into view.