

DLR - Artefact 6 (The Lambton Worm)

[Audio: background music, light and upbeat. Person talking to camera.]

(Setting: Warehouse, historical dolls and a painting of John Lambton slaying the Lambton Worm.

(Large sign with text and images:

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Images include: The skeletal jaw of a dinosaur, Lady's Miao Boots (China/Thailand), children reading Viking books and examining ancient Viking pottery, child holding a rock.

(Adam Bushnell) Hello, my name is Adam Bushnell and I'm an author from County Durham. Today, I'm working with Durham Learning Resources, and this is one of the paintings that's available for primary schools. It's the story of the Lambton Worm probably our most famous story from the whole of the North East of England.

(Object: Adam Bushnell gestures towards the painting of the Lambton Worm. The camera zooms in on the painting's details showing John Lambton wearing a purple, orange and yellow knight suit; the suit has sharp spikes. John Lambton is holding a silver spear and slaying the gigantic green Lambton Worm into pieces.)

(Adam Bushnell) The Lambton worm is a super important story, it's important for lots of different reasons but here's one of them. The Lambton worm is likely to be a Viking story originally because the word that the Vikings used for dragon was Wyrn w-y-r-m. When the Vikings invaded and settled here in the North East of England they told lots of stories. We listened to them, and we retold them ourselves, but we changed them from Wyrn stories into worm stories and that's where the story of the Lambton Worm comes from.

(Action: Adam Bushnell make lots of hand gestures as he speaks, opening and closing them and pointing to the camera.)

(Adam Bushnell) The story of the Lambton worm is about this character he who is called John Lambton.

(Action: Adam Bushnell points to the painting and points to John Lambton who is slaying the Lambton Worm into pieces.)

(Adam Bushnell) When John Lambton was a boy, he didn't want to go to church with his family so instead he collected his fishing gear, and he headed off down to the River Wear. When he got there, he cast his line into the water when he reeled in the hook there was nothing there on the end, so he cursed his family, and he cursed his look. Then he cast his fishing line into the water again when he reeled in the hook there was nothing.

(Action: Adam Bushnell uses his hands to show the action of casting out a fishing line and reeling the hook in.)

(Adam Bushnell) So, he cursed Lambton Castle, and he cursed the land all around it. He cast his line at the water again and for a third time when he reeled it in there was nothing on the end of his hook. So, he cursed the Church, and he cursed God.

(Adam Bushnell) He cast his line a final time and this time his fishing rod bent right over. He thought he caught himself a huge fat fish but when he reeled it instead there was an ugly evil looking worm.

(Action: Adam Bushnell uses his hands to show the action of casting out a fishing line and reeling the hook in.)

(Adam Bushnell) A green worm that slithered and slimed around the hook, so John Lambton ripped it off and threw it down a well nearby.

(Object: Camera zooms into the green Lambton Worm's face on the painting.)

(Adam Bushnell) He then travelled back to the castle when his family told him off for not going to Church. John Lambton grew up into a young man and as lots of rich young men at the time who lived in castles. He first trained to become a Page and then a Squire and finally a Knight.

(Object: Camera zooms into painting of John Lambton slaying the Lambton Worm.)

(Adam Bushnell) While he was training to become a knight, he was sent off to lands far away to fight in battles that had nothing to do with him. Meanwhile, that worm down in that well had grown longer and it got bigger and had become hungrier it oozed and slimed its way out of the well and it oozed and slimed its way across the land searching for creatures to eat.

(Action: Adam Bushnell uses his hands to represent the snake slithering.)

(Adam Bushnell) It travelled to a farm where it ate pigs, sheep, and cows but then it also ate the farmers that work there and now it had taste for human flesh. It travelled across the land eating people every single day knights were called for, but the

Lambton Worm had a magic power. If you were to slice it in half it could join itself back together.

(Object: Camera zooms into the green Lambton Worm which has been cut into numerous pieces)

(Adam Bushnell) There are lots of different retellings of the Lambton Worm and there are books there are videos on YouTube and there are also songs that retell it. The Lambton Worm is perhaps most famous for being a folk song. The reason that it's a folk song is that during the Victorian times the Lambton worm was performed as a pantomime at Sunderland Empire and there were lots of songs that went with it including the most famous song of the Lambton world.

(Action: Adam Bushnell begins to sing.)

(Adam Bushnell sings) "Wisht lads had ya's gobs I'll tell ya's all an awful story wisht lads had ya's gobs I'll tell you about the worm, and on it goes."

(Adam Bushnell) There's a Victorian writer called Lewis Carroll, who travelled to Sunderland Empire to go and see his family. He heard that song, and he heard this story, and it inspired him to write a poem called the 'Jabberwocky' which is included in his book, Alice in Wonderland. The Lambton Worm has got its roots steeped in literary history. The Lambton worm is not the only worm story from the North East of England, there is a story called the 'Sock Burn Worm.' Sock Burn is now part of Darlington but a long time ago it was called Sock Burn and the sword that was used to kill the Sock Burn Worm hangs up in Durham Cathedral even today.

(Adam Bushnell) In Northumberland, there is a story of the 'Long Witten Worm' in Bamburgh there's a story of the Bamburgh Worm there are worms all over the North East of England and each worm has a different power.

(Adam Bushnell) The Lambton Worm could join itself back together when it was chopped in half.

(Action: Adam Bushnell points at the Lambton Worm and then pushes his two hands together to represent the two halves re-joining themselves.)

(Adam Bushnell) The Long Witten Worm couldn't be killed if its tail was in its cave where it lived.

(Adam Bushnell) The Sockburn Worm could release poisonous gases from its nostrils.

(Action: Adam Bushnell put his hands to his nostrils whilst talking about them.)

(Adam Bushnell) Perhaps you could create your own worm a legless dragon that looks like this.

(Action: Adam Bushnell points to the Lambton Worm on the painting.)

(Adam Bushnell) You could create some powers to go with it. Maybe it can breathe something out of its mouth. Maybe its skin has a different magical property maybe it can turn invisible or can fly.

(Action: Adam Bushnell touches his arm whilst talking about skin.)

(Adam Bushnell) At the end of the Lambton Worm, you can see here John Lambton is covered in spikes and the River Wear runs past him.

(Action: Adam Bushnell points at John Lambton on the painting.)

(Adam Bushnell) If you listen to or read the story you can find out how John Lambton defeated the Lambton Worm and that might give you some ideas for in your story how your worm could be defeated by a local hero, such as yourself.

(Action: Adam Bushnell points to the camera.)

(Text: Navy Blue Screen with text saying 'Durham Learning Resources' logo and a 'Durham County Council' logo.)