

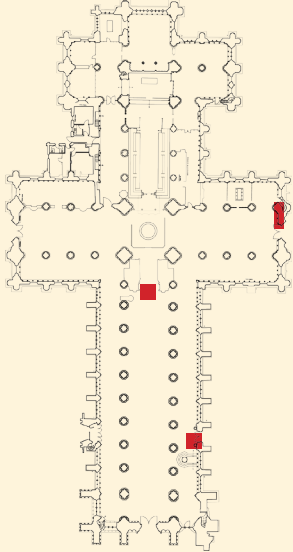
ST JOHN & KING ATHELSTAN



Where - Tomb of St John / Statues of St John and Athelstan / Painting of John and Athelstan (locations on plan).

Who

St John was Bishop of Hexham (687-706) and then York (706-714) before spending his old age in the monastery on the site of what is now Beverley Minster where he died in 721. He was known for his holiness and his miracles. This led to Beverley becoming a place of pilgrimage and thriving importance, in fact by the 1300s Beverley was one of the largest towns in the country.



King Athelstan (894-939) was the first King of all England. He stopped at Beverley on his way north in 934 so that he could pray for military success at the shrine of John of Beverley. Four years later he took the banner of St John into battle against the Scots at Brunanburh. In recognition of his success in battle he gave a number of privileges to Beverley including the right of sanctuary. Beverley became a place where fugitives could find a safe place until justice took its course.

Activity - The painting of John and Athelstan depicts them side by side together. This meeting could never have taken place in real life because John and Athelstan lived 200 years apart from each other. We just have to imagine what the conversation between them would have gone like had they actually met. In partners, see if you can act out what they might have said to each other.



- How might King John have argued his case for why he needed to fight the Scots?
- Why was it so important to him to win the battle?
- How might St John have replied?
- Would he have taken some convincing?
- What might the conversation have gone like on King Athelstan's return through Beverley after the battle?
- Do you think St John really influenced the outcome of the battle?

Resources - The animation on the touch screen nearby.

Curriculum links - History, RE