

The Lambton Worm

One Sunday morning, while everyone else was at mass, John Lambton went fishing in the River Wear. The young heir to Lambton Hall didn't seem to care that most people would have a very low opinion of this and confidently cast his bait into the water.

After what seemed like hours, he finally felt a sharp tug on the line. "Aha, this must be a fine strong fish, it has put up a mighty struggle!" he cried aloud to no one in particular as he hefted his prize onto the bank.

John Lambton looked down in dismay at his catch – it wasn't a fine fish after all but a rather ugly, slimy green worm. The creature writhed powerfully on the bank and Lambton decided there and then he wasn't taking it home. He looked around, wondering how he could get rid of the gruesome beast. His eyes landed on the ancient well and he immediately ran toward it rod, line and all. Heaving the creature up and over the edge, Lambton watched as it fell into the inky blackness and landed with a splash in the water below. He promptly turned on his heel and marched off home, never giving the worm another thought.

Years passed and Young Lambton grew tall and strong. He announced he wished to join a Crusade to the Holy Land and set off almost at once with a band of brave knights to fight wars in that faraway place.

All this time the worm had also been growing steadily in its deep dark hiding place. It was now enormously strong, enormously long and very, very hungry.

Eventually, the giant worm crawled out of the well. Each night it went hunting, roaming around the land eating everyone's animals. Sheep, lambs, and calves kept disappearing and it could drink the milk of a dozen cows in one go! The foul creature even took little children from where they lay sleeping in their beds and swallowed them in one enormous bite. When it had eaten its fill, the worm would return to Penshaw Hill and wrap itself round and round – seven times in all.

The people lived in dread and fear of this terrible creature and tried to think of ways to rid themselves of it. It was all they could talk about. News spread far and wide of the awful worm and its dreadful deeds. Word of the worm reached Young Lambton's ears in Palestine and he returned home immediately, concerned for his family and the people of the area.

Lambton donned his armour and set out to face the fearful creature. After a long and fierce battle, the brave knight triumphed, slashing the huge worm into pieces.

The celebrations were loud and boisterous as the relieved people gave thanks that the evil beast was no more. At long last they could sleep sound in their beds knowing their children and animals were no longer in danger.

