

# Lihou Priory



Site of Medieval Buildings

## 1 The Priory of Notre Dame de Lihou

The Benedictine Priory on Lihou Island was founded in the 12th century. It was a dative priory where dues were collected for the mother house of Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, northern France. Robert de Torigni, Abbot of Mont Saint Michel, came to Guernsey in AD1156, and his visit may have been for the dedication of the church.

The church was built in at least two phases and was highly decorated with carved limestone from the Caen region of northern France, painted window glass and a floor of green and yellow glazed tiles.

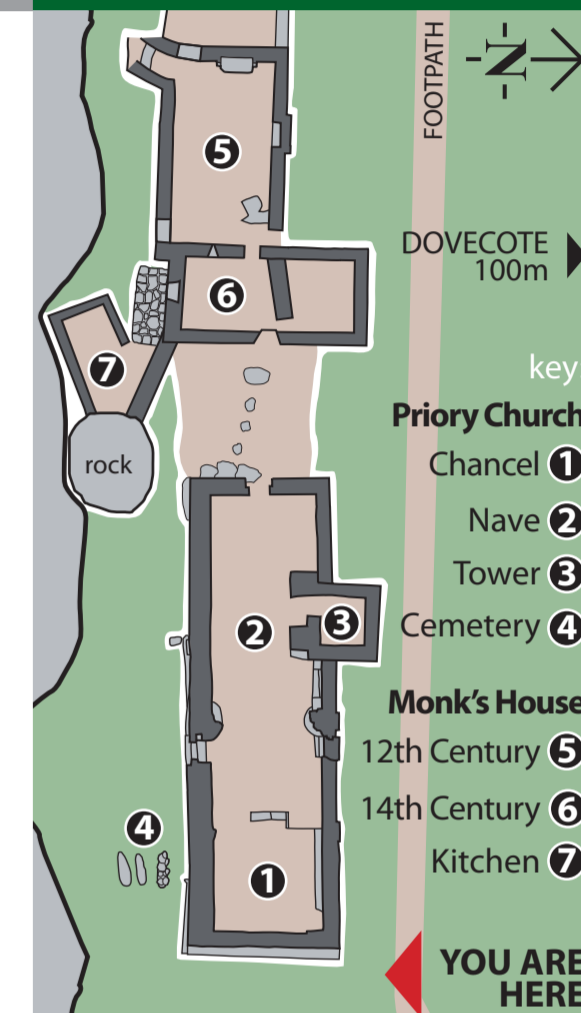
Burials in the cemetery and in the church itself have recently been dated to c AD1250.

Evidence from the domestic buildings gives a date of the early 12th century for the first phase. The buildings were later extended in the 14th and 15th centuries. Many fine objects were recovered. Painted medieval glass, pottery from south west France, coins and decorated metal objects indicate the high status of the Priory. A dovecote for keeping pigeons provided food for the Prior's table.

Finds from Lihou Priory are on display at Guernsey Museum.



The island of Lihou is part of an area of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention

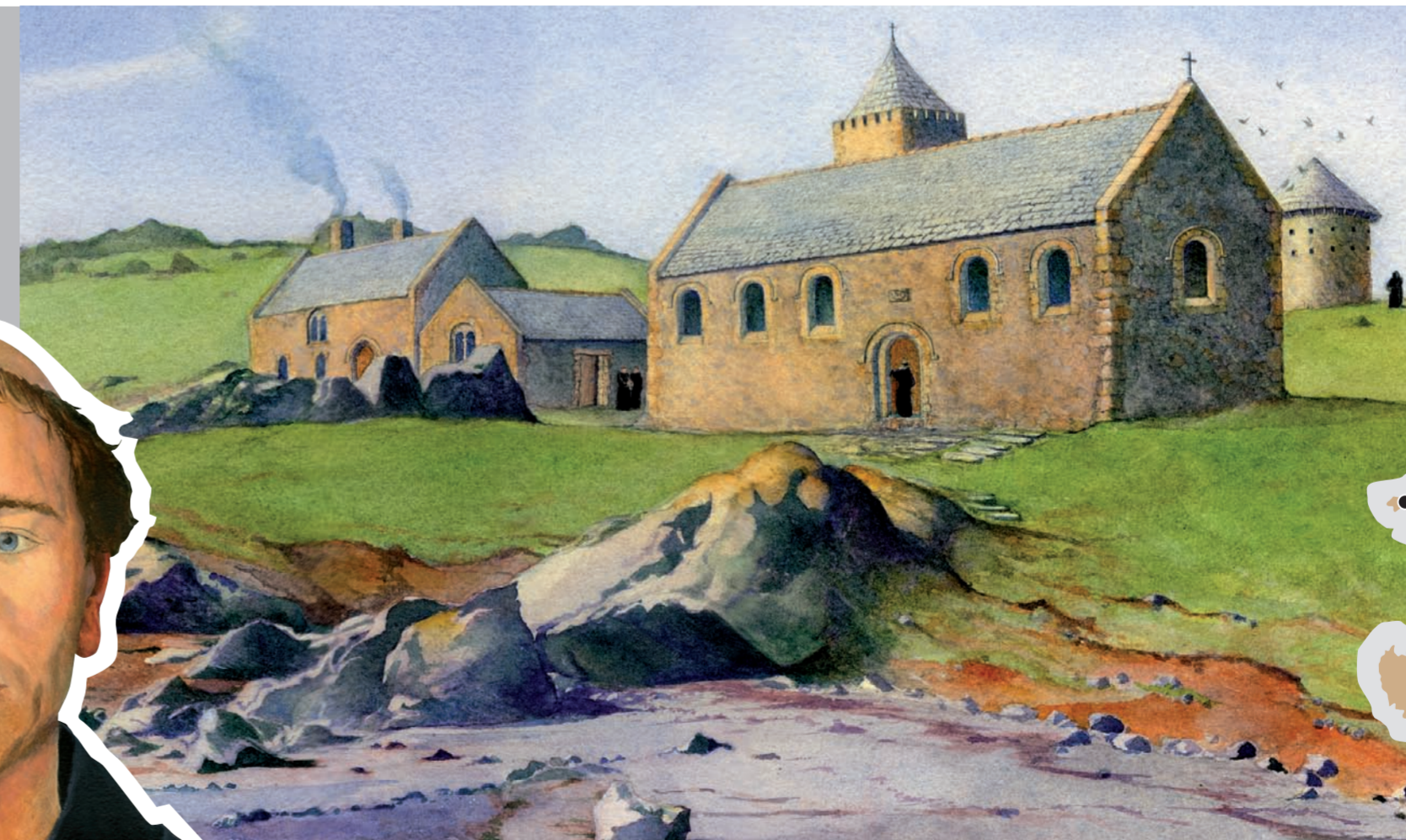


### A Monk's Tale

Lihou Priory would have been the residence of a small community of one or two monks and their servants. They lived in relative comfort during the life of the Priory. By the middle of the 14th century they resided in a substantial two storey stone-built house adjacent to the church. This was adorned with plastered walls which were painted and had leaded windows with painted glass. A magnificent fireplace with a hearth of flat sea-worn stones would have provided warmth during the winter gales. A paved area to the south of the building was most likely part of a walkway between the church and the house. It was blocked off at a later date probably as a protection from the gales and storms which regularly lash the island. In 1302 one of the monks John de L'Espine was murdered at night in the Priory by Thomas le Roer, the servant of the Prior Nicholas Baddes.

When the King's bailiffs and jurats came to the island, le Roer tried to escape back to the sanctuary of the Priory but was overtaken and put to the sword by Jurat Ranulph Gautier.

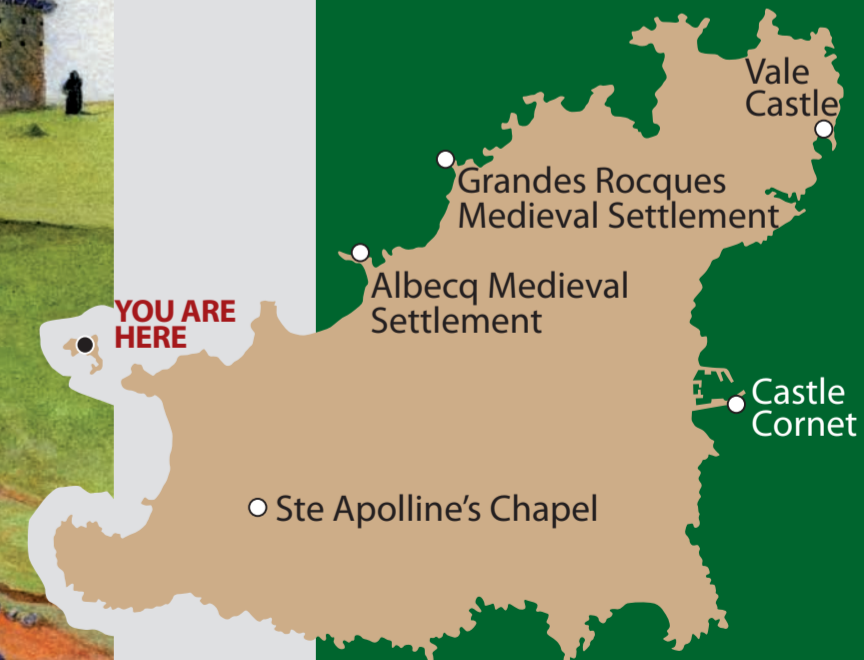
Artist's impression of a Lihou Priory monk produced for the BBC programme 'Meet the Ancestors' © Jane Brayne



Artist's impression of the Priory and its associated buildings © Jane Brayne

Plan of the site showing remains of the buildings

Remains of other medieval buildings can be found in Guernsey



Visitors are welcome to enter the site at their own risk  
**CAUTION: DO NOT CLIMB ON THE WALLS**

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