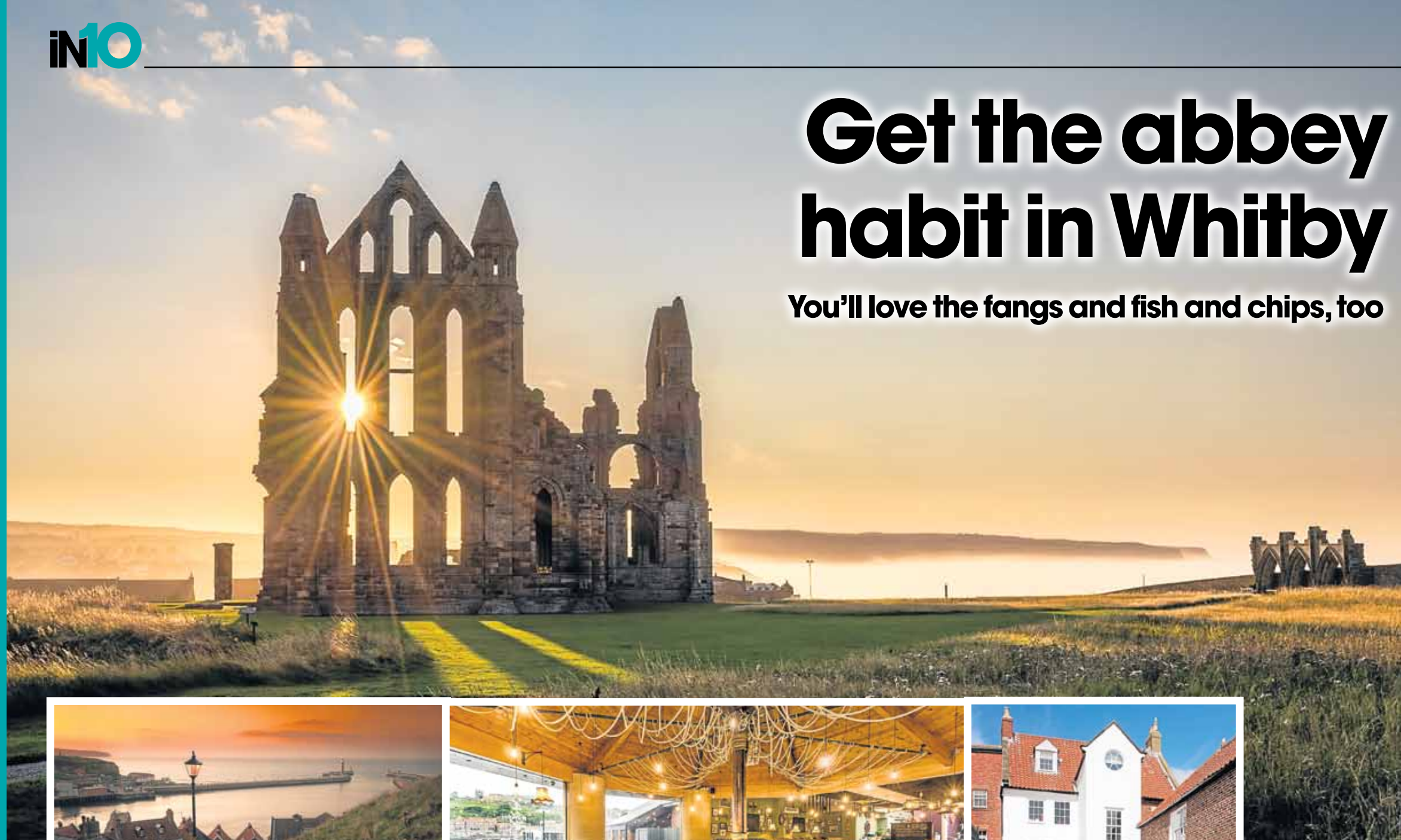


# Get the abbey habit in Whitby

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▼ Step on it - all 199 of them - and head for Whitby for the delights of the Star Inn and the Captain Cook Museum.

By Bill Gibb

IT'S a real brain teaser. How the heck did we get into this situation – and how do we get out? We're in a darkened room and if we can't work out how to get the padlock on the door open then it seems we're trapped. Actually – thankfully – we do know there's no chance of us being hopelessly trapped forever, doomed never to see the outside again. We're in Eskape, one of Whitby's newest attractions. It's located in an old workhouse in the North Yorkshire seaside favourite, just a few minutes' walk from the famous Abbey. The idea is you solve a series of fiendishly difficult clues within an hour – trunks to open, letters to decode, puzzles to work out. In near darkness and with

the room set up as an old warehouse looked after by a night watchman, it's far from easy. If you get stuck, clues are slipped under the door. Even so, we fall agonisingly short, with time running out just as we get to the final clue. It's all brilliant fun, though, and safely out, we decide to go from Whitby's newest attraction to the oldest, that magnificent Abbey. There's a car park at the top if you want save your legs, but we choose what are known as the 199 Steps from the town. Yes, there are indeed one short of a round 200 – we breathlessly counted every one. But both the Abbey and the stunning views are well worth it. You can't miss the ruins from wherever you are in or around Whitby and they're

just as impressive up close. The Benedictine Abbey ([english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)) has been sitting on the headland since the 11th Century and the spiralling stonework you wander around dates from the 13th. In fact, the headland was first settled as a monastery in AD657, becoming one of the most important religious centres in the Anglo-Saxon world. You can lose yourself in the history here for a good couple of hours between the ruins and the splendid visitor centre. The ruins were the inspiration for Bram Stoker and his famous vampire and we reckoned we couldn't visit this Yorkshire seaside favourite without a flavour of one of its other associations. The Dracula Experience ([draculaexperience.co.uk](http://draculaexperience.co.uk)) mixes animated scenes, special effects and live actors

– who got right into the spooky spirit of things – to provide a spine-tinglingly fun tour to get your teeth into. All this puffing up steps, puzzling out mysteries and getting spooked had worked up a fair old hunger. Whitby is fame for its seafood, especially its fish and chips. But we'd been tipped off about an eatery that was a real cut above. Andrew Pern is one of Yorkshire's most respected chefs. He's associated with his Michelin-starred pub The Star Inn at Harome – a regular fixture on lists of

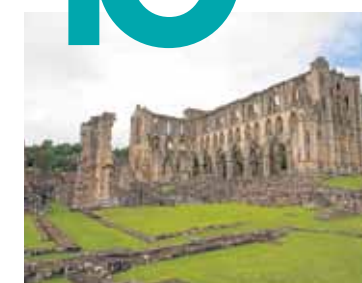
Britain's best – but more recently he's returned to his hometown. The Star Inn The Harbour is the restaurant that sits right opposite the railway station and directly on the quayside. That means that the catches couldn't be fresher – the first boat tied up is the one that catches the lobsters on the menu – or the views more panoramic. The big windows look right over the harbour and up to the Abbey. The welcome was warm and the dishes sensational. While seafood is the

speciality, there's plenty more to choose from. The goujons and the cod were melt-in-the-mouth marvellous but space had to be left for dessert – come on, the place has its own ice cream parlour! The ginger parkin is one of Andrew's signature dishes and was out of this world. All in all, the very best taste of Whitby. Whitby's also famous for its association with one seafarer in particular and the Captain Cook Museum ([cookmuseumwhitby.co.uk](http://cookmuseumwhitby.co.uk)) is a great place to check out his remarkable story and you can even see where he bunked in the roof space. And to mark 2018's 250th anniversary of Cook's Endeavour expedition, a replica of the vessel will soon become yet another of the town's must-sees. Whether it's old or new, Whitby really does have it all.

**FACT BOX**

Details of Whitby's original Escape Rooms are at [eskapewhitby.co.uk](http://eskapewhitby.co.uk)  
 For reservations at the Star Inn, [starinntheharbour.co.uk](http://starinntheharbour.co.uk)  
 All tourism info from [Yorkshire.com](http://Yorkshire.com)

**10 other great abbeys**



**RIEVAULX**  
 Founded in 1132 this former Cistercian abbey near Helmsley, North Yorkshire was one of England's wealthiest.



**FOUNTAINS**  
 Also in North Yorkshire, near Ripon, this is one of the best-preserved Cistercian monastery ruins in England.



**KELSO**  
 Situated right in the middle of town, the ruins of one of the famous four Borders abbeys are very well preserved.



**JEDBURGH**  
 Another of the quartet, it's packed with fascinating architectural features including a rose window.



**TINTERN**  
 Sitting on the Welsh bank of the River Wye, it dates back to 1131 and was a favourite haunt of 18th Century painters.



**BUILDWAS**  
 On the banks of the River Severn in Shropshire this 12th Century abbey was frequently raided by Welsh princes.



**BOLTON**  
 Another North Yorkshire cracker, the ruins of this 12th Century Augustinian monastery also has miles of lovely footpaths.



**MELROSE**  
 This Borders beauty founded in 1136 is built in a wonderfully Gothic style. Looks out for burial spot of Robert the Bruce's heart.



**DRYBURGH**  
 Sir Walter Scott is buried in this River Tweed classic, considered one of Scotland's most evocative monastic ruins.



**KIRKSTALL**  
 Turner is just one of the famous artists tempted into capturing the ruined Cistercian monastery on the River Aire.