

Christianity in England and Ireland



Timeline

- **180 AD** The first evidence of Christianity in Roman Britain
- **304** St Alban is the first known Christian martyr in England
- **313** The Emperor Constantine allows Christians freedom of worship
- **314** 3 bishops from Britain attend a conference in France
- **407** The Romans leave Britain and the native people (Celts) are left to fend for themselves
- **450** Saxons from Germany invade Eastern England. The Saxons are pagans and as they advance Christianity disappears from England except in the South West
- **6th Century** Cut off from Rome
Christians in Wales, Cornwall, Scotland
and Ireland develop their own
Celtic Church.

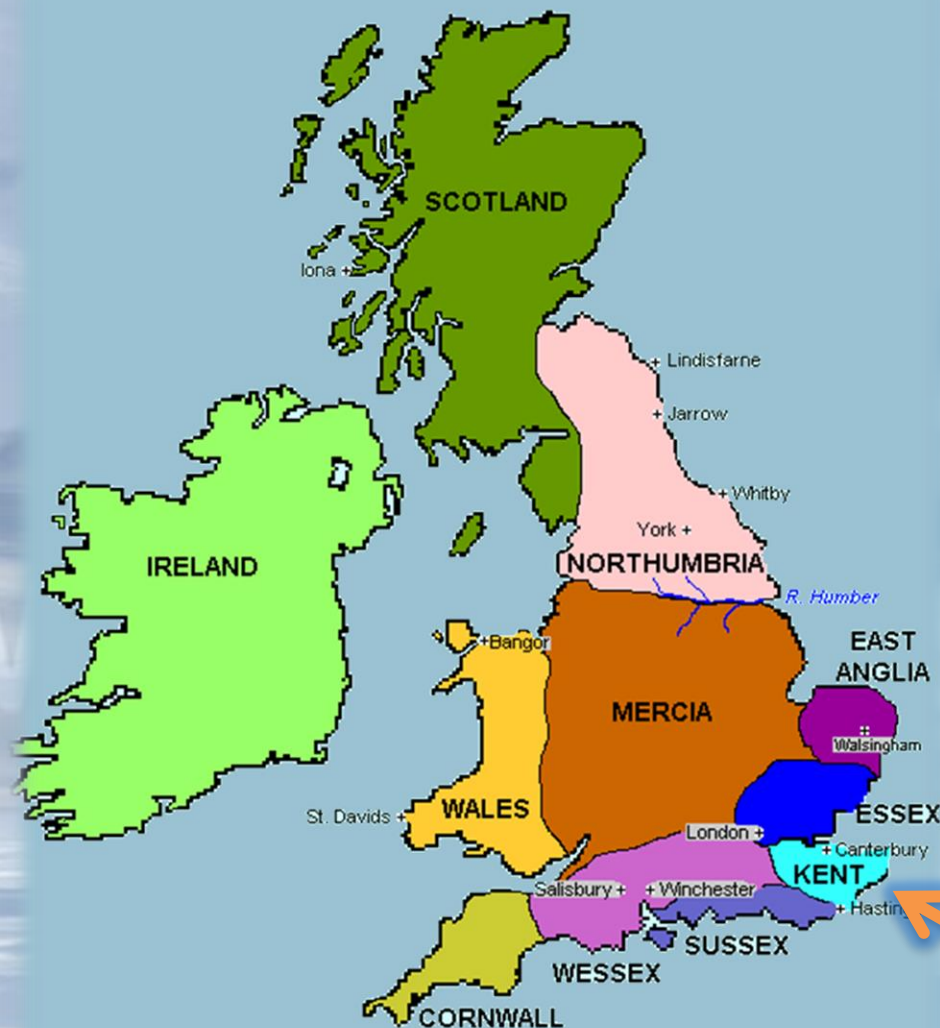


- **597** Missionaries are sent from Rome to preach in Kent. Eventually the people of Kent and Essex are converted
- **601** Augustine becomes the first Archbishop of Canterbury
- **627** The King of Northumbria (a kingdom in the north of England) is converted. Eventually the people follow.
- **630** Missionaries preach in East Anglia and Hampshire
- **653** The king of Mercia (a kingdom in the Midlands) is converted and his people follow



- **664** The king of Northumbria decides to follow the Church in Rome rather than the Celtic Church
- **680** St Wilfrid begins converting Sussex, the last Saxon kingdom to become Christian
- **851** The Danes invade England
- **878** Alfred the Great defeats the Danes and they agree to be baptised
- **Late 10th Century** There is a religious revival in England and many new monasteries are founded





Pope Gregory

- According to tradition, Pope Gregory saw boys on sale in the slave market in Rome.
- He enquired about them and when he was told that they were Angles he replied 'not Angles but angels'.
- When he became Pope he was keen to convert the Anglo-Saxons.
- In 596 he sent a party of about 40 men led by Augustine to Kent. They arrived in 597.



Why from Kent?

- Because the king of Kent, Aethelbert, was married to a Christian princess named Berta.
- It may have been partly due to her influence that Kent was converted to Christianity.
- Furthermore, his nephew, Saeberht, the king of Essex was also converted.
- In time he was converted too.





IRELAND

- **400 A.D.** The 5th Century (400-500 AD) is the time period that it is said that Christianity first came to Ireland
- In **431 AD** Pope Celestine I commanded **Bishop Palladius** to come to Ireland.
- Palladius was an example of a missionary.
- He was sent to spread the word of God to the Celtic Irish, who were pagans.
- **432AD** is said to be the estimated arrival of St Patrick in Ireland



- **462 AD** is the year that St Patrick is said to have died. Some historians argue that St Patrick may have died in 461 AD.
- **600 AD** (beginning of the 7th Century) is the year that the Book of Durrow is said to have been made. This is an important historical document.
- **From 600 AD onwards** there was huge increase in the number of monasteries.
- **795 AD** marks the arrival of the Vikings in Ireland. Viking raids led to the decimation of Irish Christian monasteries



St. Patrick

- **St Patrick** is the most famous missionary to Ireland.
- He was born in Roman, the son of a wealthy official.
- When he was 16, sometime in the early 400s, he was kidnapped by an Irish raiding party and sold into slavery in Ireland.
- As Roman Britain collapsed, Patrick fell victim to one of the raids if the barbarians.
- Patrick worked as a slave for 6 years tending sheep.
- Patrick says in his Confession that he discovered God during his time of captivity.
- After 6 years, Patrick managed to escape, walked 200 miles to the east coast and managed to negotiate a passage aboard a trading ship to Gaul .



- There, he was probably trained to be a Christian priest.
- A day he dreamt that the people of Ireland near the 'western sea' called him to come and walk among them again.
- He then travelled to Ireland as a missionary, and it seems that he never left.



- Patrick concentrated his work in north-east Ireland, and his first church was at Saul.
- He preached to the Kings and their households .
- One of his methods was to 'Christianize' the Celtic Pagan festivals.
- Patrick lit an Easter bonfire on Slane Hill near the Hill of Tara while the King was having his own Pagan bonfire there.
- The King was enraged, but Patrick took the opportunity to preach and managed to make some converts.



Saint Patrick's Day

- It is a cultural and religious celebration held on 17 March, the traditional death date of Saint Patrick (c. 385 – c. 461).
- The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.
- Saint Patrick's Day was made an official Christian feast day in the early 17th century.
- Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks.





The Rise of Monasticism

- During the late 400s, hundreds of churches were set up.
- They were unlike the churches that we would recognise today: most were small wooden buildings, with the occasional small stone structure
- They would not have accommodated more than a few dozen people at a time.
- The first buildings of a monastic settlement were built of wood, then gradually rebuilt in stone.

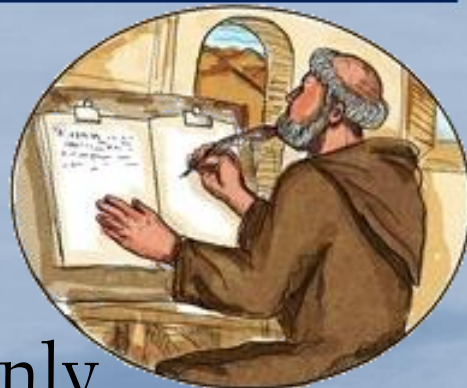


The Daily Grind

- The day of a monk or nun was regulated by regular prayer services in the abbey church.
- These services took place every three hours, day and night.
- When the services were over, monks would be occupied with all the tasks associated with maintaining a self-sustaining community
- Abbeys grew their own food, did all their own building, and in some cases, grew quite prosperous doing so.
- Many grew to be enormously wealthy, largely on the basis of raising sheep and selling the wool.



Learning



- Throughout the Medieval period, the monasteries were practically the only repository of scholarship and learning.
- The monks were by far the best-educated members of society.
- Monasteries acted as libraries for ancient manuscripts.
- Many monks were occupied with laboriously copying sacred texts (generally in a room called the scriptorium).

Illuminated manuscripts

- In the areas where Celtic influence was strongest, for example in Northumbria, the monks created "illuminated" manuscripts; beautifully illustrated Bibles and prayer books with painstakingly created images on most pages.
- These illuminated manuscripts, such as the Lindisfarne Gospel (now in the British Museum), are among the most precious remnants of early Christian Britain.

