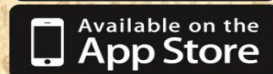


BANGOR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE TRAIL

FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BANGOR'S ANCIENT SAINTS



To download the free app for the Bangor Christian Heritage Trail please visit:



FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BANGOR'S ANCIENT SAINTS

Early Irish saints had an enormous and lasting impact on the development of Christianity across Europe, and none were as influential as the men who studied in this area.

Bangor was one of most important monasteries in Early Ireland. Under the rule of Comgall, saints such as Columbanus and Gall would be inspired to travel to the Continent to spread Christianity to lands torn by warfare and strife.

These men would go on to found some of Europe's most important and lasting Christian centres in France, Austria and Italy. Even today the names of these ancient Irish saints are held in reverence across the Continent.

Follow in their footsteps to discover the land that so influenced them to spread the Word of God. Our Bangor Christian Heritage Trail begins at the North Down Museum, where you can encounter artefacts and stories relating to Bangor's ancient saints.

1. NORTH DOWN MUSEUM
2. MALACHY'S WALL
3. BANGOR ABBEY
4. ST. COMGALL'S CHURCH
5. STRICKLAND'S GLEN
6. SMELT MILL BAY
7. THE COASTAL PATH
8. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9. BANGOR CASTLE WALLED GARDEN



1. NORTH DOWN MUSEUM



These handsome buildings were once the stables, haylofts, stores and laundry of Bangor Castle and they date back to 1852. The Museum houses exhibitions that tell the story of Bangor and the wider area dating from its prehistoric past to the present. Inside you will discover the wonderful Christian Heritage Exhibition, with a number of artefacts and a fine model that shows how the Abbey would have looked during its heyday in the 7th century.

2. MALACHY'S WALL

Saint Malachy is undoubtedly one of the key figures in the story of the medieval church. He was born in Armagh in 1094 and he was first inspired in the Christian life by a hermit before training in the great centre of learning at Lismore, County Waterford. Malachy travelled extensively across the Continent where he encountered new ideas of Christianity that he brought back to help reform the Irish Church. Malachy built the first stone buildings at Bangor Abbey. Today the old stretch of wall which stands near the current Abbey is known as 'Malachy's Wall' in his honour.

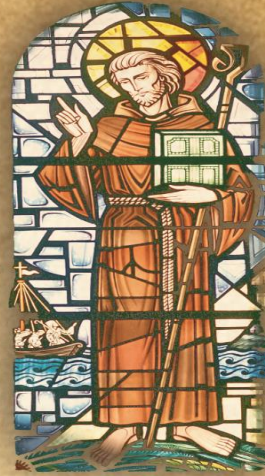
3. BANGOR ABBEY



Saint Comgall founded a monastery on this site in c.558 and it has been an important place of Christian worship ever since. For almost 300 years, Bangor Abbey was one of the greatest monastic schools in Europe. Its missionaries sailed to the Continent, founding monasteries and keeping the flame of Christianity alive.

4. ST. COMGALL'S CHURCH

As Bangor's population grew through the 19th century, it was decided that a church was required to serve the expanding Catholic population. This fine church was constructed here in 1889 and consecrated in 1891. In 1916 Fr. Patrick Scally, a former chaplain of HMS Caroline, became the parish priest of St. Comgall's, and it was at this time that many changes took place. Today the interior of the church is a serene and peaceful place to contemplate the story of its namesake, Saint Comgall.



5. STRICKLAND'S GLEN

As you follow Bryan's Burn, the burbling and sparkling stream that threads its way through Strickland's Glen, it is possible to imagine that this tranquil and enchanting wooded glade has changed little since the time of the ancient saints. Columbanus grew determined to carry out missionary work on the Continent, to help spread the Word of God to those regions that had entered a dark age in the centuries following the collapse of Rome. He sought permission to set off on his mission from Comgall, and he, along with his twelve companions began their long journey, never to return.

6. SMELT MILL BAY



The name 'Smelt Mill Bay' is an echo of Bangor's industrial past, from the old lead smelt mill that once operated here. From along this coastline, Saint Columbanus and his companions set sail in around 589 or 591. They travelled in a curragh, a traditional canoe-shaped, round-bottomed Irish vessel. Though short by today's standards, in the 6th century it would have been an arduous and dangerous journey.

7. THE COASTAL PATH



In the centuries that followed the time of the great saints, Bangor's fortunes ebbed and waned. The region began to take shape under Sir James Hamilton in the 17th century. Bangor became more industrialised, and by the 1780's the cotton mills of Bangor brought employment and prosperity. However a century later, the cotton industry declined and Bangor began to change character again. The coming of the railway in 1865 meant that inexpensive travel from Belfast was possible, and Bangor quickly became a popular and fashionable resort for holidaymakers from Belfast.

8. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

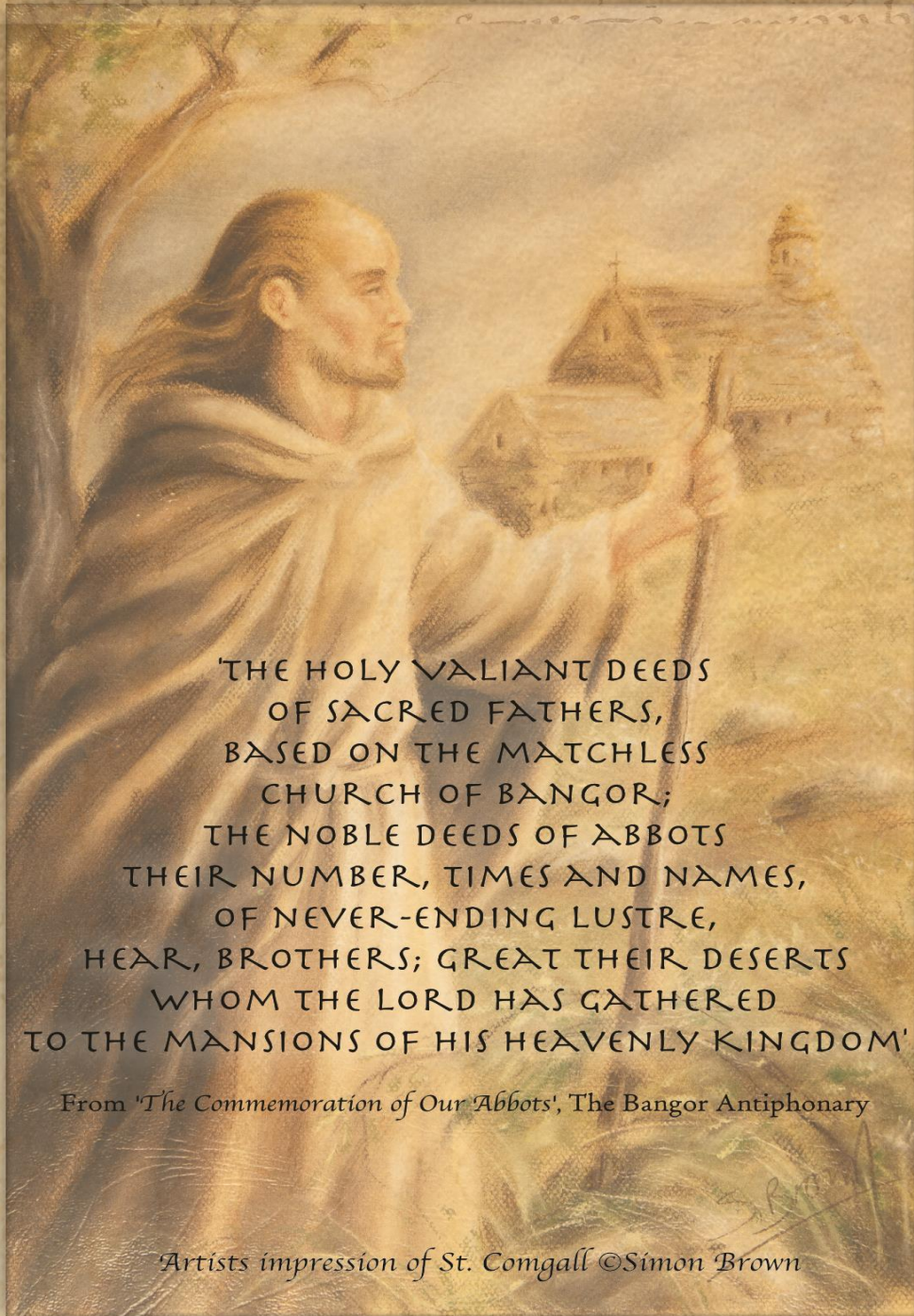
This elegant church is a fine example of a traditional Presbyterian meeting house. Built in 1831, it is the fourth building to be occupied by the congregation. The first Presbyterian clergyman in Bangor was Robert Blair, a fiery, reforming cleric. He came over from Scotland in 1623 to minister to local Scottish settlers. The Scots started arriving in Bangor and North Down in 1606 and their arrival changed the area forever.

9. BANGOR CASTLE WALLED GARDEN



The Garden is a restoration of the original Victorian Walled Garden that was created here in the 1840's by the Ward family, who were the owners of Bangor Castle. In honour of the enduring legacy of Bangor's early saints, soil from the Garden has gone to the Continental churches with links to Columbanus and Gall. The land on which the Garden stands belonged to Bangor Abbey, part of a vast estate that stretched all the way to the Isle of Man.

FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF BANGOR'S ANCIENT SAINTS



'THE HOLY VALIANT DEEDS
OF SACRED FATHERS,
BASED ON THE MATCHLESS
CHURCH OF BANGOR;
THE NOBLE DEEDS OF ABBOTS
THEIR NUMBER, TIMES AND NAMES,
OF NEVER-ENDING LUSTRE,
HEAR, BROTHERS; GREAT THEIR DESERTS
WHOM THE LORD HAS GATHERED
TO THE MANSIONS OF HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM'

From 'The Commemoration of Our Abbots', The Bangor Antiphony

Artists impression of St. Comgall ©Simon Brown

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THE COASTAL PATH

SMELT MILL BAY

STRICKLAND'S GLEN

ST. COMGALL'S CHURCH

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

MALACHY'S WALL

BANGOR ABBEY

NORTH DOWN MUSEUM

BANGOR CASTLE WALLED GARDEN

Bangor

Pickie Fun Park

Asda

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