

# Simple timeline identifying St Hilda's role in the Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon Britain

In the immediate apostolic period, Easter was dated according to Jewish calendar. This placed Easter at the same time as Passover - the 14th day of the 1st lunar month of the Jewish year, called *Nisan*, the day of the crucifixion ( John 19:14).

Calculating date of Easter (*computus*) became a complicated process involving a lunisolar calendar, finding the first Sunday after an idealized Passover on the first full moon after the equinox.

During 1st - 4th centuries, Christianity was one of several religions across Anglo-Saxon Britain. Christians risked persecution ie St Alban (4th Century). Roman Christianization intensified under Constantine the Great in the early 4th century and its promotion by subsequent Christian emperors.

First Council of Nicea (325 ce) - the first council to bring together the various belief strands of Christianity. It is from this council that we have the Nicene Creed.

It also decided that all Christians should observe a common date for Easter according to the practice of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria.

In 407, Britons and Gauls revolted against Roman rule and reverted to previous customs. Along came some of the most famous evangelists in the Ionan (insular) Christian tradition. ie Saints Patrick and Finnian of Clonard were responsible for the Christianization of Ireland, Picts and Anglo-Saxons. Saint Columba then began the conversion of the Dál Riata and the other peoples of Scotland. Aidan of Lindisfarne came from this tradition.

Monasticism spread widely in the celtic regions - most famously at Bangor, and Iona. Monks had a distinctive appearance -the tonsure differed from Roman tradition clergy and also became a point of contention. Some monasteries were led by married clergy, inheritance of religious offices was common.

Obvious signs of disunity between the Ionan and Roman Christian traditions - and conflict with the Nicene Council decree regarding when to celebrate Easter (where Ionan Christians began to celebrate the feast of the Resurrection while Roman Christians continued to solemnly observe Lent) required management.

This occurred at the Synod of Whitby (664 ce) at which St Hilda of Whitby was a leading figure.

Until approx 11th century (post Norman Conquest), most Christians did not attend regular services but relied on preaching tours from monks travelling throughout the country.