

## Worcester Cathedral Cloister stained windows



### **Worcester Cathedral**

If you're looking for a pleasant, short excursion full of historical interest, a trip to Worcester Cathedral isn't that far to go and your visit need only take up half a day. Having been on a day's photographic expedition last year, our visit on this occasion was timed for lunchtime and early afternoon.



### **The cloisters at Worcester Cathedral**

On our previous visit I'd photographed the stained glass in the cathedral cloister, which depicts the history of the English church with special reference to events in Worcester. Alas, there is no guidebook on sale in the Cathedral shop that specifically covers these windows (although I'm told there is one in preparation). While most figures in the windows are named, some names are indistinct and there is no additional, explanatory labelling.

The names are intriguing because the kings, saints and holy people depicted lent their names to many towns and villages around England, but

in many cases the significance of these early figures in the story of British Christianity is not widely known or appreciated.

In due course we will feature all the windows from Roman times to the Reformation, but for the time being we will consider one window at a time, giving an idea of why the featured people were important.

The information about the windows was kindly provided by a volunteer guide at the cathedral from a detailed 'manual' they carry to answer any detailed questions by visitors. He photocopied the relevant information for me at the cathedral offices and it was there that I met Chris Guy, the diocesan archeologist - someone who may well be helpful to us in any future researches regarding our parish.

The windows were designed and executed in the 1930s by [Archibald John Davies](#) (1877-1953) who was Director of the Glass Studio at Bromsgrove School of Applied Arts. From what I have read, they were commissioned 'piecemeal' fashion as and when benefactors provided the funds to pay for them; in most cases they are in memory of loved ones. However there does appear to be a 'masterplan' regarding the chronological sequence and content of the windows, that the commissioners followed when money became available.



### **The Chapter House, used as a cafe in the busy summer months**

From a day tripper's point of view, the Chapter House, better known for grand events, is requisitioned during the summer months and turned into a large tea room to cope with the increased number of visitors. They serve a range of light lunches (ie salads, toasted sandwiches and paninis) as well as coffee and cakes, so whatever your interests the cathedral and surrounding area make a very pleasant venue for a day out. Added to that, Worcester has a wonderful range of shops and pedestrianised shopping streets.



Worcester city centre shopping

## WHO'S WHO IN THE CLOISTER WINDOWS



### Before the Saxon invasions

1. [St Alban](#), the first British martyr.
2. St Ninian, Apostle of Southern Scotland.
3. St Patrick, Apostle of Ireland.
4. St David, Apostle of Wales.
5. St Martin, founder of Monasticism in France.

**6. British Bishops at the Council of Arles, 314.** The Council was convened to resolve a schism among North African Christians. Under Diocletian, Christians in the Roman Province were persecuted and some renounced their faith and handed over holy objects. When Constantine reversed the persecutions, some Christians, led by Donatus, refused to accept the validity of communion administered by the *traditores* (those who had handed over sacred objects) during the persecutions.

7. St Deiniol, Missionary in Wales.

**8. St Germanus,** adviser of the British Church. Shortly after the departure of the Roman legions from Britain in 410, Germanus was selected by Bishops in Gaul to travel to Britain to combat the heresy of Pelagianism that was rife among the British clergy. Germanus led an army of native Britons against a Pictish and Saxon army at Mold in Wales.

**9. Gildas, *British Monk and Chronicler (500-570)*.** Gildas wrote a history of Britain under Roman rule and chronicles the departure of the Romans and the subsequent battles with Anglo-Saxon invaders. He also established a Rule for monastic life; he was a contemporary of St David.

10. Glastonbury, an early Christian centre.

11. St Colombia, Irish Abbot and Missionary .

12. St Columbanus, Irish Abbot and Missionary.



### The Mission of St Augustine, 597

1. St Gregory, the Pope who sent St Augustine.
2. St Augustine, Missionary from Rome to Southern England.
3. King Ethelbert, St Augustine's patron.
4. Queen Bertha, Ethelbert's Christian wife.
5. The School at Canterbury.



6. "Non Angli sed Angeli"

7. Ethelbert and St Augustine.

8. St Augustine meets British bishops.

9. **Coifi, a pagan priest, destroys the idols.** Coifi was chief of the priests of Northumbria, who was instrumental in persuading King Edwin to accept Christianity when Paulinus went to the king on a mission to convert the kingdom. Coifi destroyed all the pagan altars and the idols that he had previously worshipped.

10. **Paulinus converts the Northumbrian Witan.**

11. Paulinus baptises Edwin and Hilda. Paulinus was a monk who was part of the second wave of missionaries sent by Pope Gregory to Britain in 601. He was later sent to Northumbria to convert King Edwin and he also converted Hilda who became the founding abbess of the monastery at Whitby and who hosted the Synod of Whitby.

12. **Birinus baptises Cynigils near Oxford.** Birinus was sent by Pope Honorius to convert the West Saxons in 634. He succeeded in baptising their king, Cynigils in 635.



### The Synod of Whitby (664) adopts Roman ways

1. [King Oswald](#) (king 634-42), defender of the Faith. Oswald brought the northern kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia together. He invited Aidan to convert Northumbria to Christianity and gave him the island of Lindisfarne as his episcopal see.
2. [St Aidan](#) who came from Iona to Lindisfarne and converted the Northumbrians to Christianity.
3. [King Oswy](#), founder of Whitby Monastery. After his brother Oswald was killed by King Penda of the Mercians, Oswy in turn defeated and killed

Penda, eventually becoming Bretawalda (overlord of all Saxon Kingdoms). He accepted the Roman formula for the calculation of Easter at the Synod of Whitby.

4. [St Hilda](#), first abbess of Whitby.
5. Iona, island source of Scottish Christianity.
6. Colman, successor of Aidan at Lindisfarne.
7. Wilfrid, Bishop of York.
8. The Synod of Whitby, 664.
9. Lindisfarne, St Aidan's monastery
10. St Cuthbert, Bishop, buried in Durham Cathedral.
11. Caedmon, poet monk of Whitby.
12. Benedict Biscop, founder of Wearmouth Abbey.



1. King Poeda brought missionaries to Mercia.
2. Wulfhere, first Christian king of Mercia.
3. Theodore, Greek Archbishop of Canterbury.
4. St Chad, united the old and new churches in Mercia.
5. Dinma, first Bishop of Mercia.
6. Finan instructs King Poeda.

7. St Werburg, Abbess, daughter of King Wulfhere.
8. Winifred at the Council of Hertford, 673.
9. Death of King Penda opens Mercia to Christian missions.
10. Kings Egbert and Oswy meet to appoint Theodore archbishop.
11. St Chad with Theodore.
12. St Chad in his oratory.



1. [Bosel, first Bishop of Worcester](#), consecrated in 680, a Whitby monk. He founded the Royal Grammar School Worcester.

2. King Etheldred, Master of Middle England, who appointed Bosel.

3. Egwin, Bishop of Worcester 693, and founder of Evesham Abbey.

4. King Osric, founder of abbeys at Gloucester and Bath.

5. King Offa, founds the Abbey of St Albans.

6. Offfor, Bishop of Worcester, a monk of Whitby.

7. Eaba, Mercian princess who brought the faith to Sussex.
8. Bede, historian of British Christianity.
9. Berthana, first Abbess of Bath.
10. Vision of Eoves, founder of Evesham Abbey.
11. King Oswald, founder of Pershore Abbey.
12. Cyneburga, first Abbess of Gloucester.



1. King Alfred
2. Bishop Werfrith of Worcester, Alfred's friend
3. Duke Ethelred of Mercia, married Alfred's daughter.
4. Ethelflaeda, daughter of Alfred.
5. Treaty of Wedmore 878, after defeat of the Danes.
6. Alfred taught by his mother.



7. Leo IV blesses Alfred at Rome.
8. The baptism of Guthrum the Dane.
9. John Scotus Erigena, Irish monk and philosopher, at Alfred's court.
10. Burhead, donor of Hartlebury to the Bishops of Worcester.
11. Bishop Kinewald reorganised Worcester Diocese.
12. Asser, biographer and friend of Alfred.

See also [Chris Thomas's photos](#) on the internet.