



SAINT OSWALD

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St Aidan
King of Northumbria

Beginning.....

- St Aidan Oswald was born at the beginning of the 7th century. He was the youngest son of the pagan Ethelfrid, first king of a united Northumbria. After his father's death in battle, the young Oswald fled to Iona for safety and there he was baptised and became a Christian. In 633 Oswald returned to Northumbria to regain his father's kingdom.
- It was said that he set up a wooden cross as his standard and dedicated himself and his people to God's protection before engaging in battle with the occupying Welsh king, Cadwallon, not far from Hexham.

The Battle of Heavenfield...

- Heavenfield is in the Northumbrian countryside just north of Hexham and on the Roman Wall. Today at the spot where the two forces met there is a wooden cross commemorating the ancient battle.
- A church dedicated to St. Oswald has been built on the site where King Oswald erected his cross.
- Before the battle Oswald ordered his men to make up a wooden cross. He held the cross upright in a hole while his soldiers heaped soil around it. Then they all knelt down and prayed for God to help them defeat Cadwallon. It is said that St. Columba appeared to Oswald and told him to be strong and to be of good courage.



- Oswald defeated and killed Cadwallon and at once invited monks from Iona to begin the work of evangelisation of his kingdom which extended from the Forth to the Humber.

The battle re-established a Christian as King of Northumbria and one of Oswald's first tasks was to invite the monks of Iona to set up a monastery in the region. This they did at Holy Island under the guidance of St. Aidan and from here Christianity spread to be the main religion of the nation.

- Oswald often accompanied Aidan on his missionary journeys, acting as interpreter for at first Aidan could not speak the local dialect. Aidan was noted for his prayerfulness and his charity to the poor.



Killed in battle....

- Sadly the reign of Oswald lasted only eight years. On 5th August 642 he was killed in battle by Penda, king of the Mercians at Maserfield, now Oswestry, in Shropshire.





END

MYROSHNIKOVA VERONIKA

