

## FACTS ON ST WILLIBRORD PATRON SAINT OF LUXEMBOURG & HIS CARLOW CONNECTION

- St. Willibrord was born near York, Northumbria, England in 658AD.
- He died in 739AD aged 81 in Echternach, Luxembourg.
- His Feast Day is the 7<sup>th</sup> of November.
- He is the Patron Saint of Luxembourg and he is the only Saint buried in Luxembourg.
- He was trained and ordained at a religious site located in the townland of Garryhundon, Co Carlow commonly referred to as Killochan, Rath Melsigi (Rathmelsh) or Clonmelsh.
- During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries this site was the most important Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical settlement in Ireland. From 678AD to c. 720AD many Englishmen were trained for the continental mission.
- In 690AD Willibrord led a successful mission from Carlow, made up of Irishmen and Englishmen to the continent.
- He was consecrated as a Bishop by Pope Sergius 1 in Rome in 695AD.
- He built a Cathedral in Utrecht, Holland and became the first Bishop of Utrecht.
- In 698AD he established his monastery in Echternach, said to be the oldest town in Luxembourg.
- As part of his abbey in Echternach he established a scriptorium where they produced many of the bibles, psalms and prayer-books that are to be found today in the great libraries of Europe.
- His signature is the oldest dateable signature in the English language and is written in a book that was probably written in Co. Carlow. This book is now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.
- He is buried in the crypt Basilica of Echternach, Luxembourg which is the centre of his monastery.
- In Echternach an annual 'hopping procession' is held on the Tuesday after Pentecost Sunday and has been granted UNESCO World Heritage Status since 2010.

**WEBSITE LINK:**

Carlow Trails of the Saints Publication:

<http://carlowtourism.com/site-assets/uploads/2012/03/Carlow-Trails-of-the-Saints.pdf>

**ST WILLIBRORD IMAGES:**

Pic1: A stained glass image of St Willibrord from the Basilica, Echternach, Luxembourg.

Pic2: The 'Carlow' stained glass window in the Basilica, Echternach, Luxembourg featuring St Willibrord's training and ordination at Killogan/ Rath Melsigi Co Carlow during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Photograph courtesy of Carlow County Museum.

Pic3: Statue of St. Willibrord in the Basilica of Echternach

Pic4: Statue of St. Willibrord in the Abbey Museum Echternach

Pic5: The Basilica of Echternach

Pic6: The Relic of St Willibrord being paraded during the annual Hopping Procession

Pic7: People hopping

Pic8: People hopping

Pic9: Illuminated manuscript produced in Echternach

Pic10: Illuminated manuscript produced in Echternach

Pic11: Cover of an illuminated manuscript produced in Echternach

Pic12: St Willibrord's Tomb, Basilica Echternach