

Kyneburga, Kyneswide and Tibba

Saints Kyneburga, Kyneswide and Tibba were female members of the **Mercian** royal family in 7th century England.

1 Lives

1.1 Kyneburga and Kyneswide

Kyneburga (d. c. 680) (also called Cyneburh; the name being also rendered as *Kinborough* and in occasional use as a Christian name ^[1]) and **Kyneswide** (Cyneswitha) were sisters, the daughters of **King Penda of Mercia** (who remained true to the **Anglo-Saxon religion**). She was eldest daughter of King Penda of Mercia. Although her father was an opponent of Christianity, She and all her siblings converted. Bede wrote that Penda tolerated the preaching of Christianity in Mercia itself, despite his own beliefs:

“Nor did King Penda obstruct the preaching of the word among his people, the Mercians, if any were willing to hear it; but, on the contrary, he hated and despised those whom he perceived not to perform the works of faith, when they had once received the faith, saying, They were contemptible and wretched who did not obey their God, in whom they believed”.

This was begun two years before the death of King Penda.^[2] Their mother was Queen Cyneswide. Tibba is believed to have been a relative.

Kyneburga married Alhfrith of Deira, co-regent of Northumbria (who attended the Synod of Whitby in 664),^[3] but later founded an abbey for both monks and nuns in Castor, in the **Soke of Peterborough**.^[4] She became the first abbess and was later joined by Kyneswide and Tibba. Kyneswide succeeded Kyneburga as abbess and she was later succeeded by **Tibba**. She was buried in her church, but the remains of Kyneburga and Kyneswide were translated, before 972,^[5] to Peterborough Abbey, now Peterborough Cathedral.

She had been one of the signatories, together with her brother Wulfhere, of the founding charter of Burh Abbey, dated 664, per William Dugdale's *Monasticon*.^[6] (Burh Abbey was later dedicated to St Peter, becoming “Peterborough”). She was much esteemed as a saint by the monks of Peterborough, and features as one of the

saints remembered annually on 6 March in several ancient Peterborough-produced Kalendars,^[7] (a section of a psalter).^{[8][9]}

She died on 15 September AD 680 and was buried at **Castor, Cambridgeshire** where she soon became revered as a saint. In 963 her body was moved to Peterborough, with those of her sister, Cuneswitha, and their kinswoman, Tibba. Her remains were transferred to **Thorney Abbey** some time later. Her feast day is celebrated on 6 March.^[10]

She is remembered in a chapel at Peterborough Cathedral, the 12th century St. Kyneburga parish church in Castor, Cambridgeshire, Lady Conyburrow's Way (a ridge in a field near Castor), Kimberwell spring, Bedfordshire, the villages of Kimberley, Norfolk and West Yorkshire.^[11]

It should be noted that there was another lady by the name of Kyneburg, the wife of **Oswald of Northumbria**.^[12]

1.2 Tibba

Tibba, patron saint of falconers, is believed to have lived in Ryhall, Rutland, in the 7th century. She was buried there, but in the 11th century her relics were translated to Peterborough Abbey, by Abbot Ælfsige (1006–1042).^{[13][14]} According to legend, St Tibba was a niece of **King Penda**.^[15] The remains of a small hermitage associated with the saint can be seen on the west side of the north aisle of Ryhall church.^[16]

A 19th-century book refers to a holy well at Ryhall dedicated to Saint Tibba, though the location cannot now be identified,^[17] and there is similar doubt about the location of a well said to have been dedicated to Tibba's alleged relative, **St Ebba**.^[18]

2 Burial

Originally buried at Castor, Cambridgeshire their relics were bought in the 10th century by Peterborough Abbey under the direction of *Abbot Aelfsi of Peterborough*, as part of a policy of relic acquisition by the Abbey. However, many of the numerous relics at the abbey were lost or destroyed in the reformation.

3 References

- [1] Elizabeth Gidley Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian names* Oxford:Clarendon Press,(1945) Pp. xxxvi+136.
- [2] Bede, B. III, Ch. XXI
- [3] Bede(d. 735), Ecclesiastical History of the English People.
- [4] Dugdale's *Monasticon* prints the foundation charter of Burh/Medehamstead, dated 664, which establishes beyond doubt that Kyneburg had left her husband to found and preside over her monastery at Castor: "Formerly a queen, who had resigned her sway to preside over a monastery of maidens".
- [5] The account of the translation is from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, dated 972: "Abbot Aelfsi took up St Kyneburgh (with her sister and a female kinswoman) who lay at Castor and brought them to Burh and offered them all to St. Peter in one day".
- [6] Dugdale's *Monasticon*: Peterborough, vol 1, p.377, no.2, prints the charter of 664.
- [7] Examples of Kalendars listing St. Kyneburg for 6 March are: the Lectionary for St Kyneburg of Gloucester (14th century?), R.S. XXXIII, I, lxxv & lxxviii. Quoted in Livingston Carson, A Finding List of Political Poems Referring to English Affairs of the 13th & 14th Centuries. No.256; Antiphoner of Gilbert de Stanford (early 14th century) F.4.10 Haenel 17(L.5.8), produced at Peterborough Abbey.
- [8] Biog. of St Kyneburg from: Eckenstein, Lina (d. 1931) *Women under Monasticism: Chapters on Saint-Lore and Convent Life Between AD 500 and 1500, Houses in Mercia & the South.*(1896)
- [9] Victoria County History, Northampton, vol.2. Houses of Benedictine Monks: Abbey of Peterborough.
- [10] CyneBurh at geni.com
- [11] Cyneburh
- [12] For Kyneburg the wife of Oswald see Henry of Avranches, *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* (Life of St Oswald)
- [13] Mellows, William Thomas; Mellows, Charles, eds. (1941). *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*. Peterborough Natural History, Scientific and Archæological Society. p. 27. The society is now known as Peterborough Museum Society
- [14] *A History of the County of Rutland: Volume 2, Page, W.* (ed.), 1935. British History Online. Retrieved 16 March 2010
- [15] Rollason, D.W., *The Mildrith Legend A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England*, Leicester University Press, 1982 (e.g. p. 115, in Medieval Latin).
- [16] "National Monument Record for church and Anchorite's cell".
- [17] "National Monument record for St. Tibba's well".
- [18] "National Monument Record for St Ebba's well". For the relationship between St Tibba and St Ebba ("Domne Eafe"), see e.g. Rollason, D.W., *The Mildrith Legend A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England*, Leicester University Press, 1982, p.77.

4 Bibliography

- Dunbar, Agnes (1904) *A Dictionary of Saintly Women*. 2 vols. London: Bell, 1904-1905.

5 External links

- Castor Church - The Life of St Kyneburgha

6 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

6.1 Text

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