

## 6) Onto Italy – 'Milan'



Columbanus arrived in Milan c.612. Warmly received by King Agilulf and Queen Theodelinda, Columbanus restored Christianity to the area.

Bangor Abbey was governed by 'good rule' with an emphasis on obedience, charity and humility. This is recorded in the Bangor Antiphonary, a 7th century book of hymns, prayers and antiphons, produced in the monastery. It was taken to Bobbio where it remained until Cardinal Federigo Borromeo appropriated the book for the Ambrosian Library, Milan which opened in 1618.



## 7) A legacy - 'Bobbio'



In recognition of his work, Agilulf, King of the Lombards, gave Columbanus land near the River Trebbia to build a monastery. Bobbio was the last monastery Columbanus founded in 614. The Devil's Bridge, Ponte Gobbo, is important in the story of Columbanus who agreed the devil could claim the first soul who crossed the bridge; Columbanus cleverly sent an animal across. The devil was furious and kicked the bridge in rage which led to its distinct humpback shape.

The church became an important pilgrimage site and a great centre of learning. Bobbio was to be the final resting place for Columbanus.



**Bangor Abbey, 1 St.Malachy's Way, Bangor, BT20 4JF**  
**North Down Museum, The Castle, Town Hall,**  
**Castle Park Avenue, Bangor, BT20 4BT**

# Bangor Bell Trail

The 'Bangor Bell Trail' is an interpretive art trail that tells the story of St Columbanus and his journey through life. There are seven pieces of art commencing at Bangor Abbey through to North Down Museum



# Bangor Bell Trail



## 1) Fluctus Angelorum (The Wave of Angels)



This sculpture stands on the site of Comgall's monastery, founded in 558AD. It takes its shape and inspiration from the Bangor Bell, a 9th century handbell which was unearthed by workmen digging in Bangor Abbey graveyard in 1780. The surface of the sculpture is shaped with the texture of ocean waves representing the importance of the sea to those in the Abbey. The original bell has been housed in North Down Museum since 1984.

Born in Leinster c. 543AD, Columbanus decided from a young age to enter religious life. He travelled first to the Island of Cleenish on Lough Erne where he received his education under the celebrated scholar Sinell. He then completed his studies at Bangor Abbey where he became a disciple and friend of Comgall.

## 2) Leaving Bangor – 'The Voyage'



Columbanus set sail for continental Europe c.590. He was accompanied on this great journey by twelve companions including St Gall. The group stopped for a short time in Britain, then proceeded to France where they arrived near Saint-Malo in Brittany. Columbanus is remembered today in its name – Saint Coulomb.

## 3) Travelling through France – 'Luxeuil'



The monks established a monastery in the ruins of a Roman fortress in Annegray. The church attracted so many followers that Columbanus founded a larger monastery at Luxeuil (c.593) which is often regarded as the "nursery of saints and apostles". Luxeuil produced 63 Apostles who founded over one hundred different monasteries.

## 4) Onto Austria – 'Bregenz'



Life was not always easy for the monks as they travelled across mountains and rivers visiting Metz, Mainz following the Rhine. Eventually they arrived at Bregenz on Lake Constance where Gall, under Columbanus' instruction, converted the local community to Christianity. In 1987, in celebration of the important historical connection with this area, Bangor twinned with Bregenz.

## 5) A diversion to Switzerland – 'St Gallen'



Following an attack on their monastery the group split. Gall travelled to Switzerland where he lived for several years as a hermit by the River Steinach. After Gall's death in 646AD, the site of his hermit's cell was revered, and the town was renamed in his honour. The monastery was refounded in 720 to house his relics which became an important pilgrimage site. In 1983 the Convent of St Gall became an UNESCO World Heritage Site.