

Kate Tristram
The Story of Holy Island
ISBN 9781 8531 1945 3
Canterbury Press Norwich, 2009, £12.99

Amid a selection of new books focused around the Island of Lindisfarne and Celtic spirituality, the question occurs: what exactly is known? Kate Tristram has earned the good reputation on the Island as one who knows the sources and reports with the most accurate history of this important centre of the Irish Church in England. Many will have heard her speak about the characters of Aidan and the four Iona Bishops of Lindisfarne who gave to Northumbria its golden age. Now we have a complete story of this Island, written with all that engaging style and eloquence for which she has become known as a local speaker.

Her illustrated book takes us back from the days when Holy Island was part of the mainland and ends with a comprehensive account of the latest developments in the current generation of residents on the Island. Kate is a tertiary who has given over thirty five years to the Island, establishing Marygate House for pilgrims, and who continues to share the daily pattern of prayer in the Parish Church, the site chosen by Aidan and where Cuthbert and so many others were trained to live holy lives and be fired with missionary zeal.

Read 'the story' from cover to cover: it tells the remarkable history of a unique place in Church history and how it continues to appeal to vast numbers of pilgrims and visitors today. Then return to dip into the chapters, well defined, to sort out your answer for which king, which battle, which saint. Like Kate herself, the book is alive with enthusiasm and respect for, and devotion to, our Celtic Saints. Locally, we had been begging her to write it all down, and here it is, and - as expected - it is a treasure trove!

Damian SSF