

**St Wilfrid of Ripon
Or
A Tale of Two Tonsures**

by

Caroline Moir

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St Wilfrid of Ripon, or A Tale of Two Tonsures was commissioned by Ripon Cathedral as part of the St Wilfrid 1300 celebrations and first performed on Saturday 25th July 2009 at Ripon Market Square and Ripon Cathedral.

Cast:

Vidal & King Ecgrith	<i>Jenny Bellamy</i>
Saxoon & King Oswiu	<i>Julie Prescott</i>
Wilfrid	<i>Howard Firth</i>
Eddie Stephens (Stephen of Ripon)	<i>Derek Ching</i>
Queen Eanfled & Queen Balhild & Abbess Aelfledd	<i>Jane Coomber</i>
Bishop Annemundus & Bishop Colman & Archbishop Theodore & Archbishop Bertwald	<i>John Groves</i>
Hild	<i>Dorothy Taylor</i>
Queen Irminburh	<i>Rosie Priestley</i>
Stage hand & Executioner & Pope	<i>Guy Wilson</i>
Stage hand & Executioner & Bishop	<i>Caroline Moir</i>

Directed by:

Chris Taylor

Produced by:

Guy Wilson

Musicians:

*Joe Priestley
Kieran Newman
Charles Lancaster
Jay Mitchell*

Stage management, set, props & costumes:

*Lynne Ditchburn
Catherine Stewart
Ann Medway
Euan Raffles
Loretta Williams
Connie Birkinshaw
Susan Wordsworth
David Mayoh*

COSTUMES and PROPS were a mixture of ancient and modern. All the QUEENS wore modern dress, particularly stylish in the case of BALDHILD, particularly gaudy in the case of IURMINBURH, and crowns. VIDAL and SAXOON wore modern dress with elaborate hair styles, and as KINGS shared a Barbour raincoat and a crown. The BISHOPS were differentiated by the gorgeousness of their copes, and their crosiers – i.e. COLMAN was homespun, with a simple crosier, ANNEMUNDUS more in keeping with the Roman church. Mitres were in different colours. The STAGE HAND who acted as the POPE had a purple mitre. CREDDY EDDIE wore a monk's habit. STAGE HANDS were in cassocks. HILD and AELFLEDD wore simple, bleached, nun's robes, and Hild had a big pectoral cross. At the beginning of the piece WILFRID wore extremely fashionable jeans and shirt. As a monk he wore an alb with a very large pectoral cross. As bishop his cope was highly decorated with gold braid. His crosier was embellished with large jewels.

PROPS were kept to a minimum. An enormous bejewelled Gospel, and a signpost with signs - **Ripon Cathedral City; Bamburgh Northumbria; Gaul [or France to you and me]; Whitby Synod City; Nidd Trout Town; Selsey Soft South Saxon Sussex** - changed by the stage hands to indicate the location of each scene, defined the front and the side of the playing area. At the back a finger post pointed to *Rome* and to *Lindisfarne*. VIDAL and SAXOON had office chairs with wheels for their 'clients', who had outlandish wigs at which VIDAL and SAXOON clipped and combed with outsize scissors and combs. Fishing rods were bamboo poles with string and large laminated fish. In general the style was pantomime meets ecclesiastical.

HISTORICAL note and sources. The main sources were Bede's *The History of the English Church and People*, Stephen of Ripon's *Life of St Wilfrid*, plus Peter Hunt Blair's *Anglo-Saxon England*, Geoffrey Hindley's *A Brief History of the Anglo-Saxons* and some articles. Although not source material, sadly Rudyard Kipling's 'The Conversion of St Wilfrid' and 'Edda's song' in *Rewards and Fairies* were not read until the performances were over.

Following the St Wilfrid conference in York in September 2009 it appears that Baldhild wasn't as wicked as Stephen of Ripon painted her, and probably did not martyr Annemundus. For that, and any other errors, I am sorry, but they were unintended. In any case my brief was to write a piece of theatre suitable for performance 'in the street'. To capture and retain a street audience demands entertainment and wicked old Baldy Hild was a gift too good to pass up. However I hope that Wilfrid was in some part 'rehabilitated' by the play, as he must have been an extraordinary man.

ST WILFRID OF RIPON OR A TALE OF TWO TONSURES

SCENE 1: RIPON – THE HAIRDRESSERS

VIDAL and SAXOON snip at the hair of the two mannequins sitting in the chairs – can be office chairs on wheels - with patter such as: ‘Would you like a Roman or a Celtic tonsure, Sir?’ At an agreed signal they open the show.

SFX:

VIDAL&SAXOON: LADIES and GENTLEMEN, BOYS and GIRLS, RIPE-ONIONS and OFFCOMERS

VIDAL: That’s you TOURISTS.

SAXOON: ROLL UP, ROLL UP.

VIDAL: To enjoy the VIDAL – that’s me.

SAXOON: And SAXOON – that’s me.

VIDAL&SAXOON: SHOW!

SAXOON: Called ‘St Wilfrid of Ripon’ or a ‘Tale of Two Tonsures.

VIDAL: Written under duress, by that great musician, EDDIUS STEPHANUS.

SAXOON: Otherwise known as Stephen of Ripon

VIDAL: Or Creddy Eddie, because he’s so

SAXOON: Lovable

VIDAL: Gullible

VIDAL and SAXOON snigger.

VIDAL&SAXOON: AND CREDULOUS.

VIDAL&SAXOON: We are pleased to introduce to you the other characters: the Kings of Northumberland.

VIDAL and SAXOON look upstage and clap, look surprised when no one comes on; then turn to the audience.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Oh – that's us.

VIDAL & SAXOON bow.

As the other members of the cast are introduced they come on, in character, and take a bow. The CAST applauds enthusiastically.

VIDAL&SAXOON: The Queens of Northumberland; the Abbess Hild; the Archbishops of Canterbury; the Pope; and last but not least the poor put upon stage hands.

VIDAL&SAXOON: AND now another large round of applause for Creddy Eddy, A Tale of Two Tonsures, and St Wilfrid of Ripon.

CREDDY EDDIE enters carrying a large book entitled FIRST DRAFT of ST WILFRID of RIPON.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Here he comes just a walking down the street

Singing doo wa diddy diddy dum diddy do
The most credulous bloke you could ever ever meet
Singing doo wa diddy diddy dum diddy do

VIDAL&SAXOON: Morning/afternoon credulous Eddie, how's the biog going today?

EDDIE: Don't ask I'm a singing master not a writer – and he's not the normal type of saint.

VIDAL&SAXOON: You're telling us.

VIDAL and SAXOON chant football style waving their hairdressing towels.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Williefred, Williefred, Williefred, Williefred, Williefred, Willifrehed!

EDDIE: That's not fair.

VIDAL&SAXOON: What's not fair?

EDDIE: His name's not Williefred, its Wilfrid, and he did wonderful things. He gave me a job, you know. And he established the ROMAN church in England.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Ah, the DunROMAN church. Been better if we'd stayed with the Wandering CELTS – more spiritual like.

EDDIE: No, no, you don't understand, if the Celts had won we'd still be pagans, the Celts weren't interested in converting people.

VIDAL and SAXOON talk in 'Irish' accents.

VIDAL&SAXOON: The Hoirish mishionaries wore.

EDDIE: I'm not talking about them, I'm talking about the...

WILFRID: Get on with it Eddie, I can't be a real saint until you've finished the hagiography.

VIDAL&SAXOON: What's a hagi, hagiography?

EDDIE: It's the biography of a saint.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Why didn't he say so then?

EDDIE: Because he likes things to be done proper.

WILFRID: PROPERLY.

VIDAL and SAXOON read over EDDIE's shoulder.

VIDAL: And so

SAXOON: Williefred

VIDAL: Was born

SAXOON: And like many saints

VIDAL: There was

SAXOON: A miraculous

VIDAL: Light

At the word 'light' EDDIE, VIDAL, SAXOON, and the rest of the cast shield their eyes or don outsize sunglasses.

SAXOON: Or perhaps the house

VIDAL: Was on fire

SAXOON: Whatever

VIDAL: And grew up to be a

SAXOON: VERY

VIDAL: Handsome

SAXOON: Boy

VIDAL: 'With none of the silly fads common to boys' – what do you mean by that Eddie?

EDDIE looks uncomfortable.

EDDIE: Well, you know he didn't push other boys into water troughs and things like that...

To EDDIE's consternation VIDAL and SAXOON start to push EDDIE upstage re-enacting their words.

SAXOON: That's not a fad, that's horse play that is... Hey do you remember when we pushed Creddy Eddie into a water trough because he was...

VIDAL: A wonka!

SFX: Cymbal crash

VIDAL and SAXOON fall about laughing. THEY and EDDIE move to the side of the stage.

SCENE 2: BAMBURGH***SFX: The Keel Row***

EANFLED: Tell me Wilfrid, and you can tell me the truth, is there any other reason apart from wanting to serve God – and hating your step-mother – that has brought you here to ask for my patronage?

WILFRID: Queen Eanfled, you have the understanding of a true mother. I do not see eye to eye with my stepmother.

WILFRID kneels and clasps his hands in prayer.

WILFRID: But all I want to do is dedicate my life to God and his Church.

EANFLED: Good: I shall commend you to the monastery at Lindisfarne. You will accompany my paralysed kinsman, Cudda, there: to look after him and learn to be a monk – poverty, obedience and chastity. And prayer.

During her speech WILFRID slumps and his hands drop to his side.

EANFLED: And prayer.

WILFRID snaps to attention and clasps his hands in prayer again.

WILFRID and EANFLED exit to the side.

SCENE 3: RIPON – THE HAIRDRESSERS**SFX:**

VIDAL: Go on Eddie what happened next. We heard that BEDE

EDDIE: The Venerable...

VIDAL: The VENERABLE Bede

SAXOON: Called him

VIDAL: Such a 'clear-sighted' youth

SAXOON: That he realised he'd never

VIDAL: Get ahead

SAXOON: If he stayed with the CELTS

VIDAL: Or maybe he was bored on Lindisfarne

SAXOON: Nothing but poverty, obedience

VIDAL: And squawking gulls.

VIDAL and SAXOON swoop around EDDIE, briefly, in squawking flight.

EDDIE: Girls?

SAXOON: Gulls, Creddy Eddie, gulls.

VIDAL: So he asked Queen Eanfled to send him to Rome.

SAXOON: And she did – with all the kit he needed.

VIDAL: Did he like girls, Eddie?

All three retire to the side.

SCENE 4: GAUL - or FRANCE to you and me***SFX: THE Marseillaise***

WILFRID: The queen was just one of many women in my life – there was my mother, my step-mother, and on the way to Rome, the Bishop of Lyons offered to marry me to his niece AND give me part of Gaul to govern. But I would not be deflected, though I loved Gaul. So Romanised. So civilised. I promised I would return.

BISHOP ANNEMUNDUS of LYONS enters in full clerical rig.

ANNEMUNDUS: Wilfrid, you've come back. How was Rome?

WILFRID: Enlightening. I've learnt how to sing the Roman way, how to run a monastery the Roman way, how to work out the date of Easter the Roman way.

ANNEMUNDUS: Stay awhile. You can learn even more from me.

WILFRID talks to the audience. QUEEN BALDHILD enters up stage.

WILFRID: I stayed for three years until another woman entered my life, wicked Queen Baldhild.

There is a cutaway to the execution of ANNEMUNDUS by the STAGEHANDS.

WILFRID: She martyred Annemundus,

SFX: Cymbal crash

Annemundus head falls forward.

WILFRID: but she wouldn't martyr me.

QU. BALDHILD: 'Vous n'est pas un Gaulois, vous est un Anglais

QUEEN BALDHILD spits at WILFRID'S feet

QU.BALDHILD: We do not martyr ze English.

SFX: Reprise of the Marseillaise

Exit all.

SCENE 5: RIPON – THE HAIRDRESSERS**SFX:**

SAXOON: So wicked Queen Baldy Hild

EDDIE: Not Baldy Hild, Baldhild.

WILFRID: Wouldn't martyr poor Wilf.

WDDIE: WILFRID, his name's WILFRID.

VIDAL: He was a wannabee right from the word go.

EDDIE: He wanted to be martyred, for God, yes.

SAXOON: Voice like and angel?

VIDAL: Always did as he was told?

EDDIE: He always did what God desired.

VIDAL: Which was?

EDDIE: Build monasteries and churches.

Enter STAGE HAND carrying box of large cards bearing the names of the monasteries and churches which WILFRID built and also those where he was a bishop with a few wrong ones - e.g. Canterbury Cathedral, Notre Dame – thrown in. During EDDIE'S speech he/she hands the cards to VIDAL and SAXOON who

*discard the wrong ones and at the end hold up the right ones:
Hexham, York, Oundle, and Selsey.*

EDDIE: And he was made Bishop of Ripon and Bishop of Hexham and
bishop of York and Bishop of Leicester and Bishop of the West
Saxons.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Hexham, York, Oundle, Selsey

STAGE HAND holds up Ripon.

STAGEHAND: Ripon!

VIDAL&SAXOON: Ladies and Gentlemen, we give you: the big bold builder bishop
WILFRID.

STAGE HAND gathers up cards and exits.

EDDIE: For God, it was for God.

VIDAL: People loved him?

EDDIE: His monks and his followers did.

VIDAL: Like who?

EDDIE: Like Alchfrith, and Bishop Agilbert, And Queen Eanfled and her
priest James the Deacon.

VIDAL: Ah, the Romans.

SAXOON: Not the Celtic establishment. Not the big guns. Not King Oswiu, Alchfrith's Daddy. Not Abbess Hild of Whitby. Not Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne.

EDDIE: No.

VIDAL: Doesn't sound very saintly to me.

EDDIE: But he was...I mean is...I mean he will be a saint when I've finished this biog.... You should have seen him at the Synod of Whitby.

SCENE 6: SYNOD OF WHITBY

SFX: Shouting and yelling from the cast.

The ROMANS and the CELTS enter led, respectively, by WILFRID and BISHOP COLMAN who parry each others thrusts with staff and crosier. Behind them are their followers. Each side hurls abuse at the other.

SFX: Crash of cymbal

EANFLED parts WILFRID and COLMAN and marches down stage, followed by OSWIU.

EANFLED: I don't see why you've called this summit meeting.

OSWIU: Because, Eanfled, we cannot go on having Easter twice a year. Your Romans are fasting and meditating when my Celts are trying to work, then your lot are celebrating and on holiday while my lot are feeling hungry.

EANFLED: But we've managed so far Oswiu, why is it such a problem now?

OSWIU sounds shifty.

OSWIU: It undermines my authority.

EANFLED eyes him shrewdly.

EANFLED: It's our son Alchfrith. He's the problem. He's a good friend of Wilfrid's and is standing up to you by backing Rome. *Pause.* And why at Whitby?

OSWIU: Hild is a very good administrator.

EANFLED: And?

OSWIU: And a Celt.

EANFLED: But you don't care about Celts and Romans, Oswiu. What you want is tidiness. And to keep Alchfrith in his place.

VIDAL calls across to EDDIE.

VIDAL: He, Ed, is this Hild wicked old Baldy Hild, the Gaul?

EDDIE looks alarmed and hisses.

EDDIE: Keep your mouth shut.

VIDAL: Well is it?

EDDIE: 'Course not, this is the ABBESS Hild, a Geordie, runs the monastery at Whitby. Very important, gives advice to all the kings and bishops and things. Very Holy.

VIDAL: Another saint?

EDDIE: Yes. Shut up Vidal.

OSWIU: I want this matter settled once and for all. Hild – make sure it's a clean fight.

HILD moves down stage centre to announce the start of the contest. During her speech, each side, led by WILFRID and COLMAN, continues to abuse the other and support their own. The CELTS are raucous yelling 'Oggi, oggi, oggi,' etc; the ROMANS clap politely and say 'Hear, hear,' etc.

HILD: Brothers and sister we are gathered for a momentous debate. On my right is the Bishop of Lindisfarne, Bishop Colman, to put the case for the Ionan Celts, and on my left is Wilfrid, Abbot of Ripon, who will speak on behalf of the Roman Church. They will expound on the proper date of Easter and Bishop Colman will tell us why our monks should shave their foreheads,

VIDAL'S interruptions are addressed to the audience.

VIDAL: Makes 'em look like miserable horses.

HILD: While Wilfrid of Ripon will tell us of the necessity of them shaving their pates.

VIDAL: Makes that lot look like fat babies.

HILD turns to BISHOP COLMAN

HILD: Bishop Colman, give us your reasons for keeping Easter on the 14th Nisan.

VIDAL: That's stuffed the Celts then – when they start talking in threes you know their doomed – look at St Tony Blair of Sedgefield's 'Education, education, education'.

During the ensuing speeches verbal antagonism between the two sides is maintained.

COLMAN: We follow the custom of our founder St Columba, who followed the practice of St John, who followed the practice of dating Easter from the Passover, the 14th day of the first Jewish month – though we've modified that it is usually the Sunday after the 14th day of the month of the Spring moon.

WILFRID interrupts.

WILFRID: But not always – sometimes that Sunday IS the fourteenth day itself, and you know that's against ROMAN church law.

HILD: Wilfrid, don't interrupt. Bishop Colman, apart from the date of Easter, why do you recommend we follow the traditions of St John and St Columba?

COLMAN: Because of Columba's simple saintliness and the holiness of St John.

WILFRID can barely control his impatience.

HILD: All right, Wilfrid, it's your turn now.

WILFRID: But it's so out of date and ...

VIDAL: How can a date be out of date?

WILFRID holds his hand out in appeal to HILD who admonishes VIDAL.

HILD: If you interrupt again I shall be forced to expel you.

HILD turns back to WILFRID.

HILD: Continue with what you have to say Wilfrid.

WILFRID: One: you are out of date – the whole of the rest of the Christian world – even the Irish- celebrates Easter on the first Sunday AFTER the fourteenth day of the month of the Spring moon.

Two: your TONSURE is out of date.

Three: your SINGING is out of date.

Four: your BIBLE is out of date.

AND FIVE: Who is the rock on which our church is founded and who holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

COLMAN &CAST: St Peter!

WILFRID: Who is the patron saint of the monastery of Ripon built by me?

CAST: St Peter!

OSWIU: Who do we acknowledge to be the father of the church?

WILFRID

COLMAN &CAST: St Peter of Rome.

OSWIU: Right, Rome it is then, we'll go with the Pope.

WILFRID: I'm going to be a bishop.

OSWIU: Ah...we'll see.

Exit all except VIDAL.

VIDAL: Oswiu's a crafty old

There's a tiny hesitation after the 'b' of 'beggar'.

VIDAL: Beggar.

SCENE 7: RIPON – THE HAIRDRESSERS**SFX:**

VIDAL and SAXOON resume clipping their clients, EDDIE advances upon them.

EDDIE: You barmpot, Vidal, you nearly got us locked up.

SAXOON: Eddie, I hope that's not the kind of language you're using in Wilf's biog.

EDDIE: It's WILFRID.

VIDAL: He's not a Wilf and he's not a Willie – but he is a wannabee. I said he was.

SAXOON: And he became a bishop?

EDDIE: Yes, they had to have a new bishop and Wilfrid was ideal. He didn't want to be one, but in the end he agreed. He had to go to Gaul to have it done properly – he was carried into the church at Compiègne on the shoulders of twelve bishops.

VIDAL: Not very tactful, being done in Gaul.

SAXOON: And he came back to be Bishop of Lindisfarne.

EDDIE: Not exactly – he didn't think it was quite a suitable see for the ROMAN church.

SAXOON: North Sea not good enough for him? Not that I blame him, I managed thirty seconds in the water off Bamburgh last July.

VIDAL: Last July was a washout – Scarborough's a bit better, water gets warmed up in the bay.

SAXOON: Every July's a washout.

EDDIE: Where did you go to school?

VIDAL: Never you mind.

SAXOON: Well it wasn't Choir or Grammar.

EDDIE: A bishop's see is his seat.

VIDAL & SAXOON proceed to wind EDDIE up.

VIDAL: His bum?

EDDIE: No where his throne is.

SAXOON: His kazi?

EDDIE: That's no way to talk about a bishop – let alone a saint. No it's his official place – his palace, his cathedra, where he does his work from.

VIDAL: Where was Wilf's palace, his see, his

VIDAL smirks at the audience.

VIDAL: His catheter.

EDDIE: Catheter? CATHEDRA. York, where the original Roman one was. Though he didn't go there straight away, he stayed in Gaul for a couple of years.

VIDAL&SAXOON: So civilised Gaul.

EDDIE: And when he got back King Oswiu had put Chad in his place.

SAXOON, with irony.

SAXOON: Chav – now there's a good Celtic name.

EDDIE; But Wilfrid didn't complain. He retired to his monastery at Ripon until the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Theodore, made Chad see the error of his ways. Then he gave Wilfrid his see back.

VIDAL: AND then what happened?

WILFRID comes downstage to where his great Gospel is set.

WILFRID; I was given money and land. And I built my beloved Ripon with dressed stone, and purple and gold fitments. Go and see the crypt – it's still there. I had a Gospel written in gold on purple parchment, and the king gave a great feast that lasted for three days.

WILFRID exits.

SAXOON: So he's set for life.

EDDIE looks unhappy.

SAXOON: Not so Eddie?

SCENE 8: BAMBURGH***SFX: Discordant fanfare***

WILFRID, KING ECGFRITH, QUEEN IURMINBURH, HILD and THEODORE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY enter. WILFRID is being attacked from all sides. IURMINBURH is beside herself with fury.

ECGFRITH: What did you mean, Wilfrid, telling my first wife Audrey it was O.K. for her to remain a virgin?

IURMINBURH: And Audrey gave you Hexham – that should have been mine

IURMINBURH points emphatically at ECGFRITH.

IURMINBURH: When Ecgfrith married me.

IURMINBURH points at herself.

WILFRID: It was Audrey's to give – it's allowed me to build a magnificent church there.

ECGFRITH: It was Audrey's to give IF she'd done her God-given duties as a wife and had babies instead of running off to Ely to be a nun.

THEODORE: And you refused to attend my synod to discuss one, making you promise not to interfere with another bishop's diocese

WILFRID: Bishops must be able to go wherever God calls them

THEODORE: And two, dividing up your see.

IURMINBURH: He's Bishop of York and more than half of England.

WILFRID: Northumbria needs one strong leader.

IURMINBURH: They'll be calling him Wilfrid the Magnificent soon.

THEODORE: You are under my rule.

HILD: Not according to Wilfrid.

IURMINBURH: Theodore! Take Wilfrid's see away from him.

IURMINBURH and ECGFRITH exit.

HILD: I'll back you to the hilt, Theodore.

THEODORE: To the hilt, Hild?

HILD: I will. I'll send a message to the Pope.

HILD exits.

THEODORE: Then I shall divide the see of York into three: York, Lindisfarne and Hexham. With three bishops. Wilfrid – you can have one of them.

THEODORE exits.

WILFRID: Everything I do is for God. I will not have my see taken away from me. I will GO to the Pope. He will give them ALL back to me.

Wilfrid exits.

SCENE 9: RIPON: THE HAIRDRESSERS**SFX:**

EDDIE reads from his manuscript.

EDDIE: 'In this skirmish between God and Satan the tempter chose his usual weapon – woman'.

VIDAL: That's a bit sexist, Eddie.

EDDIE: It was all Queen Iurminburh's fault. But by the grace of God, Bishop Wilfrid got safely to Rome. Luckily for him, Bishop Winfred of Lichfield was also going to Rome. The King of Gaul wanted to beat up Wilfrid

Cutaway to the two STAGE HANDS. They sneak down stage. They spy Winfred. They beat up Winfred. They exit gleefully.

EDDIE: But he got the name wrong and beat up Winfred instead.

SAXOON: How could you mistake a Winnie for a Willie?

VIDAL: So civilised the Gauls.

SAXOON: Perhaps God was trying to tell Wilfrid something, that he was backing the wrong horse?

EDDIE: No, no, the Pope exonerated him. He couldn't have it all, but he could be Bishop of York. So he brought the document back and a trunk full of saints' bones for Ripon and Hexham.

WILFRID tours the arena, document in one hand relics in the other.

VIDAL: And everyone lived happily ever after.

EDDIE takes a deep breath. He is interrupted by IURMINBURH who rushes in and snatches both document and relics from WILFRID.

IURMINBURH: No. I, Queen Iurminburh, stole Wilfrid's relics and wore them round my neck and Ecgrith said the document was a fake.

EDDIE: He locked Wilfrid up in a black dungeon

The STAGE HANDS drag WILFRID backwards up stage and force him to his knees.

EDDIE: And only let him out after he had made a miraculous light.

The whole cast covers eyes/ puts on sunglasses and freezes until IURMINBURH speaks.

IURMINBURH: And after Ecgrith's sister Aebbe had told Ecgrith off.

VIDAL: Aebbe? Another of Wilfrid's women? How many have we had now sexy Sax?

SAXOON: Well Vital Vid, I reckon there's the wicked step-mother, and his mother in God, Eanfled; nasty Queen Baldy Hild and the she-wolf, Iurminburh,

IURMINBURH: Watch it!

VIDAL&SAXOON: Ooh!

SAXOON: And, depending on the way you look at her, Saintly Queen or Deserter from Duty, Audrey; and the one it was a bit silly of Willie to have got on the wrong side of, Geordie Hild –

VIDAL: And now the Abbess Aebbe. Any more women, Eddie?

WILFRID comes down stage and speaks to the audience.

WILFRID: Only one more woman, right at the end of my life, Aelfledd, daughter of Queen Eanfled. She always supported me.

SCENE 10: SELSEY

SFX: Song, to the tune of 'Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord'.

CAST: His eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
He went on down to Sussex to the Southern Saxon Shore,
He taught them how to catch fresh fish 'til they could eat no more,
St Wilfrid marches on.

WILFRID: I went to Sussex, which just proved my point, the Ionan Celts were incapable of Christianising the country – they'd had a monastery there for years, but had they made any converts? Had they heck.

The CAST, except EDDIE and VIDAL and SAXOON, start walking towards WILFRID. They are in the throes of starvation.

WILFRID: I soon sorted that out. And with money from the king I built another Abbey.

The CAST teeter on tiptoe eyes glancing down and askew as if on the top of a cliff.

EDDIE: It was helped by the fact that you taught the starving South Saxons to fish, Wilfrid, so they stopped committing suicide in the sea.

VIDAL and SAXOON hand the CAST fishing rods with fish dangling from the end. At a signal from Wilfrid they pull up the fish to gasps of astonishment.

WILFRID: There you are lads. You need something more in your bellies than jellied eels.

CAST: How can we ever thank you my Lord?

WILFRID: Come down to my Abbey on Sunday and I will baptise you in the seas off Selsey Bill.

Exit all except VIDAL, SAXOON and EDDIE.

SCENE 11: RIPON: THE HAIRDRESSERS**SFX:**

VIDAL: There it is again, the cold, cold sea.

SAXOON: But he hasn't got a see.

VIDAL: No, but he's still a bishop and an abbot and a priest.

EDDIE: And spiritual father of Caedwalla.

VIDAL: Who?

SAXOON: Renegade King of Wessex, who murdered the King of the South Saxons, and killed the King of the Isle of Wight.

VIDAL: And then gave a quarter of the island to Wilfrid.

SAXOON says sardonically.

SAXOON: I wish I had some of what that man had.

EDDIE: He had faith.

EDDIE looks dreamy for a minute.

VIDAL: Get on with it Eddie, poor old Willie can't become a saint until you finish.

VIDAL and SAXOON go back to cutting hair while EDDIE scribbles away.

EDDIE: Ecgrith died, and Aldfrith, most learned in the CELTIC faith became king...

VIDAL: Uh oh.

SAXOON: Here we go.

VIDAL and SAXOON chant the next words.

VIDAL&SAXOON: Here we go, here we go, here we go

During this speech WILFRID whirls between KING, ARCHBISHOP and POPE who are placed in a triangle up stage of EDDIE, VIDAL and SAXOON.

VIDAL: Again. Wilfrid annoys the King, falls out with the Archbishop, goes to Rome. The Pope exonerates him. It cuts no ice with the King who dies. He annoys the new King, the King's son, and then back's the old King's grandson who becomes the new, new King. Etcetera, etcetera.

The rest of the cast exit apart from VIDAL, SAXOON and EDDIE. SAXOON is disbelieving.

SAXOON: Is that right Eddie?

EDDIE: Yes. Until Archbishop Bertwald summons everyone to the Synod of Nidd...

SAXOON: Good ol' Nidd, good trout there.

EDDIE: And reads out the Papal declaration.

VIDAL, SAXOON and EDDIE retire to one side of the stage.

SCENE 12: SYNOD OF NIDD**SFX:**

Whole CAST enters except the STAGE HANDS.

AELFLED: For you who could not manage to follow the reading Archbishop Bertwald will explain just what the Pope means.

BERTWALD: What the Pope means is this: either get on with Wilfrid or trek off to Rome to have it sorted. Those who do neither are excommunicated. It's the carrot or the stick.

VIDAL: Sounds to me as if the Pope is a bit fed up.

SAXOON: Have to give it to Wilfrid: he does keep on keeping on.

BERTWALD: If you want my advice do what the Pope says.

VIDAL: And that old trout Abbess Aelfledd – that's the last of Wilfrid's women – gives hers.

AELFLED taps her finger to her nose.

AELFLED: I told them: the old dead king wanted to be at peace with Wilfrid.

VIDAL: So it's all sorted. Wilfrid becomes Bishop of Hexham. *[Cheers]* And gets Ripon back. *[More cheers]* And his monks and followers get back their beloved father. *[Loud cheers]*

EDDIE reads from the manuscript.

EDDIE: 'But in this world no joy comes to us unmixed with sorrow and everything is by nature mortal'.

As he writes these last lines in this and the next scene, EDDIE is tremulous and near tears.

VIDAL: He means he's going to die.

SAXOON: He's very old for them days, at least seventy-five.

EDDIE: He wanted to die in Rome you know – but he died at Oundle.

CAST: Where?

SCENE 13: RIPON

The CAST acting as the funeral cortège escort WILFRID down stage.

EDDIE: When we brought him back to Ripon to be buried there was a miraculous light

*Whole CAST freezes and shades their eyes on the word 'light'.
The CAST hum the tune of 'Oh When the Saints, Go Marching in'
during the following dialogue.*

EDDIE: Stretching over the whole of the church.

VIDAL: Hey Eddie don't cry – you really rated this guy.

EDDIE: He took care of us.

SAXOON: Wouldn't mind meeting him myself.

VIDAL: Fat chance – you'll never make saint, Sexy Sax.

SAXOON: Nor you neither, Vital Vid.

EDDIE: There's always hope.

The CAST repeat EDDIE'S words until they start to sing the final song.

CAST: There's always hope.

WHOLE CAST: Oh when St Wilfrid marches in

Oh when St Wilfrid marches in
I want to be in that number
When St Wilfrid marches in.

And when he turns on all his lights
And when he turns on all his lights
I want to be in that number
When he turns on all his lights.

The BAND reprises the song for as long as it takes the CAST to tour the audience before returning to the playing area for a final 'pose' in lieu of the traditional bow.

