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On this day: St. Frideswide

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Oct. 19, 2011 NCR Today

On this day Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Eastern Orthodox Churches remember St. Frideswide, Patron of Oxford.

"Once upon a time in the fair city of Oxford, there lived Princess Frideswide who was as good as she was beautiful.

"The King, her father, ruled the people of his realm with clemency and justice, and she learnt the ways of the Church.

"The motherless child was tenderly looked after by gentle nuns who taught her to read and write and to play sweet music upon the harp and lyre."

--"St Frideswide: Oxford's Patron Saint," [1] by Jane Curran, BBC Oxford, 2009.

After her flight from Prince Algar, "Princess Frideswide's wish to become a nun was fulfilled, and close to the southern wall of Oxford she founded a great priory, where monks and nuns praised God and cared for those stricken by misfortune, and where her name lived on for ever."

Frideswide's monastery was destroyed by fire in 1002. It is believed that Christ Church, [2] "one of the largest constituent colleges of the University of Oxford in England," stands on the site of her Saxon foundation.

"As well as being a college, Christ Church is also the cathedral church of the diocese of Oxford, namely Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford." Christ Church is "traditionally considered the most aristocratic college of its university." It figures in various books, including *Brideshead Revisited,* and scenes at Harry Potter's Hogwarts were filmed there. Click here [3] for an article from Christ Church on Harry Potter.

Click here [4] for the Wikipedia article on St. Frideswide.

Click here [5] to see Frideswide hiding from Algar among the swine, ducks, and sunflowers. The stained-glass window at Christ Church is by the Pre-Raphaelite artist, Edward Burne-Jones. [6]

Click here [7] for the Sacred Destinations page for Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, which includes a history and pictures of the cathedral, pictures of the shrine where St. Frideswide's relics were once preserved, and details about the incidents in her life portrayed in the Burne-Jones windows.

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Links:
[1] http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/oxford/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8403000/8403977.stm
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Church,_Oxford

[3] http://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/visiting/harry-potter
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