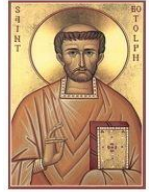




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

[www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)



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Issue Number: 98

Now published every other month

1st February 2022

## Highlights this month

- **Abbey of Bury St Edmunds**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following new members: Jenny Bolt (from Selsey in West Sussex) and Professor Graham Ward (Regius Professor of Divinity at Christ Church Oxford).
- Correspondence from Jenny Bolt, Peter Godden and Graham Ward.

## Editorial

First of all I must thank my friend Ben Cottam<sup>1</sup> for stimulating the writing of this month's feature article as it was he who sent me the M.R. James groundplan (which you will find further below) of Bury St Edmund's Abbey showing the location of the shrine of St Botolph.

I had always had in mind that there was a strong connection between St Botolph and Bury St Edmunds - partly because I had discovered the existence of a St Botolph's Lane and St Botolph's Bridge in the town.

These led me some years ago to the site of a St Botolph's Chapel but because I was sceptical about its significance I did not hurry to pursue the lead and somehow I subsequently managed to sideline the importance of our saint's connection with the abbey itself - so I am grateful to Ben for refocusing my attention.

I am afraid that this issue does not have much in the way of architecture but I hope that it throws a different light on some old Botolphian chestnuts.

## Feature

## **B**ury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

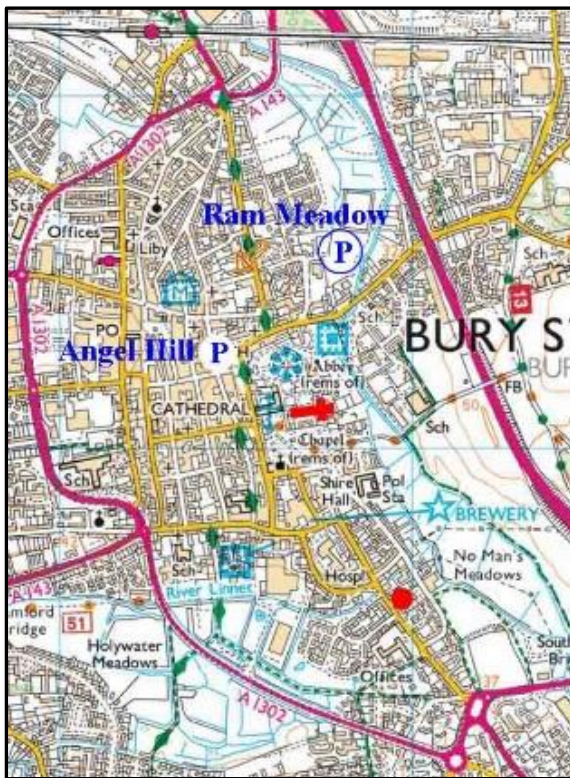
**Approach:** The question 'Which is the quickest way to Bury St Edmunds?' must be one of the oldest schoolboy jokes but it is something which I now find myself having to address seriously. From London, the M11/A11/A14 appears to be favourite unless you wish to take the pretty route along the A12/A14 through Colchester and Ipswich.

There is short stay parking on Angel Hill but this, apparently, is often full. Alternatively there is a large 825-space park at Ram Meadow which is (or was) £2.50 for 3 hours or £3 for all day.



<sup>1</sup> Ben writes for TV and Radio - his latest radio play being an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *The Signalman*.

**Location of Bury St Edmund's Abbey Ruins:**  
 Lat/Long: 52.2437, 0.7189. Postcode: IP33 1LS.  
**Location of the site of St Botolph's Chapel,**  
**Bury St Edmund's: Behind the Abbey Hotel at**  
 33 Southgate Street, IP33 2AZ. Lat/Long:  
 52.2388, 0.7223.



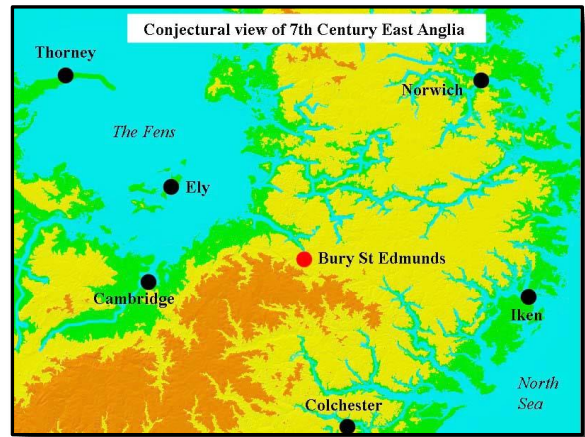
*Showing the positions within the town of the Abbey ruins (in red) and the site of St Botolph's Church (red dot) - with two useful car parks thrown in for good measure.*

There is considerable confusion about the town's name:

Although the town of **Bury St Edmunds** has a cathedral ( St James' Church became its Cathedral in 1914) it does not however have 'city status'. It is known locally as '**Bury**' and, for the sake of brevity, I will follow that tradition here.

From AD 925 however, when the name of St Edmund was on everyone's lips, the town's name changed to **St Edmund's Bury**. This name was confirmed when, c.1050 the town was granted a mint by Edward the Confessor. I have found no record of when the title reverted to Bury St Edmunds.

**St Edmundsbury** is the formal name of the diocese - thus it is 'St Edmundsbury Cathedral'. From 1974 until 2019 the borough (i.e. the local government district) was called **St Edmundsbury** but when St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council merged, the name was lost and the district is now known simply as **West Suffolk**. I hope you have managed to digest all that.



In the seventh century, Bury lay in the centre of the East Anglian peninsula which was bounded to the east by the North Sea and to the west by the shallow fens which harboured the Isle of Ely. Conjectural maps of C7 topography, as seen above, show an exciting terrain rich with navigable rivers and creeks. During the following seven centuries many of those rivers silted up, gradually turning wide waterways into today's narrow streams. With the exception of the glorious rivers and broads of the east coast, this alluviation endowed us with land that, when first studied on a modern map, looks flat and featureless.

The period that we are covering in this issue is mainly C11 so we might guess that, by this period, the waterways were halfway between their C7 status and that of today.

## **S**aint Edmund the Martyr

Saint Edmund (841-869) was Patron Saint of England until 1348 when Edward III declared that the position had been re-assigned to Saint George. Edmund became king of the East Angles c. 855 and fought alongside King Alfred of Wessex during the Viking invasion of 869.



*Picture by Brian Whelan 2003.*

Sadly he was captured and might have been spared but for the fact that he refused to renounce his Christian faith. For this refusal he was tied to a tree and shot many times with arrows and then beheaded.

His legend tells us that local people found his decapitated body and started searching the woods for the missing head. Their attention was drawn by the howling of a wolf at the feet of which they discovered the object of their search.

His body was buried near the site of his death which is thought to have been 22 miles east of Bury at Hoxne<sup>2</sup> and his grave is said to have been covered by a wooden chapel constructed specifically for the purpose. In 925 (just 55 years after his death) King Athelstan founded a religious community to look after his shrine.

Edmund's death seems to have been pivotal regarding the *Pricking of the Viking Conscience* concerning the atrocities that had been carried out at the behest of their leaders. There is evidence that within three decades of his death the Vikings<sup>3</sup> started to venerate Edmund even to the extent of their minting coins in his memory. This same conscience could still be seen a century later in the actions of Cnut the Great when he devoted much of his energy to re-founding monasteries and abbeys razed to the ground by his predecessors. Sadly for us 'Botolphians' Cnut did not choose to re-found the Abbey of Icanho, although he seems to have been very supportive in the enshrinement of our saint's relics at Ely, Thorney, Westminster and Bury St Edmunds.



*King Sigeberht*

He had a reputation as a great warrior but in 634 abdicated and entered monastic life in *Beodricsworth Abbey* which he had founded on the site now occupied by the ruins of Bury St Edmunds Abbey. Sadly his peace was short-lived because, we are told, there was, in 636, an attack on the kingdom by the warlord Penda of Mercia and Sigeberht was called upon to fight. On account of his Christian beliefs, he refused to bear arms and entered the fray carrying only his staff so quickly died a martyr's death.



*The picture above is of the monk John Lydgate (c.1370-c.1451) worshipping at Bury's shrine of St Edmund. Lydgate, an esteemed poet, was admitted as a novice to Bury Abbey in 1382 and ordained as a subdeacon in 1389.*

### **Sigeberht, king of East Anglia**

But Edmund was not the first king to have deep and tragic associations with Bury. A predecessor by the name of **Sigeberht** had been king of East Anglia from c.629 to c.634.

### **St Botolph's Church, Bury St Edmunds**

As well as having the *two* aforementioned martyrs, Bury has *two* areas of interest for students of St Botolph.

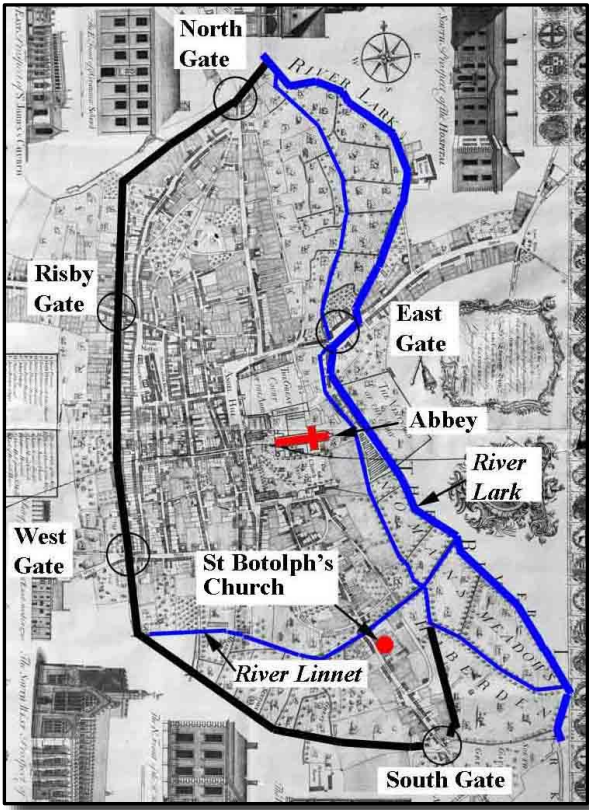
The first is the aforementioned ruins of the abbey where there was a shrine dedicated to our saint. The second is the site of a church dedicated to him; this lies just 700 metres to the SSE of the abbey.

In much of the writing about this building it is referred to as a 'chapel'. St Edmund's Abbey also has a St Botolph's Chapel however, so to prevent confusion I shall mostly refer to this building as a '**church**', and indeed it merits this title because, as far as I can see, it was never subsidiary to a 'mother church'. One of the many reasons for a church being referred to as a chapel, is simply the lack of a tower, but smallness or insignificance can also qualify. This church was not large but it was entirely significant to the community that it served, as we will shortly see.

<sup>2</sup> The historian A.B. Whittingham maintains that the site of Edmund's death was not at Hoxne but at Hellesdon, just north of Norwich.

<sup>3</sup> Viking - an emotive word covering the Danes and all Scandinavians. Some say that it originates from the raiders' original targets - the 'wics' - i.e. market towns

such as 'Norwic' (Norwich) and many others the names of which can be identified by their similar suffixes. Some indeed contend that 'viking' should be used as a verb - e.g. *The Swedes, Norwegians and Danes went viking ... plundering the English wics.*

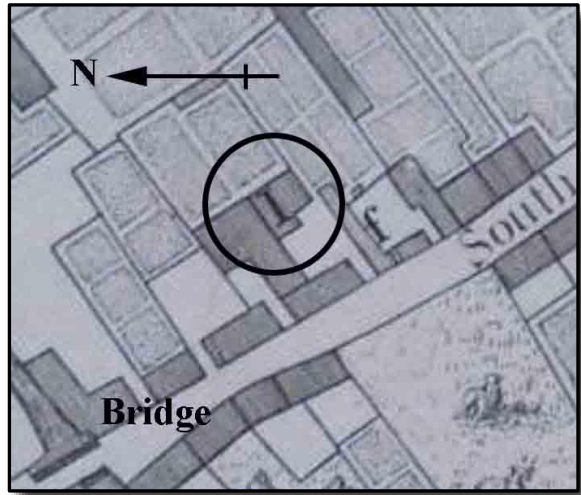


Above we see Warren's 1776 map of Bury showing in red the two relevant sites. The map was originally drawn 'east-side-up' so I have rotated it for convenience. In black you see the city walls and in blue are the rivers. As we will discover shortly, in C7 the Lark would have been a wide river, but as it silted up it transmogrified into two smaller streams, the wider one being the Lark and the narrower one the Linnet. It is a western tributary of the Linnet which flows past the church site.

the southerly one is St Botolph's and the northerly one is the Abbey Church.

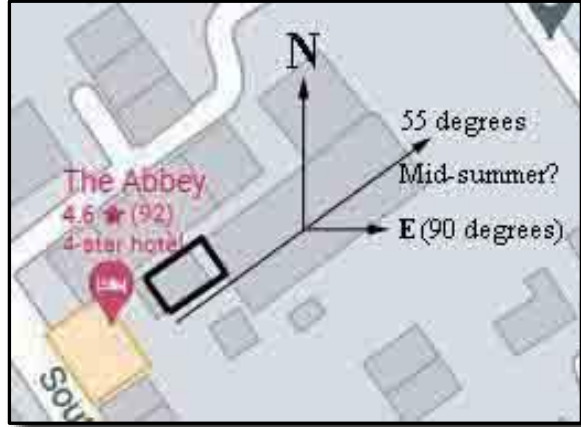
A	Saint Petronel's	17
B	Gods House, or St. Johns Hospital.	27
C	Saint Nicholas's Hospital.	3.S
D	Saint Saviours Hospital.	4.S
E	Saint Thomas's Hospital.	5.S
F	Saint Peter's Hospital.	6.S
G	Jesus College	6.C
H	Chapel of the Charnel.	7.S
I	Saint Botolph's Chapel.	8.E
K	The Exchequer or Audit House of the Abbey	9.T
	Chantryes markit thus. ☉	10.F
a	H <sup>m</sup> Barnabys's Alma House	11.D
b	Bartholomew's Hospital's Alma House	12.G

Usefully, Warren's 1776 map key shows Saint Botolph's Chapel (Church) at 'I'.



This 1675 map of John Ogilby shows the road from Chelmsford entering Bury via the South Gate and passing two churches on the right. Ogilby used the same symbol for all churches, large or small, with tower or without tower so it seems that

And here is 'I' on the (un-rotated) map to which the key refers. It lies on the South Gate Street with South Gate Street Bridge over the River Linnet shown at the lower left hand corner. This is *not* St Botolph's Bridge.



And this is what we get once we rotate the map to True North and lay it over a modern map. The outlines of the old church fit squarely over the

outlines of a modern building in the backyard of The Abbey Hotel. The church was not built pointing to the traditional angle of due east (90 degrees), but at 55 degrees (i.e. 35 degrees *north* of east). Further up the road however the angle of the Abbey Church is rather closer to what we might expect, at 85 degrees (only 5 degrees north of 'target').

The reasons for such a discrepancy can be manifold - there were no hard and fast rules - indeed the chancels of most churches do not face exactly to the east although it is slightly unusual to find a building as many as 35 degrees out of kilter. Sometimes, as at Rochester where the cathedral lies at 129 degrees (39 degrees *south* of east) the angulation is said to have been caused by the limitations placed on the builders due to the presence of existing trackways leading to the bridge over the River Medway. This same sort of factor could have influenced the angle here at Bury where the church was adjacent to a main road leading from the South Gate to the town.

On the other hand, this is a small church not a massive cathedral, and one would have thought that the builders could have placed it at whatever angle they chose in the open landscape that would have been available at that time.

My favourite answer to this riddle is related to the 'pegging out' of the new building. When such a construction was begun, the first process was to drive wooden pegs into the ground outlining the proposed shape of the new structure. In the case of religious institutions, the first two 'pegs' to be placed would actually have been *poles* long enough to be aligned to the rising sun.

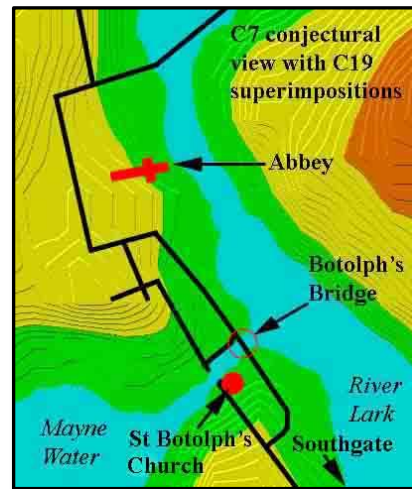
The only times that the sun rises at due east are at the equinoxes i.e. 21st March and 21st September; between those dates the angle can vary as much as 40 degrees on either side of east. Halfway between the equinoxes we find the solstices and the summer one (when the discrepancy is 35 degrees north) is on 21st June so it looks as if that was the day on which St Botolph's Church Bury St Edmunds was pegged out.

Interestingly this calculation takes us to only four days after St Botolph's Day (17th June) so we might guess that the Saint's Day was chosen for the 'pegging out' of the site.

We can imagine the villagers<sup>4</sup> getting up early and, having caught the rising sun, setting to work pegging out the site? Would the builders have then, gleefully, immediately started to build?

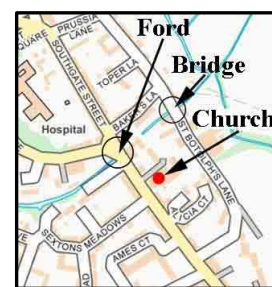
<sup>4</sup> I say 'villagers' rather than 'townspeople' because, as we will see further below, the community at that stage would have been too small to constitute a town.

Well, NO, actually, because St Botolph's Day would have been a holiday so the work proper could not have started in earnest until a few days later ... but perhaps the Botolphian feast became a 'fun ritual' in which adults and children alike joined in the 'placing of the pegs' so that the people would subsequently feel that the church was truly their own?



If we look at a relief map of the area we find the church perched on the south bank of what, in C7, would have been a rivulet of a depth viable for navigation. The black lines represent trackways. Botolph's Bridge and the trackways serving it were much later. The River Lark is conjectured in its full C7 width before silting, and the Linnet tributary flows to the west. South Gate Street (its name alone suggests a Roman or pre-Roman origin) runs upwards from the bottom of the map towards the town.

It looks as if South Gate Street travellers would initially have forded the Linnet at what was then its narrowest and shallowest point but as the silting up of the Linnet and the Mayne Water basin became more severe the river traffic stopped and the easiest point of crossing moved to the northeast and provoked the building of Botolph's Bridge. The fact that the site of St Botolph's Church is adjacent to the ford rather than on 'St Botolph's Lane' indicates that it pre-dates the bridge by a considerable period.





Above is an etching showing the church a few years before it was demolished. We can see that, like many of its redundant sisters, it has been converted into a barn. We are here looking towards the northeast and through an unusually large Norman window we can see wooden steps leading up to a hayloft. I suspect that the artist particularly wanted to show these steps to demonstrate the building's use as a barn and used artistic licence to feature a larger window for that purpose.



If (on the left above) we use the power of editing and attempt to second-guess the artistic licence, we end up with a picture not unlike that seen above right which is of the Anglo-Saxon church of St Peter-on-the-Wall, Bradwell, Essex which dates from c. 660 (right in the centre of St Botolph's lifetime). We must not become over-excited though. On the basis that *'There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip'* we are a long way from demonstrating that the Bury church was C7 - this simply demonstrates that it is not outside the realms of possibility.

In his *History and Antiquities of the Abbey of St Edmund's Bury*, Richard Yates (1769-1834) tells us, 'In the White Hart Yard, South Gate Street, are the ruins of an old religious house, now called the Chapel. It is supposed to have been dedicated to St Botolph.' The former 'White Hart' is now a 4-star hotel called 'The Abbey'.

The Warren 1776 map that we looked at earlier confirms the chapel (church)'s location, and Edmund Gillingwater (c.1735-1813) in his *Historical and descriptive Account of St. Edmund's Bury*, records that it still stood in 1801 but was totally demolished by 1804.

The church had done well to survive that long. One can only assume that its saving grace was that, by the Reformation it was already a ruin in agricultural service, and therefore presented no temptation to Henry VIII's minions to 'pluck it down'.

It is noteworthy that Richard Yates' reference was in the section of his book which related to 'hospitallers' which leads one to suspect that he had the notion (as well he might) that the church provided hospitality to travellers. He gave no indication that he thought the church might have any connection to the Knights Hospitallers of St John.

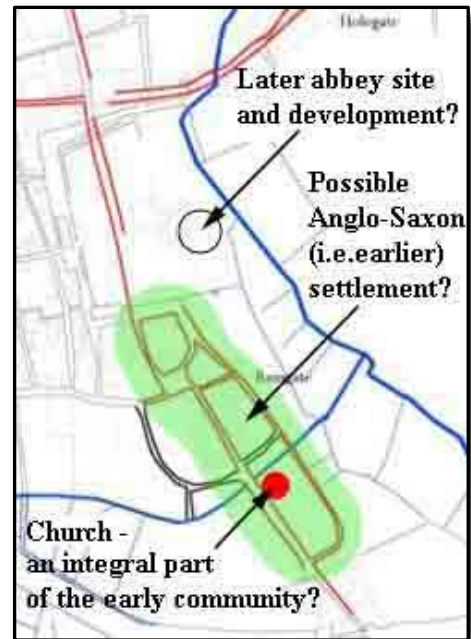
So who founded the site of this church? Was it Saint Botolph himself ... or was its one of his later acolytes as part of the further development of his cult?

My first reaction was that the siting of the church - right down on the foreshore of the Linnet river - did not look typical C7 - it seemed too close to the water's edge for that period when the waterways would have been wide and prone to flooding. It looked unlikely that any self-respecting Anglo-Saxon builder would place it so close to the water's edge. Our relief map also shows the Abbey Church lying close to the banks of what would, in C7, have been a wide river - but by the time the abbey was built - 400 years later in C11 - the river would, to a great extent, have silted up; the land would have been drier and the choice for the abbey would have been viable.

However, in her doctoral thesis: *Urbanisation and the Urban Landscape: Building Medieval Bury St Edmunds* Dr Abby L. Antrobus makes some interesting observations in which she suggests that the little church was at the centre of a settlement which predated both the abbey and the town as we know it today.

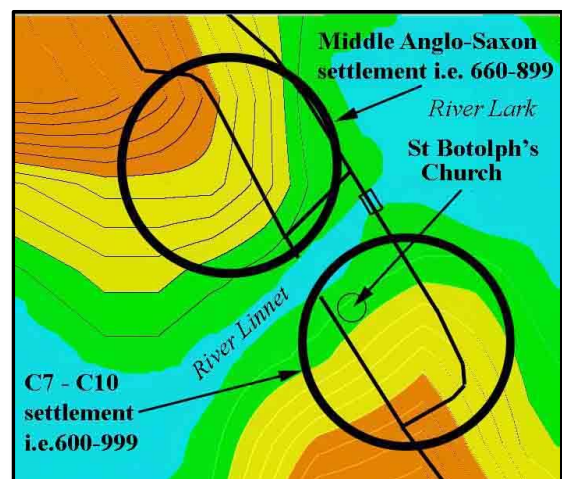
With reference to the diagram below, Dr Antrobus writes: 'The red lines delineate a suggested suburban expansion to an older part of the town (shown in black). On the basis of the name 'Raingate Street' it is suggested that this occurred sometime before or in the Late Saxon period, and that it may be an early part of the street plan, pre-

dating much of the town on the north ... the main east-west and north-south roads have been shown in red, as it is likely that they existed at this time. The name 'Holegate', now Hollow Road, is mentioned in 10<sup>th</sup> century boundary charter.'



*Dr Antrobus' plan of the Bury suburb with my additions in green and red and my annotations.*

If we focus our attention on the River Linnet, it is easy to imagine the two halves of the southern early Anglo-Saxon community grouped around the river crossing with St Botolph's Church as its central feature.



This places the church in a typically *Botolphian* 'Gate-guardian' position at the river crossing, where its people would have attended to the needs of travellers as well as to the spiritual requirements of the local community.

If the foundation of the church does indeed date from C7 then it would have come into its own in an even greater way 400 or so years later when, in C11 there would have been a large increase in traffic as pilgrims flocked to the recently installed

shrines of (primarily) St Edmund, but (also importantly) St Botolph, in the new abbey.

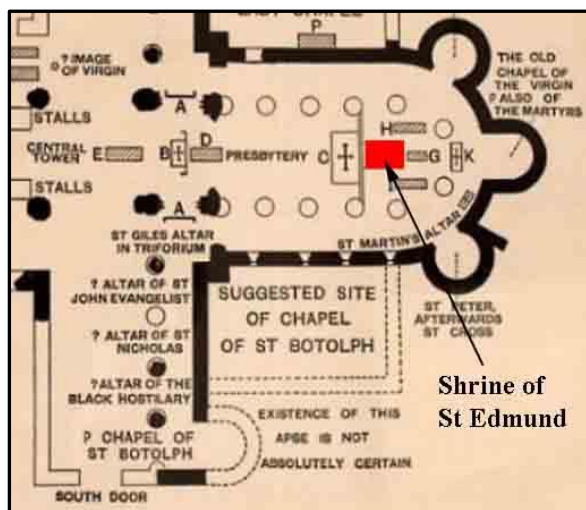
## Bury St Edmunds Abbey

As discussed earlier, the first foundation on the site where the ruins of the abbey lie today, was the *Beodricsworth Abbey* legacy of King Sigeberht - the first English king to receive Christian baptism before his coronation (c.629) and the first to abdicate in favour of becoming a monk.

It seems that Bury abbey - amazingly and almost unbelievably - managed to avoid being razed by the Vikings and that nearly three centuries later - rose to prominence when St Edmund's relics were translated there.

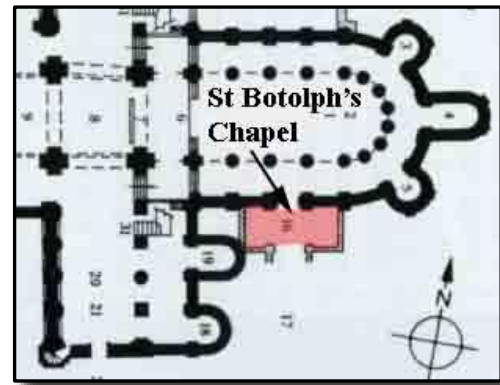
Briefly (because we study this in more detail later) - lands around the abbey were gifted in 945 to the four priests and two deacons who were guarding the shrine. In 1010 there was a security scare when the relics were lodged in London for three years following worries about another Danish invasion. Ten years after that the secular guardians were replaced by twenty Benedictine monks and an abbot was installed

A constant flow of benefactions followed and the abbey's wealth consequently increased to the point that in 1093 the (Norman) Abbot Baldwin decided that the time had come to rebuild the Abbey Church on a grander scale. In 1095 the relics of St Edmund were translated to their shrine which was in pride of place in the new church.

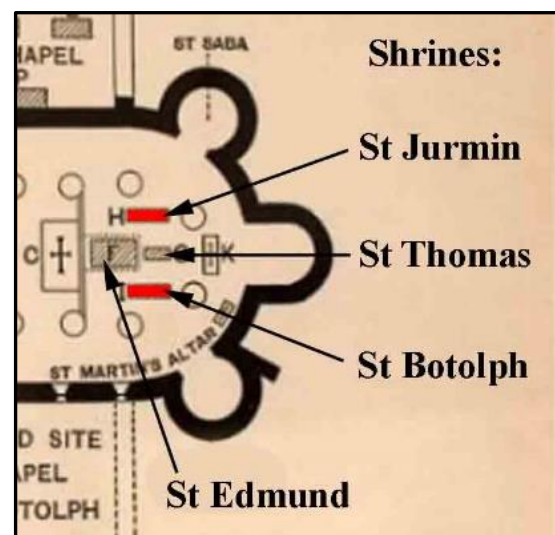


The picture above (and the one in full size below) comes from a book on the abbey written by Montague Rhodes James and published in 1895. M.R. James (1862-1936) is perhaps better known today as the author of ghost stories but he was an outstanding archaeologist and mediaeval scholar. He was also Provost of King's College, Cambridge.

M.R. James wrote: *'What and where was the Chapel of St Botolph in the south transept? Father Mackinlay, in a rough plan of the Church puts a large chapel in the angle of the south transept, corresponding to the Lady Chapel on the north ... it is likely enough that St Botolph's Chapel stood here ... Very probably the saint's body was translated there but I think it more likely that only his arm (which is mentioned as a second relic in a Rituale, MS Harl. 2977) was kept there.'*



The diagram above was drawn in 1952 by A.B. Whittingham. Although it confirms the location suggested by M.R. James, the author suggests that this chapel only remained dedicated to St Botolph for the two decades between 1279 and 1301. Until the Dissolution, St Botolph's *shrine* remained in what I suppose we might call St Edmund's Chapel, close to the shrine of St Edmund and in company with that of St Jurmin.



In truth I am not sure if it has been ascertained which of the Jurmin/Botolph shrines was which but here I have drawn St Botolph's to the south. St Jurmin was the martyred son or brother of King Anna of East Anglia. It is believed that the latter was the king who sponsored Botolph's Icanho Abbey.



The St Thomas' shrine was that of the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury and so must have been added 75 or so years after the new church's consecration since his death was in 1170. Until that time the three stars of the show which attracted a multitude of pilgrims, were the shrines of Saints Edmund, Botolph and Jurmin.

The atrocity of Thomas's murder must have rocked the country to its core. Such tragedies do offer opportunities however and it looks as if the St Edmundsbury monastery was not slow in acquiring one of his relics to show their allegiance.

## Relics

As might already have become apparent, the **cult of relics** is an important part of this issue since it is relevant not only to the relics of Saint Edmund himself but also to those of Saint Botolph which were enshrined both elsewhere and in Bury Abbey Church. The subject might be considered rather macabre in terms of today's culture and I hope it will not unduly upset readers' sensitivities but I feel that it should be addressed here.

### Relics of Saint Botolph

Since he is our saint and the fact that *his* relics have perhaps a more intriguing story, we will start with the those of St Botolph.

Many years ago, when I first started studying Botolph's disinterment I came to the conclusion that it was likely that his 'brother'<sup>5</sup> Adulph had died first and that when, some years later, Botolph too passed away, he was buried in the same grave/coffin/tomb as his sibling. It is recorded that when (in circa 965) following Bishop Aethelwold's orders, the grave was opened to exhume Saint Botolph there was difficulty in separating the two 'brothers' and so the decision was made to disinter Adulph as well.

Hagiographic literature is full of stories of saints' tombs being opened and the saints' bodies found to be incorrupt. The process of embalming might be thought to explain it and embalming was indeed used in the Anglo-Saxon period, but mainly for the bodies of royalty and mainly with the purpose of preserving the body for the relatively short period between death and burial.

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<sup>5</sup> I write 'brother' here in quotes as some historians believe that they were not of the same blood.

<sup>6</sup> Sadly we are given no clue as to the date of that 'very day'.

<sup>7</sup> The name 'Botolph' has been transcribed in many different ways over the centuries. It has been established that 'Botulph, Botwulf' etc., all refer to the same person.

Bearing these matters in mind, I at first assumed that when a saint like Botolph was exhumed his body would be incorrupt, and that dividing him up would be a grisly task. We are told by most authorities that his head went to Ely Abbey, his trunk to the king (ultimately bound for Westminster Abbey) and his lower half to Thorney Abbey. It came as something of a relief when I realised that Saint Botolph's 'exhumation committee' are likely to have simply found a collection of dry bones belonging to two individuals who had been buried in the same grave.

One might think that since, as I conjectured, the burials had occurred with a gap of maybe a couple of years, the experienced exhumationist would have been able to tell the difference between the two collections - for example by the colour of the bones. However when one considers that both sets of bones had been in the ground for nearly three hundred years before they saw the light of day, the difficulty of identifying the separate owners becomes understandable.

This subject was addressed in late C17 by Daniel Papebroch at the Society of Bollandists in Antwerp when he analysed and compared the 28 different *Saint Botolph Vitae* that had collected by the Bollandists.

Papebroch writes:

*"The memory of St. Botolph is very well preserved in the most ancient memorials of England ... In an English manuscript once kept at Rome in the library of Duke Altempsius there were the following words: "On that very day<sup>6</sup> at Bury St. Edmunds the burial of St. Botolph<sup>7</sup>, Bishop" (it should be Abbot<sup>8</sup>) "and Confessor"... The Malmesbury author<sup>9</sup> dealing with the same church of St. Edmund says "There lie two Saints, German<sup>10</sup> and Botulph ..."*

Papebroch continues by citing the words of **John Brompton** (fl. 1436, abbot of Jervaulx Abbey near Ripon). Brompton wrote:

*"Also at that time the Venerable Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, builder of monasteries, got leave from King Edgar to transfer the bodies of various saints, which were lying neglected in ruined places, to the monasteries which he had*

<sup>8</sup> This, in parentheses, is Papebroch's comment not mine (Ed.) although, as with the previous footnote, it has been established that, with reference to Saint Botolph, the titles of 'abbot' and 'bishop' are, in ancient documents, frequently interchanged. They refer however to one and the same person.

<sup>9</sup> William of Malmesbury (c. 1095 - c. 1143).

<sup>10</sup> 'German' = 'Jurmin'.

built; among them, he had the body of St. Botolph transferred from the Ikennum<sup>11</sup> monastery, which St. Botolph had built in his lifetime, and which had later been destroyed by the people who killed St. Edmund the King; and he informed His Majesty of this. The King, showing a passionate interest in the merits of St. Botolph, decided that his body should be divided into three parts; he gave **the head** to the monastery of Ely, **the middle part** to the Church of Thorney **and the rest** he reserved for himself and took into the chest of Royal Relics belonging to his Court. Later they were all collected in the Oratory of St. Peter<sup>12</sup> by King Edward of glorious memory".

Sadly, this causes something of a conflict because a little later in his compilation Papebroch quotes an earlier chronicler, **John Capgrave** (1393-1464) who says, when writing the same story:

*"Now when a certain monk named Ultikellus with many others had come to the tomb of St. Botolph on the instructions of St. Aethelwold and had taken up his precious bones wrapped in muslin, and they were trying to carry them away on their shoulders, they were stopped by such a great weight that they could not move in spite of all their efforts. Also the gates around the altar made a great noise and produced a movement as of some work that was only half done. So they stayed for a long time utterly amazed; but finally, taught by the grace of God, the aforesaid monk recollected from something he had heard, that the Blessed Adulph was buried in the same place with his brother, and so they took up his body from the earth and brought it rejoicing with them to St. Aethelwold, and here also to King Edgar."*<sup>13</sup>

*He allotted the **head of St. Botolph** to the monastery of Ely, **the middle part** he put in the chest of the Royal Relics for himself and his own court; and he gave **the rest**, with the body of St. Adulph, to the Church at Thorney."*

There seems no doubt that St Botolph's head went to Ely. Regarding the king's share, Malmesbury (1080-1143), Capgrave (1393-1464), and Leland (1503-1552) say he had the **middle part**, whereas Brompton (fl. 1436) says the king took St Botolph's lower limbs and it was *Thorney Abbey* that had the middle part.

On balance it would seem that Brompton was mistaken and this is supported by further evidence (see footnote 18 below) regarding the redistribution of the arms but the true answer really remains anyone's guess.

Whoever had what, this event must have come rather hard on the caring families who, for generations, had been guarding St Botolph's remains and venerating his burial place at Icanho - not to mention the likelihood that the presence of the saint's grave probably brought them some sort of income.

The sudden arrival of the Bishop of Winchester's agent Ultikellus and his companions must have come as rather a shock. And when they started (with due reverence and ceremony I am sure) to exhume the precious saint with a view to translating him elsewhere, the shock to the curators must have been devastating.



They cannot have been totally discouraged, for Saint Botolph's Iken Church still occupies the site today. Perhaps, as a matter of Christian empathy the faithful people were left with a small relic of their saint in order to continue their traditional vigil.



*This picture from the inn-sign of Botolph's Bridge Inn on Romney Marsh in Kent, brings me almost full circle as it was this which first stimulated my interest in Saint Botolph.*

<sup>11</sup> Icanho

<sup>12</sup> At Westminster Abbey (from 1065).

<sup>13</sup> This writing makes is sound like a 'done deal' but as we will see later it was far from being as simple as that.

### The collections

If **King Edgar** chose to take the 'middle part' then it was perhaps a sign of his shrewdness since the bones of St Botolph's rib cage, vertebral column and arms would have numbered **111** (see comparative values below however).

Although in some ways **Ely Abbey** received the most emotive and prestigious of the relics, i.e. the skull, their portion of the harvest - if one includes the skull itself, the lower jaw and a possible total of 32 teeth, - would only have numbered **34**.

As a major saint, there is a good chance that Botolph's skull would have been preserved intact and it seems likely that this is what happened at Ely Abbey. When trade in relics was at its height however it became standard procedure to dismantle the skulls of lesser saints thereby providing the 28 bones which had originally constituted the skull, which, adding the teeth and the lower jaw made a total of **61**.<sup>14</sup>

**Thorney Abbey's** share consisted of St Botolph's pelvis and lower limbs and totalled **61** although we must remember that the abbey also had *all* the bones of St Adulph - an extra **206** (or **234** if Adulph's skull was dismantled). This was a huge potential total of **295** or more - but only **61** were truly Botolph's

### The value of relics

In AD 787 the Second Council of Nicaea decreed that '*every altar should contain a relic*'. They therefore became important and valuable items and were traded both for money and as prestigious gifts. A pilgrim might hope that the shrine at which he prayed would contain a whole body - but in reality the relic inside might be as tiny as a tooth or a finger bone.

This set me to wondering what the value of these relics might have been in the Middle Ages - recalculated in today's money. Clearly the values would depend upon the prestige of the person - ranging from the lowliest almost-unknown and non-martyred saint, via St Thomas a Becket, to Biblical saints and the apostles, and finishing with Christ himself.<sup>15</sup> I concluded that it would be unsurprising if the price ranged between £200,000 for the whole body of a minor saint to perhaps several £million for a major one - and *pro rata* for bones etc., according to their size.

Basing my speculations on the relative weight of the relic in comparison to the weight of the whole body, and randomly assuming that Saint Botolph's skeleton in its entirety might be worth about £500,000 in today's terms, I calculated that **Ely's share** (skull and mandible) would have been worth the equivalent of about **£65,000**;

**the king's share** (2 upper limbs, rib cage and vertebrae) would come to **£215,000**;

**and Thorney's part** of Saint Botolph (pelvis and lower limbs) would, surprisingly, be **£220,000**.

On this basis the price of a single tooth or the smallest finger bone would sell for about **£61**<sup>16</sup> and a whole arm would be a snip at £28,000.



Shown above is a series of small relics which had been collected by the *Museum de Sens* in France. Each relic is carefully wrapped in muslin and each has an attachment detailing its provenance. This picture was part of Julia Smith's inspiring inaugural lecture (entitled '*Reframing Relics in the Early Middle Ages*') as Chichele Professor of Medieval History at All Souls College Oxford. For those who would like to view this it is freely available at:

<https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/event/thinking-with-things-reframing-relics-in-the-early-middle-ages>.

Relics were not kept permanently locked away - quite the opposite. In a copy of the C13 Statutes of Dover Castle (which was sent to me by my friend Peter Godden) as applied to the church of St Mary-in-Castro we read:

*'Reliques are appointed to be shown, and, especially such as are of the true Cross, shall be*

<sup>14</sup> I would risk hazarding a guess that skull relics are *never* found to have a full complement teeth - partly because, *post mortem*, single-rooted teeth drop out of dry jaws with little or no encouragement and partly because of the thought that such a little item would never be missed.

<sup>15</sup> Items claiming to be relics of Christ range from parts of His body to the Turin Shroud and pieces of the cross.

<sup>16</sup> I cannot imagine that purchase of even a small part of a major saint like St Botolph would be easily within the means of a humble member of the public. The price would have had to make the purchaser wonder whether it would be worth spending that amount of money. In this case £300 or even £600 might be more appropriate than £61. My estimates might therefore have to be adjusted by as much as tenfold.

brought out every Friday and placed on the High Altar from the ringing of prime to the end of high mass. Meantime the reliques shall be open to all who wish to visit them, for the honour of God, and the benefit of the Chapel. One of the Chaplains or a Clerk, vested in a surplice, shall remain by the reliques and may shew and explain them, and pronounce absolution to a person in a dying state who may desire it.'

### Furta Sacra

These words refer to the mediaeval pastime of one monastery stealing the relics of another monastery. Today this sounds, to say the least of it, terribly un-Christian, but to understand this widespread activity we have to do our best to enter the 'medieval mind'.

The mitigation that is put forward is that the relics of saints are extremely powerful and if they did not *want* to be stolen they would become so heavy that it would be impossible to move them. Hence any relics that allowed themselves to be stolen must have colluded with their liberators. As a rider to this comes the suggestion that, if a monastery holds a relic and is not making the best use of it, it is the duty of any other self-respecting abbey to effect a rescue and provide the relic with better and more reverent accommodation.

Readers will have noted that the abbey of Bury St Edmunds was not listed as a beneficiary after St Botolph's body was exhumed in mid C10. By mid C12 however (as recorded in the List of the Relics of the Saints written by the monk Hugh Candidus in the Chronicle of Peterborough Abbey) Bury Abbey possessed *two* significant relics of our saint.

Against this, the *Saxon* monks of Ely Abbey record in their *Liber Eliensis* that, in the 1090s 'foreign' monks (the inference is that they were *Normans*<sup>17</sup> from Bury) have entered their church, '**broken open the chests**' and stolen the relics of Saint Botolph. Manuscripts from Bury record that at a similar date *their* monks brought relics from Grundisburgh<sup>18</sup> and **enshrined them** in their abbey church.

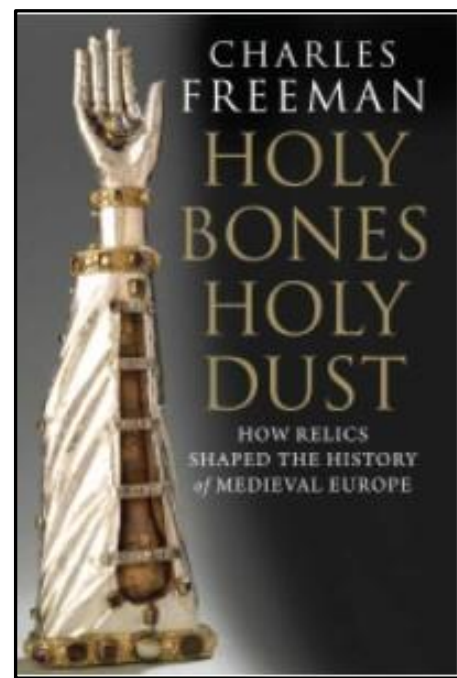
As yet I have been unable to have sight of the Latin manuscripts which cover these events but, when I eventually do so, I will be interested to see if those exact terms are used. If they are, then there is a lot of difference between the respect shown in '*enshrining*' the saint's ... skull? and merely '*keeping it in a wooden chest*' so this might be seen by some as justifying the actions of the

<sup>17</sup> I am grateful to Patricia Croxton-Smith for identifying this event as another example of Saxo-Norman conflict.

<sup>18</sup> It seems likely that this manuscript was simply a fabricated alibi.

Bury monks as being at once a liberation and a new promotion of the saintly parts.

Indeed the skull's 're-location' would have coincided with the construction of a new abbey church by Abbot Baldwin<sup>19</sup> to replace the previous one opened in the time of Cnut the Great in 1032. The new church was consecrated in 1095 and the timely addition of another prestigious relic would have made a good start for the new pilgrimage site. It is highly likely that the abbot was firmly behind the 'furta sacra' plot - and his ambitious foresight paid off because, due in great part to the vast number of pilgrims who visited, the abbey became one of the six richest Benedictine monasteries in England.



On the front cover of his excellent book, Charles Freeman illustrates a reliquary which contains the arm of St Felicity - and St Botolph's arm was probably similarly displayed in his chapel at Bury. A *Guild of Saint Botolph's Arm* was also recorded in mediaeval London so this accounts for the destiny of both arms and they - as we surmise - were originally the property of King Edgar. How the guild obtained their arm I have no idea but other historians suggest that the arm at Bury was a gift from the monarch. It looks as if that monarch was Edward the Great and that the arm arrived at Bury sometime between 1045 and 1066 and was used by the monastery to provide extra substance for their new abbey church which was consecrated in 1095.<sup>20</sup>

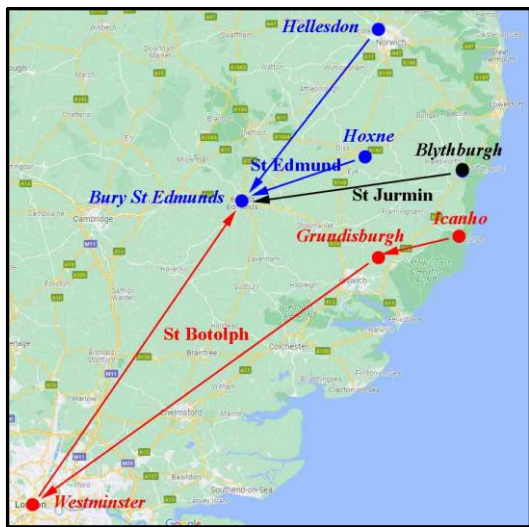
<sup>19</sup> Abbot Baldwin was in office from 1065-1097.

<sup>20</sup> If the arm was indeed a gift from the monarch this would support the evidence that Edgar 'took the middle part'.

## Relics of St Edmund

It is to be noted that Bury St Edmunds was *not* one of Aethelwold's projects. This was partly because it was in no need of restoration and partly because it did not have abbey status. It had somehow either been spared Viking destruction or had been rapidly re-built shortly afterwards ... and indeed perhaps re-built again and again, refusing to submit to Viking pressure.

It lay in the centre of what had become the Viking warlord Guthrum's Danelaw land following his submission to Alfred the Great in 878. Here Guthrum lived peaceably as a Christian (apart from an aberration in 884) for the next eleven years. One cannot help but wonder if it was Guthrum himself who looked after Bury's interests and whether, after he died in 890, his beneficence was maintained by his successors until Danish control collapsed in 917.



It was during this 27 year interim period that we hear of the relics of St Edmund the Martyr being disinterred in 903 from Hoxne (or Hellesdon if A.B Whittingham is to be followed - see footnote 1) and enshrined at Bury, later to be joined by St Jurmin and St Botolph.

This looks very much like determined progressive entrepreneurial activity bent on promoting the importance of the religious site. It would seem that between 903 and 917 the project was entirely Danish.

The memory of their forefathers' atrocious treatment of young King Edmund only 34 years earlier, must have continued to burn in the souls of the 'new Danes' as a lasting regret. It must have seemed to them that the religious sea-change to Christianity that their nation now embraced,

dated from the very time of Edmund's death and so, to those Danes in East Anglia, he would have been very much a saint ... if not a messiah.

It is unsurprising therefore that they would have sought out his resting place and brought him back to the centre of their community where he could be properly venerated and achieve the status of *patron saint*; a status that shortly spread to the rest of England.

To remind you of the sequence of events, it was over the next four decades that the Bury foundation rose to such importance that in 945 the martyr's namesake King Edmund I (b.920, k.939, d.946), gifted the lands around it to provide sustenance and support for the priests and deacons who were curating the shrine.

Another 75 years passed and in 1020 a new king (Cnut the Great, Danish King of England 1016-1035) took up the same cudgels left by those of his countrymen who had first enshrined St Edmund. He capitalised on their efforts by re-converting (we must not forget that Sigeberht's original foundation was monastic) Bury into an abbey, by granting it a generous charter of endowment and by stocking it with twenty Benedictine monks from St Benet's Abbey in Norfolk.<sup>21</sup> One of the monks, Uvius, was consecrated as the new foundation's abbot by the Bishop of London. Both abbot and king then cooperated to start the construction of a new stone church and this was consecrated in 1032.

This then was the pathway single-mindedly managed by the Danes which led to Bury St Edmund's success.

## Relics of St Botolph

There is no doubt that following their exhumation in c. 975, the relics of Saint Botolph eventually found their ways to Ely, Thorney and Westminster although there is considerable debate about how long it took them to get there.

King Edgar had acceded to the throne in 959 and he and his henchmen Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury (from 959), Bishop Oswald<sup>22</sup> of Worcester (from 961), and Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester (from 963) made a formidable team enthusiastic to revive monasterial traditions. Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester in particular sounds like a man in a hurry.

His main projects and their approximate re-foundation dates were as follows:

c. 966	Peterborough Abbey
c. 970	Ely Abbey
c. 972	Thorney Abbey

<sup>21</sup> Joan M. Snelling and W.F. Edwards, *St Benet's Abbey, Norfolk*, Norwich, 1983, p. 3; Tim Pestell,

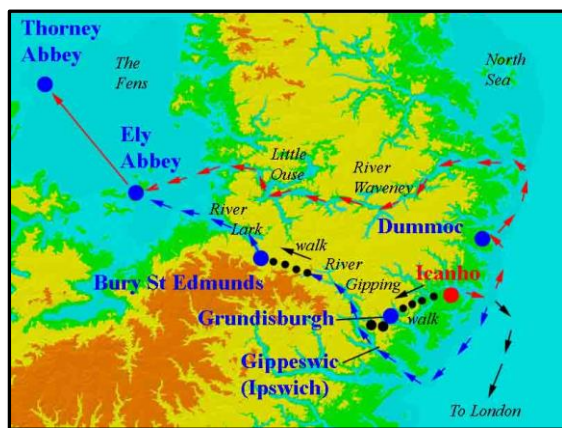
*St Benet's Abbey: Guide and History*, Norfolk Archaeological Trust, Norwich, 2007, pp. 24-25.

<sup>22</sup> Bishop Oswald was of Danish ancestry.

The story goes that after Bishop Aethelwold had arranged for the exhumation of St Botolph and St Adulph at Icanho, the relics were divided as prescribed by King Edgar. After that the story becomes somewhat confused and the village of Grundisburgh in Suffolk becomes involved as the site of the suggested storage of the relics. This does not ring true if Aethelwold really *was* a man in a hurry. Some versions maintain that it was only the *king's* relics (St Botolph's 'middle part') that were stored at Grundisburgh and that the rest were sent directly to their designated monasteries (i.e. the head to Ely Abbey and the rest to Thorney Abbey) and this sounds more sensible.

Indeed it looks as if the construction of Ely and Thorney were commenced in the early 970s and the exhumations were not carried out until the middle of the decade by which time the abbeys would have been of sufficient substance to take immediate delivery of their gifts.

The construction of Westminster Abbey had also been completed, and King Edgar and Archbishop Dunstan had contrived to install a community of Benedictine monks at Westminster by c. 672. The only apparent logic for using Grundisburgh for interim storage is that London was a comparatively long way away and that the slow holy procession of translocation would take several days.



Given the Anglo-Saxon predilection for travel by water rather than overland, and given the prerequisite for any overland procession carrying the body of a saint in translation to be respectfully slow and full of reverence, one would have expected the journey from Icanho to have been by boat down the Alde River, and that, I suspect, is what Aethelwold's men would initially have had in mind.

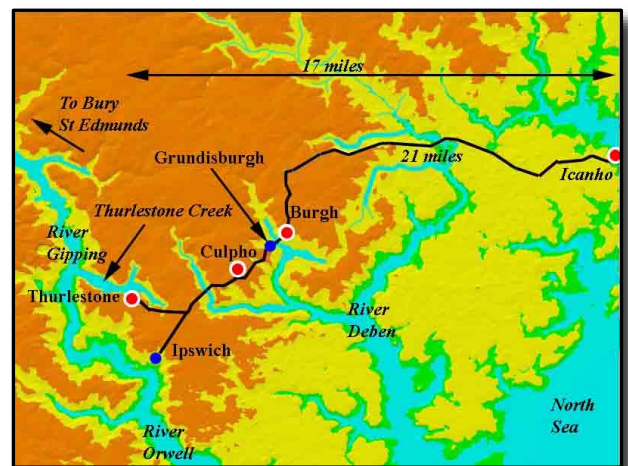
<sup>23</sup> This is *another* River Lark - not an extension of the same one which runs through Bury St Edmunds.

<sup>24</sup> It is possible that the scribes used the name of Grundisburgh rather than Burgh because it was more distinctive but that the bones were actually kept half a

## Speculation

The favoured route would probably have been to exit the Alde River into the North Sea, and then turning left towards the north - perhaps making a courtesy call at Bishop Felix's old Dummoc Abbey (if it had not been washed away by then), and subsequently heading west and taking the 'River Waveney' and the 'Little Ouse' into the Fens (as shown in red in the diagram above).

My guess is that on the day, or the day after, exhumation *something* prevented the brethren (who must have numbered at least twenty) from sailing their boat down the River Alde and putting out into the North Sea; a strong easterly wind would be a likely reason. This would also have scotched any alternative plan which involved exiting the Alde River, e.g. heading south to enter the River Gipping. In such circumstances the only solution would have been to walk the 21 miles overland to the River Gipping and take a boat from there.



Looking at the ancient trackways available and the topography, the route they would have taken looks fairly obvious. They would have kept to the north, crossing rivers at their narrowest point and walking west along higher ground before dropping down to the place where the church of St Botolph's Burgh now stands on the east bank of a small river called The Lark.<sup>23</sup> On the opposite bank lay the village of Grundisburgh<sup>24</sup> mentioned in mediaeval texts as being the place where St Botolph's relics were stored.

There must be *some* truth in this but there seems no logical reason why *all* the relics should have been stored here. My guess is that only St Botolph's 'middle part' (i.e. his ribs, arms and vertebrae) were left behind and that there was

mile away at Burgh. We know that the site on which this church stands was, in the Iron Age, a fortified enclosure. Some writers cite this as being the reason it was chosen to store St Botolph's relics but I am doubtful that any useful stronghold existed in 975.

every intention that, after the other relics had been delivered to Ely and Thorney, the exhumation party would return to Burgh, collect the remaining relics and sail back to London and deliver them to the king.

It is the fact that Grundisburgh lies well south of the original track that makes me think that the procession made that sudden turn to the left because it was the River Gipping they were heading to, rather than planning to continue directly over land to Bury St Edmunds.

With due pomp and ceremony, after leaving Burgh, the group would have crossed the wooden bridge to Grundisburgh and carried on to the southwest, passing (and probably stopping at) the village of Culpho where a St Botolph's Church still stands today. One more bridge or ford would take them to the point where they could either go further south to Ipswich (Gippeswic) to find a boat, or stop off at the place where St Botolph's Church Thurleston used to stand - at the head of Thurleston Creek.

From here they would be able to sail upriver to the Stowmarket area but there they would need to disembark and walk for another 12-miles towards Bury St Edmunds before they could take their last boat down the River Lark - into the shallow Fens - and across to the abbeys of Ely and Thorney. Having completed the main phase of their project one can imagine them tarrying for a while to celebrate and rest, before starting the journey back to Burgh to collect the other relics, and thence to London.

This delay might have been the undoing of the project's final phase, particularly if the year happened to be 975 because that was when, on 8th July, their monarch, King Edgar suddenly died at Winchester. Such an event would have caused everything to have been thrown into confusion.

Whether it was because of this, or for some other reason, the bones were left at Burgh for some considerable time. *Here endeth my speculation.*

### **Liberation of the Grundisburgh relics**

King Cnut the Great has frequently been referred to as being the next protagonist in the cause of the St Botolph's relics but the Bollandist Daniel Papebroch found in C17 the following recorded in a text written by John Capgrave (1393-1464):

*In a book of the Church of St. Botulph near Aldersgate in London, it is written that part of the body of St. Botulph (was brought there) through King Edward of glorious memory (perhaps the third of that name, called the Confessor ...).*

This suggests that the relics had at last been translated overland from Burgh via Aldersgate at the command of Edward the Confessor (reigned 1042-1066) rather than Cnut.

Soon after his accession to the throne Edward had begun rebuilding St Peter's Abbey at Westminster and the necessity of stocking this with some worthy shrines was probably the stimulus that drew his attention to the missing relics. A C14 manuscript (Bodleian MS 240) tells us that **King Cnut** (d.1035) *gave permission* for the relics to be transferred from Grundisburgh to Bury St Edmunds, but that this did not actually happen until the time (c. 1044-1065) of Abbot Leofstan ... whose incumbency was entirely in the reign of King Edward the Confessor.

Thus one might conclude that the 'arm' would have arrived at Bury in about 1045 in which case the sojourn of the relics in Grundisburgh had lasted seventy years.

The theft of the Ely skull occurred about 50 years later and looks as if it was designed to augment the 'St Botolph collection' further, in anticipation of the launch of the new Bury Abbey Church in 1095. It seems that the skull was given pride of place in the shrine in St Edmund's Chapel and that the arm remained unfettered and mobile and possibly used to give benedictions to the congregation. In 1275 it was eventually installed in its purpose built chapel.

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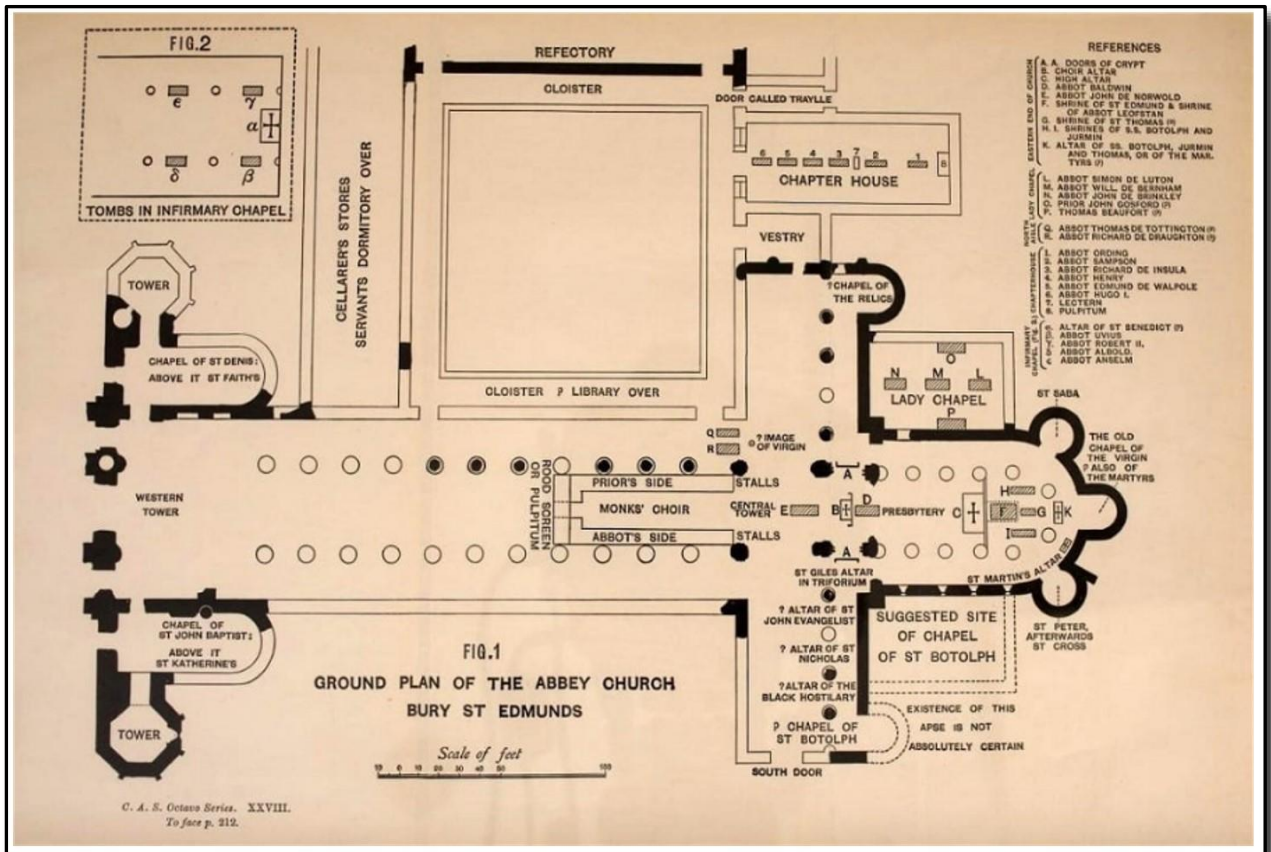
### **Conclusion**

The photograph below shows the subjects we have been discussing: on the left, St Edmundsbury Cathedral (formerly St James' Church but refurbished, reconstituted and reconsecrated in 1914) and on the right the remains of the abbey ruins.



The cathedral stands where, in 1065, the church of St Denis was built within the precincts of Bury St Edmunds Abbey. It was rebuilt between C12 and C16 and served as a parish church before being elevated to cathedral status.

Bury has provided us with a rich treasure trove of Botolphian connections - not the least being the new discovery of another St Botolph's Church. This brings our total up to 81, which is an average increase of about one church per year over the past ten years. There are still many to be found. I look particularly towards Huntingdon and Leominster.



*The diagram above refers to the ‘new’ church built in 1095 with its subsequent additions. The Chapel of St Botolph was installed in 1275.*

**Summing up the three abbey churches**

The chronological sequence of events for each of the three churches of Bury, Westminster and Ely until, say 1030, is similar in many ways:

1. All were founded in C7.
2. All had shrines to St Botolph,
3. All were Benedictine monasteries.

After 1030 however their routes diverged somewhat:

**Bury Abbey Church** was renewed in 1032 and then again in 1095 with the relics and shrines being translated each time.

**Westminster Abbey Church** took on a special secondary role - that of a mausoleum - when it was rebuilt<sup>25</sup> by Edward the Confessor as his burial place and that of his successors. It was consecrated in December 1065, just before his death on 5th January. I think that we can assume that the consecration would not have occurred before the old shrines were properly installed and that that of St Botolph would have continued to be venerated in spite of the new masters. After all,

his position as Patron Saint of Travellers remained secure for another 200 years during which his Westminster shrine would, if it remained, have continued to generate an income on that account.



*Westminster Abbey on the Bayeux Tapestry*

**1269-c. 1534:** In 1245 Henry III started to build a much grander abbey and the shrines were moved

<sup>25</sup> Simultaneous to the re-building of the abbey, Edward built the Palace of Westminster (which became the monarch’s principal residence during the late

mediaeval period) on nearby ‘Thorney Island’. This might have been the same site as that upon which Cnut resided between 1016 and 1035.



once again. The new building was consecrated in 1269 at a time when the wool trade was in full fling. From early C12 to at least mid C15, there was a resurgence in St Botolph's popularity as he was hailed as the principal intercessor in the prayers of traders and sailors who were seeking their fortunes in the wool market. Westminster was only two miles west of the Hansa's 'Steelyard' headquarters at Billingsgate and although a St Botolph's church lay at the docks, a ship's master would probably have thought it well worthwhile to take a skiff two miles upriver to pray at St Botolph's Westminster shrine before setting out across the hazardous North Sea.

**Ely Abbey Church**, since its refoundation in 970, had become one of England's most successful Benedictine abbeys. Bury had St Edmund as its famous saint, Westminster (later) had St Edward, and Ely had St Etheldreda<sup>26</sup>. Each of these three at some stage also possessed a shrine to St Botolph.

Hereward the Wake (c.1035-c.1072) was probably Anglo-Danish and, like many others, totally opposed to the Norman occupation. In 1070 he participated in an insurrection based on Ely which led to the island being besieged, the abbey being heavily fined and much of its land being allotted to the Norman faithful. These lands were returned to the abbey in 1082 when Simeon<sup>27</sup> - brother of Walkelin, Bishop of Winchester and a relative of King William - was installed as abbot. He began the construction of a new Norman church (consecrated in 1083) whilst gradually demolishing the Anglo-Saxon one.

### Classification

#### Site of St Botolph's Church Bury.

On balance I believe that this site probably dates from C7. At only 35 miles from Icanho there is every chance that it was founded by St Botolph himself or by acolytes after his death. It is a classical 'gate-guardian' church on a much travelled route and therefore has the highest qualifications. I would therefore classify it as **Type 1** (cf. Regular End Notes below).

#### Bury St Edmund's Abbey Church

This does not qualify as a St Botolph's Church because, like the abbey's of Ely and Westminster the whole church was never dedicated to St Botolph. It is however integral to St Botolph's history and has for me made a most interesting subject in helping to tie up some of the loose ends in the Botolph story. I hope you have enjoyed it too despite the complexities involved.

### Correspondence

**1. Jenny Bolt** from Selsey, who has been a friend for many years (without, until recently, discovering my interest in St Botolph) sent me a Christmas Card with the now redundant St Wilfrid's Chapel Selsey on it. St Wilfrid (633-709) was a little younger than St Botolph and was a very flamboyant character who habitually found himself in a lot of trouble but always (as my uncle used to say) seemed to come up with a bar of chocolate in his mouth. His main claim to fame was at the Synod of Whitby in 664 where he managed (unlike many others) to avoid dying from the Justinian Plague that was then endemic, and was instrumental in fixing the formula for calculating the date of Easter and ensuring that the English church followed Roman rather than Celtic tradition.. He also succeeded (where Botolph had tried and failed) to convert Sussex to Christianity - no mean task they tell me.

**2. Peter Godden** from Folkestone kindly sent me a copy of the C13 Statutes of Dover Castle which gave me a further insight into the traditions regarding relics (as written on page 11 above).

**3. Graham Ward** wrote to alert me to the fact that his emailed application form had failed to reach me via the [botolph.info](http://botolph.info) website and that the 'CONTACT US' page would not work. This was because we had had to close the membership form section down due to 'spammers' making multiple applications; I had forgotten that this would affect the CONTACT US pages too. Thank you Graham and many apologies to others of you who have had similar problems. I intend to correct this and generally refresh the web pages within the next few weeks.

Graham also came up with some very useful hints on where to find extra information, notably:

- The British Newspaper Archive (for reports of activities and publications from C19 Architectural societies) available free at Local Libraries ;
- *Beauties of England and Wales* by John Britton ;
- the website of the HathiTrust.

Graham was also kind enough to email me a copy of Ralph Lingard's *The Life and Times of our Patron Saint, Saint Botolph*, which was written to commemorate the Centenary of the enlarging of the St Botolph's Church of Whitton with Thurleston, Suffolk. Coincidentally you will have noticed(?) that the Thurleston site is mentioned on page 15 in this issue as the place where the 'exhumation party' are likely to have boarded a boat to take them up the Gipping River towards Bury St Edmunds.

Graham's webpage is at [www.edintone.com](http://www.edintone.com)

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<sup>26</sup> St Audry.

<sup>27</sup> Abbot Simeon died in 1093.

### **REGULAR END-NOTES**

If this is your first *Botolphian* and you have acquired it by circuitous means but would like to receive an email copy each month then just send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) saying 'YES PLEASE'. If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

You will frequently see the 'twin' towns of *Boston* mentioned in these newsletters, - one in Lincolnshire and the other in Massachusetts USA. The relevance to the Society is that the name 'Boston' is said to be a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.'

#### **Classification of Botolph Church sites: -**

The list of classifications I use has been subject to constant revision over the past six years. The current version, revised December 2020, is as follows:

1. A church on a site which might have been founded directly by St Botolph during his life or by his acolytes soon after his death.
2. A church the original of which is thought to have been the product of Danish landowners (c.878-890, c.1016-1035).
3. A church originating from and as a result of Monastic Revival (c. 950 - 1016).
4. A church which, even if it had a humble predecessor on the same site, mainly blossomed as a result of opulence gained from the wool trade (c. 1150-1450).
5. A church lying on or close to one of the major ancient trackways, Roman roads or city gates, the proximity of which merits the suspicion that a major aspect of the function of the church has for a long while been closely linked with long-distance travel.
6. A church lying on or close to a pilgrimage route. For the moment until a pattern becomes clear, this classification has been sub-divided in the following way:
  - a. Churches founded for this purpose before A.D. 800.
  - b. Churches similarly founded but between the years A.D. 800 to 1066.
  - c. Churches founded after the Norman conquest.

#### **Typical Characteristics of early St Botolph Churches.**

1. Nearly all are in the eastern half of England
2. Most have Saxon foundations.
3. Many lie within 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway.
4. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels.
5. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys.

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