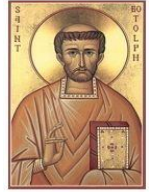




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

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



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## Highlights this month

- **Ely Abbey and Ely Cathedral**
- This is the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of *The Botolphian*.

## Editorial

I am briefly back in England to help my family to celebrate my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday – which was a few days ago.

Most of my birthdays over the past 50 years have been spent afloat, more recently of course in Sicily. This year my inspired sons made me feel I was at sea by arranging a party at the Champagne Bar on the end of Folkestone Pier where I was (almost) surrounded by the English Channel, good friends, wonderful food and a comfortable supply of alcohol, but a rather chilly wind.



Many thanks to Rob and Tom and also to Simon Robinson, owner of the Champagne Bar, who produced a sumptuous and attractively-presented meal. The salmon was particularly delicious as were the humble-looking but very tasty new potatoes; an unusual thing to praise I know, but they were outstanding. A couple of days earlier my dear wife Zina had treated all of us to a wonderful family dinner at one of our favourite Folkestone restaurants.

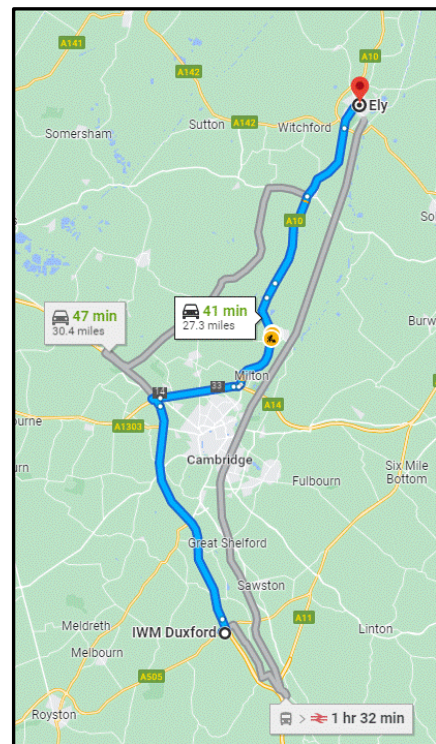
I was hoping to have plenty of time to write this bi-monthly *Botolphian*, but with all these festivities time just seemed to slip away. It is not so easy to keep up with everything that goes on in England when you are eighty!

I wish you all very happy Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. We are hoisting lots of flags and bunting here in Folkestone.

## Feature

# Ely Cathedral, Suffolk.

**Approach:** From the London area it is a case of heading north towards Duxford – either using the A1(M) or the M11.



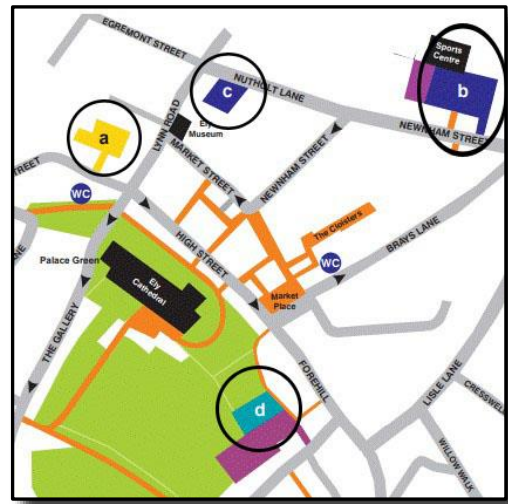
After this, as you see above, it is a matter of by-passing Cambridge.

Alternatively there are trains every 30 minutes from London King's Cross and the journey takes one and half hours, give or take a quarter of an hour depending upon the time of day.

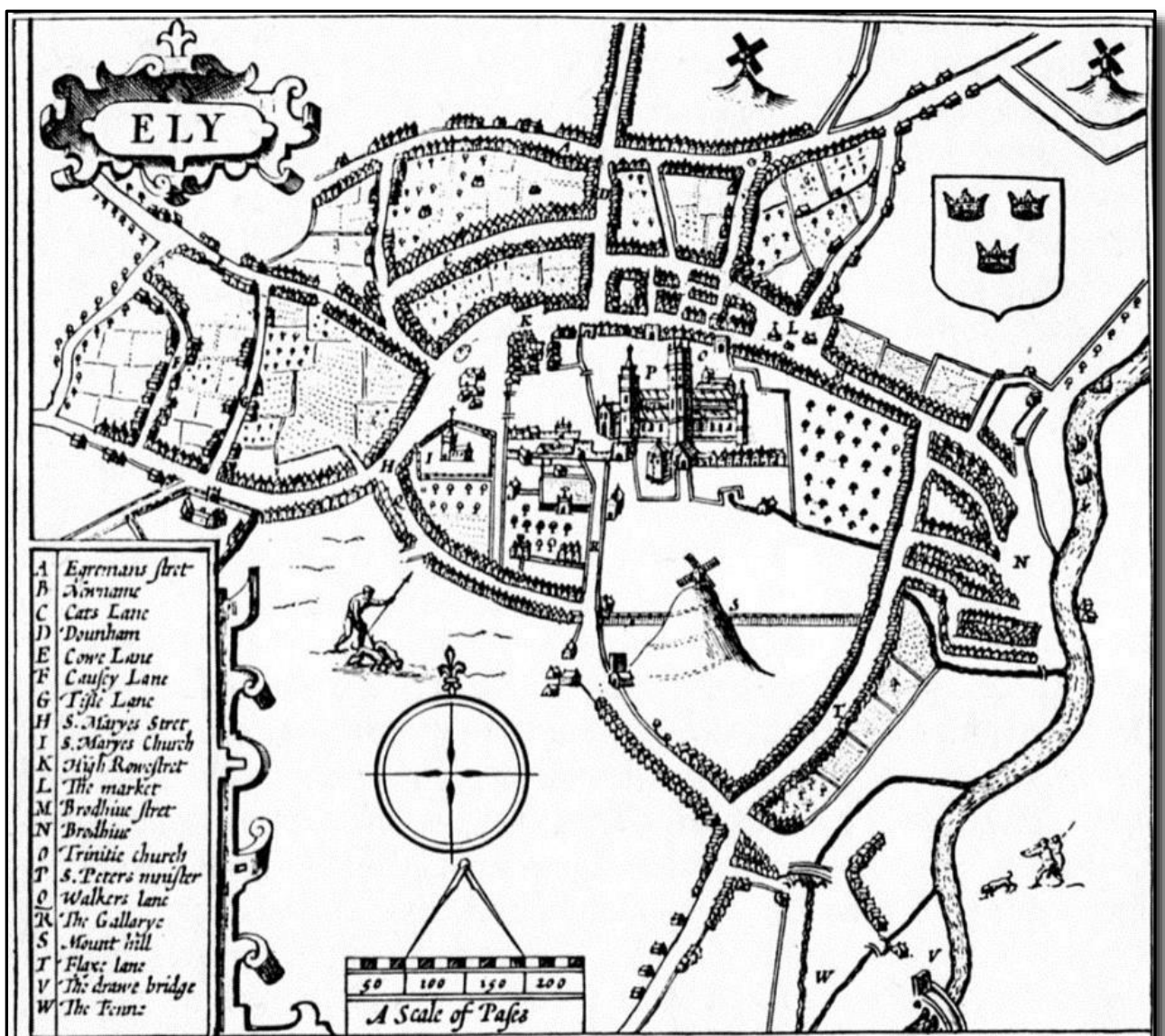
**Location of Ely Cathedral:** Chapter House, The College, Ely CB7 4DL. 52.39867, 0.26317. The normal opening hours are Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sundays 12.30 p.m. to last entry 3 p.m. (Closes 3.30 p.m.). Guided tours available. Apply for tickets at <https://www.elycathedral.org/plan-your-visit/visitor-tickets-and-tours>.

The Stained Glass Museum is also worth visiting, I am told,.

**Listed Grade: I.**



Short stay car parks in Ely

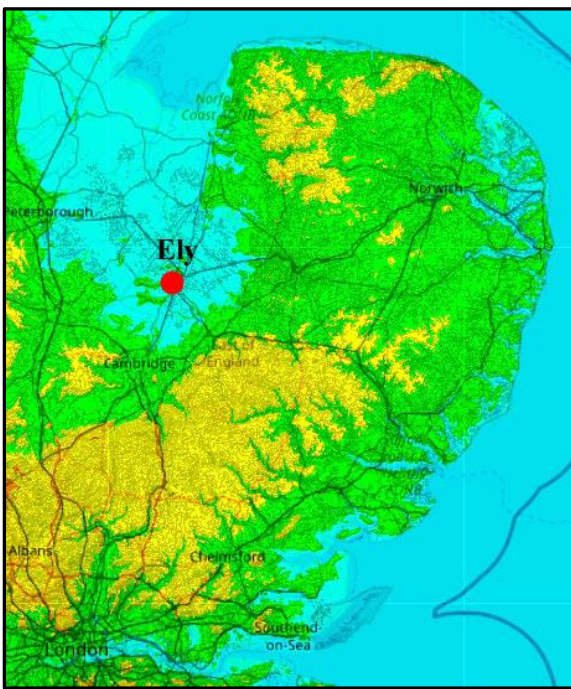


Map by John Speed c. 1610





64 miles NNE of London is the location of what today is known today as the *Isle of Ely* in spite of apparently being land-locked and the closest sea being 27 miles to the north at King's Lynn.



And yet if we look at Ely on a relief map with the water heights adjusted to their likely levels in C7 we can see that in those days it was a true island surrounded by the waters of the Fens. Sadly, although I have visited Ely in the past I have yet to visit it specifically for the purpose of taking photographs, so the picture below comes from Wikipedia courtesy of the copyright holder, 'Verbcatcher'.



*Ely Cathedral - known as the Ship of the Fens.*

### What then is the connection between Saint Botolph and Ely?

The answer once again concerns relics. Ely was the important resting place of Saint Botolph's skull. The topic of relics in general and Saint Botolph's relics in particular was discussed at some length on page 10 of the February 2022 edition of the *Botolphian* (No. 98) and, dear reader, you might consider re-reading this and refreshing your memory before turning your attention to the specific site of Ely.

### Ely in the seventh century

Ely Abbey was founded in 673 by **Etheldreda**, the third daughter of King Anna of Anglia - the king who is believed to have sponsored Saint Botolph in the building of his abbey of Icanho 58 miles ESE of Ely on the Suffolk coast.

It was whilst in his early twenties, at Faremoutiers Abbey just east of Paris where he was first professed as a monk, and then ordained as a priest, that Botolph made his first contact with the family when he met Etheldreda's elder sister **Ethelburg** and her step-sister **Saethryth**. We can assume that Botolph was their tutor. As a result of their recommendations Botolph eventually became a firm family friend - but this was not until after he had returned to England in c. 647.

Etheldreda, *also known as Saint Audrey*, was born in c. 636, making her about sixteen years younger than Botolph; she died a year or so before him in 679. When she was a youngster she had taken a vow of perpetual virginity but in her late teens she nevertheless risked marrying **Prince Tonberht of the Fens**. Tonberht respected her vows but he died only four years after their marriage whereupon Etheldreda retired to the Isle of Ely which had been given to her as a dowry.

For some obscure reason (which is said to have had political connotations) she took the plunge again in about 660 and married Ecgrith (644-685), the future king of Northumbria.

Ecgrith was only sixteen at the time and 8 years her junior. When he was crowned in 670, Etheldreda opted to become a nun. However, her second husband was not as forbearing as 'Tolerant Tonberht' had been and after ten years of abstinence he finally decided that he was entitled to his 'marital rights' - but she steadfastly refused. Ecgrith tried to enlist the aid of a man who often crops up in these pages, **Wilfrid Archbishop of York**, but Wilfrid (born c.634, died 709) supported Etheldreda instead, thus infuriating Ecgrith and leading to a lifetime feud.

In desperation the king attempted to abduct her, but she fled initially to her aunt at Coldingham and then to Ely in the company of two nuns. In 673 she founded the monastery there, but died only six years later on 23rd June 679, which you will note, makes her patronal festival only six days after Botolph's.

### **The Cambridge connection**

As you might recall from the feature on St Botolph's Cambridge, Etheldreda's successor as abbess was her sister Seaxburh (c.630-699), and she exhumed Ethelthryth's body in about 694 and found it to be incorrupt and thus of saintly status. She sent a group of monks to what was then the ruined Roman town of Cambridge, tasking them with finding a suitably elegant sarcophagus in which to re-bury Etheldreda.

Their search was successful and in c. 695 Saint Etheldreda was re-interred at Ely in the marble coffin.

For the next 170 years (i.e. between 695 and 869) business at the monastery continued as usual although in the latter years there must have been some worry and many prayers about how to avoid the fate that was eventually to befall them.

This fate came to fruition in 869 when the Great Heathen Army of Vikings came sweeping down from York, cruelly martyred King Edmund, razed most of the monasteries and murdered many of their occupants.

The abbeys of both Icanho and Ely were included in this grisly scenario.

### **The exhumation of Saint Botolph's body by the Monastical Reformers of C10.**

Nearly a century later, following a period of relative peace, the Viking danger seemed to have

passed, and the opportunity for Monastic Reform was ripe. It must be emphasised that the reformers<sup>1</sup> were interested not only in founding, refounding and generally re-minsterising England in the wake of the Viking destruction, but also in ensuring that their new institutions conformed more closely to the Benedictine Rule, i.e. were *monastic* rather than being populated by secular (and often married) priests.

It was to this end that in c.970 Bishop Aethelwold, with King Edgar's permission, sent his minions to Icanho to retrieve Saint Botolph's body. The bishop's motives for collecting bodies of the saints were more complex than might at first appear and this particularly applies in the case of Saint Botolph.

1. Aethelwold needed the saints' bodies in order to boost the authority and prestige of his *new monasteries*.
2. His aim was also to boost the authority and prestige of *the saints themselves*.
3. Where a saint had been languishing in a deserted area, its cult administered by a secular priest,<sup>2</sup> and venerated only by a few passing pilgrims, Aethelwold's aim was to *restore the body to dignity ...*
4. ... and to *replace the priests with monks*.
5. By requisitioning the body (in the name of King Edgar), the *associated lands of the former monastery* could also be appropriated and the income from these used to support the soon-to-be-founded abbeys.

We have, in previous issues, traced the journeys of the **middle and lower sections** of Saint Botolph's body from Icanho to Thorney, Bury St Edmunds and Winchester, and our focus now turns to Saint Botolph's **skull** and its relationship with Ely Cathedral.

Three aspects of the skull's despatch to Ely are important, the first is that Bishop Aethelwold and King Edgar had great hopes for Ely and by bequeathing them such an important relic as the saint's skull, they made it apparent that they also had great plans for Saint Botolph.

The second is that in Bishop Aethelwold's ordered mind Ely was clearly intended to be the skull's final resting place, and the third is the apparent earmarking of Ely (by Bishop Aethelwold and King Edgar) as an important centre for Saint Botolph's veneration. Perhaps they even felt that his importance would supersede that of Saint Ethelthryth?

amongst the ruins of Icanho Abbey, it is more likely that local devotees (including aristocrats) would have raised a new shrine to his honour and appointed a priest to put the site to good use for the spiritual and financial benefit of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester, Archbishop Dunstan of Canterbury and Bishop Oswald of Worcester.

<sup>2</sup> Whilst one might have thought of Saint Botolph's body as languishing in seclusion in an unmarked grave

Old habits die hard however, and the lady saint proved that she was not to be outmanoeuvred.

### Other dramas at Ely

It seems that after the Viking desecration of Ely several attempts were made at revitalising the monastery but all without success. An ecclesiastic called Sygedwold and a Dane by the name of Thurstan were competing to purchase the island when King Edgar was reminded that the land was an endowment of the Church and should be restored as such. Both candidates were therefore dismissed and it was then that the project was handed over to Bishop Aethelwold who is said to have purchased from the king the entire island and its various estates for the sum of £100 plus a gold crucifix. The secular clergy were discharged, the monastery was repopulated with Benedictine monks and **Byrhtnoth** was appointed as abbot.

In c.970 Archbishop Dunstan rededicated the church - the east end to St Peter and the south side to the Virgin Mary.

Saint Etheldreda's shrine was placed near the high altar and the tombs of her sister Seaxburgh and Seaxburgh's daughter Eormenilda were nearby.<sup>3</sup> Two other sisters were buried in France and their brother Jurmin was still resting in his grave at Blythburgh (he was enshrined many years later at the abbey of Bury St Edmund). All that Ely needed at this stage in order to possess a full female family collection was the body of King Anna's youngest daughter **Wihthburh** whose dates would seem to be c.640-c.703<sup>4</sup> (but see footnote). Wihthburh had founded the abbey of Dereham (36 miles to Ely's northeast) sometime after 654 and she had served there as abbess. Her body, like that of her sister Ethelthryth, had been exhumed and installed in a shrine in her monastery church, but at Bishop Aethelwold's request, Dereham had now been officially appropriated to Ely Abbey.

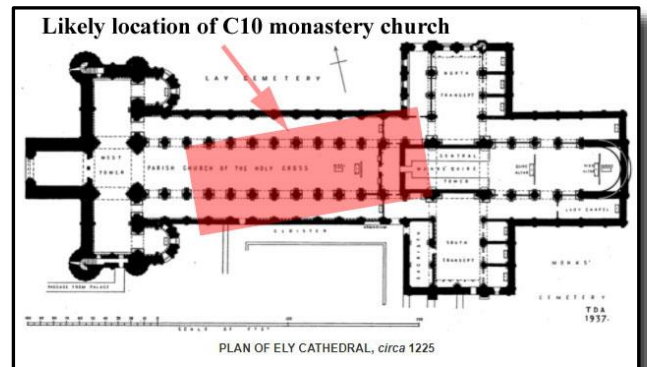
In 974 Abbot Byrhtnoth had a plan and in execution of this he held a court at Dereham where he provided a great feast to which all and sundry were invited. The Dereham monks made the most of the fine wine on offer and when they were well inebriated the Ely contingent 'liberated' St Wihthburh's body and headed for home. Once the offended monks regained some sort of sobriety

<sup>3</sup> All three had been abbesses of Ely.

<sup>4</sup> There is some doubt about Wihthburh. Her death is given as 743 but Anna died in 654 so on this basis she must have been born c.652 but this would make her 91 at death AND she is recorded as founding the monastery at Dereham soon after her father's death at which time she would only have been a toddler. I believe that the dates c.640-c.703 are more likely.

<sup>5</sup> 'Furta Sacra' – Holy Theft (of relics) – a mediaeval monastic pastime.

and realised that they had been duped, they wobbled off in pursuit but were unable to catch up with the band of 'Sacra Furtists'<sup>5</sup> until they reached the edge of the fens. Knowing their way through the marshes, the Ely men were able to make good their escape and Saint Wihthburh was duly ensconced at Ely Abbey.<sup>6</sup>



Above is seen Ely abbey church in 1225 overlaying the (pink) 970-1102 church which was of stone and brick construction. Note that the Anglo-Saxon church was in better alignment to the West-East axis than the modern one which dates from 1102.

### Saint Botolph's Skull

The theft of St Wihthburh took place soon after Ely had been re-founded when the new 'Monastic Reform abbeys' would have been vying with each other to become the place with the greatest number of most prestigious relics.

No doubt various similar games of high jinks were played subsequently, but it was not until the 1090s that the relics of Saint Botolph became involved. *Liber Eliensis*<sup>7</sup> (the Book of Ely written in C12) tells us that when Prior Simeon of Winchester was installed as Abbot of Ely in 1082 he brought with him a sizeable group of Winchester monks.<sup>8</sup> It turned out that these did not integrate well.

When Simeon died in 1093 the seven Winchester monks who remained were worried that without his protection their lives would become a misery, and that their best option would be to return to Winchester.

It seems that this would have come as a relief all round as the group had proved more of a liability than an asset to Ely.

<sup>6</sup> One wonders why Byrhtnoth did not just ask, but as the hero of the Battle of Maldon (if this was indeed the same man) one assumes that he found action more effective than diplomacy. Or perhaps he *had* asked and, no action being forthcoming, decided to take the matter into his own hands.

<sup>7</sup> *Liber Eliensis* Book II, 138.

<sup>8</sup> In other versions 'foreign monks' are blamed for the theft of the skull. It now appears that 'foreign' refers to their origin being from Winchester rather than local.



Once Abbot Simeon's body was lying 'in state' in Ely's cathedral church the group persuaded the local monks to leave them alone so that they could mourn in isolation at the side of their sponsor's body. As soon as all potential witnesses had left they ceased their mourning and set about pilfering all they could get including:

"... to top it all, the head of the blessed confessor Botolph and his larger bones,<sup>9</sup> the casket having been violently broken open."<sup>10</sup>

When well-loaded they made their escape and by the fourth day of travel had reached Guildford. Feeling by then that they were safe from arrest, they lodged at a guest-house and celebrated by having a wild party around an open fire. Unsurprisingly this set the whole house ablaze and the drunken group staggered outside to save themselves but were too inebriated to think of taking their plunder with them. As a result they could do nothing but watch their ill-gotten gains go up in smoke.

The *Liber* finishes this story by assuring the reader that the account is well-known at Ely to this day (i.e. the day of writing of the original document that was subsequently incorporated into *Liber Eliensis*. The point that the writer seems to be making is that this was not a fabricated hagiographic cautionary tale but a true account). It would appear then, that our saint's poor skull was first buried, and then after several enshrinements was inadvertently cremated which cut short its saintly duties from 1093 onwards. Certainly there is no record of the existence of the skull any time after that so the story must be true.

### Analysis of this *Liber Eliensis* story

The account is valuable in that the information it gives tells us two things that we might otherwise not have known, viz: that *the saint's relics were in a casket*, and that the casket *also contained some of 'his larger bones'*.

The fact that the skull was 'in a casket' is a pretty good indication that until 1093 it had been actively venerated at Ely.

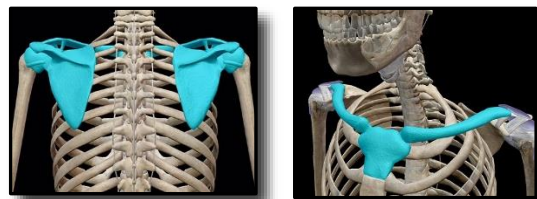
The '*larger bones*' comment throws another spanner into the works regarding which of the saint's bones were apportioned to which abbey. At first sight the term, '*his larger bones*', suggests his legs, but the records seem pretty clear that they went to Thorney, and the pelvis (another 'large bone' possibility) is surely likely to have gone along with them.

<sup>9</sup> It is surprising that 'his larger bones' should be mentioned here since other writing (e.g. *Acta Sanctorum*) indicate that Ely only possessed his skull.

<sup>10</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, translated by Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press 2005), ISBN 978-1-84383-015-3, II, 138, pp.263-266.

Botolph's arms and hands have already been accounted for – one eventually went to Bury St Edmunds, and one to a London Guild courtesy of one of the later monarchs.

If we exclude arms and legs then, the next 'larger bone' would be the scapula (shoulder blade) and if this is what it was, the only speculation I can offer for its presence with the skull is that King Edgar, seeing his grand collection of arms, ribs and vertebrae, and Thorney Abbey's pelvis, legs and feet, thought that with just a skull and mandible to their account Ely seemed to be getting a raw deal. I suspect therefore that Edgar might have thrown in a few of his extra bits for good measure. He might even have included both scapulae and their associated clavicles.

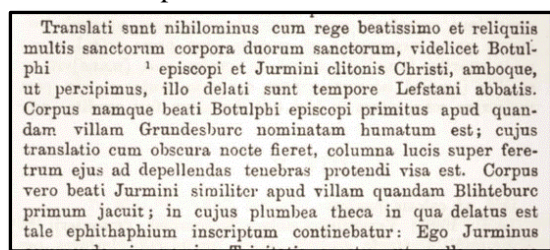


### Apology

This further research makes it clear that I was maligning **Bury St Edmunds Abbey** when I suggested that it might have been the monks from *that* noble institution who stole St Botolph's skull from Ely and then forged a manuscript saying that their relics came from Grundisburgh.

I have now managed to catch up with a copy of the manuscript<sup>11</sup> in question and there is no suggestion that it is anything other than genuine. The C11 Anglo-Saxon monks from Bury are therefore fully exonerated.

The manuscript reads:



Of which my translation is:

*Translated together with the most blessed king [Edmund] and other saintly relics were the bodies of the two saints Botolphus and the Christian aetheling Jurmin, and both, as we recall, were carried at that time by Abbot Leofstan.<sup>12</sup> The*

<sup>11</sup> Bodleian MS 240 as transcribed in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey* Thomas Arnold, Volume I, p 352. Origin: 1377 at Bury St Edmunds Abbey. Much of this is taken from John of Tynemouth's *Historia aurea*.

<sup>12</sup> Leofstan was abbot of Bury St Edmunds from 1044 to 1065.

*body of the blessed Botolph had earlier been buried in a village called Grundisburgh. The translation was carried out at night - a pillar of light appeared to stretch over the feretrum and to drive off the darkness.*

The manuscript goes on to say that the body of the king's son Jurmin had, like Saint Botolph, also been buried elsewhere - in Jurmin's case at Blythburgh.

Assuming that Abbot Leofstan was indeed the bearer of the relics then the translation of St Botolph from Grundisburgh to Bury St Edmunds cannot have occurred before Leofstan's inauguration in 1044. I have hazarded a guess at 1046 but see the adjacent summary.

### **Hereward the Wake**

We cannot leave the discussion about Ely without mentioning this man who for generations was a boyhood (and perhaps girlhood?) hero.

To remind you of the story:

Hereward (c.1035-c.1072) was the son of English noble parents who might even have been Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and his wife the famous Lady Godiva. He was exiled to the continent at an early age for disruptive behaviour, and legend records some heroic exploits abroad. On returning to England just after the Norman Conquest he discovered that his family's lands had been seized by the Normans, and his younger brother killed and his head exhibited on a spike. Hereward took his revenge.

Before the Conquest the abbacy of Ely had been bestowed on the Anglo-Saxon Thurstan. The Conqueror wanted to replace the abbot with a Norman but Thurstan sat tight and Ely was not easy of access due to its swamps and marshes; it therefore became a haven of refuge for those opposing the new Norman dominance and Hereward was invited to take command.

(One sees here some similarities to the Ukraine conflict).

In 1069 William attempted to invade Ely by building roads across the morasses on the western side but as fast as they were built by William they were destroyed by Hereward and his men. The Conqueror made a short-lasting peace which he broke in the spring of the following year. The story is quite complex and involves many heroic activities including Hereward's entering a Norman camp in disguise and discovering and then thwarting the enemy's plans.

## **A summary of my conclusions regarding the distribution of Saint Botolph's relics**

### **In C10 circa 970:**

**Ely:** *Skull and perhaps a scapula and clavicle.* Taken directly to Ely after their exhumation at Icanho. [Accidentally incinerated in 1093 following their theft].

**Thorney:** *Pelvis, legs and feet.* Taken directly to Thorney after their exhumation at Icanho. [Presumed destroyed during the Dissolution].

**Grundisburgh** *Middle part including arms, vertebrae, ribs and sundry other bones.* Taken to Grundisburgh and stored (perhaps even reburied) in anticipation of their being taken to Westminster in due course.

### **In C11 between 1044 and 1065:**

**Bury St Edmunds:** *An arm, hand and sundry other bones.*

***Memorials of Bury Vol I p 360*** records that King Cnut (c. 1032) granted permission to the monks of Bury to transfer the bodies of St Botolph and St Jurmin from Grundisburgh and Blythburgh to Bury St Edmunds Abbey, but this was not done until the time of Abbot Leofstan (1044-1065). [The records suggest that St Jurmin's and St Botolph's relics were both collected in one solemn procession from Blythburgh via Grundisburgh to Bury – probably in the early part of Leofstan's incumbency, perhaps circa 1046].

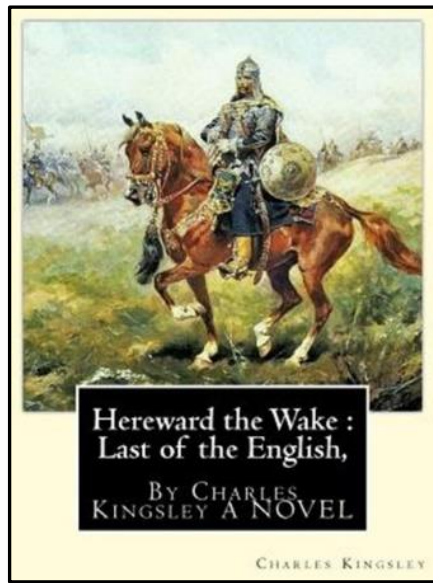
***Memorials of Bury in Vol I p 252*** also records that the same relics were translated from Bury's old church to its new one in 1095 and notes that at a previous translation they were carried by Abbot Leofstan. Later there is another reference (***Vol I p 366***) which records refurbishment of St Botolph's shrine c.1433). It is presumed that the relics were destroyed in the Dissolution.

**Westminster:** *Middle part including arms, vertebrae, ribs and sundry other bones.* [Relics presumed destroyed at the Dissolution].

### **In C11 circa 1093 or later :**

**London Guild of St Botolph's Arm:** *An arm and a hand.*- these were perhaps sold or given to the guild by Edward the Confessor at a similar time to the above. Their fate is unknown but they were probably discretely destroyed at the Reformation.

A novel on the subject by Charles Kingsley was published in 1869.



Suffice it to say that despite Hereward's heroic efforts it proved expensive for Ely Abbey due to the heavy fines that William imposed for their resistance. Even worse, whereas the Normans were preparing to rebuild all the English cathedrals and abbeys, Ely was punished by being excluded and it became clear that in order to maintain its prestige the abbey had to take the matter into its own hands. It was to this end that the 90-year-old Prior Simeon of Winchester was appointed Abbot of Ely in 1083. Simeon had some experience as he had been involved in the rebuilding of Winchester Cathedral between 1079 and 1082, and although he was a Norman he sided with the Ely monks and effectively began the reversal of the abbey's fortunes.

### Relics in the parish churches

I hope it is clear then that Ely Cathedral qualifies to be featured in *The Botolphian* because part of our saint's body was enshrined and subsequently venerated there for many years. I am not sure if that makes Ely a greater or lesser religious establishment than one of our humble parish churches which are dedicated to Saint Botolph in their entirety. We might today have the impression that none of these parish churches ever possessed a true relic of St Botolph, but bearing in mind the decree of the AD 787 Second Council of Nicaea that 'every altar should contain a relic' it seems that we are likely to be wrong in that conception. Certainly in the case of my home town in Folkestone our parish church always did – an indeed still does – possess in the sanctuary almost the entire body of our patron, Saint Eanswythe.

A church's patronal relic was often by necessity tiny and they were usually set into the stone of the

altar slab (mensa) - but these themselves were banned and destroyed in C16.

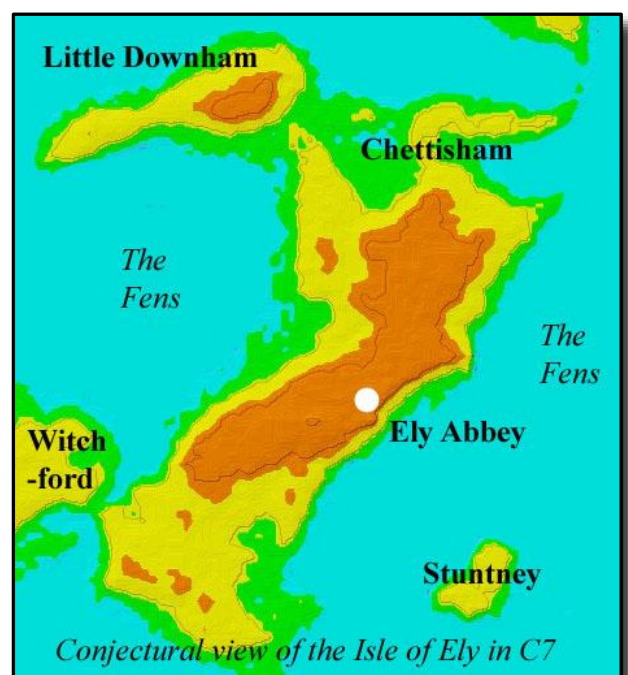
Now, 500 years later it is difficult to conceive that, of the eighty or so English parish churches that were dedicated to St Botolph, each are likely to have kept wrapped in a holy cloth at the altar, a tooth, finger part, bone shaving or similar, each claiming direct provenance from our saint. All these parts would have been purchased or gifted from one of Aethelwold's original recipient abbeys.

All four major abbeys, Thorney, Ely, Bury St Edmunds and Westminster would have had internal chapels which were dedicated to Saint Botolph although it was only Thorney Abbey that had the whole building dedicated to him. Bury St Edmunds is the only edifice of these four where we know the location of St Botolph's shrine within the building.

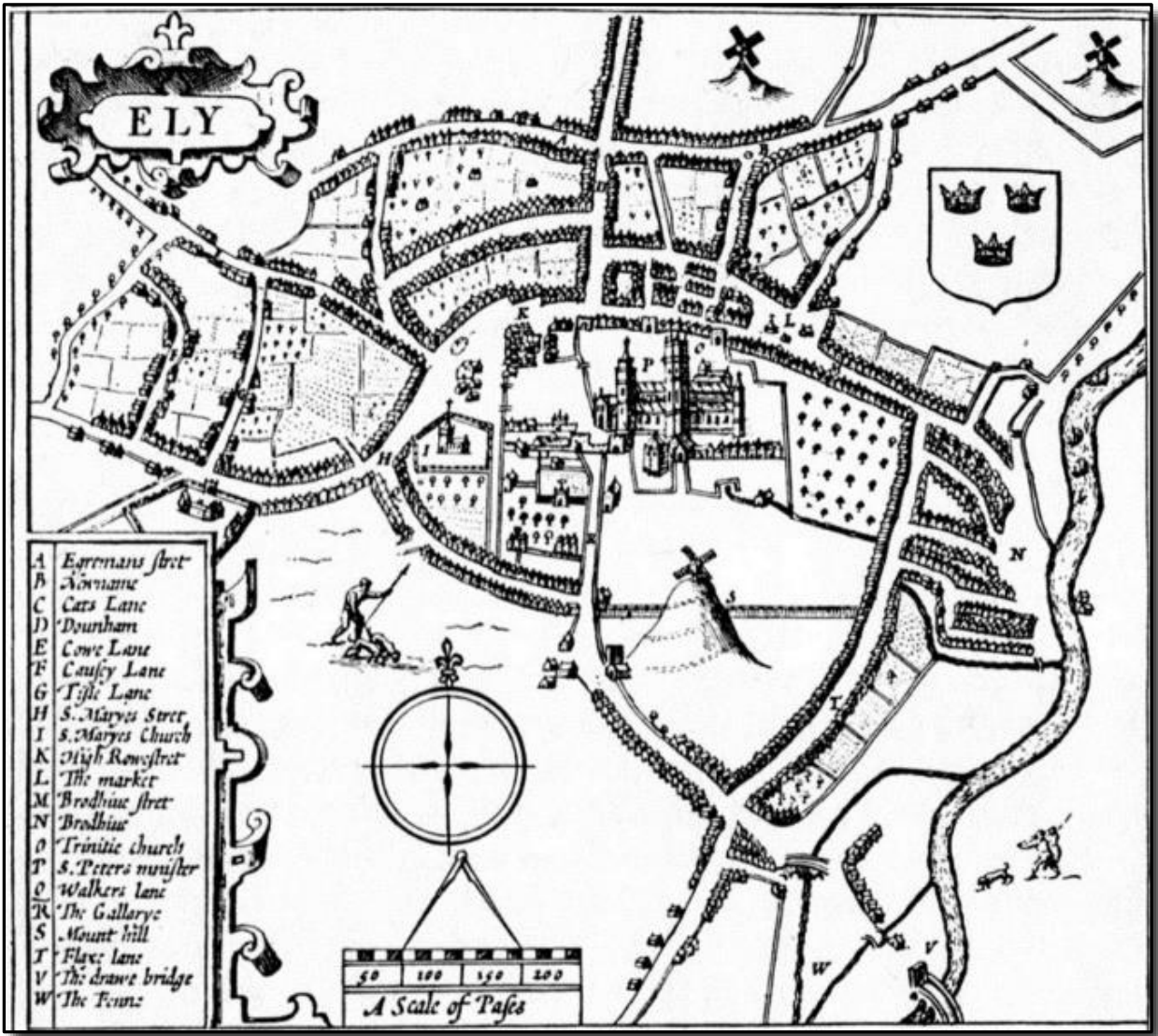
### Ely Cathedral

I must once again confess to a greater love for parish churches than for cathedrals which latter I admire greatly but find rather overwhelming. In the case of Ely I will not, therefore, conduct my usual architectural overview but will leave you with a few pictures which I hope will inspire you to go and visit and stand quietly and reflect for a moment that 'Botolph was here.'

The cathedral is placed fairly well in the centre of the island on 'high' ground.





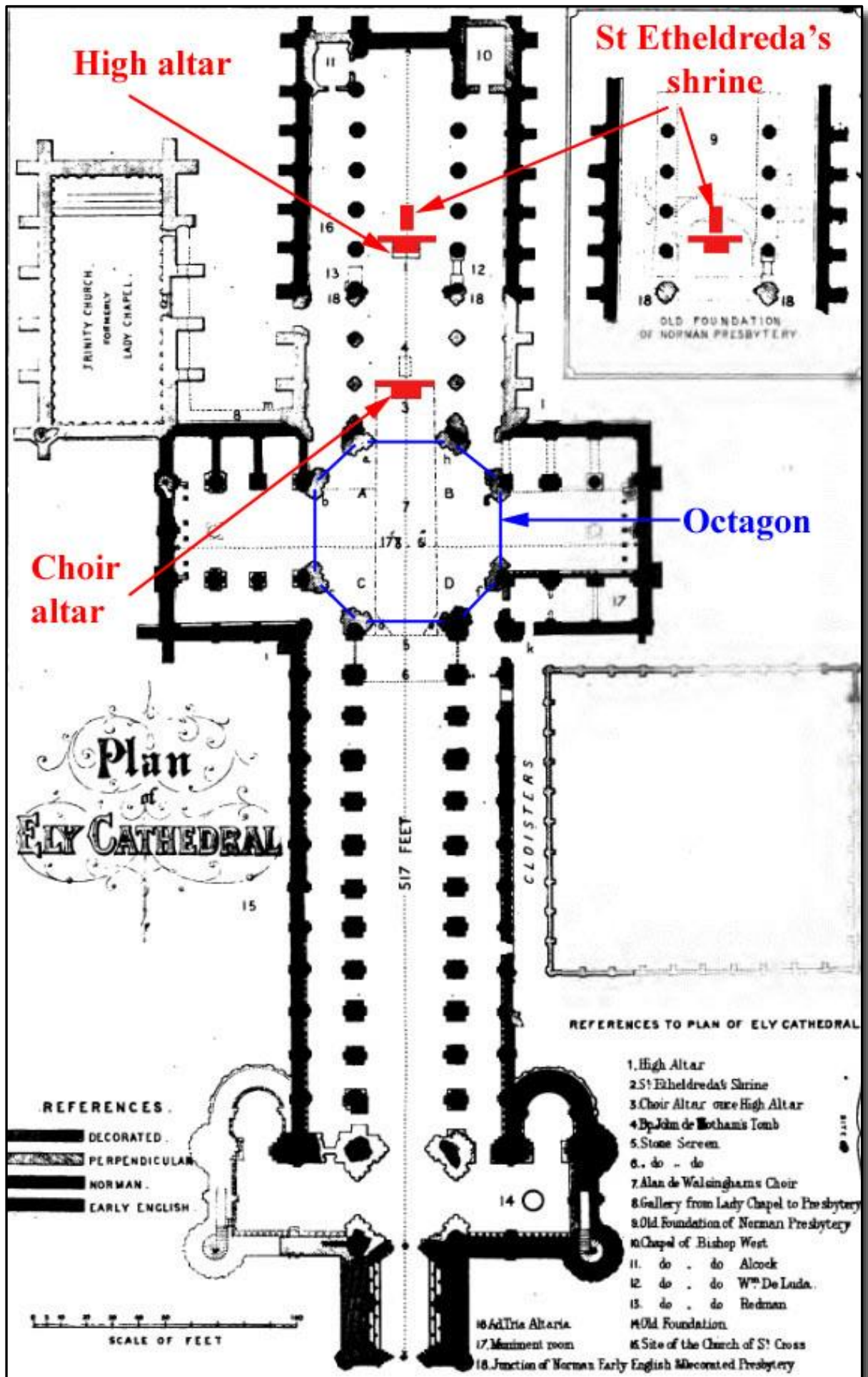


The actual highest ground on the island is the small hill shown here with the windmill on the top. This hill was the site of the motte and bailey castle built by William the Conqueror when he was dealing with Hereward the Wake in 1070. It was re-used several times subsequently.

This photograph of the west end of the cathedral is one of the building's most iconic views.



And this is a view of the east end. Neither are particularly good pictures I am afraid and the southern and northern aspects are even more difficult to photograph. I propose to visit for a proper photo-shoot before I include this section in the appropriate volume of *Voyages around Saint Botolph Churches*.





I chose to include the above groundplan because it is one of the few available that is orientated vertically and so fits the page better. This drawing dates from 1937 but things have not changed a lot since then. Once again I hope to produce a better one (in colour) when time becomes available.

You will notice in the top right hand corner a drawing showing the old Norman presbytery<sup>13</sup> with its apse. This is not a separate part of the building but is drawn as a comparison between Norman and newer.

The Octagon is perhaps one of the most delightful and spectacular parts of this amazing edifice.

-0-

I am sure that you need no reminding but in two weeks' time on 17<sup>th</sup> June it will, once again, be Saint Botolph's Day.

That, I believe, concludes the pursuit of Saint Botolph's relics and we can now move on.

The next issue of *The Botolphian* (Issue number 101) will be in two month's time on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and will, I hope, feature Saint Botolph's possible birthplace ... in Scotland. In the meantime I wish you all a very happy, healthy and enjoyable summer.

#### **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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<sup>13</sup> Here called a '*presbytery*' but this word is to all intents and purposes synonymous with 'chancel'.