

The Abbey of St Edmund



The Master & Fellows of Corpus Christi College Cambridge



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL
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Communities

R E S O U R C E P A C K

Leisure Services



This pack is intended to give a brief overview of the history of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds and could be used to support the teaching of Medieval Realms, Local History or Religious Studies. It can be used as a teacher resource or can be photocopied and used with pupils. With this in mind we have tried to make the reading level suitable for Key Stage 3 pupils.

Each section deals with a different aspect of the abbey. Where possible the sections are supplemented with examples of primary sources of evidence, such as drawings of artefacts and excerpts from the Chronicles of Brother Jocelin, suggestions for further reading and ideas for follow-up activities. Some sections also contain timelines. Pupils could choose key events from these to produce one timeline showing the history of the abbey.

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Sources of Evidence

The Abbey of St Edmund

A Benedictine Abbey

The Monks of the Abbey

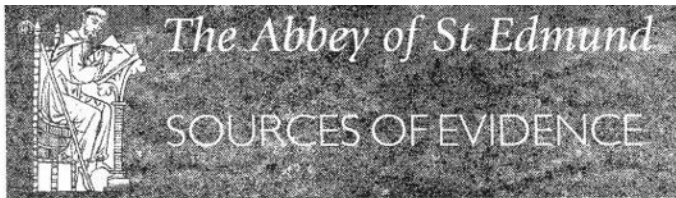
The Building of the Abbey

The Abbey Precinct

The Abbey and the Crown

The Abbey and the Town

The Dissolution of the Abbey



Very little remains of the buildings of the Abbey of St Edmund, once one of the five largest monasteries in England. How can we tell then what the abbey was like? How was the site set out? What was everyday life like for the monks who lived there?

This information comes from studying primary sources of evidence. These are clues that have been left behind in the form of building remains, objects (artefacts), literature and written sources. This evidence helps us to build up a picture of the abbey as it was. Where there are gaps in the evidence, clues from similar sites can help us to make informed guesses. It should be remembered though that evidence can be interpreted in different ways. Whilst we are fairly sure of the information evidence gives us, it is always difficult to be 100% sure!

What can we tell from the remains?

The scant remains of the Abbey of St Edmund do little justice to what was once one of the greatest abbeys in England. After the abbey was closed down (dissolved) by Henry VIII in 1539, the buildings became quarries for material from which other houses could be built. Although stripped of most of its stone, enough is left of the foundations and a few prominent walls for archaeologists and historians to work out what the site would have looked like in its heyday during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The task of reconstructing the abbey's appearance is helped by the writings of people who knew it. Their descriptions of the abbey and how it was built are supported by archaeological finds: these help establish the uses of different buildings. For example, if cooking pots are found in a certain area then it is safe to assume that cooking took place there at some stage.

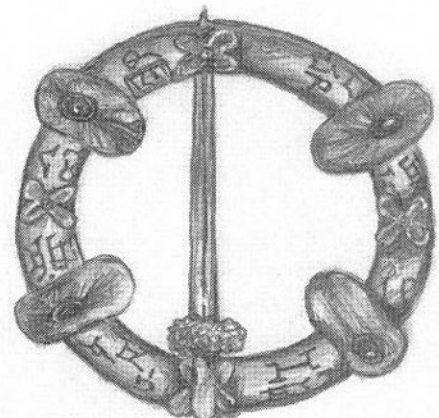
How can archaeology help us to understand the lives of those who lived in the abbey?

Archaeologists try to interpret the objects they find

and the context in which they find them. By studying the objects, an archaeologist tries to recreate the lives of the people who made and used them. From material evidence the archaeologist will try to explain how, why and where things were made and from which materials.

The archaeology unearthed at the abbey site is very rich and varied and when combined with the detailed history of the site provides valuable clues as to the character of the abbey.

Archaeology is also very useful for confirming details from less reliable sources of history, such as written evidence which may be biased.



The archaeology itself can paint a picture as to what life was like inside the medieval abbey. The following are a small sample of finds from the abbey:

- Arrowheads and other weapons tell us that life was not always easy and peaceful.
- Jewellery indicates that there was wealth in Bury St Edmunds.
- Pots and thimbles are evidence of domestic activity.



However it is often unclear if the evidence is representative of the whole area or whether it is a unique object, as

evidence survives by chance as a result of being lost or deliberately buried.

What literature is available from the abbey?

The Abbey of St Edmund had a great library and it is from these books that we gain a lot of knowledge about the abbey site. Unfortunately the collection was split up during the dissolution (closure) of the abbey and many books were destroyed. Those that are left are spread across the country in many different libraries.

An example of the information which can be gained from these books comes from the *Registrum Hostilarie* which dates from the 15th century. This tells us of the terrible fire at the abbey in 1465.

"The whole house of God now tattered to its fall, the flames, raging high and low, caught upon the lantern that tops the spire and is the ornament of the whole fane... By this time a great wind was sounding through the air and carrying large burning sparks to a great distance, nay, what is more surprising, I saw numbers of small pieces of lead cast to a considerable distance by the combined force of wind and fire."

This written evidence when combined with archaeological evidence helps the historian to produce a fuller picture of life in the abbey. When excavating the Chapter House a line of five tombs was found down the centre. They contained the remains of five abbots whose identities were established by M.R. James from the *Douai Register*, a 15th century manuscript written at the Abbey of St Edmund. Without this document their names would never have been discovered.

ACTIVITIES

Look at the aerial photograph. What can you tell about the size, shape and layout of the abbey?

Draw a plan of what you think the abbey church might have looked like. Compare your plan with the one in this pack.

What are the 'Chronicles of Jocelin'?

A chronicle is a written source rather like a diary. Of all the chronicles of the Abbey of St Edmund, Jocelin of Brakelond's is the most famous. Jocelin was born in the middle of the 12th century in the town of St Edmundsbury and became a monk at the abbey in 1173. His chronicle begins in the 1190s. Jocelin describes many important historical events and how they affected the abbey. These events include Abbot Samson's rise to power, King Richard's crusades and King John's coronation.

The chronicles are an important source of evidence as they were written by people living in the abbey at the time. They give an alternative view of events, written from a personal viewpoint, so we read about people's faults as well as their good points. However it should be remembered that the information is likely to be biased.

Examples of evidence

Several examples of sources of evidence are included in this pack. They are an aerial photograph of the remains, a plan of the site, drawings of artefacts and excerpts from the 'Chronicles of Jocelin'.

Extracts from the Chronicles of Brother Jocelin are taken from the publication *Jocelin of Brakelond: Chronicles of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* translated by Diana Greenway and Jane Sayers, Oxford World's Classics, 1989 and are reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.

Further Reading

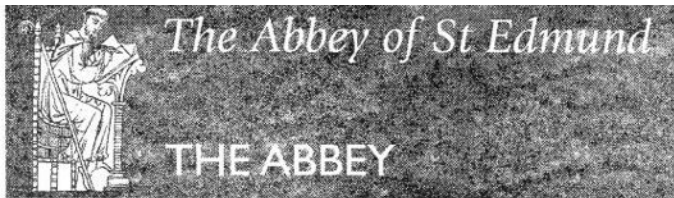
Jocelin of Brakelond: Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds
World Classics, Oxford University Press ISBN 0-19-281810-4

Jocelin of Brakelond by Norman Scarfe
Grace Guides on British Heritage ISBN 0-85244-352-8

Both books are available from Moyse's Hall Museum tel: (01284) 757488

An aerial photograph of the remains of the Abbey of St Edmund





What is an abbey?

An abbey is a building, or group of buildings, where a religious community lives. The community could consist of monks (men) or nuns (women) who have given up worldly things such as money, possessions and marriage in order to devote themselves to serving God. They would live together, away from the outside world, ruled over by an abbot or abbess.

Which came first: the abbey or the town?

King Sigebert of the East Angles founded a monastery (a religious community of monks) in about 633AD in a settlement called Bedericesworth. The monastery grew, new buildings were built and it became an abbey ruled over by an abbot. As the abbey developed a town grew up around it which was wholly owned and controlled by the abbey. This town eventually became known as Bury St Edmunds.

Why did the abbey become famous?

It became famous as the shrine of Saint Edmund. Edmund was a later King of the East Angles. In 870 he was killed by invading Danes when he refused to renounce his religion, Christianity.

Here is one description of his execution:

'After being savagely beaten he was brought to a tree in



the neighbourhood, tied to it and for a long while tortured with terrible lashes. But his consistency was unbroken, while without ceasing he called on Christ, this roused the fury of his enemies, who, as if using him as a target pierced his whole body with arrows. But King Edmund despite all of this continued to call upon the name of Christ without giving in, so the executioner was commanded to cut off his head, which was thrown into the nearby woods.'

from Garland of St Edmund by F. Hervey

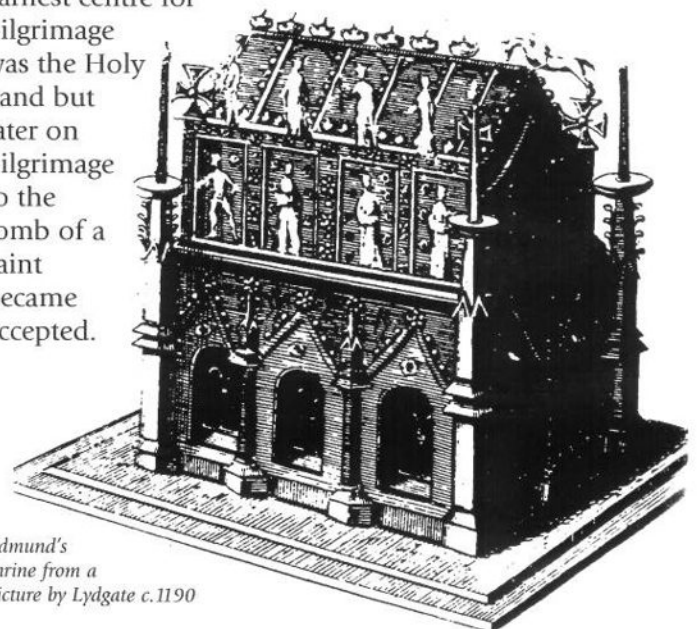
A legend grew up around the story of Edmund's death. According to the legend, Edmund's followers wanted to give him a decent burial but they could not find his head, which had been thrown into the woods. As they searched the forest they heard cries of 'Here, here, here!' Following the cries they found the King's head guarded by a wolf. When the head was put back with the body they mysteriously fused together leaving only a thin red scar.

Edmund became a popular hero. He was eventually canonised and so became Saint Edmund. For a time he may also have been patron saint of England.

His body was first brought to the abbey at Bedericesworth in 903. However about a century later the Danes again threatened the town and the body was moved to London for safety. In 1014 it returned to the abbey and was laid to rest in a magnificent shrine covered in sheets of gold studded with jewels, according to the monk Jocelin of Brakelond.

Who visited Edmund's shrine?

The shrine became a centre of pilgrimage. A pilgrim is a person who makes a journey, often a long way, to a holy place as an act of religious faith. The earliest centre for pilgrimage was the Holy Land but later on pilgrimage to the tomb of a saint became accepted.



Edmund's shrine from a picture by Lydgate c.1190

In the medieval period pilgrimages were organised on a large scale. They sometimes became associated with abuses such as the sale of dubious relics (parts of a saint's body or property believed to have special powers) and payment for the forgiveness of sins.

Pilgrims to the shrine of St Edmund included ordinary people as well as noblemen and kings. They would queue to get a glimpse of the shrine and the other sacred objects displayed there. These included St Edmund's sword, shirt, cup, standard (a type of flag) and even some of the saint's nail clippings! The pilgrims would have made offerings of money, or jewellery, which all added to the wealth of the abbey.

Stories spread of miracles wrought by Edmund from his tomb. He was considered to be so important that a royal grant was made whereby people living near the shrine paid taxes to the saint rather than to the Crown as was usual. When King Sweyn Forkbeard tried to force local people to pay him instead, he died suddenly and everyone believed St Edmund had caused his death. His son Cnut (sometimes called Canute) who was anxious not to anger the saint established the Benedictine monks at the abbey. It later became one of the great religious houses of the Middle Ages.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Design an advertisement, e.g. a poster, to encourage people to make a pilgrimage to the Abbey of St Edmund.
- 2 Some people still make pilgrimages today though they are not as popular as they were in medieval times. Is there anything else today that is similar to making a pilgrimage? Think of special places or people who attract a following.

When was the town named after St Edmund?

St Edmund's body brought such fame and status to the town of Bedericesworth that by 1065AD it was called St Edmundsbury. The word 'bury' comes from the Saxon word 'burh' which means a fortified place. It is not known when the town was first called Bury St Edmunds. The importance of the legend of St Edmund to the development of the town can be seen in the Borough motto:-

'Sacrarium Regis, Cunabula Legis' which means 'Shrine of a King, Cradle of the Law' which dates from about 1850.

The second part of the motto refers to the oath believed to have been sworn by barons in 1214AD at the altar of St Edmund to force King John to accept the Charter of Liberties which would later become the Magna Carta.

St Edmundsbury Borough Coat of Arms



The date of Edmund's death, 20th November, is still celebrated locally as the Feast Day of Saint Edmund.

Further Reading

The Cult of St. Edmund by J.M. Matten
Drecroft Ltd. in association with St Edmundsbury Borough Council
ISBN 0-9506938-9-3

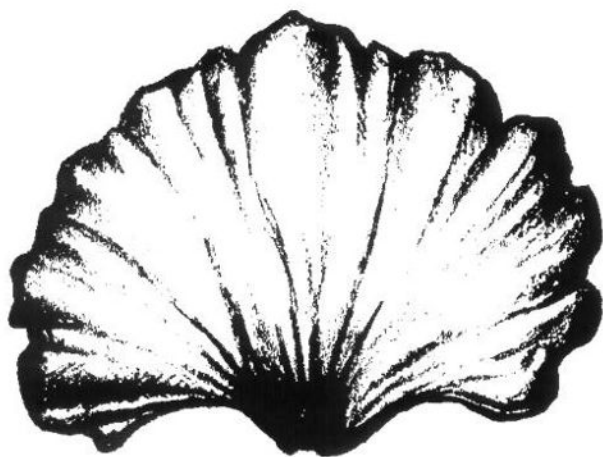
The Hollow Crown: The Story of St. Edmund by Matt Champion
Timescape
ISBN 0-9531851-0-9

Both books are available from Moyse's Hall Museum tel: (01284) 757488

ARTEFACTS

Pilgrim Badges

Pilgrim badges were sold at shrines. Their design often alluded to the saint at whose shrine they were sold. However, they were not just souvenirs, but were regarded as proof that a person had made a pilgrimage. Through contact with the shrine they were also believed to have special properties so were often used as cures.



The scallop shell badge of St James of Compostella became the generally accepted symbol of a pilgrim and was incorporated into badges and ampullae.

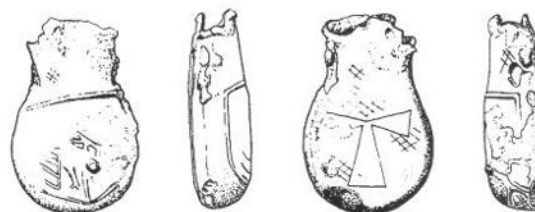
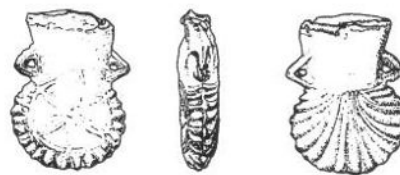
St Edmund Pilgrim Badge

This one was found near Hailes Abbey, Gloucestershire, and was donated to Moyses's Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds, in the 1930's. It shows the death of King Edmund. The king, tied to a tree, is pierced with arrows by his Danish captors. About five similar badges have been found, but none near Bury St Edmunds. This suggests that pilgrims were travelling from some distance to Edmund's shrine.



Ampullae

Ampullae were small lead flasks which held holy water. They were sold at shrines and worn on a cord around the neck. The water was thought to have special healing properties. Some are decorated with ribs to look like the scallop shell of St James, while others bear the symbol of the shrine at which they were sold.



THE 'CHRONICLES OF JOCELIN'

Fire at St Edmund's shrine 1198

In 1198 the glorious martyr Edmund wanted to strike terror into our convent and instruct us that his body should be looked after more reverently and carefully. There was a wooden dais between the shrine and the high altar, on which there stood two candles which the wardens of the shrine used to patch up, piling wax on top of wax and crudely joining them. Under the dais many items had been put most inappropriately - flax, thread, wax, various implements, indeed anything that came into the hands of the wardens was stored there, the doors and walls being of iron. While the wardens slept on the night of St Etheldreda (22 June 1198), it happened, so we believe, that part of a repaired candle burnt out on the said dais, which was covered with hangings, and began to ignite all about it, above and below, so that the iron walls glowed all over with fire. And 'Behold the wrath of the Lord' [Num. 11: 33], though not without mercy: as it is written, 'in wrath, thou wilt remember mercy' [Hab. 3: 1].

Around the same time the clock struck for Matins, and the vestry master, on getting up, saw the fire, and ran as fast as he could, and beat upon the board as if someone were dead, and shouted in a loud voice that the shrine was on fire. We all rushed up, and met the incredibly fierce flames that were engulfing the whole shrine and almost reaching up to the beams of the church. Our young monks ran for water, some to the rain-water tank, some to the clock, and some, with great difficulty, when they had snatched up the reliquaries, put out the flames with their hoods. When cold water was thrown on the front of the shrine, the precious stones fell down and were almost pulverised. Moreover, the nails by which the sheets of silver were held to the shrine came loose from the wood underneath, which was burnt to the thickness of my finger, and without the nails the sheets were hanging one from another. Yet the golden Majesty on the front of the shrine, with some of the stones, remained stable and intact, and was more beautiful after the fire than before, because it was solid gold.

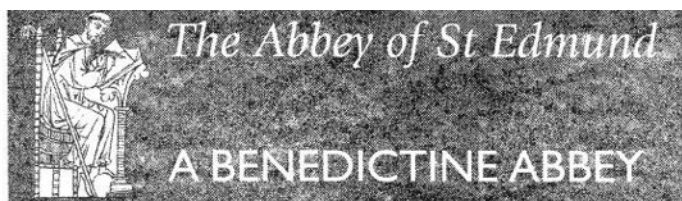
It so happened, by God's will, that at that time the great beam which used to be beyond the altar had been taken down to be renovated with new carving. By chance, too, the cross and the 'Mariola' and the 'John', and the casket with the shirt of St Edmund, and the monstres with the relics that used to hang from the same beam, and other reliquaries that stood on the beam all had been taken down earlier: otherwise everything would surely have been destroyed by the fire, as was the painted hanging which had been put up in place of the beam. But what would have been the outcome if the whole church had been decorated with hangings? Our despair was somewhat alleviated when, after careful investigation of the cracks and holes, we had made certain that the fire had not spread into the shrine at any point, and when we had established that everything had cooled down. Then, to our horror, some of our brethren shouted out with a loud wailing that St Edmund's cup was burnt. But when some of them were looking here and there among the cinders and ashes for stones and sheets of precious metal, they drew out the cup in perfect condition lying in a heap of cinders that were no longer burning, and they found it wrapped in a linen cloth that was half burnt. The oak box itself, in which the cup had long been stored, was burnt to dust, and only

the iron bands and lock were found. When we saw this miracle, we all wept for joy.

Seeing that the greater part of the front of the shrine had lost its plating, and horrified by the shameful circumstances of the fire, we agreed together to summon a goldsmith secretly, and we made him join the metal sheets and re-affix them to the shrine as quickly as possible to avoid public disgrace. We had the scorch marks covered over with wax and other materials. But to quote the Evangelist, 'There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed' [Luke 12: 2]. The pilgrims who came early the next morning to make their offerings knew nothing of what had happened, but some of them, looking all around, asked where the fire was, which they had heard had occurred in the area of the shrine? Since it could not be entirely concealed, we replied to the questioners that a candle had fallen down and three towels had been burned, and that some stones in the front of the shrine had been destroyed by the heat of the flames. However, a flagrant lie was put about that the Saint's head had been burnt - some said only the hair, but later when they learned the truth, 'the mouth of them that speak lies was stopped' (Ps. 63: 11). All this happened, by the will of God, so that the area round the shrine might be more carefully supervised and the abbot's plan carried out more speedily and without delay: this was to place the shrine, with the body of the holy martyr, more safely and more spectacularly in a higher position. Before this unfortunate incident the canopy of the shrine had been half completed and the marble blocks for raising and supporting the shrine had for the most part been prepared and polished.

The abbot, who was away, received the news with very great sorrow. On his return home, he came into chapter and said that all this had occurred - and similar, even greater disasters might come about - because of our sins, and especially because of our complaints about the food and drink. In saying this, he put the blame on the whole of the convent rather than on the wardens of the shrine for their greed and carelessness. In order to induce us to forgo our pittance for at least a year and assign the pittance funds to repairing the front of the shrine in solid gold. He himself first set an example of generosity and in front of us all contributed his entire gold treasure - fifteen gold rings, probably worth 60 marks - for the restoration of the shrine. We all agreed that our pittance must be used for this purpose, but this decision was reversed because the 'sacrist' said that St Edmund could well restore his own shrine without such help.

From Jocelin of Brakelond: *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*



The Abbey of St Edmund was a Benedictine monastery.

Who were the Benedictine monks?

King Cnut (or Canute) established Benedictine monks at the abbey in 1020. The word monk is from a Greek word meaning 'single' or 'solitary'. This is because the first monks in Egypt left their villages to live by themselves as hermits in the desert, in order to devote their lives to prayer. Benedict, an Italian (c480-550), started out as an hermit but he attracted



A Benedictine abbot

lots of followers and later organised them into communities. He wrote a Rule to show them how they should live their lives. The monks at the Abbey of St Edmund followed the Rule of St Benedict and so were known as Benedictine monks. The place where monks live is called a monastery.

What was the rule of St Benedict?

To follow the rule of St Benedict monks must:-

- **have no personal possessions**
- **be chaste**
- **be obedient**

Their days should be divided between:

- **prayer and worship**
- **work**
- **study**

Sunday should be spent wholly in prayer and worship.

What else was covered by the Rule?

Monks following the Rule should only speak to one another when really necessary. At mealtimes there was a rule of absolute silence though one monk may read to the others from a religious book. Monks

often invented their own form of sign language to communicate with each other!

The monks were allowed two meals a day in summer and one in winter. Meat was forbidden except for the sick. However by the mid 13th century it was common for monks to have meat as a treat when they were dining with the abbot (head of the abbey) or when they were in the infirmary (hospital) whether they were ill or not.

Monks had to visit the infirmary regularly for blood letting and then would stay there for two or three days to recover. This was often a welcome holiday for them.

Ritual washing would take place daily but the monks only had baths about 5 times a year. They should sit in the bath in silence and not stay in there longer than was necessary.

Providing hospitality was an important part of Benedictine life. Monasteries were often used by members of the royal family as lodgings during their travels.

The Rule also included details on how new monks should be welcomed and disobedient ones punished!

Although the different monasteries were independent of each other they would have been similar and a monk could move easily from one to another. The buildings would be laid out in a similar way, the monks would all speak Latin, whatever their nationality, and they would all have the same daily routine.

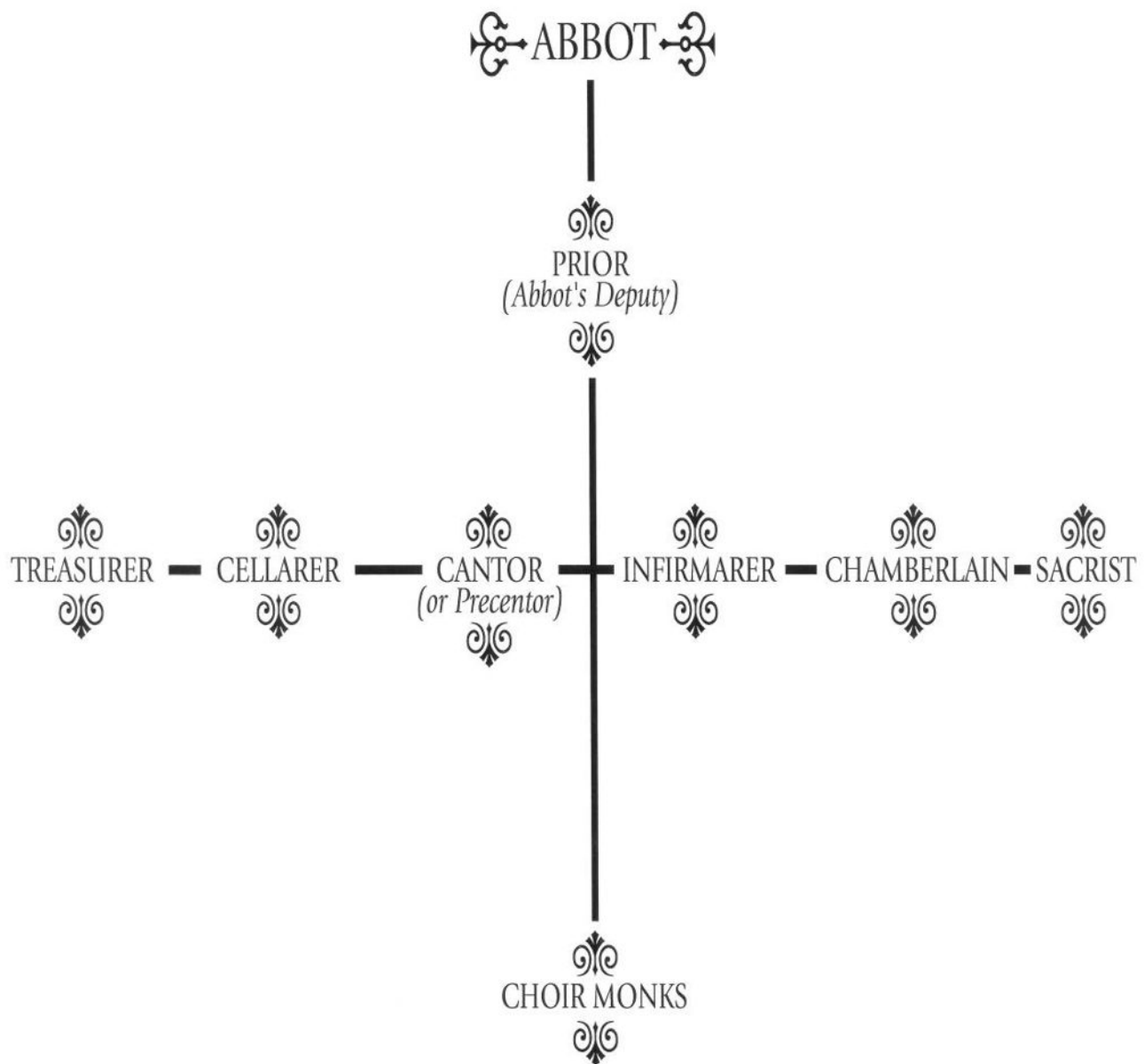
All Benedictine monks wore black habits with hoods, and boots or sandals, and were often known as the 'black monks'. The ritual shaving of the head, known as 'tonsure', also showed that they had joined a monastery.

Were all monks Benedictine?

In the early Middle Ages monasteries followed the Rule of St Benedict but were very separate from each other and didn't see themselves as part of a larger organisation. This changed with the Cluniac and then the Cistercian monks who saw their original monastery as the 'mother house' or headquarters. All other monasteries which then grew from this one were considered to be part of the same 'order' and were ruled by the abbot of the 'mother house'.

Gradually other new 'orders' developed and there was often rivalry between them and the old orders. Old monasteries felt threatened: they might get less new recruits and that would also mean less money.

WHO'S WHO IN AN ABBEY?



This is a simplified hierarchy showing the roles common to all Benedictine monasteries.

The Abbey of St Edmund owned much property so needed many officials to perform administrative tasks. At the height of its power it had 30 officials. These monks were known as obedientiaries.

ACTIVITIES

1 Make a chart of the hierarchy and roles of people in your school. Are there any similarities between your school and the abbey?

2 Look at the different offices (roles) of the monks. If you had to choose an object for each monk to carry as a symbol of his job what would it be? Draw a picture of one of the monks. Write a list of his tasks for the day.

WHAT DID THESE PEOPLE DO?

Abbot

The word abbot means 'father'. St Benedict wanted the monasteries to be like a family with the abbot as a strict and loving father to all the monks in his care. He was the most powerful and important man in the abbey, making sure that the rules were obeyed and looking after spiritual affairs. Any monk who opposed the abbot could be beaten or imprisoned.

The abbot had control over the surrounding town, raising taxes and acting as judge in local court cases. He also supervised any building works. His influence spread across the country. He would provide accommodation for people visiting the abbey and other wealthy visitors. He took his orders from the Pope in Rome who was head of the church.

The abbot would carry a 'crosier' which was a symbolic version of a shepherd's crook.

Prior

The prior was in charge of discipline within the monastery. In the larger monasteries, such as Bury St Edmunds, there were sometimes also several 'sub-priors'. Bury St Edmunds had four sub-priors who acted as deputies for the prior when he was away from the abbey.

Treasurer

The treasurer was in charge of all the money and the accountancy of funds.

Sacrist

The sacrist was responsible for looking after the abbey church. The church was the most important part of the abbey, so this was a very important job. He was in charge of security and of repairs and maintenance to the building and other valuable items. He made sure that candles were lit before every service and that bells were rung calling the monks to prayer.

Cellarer

The cellarer was in charge of the abbey's business affairs and of providing the monks with food and drink. Much of the abbey's food would come from its own farms and stores. Anything else needed by the abbey would be bought by the cellarer. He had first pick of the produce on the town's market after the abbot's buyer.

The sacrist and the cellarer were both responsible for collecting rents and taxes and had considerable influence in the town.

Cantor or Precentor

The cantor was in charge of the music and ceremonies within the abbey and was responsible for the library and for the scholarly work of the monks. He organised the writing and illumination (decoration) of manuscripts. The main purpose of these was to provide service books for use in church.

Infirmarer

The infirmarer ran the hospital and cared for the sick. This included preparing remedies from his garden of plants and herbs and performing simple operations. He also visited the sick and consoled them with a prayer. Servants did most of the actual nursing.

Chamberlain

The chamberlain was responsible for all the monks' clothing. He also supervised bedding, bathing and shaving.

Choir Monks

Those who did not hold office as obedientiaries (important abbey officials) were known as choir or cloister monks. They were expected to carry the full round of prayers and church services.

Why were so many obedientiaries needed?

St Benedict's original idea was for monks, or nuns, to live in a very simple way as one big family. However, as monasteries grew bigger life became more complicated. The abbot started to live separately and to have his own land and income. Some monks were made into obedientiaries to see to all the organisational tasks that were needed to keep the monastery running smoothly. Unlike ordinary monks they were sometimes allowed to miss church services in order to perform their duties or even to leave the abbey and go into the town. Some of them set up their own apartments within the abbey.



THE 'CHRONICLES OF JOCELIN'

Relations with the town

One of our brother monks, who was quite sure of the abbot's affection and friendship, went to him, as soon as he had a chance, and tactfully told him that there was grumbling in the convent. On hearing this the abbot was silent for a long while, as if rather put out, and was reported to have answered at last, 'Surely I, and I only, am abbot? Is it not my business to deal with the affairs of the church which is in my charge, at least so long as I have my wits and act according to God's will? If there is any failure of royal justice in this town, it is I who will be blamed, and I who will be summoned; it is I who will bear the burden of travel and expense, as well as of the defence of the town and similar responsibilities. It is I who will be thought stupid, not the prior, not the sacrist, not the convent, but I alone, because I am their head - or ought to be. It is through me and my policy, with God's help and to the best of my ability that the town shall be preserved without loss and the annual £40 due to the altar secured. The brothers can grumble and criticize and talk among themselves as much as they like: I am their father and their abbot. I shall not hand over my position to anyone else, so long as I live.' At this the monk left him, and reported the abbot's reply. I found the words perplexing, and debated the pros and cons to myself, but in the end I was forced to remain doubtful, because canon law says and teaches that everything is in the abbot's control.

Changes in customs - the cellarer and his rights

Many people were astonished at the alterations to the customs which Abbot Samson directed or allowed. Ever since the town of St Edmund had been given the name and status of a borough, men had been accustomed to pay to the cellarer, at the beginning of August, a penny on each dwelling for the cutting of our corn. This payment was called 'repsilver', because before the town gained its freedom, everyone used to do the reaping, like serfs. Only the houses of knights, chaplains, and servants of the court were exempt from the payment. In the course of time, the cellarer exempted some of the richer men of the town, exacting nothing from them. Other burgesses, seeing this, declared openly that no one who had his own messuage ought to pay the penny, but only those who rented houses. Later they all made a joint demand for this exemption, coming to the abbot and offering an annual payment instead. The abbot, indeed, considering how the cellarer went about the town in an unbecoming manner collecting 'repsilver', how he took goods from the houses of the poor as securities for payment - sometimes stools, sometimes doors, sometimes other essentials - and how little old women came out with their distaffs threatening and reproaching him and his officers, decided that 2s. should be paid to the cellarer yearly at the borough court that met just before August. This was to be rendered by the burgesses through the agency of the reeve, to whom they entrusted the money for this purpose. And thus it was done and confirmed in our charter [before 1200].

Also, the cellarer was accustomed to take freely, for his own uses, all dung in the streets of the town, except outside the doors of those who hold 'averland'. They alone were allowed to collect and keep the dung. This custom declined a little at the time of Abbot Hugh, until Denis and Roger of Ingham were made cellarers. They, wanting to revive the former custom, seized the burgesses' wagons

laden with manure, and ordered them to be unloaded; but a great many burgesses protested, with such success that now each person collects the manure on his own tenement, and poor people sell theirs when and to whom they wish.

From Jocelin of Brakelond: Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds