



The Abbey of St Edmund

THE MONKS OF THE ABBEY

The life of an ordinary monk at the Abbey of St Edmund was well ordered. He followed the Rule of St Benedict by which the monks lived and worked together as a large family. His day would be very similar to that of a monk in any Benedictine monastery across Europe. At the heart of this strict monastery life was the church and a monk would be called to prayer by the ringing of bells many times throughout the day and night.

This is a typical day in the winter:-

Midnight	Matins <i>The first prayer of the day</i>
1.00am	Lauds <i>The second prayers of the day</i>
Monks would go to the church for these services, then return to bed using the night stairs.	
2.00am	<i>Back to bed in the dormitory</i>
7.00am	Prime <i>More prayer, followed by early mass for the many abbey staff while the monks washed and dressed, changing from warm night shoes to day shoes.</i>
7.30am	Breakfast <i>This consisted of 1/4 pound of bread and 1/3 pint of beer or wine. Monks were allowed to drink up to 8 pints of beer a day. This was probably safer to drink than the water from the well.</i>
8.00am	Mass
9.00am	Daily Chapter <i>All the monks met in the Chapter House to hear the reading of a chapter from the Rule of St Benedict and to deal with day-to-day matters including the discipline of any monks who had broken the rules.</i>
9.30am	Gossip in Cloisters <i>This was a chance for monks to chat among themselves. Most of the time they had to observe a rule of silence.</i>
10.00am	High Mass
11.00am	Dinner in the Refectory <i>This was the main meal of the day and would consist of locally grown fruit and vegetables, and maybe some fish from the monastery pond.</i>
11.30am	Recreation <i>Junior monks played games while the older monks slept for an hour.</i>

12.30pm	Study <i>Monks spent the afternoon in study or other activities such as writing manuscripts. Some worked in the gardens but the heavy work was done by abbey staff who were local townspeople.</i>
5.00pm	Vespers <i>Prayers which were followed by changing into night clothes, supper and readings in the Chapter House. Then a final chance for a chat in the Warming House.</i>
7.00pm	Compline <i>Last prayers before bed. There was no talking after Compline.</i>

This timetable changed slightly with the seasons but the monk's day was still basically one of prayer and quiet contemplation.

Scriptorium

The abbey of Bury St Edmunds had a great scriptorium, a room where monks copied out manuscripts by hand. Printing had not yet been invented, so there was no other way of making copies. Manuscripts were often decorated with highly coloured, illuminated letters. The colours used were handmade often from rare and precious ingredients:

CRIMSON - the gum of a tree

SCARLET - a tiny red insect

DRAGONSBLOOD RED - an Indian shrub

INDIGO BLUE - an Indian plant

WOAD BLUE - a plant grown in England

PURPLE - a small shellfish from the Mediterranean

GREEN - copper mixed with the juice of rotten apples

YELLOW - saffron (from crocuses)

GOLD - real gold

Books were very precious. A great abbey such as that at Bury St Edmunds might have about 600. These would include books on music, history, medicine and the prose and poetry of ancient Rome as well as religious texts.

Surviving manuscripts from the Abbey of St Edmund include the *Bury Bible*, at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and *Bury Herbal* at the Bodleian library. The abbey also produced some famous writers of the time such as the monk-poet John Lydgate.

Between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the universities in the middle of the 12th century, monasteries were the only centres of higher education and learning. Most ordinary people could neither read nor write.

Who became monks?

Monks joined the monastery from many different backgrounds. They included children, known as 'oblates', who were pledged to a monastic life by their parents, as well as young adults and older people who chose to become monks.

Reasons for joining a monastery included not only a religious calling, those who wanted to devote their lives to serving God, but also family expectations or the chance of a career. For upper class women of the medieval period the only other choice was marriage and motherhood. Many of those who joined the monasteries were from the wealthier sections of society and were expected to bring with them gifts of money or land.

When a person entered a monastery they were known as a 'novice' and were free to leave until they took their solemn monastic vows. Once the final vows were taken a monk was bound to the abbey for the rest of his life. It was recorded that some monks regretted their decisions and tried to run away but the monasteries were powerful and used the law to force them to return.

Further Reading

Life in a Medieval Abbey by Tony McAleavy
English Heritage Gatekeeper Series
ISBN 1-85074-592-7

Available from Moyse's Hall Museum
Telephone: 01284 757488

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Write down your timetable for a typical day at school. How does it compare to a monk's day?
- 2 The monks spent some of their time copying out manuscripts by hand. Try copying out a piece of *Brother Jocelin's Chronicle* in ink, in your best handwriting, with no mistakes. Make the first letter a colourful and illuminated (decorated) one. How long does it take?

ARTEFACTS

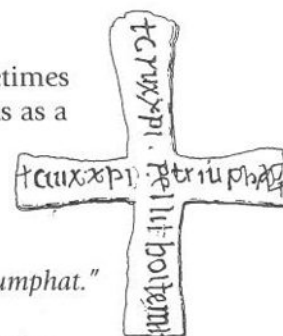
Pectoral Cross

Small lead crosses were sometimes placed in the coffins of priests as a badge of their office. Some are plain, but others bear a crossed

inscription "*Crux Christi pellit Hostem. Crux Christi Triumphat.*"

(The cross of

Christ overcomes the enemy. The cross of Christ triumphs.) Several crosses of this type were found in the graves of priests when the monks' cemetery at the Abbey of St Edmund was excavated in the 19th century.



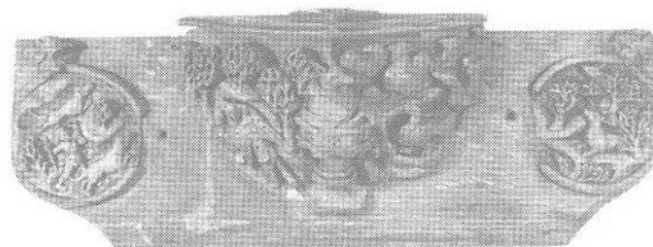
Mount

This fine decorated band, made of gilded silver, probably decorated the stem of an abbot's crosier. It dates from the late 12th century and was found in the coffin of Samson (1182-1211), perhaps the greatest of Bury St Edmunds' abbots.



Misericord

This carved ledge takes its name from the Latin word for 'mercy' or 'compassion'. Monks often had to stand for long periods during services. Some, especially the elderly and infirm, found this difficult, but were not allowed to sit. Ledges were attached to the underside of folding seats so that weary monks could rest on them while still appearing to stand. Because misericords could not normally be seen, craftsmen were allowed to carve secular (non-religious) subjects on them. Some could be quite rude!



This misericord shows the rivalry between monks and friars. It shows a fox dressed as a friar preaching to a flock of chickens and geese. In another scene he has caught one of the flock and is running off with it in his mouth.

Boy Bishop or St Nicholas Tokens

During the Middle Ages it was customary for churches and abbeys to elect a choirboy as Boy Bishop. He held office from *St Nicholas' Day* (December 6th) to *Childermas* (December 28th), when he preached a sermon and resigned.

In England the main centre of both production and use of Boy Bishop tokens was Bury St Edmunds. These were distributed by the Boy Bishop and probably exchanged for sweetmeats or alms at the abbey almonry or by local merchants. They were probably also used as small change.



The Boy Bishop ceremony was in existence in Bury St Edmunds by c.1418 but the tokens date from c.1480.

Pax Board

The pax is a tablet which receives the kiss of peace during Mass. This one dates from around 1400 AD and is among the earliest of the few surviving English examples. It can be seen at the Abbey Visitor Centre in Bury St Edmunds.



Papal Bullae

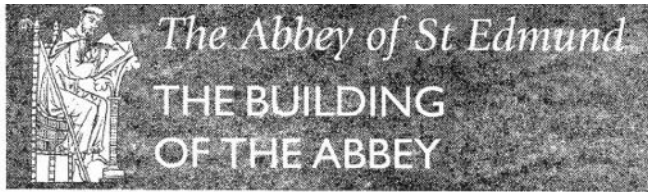
Bullae were lead seals attached to church documents sent out from Rome. They were used to show that documents were not fake. Early seals were made of wax, but they melted in the heat of the Mediterranean summer. One side of the bulla bore the name of the Pope under whose authority the document was issued. The other side carried images of Saints Peter and Paul, and the inscription SPASPE (Sanctus Paulus Sanctus Petrus). The cord used to attach a seal to a document passed through it from edge to edge. To seal a document, the cord was closed between two half seals which were then joined together. The material from which the cord was made varied according to the type of document; silk for those confirming rights, hemp for those expressing orders.

Lead seals of various types were used throughout the Middle Ages and beyond as a mark of authenticity, or as a check to show that goods met the required standard. They are still in use today.



T I M E L I N E

945	The Saxon King of England granted control of the town of St Edmund's Bury to the monks of the shrine of St Edmund.
1044	Edward the Confessor gave the monks control of West Suffolk.
1081	The abbot persuaded the Pope and William I to confirm that the abbey was independent of the local bishop, and even the archbishop.
1182-1211	Abbot Samson controlled the abbey. The monk Jocelin of Brakelond kept a diary in which he recorded the happenings at the abbey at this time.
1213	The 65 monks were bitterly divided over the choice of a new abbot.
1257-63	There were bitter disputes between the Benedictine Monks and the newly arrived Franciscan Friars.
1263-67	In the civil wars of Simon de Montfort, the townsfolk, (the monks' feudal tenants) took the opportunity to violently coerce their masters into granting some rights of local self-government. However in 1267 the monks persuaded Henry III to support their regaining control over Bury St Edmunds' affairs.
1281	Edward I confirmed the new charter defining which revenues belonged to the abbot and which to the 80 monks.
1297	In retaliation against Edward I's misuse of Church revenues, Pope Boniface VIII ordered the English bishops and abbots to meet at the Abbey of St Edmund to plan their resistance.
1312	The Abbey of St Edmund was in financial difficulties and was borrowing from international banks.
1327	There were bitter clashes between the townsfolk and troops of the monks. The abbey church and monastic buildings were looted and the Abbey Gate destroyed.
1349	The Black Death (bubonic plague) killed 40 of the 80 monks and about 1500 of Bury St Edmunds' population of c. 5000.
1379	There were bitter disputes between the monks over the choice of a new abbot. The townsfolk supported the Pope's choice but Richard II's government supported his rival. The monks collected the first of the Poll Taxes for the government.
1517	The monks were in bitter dispute with the townsfolk again. The abbot had Cardinal Wolsey summon the leading townsmen and order them to obey the monks. In Germany, Martin Luther began his struggle against the power of the Pope and the Catholic Church which led to the Reformation.
1525	The ideas of the Protestant reformers began to reach Bury St Edmunds from Germany and from Cambridge, spread by the newly-available printed books and pamphlets. Two of the 65 monks at Bury were found to be in sympathy with their views.
1535	Henry VIII's inspectors visited the abbey to check up on the possessions of the 62 monks. Bury was found to be the fifth wealthiest of the English monasteries and cathedrals.
1538	Royal commissioners stripped the abbey of most of its gold, silver and other valuable items. With royal encouragement about a third of the monks had already resigned.
1539	The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-40) caused the closure of the Abbey of St Edmund after 519 years of Benedictine observance. The abbot and the remaining 43 monks were given pensions.



Who organised the building of the abbey?

The abbots were responsible for organising building work. Little is known about the abbey in its earliest days but it was Abbot Baldwin (1065-1097) who laid out the foundations of much of the abbey as well as encouraging the building of houses in the town.

Abbot Anselm (1121-1148) continued work on improving the abbey. He was responsible for the building of the tower which we call the Norman Tower today. This was the gateway to the abbey for pilgrims. He had wanted to go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St James at Compostella, in northern Spain, but was refused permission. Instead he built the tower. Abbot Anselm was also responsible for the medieval grid pattern of streets in the centre of the town which still exists today.

The abbey church was later finished by Abbot Samson (1182-1211) and his Sacrist Hugo who added the towers and great bronze doors to the West Front. The remains of Samson's Tower house the Abbey Visitor Centre today.

Where did the stone come from?

Stone was particularly expensive in this area as there was no local source. The abbey was very wealthy and had most of the stone brought in from Barnack, near Peterborough. Some of it was also transported from Caen in Normandy, France, by boat as far as Rattlesden and then overland. The stone was mainly used to cover the surfaces of walls and pillars. Their inner cores were built of local flint and mortar.

How was the building put up?

The abbey was built by gangs of masons. Each gang had its own master. The gang would come, build a bit, then when money ran out, move on to another project. Builders often worked from very detailed plans drawn up by master masons.

Wooden scaffolding was used to reach higher parts of the building. It was often secured to the building itself by pushing the wood into holes called putlog holes. When the time came to remove the scaffolding it was simply sawn off flush with the wall and taken away. The holes were then either filled in or left open. If the building was being repaired or altered the same holes could be re-used. Examples of putlog holes can be seen at St Saviour's Hospital site on Fornham Road, Bury St Edmunds as well as in the precinct wall of the abbey.

What style is the building?

Big buildings such as abbeys were often built over a long period of time. They were very expensive

buildings to put up and so were added to as money came in. Because of this they often include different architectural styles depending on the fashion of the time.

Most of the initial work on the abbey was undertaken during the Norman (or Romanesque) period. The remains of the large arches in the West Front are typically rounded Norman arches. The Norman Tower also has many characteristics of this period. Built between 1119 and 1148, it is the best preserved part of the abbey. The Abbey Gate shows elements of Decorated and Perpendicular styles (see below). It was rebuilt after a riot of the townspeople in 1327, mainly for defence.

How do I recognise different styles of architecture?

The styles in fashion at different times throughout the history of the abbey are as follows:-



NORMAN - 11th and 12th centuries - heavy solid architecture, large pillars and rounded arches



EARLY ENGLISH/GOTHIC - 13th century - spiky architecture with pointed arches



DECORATED - c1290-1350 - a more elaborate style with very rich carvings



PERPENDICULAR - c1335/50-1530 - a less ornamental style, four centred arches (four curves



making the top part of windows with a line straight down the middle) and bigger windows to let in more light

To a certain extent different architectural styles reflected social and economic changes in Britain as well as influences from abroad.

ACTIVITIES

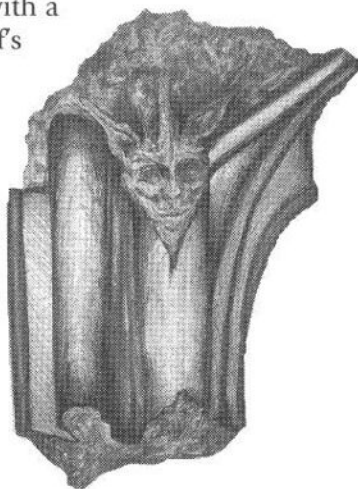
- 1 Much of the stone used to build the abbey came from Barnack, near Peterborough. Find Barnack on a map. How do you think the stone was transported?

- 2 Have a look at the guide to recognising different architectural styles. Try it out on a local church. Can you tell when it was built? Remember it might have been added to over the years!

ARTEFACTS

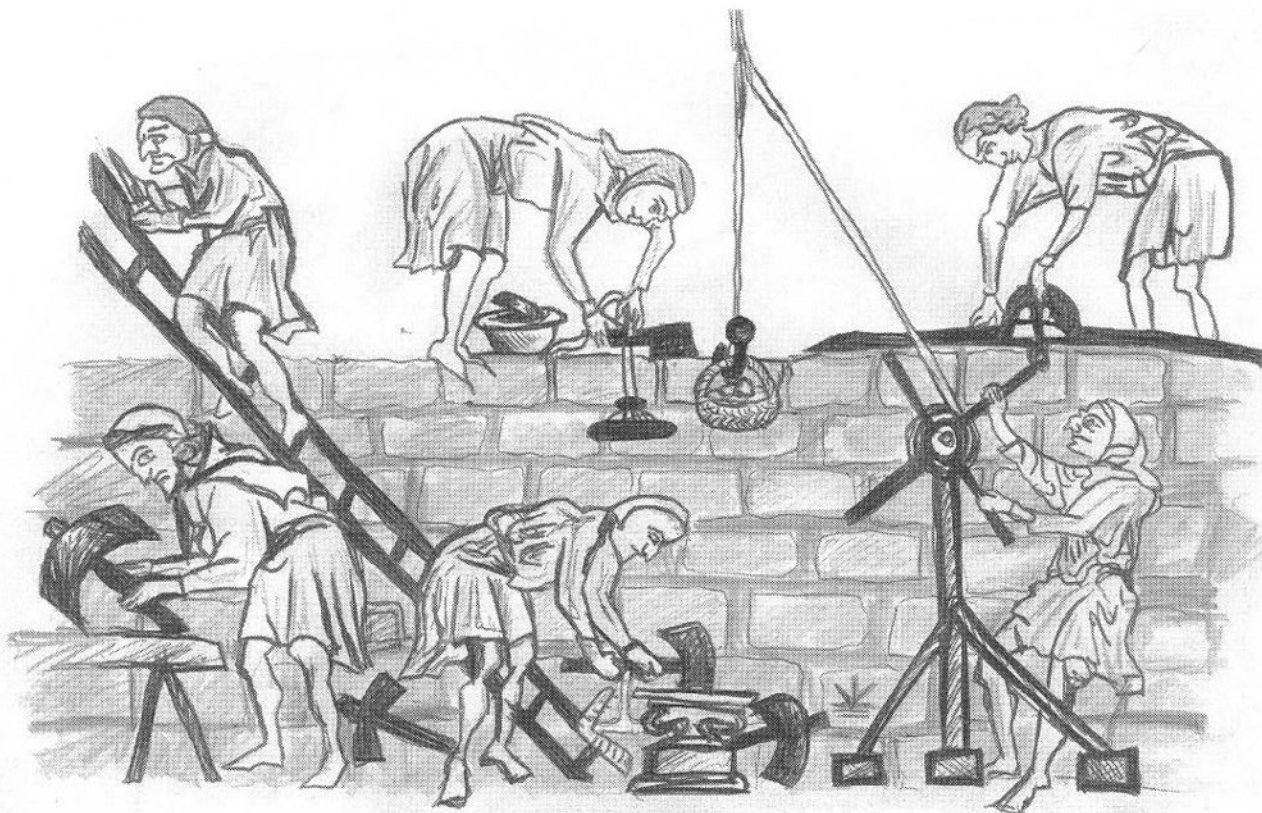
Carved Marble Fragment

This fragment carved with a small column and wolf's head, was excavated from the Abbey of St Edmund and is thought to be part of Saint Edmund's shrine.



Carved Stone Capital

Found in the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund, this once formed the head of a small stone column or pillar. Although very worn, the subject can still be made out. The severed head of St Edmund, surrounded by briars or brambles, lies in the centre, guarded on the right by a wolf. On the left, Edmund's followers are looking for his head.



A gang of masons

THE 'CHRONICLES OF JOCELIN'

The Bishop of Ely tricked.

The Bishop of Ely, Geoffrey Ridel (1174-89) asked the abbot for timber to be used in the construction of some large buildings at Glensford. Although the abbot was reluctant to grant this, he did so for fear of offending the bishop. Then, when he was staying at Melford (Long Melford), one of the bishop's clerks came with his master's request that the promised wood should be taken from Elmswell. But 'Elmswell' was a slip of the tongue for 'Elmset', which is the name of a wood at Melford. The abbot was surprised at this message, for Elmswell could not supply that sort of timber. However, when Richard the forester of Melford heard about it, he told the abbot privately that the previous week the bishop had sent his carpenters to Elmset as spies, and that they had selected the best trees in the whole wood and put their marks on them. Hearing this, and realizing that the bishop's messenger had made an error, the abbot answered that he was happy to agree to the bishop's request. The following day, after the messenger had left, and as soon as the abbot had heard Mass, he went with his carpenters into the wood, and ordered that all the marked oaks, and over a hundred more, should be marked again, this time with his own sign, for St Edmund, and should be felled without delay for use at the top of the great tower. When the bishop understood from his messenger that the timber was to be taken from Elmswell, he reprimanded him severely and sent him back to the abbot to correct 'Elmswell' to 'Elmset'. But before the man reached the abbot, all the trees that the bishop had desired, and his carpenters had marked, had already been felled. If his Lordship wanted timber, he would have to find other trees elsewhere. When I heard this, I laughed and said to myself: 'This is an example of a trick being trumped.'

New Buildings

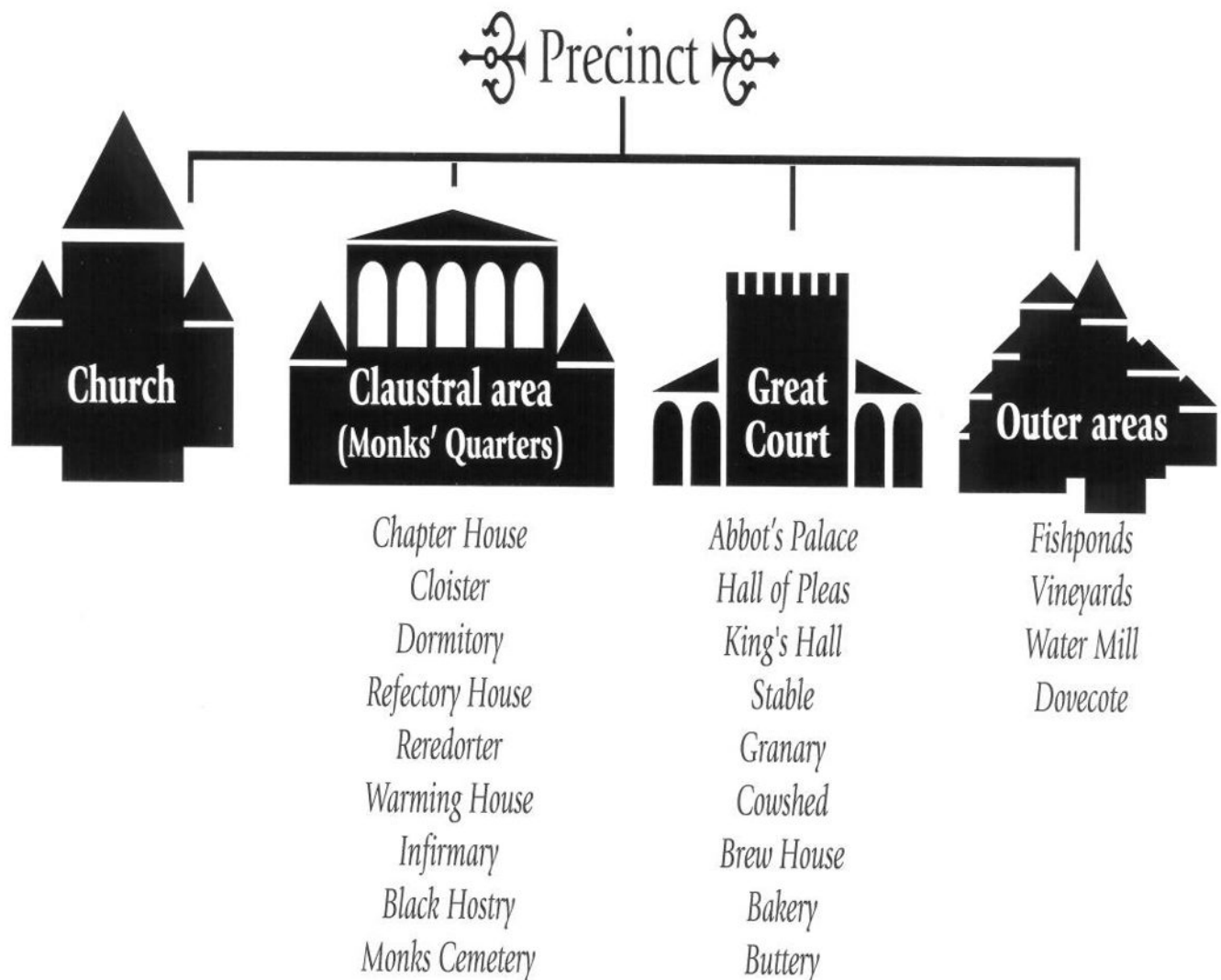
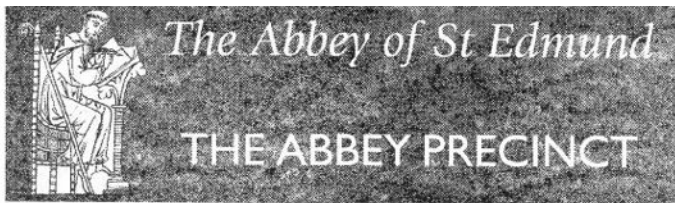
When the abbot had erected many different buildings in the villages throughout his estates and had stayed overnight on his manors more often than at home with us, at last he came to himself, and changing good for better, he announced that he would in future spend more time at home. He said that he would construct needed buildings within the court, paying attention to work here as well as elsewhere, acknowledging that 'the master's presence enriches the field' (Palladius l.i.6). He ordered that the stables and outbuildings round the courtyard, which previously had been reed-thatched, were to be tiled, under the supervision of Hugh the sacrist, so that there should be no further fear or danger from fire. 'Behold, the acceptable time' (2 Cor. 6: 2); the long-desired day has come, which as guest-master I am particularly happy to describe. See how on the abbot's orders the court echoes to the sound of pickaxes and stonemasons' tools as the guest-house is knocked down. At this very moment nearly all is demolished. May the most high God provide for the rebuilding. The abbot constructed a new larder for himself in the court, and gave the old larder, which was in an unsuitable position under the dormitory, to the convent, for the chamberlain's use. The chapels of St Andrew, St Katherine, and St Faith were newly roofed with lead. Also many improvements were made inside the church and out. If you don't believe this, open your eyes and look. At this time too, our almonry was rebuilt in stone - formerly it had been ramshackle and of wood. Towards this our brother Walter the physician, then almoner, gave a large donation of money that he had made from his medical practice. In addition, the abbot, seeing that the silver frontal on the high altar

and many other precious ornaments had been disposed of to pay for the recovery of Mildenhall and for King Richard's ransom, did not wish to refashion the frontal and other similar panels in case they should suffer the same fate of being stripped off and dispersed. Instead, he concentrated all his efforts on making a most precious canopy above the shrine of the glorious martyr Edmund, so that his work of art would be put in a position from which it could in no circumstances be taken down, and where no man would dare lay a hand on it. Indeed, when King Richard was a prisoner in Germany (1192-4), there was not one treasure in England that was not given or exchanged for money, and yet the shrine of St Edmund remained intact. Nevertheless, whether St Edmund's shrine should be partly stripped for the king's ransom was argued before the Barons of the Exchequer, and the abbot stood up and answered the point in this way: 'Take it for a certainty, that this shall never be authorized by me, nor is there any man who would get me to agree to it. But I will open the doors of the church - let anyone enter who will, let anyone come near who dare.' Each judge replied with an oath, 'I shall not go', 'Nor I, St Edmund vents his rage on the distant and the absent: much greater will his fury be on those close at hand who seek to rob him of his clothing.' Because of what had been said, the shrine was not despoiled, nor was a loan raised on it. So putting other matters aside, the abbot decided very wisely and sensibly to construct a canopy for the shrine. And now sheets of gold and silver resound between the hammer and the anvil and 'craftsmen handle craftsmen's tools' (Horace, Epistolae, ll. i. 6)

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

T I M E L I N E

633	The King of East Anglia set up a royal monastery at Bedericesworth (now Bury St Edmunds)
870	The Danes captured Edmund, King of East Anglia. They executed him when he refused to give up his Christian faith. The shrine to 'Edmund, King and Martyr' was set up here between 882-903.
1020	King Canute and Bishop Ailwin established a Benedictine monastery at the shrine of St Edmund.
1065-97	Abbot Baldwin ruled the abbey at the time of the Norman Conquest. He had Bury 'New Town' set up; with 342 new houses built in the town. Abbot Baldwin also had work begun on the new Norman abbey.
1097-1104	The abbey church, begun in about 1085, was completed. Most of the monastic buildings were to be constructed by 1120; the new St Mary's Church (upon its present site) by c. 1125.; the Norman Tower and the new St James' Church by c. 1135. The monks even had the part of the town close to the abbey cleared and the extended grounds were enclosed by the present precinct wall.
1120-48	Abbot Anselm continued the work started by Baldwin to set up a grid system of streets in the town centre which still exists today
1150	The monastic buildings were badly damaged by fire.
1182	Abbot Samson had the very wide West Front completed along with its West Tower and two side towers.
1210	The central bell tower collapsed and had to be rebuilt.
1211	The Vinefields across the river were laid out and enclosed, and the Abbot's Bridge was built near the East Gate of the town.
1215	About a week and a half before the signing of the Magna Carta, the monks' town of Bury St Edmunds was destroyed by fire.
1220-30	The Chapter House and the Prior's Hall were rebuilt.
1285	The new Abbot's Palace, the King's Hall and the Queen's Hall were built. They stood between the present flower gardens and the Dovecote (the abbot's 'summer house' down by the river).
1327	There were bitter clashes between the townsfolk and troops of the monks. The abbey church and monastic buildings were looted and the Abbey Gate destroyed.
1346	The new Abbey Gate was built. It acted as a small keep.
1425-35	St Mary's Church was rebuilt in the new Perpendicular style.
1430	The West Tower of the abbey collapsed and had to be rebuilt.
1439	The Great Gale in January destroyed monastic buildings. The Great Flood in May resulted in water some two feet deep extending from the Norman Tower into St James' and the abbey church. Afterwards the area between the Norman Tower and the abbey was raised by 4 feet. (This can best be seen in the narrow passage between the West Front and the cathedral, and in the railed-off area beneath the Norman Tower.)
1465	Fire gutted the abbey church. Renovation work was mainly completed by the time of Henry VII's visit in 1486.
1499-1525	St James' Church was rebuilt and extended. The work was in the new Perpendicular style.
1540	Royal officials, acting on behalf of Henry VIII, took over the abbey, its vast estates, and the town of Bury St Edmunds. They stripped the monastery of its bells and roofing lead, and sold off the valuable surface stonework, timbers and stained glass.
1540	A proposal to create a new bishopric at Bury St Edmunds failed. Had it been successful, the abbey church would have been retained, as at Peterborough and a number of other places.
1540 onwards	The gutted monastery buildings gradually fell into ruin.



What buildings were there on the abbey site?

The most important building on the site was the abbey church which dominated not only the rest of the abbey but also the town. It was built in the shape of a great cross and was one of the largest churches in Europe.

The whole site was enclosed by the precinct wall and access was controlled through several gates. The wall even extended over the river where a bridge was built with portcullises to stop boats from entering the abbey.

The first monasteries sought to be self-sufficient. St Benedict ordered that each monastery should have a mill, a garden and various workshops within the abbey precinct so that the monks would rarely need to leave the abbey. He expected the monks to

perform manual tasks and for some to be skilled craftsmen. Servants could be taken on to do much of the labouring but as monasteries grew the use of servants increased.

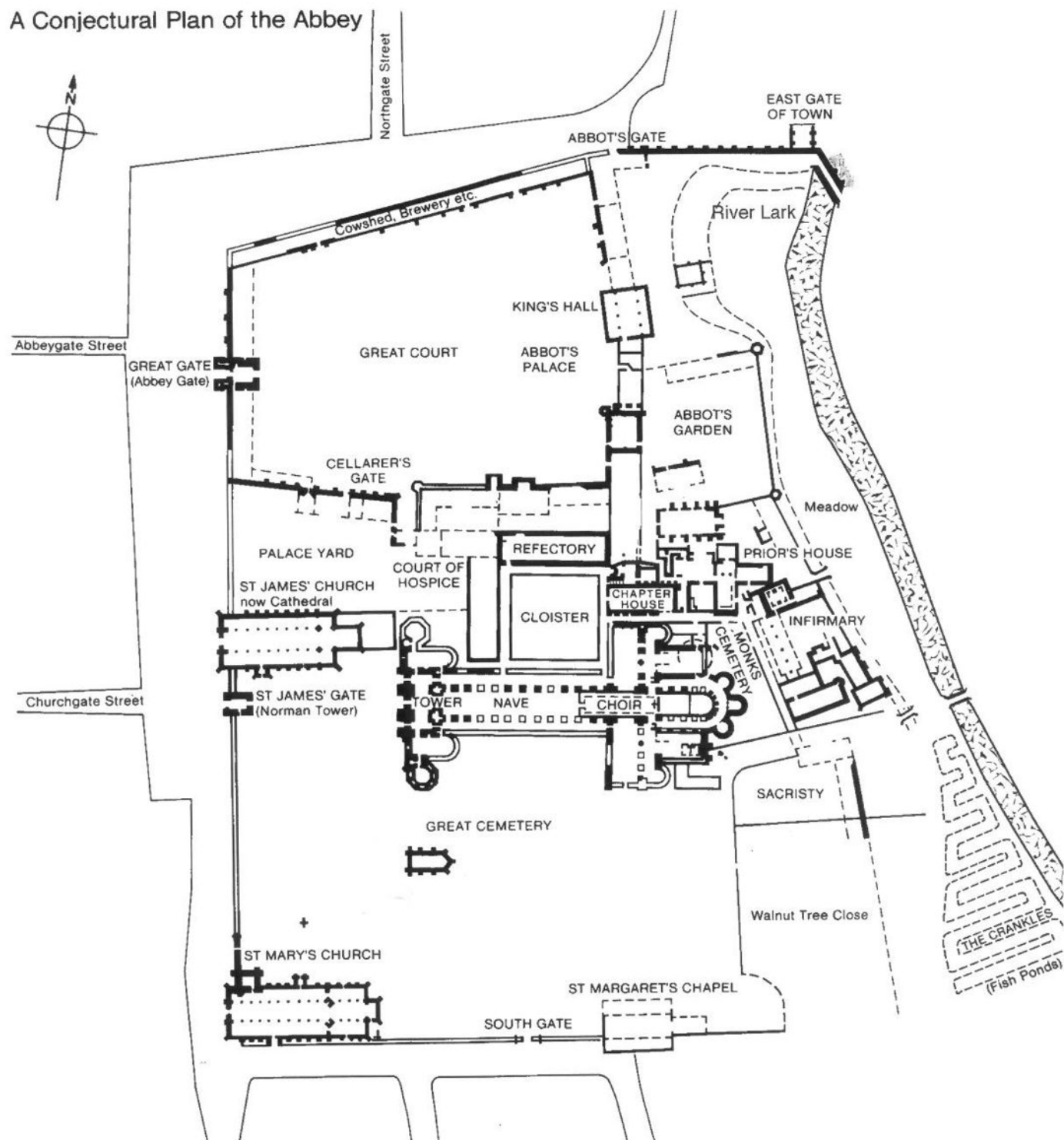
From the distance the site looked like a small town. In the 16th century John Leland reported that:

"The sun does not shine on an abbey more famous, whether we regard its endowments, its size or its magnificence. You would aver that the abbey was a town in itself, so many gates has it got... so many towers and a church surpassed by none."

How was the site laid out?

This plan, which is taken from the English Heritage guide to the site (see *Further reading*), shows how the site was probably set out.

A Conjectural Plan of the Abbey



What were the different buildings for?

Church

The abbey church housing the shrine of St Edmund was the most important building of the abbey.

The lives of the monks centred around services in the church.

Here they performed their chief duty of praising God separated from the rest of the Church by screens so as not to be disturbed by pilgrims passing through. Pilgrims made their way round to the back of the High Altar where the shrine of St Edmund stood.

There were two other churches on the precinct - St Mary's which is now a parish church and St James which is the cathedral.

Claustral Area

Cloister

This was a courtyard surrounded by a covered walkway. Monks spent much of their time in between church services here in study and meditation. It linked the most important buildings of the abbey - the church, refectory (dining room), dormitory (where the monks slept) and the Chapter House.

Chapter House

This was the meeting room of the monks where day to day matters were discussed, religious readings were read and monks who broke the rules were disciplined. The monks sat on a stone bench around the room, parts of which still survive today. In the centre are the graves of five abbots including Abbot Samson.

Warming House

This was the only building that had a fire for the monks to keep warm.

Great Court

This was a large area surrounded by buildings where the practical affairs of the abbey were conducted. The buildings included a kitchen, larder, brew house, bakery, mill, granary, guest house and stables. There were also workshops for blacksmiths, masons and carpenters. Townspeople often used these facilities as well but had to pay the abbey to do so.

Abbot's Palace

The abbot lived separately from the other monks and had his own manors to finance his lifestyle. He often travelled to visit his far flung estates, other abbeys, London and even Rome. He was also required to entertain noblemen, bishops and even the king.

Outer Areas

These areas such as the Crankles (fishponds), the water mill and the vineyards were used to produce

food and drink for the monks. Pigeons in the dovecote were a useful source of meat when it was allowed. Their droppings were carefully collected to treat parchment (paper).

Further Reading

Bury St Edmunds Abbey by A.B. Whittingham
English Heritage

Available from Moyse's Hall Museum tel: (01284) 757488

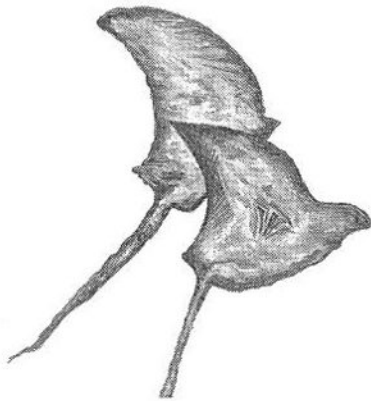
ACTIVITY

The abbey church towered over the town, just as religion dominated the lives of the people in medieval times. What are the main landmarks of the town today? Do they say anything about our society? If you don't live in Bury St Edmunds try this on your own town or village.

ARTEFACTS

Leather Working Knives

These two leather working knives were found in the area once occupied by the Great Courtyard, the hub of the abbey's secular life. Here were the stables, brew house, bakery and workshops. The knives hint at one of the activities which took place there.



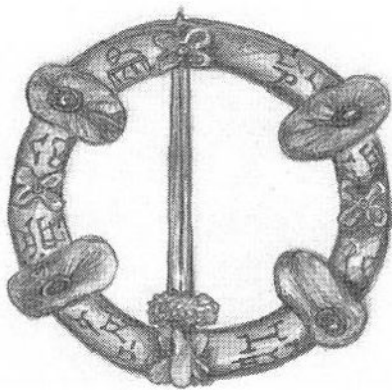
Bowls

These two 13th century earthenware bowls, which were discovered near the Abbey Gate, were in use when the abbey was in its heyday.



Brooch

Jewellery decorated with religious mottoes shows the importance of the church in medieval life. This silver-gilt brooch with four gems is inscribed 'Ave Maria Gracia Plena' (Hail Mary, Full of Grace). It was found near the abbey vinefield.



Keys

Some of the many medieval keys found on the site of the abbey.

