

Welcome to the Abbey of St Edmund

The Abbey was founded in 1020 by King Canute and includes: the Abbey Gardens; the Cathedral; St Mary's Church; the Great Churchyard; the Water Meadows and the former Vinefields of the Abbey. Few of the medieval buildings remain but, along with the ruins and the beautiful setting, they talk to us of the past. We treasure and love them, and we hope you will too.

This leaflet suggests some of the main points of interest on a map with some explanatory text.

- 1 **THE ABBEY GATE** was built in the mid -14th century. It replaced the original gate which was destroyed by rioting townfolk in 1327.
- 2 **THE FLOWER GARDENS** follow the layout of the botanic garden established by Nathaniel Hodson in 1831.
- 3 **THE DOVECOTE** stands in what used to be the Abbot's garden.
- 4 **THE PRECINCT WALL AND ABBOT'S BRIDGE** The wall surrounded the abbey precinct and the best surviving part runs along Mustow Street and continues across the Abbot's Bridge.
- 5 **THE ABBEY MODEL** shows what the abbey would have looked like in 1200 AD.
- 6 **THE ABBEY OUTBUILDINGS** include the Chapter House, the Dormitory, the Refectory, the Buttery and Pantry, the Prior's House and the Infirmary. The Chapter House was where the Abbot and the monks met daily. Inside the Chapter House is a row of stone coffins of five abbots which was found in 1903. They include Abbot Samson who built much of the abbey church.
- 7 **THE ABBEY CHURCH** was built in the 12th Century and became one of the largest buildings in Europe. The body of St Edmund was moved into the Presbytery during the 1020s. The interior was lavishly decorated. The abbey was dissolved in 1539 and stripped of its stonework.

- 7a **THE CRYPT AND PRESBYTERY** was built in the 11th Century. The presbytery had a semi-circular eastern end which housed the high altar and the shrine of St Edmund. The fate of St Edmund's body remains a mystery.
- 7b **THE CROSSING** is marked by four large columns, which supported the central tower. Here is a record of the meeting in 1214 which led to the Magna Carta for common people's rights.
- 7c **THE NAVE** was twelve bays long. The rubble cores of the columns from the north arcade still survive. The southern half remains buried.
- 7d **THE WEST FRONT** had a central tower and it was flanked by two octagonal towers. Unique houses were later built into the ruined arches and are a distinctive feature today.
- 8 **THE US AIR FORCE ROSE GARDEN** is a memorial to American servicemen. It is named after John Appleby who served with the 487th Bombardment Group at Lavenham.
- 9 **THE DEANERY**, formerly Clopton's Asylum was built as alms houses with money left by Dr Poley Clopton. It is now the Deanery of the Cathedral.
- 10 **THE CRANKLES** lie between the confluence of the rivers Lark and Linnet within the Abbey precinct. Historic maps show it with a zig zag of channels which are believed to have been the remnants of monastic fish ponds.
- 11 **THE GREAT CHURCHYARD AND CHARNEL CHAPEL** served the abbey and several other churches and chapels.
- 12 **ST MARY'S CHURCH** was founded in the early 12th century. It contains the grave of Mary Tudor, the sister of Henry VIII.
- 13 **THE NORMAN TOWER** was built in the early 12th century as the main gateway to the abbey church. It indicates what the rest of the abbey church would have looked like.
- 14 **THE CATHEDRAL** was built as the parish church of St James in the early 12th century. It became St Edmundsbury Cathedral in 1914.

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VISITOR GUIDE



www.abbeyofstedmund.org.uk

This guide has been produced by the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership in collaboration with English Heritage and encourages people to experience today, the significance of St Edmund and the historic Abbey.

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VISITOR GUIDE

-  Pedestrian access
-  Public toilets
-  Path
-  Café
-  Path with steps
-  Children's playground



POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1** The Abbey Gate
- 2** The Flower Gardens
- 3** The Dovecote
- 4** The Precinct Wall and Abbot's Bridge
- 5** The Abbey Model
- 6** The Abbey Outbuildings
- 7** The Abbey Church
 - 7a** The Crypt and Presbytery
 - 7b** The Crossing
 - 7c** The Nave
 - 7d** The West Front
- 8** The US Air Force Rose Garden
- 9** The Deanery, formerly Clopton's Asylum
- 10** The Crankles
- 11** The Great Churchyard and Charnel Chapel
- 12** St Mary's Church
- 13** The Norman Tower
- 14** The Cathedral