

St Edmundsbury
Cathedral



2024 Pilgrimage

In the footsteps of the
Suffolk Saints: Edmund and Botolph



Dunwich to Bury St Edmunds

Saturday 4 May - Thursday 9 May

Suffolk Saints Pilgrimage

Edmund and Botolph

Dunwich to Bury St Edmunds:

4-9 May 2024

The 2022 celebrations marking the 1000th anniversary of the establishment of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds included pilgrimages which followed the footsteps of the founding monks. This year we have planned another pilgrimage, linking Suffolk's saints who brought alive the Christian inheritance which has shaped so much of our county's cultural and architectural landscape.

A quick bit of history

Saint Botolph was an East Anglian noble living in the seventh century, some two hundred years before Saint Edmund. With his brother, he was educated by Benedictines in France. He returned to his native East Anglia and was given a grant of land on which to build a monastery at Icanhoh, most likely to have been Iken, near Aldeburgh in Suffolk.

St. Botolph is described 'on all sides to be a man of unparalleled learning and life, full of the grace of the Holy Spirit'. He died in the year 680 after a long life of Christian pastoral care, endeavour, mission and teaching. The monastery lived on for two centuries more, but in 870 was destroyed by Danish invaders – perhaps the same invaders who martyred Saint Edmund in 869. St Botolph's remains were taken from the monastery ruins to be divided into parts, to be taken to Ely, to Thorney and to Westminster Abbey. The route to Westminster went via Burgh and Thurleston in Suffolk, St Botolph's, Colchester, and then to London where four churches were dedicated to St Botolph – Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Aldersgate and Billingsgate.

The connection with St Edmundsbury is that there was also a 'feretrum' (shrine) for the remains of St Botolph in a side chapel dedicated to his name within the Abbey.

Over 70 Churches in England, along with five towns and villages, are dedicated to St Botolph, including six in Suffolk.





‘Who is it for?’ Anyone, irrespective of beliefs, is warmly welcome. A pilgrimage such as this is a time to ‘come up for air’ in our lives, and connect more intentionally with the source of our life, our being and our becoming.

Accommodation: Four of the five nights will be in hostel-style accommodation in two locations: Darsham Country Centre and Dove’s Barn (Needham Market). Both are clean, well run and comfortable but rooms will be four or five beds per room with shared bathrooms. The middle night will be at the Premier Inn Claydon, and single-room occupancy will be available for that night. Transport will be provided each day to and from the overnight accommodation.

Food: An evening meal and breakfast is provided each day. You will need to provide your own food and drink for each day’s walking there are local shops. You will need to bring a small day back-pack to carry any items you need during the day.

Luggage: We can transport an overnight bag, but we ask that this is a small bag with just the essentials you need for each of the overnight stays. Please include a towel and basic toileteries as these are not provided at Darsham.

Logistics: Each day will be led by experienced walkers who have recently tested the route. We will normally depart at around 9.00 am each day, depending on the itinerary. This will ensure that we arrive for our overnight stay in good time to allow for any stops you want to make for a sandwich, ‘nature calls’, musing, resting your feet or simply ‘resting awhile’. The aim is to arrive late-afternoon to allow for a rest before supper and prayers – and to buy yourself any supplies for the next day’s walking. We will begin and end each day with prayer and a reflection, bookending the day recognising God’s presence in the pilgrimage of life. After breakfast your luggage will be transferred, so you will only need to bring a small/light back-pack for the day to carry a bit of lunch, water, sun-cream, plasters, etc.



Practicalities

Footwear: Throughout the route the terrain is easy-going, with no difficult or rocky paths. So you will be OK wearing good quality trainers or sturdy walking shoes. Some people prefer trusty well-worn walking boots. The terrain and time of year we are walking does not really demand heavy walking boots, but there may be wet days or mud/wet grass. Do follow your instinct on this – just make sure you are comfortable. You will want to bring a change of shoes for the evening.

Clothing: What can we say? East Anglia in early summer is unpredictable, and although average temperatures are around 16C, have fluctuated between 5C and 30C in some years. Likewise rainfall has been low on average in May, but be prepared for all possible weathers... pack a T-shirt but also some really warm/waterproof clothing, and be prepared for downpours! If you have lightweight waterproof tops and trousers it would be no bad thing to put them in.

Also, a tip from seasoned pilgrims: if you are carrying a mobile phone or camera, make sure you keep it in a couple of water-proof plastic bags. On a rainy day, water can get in the most unlikely places. But... do bring a hat and sun-screen to protect yourself as, on the other hand, it might well be sunny all the time.

Support: there will be a car and driver available each day for you to contact should you need assistance at any point.

Dogs: sadly, the Pilgrimage is not suitable for dogs.



The Itinerary

Dunwich to Bury St Edmunds - around 80 miles

Friday 3 May: You may wish to make your own way to Dunwich on the Friday, so that you are near the start of the Pilgrimage on Saturday morning. Overnight accommodation will be your own responsibility.

Saturday 4 May (15 miles): The Pilgrimage will begin at St James' Church, Dunwich (field car park opposite, also Beach car park with toilets) at 9.00 am with prayers and briefing before beginning the walk to Snape Maltings. The route crosses Dunwich Heath to follow a beautiful stretch of coastal path to Thorpeness where it turns inland to follow the River Alde upstream to Snape Maltings. Transport to Darsham for overnight today and on Sun/Mon.

Sunday 5 May (12 miles): Breakfast followed by prayers and briefing before the second day. Starting from Snape Maltings, the route heads along the shore of the Alde to Iken, then passes through Tunstall Forest via Chillesford and Butley to Eyke. St Botolph founded a Monastery at Iken in 654AD which became a renowned seat of learning. He died in 680 and was initially buried here. Inside the Church are remains of a 9th-10th century inscribed cross.

Monday 6 May (14 miles): Setting off again after breakfast, prayers and briefing. The way follows field paths and tracks to Tuddenham. The route passes St Botolph's Church, Burgh where Botolph's body lay for safekeeping in the 10th century. We then head upstream along the beautiful Fynn Valley dotted with small villages and ancient Churches to Tuddenham.

Tuesday 7 May (12 miles): Today's route continues along the Fynn Valley Walk to the source of the Fynn River at Witnesham. Then follows quiet tracks and lanes via the festival church of Akenham St Mary and on to Needham Market - St John's Church and its magnificent hammer beam roof with carved angels (mentioned in Dorothy L Sayers' 'The Nine Tailors'), as well as ancient statuettes of pilgrims in the porch. Now to Doves Barn for overnight.

Wednesday 8 May (12 miles): Another more leisurely day of Pilgrimage. The route is partly along the Gipping Valley in beautiful undulating Suffolk countryside. We pass via Stowmarket, Onehouse and Shelland (King Charles the Martyr church) ending the day at Rattlesden's St Nicholas Church. Transport back to Doves Barn overnight.

Thursday 9 May (11 miles): Ascension Day – our final day of pilgrimage. Transport back to Rattlesden for prayers and briefing. The day follows well-marked footpaths through varied landscapes and the opportunity to stop in historic churches at Drinkstone, Hessett and Rushbrooke (collegiate nave seating). The route into Bury St Edmunds will allow a visit to Saint Edmund's Catholic Church (prayer with a relic of Saint Edmund) and the ruined shrine of St Edmund in the Abbey Gardens. A special Ascension Day service starts at 5.30pm.



Costs and booking

4-9 May, St Botolph Pilgrimage Dunwich to Bury St Edmunds:

£400.00 per person sharing in hostel accommodation

Day Pilgrims

£15.00 per person

The cost per person and will include:

- Accommodation overnight on a room share basis
- Food: breakfast and evening meal
- Luggage being moved each day; (and car 'back up' if needed)

There are some things not included:

- Single occupancy on 6 May: there may be an additional (small) single room supplement.
- Your own travel insurance and transport to the start of the pilgrimage for which individual arrangements must be made.
- All lunches (picnics en-route each day, from local shops).

Booking form:

email philip.banks@cofesuffolk.org.

For those wishing to walk for just one day, please use the space on the booking form provided.

Booking timetable is as follows:

Firm commitment needed by 11 March - which will require a non-refundable 25% deposit
Balance payable by 2 April. Bookings can be made by email and payments either by cheque or bank transfer.





More Information

A pre-pilgrimage meeting and presentation will take place on Wednesday 24 April at 7.00 pm by Zoom. This will be a chance to ask questions, meet other pilgrims and hear a bit more detail about the route and daily itinerary.

Do contact philip.banks@cofesuffolk.org or ring the cathedral office if there are any aspects of the pilgrimages you'd like to discuss.

A Pilgrim Prayer

May God shield you on every step,
may Christ aid you on every path,
may the Spirit fill you on every slope,
on hill and plain. Amen.

