

## History Group Report for Newsletter

On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, thirteen members met up at Bury St Edmunds for our private guided tour.

The theme of the tour was 'A Town with a Town'. This took a close look at the site of the ancient Abbey and its remains.

Buria Sancti Edmundi owes its existence to the interred remains here of the former king of East Anglia. It was a centre of pilgrimage since it was the burial place of the Anglo-Saxon martyr-king Saint Edmund killed by the Danes in 869. St Edmundsbury Abbey was once one of the greatest and richest Benedictine monasteries in the country. The construction of the abbey's buildings consisted of limestone blocks with a core of flint and mortar.

In 1327 the Abbey was destroyed during the Great Riot by the local people, who were angry at the power of the monastery, and it had to be rebuilt. The Norman Gate dates from 1120 to 1148 and was designed to be the gateway for the Abbey Church and it is still the belfry for the Church of St James, the present cathedral of Bury St Edmunds. Abbey Gate is an impressive 14th-century stone gatehouse, designed to be the gateway for the Great Courtyard. The Crankles was the name of the fishpond near the river Lark. There were three breweries in the Abbey as each monk was entitled to eight pints a day!

The abbey church was dissolved in 1539 by Henry VIII.



Panorama of the ruins of the abbey church, with the new Millennium Tower of St Edmundsbury Cathedral in the background

After our tour we all met up at the Pilgrim's Kitchen for lunch and then finished off the afternoon with visits to the St Edmundsbury Cathedral and St Mary's Church.

Most of us enjoyed this tour so much, as a result we plan to hold another on a different theme some time in 2024.

There will be no meeting in August, but we shall resume in September with a trip to London on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September. We plan to visit the Bank of England Museum and the Guildhall Art Gallery.

Geoff Pugh