



A Salisbury-Cathedral-centric view of History.

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Great British Trees by Jon Stokes (published by the Tree Council 2002) is an entertaining bedside book looking at 50 of Britain's most significant trees.



The Ankerwycke Yew (*Taxus baccata*) is estimated to be 2,000 years old and stands close to the Thames within sight of Runymede. It must therefore have witnessed the great event of 1215. It originally grew in the grounds of Ankerwycke Priory and legend has it that Henry VIII met Ann Boleyn under this tree.

The *Abbeys & Priors of England* by Tim Tatton-Brown (New Holland Publishers 2006). Although we are used to Benedictine abbeys becoming Cathedrals (as Westminster), many cathedrals had priories attached. They were run by priors as the Bishop was the titular Abbot (and pocketed the income). the Black Canons (Augustinians) had a more relaxed

rule but in the case of Lacock, Founded by Ela Longespee, the nuns were all aristocratic so there was no funding problem. Ela's son Nicholas was Canon Treasurer of the Cathedral and became Bishop in 1291. His heart was buried at Lacock.

Wenlock Priory in Shropshire was re-founded (after being sacked by the Vikings) by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and his wife, Lady Godiva. Although rebuilt there are traces surviving in the parish church. Thomas Cromwell organised the dissolution of the monasteries and we know that at the Cluniac Lewes Priory, a special team of men under the Italian Engineer Giovanni Portinari was brought in to undermine and demolish the church. Interestingly, the *reredorter* (latrines) at Lewes could accommodate 60 monks. This was because under the Rule, all the monks were supposed to 'use the facilities' at the same time!!!!

Many priors were important men and the wealthiest raised their status to *mitred abbots* and sat in Parliament. Abbot means father and early councils were very much against this trend. This was undermined when Pope Alexander II awarded a mitre to Egelsinus , abbot of Canterbury in 1154 and Pope Adrian IV (Nicholas Breakspear) awarded one to the abbot of St.Albans. John Twenge or Thwing (above *courtesy of the British Library*) was a 14th century English Saint noted for his holiness, miraculous powers, integrity, scholarship and generosity. As an Augustinian Canon and then Prior of Bridlington Priory in Yorkshire he became known as St. John of Bridlington.



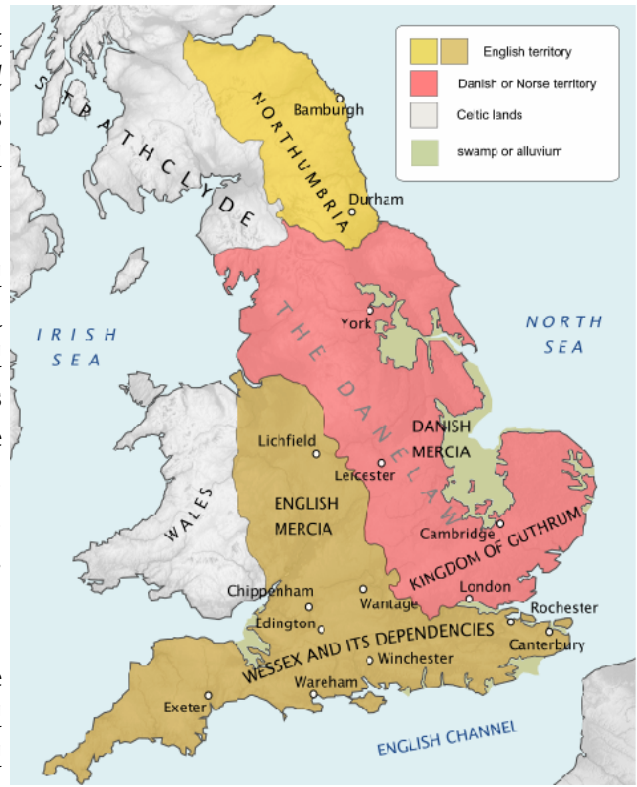
St Frideswide's priory was founded in Oxford around AD 900. After the Vikings burnt the original buildings they were restored by Edward the Confessor in 1049 and run by secular canons. Henry I gave it to the Augustinians at the suggestion of Bishop Roger of Salisbury (Justicar). It was suppressed by Cardinal Wolsey in 1524 so he could make it into his Cardinal's College. Henry VIII took over the college, now known as Christ Church and the chapel became Oxford Cathedral. Frideswide, originally Frithuswith (650 - 727), was the daughter of a sub-king of Mercia. She founded a monastery but despite her vow of celibacy Aethelbald of Mercia sought to marry her. She escaped with divine help and ended up as an abbess and is of course the patron saint of Oxford.



The abbey was destroyed in 1002 as a consequence of the *St. Brice's Day massacre*. This terrible event took place when Aethelred the Unready ordered all Danes within his territory to be killed. The skeletons of 30 young

Vikings were found during an excavation at St John's College in 2008 (Page 2 courtesy of Oxford Archaeology). It is partly as a consequence of this outrage that the Danes invaded England and Cnut became king in 1016.

It should be remembered that the *Danelaw* agreed between King Alfred and Guthrum was then a large area of mainly settled farmers and Oxford was not far from its border. A map right shows the position in 878. Roughly speaking the Danelaw comprised Leicester, York, Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln, Essex, Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, Huntingdon, Bedford, Hertford, Middlesex and Buckingham.



Although ostensibly control was exercised by the Norwegians and Danes, the English Saxons and Danes coalesced to form a nation that resisted outside interference. This was underlined by King Harold's defeat of Harald Hardrada at Stamford Bridge, three weeks before the battle of Hastings. The influence of the Norse can be seen in North-Country place-names such as those ending in *thwaite*, *thorpe*, *wick* or *by* and regional words such as *force* for waterfall or *gill* for gully. It is often said that blonde men are more common in the East of the country but the truth is that the Danes had mixed hair colours, it was only the Swedes that were blonde.

As ever, I am grateful to Wikipedia for some of the above.

THE VENERABLE BEDE

Bede is an old word for prayer. Each medieval parish would have a *bede-roll* that listed all persons for whom prayers were to be said on the anniversary of their death. They would date back over many years and formed an integral part of the parish's religious life. *Bead* was originally a prayer with a rosary and by transference this became small decorative pieces of glass or metal. *Beam* meant tree as in hornbeam and whitebeam and thus became a synonym for the cross.

But I digress..... Bede (673 to 735) was a Geordie who spent most of his life as a Benedictine monk in Jarrow on the banks of the Tyne. We know that the furthest he ventured was to Holy Island and York. He may have been an orphan and joined the monastery at 7 years old. Life was harsh and when plague came in 685, only he and the abbot were left to keep up the chanting and





responses. The chapel is still there but now surrounded by industry. Bede of course wrote on parchment and the ink was the same as used on our Magna Carta and known to the monks as *Encaustum*. Unbelievably, Bede wrote 68 books, in Latin naturally, with this medium. The subjects covered Bible commentaries, spelling, time, science, poetry, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, grammar, hymns and the lives of martyrs. He was also interested in carpentry, music, the tides and cooking. The 12th century portrait on page 3 shows him writing. *Courtesy of The British Library*. The manuscript above is part of Bede's historical works, *courtesy of the British Museum*. Truly a polymath.

The popularity of the AD dating system (*anno domini*) comes from Bede's magnum opus, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in which he gives us a window into those bleak times. For example, during famine, whole families would join hands and jump off the white cliffs in Sussex. As a result of this book he is sometimes known as the father of English history.

Bede died surrounded by his pupils at St Paul's monastery where they were helping him to complete his translation of the Gospel of St. John from Latin into *englisc*. His bones were brought to Durham Cathedral in 1022; he was declared *Venerable* by the Church in 1836 and canonised in 1899.

Much of the above comes from Robert Lacey's *Great Tales from English History* (Little, Brown 2003) and *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms & Phrases* by Coredon and Williams (D S Brewer 2004).

THE CORONATION

The Chapter minutes have recorded the following actions:

December 1909 - Deodar [Himalayan cedar that can grow to 40+ metres] planted on north-west side of churchyard on Coronation Day, to be replanted in a place to be decided.

June 1911 (George V) - Dean and Chapter did not see their way to give donations to villages for the King's coronation.

February 1861 (Victoria) - On the anniversary of Her Majesty's coronation the Chapter House be thrown open to the Fisherton Anger Temperance Society.

May/June 1902 (Edward VII) - £2.2.0 to be given both Durrington and Stapleford towards the coronation festivities. £1.1.0 towards King's coronation festivities at Tilshead.

February 1912 - Waywardens to be paid £3 towards the cost of decorating the Close for the coronation.

Many elements of the coronation *ordine* (order) and oath can be traced back to that devised by Saint Dunstan for the crowning of King Edgar in 973AD in Bath Abbey which drew on the Frankish crowning ceremony and the ordination of bishops. This was the second *recension* (revision) but no record of the first has survived. The third *recension* was devised in Henry I

time and included elements from the Holy Roman Empire. It was used at Stephen's coronation. The fourth recension came in with Edward II coronation in 1308 (no doubt influenced by Magna Carta). The domination of the ritual by the Anglican Church has turned the ceremony into a *rite* (sacred ceremony). A manuscript in Westminster Abbey entitled *Liber Regalis* (below) has become the definitive version. Following the death of Henry VIII the rite changed to reflect the dominance of Catholicism or Protestantism. Queen Elizabeth I was the last monarch to have a Catholic coronation but as she insisted on certain alterations the major bishops refused to officiate and so it was left to the low-ranking Bishop of Carlisle.



The *Liber Regalis* was translated for James I in 1603 and then the service was truncated for the Catholic James II. The Bishop of London revised it for William III and Mary II in 1689 and the Latin text was used for the German-speaking George I. Needless to say it was used by Oliver Cromwell when he was inducted as Lord Protector. The whole service was cut down for William IV as it was a time of austerity (the *Half-Crown nation*) and this version was also used by Victoria. In the 20th century scholars sought to revive the spiritual meaning, and the increased pageantry was to emphasise the strength and diversity of the British Empire.

It was King Edward I who commissioned the iconic Coronation Chair (right). The block of sandstone which fitted underneath known as the *Stone of Destiny* seized from Scone Abbey in Perthshire in 1296 had traditionally been the seat used for crowning Scottish monarchs. It was returned to Scotland in 1996. Incidentally the chair was restored after a Suffragette bomb broke one corner. It underwent restoration between 2010 and 2012 and then again in 2023 before its latest outing. A second chair was commissioned for the coronation of Mary II, and still resides at the Abbey.

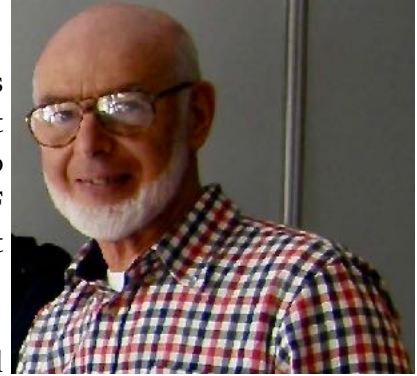


A PLEA

You may recall that a year or two back I pointed out that it costs some £600 a year to produce **Jot & Tittle** and you very kindly responded with enough donations to cover the expenses.

In the last twelve months, the outgoings have included a new (second-hand) Apple i-Mac to replace the worn-out previous computer, so I am writing to you again to ask if you would be prepared to make a contribution towards the rising expenses.

Some of you have already 'jumped the gun' and sent in cheques of your own volition which I do very much appreciate. Payment can be sent by cheque made out to Mark Brandon and sent to Griffin Cottage, 10 St Edmunds Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF or by BACS type transfer to sort code 07-08-06 account 06332576*.



I am always grateful for your support and in return I will endeavour to keep the articles flowing - **do always feel free to comment or contribute.**

Kind regards

Mark

Mark Brandon, Editor.

*Although this is a separate account, Nationwide will not do (not-for-profit) business accounts. I am awaiting authorisation for a new J&T account at Lloyds to which any monies will be transferred.