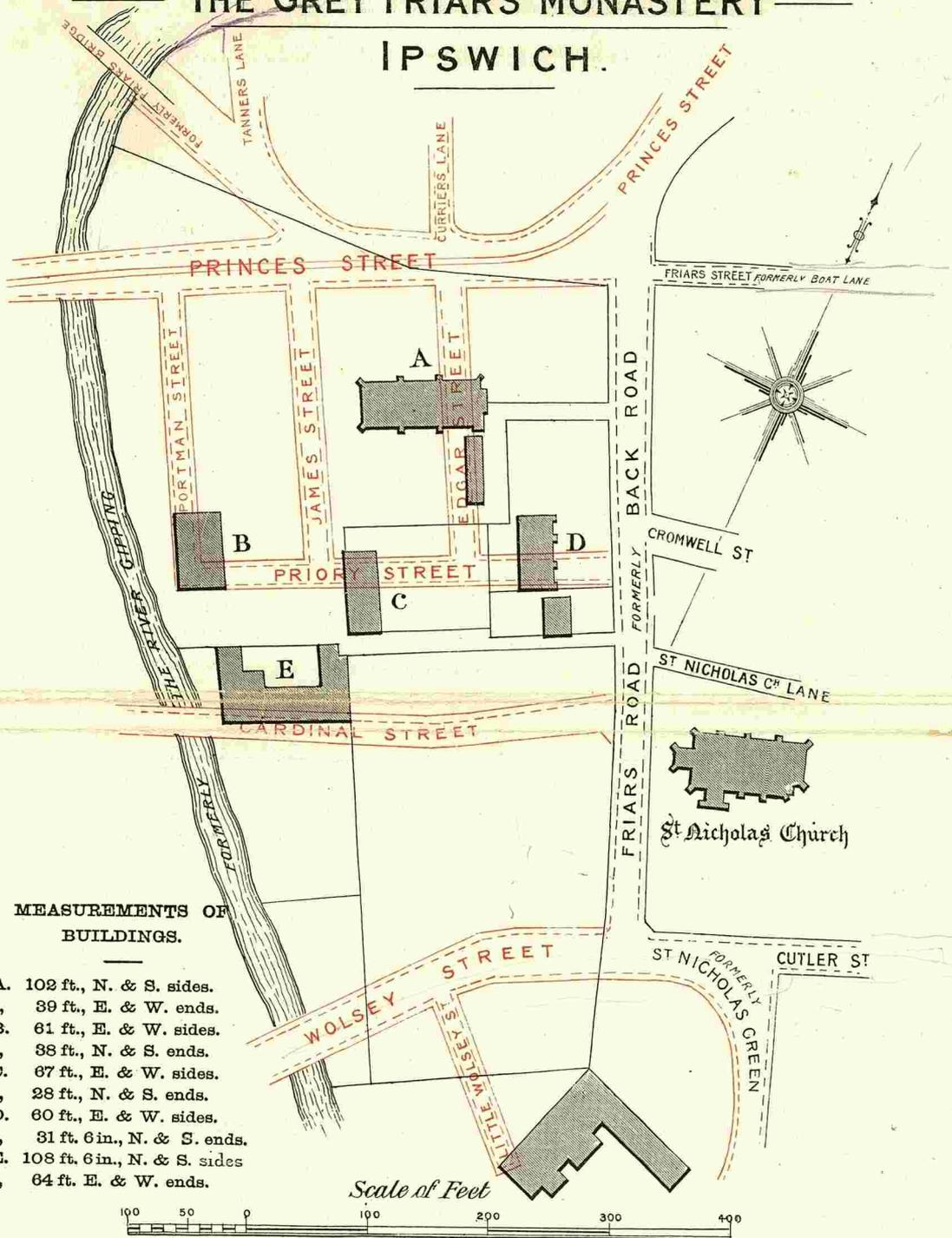


— SITE OF —  
**THE GREY FRIARS MONASTERY**  
**IPSWICH.**



In black lines westward of Friars' Road, as reduced from Ogilvie's Map, 1674. In red lines as transferred from Ordnance Survey Map of same locality, prepared under the direction of B. P. Grimsey, by L. J. Veit, Surveyor.

## THE GREY-FRIARS MONASTERY, IPSWICH.

BY B. P. GRIMSEY, F.R. HIST. SOCIETY.

The Religious fraternity, some of whom possessed and occupied the property, the site of which, in relation to the position of existing roads, streets, and buildings, is shown upon the accompanying plan, and purports to be described by this paper, was founded—as the Friars Minors—by Saint Francis, who was born in 1182, at Assisi, in Italy, and whose rules for such were approved by Pope Innocent III., in 1210, revised in the Lateran Council of 1215, and confirmed by Pope Honorius III., in 1224, in which year—being two years before the death of their Founder and Patron, and the vii. year of King Henry III.—some nine of them came to England with Letters Recommendatory; five of whom settled at Canterbury, where they established the first Franciscan Convent in England, and the other four proceeded to London, where they succeeded, with assistance from the wealthy Citizens thereof, in founding a like institution, on or near the site of what has for very many years been so well known there as Christ's Hospital. Their designation—Friars Minors, was intended to indicate deep humility, "Sum Minor omnibus beneficiis tuis," and the appellation—Grey Friars—the distinctive color—undyed white grey—of the habit they adopted.

This Monastery, as shown by Ogilby's Map of Ipswich (1674), occupied the space of ground in the Parish of S. Nicholas in that Borough, extending from the north-west corner of Friars Road—Mr. Arthur Beard's shop—southward in a quasi straight line to a point a few yards south of the south-west corner of Wolsey Street, and thence westward to the fresh-water river, the Gipping, which then

flowed by there in all its primitive beauty, freshness, and clearness, and from the before-mentioned north-west corner of Friars Road westward to a point on the same river nigh to a bridge crossing such, which was in 1674 and until its destruction in 1879, or early in 1880, known as the Friars Bridge. The black lines on the accompanying plan indicate those on Ogilby's map, and the red ones those on the Ordnance Survey map of the same locality, so that it is apparent all Wolsey Street, and about half Little Wolsey Street, all the streets, houses, and gardens northward of Wolsey Street, and between Friars Road and the Sewer now formed in the bed and place of the said river, and up to the said northern boundary of the premises, are on the site thereof.

The building at the south-east end doubtless belonged to the Monastery, being shown on Ogilby's map, though omitted to be so indicated, and from its position it is likely to have been the Hospital and House of Reception for Indigent Wayfarers.

In the garden of the house in Friars Road (at the junction with Priory Street), belonging to, and in the occupation of Mr. Frederick Messent, are the only known remains of the Monastery Buildings, such consist of two window arches, and a part of the wall in which they were built.

In the Vestry room of the Church of S. Nicholas on the opposite side of Friars Road is a Map executed in 1827, on which is a drawing representing these window arches and three others adjoining, and there are existing anastatic copies of an etching by Henry Davy, executed in 1839, giving the same five arches which originally were formed in the Monastery Building, marked C upon the accompanying plan, and the Ordnance Survey map evidences that the erection of the north wall in Mr. Messent's garden divided the two southernmost of the five arches from the others, and the consequent position of the others—were they still standing—would be in Priory Street; the other Monastery Buildings were probably long previously destroyed.

The measurements of the several buildings existing in 1674, and marked A B C D and E, are stated on the plan; the northern boundary of the site extending 430 feet, and the southern 213 feet, the frontage length upon Friars Road and onward to the corner of the other building shown thereon was 627 feet; the houses 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th in Portman Street from Princes Street appear to occupy part of the site upon which the building marked A stood. The houses southward of the 5th house in Portman Street, counting from Priory Street end, and to the 4th house from the east side of Portman Street, appear to occupy the site upon which the building marked B stood. The position of the building C has been stated, and it will be seen by the plan that but very little of it extended to the site of houses on the north-west side of Priory Street. The position of the buildings marked D and E cannot be demonstrated better than they are shown on the plan. The building referred to as situate at the south-east end of the Monastery grounds measured 117 feet on the north-east front, 111 feet on the north-west side, and 40 feet at the south-west end.

A little more southward than mid-way in Friars Road on the west side exists an old Wall, the property of Mr. Edgar Jermyn Brown, apparently either part of the wall of the Friars Orchard, or containing some of the materials of which such wall was probably built.

In the pictorial representations of parts of the Town on the Sepulchral Memorial of William Stuart, who died in 1599, which is in the Church of S. Mary-at-the-Tower, there is one accredited as showing part of these Monastery Buildings, so accepting it, and granting the artist due license, we may gather therefrom and the map before us that the building marked A is that intended to be depicted. The views given are very small, but present points clearly distinctive. In Wodderspoon's "Memorials of Ipswich" (1850), p. 380: there is an engraving—reduced in size—from a drawing and etching by Walter Hargreen, representing the whole tablet and a late parishioner of S. Nicholas—Mrs. Cotton—made an enlarged and beautifully neat

drawing from the original of the view, considered to represent this Monastery building and Church of S. Nicholas adjacent, which doubtless is still in the possession of her family.

This Friary is considered to have been founded under the patronage of, and with assistance primarily from Sir Robert Tibetot (whose name is sometimes written Tiptoft, sometimes Tiptoth, sometimes Typtoft), who was of "an antient family first seated at Bramford in Bosmere Hundred" in Suffolk, and nigh unto Ipswich, and who died seized of the Lordship and Manor of Nettlestead in the xxvi. year of King Edward I. (1298); and if this be so, then it must have been founded less than lxxv. years after the first members of the order came into England, and most probably was founded before the Patron mentioned entered upon the last year of his mortal existence. Wodderspoon, in his "Memorials," *ante* p. 58, fixes the date as 1290. In only very fragmentary statements is there known to be preserved any mention respecting these local Friars themselves, but their local influence was certainly great, for we read in the Roll "De recognicionibus ac de Testamentis" xii. Edward II. "Before the Bailiffs, in the presence of a Coroner, and certain men in the Court of Gippeswic, and in full Court, Master John Strikes and Geoffery the Cook of Gippeswyc came and said they were the Executors of the Testament of Robert de Fornham, and showed the Testament of the deceased not signed, nor proven before the Ordinary, and produced not witnesses to prove the same in accordance with the law and custom of the town, but two Friars Minors to testify to the aforesaid Will, namely Friar Robert de Swanton, and Friar John de Dyngton, who on the peril of their souls declared and testified that they were present, and hearing where the aforesaid Robert, being of good memory made his said testament (etc.), and for fulfilling and executing all things in the said testament, named and ordained the aforesaid Masters John Strikes and Geoffery, his executors. Whereupon free administration was granted for doing in accordance with the contents of the testament."

The Chapter House Papers, Vol. A, 3, 11, formerly in the Rolls Office and now at the Record Office, contain "An inventory of the Grey Friars in Gipswch made the vii. day of Apreyle in the xxix. yere (1537-8) of King Henry VIII. by the Kinge's Visitor, Richard, Suffragan of Canterbury," a copy of which can be read in Part III. of the Suffolk Archæological Association's original papers (1848) page 14. In Weever's Account of the Foundation and Fall of Religious Houses (1631)—containing however no statement as to 'the foundation or suppression of this Monastery—is given a long list of notable persons buried therein, but except as to "The Founder, and Dame Una his wife" with which the list begins, and their descendants named therein and their wives, any attempted historical statement would seem profitless. The Founder here referred to is Sir Robert Tibetot, before mentioned (page 376), he died in 1298, but the date of Dame Una's death is undiscoverable. "Payen de Tibetot," was their son, he became heir to his father—the founder—when ten years of age, and was at the Tournament in the Town of Dunstable in the 2nd year of King Edward II. (1308), and killed at the Battle of Striveling, in the 7th year of the same King's reign (1314): "Sir John Tibetot," was his son and grandson of Sir Robert the founder and married Margaret one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Sir Bartholomew Badelysmer (or Badlesmere), who died in the xli. year of the reign of King Edward III. (1368). "Sir Robert Tibetot," was their son, he married Margaret, daughter of William Deincourt, and died on the 13th of April, 1372, seized, as was also his father before him, of the Lordship and Manor of Nettlestead, in the County of Suffolk, "Elizabeth Lady De'Spencer," was the youngest of their three daughters, his co-heiresses, who "wedded to Sir Philip le De'Spencer," the younger. In the ix. year of King Richard III. (1386), partition was made between the said three daughters of their father's lands, and though no record of the death of Lady Elizabeth is discoverable, it is apparent Sir Philip survived and died in the ii. year of King Henry VI. (1423), leaving

an only child, Margery, who became first the wife of John Lord Roos, of Hamlake, and afterwards of Sir Roger Wentworth, of Nettlestead aforesaid, and was buried in the Monastery in the xviii. year of King Edward IV. (1479).

The Sir Robert Curson (called Lord Curson) referred to in the Suff. Arch. proceedings, Vol. vii., pp. 255 and 381, and Vol. ix., p. 271, was also buried in this Monastery, and probably his wife also, the Inventory mentioned ante page 377, contains the items "a feyr herse cloths yt lay upon Lord Cursons herse, and ij feyer silke pelowys yt was Lady Cursons."

The suppression of the Monasteries generally, by King Henry the VIII., began about the year 1535, but the date of this one in particular cannot be fixed. It would have been interesting, to trace the transmission of its ownership from the Holy Friars to speculative builders, but no materials are to hand.

Authorities quoted :—

The MS. of the Grey Frairs of London. Edited by John Gough Nichols, jun, and printed by the Camden Society, 1852.

Fuller's Ch. His., vi., 270.

A copy of an inedited MS. circa 1600, "Antiquitates Suffolcienses" by Sir Richard Gipps, of Gt. Whelnethan and now in the possession of J. H. Josselyn, Esq., Queen Street, Ipswich.

Wodderspoon's "Memorials of Ipswich," 1850.

"Visitation of Suffolk," by Metcalf, 1882.

Weever's "Foundation and Fall of Religious Houses," 1631.

Taylor's "Index Monasticus."

Page's "Suffolk," 1847.

Gage's "Thingoe Hundred in Suffolk," 1838.