

Conclusions

The existing stone structure of Iken church is clearly of Norman origin, built on a site of an earlier timber framed building, with evidence of Middle Saxon occupation. The pre-Norman burials cannot be closely dated but are likely to be associated with the earlier structure as they only occur on one side of it. The dating of the cross shaft to the late 9th or early 10th centuries by Professor Cramp suggests that the cross was commemorative and could be assumed to be still standing when Ulfitell came to remove the saint nearly 100 years later. The following phases can be identified:

- Phase 1 Some unknown Romano-British occupation, possibly with a preceding Iron Age presence.
- Phase 2 Middle-Saxon. Three sherds of Ipswich ware.
- Phase 3 Late Saxon/Norman. Two Thetford ware sherds.
- (Unphased) Pre-Norman graves in nave, and clay foundations of a timber building on a different alignment outside the Norman north wall of the nave.
- Phase 4 Early Medieval. The Norman nave with its foundation trench, a more massive chancel arch, and a chancel of unknown proportions.
- Phase 5 Considerable activity in the late 13th/14th century (524 sherds) replacement of the chancel arch, modifications to the doors and windows in the nave.
- Phase 6 Later medieval building: the tower (1450) with re-use of Saxon cross fragment; re-roofing of the nave, addition of south porch.
- Phase 7 Post-medieval modification and restructuring of the chancel.

THE IKEN CROSS-SHAFT

by Rosemary Cramp

The lower part of a cross-shaft discovered by Stanley West in 1977 built into the base of the tower of Iken church may indeed have served as a memorial to St Botolph, even though it was carved many years after his death. It is dangerous to infer from a single piece of sculpture that it was unique or of special significance in its time, since the survival of such pieces is so random. Nevertheless in Suffolk, unlike Northumbria or Mercia, cross-shafts are not commonplace features in church walls. Indeed this shaft is unusual in its region. There are plenty of slab grave covers from excavated church yards in Eastern England from Lincolnshire to Cambridge, but even these are comparatively late. It is possible that this monument represents an attempt to copy a monument type from another region or of an earlier age, since, on every face the motifs, with the notable exception of the fan-armed cross-head, and the animals on the broad faces, are waveringly and even incompetently produced.

The cross is 1.5m high with a broken tenon at the base and is of slab-like section, which in other regions, such as Northumbria, would be considered a late characteristic (Fig. 76, A-D).

On one broad face, A, the ornament is weathered away save at the top where parts of two panels survive; in the uppermost which is surrounded by an inner roll moulding, seem to be the heads of two creatures, with long, beaked jaws with rolled tips, enmeshed in interlace. Below an elegant, confidently drawn ribbon animal with a coiled contoured body. It has a canine head with open jaws and extended tongue; its eye is lightly dotted and it has a pointed ear. Its hindquarters terminate in long spindly legs and a tail which passes under its body and terminates in a tight coil. The head of a second beast of similar type is just discernible below, but the stone has so flaked away that the rest of it is lost. The origins of such creatures in 7th/8th-century Insular manuscripts can hardly be in dispute and it would seem that the dog

was part of a more extensive composition which extended to the base of the shaft. Nevertheless the interlace on the upper panel and the compositional layout of the animal below is not easy to parallel in a specific manuscript.

Face B is entirely covered by a spiral scroll. Each volute is tightly coiled into a dotted centre and is surrounded by pendant tendrils. The fine strands and tightly coiled side tendrils are reminiscent of 8th/9th-century scrolls in the North-West such as those of Lowther or Heversham in Cumbria (Kendrick 1938, xcii) although the scrolls have both leaves and fruits. This scroll is reminiscent of a plant scroll.

Face C is divided into three panels. At the top is a panel of fine stranded muddled interlace of no known type and below four knots joined by long diagonals. At the base is an elegant fan armed cross with a fine moulded outline. The difference between the confidence of the cross carving and the sprawling interlace above is very striking. Such interlace which consists of linked knots in broken sections is found on work of the early Viking age in the North such as that in Hart, Durham, and there is one cross from the East Midlands — Edenham Lincolnshire — which also has such interlace and a blundered scroll. It would seem therefore that the parallels for the interlace are of the late 9th/early 10th century.

The cross-head is strangely placed at the foot of the cross and reminds one of the placing of crosses on recumbant slabs where they can be at both ends of a face. Crosses of this type occur largely in western contexts; at Newent, Gloucester; Rowley, Staffordshire; or combined with a ring-head, at Bath. They seem to be 9th/early 10th century.

Face D is covered by a fine, six-stranded interlace which appears to change its pattern from the top to the bottom of the shaft. It conforms to no defined geometric type (see Cramp 1984, Figs. 14-24) but appears to be formed from a single run of knots with crossing outside strands.

In summary the monument looks like a late 9th/early 10th-century piece which is either copying or remotely reflecting alien motifs. Late 9th/early 10th-century crosses in Wessex such as Colerne, Steventon, or Ramsbury (Kendrick 1938, xcvi, c) favour animal ornament which is reminiscent of Insular metalwork, so that this could be a reflection of that style. On the other hand the plant scrolls and interlace have the appearance of copying Northumbrian or Mercian models. It is possible that if this was a late 9th/early 10th-century memorial to Botolph, it was felt appropriate to raise up an old fashioned looking memorial to him, and the animal ornament could have been derived from a manuscript or piece of prestigious metal-work which had been traditionally linked with his name, whilst the cross was taken from a contemporary source such as a grave slab.

All of this is sheer supposition in order to account for the strange muddling of motifs; but Norman Scarfe's paper does provide a context and traditional links both with Northumbria and the western kingdoms which could be significant.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE REVIEWED

by Norman Scarfe

Again, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* provides the starting line. Under the year 654 (653 in Text E), the chronicler recorded: 'In this year [King] Anna was slain, and Botwulf began to build the Minster at *Icanho*'. The *Chronicle* occasionally combined two unconnected statements in one sentence, but there is a clear, and significant, connexion between the two parts of this one. In the first big *Sutton Hoo* volume, Rupert Bruce-Mitford considered the relevance of that sentence as a pointer to the location of *Icanho* at Iken, in south-east Suffolk, close to the heart of King Anna's East Anglian kingdom (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 707 n.): in that same footnote, he also floated the suggestion that *Icanho* minster 'may well have been founded in commemoration of Anna.'

The East Anglian kingdom was created, and then very effectively christened, during the first half of the 7th century. The recorded details are scanty, but circumstantial evidence suggests that both the formation of the kingdom and its adoption of Christianity took place in extremely warlike, not at all peaceful, conditions. It cannot be supposed that Raedwald, whose rule covered the first quarter of the century, established his supremacy as Bretwalda over the remaining Anglo-Saxon kingdoms without fighting and the exercise of formidable strength. The Sutton Hoo helmet, sword and shield — and the ship itself — are impressive symbols of might, as well as superb craftsmanship. But, with Raedwald's death in 624/5, the Bretwaldaship passed to his protégé Edwin of Northumbria. This must have reflected the reduced prestige and power of Raedwald's immediate successors in East Anglia. Then, after Edwin's defeat and death in 632, the forces of Penda of Mercia rapidly expanded and presented an ugly, indeed terrible, threat to East Anglia. He soon wrested back from East Anglia the lands of Middle Anglia — Leicester and the East Midlands — and put his son Peada in charge. Then he invaded the East Anglian kingdom, and not until Oswiu of Northumbria's victory over Penda at the Winwaed in 654 could the East English begin to feel safe again.

That constant threat of harassment and military incursion by Penda's heathens from the Midlands provided the conditions — coincided with the two formative decades — in which Christianity came into East Anglia. The precise dating of events in these years is still open to argument (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 696-98). An acceptable framework seems to bring King Sigeberht (described by Bede as 'very Christian and learned') to rule East Anglia in 630/1. A fugitive in Gaul from his uncle Raedwald's hostility, he there accepted Christianity, and, as soon as he began to reign, took care that his whole kingdom shared his faith. Anxious to imitate the good institutions he had seen in Gaul, he founded a school. (It was perhaps at Dunwich, but Bede was not specific.) From Canterbury, the Archbishop sent him Bishop Felix, born and ordained in Burgundy, who supported him superbly in these efforts, and brought him teachers and masters from the Canterbury school (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969, 190, 266-68). Sigeberht personally preferred the kingdom of heaven: he handed his earthly kingdom to his kinsman Ecgric, 'who had previously ruled part of the kingdom' (Middle Anglia? Norfolk?). He himself withdrew into a monastery he had founded: at *Betrichesworde* (Bury St Edmunds), according to the local tradition recorded in the *Liber Eliensis* (Blake 1962, 11). After Sigeberht had been there some years (*multo tempore*), Penda launched his first attack. The East Anglians must have allowed their fighting force to decline fatally during the decade after Raedwald, and now they dragged Sigeberht out in the forlorn hope of stiffening the army's morale. He declined to bear arms, however, carried a wand into battle, and both he and Ecgric were slain and their army beaten by Penda's heathens.

Before this first of Penda's East Anglian aggressions, *Betrichesworde* (Bury) presumably

seemed a safe enough site for a monastery. Another East Anglian monastery was founded during Sigeberht's reign: an ascetic Irish saint, Fursa, established himself in *Cnobheresburg*, a 'castrum', 'near the sea': probably in the great Roman fort, Burgh Castle, overlooking the Yare estuary north of Lowestoft, but conceivably at Caister-on-Sea (Colgrave and Mynors 1966, 268-77; Johnson 1984, 119-20). And Bishop Felix himself received the seat of his bishopric in Dunwich 'city', i.e. presumed Roman fort (Colgrave and Mynors, 190), also on the coast, remote from Penda. Bede spelt this city *DOMMOC*, the *Liber Eliensis*, *DUNUUOC*. It has recently been argued that *DOMMOC* might have been the Roman fort at Felixstowe, but that argument was fairly well disposed of by Professor Whitelock (Whitelock 1972, 4 note 2). Whether *DOMMOC/DUNUUOC* was at Dunwich or Felixstowe, Iken may be seen to fit into a pattern of coastal monastic sites (which, c. 650-60, came to include Bishop Cedd's two Essex establishments at Bradwell-on-Sea and Tilbury).

The period of Felix's successful evangelism as bishop was measured, by Bede, as seventeen years: these were 630/1 to 647/8, covering Sigeberht's reign and most of Anna's. It is generally reckoned that Sigeberht was slain by Penda's heathens in 636/7. Professor Whitelock argued (1972, 6) that 'Penda was hardly likely to be strong enough to attack the East Angles until after he had defeated Oswald of Northumbria in 641'. But that argument may be reversed. Would he have been strong enough to attack Oswald until after he had defeated East Anglia? At all events, King Anna succeeded Sigeberht probably in 636/7. He succeeded a king slain by Penda, and was himself, as we saw at the beginning of this article, slain by Penda in 654, the year the minster at *Icanho* was founded. Felix's bishopric was no kind of pastoral idyll, more a saga: Penda put East Anglia's new Christianity on the anvil: an enduring link was forged between Christianity and patriotism.

There is a record of at least one other incursion, presumably by Penda, and probably c. 651. This is the Nivelles *Additamentum de Foillano*, written within six years of Fursa's death (Whitelock 1972, 6). *Cnobheresburg* was wrecked and apparently extinguished. Fursa's successor as abbot (his half-brother Foillan) was saved from death only by the approach of King Anna. Foillan got his church valuables and books away by ship to France. 'The most Christian King Anna was expelled.' What is meant here by Anna's 'expulsion' is not clear. It may mean that his death at Penda's hands three years later, (again presumably) near Blythburgh, occurred during an attempt to return from exile.

If speculation is permitted, I think Anna, after his 'expulsion', may have lived in exile among the *Magonsaetan* near Ludlow or Shrewsbury in Shropshire, as far away as possible from East Anglia. Dorothy Whitelock (1972, 12 and n.) admitted the authenticity of a story told by Osbert of Clare of a canon of Bromfield, near Ludlow, who had spoken with people who had seen a vision of Anna's daughter, St Etheldreda, *at a church dedicated to her on the Welsh border*. Professor Whitelock dismissed Osbert's claim that a little wooden church had been built there by King Anna: 'it is impossible that he should find a church on the far side of heathen Mercia.' Well, it would provide an explanation — otherwise lacking — for Osbert's extraordinary story. Furthermore, Bede expressly stated (Colgrave and Mynors, 280): 'King Penda did not forbid the preaching of the Word, even in his own Mercian kingdom, if any wished to hear it. He merely despised those Christians who did not live up to their faith.' Professor Whitelock accepted the *Icanho*-Shropshire link attested by Aethelheah, Botolph's successor c. 674-90 as abbot of *Icanho*, in an exchange of landed endowments between *Icanho* and the double monastery at Wenlock. It seems perverse to reject as 'impossible' Osbert's circumstantial explanation of an otherwise very improbable link across the whole width of England.

It seems all the more feasible that, c. 651-654, Anna was in the land of the *Magonsaetan* (south Shropshire and Herefordshire) as soon as you look closely into his family history. King

Eorcenberht of Kent (ruling 640-664) married one of Anna's daughters, Seaxburg. (Bede's tribute to Anna was: 'a good man, with good and saintly offspring'. Colgrave & Mynors, 234.) King Eorcenberht's kinswoman (probably his brother's daughter), Eormengild, married Merewalh, ruler of the *Magonsaetan*. In short, Anna's daughter, queen of Kent, was closely related, probably aunt, to the wife of the ruler in south Shropshire. What more natural than that Anna should find refuge there? If so, what more likely than that he would found a church there? Nor is it really surprising that Merewalh's daughters vied with Anna's in being saintly. One of them, Mildred, went back to her mother's kingdom as abbess of Minster, between Richborough and Reculver. It has been assumed that, when she died c. 700, her grandfather's nephew Aldwulf (king of East Anglia 662/3-713) dedicated a church in Ipswich to her. After centuries, it became the Town Hall, probably on the site of a 7th-century *vicus regius*, with the Cornhill already marked out as the town's chief *forum* (Scarfe 1972, 101). Finally, no wonder that, when St Mildburg, another of Merewalh's saintly daughters, founded the double monastery at Wenlock, she linked it to the revered memory of Botolph. His successor as abbot of *Icanho* gave her lands that included '97 hides at Wenlock'. It is hard to see how a Suffolk abbot would have Wenlock lands to give unless there were some such personal links as I have suggested. Like the late Professor Whitelock, I have not felt able to accept the story that Botolph was chaplain in a nunnery abroad where abbess Liobsynde of Wenlock had been educated, not that I find it improbable. It seems based on even less verifiable evidence than the Osbert of Clare story I have been examining.

That story is the nearest we approach to an authenticated early statement connecting *Icanho* with Anna — apart from the sentence in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that sparked off Dr Bruce-Mitford's conjecture that *Icanho* might have been a memorial to Anna. In addition to his kingship during the testing years of Penda's attack, Anna's better-known qualifications for remembrance in a new monastic house were the examples of 'goodness' attributed to him by Bede. He and his nobles helped Fursa extend and improve his monastic buildings at *Cnobheresburg*. And through Anna, according to Bede (*ibid.*, 234), King Cenwealh of Wessex accepted Christianity. He had made the mistake of marrying Penda's sister and then repudiating her. In consequence, in the later 640s, he spent three years in exile in East Anglia with good King Anna.

Lastly, there was the celebrated saintliness of his daughters, for which some credit is probably due to him: Aethelthryth (or Etheldreda, or Audrey) who founded Ely, Seaxburg who succeeded her at Ely as abbess, Aethelberg who became abbess of Faremoutiers-en-Brie; and then a step-daughter of his followed Aethelberg there. Commenting on the departure of ladies to nunneries abroad, Professor Whitelock reflected that it 'suggests that there were at that time no nunneries in or near East Anglia: the first may have been ... Ely, about 673'. May not the activities of Penda have had something to do with the absence of East Anglian nunneries and these retreats to nunneries abroad?

There is respectable testimony (Blake, 18) that Anna's remains had been enshrined at Blythburgh, presumably near the place of his death, and that those remains were being venerated there in the 12th century. They conceivably rested in the precursor of a small monastery, ruins of which lie immediately north-east of Blythburgh parish church: Ipswich ware found there (*Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.* xxxiv, 1978, 55) suggests a real possibility of 7th-century occupation of the site of the later Blythburgh priory. So does the whalebone writing-tablet — carved with interlace — found there and presented in 1902 to the British Museum by the then owner of the Priory (Page 1911, 350-352 and Fig.). The original presence of Anna's tomb at Blythburgh seems not to preclude the theory that Anna's two surviving brothers (and successors) Aethelhere and Aethelwald might have helped Botolph establish his monastery at a suitably quiet, remote, undeveloped place. Blythburgh in those days is likely to have been

already a royal *vill*, and perhaps market — anything but quiet!

We turn now to the question of *Icanho's* identity with Iken, and to Botolph's life and his posthumous physical fortunes. Since Dr Stanley West's excavation in 1977, there seems no shadow of doubt that the *Icanho* minster stood approximately where St Botolph's church at Iken stands today, on its *ho* — which means a spur — jutting out romantically above the lonely Alde estuary (see S.E. West, accompanying). A recent attempt to argue that *Icanho* was Hadstock (in *Essex!*) has been thoroughly discounted on etymological and numerous other grounds by Edward Martin (Martin 1978, 153-59). The main toponymous evidence of identity with Iken was put forward in a long, learned and — for its date — admirable article in these *Proceedings* (1924, 29-52) by one of our former Vice-Presidents, Francis Seymour Stevenson, of Playford Mount, M.P. for the Eye Division 1885-1906 (from the age of 23!). Claude Morley had drawn his attention to a transcript of three skins mostly devoted to a 14th-century Butley Priory rent-roll. It gives the rent paid 'in parochia de ykenho' by William Fransebroun. To clinch the identification with Iken, one finds, in the 1327 Subsidy Return, a Roger Fausebroun paying 3s. subsidy in Iken-with-Chillesford-and-Dunningworth. (A house in Iken, presumably on their site, is still called Fazeboons.) Since 1924, there has been no sensible room for doubt that *Icanho* and Iken coincided. Yet the recent proponent of Hadstock (Rodwell 1976, 68-69) seems not even to have considered the possibility.

Does Domesday Book record a church at Iken? I find four of every five medieval Suffolk churches clearly referred to in Domesday Book, which however makes no mention of Iken by name. It does, though, register two churches in the adjoining *vill* of Sudbourne (Page, 1911, 456, 521), which was important as an early administrative centre of the 'Liberty of St Etheldreda' (indicating yet another close link with Anna). One of these two churches, with 16 acres, was held in Domesday Book by Gilbert de Wiscand (Wishant) of Robert Malet, who founded, shortly after the making of Domesday Book, Eye Priory. Among the gifts to the new priory from one of Malet's tenants (named Roville, but perhaps he had meanwhile supplanted Wishant), was the church of St Botolph at Yca (Eye Cartulary, E.R.O., D/DBYQ 19, f. 64v.). The dedication to St Botolph luckily reduces any confusion with Eyke nearby, whose church seems not to have been dedicated to Botolph as Iken's still is: it is slightly confusing that among the Roville gifts to the new priory at Eye was the tithe of their demesne at *Clakestorp*, a lost Domesday *vill* in Loes Hundred and now located as having been in Eyke. The most tantalizing aspect of the gift to Eye Priory of the church of Botolph at *Yca* is the enigmatic intention expressed in the charter: 'ut sint ibi fratres monastici ordinis serviendum Deo'. If William and Beatrix de Roville wanted the priory of Eye to establish monastic brethren to serve God at St Botolph's, *Yca*, may they not have had an idea in mind of bringing back into service the remembered former monastery there? If so, nothing is known of their wishes being put into effect.

What do we know about Botolph himself, and does it tell us anything about what might be expected of the former building he made so illustrious at Iken?

The sole, but very impressive, glimpse of Botolph comes in an anonymous *Life of Abbot Ceolfrith* (Plummer, 1896) of Wearmouth and Jarrow. In his late twenties, after some years at Ripon with Wilfrid, who was probably the most dynamic English churchman of his remarkable generation, Ceolfrith had come south to Kent to see the form of monastic life there. Then he came to East Anglia to see the version of monasticism conducted by Abbot Botolph, himself universally acclaimed as 'a man of unparalleled life and learning and full of the grace of the Holy Spirit'. This would have been about the year 670, when *Icanho* minster had been going for about sixteen years. But apart from those phrases in the *Life of Ceolfrith*, we hear nothing more about Botolph. That Bede says nothing is disappointing. The story is alas not finally provable that when Jarrow was founded, c. 681, Bede, aged about eight, went there under Ceolfrith's

care, with 22 monks. The plague came among them, 'and no one was left to sing the offices except Ceolfrith and one little boy.' That boy *may* have been Bede. Anyway, accidentally or intentionally, Bede omitted all reference to Botolph. Either Ceolfrith omitted to tell Bede about him, or Bede omitted to record it. By the time Bede read the reference in the *Life of Ceolfrith*, Ceolfrith himself was beyond reach, unable to amplify.

Sometime after 1070, four centuries after Botolph lived, a *Life* of him was written by Abbot Folcard of Thorney. And there are brief references to his life in 'The Slesvig Breviary'. (Both are printed in *Acta Sanctorum*, iv, 1867, 324-30.) Both were dismissed by the late Dorothy Whitelock for their 'absurdities' (Whitelock 1972, 11, n.), but there are reasons, as we shall see, for Thorney to have preserved some local traditions that may contain a grain of truth. One thing both sources refer to is a 'Scottish' (i.e. Irish, Celtic) connexion (no more than that) in Botolph's background. I mention it because I am inclined to believe that too much has been made of the 'differences' between the Irish and Roman traditions — at least so far as they affected the conversion in East Anglia.

Professor Whitelock admitted there was at least a 'likelihood' of Irish influence in Bishop Felix's background (1972, 5). This makes it the easier to understand Fursa's settling down alongside him, a few miles along the Suffolk coast. I do not find it hard to reconcile, as Professor Whitelock did, the practice at *Icanho* of a religion 'full of the grace of the Holy Spirit' by a man of unparalleled life and learning, with the thought that his experience might have included Irish as well as (undoubted) Roman forms of the faith.

I stress this because, in her account of 'The pre-Viking age church in East Anglia' (1972, 6) Professor Whitelock 'concluded' her 'evidence of Celtic influence in the East Anglian church' and, only later (p.9) — as though it were 'of interest' but hardly fundamental — referred to the Celtic training of Bishop Cedd, and Cedd's baptism of Swithhelm, a prince of Essex, at Rendlesham, an East Anglian royal *vicus* only five miles from Iken — 'though the East Anglian church', as she put it, 'was aligned with Canterbury'. This may be making too much of East Anglia's — and for that matter Essex's — 'alignment'. We cannot reasonably doubt that Botolph was present with Cedd at Swithhelm's baptism, when King Aethelwald, Anna's brother and probably Botolph's original sponsor at Iken, 'supported Swithhelm as he ascended from the holy font' (Colgrave and Mynors, 284). Incidentally, Bede's description of this rite makes one wonder whether the font may not have been set in the floor and shaped like the mid-4th-century Romano-British-Christian font uncovered in West Suffolk at Icklingham (West and Plouviez 1976, 72-79). If Bishop Cedd's 'alignment' had been rigidly Celtic, he would hardly have been invited to play his crucial, and successful, rôle of mediator — 'vigilant interpreter for both parties' — when the differences, mainly over the dating of Easter, were finally argued out at the Synod of Whitby in 664 (Colgrave and Mynors 298). I should be surprised if the outcome were felt to be of the most urgent importance by East Anglians — or East Saxons — quite clearly tolerant of the two traditions.

As to Cedd's undoubted Northumbrian Celtic background, it seems to have had no effect on the shape of the fabric of his church at Bradwell-on-Sea, so much of it so astonishingly still standing. The Taylors confirm (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 92-93) that this remarkable survival from the 7th century bears evidence of the multiple-span arcade between nave and chancel — as at Reculver and St Pancras, Canterbury, in Kent, and with an eastern apse instead of the rectangular chancel the Northumbrians seem to have preferred. For all that has been suggested in this article about Celtic influences in early East Anglian Christianity, it would be surprising, therefore, if the fabric of *Icanho* minster did not follow the lines of its near contemporaries in Kent and Essex. The foundation of an early timber building was revealed in the excavation, but the use of that material would not have affected the ritual function and lay-out of the church.

Bede's devotion to his old master, Ceolfrith, and what is known of Ceolfrith's long life of

dedication, is impressive indirect testimony to the work of Botolph at *Icanho*. He must have been a model abbot indeed to earn that tribute from Ceolfrith's biographer: in Ceolfrith's exemplary life, and perhaps even in Bede's, Botolph's work here may begin to be measured. Under his successor Aethelheah, c. 674-90, *Icanho's* influence was at work as far off as Shropshire: we can imagine its impact nearer home.

Abbot Folcard of Thorney's word is accepted that Botolph died at his monastery, and was buried by his disciples, on 17 June, the day on which he is still remembered (*Acta, loc. cit.*, 328). I see no reason to question the statement of Olaf Worm, rector of Copenhagen Academy in the early 16th century (Stevenson, 37), that the three days ending on 17 June were formerly known in Denmark as the Botelmas or Bodelmas.

Two centuries after Botolph's death, Danes invaded East Anglia, killing King Edmund in 869, at Bradfield near Bury as we now think, and settling in Norfolk very much more densely than in Suffolk. Their destruction of the monasteries they came to, including *Icanho* (see below) seems only to have strengthened the faith. It is extraordinary that about 2,000 coins have been found commemorating 'Saint Edmund, King' by name, that they mostly came from East Anglian mints, and that this public celebration of his death as a saint was begun before 892, within about 20 years of his death (Blunt 1970, 234-255). This massive numismatic commemoration of a Christian martyr so soon after the event is our strongest evidence of the firmness with which Christianity was held and the speed of Christian recovery in Danish East Anglia, strengthened presumably by the tensions of Danish occupation. This late 9th-century recovery of Christianity *may* coincide with the marking of the site of Botolph's *Icanho* with a memorial cross. (The dating of the carving on the length of cross-shaft found at Iken is puzzling the experts: the end of the 9th century seems a possible date, but up to a century later is also thought possible. The precise date does not greatly alter the function of this memorial, merely shifts the time of its erection. A variety of dates can be accommodated by the Anglo-Danish history of the site.)

The Danish King Guthrum, who at least formally accepted Christianity from Alfred in 878, and according to Asser died in 890 and was buried at the royal *vill* of Hadleigh in Suffolk, may have been something of a restraining influence on his pagan fellow-countrymen in these parts. A Christian Danish king presumably revived, for instance, the church at Blythburgh, and perhaps a successor sheltered it through the renewed Viking storms of c. 991-1010. Otherwise, belief in the presence there of King Anna's remains is unlikely to have survived. How was Botolph's *Icanho* affected, and what became of his remains? His posthumous travels add strong confirmation to *Icanho's* identity with Iken.

The most significant records seem to be these. In the 12th century, the *Liber Eliensis* (Blake, 111) showed that Sudbourne was owned by the Danish Earl Scule in the 930s and 940s, two important decades in terms of the local revival of Christianity. Then, about the year 970, King Edgar and his Queen Alfreth gave the Sudbourne Manor to Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester (later Saint Aethelwold) in return for a translation into the English language, by Aethelwold himself, of the Rule of St Benedict (the rule by which all Benedictine monastic life was conducted — from Monte Cassino to Iken in Botolph's day and to Ely in Aethelwold's day). Aethelwold, receiving Sudbourne from the King, handed it on to St Etheldreda (Ely).

The next sources are later, from the later Middle Ages in the *Legenda* of John Capgrave and the Chronicle sometimes called John Brompton's, sometimes called the Jervaulx Chronicle. Both are quoted in the *Acta Sanctorum, loc. cit.*, pp. 324 and 330. Since there are minor differences, and since Capgrave is the earlier and more credible, we will cite him, and note the differences where relevant. From Capgrave we see that, at about the same time as the King's gift of Sudborne to Bishop Aethelwold, the Bishop got permission from the King to have the remains of saints removed from places destroyed by the Danes to the monasteries that were

being built: among these remains were Botolph's at the monastery at *Icanho* 'quod idem S Botulph in vita sua construxerat, et post-modum per interfectores S Edmundi Regis destructum fuerat' (Brompton). Capgrave described the difficulties presented by St Botolph's bones. 'When, at the order of Bishop Aethelwold, the monk called Ulfkittel, with many others, came to Botolph's tomb, and recognised the precious bones in their shroud, and in their arms tried to raise him to remove him; so firmly was he fixed that no amount of exertion was able to move him.' Moreover, the Saint's head was to be despatched to Ely, the middle of the body to the royal collectors, and 'the rest' (presumably the limbs) to Thorney. (Brompton agrees about the head going to Ely, but switches the destinations of the other parts!)

The first point we notice is that the decision of Bishop Aethelwold to dispose of holy relics from places destroyed by the Danes, including Botolph's at *Icanho*, came at roughly the same time as his grant of Sudbourne from the King, and his own grant of it to Ely. This rough coincidence itself perhaps corroborates the location of *Icanho* within the Manor of Sudbourne c. 970.

Next, there is that specific reference to the destruction of the *Icanho* monastery by the Danes. The whole implication of the authorised re-distribution of Botolph's bones is that *Icanho* monastery was not rebuilt, though at least enough still stood c. 970 to enable his tomb to be found.

Finally, we see that these *intentions* to despatch Botolph's remains in three different directions were, for whatever reasons, miraculous or otherwise, not fulfilled. For there is convincing evidence of changes of plan and further delays.

Notes written in the margin of Marianus Scotus (Arnold 1890, 361) record that King Cnut authorised the removal of St Botolph's bones from *Grundisburgh* to St Edmund's Abbey at Bury, newly founded by the King in 1020. The notes go on to record that this removal was finally accomplished one very dark night in Edward the Confessor's reign by Abbot Leofstan (1044-1065), 'a column of light dispelling the darkness above the feretory' — not a difficult effect to stage.

F. S. Stevenson, who quoted these notes from the margin of Marianus Scotus in his article on St Botolph (1924, 41) was clearly baffled, could think of no convincing explanation of the presence of Botolph's remains at Grundisburgh. Yet the explanation is surely this. Grundisburgh and Burgh St Botolph are now separate adjoining parishes. The *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* explains Grundisburgh as 'the burg, or fort, at Grund' and adds that Grund 'very likely' was the original Old English name of the place, meaning as it did 'the foundation of an old building-site.' Presumably the name Grundisburgh originally referred to the ancient Belgic or British buildings in the massive Belgic camp behind and beneath St Botolph's church in that part of Grundisburgh now merely called Burgh. The name expanded to Grundisburgh when the *burh*, the stong-point, was brought into civil use. This impressive defensive site gives, I think, the clue to the presence of St Botolph's bones there (i.e. in what was a part of the whole Grundisburgh) in Cnut's day. The fact that the *Life* of Botolph was written by an abbot of Thorney (Folcard) in the 11th century suggests that they got their share all right. But it is by no means clear that Ely or Westminster ever received the portions Edgar allotted them. The translation of at least some remains from Grundisburgh to Bury under Cnut's authority (though accomplished in the time of the Confessor) shows clearly that they had not been distributed as Edgar instructed.

But between Edgar's orders, c. 970, and Cnut's establishment of Bury Abbey in 1020, there were renewed ferocious Viking raids in the neighbourhood, notably in 991 and 1010. Edmund's own mummified corpse was removed from Bury during that bleak time and taken for refuge to St Paul's churchyard in London. The hallowed relics of Botolph were, as I understand all this evidence, brought back from that exposed spur above the estuary at Iken to the relative security

of the ramparted position above the valley at Burgh. In short, the recorded details about the use of Burgh/Grundisburgh as a temporary, sheltered, inland repository for Botolph's bones, and their final transfer from there, go a long way towards confirming Iken as the site of *Icanho*.

A generation ago, in his essay on 'The East Anglian Kings in the Seventh Century' (Clemons 1959, 49), Sir Frank Stenton wrote:

It is remarkable that under these kings, whose reigns were generally short and sometimes disastrous, Christianity should have become rooted in East Anglia so firmly that it was unaffected by the fortunes of local rulers. There is no hint in Bede or any other early historian that the East Anglians ever relapsed into heathenism in times of trouble. The outstanding figures in the recorded history of East Anglia during these years are not the kings, but the men who established Christianity under their protection — Felix, who made his bishop's seat at Dunwich a centre for religious instruction, Fursa, the Irish ascetic of Burgh Castle, Botulf of Icanho, whose fame as an organiser of monastic life spread throughout England.

The richness of the royal ship and its treasures at Sutton Hoo has inevitably deflected attention from these remarkable churchmen, and towards the rulers of East Anglia at the end of the pagan period. Stenton's dictum may do less than justice to one or two of the early East Anglian kings: to Sigeberht for instance, and Anna, and would certainly not apply to Aldwulf, who ruled from 662/3 to 713 and who was a correspondent of the celebrated Boniface. A new appraisal of the earliest East Anglian churchmen was unquestionably overdue. Dr West's remarkable discovery of the Iken cross has concentrated our attention usefully on St Botolph, and perhaps enabled us to establish more firmly the circumstances of his exemplary life of the spirit on that spur overlooking the broad estuary at Iken.

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NOTE

¹ Whitelock *et al.*, 1961, 20. Except in quotations, we will use the more familiar Norman spelling, Botolph.

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