THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF ST BOTWULF (BOTOLPH)
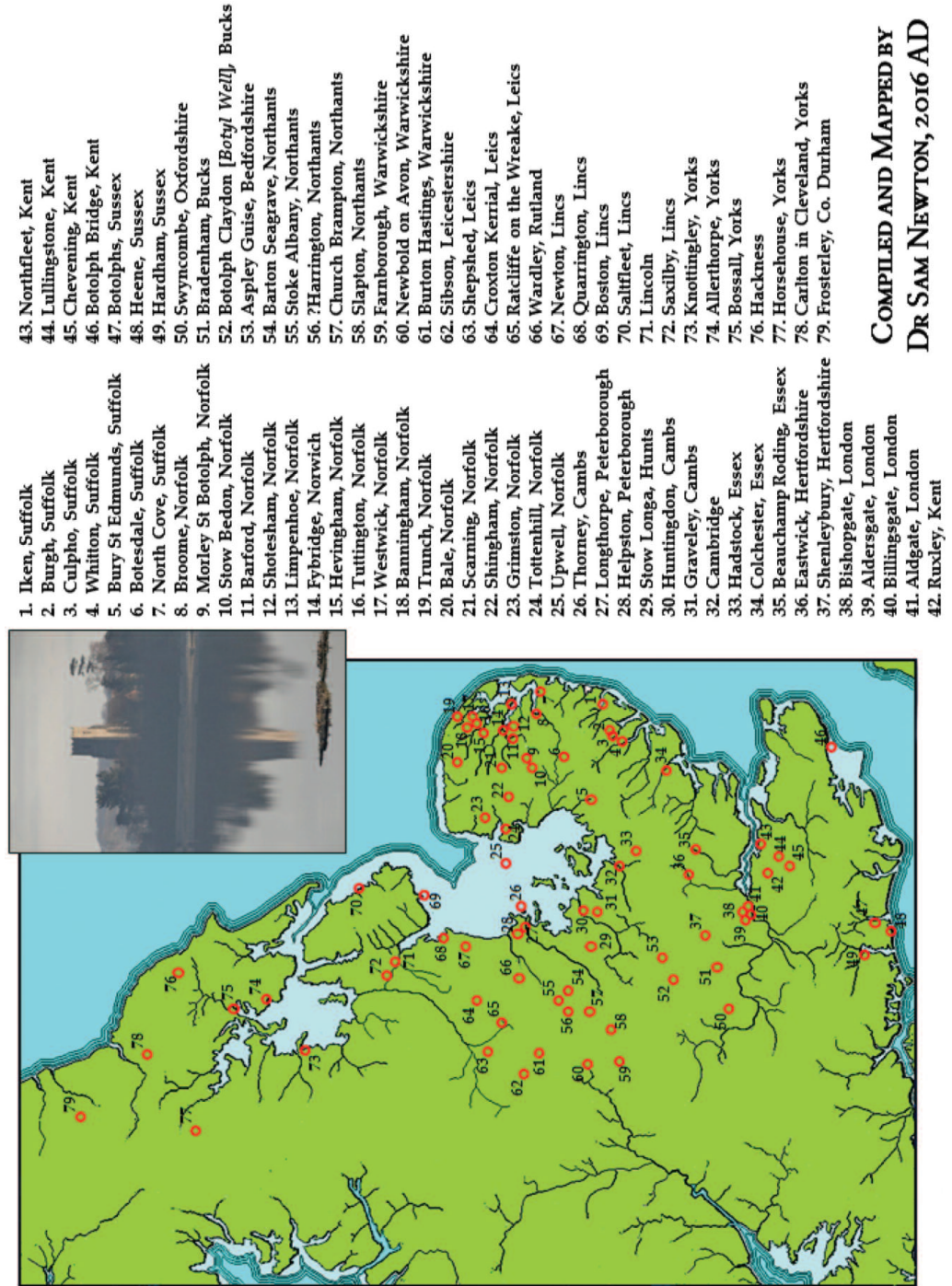
by SAM NEWTON

THERE CAN BE no doubt that St Botwulf was once widely revered, for there were at least sixty-one churches dedicated to him in pre-Reformation England.[1] If we include chapels there may have been up to seventy-nine (Fig. 193). His cult also appears to have been popular in medieval Scandinavia, where at least twelve dedications survive (Fig. 194), as well as a surprising number of ecclesiastical texts associated with him, all of which makes Botwulf the most well-known Anglo-Saxon saint in Scandinavia.[2]

His name is unusual in England but oddly familiar to many, albeit in the Latinised form of *Botolph*, which derives from *Bótulf*, a contraction of the original Old English form *Bótwulf*.[3] The first element of this compound name seems to be *bót*, the meaning of which includes 'help', 'deliverance', 'atonement', and 'advantage'.[4] The word is almost extinct in Modern English, apart from the occasional use of the old phrase 'to boot'.[5] The second element must be *wulf*, 'wolf'. The full name would probably have been pronounced to sound to us something like 'Boot-wolf'. Although there are other examples of personal names in early England beginning with *bót*, such as the monk at Hexham called *Bóthelm*,[6] there appears to be only one individual named *Bótwulf* or *Bótulf* in surviving Anglo-Saxon records.[7]

Many travellers would have come across the name of the saint because of the number of English churches dedicated to him close to town and city gates, such as Cambridge, Colchester, and especially London.[8] There are also at least two English place-names based on *Bótwulf*. Boston, Lincolnshire, from which Boston, Massachusetts takes its name, probably derives from *Bótulfes Stán*, 'Botwulf's Stone', and Botesdale, Suffolk, from *Bótulfes Dæl*, 'Botwulf's Dale'.[9] In the local Suffolk dialect the latter is still pronounced as something like 'Boot's-dal'.[10] As well as these, there are parish names such as Botolphs, Sussex, and Morley St Botolph, Norfolk.

Despite the indications for his medieval popularity, very little is remembered about him today. James Campbell has referred to this curious amnesia as 'the strange case' of St Botwulf.[11] Our main source for the history of the early English church, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gens Anglorum*, written in Wearmouth-Jarrow in Northumbria and completed in 731, makes no mention of Botwulf at all.[12] Yet it is difficult to believe that its famous author had not heard of him, for Bede's mentor and abbot, Ceolfrith, certainly knew of Botwulf's high renown in the early church in England, perhaps as a pioneer of Benedictine monasticism.[13] This was the same Abbot Ceolfrith who was one of the founders of the 'Golden Age' of the Northumbrian church and who oversaw the production of three magnificent bibles in his scriptorium at Wearmouth-Jarrow, one of which survives in Florence as the *Codex Amiatinus*.[14]

We learn of Ceolfrith's knowledge of Botwulf from *Vita Ceolfridi*, which was written in Wearmouth-Jarrow not long after 716, possibly by one of Bede's own students.[15] This tells how the young Ceolfrith was ordained as a priest by Bishop Wilfrid at Ripon before being sent south to further his monastic education.[16] He studied at Canterbury under Archbishop Theodore and then, around the year 670, on his return back north, Ceolfrith visited East Anglia (*Angli Orientalis*)

1. Iken, Suffolk
2. Burgh, Suffolk
3. Culpho, Suffolk
4. Whitton, Suffolk
5. Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
6. Botesdale, Suffolk
7. North Cove, Suffolk
8. Broome, Norfolk
9. Morley St Botolph, Norfolk
10. Stow Bedon, Norfolk
11. Barford, Norfolk
12. Shotesham, Norfolk
13. Limpenhoe, Norfolk
14. Fybridge, Norwich
15. Hevingham, Norfolk
16. Tuttington, Norfolk
17. Westwick, Norfolk
18. Banningham, Norfolk
19. Trunch, Norfolk
20. Bale, Norfolk
21. Scarning, Norfolk
22. Shingham, Norfolk
23. Grimston, Norfolk
24. Tottenhill, Norfolk
25. Upwell, Norfolk
26. Thorney, Cambs
27. Longthorpe, Peterborough
28. Helpston, Peterborough
29. Stow Longa, Hunts
30. Huntingdon, Cambs
31. Graveley, Cambs
32. Cambridge
33. Hadstock, Essex
34. Colchester, Essex
35. Beauchamp Roding, Essex
36. Eastwick, Hertfordshire
37. Shenleybury, Hertfordshire
38. Bishopgate, London
39. Aldersgate, London
40. Billingsgate, London
41. Aldgate, London
42. Ruxley, Kent

43. Northfleet, Kent
44. Lullingstone, Kent
45. Chevening, Kent
46. Botolph Bridge, Kent
47. Botolphs, Sussex
48. Heene, Sussex
49. Hardham, Sussex
50. Swyncombe, Oxfordshire
51. Bradenham, Bucks
52. Botolph Claydon [*Botyl Well*], Bucks
53. Aspley Guise, Bedfordshire
54. Barton Seagrave, Northants
55. Stoke Albany, Northants
56. ?Harrington, Northants
57. Church Brampton, Northants
58. Slapton, Northants
59. Farnborough, Warwickshire
60. Newbold on Avon, Warwickshire
61. Burton Hastings, Warwickshire
62. Sibson, Leicestershire
63. Shepshed, Leics
64. Croxton Kerrial, Leics
65. Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Leics
66. Wardley, Rutland
67. Newton, Lincs
68. Quarrington, Lincs
69. Boston, Lincs
70. Saltfleet, Lincs
71. Lincoln
72. Saxilby, Lincs
73. Knottingley, Yorks
74. Allerthorpe, Yorks
75. Bossall, Yorks
76. Hackness
77. Horsehouse, Yorks
78. Carlton in Cleveland, Yorks
79. Frosterley, Co. Durham

COMPILED AND MAPPED BY
DR SAM NEWTON, 2016 AD

FIG. 193 – St Bótwulf: church and chapel dedications.

1. Ålborg
2. Tømmerby
3. Viborg
4. Tirstrup
5. Roskilde
6. Ängelholm (Lunterton)
7. Lund
8. Bodilisker, Bornholm
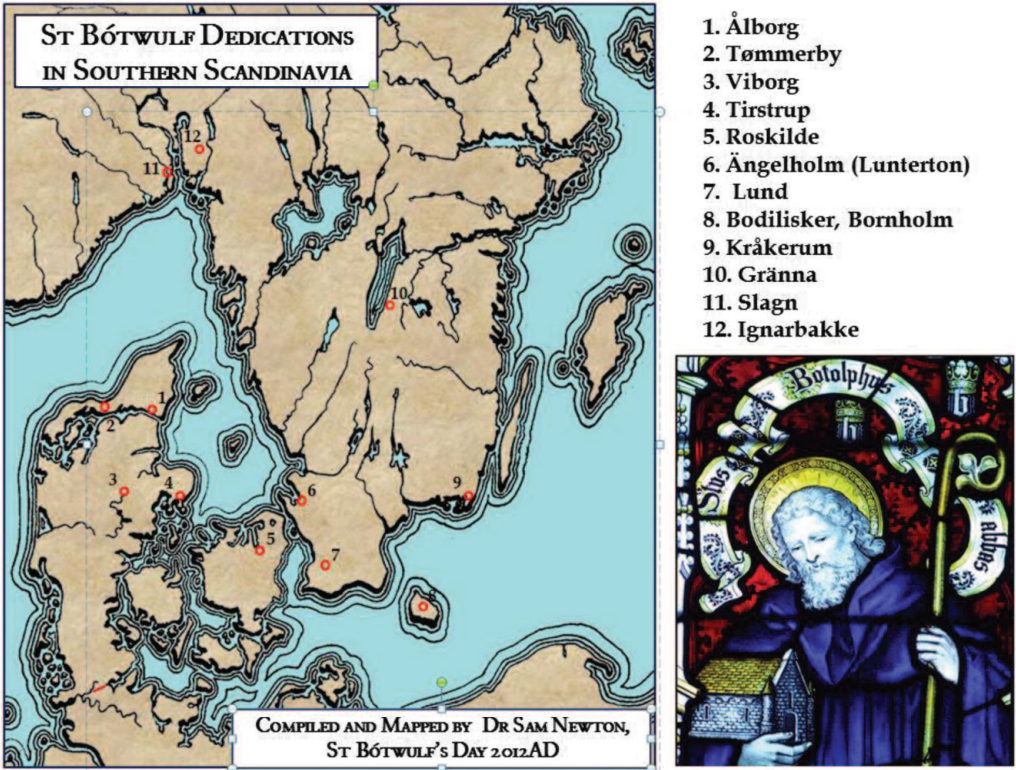9. Kråkerum
10. Gränna
11. Slagn
12. Ignarbakke

FIG. 194 – St Bótwulf dedications in southern Scandinavia.

to see the monastic practices of Abbot Botwulf, whom report had proclaimed on all sides to be a man of unparalleled life and learning, and full of the grace of the Holy Spirit; and he returned home abundantly instructed (*Vita Ceolfridi*, 4).[17]

From this reference it is clear that Botwulf was abbot of an important seventh-century minster in East Anglia and that there he enjoyed a very high reputation in the early church, as several scholars have observed.[18]

The great acclaim given to Botwulf in the *Vita Ceolfridi* is reinforced by part of the lost charter for the foundation of the double monastery of St Mildburh at Wenlock in Shropshire, dated between 675 and 690, preserved in the thirteenth–century manuscript of *Vita Sancte Mildburge virginis*.[19] This text refers to one Æthelheah, Abbot of *Icheanog*,[20] who, 'with the consent of the whole *familia* of Abbot Botwulf of venerable memory', is said to have bestowed extensive lands in Shropshire and Herefordshire on Abbess Mildburh for the establishment and support of her minster 'on condition that the said place shall by God's will remain, not on compulsion but willingly, under the tutelage of the church of the venerable Abbot Botwulf'.[21] This reference indicates the high honour in which Botwulf was held after his death, which is usually dated 17 June 680,[22] and also implies that his minster was prosperous enough by then to own and control estates in Britain a long way west of East Anglia.

With these impressive credentials, why does Bede not mention Botwulf in his influential *Historia Ecclesiastica*? Bede writes so well that it is easy to forget that in places he was very much an advocate for the interests of the Northumbrian Roman church, which to a great

extent determined the way he treated other branches of early Christianity.[23] As such, Bede's omission of any reference to Botwulf could have been deliberate and motivated by ecclesiastical politics.

Whatever the reason for Bede's silence, we have an invaluable reference to Botwulf in the group of Old English parallel chronicles known collectively as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.[24] This is one of the literary treasures of the English-speaking peoples and its earliest surviving text, the Parker manuscript (MS A) is now housed in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (MS 173). The early entries of this manuscript appear to have been copied in Winchester in the late ninth century and among them is the entry for the year 654.[25]

> Hér Onna cyning wearþ ofslæġen; *ond* Bótulf ongon minster timbran æt Icanhó.
> *Here Onna King was slain; and Botwulf began [his] minster to build at Iken Hoo.*[26]

Onna (or Anna) was king of the Eastern Angles from *c.* 640. He was the nephew of the famous king Rædwald (died *c.* 624), who was one of the first overlords of all Britain and considered by many to have been the king who lay in state aboard the magnificent Sutton Hoo ship-burial.[27] The quality and quantity of the Sutton Hoo treasure reveals the wealth and sophistication of East Anglian culture around the end of the first quarter of the seventh century.[28] King Anna was highly praised by Bede as 'a good man and blessed with a good and saintly family', and 'an excellent man of royal descent and the father of a distinguished family' (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 7, 18).[29] Bede also tells us that he was killed by the formidable Penda of Mercia (*Historia Ecclesiastica,* III, 18), perhaps in battle near Blythburgh in Suffolk, where he is said to have been buried according to the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*, the *Book of Ely*.[30] This must have some authority as Anna's daughter St Æthelthryth (Audrey) was Ely's founding abbess.[31]

The early parts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are primarily concerned with West Saxon affairs and the entry for 654 is one of the very few references to East Anglian events. This suggests that there was a special West Saxon interest in East Anglia at this time. Bede mentions that the West Saxon king Cenwalh was sheltered in East Anglia by good king Anna for three years after had been exiled from Wessex by Penda of Mercia, during which time he was baptised, before being restored to his kingdom (*Historia Ecclesiastica,* III, 7).[32] The *Book of Ely* adds that Cenwalh was baptised by the first bishop of the Eastern Angles, Felix, and that Anna 'received him from the holy font', *i.e.*, he was his godfather. The East Anglian king, moreover, supported Cenwalh against his enemies and assisted his return to power in Wessex, which in turn led to Anna's subsequent death at the hands of Penda in 654 (*Liber Eliensis*, I, 7).[33] It is therefore reasonable to suppose that West Saxon sources marked the death of Anna because of his support for Cenwalh.[34] It may also be possible that Botwulf could have become somehow connected with the West Saxon king, at least indirectly through his possible close association with Anna. The juxtaposition in the 654 entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* of the notice of the death of King Anna and the building of Botwulf's minster could be taken to imply that the latter was founded in honour of the former.[35] Either way, the *Chronicle* entry here provides us with credible information not given by Bede, that is, a foundation-date and a name for the site of the famous minster visited by Abbot Ceolfrith in East Anglia around the year 670.

ST BOTWULF AND *ICANHÓH*

The *Chronicle* locates Botwulf's minster *æt Icanhó*, which is a correct Old English dative form for *Icanhóh*.[36] Although it has been claimed that *Icanhóh* should be identified with sites elsewhere (see Appendix 2), there can now be very little doubt that it was at Iken in Suffolk.[37]

The medieval church there is dedicated to St Botwulf and stands on the highest point of a classic *hóh*, a 'hoo', a hill with a gentle slope on one side and steeper one on the other.[38] The immediate landscape context therefore fits well with the second element of the name for *Icanhóh*.
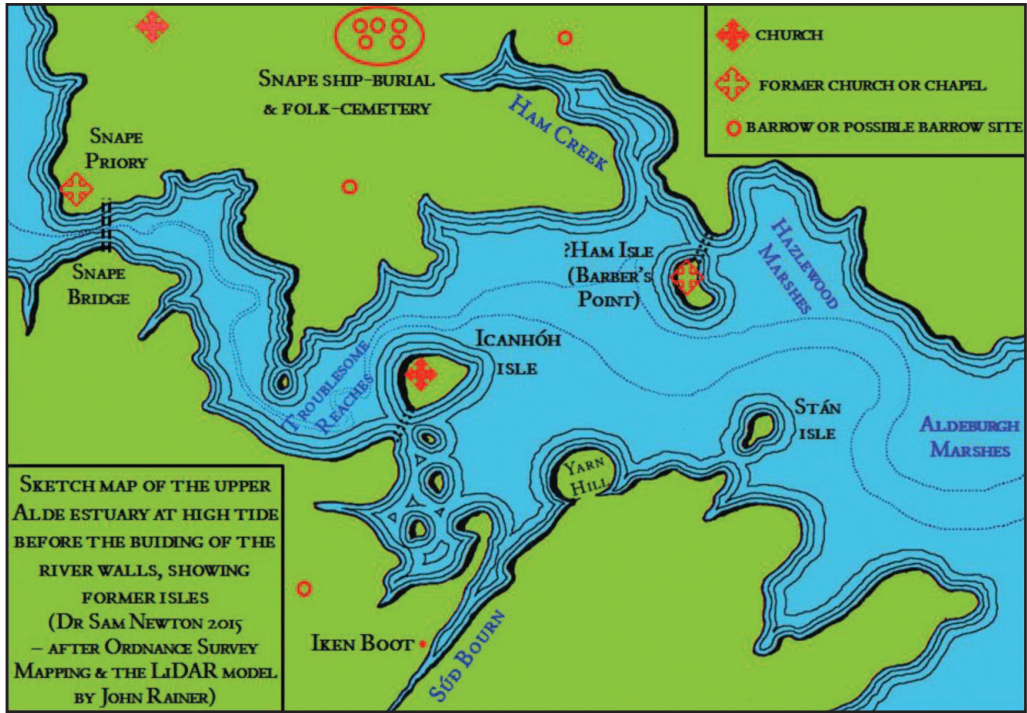

FIG. 195 – Sketch map of the upper Alde estuary at high tide
before the building of the river walls, showing former isles.

The *hóh* on which Iken church stands overlooks the wide estuary of the river Alde. Over the centuries the building of river walls has much changed the shape of the estuary, although we can get some idea of its former width where the walls have broken in places, such as between Iken and Snape Maltings. It is not clear when these great lines of turf banks were begun, but those along the lower part of the estuary appear to have been built before about 1500.[39] During the seventh century the site of Iken church was almost certainly an island accessible only at low tide (Fig. 195).[40] In its broad estuarine setting, it would have looked like the description of the site of St Botwulf's minster provided in the *Schleswig Breviary* as 'a very beautiful place surrounded on each side by the streams of a certain river' (*Schleswig Breviary*, 2).[41] Though no longer on an island, Iken church can certainly be described as 'a very beautiful place', especially in the morning when the sun is shining (Fig. 196).[42]

The fullest surviving text concerned with St Botwulf is the Latin *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis*, written by Folcard, abbot of the minster on the former fenland isle of Thorney in Lincolnshire, during the second half of the eleventh century.[43] Folcard names the site of Botwulf's minster as *Ikanho*, which reads like a Latin rendering of the Old English *Icanhóh*. Moreover, in the manuscript of Folcard's text preserved in Lincoln Cathedral Library (MS 7), the name is written as *Ikanhou ei*, the second word of which looks as if it has been derived from Old English *íeg*, 'isle'. If this reading is correct, it would complement the description in the *Schleswig Breviary* and further strengthen the identification with Iken.[44]

FIG. 196 – Iken Church from the W in the morning at low tide (© *Sam Newton*).

FIG. 197 – Dr Stanley West (right) with Henry Ferguson
touching the stone of the cross-shaft next to the place
where it was discovered inside the church in 1977
(*photo courtesy of Mrs Sheila Dickie; © Myrtle Ferguson*).

That the site of the church of St Botwulf at Iken was once of great ecclesiastical importance is shown by Stanley West's discovery there in 1977 of part of a large Anglo-Saxon carved stone cross-shaft (Fig. 197).[45] Although heavily weathered, this had formed the lower part of a large decorated stone cross, perhaps ten or twelve feet in height, the material and style of which associates it with the East Mercian school of sculpture, datable to the ninth or early tenth century (Fig. 198).[46] It is very rare to find evidence for such a large cross of this type in East Anglia, and, given the work of transporting such a monolith to Iken, the implication is that it marks a site of great significance. The full cross probably stood at the highest point of the *hóh* on, or close to, the site of the present church, and would thus have overlooked, and have been widely visible from, the waters of the upper estuary of the Alde.

Moreover, as Rosemary Cramp pointed out, it is possible that this cross may have been raised as a memorial to St Botwulf, albeit long after his death.[47] The heads of the animals incorporated into the zoomorphic ornament of Face A of the cross-shaft look very much like dogs or wolves (Figs 198 and 199).[48] Although not dissimilar designs are found elsewhere in Mercian sculpture, it might just be possible that the wolf, because the word forms part of his
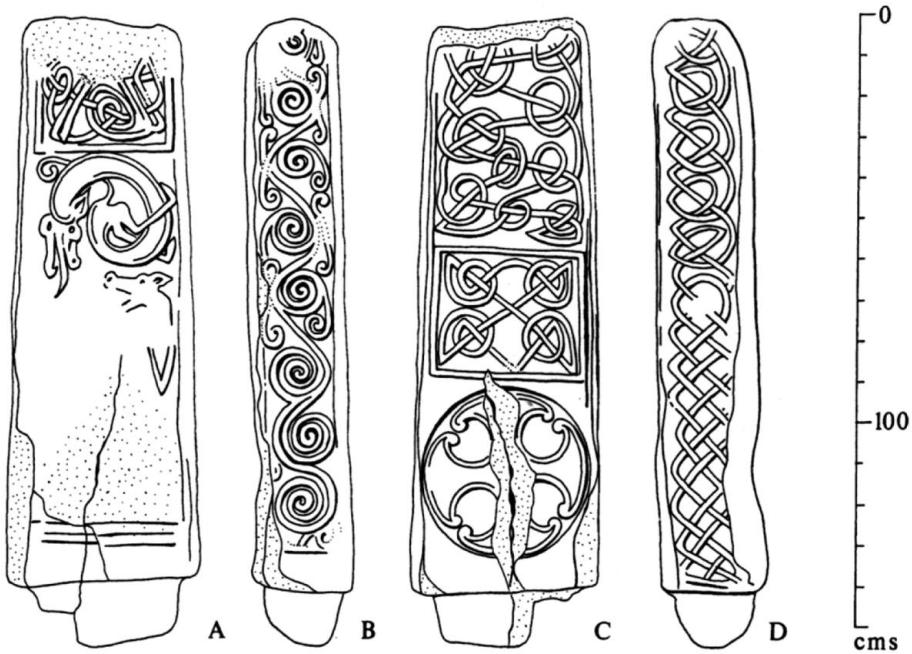
FIG. 198 – Drawing of the cross-shaft showing the weathered sculptural designs (West et al. 1984, 290).

name, was regarded as one of St Botwulf's emblems in medieval church art. As Cramp suggested, 'the animal ornament could have been derived from a manuscript or piece of prestigious metal-work which had been traditionally linked with his name'.[49]

FOLCARD'S *VITA BEATI BOTULPHI ABBATIS*

Cramp's suggestion that there might have been some sort of artistic or manuscript tradition associated with St Botwulf may cast a little light on the question of the sources used by Abbot Folcard of Thorney to write his *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis* during the latter part of the eleventh century, perhaps between 1070 and 1071.[50] Despite its late date, it may contain details derived from an earlier text, as by Folcard's time Thorney Abbey was claiming to house some of the relics of the saint. These appear to have been translated *via* Grundisburgh in the time of King Edgar (959–970) and thence to Bury St Edmunds and Ely during the reigns of Cnut (1016–1035) or Edward the Confessor (1042–1066).[51] Thorney could have received its share of the relics at around this time, perhaps with some sort of accompanying narrative about the saint. Dorothy Whitelock was very doubtful about the authority of Folcard's work, but Rosalind Love has recently reassessed it and thought it possible that Folcard may have used 'some kind of document', now lost, from which he derived information for his story of how Botwulf was granted the land for his minster by the East Anglian royal family.[52]

Folcard does seem to have been at least partly well-informed. He tells how, in a monastery abroad, Botwulf met two sisters of a king of the 'South Angles' called *Edelmund* (Æthelmund). The two sisters sent a letter of introduction to their brother and mother, *Sywara* (Sæwaru), who was regent because her son was still young, requesting that Botwulf be given land on which to build a monastery. Folcard mentions two other kings, *Adelhere* (Æthelhere)

and *Adelwold* (Æthelwald), 'relations' of the young king, who supported the request. These names suggest that by 'South Angles' Folcard meant Eastern Angles, for we know from Bede that the brothers Æthelhere and Æthelwald were kings of the Eastern Angles (*Historia Ecclesiastica* , III, 24, III, 22).[53] Æthelhere ruled from *c.* 654 until his death at the Battle of the River Winwæd in November 655, and Æthelwald appears to have ruled until around 664.[54] They were brothers of the famous King Anna, who ruled from *c.* 640 until his death in 654. As we have seen, Anna's death is noted

FIG. 199 – Detail of the cross-shaft showing weathered image of a zoomorphic design with the heads of dogs or wolves (© *Sam Newton*).

in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the same entry that records the founding of Botwulf's minster at *Icanhóh*.

Folcard's references to Æthelhere and Æthelwald may thus be authentic, though Whitelock was doubtful.[55] She also argued that Folcard invented the otherwise unrecorded names for the young king Æthelmund and his mother, Sæwaru, yet both would be credible Old English names for members of the East Anglian royal family in the mid seventh century.[56] Bede mentions that King Anna had a stepdaughter called Sæthryth, Abbess of Faremoûtiers-en-Brie in Gaul (*Historia Ecclesiastica* , III, 8), which could imply that Sæwaru was the name of the wife of King Anna and that she may have had East Saxon connections.[57] As to the name Æthelmund, it would fit perfectly with the patterns of alliteration and compound name-giving in the family at the time.[58] Its first element, *Æthel-* is consistent with the names of three of the known sons of King Rædwald's brother Eni, as well as two of King Anna's saintly daughters.[59] So we need not assume that Folcard's two unrecorded names are fictions.[60] If these two names are identifiable as potentially authentic seventh-century East Anglian royal forms, then it is not unreasonable to suggest that at least some of the story in which they play a part may have some basis in history. If Sæwaru was the name of the wife of King Anna, then Æthelmund could be identifiable as a son of Anna and the nephew of Æthelhere and Æthelwald. Æthelmund's two sisters would then be Anna's daughters, possibly Æthelburh and his step-daughter, Sæthryth, which would in turn suggest that the monastery abroad where Botwulf met the two sisters was at Faremoûtiers-en-Brie in Gaul, where both Æthelburh and Sæthryth became abbesses.

It might then be possible that something of Folcard's account could derive ultimately from a lost *Life* of St Botwulf written much nearer the late seventh century. Certainly the authenticity of the name-forms could point to an earlier text, as in the case of the twelfth-century manuscript which preserves the story of the martyrdom of the late eighth-century East Anglian king Æthelbert, *Passio Sancti Athelberti*.[61]

FOLCARD'S ACCOUNT OF *IKANHO*

According to Folcard, after some time Botwulf was granted the right to build a monastery and he chose a place named *Ikanho*. In contrast to the description in the *Schleswig Breviary* (noted above) of the site as 'a very beautiful place surrounded on each side by the streams of a certain river', Folcard describes it as a 'wilderness' which was 'occupied by demons'. He then provides a rather dramatic story of how Botwulf exorcised the place.

> 7. At the approach of our blessed teacher Botwulf, the place breathed out a most acrid black smoke, and, not realising that flight was imminent, [the demons] echoed out terrible cries. 'We have occupied this place for a long time, thought we would occupy it forever, we have got nowhere else ... When the whole world is lit up by your merits, why do you come poking into our dark corners? You are behaving inhumanely, and neglecting all love, in driving us poor things, exiled by the rest of the world, even from this place of solitude.'

> 8. But St Botwulf, outstanding athlete of Christ, went on crushing the inane crowd with his out-poured prayers, and making the sign of the cross, he put them to graceless flight, and with the mighty force of his words forbade them admission to the region which had been granted to him from heaven. Having expelled the minions of the lawless with the cross of Christ, he set up the standard of heavenly power, and constructed a hall for divine dwelling.[62]

The source for this part of Folcard's account is unknown. Love suggested a number of possible parallels for it, such as the old story of St Antony the hermit and his struggles with the demons of the Egyptian desert.[63] St Antony's precedent certainly inspired the eighth-century *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, the *Life* of St Guthlac, the famous Mercian royal hermit of the former fenland isle of Crowland, Lincolnshire, only five miles north-west of Thorney.[64]

The *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* provides a close parallel to Folcard's account.[65] It is one of the earliest Latin hagiographies written in England and was to become a well-known work, later translated into Old English prose.[66] It also provided the basis for a short Old English homily.[67] As well as this, the wider popularity of Guthlac's story is shown by the fact that it was retold in Old English verse, two versions of which survive.[68] The author of *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, a monk called Felix, states in the opening of his Prologue that he had been commanded to write the work by his lord, the East Anglian king Ælfwald, who ruled *c*. 713–749.[69] We do not know in which East Anglian minster King Ælfwald commissioned the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, but wherever Felix wrote it, it shows that hagiographic works were being written in East Anglia at an early date, which would suggest a clear context for the writing of an early *Life* of the founder of *Icanhóh*. That part of a late seventh-century Wenlock foundation charter preserved in the thirteenth-century *Vita Sancte Mildburge virginis* describes him as 'Abbot Botwulf of venerable memory' implies that his reputation was great enough to warrant its writing.[70]

Folcard's *Ikanho* was a 'wilderness ... occupied by demons'. Felix's *Life* of St Guthlac provides a more detailed description of the haunted wilderness of the Fenlands, which sounds like a larger scale picture of the estuarine marshes and islands around Iken (Fig. 195). There too we would have had 'sometimes ... black waters overhung by fog, sometimes studded with wooded islands and traversed by the windings of tortuous streams'. It might also be significant that the awkwardly twisting meanders of the course of the river below Iken church are today called the 'Troublesome Reaches'.

Felix goes on to tell how Guthlac landed on the island of Crowland and decided to build his hermitage in the burgled burial chamber of an old barrow. He was subsequently haunted by demons which he addressed as 'sons of darkness'.[71] Despite differences of degree of emphasis, both Folcard and Felix tell of the exorcism of the terrors which haunt the same kind

of wetland wastes, the English landscape equivalent to St Antony's Egyptian desert. Botwulf's demonic opponents describe themselves as 'exiled by the rest of the world'. Guthlac's are also exiles, being the descendants of the Old Testament fratricide and accursed exile Cain. There are closer parallels with the Old English poetic version of Guthlac's *Life* from the Exeter Book known as *Guthlac A*.[72] For example, Folcard tells how Botwulf exorcised *Ikanho* by 'making the sign of the cross', just as the author of *Guthlac A* depicts the raising of the cross as a weapon of exorcism (lines 177–81).[73]

Folcard's story of Botwulf's exorcism of the demons of *Ikanho* would certainly fit into the landscape of Iken in Suffolk. The 'most acrid black smoke' which 'the place breathed out' at his approach could be seen as estuarine mists, not unlike Felix's 'black waters overhung by fog' (*Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, 24). Folcard also tells how he exorcised the 'demons' of the place by 'making the sign of the cross ... the standard of heavenly power' (*Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis*, 8). This may be just another hagiographic formula, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the extraordinary ninth- or tenth-century cross which stood at Iken (described above) could have been intended as a successor for Botwulf's precedent. In other words, the raising of this once impressive cross may have been a conscious renewal of Botwulf's original act of exorcism and consecration of the former island and its surrounding waters and marshes.

ST BOTWULF THE EXORCIST

Although Folcard's story of Botwulf's exorcism can be seen as somewhat formulaic, there are clear indications that in Anglo-Saxon England there was a need for stories about saints and heroes who exorcise the human fears associated with liminal zones such as fens and marshlands, echoes of which we can still detect today. It can be a pleasure to walk by the river near Iken on a fine summer's day, but in winter it can be a lot less pleasant. If you are still out as the mist starts to form and the long night approaches, the bleak loneliness of the place soon becomes evident (Fig. 200). In the misty marshes the normal distinctions between the elements

FIG. 200 – Distant view of Iken Church at dusk looking E with the mist forming (© *Sam Newton*).

of earth, water, fire, and air begin to blur and it is not difficult to imagine why, before the development of a more scientific understanding, folk were fearful of such landscapes. George Carter recognised this in his description of the Aldeburgh and Lantern Marshes, just downstream from Iken.

> The ... dominating feature is ... a vast and somewhat frightening loneliness that, once clear of the town, descends upon one like a cloud ... [Then] there are the Lights ... Between Aldeburgh and the white and red tower of Orfordness lighthouse lies an eerie stretch of shingle-bordered marshland [Lantern Marshes], where the will-o'-the-wisps dance at night ... They are haunted too, by local repute, for many have lost their way and never returned.[74]

That the loneliness and fear induced in such places was very much part of the world of the Old English-speaking peoples is shown by the detailed description of the haunted wilderness of the Cambridgeshire Fens in the Old English prose version of Felix's *Life* of St Guthlac:

> for meniġfealdum brógum *ond* eġsum, *ond* for ánnysse þæs wídġillan wéstenes,
> *because of [the] manifold terrors and fears, and loneliness of the wide wasteland,*
> þæt hit nǽniġ man ádréogan ne mihte, ac hit ǽlċ forþan befluġe ...
> *that it not any man could endure, and from it each [one] because of that fled ...*
> for þǽre eardunga þára áweriġedra gásta ...
> *[and] because of the presence of the accursed warg ghost ...*[75]

This text shows that the belief that terrors prowled such watery wastelands was a reality, and that those terrors were personified as *áweriga gástas*, 'accursed *warg* [lone wolf] ghosts'.

The reality of this belief is also revealed by Old English poetry, especially *Beowulf*, where the fen-dwelling Grendel is presented as the ultimate marshland nightmare (ll. 102-104a). The terrifying and relentlessly predatory power of Grendel is made clear in several passages. For example, in lines 159–162a he tracks his victims through the long night and ensnares them in the unchartable wastes of the *mistiġe móras*, 'misty marshes' (l. 162a), beyond the limits of mortal knowledge (ll. 162b–163). In the much-discussed passage describing his approach to the sleeping hall of Heorot (ll. 702b–727), a 'hair-raising description of death on the march', as Arthur Brodeur put it,[76] Grendel appears for the first time in the action of the poem as a physical entity.[77] He is the shadow-walker who emerges from the misty marshes in the dark night to prey on folk and *under sċeadu bregdan*, 'under [the] shadows bind [them]' (l. 707b), yet he has become as a physical entity that has to enter the building through the door and tread the floor.[78]

Furthermore, like the terrors haunting the Cambridgeshire Fens in the Old English *Life* of St Guthlac, Grendel is also described twice as a *werga gást*, 'accursed *warg* ghost' (ll. 133a, 1747b). The etymology of the adjective *werga* used here ultimately implies that Grendel had demonic, wolf-like characteristics, an implication strengthened by parallel references to him as *heoro-wearh*, 'weapon-*warg*' (l. 1267a). Similarly, Grendel's mother is a *grund-wyrgen*, 'she-*warg* from the bottom of the mere' (l. 1518b), and *brim-wylf*, 'she-sea-wolf' (ll. 1506a, 1599a).[79]

Another old word used to refer to Grendel and his mother is *sċucca* (l. 939a). This appears to be of deeply pre-Christian origin and may have originally represented the physical personification of the fears imagined in the elusive, oscillating movements of shadows.[80] The Old English word *sċucca* lies at the root of the East Anglian and Midland dialect name for a marsh-haunting nightmare of folklore known as 'Shuck' or 'Black Shuck'.[81] This philological underpinning verifies the authenticity of the name and reputation of the 'Shuck' of folklore, which may thus echo beliefs reaching back to Anglo-Saxon times if not earlier. This means

that the folk-tales cannot all be entirely based on later antiquarian speculation. That 'Shuck' is a widespread phenomenon in English folklore also suggests an older origin.[82] Certainly the fears associating 'Shuck' or 'Black Shuck' with the East Anglian marshes seem to be well-known, as George Carter wrote of the terrors of the estuary of the River Alde downriver from Iken.

> One can feel their presence, brooding and resentful in the empty marshland that surrounds the town [of Aldeburgh] … 'Black Shuck', the Phantom Dog, big as a calf and with flaming eyes … haunts the East Anglian marshlands.[83]

Theo Brown identified 'Shuck' as the East Anglian name for the more widespread 'Barguest' type of 'Black Dog', concluding that it 'is not essentially a dog, but a shapeless monster … it is a subconscious, partly chthonic entity'.[84]

Reports of the dog-like 'Shuck' suggest that they have several characteristics in common with the *sċucca* Grendel.

1. Both are correspondingly inexact as to their precise appearance and ontology. Some sightings attribute human form to 'Shuck',[85] as does King Hrothgar when telling what he has heard of Grendel and his mother in *Beowulf* (l. 1352a).
2. The lupine characteristics of the Grendels, as implied by the use of the word *warg* and its variants to refer to them (mentioned above), are comparable to the canine traits of 'Shuck'.
3. The latter and his kind are also noted for the prominence of their shining eyes, which are typically described as 'saucer-shaped' and 'burning like coals'.[86] Grendel's bright and 'flame-like' eyes are also a noted feature of his baleful appearance (ll. 726b–727).
4. Finally, very much like Grendel, 'Shuck' is generally associated with fens and marshes, whence he emerges, usually at night, to prowl alone in particular haunts nearby.[87]

All of this implies that the fears associated with the wetlands of Anglo-Saxon England were very real to ordinary folk, hence the need for stories of heroes like Beowulf who could exorcise such nightmares.[88]

Grendel and his folklore cousins appear to have had deeply pre-Christian roots. They emerge from the shadows to become, as Professor Tolkien put it, 'mortal denizens of the material world, in it and of it'.[89] Like the fenland terrors which beset Guthlac (noted above), both Grendel and his mother are explained by the poet of *Beowulf* as the kin of the Old Testament murderer Cain (ll. 102–114, 1258b–1266). By making them descendants of Cain they become the enemies of the new god too.

> For the monsters do not depart, whether the gods go or come. A Christian was (and is) still like his forefathers a mortal hemmed in a hostile world. The monsters remained the enemies of mankind, the infantry of the old war, and became inevitably the enemies of the one God, *eċe Dryhten* the eternal Captain of the new.[90]

In the interesting times of the transition of religious allegiances among the English-speaking peoples during the seventh century, the heroes of old became the noble allies of the new god. As the new religion became more established, a more saintly type of hero moved up to the front line. Like Guthlac,[91] Botwulf too can be seen as a saintly replacement for the type of exorcist-hero that we meet in the Old English epic of *Beowulf*.

The famous story of the Wild Man of Orford shows that the belief that supernatural beings existed out on the elemental margins of land and water in the lower estuary of the River Alde continued to be a reality long after the seventh century. Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall recorded

in his early thirteenth-century *Chronicon Anglicanum* that, during the time of King Henry II (1154–1189), Orford fishermen caught in their nets a *hominem silvestrem*, a 'wild [wood] man'. It seems significant that Ralph added that this was but one example of many such strange encounters.

> Whether this appeared to be a mortal man or some fish pretending to be of human species, or will have been some malign spirit in a drowned man's corpse lurking ... it is not easy to define, the more so because so many wondrous events of this kind are told by so many.[92]

These tales of 'so many wondrous events of this kind' are long forgotten, but Ralph had clearly heard of other amphibious apparitions like the Wild Man of Orford. The unusual Romanesque relief sculpture on the tympanum of the vestry door at St Botwulf's church, Stow Longa, Huntingdonshire, could imply that the sculptors knew of a story of Botwulf's exorcism of such entities (Fig. 201). This sculpture shows what looks like a kind of mermaid, accompanied by possibly dogs or wolves.[93] If so, it might be possible that the heads of wolves or dogs incorporated in the interlace designs on the Iken cross shaft (mentioned above) could be understood to realise the power of the cross to exorcise, or bind, the terror that came to known as 'Shuck'.

FIG. 201 – The vestry door and tympanum, St Botolph's, Stow Longa, Huntingdonshire (© *Sam Newton*).

ST BOTWULF THE PROTECTOR OF TRAVELLERS

The suggestion is that St Botwulf would have been venerated as an exorcist of the terrors associated with crossing waters. Like St Christopher and St Clement, he would thus have been one of the saints to whom travellers could pray for protection. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that, out of the high number of churches dedicated to him (Fig. 193), there appears to be a significant pattern of dedications located close to town and city gates.[94]

1. In London the saint was honoured with a church by four of the main gates of the city, three of which still exist:
    a. St Botolph without Aldersgate stands on the left side of Aldersgate Street as one travels north-northwest out of the city.
    b. St Botolph without Bishopsgate is on the left side of Bishopsgate Street Without, which runs north-northeast out of the city.

    c.   St Botolph without Aldgate is on the left side of Aldgate High Street going north-east out of the city.

    d.   St Botolph Billingsgate was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 and not rebuilt. It stood at the junction of Thames Street and Botolph Lane. It was to the west of the city's old water gate at Billingsgate but just to the east of the original main road for travellers heading south out of the city across Old London Bridge.[95]

2.   In Colchester the impressive ruins of St Botolph's Priory can be seen just outside the south gate of the town on the east side of St Botolph's Street. It seems appropriate that the old town railway station nearby was also named after him, as well as the curve in the tracks approaching it.

3.   In Bury St Edmunds there was a chapel of St Botolph which once stood just outside the old town on the east side of Southgate Street at its junction with St Botolph's Lane.[96] St Botolph's Lane still leads from there across St Botolph's Bridge via Raingate Street to the south gate of the Abbey, where St Botolph's shrine was located on the south side of the focal shrine of St Edmund.

4.   In Cambridge St Botolph's church still stands just inside the old south gate of the town on the east side of Trumpington Street at the junction of Botolph Lane.

5.   In Norwich a church dedicated to the saint, demolished in 1548, formerly stood on the west side of Magdalene Street at its junction with St Botolph Street, not far from Magdalene Gate, the main north gate in the city walls.

6.   In Lincoln St Botolph-by-Bargate church is on the east side of Lincoln High Road, the main south road out of the city. This was originally the southernmost limit of the city bounds.[97]

With the possible exception of St Botolph Billingsgate, all of the dedications mentioned above are located on or close to the left-hand side of the roads that led travellers out of these towns and cities. This seems to be a significant pattern – did it have something to do with the need to carry a spiritual shield on the left, or was it simply convenient for wayfarers travelling on the left-hand side of the road?

   Another indication that St Botwulf was venerated as a protector of travellers emerges from the pattern of his associations with the crossing points of rivers. There were at least two bridges dedicated to St Botwulf mentioned in the Domesday Book.[98]

1.   One carried one of the main roads into Peterborough from the south across the River Nene at *Botuluesbrige,* 'Botwulf's Bridge', which is the name of the parish mentioned in the Domesday Book later misconstrued as *Bottle Bridge* or *Battle Bridge.*[99] Both bridge and parish are long gone, but the name survives in places along the Oundle Road.

2.   The other spanned the River Ouse at the strategic crossing between Huntingdon and Godmanchester, where three major Roman roads still meet. There also appears to have been a church formerly dedicated to St Botwulf (later All Saints), perhaps near the bridge on the Huntingdon side of the river.[100]

To these two early examples we may add the following:

3.   The parish of Botolphs, West Sussex, appears to have been once known as Old Bridge. The bridge in question carried the old road along the South Downs Ridgeway across the River Adur.[101]

4.   Botolph's Bridge, Kent, is just south of the site of the Roman fort at Lympne in the north-east corner of Romney Marsh, close to an Anglo-Saxon river wall.[102]

5.   St Botolph's Bridge, Colchester, carries the road from Colchester to West Bergholt down St Botolph's Hill and over St Botolph's Brook, which forms the boundary between the two parishes. J.H. Round argued that the name of this bridge is a folk etymology derived from what appears to be an earlier 'Godulf's Bridge'.[103] Given the potential for scribal confusion exemplified by the *Botuluesbrige* near Peterborough noted above, this is not compelling; neither does it account for the name of the hill, nor that of the brook.

6. St Botolph's Bridge, Bury St Edmunds, which is built alongside an old ford across the River Linnet close to where it joins the River Lark. Over it runs St Botolph's Lane, which links St Botolph's Chapel via Raingate Street to the south gate of the Abbey, as noted above.

There may have been other river crossings associated with St Botwulf where the indications are now less clear.[104] Interestingly, a new one has recently been built in Boston, Lincolnshire.[105]

Why should bridges be dedicated to St Botwulf? One answer is, as Roy Hart pointed out, 'he is, after all, the patron saint of wayfarers'.[106] In the light of the pattern of bridges and churches dedicated to him at, or close to, places where roads cross rivers, we can perhaps be more specific and suggest that and he may have helped folk feel less susceptible to being haunted by the personifications of the fears associated with crossing water discussed above. In other words, his cult could have provided a kind of medieval spiritual travel insurance. Of course, all journeys involve crossing water at some point, which can still cause anxiety today. Gephyrophobia, fear of crossing bridges, is a recognised clinical condition.[107] Might this also partly underpin the fear of the troll under the bridge in the old Norwegian folktale, *The Three Billy-Goats Gruff*?[108] The troll under the bridge, who, like 'Shuck', had big, saucer-shaped eyes, seems a perfect example of the way in which medieval gephyrophobics could have personified their fears.

THE BONES OF ST BOTWULF

The suggestion that St Botwulf was venerated as a protector of travellers and as an exorcist of the potential dangers associated with watery places is further strengthened when we look at what we can deduce of the history of his relics. Folcard states that Botwulf

> was buried by his pupils in the very monastery he himself had constructed on the fifteenth kalends of July. There, by his intercession, many glorious miracles occurred.[109]

The date given by Folcard equates to 17 June, St Botwulf's festival day in the medieval church calendar in eastern England and Scandinavia.[110] The year is usually said to have been 680, a date which seems to derive from some versions of Folcard's *Vita* printed in the *Nova legenda Anglie* attributed to John Capgrave (1393–1464).[111] Folcard's references to Botwulf's burial in the minster that he himself had constructed and that miracles subsequently occurred there could be seen as hagiographic formulas. Yet as the aforementioned lost charter for the foundation of St Mildburh's minster at Wenlock, Shropshire, suggests, Botwulf was venerated after his death at *Icanhóh* and his minster continued to prosper in the later seventh century.[112]

In his account of how part of the relics were translated to Thorney, Folcard tells how, in the time of monastic reform during the reign of King Edgar (959–975), the famous Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester built the minster at Thorney and received royal permission to seek out

> the bodies of the saints, which were lying unvenerated in sites by that time ruined and neglected ... to be translated to the monasteries which he had constructed in his own day.[113]

Botwulf would have been included here because of his possible reputation as a pioneer of Benedictine monasticism in England.[114] Folcard provides a formulaic account of how Æthelwold acquired Botwulf's relics from 'the monastery which he had constructed at *Ikanho* [which] was destroyed by the persecutors of the blessed King Edmund'.[115] This implies that he believed that the place had been sacked by the Danish *micel here*, the 'Great Army', in the

winter of 869–870.[116] But that Folcard says that St Botwulf's tomb was identifiable by Bishop Æthelwold's men implies that it was not completely destroyed.

According to the *Book of Ely*, King Edgar and Queen Ælfthryth gave the large estate of Sudbourne, Suffolk, to Bishop Æthelwold in return for his English translation of the Latin *Rule of St Benedict,* and Æthelwold later gave the land to the abbey of Ely (*Liber Eliensis* II, 37).[117] In the Domesday Book of 1086 the church at Iken appears to have been included in what is now the adjacent parish of Sudbourne.[118] If so, the *Liber Eliensis* reference to King Edgar's gift of Sudbourne to Æthelwold would imply that the bishop would also have had lordship of Iken which, taken together with Folcard's account, would mean that he would have had the proprietorial right as well as royal licence to take possession of the relics at *Ikanho*.[119]

Folcard goes on to state that the plan was to divide the relics into three parts,[120] but this division seems not to have been carried out as intended, for it appears that the relics were then moved only as far as Grundisburgh, some fifteen miles west-south-west of Iken. This is implied by a reference in a fourteenth-century manuscript from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds (now Bodleian MS 240). It is stated there that King Cnut (1016–1035) gave permission for the body of St Botwulf to be transferred to the abbey from *Grundisburc*, but that this was not carried out until one dark night during the time of Abbot Leofstan (1048–1065), when a miraculous column of light stood shining over the relics.[121] The same event is described in a little more detail in a note written in the margin of a folio of a twelfth-century Bury copy of the *Chronicon* of the eleventh-century Irish monk Marianus Scotus (now Bodleian MS 297).[122] Although the note omits any reference to King Cnut, it does specify that the relics were housed *apud … Grundisburc*, that is, 'at' or 'near' Grundisburgh.[123] These two Bury documents imply that the relics were enshrined there for around eighty or ninety years after they were translated from *Ikanho*.

The question is, why were the bones of St Botwulf brought to Grundisburgh in the first place? A possible clue is suggested by the second part of the name *Grundisburgh*, which derives from the Old English word *burh*, 'stronghold'. The *burh* in question must be the once massive late Iron Age *oppidum* in the neighbouring parish of Burgh, which probably formed part of Grundisburgh in the time of King Cnut.[124] The ramparts are now almost completely ploughed flat, but are visible from the air in the right conditions (for an aerial view see Fig. 202 and for a reconstruction sketch see Fig. 203).[125] The whole structure is almost, but not quite, a hillfort, for it is set on the side of the valley of the River Lark, a tributary of the River Fynn, which joins the Deben at Kyson (*Cyningestún*) via Martlesham Creek. Part of it resembles a promontory fort, on the highest point of which stands a church of pre-Norman origin dedicated to St Botwulf. As several scholars have pointed out, this surely was the place where the relics of the saint were enshrined.[126]

Norman Scarfe suggested that they were placed within the *burh* for safe-keeping in the Anglo-Danish wars of the late ninth and early tenth centuries.[127] This is certainly possible, but if the transfer took place during the peaceful reign of King Edgar (959–975), as Folcard's story implies, then there might be other explanations. As noted above, Folcard stated that there were miracles associated with his tomb at *Icanhóh*. This is a typical hagiographic formula, but it reflects the widespread medieval belief that the relics of saints crackled with spiritual radioactivity. If St Botwulf was regarded as an exorcist of the potential terrors associated with watery places, as I suggested earlier in this paper, then his bones could have been held to have similar powers.

Burgh St Botwulf overlooks the valley of the River Lark, which is still boggy in places and liable to flooding (Fig. 204). It is here that we have the haunt of a local variant of the 'Shuck' of folklore known as the 'Gally Trot', described by Edward Moor of nearby Great Bealings in 1823 as follows:

FIG. 202 – Burgh from the air looking SSW. Note the clearly defined ramparts and ditches of the *oppidum* which surround St Botolph's Church. St Mary's, Clopton, can be seen in the bottom left (*Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography © copyright reserved*).
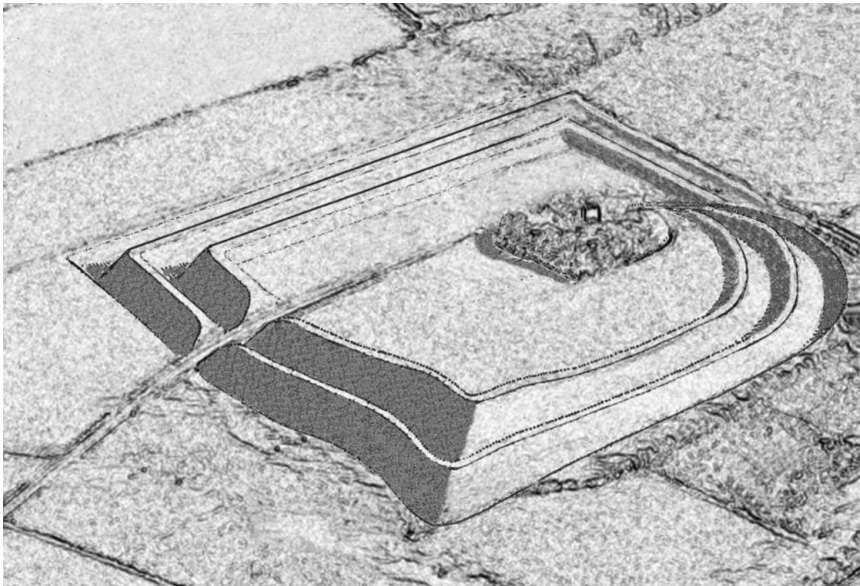

FIG. 203 – Reconstruction sketch of the Burgh *oppidum* looking SSW (*© Sam Newton 2016, after Edward Martin 1988*).

This is the name of an apparition or cacodæmon that has sorely frightened many people in the neighbourhood of Woodbridge. It sometimes assumes the shape of a dog; and gives chase to those whose alarm compels them to run. Its appearance is sometimes as big as a bullock – generally white – and not very definable as to outline. Its haunts are more particularly at a place called Bath-slough, meaning a slough or bog in the parish of Burgh. But the place in question is not in, or very near, that parish, nor is there any slough. I can make nothing of the name; nor much of the story, though I have heard it related by more than one person who had suffered from the apparition.[128]

The particular haunts of the Gally Trot to which Moor refers may be located more precisely than he says here. The hillside south-west of Burgh church across the Lark is known as 'Bath Hill', which suggests that the boggy valley below was 'Bath Slough'.[129]

The story of the 'Gally Trot' has persisted down the years. I was first told about it as a child living in nearby Otley. There was also talk of a golden calf buried in the field enclosed by the ramparts around Burgh church. In his report on his work at Burgh, Edward Martin quotes an unpublished manuscript by Mr J.D.W. Treherne of Otley, who excavated part of the site between 1947 and 1957, on the legends associated with the place.

> Both church and field are associated with legends, one is that of a golden calf buried somewhere close by, while the other is that of a spectral dog, the Gally Trot, which is said to haunt the vicinity of the church. The former story is very popular in the neighbourhood and if any of the local inhabitants come and watch me dig they invariably ask if 'I am digging for the golden calf'. Many have dug for it in their youth.[130]

In 1975, when I worked for Edward Martin as a student archaeologist during his excavation of the site of the planned extension to the churchyard at Burgh, we were asked similar questions by local visitors to the site. The legends were also mentioned in the village pub in Grundisburgh, aptly called 'The Dog' as far back as 1844,[131] a name which could derive from the legend and which certainly furthers its memory.
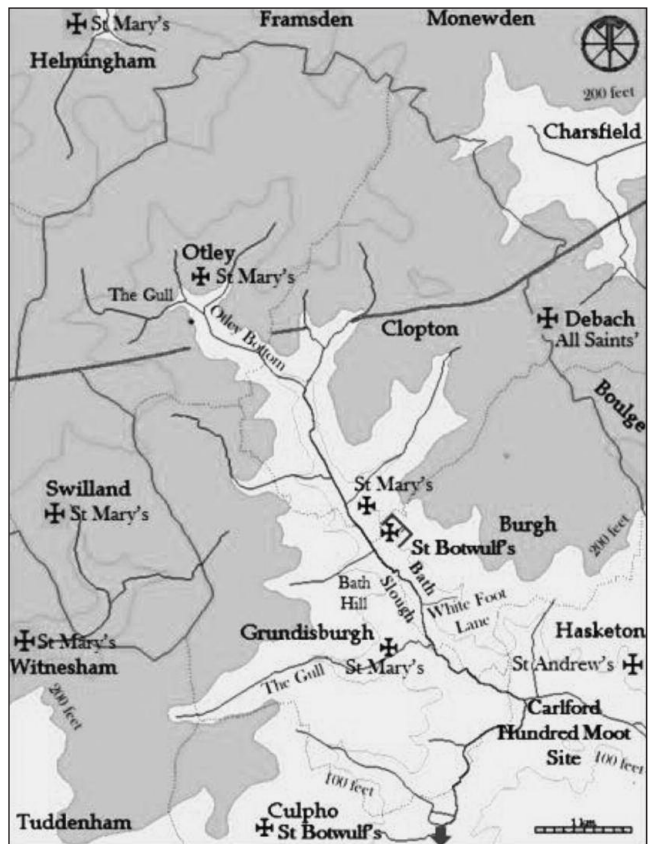

FIG. 204 – Burgh and its surrounding parishes, which probably derive from an ancient territorial unit centred on the Burgh *oppidum* which later became the N part of Carlford Hundred; also showing some of the places mentioned in the text. The number of dedications to St Mary is impressive. The neighbouring parishes of Framsden, Monewden, Great Bealings and Playford are also dedicated to St Mary (*map by Sam Newton 2016 after Edward Martin 1988*).

The first element of the name 'Gally Trot' might derive from the East Anglian dialect word 'gull', meaning a small ravine cut by a fast-flowing stream.[132] The upper valley of the River Lark above Otley Bottom is called 'The Gull' and closely fits this description. This is also the name of the tributary that flows though Grundisburgh village. The second element of the name 'Gally Trot' may derive from the Old English *trod*, 'track' or 'tread'.[133] If so, the name then could mean something like 'Gull-Treader', thus placing the emphasis on the tread of the spectral creature in the physical landscape as the focus of fear, not unlike Grendel's tread as he enters the hall of Heorot (l. 725).

The place-name *Grundisburgh* is itself of great potential interest. Ekwall states that 'very likely *Grund* was the old name of the place' and that name meant the *burh* 'at *Grund*',[134] but equally it might have meant *burh* 'of *Grund*'. As has been suggested, this must have been the *oppidum* in the now neighbouring parish of Burgh, originally part of Grundisburgh.[135] The Old English word *grund* usually means simply 'ground' or 'bottom',[136] as in *Beowulf*, where the bottom of Grendel's Mere is described as *mere-grund* (ll. 1449, 2100). The word is used in compounds used to refer to Grendel's mother, such as *grund-wyrgen*, 'she-*warg* from the bottom of the fen' (l. 1518b), a compound noted above in relation to the Grendels' lupine traits, and *grundhyrde*, 'mere-bottom guardian' (l.2136b). It is also used as part of the compound which refers to the location of the Grendels' sub-aquatic home in the *meregrund*, 'mere-bottom' (ll. 1449a, 2199b). This would reinforce the suggestion that Grendel was named after the place where he dwells, as is also implied by the names of a number of meres and watercourses containing his name, or close variants, in Old English charters, as many scholars have noted.[137]

Old English *grund* in this context may also relate to the Suffolk dialect word *grindle*, 'drain', 'ditch', 'small stream', or 'or its bed',[138] and especially its variant *grundle*. The Grindle at Pinmill, Chelmondiston, refers to the bed of a small spring-fed tributary of the Orwell estuary. The Grindle on the south side of Bury St Edmunds is the name of part of the marshy valley of the River Linnet.[139] It is situated upstream from St Botolph's Bridge and not far south of the site of St Botolph's Chapel. The dialect words *grindle* and *grundle* are both also used to refer to roads or paths which form the beds of watercourses. Existing examples are Grindle Lane, Sproughton, which forms the boundary between the old hundreds of Bosmere and Samford,[140] and the remarkable Grundles of Stanton and Wattisfield. These Grindles and Grundles could reinforce the suggestion noted above that the Grendel was named from his association with watery places. As such, the place-name *Grundisburgh* could have been understood to mean '*Grund*'s stronghold', and *Grund* might have been another name for the bog-haunting local variant of 'Shuck', the 'Gally Trot'.[141] Either way, the overall suggestion emerging from this discussion is that a possible reason why the bones of St Botwulf were brought to Grundisburgh could have been to help to exorcise the terrors associated with this place, especially if he already had a reputation for the purification of such places.

Edward Martin has assessed the settlement history of Burgh and its surrounding landscape and shown that it was a central place of authority in the late Iron Age and Roman periods, perhaps of a forgotten people located between the Iceni and the Trinovantes, whose territory shaped what was to become the northern corner of Carlford Hundred (Fig. 204). He also noted that 'finds from the earthwork imply a gap in its occupation between the Late Roman and the Anglo-Norman periods' and in its immediate vicinity.[142] This gap in activity on the site could have been the consequence of a belief that it was haunted during the Anglo-Saxon period, as Old English poetry implies of other Romano-British ruins. It is also likely that Burgh was a place of religious activity, for which there is some archaeological evidence, perhaps associated with the river.[143] The fact that Burgh church is only a quarter of a mile from Clopton church, both being curiously located on the outer edges of their parishes, might

strengthen the possibility that there was something special about the local *genius loci*, the spirit of this place, and a need to appease it.[144]
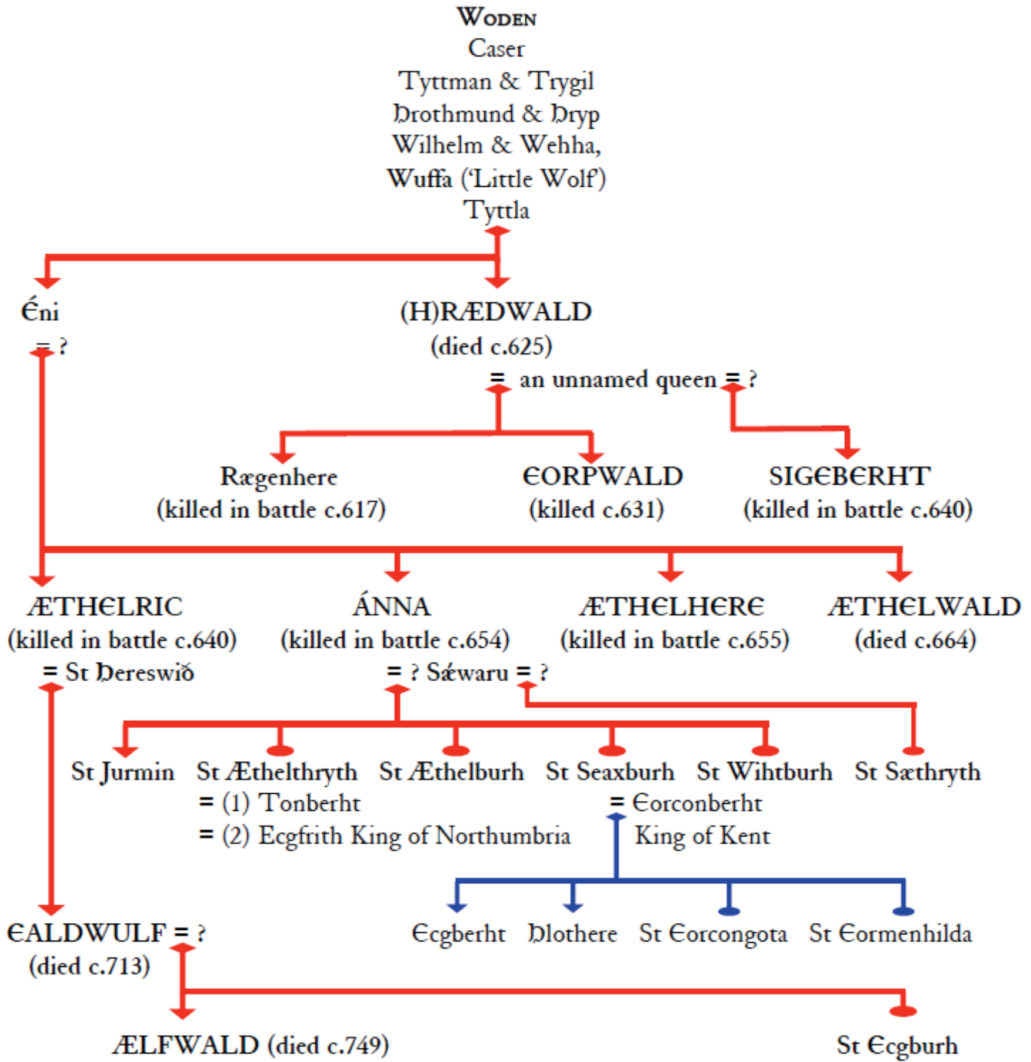
As noted above, it appears not to have been until the reign of King Cnut (1016–1035) that royal permission was granted for the bones of St Botwulf to be transferred to the abbey of St Edmund from *Grundisburc*, but this was not carried out until the time of King Edward the Confessor (1042–1066).[145] Not long after, some of the relics must have reached Thorney, when Abbot Folcard wrote his aforementioned *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis*.

THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF ST BOTWULF

In this paper I have sought to show some of the ways in which we can retrieve and begin to chart something of the forgotten history of St Botwulf. I have attempted to demonstrate that this is possible through a combination of studies in landscape history, archaeology, Old English language, literature, poetry, and folklore, as well as Latin ecclesiastical sources and hagiographies, and, above all, by the new insights afforded by the recent work on Abbot Folcard's *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis* by Dr Rosalind Love. Such an interdisciplinary approach can take us some distance towards compensating for Bede's withering silence about a saint who was clearly very important in medieval England, and whose name continues to resonate today.

APPENDIX 1

A GENEALOGY OF THE KINGS OF THE EASTERN ANGLES

WODEN
Caser
Tyttman & Trygil
Þrothmund & Þryp
Wilhelm & Wehha,
Wuffa ('Little Wolf')
Tyttla

Éni
= ?

(H)RÆDWALD
(died c.625)

≡ an unnamed queen ≡ ?

Rægenhere
(killed in battle c.617)

EORPWALD
(killed c.631)

SIGEBERHT
(killed in battle c.640)

ÆTHELRIC
(killed in battle c.640)
= St Þereswið

ÁNNA
(killed in battle c.654)
= ? Sǽwaru = ?

ÆTHELHERE
(killed in battle c.655)

ÆTHELWALD
(died c.664)

St Jurmin   St Æthelthryth   St Æthelburh   St Seaxburh   St Wihtburh   St Sǽthryth
= (1) Tonberht   = Eorconberht
= (2) Ecgfrith King of Northumbria   King of Kent

Ecgberht   Ðlothere   St Eorcongota   St Eormenhilda

EALDWULF = ?
(died c.713)

ÆLFWALD (died c.749)

St Ecgburh

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APPENDIX 2

OTHER CLAIMS TO BE THE SITE OF THE ORIGINAL FOUNDATION
OF ST BOTWULF'S MINSTER AT *ICANHÓH*

Hadstock, Essex
According to a charter of Bishop Nigel of Ely recorded in the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*, dated 1144 or 1145, Hadstock in the north-west corner of Essex 'had been consecrated to the religious life of former times under the blessed Abbot Botwulf, who reposes there' (*Liber Eliensis*, III, 90).[146] This probably means no more than that the notable church of St Botwulf at Hadstock might have been one of those which could have been founded by Botwulf during his lifetime. The version of his *Life* preserved in the *Schleswig Breviary* mentions that he established other churches besides *Icanhóh* though the descriptions of their locations (*Schleswig Breviary*, 4, 5) seems not to sound like Hadstock.

Furthermore, because of the references to the translation and subsequent division of the bones of St Botwulf between the reign of King Edgar (959–975) and the time of Abbot Leofstan (1048–1065) discussed in this paper, the Ely statement that the saint 'reposes there', which is reiterated in the ensuing chapter (III, 91),[147] seems unlikely to refer to his original resting place. It probably implies that some of his relics were there at the time, perhaps acquired from Ely, which does appear to have received its share of them. The *Liber Eliensis* mentions the theft from a casket of 'the head of the blessed confessor Botulph and his larger bones, in 1093 (II, 138).[148]

A serious case that Hadstock should be identified as *Icanhóh* was published in a paper by Warwick Rodwell in 1976. This was comprehensively rebutted in a reply by Edward Martin in 1978.[149] Nevertheless, Hadstock church is of great architectural interest. The evidence for major rebuilding in the early eleventh century make it a leading contender to be identified as the minster King Cnut had built for the souls of the men slain in his kingdom-winning victory at the Battle of *Assandún* in 1016, which was consecrated in 1020 according to the entry for that year in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.[150] Perhaps the cult of St Botwulf was part of Cnut's attempt to reconcile Anglo-Danish relations after years of warfare and hence his interest in the bones of St Botwulf implied by the Bury texts mentioned above. If so, this might suggest an explanation for the popularity of St Botwulf in Scandinavia noted earlier.

Boston, Lincolnshire
Boston's claim appears to be based on a combination of antiquarian speculation and local patriotic enthusiasm since the sixteenth century.[151] This seems to be entirely based on its interesting place-name, which probably derives from the Old English *Bótulfes Stán*, 'Botwulf's Stone'.[152] Perhaps this was a stone of pre-Christian significance reconsecrated by Botwulf on one of his travels. Either way, Boston church has one of the tallest medieval towers in England (it is just over 272 feet, or 83 meters, high) and is known ironically as 'The Boston Stump'. It is a landmark for travellers for miles around and was also a navigation mark for shipping approaching Boston via the Haven of the River Witham. At night it functioned as a lighthouse.[153] On a clear morning the tower can be seen across the Wash from the high ground of north-west Norfolk. Boston emerged as a trading port around the end of the eleventh century and, as successful travelling would go naturally with successful trading, this could suggest how St Botwulf also came to be associated with mercantile activity as well.[154] However, it is not clear what is the basis of Ekwall's assertion that the 'earlier name [of Boston] was *Icanho*' and no serious scholarly case has ever been made to sustain the claim.

Thorney, Cambridgeshire
A thirteenth-century Middle English poetic version of the *Life* of St Botwulf, preserved in the group of saints' lives known as the *South English Legendary*, retells Folcard's *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis* by Abbot Folcard of Thorney but asserts that Thorney itself was the original foundation (l. 39). This probably arose through local patriotic exuberance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1   Arnold-Forster 1899, 4, 343–44.
2   Toy 2003, 565–70.
3   In this paper I shall use the form 'Botwulf'.
4   Clark Hall 1962, 54, *s.v.* 'bót'.
5   Hoad 1986, 46, *s.v.* 'boot''.
6   Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 2; for other examples, see the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (PASE) website – http://www.pase.ac.uk/ *s.v.* 'Bot'.
7   PASE: http://www.pase.ac.uk/ *s.v.* 'Botwulf'. It does however appear to have been sometimes used as a personal name in later Scandinavia – see http://www.nordicnames.de/wiki/Botulf
8   See the further the section below on Botwulf's status as a protector of travellers.
9   Ekwall 1960, 54, *s.v.* 'Boston' – see Appendix 2; Ekwall 1960, 54, *s.v.* 'Botesdale'.
10 Thanks to Gilbert Burroughs of Chediston, Suffolk, for this information.
11 Campbell 1996, 12.
12 Colgrave and Mynors 1969.
13 Arnold-Forster 1899, 53–55; Bond 1914, 67, 90; Gallyon 1973, 92, 97.
14 Michelle Brown describes this as 'the greatest work of biblical scholarship and editing of the age': Brown 2010, 12.
15 Whitelock 1972, 10.
16 Gallyon 1973, 92.
17 Whitelock 1955, 698.
18 Scarfe 1986, 47; Stenton 1971, 117; Plunkett 2005, 121; Love 2014, 490.
19 British Library, Add. 34633, fols 206–16v; Sawyer 1968, no. 1798.
20 The form *Icheanog* looks like a Latin variant of the Old English name *Icanhóh*, on which see further below.
21 Whitelock 1972, 12; Scarfe 1986, 42–43.
22 Farmer 1978, 51–52, *s.v.* 'Botulf'. On this date see further below.
23 Higham 1995, 9–46.
24 Garmonsway 1953, or Swanton 2000.
25 Comparable entries are in manuscripts B, C, and E of the *Chronicle*, though in the latter the entry is under the year 653.
26 My own edition and translation, based on Plummer 1899.
27 Newton 2003. For a genealogy of the royal family of the Eastern Angles, see Appendix 1.
28 Bruce-Mitford 1975, 1978, and 1982.

29   Colgrave and Mynors 1969, 234–35, 268–69. See Appendix 1.
30   Fairweather 2005, 22.
31   Excavations by *Time Team* and work since have reinforced the view that Anna's burial-place was where the ruins of Blythburgh Priory now stand (*Time Team* 2008: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQtaKZflqVI).
32   Colgrave and Mynors 1969, 232–37.
33   Fairweather 2005, 21–22.
34   Harrison 1976, 134–35.
35   Scarfe 1986, 40, following Bruce-Mitford 1975, 707 n.
36   Martin 1978, 154.
37   Arnold-Forster 1899, 54; Stevenson 1924; Whitley 1930, 233–38; Whitelock 1972, 10–11; Martin 1978; Scarfe 1986, 44–45; Warner 1996, 114–15; Blair 2004; Pestell 2004, 25; and Hoggett 2010, 47.
38   Gelling 1984, 167–69.
39   Arnott 1952, 12–13.
40   Arnott 1952, 89.
41   I am indebted to Dr Rosalind Love for allowing me to use her unpublished edition and translation of this text.
42   The parallel was noted by Arnold Forster 1889, 54, and Stevenson 1924, 31.
43   On this important text, see further below.
44   There were clearly once several islands in the estuary, such as the one now known as Barber's Point, across the river north-east of Iken church. Since the tidal surge of 6 December 2013 breached the turf banks protecting the adjacent Hazlewood Marshes, this is now an island again. Fortunately, excavations there before this inundation by Richard Newman and the Aldeburgh and District Local History Society revealed several seventh- and eighth-century burials, as well as the possibility of another church site. See Meredith and Jenman 2015 – I am indebted to Anne Dodds for giving me a copy. For more information, visit www.adlhs.org.uk
45   West, Scarfe, and Cramp 1984, 279–301.
46   Cramp 1984; Plunkett and West 1998, 328, 344–45.
47   Cramp 1984, 291.
48   West *et al*. 1984, 289; Cramp 1984, 291–92.
49   Cramp 1984, 292.
50   Love, 2014, 491–95; Love 2015, 29–30.
51   On Grundisburgh, see further below.
52   Whitelock 1972, 11; Love 2015, 42.
53   Colgrave and Mynors 1969, 284–85, 290–91.
54   See the genealogy in Appendix 1.
55   Whitelock 1972, 11.
56   Woolf 1939, 8–16.
57   Colgrave and Mynors 1969, 238–39; Woolf 1939, 12–13.
58   Woolf 1939, 13–14.
59   For these members of the East Anglia royal family, see the genealogy in Appendix 1.
60   Love 2015, 42.
61   James 1917.
62   I am indebted again to Dr Rosalind Love for allowing me to use her unpublished edition and translation of this text.
63   Love 2015, 42–43.
64   Colgrave 1956.
65   Love 2015, 43.
66   Goodwin 1848.
67   Vercelli 23 (Scragg 1992).
68   Roberts 1979.
69   Colgrave 1956, 60–61. On Ælfwald's genealogical position, see Appendix 1.
70   Sawyer no. 1798; see the discussion of this text above.
71   Colgrave 1956, 94–111.
72   Love 2015, 43. The Exeter Book was compiled in the late tenth century but *Guthlac A* appears to have been composed not much later than the mid eighth century: Fulk 2014, 33–34.
73   Krapp and Dobbie 1942, 54.
74   Carter, 1945, 7–8. Thanks to James Irvine of Woodbridge for this reference.

75 My edition and translation, based on the edition by Goodwin 1848 of the British Library MS, Cotton Vespasian D xxi.

76 Brodeur, 1971, 90. See also Greenfield, 1967; Renoir, 1962; Storms, 1972; Irving 1968, 101–3; and Lapidge 1993, 383–84.

77 Orchard 1995, 34–37.

78 Grendel's physicality points to a date for the composition of *Beowulf* close to pre-Christian times, as Rafael Pascual has argued in his recent paper: Pascual 2014, 202–18.

79 Gerstein 1974, 145–47.

80 Pascual 2014, 206–11.

81 Forby 1830, **2**, 238, *s.v.* 'Old Shock'; Wright 1898–1905, **5**, 415, *s.v.* 'Shuck'; *The Oxford English Dictionary*, *s.v.* 'Shuck'; Newton 1993, 142–44; Pascual 2014, 206–11.

82 Brown 1946, 175–92; Brown, 1978, 45–58; Trubshaw 2005. I am grateful to Mark Orridge for a copy of the latter.

83 Carter 1945, 7–8.

84 Brown 1946, 176, 189.

85 Brown 1946, 178.

86 Brown 1946, 187; Reeve 1988, 42.

87 Brown 1946, 179–84; Reeve 1988, 42–43.

88 Hübener 1935.

89 Tolkien 1936, 262; Dronke 1969, 302–25; Pascual 2014, 203.

90 Tolkien 1936, 264.

91 Whitelock 1951, 29, 80–81, 104–5; Mayr-Harting 1972, 229–39; for a summary, see Newton 1993, 142–43.

92 My translation of the edition of the edition by Stevenson 1875, 117–18.

93 Stevenson 1924, 50–51; on this sculpture, see The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland: http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/609/ Stow Longa is well inland, but on the west and north sides of the churchyard flow streams in deeply incised valleys.

94 Cam 1963, 16; Warner 1996, 114.

95 Thornbury 1878, 9–17: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol2/pp9-17

96 I am indebted to Liz Wigmore for this information.

97 Morris 1989, 172, 219.

98 Hart 1992, 223–25.

99 Mawer and Stenton 1926, 194–95; Hart 1992, 224 and n. 23.

100 Arnold Forster 1899, **3**, 58; Hart 1992, 225.

101 Hudson 1980, 195–99: online at https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol6/pt1/pp195-199

102 Anon 2015: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1016518

103 Round 1921: http://cat.essex.ac.uk/reports/EAS-report-0055.pdf ; Reaney 1969, 377, *s.v.* 'St Botolph's Bridge'.

104 (a) St Botolph's church, Knottingley, Yorkshire is on the south bank of one of the old ferry crossings of the River Aire, a major tributary of the Humber. (b) The site of St Botolph's Chapel, Broome, Norfolk is now forgotten, but if it stood in the westernmost corner of the parish it would have been on the northern edge of the floodplain of the River Waveney, where the Roman road crosses from Wainford. (c) The place now called *Battlesbridge* in south-east Essex appears as *Batailesbregge* in 1351 and 'is probably to be associated with the family of Reginald *Bataille*': Reaney 1969, 193, but can we completely rule out the possibility that the name could have arisen from a confusion with *Botuluesbrige,* just as *Botuluesbrige* near Peterborough was misconstrued as *Battle Bridge* in a Northamptonshire map of 1779 (Hart 1992, 224, n. 23)?

105 St Botolph's Bridge over the River Witham at Boston, just south of the towering landmark of St Botolph's church, was built in 2014 (http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/transport-and-roads/roadworks-and-improvement-schemes/st-botolphs-footbridge/st-botolphs-footbridge-boston/106924.article)

106 Hart 1992, 224; Morris 1989, 219.

107 http://www.fearof.net/fear-of-bridges-phobia-gephyrophobia/ or
    https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gephyrophobia

108 Asbjørnsen and Moe, 1843; *Dasent* 1859: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Billy_Goats_Gruff

109 *Vita Beati Botulphi Abbatis*, 11: unpublished edition and translation by R. Love.

110 Toy 2003, 565, 567.

111 Thompson 1856, 371; Stevenson 1924, 35; Farmer 1978, 51–52, *s.v.* 'Botulf'; and Martin 1978, 153.

112 Sawyer 1968, no. 1798; Whitelock 1972, 12; Scarfe 1986, 42–43.

113 Cambridge, St John's College MS H.6. fols 179r–182v: unpublished edn and translation by R. Love.
114 Arnold-Forster 1899, 53–55; Bond 1914, 67, 90; Gallyon 1973, 92, 97.
115 See the discussion by Love 2014, 504–12, also her unpublished edition and translation.
116 The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, entries for the years 869–870; Garmonsway 1953, or Swanton 2000.
117 Fairweather 2005, 134–35.
118 Scarfe 1986, 45.
119 This would in turn reinforce the identification of Iken as the site of St Botwulf's minster at *Icanhóh*, as Norman Scarfe pointed out: 1986, 48–49.
120 Unpublished edition and translation by R. Love.
121 Arnold 1890, Appendix E, 361: https://archive.org/details/memorialsofstedm01arno
122 Arnold 1890, Appendix B, 352: https://archive.org/details/memorialsofstedm01arno
123 Stevenson 1924, 43; Martin 1978, 158; Scarfe 1986, 48–50.
124 Scarfe 1986, 50.
125 Martin 1988.
126 Stevenson 1924, 45; Martin 1978, 159; Scarfe 1986, 50; Martin 1988, 74; and Love 2014, 50.
127 Scarfe 1986, 50.
128 Moor 1823, 141–42, *s.v.* 'Galley trot'.
129 I am indebted to James Irvine, formerly a resident of Grundisburgh, for this information.
130 Martin 1988, 1.
131 White 1844, 134.
132 Malster 1999, 40.
133 Clark Hall 1962, 349, *s.v.* 'trod'.
134 Ekwall 1960, 207, *s.v.* 'Grundisburgh'.
135 Scarfe 1986, 50.
136 Clark Hall 1960, 161, *s.v.*'grund'.
137 Chambers 1959, 304–10.
138 Moor 1823, 114, *s.v.* its variant 'drindle', and 155–56 *s.v.* 'grip'; Wright 1898–1905, **2**, 230; Claxton 1968.41, *s.v.* 'grindle'; *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 427, *s.v.* 'grindle'.
139 I am grateful to Sue Banyard for this example.
140 Paine 1990, 173.
141 It is interesting to note that the Old Norse personal name *Grundi* appears to have supernatural, even troll-like, connotations, as N.K. Chadwick pointed out: 1959, 193 and n. 3).
142 Martin 1988, 68–76.
143 Fairclough 2010, 240; Martin 1988, 73.
144 Thanks to John Fairclough for this observation. Although there is not space to take this further here, John and I have speculated on the possibility that the canine and lupine apparitions from fen and marsh, like the Gally Trot, might ultimately derive from the frightening-looking wolf so vividly depicted in the iconography of the Iceni gold coin series known as the 'Norfolk Wolf'. Daphne Nash Briggs has also connected the Norfolk Wolf with the origins of Fenrir, 'Fen-dweller', the apocalyptic wolf of Norse mythology. See Nash Briggs 2011, 98.
145 Arnold 1890, Appendix E, 361: https://archive.org/details/memorialsofstedm01arno
146 Fairweather 2005, 414.
147 Fairweather 2005, 415.
148 Fairweather 2005, 266.
149 Rodwell 1976; Martin 1978.
150 Hart 1992, 560–64; Pestell 2004, 117.
151 Thompson 1856, 25–27.
152 Ekwall 1960, 54, *s.v.* 'Boston'.
153 Thompson 1856, 178 n.
154 Morris 1989, 171, 219.

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