

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Following in the footsteps of Edmund, King and Martyr



A modern representation of the Godspeed, the ship which  
Bartholomew Gosnold captained on his expedition to the New World  
in 1607, by local sculptor, Jonathan Clarke

## American Connections

An explanation of the many links, past and present,  
between St Edmundsbury Cathedral and the people of the  
United States of America





## Bartholomew Gosnold

Bartholomew Gosnold was born in Grundisburgh, Suffolk in 1571(2). The Gosnold ancestral family home was Otley Hall and tradition has it that his future voyages to the New World were planned in that lovely house. Whilst still a teenager, he graduated from the University of Cambridge and went on to study law at Middle Temple. After his marriage to Mary Golding in 1595 and the birth of their daughter Mary, one year later, Bartholomew brought his family to live in Bury St Edmunds but the whereabouts of their house is unknown. A second daughter was born and baptised Martha in the Church of St James (the modern Cathedral). The font we see today was put in position in the 1860's, but the octagonal pedestal inside the pillars is believed to be part of the original 16th century font and, as such, would have been the one in which baby Martha was baptised. Sadly, Martha died when she was two years old and, because she was baptised in the church, it is assumed that she is buried in the Great Churchyard although there is no marked grave.

Mary and Bartholomew had five more children after Martha died. Another daughter, also named Martha, married John Blemell, who is commemorated on a plaque on the south side of the church. In 1602, Bartholomew made his first voyage to the New World in a tiny ship called Concord; it was on this voyage that he named Cape Cod and, further south, found a single small island which, in memory of his little daughter, he named Martha's Vineyard. After obtaining a charter from King James 1 in 1604 for a 'Virginia Company' to settle Virginia, Bartholomew began putting together another expedition and, in 1606, he sailed as second-in-command of a fleet of three ships — Discovery, Susan Constant and his own ship, Godspeed. There is a representation of the Godspeed in the Refectory garden. They landed on 13 May 1607 and named the proposed settlement Jamestown in honour of the king. The site chosen was not a healthy one and many settlers died, including



Bartholomew himself, who died of dysentery in August of that year. Thanks to Bartholomew Gosnold and other brave adventurers Jamestown and other settlements were established and in future years others would come with their families and build on those foundations to make the USA into the country it is today.



### Translation of wording of Blemell memorial

Sacred to the memory of

|         |      |              |      |              |
|---------|------|--------------|------|--------------|
| Rebecca |      | Dec 6 1635   |      | Apr 4 1636   |
| James   | born | Sept 15 1644 | died | Nov 29 1644  |
| James   |      | July 2 1646  |      | June 13 1667 |

the Revd John Blemell, formerly Clerk in Holy Orders in this town of Bury and latterly with the people of London amongst whom (he worked) as minister in All Saints Church in a district near the Thames next to Martha, his wife, the mother of Mary Ewre, buried here and of the three children buried outside this tomb, who having fallen asleep, rest peacefully in the Lord.

RB, Clerk in Holy Orders (incumbent) out of respect and love.  
Set this stone in the year of the Virgin born 1695

## The Barons of the Magna Carta

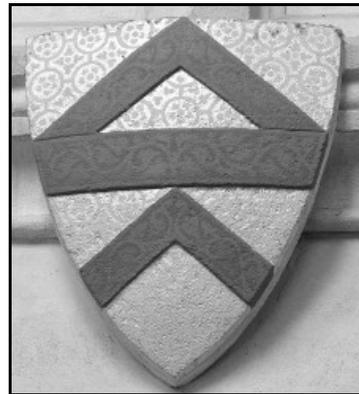
In June 1215 the barons of England forced a meeting with the tyrannical King John at Runnymede in a meadow by the River Thames not far from Windsor, and made him sign the charter known as the Magna Carta. This was a charter of



civil liberties first drawn up by Henry I a century before and agreed subsequently by churchmen and the nobility. Important clauses included the right by everybody to be tried by their peers and the principle of no taxation without representation. This is the document on which the American Constitution is based.

Before this, in November 1214, the barons had met secretly in the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, where they are reputed to have been given sanctuary by the abbot and to have sworn their support on the high altar. This might have been on

the Feast Day of St Edmund, 20 November. The barons were 26 in number and included the earls of Winchester, Essex, Gloucester, Oxford, Pembroke and Norfolk in addition to a number of lesser barons. The party included the Lord Mayor of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury - who was doubtless representing Church interests.



Bury St Edmunds therefore claims a historic connection with the Magna Carta and in the 1840's added to the coat of arms of the town the motto 'Shrine of a King, Cradle of the Law'. Following a visit by Provost Waddington to the United States in the 1960's to raise funds for the

cathedral extension, the Dames of the Magna Carta who claim to be able to trace their ancestry back to the original barons paid for the copies of the shields of all the original party of 26 to be carved around the walls of the new quire and sanctuary. A grant from the Friends of the Cathedral paid for them to be painted in the original armorial colours. The extension was opened in 1970.



## The Bury Cross

The Cathedral has a wonderful facsimile of the Ivory Cross, almost certainly carved in Bury by a twelfth century Abbey craftsman named Master Hugo, which was lost for some 800 years and then acquired in 1963 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Housed in the Cloisters Collection, this cross is recognised as one of the very greatest masterpieces of Romanesque art.

## Recent links

Just to the East of the Cathedral there is a tranquil rose garden commemorating those Airmen from the 94th Bombardment Group of the USAF who lost their lives during the Second World War. An American Technical Sergeant named John T Appleby served with the 487th Bomb Group near Lavenham, some 8 miles south of Bury, for just the last six months of the war. But it was long enough for him to fall in love with Suffolk. He wrote a slim volume, entitled *Suffolk Summer*, which has been in print ever since. Appleby donated his royalties to the Borough of Bury St Edmunds for the establishment of this rose garden as a lasting memorial to the brave young men who lost their lives so far from their homeland.

When the war in Europe was over and the 94th Bomb Group returned to the United States, the base commander handed into the safe-keeping of the Cathedral the United States flag which had flown at the base during two terrible years of aerial combat. The flag was by then in a worn condition, and, of course, had only 48 stars. A subsequent Base Commander at Mildenhall offered a replacement to fly in the cathedral, but it was felt at that time that the original flag had great sentimental worth, and it is still cherished as a memorial of a close war-time relationship between this town and those American Airmen who flew into combat from the four US bomber bases in our vicinity. The flag is currently awaiting a new 'home' in the Cathedral.



## Cathedral Refectory

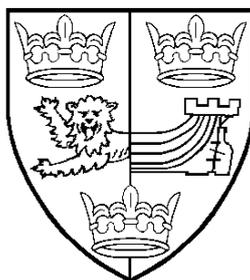
Also of interest in the Cathedral Refectory Garden is a modern representation of the ship *Godspeed*, which sailed from Ipswich in December 1606 under the command of Bartholomew Gosnold and reached the American coast at what is now Jamestown in May 1607 (see picture on front cover). The Refectory is open Monday to Saturday 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. A wide range of refreshments are available including hot and cold lunches, teas, coffees, cakes and scones. Toilets are located in the Cathedral Centre, near to the Refectory. The Cathedral Shop is open Monday to Saturday 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

### Useful Websites

[www.stedscathedral.co.uk](http://www.stedscathedral.co.uk)

[www.jamestown2007.org](http://www.jamestown2007.org)





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