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Barnwell Priory and Abbey

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Barnwell Priory Chapel



Then

Barnwell Priory was founded in 1092 and is the Abbey for which Abbey ward is named! It was founded by Picot, High Sheriff of Cambridge, for his sick wife, Hugoline, and became one of the most important buildings in the county.

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Barnwell Priory in the Medieval Period

The Priory became very rich and prosperous in the medieval period. The number of monks increased from just six in 1092 to more than thirty.

King John, Edward I, Edward II, and Henry II all spent periods at Barnwell, accompanied by huge entourages from their London courts.

During the reign of Richard II, it was even chosen as the venue for a national Parliament!



Richard II

The Great Fire of Barnwell



FACTOID!

The damage from the fire was so great that it took more than two years to repair!

It was lucky that King Edward I wasn't visiting Barnwell on the night of 3 February 1287 because, during evening service, there was a great storm. Lightning hit the tower and set the Priory ablaze!

Sparks – said to be 'like apples of gold' – were blown by strong winds into neighbouring houses and, in the absence of the Fire Service we have today, the fire raged for nearly two days. Large parts of the Priory and surrounding buildings were completely destroyed.

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The Peasants' Revolt



FACTOID!

The monks claimed that they lost £1000 in the attacks – which is more than half a million pounds in today's money!

But the Priory was not always popular. When the monks began to turn communal land into private farms, the locals became angry.

During the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, a mob of more than 1000 people broke down the door, gate, and walls, and stole food and coins from the monks.

Barnwell Priory and Henry VIII

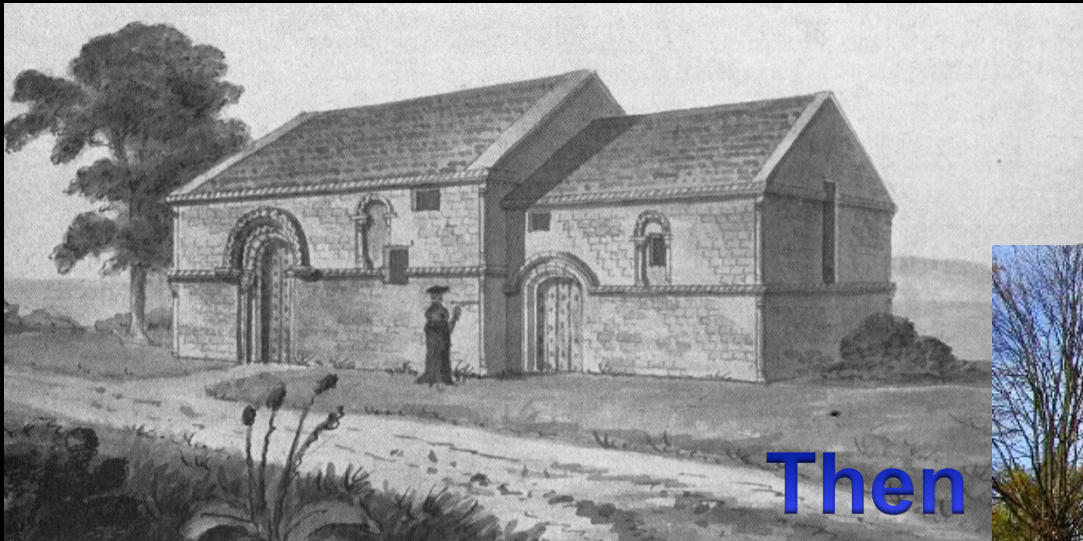


FACTOID!
Did you know this
was the place Abbey
Meadows School was
named after?

150 years later the Priory became the target of a more powerful foe, King Henry VIII! During Henry's Dissolution of the Monasteries, the monks were expelled and most of the Abbey was dismantled, standing as a ruin from 1538 to 1810.

Hardly anything now remains of this medieval landmark, except for the storehouse called the Exchequer (for coins, fish and grain), which you can see on Beche Road. This is the same storehouse that angry residents stole from in 1381!

St Andrew the Less



Do you recognise this building on Newmarket Road?



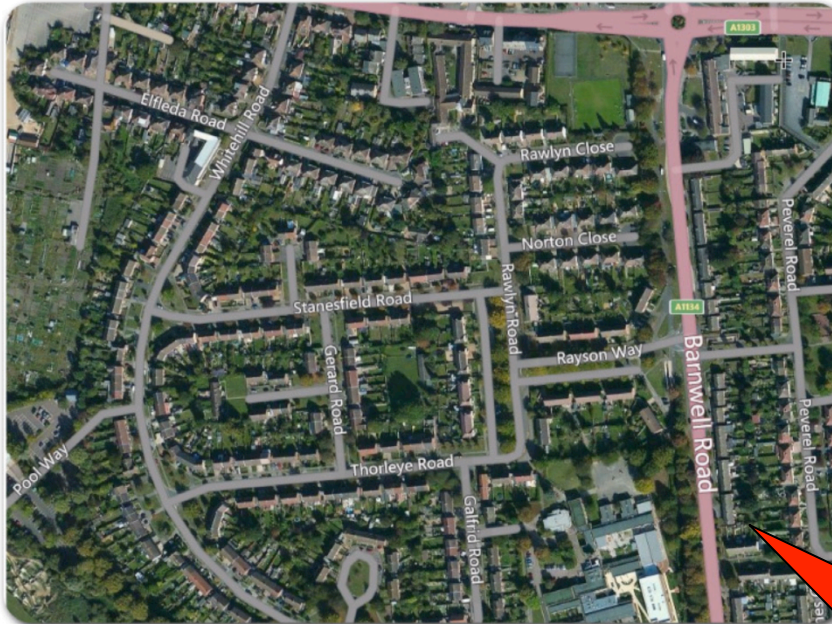
FACTOID!

The Church of St Andrew the Less now stands where part of Barnwell Priory used to be. This is why St Andrew the Less is sometimes also called 'The Abbey Church'.

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Abbey Street Names



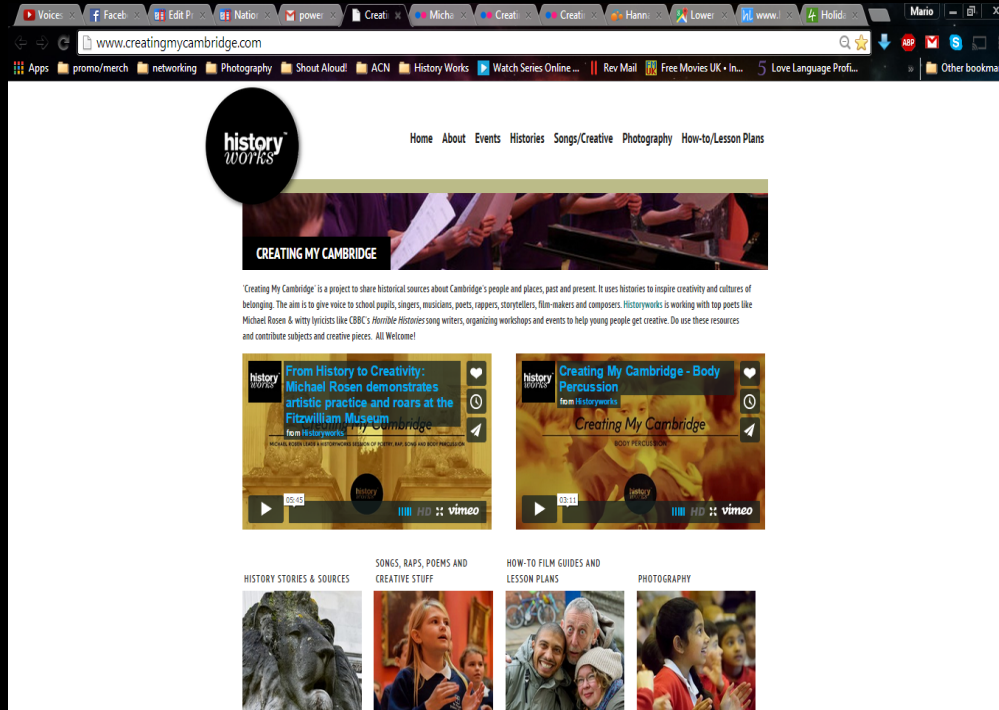
But though the monks of Barnwell have long gone, they are not forgotten!

Priors and patrons of the Priory are familiar names on the streets of Barnwell.

How many of these street names do you recognise? All are named after people from the Priory!

Web Resources available at:

<http://www.creatingmycambridge.com/history-stories>



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