



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Chertsey Abbey

This wall is one of the inner precinct walls of Chertsey Abbey, the first religious house to be built in Surrey.

The Benedictine Abbey, which was dedicated to St Peter, was founded by Erkenwald, later Bishop of London, in the seventh century. The site was then an island known as 'The Isle of Ceorot' (Cirotesige), from which the name Chertsey is derived.

The early Abbey, which would have been a modest affair of timber construction, was sacked by Viking raiders in 871, when 50 monks, the Abbot Beocca and his priest Ethor were slaughtered. The Abbey was refounded with 13 monks from Abbingdon in 964 and went on to become one of the greater monastic houses, ranking with Reading, Glastonbury and Bury St Edmunds. At the time of the Domesday Survey it held over 50,000 acres of land, not only in Godley Hundred but also in nine other Hundreds.

When Abbot Hugh of Winchester was promoted to Chertsey in 1107 he found the monastery in a ruinous state. The work of rebuilding commenced in the year 1110 and continued, with many alterations to the church, until the end of the thirteenth century.



ARCH IN WALL, NEAR ABBEY MEADS.

This section of wall was probably built at the time of John de Rutherwyk, Abbot from 1307 to 1346. Rutherwyk is often described as the "second founder" of the Abbey due to his active programme of rebuilding and improvements.

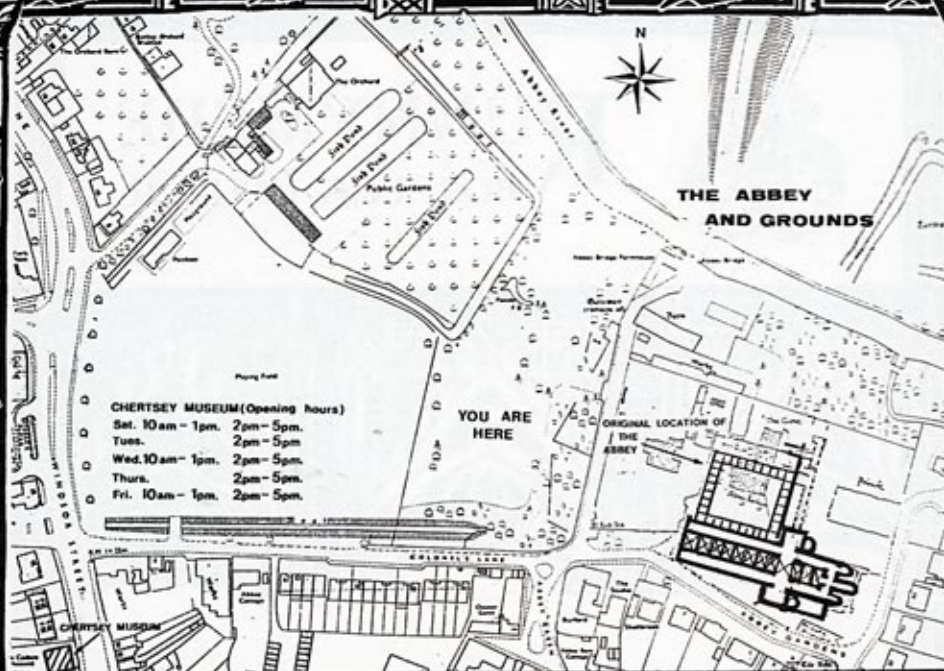
The wall separated the religious and domestic buildings of the Abbey from the industrial and agricultural areas of the precinct.

In 1934 excavations in this area revealed tile kilns, possible bread ovens and evidence of lead smelting. Fish ponds constructed by Rutherwyk in 1308 can still be seen in the Orchard, a short walk from this spot.



THE CONVENTUAL SEAL





LOCATION PLAN SHOWING ABBEY FIELDS, FISHPONDS, AND THE ORIGINAL SITE OF THE CHERTSEY ABBEY

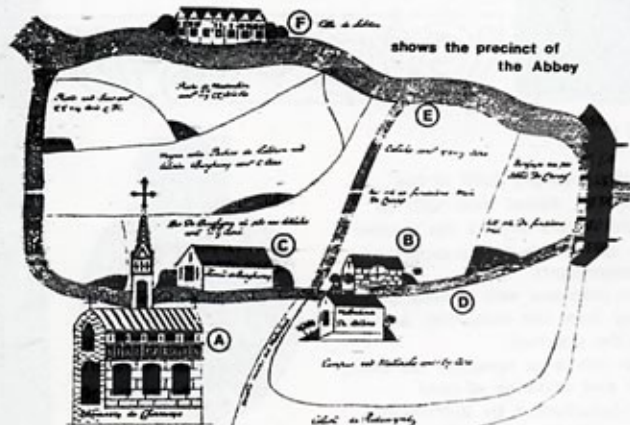
FURTHER INFORMATION & DETAILS OF A GUIDED TOUR FROM THE CHERTSEY MUSEUM

The major buildings of the monastery were dismantled at the command of Henry VIII in 1537, although enough accommodation survived ten years later for Archbishop Cranmer to be working here on the basis for our Book of Common Prayer.

The last act of grandeur was the consecration of Ferrar as Archbishop of St Davids by Cranmer on 9th September 1548

Excavations carried out in the 1860's and 1950's have revealed the scope of the great Abbey Church, which was 275 feet long and lined with Purbeck marble. The decorated floor tiles have been described as the most famous in England, with pictures illustrating romantic legends. The tile kiln was discovered close to the South transept of the church and excavated in 1922. Examples of the tiles are on display in the Chertsey Museum.

The tiles depicting King Edmund, shown below, were a composition of 9" tiles which were standard in the 1290's. The original of these tiles can be seen in the British Museum.



FIRST KNOWN MAP OF CHERTSEY DATED TO THE 15TH CENTURY

The Abbey (A) The twin water mills (B) The Great Burway Barn (C) Abbey River, flowing from Penton Hook (D) The Thames (E) Laleham (F)

