

Introduction

The story and legend of St Edmund, Hunstanton's most famous visitor can now be explored following this leaflet and a series of way markers which lead you from the cenotaph in the cliff top gardens to the dramatic cliff top location of St Edmund's chapel.

St Edmund was born into the Wuffing family (Wuffa was the old English word for a wolf) and was the last of that dynasty which had ruled the Kingdom of East Anglia for over 200 years. He landed in Hunstanton in 855 A.D., and since then Hunstanton has had a long and close association with St Edmund.

The story of his arrival in Hunstanton, his time ruling East Anglia, the dramatic story of his eventual martyrdom at the hands of the Vikings and the legendary appearance of a wolf to guard over his severed head can be discovered following the Hunstanton Wolf Trail.

Hunstanton's association with St Edmund were celebrated by Henry Le Strange, when in the 1840's he proposed his new sea bathing village 'St Edmunds'. As the town quickly grew it became known as Hunstanton St Edmund's, retaining this name until 1893 when the new council decided to rename the town 'New Hunstanton'. The connections with St Edmund live on in road names 'St Edmund's Terrace' and 'St Edmund's Avenue' and he is the patron saint of both the Anglican and Catholic Churches

The Wolf Trail starts at the entrance to the Esplanade Gardens, just a short walk from the Town Hall. You will find an information board about the story of St Edmund at the start of the trail and the first of six 'Wolf Trail' way markers which take you to the site of St Edmunds Chapel, the surrounding gardens and home of the Wolf statue.

APPEARANCE OF THE WOLF

Around a month after his death, St Edmund's supporters were guided to the location in the forest to try and retrieve his head, but it could not be found. As night fell, they heard Edmund's voice calling out 'Here!, Here!, Here!. Hurrying to the spot in the shadow of the trees, they were shocked to find a great wolf crouched motionless, with the king's head totally unharmed resting between its legs. As they approached, the wolf quietly got up and retreated into the forest.



Situated in the Wolf gardens at St Edmund's chapel the beautiful carving of the wolf has been designed by Jean Mulligan an artist/teacher who has a background in community art projects. The sculpture was installed in June 2011.

The Wolf Trail was planned and financed by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk as part of its participation with 'In Bloom'.

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DISCOVER THE HUNSTANTON WOLF TRAIL

Explore the gardens and cliff top scenery to trace the story of St Edmund, Hunstanton's most famous visitor and first patron saint of England.





1



ST EDMUND'S SHIELD

Enter Esplanade Gardens near the cenotaph.

The Wolf trail marker (1) depicts the shield of King Edmund. St Edmund was born into the Wuffing family (Wuffa = little wolf) who had ruled East Anglia for over 200 years. Having spent his youth in Saxony (northern Germany), at the age of 15 he set sail for East Anglia to fulfil his claim to the throne and kingdom of East Anglia.



2



ST EDMUND LANDS AT HUNSTANTON A.D. 855

Follow the footpath through the Esplanade Gardens along the line of the cliffs. Continue past the bowling green and café on your right, until you reach the open grassed areas of the cliff top.

The Wolf trail marker (2) shows two stained glass windows depicting St Edmund landing in Hunstanton in 855 AD. Legend suggests that his fleet which included counsellors, priests and clerics to help support his claim to the kingdom, had a safe journey, arriving on the beach below the landmark of the Hunstanton cliffs.



3



HOLY WATER

Continue to follow the cliffs until you reach the Wolf trail marker (3).

The legend continues that just a short distance from where he landed, St Edmund knelt down to give thanks for his safe arrival and a series of springs suddenly arose. The springs are still present at Waterworks Road in Old Hunstanton. The water from these springs was said to have miraculous powers, with many pilgrims arriving to drink the waters. For nearly one hundred years the residents of Hunstanton drank this water as it was pumped to the water tower (now demolished) at Lincoln Street.

- 1 Lighthouse
- 2 Coastliner Bus stop
- 3 Landtrain to Hunstanton town centre
- Cliffs
- 1 Wolf Trail



Continue further along the cliff.

Wolf trail marker (4) depicts the coronation of St Edmund. He was crowned King of the Northfolk (Norfolk) in 855 and King of the Southfolk (Suffolk) in the following year. At his coronation, St Edmund took an oath to protect his people from the Vikings and any threat from neighbouring small kingdoms. Under his Christian rule St Edmund's small kingdom prospered.



4



ST EDMUND'S CORONATION

Continue further along the cliff.

Wolf trail marker (5) depicts the Vikings arrival in the north of England in 865. The Vikings gradually moved south and after 4 years reached St Edmund's kingdom. Following an enormous battle on Thetford plain, St Edmund retreated to one of his strongholds near Hoxne in Suffolk, knowing that he would be heavily defeated in any further battle. Shortly after the Viking leaders demanded that Edmund should give up his religion and rule under Viking law. Refusing to do this and to save his people from further suffering, St Edmund gave himself up.



5



THE VIKINGS ARRIVE

Further along the cliff edge, close to the remains of St Edmunds Chapel, Wolf trail marker (6) depicts the martyrdom of St Edmund. Having surrendered to the Vikings, Edmund was tied to a great oak tree, whipped and beaten. Still refusing to renounce his religion, the Viking archers used him for target practice before finally he was beheaded. His head was taken deep into the forest and hidden amongst the undergrowth.

Legend or myth, the story of what happened to those searching for St Edmunds head is told overleaf.

Walk over to the remains of St Edmund's chapel and the gardens to discover more.



6



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST EDMUND