

Somewhere full of peace

To the Dengie peninsular in Essex to visit the chapel of St Peter on the Wall at Bradwell.



This is one of the oldest intact churches in England built by St Cedd (I suspect all the other monks and lay people and villagers had a big hand in the work) in 654 on the remains of the Roman fort of Othona, using the bricks and tiles left over. Roman bricks are distinctive being much narrower than later bricks (Tudor bricks are fatter, and Victorian bricks are fatter again).

St Cedd and his brother St Chad are well thought of to this day in Essex and East Anglia. There were four brothers; Chad, Cedd, Caelin and Cynebill born in the Saxon kingdom of East Anglia and educated by St Aiden in Lindisfarn. All became priests and Chad and Cedd became bishops and later were canonised.

Chad did most of his evangelical work in Mercia in the

midlands and his shrine is in Lichfield Cathedral, although when the first tomb was broken up during the Reformation some relics were saved, and these are held by St Chad's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham.

Cedd did much of his work in Essex but also founded a monastery in Lastingham in Yorkshire. He was one of the delegates of the Celtic church who attended the Synod of Whitby in 664 to discuss and decide which school of Christianity should be followed in calculating the date of Easter, that of the Celtic church directed from Iona or the Roman church directed from Canterbury. The Roman method prevailed for Easter and also other practices. Cedd died shortly afterwards and is buried at Lastingham. He is honoured next to his brother in Lichfield.

St Peter's was used as a farm barn for some centuries after the Reformation, and the space where carts were pulled in is still visible (refilled) below the two windows. It was reconsecrated in 1920 and services are held daily.



It's a long way to come for most of our readers but it is well worth a visit. Not much of the Roman fort and wall is left

(part of the line of Saxon Shore defences abandoned in 410)
but the beach walks and bird watching are also of interest.

The Essex Tourist Board has not paid me for this
recommendation (honest)