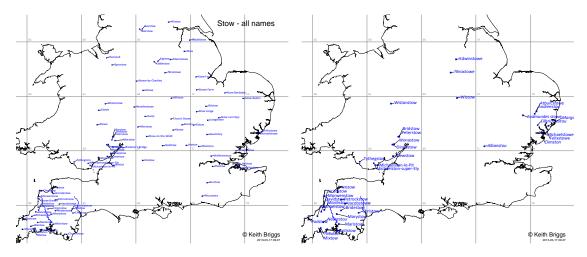
Saint's name + stow in Suffolk

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Motivating question: does the place-name Felixstowe contain the name of St. Felix? (first record Filchestou 1254).

The element stōw: The word is well recorded in OE as a simplex meaning 'place', usually with an implication of 'central (meeting) place' or 'sacred place'. About 100 English place-names incorporate the element, including 9 hundred-names (not all surviving). About 16 instances of the simplex Stow(e) occur. About 30 instances of saint+stow occur, nearly all Cornwall, Devon, and south-east Wales. Less than 8 instances of saint+stow occur outside that area, with not all cases secure or surviving. Unique Scottish example: Stow NT458445 (Midlothian/Selkirkshire); Stow of Wedale 1473; Wedale < *wēoh 'holy'? (ex inf. Simon Taylor).



Lost saint + stow names in Suffolk

- 1. sanctæ Eadmundes stowe to Bydericeswyrðe late 10th (i.e., the abbey of St. Edmund at Bury) in the will of Æthelflæd (Sawyer 1494, ASWi, no.14).
- 2. Andreestou s.a. 1094/5 (Chronicle of Battle Abbey, MS mid-13th) in a grant by William II to Battle of the church of St. Andrew in Cotton (TNA Cowdray/1(ii); Searle (1980, p. 98)).
- 3. *Eilbrichtestou* in Bramford in the same source and associated with *St. Albrytys Chapel* late 15th (Register of the municipal general court of Ipswich 1415–84, BL Add MS 30158). To Æþelberht.
- 4. *Atburcstowe* c.1230, identical to *capelle Beate Eadburge* in Thornham (Magna or Parva) in the Eye cartulary (Eye1, p. 194; Eye2, pp. 50–2).
- 5. *Halgestou* in Shottisham (also in the Chronicle of Battle Abbey), the same place as *Margaretistowe* 1279 and *Stowe*, *Blessed Margaret* 1307 (Brown (Eye2, p. 65); Arnott (1946, p. 67)).
- 6. Clymston, referring to a chapel of St. Clement and undoubtedly a misreading of *Clymstou (cf. Filcheston(e) 1291).

More on Climston and the chapel of St. Clement: Mentioned only in unpublished documents in the Suffolk Record Office, e.g. "piece of arable land called Costyn lying in Clymston' in Herkestede" 1467 (HD1538/246/3). Was claimed by Laverton (1995, 2001) to contain a British element clim compounded with OE tūn. Laverton knew about the chapel of St. Clement, but made no connection. It is much more plausible that Clim is an anglicized form of Clēmens, showing a similar phonetic development to Fēlic>Fīlic: Clēmen(s)>Clīm(en), and that -ston is a misreading of -ston. There is independent evidence for a name Clim: Jn. Clymson 1562 etc.

Back to Felixstowe

- * Skeat PNs of Suffolk (1913): "[...] 'a place of felled trees'"
- * Baron MA (1952): "It can [...] hardly be possible to accept Ekwall's interpretation 'St. Felix's place' [...] More probable is a noun fylleth [...] 'a place cleared by felling trees'."
- * Ekwall DEPN (1947, 1960): "Probably 'St. Felix's place [...] or possibly the first el. is Filica pers. n."
- * Mills ODBPN (1991, 2003): "Probably 'holy place or meeting place of a man called *Filica'. [...] The pers. name is probably an anglicization of (St) Felix, first Bishop of East Anglia, with whom the place is associated."

- * Watts CDEPN (2004): "OE pers.n. Filica+stow. [...] There does not seeem to be any connection with St Felix [...]."
- * Anon. KEPN (2013): "'*Filica's place' *Filica may be a form of Felix; the latter has certainly replaced it later."

Felixstowe — the theory of Coates (CVEP 238): *Filica (*Fīlica?) is an Anglicized form of Felix (< Latin stem Fēlic): Filchestou < Fīlican-stōw. Latin \bar{e} is borrowed as OE \bar{i} in stressed syllables (Campbell 1959, §506). Vernacular *Fīlica was later "improved" to Felix.

Some refinements of and/or support for the theory of Coates: The vernacular form of Felix may have been strong, with genitive Filices. Other saint's names have vernacular versions: Christopher/Kitt, Simon/Sim, Gregory/Grigg, Vedast/Foster, Bridget/Bride, Michael/Miles, Osgȳp/Sise, James/Jim, Julian/Gillian. Note the prevalence of the vowel -i- in these, even when not etymological. Other names possibly derived from *Filic: Filkins in Oxfordshire (Filching 1173–4, PN O 2, p. 320). Mariote Filche 1327 from Hoxne (Sf 1327). Fillyxchurche 1578 for Felixkirk in Yorkshire; PN YN, p. 199

Conclusions: There are six cases of saint $+ st\bar{o}w$ in Suffolk. The significance of these as a group has not been appreciated. They provide a good context for interpreting Felixstowe as really containing the saint's name. The parallel example of *Climstou containing an anglicized saint's name gives additional mutual support. The vanished Climstou was undoubtedly once more important, probably as a ferry crossing to Michaelstowe in Essex. Its existence is a valuable addition to the corpus of Clement chapels (nearly all associated with sailors; see Crawford).

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