

The Butley Priory Chronicle¹² recorded iconoclasm at St. Mary's, Ipswich with images having arms and heads cut off. However it did not specify in which of the several religious buildings in Ipswich, dedicated to the Virgin, they stood. Sir Thomas Russhe who lived at Sudbourne, was appointed visitor (inspector) by the Lord Privy Seal, Thomas Cromwell, and he reported in June 1534 that devotion to the image in Lady Lane *'is decayed'*. This is not surprising if the image was seriously damaged.. But what is to be made of the tradition that the image was taken to Italy, it being known to this day as *'The English Lady'*?



The statue of Our Lady of Grace, much restored and repainted, in the church at Nettuno

Experts do not believe that it could have possibly escaped the flames in London where dozens of images and other religious objects collected from all over the kingdom were destroyed at Chelsea in 1538. Our Lady of Ipswich was the subject of two letters in that year. William Lawrence wrote in July that, *'Our Lady was conveyed into the ship secretly and will come up shortly as the wind will serve'*. Another letter revealed her coat had *'two gorgettes of gold to put about her neck'* and there was also *'a tabernacle of silver gilt with the feather in the top of gold, and a little relic of gold and crystal with Our Lady's milk in it, as they say'*. Cromwell's steward, Thomas Thacker, recorded that the image was taken to the Lord Privy Seal's house. He added that by now there was *'nothing about her but half shoes of silver and four stones of crystal set in silver'*.