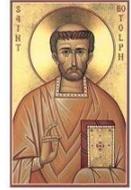




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

[www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)



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President: Revd. Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

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Easter Day: Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

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## Editorial

Well – here it is! This publication has had such a long gestation period that I expect some of you were wondering if it would ever be born.

However - Easter seems a particularly appropriate date on which to start a project like this (birth of new life etc.).

My intention is that The Botolphian will be published on the first of each month for the foreseeable future. I realise that this is an ambitious aim and if, in a year or so, I find that I have bitten off more than I can easily chew I might have to reduce the issues to bi-monthly. I am keen however that the society should get off to a good start and I believe that a solid foundation of twelve newsletters will go a long way towards achieving that.

There is bound to be a learning curve and I hope that you will bear with me. Please do not hesitate to criticise – but I would of course prefer that you did so in a kind and constructive way!

*The primary object of the Society is to remember, celebrate and raise the profile of Botolph, Britain's most important forgotten Saint. The secondary object is to provide communication, fellowship and a sense of "family" between Botolph's churches.*

I have received a great deal of encouragement from many people to press on with the society's revival. There are of course some who could not care less about the fact that they attend (or work at) a church which is dedicated to Saint

Botolph but at the same time there are many other people in whom the saint's name does seem to generate a lot of enthusiasm – and I am unashamedly one such enthusiast.

I suppose that 'supporting' a particular saint is in some ways like supporting a football team. I find it extremely exciting that we had, in this country, a 'home-grown' saint who, 1400 years ago, was a pioneer in spreading Christianity throughout our green and pleasant land. As a result of his endeavours we have been blessed with many things including national treasures such as the considerable number of attractive churches which bear his name.

It is also worth remembering that he was not a 'johnny-come-lately' but born within a few years of Augustine's arrival on the Kentish Isle of Thanet in AD597. Botolph was one of the pioneering heroes of his time and the resurgence in Christianity that he helped to promote was quickly recognised by the more intelligent British 'kings' as the way forward to provide a coherent society; this subsequently became the basis of our culture.

Also remarkable is the fact that so many churches bearing his name have survived. The vast majority of churches in the UK are dedicated to saints who originate from overseas (e.g. SS. Mary, Peter, Paul, Martin, John) but we celebrate our Botolph as one of the few *British* saints and he is well represented by the nearly seventy churches which are dedicated to him.

More of this in the next edition though. The plan is that each newsletter will follow the same format as this one although modifications will be made according to the comments I receive.

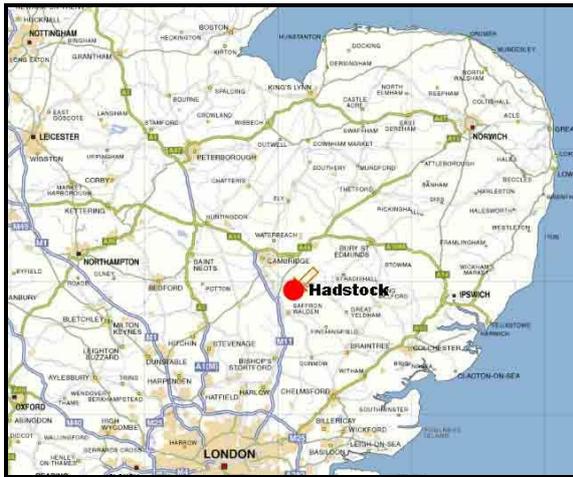
*I intend to feature a Botolph's Church in every issue and hope that as you read these you will feel inspired to pay a visit to these churches. When you do so, I would be grateful if you would leave a note (perhaps in the church visitors' book) indicating that it was 'The*

*Botolphian' which prompted your visit - and/or drop me an email so that we can see that our efforts are 'bringing forth fruit.'*

There will also be a 'Readers' Letters and Emails' section which I hope will generate lively discussion and fellowship between churches. Please feel free to print this newsletter and distribute it as far and wide as you can.

### Church feature

## Hadstock.



**Approach:** *If coming from A11, take the A1307 to Linton and turn right onto the B1052. After passing the King's Head Pub on your right (excellent 'ham egg and chips' in March 2013), do not turn up Walden Road but drive straight over and find the narrow lane (see dotted red line on map below) and proceed to the church car park.*

**Key:** *The church is open daily but in case of difficulties ask anyone in the village for Robin Betser (who is the Churchwarden and lives close by).*

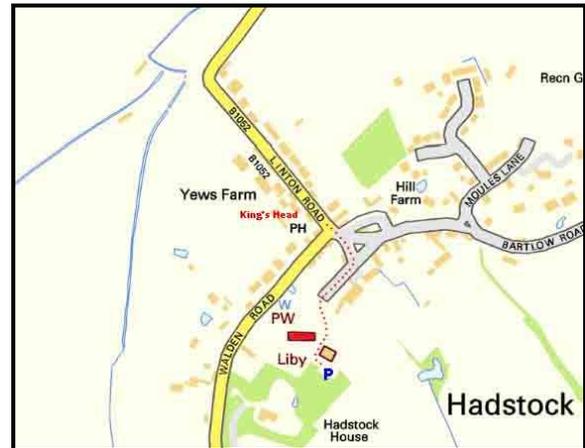
**Location:** 52.0792, 0.2729, (Note when setting your GPS that this is EAST of the Greenwich Meridian). Post code is CB21.

**Listed Grade: I.**

#### **Foundation of the site:**

There is little doubt that the basic structure of the existing church was built by King Cnut a few decades before the Norman conquest. It is thought that the church was built to commemorate the dead of

both sides when Cnut defeated Edmund Ironside at the Battle of Assundun in 1016.



Excavations of the church floor in 1974 revealed that the present building had been constructed on the cruciform foundations of a stone predecessor which was about 30 metres in length and 7 metres in width and had been destroyed by fire.

It has been suggested that these exceptionally large dimensions are due to the fact that this was not just an ordinary church but one of the first minsters (i.e. a royal foundation of collegiate monks). It is possible that it was constructed during Botolph's lifetime. In AD1144 Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury wrote of Hadstock as "that place sanctified to religion in the days of old by the Holy Botolph there at rest."

During the 1974 excavations a large but empty Saxon grave was discovered abutting the east wall of the south transept in such a position as would suggest that it once contained the body of someone of great importance.

These facts, together with others, lead locals to boldly proclaim the site as being that of Botolph's Abbey of Icanho.

[Ed: I look forward to receiving readers comments on this controversial point].

#### **History of the existing church:**

1. C11: walls of nave and north transept.
2. C13: Collapse of the central tower.
3. C14: Rebuilding of south transept.

4. C15: Addition of west tower and north porch.
5. 1884: Chancel rebuilt by William Butterfield.
6. St. Botolph's Hadstock has remained a royal church except for a few years when owned by the monks of Ely.



#### Items of interest within the church:

1. Anglo-Saxon oak door between the porch and the nave. The gruesome story is told that in the tenth century a Dane was flayed alive for attempting to steal the church's silver plate and that his skin was nailed to the door. It is thought that the original doorway lay a little further to the west but was repositioned within a few years of the building's original construction.
2. Two worn statues of a 'seated man with serpent' (C11 or earlier) which originated from the gates of a religious building.
3. Four C11 double-splayed windows high up in the nave.
4. 'Honeysuckle' C11 carved ornamentation on north door arch and imposts – repeated on capitals of south archway.
5. Font: C14 bowl on a Saxon base (although this is so well polished that it gives the appearance of being much more modern).
6. Rare C14-15 Oak Lectern with cable moulding.
7. C15 Screen with carving of the medieval theme of a fox preaching to geese. Test your mettle on this: I found the fox difficult to identify.
8. C13 Finial Cross - outside on the gable of the south transept.
9. C14 Piscina in the wall of south transept.

#### Relevance of the church to Botolph's life:

*Possibly extant during Botolph's life. May have been one of his great 'missionary centres.'*

#### Places of Interest in the vicinity:

*If you are "into" visiting Botolph Churches, Saint Botolph's Cambridge is only 12 miles to the NW and Graveley is a further 18 miles NNW of that.*

[Ed: My grateful thanks to Patricia Croxton-Smith and Robin Betser for their hospitality and assistance in preparing this feature.]

#### Focus on Botolph

I shall try to keep this section reasonably short but I do want to use it to share with you as much information as I can. I am at present engaged in reading for an M.A. degree in Biography and 'Botolph' will be the subject of my thesis. I rather hope that people reading this article might come up with research that I might have missed so I will welcome any useful information (with references please) that you might have.

#### **This month's subject: His name.**

This is written variously as 'Botulph,' 'Botolf,' 'Botwulf' etc; my gardener (Norman) insists on calling him 'Bolt-off.'

*Derivation:* the name comprises two elements and would seem to be a contraction of 'Beorhtwulf' meaning 'bright wolf.'

*Tribal / Dynasty connections:* During the British Medieval Migration period, name prefixes and suffixes were used repeatedly within the same families and one would have thought it would be quite easy to identify the dynasty from which Botolph came. Sadly this has not proved to be the case.

In fact the 'beorht' element was regularly used as the *second* part of names in early Kentish, Essex and East Anglian dynasties but very rarely as the *first* part; the exception of course is the famous 'Beowulf.'

It is also similarly rare to find the 'wulf' element in names *before* Botolph's date of birth (c.AD620) although it becomes relatively more common after his death.

The Schleswig Breviary tells us that Botolph's roots lie in Scotland but I find this unbelievable since there is absolutely no hint of anything vaguely approaching the structure of his name in either Scottish or Irish dynasties. There is

however, the outside chance that the breviary scribes thought that Northumbria was part of Scotland. If this were the case then it seems to me that *Ecgwulf*, the first (c.AD716) monarch of the Leodwaling dynasty, would be the missing link for which we are searching. He was rapidly followed by Ceolwulf (to whom Bede dedicated his Ecclesiastical History), Oswulf and two Eardwulfs.

I am therefore placing my bets on Botolph's name (and hence his ancestry) originating from Northumbria – probably from the line of Ida. There! I have thrown my hat into the ring and I shall sit back and wait with interest for comments from our learned readers.

### Readers' Letters and Emails

... well none as yet – which is hardly surprising but I look forward to filling this section with lively discussion next month. I shall be sending this newsletter to our friends in Botolph Churches in Scandinavia and the U.S.A. and I particularly look forward to hearing from them.

I do reserve the right to edit your letters although I pledge to do my best to ensure that your meaning is not altered. It would help me greatly if you would send the correspondence electronically (i.e. by email) but if you do not have the facility to do this please feel free to use Royal Mail.

### Greetings

If you have ever been to semi-formal dinners where the Master of Ceremonies presides as various groups 'take wine' together, then you will recognise the point of this section. It fosters the same sort of networking spirit as Facebook by making the interchange of goodwill transparent to all. – So keep an eye on this section to see if your church features. Thanks to Revd David Murdoch here is the first:-

"St. Botolphs Iken send their greetings to St. Botolphs-without-Bishopsgate and St Botolphs Aldgate and look forward to seeing them at Iken's combined service at 12 noon on 29th June 2013."

### Social Events

As announced previously, a society luncheon will be held in October. At the moment I am proposing *Wednesday 9th October 2013 at 1230 for 1 p.m.* I would like your feedback on that date please; I am looking for a venue that is central to the Botolph Churches – perhaps somewhere like Cambridge. I shall aim for a cost not exceeding £20 per head and a meal that will consist of a main course and dessert with wine and coffee available separately. I am hoping that there will be a short address by our

president, Father Timothy L'Estrange, followed by a speaker on a 'Botolph' subject. After the talk, for those who wish, there will be a guided tour around a nearby Botolph Church.

### Footnote

Although I shall be delighted if you would forward this to as many others as possible, I would much prefer that you get them to send me their email address so that I can remit to them directly.

Do not forget to look at the website [www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info) from time to time. Its usefulness will probably take a while to develop but I hope that it will gradually gain momentum. On that subject I must mention that this is a family affair since the website is run by my charming daughter-in-law Angelique (and here I record my thanks) – with a little help or obstruction from her husband Rob and children Charley (7), Hayden (5) and Eva (2).

### Copy

The newsletter will appear in your email inboxes on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and I would be pleased to receive letters and any other copy a week earlier: i.e. by 23<sup>rd</sup> of the previous month.

### Membership

At present this stands at 65.

If at any point you wish to be removed from the mailing list, just send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) saying "NO THANK YOU."

You have either received this first issue of  
**The Botolphian**  
because you have already indicated that you wished to do so or because you happen to be on my personal mailing list. The latter is a 'one-off' event but if you would like me to put you on the list to receive future issues please send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) saying "YES PLEASE."

D.S. Pepper is the author of the historical novel  
"Botolph"  
ISBN 978-0-9567508-0-8  
This book is available directly from the Society of Saint Botolph at £10 including p&p, or from any good bookseller at £8.99.  
This is the first book of a trilogy; the second is due to be published later this year.