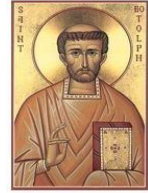




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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

Issue Number: 5

1st August 2013

Highlights this month

- St. Botolph's Church, Botolphs W. Sussex.
- Letters from *Father Pachomius, Simon Knott, Father Lawrence Smith, Father David Murdoch, Mark Tattum-Smith, Jean Mableson and Revd Nigel Lacey.*
- Saint Botolph's childhood.

Editorial.

The 'great' Icon search is continuing and gradually bearing fruit and I will report further on that when it is ready to be properly 'harvested'. As you will see from 'Readers' Letters' the project brought forth at least one wry comment.

I have been in touch with several iconographers including Helen McIlldowie-Jenkins and Marchela Dimitrova. Marchela describes her technique of icon painting using 'Egg Tempera and Golden Leaf 24 carat & silver leaf on wood primed with cloth and gesso.' Clearly this is a very specialised art form of which I look forward to learning more.

I gather that Hadstock's Saint Botolphide Fete went very well again this year (in spite of the rain) and that they raised the phenomenal sum of about £5,000. This fete is obviously something special and well-worth visiting for those within range.

I apologise for the late arrival of the newsletter last month which was partly due to a failure of Windows Live Mail technology (which I think I have solved by reverting to the 2011 version) and partly due to Virginmedia which blocked my emails due to 'unusual activity'. As I write this it is mid-July and I am still unable to get any assurances from Virginmedia that the same thing will not happen again.

Botolphs.

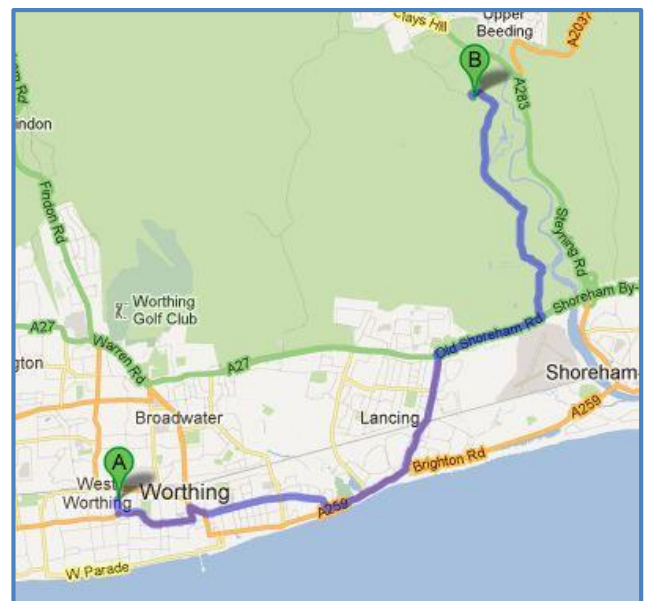
Approach: *Coming eastwards from Worthing on the A27, turn left at the traffic lights and follow Coombes Road which runs parallel to the River Adur. The road passes the imposing façade of Lancing College on your left and then at Coombes itself you will see another Saxon church (which is worth returning to after visiting your main objective). You will find St. Botolph's church just a little further on your right. The church lies on the South Downs Way and is often visited by walkers.*

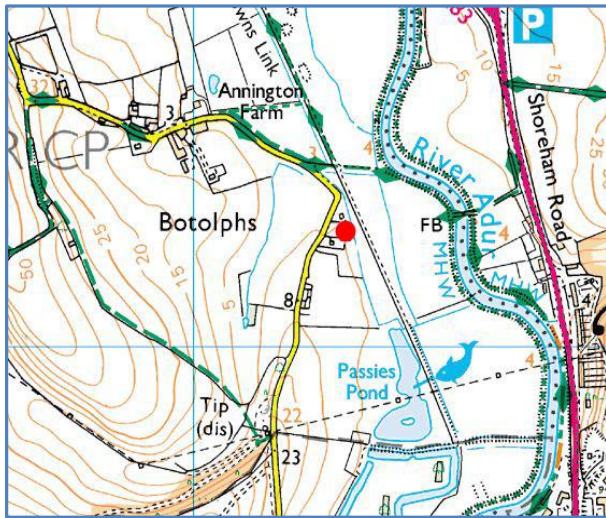
Key: *St. Botolph's is open most days but see Contact below.*

Contact: *Fr. John Challis, The Rectory, Church La, Upper Beeding BN44 3HP. Tel: 01903 810-265.*

Location: *50.8704, -0.3052, BN44.*

Listed Grade: *Grade I.*





Botolphs village and Saint Botolph's church:

Which was the chicken ... and which the egg? The first records of the place name date from C13 but of course that does not mean that it was not in use previously. The church dates from C10 or earlier and is likely to have been dedicated to our saint since its foundation.

The old Saxon estate of Annington and the parish of Botolphs, together with a site known as 'Old Bridge' are lumped together in an historical muddle which is not easy to unravel, the names having been regularly interchanged.

To add to the confusion, after the Norman conquest, the church was re-dedicated to 'St. Peter of Old Bridge'. The original dedication to St. Botolph was still used locally however and by c.1450 it had been restored. So it would appear that the church was 'the chicken' and the village was 'the egg'. The romantic might postulate that if Botolph himself had previously graced the site with his presence then perhaps it was named after him and that it was he who was really the 'chicken' which spawned both village and church.

Foundation of the site: *Saxon. The existing church is based on Saxon foundations which have been dated at c.950.*

Was there 'founding chapel' on this site in the seventh century? *No evidence has been found for this..*

Date of present church: *Late 11th century.*
Original format of present church: *Nave and Chancel.*

Major additions: C13 Tower; c.1250 North aisle; C14 new windows; 1536 Peal of three bells. C18 North aisle demolished.

Items of interest within the church:

1. Saxon nave and chancel.
2. Round-headed Saxon window at west end of south wall.
3. C17 south doorway. (The porch is modern).
4. The Saxon soffit roll under the chancel arch.
5. The 1630 pulpit.
6. Also to be found in the church is an attractive wood-carving of Saint Botolph, sculpted a few years ago by a local parishioner.
7. Some evidence of wall-paintings were recorded in 1897 but sadly no evidence remains today.

Status: *In use: Evensong is held here on the first Sunday in every month.*

Relevance of the church to Botolph's life:

Our first question on this subject must be: Did Botolph visit this area and if so, when? One can only speculate. If he did so, it is likely to have been either on or after his return from France in c.647 but before he 'timbered' his monastery at Icanho in c.654. This begs the question of 'To where would he have sailed?' Did he land on the *south* or on the *east* coast of Britain? If he sailed directly down the Seine from Paris, one of the major trading routes would have taken him to Bosham from whence he would have been able to try his hand at spreading the word of God amongst the then notably pagan West Saxons.

Alternatively, in Botolph's time, the River Adur was navigable right up to and past today's village so it also could have been his landing point.

If it was not Botolph's living presence that influenced the founding of his churches in Sussex

and South Kent, then, once again we can quite justifiably fall back on the likelihood that the proximity of major ancient trackways, - one passing east-west and the other going north-south, would explain the locals' decision to provide a chapel in which journeyers could pray to Saint Botolph, the Patron Saint of Travellers.

Places of Interest in the vicinity:

1. The adjacent Grade II timber-framed vicarage which may date from as early as the 14th century,

2. To the east of the church is one of the four **'Botolph's Bridges'** that exist in England.

The others are at Colchester, Peterborough and on Romney Marsh. The bridge is modern but there were, on the site, previous ancient bridges which, at different times, bore the same name. The importance of the 'bridge site' is reflected in the attachment to St. Peter's name when the church was dedicated to him.

3. The Saxon church at Coombes - which still retains some superb wall-paintings.

Focus on Saint Botolph.

We have, before becoming side-tracked by London Churches, St. Botolph's Day and Icons, already addressed the issue of the possible origin of Botolph's name in the hope that it might lead us to his parentage and the place of his birth. Unsurprisingly we were unable to come to any firm conclusion other than speculation that he might have originated in Northumbria.

Continuing the theme of finding out more about what the 'real personage' of Botolph was like, I want, in this issue, to speculate on his childhood. One might think that the seventh century was a hostile environment for a child but this was probably not so. Human beings have always been very adaptable as far as climate and circumstances are concerned and it is likely that the three greatest hazards Botolph would have had to face were: being born; succumbing to infection; being taken as a slave. He survived all of these, although it is likely that he would have suffered many personal tragedies during his life.

Some records suggest that he 'came from noble stock' but whether this were true or not, the danger of death from starvation is unlikely to have been a great problem. Good food and a

balanced diet in accordance with the seasons would have been reasonably plentiful. Good husbandry would have stored produce (such as milk, in the form of cheese) to see the families through the winter. If Botolph's family had cattle or sheep, the weakest would be slaughtered and salted by All Saints Day and their remains burned on the 'Bone-fires' as they celebrated the festival.

Did he have siblings? Opinion is divided. The popular consensus is that he had a brother called Adulph who served as a bishop in the Netherlands and that the brothers were buried in the same grave. When the time came for the bodies to be translated, the story goes that it was impossible to separate the two of them.

It is often not easy to distinguish fact from fiction but another suggestion that they had a sister called Pegia has been firmly put to rest as it is now believed that she was in fact the sister of St. Guthlac who, in some ways, took over the mantle of Saint Botolph in the following century.

(Critical or additive comments on these articles are always welcome).

Readers' Letters and Emails

Father Pachomius wrote an amusing email from Boston MA suggesting that I might consider entitling my search for Saint Botolph's icons "Icon Ho!"

Dr Simon Knott quite correctly chastised me for stating *as a fact* that Boston is derived from a contraction of 'Botolph's Town'. He suggested 'Botolph's Stone' as an alternative. There will be more discussion on this later.

Father Lawrence Smith of Northfleet was kind enough to write to compliment the Society on the newsletter - 'always an enjoyable read.'

Father David Murdoch of Iken wrote to report a most successful and enjoyable meet with the Mettingham College's Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia group who presented a copy of their Saint Botolph's icon to the church.

Mark Tattum-Smith gave me some very useful information for our new Icon Database. He also kindly sent me a copy of Mettingham College's Saint Botolph Akathist which is available for sale through the St George Information Service.

Jean Mableson from Legbourne, Lincolnshire told me that our saint has been getting good press recently with two mentions on Radio Lincolnshire on the same day - one from Skidbrooke St. Botolphs and the other from Boston Stump.

Revd. Nigel Lacey wrote from Bradenham to invite me to visit his church there. I look forward to doing that at my earliest opportunity.

Membership of SOSB

1st May	125
1st June	183
1st July	194
1st August	203

Please forward the newsletters to your friends and encourage them to become members by registering on: www.botolph.info. On that subject, Angélique is constructing a members list on the website. This will only include your name and your hometown but she would appreciate it if you could find time to go to the website and fill in the registration form, or if you have already done that, to revisit the form to 'update your profile' and indicate your preferences. Many thanks.

Social Events: Annual Luncheon.

Wednesday 9th October 2013 at 12.30 for 1pm

Venue: the *University Arms Hotel in Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1AD.*

Cost: £19 per person which includes a two course lunch with tea and coffee.

Please send your remittance for £19 per person to arrive by **31st August 2013.**

Cheques should be drawn to D.S. Pepper and sent to
17 Cliffe House,
Radnor Cliff,
Folkestone,
Kent CT20 2TY

or arrange a Bank Transfer to
DR D S PEPPER
NATIONWIDE, FOLKESTONE
ACCOUNT NO: 05025196
SORT CODE: 07-01-16

Speaker: Dr Graham Jones will be entertaining us after lunch with a talk entitled:-

'The saint at the gate and the king on the shore: Botolph and his cult over time and space.'

Dr Jones is a Senior Research Associate in the Oxford University Centre for the Environment and is based at St John's College, Oxford.

His excellent book *Saints in the Landscape* (Tempus, 2007) is the first comprehensive survey of church and other religious dedications in Britain.

After his PhD in 1996 he won the Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship at Leicester and the Stott Fellowship in the University of Wales, and held a fixed-term Lectureship in English Topography in the Centre for English Local History, again at Leicester.

Dr Jones is renowned as an interesting lecturer and he is very knowledgeable about church dedications as well as many other subjects.

From past experience I know that for events such as this people often delay their applications and then there is a rush at the last minute. I would urge you to book early because the dining room is of a limited size and if I know soon enough that more than 30 wish to attend we might be able to arrange a larger room and avoid disappointment.

Regular Endnotes

If this is your first 'Botolphian' and you have acquired it by circuitous means but would like to receive an email copy each month then just send an email to botolph@virginmedia.com saying 'YES PLEASE.' If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

Insider-information

You will frequently see the 'twin' towns of *Boston* mentioned - one in Lincolnshire and the other in Massachusetts USA. The relevance to the Society is that the name 'Boston' is traditionally held to be a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.' *Icanho* was the name of St. Botolph's Abbey.

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