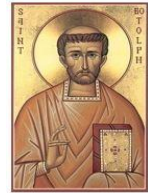




# The Botolphian

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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## Highlights this month

- St. Botolph's Northfleet
- First Annual Luncheon

## Editorial.

October was rather a busy month for me so I am afraid the newsletter is a little light this time. I hope nevertheless that you will find it interesting and that you will visit the website [www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info) and view the pictures and the video of, what turned out to be, the very successful first annual Luncheon.

I am very grateful to all those who came along and hope that you will spread the word about how enjoyable it was so that we can have an even larger turnout next year.

## Church Feature

# Northfleet.

**Approach:** Drive north up Springhead Road to the junction with Dover Road and London Road and as you drive down The Hill, Northfleet you will see the church on your left. Parking is available nearby.

**Key:** Fr Smith at The Vicarage – close to the church.

**Contact:** Fr Lawrence Smith. 01474 566-400

**Location:** 51.44306, 0.33463, DA11.

**Listed Grade: I**

The map below shows the Botolph Churches in Kent. The exact location of the foundations of the chapel at Folkestone is

unknown but records show that it was somewhere close to Folly railway crossing.

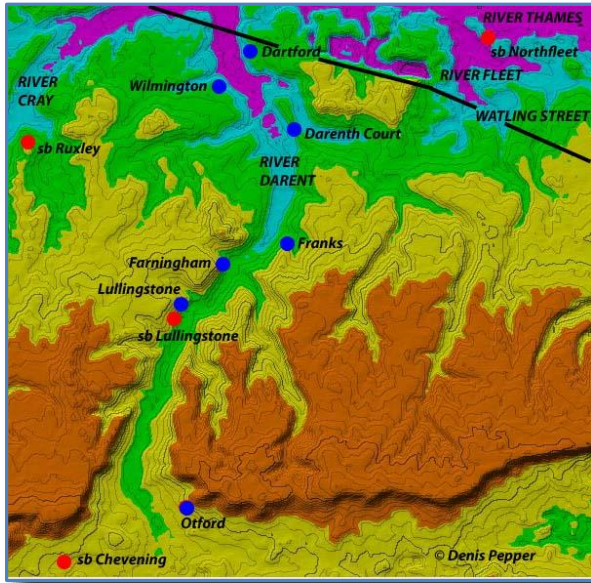


The church at Ruxley has fared a little better (it is at least still above ground) although its function now is as a storehouse at Ruxley Garden Centre. The other churches in the Darent Valley, - those at Lullingstone and Chevening are fit and well and will be featured later.

Darent Valley is 'littered' with the foundations of Roman villas of which the best known is the one at Lullingstone which is wonderfully preserved and presented.

The following map illustrates the topography of the area and shows the Roman villas (in blue) bordering the river. Of the Botolph Churches (in red), it seems likely that it might of been one of them that spawned the other three and the first on the scene would appear to have been the Saxon precursor of today's church at Northfleet. The pointers towards this are that it is the closest to the only Roman road in the area (Watling Street) and it is right

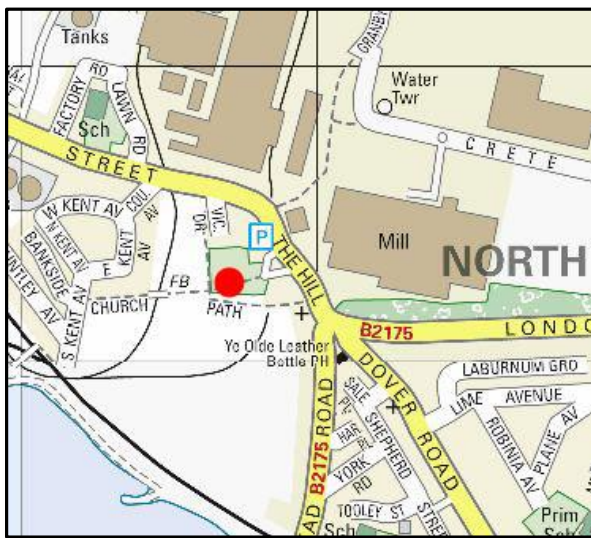
on top of the Roman (and possibly pre-Christian) site of Springhead (Vagniacae).



It seems that the present tower was built in 1717 *inside* the present one using much of the original material.



**Foundation of the site:** Do not be fooled by the comparatively modern appearance of the church. This is an ancient location which has probably been used for religious worship since pre-History.



**Items of interest within the church:-**

1. *The Rood Screen 1370. The oldest to be found in situ in a parish church in Kent.*
2. *The Sedilia and Piscina.*
3. *C14 Stone Font.*
4. *C14 Nave built over the old Saxon church.*
5. *C14 Chancel.*
6. *Model of "Royal Charlotte" (seen below) built locally in C17.*

The church is rather magnificent and is one of the largest in the Rochester diocese. The nave was built in 1330 on the site of the earlier Saxon church. The chancel dates from 1370 (as does the rood screen). The tower (which can only be viewed from outside the church) exhibits 'long and short' Saxon quoins and Roman material is present in some of the fabric of the church.



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

I believe that Northfleet might have been Botolph's base during his 'London Mission' and that he may have founded an abbey here - but I must hasten to add that I have absolutely no evidence for this other than that of the circumstantial variety. The location of the site (in a wild marshy area) was a predilection of Botolph's and it does bear some similarities to Iken.

If I am right however then it would not be surprising if he sent his acolytes out along the length of the Darent Valley in order to set up field chapels in those areas where communities were developing or where indeed they had already developed. Saint Botolph's Lullingstone for example boasts a Christian history that has continued unabated since Roman times. What a joy it would have been for Botolph to have discovered that. The foundations of the Chevening church however are thought to date from only 900 years ago - but of course there is room for error. Ruxley? - well Ruxley is believed to have been founded before the Norman conquest but just how much before will need further research.

Either way none of Northfleet's 'satellite churches' seem to have been built because they were on an ancient trackway so perhaps the missing link is Botolph himself?

I await your comments with interest.

## **Places of Interest in the vicinity:-**

1. *Lullingstone Roman Villa.*
2. *Lullingstone Castle and gardens.*
3. *Ruxley, Lullingstone, and Chevening St. Botolph's.*

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## **The first Annual Luncheon of the Society.**

This was held at the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge on Wednesday 9th October 2013 at 12.30 for 1 p.m.

Eighteen members attended and Father Timothy L'Estrange presided. Apologies for

absence were received from Chris Conn due to ill health. We wish him a speedy recovery.

The University Arms looked after us very well; the room, the food and the service were excellent. New friendships were forged and we enjoyed a delightful after-dinner talk entitled: 'The Saint at the Gate and the King on the Shore' by Dr. Graham Jones.

Under 'Any Other Business' there were several useful suggestions including having a joint meeting in the Spring. I think this came from the Church with Chapel Brampton team but I have stupidly lost my notes on that part of the meeting so I would be grateful for emails to refresh my ailing memory!

Apart from the photograph to be found below, there are other photographs on the [www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info) website together with a video recording. If you are using Internet Explorer 10 on your computer you may have problems with viewing this in which case just click the U-Tube button on the top right of the screen and all should be revealed.

Zina and I managed to arrive in Cambridge early enough to visit the local St Botolph's where we were delighted to meet the rector, Revd Prof. William Horbury, his wife Kathleen and other members of their church. After lunch had concluded, the Hadstock team were kind enough to invite several other members back to give them a conducted tour around their church.

We managed therefore to pack a lot of enjoyment into one day.



**Regular Endnotes**

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If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

You will frequently see the 'twin' towns of *Boston* mentioned in these newsletters, - one in Lincolnshire and the other in Massachusetts USA. The relevance to the Society is that the name 'Boston' is a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.'

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Folkestone, Kent. 1st May 2013.