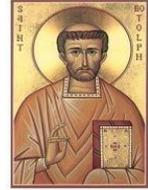




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Upwell, Norfolk.
- Emails from Father Pachomius: Diarmaid MacCulloch; Revd William Howard; Revd Paula Griffiths and Mhairi Ellis.
- *Please note in your diaries that the Third Annual Luncheon of the Society will be held at the Hilton Cambridge City Centre (this is the new name for the same hotel that we have been using for the past three years) **on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 1230 for 1 p.m.** Your after-dinner speaker this year will be 'yours truly' when I shall be giving a presentation entitled 'The Riddles of Saint Botolph, his brother and the Abbey of Icanho.'*
- I have felt that the flow of previous Annual Luncheons has been somewhat disturbed by the way we choose our two courses. Some people chose starters and main and some chose main and dessert and others chose to have all three. This year therefore you will be able to choose to have two courses without dessert or all three courses. Tea or coffee will be included but drinks will be ordered and paid for separately. There will be a small service charge included in the price. I will endeavour to keep the costs down as much as possible – the hotel tell me they will be able to accommodate us at similar prices to last year. The hotel is at present preparing new menus and I will announce these and let you know the costs in the July newsletter.
- I would be grateful however if you would let me know as soon as possible if you are likely to attend.

Editorial

As it turned out it was just as well that I sent last month's newsletter before I left England. Cosmote (a German communications company operating in Greece) had, without notice, changed the rules during the winter which, to cut a long story short, made it difficult for me to reconnect to the internet. Insult was added to injury by Cosmote confiscating the 50 euros that remained in my account! Such are the joys of life in Europe!

I am writing this (on Sunday 29 May while we are at anchor in Argostoli Bay on the southwest corner of the island of Cephalonia) in the semi-confident hope that the products of my efforts will make it into your email inboxes in a few days' time.

In the last newsletter I wrote (of Shingham and Beachamwell) that *'they must have been very pious here at one time because eight churches are to be found within a one and a half mile radius.'* Here at Argostoli I can see six (Greek Orthodox) churches scattered through the village and another on the opposite bank. None of the churches seem to be redundant and the cacophony of noise which reverberates across the bay when all the bells are rung at the same time is quite startling. I must say that, in spite of the fact that the peals lack the melodious subtlety of our British campanology, Christianity in Greece still seems to be thriving.

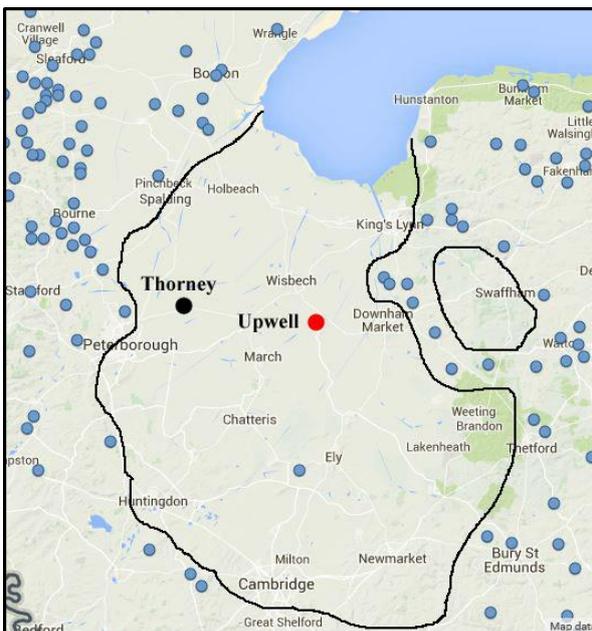
Last month's newsletter featured the now-redundant St Botolph's Church, Shingham which lies at the edge of the 'Ouse Basin.' I feel it is inappropriate to leave this area before featuring another church which lies – or rather 'lay' right in the middle of the basin – and that is the church of:

Upwell, Norfolk.



One might have thought that Upwell was too far west to be in Norfolk but this is not the case - although it does lie on the boundary. Its nearest neighbours are Wisbech to the northwest and Downham Market to the east.

It is also right in the middle of the fens which, in Saxon times would have been a desolate area as the lack of Viking place-names illustrates below. It is the fens themselves which constitute most of the Ouse Basin. To the western edge (but specifically *not* so close to the middle) there is another dedication to St Botolph – that of Thorney Abbey.



Sadly only the *foundations* of St Botolph's Church, Upwell now exist and they are buried under a modern house on the corner of Pius Drove and the main road.



We have the antiquarian Francis Blomefield (1705-1752) to thank for information about the church's existence. Blomefield was a Norfolk parson who, as a boy, started collecting monumental inscriptions from local churches. In 1739 he bought a printing press and published the first volume of his *History of Norfolk*. This was completed after his death by his friend Charles Parkin. Volume VII tells us of Upwell that '*in this parish was also a chapel dedicated to St Botulf.*'

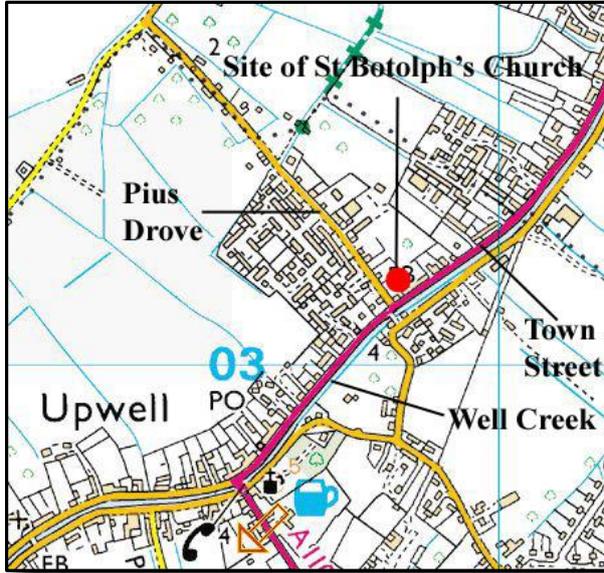
William Watson (1804-1866) in his 'History of Wisbech' when also writing of Upwell, mentions '*an old house near the bridge, the last in the village on the road to Outwell, which had the appearance of formerly having been a chapel, and a roadway nearby called Pious Drove ... this may be the chapel which, with two cottages, all in the tenure of the churchwardens, was in 1549 granted to William Warde.* (Ed: The name of the roadway is now written 'Pius' Drove).

Peter Buttle writes on his 'Saint Botolph' website <http://www.st-botolphs.com/> that he was told that Upwell church was demolished between 1890 and 1900. Peter suggests that more information might be available in Wisbech museum but I have not yet followed this lead.

Approach: Should you decide to visit the site of Upwell church's foundations you may choose to approach from Peterborough and include Thorney Abbey in your itinerary. After leaving Thorney you will find yourself on the A47 heading eastwards across remarkably flat countryside that was originally covered by water. Turn left at the roundabout and remain on the A47 and head towards Wisbech. At the next roundabout take the third exit towards Outwell (A1101). After passing the Outwell village sign turn right at the roundabout and then immediately left into Isle Road (still the A1101). This takes you along the

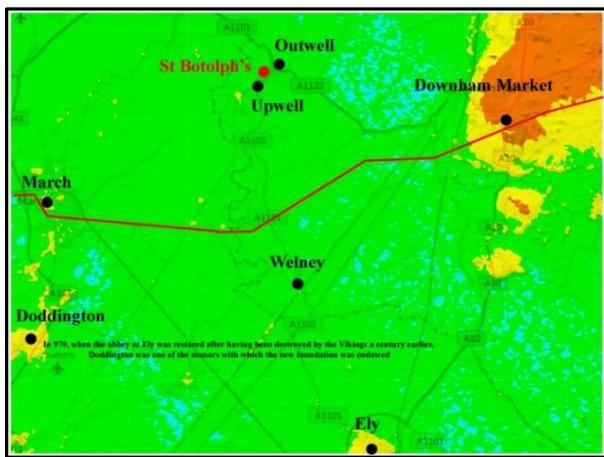
north side of Well Creek and its narrowboats and other small craft. You are now in Town Street and will shortly see a road sign indicating 'Friday Bridge 3.' As the Navigator says: "You have now reached your destination."

Location: Junction of Pius Drove and Town Street, Upwell, Norfolk PE14 9AL; 52.605230, 0.225634.



Upwell and Outwell were collectively known in the Middle Ages as 'The Welles' and, merging into each other as they do and stretching out over 4 miles, are considered to constitute the longest village in England.

In 974 King Edgar decreed that 60,000 eels yearly were to be contributed by the twenty fishermen living in 'the Welles' to the newly-founded monastery of Ramsey. It looks therefore as if the marshes had by that time been reclaimed sufficiently to support habitation.



The nearest Roman road to Upwell is the same as that which featured in last month's newsletter - i.e. the one which crosses the fens via Whittlesey and March to Downham Market. At its closest point the church site is about 2.5 miles away and therefore conforms to the 'within 3 miles of a Roman road' rule for Botolph churches!

Looking at the 1086 Domesday Register it seems that Upwell was a place of relative importance at the time of the Norman Conquest and quite eclipsed Outwell. The total population is recorded as 66 households which rates as 'very large.' There were 22 villagers, 20 smallholders, 27 slaves and 1 free man together with mills, fisheries and ... 2 churches.

By 1291 as many as 16 religious houses owned land and fisheries in the small area. The earliest foundations of the other extant churches in the area - namely St Clement's Outwell and St Peter's Upwell - date from C13 so without the evidence of Domesday one would be tempted to imagine that 'St Botulf's Chapel' would have had a similar provenance and dismiss it as a type B(iii) Botolph's church i.e. founded *after* the Norman Conquest.

If, as Domesday tells us, there *was* a church in Upwell *prior* to the Conquest however, there is a more than an even chance that it was the one dedicated to Saint Botolph. If Upwell was highly populated by 1086 – from *when* we might ask, did this increase in population date? Looking back to the records of 974 we find those 22 fishermen catching 60,000 eels for King Edgar. If the ground was dry enough to support it, *they* would have needed a church to go and pray in when the annual catch was bad and King Edgar was demanding his pound of fishy flesh.

This brings us back to Thorney Abbey at the edge of the basin. Could Upwell have started as a cell to the abbey - which might explain its being referred to as Saint Botolph's *Chapel* – i.e. a place of worship subservient to a mother church?

The Abbey has a long and complex history into which we will delve in a later *Botolphian* but, suffice it to say that, in C10, King Edgar was closely involved with its re-founding so it seems likely that Upwell and Thorney were closely linked. Although religious worship at Thorney dates from c.662, the topography gives no hint that Upwell might have been sitting on an island of higher ground at that time. This suggests that no

permanent habitation could have been built there until the land was reclaimed - and it seems likely that that did not happen for another 300 years.

Classification of the Upwell site.

I think the foundation of St Botolph's Church Upwell dates from late C10 and would suggest a B(ii) classification for the church.

Readers' letters and emails.

1. Father Pachomius wrote with news from the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline USA regarding his efforts to publish their book *Holy Week* (as translated from the Greek) see: http://www.bostonmonks.com/product_info.php/products_id/980.

2. Diarmaid MacCulloch wrote noting my passing interest in St Rumwold, telling me of a formerly lost chapel at Wetherden which lies between Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich in Suffolk. If such a thing exists, I would be interested to see a map showing the location of the dedications of St Rumwold churches.

3. Rev William Howard spotted the fact that the service with the Bishop preaching at St Botolph's Church Burton Hastings is on Sunday 19th June not the 18th as advertised here last month.

4. A press release sent by Rev Paula Griffiths from Hadstock reported on Dr Sam Newton's recent talk where: 'In a clear and engaging presentation, he described the background to Canute's invasion of England and how his victory made a major impact on the country. While he fairly acknowledged that the battle site itself has not been proved, and that other sites have been put forward, his talk pointed to many factors that favour the Ashdon/Hadstock area, including the impressive structure of Hadstock Church itself.'

The next event in the series is a talk on Friday 10 June at 7pm in Hadstock Church by Professor Simon Keynes- 'Conquest and Reconciliation, 1016-23.'

5. Mhairi Ellis wrote from St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3TL: The Churchwardens extend a warm invitation to all readers to join the annual celebration of our Patron, St Botolph this year on **Wednesday 15 June at 1.10 p.m.** when St Botolph's Choir directed by Iestyn Evans will provide glorious choral music by Wood, Padilla and Palestrina. The Venerable Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London, will celebrate and preach and the service is followed as usual by sparkling refreshments. We look forward to seeing you then - for catering purposes it would be helpful if you could let Mhairi Ellis know if you hope to be able to come at church@botolph.org.uk or 020 7588 3388.

Endnotes

Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to botolph@virginmedia.com if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

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.'

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 said to be a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.'

Classification of Botolph Church sites:-

A: C7 church sites relevant to Botolph's life.

B: 'Travellers' churches.

Bearing in mind that the Danish invasions started in c.800 and continued for 200 years, it seems logical to sub-divide

Type B (and perhaps type C) churches into those which appear to have been founded:-

- (i) before 800
- (ii) between 800 and 1066 and
- (iii) after the Norman Conquest.

C: Neither of the above.

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Folkestone, Kent. 1st May 2013.