

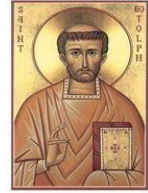


The Botolphian

Newsletter of

The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Issue Number: 15

1st June 2014.

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Wardley
- Correspondence from Jean Stone, Jane Davies, Peter Van Demark, Robin Betser, Mark Tatum-Smith and Peter Buttle.
- Welcome to Christopher Whittle, Rowena Bass, Adrian and Anna Biggs and Fiona Russell-Perry.
- Annual Luncheon 15 October 2014.

Editorial

I would like to draw your attention to the date of the SOSB Annual Luncheon 2014. I propose to follow the same format as last year and to hold it on **Wednesday 15th October 2014** at 1230 for 1 p.m. at the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge. I hope to keep the cost (for main course and dessert followed by coffee) at the same price of £19 per head. This date and price is at the moment provisional as I am at an early stage in the negotiations. I would be grateful however for an indication to botolph@virginmedia.com of numbers interested.

Within the past month or so I have had the pleasure of visiting three Saint Botolph Churches which have one particular aspect in common in that they all lie towards the periphery of the main St Botolph's grouping. The churches were Croxton Kerrial (Leicestershire), Wardley (Rutland) and Farnborough (Warwickshire).

I gained the impression (and I may be wrong) that they also share a reduced emphasis on Saint Botolph's status. One of the main thrusts of the Reformation of C16 was to reduce the importance of the saints within the churches to the extent that all but the best-authenticated were removed. We must take pride in the fact that Saint Botolph's credentials were good enough for his memory to survive this onslaught - although it might perhaps have been a 'close-run-thing'.



In 1536 Henry VIII issued a proclamation prohibiting churches from observing their patronal feasts as a holiday. A side-effect of this was to drive the memory of *local* saints into obscurity and many churches became re-dedicated in the name of more widely known Biblical figures. Some churches protected the patronage of their local saint by supporting him or her with one of the saints from King Henry's 'politically-correct' list. It looks as if this might have happened at Croxton Kerrial where the current dedication is to *Saint Botolph and Saint John the Baptist* although there is some evidence that in earlier days John's name took precedence over Botolph's.

Wardley and Farnborough both have the single patron - but (and this of course has to be a personal impression) ... it seemed to me that in none of these three churches did the personality of Saint Botolph rise to much prominence. I found no banners, statues or stained glass windows bearing the saint's name. This is not intended as a criticism but an observation which leads me to wonder if King Henry's edicts were originally obeyed more fully in this part of the country than elsewhere and if his stern voice persisted in echoing through the naves with the result that even the Victorian (and later) church refurbishers continued to toe Henry's line.

As always, I found each of the churches fascinating and, by way of a change, I have chosen to feature Wardley this month. 'The change' is

that this church (like Skidbrooke in Lincolnshire which was featured in the September 2013 *Botolphian*) is now redundant and the Church Commissioners are open to ideas as to how it could be put to good use.

Church Feature

Wardley

Approach:- *If approaching from the east, take the A47 which runs from Peterborough to Leicester. After crossing the A6003 at Uppingham (the Oakham to Kettering road) you will find a small turning to your left about 2 miles further on. The church is 200 yards down this road on your left.. We parked on the south corner - endeavouring to tuck the car away tidily.*

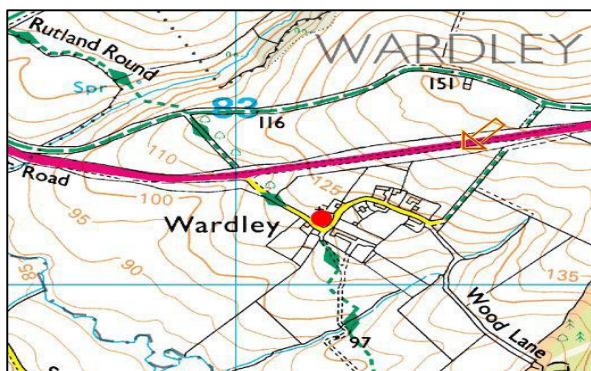
Key: *The church is normally left unlocked.*

Contact: *Revd Canon Rachel Watts, The Rectory, London Road, Uppingham, Oakham.*

Tel: 01572 829-956.

Location: *52.5923, -0.7735, LE15 9AZ*

Listed Grade: II*



The Village is very quiet and consists of just a few delightful houses, - clearly insufficient in number to support a church. The villagers won the 'Rutland Best Kept Small Village' award in 2010.

Wardley Wood, which lies to the southeast of the church, used to be part of the massive Leighfield Forest which, in C13 was a rich source of deer and trees for the tenants of Wardley Manor. This demesne is not mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) although it is believed that it was combined with the list of the nearby village of Ridlington.

In 1125 the tenant seems to have been Richard Bassett. He and his wife founded Launde Priory in Leicestershire to which he gave the advowson of Wardley church. In spite of concerted attempts by the Abbot of Westminster to recover it, it

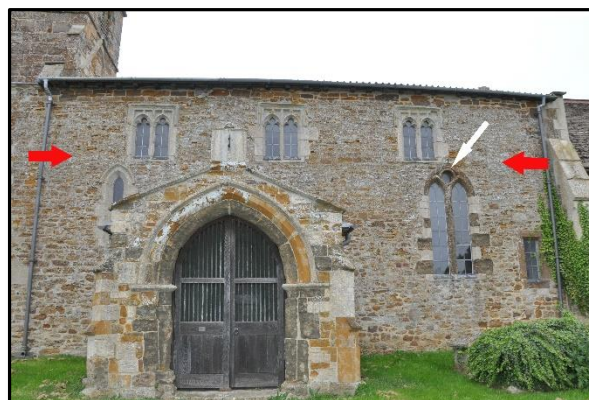
remained in the hands of Launde Priory until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The Church.

The fabric of the church is rubble with ashlar dressings. The building is clearly loved. It is light and clean and well-cared for. After the church was declared redundant in 2010 there was a proposal to turn it into residential holiday accommodation but, after receiving objections, the Church Commissioners turned this down. It is difficult to know to what purpose the building could be put but perhaps a reader of these columns might come up with a suggestion?

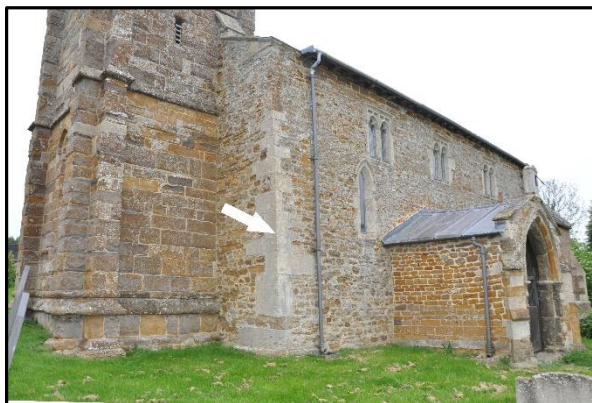


There are plenty of features to note and enjoy. I find it interesting to half close my eyes and attempt to envisage churches such as these as they were when first constructed. Standing outside one can look at the early C13 south wall and see the line (marked in red in the photograph below) where the clerestory was added (to let in more light) a hundred years or so later. It is said that the tower and porch were added at the same time and ... tacked somewhat untidily onto the eastern end is the chancel which was completely rebuilt in 1871. The white arrow marks the cuspless head-circle of an exceptionally good example of a C13 plate tracery window.



We are talking then, of the existence of a much smaller utility-based rectangular building in the time of King John and the Magna Carta.

Although the present nave is dated to early C13, the quoins at its western end (marked in the next picture), suggest that it might post-date a pre-Norman church.



The tower is notable in that it is topped by a broached spire (these are routinely octagonal and each triangular face is termed a 'broach'). They are not uncommon in this part of England. The particular feature of Wardley's spire are the two tiers of gabled ashlar lucarnes (more commonly known as dormer windows) which are present on its four cardinal faces.



On the east side of the tower a gabbling pattern remains showing the steeper pitch of an earlier roof. Inside the church however, the roof beams are said to date from C14. This must, I think, just apply to the three heavy cross beams or it would make it difficult to understand when and why the pitch of the roof might have been raised and then lowered again.

There are a surprising number of items to take note of in this little church so it seems sensible to list them so that those of you who visit can tick them off as you locate them.

Summary of items of interest:-

1. *The C14 Tower with its Broached Spire and gabled ashlar lucarnes (dormers).*
2. *The (?C11) quoins at the west end of the nave indicating the possibility of an earlier church.*
3. *The cusplless head-circle in the c.C13 window in south wall of nave to the east of the porch.*
4. *The exterior line in the south wall marking the addition of the C14 clerestory.*
5. *C14 South Porch with 1694 sundial*
6. *The gable marks on the east side of the tower showing the pitch of the roof before it was replaced by the flatter one.*
7. *The c.1175 South doorway with water leaf carvings.*
8. *The c.C13 aisleless nave.*
9. *C14 roof timbers in nave.*
10. *1797 Pulpit.*
11. *C13 (this date is disputable) Blocked north doorway*
12. *C19 Bates barrel organ.*
13. *1871 Chancel Arch. (The original chancel was completely rebuilt during this period).*
14. *C13 piscina and aumbry.*
15. *C14 corbel / headstops.*
16. *Not available for viewing but the tower has two bells, one of C16 and a smaller dated 1677.*



Some of these dates are difficult to verify and authorities vary in their views by a century or so.

I was particularly surprised that the porch was dated as early as C14. Very few medieval churches seem to have been built with porches, - they have usually been added much later. To my eyes this looks the same - except for the fact that the porch doorway itself *does* look to be authentically C14. I suspect it was either moved from a previous position in this church, or was acquired from elsewhere and built in much later - perhaps early C19? I shall await erudite comments with interest.

Two quaint features are the harmonium and a Bates barrel organ. I could not resist the temptation of trying the harmonium and I thought I managed to get it to put out some very satisfying holy noises. My wife Zina would probably not agree.



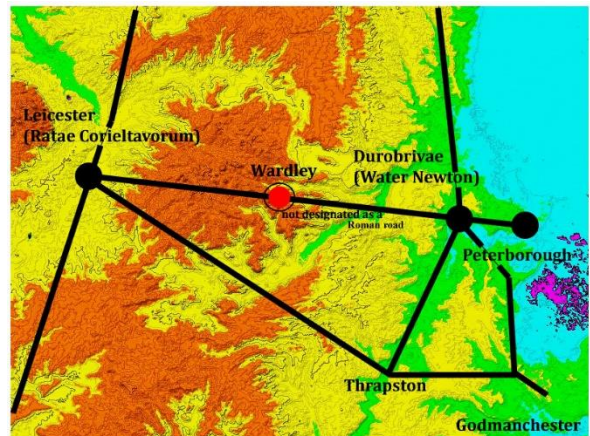
The corbel / headstop figures do not appear to be very happy souls, - perhaps they knew what was coming? They look down with an air of resigned acceptance as you walk around and one almost expects to hear them sigh!



Summary of the church's history:-

The church is situated on the road that runs from Peterborough (Medeshamstede) via Water Newton (a Roman Garrison town known as Durobrivae) to Leicester (Ratae Coritanorum aka Corieltavorum etc etc) - one of the oldest cities

in England. This ancient trackway was *not* designated by Margary as having been constructed as a Roman road although there would surely have been movement of Roman troops along it.



Relevance of the church to Botolph's life:

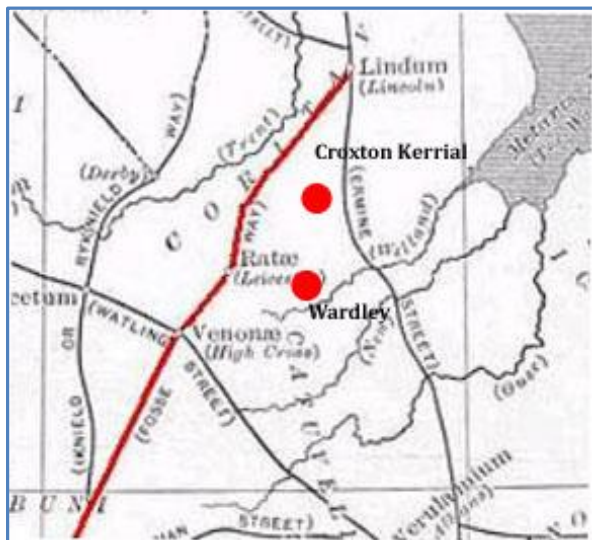
During the latter part of Botolph's (*Botwulf's*) lifetime, the Abbot of Peterborough (and eventual Bishop of Lichfield) was one by the name of *Seaxwulf*. This is an interesting coincidence because it is extremely unusual to find a name bearing the 'wulf' suffix in C7.

Wardley, being west of Peterborough would undoubtedly have been on Seaxwulf's 'patch' however and it is inconceivable that Botolph's acolytes would have strayed into that territory during his lifetime. We can therefore be fairly sure that Botolph had no direct hand in the foundation of Wardley church and this confirms the likelihood that the original building was not constructed until after the Norman Conquest.

And why should it have been dedicated to Saint Botolph? I believe that the answer is that travellers (or pilgrims) heading south from Lincoln would neither have wanted to take the busy Fosse Way towards Exeter, nor the busy Ermine Street to London. They would have chosen a quieter and hence safer route that ran between these two main thoroughfares. Thus the St Botolph's Church of Croxton Kerrial (which I shall be featuring next month) would have been the previous 'pilgrims' haven' down the line. This explains in my mind the positioning of these 'Travellers' Churches' where Saint Botolph, being in those days the foremost patron saint of travellers, would have offered the possibility of interceding with God to gain protection for the next stage of the journey.

I would therefore classify Wardley's Saint Botolph's Church as B(iii) (A 'traveller's church')

with its first foundation being after 1066 - see *Regular Endnotes* below).



Thanks: Many thanks to Revd. Rowena Bass for welcoming me to St Botolph's Croxton Kerrial and to Fiona Russell-Perry for showing me around St Botolph's Farnborough.

Readers' Letters and Emails

1. Jean Stone wrote that, as a result of the *Botolphian* she is looking at churches in a new light and noticing things she had previously missed.
2. Jane Davies wrote amusingly that she looks forwards to 'getting her parole' (I hasten to say that she means 'retirement from business') and being able to do a round of the Botolph Churches.
3. Peter Van Demark kindly sent me the script of the latest proposals for this year's play celebrating St Botolph's Day at the St Botolph Club in Boston USA. In spite of the amusing dialogue, Peter and his colleagues have taken care to maintain historical accuracy! I wish them a good production.
4. Robin Betser wrote from Hadstock to give me the wonderful news that on 15th June (the day after Hadstock Village Fete), Revd Paula Griffiths is to become their new priest. We also welcome Paula and hope that she will enjoy her links with the 'Botolph Community'. Revd. David Tomlinson, the Team Rector of the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry, will help to lead the celebrations, - supported by the Hadstock organist Gill Boyden, Hadstock Silver Band and Hadstock Community Choir.
5. Mark Tattum-Smith, of the Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow, sent a poster with a general invitation to their 'Pilgrimage to St Botolph's Church, Iken on Saturday 28th June 2014 at 12 noon'. This will be followed by a buffet lunch. For more details

telephone (01986) 895-176 or visit the website www.mettingham.org.uk.

6. Peter Buttle (who keeps a splendid website of St Botolph's Churches at www.st-botolphs.com) wrote to thank the society for the newsletters.

St Botolph's Day Celebrations 2014

The only notifications I have received to date have been the two mentioned above but if any further announcements are required please contact me and I will circulate a separate email.

Membership of SOSB

I am delighted to welcome the following new members:-

Christopher Whittle (Worcester USA)
Revd Rowena Bass (Croxton Kerrial)
Adrian and Anna Biggs (Colchester)
Fiona Russell-Perry (Farnborough).

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 Churches:-

A: C7 churches 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.