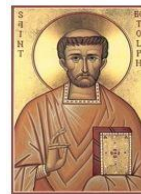




The Botolphian

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: 18

1st September 2014.

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Iken
- Welcome to new members: James Harris, Kenneth Crofton Martin, Dawn Hopley, Claire Down, Tim and Heidi Monsour, Tom and Jen Monsour, John Haydon and Pamela Mason.

SOSB ANNUAL LUNCHEON:

Tuesday 14 October 2014

Cambridge City Hotel,

12.30 for 1 p.m.

Cost: only £23 per head.

I need your support - PLEASE!

**email: botolph@virginmedia.com
as soon as possible with numbers.**

We have an excellent speaker in Sibella Laing, who will be giving a short talk about Corpus Christi College followed by a guided visit to the college of which her husband is Master. This is a rare privilege which I am sure everyone will enjoy.

Editorial

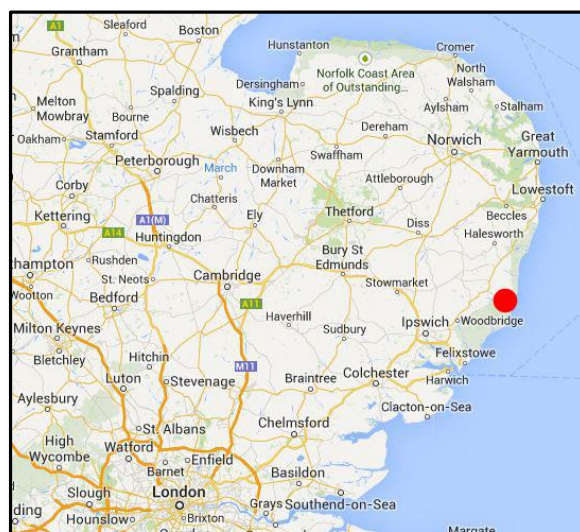
In spite of my best efforts I seem to be very bad at stirring up any controversy in these pages - although it would not surprise me if our readers find some comments to make about this month's church feature.

I have still had no response to the question of the identity of the statue wearing the bishop's mitre in the Croxton Kerrial altar screen. I have come to the conclusion that it could be St Patrick who is traditionally portrayed in the vestments of a bishop, and whose crozier (as in this case) is

frequently decorated with a cross pattée (for the description of this see below in the church feature). I have no idea why he should feature in an English Church dedicated to St Botolph however!

Church Feature

Iken, (Suffolk).



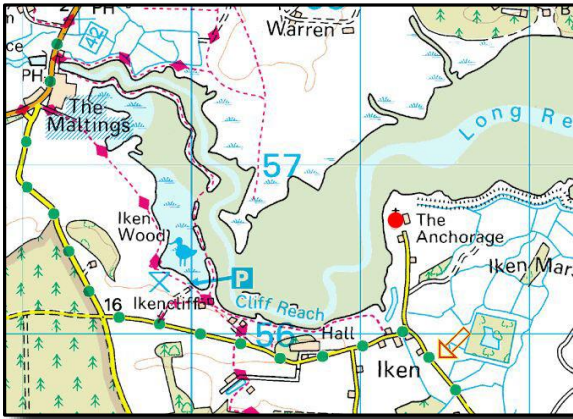
Approach:- Travelling north-easterly from Tunstall, drive 1.25 miles along the B1069 towards Snape. Then, at the junction, take the right hand turning and head east towards Iken, (2.5 miles away). At the next road junction turn left into Church Lane and park at the far end of the road.

Key: The church is always open but as the notice says on the door: **"Please close it after you because, otherwise, the bats fly in!"**

Contact: Revd David Murdoch 01394 450-336.

Location: 52.15468, 1.52592. IP12 2ES.

Listed Grade: II



Iken at last!

Zina and I only visited this iconic church for the first time on 23 July 2014. Funnily enough another SOSB member (whose name I am afraid escapes me for the moment) visited just a few days later and saw my name in the book.



Iken is of course delightful and renowned for its peace and tranquillity as, I hope, the photographs show. Apart from the beauty of the setting, the first thing that struck me about the church was the unusual and perfectly-fashioned thatched roof. Had we come to visit in 1968 that feature would have been totally absent; the nave would have had no roof at all. This was due to a disastrous fire on 4 April 1968 which was caused by sparks from some logs that were being burnt following tree felling.

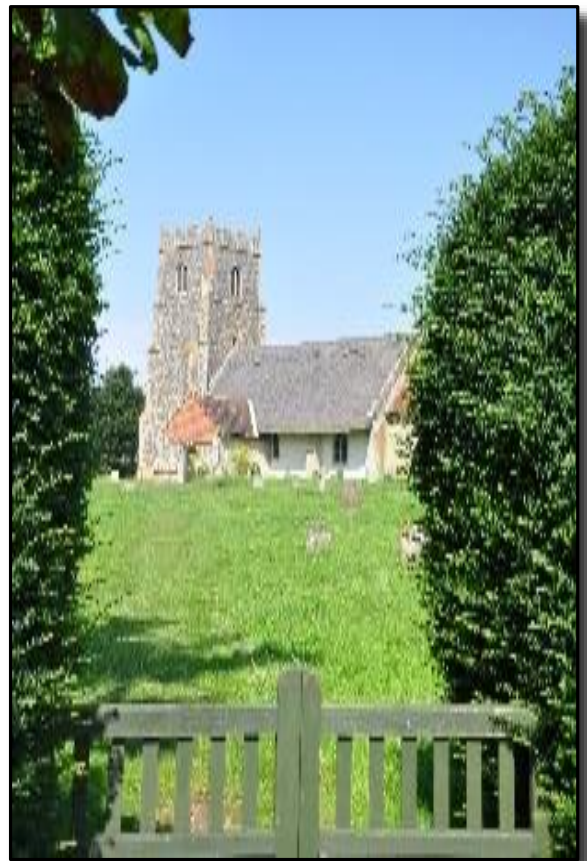
Fortunately the chancel, the tower and the basic structure of the nave walls were relatively intact and the parishioners' courage and fortitude was undaunted. It was the late 1980s before the nave walls and buttresses had been conserved and the church was ready to receive its new (£41,000) roof.

The Church.

The magic starts with one's first view of the church from the bottom of the path. What a contrast with the situation when Botolph first arrived here:

"This deserted place was not only devoid of Christian men but possessed by demons; through the advent of this mighty soldier of Christ the illusion of fantasy connected with them had to be banished..."

Saint Botolph's exorcisms were clearly very effective if the ambience of today's churchyard is anything to go by.



The church is entered through the C15 south porch. It is probably best to close your eyes to the red bricks of the upper part of the south face (which are thought to be part of late C19 restoration work) and concentrate on the rest of the porch which must originally have been a magnificent structure.



On both left and right sides of the entrance are the holes and tracings of two Mass Sundials as we have seen before.



The interior of the church is simple and elegant. The altar reredos, based on Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper, was carved by Mr Harry Brown of Ipswich and dedicated in 1959.



Immediately inside the doorway is the C15 font, the repair of which was paid for by an anonymous donor.



Behind the font, to the north-west lies the now-famous Saxon cross-shaft which was discovered in 1977 by Dr Stanley West, the Director of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Unit when he was on a routine inspection of the ruined nave. The 'cloud' of the calamitous 1968 fire had in fact 'had a silver lining' because without the fire, it is doubtful that the cross-shaft would have been discovered, hidden as it originally was, in the fabric of the wall beneath a layer of plaster.

The heat from the fire had caused the plaster to fall away and West spotted the Anglo-Saxon carving which was on the shaft's surface. When the shaft was removed, ancillary excavations revealed that there had been a previous wooden church on the site - possibly dating back to C7.



At the base of the shaft is a 'cross-pattée' i.e. a cross which has its arms narrow at the centre and broad at the perimeter where it creates a base or foot.

Norman Scarfe (who sadly died recently) was one of Suffolk's great experts on this period and his book "Suffolk in the Middle Ages" tells the story of the cross-shaft's discovery. (ISBN 97818-43830-6-89).



Whilst on the subject of 'plaster', I can do no better than quote the church leaflet which tells us that in the 1400s' *the interior ... must have been full of colour and carving (and) provided a host of visual-aids to teach the Faith to the mediaeval folk who could not read and did not understand the Latin of the services and scriptures ... Much (was) destroyed in the Puritan 'purge' of 1643... One precious piece of internal plaster on the south wall has been carefully kept and set behind a glass*

frame. Its faint traces of red colouring are all that remains of a mediaeval wall painting.'



The main structure of the nave is C11 and two blocked up Norman windows can be seen - one from the inside:-



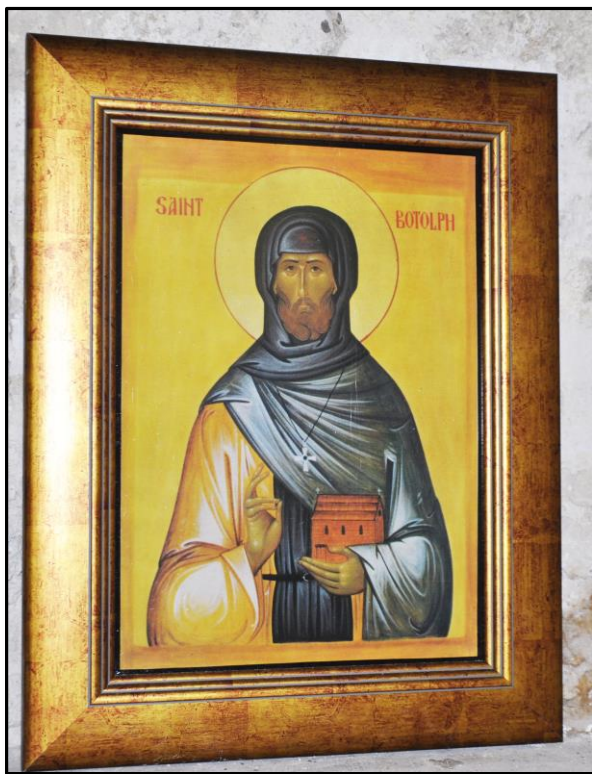
and the other from the outside of the north wall. Both window slits are actually the same size although due to the splaying within the fabric of the wall, the most westerly (viewed from the interior) looks much larger.



Back inside the church, another interesting feature is the C15 doorway and stairs that used to lead to the rood loft.



Not to be forgotten is the College of Our Lady of Mettingham (part of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia) whose premises are based nearby. One of their readers is Mark Tattum-Smith who is also a member of the Society of Saint Botolph. The organisation supports Iken Church with a pilgrimage each year on or around 17th June. In 2013 they presented the church with the icon shown below. They also published an 'Akathist in Honour of St Botolph of Iken' which very competently details his life and contains prayers and chants used in his veneration.



Summary of items of interest:-

From the exterior:

1. The C11 nave with the sealed-up Norman slit window in its north wall. Tiny holes indicate that it was not glazed but sealed during cold weather by twigs or shutters.
2. The C19 chancel.
3. The C15 tower of which the upper parts have been restored more recently.
4. The C15 porch with its Mass Sundials on each side of the doorway.

From the interior:

5. The C15 font with the emblems of the Evangelists: Angel (St Matthew); Ox (St Luke); Lion (St Mark); Eagle (St John).
6. The C10 Saxon cross-shaft in the north-west corner of the church.
7. Another C11 blocked-up window in the north wall of the nave (this is in fact the same size as '1' above but the interior splaying makes it look much larger).
8. The rood loft staircase.
9. The C20 carved altar screen.
10. The St Botolph icon.

Thanks.

My thanks to the Rector of Sudbourne and Orford, Revd David Murdoch for his hospitality. He lives in the village of Orford where there is another wonderful church which shares the benefice. The other parishes in his care are those of Chillesford and Butley as well, of course, as Iken.

Relevance of the church to Botolph's life.

The general consensus of opinion is that this church is 100% relevant to Botolph's life. There are still dissenters however who maintain that other places such as Hadstock have valid claims to being the site of the abbey described in the Schleswig Breviary as being '*far from the sea ... a waste and unpopulated land ... thorny country ... a certain valley which had a stream of water ...*'.

I believe I have the answer to this but I have not yet finished my research on the matter although as soon as I do so, all will be revealed ... it will be a while yet though!

Classification of Iken Church?

Well there surely can be no argument that it is 'A' (i.e. a church relevant to Botolph's life).

Readers' Letters and Emails

1. Dr Sam Newton wrote to announce details of his next St Botulf (sic) event which is a lecture-lunch in Iken. Details can be found at www.wuffings.co.uk.
2. Rupert Bristow wrote to give notice that his latest book *Prayers for Saints* (which includes a section on St Botolph) is now available at <http://www.kevinmayhew.com/prayers-for-saints.html>.
3. Pamela Mason wrote from Lullingstone, Kent giving me some very useful information regarding the St Botolph's Church at Trunch, Norfolk, which I hope to be visiting soon.
4. John Sennett wrote from Swyncombe (Oxon) observing that, unless the Farnborough church's Norman stone head (as featured in the August issue) was firmly fixed down it was likely, in his experience, to be stolen. (I rapidly passed the advice back to Farnborough).

New Members

I am delighted to welcome:-

James Harris (Elham, Kent).
Kenneth Crofton Martin, (Folkestone, Kent).
Dawn Hopley (Folkestone, Kent).
Claire Down (Folkestone, Kent).
Tim and Heidi Monsour (Florida).
Tom and Jen Monsour (New York).
John Haydon (Portsmouth).
Pamela Mason (Lullingstone, Kent).

In conclusion

This has been a very busy month for me with the launch of *Brother Botolph and The Abbess* so I do hope I have not missed out any New Members or anything in the *Letters and Emails from members* section. If I have then please let me know and after apologising profusely I will include them next month.

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.