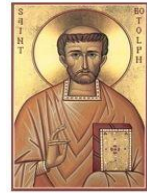




The Botolphian

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: 19

1st October 2014.

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Culpho.
- Welcome to new members: Dr John and Mrs Juliet Broadfield. Edward and Sylvia Robertson.
- The Annual Luncheon of the society will be held at 12.30 for 1 p.m. on Tuesday 14th October at Cambridge City Hotel. If you have not already booked then I am afraid you are too late this year but mark mid-October in your diary ready for next year. The final number this year was an excellent 29.

Editorial

At the launch of *Brother Botolph and The Abbess* on 9th August, John Sennett, of St Botolph's Swyncombe, posed the question: "With regard to Saint Botolph Churches and their relevance to St Botolph's function as the patron saint of travellers, do you make a distinction between Travellers and Pilgrims?"

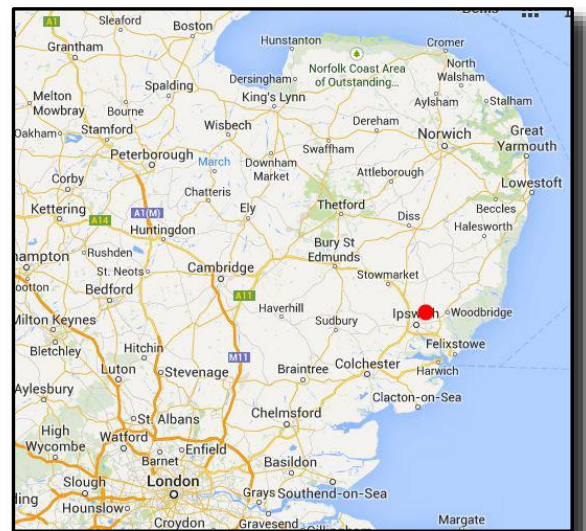
My reply, after brief consideration, was that I did not differentiate. I was working on the basis that all pilgrims are travellers and some travellers are pilgrims. The more I have thought about this however, the more implications I see in the question.

It served to remind me that our churches have had several lives which have necessitated them adapting themselves according to the requirements of the time. On this basis it would not be surprising if, between C11 and the Reformation (the period when pilgrimage was flourishing) churches which found themselves on a Pilgrim Route might have chosen to alter their dedications in his favour simply for the purpose of 'attracting business'.

This is a subject which needs a lot more thought and I am grateful to John for bringing the matter up.

Church Feature

Culpho, (Suffolk).



Approach:- From Ipswich take the A1214 Tuddenham Road and Main Road to the Grundisburgh Road. Soon after leaving Tuddenham you will find the village sign for Culpho and the church is a little way further on your left.

Key: Open every Wednesday between 1st May and 30th September between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

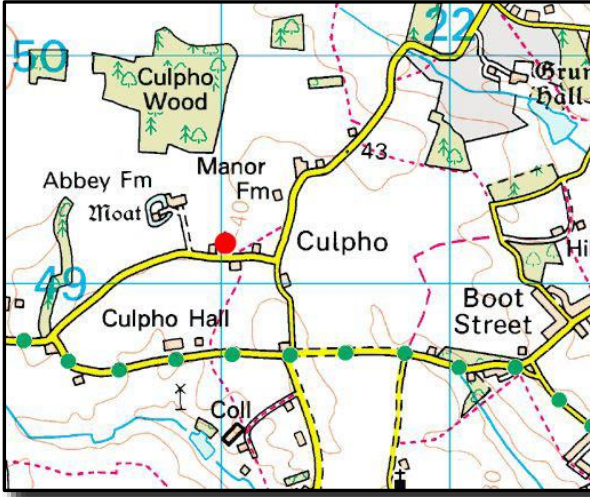
At other times contact:-

Guy Hartfall, Tel: 01473 785-347

Priest in Charge: Revd Philip John MERRY, Abbey School, Church Street, Woodbridge. Tel: 01394 610972.

Location: 52.09639, 1.224916, IP6 9DH

Listed Grade: II*



Parking: There is a small space immediately outside the church where, if parked considerably, one - or even two cars can be left.

During the summer months the church is routinely open on a Wednesday (as noted above) but it was a Thursday when Zina and I arrived. An apologetic telephone call to the key-holder, Guy Hartfall, achieved an instant response however and, within a few minutes he came to let us in.

We clearly should not prevail upon Guy's kind nature too much however so please mark **SUMMER WEDNESDAYS** in your diaries ready for your visit to Culpho



This pretty church is right in the centre of what I call the 'Iken Cluster' and this may have some significance.

The other St Botolph's churches in the cluster are those of Whitton, Thurleston and Burgh as well, of course, as Iken itself.



Guy's first question was "Do you have a pencil?" which caused me a little consternation - but I was able to produce one and Guy used it to demonstrate the Mass Dial (or Scratch Dial as they call it in Culpho) on the right hand side of the tower doorway. As you will see from the picture below, it appears that we arrived at 12 noon GMT (1 pm BST) - although I feel sure that we would have been more considerate than to have arrived at lunchtime!



When, in the subsequent issue of *The Botolphian* I published a picture of the Mass Sundial at Iken (below) Guy immediately commented: "Your picture must be upside down."



I can see the logic of his comment since the markings seem to be *above* the gnomon hole - but the picture is *not* upside down and I can only assume that the stone mason must (perhaps for the sake of completeness) have cut radial lines all around the circle and the lower ones have simply worn away?

The church and its grounds are well cared for and both are a credit to the small population of Culpho - which numbered only 48 in 1991 - and is probably about the same today.



The church (its construction is mainly of flint rubble) is based on Saxon foundations and was mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. In C13 it was given to the monks of Leiston Abbey which lies 5 miles north of Iken - which itself is 16 miles northeast of Culpho.

It is the monks of Leiston whom we have to thank for constructing many of the church features that we see today. These include the single window in the south wall of the chancel and the priests' doorway nearby.



They were also responsible for the construction of the (now-blocked) doorway in the north wall of the nave ...



... and the lofty arch of the south entrance. The entrance itself is worth a second look because, as well as the Mass Dial on the outer wall, it has a stoup which contained the holy water into which medieval communicants would dip their fingers and make the sign of the cross as a symbol of their purification before entering the sacred building. Ancient graffiti can also be found carved into the stonework.

The C13 archway itself was modified in C14 by the addition of an inner arch which makes an attractive feature.



On entering the church the C15 font stands before you. Guy reminded me that entering the church is like entering life, and by placing the font near the doorway the ideal of early baptism is emphasised. In the picture below, a palm cross has been placed on the right side of the font to illustrate the presence of a staple which would, in the past, have been used to padlock the lid to ensure that that holy water was not stolen for magical or other similarly nefarious purposes.



One might be forgiven for thinking that the chancel was a late edition to the nave; indeed that was my first impression. This is belied however by the presence in the north wall of the chancel of a modest but significant Early English style lancet window which pre-dates the rest of the church's fabric. It is true however that the chancel has been heavily restored subsequently.



Most of the rest of the windows offer us a beautiful example of simple 'Y' shaped tracery which exemplifies the beginning of the style of architecture known as 'Decorated'. Compare this simple style at Culpho ...



... with the slightly more elaborate east window at Farnborough's St Botolph's which was built just a little later in the Decorated period:-



The lightness of the interior of Culpho's church is enhanced by the steeply pitched nave roof. Originally there would have been a rood screen between the nave and the chancel and this would have made the church much darker - but it has long since been removed.



The activities of King Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell resulted in the church becoming much neglected. In 1602, just seventy years after their Reformation, the local Archdeacon recorded that

“The Chancell at Culpho is exceeding ruinous and that so bene these vii or viii yeares past ...”

The result of these observations seems to have been that work was started removing the upper stage of the tower and topping it with what has aptly been described as a ‘perky pyramid cap’. The tower, rather than being placed at the west end of the church, is on the south side and economically combines the functions of a south porch and a bell tower. Although unusual elsewhere, this is not uncommon in Suffolk where there exist 22 such porch-towers, - one of which we shall find (in a later issue) at St Botolph’s Burgh.



The picture above shows the piscina in the chancel and above this can be seen two shields - that with the ring of thorns being one of the stations of the cross (other symbols of the stations adorn the rest of the chancel’s walls) - the other shield carries a chalice representing the wine of Holy Communion and on the opposite wall there is another shield bearing a sheaf of corn which represents the bread.



The building is simply constructed and notably uses a minimal amount of buttresses. Instead it has heavy, but not inelegant, tie-beams which cross the nave bracing the north and south walls.

Two C15 piscinae are present - one in the south wall of the nave, indicating that an altar used to exist nearby, and another near the present altar in the chancel.



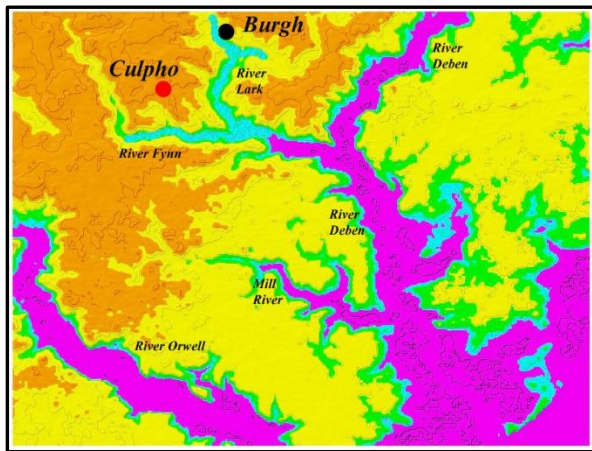
The church fell into disrepair again in C18 and in 1883, the Lord of the Manor, Baron Cranworth (of Letton Hall, Norfolk situated 12 miles west of Norwich) paid for a thorough restoration of both the chancel and the nave. The work continued throughout C20 largely due to the generosity of the local Grey family and of Eddie Hunt of Tuddenham Hall who was churchwarden here for 50 years and to whom a remembrance plaque is set in the locked-up doorway of the north wall. Also

there you will find another plaque to 'A thankful village' which records the fact that Culpho is one of 51 villages in England where no residents lost their lives in the first World War.



Ho Ho Ho.

Nothing to do with the advent of Christmas but a matter concerning the syllable shared by both Culpho, Ikenho, and Plymouth Hoe, and commonly considered to be the name given to a promontory overlooking a waterway.



As you will see from the map above (redrawn to illustrate the likely topography in C7) Culpho would indeed have been looking out over the River Fynn towards the upper reaches of the Deben whereas Burgh would have been on the banks of the River Lark. It is said that the Saxon landowner's name at Culpho was Cupwolf so the toponymy possibly derives from 'Cupwolf-Ho'.

Today the church is still used regularly, Holy Communion being celebrated here at 10.30 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays each month.

Summary of items of interest:-

From the exterior:

1. *C14 sturdy 'tower-porch' shortened by one stage and topped by a 'perky pyramid cap'.*
2. *Minimal use of buttresses.*
3. *C14 blocked north doorway.*
4. *C13 Lancet window in north wall of chancel.*
5. *C14 priests' door in south wall of chancel.*
6. *Early C14 Decorated-style windows with simple Y-shaped tracery.*
7. *Mass Sundial on outer south door.*
8. *Graffiti and Stoup in the porchway.*
9. *Lofty C14 inner south doorway.*
10. *C15 smaller arch inserted into the above.*

From the interior:

1. *C15 font with securing staple.*
2. *Steeply-pitched nave roof.*
3. *C17 Tudor-style Chancel arch.*
4. *C17 custom-made Altar/Communion Table.*
5. *Plaque to Baron Cranworth.*
6. *Plaque to Eddie Hunt*
7. *'Thankful Village' plaque.*
8. *Massive tie-beams reducing the need for buttresses.*

Thanks.

My thanks to Guy Hartfall for showing us around the church and for his friendship since.

Relevance of the church to Botolph's life.

If we are correct in our assumption that the Abbey of Ikenho was situated at Iken, only 16 miles away from Culpho, then it seems likely that this little church started life as a field-chapel-satellite of Ikenho Abbey. We can imagine the church being built and rebuilt several times on the same foundations until it finally appeared in history in 1086.

Classification of Iken Church?

One can but speculate but it seems to me that there must have been a thriving community here and it is likely that Botolph visited it and had a hand in the church's foundation and consecration. I would therefore classify it as 'A' (i.e. a church relevant to Botolph's life). - But what do *you* think?

Readers' Letters and Emails

I would like to thank the many readers who sent emails of encouragement regarding my concern over the low numbers booked in for this year's luncheon. Many regretted they were unable to join us but pledged their support for next year.

This was at a time when it really looked as if there was not going to be a 'next year', - so thank you all. I believe the society is stronger as a result of so many people giving the matter serious thought.

Combined with these emails were, once again, many expressions of appreciation for the newsletters - so many thanks for those encouraging comments too.

New Members

I am delighted to welcome:-

John & Juliet Broadfield (Sevenoaks, Kent).
Edward and Sylvia Robertson (Church with Chapel Brampton, (Northants)).

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.