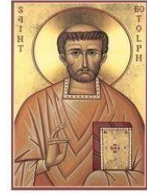




# The Botolphian

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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1st February 2015

## Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Chevening.
- Welcome to new members: Caroline Coke from St Botolph's Church, Slapton, and Peter Jackson from St Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave.
- Readers' emails from James Harris, Kathleen Tyson Quah, Derek Cummings Robert Beavis and Caroline Coke, together with a host of kind greetings.

## Editorial

At last, studies behind me, life is settling down again and I have been able to catch up with correspondence that I had had to put to one side

This month's featured church takes us into the realm of the Kentish Men. Since time immemorial tradition has had it that if you are born in Kent to the east of the River Medway you are a Man (or a Fair Maid) of Kent. whereas if born to the west of the Medway you are Kentish Men or Kentish Maids.

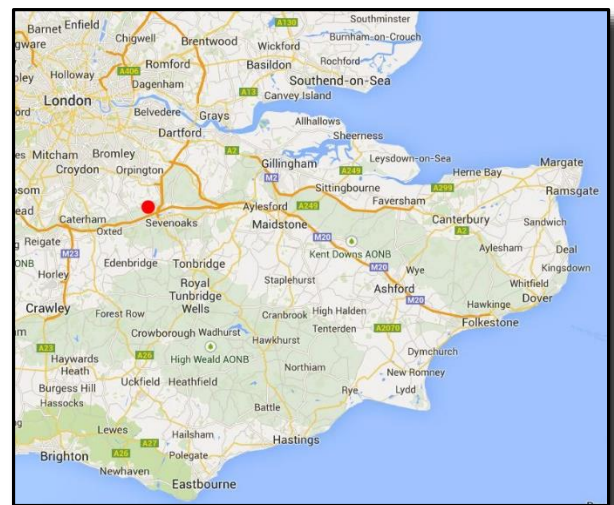
Even in the days of the Bretwalda King of Kent, Ethelbert (c. 560 - c. 616), the kingdom is thought to have been administered in two distinct 'halves' with Ethelbert administering the eastern part and his son Eadbald (who eventually succeeded him) administering the west.

Within the past few years, two Great Saxon Halls have been identified in the county - one at Eynsford (close to the Saint Botolph churches of Lullingstone and Chevening) and the other at Lyminge.

It is thought that these halls date from C7 and there is a possibility that it was from each of these sites that the kingdom was ruled.

## Church Feature

### Chevening, (Kent).



**Approach:-** *This looks worse on the map than it is when driving. The problem is that you are surrounded by motorways, none of which are of much use to you - unless you choose to follow either of the tortuous routes shown in blue and grey below. It is probably best to make a day of it and visit Lullingstone first and then drive to Chevening via Farningham (follow the route marked by red dots below). Alternatively, from Lullingstone, try following the River Darent to the south and pick up the (red-dotted on the map) Pilgrims Way - but, unless you have a good navigator, this is not easy since the route is beset by ambiguous turnings and difficulties.*

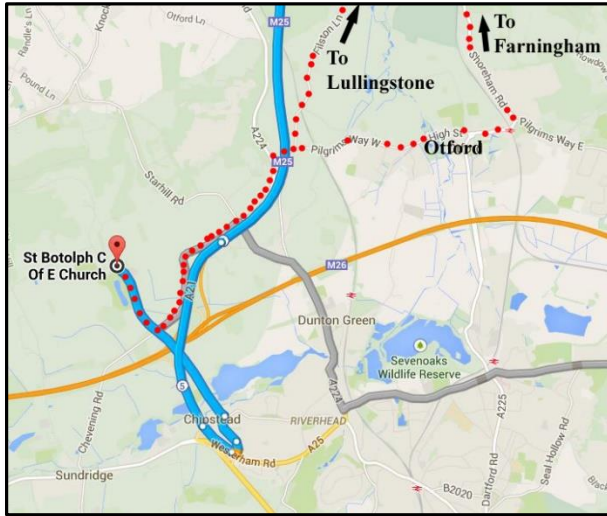
**Key:** *The church is open most days during daylight hours although the chapel containing the Stanhope Lennard memorials is only open for viewing by appointment. Telephone 01732 453-555 or 01959 561-336.*

**Priest in Charge:** *Revd Chris Smith, Chevening Rectory, Chipstead, Sevenoaks. TN14 6HF. Tel: 01732 453-555*

**Church services:** *Sundays 0800 and 1030. Informal Evening Service at 6.30 p.m. on third Sunday of the month (but telephone first to ensure there is no change to this timetable).*

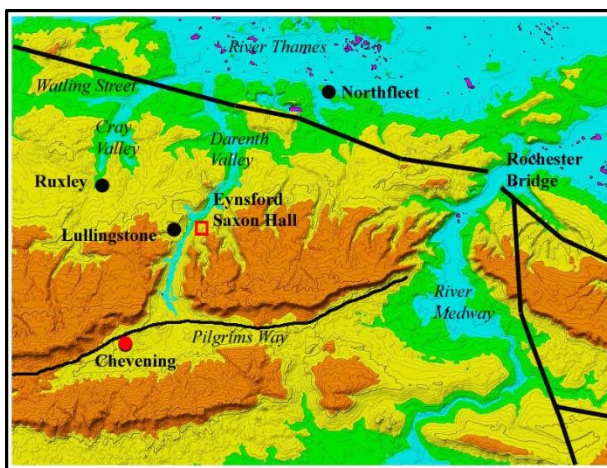
**Location:** 51.29951, 0.13293. TN14 6HG.  
NGR: TQ549158

**Listed Grade: I**



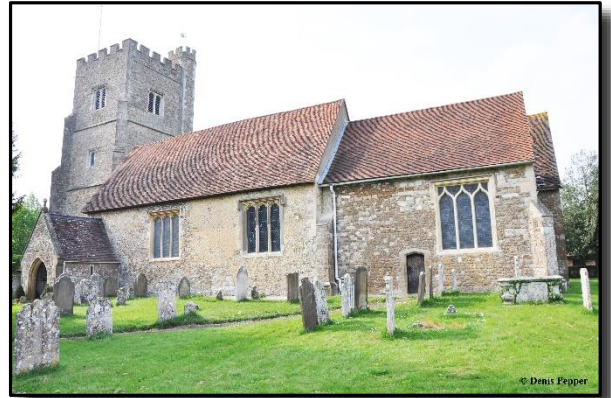
St Botolph's church, Chevening is part of what I consider to be the 'Northfleet cluster' because, as I wrote in the November 2013 *Botolphian*, it seems likely that the Christian sites of Ruxley, Lullingstone and Chevening were spawned by a mother church at Northfleet.

Ruxley lies at the head of the Cray Valley while Lullingstone lies in the centre of the Darenth Valley and Chevening is at a point where the ancient trackway now known as 'Pilgrims' Way' crosses the head of the Darenth Valley.



The names are interesting. Whereas the River Darent is devoid of a final 'h' - the title of its valley is not! 'Dartford' is a corruption of 'Darent Ford'.

The word 'Chevening' always reminds me of 'Scheveningen' (in the Netherlands) but, although the Dutch town's first settlers were Anglo-Saxon, historical evidence for *its* name only goes back to 1280 whereas a century and a half earlier we find the *Textus Roffensis* of c. 1122 referring to the Kentish village as 'Civilinga'. This may derive from the Latin *civis* meaning 'citizen'.



The core of the church is Anglo-Saxon. The north aisle and the north transept (view below) were added in C12.



The beautiful 1890 Caen stone Farmer and Bridley reredos, based on Da Vinci's 'Last Supper', was originally intended for Durham Cathedral but, by a stroke of good fortune, the Dean and Chapter did not approve it and the sixth Earl Stanhope purchased it for Chevening at a good price!





In C13 the south aisle (view below) was rebuilt using those parts of the previous church's Anglo-Saxon construction which was still serviceable. A dividing wall was removed at the same time and a chapel (now the choir vestry) was added to the north wall a little later. In C14 the chancel was built on to the east end of the nave and the chantry was added to the east end of the south aisle. The ragstone tower dates from C16. The south porch was remodelled in 1858.



The oldest part of the church's fabric is the lower part of the wall of the south aisle. Two piscinae (which are probably relics from the earlier church) are set into this. Adjacent to these are two 'tomb recesses' which have, apparently, never been used. Outside, at the west end of the aisle, (marked by an arrow in the picture below) traces can be found of a blocked up doorway which was probably the main entrance to the original simple church which consisted of two cells divided by the aforementioned wall.



During the latter half of C19 and early C20 the building underwent major restoration which included lowering the floor by 2 feet and replacing the old box pews. The work was paid for by Lord

Stanhope and carried out by W.E. Caröe. The stained glass windows are mainly C20 although the window in the south aisle is C19.

The church's fabric consists of partly-rendered rubble and flint with supporting ragstone placed at openings. Originally, most of the exterior would have been lime-washed and/or plastered.

In the same way that St Botolph's Lullingstone has a Roman villa nearby, so also was there a villa to the east of Chevening church and some Roman tiles can be found amongst the rubble.

The following picture was taken in the (proportionately very long) north nave looking west and shows the C16 limestone font at the base of the tower. The latter contains a full ring of eight bells. The font cover (seen here lying at the font's base) was made from a local oak which was a casualty of the 1987 hurricane.



The Stanhope Chantry, attached to the east end of the south aisle, dates from C14 but the priest's door in its south wall is a fine Anglo-Saxon example which has been recycled. I did not compare measurements but perhaps this came from the blocked up west doorway mentioned earlier?



The chantry is now kept locked as a result of a grim experience in October 1983 when the C18 funerary armour and gilt coronet of the first Earl Stanhope were stolen. I had no appointment with the key-holder so the photograph below was taken through the glass of the locked screen. To the left can be seen a memorial to Lady Frederica Stanhope who died in childbirth in 1823. On the right are alabaster effigies of John (d. 1590) and Elizabeth (d. 1585) Lennard. The larger canopied tomb on the far left is that of Sampson Lennard (d. 1611) and his family.



There are various other indicators of the church's Anglo-Saxon provenance such as the tall early C12 arch leading into the north transept which, it has been suggested, is a rebuilding of an earlier Anglo-Saxon arch.

#### **Summary of items of interest:-**

##### **From the exterior:-**

1. *The blocked up doorway at the west end of the south aisle.*
2. *The Anglo-Saxon priest's door in the south wall of the chantry.*
3. *The 3-stage embattled C16 tower.*

##### **From the interior:-**

1. *The C16 font in Perpendicular style with its C20 cover.*
2. *The two piscinae with the tomb recesses.*
3. *The reredos.*
4. *The archway leading to the north transept.*
5. *The chantry with its memorials.*

#### **Relevance of the church to Botolph's life.**

As I said in the introduction, I believe that this church was part of a cluster based on Northfleet and that there is more than an even chance that all four churches owe their original foundation to Saint Botolph himself.

#### **Classification of Chevening church.**

I would therefore suggest that the site has an 'A' classification.

#### **Readers' letters and emails.**

**1. James Harris** wrote to say that, while reading about the C12 Stave churches in Norway, he came across the following quotation:

"In Vinje (Telemarken ) there is the following rune *"Sigurd Jarlsohn carved these runes on the Saturday after St.Botolf's day when he sought refuge here, not wishing to be compared to his brother Sverre, the murderer of his father and his brothers.*

The date of this rune is about 1200."

[Ed: Thank you James, - this has gone into the "for future use" pot].

**2. Kathleen Tyson Quah** (who is very supportive of the SOSB Annual Luncheons - so you may have met her there) wrote in response to my comments in the January *Botolphian*:

"My suggestion of tax collection and providing hostels for merchants as a function of all the St Botolph churches "without" gates of cities and Roman ecclesiastical possessions (e.g., London, Cambridge (original location on the river bank gate), Shenley (outside the St Alban's abbey border at the ford), and Colchester) is every bit as valid for Saxons as Normans.

King Alfred built defended urban settlements with a view to markets and tax collection every bit as much as defence of his realm. King Cnut seems to have done the same. Alfred or Cnut, or the monarchs in between, may have established the early St Botolph orders for merchant hostels and tax collection at the gates of towns and at fords and borders. It was through efficient tax collection that early kings could raise revenues in coin, centralise royal authority and dominion, and secure the aid of the church confirming them as divine monarchs serving God as well as their people.

While Botolph is now the patron saint of travellers, an earlier interpretation had him as the patron of boatmen and merchants. If there is a connection of St Botolph to St Denis, then the suggestion of a commercial linkage to the saint is even stronger. St Denis controlled taxation of urban markets, fairs and ports in much of the Frankish empire of the Merovingians and Carolingians, and served as a model of



Benedictine commercial/revenue-raising in Britain from King Offa onwards.

It was a capital offence to interfere with merchants on their way to the Saint Denis Fair at Paris, supporting protection of merchants on roads and seas. When we first corresponded I suggested that Botolph may have been educated and confirmed at St Denis in Paris as a boy while in exile from Britain, as St Denis dominated Benedictine teaching at the time.

The observance of the St Denis feast day at Colchester may strengthen the case, especially as many merchants to Colchester would have come from Frankish realms across the Channel. The observance of the St Denis feast day at Colchester and other places in Britain may suggest that this very profitable Benedictine commercial/revenue-raising practices spread to this side of the Channel with St Botolph and his Benedictine followers."

Kathleen also wrote to draw our attention to the article to be found at the following hyperlink (just click it) regarding the restoration of Saint Botolph's Church, Botolphs, West Sussex (This church was featured in *The Botolphian* August 2013).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-sussex-30346407>

Thank you Kathleen.

[Kathleen's book *Carmen de Triumpho Normannico - The Song of the Norman Conquest* ISBN 9781492704751 is a very interesting read].

**3. Graham Jones, David Noy, Jane Davis, James Olson, Paula Griffiths, Marion Peel, Duncan Hopkin, Rupert Bristow, Bob Burge, Felicity Thompson, Anne Pegg, Aaron Friar and Andy Parsons** kindly sent good wishes.

Many thanks to all of you. I apologise for the delay in acknowledging your communications but, as you might imagine, my *Botolphian* duties are only just returning to normal after having to abandon all other activities for the sake of completing my thesis.

**4. Derek Cummings** wrote in reference to the Sanctuary Ring mentioned in the November edition. He told an interesting story of cases of sanctuary being sought at St Botolph's at Church with Chapel Brampton. I have not repeated the stories here because I have other plans for them later when I have discussed the matter more fully with Derek.

**5. Robert Beavis** wrote:

"Further to your comments on the church at Burgh, it is interesting to note that local folklore says that the relics were transferred to Burgh to lay a ghost or demon.

St Botolph seems to have had a reputation in his lifetime as an exorcist. To this day, the typically East Anglian tale of the Galley-Trot, a black dog that haunts the course of the river at Burgh, is known to locals.

A mediaeval mural of St Christopher, patron of travellers, survives in the church at Grundisburgh. St Botolph preceded St Christopher as the patron of travellers. I seem to recall reading somewhere that he was known as such as far afield as the monasteries of Kiev".

**6. Caroline Coke**

Caroline wrote to tell me that St Botolph's Church at Slapton (Northants) has recently completed some restoration work. She kindly forwarded me some pictures showing details of some of their wall paintings and stained glass. I hope to visit Slapton within the next couple of months and will include the pictures when I feature that church. Thank you Caroline.

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Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*.

#### 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](mailto: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.