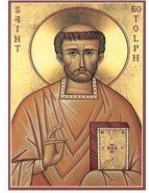




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Admin: Denis Pepper, 17, Cliffe House, Radnor Cliff, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2TY. Tel: +44 (0)1303 221-777 botolph@virginmedia.com
President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

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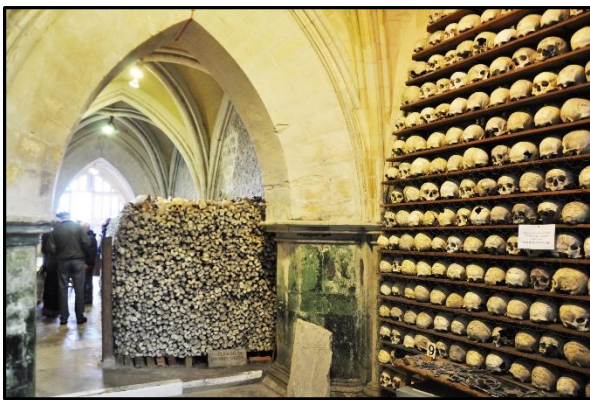
Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Lullingstone.
- Welcome to new members: George & Sue Vittay (Charing, Kent), Valerie Sadler (Coggeshall, Essex), Dorothy Latham (Dymchurch, Kent).
- Readers' emails from Tony Connolly and Dick Pascoe.
- Dates of my proposed visits to Ratcliffe, Shepshed, Sibson, Burton Hastings, Newbold, CwC Brampton and Slapton.

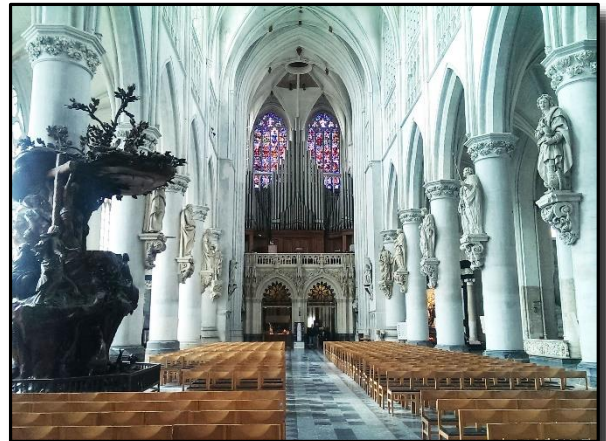
Editorial

If this missive were more of a 'blog' and less dedicated to Saint Botolph, its content this month would be describing in detail my visits to two fascinating 'other' churches.

One such visit was to St Leonard's Church in Hythe, Kent, with its famous ossuary consisting of 1200 skulls, 8,000 femurs and other bones.



The second was to St Rumbold's Cathedral in Mechelen (which lies in Belgium just a nudge north of Brussels and halfway between the latter and Antwerp). It deserves a longer visit, which I hope to accomplish later, but from the Botolphian aspect it is interesting because of its patron saint.



There are however, *two* Saint Rumbolds!

St Rumbold of Buckingham (aka Rumwold, Rumoalde, Rombout etc.), is what I would call a 'fabricated saint'. He is reputed to have been born in 662 and able to speak from the time of his birth whereupon he immediately professed his Christianity by saying three times "I am a Christian". He gave a sermon before predicting his death, making his own funeral arrangements and dying at the age of three days.

The story to us may be unbelievable but it had a serious motive in that it was apparently written shortly after the Norman Conquest with a view to befuddling the brains of the new upstart French priests who were taking jobs from the English clergy and claiming that their saints were better than ours. It is not quite clear how St Rumbold's story helped but it is full of symbolism and seems to have had a serious point.

St Rumbold of Mechelen hailed from a similar period. It is believed that he was an Irish/Scottish missionary who was murdered by two men whom he had denounced. Originally he was thought (as has also been claimed for Botolph's 'brother' Adulph) to have worked with Saint Willibrord (658-739), the first Bishop of Utrecht. In 2004

however his (presumed) relics which are preserved in Mechelen Cathedral were carbon-dated. This revealed that the subject died between 580 and 655 at the age of about forty.

This would put him in the same time-scale as Botolph and his brother and in the same locality as Adulph. We can perhaps therefore bring Rumbold on to the stage as another potential character in the 'Botolph Story'.

Church Feature

Lullingstone (Kent).

Approach:- Head for Eynsford along the A225 and then turn across the bridge and follow the Darent stream towards Lullingstone Roman Villa. Keep straight on past the villa over a slight rise and you will soon see the Castle Gatehouse on your left. Park neatly on the grass outside.

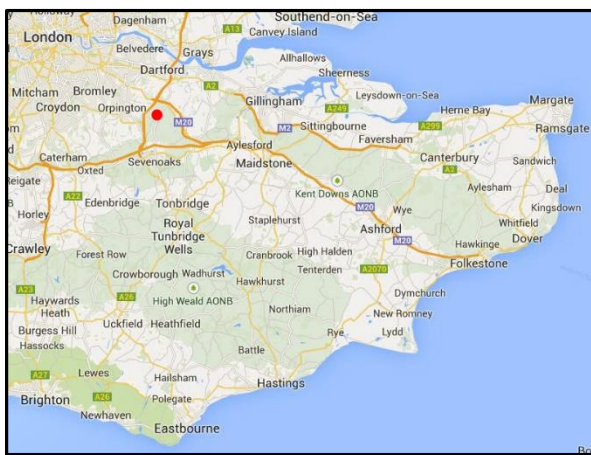
Key: The church is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

Priest in Charge: Revd Gary Owen, The Rectory, Pollyhaugh, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent DA4 0HF. Tel: 01322 863-050. Email: mail@efl-churches.org.

Church services: Sundays 11 a.m. (Holy Communion each 3rd Sunday of the month).

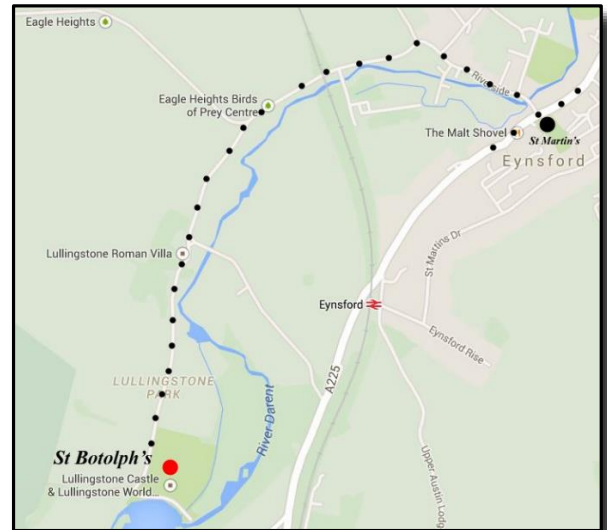
Location: Lullingstone Lane: 51.3584, 0.1960. NGR: TQ529644. DA4 0JA.

Listed Grade: I



Be forewarned: there is so much to see in this small area that you might consider 'making a day of it' - so perhaps think: flask and sandwiches! You could, for example, spend a couple of hours exploring the Roman Villa; an hour visiting St Botolph's church; an hour looking around the World Garden designed and built by Tom Hart-Dyke; and another hour on a tour of Lullingstone Castle. (The castle, incidentally, was built in C15

and known as Lullingstone House until it was renamed in 1740). These other features are all bonuses however. The object of this article is the church - which one might erroneously assume was the castle's private chapel. It is however used for regular public worship and, considering the size of the parish, sports a large congregation.



There is a lot more to St Botolph's church, Lullingstone, than initially meets the eye. One might at first be shocked by the sight of the C18 porch sitting incongruously against the C14 knapped flint south wall but do not let this cloud your judgement - the porch is very functional and there are even better things to come.

Your second observation might be the red brickwork between the walls and the roof gables. The placing of these bricks was contemporaneous with the building of the porch and signifies the raising of the church's roof in order to accommodate new moulded ceilings of the same period.

Although the building has never been the castle's private chapel, its preservation and improvements are almost entirely due to the castle's owners (the

Hart-Dyke family) who trace their residency here back to C15.

The church existed before this however. It is thought that a wooden chapel existed on the site before it was replaced by a two-cell Norman stone building (dedicated to Saint Botolph) after the Norman Conquest. The last rector of the two-cell church was John de Rokesley and his brass memorial lies under the gateway of the rood-screen. The bird on his shield is a rook (a pun on his name) and the brass records the date of his death as 1361. Rokesley built a new church in the Decorated style that is the basic structure we see today.



We tend to consider Christianity in England as starting from the time of St Augustine's arrival in 597 but the religion was of course practised by many of our Roman 'ancestors' before it went out of fashion when they departed at the end of C4.

The first recorded place of Christian worship in Lullingstone was a 'House-church' within the Roman villa (which is just down the road). It dates from A.D. 385. This area has been a centre of Christianity for more years than most.



As you enter the church, the first thing that strikes you is the rood screen. In many churches these have now been removed but this one is a fine example of early C16 craftsmanship. Before you study this more closely though, look behind the entrance door and you will find a unique font: a small marble basin in a wooden case. This, like the beautiful moulded ceilings and many other structures, was the C18 gift of Sir Percyvall Hart.

At this point it would seem useful to list the main benefactors and personalities:

- Sir John Peché (Peachey) d. 1522
- Sir Percyvall Hart (I) d. 1580
- Sir George Hart d. 1587
- Sir Percyvall Hart (III) d. 1700
- Sir Percyvall Hart (IV) d. 1738
- Sir Thomas Dyke d. 1756

Returning to the c.1525 rood screen, close inspection will reveal the rose of England (representing Henry VIII) and the pomegranate of Aragon (representing his first wife Katharine) who were frequent visitors here. There are also peach stones embossed with the letter 'e' to give a clue to the provider (Sir John). The pulpit (seen below on the left) is late C17 and was donated by Sir Percyvall Hart III.



Turning to look back at the western end of the nave you can see the font on the south wall, the beautiful moulded ceilings (c. 1723) and the black and white floor tiles and oaken pews (the wood was locally-sourced from the Lullingstone estate) of even date.

Passing through the rood screen into the chancel, to your right is the 1581 tomb of Sir Percyvall (I) and Lady Hart.



Turning away from this you are looking across the tomb of Sir John Peché (1473-1521) into the C16 North Chapel. This was built on to the church with the specific view of housing his body.



Seventy years later the tomb of his sister's grandson, Sir George Hart, was to take up residence at the east end of the chapel. The tomb is magnificent and bears the effigies of Sir George and his wife clasping hands in eternal affection. On the plinth supporting a cherub to the right is the inscription 'LABOR' and one to the left 'QUIES' (rest).

At the back of the tomb on the left is a gruesome skeleton (realistically minus its lower jaw) labelled 'MORS' (death), while a more optimistic angel on the other side is entitled 'RESURRECTIO'.



Turning one's back on the tomb one sees, on the western wall of the chapel, a complex heraldic (c. 1740) memorial to Sir Percyvall Hart-Dyke (IV), the provider of the ceilings, the font and the porch etc. On the north wall is a mural tablet memorial to Anne Dyke (née Hart) who died in 1763.



Stained glass windows.

Many of the stained glass windows are of importance due to their early provenance.

Sir John Peché (1473-1521), who provided the rood screen and the north chapel etc., also contributed the three panels in the south window of the nave. This work was done by the Anglo-Flemish glaziers of the Southwark School established by Henry VII. They depict St Erasmus, St John the Baptist and St George and the dragon.

Sir John also donated the glass (c. 1522) in the east window of the chancel which shows St Agnes, St Anne and St Elizabeth of Hungary.

In the south window of the chancel are St Nicholas of Myra, St Philip the Apostle, St Adrian and the Mystical Fountain of Life.

William Peckitt of York (1731-1795) (reputed to be the 'only notable English glass stainer of his day') was appointed by Sir Thomas Dyke (whose wife Anne's mural tablet memorial we have just seen in the North Chapel) to install the glass in the nave. In the north wall we see St Luke standing at a desk and opposite him is an unusual depiction of St Botolph. Our saint is wearing a purple gown which is most definitely not C7. The colours in his face apparently faded quickly and it became necessary to add a second piece of stained glass to replace his head!



Another glass shows the Ascension and there is also one showing (it is thought) Elijah. Beneath the picture are the arms of Dyke and Hart with the Hart-Dyke motto 'Prest a faire' (ready to act).

Summary of items of interest:-

From the exterior:-

The red brickwork of the North Chapel which dates from early C16.

The red brickwork of the Nave is C18 and indicates where the roof was heightened to accommodate the new ornate ceiling. (PH 1723 was carved into a roof beam to register Percyvall Hart's bequest).

From the interior:-

Three 'sets' of stained glass windows:

C14 in N window of chapel.

C16 Anglo-Flemish glass from the Southwark school. This is in the S nave and shows Erasmus, John the Baptist and St George and the dragon.

C16 Stained glass from other schools - seen in the E window of the chancel depicting, St Agnes, St Anne and St Elizabeth of Hungary.

C16 Stained glass in S window of chancel showing St Nicholas of Myra, Philip the Apostle(?), St Adrian(?) and the Mystical Fountain of Life.

C18 Stained glass by William Peckitt of York in two windows in N wall of nave:

In W of the two a knight's helm and crest.

In left-hand main light, St Luke at a desk.

In right-hand main light is St Botolph at a desk

C18 (c. 1723) moulded ceilings in chancel and nave.

C17 pulpit

C18 black and white floor tiles

C18 pews from trees of the Lullingstone estate.

C18 marble font in wooden case

C18 porch

C16 (c. 1515) rood screen: roses (Henry VIII); pomegranates (Katharine of Aragon); peaches with 'E' (Sir John Peché).

C16 Tomb of Sir John Peché (1473-1521).

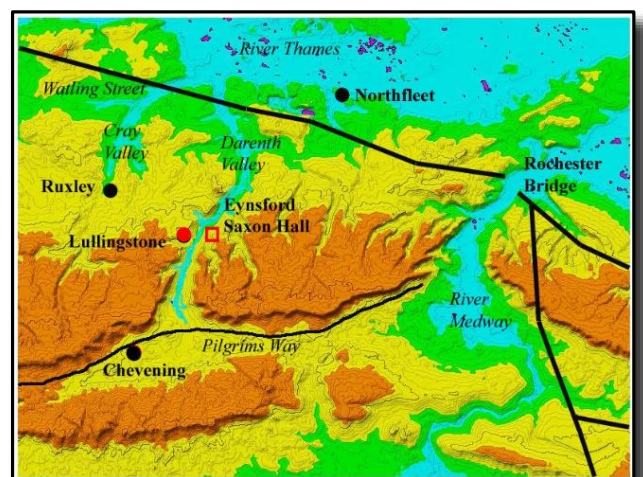
C16 Tomb of Sir Percyvall Hart I (1496-1580).

C16 Tomb of Sir George Hart (d. 1587). Note: Labor and Rest (Quies) and behind them Mors and Resurrectio. Note clasped hands.

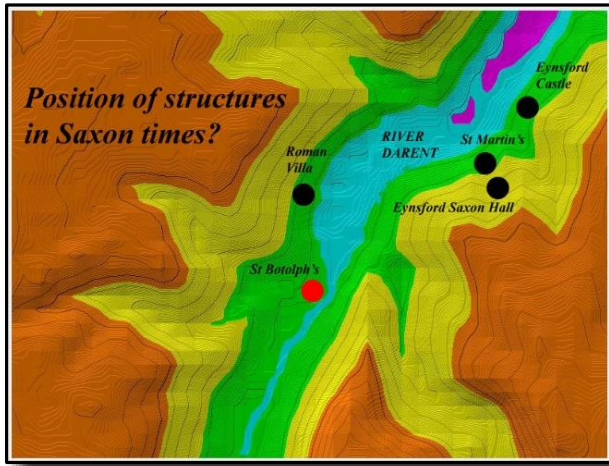
C18 Monument to Sir Percyvall Hart IV (1658-1738).

Relevance to Botolph's life.

The Darent Valley was clearly an important place in Roman and Saxon times. The River Darent was the next break in the North Downs after that of the Medway Valley. The Darent Valley was closer to London and offered good access both to the River Thames and to the ancient religious site near Northfleet at Springhead (Vagniacae). Between that and Eynsford ran Watling Street passing east-west.



Eynsford Castle was built on the Saxon foundations of a previous fortification. Lullingstone Roman villa, although only a farmstead was nevertheless an important one and of course preceded Botolph. The recent discovery of a Saxon Hall on the opposite side of the river adds to the evidence of the site's significance.



Above we see the wide River Darent (before it silted up), with Saint Botolph's Church at its head, a Roman villa on the west bank and a Great Saxon Hall on its east bank. Close to the Saxon Hall but a little further north lies the church of Saint Martin of Tours and to the northeast is a Saxon fort.

An Epitome of Saint Botolph's life found in the Schleswig Breviary (written c. 1512) tells us:

'And one day when visited by the aforesaid King had asked for another place to dwell in, because the other place was too much infested with unclean spirits. The King granted his prayer and gave him a more suitable place on the River Thames in which the man of God built a church in honour of St. Martin.'

St Martin's church Eynsford is close to the River Thames and its history reads:

'In 1066 ... when William of Normandy conquered the Saxons and was crowned King of England, he rewarded all the Norman Knights who had fought with him. He gave a knight called Unspac the lands of Eynsford. Ralf, son of Unspac built the castle out of the local Kentish flint and re-named himself William d'Eynsford out of respect for his king. William d'Eynsford then built St. Martin's church on the site of an old Saxon church, again using the local Kentish flint strengthened by Kentish ragstone.'

Could that 'old Saxon church' have been the one built by Saint Botolph as written in the Schleswig Breviary? I have always assumed that the St Martin's mentioned was either at Northfleet (although there is no record of the Northfleet church site ever having been dedicated to St Martin) - or north of the Thames - or much further to the west.

The 'Great Saxon Hall' was only discovered in 2012 and the Spring 2013 edition of the Kent Archaeological Review reads:

'West Kent had at least two Saxon sub-kings in the 7th and 8th centuries ... It now seems highly likely that this was in fact the regional palace of the West Kent kings.'

If St Martin's at Eynsford was founded by St Botolph though, why should there be a second church bearing his name on the other side of the River Darent at Lullingstone? Whatever the answer, a lot was going on here in C7 and there seems a strong likelihood that St Botolph was part of it.

Classification of Lullingstone church.

I wonder if, of St Botolph's and St Martin's, the latter was the earlier church and Lullingstone was founded a little later. In this case it would bear a B(ii) classification (see below).

Readers' letters and emails.

1. Tony Connolly wrote from Croxton Kerrial on the subject of his church's dedication:

... further developments and a mystery. The church at Croxton seems to have been called just John the Baptist until recently and is shown as such on OS maps certainly up to 1950. A local resident tells me St Botolph was added on the initiative of the vicar, reason unknown. Knowing the Church of England there would have been forms to fill in and permissions to be obtained. However Leicester Archdeaconry say they have no record of the church and I am now trying Lincoln, most strange!

2. Dick Pascoe wrote from Hawkinge (Kent):

I have never considered myself as religious in any way but still love visiting churches. It is the historical and architectural aspects of the buildings that interest me hence my enjoyment of your ramblings. Keep up the good work ...

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*.

Church Visits

Zina has organised a short break for us in Worcester at the end of March and has kindly offered to tie this in with visiting some of the Botolph Churches that have so far escaped me.

I propose therefore to visit the following churches on the following dates:

Sunday 29th March: Slapton
Newbold-on-Avon
Monday 30th March: Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake
Shepshed
Sibson
Tuesday 31st March Burton Hastings
Church with Chapel Brampton

I shall be contacting these churches within the next week or so in the hope that I may be able to meet people during my visit (sometimes this is the vicar/rector and sometimes the churchwarden or keyholder). If necessary I can shuffle the visiting dates around a little so please ring me on 01303 221-777 or 07802 646-644 or email me at botolph@virginmedia.com if you would like me to visit at a particular time on a particular day.

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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