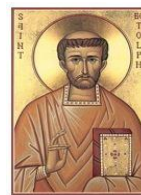




The Botolphian

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.

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1st November 2016

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Banningham, Norfolk.
- I am delighted to welcome as new members: the Curator of Saffron Waldon Museum, Carolyn Wingfield: Revd Gill Calver (Folkestone); Heather Flack (Worcester) – author of a recently published book on Edmund Ironside (which I have both read and enjoyed); Rose Doherty (USA - President, Partnership of Historic Bostons); Dr Hugh Robertson-Ritchie (Folkestone).
- Correspondence from Bruce Bailey regarding Pevsner Northamptonshire; William Hunt, the Windsor Herald of Arms.

Editorial

I am delighted – and somewhat relieved – to be able to report that the society's 4th Annual Luncheon was a great success. At nineteen it was a rather smaller group than I had hoped for but this had the advantage that it made for a 'cosy' gathering. The food and service was excellent – better than last year I thought – although, once again, the staff were a bit slow with the drinks – but perhaps we should pre-order those? Many thanks to everybody who helped to keep the machinery running smoothly on the day.

I gave a 30 minute Powerpoint presentation on 'The Riddles of Saint Botolph' and most people managed to stay more or less awake and some even said some nice things to me afterwards so I count that as a 'pass.'

We then had a pleasant walk down to the Fitzwilliam Museum (which woke everybody up

again) and enjoyed an hour's guided tour of the *Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts* exhibition.

2017 Annual Luncheon

This brings us on to the arrangements we need to make for next year. I would like to attract higher numbers. Whereas our group is a very friendly one and it is a joy to meet each other one cannot expect that alone to drag many people to the luncheon. It seems to me that we need a major attraction such as (i) an excellent speaker, or (ii) an excellent venue (such as a meal in one of the Cambridge colleges), or (iii) a prestigious after-lunch event – similar to our visit to the Parker Museum which attracted high numbers.

The problem we have is that the society has no money to pay for such attractions. I am not sure how much a good speaker would cost but I guess that, including travelling expenses, we are talking about £500 or more.

Patrons of the Society of Saint Botolph

To that end I am wondering if the answer would be to offer a second level of membership of the society costing £15 per annum for those people who were prepared to help in sponsoring the group. Please do not send me any money at the moment – I would first just like your views and an indication of whether or not you would subscribe. We have over 400 members and if over 40 were prepared to contribute then it would be worth taking this step.

Organiser required

In October 2017 I hope to be on a lecture tour in Boston Massachusetts so I am looking for somebody to take over the organisation of the 2017 Luncheon and would be most grateful to receive offers at botolph@virginmedia.com.

Banningham, Norfolk.

Approach: From the A140 Cromer road take the B1145 towards North Walsham and Felmingham. After 700m (just after Church Farm) at the Banningham St Botolph sign,



take the single track road to your left. Turn right at the end and park near the Crown Public House or the green.

Location: Church Road, Banningham, Colby, Norfolk NR11 7DY. Lat/Long: 52.8169, 1.2866.

Key: The church is open daily during daylight hours.

Vicar: Revd Keith Dally, The Rectory, Aylsham Road, Felmingham NR28 0LD. Tel: 01692 406045.

Services: The United Benefice of Kings Beck comprises St Botolph, Banningham; St Giles, Colby; St Andrew, Felmingham; All Saints, Skepton; St Margaret, Suffield; and SS Peter & Paul, Tuttington. SUNDAY SERVICE is held at 10 a.m. by rota in one of these churches. (Check on www.achurchnearyou.com/banningham-st-botolph/ for the latest rota).

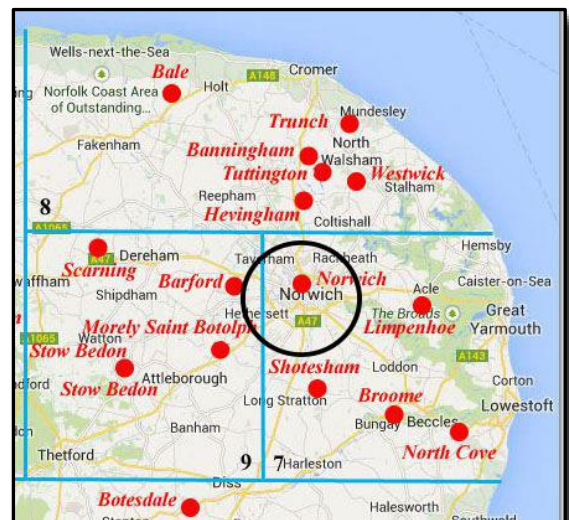
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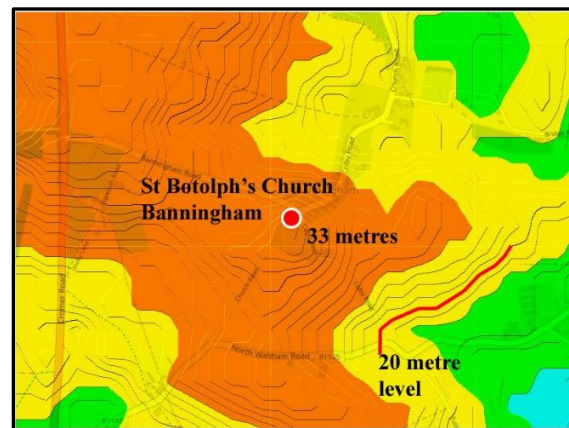
Once again, as with last month's featured church at Trunch, we are right in the north of Norfolk.



There are six churches dedicated to Saint Botolph in this small area of northeast East Anglia. Five of the churches are close together and a sixth (of which there are records but no physical evidence today) is further to the west. All the churches, with the exceptions of Trunch and Bale, lie within 3 miles of the Roman road.



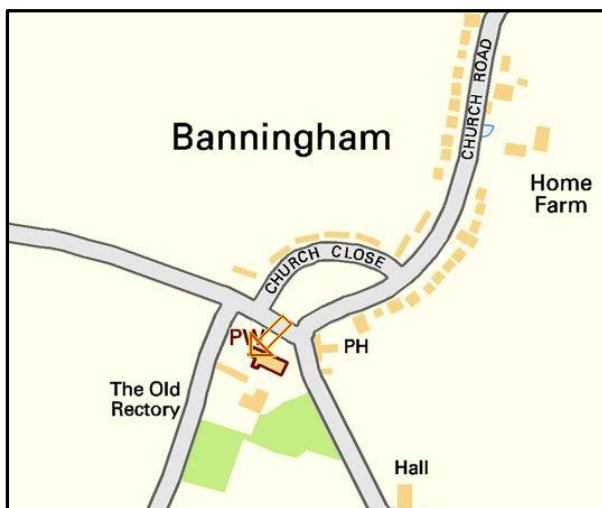
The picture above shows more Botolph Churches and it may well be that their presence is directly related to the metropolis of Norwich.



Looking at the church's position in relation to the contours we again, as with last month's church of Trunch, find it right on the top of the hill at 33 metres as compared to the 'classical location' of a Botolph's Church in this situation which would be closer to the 20 metre level.

This suggests that the founders of the site had special considerations. Perhaps they were concerned about inundation from the sea? Perhaps they wanted to display the church in a prominent position?

I suspect that the water table in Banningham might be quite close to the surface but I have not been able to verify this. I base this suspicion on the fact that the nearest well-test-site monitored by the British Geological Survey is at Wash Pit Farm near Rougham where the height of the ground is 80 m above sea level, the depth of the well is 40 m and the depth of water in the well is normally about 2 metres. St Botolph's Church Banningham lies nearly 50 metres lower than this.



The church itself:

This is the second church of the NE Norfolk Cluster that we have looked at. The village in which it stands satisfies all the basic requirements of a classical English village having the church, a Village Green and a public house all in close proximity.



We made our acquaintance with the Crown Public House after visiting the church and I was amused to see the following notice over the mantelpiece.



The doorway to the south porch is thought to be late C14 and the rest of its structure early C15.



Inside the porch on both west and east walls are two recesses separated by a freestanding square shaft, chamfered at the front with polygonal abaci (the plates at the top where the shaft joins the masonry) and polygonal bases. In the corner you can also see a stoop (for Holy Water).

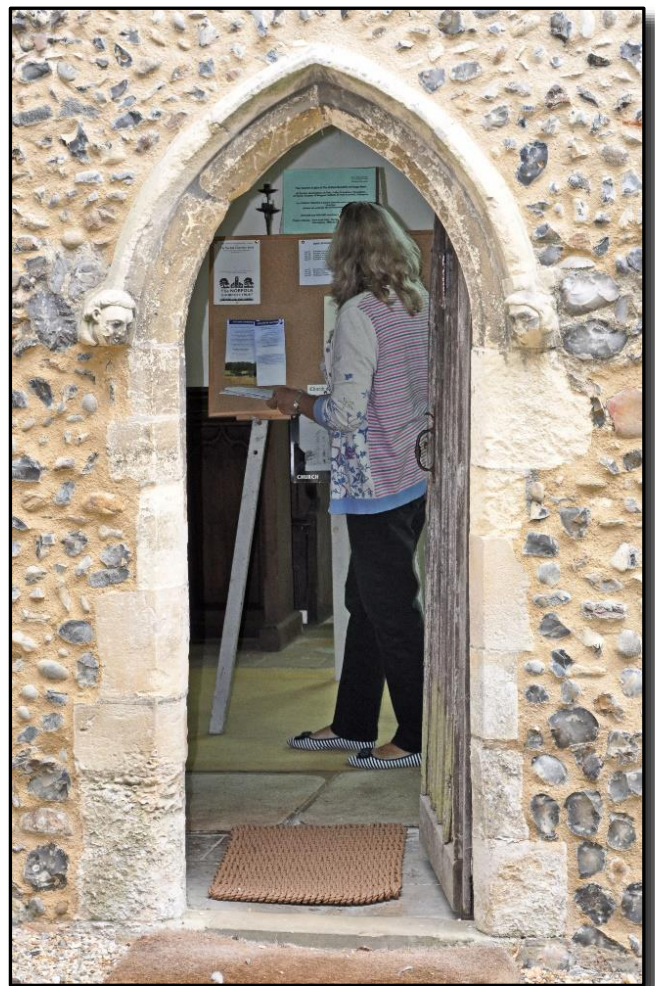


Unusually, the doorway into the nave is of an ogee pattern – i.e. (classically) like two mirrored ‘S’ shapes touching at the top so that they leave a little

notch. One can understand why doorways were infrequently built in this way since it must have created quite a headache for the carpenter who had to design the door itself.



. . . Although the entrance for visitors is not through the south porchway but via the priest’s door in the southeast wall as arrowed above. The approach to the church is from the north.



Just inside the doorway is a noticeboard with useful information and once we had passed this we found Jill Ridout waiting to greet us . . .



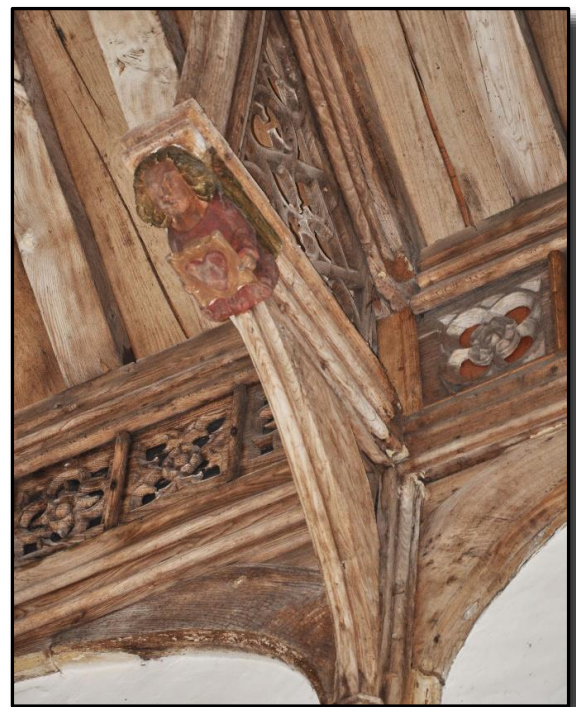
. . . and to show us around.



By the chancel arch there stands a most unusual and rather beautiful wooden lectern carved in the shape of an angel. This replaces a brass eagle lectern which was stolen some years ago.



One's first view is of the nave looking west towards the tower. The centre of the nave is C14 whereas the aisles, south porch and tower date from C15. The chancel arch was built c. 1330.



The nave's hammer beam roof, which is of a particularly steep pitch, has seven angels on each side. These are in fact painted but this does not become evident until one takes a photograph and enlarges it! One of the angels is depicted swinging a censer and another is in a boat.



Turning briefly to look at the sanctuary, one observes the piscina and sedilia.



Reverting to the nave, two wall paintings decorate its northern wall. The easterly one depicts Saint George slaying the dragon . . .



. . . while the westerly one is said to show Saint Christopher carrying Christ across a river. There is a further undecipherable painting fragment on the wall of the north aisle. True frescos are painted on wet plaster using watercolours. I am uncertain whether these count as true frescos or not. It is interesting to note that the paintings were clearly in place before the clerestory windows usurped parts of them in C15.



Pieces of mediaeval glass have been incorporated into some of the windows. In the centre light is the figure of Christ and some way below Him a tiny church.



The impressive seven-lock parish chest dates from c. 1450.



The nearby pulpit was installed in 1808. It used to be somewhat higher so that the priest could see into the box pews. The pedestal had to be shortened however when it developed dry rot.



The east window is comparatively modern and was installed during C19 restoration work but the others in the sanctuary are genuinely C14.



The Low Altar Table has fine carving and bulbous legs and dates from c. 1600.



The Lady Chapel has been cleverly used to accommodate the organ pipes. Prior to the Reformation the chapel was used by church guilds dedicated to St Mary and All Saints; the guilds were responsible for the chapel's upkeep.



The plain octagonal font is much earlier than one might suspect and is thought to be late C14. The font cover is similarly deceptive and dates from as long ago as late C18.

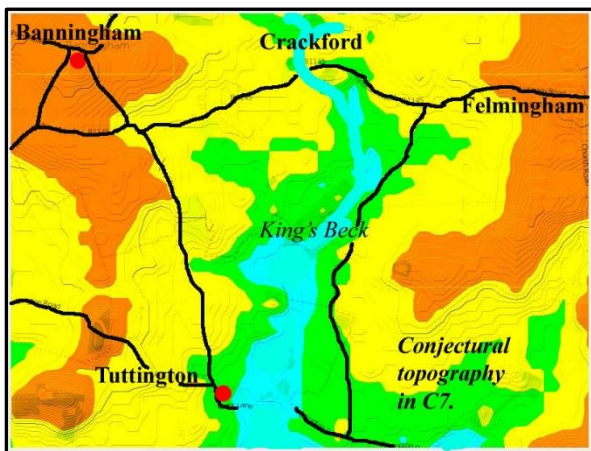


The open pews in the nave were installed during some restoration work which took place in 1847 whereas the box pews (seen above) date from an earlier 1808 restoration project.

Banningham

In the Domesday Book, the settlement is recorded as both *Banincha*, and *Hamingeha*.

Francis Blomefield (1807) tells us of Banningham: *The greater part by much of this town was called Cracheford or Crakeford and Banincham was only a hamlet to Crachefort.*



Although Domesday records Banningham as being very small with only 5 households and no church, Crackford has 9 households (still quite small) . . . and TWO churches! Across the other side of King's Beck, Felmingham is quite large at 33 households and has one church.

One and a half miles further down the beck is Tuttington (the site of another St Botolph's Church which we will feature later) – this only has 7 households but ALSO has 2 churches.

In 1086 then, within a mile's radius, there were (if we are to believe in the accuracy of the Domesday

clerks) 5 churches serving 54 households. We must bear in mind that these churches would not have been massive like the whole of today's Banningham church but rather smaller than its chancel.

Domesday tells us that the Banningham Lordship in 1086 was the *Abbey of St Benet at Holme*; the Lord of both Crackford and Tuttington was *Willam de Warenne*; and the Felmingham Tenant-in-Chief was *Roger Bigod*.

The families of the Warennes and the Bigods had vied for dominance in eastern England since the Norman Conquest.

The title of Earl of Norfolk was created in 1070 and it was the Bigod family which held it in C12 and C13.



The List of Rectors dates from Hugh de Bolle in 1316 when Blomefield tells us that the church was in the gift of Alice of Hannonia Countess of Norfolk. It looks therefore as if she might have been involved in the church's foundation but I can find no mention of her in any other historical records (I hope somebody will correct me on this). Roger Bigod died in 1306 without heirs and his estates were assigned to Thomas Brotherton, the fifth son of King Edward I. Brotherton was only 16 however when Hugh de Bolle took over as

rector and Brotherton did not marry until many years later - so Alice could not have been his wife. The detailed provenance of the church must therefore, for the moment, remain a mystery.

Classification:

Although the Norfolk Heritage Explorer writes *The earliest dateable parts of this church are from before 1300 but it is thought that parts of the chancel wall are considerably older than this . . .* I can find no evidence to support this so (in spite of the Domesday evidence of Crackford) I must assume that Banningham was a proprietary church founded neither by Saint Botolph himself in C7 nor by the Duchy of Norfolk but by local landowners in C14. Thus I would classify it as B(iii) – founded after the Norman Conquest. Its position does not point strongly to it being a ‘Travellers’ church’ although it does lie within 3 miles of the Roman road.

Thanks

My thanks to Jill Ridout for her time and patience explaining features of Banningham church.

Readers’ letters and emails.

1. **Bruce Bailey FSA** is an Architectural Historian (and is the person mainly responsible for the updated Pevsner Northamptonshire) who Derek Cummings heard speaking last month and was disappointed to find that no mention had been made of the ‘crowned heads’ on the roof timbers of the Saint Botolph’s church at Church with Chapel Brampton. As a result of this at Derek’s request I sent Bruce my photographs of the carvings. He kindly showed interest and wrote *‘Even with these it is difficult to give them a date. What is odd is that they are not mentioned in Churches of the Archdeaconry 1849 nor another contemporary descriptions. The chancel was rebuilt by the Northampton architect E.F. Law and, although they look older, I just wonder whether they date from that period. They seem to be attached to the beams rather than being an integral part of them. Bit of a mystery.’*

2. **I received** quite a few emails from people saying how much they enjoyed the luncheon – so that was gratifying for me – many thanks. I received other emails from people saying that they were unable to attend the service at Hadstock. I went and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed it – thank you Hadstock for your hospitality.

3. **William Hunt, Windsor Herald at the College of Arms.** I have been in touch with William about the provenance of the St Botolph’s shield and its correct colouring. He was unable to come to any firm conclusions about its origin in spite of consulting more than a yard of published

books relating to ecclesiastic heraldry. He has sent me photocopies from some books and the final authority seems to come from Revd E. Dorling’s book *Heraldry of the Church* (London: Mowbray, 1911) p.164 where he writes of the Botolph Arms:

“This shield with its six waved divisions of white and blue may be taken to represent the water that was about his dwelling and the chevron is the old heraldic charge by which the mediaeval armorists symbolized a builder. The cross at the top of the chevron is introduced to indicate that St Botolph’s building was sacred.”

William wrote: *“The picture you sent me had essentially a blue field with thin white lines on it, whereas, more logically, the stripes would alternate white and blue and be of the same width. Whether the chevron and cross should be gold as in your picture or black as suggested by Dorling, I have no idea – either would be acceptable on a stripy field, but if the field were just or essentially blue, it would have to be either white or gold.”*

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*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

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.

Typical Characteristics of Early St Botolph Churches.

1. All are in the eastern half of England
2. Most have Saxon foundations.
3. Many lie with 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway.
4. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels.
5. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys.

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Folkestone, Kent. 1st May 2013.