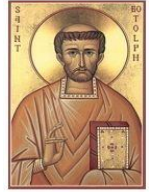




The Botolphian

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: 46

1st February 2017

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Barford, Norfolk.
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following new members: Denyse Dawson (Parish Office, Shepshed); Jean Westacott (St Botolph's Chevening, Kent); Diana and Norman Ling (Newcastle).
- Correspondence from Tony Connolly, John Sennett, Gillian Machorton, Jonathon Brackenbury, Linda Clark, Guy Hartfall and Derek Commings.

Editorial

I do not have a great deal to report this month as I have been throwing as much effort as I can into writing Book III of my Botolph Trilogy (50,000 words done and 70,000 to go!).

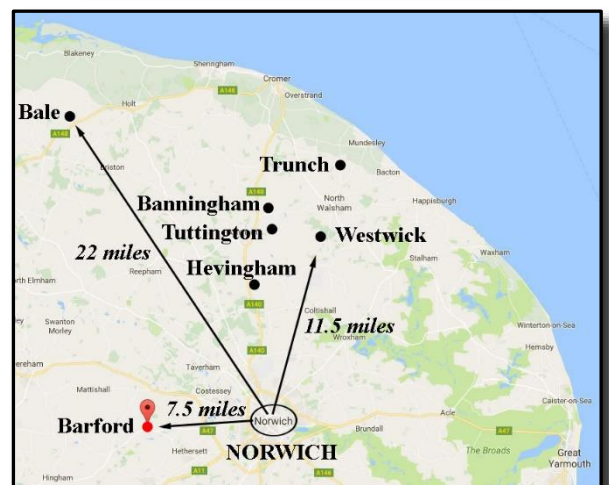
What I *can* report however is that we are making good progress with this year's Annual Luncheon in that Derek Cummings has kindly agreed to help in the latter stages i.e. having bookings and cash posted to him and dealing with any matters while I am away in September. He has also come up with the marvellous idea of booking chauffeured punts for a tour along the 'backs.' This sounds rather fun and not something one would often have the chance to do.

Guy Hartfall has also been very helpful by contacting the well-known Church Historian Roy Tricker and arranging for him to be our after-dinner speaker.

This of course all depends upon the date and it looks as if it will have to be rather earlier this year – namely:

Wednesday 4th October 2017

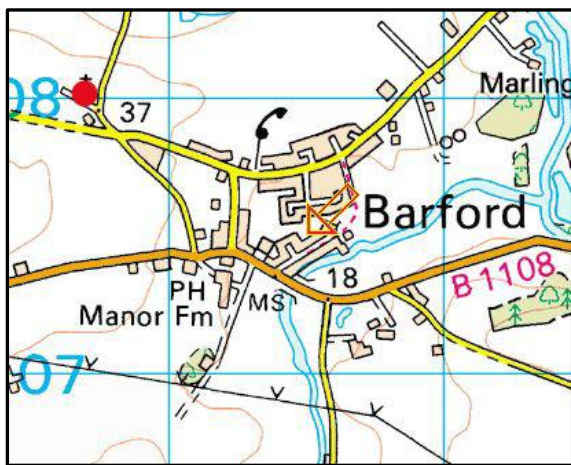
So please put this in your diaries. The event will be held in Cambridge once again but I am hoping to be able to arrange for us to have lunch in one of the Cambridge colleges rather than the hotel so . . . watch this space.



Church Feature

Barford, Norfolk.

Approach: Barford lies 9 miles due west of Norwich so take the B1108 Watton Road until the 40 mph Barford entry sign appears. A quarter of a mile after this take the second turning to your right (after passing the Anglia Auto Centre) along Back Lane – signposted Colton. Go straight over the cross roads into Colton Road, passing the '18T mgw weight limit' sign. Bear left when you see the church ahead of you and drive past it along the track and turn to the right where the hedge stops and park (rather charmingly) in the orchard.



Location: Barford Road, Barford, NR9 4AU; NGR TG1069707988; Lat/Long: 52.6287, 1.1118.

Key: The church is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. even during the winter.

Contact: David Dale, 11 Clarke's Close, Barford, NR9 4BB. Tel: 01603 739-397.

Rector: Revd Timothy Weatherstone, The Rectory, The Street, Reymerston, NR9 4AG. Tel: 01362 858-021.

Benefice: Barnham Broom and Upper Yare which comprises 13 parishes and 15 churches at Barford, Barnham Broom, Brandon Parva, Carleton Forehoe, Cranworth, Southburgh, Garveston, Hardingham, Kimberley, Reymerston, Runhall, Coston, Thuxton, Westfield, Whinburgh and Wrampingham!

Services: Being such a large benefice worship takes place at Barford once per month on the average but on the first Sunday of each month all the village communities join together for worship at 10 a.m. in one church building.

Websites: www.barford.churchnorfolk.com; www.groupof15.org.uk.

Listed Grade: II*

There are an amazing number of Barfords on the Domesday Record List:

Barford St John, Oxfordshire

Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire

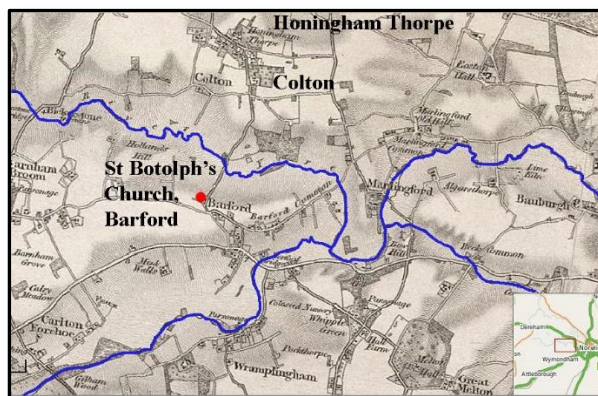
Barford St Martin, Wiltshire

Barford, Norfolk

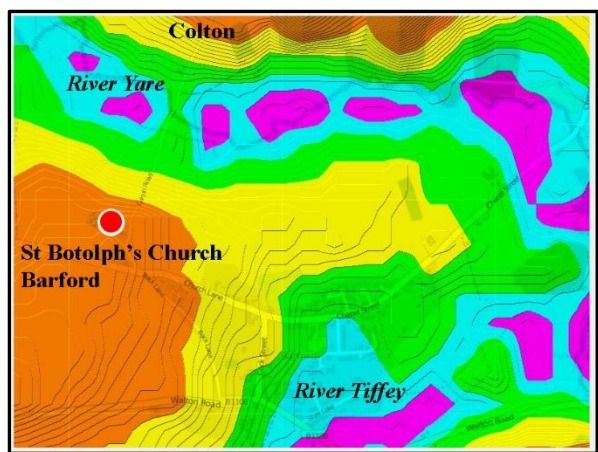
Barford, Northants

Barford, Warwickshire.

The name apparently stems from *baere* meaning 'bread-corn' and this is related to barley which was one of the first cultivated grains. (The word 'barn,' incidentally, originally derives from 'barley-house'). Thus Barford might mean the village at the ford near the barley fields although it might also mean 'near the mill' since *baere* was also synonymous with flour.



Above is an 1838 Ordnance Survey map showing the Barford church and, close by, Honingham Thorpe where the farm is still renowned for its barley.



This map shows the area how it might have looked in C7 when the rivers were wider, although there seems to be no indication that St Botolph's Barford was founded as early as this in spite of its being in a classical C7 foundation position, i.e. close to the river on the lower slopes of the escarpment (at 38 metres above sea level).



The church is said to date from late C12, C13 and C15 with C19 restoration. It is constructed of partially rendered flint with ashlar dressings.



Low in the tower's west wall is a peculiar little round-headed (with just the suggestion of a point) window set into (perhaps Roman?) tiles. A few similar tiles perforate the rest of the wall as shown ringed above.



We were met (by arrangement) at the church by David Dale who was busily trimming the hedge but he kindly abandoned this in favour of showing us around.

The C14 west tower has traceried bell openings above with quatrefoil sound holes below. It has slit windows on the south east side indicating the position of the tower staircase.

It has been suggested that the base of the tower is probably Norman but that it was encased in 1344.



Internally the window has an embrasure. The tower archway is C15.



The south porch is a little later at C16.

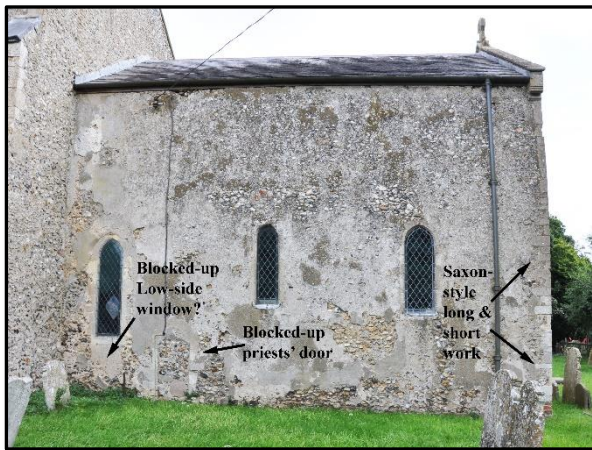


The window at the east end is a later replacement.

C15 Perpendicular style windows are set into walls which, although structurally sound, are defaced by crumbling ashlar dressings



The tracery, although still of the Perpendicular style, is of a different pattern to the nave windows.



The chancel is the oldest part of the church and it is suggested that it is late C12. It shows signs of possibly being older than that however with its Saxon-style long and short work and rounded windows.

Glass with a pointed top has been inserted into each of the latter but it seems likely that the original lights were round-headed.



Looking at the base of the east window from *inside* the church reveals that the window's source was . . .



. . . the nearby Great Snoring's Workhouse Chapel when that edifice was demolished (see full picture of east window below on page 8).



The bier always has to be stored somewhere. In this case perhaps it is placed at the entrance as a reminder of our mortality!



Before entering the church, the quatrefoil openings on the west wall of the porch should be noted.



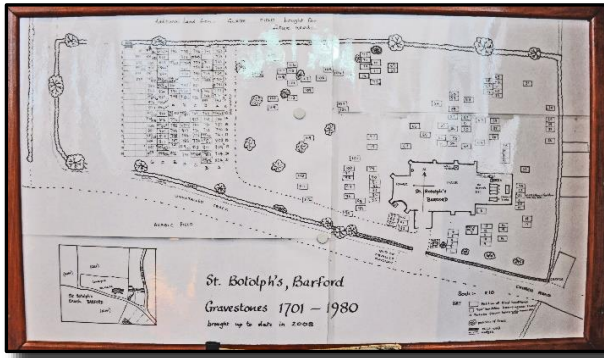
On the right hand side an area of the wall has been hollowed out for the stoup of holy water but sadly the bowl is broken.



These attractive and unusual features are set into embrasures in the porch walls.



The octagonal font is C14 and occupies a prominent classical position at the head of the central aisle. The font cover is of unknown date.



Hanging on the west wall is a comprehensive guide to the gravestones in the churchyard – a feature rarely so readily available.



The northern niche now bears a simple war memorial to the 'Barford Boys' . . .



The nave was rebuilt in C15. There is still the remains of a rood screen and inside the north wall is a flight of steps which originally led to the rood loft.



. . . and the southern set of niches are dedicated to Saint Botolph with an endearing model of our saint and a lovely embroidery collage with the notation 17th June – St Botolph 620-680 – Ikanho, Suffolk. These beautiful features are the work of Ann Tomlin.



These have been intelligently used to provide an attractive feature. To each side of the chancel are triple image niches which mark the positions of former altars. That on the north side was originally dedicated to St Nicholas and the southerly one was for the Virgin Mary.



Above the northern niches is a huge depiction of George III (1760-1820) royal arms. At <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~pardos/RoyalArms2.html> I discovered that, rather than it being compulsory to exhibit such arms marking the position of the Monarch as Head of the Church of

England, it simply became *common practice* after the 1660 Restoration. It seems that the artists who produced these arms were often the artists of inn signs too and there is apparently a revived interest in the latter.



The carving of the C16 rood screen is actually more interesting than it first appears, bearing in mind its great age. Architecturally it is described as having *flamboyant traceried heads supported on turned balaster shafts*.



The C15 chancel arch leads us into the oldest part of the building. The lead roof of the nave was replaced by slates in 1850 and this was presumably the time when the attractive wooden ceilings were placed.



The organ (which Simon Knott describes in his 'Norfolk Churches' as 'jaunty') has a side-keyboard and fits in neatly behind the rood screen.



The altar is a simple wooden table with a marquetry reredos behind. To the right is a niche which once may have been a piscina and to the left is an aumbry . . .



. . . which is put to good use for storing candles etc.



The east window dominates the chancel and depicts the blessing of the children, the Ascension and the Last Supper.



Whereas the piscina in the chancel is not particularly spectacular, this one in the south wall of the nave is quite attractive and underlines the fact that there was once an altar here which was used regularly for Holy Communion.



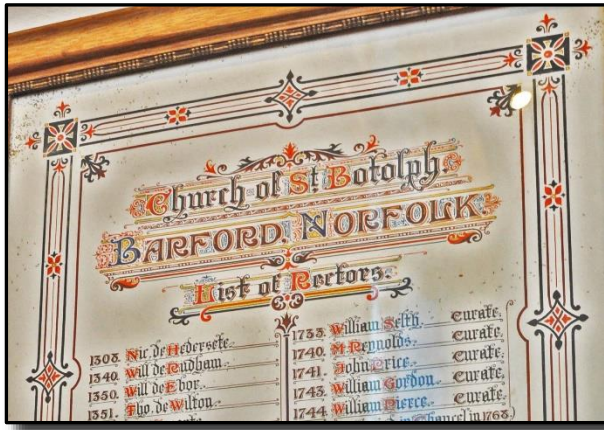
Just west of the sanctuary and against the north wall of the chancel there is a small two seater stall upon which there are two notices. One tells us that the east window dates from late C19 when it was installed at Great Snoring (but was moved to Barford in 1961) and the other notes that beneath the stall lies the body of (Robert) Sedley who died in 1613 in the eleventh year of His Majesty's (James I - 1603-1625) reign.



Looking back towards the tower, the whole of the lower part is occupied by the vestry where a door leads to the spiral stairway to the belfry. The bells are now unused although Blomefield tells us that there were originally three.

He also notes "*Norwich Domesday tells us that the rector of the mediety had a house and 12 acres of glebe . . . Here was a guild in honour of St Butolph (sic).*"

Guilds were usually groups of merchants but there were also *religious* guilds which (Wikipedia tells us) generally consisted of a 'Christian voluntary association of lay people created for the purpose of promoting special works of Christian charity or piety and approved by the Church hierarchy.'



On the west wall near the entrance is a magnificent piece of calligraphy, by Jarrols & Sons of Norwich, listing the rectors to 1957. The first, in 1308 was Nicholas de Hederse. Blomefield records the fact that he was sponsored by Mary de Neville, Lady of Middleham. The Nevilles continued to be mentioned in connection with the advowson until the Reformation.

It seems that the rectors had chequered careers here since records show that, in 1439 Sir Richard Barbour was deprived of his living as was Sir Robert Shypton in 1535. William Morvilte's rectorship was set aside in 1591 and in 1693 the institution of Jeremias Revans was voided as a result of it being proved that the bishop had no right to install him in the first place. By 1730 the Earl of Rochford was patron.

Classification:

What we are looking for here, of course, is the origin of the site. I have found no suggestion that this church was built on the foundations of another. There is no record of a church being in this area before 1086 and the first recorded rector was 1308. It would seem therefore that this site dates from mid C13, i.e. 1250 at the earliest.

The first recorded patron is Mary de Neville of Middleham who was the daughter of Ralph Neville, 1st Baron Neville de Raby (1262-1331) - a nobleman and member of the powerful Neville family. Mary seems to have been born in c. 1301 which means she was only 9 years of age when she sponsored the first rector. Perhaps this was as a result of her father's romantic whim? Mary's brother, the second Ralph Baron Neville de Raby (c.1291-1369) was the next to own the living's advowson.

It might well be that the Nevilles are an important link in the Botolph chain since, although they did not come to prominence until shortly after the Norman Conquest, they were of British origin and the family became renowned for their obduracy in

holding on to native names. One of the aims of the French conquerors was to purge England of its local saints. Could the preservation of St Botolph's patronage be in part attributed to the stubbornness of the Nevilles? Their country seat was in Raby in Northumbria where we find the northernmost of the Saint Botolph Churches i.e. Frosterley (12 miles from Raby Castle), and Horsehouse and Carlton in Cleveland – both 26 miles away from Raby. I can find no connection between these three Botolph Churches and the Nevilles but the records show clearly that they had land in Norfolk as well. Since the Nevilles held the advowson at the time of the first recorded rector it is likely that it was they who sponsored the building of the church – probably as a service to the community and their tenant farmers.

We can only speculate as to whether the foundation was dedicated to Saint Botolph in connection with the Nevilles' Hanseatic trading (as seems to have been the case with other Norfolk churches) - or whether the family felt a particular loyalty to our saint?

In conclusion there seems little doubt that this site was not founded until after the Norman Conquest and it was probably linked to the Hansa – either in respect of wool . . . or perhaps of Barford barley. This would then classify as a 'C' on our list.

Thanks

My thanks to David Dale for taking the time to show us around.

Readers' letters and emails.

1. I had greetings from many wishing me a Happy New Year. Thank you all for those.
2. **Tony Connolly** wrote with some very exciting news from Croxton Kerrial:

Dear Denis

As you may remember, we have been excavating the medieval manor complex at Croxton Kerrial for the past four seasons, we had anticipated finishing this year, but new developments have precluded that. Whilst excavating, what we assumed to be a ditch, we came upon masses of Anglo Saxon pottery from the 9th to 11th century, together with two Anglo Saxon bronze pins from around 700 AD. Further Anglo Saxon finds on the site include 6th/7th century pottery, a silver Anglo Saxon coin minted around 700 AD together with a pair of ladies

eyebrow tweezers of the same period (see attached photos).



So far so good, but when the county archaeologist visited the site he informed that, in his opinion, what we were excavating was not a ditch but an ironstone quarry. The significance of this is, of course, that the only thing the Anglo Saxons would be quarrying stone for would be a church, thus inferring that there was an Anglo Saxon church on the site before the present church, presumably dedicated to St Botolph. I trust you find this of interest and will let you know of any further developments when we recommence excavations this spring.

Many thanks for that Tony and congratulations on your discoveries. – I/We look forward to hearing of further developments.

3. John Sennett wrote from Swyncombe making the good point that so many of us produce photographs which are insignificant today but will possibly be of great historical interest later. He wonders if people ever consider entering such photographs into County Records. He also advocates the use of a rod marker to provide a scale of size. Thank you for these thoughts John.

4. Gillian Machorton wrote from Stow Bedon in Norfolk – the church which, you may remember has just been refurbished – she sent me a copy of their magnificent new guidebook which will prove invaluable when I feature this church. Congratulations on the re-opening Gillian and many thanks for the book.

5. Jonathon Brackenbury wrote from Boston Lincs., deploring the fact that the local

media seem to be more concerned with glamourising Boston's link with the Mayflower than providing "a more accurate overview of the history of St Botolph's, Boston, that stretches back further than the minor events of 1607."

6. Linda Clark wrote from Hevingham thanking me for last month's feature of which the vicar will shortly be placing a hard copy on the noticeboard of the church [Ed: a routine that I encourage] and giving me a little notice that she might have a contentious item for me to mull over – but she is still checking her facts on this. [Ed: as you know I enjoy controversy of this type and look forward to Linda's comments].

7. Guy Hartfall and Derek Cummings have kindly written in response to my plea for help with the Annual Luncheon (see Editorial). Thank you both for your support.

---O---

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: 'Hanseatic' churches.
- D: None 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.