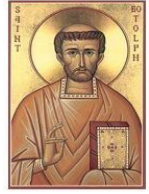




The Botolphian

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: 49

1st May 2017

Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, North Cove, Suffolk.
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following new members: Revd Jeff Payne (Carlton-in-Cleveland); Natasha Kerrigan (Cheriton); Andrew Melen (Sibson).
- Correspondence from Anne Dickinson, Revd Lawrence Smith, Terry Catchpole, Revd Kathy Couchman, Andree Sladden and Heather Flack.
- **Please note in your diaries that this year's Annual luncheon in Cambridge (venue to be announced) will still be at 12.30 for 1 p.m. but a few days earlier than usual on:**

Wednesday 4th October 2017

Editorial

In these columns the subject of Rood Screens often arises and this month's feature is no exception.



I thought it appropriate therefore to take our thoughts back to St Botolph's Church, Bradenham, Buckinghamshire which has a fine

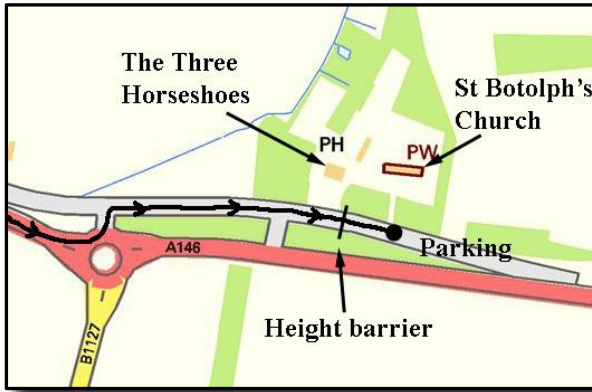
example as shown above. The 'Rood' is the name given to the cross when it is on a rood screen – and occasionally at other times. The rood is *usually* a crucifix – that is to say a cross bearing the corpus of Christ but this does not have to be so. Sometimes, as in the case of St Botolph's North Cove, the rood is a plain cross. Classically, as at Bradenham, the rood will be accompanied by the Virgin Mary on its left and St John the Evangelist on the right.

Church Feature

North Cove, Suffolk.



Approach: *If approaching from the west on the A146, press on to the Wrentham B1127 roundabout and take the first exit and turn right at the 30 mph sign along the old Lowestoft Road. After 200 yards you will find the Three Horseshoes Public House on your left.*



Go past this and under the height barrier and park in the road extension outside the church.

Location: Lowestoft Road, North Cove, Suffolk NR34 7PD; Lat/long: 52.4470, 1.6210; NGR: TM4616289390.

Key: Josie Boddy on 01502 476726; Judy Thacker on 01502 475716; Karen Hull (Benefice Secretary) on 01502 715716.

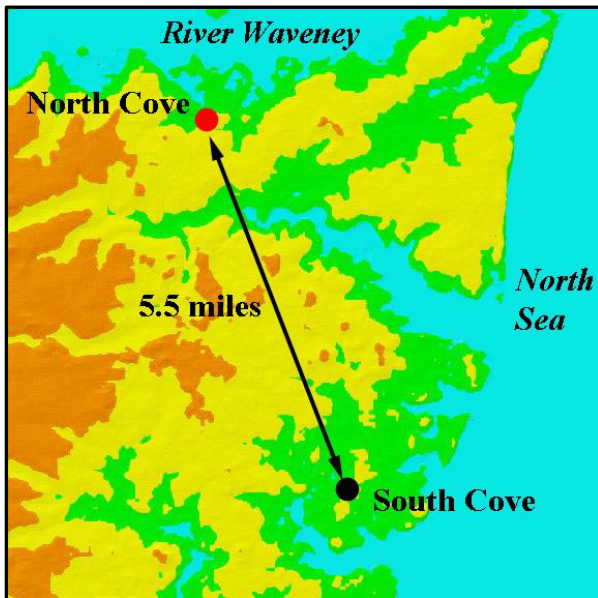
Rector: The church is in interregnum.

Benefice: The benefice covers the two churches of All Saints Worlingham with Barnby and St Botolph's North Cove.

Services: The notice board advertises this as: Alternate Sundays at 11a.m. but if you wish to attend I suggest you telephone one of the keyholders first.

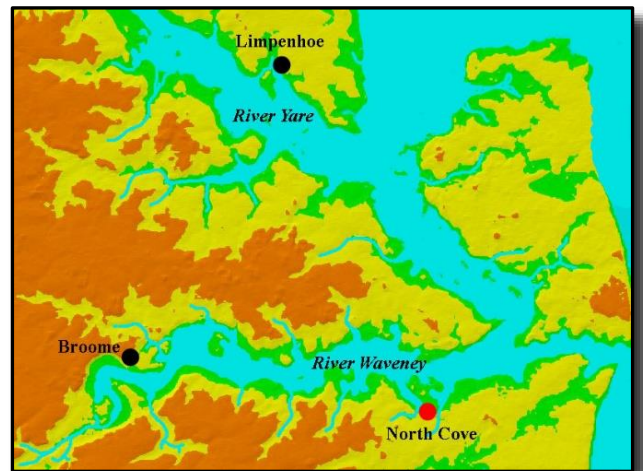
Angulation to True North: 95°

Listed Grade: I



North Cove lies on the south bank of the River Waveney so most seamen would name it *South Cove*. It therefore follows that it must have been named by a land-person to distinguish it from South Cove which lies 5.5 miles further south-east. The name derives from the Anglo-Saxon word *cofa* meaning a harbour or a shelter.

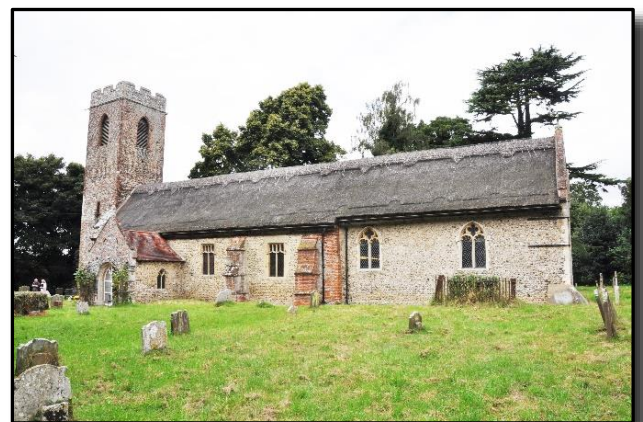
St Botolph's church seems remote from any cove today but these maps show how the coast would have looked in C7.



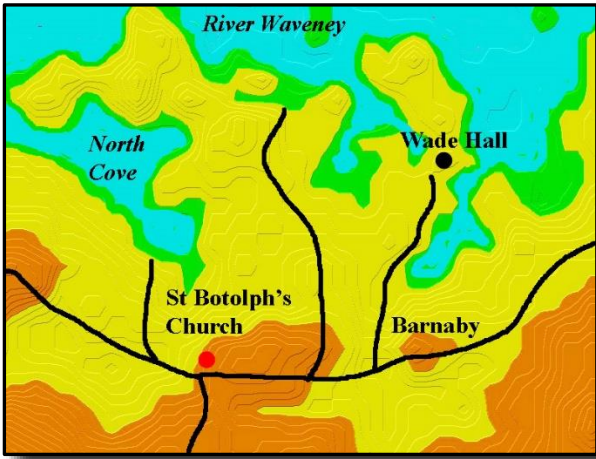
This month we cross the River Waveney from last month's featured church at Limpenhoe and in so doing pass from Norfolk down into Suffolk.



The building is approached through a leafy glade which leads from the car parking area.



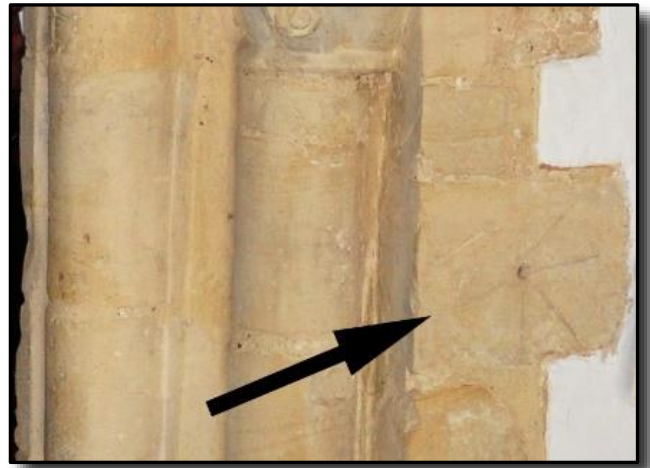
The church guide tells us that 'the core of the church we see today was probably built in early C12 and probably on the site of one of the churches mentioned in the Domesday survey.'



The nearest church that I can find in the Domesday Record was one at Barnaby (now called Barnby) which lies half a mile or so further east. North Cove itself is not mentioned in the record although it is thought that the name *Hetheburgfeld* refers to it. This word contains the three elements of *Hethe* (harbour); *Burg* (fortification); *Feld* (field). The church guide's suggestion of the church's Saxon origins makes a good start . . .



. . . and we had another good start by being welcomed at the door by Alan Glenister who took time off from his gardening duties to show us around.



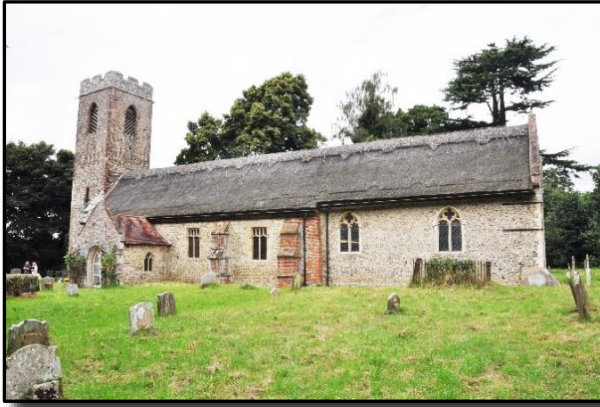
Scratched into the right hand jamb of the Norman doorway we found another example of the Mass Dials with which we have become so familiar.



The church guide tells us that the doorway stonework can probably be dated to around 1180.

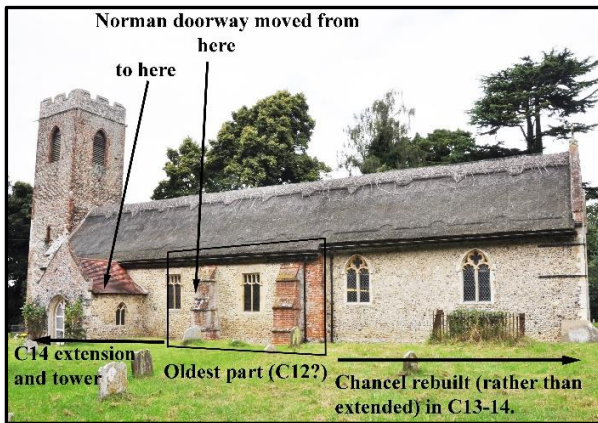


It is difficult to portray the full beauty of craftsmanship of such an item in a small photograph, so here is a further detail showing this 800 year old doorway's three decorative orders which include both chevrons and large nailheads.



One's first impression of the outside of the church is that it seems inordinately long – so long in fact that one of the first questions that I asked myself was: “which piece came first?”

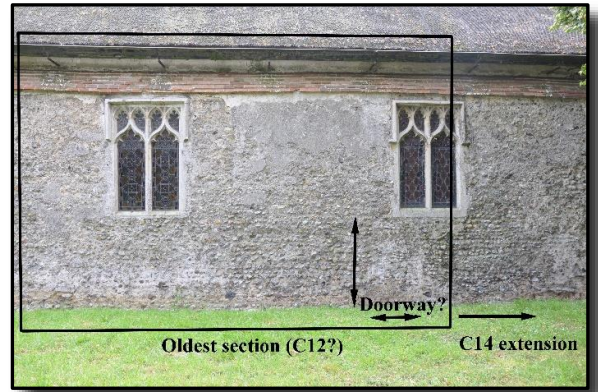
It would be logical to think that the chancel section (with its C14 windows) was the original building and that the nave (with its C15 windows) was added later together with, perhaps, the tower.



The church's history is much more complicated than this however. The oldest part of the building is, in fact, in the middle as shown above. The church guide tells us “The chancel appears to have been rebuilt . . . this was often done to allow more space for the increase in the number of celebrants involved and the increase in complexity of the service after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.”

This suggests that there might originally have been a small apse which was demolished before the new larger chancel was built.

Following the construction of the new chancel the Norman doorway was moved westwards, the nave was extended in the same direction and the tower constructed. A little later – in C15 – the windows of the south wall of the nave were replaced with those of Perpendicular style.



The windows of the nave's *north* wall were similarly replaced in C15. Evident on this wall is a sign of the remains of a northern doorway which must have been blocked up in C15 . . .



. . . and its new counterpart (seen above) built further to the west. The lancet window dates from the same period but has since been restored using modern brickwork.

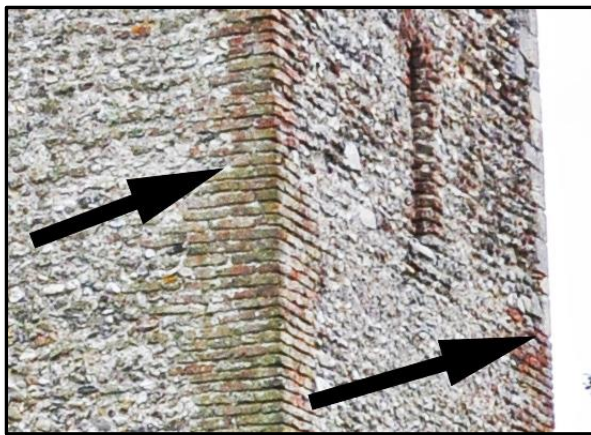


This church is quite refreshing in that there are several features which we have might have become complacent about seeing in other churches but *do not exist in this one*. **The first of these features** is *Tower Buttresses*. North Cove church has a fine slender tower which seems to say quite haughtily that has managed to survive very well without such accoutrements.

The next feature is the routine use of sandstone quoins. Instead of these the builders (particularly in the tower) used red and yellow bricks. We tend to think of bricks as being a C19 invention but from as early as C13 they were readily available from Holland and Belgium. Had it been necessary, North Cove's location on the River Waveney would have offered easy access for such imports - but the ground upon which the village had been built was blessed with a treasury of good brick-making clay which had been deposited half a million years previously by the ice sheets of the glaciation period.

The building of North Cove's tower would have coincided with an influx into the region of craftsmen from Holland and Belgium who knew all about the skills of brick-making. Brick fabrication had started in eastern England by A.D. 1300 and bricks represented a new but very expensive building material which quickly became fashionable not least because the use of such a 'modern' technique offered the squires the opportunity to advertise their opulence and importance.

Preparation of the material involved digging out the clay in the autumn and then leaving it exposed to the winter frosts. In the spring it was kneaded by treading (sometimes by horses) until it was of an easily-workable consistency whereupon it was shaped using simple wooden moulds so that the bricks that were produced were of a uniform size. The bricks were then fired in kilns.



In the picture above the two arrows point to areas of the tower's quoins (corner stones) where the building style shows a sudden change. On the north wall the width of the brick quoin suddenly

reduces and on the south wall bricks give way to sandstone blocks. The junctions of these building styles represent the beginning of the new year's build since it was only possible to add about 6ft of vertical work each year. One might also argue that the top of the tower had to bear less weight so weaker quoins were acceptable here.



It seems likely that there was a gap of 100 years or so before the South Porch was built to give protection to that wonderful Norman doorway and of course, as we have seen in other churches, to act as a meeting chamber.



Rambling roses each side of the doorway are a nice touch and on our visit flowers abounded throughout the church. The white outer doors are kept locked when the church is not in use.



Here on the oldest part of the south wall we can see, from left to right: 1. the suggestion of a herring-pattern formation of field stones (hinting that this part of the wall might be of a greater age – perhaps C11); 2. signs of the ‘retro-fitting’ of the flat-topped Perpendicular window where the gap in the stonework has been replaced by cement; 3. a plethora of different-coloured bricks (see below); 4. A strange brickwork repair to the right of the buttress.



Who would have thought that old bricks would be so interesting? Above we see a variety of different sizes and colours – an indication that the bricks are ancient and that they were hand made. Some bricks here are made from red clay, some from white clay and some have been intentionally over-roasted to produce black bricks which would sometimes be used to create a pattern within a wall. One can understand the need for the massive brick buttresses but why should there be this extra section of red-brick wall? The answer will be provided later.



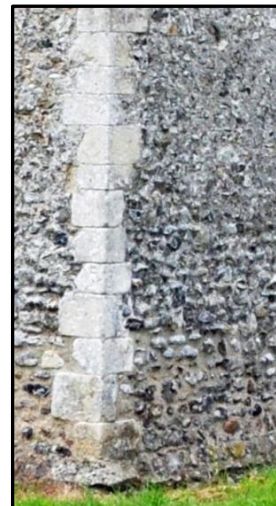
At the east end of the church, iron braces and a massive concrete quoin support have been applied. Remedial steps have clearly occupied a fair amount of the owner’s time and money.



If we move round to look at the north side of the church, two things become evident:



First, as seen in the picture above, at the junction of the nave and the chancel, the quoin of the nave’s northeast wall is a primitive construction of field stones.



Whereas at the north eastern end of the chancel we find a much more sophisticated quoin. This provides a clue that the fabric of the nave (as seen in the first picture) dates from C11 or earlier.



Returning to our first view and looking upwards, we can also see that the newer chancel (on the left) was built somewhat taller than the nave and that the latter's roof has been raised to match it.



Time now for Alan to show us inside the church.



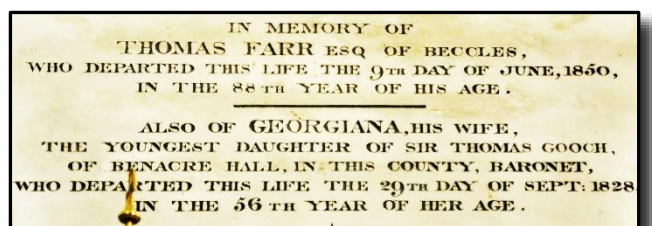
The first thing that greets us is the magnificent C15 octagonal font . . .



. . . with its carvings of angels bearing shields and of curiously-cramped lions which alternate around the bowl. Beneath are heads with headdresses. The font's stonemason must have been a busy man in C15 because the font at Gisleham church (3 miles to the east) and that at Mutford (1.5 miles to the south east) are so similar that there can be little doubt that they were made by the same man. Incidentally, both the aforementioned churches have round towers and the Mutford church bears the unusual distinction of having a Galilee porch – i.e. a porch at the west end of the tower (rather than on the south wall).



This hatchment also adds its greetings from its position on the north wall behind the font. The Farr family crest on the left of the shield and the Gooch family crest on the right links it with . . .



. . . a memorial plaque on the south wall near the pulpit which refers further to this family.

During an inspection of the church in 1959 Clive Rouse noted that “over and east of the north door where the plaster and limewash is broken . . . is much strong red, purple-red and black colour. Its position opposite the south door . . . suggests that the subject may be St Christopher.” i.e. another now-lost wall painting. Such a location is the classical position for a St Christopher fresco – as we saw at St Botolph’s church Slapton.



The first thing that is notable about the view above is the lack of a chancel arch. This is the third ‘missing feature’ which I prepared you for earlier. The 4-bay arch-braced nave roof dates from C15 but the rafters are ceiled over.

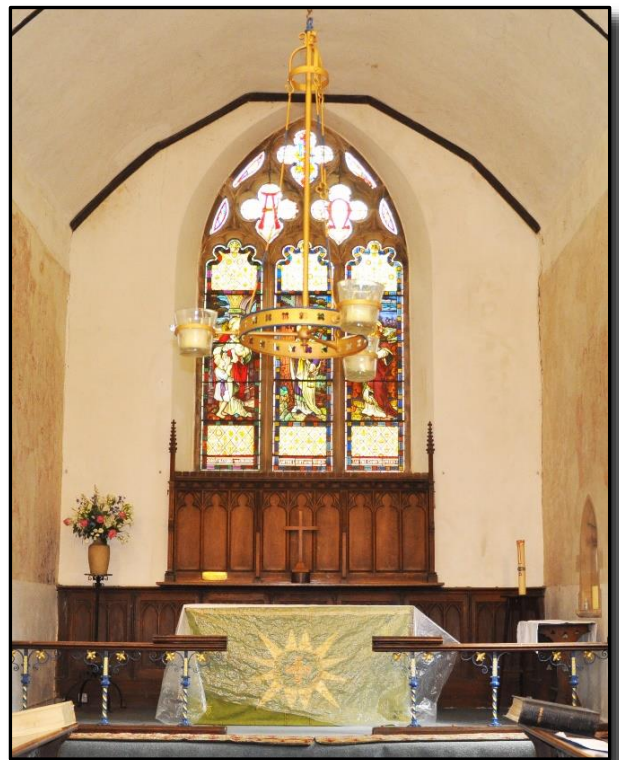


The wall posts rest on carved-head wooden corbels which are remarkable for their wild Boris Johnson-style haircuts.

I must admit to missing these on my visit and was only alerted to them later – otherwise I might have managed to obtain rather better photographs.



It is however the chancel itself to which the eye is drawn since this harbours the best-preserved collection of medieval wall paintings in East Anglia – but before we come to these there are other gems which must not be overlooked.



Hidden under the altar cloth is a fine stone ‘mensa’ which is let into the sanctuary floor. It is inscribed with five consecration crosses.

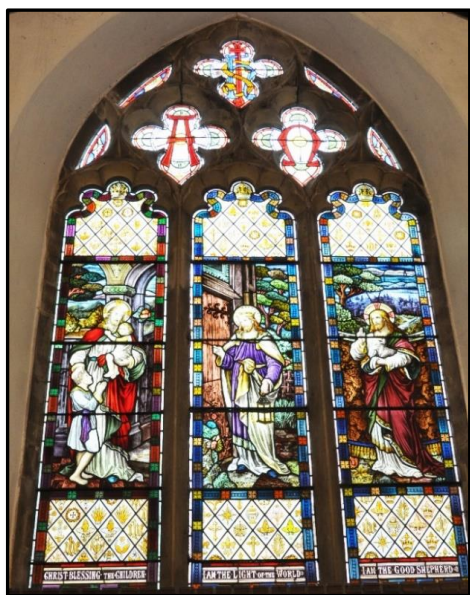
We have seen such stone altar slabs before but they are a rarity, having frequently been removed and replaced by wooden tables in C16 and C17.



It always gives me much pleasure to see fine metalwork like this in the churches I visit and these have been imaginatively painted to show off their simple beauty.



In the south wall is a piscina. If you look back at the previous pictures you will see that the altar is quite high because the chancel is raised by one step and the sanctuary is raised by a further three steps. The church guide suggests that the piscina must have had to be raised from its original position but if, as we are told, the chancel was a relatively late construction, the builders would surely have recognised from the outset that such a long church would necessitate a raised sanctuary?



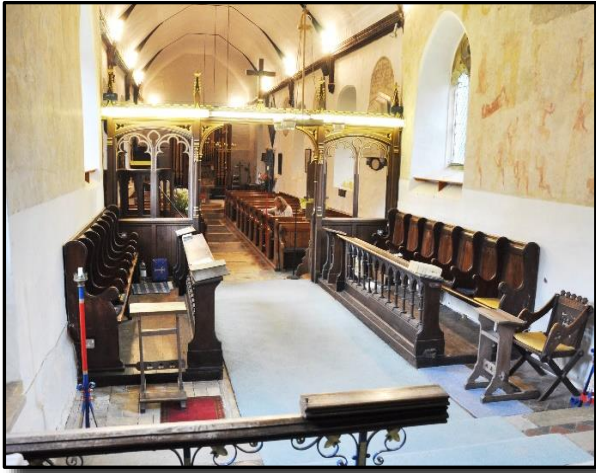
The east window is pleasant but unremarkable and is rather eclipsed by the grandeur and importance of the wall paintings.



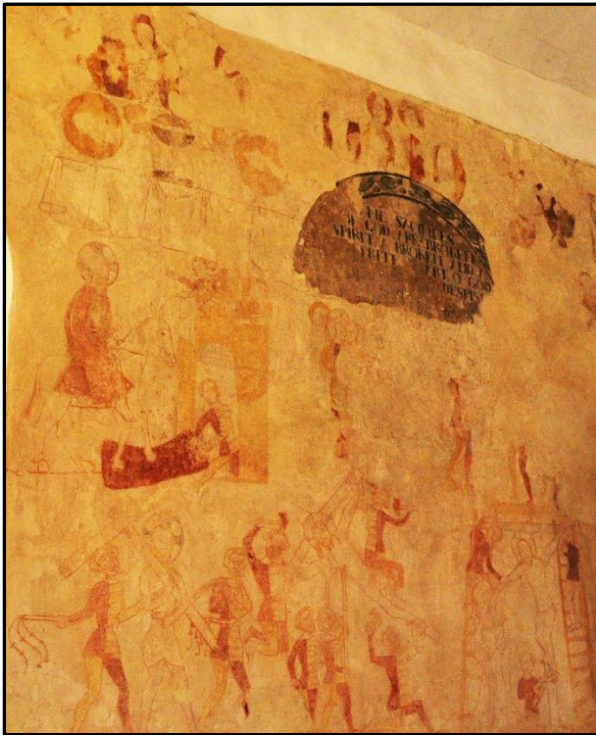
The chancel screen has been tastefully applied, mimicking a full-sized rood screen without unduly detracting from the viewer's gaze of the nave. It still supports a rood (albeit a plain cross rather than a crucifix) and it must have taken the place of a full rood screen. This brings us back to the earlier mention of the strange brickwork on the south wall.



In the days when this Rood Screen was rather more substantial, stairs were necessary to gain access to the 'loft' above it for 'housekeeping' purposes such as tending to the candles. The stairs would have been incorporated into the thickness of the south wall. Rood screens were proscribed just after the Reformation and so both the screen and the stairs were removed in C16. The red bricks represent the repairing scar where the rood stairs were removed. These bricks must therefore be younger than their cousins in the tower and may well have been recycled from a grand old building - such as perhaps the original Wade Manor (see p.15) - where the black bricks would have been used to create patterns on the walls.



Now to the jewels in the church's crown: the wall paintings are all in the chancel and date from C14 although those on the north wall are thought to predate those on the south. I have found no clue as to when they first came back to light after they had been painted over as a response to the strictures of the Reformation. Clearly they must have been uncovered by C19 because, as was their wont, the Victorians vandalised them by adding oils and accentuating lines. In 1983 however, painstaking work was started to remove both the C19 restoration work and the years of grime, and before long the faint but definite outlines of the original work began to re-appear. The C14 lines were precisely reinforced using C20 water-colour leaving us with the wonderful spectacle we have today.



The purpose of church murals was to provide illustrations of the Bible story for those who were unable to read.

The story's cycle starts in the northwest corner of the chancel and interlaced vine scrolls lead us from one scenario to the next. Above is an overview of the north wall between the windows. The semi-circular area is part of what was a full circle of C17 text which took the place of the murals when they were painted over after the Reformation. A series of details follows. I have converted these to monochrome because I find this makes the pictures easier to read.



Detail showing the Last Supper with the cloth-covered table. The circles are plates containing fish - and bread can be seen on the table.



Entering Jerusalem



The Scourging.



The Deposition from the cross.



Nailing Christ to the cross and giving a sponge with vinegar. The spear piercing Jesus' side.



This picture represents, on the left, the Resurrection with souls clambering out of their coffins and, on the right the Harrowing of Hell (Hell being represented by a large fish).



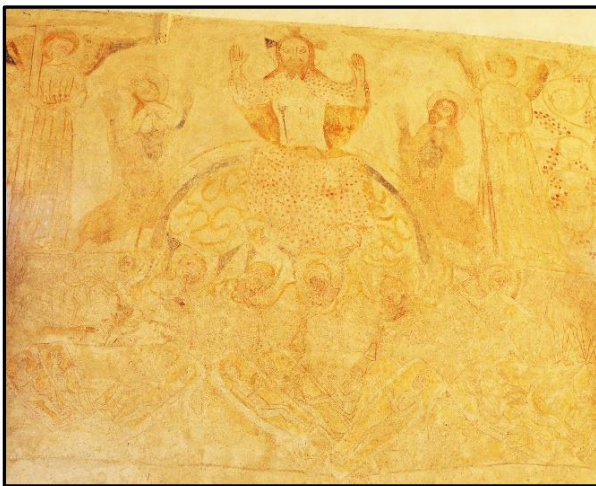
Here we see Christ standing at the mouth of Hell and releasing the souls of the saved – particularly those who had died before His birth.

The dots on the lower part of the picture are grapes on the vine which permeates the whole picture.

The church guide suggests that the vine is the symbol of St Botolph but I have never come across this link with our saint before and I am more inclined to think that it simply represents Life.



The Last Judgement. Christ is sitting on a rainbow. His feet can just be seen just below the dotted cloud. Beneath Him four angels trumpet his glory and waken the dead.



Moving on to the south wall of which the above is an overview . . .

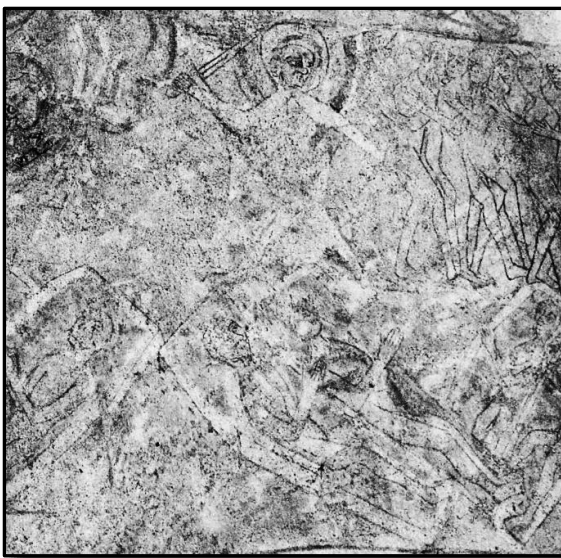


Christ is flanked on his right side by the Virgin Mary and by an angel holding a cross and some nails which represent a symbol of the Passion.

Returning to the rest of the church . . .

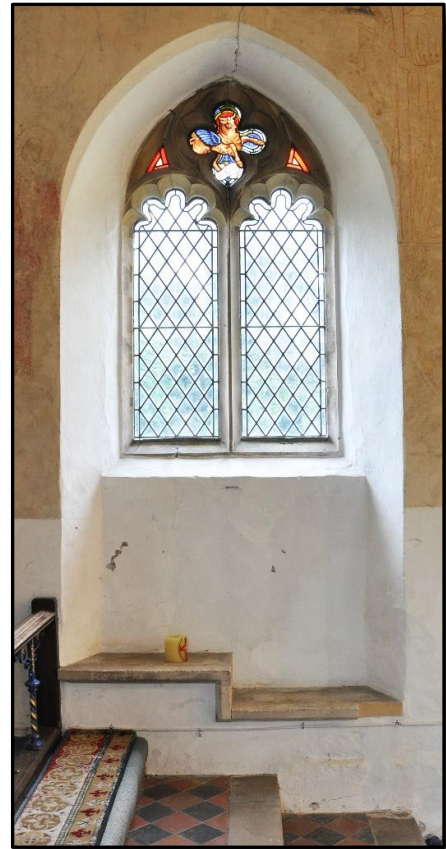


On his left side Christ is flanked by St John. The church guide suggests this is St John the Baptist but I would have thought that it is more likely to be St John the Evangelist(?) To one side is an angel holding a lance as another symbol of the Passion.

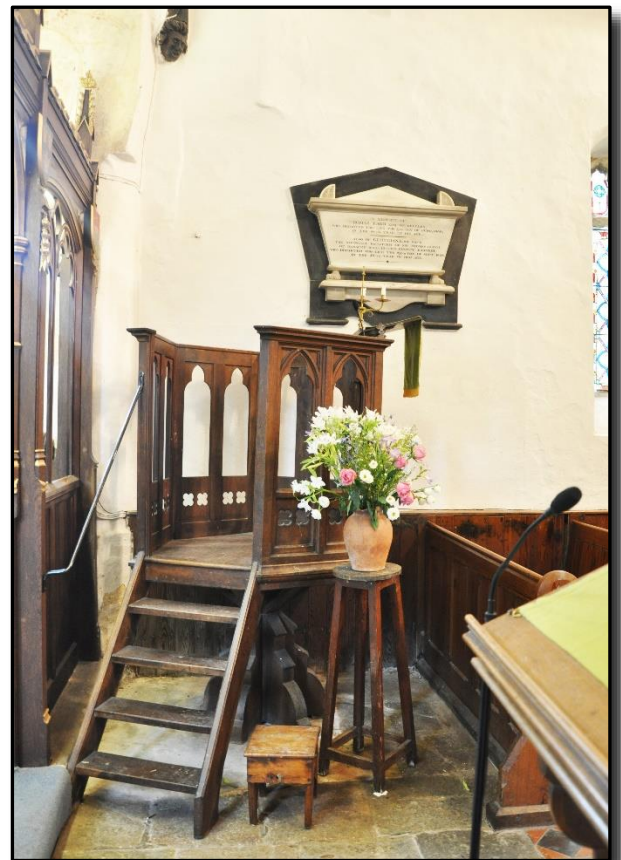


There is some controversy about this last picture which is to be found below the figure of St John. Some experts believe it is St Michael driving the naked condemned into outer darkness whereas others believe that the figure has been mis-restored and was, in all likelihood, that of the Devil driving the damned to Hell. At the bottom of the picture other souls are seen rising from their coffins.

The experts who gave reports on the murals were E. Clive Rouse M.B.E., F.S.A in 1959 and Ann Ballantyne who presented her report in 1980 and subsequently skilfully oversaw the carrying out of the restorative work.



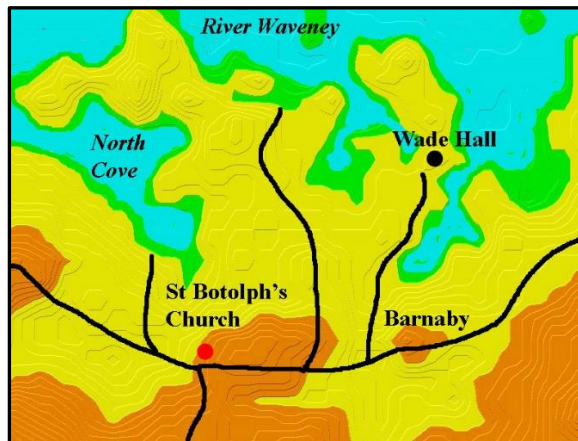
The Sedilia for the clergy to rest their weary limbs.



A simple pulpit of unknown vintage.

Classification:

So why and when did Christian worship settle on this particular site? One of the earliest records tells us of a Robert de Watheby (or Waitby) of Westmorland who was born c. 1100 and was enfeoffed of the estate of North Cove in the time of Henry II (reigned 1154-1189). This ties in quite nicely with the date of the Norman doorway. There is at present a Wade Hall to the northeast of the church and it seems likely that this was close to the site of the original manor.



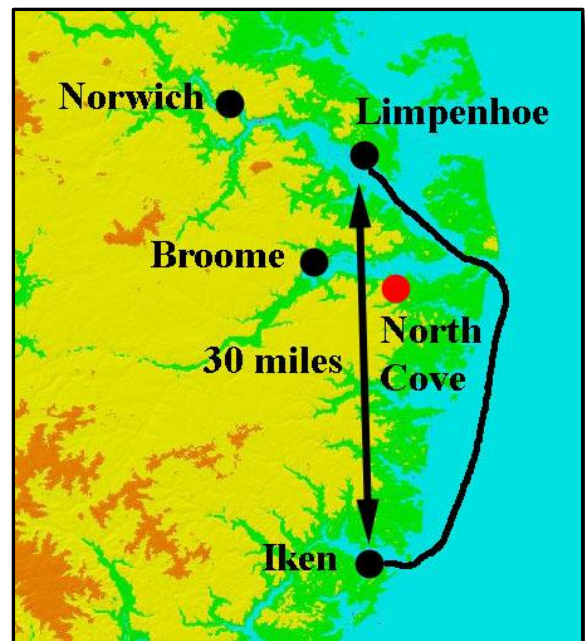
The estate was conveyed to the Jemegan family who owned lands in North Cove (or simply 'Cove' as it was probably called then) for several generations. In 1373 a Norwich advocate called Master John de Cove donated a chalice to the altar of Saint Botolph.

Alfred Suckling, in *The History and Antiquities of the County of Suffolk: Volume 1* (Ipswich, 1846), pp. 47-52, tells us "The old manorial residence of the Jernegans, at Wathe Hall, is entirely demolished, but traces of its site remain, marked by an extensive moat, and an inner rampart of earth. . . . Bricks of that flat and peculiar form, which mark the workmanship of an early period, are discovered in considerable quantities."

There is no record of when the Hall was demolished but one wonders whether some of the church's bricks came from decaying parts of the old estate houses. Suckling goes on to record two C11 tombs lying near the altar and suggests that these are perhaps memorials to the Jernegans - or the Jerninghams as they were later called. The Baronetcy of Crossey in Norfolk was created in 1621 for Sir Henry Jerningham. This might or might not be relevant but if they are the same family it does suggest that they did not rise to prominence until later.

Bearing in mind that the Wathebys were enfeoffed to the king and that the king is recorded as sponsoring the first priest in 1284 it is likely that

it was the Wathebys who were instrumental in founding the present building.



This brings us back to the suggestion that there was already a place of Christian worship on the site. Like last month's featured church at Limpenhoe I would suggest that North Cove was well in striking distance of Icanho Abbey and that it is likely that our missionary abbot Botolph himself was responsible for founding, not only the churches at Limpenhoe and North Cove but also the church at Broome . . . a little further along the River Waveney. I would therefore give the site's foundation an 'A' classification.

Thanks

My thanks to Alan Glenister for showing us round.

Readers' letters and emails.

1. **Anne Dickinson** (Burton Hastings) wrote noting Roger Cordey's request for permission to offer to visitors free copies of *The Botolphian's* Morley St Botolph's feature. She thought Roger's idea was an excellent one and asked if she could do the same at Burton Hastings. Once again I was pleased to give my permission for this.

Anne also reported that their church will soon be gaining a new Assistant Curate whom they will share with the parish of Bulkington 'in plurality.'

2. **Revd Lawrence Smith** rector of St Botolph's Northfleet wrote sending Easter Greetings. It is always good to hear from our various churches from time to time as it makes it clear that our messages are getting through.

3. **Terry Catchpole** wrote from Boston USA asking for details about *The Botolphian* so that he can 'write up an item on the newsletter for the St Botolph Club membership.'

4. **Revd Kathy Couchman** (ex Carlton-in-Cleveland) wrote saying that she has moved from the parish and that there are now two new 'Co-Rectors' namely Jeff Payne and Liz Moody. We wish Kathy well (I recall the bottle of Massachusetts St Botolph's Town beer she gave me!) and we welcome Jeff and Liz.

5. **Andree Sladden** (Elham) kindly wrote saying how much she enjoyed the publication.

6. **Heather Flack** (Worcester) sent me the Hanley Castle extracts from Tim Bridge's book on Worcestershire churches – but sadly these, although interesting, do not contain any clues towards finding any further information about the church's connection with Saint Botolph.

---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.