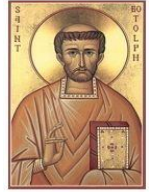




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



The Saint Botolph icon above is copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA and used by permission. All rights reserved.
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.

Issue Number: 57

1st January 2018

Highlights this month

- **St Botolph's church, Beauchamp Roding**, plus short features on **Theydon Bois** and **Buttsbury** - all in Essex.
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome Wendy MacBrown (Folkestone) as a new member..
- Correspondence from John Sennett (Swyncombe); Michael Stainer (Folkestone); Anne Dickinson (Burton Hastings) and Paul, Diane and Jackie (Heene).

Editorial

I hope all our readers had a happy and healthy Christmas and that you will all have an enjoyable and profitable New Year. Profitable, not only in the financial sense but, perhaps, in terms of time well spent. That might include, for those of you with an academic inclination, your doing your own research into Saint Botolph and passing your findings on to this Society so that they can be kept in a central database and regurgitated through these pages to provide, in modern terms, a wide *Botolph Cloud* secure storage system.

This is of course exactly what the brothers in Christ were occupied with over the centuries. Monks and abbots such as Folcard of Thorney wrote what are known today as 'papers' but then were referred to as, for example, *Vita Sancti Botolfi*. These were then copied again and again and distributed throughout the country so that when, 200 years later, the Vikings ravaged the land and burned much of our precious heritage, a few copies were able to survive. 1,000 years after Botolph, in C17, the great manuscript collectors such as Daniel Papebroch of the Belgian *Society*

of Bollandists and John de Mabillon of the Parisian *Maurists*, were able to collect what was left of these manuscripts and publish analyses in volumes such as the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum* and the Maurists' *Acta Sanctorum Sancti Benedicti*.

In a humble way this is what these pages are endeavouring to continue in respect of our one particular saint, by harnessing the internet's powers to *glean* the word on one hand and *spread* the word on the other.

Although these are not academic papers in terms of providing proper references I have every intention of one day producing a book which will make good those omissions.

By monitoring the amount of feedback that I receive in respect of different subjects tackled in these pages, I have gained the impression that readers are not so interested in churches which no longer exist. Although this is understandable it is nevertheless important that we cover these. For this reason I have this month provided you with a Christmas / New Year Bumper Bundle of three churches in the Essex Cluster. These consist of one solid church for you to get your teeth into and two others which are somewhat nebulous but included for the record. We start with the important little church of Beauchamp Roding and then move on to Theydon Bois where there was once a St Botolph's church at a known location and then to the village of Buttsbury where there is evidence of the existence of another St Botolph's church but its precise location is unknown.

When I come to the *Classification Section* where I explain what is likely to have been the origin of Beauchamp Roding church some of this is based on surmise. You will find it explained again in

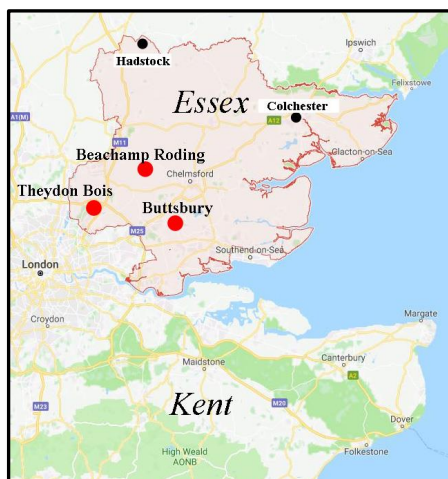
Volume III of my *Botolph Trilogy* which is making slow but steady progress. The slowness is due to the great amount of intricate research which is needed. The following is an example of this:

The year is AD 651 and King Anna of East Anglia has just been overpowered by King Penda of Mercia. He has (unusually) not been killed but sent into exile in the West. Modern wisdom suggests that he went to King Merewalh in the land of the Magonsaete on the Welsh border. But my research indicated that Merewalh can only have been about 11 years old at the time and in any case the Magonsaete people did not settle until some years later (c.656?). In 651 it was the *Pengwern tribe* who occupied the Welsh marches.

It seems more logical that Anna would have followed the Icknield Way from East Anglia to the south-west with a view to staying with King Coenwalh of Wessex who himself had sought refuge with Anna when he too had been exiled by Penda some years earlier for having the temerity to divorce Penda's sister. If we take this fact together with a suggestion by the historian D.P. Kirby that, rather than being the son of *Penda*, Merewalh might have been the son of *Penda's sister*, it is only a small step to supposing that after the divorce Merewalh might have stayed with his father and have been found with King Coenwalh in Wessex when Anna arrived.

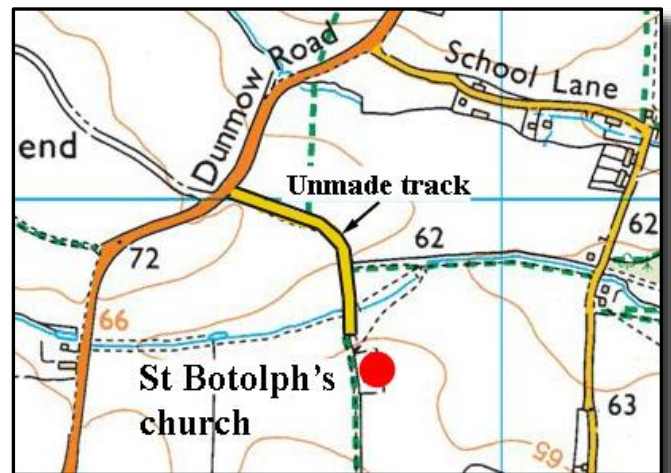
It all sounds very simple but those two paragraphs represent over a week's work of studying family trees, genealogies and dates which have ended up with Anna being in exile in a different place to where historians have previously supposed him to be. I will be very interested to hear from anyone who has alternative views about my conclusions.

Church Feature



So here are the three churches of this Essex Cluster although you will note that there are two other St Botolph's churches in Essex - one at Hadstock and another at Colchester.

Beauchamp Roding, Essex



Approach: *If coming from the south, travel up the M11 and at Junction 7 take the A414 exit towards Chipping Ongar and then turn left on the B184 towards Fyfield and continue onwards towards Great Dunmow. As you approach the church site (on the Dunmow Road), start indicating as soon as you reach the first bend and take the next turning immediately on your right. This leads you through white gates along an unmade track. I have missed the turning twice (so far) and ended up in School Lane. Drive along the bumpy track until you come to a grassy area (which is surprisingly firm) and park near the cemetery gate.*

Location: *Abbess Beauchamp and Berners Roding, Epping Forest, Essex, CM5 0PH. Lat/Long: 51.7639, 0.2852. NGR: TL 577097.*

Key: *The church is open daily from 7a.m. to 7 p.m.*

Contacts: *Churchwardens Robert or Andrew Parmenter at 17 Horsecroft, Abbess Roding, Ongar, Essex, CM5 0PD. Tel: 01279 876-219. Email: andrewrm.parmenter@gmail.com.*

Priest: *The parish of South Rodings has been in interregnum since 17 April 2017.*

Churches within the Parish of South Rodings: *Abbess Roding, Beauchamp Roding, Leaden Roding and White Roding.*

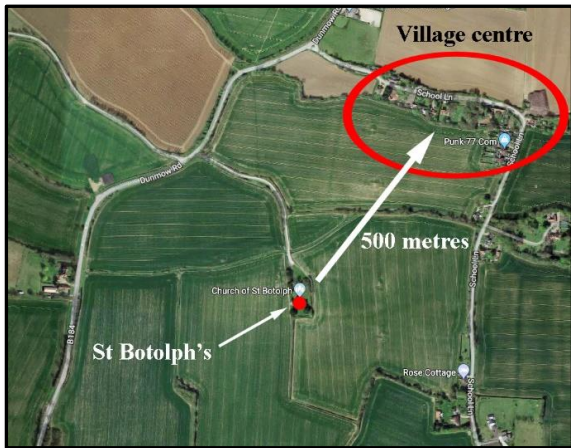
Website: www.essexinfo.net/southrodingschurches.

Church Services: *These can be found on the above website which is efficiently maintained. On 7 Jan 2018 at Beauchamp Roding, for example, there is an 'all age worship' service at 11 a.m. and this will be the same on 4 Feb 2018. On 14 Jan 2018 Holy Communion will be at 9.30 a.m.*

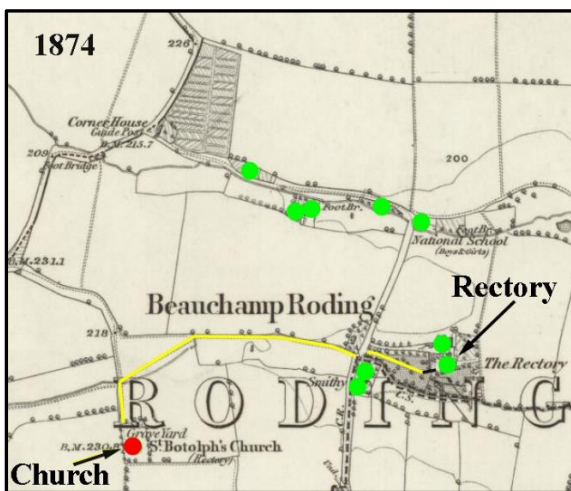
Listed Grade: II*



I live quite close to Port Lympne Wild Animal Park and the sight of this church peering over the top of its enclosure to greet me reminded me very much of the giraffes doing the same thing.



Beauchamp (pronounced 'Beecham') Roding (in some parts written and pronounced as Roothing') church was, we are told, once at the centre of its village but is now surrounded by fields. Modern maps give the appearance that the village must have moved 500 metres to the north east.



But when one looks back 150 years at the map of 1874 it is clear that, even then, the church was in isolation - and there were only *five* local properties (marked in green above) where the village now lies.

If a sizeable village ever existed around the church it must have been abandoned long ago - soon after the Reformation perhaps. Another clue which reinforces this thought is that aerial photographs of the church show no evidence of previous buildings through crop markings.

On a happier note the footpath (marked in yellow) must have offered the rector a pleasant stroll through the *beaux champs* when the weather was fine.



Whilst on the subject of beautiful fields. the grounds of this church are wonderfully maintained and the whole area is a concept of peace.



The well-used Visitors Book bears testament to the large number of appreciative people who are great fans of this church. If you look closely you will see there is a 'Prayer-request box' and . . . extra copies of *The Botolphian* for any who wish to take them. This might be a humble church but it is doing all the right things!



There are several magnificent yews . . .



Entrance to the church is via the wicket gate of the south porch just inside which there is a notice telling us that . . .



. . . as well as other 'trees of character' which serve to delineate the property as well as providing protection from the winter winds.



. . . it was rebuilt in 1870 and at the same time the 'Western window (I think it says)' was inserted.



Both the 'front' and 'back gardens' are beautifully maintained.



This *might* indeed be correct - but the western window (seen above) is in poor condition and there seems to be no evidence of change in the supporting stonework.



However the nicely knapped flints at the base of the 1870 porch . . .

The arrow points to a much less common feature which is a plinth of ashlars - i.e. large rectangular blocks which form the base of each wall.



The pattern is repeated all the way around the church with a possible exception on the north wall of the chancel which we will come to shortly.



. . . closely match those of the *eastern* wall - and the window itself looks in the sort of good condition that one would expect from an 1870 replacement. I strongly suspect therefore that the cardinal points (as written on the plaque) have been muddled. Indeed apart from the walls of the porch the eastern wall is the *only* one faced with knapped flints. The rest are constructed from flint rubble mixed with freestone and clunch dressings as seen in the picture below which also illustrates a feature that we often see - namely a blocked up North doorway.



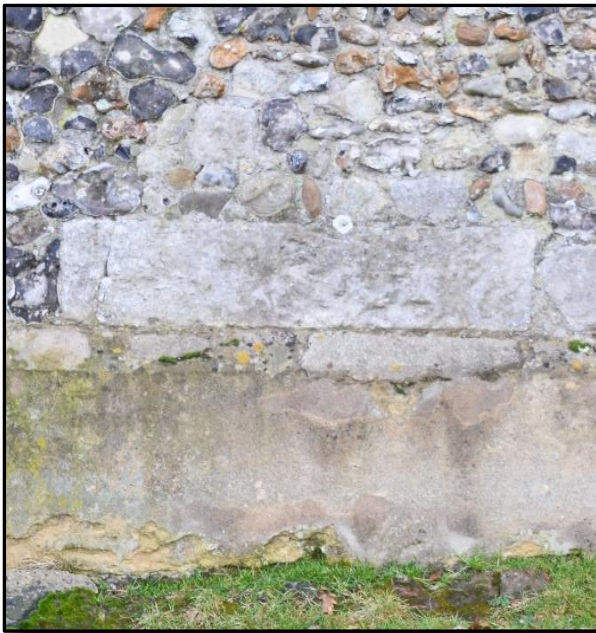
This is a view of part of the south wall which sports some exceptionally large quoins (corner stones). The blank wall in the centre is the outside of an external rood staircase which we will shortly see from the inside but before we do so there are some other interesting features on the *north* chancel wall.



Apart from the minor miracle of ivy growing on the window with no obvious source of nutrient or water . . .



. . . there is a particularly interesting large ashlar block at the base.



One always lives in the hope of ‘doing a Stanley West’ and finding the shaft of an old Saxon cross which has been recycled and built into the walls of a church - as Dr West did at St Botolph’s at Iken in Suffolk. This could also be such an item but sadly I do not think it is. The layer of thinner flat rectangular stones below the larger block are reminiscent of the sort of stones that were used in Anglo-Saxon long and short work - as seen below in an example from Earls Barton in Northamptonshire.



My initial thoughts therefore were that we might be looking at a plinth of stones acquired from the demolition of a former Anglo-Saxon church. The one thing that we *do* know is that, for some reason, there was an extraordinary number of large stones available to build this church - and this fact is not repeated in any other churches in the area. This marks out St Botolph’s Beauchamp Roding in a special way - although I am having difficulty in interpreting the message that the stones are giving us. Where did the stones come from? Were they quarried locally - or were they brought up the River Roding - perhaps by barge?

Having written this and moved on, the subject kept bugging me so I turned back and, harnessing the powers of the internet, I spent several hours studying photographs of church after church in the hope of finding an answer . . . which I eventually did. . . but I will leave writing about this until the *Classification* section at the end of this feature.

Entering the church



I had hoped to find a Mass Dial somewhere on one of the south doorway jambs but in the event I was disappointed. This must mean that the porch was indeed a replacement and that its predecessor outer doorway (which surely *must* have borne a Mass Dial) has long since been demolished.



There is evidence that the church has had at least four significant changes of direction. The guide book tells us that the nave is C11 in origin but with a substantial rebuild in C14. The chancel is C13 in origin with a rebuild in C15. The whole church was extensively rebuilt in C15 when the western tower was added.

This suggests that (unusually) the nave was built first (C11) and the chancel added two centuries later. This would tie in with my earlier thoughts that the base of the nave walls came from an Anglo-Saxon predecessor.

The guide book helpfully tells us that the dimensions of the nave are 35.5 ft x 22 ft, those of the chancel are 22 ft by 17 ft and the base of the tower is 10 ft by 10 ft.

The best I could find were some unintelligible initials on the eastern side of the doorjamb.



The simple and unremarkable C19 font lies just inside the south door.

British Listed Buildings tells us “The nave roof has 2 moulded crown posts with stout arched braces of probable C14 date.” This also caused a slight delay while I fathomed out the difference between *crown posts*, where the posts are in compression, and *king posts* where they are in tension. Whichever they are, these simple braces have performed admirably in supporting the roof for 600 years.



Close to it at the back of the church are some solidly-made C17 oak pews which have a clever arrangement of some extra planks with ring-pulls which can be deployed as steps to climb into the high pews or used as extra seats in the days when the churches were fuller than they are now.



And here are the doorways to the rood stairs. Just below the upper doorway is a corbel which used to support the weighty rood loft and beam which would have crossed the church. In the lower centre of the picture you can just see the head of the nave piscina.



As piscinae go, this is quite a pretty one and it dates from C15. The fact that it is in the nave gives us the clue that at one time there was another altar here.

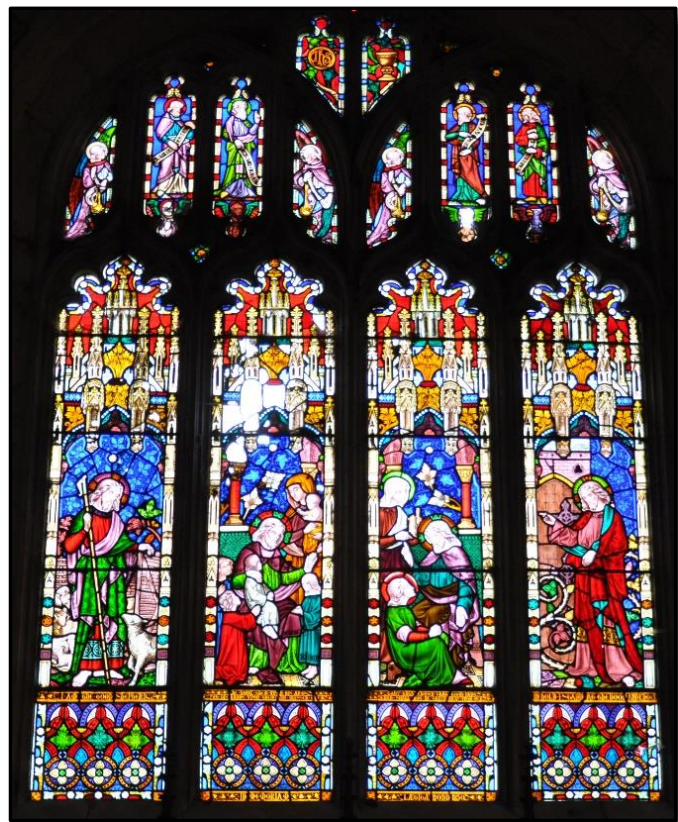


There is however a second piscina - which is in the chancel. Unlike the first, the sacrarium drainage

channel of this one has been sealed over at some stage so it is no longer functional. The church guide writes: *A piscina in the chancel may be of C13 indicating an earlier chancel of that date* - and once again I return to my earlier thoughts about the stones at the base of the walls.



Here you can just see the chancel piscina on the right together with the oaken reredos upon which, to each side are plaques bearing the Ten Commandments. I did not venture under the carpet which lies in front of the altar but the Guide Book records that there are some tiles of mediaeval origin.



The east window is C19 and I thought it was magnificent . . . but that was also my opinion of many of the other stained glass windows in this church.



This window is recorded in the guide book as being C15 and the stonework certainly dates from that time but I guess that the glass must surely be C19?



Between the two windows in the chancel there is this unusual bas-relief for which I could find no records. Like the first of the two windows above it depicts the disciples sleeping while Jesus prays.



The same must apply to this window.



This window is at the western end of the south wall of the nave.



We move on to the subject of corbels - here on the northern side of the chancel is a grotesque head with its tongue poking out to ward of the devil.



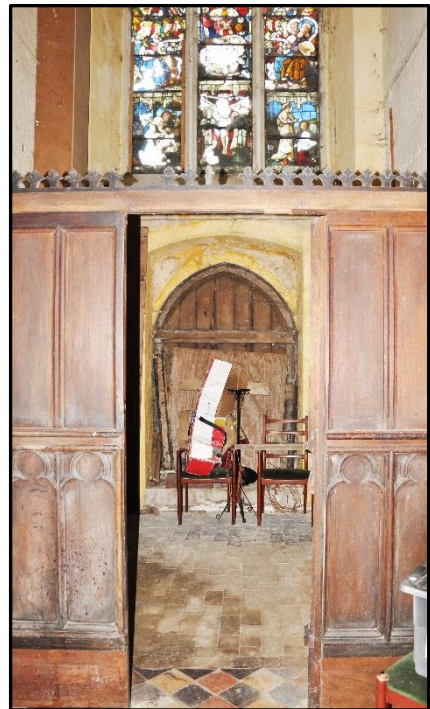
And here on the south side of the chancel we have a (now sadly faceless) angel giving support to the opposite side of the beam.



The little electronic organ lies just outside the altar rails and, as you can see in this picture, there are some poppyhead carvings on the end of some of the pews.



We visited the church just after Christmas and it was clear that, few though the congregation may be, there is no shortage of love and devotion to keep the spirit of Christmas alive here.



The base of the tower has a wooden screen across it which enables the room to be used as a vestry.

At the top left of the picture is an iron ladder which has been boxed in to prevent the unauthorised from climbing up to the bell loft which still contains four bells although they are today unworkable. The Guide Book tells us that the bells are said to have been cast by Miles Graye in 1664.

<u>Rectors of Beauchamp Roding</u>	
William Lynch(e)	1524
Richard Morgan	1554
Robert Wyse	1556
Galfridus Phillips	1557
William Lynch(e)	1559
John Hotofte	1571
Richard Hoskins	1628
John Siday (Johannes Syday)	1642
John Siday	1689
???	1704
???	1710
John Siday	1720
???	1752
William Wickstead	????
Nicholas Layton	1776
Thomas Hammond Foxcroft	1795
Jonathan Tyers Barrett	1822
William Bond	1839
J Howard	1887

The list of rectors dates from 1524 (note that the three 'John Sidays' in the list above represent three different generations of the Siday family). When the church is 'in regnum' one priest has to be shared between the four churches of the parish.

Comment

This is a wonderful and important church which deserves every encouragement. On first entering the building one is tempted to think: "Oh gosh - this needs doing and that needs doing and . . ." but as one delves more deeply into the church's circumstances one soon realises that the correct interruption to such a comment would be "You don't understand."

The plain facts are that Robert and Andrew Parmenter (father and son) with assistance from Andrew's brother James, are doing sterling work as church wardens in the face of very difficult circumstances. There are only a handful of people on the church's electoral roll and the average attendance at services is about a dozen.

This might make it sound as if the church has outlived its useful purpose but this is far from the truth. It is regularly attended by a substantial number of visitors who come to enjoy the beauty of its surroundings and the peace and tranquillity they find there.

Robert told me that one such visitor, whom they had never met, recently gave them a heart-warming surprise by leaving the church a legacy

and this has provided a much-needed lifeline. Although this will be a great help more is needed of course. Grants have been applied for but, sadly, all applications have so far been unsuccessful. This is a shame because I would have thought this was a most worthy application as evidenced by the great care being taken of the building by those that love it at (I am sure) no small sacrifice to themselves.

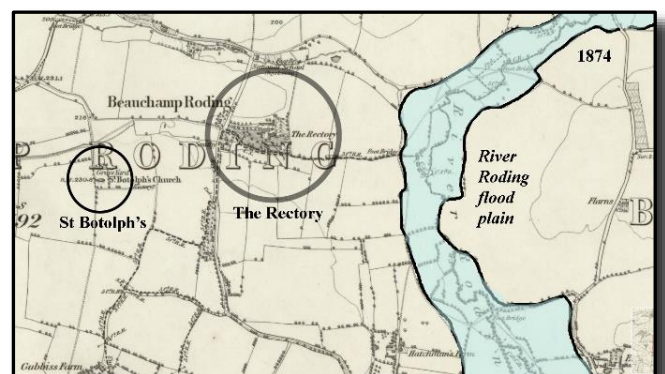
In 2016 their Parish Share was £350 per month and of course electricity bills, insurance and maintenance costs still have to be paid. Beauchamp Roding LCC holds three fund-raising events per year. A Country Market is held at the *Room in the Rodings* (formerly Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding Village Hall) on a Saturday in late April or early May. Cream Teas are held at the Church on a weekend during August and a Christmas Market is held in the *Room in the Rodings* in late November.

Classification.

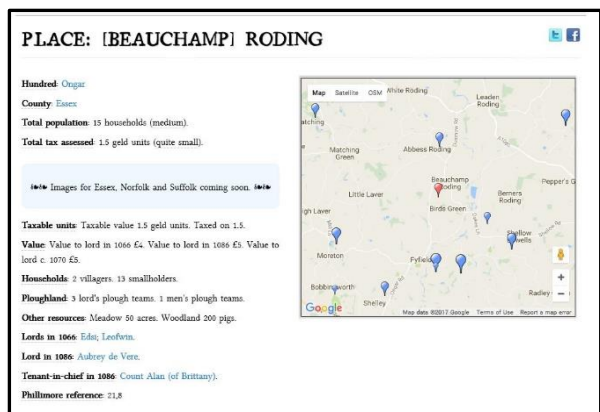
As you can see from the conjectural A.D. 1200 map below many of the St Botolph churches (indicated by red dots) in the area are closely related to waterways.



In the case of this month's church it is related to the River Roding - of which there would have been easy access from the River Thames, passing Barking Abbey at its mouth.



This is illustrated further on this 1874 map where the field patterns clearly define the river's flood plain. The river was certainly relevant to the church's foundation but was it used to transport the mystery building blocks up from London?



You will not be able to read the above very clearly due to its small size but it is a transcript of the Domesday Record regarding Beauchamp Roding and it tells us that the Lord of the Manor in 1066 was **Aubrey de Vere** who, as a wealthy nobleman, was a tenant in chief of William the Conqueror and of Count Alan (Rufus). Of all the estates tenanted by him not one (including Beauchamp Roding) was recorded as possessing a church. It seems likely that he resolved to put that omission right.

Either he or his heirs may indeed have been responsible for the building of some of the other churches that lay within the demesne but I have studied photographs of all of them and none have the same sort of ashlar plinth that is a prominent feature of Beauchamp Roding.

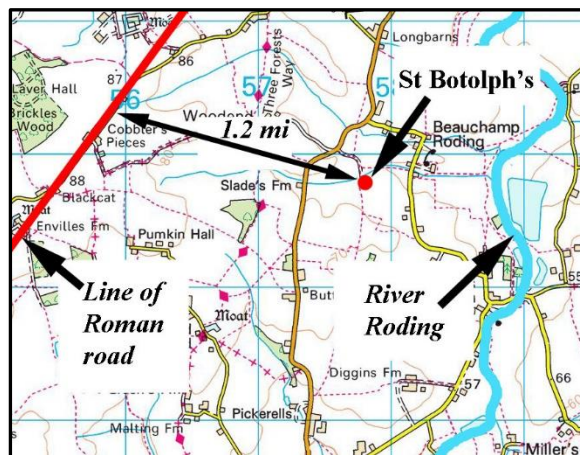
One of de Vere's principle estates was Castle Hedingham which lies only 20 miles to the northeast of our church.



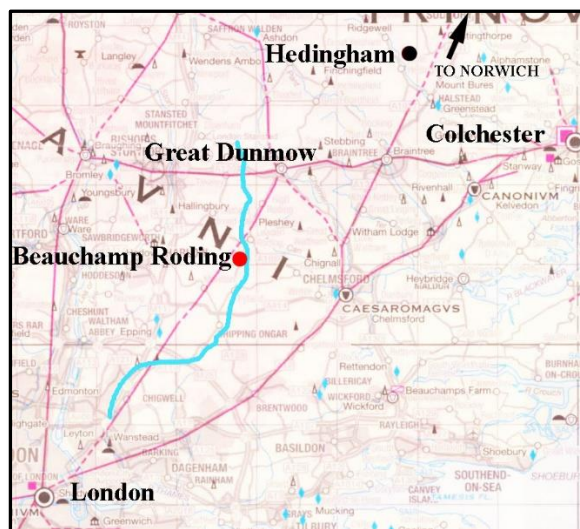
The manor of Hedingham was awarded to de Vere in 1086 and he constructed the castle in late C11 and early C12. He died in c.1113.

There seems to me a strong likelihood that Beauchamp Roding was the first church (and possibly the *only* one) that he built and that he favoured its construction with cast-offs of building stones from Hedingham.

That might solve the mystery of the ashlar - but why should the church have been dedicated to Saint Botolph?



The church lies but 1.2 miles from the London - Great Dunmow - Norwich/Colchester Roman road . . .



. . . and Aubrey de Vere's castle at Hedingham lies nearby. He would regularly have followed that route to and from London and would have known of the existence of the little Anglo-Saxon church at Beauchamp Roding. It was halfway along his journey so he too might have broken his journey and found peace and tranquillity there. It would not be surprising if he resolved to carry some extra stones and drop them off at the little church with a view to building something better for the brethren to offer to travellers.

In conclusion I believe that this important church was founded by Saint Botolph during his London

missions and that it served to give support to travellers long before it was renovated by Aubrey de Vere and that it should be classified as C(i).

Thanks

My grateful thanks to Robert and Andrew Parmenter for patiently answering my questions.

I WILL NOT KEEP YOU MUCH LONGER BUT HEREWITH A COUPLE OF NON-EXTANT CHURCHES - JUST FOR THE RECORD:

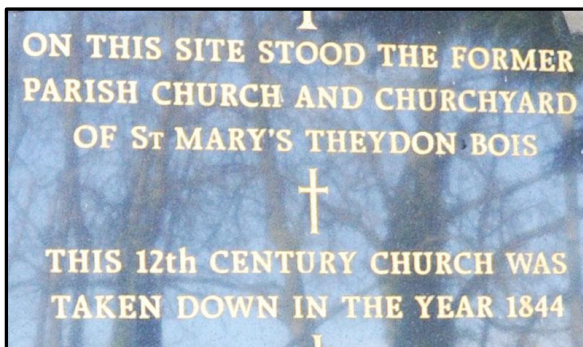
Theydon Bois, Essex.

There is no church here now but there is a memorial on the Abridge Road which applies to the church of St Mary.



Location: On the B172 Abridge Road close to Theydon Hall Lodge - Epping CM16 7NR; Lat/Long: 51.661188, 0.114128.

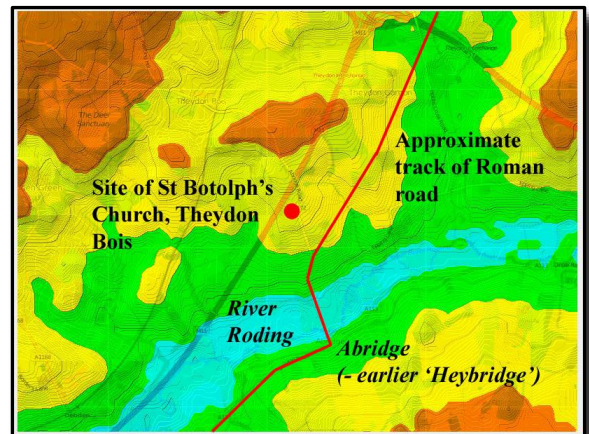
The relevant part of the memorial reads as follows:



There are several references to a St Botolph's church at Theydon Bois (pronounced Boys) - one of which can be found in the History of the County

of Essex Volume 4, Ongar Hundred pp 255-267. This was originally published by Victoria County History in London in 1956. It tells us: "The old parish church of St Mary, which may earlier have been dedicated to St Botolph, stood next to Theydon Hall."

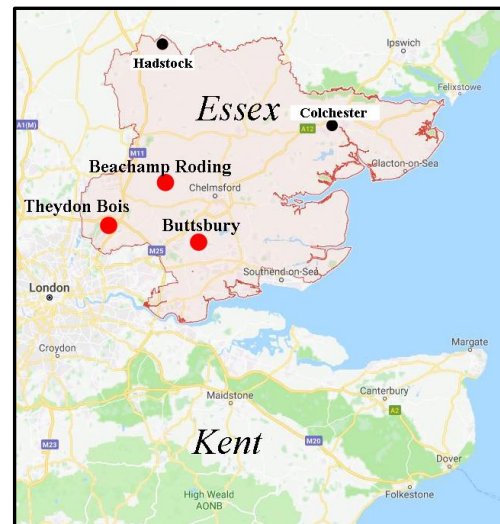
This sounds tenuous and the subject still needs to be researched more fully but from the church's position close to the Roman road and again on the River Roding, its earlier dedication to Saint Botolph seems very likely.



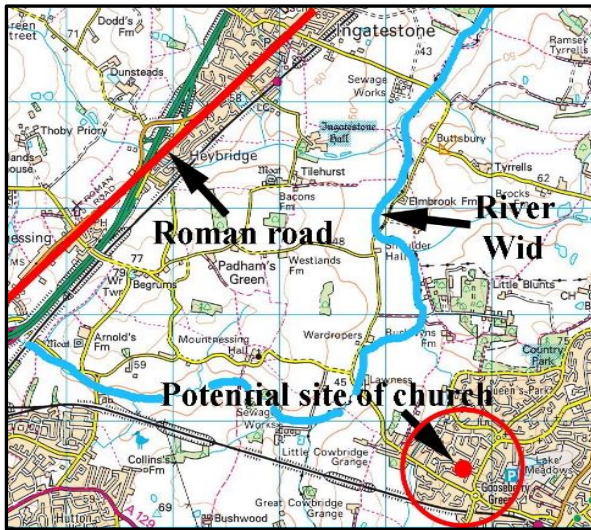
I believe that this church too should have a classification of C(i) because I believe it also was founded as part of one of Botolph's early London missions.

Buttsbury, Essex.

Location: This church was probably originally located close to the junction of Mountnessing Road and Perry Street in what now seems to be the Buttsbury region of the greater Billericay. Very approximate Lat/Long: 51.63327, 0.407763.



In Janet Cooper's *The Church Dedications and Saints' Cults of Medieval Essex (Lancaster: Scotforth Books, 2011) ISBN 978-1-904-244-67-7*, she writes of St Botolph on page 67: "In Essex between three and five churches (at Beauchamp Roding, Colchester and Hadstock, probably at Theydon Bois, and possibly also at Buttsbury) were dedicated to him . . . The parish name Buttsbury, recorded from 1219, means 'Botolph's pear tree' and may refer to the saint. If there was a cult there, however, it was probably centred near the southern parish boundary, at or near the later Perry (pear) Street, rather than on the parish church."



In truth we have no idea of the exact location of this church at the moment but I am sure that, like Richard III, it will turn up sometime and it will probably also merit a classification of C(i).

Correspondence


1. **John Sennett** from Swyncombe sent this lovely picture of last year's spread of snowdrops:



and wrote: Attached a photo of the east end of the St Botolph's at Swyncombe celebrating snowdrop Teas next year on 10,11, 17,18, 24, 25th February 2-4pm, see:

<http://www.st-botolphs-swyncombe.info/events/news/>

Zina and I are hoping to go to Swyncombe on one of those dates - all of which are free at the moment. Would anybody care to come and join us? How about on 18th Feb? If so please contact me by email or telephone.



**SNOWDROP
TEAS**

2 – 4pm
in FEBRUARY

10th, 11th
17th, 18th,
24th & 25th

**St. BOTOLPH'S
Swyncombe**

on 18th February 4.30pm Choral EVENSING!

Local Homemade Cakes and Teas
Preserves & Pickles, Chutneys - Shelagh's Snowdrop
Stall, Church goodies and more....
All to support the funds of the friendly ancient Church
open for you - all year round

between Watlington and Nettlebed
follow the walking Monk

2. **Michael Stainer** wrote from Folkestone: Your Botolphian story this month only goes to show how the right gel of parishioners can really make a splendid if 'modern' replacement church the kernel of local society again. Your mentions of Boston Stump & Boston Mass reminds me of a lessee here many years ago who told me, when I mentioned I had just returned from Boston's magnificent church, that he had been married there. When I enquired about the other Boston church pictured on his wall where I had previously understood he had been married, he responded: "I've been married twice, once in each!"

3. **Paul, Diane and Jackie** kindly wrote from St Botolph's Heene, saying how much they had enjoyed the feature on their church.

4. **Anne Dickinson** wrote from Burton Hastings with great news about the progress they are making with their building works. "Many children, from within the village and outside, came with their families to the event "A Children's Christmas Carol". It was great to see them engaged with their craft activities, listening to a story and singing Christmas songs. The event was organised by someone who just offered to do it! What was amazing is that its primary aim was to give children a positive experience of this little church. Not only did that happen, but also over

£1,300 was raised. This was an unexpected bonus to the fundraising that has already been done this year towards the extension.”

5. **Zina and I received** many many kind good wishes for Christmas and the New Year and we are grateful for all of them - thank you.

At last I reach the end of this Christmas Bumper Issue and all it leaves is for me to repeat my wishes that you all have a very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

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 END-NOTES

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.
(i) Founded by radiation from Botolph centres.
(ii) Founded along the course of Botolph's journeys.
- B: **Travellers' churches.**
(i) Founded before AD 800
(ii) Founded between 800 and 1066
(iii) Founded after the Norman Conquest.
- C: **Hanseatic churches** founded as a result of commercial enterprise.
- D: None of the above.

Typical Characteristics of Early St Botolph Churches.

1. Nearly 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.

Copyright

All rights of 'The Botolphian' newsletters are reserved to Denis Pepper and no items may be copied reprinted or reproduced for commercial purposes without written permission. Readers are however encouraged to copy and transmit the newsletter as long as this is for purely personal use. Folkestone, Kent. 1st May 2013. (Last revision 22 October 2017).