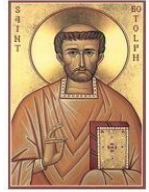




The Botolphian

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: 63

14th July 2018

Highlights this month

- **Longthorpe Church, Cambs. and**
- **Botolph Bridge, Cambs.**
- As you will see this issue heralds the rise of the St Botolph's church count by three with the additions of: Thorpe, Botolph Bridge and St Peter at Gowt with St Botolph by Bargate, Lincoln. More new sites than new members this month!

Editorial

This issue of *The Botolphian* is very 'late on parade' I am afraid - but knowing that I was going to miss the publication date I relaxed a little and tried to produce a special edition that left no stone unturned. As you will see if you read further, this is an appropriate expression because the 'feature' concentrates a lot on the 'turning of stones.'

My grateful thanks to so many of you for your kind emails encouraging me to relax and enjoy my break.

My son Rob and I had great 'quality time' together on our sail from Licata to Malta and back.



Nothing particularly spectacular happened (which is a blessing when sailing as the life is always prone to the occasional drama) but we enjoyed the

islands, had good weather and met some nice people. Whilst leaving the boat at anchor in St Julian's Bay we took the bus into Valletta - this year's European Capital of Culture and we were suitably impressed.

Church Feature

Longthorpe, Cambs.



Approach: Approaching from the south follow the A1(M) to Junction 17 and take Fletton Parkway / A1139 towards Peterborough. After 2.25 miles take the left hand lane A1260 North and turn left at Junction 3 onto Nene Parkway / A1260 towards Orton Longville. 2 miles further on at Junction 15 roundabout take the first exit into Thorpe Wood and then continue your turn on the rollercoaster by taking the first left into Thorpe Road. After half a mile you will see the church on your right. Take the next turning on your right (Woburn Close) where on your right you will see the side entry to the church grounds and a modest parking area on each side of the road.

Location: Lat / Long: 52.57096, -0.285406;
315 Thorpe Road, Peterborough, PE3 6LU.
NGR: TL163983.

Key: The church is not always open. It would be best to email or telephone first to ensure you do not have a wasted journey. Try to avoid Mondays as this is usually Jackie's day off.

Church Website: www.longthorpechurch.org.uk

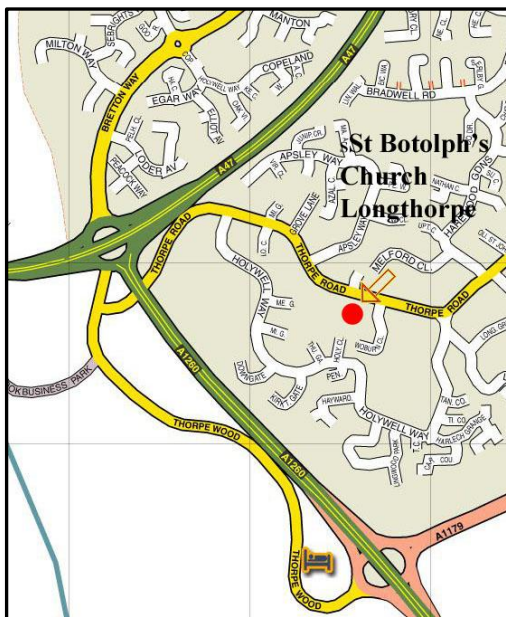
Contacts: Churchwardens: Brian Green (01733 265-482), Chris Wren (01733 266-083).

Priest: Revd Jackie Bullen, Tel: 01733 263-016

Church Services: Sundays 8 a.m., 9.30 a.m., 6 p.m.; Weds 10.30 a.m.; Thurs 7.30 a.m.

Listed Grade: I

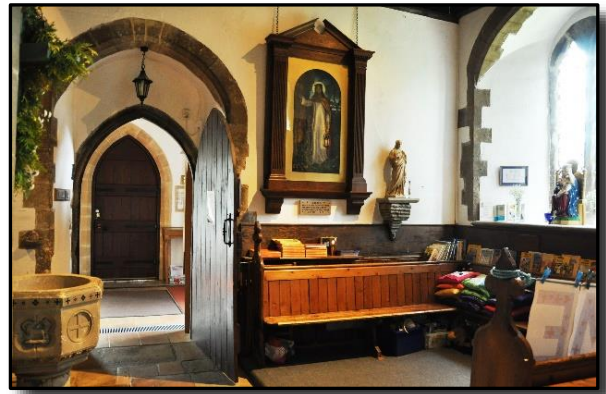
When you visit this church (as I hope you will), consider also visiting the nearby Longthorpe Tower (English Heritage) - Open Sats & Suns 10am-5pm April to October - Tel 03703 331-181.



From the outset it is clear that St Botolph's, Longthorpe is a *welcoming* church.



"Wherever you've been. Wherever you're going. You're welcome here," says the well-ordered notice-board. We found this theme repeated as we entered the church where there was a great sign saying "WELCOME."

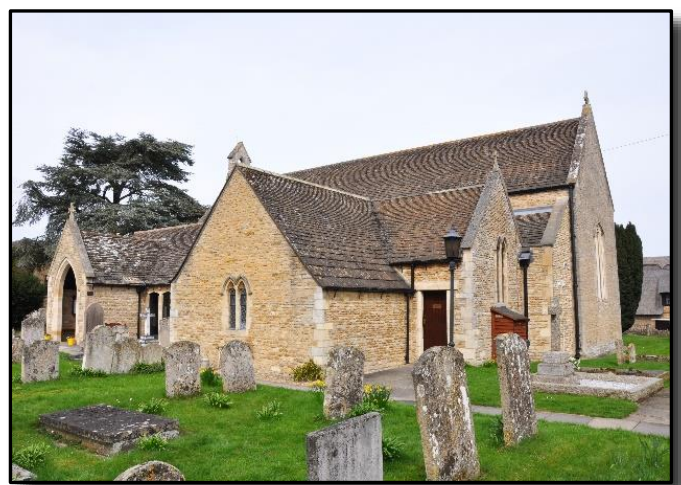


The last two letters of the sign are visible at the lower right of the picture above.

As well as being welcoming it seems apparent that this church, as St Botolph churches go, is comparatively wealthy - both in terms of money, access to parishioners, *actual* communicants and enthusiasm.



The building is a barn-like structure which in different circumstances might be totally uninteresting.



It is kept immaculately clean.



The surrounding 'gardens' (it seems somehow inappropriate to use the word 'cemetery') are well-maintained and attractive.



The mix of colour of sandstone and ironstone that comprise its building material contributes to the church's pleasant appearance. In this case it is classified as 'rubble' which in architectural terms means *'Masonry which is not fully dressed. It usually consists of irregularly shaped, rough-textured stones laid in an irregular manner.'* I have seen many churches constructed from rubble when the term seemed entirely accurate but when applied to the fine appearance of the walls of St Botolph's Longthorpe it seems somewhat inappropriate.



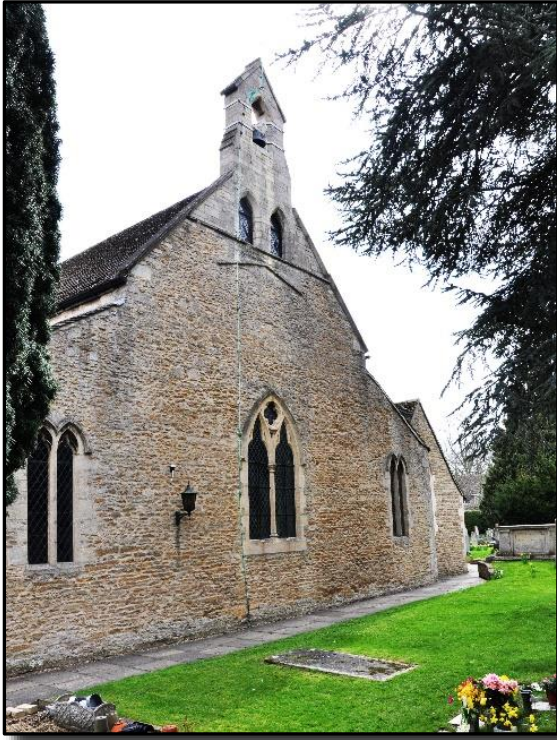
Some of this church's apparent success, it must be said, is due to funding by such institutions as the National Lottery but the parishioners are clearly an enterprising and vibrant group who want to do their best for the church.



Across the road is another trim property which reflects the general ambience of the village.



Here, on the southwest corner of the nave, there are two consecration crosses. It is suggested that one of these might be from the original church (more about this later).



The continuity of the west wall shows no dividing lines between nave and aisles.



The tracery of the west window is clearly recent (it shows little signs of weathering) although one cannot but be stunned by the beauty of its unusual design.

[Ed: At this point a quick tutorial / reminder about architectural terms seems appropriate:

Foil - a lobe or leaf-shaped curve of masonry. Foils are often grouped together in which case they are called trefoils or quatrefoils etc depending upon their number.

Cusp - the projecting point formed at the meeting of foils. It is the cusps which give the foils their shape.

Light - glass part of the window.]

In the case of the window above, its beauty stems from the fact that the central column leads the eye to the median cusps which, intentionally or accidentally, simulate a pair of hands supporting the central light.

The architect has copied the theme of elongated monofails which feature in the ancient windows of the rest of this church and has, in his design, stretched them even further.



As seen here at St Botolph's Barton Seagrave, the shorter and squatter shape of the upper foil is the one we commonly see. They do however come in all shapes and sizes but Longthorpe is at the far end of the spectrum with *long and thin* being the order of the design.



This is not only evident in the window tracery as seen here . . .



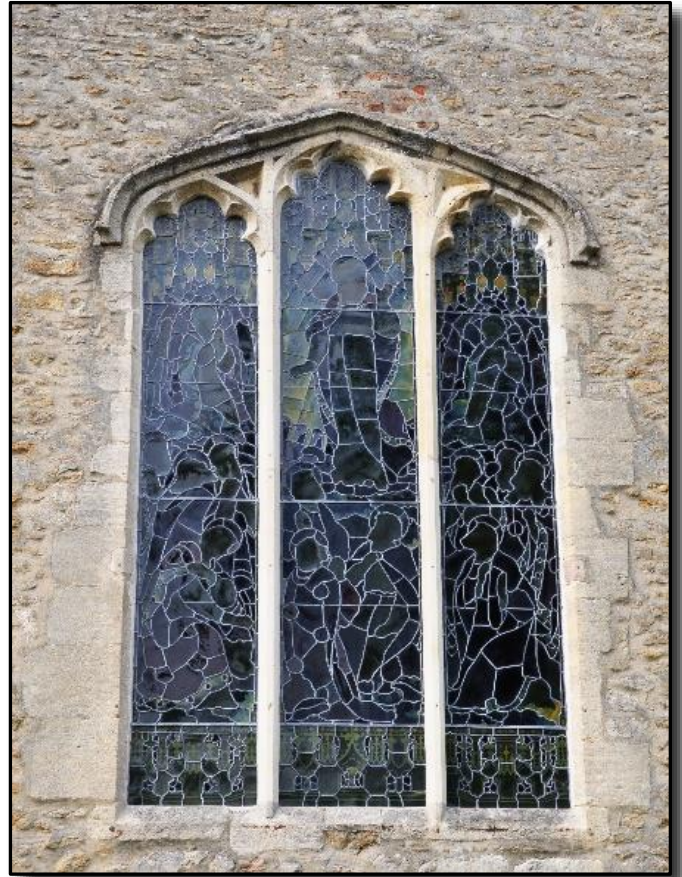
... but is also reflected in the arch over the piscina in the chancel ...



... and, more crudely, in the arch over the piscina in the Lady Chapel.



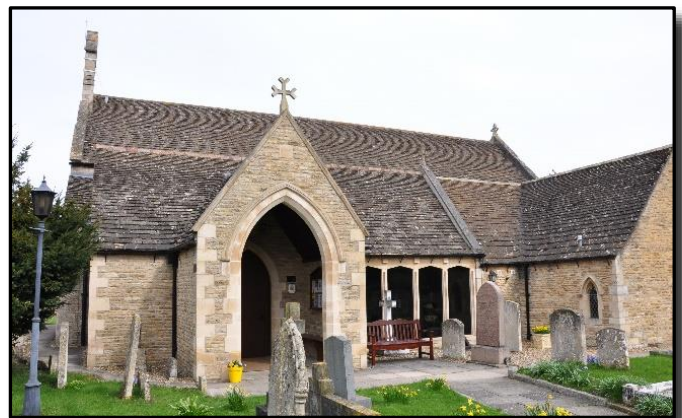
While we are talking windows, once you enter the church you will see that the more pointed C14 east window opening has been filled by a flatter-topped C15 window.



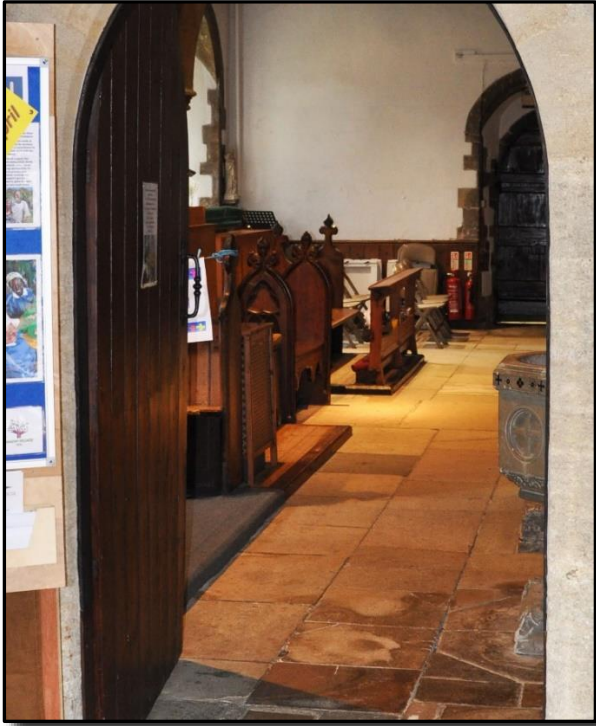
From the outside only a few blemishes in the brickwork show evidence of the change.

You will notice that the monofoil theme we have been describing has not been carried through in this replacement window which instead has trefoils.

A minor mismatch that adds architectural character.



The south porch with its modern cloister.



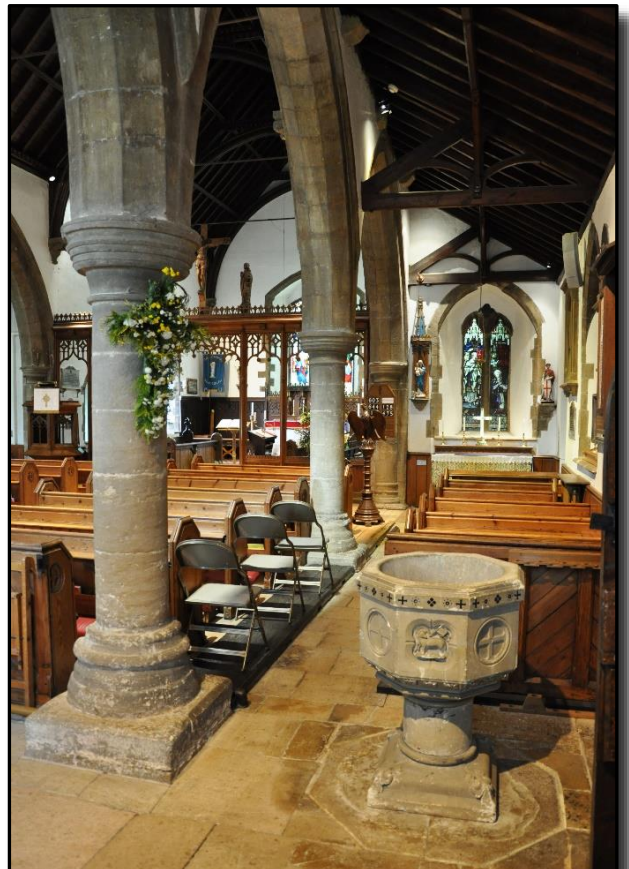
After passing through the cloister the south doorway leads immediately to the font and then to the north door - which these days is only used for funerals.



As we will discuss later this church was moved here from Thorpe - a mile or so up the road towards Peterborough. Sadly the original font was left behind and the excellent History Guide written by Jane Hogg (to which I owe much of the information contained herein) tells us that it is now to be found in the modern church of St Jude's in nearby Westwood. A British Listed Buildings survey of 1952 however reports the presence of the remains of an old alabaster font to the left of the north doorway. There is no sign of it now so perhaps it was repaired and sent to St Jude's?



The attractively sculptured font is more recent than it looks and dates from late C19 or even early C20.



A view from the font to the altar of the Lady Chapel in the south aisle.



And another view across the nave towards the north aisle.



In 1914 during the incumbency of Father O'Reilly (vicar from 1901 to 1943) the Rood Screen was erected and dedicated, Father O'Reilly was a great supporter of the Oxford Movement the aims of which was to restore Roman Catholic traditions and religious imagery to the churches following the deprivations of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 of only 40 years earlier.

The story of Father O'Reilly is in stark contrast to *The Botolphian Newsletter* Number 40 (August 2016) where Revd George Drury and the 'Akenham Burial Case' of 1878 were featured.

I then wrote: *"The Public Worship Regulation Act was passed in 1874 with the result that, as Wikipedia puts it: using incense, wearing vestments, putting candles on the altar and using unleavened (wafer) bread in the Eucharist could and did put priests in prison and even led in 1888–90 to the prosecution of a bishop – Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln. Even calling oneself a 'priest' and describing Holy Communion as 'Mass' was considered suspiciously papist in those days. In 1906 the ruling was reversed when a Royal*

Commission recognised the legitimacy of pluralism in worship and ended prosecutions but the Act itself was not repealed until as recently as 1965."

Father O'Reilly clearly took advantage of the repeal and promptly oversaw a return of a similar rood screen to those which Henry VIII and his team had delighted in tearing down during the Reformation.



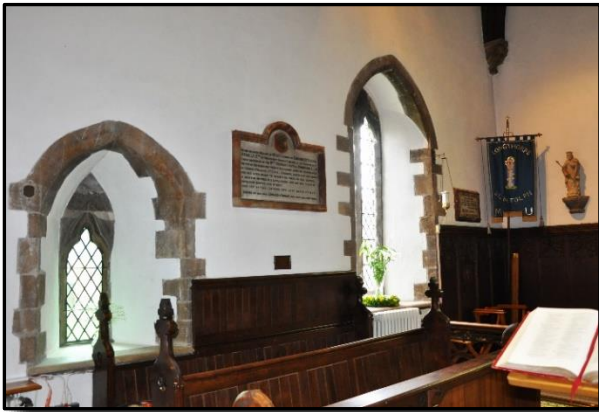
The Rood with a statue of Mother Mary on our left and St John the Apostle/Evangelist on the right.



The pulpit dates from early C20.



.The Sanctuary.



On the north wall of the chancel is a Lowside window. These are not very common but we have featured them several times in previous *Botolphians*. In slightly different form they are known as 'squints' but they serve the same purpose.



The church guide insists that the nave, two side aisles and chancel were all built at the same time but this outside view of the Lowside window seems to cast doubt on this since the close proximity of the window to the north aisle wall is too restrictive to allow the window to be of much practical use.



"And of what practical use might that be?" I hear you ask. Squints and Lowside windows were once thought to be for the communion bread to be offered to lepers but this theory has now been discarded.

The short version of a long story is that they are generally found to date from between 1200 and 1350. The arrow in the picture above shows (if I am not mistaken) a hinge where a shutter was once fixed, the window at that time being unglazed. When the church was full to capacity, the extra congregation would be outside doing their best to join in with the service. At the climax of the rites when the host was elevated, the sacrist would ring the sacring (*sic*) bell near to the open window to indicate that fact to those outside.



Squints and Lowside Windows are not common in churches but Longthorpe boasts *two* of them.



The construction of an office / kitchen on the south side of the chancel has blocked off the southern Lowside window.



The aumbry dates from 1320.



Below the plaque shown here at the left of centre, a door in the wooden panelling opens to reveal an aumbry wherein the reserved sacrament is kept. The white light above the panelling is kept burning to indicate when the reserved sacrament (used for the sick and dying etc) is present.

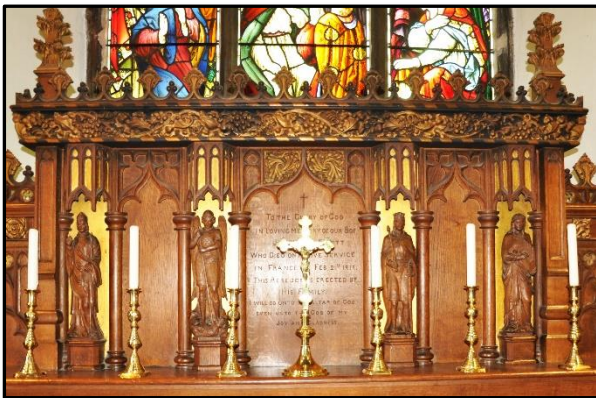


On the east wall are two modern figurines - that on the north side being of King Peada of Mercia - founder of Peterborough Abbey but son of Penda who was in many ways the scourge of the Christians in Saint Botolph's era.



On the south side we find our very own St Botolph wearing an abbot's mitre and holding an abbatial crozier.

As is frequently the case, he is depicted as a builder of churches and holds one in the crook of his arm.



The figures on the beautiful reredos are, from left to right: St Martin of Tours, St Michael, St Oswald and St Cecilia.



The east window is the Ascension by A.L. Moore. It was installed in 1907 and restored in 2003.



On the south side of the sanctuary is a rather magnificent bishop's chair . . .



... and a piscina (1320).



1892 pitch pine roof.



Above the altar in the Lady Chapel are figurines of, on one side, Mary with baby Jesus and, on the other side, St George.



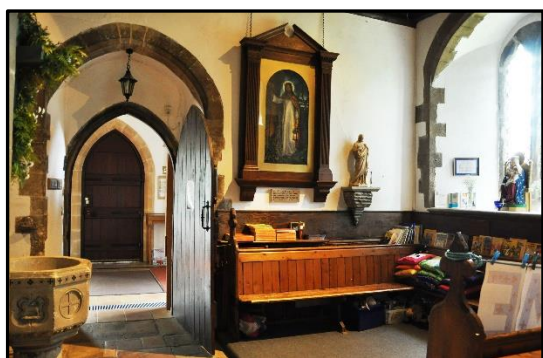
To the right of the altar is another piscina. It is thought that the Lady Chapel was originally commissioned as a chantry in 1391 to petition for the soul of its patron Sir William de Thorpe.



The 1990 Howell window (by Francis Skeat) is at the east end of the north aisle and pictures Longthorpe's farming connections, together with Longthorpe Tower and Thorpe Hall.



At the top of the right hand light is a variation on the shield of St Botolph that I have not seen before.

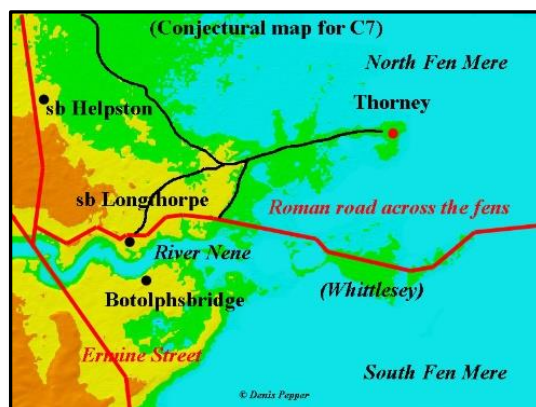


The Children's Corner is dedicated to Father O'Reilly.



I found there an old friend in this print *The Light of the World* from a painting by the Pre-Raphaelite artist William Hunt (1827-1910) which shows

Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door. The picture is in the front of a bible which I have used since childhood.



Roman roads and ancient tracks abounded in this region which in C7 bordered on the shallow waters of the fens.

Thanks

My thanks to Revd Jackie Bullen for letting me know when the church would be open for my visit. Also to Jane Hogg for her excellent Historical Guide.

Classification

Connection with Peterborough

Peterborough (or Medeshamstede as it was called in Botolph's time) is the key to this church. At least it is one of the keys - the other being the church's connection with the Thorpe family.

As you will remember it is believed that Botolph's patron and benefactor with regard to his abbey of Icanho was King Anna of East Anglia.

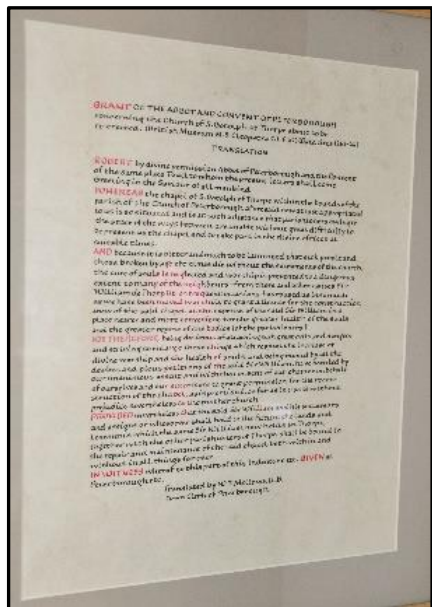
King Anna was killed by King Penda of Mercia in 654 and Penda was in turn killed by King Oswiu of Northumbria in 655. Penda's son Peada became King of Mercia and shortly afterwards founded Medeshamstede Abbey on the border of his kingdom and that of East Anglia. The foundation was subsequently desecrated by the Vikings in 864 but refounded in 966 by our old friend Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester. I say 'our old friend' because it was he who was the prime motivator in the disinterment of Botolph's body from its resting place at Icanho and the translocation of its different parts to Ely, Thorney and Westminster. It is perhaps surprising that Peterborough was not similarly endowed with a share.

Connection with William de Thorpe

After a humble start to his life, William de Thorpe (d.1199) became clerk to Peterborough Abbey and then to the king. Following the change in his

fortunes his family became established as landed gentry and acquired land in Longthorpe where, in c.1240 they built a sumptuous hall. They earned their wealth as lawyers and the family hall was a demonstration of their success.

A later heir, the second William de Thorpe, decided that a church on his doorstep would complete the scene and so, to this end, he pestered his contacts at Peterborough Abbey to allow him to mobilise the St Botolph's Church, which was then residing a mile up the road at Thorpe.



There is a copy of a translation of the resulting deed at the back of the church in which it says:

'Grant of the Abbot and Convent of Peterborough concerning the Church of Saint Botolph at Thorpe about to be re-erected . . .
whereas the chapel of Saint Botolph of Thorpe within the bounds of the parish of the Church of Peterborough . . . is so situated and is at such a distance that parishioners . . . are unable . . . to be present and to take part in the divine offices . . . Sir William de Thorp on frequent occasions has roused us in so much as we have been moved worthily to grant a licence for the construction anew of the said chapel at the expense of the said Sir William in a place nearer and more convenient.'

It seems that Sir William was able to put his lawyer's wiles to good personal use. In 1263 the church was moved brick by brick a mile down the road to the west and re-erected 'on his back doorstep.' In 1300 his grandson Robert took grandeur a little further by attaching a fortified 40 foot tower to their house. The room in the centre of the tower was lavishly furnished with a series of domestic medieval wall-paintings. These are still to be seen and are regarded as the best-preserved examples in England.



Longthorpe Tower
 (picture courtesy of English Heritage)
 Open Sats & Suns 10am-5pm April to October.

In 1656 the lease of the manor of Longthorpe was bought by the Lord Chief Justice, Oliver St. John and he built another grand property called Thorpe Hall closer to the original site of St Botolph's Church. He used stones from the ruins of Peterborough Minster which had been wrecked in 1643 during the civil war.

You will see therefore that the masonry transport industry has been kept very busy in this area. It also, perplexingly, leaves us with *two* Botolph sites - one where the original church stood at Thorpe and one where it stands now at Longthorpe. You can appreciate therefore why, when I am asked how many churches were dedicated to Saint Botolph, I am at a bit of a loss as to which figure to choose!

The Church when it was at Thorpe

We are now left with the three pertinent questions:

1. When was this site first founded?
2. Who founded it?
3. Why was it dedicated to Saint Botolph?

The church guide tells us '*stones found in recent excavations and old records which refer to Thorpe indicate that there was a church building of some sort on this site from early C12. That church indeed may have been on the site of a church originally founded by St Botolph himself.*'

It seems to me that this is not unlikely since it is on the route that Botolph would have followed during his journeys to the west in the 670s. Would he have been allowed to build so close to Medeshamstede Abbey though? King Peada had installed Seaxwulf there as the first abbot and he remained there until 676 when he moved to Lichfield. Perhaps Botolph took his chance when the cat was away - or perhaps Seaxwulf was happy to cooperate. Their names are very similar so it might even be that Botwulf (an alternative spelling) and Seaxwulf were related. The

historian Dorothy Whitehead suggests that before he was installed as abbot, Seaxwulf spent his life studying in East Anglia. This supports a theory of cooperation which makes it more likely that Botolph himself was the founder of this church site.

I would therefore suggest an A(ii) classification - a site founded as a result of Botolph's journeys.

But we are not finished yet . . .

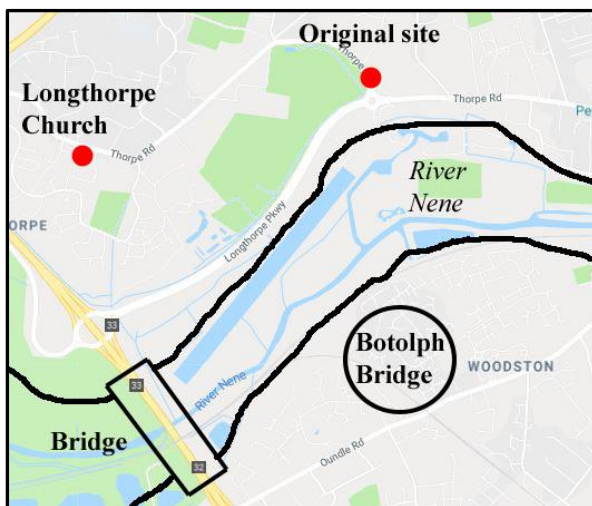
. . . because having, in this month's research, identified the original position of the Thorpe church (as opposed to the site at Longthorpe where we thought the church had always stood) . . . we find a direct relevance to another Botolph site on the opposite bank of the River Nene.

Botolph Bridge, Cambs

Location: Lat / Long: 52.562956, -0.270020;
Somewhere near Chippenham Mews, Botolph Bridge, Peterborough, PE2 7ZB..

It had always seemed odd to me that the suburb of Botolph Bridge not only had no Botolph but had no bridge either.

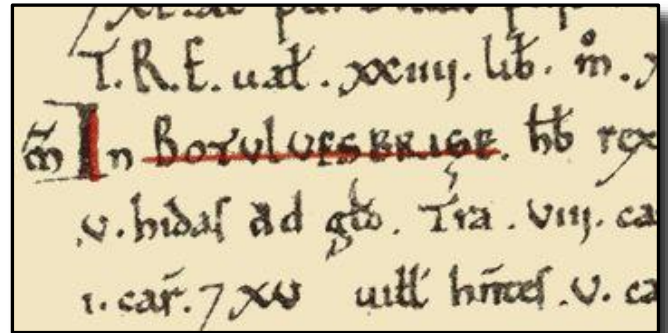
The clues found at Longthorpe prompted the discovery that it was likely in fact to have had both.



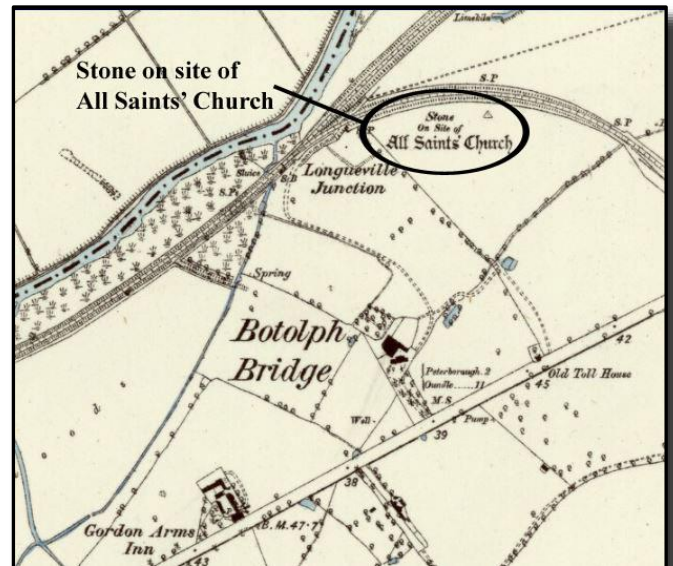
Looking at the two church sites again we can now see that they are opposite each other - but did a bridge lead directly between the two? The presence of the existing bridge is a distraction and should be ignored since it is of recent construction and does not follow the line of earlier bridges as we might have expected.

There must however have once been a bridge across the river at Botolph Bridge or the area would not have been so-named.

And we know it takes the Botolph part of its name from ancient times because it is directly referred to as such in the Domesday Book of 1086.

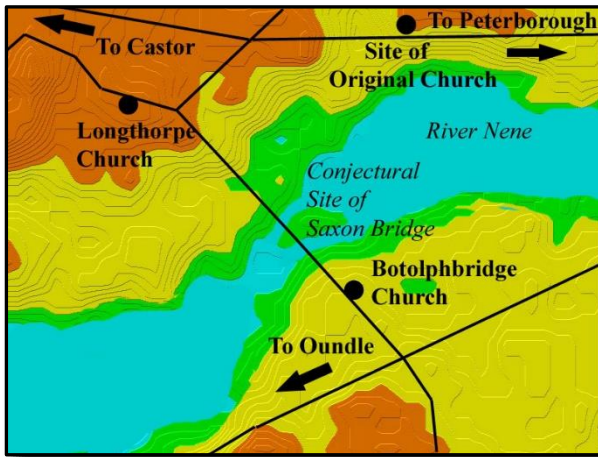


The Domesday Book also refers to the presence of a church and, if we consult an Ordnance Survey map of 1888 we find reference to a stone marking the site of All Saints' Church.

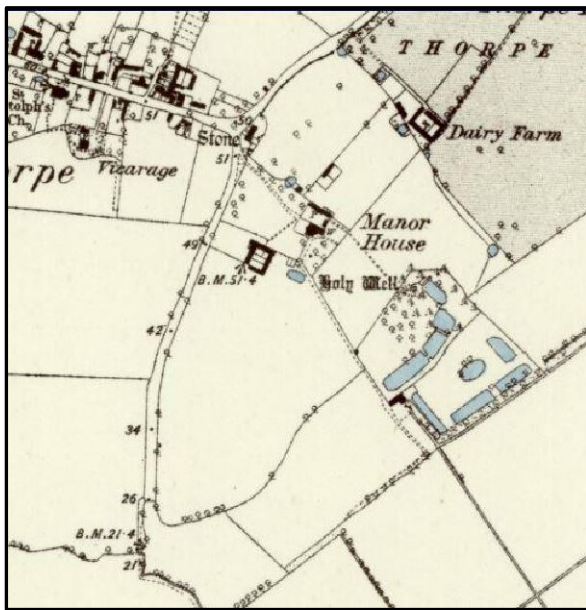


This locates the church then - just inside the loop of the railway line that was new in C19. There are also prominent footpaths on both sides of the river which indicate that this was a well-used route. The fact that the church ended its life dedicated to All Saints rather than to Saint Botolph is a minor obstacle in that, as we know, the dedications of churches frequently change. I have little doubt from the Domesday etc evidence shown above that this church was originally dedicated to Saint Botolph.

It had a chequered history however since records show that in its later life it stood here, gradually decaying, until 1695 when it was finally demolished. By that time many of its stones had already been taken away and used to repair and enlarge the church at nearby Orton Longueville.



The picture above shows the sort of arrangement we might have expected to have seen in C7. Of course it would have been more satisfying to find that the footpaths went straight to the site of the original church whereas in fact they still seem to lead in the general direction of Longthorpe before curving round towards Peterborough and passing through the centre of Thorpe Hall Park.



The angulation of the field patterns give us further clues and, as if to lend support, Holy Wells border the route. I have not researched these particular wells but in the past I have found that their Holy denominations usually only date from Victorian times.

It is not unlikely however that the passage of 1400 years has caused some obfuscation and that in the past the two churches acted as sentinels of the wide and shallow marshy river-crossing for visitors travelling to or from Medeshamstede Abbey.

Classification

Once again the three questions arise and the answers would seem to be similar to those found

at Thorpe. From the Domesday evidence the church must have been of Saxon origin and it is likely to have been founded by Botolph at a similar time to the Thorpe site so its classification would again be A(ii).

One could argue that there might never have been a Botolph church at Botolph Bridge and that the area was so named simply because it was the source of the bridge which led to the Botolph's church on the other side of the river but I think this is unlikely.

Timeline for Longthorpe and Botolph Bridge

- 656 Peada (d.656) founded Medeshamstede Abbey and Seaxwulf became Abbot.
- c.677 Field Chapels founded at Thorpe and Botolphsbridge?
- 864 Abbey desecrated by Vikings
- 966 Bishop Aethelwold re-founded abbey
- 1086 Botolphsbridge mentioned in Domesday
- c.1130 St Botolph's church built at Thorpe - possibly on foundations of a Saxon church.
- c.1240 William Thorpe built family house at Longthorpe
- 1263 St Botolph's Chapel of Ease moved from Thorpe to Longthorpe.
- 1300 Tower added to Thorpe's house.
- 1656 Lease of manor of Longthorpe bought by the Lord Chief Justice, Oliver St. John who then constructed Thorpe Hall
- 1675 Stones from the ruined (All Saints) church at Botolphsbridge used to repair and enlarge the church at Orton Longueville
- 1695 All Saints' church razed.

Correspondence

1. Joanna Comer wrote from Lullingstone solving the mystery of the Four Saint Botolph Hymns mentioned in the previous issues. I should perhaps have the grace to be embarrassed but at my advanced years this passes me by. The hymns are in *Resources for Worship with St Botolph* - a 16 page booklet edited by our president Father Tim L'Estrange and published by . . . The Society of Saint Botolph in 2002! (I hasten to add that this was before I took over the Administration). I knew of the existence of the booklet but have yet to see a copy. Joanna kindly sent me the words which I will attach to this month's email. Many thanks Joanna.

2. Anon. I received an email from someone who I know well and respect greatly but in these circumstances he wishes to remain anonymous because he is expressing an opinion on something on which he is not an expert. He gently takes issue with my comments in June where I wrote: *I have concluded that (St Botolph) was primarily an evangelical missionary whose aim was*

perfection in Holy Teaching and Holy Living. His evangelical methodology was 'travel, preach, capture and plant.

The writer says that his understanding of the words of John of Tynemouth (fl.1350) (I presume that he is referring to Tynemouth's *Nova Legenda Angliae* which I have studied fairly extensively - as opposed to his *Sanctilogium* which I have not read) paint the picture of a man of prayer who, while guiding the monks under his care to salvation, also **preserved the solitary life of prayer** insofar as he could. The writer goes on to say *I would expect that whatever preaching and travelling St Botolph did, it was mingled with long stretches of solitary prayer to remain close to God to gain the strength for his labours.* I am grateful for these comments because I believe they are highly relevant.

3. Graham Jones wrote concerning Botolph's likely travels between Icanho and Much Wenlock. He suggests that travel by ship to London and thence by Watling Street to Wroxeter might have been the method of choice.

4. Heather Flack pointed out a typo in the June edition where I had Mary Warren being born in 1855 and dying in 1838 . . . it should of course have been 1858 and I have now amended the PDF - thank you Heather.

5. Emma Rose Barber wrote concerning a talk she is giving regarding the Bloomsbury Group and the wall-paintings at St Botolph's at Hardham, West Sussex.

6. Adrian Biggs wrote saying that he went to a fine concert of Bach at St Botolphs in Colchester the purpose of which was to raise money for the Syrian refugees living locally.

5. Revd Jeremy Cullimore wrote saying that St Botolph's by Bargate, Lincoln has been leased to the Greek Orthodox parish of St Basil the Great and St Paisios of the Holy Mountain w.e.f. 1 July. This preserves the church as a place of Christian worship and the name will be preserved as the parish will be merged in with St Pater at Gowts, Lincoln. [Ed: *we seem to have gained another St Botolph's site then*].

6. Joanna Comer wrote: We have just received a voting form from the National Churches Trust inviting "Friends" of the trust to decide which of four projects should receive an extra £10,000 on top of grants already agreed. Number two on the list is St Botolph's Boston, Lincs. I expect you can guess where our vote will go and hope other Botolphians will feel the same.

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.

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