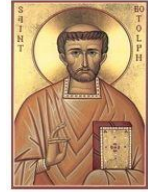




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

[www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)



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President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

Issue Number: 64

1st August 2018

## Highlights this month

- **St Botolph's Church, Stoke Albany, Northants.**
- Correspondence from **Graham Jones, Philip Spencer** and **John McConnell**.
- Please make a note in your diaries of the society's **ANNUAL LUNCHEON** which will be held at the usual venue in Cambridge on **Wednesday 24th October 2018 at 12.30 for 1 p.m.**

## Editorial

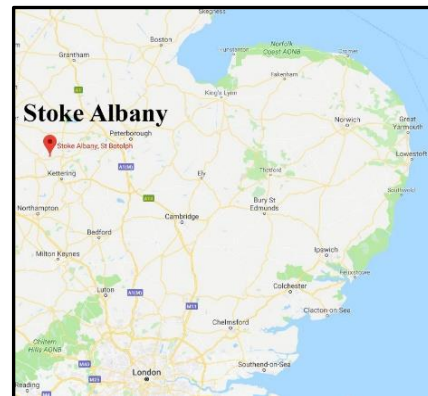
Having been late with last month's issue I am a few hours early this month because Zina and I are heading to Durham tomorrow to meet our friends Peter and Kate Van Demark from Boston Massachusetts when they visit to sing with Berkshire Choral International Chorus and Durham Orchestral Players at Durham Cathedral. We are really looking forward to the concert and to meeting them as well as to visiting other friends in the area and having a good look at Durham Cathedral itself.

## Church Feature

# **S**toke Albany, Northants.

**Approach:** Travelling from the south along the M1, take Junction 15 and then take the A45 exit to Northampton/Wellingborough. At the roundabout take the second exit onto London Road A45. After 4.5 miles bear left onto the A43 Lumbertubs Way towards Kettering.

*After 10 miles merge onto the A14. At Junction 4 take the B669 to Rothwell and continue on the B576. After 5 miles at the roundabout take the third exit onto B669 Stoke Road/Desborough Road. After 2.2 miles do a jiggle right then left into Ashley Road and 400 yards later jiggle left and then right - past the war memorial to find the church immediately ahead of you as in the picture below. There is a car park just outside the church.*



**Location:** Lower Road, Stoke Albany, Northants LE16 8PZ; Lat/Long: 52.4867, -0.8153; NGR: SP805882.

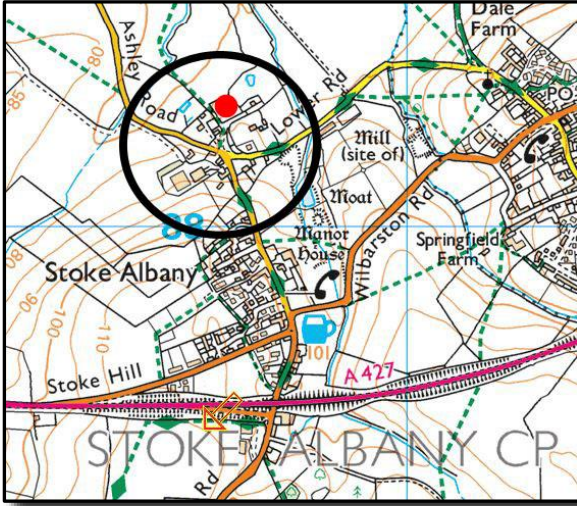
**Key:** The church is normally kept locked so you will need to make prior arrangements for your visit.

**Contacts:** Churchwarden: Katherine Malin.

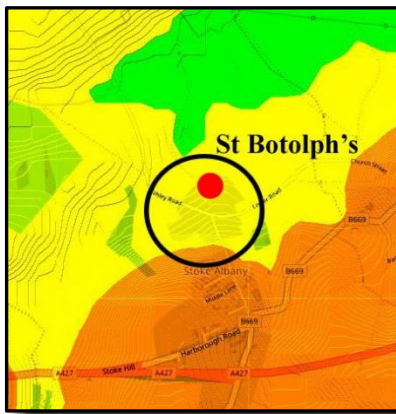
**Priest:** Revd Sally Hughes, 28 Rushton Road, Wilbarston, Market Harborough LE16 8QL. 01536 770-998.

**Church Services:** Holy Communion: Every second Sunday at 9 a.m. Family Communion/Service: Every fourth Sunday at 10.30 a.m.

**Listed Grade:** II\*



The map above shows the position of the church as a red dot with the circle representing the early village form. The settlement to the south developed later.



If the church site were of C7 foundation I would expect to see it closer to a wide stretch of water and further up the hill. In C7 the green area shown in the map above is likely to have been marshy. By the time of the Norman Conquest however, the rivers would have begun to silt up making the present site feasible.

Stoke Albany is a pretty and quiet village and all the people we met were most welcoming and friendly.



Some considerable time ago, the vicar, the Revd Sally Hughes, kindly sent me the Rockingham Forest Trust's *Statement of Significance* for the church and this, together with a yellow leaflet entitled *A Walk Round St Botolph's Stoke Albany* forms the basis of much of the information I have used.



Sally also sent me several photographs one of which is this lovely view of the church in autumn taken just as the sun was beginning to set.



The Statement tells us that the south porch has a Collyweston slate roof. The side walls are constructed of ironstone rubble and the front face is white limestone ashlar. The basic structure of the church is of regular coursed limestone and ironstone with ashlar dressings.

Many of the buildings in Sicily and Malta where I have spent the last few months, are constructed in sandstone and limestone but they lack the colour-contrast of the darker ironstones which I feel contributes greatly to the beauty of our churches.



The sundial above the doorway is inscribed with the date 1741.



The first aspect that struck me was the massive size of the south aisle which seemed likely to prove to be nearly as wide as the nave itself.



Under the east window of the south aisle there lies a C13 (broken) coffin lid. *The Statement* suggests this might originally have come from the tomb recess in the chancel which we will see later.



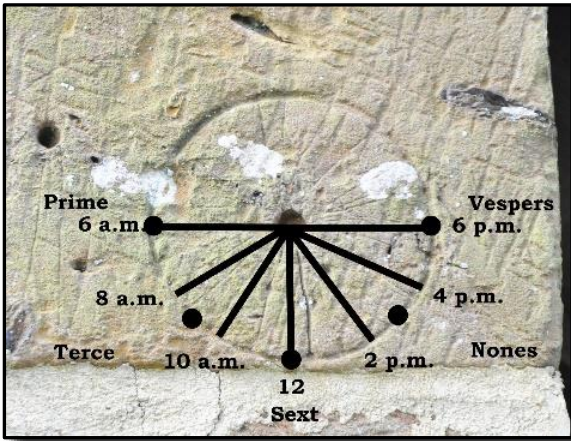
My first triumph was to find a Mass Dial - not on the south porch where one usually expects them to be but on the south east corner of the chancel - which is probably the second most popular place for them. I hope that seasoned readers will bear with me while once again I explain (for the benefit of new members) the purpose of these markings which are sometimes known as Scratch Dials.



This is a close up of this one at Stoke Albany. Some churches have more than one.



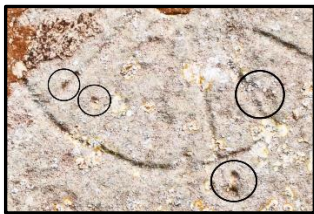
In fact Saint Botolph's in Slapton (seen above) sports THREE of them, the highest of which would be appropriately inaccessible to small children.



When a peg is placed in the central gnomon hole the time is indicated from the shadow cast by the gnomon - as with a sundial.



These dials were used so that the rector could advertise the time of next Sunday's mass by putting another peg in one of the circumferential holes. The Slapton dial shown above had a mass of holes for the rector to choose from. I suspect however that the Slapton children might have been prone to making alterations to the service times without the rector's agreement and that this is perhaps why he had another dial sculpted high up and out of their reach.



The Stoke Albany Mass Dial seen above has the remains of a few holes (identified here by the rings) suggesting that there might have been services at 8 a.m., 9 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. - not all during the same week of course.



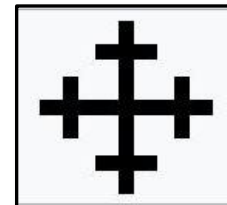
And then I became carried away by the plethora of Gable Crosses sported by Stoke Albany. It occurred to me that the study of such crosses could (and might yet) form a study of their own. There are three shown above (the one on the east end of the south aisle does not show very clearly) and from left to right they are:-



A 'cross fleury' (as in *fleur-de-lys*) at the east end of the south aisle . . .



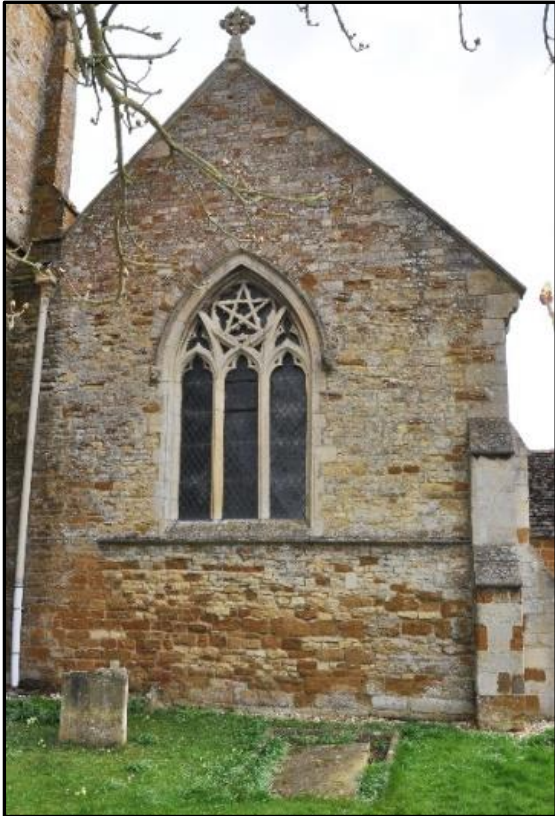
. . . and where the nave joins the chancel a 'pierced cross crosslet.'



Classically a 'cross crosslet' is a cross in the form shown above. In Stoke Albany's case there is a hole in the middle and so it is known as a 'pierced cross crosslet.'



. . . and, at the east end of the chancel, a 'celtic wheel cross'.



. . . and then, just as I had thought that I had the hang of them, I found another at the west end of the north aisle. (To help with location - the south porch is just visible to the right of the picture) . . .



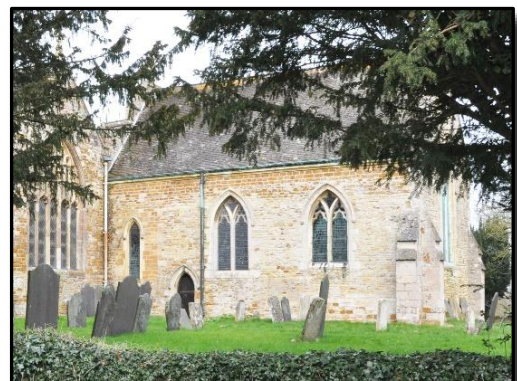
This is a flamboyant *Cross fleury* - although at first sight it looks more like a *Celtic wheel cross*.



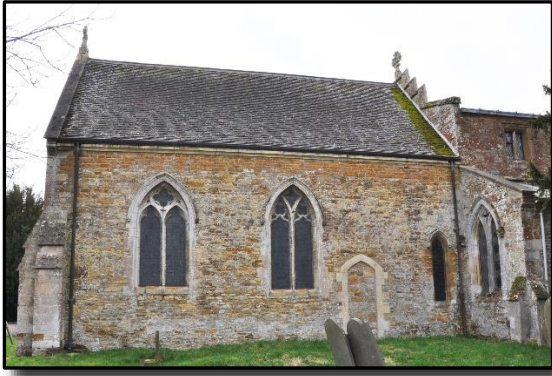
The Y-tracery in the C13-14 east window has unusual extra masonry.



Instead of the usual fine Y-lines of early C13 this seems to be an example of a late C13 move into the C14 decorated gothic style by making a few 'additions' which the architect/mason might at that time have considered a daring modern innovation. In the upper part of the arches you will notice the trefoil lights.



Of the seven windows in the chancel, this style is repeated in three of them and in two windows of the south aisle.



Of the three windows of the north wall of the chancel, the middle one is similar to those mentioned, except that it has *quatrefoil* lights . . . and the easternmost window is different again.



Like gable crosses, church windows make a fascinating study and the above picture is a collage of the windows in this church in what I consider to be the chronological order of their style. Others may have a different opinion - I will be pleased to hear from you.

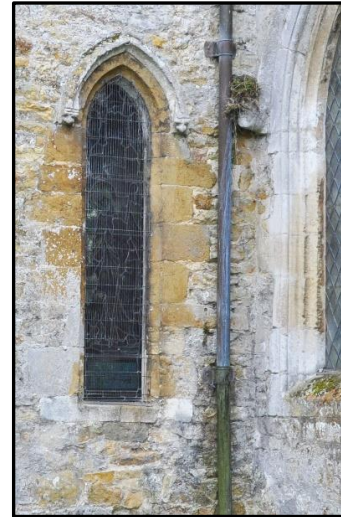
Taking a second look at the picture before last - on the far right of the chancel we find a Lowside window very similar to that which we saw at Longthorpe as detailed in the last issue of *The Botolphian*.



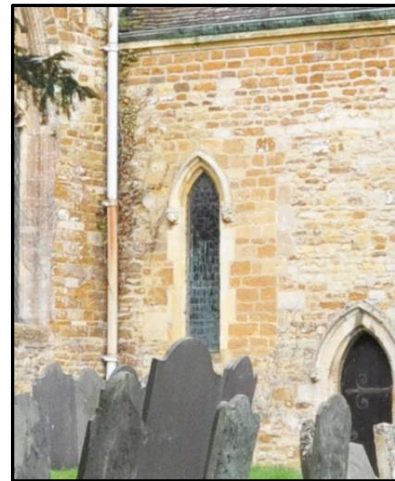
There is another Lowside window and a priest's door in the *south* wall of the chancel. Once again the presence of a *second* Lowside window mirrors Longthorpe.



The two sites are separated by 23 miles so such similarity is not because they are close to each other.



The window on the north wall looks original whereas . . .



. . . the different brickwork and the newness of the masonry shows that the southern one has been replaced (probably in C19) but probably in the same position and of a similar design to its predecessor.

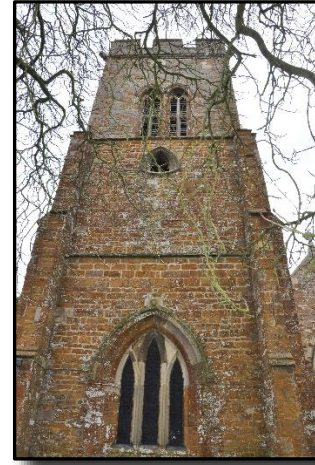
These windows are much taller than those we saw at Longthorpe - which suggests that they are later - although they would still seem to come into the 1200 to 1350 time-frame required for Lowside windows.



The north wall looks a little gloomy with its C20 addition of a boiler house but it seems it did not always look this way.



Looking at the west wall of the tower we can see signs that there was originally a steeply-pitched roof here which was removed when the clerestory (with the square-framed windows) was added in c.1470. The earlier roof would have followed the drawn line downwards. The other two lines indicate the former profile of the three-light lower window before it was cut short by the new lower roof.



The west end of the tower peers back at us through the bedraggled tree branches as if it has just washed its hair. As such towers go, it is very early - British Listed Buildings date it as c.1300.



The *Statement* points out that “the West end has a triple lancet window with a hood mould having two ugly female heads as hood stops.”



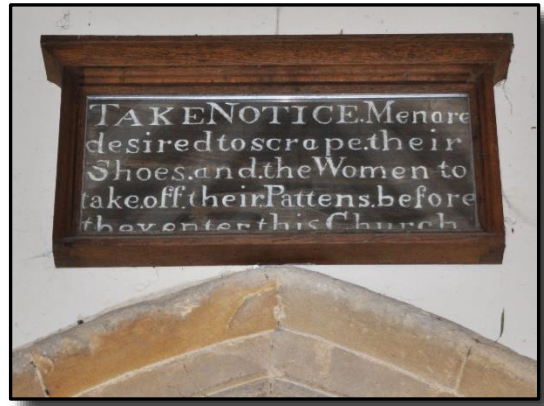
In fact, at the top of the hood mould there is another face which has the appearance of a man hoping for better things.



Below this on the left is one of the ugly women who might perhaps be his wife.



On the other side is the other ugly woman (I would dispute the ugliness) who I suspect might be his mother. One cannot help surmising that the stonemason perhaps worked away from home and that perhaps there was an occasion when one or both of the said women came to inspect his work. Maybe he risked too much and is buried somewhere in the churchyard.



We were greeted by this sign above the south doorway - "Men are desired to scrape their Shoes and the Women to take off their Pattens, before they enter this church."



There are too many interesting sculptured head ends to feature in these pages but I thought that this one was rather *spectacular* - it is in fact the face of a recent rector (1978-1995), Canon Schuffham.



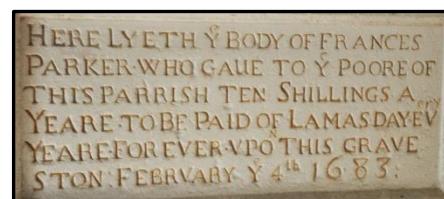
I grew up in Pattens Lane so I am familiar with this term which, as my mother explained to me, refers to clog-like overshoes used for walking down muddy roads. It can be seen from the example shown here that the patten only contacts the ground in two places.



The newly-elected churchwarden, Katherine Malin, kindly rescued us at rather short notice (due to some confusion which was solved with the assistance of a lady from the adjacent Rectory) and let us into the church and showed us round.



To the left of the south doorway is an epitaph to Frances Parker which reads that she . . .



"gave to ye poore of this parrish ten shillings a yeare to be paid on Lamas Day every yeare for ever upon this graveston. February ye 4th 1683."





There is a wonderful Saint Botolph shield above the notice board in the porch next to which is the admonition:

*Enter this door as if  
The floor  
Was made of gold  
And every wall  
Of jewels -  
Of wealth untold  
As if a choir  
In robes of fire  
Were singing here  
Nor shout nor rush  
But hush -  
For God is here.*



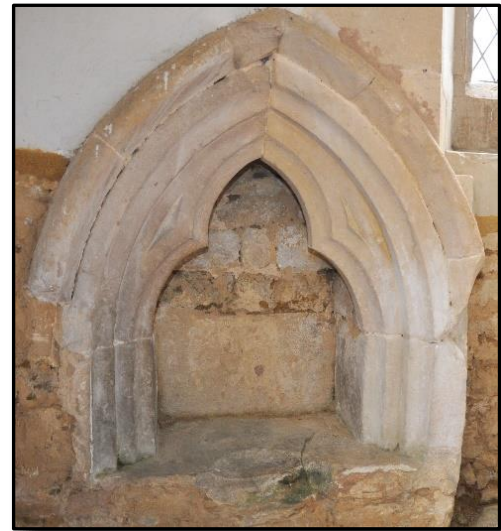
Just inside the doorway on the left is what purports to be the original font bowl of the church. It was discovered in 1954 under a tangle of ivy in the garden of the Manor House and restored to the church. If, as seems entirely possible, it is the original font then it dates from C12 or C13 and is probably the earliest I have seen.



And, relatively-speaking, the south aisle is probably the widest that I have seen in a Saint Botolph's church.



This would seem to be the replacement font but even this dates from 1681.



An ancient but broken piscina in the Lady Chapel.



Next to the piscina is a sedilia with spaces for three or even four.



The parish chest of C16 or C17. You will note the algae on the paving slabs.




I had the privilege of attending Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School at Rochester, Kent (as did quite a few of our readers). Sir Jo's coat of arms has a similar chevron and we were always told that it represented the River Medway ('Mudway' as we used to call it).

This might or might not be true but I would offer the River Alde which semicircles around Iken (now thought to be the location of his abbey of Icanho) as a potential source for this symbol.



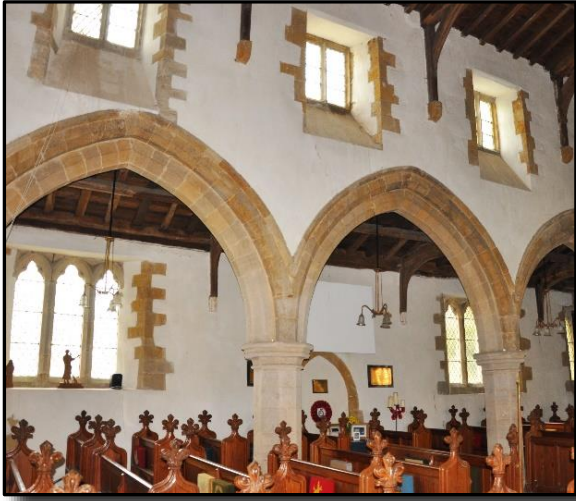
Outside the church there are pierced quatrefoil ventilation stones which were installed in late C19 - presumably to reduce dampness. In most areas they seem to have been effective but clearly less so on the slabs under the parish chest where the dampness is still evident.

INCUMBENTS OF ST. BOTOLPHS STOKE ALBANY			
<p>The coat of arms is a blue field with undulating silver lines. Superimposed is an inverted gold chevron with at its point a gold cross formy. The blue field represents the sea (most churches dedicated to Saint</p>		 <p>Botolphs) near the sea or a navigable river as the Welland was in the 1200s) and the silver lines are waves. The gold cross formy is an abbot's emblem of authority but the symbolism of the inverted chevron is unclear.</p>	
<b>The diocese of Lincoln</b>		<b>Parish combined with Wilbarston</b>	
Simon Gøher	1247/8	John Arnald	1785 1777
Nicholas de Ros	1296	Henry Knapp	1777 1812
Geoffrey de Yakele	1296 1312	Richard Vevers (born Wilkinson)	1812 1851
John de Lippingham	1312 1321	Edward Griffin	1851 1870
Simon de Clifton	1321 1322	William R.P. Waudby	1870 1890

The list shows the church's incumbents since 1247. It also interprets Saint Botolph's coat of arms and finishes with the comment that "the symbolism of the inverted chevron is unclear."



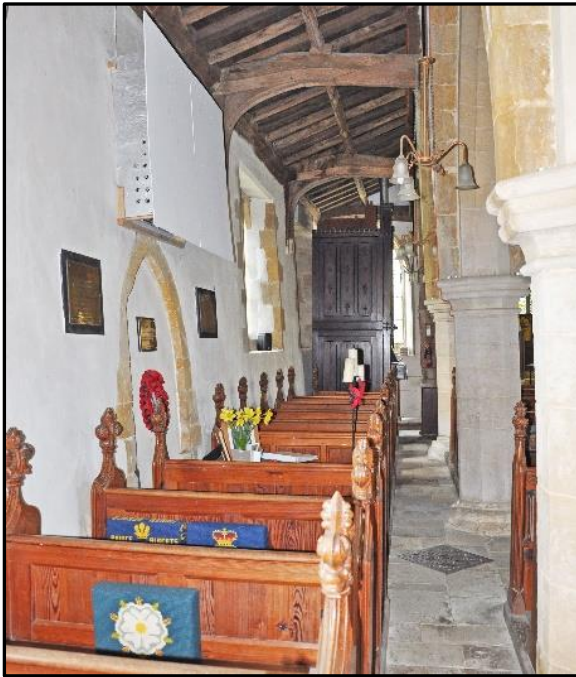
Looking east down the nave.



The poppy head pew ends create a pretty sight.



In fact the whole church is generally pretty, the brightly-coloured hassocks adding to this.



The rather narrow north aisle.



A view across the church towards the south door.



The C19 pulpit and what is generally regarded as a fine specimen of a village church organ.



The chancel and chancel arch. The latter has areas of damaged stone which indicate the original position of a rood screen.

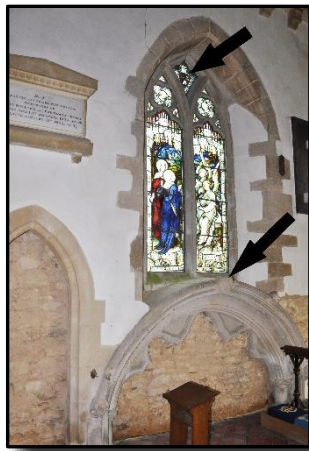


The north wall of the chancel showing the blocked doorway and the Lowside window.

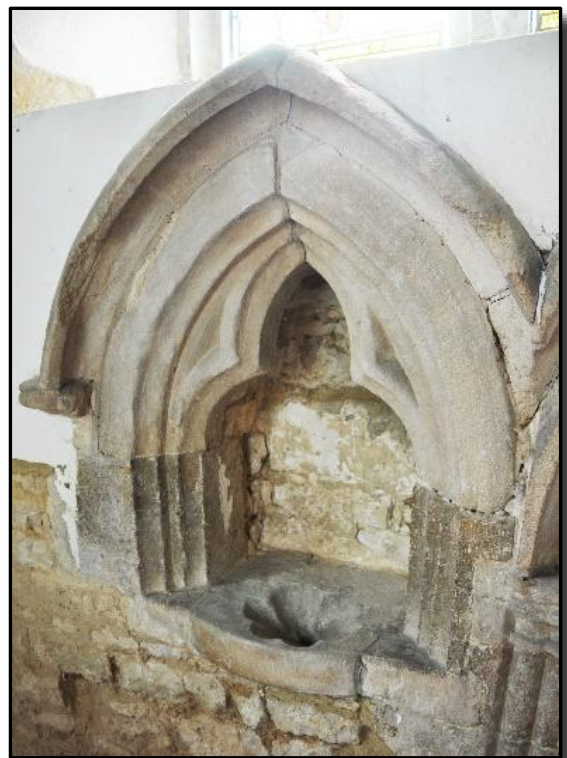
Was Johannes indeed the founder of the church or was he just its most celebrated son - having served as a soldier in the army of Henry V?

In the list of incumbents in the south aisle Simon Goher 1247-1248 is the first name shown. Johannes was not born until 1397.

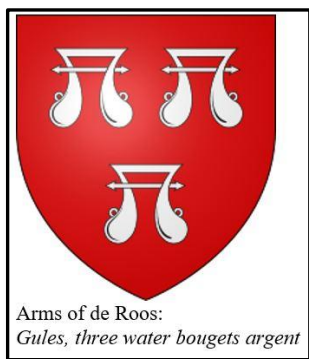
It seems likely that the first to be connected with the church would have been *Robert* de Ros who was also the founder of the de Ros dynasty. He was the Ros who in 1257 acquired title to the Stoke estate after marrying Isabel d'Albini 23 years earlier. He died in 1285 but must have founded the church by then since we see from the 'List' that his fourth son Nicholas de Ros was the incumbent at Robert's death, retiring in 1296.



Next to the blocked priest's door there is a tomb recess which is known locally as the "Founder's Arch" - the founder presumably being Johannes de Ros (1397-1421) from which the broken coffin lid (mentioned above as being outside the south aisle window) might have come. At the apex of the tomb moulding is a shield of the de Ros family (arrowed) and this is repeated in the window above (also arrowed).



The piscina in the chancel is intact and has an attractively fluted bowl and elongated monofoliate tracery which is again reminiscent of Longthorpe.



These are the arms depicted.

The church guide tells us that the arch used to contain a C15 effigy of the said Johannes de Ros but it was removed in 1790 because the Rector's wife did not like it very much.



Next to the piscina C13 triple sedilia.

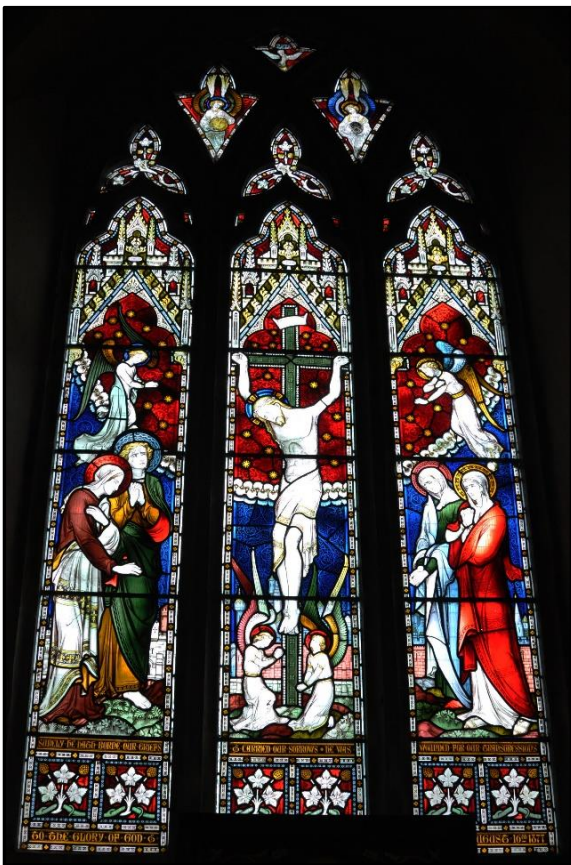


An aumbry in the chancel's north wall.



Zina is here providing us with size perspective. The *reveals* of the two Lowside windows are on each side of her. You will note that there is no possibility of a view through the Lowside windows to the photographer's position in the Sanctuary. The classical explanation of these windows is that they were for people outside to have a view of the priest at the altar. This is clearly not possible in this case.

Indeed I am beginning to formulate my own theory about the use to which these windows were put. It seems to me that they were *not* for a view of the high altar but to view a position just inside the rood screen. Could it be that between the years 1200 and 1350 it was *here* that the host was elevated - rather than at the high altar? I would be grateful for any suggestions on this point.



The C19 east window. Yellow chevrons in the upper parts either accidentally or intentionally are reminiscent of the yellow chevrons of the Saint Botolph shield.



Near the south door is a bench dated 1695.



An unusual vibrantly-coloured reredos.



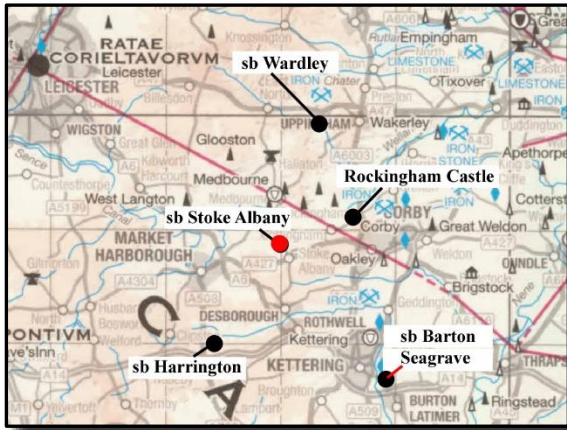
The church guide suggests that the foliate carvings on the head and shoulders might indicate that this is a depiction of the legendary 'Green Man.'

**Thanks**

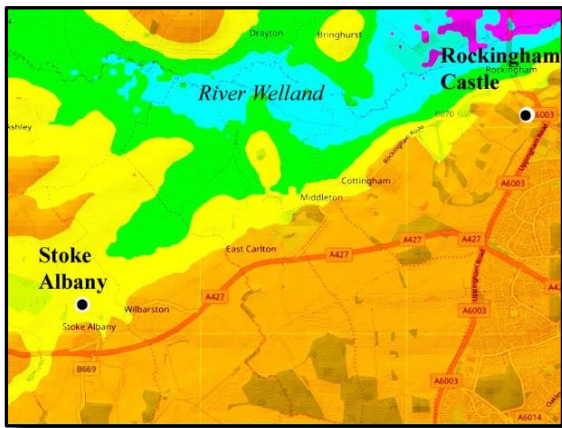
My grateful thanks to Katherine Malin for showing us around the church.

**Classification**

So what are the origins of this interesting church?



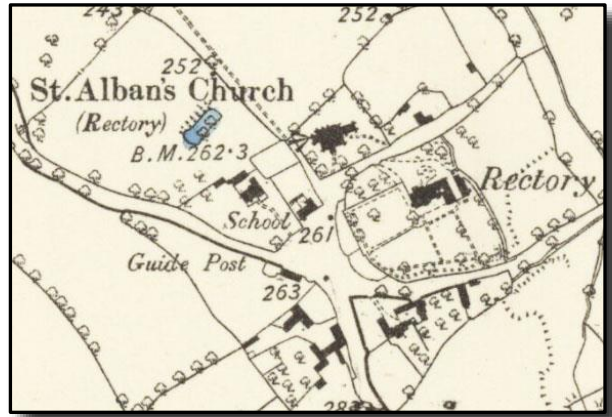
The site is well within Botolph country there being several other identically-dedicated churches within easy reach. The map above shows the nearby Roman road running to Leicester and the proximity of Rockingham Castle.



Rockingham Castle was/is the seat of the Saunders-Watson/Lord Sondes family.

Stoke	St. Milburgh	V	597	Salop	Heref.	474	Rev. George Morgan.
Stoke	St. Gregory	PC	1807	Somer.	exempt	61	E. W. King Coker.
Stoke	St. Mary	R&D	975	Somer.	B.&W	133	E. B. Fortman, Esq.
Stoke-Abbas	St. Mary	R	587	Dorset	Bristol	420*	New College, Oxford.
Stoke-Albany	St. Botolph	R	339	N'amp.	Peterb.	216*	Lord Sondes.
Stoke-Ash	All Saints	R	392	Suffolk	Norw.	275*	Rev. John Ward.
Stoke-Bishops	St. Mary	R	1026	Hants.	Winch.	437*	Bishop of Winchester.
Stoke-Bliss		V	344	Her. & Worc.	Heref.	374*	The Crown.
Stoke-Bruerne	St. Mary	R	763	N'amp.	Peterb.	422*	Brzenose Coll., Oxford.
Stoke-by-Clare	St. Augustine	PC	792	Suffolk	Norw.	130	Sir W. B. Rush, Bart.
Stoke-Cannon	St. Mary	PC	446	Devon	exempt	180	Dn. and Ch. of Exeter.

This is relevant to Stoke Albany church because the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* of 1835 (above) lists Lord Sondes as its patron. It also identifies the dedication as being to Saint Botolph.



One might have thought this was never in doubt and yet the O.S. map of 1885 brazenly usurps St Botolph and replaces him with St Alban as patron.

It would seem therefore that the church was dedicated to Saint Botolph until c.1850, then perhaps spent a hundred years in the care of Saint Alban before there was a change of heart and the church was rededicated.

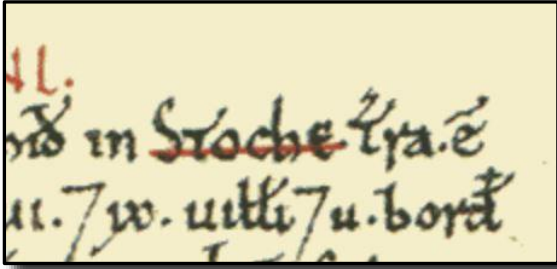
Strangely, in another issue, we will see this again less than six miles to the south at the village of Harrington which I am at present investigating.

Name of Parish, Dedication, and Nature of Benefice.	Population.	County.	Diocese.	Net Value. £	Patron.
Harrietsham .. St. John	R 704	Kent	Cant.	452*	All Souls' Coll., Oxford.
Harrington .. .. .	R 1758	Cumb.	Chest.	250*	H. C. Curwen, Esq.
Harrington ... St. Mary	R 70	Linc.	Linc.	240*	Robert Cracroft, Esq.
Harrington ... St. Botolph	R 191	N'amp.	Peterb.	421*	Countess of Dysart.
Harringworth ... St. John	V 358	N'amp.	Peterb.	174*	Christ Church, Oxford.

Here even today the church is named for Saints Peter and Paul and yet the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* shows that in 1835 it was undoubtedly dedicated to Saint Botolph. It seems then that for some reason there was in this location a concerted Victorian move to banish our saint. Perhaps diocesan records will reveal the thinking behind this.

From C12 all the estates in this area were deeply involved in the wool and grain production with which the cult of Saint Botolph was closely associated and this would have been the reason for the naming of the two churches in question.

So who were the landowners and the farmers? The name of the village gives us a clue. The dual toponymy is derived from 'Stoc' meaning a secondary farm or settlement, and 'Albani' being the surname of William de Albini who held the estate in 1155.



The 1086 Domesday Book reveals that the Lord of 'Stoche' was then Robert de Tosny/Todeny (died c.1093) who held estates right across this part of the county as seen below.



He owned other estates elsewhere one of which was further north in Leicestershire where he built Belvoir Castle which became the family seat; another was closer to home at nearby Rockingham.

Robert de Todeney's estates were inherited by the wife of Roger Bigod, sheriff of Norfolk (we have mentioned him in these pages several times before). She passed them on to her daughter who married William d'Aubigny/Albini/Brito who was a favourite of Henry I. Albini consequently became the lord of Belvoir Castle and the family manors including Stoke which became 'Stoke Albany' to differentiate it from the myriad of other Stokes in the country.

In c.1234 Albini's grand-daughter Isabel married Robert de **Ros**, and Belvoir and in 1257 the manor estates passed to him. Rockingham castle continued to be owned by the de Ros family but by late C15 it had fallen into disrepair and it and its estates had become the property of the crown. Sir Edward Watson took a lease on the estates sometime before 1616 and later purchased the freeholds. His son Lewis Watson (1655-1724) became 1st Earl of Rockingham and in 1746 his grandson Lewis Watson (1728-1795) became 1st **Baron Sondes**. It was the 3rd Baron Sondes, another Lewis Watson (1792-1836) who in 1835 was recorded by the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* as being the church's patron. Today Rockingham Castle is owned by the Saunders-Watson family.

I would give Stoke Albany site a 'C' classification, - i.e. a Hanseatic church founded as a result of commercial enterprise. I have found

no suggestion that there was an earlier church on this site.

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## Correspondence

1. **Graham Jones** wrote about last month's Longthorpe feature:

*While I'm absolutely sure you're right about our saint acting as a protector of those crossing the Nene (you'll remember that in my talk I suggested a causeway on the strength of those hedge-lines at Botolphbridge), dating at Thorpe/Longthorpe looks a little more problematic.*

*(Long)Thorpe gets several mentions in a collaborative volume from Leicester and Nottingham Universities, Thorps in a Changing Landscape, by Paul Cullen, Richard Jones, and David N. Parsons (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011). Richard is one of our most respected medieval archaeologists, and also Director of the Centre for English Local History at Leicester. Paul and David are staffers at the Centre for Name Studies at Nottingham.*

*On p. 107 they conclude that 'The archaeological evidence establishes, as well as any flawed and incomplete dataset can, that thorps were in all probability late arrivals in the English landscape, with many laying down roots in the tenth and eleventh centuries.' Then, on p. 156, after noting the clusters of thorps around places, including Peterborough, whose urban growth was well-established by 1100-1200, they write: 'We must... recognise ultimately that we are dealing with a group of places that began to form in the ninth and tenth centuries and would continue to do so.'*

*(Long)Thorpe is mentioned in a twelfth-century copy of a document from c. 971x84, so it seems highly likely, therefore, that both settlement and church were established not long before. If we are to accept the results of their collective research, foundation of a manorial church, as (Long)Thorpe appears to be, in the seventh century looks highly improbable to say the least. To posit any other form of church (e.g. field chapel) would require contextual evidence of a very different*

sort, which I'm not sure we have at (Long)Thorpe, but I'm open to correction.

Thank you Graham for taking the trouble to write. You are certainly correct that we have no contextual evidence for a C7 foundation. I need time to consider your comments more fully but in essence you are saying that a C7 foundation is most unlikely and a more plausible classification would be B(ii) - a travellers' church founded between 800 and 1066. This would bring it into the realms of the C10 monastic revival led by our very 'Botolph-minded' old acquaintance Bishop Aethelwold. I will reclassify Longthorpe to fit in with your suggestions. Many thanks.

**2. John McConnell** wrote from Boston MA with regard to the Saint Botolph Hymns saying : *Thanks Denis. Don't forget the numerous hymns sung to the tune "St. Botolph," (one of my favorites). For example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpBs0b8Nnzs>*

Thanks John - I watched that on Youtube and enjoyed it.

**3. Philip Spencer** wrote from Shingham, Norfolk : *St Botolph's Shingham, which is privately owned and normally closed, will be open to the public on Sunday 23rd September 2018 from 11am to 4pm. This is being organised by the Beachamwell Local History Group as part of their 'Churches of Beachamwell' event and more information is available on their website - [www.beachamwell.org.uk](http://www.beachamwell.org.uk)*

Thank you Philip - I am afraid I will be unable to attend but I would thoroughly recommend that anybody else who lives in the area takes this rare opportunity to see inside this ancient church which I have only been able to view through the dusty windows.

**4.** There were many other kind emails with snippets of information for which I am always grateful.

Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto: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](mailto: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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