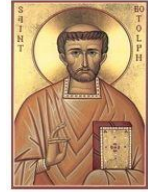




The Botolphian

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: 68

1st December 2018

Highlights this month

- **St Botolph's Church, Newton.**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following as new members: Revd Jenny Seggar from Bramford near Ipswich and Revd Nick Munday from Newton, Lincolnshire.
- Correspondence from Duncan Hopkin, Dick & Daphne Pascoe, Revd Jenny Seggar and Joanna Comer.

Editorial

I am sure that many of you noticed the error in my announcement in the last issue that the *date of the 1919 Annual Luncheon would be on Wednesday 23rd October* but it was only my friend Mrs. Melville-Brown who wrote asking if attendance should be in period costume!

Regarding Volume III of the Botolph Trilogy - this is now being proof-read by my long-suffering friends Peter, Helen, John, Ray, Patricia and Duncan. I anticipate collating all their 'advices' over the Christmas period by which time their brains will be enjoying a well-earned rest. I have already received requests from several members for pre-launch copies so I am making a list. The price will be £12.99 plus £3 p&p.

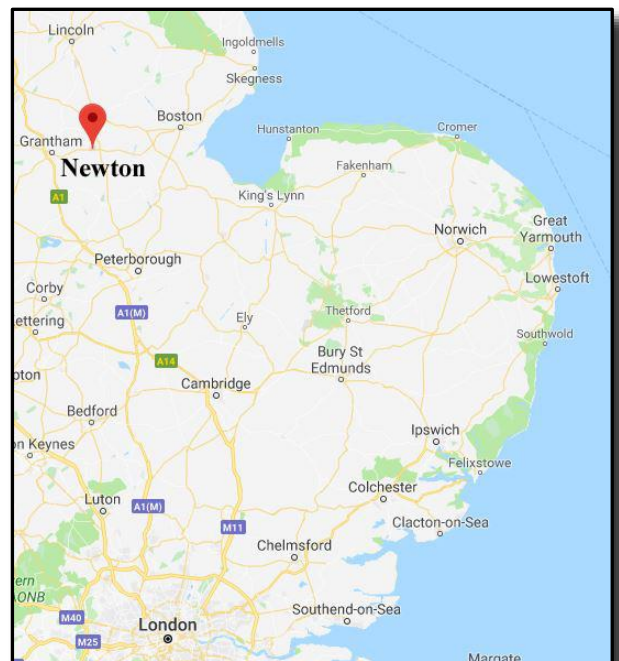
Zina and I wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Most Enjoyable and Healthy New Year.

Church Feature

Newton, Lincolnshire.

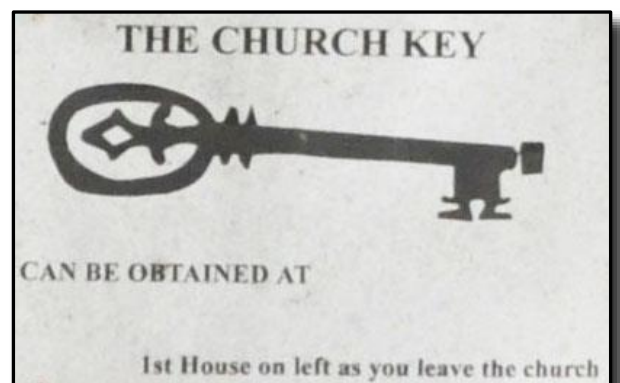
Approach: Travelling along the A52 eastwards from Grantham towards Boston, take the first exit at the B6403/A52 roundabout. After 6 miles turn right towards Newton. Half a mile later, at the junction, turn left towards Walcot and 100 metres

later you will see the church in front of you. We parked immediately outside.

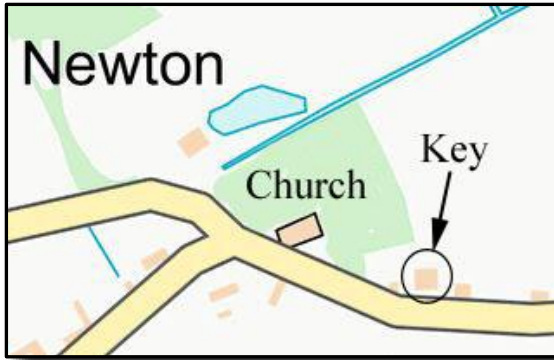


Location: *Newton Road, Newton, Sleaford, Cambs., NG34 0ED; Lat/Long: 52.9132, -0.4431; NGR: TF047362.*

Key: *There is a helpful notice in the porch . . .*



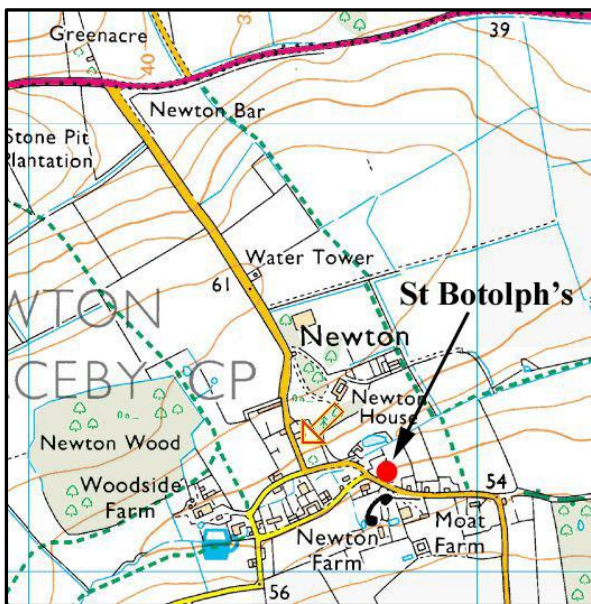
... and this is the house



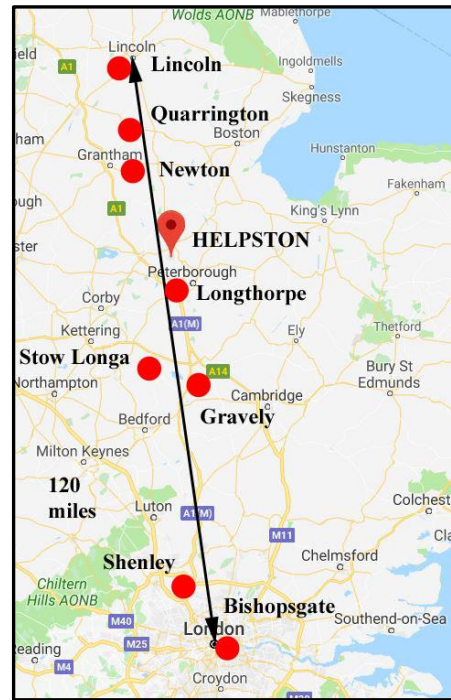
Church Website <https://parishofsouthlafford.org>
Rector: *Revd Nick Munday, The Rectory, 16 West Street, Folkingham, NG34 0SW.*
Tel: 01529 497-519.
Administrator: *Alison Scott*
southlafford@gmail.com; **Tel:** 07399 548-373.
Churchwardens: *Judith Fin and Michael Grainger.*

Next Church Service at Newton: *Sunday 20 January 2019 - 9.00 a.m. Holy Communion.*
The Parish: **South Lafford:** *Eleven Churches: St Denys', Aswarby; St Thomas of Canterbury, Aunsby; St Lucia's, Dembleby; St Andrew's, Folkingham; St Botolph's, Newton; St Peter and St Paul's, Osbournby; St Andrew's, Pickworth; St Andrew's, Scott Willoughby; St Mary & All Saints, Swarby; St Peter ad Vincula, Threkingham; St Nicholas, Walcot.*

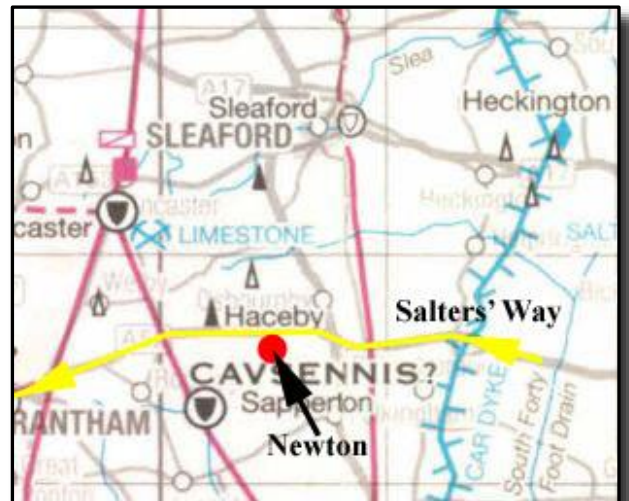
Listed Grade: I.



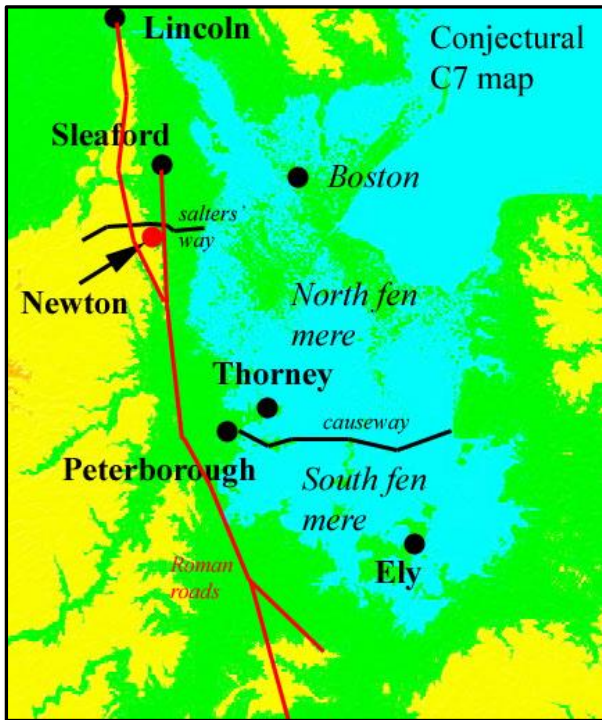
So here we are in Lincolnshire again, having moved north from last month's location in Helpston, Cambridgeshire.



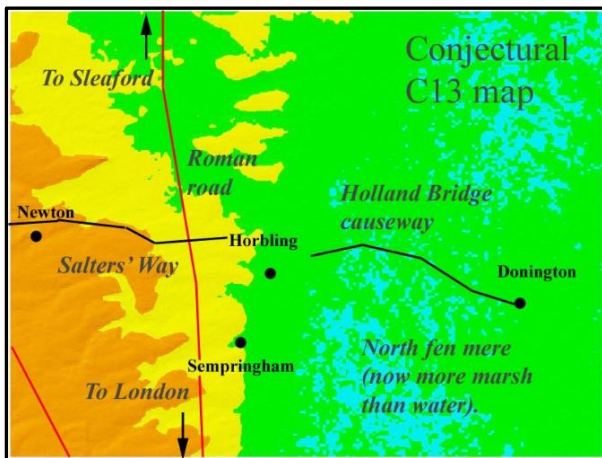
As you will perhaps remember, we ended the last issue having reached the conclusion that Helpston Church constituted an integral part of a string of churches dedicated to *St Botolph Patron Saint of Wayfarers* which line the important route joining London to Lincoln. All these churches lie within 3 miles of the main track, where they are within easy striking distance of travellers for whom their function was to provide spiritual and temporal comfort. Here at Newton we are looking at the next haven along the line.



Running to the north of Newton lies the ancient Salters' Way, shown in yellow above. The Roman roads are marked in red. It will be noticed that although the old road to Lincoln ran more or less along the tracks of the present A15 up to this point, the old and the new part company just south of Newton, the Roman road taking a more direct route to Sleaford.



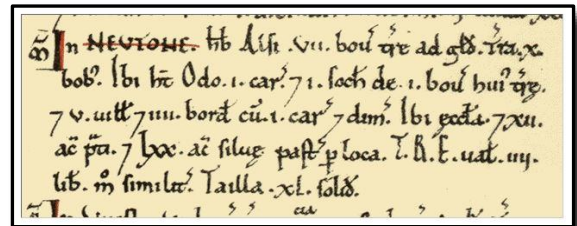
The map above shows the sort of topography that might have existed in C7. The causeway shown here (which is not the same causeway as that mentioned below) was well to the south of Newton. It was constructed by the Romans and ran the 24 miles from Peterborough to Denver in Norfolk.



By the time that Newton church was built in C13 however the fenlands were more marsh than water. The Heritage Gateway Record tells us “The Bridge End or Holland Bridge Causeway ran across the fens between Horbling and Donington during the medieval period and was probably an earlier routeway. The priory at Bridge End in Horbling was responsible for the maintenance of this causeway.” This priory was in fact a cell of Sempringham Abbey.

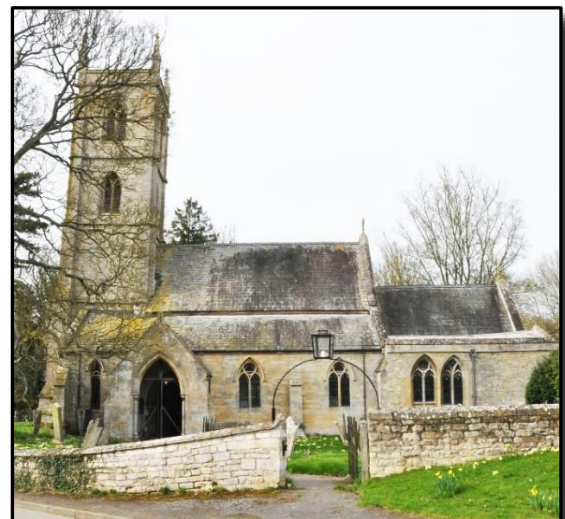
Lee Cave (mentioned further below) relates: “after passing Holland Bridge, the causeway dwindled into an ill-defined track through the marshy ground. The conditions were often worsened by the mists that rose from the marshy ground and travellers frequently lost their way. The inmates of this cell were charged with the upkeep of the causeway and the bridge, with lighting a beacon at dark and with the care of the travellers.”

The pretty little village of Newton is in the North Kesteven district of Lincolnshire and was settled well before the arrival of the Romans.

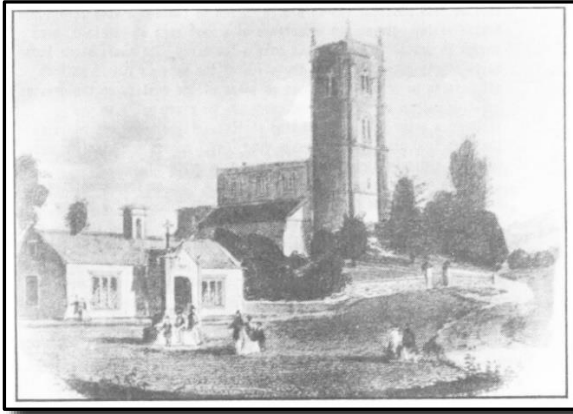


The Domesday Book (which records Newton church’s existence) tells us that in 1066 the Lord was *Alsi, son of Godram*, - whereas by 1086 the lord and tenant in chief was *Odo the Bowman*. At this time the village population was around 120. By 1846 it had risen to 221 but fell to 30 in the mid 1980s and today stands at about 70.

The fortunes and history of Newton are bound up with that of its 1-mile-away neighbour Haceby which was also recorded in the Domesday Book as having one church and a priest.



This church has a tall tower and a low chancel which at first sight makes the nave look comparatively short and stubby but this is not the impression one gains from *inside* the church.



A picture of the church before its extensive restoration in 1867 reveals the presence of a clerestory. This was removed during the refurbishments.



The C19 walls of the south aisle were made from precisely-cut limestone ashlars and these are in sharp contrast to the more haphazard rubble of the much older walls of the Lady Chapel.



The building is constructed from coursed limestone rubble. The south porch is a product of the 1867 restoration . . .

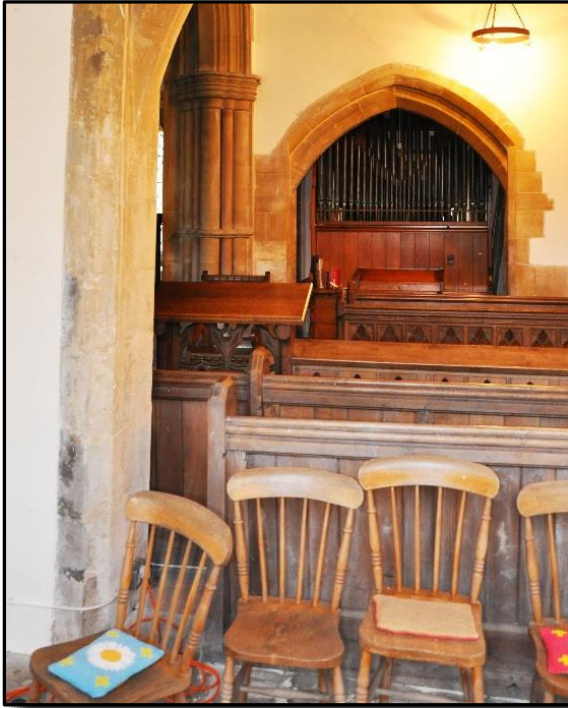


The south wall of the Lady Chapel dates from C13 and has contemporaneous windows although the records tell us that these have been repositioned. The westernmost one incorporates an old friend in the form of a *Lowside Window* [fashionable 1225-1350].



. . . as is the south aisle with its decorated-style Gothic windows.

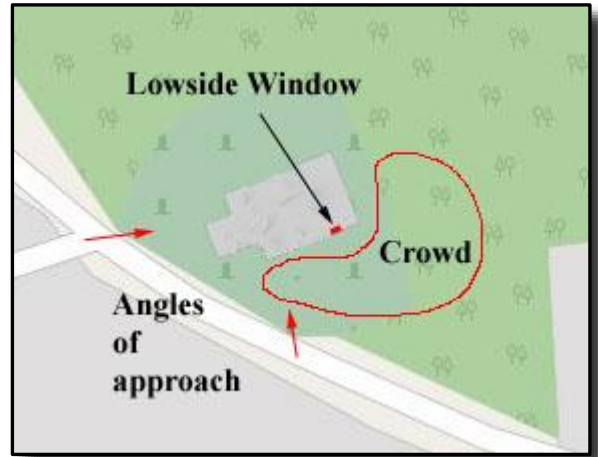
It seems unlikely that this particular window has been repositioned (unless this was done before 1350) because otherwise the *Lowside* part would almost certainly have been removed as it would by then have become redundant. As it is the window has simply been blocked up and plastered inside. Unusually, this one gives into the Lady Chapel rather than directly into the chancel.



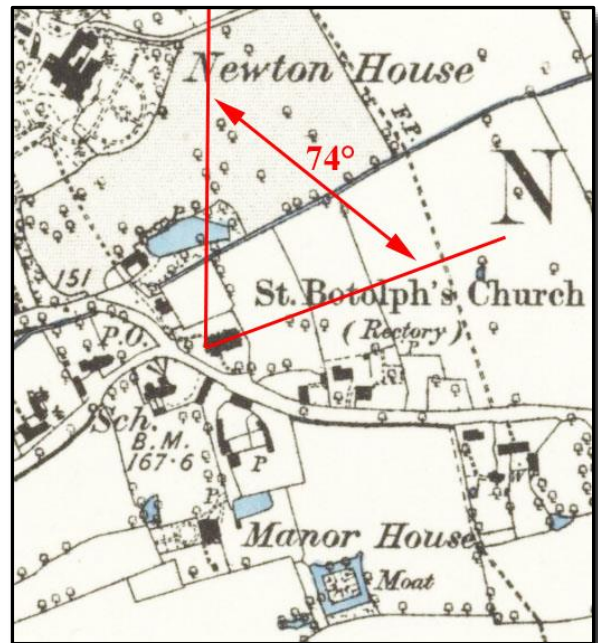
I was afraid, when I was writing this up (having forgotten the exact layout of the church), that there would prove to be a solid wall between the Lady Chapel and the chancel and hence disprove my theory about LSWs. My opinion remains intact however because, as seen above, there is no wall separating the two, but a wide arch which would have allowed a clear view from the LSW to a celebrant standing just inside the chancel arch.



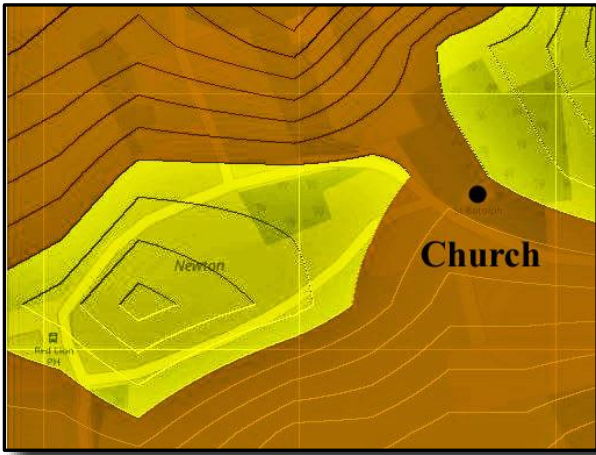
My interest in Lowside Windows has led me to start considering the positioning of these churches with regard to 'crowd gathering' and 'angle of approach.'



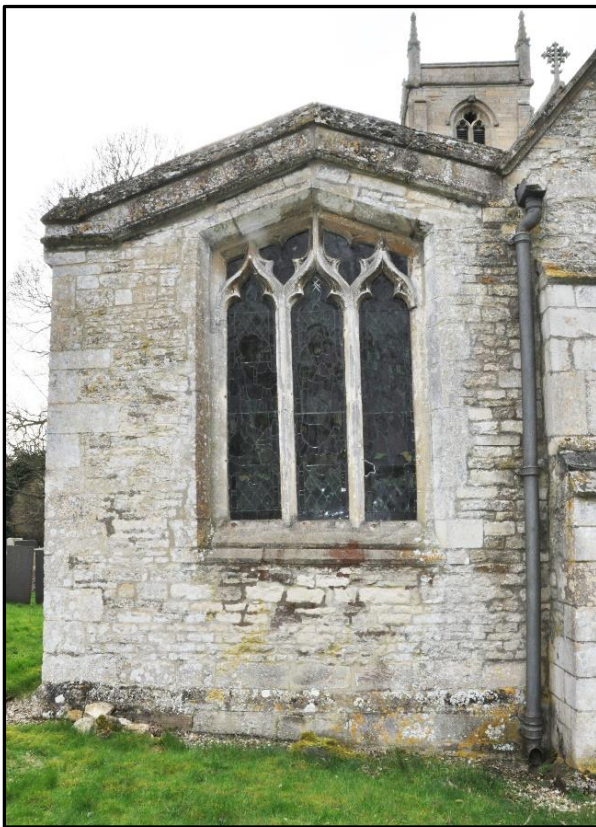
The churchyard has two access gates as shown above and entry is via the south door. It seems likely to me therefore that when the village population was, say 150, between the years 1225 and 1350, any overspill who were unable to get into the church would be likely to gather in the area shown. Hence the position of the Lowside Window for an observer to announce the elevation of the Host to the gathered masses.



Whilst on this topic you will note that the church is angled at about 74° rather than being classically aligned due east at 90° . We have met and discussed this previously (see the March 2017 issue of *The Botolphian*). Such an angulation might be due to the fact that the site was 'pegged out' in mid-April or mid-August when the sun would have been rising at 74° . Alternatively it might simply be due to the architect's choice - perhaps influenced by the contours of the land. We can see from the map above that the church is in alignment with the borders of the fields.



The contour lines however show that the church actually stands on a ridge - so it would have been just as easy to build it to face in any direction. The map throws up another interesting point and that is that the unusual oval shape of the roads at the centre of the village encircle a depression suggesting perhaps that, in days gone by, this was a wet area to be avoided if you did not want to get muddy feet.



This C14-C15 window is a later insertion into the Lady Chapel's C13 wall. This illustrates the problems that face those who 'voyage around Saint Botolph churches.' Many of the buildings have had new windows fitted into old walls and old windows fitted into new walls and this makes the dating very difficult. This window matches those of the north wall as we will shortly see. It

seems likely that they were all purchased together in C19 or at an earlier restoration.



It is somewhat of a relief to find that the east window of the chancel obeys the rules with its C13 Early-English style east window set into a C13 wall.



The deeper one looks into the dates of this church, the more confusion there seems to be. British Listed Buildings is unusually reticent about dating the walls - and the church's History Board is a little ambiguous in certain respects. We know that the south porch, the wall of the south aisle and the vestry all date from C19 and this can be seen quite clearly from the precise way in which the limestone ashlar is dressed. The east wall of the vestry should not be included in

this however because that is clearly not of the same recent vintage.

Following the line of the east wall of the vestry southwards we come to a two-stage buttress where the vestry wall joins that of the chancel.



Viewing this from the eastern aspect we see that the buttress once had a partner which has since become part of the vestry wall in which there is a C15 window.

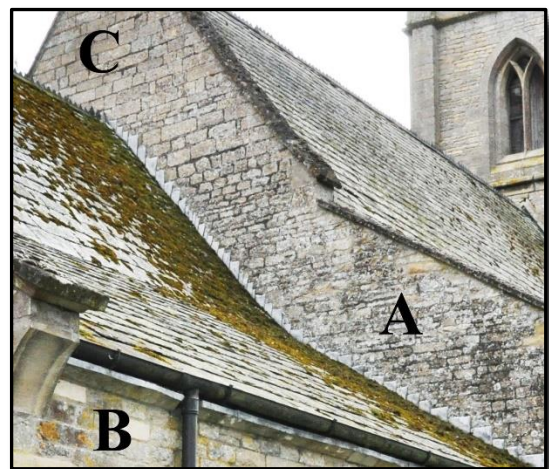
Whether the wall was part of a vestry or a side chapel, it must represent a C15 addition which was then further added to and modified in C19 when the new vestry was built.



The C19 vestry viewed from the north . . .



The limestone rubble construction of the east end of the north aisle (A) is clearly mediaeval - although whether it is C13 or C15 is not clear. Compare this though with the C19 vestry construction below it (B).



Further up the nave's eastern face (C) the other C19 work becomes apparent.

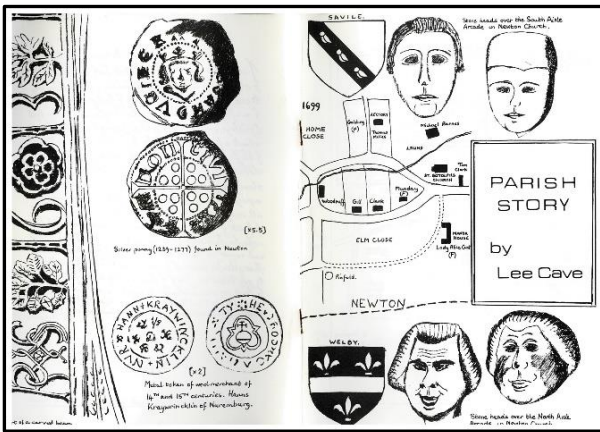


Coming back to earth, if we look at the north wall, this would also seem to be part of the C19 restoration. The two C14-C15 windows must either have been recycled from the old building or from elsewhere. They have a sister-window however and that is the one which we found at the east end of the Lady Chapel as mentioned earlier.



The 4-stage tower is a magnificent structure but only the first three stages date from C13. In the reign of Henry VII (1485-1509) Britain's prosperity increased, with wool still being the main source of wealth. As a result Newton church gained a clerestory and a fourth stage to its tower.

On page 17 for example we read:
'No doubt the Church was unpopular when it was demanding tithes and other payments that some could ill afford to give. Nor did its priests always behave as they should. In the Visitation of 1517 the rector of Newton, Michael Cotton, was reported as 'no longer having a woman in his house.' Presumably he had one on a previous occasion even though he was meant to be celibate. But the Church was an integral part of the villagers' lives in an age which was still riddled with superstition. It protected them in this life and promised them a better life in heaven. It offered them the chance to free their consciences of guilt through the medium of the confessional which was often only once a year on Shrove Tuesday - before the start of Lent. Its holy days were their only rest days from toil apart from Sundays and its feasts and its church-ales provided the only entertainment for most villagers. The images in the church, the paintings on the walls and the vestments worn by the priest might be their only glimpses of art and colour in the drab lives of the poorer people and the church building itself was the grandest building most of them would ever enter.'



The wonderful 80-page booklet shown above was published in 1987 by its author Lee Cave and is sold by the church to raise funds.

Lee particularly mentions the stone heads inside the church and we will come to those later but the stonemasons have also had a field day on the building's outer aspects.

It contains quite a lot of information about the building, some of which I have used, but perhaps even more importantly it contains a great deal about the culture of the times.



These heads are cheekily-placed high up on the top of the tower where none but the most privileged would be able to see them.



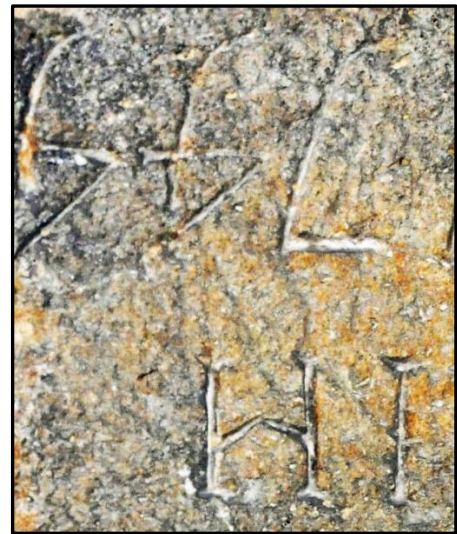
The gargoyles are really 'something else' (as they say) and sport both shoulders and arms.



There is no sign of a mass dial but on the east side there are some graffiti - seen magnified in the next picture.



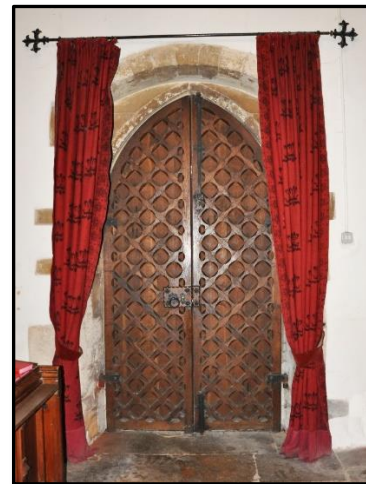
I was unable to photograph the south door in one shot.



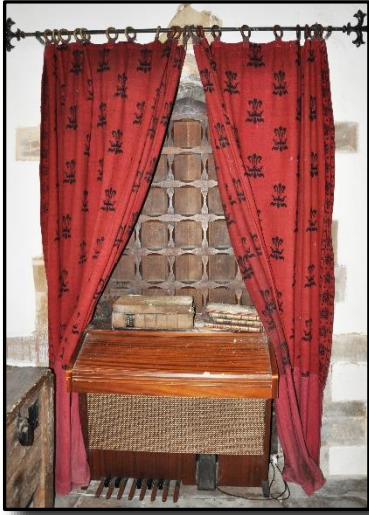
These writings are clearly ancient and might prove interesting - if one could only read them.



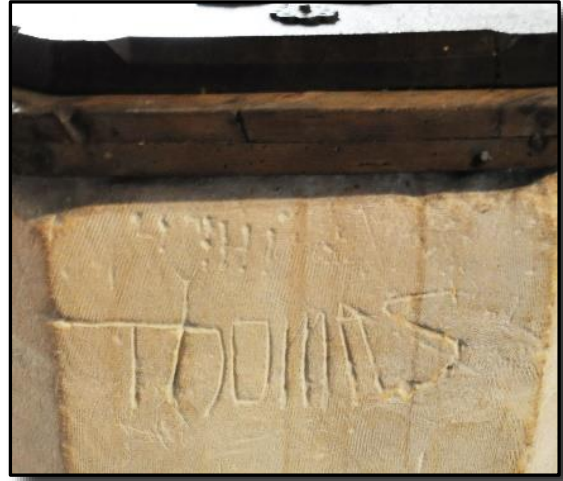
It is C13 and is described as having a *wave-moulded outer arch with engaged shafted reveals.*



This is the inside of the south door . . .



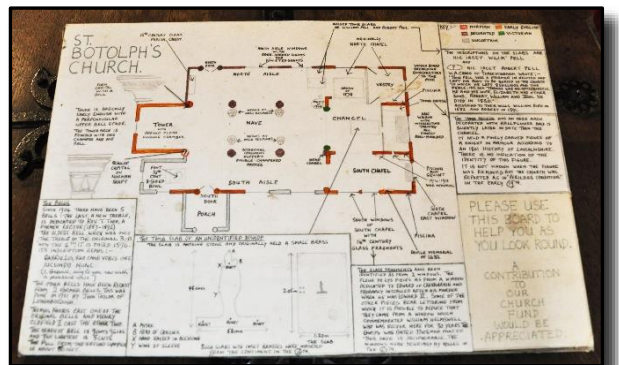
And this, on the opposite side of the nave, is the inside of the north door, just to the left of which lies the . . .



And someone by the name of 'Thomas' seems to have christened the font rather than the other way around.



. . . C13 Parish Chest. Not a particularly handsome one this time perhaps, but nevertheless Newton's own.



An information board is available for the visitor to carry around . . .



Returning to the south door, the octagonal font, which lies just to the left of visitors as they enter, dates from C14.



. . . and from this we read that right at the back of the church at the south east corner of the tower, stands a Norman column with a scalloped capital.

Halfway down the shaft there is a marking which seems to be a sign. I do not believe it is a consecration cross but I would be grateful for any ideas.



The C13 nave consists of three arcades. The columns are octagonal.



They have moulded and splayed capitals leading to double-chamfered arches. Above four of the arch responds, medieval stone heads look down on the congregation. This picture is of the north side of the nave, the south is similar.



Lee Cave writes: “*On the south arcade [Ed: the two lower pictures of the four] the two heads appear cool and rather elegantly restrained; they are clearly not the heads of village peasants but are more likely to be portraits of the lord of the manor and his lady. If this were the case, they would be portraits of a member of the Lovet family and his wife. The heads over the north arcade [the upper two pictures] are, by contrast, warmly bucolic and are obviously portraits of closely observed villagers of the time, or possibly workmates of the mason.*” One wonders how pleased or otherwise the subjects would have been with their likenesses.



Here, another head over-looks the hymn board. Sadly the features of some of these masks tend to look more flattened than others we have seen. I am not sure if that is due to the type of stone or the sculptor or whether they have been subjected to iconoclasm.



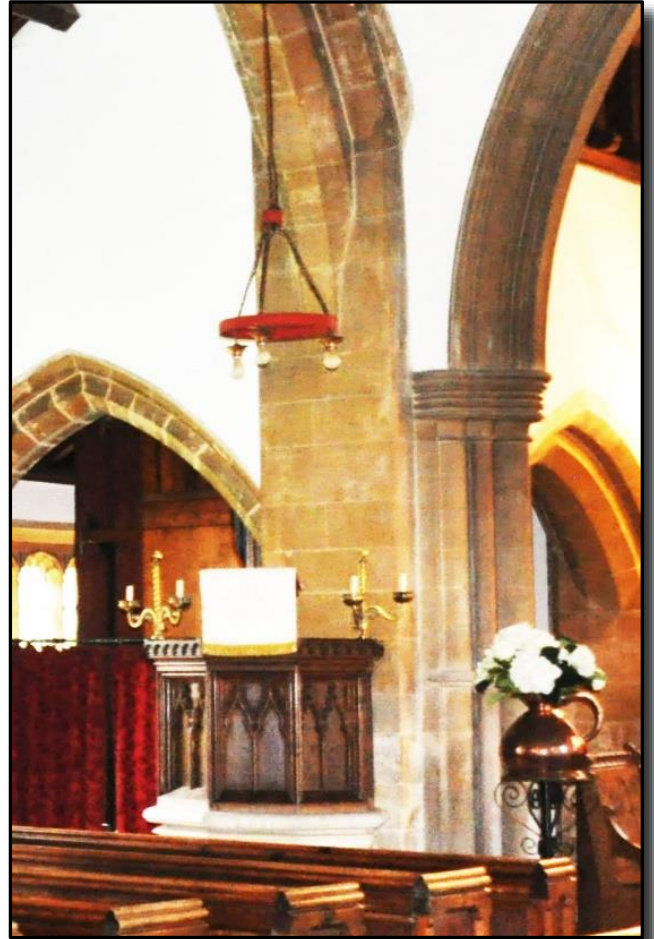
Looking south east showing the entrance to the Lady chapel.



Looking north east showing the north aisle with the organ at the east end.



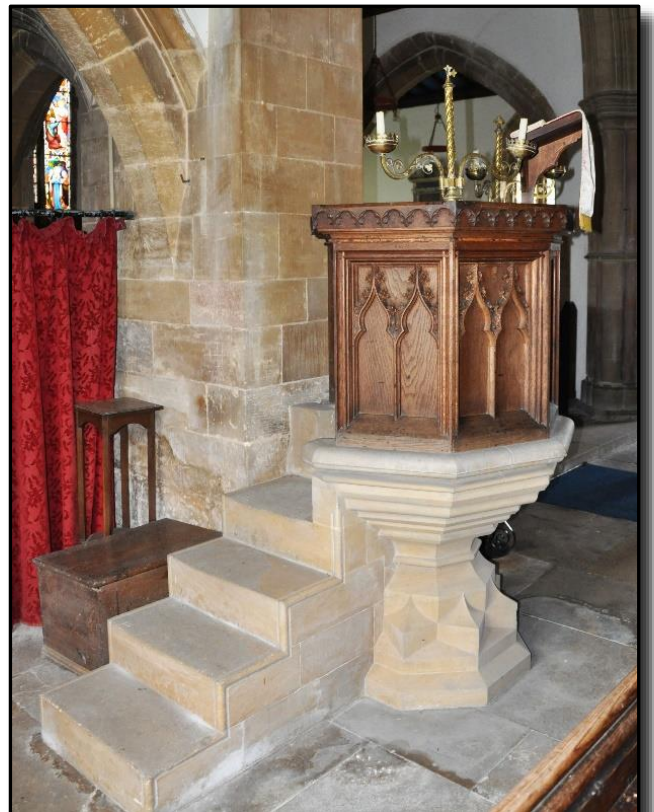
The steep pitch to the roof and the fact that its apex is so high above the apex of the chancel arch, is further evidence of the earlier presence of a clerestory.



Indeed, in this part of the church a great deal of work was done involving removal of the rood stairs and rood loft . . .



The columns of the chancel arch look too perfect to be true and this is because they, and the chancel arch itself, were replaced in the 1867 restoration.



. . . and installing a new pulpit in their position.



The Sanctuary with its magnificent 1867 reredos. You will note on the wall to the right of the altar a support for a long-since lost figurine.



I must admit to having a great affinity for alabaster and, whatever the sculptor had in mind for this piece of work, I think he must have achieved it admirably.



Christ in majesty.



Matthew and Mark.



Luke and John.



A C14 tomb recess in the northern wall of the sanctuary. This one is decorated with ball-flowers and topped by a floriated finial. It is thought that these recesses were often placed but not always filled. Lee Cave writes that in Marratt's History of Lincolnshire (published 1816) a stone effigy occupied the niche; he surmises that it might have been that of William Hemswell who was appointed rector of Newton in 1280 and who was the founder of the chancel.



In the south wall of the sanctuary stands this fine piscina which adjoins a squint in the neighbouring Lady Chapel. This ensured that, when two masses were taking place at the same time, the celebrant in the chapel did not make the ethical mistake of elevating the host before the priest did so in the chancel.



Tucked away behind the east wall panelling is this aumbry which in the past would have been used to store the reserved sacrament.



You might notice that the left-hand sacrarium (used for washing the chalice) has four flutes whereas the right-hand one (for washing the priest's fingers) has six - but this has no significance as far as I know. Double piscinae went out of fashion in 1275 so this one must pre-date that event. The columns and tracery are C19 but the dog-toothed triangular surround with its three heads is original. And here *are* the little chaps:



Has an attempt been made to disfigure them or did they always look like this?

We now move on round to the other side of the wall into the Lady Chapel as just seen through the squint.



On the south wall of the Lady Chapel is yet another piscina . . .



Here it is in the north wall . . .



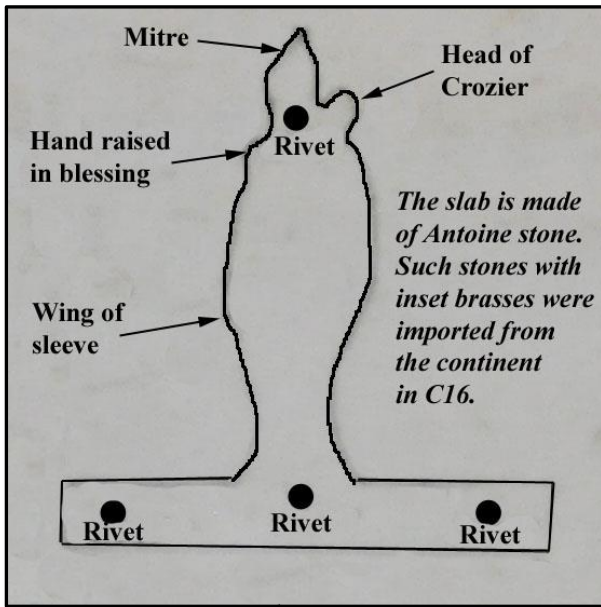
. . . which I am duty-bound to show you. A single one this time so post-1275.



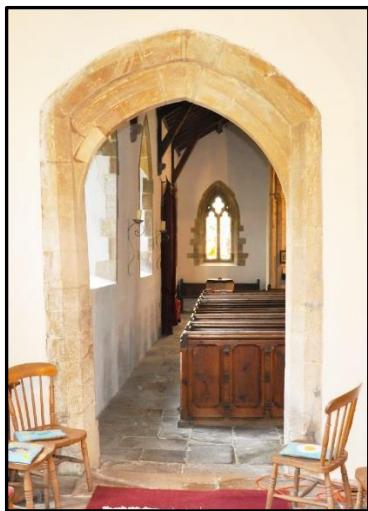
. . . and this is the view of the chancel it gives. What economical use of ecclesiastical paraphernalia!



Before leaving the chancel, local tradition decrees that visitors roll back the carpet and inspect the top of this tomb slab to which was once affixed a brass which would, no doubt, have served to identify the name of the bishop who lay beneath it.



This is the imprint on the slab that the brass has left behind. Sadly the brass itself was plundered by the forces of the Civil War in C17 and so the identity of the bishop is doomed to remain a mystery.



We leave the church by strolling up the south aisle from the Lady Chapel to the font and then back to the car, passing a tombstone guard of honour provided by the Lynn family . . .



. . . many of whom, it seemed, died sooner than they should have done - a sign no doubt of the hard times through which they lived.

Classification?

The evidence from the Domesday Record shows that the church was founded during the Saxon period. Could its founder have been Botolph himself in C7 or is it more likely that this church site was activated as a result of the post-Viking Christian revival?

I think that the answer to both questions is 'yes.' It could indeed have been founded by Botolph himself - but I think it is more likely that the foundations date from C10 and that it should be classified as B(ii) - a Travellers' Church founded between 800 and 1066.

Thanks

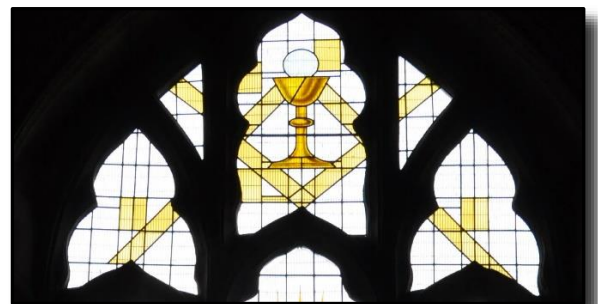
My grateful thanks to Judith Fin for opening the church for us and for showing us around and pointing out the church's salient points.

Correspondence from:

1. Duncan Hopkin of Folkestone who wrote on the following subjects:

(i) He wondered if a door ever filled the now-empty gateway of Helpston churchyard. Perhaps a knowledgeable Helpston local might read this and tell us the answer?

(ii) He agreed about the magnificence of the church's east window and wondered if the Masonic-style yellow square and lines in the upper part had any significance.



[Ed: As a result of Duncan's email I contacted one of our members who knows about these things. He kindly investigated further and concluded that there is *no* intentional Masonic link here].

2. Several members who ordered pre-launch copies of Botolph Volume III (see Editorial).

3. Dick and Daphne Pascoe in Folkestone, saying that they enjoyed the issue on Helpston church.

4. Jenny Seggar (priest-in-Charge of St Mary's church Bramford near Ipswich) - one of our newest members - who wrote:

I had a fascinating conversation with Mary Sokanovic [Ed: priest at St Botolph's church, Whitton] a few days ago about St Botolph and she has passed on your details. I have been a lifelong fan of St Botolph, as I was brought up in Burgh

(Suffolk), and attended St Botolph's for many years, oddly we then attended St Botolph's Whitton (Dad was the Self Supporting Curate there). I also know Iken well and have pilgrimaged there on a number of occasions! Recently though I have developed an interest in the female Anglo Saxon Saints attached to the Wufingas Royal Family, who of course had a huge connection to Botolph.

Welcome to Jenny and many thanks to Mary for passing on our contact details.

5. **Joanna Comer** from St Botolph's Lullingstone, just caught the last post (a few minutes before publication) when she wrote:

Dear Denis,

Im sure you'll be pleased to hear (if you don't already know) that St Botolph's Boston won the vote of Friends of the National Churches Trust and was awarded an extra £10,000 towards its repair project, which includes the lead belfry roof and the wooden platform at the top of the lantern tower. I'd like to think that Botolphians swung it!

Thank you for that Joanna - and well done Boston.

--o--

Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to botolph@virginmedia.com if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

REGULAR 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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