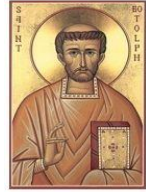




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

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



The Saint Botolph icon above is copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA and used by permission. All rights reserved.  
Admin: Denis Pepper, 17, Cliffe House, Radnor Cliff, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2TY. Tel: +44 (0)1303 221-777 [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com)  
President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

Issue Number: 70

1st February 2019

## Highlights this month

- **Church of St Botolph without Aldgate.**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following new members: Rosemary Hammick, Tina and Andrew Whibley (all from Aldgate); Gabrielle (from Germany).
- Correspondence from Matthew Harffy, Anne Pegg and Marion Peel.

## Editorial

I see that we have reached the number 70 in our editions of *The Botolphian* - the magic number that is always used when reflecting upon the number of churches dedicated to our saint. We still chunter on however in spite of having covered more than one church in some issues .

With new dedications continuing to be discovered it will be a year or so before we reach the final (contemporary) count.

--o--

I have been rather busy for the past month getting Volume III of the Botolph Trilogy ready for the printers so I am sorry if I missed replying to any correspondence. I am pleased to say that yesterday the PDFs finally winged their way to Wiltshire courtesy of the Internet and it is expected that

## *Botolph the Travelling Saint*

(the final choice in a selection of 58 titles!) will be published within the next two weeks.

--o--

I am at present engaged in researching the use of the form **Botwulf** as our saint's name. I am familiar with the fact that it has been suggested that his name derives from a combination of the prefix 'Bot' and the suffix 'Wulf' but this is only one of several theories that exist.

As far as I can make out the *Botwulf* form has never featured in any ancient manuscripts. The nearest I have found is **Botuulf** which occurs in the *Anonymous History of Abbot Ceolfrith*. where it is used only once.

The name is otherwise always written in early manuscripts as 'Botolph, Botulph, Botolf or Botulf' with or without Latinisation by the addition of '-us.' More recently the name has of course been corrupted in all sorts of ways but it is *early* manuscripts that I am looking at. I would be most grateful if anyone could point me in the direction of an example of the early use of this term.

--o--

The church featured this month is only 275 years old which is young by Botolphian standards. It therefore does not bear the exciting scars that can lead to hitherto unknown revelations about a previous life. All three extant London St Botolph Churches are vastly different to the medieval pattern that we are used to seeing, and they need to be viewed through different eyes.

They are important churches in important places and it is questionable whether they are dedicated to Saint Botolph because he was the patron saint of travellers or whether they were dedicated to Saint Botolph for some other reason and it was because they were situated at the major gates to the city of London that Saint Botolph gained his travelling accreditation.

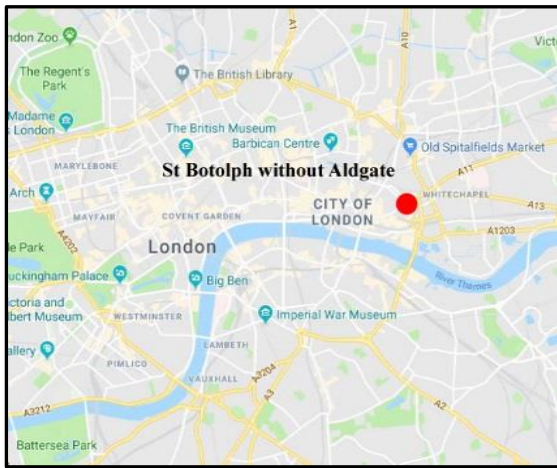
## Church Feature

# Aldgate, London

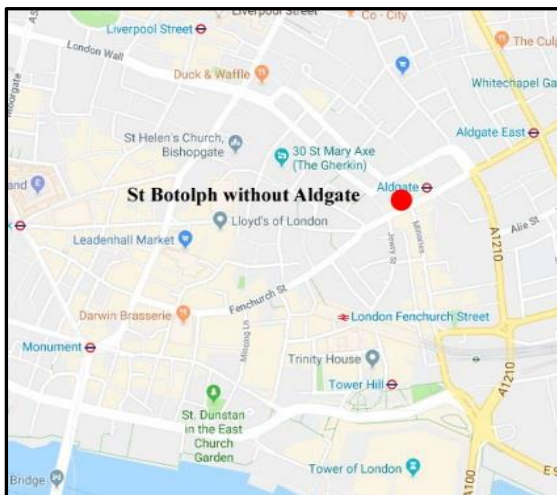
or perhaps more correctly:

## St Botolph without Aldgate

- note the lack of apostrophe and hyphens. Do not become complacent however since this pattern is not universally followed so there will be more brain-teasers on this topic when we feature the other two London 'without' churches. Even this 'more correct' name is a variable feast since in 1893 the parishes of this church and that of Holy Trinity Minories were united, at which point the word 'without' was dropped from the *parish* name . . . although it continues in the title of the *church*. Records show that for much of its life the dedication name was spelt 'Buttolph.'



The church lies at the south end of Houndsditch - once part of the town dyke running outside the city wall. It obtained its name from its filthy condition and the number of dead dogs that were cast into it.



**Approach:** *This is not for the faint-hearted unless you know London really well. I caught the train to King's Cross / St Pancras and cheated by using a taxi to get to the church - but it is quite a distance as evidenced by the fact that it cost me £10. Taking the Underground to Aldgate Tube Station would have been a sensible option. I returned to St Pancras by catching the 205 bus from just outside the altar end of the church . . .*



*. . . and this took me all the way back - using my free bus pass! I am sure that if I had been a bit more savvy I could have used the 205 for my journey there.*

**Location:** Aldgate High Street, London EC3N 1AB; Lat/Long: 51.51404, -0.07636; NGR: TQ335812.

**Key:** *The church is usually open.*

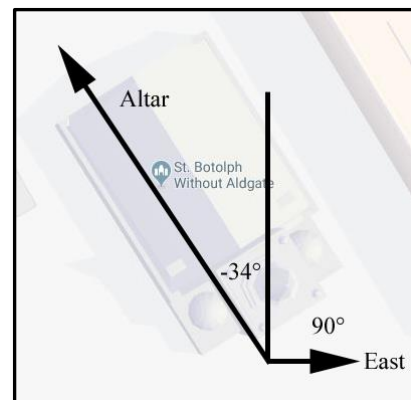
**Church Website** <https://www.stbotolphs.org.uk>

**Contacts:** Administrator: Colin Setchfield  
[admin@stbotolphs.org.uk](mailto:admin@stbotolphs.org.uk).

**Rector:** Revd Laura Jørgensen

**Church Services:** 10.30 a.m. Sundays. This is Sung Eucharist and lasts about 1 hour. On Tuesday & Thursday lunchtimes there is a Said Eucharist at 1.05 p.m.

**Listed Grade:** I

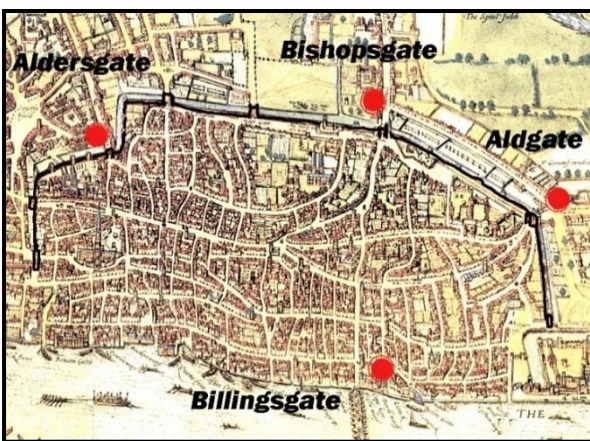


We need to start by getting our nomenclature correct since, like the title of Flanders and Swan's song about the Honeysuckle and the Bindweed this church is mis-aligned - no insult intended. As

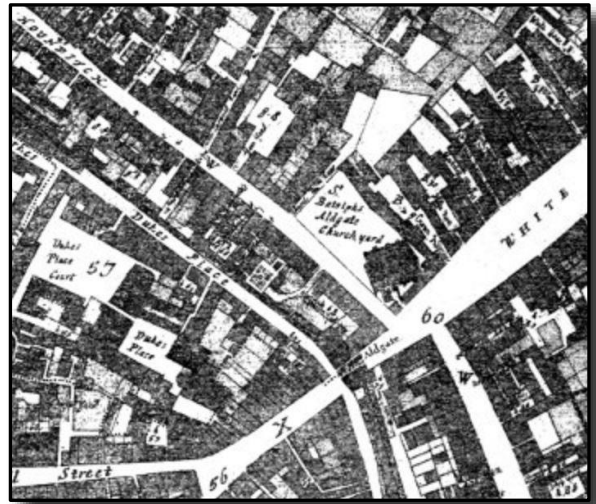
we have seen previously, most churches are aligned so that their altars are at the eastern end of the church. There is no direct requirement for this and in Aldgate's case the altar is interestingly at the northwest end i.e.  $124^\circ$  adrift from the normal alignment. Noting however that eminent people when writing about this church have continued to refer to the aisles etc as if the building was properly aligned to the east, I shall also follow this pattern using the word 'classic' to indicate that I am not referring to a compass alignment.



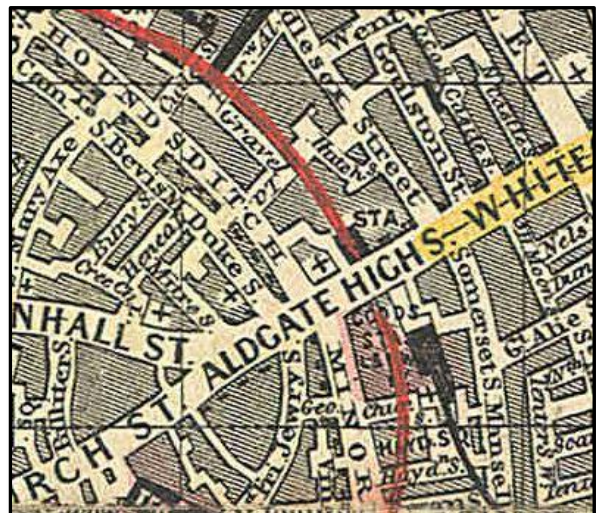
Thus we are here looking at what would classically be the north side.



One factor influencing the church's angulation is that the Roman walls of Londinium (the black line in the picture above) did not form a nicely shaped rectangle. Of the four Saint Botolph churches the other three could be aligned easily towards the east whereas at Aldgate the wall was running in a NW-SE direction.



This map of 1673 shows a picture of a church on the site but this is illustrative rather than indicating the building's angulation. Within 68 years of the map's date the church had fallen into disrepair and was pulled down. In 1744 indefatigable Botolphians under the guidance of the architect George Dance the Elder, built another church - aligned as we see it today. Being on a corner and size being important the logical and best access would be from a magnificent entrance at the southeast rather than tucked away in an alley to the north west. It seems however that 'magnificent' did not come into the equation since (as the church's guidebook tells me) it was referred to in its first 100 years as *a brick and stone structure of the utmost ugliness*. This was partly put right by restoration work carried out in 1875 but then in 1888 a more significant transformation was carried out by John Bentley the designer of Westminster Cathedral.



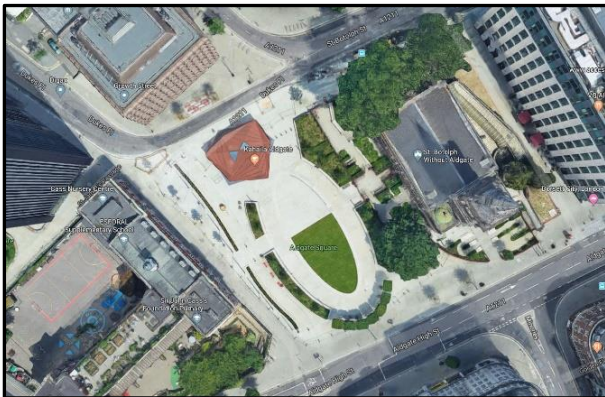
This map of 1882 shows the road changes that occurred leaving the church sitting on an island. It seems likely that it was this that led to its becoming known as *The Prostitutes' Church* since the Ladies of the Night could promenade around the island rather than remaining stationary and

risking the chance of arrest. It has for many years been a refuge for the homeless. In the days before members of the gay community were welcomed as readily as they are today, this Aldgate church took a lead in offering them hospitality.

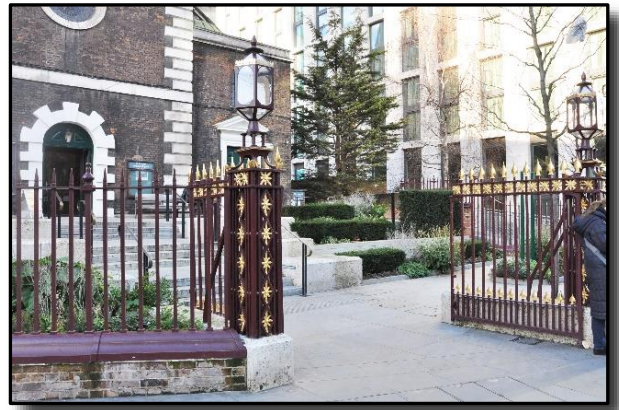


The Reverend Laura Jorgensen has been rector here since 2009 and she is proud of the inclusivity that is still afforded by the church. This was exemplified by the fact that, in spite of her heavy schedule and my arrival without notice, she kindly even took the time to talk to me.

She asked if I liked their new ‘village green.’ When I last visited Aldgate in 2013 the church was on a busy street corner and seemed somewhat cramped and inaccessible.



Since then the town planners have made some valiant and courageous changes. Google’s satellite view shows the wonderful community space that these changes have created in what is now known as Aldgate Square. Suddenly the church is showing its best aspect to the public.



Laura also asked me how I liked the new gates. Being a great admirer of artistic ironwork I had spotted these as soon as I arrived and I thought they were delightful. They are not in fact new but have been refurbished. When Laura was asked how much gilding she wanted she had replied “As much as possible” and the results certainly justified that answer.

The lanterns *are* new but based on designs taken from some old drawings. The railings are painted in reddish-purple which I rather liked but Laura said it had created some controversy because people seem to expect railings to be black in spite of the fact that the fashion for this colour only dates from Prince Albert’s death when railings were painted black as a mark of respect.



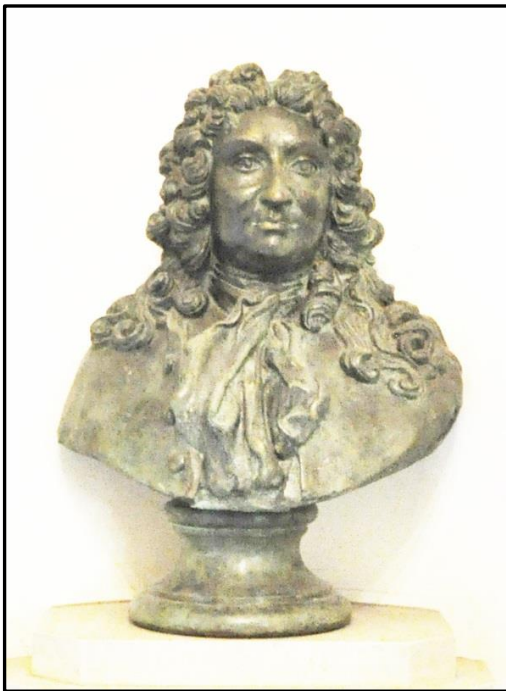
Quite properly - but unusually - the first thing to greet the visitor is the marble font. What one might see as the vestibule is in fact the baptistry. I could find no clue as to the age of the font but I guess it is C19.



Spectacularly sitting on the wall on the right hand side as you enter the baptistry is this memorial to Robert Dow (1522-1612), a Merchant Tailor.



The latest version of his school now resides on the opposite side of Aldgate Square. Although somewhat dwarfed by its massive neighbours it looks quite comfortable here.



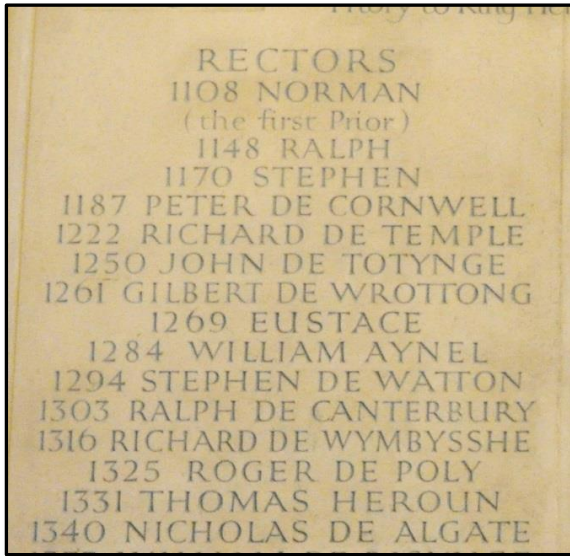
Further along in a monumental alcove is this bust of Sir John Cass (1661-1718) who used rented buildings in the adjacent churchyard to found a school.

LONDINIUM	— The Romans build a gate here at the east of their city
1115	— First written records of a church on this site, but thought to predate 1066
1489	— A new church replaces the Saxon building
1683	— Daniel Defoe marries in St Botolph's
1704	— Renatus Harris builds an organ which is still in use today
1710	— Sir John Cass founds a school in the churchyard
1739	— The church is unsafe and is demolished
1744	— St Botolph's is rebuilt in its current form by George Dance the Elder
1888	— J F Bentley, Architect of Westminster Cathedral, draws up plans to redesign the galleries, install pews and add ranks of plaster angels to the ceiling
1966	— St Botolph's is rehallowed in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother following a fire in 1965
TODAY	— The people St Botolph's continue, as did the generations before, to worship God and serve the community

The Timeline just inside the front door tells us that it is thought that the first church on the site might have been **Saxon**.

There is no clue as to whether it was *early* Saxon (i.e. during Botolph's lifetime) or *late* (perhaps part of the late C10/early C11 revival). After this

there were two separate rebuildings - the first in 1489 and then in 1744.



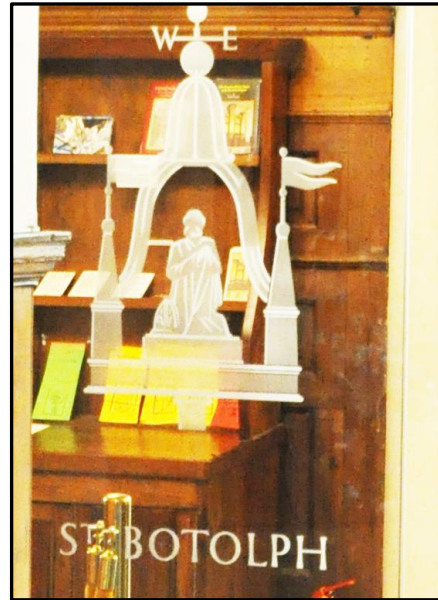
Here we see the first part of the list of rectors.

FREE LUNCHTIME RECITALS	
9 January	Angela Lau – Piano
16 January	Stelios Kyriakidis – Guitar
23 January	Duo Seula – Clarinet & Piano
30 January	Bloomsbury Quartet
13 February	Sarah McKenna – Violin
20 February	Irena Kosikova – Organ
27 February	Manu Brazo – Saxophone Prajna Indrawati – Piano
13 March	Natalie Smith – Piano
20 March	Mateusz Rettner – Piano

Also in the baptistry is this invitation which demonstrates that the church is constantly being put to good use and drawing people in at every available opportunity.



Behind the font stands the Paschal Candle and above the doorway is a tympanum relating the struggles faced by the church over the years.



On the left hand glass door there is an engraving which is easy to miss if you are as keen as I was to get into the church. It shows St Botolph at prayer on the lantern tower of the 1489 church. On the right hand door is inscribed: *Pray for all who travel by land, air or water.*

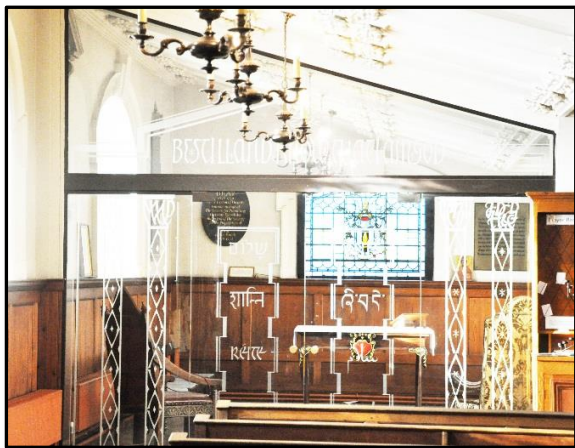


As we turn to the left just inside the door we find this magnificent cartouche which used to be in the

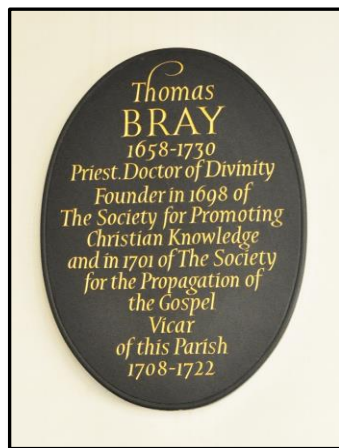
gallery attached to the organ. It records the fact that Thomas Whiting gifted an organ in 1676 for the benefit of the 'hole' parish. This is but one of the plethora of wonderful monuments that this church possesses but sadly there is only room in these pages to mention a few.



This is a view of the classic north aisle looking down towards the Peace Chapel - the work of David Peace and Sally Scott.



On the glass doors and in the capitals of the pilasters (rectangular columns built into the wall) the word 'peace' is written in eleven languages including Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Irish and Tibetan.



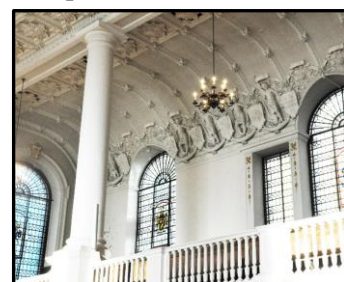
Inside the classic east wall of the chapel is this humble memorial to a great man. The bishop of London sent Thomas Bray out to the USA to investigate the religious conditions there. Finding in Maryland (on the east coast south of New York) young impoverished clergy who were hampered in their preaching and learning due to their inability to afford books, he solved the problem by founding in 1698 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK).



A view from the nave looking across to the Peace Chapel in the classic northeast corner reveals the presence of a gallery with an ornate ceiling.



This is a view of the opposite side of the church which also shows the wooden hexagonal pulpit with its inlaid panels.



The gallery ceilings are heavily sculptured with heraldic shields supported by 24 winged figures.



One of the shields on the classic south side (not shown here) is that of Geoffrey Chaucer who resided above the Aldgate gate from 1374 to 1386 in his capacity as customs official. Also amongst the shields are those of Westminster Abbey, the Deanery of Ely and Thorney Abbey - on the basis that Saint Botolph's relics were translated to each of these sites in C10.

special privileges; it was eventually overtaken by the word 'Liberty.'

The other sign informs us that 'Church Watchers are here.'



And it is due to these kind people that the church is able to be kept open for visitors such as you and me. On the day I visited I was given a warm welcome by Rosemary (on the left) and Tina - and also by the Parish Administrator Colin Setchfield who kindly printed out for me a draught of the new Guide to St Botolph's Church Aldgate from which I have drawn heavily for this feature.



At the front door of the church there are two signs. One tells us that we are in *Portsoken Ward*. The Aldgate Ward finishes inside the city gates but Portsoken is the area immediately without. *Soken* is a Saxon word denoting immunity or



In this view of the classic northeast corner of the chancel there are glimpses of two particular features.





The first is a Processional Cross which was made in 2007 to commemorate the confusion and shattering of lives caused by the 2005 Aldgate Tube Bombing in which seven people died and when the church was used as a triage centre for victims. As the church guide tells us: *Blurred images of commuters reminiscent of the mobile phone shots that recorded the aftermath are photographically etched into a stainless steel cross on a blackened oak shaft.*



On the wall just to the left of the cross is an unusual icon of Saint Botolph. It is one of eight different paintings of our saint which I know to be in existence. All of them date from recent times and I would dearly like to know the date on which this one was painted and the identity of the iconographer.

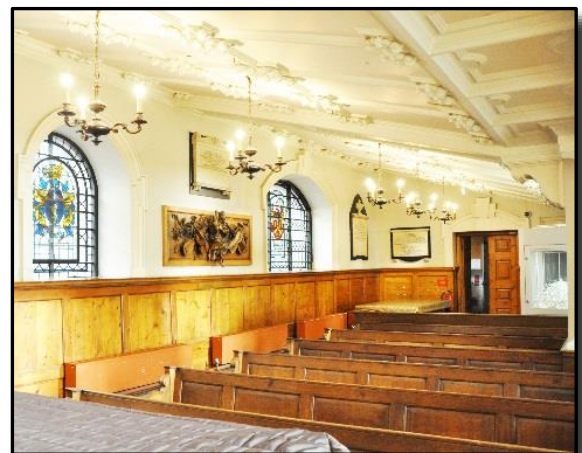


In the gallery above the entrance stands this marvellous set of organ pipes. It is generally

accepted that these represent the oldest English collection of pipes in their original positions on their original wind chests. Sadly it does not seem to be the same organ that was referred to on the 1676 cartouche seen earlier but is a replacement built c.1705 by Renuart Harris. Since then it has been dismantled and remantled several times and in 2005 was restored as far as was possible to its original 1744 condition.



This is not something you might come across every day. What can it be? It is a Ceremonial Sword Rest from C19 when it was constructed to store the upright sword of the Lord Mayor when he visited the church. The wooden cups at the base are where the tips of the swords would be placed.



A view of the classic south aisle showing a magnificent wooden panel.



This depicts King David and was rescued from the gallery in St Mary's Church, Whitechapel after it was gutted by fire bombs in December 1940.



Reverting to the chancel, the central panel of the window portrays a copy of Ruben's *Descent from the Cross*. The window was designed by Charles Clutterbuck and donated in 1857 but was damaged by the blast of the 1992 Baltic Exchange IRA bombing which blew a large hole in the centre of it. Poor St Botolph's Aldgate does often seem to find itself in the thick of it: 1940 Blitz; 1965 Fire; 1992 IRA bomb; 2005 Tube bombing. Not to mention of course Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel murders. But in all these storms the church itself has frequently been called upon to serve the community and has readily offered itself as a haven of peace.



In the same aisle but looking in the opposite direction we see, at the end, the Sacristy which is not generally accessible to the public.

In August 1965 the church was severely damaged in this area when a fire broke out in suspicious circumstances.



Below the window is a painting of the Tree of Life with the Holy City in the background. This was created by Thetis Blacker in 1982 using the batik technique of wax-resist dyeing. At the base of the tree the River of Life flows in all directions from its roots offering everyone the chance to drink. Each of the side panels depicts an angel guarding the Gate.

Immediately above and in front of the tree a small ceramic pyx in the form of a dove is suspended by a wire which is operated from the sacristy.



The dove contains the reserved sacrament (communion bread that has already been consecrated and is ready for use in an emergency). The church guide tells us that the use of a dove-pyx 'was first suggested in 1977 and mimics an Eastern custom dating back at least to the sixth century.'



As we leave the church and turn to our right we pass this elegant drinking fountain erected in honour of Frederic Mocatta 'in recognition of a benevolent life.'



Walking across the new 'village green' to the Sir John Cass school we are treated to a view of one of Sir John Cass's boys.

**Classification.**

Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate (also known as Christchurch Aldgate) was a priory of Austin Canons founded in c. 1106 by Queen Matilda - the wife of Henry I. The priory's first monks were relocated from St Botolph's Priory in Colchester so it is thought that this might have been the reason behind the choice of dedication for the church.

This ties in quite nicely with dates and indicates that nine years after the monks' arrival a decision was perhaps made to build a church that the local population could use.

This would mitigate against Aldgate having a Saxon predecessor although it does not totally eliminate the possibility. New churches were often built on sites which had previously been used for worship - even Pagan worship.

The priory was dissolved in 1532 and the buildings were sold - no doubt bringing *more* money to Henry VIII's coffers.

A foundation of 1115 would pre-date the Hanseatic League which did not really get going until at least 1150 so it would not have been the Hansa that brought Botolph to London although it might have been the presence of a St Botolph Church at Aldgate that alerted the Hansa once

again to his name when they settled into their Steelyard premises on the waterfront near today's Cannon Street Station. In fact they would have been fairly surrounded by Botolph's since St Botolph's, Billingsgate would have been even closer.

I will reserve judgement on this one since more research is necessary to see how the four London churches interact. The Billingsgate church was a casualty of the Great Fire of London. Historical records tell us that some of Botolph's relics were brought to London and lodged in a church - so this also has to be taken into account.

For the moment I will go along with the 1115 church being the first on this site. I believe it might have had a function connected with the collection of tolls and taxes. I would suggest a B(iii) classification.

### Thanks

My grateful thanks to Colin Setchfield for all his help and to Laura Jørgensen for her hospitality.

### Correspondence

1. **Matthew Harffy** contacted me wondering if the surname Biddulph had any connection to Botolph.

I replied that I thought this was likely in just the same way that our eminent member Peter Buttle's name seems also connected. This is another matter that needs research. Why might a family acquire the name of a saint - unless perhaps they come from a village (such as Botolphs in Sussex) where a man might easily be known as John of Botolphs?

2. **The Scandinavian Connections** that I discussed last month created a lot of interest and I received correspondence on this subject from Patricia Croxton-Smith, Michael Knights, Father Pachomius, Heather Flack and Rose Doherty. All this correspondence was very interesting and most welcome. I have just noticed that I did not answer one of Rose's questions - I must get on with that!

3. **Marion Peel** wrote to ask what details there were of the trip to Iken that was proposed for Monday 17th June. All has gone a bit quiet on that subject. I will contact the relevant people shortly. Sadly it is in the sailing season so I shall be unable to attend but will be delighted if others 'carry the SOSB banner' to Iken.

4. **Anne Pegg** (whose book *Barton Seagrave Village, Church and People* I have just read and enjoyed - copies are available at £12 including p&p from Anne at 5 Southfield Drive, Barton Seagrave, NN15 5YQ) . . . Anne wrote to give us the exciting news that their church intends to hold a 900th anniversary celebration in 2020. What a triumph. Anne is always available to take people

around her church during the summer months. Telephone her on 01536 671-891.

### 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.

### Copyright

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