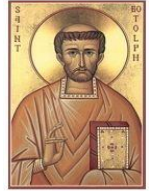




The Botolphian

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: 74

1st July 2019

Highlights this month

- **St Botolph's Church, Hadstock, Essex.**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Revd Dr John Rawlinson (from Stow Longa) as a new member.
- Correspondence from Duncan Hopkin, Marcia Barton, Peter Van Demark, Ann Pegg and our President FT.
- Congratulations to our President, Father Tim L'Estrange who has just celebrated 30 years since his ordination.
- The date of the Society's annual luncheon at the Hilton Cambridge City Centre Hotel is **Wednesday 23rd October 2019 at 12.30 for 1 p.m.** on the hotel's first floor in our usual venue - now called Section 3 of the Bull and Bass restaurant. I have not received the prices yet but it is likely to be about £30 a head. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are likely to be joining us so that I can pencil in your name with a view to your confirming later.

Editorial

I had an exciting present this year when, on Saint Botolph's Day itself, I received an email from Richard Meredith, the secretary of **Huntingdon and Godmanchester** Civic Society saying:

I don't know whether you were aware that there was a church of St Botolph in Huntingdon from before the Norman Conquest which was last seen as a ruin in 1533 by John Leland. It was located near the river, on a small hill on the site of a Roman building. In later years the site was used as windmill.

So the list of St Botolph Churches keeps increasing and I am sure that there are many more yet to find. I sent my effusive thanks to Richard and look forward to finding out more about the Huntingdon site in due course.

I was also pleased to hear of other successful happenings during the St Botolph Festive Season:

Hadstock (featured below) - a village of only 350 or so inhabitants, raised a record £6,400 from their St Botolph's Fair. The proceeds will go towards supporting the church and the village hall.

A large group from St Botolph's Church, **Stow Longa** made a pilgrimage visit to the St Botolph's churches at Iken, Culpho and Whitton. Their leader Christine tells me she will be sending a report shortly. This is an activity very much to be encouraged so I hope others will be inspired to follow Stow Longa's lead. If you need help with the Saint Botolph sites near your location please do not hesitate to contact me.

Church Feature

Hadstock, Essex.

Approach: *If coming from A11, take the A1307 to Linton and turn right onto the B1052. After passing the King's Head Pub on your right do not turn up Walden Road but drive straight over and find the narrow lane (see dotted red line on map below) and proceed to the church car park.*

Key: *The church is open daily but in case of difficulties ask anyone in the village for Robin Betser (who is the Churchwarden and lives close by).*

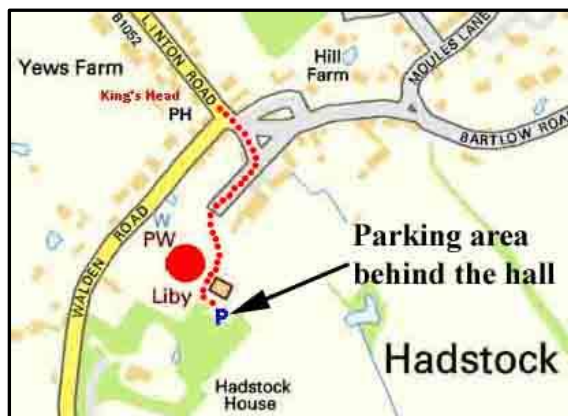
Location: *Church Path, Hadstock, Saffron Walden, CB81 4NX. 52.0792, 0.2732*
Tel: 01799 500-947

Rector: *Revd Paula Griffiths*

Church Services:

Holy Communion every third and fourth Sunday at 9.30 a.m. for 1 hour..

Listed Grade: I



St Botolph's church Hadstock was the first church to be featured in *The Botolphian* and 'I were nowt but a lad' when it was published on 1st April 2013 (an appropriate date you might think). At that stage I was very much 'feeling my way' and since then I have written 73 similar features and I now feel that I know where I am going. I have looked back many times at the early articles and have promised myself and quite a few other people that I will have a second attempt and try to do better justice to those churches of *The Botolphian*'s early days.

I have, in a way, already started this because the four London churches were originally very briefly covered in one issue and so I have been putting that right over the past few months by giving each an issue of their own.

Hadstock however, is the first of the proper re-writes. There are still quite a few more 'as-yet-unfeatured churches' to cover but many of these

are not extant so as they might prove to be less interesting to readers I propose to intersperse them with the re-writes in an attempt to retain your attention.



Whenever I write about a church I find great variety in the amount of information available - it is an example of the feast or famine syndrome. In Hadstock's case it is 'feast' as many scholars have shown an interest in the church. The fact that Hadstock has, it is said, always been a *small* village and yet possesses such a *large* church has fuelled controversy and speculation as to why that might be.

My usual starting point is the Domesday Book and this, somewhat perversely, records the village as being 'quite *large*' with 27 households of which there were 12 villagers, 13 smallholders and 2 slaves. The lord and tenant-in-chief in 1086 was St Etheldreda's abbey in Ely. It makes no mention of the presence of any church and, since there is no doubt that Hadstock had had a church for a century before Domesday was written, this serves to prove the point that the Domesday Book cannot be relied upon to accurately record churches. It has been suggested that the reason for this was that churches did not represent any source of tax for the king. I am not at all convinced by this theory.

In regard to the village's name, we know that in 1008 King Aethelred granted two hides at *Cadenho* (now identified as Hadstock) to Ely monastery. In 1016 at the Battle of Assandun the Saxons, led by Edmund Ironside, were defeated by Cnut. For many years it was thought that the battle was fought at Ashingdon, 36 miles to the southeast of Hadstock, but the tide has

turned more recently in favour of the battleground having been at Ashdon (only 2.5 miles to the southeast). We know that 'Ho' refers to a spit of land and it has been suggested that 'Cadent' referred to 'the fallen' at the battle. History records that in 1020 Cnut built a minster church to commemorate those who died at Assandun. Again there has been discussion as to whether this minster church was at Ashdon or Hadstock. The balance has swung towards Hadstock on the basis of the church's imposing and exceptional structure. As a commemorative the village would have become a 'holy place' and the suffix 'stoc' often refers to such sites. It would not be surprising therefore if over the years 'Cadenstoc' became corrupted to Hadstock.



The lower right quadrant of the village sign refers to a nearby disused airport which was in operation in World War II. It was at first known as RAF Hadstock but was officially renamed RAF Little Walden.



Hadstock church might be described as being very chunky and a mix of different styles.



The hummock on which it stands is aligned east-west but access to the church is uphill from the north. The first thing one might notice is that the entrance porch sits clumsily against the north transept on its left. On its right, after an almost blank wall of unattractive clunch there is a massive buttress which does nothing to improve appearances.

But we are looking at a particularly *ancient* building here and although good appearances might be desirable they are not essential so I think we must forgive its eccentricities and accord it the respect that it deserves - for, as you might guess from the small round-topped windows high up under the eaves, this is a *late Saxon* church.



These C11 windows are set inside the wall so that they have a splay both inside and outside. There were originally six of them but only four remain intact.



The two-stage tower is a late addition and did not join the family until C15. The oddly-angled buttress on the left of the picture between the tower and the north wall suggests that it was engaged in supporting the walls of the nave before the tower was built.



Early in its life the cruciform building was served by a central tower which, like many others, collapsed in the high middle ages. The forward-leaning northern transept you see here is part of the original building which dates from the second quarter of C11.



It is thought that, before the tower was built, the main entrance to the church might have been through the west door which was then recycled as the west door of the new tower. The picture shows the ground sloping to the left and, as we will see later, the original floor of the church sloped *inside* in the same way. The west late-Decorated style window is contemporary with the remainder of the structure.



Ancient graffiti-carvers have had a field day working on the west doorway.



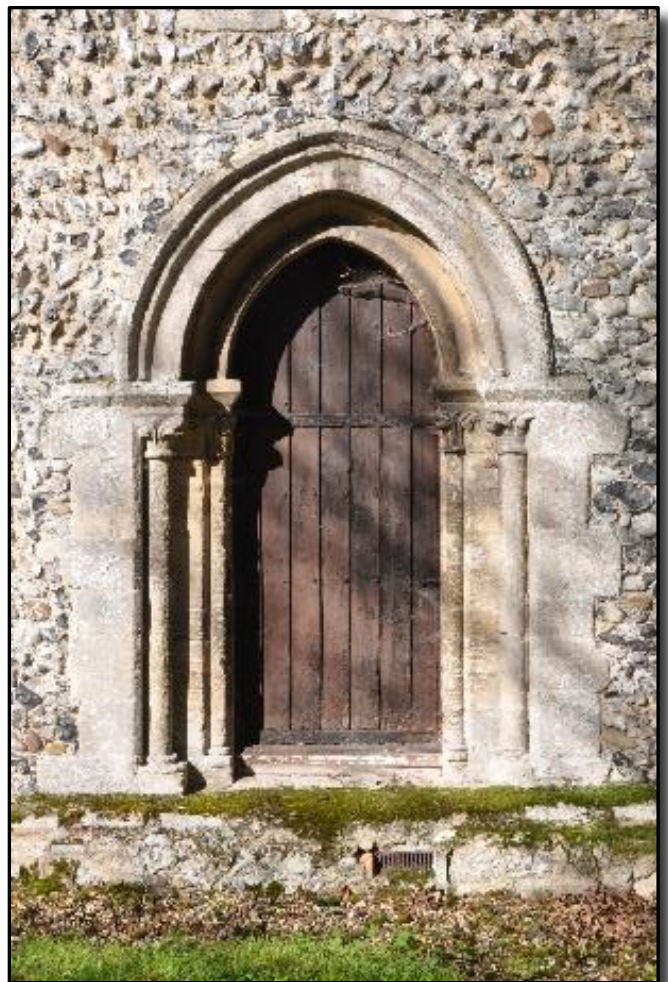
The patterns created by the ironstone are pleasing to the eye and this south wall is one of which the church can be proud.



Moving round to the south side we see two more late Saxon windows, a C15 replacement window and a C13 south doorway.



The striations and herring-bone work of this wall are an indication that it was built in several phases.



The south doorway has now been sealed. I could see no sign of any Mass Dial carvings which is an indication that parishioners would habitually approach the opposite side of the church.



This is the south transept which, although it was part of the church's original design, has been rebuilt.



The south window of the south transept.



Many photographs have been taken of this photogenic gable cross, carved in C13 or C14 out of one piece of high quality stone from the Barnack quarry (we have come across this quarry several times previously).



We turn the corner into the shadow of the yew tree. In front of us here is the south wall of the vestry.



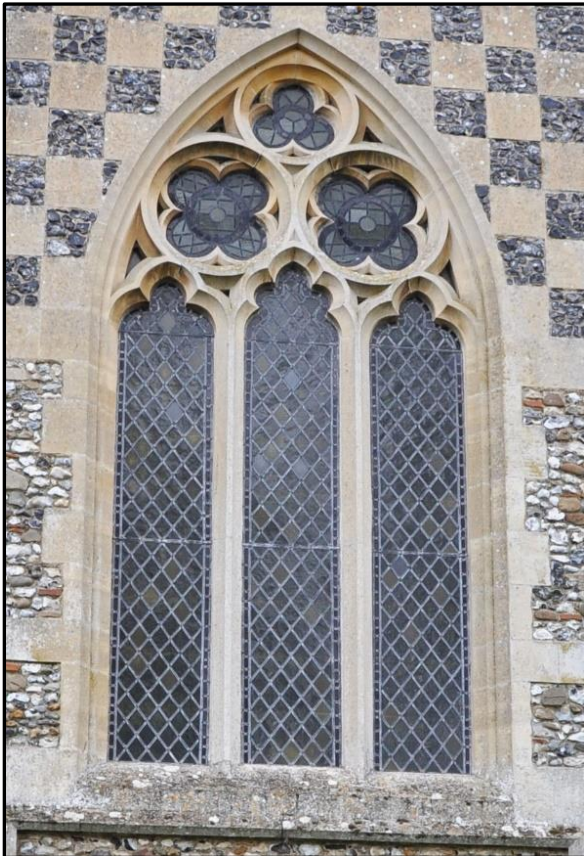
This picture of the church's southeast corner shows the vestry with its chimney abutting the C19 chancel. This was built to the design of William Butterfield (1814 - 1900) in 1884. The chimney is said to be typical of Butterfield's uncompromising practicality.



North side of the C19 chancel.



Rubble-built east wall of the north transept with replacement window. There are suggestions that this wall was breached at different stages by a doorway and an apse.



C19 east window in Gothic Decorated style. Note also in the chancel walls, the flint-decorated chequer work which the architect has matched to the C15 base of the tower.



And the north wall of the same transept. This also once had a doorway here before the porch was built. Note the large quoins on the northeast wall.



These represent classical 'long-and-short work' found in late Saxon stone buildings.



And now at last we can enter this wonderful church through the C15 porch.



And the rather attractive but immensely tall north window of the same transept.



When one first sets eyes on the massively-built main doorway and its door it is immediately clear that one is looking at something special. The door, it is to be noted, is set in line with the inner wall of the church rather than resting centrally on a rebate. This is typical of doorway construction of the immediate post-conquest period.

And it was thought for many years that this door had a gruesome history. Legend had it that a Dane desecrated the church and for his sins he was killed and his skin removed and nailed to the door as a warning to others.

Sadly for us (but not for the Dane), when a small amount of the so-called human skin was removed from under the metal of one of the hinges and sent off for analysis it was found to be cowhide. Many such old doors were apparently covered with leather and painted red. This must have looked quite spectacular.

The wood of the door itself has been dendrochronologically tested and found to date from between 1034 and 1042. This makes it the country's oldest wooden door still in use.



If we look closely at the wood, pock marks are visible.



The heavy capitals have palmette or honeysuckle motifs carved into them. To the right of the

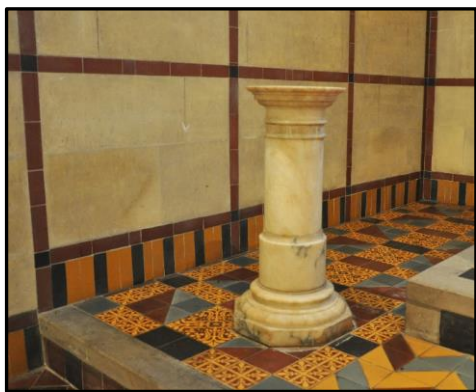
doorway can be seen the remains of a stoup where a bowl of consecrated water would be kept for the use of parishioners entering and leaving the church.



Inside the building similar heavy columns are found supporting the chancel arch. This is pointed arch indicating its later date. Note the chancel's barrel-vaulted ceiling and the rather special C14 or C15 (opinions seem to differ) lectern.



... which is made of oak and has cable moulding.



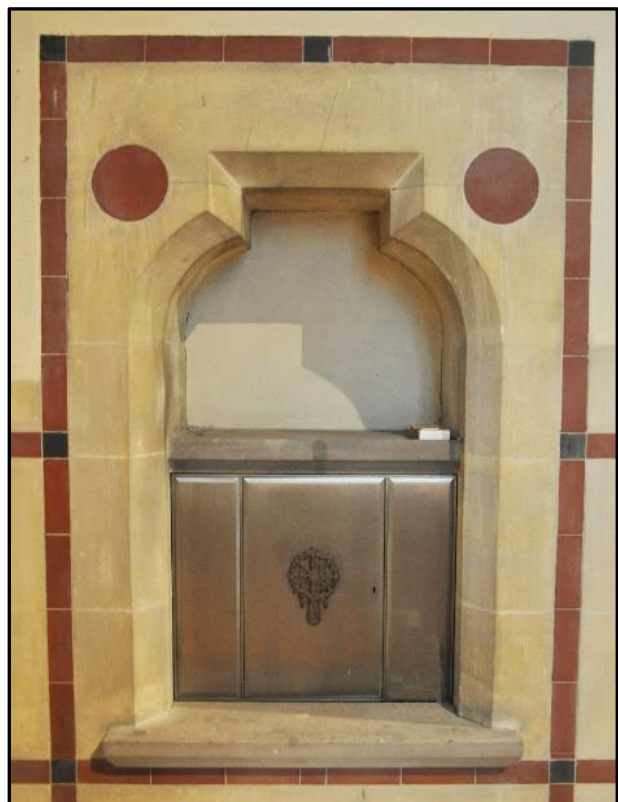
The chancel is bathed in a golden glow from the work of William Butterfield. To the left of the altar stands this column - perhaps for the paschal candle?



To the right of the altar is the Mothers' Union banner and to the right of that a piscina which is now being used as an aumbry.



The Mothers' Union banner.



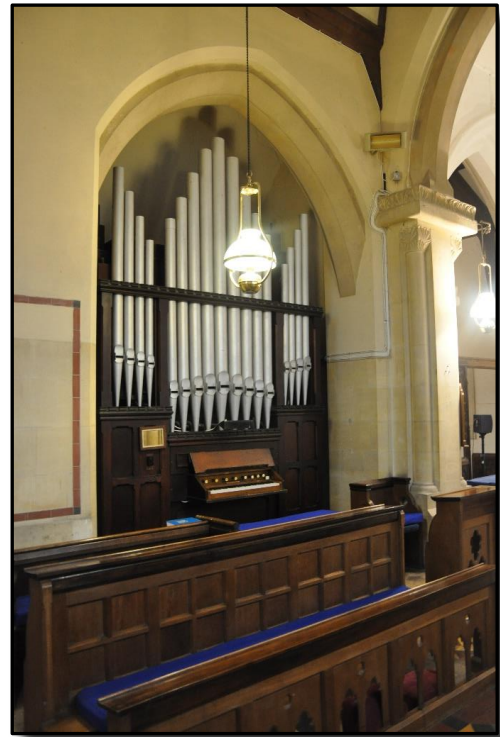
The C19 piscina.



And to the right of that, just before we reach the altar rails, is a double sedilia.



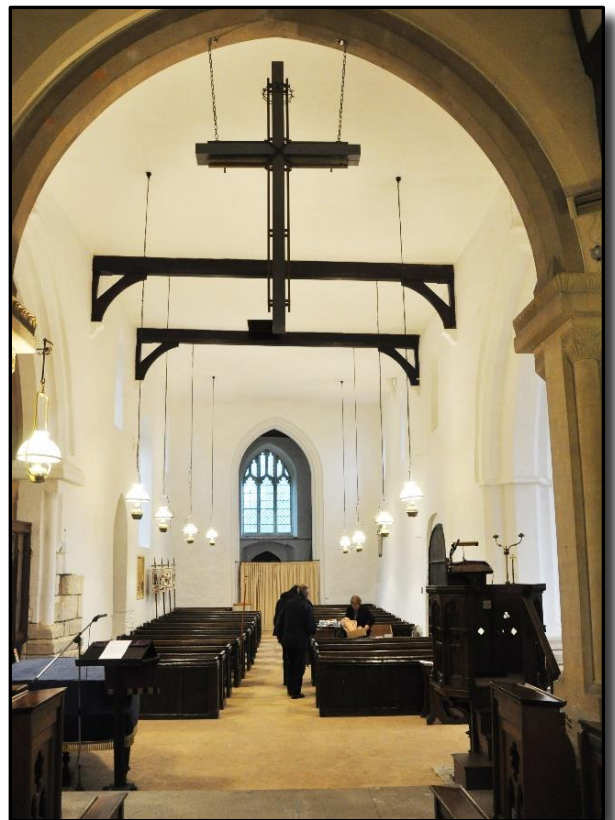
This doorway is the second of three that give access to the vestry. We saw the first doorway outside.



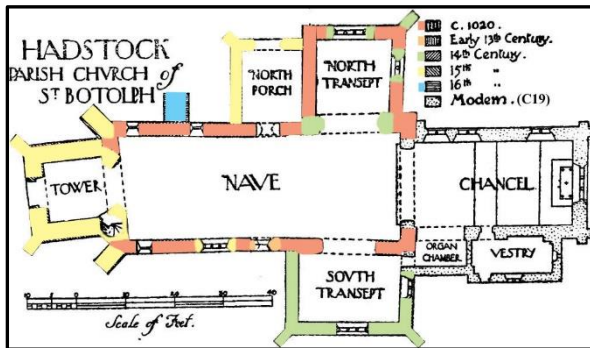
The organ dates from C19.



This picture and its caption tells the story of a Victorian Altar Frontal and Falls which are prized possessions of the church and were used regularly until the 1990s. They were made from the ivory figured silk wedding dress of Sarah, the second wife of the then rector Revd Francis Smith, worn when they married in 1891.



The Rood hangs from the chancel arch as we here view the nave from the altar. The pews date from early C16. Moving forward takes us under the crossing where once, above us, there would have stood a central tower. This is where the dating gets complicated hence the following picture . . .



... where the structure in pastel red is dated c. 1020, C14 is in green, C15 is in yellow and the little splash of blue denotes C16.



Turning to our left takes us through the doorway of a wooden screen and into the C14 south transept



... but before we do that we must look at one of Hadstock's prized artefacts - a carving on an ancient theme on one of the panels of the screen. It consists of a be-habited fox (is he dressed as a monk or as a priest?) preaching from the pulpit to some geese. And in case, like me, you find the cunning fox difficult to pick out ...



... here is a close-up which I hope will help you to find the little chap. Some interpret the picture as the fox eating one of the geese so that all that is left is its neck, head and beak - but I am not too sure that he really has it in his mouth at all as I find the carving can be looked at in two ways. What do you think?



The chapel in the south transept and door giving a third access to the vestry.



Piscina topped with an ogee arch dating from late C14 and found in the south wall of the south transept.



The sealed south door dates from c. 1210 and is set rather too high in the wall to be of practical use today. Until C19 all the previous floors of this church sloped in accordance with the angle of the ground on which the church was built but in c.1875 'a great levelling operation was undertaken' - hence the discrepancy between this door and the floor.



Looking obliquely to the southwest part of the nave we find the sealed up south door that we saw from outside. We also see two of the six original high Saxon windows with their wide splays. At the far western end of the picture the font is just visible.



To the left of the large south window the wall has been left denuded to reveal the remains of part of a fresco.



Lower down there is similar denudation but this is protected by a perspex panel to discourage prying fingers . . .



... and then these other wonders of more modern art. They are not, as one might think at first glance, copies of the Bayeux Tapestry but Hadstock's very own answer to it:

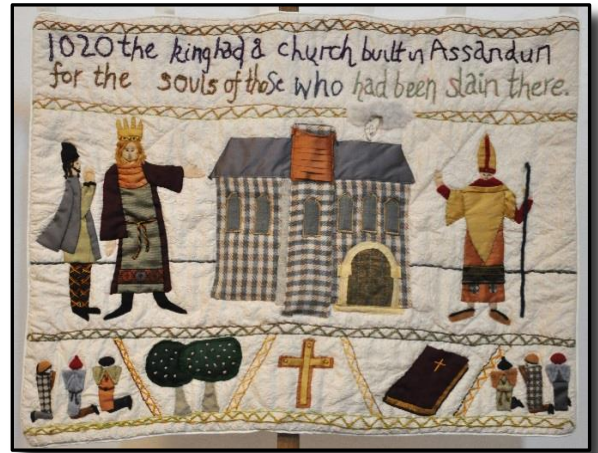
1016 came Cnut with 160 ships destroying and burning in Mercia. King Edward overtook at ASSANDUN.



Cnut was victorious and won all England. The kings met and made a compact of friendship.



King Edmund passed away in 1017. Cnut succeeded to the whole realm of England.



1020 the king had a church built in Assandun for the souls of those who had been slain there.

We shall discuss Assandun later but suffice it to say for the moment that one of its two possible locations is a small village which lies 2.5 miles southeast of Hadstock.



The large square-based font bowl dates from C14 but it is thought that the pedestal on which it stands might be Saxon.



The bell tower has an internal turret stair in the southeast angle and this gives access to the second storey. I saw no signs of any bellropes to ring

the five bells that the *Inventory of Historical Monuments of Essex* reported in 1916. This same instrument mentioned an iron-bound chest of uncertain date



On our left is the ancient entrance door, set, as we said earlier, in line with the inner wall of the nave and then in front of us is what remains of the crossing (one would normally expect to find four arches here to support the original central tower but only the chancel arch and the two transept arches remain).



An inside view of the entrance door which looks as if it has been there forever but it actually started life ten yards to the west of this - although there

are no signs of its original position now as the inside has been plastered and painted and the outside is masked by the massive buttress.



The pulpit (I could find no information about the date of this but I suspect it is Victorian) stands near the entrance of the north transept.



As we turn to our left into the north transept we might be puzzled by these marks on the stones at the base of the archway. They represent the last remaining signs of a wooden screen which mirrored the one with the fox at the entrance to the south transept.



The first sight that greets us is the two flags - on the left the flag of St George of England and on the right, the flag of Denmark which celebrates the link established in 1970 between Hadstock and the St Budolfi Cathedral in Aalborg.



On the transept's west wall is a royal coat of arms which is thought to date to the reign of George I (1714-1727).

Discussion

This is undoubtedly an amazing church and one which has created a lot of exciting controversy. It has vied with Iken as being the site of St Botolph's Abbey of Icanho. The foundations of this argument are principally based on a reference in the C12 chronicle *Liber Eliensis* to Hadstock as "that place which was consecrated to religion long ago by the Holy Botolph there at rest."

Hadstock's claim was further enhanced by the discovery of a shallow empty grave in a most prestigious position close to the altar in the south transept. The suggestion was made that this

might have been the shrine of St Botolph.

Preliminary investigations of the foundations of the church suggested that it was built on the site of an older wooden church which had been destroyed by fire. In the subsequent more conclusive investigations carried out by Warwick Rodwell in 1974 when the whole of the nave floor was removed and renewed, he found no evidence of this but did find that, during constructions, an underground furnace had been built within the church for use as a bell foundry. He writes in his report "The extent of the reddening of the ground around the furnace indicated the great heat of the fire." It seems likely that this was the source of earlier conclusions being drawn concerning a burnt-out wooden predecessor. Rodwell does concede however that *the first church at Hadstock was a transeptal stone-built structure of which the only upstanding parts to survive are the lowest courses of the north porticus and the north and south walls of the nave . . . Dating . . . is difficult - it is certainly well back in the Saxon period and there is nothing to bar a 7th century date.*

In spite of my Hadstock friend Patricia Croxton-Smith's enthusiasm, I have long been sceptical about St Botolph's personal involvement with this church site. It is clear from the above reports however that the dates of the foundation are not a limiting factor.

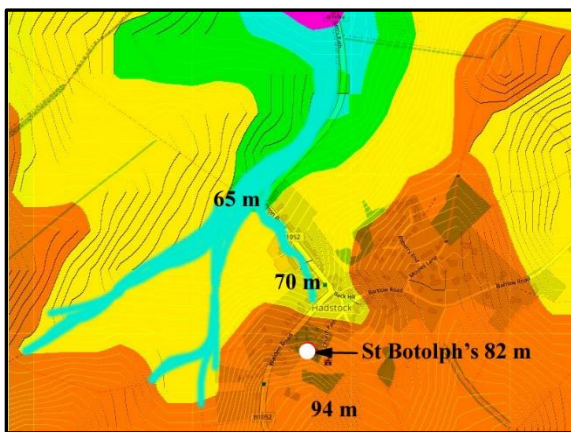
I have recently concluded that all history of the Early Medieval period (and earlier) is speculative - it is just that the high-powered pure history scholar's speculation runs at a different level to that of the writer of Historical Fiction. Sadly one cannot even say that the truth lies somewhere between the two.

If the speculation about Hadstock being the site of Icanho is to be accepted and if the coffin found in the south transept was that of Saint Botolph, then it raises at least two questions about the current story of his life:

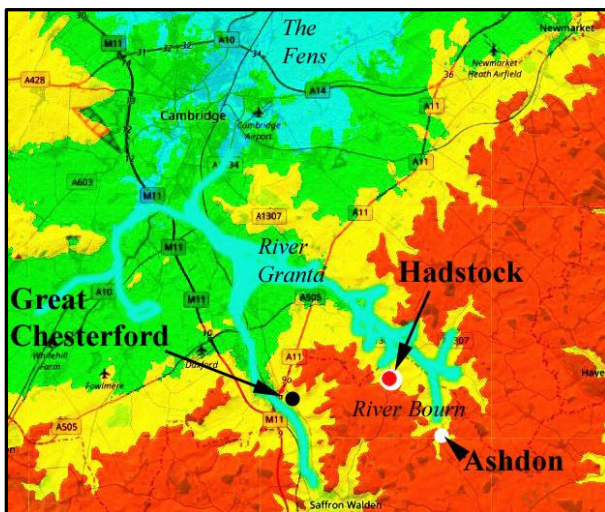
1. Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester (c. 904-984) is credited with exhuming Adulph and Botolph's remains from Icanho in c. 970. They are said to have been stored subsequently at Grundisburgh in Suffolk (41 miles east of Hadstock) for 50 years before they were divided into three and enshrined in Aethelwold's new or refounded abbeys of Thorney, Ely and Westminster. **If Hadstock was Icanho, the bodies would have been exhumed from the old church so, at this period when shrines were all the rage, Cnut, in 1020, would have found that the precious**

relics had been removed 50 years previously leaving him with no resident saint upon which to base his foundation. One would have thought in these circumstances that if the remains were still at Grundisburgh the all-powerful Cnut might have contrived to retrieve them and return them to Hadstock. If so, the 'bag of bones' by then would have required only a tiny reliquary.

2. If, on the other hand, the story is true about it proving impossible (during the exhumation) to separate Botolph's remains from those of his brother - and if the south transept coffin dated from C7 - it would have to have been very large to accommodate both bodies.



When I first looked at Hadstock church I was rather puzzled by its being so far away (over a mile) from the nearest useful waterway - the River Granta to the north. Also it was not 'close to the bottom of an escarpment' in relation to that river and so, in short it did not seem to satisfy the credentials of the positioning of most early Botolph Churches.



Having studied the area more closely I see that it is more likely that the church's most useful

waterway is likely to have been to the west. Both the above contour maps contain conjectural details but they indicate that in C7 a tributary of the Granta would have run to the south alongside the village and have been only 400 yards away from the church. Although small it is likely to have been of sufficient size and depth to provide for transport as well as offering a water supply.

Frustratingly I had prepared an overlay for the above map showing the presence of the nearest Roman road (only 2.7 miles to the southwest) and the ancient Icknield way (half a mile to the northwest) but I managed to delete it so, as I am now running short of time, I am afraid that these words will have to suffice! [The Daily Telegraph never admits to such issues].

Classification:

Like Fiona Bruce on the Antiques Road Show, it is now decision time - and this is a far more inexact science than the one with which Fiona has to contend:

I would suggest that the church comes into the **B(ii)** category (a site founded between 800 and 1066). This would normally have made it a Travellers' Church and it might well have become so subsequently but clearly it is very special. I am fairly convinced that it was Cnut's commemorative foundation and that as such it would have played an important part in his benevolence towards other minsters.

I am still resistant to believing it to be the site of Icanho however.

Correspondence:

1. **Duncan Hopkin** from Folkestone, whom many of you will have met at the Society's luncheons, wrote in response to the feature about St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate to say:

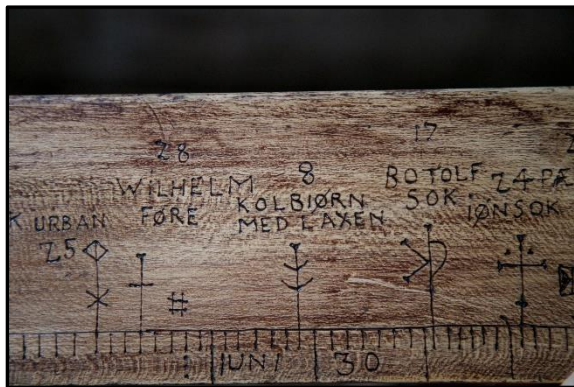
I was working in the City when the IRA bombings took place and walked through some of the devastation in the Bishopsgate area a day or two later – in fact it was difficult to avoid it as I my job involved working with other companies in the general area. The damage was appalling and it made me wonder how it could ever be rebuilt. But London, and the City are very resilient . . .

Duncan is facing the prospect of major surgery on 29th July so our best wishes will be with him then.

2. **Marcia Barton** wrote from Chevening pointing out that their church is not next to Chequers (as I mistakenly said) but next to Chevening House. Although the church has not been on TV featuring Mrs May it has featured as one of the locations of Vanity Fair which was televised last year. Thank you Marcia.

3. **Peter Van Demark** from Boston USA sent me this picture of a stave Kalendar featuring Saint

Botolph. The stave is in the Kristiansand Museum in Norway.



4. **Anne Pegg** wrote from Barton Seagrave saying that next year St Botolph's Day will be celebrated there as part of their 900th anniversary festival.

5. **Our President, Father Tim**, wrote on 17th June that *St Botolph's Day mass was offered at North Acton parish church this morning at 7.15am, with special intercession for the Society of St Botolph and its members around the world.*

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's 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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