



The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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1st November 2019

Highlights this month

- **Church of St Botolph's, Botolphs, West Sussex.**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following new members: June Kennard, Rachel Reed and Stuart Stevens from Botolphs, West Sussex. Tessa Ivory, Bev Parsons, Paddy Yule and our Mayor, Jackie Meade - all from Folkestone.
- Correspondence from Anne Dickinson, Father Pachomius, Janet Havers, Revd Paula Griffiths and Jean Gibran.

Editorial

I am delighted to say that the Society's luncheon at the Cambridge City Centre Hilton Hotel went very well again this year. We had 26 members present which I considered very good since there were quite a few staunch attenders who, for one reason or another, were unable to attend this year.

Roy Tricker entertained us admirably on his 'return visit by popular request' and none of us were disappointed with his light-hearted look at *Tales of Eccentric Clergy*. Once again the hotel looked after us very well.

Our President brought his daughter 5-year-old Catherine with him once again and true to form she was a good as gold and a delight to have as a guest.

The next luncheon will be held on **Wednesday 21st October 2020**. At least this will be the date if the Hilton is to be our venue. I have however received a tentative offer that might lead to us eating at one of the colleges. I am looking at this at the moment and will let you know as soon as possible if there is likely to be a change of date. For the moment please put 21st October in your diaries.



Church Feature

Botolphs, West Sussex



Approach: *Coming eastwards from Worthing on the A27, turn left at the traffic lights and follow Coombes Road which runs parallel to the River Adur. The road passes the imposing façade of Lancing College on your left and then at Coombes itself you will see another Saxon church (which is worth returning to after visiting your main objective). You will find St. Botolph's church just a little further on your right. The church lies on the South Downs Way and is often visited by walkers.*

Key: *St. Botolph's is open most days but if you are coming a long way and want to be certain of access then it might be a good idea to telephone or email the Rector first.*

Location: 50.8705, -0.3051, NGR: TQ193092,

Listed Grade: Grade I.

Rector: Revd Emma Graeme. Tel:01903 810-265. 3bsrector@gmail.com.



The village which bears our saint's name (it is 'Botolphs' without an apostrophe) is home to one of the three southernmost Saint Botolph churches.



On this map please note the positions of both the church and the bridge and also the green lines marking the South Downs way as it crosses the bridge (which points straight at the church).



If you are approaching from the south then you reach the car park (which is also the access to the cemetery) before you reach the church itself. If you take my advice you will park here and walk to the church via the cemetery.



The alternative is to use the front gate which, as it is rarely called into service, needs careful manipulation.



From the cemetery, the entry to the churchyard is through what I would have called a 'swing-gate' but it is in fact a modern 'Tapsel' gate. Tapsel gates are peculiar to Sussex and take their name from a family of bell-founders one of whom invented them in late C18. Their function is to keep grazing cattle out of the churchyard while allowing coffins easy access in either direction. I have never seen one in use but it is clear that the gate is swung to 90 degrees and the pall bearers pass either side while the coffin slides neatly over the gate's top. This one dates from 2004 when it was consecrated by the Bishop of Horsham.

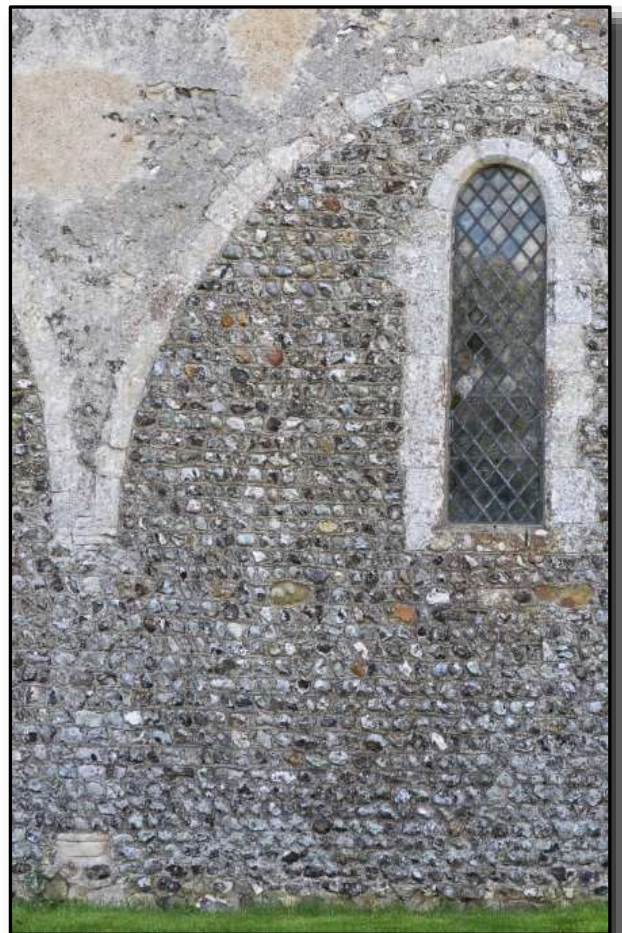


As I entered the churchyard one tiny grave caught my eye and with some sadness I paid my respects to

John
The infant son of
ILA & THOMAS C. McILROY
Born Aug. 10th 1922
Died Aug. 11th 1923



Compared with the general structure of the building the nave is very long and thin, and this picture of the church's unusual three filled-in arches is iconic to the little village of Botolphs. The arches give evidence of the existence of a north aisle which was added to the original church in c.1250 when the church was in its heyday. By C17 the aisle had become ruinous and was finally demolished at the beginning of C18 by which time the village's population had become severely depleted and only a small church was required.



Flint walls were constructed to fill the archways and recycled C14 round-topped lancet windows were used to provide light. The base of one of the arcade columns is still visible in the picture above.



The loss of the aisle leaves the church looking rather lean and hungry. The single stage tower and its buttress, also date from c.1250 when the ill-fated north aisle was built. If the structure really is that old - and has never been rebuilt - then it has stood the test of time remarkably well.



Contemporary with the building of the tower in 1250 previous writers have surmised that an existing semi-circular Saxon apse was removed and a new chancel built. This is not, however, the chancel that we see today because within the next one hundred years it was rebuilt again. The interim chancel would have had a lowside window (LSW) at its western end - perhaps just on one side or maybe on both.



These LSWs or 'squints' were only used between 1230 and 1350 after which most were blocked up. Various suggestions have been made regarding the use to which they were put - early theories had them being used to give communion to lepers but this is now generally discounted as the openings are generally too narrow to be used to administer communion. They are generally positioned in such a way that makes it clear that their function was to allow a person outside to see in and the sight path is directed towards the centre of the west end of the chancel rather than towards the high altar.

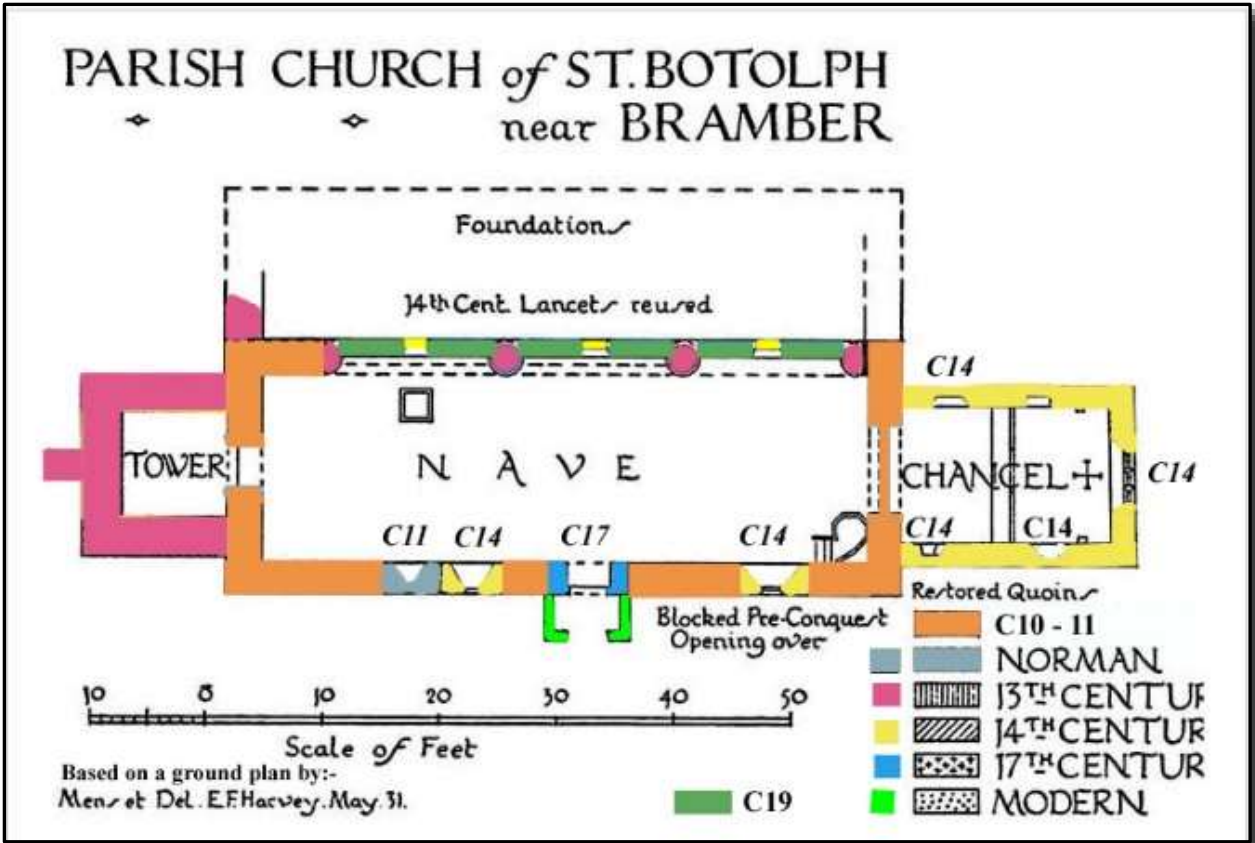
At my first sight of the filled cracks in this south wall I thought 'Oh dear, this c.1350 chancel has over the years suffered from some settling of the ground.'



Looking at the north side in the region of the boarded up window there is another crack / join in a similar place.

We know that in the 1300s it was customary for chancels to be extended and I think that this is what happened here. The chancel was not simply rebuilt in C14 - it was more than doubled in length..

It is impossible to tell if the two small west windows were once much lower and functioned as LSWs before being raised to their present position during the C14 building work but it seems likely.



The ground plan shows most of the basic structure of the nave as being pre-conquest. This of course could mean anything from C7 to C10. There could well have been a church here in C7 but if so it would almost certainly have been made of wood. It is likely that the date of c.950 which has been proposed for this stone church is accurate.



The quoins used as corner stones are quite massive and records tell us that many of them have been repositioned.



None of them are laid in the 'long and short' configuration favoured by early Saxons.



The east window is recorded as being C14 but although it is Gothic Decorated in style it does not show the wear or fineness that I would expect from that period.



... we can see the difference in style between the two western windows - and we also see an uneven area to the left which gives the impression that there might once have been another window there - perhaps a sister to that on the right of the picture.



I am not sure what these foundations are but I guess that they are modern?



As we enter the C19 porch we face a C17 doorway



As we make our way along the south wall of the nave towards the modern porch ...



... containing a C17 studded wooden door



. . . the date of which is clearly marked as 1630 under the initials EC and IS separated by a craftsman's dividers.



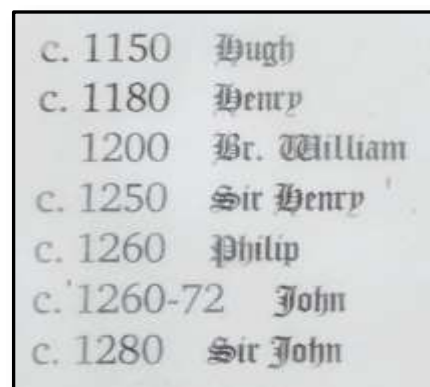
Once inside the church it is, appropriately, the C18 font which is the first object to greet us. Fonts are not always the easiest things to date. It is often a case of 'the less embellished they are the older they are,' but clearly not in this case.



The door has been constructed from two layers of planks - the ones on the outside being set vertically and those on the inside being horizontal. The studs are not just for decoration. Each would have been made individually by the local blacksmith, and driven through a pre-bored hole before being clinched on the inside.



I am always pleased to see a list of Parish Priests in an old church.



Here we see the installation of Hugh as Chaplain in c.1150. The Domesday record tells us that this place, then referred to as *Haningedune* (or Annington - which name now refers to the hamlet just up the road) was, in 1086 (64 years before Hugh), 'very large' with 49 households and one

church. The lord in 1066 had been Northmann of Mereworth and the overlord had been King Edward. By 1086 William of Braose had become both the lord and tenant-in-chief.

William de Braose, 1st Lord of Bramber, fought alongside William the Conqueror and was duly rewarded with extensive lands in Sussex, Dorset, Surrey, Berkshire and Wiltshire. He came originally from Briouze in Normandy - about 40 miles from the coast - but particularly favoured the Abbey of Saint Florent in Saumur - a town on the Loire between Nantes and Tours and about 140 miles further south than Briouze. He built the castle at Bramber and endowed a priory at nearby Sele which he gave to Saint Florent Abbey. He took up residence in the castle and constructed a bridge where he demanded tolls from vessels sailing further up the River Adur to Steyning which, sadly for him, was owned by the monks of the abbey of Fécamp in Normandy. The monks felt aggrieved by this and took their case to Duke William and, to cut a long but quite amusing story short, the result was a win for the monks and Braose had to curtail his activities.

The advowson (the right to select the rector) was held by Sele Priory until C15 when it was transferred to Magdalen College Oxford which retained it until 1953 when it was passed to the Bishop of Chichester.

1987	Derek J. White B.A.	Re
1998	Timothy J.A. L'Estrange M.A.	Re
2009	John W. A. Challis	Rector of

Here we see the record of our president Father Timothy L'Estrange who was rector here from 1998 - and his successor, Father John Challis who took over in 2009. The rector now is Revd Emma Graeme.

Coming back to *Haningedune* its manor was first recorded in 956 when it was owned by King Eadwig. Eadwig was succeeded by his younger brother King Edgar who was a great supporter of Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester . . . who was a leading propagandist for monastic reform . . . and was largely responsible for the exhumation of St Botolph's remains from Icanho in c.970. An interesting connection but all I suggest is that, even then, it was a small world.



The narrow width of the nave enables the bracing of the roof to be effective without needing a vertical kingpost to support the beam.



Here and there on the plaster one glimpses signs of wall paintings. They were first recorded in 1897 and subsequently thought to be from the 'Doom' school. They included St Mary with a bishop and pictures of St John.



The pulpit, with its sounding board, is rather more special than it first appears.



It is a fine example of Jacobean work and probably dates from 1630. The man who carved the abstract patterns might even have been the same person who carved his initials on the south door.



Who can get excited about a soffit roll end-stop? Well clearly I can when they are as old as this one (late Saxon).



On the south wall of the sanctuary is a simple but attractive C15 piscina and, if you look again at the picture of the chancel, on the north side is an aumbry i.e. a storage niche in the wall. Unusually this one has no doors.



This view of the underside (the soffit) of the chancel arch shows the single Norman soffit roll with end stops.



As we turn back towards the nave we see again the questionable Lowside Window on the south wall. This picture gives the impression that the window is much lower than it seems from outside.



Its boarded up partner on the opposite side still seems rather high however.



. . . hangs the royal coat of arms of Charles II which possibly dates from his restoration to the throne in 1660 - thirty years after the installation of this church's south door.



Looking back into the nave we can see that high up on the wall . . .



On the blind side of this picture is the handle to the organ's pump and this brought back fond memories of the story my father used to tell me of when he was the 'pump boy' and if he lost concentration and slowed down there would come a furious thumping on the side of his cupboard urging him to work harder.



Just above and to one side of the organ are two very different windows. The round-headed one on the right is a C11 window in a C10 wall whereas, like most of the other single light windows, the other is a C14 insertion.



We had arrived at Botolphs rather earlier than planned so I was able to get most of the photography done before we were greeted by a group of representatives from the very active *Friends of St. Botolph's*. From left to right we have Helen plus dog, Rachel Reed (Chair of the *Friends*), Stuart Stevens and June Kennard - and they gave us a wonderful welcome. Although the care of the building has now been taken over by the Churches Conservation Trust the number of services that are held in it has not been much reduced.



And what an inspiring set of services they are.



Stuart opened the door to the tower and solemnly rang one of the three bells.



He also demonstrated his ability to double handedly and single-footedly ring all three bells by putting a loop in the rope of the middle bell rope. Some feat!



The time had come for us to take our leave because I wanted to make the acquaintance of St Botolph's bridge so ensuring that the Tapsel gate closed behind us, we headed back to the car and parked a mile or so up the road.



There exist about four 'Botolphs Bridges.' The first one I came across was on Romney Marsh in

Kent and it was *Botolph's Bridge Inn* which was first responsible for my introduction to Saint Botolph. There is another bridge at Longthorpe (Peterborough) and another at West Bergholt so I was keen to add pictures of the Sussex one to my collection. I am not absolutely sure if it is actually called *Botolph's Bridge* but if not then it certainly should be.



Anyway - here is the bridge in all its glory. As shown by the green line on the map at the beginning of this issue, the bridge forms an important part of the South Downs Way



It is a very busy and attractive area - particularly when the River Adur is in full spate as it was on the day that we visited.

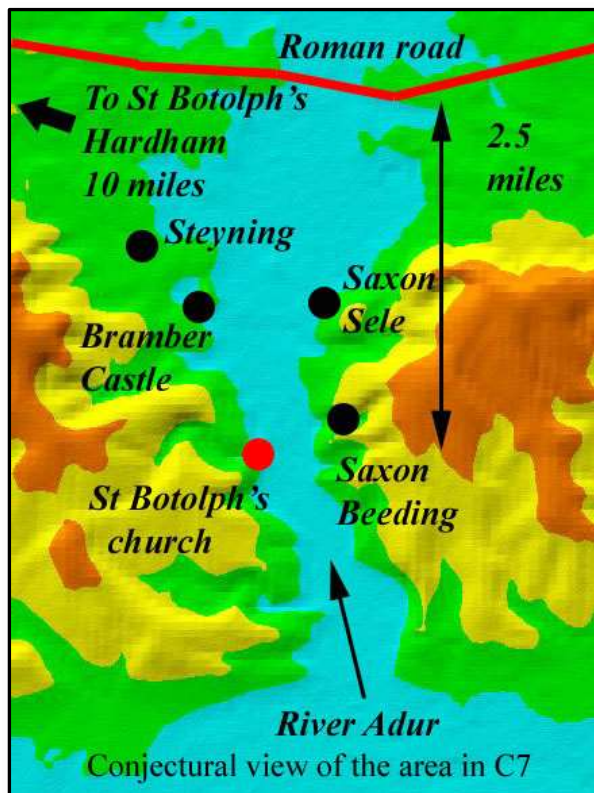


Turning to walk back to the car, St Botolph's was just visible on the other side of the trees.

Classification?

So what is the story about this St Botolph's church? Why was it dedicated to that particular saint and why has the village also taken his name?

The church satisfies most of the typical characteristics of early St Botolph churches - it lies in the eastern half of England; it has Saxon foundations and it lies within 3 miles of a Roman road. It is not well clear of water levels however; in fact it has been fortunate if it has escaped inundation.



The village name of 'Botolphs' or 'St Botolphs' has been on record since mid C13. It seems that there was an east-west crossing which ran along the top of the downs and crossed the River Adur at the village. This provides us with our requirement that a St Botolph's church should be strategically placed. As early as 1080 the hamlet of Annington was known as 'Old Bridge' and since that was the date that the 'new' Bramber bridge was built, there must have been a predecessor. A church known as *St Peter de Veteri Ponte* is frequently mentioned in Medieval writing about this area and it seems that this was an alternative name for what is now known as St Botolph's church. The suggestion is made in the literature that after the Conquest the Normans rededicated the church to St Peter so that it reflected a saint with whom they were familiar. The original name continued to be used locally, occurring frequently in records of C12 and C14

and by C15 St Botolph had been officially re-adopted.

So was St Botolph himself ever here? Clearly we can never know the definitive answer to this question but in my view he almost certainly was. History tells us that in c.647 he returned to Britain from France where we believe he had been studying at the abbey of Faremoutiers, 30 miles east of Paris since c.638. Seven years later he ended up in Suffolk. He could have sailed there directly or, as seems more likely, he could have sailed to the south coast of Britain and then travelled overland. The question is 'Where would he have made his landfall?' The likely candidates are Bosham or Botolphs - and here I rest my case. My classification would be A(ii).

Thanks

My grateful thanks to June, Rachel, Helen and Stuart for their warm greetings and helpfulness and also to Nick Watts of the Churches Conservation Trust who organised the visit.

Correspondence

1. **Anne Dickinson** wrote from Burton Hastings saying *We're getting closer to receiving enough funds to start building the extension to the church. As I write, we need just over £12,000, which is £10,000 less than a month ago! Sadly, this year has had its toll on our parishioners but hopefully we look forward to a happier 2020. Well done Burton Hastings - fantastic progress - good luck with raising the final part.*

2. **Father Pachomius** wrote with his usual wit from Massachusetts suggesting that Roy Tricker might subtitle his *Tales of Eccentric Clergy* with *... or Loose Canons ...* well it made me chuckle anyway.

3. **Janet Havers** wrote from Barford, Norfolk: *I am pleased to report that St Botolph's church in Barford, Norfolk is now open again daily (10-4) after extensive external repairs and internal reordering. We are still waiting for two nave windows to be replaced after cleaning and re-leading and that should be done later this month. We had a lovely service last Sunday when the Archdeacon of Lynn attended. Our next project is a toilet and kitchen. Well done Barford. I like to think, with these church reports, that they will inspire other parishes to think that the seemingly impossible can in fact be achieved. So please keep sending your reports in.*

4. **Revd Paula Griffiths** wrote from Hadstock, Essex: *You'll remember very kindly giving me your lists and maps for use in the leaflet to encourage our congregation to visit the other St Botolph's churches in use.*

Out of courtesy, before I make the booklet more widely available, I wanted you to see a copy: so here it is. I hope you are happy with the attribution to yourself, but please do let me know if you would like any changes in this.

I also attach the record sheet for people to fill in once they have visited - which is deliberately simple as possible.

And here is the front page of Hadstock's six page booklet. I think this is a wonderful project and I wish them every success. Might this too be an inspiration for other churches?



5. **Jean Gibrán** wrote from Boston Massachusetts: *Dear Friends who believe that Art is a Bridge to Peace and Understanding, I hope you enjoy this wonderful exhibit at St Paul's Cathedral. The opening program and reception for the exhibition in Boston is on October 27, 2019 at 4pm at The Cathedral of St. Paul. It is open to the public. Special guest speakers include Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler. Jean is a member of the St Botolph Club in Boston.*

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 within 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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