

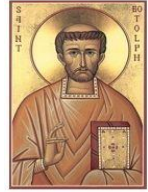


# The Botolphian

Newsletter of

The Society of Saint Botolph

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



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

Issue Number: 81. **2020 – the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary (circa) of St Botolph's birth.** 1st February 2020

## Highlights this month

- **St Botolph's Chapel, Folkestone.**
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome Tony Quarrington (Folkestone) as a new member..
- Correspondence from Graham Jones, Charles Evans, Paul Kemsley and Robert Beavis.

## Editorial

I have little for the editorial this month except to apologise to any of you who have received spurious email messages purporting to come from me. One of my email accounts was hacked but in a minor way that did not involve viruses or anything too serious. It was not the account that I use to send *The Botolphian* but as a result I have stepped up the security which has taken a lot of time over the past few days.

Due to this I have been unable to finish the pictures of the Hardham wall paintings that I had hoped to include in this issue. My apologies for this. All being well I hope to send them as a separate email within the next week or so.

I must apologise to Father Peter Mallinson of St Botolph's Hardham. After checking with him I failed to correct the text and mistakenly recorded him as being 'Rector of Hardham' despite his telling me that he is the church's Vicar.

## Church Feature

# Folkestone, Kent.

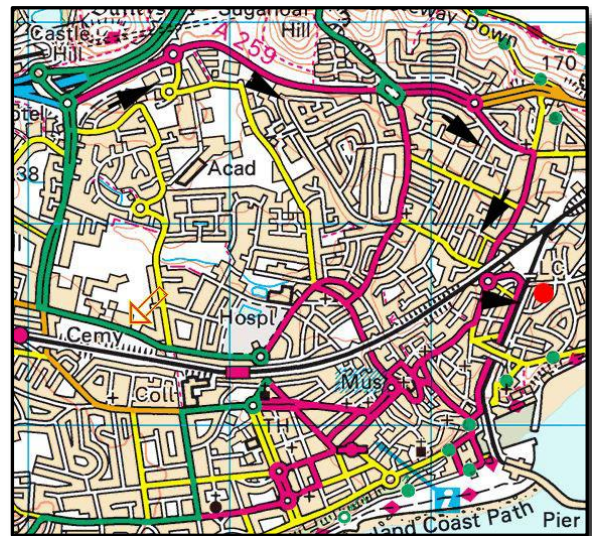
**Assumed site of St Botolph's chapel (no evidence visible).**

**Approach:** *Coming from London down the M20 exit on Junction 13a and at the second roundabout take the second exit along Churchill Avenue.*

*Take the first exit at the first roundabout and the second exit at the second roundabout. At the third exit take the third exit (all very logical in Folkestone!). At the next roundabout take the third exit and drive down the A260 Dover Road for 600 yards, pass under the railway bridge and take the first exit. After 200 yards do not turn right but cross the level crossing into Warren Road. The site is on your right 25 yards past the level crossing.*

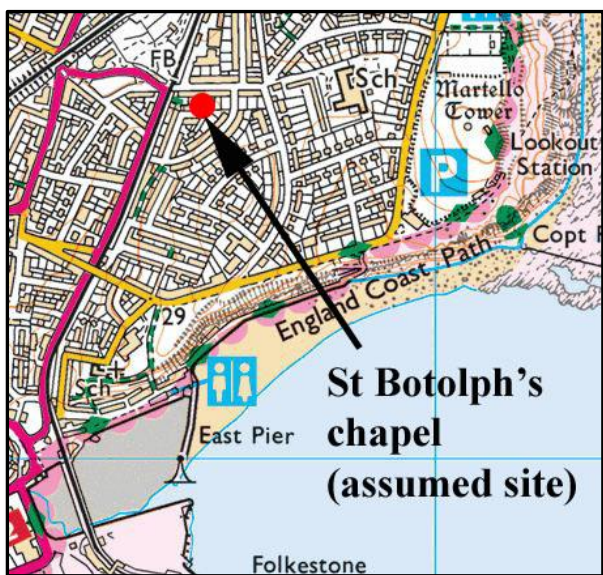
**Location:** 9 Warren Road, CT19 6DE.

**Lat/long:** 51.08603, 1.19025.



Folkestone is of course my hometown. I have delayed featuring *our* St Botolph's Chapel for as long as I could because I have wanted to be able to write the *definitive* story. Sadly, this aim has been perpetually frustrated by lack of evidence. Come January 2020 I found that for various reasons I could delay it no longer so I made the decision to commit myself, dive right in and just produce the best I could. Knowing that it was going to be a tricky journey I decided at the outset to include references in the hope that others more knowledgeable than I would take up the trail and

perhaps discover answers that have so far eluded me.



### The story so far

**1503 The chalice:** The first evidence of the chapel's existence comes from the fairly recent discovery by Eamonn Rooney (in the parish church's 1503 Churchwardens accounts) of mention of a "Chalice of the Chapel of Saint Botolph." The chalice has since been lost but the record shows us that the chapel was in use until a few years before the Reformation.

**1528 Thomas Curtyer:** The will of Thomas Curtyer dated 26 March 1528 includes the bequest of a sum of money so that four men would 'bear my body to St Botolph's Chapel. There shall be

*sung for my soul for a year (sic) at St Botolph's weekly*'.

**c. 1538 John Leland** - the 'father of English local history': In the midst of the reign of Henry VIII (reigned 1509-1547), John Leland embarked on a series of journeys which, over six years, took him round England and Wales.



**John Leland (1503-1552)**

His findings were published in his *Itinerary*<sup>1</sup> and when writing about Folkestone Parish Church he noted:

*'There is St Eanswide buried, and a late therby was a visage of a priory. Toward a quarter of a myle owt of the town is a chapel of St Botulfe on a likelyhod of farther building sumtyme.'*<sup>2</sup>

In **c.1799 Edward Hasted** (1732 - 1812)<sup>3</sup> visited Folkestone and wrote a very full report<sup>4</sup> but made no mention of St Botolph's chapel. One must assume from this that by then all evidence of the chapel had disappeared.

**In 1869** following Folkestone's rapid expansion (in response to the fashion for seaside resorts, to the development of the railway, and to the opportunities for cross-channel travel) an important discovery was made during building

<sup>1</sup> Original notebooks now kept in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. First published by Thomas Hearne in 1710 and then more usefully by Lucy Toulmin Smith between 1906-1910: Toulmin Smith, Lucy (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, Vol. 4, Containing Parts 7 & 8 with Appendices including Extracts from Leland's Collectanea & 3 Maps, (London, 1909). p.64 of Toulmin Smith, p.141 of original.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to interpret what Leland means by "*on a likelyhod of farther building sumtyme.*" One interpretation might be: "it is likely that the chapel is (sited) on the foundations of another building built sometime previously."

<sup>3</sup> See notes about Hasted in *The Botolphian* Number 60 (Ruxley) of 1st April 2018.

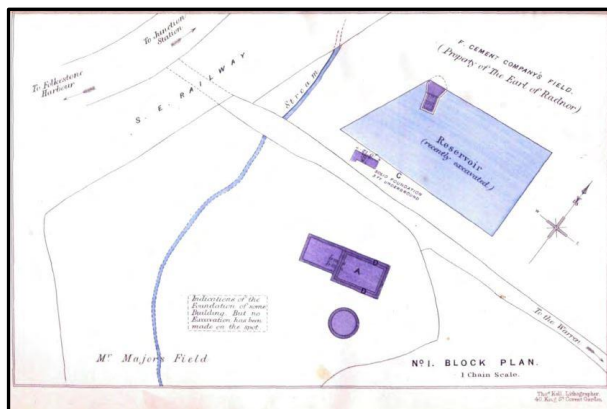
<sup>4</sup> Hasted, Edward, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*: Vol. 8 (Canterbury, 1799), pp. 152-188: 'The town and parish of Folkestone'. Also available online at 'British History Online' <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol8/> pp152-188 [accessed 23 February 2018].

work on the east cliff. Sadly, this was not formally reported until seven years later, whereupon . . .

**In 1876 Canon R.C. Jenkins** Rector of Lyminge wrote in *Archaeologia Cantiana Vol. 10 1876. pp.173-177.*

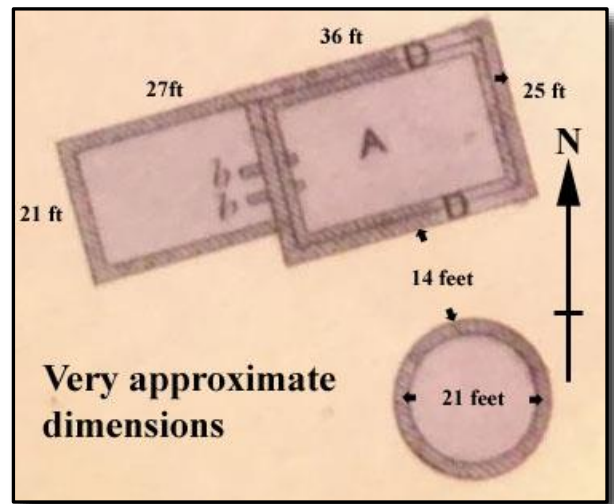
*It will be within the recollection of those members of our Society who were at the meeting at Folkestone, that their attention was directed to the recent discovery of the foundations of a church or chapel, apparently of Romano-British origin, in a field adjoining the Upper Station, at the eastern end of the town. These remains of an early building, through the kindness of the proprietor (Mr Major of Folkestone) were left open for some time and an opportunity was thus given for their fuller inspection. Unfortunately no ground-plan was taken, so that the only record of them is in the memories of those who saw them during the period of their exposure . . .*

*By many this early religious foundation was supposed to be that of the Chapel of St Botolph respecting which various records still exist; but it is difficult, without further evidence, to identify it, though the character of the masonry, in which Roman bricks of a large size were occasionally found as bonding courses, and the structure of the concrete, point to a very remote antiquity. Some skeletons were found entire in the very walls of the building (at DD) [Ed: See following figures].*



The plan above was published with the report and shows to the north of the road, the outlines of a new reservoir (in blue) and parts of a Roman hypocaust (at the top in purple). The presence of the hypocaust was taken to indicate that this was the site of a Roman bath. More purple shown close to the northern edge of the road shows some foundations and I have used the measurements indicated on these to make a very crude assessment of the size of the structures south of the road.

<sup>1</sup> S.J. Mackie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of Folkestone and its Neighbourhood* (Folkestone: J. English, 1883).



Canon Jenkins' report continues:

*The chamber marked A in the plan subjoined, had (as Mr Major informs us) thicker walls than the adjoining one, and showed traces of an underground apartment, which was evidently approached by a flight of steps from the westward - the two projecting thin walls (bb) being probably built for support . . . This crypt (if we may so term it) was . . . about eight feet below the surface.*

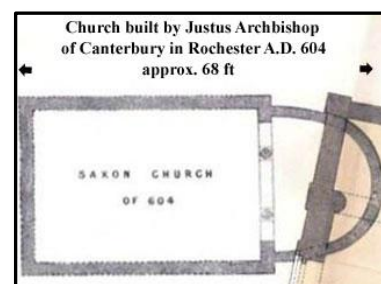
Another C19 antiquarian, **S.J. Mackie**<sup>1</sup> writes:

*In the early part of 1872 some excavations were made in a field belonging to Mr. S. Major on the right hand of the path leading to the Folly Cottages on the road to the Warren. The meadow had long borne the name of Chapel Field, though no one could tell why. The foundations of a building which could only have been a church were laid bare and several skeletons were found. . . . Is it not very probable that this was St Botolph's Chapel?*

### Moving on to modern times

For the past two or three years I have been looking at these plans with increasing uneasiness.

1. There are no signs of an apse or chancel.
2. It is rare to come across such a church with a crypt.
3. Canon Jenkins refers to the relic as being of the Romano-British period.



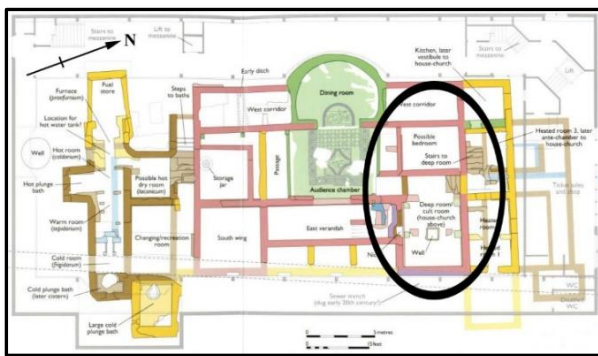
The picture above shows the Saxon church at nearby Rochester and this indicates the sort of ground plan one would normally expect to see. Although the Folkestone chapel has no second 'cell' to the east there is a second slightly narrower room to the west which seems to act as an atrium to the steps at 'b' which lead down to the 'cellar' beneath room A.

Of course, bearing in mind that it was drawn from the memories of several people some years after the site had been covered, the picture might be inaccurate but I think that in the absence of anything else we must assume that the work is reasonably correct.

The strange circular object to the south was, according to Canon Jenkins' report, connected to room A by a connecting passage. The mystery deepens!

### An alternative possibility

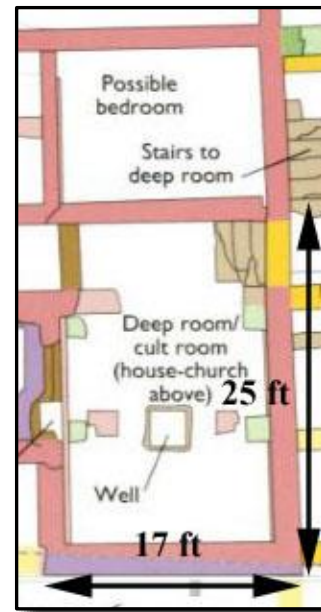
Once I started (a few days ago) to consider Jenkins' report more fully, I recalled seeing this sort of arrangement previously. 47 miles northwest of Folkestone, on the road to London, lies the Roman villa of Lullingstone, the plan of which is shown in the picture below. By coincidence (it would seem) another St Botolph's church lies in the grounds of Lullingstone Castle.



The villa faces east-southeast and the important part from our point of view is the area I have ringed.

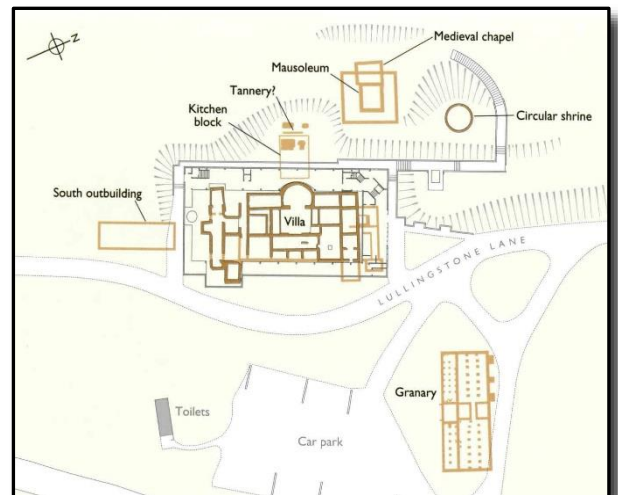
The enlargement below shows that, although the main room is half the floor area of the one we are looking at in Folkestone, the proportions are similar. The Lullingstone one also has a cellar beneath the larger room with steps leading down to it. The Lullingstone guidebook<sup>1</sup> suggests that the upper room was a Christian 'house church' and that the cellar was a cult room and that facilities were provided at the villa so that both Christianity and pagan worship could be carried on at the same time - perhaps by different members of the same household. The guide notes

that such 'cellars' have been found on at least 20 other villa sites, including a further seven in north Kent. One at Chalk near Gravesend, also shows signs of having had a ritual function.<sup>2</sup>



Returning to the Folkestone picture, I had tried for some time to guess what the purpose of the strange circular structure might have been. I came up with several possibilities:

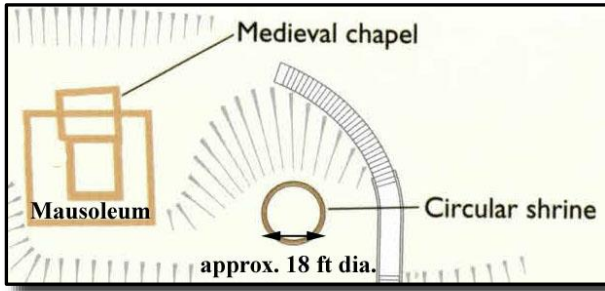
1. A bell tower.
2. A lighthouse.
3. An oven.
4. A oasthouse (added later).



A wider picture of Lullingstone shows, at the top right, a similar circle and the guide (p.20) writes: *'To the north of the house, a second century circular structure with the remnants of a floor of coarse red tesserae and traces of red and white wall plaster, may have been shrine or temple'.*

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, P., *Lullingstone Roman Villa* (London: English Heritage, 2009) p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, P., *Lullingstone Roman Villa* (London: English Heritage, 2009) p. 9.



Interestingly the circle here is also smaller being about 85% the size of that at Folkestone . . . perhaps we just do things here in a bigger way. So far I have achieved little success in discovering further information about circular Romano-British shrines other than one at Hayling Island in Essex which seems to be in a different league.

### Equating Lullingstone and Folkestone

If, just for fun, we take a mirror image of the Lullingstone villa, resize it a little and lay it over the plan of the Folkestone site placing the Lullingstone house-church directly on top of the Folkestone relic, we obtain the picture below.



This suggests that the 'Romano-British' items which were found comprise part of a large Roman villa facing east-northeast. This comes as no real surprise since the existence of something similar has been mooted in other articles and books.<sup>1</sup>

For a hunter of St Botolph churches this is rather distressing news since it seems to tell us that we have been hoodwinked and this Romano-British feature does not represent the foundations of a St Botolph's church at all; it is merely the remains of a Roman villa. Folkestone already has a thoroughly excavated and researched Roman villa in a nicely accessible grassy patch on the cliffs so the prospect of a second one mostly covered by tarmac and houses is not particularly tempting bait for our archaeologists.

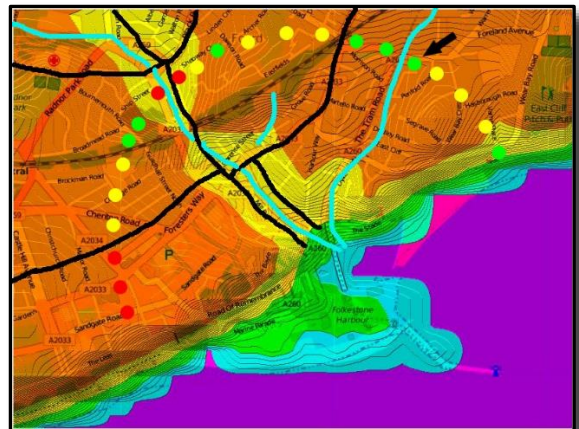
<sup>1</sup> The most recent to date being: *Folkestone to 1500 - A Town Unearthed*, ed. Ian Coulson, (Canterbury: 2013) ISBN 978-1-870545-27-3, p.35.

### If not in Chapel Field, then where else might St Botolph's have been?

Despite growing increasingly uneasy about the validity of the site, its Chapel Field location had become a fixture in my mind. To take my focus away from here and open my perception to other possibilities I reassessed the mean harvest of clues that were on offer:

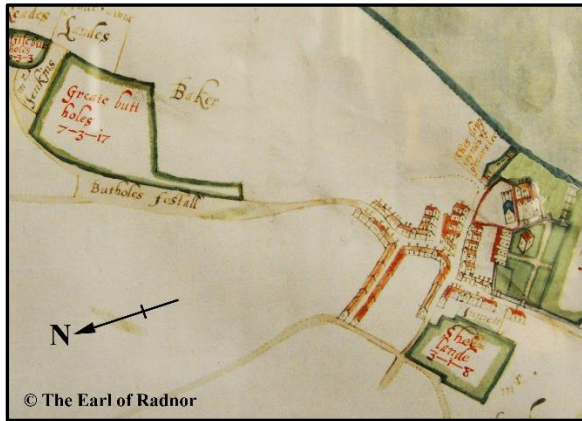
1. Leland had told us: *'Toward a quarter of a myle owt of the town is a chapel . . .'* In 1540 the town's habitations themselves probably radiated a quarter of a mile from its centre. The location we need to look for is therefore likely to be about *half* a mile or so from the town centre. (The earlier site was about 765 yards from the town quay).
2. The tenor of Leland's words suggest that the site was on or close to a road leading out of the town.
3. We might be able to use the fact that most early St Botolph churches are found approximately halfway down a slope - close enough to water but on securely dry ground i.e. *not* at the bottom of a valley and *not* on the top of a hill.
4. In C7 the area outside the town would have been sparsely populated and the founder of a new C7 chapel would be influenced in his choice by the presence or absence of a ready source of fresh water. A site with a nearby stream would be favoured.

I played around for a little while using those four parameters to produce a series of locations as seen below.

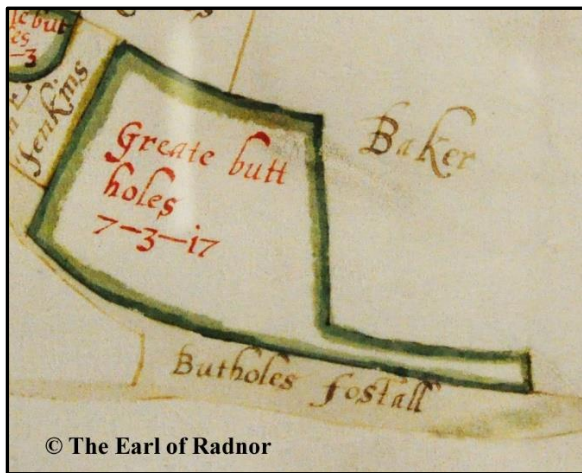


In the map above:  
 Red = unlikely sites (too high or too low),  
 Green = sites that might be ideal,  
 Yellow = possible but uninspiring.

At this point I felt that I had reached a dead end so could go no further. I comforted myself in passing with the hope that in future years someone might recall these coloured dots if (perhaps during demolition) some unusual foundations are discovered. What the exercise *had* shown me was that the Chapel Field site (marked with an arrow on the top right) stood out on my picture as having all the right qualifications, so I turned back to look at it again.



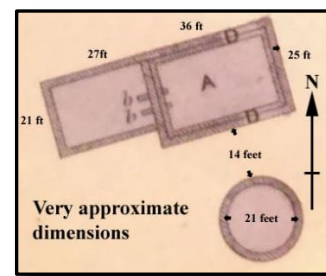
On this C17 map we see (courtesy of Lord Radnor) a plot of ground lying less than half a mile to the north east of the town.



On closer inspection the name of the field proves to be 'Greate butt holes' and it lies adjacent to 'Butholes fostall.' A 'forstal' in this context is a standing area in front of a farm,<sup>1</sup> but what (we might ask) are *buttholes*? 'The Butts' was a name given to a shooting field where archers or riflemen could practise firing at targets backed up by mounds of earth designed to absorb stray missiles. Was this such a field? If so, was the word 'Butthole' corrupted to 'Botolph' or did it happen the other way around? As far as I can make out, there is no such thing as a 'butthole' ("Oh yes

there is," I hear our American members cry but I will overrule them on the basis that such expressions are not English!). On the basis that the word is nonsensical I am emboldened to suspect that the latter corruption was the case – i.e. the field was originally known as *Great Botolphs*. The chapel in question would have been close to the southeast border of this field which it surely must have owned? A long step perhaps but a logical one.

My main objection to the idea that this was St Botolph's chapel was the lack of a chancel because I felt sure that new incumbents would have built one. Re-thinking the matter through however, I concluded that a well-built Romano-British stone building could have survived virtually intact between, say A.D.350 and A.D.650.



It might have needed little refurbishment to make it inhabitable and the eastern annexe would have provided adequate accommodation for a few monks.

### The local presence of Saint Botolph

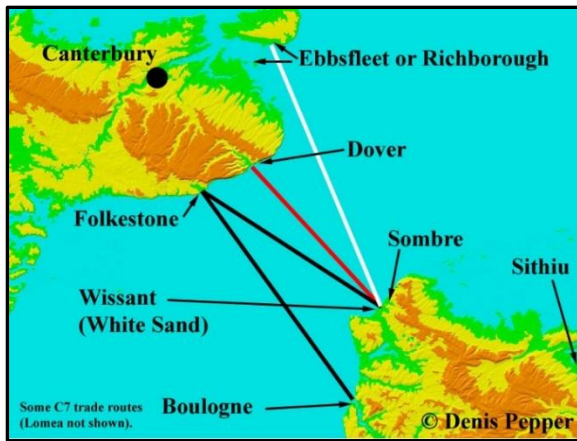
If Saint Botolph himself had trod the Folkestone shores it would lend credence to a suspicion that he might have founded the chapel in C7. We have already looked at ancient nearby churches bearing his dedication. Seven miles to the west of Folkestone at West Hythe lies *Botolph's Bridge* – which has certainly borne that name for over 400 years. I was hoping to tackle the mystery of this bridge's name in this month's issue but I ran out of space and time so I shall expound upon it later. Graham Jones (see correspondence below) gives some good clues about Hardham which might also relate to West Hythe.

Although from the sight of the C17 maps we have been looking at Folkestone appears as just a cluster of houses, it is unlikely that it always had that appearance.

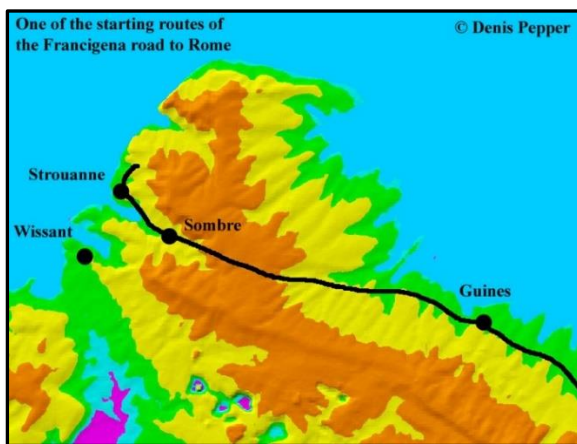
In 1086 the Domesday record tells us that both Folkestone and Dover were extraordinarily heavily populated with about 400 households each. This represents an enormous population as compared with the rest of southeast Britain. It

<sup>1</sup> Archaeologia Cantiana – Vol 76 (1961) p.207 tells us: 'the forstal of a manor house was the rough pasture on which the horses of visitors could be tethered or let out while their owners were entertained within.'

seems likely that the same sort of ratios existed 400 years earlier and that Folkestone and Dover were truly then two of the main gateways to Britain. We know from the fact that he built a church in Folkestone that King Eadbald of Kent (616-640) was closely associated with the site. We also know that cross-channel sailing vessels were flat bottomed and did not need deep-water harbours but could be pulled up onto the beach.



In 630 France's Christianity was well established as indeed was Canterbury's. Calais was simply a mass of awash sand dunes and cross channel journeys started or finished at Sithiu (St. Omer), Sombre (Wissant) or Boulogne.



A line drawn from Canterbury to the nearest ports in France passed through Folkestone and Dover so that they became important centres of trade and fashion.



The track now known as the *Via Francigena* was first identified from notes left by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sigeric the Serious, when he used the route to return to Canterbury following his journey to Rome to receive his *pallium* in 990. Even then though, the trackway was ancient and was first documented as the *Lombard Way* although it was originally known as the *Iter Francorum* (found in the *Iterarium sancti Willibaldi* of 725).

Being on such an arterial route, both the young Botolph – while on his way to study in Francia in c.638, and the older Botolph – after returning to Britain in c.647, are likely to have visited and probably came to know the people well.

### Classification

When I first encountered Folkestone's St Botolph's chapel, I guessed that it was probably founded in C12 and fell into ruin within two or three hundred years. As I learnt more, I realised that, whereas our Norman masters might have tolerated a chapel that had been dedicated to a local saint well before their arrival, they would have been unlikely to allow such a dedication to a new chapel - so I revised my provisional idea of the likely foundation date to C10.

However, it looks to me as if the chapel was not built *on top of* the foundations of the Roman villa but that the extant ruins of the house-church of the villa *were converted* for use as a chapel. I base this on the surmise that if the chapel had been rebuilt it would have had a chancel.

I believe therefore that this is one of the earliest St Botolph's foundations and should be classified as 'A (ii)' – a church founded along the course of Botolph journeys.

### Correspondence

1. **Graham Jones** sent me some interesting comments about last month's Hardham issue:

*On the face of it, Hardham is a slam-dunk example of Botolph as a bridging-point saint, commemorated on a strategic route in a church of the early-mid eleventh-century, a time of his popularity. Yet, as you point out, its thirteenth-century parochial patron was St George. A bequest to a light of St George in 1537/38 strongly suggests an associated image, and one wonders if it might have stood on the image base in the middle of the east window (though a cross is a strong possibility, as you say) rather than on the south side of the high altar as was usually the case.*

*No other devotional light or image is recorded in surviving late medieval wills from Hardham, and without any evidence that George had been banished to the nave, it might therefore be thought a bold step to move to the conclusion that George*

was no longer patron saint in 1537/38 and that Botolph had supplanted him before the Reformation because the wall-paintings had been whitewashed over and there were St Botolph gate churches in London.

Botolph only appears first in 1754. In Browne Willis' 1733 survey of churches in the Chichester diocese, Hardham is entered without a patron saint being specified. It would be nice to think that Hardham had 'reverted' to Botolph's patronage, but his appearance in the eighteenth century could have other explanations, among them Orme's 'conjecturing antiquarians'.

Though the wall-paintings are attributed to the school of artists employed elsewhere by the canons of Lewes, George appears already to have been patron when 'the church of St George of Hardham' was given to the canons, followed by the establishment of their priory at Hardham, probably after 1248 according to the account in the priory in the Sussex VCH, vol. 2.

Something more than Norman predilection for George is perhaps called for and running contrary to that is the frequent evidence that George supplanted not Botolph but Gregory, a saint of pre-Conquest royal estates like that of Bury of whose small hundred Hardham was part. (George was the second name of the pope who himself became an unofficial patron saint of the England his Augustinian mission evangelised.)

What a puzzle, indeed. If we persisted in looking for an explanation for Botolph, your thought about another church elsewhere in the parish is tempting. It is rather a small parish, though. However, it's intriguing to find that Pulborough Bridge over the Arun, despite its name, is wholly in the parish of Hardham, the parish boundary veering from the middle of the stream on to the Pulborough bank of the river just west of the bridge and continuing some way eastwards until re-joining the Arun where it swings south.

The boundary may mark an ancient course of the Arun, but be that as it may, the plots either side of the bridge at the time of the tithe survey in 1849 formed the East and West Wharves and these were part of the Hardham manorial waste. Pulborough Bridge, carrying Stane Street, had its Roman or Saxon predecessor, of which piles have been identified. It would be no great surprise to discover that the maintenance of the medieval crossing, whether bridge or causeway, was, as often the case, entrusted to a keeper who was also a hermit or otherwise in minor orders, possibly with a chapel on or near the bridge for which a dedication in honour of Botolph would have been entirely appropriate.

Entirely speculative, Denis, but as worth a punt as anything else until a more secure explanation for Botolph's presence comes to light.

Many thanks indeed for that Graham. I shall have to have a re-think. [I know that Graham is waiting for this month's feature on Folkestone so I will be all agog to hear his comments this month].

**2. Charles Evans, Paul Kemsley and Robert Beavis** alerted me to the article in the Sunday Telegraph and on BBC News about the ruined St Botolph's church at Skidbrooke in Lincolnshire where Satanic rituals have been carried out. The church is open to the elements so the Churches' Conservation Trust which looks after the church has no way of preventing these occurrences. We featured Skidbrooke in the September 2013 issue of the *Botolphian*. Issue number 6.

#### **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 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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