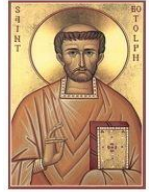




# The Botolphian

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: 89 **2020 – the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary (circa) of St Botolph's birth** 1st October 2020

## Highlights this month

- **Church of St Botolph's, Broome.**
- Correspondence from John Sennett, Nick Molyneux, Marcia Barton, and Graham Jones.

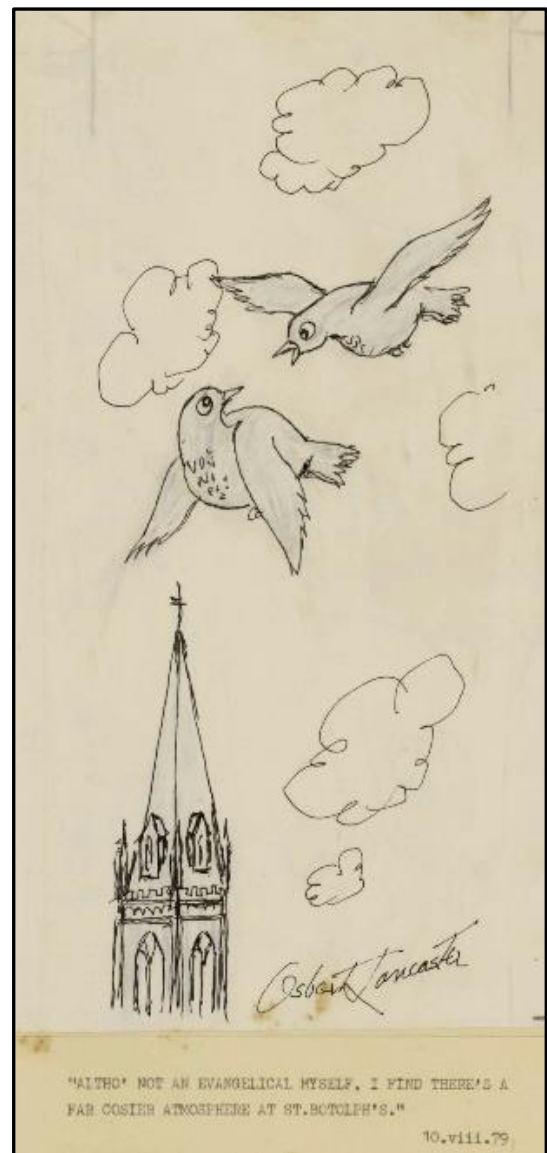
## Editorial

I hope you are all keeping well in these difficult and dangerous times. I have not heard of any of our members who have been in difficulty and that is a good sign. As you will have gathered, I am not proposing to hold a St Botolph's Luncheon in Cambridge this year.

On a brighter note, I had my baby grand piano tuned the other day. I thought I had better do so because two of my grandchildren now play and they like to do so on a *real* piano from time to time rather than on their electric keyboards. My piano tuner is a friend called Chris Pearson. It had been so long between tunings that he had to do it *twice* and between the two we chatted (2 metres apart) over a cup of coffee.

The talk naturally turned to 'things Botolphian' and Chris told me that he had many years ago been given a picture drawn by the cartoonist Sir Osbert Lancaster when Sir Osbert was staying at Botolph's Bridge Inn on the Romney Marsh. The picture, he said, was of two pigeons flying over the steeple of a St Botolph's church. I was lost for words.

"You can have it if you like," said Chris. "It's no good to me and it would obviously mean so much more to you." He came round and presented it to me the next day. What generosity! I am completely 'over the moon' about it and it hangs on the wall just above my desk . . . except that I shall take it down now to photocopy it so that you too can share my joy.



The typed caption reads:  
"ALTHO' NOT AN EVANGELICAL MYSELF, I FIND THERE'S A FAR COSIER ATMOSPHERE AT ST. BOTOLPHS."  
10.viii.79.

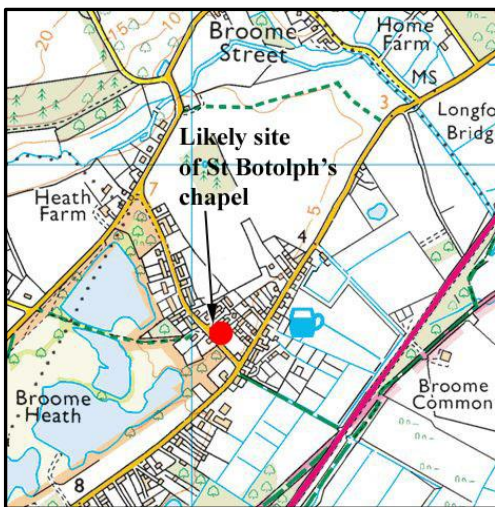
## Church Feature

# Broome, Norfolk.



**Approach:** From Bury St Edmunds take the A143 and after about 35 miles at the roundabout take the B1332 towards Norwich and Ditchingham. Take the next turning on the right, the Loddon Road, towards Thwaite St Mary. Continue straight for another 1 mile. At a point where there is a grassy triangle turn right into Sun Road. After 400 yards you will see the Methodist Church on your left. This, in my estimation, is the approximate location of the old St Botolph's chapel.

**Location:** Lat / Long: 51.471631, 1.459725.  
Postcode: NR35 2RR.



As G.H. Cook tells us in his *Mediaeval Chantries and Chantry Chapels* "Every religious house that was founded in this country from the eighth to the thirteenth century owed its origin to a royal benefactor or to some wealthy landowner."

This statement is important in the annals of this publication since it tells us that churches founded in St Botolph's time, C7, are not covered by this generalisation, nor are churches from C14 onwards.

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Last month St Botolph's church Shenley brought us briefly into close contact with the Wars of the Roses.

This month, the now-somewhere-buried little chapel of St Botolph's at Broome (aka Brome, Brom etc) in Norfolk brings us into contact with another major part of British history.



Quite a collection of villages with this name are to be found over the country and virtually all of them seem to have gained their names from the ubiquitous shrub which grows easily anywhere except, I am told, in soggy, boggy, shady locations.

At the time of Domesday in 1086 (bearing in mind that the actual *ownership* of all land was vested in William I) the Norfolk village of Broome was shared between three tenants.

- Robert Corbucion
- Roger Bigot
- Bury St Edmunds abbey.

On Corbucion's death his land reverted to the crown and King William II (k.1087-1100) granted it to **William d'Aubigny<sup>1</sup> Pincerna** (born before 1070, died 1139), an Anglo-Norman baron who served William II and then Henry I, and was entitled 'butler' (*pincerna* in Mediaeval Latin) to distinguish him from others of the same name.

Tradition has it that the noble de Brome family, who occupied the manor (Broome Hall) from

<sup>1</sup> He and other members of his family were also known as d'Albini.

earlier than 1170 until 1510, derived their lineage from the **Earls of Anjou** and so this will be the first part of my trail.



Our story starts in France in 1120 with Fulk V, then the current Count of Anjou (the ancient district is shown in red on the map above) heading off for the crusades. Whilst putting the world to rights in the east, Fulk wore in his helmet a yellow sprig of broom as his emblem. He became closely associated with the Knights Templar and on his return in 1121 he subsidised the organisation by maintaining two knights in the Holy Land for a year. In 1129 he returned to the east and settled down as King of Jerusalem leaving his son Geoffrey (1113-1151) to look after family affairs back home in France.

Before leaving Anjou Fulk had engineered a marriage between Geoffrey and the widowed daughter of the English king Henry I. This was done in the hope that the marriage would secure peace between England, Normandy and Anjou. Geoffrey's new wife's name was Matilda (she was always known as *Empress* Matilda on account of the fact that her first husband had been the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry V of Germany).

When, in 1135, her father, Henry I of England, died having designated Empress Matilda as his heir - she set about claiming her sovereign rights. Normandy pledged their support and Anjou was already secure but to her fury the English barons reneged on their earlier oaths and selected as king her cousin **Stephen**, the grandson of William the Conqueror. Stephen had been very prominent in Henry I's court, married well and become extraordinarily rich. On Henry's death it was he who promptly claimed the throne.

Normandy changed their allegiance and lent him their support leaving the empress in a difficult position but troops could be purchased and in 1139 she and 140 knights sailed to England and took residence in Arundel Castle owned by the Earl of Sussex **William d'Aubigny** – son of William Pincerna.

Years of anarchy ensued during which Stephen was captured at Lincoln. His life was spared when he was exchanged for Empress Matilda's half-brother who had been captured by Stephen's men. The civil war dragged on with neither side gaining an advantage until 1153 when again it was the younger **William d'Aubigny** who was instrumental in arranging a meeting at Winchester when a treaty was signed, in which Stephen agreed to recognise Geoffrey and Matilda's son Henry as his heir and Henry agreed to Stephen remaining as king until his death.

Henry had only a year to wait before that event occurred and he was crowned King Henry II of England.

The memory of grandfather Fulk wearing that sprig of broom in his helmet had persisted as an emblem in the family and Geoffrey had become known as the equivalent of Geoffrey Broomplant. The French word for Broom is '*genêt*' so Geoffrey's name translated as *plantegenêt* and thus his son Henry became known to us as Henry Plantagenet.

In the Domesday Book of 1086 Broome village was already referred to as '*Inbrom*' so when the *de Bromes* took up residence there, they must have taken their name *from* it rather than the other way around. In this case they must have acquired the manor before 1129 when Fulk V left Anjou for Jerusalem.

Although Fulk had initially opposed Henry, by 1118 the two were colluding in arrangements for Fulk's daughter Matilda to marry Henry's son William Adelin and it is quite likely that Fulk was in England for some time during that period. It might well be that his association with the lands of Broome began then and that was when he adopted the yellow emblem before wearing it in the east and advertising the humble village there. I have, spent many hours searching the records trying to discover which particular strain of the Angevin family adopted de Brome as their family name but I have sadly been unable to do so. Perhaps a reader can help me here?

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The other thing that has been eluding me – and this time it is over a four-year period – is the location of the Broome St Botolph's chapel. Zina and I visited the village in August 2016 and all we could find was the parish church of St Michael. My first thoughts were that this church might have been a re-dedicated St Botolph's, but I could find no evidence for this. We spent a long time driving around the local streets looking for a site that might once have sported a chapel but found nothing.





Before our visit I had noticed on Google Earth something which I call an EWR (an Eccentric Woodland Rectangle in the middle of a field). EWRs are basically large squarish clusters of isolated trees. They often just mask bomb craters but sometimes hide stone ruins of a castle or a church. If all else fails, as it did at Broome, I go and take a closer look at them.



In the event I could find nothing significant and concluded that the farmer was simply *growing trees* – which were possibly more valuable to him than any cereal crop he could have grown in the same area. I gave up on the August 2016 search and resolved to return to it later.

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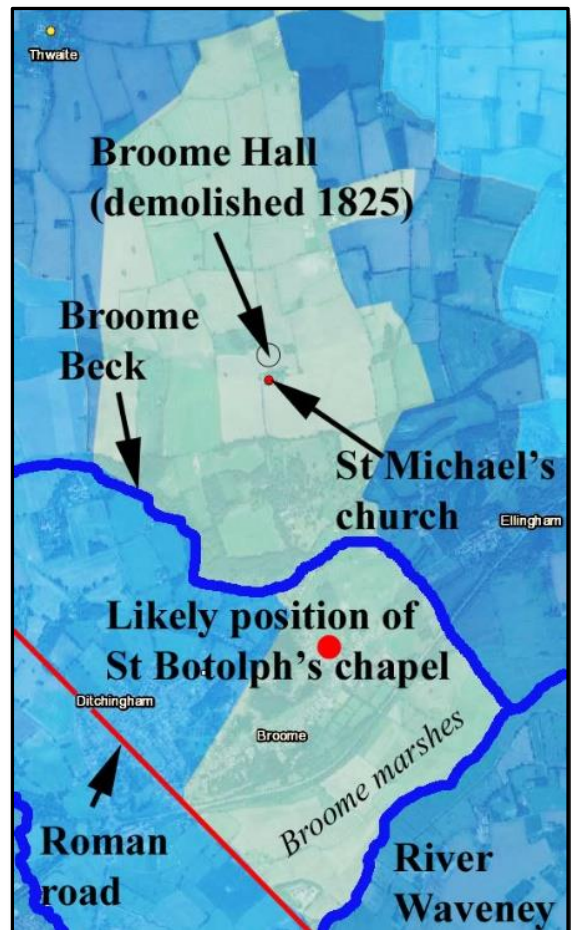
There are two reputable references to the existence of a St Botolph's church or chapel in Broome. The first is from our old friend Francis Blomefield in Volume 10 of his *Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* published in 1809 where he writes:

*The church is a rectory dedicated to St Michael . . . in this church was the guild of St Michael and in the town was a chapel dedicated to St Botolph and was in ruins (as appears) in 1558.*

The second was in the section of the 1821 *Index Monasticus* under the heading *A List of the Chantries and Free Chapels in Norfolk previously to their Dissolution by Edward VI containing such only as were detached from the monasteries, parochial churches or chapels and vicarages.*

Lady St. Peter	Bef. 1196	Near the church; granted to Hen
St. Botolph	! ! !	Chapel; granted to St. Giles's Ho
St. Mary the Virgin	. . .	of Hulme, 1196; became a vic
. . . . .	Bef. 1229	was in ruins in 1618.
		A chapel; in ruins in 1558.
		The lords of Buckenham castle.
		2 or 3 chaplains; dissolved 1
		Given to Lewes priory by Wal
		Chapel.

Identifying the location of the remains of this building was always going to be a tricky project and involve a fair amount of detective work. I was not confident of success but in the end, I believe that I have managed to pin it to the right spot. The first thing I looked at was the layout of St Michael's parish.



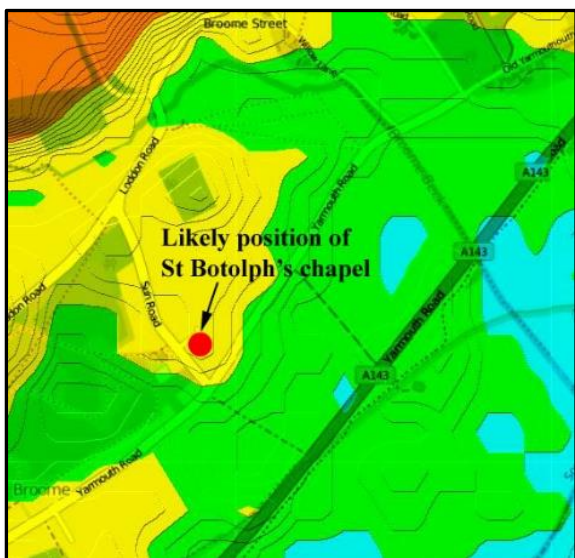
The parish is (sort of) hourglass-shaped, measuring approximately 3 miles from north to south with its maximum width being about 1.5 miles. The Broome Beck, the River Waveney and the line of the old Roman road are used to define some of its borders. The parish falls naturally into two halves separated by the Broome Beck. St Michael's church is centrally-placed in the



northern half and until 1825 its close neighbour was the manor known as Broome Hall.



The southern half is (or certainly *was* before land reclamation) again divided, one quarter of the whole being taken up by Broome Marshes and the other part accommodating Broome Village proper. St Botolph's chapel in my view must have been located in the centre of this village area.



This is supported by the topography which, once again, true to form, would put the church on higher ground away from the potential ravages of the River Waveney. That is also of course the reason for the position of the village itself.

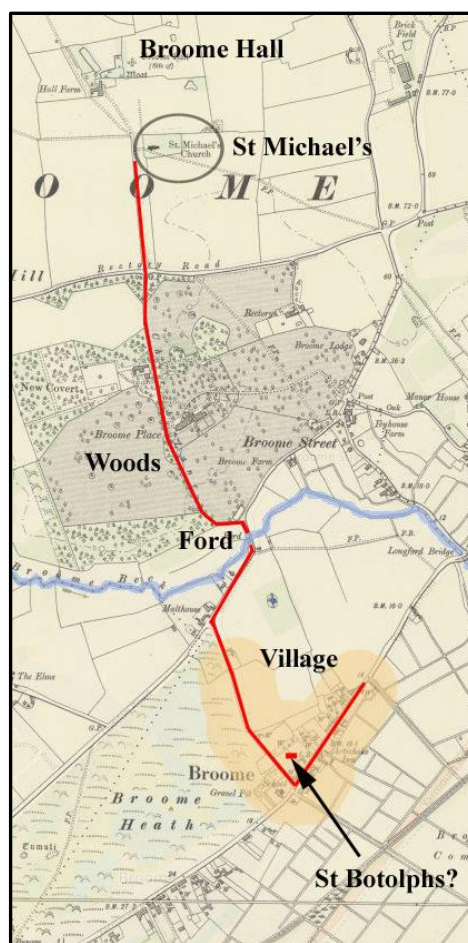


This picture of Broome Hall was painted by **Revd Alfred Inigo Suckling** and now hangs in the British Museum. It proved to be more interesting than was at first apparent. The painter lived for a while at Woodton Hall just 4 miles to the west of St Michael's church.

In 1575 the Lord of Woodton was Robert Suckling. One of *his* successors was Sir John Suckling (1609-c. 1641) who was a notable poet and invented the game of cribbage. Further down the Suckling line came Catherine (1725-1767) who was the mother of the child who eventually became Admiral Lord Nelson.



As we see above, it seems to have been another case of the lord of the manor building the parish church in his back garden for his own easier access.



To be fair, although this might cause the villagers some distress on a winter's day it is only 1 mile's trudge from the village to the church – but there again that trudge was down a hill, across a ford, up another hill and through the woods.

But there were advantages to the lord having the church close at hand and near his farm. In these circumstances the lord would be able to ensure the church's security and to maintain the church more easily. He might feel that the villagers should bear the pain gracefully and show him some gratitude for building such a nice church for them – and I am sure that most of them did.



The first incumbent of St Michael's arrived in 1307 so we must be safe in assuming that the church was founded shortly before this date. The architecture of the building confirms this. The lord then was Sir Roger de Brom and the records tell us that around that time Sir Roger settled the estate on his son and heir William with the remainder going to his younger son Robert. William died shortly afterwards and Robert de Brom became lord. Records from that period indicate that the manor was leased to the de Broms by the owner of Rising Castle – the **d'Aubignys**.

It would be logical to assume that St Botolph's *raison d'etre* was as a chapel of ease to St Michael's but as my research progressed it began to seem more likely that what we now refer to as the *chapel* was in fact the first *church* on the scene. I base my assumption on the fact that had it been a chapel of ease or a chantry, its foundation would have been more recent (perhaps C14 or C15) and records would have been available. Stone buildings tend to last quite readily for several centuries and the fact that it was in ruins in 1558 suggests that it had been around for a long time.

It seems likely that the church had become too small for the increasing population in late C13 and that the affluence brought by the flourishing wool trade influenced the building of a more upmarket church which the de Broms, being farmers themselves, would have been very happy to provide - as long as it was on their terms.

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I did at first wonder if the builder of the little chapel was none other than *the butler* himself, William d'Aubigny Pincerna. He was not recorded in the Domesday Book as being a landholder because his fortunes, of which there were many, came just a little later. According to the ODNB<sup>2</sup> by 1091 he had become an important landholder in Norfolk. In 1107 he founded Wymondham Priory which was set up as a cell to St Alban's Abbey where one of his relatives was abbot (and near to which, incidentally, was St Botolph's church, Shenley). By 1135 he was lord of 22 knights who had lands in his barony – one of whom was almost certainly William de Brom.

But this chapel would have been small fry for the great man – besides which Domesday tells us that in 1086 *a church already existed* on that parcel of land tenanted by the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. I have found no evidence that St Michael's church had an Anglo-Saxon predecessor so the reference must surely be to St Botolphs.

Of the three parcels of land, it was the abbey's section which had the largest number of households – namely 3 villagers, 15 freemen and 16 smallholders – compared to 6 households on Robert Corbucion's holding and none on Roger Bigot's land. This demography strengthens the argument that the village itself was under the abbey's control.

My conclusion is, therefore, that this little church must surely then have been built and dedicated to St Botolph by the abbey of Bury St Edmund.

**St Edmund was martyred by the Great Heathen Army at Hoxne in 869 – the same year and only 21 miles from the location where the same army razed St Botolph's abbey of Icanho to the ground.**

In c. 915 St Edmund's relics were moved from Hoxne to Beodricsworth (as St Edmund's Abbey was then called) where they were guarded by a handful of monks. In c. 970 St Botolph's relics were disinterred from Icanho and after apportionment were ultimately enshrined in the abbeys of Thorney, Ely and Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.



In 1020 England's Danish king Canute re-invigorated enshrinement and the cult of the saints and provided a fillip to Edmundsbury in the form of gifts of land and monks, as a result of which the new abbey eventually grew to become one of the richest Benedictine monasteries in England.

My further conclusion is that St Botolph's church was built sometime during the century preceding the Norman Conquest and I would classify it as C(ii). This would normally indicate a 'Travellers' Church' but this particular church seems to have been built primarily to serve the community. With the Roman road to Norwich only three-quarters of a mile to the southeast however its use by travellers would have been inevitable and would have brought many benefits to the village.

It seems that this church would have served the community from, say 1020 until 1300 when the lord of the manor provided a substitute and the former church was relegated to being a chapel which gradually fell out of use. The normal fate of such buildings is that farmers use them as barns and they gradually fall apart from lack of maintenance.

Poor old Broome St Botolph's. Let us hope that one of the Broome residents reads this and remembers his great grandfather digging up some unusual stones in his back field and contacts me

**on 07802 646-644!**

### Correspondence

1. **John Sennett** from St Botolph's at Swyncombe, Oxfordshire and I have been in contact several times. He is compiling a booklet on his church but, like me, he is having difficulty in obtaining as much information as he would like. We joyfully commiserated with each other.
2. **Nick Molyneux** sent me what looks like an interesting paper regarding an Anglo-Saxon and Mediaeval Settlement, which I hope to find time to read soon.
3. **Marcia Barton** sent me a photograph of what appears to be a horseshoe carved into the doorway at St Botolph's Chevening.
4. **Graham Jones** replied to a query about something I found in his excellent book *Saints in the Landscape* ISBN 9780 7524 4108 5 which I am reading for the third time. In this book he slips in a figure which I had missed on my previous forays and which indicates that there was a St Botolph's chapel in Scotland. He gave me other details which I hope to share with you on these pages shortly. Receiving his email made it a great day for me – another St Botolph's Church to add to the list!

### 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: **Danish foundations:** between 800 and 1066
- C: **Travellers' churches.**
  - (i) Founded before AD 800
  - (ii) Founded between 800 and 1066
  - (iii) Founded after the Norman Conquest.
- D: **Hanseatic churches** founded between 1150 and 1450 as a result of commercial enterprise.
- E: 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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