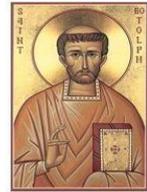




# The Botolphian

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: 21

1st January 2015.

## Highlights this month

- St Botolph's Church, Colchester.
- Welcome to our new members: David and Ronnie Gallimore.

## Church Feature

# C olchester, (Essex).

## Editorial

Well, at last I have at last finished my thesis and handed it in. There is a theory in thesis writing that (as with marathons) the final 385 yards are the hardest and, certainly in my case, the work and the concentration were all-consuming. Hence the reason that I had to forego the December Botolphian - for which I apologise again.

For your interest, the (eventual) title of the thesis was 'The Scientific Hagiographer: Daniel Papebroch and the Case of Saint Botolph'.

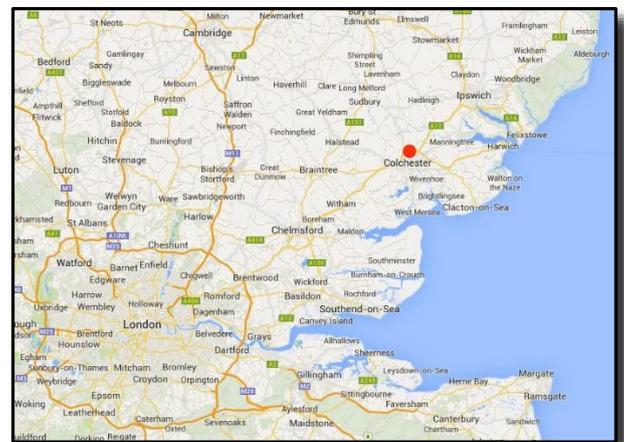
I finally finished and delivered it on 29 December which left me with rather less time than I would have liked to produce this Botolphian; so as midnight is fast approaching I shall have to cut the issue short at this point.

I am afraid that this means I have several letters that are still awaiting replies. I will put the matter right in the next edition.

I owe particular apologies to:

- Caroline Coke at Slapton
- Kathleen Tyson-Quah
- Peter Van Demark.

In the meantime my best wishes to you all for a very Happy and Healthy New Year.



**Approach:-** *If leaving the A12 at Junction 26, take the A133 Cymbeline Way (named for Cunobelin, king of the local tribe (c.5 BC to AD. 40)) which leads into Colne Bank Avenue. Take the third exit at the roundabout and drive down Westway taking the third exit at the next roundabout along Balcerne Hill. Then turn left (first exit) along A134 Southway to St Botolph's Circus. Cross the roundabout tangentially into Britannia Way (see satellite map below) and enter the car park.*

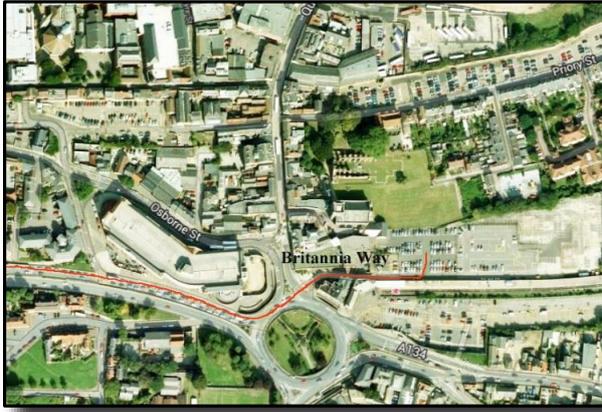
**Key:** *The church is normally open during daylight hours. (If unsure then enter via the church hall on the south side of the main building).*

**Priest in Charge:** *Revd Mark Wallace, The Vicarage, Balcerne Close, Colchester, CO1 1NZ. Tel: 01206 572-641*

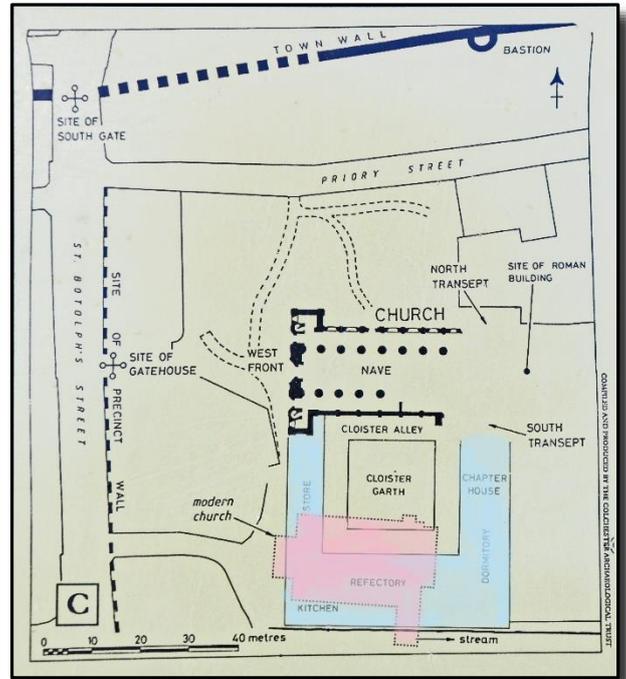
**Church services:** *Matins: Sundays 0945; Evensong: every second Sunday of the month at 6.30 p.m..*

**Location of Car Park:** *51.88658, 0.90460, CO2 7EF. NGR: TL999249.*

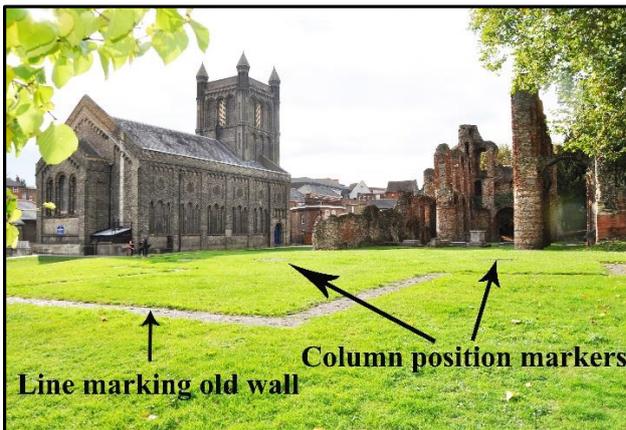
**Listed Grade of church: II**



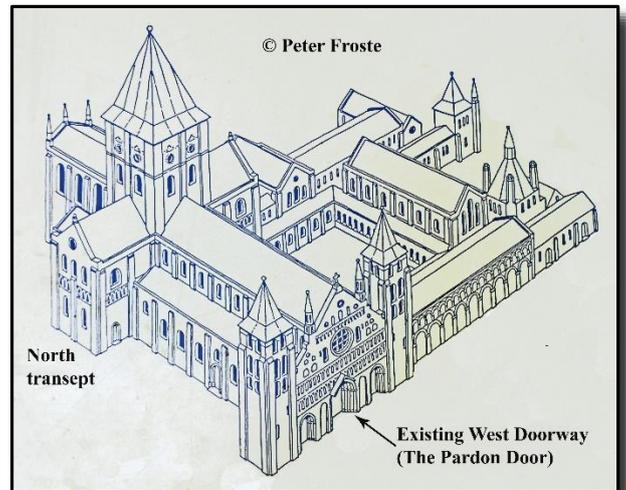
Colchester - previously known by various names including *Camulodunum* - *Colonia Victricensis* and *Colneceaster*; capital of Britain for 17 years from A.D.43 until AD.61 when it was sacked by Boudicca. London was similarly sacked but became the capital of Britain once it was rebuilt. Colchester was also restored and reached its peak of prosperity (in Roman times!) in about AD 200.



The blue area marks the position of the priory cloisters the structure of which is thought to have been something akin to that shown in the following picture:



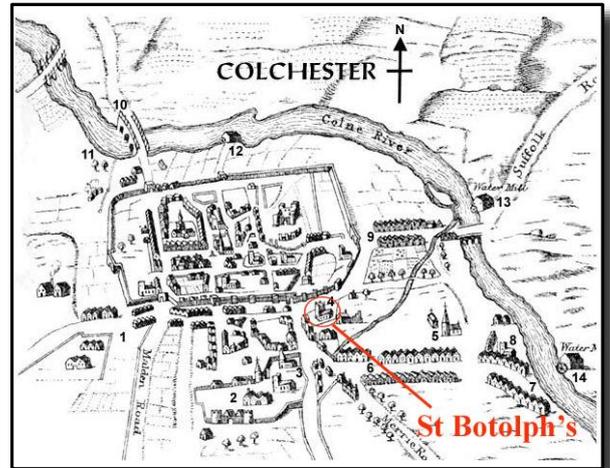
After the Romans left, in c. AD 410, there was a lull before the area became overwhelmed by Saxons. Colchester has a plethora of churches including a late Roman Church situated at Butt Road. There are records of at least *six* churches dating from the Saxon period including the predecessor of the ruined priory church. As can be seen below, the ruins are to the north of the existing church (seen below in pink).



The priory's West Doorway is shown below. It was known as the 'Pardon Door' because pardons were granted there on the feast of St Denis (9 October) each year.



The new church was built across the foundations of the refectory and cloisters of the old St Botolph's Priory which in turn had been constructed on the site of the small Saxon church dedicated to Saint Botolph.



St Botolph's, like many of its sister churches, lay outside the city walls. The River Colne was not far away and served as a protective moat in troubled times and as a source of trade otherwise. Throughout the Middle Ages Colchester was the largest town in Essex and by the end of C14 was the eighth biggest in England.

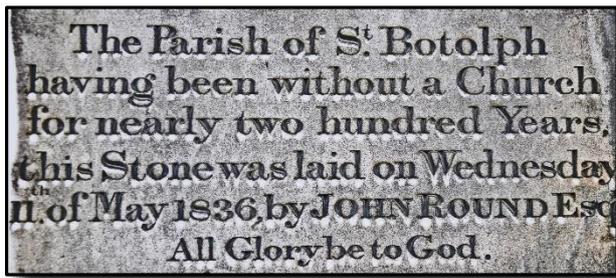
St Botolph's Colchester was built in 1835-7 by William Mason of Ipswich. It is not the cosiest Botolph Church I have visited but it has many redeeming features and its size and magnificent acoustics have been put to good use by the church's development of a strong musical tradition. Indeed it was Colin Nicholson, conductor of St Botolph's Music Society (and one of our members), who kindly met Zina and me and showed us around. His forthcoming 2015 concerts are on 7 Feb, 28 Mar and 4 July (See programme at end) and Zina and I very much hope to be able to attend at least one of these.

The priory had been founded in c. 1103 by Ainulf, the leader of a college of secular priests who were based in the original St Botolph's church. The influence of Botolph's Benedictine traditions had evidently not reached the current incumbents because they decided to follow the Rule of Saint Augustine. In 1116 as the result of a papal bull the establishment became the first Augustinian priory in England.



It was dedicated to St Julian and St Botolph and also honoured St Catharine of Alexandria, St Denis, St Thomas Becket and St Mary.. Sadly, its association with these auspicious saints did not prevent it being dissolved in 1536 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Indeed it may have been the excessive number of saints that angered the Protestants to the extent that they demolished the choir, cloisters and chapter house leaving only the nave. This continued to be used as a parish church until 1648 when it was caught in crossfire during the Siege of Colchester in the Second English Civil War. The town had been seized by the Royalists, and Thomas Fairfax's Model Army's erratic fire on the town's South Gate wrought havoc to the priory walls.

As lamented by the notice on the north wall, it was another 200 years before the parish regained a place of worship.



The church is not so much a masonic masterpiece as a masterpiece of engineering since it contains some wonderful cast metalwork.



The chancel screens are elegantly crafted - in some contrast to the iron roof-support columns which are functional if not beautiful. One feels surprised that the castings are not more detailed but these of course were the days of Telford and Brunel and massive engineering projects where the whole ethos was one of 'might and power'. It would be interesting to know which of the local ironworks won the contract.



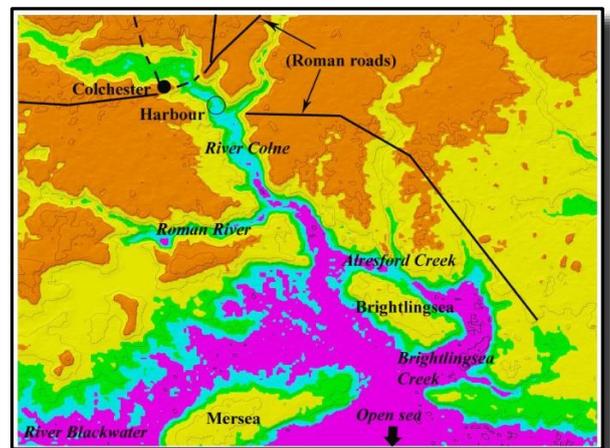
The picture below shows the chancel area which was drastically altered in the 1970s when various items were removed including the rare cast-iron

pulpit. The pews were also taken away shortly afterwards and replaced by chairs.



In 2000 an extension hall was built offering a wide range of other facilities. It has been a great success and is widely used by other members of the community.

The reason for the Roman's choice of *Camulodunum* as their capital is clear since it is centrally positioned and offers easy access from the sea in the prevailing south-westerly winds. The River Colne (wider and deeper then) would have afforded good protection for a great number of vessels as well as providing a moated defence.



#### Relevance of the church to Botolph's life.

Colchester is only 34 miles from Iken and if that was indeed Botolph's Icanho then Colchester was definitely 'on his patch' and it seems likely that he would have wanted to extend his ministry to the 'once capital of England'.

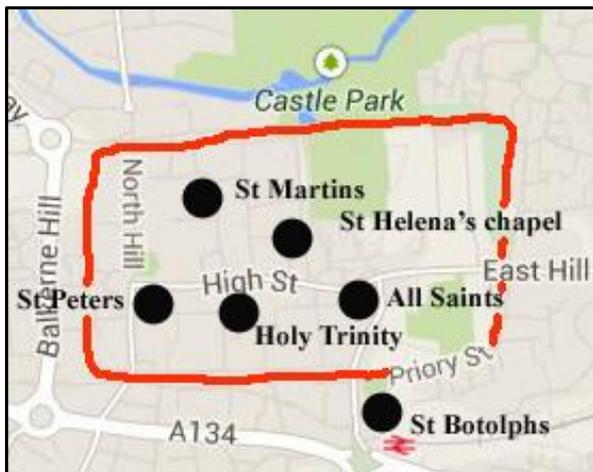
#### Classification of Colchester church.

The 1837 church is clearly a 'C' (neither a travellers' church nor relevant to Botolph's life).

The original Saxon church - (predecessor of the 1116 priory church) is more difficult to classify in view of its position outside the town gates. If Botolph or one of his acolytes had founded the church in C7 as a 'missionary post' one would surely have expected to find it within the town walls. Kathleen Tyson-Quah has suggested that churches were placed outside the gates in order to collect taxes and one might have expected this if the church had been Norman.

I believe that Colchester is important in this respect because, as seen on the map below, many of the other Saxon churches do lie within the town walls. This suggests that, with his reputation as 'Patron Saint of Travellers', Botolph's church might have been placed outside the gates with a specific view to ministering to the needs of wayfarers.

The Saxon church would therefore merit a likely classification of B(i) (A travellers' church founded before 800) although of course it could have been Late Anglo-Saxon in which case B(ii) would be appropriate.



### The next concert at Colchester.

#### **NEXT CONCERT**

**FEBRUARY 7th 2015**

*Gala Concerto Concert*

*Brix*

**Organ Concerto in F**

*Beethoven*

**Piano Concerto no. 4 in G**

**Piano Concerto no. 5 in E flat, 'Emperor'**

**COLIN NICHOLSON (Organ)**

**NORIKO OGAWA (Piano, no. 4)**

**PHILIP SMITH (Piano, no. 5)**

**SBMS Orchestra conducted by**

**JONATHAN ABBOTT and**

**COLIN NICHOLSON**

There are usually some tickets available at the door from 6.45pm onwards. Tickets (£12 or £10.50 concession) are available by post or telephone 01206 823662 or from [www.sbms.org.uk](http://www.sbms.org.uk).

#### POSTAL APPLICATIONS to:

Hon. Secretary, SBMS, 57 Manor Road, Wivenhoe CO7 9LN. Cheques payable to SBMS Please enclose S A E.

#### Regular Endnotes

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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 Churches:-

A: C7 churches relevant to Botolph's life.

B: 'Travellers' churches.

Bearing in mind that the Danish invasions started in c.800 and continued for 200 years, it seems logical to sub-divide Type B (and perhaps type C) churches into those which appear to have been founded:-

(i) before 800

(ii) between 800 and 1066 and

(iii) after the Norman Conquest.

C: Neither of the above.

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Folkestone, Kent. 1st May 2013.