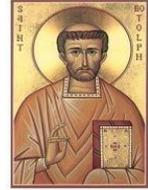




# The Botolphian

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.

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1st April 2016

## Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Allerthorpe, Yorks.
- Welcome to new members: Michael Burtonshaw from Folkestone. Email addresses now stand at 289 and (re-audited) membership at 364).
- Emails from Patricia Croxton-Smith, Colin Potter, Buell Hollister, Hal Annett and Lyn Stilgoe.
- **Please note in your diaries that the Third Annual Luncheon of the Society will be held in Cambridge on Wednesday 12 October 2016.**

## Editorial

After February's short month I found it a great joy to have a few extra days in March. I needed those extra days because I have just changed to a new computer and, as usual, this was somewhat traumatic and time-consuming – although greatly eased by my son Rob lending an expert hand. I hope the changes have not resulted in anyone being dropped from the email list.

As I was writing this month's church feature and struggling to understand the ambiguities of the Domesday records for the area, I kept running across the nearby town of Pocklington – a place of which I do not remember hearing previously. Suddenly, right in the midst of my investigations, the town became famous for a few days as, on 17 March, the media announced that, whilst preparations were being made for the erection of 77 houses, a "hugely important" Iron Age burial ground had been discovered there.

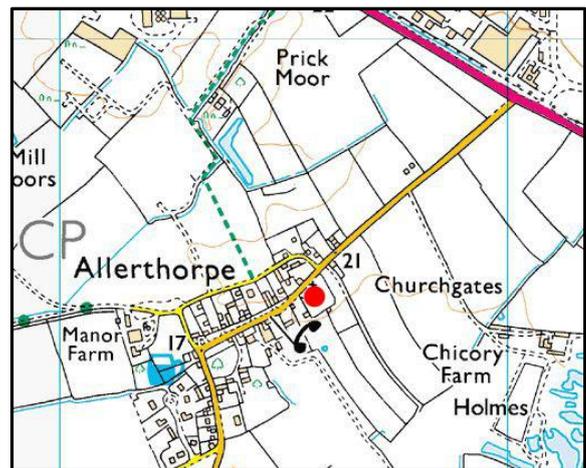
I am sure that the builder was not at all pleased about that but the archaeologists certainly were as 65 small square burial mounds were discovered containing 150 skeletons, jewellery and weapons.

What connection, I wondered, could there be between this early site and the construction of a Saint Botolph's church at nearby Allerthorpe?

## Church Feature

# Allerthorpe, Yorks.

**Approach:** From York take the A1079 York Road heading towards Hull. At the Pocklington roundabout take the third exit to Melbourne and Allerthorpe. After a quarter of a mile you will see the church on your left. Park where convenient.



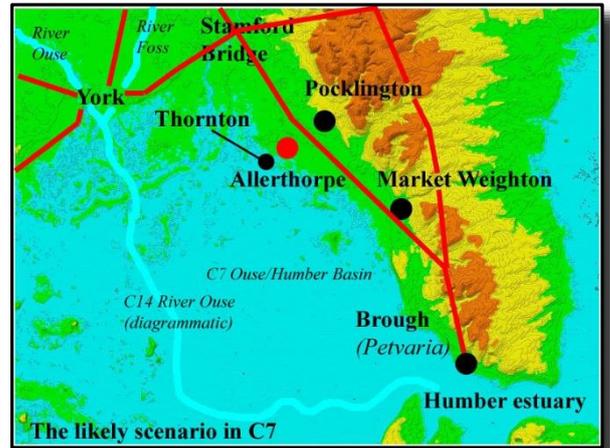
**Key:** Churchwardens:  
 Charlotte O'Gram 01759 303180  
 Martin Ratcliffe 01759 303-161  
 Vicar: Revd Gail Dalley 01759 307-490.



**Church services:** *First Sunday Evensong (4pm in winter and 5 pm in summer); Second Sunday - Holy Communion 9.15 a.m.; Fourth Sunday - Holy Communion 8 a.m.*

**Location:** *Main Street, Allertorpe, East Riding of Yorkshire, YO42 4RP. 53.916960, -0.805361. SE785474.*

**Listed Grade:** *II Registration number 1083874.*



The red lines above show the position of the Roman roads and black dots mark the relevant neighbouring towns. Thornton has been squeezed in to show its position today.

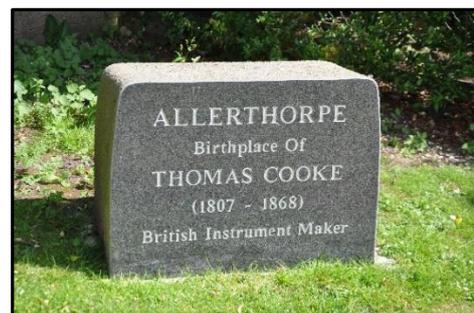


I mentioned in the last issue of *The Botolphian* that this church is the fifth most northerly of the Botolph churches. It lies in Yorkshire just 13 miles ESE of the city of York itself.

As you drive to the location there is little hint that the church stands in an area which, in C7, would have been right on the edge of a marshy lagoon which drained into the River Humber. This is not the typical position of a Saint Botolph's church; they are usually built in locations where they are more certain to avoid getting their feet wet. This in itself immediately suggested that the site was founded at a later date – after the marshes had been reclaimed.



As we enter the churchyard, we see on our right a memorial to Thomas Cooke, the British Instrument Maker, who was born in Allertorpe in 1807.



After studying as an optician he opened a business in York but in his spare time he pioneered the invention and construction of refracting telescopes. In 1855 he moved to larger premises and, amongst many other notable constructions, built the Newall 25-inch refracting telescope which, for many years, was the largest of its type in the world.

## The church

St Botolph's Allerthorpe hides its mysteries well. The building we see today dates from 1876 but the chapel of ease which was its predecessor had been built in C14; its burial rights were granted in 1360. By 1615 however it had already fallen into a state of decay but seems to have revived soon after that because the register records burials from then until 1695. After this there is a gap until 1828 and during the interim, for some reason, residents were buried in Pocklington and Thornton.



The 1874 ink drawing above shows the *old* church with buttresses in the same position as the *new* one. The square windows of the chancel were replaced in the new church by gothic windows of C14 style. A vestry had been added in the 1850's but soon after that the decision was taken for the church to be completely rebuilt and this was accomplished two years later. It is not clear whether the dedication to Saint Botolph dates from the rebuilding or if the previous chapel was also similarly dedicated.



The new church follows a similar pattern to the old with a two-bell bell cot at its western end. The east window was either retained or rebuilt to copy the original.



The pulpit was moved from the south to the north side of the nave and the 'very ancient' font taken from its position near the chancel and a newer one placed in a traditional position close to the south door of the nave.



The building is light and airy and both it and its grounds are very well kept.



Another interesting thing about this Saint Botolph church is that, unusually, its parent village bears a Viking placename.

**The Domesday Book** entry for Allerthorpe records that it had a very small population consisting of 13 villagers, 5 smallholders, 1 priest, 4 tributaries and 15 burgesses. In 1066 its lord was Earl Morcar and in 1086 it was King William himself. It had 3 mills and a church.

This sounds great until we look at the Domesday records of the other villages in the area when we find that all eleven have exactly the same narrative - each bearing the modern reference of Phillimore 1Y10.



One might concede that there *could* have been 12 churches within that 2.5 mile radius but it is doubtful that there would have been 33 mills or that each of the 12 settlements would have had exactly the same number and type of residents. The conclusion must be that the assets listed applied to the whole area in which, therefore, there must have been only the one church. This leaves the question of in which particular village this church and its priest would have been located.

**Pocklington**

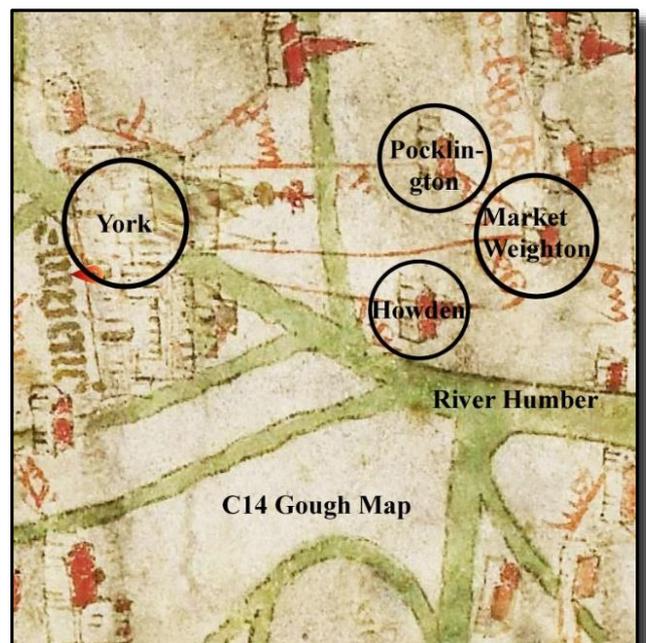
The name of the small town of Pocklington can be traced back to Botolph's seventh century but no earlier than that. For many years it has been believed that the settlement originated in the Bronze Age but now of course, since this month's discovery, it has been positively dated to the Iron Age ... and perhaps even earlier. Its church, All Saints, has in its churchyard the Sotheby Cross which dates from C15 and records '*Paulinus here preached and celebrated AD627.*' There is no reason to doubt the veracity of this since, although the existing structure is Norman, the building's foundations are indisputably Saxon.

Paulinus (c.580-644) was one of the second wave of missionaries which were sent by Pope Gregory following the 597 success of Augustine's venture

in Kent. Paulinus had arrived by 604 and seems to have stayed in Kent although there are no records of his activities until 625 when he was created Bishop of York by Justus Archbishop of Canterbury. Paulinus's presence in this area predates Botolph's potential by 25 years. In 633 Paulinus became Bishop of Rochester.

*A piece of trivia worth mentioning is that the Pocklington church contains a plaque to the memory of 'Thomas Pelling – The Flying Man of Pocklington.'* Thomas's claim to fame is that (for some long-obscured reason), in 1733, he attempted to travel along a rope between the Star Inn and the church. Sadly there was a misunderstanding between himself and the men working a windlass with the result that he crashed into the east end of the church and fell to his death at the spot where the plaque is sited. Clearly his 'risk-assessment' qualities were not working too well that day.

By C14 Pocklington was of considerable importance as shown by the fact that it was marked on the Bodleian (or Gough) map of c.1360.



The heritage of its church outshines all other churches in the locality, including the one we are considering at Allerthorpe. Although many of the local churches are listed Grade I or II it seems likely that they were all founded after 1066. The church referred to in the Domesday Book looks therefore as if it was that of All Saints Pocklington which, incidentally, satisfies the requirements mentioned earlier of a C7 church being higher up the escarpment in a position where its feet would stay dry.

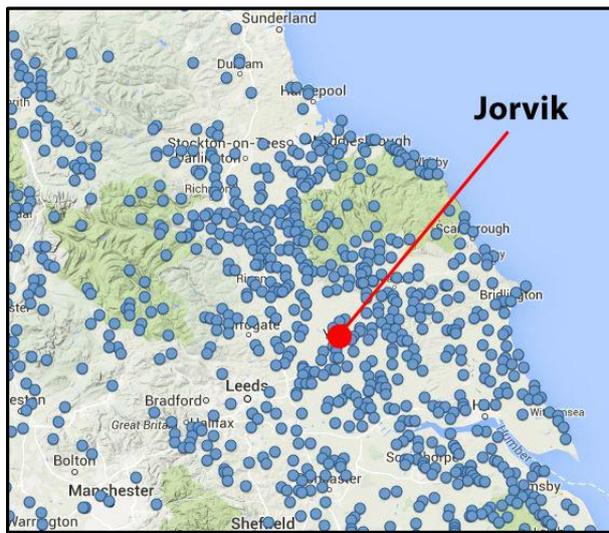
## York

York was founded in AD71 and its asset and liability was that it lay at the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Foss. This brought the advantage of easy transport but the town was prone to flooding and so was abandoned in AD400.

In C7 King Edwin (the same who was mentioned in the March issue) started to reclaim the town's flooded ground and built the first wooden church and was himself baptised there in 627. His efforts to convert this into a stone minster were frustrated by his death in 633 and it fell to his successor Oswald (again mentioned last month) to complete the work. By Botolph's time, York had regained much of its lost importance.

## The Vikings

In 866 came the Viking Invasion and the Great Heathen Army which eventually made York its stronghold giving it the Scandinavian name of Jorvik. As we have mentioned the name 'Allerthorpe' is also of Viking origin – as are the names of virtually all the villages featured in the 'Pocklington-encirclement' picture above.



This next picture shows Jorvik surrounded, unsurprisingly, by a high density of villages which (marked in blue) have Scandinavian place-names. These settlements probably originated from the Viking occupation of Jorvik in 866 although their density must have increased further during the subsequent 200 years of the Vikings' 'on and off' presence. After the 866 year of occupation the bulk of the army moved south leaving behind their elderly and infirm - protected perhaps by a small garrison of soldiers. During the next ten years the army ebbed and flowed between York and the south.

With the comparative peace of 878 following Guthrum's conversion to Christianity many of the troops would have travelled back up to the north to re-unite with their families. Many of them were newly-baptised Christians and it would not have been surprising if they had started to build or re-build churches at their homesteads.

Nothing is known of the state of York Minster and Pocklington church during this period but it is likely that they were in ruins. Both were large structures which the Vikings neither had the skills nor the interest to rebuild but there might have been other smaller churches which they could have tackled.

The dedication of the Allerthorpe church to Saint Botolph is important. If it had been to any other saint one would not perhaps be alerted to the fact that its foundation could be earlier than Norman.

We know that Saint Botolph became the most important British saint in Medieval Scandinavian Christian culture. There could be several reasons for this. Was it because the AD869 destruction of Icanho Abbey somehow made an unexpected impression on the Viking marauders?

Were the Icanho monks especially brave or awe-inspiring - or did they live long enough to communicate tales of greatness about their founder?

Or was it that the Vikings were travellers and so *unsurprisingly* took to their hearts the cult of a dead Abbot who was the Patron Saint of Wayfarers?

Whatever caused it, the year of 885 is not too early for the Scandinavian Saint Botolph Cult to have started. Perhaps this resulted in the returning 'warriors-without-a-war' choosing to spend their spare time building a church in Allerthorpe where their community could gather and pray?

## The later Allerthorpe:

By C14 the local gentry and their farmers were well-established as wool-traders and, being only 13 miles away from the trading centre of York, they were in a prime position for business. Is this another important factor to be considered?

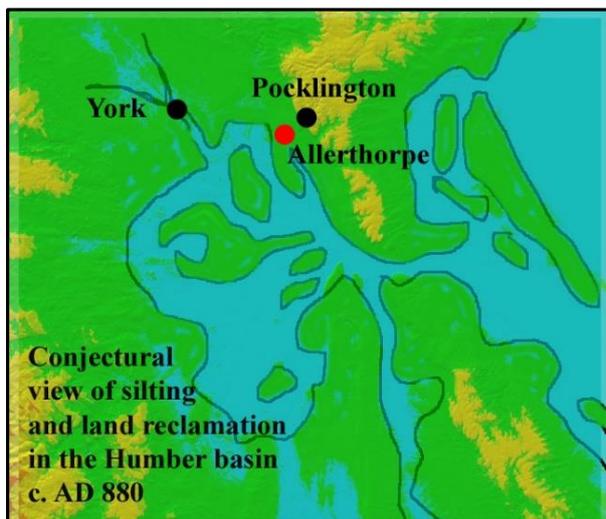
## Classification of the Allerthorpe site.

So now is the time to put into our melting pot all the ingredients we have discovered and see what ingots emerge. What is the answer?

I would have liked to have found that the site of Saint Botolph's Allerthorpe was likely to be of

Anglo-Saxon origin but the evidence suggests otherwise. In my view the church is situated too close to the 'water's edge' of the Humber basin to be that early and, although I usually take the Domesday records with a pinch of salt, - on this occasion it does seem likely that it was the Pocklington church which was all-important in the early days. Vitality it is this church which is 'in the right place' for C7 foundation from a topographical point of view.

I still feel however that the Viking theory has potential – particularly if one bears in mind the fact that by AD880 (two hundred years after Botolph's death) the Humber river basin would have silted up considerably and some land would have been reclaimed (see conjectural sketch below). Allerthorpe therefore, although probably prone to flooding, would, by that time, generally manage to keep its feet dry so there is still an outside chance that it might merit a B(ii) classification (i.e. built between 800 and 1066).



In this instance however I believe it is more likely that Allerthorpe is another 'Travellers' church' built close to a main thoroughfare (when the area was gaining in affluence due to the thriving wool trade) and dedicated to Saint Botolph in order to attract the custom of wayfarers. I would suggest it should be classified B(iii).

### Readers' letters and emails.

1. I had many kind emails from readers who said that 'in spite of the delayed publication it was worth the wait.' Thank you all for that.
2. Patricia Croxton-Smith wrote to say that Saint Botolph's at Hadstock in Essex are hosting a talk

by Dr Sam Newton at 7 p.m. on Thursday 19 May entitled *Cnut, Hadstock and the Battle of Assundun*. I am sure this will be well worth attending as will the re-enactment of the battle on 11 September at Waltons, Ashdon. If anybody wishes to attend please email me and I will forward your email to Patricia.

3. Colin Potter wrote with more information about the St Botolph's Chapel in Dyfed, Wales; to be specific his information was about the Stokes family.

4. I enjoyed receiving several emails from Buell Hollister from Boston USA although by the time we finished we had conversed more about sailing than about Saint Botolph. We seem to have a lot in common.

5. Hal Annett wrote from Canada thanking me for the latest *Botolphian* and for information.

6. Lyn Stilgoe wrote from Norfolk. Lyn arranges Sunday tours of Norfolk Churches. She is also much involved with the Round Tower Churches Society which covers Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Sussex and Cambridgeshire. She has visited 29 of the *Botolph Churches* - I hope that she might compare her findings with mine so that we can reach an improved consensus.

### Endnotes

Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

#### Regular Endnotes

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.  
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.