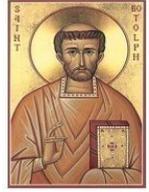




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

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



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## Highlights this month

- **Ruins of St Botolph's church, Shotesham, Norfolk.**
- Correspondence from David Noy and Harriet Enholm.

## Editorial

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas. I had an exciting 'Botolphian Christmas Present' this year as the result of an email that I received from Harriet Enholm. Harriet is from Finland but lives with her husband Gustav on their boat in Sicily. Harriet wrote that she had just finished a lightweight criminal novel set in Sweden/Gotland/Visby in which the author wrote that in early times during yearly historical festivity weeks 'you could be made a knight by Botolph himself!' As a result of this, Harriet told me, she ventured into the 'clouds' and discovered a paper written in Swedish by Dr Nanouschka Myrberg entitled "Botulf - Saint or Free Mover?" Nanouschka is from Stockholm University and I lost no time in contacting her and she very kindly sent me a copy of her paper. It took me a while, burning the midnight oil in company with Mr Google-Translate, before I managed to produce an English copy - but what an exciting process it was.

### **How many English people with the name of Botolph have you met?**

I guess your answer will be 'none.' In Scandinavia though, it seems that you cannot go more than a couple of hundred kilometres without falling over Botolphs/Botulfs/Botulfssons by the dozen. Perhaps this is a slight exaggeration but the principle is correct. Some years ago Patricia Croxton-Smith kindly sent me some research which had been done by a Norwegian called

Botolf Botolfsen into Saint Botolph's connections with Scandinavia. That in itself was exciting and something which I will follow up on when I get to the Scandinavian Saint Botolph's churches.



**Runestones.** How much do you know about runestones? I must confess to being 97% ignorant until last week but now I know a bit. The tradition of raising these started in C4 and lasted until C12. The stones are found in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The custom received a boost in c.960 when Harold Bluetooth commanded the erection of a runestone to mark his baptism; other lords copied him. There are about 3,000 such stones in Scandinavia.

**Dr Myrberg's research** tells us that Botulf is a common male name that appears in *at least 29 Gothic runestone inscriptions between 1000 and 1400*. The oldest evidence for the name Botulf in Gotland is Runestone G80 in Linde church (c.1060). The consensus of opinion seems to be that the name was imported from England. The Botulf inscriptions on the runestones might be referring to a namesake or to Saint Botolph himself.

The author then moves on to focus on **Botulf Coins** (*Botulfsmynten*). These, she tells us, are characterised by runic inscriptions and she expresses surprise that such a ‘standalone’ coin could run in parallel with the ‘official’ Gothic coinage. There are six variations of these coins most of which are single sided. Dr Myrberg has located 40 examples of which 28 are sufficiently clear to examine comparatively. It seems that they were in circulation between 1210 and 1220. She speculates that the coins were perhaps created by ‘a Botulf from Gotland’ - maybe an ‘enterprising Gutnian farmer or trader who took advantage of the uncertain circumstances of C13 when people became allowed to mint their own coins as a matter of practicality.’



Left: a silver sceat from the reign of King Aldfrith (685-705). Right: the same coin ‘photoshopped’ by the Editor using the outlines of a drawing by Dr Myrberg to give an idea of the appearance of a Botulfsmynt.

Right at the end of this most interesting paper, Dr Myrberg briefly mentions the Hanseatic League but then moves on. As I was translating, a vision of the Hansa kept flashing through my mind. I feel that this is just the sort of thing that would have appealed to this powerful organisation which was founded in 1150 and traded closely with the prime St Botolph port of Boston in Lincolnshire. We know that Saint Botolph was the closest the Hansa came to having a patron saint. He was revered by the sailors who traded between Scandinavia and Britain.

Dr Myrberg tells us that the earliest *Botulfsmynten* contained high silver content but this gradually reduced over the years. I would not have been surprised to find that the Hansa minted their own coins - but how much cleverer to have minted a coin that bore the name of the saint who was noted for protecting the traveller on his voyage and interceding for good harvest and wool production. If the coin was a Hansa device then it could of course be exchanged at any Hansa port. Hundreds of years later St Christopher medallions were carried as talismans. Perhaps *Botulfsmynten* served a double purpose? Or perhaps they were not used in a monetary way at all?

I will wait with interest to hear my new friend Nanouschka’s comments.

## Church Feature

# Shotesham, Norfolk.

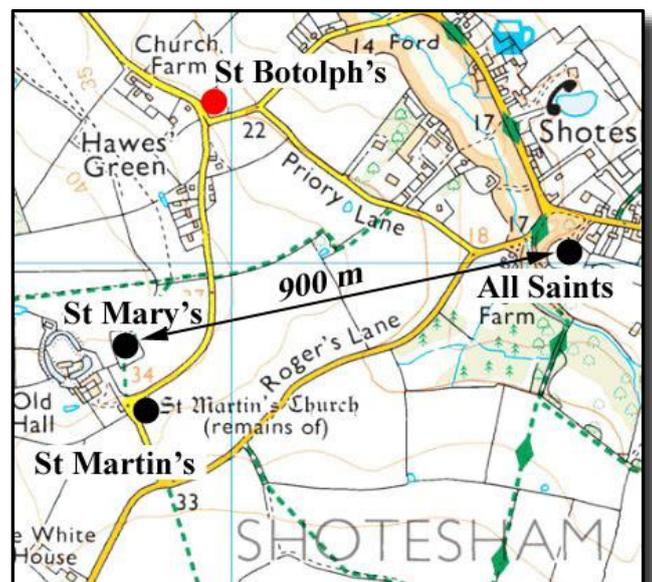


**Approach:** From Ipswich: Take the A140 to Newton Flotman (33 miles) and then turn right opposite the Duffields site towards Saxlingham Nethergate. After 1 mile turn left onto Norwich Road and follow this for 1.2 miles. Here Knights Road joins on your left - pass that and take the first turning to the right (Eastell’s Lane). After 300 metres bear right and 500 metres further on turn left into Hollow Lane. After 100 metres where the road divides you will see on your left the gate to the site. Park where convenient and safe.

**Location:** Junction of Hollow Lane and Hawes Green, Shotesham, Norfolk NR15 1UP.

Lat: 52.5456, Long: 1.3016; NGR: TM 239993.

**Listed Grade: II**



In many ways we have been spoilt in the last 68 issues by having Botolph churches which have

survived the rigours of time. We are coming to the point now though where we have to review the casualties which, like any of the fallen, deserve our respect. The burning questions which attended all the other churches were: *Why was the church built in this position? . . . and Why was it dedicated to Saint Botolph?* The questions are no less pertinent in the case of St. Botolph's Shotesham and, in order to answer them, we will later need to look at the village as a whole.



As the notice near the gate tells us: *A tiny piece of ruin - part of the tower - remains in the churchyard. The Shotesham conservation group and the PCC have cleared the site for visitors.*



And this is your first sight as you enter the garden.



Here you can see the remains of the tower in all its glory. If the Shard is the tallest, then this must surely be the shortest tower in England.



This will help you get your bearings. On the left is the remaining piece of the ruin; it is the west wall of the tower. I have drawn in the remaining part of the tower and the nave.



On this corner, on the right, you can also see the foundations of a buttress at the northwest angle.



Michael Knights is one of Shotesham's leading lights and it was he who several years ago told me

of their St Botolph's church and their plans to tidy up the garden and open the remains for public view. It was a while before I got around to visiting it in 2016 and I am afraid it has taken another two years before it has finally reached publication.



Here Michael is pointing down the eastern part of Hollow Lane towards . . .



. . . the houses nestling in the valley through which flows a tributary of the River Tas. This stream in turns runs northwards up to Norwich before joining the River Yare which follows an easterly course to Great Yarmouth and the North Sea.



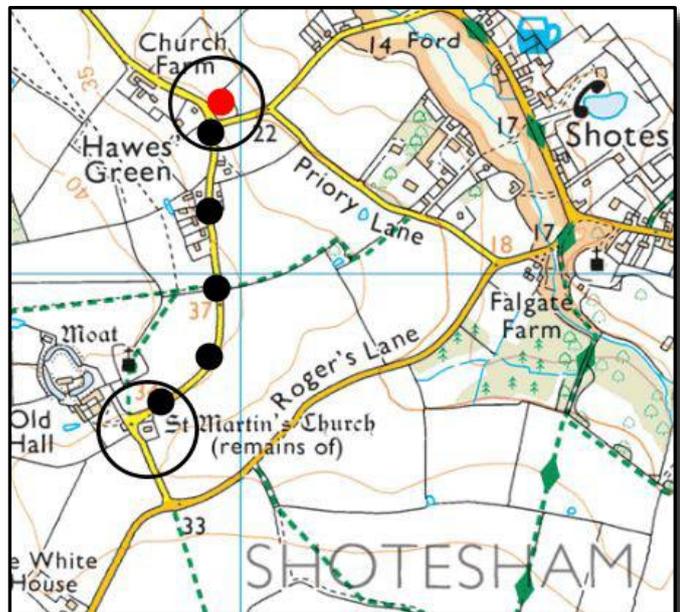
When we visited, the garden was nicely tended but one can imagine that it will not be easy to maintain such a high standard . . .



. . . as the years pass and the interest of the villagers waxes and wanes.

Michael told us that the church used to belong to the Abbot of St Benet's and it was sometimes in ancient documents referred to by that name and sometimes as St Botolph's. The story goes that the abbot made himself unpopular with Henry VIII and that it was due to Henry's spite that the church (together with others of the abbot's possessions) was destroyed either before or at the Reformation.

Its foundation is more interesting than its demise though since it seems that it was built in 1020 under the auspices of King Canute.



The visit to the St Botolph's site did not take long - there not being a lot to see - but Michael then kindly took us just over half a mile further down the road to the ruins of St Martin's church which had fared rather better than St Botolph's.



Once again the locals had been doing stalwart work clearing the site and restoring the building as far as they were able.



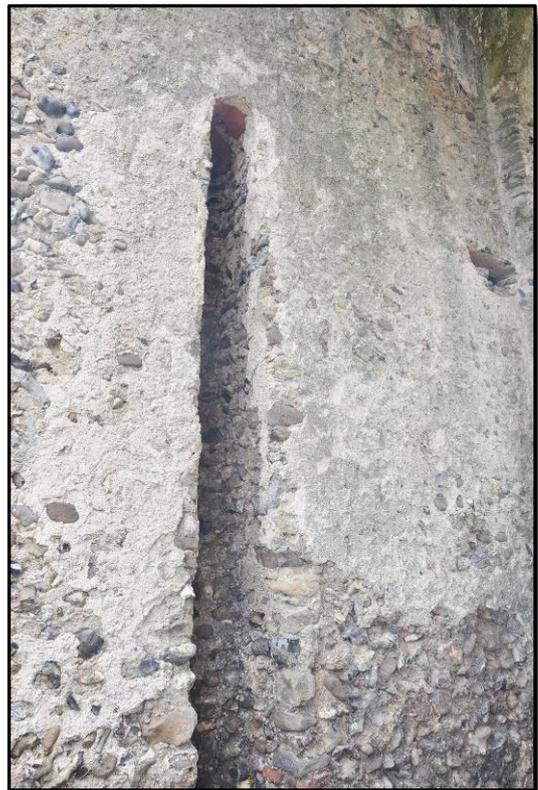
Amazingly the tower is still standing. This church also belonged to the Abbot of St Benet's - it having been given to him in about 1050 by Edward the Confessor. It too was condemned to demolition by Henry VIII but somehow survived the Reformation and carried on to boast 70 communicants in 1603. It was the English Civil War (1642-1651) that, for some reason, finally engineered the church's demise and it was abandoned. By the turn of the second millennium the ruins were inundated with ivy and small trees were starting to grow within the walls of the nave. In 2009 the Shotesham conservation group started the hard work of penetrating the brambles and rescuing the structure from its imprisonment.



It was possible to repair and restore some parts, but as Michael pointed out, it took time because one had to build the walls in layers and leave the mortar enough time to harden before building the next layer or the weight of the extra height would squash the mortar thin and lead to failure. Here (above) outside the nave and looking northeast you can see signs of the layering in the south wall.



This view shows the same section of the south wall but looking towards the northwest. The picture also shows the foundations of the south porch and the east aspect of the tower.



Entering the church through the lines of the south porch and turning left into the tower one finds this interesting groove in the masonry. It is an unusual utility - a recess for storing banner staves. What *will* they think of next? (As my mother would have remarked).



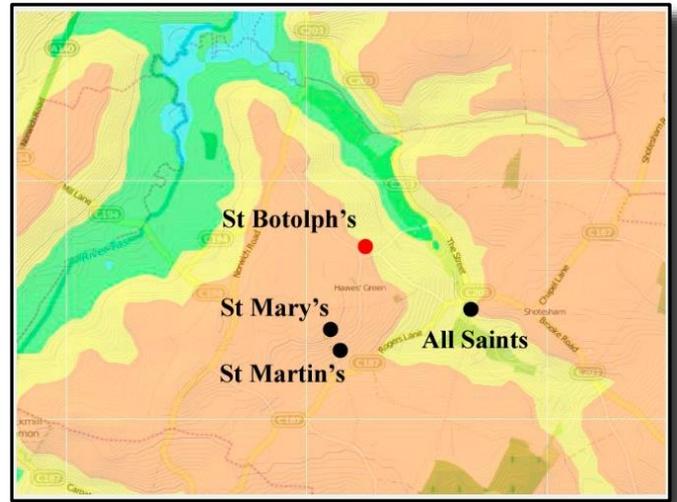
The PCC made arrangements for a local builder to seal the top of the walls using a capping of hydraulic lime mortar (seen here at the end of Michael's walking stick).



The base of the tower viewed from the south west. The remains of the east window are seen on the right side of the picture.



The west face of the tower.



Looking at the contour map's view of the four churches, we find (coincidentally or not) St Botolph's placed as usual on the edge of an escarpment; All Saints situated more in the valley and St Mary's and St Martin's on the top of the rise. Interestingly several writers mention All Saint's church as overlooking the other three whereas by my calculations it lies at 29 m above sea-level - three metres below its nearest competitor; an optical illusion perhaps?

### Analysis

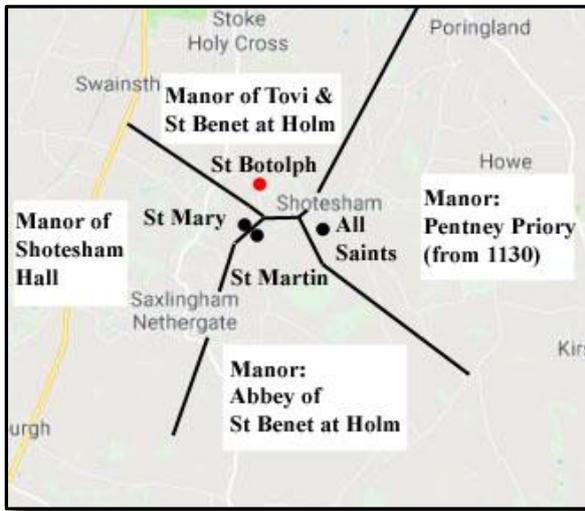
The village's full name is Shotesham St Mary and St Botolph with St Martin. In the past it was often referred to as 'Shottisham' - not to be confused with a village of the same name in Suffolk.

Today it has a population of about 562 with the remains of the four churches lying within a 1,000 metre radius. The churches' dates are as follows:

St Botolph's:	c.1020 - pulled down in 1534.
St Martin's:	c.1020 - in ruins by mid C18.
All Saints:	c.1080 - still in use.
St Mary's:	c.1150 - still in use.

The Domesday Book of 1086 records Shotesham (in the Hundred of Henstead) as being 'Very Large' with 131.5 households. At five persons per household that would make the population about the same size as it is today . . . which is surprising. The village name is said to derive from 'Scotesham.' 'Scot' in this case means 'parts or portions' referring to the fact that it is a 'patchwork village' from the manorial point of view.

At the Domesday survey it comprised: 4 capital manors and 2 hamlets. The manors extended into Framlingham, Bedingham, Brooke and Stoke Holy Cross. In association with these 4 capital manors Shotesham also had 4 parish churches.



It has not been easy to unravel the story of which church belonged to which manor but I have done my best and the result of this is shown in the picture above. I await the Shotesham inhabitants' comments with interest.

One and a half miles to the north is the village of Stoke Holy Cross which was also recorded as being 'Very Large' - with 63.5 households. The Domesday Register shows that Stoke Holy Cross had 1 church under **Roger Bigot**; 1.5 churches under **Tovi** and 1 church under Eaton Manor - a total of 3.5 churches. At Shotesham we find 1.3 churches under Brooke Manor and 0.5 churches under **Roger Bigot** - totalling 1.8. Thus a total of 5.3 churches between the two villages. Allowing for inaccuracies and the fact that St Mary's was not built until after 1086 that would seem to be about right.

This **Tovi** seems to be one and the same as a standard bearer who came over with King Cnut and subsequently survived the Conquest to find favour with the new Norman king. In 1066 Holy Cross was owned by the Abbey of St Benet at Holme but somehow within the next twenty years Tovi gained the lordship. It seems likely that the name of the village has some connection with the discovery in Somersetshire in 1035 of an impressive black granite Holy Cross which then, under Tovi's direction, was transported to its final resting place in Waltham Abbey in Essex.

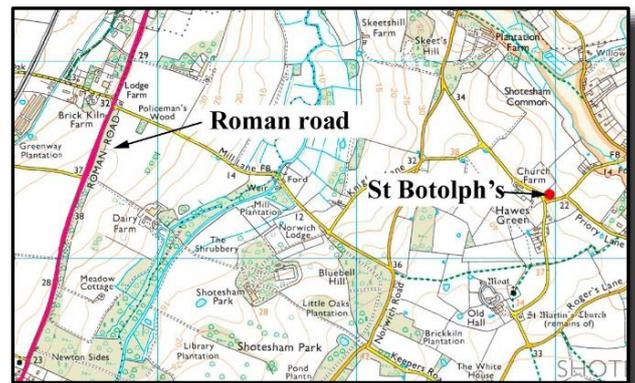
**Roger Bigot** was a Norman knight in the household of William the Conqueror. Roger and his brother Robert alerted the king to a plot against him and as a result were rewarded with estates in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. We have come across Roger or his heirs several times during our quest for information about the founders of Saint Botolph Churches: (cf. Banningham, Tuttington, Saxilby, Stoke Albany) which suggests that this family of landowners might have been

instrumental in choosing Saint Botolph for the churches' patrons.

**The Abbey of St Benet at Holme.** This has also featured previously - as the landowner of St Botolph's church Westwick. The Benedictine abbey was situated on the River Bure northeast of Norwich. It is said to have had Danish connections and was favoured by King Canute who conferred his manors of Horning, Ludham and Neatishead to it. When Canute later founded the abbey at Bury St Edmunds half the incumbents of St Benets at Hulme were transferred there together with much of St Benets' property. During the reign of Henry VIII the abbot of St Benets was such a constant thorn in his side that he resolved to decimate his abbey's possessions, one of which was St Botolph's church at Shotesham.

### Classification

We saw in the Editorial how enamoured the Scandinavians were with Saint Botolph and I think that this church was dedicated to him because of Danish influence - partly from Tovi himself and partly from the abbey.



And the choice of site? The Roman road lies just 1.4 miles away so, it might have been built with travellers in mind or it may just have been the landowner's decision.

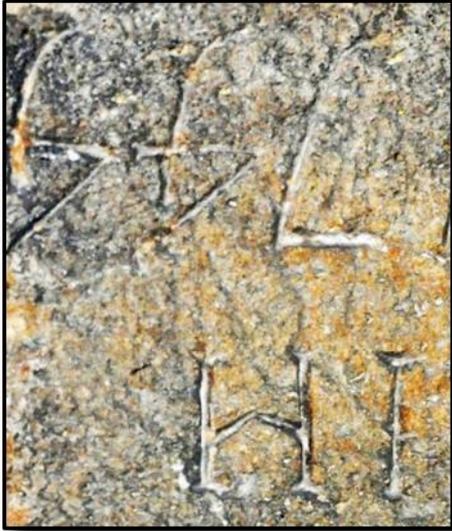
I would classify this one as B(ii) - a Travellers' Church founded between 800 and 1066.

**My grateful thanks to Michael Knights** for showing us round Shotesham two years ago and for his telephone call last night. I was comforted to hear that nothing has changed. Both the St Botolph and the St Martin sites are still being kept in good condition and the latter is now receiving a substantial number of visitors. The walnut tree planted at St Botolph's is thriving and the flowers that were planted in the garden made a good display last year. The decision was taken to have a new bell at All Saints and such was the enthusiasm of the villagers that £6,000 was made

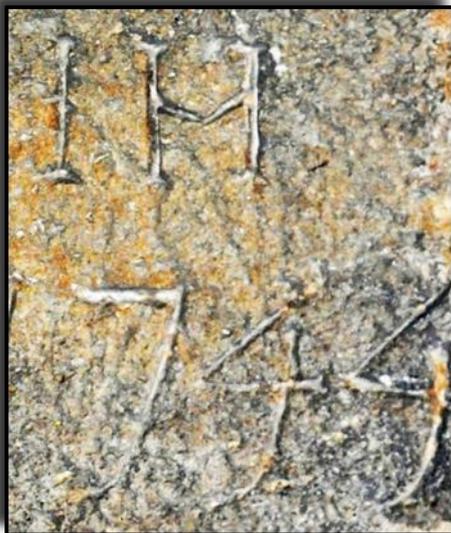
in one evening. It is clear therefore that all is as it should be at Shotesham and Zina and I wish them and all the other St Botolph parishes and all our members a Very Happy New Year.

### Correspondence

1. David Noy wrote in response to my query about the graffiti at Newton . . .



. . . which is to be found on the right side of the south door.



And this was David's solution. He suggested that Victorian restorers were to blame. We look at these church structures and cannot help thinking that they have looked this way since they were built. It is salutary to realise that, like Lego pieces, many of them have been dismantled and remantled (sometimes incorrectly) many times over the years. Thank you David.

### REGULAR END-NOTES

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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 with 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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