

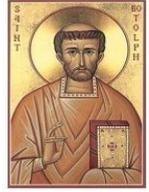


The Botolphian

Newsletter of

The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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

Issue Number: 87 **2020 – the 1400th anniversary (circa) of St Botolph's birth** 1st August 2020

Highlights this month

- **Church of St Botolph, Northfleet (3)**
- Correspondence from Father Stephen Anderson, Robert Beavis, Duncan Hopkin, Joanna Comer, Marcia Barton, Revd Paul Wilkinson, Graham Higgs,

Editorial

You will recall that two months ago you received a *Botolphian* with a series of small squares where the pictures should have been and a promise that I would supply the pictures as soon as the Covid-19 rules were relaxed sufficiently for me to visit the church and take the missing photographs. I intended just to send a sheet of photographs but having prepared it I found that it just would not do. This month is therefore an update on the salient points about the Northfleet church itself including some further interesting facts that I have discovered in the interim.

Church Feature

N

orthfleet, Kent



Approach: Drive north up Springhead Road to the junction with Dover Road and London Road and as you drive down The Hill into Northfleet you will see the church on your left. Parking is available nearby.

Key: Wendy Waller (Churchwarden and Chairman of the PCC) Tel: 07948 095-109.
Pauline Hickmott (Churchwarden) Tel: 07732 653-358.

Associate Priest: Father Cyril Showers.

At present the church is going through a difficult time having lost two priests in quick succession. Father Cyril is living at St Mark's Vicarage but covering St Botolph's too with the aid of Father Joe King.

Location: (This refers to the site of the parking area near the church gate): The Hill, Northfleet, DA11 9EX. 51.44118, 0.336064,

Church Website:

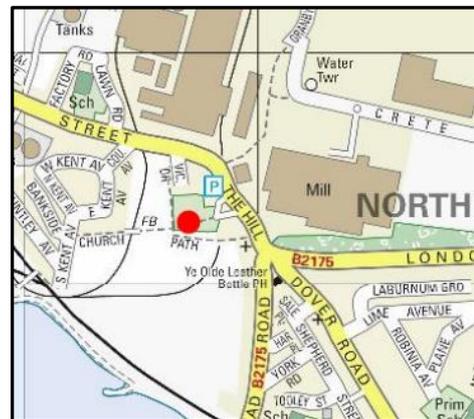
<http://stbotolphnorthfleet.org.uk>.

Website Administrator: Amanda Horrobin (amanda_horrobin@hotmail.co.uk).

The Benefice: St Botolph's Northfleet and St Mark's Rosherville

Facebook: St Botolphs Church Northfleet

Listed Grade: I



We discussed in a previous issue the area in general and what I believe are the disastrous results of excessive quarrying. I read in the news that the site is now earmarked to become Britain's Disneyland and although I have not thought the matter through regarding possible ramifications, it looks at first appearance as if this might be the best thing that could happen. What effect, I wonder, would it have on St Botolph's church. Might Saint Botolph the Patron Saint of Travellers find a new portrayal as a British Disney character?

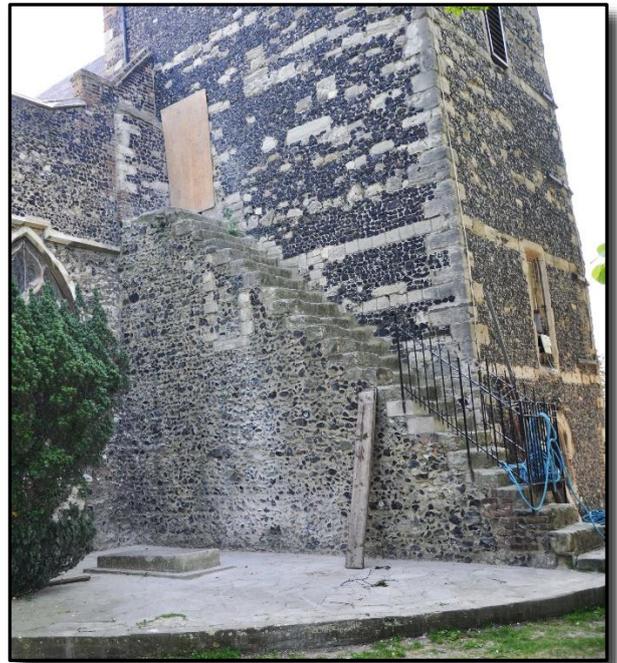
The **nave** we see today was built in 1330 on the site previously occupied by a Saxon church – and of course it is the earlier church – and perhaps its predecessor(s) - in which we are ultimately interested. One of the first things we might notice about the church is how large it is. Indeed, at approximately 166ft x 66 ft it is one of the largest churches in the Rochester diocese. The chancel was added in 1370 (together with the rood screen) but until that time the high altar was at the east end of the nave.

The original tower predated the nave by 250 years. It was built in 1080 and, although it collapsed in 1628 its existence marks the presence of the earlier church. Towers tend to be 'add-ons' constructed after the more important part of the church has been completed so it looks as if we are heading back to the benchmark date of 1020¹ for the construction of the earlier church itself. Once again Cnut the Great (King of England 1016-1035) must be considered as an influence.



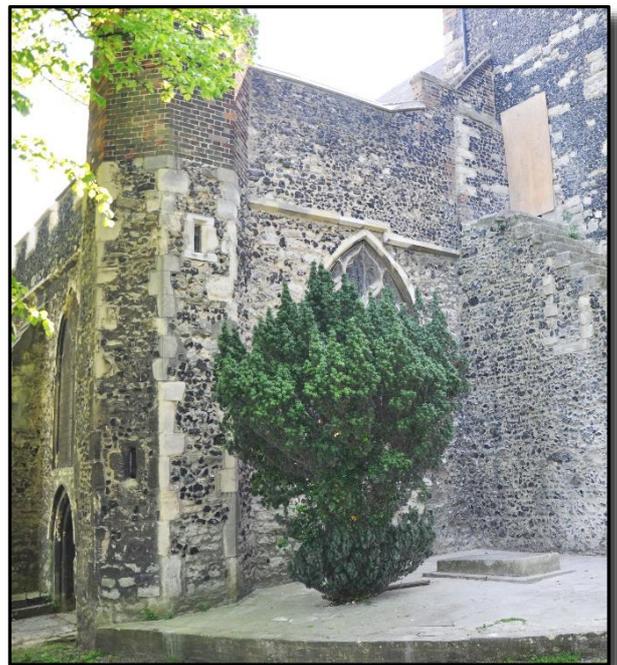
Today's tower (which can only be viewed from outside the church) was constructed *inside* the old tower in 1717. Here we see the south side . . .

¹ The process of dating early parish churches has been described as being equivalent to the arbitrary throwing of darts or spinning the roulette wheel. If in doubt the



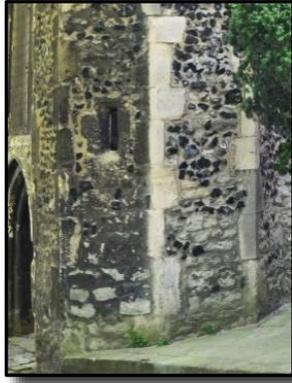
. . . and here the north side.

Halfway up the wall of the outer tower, the remains of a window can be seen. Above that is wooden shuttering which presumably secures the entrance to the belltower.



But at the northwest corner is an unusually-placed hexagonal tower which presumably houses a stairway and, via a gallery, would have provided access to the 1717 belltower.

date of 1020 seems to be regarded as the one to put your money on.

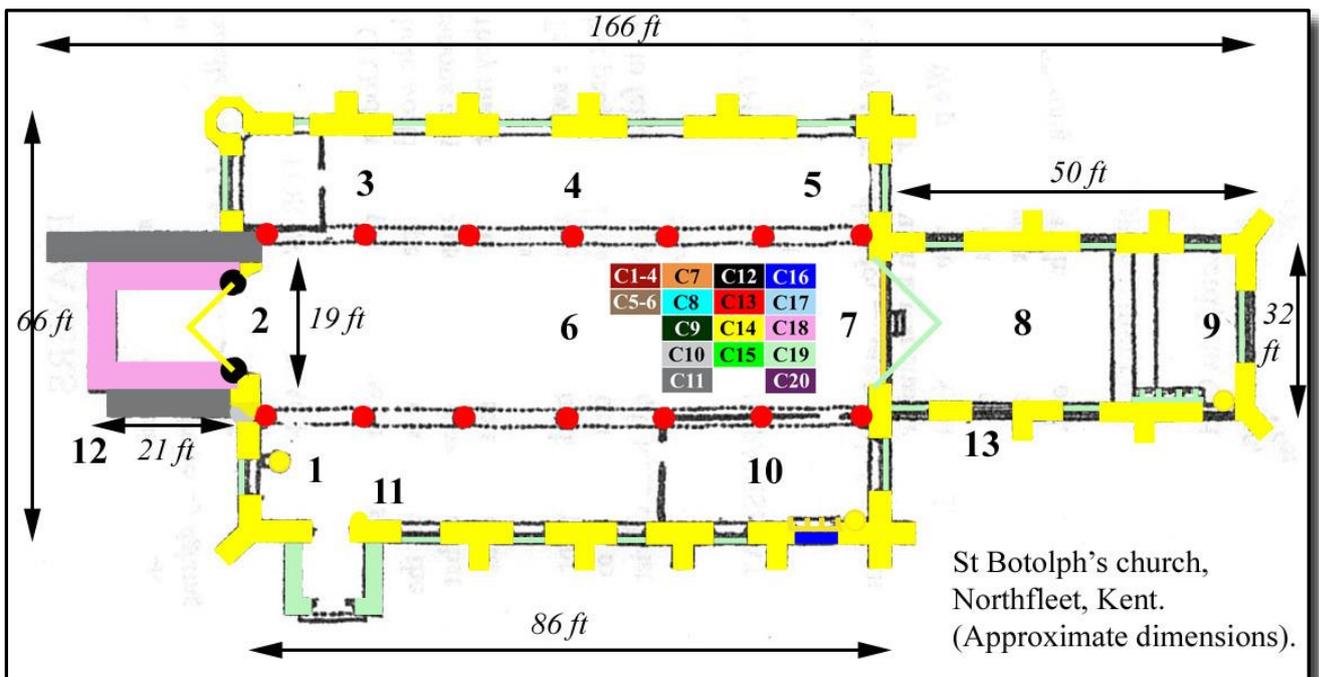
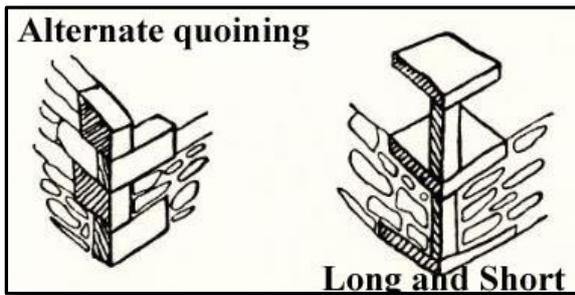


In a previous issue I wrote ‘It is made even more unusual by having ‘long and short’ stonework which identifies it as being of Saxon construction. Sadly I have been unable to study it closely I will reserve judgement on this until I am able to re-visit the church.’ Having now re-visited and re-studied the church, I must rescind my earlier comment. This is *not* long and short work *per se* although the shape of the quoins suggest that they are ‘long’ stones which have been recycled from the earlier Saxon church.

It is round the corner on the *south* side of the tower – where it joins the wall of the south aisle – that we can see true long and short work showing through the masonry where the angle of the old nave remains visible.

This is important in a second way because the quoins confirm that the Saxon nave did not have an aisle.

We can be fairly sure then that we are looking at a church which is based on a Saxon predecessor which had a *western* as opposed to a *central* tower. Both such churches were the norm in those days although *central* towers were perhaps more common. The usual length of the whole Saxon church, including a small chancel would have been about 60 feet. This differs hugely from the massive 160 feet we see today. The church must have received a great deal of investment over the years but from whom?



St Botolph's church, Northfleet, Kent. (Approximate dimensions).

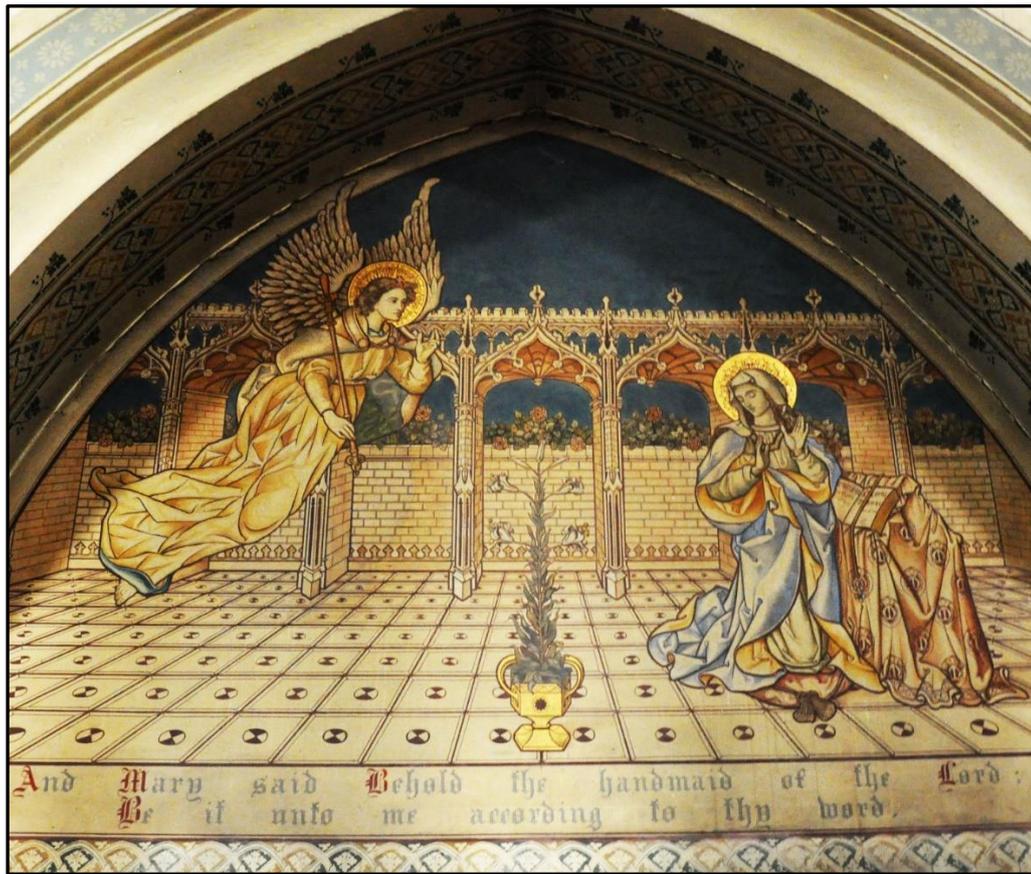
To continue our inspection of the church we will again follow the numbers shown on the

groundplan above as we did in our primitive attempt in June - but this time with pictures!

1. Once through the south doorway we find the C14 font on our left. In C18 it had been moved to the 'christening pew' in the north aisle but was returned to its position near the south doorway in 1850. In 1865 it was desecrated and so removed from the church until 1937.



2. The church guide tells us: *Below the painting on the west wall are some columns which are all that remain of the Norman church that stood on the site.* We have to remember that we are considering a progression of several churches in this location. The 'Norman' church referred to is of course the one that existed between the time of the Saxon church and the one we see today.



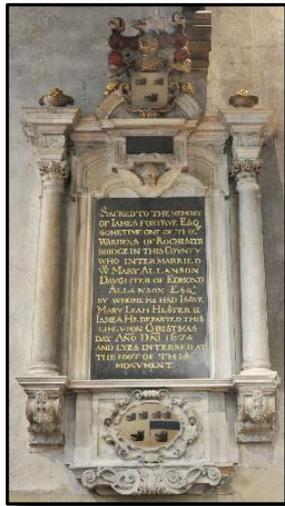
The painting itself, the **Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, is the work of N.J.H. Westlake of the firm Lavers, Barraud and Westlake. Between 1872 and 1876 this same company restored the church's stained glass windows to an exceedingly high standard.



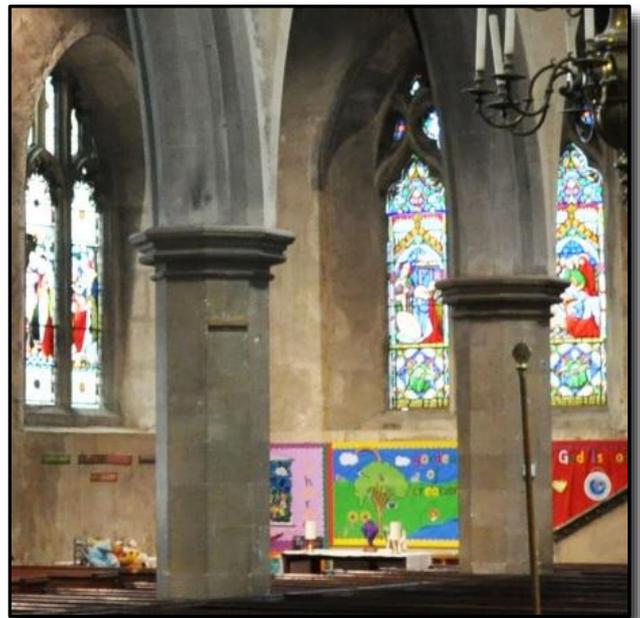
3. The **parish chest** is a magnificent piece of equipment and is thought to date from C14 and to have been bequeathed to the parish by William Lyle in 1391.



The sculptor has Mr and Mrs Crich in such 'joyful' attitudes that I could not resist a close-up. John Newman, in Pevsner's *Buildings of England* series writes "One can only interpret this curious pose as a hesitant English attempt to show Italian Baroque ecstasy." Personally I quite like a bit of Baroque ecstasy from time to time.



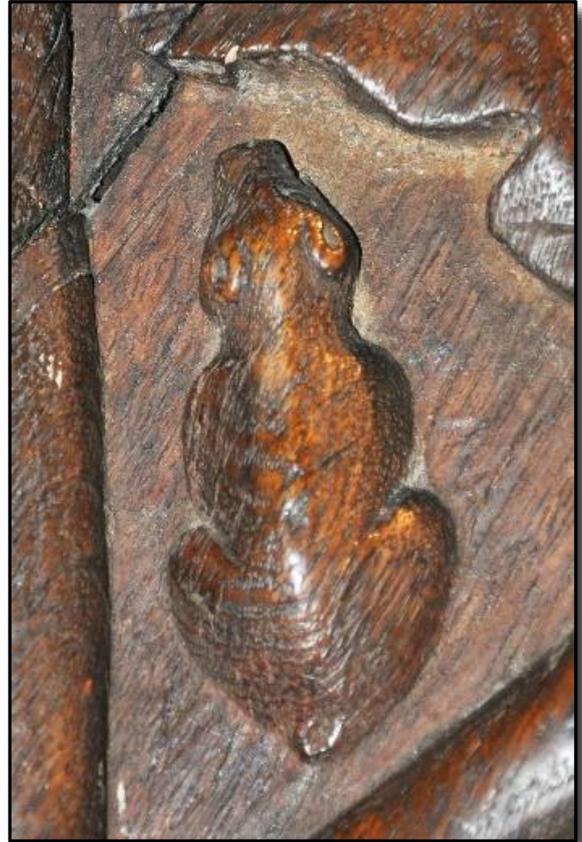
4. The Fortrye Memorial (1674) on the wall of the north aisle, together with the monument to Richard (d.1709) and Esther (d.1705) Crich. Their burial slabs lie under the adjacent pews.



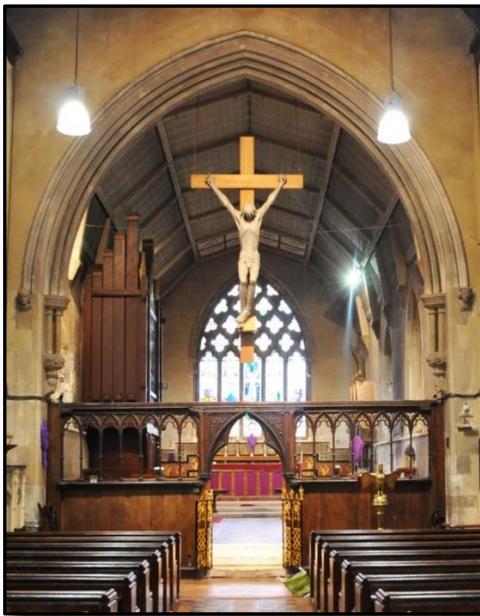
5. The church guide writes: *The (Saint) Andrew Chapel (above) contains two fine C15 windows (the remainder in the church are C14) with stained glass inserted at the end of C19. This is the church's 'children's chapel'*



6. The original box pews were replaced in 1850. The nave was restored in 1862 by Edward Godwin who raised the level of the floor.



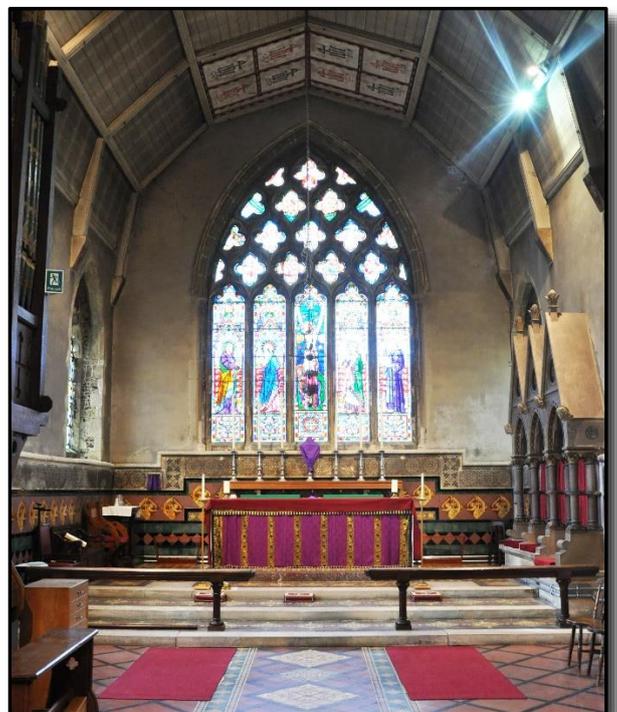
All *proper* people who come into this church have to stroke the church mouse – especially the children who, no doubt, are told that they have to keep as quiet as him during the relevant parts of the services.



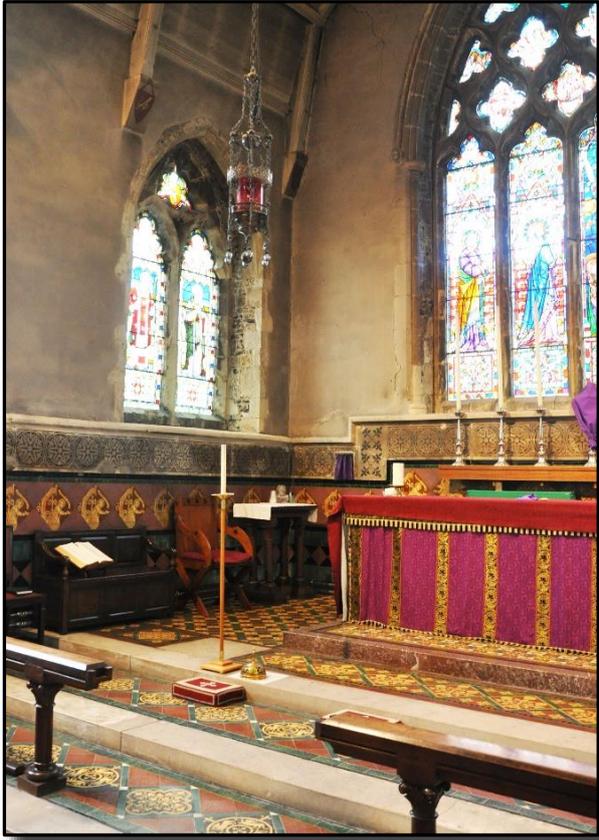
7. **The Rood Screen** is the oldest to be found in a parish church in Kent. It was constructed in 1370 and originally had solid oak doors and was topped by a rood (crucifix).



On the reverse (chancel side) of the screen the defaced (vandalised by the puritans) faces of Christ and the Apostles can be seen (arrowed). The white circle on the left indicates the position of the church mouse!



8. Like the rood screen, the chancel also dates from 1370. It was heavily restored by Edward Godwin in 1862. (Godwin's profile was explored in the earlier Northfleet issue).



On the north wall in the sanctuary's northeast corner there is a window with the inscription *ex Voto fraternitas St Botolph 17 June 1872* which I take to mean that the stained glass was a votive offering from the Guild of St Botolph

The Guild of St Botolph

I had read elsewhere that there was a Guild of St Botolph in Northfleet but I had been unable to find any details about it. I imagine that the organisation was disbanded many years ago. At first, I wondered if the guild had some Masonic connections but if this had been so I am sure that I would have found the familiar Freemasonry symbol of a square and compasses depicted somewhere in the stained glass close to the inscription.

Whilst searching for details of the guild I made a discovery which I was surprised not to have known about earlier. Last year, on 1st April 2019 a Guild of St Botolph was formed at St Botolph's church in **Boston Lincolnshire** in order to raise some much needed funds. Rather than it being the prestigious organisation that I had hoped, it seems likely that the Northfleet guild too was conceived as a money-raising venture.

Revd Frederic Southgate was vicar of this parish from 1858 to 1885 and it seems that he was responsible for setting in train the second phase of the C19 restoration work here.

There was, in the second half of C19 England, an 'Anti-Ritualism' campaign which sought to maintain the protestant 'Low Church' nature of the Church of England. To that end the Public Worship Regulation Act was passed in 1874 with the result that, as Wikipedia puts it: *using incense, wearing vestments, putting candles on the altar and using unleavened (wafer) bread in the Eucharist could and did put priests in prison and even led in 1888–90 to the prosecution of a bishop – Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln.*

Even calling oneself a 'priest' and describing Holy Communion as 'Mass' was considered suspiciously papist in those days. In 1906 the ruling was reversed when a Royal Commission recognised the legitimacy of pluralism in worship and ended prosecutions but the Act itself was not repealed until as recently as 1965.

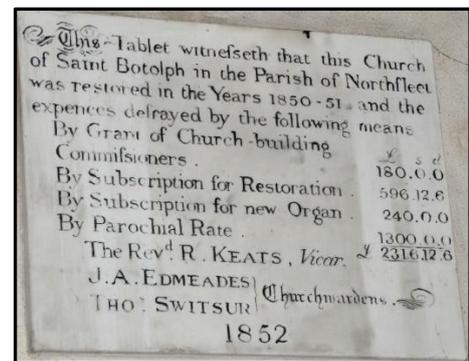
It seems that Revd Southgate was treading a fine line because there came a point when the parish was rocked by the scandal of the vicar being charged by some of the parishioners with carrying out High Church practices. He was also, quite illegally, charging for the use of pews.

In many ways one could put this down to over-exuberance in his desire to raise money and make improvements to his church. He seems to have been aided and abetted in this by Revd Fuller the rector of Greenhithe since on the formation of the Guild of St Botolph, Revd Southgate became the Provost and Revd Fuller the Vice-Provost.

To their credit a large sum of money seems to have been accumulated – sufficient to finance the replacement of two two-light windows in the sanctuary together with a marble step and footpace. Of the 22 stained glass windows in the church, nearly half seem to have been donated by individual families or via the guild.

The Restorations

There were three C19 restorations, the first of which started in 1852 under the Revd Keats who was the son of Admiral Sir R.G. Keats, K.B., Governor of Greenwich Hospital.



John Newman² tells us that during this restoration, all the window frames, mullions and tracery were replaced by the firm Brandon and Ritchie.

He writes that they “offer a wide variety of tracery patterns . . . The combination of geometrical motifs, such as spherical triangles and ogees is characteristic of Kent and the split cusps in the south aisle east window are the hallmark of so-called ‘Kentish tracery’”.



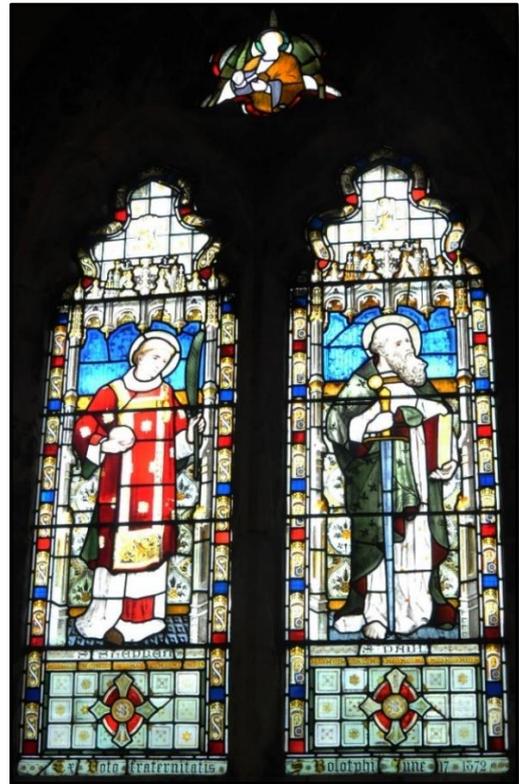
Above, the yellow denotes the aforesaid spherical triangle of the tracery; the white defines the S-shaped ogee style and the black arrow points to a split cusp.

I must say however that this is the only one of the church’s 22 windows which exhibits this feature of split cusps although spherical triangles and ogees abound.

The second restoration was the one carried out by Godwin under Revd Southgate and started in 1862.

The third restoration began in 1872 and it was during this phase that the church’s stained glass windows were restored - many by the firm of Lavers, Barraud and Westlake – others by Warrington.

Returning to the Guild of St Botolph, as mentioned earlier the members as a group financed two windows, both of which are in the sanctuary. The one on the north side is shown below.



It depicts on the left the martyr St Stephen, holding in his right hand one of the rocks with which he was stoned to death. The Bible tells us that his stoning was witnessed by the then Saul of Tarsus who we see on the right now named St Paul. It is a lovely window. There is a view that any article of great beauty should have a small defect to enhance its beauty further.



In the case of this window the small defect is that Saint Botolph’s name has been mis-spelt. The pronunciation of the new spelling has a somewhat Russian flavour.

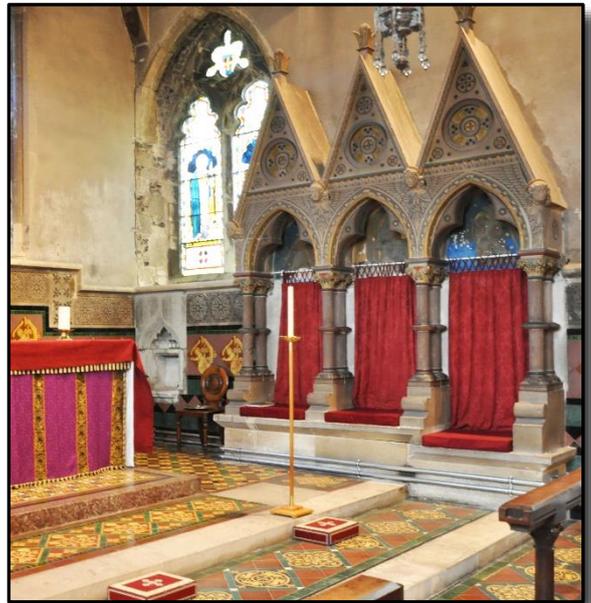
² Author of the West Kent edition of Pevsner’s *The Buildings of England*.



The window on the north side of the sanctuary (from the guild) is dated 1884 – a year before the death of Revd Southgate.



It appears that this is (or was) the insignia of the Northfleet Guild of St Botolph.



Below the south window is a piscina and to its right what some might call a 'magnificent' set of sedilia – the latter being part of Godwin's restoration. I quite like them but others have found them 'aggressive'.



The piscina dates from C14 and has an ogee-shaped arch. On the shelf stand bottles of Holy Oils ready to be consecrated.

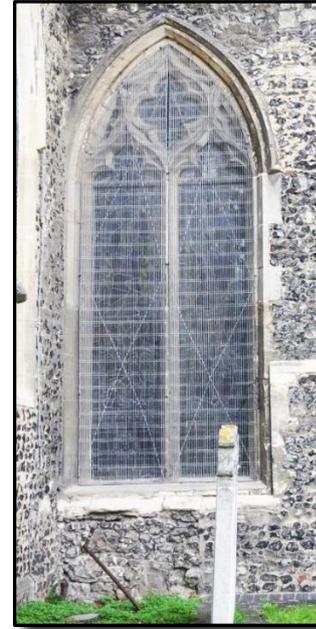


Looking down the nave from the altar rail we can see that the long chancel might more properly be called ‘the choir’. It is partly occupied by the organ and partly by choir stalls.

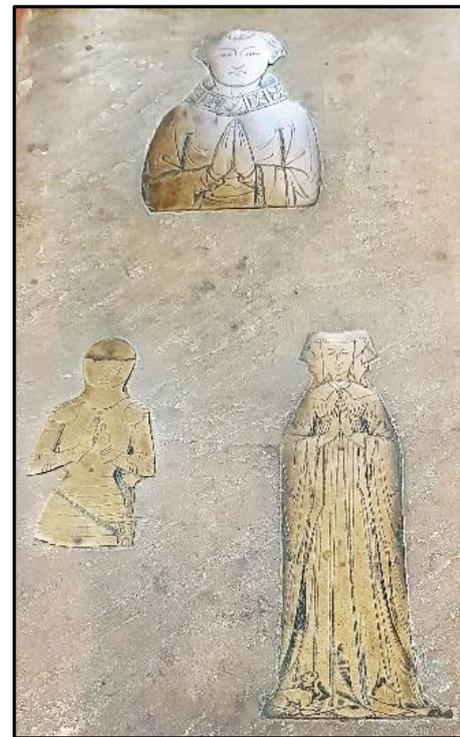


On the left (south) side is a priest's door and the next window along, just before the chancel arch, stretches almost to the floor – a lot lower than the other windows.

Outside, we see that this window is tucked tightly into the angle between the south aisle and the chancel and close enough to the ground for anyone to lean inside, were it to open.



It is another of the enigmatic Lowside Windows that we keep coming across. These were a required feature in this position between about 1225 and 1350 and I have expressed my thoughts on them many times before - but in truth their purpose remains a mystery.



8a. There were originally nineteen mediaeval brasses in this church. Above at the top we see William Lyle (Rector 1390 to 1391) and below are William and Katherine Rykill who lived at Instead Rise.

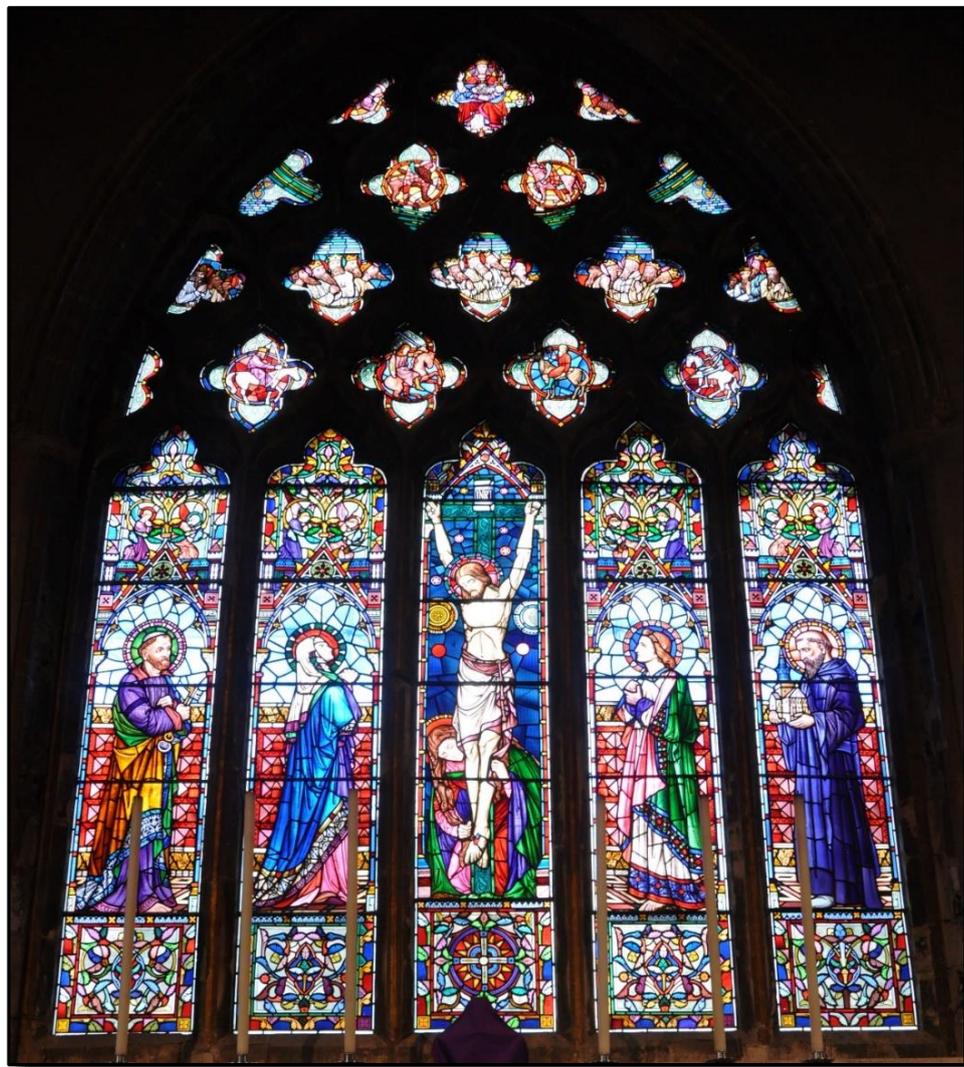


The 4ft 6 ins. brass memorial to Peter de Lacy dates from 1375 and is one of the earliest in the country to depict a priest.

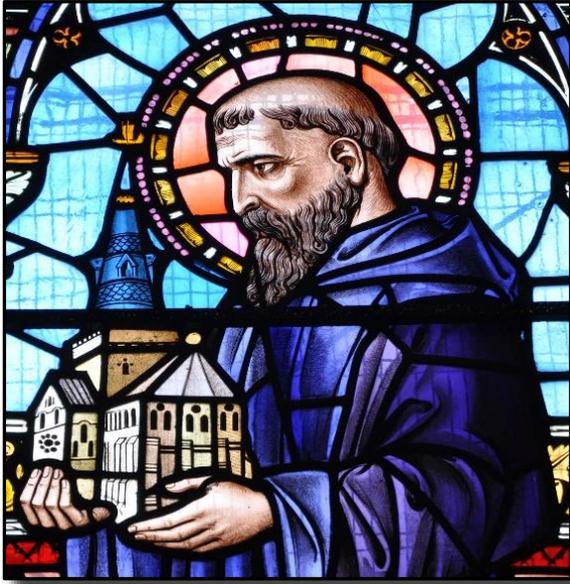
The subject was Rector of St Botolphs from 1356 to 1375 and also chaplain to the Black Prince.

There are signs that the brass originally depicted a canopy over his head.

I must confess to having had to ask Wendy Waller for her assistance in order to find both the mouse and the brasses.



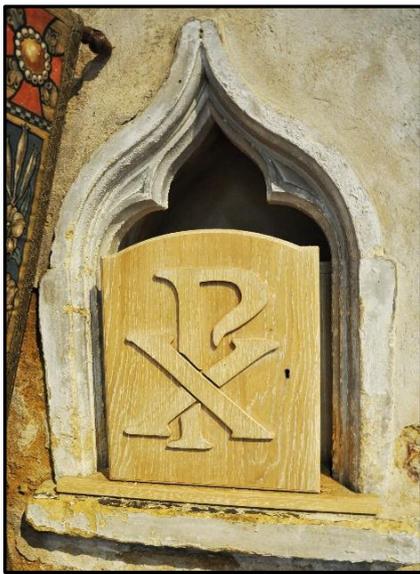
9. The **East Window** is quite magnificent. It was designed by Godwin, made by Milner-Allen, Lavers and Barraud and erected in memory of Prince Albert – once again almost certainly financed by the Guild. On the left, carrying the keys of heaven, stands St Peter, next is Mary Cleophas, then Mary Magdalene tending Christ's feet. Closest to Jesus on the right is St John the Apostle and then comes our very own St Botolph, carrying a model of Icanho Abbey. Above is a representation of part of the Book of Revelation. It is said that Botolph's representation bears a good likeness to the architect Edward Godwin!



And this is Godwin's portrayal of St Botolph.



10. We then jump to the **Lady Chapel** where the Sedilia and Piscina both date from C14.



Bolted securely to the piscina's bowl is a locked wooden box which I suspect contains the reserved sacrament. The piscina itself has an ogeed arch just like its sister in the sanctuary - so it looks as if both piscinae were placed at the same time.

Whether this chapel was dedicated to Our Lady in 1330 or to some other saint is a matter for conjecture. Since the sedilia themselves do not follow the same ogeed pattern it seems likely that they were built half a century later when the style was beginning to change.



From the outside we can see that in order to accommodate the high sedilia *inside* the church, the lower border of the little window frame on the far right is much higher above the ground than the frames of the other windows. And in spite of the fact that *The Buildings of England* tells us that all the window masonry was replaced in C19, it appears that this one escaped.

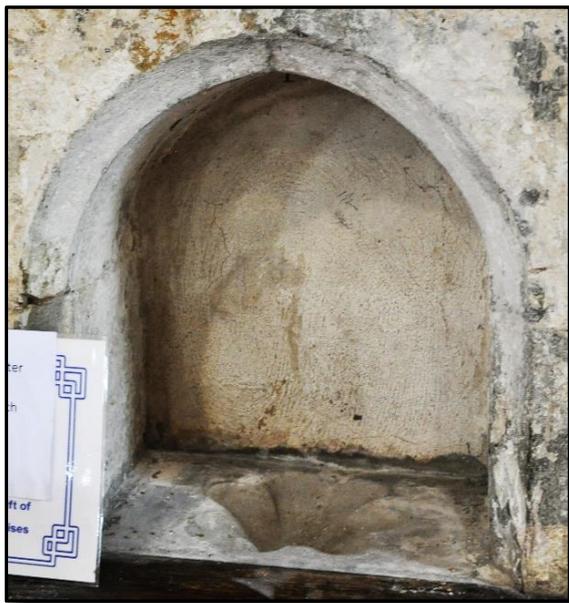


It is clearly not C14 however but its flattened top and grumpy-looking hood-moulding heads suggest that it was replaced in C16.



Whilst we are on the subject, the one window where the book was hesitant about the accuracy of its replacement was the *centre* one of these three windows of the north aisle. You will notice that the culprit has a more pointed gothic arch than the others and that it reaches closer to the moulding at the base of the battlement than its partners do. I suspect that, in the days when the customer was

always right, this was the mason's compromise when the benefactor stipulated that the tracery of the upper section of his window should be circular. Shortening the window too much would be aesthetically displeasing so an extra 12 inches of latitude was gained by raising it.



11. Back inside the church and moving onwards towards the west, we find the **Holy Water Stoup** by the south door. Again this looks C14. One might have wished it had an ogee arch to match the piscinae but this is a *functional* object for the use of the congregation.



12. We have already discussed the **Tower** to which there is no access from *inside* the church. The remains of the old outer tower are C12. The newer 1717 inner tower rests inside the Norman supporting framework.



13. The final site in this baker's dozen lies on the south wall outside the building on the buttress near the blocked priest's door. In the area indicated by the arrow in the picture above . . .



. . . we can just about see the outline of a C14 **Mass Dial**.

Classification

Aggravated by the Covid-19 circumstances, it has taken me two issues (initially June and now August 2020) to finalise the Northfleet investigation. This has been in addition to my early essay in November 2013.

At the end of the June issue I concluded "I believe that the site of St Botolph's church Northfleet is likely to have been founded by St Botolph himself in C7. This would give it an 'A' classification."

Thanks

My sincere thanks to Wendy Waller, churchwarden and chairman of St Botolph's Parish Council, for her help with my research.

Correspondence

1. **Father Stephen Anderson** wrote from Cambridge with thanks for the *Botolphian* and in particular for the “excellent video of Father Tim.”

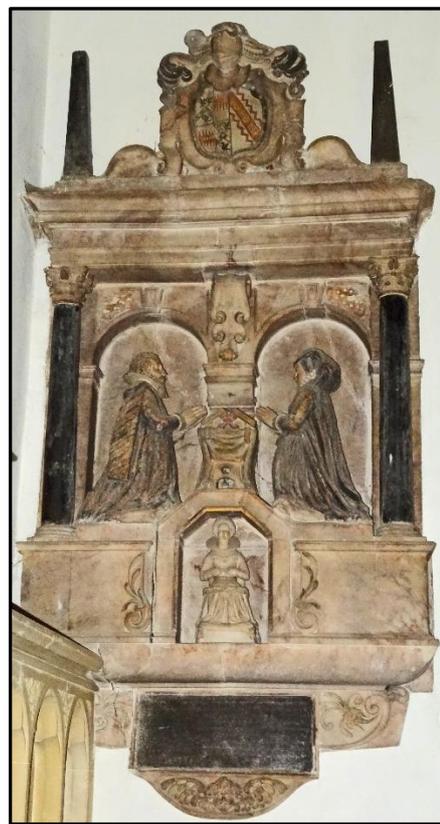
2. **Robert Beavis** wrote saying *Galleting is commonest in West Sussex, but will be found all over south-eastern England. The second example of pointing, which you think covers older stonework, appears to be ribbon pointing. It's very difficult to tell from the photo, but it looks most like a modern repair in sand cement. The crazed lines (perhaps an attempt to cover decaying stonework) and the vigorous pointing proud of the masonry are often the work of modern builders throughout the 20th century, who repointed historic walls with neither the knowledge nor the materials to do the job correctly. Sadly, it is likely that the use of hard cement is irreversible and will cause long-term damage to the historic fabric.*

I'd recommend English Heritage (2011) Practical Building Conservation - Mortars, Renders & Plasters (re-issued in 2018, published by Routledge). It's got a lot of useful information. Painfully expensive, perhaps best borrowed from the library!

[On questioning Robert told me that he is in the process of finishing a Master's degree in Conservation of Historic Buildings at Bath. Good luck with that Robert].

3. **Duncan Hopkin** wrote from Folkestone on the same subject saying that locally we have examples of galleted walls in Elham and Sandwich. He also noted that, by coincidence, shortly after the arrival of the *Botolphian* he read that the flint gallets in the walls of Windsor Castle complicated its restoration after the 1992 fire due to difficulties they caused when the contractors wanted to drill into the walls.

4. **Joanna Comer** wrote from St Botolph's Lullingstone, kindly sending me more useful pictures of the Lechmere Chapel at Chevening two of which, with her permission, I reproduce here. As she points out, the second picture commemorates Robert Cranmer, nephew of Thomas.



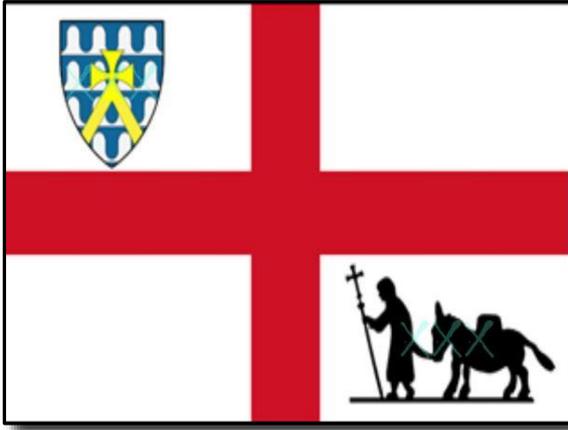
5. **Marcia Barton** wrote from St Botolph's Chevening: “Many thanks again for featuring our church in the July edition! May I just gently make a couple of factual corrections?”

First, the church is not part of the Chevening Estate, although it is certainly surrounded by estate land.

Secondly, we are no longer in the Shoreham Deanery, and for quite a few years have been in the Sevenoaks Deanery.

Otherwise I'm afraid there are still all those other questions about the building to which we may never have an answer! Our church architect for example believes the north side of the church is older than the south side.” Thank you, Marcia, for those valued corrections. I will tweak the records accordingly.

6. **Revd Paul Wilkinson** wrote from Newbold-on-Avon: “I thought you might be interested in seeing the attached. My churchwarden's grandson (age 15) is a bit of a flag expert and he designed this flag and had it professionally made up as a birthday present for his grandfather. The explanation that he wrote to go with the flag is, I think, self-explanatory. We plan to fly it for the first time this coming Sunday to mark the (limited) reopening of the church after its COVID shutdown. It is good to see that St Botolph's influence is living on in a new generation. [Amateur flags are often very fussy but this, to me, seems to be a beautifully simple design using, as it does, the church's weathervane as a motif. Well done young man].



7. **Graham Higgs** wrote from Chevening: “I am a new recruit to the society and Treasurer of St Botolph’s Church Chevening PCC. I must congratulate you on a delightful feature on our church, the style of the writing was both learned and humorous. Excellent and most enjoyable. Sadly, as with most churches of this age, we have major work to do on the church and money is likely to be a problem for us. **So, if anyone has any spare cash sitting around, please visit our website and pass a little our way.** Once again, thank you for a delightful feature, it has brightened up a very dull day!” [Thank you, Graham, – no good treasurer misses a chance to advertise the need for funds!]

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 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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