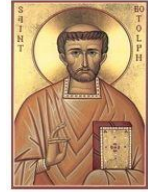




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Issue Number: 111

Now published every other month

1st August 2024

Highlights this month

- **Haverhill.**

Editorial

Well here we are at the beginning of August, and the substance of this newsletter which started as the *June issue*, and then became the *delayed June issue* has now turned into the *August issue*,

Many apologies for these delays. I hope that we are back on track now – at least for a while. As I explained two months ago, the initial hiatus was caused by my wanting to concentrate on the delights of giving my 6-year-old grandson Jacob his first experience of living on a boat and sailing. He took to this like the proverbial duck to water and we had a great family time in Licata, Sicily which has been my boat's home port for the past seven years. Sadly, having reached the age of 82, the time has now come when I am going to have to give that up – before it suddenly gives me up – so ELECTRA II is for sale, and offers are beginning to come in so it seems that I am on a committed course. The good news is that spending longer in England will, I hope, allow me to finalise the publication of my other Saint Botolph books - and to write these newsletters on time.

Sixty years of sailing on the high seas and facing wind, rain and sun has taken its toll, and after returning home with Jacob I had to undergo surgery on my lower lip for the removal of what turned out to be a Squamous Cell Carcinoma caused by too much sun, so this slowed me down a bit more and kept me away from the computer and the newsletter.

Fortunately (aided, I know, by lots of prayers from family and friends) the surgeon managed to remove the entire tumour (in the 17mm chunk that he took) and as a result of his skilful plastic

surgery, my lower lip looks pretty much the same as it ever did although Zina tells me that it makes me appear more serious – which at my age is probably no bad thing.

We are now rapidly approaching the Society of Saint Botolph's annual luncheon which we normally hold at the end of October. Last year there was some discussion about altering the date to make the event more accessible for some who found the 'half-term date' inconvenient, but as so often happens it transpired that this would have made it more difficult for others who had found the date ideal. My proposal therefore (which might well change if the date proves difficult for some people) is:

Cambridge 12.30 for 1 p.m.

Wednesday 16th October 2024

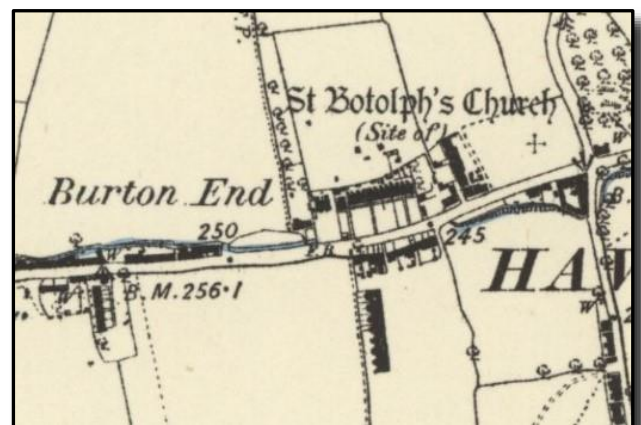
at a venue to be announced later.

Please contact me on 07802 646644

(Voice, WhatsApp or SMS)

or by email to denpepper@virginmedia.com
and let me know your thoughts asap.

And now to the interesting conundrum concerning a site in Haverhill, Suffolk. Is this the Saint Botolph's Church that never was?



Feature

Haverhill, Suffolk.

This feature is not concerned with church architecture or matters such as Lowside Windows; it is more of a detective story following a challenge.

At the beginning of April (2024) I received the following email from Joanne Comer of St Botolph's Church, Lullingstone:

*Dear Denis,
Relatives coming to a wedding at St Botolph's Lullingstone were interested in our saint as they lived at St Botolph's Way, Haverhill in Suffolk. They said the church with that dedication was no longer there. We wondered if it was on your list of lost churches?*



Joanna then helpfully provided me with a link which led me to Tony Turner, the Honorary Archivist at Haverhill Local History Museum, to whom I wrote saying:

'In the History section of your website I note the following comment with regard to the church (of St Mary?) which used to stand at Burton End:

“ ... In the nineteenth century this name [Burton End] was misrepresented to become St Botolph's, a serious mistake, since it has caused confusion ever since ... ”

I believe this was written by Michael Horne (of Haverhill) in 1999, and I would be most grateful if you would point me in the right direction where I can find the evidence in support of this.'

¹<http://www.stedmundsburychronicle.co.uk/Chronicle/Havto1899.htm> (accessed 17th May 2024)

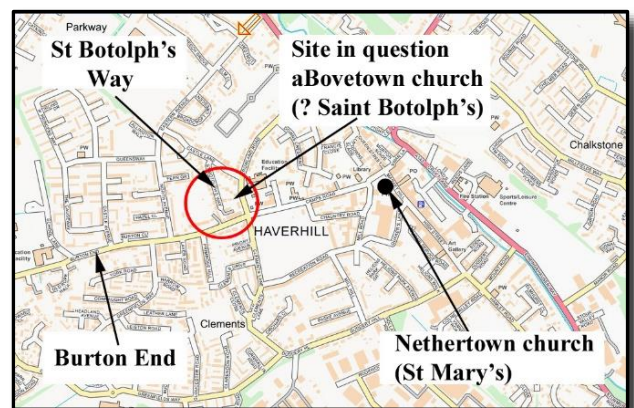
Tony Turner kindly replied promptly with the sad news that Michael Horne had passed away earlier in the year. He was not sure from whence Michael had obtained his information but was able to say:

“We have several quotes from wills of the time which quote “the church of our lady”. Saint Botolph's is not mentioned before 1794, when it can be found in the parish records but this is 243 years after the church was dissolved.”

-0-

There was the challenge - a church masquerading as a St Botolph's! True or False? Further research¹ revealed the following note in the St Edmundsbury Chronicle regarding a record in the Calendar of Patent Rolls 5 of Edward VIII Part III:

*May 12th 1551: "...Whereas the inhabitants of Haverhille, Suffolk, have informed the King that of the two churches in that town which are situated not far from each other, that the one called the Overchurche alias **Bovetowne** church is too small to hold all the parishioners, and is difficult to access; whereas the other church called **Netherchurch** is large enough for all, and conveniently situated, that the inhabitants are not able to repair and maintain two churches, and that the patron and rector of the said little church agree to its dissolution ... and unite the parishioners to the Netherchurche which shall then be the parish church of the whole town, and its rector shall have the tithes and profits previously enjoyed by the Rector of the Overchurche."*



The complaint that the church was *too small* is a revealing point – as discussed below.

The Suffolk Heritage Explorer website (accessed 28 June 2024) comes up with some interesting (and conflicting) facts:

In its November 2020 Monument record HVH 005, we read (Ed: the bold type is mine and is not present in the original):

1854: 'When digging a gateway in 'Bove² Town', or 'Button End' Churchyard, next to the cottage, many bones were found ...

1862: Visit by SIA to '(Button End) Churchyard, where a part of the foundations of a very small **Norman apsidal** church had been exposed to view for the gratification of visitors...'

1885 Excavations of the old church at Haverhill by W W Boreham in 1885 exposed **foundations of flint rubble 4 1/2 ft thick. The north wall was 38ft long: the east end, 20ft inside, was circular.** Burials were found inside this area oriented east-west, some with indications of coffins ... **This chapel existed as early as 1392³** and belonged to Castle Acre Priory, Norfolk.

1997: Excavation of part of churchyard by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust - 355 graves with evidence of coffins, '**pillow stones**' and possible dress fittings. Churchyard boundary ditches were also identified ...

In March 2023 this was updated in SHE's Event Record ESF21043 following further excavations so that the current record now reads: *The church was **almost certainly of Norman or earlier date.***

The mention of 'pillow stones' is interesting. Suffolk Heritage Explorer defines such a stone as '*A small Anglo-Saxon cross-slab buried on the breast or beneath the head of a corpse.*' The presence of these items suggests a pre-conquest date for the graveyard.

The recorded dimensions and structure of the church walls are most important and relevant, being **38 feet long and 20 feet wide with a semi-circular apse and walls over 4 feet thick.**

This was a *tiny* church, and it is unsurprising that the 1551 congregation opted to move to the larger St Mary's Church in the newer town centre. But, like the presence of Anglo-Saxon pillow stones, the recorded size is also more reminiscent of an Anglo-Saxon church than a Norman one. This generates the suspicion that the Victorian archaeologist might have discovered something else about the church during his excavations that made him think it was Norman. Perhaps it was

² *Bove* (pronounced "Buv" is a shortening of 'Above'. In this paper, in an attempt to clarify the matter I from time to time refer to the upper church as '*aBovetownchurch*'. *Nether* means 'Lower'.

³ It is not clear why several websites should mention the 'Norman' church existing '*as early as* 1392'. If Norman, it would surely have existed earlier still.

the anomaly of the massively thick walls that led him to this conclusion?

Other well-known early Anglo-Saxon churches usually average about 60 feet in length but this includes the apse whereas the dimensions mentioned for Haverhill seem to be confined to the internal measurements of the nave. In those terms some approximate nave dimension comparisons are as follows:

Escomb, Durham 42 feet x 15 feet.

St Botolph's, Ruxley 44 feet x 20 feet⁴

St Botolph's, Botolphs 52 feet x 16 feet

Hadstock, Essex 44 feet x 21 feet⁵

St Martins, Canterbury 38 feet x 24 feet

St Pancras, Canterbury 42 feet x 30 feet

Thus the church on this site at Haverhill can be said to fit into the pattern of Anglo-Saxon church dimensions although the 4 feet 6 inch walls are for the moment unexplained. Let us therefore, as a starting point for the purpose of discussion, regard the church foundations as if they were Late Anglo-Saxon, i.e. c. A.D. 1000.

Analysis of Michael Horne's article.

In his excellent 1997 history of Haverhill (revised 2018), Michael Horne reminds us that the early settlement was well-established by pre-Roman times; the River Stour was navigable from Harwich as far as Wixoe, and the Roman road *Via Devana* ran from Chester, through Cambridge and Haverhill to Colchester. From A.D. 410 until, c. 900, he tells us, the **area's history is obscure**, but by 1086 Haverhill was an established market town and by C12 there were manors in the area and **possibly a castle** – although he cautions that there is no direct evidence of this until 1373, and that 'the castle' **might have been merely a fortified manor house**. The county border divided the town for 900 years from 1008 to the end of C19, two thirds of it being in the Risbridge Hundred of Suffolk, and one third being in the Hinckford Hundred of Essex.

He notes that the medieval town and market developed first around Burton End and then shifted its position eastwards after the foundation of a new St Mary's church in C13.

It is here that he writes "... in C19 [*Bovetown church*] was misrepresented to become *St Botolph's*, a serious mistake ...".

⁴ These dimensions refer to the Anglo-Saxon foundations that lie beneath the more recent superstructure.

⁵ Original nave before extensions.

It is interesting that Michael Horne uses the word 'mis-represented', and I would dearly have liked to have been able to discuss with him exactly what he meant by that, and what he thought the Georgians' rationale might have been regarding the change. He cites nothing specific, and without further clues it looks as if he suspected that the antiquarians were simply persuaded by the apparent plethora of names in the area that began with 'B', namely Button and Burton, and that the title 'Bovetownchurch' finally swayed them to the extent that they made the unusually rash decision that the St Mary's church that was demolished in 1551 should, centuries later, be retrospectively renamed for Saint Botolph.

In fact he would not have been too much out of order in making such an assumption since these confusions are not unusual in the world of Saint Botolph. For example, at Botolph's Bridge on Romney Marsh, where the structure had for many years previously borne the adjectives *Butter's*, *Butler's* etc., its modification to 'Botolph' in C19 initially engendered the suspicion that an unidentified antiquarian had simply changed the name to suit current trends. This subsequently proved not to be the case; the connection with St Botolph was solid. A similar situation still exists at West Bergholt near Colchester where the assumption has been made that their 'Botolph's Bridge' is derived from 'Gudolf's Bridge', and all discussion about a potential connection with our saint has therefore been cast aside. *This* matter is on the list of needing resolution.

I would like to think that in the years since Michael Horne carried out his research, Saint Botolph's name has lost its 'obscure saint' image, and reached the point of academic respectability where, if mentioned in connection with a site, the clue would today be seen to be worthy of proper investigation.

Michael Horne might well have followed the research trail as far as he could – he was clearly a competent historian - but since, sadly, he is no longer with us, the time has come for the Haverhill case to be reopened.

The Haverhill case

There is little doubt that from its early days until C18 Button Church was dedicated to Saint Mary. We might start by considering whether the Georgians of 1794 had privileged information about the church's early connection with Saint Botolph, that has since been lost to history? i.e. was the church anciently dedicated to Saint Botolph before it was rededicated to Saint Mary?

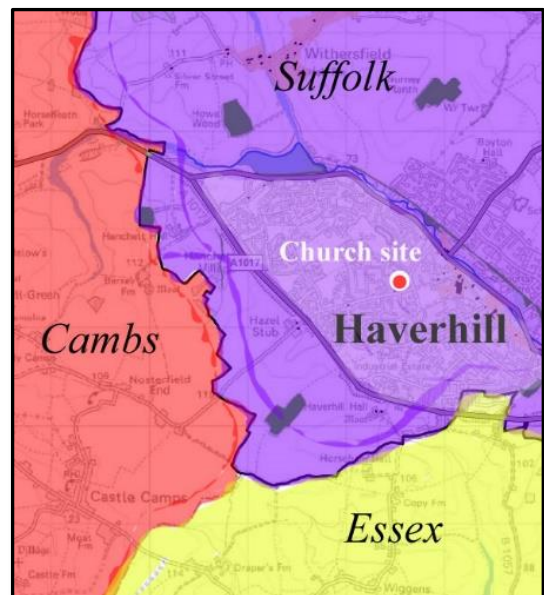
That would be entirely understandable if such a change had occurred at the C16 Reformation, but Haverhill's records show that the Marian dedication was in existence here as early as the high middle ages, and if Botolphian dedication there was, then it must have been earlier still.

So how far back does this church site's history go? How early was the church built? And was it built on the site of an even earlier church - perhaps an ancient wooden one - which has left little or no evidence behind it?

In the paragraphs above, as a result of the building's dimensions, we made an initial estimate of the date of foundation as being ca. A.D. 1000, but might it be even earlier?

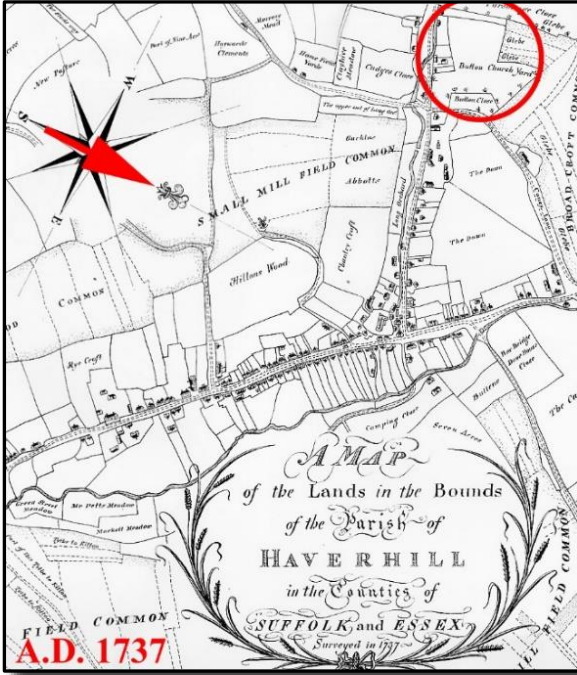
Characteristics of the Haverhill church

As Horne told us, for many centuries the Haverhill settlement straddled the border between Suffolk and Essex, but even more than that, the *Cambridgeshire* border was also very close.



As we see in the following pictures, although a stream runs past the church site, we can ignore this from the point of view of it being involved with the church's 'gate guardianship' since it is a simple drainage channel from the hills above, and has never been a waterway of any significance.

If the initial *raison d'être* for a church on the site was as a gate guardian then its guardianship would seem to have been more concerned with *border crossings* rather than *stream or river crossings*, and the neighbouring border complex is indeed likely to have been a factor that influenced the church's construction. Such churches are frequently found to be (or have been) dedicated to Saint Botolph.



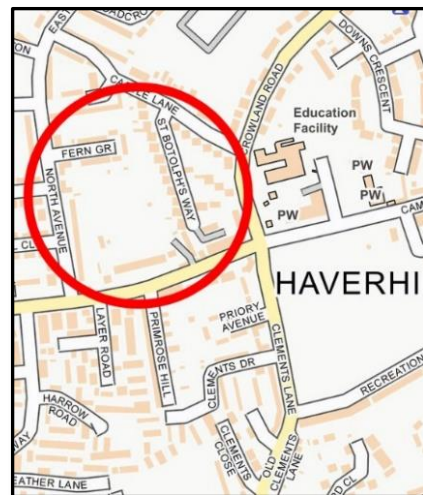
A 1737 map of Haverhill shows us the site which was originally known as Button Churchyard (enlarged in the picture below).



Above we see the same map re-orientated to show 'north-up' and the stream running along the southern border of the plot.



An Ordnance Survey map from the following century shows the location labelled as the site of Saint Botolph's Church.



A modern Streetmap shows St Botolph's Way leading to the site where the old church used to be.

Comparison of the site's characteristics with those of early Botolphian churches

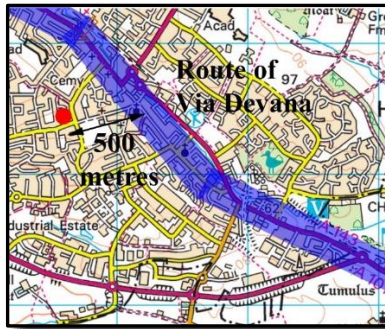
We note these characteristics in the Regular End Notes of each of these newsletters, viz:

- | |
|--|
| <p><u>Typical Characteristics of early St Botolph Churches.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nearly all are in the eastern half of England 2. Many lie on what today are county borders. 3. Most have Anglo-Saxon foundations. 4. Many lie within 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway. 5. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels. 6. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys. |
|--|

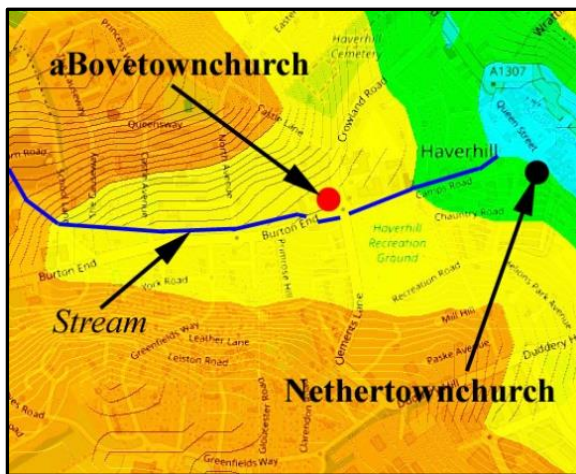
In the case of Haverhill **Characteristics 1 and 2** match the pattern perfectly:

1. *The site is in the eastern half of England.*
2. *It indisputably lies at a county border.*

Third characteristic: [*most early Botolphian churches have Anglo-Saxon foundations*] We have already established that this seems likely to be the case here.



Fourth characteristic: [*the site lies within 3 miles of a Roman road*] –it is actually only 500 metres from the route of the old Via Devana as seen above.



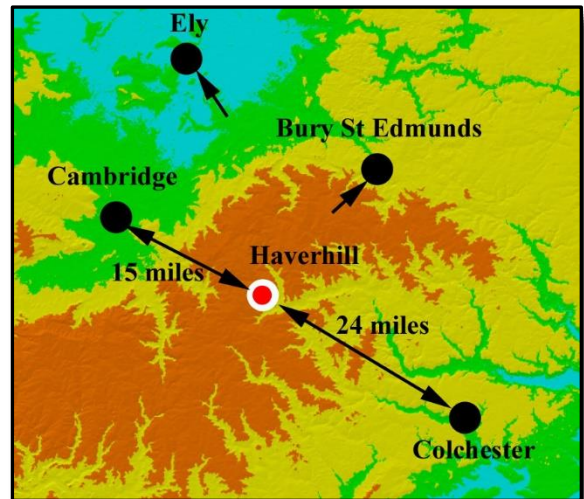
Fifth characteristic: [*most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels*].

Sure enough, the red dot marking the site in the map above, lies well down the escarpment and yet well clear of the wetter blue area. Interestingly the dot lies adjacent to a stream that runs down from the hills - an ideal choice of location for an isolated chapel which needs a regular water supply.

Conversely and as a matter of interest, if we look further down the hill, the site of the later St Mary's church is in a wet area where no self-respecting early Saint Botolph's Church would ever find

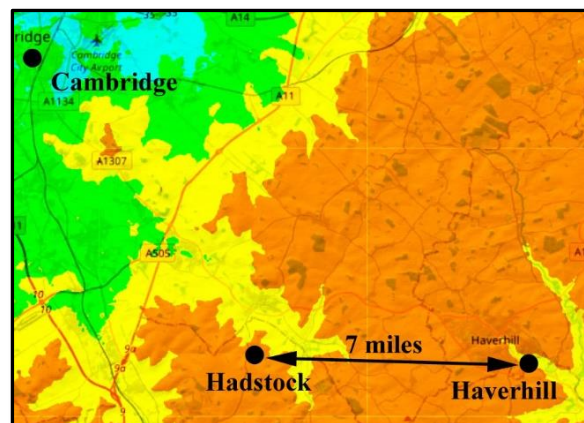
itself, and had *this* been the site in question its Botolph connections would almost certainly have been discounted.

Sixth characteristic: [*the site is strategically placed in an area which represents the beginning, middle, or end of a long journey*]. This is a rather nebulous matter, but to help us we can ask the question: 'Where would the traveller (be he merchant or pilgrim) be going to when he found himself at Haverhill?'



And the answer is almost too good to be true (which is always worrying). Haverhill places the traveller neatly near the middle of the route between Saint Botolph's Church at Cambridge and Saint Botolph's Priory at Colchester. Fifteen miles from Cambridge – a long, hard but feasible day's walk, and 24 miles from Colchester – needing a stopover⁶ elsewhere.

The shrines at Bury St Edmunds also need to be taken into account, as does the route to (or from) Ely. North of Bury St Edmunds lay the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, and this too must be considered as part of a pilgrimage route influencing Haverhill – but more of that later.



⁶ This begs the question 'Was there another now-lost Saint Botolph's Church that provided the requirements for this interim stopover?'

Haverhill certainly satisfies all the typical characteristics one would expect for the site of a St Botolph's church ... although that does not *make* it one.

But what of the well-validated and important St Botolph's Church just seven miles to the west at Hadstock? Would two St Botolph's Churches so close together be viable? I think they would. Such a proximity of churches with the same dedications is not at all unusual so this is not counter-indicative. Indeed Hadstock would provide yet another easy and attractive break in the traveller's journey.

To sum up, the circumstantial evidence shows that the earliest church at Haverhill matches the credentials we would expect from a classic Saint Botolph's Church. Sadly we lack the all-important confirming record, and to confound us further there is historical evidence that for most (and perhaps all?) of its life it was dedicated to Saint Mary.

The Georgians of C18

What we *do* have however is *the broad hint* that 228 years ago the clergy and parishioners of C18 knew something about this Botolphian connection that has since been lost to history. That surely must be the reason why they took what must have been a controversial decision to change the dedication so many years after the church had been pulled down (as a sort of 'posthumous award' perhaps?). Such a decision surely *could not* have been taken merely on the flimsy evidence of local Botolph-like names of 'Burton, Bovechurch and Button'.

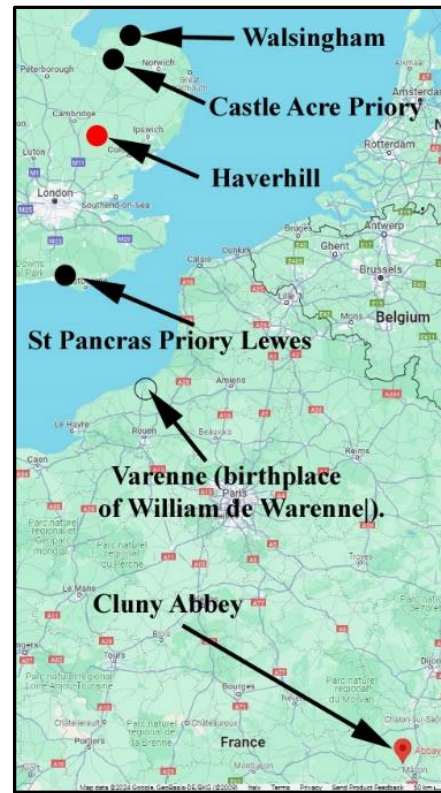
Reverting to Michael Horne's history of Haverhill which, as far as I can make out, is the only relatively decent history available, he writes:

'The mediaeval town first developed around Burton End, where there was an 11th-century parish church, dedicated to St Mary, called Bovetownchurch ... A second church also dedicated to St Mary, was established in the 13th century on the main highway, and was referred to as 'the Chapel' in the very early days ... Both churches were for many years under the patronage of Castle Acre in Norfolk ... although there was a church here before this time (and it could be that the blocked arch in the north chancel wall is a lancet window of the 1200s), the earliest dateable work is in the lower parts of the tower, from the early 1300s.'

This immediately makes me wonder if both churches were adopted by Castle Acre at the same time or if the earlier 'above-town' church was adopted before the 'nether-town' one? We come back to this question several times below.

Castle Acre

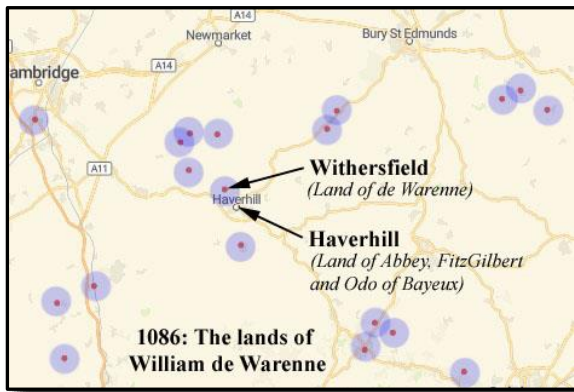
The castle at Castle Acre (the location of which is shown on the map below) was founded by **William de Warenne**, the First Earl of Surrey, fifteen years or so after the Norman Conquest.



Warenne was a Norman knight who fought at the Battle of Hastings; he and some of his successors have featured frequently in Botolphian research topics, although there is no evidence that any were particular aficionados of our saint - despite the fact that his father's name 'Rodulf' had a similar ring. He was however an enthusiast of Cluniac monasticism, having visited Cluny Abbey with his wife Gundreda whilst on their way to Rome. He founded a priory at Lewes in West Sussex c. 1077 and dedicated it to Saint Pancras. Indeed it was Cluniac monk-artists from here who, in early C12 were responsible for the beautiful wall paintings at Saint Botolph's Church Hardham, in the south of England - just 24 miles away from Lewes. Paintings at Saint Botolph's Church in Botolph's village were probably carried out by the same group.

Castle Acre Priory in Norfolk was founded (on a site that actually belonged to Gundreda) a few years later, and was populated by monks imported from Lewes. There is no doubt that Saint Botolph's name (as patron saint of the nearby Hardham and Botolph churches) would have been entirely familiar to them - despite the fact that the skills of the Lewes wall painters would not be called upon until a few years later.

De Warenne died in 1088; his son took over and in 1089 moved the priory to a nearby site where the priory ruins now stand. The Castle Acre church was consecrated in c. 1145, but not completed until c. 1165. Its last endowment came from the sixth earl in 1315 by when Haverhill's *Netherchurch* would have just become established. On first sight it seems likely that it was at about this time that one or both Haverhill churches were taken under the priory's wing.



The reason for the de Warennes' interest in the churches is unsurprising. They had been tenants-in-chief of land to the north of Haverhill (Withersfield) since before 1086 when they were farming 100 sheep there.

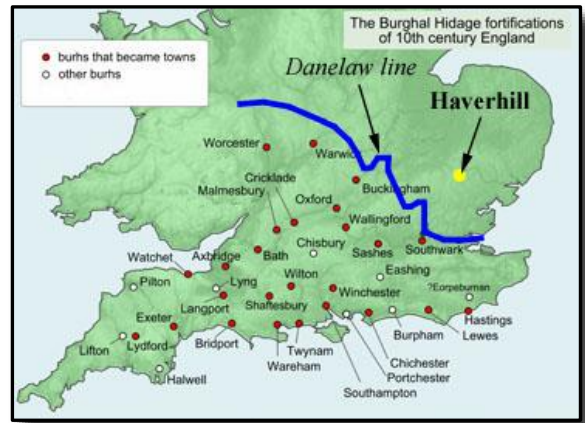
The red herrings of Burton and Button

Michael Horne tells us that by C12 there were manors in the area and possibly a castle – although he cautions that there is no direct evidence of the 'castle' until 1373, and that it might have been merely a fortified manor house.

Suffolk Heritage Explorer records that excavations of the old church at Haverhill by Boreham in 1885 exposed foundations of flint rubble four and a half feet thick.

The area is known as Burton End, and toponymical investigation of the word *Burton* reveals that it often derives from the words *Burh* and *Tun*, the former referring to a fortification and the latter being a farmstead. This information combined with the presence of such massive foundations rather suggests that the church demolished in 1551 had been built on a site previously occupied by a fortified farmhouse. This would explain the title of 'Button (aka Burton) Churchyard'.

Anglo-Saxon *Burhs* were developed by Alfred the Great in C9 to defend the country against Viking raids. They were listed in a C10 document we now know as the *Burghal Hidage*; the map below shows in red the settlements named in the list.



Sadly for our investigation these features were all on the wrong side of the Danelaw line for them to have any connection with our *Burh Tun* in Haverhill. Nevertheless the combination of name and physical structure strongly suggest that the foundations discovered under the church were those of a building concerned with defence, although when it was built, and by whom must be the subject of (somebody else's) further research. The important thing from this paper's point of view is that the existence of the massive foundations points to the fact that the names 'Button and Burton' are likely to have arisen in connection with an early fortified farmstead rather than referring to the dedication of the church which stood on this site.

On this point therefore we can agree with Michael Horne that the *misrepresentation of the name 'Burton' by assuming that it was derived from the name 'Botolph'* (if this actually occurred) would have been a serious mistake.

Before leaving this matter however, it seems only right to take a closer look to see if we can find a factor which might have induced an antiquarian to make such a misrepresentation.

The Marian tradition

The veneration of Saint Mary surged in popularity⁷ in C11 and again in C13. One of the factors contributing to the C11 surge in East Anglia was the building of the **Shrine of our Lady at Walsingham** only **15 miles to the north east** of Castle Acre.

The Walsingham Legend tells us that it was in 1061 that a devout Anglo-Saxon widow by the name of Rychold, experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary. The shrine which was consequently constructed became and remained one of Europe's greatest places of pilgrimage right up until the Reformation.

⁷ The Virgin Mary has always been Christianity's most popular patron saint; in England there are some 2,368 churches dedicated in her name.

The De Warennes and Castle Acre were devoted to Cluniac principles of which Marianism was an important component. It would be unsurprising therefore if, as part of the adoption process by Castle Acre, both Haverhill churches would fall into line by being dedicated to the name of the Virgin Mary, but as we will see later, this might have already happened in the case of the *Bovetownchurch*.

It is not clear whether Castle Acre itself was the founder of *Nethertownchurch* (in c. 1300) or whether it was founded locally at that time, and did not come under control of the De Warennes until some years later – perhaps when it needed maintenance the responsibility for which the townsfolk were happy to pass on to a new lord and master.

It is possible that this *lower* church was built as a Chapel of Ease to the *upper one*, in order to service the needs of a community which had moved eastwards. We must remember that when first built, like *Bovetownchurch*, it too was small - although not *as* tiny as its Anglo-Saxon elder sister. It was rebuilt in C15 and then rebuilt again in 1687 after a disastrous town fire, and then restored once more two centuries later in 1887. So the church we see today bears little resemblance to the one adopted by Castle Acre.

1794

This is offered as the date that Saint Botolph's name first appeared in Haverhill's parish records – although there is little doubt that the concept would have been circulating some years before that.

It is frequently stressed that a researcher who wishes to properly understand the Middle Ages must endeavour to look at circumstances through *mediaeval eyes*. In the same way, we should here consider what would have been uppermost in the minds of those people who lived during the 1760-1820 reign of George III.

In 1794 the magnificent and thriving re-built St Botolph's Church at **Aldersgate**, London was beginning to find its feet having re-opened just *six* years previously, to great celebrations and consequent publicity. Forty-four years before that *another* re-constructed Saint Botolph's Church had reopened at **Bishopsgate** in 1744, and yet another in 1725 at Saint Botolph's **Aldgate**. Over 63 years the news from the fashionable part of London had contained a constant drip feed of information about marvellous 'new' churches dedicated to Saint Botolph. They had been rebuilt as part of the master plan to update and grandify⁸

⁸ Interestingly, the Oxford English Dictionary tells us that the word 'grandify' came into use during the middle of C17 i.e. close to the time of the Great Fire.

the standard of architecture in the metropolis following the disastrous Fire of London in 1666. Were these fabulous new buildings a high topic of conversation amongst the residents of Haverhill? Did the town's burgesses and antiquarians have London connections? Did the publicity sow the seed of St Botolph's name to the extent that a 'must-have' in Haverhill became a connection with our saint?

I cannot really believe that this is what happened, and I am convinced that the reasoning behind the change was far more substantial but has now been lost to history.

Who, why and when?

Haverhill lies 47 long miles west of our saint's C7 Icanho Abbey so it is doubtful that it was the administration at Icanho which spawned the building of the little church between 654 and 869 (when the abbey was razed to the ground by the Vikings).

Haverhill lies the same sort of distance from *Thorney Abbey* where some of Saint Botolph's bones were enshrined as part of the C10 Monastic Revival. It is conceivable that Haverhill church might have been founded as part of the pilgrimage circuit.

Wool

Plenty of sheep were farmed in the area in C11 but in a more modest way than in Norfolk and Lincolnshire.

The two Great Wool Churches of Long Melford (1467) and Lavenham (1340) lie only 16 miles or so to the east, but they date from a later time frame and are more relevant to cloth (*derived from wool*) than fleece (*the producer of wool*). It was the farming and merchandising of the *latter* which gave rise to the Saint Botolph wool churches, and I can find no suggestion that such an enterprise operated at Haverhill. The tiny *aBovetownchurch* must surely have been built with an eye to hospitality for both travellers-in-general (many of them perhaps being merchants), and pilgrims-in-particular. It is significant that it was built close to the 'three-counties' border crossing and that it lay on the Via Devana.

Domesday Landholders of Haverhill.

	<u>Value of land held</u>
Bury St Edmunds Abbey	5d
Odo of Bayeux (Bury 1066)	3s
Richard Fitzgilbert	15s
Richard Fitzgilbert	£1 10s
Richard Fitzgilbert	4s 5d
Tihel of Helléan 1 church	£2 13s 2d

So **Bury St Edmunds Abbey** had a very small landholding in Haverhill that was worth only 5 pence, and a similarly insignificant tranche valued at 3 shillings was held by **Bishop Odo of Bayeux** (who happened to be in prison at the time of the registry).

Richard Fitzgilbert on the other hand held three tranches consisting of 2 acres of meadow and other resources and valued at £2 9s 5d, but the major landholder was **Tihel of Helléan** with 8 acres of meadow plus other resources (which included the church) valued at £2 13s 2d.

Tihel was an interesting man; also known as Tihel the Breton he was captain of the king's guard during the 'Norman invasion'. He held a total of (about) sixteen properties all of which were substantial (i.e. valued in pounds rather than shillings). He wife came from nearby Sturmer and he lived in a town that lies south of Haverhill and rejoices in the name of **Helions Bumpstead**. When Bishop Odo of Bayeux was consigned to prison in 1082, it was Tihel to whom he entrusted his landholdings pending his release.

Continuing the quest ...

So in 1086 Tihel of Helléan was the landholder of Haverhill's church, but he was neither its *builder* nor yet the person responsible for its dedication – be that to Saint Botolph or Saint Mary.

Logically one would have expected to find the church on the lands tenanted by the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, but not so according to the land distribution in 1086. Before the Norman Conquest however the abbey still held the land mentioned in Domesday, together with Odo's lands which makes one wonder if, earlier still, the whole of Haverhill might have been the abbey's province, but might have been sold off in the pre-conquest years in order to provide capital. If this *were* the case then it would have been the abbey which had built and dedicated the church.

Pilgrimage attractions

The original monastery at Bury St Edmunds was known as **Beodricsworth**. It did not graduate to being an abbey until Cnut endowed it in 1020; during the period under discussion its officers were priests and deacons rather than monks. Nevertheless pilgrimages would have been made to St Edmund's shrine there since **903**.

The ruined site of Saint Botolph's Icanho would have been a similar but much more humble attraction as far back as **869** when it was razed by the Danes. His name would still have been on

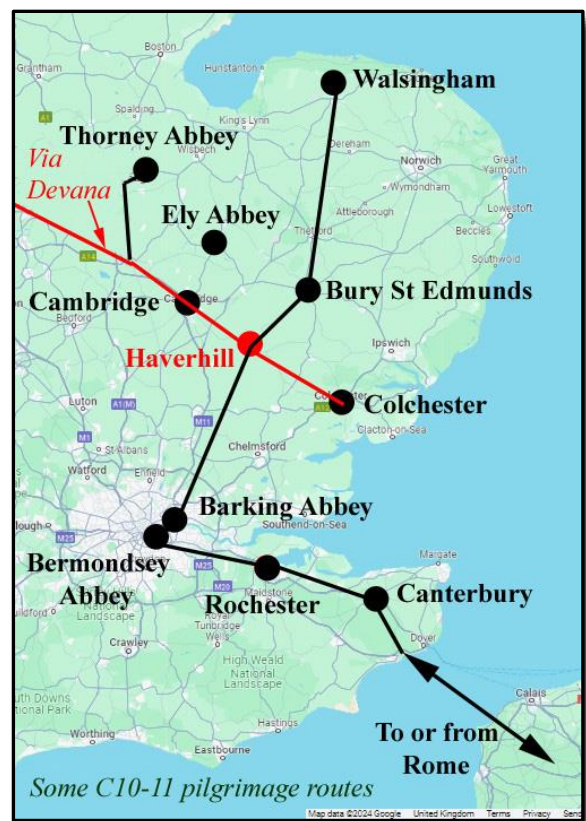
everybody's lips and there is little doubt that the place of his burial would have been marked.⁹

A century later Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester and his Monastic Revival colleagues sought to regenerate the lucrative (to the church) fashion of pilgrimage by exhuming Botolph's body, dividing his relics into three and kick-starting new/reformed abbeys by the creation of shrines to him at **Thorney, Ely** and (eventually) **Westminster** and (by a second division) at **Bury St Edmunds**.

Thorney and Ely were in business by **975**, and Bury caught up (by receiving Saint Botolph's relics) in **1045**.

It is clear that the location of Haverhill church was ideally placed at the division of the roads which led to all the local Botolphian shrines, and at that time it would surely have been Saint Botolph to whom the church was dedicated.

Nothing is forever though.

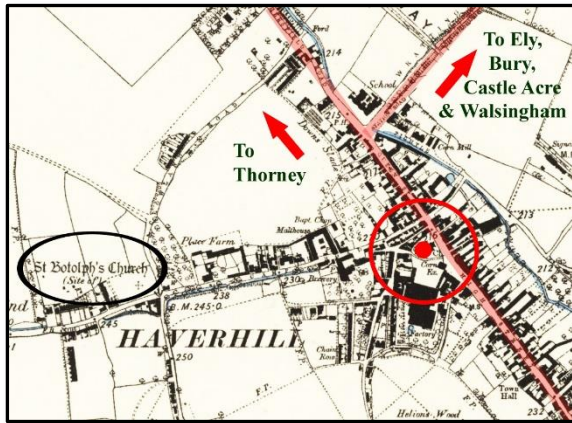


In **1061**, 59 miles to the north, there was an event which had massive repercussions when a devout Anglo-Saxon widow by the name of Rychold, experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary, and the shrine of **Our Lady of Walsingham** burst into glory resulting in a surge of veneration and devotion to Saint Mary.

⁹ The site of Saint Botolph's grave might perhaps have been marked by the cross discovered by Stanley West in 1977.

In **1081** just south of Walsingham at Castle Acre, William de Warenne (page 7) began to populate his new foundation with Cluniac monks from his property in Lewes, and **Castle Acre Priory** was borne, strengthening the Marian tradition in the area. It was dedicated (in 1089) to St Mary, St Peter and St Paul.

The focus in the north of East Anglia had moved from Edmund and Botolph to Saint Mary and the ‘signposts’ would need to be changed.



It may have been this that was the motivation for building the new (c. **1300**) Saint Mary’s church (see ringed in red in map above) closer to the Roman through road at Haverhill. The De Warennes might have built it themselves and gifted it to Castle Acre Priory, or it might have been constructed by another builder who was perhaps persuaded to donate it to Castle Acre for the benefit of his soul.

But the *new* Haverhill church was built more than two centuries after the Walsingham miracle.

If we are to believe that one of the functions of chapels like these was to act as stepping stones to guide the pilgrim to his next destination, then the signpost on the *old* church needed re-writing urgently. I suspect it was rededicated to Saint Mary around 1100.

COMMERCE

As we follow this trail the story begins to look more and more like the cut and thrust of commercial enterprise.

Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester

Bishop Aethelwold’s Monastic Revitalisation had set the cult of Saint Botolph on a pinnacle as the bishop sought to use the saint’s still high reputation as a source from which he could propagate more monasteries.

It is notable that he did not (as one might have expected) choose to take Saint Botolph’s still-functioning shrine at Icanho, re-build it and glorify it with new abbey buildings as a revived foundation.

Such a programme might have suited the average bishop, but would not have made business sense to the dynamic Aethelwold as it would only have produced *one* new foundation.

The bishop was a clever and shrewd man and, I suspect, not averse to manipulating situations for the benefits of Monastic Reform.

He would have given a lot of thought to the matter before he settled on Saint Botolph as his flagship saint.

The body of Icanho abbey was barely cold – it had been savaged by the Vikings only a hundred years previously and the name of our saint was still revered – both throughout the land but particularly locally. The abbey – believed to have been the first Benedictine abbey in England, had been particularly well run as recognised by Bede’s mentor Ceolfrid when he visited in 669. Aethelwold could trade on Saint Botolph’s high reputation.

Thus, after receiving the authority from his king (Edgar) he travelled in company with his colleagues (in particular a man called Ultikellus) to the Icanho site and exhumed Saint Botolph’s remains - cleverly taking his ‘brother’ Adulph’s body at the same time. The excuse given was that some mysterious force would not allow the ‘brothers’ to be separated.

From Aethelwold’s point of view this meant that he had two bodies i.e. a total of 468 bones instead of 234, and nobody could be certain which were Botolph’s and which Adulph’s. Each bone had a spiritual and financial value.

This was a harvest that was double the size that a lesser bishop could hope to glean.

But it did not stop there. Aethelwold divided Saint Botolph’s bones into three to make them go further. Each of the three sections were designated to support a different abbey; ‘support’ in these circumstances means ‘to attract pilgrims and their votive offerings’.

On the marketing front the bishop would have been well aware that flooding the area with Saint Botolph’s name would have made his project so much more effective. Thus the bishop destined our saint’s remains to be enshrined at **Thorney**, **Ely** and (for good measure) at head office i.e. **Westminster**. The latter enshrinement was much delayed, and fortuitously (but after Aethelwold had died) an extra enshrinement came about at **Bury St Edmunds**.

This happened as a result of the development of the monastic pastime of ‘*Furta Sacra*’ - the theft of relics by monks from each other’s institutions. It was in this way that St Edmunds Abbey acquired Saint Botolph’s skull from Ely Abbey and thereby joined the Botolphian circuit independently of Bishop Aethelwold.

The bishop's marketing principle of 'flooding the area with Saint Botolph's name' would probably have extended to influencing the building of humble chapels along the routes to act as signposts and guide pilgrims to the all-important shrines. This might explain some of the plethora of our saint's churches – particularly those in East Anglia. We generally classify them as Type 3 or Type 6 Travellers' churches, but closer inspection might reveal that some of them have an inclination towards a specific Botolphian shrine.

By 975 then, the shrines of Saint Botolph were all set to be one of the major 'votive offering raisers' in the country.

Competition

Having looked at Aethelwold's technique and being struck by the emergence of a commercial aspect, the well-timed miraculous vision at Walsingham seems almost too good to be true in terms of it taking the focus away from St Edmund and St Botolph and applying it strongly to St Mary.

The story did not end there though.

In 1170 **Saint Thomas Becket** was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, and by c. 1245 the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds had added his shrine to their collection. This would move the focus again, and no doubt create competition for Saint Mary at Walsingham.

Some might say that the increase of available shrines would attract a greater number of pilgrims so that everybody would win, but each pilgrim carried offerings to a limited value, and they would naturally donate the most valuable to their favourite shrine.

Conclusion

This has been a long and arduous trail, but I am grateful for being challenged by Haverhill because it forced me to look at certain subjects from a different perspective.

At first I felt that there was a strong 'wool' element at Haverhill, but as my research progressed I discovered that was not so. I nevertheless travelled a long way down that particular cul-de-sac, and I hope to be able to discuss 'wool churches' more fully in the next issue.

I have concluded that it is extremely likely that the old Haverhill church (in one of its forms – it was probably re-built several times) was once dedicated to Saint Botolph but it was soon overcome by a Marian dedication as her culture locally gained in strength and popularity.

I think it is likely that the church was built and dedicated to Saint Botolph at least as early as A.D. 990 its principal purpose being to cater for the spiritual and physical needs of pilgrims who were

on their way to his shrines at Ely and Thorney and later at Bury St Edmunds.

I would classify the church as **Type 3***: *A church originating from and as a result of the Monastic Revival and lying close to a county border.*

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 dp@botolph.info saying 'YES PLEASE.' If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

If you wish to purchase any of the books of the Botolph Trilogy please use the same email address.

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*.'

Types of Botolph Church sites: -

The list of classifications I use has been subject to constant revision over the past ten years. The current version, first revised in December 2020, is as follows:

1. A church on a site which might have been founded directly by St Botolph during his life or by his acolytes soon after his death.
 2. A church the original of which is thought to have been the product of Danish landowners (c.878-890, c.1016-1035).
 3. A church originating from and as a result of Monastic Revival (c. 950 - 1016).
 4. A church which, even if it had a humble predecessor on the same site, mainly blossomed as a result of opulence gained from the wool trade (c. 1150-1450).
 5. A church lying on or close to one of the major ancient trackways, rivers, Roman roads or city gates, the proximity of which merits the suspicion that a major aspect of the function of the church has for a long while been closely linked with long-distance travel.
 6. A church lying on or close to a pilgrimage route. Churches' roles have always needed to be flexible. The Type 6 classification takes into account the increased influence of pilgrimage that occurred from late C12.
- * A star is added to the 'Type' when the church lies on a county border.

Changing functionality.

One church will often have fulfilled many roles during its lifetime so a 'type' will often be transient and must of necessity be defined by dates.

Typical Characteristics of early St Botolph Churches.

1. Nearly all are in the eastern half of England
2. Many lie on what today are county borders.
3. Most have Anglo-Saxon foundations.
4. Many lie within 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway.
5. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels.
6. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys.

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