The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph
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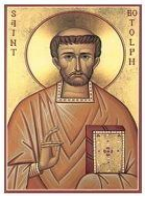

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Highlights this month

- **Martoni's Pilgrimage in 1394 and the 'Indulgencies of Jerusalem'.**
- **Lowside windows and the concept of Purgatory.**
- **Connections between the Abbey of Melrose with the Saint Botolph's Fair, and with the abbeys of Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh.**

Editorial

"Long time no see." This has nothing to do with the prolonged absence of a diocese, but constitutes the start of an explanation for my recent lack of communication.

Christmas brings its own annual chaos, but this year towards the end of November I received an offer from somebody who wanted to buy my boat. As many of you will know, sailing has been an important part of my life for the past sixty years or so. I owned ELECTRA II for 28 years during which time my wife, Zina, and I sailed her extensively in the Mediterranean, spending long periods in Croatia, Turkey, Greece and (for the past seven years) Sicily. Having attained my eighty-second year however, it became clear to me that the time was coming when I would have to stop having all this fun and settle down like a normal person before Neptune/Poseidon decided to end things prematurely.

So in early December my son Rob and I headed back to Sicily and conducted negotiations with a charming German couple who live in Cyprus and this eventually led to a successful sale. The outcome is that the new owners are now busily refurbishing the boat ready to sail her around the world, and I *should* now have more time to write about Saint Botolph.

It did not start like that though because Christmas and other more haphazard events, including a nasty bout of Respiratory Syncytial Virus kept me from my computer. I resolved that at my age I should not have to rush around so much but would just do things when I could … and this publication marks an '*I could*' event.

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Amongst the wonderful presents I received this Christmas was a book entitled '***Martoni's Pilgrimage 1394***'[1] The book details the voyage of an Italian lawyer as he sailed from Gaeta - a harbour on the west coast of Italy (which, incidentally, I know well) - to the Holy Land.

I found the whole story fascinating but I was particularly interested by Martoni's catalogue of the *Indulgences of Jerusalem.*

To refresh your memories, whilst writing about individual churches dedicated to Saint Botolph, I have often identified a **Lowside Window** (LSW) tucked away in a corner between the nave and chancel walls, such as the one shown below at Saint Botolph's Church, Longthorpe.

[1] *ISBN: 978-0-9557569-8-6*, written by *John Mole* and first published by *Fortune* in 2017.

For many years these have been passed off as enigmas and nobody has come up with a satisfactory explanation for their origins and purposes. I have written about them in previous issues of the *Botolphian* and have gradually formulated conclusions which I believe comprise the most satisfactory hypothesis to date.

The windows are normally to be found in the westernmost part of the chancel where it joins the nave. Their window sills are at waist height and signs of an LSW's existence can be expected in churches which were extant between 1220 and 1350. My hypothesis links them to indulgences.

Indulgences

These became a common feature of the Christian Church following the *Fourth Lateran Council* of 1215. *Indulgences* are essentially linked to *Purgatory* which was also being promoted during the same period.

In the forward to his Jerusalem catalogue, Martoni writes:

> "*wishing to visit the following sacred places outside the Sepulchre, we got up in the middle of the night and, with two Friars Minor, one of whom was the vicar of the Franciscan monasteries, went to the places listed below that grant indulgences, as we were told by the Friars and according to many other texts.*
> *Those* (in Martino's diary) *marked by the sign of the cross* ***'+'*** *give to those who truly repent and confess,* ***plenary absolution of sin and punishment …*** *the other places marked with a* ***'Y'****, grant* ***seven years absolution and seven indulgences of forty days."*** **[**Translated from the Latin by John Mole].

To put this in more understandable terms. the grant of an indulgence represents a 'get out of jail free' card … 'jail' in this case being a euphemism for 'purgatory'. And in Jerusalem in 1394 it seems that there was plenty of potential for wiping one's purgatory slate clean.

Purgatory

This can be defined as *an intermediate state designed for the purifying of the soul before its admission into Heaven.*

Much of the church's control over their people in the Middle Ages was based on 'fear', and the prospect of one's soul's passage into heaven being delayed might have been unbearable to some.

On his pilgrimage Martoni was following a prescribed route and in Jerusalem and its environs, he catalogued 17 locations where the indulgences of plenary absolution of sin and punishment would be granted, and 51 sites where, by visiting, he would obtain seven years absolution and seven indulgences of forty days at each site making a total of 14,280 days (39.1 years) of indulgences. He would therefore be in extraordinarily good standing if purgatory ever became an issue.

So what was the point of Jerusalem's 68 'Indulgency Stations'? It looks as if there might be two answers to this:

(i) to ensure that the pilgrims visited ***all*** the tourist sites in Jerusalem and did not cheat by missing some out.

(ii) money – probably in the form of votive offerings. It is not clear if there was a fee payable for entry into these sites or whether one simply made an offering of what one could afford, but it seems likely that money was involved somewhere; without the attraction of the grant of an indulgence, the footfall and income would have been less.

Lowside Windows

Martoni's date of 1394 was right at the end – or even *after* the 1220 to 1350 period that Lowside Windows were prevalent in English churches, but we can perhaps allow that the difference might have been caused by culture differences in the 2,500 mile separation. The principle however was, I believe, the same.

Members of any English church's congregation during that period would have been made well aware that, if and when they wished, they could easily improve their status by purchasing an indulgence for the purifying of their souls.

The process of such purification was that the priest would bring the newly-elevated host (the bread which, by the miracle of transubstantiation, had been converted into the real flesh and blood of Christ as he hung on the cross) to the penitent who would utter the words "My Lord and My God", as a sign of their true faith.

This was the equivalent of a 'Y grant' in Martoni's terms i.e. absolution of sins for seven years, and seven indulgences of forty days – i.e. 280 days freedom from purgatory.

The existence of the rite itself is undoubted. The question is whether or not lowside windows were used for that purpose – but for several good reasons I believe they were.

The insertion of lowside windows in C13 churches was widespread, but one can imagine that they would be most relevant in *small* churches which might expect, on high days and holidays, *large* congregations with many people unable to worship *inside* the church … and ***this*** I believe was when they came into their own. Indeed at the time of such festivals it is conceivable that the queue at the lowside window would have been quite lengthy. Each church might well look forward with glee to the prospect of another festival and the large income that would be generated from the lowside window source.

This all came to an end in C16 at the Reformation and it is due to the publication of Martin Luther's, *Ninety-five Theses* in 1517 that we are now able to take the practice of paying for indulgences lightly, and perhaps regard it as a ridiculous and perhaps risible process - but at the time, the matter was deadly serious.

Feature

The Border abbeys

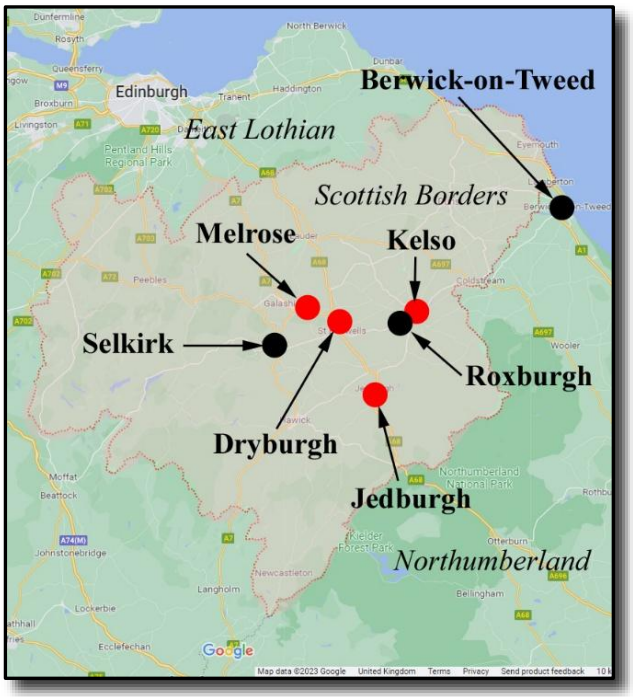
The highlights of the last newsletter (Number 112 of October 2024) were

- Sheep, wool and fleece
- A resumé of Saint Botolph's resurgences
- Botolph becomes fashionable
- Wool churches
- The London Sheep Drive
- A view from Melrose Abbey

In particular we looked at the resurgence of Saint Botolph's name between C11 and C15 in connection with the sheep trade. I made the observation that

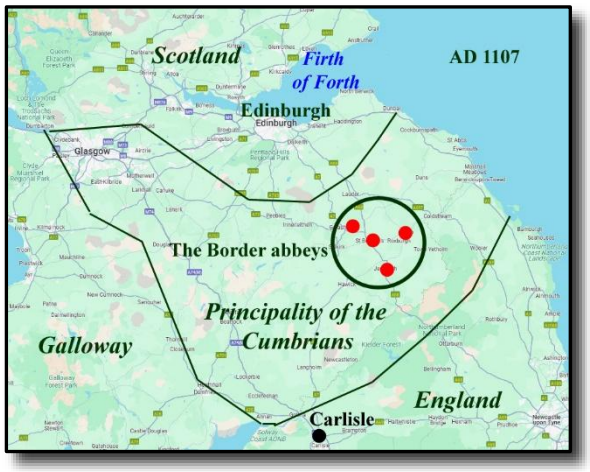
> '*whereas many of us had tended to label Botolphian churches as* ***Travellers' Churches*** *(due to his long-term fame as Patron Saint of Travellers) there was in truth a dichotomy due to the fact that some of the churches owed more to 'wool' than to 'pilgrims''.*

The origin of my interest in this aspect of the history of Saint Botolph's name was that I was intrigued by the fact that although the northernmost of his *churches* is at Frosterley in Durham, and the northernmost of *chapels* dedicated to him was at St Andrews in Scotland, his veneration continued ever further northwards whilst maintaining its east coast bias.
Although impossible to prove, my impression is that these northern cells of veneration stem not from his life in C7, but from the resurgence of his name in C11-C15 in connection with the wool trade. This created within me an urge to investigate this group of northern abbeys that are well-known for their successful farming of - and trading in – sheep, and these abbeys are shown in the map below.
Of all the religious institutions it is the Cistercian monasteries which shine out as leaders in the northern development of the trade, and of the Cistercians, it is their monastery at Melrose in 'The Borders' which would usually be the first to come to mind when thinking about specialised sheep farming in the Middle Ages.



Melrose Abbey
In my study of Melrose I wanted to compare the similarities and differences between the ways its sheep were traded as opposed to the methods used in Boston.
The abbey was founded in 1136, the Cistercians having been invited into the Borders by King David I of Scotland (b.1084, crowned 1124, d.1153).

King David I
David had spent his early life in Scotland but was orphaned in 1093 when his father Malcolm III was killed during an invasion of Northumberland; his mother died a little later. Their paternal uncle Donald III then promptly made himself king and forced David and his two brothers into exile in England.
William Rufus (King of England 1087-1100) was unhappy about Donald's accession and sent (firstly) David's brother Duncan to effect a coup, and when that failed, his other brother Edgar, who in 1097 was successful in taking over the Scottish throne. Until that date, David had remained in England. Two years later King Edgar went south to visit King William Rufus of England, and it was probably as part of their negotiations that David was bequeathed land south of the river Forth.
When Edgar died in 1107 the throne passed to his brother Alexander, and 'Prince' David came into his inheritance which constituted lands known as the ***Principality of the Cumbrians***.
In 1113 King Henry I (crowned 1068, d.1135) arranged for the marriage of David to Matilda, daughter of the Earl of Northumbria. This brought with it extra lands in Bedford, Huntingdon and Northampton and resulted in a dramatic rise in Prince David's status.



In 1124, on his brother Alexander I's death he unhesitatingly laid claim to the kingdom of Scotland – a claim in which he was supported by Henry I.

Rebellion

Six years later, in 1130, while the comparatively new King David of Scotland was lavishing in England at King Henry I's court (where he had also spent much of the previous three years) a rebellion broke out in Scotland.

Called home to deal with the uprising David found the rebel-rouser to be his nephew Malcolm (*Mael Coluim*) and a series of battles raged until 1134 when Malcolm was captured and imprisoned in Roxburgh Castle – of which we shall hear more shortly.

Having regained a modicum of control, David reinforced his position by gathering around him some efficient and loyal lieutenants, and by the time Henry I died in 1135, David's dominance over the greater part of Scotland was assured.

Border raids

It was at this point that amicability with England turned to antagonism when, instead of Henry I's daughter Matilda taking the English throne it was suddenly usurped by Stephen. As a witnessing sponsor to Henry's choice of Matilda as his successor, King David felt duty bound to take some action, and he duly marched on England. This resulted in a series of wars and skirmishes which left the borders constantly changing hands. King David consequently moved his main residence from Roxburgh to Carlisle.[2]

When he died in Carlisle Castle on 24th May 1153, he left two major legacies. The first was the establishment of about fifteen burghs – Scotland's first proper towns. These were settlements with defined boundaries and established trading rights.

The second was his foundation of monasteries which amongst many other things, served as centres of literacy and knowledge.

The monasteries

It was during his predecessor King Alexander I's reign in c.1113 that David, as Prince of Cumbria, had invited some French **Tironensian** monks to come to Scotland.

They were soon followed by **Augustinians** **Cistercians** and then **Premonstratensians**.

These were the representatives of a new group of abbeys which had started to spring up in France in C12. Their members were generally devout Christians who were dissatisfied with the lax standards of adherence to the Benedictine Rule, and they were looking for the pursuance of a more appropriate and austere way of life.

The Tironensians were the first of this group to be established in France - in 1109 at the town of Tiron. They were known as *Grey Monks* and in 1113 were the first to accept Prince David's invitation to come to Scotland where they settled into **Selkirk Abbey**. In 1128, after fifteen years, the abbey closed, and its incumbents moved to a new monastery at nearby **Kelso**.

The Cistercians (first called Bernardines) were formed at the French town of Citeaux near Dijon in 1110[3] and rapidly expanded. They were known as *White Monks*. Their first foray into England saw them installed at Rievaulx Abbey in 1131, and when, in 1136, Prince David invited them to Scotland they were quick to accept and a section of the Rievaulx group moved north to **Melrose**.

[2] Carlisle had been a 'moveable feast' in respect of its loyalties, but in 1136 it was ceded to David I at the Treaty of Durham, it was taken back by Henry II of England in 1157, and it then surrendered briefly to the Scots in 1216. The Treaty of York in 1237 settled the matter for ever, since when Carlisle has been English.

[3] The date of the order's formation is given on the Melrose Abbey site as being 1098.

The Augustinians's French origin was in 1068 at the abbey of Mont Saint Eloi near Paris. The first Augustinian priory in England was founded in c, 1097 at *St Botolph's Priory* in Colchester. The Rule first appeared in Scotland at **Scone** in c. 1114, and it was in c.1118 when the order was founded at **Jedburgh Priory** but full abbey status was not acquired until 1147.

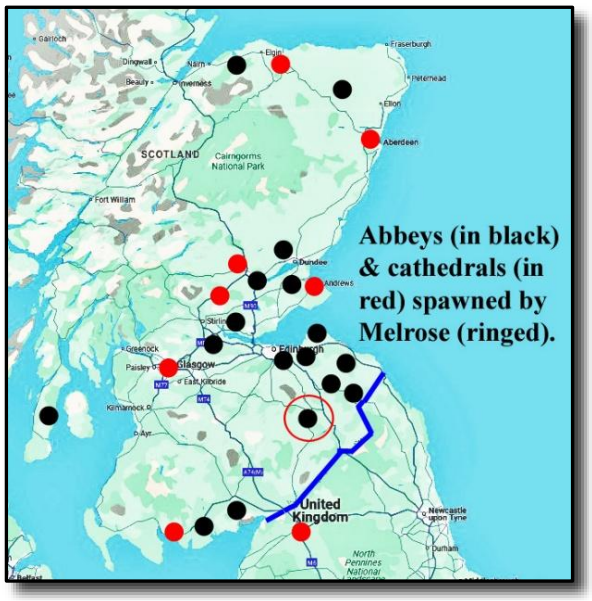
The Premonstratensian order was founded in 1120 at Premontré by Saint Norbert and for this reason they are also known as Norbertines – and as *White Monks.* Their first accommodation in England was at Newhouse in Lincolnshire and in c.1150 a group from there founded **Dryburgh Abbey** in the Borders.

Of the four Borders monasteries, it seems that the sequence in which the different Orders arrived on the scene was:

Tironensian (1113) **Selkirk**, then (1128) **Kelso.**
Augustinian (1118) **Jedburgh** – (1147) >Abbey.
Cistercian (1136) **Melrose**.
Premonstratensian (1150) **Dryburgh**.

Melrose Abbey

Of all the Orders, the Cistercians were arguably the most dynamic. The map below shows, as black dots, daughter abbeys which sprang from Melrose (which itself is shown ringed in red). The red dots are daughter cathedrals.



The Cistercians' '*reason for being'* was of course the veneration and service of Christ, but their '*field of talent and expertise'* was closely bound up with the pursuit of sheep farming and sheep trading. It is said that they initially looked for land that was quite rough and for which nobody else had a need[4] although the borders land where they ended up is particularly fertile and lush.

After the foundation
Melrose eventually possessed a total flock of about 17,000 sheep.
The primary aim of the Cistercians was to be self-sufficient, and in many ways this was soon achieved. The sheep provided them with food in the form of milk and meat – although the habit of the time was the consumption of *mutton* rather than *lamb* (the concept of slaughtering youngsters before they had time to breed would in those days have seemed to be anathema). Mutton, however, was rated as second best and as such might well have suited the Cistercians austerity plans. It was tough, and its flavour not relished to the same extent as beef, but it was entirely suitable for humble monks.

As their land ownership increased so did the size of their flocks, and this provided surpluses which could be sold and the income used to purchase items that were outside their own potential to produce. It soon became apparent that sheep farming was one of the most profitable aspects of their life, and this led to their trading in sheep more ambitiously.
As Esther Rutter writes in her excellent book '*This Golden Fleece*'[5]:

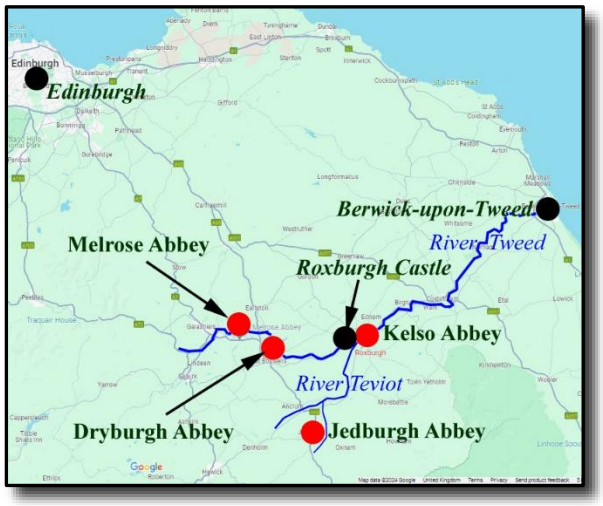
> *'The Border's woollen industries started almost a thousand years ago, with the founding of abbeys at Kelso, Melrose, Jedburgh and Dryburgh. Indeed Scotland's oldest extant agricultural records, dating from 1150, detail specialised commercial sheep farming at Kelso. While monks spent their hours in prayer, contemplation and reading,* ***lay brothers set up sheep farms nearby*** *at places including Eildon and Gattonside, on lands gifted to the abbeys by King David I of Scotland.'*

And it was this clever employment and management of **lay brothers** to tend the sheep, which was the essence of Melrose's success. The monks themselves were just too busy to farm because they were fully occupied with a constant

[4] This is a common element found in hagiography in connection with the foundation of monasteries. We are told in the '*Vitae'* of Saint Botolph, that the priorities in his search for somewhere to build his foundation of Icanho Abbey were that it should be a rough place that was of no use to anybody else.

[5] E. Rutter, *This Golden Fleece*, (London: Granta Books, 2019) ISBN 978-1-78378-435-6, eISBN 978-1-78378-435-0.

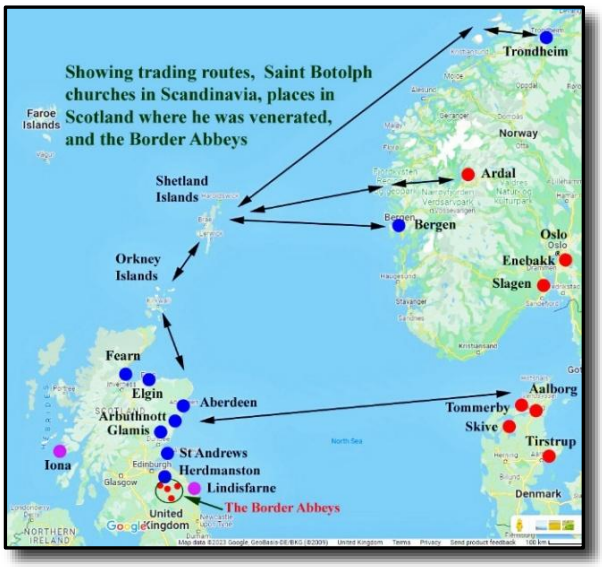
round of services starting soon after 2 a.m. and continuing spasmodically until 7 p.m. as decreed by the Rule of Saint Benedict. If they had lowered their principles in favour of farming sheep the farming would have become all important and the austerity they were seeking would have been jeopardised.



From this distance in time it is difficult to tell if the Cistercians of Melrose were well-managed by some far-sighted person who knew exactly what they were doing, or whether they were just lucky to fall into such an ideal location. The combination of the fertile plains – close enough to the coast and yet far enough from the sea to avoid scorching by the salt air – and the capable River Tweed with its eastern port ,,, all must have seemed like a gift from Heaven, but to give them due credit, they clearly managed their gifts wisely.

Not only did the Tweed provide a reliable source of water for farming and monastery purposes, but it also offered a highway of easy navigation for small vessels (such as that seen in Rosa Bonheur's painting above). As a further bonus the port of Berwick-upon-Tweed lay at its estuary; a port which was a well-sited haven for ships traversing the German Ocean.

Just 10 miles to the south of the port was the holy island of Lindisfarne, and fifty miles to its north was Saint Andrews; between them lay the revered village of Whitekirk. The whole area was a potent site of pilgrimage, although I am not sure that this would have brought any particular benefits to Melrose.



In the abbey's early days the trade would have been focussed on local markets, but it rapidly developed into a European commercial venture. As a result the Cistercians bought their own ship which they based in their home port of Berwick-upon-Tweed. History tells us that their trade was initially concentrated on Flanders but, as can be seen from the map above, the port was ideally placed for the liaisons with Scandinavia which soon developed.

The River Tweed and its estuary at Berwick-upon-Tweed can therefore be seen as being key to the success of this part of the country's fleece export industry.

The Scandinavian route was not the only one however. Marketing the fleeces of 17,000 sheep was not a light undertaking and its success depended upon versatility.

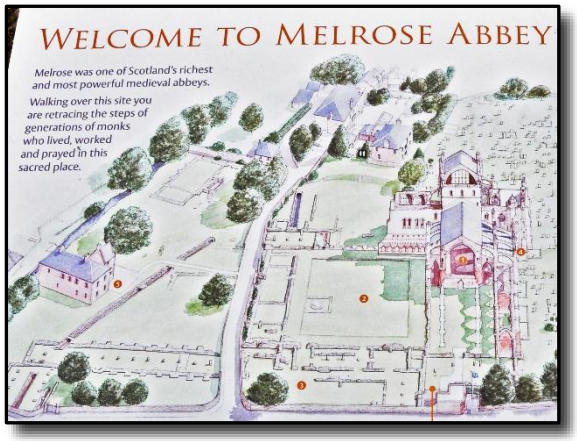
Some sheep would have been shorn in the abbey pastures and their fleeces transported to their destination by ox-cart, but this would have been hard work, expensive and slow. When possible drovers were employed so that the sheep could carry their own fleeces to market, and in those days *Scotland* possessed many – such as those centres at Crieff, Perth, Leith and Edinburgh. There were however also great prospects for the Cistercians in *England*, and these were followed when political tensions allowed.

One such centre was to the south-west at Carlisle, but a major event which the Cistercians rarely missed was the annual ***Saint Botolph's Fair*** at Boston, some 210 miles to the south-east. This was for many years the most import international sheep/fleece trading fair in the country, and it attracted merchants of every nationality and type. On such occasions Boston port would be crammed full of sailing vessels and throbbing with colourful activity. It is likely that one of the ships berthed

there would have been the Melrose vessel, but laden with sacks of fleece rather than carrying sheep. These are likely to have been taken overland by the drovers.

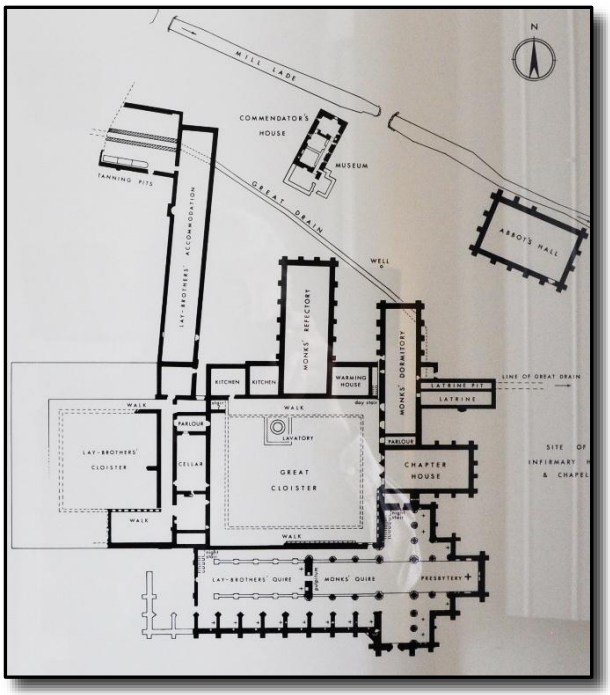
On these occasions the aim of the drove would not initially be Boston, but the Cistercian abbey at **Vaudey** where the animals would be rested and fattened for a few weeks before being driven to Boston itself.
The Cistercians owned many estates like Vaudey - acquired specifically with this '*drovers' rest*' facility in mind. A total of thirteen other Scottish Cistercian Abbeys were founded (see the first picture under the Melrose heading above) of which a predominant one was at Mauchline on the western side of the country.

The Melrose abbey site
All abbey sites seem to be spectacular in their own way as long as there is enough remaining masonry to allow them to be so.



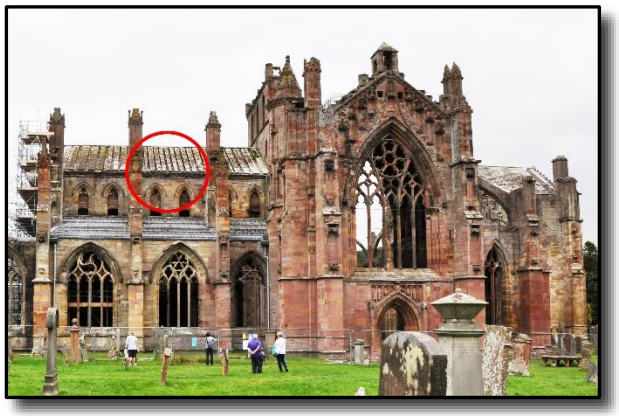
The 'arrival noticeboard' at Melrose depicts the site as we see it today ...

… but this is an artist's impression (from the ***north***) of how it would have looked in 1500.

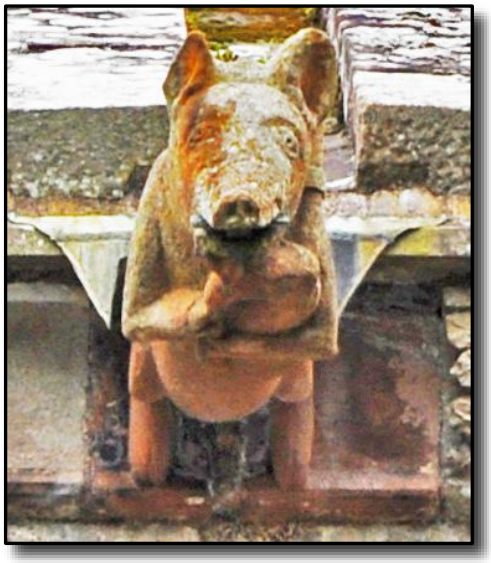


This groundplan, on the other hand, is a depiction in standard form showing north upwards.

And here we look at the southern aspect of the monastery church with its nave on the left (the area where the lay brothers worshipped) leading to the rather more intact monks' choir, with the south transept on the far right.

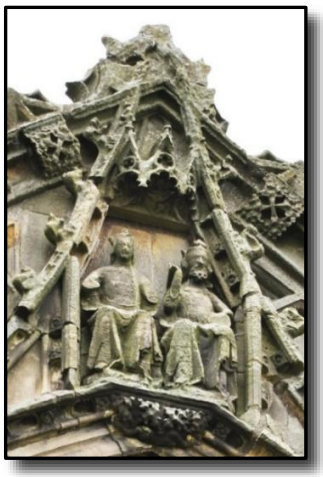


Here ringed in red high above the monks' choir is an unusual feature, whether it be on an abbey roof or at a Burns Night – a bagpipe-playing pig.

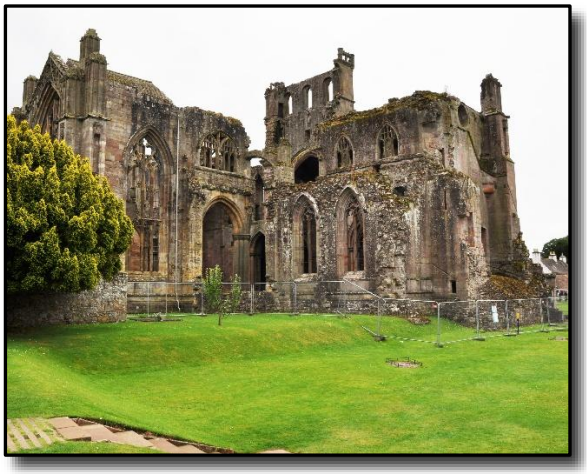


We have to remember that the building we now see was not constructed until after 1385, the former smaller church having been all but demolished by the activities of Richard II during a border skirmish. Our pig derives from the C14 construction. Why it should be a pig rather than a sheep is difficult to understand, but it rather looks as if the master mason was cocking a snook at the English.

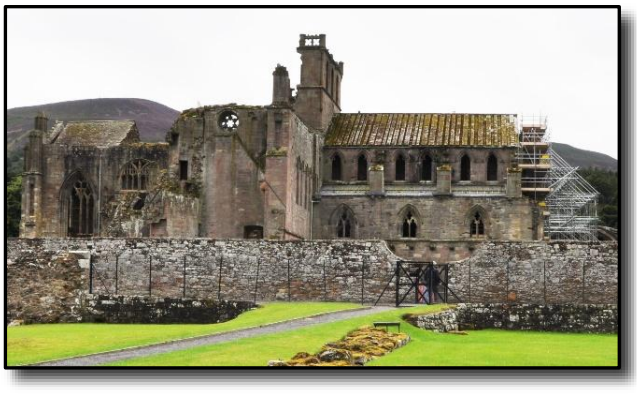
Continuing to move anti-clockwise around the building we see the south transept here again on the left of the picture, and the east window of the church on the right. We, of course might call this the chancel but up here in the Borders it is known as the presbytery. High up on the gable marked by the red indicator on the picture above …



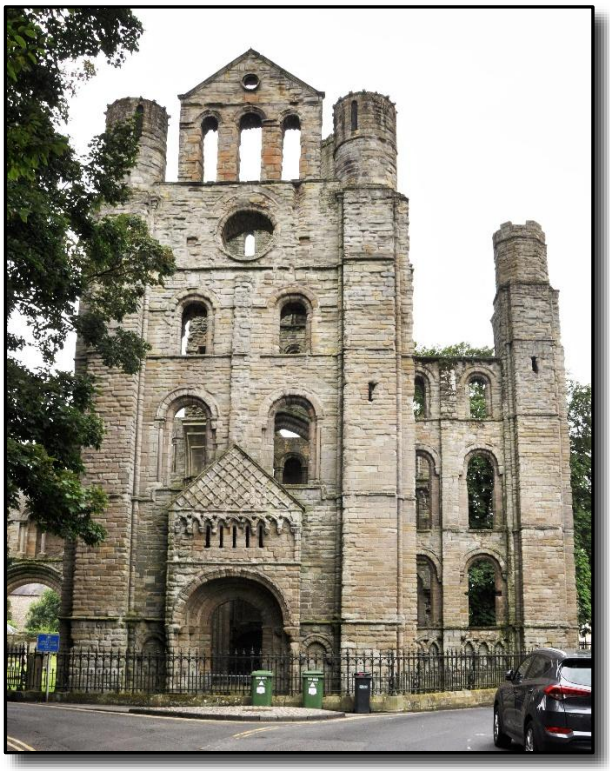
… we find two effigies in a commanding position looking towards the rising sun. Their identities are uncertain but one suggestion is that they are '*two persons of the Trinity'* i.e. Christ and God, although I find this unlikely.



Continuing anti-clockwise (the effigies just mentioned are at the top left of this photograph) this photograph was taken from the north-east and shows the presbytery on the left and its adjoining north transept on the right.



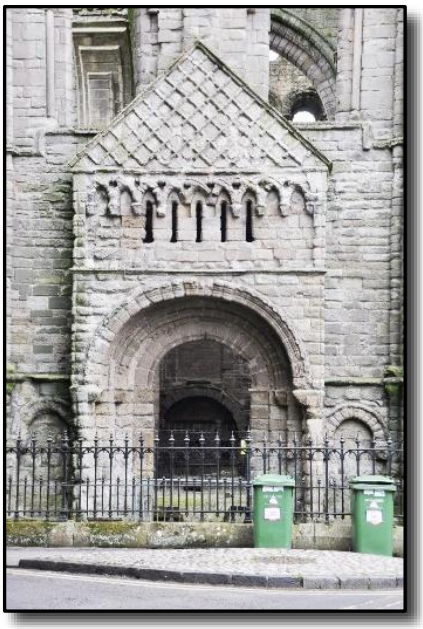
Moving anti-clockwise again, this shot shows the north side of the monastery so we have, from left to right: presbytery, north transept and monks' choir – or '*quire*' as it is often written.
Because we have three other abbeys yet to 'see', I will not dwell further on Melrose other than to say that some authorities have remarked that it is '*perhaps the most beautiful of all Scottish monasteries*'. Certainly, before its ruination in mid C16 it exhibited some wonderful stone carvings and effigies – particularly on the south transept, but on the day that we visited, the scaffolding and fencing did not show it at its best. Our interest though is less *architectural* than *agricultural*, and in this respect we must recognise that the Cistercians of Melrose were past masters at organising the farming and marketing of sheep for their products of fleece, skin, milk and meat. And it is *this* that links them to the name of our **Saint Botolph** whose eponymous port of Boston in Lincolnshire was similarly glorified during the same centuries for its expertise and international importance in connection with the same trade.
Melrose did not stand in the Borders alone however. Its three other neighbouring abbeys also contributed to the importance of the Borders during this period, together with Roxburgh Castle which became the administrative centre for King David, so we cannot leave the subject before briefly looking at these.



The remaining abbey buildings (of which it's church is the only part standing) do have appealing features however. This view from the north shows its most intact surviving face, namely the north transept, with its rather pretty porch.

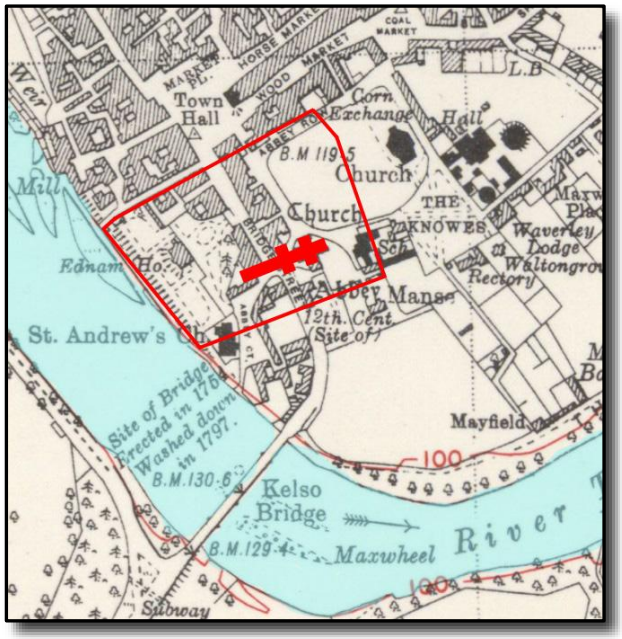
Kelso Abbey

This, I felt, was the saddest and least celebrated of the four abbeys although we found the town square attractive and its people most friendly and welcoming.



It is a pity about the bins, although they do add some colour, and might one day themselves be regarded as quaint and interesting historical items.

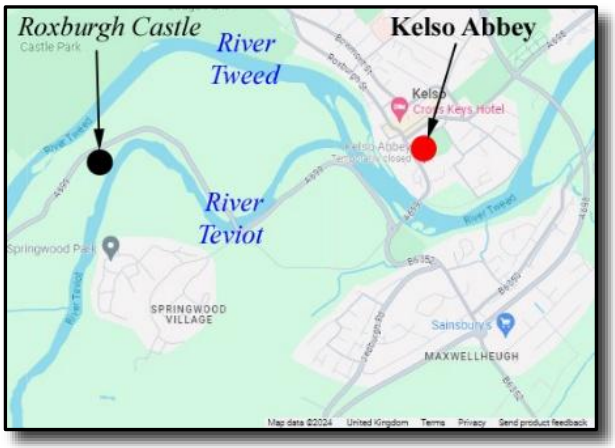
A view from the east shows both the north and the south transepts. Sadly the façade and window of the east end of the church is missing (not to mention a great deal more). The building was fortress-like in its strength, and, most unusually, is reputed to have had two transept crossings – which was most unusual in Europe.



Here in red is depicted the sort of footprint that we might expect to have seen had we visited at the height of the abbey's power.

Roxburgh Castle

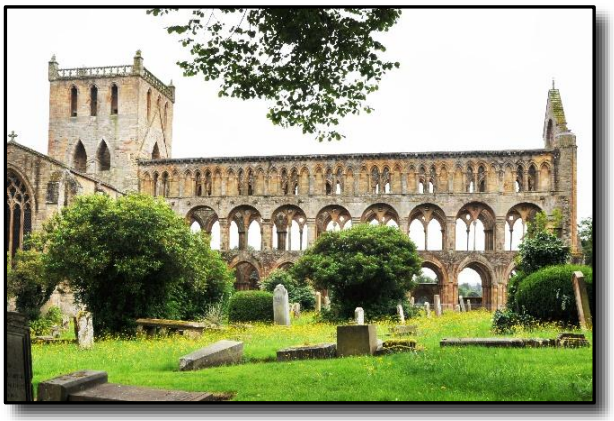
Less than a mile to the west, and wedged in a good defensive position between the River Tweed and the River Teviot, we find just a few remaining walls commemorating this highly-significant site.



In the Middle Ages it was at least as important as Edinburgh or Berwick-upon-Tweed, being for a while the primary residence of King David I. During his occupation of Scotland, Edward III also chose to reside there. It was finally destroyed during an attack in 1460, whereupon it was *Jedburgh* which took up the cudgels as the Borders' county town.

Jedburgh Abbey

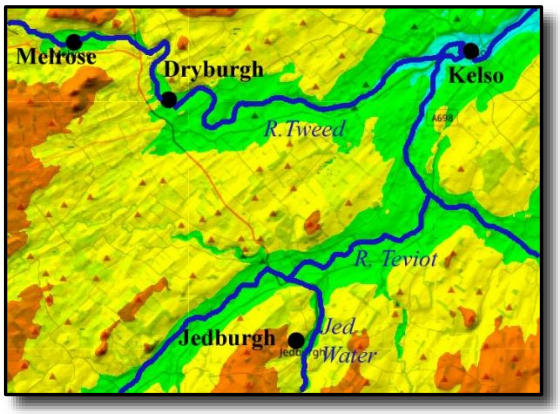
Jedburgh is the fourth and southernmost of the border abbeys on our list. It was founded in 1118 as an Augustinian priory - some eighteen years *before* Melrose's foundation in 1136 - although its full status as an abbey was not acquired until eighteen years *after* Melrose's foundation.



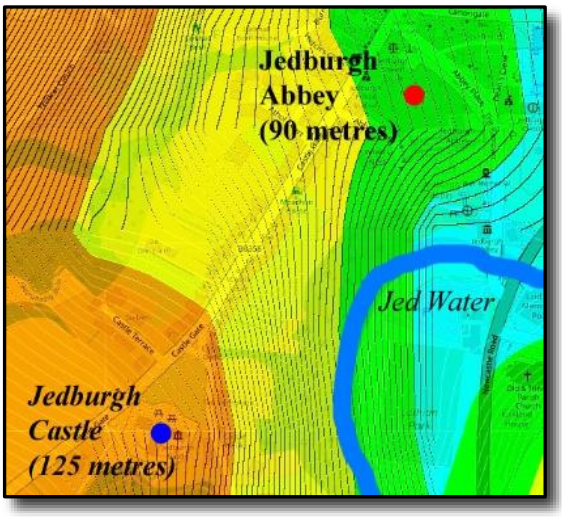
It too lay on a river - the Jed Water – a secondary tributary of the Tweed via its first tributary the River Teviot. The Jedburgh site is thought to have been a centre of Christian worship for hundreds of years previously.

The abbey contains some of the finest Romanesque and Gothic architecture in Scotland, and it is the most complete of the four Borders' abbeys.

The incumbents, the Augustinians, particularly concerned themselves with the development of herbal remedies. There is a suggestion that King David built such a magnificent structure close to the English border as a showpiece to the English to demonstrate that such feats of construction were possible in Scotland.



Jedburgh is positioned rather differently to the other three abbeys. Both Melrose and Dryburgh have their own patches of lower plain (seen here in green) and Kelso is blessed with having its own wide area, but Jedburgh is further up into the hills, is more constricted, and has a less significant waterway.



The abbey sits in an elevated position at 90 metres above sea level. Above it and to the south-west at 125 metres lies Jedburgh Castle in a strong defensive position, but Jed Water does not offer the same prospects for navigation as the Tweed. It is more of a drainage channel from the hillsides, and has to fall 40 metres in a three mile stretch before it reaches the levels of Melrose and the Berwick port.

It was perhaps because of these factors that the Augustinians followed a different culture to that of Melrose. Sheep farming was not a commerce in which Jedburgh took part to any noticeable degree.

Dryburgh Abbey

For my money I found Dryburgh Abbey to be the most beautiful of the Border abbeys; the approach through the trees is stunning …

… and there was, for me, a palpable feeling of peace and tranquillity.

… and my favourite place *within* the abbey was the Chapter House of which the above is its splendid doorway.

I am afraid that, at first sight, this picture of the inside of the Chapter House makes it look like a large abandoned vault, but I promise you that in reality it is not like that at all. I have seen a few Chapter Houses on my travels but I cannot recall seeing such a complete one in a still-usable condition. It was here where the community gathered each morning to receive their daily deployment orders and to discuss any matters of importance. They would hear a chapter read from the Rule of Saint Benedict (hence ***Chapter** House*) which would remind them of their obligations. No casual conversation was allowed. During C13 the room had been beautifully painted and here and there fragments of colour can still be seen.

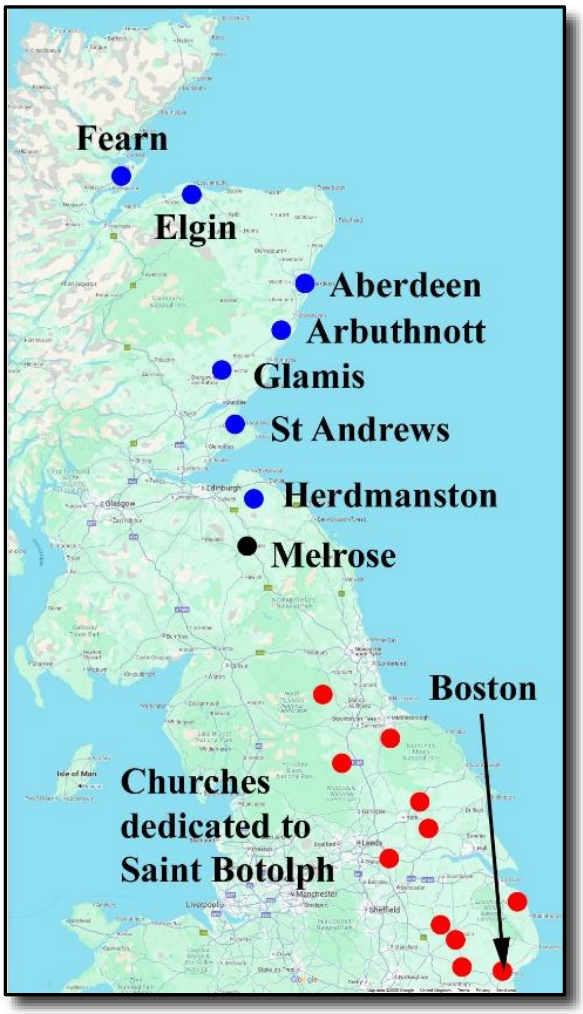
Results

My purpose in exploring the Border abbeys was to *try to find a connection* between them and Saint Botolph.

Melrose Abbey has long been famed for its strong connection with the sheep and fleece trade, and the trade fairs at '*Botolph's Town*' (Boston) in Lincolnshire, had the greatest reputation for being central to England's medieval success in the wool industry. I guessed that the other three Border abbeys would have been similarly involved in the trade.

In the event I found little indication that this was true. It seems that I was wrong. The other abbeys did not come close. It was the ***Cistercians of Melrose*** who were the stars in this field and no other Order could touch them.

Other evidence which made me think that there *might* be some connection between the abbeys and Saint Botolph came from our saint's inclusion in breviaries found in abbeys of Nova Farina (just outside Fearn), Elgin, Aberdeen, Arbuthnott, Glamis, and at Herdmanston. These sites cover the eastern seaboard[6] of Scotland as seen in the map below:



Breviaries are reference books used by monks as a guide to their devotions. Within these books are *Kalendars* listing the dates during the year when individual saints should be venerated. There being far more than 365 saints, it is left to the local ecclesiastics to decide which of the saints should be so favoured. From the fact that the places of worship indicated on the map gave due space to Saint Botolph's Day indicates that during this period his memory was esteemed, and that his cult was being venerated there.

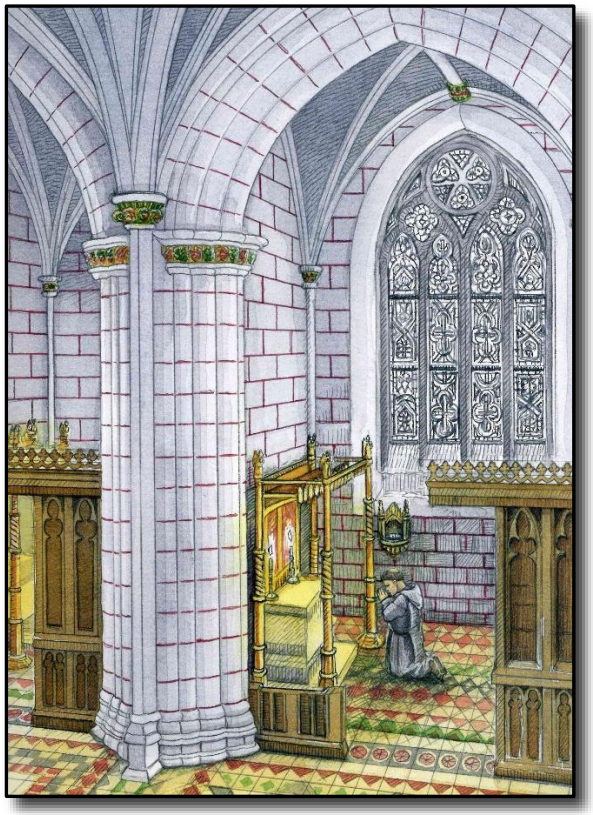
As we have seen, records show that the Cistercians of Melrose were regular market traders at the annual Saint Botolph's Fairs in Boston. There is no doubt then that his name and sanctity would have been well known to them.

Further north in St Andrews there was a chapel dedicated to our saint.

At Melrose Abbey running the length of the monastery church there was a series of eight chapels which were dedicated to a range of saints for their veneration.

[6] It is noteworthy that these sites are *all coastal* adding weight to the suggestion that the **link** which nurtured Saint Botolph's cult in this region was fostered by seaborne travel. Logically the destinations would have mostly been Scandinavian, but there would also have been a demand for trade up and down the coast - for example, carrying fleeces to Boston to get a better market price than might have been available in the north.

The picture above shows the ruined nave (the religious home, you will remember, of the **lay brothers**) and five windows - each of which would have constituted the southern wall of one of the eight chapels. It is not unlikely that one of these chapels would have been dedicated to Saint Botolph.



The picture above, from the Official Guide to Melrose Abbey, is included courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland. It is a view from the north showing the artist's impression of a monk in the year 1400 venerating a saint in one of the chapels of the south aisle of the nave.

Conclusions

I believe we have moved a step further up the ladder, of understanding how and why, seven centuries after his death, Saint Botolph's name was still on many people's lips in Scotland and the north.

Afterwords

I was delighted to receive an e-mail from Revd Gary Alderson, rector of St Botolph's Church, Helpston. Gary told me that he was doing a '*Botolph Crawl around London and the vicar of Aldgate passed details of your newsletter on to me.'* I am pleased to welcome Gary as a new member. Many thanks to Revd Laura Jorgensen at Aldate for introducing him.

The next *Botolphian* will, I hope, be with you in two month's time … approximately.

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.