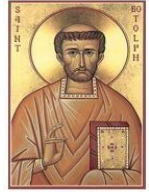




The Botolphian

Newsletter of
The Society of Saint Botolph

www.botolph.info



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Issue Number: 114

Now published (approximately) every other month

1 April 2025

*This issue is dedicated to
Christopher J. Micklethwaite,
late of St Botolph's Church, Quarrington.*

Highlights this month

- Saint Botolph's Church, Quarrington (updated from *Botolphian Issue No. 9* of 1st December 2013).

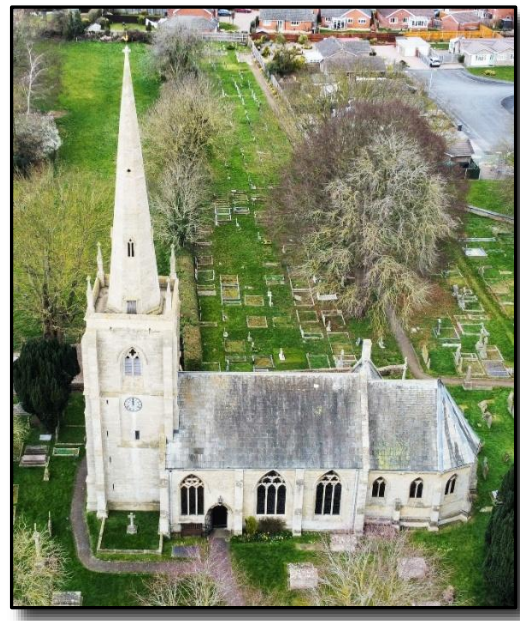
Editorial

Christopher Micklethwaite died several years ago but he and I communicated regularly following my first visit to St Botolph's Quarrington in 2013. I was very 'green' in writing the *Botolphian* in those days; I was learning rapidly, and I was cautiously feeling my way forwards; the newsletter was cutting its own pathway and I was unsure about which direction it would take.

As a consequence, Number 9 newsletter was less informative than it might have been, and as Christopher saw subsequent newsletters improve he several times expressed the hope that I would "do Quarrington again". Sadly I did not get around to this during his lifetime, but he prepared his own excellent booklet entitled *St Botolph Quarrington – a Short History*.

Quarrington's churchwarden Maria Fryer kindly printed out a copy for me and I found it extremely helpful as I prepared this update.

I felt that the least I could do in memory of my enjoyment of Christopher's friendship, and the diligence of his research was to dedicate this issue to him which I do with great pleasure.



Feature

Quarrington

is in southern Lincolnshire, south west of Sleaford. It lies 20 miles south of Lincoln and west of Boston.

Approach: *If coming from the south you will probably drive up the A1 and then join the B6403 and A153. After crossing the A15 roundabout the first turning on your right will take you up Northfield Road and 500 metres later you will see the church on your left. We parked outside the church in Town Road.*

Key: *The church is usually left open between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.*

Location: 52.9870, -0.4310. NG34 8RS.

Listed Grade: II*



The name of the town is said to stem from a combination of the Old English word *cweorn* meaning ‘mill’ and *tun* standing for ‘homestead’.

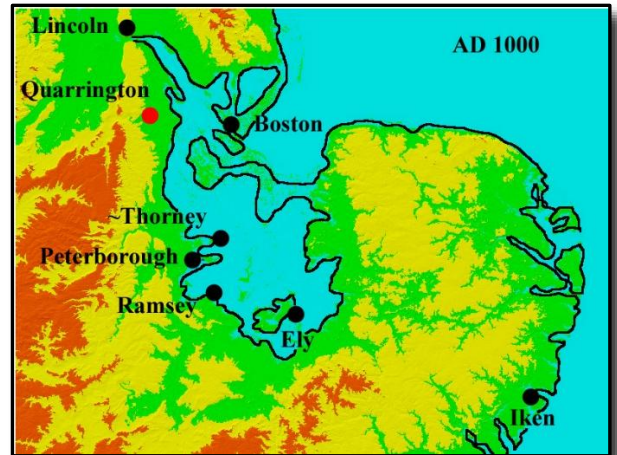


It lies adjacent to Sleaford; the River Sleaf was notable for the number of watermills along its length. For a while during the Middle Ages the name *Millthorpe* was also used to denote the Quarrington area.

Although Sleaford itself was occupied by the Romans there is little evidence of any Anglo-Saxon settlement in Quarrington, although it did have a mention in the 1086 Domesday Book where it was referred to as a large settlement with a population of 53.8 households.

The region was held in three parts: (i) by King William himself, (ii) by the Bishop of Lincoln (St

Mary), (iii) by **Ramsey Abbey** (St Benedict’s). The abbey’s holding contained two churches. Ramsey Abbey was a new foundation, built c. AD 969 by Bishop Oswald of Worcester (d.992) as part of the monastic reform¹ that would, a few years later in c. AD 972, see Saint Botolph’s relics translated from Icanho and elevated to prominence in his new shrine at the restored Thorney Abbey.²



There is no actual record of any of Saint Botolph’s relics finding their way into Ramsey Abbey during the monastic reform process, although it would not be surprising if they had done so. Saint Botolph was more a *Bishop Aethelwold’s man* than a man of *Bishop Oswald*, but it would be another three years before Aethelwold’s enthusiasm for Saint Botolph was let loose, and by that time Oswald had become Archbishop of York.

Two centuries earlier though, in AD 787, the Second Council of Nicaea had decreed that ‘*every altar should contain a relic*’. The principle relic would of course be from the body of the saint to whom the church or abbey was dedicated.

It would not have been unlikely for Oswald to have received a small token of his colleague Aethelwold’s respect in the form of a few of Botolph’s relics when they were ultimately disinterred. Particularly so because, during the digging, Botolph’s bones became intermingled with those of his brother Adulph, and Bishop Aethelwold ended up with a surplus.

My speculation is that, although Oswald would (just) have become Archbishop of York by the time Saint Botolph’s relics became available, he would still have retained a close interest in the lands of Ramsey Abbey, and that, had he acquired the relic, he might well have passed it on to the incumbent abbot of Ramsey with the strong

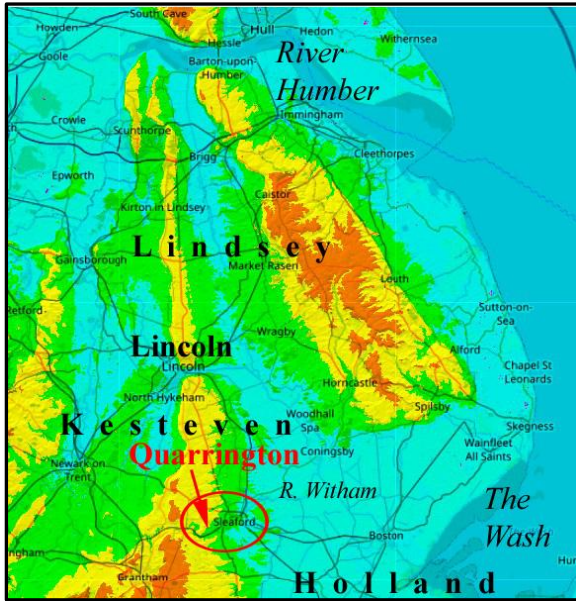
¹ Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester (904-984), and Archbishop Dunstan (909-988) were the two other members of the group promoting monastic reform.

² Thorney, Ely and Peterborough abbeys had been desecrated by the Vikings in AD 869.

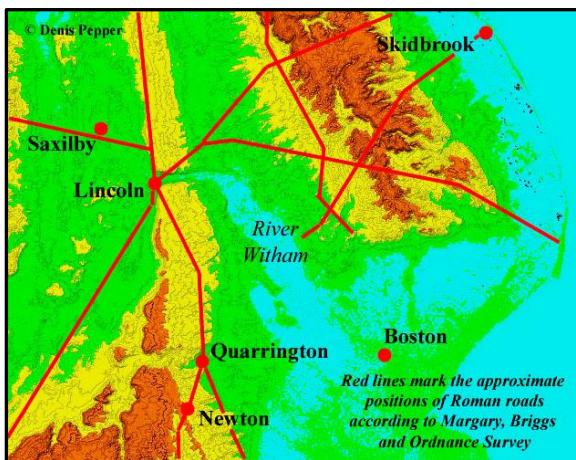
Archbishoply hint that a new St Botolph's church on the abbey land at Quarrington would be a good idea. In such a case the foundations of the first church here could have been c. 980, the last of the Viking raids permitting.

Quarrington's location

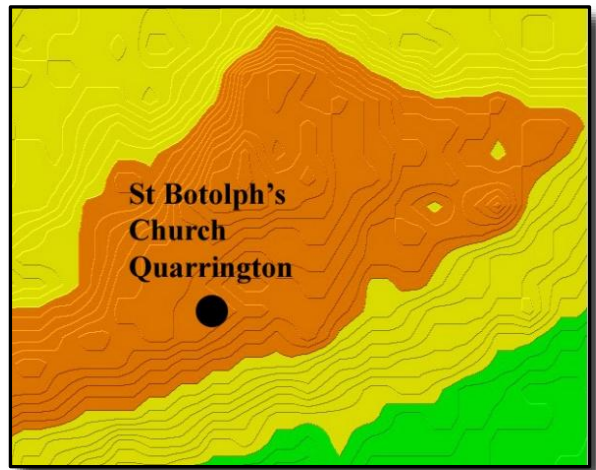
The map below is a difficult one to annotate, but you will see that the high land in the area is formed into ridges of *wolds* that run north-south. Between them lie the flat *fens*, and some of the ridges are broken so that, in effect, they become islands.



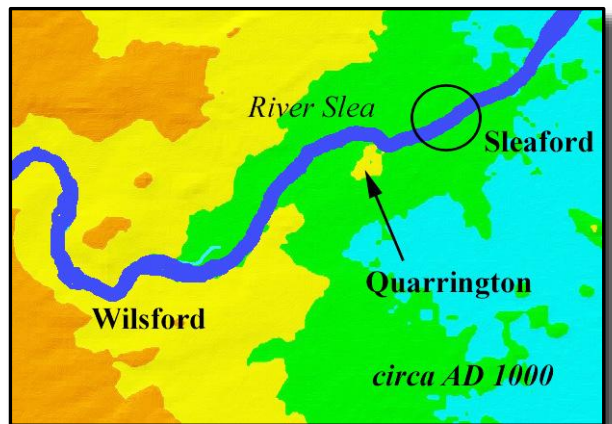
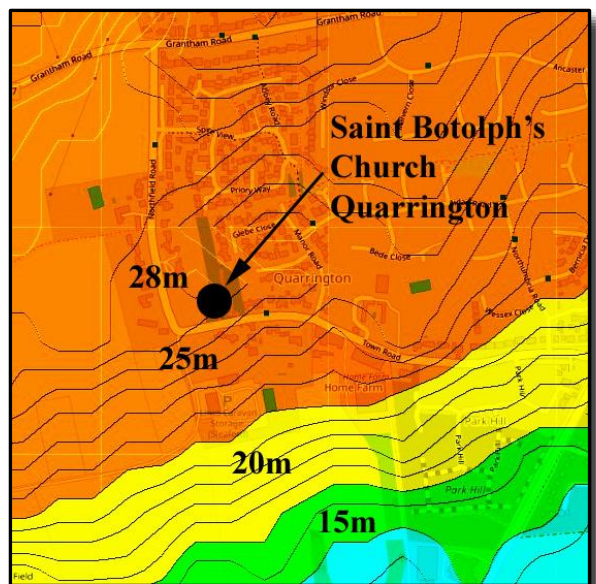
Lincolnshire itself runs from the River Humber to The Wash and consists of *Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland*. We are concerned here with the southern part of the central spur, which resembles the distal, middle and proximal phalanges of a skeletal finger divided by joints at Lincoln and west of Quarrington where there are breaks in the hills.



Above is a contour map showing the track of the Roman roads, most of which follow the higher ground.



Our church here was wisely built on high ground with its feet well clear of the water.



Meanwhile, the River Slea goes slithering past on its way from the hills to its link with the River Witham.

I have included the map below (used originally in the St Botolph's Church, Helpston feature) to illustrate another possible *raison d'être* for Quarrington's St B – that of being one of the Botolphian *Travellers' churches* – pilgrims' hostels on the route between Lincoln and London.

Another thing that we might bear in mind is that this is Danish settlement country as evidenced by the great number of *-by* villages in the vicinity, i.e. Rauceby, Willoughby, Aswarby, Swarby, Oasby, Aisby, Kirkby and even Welby!



C16 and C19. The C14 doorway is remarkably fine with its foliate capitals. The wooden door itself is relatively modern and dates from 1897.



One would expect there to be a mass dial on the stone block shown centrally here but despite trying hard to focus my imagination I cannot see any sign of the dial or the gnomon or service holes that would go with it. There are however some graffiti:

The exterior of the church



The south doorway leads directly into the nave without the intervention of a porch although records tell us that there *was* a porch here between



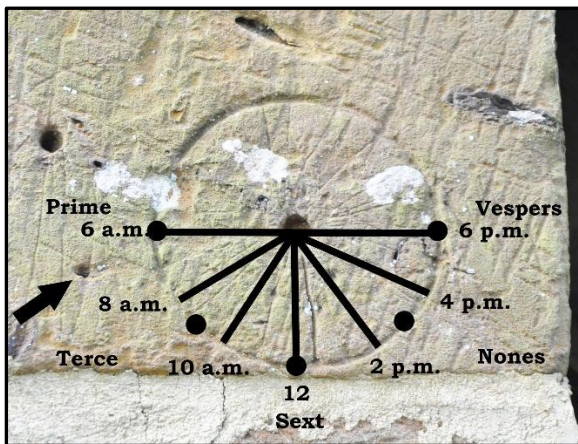
This is a photograph of the same block taken when I visited in November 2013, and the graffiti has faded considerably since then. The marks seem to indicate 1770 and 1773 but I cannot really fathom what that is all about.

The fact that there was a porch here earlier would of course explain the lack of a mass dial since it would have been on the outer wall of the porch itself – the stone fabric having long since been removed. Mass dials, (aka *tide dials*, or *scratch dials*) were prevalent in England between C7 and C14.

In case you have forgotten the format and purposes of a mass dial, this is a type of sundial which is scratched onto a prominent south wall of a church – usually at the south doorway – and a pencil-like stick or twig, when placed in the central gnomon hole, casts a shadow to indicate the present time of day. The time of the next service is indicated by another twig placed in the circumference of the dial. Thus the artefact is both a clock and a noticeboard.



Here we see the mass dial in use at noon at Saint Botolph's Church, Culpho, Sussex, - the midday shadow running straight downwards ...



... and here we see the interpretation of the service holes, the annotation making reference to the hours of devotions of the monks – prime, terce, sext, nones and vespers. The arrow marks 7 a.m. for those who wish to join an early Holy Communion service. This dial is at St Botolph's Church, Slapton in Lincolnshire.



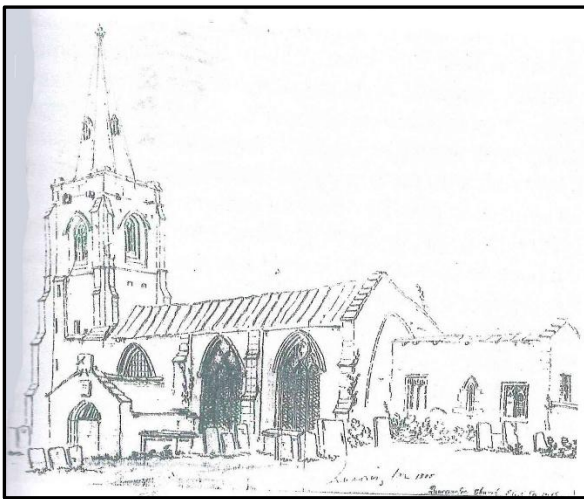
Above the doorway is the face of a rude man poking out his tongue – either to scare away the devil or perhaps to warn the devil that he can 'Go to Hell' because all members of the congregation of the Quarrington church are true believers and will resist all temptation – so there!



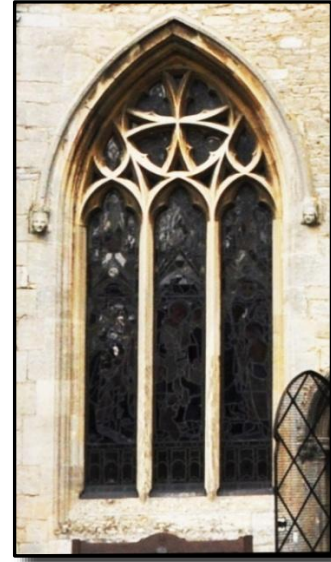
Just in case anybody thinks I might not have noticed – I see that he has had a face-lift since my last visit.



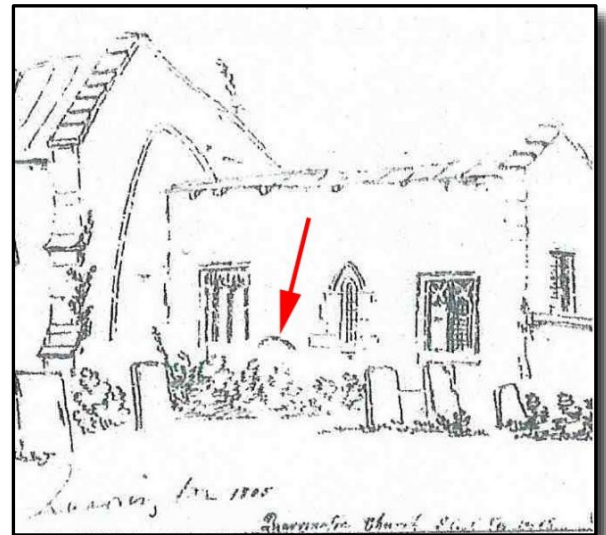
I could not resist a quick doodle to ascertain where the outlines of the porch might have been in the past. As you will note, this puts the SW window and the buttress in some jeopardy. Subsequent to my doodle I discovered in Christopher Micklethwaite's publication of *St Botolph Quarrington – A short History* (which Maria Fryer had kindly printed out especially for me – it otherwise being out of print) a copy of an 1805 drawing of the church in which the porch is depicted.



This shows that it was wide enough to cross the buttress to the right of the doorway, and to severely impinge upon the SW window the lower half of which was apparently blocked up. It was not unblocked until 1859 which must have been within a decade or so of the porch being removed. The window (pictured in the next column) was rebuilt in the C14 Gothic Decorated style.



Speculation about the south doorway does not end there however. Pevsner tells us that today's south doorway started out as *priest's doorway* i.e. that it was recycled from the wall of the old chancel.



If we look at the chancel part of the 1805 sketch again it appears that the building was in a sorry state at the time. Its roof seems to be missing and foliage has grown up along the south side almost obscuring what seems to be the top of a doorway (arrowed). This was probably the original site of the south door.

There is however no sign of the face with the protruding tongue which in any case would not have been appropriate for a priest's door – so the mystery deepens. In fact it is probably better not to ask further but to accept the amusing idiosyncrasy as it is today.

Of the windows shown in the sketch, three are of C16 Tudor style and one is a C13 style lancet - probably a window retained from an earlier structure.



The south wall of the nave together with its windows and the tower and its spire were rebuilt c. 1325 – just in time to avoid the loss of labour brought about by the fast-approaching Black Death.

The first priest at Quarrington is recorded as having been Alexander de Brauncewell who joined in 1218. We might suspect that his church would have been smaller than today's church with windows of a Gothic Early English style similar to that from St Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave shown on the left below - or the lancet (from St Botolph's at Bossall, Yorkshire) on the right.

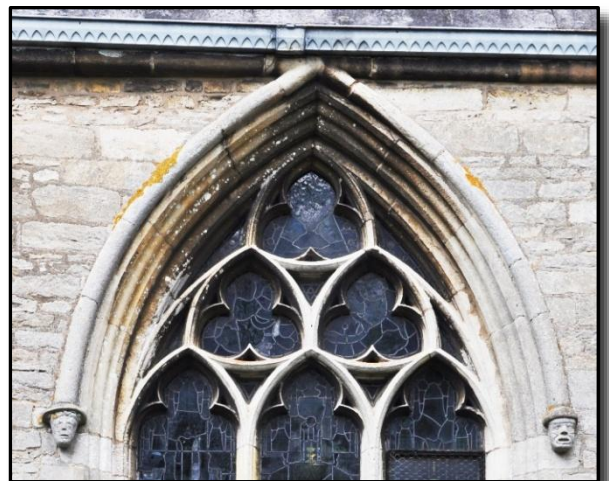


In the rebuilding of 1325, these windows would have been removed and replaced by the larger (but weaker in terms of wall strength) Decorated style windows which would have brought much more light into the church. Buttresses would have been added to provide compensatory strength at the same time.

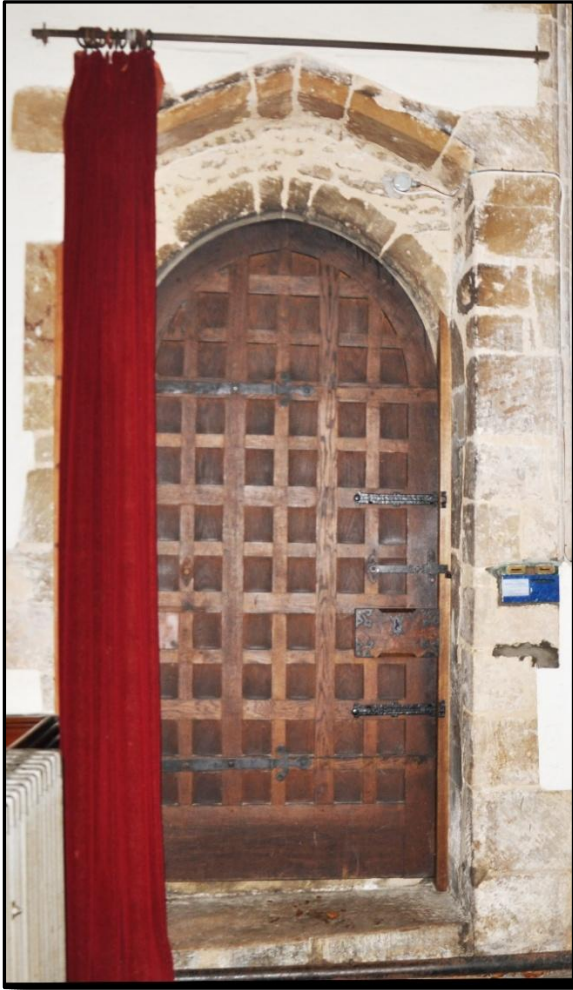
Although de Brauncewell might have been *recorded* as the first priest, it is likely that he had several predecessors since, as noted earlier, the original church on this site probably dated from late C10. It would have had tiny windows, no buttresses and have been *very* dark inside.



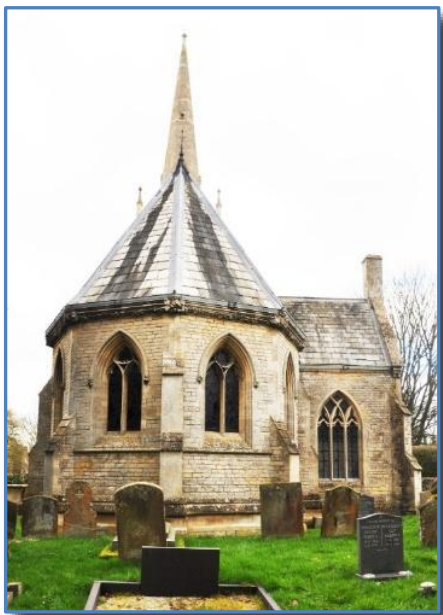
The windows of the south wall of the nave exhibit hexagonal tracings (as seen here and remarked upon by Pevsner as being most unusual) and spherical triangle tracing as seen below. You will note that the hexagonal window does not sit centrally between the buttresses and that its apex (like its partners) goes right up to the eaves in a desperate attempt to illuminate the church with as much light as possible.



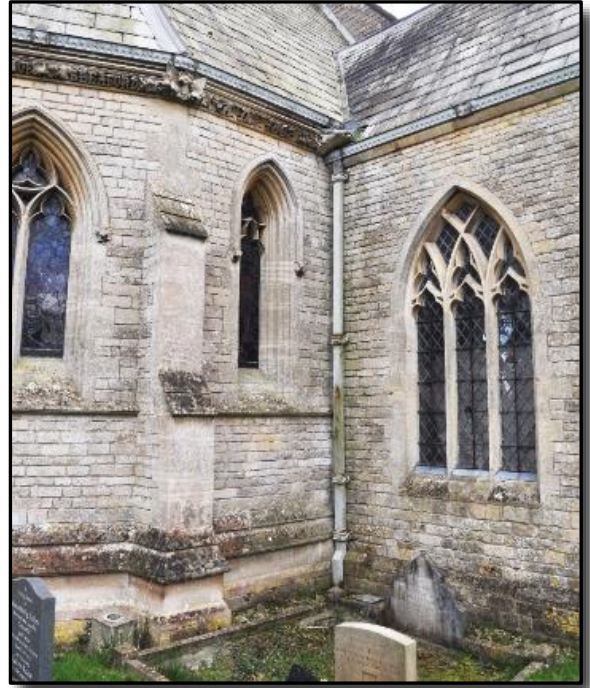
Each window has hood moulds to direct rainwater sideways away from the glass, and each hood mould, in common with the remainder of the church windows, has headstops carrying some full-of-character faces.



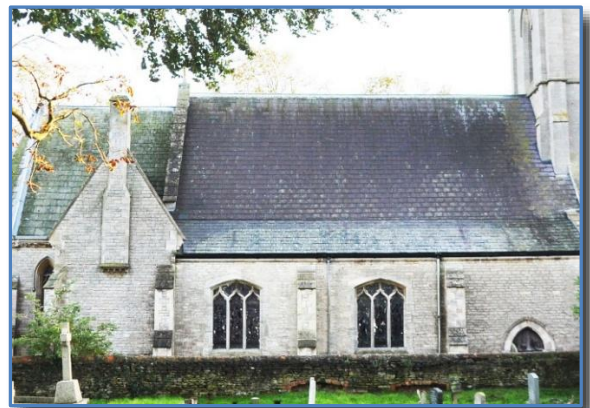
Reverting briefly to the subject of the south door and looking at it from the inside, we see signs that it originally encased a taller, perhaps pointed door or double doors -which would also have given the earlier church a different aspect.



Moving along to the east, the chancel was built in 1862 by Charles Kirk, a local church builder of some renown.

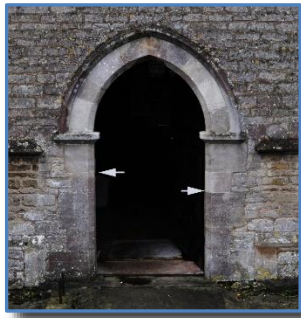


Here we see the chancel abutting onto the vestry at the north east corner of the church. The vestry's east window style is more late C13 than early C14 ... but it is so only in *style* rather than in *fabrication* for, as Christopher Micklethwaite tells us, it was in fact commissioned by Revd Henry Hine (rector from 1844-1861) and served as the east window of the chancel for a few years before the new chancel was built. It was then jollied along to the north west and recycled as the east window of the north aisle.



The north arcade (seen *inside* the church) displays today's church's earliest fabric (C13). The north *aisle* was initially rebuilt in 1848, but in 1862 it was remodelled again when Charles Kirk was engaged to refurbish the church as a whole. This remodelling must have involved substantial changes to the north wall because the vestry (seen here on the left with the chimney) which now functions as the organ chamber, was a Kirk addition, and to the right of this the two late C16 style windows look as if they were inserted at the same time as the other building work. Whether

they came from the previous wall or whether they were C16 replicas made in 1862 is a matter for speculation.



Photographic manipulation of contrast and brightness suggests that the upper part of the north doorway is newer than the lower jambs and that this too was included in Charles Kirk's renovations of the north wall.



Turning the corner to look at the west wall of the tower we find a C14 window which, to privileged visitors to the base of the tower reveals ...

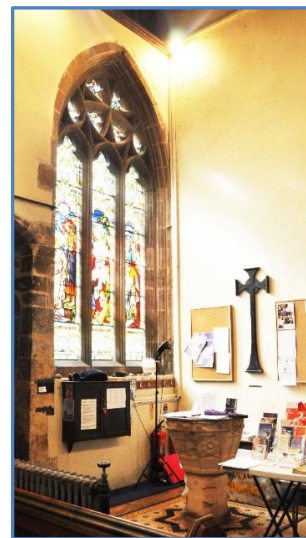


The window slits on the south west corner of the tower reveal the position of the stairway that leads up to the high parapet.

Interior of the church



... Jesus the Good Shepherd on the south side and our saint, builder of churches and abbeys, to the north.



Entering via the south doorway we find the font duly reminding us of our baptism and membership

of the church family. The bronze cross on the wall is a silent memory of Revd Frederick William Shannon who was rector here from 1861 to 1910. It looks as if the forger (the artisan – not the priest) took the precaution of casting two crosses in case one failed for, if we cross the nave, bowing reverently to high altar as we pass, and exit via the north door, we find its sister marking his grave just outside.



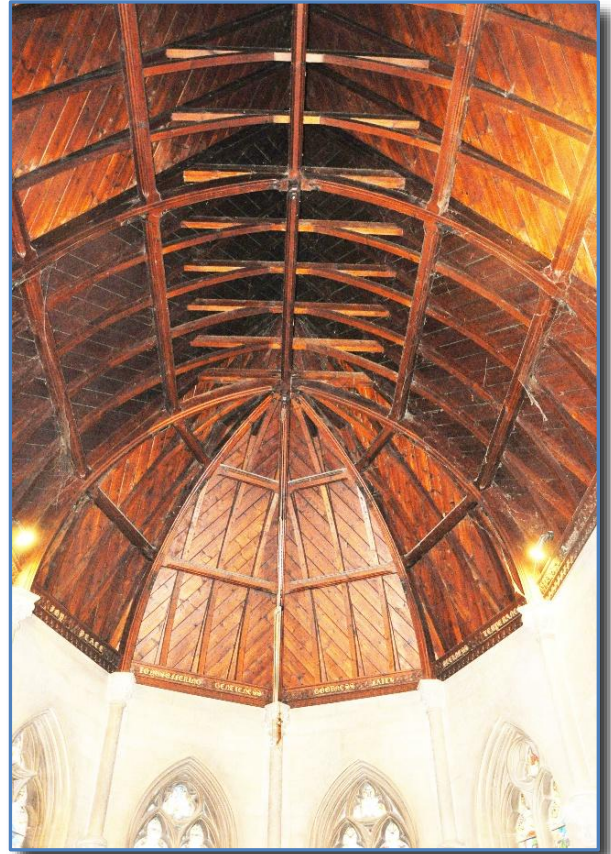
The eight faces of the (late C14) font sport a variety of bas-reliefs most of which feature roses.

Here we see the exceptionally wide chancel arch which was modified in 1862 to match the new chancel. It replaced a much narrower arch of C14 which saw many changes during its lifetime starting with its contemporaneous chancel. This was replaced by a smaller chancel in late C16, which was in turn replaced in 1812 by a small structure with a wooden window. The fourth and final chancel was the generous masterpiece of 1862 built by Charles Kirk.



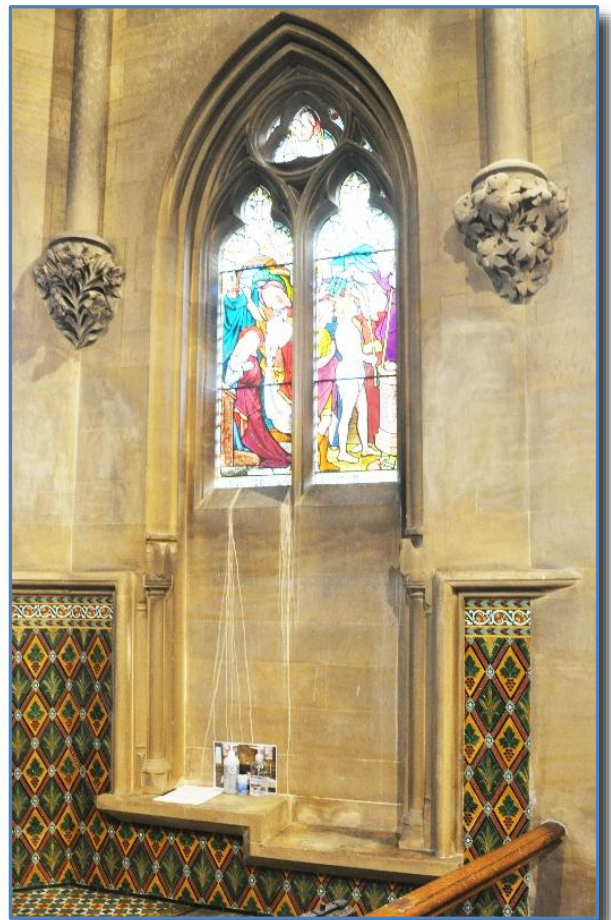
It seems that Kirk's decision to rebuild was influenced by his realisation that he could do little with the remains of the existing chancel and that it was better to start again from scratch. Attempts had been made in 1859 by the then rector, Revd Hine, to cheer things up by paying for a new east window. Kirk ensured that this was not wasted

by moving it to the east end of the north aisle as we saw earlier. He then demolished the rest of the chancel completely, replacing it with his quinquangular apse.



As Christopher Micklethwaite points out in his booklet: *'The quinquangular (five pointed) shape of the apse is most unexpected in England. Note the sculptures of a lamb, doves, a lion (St Mark), an angel (St Matthew), a bull (St Luke), an eagle (St John), and the lamb with a banner (both a symbol of St John the Baptist and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ).'*

The inside of the chancel roof is spectacular too.

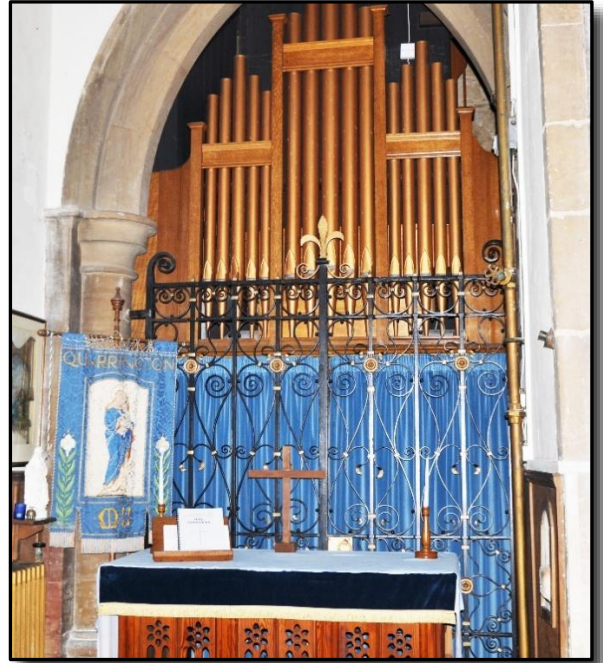


It is Kirk's loving attention to tidiness and detail which sets his apse apart from others.

Sedilia.



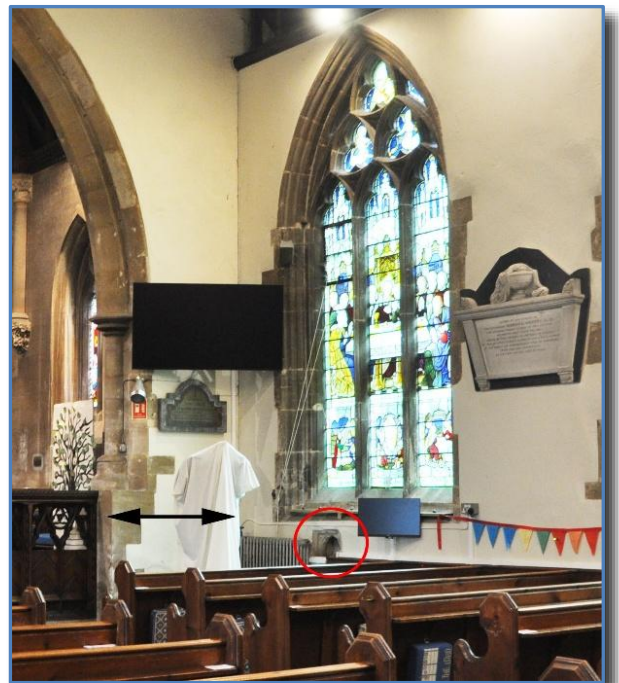
As noted previously the oldest part of the church is the C13 arcade which separates the north aisle from the nave. The north aisle was widened in 1848. I am not sure exactly how this was achieved because the columns of the arcade would not have been moved so one must presume that the north wall was demolished and re-built.



Back in 2013 when I made my first visit here, it was the home of the Lady chapel's altar as seen above. At the bottom right of the picture a small C14 piscina is just visible indicating that an altar had existed in this location for 700 years. Behind the altar table and serving as a reredos the attractive 1889 wrought ironwork used to be a gateway to the vestry; this is now fully occupied by the organ.



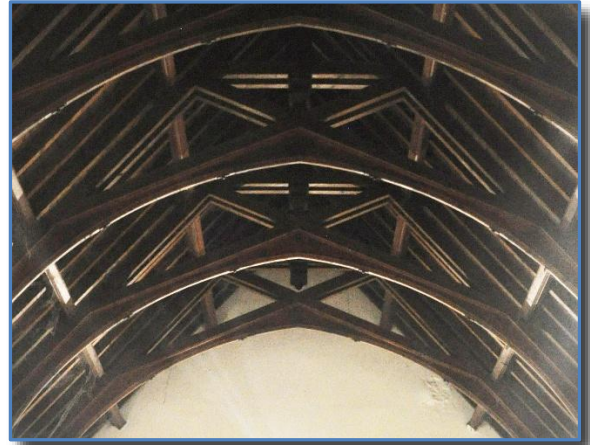
The North Aisle looking east. Tucked away down at the end seems now to be an area for relaxation and perhaps counselling?



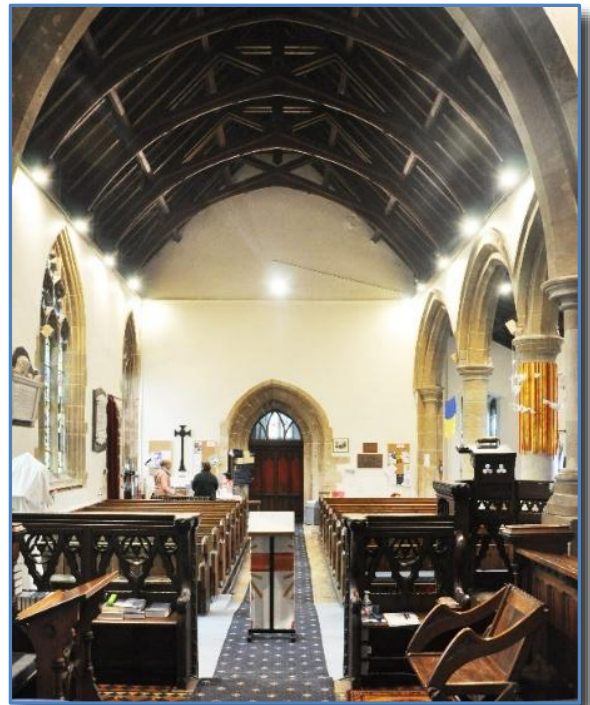
On the *south* side of the chancel arch we find another piscina (here ringed in red) – a sure sign that there was once an altar here too, but this was in the days when the chancel arch was narrower. It is clear from the small width of wall remaining (arrowed in black) that there is no room for an altar table here now.



The ghostly enshrouded figure standing in the corner in the picture above is now revealed to be that of - I want to call him Percy the Eagle - but whatever his name really is, he is a magnificent beast who has to be kept under wraps. Eagles are used for lecterns because they are reputed to be the only birds that can look into the sun and thus spread the light of the world.



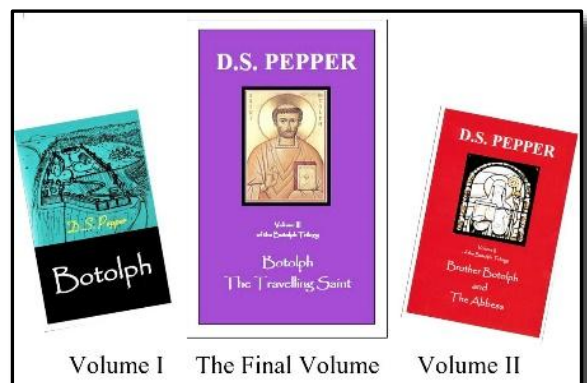
An enlarged photograph of the nave roof beams looking west ...



... and the same shot without enlargement.



This is the aforementioned piscina in the nave where the priests of C14 would wash the vessels used in the Holy Sacrament. At that time there would have been a third piscina in the sanctuary close to where we recently saw the sedilia.



I hope you will forgive me for a quick commercial while I still have your attention. My Saint Botolph Trilogy covers the (somewhat dramatised) life of our saint from his birth in c. **AD 680** via his sojourn in France from **618 to 647** (where he was

professed as a monk then ordained as a priest) to his founding of Icanho Abbey in 654 and his death on 17th June 680.

The three books are available directly from me at Dr Denis Pepper, 17 Cliffe House, 38 Radnor Cliff, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2TY. Tel: 01303 778-778. Mobile: 07802 646-644.

Email: dp@botolph.info. Nationwide Bank:
Sort code 07-02-46, Account Number: 45570161.

The Botolph Trilogy:

Volume I, 'Botolph' (Folkestone: EarlsGate Publishing, 2010) ISBN 978-0-9567508-0-8 at £8.99 plus £3 p&p

Volume II, 'Brother Botolph and The Abbess' (Folkestone: EarlsGate Publishing, 2014) ISBN 978-0-9567508-1-5 at £12.99 plus £3 p&p.

or Volumes I and II together £17 plus £3 p&p.

Volume III, 'Botolph the Travelling Saint' (Folkestone: EarlsGate Publishing, 2019) ISBN 978-0-9567508-2-2 at £12.99 plus £3 p&p.

or special price of £27 for the three books (which includes p&p).

Conclusion

Updated Classification of sb Quarrington

(See Regular End Notes opposite).

I would favour Type 3.

Type 2? It would almost qualify as Type 2 since Bishop Oswald was of Danish ancestry (but I write this mostly in jest).

Type 4? It never seems to have been a rich church so although it was well within the sheep farming ambit and close to the wool-trade metropolis of Boston, I see no sign that the church has been sponsored by an entrepreneur who has gained his wealth from sheep farming. Indeed if my first instinct is correct, the church would already have been well established for over a century before the wool-trade entered its ascendancy.

Type 6? The church's later functionality might well have been linked closely with the provision of hospitality for the traveller. Indeed who am I to say that this was not part of Bishop Oswald's initial plan for its foundation?

Thanks

My grateful thanks to Maria Fryer for her hospitality and help during our visit. I greatly enjoyed visiting *Christopher's patch* again despite his absence. If the parish through Maria would be interested in reprinting this newsletter and offering it for sale to the congregation at perhaps £5 per copy to raise money for church funds then I would have no objection.

There is no charge for membership of The Society of Saint Botolph. If anyone who reads this would be interested in joining then please email me and I will add your address to the emailing list.

Back copies are available on the website at www.botolph.info (just click on the *Newsletters* tab at the top. And once again many thanks to my

son Rob and his wife Angélique for hosting our website.

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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