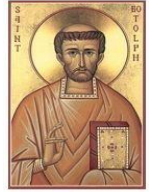




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

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



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17 June 2026

## Highlights this month

- Editorial Excuses.
- Updating the feature on Saint Botolph's Church, Grimston, Norfolk.

*It is*

*17th June 2026*

*Happy Saint Botolph's Day!*

History tells us that our dear saint died 1,346 years ago on this very day in AD 680.

## Editorial

Long time no *Botolphian* I am afraid – but I *am* still alive. I must apologise for that – (the *lack of newsletters!*).

I have not been inactive however. Although having reached the age of 84 my 'active' is rather slower than it used to be. The truth is that I have been spending a great deal of my time dabbling deeply into the activities of Abbot Botolph's 'ecclesiastical sister' **Abbess Eanswythe of Folkestone** (my home town).

**Botolph:** Born *circa* AD 620

**Eanswythe:** Born *circa* AD 618 ... or so it was thought - but read on:

Princess Eanswythe (*circa* 618 x 637 to *circa* 640 x 654) was the grand-daughter of King Ethelbert of Kent (*circa* 560-616) – and it was he, you will remember, who welcomed Pope Gregory's missionary (now known as Saint Augustine) to re-jump start Britain's Christianity in AD 597.

Some years ago I was part of a research group which made a study of Folkestone's Saint Eanswythe concluding in 2020 with the announcement that she was probably *not* born in

618 as was the local tradition, but in *circa* 637. Furthermore her death was deemed *not* to be in AD 640, but in *circa* 660.

Several of us were not convinced about the new dates or the methods used in their determination, and so with some urgency in October last year the **618-641 Research Group** was set up to look at the results more closely. For the past 8 months therefore I, two other historians and two archaeologists have been hard at work researching this period in depth. There were many points to clear up, but what interested us most was the date of her birth, and details of what was happening in the wider local community during that period.

## **Does the *actual* date of her birth really matter?**

Sadly, our Eanswythe was only 17 - 22 years of age when she died. Taking her short life into account together with the fact that her father died in 640, severely limits much speculation. History credits her with having founded Folkestone's Nunnery – said to have been the first in Britain. Our ancient church where (most unusually) her relics are still held, possesses a Victorian picture and a signboard on each of which **AD 630** is clearly inscribed as the date of the nunnery's foundation. We need to be certain of our dates before scarce money is spent on replacing the signboard and defacing the picture, since it would cause no little embarrassment if in some years time the recent research was discredited and the traditional dates were deemed to be correct after all. So yes, at this particular moment in time it is important that we make every effort to secure Eanswythe's dates for posterity.

The last 8 months has been interesting and I have found my sixteen years of work on Saint Botolph has stood me in good stead. I dare to hope that the same might happen in reverse and that my interest in *Eanswythe* will, in due course, contribute some more pieces to the Saint Botolph

jigsaw puzzle. After all, there were, in those days, only about 2 million people in Britain and the early 're-jump-started' Christians were working closely together. We know that young Botolph travelled to Frankia and, as likely as not passed through Folkestone (where later, a chapel was dedicated to him) and perhaps met his contemporary, young Eanswythe, who with her sister nuns, was running the 'meet and greet' nunnery which served cross-Channel voyagers.

The 618-641 Research Group are taking a very close holistic look at the history of these 23 years in a depth that has never been attempted before. We are similarly restricting our research to the confinement of the *Canterbury-Théroutanne Box* – an area which encompasses the ecclesiastical sites on each side of the Dover Strait together with the British and Frankian ports and the nunneries and monasteries associated with each of them. If this interests you, then all will be revealed in six months or so in the forthcoming publication:

***Pilgrimage Ports of the Dover Strait in the Seventh Century.***

At present the group are involved in preparing a paper for publication and peer review, and we anticipate having that ready by this September. So ... I have been quite busy.

**Updated Feature**



It was many months ago when I started to prepare this updated feature on Saint Botolph's Church,

Grimston, Norfolk, but then I became side-tracked as explained above.

The first time this church was featured in the *Botolphian* was 1st March 2014 in Issue Number 12 (104 issues ago!) since when I would like to think that I have learnt a lot both academically and photographically. Looking at individual churches like Grimston, and bearing in mind that I have, since 2014, visited and written about more than seventy *other* Saint Botolph churches, I have amassed some knowledge of the links that lie between them.

I intend here to use most of the same text and images of the 2014 feature but will build the updated material around them.

**Grimston.**

**Approach:-** *Either turn off the A148 and follow the B1153 to Grimston or, as we did, approach from the south. Once you are on the B1153 the church is easy to find.*

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

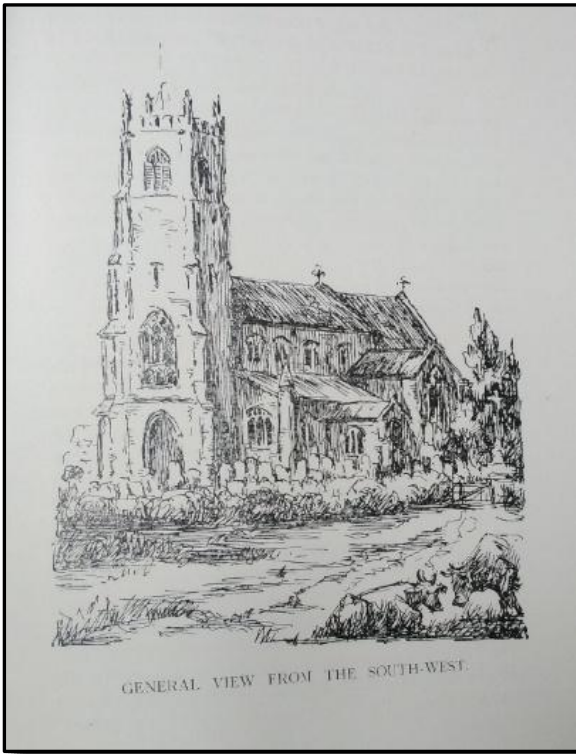
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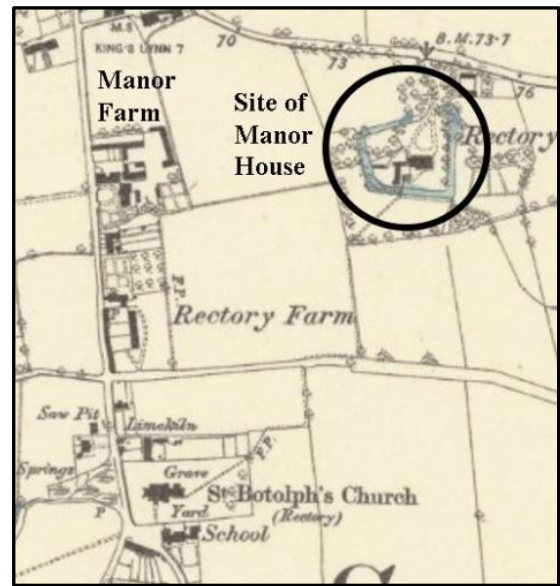


It was Grimston's then recently-retired (now *long-since* retired) rector, Revd William Howard, who prompted me to visit this lovely church in 2014.





was the case then the nearby Saint Botolph's church at Hadstock would also have come under the aegis of both King Cnut and Stigand.

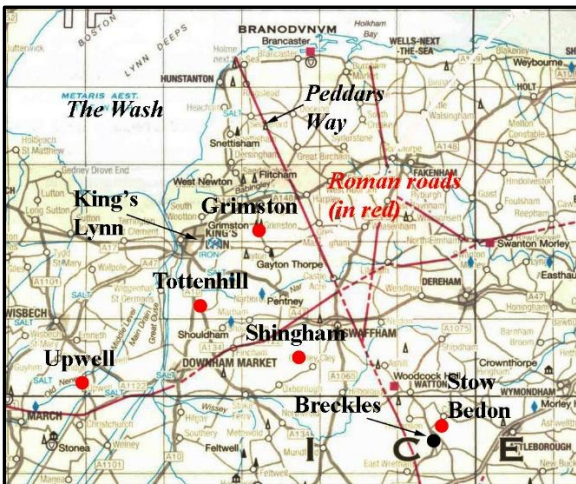


**The Domesday Book (1086).**

In my 2014 feature on this church I followed George R. Oswell's 1923 lead in his excellent and useful booklet where he wrote:

*'... if there was a Saxon church why is it not mentioned in Domesday Book? The answer is that only those churches were mentioned which had glebe.'*

On closer inspection it seems that in this respect he was mistaken. Not only was Grimston mentioned in the Domesday Book (as Grimstuna) but it also had church lands i.e. a 'glebe'.

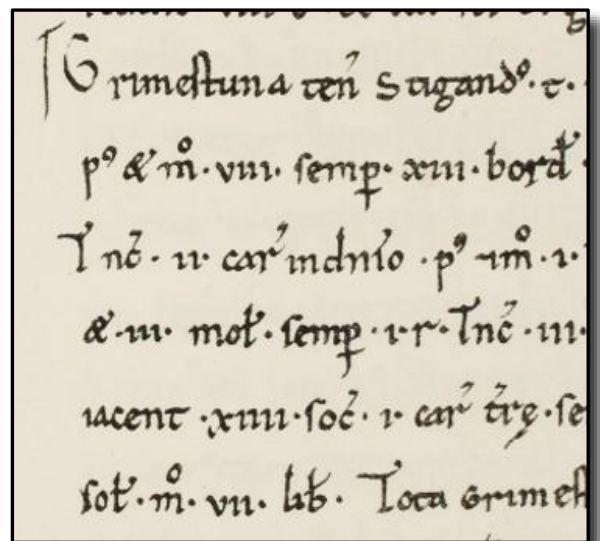


Jan Willson kindly met us there on a bright January day but a biting wind encouraged me to finish taking photographs from the churchyard and to get inside the church as quickly as possible.

**Early history of Grimston**

Blomefield<sup>1</sup> tells us that 'Breccles Manor' at Grimston was originally held by **Stigand** (d. 1072), who was Bishop of Elmham in 1043, and later Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury in plurality.

In 1020 he was King Cnut's chaplain to a church at the royal foundation of Assundun – the jury is out as to whether this was located at Ashington near Rochford in southeast Essex, or at Ashdon near Saffron Walden in north Essex. If the latter



<sup>1</sup> Francis Blomefield, 'Freebridge Hundred and Half: Grimston', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 8* (London,

1808), British History Online <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol8/pp441-452> [accessed 31 August 2025].



Domesday tells us that it was ‘*in the hundred of Freebridge ... and had a population of 142.5 households in 1086*’.

To add a little more detail, Grimston was *administratively* in the Freebridge-Lynn Hundred, although *ecclesiastically* it was in the diocese of North Elmham under the control of Bishop Alfric (d.1038) and it was in his will that we first find the village mentioned. Domesday goes on to tell us that the land was divided into five plots held as follows:

- Bishop Odo of Bayeux (plot worth £7)*
- William of Warenne plot 1 (worth £3.50)*
- William of Warenne plot 2 (worth £2.10)***
- Roger Bigot (plot worth £0.50)*
- Berner the Bowman (plot worth £1)*

The resources tenanted by William de Warenne in his ‘plot 2’ are recorded as being ‘*1 lord's plough teams; 2.5 men's plough teams; Meadow 21 acres; 1 mill; 0.5 salthouses; 1 church and 1.0 church lands.*’ It seems fair to assume that this was the church that was the predecessor of Saint Botolph’s, Grimston.

Archbishop Stigand (c. 998-1072) had held the manor at Grimston until the Norman Conquest after which it was given to Bishop Odo of Bayeux (Earl of Kent 1067-1088). When Odo fell out of favour the manor passed to the Earl of Arundel, William d’Albini (c.1109-1176), and by 1243 Thomas de Grimston held the land *in capite*<sup>2</sup>. He died without issue and the rights to the property were inherited by his niece Alice who married John de Breccles<sup>3</sup> who thus obtained the

<sup>2</sup> *Tenure in capite* is a legal term whereby, under the feudal system, land is held directly from the highest lord (frequently the King but in this case the Earl of Arundel). This practice was abolished in C17.

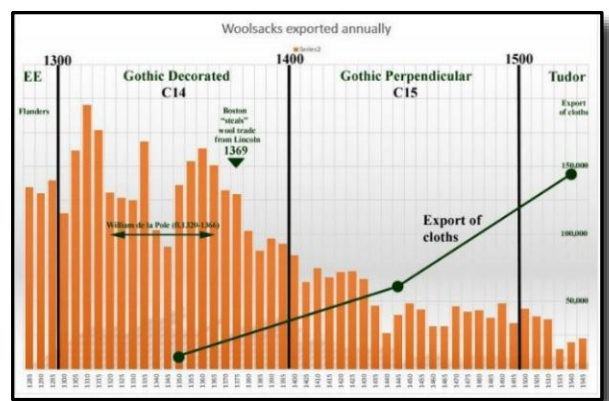
advowson of the church and was Lord of the Manor (which had assumed his name) by 1276.

It is interesting to note that a little earlier, in 1254, Henry III, whilst in France, granted a charter authorising Walter de Thorpe, parson at Grimston to hold an **annual fair** in the village ‘*on the eve, the day, and the morrow of Saint Botolph*’. This was a farming community and the fair would have been the highlight of the year and offered a great annual boost to the economy. Barley was the foremost cereal crop, but it was **sheep farming** that would have provided the major source of income.



**Fig.#**

Just 28 miles away across The Wash to the northwest of Grimston lies the ‘Botolph-town’ of Boston which in C14 ranked as England’s main exporter of fleece. The years between C11 and C16 saw a rapid increase in sheep farming as landowners found that it was much less demanding of labour and far more profitable than arable farming.



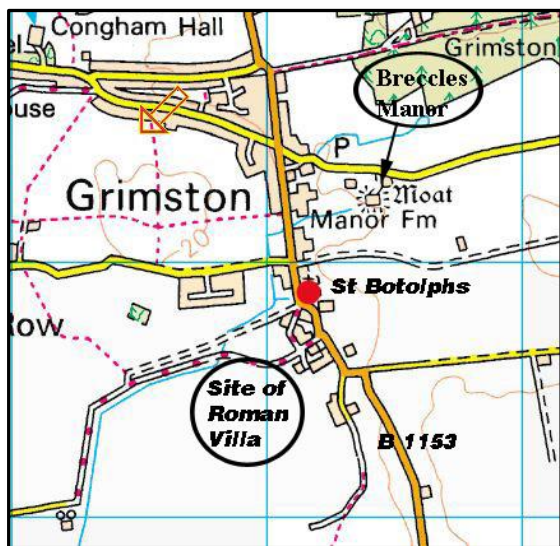
In C14 exports of fleece were bringing great profits. By the end of the century, instead of the ‘raw’ fleece, it was *cloth* that was being exported and these exports rose as C16 approached. Lincolnshire in general and Boston in particular were the fore-runners in this, but Norfolk and

<sup>3</sup> The family seat of the *de Breccles* was at Breckles, 23 miles to the southwest of Grimston. Breckles’ neighbouring town is Stow Bedon – the site of another Saint Botolph’s Church.

King's Lynn were not far behind, and as seen in the map above, Grimston was only 6 miles from the important town of 'Lynn' - its original title before it became *Bishop's*<sup>4</sup> Lynn in C12 and then, '*King's* Lynn'<sup>5</sup> in 1537 when it was renamed after Henry VIII had reclaimed it from the bishops.

In these pages we have often referred to the *Hanseatic League* and for a while I anticipated discovering that Saint Botolph had been adopted by the league as their patron saint, but I was to be disappointed in this. Indeed it was the 'private' merchants and their sailors who (metaphorically) 'traded under the Saint Botolph flag' whilst exporting fleece and cloth to Scandinavia etc., and they were direct competitors of the Hansa.

Both Boston and Bishop's Lynn were used by the league, but it was the latter which benefited from the building of two warehouses in 1475. Another Hanseatic Warehouse - known as 'The Steelyard' was built close to the St Botolph's Church in Billingsgate, but this (like the church itself) was a casualty of the 1666 Great Fire of London,<sup>6</sup> leaving the Norfolk warehouse the only remaining Hansa building in England today.



### History of the existing church:

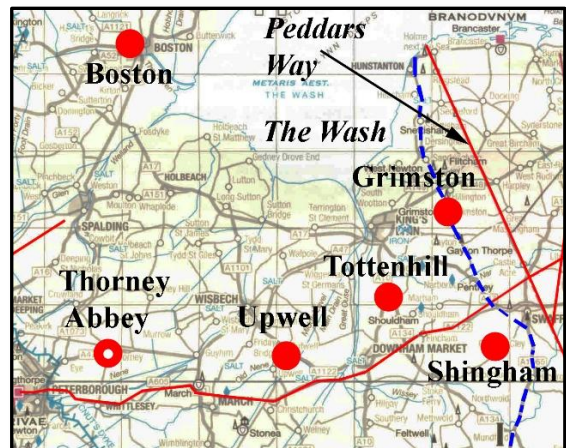
Grimston's church, as we see it now, dates from C13 although it was heavily restored in C19. Like many Saint Botolph churches, this one had an Anglo-Saxon predecessor.

Grimston was an Anglo-Saxon village and a rich source of iron and salt. Freshwater springs are plentiful in the area and 450 yards SW of the church lie the foundations of a Roman villa, bricks from which can be found in the wall and buttress of the church's North aisle. Three

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Herbert de Losinga (d.1119) founded the mercantile town of Lynn in 1101 - just five years after founding Norwich Cathedral

miles to the south near Gayton Thorpe lie a tumulus and the foundations of yet another Roman villa. These all point to the fact that this had been an important site since well before the Roman Conquest.

Both Grimston and its neighbouring Saint Botolph Churches of Tottenhill, Upwell, Shingham and Stow Bedon are strategically located in the vicinity of Roman roads (shown in red above). The implicit 'strategy' was that the churches should not only offer their service to, but also profit from, passing travel and trade.



As William Howard pointed out to me in 2014, there were other ancient trackways (one of which is shown above in blue) that pre-dated the Roman roads. Interestingly it was these trackways (rather than the Roman roads) which were lined north and south of Grimston by a sequence of seven Roman villas.

Saint Botolph's Grimston is associated with *Peddars Way* which starts from Thetford and runs NNW up to the eastern headland of The Wash whereas the **Shingham, Tottenhill and Upwell** churches, together with **Thorney Abbey** (which I have marked on the map with a white centre as a reminder of its importance as a pilgrimage site) line the route to Peterborough.

The church's fabric is of carrstone - a type of sandstone that is found extensively in Norfolk and (less so) in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire; it varies in colour according to the amount of iron oxide it contains. Nearby Ashwicken, is one of only four smelting areas in East Anglia where the Romans extracted iron from this local stone. Just a little further to the north is Snettisham where the carrstone quarry is still working today.

<sup>5</sup> As with the 'lin' in *Dublin* which refers to a 'pool' (a *Black-pool*), the pool referred to here is that which we know as the Wash.

<sup>6</sup> The building rubble was used later to build Cannon Street Station.

The darkness of the carrstone would have lent the original Saxon church rather a gloomy interior, and it may have been this which in *circa* 1220 precipitated the building of the South aisle with its delicately moulded pillars of white stone brought up from Barnack near Peterborough. A few decades later, the North aisle was added.



Two centuries passed before the Lord of the Manor, Sir Benedict de Beccles (c.1260-c.1327) rebuilt the eastern end, extending the nave by one bay and erecting a new chancel and transepts. The final glory came in C15 when the clerestory<sup>7</sup> was added together with the elegant two stage flint-faced 97 ft tower.

#### A tour around the church



I have yet to discover the function of the small angle-tower shown in the picture above. It looks

<sup>7</sup> The 'clear story' level giving extra height to the nave and bringing light into the church.

rather like a Medieval Space Rocket and lies at SW corner of the church's South Aisle. I have asked several people about its provenance without success, and it was this puzzle which brought me to a grinding halt when I was writing this in October 2025. I hope that one of our readers might have the answer to what function this structure could serve, but the best I can offer at the moment is that it is purely decorative.



Bizarrely, whilst pondering the problem, I found a similar feature on my doorstep - at the Woodward Hall at Folkestone, close to Saint Eanswythe's church where I frequently work as a 'welcomer'. The Woodward Hall is a Victorian building, and I suspect that the 'space rocket' at Grimston is a Victorian add-on too - so until somebody comes up with a better answer, I am going to stop worrying about it and mark it down as a Victorian foible.



The south porch viewed from the southwest



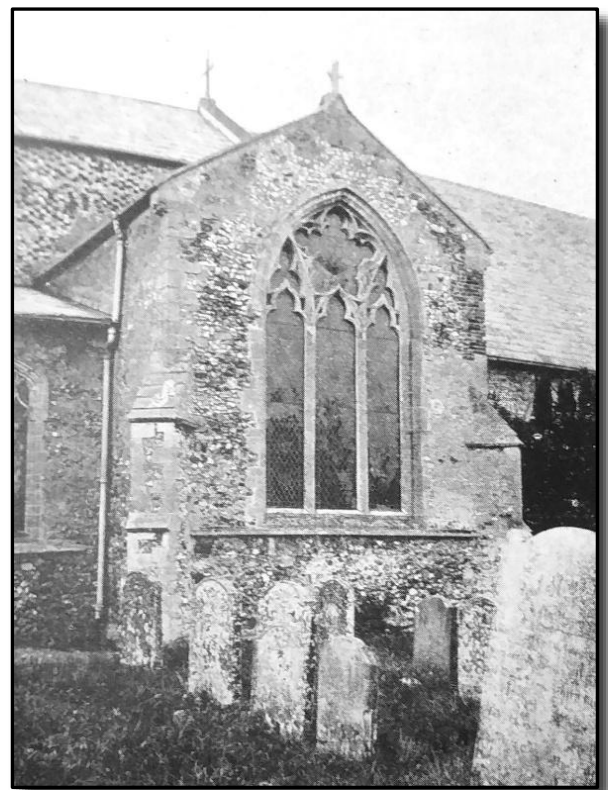
I can find no evidence of the original contents of this recess at the apex of south porch. It might once have held the statue of Christ ... or indeed of Saint Botolph - although the former is more likely.



In the south wall and the clerestory we have windows of C15-16 style whereas the window in the south transept is Decorated Gothic of C14. Marked by a square where lurks (behind a yew tree) the beginning of the south wall of the chancel), there are signs of alterations to the masonry as shown below. These may or may not

<sup>8</sup> Some will recall that Lowside Windows are an interest of mine; I hope to write a book about them shortly. By decree, every church that existed between AD 1220 and 1350 would have had one. They ran out of fashion after that date and many were shortened and

be associated with the former presence of a Lowside Window<sup>8</sup> in that wall.



Above is a similar picture dating c. 1923 which was published in Revd Goodall's pamphlet of the church. I have a digital version of the pamphlet but it excludes the photographs so I am grateful to Revd William Howard for sending this and other copies to me. I was intending to include them all in this issue but so little has changed I now feel they would be superfluous so I have just used a few – two of the sketchings are shown at the beginning of this feature.

glazed, but one can often find evidence of their existence. Nobody else seems to have placed a definitive finger on them yet but I believe they were concerned with 'indulgences'.



From the chancel's south wall and continuing anti-clockwise round the east end towards the north wall we find the vestry with a plaque placed centrally under the window.



At first sight (on the left above) it appears to date from 1031, but on closer inspection – and with a little help and doctoring from Adobe's Photoshop Elements software reveals that the original intention is that it should read AD 1631, - which is still very old – but more credible.

similar windows set above the others in the clerestory.



At the lower right of Revd Goodall's photograph you can just see the 'stoup' which I have (picture above) tried to magnify to see if it has been altered over the years.



At the far end of this picture, where the camera is looking southeast, the aforementioned vestry can just be seen again - then comes the north transept with another C14 window to match its southern partner's - then three more C15-16 style windows in the north aisle with a north door (to let the Devil out as they used to say) between the second and third windows. You will note a further set of four

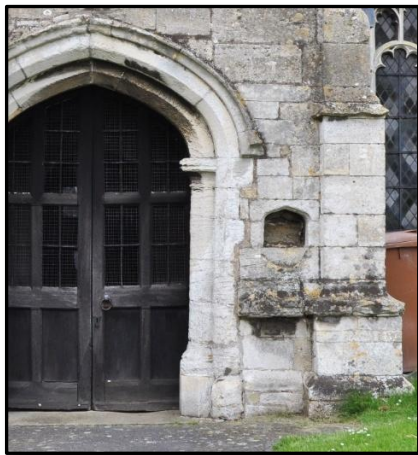


Little, in fact, seems to have changed, and the picture above, which I took myself in 2014, shows

that the bowl has fine scalloped fluting which suggests that it might also have a drain. Stoups come in all shapes and sizes but in my experience they are usually *inside* the church, or at least *inside* a church porch – and usually a *southern* porch at that. This of course depends upon whether the customary entry point of the church was from the south or north. This stoup is unusual in this respect. It is not just left outside exposed to the weather, but to vicious *northerly* weather.

To me it shows every sign of having started its life as a Sanctuary piscina. Perhaps it is the one that was replaced by the magnificent one-piece piscina-sedilia unit (seen below). But this brings up another confusion since the piscina-sedilia dates from C14, so the stoup, if piscina it was, must be C13 or earlier.

Experience (plus a little knowledge gained over the years) tells me that I must not be too hasty here. Un-stoup-like the structure might appear, but unique it is not, since similar stoups are to be found – even in our relatively small group (70-ish) of Saint Botolph churches.



One such example being at St Botolph's Church Croxton Kerrial as shown above.



The interesting thing at Grimston however, is that the stoup is placed so that it is at the entrant's left hand when he or she passes through the doorway, whereas most of the others are found to the right. This is because the usual format was for the fingers of the right hand to be dipped into the holy water on accessing the church, and used to make a sign of the cross on the forehead, reminding oneself of one's baptism and commitment to Christ.

The fact that Grimston's stoup is on the *left* hand side of a door which is the *north* door rather than the commonly used south door, gives me further confidence to speculate that this feature represents the sensible re-cycling of a redundant piscina with which the incumbent was reluctant to part; in which case I would say "Good for him!"



The north wall in its entirety and, in the open angle created by the junction of the tower's north wall and the west end of the north aisle, we find another conundrum as shown in the picture below.



The Revd Goodall tells us that these large iron-rich stones are of the carr variety – probably originating from the nearby Warren Farm Quarry - and that their presence is evidence of a predecessor church which he suggests was early Anglo-Saxon – i.e. C7-8. This is rather a long and optimistic shot I think, but as with all these things there is a 50% chance that he could be correct.



Having completed our circumnavigation of the church it is now time to look inside.



On entry via the south porch and what Pevsner describes as the *Early English (C13) doorway with*

*colonnettes and half-dog-tooth in the arch*, our first view of the church reveals the arcades of the north and south aisles – with the likelihood of a doorway (seen in grey to the left of centre in the picture) which probably led to the rood beam stairway. In the centre we see the vestige of the rood beam itself (the original having been removed during the Reformation) and below it the framework of the rood screen.



Turning slightly to our left we find the C13 square font supported by five shafts (the capitals of which interestingly resemble those on the pillars of the south arcade) and surmounted by an elaborate font cover.

The arrows mark the beginning of two ‘responds’ which mark the position of two arches which must have once existed here before, in C15, the nave was topped with a clerestory and the tower added with its gloriously tall and elegant arch.



The font is rather special since although it is square in essence, the bevelled corners turn the top into an octagon. It is thought to date from late

C12 to early C13 which is recognised as the transitional period after which fonts regularly became octagonal in design.



Grimston's rood screen is delightfully delicate – a Victorian replacement of course to the one that was sacrificed at the Reformation. It is surmounted by the rood (cross).

The picture above shows the Sanctuary with organ pipes on the left and the triple sedilia to the right.



Reversing our view we look westwards through the Chancel screen and the architectural lines lead our focus, as they should, on what is possibly the most important feature of any church, namely the font at the far end.



The screen panneling has some interesting panel work which is more colourful than most. The paintings are reminiscent of Italian silk fabrics of the day.



The magnificent Chancel ceiling and arch looking west.



Above is the South wall of chancel showing the priest's door and the easternmost window foreshortened to accommodate the newer sedilia and piscina.



A neat little piscina bowl in the sedilia complex of the sanctuary



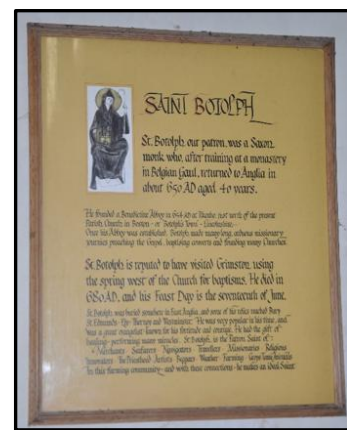
If the stoup mentioned earlier *did* start life as a piscina which then became redundant this would be quite understandable because Saint Botolph's Church at Grimston seems to have a surfeit of piscinae. In the picture above we see what looks like one at a rather strange position in the south wall of the south transept. This suggests there was once an altar here but where was it? Piscinae are normally on the right hand side as the priest faces the altar. Was the priest facing south here – or east as one would expect? Or was this not a piscina at all but a niche for a figurine or cross? ... but in these circumstances one would have expected the niche to be placed centrally under the window. One of the many joys of Parish churches are (if you look closely enough) due to the mysteries they hold.



The picture above shows the South Aisle looking southwest. Between the windows lies a consecration cross also seen below:



North Aisle looking northwest



And here on the wall we find a tribute to our saint which tells us, amongst other things that:

*... he is reputed to have visited Grimston using the spring that lies west of the church for baptisms. He was very popular in his time and was a great evangelist, known for his fortitude and courage. He had the gift of healing – performing many miracles. Saint Botolph is patron saint of Merchants, Seafarers, Navigators, Travellers, Missionaries, Religious Innovators, The Priesthood, Artists, Beggars, Weather, Farming, Crops, Tame Animals. In this farming community – and with these connections – he makes an ideal saint.*

RECTORS of GRIMSTON	
1238	Walter de Thorp
1286	William de Walynes
1310	Benedict de Breccles
1312	Edmund de Breccles
1335	Edmund de Breccles
1337	Hervey Falstolf
1361	Adam Fyk
1397	Henry Wells
1399	Roger de Schyrdain
1407	John Burgony
1417	Nicholas Flint
1421	Thomas Selers
1426	Richard Vele
1431	William More
1430	Thomas Brigge
1441	Robert Appulby
1450	Walter Wundesore
1467	William Latham
1470	Ralf Daavel
1500	Thomas Hare
1520	Nicholas Carr
-	Edward Rochester
1530	William Fordage
1585	William Thorsgood
1625	Thomas Thorsgood
1640	John Brocket
1663	Thomas Cremer
1691	John Cremer
1742	Morley Uawin
1769	Robert Cooper
1777	John Brett
1816	George Barnes
1840	William Dean Gangeley
1857	John Rowlands
1877	John Fowler
1902	Alfred Hall Ellaby
1918	Armitage Goodall
1930	Ernest William Selwyn
1938	Eric Cyril Corke
1946	Eric Walton Rogers
1952	Thomas Winston Daniel
1957	Eric Leslie Fuller
1964	Albert Robinson
1979	Esdaile L. Barnes
1978	Andrew H.R. Thomas
1984	William Alfred Howard

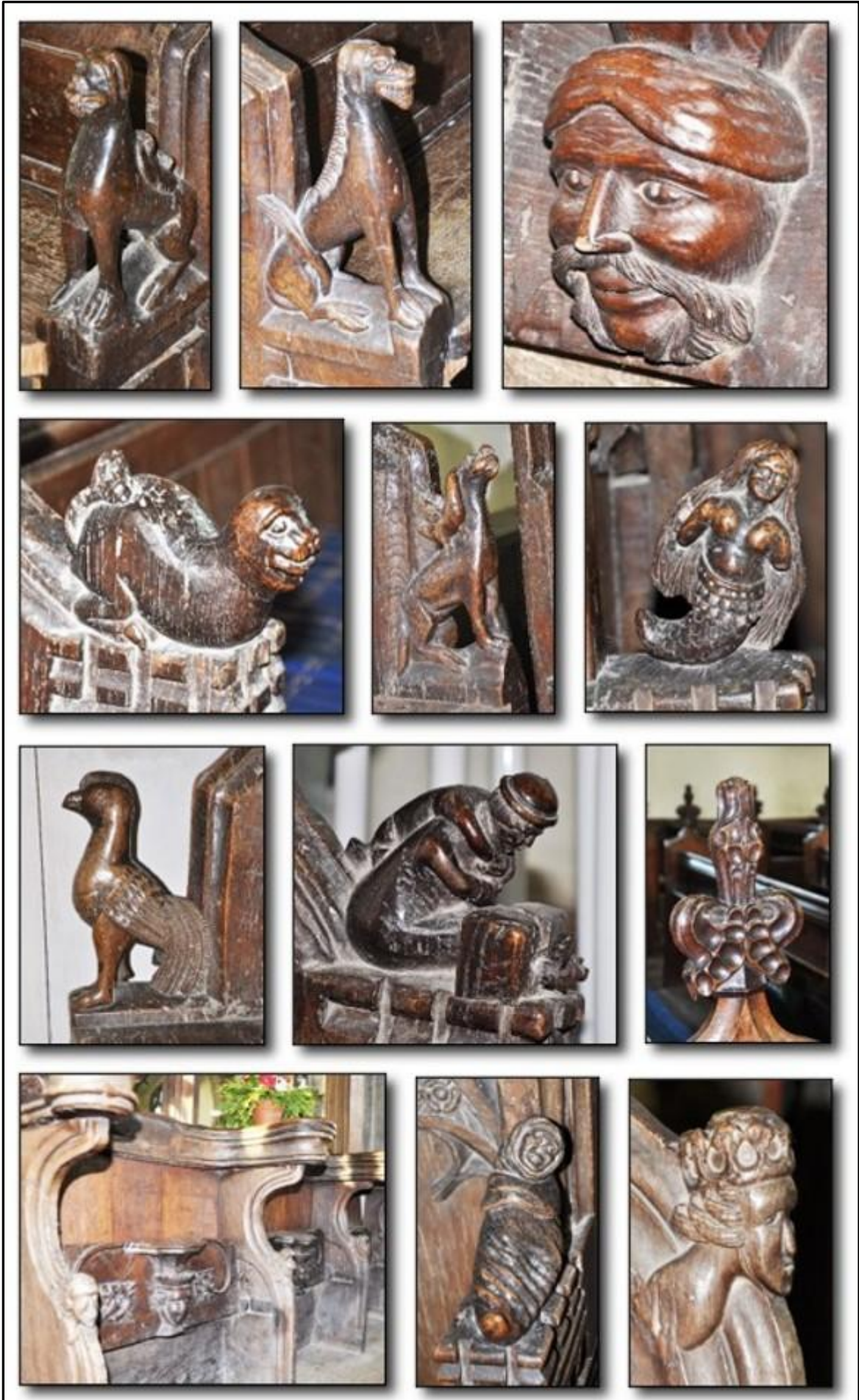
I believe that Rectors' Lists like this are so important to a community and I have therefore given this one a full spread so that you may take your time studying it a little. They usually hang humbly in a dark corner and are so often hurtfully ignored - but I guess the little chaps must accept that that is their lot in life.

They deserve better than this though, because they give us *a sense of community continuity*. The people on this list were *real*. *People* ... often perhaps lively and awe-inspiring characters, who served the parish of Grimston from 1238 until now.

I often liken a Parish church to a wise old grey elephant who has stood in his field, faithfully looking after the needs of his villagers in terms of hatching, matching and dispatching - as well as all the other jobs - for hundreds of years. This list comprises those men who have looked after *him* and the Reverend William Alfred Howard's name is the last we see here. It is a while since I have spoken to him, and I hope that he is still alive and well on this Saint Botolph's Day 2026.

**The wood carvings:**

I shall remember Saint Botolph's Grimston as being the 'church-of-woodcarvings' and how magnificent they are. These include a man with a pig on his back, a dog which has caught a goose, a moustachioed man, a mermaid, a poor man and various birds and animals and a wonderful collection of misericords. Just a few are shown below:-



## Relevance of the Grimston church to Botolph's life:

As it has been rather a long time since the last newsletter (all 115 previous newsletters are online and available at [www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)) I should perhaps remind you that our Saint Botolph, - or at least *his name* - had *two* lives.

*His name's first life* was when he was born in *circa* AD 620 – and the location of that, my latest research shows, was possibly at Dunadd in Scotland – and then died at his abbey of Icanho – now the village of Iken in Suffolk near Aldburgh. Between those times he travelled extensively and was professed as a monk and subsequently ordained priest at the mixed monastery of Faremoutiers, 30 miles east of Paris. He returned to Britain in about 647 and was granted land at Iken by the local king in 654 when the construction of Icanho began.

Towards the end of his time at Faremoutiers, the redoubtable Abbess Fara changed the Rule under which her monastery was regulated, from Columbanianism to Benedictinism and it is thought that Botolph was the first to bring this rule to Britain where he employed it at Icanho.

Bede's mentor Ceolfrid visited Icanho in about 670 and stayed a while to see how the monastery was being run and then returned home reporting of Abbot Botolph that "*no one could be found more learned than he in monastic and clerical rule*".<sup>9</sup>

During, or shortly after his life he became recognised as the Patron Saint of Wayfarers/Travellers, and was so for hundreds of years until in C13 Jacob de Voragine invented his story of Saint Christopher whereupon Botolph's position was usurped.

It is thought however that the fact that each of London's main gates<sup>10</sup> has or had a Saint Botolph's Church associated with it, is clear evidence of his former patronage.

Saint Botolph's work, starting just 57 years after the arrival of Saint Augustine, gave the developing Christian culture a huge boost in Britain, and he and Icanho Abbey were vastly important.

*His name's second life* started in C11 when British farmers realised that their land could be made far more profitable by breeding and rearing sheep and selling their fleece, rather than

employing labourers to eke out their livings sowing and producing crops to sell.



It was in the churchyard of a little Saint Botolph's Church which lay just to the north of Skirbeck in Lincolnshire – on the River Witham of which the church was a 'gate guardian' - that the first Saint Botolph Fair was held (in C11). This became so popular and financially successful as the fleece export industry grew, that a community developed around the church and was called *Botolph's Town*. People being as they are, this name was soon shortened to **Boston** – and the rest, as they say, is history. Boston out-rivalled London for a while as it sold its high quality fleeces to Scandinavia and the European countries for the next four centuries.

Today, Saint Botolph's Day, would have seen the River Witham packed with vessels, and the town and the churchyard and quayside packed with merchants of all nationalities as the bargaining and sales went on. The countryside around Boston would have been full of sheep which the drovers had brought from as far away as Scotland, and the shearers would have been hard at work removing the fleeces self-transported there by the animals. The fair would have lasted a week, but TODAY was the **special day** and the name of Saint Botolph would have been on everybody's lips.

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And Grimston? Where does this church fit in? Such churches (as you will note in the box below) either stem directly from the influence of Saint Botolph and his acolytes from Icanho – in which case the church will have had an Anglo-Saxon predecessor – or they were built after C11 by a landowner who was doing very well from the profits made from his fleeces. What better way

<sup>9</sup> *The Age of Bede* Translated by J.F. Webb, Edited by D.H. Farmer (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1965, ISBN-13; 978-0-14-044727-9) p. 214.

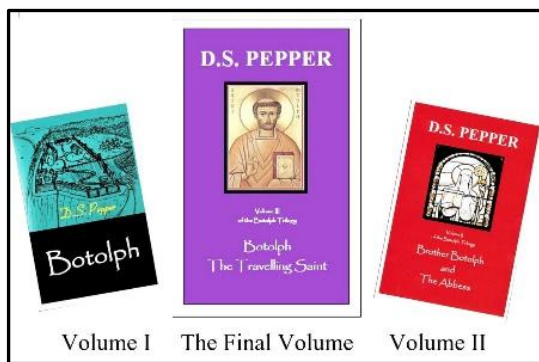
<sup>10</sup> Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Aldgate, Billingsgate (the latter's church was burnt down in 1666 during the Great Fire of London).

to spend his money than to build a church for his community? This would glorify his success. He and his family could be buried there. A guild could be founded to look after the church and ensure that he and his family could be prayed for regularly for the foreseeable future and the length of his confinement in purgatory could thus be shortened so that he would sooner be accepted into heaven.

To consolidate the package he would dedicate the church to Saint Botolph as an acknowledgement that it was through the money-changers at Botolphs-Town that his income had been derived, and he and his nearest and dearest would pray to their Heavenly Father via Saint Botolph and beg Him to ensure that his business remained successful.

I therefore believe that Saint Botolph's Church Grimston should be classified as Type 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.*

ooo



My *Botolph Trilogy* is, as I imagine it, the true story of Botolph's real life, dramatised a little to make his story more readable. The historical characters he meets are genuine and it is likely that he did indeed meet them. Although he was undoubtedly a good chap, he was possibly quite intense, his evangelistic role being so important to him. For this reason, in the book, he has an irreverent alter-ego called Luka, whom many readers seem to enjoy.

The Botolph Trilogy:

**Volume I**, [AD 620-638] 'Botolph' (Folkestone: Earlsate Publishing, 2010) ISBN 978-0-9567508-0-8 at £8.99 plus £3 p&p

**Volume II**, [AD 638-647] 'Brother Botolph and The Abbess' (Folkestone: Earlsate 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**, [AD 647-680] 'Botolph the Travelling Saint' (Folkestone: Earlsate Publishing, 2019) ISBN 978-0-9567508-2-2 at £12.99 plus £3 p&p.

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#### REGULAR END-NOTES

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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 need to 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 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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