



St Botolph's Church



St Botolph's is the parish church of Helpston.

The church is built on the site of a Saxon church, over a thousand years old, which was located approximately in the position of the existing nave. Historians point out that

"The daily life of the vast majority of England's population was closely bound to the local parish church, which by the end of the 10th century was the focal point of a community. Everyone would worship together, and they were led through the mysteries of the sacrament by the local priest."

Some of the Saxon stonework still exists, incorporated in the present building, which was built mainly between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, though what was originally a Norman tower was rebuilt in 1865. The first recorded name of a rector of the church is Galfrid de Helpston in 1230.

Today, whilst the building remains much as it would have been for centuries past, St Botolph's is part of a larger benefice of six village parishes to the north and west of Peterborough, reflecting the changing role of the church and the long-term decline in numbers of both clergy and church goers. The rector is shared between the six villages and lay people now play a bigger part in the running of the church, its worship and its work in the community.

St Botolph's still retains its place at the centre of village life. The role of the parish church continues to be to foster a broad and inclusive community of faith, and meanwhile offer invitation, hospitality, prayer and concern for every resident.

The Church is the driving force behind the Botolph's Barn project. Members of the Parochial Church Council developed the vision for the project and it was the church that raised the funds to purchase the Barn.

St Botolph

The parish church is named after St Botolph, a Saxon monk who lived in the seventh century. The future saint was sent to Germany by his parents to study with his brother Adulf. Adulf stayed abroad, becoming Bishop of Utrecht, but Botolph returned and was granted land by Ethelmund or Ethelwold, King of the Southern Angles, whose sisters he had met in Germany. The king offered Botolph land to build a monastery at Icanhoe (Ox-island). Botolph is thought to have died in 680 – the date of his birth is unknown.



Icanhoe has often been identified as modern day Boston, Lincolnshire, mainly because Boston is thought to be a corruption of 'Botolph's town'. In fact the location may have been near the village of Iken in Suffolk, which also has an ancient church dedicated to Botolph.

Botolph was known in the Saxon world for his wisdom, holiness and pastoral care. His brother Adulf was also venerated and made a saint, but his following has not survived.

Some 64 parish churches are dedicated to Botolph – most of them in East Anglia, although there are three designed by Sir Christopher Wren in London.