

St. Botolph's Celebrations



The Knights of Skirbeck have broken camp and moved to pastures new, the cups and saucers are washed and put away, the bunting taken down and the crowds, who come to celebrate 800 Years of worship at St. Botolph's, have gone and, once more, the church slumbers in its quiet churchyard.

During a fortnight of events in June those attending have been informed, educated and entertained about life in the parish of Quarrington when, in 1218, the church of St. Botolph's was founded. The medieval encampment with its brightly coloured tents, authentically dressed knights and their ladies, provided a wealth of historical experiences. An armorer proudly displayed his array of fearsome weapons, a

spice merchant displayed wares from around the then known world, while on a spit in the camp kitchen a chicken was roasted. This was black on the outside, but the meat underneath was pronounced tender and sweet. A set of stocks was available for those who fell foul of the law. They seemed to have plenty of miscreants clamped by the neck during the weekend! A septic wound was doctored with little sympathy for the unfortunate patient and quantities of realistic bodily excrescences. As a finale the Knights demonstrated the use of their weapons in no holds barred contests in the tournament ring. Who knows - some of the re-enactors forebears may have camped on the same field 800 years ago?



The Craft Tent was popular venue for children, many wearing knights and princess costumes. Pictures were carefully drawn and coloured while many shields were designed accompanied with cardboard swords. Parents had as much fun as the children. Every youngster who visited the event from toddlers to teenagers received a wrist Slap Band bearing the logo, St Botolph's Church 800 Years.

We learned of the history of the parish and archaeological finds from the Bronze Age which pre-dates its existence. Sleaford and the surrounding area had once had a mint, as coin moulds have been unearthed at various local sites. In a talk on the history of the church, the stained-glass windows were given special mention. A casual observer, can easily miss the fine detail when looking at the overall scenes depicted in the windows, including plants, birds and musical instruments in numerous nooks and crannies. These events were under the aegis of The Sleaford Museum Trust. On Saturday 9th June they kindly displayed a range of artefacts from Museum and the author discovered how much a firkin of gin cost from a merchant's ledger dated 1886. An exhibition of artefacts from St. Botolph's Church is currently on display at the Museum - free entry, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 - 3.



The church has echoed to the music of recorder and crumhorn played by the group Freshe Ayre. They presented a comprehensive concert of medieval music with the audience encouraged, without success, to dance in the aisles. The entertainment continued with the Lincolnshire duo of Teri and Nigel performing from their folk song repertoire. Another foot tapping evening.

The children of St. Botolph's School had also been busy and provided items for an exhibition in church. Their work included a time line of events in the parish, art work inspired by Van Gogh, Kandinsky, David Hockney and a wall hanging of the church produced by the Reception children.



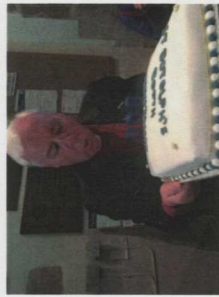
The usual life of the parish continued uninterrupted. On Saturday 9th June a local couple were married by Reverend Mark, while in the neighbouring field steel rang against steel! The Sunday Service moved al fresco and was attended by the soberly dressed, visitors in shorts and tee shirts, fine ladies and knights in armour and a tully costumed jester. The children were tasked by Granny Washbrook (a puppet) to search for the lost sheep, while the rest of the congregation listened to the sermon. It was duly found in a clump of long grass. At the end of the service the day's activities continued as the hog roast was ready and tea and coffee prepared.



The Pet and Teddy Blessing Service on Saturday 16th was attended by a small group of very well-behaved dogs and a hamster called Cupcake. The teddies ranged in age from 39 to a few weeks old, but all were much loved family members. Reverend Mark led a jolly service which included well known hymns and others with slight alterations to reflect the wide animal kingdom. He blessed each pet and teddy, and all had their photos taken for the local paper.



On St. Botolph's Day, 17th June, Bishop Christopher joined the congregation to celebrate Holy Communion. During his sermon he made reference to the parable of the mustard seed and its spread to provide shelter to numerous birds and animals. As we as a parish grow in numbers of residents, our mission is to provide shelter to those seeking spiritual comfort in a busy world. Our hope is that those who enjoyed the many and varied events in our 800 Year Celebration will return to join us in our welcoming church community. At the end of the service, led by the Bishop, we gathered by the Lychgate for a short service of re-dedication following its refurbishment.



Finally, a birthday cake was produced: "Happy Birthday" was sung and the candles, only three, were blown out. While the Bishop and the parishioners chatted and enjoyed the delicious cake, Max, the well-loved four-legged member of the congregation, diligently searched for cake crumbs. A fitting end to our fortnight of celebration and fellowship. What next for St. Botolph's and Quarrington?

