

**The Parish of Boston, Diocese of Lincoln in the Archdeaconry  
of Lincoln**



The Team Ministry was formed in 2005 and encompasses the three churches of St Botolph (the famous Boston 'Stump'), St Thomas, Skirbeck Quarter, previously a separate parish and St Christopher, Fenside.

**Incumbent:**

The Revd Robin Whitehead



## *Churchmanship*

We are a parish in the *inclusive church* tradition, striving to be a welcoming community, where everyone is valued and diversity celebrated. We are committed to working for justice, peace and equality. The parish has a liberal catholic churchmanship. It is important that anyone coming to work here will feel comfortable in that setting.

Vestments are worn at all services, the sacrament is reserved in all three churches and incense used on feast days. The main services are all Eucharistic and principally Order I Contemporary. There is currently a Eucharist on four days a week at one of our three churches. We use the Weekday Missal and Exciting Holiness in our worship

Choral Evensong takes place at 6.30pm at the Stump on Sundays. As a team we share officiating and preaching at this service.

We try to use each of the churches where appropriate for different services or alternative styles of liturgy in the course of the year and especially in Holy Week when we move around the churches for the Liturgy.

*Normal Sunday service pattern::*

8am Said Eucharist at St Botolph's

8am Said Eucharist (St Thomas' first Sunday of the month only)

9.30am Eucharist (Said with hymns at St Christopher's)

10.30am Sung Eucharist (St Botolph's) Choral

11am Sung Eucharist (St Thomas's)

12.15/12.30am Baptism on first Sunday of the month

6.30pm Choral Evensong (St Botolph's)



## St. Botolph's

Nikolas Pevsner in *The Buildings of England* describes it as “a giant among English parish churches”. It is listed in the top ten churches in England's Thousand Best Churches by Simon Jenkins.

St Botolph's church is one of the largest parish churches in England ranking as the largest always to have been a parish church and is part of the national Greater Churches group. Begun in 1309, it is by any standard a magnificent and breathtakingly glorious building. The church is Grade I listed. Maintenance of such a building is costly and we are continuing a major £3 million restoration appeal.

This 2009 we have been celebrating our 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and many wonderful events have taken place. It has been an exciting time for the church and the town, including a visit from HRH the Princess Royal, the Patron of our Appeal



The church is extensively used as a major venue in the town for concerts and for all important civic events in the year.

Good liturgy is important to the Stump and we pride ourselves on worship well done and welcoming

St. Botolph's has a long musical tradition, which is still maintained, albeit with greater difficulty these days with pressures on people's lives. There is a Director of Music and two other organists. Until recently there were three choirs, men and boys, a girls choir and an adult choir, the St. Botolph's Singers, who are of a high standard. Lately the boys and girls sing together. Numbers have fallen and we are looking to do a recruitment drive. In the summer we host a series of free lunch-time concerts. Various evening concerts are organised by local groups, including Boston Sinfonia, and the local Choral Society. One or two charities also put on concerts. We usually receive a number of requests from Orchestras to stage events in the church.

### **St Thomas'**

St Thomas' is situated in the Southern part of Boston. The church building dates from 1912 and is in the Arts and Crafts style, although its screens and roof beams were installed in 1933.

The congregation of the church stands around 35-40 on most Sundays. It is a fairly typical Anglican congregation, now mostly elderly. There is an enthusiastic little choir but the standard is not high.

There is a community hall in very regular use.

### **St Christopher's**

The present St. Christopher's church was opened in June, 2001, and recently extended and developed to be an excellent facility for the community. Since 2001 St. Christopher's has developed its identity as both a church and a community resource for Fenside, an area of significant social housing with attendant problems are. The church is now principally used by the local community and Sure Start. We have an administrator who lives in the vicarage and keeps the clergy informed of pastoral needs on the Estate. The worshipping community at St Christopher's is now small and elderly but we seek to maintain at least one act of worship there and are looking for ways to extend our mission. We organise a small Sunday School, led by a team from the Stump.

### **St Thomas' CE Church Primary School**

There is an excellent Church School, which is at the St Thomas's end, but is now our Parish Church School with a roll of c380. Both the Team Vicar and Team Rector are Governors of the school and we all take regular assemblies there. The Headteacher is very keen on our involvement. The school comes into St Thomas' church for festivals and holds its Christmas Carol Service in the Stump each year.

There are a number of other primary schools in the parish and the Boston Grammar School, so there is plenty of opportunity to make inroads into the local schools.

### **Committees**

Committees and groups work where possible across the whole parish; so for instance, the Social Committee will plan events for the whole parish using any one of the facilities available.

There is one PCC for the whole parish, with smaller committees to oversee the day to day needs of the three churches.

### **Occasional Offices**

There is a big opportunity for occasional offices across the parish and much demand for our services

There are many baptisms. These usually take place at 12.15pm after the main service at all three churches, twice a month.

This year we have had something in the order of 20 weddings across the parish. The weddings are shared out in the early part of the year.

There are a large number of funerals in the year (174 last year) and again we share these out amongst the Clergy team. Few weeks go by without the diary filling with funerals!

### **Team work**

We work very much as a team, enjoying our collegiality. We meet currently on Monday mornings for Morning Prayer and then a meeting afterwards when we invariably put the world to rights over coffee and have a bit of diary sharing in addition!

As a team we appreciate too that we have wider involvement in town and diocesan affairs and so we do cover for each other when necessary and encourage each other in that wider role.

### **Deanery links**

The Team Rector is also the Rural Dean of Holland East and West Deaneries. The parish is in the Holland East deanery but we are currently looking at ways to move closer and possibly to merge the deaneries into one Holland Deanery

### **Civic links**

There are strong ties between St Botolph's and the Borough Council and the Team Rector is traditionally the Mayor's Chaplain. The Stump is used a great deal for civic and mayoral events throughout the year. The Chaplain is expected to open the Council meetings in the prayer and leads the service for the opening to the traditional May Fair. Clergy colleagues support the Chaplain in this role.

### **History of The Town**

The name Boston is thought to be a corruption of "Botolph's town or Botolph's stone", as St. Botolph may have established a monastery on the banks of the River Witham in the seventh century. However, there is little documentation of the history of Boston until the late eleventh century, by which time Boston had become a thriving port and was a member of the Hanseatic League. It became the fourth-richest provincial town in England and held the wool staple. It was in the fourteenth century that the church was rebuilt on the grand scale we see today. Dominating the Fens, the tower, affectionately known as the "Stump" almost from its beginning, is an impressive landmark.

Boston is an ancient market town that received a charter from Henry VIII in 1545 to form the Boston Corporation. Soon both town and Corporation were to be led by a spirit of religious reform. In 1612 the Corporation appointed the strongly Puritan, John Cotton, as Vicar. Suffering the wrath of Archbishop Laud Cotton felt obliged to leave Boston for America in 1633 with a group of local people aboard the *Griffin*. The Puritan influence here was maintained under the vicariate of Dr. Anthony Tuckney.

For a time Boston ceased to prosper owing to the river silting up. In the 1760s, however, drainage of Holland Fen, which lies to the west of Boston, was begun; the

area began to turn to arable farming; Boston began to thrive once more. By the time of the Napoleonic Wars, more land reclamation meant the town's merchants were becoming wealthy. In 1848 the railway came to Boston; in the 1890s the Corporation built the Dock that exists today.

In the twentieth century Boston's public services grew. The present Council Offices were built in 1904 and have been considerably extended in recent years, following the enlargement of the local authority area to a District Council in 1974; a Council covering Boston and the surrounding villages. Boston College, which opened in 1964, offers a wide range of subjects and levels of education to degree standard. It serves a large number of students. The College also offers part-time day and evening classes. New secondary and primary schools were added to the town. Pilgrim Hospital replaced several small hospitals in the town and has developed into the main hospital for the south of the County.

Boston has a population of 50,000 in the town itself. Major building works have taken place in recent years with two fairly new shopping centres. The town's Guildhall Museum is also being renovated and should be fully open in 2008. The Haven Gallery, a new Art Gallery opened in 2006.

The River Witham and the surrounding drains have long attracted fishermen and the waterways are increasingly used for leisure boating. To the south lies the Lincolnshire Fens and to the north the Lincolnshire Wolds.

The town has seen a huge influx of people from Eastern Europe over the past few years who have moved here to find work. Now some 10% of the town are new arrivals. The town has been criticised for not always making these people welcome but we in the church have worked hard to make people feel welcome in our communities.

#### *Transport*

Boston has major road links via the A16 (54 miles to Grimsby, and 36 miles to Peterborough where there is a link to the A1 and the south), the A17 (36 miles to Kings Lynn, and 30 miles to Newark, where there is a link to the A1 and the north), and the A52 (53 miles to Nottingham linking to the Midlands). Lincoln is approximately 35 miles. Regular trains run from Boston to Grantham where there is a link to the East Coast main line. There are rail links to the seaside town of Skegness, and to Lincoln. Local buses run to nearby towns in Lincolnshire, Spalding, Skegness, Lincoln, Horncastle and to nearby villages.

#### *Markets*

The ancient market is held twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, filling the market place with stalls of every description. There are a number of excellent fruit and vegetable stalls selling the wonderful produce from the surrounding area. Good soil and farming practice make this area one of the main suppliers of the nation's fruit and vegetables. On other days the Market Place is used as a car park

Once a year, when the May Fair comes to Boston, the markets are much reduced and moved elsewhere in the town. The Fair fills the Market Place, Wide Bargate and the Green and has been a regular part of the Boston's life for hundreds of years.

The Fair opens with a service from the gallopers, usually lead by the Team Rector as Vicar of Boston.

### *The County*

The county of Lincolnshire is one of the largest in England stretching from the Humber in the north to the Wash in the south, and from Nottinghamshire and Rutland in the west to the coast of the North Sea in the east. It has magnificent, wide-open spaces, but it is not as flat as many people imagine. Although the county lacks mountains, it has the beauty of the Wolds, gentle green hills that are easy on the eye. Its long coastline provides a mixture of busy, medium sized resorts and smaller places which give the joys of the seaside without the razzmatazz of larger seaside towns. Lincolnshire is a county with much to offer.

### *The Coast*

One of the attractions of Lincolnshire is its beaches of good, clean sand, most of which are “blue flag” beaches. From Cleethorpes in the north to Skegness in the south, with Mablethorpe in between, these resorts offer a good day out for the family. There are smaller villages between Skegness and Mablethorpe that are quiet, and are not too far from Boston.

Nearer to Boston is the Wash coastline. A groundbreaking conservation project has given the county the largest area of salt-marsh in the country. The superb scenery combines to give mile after mile of walking, cycling, bird watching or simply peace and tranquillity.

### *The Wolds*

The Wolds provide good, but reasonably easy, walking, with well-marked footpaths through beautiful countryside. Many of the villages are tiny, but very attractive. The Wolds begin not more than 15 miles from Boston, and they provide plenty to see and do.

### *The Fens*

Boston lies within the Fens which stretch southwards to Spalding, Crowland and the Cambridge Fens. The whole area is bisected by its “drains”. Essential for the management of the fen drainage they provide a wonderful wild-life habitat, coarse fishing and in cold winters, skating. One looks into the distance and sees for miles. There is never a feeling of being confined. Boston Stump itself can be seen from far away; on a good day from Hunstanton, Norfolk. From the tower balcony, on a clear day, it is possible to see Lincoln cathedral.