



St Botolph's in the community autumn and winter



The Sunday Club performs



Women's Institute Party

St Botolph's church has been at the centre of village life for over a thousand years. Despite much change in the village and in society as a whole, St Botolph's retains that role today: contributing to village life and bringing people together regularly to celebrate in weekly worship, baptisms, weddings, funerals as well as the traditional festivals of the church.

Harvest

Harvest Festival falls on the last Sunday in September. The church is decorated with flowers and garden produce. A sheaf of wheat is placed against the pulpit to remind everyone that their daily bread depends upon the harvest. After the service, a Harvest Supper is held in the Village Hall with young and old sharing a meal together.

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday is important as villagers remember family members or friends who have died in the wars. The service is made particularly special by the presence of the village's Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Cubs who attend in uniform after marching down West Street from the Scout Hut.

A villager, connected with someone who died in the wars, reads the solemn words, "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall remember them".

Christmas

One of the most popular festivals in the run up to Christmas is Christingle – meaning Christ Light. The Christingle itself is a lighted candle, symbolising Jesus, the Light of the World, mounted on an orange, representing the world. A red ribbon around the orange denotes the blood of Christ. Four cocktail sticks, bearing dried fruit and sweets signify the four seasons and the fruits of the earth.



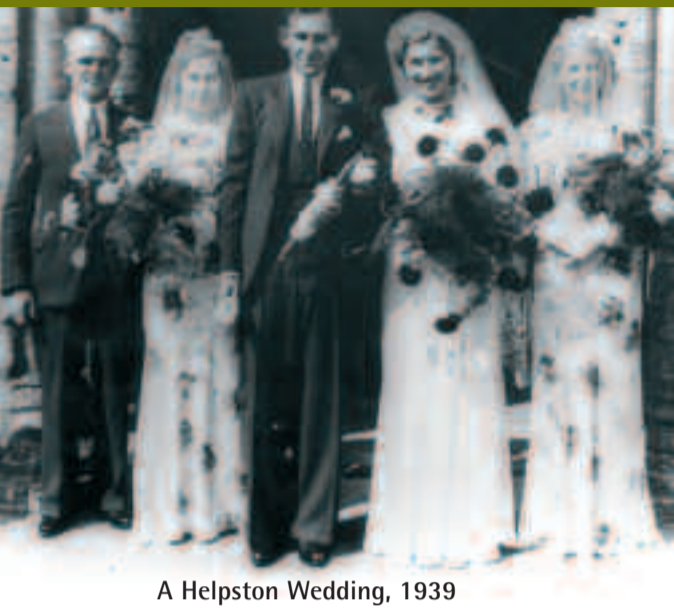
The Christmas carol service, held by candlelight, is held on the Sunday evening prior to Christmas Day. Milton Estates donate the Christmas tree, which is decorated enthusiastically by the children.

Before Christmas, members of the church go around the village singing carols: donations for charities supporting local homeless people are collected door to door.

On Christmas Eve, St Botolph's holds a midnight communion service. The church bells ring out so that everyone in the village knows that Christmas has come.



St Botolph's in the community spring and summer



A Helpston Wedding, 1939



Lent

Preparations for Easter start on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. The priest burns the palm crosses from the previous year's Palm Sunday procession and uses the ashes to make the sign of the cross on the forehead of each person in the congregation.

Easter

Holy Week – the week running up to Easter – begins with a special service on Palm Sunday. There is a procession, led by a donkey, around the village to recall Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Palm crosses are handed out.

Church services are held every day during Holy Week. Easter Eve is marked with a bonfire, in a special grate. From this the Paschal candle is lit and taken into the darkened church to light candles for the congregation. Easter Day is the highlight of the church year, with music and flowers celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.



St George's Day

St George's Day, 26 April

England's patron saint is remembered with a parade service on the Sunday nearest to St George's Day. Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies march to the church to present their flags. This is a special outing for the St George's flag, which has its own flagpole on the south side of the church.

The Church Gala

Held in the middle of May since 1982, the gala involves the whole community. The village green hosts stalls and traditional games, teas are served in the village hall and exhibitions held in the church and Barn. The money raised covers the costs of maintaining the historic church buildings.

St Botolph's Day, 17 June

On the Sunday nearest to the saint's day, 17 June, the church celebrates the saint's life. Botolph was a gifted leader and helped many to find faith and serve God.



Church Gala Day

