

AUGUST CHURCH TOUR

We meet at **St Botolph, Lullingstone** (DA4 0JA) at 2.15pm on Tuesday 6th August 2024. *The church is reached via Eynsford: turn left opposite Eynsford church, cross the Darenth by the bridge and follow the lane south to the Roman Villa, then take the private road to Lullingstone Castle. Park on the grass verge outside the castle and approach the church through the castle gatehouse.*

St Botolph's is one of Kent's best churches. It sits beautifully on the lawn in front of the house. It is of the 14th century but was refurbished by the Hart family in the early 18th century, with rich plasterwork and fittings – reredos, altar rails, pews and a curious font. The highlights are, however, the glorious late medieval screen and the collection of monuments. There is also good stained glass.

Our second church, where we are due at 3.15pm, is **St John, Meopham** (DA13 0AA). *The church sits beside the A227 at the northern end of this strung-out village. There is a car park next to the church, by the church hall.*

St John's was dedicated following a partial rebuilding in 1325 and the tower and nave are mostly of that date, though the eastern parts are of the late 13th century. It is a large and stately church for a prosperous village, if rather heavily treated by the Victorian restorer. There are some good fittings, the best a magnificent late 17th century pulpit from St Margaret's Westminster, and a few interesting monuments.

The final church which we shall visit, at 4pm, is **St Peter & St Paul Trottiscliffe** (ME19 5EE). *The church is half a mile east of the village, approached along Church Lane. There is parking for a few cars opposite the church but otherwise please park in Church Lane.*

St Peter & St Paul's is well-sited amidst a group of manorial buildings with the scarp of the North Downs behind it. The building itself – a small Norman church with a late medieval south tower - is not what matters here, nice enough though it is. The thing to see is the interior, crowded with furniture, much of which comes from elsewhere, notably an extraordinary pulpit from Westminster Abbey whose tester almost touches the roof. The sanctuary fittings are all probably from the same source. There are box pews and some attractive stained glass of various dates.