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Vol. XXXV1 No. 3 March 2009



The Round Tower

Vol XXXV1 No 3

March 2009



St Andrew's Hasketon, Suffolk



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ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY 2009 TOURS

Tour and AGM Saturday 9th May

10.30am 2.15pm	Cranwich, Feltwell St Nicholas, Weeting A.G.M. at Weeting Village Hall.
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Saturday Tours 2.30pm

6th June	Burnham Norton, Burnham Deepdale, Titchwell
4th July	Brome, Syleham, Weybread
1st August	Brandiston, Haveringland, Taverham
5th September	Woodton, Bedingham, Topcroft

Church Tours - Sundays 2.30pm

19th April	Blofield, Braydeston, South Burlingham, Strumpshaw.
17th May	Hilgay, Southery, Wretton, West Dereham (RT)
21st June	Tibenham, Aslacton (RT), Great Moulton, Tivetshall St Margaret
19th July	Scarning, Wendling, Longham, Beeston St Mary

Everyone is welcome to both sets of Tours. There is no charge, although donations to the churches are encouraged. Refreshments will be provided by one of the churches each afternoon. The Sunday Tours were formerly organised by Richard Butler-Stoney and visit Norfolk Churches with square, round or no towers! These Sunday Tours end with a form of Service, usually Evensong at 6.30pm, though attendance is not compulsory! Enquiries to 'Lyn Stilgoe 01328 738237.

Membership Subscription

Minimum £10 (overseas £15) annually of which 40% is for the printing and posting of *The Round Tower* magazine and administration, with the balance going to the Repair Fund.

Magazines are published on the 1st of March, June, September and December. Membership renewal date is the first of these dates following the application for membership.

To join the Society, please make contact with the Treasurer:-

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Cover photograph: Nick Wiggin



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THE ROUND TOWER

**The quarterly magazine of the
Round Tower Churches Society**

Vol. XXXV1 No 3 March 2009

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**The next issue is June 2009 and
the deadline for insertion is
Friday 24th April 2009.**

Please send all items to:-

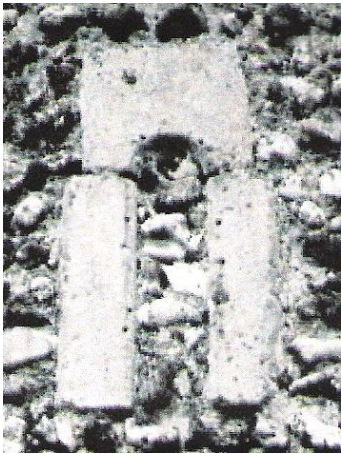
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ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HASKETON, SUFFOLK

This church was featured in June 1999, but because recent observations and analysis have thrown new light on some aspects of its recorded history, particularly on the tower and the small blocked window in the nave south wall, this fresh appraisal has been written.

The church has an aisleless nave about 19'3" wide with a narrower chancel, a round west tower with an octagonal belfry stage, south porch and a north vestry. Pevsner, Goode and the church guide all call the tower Norman with a later octagon.

The flint walls of the nave have dressed stone quoins and pointed north and south doorways. Several of the windows are Victorian restorations but a tall two-light Decorated one in the nave south wall and a Perpendicular one in the chancel are noteworthy. The nave west wall is about 2'10" thick and the north and south walls about 3 feet. Though appreciably restored, they retain some areas of apparently original flintwork containing coursed flints and some laid in herringbone fashion.



The small blocked slit window

Situated at about nine feet from ground level in the south wall is a small blocked slit window with single jambstones and a single square lintel stone with a small semi-circular 'arch' cut in its lower edge; this arch and the jamb stones have chamfered edges into which pencil-sized holes have been drilled at irregular spacings, four in each jamb and two in the head. There is no recess inside the church behind these stones and the wall there is plastered so any internal evidence of this window that there may have been is hidden.

The tower is circular for about two-thirds of its height, above which it is octagonal. Both stages are faced with even, uncoursed, well-packed rubble flints. The octagon, much repaired in brick at the top, has dressed limestone quoins and two-light Y-traceried belfry openings in the cardinal faces whose cill level is about ten feet or so above the stone weathering between the round and octagonal stages.

The circular stage has a two-light ground-floor west window with Y-tracery, which, though appreciably restored, contains sufficient original stonework to authenticate the tracery pattern. At first floor level,

Market. But which came first, the church or the Market, or were they built at the same time?

St Peter's Church was somewhat unusual: Dr Tanner writes: "St Peter's Church was never under the care of the Rector of St Michael's, yet it was no parish church, and no chantry, and had no monks, canons or friars belonging to it." Nevertheless it could have been the first parish church in Beccles. As the population of the town grew it was necessary to find more church accommodation, but because of the way the land sloped down to the river it was impossible to extend the church. Perhaps it was at this time that St Michael's Church was built, which superseded St Peter's as the parish church. This left the church without a parish, rector or congregation. However, looking at medieval wills it is clear that the church had a burial ground which was still in use in 1528 only ten years or so before its de-consecration, and that it had new bells in about 1470 and a south door at the west end, besides a rood and screen separating the nave from the chancel. Was this where the Holy Rood of Beccles was housed as mentioned in a Kenton medieval will? The Church was still described as the "Rood Church that was" in the Beccles Task Book of 1576.

David Davy quoting John Martin, the antiquarian who visited Beccles in 1750, wrote: "Mr Crowfoot [the owner of St Peter's House] at the upper end of his tan office showed me two old towers or circular buildings which he tells me are the remains of St Peter's Church. The churchyard which abuts upon Mr Le Grys his garden [he owned what is now Waveney House Hotel], southward is yet to be traced by the ruinous walls, and is copyhold. There is a barn to lay bark in built between the two towers which hinders the view."

So John Martin the eighteenth century antiquarian believed that the structures were towers. If they were in fact towers, they seem to be unique in British Saxon or Norman architecture. They were not uncommon in Germany at this period.

What constitutes a tower, especially a round church tower? Generally they were built of flint and were taller than the rest of the building. They proclaimed the presence of a church and frequently held bells to summon the population to services. It appears that the "towers" of St Peter's fulfilled these roles; however they are short and stubby in appearance. Do they deserve to be described as "Round Towers"?

David Lindley

ST PETER'S CHURCH, BECCLES



St Peter's House stands at the top of Northgate on rising ground. To the south the street leads uphill to the New Market, and to the west the garden slopes down to the River Waveney. The house faces Old Market forming one side of the square. Until the Reformation, the Church of St Peter stood on the site and some of the original fabric of the church has been incorporated into the present building.

Jutting into the road in Puddingmoor, which is immediately next to the southern side of the building, is a semi-circular structure. This is of flint construction and was part of the original church building. It is echoed on the north side by a structure of the same size and height.

Were these two round towers or two chapels? Or were they perhaps both? Whatever they were, they pose a series of questions.

The theory, stated from at least the mid nineteenth century, is that Northgate was the original place of settlement in Beccles during late Saxon times, although there is no evidence to prove this. By 960 the manor was in the hands of the Monastery of Bury St Edmunds and it is almost certain that it was the Monastery which planned the rectangular development of the Old

three lancet windows at south, west and north have stone dressings externally and internally to their jambs and pointed arches. They have splayed internal reveals widening from 9" at the external aperture to 2'8" at the inner wall face and are 5'4" tall (the glazing opening). Internally the tower is circular up to about 6'4" above the apex level of these lancets where it becomes octagonal at about the same level as the exterior change of shape, but the flintwork above and below this level is similar.



Upper door with pointed arch and stone dressings seen from inside the tower

An upper door in the tower east wall at first floor level has a pointed head with dressed stone jambs and arch and shows no evidence of having been altered; it is 2'8" wide x 6'5" high and also shows in the nave west wall. Above the arch and set directly on its stone voussoirs, longer flints laid non-radially take the form of a relieving arch. An interesting detail, if not unique certainly unusual in the upper chambers of round towers, is a chamfer on the inner edges of the internal stone voussoirs of the first-floor lancets and upper door, with mini-broaches on the springer stones of the arches.

The tower has an internal diameter of 9 ft. and walls about 5'4" thick, and above the tower arch the east wall continues the circular shape. The tower arch is a tall pointed one without imposts, 15 ft. to the arch springing, and has dressed stone jambs in nave and tower; it is 7'1" wide and about 5 ft. thick at the apex by comparison with a nave west wall thickness of 2'10" measured outside the tower, and nave side walls of 3 ft.

Interpretation

The small blocked stone window in the nave south wall was the subject of a fuller discussion in *The Round Tower* of March 2004 pages 67-69*, and so is only briefly considered here.

There is no reason to suppose that it is an insertion into an earlier wall; there is no evidence such as for instance, patched flintwork around these window

stones, to suggest that they are not in their original position; its style is consistent with the herringbone flintwork, and it could therefore be an original feature of the nave, blocked, perhaps, when original 14th-century windows (now restored or renewed) each side of it were inserted. There are many undisputed post-Conquest examples of this small 'arched-lintel' pattern of window-head in East Anglia (in Herringfleet and Haddiscoe towers, for example), and because dressed limestone was unlikely to have been available in this area before the Conquest, the nave can probably be dated by the stone and the herringbone flintwork as 11th-century Norman.

The drilled holes round the edges of the stones of this window have however, been the basis of a claim that they were Saxon, preserved and reset in their present position, having originally been positioned at the centre of a wall where the holes supported the canes of conical wattle shuttering on which the walling around a double-splayed circular-headed window was built. While some Saxon double-splayed windows were undoubtedly built in this way as evidenced in Hales church tower, the stones of this window could not have been used for that purpose; firstly, having a dressed finish and chamfered inner edges, the stones were clearly made as window facings, and secondly, there are only two widely-spaced holes in the head stone – canes projecting from them would not make very good basketwork shuttering, and they would project downwards and inwards! The theory outlined above is based on dubious and inaccurate comparisons with drilled stones at two other churches.

The tower, on the other hand, has no Norman features. The curved east wall within the tower and its 5-foot thickness at the tower arch by contrast with the 2'10" nave west wall measured outside the tower, could indicate either that the tower was built with the nave or added later to a formerly towerless church; the latter, though, seems more likely because the pointed arches of the upper door, the first-floor lancet windows and the pointed tower arch indicate a post-Norman date for their formation, which of course would be the date of the tower's construction. The similarity of internal construction and voussoir details of the tower's lancet windows and the upper door implies that they were contemporary. It is inconceivable that the well-built upper door could be a modification of the Norman round-headed one that there would have been, had the tower been Norman.

The absence of evidence of disturbance to the flintwork surrounding the lancets or the upper door externally or internally indicates that they were part of the tower's original construction and were not inserted later or modified from earlier ones. A theory that the windows were originally Norman belfry openings subsequently modified to lancet shape is unconvincing and can be

Churches. In conclusion, wooden churches with round towers over their apses are very rare in the medieval wooden church architecture of Central and Eastern Europe. They appear to be unique to Norway and, as aforementioned, in the 11th and 12th centuries there were important trading and cultural links between Norway and Eastern England associated with the Danelaw.

Footnotes:

(1) Greenstead Church: page 116, "Early Church Art in Northern Europe" With special reference to timber construction and decoration, by Josef Strykowski (based on lectures delivered before the University of London at University College), Batsford, London 1928.

(2) Josef Strzykowski: page 118, see also page 120 *ibid.*,

(3) "Norwegosche Stabkirchen – Architektur Geschichte und Traditionen, page 6, page 13, page 34. page 102, by Christel Hildebrandt, Boksenteret ISBN 82-7683-012-9.

(4) One of the oldest studies of stave churches is by L. Dietrichson in his book "De Norske Stavkirker", and a second edition in German "Die Holzbauten Norwegens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart", appeared in year 1893.

(5) "The Norwegian Stave Churches" by Leif Anker and Jiri Havran, pub. Arfo 2005, ISBN 82-91399-29-8, page 340.

(6) Leif Anker, *ibid.* page 95, 355

H.T. Norris and T.S. Norris

John Moore writes regarding the archive article on Mass Dials in the September 2008 issue and feels an updated version of the last paragraph on page 10 would perhaps be more technically accurate...

‘ The shadow cast by the gnomon of a sundial always falls on the same line at any given time of day, whatever the season. It is only the length of the shadow that varies with the season, being shortest at the summer solstice. So the mass dial would show the due time correctly throughout the year. It would have been easily readable by parishioners to within five minutes of the time due for mass.’

A third stave church derives from Gol in the region of Hallingdal; this stave church is now to be found at the Norsk Folk Museum at Oslo. The church is dated from the 13th Century, though its choir and apse are dated from year 1650. It is speculatively believed that Gol Stave Church originally had a round-towered apse, but this feature has now disappeared.



Lom Stave Church,

A fourth stave church is located at Lom, namely north of Sogne Fjord, which dates from the 13th Century. The choir was decorated in the year 1608. There is a round tower over the round apse of the church.

An issue for consideration is why round towers in wood were constructed in respect of stave churches? Whereas a round tower is easier to construct in stone in comparison to a square tower in stone, a round tower in wood is more complex to construct than a square tower in wood. One might pose the question: was a round tower for a round apse a logical constructional choice or

were there other factors that inspired the design of apses of these aforementioned stave churches? Aesthetic and symbolic factors may have played a part. A horizontal cross-section of a round tower is a circle which symbolically is a geometrical shape devoid of a discernible beginning and end, thus implicating eternity. Moreover, it is speculated (3) from a priests' book that the chancel and apse "... represented the holy men of Heaven, the nave represented the holy men of Earth". Moreover, the tree trunks forming main structural components of the nave depicted a wood and that also provided vertical relief, in a manner akin to Gothic cathedrals with their high ceiling supported by way of constructional techniques such as the flying buttress. The round tower of the apse was potentially considered as a tunnel to heaven, akin to a tunnel concept reported by people under near-death experiences. Did this concept ever have a bearing on the choice of round-towered churches in East Anglia?

Important Norwegians participated in the Crusades and ideas which originated in Byzantium and further East in the Holy Land may also have been a factor in the design and construction of the Norwegian Stave



The south lancet window in the tower showing undisturbed flintwork around its stonework

dismissed on three counts: firstly, they show no evidence whatever of having been adapted from Norman openings; secondly, they are at the same level as the upper door and it is highly unlikely that that an upper door would have opened directly into a bell chamber; and thirdly, it is improbable that the Normans, or later builders, would have built a tower with a belfry below the level of the nave ridge, which at the time the upper door was formed must have been at least at this height.

Because, then, the three lancets are unlikely to be altered Norman belfry openings, nor for the same reasons later ones, the level at which the shape changes from circular to octagonal

could not have been the top of a finished tower, since such a tower would have had no belfry. Nor is it likely that a Norman belfry had been demolished since it obviously could not have been earlier than the post-Norman stage below! Consequently, the present octagonal stage must have been part of the original complete tower. Since a post-Norman belfry earlier than the present one seems no more than a theoretical possibility, it follows that the present octagon must be this tower's original belfry and that the circular and octagonal stages are therefore contemporary. Thus the octagon with its Y-tracery bell-openings provides confirmation for a post-Norman attribution for the circular stage.

Further corroboration for the date of the circular stage and its contemporaneity with the octagon comes from the fact that the ground floor west window has the same tracery pattern as the belfry openings. Because many early round towers have had later ground-floor west windows inserted, this feature has come to be regarded as notoriously untrustworthy for dating, but in some of the later towers the ground-floor west window was clearly part of the original tower structure, and Hasketon tower seems to be one of those cases. The Y-tracery of the west window and belfry openings suggests that the tower may have been added to the Norman nave in the late 13th century or early 14th, though this window pattern was used for a long time after it first appeared in the late 13th century.

Standing about 60 ft. high, Hasketon tower is one of the tallest of all round towers and its wall thickness of more than 5 ft. is an indication that a tower of considerable height had been envisaged from the outset; a wall of this thickness would hardly have been necessary for a tower of only the height of the circular stage. This is another indication, though only circumstantial evidence, that the circular and octagonal stages are contemporary.

Stephen Hart

* Copies of the article on the blocked window may be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope, (size C5 for A5 document) to Mrs Lyn Stilgoe Crabbe Hall, Burnham Market, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 8EN

SUFFOLK CHURCH CHESTS by David Sherlock

Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History ISBN 978-0-9521390-5-8



This splendidly illustrated book of Church Chests, which date from the 13th and 14th centuries, and later, contains a very comprehensive study of their manufacture as well as an inventory that spans the entire county in alphabetical order. Within its contents are to be found

their known history, including those formerly from religious houses, chests that have been imported, some from Norway, and others, principally, in pinewood, from the major port of Gdańsk, in Poland, and from North Germany. Space is given to the latest discoveries through dendrochronology, thus enabling us to date these chests with precision.

A thorough description of the manufacture of the chests in wood and in iron and other materials, and their categorisation, is accompanied by an Inventory, a full Bibliography and Glossary. It will be of major interest to members of the Round Tower Society as a handful of these churches possess round towers. They include those at Burgh Castle, Little Saxham, Rickinghall Inferior, Risby and in particular Syleham. This was photographed in 1976 by the Society and there is a photograph of the 13th century chest in Lowestoft Record Office. This book offers an indispensable guide as to how to list and describe ancient chests and readers will be struck both by the artistry and craftsmanship.

Available from Healeys, Suffolk £15 (incl P&P).

wood, even its roof tiles. According to Leif Anker, who received his degree as an art historian from the University of Oslo, and who has specialized in the relationships between stave churches and stone church constructions during the Middle Ages, this round towered apse from ground to summit comprises the apse Pentice wall intermediate post, the Pentice wall, the Pentice roof, the apse wall, the apse roof, the apse turret wall, and is capped by the apse turret roof (spire) (5). According to Leif Anker, C. Ahrens in principal shares the view of H. Christie, but contends that the centre room of the stave church finds its origins in English wooden architecture of the years 1000's. C. Ahrens in his writings points to the traces of churches with interior supporting posts in several locations in England, notably Norwich and Wharram Percy. He finds the origins of this form in the halls of the elite in power in the years 1000's. He adds that this form could have come to Norway during the era of Christian mission and it formed the model for a development in Norway of the centre-room church founded on raft beams. C. Ahrens is also of an opinion that a similar sequence of events pertains for the mid-mast constructions. Here he finds support for an early example in archaeological finds made in Norwich which are dated to the first half of the year 1000's. With regard to Norwich, this city is a geographical centre for English round-tower church constructions (6).

Following the building of Norwich Cathedral in year 1096, and Ely Cathedral in year 1102 to 1174, and Peterborough Cathedral in year 1117 to 1193, an influence reached Norway and can be seen at Stavanger Church built in year 1123 to 1150 and the first stone cathedral at Drontheim (Trondheim).

Second only to Borgund Stave Church in historical importance is Heddal Stave Church; Heddal Stave Church is located in the Telemark region of Norway. This church likewise has a choir and an apse dating from year 1250 to 1350. Moreover, this church is regarded as the "cathedral of the stave churches" and is unique in that it also has a round tower over its mid-ship section between the nave and the apse. Bells are housed in the highest square tower constructed over the nave.



Heddal Stave Church

REFLECTIONS ON THE ROUND TOWER APSES OF THE NORWEGIAN STAVE CHURCHES (MAST CHURCHES)

Early church art in Northern Europe is of interest, on the one hand on account of wooden constructions being employed, and on the other hand on account of interior decoration being employed. Norway, unlike the Swedish province of Skåne, is not a country of round tower churches, nor is it of round churches such as those found on the Danish island of Bornholm. However, at least four of Norway's famous stave churches, two of these being amongst the oldest surviving stave churches, have or had round-towered apses. Such provision of round-towered apses could hardly contrast more greatly with round tower churches in East Anglia. Even so, these wooden round towers in Norway have a bearing on those with which we are familiar in East Anglia. It is believed by many that much of the Christianity of Norway came from the East of the British Isles, and one should also recall that our oldest wooden stave church is at Greenstead in Essex, just outside Chipping Ongar (1).



Borgund Stave Church

There are four surviving stave churches in Norway that have or had round towers. The oldest of these stave churches is Borgund Stave Church dedicated to St. Andreas; by coincidence or design (?), Greenstead church is also dedicated to St Andrew. Borgund Stave Church is located at the end of Sogne Fjorden. It was first mentioned in year 1360 and is dated to around year 1150, namely a similar age to the earliest round towered churches in East Anglia (4). Roofs of Borgund Stave Church run West to East, its ground plan is 23.5 feet by 19.5 feet, and its height is 14.5 feet, built in six stages. According to Josef Strzygowski (2), "... There is also, however, a vertical line marked by the

small spire and, lower, by gables on the roof. The small round tower at the East and the dragons' heads on the roof should also be noted". At Borgund Stave Church, there is to be found a rectangular choir, 11 feet square, which terminates in a semi-circular apse although this is of a later date. The church is surrounded by a broad embowered walkway with external pillars and an associated arcade. The round tower above the apse is entirely constructed of

SUMMER TOURS 2008 PART 2

Bright sunshine followed a lunchtime storm, as we met in July at Worthing St Margaret. Here the chancel is long gone and at 25 feet in height this is the shortest of our round towers, not even rising above the nave roof ridge. Entering by a fine Norman doorway with zig zag moulding, we found a craft fair in progress.

Further east along the beautiful Wensum valley is Bylaugh St Mary the Virgin. Its round tower topped by an octagonal belfry, the church was much changed in 1809 when the chancel and transepts were added by Sir John Lombe, its patron. The Georgian furnishings are a delight, dominated by a fine three decker pulpit. There are many monuments and rolling up the nave carpet revealed the splendid 15th century brass to Sir John Curson in armour and his wife wearing a wimple.

Morton on the Hill St Margaret suffered a tower collapse in 1959, which damaged the nave and porch roofs. This is no abandoned ruin however, as selective restoration means the church is still used on occasions. A peaceful place to visit made even more beautiful by the surrounding grounds laid out by Sir Joseph Hooker, born at Halesworth in Suffolk, who followed his father Sir William, as Director of Kew Gardens.

August brought a Suffolk Tour starting at Bruisyard St Peter. The church stands on gently rising ground. Its tower is round for its full height of 44 feet and has considerable bulging about halfway up. Inside, the Hanoverian Royal Arms are claimed to be 'the worst executed in England!' There is a printed set of the 10 commandments, a 15th century font and portrait brasses of the two wives of Michael Hare c1610.

Thornington St Peter's tower has blind arcading in its flint work and the battlemented octagonal brick top of the tower looks late 15th century. There are monuments to members of the Bence family and a First World War battle cross in memory of the second Lieutenant A. Bence Trower, killed in action in May 1918.

At Theberton St Peters we were welcomed by ringing bells. The combined length of the nave and chancel of almost 100 feet and under one long thatched roof gives an impression of size to the interior. There is a fine 15th century font, with lions and woodwoses around the stem and a 15th century

pulpit, apparently moved three times in the early 19th century. Inside the vestry, turning to look back towards the church is perhaps the greatest of St Peter's treasures, a magnificent 12th century Norman doorway.

September's tour was exceptionally well supported, with over 60 people counted at our first stop at Intwood All Saints. Its tower is 60 feet high with its octagonal belfry a later addition to the round section, the lower parts of which may be Anglo Saxon.

The weather had deteriorated by the time we arrived at Keswick All Saints. Material from this church was used to repair Intwood by Sir Henry Hobart. The tower was repaired here in 1893 and a small nave added. An apse was added later still, but this tiny church was filled to overflowing by our party. Ruins of the original chancel are to the east of the apse.



Arriving at Swainsthorpe we found ourselves in the middle of a village Festival, with Scarecrows everywhere, including inside St Mary's church. There are fine perpendicular windows in the nave, which has a 15th century arch braced roof with angels. The visit proved a jolly ending to our season but also a time to reflect on the cooperation and kindness showed to us by so many, parishioners, church wardens and clergy, during the summer and the refreshments we had received.

To remember also, the hard work of Lyn and Richard, in both preparation and leading the tours. My final memory is of our Treasurer sitting in the porch beside a St Trinians' schoolgirl scarecrow! Roll on next summer...

Stuart Bowell



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Today the church is equally open to the protestant and the catholic community which hold their respective services on Sundays or join together for an ecumenical service.

Visitors interested in round tower churches will, of course, make their way first to Gernrode but they should not miss nearby Quedlinburg, an almost completely preserved mediaeval town of beautiful timber-framed houses which is listed as UNESCO site of cultural heritage.

B & U Feistel

The article is based on Klaus Voigtländer, Die Stiftskirche St. Cyriakus zu Gernrode, DKV-Kunstführer Nr. 404/2, and on the kind information provided by Frau Ulrich, Gernrode.



Beachamwell Village Gardens Open Day

Sunday 7th June 12 noon—5pm

The Hilgay Silver Band, Molly Dancers, Organ Recital in Church, Ploughman's Lunches, Afternoon Teas, Garden Stalls, Raffle and Tombola.

Adults £3.00, Couples £5.00, Children Free

In aid of St Mary's Church, Beachamwell.
For more information call 01366 328774

ROUND TOWER CHURCH TOURS OF THE PAST

Member Jo Pinner thought it would be useful to look back at past church visits, herewith 1986 - 1989:-

- 1986 **July**—Fritton, Hardwick, Morningthorpe;
September—Hales, Heckingham
- 1987 **May**—Syleham (AGM); **June**—Gissing, Shimpling, Rushall
July—Roughton, Aylmerton, Bessingham, **August**—Frostenden, Thorington, Theberton; **September**—Barsham, Mettingham, Bungay
- 1988 **May**—Tasburgh (AGM), Framlingham Earl, Poringland, Howe;
July—Kirby Cane, Geldeston, Stockton; **August**—Matlaske, Gresham, Sustead; **September**—Bramfield, Spexhall, Wissett
- 1989 **May**—Seething (AGM), Mutford, Gisleham, Gunton; **July**—Ashby, Herringfleet, Lound; **August**—Taverham, Bawburgh, Colney;
September—Roydon, Wortham, Rickinghall Inferior

the building was renovated and those parts of the building can therefore be easily distinguished from the original remains.

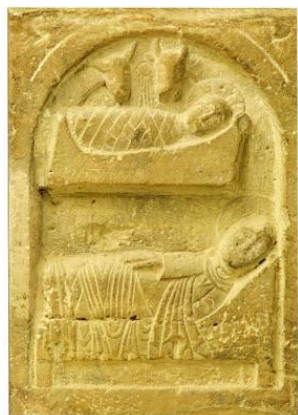


Lion carrying human mask

The north porch is also an addition of the 12th century. It is a simple Romanesque doorway with a plain tympanum. Its most interesting feature being the two lions just above the doorway thought to prevent mischief. Each beast holds a human mask in its claws.

Of the west building the two towers are the main remaining features from the 10th century. The towers were brought down and re-erected in 1907 and 1910, respectively. As this was done with great care according to the original layout it seems to be justified to date them back to the origins of the building. The stones were listed and numbered and the towers rebuilt stone by stone, the only major difference being a new foundation.

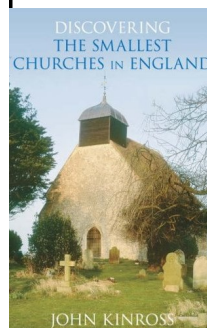
The two towers are of very similar design with some blind shafts in the lower part and blind arcading in the middle part distinguished by its round heads (south tower) and triangular heads (north tower). In the upper part of each tower are two-light belfry openings, the shafts and their capitals reminding us of similar features of Saxon origin in England though they are of a more delicate finishing.



There are many interesting features inside the church, amongst them the fine 16th century tomb of its founder Gero showing on the base St Cyriacus holding the hand of a little devil; one of the oldest preserved replica of the grave of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem with elaborate, wonderful decoration dating from the late 11th century; and the font dating from 1150, with a very unusual depiction of the scene of nativity showing Mary resting on a bed. Most of the existing wall paintings date from the restoration. Quast tried to emphasise perceived possible Byzantine influences which he also applied to the organ, added at the same time. He may have had a point considering the fact that Otto II was married to a daughter of the Eastern Emperor Romanus II.

DISCOVERING THE SMALLEST CHURCHES IN ENGLAND

John Kinross The History Press £16.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-4779-7

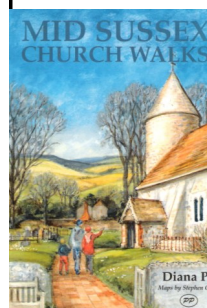


While everyone is familiar with the great cathedrals of England, there is a smaller group of churches countrywide that deserve their share of the attention, but are frequently little known. This companion volume to the author's successful *Discovering the Smallest Churches in Wales* is a county by county guide to the smallest gems of English ecclesiastical architecture which have naves of thirty feet or less. John Kinross provides the reader with descriptions of over a hundred of the country's loveliest and most interesting churches and chapels (including Keswick All Saints), many of which have a fascinating history and wonderful architecture. The book also includes maps, directions and a page about The Round Tower Society.

A 15% discount is available by phoning The History Press in Stroud on 01453 883300 or email sales@thehistorypress.co.uk

MID SUSSEX CHURCH WALKS by Diane Pé

Pé Publishing £6.95 156 pages ISBN 0-954-36902-5



From conversations on our Church tours I know that many of you enjoy walking and rambling just as much as church crawling. This recently published book has been brought to my attention and it charmingly combines the two pastimes. Thirty walks are detailed and amongst the churches visited are the three Sussex round towers of Lewes, Southease and Piddinghoe. Each walk is accompanied by a clearly drawn map and details are given of points of interest in the churches visited. Items of local interest are also mentioned and I was amused to see that Walk 25 offers '4 pubs and innumerable stiles!'. Just right for burning off that extra lunchtime pint. This is an excellent book for anyone heading to Sussex for a holiday, and similar volumes are available covering West Sussex, Dorset and Cornwall. One would love to see similar books taking in the round towered churches of East Anglia.

The book is available, with free postage, from the author, Diana Pé, Landsdowne, Ratham Lane, Bosham, Sussex PO18 8NH.

ST CYRIAKUS, GERNRODE



In contrast to the abundance of churches blessed with a round tower in East Anglia, St Cyriakus in Gernrode is a rather rare example with such a particular feature in Germany. However, it is a very fine one and the church of St Cyriakus is worthwhile visiting not only for its two round towers but for its fine Romanesque architecture.

Gernrode is located about 100 miles south-west of Berlin in the German county of Sachsen-Anhalt, which, in the middle of the 10th century, became a centre of the German Empire since it was the homeland of its (then Saxon) kings and later emperors. It must once have been a wonderful setting at the foot of the Harz mountains in a gentle valley surrounded by woods. And indeed, the very name Gern-rode is almost self-explanatory, 'Gero' being a man's name and 'rode' meaning the clearing of a forest.

Although there is no certainty it is generally assumed that building of the church began in 961 following the founding of a convent and the installation of its first abbess in 959. Established as a female convent, it developed into one of the most distinguished institutions of its kind in the empire and provided for the privileged daughters of the aristocracy. Not only did they receive an excellent education, but the abbess had also some influence at the court which extended as far as a right to vote. In 961 the founder of the convent, Gero, margrave of the German emperor Otto I, brought a relic of St Cyriakus from a pilgrimage to Rome who subsequently became the patron saint of the church. Gero also safeguarded papal protection which together with the imperial one gave the convent a special kind of independence.

Building proceeded from east to west and when Gero died in 965 he was already buried in front of the chancel. The church was eventually completed around 980. With the exception of some alterations in the early 12th century the church of St Cyriakus is an extraordinary example of early German ecclesiastical architecture which remained almost unchanged over the centuries. We owe the present condition of the church to the superb and exemplary restoration work carried out by the Prussian architect Ferdinand von Quast, a pupil of Schinkel, in the second half of the 19th century. The church was in such a dilapidated condition that even a complete demolition was considered an option.

The basilican church has a cruciform plan with north and south aisles, a square chancel at the crossing and a semi-circular apsidal sanctuary to the east of the chancel. There are two smaller semi-circular apses to the east of each transept. Nave and aisle are separated by a row of simple square pillars alternating with columns, a pattern known in Germany as the 'Rhenish model'. The capitals of the columns have elaborate carvings and there is some debate about a possible Byzantine connection.

To the west, at the end of the two aisles, are the round towers, originally enclosing a massive square tower between them. Their spiral staircases provided access to the central tower and to the gallery. Unlike in areas such as Norfolk it can be presumed that in the case of Gernrode, functionality rather than the lack of good building stone, determined the circular form of the towers. A similar design of two slim round west towers can be found at St Pantaleon in Cologne (966) and in one of the earliest existing architectural manuscripts intended for the island monastery of Reichenau (dated 820). It is known that Gero visited Reichenau and St Gallen, where the manuscript is now being preserved, on his way back from Rome.



West Front of the Church

Today the massive west apse bows out between the two towers (see left). It was added in the early 12th century when changes were made to the west front in order to accommodate an additional crypt. The west tower was replaced by a new west facade with a large semi-circular choir.

The plan shows some oddities, in particular a significant shift in orientation between the nave and the transepts for which despite all research no satisfactory explanation has been found.

Looking from the outside the eastern parts of the building stand out by the use of unfinished stone whereas the north and south facade are built with dressed stone. The eastern walls also do not spring from a foundation, which - together with their rough fabric - indicates that what we see today are parts of the original building. Dressed stone was only used later when