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Vol. XXXV11 No. 3 March 2010



The Round Tower

Vol XXXV11 No 3

March 2010



Norwich, St Etheldreda

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ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY TOURS 2010

Tour and AGM

8th May 10.30am Geldeston, Hales, Seething
2.15pm AGM, Seething Village Hall

Saturday Tours - first church 2.30pm

5th June Beeston St Lawrence, Ashmanhaugh, Great Hautbois
3rd July Roydon, Wortham, Stuston
7th August Kilverstone, Breckles, Rockland St Peter
4th September Long Stratton, Topcroft, Denton

All the Tours are in Norfolk, except Wortham and Stuston in Suffolk on the 3rd of July.

Church Tours - Sundays, first church 2.30pm

18th April Stiffkey, Cockthorpe, Wighton, Great Walsingham
16th May Northrepps, Sidestrand, Trimingham, Gimingham
20th June Stratton St Michael, Shelton, Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary
18th July South Acre, West Acre, Castle Acre, Newton by Castle Acre

Everyone is welcome to attend 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 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 optional. Any queries please phone 'Lyn Stilgoe on 01328 738237.

Welcome to an issue of puzzles! Are the church and tower at St Etheldreda's, Norwich pre-Conquest?; is there enough evidence at St Clements, Fiskerton and at St Mary & All Saints, Great Walsingham to support round tower theories; when is a tower a turret or a turret a tower and why were fish used as weathervanes? Your thoughts on any of the above would be most welcome...For those in a more reflective mood a recap on the second part of the Summer Tours or John Lee's Sketching Summer may be of interest. Enjoy!

The next issue is June and the deadline for insertion is Friday 30th April 2010.

Please send items for publication either as email attachments or on disc as separate files – text, photos, drawings etc., or by post to:-

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Photographs:-

Front Cover—Dot Shreeve

THE ROUND TOWER

The quarterly magazine of the Round Tower Churches Society

Vol. XXXV11 No 3 March 2010

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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.

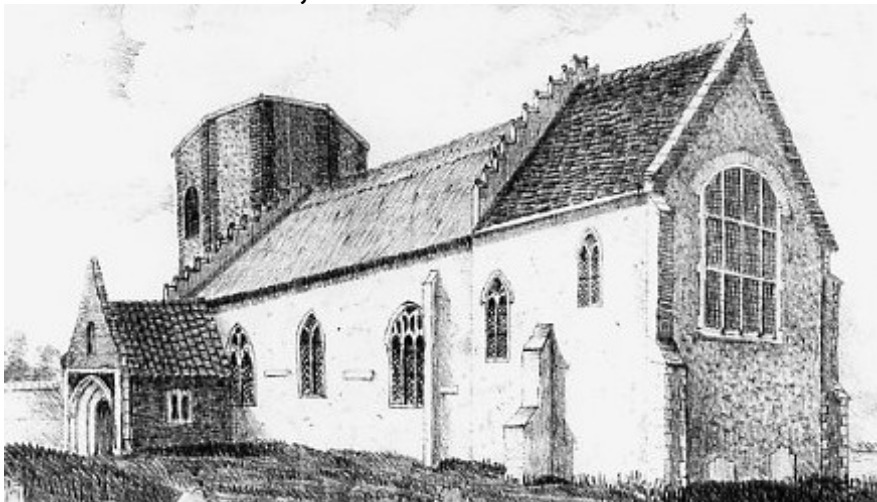
Magazines are published on the 1st of March, June, September and December. Membership renewal date is the first of these dates following the application for membership.

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

Mr Richard Barham

6 The Warren, Old Catton,
Norwich, NR6 7NW
Tel: 01603 788721

ST ETHELDREDA, NORWICH



A nineteenth-century drawing of the church by J.Sillet before the extensive Victorian alterations of 1883

This church is built on ground that slopes downwards quite steeply from west to east. It has an aisleless nave, a chancel of the same width, a south porch and a round west tower with an octagonal top. The nave is 19 feet wide internally with side walls thinner than normal for early flint walls – about 2'2" thick, but the west wall measured outside the tower averages about 3'4".

The church has manifestly undergone considerable restoration in the nineteenth century. The nave walls, which in their lower parts are of uncoursed flint rubble appear to have had their upper parts rebuilt and raised – above window-head level they are faced with knapped flints in a style quite different from the lower work. All the windows are renewals in Victorian versions of the Decorated style and buttresses have been added. The chancel appears to have been entirely rebuilt, faced with knapped flint-work.

The nave retains NW and SW quoins of Caen stone, and in the south wall just short of its east end, there is an early buttress built of flint with dressed stone corners; it is about 2'8" wide with a projection of about 6". A round-headed Norman south door has three orders and roll mouldings in its arch. At a level about half-way up the windows, remnant sections of a horizontal Caen stone string course moulding (not mentioned in Goode's books), run

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tuesday, 24th August at 2pm

STANFORD TRAINING AREA TOUR



There is to be a special visit, for RTCS members only, to hopefully the four redundant churches still standing in the Stanford Training Area, including the round tower church at Stanford. The final programme will depend on whether any of these churches are within the live firing ranges in use on that day. Names, addresses and phone numbers of those who wish to join the Tour should be given to 'Lyn Stilgoe (01328 738237), who will send further details and require £5 per head (payable to RTCS) nearer the time.



Please note: Park cars at West Tofts Camp by 1.45pm where a 55 seater coach will be waiting; no-one under 18 years; no dogs; cameras/video recorders only by prior consent. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, and if over-subscribed a reserve list will be kept.

Photos and Jottings



All Saints Church, Stanford

"On Christmas day 2002 I was on duty in the Stanford Training Area and ate my picnic lunch by All Saints Church in a lovely Breckland setting..."

Coincidentally sent in by Tom Pallister

DATES FOR THE DIARY

THE RYBURGH CONCERT SEASON 2010

St Andrew's Church, Great Ryburgh, Norfolk

Saturday 17th April "Ayres and Graces"

A concert of songs for Lute and Voice

Saturday 15th May "I Musicanti"

Music for four, five and six voices from Tudor times to the present day

Friday 11th June "Mistresses and Nostalgia"

A song recital on a Shakespearean theme given by Hugh Latham

Saturday 31st July Piano recital by Pippa Trent

All concerts begin at 7.30pm—retiring collection in aid of church restoration.

Sunday 6th June 12.00 noon—5.00pm

BEACHAMWELL VILLAGE GARDENS OPEN DAY

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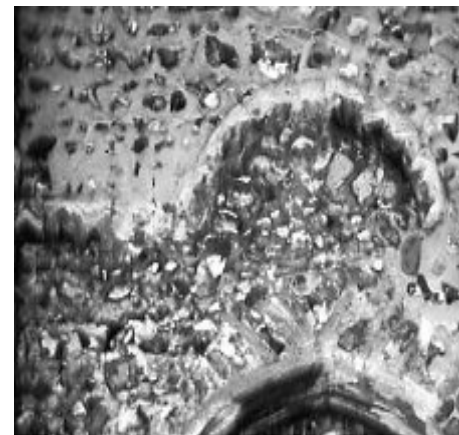
In aid of St Mary's Church, Beachamwell. Enquiries: 01366 328817

Saturday 19th June

REDGRAVE, RICKINGHALL SUPERIOR AND INFERIOR CHURCHES GUIDED TOUR

Clive Paine will be leading a guided tour of the above three churches on Saturday, June 19th commencing at 10.30am. The tour will start at Redgrave Church, where coffee will be served from 10am followed by lunch of quiche and salads etc. at Redgrave church. After lunch drive to Rickingham Inferior Church followed by a short walk to Rickingham Superior Church. Tickets will be £13 for the three churches, including lunch. Further information and tickets can be booked by June 12th with Jean Sheehan on 01379 890237. All profits from this tour will be for the benefice of Redgrave-cum-Botesdale with the Rickinghalls.

Redgrave church is a fourteenth century redundant church which has been beautifully restored by the Churches Conservation Trust with much additional work by Redgrave Church Heritage Trust, including loos and ample car parking. Rickingham Superior Church is Perpendicular, again well restored by the Churches Conservation Trust. Rickingham Inferior Church has an early Norman round tower with mainly fourteenth century additions.



The semi-circular extension of the Norman string course moulding in the nave north wall

between the windows and buttresses on both sides of the nave with, on the south, a short length at a lower level east of the early buttress. The moulding is about 4" high and projects about 3" from the wall face and is decorated with the typical Norman zig-zag motif. At the west end on the north side, it rises to form a small semi-circle as if it might have been a window hood mould – it seems too small and too high to have been above a door although now, some way below it, there is a wider door with a four-centred arch.

Convex fillets fill the re-entrant angles between the tower and nave west wall. The tower's first-floor west window is probably a later insertion; it is surrounded by knapped flints.

This tower is one of those in which not only the octagonal stage but also the upper part of the circular stage has been rebuilt or added. Only about 14½ feet (measured at the tower-to-nave junction on the north side) of the original tower structure survives; for about five feet or so above this level, up to the corbelled brick base of the octagonal top stage, the circular walls contain much knapped flint and, about six feet apart, there are vertical brick bands of alternating headers and stretchers. These bricks look post-medieval and are similar to those that form the corbelled base of the octagon, those in the octagon's quoins and those forming the segmental arches of the belfry openings in its south, west and north faces.

The tower's internal diameter is 10'7" and the interior circularity is maintained in the east wall where the thickness at the tower arch apex is 3'2". The tower arch opening is 7'2" wide between reveals with a pointed chamfered stone arch springing from moulded imposts on semi-circular half column responds.

There is little definite evidence in the lower part of the tower's circular stage on which to judge its date or to establish whether it was contemporary with the nave or a post-Norman addition. However, the similarity of the flintwork in the tower wall and fillets to that in the nave west wall, the

internal circularity of the tower's east wall and its thickness relative to that of the nave west wall suggest that the original church and tower would have been built at the same time; if so, the positive Norman features in the church walls described above, would also establish the lower part of the tower's circular stage as Norman. The pointed tower arch is likely therefore to have been a later alteration.



The nave south wall showing the short lengths of Norman string course moulding between the windows and buttresses. Note the smaller projection of the wide Norman buttress by comparison with the three narrower Victorian ones. Compare this picture with Sillet's drawing

Archaeologically, this church is probably one of the most important round-towered churches because the nave walls themselves rather than doorways or windows in them can be dated beyond reasonable doubt. The main evidence for this is the moulded string course of Caen stone, a material unavailable before the Conquest and probably not obtainable before Norwich Cathedral was begun in 1096, and the early shallow buttress with stone dressings which probably defined the western end of the original chancel. This type of buttress (it is not a pilaster), is a characteristic Norman element and there is no reason or evidence to support speculation that its stone corners are later embellishments of a Saxon flint pilaster rather than original parts of the buttress. It has an exact parallel in the similar feature on the Lazar chapel in Norwich, founded in the time of Bishop de Losinga, (1090-1119). There are no precedents for Saxon flint buttresses of this width with a 6" projection.

There can be little doubt that these two features are Norman, and in the absence of any evidence to suggest that they might be later insertions, they

In **1524** the curate of Great Walsingham left a bequest for the repair of both his parish churches in return for which an annual Easter-tide service of *Placebo* and *Dirige* were to be said in them. This suggests that All Saints Church was still then in use yet is almost certain that none of his bequest was spent repairing that church. Despite having been a supplicant at Walsingham Priory, Henry VIII closed it when he dissolved the larger monasteries of England in the **1538**. The two churches then lost its patron and fell on hard times. In **1552** the 'Church Goodes Survey' was carried out across Norfolk by Crown Commissioners. In Great Walsingham they found that the wardens for both churches had cleverly sold off the church plate to raise money for bridge and road repairs in the parish. Some money was still in hand. This suggests that the chancel of St Peters had been abandoned and All Saints Church was demolished only a few years earlier, yet the record notes that All Saints Church 'was long demolished'. Perhaps the burial yard of All Saints was still in use though there are no memorials surviving there today. There are no other early records to say whether the tower of All Saints Church ever held bells. In the **1870s** there were still substantial ruins to be seen in the field but today there are only the remains of wall foundations. (C.Cox, vol I, page 1911).

Dom Bede of Cambridge wrote in my volume of Cox' '*Norfolk Churches*', that St Peters Church, 'almost a ruin; to be restored by SPAB', 6 June 1923.

Richard Harbord

ST MARY'S APPLETON

Terry Allen wrote in response to the piece on St Mary's Church, Appleton (September 2009, Vol XXXV11 No 1) that whilst finding the piece interesting he was concerned that the conservation work has left the site in a bit of a mess so it is now fairly neglected again and overgrown. He asks if the Society is able to exert any influence—an item we can perhaps discuss at the next AGM.



He also pointed out that the coffin lid (pictured) is believed locally to be that of a Knight's Templar grave.

The original church may have stood in the middle of its burial yard but was then extended eastwards so that it abutted the lane on that side. The boundary wall of the churchyard can still be recognised in the ground except on the northern side. It measures about 190ft east-west by 226ft north-south, enclosing an area of almost an acre. The ground falls about 10ft from the church down to the lane so the entrance to the burial yard was probably in its north-east corner.

The *Domesday Survey* of **1086** makes it clear that Little Walsingham was already growing faster than its neighbour. The establishment of its shrine in **1061** associated with twin wells and the 'Holy House of Nazareth' led to the founding of a Priory. Kings, prelates and other dignitaries flocked to Walsingham. By the late **1200s** it was said to rival Canterbury in the number of votaries it received so the monastery and its town became wealthy.

In **1268** the lord of the manor left his church rights in Great Walsingham to the Priory and this was the beginning of a take-over by that monastery. In **1280** the Archbishop of Canterbury agreed that the rectory of All Saints Church could be appropriated by Walsingham Priory who then became the church's patron. About **1320**, a new parish church of St Peters, Great Walsingham was begun on land south of All Saints. St Peters was designed entirely in a consistent Decorated style so for once we see a church where all the windows are of a similar pattern. It has a fine tower, which unusually has its original medieval bells. The nave and two aisles also have most of their splendid medieval furniture. It was probably incomplete at the time of the Black Death in **1349**. The plague was a set back for Walsingham Priory where a new Prior was appointed presumably to replace one who had died in the plague. In **1350** the two parish churches of Great Walsingham were merged and reduced to a curacy. The 'Church Goodes Survey' of **1368** (*Norfolk Record Society* vol 19, page 92) shows that All Saints was rich in its contents. It held ten liturgical books; the usual altar furnishings and vestments; a *lenten* veil and unusually two banners with the BVM enthroned, bearing a *carona* and emblazoned with rich colours. Was this a gift from the great monastery? Great Walsingham is surrounded by sheep fold-courses and in the period of unrest in **1381** *morrain* attacks occurred. Despite setbacks, pilgrims continued to arrive. Some came by sea to Wells a port four kilometres to the north appropriately named for visitors to the sacred wells of the similarly named Walsingham. Wayside crosses guided their route keeping them on the western side of the River Stiffkey, which divides the churches of Great Walsingham from the main part of its village.

are self-evidently original parts of the walls in which they occur and thus define those walls as Norman. Supporting evidence is provided by the quoins of typical Norman size and proportions at the SW and NW corners of the nave also of Caen stone with which the string course neatly converges, showing that quoins, string course and wall were almost certainly built concurrently, and the round-headed south doorway provides further evidence for a Norman date.

Whereas it can be accepted in principle that doorways, windows or quoins have sometimes been inserted into earlier walls without showing any tell-tale evidence, it is just not credible on grounds of reasonable constructional practicability that a string course would have been inserted into an pre-existing wall of uncoursed flint rubble, and there is no evidence to suggest that the one here would have been. Later insertion would have entailed cutting a deep chase into irregular flintwork for the full length of the nave both sides and apparently the original chancel also, and then bedding and wedging the string course stones into the chase to an even level and line in slow-setting mortar; it is highly unlikely that such an extensive, troublesome and almost impracticable venture would have been undertaken for such a minor, unfunctional decoration. The even setting and jointing of the string course stones and the precision with which those in the small arch on the north side have been laid could, it is suggested, only have been achieved if they had been incorporated in the walls as they were being built.

Nevertheless, despite that and the other Norman evidence, and the absence of any Saxon features, the church and the tower's circular stage have been claimed as pre-Conquest; the claim is based on unproved contentions that Norman church walls were never less than 3ft. thick and Norman nave widths never under 20 feet, and that therefore all the Norman stone features are later insertions into Saxon walls.

On the evidence of the features described, the church's constructional history might be:

C.12. Original Norman church and tower built.

C.14. Formation of the pointed tower arch, and probably insertion of larger windows.

C.15. South porch added.

C.17 or 18. Re-building of the upper part of the tower circular stage and building the octagonal belfry.

C.19. Raising of the nave walls, renewal of windows and rebuilding of the chancel.

Stephen Hart

FISH ASSOCIATIONS...

Following the review of “Fish & Fishermen in Medieval wall paintings” (December 2009 magazine—Vol XXXVII No 2) it set me thinking about “fish” associations in the Bible, and churches generally. Fish (in the Greek language, ichthus - ΙΧΘΥΣ) was an early Christian symbol because the initial letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ, son of God Saviour, form the Greek word for fish and had early reference in Paedagogus III by Clement of Alexandria. During the 1st century early Christians in Roman catacombs used fish symbols for secrecy purposes. Fish has several mentions both in the Old and New Testaments, and abound in the inland waters of Palestine as well as the Mediterranean, but curiously none are distinguished by name. Leviticus 11:9 tells us “whatsoever hath fins and



Piddinghoe's weathervane

scales in the waters” is declared clean and whilst all “that have not fins and scales” are forbidden.

Of the three Round Tower churches in Sussex, all on or near the Ouse, two: namely Lewes and Piddinghoe, have a fish weathervane on the spires atop the round towers. Fish weathervanes (comparatively rare) will also be found at Filey and Flamborough, Yorkshire, again near the sea, and at Alciston, Sussex. However, the church at Southwold (described by Simon Jenkins as “the grandest of the galleons that once sailed the length of the Suffolk coast”) has not a fish weathervane, but a ship. The word nave is derived from the Latin word, navis – meaning a ship. All three Sussex round towers have spires (Piddinghoe's and Lewes' roughly equalling the height of the round tower; Southease's less than half the height of its tower at 15ft) in a style quite



different from those typically seen in East Anglia, although similar to Broomfield, Gt Leighs and Lamarsh in Essex, Croxton and Quidenham, Norfolk and Welford in Berkshire. They are covered with shingles, the method of construction resembling overlapping pine cones or fish scales (see *Southease left*).

ST MARY AND ALL SAINTS CHURCH, GT WALSINGHAM

Local tradition says that All Saints Church had a round tower before it was demolished circa 1550. Bill Goode argued that a round tower is difficult to recognise on an aerial photograph of the site so there is some doubt about this question. The site is about 200 metres north-north-east of the surviving parish church of St Peters, just east of the B1355 road between Wells and Fakenham.

All that can be seen on the ground is the rough outline of a church in the middle of a pastured field adjacent to Westgate Farm. There are few other early round towered churches in this north central part of Norfolk – Little Snoring is four kilometres away and is the nearest to Great Walsingham. Ironically the Roman Catholic parish church of Little Walsingham only a mile from the site, has England's newest round tower; completed in 2006.

It is curious that this little village was called Great Walsingham yet its near neighbour is the world famous pilgrimage township which is called Little Walsingham. An urn containing half burnt human bones was found in the mid 1600s, in a field east of the site on the other side of the River Stiffkey. This discovery led the famous philosopher and physician, Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich to publish his great book, ‘*Urn Burial*’ in 1658. A mid 19th century vicar of Great Walsingham, the Rev James Lee-Warner further excavated the site and found 40-50 more urns including ancient coal used in the cremation process. They were originally thought to be Roman but later dated to the Anglian period of 7th century settlement in Norfolk. Clearly Great Walsingham (later called ‘Old Walsingham’) was an important early settlement as its place name ending in ‘*ingham*’ confirms.

All Saints Church was fairly large. Its outline measures about 31ft by 93ft internally in length plus 18ft for the tower (including its walls). The church was broad and long in comparison with the little chapels of the pre-Norman period that have survived in Norfolk. A cushion capital with a scalloped moulding came from the site, which indicates at least some of the church's fabric was Norman. There is a great deal of stone masonry built into the walls of nearby buildings and field walls. In the eastern part of the village in Angel Cottage, Hindringham Lane there are some highly wrought architectural fragments including a carved angel and frieze panels. These are Perpendicular in character. They may have come from All Saints Church or indeed from the others in the same area that were demolished at the Reformation.

was built in 1858 and is 'pure Victoriana'. In the north transept is the organ built by Norman Brothers and Beard, in Norwich, in 1888 and a brass to Alice Townsend of 1561.

At Taverham St Edmund the chancel is thatched. Dedications to St Edmund sometimes indicate an early foundation for a church. A Saxon window was discovered here in the west wall of the nave in 1981, so the nave may pre date the tower, the lower half of which is thought to be Saxo- Norman. There is also the head of a Saxon cross in the north aisle. The fine 15th century font has eight saints on its stem, including St Leonard with a chain and St Anne teaching the Blessed Virgin to read. The screen is 15th century and the whole chancel was restored as recently as 1953. Perhaps the greatest treasure of this church is the 15th century Norwich stained glass in the nave north window. There are four angels at the top, a crucifixion scene in the middle (with macabre skulls of Golgotha) and donor figures at the bottom.

September saw Lyn and Richard back in tandem and also another vintage aircraft appearance. As we gathered outside Woodton All Saints we were treated to a flypast by part of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. There is something very special about the sight and sound of a flying Lancaster. All Saints has a two stage octagon added to its earlier, possibly Saxon, round tower. In the chancel is a monument to Ann Suckling, who died in 1653, the great, great grandmother of Admiral Nelson. A more recent memorial commemorates the sons of the Rector who both died during the Great War, one serving in the Royal Flying Corps 'while testing an aircraft on Mousehold Heath' (Norwich). At Bedingham St Andrew the octagonal belfry was built to replace an earlier demolished one, while the round part of the tower may be Saxon. There is further evidence inside, where the tower arch, narrow, tall and round headed (often considered Saxon features) is formed without dressed stone. There is a good 15th century screen and low window sill sedilia with an angle piscina on either side. Fragments of 15th century glass show Philip with loaves in a basket.

Our final visit of the summer was to Fritton St Catherine. Here, at the end of a lane, was the third added octagonal belfry of the day. This church is something of a medieval art gallery, with wall paintings showing a bishop, St Christopher and St George and the dragon. Painted panels on the screen show the four Latin doctors as well as St Jude holding a boat and St Simon holding a fish. John Bacon, the donor of the screen died in 1510 and he, his wife and fourteen children are also shown, with many of the figures holding rosaries, a testament to their piety. As always, at the end of the September Tour, farewells were said. *We look forward to the 2010 Tour Season...*

Stuart Bowell

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) had a home, Bateman's, at Burwash in East Sussex (now a National Trust property) and wrote in his poem "Sussex"...

*I will go north about the shaws
And the deep ghylls that breed
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold
No more than Sussex weed;
Or south where windy Piddinghoe's
Begilded dolphin veers,
And red beside wide-banked Ouse Lie down our Sussex steers*



The fish symbol (pre-Christian) was often drawn by two overlapping crescent moons, to represent the before and after of the new moon. The moon is the heavenly symbol associated with the Goddess and the link between the Goddess and fish was found in assorted areas of the ancient world.

In Scandinavia, the Great Goddess was named Freya; fish were eaten in her honour and the sixth day of the week was named "Friday" after her. The Chinese Great Mother Kwan-yin holds many titles: The Goddess of Mercy, Gentle Protectress, Bodhisattva of Compassion, even the saviour of seamen and fishermen and is often portrayed in the shape of a fish. The Greek word "delphos" meant both fish and womb and is derived from the location of the ancient Oracle at Delphi who worshipped the original fish goddess, Themis. The later fish Goddess, Aphrodite Salacia, was worshipped by her followers on her sacred day, Friday. In later centuries, the Christian church absorbed this tradition by requiring the faithful to eat fish on Friday. The tradition of eating fish on Friday, however, comes from many different pagan cultures. The English word salacious (lustful or obscene) derives from Salacia's name as does April, our fourth month. In the Middle East, the Great Goddess of Ephesus was portrayed as a woman with a fish amulet over her genitals. The Goddess Kali from India was called the "fish eyed one".

St. Andrew, known as Protokletos or the first-called, was one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, born in Bethsaida, Galilee, the son of Jona and brother of St. Peter (Simon Peter). Before joining Jesus, he was a disciple of St. John the Baptist and, like his brother, St. Andrew was a fisherman, hence the tradition that Jesus called them to be his disciples by saying that "He will make them "fishers of men" (St Matthew 4:19). No fish can live in the Dead Sea and most die from the swift currents of the Jordan, and nearby streams. Some small kinds of fish are to be found in salt springs of the

borders of the Dead Sea but soon die due to the wrong kind of a constituent of the Dead Sea water. The significance of the emblem of St James the Great - a scallop shell and pilgrim's staff - can most likely be traced to the legend that the apostle once rescued a knight covered in scallops.

In the village where my grandparents lived in deepest rural East Anglia, during my childhood there were two village shops (long since closed) but neither sold fish, meat or milk. The milkman called daily, the baker on Tuesdays but the fishmonger, always on Fridays. I am sure many people today still eat fish 'ovva froy-dee' (on/of Friday, Norfolk-speak), following the tradition set by their ancestors many years ago.

Valerie Grosse

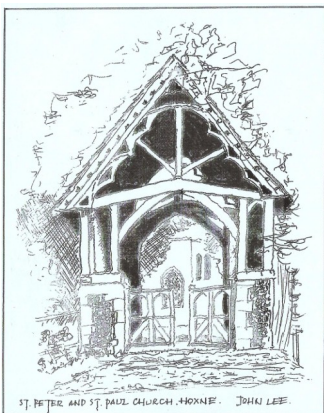
This prompts other questions i.e. why were fish used as weathervanes in the first place — perhaps to reflect the Early Christian symbol or maybe to denote a closeness to a water source — any views?

A SKETCHING SUMMER

After a gap of 3 years, I was pleased to find that the good weather of this last Summer encouraged me to get out sketching again.

The end result was 23 church drawings, two lytch gates and a church mausoleum, in addition to two houses alongside church yards, one watermill (Marlingford) and a farming scene.

The intention was not to frame these sketches and turn them into art for sale. At the age of 75 I have got past commercialism and these drawings are done solely for my personal satisfaction and a little gentle exercise.



Round tower churches visited and drawn were:- Aslacton, Bawburgh, Fornsett St Peter, Kilversone, Merton, Surlingham and Tasburgh.

I produce my own Christmas card each year and for 2009 I used a drawing of the lytch gate at Hoxne church (*see left*).

SUMMER TOURS 2009 PART 2

On a warm July afternoon we met at Brome St Mary. Richard our regular joint tour leader was unwell, so Lyn covered both interior and exteriors on this tour. (With extra work to do she also had competition here from a World War II fighter- a Mustang- making passes above us. 'A good aircraft once it got a British engine' was one comment.) The Cornwallis family were long established at Brome and there are some notable monuments including that of Sir John who died in 1544, whose effigy is shown in armour beside his wife Mary. There was much restoration here in Victorian times and more recent work on the tower in the 1990's. It is worth re-reading both the Bill Goode and Stephen Hart books for information about the tower.

Remote in the Waveney marshes, Syleham St Margaret is always a delight. Its tower has decorative alternating squares of knapped and rubble flint in the belfry stage, while the chancel roof, unusually, is higher and steeper pitched than that of the nave. Inside is much of interest including a font cover dated 1667, a Jacobean pulpit and a facsimile of Syleham's Domesday entry, which mentions a church with 16 acres- value two shillings. Of the numerous memorials my favourite is that to the Lambe sisters who 'like wise virgins always had oil in their lamps'.

Weybread St Andrews' tower has a rough sort of knapped and rubble flushwork in dummy lancet windows in the belfry stage. Entering the church by a flint panelled south porch, much Victorian restoration is apparent. A modern memorial commemorates Alfred Ablett, perhaps Weybread's most famous son, the first Suffolk man to win the V.C. He was serving with the Grenadier Guards in the Crimea at Sebastopol in 1855. After our visit we were given a fine repast at nearby Weybread Hall – without a doubt Tea of the Year.

All were pleased to see Richard recovering in August. Though still not well enough to join Lyn as the tour leader he generously made his research available to his 'stand in'. Brandiston St Nicholas, our first call, is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Much of the tower was rebuilt in 1890 and is only 30 feet high. Inside are several memorials including one to two sons of a former rector killed in the Great War (aged 21 and 19). There are fragments of medieval coloured glass in the window tracery of the south aisle. Field glasses reveal small faces, perhaps devils and quaint lions.

Nearby Haveringland St Peter stands by the perimeter track of a Second World War airfield and inside the church we found an exhibition, including details of the Mosquito aircraft which flew from here in 1944. The chancel

Tower Churches Society are particularly well qualified to undertake. At the same time, this does not exclude that in the future we may discover traces of other round tower churches in Lincolnshire. Still, one survivor is a very welcome discovery!

Harry T. Norris

Footnotes:

(1) Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, “Lincolnshire” in the Building of England Series”, pp. 279.

(2) Malcolm Norris, “Brass Rubbing”, Studio-Vista London, 1965, pp. 79, who writes: “A full analysis of indents would reveal Lincolnshire and Yorkshire as having been rich in brasses”. “The preponderance in the Eastern Counties extended further North than now appears”.

(3) Measurement made recently on the tower at Fiskerton reveal that the tower has an exterior diameter of 10 feet.

(4) Unlike round tower churches in Sussex and elsewhere, Fiskerton may be compared to those in Essex, since Lincolnshire like Essex is a direct neighbour to Norfolk on the one hand, and Suffolk on the other hand.

Certainly a puzzle—and one on which there will no doubt be several views of opinion—particularly if one suggests that the base has been thickened and the result has given the tower a more rounded appearance or that within the upper level of the tower the corners are noticeably square. Please pass on your views...



TOWER OR TURRET?

Built in 1880 and paid for by the Railway Company and railway workers, St James' Church, Tebay has a large western apse housing the Baptistry. The tower/turret has a spiral staircase from the main church down to the Vestry, has a conical spire and holds a single bell...any views?

OBITUARY

It is with sadness that we record the passing of one of our staunch supporters, Mrs. Pauline Llewellyn, the Warden of the Round Tower Church at Onehouse, near Stowmarket in Suffolk. She has overseen much restoration work at this church, now with its round tower standing proudly after centuries of causing problems!

Amongst my memories of the summer are:-

Tasburgh - drawing this splendid church from the East end with the church and its gravestones before me, many recent ones bedecked by flowers. Then reading in the Eastern Daily press that very day of a church council in Norfolk that intended to ban the placing of flowers on graves in its yard. This resulted in me writing to the EDP Letters page, condemning the action of that particular church.

Merton – Sat on the edge of the church yard and suddenly conscious of a munching sound behind me and discovering an Alpaca reaching up and lurching on the lower leaves of a tree!

Rockland - After sketching on the sunny South side, a walk about revealed a collection of discarded peacock feathers which now adorn my conservatory. To complete a pleasant morning I had lunch at a nearby pub watching Sky TV and saw England bowlers take four Australian wickets in the Test Series!

Colton - A pleasant quiet spot, but on the way to the church, a deer suddenly leaped over the hedge, hop, step and jump over the other hedge and away. No damage to the deer or my car!

Visiting church yards one gets used to seeing Service graves. One at Colton reads as follows:-

*Treasured memories of Flight/Sgt
Peter John Dunnell
The beloved son of Edward and
Emily Dunnell
Shot down by Soviet Fighters
In Germany
While on a peaceful mission
12th March 1953
Aged 29 years
Brave, Unselfish, Loving*

Obviously an innocent victim of the Cold war. Inside the church four other Dunnells are listed as losing their lives on the WW1 memorial plaque.

John Lee

ST CLEMENTS, FISKERTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

“St. Clements’s: a church full of problems and puzzles”⁽¹⁾

St. Clements Church, Fiskerton is 3 miles to the East of Lincoln. It is situated on a hillock in the River Witham valley. A road leads down from the village to the location where there was once a ferry taking passengers across the river. There are very few crossings even today over the river, hence the location at Fiskerton was one of key importance in much earlier times. Close to the River Witham was an important Iron Age timber construction of an unknown use; Pevsner suggests that it was a bridge abutment. Because of this, it is possible that the tower of the church in the past was a navigation beacon and/or look-out post. The tower is externally almost entirely a Perpendicular construction and there is Perpendicular period within the church, though this subordinates to the wealth of Norman (FIG. 2), early English and Decorated features. Parts of the church were rebuilt during the course of Ewan Christians’ restorations in the year 1863. Pevsner has remarked that this Perpendicular tower has most unusual buttresses. These are of the clasping type, four sides of a hexagon set diagonally. He notes that this curious arrangement is probably due to the fact that the body of the tower itself is round, (FIG. 4). Even so, the shape of the round tower is partially visible externally (FIG. 3).



FIG 2: Norman doorway in the North wall

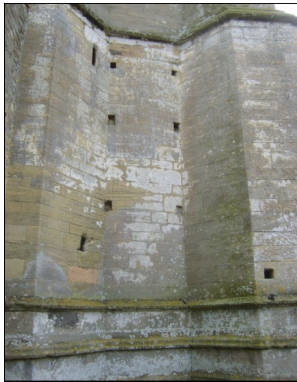


FIG 3: Exterior view of the South side of the ashlar-faced tower wall



FIG 4: Interior view of the tower arch area revealing round tower characteristics

We cannot be sure that there were no other round towers of a similar kind in Lincolnshire in the past. In any case, an explanation for its existence here is one which we can only be sure of after much more investigation and

research. Until that time, we can only speculate and make suggestions. For example, it is reasonable to suggest an East Anglian influence in this building, this influence having come into this part of Lincolnshire from the region of the Wash. It would be pleasant to propose confidently that the round tower core of this church dates back to the Norman age in view of the survival of much Norman structure within the church today. However, this is less likely in view of the refashioning of the tower structure in so much of its structure in the Perpendicular period, and there are other reasons too for suggesting that any East Anglian influence is more likely to have been of importance in a later rather than in an earlier period. We know, for example, that in the Holland district of Lincolnshire to the West of the Norfolk border such outstanding churches as Gedney Church, not to mention Boston Stump itself, are heavily influenced from Norfolk’s medieval architecture. As an example, there are a number of monumental brasses which survive in Lincolnshire which date back to the middle of the late 15th Century and a number of these are of Norfolk or Suffolk origin, or were made in London. Fiskerton itself has a brass of a coped priest which dates from the year 1490. Elsewhere, there is a Suffolk-style brass in Horncastle Church of Sir Lionel Dymore dating from 1519 and in Stallingborough which dates from 1509. Most striking of such brasses are to be found in Tattershall Church. Stallingborough is in North-East Lincolnshire. Tattershall is in Southern Lincolnshire. One might mention in particular the brass of Joan, Lady Cromwell which dates from circa 1475 which is entirely in East Anglian style; hands and face and drapery are typical of the best Norfolk work ⁽²⁾. For example, in such a brass is depicted St. Edmund, King of East Anglia and other features which make it plain where the geographical inspiration was at that time. One might therefore make the suggestion that while very fine brasses were exported from Norfolk and Suffolk to Lincolnshire, then why not a round tower to the church in Fiskerton? This assumes that the round tower at Fiskerton was there at a time relatively close in date of the final Perpendicular tower which we see today. On the other hand, the design of the round tower may be connected with the position of Fiskerton as a key crossing. Despite the relative proximity of Fiskerton to Lincoln, in past ages journeys were not made unnecessarily because of the relatively large amount of human effort involved.

Fiskerton must be included within the list of round towered churches as is clear from the features of a round towered church which have survived, principally within the tower, see FIG. 4. This rounded feature clearly deserves a programme of research which members of the Round