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Vol. XXXVI No. 1 September 2008



# The Round Tower

Vol XXXVI No 1

September 2008



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*Your contributions in the form of articles, notes on visits, anecdotes, local activities etc., are all greatly appreciated to make each issue of the magazine an interesting and worthwhile read.*

Please send material to:-

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## EDITORIAL

Thank you to all those who have submitted items for inclusion in this issue. It is always good to hear from both regular and new contributors.

We have another European theme in this issue with a look at the Round Towers of Ravenna and an insight into Zetting Church at Bliesgau. Those members booked on the tour in mid September will appreciate an early insight into this delightful church. Our own region is represented by a feature on All Saints, Freethorpe and the lost medieval church of St Paul's, Norwich.

The next issue is December 2008 and the deadline for insertion is Friday 24th October 2008.

Please send all items to:-

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## THE ROUND TOWER

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

**Vol. XXXV1 No. 1 September 2008**

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### Annual Membership Subscription:

Minimum £10 (overseas £15) of which 40% is for the printing and posting of *The Round Tower* 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 contact the Treasurer whose address and telephone number is on the inside back cover.

## ALL SAINTS, FREETHORPE

Map ref: T.G. 408 055

This flint church consists of a round west tower, a nave only 13'1" wide, a slightly narrower chancel, north and south aisles with two-bay arcades, the Walpole pew on the north side of the chancel, and a south porch.

It is always interesting to compare the attributions proposed by other commentators. Munro Cautley dismisses Freethorpe with the comment "*The round tower is probably Norman. Everything else looks like a drastic restoration*". Bill Goode called the tower and church possibly Saxon, using his standard formulae of Saxon signs, i.e. narrow nave, thin walls, short tower and tower fillets as his grounds. The earlier, 1979 Pevsner does not date the tower but calls the nave, north aisle and chancel EE, but the 1997 edition says that the north and south aisles were added in 1848-50 by Anthony Salvin who was also the architect for the Walpole pew. The statement in both editions that "*the west windows of the nave – the only trustworthy ones – are lancets*" is confusing for two reasons: firstly, the nave has no west windows, the west windows are in the aisles (which are said in the later edition to be c.19), and secondly all the lancet windows in the church seem to be c.19 renewals.

The church has no Norman or earlier evidence nor any definite EE features although the flintwork fabric of the chancel looks medieval and its eastern quoin stones include Caen stone – usually an indication of work of c.12 or c.13. In the absence of positive contemporary features, there is only circumstantial evidence for an EE attribution for the nave and chancel – namely an assumption that the Victorian windows correctly represent what was there before the restorations. The tower has no earlier evidence, and as discussed below was probably added; the church would therefore originally have comprised nave and chancel only.

The fabric of the north and south aisle walls does not look like Victorian flintwork, making a telling contrast with the immaculate knapped flintwork of the Walpole pew walls\*; it is difficult to believe that both could be virtually contemporary and the work of the same c.19 architect. Being about 3 feet thick, the aisle walls tend to suggest medieval work rather than of c.19 because it is unlikely that Victorian builders would have built low walls like these at that thickness. For a comparison, the Victorian arcade walls are 1'10" thick. The SE quoins of the south aisle are stone, though they might be re-set. No corners show on the north aisle, being covered by buttresses whose construction, in contrast to the wall fabric, does look more

## ROUND TOWER NEWS

A big thank you firstly to members Pauline Moorbath (926), Veronica Hardy (927) and their sister Yvonne for the wonderful collection of photographs they have kindly donated to the Society. Travelling to Norfolk over the years their collection has grown into a valuable record of our unique architecture. Once again –many thanks.

Secondly—‘Lyn Stilgoe has been busy (as well as researching and running the Tours), participating in a radio programme on Future Radio, the community radio station based in Norwich. This distinctive platform gave ‘Lyn an opportunity to explain the works of the Society and its position in providing donations to Round Tower churches in need. A discreet push regarding membership may also encourage a few new members!

### Reminder—last tour of the season

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September**



**First church 2.30pm**

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**Basilica of S Vitale,**  
Via Fiandrini Benedetto

San Vitale is the best known of Ravenna's world heritage sites, with exquisite mosaics in the apse. Sandwiched between the 6<sup>th</sup> century San Vitale and the National Museum (situated in a former Benedictine monastery) is a later tower. The tower has a single line of one light windows, and a conical roof topped with a cross. There are also five round windows in a vertical line on the National Museum side.



**Sant'Apollinare Classe,**  
Via Romea Sud, Classe

The church is another world heritage listed site and was built in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is in Classe which was Ravenna's port (*classis* = fleet), although the sea has since receded. The tower is 10<sup>th</sup> century and it, like that of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, is another delight. It is 130 feet high. There are two lines of one light, one line of two lights and three lines of three lights (the top two on a larger scale than the third line). There is a small conical roof.

*There are further structures which, although not possessing round towers, are themselves round or almost round and merit comment. All are world heritage listed.*

**Arian Baptistry, Vicolo Degli Ariani**

The Arian baptistry was built in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century by the Arian Theodoric. It is in an octagonal form. The dome is covered in a magnificent mosaic of Christ being baptised but, in accordance with the Arian heresy, he became divine only at the point of baptism and the Christ depicted is, therefore, merely human.

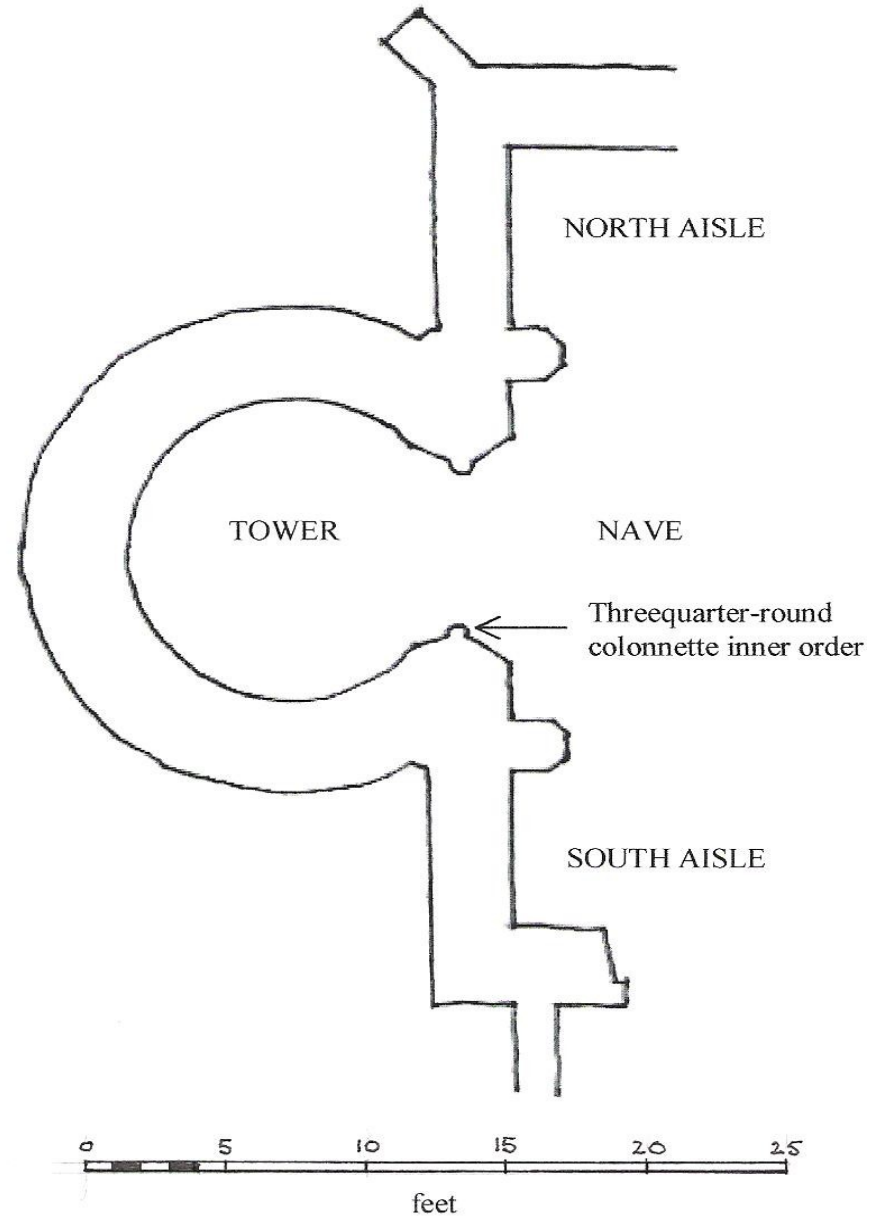
**Neonian Baptistry, Piazza Duomo**

Begun at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Orthodox baptistry is the oldest of the monuments in Ravenna. It is located next to the Duomo and is now below street level. Also of an octagonal design, its walls are covered with mosaics of a baptismal motif.

**Theodoric's Mausoleum, Via Delle Industrie**

Not round, but a double decagonal structure, it was built by the Emperor Theodoric in 520 to be his tomb.

*Henry Long*



**FREETHORPE CHURCH, West End**

like Victorian work, and the windows are also c.19. It may be that Salvin's reported 'building' of the aisles was the provision of buttresses and renewal of windows within the existing walls.

Assuming that the aisle walls are medieval, the question arises of their date. Unlikely probably to pre-date the tower, they may be contemporary with it or later. In any event, at the time they were built, an arcade would have been formed in the then existing nave side walls that presumably were thicker than the present arcade walls.

In a short article on aisle widths in *The Round Tower* of March 2006, it was shown that of the round-towered churches, only Threxton, Barmer and Freethorpe had aisles of less than 7'6" wide. In fact those at Freethorpe are about 6 feet (south) and 7 feet (north). Their west wall thicknesses are about 2'11" and 2'8" respectively, and within an inch or so their inner faces align with that of the nave west wall.

As can be seen on the measured plan (overleaf) of the west end of the church, the western responds of the arcade walls lie almost with the overall direct measurement between the tower's fillets. Assuming an original internal nave width of just over 13 feet as at present (it is hardly likely to have been wider since that would have made the later added aisles very narrow) and that the original nave walls in which the arcades would have been formed were about a foot thicker than the present Victorian arcade walls, the external corners of the nave west wall would have been a foot or so outside the present tower fillets, and close examination of the wall flintwork immediately adjacent to the fillets suggests that it could be original fabric to which, following removal of its quoin stones, the later aisle west walls were bonded.

The tower, circular to the top, is a relatively low round tower – about 30 ft high to the eaves of its tiled conical roof, according to Goode's book, but that is no evidence of the original height since its upper part has clearly been heavily restored if not entirely rebuilt. Only the lower part, still partially coated with harling, may be original and perhaps an unrendered area on the north side up to the cill level of the belfry openings. Elsewhere various patchings confound interpretation. It has a Victorian lancet window in the ground stage and two only similar lancet belfry openings facing south and west. Measured at the ground-floor west window, the wall is about 3'8" thick and at the apex of the tower arch about the same, above which the tower's east wall is a flattened curve. Comparison of these measurements with the



### **SS Giovanni e Paolo, Via Cura**

Strangely omitted from most lists of churches and not shown on any maps, the church is of a similar baroque design to San Giovanni Battista except that here the tower is on south side not the north. There is a plaque outside the church which describes the tower as 10<sup>th</sup> century although Prof Enrico Verdozzi dates it as 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>. The tower is unusual, and unique in Ravenna, in that it is square initially, but a little above the roofline of the present church it then becomes round. There are three lines of windows: one single light, then one double light and finally another single light.

### **Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, Via Galla Placidia**

Originally built in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, this church was also rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> in the baroque style. The church is known for its shrine to Santa Maria dei Tumori (St Mary of the Tumours). The detached tower is from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries; there are three lines of windows, two of one light and the other of two lights.

### **Duomo (Basilica Ursiana), Piazza Duomo**

Known as the Basilica Ursiana after Bishop Ursus who built the original in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the cathedral was also rebuilt in the baroque style in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The tower is detached and is 10<sup>th</sup> century. (On the far side of the campanile is the Orthodox Baptistery, also known as the Neonian Baptistery.) There are three lines of windows: one of two lights, and two of three lights. There is a small conical roof with a cross on top.



### **Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Via Di Roma**

One of Ravenna's eight world heritage listed sites, the church was built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century as the palatine church of the Visigothic Emperor Theodoric. The later tower (between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) is detached from the church itself, although it adjoins the 16<sup>th</sup> century portico. Despite Austrian bomb damage in 1915, the tower is one of the great joys of Ravenna. It rises to double the height of the church. There are some eight lines of windows: three of one light, another three of two lights, and finally two of three lights.

## Round Tower Churches in Ravenna

Originally a small seaport, Ravenna was made the capital of the Western Roman Empire in 402 in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to defend the Italian peninsula from Visigothic incursions. It was during the subsequent Visigothic period that Ravenna's mosaic treasures were created. The Exarchate of Ravenna followed, but after its fall in 751 Ravenna reverted to a sleepy existence, aided by the recess of the sea. By the later middle ages it was some miles inland. It is this quiet untroubled period that helped preserve not only the mosaics but also Ravenna's other great treasure: its round towers.

As with British round towers, there are differing theories as to the origins of those in Ravenna. The common view is that originally they were built as belfries (or campaniles) and as peaceful lookouts. Their earliest date is given as 6<sup>th</sup> century. Typically they were detached from the church, although rebuilding of the church means that this is no longer the case for all towers. All are built of brick. These round towers were built between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries; subsequent campaniles were generally built to a square plan, but there are some surviving examples of later round towers.



**Sant'Agata Maggiore,**  
Via Mazzini Giuseppe

The church is of late 5<sup>th</sup> century construction and is now considerably below the level of the surrounding streets. The bell tower is detached and is of a much later 16<sup>th</sup> century date, although this is a reconstruction of an earlier tower which was contemporaneous with the church. There are small windows half way up, and another line of double light windows at the top of the tower.



**S Giovanni Battista,**  
Via Rossi Girolamo

Although the church was built in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, it was demolished and rebuilt in 1683 in the baroque style of the day. However, the original tower was retained in a rather incongruous juxtaposition. There are two lines of single light windows followed by lines of two and three light windows. The roof is a steep cone with a cross on top.

probable original nave west wall thickness measured at the aisle west windows, suggests that the tower could either have been contemporary with the nave or a later addition, but the form of the tower arch which appears to be c.14 rather than c.13 tends to favour the latter.

The tower arch is tall, pointed, and 11'4" high to the springing level of the arch. The 6-foot opening is widely splayed both towards the nave and into the tower, with single 5½" diam. threequarter-round colonnette responds forming an inner order at the centre. Facing the nave, the arch's two-foot wide splays are plain for their lower two feet but above that they are moulded with a series of shallow waves and hollows that continue round the arch uninterrupted by imposts. The inner colonnette responds however rise from two-foot high moulded bases at floor level and have battlemented moulded imposts at springing level. This suggests a distinct possibility that the colonnette inner order is a later addition within the splayed tower arch. Because of successive limewashings, stonework jointing that might give an indication of whether or not the inner order and the splayed arch are contemporary, cannot now be seen, but the colonnettes appear to be a different colour though this may just be the painting; more significant perhaps is a difference in the architectural style of the surrounding arch and the inner order, in particular the fact that the inner order's moulded base does not occur on the arch splays. The moulded base and battlemented impost have a definite c.15 Perpendicular identity whereas the continuous low-key mouldings of the splays running round the arch have an earlier, c.14, feeling.

The major restorations of c.19 seem to have included demolition and rebuilding of the nave arcades, rebuilding much of the tower at least upwards from the belfry cill level, renewal of all windows, adding buttresses to the north aisle, adding the Walpole pew and building the South Porch.

\*Footnote. I did not measure the thickness of the Walpole pew walls. If they are thinner than the aisle walls, that could be a further indication that the latter are medieval rather than Salvin's.

*Stephen Hart*



## ZETTING, BLIESGAU



The last of the four round-tower churches in the area of the Bliesgau is the church of Zetting (or Zettingen in German). It is situated in the Département “Moselle” in France, only a few miles south-east of Sarreguemines (Saargemünd), and just across the German-French border from Reinheim. The village of Zetting is situated on a hill,

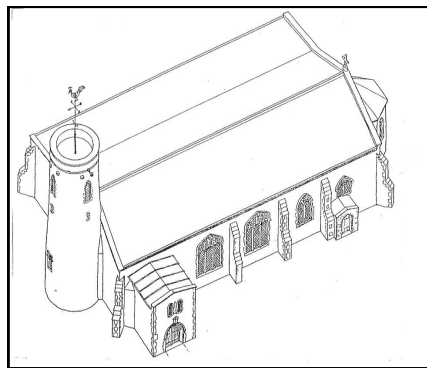
right above the “Canal des Houillères de la Sarre”, a canal formerly used for the transportation of coal, but now – as the canals in Britain – a favourite for holiday boating. The church – which is dedicated to St Marcel or Marcellus – lies on top of the hill (called “Kirchberg”, literally translated as “church mountain”), overlooking the valley below. It belonged to the Benedictine Abbey of Tholey in the neighbouring Saarland. In 1576, as a consequence of the Reformation, it became protestant, only to be reinstated as a catholic church in 1684 under Louis XIV.



The oldest part of the church is the round tower, thought to be from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and – like the other round towers in the region – originally used as a watchtower and refuge for the inhabitants of the village. The tower could only be entered via an entry about 7 m above ground level. It has a height of 17 m to the edge of the roof and is crowned by a tapered helm roof. It has two floors and a belfry, which can be reached via a spiral staircase from the ground floor. The thickness of the walls diminishes from 1,90 m at ground level to 0,70 m at the belfry stage, while the inner diameter widens from 3,80 m at ground level to 4,60 m at the belfry stage.

The entrance to the church nowadays is via a small porch added to the western side of the tower in 1846. The Romanesque nave was added to

openings, each without tracery but with cusped heads and wooden louvers. Below these were four slit windows. At ground floor level there was a large square headed, two light window on the west side and square headed south door to the tower (as illustrated in *The Parish Churches of Norfolk and Norwich* by Claude J.W. Messant, 1936). Neither of these features seems to have been of great antiquity. The nave had diagonal buttresses which hid whatever wall quoins might have existed before them. The church was restored in 1870 when a diminutive altar chamber (apse) was added at the



Axiometric drawing showing the apse

eastern end. The church building was originally placed close to the east and southern boundaries of the burial yard. This restriction limited the possibility of adding a new chancel. It also helps to explain the smallness of the altar chamber and why the chancel arch was narrow in comparison to the width of the nave but not in its relationship with the altar chamber. The tower then still had a single bell and weather vane.



Late 1940s — post bomb damage

Pre-war photographs of the interior show a roof with exposed tie-beams and king-posts. The interior was renovated in 1921 and 1933. On 27<sup>th</sup> June 1942, enemy bombing destroyed the roof and the interior. The ruin survived until the early 1950s when it was finally demolished. Only half the burial yard and four fine Plane trees growing on the Willis Street boundary survive –

what happened to the grave stones? There are many other unanswered questions about this church and especially its tower which archaeology could help to answer. The church registers dating back to 1567 were destroyed in 1942 but miraculously a copy of them survives.

*Richard Harbord*

*Main photographs reproduced courtesy of George Plunkett's 'Photographs of old Norwich'. See [www.georgeplunkett.co.uk](http://www.georgeplunkett.co.uk) for further insight into 75 years of photo recorded history of the city. Drawings taken from the War Damage Claim prepared in March 1948 by J P Chaplin and reproduced with kind permission of Mrs Alison Newland and family.*



John Sell Cotman. It had 7 bays and 12 panels with elaborately carved tracery and four armorial shields. Wealthy people such as Sir John Fastolfe, settled in the parish in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and the church seems to have benefited from numerous bequests. It was subsequently embellished:-

1. The former chapel of the BVM at the eastern end of the aisle was converted into a Vestry at the same time and the former rood screen was moved into the eastern bay of the aisle arcade. A similar wooden screen stood in the tower arch. Perhaps the tower arch was reshaped at the same time to accommodate it.
2. Four Perpendicular windows were inserted in the north aisle and perhaps two on the south side of the nave. Armorial stained glass was placed in them. Various sepulchre brasses were placed in the floor of the church.
3. The porch was given a rib-vaulted ceiling and a first floor chamber accessed by a spiral stair.
4. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Norfolk historian, Francis Blomfield refers to the tower (vol4. 429) saying, 'the steeple is round at the bottom and hath a octagonal top of freestone adorned in the Gothic manner'. This 15<sup>th</sup> century addition could have allowed, and even been necessitated by, the raising of the ridge height of the nave to allow the insertion of a clerestorey over the nave arcade. There is no surviving evidence to show that this happened.

Between 1773-78, William Utten reports that the north side of the church was suffering from severe dampness; churchyard walls were collapsing and the tower was in poor condition. Two of the bells were sold to Witton and Postwick churches between 1813-20. William White wrote in 1819 that the octagonal part of the tower was dismantled and replaced with a plain stone parapet and white brickwork below. Gargoyles were placed on the north and south sides at string course level. These works resulted in a significant reduction in the height of the tower. Perhaps the ridge height of the nave was reduced at the same time. A low pitched, leaded roof over nave, aisle and chancel was added perhaps at the same time. The tower was also capped in lead and a pole was erected on its roof to support a prominent weather vane as if to compensate for the loss of the octagonal belfry. Perhaps the bell frame and bells were re-hung as well so this must have incurred significant expenses. The low roof of the body of the church helped to visually emphasise the importance of the bell tower, but the overall impression was of a poor parish church in contrast with those in the richer parts of the city.

The earliest surviving picture of the church was drawn by the artist John Sillet who showed the south west side of the building in about 1828. The picture shows the building much as it was a century later. The walls of the upper part of the tower were reinforced with round cast iron wall-plates (not 'Saxon' circular windows as reported elsewhere). There were four narrow belfry

the eastern side of the existing round tower. The choir – which is nearly double the height of the nave, giving the church an unusual outer appearance (similar to Haddingham in Norfolk) – was added in 1434 by the Benedictine monks in the Gothic style. During these works, the nave was also altered in the Gothic style, resulting in three aisles with ripped vaults. The most impressive feature of the interior (and probably of the whole church) are the massive lancet windows in the choir, originally dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They are considered to be the most beautiful church windows throughout Lothringen – after the cathedral of Metz. They have experienced a turbulent history: partly destroyed during the religious Thirty Years War (1618-1648), some later priests treated them in a careless way and gave away some of the coloured glass panes. At the outbreak of WW II, the French society for monument protection dismantled the windows, and evacuated them to the region of the Charente, where they were detected by the German occupants, and brought back to Sarreguemines, where they were stored to be shown later in the Saarlandmuseum in Saarbrücken. How they finally arrived at the crypt of the cathedral of Metz, where they were found after a long and fruitless search at the end of the war is still a mystery.



There is a richly decorated altar at the east end of the choir. On the northern wall of the choir, a holy grave can be seen. The organ is also located in the choir, and originally dates from 1889. It was later renovated and electrified in 1960. Another fine feature of the choir are the murals on the choir vault. They were painted over in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but a major renovation of the interior of the church starting in 1975 brought them back to light. They show amongst others the virgin mother with Christ, the symbols of the four evangelists, angels and some birds. The roof boss of the choir vault shows the patron saint of the church, St Marcellus.

*Bernd Jatzwauk*

This article is based on the brochure "Rundturmkirchen im Bliegau" by Heidi Kügler, published by Rheinischer Verlag für Denkmalpflege und Landschaftsschutz, Heft 394, 1993; ISBN: 3-88094-755-4, and the Church Guide

*We will visit Zetting church during our trip to Elsaß-Lothringen and the Saarland in September. It promises to be a highlight of the tour.*

## From the archive...QUEST FOR MASS DIALS

On many of our Round Tower Churches may be seen rough carvings of what appear to be a form of sundial. Although sun was necessary for them to use, they were never intended to be a time-indicator or clock as we know it. These early markings were there to indicate the time of a service in the particular church on which they appear. They are known as Mass Dials, (although many show the times of more services than just the Mass), or Scratch Dials (although some argue that it would have taken more effort than a mere 'scratch' to incise the lines!).



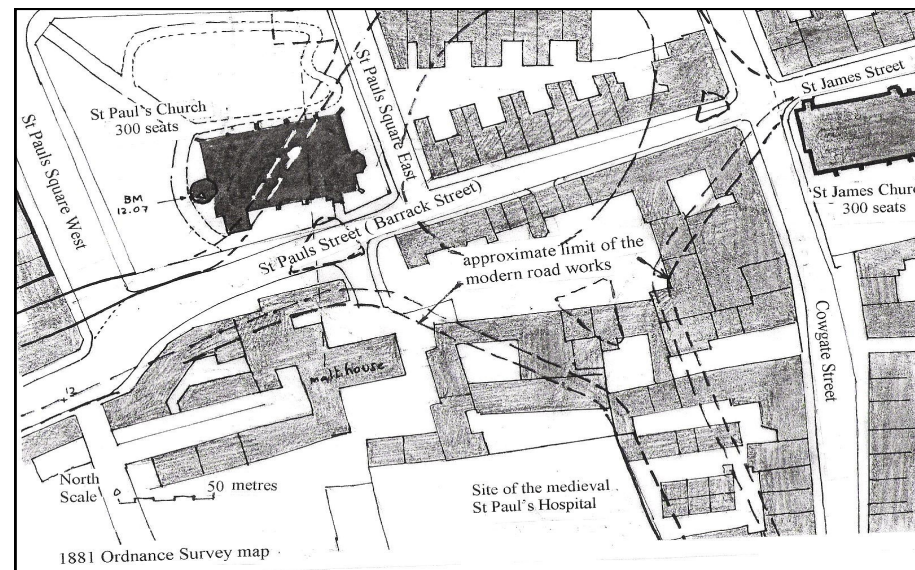
All dials have had a central hole for the style or gnomon, a piece of metal stuck at right angles to the wall to cast a shadow. Many simple dials merely have one line radiating from this hole, approximately pointing to what we would think as 8 on a clock face. When the shadow fell along this line it would be the time of the Mass. The other most common line falls vertically below the gnomon hole and is known as the noon line, i.e. the shadow covers it at 12 noon. Other

lines falling in the lower left quadrant indicate the times of other morning services, those in the lower right, often fewer in number, show the time of afternoon services or vespers. Where there are radiating lines in the top half of the dial, these are later decorative additions, in that the shadow could never have fallen upwards!

There are many variations developed from the simple dial. Some have their lines enclosed in a circle, some have the end of the radii indicated by small drilled holes, some of the lines have a small cross bar near their tip, many noon lines are of greater length than the rest of the lines.

It is believed that the idea of these dials came to us with the Normans, in that some have been recorded in Normandy. Their use persisted until the 1400s when time-pieces more as we know them became available.

Obviously a particular line did not indicate a specific time. Being dependent on the sun there would be a variation in the due time that the shadow fell on a line according to whether it was summer or winter. For its



The Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows St Paul's in the middle of St Paul's Square. One romantic writer said that the picturesque terraced houses around the square were half timbered and medieval but others say they were a dismal warren of tenements. They were replaced by brick built, row houses in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. By comparing the 1886 map with the modern version, it is clear that the area was heavily populated, densely developed and impoverished compared with much wealthier parts of the city. Much of this development was cleared away during and after the war especially when the Inner Ring road and its large roundabout were built in the early 1970s. Two sides of the Square and a large part of the former churchyard were retained. The site of the church tower and western part of the nave are now under a children's play park though no sign marks the spot. Archaeological investigation could possibly expose most of the original Norman part of the nave.

The church consisted of a nave, north aisle, south porch and western round tower. The tower had three bells inscribed as **1.** *Hoc fit scorum camp laude honorum* (this bell praise honour) **2.** Gregory Uocer, **3.** Sanctus bell. The late medieval church probably had a single roof, covering the aisle, nave and chancel together with no chancel arch separating the last two (that came later). There is no evidence that a clerestory over the arcade was ever intended or built. The chancel was divided from the nave only by a rood screen. A Perpendicular rood screen was recorded in 1814 in a drawing by



## The lost Round Tower church of St Paul, Norwich



St Paul, Norwich taken in the 1930s

If there is a consensus that the earliest round-tower churches were Norman, where is there evidence for that claim? In Norwich most of the churches that existed in the Middle Ages have been lost or rebuilt so many times that apart from the cathedral, little Norman building work remains. There is written evidence that the former church of St Paul was founded in the time of Bishop Herbert of Losinga in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and was therefore Norman. St Paul's church and St Paul's Hospital (Norwich's earliest) which lay to the south, were built together under the same patronage. They were both consecrated by Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury (1118-1145). Even the street on the south side of the church was called 'The Normans'. The parish was taken out of that of All Saints church, which lay to the north-west and has also disappeared. This was a dependency of the very extensive parish and manor of Thorpe St Andrew. St Paul's lay within the late Saxon defensive walls of the city. It may have existed on a small scale at the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 but only All Saints is listed in that record by name. The main street of Cowgate by-passed the churchyard, but it linked the parish with the north-western part of the city and the city centre via Fyebridge (also called, Whitefriars Bridge) to the south. Close to the site of the church and to the east is St James church, which does survive.

There were originally seventeen medieval churches north of the River Wensum and now only nine are left (if my counting is correct).

purpose it was enough that the service was held about a quarter way through the daylight hours.

Questions have been asked as to why some churches have more than one dial, up to eight (Hales) have been seen! Presumably some became too worn and were replaced, others may have been replacements when the time of the Mass was changed, which might be necessary if a church was served by a visiting friar, and some are thought to have been crude copies of existing dials added for decoration or for the amusement of schoolboys with time on their hands!



The most favoured position for carving these dials was near to the door that the people used to enter the church, or near the priest's door into the chancel. Particularly in East Anglia where much of the walling was made of flints, the dressed stone used for doorways, window frames or for quoins was the only option for such work.

Originally all would have been facing south, more or less, but some can now be found in odd places such as where dressed stones have been re-used in the making of Perpendicular buttresses on the north side of churches as at Breccles or Needham, or where south doorways have been rebuilt in other positions e.g. Syderstone's west tower door. Some, although on south doors, no longer ever see the sun because later porches have been built over them.

Maybe because so many of the round tower churches still exist in their early unsophisticated form, there are many that still have one or more dials. The British Sundial Society has an ongoing project to record ALL the remaining Mass Dials in the country, over 3,000 having been recorded so far! So for the past three years I have been attempting to measure and record all the dials I have come across. Probably I have visited about half the Round Tower Churches for this purpose, but it takes time! I would be grateful for any information about the existence of dials, so I can plan my routes to visit them with a tape measure. I also take in square towered churches or no-towered churches as well!

*'Lyn Stilgoe—first published Vol XXVI No 3 March 1999*



## BRIAN LESLIE GEORGE HARMER, 1929 - 2007

All too few of us were privileged to realise just what an ecclesiological treasure we had in Brian Harmer - that this quiet, shy and self-effacing man was in fact one of the "giants" in the study and appreciation of churches, with an encyclopaedic knowledge and understanding of art and architecture in the United Kingdom and far beyond. Brian saw his career as an office clerk at Moore's Wroxham boatyard and later with Dalgetty at Rackheath as but a necessary evil to enable him to survive, but, more importantly, to buy books, documents and postcards.

Our first meeting in 1967 in my student days began a life-long friendship, with many visits to his home filled with countless obscure books, files of meticulous notes, albums of newspaper cuttings and the largest church postcard collection, by far the most any of us have ever seen! Brian didn't drive, so spent his time travelling by train and bus to see churches on foot from convenient setting-down points, also going on package tours to the Continent and beyond. His knowledge was amazing, his reading exhaustive and his research was detailed and scholarly.

He married Christine in 1986 and later left his beloved Wroxham and Hoveton to live near the sea at Gorleston. His final years as a widower took their toll upon Brian's health, but not upon his love of churches, nor his acquisition of books, postcards and knowledge. To the end he was always his welcoming and hospitable self, always gracious and generous, always wanting you to know how much he valued your friendship.

Around 1971 I had the task of sorting tens of thousands of church slides taken by my late friend Canon Thomas Backhouse and a certain W. J. Goode wrote asking if there were any of round towers going spare, because he was hoping to set up a Society ....(you know the rest!). I put Bill in touch with Brian and this started another close friendship which lasted until their recent deaths. Brian thought the world of Bill, whose car was the means of getting him to far-off churches and Brian didn't mind steadying ladders, so long as he did not have to climb them! Even in his 90s Bill would catch the bus to Gorleston in order to cook Brian the occasional "decent meal"! Brian valued his membership of the RTCS and he was an original Committee Member, serving from 1973 - 1993.

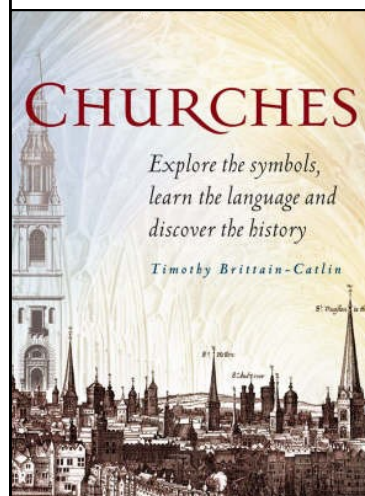
He was Best Man at our wedding in 1974. Rather than rewarding him with the usual cufflinks, we thanked him, much to his delight, with obscure Norfolk postcards from my little collection, which he didn't possess and had long coveted! It would not surprise me to learn that the Angels are now being

very graciously pestered to look out for the few Norfolk cards that he still needed to complete the "full set"! Thank God for Brian Harmer. May he rest in peace and Rise in Glory!

*Roy Tricker*

*The Round Tower Churches Society has received a very generous bequest from Brian's estate. It has been agreed to use this money for additional grants. If the Committee decide to give a grant of say £1,000, in special cases of need they can agree to give a further grant of perhaps another £1,000 as a "Harmer Grant". This would acknowledge his kindness in a measurable way until all his money has been utilised.*

### **"CHURCHES" by Timothy Brittain-Catlin published by HarperCollins, at £14.99 (special offer £11.99)**



This is not just another book explaining the architectural features and the furnishings and fittings to be found in a church, although all these are here. A much broader canvas is covered, giving the historical development of the parish system, the relationship between Church and State, the influence of cathedrals on the design of parish churches, the upsurge of the nonconformists, the church buildings to be found world wide (ancient and modern), and much more! The book is clearly presented,

and there are a generous amount of colour photos throughout. In addition to the general text, detailed explanations are given on coloured pages of specific points, such as the Reformation, the making of church bells, the elegance of Wren churches, and the work of some leading Victorian architects. This is a book to be enjoyed, with a great deal of information about the background which has made our churches what they are to-day.