



The Round Tower

Vol. XXXIX No 3

March 2012



Blundeston, St Mary.

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The next issue is June 2012 and the deadline for contributions is 1st May 2012.

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Membership Subscription

Minimum £10 (overseas £15) a year of which 40% goes towards the printing and posting of The Round Tower magazine and administration. 60% goes to the Repair Fund of the RTCS.

Magazines are published in March, June, September and December. The membership renewal date is the first day of the month following the application for membership.

To join the Society or to make any enquiry about your membership please contact :-

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THE ROUND TOWER

The quarterly magazine of the Round Tower Churches Society

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Porch glass. Blundeston.

Thank you from the novice editors of The Round Tower to Susan Williams.

Chairman Stuart Bowell quite properly thanked Susan in the December magazine for taking on the editorship of the Round Tower Magazine for the Society in 2006 and for her hard work ever since.

As the new joint editors of the magazine we can only now fully appreciate how hard Susan has worked for the Society over the last five years. Susan never missed a deadline and has always produced a magazine full of interest and content. Many thanks Susan for all you have done for the Society and we are delighted that you have agreed to continue on the committee.

Editorial.

Steven Hart has written a scholarly article on Blundeston, St Mary. Dickens fans will know that this village was the birthplace of David Copperfield. 'Lyn' has reminded us about the wonders of Woodton, All Saints. RTCS members will enjoy a look at Round Tower churches in Slovakia.. Stuart Bowell and Nick Wiggin have reviewed the first three of the 2011 RTCS tours with interesting questions posed by Joseph Biddulph,

There are dates for your diary on pages 8 and 9. RTCS members will also want to pencil in Saturday 29th September for a RTCS Study Day. Booking details, the venue and hopefully a draft programme will be in the June magazine.

If you archive the magazines please note that the September and December 2011 magazines have an incorrect volume number. The correct volume number for these two magazines is XXXIX. Many thanks to Stephen Hart for drawing this to our attention.

The answers to the December quiz questions are so obvious once you know what they are! Congratulations to Mr & Mrs P. Weston of Walberswick. Anne Haward has donated the prize to her quiz and a book token will be with you shortly.

Finally the editors need to record our thanks to the Charity Technology Trust and Microsoft Corporation. CTC facilitated and fast-tracked our request to Microsoft and they have made a generous donation of the expensive software appropriate to edit the magazine. Microsoft still cannot understand how the RTCS gives grants of thousands of pounds every year without a dedicated IT system. Well we can and we do!

BLUNDESTON, ST MARY

The church comprises nave, chancel, round west tower and south porch. Like Beeston St Lawrence and Brampton, the tower is off-centre because the nave width has been increased by the rebuilding of its south wall on a new alignment further to the south, almost doubling an original deduced width of about 15 feet to 29 feet. The west wall was correspondingly extended southwards and increased in height to become the gable of a larger roof spanning the full width of the widened nave. This extended wall has a pointed west window of three plain uncusped lancet lights, and the wall fabric, particularly in its upper part, contains much medieval brick.

Unlike Beeston and Brampton where the original nave north walls were retained, the north wall at Blundeston was rebuilt, but probably on its original alignment. It has a lot of medieval brick in its fabric and has Decorated windows with a brick voussoir pattern above their stonework arches. Although the north door, now blocked, has a semi-circular stone arch it is probably contemporary with the re-built wall. Arch and jambs are continuous and have a twice-chamfered profile – much more characteristic of the fourteenth century than of Norman style. Above is a concentric 'relieving arch' of thin bright red brick voussoirs that could well be re-cycled Roman bricks.

The south door is pointed but its jambs incorporate two Norman colonettes used upside down; internally its rere-arch is segmental.

With a similar north wall to that of the nave, the chancel was apparently rebuilt on an alignment to centralise it to the widened nave; the south wall was faced with knapped flints in 1851. With these alterations, the only original parts of the church still in situ are the tower and part of the nave west wall.

Although circular to the top with no string courses, the tower was originally only three-quarters of its present height. The original part is built of reasonably well-coursed rubble flints and has fillets in the re-entrant angles between the tower and the nave west wall.

It has one round-headed stone-framed lancet facing south at first-floor level, and two at second-floor level. At third-floor level six former belfry openings with small apertures between are now blocked with medieval brick; these former openings were stone-framed but much of their stonework has been removed.

A later belfry, surmounting the original one, has much medieval brick in its fabric and pointed lancet openings at the cardinal orientations; their dressings are small square stones, some of which could well be reused dressings.



The twice-chamfered round-arched blocked north door.

At 8'9", the tower's internal diameter is smaller than many; the walls are about 3'8" thick measured at the west window and about the same at the apex of the tower arch, above which the tower east wall is a flattened curve internally for a width of about 3 feet. By comparison, the nave west wall measured outside the tower is about 3'2" thick, and so it seems that the flattened area of the east wall is not the original west face of a formerly towerless nave; the almost equal thicknesses of the tower's east and west walls suggest that the tower and the nave west wall were probably integrally built.

The tower arch is about four feet wide and 11'9" high to the crown of its semi-circular head. It has typical Norman once-chamfered imposts, though plastered, and stone dressings on the nave side. Its height tends to imply that it was formed as a tower arch and was not a former west entrance. The north reveal of the opening has been partially splayed at the tower face, possibly to allow a view of the altar when the chancel had been re-aligned with the wider nave.

Within the tower, the ground-floor west window is a Tudor brick insertion into a former opening, now plastered internally, but the tops of dressed stone arch voussoirs still just visible above the floor in the unplastered first-floor wall show that this was probably originally a round-headed stone window.

The one window at first-floor level and the upper door (now blocked, and not visible in the nave) have dressed stone jambs and arches and the mortar in the soffit of the window arch and in the flintwork of its reveals can be seen to be contiguous with the internal and external stone dressings, thus establishing them as integrally built with the wall and not inserted later.

The stone-dressed south- and west-facing windows of the second-floor are both blocked, but internally their former embrasures are not easily detected as the blocking is flush with the inner wall face and merges with it, suggesting the probability that internal stone dressings may have been robbed for reuse.

By contrast, at third-floor level, the outlines of the embrasures of the original six belfry openings and the small openings between them, all now blocked, can clearly be seen. They have rubble jambs and roughly radially-laid rubble flint arches that appear to be unaltered.

A round-headed tower arch and the round-headed window and upper door openings in the tower with dressed stone jambs and arches are convincing evidence for a Norman attribution for the original tower. The internally stone-framed first-floor window and upper door and the internally flint-framed belfry openings provide evidence that Norman builders constructed openings with and without internal stone dressings in the same building. Flint-framed openings are not exclusively Saxon.



First-floor south window in tower with stone dressings inside and out.

As a result of the larger roof necessitated by the widened nave, the height of its ridge reached almost to the level of the top of the original belfry openings, thus obscuring the one facing east. If that had been the reason for the addition of a higher belfry, it would imply that the later belfry and the widening of the nave were contemporary.

However, the lancet belfry openings and the three-light lancet-style window in the widened nave west wall suggest a late thirteenth-century date for those alterations, but the medieval brick in the belfry walls and in the rebuilt nave north wall, the profile of the north door arch and the pattern of the nave's Decorated windows tend to favour a rather later fourteenth-century date.

An apex window tracery motif comprising the normal repetitive ogee vesica of Reticulated tracery but containing a small reticulation unit within it at the top is a characteristic feature of several Norfolk church windows, for example at Great Walsingham and Beeston and others in that area, and by reference to more firmly datable examples elsewhere this motif is thought to date from near the middle of the fourteenth century.

The two-light nave windows at Blundeston have a similar apex motif except that its upper curves follow the window arch and unlike in the Great Walsingham pattern, the smaller reticulation unit rests in the bottom of the larger unit, beneath a pair of curved converging falcion figures.

How then can this apparent style gap of about half a century between the nave's Decorated windows and the lancet styles of the belfry and nave west window be accounted for?

The apparent recycling of the jamb stonework of the Norman belfry openings in simple lancets in the later belfry suggests that economical construction was a key consideration and, by avoiding the need for the usual stone string course below, adoption of the circular shape for the belfry would have been a further economy. Also, the single lancet openings would be better suited to the belfry's curving walls than would wider two-light Decorated-style openings. Although the lancet openings might suggest the earlier date, the extent of medieval brick in the belfry walls favours the later one. The lancet style window in the extended nave west wall could be a re-set window from the earlier nave – another economy.



One of the small openings inside the Norman belfry. Part of the outlines of the blocked Norman belfry openings can be seen at the edges of the photo.

Stephen Hart

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

12th May **11am** Mettingham NR35 1TL, Barsham (Suffolk)

2.15pm RTCS A G M at Ilketshall St Andrew Village Hall
NR34 8HX followed by a tour of the Church.

RTCS SATURDAY TOURS.

2nd June **10am** South.Ockendon RM15 6SH, Broomfield,
(Church Hall for packed lunches),
2pm Gt Leighs CM3 1PL, Bardfield Saling, Lamarsh

7th July **2.30pm** Ingworth NR11 6PD, Tuttington, Brampton

4th Aug **2 30pm** Raveningham NR14 6NS, Heckingham, Brooke

1st Sept **2 30pm** Gayton Thorpe PE32 1PN, Shereford, Gt Ryburgh

CHURCH TOURS Sundays 2.30pm.

22nd April Mundesley NR11 8BE, Paston, Bacton, Edingthorpe

20th May Snetterton NR16 2LR, Shropham, Gt Hockham, E Wretham

17th June Claxton NR14 7HZ, Ashby, Carleton St Peter, Langley

15th July Warham St Mary Magdalene NR23 1NH, Warham All Saints,
Hindringham, Thursford

Further details of all the tours are available from 'Lyn Stilgoe, 01328 738237. The Essex Day plans to visit five of the six round tower churches in the county (Pentlow was visited 2007). This tour will involve a lot of driving. South Ockendon last had an official visit in 1994!

For both Tours teas will be provided by one of the churches each afternoon.

The Sunday Tours visit all kinds of Norfolk churches and on 22nd April will include the round tower church at Edingthorpe. Sunday Tours usually end with an optional form of Evening Prayer at 6.30pm. All Tours are open to everyone and are free, but donations to each church are encouraged.

RTCS STANFORD TRAINING AREA TOUR 2012.

On Tuesday, 10th July 2012, we will once have the opportunity to visit the churches in the Stanford Training Area thanks to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Our tour is only available to members of the RTCS.

These churches were closed in the 1940s, when most of their furniture were removed but we can still see the fabric. Some of the churches have had their roofs replaced with steel sheets that look like red pantiles - very effective! Where the glass has gone the windows are covered with clear plastic which keeps out the weather but still allows light into the buildings. As on our previous tour there is no guarantee that Stanford Round Tower Church will not be within a live fire firing range and therefore out of bounds on the day. Stanford was out of bounds for the 2010 Tour and was not visited.

TOTTINGTON is a large 14C church with aisles, with fine Decorated tracery in the windows. It had well carved pews and some remnants of these remain. The north aisle still has its medieval wooden roof with carved spandrels. **LANGFORD** is the smallest church in the training area and has Norman work including a south doorway with two orders of Norman carvings. The font is 14C with Decorated tracery. The surprise of the church is the enormous 18C monument with three life-sized figures in Roman clothing! These represent Sir Jacob Garrard +1666, his son Thomas +1689 and grandson Nicholas +1727. **STANFORD** has a round tower, the circular part of which dates from 11C, with a 15C octagonal belfry. This has four belfry openings and four decorative blind arches of flint proudwork. By the late 18C the aisles had fallen into ruins and the arcades were filled in, but in Victorian times both aisles were rebuilt. **WEST TOFTS** was mostly rebuilt and furnished by the architect Pugin and completed by his son in 1849-56. There is much Victorian decoration still to be seen. The church is fortunate that the pews, used for many years in an army chapel, have now been returned. The 15C tower, remaining from the former church, has flushwork in its base course, with the names of the people who paid for its building.

Booking information: Names, addresses and phone numbers of those who wish to join the Tour should be given as soon as possible to 'Lyn Stilgoe (01328 738237), who will send further details and require £7 a head (payable to RTCS) nearer the time. Places will be on a first come, first served basis, but some priority will be given to those near the top of the 2010 reserve list. If this tour is oversubscribed, a reserve list will be kept for any future tour.

Please note: cars must be parked at West Tofts Camp by 1.45pm, where a coach will be waiting; this tour is only open to members of RTCS over the age of eighteen; no dogs are allowed; cameras may only be used with permission of the guide.



WOODTON, ALL SAINTS

Woodton Church is one of the churches with a multi-stage octagonal belfry. Others can be seen at Topcroft, Thorpe Abbotts, Rollesby and Ilketshall St Andrew. This round tower has a two stage octagonal belfry, which was built in the 15C on the top of an earlier circular tower, probably dating from Saxon times. Parts of the west nave may also date back to Saxon times as the north-west quoin, above the vestry, is formed from flints.

The earlier round towers were quite often made up-to-date by the addition of octagonal belfries. As windows, and therefore belfry openings, became wider, it was easier to fit them into the straight walls of an octagonal tower, rather than into a curving wall. New round towers built in the 13C & 14C often had octagonal belfries from the start. Glass was not easily available in Saxon times so windows were small to keep the weather out, but as time went on windows became taller and wider, and obviously congregations wanted to keep up with the latest fashion and have more light in their naves.

Heightened naves meant taller towers, so the sound of the bells could ring out over the countryside. Often the earlier openings were left in the towers, where it was not so crucial to have more light.

The original circular tower here had its belfry openings with round arches formed of flint. These can still be seen from the inside of the tower, just below where the tower changes to octagonal, but on the exterior these openings have been skilfully infilled with flints and are not obvious.

One has been adapted to accommodate a clock at some time, which is no longer there. The tower arch, within the church, would also have had a round arch made of flint, but this has been altered to a lower pointed arch at a later date. The horizontal stonework of the imposts of the Saxon arch can still be seen.

The present belfry has four openings with Y shaped wooden tracery, which has presumably replaced similar work in stone (wood being a cheaper option for repairs!). Above is a battlemented parapet with simple flushwork panels, and formerly there was an additional spirelet at the top.

There are six bells, five made by John Brend in 1641 and one by Pack & Chapman in 1772. In 1983 these were hung in a new frame, fitted below the 15C frame.

The 15C porch was built on to the north nave, because until the early 19C the road was on that side of the church and this was the main entrance. Woodton Hall was also sited a little further to the north. Following the closure of this road a further porch was added on the south side in 1880. The north porch was extended westwards to form a vestry c1915.

The chancel dates from the 13C, and the south aisle was added in the late 13/14C. Nearly all the windows of the church have the curving quatrefoil tracery of the 14C Decorated style. The east window of the south aisle has a particularly fine example of reticulated (net-like) tracery.

Inside the church, the square font dates from Norman times, though it has been restored. It is made of Purbeck marble with shallow rounded arches carved along the sides. It stands on four shafts with a thick central column.



Almost below the tower arch there is a small brass inserted in the stone floor. This is for Christiane (written Xtiane) Bacon, who died in 1532. She is shown with a squared flat headdress and fur cuffs to her robe.

On the north nave wall is a hatchment showing the arms of Maurice William Suckling +1820 and his two wives, Catherine Framlingham +1814 and Caroline Ramell + 1855. Hatchments were made for the funeral procession and were then hung on the deceased's house. After the due period of mourning many were given to the local church. This one is unusual in that the second wife is remembered by a ram, shown in the centre of the shield instead of sharing half the shield with the first wife's arms. There is a second hatchment on the south wall of the aisle, and this is for Sarah Yelloley, née Tyssen, who died in 1854. She was the wife of Doctor John Yelloley,

At the east end of the nave is a Jacobean pulpit, with typical carvings of the 17C. Beside it is the entrance to the former Rood stairs, which provided access to the loft across the top of the Rood Screen, dividing the nave from the chancel.

In the south aisle is the organ, made by Bryceson & Co. of London, which came to the church in 1987. Nearby is a window filled with glass from about 1860, showing patterns and some symbols of the Passion.

The south aisle east window retains some fragments of medieval glass within its tracery. In the top quatrefoil is a shield showing the Cross of the Passion. Below are two figures, St Catherine with the wheel of her martyrdom and St Margaret spearing a dragon. This window has unusual fleurons in the stonework of the arch.

The chancel has very striking glass in its east window, which has an outer stone arch with a dogtooth pattern of the 13C. The glass was made originally for the church in Tenterden, Kent as a memorial to the Rev'd Philip Ward, +1839, husband of Horatia Nelson. By 1934 the congregation there decided they did not like the devil in the central light and sold the glass to the then Rector of Woodton, the Rev'd Lee. The window, possibly not made till about 1863 by Lavers & Baraud, shows the Baptism of Christ, the Temptation in the Wilderness and Garden of Gethsemane. The central light showed Jesus being tempted by a large green devil. When the glass came to Woodton it did not quite fit the window, so the central light was reduced, and now only the tip of the devil's green wing can be seen!

In the north of the Sanctuary is a fine memorial of a lady kneeling at a prayer desk, for Anne Suckling, wife of Robert who was High Sheriff of Norfolk. She was the daughter of Sir Thomas Wodehouse of Kimberley Hall and died in 1653, aged "about 36". She became the great, great grandmother of Horatio Nelson, whose mother was one of the Suckling family.



On the south wall of the chancel are a piscina, for the washing of the Communion vessels, and a dropped sill sedilia, to provide seating for the priest, deacon and sub-deacon while they were awaiting their part in the Mass. Unusually behind the altar, in the east wall, is a double aumbry, or cupboard, for secure storage of the altar silver and requisites. On the wall either side of the altar are stone slabs showing the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

Lyn Stilgoe

Woodton All Saints. This church has produced a series of leaflets about walks from the church. Obtainable at the church at a small cost.

The RTCS December Quiz (and the answers) .

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Chase this on horseback. | 16. Read it to the doctor. |
| 2. Type of type. | 17. No fruit machines in this one. |
| 3. For showing blue films? | 18. To light you to bed. |
| 4. A volume of paper. | 19. L centre. |
| 5. Wight or man? | 20. Duke or bishop? |
| 6. Could be a breakdown lorry. | 21. Wear what is left over. |
| 7. To cradle a princess's baby. | 22. Traditional bat roost. |
| 8. For a medal or embrocation. | 23. No space for a top orchestra here. |
| 9. Might be hard to transplant. | 24. A job that makes one blush. |
| 10. Robber of the Queen's kitchen. | 25. Would new glasses cure it? |
| 11. For the use of male voice choirs? | 26. A rhyming pair: to kneel.... |
| 12. Change the fencing. | 27. ...or wear. |
| 13. Must you crouch to use it? | 28. Change of end for a French swimming pool. |
| 14. Dull sermon? Shred or pulp it. | 29. Also a tube station. |
| 15. Are the sun and rain so proud? | 30. Annoyed by all this? |

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1, Steeple. | 11, Hymn books. | 21, Surplice. |
| 2, Font. | 12, Altar rail. | 22, Belfry. |
| 3, Rood Screen. | 13, Stoup. | 23, Porch. |
| 4, Choir. | 14, Pulpit. | 24, Flush work. |
| 5, Aisle. | 15, Weather vane. | 25, Squint. |
| 6, Tower. | 16, Lancet. | 26, Hassock. |
| 7, Royal arms. | 17, Arcade. | 27, Cassock. |
| 8, Chest. | 18, Candle. | 28, Piscina. |
| 9, Organ. | 19, lectern. | 29, Monument. |
| 10, Nave. | 20, Arch. | 30. Cross. |

ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY TOURS. 2011.

Part One.

May 7th 2011. Bradwell, Belton and Burgh Castle.

We opened our Summer Tour Season on a pleasant May morning at **Bradwell** St Nicholas, where a great deal of restoration took place during Victorian times. A modern extension has been added to the north side of the church and this was to be our venue for our AGM during the afternoon. Inside the church is a notable monument to William Vesey who died in 1644 and his two wives, three sons and four daughters. Of interest for their unusual nature are the 17th century altar rails, carved with cupids riding curly tailed sea monsters which look distinctly unecclesiastical.



Bradwell.

At **Belton** All Saints the large expanse of red roof tiles makes an immediate impact. The tower was rebuilt in brick faced with cut flints in 1849. On the north side we found our second modern church extension of the day. Inside the church on the north wall are some faded remains of a wall painting depicting St James the Great. And other faint 15th century wall paintings which partly cover an earlier St Christopher. Fish can be plainly seen swimming around his feet. Unusually the 14th century rood screen has survived complete with its doors.

For those who had not visited the Roman Fort at **Burgh Castle**, or the church of St Peter and St Paul for some time, the recently built car park was an impressive surprise. The church tower here is post Norman, with much knapped flint and medieval brick in the middle stage. Putlog holes in the lower stage appear to be framed or partly filled with both Roman and medieval brick.



Burgh Castle.

Inside the church the octagonal font has seated lions at the base and lions alternating with angels holding shields on the panels with one shield depicting passion symbols. A surviving section of the rood screen hangs above a wall and has an inscription, which is not easy to decipher in the gloom, appears in part to say 'Twyce brent is bylt again'! (Brent an archaic form of burnt).

June 4th 2011. Mautby, Clippesby and Repps with Bastwick.

Our first June church was **Mautby** St Peter and St Paul where nave and chancel are covered by a single long thatched roof. The tower has an octagonal belfry stage with lancet belfry openings and dressed stone angles to the octagon. A former south aisle to the nave is no more, but there is evidence of its existence inside where the arcade can be seen in 'legged knight of the 13th century, while along the south chancel wall is a piscina and sedilia.



Clippesby St Peter's tower was rebuilt in the late 19th century in brick and faced with flint. The north side of the nave has a Norman doorway and some early slit windows. Re-used Norman stonework at the south porch entrance excited much interest and debate. Discussion ensued over a tiny figure; was the arm outstretched in prayer? Viewed from one angle, however, it looked more like a person hawking, with the bird perched on the wrist. There are brasses in the nave for Thomas Pallyng 1503 and his wife Emma, others in the chancel for John Clippesby 1594 and his wife Julian, with three daughters and a son. A south nave window commemorates Alfred Rivett, a former rector, and his wife. The bright glass is beautiful and takes the theme 'Suffer the little children'. Included in the design is a child's toy Noah's ark, complete with animals, including an elephant and a tiger.

Mautby

The great joy of **Repps with Bastwick**

St Peter is its tower where octagonal belfry and round tower are contemporary. The ornate belfry has four decorated tracery bell openings on the cardinal compass points and between each of these are double blank arcades with a small quatrefoil opening in their heads. The top section of the tower is mostly of brick and is crenallated. A south porch is also built of brick but from a later century and has a sundial. Inside the church there has been much Victorian restoration.



Repps with Bastwick.

Stuart Bowell.

2nd July 2011 Framingham Earl, Poringland and Howe.

A good turnout of members received a warm welcome from the parishioners in the hot sunshine of these three churches south of Norwich. The churches are very different but all extremely well cared for with neat and tidy churchyards.

Framingham Earl. The tower is rendered so the real interest lay inside. The Saxon chancel was thought to have had an apse originally, but keeps the little double-displayed round window. The Norman chancel arch with stone-lined openings, though restored by the Victorians, is stunning and frames the view of the beautiful reredos. The elongated roundels of medieval glass depicting St. Catherine in the south nave window and St. Margaret in the west wall of the tower are rightly famous. The west end has the low gallery, which makes the church seem quite intimate. The grave of the writer W.G. (Max) Sebald lies to the north of the chancel with its plain and simple inscription on the headstone. He lectured at UEA and lived at nearby Poringland, which was our next stop.

Poringland. We are used to our churches being off the beaten track but this one is on a busy main road in an urban environment. It is not such a surprise then to find the church much bigger than normal with a massive window in the south nave but small clerestory windows. There are unusual image niches above and beside the Victorian east window in which a wonderful collection of medieval glass has been reset. The red brick south porch is also 19th century but the font a fine example of 15th century East Anglian work.

Howe. We are back in the country again to see the Saxon Tower with the little conical cap of Howe. For student of Anglo-Saxon buildings, Howe's church is a delight, with its round tower scarcely poking above the tall nave. The church is in a delightful setting opposite a farm and appears to have been here forever. There is a lot of Victorian restoration inside with a very plain font in the Norman style but the primitive tower arch and the blocked doorway in the tower have been retained. The beautiful lectern is in the French style, and behind it by the steps to the rood loft, an interesting glazed terracotta plaque from the 1920s of the Madonna and Child.

Our tea at Howe was a contender for the 'tea of the year' as the ladies of the parish had prepared an amazing spread with a huge selection of delicious cakes.



Howe.

Nick Wiggin

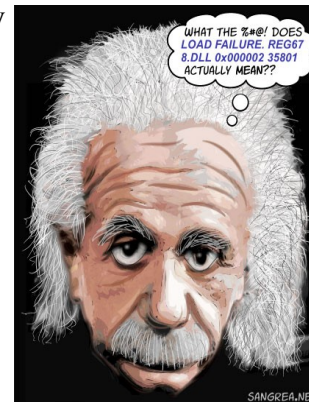
Joseph Biddulph has contacted the editors about Framingham Earl and Howe. He writes that these two churches provide good examples of Anglo-Saxon work and question the distinctions often made between Anglo-Saxon work often characterised as 'rough', 'irregular' and 'simple' and Norman work as 'regular', 'straight' with 'matching' arches, mouldings and corners. He rightly argues that Anglo-Saxon artefacts such as the Staffordshire Hoard and Sutton Hoo treasures and stone carving such as at Breedon-on-the-Hill display fine craftwork as well as intricate and exuberant decoration. While they may lack the balance of form and symmetry typical of the Classical world, they are certainly not rough or unskilful.

He poses an interesting question. Could a deliberate irregularity be part of the plan of buildings such as Framingham Earl and Howe? So for example at Framingham Earl the plan of the chancel is irregular, tapering in towards the east end and the round splayed flint dressed windows in the south and north walls are not quite a perfect circle. The use of flint in the construction of the two churches is also of interest. Flints form a herringbone pattern at the base of the south chancel wall at Framingham Earl and are used for the corners of the nave at both churches. The flints are large irregular nodules giving a gnarled, fuzzy outline. These corners contrast with those in the later porch at Framingham Earl with their crisp, smoothed off dressed stone. Perhaps the artistic imperative was greater than the local materials allowed? Or perhaps a roughness of texture was sometimes preferred?

AN APPEAL FROM THE COMMITTEE.

Many members will know that the society has a website. Your committee are sadly at a loss as to how to make even simple changes that need to be made. Is there anyone out there with the know-how to take on the RTCS website?

If you are in a position to help and you know your source codes from your pasta sauce or your algorithms from the Algarve 'Lyn or Nick would be very pleased to hear from you.



The Surviving Tradition of the Round Towered Church in Slovakia.

Slovakia, today, has relatively few round towered churches, although there are more rotundas. However, in the Romanesque period there were a few round churches, or rotundas, in several parts of Slovakia. According to Dr Alex Koller a specialist in late Medieval and Baroque church architecture in East Central Europe and beyond the first church in Slovakia was built in Nitra, namely St Michael's Church. This is a type of Romanesque emporia church. It was constructed from timber and dated from 830 AD. A century later, the principality became a part of Great Moravia which had developed circular types of stone church. The early Romanesque churches of Slovakia share similarities to these churches, especially so in the oldest rotundas and the country churches with galleries, for example in Nitra and the surrounding area, including Drazovce where the apse is round as is shown below. Romanesque-style churches persisted in Slovakia, for example, in the mid-13th cathedral at Spisska Kapitula.



Drazovce

One of the finest examples of a much later round tower is to be seen at Spissky Stvrtok. The church is built on a hill. Moreover, the church could perhaps be described as “High Gothic”. The church has a splendid square tower and it is flanked by a Gothic chapel on its Southern side (the Zapolsky Chapel). This chapel is exceptionally beautifully decorated with a brightly painted interior, decorative reredos, slender windows and exterior buttresses. However, on the North side of the church, there is a round tower of approximately 12 metres in height and 4 metres in diameter. It is capped by a two-stage conical roof, and with small lookout windows for defensive purposes and an exterior door near ground level .

There are superficial resemblances between this tower and those which Society members visited in Alsace Lorraine. What purpose did this round tower serve? The date of this round tower is contemporary with the nave of the church which predates the aforementioned chapel.



Spissky Stvrtok

The development of trade and the location of important regional capital of Levoca on a route that linked the Balkans with the Baltic, each and all give emphasis to the importance of trade and therefore defence in this particular region. There are shared architectural features with churches in neighbouring Poland, beyond the Tatras Mountains.

Scattered around Slovakia are other round towered churches of a predominantly later date. For example, Lubica which lies close to Levoca includes a smaller round towered church, though it is not the main parish church. On the fringes of round towered church construction is the solitary round tower within Spišsky Hrad castle. It is adjacent to a corresponding chapel. There are several wall paintings within churches in Eastern Slovakia with early wall paintings which

in date and style are similar to those within Houghton-on-the-Hill Church in Norfolk. In Zehra Church, there are well-preserved wall paintings dating from the 13th Century.



Spišsky Hrad



Zehra

Harry Norris and Tim Norris

TOPCROFT OPEN GARDENS. 26th and 27th May 2012.

At least ten gardens will be open at Topcroft on Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th May 2012 between 11am and 5pm

Homemade refreshments and light lunches will be available. There will also be a plant stall. Free parking. £3 entry. Map and garden descriptions available on entry. No dogs are allowed in the gardens. Topcroft Hall will be open - a six acre garden with a 500 year old mulberry tree under which Margery Brewes wrote the first Valentine Card to John Paston, wooded gardens and extensive herbaceous borders. All proceeds go to St. Margaret's Church.

SHIMPLING, ST GEORGE.

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM The Queen and the 25th anniversary of the vesting of St Georges with the Churches Conservation Trust: June 5th between 2 & 4pm.

2012 Heritage Open Days (10am to 5pm): September 8th & 9th
(Norfolk Churches Trust Sponsored Cycle Ride on the 8th).

Open Days (11am to 4pm):
April 8th & 9th, May 6th & 7th,
June 4th & 5th, July 7th & 8th,
August 4th & 5th, 26th & 27th.

Celebrating two saints:
St George: Monday April 23rd.
10.30 Holy Communion followed by wine and nibbles.
St Edmund: Tuesday November 20th Morning Prayers 10.30am.

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols: Thursday December 13th 7pm.



The Society continues to be grateful to Simon Knott for giving us permission to use his excellent photographs in our magazine. Those members with access to the internet will already be familiar with his wonderful websites:
norfolkchurches.co.uk
suffolkchurches.co.uk

‘I live in France but visit Norwich regularly. I recently joined the RTCS and for the moment I am specifically interested in documentation on the reasons why round towers were built in Norfolk and if there is any link to the different land tenure systems. I am specifically interested in the origins of round tower churches as a system rather than in any particular church although I am obviously fascinated by specific churches’.

If you feel able to assist with this enquiry please contact ‘Lyn.

Joseph Biddulph has produced an index for The Round Tower Magazine from December 2000 to June 2011. If you would like a copy contact Joseph at Joseph.Biddulph@gmail.com or write to him at 32 Stryd Ebeneser, Pontypridd, CF37 5PB for details of cost.

Several members have enquired about John Lee’s article in the September 2010 magazine. John included with his article an example of a completed church visit report form that he has developed over the years which he then files away in ring binders together with his photographs of the church. If you have lost or mislaid the September 2010 magazine or are a new member of the RTCS and would like a photocopy of the article please send a stamped addressed to the magazine editors.

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