



The Round Tower

Vol. XL1 No 2

December 2013



Bessingham

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The next issue is March 2014 and the deadline for contributions is 1st February 2014.

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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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

Vol. XL1 No 2 December 2013

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about round tower
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RTCS members who have registered will also receive this magazine as a PDF. Colour photographs will be in colour in the PDF and not in black and white.

If you have not yet registered but would like to receive the PDF in addition to your paper copy please send your email address to pt.hodge@tiscali.co.uk.

Editorial.

Behind every successful man is a good woman. John Scales pays tribute to Ada Goode on page 5. Members of the RTCS who attended the AGM this year are unlikely to forget John's tribute to Ada. We would like to share this with all our members,

Richard Harbord has written an excellent article about the Victorian architect Thomas Jeckyll and his work at Brome starting on page 6. Jeckyll could so easily have got his restoration totally wrong but in our opinion it is a considerable triumph. Visit Brome, make up your own mind and tell us what you think.

Thinking about the reasons for round tower is not new. Samuel Woodward was doing it in the 1820s. He put some of his findings in a letter to Hudson Gurney in 1829. Paul Hodge found out about the letter while trawling the internet and you can read his online research on page 12. Many long time RTCS members will probably already know about this letter and the 1831 Archaeologia article.

Jack Sterry tells us that sadly he does not feel that he is able to produce a 2014 Round Tower Churches calendar. Over the years Jack has given £3750 to our society from the sale of his books and calendars. We salute and thank Jack on page 15.

Anne Woollett writes about the work of our Grants Officer Nick Wiggin on page 18. The lovely photograph of Teresa and Nick was taken by Stuart Bowell on the RTCS Essex tour day.

The cover photograph of Bessingham was taken by Bill Goode in 1971. K.T and T.S Norris write about Bessingham and Solid geology on page 21.

Stuck for ideas for Christmas presents? It is still not too late to give gift membership of the Round Tower Churches Society. See page 17 for details.

We are already excited about the March 2014 magazine. John Salmon will be writing about the Round Tower Churches of London and Stephen Hart begins the first in a series of articles examining the reliability of certain theories for dating round tower churches.

Next year is the centennial of the start of the First World War. Over the next four years we will be looking for articles and stories with particular reference to round tower churches and their war memorials and monuments. Are you planning any research, publications, events or work programmes? One place to start thinking about things might be by joining the new Facebook group 'World War 1 memorials in round tower churches and churchyards'. We have put together a number of useful links.

In his article on bricks in the September 2013 Round Tower magazine Stephen Hart referred to an article written by Stephen Haywood in 2002. This is now available on The Round Tower Magazine page on the RTCS website.

Ada Goode. A tribute by John Scales given at the 40th Anniversary Annual General Meeting. May 2013.

It is often said that behind every successful man there is a good woman, and that was certainly so with the Friends of the Round Tower Churches (now known as the Round Tower Churches Society). Mrs Ada Goode was not concerned about whether a church has a square tower, a round tower, or no tower at all. To be frank she was not particularly interested in either architecture or history. Her overriding concern was the welfare of her family and she was a splendid mother and grandmother and, of course, a devoted and loyal wife.

So when her husband quite suddenly in later life developed an obsession about churches with round towers she raised no objections. Some wives might have been rather churlish of their husband's frequent trips to visit churches when they could have been together at the seaside or relaxing quietly in the garden. In fact I knew some who were! But not Ada.

She very rarely accompanied Bill on these trips for she had her priorities right, ensuring there was always a nourishing meal and warm slippers awaiting him on his return. She raised no objection either when one of their rooms was converted exclusively to round tower church use. Nor did she mind being left at home for a week when three of us whisked Bill off to Schleswig-Holstein so that he could compare their round tower churches with ours. She even readily agreed to their savings being used for the publication of Bill's first book.

Now I'm not proud of much that I have done in my life- for the simple fact that I've done very little of which to be proud! But of one thing I am pleased about, and that is when the second edition of his book was ready for publication I said to him 'What about the dedication?' You see he had dedicated his first book to the craftsmen who had built our churches. When he replied that he did not intend to change it I suggested that he might instead dedicate it to Ada. Now Bill was a man of few words, so he simply looked hard at me and then quickly said 'Yes'. And so the dedication reads: 'To my dear wife, who for thirty years has encouraged me in my study of round tower churches'.

Ada was quiet, unassuming, kindly and warm-hearted, who to know was to love. I remember her with the greatest affection but I think we should all remember her with gratitude. I believe that her unseen role was crucial and that without her unwavering support for her husband we just possibly might not be here today.

John Scales wishes to thank all those people who gave generously to help him raise £152 on the Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride. John is giving half to the Norfolk Churches Trust and the half "towards the restoration of the lovely little St Margaret's church at Hardwick". We have taken this opportunity to post Bill Goode's photographs of Hardwick on the RTCS Facebook page.

Thomas Jeckyll and St Mary, Brome.

The family of Thomas Jeckyll (1827-81) originated from Marsham in Norfolk. Many of his projects were undertaken in that county including the restoration of many country churches. He was influenced by the call of William Morris to combine art, craftsmanship and industry so Jeckyll's oeuvre was far ranging. He experimented eclectically with Queen Anne, Asian especially Japanese and Old English vernacular styles in all sorts of craft work related to his buildings. The sheer volume and range of his works is enormous. They illustrate vividly the mind-set of the mid Victorian architect and the issues that arise from it. Thomas's father, the Reverend George Jeckyll was vicar of the great church of Wymondham, Norfolk. He had a Cambridge degree; was a good artist and an active antiquarian. These skills were passed on to his son Thomas who was probably apprenticed to a builder rather than given a pupillage with an architect. The Swing Riots of 1834 changed the course of their lives. After receiving threats to burn down his church George Jeckyll decided to take his family to Norwich where he joined the Millenialists more commonly known as the Plymouth Brethren. They had radical views on how Christianity could be practiced. It is curious given the later predilections of Thomas that this sect preferred simple buildings. By 1847 Thomas had set up a design office in Wymondham for local builders and he adopted a simple life-style. In 1851 he moved first to Norwich and soon after to Cambridge to be near the works of James Rattee and Kett, builders from Wymondham. Ecclesiologists advocated 'eclectic restoration' (in the mixed styles of the original building) accepting in a single project a combination of necessary demolition, rebuilding and conservation where practical. Although today this seems naive it was probably the first time that builders had up-graded existing buildings without demolishing them before rebuilding. A faithful restoration depended on the ability to interpret what they found using their antiquarian judgement and personal taste. None of this held back the Victorian architect from being innovative, assertive and 'improving'. The ecclesiologists as early as 1847 acknowledged that any reverence for existing historical fabric could be compromised by a tendency to 'improve' and innovate.

What happened when a mid-Victorian architect was let loose on an ancient parish church with a round tower? Jekyll almost completely rebuilt St Mary, Brome between the 1850s and the 1870s and it would seem that little expense was spared. Before he restored Brome Jekyll sketched it looking from the north-east. It looked dilapidated. He soon changed all that by adding a massive north transept with an elaborate window in the late Decorated style. This contrasts with the existing and modest 13th century windows of the north aisle. The medieval triple lancet window at the eastern end of the north aisle was replaced by a massive new rose window. The north arcade was elaborated by adding exaggerated dog-tooth mouldings. On the northern side of the round tower a turret was added. It has a whimsical Romanesque door, a slit window above and at the top two small ox-eye windows. Jekyll's argument might well have been that every previous age had innovated with styles and churches were usually an accretion of different stylistic periods anyway. Jekyll's work at Brome was augmented by the largest known collection of the work of the Ipswich sculptor James Williams, whose workshop produced the long stone reredos, altar rails, prayer desk and the now sadly battered pulpit. The project was bankrolled by two millionaires: Lord Kerrison whose name is inescapable in this part of Suffolk, and the Rector for forty years, George John Mapletoft Paterson. Lord Kerrison's wife produced some of the windows, and others are the work of Heaton, Butler and Bayne.

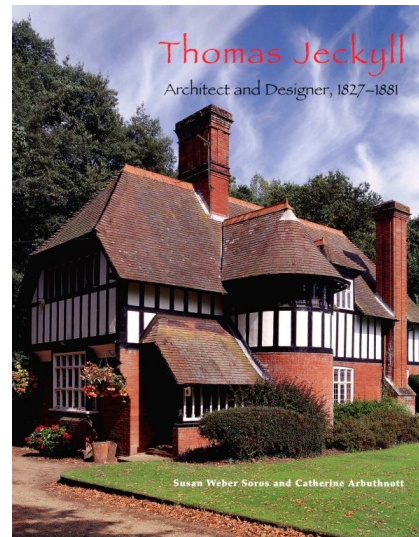
The Cambridge Camden Society attacked the brutality in which restorers were attacking the historic fabric of old churches and eroding their archaeological assets. John Ruskin in his book *'The seven Lamps of Architecture'*, wrote about the *'lamp of memory'*. He said that the existing historical fabric of a church had an integrity that should be respected and not violated. The architect George Gilbert Scott also pleaded for faithful restorations especially of medieval buildings. In the 1860s the newly chartered Royal Institute of British Architects set up a body to advise on church restoration yet there was still no statutory guide-lines or models of good practice available. Jekyll's response to public disquiet over the work of church restorers was merely to write specifications for his builders not to use scrapers on old stone or cut into it.

By then he had been restoring churches for 17 years. He had to wrestle with the dilapidation of churches where they were often in danger of collapse. In the round towered church of Old Catton, the north wall and roof was held up by props so the building was out of use in winter. All Saints, Stuston was also in a wretched state. He added a new vestry in St Mary's Church, Haddiscoe in 1860-61 where he was accused of destroying ancient mural paintings. In fact he only had them painted over – they were revealed and restored in 1908.

Although he was a successful architect Jeckyll is best known today for his “epoch-making” designs in metalwork. His architectural practice routinely included the design of gates, railings and metal fittings for domestic commissions and candelabra, and altar rails for ecclesiastical ones. But it was his exhibition pieces for the ironworks firm of Barnard, Bishop & Barnards of Norwich that brought him his greatest renown. His “Norwich Gates” for the 1862 London International Exhibition set in motion the 19th-century wrought iron revival in Great Britain. Subsequent creations, including his “Four Seasons Gates,” exhibited in Paris in 1867 and Vienna in 1873, and his cast iron pavilion



St Mary, Brome.



for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition received substantial praise in particular for their creative use of Asian principles and motifs. His innovative Anglo-Japanese designs for stoves, stove fronts, fenders, fire irons and other domestic metalwork were also produced and sold in large numbers. As these designs were both artistic and affordable they allowed the incorporation of objects of beauty into middle-class homes. He was one of the few figures in the design reform movement in Britain who managed to unite beauty and utility.



St Mary, Brome.

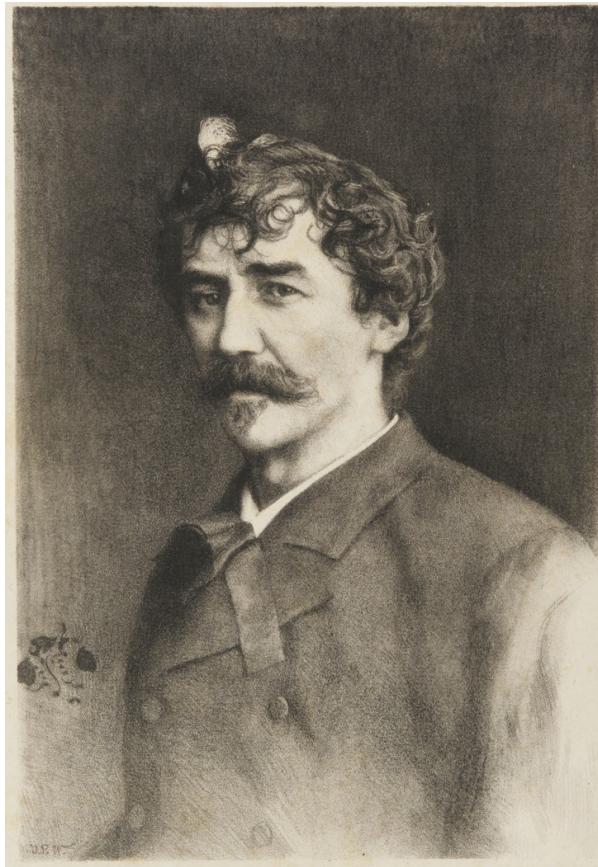
Jeckyll's career was curtailed in 1876 by mental illness. He died at 54 years of age. He spent his last five years confined to asylums in Norwich, his outstanding contributions to 19th-century architecture and design all but forgotten.

'Thomas Jeckyll, architect', by Susan W. Soros & Catherine Arbuthnott; Yale University Press, 2003

Richard Harbord



Examples of Jeckyll's work at
St Mary, Brome.



Thomas Jeckyll

Over five thousand of Bill Goode's photographs of Round Tower Churches can be viewed by joining the Round Tower Churches of South East England group on Facebook. Membership of the group is free. The photographs were scanned by Dick and uploaded by Paul. The group is administered by Georgi and Paul on behalf of the Round Tower Churches Society.



Samuel Woodward (3 October 1790 - 14 January 1838).

English geologist and antiquary born in Norwich.

He was for the most part self-educated. Apprenticed in 1804 to a manufacturer of camlets and bombazines (fabrics), a taste for serious study was stimulated by his master John Herring and by the banker and Quaker minister Joseph John Gurney. Becoming interested in geology and archaeology he began to form the collection which after his death was purchased by Hudson Gurney for the Norwich Museum. In 1820 he obtained a clerkship in Gurney's (afterwards Barclay's) bank at Norwich. Hudson Gurney (antiquary, verse-writer and politician) and Dawson Turner of Yarmouth (banker, botanist and antiquary) both fellows of the Royal Society encouraged his scientific work.

He communicated to *Archaeologia* articles on the round church towers of Norfolk (1831), the Roman remains of the country, etc., and other papers on natural history and geology to the *Mag. Nat. Hist.* and *Phil. Mag.*

He was author of:

- *A Synoptical Table of British Organic Remains* (1830), the first work of its kind in Britain
- *An Outline of the Geology of Norfolk* (1833)
- *The Norfolk Topographer's Manual* (1842) issued posthumously.



Samuel Woodward. 1790-1838.

His eldest son, Bernard Bolingbroke Woodward (1816-1869), was librarian and keeper of the prints and drawings at Windsor Castle from 1860 until his death. The second son, Samuel Pickworth Woodward (1821-1865), became in 1845 professor of geology and natural history in the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and in 1848 was appointed assistant in the department of geology and mineralogy in the British Museum. He was author of *A Manual of the Mollusca* (in three parts, 1851, 1853 and 1856).

Samuel Pickworth Woodward's son, Horace Bolingbroke Woodward (1848-1914), became in 1863 an assistant in the library of the Geological Society, and joined the Geological Survey in 1867, rising to be assistant-director. In 1893-1894 he was president of the Geologists' Association, and he published many important works on geology. Samuel Woodward's youngest son, Henry was also a noted geologist.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel Woodward](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Woodward)



Joseph John Gurney. 1788-1847. His sister was Elizabeth Fry (nee Gurney) the noted reformer.



Hudson Gurney. 1775-1864. Described as having a habit of questioning everything: "he seemed never to agree with you".

Observations on the Round Church Towers of Norfolk and on the material employed in constructing the early religious Buildings in that County. By Samuel Woodward of Norwich in a letter to Hudson Gurney in 1829. Published in Archaeologia. Volume 23. 1831.

In consequence of the conflicting opinions entertained respecting the origin of the Circular Towers of Churches I have been led to ascertain their proportional number in Norfolk in order to illustrate, if possible, their origin. In doing which, I find that they are more frequent in those parts of Norfolk in which thick beds of diluvial gravel occur; particularly in Clavering hundred (the south-east angle of the County) where they equal in number the square towers: they are found also in the northern part of Suffolk under similar circumstances and that they are but thinly distributed or entirely absent in other counties of England. Their dimensions are small and many of them have been finished with an octangular top of comparatively modern workmanship; they are all built with flint boulders with the exception of that attached to the church of West Dereham which is of Car-stone; and I have no hesitation in stating my conviction that they owe their form not to any peculiar style but have been thus built from necessity, in consequence of the absence of freestone in the soil and that the necessity originally influencing the Saxons extended itself to the Normans as may be seen in the towers of the parish churches of St. Paul and St. Mary in Norwich, founded after the Conquest.

Shimpling, St George. Some dates for 2014.

Wednesday 23rd April. 10.30am. Patronal Holy Communion followed by wine and nibbles.

Wednesday 18th June. 7 30pm. Wine and nibbles from 6 45. 'Some Eccentric East Anglian Clergymen' - Roy Tricker.

Sunday 27th July at 3pm. The First World War began on the 28th July 1914. In 2014 we commemorate the twelve men from Shimpling who died in the service of their country.

September 13th and 14th. 10am – 5pm. Heritage Open Days.

Thursday 18th December at 7pm. Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight.

Jack Sterry.

For a number of years Jack Sterry has produced wonderful calendars of Round Tower Churches. Recently Jack has informed the Society – regretfully - that he will not be producing a calendar for 2014 because of ill-health. Sad news for us and we wish Jack a happy post-Round Tower Churches calendars retirement. Jack is also the author of a series of books about Round Tour churches in East Anglia published between 2003 and 2010. Each book is made up of four suggested tours complete with instructions and information about the churches. The books are richly illustrated with photographs taken by Jack himself. In total the books ‘visit’ 81 churches- no mean achievement. Jack claims to be computer illiterate and acknowledges the support of Pam Paterson for typing and assisting with the layout of his four books. In the preface to his third book Jack said that he thought this would be his last book, but he found the energy and commitment to complete the fourth in the series.

Apart from the pleasure his books and calendars have given us (and those to whom we have given the calendars as Christmas gifts) we owe Jack thanks for his generous contribution to the Society’s funds. Jack divided the proceeds from the sale of the calendars between Norfolk Churches Trusts and Round Tower Churches Society. This year the Society received £100 from Jack and the total over the years has come to £3,750. His contribution has been most welcome and we are thrilled to have been able to allocate this money in grants .



Burnham Norton

The Society has copies of Jack's books for sale, so while you can no longer give Jack's calendars as Christmas gifts, you can inspire friends and relatives with his books of tours.

As Jack explains in the preface to his books, he was born in Gloucestershire but moved to Norfolk in 1935 where he went to secondary school and spent the war years. In his younger days he was a good sportsman and played badminton for Norfolk and Yorkshire and had cricket trials for Norfolk. His interest in sports continued through his adult life. In his 20s his career took him away to other parts of the country but his affection and interest in Norfolk and later Suffolk continued and he returned to spend holidays here. He retired as an Area Chairman and Regional Managing Director of an insurance brokerage company and now lives in Kenilworth in the Midlands. Alongside his keen interest in churches he is also a keen amateur photographer and took all the photographs in his books.



The font at Burnham Norton

It is the intention in 2014 to publish a leaflet about Burnham Norton church as a tribute to Jack. He claims it is one of his very favourite churches and it is the first church he visited on the first tour in his first book. RTCS Secretary 'Lyn Stilgoe is currently revising the leaflet on Burnham Norton which was first produced a number of years ago.



The hexagonal
wineglass pulpit at
Burnham Norton



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Part of the yearly subscription goes towards the printing and posting of The Round Tower magazine, and administration. The majority goes to the Repair Fund of the Round Tower Churches Society from which grants are made to churches.

Magazines are published in March, June, September and December

*To Enquire about
Gift Membership
please contact:-*

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NR6 7NW**

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Supporting work to our round tower churches: a day in the life of the RTCS Grants Officer.

RTCS has given grants of just over £150,000 in our first forty years (1973-2013). Demands on our repairs fund and the generosity of our membership continues to rise. We gave grants of £16,500 in 2011-2012 and £21,450 in 2012-13.

RTCS receives many applications for financial assistance for work and repairs to round tower churches. Nick Wiggin is the Society's Grant Officer. Nick supported by his wife Teresa gives generously of his time, experience and expertise. It is Nick who receives and processes these applications. Churchwardens seeking funding are asked to complete a very short application form explaining what repairs and works are required and how much these are likely to cost. Nick then usually visits the church. The application form, the church's requirements and whether we have given before and what we have given in the past are then discussed at a committee meeting of the Society. A decision is then reached about any assistance we feel able to make. Sometimes a request is the first we have received from a church but as RTCS has supported work in the majority of round tower churches over the last 40 years we may be considering a second or even a third request for a grant. We always try to provide some support but the extent of our help depends on the funds we have available. In the last three years we have been very fortunate to have received several very generous gifts and legacies which have enabled us to increase the support we can provide. So what sort of work and repairs do we support? Churches report a variety of problems, often it is work needed to their roofs and sometimes to their towers. In the past twelve months the Society has contributed to the repair of roofs, towers, walls, windows and improving drainage through the replacement of downpipes and gutters. The amounts churches need for their works also vary substantially. For example Rockland St Peter required £7000 to reseal the lead on their roof but Potter Heigham needs at least £280,000 for a new nave roof. In 2012 RTCS gave our largest individual grant (£5000) to Cranwich towards the thatching of their roof and very splendid it looks too.



RTCS Grants Officer Nick Wiggin and RTCS committee member Teresa Wiggin at the top of Bardfield Saling tower (Essex tour 2012). Photograph by Stuart Bowell.

Work to churches is a costly and time consuming business: from a growing awareness that a church has a problem, undertaking surveys and identifying the issue, obtaining estimates for work, seeking assistance from funding bodies and then to getting the work completed. This can be a long and frustrating time for churchwardens. Some of the time consuming but less obvious tasks include: obtaining a Faculty from the diocese; finding specialist architects and contractors; obtaining estimates; obtaining approval from English Heritage; undertaking bat surveys etc. Churchwardens argue that their longest and sometimes their most dispiriting task is raising the funds: finding out about potential funders, filling in the forms (we are told that ours is a very short

and simple grant form), and then waiting for responses. Even after raising the money things can go wrong. For example at Herringfleet the day after the tiles were removed to enable work to start on renewing the tiles the workmen arrived to find that the rafters had collapsed into the nave. The contents of the nave were then covered with tarpaulins to keep the worst of the weather out and when uncovered many months later were fortunately found to be in relatively good order. Our hearts went out to the churchwardens who had to try and raise extra funds for new rafters and that in a hurry. Luckily the society had just received a very generous and unexpected gift and we were able to offer some additional and immediate financial help.

There is often a long time interval between funds being committed and the work being completed. At Threxton work started in 2009 and a dedication service in May 2013 attended by Nick and Teresa on behalf of RTCS marked the end of the work. Large repairs and works take even longer. Nick and Teresa often make several visits to a church- to see what needs doing at the start of a project and to monitor progress as work is done. Sometimes the final visit, as at Threxton, is the very pleasurable task of attending the rededication service. It is also a pleasure to visit churches on a RTCS tour after the work is completed as at Great Ryburgh in 2012.

The grants RTCS can provide are relatively small but they can help churches and churchwardens demonstrate to the bigger funders such as English Heritage that churches are working hard to seek funds and have the support of local people and local charities. RTCS funds come from our members: 40% of the minimum subscription goes towards the church repairs fund. Many members give gifts and extra donations which go in their entirety to the repairs fund. RTCS members have also found other ways to add to the Society's funds by leaving legacies, giving gifts, collecting postage stamps and handing over royalties from the sale of books.

Written by Anne Woollett from conversations with Nick and Teresa.

Bessingham Round Tower Church and Solid Geology.

An article entitled “Solid Geology & Round Tower Churches” appeared in the September 2011 issue of “The Round Tower” (Vol. XXXIX No.1). The main point of the article was to examine whether the availability of adequate building material (i.e. solid rock) would affect whether a round tower would be constructed. Bexwell and West Dereham lie very close to carstone and conglomerate yet their builders elected to construct round towers when they could have built square towers. A further development of this theme is presented by the round-tower church at Bessingham four miles south of Sheringham. Together with Harry Norris we visited Bessingham on Sunday 6th October 2012. The church lies on a prominent hilltop to the east of the village. Our attention focused on the tower. The tower is constructed of bands of conglomerate and flint and is considered to date from about 1050 according to the church guide. The first ten feet of the tower is almost entirely conglomerate with a few flints, then a ten foot course of flint and then another course of conglomerate followed by another course of flint. From there to the parapet it is again almost entirely conglomerate. There is further flint at the battlement level. The twin-light belfry windows are entirely constructed of conglomerate. The jambs of these are inverted Vs, the heads having flat slabs. Though the west wall has surviving Saxon material much of the rest of the church dates from the 1869 restoration and therefore is not relevant to the thrust of this article though it is substantially built in flint. The September 2011 “Round Tower” article combined the availability of solid rock and round towers. Here at Bessingham we have a round tower using substantial quantities of solid rock yet it is a significant distance from the carstone and conglomerate beds in the Downham Market to Snettisham belt 35 miles away. These rocks do not occur in the locality of Bessingham and it is evident that the building material has been transported from a distance. This observation points at a system of organization and transport in the Saxon-period. The builders also decided to build a round tower despite having a good quantity of solid rock.

Bessingham church rewards the visitor in several ways. The situation is most attractive, the church sitting on a hilltop and the brown conglomerate presenting a strong and attractive colour particularly in sunlight. The churchyard path could well be described as a clamber as it is very steep but this has not deterred the village folk from using the church over nearly a thousand years. The visitor will probably arrive using the A148 Fakenham-Cromer Road which is 2½ miles away through a series of lanes. The church seems to be open every day and is well cared for.

Reference: W.J.Goode, "Round Tower Churches of South East England"

K.T. and T.S. Norris



St Mary, Bessingham.

ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY

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