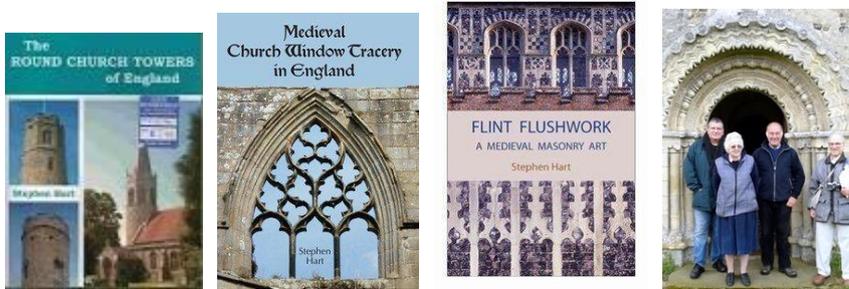


Stephen Hart 1924-2014

Stephen Hart died in July 2014, days before his 90th birthday. Stephen drew on his experience as an architect and became a leading authority on church architecture, including the architecture and construction of round towered churches. *The Round Church Towers of England* (published in 2003 by Lucas Books) is a wonderful and essential book for all lovers of round tower churches, illustrated with Stephen's own photographs. The Society has copies for sale- go to [items for sale](#). Stephen's publications include: *Flint Architecture of East Anglia*. Published by dlm as a paperback in 2000 and still available; *Flint Flushwork: a medieval masonry art*. 2008. Boydell Press; *Medieval Church Window Tracery in England*.



Stephen's book and with RTCS officers at Hales, 2010.

Stephen was an active member of the Society for many years, providing insights on site visits, editing the Society's Magazine for four years, and was the author of many articles for *The Round Tower*. In his later years, Stephen was less able to travel to Society tours but he continued to write about round tower churches. The Round Tower Editors had several of his articles awaiting publication. We also plan to re-publish some of his earlier articles, many of which he had revised as new ideas and information became available.

In December 2014 edition of *The Round Tower* RTCS secretary, 'Lyn Stilgo, wrote an obituary of Stephen and Chairman, Stuart Bowell wrote about some of his memories of Stephen. These are reproduced here.

'Lyn Stilgoe. RTCS Secretary, wrote: It is very sad to have to record the passing of Stephen, just six days before his 90th birthday. He was an outstanding architect with a great knowledge of medieval stonework. In his retirement he devoted much time to the meticulous study of our round towered churches. Stephen was always generous with his learning and very patient and enthusiastic in explaining everything to those with less knowledge. It is in great part thanks to his work that the Society now has a reputation in the academic world and is credited with considerable insight into the history of these precious buildings. Stephen was an active member of the Committee from 2000 to 2010 which included nearly four years as Magazine Editor from his first issue in December 2000.

We are fortunate that much of this expertise will live on in that he has published three well reviewed books where he imparted his great knowledge of church architecture including "*The Round Church Towers of England*" in 2003. He also updated the useful booklet "*East Anglian Round Tower Churches*" which for many people is their first introduction to the understanding of these towers. Right up to the last he was contributing detailed, learned articles for our magazine and there are more yet to be published.

Stephen has kindly willed that the Round Tower Churches Society will inherit his research papers for our archives. These will be available for future generations of ecclesiologists and round tower church aficionados to learn from.

Stephen will not be forgotten and the Round Tower Churches Society is without a doubt a better and a more worth-while organisation for his involvement with us.

Memories of Stephen Nelson Hart by Stuart Bowell. RTCS Chairman.

The death of Stephen is a great loss to our Society. His knowledge of Round Towers was unequalled. At a sad time there is comfort in reflection. Many of you reading this will have your own memories of Stephen from our summer tours. My own memories are legion and I share a few of them here.

Stephen made his contributions on tours in his own quiet yet authoritative way. Never wishing or prepared to take over from the tour leaders yet freely offering his thoughts and ideas when asked. I particularly remember his enthusiasm for putlog holes. There was great excitement at Sustead in September 2003 at the first opportunity to purchase a copy of the recently published 'The Round Tower Churches of England'. Stephen was kept very busy signing copies.

Stephen became our magazine editor in late 2000 producing his first magazine in December 2000. The magazine had a new title 'The Round Tower' and also a new logo on the cover. As Stephen commented in his editorial... 'a simple symbol rather than a figurative illustration creates a more pithy impact'. His appointment as editor gave us the benefit of his presence on the Committee and also meant that I got to know Stephen much better. However, I was extremely surprised to learn his age when he told me. On a tour in 2004 Stephen apologised for leaving early: 'I am going to a family party' he said. I replied 'Oh, a special occasion?' 'Yes, it's for my birthday.' I asked 'is it a big one?' He replied 'I shall be 80'.

A few years later during a tour 'Lyn was interrupted by a loud, low flying aircraft. A Spitfire, someone suggested. Stephen said quietly 'a Mustang with a Spitfire engine – the Mustang became a much better aircraft when fitted with the Merlin engine.'

During 2010 I was fortunate enough to join Stephen, 'Lyn and Richard on a visit to Hales St Margaret. Owen Thompson, archaeologist and development Officer for the Churches Conservation Trust accompanied us and we were able to climb the tower giving us the opportunity to examine the interior fabric at close quarters. To do this in Stephen's company, with the benefit of his expertise, was a real privilege.

A talented man himself, Stephen had great respect and admiration for the work of others. When reviewing 'The Round Tower Churches of Norfolk' in 2001, he wrote of Dorothy Shreeve's superb and meticulous drawings: 'To draw a wall of flints that doesn't look like a spotted dick is in itself difficult enough, but to achieve the subtleties of shading and texture of different kinds of flint on flat and curving surfaces that the artist manages here, shows a rare and enviable skill'.

Stephen was laid to rest in the churchyard of All Saints, Easton on the Hill near Stamford the village that had been his home for over 50 years.

