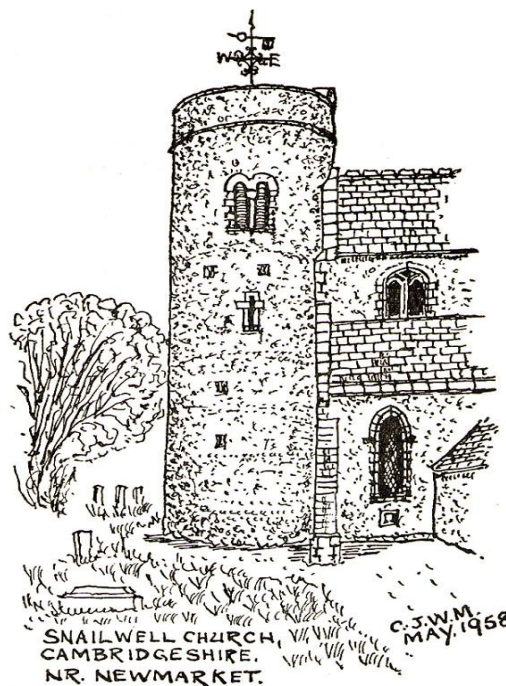




The Round Tower

Vol. XLIV No 2

December 2016



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Editorial

Committee member Michael Pollitt reports on our 2016 Study Day from page 4.

Correspondence on pages 7 to 10.

Collioure resident and Round Tower Churches Society member Clare Galloway reports on her round tower church from page 11. Your editors visited Collioure a few years ago. What a lovely place to live!

Part Two of Stuart Bowell's report on our 2016 tour programme starts on page 16. Part Three will be in the March 2017 magazine.

The March magazine will also include details of our 2017 AGM, tour programme and a report on the 2015 archaeological excavations at Hemblington.

Remember that we always welcome items for publication.

The next issue is March 2017 and the deadline for contributions is 1st February 2017.

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 £20 (overseas £30) a year of which 25% goes towards the printing and posting of The Round Tower magazine and administration. The rest 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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www.roundtowers.org.uk

RTCS Study Day – October 2016.

Forty two members and friends attended.

“Decayed and Profaned” was the title of the first talk given by Ian Groves, who lives in North Norfolk and is studying for Phd at the University of East Anglia. His title “Decayed and Profaned” refers to the former church at Egmere, now part of the Holkham estate. It was ruined in medieval times by ruthless owners who were arrested trying to sell the metal from the bell.

Ian discussed the remarkable heritage of churches in Norfolk which is home to the greatest density of medieval churches in Europe. Drawing on estate maps and medieval documents, Ian discussed some of the 254 ruined churches. Some are possible to detect as crop marks as at Great Cressingham or Kerdiston, near Reepham. At Stiffkey and Great Melton there were two churches just yards from each other. He considered the ruins at Sco Ruston, near North Walsham, and his own favourite, Godwick, one of many redundant or lost churches within a few miles of Fakenham.

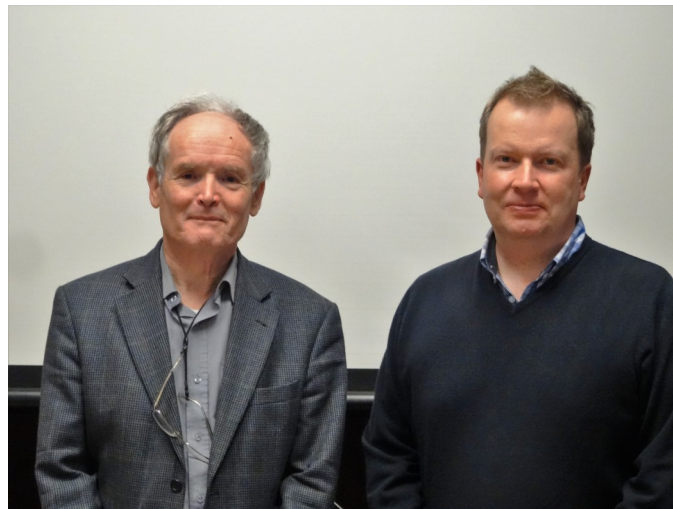
Some churches were lost to coastal erosion as at Eccles (see The Round Tower December 2015), Shipden, off Cromer (subject of a forthcoming article by Richard Harbord in The Round Tower), Sidestrand (where the church was rebuilt further inland), Whimpwell, Tivetshall St Mary (collapse of the tower and church by jet aircraft sonic boom). Only one church- Little Ringstead in west Norfolk – was definitely lost as a result of the Black Death in 1349. A modern example of a ruined church was St Wandregesilius at Bixley, near Norwich, which was devastated by fire in 2004. It was thought to be the only known dedication to this saint in Europe.

Mark Mitchels gave the second talk entitled **“The Story of the Bible in English”** in which he charted the development of the Bible in English. This required translating a variety of early texts from the Hebrew and Greek texts and the later Epistles (written c50 to 60AD), the Acts (from 70AD), Mark’s Gospel (from c 65 to 75AD) and St John’s Gospel (c 90AD).

From 900 AD King Alfred encouraged the translation of some parts of the Bible, but after the Norman Conquest this Wessex Gospel was rejected and Bibles were produced only in Latin. In 1215 the Lateran Council decreed that that the “secret mysteries of faith should not be explained.”

In 1380 the first English version of the Bible was produced by John Wycliffe. At least 180 copies were thought to have been produced one of which might have been read by Henry IV (1399 to 1413). The church authorities were deeply critical of such translations linked as they were to political and religious ideas fermented by groups such as the Lollards.

The development of printing in Germany made the production of Bibles in local languages more feasible. Gutenberg’s first printed Bible in 1450 was challenged and updated by scholars such as Erasmus (1466-1536) and Martin Luther (1483-1546). In 1525 William Tyndale produced the first printed Bible in English in Antwerp. Only two copies of Tyndale’s Bible survive, in part because it became illegal to possess one. Miles Coverdale produced the first Bible printed in England in 1539 dedicated to King Henry VIII which by 1541 ran to seven editions.



Speakers Mark Mitchels (left) and Ian Groves

The Geneva Bible was produced in 1560, drawing largely on Tyndale's wording with verse and chapter headings. This was the Bible read by Shakespeare and Milton. On the order of King James a new Bible was produced in 1611, the so-called King James Bible or Authorised Version. The Book of Common Prayer was published in 1662.

After lunch 'Lyn Stilgoe and Richard Barham lead a tour of St Mary's Church, Rickingham Inferior

The third and final speaker, Michael Rimmer talked on "**The Angel Roofs of East Anglia**". The first "Angel" roof is at Westminster Hall, London and dates from 1395. Hugh Herland, Richard II's Royal Carpenter was probably responsible for this work. In 1398 Herland was involved in a major project to improve Great Yarmouth's harbour and it is possible that he may have persuaded wealthy East Anglian patrons to have angels carved for their churches. This would explain the large proportion of angels roofs in East Anglia built between 1399 (St Nicholas at King's Lynn) and 1534. Despite determined efforts in Edward VI's reign (1547-1553) and during the Puritan years from 1643 a great many "Angel" roofs have survived.



Committee member Nick Wiggin, speaker Michael Rimmer and committee member Michael Pollitt

Michael discussed some of these amazing survivors including Cawston, Blythburgh, Mildenhall, Methwold, Gissing, Swaffham, Fincham, Bury St Edmunds and St Peter Mancroft, illustrated with his wonderful collection of photographs which can be enjoyed in his book published in 2015. (*Since the Study Day Michael Rimmer has been up a scaffolding tower to inspect the angel roof at close quarters. For the photograph see the RTCS Twitter feed. Eds*). Angel carving, he suggested, was a general scheme of decoration and complemented rood screen carving, as for example at South Creake. While the names of the carvers are not known, there are similarities amongst the angels at Methwold and St Nicolas King's Lynn suggesting that some carvers produced work for more than one church.

The Church was able to draw upon the economic wealth of the region generated by wool and weaving and by trade especially with northern Europe. These wealthy patrons were able to demonstrate their faith by decorating their churches as evidenced by John Baret at St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds in around 1445.

Michael provided a colourful ending to a highly-successful day, which saw a number of society members attending a Study Day for the first time.

Michael Pollitt

Correspondence: Study Day.

Dear Editors

May I congratulate the leaders of the RTCS on another excellent Study Day this year at Rickingham.

However could I comment on the second lecture which was entitled "The Story of the Bible in English". We had an excellent overview of early developments in translating the Bible into English culminating in the 1611 translation of the King James Version. And there the lecturer stopped. He gave the clear impression that God has done nothing worth mentioning since then with regard to the Bible in English!

The King James Version was of course a superb translation for the people of 1611 and for many decades afterwards. It is still much valued by some today. But with modern scholarship it came to be realised

that there were some textual mistakes in the King James Version. This led to the production of the Revised Version in the 1880s. In the 20th Century it became increasingly recognised that English is a living language, spoken and heard in a very different way to what it was in the 17th century. And so there have been a wide range of new translations. Some, such as the New Revised Standard Version, is similar in style to the King James Version but uses modern English. Others, such as the New English Bible and the Good News Bible, are more radical and present the Scriptures much more in the style of speech of the present day. This means that many who struggle to understand what the King James Version means can now have a clear understanding of God's Word. I wonder how many who say they prefer the King James Version actually read much of the Epistles and Old Testament - and understand it!

Finally to clarify which translation is authorised to be read in Churches: the Canons of the Church of England states that “any version of the Bible not prohibited by lawful authority may be used with Alternative Services (to the Book of Common Prayer)”. It adds that there are currently no such prohibitions.

I would have liked to have made these points at the Study Day but there was no time for questions or comments.

Frank Howard

Correspondence: Fonts and Pdfs.

Dear Editors

There is a boxed, short message on page three of the June 2016 edition of The Round Tower, which advises, amongst all the secret stuff that colour photographs appear in colour. Heartening news, though many will have assumed that. Where I'm stumped is the singular use of PDF. In capitals this is repeated, so it can't be the author mixing up a letter to the Masons or something like that. Once I'm advised what PDF stands for this notice in the newsletter will make sense; though I'm not so sure, for 'font' - again used twice - seems to, perhaps for the In Crowd to have a further non religious meaning.

Robin Jackson

Dear Robin

Portable Document Format (PDF) has been around since 1991. It is a file format used to present and exchange documents reliably, independent of software, hardware, or operating system. Invented by Adobe, PDF is now an open standard maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). PDFs can contain links and buttons, form fields, audio, video, and business logic. They can also be signed electronically and are easily viewed using free Acrobat Reader DC software.

Printers use fonts (they used to call them typeface). There are thousands of them. We use Times New Roman in the magazine. If you receive the magazine as a PDF you can increase the print size on your screen to any size you are comfortable with. Receiving our magazine as a PDF has proved to be a great boon to some members who find the print size in the magazine too small these days.

Anne and Paul (RTCS Editors)

Paul

Thank you so much for your compelling reply to my consternation about PDF and fonts. It truly is a foreign language to me; I am so unconnected to all this, and now, not of an age when I wish to get to grips with it; but I am truly grateful for your sensitive and well constructed reply; PDF and fonts, well what ever next.

God Bless, Robin

Robin's enquiry about fonts (as distinct from the fonts found in churches) inspired me to do some further research. According to some sources font is derived from the Middle French 'fonte' meaning a casting or something that has been melted. Hence font is used to refer to the metal pieces used to set out a printing plate for books and newspapers: this is the process which made possible the shift from manuscripts to printed documents, and hence cheap copies of the Bible in the vernacular.

Anne Woollett

Correspondence: Lino the Taverham cat



Dear Editors

It was with much surprise and pleasure that we saw that the fame of Lino, our church cat, is spreading to your magazine!

Lino is a bit of a star at our church and is now even being requested to attend weddings - ever since he led a bride and her father down the aisle (and the bride and groom back after the ceremony). His timing to the music is impeccable

On a serious note, if anyone visits us you may end up having to give him some milk if you have tea or coffee from our little kitchen area but do guard your sandwiches! He has been known to eat the Vicar's sandwiches on more than one occasion and the filling is no issue either. Ham and mustard is no problem for Lino.

Sue Weatherburn, Church Warden,
St Edmunds Church, Taverham.

COLLIOURE: a Mediterranean round-towered church

In the village of Collioure stands a round-towered church, Notre-Dame-des-Anges. Situated in France 15 miles north of the Spanish border, and about 1000 miles south of East Anglia, it may be the most well-known round-tower church in Europe. Almost certainly it is the most frequently drawn, painted and represented. From the Fauvists through to the artists of today - be they professional or simply hobbyists - the bell tower with its pointy little pepper pot hat is just a must-do for anyone with a pencil or paintbrush.

Collioure is sited in a uniquely beautiful spot where coastal flats near Perpignan give way to rugged cliffs and secluded beaches. This is the Cote Vermeille, which is the French coast north of the Costa Brava. The deep blues of sea and sky and the almost crazily luminous sunlight attracted artists notably Matisse and Derain. They came in the early 20th century to what was then a small fishing village and painted in such wild colours that they became known as the Fauvists (**Fauvism** is the style of les Fauves, French for "the wild beasts", a loose group of C20th Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism).

Nowadays the town hosts more than 50 artists and their galleries and easels and is often referred to as the 'ville des artistes'. The church bell tower is the symbol of the town, loved by residents and visitors alike and it features in every street and square, on easels and in galleries, on postcards, magazine covers, tea towels, menus, adverts, paper serviettes and much more.

THE TOWER

The bell tower or 'clocher' has its feet in the sea, or, more accurately, it stands on a small outcrop of rock next to a sunny bathing beach. When the weather is inclement, as it often is, it is battered endlessly by huge waves. Unsurprisingly, the state of the fabric is now beginning to cause alarm and murmurings are heard about restoration funding. How did this round-towered church find its place by the sea?



Photograph by Clare Galloway



Photograph by Anne Woollett

ROMAN AND MEDIAEVAL TIMES

The Bay of Collioure was strategically important probably as far back as Roman times. The earliest written reference from a 7th century source referred to it as *Castrum Caucoliberi* which over the centuries became *Cocoliberis* and then *Collioure* or *Cotllioure* in Catalan. In the early C13th protecting commerce was thought important enough to

justify the building of a lighthouse, or more accurately, a beacon. It functioned with smoke by day and flames by night, but apparently also had a defensive purpose, as the lower part of the tower has narrow arrow-slits in a stout wall.

It is thought that the structure was partially destroyed when the kingdom of Majorca fell and towards the end of the fourteenth century a higher tower was constructed on its base. It was about two-thirds as high as the present-day tower.

THE 17th CENTURY

Collioure was in Spain until it was annexed by the French in 1642 during a fierce struggle between the Spain of the Habsburgs and the France of the Bourbons. An engraving, possibly contemporary shows French ships blocking the port. Ten thousand French troops occupied the surrounding hills. And the beacon tower stands alone before the addition of the church.



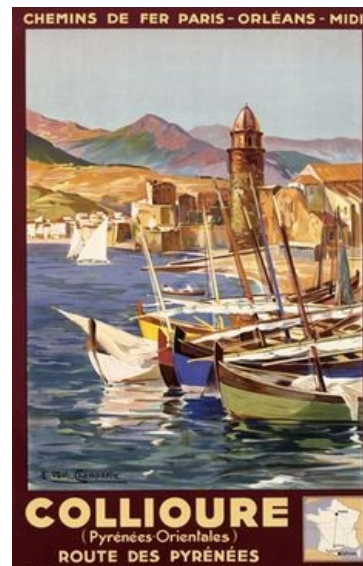
1642 etching of the lighthouse before the church was added (apologies for the quality of the copy).

In 1658 the border between France and Spain was redrawn further north by the Treaty of the Pyrenees which recognised that the Pyrenees constituted a more natural and practical boundary between the two countries. The Spanish-French border skirmishes more or less ceased thereafter.

In the late 17th century, the tower was therefore less strategically important for shipping and land defences were massively improved. In 1667 the tower became a prison, but in 1693 another change of function ensued. Vauban, Louis XIV's chief military engineer, created many fortresses and strongholds in this important area and Collioure was to be no exception. Under Louis's instructions, much of the original mediaeval town surrounding the castle was demolished so that fortifications could be strengthened. These demolitions left the villagers without their church.

A new church had to be found - for a few years an existing monastic building was used on the other side of the bay but this was not very convenient so a new church was built attached to the bell tower with the first stones laid on July 18th 1684. It was completed in 1693. At this point another level was added to the tower. The interior of the church is typically Catalan Baroque of the period with an ornate wooden gilded reredos and several similarly dressed side chapels.

The masonry of the tower can be best described in three sections. The lowest third is the 13th century base, which is about 7 metres high, faced with brown schiste and pierced by arrow-slits with white marble reveals. The next level is white rounded stones set in cement. Finally the top storey is topped with red brick.



THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

It was not till 1810 that the pink dome was added. It has been suggested that this was Italianate in inspiration but on the other hand there are several similar pepper pot towers on other buildings in Collioure and indeed elsewhere. This addition gives the whole tower a ridiculously phallic appearance, which is difficult to ignore and as you can imagine much has been written on this topic.



Watercolour by
the author

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Clare Gallaway

Summer Tours 2016 – Part 2

On a fine, warm June afternoon we arrived at **Potter Heigham St Nicholas**. The tower here is 48 feet high, post Norman with a contemporary octagonal belfry stage. Thatch was replaced by lead on the nave roof in 2012 but the chancel remains under thatch. On entering the church and looking up one sees a magnificent hammer beam roof. In the roof, above the font, is a curious wooden roller pulley which would have assisted in the raising and lowering of the font cover. Curious also is the 15th century font made of brick, a most unusual feature. The rood screen has paintings of saints and the Four Latin Doctors. However, for many people the greatest delight is to be found in the wall paintings. Especially fine are the works of mercy showing a microcosm of medieval life. A memorial to Robert Mihill ‘Clerke Vicar of ye Towne.... suffered much in ye Oliverian Times for his Loyalty to his Prince’ bears this rare terminology to describe the period of Cromwell’s rule.



Potter Heigham St Nicholas

Dilham St Nicholas, our second church of the day with this dedication, originally had a square tower. This was ruinous by 1835 when it was demolished and the round tower built. However, this also collapsed before the end of the century. In 1931 the present church replaced the old building with the base of the round tower becoming a baptistery, where the 14th century font, from the original church can be seen. The Royal Arms of George III are also in the church. Memorials record the names of those who died in the two World Wars; 6 in the First World War and 5 in the Second World War. The hammer beam roof is a credit to the craftsmen who built it.



Dilham St
Nicholas



Witton St Margaret's tower is 59 feet tall and circular for its full height. There is a lot of brick in this tower, especially near the top and the large number of iron ties visible show that repairs have been needed during the past. Most of the flints appear to be rounded water worn cobbles, which is not surprising considering the proximity of the coast. There are circular windows on the north side of the church with splays inside and out, which are often seen as evidence of early work in the Saxon style. The font is early 15th century while in the chancel, there are only two seats in the sedilia. Over the sedilia are two large pointed arches with dog tooth pattern above and at the sides. Some of our party climbed the tower and were rewarded with fine views towards the coast.

At the end of the tour we were served a tea variously described as 'generous', 'delicious' and 'outstanding'. Hopefully our gratitude was reflected in the donations bowl.



Witton
St Mar-
garet



Witton St Margaret

Our July tour took us to Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, starting at **Saxham Parva St Nicholas**. Its Norman tower is thought by many to be one of the finest of the Suffolk round towers. It is circular for its full height of almost 50' and has an arcaded upper storey with four belfry openings. The Norman south doorway, leads to an interior which has much to interest the visitor. A 17th century bier, with unusual retracting handles, stands beside a much smaller one used for children. On my last visit there were two bells, long removed from the belfry. Sadly these were stolen in October 2014. Many of the benches have interesting grotesques, while the pulpit dates from the 17th century. The attractive communion rails, with their double curve, were originally in the now abandoned church of Little Livermere, north of Bury St Edmunds. Two contrasting monuments in the north chapel, were greatly admired.

A life sized figure of Baron Crofts reclines bewigged, with his wife below him; an outstanding example of a baroque monument. On the east wall is a bust effigy of Elizabeth Crofts, who died in 1642. Perhaps 'bust' being particular appropriate as the lady is shown with her ample bosom bared for all to see.

The inscription beneath states '...she had a large proportion of personal beauty and handsomeness' and continues stating 'ye endowment of her mind being much more eminent'.

Saxham Parva. St
Nicholas



Higham St Stephen was designed in the Early English style by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1861 and was built at a cost of £6,000.00. It is one of his few entirely Victorian churches in Suffolk. Circular to a height of 56' the tower has a conical cap, giving a total height of almost 77'. The belfry stage has bell openings linked by blind arcading. Inside the church the ground floor of the tower contains the baptistry. Above is a groined vault supported on carved corbels. A north aisle is separated from the nave by a four bay arcade, while the roof has tie beams and king posts. Displayed in the north aisle is a benefaction board headed Parish of Gazely Hamlet of Higham charity land. This includes the following information 'the Proceeds are now distributed in COALS during the winter among deserving householders of the labouring class resident in the hamlet'. Michaelmas 1855. This reminds us that Higham was not originally a separate parish.



Higham. St Stephen

Across the county border, in Cambridgeshire, **Snailwell St Peter** has a Norman tower circular for its full height of almost 50'. The double light, round headed belfry openings are positioned beneath the parapet string course and the nave roof ridge reaches relatively close to the top of the tower. Every window is filled with coloured glass which gives a rather gloomy atmosphere. There was a very thorough Victorian restoration in 1878. However, there is a fine roof, arch braced to collar beam and hammer beams. The sun was shining as we enjoyed a picnic tea in the churchyard, which made a pleasant ending to a most interesting tour.



Snailwell. St Peter.

Stuart Bowell

Part 3 of the Summer 2016 Tour Report will follow in the March magazine.

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