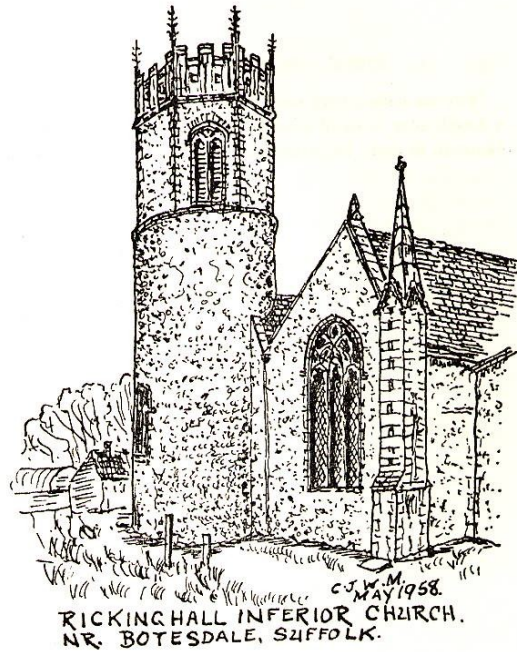




# The Round Tower

Vol. XLIV. No 1

September 2016



£2 to non members  
[www.roundtowers.org.uk](http://www.roundtowers.org.uk)

## ITEMS FOR SALE BY THE SOCIETY

<b>Tea Towels</b> — Five Norfolk Churches design	£3.00	Plus 70p p&p
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**Please forward orders to: - Mrs P Spelman, 105 Norwich Road, New Costessey, Norwich NR5 0LF. Cheques payable to The Round Tower Churches Society.**

Most RTCS committee members have an email address and would prefer to receive communications from members by email. If you write a letter and would like a reply by post please send a stamped addressed envelope.

Richard Harbord has been thinking about Great Hautbois. He shares his research with us on page 4.

We contacted Tim Pestell about the article he wrote for us in 1992. Tim walks the beach at Eccles most days and tells us that there is little new to report. We have his permission to reprint the 1992 article which starts on page 8.

RTCS Grant Officer Nick reports on his year on page 14.

TS and HT Norris continue their study of round tower churches in Europe on page 16. Your editors were inspired by their travels to visit the four round tower churches in Sweden earlier this year. Our photographs can be viewed on the RTCS Facebook page.

RTCS Chairman Stuart reports on the first RTCS tour of 2016 on page 20.

Finally if you missed RTCS member David Stannard talking about Eccles at our last Study Day you have another opportunity to hear him talk on this fascinating topic at a NAHRG meeting. See page 22 for details.

**The next issue is December 2016 and the deadline for contributions is 1st November 2016.**

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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Back Street  
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Norfolk  
NR10 4SJ  
Tel: 01603 870452  
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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 :-*

**Mr Richard Barham**  
6 The Warren, Old Catton,  
Norwich, NR6 7NW  
Tel: 01603 788721

## **THE ROUND TOWER**

The quarterly magazine of the  
Round Tower Churches Society  
[www.roundtowers.org.uk](http://www.roundtowers.org.uk)

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For up to date information visit the website. For up to the minute information follow us on Twitter or like us on Facebook. Links to our Facebook page and our Twitter feed can be found on the website. **[www.roundtowers.org.uk](http://www.roundtowers.org.uk)**

There are good reasons to receive the magazine as a PDF as well as a paper copy. Firstly colour photographs are in colour. Secondly the text can be read in as large a font size or as small a font size as you like.

Email [pt.hodge@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pt.hodge@tiscali.co.uk) to receive the magazine as a PDF.

## **Great Hautbois, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

*This church is also sometimes shown as ‘St Theobald’s Church’ a reference to a popular medieval shrine. Richard wrote first about this church in *The Round Tower*, June 2009.*

The tower is tall, tapered with thin walls. The flint-work of the tower is mainly of whole field flints with rough coursing in contrast with the gable wall which has no coursing. The quoins of big Pudding-Stones survive on both corners suggesting a Saxo-Norman date (ie 1080-1120). The north wall of the nave and west gable wall are of equal thickness which suggests that the tower was added to an earlier church. The orientation of the church is on an accurate east-west alignment suggesting the present building does not sit on an earlier Saxon structure.

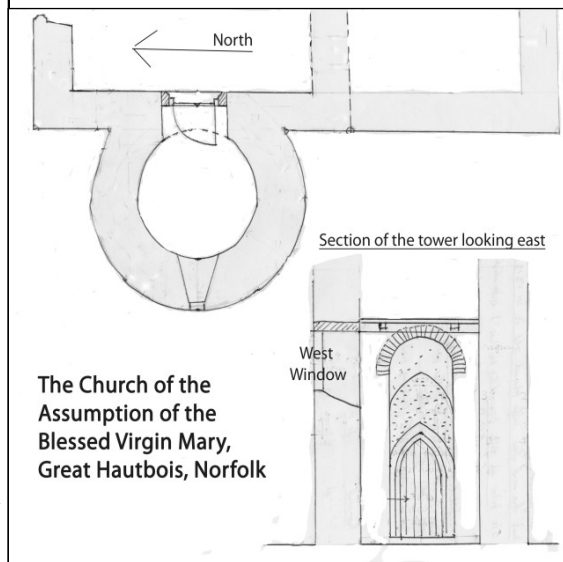
The original tower arch was very tall and narrow, with voussoirs made of narrow Roman red bricks. This was partly blocked up in two stages, leaving space only for the present small door (see the plan). The internal walls of the tower space are still plastered and no imposts are visible. The red tiled ground floor and the floor of the sound chamber are still in place despite the tower being a ruin. Most of the dimensions of the church are as given in William Goode’s *‘East Anglian Round Towers and their Churches’* (see the table).

On the other western side of the parish (in Little Hautbois) there was a medieval chapel and a hospital, or ‘House of God’. These were built by Sir Peter de Hautbois in 1235. He was the powerful Steward to the vast estates of St Benets Abbey, in Horning. The church described here stood next to Sir Peter’s fortified manor-house so it acted as a proprietary field-chapel detached from the small hamlet of Hautbois. The manor-house lay on the banks of the River Bure. It and the church were and still are reached via a causeway path across the meadows. The site of the moats of the manor-house and its double courtyard can still be seen amongst the trees.

In 1312 Sir Robert and his wife, Maud Baynard received a license to crenelate their manor-house and turn it into a small castle. About the same time the church was enlarged to accommodate the pilgrims visiting St Theobald's shrine. A south aisle and south porch were added. Very few alterations have been made to the church since then so this is one of the least changed round-tower churches in Norfolk.

Most of the residents of the parish live in what is now a suburb of Coltishall a large village to the east which is where the new church, built in 1864, was located. It was designed by that rogue Victorian architect Thomas Jeykyl (see Richard's article in *The Round Tower* December 2013, and *Norfolk Heritage Explorer* 7702). Instead of Jeykyl's habitual extravagance, this design is very muted (Pevsner calls it 'minimal Early English!') and it could have benefitted by more articulation. St Trinity's Church houses the wonderful base of a C12<sup>th</sup> font moved there from the old church. That may be another indication of the date of the church. Although the church is a ruined condition, the churchyard is still maintained and was used for burials into modern times.

William Goode's dimensions in metric;	
Tower;	
internal diameter	2.51
(I find it 2.30 north-south)	
wall thickness	0.91
arch wall	0.81
gable wall thickness	0.70
Nave – width	4.57
Nave + Aisle	9.07
My height dimensions from tower floor;	
tower door opening	2.00
west window sill	2.40
Medieval arch over door	2.88
Norman arch over door	3.55
arch width	1.14



The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Great Hautbois, Norfolk

Richard Harbord



The Taverham church cat. Photo by Dick Barham

### **Lead Roof Appeal**

Merton and Thwaite churches both had lead stolen from their roofs in autumn 2015.

The churchwardens have secured their churches against the winter weather to keep damage to a minimum. They have now started the difficult and lengthy process of seeking funding to repair their roofs.

RTCS is providing some financial support for these churches but the income we have from members' subscriptions necessarily limits what we are able to do. We are therefore making a special appeal to members to help these and other round tower churches who lose their lead. Any gift you feel able to make will help churches to repair the damage to their roofs.

Please send a cheque to Richard Barham at 6 The Warren, Old Catton, Norwich, NR6 7NW. You can also hand over cash or cheques to Richard on our tours. **This appeal will close on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.** Please mark your envelope 'Lead Roof Appeal'.

**RTCS Study Day at Rickinghall Inferior Village Hall  
Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016 starting at 10am**

Ian Groves (Ruined churches).  
Mark Mitchels (The Bible in English).  
Michael Rimmer (The Angel Roofs of East Anglia).

Tea and coffee will be provided but bring your own lunch.  
A RTCS member who wishes to remain anonymous is sponsoring this event. The ticket price to RTCS members is therefore only £10. The ticket price for non-members is £12.

To book tickets or to check ticket availability (cheques payable to The Round Tower Churches Society with a stamped addressed envelope please) contact Stuart Bowell at 2 Hall Road, Chilton Hall, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 1T. You can telephone Stuart on 01449 614336 or email him at [gw.sab@btinternet.com](mailto:gw.sab@btinternet.com).

**ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY TOURS**

One more tour this year.

3rd September. Thurgarton, Wickmere, Thwaite. We meet at Thurgarton at 2.30pm.

Everyone is welcome to join us and our tours are free, though donations are encouraged at every church. Teas will be provided by one of the churches

## **Eccles - a lost village by Tim Pestell.**

*In December 1992 The Round Tower published an article about Eccles on Sea written by Tim Pestell. This article brought together the findings and ideas of a small research group of local residents with historical, archaeological and geological interests. The investigations over a five year period coincided with some of the most extensive scouring of the beach in living memory which enabled the researchers to learn more about the history of Eccles and its church. Since the 1990s there has been less scouring and hence less new evidence. Given the interest David Stannard has generated in the lost church of St Marys Eccles we think readers might welcome the opportunity to revisit the 1992 article.*

*Anne Woollett*

‘Lost’ coastal settlements are perhaps best known from Dunwich, but of course this is only one of several; for instance, in North Norfolk alone, Keswick, Waxham Magna, Caistor Ness and Wimpwell have also been lost. Eccles has held a fascination in being one of the more tangible examples of a village lost to the depredations of the North Sea. The church tower standing on the beach fortunately led to an unusually good photographic record of the remains for the time. In addition there are several antiquarian accounts of both the church and objects of archaeological interest uncovered by tidal scours. Of these, the three principal accounts are by Suffling in his ‘East Coast Reminiscences’ published in the *Norwich Mercury*; by Danny Palmer in a short article in *Norfolk Archaeology* and by William Cooke, a local antiquary in his *Eccles-Next-The-Sea* (an embroidering upon Blomefield, with various personal anecdotes and observations added).

As a preliminary to describing the present research’s group’s work and what it tells us, some form of historical framework is desirable. The placename Eccles has been suggested by some as indicating a Romano-British origin, possibly as an early place of worship (1).



Eccles' first certain appearance is, unsurprisingly, in 1086 in the Domesday Book but our main information about the village comes from Blomefield's *Topographic History*. For instance he records the incumbants of Eccles, the first being Thomas Walcot (almost certainly Thomas of nearby Walcott) 'in the 9<sup>th</sup> of Edward II', that is, 1315. Although of interest, it is of limited use for understanding the village as he discusses mainly the ownership and rights of the Lords of the manor, the Le Parkers and the De Garners.

This serves to highlight how patchy our knowledge of the village is, although detailed documentary research could doubtless help to rectify this situation. Otherwise, most of the available sources concern the church. Hence, the 1254 Valuation of Norwich (2) records Eccles as having an above-average (although not exceptional) value. This probably reflects the larger size of the village compared to many others, which was therefore able to generate greater wealth. It also demonstrates that the first incumbent that Blomefield lists was clearly not its first priest.

There is an uncertain reference to a 'new' parish church being built in 1338 to replace one damaged or destroyed by incursions from the sea: this will be reviewed in the light of archaeological evidence below. St Mary's is also mentioned in what proved to be near the end of its life in the 1522 Inventory of Church Goods (3) when it was recorded as possessing a chalice and paten weighing 15 ½ ounces, a crimson velvet cope and two bells weighing 3 and 5 hundreds. Finally wills are a valuable source of information for at least the intentions and motivations of medieval people. 15 villagers had wills proved in the Consistory Court of the Bishops of Norwich between 1370 and 1550. The most interesting for present purposes is that of Jack Pickman (4) of 1507 who left a bequest of 40d towards the reparation of the 'perke' (the medieval name for a roodscreen).

These sources combine to outline a church and a village known today only from its ruined traces. It was against this background that the potential for an archaeological survey to substantially increase our knowledge of the village was recognised. Although unable to write history archaeology is able to generate alternative classes of information

which enable us to understand the past better. More specifically, in being a study of material culture (what people left behind) we can come closer to understanding the life of everyday people. And so, with the first scour of 1985 an archaeological project and research group was born.

Being based on low lying clays beneath the beach sand means that anything of archaeological interest revealed by the sea stands a good chance of still being *in situ* and hence allows reconstruction of part of the village's groundplan. Much of our work, therefore, has been spent in the time-honoured archaeological fashion of recording various features in plans and cross-sectional drawings.

The initial scour by the sea in 1986 uncovered part of a road, a possible foundation, a flint cobble well and a 'pit'. Since then subsequent scours across several hundred yards of the beach have added to this list and by 1991 we had been able to observe 9 wells, more road surfaces, parts of the church and graveyard and an assortment of artefacts including nearly 500 sherds of pottery.

Of all the features explored so far, perhaps the most useful to the archaeologist are the wells. In the medieval period wells were essential not only for water collection but for waste disposal. The gradual erosion of the clay containing the archaeological layers at Eccles has also meant that only deeper features such as wells survive in many parts of the beach. It would seem likely that the wells so far investigated had all been used for the collection of water, then for the disposal of refuse and in some cases as cess pits. The water contained within them had become starved of oxygen leading to 'anaerobic' conditions. This meant that the micro-organisms which act as rotting agents were unable to survive leading to the preservation of all manner of organic waste. Hence, amongst the finds from the wells objects recovered have included pieces of shoes, straw, wood and even scraps of cloth. In addition to these, more common types of waste such as animal bones and potsherds have been found. Together they vividly illustrate a way of life led without the comfort of a dustman's weekly visit. In addition the finds are all dateable to no later than the traditional destruction of Eccles in 1601. This is important in supplying

contributory evidence that the abandonment of the village must have been at the start of the seventeenth century which is far from clear from the scattered documentary sources.

Also of interest is the variety of techniques observed for the construction of the wells. All originally had a large hole dug, usually circular, in a bowl shape. At the centre of this the foundations for the wall of the actual well were constructed. In two cases the walling was of flint cobbles which were laid on bases of brick and wood. This formed a square frame upon which the walls were built up, the corners being rounded off in each progressive course until the well was of a circular shape. Once the wall was completed, the bowl in which the wall was built was filled in, leaving the circular shaft. The same method was used in most of the wells found except that instead of cobbles they were built from large sun-baked blocks and in one case just heavily beaten down layers of clay.

It takes a certain kind of person to delight in other people's waste and fortunately not all of our endeavours have been so subterranean. Scours have also revealed traces of the topography in the area around the church, including a linear feature which is interpreted as a ditch forming the western boundary of the churchyard. The churchyard wall has also been found to the south and east of the church ruins and beyond it a layer of cobbles has been observed. This almost certainly represents the remains of a road surface which ran round the church and corroborates some of the antiquarian accounts from the last century. This is pleasing as the confirming of such details means that we can have more confidence in accepting certain other claims for which there are no means of confirmation. For instance, according to Suffling (5) the church is supposed to have a north porch. Today there is no way of proving this as all the church walls have been completely undermined by the sea.

All of this brings us neatly to St Mary's church, of which only the tower stood on the beach until destroyed in a storm on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1895. Its position, isolated on the beach, made it a familiar local landmark

used by mariners and visited by many local artists. The tower seems to have been approximately 20m (66 feet) high, including the octagonal stage, the round tower being some 12.8m (42 feet) in height. Only the tracery of the octagonal belfry can be seen in surviving photos of the church and show it to have been of C14th or C15th date. There was a tall tower arch some 6m (20 feet) high which had later been lowered to form a small pointed doorway about 3.3m (11 feet) high.

Investigations since 1986 have enabled several details of the church's structural history to become clearer. An antiquarian plan of the church drawn in December 1893 by Yarmouth architect James Teasdel shows the south aisle and most of the nave still intact. It also shows a sinuous line between the nave and the south aisle. It would seem that this represents the original nave south wall which was subsequently demolished when the aisle was added. Observations of the rubble remaining on the beach have shown that the tower was added onto a pre-existing nave, one large curved fragment having the characteristic flat edge of a butt-join. In addition the buttresses on the south aisle wall which Teasdel's plan shows, were clearly added. Fragments of the aisle wall still survive although now undermined and left scattered at various angles. These show that the buttresses had far shallower foundations than the walls which they were supposed to support. A fragment of limestone from one of these buttresses which became detached in a strong tide proved of added interest. The mortar had preserved chisel marks which by analogy with other better dated examples, may date from the late C14th or C15th (6). It is therefore tempting to associate the construction of the buttresses with a campaign to consolidate the church following incursions by the sea. Certainly this might make some sense of the reference to the 'rebuilding' of the church in 1338 as the tower and nave at least are earlier than this. Other limestone blocks from the church have been found loose in the sand at very low tides, some retaining traces of chisel marks. Unfortunately nearly all are too worn to be dated.

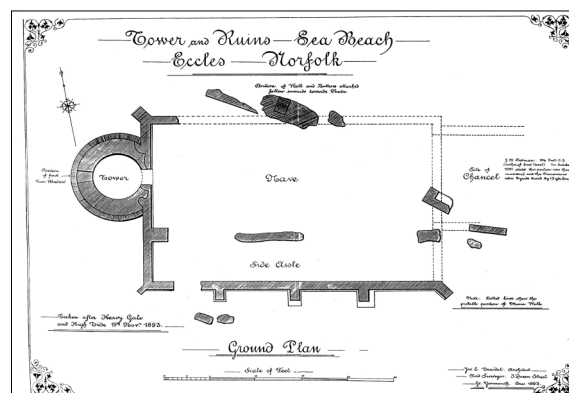
The scouring of the sea has also uncovered parts of the churchyard. This has shown that the area to the north of the nave ruins has been totally eroded of archaeological layers including burials, but that many skeletons still survive elsewhere. All those burials still surviving have

been left untouched as removal without a Home Office licence is illegal. Nevertheless, careful observation suggests that the many children's graves seen along the south side of the church may be the result of a deliberate 'zoning' policy of burials in the medieval period. This has been suggested at other excavated cemeteries, for instance at Magdalen Street (7) and the Anglia TV site in Norwich (8). Fortunately, the site of the graveyard is safely covered by a deep blanket of sand again.

In conclusion, the investigations at Eccles have enabled a dramatic increase in our knowledge of both the village and church despite the severe time restrictions imposed by tides (and usually the inclement weather which led to the scouring in the first place).

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- 4 S Cotton Medieval Roodcreens in Norfolk: their construction and painting dates. Norfolk Archaeology 1987 XL 44-54
- 5 E R Suffling East Coast Reminiscences The Norwich Mercury August 28<sup>th</sup> 1897
- 6 J R Magilton The Church of St Helen-on-the-Walls, Aldwark The Archaeology of York 10/1 York 1980
- 7 B S Ayers pers comm
- 8 B S Ayers Excavations within the North-East Bailey of Norwich Castle 1979 East Anglian Archaeology, 28, Dereham 1985



Tim Pestell

## **Grant Officers Report 2015-2016.**

The Society gave twelve grants (up from five in 2014-15) and work was completed on several churches where we have promised grants. As you can imagine the main cause of delay is obtaining funding but there are also many hoops that churches have to jump through before contractors start work.

We promised Welborne a grant of £2000 as long ago as 2008. Finally they have been awarded a first stage grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This allows preliminary investigations and work such as a bat survey to take place. The PCC member leading the project (an unpaid volunteer) is at present working through an 80 page questionnaire, We have sent Welborne our promised cheque and very much hope that they are awarded the full Heritage Lottery Fund grant as flints are starting to fall out of the tower structure.

It is often the case that preliminary investigations and work reveal that problems are far worse than was first thought. This is the case with Sedgford who discovered that the floor under all the pew benches was unsound. Their total bill for new works is likely to exceed £340,000.

As always the churches that we are able to award our relatively small grants are very grateful to us. Our support is often helpful in securing larger grants elsewhere. The very generous legacy from Brian Harmer has meant that we have been able to offer grants of thousands of pounds rather than hundreds. This legacy is now exhausted, unfortunately.

Repairs to roofs have featured heavily this year. We gave grants to Merton and Thwaite after lead thefts. Fritton St Edmund rethatched the north side of their nave roof and Matlaske re-laid their roof tiles. Their new rainwater goods not only look good but look good to last another century or so.

Extensive and expensive repairs have been carried out on the towers at Ramsholt and Clippesby. These towers now look splendid. RTCS has been given a limited edition print in thanks for our support (see p15). East Anglia is very fortunate in that we still have skilled craftspeople

prepared to show visitors what they are up to.

Other schemes we have supported this year include new lighting at Mautby and reopening the north door at Ashby to allow wheelchair access.

Finally I would like to thank members for their subscriptions and generous donations. Without your support we would have no money to give away in grants.

Nick Wiggin



Welborne, All  
Saints



Clippesby, St  
Peter

## THE ROUND TOWER CHURCH OF SUNDRE, SOUTHERN GOTLAND, SWEDEN

**TS and HT Norris continue their study of round tower churches in Europe and especially in Scandinavia with this article about the church at Sundre, at the south of the island of Gotland.**

Gotland is a large island in the Baltic Sea, to the east of central Sweden. Visby is its principal town which is famous for its rich heritage of mediaeval remains of churches and walls. The cathedral, *Skt Marienkyrka*, built about 1200 was consecrated by Bishop Bengt of Linköping, Sweden. As with the rest of Scandinavia, the replacement of the Norse religion by Christianity and the building of churches started late, from about 1100. The earliest stave churches (*Stavkyrkor*) like the Viking dwellings (*Vikinghus*) were probably built in wood.

In Sundre near the Southern tip of the island of Gotland, is an example of early mediaeval round tower built separately from its associated church. There also is a ruined tower near the late Gothic church at Dalhem, Gotland and the foundations of a round tower in Visby. In the late 11<sup>th</sup> Century and early 12<sup>th</sup> Century, towers were built at locations along the Baltic coast, including some on Gotland and were probably used for defence as well as bell towers. They were built in the vicinity of churches, harbours and trading places. As they were in exposed points along the shores of the Baltic Sea, they were open to raids by the Wends and Baltic seaman and from pirates looking to steal the treasures of the churches. Building a tower at a distance from its church, could minimise damage to the church from fire if the tower was attacked.



Sundre round tower and associated church in background



It would seem likely that a wooden stave church was first constructed at Sundre, perhaps similar to the reconstructed stave church at Moesgård, Denmark (see below). A stone tower was then constructed detached from the stave church. Later, the stave church was replaced by a stone church.



Reconstruction  
of Viking stave  
church,  
Moesgård, Den-  
mark

The round tower at Sundre was built from Siluric limestone, and is covered by a dome like stone roof probably with a parapet wall. The tower originally had three storeys, like Østerlars Round Church on Bornholm, Denmark. The entrance was via what is now a rounded portal which led upwards via a spiral stone stairway to the parapets. There is a similar raised entrance at Hammarlunda (as reported in *The Round Tower*, June 2011). The present entrance at ground level was opened in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Access between the floors was provided by wooden ladders. The tower looks similar to local windmills and involved the same building skills as round towers..

In conclusion, Sundre round tower church demonstrates that round towers were not always built abutting their corresponding naves. Bramfield in Suffolk is the only extant example of a UK round tower built separately from its church. Towers could also serve as watch towers and for defensive purposes, with their bells providing a means of communication to warn of attacks. The strong links between Eastern England and Scandinavia in this period suggest the possibility of mutual influence in tower and church design.

TS and HT Norris.

**The Round Tower has published a number of other articles by HT and TS Norris about round towers and churches in Scandinavia.** These are: Round Tower Churches of Skane, Southern Sweden in The Round Tower December 2005 (not available electronically); Reflections on the Round Tower ApSES of the Norwegian Stave Churches (Mast Churches) in The Round Tower March 2009; Rotundas and Round-Towered churches in Northern Europe in The Round Tower March 2011. In this they report on an article by Jes Wienberg from the University of Lund. There is also a piece on Investigations in Hammarlunda Church in The Round Tower June 2011. The latter three articles can be viewed or downloaded from the RTCS website.

**In the June magazine we published an appeal from the Wooden Graveboard Survey.** RTCS member John Girt reports on a wooden graveboard in Suffolk.

‘I think you may be interested in the attached images taken today. They are of the grave board, running the length of the grave and with the letters carved ‘proud’ as opposed to being incised of my Great, Great, Uncle John Girt.

The church is St. Andrew, Hasketon, NGR TM250503. The RTCS journal says there are no wooden boards in Suffolk but this one surely exists and is also at a round towered church!

John Girt was born 6 June 1837, married Elizabeth Chisnall (supposedly when he was 14 years old) and died aged 65 years on 5 May 1903. Close examination of the board reveals the death date although it is now becoming a little unclear in photographs but reasonably clear when viewed close to’.



**Quatrefoil** held a 'Bringing Local History Alive' day at **Rickinghall Inferior Church** on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Villagers brought photographs and ephemera and their personal memories.

Visitors came from as far away as Surrey and Northampton, as well as many local people and other East Anglians. The event launched Brian Chandler's book 'James Scarfe of Botesdale, one of the Noble Six Hundred' which tells the story of a man who survived the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War in 1854. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> book in the Quatrefoil series of local history books.

Sue Emerson gave a talk about the book and even brought a genuine sabre to demonstrate how James would have received his wounds. Sarah Doig showed photographs taken by The Rev. Edmund Farrer of Botesdale and Rickinghall in the 1920s showing properties which have been demolished since then.

Displays and information on the villages of Botesdale, Rickinghall and Redgrave were available to view as well as profiles of individual people involved in The Great War.

Donations from visitors were given in support of Rickinghall Inferior Church Fabric Fund amounting to over £140. Copies of the books are available from Diana Maywhort. Tel. 01379 898785.

Rickinghall Inferior's latest event, on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August, was a concert by Hexachordia '*Music for a Golden Queen*' to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of our current Queen.

### **Gissing, St Mary the Virgin**

We have a music day in our round tower church on Saturday 10 September. Pop in and see what is on offer.

The event will run from 10am-4pm. Celebrate all kinds of music from boogie to Bach. There is no entrance fee but we hope that folks who come to listen to what is on offer will leave a donation for the church.

One of our star attractions is the Reverend Norman Steer of Starston on ukulele!

## Summer Tours 2016 – Part 1

The 2016 Tour Season began on a sunny May morning at **Holton St Peter** in Suffolk. Here the tower is circular for its full height of 52 feet. It appears a new belfry was added during the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, its fabric differs from the lower part of the tower and contains much brick. Eight round headed stone framed, original belfry openings (four are now blocked) remain on a continuous string course. Above the arch of the Norman south doorway is a contemporary carving of a mythical creature, perhaps a griffon. Inside, the roofs are arch braced. Items of interest include the C15<sup>th</sup> font, with shields and Tudor Roses and the Royal Arms of George III.



Holton St Peter.

**Wissett St Andrew** has an early Norman tower, circular for its full height of 50 feet. There are two Romanesque doorways, with the North being the finer. This has recently been brought back into full use as disabled access to the church. The interior has much of interest. The nave roof is arch braced without collars with alternate principals and tie beams. Lions and woodwoses decorate the stem of the font and the Royal Arms

are of George III dated 1813. There are fragments of medieval glass, including depictions of angels in the windows. A modern carving of St Andrew holding a boat is a striking addition to the church's treasures. The wheeled parish bier now sees service as a bookstand. St Andrew's has three individual memorials to the men of the parish who lost their lives in C20th conflicts: nine in the Great War, one in WW2 and Robert Moore 'gave his life for his comrades' in Malaya in 1951. Some of our party ascended the tower to the ringing floor, giving them the opportunity to observe the interior fabric.



Wissett St Andrew

**Spexhall St Peter's** tower fell in 1720, was rebuilt in 1910 and now stands circular for its full height of 50 feet. Inside the church is a wall mounted brass effigy of 1593 to a woman and six children of the Browne family. Close to the south porch in the churchyard are some gravestones bearing typical C18<sup>th</sup> rhyming epitaphs. One to James Garrould who died in 1767, aged 71 years, reads:

'Here lies an Honest Inoffensive friend  
Peaceful in his life and Happy to his End  
Harmless in words and in his dealings Just  
Constant to his promise and upright to his trust'

After the tour, the AGM was held in the Village Hall. We were served an excellent tea by the good folk of Spexhall.



Spexhall St Peter.



Stuart Bowell

**Norfolk Archaeological and Historical Research Group (NAHRG)**

**Saturday 19th November: 2.30pm**

**The Destruction of Eccles-super-Mare.**

David Stannard (Retired Business Lecturer and Local Historian).

NAHRG meetings take place at UEA (Room Arts 01.02) at 2.30 pm.

UEA parking £1 on Saturdays.

For further details visit the NAHRG website. [www.nahrg.org.uk](http://www.nahrg.org.uk)

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