

ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY



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Newsletter



EDITOR'S UPDATE

Dear Members,

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Altogether Archaeology Newsletter. The year is nearly over and what a busy time it's been!

Our two summer digs this year – at Gueswick and Gilmonby – are both incredibly important, adding to our knowledge of the local area. These digs were well supported by our members and both digs will continue next year, where there is every prospect of even more interesting finds coming to light.

A big thanks to Elaine Vallack for putting together this year's program of talks and activities. Let's hope next year's itinerary is equally stimulating.

If you are interested in knowing what future events and activities are taking place then visit the website at: <https://altogetherarchaeology.org>

Read on to find out more about the continued adventures of Alan Newham in his explorations of the country's churches. In this issue he delves deep into East Anglian architecture (p.3). Margaret Ablett gives an account of how she survived the tender ministrations of our next generation of archaeologists during the recent digs (p.7). Also, Kay Fothergill gives us her account of the discovery of a bee-hive quern-stone in a farmer's garden at Croft-on-Tees (p.9). I hope you enjoy reading these articles.

And finally, test your knowledge with the quiz (p.13)

Wishing you all a 'Happy Christmas' and a fabulous New Year!

Sue Goldsborough

(Editor)

CHURCH CORNER

SOME FLINT CHURCH ROUND TOWERS in EAST ANGLIA

Flint, when spoken of in archaeological terms, will usually refer to lithic tools. However, flint had an important use elsewhere. Because of the paucity of a more conventional building stone in the East Anglia region, the convenient availability of flint solved a building problem as far back to the medieval period.

Early flint church round towers are mainly found in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, numbering some 168, with a dozen or so, shared between Essex, Sussex, Cambridgeshire and Berkshire. Of the total number, about 150 dates from the medieval period.

Construction of the towers was not always exclusively in flint. Conglomerates such as carstone and pudding stone were also employed in several towers as decorative bands and features. Construction methods would employ the usual main elements of scaffolding and shuttering, but care had to be taken when deciding the height of each section of 'lift' in the tower construction.

The flint nodules would be of various shapes and sizes, therefore would sit in a matrix of mortar in a random way, unlike the roughly flat surfaces of a coursed rubble wall made of say, limestone where the mortar can be layered more evenly. Therefore, mortar must be hard enough before the next 'lift' is undertaken. The bands of 'lifts' can sometimes be seen clearly on the towers.

The following four church towers date from the late Anglo-Saxon or Saxo-Norman so-called 'overlap' period:

Saint Mary, Haddiscoe, Norfolk

The tower is built in four stages separated by string-courses of dressed stone. The parapet is of a much later date. The most interesting feature is the double belfry openings that combine the Saxon mid-wall cylindrical shaft and triangular heads with the detail of the billet moulding and the angle shafts that make them also Norman in character (fig.1). Pevsner's Norfolk volume agrees:

'The twin bell-openings are clearly Saxon and as clearly Norman'

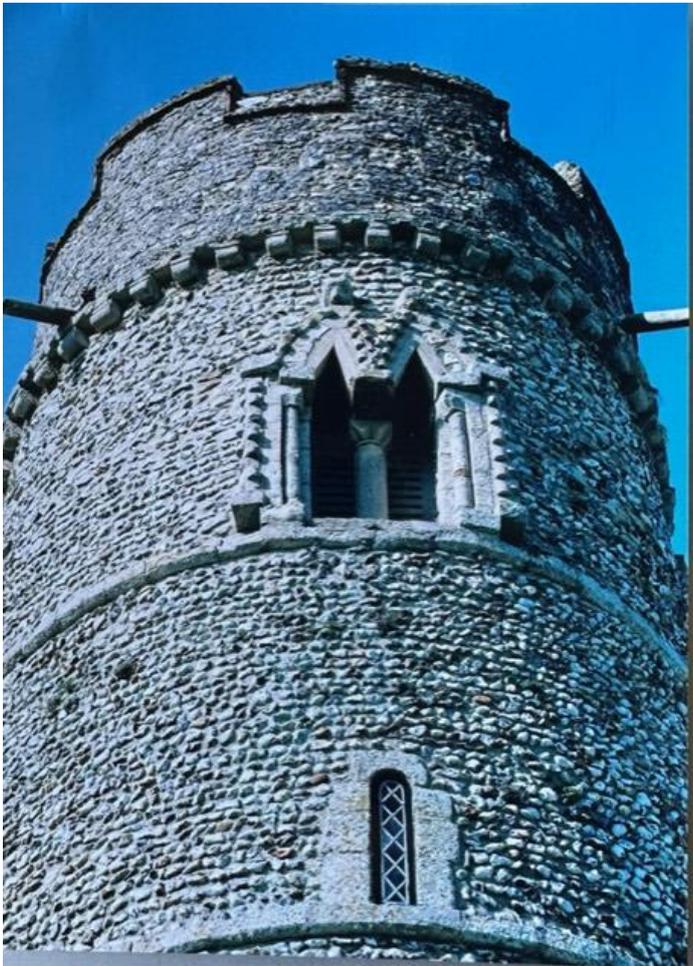


Fig.1: Saint Mary's Church, Haddiscoe, Norfolk

Saint Andrew, Great Ryburgh, Norfolk

The lower stages of the tower show clearly both the 'lifting' stages of the construction, but also the use of brown carstone in decorative bands (fig.2).



Fig.2: Saint Andrews Church, Great Ryburgh, Norfolk

Saint Margaret's Church, Hales, Norfolk

Although the main body of the church is considered Norman, the tower is thought to be Saxon on account of the two double splayed windows in the tower (fig.3a). The exterior splays are blocked but the interior splays can be seen within the tower. What can be seen is of great interest in late Anglo-Saxon construction work. It is clear, that the inner splays of the round heads are built over a frame of basket-work that although painted, can still be seen to this day (fig.3b).



Fig.3:

(A. above) Saint Margaret's Church, Hales, Norfolk

(B. left) showing the basket-work imprint

Saint Andrew, Little Snoring, Norfolk

The broad tower is detached from the later church; it has no original windows and has a blocked tower arch (fig.4). This indicates the remains of an earlier church, whereby the strength of the tower has out-last-ed the church it was attached to.

The tower arch is made of carstone that can be seen also in the lower stage of the tower (fig.5). The later church alongside the tower has a Norman/early English origin (fig.5).

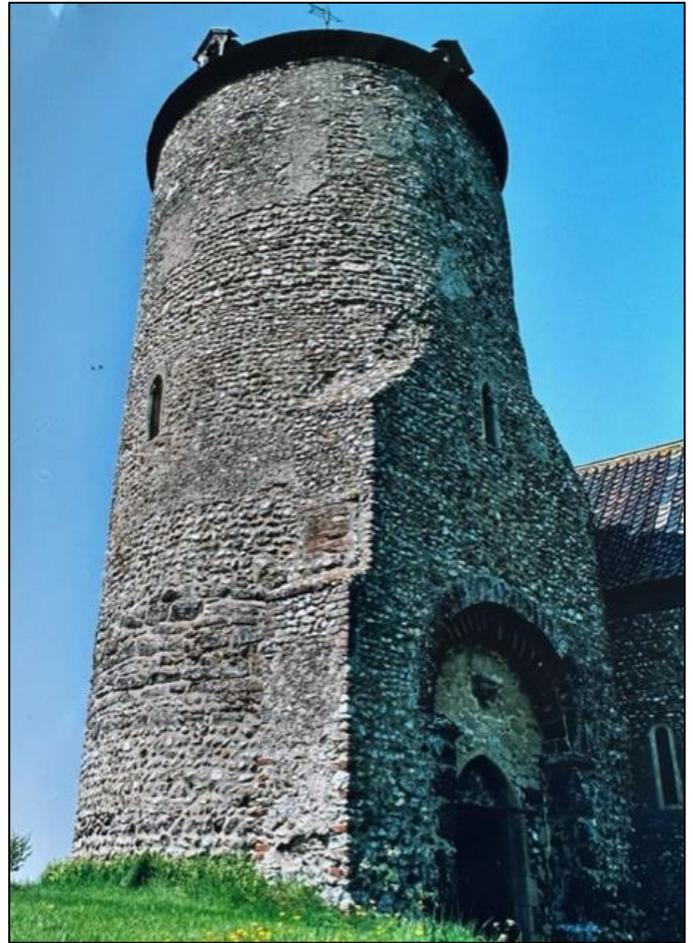


Fig.4: Saint Andrew, Little Snoring – the tower with carstone arch



Fig.5: Saint Andrew, Little Snoring, with later church

Alan Newham

(Photos: Alan Newham except 3A: www.visitchurches.org.uk)

OUT and ABOUT

This year, Altogether Archaeology in conjunction with the engagement officer for the NPAONB Silver and Lead Project welcomed young people with an adult family member onto our sites at Plover Hall and Gueswick, to spend time alongside our members and learn a little more about what we do and the way we excavate sites.

I was only involved on one of the days but what a fun day it was. The young people aged between seven and thirteen were a breath of fresh air full of interesting questions and ideas.

The day began with a tour led by Tony Metcalfe looking at the site and deciding why it might be a suitable place for a settlement. The youngsters quickly spotted the river and the position on a hill with a flat top that would make a safe desirable place to settle and defend.

They spent some time looking at and talking about Stephen Brown's models with such enthusiasm. They now had a good idea what the site might have looked like. We examined some finds and with Tony's help they found out about the pottery glass and iron work.

Rob Young created an amazing human timeline with them to show when the settlement might have existed. It involved walking into spots depicting events such as grandma's birthday, the first and second world wars, the great fire of London etc. The young people enjoyed it tremendously and so did the adults. What a great way to teach the history of time.



Now it was time to dig. Some of our group attended the young archaeologist club at the Auckland Project and already had some knowledge of how to excavate. Our younger members simply wanted to find skulls and weapons. They all listened carefully to how we were going to excavate, scraping back with their trowels. It was great to see how carefully they tackled the work. Their concentration was a delight to see.



We worked for quite some time without finding anything of any significance but they were not put off. I was just so impressed with the attitude of these young people. I remember a dig at Piercebridge some time ago where we opened five trenches and in one of them there were roman coins and pottery coming out constantly. In the other four trenches we found nothing and of course I was working in one of these. It was quite something to see the way they carried on with nothing to show for their hard work.

I do believe that they had fun and enjoyed the experience and I know that I certainly did. I look forward to next time and hope to see them again as well as more youngsters who might be interested.

Margaret Ablett

(Photos: M Ablett)

OBJECT FOCUS

ANOTHER BEEHIVE QUERN-STONE

Our excavations at Gueswick have produced several rotary quern-stones. Two were lifted this year and details sent to John Cruse of the Yorkshire Quern Survey. He confirmed that they were the bottom stones of Iron Age/Romano-British bee-hive querns. Visitors to the site were very interested in the querns but as both excavated ones were bottom stones, they had some difficulty in visualising how they would have been used.

Imagine my surprise when I was showing some pictures of the dig to a farmer's wife near Croft-on-Tees and she said she had something very similar in her garden which had been found years ago during ploughing. I went to look at it and the stone proved to be the upper stone of a bee-hive quern.

I thought people would be interested to see the pictures as it helps to see how the quern would have been used.



The stone is about 16.5 cms high and the flat top is approximately 16cms across though wider below.

The centre hole is funnel-shaped and about 6 cms across at the top though narrower below. The hole had soil in it but is thought to go right the way through. It has 1 prominent hole for a handle and 3 possibly 4 others on the opposite side.



I wondered if there were several holes at one side because the original hole became worn in use so they had to make other ones but that of course is just a theory. Perhaps they used a forked stick at one side to give greater purchase.



I sent the photos and measurements to John Cruse and he sent me the following information.

It does indeed look to be the upper stone of a beehive quern.

It appears to be largely intact: its exterior looks to be 'punch' dressed, i.e. never finished with the usual neat 'peck' dressing. The c. 5cm wide flat top is interesting – only a few are known, but they don't have any regional focus: the handle is placed quite high on the side and could well have a companion on the other side.

Although the grinding ('G/S') is not visible, it doesn't look to have worn unevenly. I suspect there might be some deliberate damage to the grinding surface edges (which would be normal 'decommissioning' activity): the damage to the hopper rim looks to be relatively recent, as it seems to have been removed by a metal tool.

I'd expect the G/S diameter to be around 30cm: As the height range is c. 25cm (new) to 10cm (exhausted), at 16.5cm high, this was c. 60% used.

It seems to be made from a local gritstone. I've added it to our Yorkshire Quern Survey archive as YQS 8903.

There is more information about the various types of quern stones here

<https://www.yas.org.uk/Sections/Prehistory-Research/Quern-survey>

Kay Fothergill

(Photos: Kay Fothergill)



Contribute to the Newsletter

We are always on the lookout for contributions, and welcome submissions of general archaeological interest as well as those about AA activities, so please let us know what you have been up to!

If you would like to contribute an article or photographs for the next edition (June), contact the Newsletter Editor, Sue Goldsborough at:

sgoldsborough2002@yahoo.co.uk

QUIZ

Multiple choice... no cheating! Answers p.15



1. What is the site of Gobekli Tepe in Turkey best known for?

Pottery	Pillars	Well-preserved bodies
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2. Where did archaeologists locate the lost city of Heracleion, in Alexandria, Egypt?

In the jungle	Underwater	Buried in sand
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3. Which civilisation is known for using Linear B script?

Mycenaeans	Minoans	Hitites
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4. When was Machu Picchu built?

8 th century	12 th century	15 th century
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5. How many soldiers make up the Terracota Army?

60	600	6000
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6. What is the name of this archaeological site?



Library of Celsus, Ephesus
Petra
Karnak Temple Complex

7. What year did a volcanic eruption bury Pompeii?

810 BC	79 AD	355 AD
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8. What was an open space that served as a meeting ground for citizens in ancient Greece?

Agora	Forum	Amphitheatre
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9. What is the fossilised excrement of animals called?

Carbonite	Coprolite	Petralite
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10. What is the scientific discipline concerned with all aspects of soil?

Geology	Limnology	Pedology
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11. What is the scientific discipline concerned with dating and interpreting past events according to the analysis of tree rings?

Dendrochronology	Radio carbon dating	Thermoluminescence
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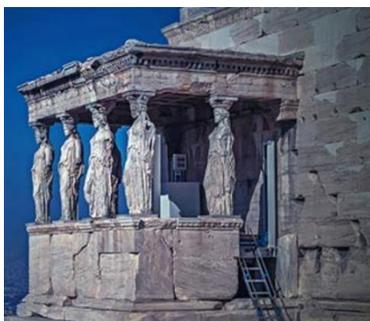
12. How can archaeologists figure out how old rocks or pottery from a site are?

Potassium-argon dating	Thermoluminescence	Electron Spin Resonance
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13. Which Roman emperor was responsible for the invasion and conquest of Britain?

Claudius	Calligula	Julius Caesar
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14. Name this site



Temple of Olympian Zeus
Pantheon of Rome
Acropolis of Athens

15. Name this site



Chichen Itza
Tikal
Machu Picchu



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Quiz answers:

1. Pottery
2. Underwater
3. Mycenaeans
4. 15th
5. 6000
6. Petra
7. 79 AD
8. Agora
9. Coprolite
10. Pedology
11. Dendrochronology
12. Thermoluminescence
13. Claudius
14. Acropolis of Athens
15. Tikal

Many thanks to the following AA members for this edition's contributions:

Alan Newham

Margaret Ablett

Kay Fothergill