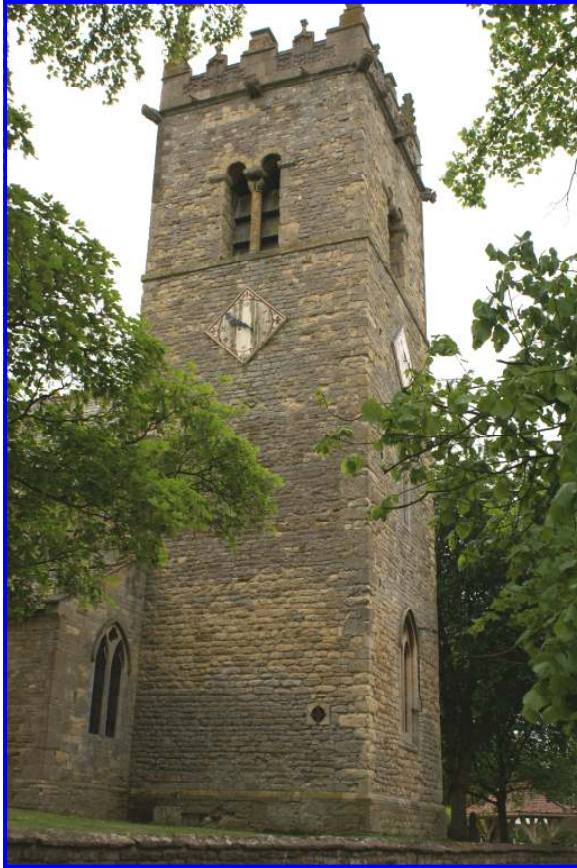# Anglo-Saxon towers (1).

page 1.

These pages show a selection of towers, of varying stature and interest. Pictures are described in every case in clockwise rotation and from the top left hand picture (blue border). The aspect from which they are viewed is shown, for instance, N for north, E for east, etc.

1. All Saints, Harmston, Lincs; N.
2. A closer detail of a belfry window Harmston (note characteristic mid shaft).
3. All Saints, Branston, Lincs; S.
4. Belfry stage, Branston.
5. N face, Branston.
6. St Mary le Wigford, Lincoln; W.
7. Dedication stone in W wall of pic 6; the A-S inscription is cut above the Latin on this Roman memorial stone.
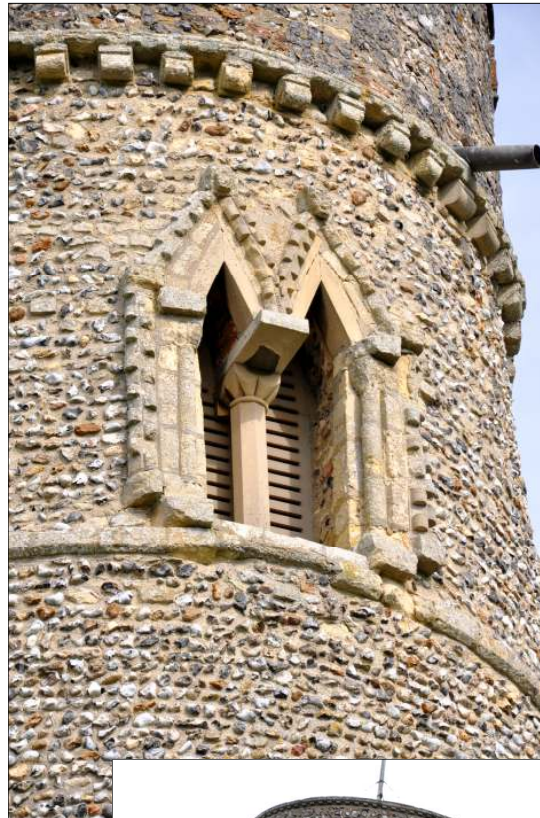
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Towers.

8. St. John, Barnack, Northants; SW.
9. All Saints, Hough-on-the-Hill, Norfolk; W.
10. Hough again; N.
11. St. Margaret, Marton, Lincs; S.
12. The tower stairway at Hough.
13. All Saints, Brixworth, Northants; S.
14. Holy Trinity, Colchester, Essex; S.

Towers.

15. St. Barnabas, Great Tey, Essex; NW. late 10th century, central tower. The belfry stage is Norman.
16. St. Mary, Haddiscoe, Norfolk; one of 4 belfry windows.
17. Haddiscoe, tower; N.
18. Belfry opening, Haddiscoe; note prominent stops.
19. St. Andrew, Framingham Earl, Norfolk; S.
20. St. Mary, Howe, Norfolk; S.

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21. St. Mary, Tasburgh; N. Note the arcading which worked in flint.
22. As 21, detail.
23. St.John, Milborne Port, Somerset. 2nd stage Saxo-Norman hybrid; top stage later medieval; NW.
24. As 23; west face from SW. Note truncated springing of blind arcading to S & N of surviving arch; the remainder has been 'built out' by later re-facing of walling.
25. All Saints, Earls Barton, Northants. The remarkable tower; NE (see dedicated photo page on this church).

26. Kirk Hammerton, church of St. John, Yorkshire. The tower from the south. The double belfry window (one of four) has a through-stone supported on a mid-wall shaft. None of the shafts have capitals but have rude bases consisting of a bulbous collar over a splayed foot. H.Taylor puts the date of the tower after 950.
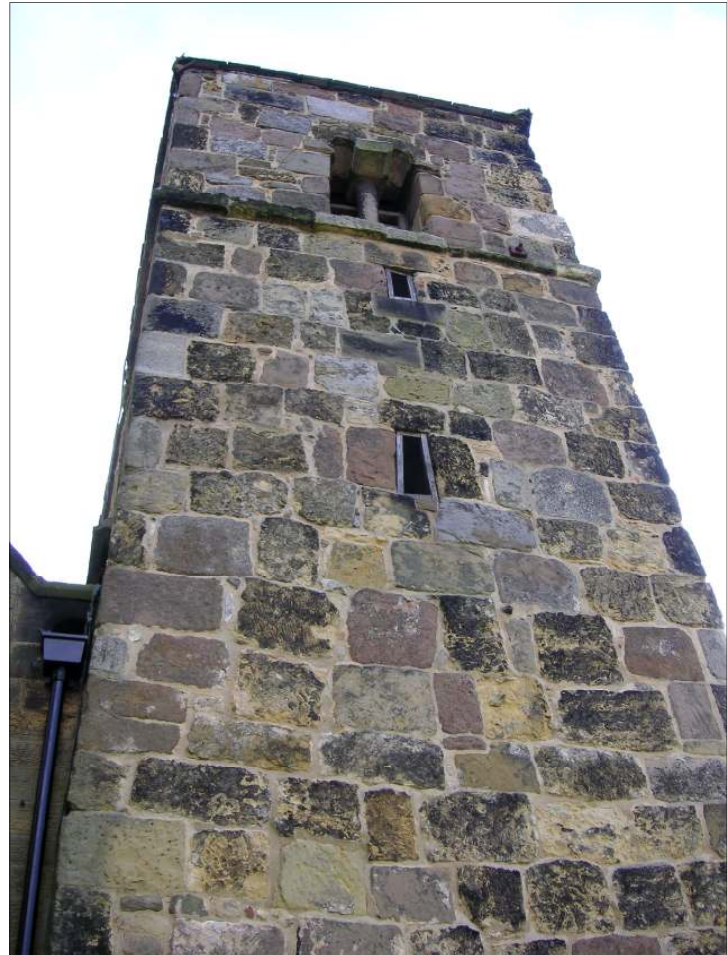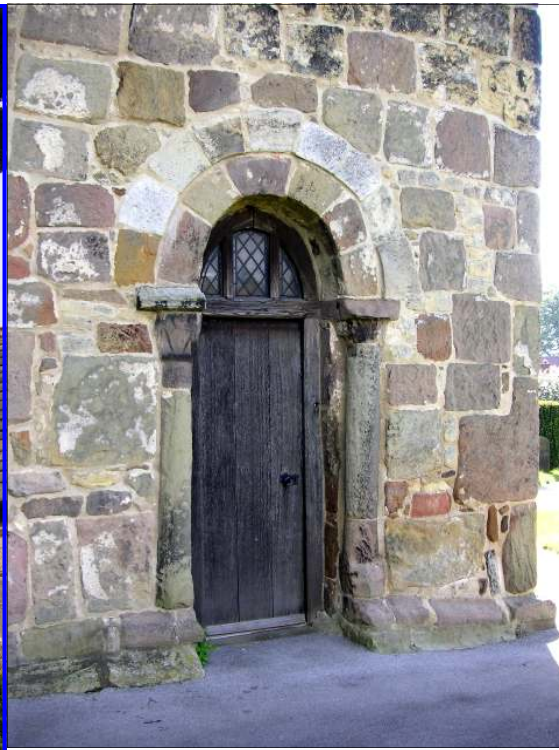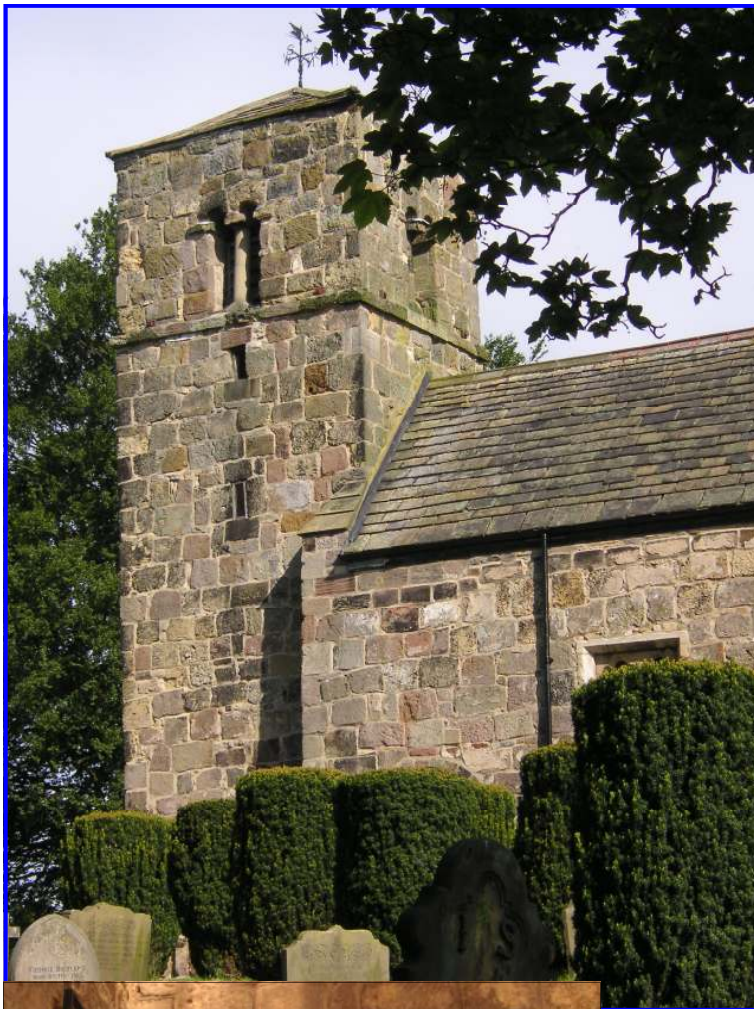
27. Its west doorway, note the decorated capitals.

28. The west face of the tower.

29. The tower arch from inside the (old) nave. Taylor states that the tower is a later addition to the 2 cell church, which has lost its north walls (to both nave and chancel) with the addition of a 13th century north aisle, and then in the 19th century considerable enlargement to the church on the north side. The strange form of the tower arch may be due to inexperienced workmanship when cutting through the existing west wall of the (older) nave to insert the arch (which may possibly occupy the position of a previous west doorway).

The church is built of large blocks of roughly squared greyish-brown stone laid roughly in courses and with side-alternate quoins. All the quoins survive despite the rebuilding to the north aspect.

30. St.Michael at the North Gate, Oxford. This mainly Anglo-Saxon tower, is seen here from the SE. No other part of the pre-Conquest church has survived. The fabric of the tower is rubble, with long-and-short quoins on both northern angles, but rubble quoins on the south. The unbuttressed walls rise sheer, about 70 feet from the ground to the plain modern parapet, with no string-course or off-set to relieve their simplicity or to separate them into stages corresponding with the four internal stories. The ground floor has a blocked, round-headed west doorway; and is lit by a double-splayed, round-headed north window, with jambs and head all built in rubble. The blocked doorway has plain square imposts and arched round head of dressed stone, but its jambs have either been robbed when it was blocked, or else have always been of rubble like the walls. Three dressed stones survive in the northern jamb, and therefore the former deduction seems the more reasonable. To the north, and with its sill over 30 ft from the ground, opens a tall round-headed doorway cut straight through the wall. There are round-headed double splayed windows, and in the second floor there are characteristically late-Saxon double belfry windows, the arched heads resting on projecting, rectangular, stepped imposts of dressed stone, and on a similar central through-stone slab which is supported on a mid-wall baluster-shaft of somewhat bellying shape, with a recessed band round its centre. The uppermost floor (or bell-chamber) has similar windows to north west and south, but on the east it has a modern rectangular opening (see photo below). Nothing remains of the original tower arch. The tower is roughly square in plan and is about 70 ft tall, with sides about 20 ft in length externally and about 12 ft internally. (H.Taylor. pages 481 & 2. Vol I. Anglo-Saxon Architecture).

This (black & white) photograph was taken by F.Parsons in about 1975.

Towers.

31-3. The ruined tower at the church of All Saints, Weybourne, Norfolk. Originally axial set between nave and chancel, the church was incorporated into a 12th century priory. The surviving south wall of the tower with stubs of the west and east walling stands to full belfry height with its flint-built quoins and decorative arcading. The tower ia about 19 feet square with walls about 3 feet thick.
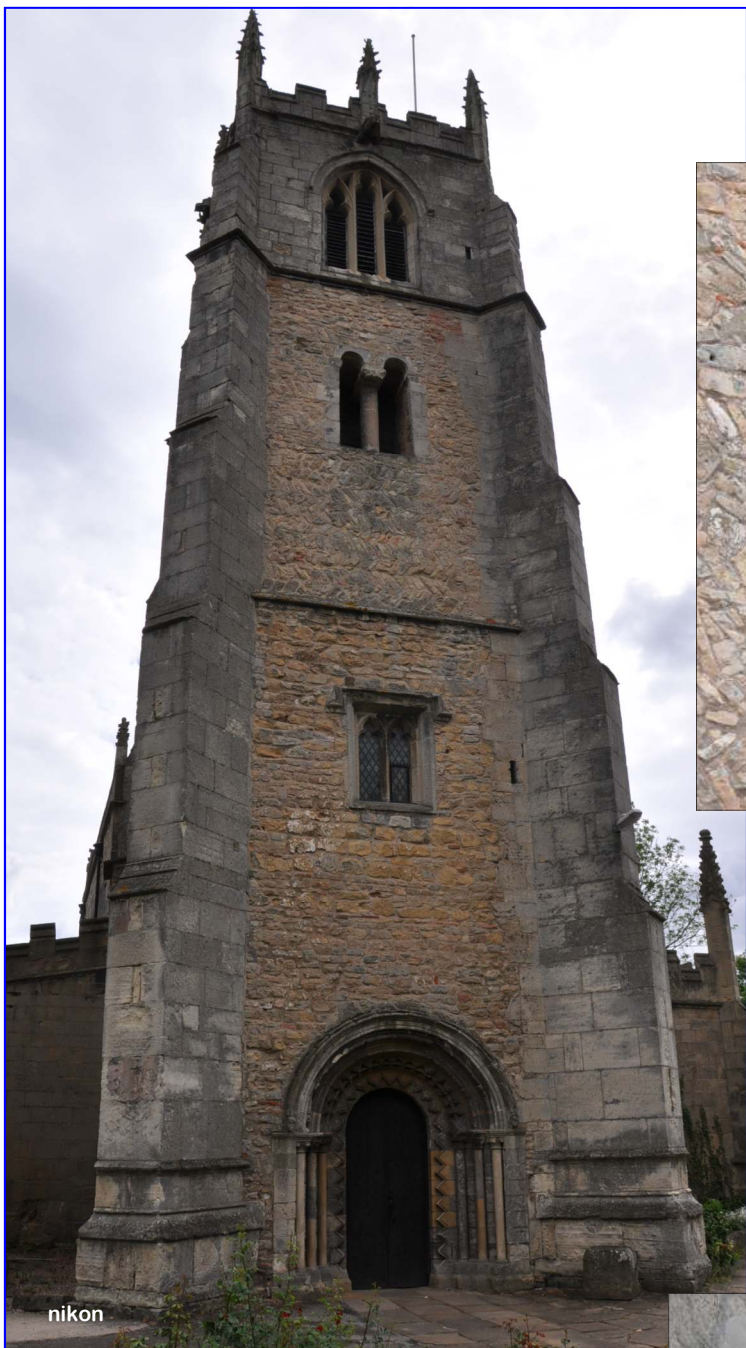
34. The central tower of St. Mary the Virgin, Norton, Co. Durham. Viewed from the NW, the late Anglo-Saxon work is confined to the lower parts of the tower with their small windows and the transepts with their offset archways. The nave and chancel arches have been replaced in Norman times.

Towers.

35-37. The church of St. John, Carlton-in-Lindrick, Nottinghamshire. The nave and (part) chancel are earlier than the tower, and are all pre-conquest fabric.

35. The massive diagonal buttresses were added to the tower when the top stage was built in the 15th century. Until 1869 the Anglo-Saxon features lay hidden under a layer of plaster, and quite unsuspected, until the plaster was removed during a restoration, when the blocked outlines of eastern and western double belfry windows were revealed. The fabric of the tower is of stone rubble which has been laid in a variety of ways. The NW and SW quoins of the nave exhibit exceptionally large (and random) side-alternate work. The later tower is not bonded with the nave but butted up to the west wall thus showing it is an addition.

36. The double belfry window overlooking the nave.
37. That in the east wall of the tower.

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38. Heapham, Lincs. Thev west tower has four double windows with ashlar jambs and cylindrical mid-wall shafts. The nave and tower seem contemporary, the walls of the nave are 33 in. thick. The west tower has a tall and wide tower-arch. Remains of a west doorway, now blocked, is seen in this picture.
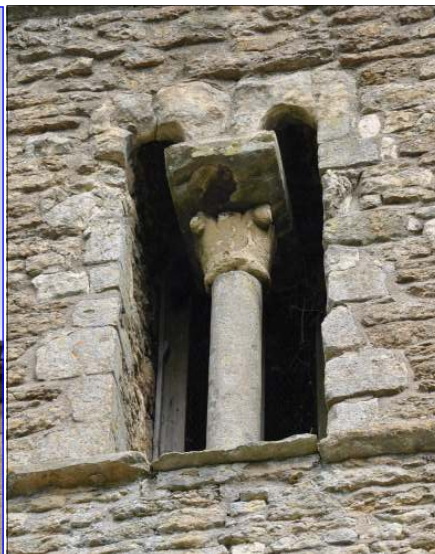**39.** One of the four belfry windows (partially restored).

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Towers.

40. Harpswell, Lincs. A Roman road runs north on a ridge of high ground from Lincoln to the Humber and Harpwell is one of several villages with late-Saxon churches which stand on lower land a few miles west of this road. The west tower seen from the south, of carefully coursed rubble with an absence of dressed stone at its quoins and of broader and more squat proportions, quite possibly of the decade before the conquest and representing the influence of continental techniques and style.

41. One of the double-headed belfry windows (there were originally four of which three survive), with through-stone slab, the heads on the outer edges supported on rubble jambs without any imposts. The mid-wall shafts are cylindrical with simple conical capitals, which are changed into square plan at the top by the clever addition of little knobs at each of the four angles. The eastern window, although double like the others, differs by having a plain, flat, stone lintel, which covers the whole head of the window (a possible alteration?).

42. Glentworth, Lincs. Standing about a mile west of the Roman Ermine Street and about 10 miles north of Lincoln. The tower seen from the NE. The tower is typical of the late Saxon work in Lincolnshire, its tall plain lower stage more than two-thirds of its height. Interesting carved and decorated stone-work may be seen on the tower windows and archways.

43. The south face of the tower. The upper stage of the tower has the usual four tall and narrow double-headed belfry windows. The lower stage is separated from the upper by a plain square string-course and an off-set. The fabric is of undressed rubble, the quoins are of dressed stone laid in side-alternate fashion.

44. The carved and decorated south belfry window with a keyhole round-headed window directly beneath the string-course, the head receiving of which has incised lines imitating voussoirs, and the outer face ornamented by palmette loop pattern.

45. Above the Perpendicular west window is a small keyhole window with the lower left stone of its jamb nicely carved with an ornamented cross. The ornamentation within the edges of the cross are carved in a series of "vee" shapes.

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