

3. All Saints' Church, Kirby Cane

Kirby Cane church consists of a round west tower, nave, chancel, a south porch, north aisle and vestry. The Anglo Saxon tower has single light bell-openings and a later crenellated parapet. It is built of whole and cut flints and around the base of the tower it is still possible to discern small pilasters – a typical Saxon feature.

There is a fine Norman doorway on the south side. It has columns either side, zigzag, spiral cable and chevron decorations around the arch and a beast's head in the apex. The bulbous flowers on the hoodmould above the arch are particularly unusual for this part of Norfolk.

The interior of this church remains largely unrestored 13th century, although the domed chancel ceiling with diagonal ribs was probably added in the 18th or 19th century.

There is an interesting font which probably dates from the mid to late 14th century. It stands on eight columns and the bowl is decorated with shields. There are eight heads – both male and female - with very distinctive hairstyles against the underside of the bowl.

Jane Chick (University of East Anglia, Norwich), January 2007.

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Norfolk Churches Trail Round Towers, Fonts and Piscinae



These three important round tower churches are all close to the Suffolk border. It is worth visiting all three and comparing features such as their round towers, fonts and piscinae.



Norfolk Churches Heritage Trail

Round Towers, Fonts and Piscinae

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1. All Saints' Church, Woodton

This church has a round west tower with an octagonal belfry, nave, chancel, south porch and aisle and a north vestry. The base of the tower is thought to be Saxon and it has an octagonal belfry in two sections that was probably added in the 15th century. A small window near the top of the round section is thought to be an original Saxon opening.

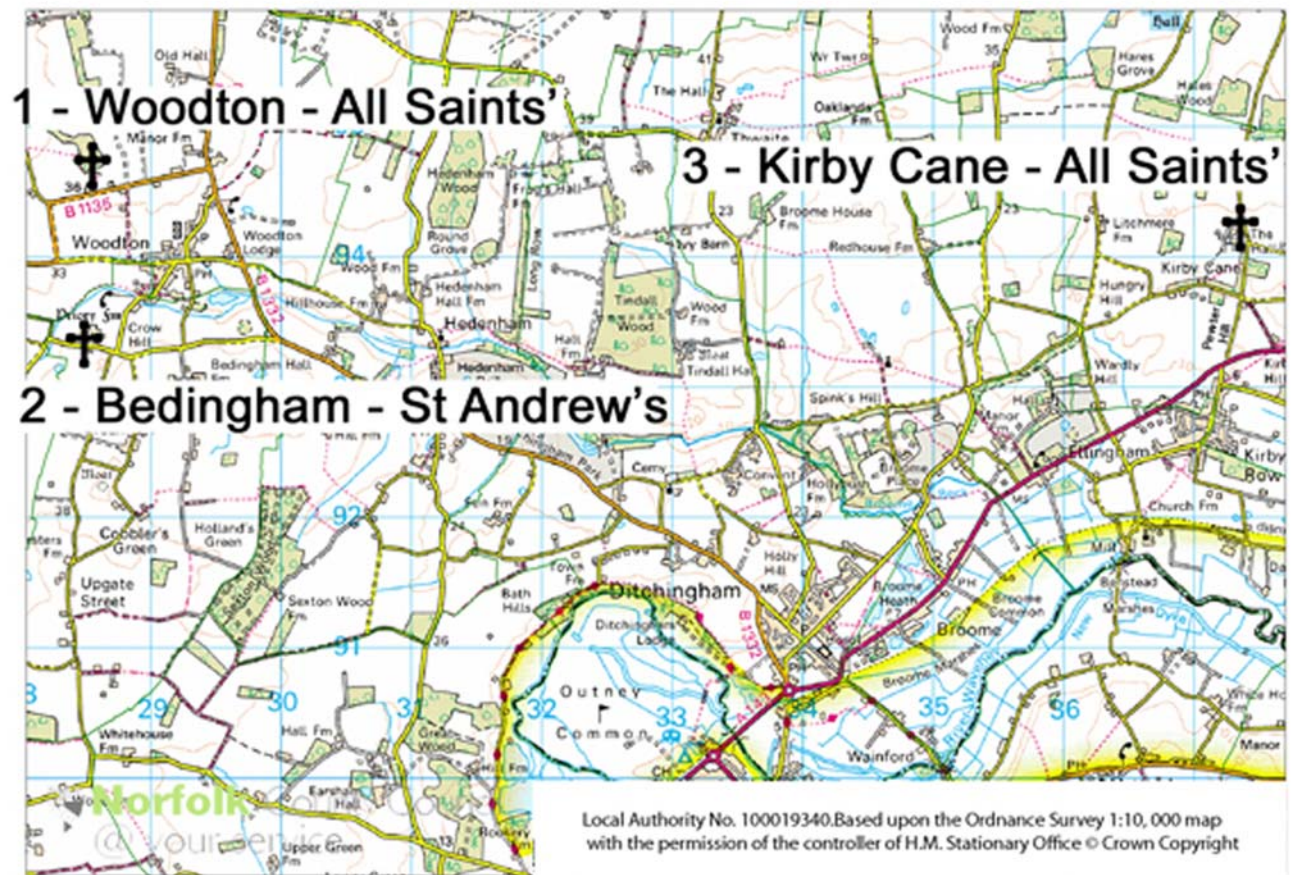
Inside the nave and chancel date from about 1300; the south aisle was added later.

There is an unusual 13th century piscina (basin for washing mass vessels) in the chancel. The recessed trefoil has corbels at the bottom and either side and is attached to a plain stone sedilia (seat for priests set into the wall).

The marble font is 13th century.

2. St Andrew's Church, Bedingham

St Andrew's Church now consists of a round west tower, porches to the south and north, nave, chancel, south and north



Map of Norfolk Churches Heritage Trail, Round Towers, Fonts and Piscinae

aisles and transepts. The round section of the tower is described by some historians as Saxon and by others as 12th century Norman.

The age of the chancel and nave is also disputed; they may have Saxon origins with Norman additions. It is thought that the south and north transepts were probably built at the same time as the nave and chancel but that the aisles were added later.

On the south wall of the chancel is an unusual Purbeck marble piscina. It consists of twin trefoil arches – the one on the west having no practical function - with a sedilia set between the two.

The Tudor font stands on a double stone plinth. The base is supported by four lions and the bowl is decorated with angels, the symbols of the evangelists and the Tudor rose.

Continued overleaf...