

Castle Acre Priory.

### 3. All Saints' Church, Newton

All Saints' Church has a nave, central tower and chancel. The square, Saxon tower has double bell-openings and a pyramid roof. The tower is the same width as the chancel and it is thought that originally, it may have been a cruciform church. One source suggests that the transepts fell into ruin and were removed in the 18th century.

Inside the church the small, unadorned arch on the east side of the tower is thought to be Saxon. The arch on the west side has mouldings around it but these were probably added at a later date. There is a doorway halfway up the eastern wall of the nave on the north side that may have led into the roodloft, above this is a small window, the purpose of which is unclear.

There are fragments of wall paintings from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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

## norfolk heritage explorer

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### Norfolk Churches Trail Saxon Towers



These three churches are within a few miles of each other and it is worth visiting all three to compare their fine Saxon towers.



# Norfolk Churches Heritage Trail

## Saxon Towers

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### 1. St Andrew's Church, Great Dunham

Great Dunham church consists of a nave, central tower, chancel and former apse. The square Saxon tower, set between the nave and the chancel, is built from rough flint interspersed with Roman bricks or tile. Externally, several features are visible that help to date it; for example the long-and-short work on the corners of the tower, the double arched bell-openings with baluster supports, above which, on the west and east side are circular holes.

Inside the church it is possible to discern both Anglo-Saxon and Norman elements. The south and north sides of the nave have blank arcading with horizontal moulding decorated in Norman zigzag and nailhead patterns and the west arch of the tower has dogtooth moulding which is also thought to be Norman. However, the east arch of the tower has two bands of moulding suggesting that it is more likely to be Saxon. In the 19th century the foundations of the semicircular apse of the Saxon chancel were discovered.

In the chancel is a 15th century piscina



Map of Norfolk Churches Heritage Trail, Saxon Towers

(basin for washing mass vessels) with birds carved in the spandrels.

### 2. St Andrew's Church, East Lexham

St Andrew's is interesting as it stands in a circular graveyard. This may indicate that the land was of significance in pagan times.

The outstanding feature of this church is its west tower; it is possibly the oldest remaining tower in the county, dating from around AD 850 to 900. It is round

but very irregular and roughly built and has three distinct bell-openings (rather than the usual four).

The body of the church has been rendered and there is a south porch. The interior of the church was restored in the 19th century. There is a World War One memorial and in the chancel is an extraordinary chair made from three misericord seats that possibly came from the church at

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