

St. Mary The Virgin, Norton, Co. Durham.

Although Norton has effectively been absorbed into Stockton, the church lays at the head of a large village green with old houses surrounding the green and its pond and what was once the old rectory nearby. The Anglo-Saxon fabric comprises the 'lower' part of the central tower to perhaps just above the level of the clock faces (although the newer stonework confuses the issue), the north transept and the side walls of the south transept, and vestiges of nave and chancel. The archways to the transepts survive but the other two archways have been replaced in Norman times. At the time of my visit in 2011 I was unable to gain access to the interior but I hope to remedy that soon.

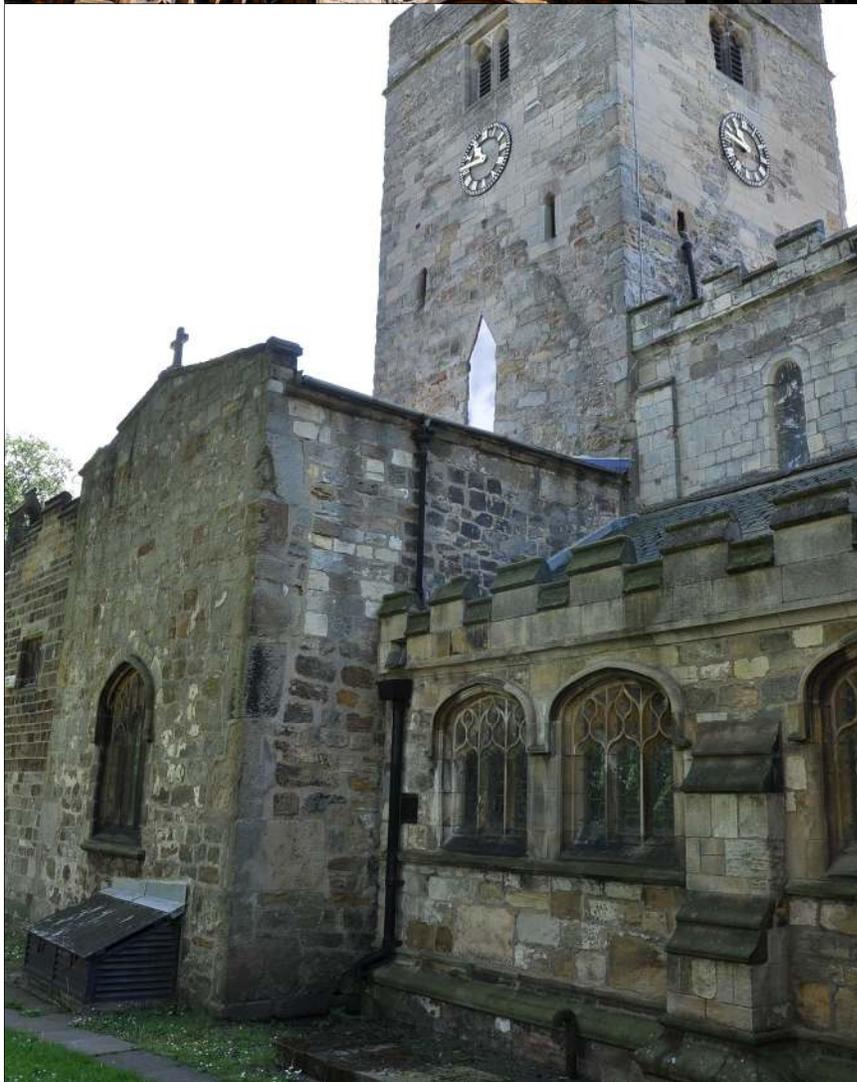
All photos on these pages are viewed clockwise from top left.

1. The central tower seen from the SW with the south transept running out to the right. Note the small Anglo-Saxon windows in the tower. These

would have cleared the original pitch of the transept roof.

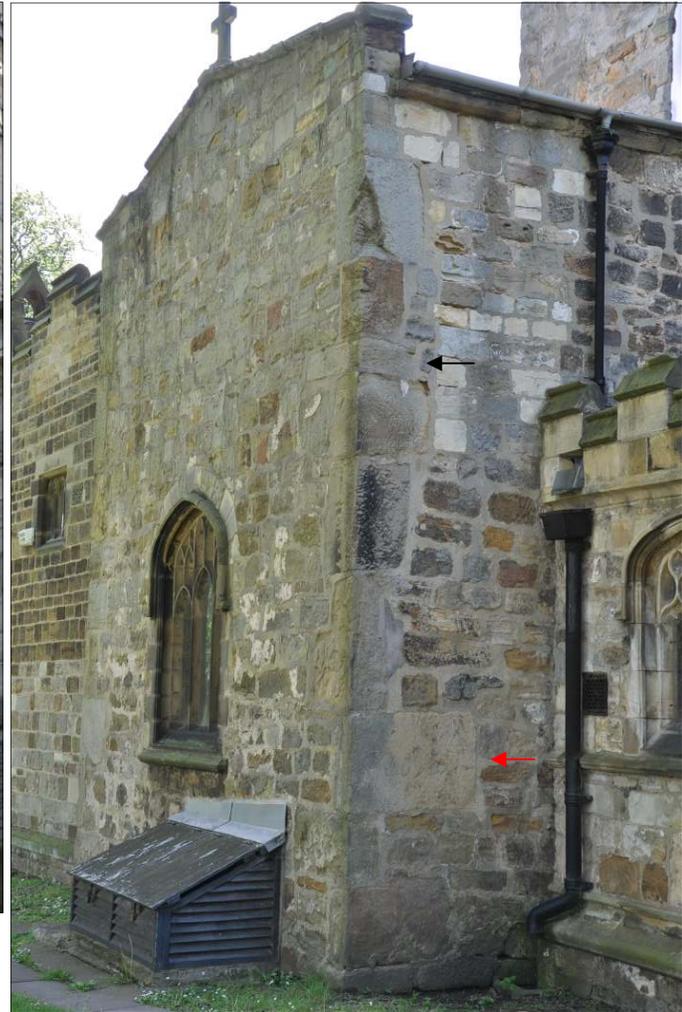
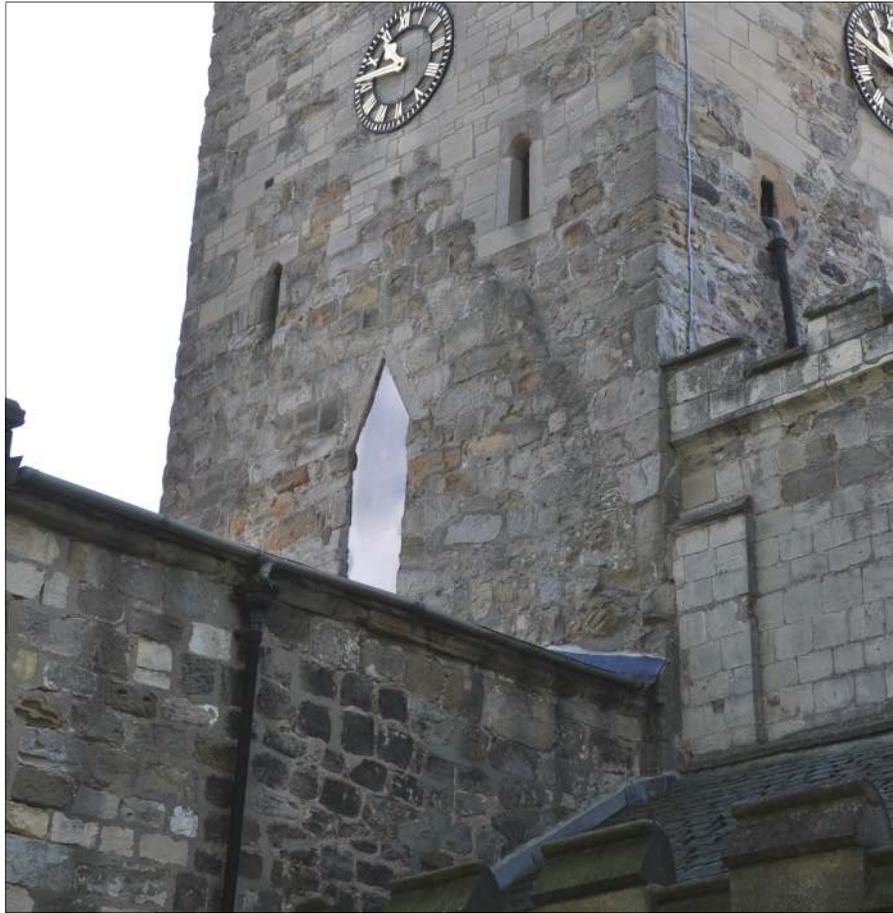
2. A closer detail from the same viewpoint of two windows, each being one of a pair.

3. Seen from the NW the north transept is seen to the left. The triangular doorway to what was originally the transept roof space is seen nicely here and again the pair of small windows. This combination of three openings is common to all four faces of the tower. Note the massive size of the quoin stones of the transept which are indicative of pre-conquest work.



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4. From the same viewpoint as picture 3, this closer view shows the triangular doorway to the original roof space of the north transept and with the outline of the original roof pitch clearly visible. Note that the walling under and around the old roof line on the tower matches that of the transept illustrating it was all one build.
5. The north transept from the NW and note again the massive stones of the quoins. In the same way as at Stow, Lincs, and Milborne Port, Somerset, and at Wimborne Minster in Dorset, the four subsidiary adjuncts are built so



that all four quoins of the tower stand freely as salient angles.

6. The north wall of the north transept with both quoins intact. The NW quoin is a strange mixture of stones set on their side and working upwards the next few courses repeat on that same side rather than being true side-alternate work. There are also long stones and the occasional short stone (as in long-and-short). All in all a very curious 'mixed' effect. We must remember that the Anglo-Saxon masons worked with the available stone to hand, they were not prepared at the quarry, at least not to any great degree, and certainly they were not pre-cut to a standard height ready to lay in true courses as in post-conquest times. In picture 5 look at the size of the quoin stone marked with the red arrow, its size is massive compared to its thinness. The black arrow some way above marks a short stone (as would be used in long-and-short work) below which there are four side set stones, though not necessarily alternate! The date of the building; Fernie puts the church at Norton in the first half of the eleventh century. He notes that the transept arches are off-set, unlike at Stow. At Milborne Port this off-set is repeated. The two arches that remain are of one square order with matching square imposts and double, or stepped, in height, as may be seen with the eastern archway at Barton-upon-Humber. Taylor notes that there is a possibility that the inner order has been removed to make the openings larger, certainly the archways do look slightly odd.