

# **All Saints' Church Leek Wootton**

**2014**

**Bell Restoration Appeal**





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The bells of All Saints' have rung out for many centuries, calling parishioners to worship, marking national occasions and personal milestones such as christenings, weddings and funerals. Nearly one hundred years since their last full renovation, they now need a major overhaul, which will cost between forty and fifty thousand pounds.

The bells are a part of the rich heritage we have in our parish church, which has served the community over the years by providing shelter, education, religious and social care and a place in which to worship. It is important that it is looked after and handed on to future generations. As you are a part of the local community, we would like to invite you to help towards the cost of the restoration of the bells.

This leaflet describes the work that is planned and the enclosed sheet enables you to contribute. If you would like any more information, please get in touch with us using the contact details at the back.



*Newly cast bells after removal from their moulds and before final tuning and fettling*



# The Bells



The bells are some of the oldest fixtures in our church, in some cases pre-dating the current building. The medieval church was pulled down in 1789 and a new church was built in the 1790s.

In 1793 two bells were added and the tower now contains a peal of five bells, the principal details of which are as follows:

Bell	Founder	Date	Diameter	Weight
Treble	John Briant of Hertford	1793	665mm	195kg
2 <sup>nd</sup>	John Briant of Hertford	1793	702mm	205kg
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Abraham Rudhall I of Gloucester	1703	709mm	205kg
4 <sup>th</sup>	Abraham Rudhall I of Gloucester	1703	780mm	265kg
Tenor	Johannes de Stafford of Leicester	c.1360	865mm	355kg

The bells were last rehung in 1921 by J E Groves of Birmingham when the four smaller bells were a quarter turned and the tenor bell an eighth turned to present unworn surfaces of the sound-bows to the blows of



the clappers. All five bells have become moderately worn where the clappers currently strike and are deeply worn in the previous clapper strike positions. The majority of the ringing fittings date from the restoration carried out in 1921 and some of the frictional parts have received attention over the years by the John Taylor Bellfoundry of Loughborough, particularly in 1966 when the present bearings were fitted.

Since 1921 the bells have been in constant service, with routine maintenance being carried out by successive tower captains. The time has now come for a major overhaul to ensure that the ring of bells remains serviceable and safe for another hundred years and to bring it up to modern standards.

## 🔔 What work is proposed? 🔔

- 🔔 Deal with the wear and tear accumulated over 93 years since the last major overhaul and ensure the bells are safe to ring.
- 🔔 Bring all bells back into tune and put them in optimum condition, enabling use by novice ringers, particularly younger ringers who are important to keep the ringing tradition alive. We hope to create a link with the village school, allowing Year 6 children to come and learn how to ring church bells.
- 🔔 Conserve the bell frame and the bells and minimise the danger of the bells developing cracks in the future.
- 🔔 Provide an additional 6<sup>th</sup> bell, substantially increasing the range of methods that can be rung.
- 🔔 Offer the chance to move and replace the very old tenor bell in the ringing peal. The existing tenor would be moved to a different position in the belfry where it would be used only to strike the



*The ancient tenor bell at All Saints' Church*



hour for the clock. This would mean that future wear on this historic 'listed' bell would be considerably reduced and it would be protected from wear arising from ringing and the possibility of damage should a clock wire break.

🔔 Enable inspection and overhaul of all other fittings such as the louvres while these are accessible with the bells removed from the tower.

🔔 Allow us to consider other improvements including sound-proofing with internal opening and closing louvres, to reduce noise during bell ringing practices.



## 🔔 How will it be done? 🔔

🔔 Trapdoors in the bell tower will be opened up and temporary lifting gear installed in the top of the tower. Each bell will be carefully lifted from its mountings and lowered to the upper room in the church and from the balcony to ground level via a scaffold tower.

🔔 All the bells will be transported to the workshops of John Taylor & Co in Loughborough where each bell will have the remains of old iron fittings carefully removed. The expansion of rusting iron can cause cracking of the bronze bell metal (an alloy of copper and tin), chosen to give resonance. New resin pads will be cast into the heads of the five bells to provide a stable surface on which to mount the headstocks.

🔔 Each bell will be provided with double row, self-aligning ball bearings with bearing seals and fresh grease suitable for mounting in the existing cast iron housings. This will make it considerably easier to swing the bells, which will not only be welcomed by the existing bell-ringers, but will also make it easier for learners, particularly younger members.

- 🔔 All the 'running gear' that transmits the efforts of the bell-ringers to the bells - the ropes, pulleys and the big wooden wheels that apply the leverage - will be repaired, renovated or replaced as necessary.
- 🔔 The repaired and renovated bells will be retuned, to accord with the historic tenor bell, which is to remain un-tuned. Whilst the bells are not badly out of tune some correction is desirable.
- 🔔 If an additional bell can be funded, then an additional steel bell-frame will be added. Some other minor works will be carried out to the steps to the upper tower, which will allow ringing of the new bell whilst maintaining access to the bells for maintenance.
- 🔔 The refurbished bells and fittings will be returned to Leek Wootton, hoisted back into place and tested before a ceremony to mark their return

## 🔔 When will it be done? 🔔

First we have to raise the money! Our timetable is for six months of intensive fundraising, locally in the parish and by applying for grants both regionally and nationally. We hope to be able to start work before the end of 2014 and once started it should take 2-3 months to complete.



(@ www.taylorbells.co.uk)

We feel that this could be a fitting memorial to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

## 🔔 Who will do it? 🔔

The main contractor will be the specialists, John Taylor & Co of Loughborough, who can trace their ancestry back to Johannes de Stafford of Leicester, who cast our tenor bell in about 1360.



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## 🔔 What will it cost? 🔔

Our current estimate is that the whole project will cost between £40,000 and £50,000 depending on a number of options and what additional works are carried out at the same time.

As already mentioned, we would like to replace the ancient tenor bell and fund a 6<sup>th</sup> bell. These ideally would be new castings, which would then be here for hundreds of years to come. We are investigating trying to rescue bells through the Keltek Trust, which helps churches acquire surplus or redundant bells to be hung for English style full circle bell ringing.

We also have the option of reducing the refurbishment bill by about £4,000 if we provide fit and able-bodied assistants to the bell-hangers during the removal and reinstallation of the bells and their fittings.

## 🔔 Fund raising 🔔

All Saints' PCC is launching a 'Bell Restoration Appeal' to raise the funds required. We will be approaching local businesses and enterprises as well as charitable trusts that aid church and bell

refurbishment projects. To succeed with these organisations, we need to demonstrate that we are raising a substantial portion of the money through our own enterprises within the parish.

Donors, if they wish, will have their name recorded in the Book of Benefactors. We will be pleased to discuss commemorative inscriptions on headstocks, the new bell or its bell-frame with major contributors.

We hope that you share our desire to maintain the heritage we have received in our church and its bells and will support us by contributing to the All Saints' Church '2014 Bell Restoration Appeal'.



*The bell loft at All Saints' Church, Leek Wootton*





## Further Information



If you would like to know more about this appeal, please contact one of the people listed below:

Jim Perryman (Priest-in-Charge): 01926 850610

Jonathan Kingston (Churchwarden): 01926 851181

Nigel Stallard (Churchwarden): 01926 850548

Mark Sayers (Tower Captain): 01926 859389

Lesley Eldridge (PCC Treasurer): 01926 854347

Simon Kermode (PCC Secretary): 01926 853356

Or email: [bellappeal@leekwoottonchurch.co.uk](mailto:bellappeal@leekwoottonchurch.co.uk)

All Saints' Church, Leek Wootton  
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