

Derby Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers Consultant's Report	Report DDACB 06/06
Church of St. James the Apostle and Martyr. Riddings Inspection of Tubular Bells	Issue Date 15/08/06

1.0 Introduction

On 23rd. February 2005 an inspection of the above installation had been undertaken by Nicholson Engineering Ltd of Bridport Dorset. A copy of this report had been passed onto The Derby Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers Bell Consultants who had been invited by Mrs. Anne Westman, a member of the PCC, to carry out an up-to-date independent assessment of the extent of the remedial work required.

The inspection was carried out by Derby Diocesan Association Bell Consultants Mike Banks and Robin Lyon on Friday 11th. August 2006.

2.0 Findings

The bells are hung from a simple softwood frame with four corner posts. Two of which are resting on the tower offset and the other two resting on the substantial wooden floor. The whole structure is well braced and keyed into the stone walls at the upper level. Although the through bolts all showed signs of heavy corrosion the wood itself appeared sound.

The bells, manufactured from bell metal, are suspended from two wooden beams running north – south. Each bell has a bolt passing through the support hole, which has a chain attachment at either side. Each chain is then hooked over a 'J' bolt whose screwed end is secured though the beam. On some of the bells there appeared to be elongation in the support holes.

All the metal work used to support the bells; chains, 'J' bolts, and nuts showed excessive wear due to corrosion. All the other metal components, hammers and bell cranks are in a similar state. The leather 'rebound straps' are no longer present and some of the wooden strike faces in the hammers are split. At some time in the past the actual method of striking the bells has been altered which makes the operation more difficult. The whole installation shows one of complete neglect over the years.

3.0 Conclusions

I am of the same opinion as that expressed by Mr. Andrew Nicholson of Nicholson Engineering Ltd. that the whole installation should be dismantled and removed from site. A thorough inspection of all the components can then be undertaken and parts replaced as required, bells retuned, and timbers treated.

The individual parts can then be reassembled in the tower.

A faculty would be required before the work could commence and the work required to dismantle, overhaul and refit the installation should be undertaken by a recognised bell hanger.

Advice given in good faith – no liability accepted.

Robin Lyon

Bell Consultant to the Derby Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers