



Christ Church **Healey** Rochdale

Bells and Frame Removal

5th - 7th April 2017

When the fittings were removed from the bells at Healey last year it was noticed that the oak frame was in a very poor state and ideally needed to be replaced with a new steel frame, which would also allow the bells to be hung on one level.

A year on and it was full steam ahead on 5th April to start dismantling the old frame and lowering the bells ready for transportation to Taylor's for a good clean and a retune.



Paul Mason (Taylor's Works Manager) arrived onsite on Wednesday along with an eager team of able bodied volunteers with the aim of getting as much preparation work done as possible so that the bells would be ready to be lowered on the Thursday. Key jobs were chopping out a corner of the frame in the doorway, opening up all of the trapdoors, and getting lifting beams and hoists in place.

The big adjustable spanners were definitely needed to extract frame bolts which hadn't moved for over a hundred years. Some refused to budge though and required the attention of the angle grinder. The latter was also needed to cut through several steel tie-rods. Another tool which proved useful was Helen's electric chainsaw. Needless to say hard hats and safety boots were highly recommended!



*Impressive work by
the electrician?*



Heavy metal anyone?



Tenor side-frame cracked through.

Camera Crews

On Thursday the team was joined by two students who had jumped at the opportunity of making a film documentary on such an unusual project. A GoPro camera was installed in the belfry and a tripod mounted camera was stationed in the ringing room window to capture all of the action.

A photographer from the Rochdale Observer took various still shots for a newspaper article and a short video of one of the bells being lowered which is available online: <https://goo.gl/sAKxEu>

The electric hoist (aka The Beast!) made short work of lowering the bells and by the end of the day all six were sitting on the floor at the base of the tower ready for collection.

Moor Bells

On Friday morning a large lorry negotiated the steep, narrow lane but only as far as the church car park. Fortunately the loan of a tractor had been gratefully accepted and this was used to gingerly transfer the bells. The graveyard clearly hadn't been designed with such heavy traffic in mind though so some lengths of the old wooden frame were used to prevent sinkage.

The Healey bells had company on the lorry in the form of the eight bells from the church at Cleator Moor which is now sadly redundant. It was suggested to the driver that he might like to effect a swap as he drove through Rochdale but how seriously he took the idea we're not sure.

To Be Continued...

All being well the new frame and refurbished bells will return in June.



