

## The Over Kellet Jubilee Bells Project



St Cuthbert's Church in Over Kellet has had bells for over 500 years and the current ring of 3 comprise one of unknown origin dated 1499, the Treble by Abraham Smith of York and dated 1694 and the Tenor by Thomas Mears of Whitechapel, dated 1824. Unfortunately, about seven years ago they were condemned as not only unsafe to ring but in need of removal before the decayed wooden frame collapsed and deposited them in the vestry below.

The question then was should they be removed and leave us with a bell-free church or should we look for a more ambitious project? Replacing them with a ring of 6 or 8 would mean that the village community would not only hear bells ringing out again but residents young and not-so-young would have the opportunity to learn the ancient art of bell-ringing. With the encouragement of the Diocesan Bells Advisor and the President of the LACR, together with the generous support of the Keltek Trust, a redundant ring of 8 bells was identified at the Church of St James, Church Kirk and the Over Kellet Jubilee Bells Project was launched in June 2022, with faculties for their removal and installation obtained by the end of the year.



Having been removed from Church Kirk in January by a team of volunteers from Over Kellet (with some help from two members of the LACR), under the direction of Steve from John Taylor & Co,



the 8 Warner bells are now sitting in Loughborough awaiting funds to complete the project. The St Cuthbert's tower is quite a bit smaller than that at St James and a structural engineer's report advised that the bells needed to be remodelled to reduce the overall weight and then hung on two frames, one above the other, with 5 bells on one and 3 on the other. This remodelling means only 5 of the Warner bells will be used with 3 new ones being cast. The Church Kirk 7<sup>th</sup> bell will become the new Tenor bell in the key of G, and the 3 newly cast bells will become B

natural, F#, and the new Treble to form the octave G note. The new ring will therefore be a light ring of 8, the only one in this part of North Lancashire, and ideal for teaching bell-ringing, particularly to young people:

Bell	Diameter	Weight	Note	Cast
Treble	28.00"	4½ cwt	G	New
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29.00"	5 cwt	F#	New
3 <sup>rd</sup>	30.13"	5½ cwt	E	1865
4 <sup>th</sup>	31.63"	6 cwt	D	1865
5 <sup>th</sup>	33.00"	6¼ cwt	C	1865
6 <sup>th</sup>	35.00"	6½ cwt	B	New
7 <sup>th</sup>	37.13"	7¾ cwt	A	1867
Tenor	40.00"	9½ cwt	G	1867

Fundraising for this is now well underway and along with substantial grants from both the LACR and the Keltek Trust we have been able to secure a grant of £20,000 from Lancashire County

Council Culture and Sports Fund, provided we are able to match at least this amount and reach a target of £43,000 on the crowdfunding platform 'Spacehive', with whom they are in partnership. The slight drawback is that we have to reach this target by 1st May or their pledge is withdrawn and so all contributions to help us achieve this will be gratefully received! To leave a pledge go to: [www.spacehive.com/over-kellet-jubilee-bells-project](http://www.spacehive.com/over-kellet-jubilee-bells-project).

Once we reach this target, and along with the other grants and individual donations we have already received, we will be over 75% funded to complete the project and we do hope it will not be too long before we are able to invite LACR members to ring our new 8 bells. For news of progress please follow us on facebook, "Over Kellet Jubilee Bells Project".

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