Terrier. § 19

ALL HALLOWS - RINGMORE.

OUR BELLS.

They are the survivors of a Ring of Three recorded in an inventory of 1553 when the Commissioners spelt the name RYDDEMORE.

At one time they were a peal but now they can be chimed only. They were re-hung in October 1869 by Mr Wm. Aggett of Chagford and again after an inspection in 1962.

TREBLE BELL. The late Rev. H.T.E. Ellacombe of Clyst St George who made a special study of the bells of the Diocese recorded that our Treble Bell is one of the oldest in the Diocese. It has no name of the founder or of a Warden of the time, only the founder's mark I.T. His name is not known but he was working in Exeter around 1440.

The bell has inscribed in ' Black Letter ' which is notoriously hard to read

' Voce Mea Viva Depello Cuncta Novica '

trans. 'With my living voice I drive away all things that may do hurt. '

It is 29¾ " in diam.

SECOND BELL. This was recast by MEARS of London in 1869.
It is 30½" in diam.
It was previously recast by a local founder Mordecai Cockey of Totnes.
The old inscription used to read :

' Nicholas Hooppell Ch Warden -
Mordecai Cockey cast me in Totnes 1692 '

Nicholas Hooppell probably lived in Cottage Farm which is now Cross Manor.

TENOR BELL. It is the largest bell 32½" in diam.
It was recast by AMBROSE GOODING of Plymouth in 1740.
The inscription reads:

' IAMES GILBERT WARDN A GOODING 1740. '

James Gilbert occupied one of the Tenements at Marwell and is listed in the Survey of 1754.

Gooding's bells had a faulty design im the crown staple and the clapper tended to fall out. There are few of his bells left in Devon. The crown staple in our bell has been strengthened, no doubt because of the technical knowledge of Hingeston Randolph at the time of the re-hanging in 1869. So we have one of the few remaining Gooding bells in Devon.

Authority: Rev. H.T. Ellacombe. (1860)
Prebendary John Scott of Bampton.
(New Totnes. 1995)

29 Oct 87. G.C.G.

Copy.

The Vicarage
Bampton
Tiverton
Devon EX16 9NG

September 20th 1988

Dear Colonel Grimshaw,

First may I say how much I enjoyed meeting you, and how much we both enjoyed our visit to Ringmore and Middle Manor.

I enclose a report on the condition of Ringmore bells, and a sheet containing some historical notes on them. I'm much intrigued by the Robert Stainbank mark, of which I have a very good plaster-cast now, and if I find out anything inter-esting about it I'll let you know.

I think the best person to do the work which is needed on your bells would be Arthur Fidler of Rame Barton, Rame, Torpoint, PL10 1LG. He used to work for Taylors' and may even have done the Ringmore job in 1962; certainly he will know just how the clappers should work. He should be asked to estimate for the whole work including cleaning and painting the steelwork, but of course that's not skilled work and if you could raise a working-party to do it voluntarily it would save the PCC a lot of money.

Alternatively, you could get an estimate from Taylors' themselves, at The Bell Foundry, Loughborough, Leics., or from the Whitechapel Foundry, 34 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

I think the PCC should be urged to get on with this work as soon as it can: the rusting of the bell-bolts is putting three historic bells in some serious danger, and in any event it will not be long before the steel girders become actually dangerous if the corrosion is not halted.

If there is anything I can do to help in the future, please get in touch. When you have got some estimates, you might want to seek for grant help, and I might be able to help you with some addresses.

If the bells have to be removed from the tower (which they probably won't) you would have to get a Faculty, but otherwise I think an Archdeacon's Certif-icate should do.

Yours most sincerely,

John Scott.

Agreed that I should approach Fidler. PCC 14/1/88

Spoke to Mr Fidler. He remembers the work being done by Taylors (not by him). He would like to make his own assessment and will let us know as soon as he can visit us. I gave him my address, and Col. Grimshaw's name, in case

RJ 21/11/88

Mr. Fidler telephoned. He will come at 11.30 on Friday 2/12.

RJ 29/11

Ringmore Church Bells: Some Historical Notes

Before the great surge of enthusiasm for bellringing in the 17th century, most churches had rings of three or four. At Ringmore the ring of three which is recorded in the Inventory of Church Goods of 1553 remained, though two of the bells have been recast, one of them twice.

The Treble, 28¾" diameter, was cast by the Exeter foundry in the middle of the 15th century. It bears the mark of a founder whose initials were i.t. or l.t., flanking a bell and surrounded by a rope circle. There is an initial cross, followed by the inscription:

Voce mea viva depello cunts nociva
[with my lively voice I drive away all hurtful things]

Until the last century there was a belief that ringing church bells would avert thunderstorms, floods and epidemics, and this motto was a popular one on bells cast by the Exeter founders.

This bell has had the "cannons" [the loops on the head from which it was originally hung) removed, but is otherwise in its original state, and sounds the note C sharp. It is one of about 140 pre-Reformation bells from the Exeter foundry in the county of Devon; there are others in Somerset, Cornwall and Dorset and a few elsewhere including Guernsey.

The Second was recast in 1692 by Mordecai Cockey of Totnes, and was (according to H.T. Ellacombe) inscribed:

NICHOLAS HOOPPELL CH: WARDEN MORDECAI COCKEY CAST ME IN TOTNES 1692

The story goes that the clapper of this bell fell out when the bells were to be rung for a wedding in the last century, and the blacksmith was recruited to go into the belfry and hit it with a sledge-hammer, which not surprisingly broke it. It was in pieces in 1865 when Ellacombe saw it, but was recast at Whitechapel in 1869. The inscription on the new bell is:

Defunctos ploro - plebem voco - festa decoro
[I mourn the dead, I call the people, I honour the festivals]

The lettering is a 19th-century version of gothic "black-letter". There is a cross and a foundry-mark preceding the inscription, and the foundry-mark is interesting because it has the initials R.S ., for Robert Stainbank. He was taken into partnership by George Mears of Whitehcapel in 1865, and from then on until after World War II the firm was known as Mears & Stainbank, but Robert Stainbank's name seldom appears on their bells by itself, and I have never seen this very handsome mark or even seen it illustrated.

The Tenor, 32½" diameter in A sharp, was recast in 1740 by Ambrose Gooding of Plymouth. It is decorated with various little embellishments -- a dove, a crown, a head (possibly of George I) and an acanthus-leaf. The inscription is:

JAMES GILBERT + WARDN + (leaf) A + (bell) + GOODING + (2 leaves) 1740

+ (dove) (crown) (head)

The omission of the "E" in Warden is Gooding's mistake.

Both the 2nd and Tenor have their cannons, but have been drilled for a centre bolt and two bell-bolts.
The three bells are not tuned to a modern diatonic scale, but the modern scale was not invented when Ringmore's original three bells were fast, and no doubt the two bells which were recast were recast to the same notes as they had before.

John G.M. Scott
20th September 1988

Ringmore Church Bells

The ring of three was first inspected by me in 1962, when the 2nd and Tenor were hung in a mediaeval or early 17th-century type frame and the Treble in a lash-up arrangement above them in the base of the spire. Subsequent to my visit the bells were rehung "dead" for chiming by Taylors' of Loughborough.

The Tower is transeptal, over the S porch, and the only example of such a tower from pre-Reformation times in South Devon, as far as I know. It is of local limestone, with a short parapet spire, and seems to be in good condition. However, a good deal of weather seems to blow in through the louvred windows in the belfry. Access is by a vertical wooden ladder.

The Bellframe consists simply of three steel girders, 5" x 6", with their ends built into the E and W walls of the tower, with angle-section steel sections bolted across their ends near each wall. The bells are hung from timber deadstocks which are secured to the girders by steel angle-brackets.

The steelwork has all suffered from the weather and proximity to the sea, which always increases corrosion in steel. The ends of the girders, where they meet the walls, are laminating and the expansion is splitting the stonework round them, while the rest of the steel is showing blistering of the paint as rust pockets form underneath it.

The Gear consists of bell-bolts securing the bells to the deadstocks, centre-bolts securing the chiming-clappers, and chiming-clappers of the "trigger-action" type, with ropes and pulleys to a panel in the tower's first floor. The design of the clappers was intended to prevent the heads of the clappers from being held in contact with the bells, as this can cause bells to crack.

The bell-bolts, and probably the centre-bolts too, are rusting severely, and although there is probably ample reserve strength in them they are now expanding so that they fit very tightly in their holes and could at any time split the heads of the bells. The clappers and fittings are rusty but serviceable; the clappers of the Treble and Tenor have lost their "trigger-action" property and the heads of the clappers can be held against the bells. This is probably caused by wear. The chiming panel downstairs has ratchet adjusters for the ropes, but these have all siezed up solid, and one of them has had its square sheared off in an attempt to move it. The ropes can be adjusted in the ordinary way, but less easily.

The Bells, historical details of which I enclose separately, are in good order, and need no attention. The Treble has had its cannons removed, but the other two have their cannons intact.

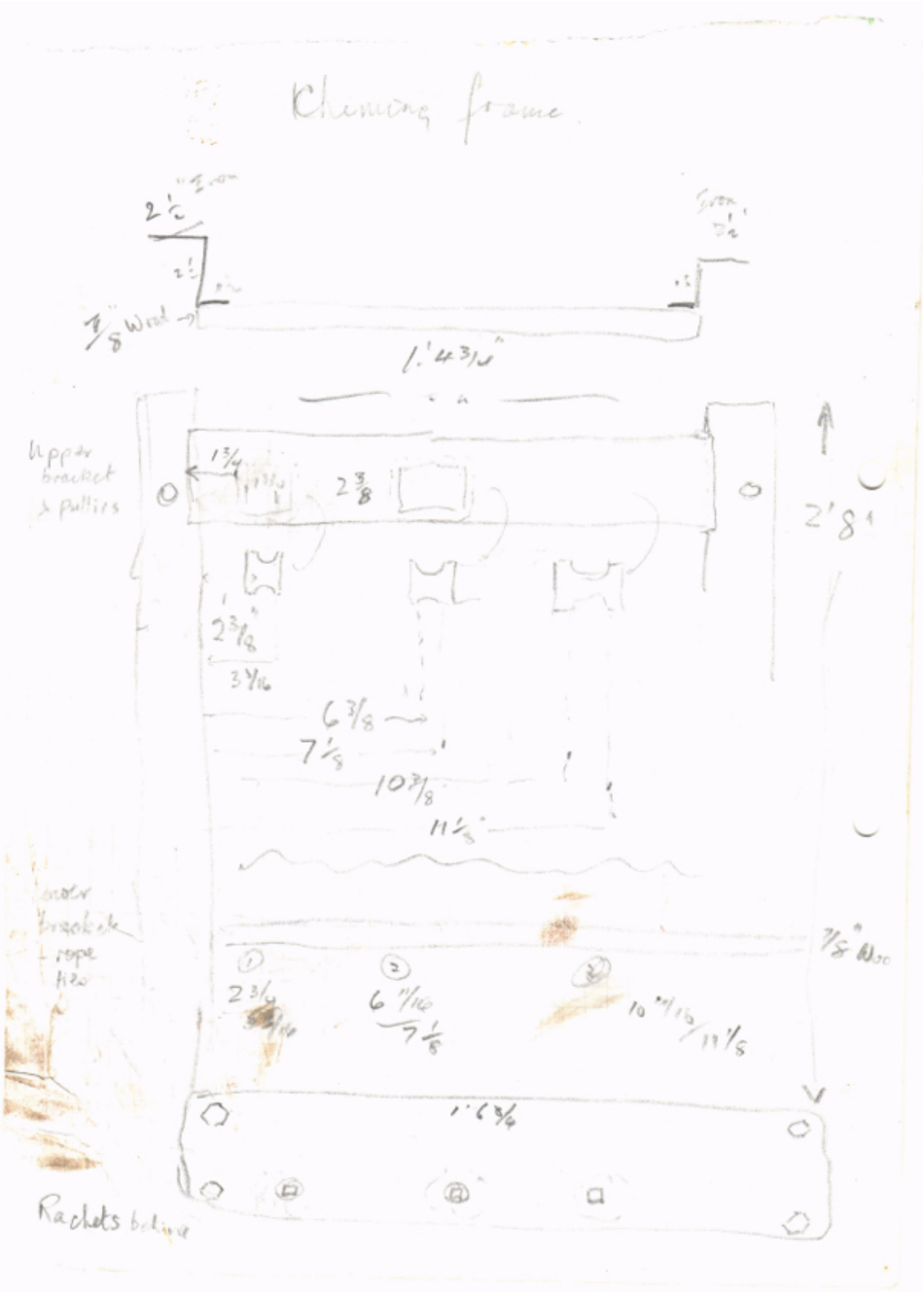
Recommendations. The urgent need is to prevent rust from doing any more damage. The steelwork of the frame should be cleaned off and painted with rust-preventing paint as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

The bell-bolts should be drawn, and replaced with new ones, either hot-dip galvanized or for preference (though much more costly) stainless steel.

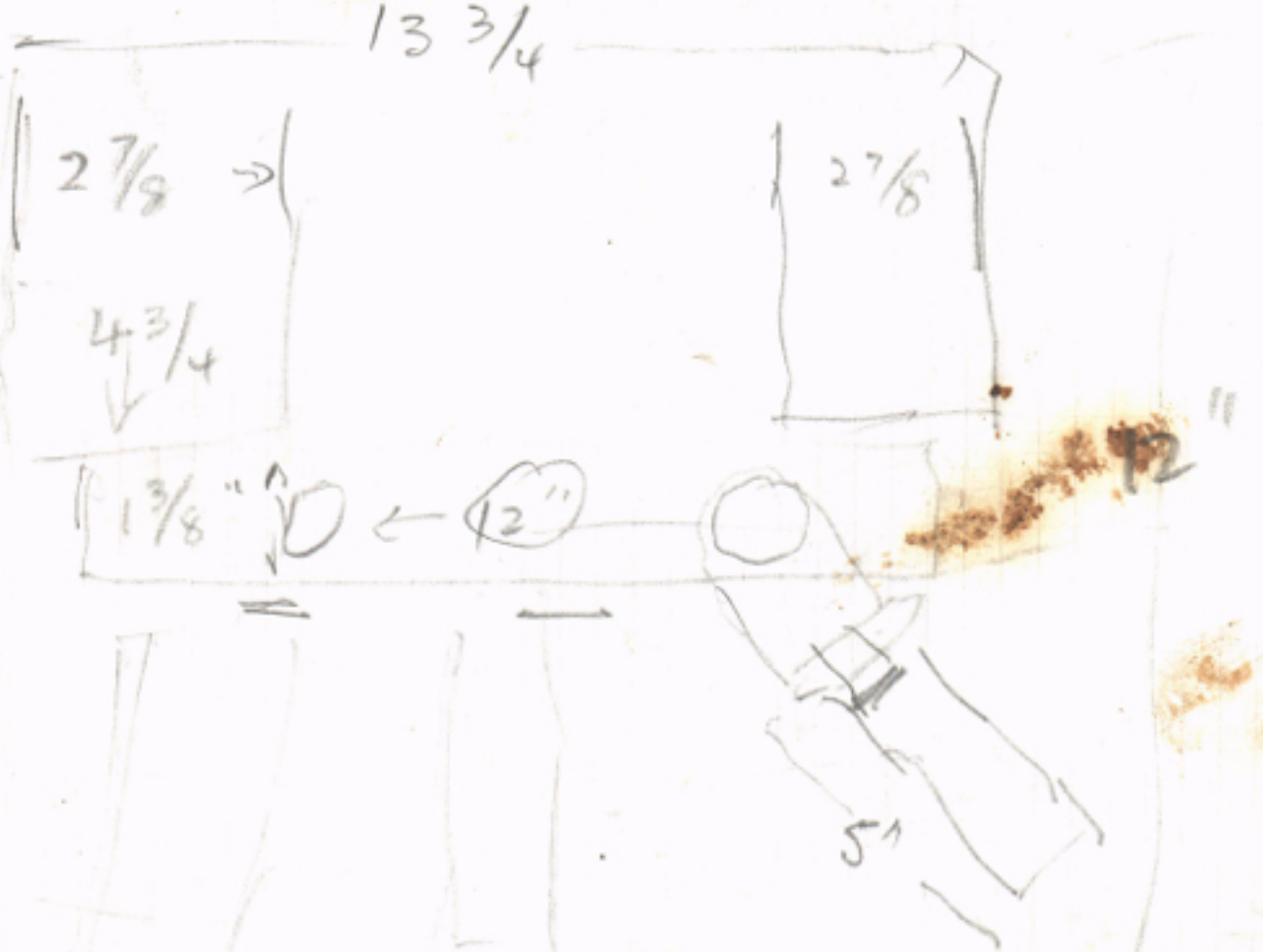
The clappers and their fittings will have to be removed for this to be done, and they should be overhauled at the same time.

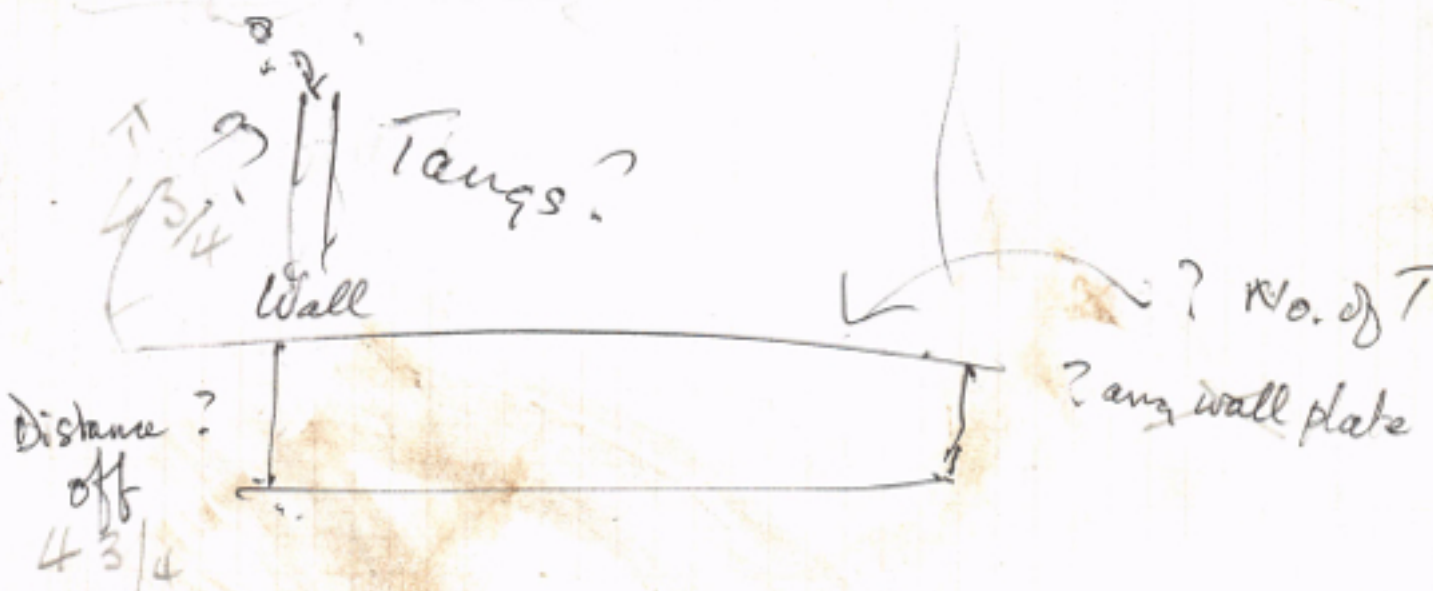
John G.M. Scott
September 20th 1988

Chewing frame




E
Holefaals 3/8" bar flathead
to 1 3/16
3 1/4" outstanding
Beam 3 1/2 x 2"
N
S
7'11"
2m. 415
8'0 3/16" 445
7'11"
2.413
5'4 3/4"
1.64m
2'4 3/4"
7 32
1'5"
.430
1'3"
430
1'7 1/2"
.495
W


13 3/4
2 7/8
2 7/8
4 3/4
1 3/8"
12"
12"
5"


Tangs?
Wall
? No. of T
? any wall plate
Distance ?
off
4 3/4

Trelake
Bridgetown Hill
Totnes
Devon
TQ9 5BA
6 July 1995

Totnes [0803] 867754

Dear Reg,

Ringmore Church Bells

Here are two copies of my report: the Secretary of the DAC says that you won't need a Faculty to move the chiming ropes, and the same should go for the new doors to the tower roof, &c.

I hope all will go well; do let me know if there's anything more I can do to help.

Yours most sincerely,

John Scott.

Acknowledged by telephone 12 July.
Mr Scott acknowledged receiving our cheque for expenses

12/7

1. Arthur – to see
2. Michael

Amended by telephone

Report on the Tower & Bells of ~~Holy Trinity~~, Ringmore

Date of Inspection, 5 July 1995

The Tower now houses, in the second stage, a heating apparatus mounted against the N wall with a louvred opening into the nave. This has necessitated the removal of the chiming-rope frame which formerly stood on this wall. The flue from the heater has been taken up through the belfry and out through the doorway to the tower roof.

One of the holdfasts at the top of the ladder is rusting badly and should be replaced: it would be highly dangerous were the ladder to come off the wall when someone was on it, and a second pair of holdfasts would be a wise precaution.

The Bellframe is rusting again, and needs to have the loose rust removed before it is repainted.

The Gear is in quite good order; some of the bell-bolts have been replaced in stainless steel, and some others are rusting.

The Bells are in good order.

Recommendations.

1. There seems to be no great difficulty in resiting the chiming-ropes. The clappers are mounted on independent crown-staples which can be loosened and swivelled to a new angle to suit a different run for the ropes, and the frame for the top pulleys can be re-mounted in a different position. The best place for the chiming frame is probably across the W window of the ringing-room, and it can be mounted on two pieces of timber fixed across the opening. There is some worm in the wooden parts of the frame, and it should be treated before it gets weakened.

   The pulley-frame should be overhauled, cleaned, repainted and the pulleys greased, and mounted directly above the frame, with holes drilled in the floor for the ropes, at the same height as at present. [If there are joists in the way of the ropes, the pulley-frame and chiming frame should be adjusted one way or the other to avoid drilling through them.] I advise that the old angle-brackets be left in situ and new ones made up and hot-dip galvanized before being cemented into the W wall. The crown-staples of the bells should then the loosened, the ropes fitted, and the clappers adjusted to swing exactly in line with their pulleys before the nuts are retightened.

   I understand that this work is regarded as being implicit in the Faculty for installing the heating system, and no further permission will be needed.

2. The bellframe should be cleaned and painted. I would recommend an undercoat of "Galvafroid" as the best way of inhibiting rust.

3. The bell fastenings should be checked over, and any suspect nuts replaced in stainless steel; the rest should be painted in the same way as the frame.

4. The doorway to the tower roof needs to be fitted with doors which fit round the flue-pipe and exclude birds and asmuch weather as possible. The sound openings in the belfry should have any missing louvres replaced and should be fitted with "Weldmesh" bird-guards; these could be of a size big enough to allow the bats to pass through but exclude jackdaws and pigeons -- say 2".

5. The rusty holdfast at the top of the belfry ladder should be replaced, and a second pair of holdfasts fitted about 6 feet below, as a safety precaution.

John G.M. Scott.

THE BELLS

During the last week or two, you may have heard the odd bell sounding from the church belfry, or have seen John Milne-Smith or me walking through the village carrying strange pieces of metal. John has been refurbishing the bells, following a report from the Diocesan Adviser on bells, recomending that the bell-bolts, which secure the bells to wooden beams, and the centre-bolts, which secure the chiming clappers, should be replaced and the clappers with their fittings overhauled at the same time. The steelwork of the bell-frame and the clappers was very rusty, requiring cleaning and painting with rust-preventer.

The Church Council asked a bell-hanger to give an estimate for this work, although it was probable that much of it could be done within the parish. He was very glad that we were thinking of this since he had a full work book for some months ahead and he was sure that we would be able to do it. He gave us a detailed specification of the work to be done and said that possibly some of the bolts would be found to be in a reasonable condition.

Each bell is held up by two bell-bolts, (about 13-15 inches long, depending on the size of the bell) and the centre-bolt from which the clapper hangs. The bell-hanger told us that we could safely draw one bolt at a time for inspection and that we need not build up blocks on the belfry floor to support the bell while one bolt was withdrawn; this helped considerably. The nuts appeared to be well-rusted on, but after a few days soaking in penetrating oil, they moved with reasonable ease. We found that both bell-bolts on the Second bell (the middle note, between the Treble and the Tenor) were worn where the bolt bolt passed through the bell - presumably from the vibration -

so that the thickness of the bolts was 3mm less at this point. Similarly with the Tenor(the biggest bell). The centre-bolts screwed into sockets on the clapper mechanism; with these, only the Second needed replacing. Having taken them out, one by one, measured them and put them back, we ordered the five replacements, in stainless steel, from Roger Simcox in Kingsbridge.

He made these for us very quickly but obviously we had to wait some days so John was able to take the clappers home, de-rust them, mend the 'triggers' on two of the levers and paint the lot. He also stripped down the rack from which the bells are chimed, painting the metal and varnishing the wood of the frame.

There will have to be adjustments made as the bells bed down again and the slow job of chipping the rust off the frames and re-painting with rust-preventer remains but the main work has been done. Thank you, John.

RCT

top Chm
1 John 8/2/89

7 8

Take off plate of the chiming panel. 2/11/88
£26. each for new racket. 17/8"
from Taylors.

Mr. Fidler came as arranged. He is very confident that we could do almost everything ourselves. Certainly the scaling off the rust to the metal and immediate covering (with waxoil - or) can be done. The bolts should be possible - WD40 the nuts and where the bolt passes through the bell, each day for a week before starting work on them. Tap each bolt when applying the fluid. Tackle one bolt at a time! (leaving two on is quite safe.) It could well be that we need not get new bolts! - repaint job. If we have to have new ones, stainless steel might not be necessary: let him know, to see what he might be able to provide.

If he did it himself, he would probably charge between £800 and £1000, possibly more, but not until ? May at the earliest

When (if) we have finished - let him know and he will come and look at the "trigger action" of the clappers. He thinks that he will be able to replace part of a small piece of metal, which has probably worn off. He will make a report.

3/11

3/11