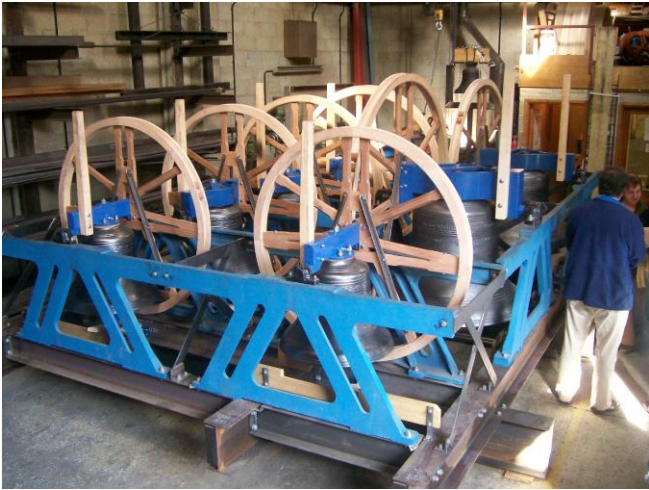


## *Our Bells Are Back*



Great Brickhill bells, together with the two new trebles cast by the Whitechapel Foundry on 30<sup>th</sup> October and the 1681 Sanctus bell, have now been rehung by Whites of Appleton. Earlier, on 13<sup>th</sup> March, bellringers and villagers made the pilgrimage to Appleton to see the refurbished and returned bells assembled in the new bell frame, and our thanks go to Brian White and his wife, Diana, for hosting the event.

After the morning visit, an excellent lunch was had at the Bear and Ragged Staff at Cumnor, and we still had time to get back to watch the French beat the England rugby team.



On 8<sup>th</sup> April, the new steel support grillage, which will brace and strengthen the Tower, was installed, and the frame reassembled in the Tower. The bells were returned to Great Brickhill on 16<sup>th</sup> April, together with the two new bells augmenting the ring to eight, and at the service on Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> April, the Rector, Revd. John Waller, blessed the new bells. The new treble bell bears the inscription "Donated by the Parish in memory of villagers interred at Gt. Brickhill Baptist Chapel".

During the following week, the bells were hoisted into the frame, with the bells being rung individually for the first time when the clappers were installed on 4<sup>th</sup> May, and I was privileged to be the first to ring the new cast treble. However, it is unlikely that the bells will be ready to ring together until the end of May or early June, in order to allow the concrete for the tower repairs and in the grillage foundations to cure fully.

We have been required by English Heritage to rehang three massive ancient support timbers in the tower, and those are now in place with the new grillage assembled above. Those timbers will support new ceiling boards in the Ringing Room, and new hardwood benches and panelling are to be fitted.

The cost of the bell work alone is £70,000, but the total project costs, including builders' work, additional tower repairs and architect's fees are expected to reach £150,000.



The Brickhill bellringers have been practising both at Newton Longville and latterly at Bletchley, with Hugh Butler, our long time former Tower Captain, among the team of experienced bellringers assisting in getting the band into shape to ring eight bells. If readers would like to join in ringing with the Brickhill bellringers, we ring at St. Mary's, Bletchley at 7.45pm on Wednesdays until the Great Brickhill tower is ready for ringing in June, when we will be starting separate beginners lessons on another day of the week.

We need new bellringers, and so, if you are interested in learning to ring our new bells, please ring David Middleton on 01525-261024, or email [DMiddleton@themail.co.uk](mailto:DMiddleton@themail.co.uk), or just join us on Wednesday evenings.

***David Middleton***