

Hartpury, Corse, and Staunton Bell Project

At last, the work has started. Prior to Taylor's bellhanger arriving five volunteers completed the work of removing the ancillary fittings from the bells at Hartpury and Staunton. This included the wheels, stays, ropes, sliders and pulley blocks.

Work commenced in earnest after Easter with all the fittings and bells being removed from Hartpury church, and then the bells, fittings and bell frame from Staunton church. This involved opening the trap doors between the ground floor of the tower and the rooms up to the bell chamber, installing lifting beams and chain hoists before the delicate, but physically hard work of lowering everything to ground level was undertaken. This took almost three weeks work by volunteers and the bellhanger and everything has now been transported to their workshop and foundry in Loughborough.

The work on the bells is being recorded by Derrick Hall as it proceeds as a historical record of the once in a century event.

On April the 27th 37 people travelled to Taylors foundry and watched two of the three new bells for Hartpury being cast, had a tour of workshops, and those bellringers on the trip enjoyed a ring on the 12 bells on the foundries ring of bells.

Work will continue at the foundry on both sets of bells over the next three months, during which time the new floor and access staircase will be installed at Hartpury.

Not to mention there was the small matter of the King's Coronation, for which as many bells in the country as possible were rung. Our local ringers rang the bells at Corse and Ashleworth to celebrate the event.

After the Coronation, work will start on Corse bells with the fittings being removed and taken away for refurbishment and the frame painting completed.

In August, Hartpury bells and fittings will be returned, and work completed in rehangng them, followed immediately in September when the work moves onto Staunton, where the new supporting girders and refurbished frame will be fitted along with the bells and new fittings. At the same time Corse bells will have their new fittings replaced. This is at least six weeks work until the end of September by Taylors and the local volunteers.

Once all the work has been completed, the bells tested and work signed off as satisfactory, it will be time for their rededication, this is planned for Wednesday the 8th of November when the Bishop of Gloucester will carry out a rededication service of the bells at each church, this will include the new 'Coronation' bell at Hartpury church in commemoration of the coronation of King Charles III, and the memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth.

Once the service is over there will be open ringing during the afternoon at each church.

Details of the rededication services will be available at a later date.