

All Saints Church Tower

One of the oldest parts of our Norman church , the tower has stood guard over Bramham for around 800 years with its comparatively short , hollow spire sitting on top of walls four feet thick . One of the village ' s finest views can be had after braving a tortuous climb up the ordinary wooden ladder which rests on the bell frame within , followed by a heady scramble over the high sill of the door leading to the parapet at the base of the turret . Though few have had the nerve or the agility to make that climb , one notable village octogenarian has accomplished it regularly as the only way to raise the flag above the Church .

Beneath the turret are five levels . Top , and reverberating round the interior of this spire , lie the bells , six of them , weighing in total 46 cwts. This mighty peal , created by Warner ' s of London in 1875 and several times re - hung and tuned since , replaced three earlier bells destroyed in a fire the year before . The bats , birds and butterflies which have tried to colonise the massive space within the spire continue to be driven elsewhere by the hourly clock strike and the resounding re - echoing of a full peal .

Next down lies the clock , built and supplied , again after the fire , in 1875 by William Potts & Sons of Leeds, who have serviced it ever since . This replaced the previous single - face clock whose mechanism was destroyed in the fire but whose face still looks west . The iron structure of the present clock, mounted on massive wooden frame , is essentially simple in its mechanism , serving three clock faces on the outside of the tower . These are replicated on the inside in reverse so that re - setting the clock , once it has stopped , has to be done with care . The differing designs of the faces reflect the slight variations in the times they show . A weekly winding is required to give the village its time check , though the hourly strike can only function without pause if wound up each sixth day and a half -- hence the usual half day ' s silence as the clock continues to tick throughout a week .

These two workings , the tick and the strike , are governed by weights which wind down the tower in a discrete internal wooden tunnel

until they reach the lowest level , the cellar , where they come to rest. As the much heavier strike weights are longer , they arrive on the ground sooner , hence the quiet period , which could be eliminated by digging out the cellar floor to a lower level [or winding every six days] .

The two weights , the clock of about 85 lbs . and the strike of no less than 350 lbs. , are separately wound , the former requiring 45 turns of the detachable handle , the latter 118 more strenuous turns . Thus , the clock winder , assuming he [or she -- there is no record to show whether the desire for manual equality has ever stretched this far] does the job each week , will , in a year , turn the handle about 8476 times . This means that the present incumbent , with nearly 30 years ' service , has comfortably exceeded a quarter million turns , lifting nearly 85 million pounds in the process.

Below the clock lies the ringing chamber , where teams have rung out tidings on the present bells -- sorry , glad or merely mundane -- since mid - Victorian times with only occasional rumblings of discontent from neighbours . The bells have after all been here far longer than any of us! Above their heads , boxed in wood , swings the mighty pendulum on which can be placed small stones or coins to fine tune the clock timing. As they pull , the ringers stand on a floor immediately above the baptistry in the church , where the font lies next to the small door in the wooden casing for checking descending clock weights . From here also the single curfew - bell is tolled by independent line to a clapper on the tenor bell above. Down again , under the font , lies the shallow cellar .

Access to the various chambers is , since the major re - building of 1853 , via a narrow , spiral , stone staircase erected on the outside of the tower 's north wall at that time . This construction must have been difficult enough , as must , 20 years later , the raising aloft of the new clock and bells . Imagine then , the labour , skill and danger involved , with early thirteenth century facilities , in building a tower like ours , with yard - thick walls and hollow spire on top . Our predecessors must indeed have been people determined , brave and dedicated almost beyond our comprehension .