

Bramham Mean Time

Not everyone loves bells. Though they 've been here longer than any of us, and we didn 't have to choose to live nearby , they do cause some [a minority , I suspect] to have feelings of annoyance , or worse. No one , however , seems to object to the Church clock , even though it does show a slightly different time on each of its faces , and is therefore not entirely reliable.

The clock can be seen from a surprising number of places in the village ; some people , I 'm told , have come to rely on it ; and it ' s valued by many as a focal point in our community. How many photographs of Bramham include the clock ? Can you imagine the village without it and its Church tower ? I ' m soon reminded of my duties , I can tell you , if I allow your clock to stop !

Of course , without the bells , the clock would not strike , making it a less characterful , living part of our lives. The two are , in their history and their function , bound up together. The six bells , cast by John Warner 's of London and hung by John Taylor 's of Loughborough , replaced an earlier ring in 1875 , at the same time that William Potts of Leeds replaced the previous single - faced clock. The whole exercise , carried out after a fire in the tower , required the construction of two immensely strong floors and frames , which stand firm to this day. They were made to act in unison , a working harmony under which generations of villagers have lived out their diverse lives ever since.

We now exist in an age when , oddly , folk look to eliminate hard labour from their diaries , whilst paying handsomely for membership of gym or pool. Exercise from the weekly winding of the great weights which drive the clock is somehow unfashionable or too much of a responsibility. That philosophy , together with our favouring of all things electronic , has brought to the fore the suggestion that unreliable man should be eliminated as winder, with the clock computerised though , one hopes , not digitalised . It wouldn 't be quite the same to glance up at a 24 hour numerical face , or to listen to an hourly electronic strike !

For the moment , muscle is cheap and handy , but when the day comes to install a motor , costs , initial and running , will rise. Then , if you value your village timekeeper , you ' ll need to pay for it. The Church as supplier of services to the uncommitted may well not stretch that far !