

Penshurst Church Bells Restoration

Launch event Saturday 8th June 7pm

Penshurst's eight bells are a wonderful asset of the church and village, the tenor dating back 400+ years and the 5th dating back 500+ years. We owe a duty to past and future generations to preserve them in good shape.

The last major work on the bells took place half a century ago; the headstocks, wheels and clappers are now 127 years old. They are being used to swing massive weights around above the heads of the ringers and are rapidly approaching the end of their safe lives. The bells also need turning by one-eighth due to excessive wear at their strike points.

The evening's programme (drinks and canapés throughout):

Quarter Peal

(With 1250 changes, rung to mark special occasions, 45 mins)

Explanations of restoration project

Neil Jones: Chairman, Kent County Association of Change Ringers

Special Poem for the occasion by Philip Sidney
read by Lady De L'Isle;

What needs to be done – the ‘technical’s

- Dismantle the bells and ringing fittings, lower all to the ground and transport to bellhangers works.
- Remains of the original cast-in crown staples removed, and each bell checked for cracks.
- Bells tuned to enhance their tone and musicality.
- Bells rehung with new headstocks and adjusted to give optimum performance from minimal effort
- Revised arrangement of rope handling to improve the bell handling
- Proposed start January 2025; cost £75,000.

What’s the worst that could happen if bells are not properly maintained?

When an indentation gets to about 10% of soundbow thickness, a bell is normally turned to present new surfaces to the clapper and reduce the risk of cracking. Peshurst bells have excessive wear at strike points and are at risk of cracking; as long as they are turned, we expect several hundred years more of useful life.



Proposed design of cast iron headstock for the eight bells.

You are cordially invited to attend this important event (no charge).