

ROPE GUIDES

Bells with a long length of rope can be difficult to control. This is because the weight of rope supplements the force needed from the ringer to an increasing extent as the length increases and the bell weight is reduced such that it becomes most difficult to control the bell and the rope takes on a life of its own. The reduction of the need to pull the rope hard, allows the slack rope to start producing sideways looping in the intermediate room between the bell chamber and ringing chamber and this with the slackness below the ceiling can make the rope fall in an erratic manner causing difficulty in bell control. This can lead to risky situations for the ringers if they fail to catch the rope at the end of its travel. Pulling the rope harder to keep the rope under control can then perhaps lead to a broken stay if the ringer misses catching the sally thus over-turning the bell with the associated dangers.

At Kilsby, the bells are not particularly easy to control for these reasons. It makes it very difficult to teach new recruits safely. The length of rope above the ringer to the bell is about 30ft. The distance from floor to ringing room ceiling is about 20ft.

Practical experience shows that by introducing a rope guide around 15ft 9in above the floor, rope movement is greatly improved, with the sideways looping in the intermediate chamber reduced. If the guide at this level interrupts the view of the St Faith window from the nave, a suitable guide framework can be designed to reduce this intrusion to a minimum and below is a photo of such a format adopted in Felmingham, Norfolk.

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The main frame is out of the sight line from the nave and the extensions for each rope guide are adjusted to meet mutual requirements of sight line and bell control.