

Church bells to ring again



● Francis Bennett . . . "it's very rewarding."

THE sound of music will soon ring out once more in the village of Willoughby . . . for major restoration work has been carried out on the carillon and clock at St Nicholas Church.

Villagers are looking forward to enjoying the tuneful sounds of the carillon when it is given its official launch on Easter Sunday.

Mr Francis Bennett, clock maker, said the work has been done in two parts.

The first job was to completely restore and rebuild the original clock movement, and the second to rebuild and re-engage the bells.

The project began about a month ago when the clock and carillon were removed and taken to a workshop in Shipston on Stour.

They were carefully cleaned and all the corrosion and paint removed.

Said Mr Bennett: "Then the job of restoration started and we had to remove the wear and tear of past centuries whilst at the same time taking great care not to alter the clock or damage its character."

He described the work as "a labour of love" for his team of craftsmen.

Carillon
set to
carry on

Story:
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● Jonathon Harris at work on the carillon.

He said: "I am very interested in this sort of work. You are creating something before your eyes. It is very rewarding in that sense.

"It is a bit like playing for an audience because the results of the work will be heard throughout the parish."

The Rev Douglas Pharaoh said the carillon — believed to have been installed in 1740 — works by a series of hammers

hitting the bells.

Very few people in the village had heard it before, but five tunes can be played now that the work has been carried out.

The Rev. Pharaoh said finance for the work was provided by the Willoughby Educational Foundation and the Council for the Care of Churches (via the Pilgrim Trust).