

Bill in the Belfry

In 1956 (or thereabouts) my husband Bill and I with our 2 small sons were living in Manor Cottage adjacent to the church. Sadly, at that time, only one of the 2 bells was working so my husband was requested by my uncle the churchwarden (Bert Whetham) to investigate the problem. To gain access to the belfry in the tower we borrowed a large extending ladder and so, armed with some basic tools and pieces of wood, Bill climbed into the belfry and began investigations.



Pendermer Church and Manor Cottage

Some time later I heard a loud clatter and shouts of "Help!" emitting from the small slits in the tower. On arrival I found that the ladder had collapsed and my husband was marooned in the tower. Unfortunately I was unable to push up the ladder extension unaided so innovation was called for. I was instructed to fetch the garden hoe and tie it to one of the bell ropes which he pulled up to the belfry; he was then able to lower the hoe down and attach it to the top rung of the ladder which I was holding upright. Then, with me pushing and him pulling we were once again able to get the ladder in position and himself safely returned to "terra firma".

He'd managed to make temporary repairs, but professional work was required eventually.

Shortly after this episode we left Pendermer and didn't return until 5 years later and then to "Rose Cottage" where we stayed for a further 14 happy years. All 3 of our children still consider Pendermer to be "home" and its a first port of call when my eldest son returns from his current home in British Columbia.

Jean Laughlin