

## Tour of Ainsworth Parish Church Tower 2/2/13.

Over 25 intrepid members of the local history society, together with family, friends and members of the church, turned out for the tour which had been re-scheduled after the heavy snow of the previous Saturday.

After ascending the different levels of the tower on very steep wooden ladders we were able to stand on the enclosed roof space. We were rewarded for the effort with 360 degree views of the village, giving a real appreciation for its scale and the layout, the older areas and growth of its modern additions.



Also the separateness of its setting within the wider areas of Lancashire, it's past role as a stage post between the towns and a reason for the high proportion of inns in Victorian times(?). Clear skies afforded further magnificent views over towards Manchester, the Pennines and as far as Staffordshire. And on a personal note, it was a relief to see my roof tiles still intact after the bad weather!

Dave pointed out the 'masons marks' carved into one of the topmost spires of the tower – a human connection to its construction



(see Photograph by Matthew McArdle). Indeed, a subsequent inspection of graves close to the tower showed that some were also carved with similar masonic emblems – possibly of the same men who had worked on the church tower?

Descending into the top level of the tower, it was interesting to see the original rustic housing of the single cast iron bell. One or two members could not resist a little campanology on the next level down with a quick pull of the bell cord. This level also houses the clock mechanism.



Curiosity satisfied and safely back on ground level, we were kindly offered hot drinks in the church by Polly. A welcome touch on a chilly day and bringing an enjoyable conclusion to the tour. Many thanks to Dave and Polly for their time and organisation.

Gail and Matthew McArdle