



QUIBELL

BUILDING, MASONRY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS

STONE MASONRY DIVISION

QUIBELL'S COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION OF A 13TH CENTURY CHURCH TOWER.

introduction

The Stone Masonry Division of the Quibell Group have recently carried out the complete dismantling and reconstruction of a 13th century church tower at Kellington, North Yorkshire. It is believed that this is the first time such a task has been attempted in the UK, the project offering a unique challenge for the Group's Stone Masons.



before

background

British Coal's plans to mine underneath Kellington from its Kellingley Colliery resulted in an unacceptable risk of damage to the church from mining subsidence. The decision was therefore taken to underpin the whole church.

The 17m tower was, however, in such a poor condition that no assurance could be given on its structural stability, even after the underpinning. The decision was therefore taken to:

- ▲ Dismantle the tower stone by stone.
- ▲ Form a complete new tower foundation.
- ▲ Reconstruct the tower to its original appearance, including building out of plumb!

the project

Quibell's Stone Masonry Division was successful in winning the contract for the tower work, and dismantling began in November 1990. During dismantling, each stone was carefully referenced and stored for re-building. The whole dismantling phase was carried out in close collaboration with archaeologists from the University of York. Many significant finds were made, not least of which was the discovery of finely carved stones within the core of the tower walls, indicating that an earlier tower with many elaborate features had been constructed. It had possibly collapsed, being replaced by the present tower, c 1250.



during

Dismantling was completed in March 1991, at which point the new foundation works were started. The tower was ready for reconstruction by July 1991.

The job of putting the tower back together involved restoring over 8,000 individual stones to their exact, original position and demanded a very high degree of organisation and skill. Nevertheless, the stone reconstruction was completed within 6 months - an achievement of which the Company is very proud.



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after restoration