

# Campsea Ashe Church Tower Graffiti Survey – September 2009

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September 2009

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## **Introduction**

The early 14th century Church of St John the Baptist in Campsea Ashe consists of a lengthy nave and chancel, a projecting vestry off the chancel to the north east, a projecting porch accessing the nave to the south west, and a lofty square-section tower at its west end, some 76 feet in height. A narrow stone spiral staircase leading from the base of the tower gives access to the Bell Ringing Chamber. A further wooden staircase leads from here to the top section of the tower which currently contains the four bells mounted in a mid-19th century frame. As part of the 2010 phase of the *Campsea Ashe Bells Project* these are to be increased in number to six, and relocated lower down the tower.

In order to operate the relocated bells, ringers will no longer use the existing Ringing Chamber, but will instead occupy a new Ringing Gallery also positioned lower down the tower, and visible from the rear of the nave. Once the tower has been converted to this configuration, the existing Ringing Chamber will become much less accessible than it is now, and will be entered only occasionally for inspection and maintenance of the bells themselves. Consequently, prior to the start of building work on the tower, the opportunity has been taken to carry out a survey to record and document the interesting graffiti that has amassed in the Ringing Chamber over the last century or so.

Reflecting the symmetry of the tower, the interior of the Ringing Chamber is square in section, with the spiral staircase entering from the south-west corner (Figure 1). There are windows in the north and south walls, deeply recessed by about 4 feet because of the width of the tower masonry. The interior walls of the Ringing Chamber are chiefly composed of rough flint, with some other masonry brickwork or stone blocks, all set in a coarse mortar. As such these surfaces have not lent themselves as suitable for graffiti artists. Over the years, however, the window recesses have been plastered and/or lime-washed, and have presented very good – and readily accessible - surfaces for pencil drawings and script, and so are rich sources of graffiti, going back to the early 20th century and almost certainly before. In some places over-coats of lime-wash have obscured earlier graffiti.

The arch leading to the spiral staircase has a smooth stonework surround, and is similarly suitable for graffiti, so there are some good examples here as well. Finally, the wooden staircase that leads from the north-west corner of the Ringing Chamber up to the belfry is of a simple planed pine construction, and has also attracted graffiti artists and writers.

The dictionary definition of graffiti is “drawing or writing scratched or scribbled on a wall etc.” and, probably because of its casual and ‘opportunist’ nature, the graffiti in the Campsea Ashe Ringing Chamber indeed tends to be restricted to about head-height (5 to 6 feet from the ground), quickly executed and rarely of great literary or artistic merit. As would be expected many of the pieces are simply names and dates hastily written in an impromptu style, but there are some other examples of more elaborate and better crafted work on which some considerable time has been spent. Several are of particular note: drawings of mid-20th century aircraft, presumably dating from when the tower was visited or occupied by military service personnel during or between the first and/or second world wars; some sketches of figures (notably a bespectacled bishop in ecclesiastical robes and mitre); animals and birds. Also of interest are lists and sequences of numbers that may well reflect the use of the chamber by bell-ringers in times gone by.

The bulk of the material is in pencil, and dates from the 1920s to the 1950s, with a number of individuals featuring more than once. There is also some renewed activity being manifest during the 1980s. The earliest recorded graffito in the survey is one claimed for Joseph Bell and dated June 2nd 1646, and there are two others apparently dating from the 18th century (“F Jacobs 1766 BELLRINGER” and possibly “G FLOWER 1793”), but these earliest ones are very uncertain and may need further research.

### ***List of Photographs***

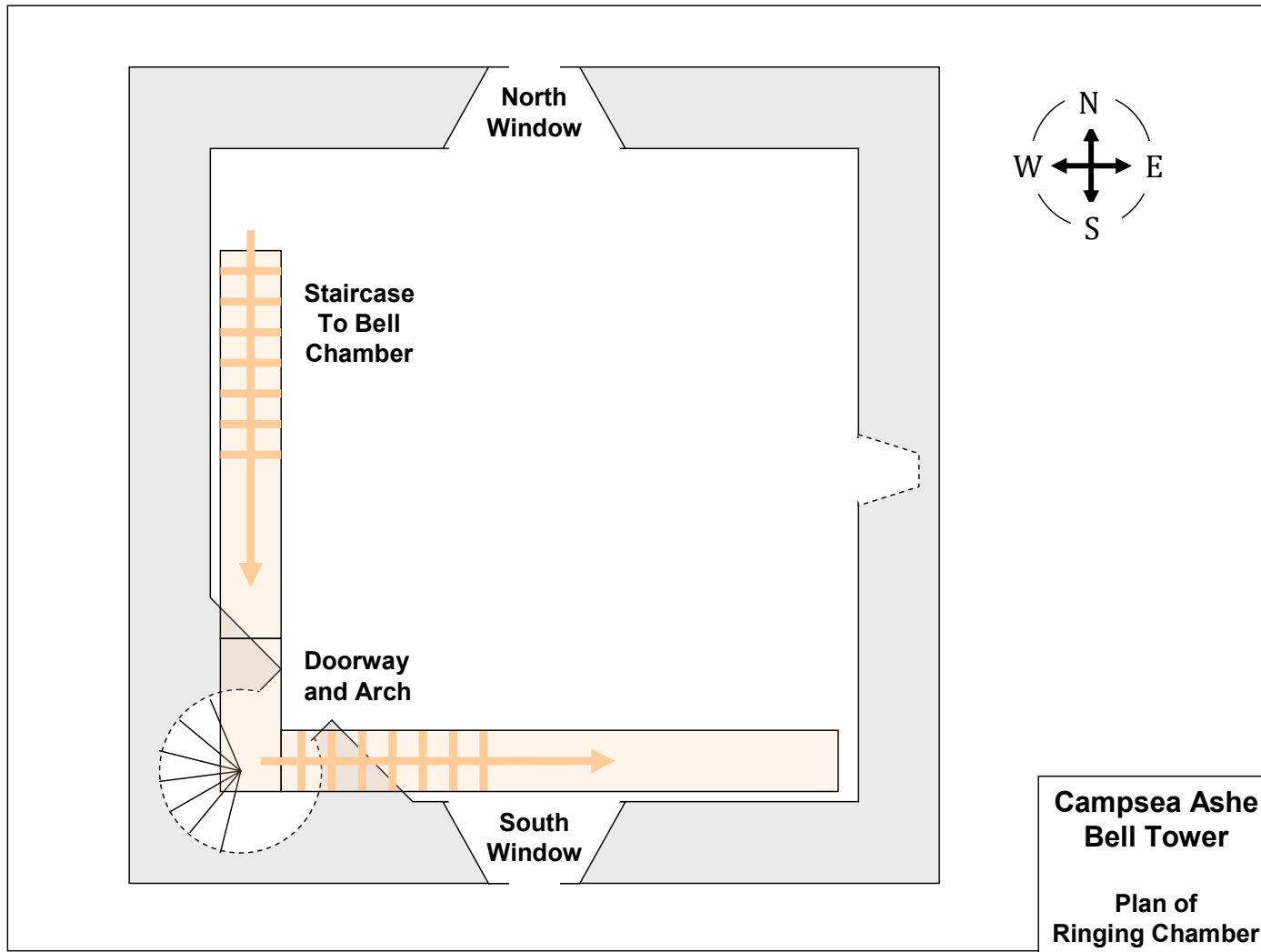
A series of 33 photographs of the graffiti accompany this survey, and may be referred to separately. They are currently held in electronic format and have not been embedded with this text on the grounds of restricting the data file size. The photographs are of the more prominent examples of graffiti, and the set is as follows, the figure numbers listed according to the document sections 1 to 4 and the graffiti numbers according to location:-

<b>1. North Wall &amp; Window Recess</b>		<b>2. South Wall &amp; Window Recess</b>	
Fig 1.1	Ringling Chamber N Window Recess	Fig 2.1	Ringling Chamber S Window Recess
Fig 1.2	Nos. 3 and 6 The Spectacled Bishop	Fig 2.2	Nos. 14 to 18 Ira Chatfield, potato-head etc.
Fig 1.3	No.22 The Racing Car	Fig 2.3	Nos. 36 and 36a E Copping's Monoplane
Fig 1.4	Nos. 18 and 20 Cartoon Bishop and Stick Man	Fig 2.4	No.7 CEFR Cross dated gothic script
Fig 1.5	Nos. 27 and 28 The Horse & Horseman	Fig 2.5	Nos. 43 and 44 Smith, Culham and Whymark
Fig 1.6	No.25 The Illegible Signatures	Fig 2.6	No.11 J Watling Bellringer
Fig 1.7	No.12 The Cartoon Standing Figure	Fig 2.7	No.42 The German Bomber under fire
Fig 1.8	No.23 The Thora Rivett Panel	Fig 2.8	Nos. 10 and 12b E Brown and the 2 inch face
Fig 1.9	No.27 The Horse's Head	Fig 2.9	No.27 D Skipper dated 1918
		Fig 2.10	Nos. 32 to 35 Bearded Figure, May, Pooley and Evans
<b>3. South West Doorway &amp; Arch</b>		<b>4. West Wall Staircase</b>	
Fig 3.1	Ringling Chamber SW Doorway and Arch	Fig 4.1	Ringling Chamber West Wall Staircase
Fig 3.2	No.1 B Smith 1924 (1934)	Fig 4.2	Staircase from the rear
Fig 3.3	No.3 B Smith 1920	Fig 4.3	Nos. 6 and 7 K Coleman, Thomas Mowson and Bertie Smith
Fig 3.4	No.5 W and P carved capitals	Fig 4.4	Nos. 14 and 15 A Bowell, Ipswich 1922 and AFB
Fig 3.5	No.6 aeroplane on doorframe	Fig 4.5	No.34 Lovell, Holland, Bates and Greig, May 1954
Fig 3.6	No.2 AC dated 1926	Fig 4.6	Nos. 26 and 31 (step VII) A Cement and M Battle
Fig 3.7	No.18 Alec Cook block capitals		

This survey has been carried out as part of the *Campsea Ashe Bells Project*, and will form part of the Village Heritage initiative.

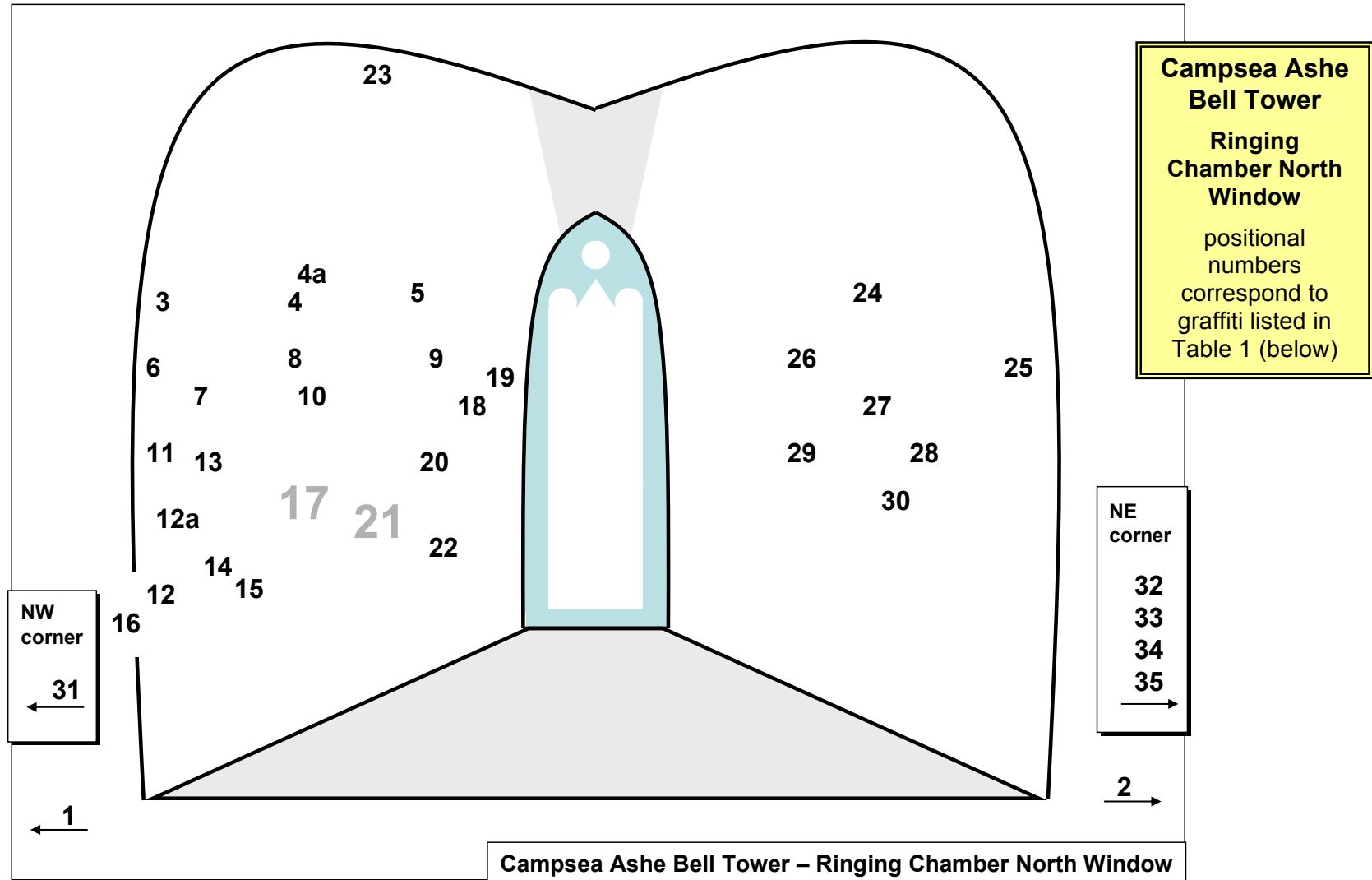
***Peter & June Carter, Campsea Ashe, September 2009***

**Plan of the Ringing Chamber at September 2009**



**Figure 1: Plan of the Ringing Chamber**

**1. The North Wall & North Window Recess as viewed from inside Ringing Chamber**



**Figure 2: Ringing Chamber North Window**

**Table 1: North Wall & North Window Recess**

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
1	pencil	on wall brick several feet to the left of the window recess:- initials "W.G."	¾	1	fair
2	pencil	on wall brick several feet to the right of the window recess:- initial "R" – scrawled and indistinct	2	1	fair
3	pencil	script "S. Smith" (uncertain)	1	3	fair
4	pencil	capital letters "SMITH" (uncertain); also several illegible capitals beneath, but including "A" and "M"	½	2	poor
4a	pencil	located immediately above #4: script "Smith" (uncertain) and date "1955" (uncertain)	¾	2½	poor
5	pencil	large capitals "COD"; also a cartoon profile face with turned-up nose, facing the window	1	4	fair
6	pencil	cartoon figure of a bishop (?) wearing mitre & spectacles; also columns of numeral pairs (e.g. 1 2, 3 4, 2 4, ... ) to the right of the sketched figure (height 20 inches approx.)	2	1½	good
7	pencil	adjacent to columns of numeral pairs: cartoon of figure running away from window; also a small column of figures 9 2 2 (height ~6 inches)	4	3	fair
8	pencil	beneath #4: name in lower case script "Cedric Bilno ..." (?); also date 3/4/...29 (?)	¾	3½	fair
9	pencil	beneath #5: cartoon bird facing away from window	1	2	good
10	pencil	illegible signature and date 3/8(?)/29	¼	1¼	poor
11	pencil	cartoon standing figure with round face ~5 inches high	5	3	good / fair
12	pencil	cartoon standing figure ~4 inches high (similar / same artist as above)	4½	1½	good / fair
12a	pencil	between Nos. 11&12 and to the left, very indistinct:- vertical columns of numeral pairs (ringing sequences?) e.g. 3 1, 2 4, ...	4	2	fair / poor
13	pencil	script "d riley" (?) with date "1921"	2	3	poor
14	pencil	capital letters "BOYER" (perhaps "DOYER") (?)	½	2	poor
15	pencil	three rows of barely legible script: "1922" (?); capital letters (not legible) capital "M"	2	4	poor
16	pencil	signature on corner of window recess "Ray Smith" plus symbol "X" and script "Rose Smith"	2½	2	fair
17	pencil	very faint numerals over extensive area – several square inches	-	-	poor

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
18	pencil	cartoon stick man with splayed feet. 6 inches high	6	2	fair
19	pencil	cartoon female face with enlarged chin ('Desperate Dan' jaw line!)	2½	1½	fair
20	pencil	cartoon bishop's head with mitre and spectacles. 4½ inches high	4½	3	fair
21	pencil	apparently random scribbled lines; capital "AC" legible in central area	15	15	poor
22	pencil	immediately beneath #21: sketch of 1920s style racing car, on about 12 inches of 'road surface' facing window	1	3½	good
23	pencil	at top front of window recess, in a sketched rectangular panel. capital script "THORA RIVETT" (or possibly "NOFT", "NEEFT" or "NERFT") - followed by an illegible script / signature	2	1	good
24	pencil	barely legible text "...FET" with date "1830" (?)	½	1½	fair
25	pencil	three illegible signatures:- "Gosling" (or possibly "Goserling") "...Pipe" (?) "A Gosling" (?)	4	3	fair
26	pencil	cartoon fish facing window – long and thin, about 8½ inches x 1 inch	1	8½	fair
27	pencil	well executed cartoon horses head, with prominent ears, facing away from window, about 5 inches long	4	5	good
28	pencil	cartoon horseman figure (?) beside and facing horses head (above), possibly holding reins or similar; height ~9½ inches	9½	5	fair
29	pencil	capitals and numerals "...PT 44 ... CHATFIELD" (?) (or possibly ...SEPT 49") accompanied by small (~1½ inch) cartoon bird facing window	¾	6	fair
30	pencil	well executed drawing of bird facing window; also a 1 inch square profile of a man's head, wearing a cap, facing window	2	1½	fair
31	pencil	on eye-level stone in corner of W & N walls: capital "JB 1942"	¾	2	good
32	pencil	on eye-level stone in corner of E & N walls: "E Sattis age 18 1932"	2	3	good
33	pencil	corner of E & N walls, with above: "Edwin Glover 19 ---" (?)	1	3	fair
34	pencil	corner of E & N walls, with above: large capitals "TF"	2	3	good
35	pencil	corner of E & N walls, with above: capitals "BT" (?) & "BW" dated "1935"	1½	5	fair

## 2. The South Wall & South Window Recess as viewed from inside Ringing Chamber

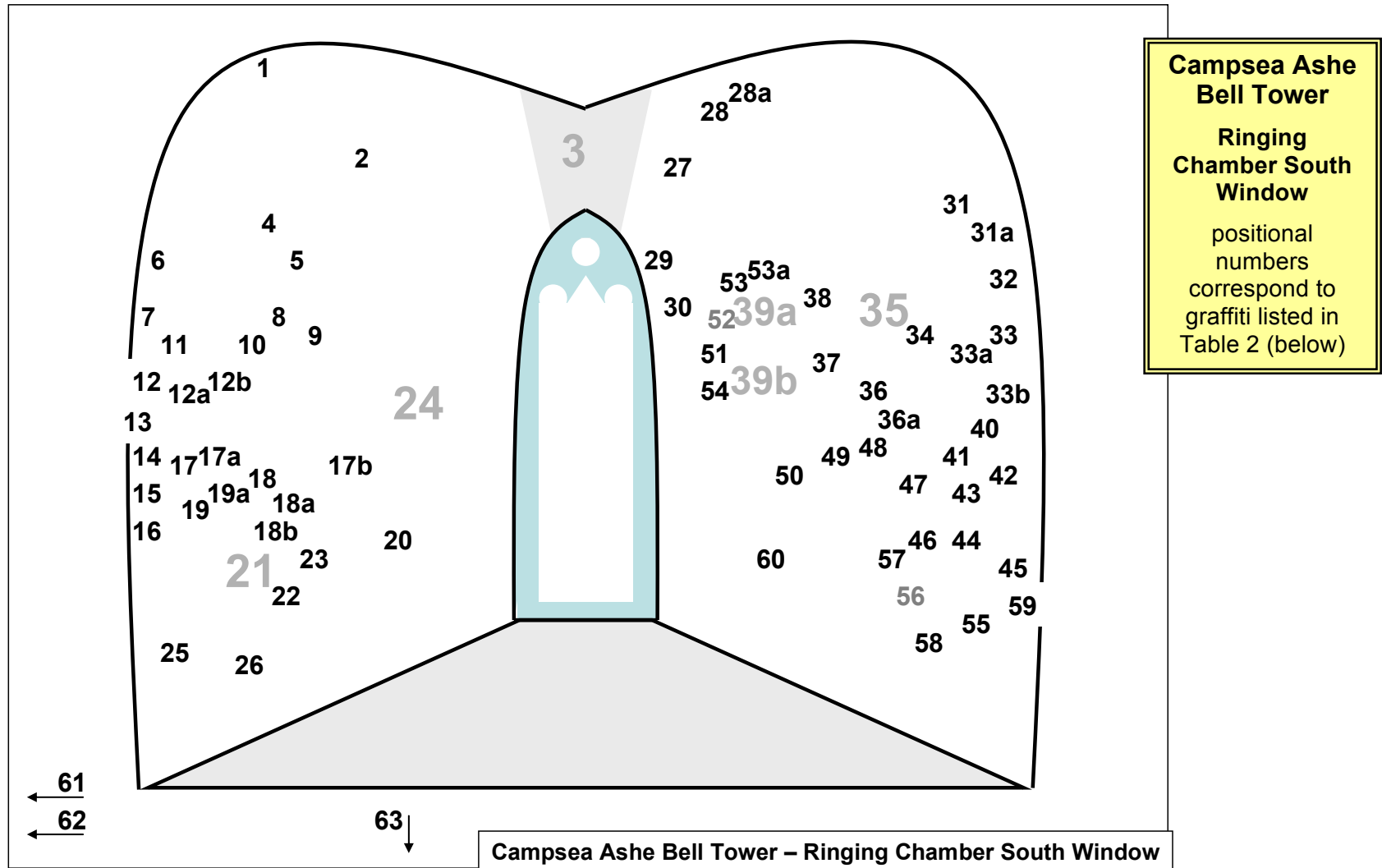


Figure 3: Ringing Chamber South Window



**Table 2: South Wall & North Window Recess**

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
1	pencil	script "Fred ---" (?)	1	4	poor
2	pencil	script "Eric Copping"	1	4	fair
3	pencil	natural patterning – probably from a wasps' or bees' nest	-	-	N/A
4	pencil	large capitals "GORDON MARSH" (? surname indistinct); also very faint capitals beneath giving a second name or date (?)	1	10	fair / poor
5	pencil	sketch of a grotesque / alien figure or bird (?) ~3½ inches high	3½	2	poor
6	pencil	capitals written sideways "M EVANS"	¾	3	fair
7	pencil	elegant gothic script "C E F R Cross", dated "22/5/33"	1½	5	good
8	pencil	neat script "Eric Copping 19—" (date indistinct)	1½	8	fair
9	pencil	script "o v a ---"	1½	4	poor
10	pencil	capitals inside a rough oval frame "E BROWN MA ---" (date?) "22.1981" (possibly May or March 1985)	2	4½	fair
11	pencil	capitals in rough oval frame "J WATLING BELLRINGER 13 15" (?)	2	4	fair
12	pencil	script "D Vincent"	1	3	fair
12a	pencil	(beside No.12 but not necessarily associated) "17/9/38"	¾	2	fair
12b	pencil	(between Nos.10 & 12) face ~2 inches round	2	2	good
13	pencil	script "W C Re -----" ( <i>Rexssuly</i> or similar)	½	3½	fair
14	pencil	elaborate 'trellised' rectangular panel containing capitals "IRA . F. 1934 CHATFIELD"	1½	3½	good
15	pencil	script "Edward Cotter 1931"	1¼	1¾	fair
16	pencil	small capitals "E LATTER"	¼	1½	fair
17	pencil	rough script in large oval "F Jacobs 1766 BELLRINGER "	4	5	fair
17a	carving	first capital "E" ~1 inch square carved into stone / plasterwork	1	1	good
17b	carving	second capital "E" ~1 inch square carved into stone / plasterwork (9 inches to the right of No. 17a)	1	1	good
18	pencil	rough 'potato face' drawing with "Harris" script and "10 / 29" scribbled across it; features obscured by tailfin of aeroplane sketch (No.19a)	5	3½	fair
18a	pencil	script "Jack Mass" or similar	½	2	poor
18b	pencil	script "Chas King" or similar	½	2	poor
19	pencil	illegible sketches accompanied by the faint word "London" and an illegible date (possibly "Aug 8th 1940")	1½	2½	poor
19a	pencil	sketch of aeroplane obscuring part of "F Jacobs" script (No.17) and 'potato	5	6	fair

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
		face' (No.18)			
20	pencil	rectangular panel containing script "A Marsh 1936" (?date indistinct)	¾	½	poor
21	pencil	extended script "---Granger 1926" (uncertain)	½	6	poor
22	pencil	script "G Spall" (or similar) and dated "1926"	1	3	poor
23	pencil	illegible script "Rox ---" or "Revett" (?)	½	3	poor
24	pencil	very indistinct angel figure (?) ~6 inches high standing or leaning on an extensive rectilinear frame or fence, with curved side features; large illegible capital letters to the right of framework	6	14	fair / poor
25	pencil	pair of stick-men figures embracing ~2 inches high	2	1¼	fair
26	pencil	poorly legible script and sketches – partly obscured by whitewash	3	6	poor
27	pencil	script in large oval frame "Arthur Gibb" (or similar) "May 8th / 98"	2½	6	fair
28	pencil	script in a circular frame "Joseph Bell" (or similar) "June 2nd 1646"	3½	4	fair
28a	pencil	rough script "My Name" (or similar)	½	2	poor
29	pencil	rough profile face facing window ~2 inches round	2	2	fair
30	pencil	rough profile figure ~4 inches high, wearing a cap	4	¾	poor
31	pencil	capitals in a circular frame "ARC RAH 21 / 9 / 35"	4	5½	fair
31a	pencil	script "W Small" or "W Smiley" (?uncertain)	1	1	fair
32	pencil	very large script "G May Jan 1929" (underlined)	4½	7	good
33	pencil	very large script "P Pooley Jan 1929" (underlined)	3½	6	good
33a	pencil	small script "A C Bridges"	½	3	fair
33b	pencil	very large script "M Evans Jan 1929" (underlined)	3	5	good
34	pencil	script "H Clements"	1	4	fair
35	pencil	standing bearded figure ~8 inches high: dressed in a collared coat and trilby hat, facing the window	8	2½	good
36	pencil	detailed drawing of a monoplane prop aircraft in flight, with fixed wheel undercarriage and clear markings G-ABXI on its wings and fuselage	7	7	good
36a	pencil	names in a rectangular frame, associated with aircraft drawing:- "E Copping" (or similar) and "Plane" overwritten "C Mellis ---" (or similar) "May 5th 1929"	4	8	fair
37	pencil	script "C Skeet 1928"	1½	3½	fair
38	pencil	script "E Evans June 17th 1929"	1	½	fair
39 a/b	pencil	extensive / scribbled face profile ~20 inches high, facing window	20	10	poor
40	pencil	script "E Wheldon (or similar) 1930 . May 22nd"	1¼	4	fair
41	pencil	scripted date July 26 1813	2	3	poor

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
42	pencil	sketch of bomber (possibly the distinctive WWII German Dornier Do17 'Flying Pencil'), with cross markings on tailfin, being shot at by a ground-based field gun	3	4	good
43	pencil	underlined capitals "B SMITH 1920" and "W CULHAM 1920"	2	5	good
44	pencil	script "J Whymark" accompanied by large capitals "L / C" (or similar); also illegible dates	2	4½	poor
45	pencil	small capitals "R F S April 1985"	1	1	good
46	pencil	capitals in a rough circular frame "D SKIPPER Jan 2nd 1918"	2	2	fair
47	pencil	capitals in a rough oval frame "G BREWER" [possibly "G FLOWER" (?)] & "1793" [damaged and made less legible by holes in plasterwork]	3	5	fair
48	pencil	capitals "G DAVIES MAY 2001"	1¼	4½	good
49	pencil	alphanumeric text in a clear rectangular frame:- "2 / B / M / King / PSW1014369 / JA 1936" [or similar, possibly Service Ranks & Number etc.?)	1½	3	good
50	carving?	scratched capital "A" in plaster ~2" high	2	1¼	poor
51	pencil	large rough script "P N O I"	¾	2¼	poor
52	pencil	faint illegible script	4	3½	poor
53	pencil	script "E Evans Jan 1927"	1¼	1½	fair
53a	pencil	barely legible script obscured by plaster/whitewash: "C Cliff" (or similar)	1	2	poor
54	pencil	underlined script "Walter SMITH"	½	2½	fair
55	pencil	script "M EVANS brother" (or similar)	1	5	fair
56	pencil	rough rectangular panel with illegible script & scratches	3½	4	poor
57	pencil	large script "A COLLINGS"	1½	5	fair
58	pencil	small capitals "L MATTIN" ("L" is indistinct)	½	2	fair
59	pencil	small capitals "WS"	¼	¾	fair
60	pencil	vertical script "William Gibbs" (or similar) with date "July 5 1902"	1½	5	fair
<b>NB. Other graffiti likely to exist under the plaster / whitewash</b>					
61	pencil	on wall brick several feet to the left of the window recess – capitals "CHALLIS" or possibly "CHARLES"	1	6	poor
62	pencil	on wall brick several feet to the left of the window recess - capitals "J B" dated 1943	½	2	poor
63	pencil	illegible script on wall brick beneath the window recess	1	5	poor

### 3. The Doorframe and Surrounding Arch as viewed from inside Ringing Chamber

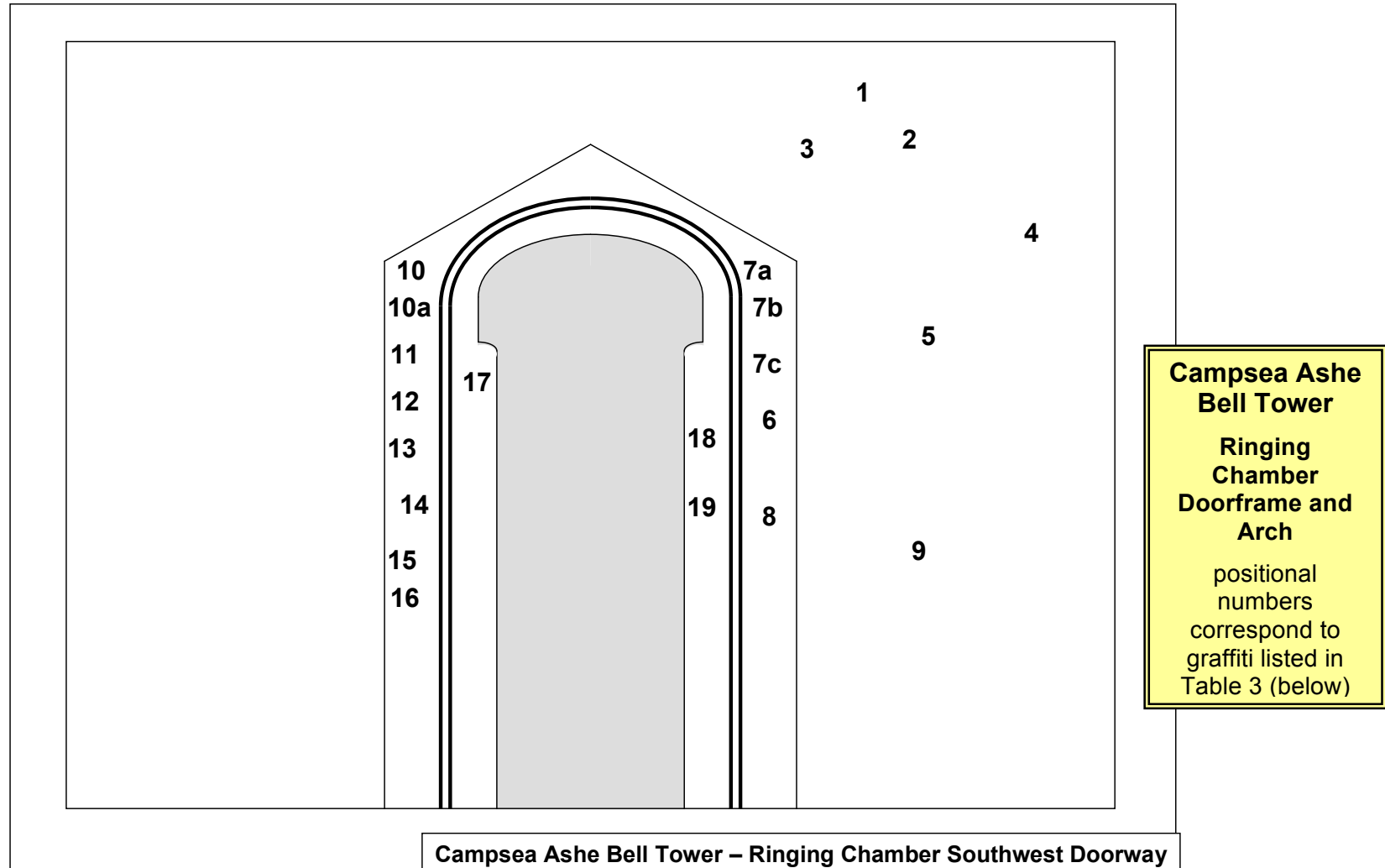


Figure 4: Ringing Chamber Doorframe and Arch

**Table 3: South-West Doorway & Arch**

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
1	pencil	script "B Smith" and date "1924" or "1934" (?)	2½	3	fair
2	pencil	capitals "A C" with indistinct date "1925" or "1926" (?)	2	2½	poor
3	pencil	script "B Smith" and date "1920"	2	4	fair
4	pencil	script "M Burton" and date "2 5 1921" – partly obscured by late 20th Century wiring	1	2	fair
5	pencil	capitals deeply carved into masonry / brickwork "W" and "P / " (remainder illegible) - both partly obscured by late 20th Century light switch & wiring	4	~ 6	fair
6	pencil	sketch of aeroplane on door frame	3	4	fair
7a	pencil	very faint illegible script	1	1½	poor
7b	pencil	very faint illegible script	½	2½	poor
7c	pencil	very faint illegible script	½	2½	poor
8	pencil	very faint illegible capitals	4	4	poor
9	carving	large rough capitals on brick "A C M" ~2 inches high	2	5	fair
10	pencil	profile sketch of head and shoulders, ~2 inches high facing the south window	2	1¼	fair
10a	pencil	profile sketch of head and shoulders, ~1½ inches high facing the south window	1½	¾	fair
11	pencil	very faint script "B BELL"	½	1¼	poor
12	pencil	script "M EVANS 1924"	¼	2½	fair
13	pencil	script name – illegible "FROM HOL --- JUNE 1984"	1	4	poor
14	pencil	very faint illegible script	1	4	poor
15	pencil	poorly legible rough script "PROT" or "FROST" (?)	½	2	poor
16	pencil	scribbles/scratches on edge of door jamb, obscured by dirt and handling	8	5	very poor
17	pencil	clear script on door jamb: "R Hughes Nov 1960"	½	5	good
18	pencil	Bold blocked capitals "ALEC COOK"	1½	3	good
19	pencil	script: "A CHAT"	½	2	good

### 4. The West Wall Staircase as viewed from inside Ringing Chamber

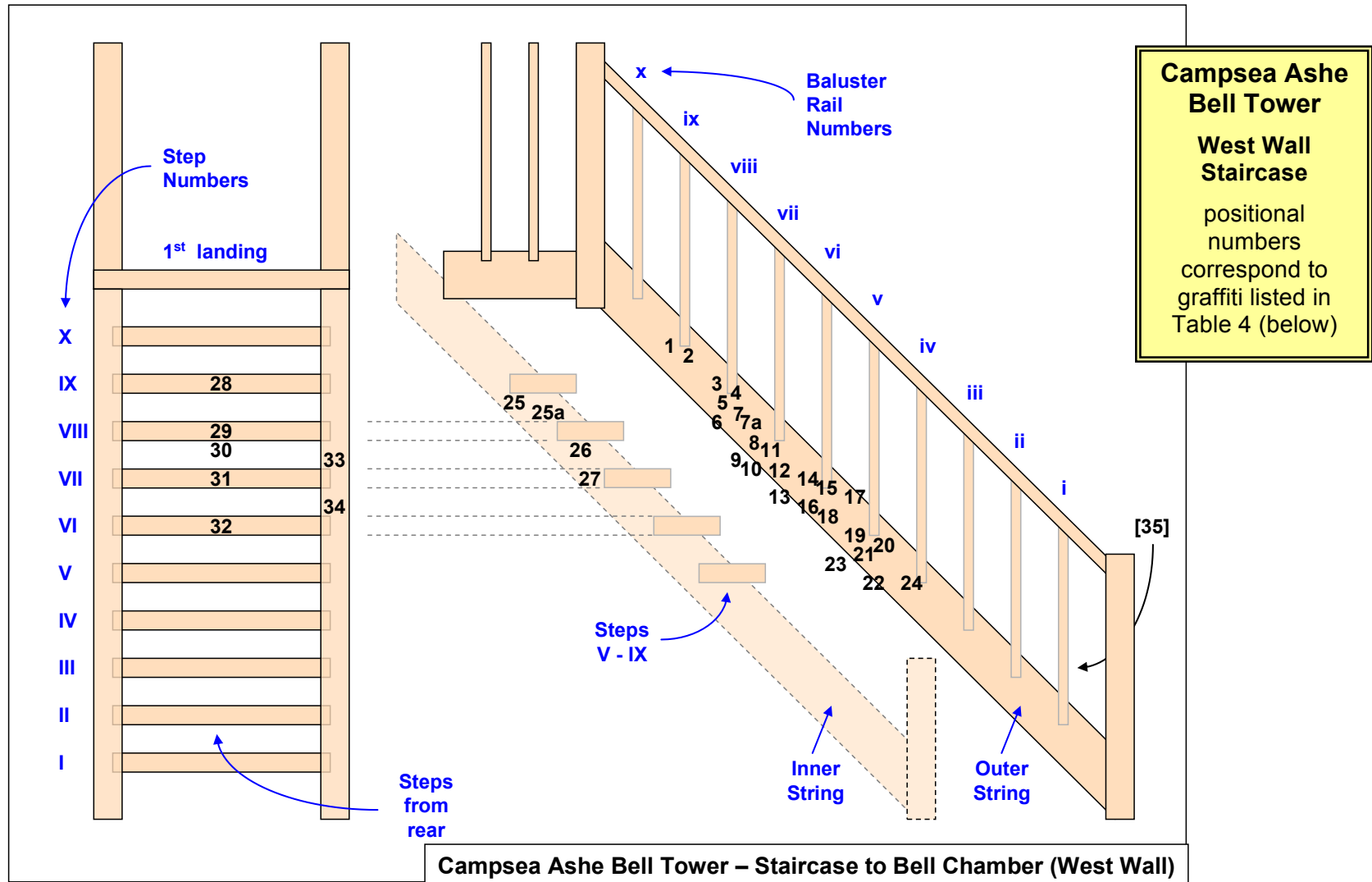


Figure 5: West Wall Staircase

**Table 4: West Wall Staircase**

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
<i>Exterior face of the Outer String – around the bases of baluster rails [iv] to [ix]</i>					
1	pencil	capitals “K COLEMAN” and “Bramford 1960”	1¼	5	good
2	pencil	script “D Wall” and numerals 14 9 (indistinct)	¾	1¼	poor
3	pencil	(beneath base of baluster rail) five lines of text scribbled over	4	2	poor
4	pencil	rough rectangle & script “F Johnson Wickham MARKET”	2	4½	good
5	pencil	vertical list of numbers: 98, 75, 75, 19, 54, 87, 114 as in a summation: <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">548</span> [NB. numbers sum to 522]	4	1¼	fair
6	pencil	vertical capitals along edge of string in rough scratched frame:- “K + COLE+MAN 1960” Marked + between the initial K & C; also between the letters E & M:- “C8G” or possibly “C&G” in small capitals	1¼	5	good
7	pencil	pairs of script by the same hand, same size, one beneath the other:- “Thomas Mofuer” (?) and “Thomas Mowson” (?) or similar	1	2	fair
8	pencil	script “Bertie Smith”	½	2	fair
9	pencil	script “G Skeet”	¼	1	fair
10	pencil	script “E Evans”	¼	1¼	fair
11	pencil	capitals “E LATTER 1931”	¾	2	poor
12	scratch	initials “M R”	1	1	good / fair
13	scratch	initials “J H 1984”	2	4	good / fair
14	pencil	script “A Howell Ipswich April 12th 1922”	2½	4½	good
15	pencil	Gothic style script “F L B”	½	1¼	fair
16	pencil	rough script “M Evans”	¾	3	fair
17	pencil	script “R Hughes 1960”	1	2	good
18	pencil	Rough script and some characters - illegible	5	4	poor
19	carving	deeply carved capital “A”	1	1	good
20	carving	deeply carved capitals “I C”	1¼	1¼	good
21	pencil	deeply penciled capitals “A C H”	½	1¼	good
22	carving	deeply carved capital “A”	1	¾	good
23	pencil	capitals “A S 1941” with capitals “R B” (and illegible date) beneath	2½	1¼	fair
24	scratch	very rough scratched capitals “N I”	1½	2¼	poor

No.	Medium	Description	h (in)	w (in)	Condition
<i>Interior face of the Inner String – between steps [VII] and [IX]</i>					
25	pencil	script “R Hughes 1960” (over-writing 25a, below)	1¼	2½	fair
25a	pencil	large rough capitals “N F F W 28 7 54” (under-writing 25, above)	4	5	fair
26	pencil	script “A Cement 1921” (or similar)	1½	3½	good
27	pencil	rough capitals “A C L”	¾	1	fair
<i>On the back and under- faces of steps [VI] to [IX]</i>					
28	pencil	capitals “K COLEMA ----” (unfinished – <i>caught in the act?</i> )	1	5	fair
29	pencil	large capitals “GREIG MAY 1954”	1½	14	good
30	pencil	on underside of step VIII, large capitals “LOVELL MAY 1954”	4	6	good
31	pencil	large rough script “Mary” or “Martyn Battle”; possibly a rough love-heart and an illegible date	1½	14	fair
32	pencil	capitals “V HOLLAND May 6th 1954”	¾	12	good
<i>Rear underside of the Outer String</i>					
33	scratch	scratched capitals “B Y”	2	¾	fair
34	pencil	large capitals, arranged in a vertical list and separated by horizontal lines:- “LOVELL, HOLLAND, BATES, GREIG, MAY 1954”	8	2½	good
<i>Front faces of steps</i>					
[35]	scuffs?	possibly more rough graffiti; illegible and originating from or obscured by scuffing by use.	-	-	very poor