

GOSPEL OAK

Designed by E B Lamb, the brick tower faced with Kentish ragstone originally had a turret at each corner but these were removed for safety after bomb blast in the Second World War. John D Allcroft provided the funds for this place of worship for the ever increasing local population, also, it is believed as a thanksgiving, “for the narrow escape of his son who had been attacked by a lion whilst in Africa and the living was offered to a young curate who had been at the scene and had helped to save him.”

The Warner crest is inscribed at the waist on the opposite side of the inscription on each of the six bells which hang on one level in the original oak frame. Canons remain on all except the fourth (1980), Mears & Stainbank hung them on ball bearings in 1923.

The first peal on the bells, rung for the Middlesex County Association, took place on Monday May 30th, 1898 of 5040 changes of Minor in two hours fifty-one minutes. The ringers were: Henry Ellis, James Nixon, Ernest Bonfield, (his first peal); Richard Bevan, Charles H Martin - conductor and George Smith.

Mr. Coggan, father of Archbishop Frederick Donald Coggan, served as a Vicar's Warden for fifteen years until 1941. Dr. Coggan learnt to play the organ at St. Martin's and preached one of his first sermons here whilst a curate at Islington.

Clock restoration by the parish was carried out in 1976 when electric motors were fitted and the hours struck.

Source: Whitechapel Bell Foundry records; Elizabeth Love and George F Morley, *Ringing world* January 25, 1980 pp 65-6; Association records.