

ASHFORD St Matthew

The tower was built in 1858 at the south-west corner of the church.

In 1914 Mears & Stainbank received the order from John H Tyars, of John Street, Adelphi, London, W.C., for the old cracked tenor of 6cwt. and 10 lbs to be recast and the installation of a new iron frame to carry four bells on one level.

After his Induction, the Revd Barry Hodges discovered the existence of the Parish's own Bell Restoration Fund and he was instrumental in the fund raising for the second bell - known affectionately as "Barry's Bell". A great deal of voluntary work was done for the purchase and installation of this bell with William Theobald of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry as the Foreman.

The name of Pam Steele inscribed on the treble bell was the Deputy Head of St. Matthew's Church of England School, a skilled embroiderer and a stalwart church worker, lived long enough to be enchanted with the sound of "Barry's Bell", that she left a bequest in her Will so it would be possible for the addition on another bell.

Source: Alan F Thirst; Whitechapel Bell Foundry records.