

## BOW, ST MARY ATTE BOW

Matilda, Queen of Henry I, fell into the straight ford across the river Lea from the stone bridge 'arched like a bow' - hence the village name of 'Stratford atte Bowe' - the straight ford at the bridge, later Stratford Bow, also known as to ringers as, 'Bow in the Road'. The church was built as a chapel of ease for Stepney by Bishop Baldock in 1311. Edward III gave the ground which was, even then, in the centre of the King's Highway, going eastwards from the City of London.

The top of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century tower fell in 1829 and was rebuilt in brick. It received a direct hit in 1940 and the top had to be rebuilt again.

One bell sufficed until 1760 when John Cook, collar-maker to the King, was the principal subscriber for five new bells cast by Lester & Pack. In 1797 another bell was added, cast by Thomas Mears when the Revd Mr. Allan Harrison Eccles, M A, was Rector and the Churchwardens were Richard Lovelidge and John Giles. A 17<sup>th</sup> century call bell was added in 1821 inscribed with the names of the Churchwardens: J Rose, R E Crawley. In 1858 G Goddard, Esq., Churchwarden, ordered two more bells from G Mears. The treble was 4cwt 2qrs 26lbs and the tenor 14cwt 25lbs. Richard Walter Crawley was the other Churchwarden and The Revd George Townshend Driffield, the Rector.

At the request of the Churchwardens a muffled peal was rung on Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup> 1884 as a last tribute of respect for the departed Duke of Albany, rung by Bow members: L Green, W Hopkins, J Green, A Cutmore, C Beech R Gray, T Baker and D J Sutton.

The present bells were dedicated by the Bishop of London on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1952. Sound proofing was installed in 1980. This is one of the few towers in the London Diocese where the bells are rung from the ground floor.

Source: Basil F L. Clarke, *Parish Churches of London* 1966 p 163; Christopher Hibbert, *London's Churches* 1988, p 181; Rowena Small; Whitechapel Bell Foundry records; J R Jerram, manuscript in the care of the Revd. D L Cawley; *Bell News and Ringers' Record* April 12, 1884 p 17; *Ringing World* December 19, 1952 p 809; R G Booth, *The Ringing World* January 9, 1981 p 41; P J R - Newsletter - *Ringing World* December 18/25, 1981 p 1131.