

HARLINGTON

The 15th century west tower in three storeys is topped by a castellated parapet. The small turret at the north-east corner has an 18th century cupola with a ball and weather vane at the summit.

There were bells here in the 1400's. In Henry VIII's time a bell weighing over 800lbs was sent to John fford, London, to be recast and tuned with the other four bells but the churchwardens omitted to get a receipt. John fford melted the bell down. A few weeks later he died, his widow denied all responsibility. The case went to the High Court of Chancery but record of the outcome, and the bell, is lost.

The old tenor before the 1893 recasting was inscribed:-
THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1799
REV THOS CHIVERS RECTOR
GEORGE GODDARD CHURCH WARDEN
The weight was 7cwt 2qrs 12lbs.

Two stories have emerged from the early 1600's as to why an unknown woman endowed a portion of land, the rent from which was to pay for the Annual Leg of Pork Supper for the Harlington ringers to be held on November 5th: either because she was lost in the fog and the sound of the bells helped her to find her bearings, or, in celebration of the failure of the Gunpowder Plot. The ancient and vital records are lost but it is believed the land is under the main runway at Heathrow Airport. At the Suppers before the Second World War the ringers were given tobacco and long clay pipes and were challenged to bring back the pipe intact the following year but this was rarely accomplished as the pipes were so thin and brittle. To date the bells are still rung prior to the Supper in accordance with the mystery lady's wishes.

Tower Captain's Records show that Miss Newman was the first lady to ring at Harlington on St. George's Day in 1916. From then on other ladies were trained and they kept the bells ringing whilst the male members of the band were away fighting for King and Country. A chiming apparatus was installed after the Second World War in memory of two ringers killed on active service:- Lionel Beale of the Royal Artillery and Cyril Arthur Winter of the Royal Air Force.

The first peal on the six bells was on Saturday April 9th, 1921 of 5040 changes of Minor in two hours thirty minutes by members of the Middlesex County Association:- Edgar Hancox, Percy Jones, William Henley, Hubert J Chaffey -conductor, Cecil C Mayne, William Welling.

Source: Christopher Luetchford, BA., ARCM: *A short history of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Harlington* Revised 1994, pp 4 and 5; Ecclesiological Society *Transactions* 6, 1906-10; H B Walters, manuscript; Frederick G Goodfellow: *Ringing World* January 10, 1947 p 19; Association records