

## *Church News*

### **News from the Belfry May 2014**

Peals are often rung to mark a special event. On Mothering Sunday afternoon a peal was rung to celebrate the birth of Amelia Willow Keeble born on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Her father is John a ringer at Layer de la Haye and a regular visitor to St Peter's. Fellow Layer ringer George, James and Yvonne from Inworth, Ian from Mistley and Neil from the Hythe Colchester completed the band. They rang 5040 changes in 2 hours 36 minutes. The following minor methods were rung, London, Ipswich, Primrose, Bourne, Caithness, Cambridge and Norwich.

Most church bells have an inscription. For example the treble and number two bell at St John the Baptist Layer de la Haye are respectively inscribed; "The Lufkin Bell donated to Layer de la Haye by the Essex Association of Change Ringers" and "Thomas Mears of London fecit 1792". All six bells at St Peter's have the same inscription "Cast by John Warner & Sons Cripplegate 1878".

The earliest record of a bell at St Peter's is circa 1450 and was cast by John Sturdy. Thomas Laurence cast a heavier bell about a century later. In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century there were three bells in the tower. However one of them was stolen in about 1800. In 1878 the two remaining bells, both badly cracked, were sold to John Warner and Sons. The current ring of six was installed in the same year.

Some time later Ellacombe chiming apparatus was installed at St Peter's. This enabled the bells to be rung by internal hammers from a ringing cabinet on the ground floor. When the apparatus was being used the bells had to be down. The apparatus enabled change ringing to be undertaken without the need for one person per bell and for tunes to be rung. When the bells were overhauled in 1991 the apparatus was removed. During the restoration work on the roof and spire in 2012 parts of the original oak frame dating back to 1878 were found to be rotten. Remedial work was undertaken and metal plates were used to provide additional support at the joints.

Are you interested in learning to ring the bells at St Peter's? Contact our Tower Captain Janice Spalding Tel: 01621 892197. You are also welcome to visit on our Friday practice night at 20.00hrs.

Website <http://greattothambellringers.org.uk/>  
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