

# The Bells of Whatlington Church

Whatlington Church has a ring of three bells, Swing Chime.

The bells are hung in the belfry of the Victorian tower of 1862 and are rung from the tower room, or ringing chamber on the first floor.

Prior to the Victorian restoration the bells were hung in a wooden bell cote, or tower located on the west end of the nave roof. The 16<sup>th</sup> century oak frame from the roof mounted tower was transferred into the new tower.

Much the oldest bell, the 1<sup>st</sup>, or Treble is dated to circa 1350, though it is uninscribed.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> bell also uninscribed, is 18<sup>th</sup> century, likely 1724, the canons being unusual in that their moulds were parted down the centre of the front.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> or Tenor bell originally cast in 1636 was inscribed 'Laur Chaderton, Parson of Whatlington IP 1636, Richard Donck, Lance Davies, SC Warden TP. It was recast in 1862 and is now inscribed 'J. WARNER & SONS LONDON 1862,a / PATENT 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>".

The south and centre truss is now of M type. The churchwardens' presentments record in 1675 and 1676 one bell cracked and in 1677 the bells require rehanging. In 1686 one bell broken which must have been recast by 1724, for it was then recorded, 'three bells'. It is most likely that the 2nd was the bell referred to. Tower by S. W. Tracey in 1862. G P Elphick visited June, 1937.

11.10.1962 Whitechapel Bell Foundry to remove the bells, cut out the 'cast in' clapper staples and turn the bells  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn, this due to indents caused by centuries of ringing. J. Morgan churchwarden Faculty for above granted 22.04.1963 to allow works to proceed

The bells were checked over by Whitechapel Bell Foundry during the post fire restoration, the metal parts were cleaned and painted.

In 2014 the Tenor bell was fitted with an electro-magnetic hammer and associated 'Rugby' timer by Whitechapel Bell Foundry, new ropes were fitted to the Treble and third bells.

The timer device allows the bell to automatically toll before a service, it can also be set off manually and its speed can be adjusted, for example it will 'toll' for a funeral.

A further feature is that the device can be set to ring the hour, from 7am to 9pm, this despite there being no actual clock.

The bells are rung on a regular basis.

Scroll down for photographs.....



The 1<sup>st</sup>, Treble Bell  
circa 1350



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bell, circa  
1724



The 3<sup>rd</sup> or Tenor Bell, now rung by an electric hammer. This bell is now controlled by a timer device and strikes the hour, as if it were a clock!



Former Churchwarden Ken Jones inspects the bells



A view looking up the inside of the steeple



A view showing the base of the spire