

THE STOW COMMEMORATION SERVICE 1971

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Photograph

KEITH ELLIS

For many years it has been a tradition to hold this Service at the Church of St. Andrew Undershaft, St. Mary Axe, E.C.3., annually in April in commemoration of JOHN STOW (1525-1605), tailor, historian and antiquary, who was buried in this church on the 8th April, 1605.

This year the Service was held on Friday, 30th April, and was attended by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Peter Studd, G.B.E., M.A., D.Sc., Sheriff Peter Gadsden, M.A., J.P., and their ladies; by Alderman Sir A. Charles Trinder, G.B.E., M.A., D.Sc., Alderman of Aldgate Ward, and the Common Councilmen of that Ward; by the Lord Reigate, Master of the Merchant Taylors Company, and the Court of the Company; and by the President and Council of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (sponsors of the Service). The Service was conducted by the Rector, the Venerable H. A. S. Pink, M.A., the Lesson was read by the Lord Reigate, and the Address in commemoration of Stow was given by the well-known historian, Dr. A. L. Rowse, F.B.A. (see page 15).

In connection with the Service, an essay competition has been held annually since 1939 for scholars attending secondary and grammar schools in London and Middlesex, and the subject has been connected with the history of the City of London. In recent years it has been open to such schools in the Inner London Education Authority, and those connected with the City of London.

In the course of the Service is the ceremony of the changing of the quill held in the hand of the effigy of Stow in the memorial erected by his widow, and this part of the ceremony dates back very many years. The Lord Mayor places a new quill in the hand of the effigy (see photograph above), after the old quill has been withdrawn by Dr. Rowse (on the right of the photograph), who places it in a special case. The Lord Mayor then presents the prize to the winner of the essay competition, and hands the old quill in its case to the representative of the school of the essay prize winner.

This year the essay prize winner was Lesley Gibbs of The Lady Eleanor Holles School for Girls, Hampton, Middlesex, who, in addition to the book prize, received an Honorary Student Membership of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.

Whilst Stow was born in the City of London, and lived as a tailor for several years at the junction of what are now Leadenhall and Fenchurch Streets, and later near to Lime Street, yet he dedicated most of his life to topographical and historical work. He is probably best known to us by his *Survey of London* (1598), describing the City of London ward by ward.