



ST DONARD'S, BELFAST 6 Bells

Ye Ringers all, that do come here,
Give head and hand and heart;
The head for will, the hand for skill,
The heart for worship's part.

S

It was in 1947 that a fund was inaugurated to perpetuate the memory of Canon Moore who died on 30 July 1946. Sufficient funds were raised to purchase and install a peal of six bells as a memorial. The Canon had frequently looked to the day when such an enterprise could be undertaken and the cost of purchasing and installing the bells came to £1,600. The bells were cast and installed by Taylor's of Loughborough and are in the key of A flat, the whole peal weighing 32 cwts 2 qrs 11 lbs. Five of the bells are inscribed:-

“1949. In memoriam, Alexander Moore, Rector 1906-46”.

A bronze plaque in the Church porch reads:

The Peal of Bells in the tower of this Church was dedicated on 26th November 1949, by the Rt Rev William Shaw Kerr, D.D., Lord Bishop of Down and Dromore, as a memorial to the Rev Canon Alexander Moore, B.A., Hon. C.F., for forty years (1904-46) the beloved Rector of St Donard's Parish.

There was already one bell in the tower and this was the congregation's memorial to the men of the Parish who gave their lives in the Great War of 1914-18. Although recast, this bell was given the same inscription as it originally had, with the addition of the words “recast 1949”. The identity of this bell as a War Memorial has, therefore, been preserved and is rung as the 5-minute bell on Remembrance Sunday. The Psalm used at the Dedication Service of the bells was most fitting, being Number 150.

The Bells have rung in Sorrow:

Over the years the bells have been rung, muffled:

- For the passing of parishioners
- For the funeral of King George VI
- For the funeral of Princess Diana
- For the victims of the Omagh Bomb
- On each Remembrance Sunday as we remember those who lost their lives in war.
- On Good Friday as we remember the Crucifixion.

And the bells have rung in joy:

- On Christmas Morning as we remember the Birth of Jesus.
- On Easter Morning as we remember the Resurrection.
- On the occasion of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II
- For Weddings
- And like many other towers in Ireland we are the first to usher in each New Year as midnight strikes.

Prior to the installation of the bells in 1949, a team of ringers was trained and ready to ring the new bells for their dedication and in this respect we owe a debt of gratitude to the then ringers of St Thomas', Belfast, led by the late Mr Billy Patterson, who trained those first ringers so as they would be able to ring for the Dedication Service.

In January 1950 the curate, the Rev R H Lowry, approached the Guide Company on a recruiting drive for more bellringers. 12 new recruits were found and were taught to ring. This young team went from strength to strength and in their first ever competition, on the bells of St Patrick's, Coleraine, Easter Monday, 1951, they came home not only as winners of the Cunningham Cup (the Northern District Trophy) but also as winners of the Attendance Shield for having the best attendance at Sunday Service ringing of all the towers in the whole of the Irish Association.. The ringers won the Cunningham Cup again in 1953, 1959, 1964, 1975, 1981 and 2008. On two occasions we were also holders of the Murphy Cup (the all-Ireland trophy) and in 1958 won the Adamson Cup for Scientific Change Ringing.



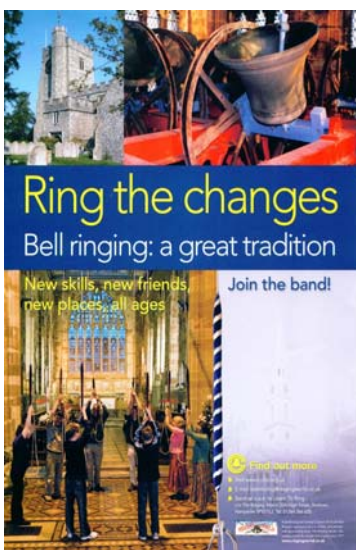
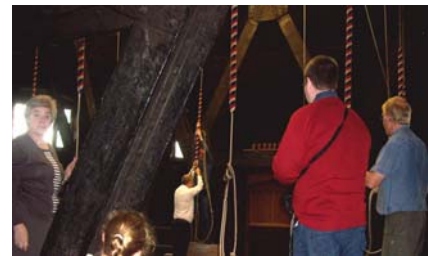
The winning team back in 1953.

On Saturday 23rd October 1954 two of our ringers were in the band which rung the first Peal of Surprise in Ireland by a resident band. This was a peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor on the bells of St Donard's and was conducted by the late John T Dunwoody.



We celebrated our 50th anniversary on 26 November 1999 with a special Service at which we had well over 100 guests - certainly boosted our Evening Service!

Some of our ringers taking part in the ringing at Liverpool Cathedral on a day trip to Liverpool in 2007.



We have had our ups and downs with recruiting since those early days and we would very much like to have a lot more people learning to ring. Bellringing is an ancient art and we certainly do not want it to die out in St Donard's, so if you are aged 10 and above- there is absolutely no upward age limit on learning to ring - so long as one can climb the 12 steps into our ringing room you will find a very warm welcome.

Sunday Service Ringing is from: **11.00 am-11.20 am. and 6.30 pm - 6.50 pm.**
Practice Night is **Tuesday 6.30 pm- 8.00 pm.**

If you feel you can serve the Church in this way please contact the Tower Captain:

Jean Jeffery on 028 90 658318 or e-mail jean.jeffery@ntlworld.com