

## The Church Bells of Ayrshire.

By *Ranald W. M. Clouston, B.Sc.Eng., F.S.A. (Scot.).*

Member of the Ancient Society of College Youths.

The use of bells for ecclesiastical purposes goes back many centuries. Their invention has been ascribed to Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in Campana, who was living early in the fifth century.<sup>1</sup> The early missionaries such as Saint Kentigern and Saint Patrick, had their personal handbells which were carried round with them. Many of these bells still exist, and there is a fine collection in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh.

Originally these handbells were made from flat plates of iron, which were bent and rivetted together; it was soon found that the iron needed to be protected, and as a result the bells were dipped in molten bronze. The final stage was to cast the bells entirely in bronze, or bellmetal as it is generally called, this latter being an alloy of copper and tin in the approximate ratio four parts to one.

With the spreading of Christianity in Scotland churches were built, and, as a portion of the fabric, either towers or turrets were erected to house the bells. Right up to the time of the Reformation and afterwards there were very few Scottish churches with more than one bell, whereas in England it was common for the larger parish churches to have as many as five, musically tuned in a scale, so that they could be rung in succession.

After the Reformation the Continental founders cast many fine carillons. These may be defined as sets of bells, numbering not less than 23 bells and covering two octaves. These were hung stationary and struck with hammers operated from a keyboard, not unlike that on an organ. Tunes are invariably played on these carillons either manually or by a clockwork mechanism.

In England a different style of ringing developed after the Reformation. This is the art known as Change Ringing. With the five bells possessed by most of the important parish churches, it was found that the bells could be rung successively in 120 different orders. As previously the bells had only been swung through a comparatively small arc, and as for this new art precision timing was required, it was arranged for the bells to rotate a full circle returning to balance upside down, *i.e.* with mouth uppermost at

(1) Sharpe. *The Church Bells of Radnorshire.* p. 1.

each stroke. The bells had to be hung considerably out of balance, and as a result the thrusts horizontally and vertically are considerable, amounting to twice and four times the weight of the bell respectively.<sup>2</sup> Thus the towers and the frames in which the bells hang, had to be of good construction.

A device was latterly fitted to enable a bell to be held mechanically upside down without the ringer holding the rope below. This consists of a stay and a slider. The former is bolted vertically to the headstock, or axle on which the bell rotates, and is pointing downwards when the bell is mouth up. The top of the stay engages in the slider which is positioned horizontally in the frame, one end being pivoted and the other free to move between two stops. As the bell rotates the top of the stay pushes the slider along till the bell is over the point of balance and the slider has reached its stop.

The rope runs in a large wheel with a channel in its outer circumference; these wheels are sometimes up to eight feet diameter, one at Maybole is nearly seven feet diameter. The headstocks used to be made entirely of wood, and were shaped to fit the canons and argent (Fig. A, Plate VI); in modern times with the shortage of seasoned wood the headstocks are frequently made of cast iron, though for this material the canons and argent should be either of equal height or not present at all if a good joint is to be made. The purpose of the loops on the old style of crown was to facilitate the strapping of the bell by means of iron strips which were nailed to the wooden headstock. With the advent of the screw thread a far better job is made if the bell is bolted through the crown to the headstock.

In Scotland the tendency after the Reformation was to follow the Continental style of ringing, though very few carillons or chimes were cast. One of the earliest chimes was cast for St. John the Baptist's Church, Perth, by Peter Waghevens of Mechlin, in 1520 and 1526; a number of these bells are still in existence.

The Collegiate Church of St. Giles, Edinburgh, had a carillon of 23 bells cast by John Meikle of Edinburgh in 1698-9, though this has now been removed from the tower.

Chimes of bells, consisting of bells tuned one with another, numbering less than the 23 for a carillon and struck by hammers, are more numerous. The Clark Memorial Church, Largs, has a

(2) *A Handbook on the Installation, Preservation, and Repair of Bells, Bell-Frames and Fittings.* The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. p. 10.

chime of ten bells, and Trinity Church, Ayr, has an octave of tubular bells.

In the following survey the author has visited all the old parish churches and the town halls which possess municipal bells, also all churches which have more than one bell. Due to the Disruption in the Church of Scotland there are many churches built about a century ago which possess a single bell of that date. The author found, when making a survey of Renfrewshire church bells, that there were very few exceptions to this rule, and as they are of little or no antiquarian interest they have been excluded.

A number of bells have served their period of usefulness to the church and have gone into private possession. The author has tried to locate as many of these bells as possible and make a record of them under their respective parishes. He feels, however, that there may be more, possibly of some age, preserved in large estates, and he would greatly appreciate the help of members in giving him any information so that this survey may be as complete as possible.

The parishes are arranged in alphabetical order, and at the end a chronological account is given of the founders who cast bells for the county.

Unless otherwise stated, the inscriptions start on the inscription band, as shown in Fig. A, the end of the line being denoted by an oblique stroke. Any subsequent line is placed below the band on the waist, and sometimes an inscription is placed on the soundbow in addition to elsewhere.

Generally the inscription is stamped in the mould before casting, with the result that the lettering is raised from the surface of the bell. Sometimes, however, when a further addition to the inscription is required after casting, lettering is incised on the bell surface: such lettering is shown in italics.

A number of the bells hang in turrets which would be accessible only with the aid of long ladders. These bells have been examined through a telescope and as much as possible of their inscriptions noted. In the following survey it may be taken that all bells which have only an approximate lip diameter given, come in this category.

The majority of the parishes were visited in the autumn and winter of 1948 and changes subsequent to that time may not be noted.

The author would like to express his thanks to Dr. F. C. Eeles, the author of similar surveys of Kincardineshire and Linlithgowshire, for his advice and for information which he has supplied; to Mijneer Jan Arts of Tilburg for information about the Dutch bell-founders; to the Town Clerk of Ayr for permission to see the Burgh records; to the Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities for the photograph of the Dundonald bell. The Right Honourable the Baron de Fresnes was most kind to allow the author to see the old Flemish bell in Cessnock castle.

The large number of ministers contacted for this survey have all been most helpful and have given every possible assistance to the author to obtain the information he wanted; Rev. Archibald Mackenzie, F.S.A. (Scot.) especially, has been most kind in supplying information about the bells of the Old Church of St. John the Baptist, Ayr.

Mr. James W. Forsyth of The Carnegie Public Library, Ayr, has been of assistance in looking through the exhibits that were formerly in the museum there.

A number of church bells now hang in schools, and in this connection the author would like to thank the Rector of Cumnock Academy and Mr. Blackwood, headmaster of Prestwick Public School, for enabling him to see their bells.

The author would also like to express his thanks to the clock-making firms of Messrs. J. B. Joyce & Co. of Whitchurch, Shropshire, and William Potts & Sons, Ltd. of Leeds, and the bellfounding firms of Messrs. J. Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, Gillett & Johnston of Croydon, Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel, London, and Steven & Struthers, Ltd., of Glasgow, who have been of great assistance in supplying information.

## ALLOWAY

(New Church).

In an open western bell-cote hangs one bell, about 24 inches diameter, inscribed:—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW 1861. N<sup>o</sup> 754

The bell is hung for chiming with metal fittings.

# ALLOWAY

## (Old Church).

In an open eastern turret hangs one bell, about 10 inches diameter, inscribed :—

FOR THE KIRK OF ALOUAY 1657

All but the word Alouay is in raised Roman lettering but the latter word is incised in rough lettering on a raised strip which is long enough to accommodate about ten letters. Above and below the inscription is a leaf border which, through a telescope, seems to be identical with that on the bell at Coylton, cast by James Monteith, in 1647, though the lettering is rougher on the Alloway bell and not quite of the same type.

This church, now in ruins, was built in 1653,<sup>3</sup> and tradition affirms that the bells for Alloway and Dalrymple were both cast at the same time ; and having been brought to Alloway, the people made choice of the best toned one, covering their mal-appropriation by altering the designation on each. However, the old bell at Dalrymple had no inscription apart from the date 1688, though this does not preclude the possibility of its having been cast in 1657 and being subsequently broken.

A more likely explanation of the local tradition is that the founder, probably James Monteith, cast bells for stock, leaving the parish name blank. When an enquiry came for a new bell, he would probably select several of different sizes and send them to the parish for the Kirk Session to decide which one they wanted. A choice having been made, the place name was incised on the blank space and the bell was hung. The other bells not selected would then go back into the founder's stock. As Dalrymple were requiring a bell then, they had the choice of the bells left, in this case possibly only one, so giving rise to the legend.

In the eighteenth century it is recorded that the magistrates tried to take away the bell but were repulsed by the Alloites "*vi et armis*."<sup>4</sup>

# ARDROSSAN

## (St. Cuthbert).

A tower containing one bell, 45½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

ERECTED BY THE HERITORS, SESSION AND  
CONGREGATION / OF THE PARISH OF ARDROSSAN.  
NOVEMBER 1911. / MINISTER, REV: DAVID D. REES. /  
JOHN C. WILSON & CO. LTD FOUNDERS. GLASGOW.

(3) *History of the County of Ayr*. James Paterson. p. 175.  
(4) Grose. *Antiquities of Scotland*. Volume II. p. 201.

The present church in Saltcoats was built in 1908 on a new site, the old church, which is now not used, has a southern bell turret containing one bell, about 20 inches diameter, which bears the inscription :—

ARDROSSAN PARISH.....

The bell is obviously the product of a local brass foundry, and even though the full inscription cannot be read from the ground, the bell is no earlier in date than 1804 when the present masonry was built to house the bell.<sup>5</sup> The crown has a handbell type argent (Fig. A).

# AUCHINLECK

(The Barony Church).

In the tower of the new church hangs a single bell, 30½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW. A.D. 1858.  
Nº 616 / AUCHENLECK CHURCH.

The bell is hung in metal fittings.

In the eastern turret of the old church, now in ruins, hangs a bell, 17¾ inches diameter, inscribed :—

(a star) IACOBUS MONTEITH (a star) FECIT  
EDINBURGH ANNO DOM. 1641

This bell has had some rough usage and quite a portion of the lip has been broken off ; the bell, however, still gives forth a ringing tone.

The access to this bell is precarious, and for that reason only part of the inscription could be taken as an impression, being reproduced as Fig. H. Above and below the inscription appears an ornamental border 7 inches long and 1 inch high which is repeated all round the bell. In the centre is a vase with a handle on each side. These handles are held by two winged youths, possibly angels. Further out from the centre are two horns from which issue leaves and flowers ; the whole border is thus symmetrical about the centre of the vase.

(5) *Burgh of Saltcoats. Quarter Centenary Handbook*. p. 61.

## AYR

## (The Old Church of St. John the Baptist).

Of this church only the fine tower remains. Originally the parish church of Ayr, it fell into disuse when Oliver Cromwell decided to build a fort on a site which enclosed the churchyard. The building, however, was not pulled down and was again used as a church by the Presbyterians when the Episcopalians occupied the present parish church shortly after the Restoration in 1660.

The history of the bells in this church is known only as early as 1536 when there were two bells. The Ayr Burgh Accounts from the period 1534 to 1624 have been published and contain numerous references to general repair work on the bells. Two items from the accounts of 1536-37 read<sup>6</sup> :—

Item for ane corde to scheine the greit bell with, xd.

Item for v faddum of chymmyng cordis to the small bell, xvjd.

Ringin on special occasions such as " quhen the kingis grace come out of France"<sup>7</sup> and Hallowe'en was paid for, and oil was supplied for the bearings. In 1534-35 one bell was rehung, two entries for metal work and labour amounting to £16 9s 11d.<sup>8</sup>

The church also possessed handbells which were used for funerals and other occasions. A charge was made for their use, and from 1541 till 1547 a regular income of £1 10s 0d was obtained.<sup>9</sup>

One rather surprising entry for the year 1544-45 is the debit,<sup>10</sup>

For drawing the town's guns out of the kirk, 6d.

Regular entries for repairs and for olive oil continue to appear, but it is only in 1574 that the bellringer was paid a regular salary. For £6 13s 4d per annum he was responsible for keeping the kirk and ringing the bells. This sum, the amount derived from the malt custom, continued to be paid annually right up to the end of the published period of the Accounts.

The entries usually refer to just one bell, and it is by no means easy to decide if one of the bells had been removed. The last mention of the bells is in the item concerning the beadle's salary for 1613-14, but it may well be that there were two bells right up till Cromwell's time.

(6) G. S. Pryde. *Ayr Burgh Accounts 1534-1624*. p. 20.

(7) *ibid.* p. 20.

(8) *ibid.* p. 72.

(9) *ibid.* p. 88 ff.

(10) *ibid.* p. 96

In 1706 when the church was put up for sale the Kirk Session were concerned about the " disposing of the old church materials such as the stones of it and the bell."<sup>11</sup> So far research has not enabled the author to determine what ultimately became of this bell.

## AYR

## (Trinity Church).

In an octagonal tower hangs a chime of eight tubular bells in the key of "C" natural supplied by Messrs. Harrington, Latham & Co., of Coventry in the early years of this century.

## AYR, NEWTON-ON-AYR

## (Old Church).

The steeple of this church with its spire is detached from the church proper, the lower floor forming an entrance gateway. In the tower are two bells, 20½ inches and 24½ inches diameter, both inscribed :—

THO<sup>s</sup> MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1795

Both were cast at the Whitechapel Foundry, London, and are hung in a wooden frame with wooden fittings. The lighter bell has a lever, but the other is fitted with a solid wooden wheel with no spokes, and with only a sector removed to clear the lip of the bell.

## AYR

## (The Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity).

At the west end of the Nave is preserved a bell, 14½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

MICHAEL · BVRGERHVYS · ME · FECIT · 1625 . / M  
IF

The lettering is illustrated in Fig. B, and Plate I (a) shows a photograph of the bell. The bell is now unhung but has the clapper in place, this latter is not the original one for the bell, as at Kilmaurs, and the crown staple has had to be renewed. The bell is not a particularly good casting, and the tone is not quite up to the usual standard of the Dutch founders; this may be due to corrosion from sulphurous gases.

(11) Mackenzie. *An Ancient Church*. p. 20.

This bell was cast at Middelburg in Holland in 1625 to the order of Rev. John Fergusson, who was minister of the parish of Barnweil, then an Episcopal Church, and his initials are on the bell.<sup>12</sup> Barnweil parish was suppressed in 1673 for the erection of the new parish of Stair. This was formed in 1690 as a Presbyterian parish; Presbyterianism by then had become established.

The old church at Barnweil fell into disrepair, and the bell fell down and was taken into the house of Swindrigemuir. Latterly it came into the hands of Major General Neill, who in 1857 presented it to Holy Trinity Church, and the bell was hung in a wooden belfry, which has now been removed.

### AYR BURGH BELLS.

From the municipal viewpoint "The Ayr Burgh Accounts, 1534-1624," by G. S. Pryde, contain a number of references to bells. The earliest is in 1557-58 with the entry:—

Rope for the common bell, 1s 8d.

The only building that this bell could have been hung in, is the Old or Laigh Tolbooth which was removed from the island site in the High Street in 1810.<sup>13</sup> This bell was probably also used as the hour bell for the clock, to which there are frequent references.

In 1585-86 the bell required a further replacement:—

For an iron chain to the common bell, 10s 6d.

An entry for the year 1608-09 is interesting as it shows what became of some of the monastic property at the Reformation:—

For the carriage of the bells from Glenluce to Ayr, £4 10s 0d.

Thus the bells from Glenluce Abbey, Wigtownshire, found their way to Ayr. They do not exist at the present time in the neighbourhood of Ayr. In 1614-15 it was resolved to build a bell house on top of the New or Over Tolbooth in the Sandgate, which had been erected in 1574-75. In 1615-16 John McCra, the burgh officer, went to Irvine about the casting of the town's bell, and in the same period John Smyth, snapmaker, went to Irvine and transported the bell at a cost of £4 10s 0d. There is no mention about any founder's fee, so it is possible that this one bell was cast out of metal from the Glenluce Abbey bells and the extra metal was kept by the founder as payment.

(12) *Holy Trinity Parish Magazine*. July, 1948.  
(13) Pagan. *Annals of Ayr*. p. 54.

The Burgh was also interested in the Crosraguel Abbey bells and in some unspecified ones in Kintyre about the period 1612-1615. Full mention of these references is made under Crosraguel Abbey. The Burgh may have been successful in obtaining some of the metal but there is no mention about it in the accounts.

After the new bell was put up in the New or Over Tolbooth a man was paid £20 per annum for keeping the clock and ringing the curfew bell. Though the Burgh possessed a bell before 1615, it seems never to have been rung for a curfew, and from that one might infer that it was not large enough to be heard at any distance, and that the converse would be true of the new bell.

The accounts do not state that the bell was cast in Irvine but this seems probable. The usual place to have bells cast in this period was in Holland and the port of Ayr would have been the place of arrival and not Irvine.

In the Town Council records it is minuted "1648, That the Bellman ring ane of the bells in the Tolbooth at six hours on Sabbath morning to warn the people to make family worship."<sup>14</sup>

At this time there were two Tolbooths, and it would be probable that the above minute refers to the New or Over Tolbooth in the Sandgate. A bell was certainly cast for it in 1615, and if there were two bells there in 1648 then it would appear correct to assume that the new bell would have been cast between those dates. The French bell in the Wallace Tower dated 1639 fulfils this condition and the meaning of the legible part of the inscription "was put here to serve . . ." supports a secular use as a curfew and clock bell. Also the outside surface of the soundbow bears the mark of a clock hammer diametrically opposite the position of the present one.

In the early years of the nineteenth century a bell was recovered from the marshy ground round Blackburn House or Cunning Park as it is now called.<sup>15</sup> Around it were spars and other ship's gear and the author of the article uses the evidence to show that the mouth of the Doon was further North than it now is. The inscription in large letters read GLORIA SALI DOE standing for Soli Deo Gloria.

It is to be very greatly regretted that this bell was melted down and the metal used to cast a number of handbells. The author has been unable to locate any rubbing or impression of the lettering, so that the founder's name and the position of his foundry cannot be determined.

(14) Paterson. *History of the County of Ayr*. Vol. I. p. 190.  
(15) Paterson. *History of the County of Ayr*. Vol. I. p. 158, and *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*. Vol. V. p. 9.

It has been suggested that this bell is the missing one from the Old Church of St. John the Baptist. However, the circumstances relating to the bell having been found among nautical equipment suggest that it had just arrived from Holland. The inscription "Soli Deo Gloria" is associated with the Reformed Church and not with the Roman Church, and is well-known on pre-Reformation church bells in England, many of which still exist. It was a popular formula with the Dutch founders in the seventeenth century.

## AYR

### (The Town Hall).

In the lofty spire hang two bells, the lighter being  $19\frac{7}{8}$  inches diameter, and the larger being  $49\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter with a weight of 22 cwt. 0 qr. 16 lb. and the note is  $\frac{1}{4}$  (sharp) of D (sharp) (old high pitch). The inscriptions are:—

#### SMALLER BELL.

SOLI DEO GLORIA DALMAHOY 1700.

#### LARGER BELL.

CAST 1830./RECAST BY MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. JUNE 1897./BEING THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S REIGN./1837 (*a crown*) 1897./GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!/HUGH D. WILLOCK, PROVOST./JAMES MEIKLE, DEAN OF GUILD./JOHN EAGLESHAM, TOWN SURVEYOR.

The larger bell is hung in bearings with a wooden wheel of large proportions. Above the names of the Burgh Officials for 1897 there is a wavy line dividing the inscription.

This bell is rung for 10 minutes at 10.30 a.m. on the second Monday in every month for the meeting of the full Council, and also every Sunday morning from 10.45 a.m. till 11 a.m. for the church services. Before the first Great War it was also rung at 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

The smaller bell is hung from an old headstock which is now fixed stationary. There is no clapper and as the clock hammers are no longer used the bell is also disused. The sulphur from the atmosphere has attacked the copper in the bell metal and as a result the inscription is very hard to make out, but with the aid of a plaster cast the author has managed to obtain the true wording.

There is a border above the lettering but this is too far gone for identification and reproduction as an illustration. It appears to be a series of leaves, similar but not identical with that on the smaller bell at Dalry cast by Franciscus Hemony of Amsterdam in 1661.

The word "DALMAHOY" can refer either to a bellfounder or to a place. There is an estate of this name in Ratho parish, Midlothian, which has been in the possession of the Earls of Morton for many years. Nearby and bearing the same name is the Episcopal Church of St. Mary, which was built there in 1850 and has no bell. It would therefore seem that the word is the name of a founder. The words "SOLI DEO GLORIA" were used extensively by the seventeenth century Dutch founders, as at Kirkcudbright, Roseneath and elsewhere. It is therefore possible that the bell was originally cast in Holland and after being broken, was recast locally with the old ornamental border re-used and with a similar inscription. A number of Scottish founders used borders which were designed and used first in Holland (vide Kilbirnie).

No founder of the name of Dalmahoy has so far been located either in this country or in Holland.

The present Town Hall was erected about 1825 when the New or Over Tolbooth, referred to earlier, was pulled down.<sup>16</sup> It is therefore likely that the small bell was originally hung in this Tolbooth and that the metal is that which was used for the bell cast in 1615.

The larger bell though re-cast in 1897 seems to have been first purchased in 1830 for the new building and has no earlier history.

## AYR

### (The Wallace Tower).

In the tower hang two bells,  $21\frac{1}{4}$  and 27 inches diameter, which are inscribed:—

#### THE SMALLER BELL.

+ (Fig. J) FRANCISCVS HEMONY ME FECIT  
AMSTELODAMI ANNO DNI · 1661.

(16) James Paterson. *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr.* p. 8.

## THE LARGER BELL.

CE DIT A—FVS ICY MISE POVR SERVIR  
EN.....AN MIL VCC XXXIX.

Sulphur from coal fires has seriously attacked the inscriptions until they are legible only in part. The larger bell is especially interesting as the language is undoubtedly French and the date is given as 1639, the symbols VC standing for the more usual D. The author has taken two complete impressions of the inscription and has taken great pains to examine the metal surface minutely, but the lettering has corroded away too far for a complete record to be given.

The smaller bell is very similar to one at Dalry and bears the same border below the inscription;<sup>17</sup> there are traces of one above the lettering but this is past identification. The bell has a fine tone despite the corroded state and, when new, must have been a very fine product of the founder's art. A rope is provided but the bell is not now used, and judging by the indentation of the clapper on the inside, it could not have been used very much in the past.

The larger bell has a type of fleur-de-lys border above the inscription and has lost both canons and argent. These have been replaced by four eye bolts which go through the crown and have nuts on the inside. A new crown staple has been fitted but in the same relative position as the old one with the result that the clapper still strikes the bell in the same two places as it did in 1639 and the metal has worn rather thin. However, the bell is no longer swung, and is only used as an hour bell for the clock, which strikes with an external hammer. The tone of the bell is very poor compared with the other bell, though both have been affected by corrosion.

The clappers of both bells are of the same design and are attached to the crown staples by leather straps. The bells would seem to have been reclappered and completely rehung when the Wallace Tower was rebuilt in 1834.<sup>18</sup>

The Wallace Tower, or the Auld Tour as it is called in the Burgh records, was purchased by the town from Adam Ritchie, a burgess, in 1673.<sup>19</sup> Previous to this it had belonged to Cathcart of Carbieston and had, with adjacent buildings, probably formed his town residence.

In the Council Minutes for April 23rd, 1731, it is reported that Hugh Gibson, a writer in Ayr, gave in a petition stating that as a

result of requests from the inhabitants, especially those living in the Townhead who could not hear the town's bell, he had undertaken the work of repairing the old Tower and putting up in it a clock and bell. The cost had been £1,121 Scots and subscriptions amounted to only £564 12s 6d. The petitioner asked the Council if they would pay the difference and a Committee of four was then appointed to see Hugh Gibson's accounts and report back. This they did at the meeting on July 1st, 1731 and stated that the accounts were correct in the arithmetic and that the balance due was "the sume of Three Hundred and fifty-two pound seven shilling six pennies Scots besides the price of the bell and its charge and carriage which is two hundred and four pounds Scots."

The price of bellmetal, an alloy of copper and tin, in 1719 in Amsterdam was £45 Scots per 100 lb. as scrap value, and in 1773 in London was 10d Sterling per pound as scrap and 14 pence per pound as new metal.<sup>20</sup> These scrap prices are roughly the same, and considering that the carriage of the bell in question amounted to say £4 Scots, then at a scrap rate £200 Scots would only buy a bell weighing just under 4 cwt. This must be the maximum size of bell that could be purchased and if one had to be cast then the additional cost of melting the metal, making the mould, etc., would considerably diminish the size of the bell. As none of the bells at present in the Tower or anywhere else in Ayr bear the date 1731 or near it, then it is to be presumed that this bell was bought second-hand, perhaps from the purchaser of the bell from the old church of St. John the Baptist, which was sold in 1706 and is mentioned under that church.

Using a table of weights and diameters one may obtain an appropriate idea of the weights of the existing bells: they are 2 and 4½ cwt. Which was the original bell put up in 1731 is not readily apparent; it is most probable that if the bell were brought from the old church of St. John the Baptist it is the French one of 1639.

The Town Council Minutes for the year 1661 and the years before and after have been examined by the author but without finding any mention of having a bell cast or recast.

The Wallace Tower as it now stands is the result of the rebuilding in 1834. It was resolved to face the old building with hewn stone; but though the walls were of immense thickness, it had no sunk foundation, and could not stand the operation. Thus it had to be removed and a new tower built.<sup>21</sup>

(17) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* Vol. XLVII. p. 73. Fig. 9. Lower border.

(18) James Paterson. *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr.* p. 5.

(19) *ibid.* p. 5.

(20) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* Vol. 47. pp. 88 and 89.

(21) James Paterson. *Reminiscences of Auld Ayr.* p. 5.

It would be very difficult to get either of the bells in or out of the tower as it now stands so it seems probable that the second bell was added when the tower was rebuilt. The Old or Laigh Tolbooth, which certainly had a bell, was pulled down in 1810, as mentioned earlier, and it is likely that its bell was placed in this tower as no other record of the bell exists.

### BALLANTRAE.

In a very small closed turret hangs one bell, 26 inches diameter, weighing 3 cwt. 2 qrs. 14 lb. and having the note "E." The clock is directly below the bell and the author found that access to the bell would be quite impossible without stopping the clock and disengaging the shaft drive to one of the faces. However, he could see enough of the inside of the bell and the turret to note that no clapper was provided and that the bell was struck by an external hammer. The size of the turret does not allow the bell to be swung.

The bell was cast by Messrs. John Taylor & Co., of Loughborough, in 1891, and the inscription will be to this effect.

### BARR

(St. Andrew).

In the turret of the present church hangs a bell, about 16 inches diameter, which bears no inscription. The bell has canons, moulding wires on both inscription band and soundbow, and is hung from a cast iron headstock which is fitted with an iron wheel and chain; the latter comes to the ground outside the church. The shape of the bell is unusual as the diameter at the inscription band is much less than is to be expected from the lip diameter. The present church was built about 1870 and the bell is probably of this date.

In an outbuilding by the Manse is another bell, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO GLASGOW A.D. 1878.

This bell has a handbell type argent to which is attached a cast iron headstock. The bell is not cracked and has a fair tone. It is not quite clear where this bell came from but in the graveyard are the foundations of the previous church in use up till 1870. This building may have been left intact till well after the present church was in use, and so it is possible that this small bell was recast from the earlier bell of this church.

### BEITH

(Old Kirk).

In a high open turret hangs one bell, about 16 inches diameter, inscribed :—

THIS · BELL · WAS · GIVEN · BY · HUGH MONTGOMERIE ·  
SON · / TO · HESSILHEAD · ANNO · 1614 · AND ·  
REFOUNDED · BY · THE · / HERETORS · OF · BEITH  
· ANNO · R · M · & · COMPY : FECIT · ED<sup>R</sup> · / 1734.

The bell is some considerable height above the ground and access to the turret would be difficult. However, portions of the inscription are visible from the ground and the above wording, which is taken from a printed record,<sup>22</sup> has been corrected to agree with the observations made with a telescope. The final date would seem to be out of place as shown above but in actual fact it is in a line directly below the initials R. M. and is thus directly after the word ANNO.

The bell was cast by Robert Maxwell & Company of Edinburgh and is now no longer used.

### BEITH

(High Kirk).

In the tower hang two bells, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$  and 43 inches diameter. The smaller one is without inscription and has a handbell type argent. There are no moulding wires to form an inscription band and on this evidence it is certain that the bell was cast no earlier than 1809 when the church was built on the present site.

The larger bell bears the inscription :—

CAST BY MEARS & SON, LONDON. 1809. / RECAST BY  
JOHN C. WILSON & Co., L<sup>TD</sup> FOUNDERS. GLASGOW.  
1909. / FOR THE PARISH CHURCH OF BEITH.

This bell, which has a good tone, is hung with all metal fittings in an oak frame provided by Messrs. T. Mears & Son, of Whitechapel, London in 1809. The bearings are of the non-lubricated type with the gudgeon pins resting on two rollers.

The present church was completed in 1810, and the bell was the gift of Robert Shedden of Gower Street, London,<sup>23</sup> who was a native of Beith and who also gave the town's bell.

(22) T. Pont. *Cunninghame*. Edited by J. S. Dobie. p. 86.  
(23) Paterson. *History of County of Ayr*. Vol. I. p. 262.

**BEITH****(Town House).**

In an open turret hangs one bell, 20 inches diameter, inscribed :—

THE GIFT OF ROBERT SHEDDEN ESQ<sup>R</sup> 1823.

The bell was cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, by Thomas Mears II., and is hung with the original fittings. The frame is of wrought iron and as the bearings are not covered they have seized up. The bell is no longer used.

**COLMONELL.**

In an open eastern turret hangs one bell, about 16 inches diameter, inscribed :—

MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1848

The bell was cast by Charles and George Mears of Whitechapel, probably as a stock bell as the church was not rebuilt till the following year. The bell has canons and is hung from a wooden headstock. An iron wheel is provided but the rope is connected to a lever and comes to the ground outside the church.

**COYLTON.**

A tower containing a single bell, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, hung for ringing and inscribed :—

T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1830.

The fittings consisting of a headstock and wheel are made of wood and are of the same age as the bell. A counterbalance weight has been added later.

It is unusual to find such a large bell as this in a country church. Legend has it that the bell was originally cast for exporting to Belgium, but as this order was cancelled the bell was then bought for Coylton. The present church was built in 1832, and this legend would account for the fact that the bell was cast two years before the church was rebuilt.

The previous church, the ruins of which remain, stood in Old Coylton and had a small bell turret. The bell that hung in this cote is now preserved in the present church: it is 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter and bears the inscription :—

IACOBUS · MONTEITH · ME · FECIT · ANNO · 1647 ·

The lettering is reproduced in Fig. G. and the border which is placed above and below the inscription is shown in Fig 1.

A photograph of the bell is also reproduced, being Plate I (b). The bell, though of an orthodox shape, has a poor tone. The old iron axle and lever are still bolted to the canons but the clapper and the crown staple have gone. The moulding sand had become displaced by the O of JACOBUS and as a result the letter is not complete.

**CRAIGIE.**

An open eastern turret containing one bell, about 18 inches diameter, which bears the inscription :—

COLIN · BLYTH · FROM GLASGOW. · 1780 : .

This was read with the aid of a telescope, and due to the position of the masonry round the bell the third word is not entirely visible, the letter M being conjectured.

In the first Glasgow Directory, published in 1783, Colin Blyth, founder, is noted as living in the Saltmarket.

The present church was rebuilt in 1776. The parish was separated from Riccarton in 1647 and enlarged with a portion of the parish of Barnweil in 1673.<sup>24</sup>

**CROSRAGUEL ABBEY.**

The church of this abbey, now in ruins, has remaining a double bell cote built on top of a sixteenth century wall dividing the nave from the choir.

There is a reference to a great bell contained in a complaint to the Privy Council of Scotland<sup>25</sup> on 6th October, 1613.

(24) *Old Statistical Account of Scotland*. Vol. 5. p. 394.  
(25) *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. Edited by David Masson, LL.D. Vol. X. p. 155.

"Complaint by Mr. Peter Hewatt, Commendator of Croce Raguel, as follows:—The late Johnne Kennedy of Baltersane had taken away from the Abbey of Croceraguell the great bell, weighing (*a blank*) stone.

"The said bell is now in the possession of Florence McDougall, his relict, and Allane, Lord Cathcart, her spouse. Pursuer wishes to use the bell at the Kirk of Croceraguell or in any other way which he may think good; but defenders will not surrender the same. Pursuer appearing by Thomas McCaula, writer, and defenders not appearing, the Lords order defenders to deliver the bell to pursuer."

In the Ayr Burgh Accounts for the year 1612-1613 which were audited on 7th January, 1614 an entry reads<sup>26</sup> "To Robert Reid, messenger, and John McCra, officer, for executing letters against Lady Cathcart anent the bells and to Adam McCubene to take the letters back to Edinburgh.....£7."

Later, in 1614-15, there is another entry, "To Robert Reid, messenger,....., and for executing the Town's letters against Lady Cathcart anent the bells of Crosraguel, £13 18s 8d."

Another entry, which may or may not bear on this matter, is one in the same year, "To George Masoun, for awaiting in Edinburgh in June, 1615 while the Privy Council took order anent the bells in Kintyre, and for raising letters anent the stent, £12 13s 4d." The author has looked through the Privy Council Minutes for the whole year 1615 and there is no mention of this matter ever being discussed, nor about any further complaint from the Commendator of Crosraguel after October, 1613.

### CUMNOCK, NEW.

In the tower of the Martyrs' Church hangs a single bell, 31½ inches diameter, inscribed:—

NEW CUMNOCK 1732 / RECAST AT KILWINNING 1859

The shape of this bell is unusual, the waist is much extended and as a result the tone is poor. Metal fittings are provided, these include wheel headstock and a counterbalance weight. The recasting of this bell was done by James Hendrie of Kilwinning.

This parish was formed in 1659 when the church alongside the Manse was built.<sup>27</sup> This church is now in ruins and the present one, built on a new site, was erected in 1832.

(26) Pryde. *Ayr Burgh Accounts*. 1534-1624. p. 257.

(27) Paterson. *History of County of Ayr and Ayrshire Families*. Vol. I. p. 352.

### CUMNOCK, OLD.

In the tower hangs one bell, 36 inches diameter, inscribed:—

ERECTED AT CUMNOCK PARISH CHURCH A.D.  
1873. / JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW.

The bell is hung in wooden fittings and has a good tone. In addition to its use at service time it is also rung at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. This is a survival of the ringing for the Reader's service which, shortly after the Reformation, was held when there was a scarcity of Ministers. The bell weighs 10 cwt. 3 lb. and gives the note B flat.

### CUMNOCK, OLD

(The Primary School).

In the open turret of the Primary School is preserved the old bell from the parish church.<sup>28</sup> This is 20¾ inches diameter and bears the inscription:—

QUIRINUS DE VISSCHER ROTTERDAM · J697 ·

The shape of the crown is peculiar in its flatness and the bell thus presents a tub like appearance. However, the casting is of the highest quality, the design and fineness of the two borders above and below the inscription being especially well done. The border below the inscription portrays a hunting scene with a farm labourer with a pitch fork, a boar, rabbits, a horseman with a lance, a house, and a church with a tower. The upper border is composed of masks linked by geometrical designs. The borders are shown in Plate II. (a) and (b) and the lettering is illustrated in Fig. C.

The crown staple is original and the bell has a good tone. Unfortunately one of the canons is fractured at the junction with the crown.

### DAILY.

A tower containing one bell, 18½ inches diameter, inscribed:—

REV<sup>d</sup> D<sup>r</sup> C. CUNNINGHAM · (*a sprig*) 1815

The lettering is all incised and the bell is exactly similar to the bell in Saltcoats Town Hall and has a handbell type argent, which

(28) Warrick. *History of Old Cumnock*. p. 345.

is recessed into a wooden headstock. The chain is connected to an iron quarter wheel mounted directly over the centre line of the bell. The tone is poor.

Rev. Dr. Charles Cunningham was minister of this parish from 1806 till 1815.<sup>29</sup> The present church was finished in 1766 after being rebuilt from the first one on this site erected in 1690. The pre-Reformation church which was in use up till this latter date, is at Old Dailly and has a peculiar feature in that there is a bellcote in both East and West gables.<sup>30</sup>

### DALMELLINGTON

(Kirk o' the Covenant).

A bold western tower containing one bell, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, hung for ringing inverted and inscribed :—

C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1846

This bell was cast in the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London.

### DALRY

(St. Margaret).

In a lofty tower with spire hang two bells, the larger weighing 20 cwt. 21 lb. The inscriptions are :—

SMALL BELL (21 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter).

+ FRANCISVS HEMONY ME FECIT AMSTELODAMI.  
ANNO DOMINI 1661

LARGE BELL (45 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches diameter).

PRESENTED TO DALRY PARISH CHURCH BY JAMES  
M'COSH, OF PARKHILL. A.D. 1872. / REV: ROBERT  
STEVENSON, MINISTER, / JOHN C. WILSON. FOUNDER.  
GLASGOW. / VOCO, "VENITE IN DOMINI TEMPLUM."

The larger bell is hung in wooden fittings and rotates in ball bearings, the tone is good.

(29) Turnbull. *A South Ayrshire Parish.* p. 151.

(30) *ibid.* p. 83, 84.

The smaller bell is almost exactly the same size and was cast by the same founder and in the same year as the smaller bell in the Wallace Tower, Ayr. This bell is very much better preserved than the Ayr one and bears two fine borders. The border above the inscription is illustrated as Plate II. (c), that below consists of a series of leaves and it is illustrated in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Volume 47, p. 73, Fig. 9 as the lower border on the treble bell in the church of St. Michael, Linlithgow.

Part of the inscription is reproduced as Fig. J and a photograph of the bell is shown as Plate IV. (a). The canons have angels' faces cast in them and the whole bell is an extremely fine casting, well worthy to bear the name of one of the greatest carillon founders that the world has yet seen. The crown staple has been renewed but is in the same position as before. The clapper is attached to it by means of a leather strap or baldrick. The tone of the bell is excellent.

### DALRYMPLE.

In an open eastern turret hangs one bell, about 20 inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW A.D. 1865.  
N<sup>o</sup> 771

As mentioned in connection with the bell in Alloway Old Kirk, a bell for this church was cast at the same time and the people of Alloway had the choice of the two bells. It is also stated, however, that when the Dalrymple bell was broken at the rejoicing following the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, it was found to bear only the date 1688 in bas relief.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the bell which was originally cast in 1657 was broken in 1688 and had to be recast, in any case the recasting in 1832 was not very durable, as the present bell is dated only 33 years later. The present church was built in 1764.<sup>32</sup>

### DREGHORN.

In a small spire hangs one bell, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, which is devoid of inscription. The crown terminates in a handbell type argent and the fittings are all of cast iron. The bell is similar to that in Saltcoats Town House and was probably cast in a local brass foundry in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The parishes of Dreghorn and Pierceton were united in 1668 and the parish church was rebuilt in 1780.<sup>33</sup>

(31) Paterson. *History of the County of Ayr.* Vol. I. p. 175.

(32) *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland.* Vol. 4. p. 305.

(33) Paterson. *History of the County of Ayr and Ayrshire Families.* Vol. I. p. 446.

## DUNDONALD.

In a tower with spire hangs one bell, about 30 inches diameter, which bears no inscription. The crown has a handbell type argent which is bolted to a cast iron headstock and wheel. The bell is very similar to that in Saltcoats Town House and is known to have been installed in 1841 when the present clock was put in and when the ancient bell was removed.<sup>34</sup>

The ancient bell, which is now on loan to the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, is 16½ inches diameter and is inscribed :—

+ Sancte egidie ora pro nobis anno dñi

° °      to  
m cccc lxxxx u / xt

The translation being "Saint Giles pray for us, in the year of our Lord 1495," with the founder's mark **xt** on the waist and a border above the inscription. The bell is illustrated as Plate IV. (b), and Fig. M. shows a scale drawing of the inscription.

St. Giles was the patron saint of blacksmiths, and a number of English pre-Reformation bells are dedicated to him. One of the inscriptions used by the old Brasyer foundry at Norwich may be translated "The sound of Giles rises to the vaults of heaven."<sup>35</sup>

The argent is cracked in one place and there appears to have been only four canons, two on each side of the axis of the argent, and of these two have been broken. The bell, however, is a good casting, free from blow holes and porous metal.

The bell served the parish of Dundonald till 1841 when the clock was put in and it was required to strike the hours on the bell. As the latter is small the sound would not carry far, so the present bell was purchased and the ancient one went into private possession. Later it was presented to the Free Kirk and was used from 1843 for over 40 years when "part of the cup front gave way" and the bell was returned to private possession.<sup>36</sup> It is not quite clear what the damage was; but as can be seen from the photograph the argent is cracked and two canons are gone. As the bell now stands in the showcase in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, and weighs about 96 lb., the author was not able to check whether the bell is cracked or not; no crack, however, is visible in the soundbow.

(34) Gillespie. *Dundonald*. Vol. 2. p. 477.

(35) Raven. *The Church Bells of Suffolk*. p. 59.

(36) *Archaeological Collections of Ayrshire and Galloway*. Vol. 7. p. 80 ff.

## DUNLOP

(Laigh Kirk).

In the tower hangs one bell, 37 inches diameter, inscribed :—

THOMAS MEARS LONDON FOUNDER 1837

The bell is hung in its original fittings, though the wheel has been repaired and a counterbalance weight has been added to the headstock. The clapper has made two deep pits in the soundbow and the bell will soon need to be quarter turned so that the clapper strikes in new positions.

In an old burial vault in the churchyard is preserved an earlier bell, 19½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

FOR THE PARISH OF DUNLOP 1792

The lettering is similar to the smaller set used on the larger bell and also came from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, being cast by Thomas Mears I., the father of the founder of the larger bell. This bell still has the clapper in place and was returned some years ago from the estate of Kennox whence it had gone when the new bell arrived.<sup>37</sup>

## FENWICK.

The single bell, about 19 inches diameter, is not easy to reach, and with a telescope only a portion of the inscription is visible. However, from the Kirk Session Records and observations the inscription may be taken as :—

FOR · THE · PAROCH · OF · FINNICK · R · M · & ·  
COMPY · FECIT · EDR · 1730

This bell was cast by Robert Maxwell of Edinburgh and weighs 175½ lb. It was rehung when the stone turret was rebuilt in 1864. It has a poor tone and is thought locally to be cracked.

The parish was separated from that of Kilmarnock in 1642<sup>38</sup> and most of the present church dates from that time. The bell turret was built in 1660 and was presumably furnished with a bell<sup>39</sup> which was recast into the present one.

(37) *Archaeological and Historical Collection relating to the Counties of Ayr and Wigtown*. Vol. 4. p. 39.

(38) *Old Statistical Account of Scotland*. Vol. 14. p. 51.

(39) *Jubilee of the Rev. James Orr, Fenwick, 1880*. p. 8.

## GALSTON

(St. Peter).

In the spire hangs a single bell,  $50\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, weighing 22 cwt 1 qr. 18 lb. in E, inscribed :—

ERECTED AT GALSTON PARISH CHURCH A.D. 1885,  
BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. / REV: JOHN  
BROWN B.D. MINISTER. / JOHN C. WILSON & CO,  
FOUNDERS. GLASGOW. / (*soundbore*) "GLORIA IN  
COELIS ALTISSIMIS DEO, ET IN TERRA PAX, IN  
HOMINES BENEVOLENTIA."

This bell is hung with metal fittings and rotates in dry roller type bearings.

The large bell cast in 1885 replaced one,  $20\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, which is preserved in the church. The inscription is :—

FOR · THE · PARISH · OF · GOLSTOUN · IOHN  
MEIKLE · ME · FECIT · EDINBURGI · J696 · / S  
G · C

The lettering is of the Roman style,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch high, and was later used by Robert Maxwell. Above the inscription is a border which appears on a bell by Peter Ostens of Rotterdam, dated 1664, and is illustrated in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Volume 47, page 72, Fig. 8, as the border above the inscription. The initials on the waist of the bell stand for Sir George Campbell. The clapper is still in place and the bell has a fair tone.

In the vestry is preserved a handbell,  $6\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter and  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches high overall, which was used for funerals. The inscription is :—

FOR · THE · PARISH · OF · / GALSTON · 1722 · (*a knot*).

The lettering is not unlike that on the 1696 bell and it is probable that the handbell, too, came from Edinburgh. Part of the inscription is reproduced as Fig. D. An oval handle is cast into the crown.

In 1762 the sexton was allowed 2 pence per mile for going and ringing the small bell and was never to ring for less than this rate; he was also allowed 2 pence per burial for ringing the big bell. <sup>40</sup>

(40) Anon. *The History of Galston Parish Church.* p. 22.

## GALSTON

(Cessnock Castle).

On top of the old tower hangs a bell,  $20\frac{7}{8}$  inches diameter, which formerly hung in the parish church of St. Peter. The inscription is :—

PEETER VANDEN GHEIN HEFT MI GHEGOTEN INT  
IAER MD LXXXXVI.

The lettering is Roman and is about  $11/16$  inch high. Unfortunately as the bell has been hanging within a foot of the main chimney the surface has been severely corroded by the action of sulphur on the copper in the bellmetal. As a result none of the borders or the lettering is in good enough preservation to reproduce in this paper.

Above the inscription there is a border about 2 inches high, consisting of what looks like four sea horses facing each other, two on one side and two on the other of a centre line, with floral work round about. Below the inscription there is a border of a three leaved design repeated at intervals of  $9/16$  inch and joined to a common base line by semicircular arcs. This border is interrupted in three equally spaced positions to leave room for cherubs with out-stretched wings,  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches across; each bearing a rectangular plaque,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide, supported by three strings from their mouths. Nothing is now visible on these plaques, but on them may have been the name of the place where the bell was cast, *i.e.* Mechlin in Belgium, now known as Malines.

The bell has canons, but the clapper and crown staple have dropped out as the latter has rusted through. The bearings, which have seized up, are mounted on a cast iron frame, which was found to be not wide enough to permit the bell to be swung and as a result both the frame members and the lip of the bell were chipped to give a clearance. This has undoubtedly affected the tone of the bell somewhat, but it is still of a high quality.

The masonry of the turret also came from the parish church and is about the same age as the bell. The turret is perched up on top of the west wall of the tower at about 100 feet above the ground. Access to it is by no means easy<sup>41</sup>.

(41) Anon. *The History of Galston Parish Church,* pp.15, 21, 104 (photograph).

**GIRVAN**

(Old Church, St. Cuthbert).

In the tall tower with spire hangs one bell, 40 inches diameter, inscribed :—

*ERECTED A.D. 1885. / JOHN C. WILSON & CO  
FOUNDERS, GLASGOW. / VOCO, " VENITE IN DOMINI  
TEMPLUM."*

The first line of the inscription is incised. The bell has canons and is hung in all metal fittings.

**GIRVAN**

(Town Hall).

In the steeple hangs one bell,  $32\frac{7}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

STEPHEN MILLER & CO MAKERS GLASGOW 1826  
8 : 1 : 14.

The latter figures would seem to give the weight as 8 cwt. 1 qr. 14 lb. but it is a bold founder who stamps in the mould the exact weight of the product to within 0.1%. In any case the bell seems to be about 2 cwt. heavier than the diameter would suggest; the Whitechapel Foundry, London, established 1567, give the weight of one of their 33 inch diameter bells as about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cwt., with approximately the same note.

The bell has a wheel but the headstock is fixed so that it is only used as the hour bell for the clock.

**HURLFORD**

(Parish Church).

The tower of this church contains a bell,  $51\frac{13}{16}$  inches diameter, which weighs 25 cwt. 1 qr. and gives the note "E" natural. The inscription reads :—

ERECTED AT HURLFORD PARISH CHURCH. A.D.  
1875. / JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW. / E

The bell is hung with wooden fittings; the wheel is  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter. This bell is the heaviest in Ayrshire though not as large in diameter as the steel bell in the Grange Church, Kilmarnock.

**IRVINE**

(Old Church).

A tower with spire containing one bell, 42 inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN WARNER & SON FOUNDERS LONDON 1797

This bell was cast at the old Cripplegate Foundry, London, and is hung from a very large wooden headstock which is turned by a fabricated metal wheel.

The tower of the old church was declared unsafe and was taken down in 1721; the bell therein seems to have been taken down earlier and was hung for a time from one of the boughs of an ash tree in the churchyard.<sup>42</sup> However, in 1711 the bell was removed to the Tolbooth steeple, still being rung for church services. The inscription read :—"Blessed is they that hear the joyful sound," but there was neither date nor maker's name. From the peculiar grammar used it would seem probable that the founder was not fully acquainted with English, and as it has been noted that a bell bearing a similar inscription was cast in Irvine for the Laigh Kirk in Kilmarnock by Albert Danel Geli in 1697, it is likely that this bell also was cast by him.

On his bell at Maybole he is represented as a Frenchman; this might account for his spelling and gives colour to the theory that the old Irvine bell was his. This latter bell was cracked during the rejoicing following the passing of the Reform Bill; and having been recast was used for secular purposes till it was again cracked on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. It was then sold for old metal.

The present steeple was built in 1778 and the bell was supplied in 1797 through the generosity of the provost, the twelfth Earl of Eglinton, and was hung at his expense.

A brass plate giving the names of the donor, his fellow-magistrates, the dean of guild, and the minister is supposed to have been fixed to the bell, but no trace of it now exists. However, as the clock was given at the same time the plate may be fixed to the latter.

(42) Arnold F. McJannet, *Royal Burgh of Irvine*, pp. 140, 141, 184.

**IRVINE****(Town Hall).**

Below the clock in the town steeple hangs a bell, 41 inches diameter, inscribed :—

ERECTED A.D. 1888. / JOHN C. WILSON & CO FOUNDERS  
GLASGOW.

This bell, cast in the Gorbals Foundry, is hung in all-metal fittings. Above the clock and in the base of the spire hangs a smaller bell, 22 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

**THE : TOLBUITH · BELL · OF · THE · BVRGHE · OF ·  
IRVINE · 1637 O**

The last two letters of THE and BVRGHE are run together. The lettering, which is shown in Fig. E., is rough Roman type, and at the end of the inscription there is a circle, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches diameter, which might be the impression of a coin, but the corrosion has destroyed any identification marks. The bell is hung for ringing in a wooden frame, but as the ball of the clapper has gone the bell is not used. The crown staple is original, and as the marks of indentation of the clapper are hardly noticeable the bell cannot have been swung very much in the past. It was doubtless primarily intended as a clock bell. The tone is poor, and it is likely that it is a local product, perhaps cast by the same founder who cast a bell in Irvine for the Over Tolbooth in Ayr in 1615-16.

The present spire was built in 1818 and is not unlike its predecessor.<sup>43</sup>

**KILBIRNIE****(Barony Church, St. Brendan).**

In an open western turret hangs a bell, 22 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

□ (a stop) **FOR THE KIRK OF KILBURNIE M<sup>r</sup> MALCOLM  
BROWN / MINISTER IOANNUS MILNE EDINBURGO  
FECIT J753** □ (a stop).

Above the inscription appears a border which was used by the Rotterdam founders as early as 1657; it is illustrated in the Church

(43) McJannet, *Royal Burgh of Irvine*, p. 119.

Bells of Linlithgowshire, Fig. 8, as appearing below the inscription on a bell cast by Peter Ostens of Rotterdam in 1664.<sup>44</sup> A portion of the lettering on this bell is shown in Fig. O. Just above the soundbow there is another border which the author has not noted elsewhere, Plate III (b). The stops are actually portions of the Dutch border.

The contour of the bell is unusual, the crown is quite flat and the external surface of the soundbow instead of having a gentle curve round to the lip is brought to a point at the thickest part. A new clapper and crown staple have been fitted, but in the same positions as the old ones so that the bell is wearing thin. The tone of the bell leaves much to be desired: it is so bad that the bell is thought to be cracked; this is not so.

Mr. Malcolm Brown was still the minister in 1793 when aged over 90.<sup>45</sup>

**KILMARNOCK****(Laigh Kirk, St. Marnoe).**

In the ancient steeple hangs one bell, 41 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO FOUNDERS. GLASGOW. /  
A.D. 1894.

The bell is hung in all metal fittings and rotates on dry type bearing rollers.

The earliest record of a bell for this church is dated 1697, when when it is recorded in the Kirk Session Records<sup>46</sup> :—

1697—To Baylie Paterson, for going down to ervin and giving drink money to the founders of the bell, £9 8s 0d Scots.

1697—For bringing the bell out of ervin, £1 9s 0d Scots.

This bell weighed nearly 4 cwt., and was inscribed "BLESSED IS THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE JOYFULL SOUND, PS. 89, 15, NVM, 10, 10. ALBERT DANIEL GELI ME FECERUNT, KILMARNOCK, AN. DOM., 1697."<sup>47</sup> The bell was cracked in 1853, and was sold to the

(44) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* Vol. XLVII., p. 72.

(45) *Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. 7, p. 149.

(46) McKay, *History of Kilmarnock*, p. 381.

(47) *ibid.* p. 11.

Laigh Kirk at Stewarton and was recast. The same founder cast the Maybole town bell in 1696 on which he describes himself as a Frenchman. On this bell he uses "Fecerunt" in the plural to agree with a singular subject, and phrases the inscription to show that the bell was cast in Kilmarnock whereas we know that it had to be brought from Irvine.

A new bell was purchased from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, in 1853: it weighed 12 cwt., which is about the same as the present bell. The Whitechapel bell cost about £100 Sterling and had a fine tone.<sup>48</sup>

### KILMARNOCK

(Old High Kirk).

This church, established in 1732, possesses one bell, 34½ inches diameter, inscribed:—

C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1852 /  
GOD PRESERVE OUR CHURCH & STATE.

Cast at the Whitechapel Foundry, London, with a weight of 7 cwt. 2 qrs. 14 lb.

### KILMARNOCK

(Grange Church).

In the tower with spire hangs a single bell, 54½ inches diameter, bearing a very corroded inscription:—

VICKERS · SONS & CO LIMITED · SHEFFIELD · 1867

(Royal Arms)

PATENT · CAST · STEEL · 1808.

As stated on the bell it is of cast steel, and is therefore liable to rust. The last figures are not at all clear, and on comparison with other inscriptions on bells cast by this firm it would appear that they form a foundry number and have no other significance. The bell was hung to be rung up and set inverted, but when a counter-balance weight was fitted the slider had to be removed, so now the vertical post on the headstock, or stay, does not engage and permit the bell to be left inverted.

(48) *ibid.* p. 11.

There are no canons or argent, the crown has a flange cast some 2 inches above it and through this flange run the bolts attaching it to the headstock.

This bell has the largest mouth diameter of any in the County of Ayr and for this reason it has been included here. The weight, however, will be less than that of the bells in Hurlford Parish Church and Ayr Town Hall, as steel is lighter than bellmetal and because the steel bells are thinner than their non-ferrous counterparts. The largest of a ring of steel bells cast by this firm for Hurst, near Ashton-under-Lyne, has a diameter of 54 inches and a weight of 19¾ cwt., so this bell will be very much the same in weight.<sup>49</sup>

### KILMARNOCK

(Henderson Memorial Church).

An order has been recently placed with Messrs. Gillett & Johnston, Ltd., of Croydon for a chime of eight bells for this Church. They will cover an octave in the key of A flat with the tenor being 38½ inches diameter and weighing about 10¼ cwt. It is expected that these bells will be cast in 1950, and that they will be played from a clavier, or hand keyboard.

### KILMARNOCK

(Town Hall).

In the small steeple hangs a bell, 21¾ inches diameter, inscribed:—

THIS BELL WAS GIFTED BY THE EARLE OF KILMARNOCK TO THE TOUN / OF KILMARNOCK FOR  
THER COUNCILLHOUSE R M FECIT ED<sup>50</sup> 1711.

On the waist appear two coats of arms, each of which is shown twice; one is the Royal Arms of Scotland and the other the Arms of the Boyd family, who were Earls of Kilmarnock.

The bell was cast by Robert Maxwell of Edinburgh and bears his usual lettering, which appears on a disused bell at Bonhill, Dumbartonshire, and which is illustrated elsewhere.<sup>50</sup>

(49) *Eeles. The Church Bells of Kincardineshire.* p. 59.  
(50) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot., Vol. LXXXII.*

The fittings are of wood, and the frame, of the same material, is built on top of a round shaft which has a floor 15 feet below the bell. The lettering and the coats of arms are much corroded but are still quite plain.

The bell is used to summon the Town Council, and before the present building was erected it served the same purpose in the old Town House.

### KILMARNOCK

(The Dick Institute).

In the Museum is preserved the old funeral bell of Kilmarnock, 7 inches diameter and  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches overall height, which bears the inscription :—

#### KILMARNOK 1639.

The inscription is reproduced in Fig. F, and Plate VI. is a photograph of the bell. The bell instead of being made of an alloy of copper and tin called bellmetal is made of brass, and is consequently yellow in appearance instead of the usual greenish colour.

The handle, which was cast with the bell, is cracked in one place and the crown staple has had to be renewed. The bell was used to announce deaths and to give the time of burial. Records of this ringing exist for the years 1714, 1718, 1721 and 1723.<sup>51</sup>

Also in the Museum are two cannons, one is inscribed :—

**HENRICUS WEGEWAERT ME FECIT ENCHUSAE ANNO 1623.**

The other was cast in the Royal Arsenal, Lisbon, in 1778.

### KILMAURS

(St. Maura).

A tower containing one bell,  $18\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

**MICHAEL · BVRGERHVYS · ME · FECIT · 1618 ·**

The lettering and the border which appear above the inscription on this bell from Middelburg, in Holland, are illustrated as Fig. N and Fig. 3.

(51) McKay, *History of Kilmarnock*, p. 130.



PLATE I. (a).—A bell cast by Michael Burgerhuys of Middelburg, Holland, in 1625, at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Ayr.



PLATE I. (b).—A bell by James Monteith of Edinburgh, 1647, at Coylton.



PLATE II. (a).—Cast, 12 inches long overall, from hunting scene on Old Cumnock School bell, cast by Quirinus de Visscher, 1697.

(Photo : Annan).



PLATE III. (a).—An ornamental border used by a Dutch founder on the bell at Kirkoswald, 1677. Overall length of plaster cast is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

(Photo : Annan).



(b)

PLATE II. (b).—Cast, 5 inches long overall, of border on Old Cumnock School bell, 1697.

(Photo : Annan).



PLATE II. (c).—Cast,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches long overall, from a bell at Dalry, cast by Franciscus Hemony of Amsterdam in 1661.

(Photo : Annan).

*Bells of Ayrshire, II.*



PLATE III. (b).—Cast,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches long overall, of border on bell at Kilbirnie, cast by John Milne in 1753.

(Photo : Annan.)

*Bells of Ayrshire, III.*



PLATE IV. (a).—A bell by Franciscus Hemony of Amsterdam, 1661, at Dalry.

(Photo : Bell, West Kilbride).



PLATE V. (a).—The bell at Kirkoswald, cast by a Rotterdam founder in 1677.



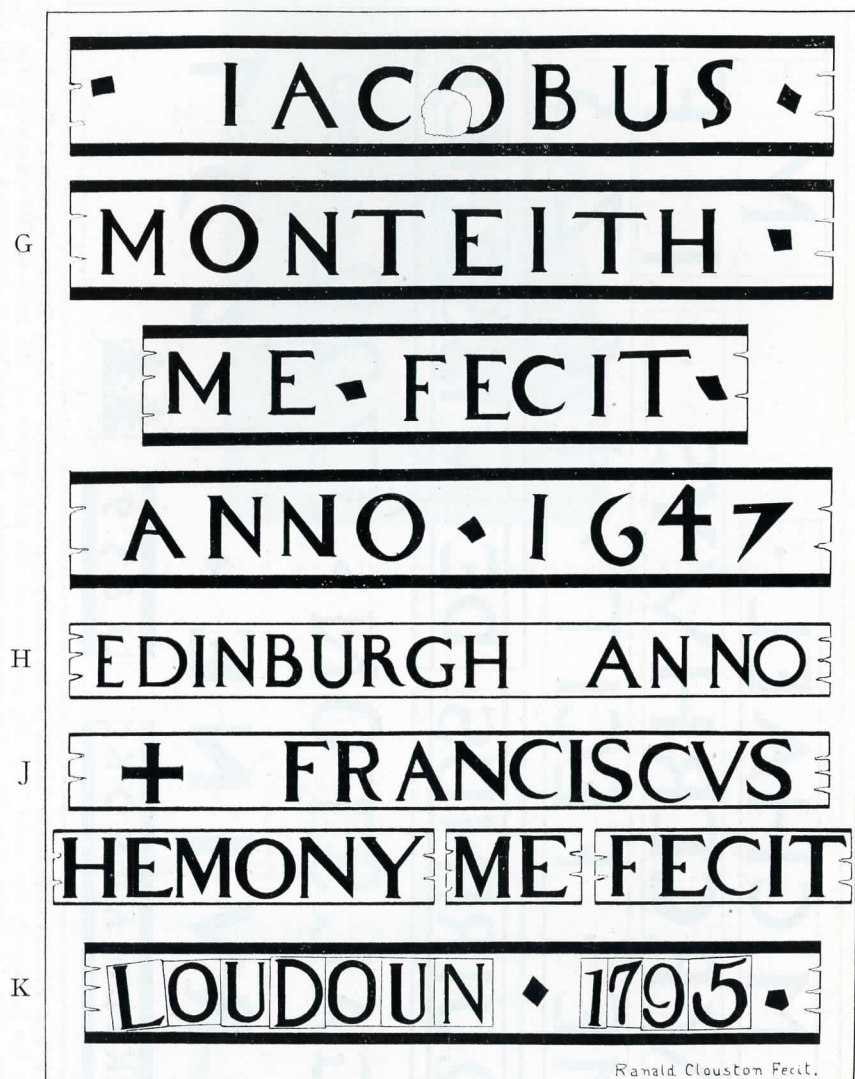
PLATE IV. (b).—A bell dated 1495, formerly at Dundonald, and now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh.

(Photo :  
The Keeper of the Museum).

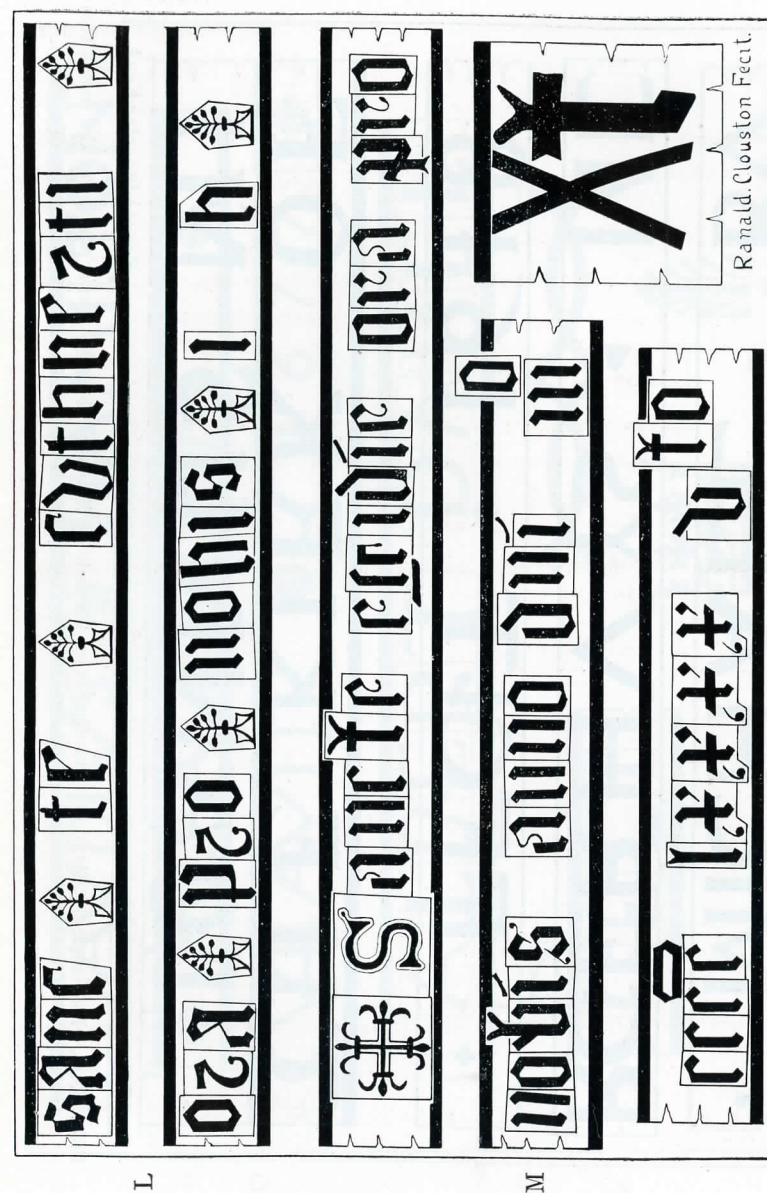


PLATE V. (b).—A pre-Reformation bell by an unknown founder at Monkton.





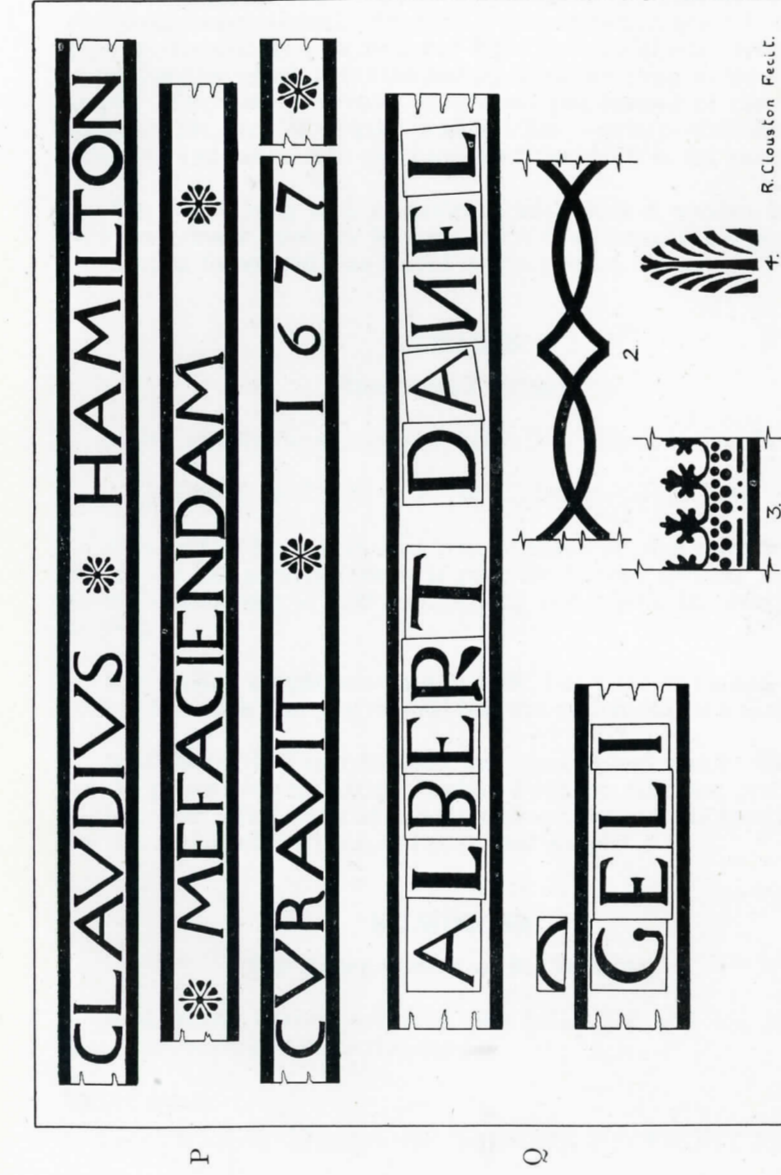
FIGS. G-K.—Half-scale details of the inscription on the disused bell at Coylton (Fig. G). Portions of the inscriptions on bells at Auchinleck (Fig. H), Dalry (Fig. J) and Loudon (Fig. K).



FIGS. L, M.—Half-scale details of the inscriptions on the bells at Monkton (Fig. L) and Dundonald (Fig. M), the latter is now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Figs. N, O.—Half-scale details of the inscription on the bell at Kilmaurs (Fig. N) and a portion of the inscription on the bell at Kilbirnie (Fig. O).



Figs. P, Q, 2, 3, 4.—Half-scale details of the inscription on the bell at Kirkoswald (Fig. P) and portions of the inscription on the old Maybole Town Bell (Fig. Q). Fig. 2 shows a design of border used by the Whitechapel Foundry as at Kilwinning. Fig. 3 shows the border used by Michael Burgerhuys at Kilmaurs, 1618. Fig. 4 is an ornament used by the Whitechapel Foundry, as at Largs, 1814.

The bell is an excellent casting with no flaws or holes of any description, and the tone is very fine for a light weight. One of the rare features about the bell is that both the clapper and the crown staple are original. The former instead of having a cylindrical portion terminating in a ball and flight, is conical right from the upper loop by which it is attached by a leather strap to the crown staple. The cone terminates in a small peg instead of the usual flight. This type of clapper makes a line contact with the bell after years of use, but in this case the indentation is not excessive.

The bell is hung with a wooden headstock in a wooden frame, which was made when the bell was taken down from its old position in an open turret and was placed in the present tower.

### KILMAURS

(The Council House).

In the steeple hangs one bell,  $30\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed .—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO FOUNDERS GLASGOW.

This bell is hung with cast iron fittings and was used for the clock. At the present time it is rung for Sunday services, but in 1912<sup>52</sup> it was rung at 5.30 a.m., 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on week-days as well.

The present steeple was built in 1800, but there was a bell prior to this date as in that year the old bell was exchanged for a new one.

In 1896 the bell cast in 1800 was cracked and was exchanged for the present one cast at the Gorbals Foundry, Glasgow, probably in that year. The material is bellmetal and not steel as mentioned by the author of "Kilmaurs Parish and Burgh."

### KILWINNING

(The Abbey Church of St. Winning).

A detached tower containing two bells,  $23\frac{3}{8}$  and  $45\frac{7}{8}$  inches diameter, bearing the inscriptions :—

SMALL BELL.

CHAPMAN & MEARS OF LONDON FECERUNT 1782  
(Fig. 2).

(52) D. McNaught, *Kilmaurs Parish, and Burgh* pp. 266-267.

## LARGE BELL.

KILWINNING BELL/RECAST IN 1864./AGAIN RECAST  
BY JOHN C. WILSON & C<sup>O</sup> L<sup>TD</sup> 1912./A. HUNTER,  
MINISTER.

Both bells are hung with wooden fittings in a wooden frame. The smaller bell was cast at the famous Whitechapel Foundry, London. The firm is now known as Mears & Stainbank.

The larger bell was cast at the Gorbals Foundry, Glasgow, and before recasting in 1864 it was reputed<sup>53</sup> to bear the inscription :—

REFOUNDED BY ALEXANDER, EARL OF EGLINTON,  
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1629. GLASSFORD,  
MINISTER. (MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD  
REACH THE HEART OF EVERYONE WHERE THE  
SOUND OF THIS BELL IS HEARD).

However, when this reference was written, in 1900, the bell had then been recast for almost forty years and so it is probable that the first sentence was on the bell of 1629, and that the portion in brackets was added in 1864 by James Hendrie when he recast the bell at the local ironworks. Unfortunately this bell was cracked in 1912 and had to be recast into the present one, which weighs 16½ cwt.

In the records<sup>54</sup> for the Kirk Session for March 12th, 1656, it is stated :—"Which day Alexander Simpson undertook to ring the little bell at four hours in the morning and eight at night, till the greater bell was fixed in the stock, and this he was to do till Youll, who then if he should not get contentment neither from the town nor session he should be free of the charge belonging to the church."

The small bell is mentioned under the parish of Tarbolton, as it formerly hung in the church there.

The old Abbey tower, which was 32 feet square and 103 feet high, fell down with a tremendous crash in August, 1814, and was rebuilt on the same site, 28 feet square and about the same height.<sup>55</sup> The bell may have been destroyed or at least cracked, and this would give a reason for the removal of the Tarbolton bell to Kilwinning about seven years after the fall, and when the rebuilding had been completed.

(53) Rev. William Lee Ker, M.A., *Kilwinning*, p. 27.

(54) *ibid.* p. 165.

(55) Robertson, *Cunninghame*, p. 190.

## KIRKMICHAEL

(St. Michael).

In an open western turret hangs one bell, 30 inches diameter, hung for ringing and inscribed :—

PRESENTED BY MR. AND MRS. J. MANN THOMPSON,  
A.D. 188 — / REV : HUMRY A FAIRLIE, MINISTER /  
JOHN C. WILSON & C<sup>O</sup> FOUNDERS · GLASGOW.

The last figure of the date is unfortunately not visible from the ground. The church was rebuilt in 1787.<sup>56</sup> The bell weighs 5 cwt. 2 qrs. 4 lb.

## KIRKOSWALD

(St. Oswald).

An eastern turret contains one bell, 18¾ inches diameter, bearing the inscription :—

CLAVDIVS \* HAMILTON \* MEFACIENDAM  
\* CVRAVIT \* 1677 \*

The lettering is reproduced as Fig. P, and Plate V. (a) is a photograph of the bell. Above the inscription appears the border of masks, Plate II. (b), which also is on the Old Cumnock bell of 1697. Below the inscription is the border, Plate III. (a).

The canons and argent are completely covered by the wooden headstock to which is attached a wooden half-wheel with wrought iron spokes. The clapper and crown staple have been renewed, the latter being in the same position as formerly but the indentation of the clapper is slight. The tone is good and the bell is an excellent casting quite free from flaws.

Hew Scott's *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, Vol. III., page 47, confirms the translation of the above inscription, which is ; Claud Hamilton had me made 1677. Claud Hamilton was admitted to the charge before 1668 and at the time of the Revolution left the parish ; in 1691 he retired to Maybole and died before August 1699.

The founder's name is thus unknown, but as the border of masks appears on the Rotterdam bell at Old Cumnock, dated 1697, cast by Quirinus de Visscher, it seems logical to presume that this bell also came from Rotterdam, though it is probably not the work of Quirinus de Visscher.

(56) *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. 6, p. 102.

## LARGS

(St. Columba).

In a tower with spire hangs a single bell hung for ringing inverted, and four smaller clock bells hung dead.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	1891.	3
Second.	1891	4
Third.	1891	5
Fourth.	PEACE AND GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD : (Fig. 4 seven times).	8
	T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1814 (Fig. 4 nine times).	
Tenor.	1891	10½

Previous to 1891 there was only the Whitechapel bell of 1814, but in that year the other four bells were added together with a clock. These bells bear no founder's name, and the makers of the clock, Messrs. Joyce of Whitchurch, Shropshire, have been unable to enlighten the author.

The tenor is a poor casting and has a number of blow holes round the soundbow, and, as none of the three principal English firms claim to have cast them, it is to be presumed that they are the work of some Glasgow foundry other than the Gorbals Foundry.

The three lighter bells have no clapper and are struck by clock hammers. The Whitechapel bell has only the upper portion of the clapper remaining, the ball having been removed, and is now struck by a hammer.

The predecessor of the Whitechapel bell cast in 1814, was a fine toned bell but after being cracked, was sold and taken to Port Glasgow.<sup>57</sup>

## LARGS

(Clark Memorial Church).

In the tower of this church hangs a chime of ten bells, tenor, 49½ inches diameter. The inscriptions on all the bells are identical and read :—

CAST BY GILLET & CO. CROYDON 1891.

(57) *Archaeological and Historical Collections relating to Ayrshire and Galloway*, Vol. IV., p. 54.

The approximate weights of the bells are :—5½, 5½, 6, 6½, 7½, 8½, 10½, 13½, 15½ and 22 cwt.

The bells were cast with canons, and hang in a wooden framework in four tiers of two, three, three and two bells, the heavier bells being below. The bells cannot be swung so a chiming mechanism was installed when they were erected, to play tunes on them by means of hammers. This machine is at present out of order and only the third, fifth, sixth, ninth, and tenor are used, and these for the clock chimes of the Cambridge Quarters. The tenor only has a clapper.

Since the above account was written, the founders, Messrs. Gillett & Johnston, Ltd., of Croydon, have done some repair work in the tower. The unused bells noted above, namely, the treble, second, fourth, seventh and eighth, have been removed from the tower and returned to the foundry as scrap metal. The remainder, on which the clock chimes, have been rehung in a new steel frame, as the former wooden one was beyond repair.

## LOUDOUN

(Old Loudon Church, Newmilns).

In the tower hangs a single bell, 20½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

FLORA COUNTES OF LOUDOUN · 1795.

The lettering is shown in Fig. K. The bell is a good casting but has a poor tone. No founder's mark or name appears on the bell but the lettering is identical with that on a bell preserved in the vestibule of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, inscribed :—

GEORGE WATT · FECET · ST. NINIANS ROW · EDN<sup>RS</sup>  
1791.

The bell under review is by the same founder.

Flora Mure Campbell, Countess of Loudoun, was born in 1780 and succeeded her father to the estates and title in 1786. In July, 1804, she was married to Francis Rawdon Hastings, Earl of Moira in Ireland, and Baron Rawdon in Great Britain; she died in 1840.<sup>58</sup> She was aged only fifteen when she gave the bell.

(58) Robertson, *Cunninghame*, p. 367. Mackintosh, *Historical Review of Galston and Loudoun Parishes*, p. 62.

**MAUCHLINE****(St. Cuthbert).**

A tower containing one bell, 21 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed :—

FOR MACHLINE 1742.

The lettering is of a plain Roman type and each letter is placed in a well defined patera. So far the author has not seen this lettering in use elsewhere, and with no other information available the founder's name must remain unknown.

The bell is hung with wooden fittings and is used as the hour bell for the clock. The clapper has struck in the same place since being erected in 1742 and as a result the soundbow is wearing thin. The tone is poor and the bell has very little "breath," i.e. the sound dies away more quickly than is usual.

**MAYBOLE****(The Town Hall).**

In the tower of the Town Hall hangs one bell, 48 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, weighing about a ton, hung for ringing. The inscription reads :—

J. MURPHY FOUNDER DUBLIN/PRESENTED · BY · A ·  
FEW · FRIENDS / TO THE BURGH OF MAYBOLE.  
JAMES · RAMSAY . / PROVOST · CHRISTMAS · 1895.

The bell is hung in wooden fittings and has a huge wooden wheel which is 6 feet 10 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches diameter to the rope groove. The Curfew is rung every evening except Sundays at 10 p.m., and the bell is also used for fifteen minutes before the noon Sunday service at the parish church, which has no bell.

An older bell is preserved in the Council Chamber. This one is 19 inches diameter and has completely lost both canons and argent. The inscription is in four lines and is composed of rather rough letters, a number of which are facing the wrong way (Fig. Q). It is :—

**THIS BEL IS FOVNDED AT MAIBOLL BY ALBERT  
DANEL / GELI AFRECHNAN THE 6 NOR 1696 BI  
APPOINTMENT OF / THE HERITORS OF THE PARIOCH  
OF MAIBOLL AND WILLIAM / MONTGOMERI AND  
TOMAS KENNEDI MAGRATS OF THE BVRGH.**

Every letter N and letter S is reversed, the letter F in the first OF is inverted. The G of GELI has a circumflex.

It seems that at this time the parish church had no bell, and that this bell was the joint order of the heritors and the magistrates.

A small handbell, probably late 17th Century, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter, called the Deid Bell of Maybole is now preserved in the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove. This bell is a very rough casting with no inscription or mark on the surface. The crown terminates in a small argent which is pierced and to which was formerly attached some form of handle. The clapper is connected by a link to the original crown staple. There is an irregular moulding wire round the outside of the soundbow though in section this would appear as a low hump rather than a clearly defined wire.

The bell was shown in the Glasgow Exhibition of 1911<sup>59</sup> by the late Mr. Lewis Clapperton by whom it was donated to Glasgow Corporation. The author would like to express his thanks to a number of people who have helped him find this bell, and especially to Mr. J. G. Scott, B.A., of the staff of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.

**MONKTON AND PRESTWICK****(St. Cuthbert).**

A western tower containing one bell, 43 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, hung for ringing and inscribed :—

RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1935./  
(a monogram of the initials C.F.J.)/PRESENTED BY HIS  
PARENTS / TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTH / OF /  
ROBERT GURNEY ANGUS / ON / 30TH SEPTEMBER,  
1934.

This bell is hung in ball bearings in a cast iron lowside frame supplied by Messrs. Gillett & Johnston, but the wheel and headstock, both of metal, belong to the earlier bell cast by John C. Wilson of Glasgow in 1878 at a cost of £98 17s 0d. The weight was 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. and it has now been increased to 15 $\frac{1}{4}$  cwt. with the note F sharp.

The present church was built in 1837, previous to that date the old church of St. Cuthbert at Monkton was used. This latter

(59) *The Palace of History. Catalogue of the Glasgow Exhibition 1911. Vol. II., p. 1102, No. 28.*

building is now in ruins but its old bell is preserved in the present church. The diameter is  $15\frac{3}{8}$  inches and the inscription reads:—

**Sanc** ☐ **te** ☐ **Cuthberti** ☐ **ora** ☐ **pro** ☐ **nobis** ☐ **i h** ☐

The bell and the inscription are both illustrated in Plate V (b) and Fig. L. The lettering is small black letter of the usual type except for the letter "r" which is more like an inverted figure "2." The bell is an excellent casting and bears above the inscription a border made up of the stop which appears between the words, repeated many times.

The bell was cracked before the old church was disused but remained in the bellcote of the ruins until the wind blew the bell down about 1890.<sup>60a</sup> As a result the bell is now badly cracked.

### PRESTWICK

(Old St. Nicholas).

This old church has been long in ruins, but its bell is still preserved and hangs in the turret of Prestwick Public School.

This bell, about 10 inches diameter, is inscribed:—

**MICHAEL · BVRGERHVYS · ME · FECIT · 1619.**

The lettering, which is plain Roman 11/16 inch high, is identical with that found on the bell at Roseneath, Dumbartonshire, cast by Jan Burgerhuys in 1610. There is no border on the Prestwick bell, but in shape and canon details the bells are very similar, both being cast at the Middelburg foundry in Holland. The lettering is illustrated as Fig. B.

A legend about this bell relates that it was stolen by sailors, and that after some years sailors from the locality happened to put into a Spanish or Portuguese port. There they were sure they heard the Prestwick bell ringing and traced the sound to a ship in the harbour. Later a boarding party retrieved the bell and brought it back to the old kirk.<sup>60b</sup>

When the church fell into disuse the bell was put away in the Town House, and it was due to a local poet that the bell was brought out from a useless seclusion amongst the lumber to be placed in the turret of the new school.

The legend about the bell being stolen is probably based on the journey to Holland to be recast in 1619; this journey would have been made entirely by sea.

(60a) Hewat, *A Little Scottish World*, p. 41, 256.  
(60b) Hewat, *A Little Scottish World*, p. 106.

### MUIRKIRK

(Old Church).

The present church, completed in 1813, was badly damaged by fire on the night of 13 January, 1949. The author had previously examined the bell, which was  $23\frac{3}{8}$  inches diameter and bore the inscription:—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW A.D. 1867.

As a result of the fire the bell is inaccessible, though still in position in the tower, and, as the bearings are seized up, the bell could not be rung to determine if the fire had caused any ill effects. The argent is of the handbell type, and the fittings are of cast iron.

In the Parish Council Office is preserved the old bell, about 16 inches diameter, inscribed:—

**KYLS · MUIRKIRKE · BELL · SOLI · DEO · GLORIA · /  
HUGH · EARLE · OF · LOUDOUN · R · M · FECIT · EDR. ·  
1717.**

The clapper of this bell is still in place. The founder was Robert Maxwell of Edinburgh. Muirkirk did not become a separate parish till 1631, and it would seem likely that the first bell came from Holland as evidenced by the words SOLI · DEO · GLORIA which were commonly used by Dutch founders but do not appear on any other of Robert Maxwell's bells.

This earlier bell was presented by John, the first Earl of Loudoun, and is reputed to have hung in a tree as also probably did the 1717 bell, which is a recast from the previous one.<sup>61</sup>

Newton-on-Ayr. See Ayr.

### OCHILTREE

(St. Conval).

A western turret containing one bell, about 30 inches diameter. The inscription as far as is legible from the ground reads:—

..... BELL ERECTED BY THE CHURCH ..... /  
JOHN C. WILSON & C<sup>o</sup> LT<sup>o</sup> FOUNDERS GLASGOW.....

(61) Baird, *Muirkirk in By-gone Days*, p. 40.

The masonry covers the remainder of the inscription but the bell is no earlier than 1894. Between 1894 and 1898 the Gorbals Bell Foundry was made a limited company: previous to that date the inscriptions on the bells from that foundry do not bear the letters Ltd.

**Prestwick. See Monkton and Prestwick.**

### **RICCARTON.**

In a tower with spire hangs a single bell,  $32\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, inscribed:—

RICCARTON CHURCH / OLD BELL CAST 1825 / NEW  
BELL CAST 1935 / BY / STEVEN & STRUTHERS  
FOUNDERS GLASGOW.

The bell is hung in cast iron fittings. The predecessor was inscribed:—

CAST IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1825, FOR THE  
PARISH OF RICCARTON, / AT THE EXPENSE OF THE  
HERITORS. SIR WM. CUNINGHAME OF CAPRING-  
TON, BART., PATRON. / THE REV. JOHN MOODY,  
MINISTER. THE POPULATION OF THE PARISH.  
2200 / STEPHEN MILLER & CO GLASGOW FECIT.

The weight of this older bell was 7 cwt. 2 qrs. 16 lb., and in 1935 it was unfortunately cracked. The present church bears the date 1823. The present bell weighs 7 cwt. 5 lb. with the note C natural.

### **ST. QUIVOX**

(St. Kevoca).

A western turret containing one bell, about 18 inches diameter, inscribed:—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO LT<sup>D</sup> FOUNDERS GLASGOW  
A.D. 1898.

### **SALTCOATS**

(The Town House).

In the tower with spire hangs one bell,  $28\frac{1}{8}$  inches diameter, which bears no inscription.

The crown terminates in a handbell type argent, and the sides of the bell are almost straight blending into the crown with a very small radius of curvature. The bell is the product of a brass foundry and is not more than 150 years old.

### **SORN.**

In an eastern open turret hangs one bell, about 20 inches diameter, inscribed:—

CAIRD & CO MAKERS GREENOCK 1826

The canons, if any, are recessed in the wooden headstock, which is fitted with a three-quarter wooden wheel. The church was built in 1658 and was repaired in 1826, as is shown by dated stones in the walls.

### **STAIR.**

An eastern turret containing one bell, about 18 inches diameter, inscribed:—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW.....

The masonry covers the date but the bell was cast between 1854 when John C. Wilson took over the foundry in the Gorbals from David Burges and 1875 when the firm was styled as John C. Wilson & Co.

### **STEVENSTON**

(The High Kirk, St. Monachus).

In a lofty tower with spire hangs one bell,  $34\frac{5}{8}$  inches diameter, inscribed:—

T. MEARS OF LONDON FOUNDER 1834.

This bell cast in the Whitechapel Foundry has been recently rehung with all metal fittings.

**STEWARTON**

(Laigh Kirk).

A western turret containing one bell, 26 inches diameter, inscribed :—

ERECTED JULY 1902 / JOHN C. WILSON & CO. LTD  
FOUNDERS. GLASGOW.

This bell is hung with metal fittings. An old tree which formerly grew in the churchyard was known as the bell tree so presumably some centuries ago a small bell hung in it.

In 1853 this church bought a bell weighing about 4 cwt. from the Laigh Kirk in Kilmarnock, as noted under that church. This bell was cast by Albert Danel Geli in 1697 but being cracked was recast in 1853, and the present bell would be the result of a further recasting.

**STRAITON**

(St. Cuthbert).

In a western bellcote, erected in 1758, hangs one small bell, about 10 inches diameter, which is without inscription. The bell has a handbell type argent and was obviously cast using a solid wooden pattern instead of the usual strickle. This being so, it is fairly certain that the bell was cast no earlier than the second half of the eighteenth century.

In 1901 a Northern tower was erected by Quintin Macadam, Esq., of Dalmorton, and the bell in this tower, 22½ inches diameter, is inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO. LTD FOUNDERS, GLASGOW,  
1901.

This bell, which is the only one now used, is hung in cast iron fittings and is swung only a few feet above the ringer with no floor in between.

**SYMINGTON.**

In an eastern turret hangs one bell, about 18 inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW 1865.

The bell, which has a poor tone, is rung from the outside.

**TARBOLTON.**

A tower with spire containing one bell, 26¼ inches diameter, inscribed :—

JOHN C. WILSON & CO. LTD FOUNDERS. GLASGOW.  
1908.

This bell is hung with all metal fittings including a counterbalance weight attached to the headstock. The weight is 4 cwt. 8 lb. and the note is F natural.

In 1908 the spire was struck by lightning with the result that the masonry fell and the bell was broken. The present church was rebuilt in 1821, and the bell from the old church was taken by the patron, the Earl of Eglinton, and was placed in the tower of Kilwinning Abbey and is still in use there.<sup>(62)</sup> This is doubtless the Whitechapel bell of 1782 now hanging in the Abbey tower at Kilwinning.

In the Masonic Hall are preserved the clapper and the external clock hammer of an earlier bell which was in use up till 1782. A mention of this bell is contained in the last verse of Burns's poem "Death and Dr. Hornbook," which is :—

But just as he began to tell,  
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell  
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,  
Which raised us baith :  
I took the way that pleased mysel',  
And sae did Death.

The clapper shows signs of having been in use for some time, it is 14½ inches long including the flight. The head is flat and has two elongated holes in it. After having become badly worn on two sides of the ball, the head has been twisted through a right angle so that the ball could be reused. It will be noted that a clapper of this size could not have been used with the Whitechapel bell cast in 1782, which is 23½ inches diameter at the mouth and therefore has a much larger clapper.

(62) Steven, Helen J., *Tarbolton. Its History and Associations*, p. 16.

# WEST KILBRIDE

(The Barony Church, St. Bridget).

In a tower with spire hangs one bell, 30½ inches diameter, inscribed :—

ERECTED AT WEST KILBRIDE PARISH CHURCH,  
A.D. 1872./REV. ALEXANDER KING, MINISTER./JOHN  
C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW.

The church was rebuilt in this year. An earlier bell was cast by Caird & Co., of Greenock in 1833 at a cost of £7 1s 0d from the metal of the previous one, which had been cracked.<sup>63</sup> The present bell weighs 5 cwt. 3 qrs. 17 lb.

# WEST KILBRIDE

(Portencross Castle).

Many of the Low Countries' bellfounders were gunfounders as well, the guns being cast in a similar metal. With this in mind the author visited Portencross Castle to see a cannon which was recovered from the sea in 1740, and is reputed to have formed part of the armament of the galleon of the Spanish Armada which was sunk nearby in 1588.<sup>64</sup> This cannon is of cast iron and is 8 feet 6 inches overall and would have had a bore of about 4 inches when in use. The corrosion caused by the sea and the air has greatly altered its surface but a coat of arms near the powder hole is quite plainly visible but not recognisable. There is no trace of any lettering.

Up till 1837 the marks are said to have been identifiable as the Spanish Crown and Coat of Arms.<sup>65</sup> This iron cannon was one of five recovered together with a brass cannon inscribed "Richard and John Philips, brethern, made this piece, anno 1584," with a rose between the initials E.R. There can be no doubt of the nationality of this brass cannon as the inscription is in English and Queen Elizabeth was on the English throne at the time.

(63) Lamb, *Annals of an Ayrshire Parish—West Kilbride*, p. 152.

(64) Paterson, *History of the County of Ayr and Ayrshire Families*, Vol. II., p. 126.

(65) Lamb, *Annals of an Ayrshire Parish*, p. 86.

# A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF AYRSHIRE BELLS.

The bells examined in this survey may be classified in several ways. As regards possession the distribution is :—

The Established Church ...	...	...	...	87
The Episcopal Church ...	...	...	...	1
In Municipal possession ...	...	...	...	15
In Private possession ...	...	...	...	1
Old Church Bells in use in Schools	...	...	...	2
				106

As regards age and place of origin the classification is :—

Mediaeval (Dundonald, Monkton)	...	...	...	2
Dutch Renaissance (Ayr, 2, Old Cumnock, Dalry, Kilmaurs, Kirkoswald, Prestwick)	...	...	...	7
Flemish (Cessnock Castle, Galston)	...	...	...	1
French (Ayr) ...	...	...	...	1
Irish (Maybole)	...	...	...	1
English { 18th century ...	...	...	...	5
{ Modern ...	...	...	...	30
Scottish { 17th century ...	...	...	...	8
{ 18th century ...	...	...	...	11
{ Modern ...	...	...	...	40
				106

There are in the County a chime of 10 bells (Largs), a chime of 8 tubular bells (Ayr), a clock chime of 5 bells (Largs), and eight collections of two bells.

# LATE FIFTEEN CENTURY BELLS.

The two remaining pre-Reformation church bells that formerly hung in Ayrshire churches are at Monkton and in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in Edinburgh to which the bell has gone from Dundonald. Both would appear to be of the same period, that is 1495.

Let us consider the Monkton bell first. As will be seen from the photograph, Plate V. (b), and inscription, Fig. L., the bell has been well cast by a founder whose initials are I. H. The author has not

been able to locate any other bells bearing these initials or even with the same type of lettering. Very little is known about the mediaeval bell founders in Scotland. It was usual elsewhere for the trade to be combined with that of gunfounding, but Scotland seems to have brought craftsmen in this trade over from the Continent right up till 1512, when Robert Borthwick held the position of "gunnar, master meltar of the kingis gunnis."<sup>66</sup> This founder also did work on casting church bells and some products of his work still hang in the tower of Kirkwall Cathedral.

With regard to the Dundonald bell, now in Edinburgh, we are on safer ground. This bell has long been known to those interested in ancient church bells, and forms one of a group of bells all bearing the same mark, Xt, on the waist. The large bell in the tower of St. Michael's, Linlithgow, was cast by the same founder and bears the Royal Arms of Scotland and the Seal of the Burgh. The inscription is in black letter all except four letters which are of the Lombardic type.<sup>67</sup>

The date of this bell, which is contained in the inscription, has long been taken to be 1490, but an item from the Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland reads:—

1496. Item (the xij day of Junii), to the bell in Linlithquho. IXs.<sup>68</sup>

From this entry it would seem probable that the bell was not cast before 1496 and on examining the inscription it will be seen that the word Seno would seem to be superfluous. May it not be that this word has become displaced and really forms part of the date, being the numeral six. The full inscription is:—

× LYnlithqu S me villa S fecit S vocor S alma S mariaTum  
S iacobi S quarti S tempore S magnifici Seno millenoquad-  
ringeno S nonageno.

On the waist appears the Royal Arms, the Seal of the Burgh and the mark Xt. This mark also appears on the bell at Uphall, West Lothian, bearing the date 1503. Other bells which may have been cast by the same founder are at Aberdour, Fife, formerly at Dalgety, Fowlis Easter, Angus, dated 1508, and St. Giles', Elgin, dated 1502.

(66) *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Edited by T. Dickson, Introduction, p. CCXVIII.

(67) *Eeles. Proc. Soc. of Antiq. of Scot.*, Vol. 47, p. 66 ff.

(68) *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Vol. I., p. 278.

## A FLEMISH BELL.

In the tower of Cessnock Castle, Galston, hangs a bell, which is inscribed:—

PEETER VANDEN GHEIN HEFT MI GHEGOTEN INT  
IAER MDLXXXXVI.

This may be translated as:—Peter van den Ghein cast me in the year 1596. The bell has unfortunately suffered considerable corrosion so that much of the fine ornamental borders have been worn down.

The first bellfounder of this family was Willem van den Ghein who worked at Mechlin or Malines in Belgium. He died in 1533 and was succeeded by Peter I. who cast bells for Whalley, Lancashire, 1535, and the Hall Bell at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in 1548.<sup>69</sup> There is a possibility that he also cast the bell over the cloister roof at St. Giles' Hospital, Norwich, but this bell does not bear his name.<sup>70</sup> Peter I. died in 1561, being predeceased by another founder Jan I. who died about 1543.

The foundry was then carried on by Peter II. who cast a handbell for Rye Corporation, Sussex, in 1565, and a mortar, dated 1580, which in 1874 was at Beccles, Suffolk.<sup>71</sup> Jan II. also worked in the foundry and died in July, 1573. Peter II. died in January, 1589, and was succeeded by Peter III., who was born in 1553 and died in 1618.

Peter III. cast the bell at Galston, 1596, a bell at Kinellar, Aberdeenshire, in 1612, one at Inverarity in 1614, and another at Crail, Fife, in the same year. During this period Jan III. cast a bell for Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire, 1611, which has now been recast.

The Whithorn Town Bell was cast by Peter van den Ghein V. in 1708.

The foundry was kept working right up till a few years ago when, with the death of Felix Van Aerschoot in Leuven, the foundry was discontinued.<sup>72</sup> This is the end of the Van den Ghein—Van Aerschoot lineage, which has been founding for over four hundred years.

(69) Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, p. 211.

(70) L'Estrange, *The Church Bells of Norfolk*, p. 85.

(71) *ibid.* p. 86.

(72) Price, *Campanology, Europe 1945-47*, p. 12.

### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DUTCH BELLS.

The author is greatly indebted to Mijneer Jan Arts of Tilburg for supplying him with much of the following information about these Dutch founders.

The bells in Ayrshire which come under this heading are seven in number, being cast in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Middelburg. It is proposed to treat each foundry separately.

#### THE AMSTERDAM FOUNDRIES.

Several founders from this City sent their work to Scotland. In Ayrshire the two bells at Dalry and at the Wallace Tower, Ayr, were cast by Francois Hemony in 1661. This founder was probably the greatest carillon builder that the world has ever known. He was born at Levecourt in the Department of Haute-Marne in 1609, was married about 1640 to Maria Michelin, and in 1642 went with his brother Pierre to Zutphen in Holland. He went to Amsterdam in 1657, and it was there that he did the fine work which has made his name so famous on the Continent. His brother Pierre moved to Amsterdam in 1664 to help him with his work as he could not manage it unassisted.

Francois died in Amsterdam on 19th May, 1667, and was buried five days later in the choir of the Nieuwe-Kerk in that City. His brother Pierre died in Amsterdam on 17th February, 1680, and was buried next to him.

Due to the ravages of war there are now only about 30 Hemony carillons in existence.<sup>73</sup> So far, these two bells in Ayrshire are the only Hemony bells found in the British Isles.

Another foundry working in Amsterdam at this period was that owned by the family of Koster. Gerrit Koster I. was appointed master founder to the City of Amsterdam in 1606, but he seems to have cast no bells for Scotland. He was succeeded by his son Assuerus, born 1604, who cast a cannon which is now at Dunstaffnage Castle, near Oban. He died in 1661 and was buried in the Nieuwe-Kerk in Amsterdam. His eldest son, Gerrit II., succeeded him, the latter was born in 1627 and cast three bells for Scotland, all dated 1663, at Kirkintilloch, Dumbartonshire, the People's Palace Museum, Glasgow, and Stoneykirk in Wigtownshire.

(73) Price, *Campanology, Europe*, 1945-47, p. 3.

The Kirkwall Cathedral tenor was recast in 1682 by Claudius Fremy who was born in 1627 and died in 1699. His epitaph in the Nieuwe-Kerk, Amsterdam, reads :—" Claudius Fremy, husband of Catarina Weeve, bell and gun founder."

A bell at Tyrie in Aberdeenshire was cast by Pieter Seest in 1773. This founder may have been the second of that name as two bells in Holland bearing this name appear to be dated 1715 and 1716. In the main group of 28 bells the dates are from 1756 to 1782; in 1770 this founder became the Director of the Amsterdam City Gunfoundry and Bellfoundry.

#### THE MIDDELBURG FOUNDRY.

This foundry exported more bells to Scotland than any other Continental firm. The author has a list, probably by no means complete, of 35 bells cast by the family of Burgerhuys at Middelburg.

The originator of the foundry was Jan Burgerhuys I., who seems to have been initially in the service of the City bellfounder of Middelburg with whom he had become acquainted at Aix-la-Chapelle. He cast a bell for Melrose Abbey in 1608, and six others in Scotland during the years 1609-1611.

A son, Evert Burgerhuys, of whom only documentary evidence exists in Holland, cast a bell now in Whithorn Priory in 1610. On the death of Jan I. in 1617 the foundry passed to another son, Michael Burgerhuys who cast three bells for Ayrshire, namely Kilmaurs 1618, Prestwick 1619, and Ayr 1625. He was born in Aix-la-Chapelle before 1585, and died in Middelburg in 1651. Twenty-three of his bells have so far been found in Scotland.

Jan II. was most probably the son of Michael Burgerhuys. His business does not seem to have flourished nearly as well as his father's, perhaps because of the disturbed times; only five of his bells are known to exist in Scotland.

#### THE ROTTERDAM FOUNDRIES.

In Ayrshire there are two bells which were cast in Rotterdam, they are Old Cumnock, 1697, and Kirkoswald, 1677. The former bears the name of the founder, Quirinus de Visscher, about whom little is known: his bells are rare in Holland, and number only three in Scotland, these being at Kirkcudbright, 1724, and Kells in the same area, 1722. All his bells are small but they have a

fine tone, the one at Old Cumnock being an excellent casting as well. The borders used on this bell are of a really fine design, the hunting scene, Plate II (a) is one of the best the author has yet seen.

The Kirkoswald bell bears a border which appears on the Old Cumnock bell so that there must be some connection between the founders. Both bells are very similar in appearance and positioning of the borders. The lettering is different on each, Figs. C and P., and on the later bell the letter U is used.

For Quirinus de Visscher to be casting bells in 1677 and in 1724 gives him a working life of at least 47 years, which is longer than one would usually expect in that period. However, it is thought that he had neither predecessor nor successor, so the question of the authorship of the Kirkoswald bell must remain open.

There were, however, other founders working in Rotterdam during this period. The Ouderogge family cast at least eight bells for Scotland ranging from 1637 to 1660, being the work of Cornelis Ouderogge who died in June 1672. He was succeeded by his son Jan II., who cast a very fine cannon, now in the Tower of London, dated 1676.

Pieter Ostens cast two bells in Holland in 1668 and 1672, and his Scottish list so far numbers six, ranging from 1664 at Banchory Ternan, Kincardineshire, to 1684 at Rothiemay, Banffshire. A photograph of one of his bells is illustrated elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> The lettering is different from that on the Kirkoswald bell.

### A FRENCH BELL.

In the Wallace Tower, Ayr, is a bell whose corroded inscription reads :—

CE DIT A—FVS ICY MISE POVR SERVIR EN CE  
..... MIL VCC XXXIX.

Parts of the inscription are completely gone, but that which remains seems to suggest a translation like "This says that — put me here to serve in this ..... 1639." In arriving at the date the century is a bit doubtful but the shape of the bell and the style of lettering would not allow a date of 1739 so it is to be presumed that the symbols VC replace the more usual D.

(74) Eeles, *Proc. Soc. of Antiq. of Scot.*, Vol. 47, p. 72.

French bells are very rare in Scotland. The only reference that the author has been able to find relating to a bell with an inscription in French is the one in Burntisland Town House.<sup>75</sup> This bell was cast in 1595 and then recast in 1677. The first inscription was in French, and this was in part reproduced on the present bell with a further sentence in Flemish.

### EDINBURGH FOUNDERS.

The earliest post-Reformation founder in Edinburgh that there is any information about, is George Hog, who cast a bell for Closeburn, Dumfriesshire, in 1606. On this bell he gives his address as "APVD POTTERRAW."<sup>76</sup> Some years later a Charles Hog cast bells for Killallan, Renfrewshire, 1618, and Burnhouse, Midlothian, 1613. There was also a Robert Hog who was working at Stirling from about 1632 to 1639.

The next founder that has left bells that have been examined, was James Monteith. This founder cast three bells for Ayrshire: Auchinleck 1641, Coylton 1647, and Alloway, the Old Haunted Kirk, 1657. In addition there are others at North Berwick, 1642; Ewes, Dumfriesshire, 1652; Kennoway, 1653; and a cannon now preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh dated 1642. The standard of casting of his bells is not nearly as high as that of the Continental founders of the same period, but the lettering and borders are not copied from bells by other founders; some of his successors used Dutch borders.

There is another gap before the next Edinburgh founder of any repute starts work. John Meikle cast the disused bell at Galston in 1696, and his bells range from 1686 when he recast the large bell in St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews, to 1704 when he cast a bell for Dalton, Dumfriesshire. He is thought to have died in that year and to have been succeeded by his assistant Robert Maxwell. In the years 1698 and 1699 Meikle cast a carillon of 23 bells for the church of St. Giles, Edinburgh.<sup>77</sup> The bells have now been removed from the steeple and have been dispersed. It is reported in the reference given that the notes were impure. However, this was the first and so far the only carillon to have been cast in Scotland; all the others were imported from the Continent in the early times, and in recent years from England.

(75) *Proc. Soc. of Antiq. of Scot.*, Vol. 49., p. 339 ff.

(76) *Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Report on Dumfriesshire*

(77) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. of Scot.*, 1883-4. p. 94 and Vol. III. p. 196.

With regard to Robert Maxwell a degree of uncertainty remains. A number of bells bear his name in full, these are to be found at Sprouston 1703, Temple 1705, Peebles 1714, Dunblane Cathedral 1723, St. Andrews 1724, Golspie 1728, and St. Giles', Edinburgh, 1728. Another set of bells just bear the initials R.M. and are inscribed in lettering used by John Meikle on the bell at Galston. This latter group comprise Kilmarnock Town Bell, 1711, Bonhill 1712, Muirkirk 1717, Polwarth 1717, Carsphairn 1723, Sanquhar 1725, Greenlaw, Second bell, 1726, Peterhead Museum 1728, Logie Buchan 1728, Brechin Town Steeple 1728, Fenwick 1730, and Beith 1734. On the last named bells the firm is styled "R.M. & COMPY."

There can be no doubt due to the similarity of the lettering that R.M. worked in the same foundry as had John Meikle earlier, and as the latter is not known to have had any founding sons then it is to be presumed that Robert Maxwell cast both groups in the Castlehill Foundry, Edinburgh.

The next founder seems to have been a William Ormiston, who with a founder called Cunningham cast bells for New Luce in 1729, and Lanark, 1740. In partnership with Henderson he cast a bell for Cupar Fife in 1747, and alone cast one for Carmyllie in 1748.

John Milne succeeded Ormiston, and cast among others the bell at Kilbirnie 1753. This latter has a very poor tone and is tub like.

George Watt who was working in St. Ninian's Row, Edinburgh, may or may not have had any connection with the previous founders. His lettering is certainly different and better designed (Fig. K.) but he uses no ornamental borders. The author has found three of his bells at Culross 1785, St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh 1791, and Loudoun Old, Newmilns 1795.

### ALBERT DANIEL GELI.

This founder was a Frenchman, this being stated on the only remaining bell in Ayrshire that he cast. This bell, now preserved in the Council Chamber in Maybole Town Hall, is inscribed in a very rough way, all the N's and S's being reversed; however, the founder has carefully made a circumflex above the first letter of his surname.

The Maybole bell is dated 1696, and one year later Geli was working at Irvine and it was there that he cast a bell for the Laigh Kirk in Kilmarnock as mentioned under that parish. This bell

has not survived though the metal would appear to be in the bell in the Laigh Kirk at Stewarton, recast by John C. Wilson & Co., Ltd., of Glasgow in 1902.

By 1702 Geli, or as he now styles himself Albertus Gely, had moved up to Aberdeen and had succeeded Patrick Kilgour as owner of the foundry at the head of Baillie Forsyth's Close.<sup>78</sup> A bell at Portlethen, Kincardineshire, 13½ inches diameter, is inscribed:—

§ MR ALEXANDER || THOMSON || ALBERTUS || GELY ||  
ME || FECIT || ABD || ANNO || DOM † MDCCII.

§ Founder's mark.

|| Ornamental stop.

† Ornamental stop blundered.

This bell is cracked, but Dr. Eeles mentions that the lettering and mouldings are well cast, the latter appearing above and below the inscription and portions used to separate the words. The foundry mark is a wheat sheaf placed horizontally. This bell then shows the founder in a better light than the Maybole one, which may well have been cast when he had only just arrived in the country and had not had time to design lettering and borders with any artistic qualities. His latest date found so far is 1713.

### BELLS BY UNKNOWN FOUNDERS.

The oldest bell to come under this heading is that in the steeple of Irvine Town Hall, dated 1637. The lettering is rough (Fig. E) and the tone is poor. The author has been unable to find any other bells inscribed in lettering of the same type so that it is probable that a local foundry cast it. As noted under the heading of municipal bells in Ayr, a record in the Burgh Accounts for 1615-16 show that there was a foundry in Irvine at that time and that a bell was cast there for one of the town steeples in Ayr.

The small handbell preserved in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock inscribed:—KILMARNOK 1639 (Fig. F), bears no founder's name or mark and as the material is brass it is probable that the maker never cast large bells.

In Ayr Town Hall the smaller bell, dated 1700, bears the name Dalmahey and so far no founder with this name has been located. At Mauchline there is a bell inscribed:—FOR MACHLINE 1742. The lettering is plain but well cast and the bell has the appearance of being the work of some experienced founder, but here again there is no foundry mark.

(78) Eeles. *The Church Bells of Kincardineshire*. p. 16, 23.

### THE WHITECHAPEL FOUNDRY.

This foundry originated in London a few years before 1570 and has been working ever since. The second owner, Robert Mot, cast two bells for Westminster Abbey, one in 1583 and the other in 1598, both are still in use.

This firm has done and is still doing some very fine work, the standard has always been high and as a result their bells are found all over the world. In Britain they have cast "Big Ben" 13 tons 11 cwt., the Bow Bells, which are still used as an interval signal by the B.B.C., though the actual bells were destroyed in the late War, and in more recent times they cast the new ring of bells for Liverpool Cathedral, which when hung, will form the heaviest ring of bells in the world, with a tenor of 82 cwt.

In Scotland the author recently discovered a bell cast originally for the Chapel Royal, Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, but now in the Episcopal Church of St. Paul, York Place, Edinburgh, which bears an inscription showing that it was cast at this foundry in 1633.

The firm cast the first ring of eight bells to be hung in Scotland. These are in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, but they can now only be chimed due to structural weakness in the masonry not permitting the bells to be swung. Other rings of bells cast by the firm are at Dunkeld Cathedral, 6 bells, cast 1814; Old Steeple, Dundee, 8 bells, cast in 1872, except the tenor, dated 1819; St. Paul's Cathedral, Dundee, 8 bells, cast in 1872; and St. James' Episcopal Church, Leith, 8 bells, cast in 1866.

A full list of the Whitechapel founders is given elsewhere.<sup>79</sup>

The following list gives the working dates and details of bells cast for Ayrshire by the more recent founders.

*Chapman and Mears*, 1781-1784. Kilwinning, smaller bell, 1782.

*William Mears*, 1784-1787.

*William and Thomas Mears*, 1787-1791.

*Thomas Mears I.*, 1791-1805. Newton-on-Ayr, 2 bells, 1795; Dunlop, disused bell, 1792.

*Thomas Mears and Son*, 1805-1810. Beith Parish Church, 1809, now recast.

(79) Walters. *The Church Bells of England*. p. 216 ff.

*Thomas Mears II.*, 1810-1844. Largs, 1814; Beith, Townhouse, 1823; Coylton, 1830; Stevenston, 1834; Dunlop, 1837.

*Charles and George Mears*, 1844-1861. Dalmellington, 1846; Colmonell, 1848; Kilmarnock, Old High Kirk, 1852; Kilmarnock, Laigh Kirk, 1853, 12 cwt., now recast.

*George Mears and Co.*, 1861-1865.

*Mears and Stainbank*, 1865 to present day. Ayr Town Hall, 1897, 22 cwt.

Other bells in the county from this foundry, not examined during this survey, are at:—Ardrossan, 1844, 7 cwt. Irvine, 1845, 10 cwt. Largs, 1886, 14 cwt. Stewarton, 1855, 10 cwt.

### THE CROYDON FOUNDRY.

The originator of the firm of Gillett & Johnston, Ltd., was William Gillett, who was a clockmaker in Hadlow, Kent. He moved to Clerkenwell and thence to the present site in Croydon in 1844. Later Mr. Charles Bland joined the business and it became known as Gillett & Bland. In 1877 Mr. Arthur A. Johnston joined the firm and the title was changed to Gillett, Bland & Co., then to Gillett & Co., and finally to Gillett & Johnston. It was shortly after 1877 that the firm started to cast church bells and since then the firm have sent their products far and wide.<sup>80</sup>

One of their greatest works is the carillon in the tower of Riverside Drive Church, New York, which is the largest in the world and contains a bourdon bell weighing 18½ tons.

For Scotland they have cast the carillon of 23 bells in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick, Dumbarton, and chimes in Paisley Town Hall, Clydebank Town Hall, Old Kilpatrick Parish Church, and St. George's Church, Greenock.

For Ayrshire the firm cast the chime of ten bells in the Clark Memorial Church, Largs, in 1891, tenor 22 cwt, and the single bell in the church of St. Cuthbert, Prestwick, 15½ cwt., in 1935.

(80) Sharpe. *The Church Bells of Radnorshire*. p. 81.

## THE LOUGHBOROUGH FOUNDRY.

The foundry of Messrs. John Taylor & Co., has produced some of the finest bells. They cast Great Paul,  $16\frac{3}{4}$  tons, in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, which is the largest bell in Great Britain, and the rings of bells in St. Paul's Cathedral, York Minster, and Worcester Cathedral, "Great George" for the new Liverpool Cathedral, and "Grandison" of Exeter Cathedral.

For Scotland they cast the second largest bell in the country, the 57 cwt. hour bell in the tower of Glasgow University, and the rings of bells at St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, 10 bells, tenor  $41\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.; All Saints, Inveraray, 10 bells, tenor  $41\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.; St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, 8 bells, tenor 21 cwt.; St. John's Episcopal Church, Alloa, 8 bells,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.; St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, 10 bells, tenor  $32\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.; and St. James's, Paisley, 8 bells,  $22\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.

For Ayrshire they cast the bell in Ballantrae Parish Church 1891, one for Annbank 1902, 12 cwt., and another for Patna 1903, 8 cwt.

The firm can trace its history back at least to the year 1710 when John Eayre and his nephew Thomas started bellfounding in addition to their main business of clockmaking. At that time the foundry was at Kettering and it latterly was carried on at St. Neots, Huntingdonshire, Leicester, and Oxford. A branch establishment was also set up in Devon at one time but the foundry has been situated in Loughborough since 1840 and has traded under the name of John Taylor & Co., since 1859.<sup>(81)</sup>

## THE GORBALS FOUNDRY.

The first owner of this foundry was David Burges, who in 1834 was living at 38 Shuttle Street, Glasgow.<sup>(82)</sup> Previously, on March 14th, 1833, he had obtained his Burgess' Ticket from the Town Council and he was on June 11th, 1833, made a member of the Incorporation of Hammermen of Glasgow after having made two brass bushes to show his workmanship.<sup>(83)</sup>

About a year later he moved the foundry to the Head of Portugal Street in the Gorbals, and there it remained until the business was closed down about 1928.

(81) Sharpe. *The Church Bells of Radnorshire*. p. 82.

(82) *Glasgow Post Office Directory*. 1834.

(83) Lumsden and Aitken. *The Incorporation of Hammermen of Glasgow*. p. 814.

In 1854 David Burges retired, and the foundry was operated by John C. Wilson. His name alone appears on bells up to about 1874, when the firm was styled John C. Wilson & Co., and after about 22 years the firm was made a limited company. The last owner was William Kennedy, though his name never appears on the bells from this foundry.

All the bells produced are exactly as cast, and they have not been tuned by turning off portions of the inside of the bell in a vertical lathe; as a result some bells have good musical properties and some have bad. None could compete with the present scientifically tuned bells produced by the English foundries.

As a result the firm produced few chimes of bells; these are to be found at Wemyss Bay, 8 bells; Cardross, 5 bells; Lamlash, 8 bells; and Coatbridge Wesleyan Chapel, 6 bells. The bells in the Glasgow Tolbooth steeple, 16 in number, were recast by the firm in 1881.

In Ayrshire the number of the firm's bells is considerable, being more than from any other single foundry. The heaviest bell in Ayrshire, in Hurlford Parish Church, was cast in Glasgow in 1875 and weighs  $25\frac{1}{2}$  cwt.

This survey covers some 24 bells from this foundry all cast later than 1865, and due to the large number it is not proposed to enumerate them here. The bell in St. Cuthbert's, Prestwick, was originally cast by the firm in 1878 but was subsequently recast.

Most of the bells are fitted with cast-iron headstocks and wheels, and the bearings are sometimes of the non-lubricated type with the gudgeon pin resting between two overlapping rollers which rotate when the bell swings. The goodwill and plant of this firm were acquired by Messrs. Steven & Struthers, Ltd., of Kelvinhaugh, Glasgow.

## BRASS FOUNDRY BELLS.

There are a number of bells in the county which though bearing no inscription have a marked resemblance to one another. One of this group does bear an incised inscription and the date 1815, and others may be dated approximately by records.

This group comprises bells at Straiton, Saltcoats Town Hall, Ardrossan Parish Church, Dreghorn, Dundonald, Beith High Kirk, Dailly, and Barr. All except the last named have handbell type argents as illustrated in Fig. A (ii), and have no moulding wires at the inscription band position. All have an appearance just like ship's bells and the author considers that they were cast in a foundry,

probably in the Ardrossan area, which did this type of brass founding for ships.

The Barr bell is different from the rest in that it has both canons and moulding wires by the inscription band, and may not have been cast at the same foundry as the others. Its peculiar long-waisted shape, however, shows that it was cast at a foundry not well versed in the design of bells for good tonal qualities.

The Straiton bell is probably the earliest and easily the smallest; the gable which bears it being dated 1758. The Ardrossan Parish Church bell, in the old disused church, bears a raised inscription which is only partially legible from the ground, but the turret in which it hangs was not erected before 1804. The Dundonald bell was definitely erected in the tower in the week 7-14 March, 1841.

All the bells with a handbell type argent were cast in moulds made using a solid pattern of the bell; whereas the usual process is to use a strickle or sweep, pivoted about a vertical axis, which has been shaped to be the section of the desired bell.

### MISCELLANEOUS FOUNDRIES.

*Blyth, Colin, Saltmarket, Glasgow.* Craigie 1780.

*Warner, J. of London, 1788-1802. John & Sons, c1853-c1920.<sup>84</sup>*  
Irvine, 1797.

*Caird & Co. of Greenock.* Sorn 1826. West Kilbride 1833, now recast.

*Miller, Stephen & Co., Saracens Lane, Gallowgate, Glasgow.* Girvan Town Bell 1826. Riccarton 1825, now recast.

*Hendrie, James of Kilwinning.* New Cumnock 1859. Kilwinning Abbey, large bell, 1864, now recast.

*Naylor, Vickers & Co. of Sheffield, 1857-1874.<sup>85</sup>* Kilmarnock, Grange Church, a steel bell, the largest in the County but not the heaviest, cast 1867.

*Murphy, John of Dublin.<sup>86</sup>* Maybole 1895.

*Harrington, Latham & Co., Coventry.<sup>87</sup>* A chime of eight tubular bells at Trinity Church, Ayr.

*Steven & Struthers of Glasgow.* Riccarton 1935.

(84) Walters. *The Church Bells of England.* p. 219.

(85) Sharpe. *The Church Bells of Radnorshire.* p. 80.

(86) Eeles. *The Church Bells of Kincardineshire.* p. 48.

(87) *ibid.* p. 50.