

THE CHURCH AND OTHER BELLS OF THE STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT

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INTRODUCTION

ON his death Dr F. C. Eeles left a number of notebooks recording details of Scottish bells he had seen in the period 1890 to 1915. That covering bells in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright was about half complete, and so the present writer in the summers of 1961 and 1963 visited the bells Dr Eeles had recorded and the others now remaining which he had not seen.

This article is intended to be a companion to those surveys already published on bells in other Scottish counties which have appeared from time to time in the *Proceedings*. Wherever possible repetition of information is avoided.

DISCUSSION

The earliest bell, or rather part of a bell, now remaining is the bronze covering recovered from a moss at Monybuie in the parish of Balmaclellan, and now in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh (Pl. XIX, 2). Though a number of early Celtic bells still remain, this bronze covering is quite unlike any others the writer has examined, as there is so much doubt about what material was used for the core. It does not seem to have been iron, but the other alternative, leather, would not have stood up satisfactorily to the high temperature of molten bronze without some special treatment. The date would seem to be fifth century, or shortly thereafter.

Next in point of age is the really fine late fourteenth-century bell at Anwoth (Pls. XIX, 1 and XX, 1). Bells of this date are rare in Scotland; the others are at Lochmaben, treble about 1300, tenor about 1350, Kirkwall Cathedral Skellat bell, and a disused bell of about 7 cwt. at St John's Church, Perth. The marks and lettering on the Anwoth bell are not known to occur elsewhere and the bell unfortunately gives no clue as to who the founder was or where he worked.

The bell in the ruins at Parton (Pl. XXI, 3) is uninscribed. From its shape and other details it would seem to date from the sixteenth century, but here again there is no hint as to who the founder was.

By the seventeenth century, we get on to surer ground; the bell at Crossmichael bears the name of Jan Burgerhuys I of Middelburg in Holland and the date 1611, and the tenor bell in the Kirkcudbright Tolbooth bears the name of his son, Michael, and the date 1646. This family cast over 60 bells for Scotland in the period 1601 to 1679, and one, Old Lowrie, of St Nicholas, Aberdeen, cast 1634, weighed about a ton. Their history is given elsewhere.¹

The Tongland bell now in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright, bears the date 1633 and the initials LT (Pl. XXI, 2). This is a rough bell, certainly not up to the fine

¹ *PSAS*, LXXXII (1947-8), 175.

standard of the Dutch founders of the period, and though probably a local product the initials have not been linked with any known Scottish founder of the period.

In the eighteenth century the Stewartry was obtaining bells from England and Holland, and from Scottish founders. Most from England came from the White-chapel Foundry, London, and include Balmaghie, 1794, and Urr, 1795. The bell at Borgue was cast in 1712 by John Goldsmith of Redgrave, Suffolk. His bells are comparatively rare and are otherwise only found in Norfolk and Suffolk; this suggests that this bell was originally cast for a church in this area and came to Borgue second-hand. In support of this one can say that the soundbow has been chipped internally to get the strike note in tune with others, yet Borgue seems never to have had more than one bell. The Dalry bell of 1754 bears the style of lettering used by Luke Ashton of Wigan on the Penninghame, Wigtownshire, bell cast in 1750. However Luke Ashton is thought to have retired about 1751¹ and Ralph Ashton II to have continued founding at Wigan till about 1756, so this Dalry bell is likely to be his. So far as is known these are the only two bells in Scotland from the Wigan foundry.

At Gatehouse of Fleet in the present Girthon Church is preserved a most peculiar bell cast by Samuel Nickolls of Bristol in 1733. Anyway no known bells by him remain in England, and the Bristol City Archivist, who has kindly searched the city's records, has not found any trace of him.

The disused bell at Terregles was cast in 1770 by Thomas Rudhall of Gloucester. This very famous bell-founding family was active from 1684 to 1830 and is credited with having cast 4521 church bells. These went all over England, to Ireland, Wales, and even to Boston, Mass.² However, so far as is known, the Terregles bell is their only product in Scotland.

Quirin de Visser, who was founding in Rotterdam, cast two bells for the Stewartry. The Kells bell is dated 1722, and the former treble from the Kirkcudbright Tolbooth, now in the Stewartry Museum, was cast in 1724. The former is particularly well cast but is in too small a bell chamber to get a photograph; the latter (Pl. XXI, 1) is not quite up to this high standard. Another bell by him is in the Public School, Old Cumnock, Ayrshire, dated 1697,³ and there used to be another at Banff dated 1718.

The disused Carsphairn bell (Pl. XIX, 3) was cast by Robert Maxwell at the Edinburgh Foundry in 1723. His work is quite numerous in other counties.⁴ In 1711 he cast two bells for the Town House at New Galloway, and though both bells have been recast, it is commendable that his inscriptions have been reproduced on the later bells.

The Minnigaff bell, dated 1793, was cast for the Newton Douglas Cotton Works, most probably by George Watt of Edinburgh.⁵

Other eighteenth-century bells are at Kirkbean (1728), Lochrutton (1764), Rerrick (1798), and Tarff (about 1750). These are all probably locally cast by four different founders.

¹ Cheetham, *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, XLV, 112.

² Ellacombe, *The Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, Appendix B.

³ Clouston, *Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Collections*, second series, vol. 1, 219.

⁴ *PSAS*, LXXXIV (1949-50), 102.

⁵ Clouston, *Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Collections*, second series, vol. 1, 254.

Most of the bells dating from the nineteenth century onwards bearing founders' names have come from Glasgow. Stephen Miller and Co. recast the smaller bell in the New Galloway Town House in 1812; David Burges of the Gorbals Bell Foundry¹ cast the bells at the Rutherford Hall, Gatehouse of Fleet (1841), and Kirkpatrick Durham (1850); his successor, John C. Wilson, cast bells for Kelton (1864), Bargrennan (1867), Dalbeattie Town Steeple (1868), New Galloway Town House (1872) Kirkcudbright St Mary (1874), New Abbey (1876), Kirkgunzeon (1882), Carsphairn (1886), Gatehouse of Fleet, Girthon Church (1896).

From English foundries, John Warner and Sons cast the three bells at Southwick (1891), and possibly the single bell at Beeswing (1863). Gillett and Co. of Croydon cast the Troqueer bell in 1887. Messrs John Taylor and Co. of Loughborough² cast the largest bell noted in this survey, that at St Andrew's Church, Castle Douglas, dated 1890 and weighing $15\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. Others from this foundry are at Auchencairn (1902), Castle Douglas Town Steeple (1934), and Twynholm.

The Whitechapel Foundry, London,³ now Messrs Mears and Stainbank, cast bells for Kirkmabreck (1834), Kirkcudbright, St Cuthbert (1838), Kirkcudbright Tolbooth (1841), Dalbeattie, Craignar Church (1842), Parton (1901), and Castle Douglas Town Steeple (1934), being a recast of the bell they cast in 1795.

From the Dublin Foundry of John Murphy are two bells at Dalbeattie: Park Church (1853) and the R.C. Church of St Peter (1854). From the Ruhr valley in Germany came the two steel bells at Corsock (1882) and Castle Douglas R.C. Church of St John the Evangelist, cast by Bochumer Verein, now part of the Krupp group of companies.

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CATALOGUE

ANWOTH. 2

The tower contains a bell, 17 in. diameter, inscribed:

(*waist front*) GIFTED TO THE / PARISH OF ANWOTH /
BY / SIR COLIN GEORGE MACRAE / 1905

(*waist rear*) WILLIAM BRYDEN & SON

The earlier bell, disused in 1905, is preserved in the church. The diameter is $10\frac{5}{8}$ in. and the inscription reads:

(*cross*) ⚡ (*crown*) Ⓐ (*crown*) Ⓜ (*crown*) Ⓝ : Ⓐ

¹ PSAS, LXXIII (1947-8), 152.

² PSAS, LXXXIV (1949-50), 106.

³ *ibid.*, 105.

The bell is illustrated in Pl. XIX, 1, and Pl. XX, 1 shows a detail of the inscription.

One of the earliest church bells in Scotland, probably cast in the second half of the fourteenth century. The lettering, cross, crowns and stop are placed very high up, almost upon the shoulder of the bell, and they rest on the uppermost of the group of moulding wires which encircle the bell just about where the inscription usually is. The same pattern of moulding wires is repeated above the soundbow.

The clapper now hangs from a more modern staple bolted through the crown. Only five canons remain as one of the singles has been broken off. The bell is a fine casting and is an eloquent tribute to the medieval founder.

AUCHENCAIRN. 1

A very lofty open belfry contains a bell, 17 in. diameter, weighing about 1 cwt. The inscription, as far as is ascertainable from the ground with a telescope and from the bell foundry records, reads:

JOHN TAYLOR & CO. + LOUGHBOROUGH + 1902 +
(waist) I. P.M. V.R.I. 1837-1901 / D.D. W.D.R.D.

The church was built about 1858 as a quoad sacra in the parish of Rerrick. The bell has iron fittings and is rung from outside. The cross is illustrated elsewhere.¹

BALMACLELLAN. 1

The birdcage belfry contains a bell, about 20 in. diameter, inscribed on the waist:

1633 / RECAST 1886 / J B A McKINNEL

Recast at McKinnel's foundry in Dumfries. Only four canons and no moulding wires where the inscription band would normally be. The lettering is large and poorly designed and the tone is only fair. A new steel headstock was fitted when the bell was rehung in 1960.

BALMACLELLAN. Monybuie Moss.

Preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh is a bronze covering of an early Celtic bell which was found in a moss at Monybuie in this parish. It was presented by Dr W. G. Dickson in 1892.²

The mouth is elliptical, about 4 by 3 in.; the height is 5 in., and there is now no handle or clapper staple, see Plate XIX, 2. At the mouth the thickness is as much as $\frac{3}{8}$ in. in one place, and everywhere much thicker than in the waist or crown. Only just over half the covering remains.

This 'bell' is quite different from any others the writer has ever seen of this antiquity; here the core material has completely gone. Most other bells made of iron and dipped in copper or bronze, retain traces of the coating and a large proportion of the iron core. Another peculiarity is the cable moulding clearly shown in the illustration; it seems that the core was partly composed of some material like coarse string.

¹ *PSAS*, LXXXII (1947-8), 149, fig. 5.

² *PSAS*, XXVI (1891-2), 85; Museum Cat. No. KA 18.

Another feature is the odd way in which the core material has been held together. Iron bells are made from flat plate cut to shape, bent up and lap-riveted down the sides. Here there is no line of rivets, yet there is a lap-joint with flaps of the material near the mouth and by the crown. In addition there is another flap in the mid-waist which does not seem to span the lap-joint. Nearby there is a circular hole which appears to serve no useful purpose and could be accidental. By the mouth the lip has been thickened by a double layer of the core material, as seen in the centre of the illustration.

The crown is just as odd; top left in the illustration there is a roll of core material alongside a small rectangular hole. A similar hole is on the other side of the crown. In the centre is a slot on the minor axis, and part of the flap from the core material removed to make this hole, is visible in the photograph.

The bronze covering is wafer thin but does retain the shape of the original core. The cavity between the two casings is quite narrow where visible, about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. There are traces of thin thread in this cavity but these may well be roots from plants growing in the moss from which the bell was recovered.

The present writer does not think that the core was an iron one. He wonders whether it could have been some form of hardened leather which would have been able to stand the temperature of the molten copper or bronze. The twine could have been wrapped round to thicken the material where required.

Needless to say the tonal properties of such a bell would have been poor in the extreme.

It is difficult to date this bell due to the peculiar design features, but it is likely to have been made early in the period A.D. 400 to 900, possibly as early as the fifth century.

BALMAGHIE. 1

The hexagonal tower with a timber upper section contains one bell, $18\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

PRESENTED TO THE PARISH OF BALMAGHIE BY THE
PATRON / THO^S GORDON ESQ^R 1794

Cast by Thomas Mears I at the Whitechapel Foundry, London, as is evidenced by the lettering used and the design of the bell. Below the word 'Balmaghie' appear the coat of arms, including crest and motto of Thomas Gordon.

The bell has fallen at one time and now only the argente and one canon remain and both are cracked. The bell has been quarter turned and is bolted through the crown to an iron stock. The original cast-in staple remains and the clapper is hooked on to it and swings at right angles to the direction it did formerly. The tone is quite good.

BARGRENNAN. 1

The open belfry contains a bell, about 14 in. diameter, inscribed:

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

The bell is hung with a cast iron headstock, counterbalance weight, and wheel, in a triangular cast iron frame.

It seems that the Penninghame bell cast by Luke Ashton of Wigan in 1750 came here on being disused at Penninghame in 1839, and remained in use till becoming cracked about 1898. From then to the present day the bell has been on view in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright.

The existing bell of 1867 may well have been second-hand, as Wilson's list does not include a bell mentioned as being cast for this church.

BEESWING. Lochend Church. 1

The tower with spire contains a bell, 14 in. diameter, which just bears the date 1863 on the inscription band. A neat casting, with normal moulding wires and six canons. and would seem to be the product of one of the principal bell-founders, probably John Warner and Sons. The metal fittings include headstock and full wheel. The bearings are set on iron beams spanning the tower.

BORGUE. 1

The tower, dated 1814, contains one bell, 30 in. diameter, inscribed:

✠ IOHN † GOLDSMITH † † FECIT † 1712 Mr I G

Cast by John Goldsmith, bell founder, of Redgrave, Suffolk, and apparently his only bell found outside Norfolk and Suffolk.¹ A large and fine bell with remarkably beautiful lettering with initial cross and stops of a kind very uncommon at this date. The inside of the soundbow has been chipped to flatten the note showing that at one time the bell was intended to be rung with others. See Pl. XX, 1.

It is a bell of a kind not at all usually procured for a Scottish country church early in the eighteenth century, and it seems probable that the bell was acquired second-hand when the tower was built in 1814.

The clapper and connector appear to be 1712 and the securing ironwork 1814. The tone is quite good with pitches 1055, 875, 650, 515, 296 cycles/second.

BUITTLE. 1

The tower contains a bell, 20 in. diameter, inscribed:

BUITTLE CHURCH: RE-BUILT / A.D. 1818 /
THE REV^d A. CROSBIE: MINISTER.

The lettering is bad and irregular. There are no moulding wires on the shoulder and the crown terminates in a hand-bell type argent.

There is no bell at the old church, the west gable of which is surmounted by belfry, probably of the sixteenth century. It is much overgrown with ivy.

CARSPHAIRN. 2

The bird-cage belfry contains a bell, about 14 in. diameter, inscribed:

¹ Raven, J. J., *The Church Bells of Suffolk*, 145 f.

ERECTED BY THE HERITORS AT CARSPHAIRN CHURCH, A.D. 1886./
JOHN C. WILSON & CO FOUNDERS. GLASGOW.

Hand-bell type argent and cast-iron fittings. This bell is not used and the belfry has two loud speakers for electrical reproductions of bell sounds, etc.

The former bell, 12½ in. diameter, is preserved in the church. The inscription reads:

CARSPHAIRN·EX·DONO·M^{RI}:IOHAN:·REID·/
R·M·FECIT·ED^R:J723·

By Robert Maxwell of Edinburgh. See Pl. XIX, 3. The lettering is as at Bonhill, Dunbartonshire.¹ The bell is very seriously cracked and has been rivetted up to be in one piece again. The crown has lost canons and argent and has an iron argent bolted on; the old cast-in crown staple has broken off and a new one has been bolted through the crown. The Rev. John Reid, the donor of the bell, was Minister from 1694 till his death in 1737.²

CASTLE DOUGLAS. St Andrew. 1

The tower contains a large bell, 43½ in. diameter, weighing 15 cwt. 1 qr. 0 lb., and hung with full fittings for full circle ringing. The inscription reads:

(waist front) JOHN TAYLOR & CO^{OP} JOYNDERS LOVEBOROUGH
FOR / THE HONOUR OF GOD / AND / THE USE OF
THIS CHURCH
(waist rear) CASTLE DOUGLAS / MDCCLX.

A maiden bell cast with a flat crown. The wooden headstock has plate type gudgeons which now run in ball bearings. There is an independent crown staple and the rope runs over an iron pulley in a timber box.

CASTLE DOUGLAS Roman Catholic Church of St John the Evangelist. 1

The tower with spire contains a cast steel bell, 35½ in. diameter, inscribed:

GEG. V. BOCHUMER VEREIN I. BOCHUM 1900.
(waist front) R.D. BARRÉ CUNINGHAME / DONAVIT
(waist rear) IN HONOREM S^TI. JOANNIS E^V. / DEO CONSECRATUM /
A.D. 1900.

Cast in Germany by Bochumer Verein, which is now one of the Krupps group of companies, see Corsock.

The crown has an extended flange to which is bolted a timber headstock. The half wheel, stay and slider are all in iron, and all are mounted in a timber frame. The large enclosed bearings seem to be of the roller type.

CASTLE DOUGLAS. Town Steeple 2

The cupola on the top of the Town Steeple contains two bells, 21⅞ and 25 in. in

¹ PSAS, LXXXII (1947-8), 179, fig. 15(b).

² Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, Vol. II (1917), 401.

diameter, with weights of about $2\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. and 3 cwt. 2 qrs. 7 lb. Both are very difficult to reach and appear to bear the following inscriptions:

Treble. CAST BY THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON. 1795. / CRACKED BY FIRE AND RECAST BY MEARS & STAINBANK. 1934. / CASTLE DOUGLAS TOWN COUNCIL 1934. / PROVOST FORDE. / BAILIES MACFARLANE, & SMART. / COUNCILLORS. MRS WELSH, DICKSON, / MARTIN, FERGUSON, KERR, LAURIE, / W. MILLER, BURGH SURVEYOR. / RAMSAY, & IAN, HEWAT, TOWN CLERKS.

Tenor. *Ornamental border on inscription band. Soundbow front* 1934 *Soundbow rear rectangular plaque bearing* TAYLOR / LOUGHBOROUGH

One bell from Whitechapel and the other from Loughborough, both cast in the same year. Before 1934 there would seem to have been only the 1795 bell; after the fire the tenor was added as the hour bell for the clock and ding-dong quarters are struck on both. The treble also has a disused external chiming hammer. Both bells are hung dead from a beam across the cupola.

COLVEND. I

The tower contains one bell, $14\frac{5}{16}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

(*waist front*) COLVEND / & / SOUTHWICK

(*waist rear*) REV^d JAMES FRASER / 1846 / MINISTER

No moulding wires by the shoulder. The hand-bell type argent is secured to an iron headstock and lever. The tone is only fair.

The parishes of Colvend and Southwick were united in 1612. Colvend church was rebuilt in 1771 and again in 1911.

CORSOCK. I

The tower of this church, built in 1839, contains a cast steel bell, 37 in. diameter, inscribed:

BOCHUMER VEREIN GUSSSTAHLFABRIK 1882.

Cast in Germany by Bochumer Verein, which is now one of the Krupps group of companies. The last figure of the date has not corroded like the rest of the bell and seems to be in another metal set into the mould before casting. The fittings include a clapper with a very large ball suspended from a cast-in staple, an iron headstock with timber covering and an iron lever. There is a timber frame.

CROSSMICHAEL. I

The small round tower contains one bell, $13\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

IAN · BVRGERHVYS · ME · FECIT · 1611 ·

From the Middelburg Foundry in Holland by Jan Burgerhuys I. This bell is very similar to his slightly larger one at Roseneath, Dunbartonshire, cast a year earlier.¹ The lettering is the same, but here there is no ornamental border. The tone is good and the bell is an excellent casting, retaining argent and six canons. The clapper is

¹ *PSAS*, LXXXII (1947-8), Pl. XXXIV (2), and page 179, fig. 15(a).

stirrup topped with an S connector to the cast-in crown staple; the ball is more in the form of a cylinder $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter and 2 in. thick, and there is no flight. It seems to date from 1611 and is of the same design as that at Roseneath. The remaining fittings, iron headstock and lever, are more modern.

The tower appears to be of the sixteenth century and is somewhat akin to that at Portpatrick. It is built of rubble work, but there is a small round-headed window, blocked, about half way up the S. face: the jambs have evidently had roll mouldings. There are four plain square headed openings at the top, and the whole is crowned by a modern slated spirelet. The doorways below are both modern.

DALBEATTIE. Craignar Church. 1

The tower with spire contains a bell, $23\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON

(on waist) DALBEATTIE CHURCH EX DONO / MARGARET
MAXWELL OF MUNSHES 1842

From the Whitechapel Foundry, London. Hung with contemporary fittings, including elm headstock and wheel, in an 11 ft. 7 in. high timber framework. The tone is poor, mainly due to the Hum note (481 c/s) being too sharp, the other pitches are *c.* 1650, 1405, 1005, 742 c/s. There are no tuning marks.

DALBEATTIE. Park Church. 1

The tower with spire of this former Free Church contains a bell, $16\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

J MURPHY FOUNDER DUBLIN 1853

This appears just above the soundbow. The bearings are mounted on two cast-iron side frames inscribed J. MAXWELL DUMFRIES 1854

The bell has six canons with the outside edges grooved twice and a cast-in crown staple. The fittings include a timber headstock, and an iron half wheel with a weight to counterbalance the rope.

DALBEATTIE. Town Steeple. 1

Under the clock is a bell, $24\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

BRYSONS. EDINBURGH A.D. 1868.

Though the bell bears the name of Brysons, clockmakers in Edinburgh, the founder was John C. Wilson of Glasgow. This is clear from the design of the bell and also because it appears in Wilson's list of products. With the replacement of the clock with a new electric one the bell is not now used to sound the hours. Metal fittings are provided and the bearings are *suspended* from the clock floor.

DALBEATTIE. R.C. Church of St Peter. 1

The tower contains a bell, $30\frac{9}{16}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

AD·MAJ·DEI·GLOR·PASTOR·ET·GREX·ÆD:ST PETRI·
DALBEATTIE·ME·POSUERE·

(on waist) J MURPHY FOUNDER DUBLIN 1854

The waist inscription is in the form of a horseshoe and in the centre from top to bottom is a crown, a harp, and two sprigs of shamrock. Wooden fittings and a wooden frame.

DALRY. 1

The tower contains a bell, 19½ in. diameter, inscribed:

Dalry : 1754

See Pl. XX, 2.

A very English-looking bell, probably by Ralph Ashton II of Wigan.¹ The lettering and figures are of the same character as those on the bell by Luke Ashton (1750) which was formerly at Penninghame, Wigtownshire, and is now in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright.

The Ashtons, with Saunders of Bromsgrove, are the only two English founders so far known to have used 'lower-case' letters such as those here at this date.²

DALRY. Village Hall. 1

There is an uninscribed 24 in. diameter bell here which was presented with the clock to the inhabitants in 1890 by James Alexander of Mackilston. The bell seems to be English of this date, possibly by Carr of Smethwick.

GATEHOUSE OF FLEET. Girthon Church. 2

The tower, built in 1896, contains one bell, 30½ in. diameter, inscribed:

GIRTHON CHURCH RESTORED A.D. 1896 / REV: W. W. COATS. B.D.
MINISTER / JOHN C. WILSON & CO, LTD GLASGOW. FOUNDERS.

From the Gorbals Foundry. Hung with cast-iron fittings in a timber frame.

The older bell, which was disused in 1896, is preserved in the church. The diameter is 16½ in. and the inscription:

(A) ○○○ CAMPANA ○ HAEC ○ FANU ○ GIRTONENSI ○ IN ○ STEWARTRIA / ○○ KIRKCUDBRIA ○ AB ○
HONORATISSIMO ○ ALEXANDRO / ○○○ MURRAY ○ DE ○ BROUGHTOWN ○ ARMIGERO ○ DONA /
TA ○ EST ○ FUSA ○ BRISTOL ○ ASAMUELE ○○○ / NICKOLLS ○ FUSRE ○ ANNO ○ 1733 ○

The inscription, in five lines, is very irregular; the letters are only ⅜ in. high and the stop is a plain circle ¼ in. diameter. The symbol (A) at the commencement of the inscription is a circle ⅝ in. diameter with two of the smaller circles inside it. The tone is poor, but the bell is uncracked. The six canons remain with the argent, which is unpierced.

The bell was used at the pre-Reformation church till 1817, but the belfry on this fabric has now gone. From 1817 till 1896 the bell was used on the present site.

¹ Cheetham, *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, XLV, 112.

² Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 254.

No other bells cast by Samuel Nickolls of Bristol are known, so he probably combined bell-founding with some other trade. The appearance of the bell suggests that his experience as a bell-founder was limited.

GATEHOUSE OF FLEET. Rutherford Hall. 1

The tower of this hall, the former U.F. church, has on the roof a bell, 21 in. diameter, inscribed on the waist:

DAVID BURGESS / FOUNDER / GLASGOW / 1841

The bell was cast at the Gorbals Foundry and was originally hung in a local cotton-mill which was destroyed by fire. No moulding wires by the shoulder; hand-bell type argent, iron fittings.

KELLS. 1

The tower contains a bell, 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

EXDONO * GULLIELMI * GORDON *
(Soundbow) QUIRIN * DE * VISSER * ME * FECIT * ROTERODAMI
* ANNO * 1722 *

See Plate XX, 2.

A very interesting bell, by the same founder as the former treble at Kirkcudbright Tolbooth, now in the Stewartry Museum there. The Kells bell is a much better casting; the lettering is good and regular, with a small scallop shell used as a stop between the words. Moulding wires in the usual places; the second part of the inscription is on the soundbow between wires immediately above the lip of the bell—an unusual place.

The lip has been somewhat damaged where the clapper strikes, but otherwise the bell is a pleasing object.

KELTON. 1

A lofty open belfry contains one bell, about 24 in. diameter, hung with iron fittings and inscribed:

JOHN C. WILSON, FOUNDER GLASGOW A.D. 1864. N^o 838

The former church was rebuilt in 1743,¹ and the present one would seem to be as old as the bell.

KIRKBEAN. 1

The steeple, dated 1835, contains a bell, 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

=| = ION = CAMPBELL = MINISTER = 1728

See Plate XIX, 4.

The bell is a very rough and oddly designed product. Though there is an inscription band the lettering, badly stamped, appears at the top of the waist. The

¹ *Old Statistical Account of Scotland.*

crown is almost flat like a tub and the layout of the moulding wires by the soundbow is abnormal; they are also irregularly stamped.

The old cast-in staple has broken off and a false one has been bolted through the crown parallel to the old; the clapper is connected to it with a leather strap.

The timber fittings include an almost solid wooden wheel with ornamental openings in it. The clapper has a stirrup type top and a large ball with no flight. The bell is clearly a locally cast product but with no marks to identify the founder.

John Campbell, whose name appears in the inscription, was the father of Admiral John Campbell, who was born at the manse in 1719.¹ The latter sailed round the world with Anson and became Governor of Newfoundland.²

KIRKCUDBRIGHT. St Cuthbert. 1

The tower with spire contains one bell, 41 in. diameter, weighing 12 cwt. 1 qr. 21 lb. and inscribed:

THOMAS MEARS WHITECHAPEL FOUNDRY LONDON 1838.

Hung with wooden headstock and wheel for swing chiming. Ball bearings replace the earlier plain bearings.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT. St Mary. 1

The tower with spire houses a bell, 35 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

PRESENTED TO FREE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KIRKCUDBRIGHT, /
BY MARIA WHEATLEY, OF NORTH SHIELDS, A.D. 1874. /
JOHN C. WILSON FOUNDER GLASGOW.

From the Gorbals Foundry. Eight canons; timber frame, headstock and wheel and cast-iron counterbalance weight mounted on top of headstock.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT. Tolbooth Steeple. 2

The steeple now only contains two bells; the cracked treble of 1724, described below, is now housed in the Stewartry Museum.

The two remaining bells are 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ and 26 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. diameter and are inscribed:

Treble. THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1841

Tenor **SOLI DEO GLORIA · MICHAEL BVRGERHVYS ME
FECIT ANNO 1646 ·**

The treble is rather an inferior example from the Whitechapel Foundry. The wheel and headstock are original.

The tenor is a fine example of the work of Michael Burgerhuys of Middelburg, Holland, with his characteristic dragonesque border set above the inscription. The lettering and the border are those which he used on the bell Old Lowrie for St Nicholas, Aberdeen, illustrated elsewhere.³ The lettering here is the same as the

¹ *The Gallovidian Annual*, 1920, 45.

² *Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, I (1953), 196.

³ *PSAS*, xciv (1960-1), Pl. XXI.

intermediate-sized one at Aberdeen, used as the initial letters for the words in the smallest of the three sets, $\frac{7}{8}$ in. high. The tone is unfortunately poor and the bell now needs quarter turning to allow the clapper to strike unworn zones. One double canon has been broken off, so now there are five. Three pairs of screwed straps have been fitted in addition to the earlier nailed ones which are fixed to a timber head-stock; this latter may be as old as the bell. The clock strikes on this bell.

The former treble to three was cracked when being rung for the Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The diameter is $17\frac{1}{4}$ in. and the inscription reads:

**QUIRIN , DE , VISSER , ME , FECIT , 1724 , /
KIRKCUDBRIGHT**

See Plate XXI, 1.

From the Rotterdam foundry, and a much poorer product than the same founder's bell at Kells, q.v. The inscription is not well formed; letters close against the moulding wires above and below. The stops between the words are like large commas. The word KIRKCUDBRIGHT (*sic*) is at the top of the waist.

The layout of moulding wires is odd, they appear on the crown and between the waist and soundbow; the latter group consisting of three rolls with smaller rolls outside and between them. The lip is thickened with a wide band. The crack extends from the lip to the inscription band and three holes have been drilled apparently to stop it spreading. One has removed part of the letters B and R in KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT. Stewartry Museum. 1

The Kirkcudbright Town Crier's bell, $6\frac{7}{16}$ in. diameter, is preserved here. There is a wooden handle and the whole dates from about 1850. Other bells kept here and noted elsewhere in this survey are the Kirkcudbright Tolbooth treble by Quirin de Visser of Rotterdam 1724; the Penninghame, Wigtownshire, bell by Luke Ashton of Wigan 1750; the iron Twynholm bell; the Tongland bell of 1633; and the clapper from the Viscount's Bell, New Galloway Town House.

KIRKGUNZEON. 1

The W. birdcage belfry contains a bell, about 20 in. diameter, inscribed:

**FOR KIRKGUNZEON CHURCH 1671. / RECAST A.D. 1882
BY JOHN C. WILSON &. CO, FOUNDERS, GLASGOW.**

Wilson's lettering has been used throughout; if the 1671 inscription had been reproduced in facsimile then it might have been possible to determine who cast the earlier bell.

The fittings are Wilson's normal ones of cast-iron.

One reference published in 1920¹ gives the inscription 'KIRKWINNING 1674', but this could not have been on the present bell, and it is unlikely that the founders would have altered the inscription when reproducing it on the present bell in 1882.

¹ *The Gallovidian Annual*, 1920, 45.

KIRKMABRECK. 2

The tower of this church in Creetown contains a bell, $27\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, hung for swing chiming, and inscribed:

THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FOUNDER 1834.

From the Whitechapel Foundry cast by T. Mears II. A new timber headstock has been fitted, but the remainder of the fittings are those supplied in 1834. The timber frame is mounted diagonally in the tower.

The bell under the Creetown Town Clock, $20\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, is inscribed:

JOHN C. WILSON & CO, LTD FOUNDERS. GLASGOW. 1898.

The tower and clock were erected to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

KIRKPATRICK DURHAM. 1

The tower contains a bell, $26\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

(*waist front*) KIRKPATRICK DURHAM CHURCH / REBUILT 1849 /
THE REV^D GEORGE GREIG MINISTER

(*waist rear*) DAVID BURGESS / FOUNDER / GLASGOW. / 1850 / NO. 270

From the Gorbals foundry, and hangs between two beams in the tower. Cast-iron fittings are attached to eight canons. The tone is poor, the Nominal, Fundamental and Hum Notes being 1025, 464 and 355 cycles/sec.

Towards the end of 1746¹ Mr M'Morine reported the church to the Presbytery as in bad condition, and in Feb. 1748 a joint meeting of Presbytery and heritors appointed J. Maxwell and H. Wilkinson, tradesmen from Dalbeattie, to estimate cost of 'recasting the kirk bell, which is now rent'.

In the Heritors' book² among minutes of meetings of committee in 1849 is:

The necessity of a new bell (the old one being rent and useless) having been brought under consideration, the committee authorised Mr Callander to procure a new bell of about three hundred-weight and have it estimated by weight.

KIRKPATRICK IRONGRAY. 1

The tower contains a small bell, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, which is without inscription. A rough casting with numerous holes or flaws in the crown and a poor tone. The old cast-in staple has broken off and a false one has been bolted through the crown; this latter terminates in a hand-bell type argent.

The fittings include cast-iron headstock, iron lever, and 360 degree bearings fixed to two beams spanning the tower. There has been little wear where the clapper strikes, and all the above evidence suggests the date of the bell to be about 1800.

LAURIESTON. 1

The W. open belfry contains an uninscribed single bell, about 24 in. diameter, which has every appearance as being as old as the church which bears the date 1845.

¹ Stark, *The Book of Kirkpatrick Durham, Kirkcudbrightshire*, 111.

² *ibid.*, 133.

LOCHRUTTON. 1

An E. open belfry, dated 1819, contains a bell, about 18 in. diameter, inscribed:

G H (*a flower*) 1764 (? *a basket of flowers*)

The initials are presumably GH but the first letter has no horizontal bar in the centre, only a marked vertical one. The flower and the ornament after the date are both rough and this also applies to the bell as a whole. The tone is fair. There are six canons with a moulding wire above and below the inscription.

The initials would seem to be those of the founder rather than those of the minister, the latter was George Duncan I in the period 1728 to 1766.¹

MINNIGAFF. Monigaff Church. 1

On the roof of the tower hung between two beams level with the battlements is a bell, 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

NEWTON · DOUGLAS · COTTON · WORKS · 1793 ·

The first three figures of the date are virtually identical with those on the Old Loudon Church bell, Newmilns, Ayrshire, and on a disused bell in St Cuthbert's church, Edinburgh. All were cast by George Watt of St Ninian's Row, Edinburgh.

This bell has a hand-bell type argent set into a timber headstock covered with a zinc plate to keep the rain off. The tone is poor.

NEW ABBEY. Established Church. 1

The present church, built in 1877,² has a double belfry which contains a single bell, about 12 in. diameter. The inscription is not completely visible from the ground but the part that can be seen reads:

JO CO FOUNDERS GLASGOW A.D. 1876.

Clearly the work of John C. Wilson and Co of Glasgow. The fittings are all of cast-iron.

Before 1731³ the parish church was on the S. side of the cloister-garth of the Abbey, and in that year a new building was erected against the S. wall of the nave. This structure was removed when the present church was built in 1877 at some little distance from the Abbey.

NEW ABBEY. New Abbey or Sweetheart Abbey.

Much remains of the fine central tower⁴ which is 28 ft. square over walls fully 5 ft. thick – however not enough to tell us anything about the bells which formerly hung in it.

The great bell of the Abbey⁵ was borrowed by Dumfries Town Council in 1570 and was not returned, to the great and not unnatural dissatisfaction of the Abbot, Gilbert Brown. The bell had the unusual dedication 'Marie and Jon' and could

¹ Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, II (1917), 291.

² RCAM, *Inventory of Galloway*, II, 206.

³ *ibid.*, 206.

⁴ *ibid.*, II, 204.

⁵ Huyshe, *Dervorgilla, Lady of Galloway and her Abbey of Sweet Heart*, 144.

well have been destroyed in one of the English raids on Dumfries when it was recorded that the raiders 'set fyre in the town of Dumfries and spulzeit the houssis and the bellis of the kirk'.

The Burrow Court Books of Dumfries contain the following notes concerning the bell:

13 Dec. 1570. The Baillies receive joists for hanging the bell.

19 Dec. 1570. Penalty for the non-return of the bell noted to be £100.

10 April 1571. Relief of the bell. [Apparently the penalty was cancelled.]

There used to be a small bell¹ over the lych gate leading into the cloister-garth, which was probably the original refectory bell of the Abbey. This bell disappeared in about 1891 and has not been traced. Before 1877 this bell could well have been used for the parish church then close to the Abbey.

NEW GALLOWAY. Town House. 2

The steeple contains two bells hung for swing chiming with levers; the diameters are $18\frac{5}{16}$ in. and $21\frac{7}{8}$ in., and the inscriptions read:

Treble.

EX·DONO·MAGISTRI·GULIELMI·COCHRAN·KILMARNOCK·/
R. M. FECIT·ED^R. 1711· S·MILLER & C^O GLASGOW·
APRIL·1812·/ I·WATT·FECET·

Tenor.

FOR WILLEAM VISCONT OF KENMUR. R. M. FECIT. EDIN:
1711. / FOR THE HON: MRS: LOUISA BELLAMY GORDON.
RECAST A.D. 1872. / (*on the waist the Arms of the Burgh and the Arms of Kenmur*)

So Robert Maxwell of Edinburgh cast two bells for the steeple in 1711 and both have been subsequently recast. The smaller bell bears the inscription in small, badly stamped and poorly laid out lettering; somewhat tub-shaped there are no moulding wires where the inscription band normally is and the lettering is really on the waist. The tone is only fair. The clapper is suspended with a leather strap from the cast-in crown staple.

The larger bell was recast when the present clock, by Gillett and Bland of Croydon, was installed and the latter strikes on it. There is no founder's name, but the lettering is the same as that on the five bells at Cardross, Dunbartonshire, bearing the name of John C. Wilson of Glasgow as founder and the date 1871²; this bell is also one of his.

A clapper and four links of chain attached to its upper end are preserved in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright. They are said to be from the Viscount's bell, New Galloway. The overall length from the centre of the clapper ball to the furthest link is 16 in., and this would accord with them having been fitted to the larger 1711 bell recast in 1872.

¹ *The Gallowidian Annual*, 1920, 45.

² *PSAS*, LXXXII (1947-8), 180.

PARTON. 2

The tower of the new church, built 1834, contains a single bell, 24 in. diameter, inscribed:

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON, 1901

From the Whitechapel Foundry, London. An inscription in the vestry records that the bell was given in memory of R. Rigby Murray of Parton by his family.

The belfry of the ruined church nearby contains an uninscribed bell, $10\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter (See Pl. XXI, 3).

A small bell with mouldings on the crown and above the soundbow, which is small; only four canons set at equal distances round a central stem. The cast-in crown staple has broken off and the clapper is hung on a loop of iron bolted through the crown. The clapper has an eye at the top and a very small flight.

The bell has been quarter turned, but the inside of the soundbow is little worn by the clapper. Unusually the argent is solid, and lacks a hole through it. The tone is fairly good.

The present ruins are said to date from 1592, but just above the bell there is an inscribed stone dated 1636.¹ The same reference suggests that the bell is probably of considerable antiquity, and the present writer thinks that it is a sixteenth-century casting.

RERRICK or RERWICK. Established Church. 2

The tower of the present parish church contains two bells, the smaller $14\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, and the larger $22\frac{1}{16}$ in. diameter. The inscriptions are:

Smaller. (*on waist*) I.T. / 1798 / (*a mask*).

Larger. JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * (*on waist*) THE GIFT OF WILLIAM FISHER 1938

The smaller bell, which is now disused, was brought from the old church which stood about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, when the present church was built in Dundrennan village in 1865. The initials I.T. stand for James Thomson, the first of three ministers of that name who held the living of Rerwick from 1784 to 1877; they were father, son, and grandson. The first, whose initials are on the bell, died in 1826.

The bell has six canons, of which two are cracked. There are no moulding wires below the shoulder and a later crown staple has been fitted in the same position as the old one. The fittings include iron headstock and lever.

The larger bell, note F# and weighing 2 cwt. 0 qr. 21 lb., was presented with the clock, and the hours are struck on it. The fittings include a cast-iron headstock, ball bearings and a wooden wheel. The bell is hung between two rolled steel joists spanning the tower walls.

RERRICK. Dundrennan Abbey.

This abbey is said to have been founded in 1142.² The plan is cruciform, and the

¹ RCAM, *Inventory of Galloway*, II, 212.

² *ibid.*, II, 228.

transepts are largely Transitional Norman in date. Little remains of the crossing except parts of the four main pillars, and they do not give any certain information about the design of a tower which may have been above them.

The buildings appear to have been abandoned shortly after the last abbot's death in 1605, though part of the abbey church was used as the Parish Church till 1742.¹

SOUTHWICK. 3

The central tower of this church, built in 1891, contains a chime of three bells, tenor $3\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., in the key of C.

Treble. $21\frac{3}{16}$ in. diameter.

J WARNER & SONS LONDON 1891. (*incised on waist*) CHARITY

Second. 23 in. diameter.

J WARNER & SONS LONDON 1891. (*incised on waist*) HOPE

Tenor. $25\frac{1}{16}$ in. diameter.

CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1891. (*incised on waist*) FAITH

All from the Cripplegate Foundry, London. They are hung dead in a timber structure and are struck by Ellacombe type hammers operated by the ringer standing just by them. Six angular canons and cast-in staples on each. The second is a maiden bell but the other two have been turned in a lathe to alter their strike notes. Even now the interval between the two largest is nearly half a semitone too little, being $1\frac{1}{2}$ semitones.

One would have expected the tenor or largest bell to be called Charity [1. Cor. 13, 13], however the medievals sometimes dedicated the smallest bell to the patron saint of the church, as at St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, London.²

TARFF. 2

This church, built in 1844, has two bells. The larger hangs in an open western belfry and has a diameter of about 16 in. The smaller, $14\frac{5}{16}$ in. diameter, is hung in a metal stand some 7 ft. above the ground.

Both are uninscribed, and the one in the belfry has six canons and a hemispherical crown. The original staple has broken off and a new one has been bolted through the crown. The surface appears well cast with the exception of a large cavity in the crown. It seems that this bell is older than 1844, but perhaps not earlier than, say, 1750.

The bell in the metal stand is the one currently used and is rung electrically. The crown has a hand-bell type argent and is modern.

TERREGLES. 2

The open belfry of the church contains a bell, about 12 in. diameter, inscribed:

MORTON:KIRK. D:Q

¹ *ibid.*

² Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 265.

This bell was obtained from the ruined church at Morton, Dumfriesshire, to replace the cracked one noted below. There are four canons and no moulding wires immediately below the shoulder. The inscription appears at the top of the soundbow. The fittings include timber headstock, iron lever, and chain to the outside. The date would seem to be about 1800.

The disused bell, $18\frac{1}{16}$ in. diameter, was inscribed:

TERREGLES PARISH 1770 (*a border*) T (*a bell*) R (*a border*)

From the celebrated Gloucester foundry, being cast by Thomas Rudhall. None of the canons remain and only the stump of the argent. The lettering is thin and clear and the border is a common one found on many English bells cast at this foundry. So far this is the only bell of the Rudhalls found in Scotland (See Pl. XX, 2).

Unfortunately the cast-in crown staple in wrought iron has cracked the crown, due either to rusting or because the iron and the bronze of the bell have different coefficients of expansion and contraction. In very cold weather this can give rise to high stresses in the bronze crown which cracks. Efforts have been made to repair the cracks by welding, but this has not been satisfactory and some of the inscription has been obliterated. For a satisfactory repair the cast-in staple would have to be drilled out, the bell preheated and welded to give the deposited weld metal the same composition as the bronze of the bell, 77% Copper 23% Tin. The bell is now preserved in the church.

TONGLAND. I

The present church tower contains no bell. The bell formerly here, and in earlier times in the bird-cage belfry on the ruined church nearby, is now in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright. The diameter is $17\frac{9}{16}$ in. and the inscription:

L
1633 T

See Pl. XXI, 2.

The L appears above the T on the shoulder; all the figures and letters were scratched in the mould before casting rather than being stamped and they have a rough and coarse appearance. The canons now only number four as two of the double ones have been broken off. There is a crack from the lip to mid-waist which has been unsuccessfully welded.

The bell would seem to be a local product, being quite unlike normal products from Holland or England of that time. The minister here in 1633 was James Scott,¹ so clearly the initials on the bell are not his, they may be those of the founder, at present unknown.

TROQUEER. I

The very large open belfry on the gable of the E. wall of the church contains a bell, about 36 in. diameter, inscribed:

¹ Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, II (1917), 425.

CAST BY GILLETT & CO CROYDON 1887

(*waist*) PRESENTED BY J. BLOUNT DINWIDDIE / IN MEMORY
OF JEANIE WEEMS WHO DIED / JULY. 7TH 1882.

The bell has a Doncaster head with four canons and metal fittings. The chain descends to the ringer who stands outside the church.

TWYNHOLM. 2

The bird-cage belfry now contains a bell inscribed:

(*crown*) MADE IN ENGLAND
JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * LOUGHBOROUGH * ENGLAND*

From the Loughborough Bell Foundry and cast from the metal of the earlier bell which is thought to have had no inscription. The present bell was cast about 1955 and weighs 0 cwt. 2 qrs. 16 lb. The fittings include a timber headstock and iron lever.

There is a peculiar iron bell from this parish preserved in the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright. The diameter is $12\frac{3}{4}$ in. The crown is hemispherical and the lower part is long-waisted and thin. There are no moulding wires or other marks; and on the crown there are four small, thin canons without an argent.

As this bell is of iron the date is unlikely to be much earlier than 1800, and possibly later.

URR. 1

The tower contains a bell, $20\frac{3}{16}$ in. diameter, inscribed:

CASTLE DOUGLAS FACTORY. 1795

From the Whitechapel Foundry, London, being cast by Thomas Mears I. This is clear from the design of the bell, and the lettering and figures used in the inscription. One double canon has been broken off, and the fittings include wrought iron headstock and cast-iron wheel. The bell hangs in a timber frame. Formerly it was housed in the bird-cage belfry on top of the previous church.



1. Anwoth

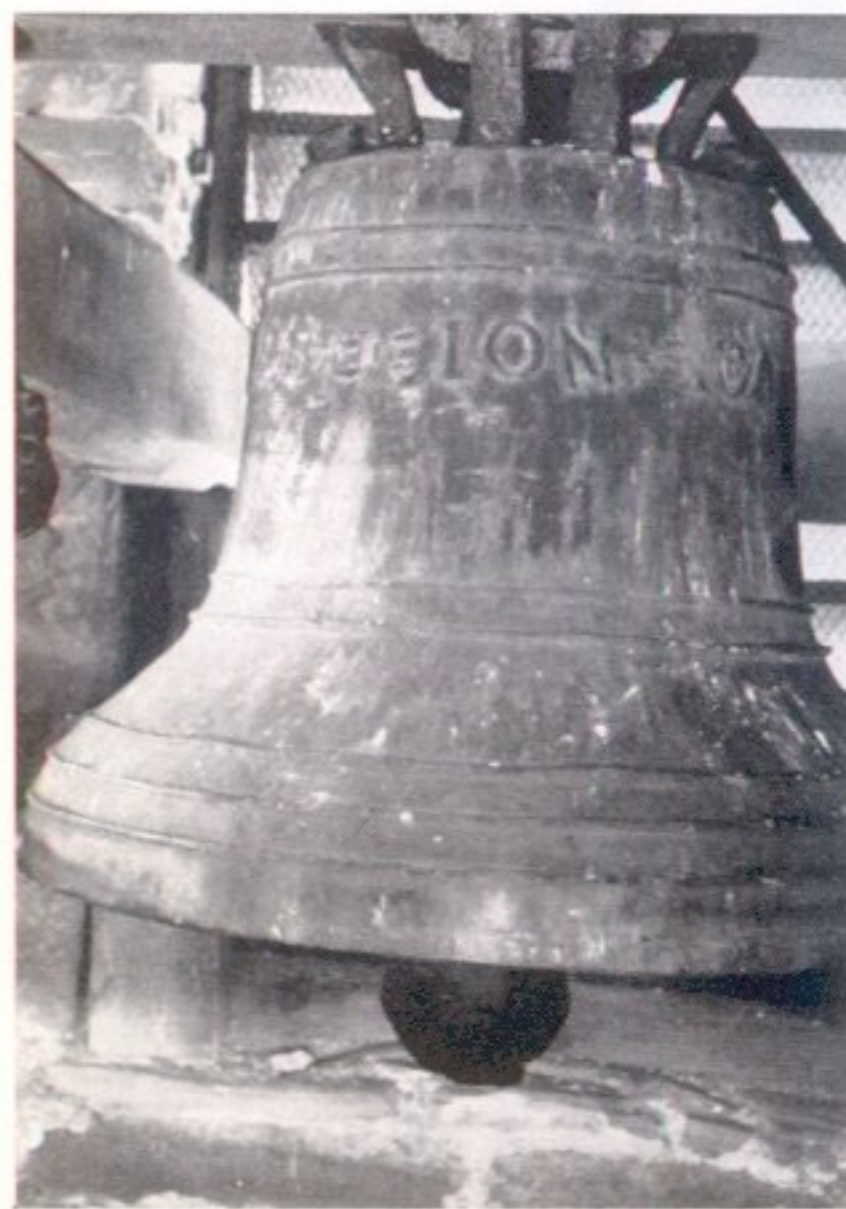


(Photo Nat. Mus. of Antiquities)

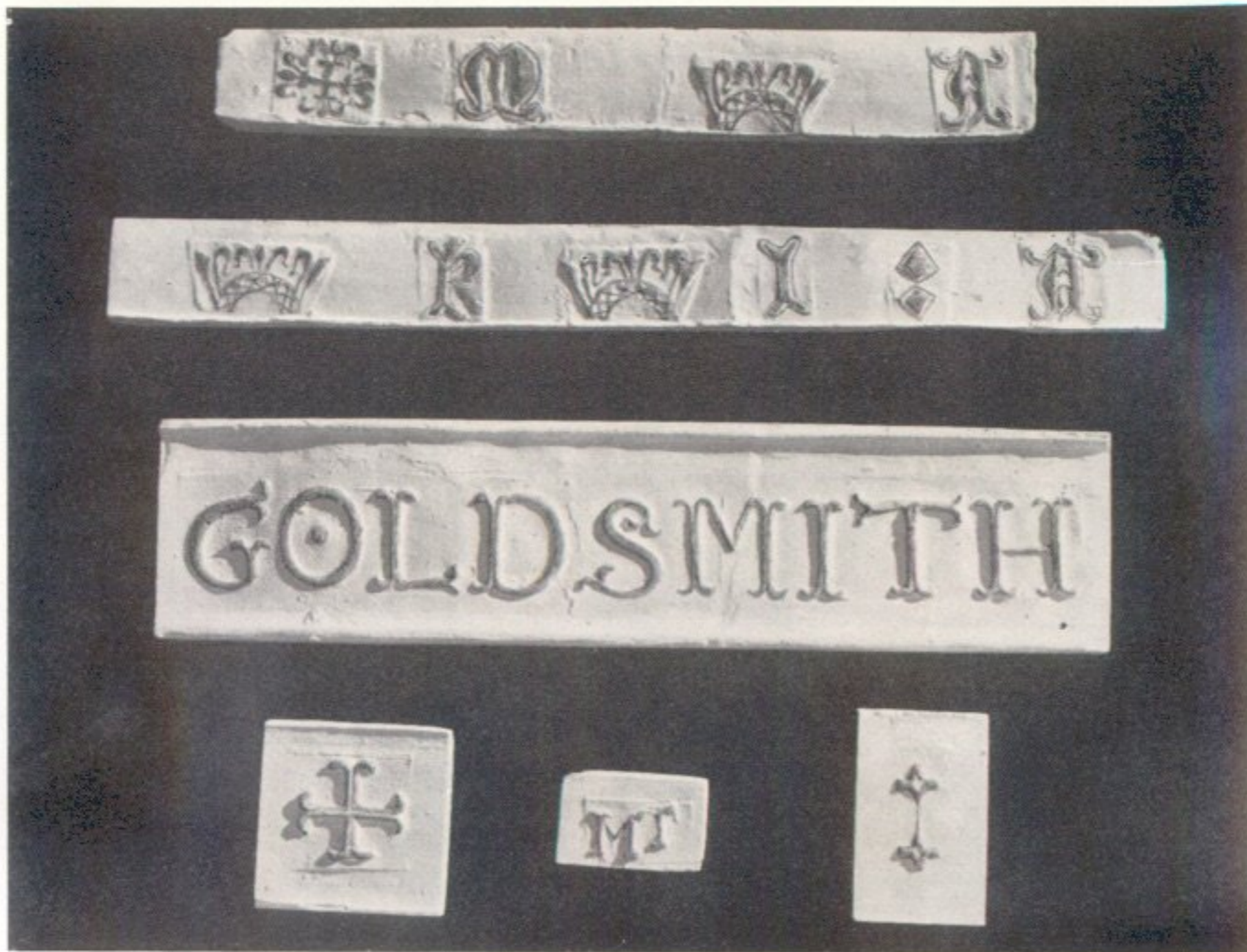
2. Early Celtic bell from Balmaclellan



3. Carsphairn



4. Kirkbean



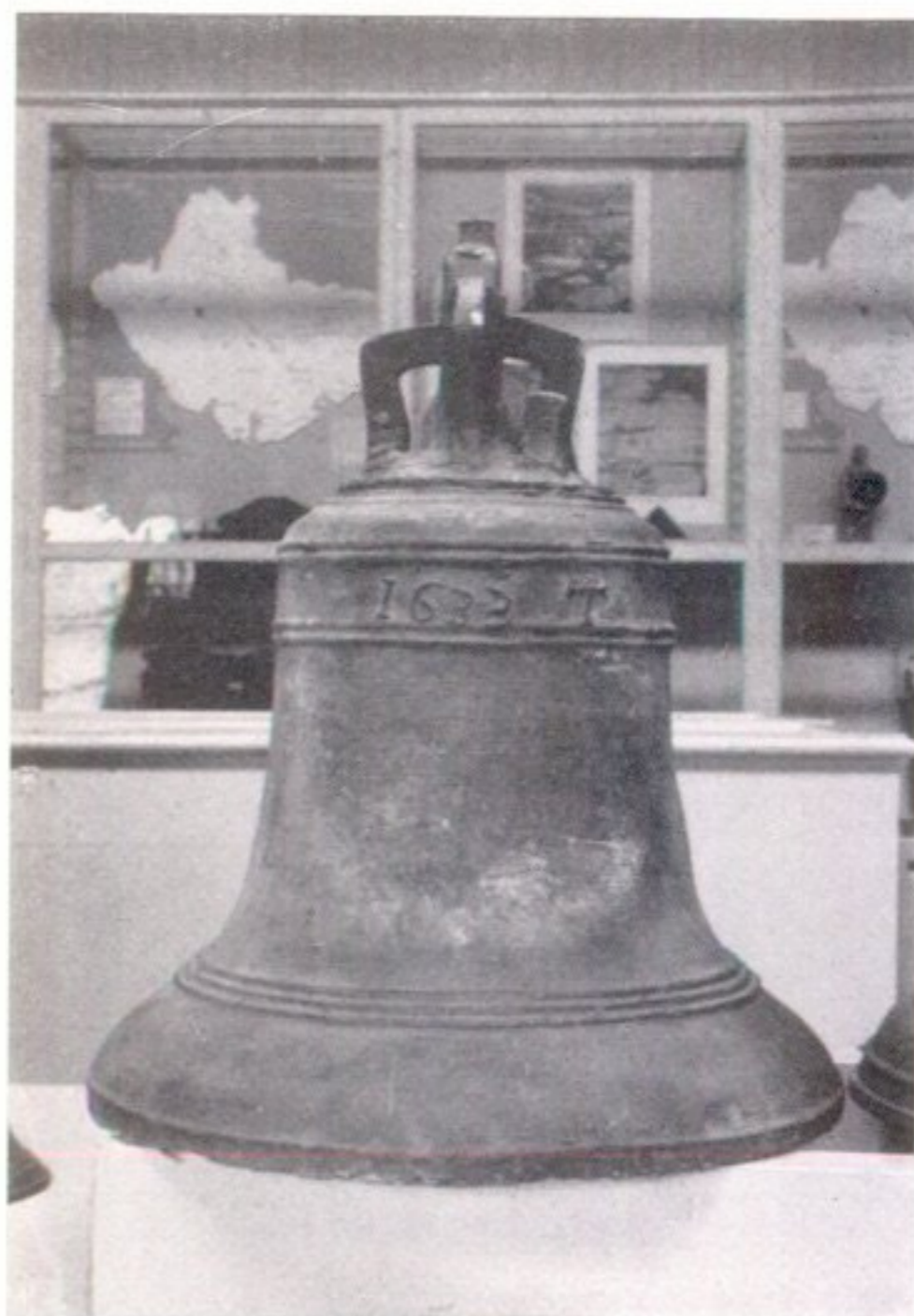
1. Casts of inscriptions on bells: upper two from Anwoth, the others from Borgue



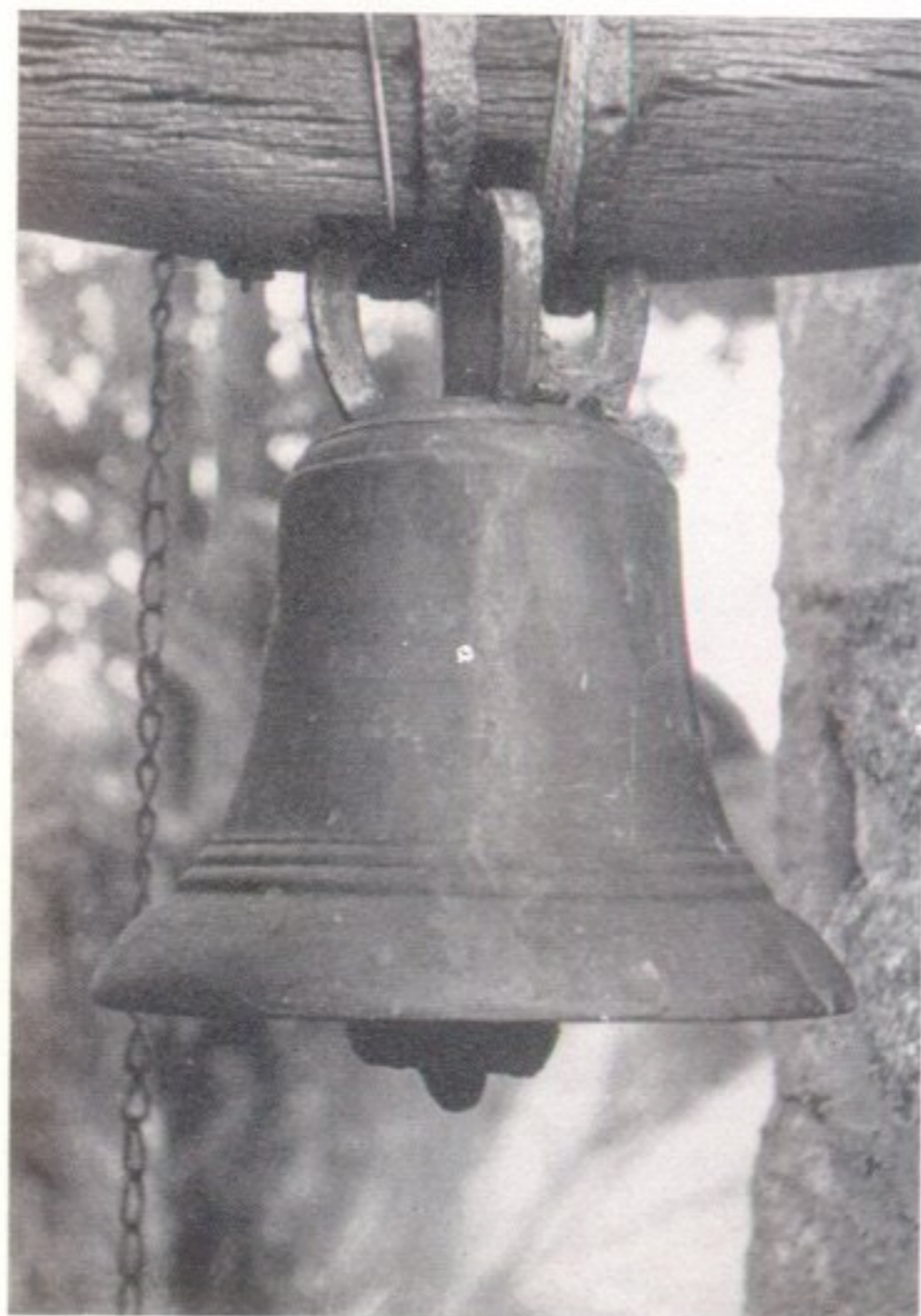
2. Casts of inscriptions on bells: upper, Kells; middle, Dalry; lower, Terregles



1. Kirkcudbright Tolbooth treble



2. Tongland



3. Parton