



Tower History

St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork.



The old Cathedral of St Fin Barre was built in 1735 after the previous building was demolished a year earlier. On 3rd May 1751, it was ordered that £1,000 be raised in the Economy Fund to erect a spire and set up a ring of bells in the steeple of the Cathedral. Later that year the Bishop was acquainted with the Resolution to erect the spire and install the bells, because in that year we note that a further sum of £300 was to be raised to finish the spire and to hang the bells.

The bells in St Fin Barre's were rung on State Days, as well as for Prayers, and we find that in 1762 it was decreed that "the bells shall always be rung at the usual time, and the ringers not to be paid on State days when they do not ring, and if any person chooses to stop the ringers, they are to pay them the usual fee for the day".

1864 was the last service held in the old Cathedral as it was demolished to build a magnificent new one in its place. The bells were taken down and all but the Treble were transferred to the Custom House vaults for storage purposes. The new Cathedral had progressed sufficiently by October 1870 to enable the bells to be hung in the Northwest Tower as a chime. Fate would seem to have taken effect on the Treble bell, which had been erected temporarily at the school-house, for when it rang for the last time in this position, before its transfer to the new Cathedral, the tongue fell out on the last note. The bells were hung low in the new tower, and it was difficult to hear them far from the Cathedral. Nevertheless, they were "ringing out merry peals" on November 30, 1870, before the service of Consecration less than two months after the work of installation had started. The fact that the bells were hung so low prompted the Dean and Chapter to institute an appeal in 1902, to raise £500 to have a proper job done.

Taylor's were given the contract to rehang the bells at the higher level in the tower in a steel frame. Three of the bells were recast at the same time, although it was noted before the start of the work that two of the bells were cracked.

A team of bellringers was formed, and they regularly rang the bells for about ten years. The Great War (1914– 1918) intervened and the bells became silent for 22 years, until a successful effort was made in 1934 to re-institute ringing in the full circle style.

Link to tower on web site

<https://bellringingireland.org/tower/cork-st-fin-barres-cathedral/>

<https://corkcathedral.webs.com/>

Bell Weights & Inscriptions

<https://dove.cccbr.org.uk/detail.php?tower=16755>