



Obituary

Theresa Nolan

16 May 1945 – 3 November 2023

The death, on 3 November 2023, of Theresa Nolan left ringers in Dublin shocked and saddened. Theresa had been ringing for the morning service at St Patrick's Cathedral the previous Sunday.

Theresa grew up in rural East Galway in the West of Ireland. After leaving school she started work in hospitality, training first in Ballinasloe and then in Lucerne. Later she ventured overseas to work and live in Sweden and the Netherlands. After many years working in hospitality, Theresa found time to graduate from Trinity College Dublin, having studied Irish, history and law.



Theresa then spent many years working as an Usher in the Houses of the Oireachtas, listening to parliamentary debates and getting to know members of the government and those that sat on the opposition benches. Her work included ensuring when the voting bell stopped the doors were locked and no member arriving late was allowed into the chamber to cast a vote. Theresa often spoke of the human side of politicians and maybe told a story of a small act of kindness performed by a politician who perhaps wasn't well liked by members of the general public. Theresa always saw the humanity in people. Theresa was rightly very proud of her time spent in public service.

At the start of the 21st century Theresa was living in the Iveagh Trust Apartments. The Iveagh Trust, one of Dublin's oldest and best-known housing associations, was established in 1890 by Sir Edward Cecil Guinness. The same Edward Guinness that was responsible for installing 10 bells in St Patrick's Cathedral in 1897. So, it was fitting that in 2001 Theresa made her way up the tower at St Patrick's where she was taught to ring by the late Charlie Reede and joined the morning band at both St Patrick's and St Audoen's. Theresa enjoyed many ringing trips, especially one to Italy.

She still regularly went over to the West to check on the family home and once a year attended the Galway races with family members. We all knew if the Galway races were on Theresa would be missing from her normal place on the treble bell at St Audoen's but apart from her annual trip to the races and holidays back to Lucerne or Stockholm, she rarely missed a Sunday morning ring in St Audoen's or St Patrick's.

Theresa touched people in an understated way. Although living in the heart of Dublin City, Theresa found ways to keep a connection with nature. She spoke regularly about her work in the community garden. She gathered blackberries in Autumn and many a ringer enjoyed a pot of Theresa's jam with their morning toast. She was known to gather sloes at home or in Milltown and to celebrate her friends' birthdays with homemade sloe gin.

When COVID hit and put a stop to our ringing, Theresa feared she would never ring again. However, with a little encouragement, when socially distanced church services resumed, Theresa returned to ringing at St Audoen's. Social distancing meant we could only ring 3 bells and through 2020 & 2021, as we went in and out of lockdown, whenever permitted Theresa along with Kenneth Morgan and Derek McEndoo donned their face masks and kept the bells of St Audoen's ringing. She returned to ringing at St Patrick's early in 2022 and continued to ring up to the week of her death.

Theresa's passing leaves a gap in our circle that will be hard to fill. Living in the shadow of St Patrick's Cathedral and just down the hill from St Audoen's she was always one of the first to arrive on a Sunday morning and first to volunteer when extra ringing was needed for weddings, funerals, and special occasions.

You won't find Theresa's name on Bellboard. She never rang a peal or a quarter peal but Theresa was the kind of ringer that is the backbone of many a belfry. A more loyal and dedicated ringer would be hard to find. She was known as a friendly, chatty woman who welcomed new ringers and was always happy to give up her bell to visitors, saying sure I'm happy to sit and listen.

On the day of her funeral, her family asked her bellringing friends to form a guard of honour as her coffin entered the church. 23 ringers stood in silence either side of the porch as the sound of handbells welcomed Theresa as she started her final journey back home to her native Galway.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis

Imelda Byrne, Ann Barrett and Kathleen McEndoo.