

The under sides of the seats of the misericords bear curious carvings of animal forms real and mythical, two human heads, said to bear a resemblance to portraits of Henry IV., angels, etc.

The three hanging candelabra belong to the restoration of the last century. The most easterly bears the inscription:

1759, Corporation of Limerick, Sexton
Baylee, Mayor. John Parker, William
Gubbins, Esqrs., Sheriffs.

On the other two is inscribed the name of the maker:

DANIEL CROSBIE, DUBLIN, 1758.

On the south-easterly pier is a monument with a bust, erected by numerous friends to memory of Robert Maunsell, who died in 1832.

THE TOWER AND BELLS.

A stone staircase in the buttress at the south-west corner of the façade gives access to the "monks' walks" and the tower. Both walks had stairways at the east end leading to the roof, but they are now closed up. A narrow stone staircase, constructed in the thickness of the east wall of the tower and over the arch which supports it, gives access to the bell-ringers' room. Through the outer door on the south side off this room access may be obtained to the battlements, from which an excellent view of the city and county in that direction may be obtained. A door at the head of the staircase gives similar access to the battlements on the north. The bell chamber is reached by a steep wooden staircase. Here will be found the

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History of St. Marys

Cathedral Limerick

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bells, presented to the church by William Yorke about the year 1670 (see page 50). They are eight in number, and in the key of F. The following inscription is on the F. bell, and follows the reading of Rev. Precentor Meredyth:

“Gvilielmvs: Yorke: Armiger: Preator; 1673
Iohannes: Vesey: S: T: D: Episcopys:
Iorannes: Smith: A: M: decanus: Lymeric
ences: 1673

Ex: Mvtis: Liqvide:(liquidi?): Fate:(facti?)
svmvs:

Nide: (inde?) Vocales: Iam: consonates:

Qvid: Vetat: Loqvamvr: W P ꝛ: R P ꝛ.”

The initials W. P. and R. P. are those of the founders, William and Roger Perdue. The former died in 1673, and was buried in the Cathedral. Dineley has preserved the inscription erected to his memory, but the slab is now lost. See page 35. Two of the others were cast in 1829, and the C bell in 1859. The initials W.P. appear on another.

A popular tradition preserves the belief that previous to the Reformed Clergy becoming the ruling power in the Cathedral, the friars carried off thirteen silver bells, which they concealed in the bed of the Abbey river, the precise spot where they are deposited being a secret handed on from generation to generation to the senior surviving members of the Order.

There is also a legend of the present bells that they were carried off from an Italian

church during a time of political commotion, and that their destination was unknown. Their founder therefore travelled over Europe in search of his lost treasures but without finding them. Pursuing his quest still further he sailed up the Shannon, and when nearing the city the chime of the long-sought bells was borne to his ears, he recognised their sweet familiar melody, but overcome with joy he sank lifeless on the deck of the vessel.

Those who undertake to climb to the top of the tower will be rewarded with a fine and extensive view of the city and surrounding county.

This brief sketch of the history and antiquities of a very venerable pile must now be brought to a close. More than seven hundred years have passed away since in times of storm and stress the firm foundations of St. Mary's Cathedral were laid by King Donald. It has continued to gather around it many associations of more than local interest. But especially it preserves the name and memory not only of princes, nobles, and ecclesiastics, but also of benefactors, merchants, and prominent citizens of Limerick, for the greater part of these seven centuries. The present generation has treated this ancient temple with loving care. Its old age is fresh and green, and the building is destined to hand on to future ages the memorials which it has preserved up to the present, with others of the twentieth century, not unworthy of those which preceded them.