

Mount St. Alphonsus Bellringers won Irish Championship

THE Murphy Cup for the All-Ireland bellringing competition was won in Dublin last Saturday by the Mount Saint Alphonsus Bellringers' Association. The other teams in the final, St. Patrick's, Ballymena, and St. George's Church, Dublin, represented the North of Ireland and the East, respectively, and the trophy has now been won by the Mount St. Alphonsus group for the fourth time.

The members of the winning team were Paddy Hanley, Jack Sciascia, Dave Benson, Noel Crowe, Tony Curtin, Liam Hickey, Liam Benson and Hugh O'Brien. Other members of the bell ringing group in Mount St. Alphonsus—there are 15 altogether—are Albert Kennedy, John O'Neill, Noel Newman, Paul and Oliver Gleeson, John Elmer and Joe Neville.

Limerick was also successful in

Camogie

Selection

Limerick camogie player Mae Clancy is on selection for the County team.

Two years ago, Mae took up camogie with the Local Authorities' team, Thomond. The Club, though a comparative newcomer to the ranks, is in a very strong position, with excellent prospects for the coming season.

In addition to taking an active part in the game as a player, Mae is taking the training course for referees which was initiated two months ago. Secretary of the County Board, Eithne Neville, with the Chairman, Chris O'Connell, have arranged to bring referees from Dublin to lec-

the championship last year, when the Murphy Cup was won by the city's only other bell ringing team, St. Mary's Cathedral.

The Mount St. Alphonsus team joined the Irish Association of Change Ringers in 1952, and since then, in addition to the Murphy Cup successes, they had won the B. R. Cherry Cup for the South of Ireland championship seven times.

Bell ringing is widely practised in England, but in some centres in this country it has died out owing to lack of interest. In Wexford, for instance, only visiting teams practice.

The art is a difficult one to master, and providing the pupil has the necessary aptitude, he may take up to three months before he is able to ring a bell in a peal. It is the general experience that only one in four or five aspirants persevere.

The Irish Association came into being about 60 years ago when a team from St. Patrick's, Dublin, came to ring in St. Mary's Cathedral. The leader of the Dublin group was Gabriel Lindoff, a world-famous all ringer, and the trophy for the Leinster Division commemorates his name.

The bells of Mount S. Alphonsus were presented by John Quin, who also had the tower built at his expense in 1867. The original peal of eight bells, with one stationary, was

taken down in 1947 and recast into a peal of ten with one stationary bell, and were rehung after a period of eleven months. They are regarded as being one of the best ten bell peals in Ireland or England.

Touring teams frequently visit the Limerick towers, and quite a number of enthusiastic bell ringers spend their annual vacation ringing at the various towers throughout the country. Next August two touring teams—one from St. Paul's Cathedral, London—will visit Limerick.

DAVE BENSON

The oldest member of last Saturday's championship team, Mr. David Benson, has been ringing the bells of Mount St. Alphonsus for 61 years. Last year, on the occasion of his diamond jubilee as a bellringer with the church, he was presented with a magnificent gold medallion. His golden jubilee of membership was marked by the late Pope Pius XII with a medal and certificate.

Dave's sons, Liam and Paddy, have also a long association with the tower. Liam, who is 26 years ringing, was a member of the four Murphy Cup championship teams, and has been identified with all the successes of the group since it entered competitive ringing in 1952. Paddy Benson was on

the winning Murphy Cup team of 1957. Paddy, who is now in Canada, was a well-known member of the College Players. The conductor of the team, Jack Sciascia, is a member of a family who have a long tradition in music in Limerick. His great-grandfather, who came here from Italy, was a gifted musician.

The Secretary of Mount St. Alphonsus bellringers, Paddy Hanley, is the only other member of the team, with Liam Benson, who has won the Murphy Cup four times. Two other great ringers, Joe and Tom Cleary, occasionally call to the tower to practise.

In charge of the team is Rev. Fr. Norris, C.S.S.R., and two other Redemptorists who are both active ringers are Rev. Fr. Magnier, C.S.S.R., Limerick, and Rev. Fr. O'Donnell, C.S.S.R., now in Galway.

Some noted bellringers of the past at Mount St. Alphonsus were Dan McNeice, Michael Doyle, the Guinas, Jack, Joe and Tom Mulqueen and the Hickeys. They have all passed to their reward, but Dave Benson assures me that they lived to a ripe old age. "Bellringing is a very pleasant exercise, and a certain amount of physical work goes with it," he says. He prescribes it as an aid to longevity, and Dave, who can still win Irish championships after 61 years of practice at the art, is a living proof of his assertion.