

Solved: Riddle of Bells of St. Mary's

By LEADER REPORTER

THE MYSTERY chimes ringing from the belfry tower of a centuries old church in Castleconnell in recent weeks have been identified.

The Bells of St Mary's are chiming again, many miles from where they were first installed, over a hundred years ago.

All Saints' Church in Stradbally, Castleconnell, has become the new home for the extraordinary tubular bells of the now closed-down St Mary's church in Ovens, Co Cork. The bells were cast by Barrington's of Coventry and installed in the Co Cork church over a century ago.

The story of how they came to Castleconnell is one of sheer coincidence.

A parishioner of Ovens and a Limerickman, Edward Rea recently met bell-ringer extraordinaire, Brian Brislane of Caherdavin, and recalling his bell ringing feats asked him if he was interested in a historic set of eight chiming bells.

Brian, a St. Mary's Cathedral bellringer, also happens to be the organist at Stradbally Church, one of the oldest buildings in the diocese, and so the die was cast.

Brian with the help of Stradbally parishioners, Leslie Hartigan, and Albert Gill, of Castletroy, travelled to



Bryan Brislane (right) with Leslie Hartigan, Castleconnell, and bells.

Ovens, hauled the bells to Castleconnell and installed them over the past few weeks.

Testing the eight chimes in the still Spring evenings almost brought the Castleconnell countryside to a halt, until the situation was explained. Now a re-dedication ceremony is planned for April 28th at 3.30 p.m., by Dean Ernon Perdue of Killaloe.

Among the guests will be parishioners of St Mary's in Ovens, who will hear the chimes of their old church bells ringing proudly in a new setting.