

The Kirk Bell of Tillicoultry Parish Church (formerly known as St Serf's Church)

Tillicoultry Parish Church's bell was cast in Rotterdam in 1670. It is likely that the bell was imported through Alloa, as trade was thriving between that local port and Rotterdam in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The bell is approximately 50cm in diameter and 42cm from base to upper lugs. The inscription on the bell is in Latin and reads:

Soli Deo Gloria Cornelis Ouderogge Fecit Rotterdam 1670
[Glory to God alone; made by Cornelis Ouderogge at Rotterdam 1670]



The earliest documented proof of the bell's existence is contained in a Presbytery Register of 17 May 1676:

Mr Robert Kirk, minister at Balquhiddel gave institution and admission to Mr Alexander Keith to be minister of the foresaid kirk of Tillicultrie, whereupon he delivered to him the Bible, and took him by the hand, and likewise all the rest of the brethren. As also he delivered to him the beltoul [bellrope], the keys of the kirk, and the keys of the manse and delivered to him earth and stane of the the glybe of Tillicultrie.

There is no record in the Kirk Session minutes of the purchase of this bell and there are no extant heritors' records for this period. The bell's first home would have been at the kirk on Tillicoultry Estate before it moved to the 1773 kirk in the present graveyard, and finally into the bellcote of the existing 1829 kirk.



Cornelis and Dirk Ouderogge were the sons of Jan Ouderogge, a noted cannon, bell and clock maker from Rotterdam. Cornelis died in June 1672. The Tillicoultry bell was the last known bell to have been cast by Cornelis before his death.¹ By that time Cornelis was re-using old cannons to make his bells.

Other local churches had bells cast by Cornelis, include Dunning and Holy Rude in Stirling; the former has unfortunately disappeared, while that belonging to Holy Rude cracked and was melted down to make the new bell.

By Mary McIntyre

¹ Information from the Piershil Museum in the Netherlands, 2004.