



Art

Invocation

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THE significance of the bell in our cultural and ecclesiastical heritage cannot be overestimated. Bells have performed a myriad of diverse functions throughout the centuries and have remained a constant means of communication, from alerting people of impending dangers to the call or invitation to worship.

Some years ago I was fortunate enough to spend a few days holiday in a Donegal hotel which had formerly been one of the old Manor houses of Ireland. I became intrigued with the old bell tower complete with bell, its original function having ceased many years ago, that of calling the workers in from the fields for prayers and evening meal. Today its revised function is one of providing that vital glimpse into the past, reminding us of the harrowing lives that our ancestors lived and their dependence on sustenance for body and soul in equal measures.

As a painter and sculptor I invariably make use of discarded and reclaimed material which I feel may have potential for a piece of art work. Having recently received a quantity of old lead I was drawn to the fact that the material had had a past life having undergone the ravages of time. The weathered and stained surfaces and the telling marks and holes along with the malleability of the metal had a certain fascination for me. No less so was the symbolic significance of lead especially in its connotations with preservation and permanence. A river estuary in South West Scotland and a windswept beach provided the wooden casing and the old piece of rope.

This work was part of a sculptural installation entitled 'Invocation'. It was exhibited in St. Columb's Cathedral Derry in 2013 as part of the UK City of Culture programme. □