

REMEMBERING THE HERALD

Keeping love alive



Hundreds filled St Mary's Church for the memorial service

Picture: Chris Davey FM4698915

There's no such thing as closure for the families of Herald victims and nor should there be, said Bishop James Jones as he addressed the congregation at Dover's 30th anniversary service.

Monday marked three decades since the Herald of Free Enterprise capsized as she left Zeebrugge Harbour in Belgium.

Hundreds of people including survivors packed into St Mary's Church in Dover to pay their respects to the 193 who perished in the disaster.

The bishop, a former pupil at the Duke of York's Royal Military School in Dover, delivered an address.

He is no stranger to major disasters having led the inquiry into the Hillsborough tragedy in which 96 football fans died in 1989.

He said: "There's no such thing as closure, nor should there ever be, for love. The re-living and the remembrance, the quest and the questioning keep alive the love for the one who has died and give expression to their worth."

"Today, in this service you are keeping your love alive. Prayers, spoken and silent, petals soon to be strewn on the water, all done in the name of love and for the love of a name that will be written on your heart for all eternity."



The Rt Rev James Jones gives his address



Peter McNeill reads the Pilot Psalm



'There's no such thing as closure, nor should there ever be, for love'

Peter McNeill, son of Lynda Burt who died in the disaster, read The Pilot Psalm. An Act of Remembrance was given by Sandra Welch, deputy chief executive of the Sailors' Society, which organised the service.

A two minute silence followed and the names of each person who lost their lives were read aloud.

There were hymns including Eternal Father, Strong to Save and Abide with Me, and prayers thanking all the doctors, nurses and emergency services who assisted on the day.

Daniel Lamote who was the safety officer at Zeebrugge for P&O Ferries presented the bell of the Herald of Free Enterprise, rescued from the sunken ferry, to the church. This was during a rendition of Amazing Grace led by Steve Erickson,

He said: "The bell was given by the management to the operations manager. Now with the 30th remembrance, I asked the widow of the operations manager if she was prepared to give the bell.

"I explained that it would be the best place for the bell to be. It's not something you can keep private and she agreed immediately to it."

The bell will hang next to the Herald memorial window.

Mr Lamote, from Belgium, remembers receiving a call at his home two miles from the port. He went straight there in his car, helping wherever possible for four days and nights.

He attends the Dover memorial

service every five years.

He added: "I'll always remember the first day when it happened and the pain is still here.

"This service is a remembrance. There's no politics. I see the survivors, the families and the friends and I see all that happened on the day, again and again.

"It's something that will never pass."

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke said: "It was an incredibly moving service. We will never forget the effect this terrible disaster had on our community. 193 people lost their lives and it is fitting to remember this once again this year.

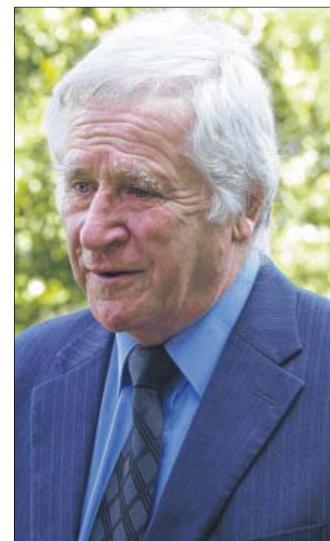
"Particularly tragic is listening to the roll of names read out when so many names were the same and so many families were lost.

"As Bishop James said we should never be looking for closure but we should look for acceptance and understanding and to be able to live with what happened."

Families continued to remember their loved ones by laying wreaths and throwing flowers into the sea at the end of the Prince of Wales Pier.

Only 45 people were able to take part, due to the Western Docks Revival works.

Relatives began the tradition in 1991. Its location, with the lighthouse at the end and the view of the Eastern Docks, is especially poignant as it represents the last view some of the crew saw of Dover before they died.



Brian Gibbons, who was the last to leave the stricken ferry, at the memorial



Steve Erickson at the memorial service

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FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1987: DISASTER CLAIMED 193 LIVES

The Herald of Free Enterprise capsized at 6.28pm on Friday, March 6, 1987, as she left Zeebrugge Harbour in Belgium. She had 459 passengers, 80 crew, and 131 vehicles. A total of 193 people died.

Many of the customers were taking advantage of a special offer from The Sun newspaper

of £1 day trip tickets.

The Dover-registered Townsend Thoresen ferry set sail from the Belgian port at 6.05pm in calm weather.

But she keeled over just outside the harbour because the inner and outer bow doors had been left fully open, allowing seawater to rush in.

It became the greatest civil maritime tragedy, for a British ship in European waters, since the Second World War.

A public inquiry by the Department for Transport heard that assistant bosun Mark Stanley had fallen asleep in his cabin, waking in darkness and feeling the ship tilting over.