

Galway city museum newsletter

nuacht litir museam cathrach na Gallimhe



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*Heritage - make it your generations tradition
about the years our Heritage
enrich the lives*

Faite go nuachtlitir Museum Cathrach na Gaillimhe uimhir a 3

Welcome to Galway City Museum Newsletter No. 3

Editorial

Welcome to the third edition of our Galway City Museum Newsletter/Nuacht Litir Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe. This comes at a time of great excitement for everyone interested in Galway City's museum and the museums service generally. The Feasibility Study commissioned by Galway City Council from Aidan Walsh, Museums Consultant and grant aided by the Heritage Council has been completed and preliminary work may start as soon as September 2003. The City Council will soon be considering tenders for the archaeological assessment which will occur prior to the construction of our new museum. Some areas around the Spanish Arch and Fishmarket have been excavated in the past and are "archaeologically resolved". Other areas have not yet been explored archaeologically and we look forward to some interesting results, though most of the area where the new museum is to be built is reclaimed land and was covered by water in medieval times. The watergate leading from the protected harbour through the town wall and a long section of the town wall have previously been excavated to the side and beneath the line of the Thai Garden and the Lemongrass restaurants. The cobbled street level and parts of the watergate are still visible and have been recently cleaned by the City Council. These will be conserved further soon. To the rear of the Blind Arch (the blocked arch which forms part of the Spanish Arch) earlier excavations have also revealed steps, a guard house and several other features which are now covered over. The top of the Spanish Arch itself had also been excavated. It is difficult to believe that a vegetable garden and a piggery once thrived on the top of the Spanish Arch but this was once the case. The extensive enhancement and conservation works carried out by the City Council over the last ten years has transformed the entire area from a deserted derelict area to a lively well landscaped plaza which, when the new museum is built, will lead to the further revitalization of the whole locality.

IMAGES OF THE PEOPLE – OUR COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

In keeping with our theme of featuring people on our Galway City Museum Newsletter cover we feature an interesting picture of a famous Galway man, Fr. Thomas Burke. The photograph on the cover of this edition of the Galway City Museum Newsletter / Nuacht Litir Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe is of a print of the famous Dominican preacher Very Rev. Father Thomas N. Burke, O.P. This famous Dominican was noted for his sermons and he was one of the best known orators of his day. His sermons were frequently printed and he had a long association with the Dominican Church (St. Marys), Claddagh. He is commemorated in various placenames around the city including Father Burke Park. There is a well known statue of him at the Claddagh and a plaque on the gable wall of a house in Dominick Street commemorates the fact that he resided there. Born in Galway in 1830, Fr. Burke died in 1883 and is buried at Tallaght, Co. Dublin. The print which was recently acquired for Galway City Museum by the Heritage Officer bears his name twice ("Very Rev. Father ThoS N. Burke, o.p."). The print itself was manufactured in Germany as were so many colour tinted engravings and lithographs of this type. Crudely hand tinted and then printed in colour, this has numerous decorative borders and several crosses of heavy duty embossed paper separately made and glued onto its surface. Germany was the best known place for the manufacture of early tinted postcards and tinted and printed greeting cards of all sorts, many with the legend "Made in Saxony" and "Made in Germany" are common from the mid 19th century down to the 1920's. Many postcards of Irish scenes were printed in Germany. This example is probably of mid to late 19th century date. A plaque at the end of Dominick Street on the house where Fr. Burke lived and his well known statue on the traffic island near the Fire Station are reminders of the greatness of this famous Dominican preacher and it is appropriate that this 19th century depiction of him will eventually be displayed in Galway City Museum.

THE SWORD AND MACE RESTORED



The display of the Galway Civic Sword and Mace in the foyer of City Hall coincides happily and appropriately with our latest Recent Acquisitions to Galway City Museum display at City Hall, College Road.

For many years the Galway Civic Sword and Mace were exhibited in the premises of the Bank of Ireland, Eyre Square when not in use and the bank took excellent care of them. Now with the sale of the bank these priceless pieces of civic regalia are housed in their purpose built case in City Hall. Their eventual display in the new Galway City Museum / Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe is something we look forward to.

Retirement Celebrations – It is highly appropriate that the sword and mace have been expertly cleaned by Robert

Blacoe, Master Jeweller of Blacoes Jewellers, Mainguard Street just in time to mark the retirement of Mr. Nick Dolan of Eyre Street. Mr. Dolan was the former Mace Bearer. Mr. Dolan a former member of the Galway Fire Service from whose ranks the Civic Sword and Mace Bearers have traditionally drawn received a standing ovation at the City Council Meeting on July 14th 2003 when a presentation was made to him on behalf of the City Council. Mr. Dolan has carried out his duties as Mace Bearer for more than 43 years and has given wonderful service to the city. Mr. Joseph Naughton, the Sword Bearer is a serving member of the Fire Service.

The Galway Civic Sword and Mace have featured in many Galwegian newspapers since their restoration. Mr. Robert Blacoe undertook their cleaning. Mr. Blacoe has offered to tighten some of the holding mechanisms of the mace and to carry out some other minor repairs to the sword in the near future, work which will be carried out with advice from the Heritage Officer and a qualified conservator.

The sword and mace themselves have a fascinating history and new that they are on display a new information leaflet on their history is available at City Hall. Like many old Towns, Galway's Civic Sword and Great Mace were used in the past as symbols of office of the Mayors and as emblems of the dignity of the Corporation.

THE SWORD

The Civic Sword dates from the time of the charter of King James I, which gave authority in 1610 for the carrying of such a weapon before the Mayor. It is silver-mounted and richly ornamented, and it bears two silversmiths' marks which have been identified as Galway ones.

The covering of the blade displays the arms of the town and many inscriptions put on at different times. One of these commemorates the restoration of King Charles II after Cromwell's death in 1660; another welcomes the accession of King William and Queen Mary and is dated 1692. Other inscriptions include the names of several Mayors.

An attempt was made, probably in the reign of James II, when the old government of the town was for a while restored, to remove the name of the unpopular Cromwellian Mayor Peter Stubbers, put on in 1655, but his name can still be read.

The latest inscription records that Edmond Blake was the last of the old Mayors of Galway. He was in office from 1831 to 1841. The Corporation was abolished in that year, but was renewed again in 1937.

THE MACE

The Great Mace, a massive piece of ornamental silverwork, was made in Dublin in 1710 and was presented to the town by Edward Eyre, Mayor of Galway, in 1712. It is almost five feet long and weighs 211 ounces, 18 penny weights. Its entire surface is decorated with engraved, chased and embossed designs of foliage, scrollwork and Classical figures. The head shows the arms of Queen Anne and the badges of England, Scotland, Ireland and France. The base shows the arms of Galway and those of the Eyre family.

The Sword and Mace were formerly carried on special occasions by Sword and Mace-bearers, appointed by the Corporation. Having been for some years out of the town, in the interval between the time of the old Corporation and the present one, the Sword and Mace were presented to Galway in 1960 by the Hearst Foundation of the United States of America.

Many thanks to James Harold (removals), Morgan Cox Health and Safety Officer for help with the display at City Hall and to Brendan McGowan, Sarah Fossitt, Jean Gormley and Mark Mulveen for their help with artifacts, research and organization of the exhibition.

Congratulations to Sarah Fossitt on completion of her thesis on the 19th century Galway Waterworks which she has submitted as part of her Heritage Management Course in GMT. An exhibition based on her research will be displayed in the Old Waterworks, Terryland as part of our Heritage Week events in September and we hope to feature an article on the same topic in the next issue of our Heritage publication "Galway's Heritage / Oidhreacht na Gaillimhe. Special thanks to Noel Quigley, Michael Collins, Frank and Mike for all the help they have provided in the moving of artifacts to and from the museum.

MISSING STONE REDISCOVERED



Niall Grealish with the arms of the Great Southern and Western Railway. Serendipity seems to have a habit of striking, when we get one artifact relating to a particular theme it usually opens the proverbial floodgates and we get a range of material on same topic. In The Great Southern Hotel Eyre Square has been a case in point. Fergal O'Connell has recently provided us with a photocopy of a drawing by artist and illustrator who in the 1950's did drawings for Richard Hayward's two books The Corrib County and Galway the City of the Tribes. The drawing of the staircase (which we will illustrate in the next Newsletter along with other material relating to the Great Southern was never used in either book. No sooner had we acquired the copy of the drawing than one of our youngest donors to date

- 10 year old Niall Grealish brought in a plaque bearing the arms of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company dated 1845 and which originally came from a fireplace in the Great Southern Hotel. This is the second of a set of two coats of arms, which decorated the fireplace - we have had the matching panel in the Museum since the 1970's. Any information or photographs for this and for a historic display in the hotel would be most welcome.

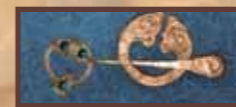
Recent Acquisitions to Galway City Museum

PAIR OF WOMEN'S HAND CUFFS USED IN GALWAY JAIL
The former owner was employed in Galway Jail. Donated anonymously through the good offices of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Galway.



A 19TH CENTURY KEY TO THE REAR DOOR OF THE OLD GALWAY JAIL
Donated by Jackie O'Brien, Galway

TWO IRISH DANCING BROOCHES



These two brooches were awarded to Mrs. Tobin's mother for Irish Dancing. The Copper brooch was made in Galway Jail by Political Prisoners. Donated by Ann Tobin, Galway



While on the subject of Galway Jail it is worth noting that a copy of Women of Galway Jail published by Geraldine Curtin 2001 has been acquired for our Museum Library.

TWO STEREO PHOTOGRAPHS

These were made by the Underwood Company in America. These stereo pairs were held in a viewer, an example of which is in Galway City Museum. The top one shows the Claddagh, the lower one shows the Fishmarket area. Donated by Kevin and Nancy Dalton USA who have become frequent donors and much appreciated visitors to the museum.



DONKEY AND CART

Framed picture of man leading a donkey and cart over the Salmon Weir Bridge. Galway Jail is pictured in the background.

CUT THROAT RAZOR

A cut throat razor which was found in the ruins of a stone wall which was demolished by a car accident at the side of the main road at Dangan Hill, Galway. Donated by Christy Kelly, Galway City Council.



DISHES AND CUTLERY FROM SEAPOINT, GALWAY



A pair of glazed dishes bearing the words Seapoint Galway Bay, the Galway Arms and a pair of dolphins. The pottery is stamped Arklow, Made in the Republic of Ireland and probably dates from the 1940's - 1950's. The well known Seapoint Ballroom in Salthill still exists as an amusement arcade. Also from the restaurant in the Seapoint Ballroom is a set of cutlery. Donated by Jim Higgins, Galway.

DISCOVERIES FROM THE RIVER CORRIB



A small selection of discoveries made while diving in the River Corrib by Mark Mulveen. An ink or vinegar bottle, five clay pipe bowls, two clay pipe stems and a cut throat razor. Mark is writing an account of his finds for the next Heritage Magazine.

STAMPS



Some recent additions to our philatelic collection includes a Galway Horse Tram Stamp which commemorates the Galway General Omnibus Companies horse drawn tram which ran between Galway and Salthill. The second stamp shows the medallion bearing the arms of Galway on the mayoral chain. This is essentially the same arms as is found on the civic sword. Donated by Jim Higgins, Galway.



SHARES CERTIFICATE FROM THE GALWAY GENERAL OMNIBUS COMPANY

Galway General Omnibus Company Shares Certificate. The Galway Salthill Tramway was constructed by the Galway Omnibus Company and ran from Forster Street and the corner of Eyre Square to Salthill. It was made obsolete by the commandeering of the horses by the British Army towards the end of the war. Donated by the Rabbit Family, Forster Street, Galway.



FIRST EXPERIMENTAL FLIGHT COVER



A postal cover for the First Experimental Flight Cover from Galway to London. The cover is dated 26th of August 1929. Donated by F.X. O'Brien, Forster St. Galway.

ARMS OF THE MIDLAND GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF IRELAND



Carved in polished black limestone and dated 1845. One of a pair which sat either side of the fireplace in the foyer of the Great Southern Hotel Eyre Square until around 1960 when the hotel was renovated.

COMMEMORATIVE REPUBLICAN POSTER

Commemorative Republican Poster depicting members of the North Galway Brigade of the IRA who were killed in action. Donated by Bill Scanlan, Former Curator of Galway City Museum.

SHELL FROM THE GALWAY SHELL FACTORY



First Artillery Shell made in Galway Shell Factory since the start of World War I. Various Galway industrialists had been campaigning to have a shell factory located at Galway and had lobbied the British War Office for it to be located in the city. Many members of the corporation were involved in this campaign, a fact which is reflected in the minutes of the time and in local newspapers. Mairteen Mór McDonagh was heavily involved. The work force was mainly women. The inscription on the shell reads as follows:

“Galway National Shell Factory
The first shell manufactured
17-2-1917
Presented to
Martin McDonagh Esq.”

The factory later became the IMI (Irish Munitions Industries Ltd.). Part of the complex still survives and now serves a much more useful service s the theatre and Student Union Bar at NUIG. Purchase

CONNAUGHT RANGER DRESS UNIFORM



A Connaught Ranger Dress uniform dated 1910 with a blue cloth spiked helmet, tunic, trousers, belt and sword hangers. The Connaught Rangers were an Irish regiment in the British Army. Their military base in Galway was Renmore Barracks, which is now the Irish Army Barracks. The accompanying illustration shows how the uniform was worn. The regiment was disbanded after the Irish War of Independence. Purchase.



SARGENT MAJOR'S SASH

Green Sargent Majors Sash worn by Irish Regiments (the regular sashes being red in colour) in the British Army on St. Patrick's Day. This sash was purchased from an old Connaught Ranger. Purchase.



AUTOGRAPHED MENU CARD

Menu from a dinner hosted by Galway City Council on the occasion of the conferring of the Freedom of the City to Eamon De Valera President of Ireland. The menu card is autographed by the President. Acquired by Michael Burke, Galway City Council.

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN 1ST JULY 1946 ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERRING OF THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF GALWAY TO PRESIDENT EAMON DE VALERA.



Back Row L-R: John Burke; Charles Copeland; Peter Green; Jim Brennan; Josie Ownes; Willie Carrick.
Front Row L-R: Michael Lydon; Michael O'Flaherty; Maggie Annie Ashe; Eamon de Valera, President of Ireland; Joe Costello; Susan Emerson; James Reddington. Galway City Council.

Heritage - cherish it forever

*Do you have items of relevance to Galway City Museum /
Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe?*



*If so, please contact The Heritage Office, Galway City Council, City Hall,
College Road, Galway.*

The Museum Newsletter / Nuacht Litir was produced by
The Heritage Office, Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road, Galway.

TEXT: Jim Higgins & Aisling Conneely
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