



B O R D F Á I L T E É I R E A N N

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Background Material on Galway Mace and Sword

For Release after ceremony in Galway on January
19th, 1961.

The decision to restore the Mace and Sword to Galway Corporation was announced by the Hearst Corporation last August. This step followed negotiations which had gone on for two years between Mr. T.J. O'Driscoll, Director General of Bord Failte, and representatives of the Corporation, notably its President, Mr. Richard E. Berlin. The insignia were handed to the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Frank Aiken, by Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, at a ceremony in the City Hall of New York on October 27th last. The Mayor of New York, Mr. Robert F. Wagner, presided at the ceremony.

The Mace and Sword, both superb examples of the craft of the Irish silversmith, were acquired by the late William Randolph Hearst in 1935 for £5,000. They were housed with many other of his paintings and antiques, in St. Donat's Castle in Wales. In 1938 they were sent to Mr. Hearst's home in San Simeon, California, and shortly prior to his death in 1951 the question of the return of the Mace and Sword arose and he gave his approval of the gift.

Mr. Hearst died, however, without carrying out his intention, and the Mace and Sword, with many other art treasures, came under the care of the Hearst Corporation.

The Great Mace and Civic Sword of the Ancient Corporation of the City of Galway have had an eventful history. When Galway Corporation was being dissolved - along with about 60 others - under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1840, it was found that the Mayor, Edmund Blake of Furbough Castle, was owed a considerable sum in arrears of salary. As there were not sufficient funds the Corporation, at its meeting, voted him the Mace and Sword in discharge of the debt.

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On Blake's death they passed to his daughter, Miss Anne Blake of Murrough House, Galway, and in 1930 she sold them to a Dublin art dealer. Galway at that stage was still without a Corporation - it was not restored its Charter and status as a city until 1937 - and it fell to Galway Urban District Council to try to recover the insignia. The effort failed, however, due to lack of funds, and in 1935 the Mace and Sword were again sold.

The Mace was made by John Clifton of Dublin in 1709, is almost five feet in length, and is of solid silver. On its base are engraved a variant of the arms of Galway and the arms of the donor, Edward Eyre - whose family gave their name to Eyrecourt and reclaimed and made into a park the land which is now Eyre Square in Galway.

The Sword was made in Galway in 1660, most probably by the Fallon family of silversmiths. It is double-handed, four feet nine inches long, and its sheath carries the names of the Mayors of Galway, beginning with John Morgan (1600) and ending with Edmund Blake (1831-41), the last Mayor before the dissolution.

The Hearst properties comprise newspapers, magazines, and feature services, radio and television stations, land and mine holdings, a philanthropic organisation and an outstanding art collection.



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Galway Mace and Sword - Remarks by Director
General of Bord Fáilte, - Mr. T. J. O'Driscoll, General
at presentation of Insignia by Taoiseach in Lula
Maxima, University College, Galway, 3.30 p.m.,
Thursday, January 19th, 1961.

We are indebted to one man more than any other for the return of the Galway insignia: Mr. Richard Berlin, President of the Hearst Corporation. It was he who guided the proposal to the Hearst Foundation and who gave it his own highly influential support. A couple of days ago I received a letter from Mr. Berlin which is worth reading to you, for it shows the lively interest which he continues to take in Galway. It gives some indication too of the goodwill towards Ireland which exists in his important organisation. Mr. Berlin wrote:

I am delighted to hear that arrangements for the return of the Mace and Sword are going ahead so well and that Galway is to be honoured by a visit from your Prime Minister, Mr. Sean Lemass, for the occasion. With so many eminent people present for the ceremony, and with that wonderful man, Mayor Redington, presiding, I know this will be a memorable day for Galway.

As I told you in our earlier discussions, we in the Hearst Corporation hold Ireland and the Irish in the highest esteem; and the decision to restore the Mace and Sword will, I hope, be accepted as a gesture of goodwill not alone to Galway but to all the Irish people.

Perhaps I may add my own postscript to that letter, Mr. Mayor. I should like to congratulate you on your splendid representation of Galway, supported by the County Manager, Mr. O'Flynn, at the ceremony in ^{New York.}

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Your presence on that occasion was deeply appreciated by the Hearst representatives; and your visit, I am sure, has done much in America to advance the name of Galway as a city of courtly and warm-hearted people.

The presence of the Taoiseach here today emphasises the fact that it is not alone Galway but Ireland which gains from this act of generosity. In New York our insurance assessors put a very high valuation on the Sword and Mace. But the monetary value of these insignia is of secondary interest to us. What does give intense satisfaction is that this country has regained two superb and irreplaceable pieces of Irish craftsmanship and that Galway has regained two pieces so closely a part of the history of the city.

I notice that more than a thousand people a day are queueing in London to see the Book of Kells. The result may be a greater awareness here at home of this and other unique artistic treasures. Certainly the interest which has been aroused throughout the country in the restoration of Galway's Mace and Sword is, we may hope, an indication of a greater pride in our possession of such works of art.

Perhaps I may bring this thought a stage further here today. If these man-made things are irreplaceable, and highly deserving of our protection, there are unique natural assets which may also be lost if they are not jealously guarded.

People who visit Ireland tell us they like it because it is so unspoiled. Do not let us spoil it for them - or for ourselves.

The charm of Ireland is an asset in the modern world. Our lakes and mountains and coastline, the views from our country roads, our squares and historic buildings, are our heritage. Let us preserve them.

We can have modern houses and shops and offices, hotels, factories, filling-stations and advertisement signs; but let us make sure they are placed and designed with good taste. Let us keep the best of what we have, and make the most of it. If we lose it, nothing will bring it back.

When we rejoice at the return of the Mace and Sword to Galway, I hope we will also keep before us the very great need to preserve those other God-given treasures as well.

I should like to thank the Mayor's predecessor, Peter Greene, for help and advice given when we needed it. The Corporation now has fine insignia of office. May the return of these insignia coincide with the greater material and cultural progress of their native city.
