

THE BOROUGH OF SLIGO

Aspects of its history over 400 years

Sligoe 400 commemorates the granting of The Charter of Sligo. The process of the incorporation of the Borough of Sligoe which was formally given assent on the 26th September 1612 and resulted in the creation of the Borough of Sligoe on the 20th March 1613, by virtue of the Letters Patent granted.

THE ROYAL CHARTER, 1613

On 20th March 1613, James I, by Royal Charter, bestowed on Sligo the status of a Corporate town. The Charter states 'There shall be one body corporate and politic consisting of one Provost and twelve free Burgesses.' The creation of the body known as the Borough of Sligoe bestowed upon its members the 'power and authority to return two discreet and fit men to serve and attend in every Parliament.'

The first Provost of the Borough was Roger Jones, and the creation of the Borough provided the legal authority to make bye-laws and impose fines. The Borough was also empowered to appoint two 'Sergeants at Mace', while the Provost by virtue of the office was also Clerk of the Market.



MACES

The two "Sergeants at Mace" were officers of the Borough by virtue of the Charter and they were regarded as the keepers of the peace. The "Sergeants at Mace" would accompany the Mayor as bearers of the mace during public ceremonies. The two solid silver maces were presented by Alderman Samuel Walton, Alderman Samuel Walton was also elected as an MP and represented Sligo Borough in Parliament.

The maces each weigh about 30 oz and are 18 inches in length, each of the mace bears an Irish hallmark for the years 1702-03.

Sligo Borough's maces depict the emblems of Ireland (harp), England (rose), France (fleur-de-lis) and Scotland (thistle).

Both maces remained in the possession of the Wynne family of Hazelwood for almost 150 years before being formally presented to The Mayor of Sligo Mr. Martin Madden.

Martin Madden was the first Mayor of the reformed Corporation, in 1842 and he was the proprietor of The Sligo Distillery which was based on Ratcliffe Street (Grattan Street).



THE MAYOR'S CHAIN

The tradition of the wearing of a Mayoral chain dates from the medieval period and has its origins as a badge of authority and fealty which was symbol of the decentralised Feudal system of rule.

It is believed that the Provost of Sligo which was later to become the office of Mayor of Sligo, wore a chain.

The Mayor's chain used today dates from 1882, and was made by the Sligo firm of clockmakers and jewellers, Nelson Brothers. The inscription on the reverse side of the medallion reads: "Presented principally by Bernard Collery, Mayor of Sligo, 1882, and former mayors". In addition to the contribution of Mayor Bernard Collery, fifteen former mayors each contributed a link to the chain.

The chain is of 18ct gold and weighs 15.5 ounces. It consists of 18 shields, each surmounted by a shamrock with a gold medallion hung from the centre shield.

On the reverse of each shield the name and year of office of each Mayor who added a link is inscribed.

One side of the medallion has a beautifully worked enamel of the Borough Arms with the inscription of Corporation of Sligo 1612 around its edge.

