

# Mystery surrounds future of 35,000 euro All-Ireland medal

By  
John O'Shaughnessy

felt the appropriate place for it to be was in Limerick. We're delight-

ed with our acquisition. It's a little bit more expensive than we

thought it might be but we were fairly determined to get it".

Within weeks, however, the paper had changed hands, after protracted negotiations.

The new owners, Johnson Press, were not involved in the purchase of the medal.

Denis Holmes, chairman of the Limerick

County Board, confirmed this week that they had not been contacted at any stage about the medal's future.

"It was said at the time it was to have a resting place in Limerick but it doesn't seem to have arrived here yet".

He claimed he had 'phoned Mr McStay after the Limerick Post first

raised the issue last year, "and he said he would get in touch with me".

Mr Holmes told the Post that they would be delighted to provide it with a home.

"This is a very important medal and is very much part of Limerick's GAA history. Maybe Mr McStay has other plans

for it, but we are disappointed that since its purchase over 18 months ago, that we have not been approached. It would be nice to have it on view at the Gaelic Grounds, or any other venue".

The medal sold by O'Brien's descendants - was awarded after Limerick Commercial

beat Louth (Dundalk Young Irelands) in a field called The Big Bank at Clonskeagh, Dublin.

There was no cup for the Limerick team and the players did not receive their medals until 1912.

It was the only time that the All Ireland was played on a club instead of on a county basis.



The Limerick Gaelic Grounds seen as ideal home for 1887 All-Ireland football medal.

THE 1887 nine-carat gold All-Ireland football medal, purchased at auction in London two years ago, by the previous owners of the Limerick Leader, has still not found a home in the city, as promised.

The medal, purchased at Sotheby's for a reported 35,000 euro, was owned by the descendants of Malachi O'Brien, who featured on the Limerick team which beat Louth in the 1887 All-Ireland football final.

It was originally thought to be the only medal from 1887 still in existence, but it later emerged that there are at least two others, one housed in a Dublin museum and the other privately owned in west Limerick.

When the Limerick Post raised the whereabouts of the medal last year, Mr John McStay, chairman of the Leinster Leader group, owners of the Limerick Leader prior to its take over by Johnson Press, said it was in a drawer at his Leinster residence.

It was his intention, he said, to have it returned to Limerick to be put on display, either at the Gaelic Grounds or a local museum.

When the medal was bought at Sothebys in late 2005, the sale generated an amount of publicity nationwide.

Mr McStay, interviewed on RTE, said it had been bought for the people of Limerick and would be put on display at the newspaper's offices in O'Connell Street.

"It's a unique piece of Limerick history and we

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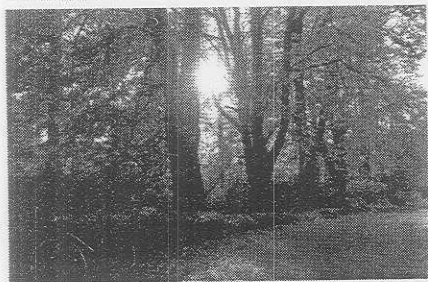


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# 1887 medal arrives after 18 month delay

THE Limerick Post's campaign to have the 1887 All-Ireland medal purchased by the Limerick Leader at auction in London, in 2005, returned to the city, has had a happy ending

By John O'Shaughnessy

THE 1887 All-Ireland football medal bought by the Limerick Leader, at auction in Sotheby's, London, in November, 2005, has finally found a resting place in the city, albeit temporarily with more than a little assistance from the Limerick Post. It has been placed at the Hunt Museum.

The medal was won by Malachi O'Brien, on the Limerick Commercial team which beat the Louth representatives, in the All-Ireland final of 1887.

It was put up for auction by his descendants, and purchased by the Limerick Leader, for a reported 35,000 euro.

Mr John McStay, then chairman of the Leinster Leader, owners of the Limerick Leader, told the nation that it had been bought for the people of Limerick, and would be put on display at the newspaper's offices in O'Connell

Street.

However, weeks later, the Limerick Leader was sold to Johnston Press of Scotland, and nothing more was heard of the medal, until its whereabouts was questioned in mid 2006, by the Limerick Post.

Obviously, the successful bid for the medal was made when negotiations for the sale of the Leinster Leader group of newspapers, which included the Limerick Leader, was near conclusion.

Within days of the report asking the whereabouts of the medal having appeared, Mr McStay contacted the Limerick Post and revealed it was in a drawer at his residence, adding he was looking for a suitable home for it.

Denis Holmes, chairman of the Limerick County Board, suggested that it be put on display at the Gaelic Grounds. Many GAA followers also questioned when the medal would be returned to Limerick, as promised.

Four weeks ago, the Limerick Post again pursued the matter, at the behest of readers.

Now, it has been confirmed by the Hunt Museum, that the medal was, last week, handed over to them

by Mr McStay, and will be on public view shortly during an exhibition of Limerick silver.



The 1887 All-Ireland winning medal, now at the Hunt Museum.

## RRR - easy when you know how

CONTINUING their drive to encourage people to better manage their waste, the Limerick network of Estate Management will host two "Waste Awareness Days" to focus on the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle strategy.

A workshop will be held in the Old Christians' Clubhouse in Rathbane, on May 23, from 11am to 2pm.

Participants at will be given the opportunity to purchase home composters at a reduced price of 10 euro and reusable bags with the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle message will be distributed, as well as mugs and other products made from recycled materials.

Staff from Limerick City Council's environment department will be in attendance with information on composting and litter and also on hand will be a number of waste collectors who will advise on the reduce, reuse, recycle strategy. Speaking to the Limerick Post, Tracy McElligot of the Limerick Estate Management Network said that all communities have a responsibility for the environment and a choice of how they dispose of their waste materials.

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