

MAYORAL CHAIN 'MISSING' AGAIN



Mayor Jack Bourke wearing the Sheriff's chain at the Il Florilegio circus. This was the last time the chain was used in public before it went missing. With the Mayor is Catherine De Bellefroid of Il Florilegio

By LAURA RYAN

ONE of the city's solid gold mayoral chains has gone "missing" and the gardai have been called in to try and recover it.

A spokesman for Limerick Corporation said this Wednesday the gardai have now been contacted and an investigation is underway.

He would not comment on suggestions that the chain may have been stolen.

"I am appalled that this could happen for the second time in a year. Last time I asked the Mayor and officials what security measures would be taken to ensure this would not happen again and I was assured adequate measures would be taken," said Alderman Pat Kennedy, Fine Gael.

He said that this time it was more serious in that the historic sheriff's chain was missing. The previous chain that went missing was a silver one presented by the TSB Bank and used by deputy mayors.

The last night the Mayor wore the chain, known as the sheriff's memorial chain, was at a party after the opening night of the Il Florilegio circus in the city last Thursday.

The Limerick Leader took the last photograph of Mayor Bourke wearing the chain at the function.

He is unavailable for comment as he is currently in the United States on a visit to Limerick's sister city, Spokane.

He left for the US the day after the circus, noticed the chain was missing and his car and home were searched for the missing item.

The ceremonial chains of office date back to 1820. Made of gold, they were for the use of the Mayor and two sheriffs.

The sheriffs' chains were later used by the town clerk and the city treasurer.

Last July, the Deputy Mayor's chain of office was stolen in a weekend break in at the home of Cllr Kieran O'Hanlon.

The solid silver chain, believed to be insured for about £8,000, was recovered in August.

It was donated by the TSB Bank some years ago.