

Historic Ship's Pass presented to the Nation



A ship's pass dated 1687, signed by **King James II** and **Samuel Pepys**, which was acquired by the Dublin Port & Docks board in 1924, was presented to the National Library of Ireland by Enda Connellan, Former CEO, Dublin Port Company on the eve of his retirement.

Mr Connellan commented "Dublin Port Company is delighted to present this interesting and rare historical document to the National Library of Ireland. This will ensure that it is appropriately conserved and displayed. In its new home it will also be more accessible to the public."

The pass is one of the few known examples of **17th century ships' passes in the world**, with others held at the National Archives in Kew, London and at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

The example presented to the National Library of Ireland was designed to provide passage for the merchant vessel **the Mary of Cork**, free from interference by English warships or warships belonging to states maintaining diplomatic relations with England.

The vessel left **Dublin port in late 1687**, bound for the **Canary Islands**. At the time, the Canary Islands were major exporters of sugar and Malvasia, a fortified white wine which travelled well and was extremely popular in Britain. The Mary of Cork may have been trading in such foodstuffs, in return for products such as salted Irish beef.

The vessel was manned by a **crew of five** and **captained by Zachary Peebuchet**.

The **Mary of Cork** ship's pass was issued at the **Court of Whitehall** on 29 September 1687 and was signed by two very famous men of that time, **King James II** (Lord High Admiral 1685-1688) and **Samuel Pepys** (in his capacity as Secretary to the Admiralty). This was just short of a year before **King James II** was forced to flee England.

On 18 April 1688, the ship's pass was returned to Ireland, where it was entered into the registry of the High Court of Admiralty of Ireland by Thomas Williamson. It was acquired by the Dublin Port & Docks Board in 1924.

The Ship's pass is on display in the National Library's Department of Manuscripts in 2-3 Kildare Street, Dublin until December 2010 and after that it is available for the archives on request. Keeper of manuscripts at the National Library of Ireland Colette O'Flaherty said the library was extremely appreciative to come into possession of such an interesting artefact.

King James II was the last Catholic monarch to reign over the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Increasingly Britain's political and religious leaders opposed him as too pro-French, too pro-Catholic, and too much of an absolute monarch. When he produced a Catholic heir, the tension exploded and the leaders called on **William III of Orange** (his son-in-law and nephew) to land an invasion army from the Netherlands. James fled England (and thus abdicated) in the **Glorious Revolution of 1688**. He was replaced by William of Orange who became king as **William III**, ruling jointly with his wife (James's daughter) **Mary II**. Thus William and Mary, both Protestants, became joint rulers of England, Scotland, and Ireland in 1689.

King James II made one serious attempt to recover his crowns, when he landed in Ireland in 1689 but, after the defeat of the Jacobite forces by the Williamite forces at the Battle of the Boyne in the summer of 1690, James returned to France. He lived out the rest of his life as a pretender at a court sponsored by his cousin and ally, **King Louis XIV**.

Samuel Pepys was an English naval administrator and Member of Parliament, who is now most famous for the diary he kept for a decade while still a relatively young man. Although Pepys had no maritime experience, he rose by patronage, hard work and his talent for

administration, to be the Chief Secretary to the Admiralty under both King Charles II and subsequently King James II.

His influence and reforms at the Admiralty were important in the early professionalisation of the Royal Navy.

The detailed private diary **Pepys** kept from 1660 until 1669 was first published in the nineteenth century, and is one of the most important primary sources for the English Restoration period. It provides a combination of personal revelation and eyewitness accounts of great events, such as the Great Plague of London, the Second Dutch War and the Great Fire of London.



King James II



William Of Orange



Samuel Pepys

King Louis XIV



The Battle of the Boyne.

Source: The National Library of Ireland & IMDO, August 2010. Images courtesy of The National Library of Ireland and the National Galley UK