

self as the shy young man bashful about the compliments. But after the second performance attended by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory (possibly), Padraic Colum, and the celebrated author himself. Pearse was ready with a speech in which he so clearly drew comparison between the play and the present, that he left no doubt that he considered Ireland was in a similar mood of dejection and despair awaiting a deliverer.

Dr. Gwynn commented "It dawned on me then that not only did Pearse long for political martyrdom as a national hero. He actually believed that he might himself fill the heroic role that had inspired him so much".

### **SYMBOLIC MEANING**

The author — "seated in the audience with his grey hair and piercing eyes, and his general air of personal distinction —" being asked to reply, stated that like Pearse he noted the symbolic meaning.

"He hoped that it might presage a new age in which the young men and women of Ireland would once again lead the lives of free people on the mountains."

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## **Smithstown Axe-head**

A flat decorated bronze axe-head was found during the operation of removing a mound with a bulldozer about June, 1968. Finder James McDermot. The axe-head was acquired by Rothe House Museum in June, 1969. The site it situated in the townland of Smithstown Upper, about one mile from Thomastown on the Kilfane Road, on the lands of Mr. Michael Carroll.

Axeheads made of bronze were used as utilitarian tools, like hatchets, throughout the Bronze Age, from about 2,000 B.C. to 700 B.C. or later. They were originally modelled on the stone axehead but with less bulk so as to economise the valuable metal. For this reason they are described as Flat Axeheads and also to distinguish them from the subsequent elaborated types which culminated in the Socketed Axehead.

Within the Flat Axehead type there are plain ones and those with surface ornament, either cast or tooled. The specimen from Smithstown shows traces of ornament both on the flat faces and on the narrow edges. It is unlikely that these decorative objects were used as utility tools but rather as status symbols or tokens of authority or honour.

The ornament reflects the art motifs current in Ireland at this early period and there are many such examples of the bronze-smith's craft found throughout the country.

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