

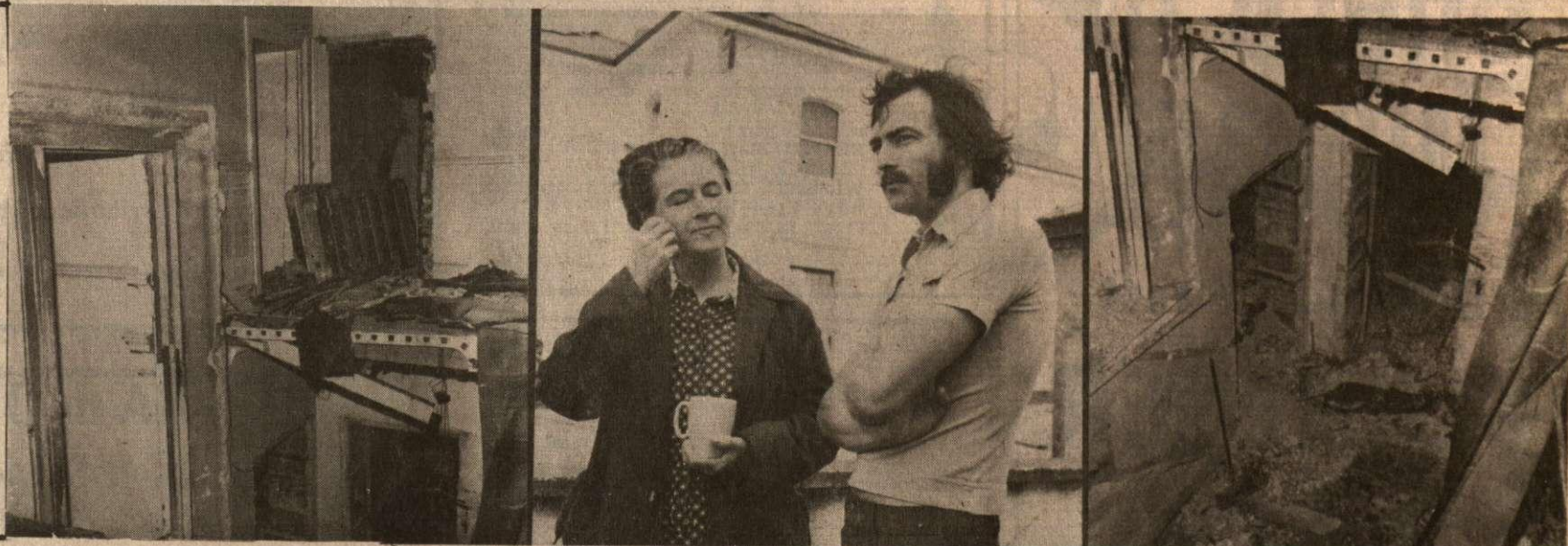
Galway Advertiser

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Thursday 15th July 1976

HOTEL BLAST—

Bomb not in Hotel before



The bomb was placed just to the left of this picture.

Mrs. Margaret Murray and her son Michael after the blast.

Another view of the remains of the first floor

Despite lengthy statements from the owners, staff and residents at the Salthill Hotel the Gardaí have no particular lead as to who was responsible for the bomb which caused considerable damage last Friday morning.

The Murray family had just breathed a sigh of relief when no bomb was found in their Salthill Hotel following explosions in four others throughout Southern Ireland the previous weekend despite a warning that there was a bomb in their hotel. But at 10.15 last Friday morning Dublin Gardaí received word that a bomb would explode at the Salt-

hill Hotel at 10.30 a.m.

The receptionist Marie Doherty received the call which was passed on by Galway Gardaí. She immediately informed Mrs. M. Murray and the alarm was raised. The hotel was quickly cleared and only two minutes after the last person left the bomb, estimated to be between 20-30 lbs., exploded.

The bomb was placed under the stairs by a public telephone in the old part of the hotel. Twenty rooms, mainly staff, were destroyed or badly damaged. The blast ripped through the outer wall, floor, ceilings and roof. Bathrooms, toilets,

storerooms and lounges were wrecked. No fire started but many windows were broken in other parts of the hotel. Mercifully no one was injured.

Gardaí and firemen arrived on the scene in strength and the hotel was carefully searched in case of further bombs. The Army Bomb Disposal Unit, based in Athlone, helped in the search.

An area of almost half a mile around the hotel was closed to the public. The "All Clear" was given at 5.30 p.m. Staff and volunteers began to clean up and on Saturday it was business as usual. Guests even stayed on during

Friday night.

WAS THE BOMB ALREADY THERE?

The responsibility for the bomb was previously claimed on 3rd July by a caller to the Gardaí in Dublin. He said he was speaking on behalf of the U.F.F. And the bombs in the other Irish hotels were in retaliation for the recent murder of Ulster business men. Gardaí believed that a bomb was to have been placed at the Salthill Hotel that Saturday but it appears the bomber did not reach his target.

However, the man who phoned the warning last

Friday claimed the bomb at the Salthill Hotel was there all the time. It had simply been re-primed.

This is not the belief of Mrs. Murray. She says after the first bomb scare the hotel was thoroughly searched. The small cupboard under the stairs was definitely looked into. It was searched by her son Michael and she was with him. Last Wednesday, because the area was going to be used for a private reception it was thoroughly cleaned and any object as big as a 20lbs plus bomb was bound to be discovered. "I am as certain as I could be there was nothing there before

Friday," said Mrs. Murray. She also remarked that, although the explosion was a terrible shock, she appreciated that a warning was given. Mrs. Murray expressed her sincere gratitude for all the offers of help and good wishes she received. Gardaí have remained on duty at the hotel.

APPEAL

There is a general feeling of unease in the city following the blast. The Gardaí have said there is no specific security plan in operation, traffic has to be kept moving through the city. They do, however, advise that if a bomb

warning is given the area should be cleared at once.

This newspaper further appeals to bomb hoaxers. It may be they have a peculiar sense of humour or derive some kind of pleasure at putting people to inconvenience, but perhaps they might enjoy equal pleasure at this time if they would stop and realise they were helping the community by not being so stupid. It is also a fairly serious offence. And the public should report anyone behaving in such a childish and irresponsible fashion.

WHO PAYS FOR DAMAGE?

Estimates on repairs at the hotel are still being prepared and it is believed costs will be hefty. Normally, bomb wrecked property would be regarded as civic malicious damage and as such costs would be met by ratepayers. But in recent years the Irish Government has tended to view bombings with Northern Irish connections as being the responsibility of the State and damage is paid out of central funds.

See "Comment" page 8.

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Accident

Kills

Visitor

A serious accident happened on Tuesday afternoon on the Oranmore Road, resulting in the death of one man.

Mr. Philip Purcell, Bridge Street, Newry was a passenger in a car driven by a fellow Newry man Michael Felt when they were in collision with a McDonogh lorry at Curegreine—the sweeping hill drive just beyond Merlin Park.

The impact of the accident was considerable; the car was broken in two. Mr. Purcell died later at the Regional Hospital and Mr. Felt's condition is described as 'fair'. The lorry driver escaped badly shaken but unhurt.

Six people were taken to the Regional Hospital also on Tuesday following an accident between a car and an ice-cream van at Threanedle Road. No one was seriously hurt and were all released from hospital.