

## **Luggala Estate returns historic Galway Gate to its rightful home.**

**Friday 16 October 2020:** Luggala Estate was delighted to help facilitate the return of the historic 17<sup>th</sup> Century Galway Gate to the west of Ireland this Summer.

The Gate is believed to have come to Luggala from the previous owner Garech de Bruin's childhood home in Co. Mayo. The assumption is that it was intended to be restored as a folly near Lough Tay, but it was never put up on Luggala Estate. The Gate lay in pieces, an unidentified heap of limestone, for many years until rediscovered by estate worker Seamus Hayes, more than a year after Garech's death in 2018.

The massive bow gate, believed to date from the 1620s, consists of 25 tonnes of limestone sections. The staff at Luggala assisted greatly with the safe packing and transport of the 110 stone pieces to Claregalway Castle in Co Galway in August, where they were cleaned and assembled by an expert team led by Michael Herwood on behalf of Galway City Council.

*Tony Boylan, Director, Luggala Estate Limited* said "It was an honour to help fulfil one of Garech's dying wishes and return the Galway Gate to its rightful home. If Seamus had not realised the importance of the limestone sections which were covered in moss and debris after lying unprotected for so many years, Garech's very generous gift might never have come about. We want to thank everyone involved including Alan Maxwell of DNG Galway who put us in contact with Galway's Heritage officer, Galway City Council and Galway City Museum for working closely with us, it has been an incredible journey.

"The new custodians of Luggala have a very strong interest in history, heritage and conservation and they were very supportive of this project from the beginning. They worked to ensure this important part of Galway's heritage was returned quickly and they are delighted that it has been a success. They are looking forward to visiting Galway to see the re-assembled Gate and to learn more about its history".

*Eithne Verling, Director of Galway City Museum* said; "On behalf of Galway City Council and the City Museum, I want to thank the Estate of Garech de Bruin and the new owners of Luggala for their generosity and support in helping to ensure the Galway Gate was returned. We are thrilled to have the Gate reassembled and conservation work will now commence on restoring it to its former glory. Archaeologist Paul Walsh, who undertook extensive research on the Gate and Mike Herwood and Eamon O' Donaghue who led the team reassembling the Gate also deserve our thanks and credit."

*Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer with Galway City Council* said, "There are two very similar porticos in the inner courtyard at Portumna Castle (1627) and the surviving frieze, Tuscan columns and pedestals are an excellent example of 17<sup>th</sup> century Jacobean architecture. It is fantastic that the people of Galway and everyone with an interest in Irish history and Irish architecture will now be able to view the Galway Gate".

**Ends.**

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