

Turoe Stone Ordered to leave Turoe?

The Turoe Stone, one of Europe's finest examples of carved stone from the La Tène period, has been in state care since 1948.

During this time it has been in front of a farm house at Turoe, Co. Galway. It sat beside a ringfort in Turoe for nearly 2000 years until it was dragged a few hundred yards to Turoe House as a decorative feature in the lawn over a hundred years ago.

According to the Department, a report in 1995 confirmed that the stone was suffering damage. Ten years later it was covered with a wooden structure and it stands that way today.

As member of the local community and of a local historical society (*Turoe Celtic Society*), I was absolutely shocked recently when I heard that ***The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government*** had decided to move **The Turoe Stone** from Turoe to a museum in Galway. There it is likely to be treated as a 'prize trophy' and used to attract tourists to the city.

Yes, the stone needs to be protected from weather damage, but there are alternatives that would ensure that the stone remains in situ. A structure could be built around the stone to protect it, or it could be moved to a protected building on the farm where it is now. In Scotland, where they faced a similar problem with the Pictish Stones, these are the two solutions that have been used, although removal to a museum was considered. Basically, it was decided that the stones should remain in the area to which they belong. Or in Denmark the Jelling Stones have been covered with an invisible silicone type material that has no adverse visual impact

Around Ireland there are many National treasures that are scattered in rural settings. Is this the beginning of a strategy to strip these rural settings of these treasures and to remove them to museums in the name of 'protection'? In the case of **The Turoe Stone**, protection in situ would be the best for everyone involved. Each year many people come to Turoe to see the stone, and they would still be able to enjoy it in a rural setting, 500 yards from its original position.

“In the interest of Rural Development, and attracting visitors to rural Ireland, it is essential to retain such National Monuments where they belong” - Kieran Jordan

Further information on the Turoe Stone and some recently discovered archaeological sites surrounding it can be found in

Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society

Vol 55, 2003

or at

www.touchstoneoftruth.com