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## BUNRATTY NAZI LOOT CLAIM IS REJECTED

By MAIRÉAD NÍ  
CHAOIMH

**ALLEGATIONS** claiming that a local antique collection contained Nazi loot were rejected outright this week by an international Art Loss Register.

The London based organisation said that the furniture collection, which is housed at Bunratty Castle, contained no stolen or missing artefacts.

The Gort Furniture Collection, which John Hunt Snr helped to assemble, comprises of over 400 items of furniture, tapestries and other art from the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries.

"We are very pleased but not surprised," commented Brian O'Connell, chairman of Shannon Heritage.

While the Gort Collection was given a clean bill of health this week, the inquiry into the Hunt Museum collection continues to run into obstacles.

This inquiry was called after Dr Shimon Samuels of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Paris alleged that John and Gertrude Hunt had links with dealers in looted Nazi art.

It was also alleged that artefacts in the Bunratty Castle acquired by John Hunt may have had a dubious background.

A team appointed to investigate the claims

regarding the Hunt Museum resigned after a dispute over how the inquiry should be financed.

The Royal Irish Academy said this week that they are helping to set up another inquiry.

A comprehensive study was carried out on all the items in the Gort Collection by the Gort Collection Trust, which was funded by Shannon Heritage.

Sarah Jackson of the Art Loss Register in London said: "To the best of our knowledge, none of the objects from the Gort collection have been registered as stolen or missing on our database of stolen and missing art, and nor has a claimant reported any item from the collection to us as a loss between 1933 and

1945."

"I would hope that the reputation of these collections has not fallen due to unsubstantiated claims. Big collections the world over sometimes have discovered they have innocently acquired items of improper provenance," added Mr O'Connell.

The collection will be displayed on the internet by the end of the year.

Carrying out an audit was something Shannon Heritage had planned to do regardless of outside allegations, added Mr O'Connell.

The news of the Gort collection comes as UL announces this week that John Hunt Jnr, who died last year, will be presented with a posthumous honorary doctorate next month.