Ken brings Limerick history to life with castle exploration

A new book detailing the results of eight years of archaeological excavations at King John's Castle has been welcomed as a "wonderful resource to explore Limerick's rich heritage".

Entitled 'A Place Of Great Consequence', the publication by author Ken Wiggins outlines the fascinating history of the castle through the 12,000 artefacts uncovered during excavations between 1990 and 1998.

From early medieval pottery and arrowheads to jewellery, coins and building materials spanning some 900 years, these items provide a unique insight into life in Limerick from its earliest settlements up to the present day.

Alongside descriptions and illustrations of many of the items uncovered, the author also details the history of the castle and the settlements that pre-date it, with a series of maps and other illustrations showing what it would have looked like at different times in its history.

Beginning with pre-Viking days, the narrative moves on to show how the Hiberno-Norse inhabitants of Limerick further developed the site before the Anglo-Normans arrived, and the decision to build the castle was made.

All aspects of the castle's development are explored, from construction in the medieval period down to recent times as a heritage property in the late 20th century.

What emerges is a complete picture of the castle as it has been provided for life in Limerick from before the Viking settlement to the last days of the castle Barracks.

More than 13,000 artefacts, including ceramics, objects of copper alloy, iron, wood, leather, bone and stone, were found during the course of the excavations. Among the finds was a pistol with a copper alloy barrel, iron nails and wooden objects, used during the great siege of the castle in 1642, as well as contemporary written accounts of the events.

A pamphlet printed that year, reporting the capture of the castle, described Limerick as 'a place of great consequence', a phrase that provides the title for this major new book.

Pottery found during the excavations also offers proof that the

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University Maternity Hospital earns gold

UNIVERSITY Maternity Hospital Limerick recently became the first hospital in the country to receive a Gold Award from the Irish Heart Foundation.

The hospital earned gold in the Healthy Eating Awards scheme, a consumer-posting initiative run by its canteen staff. This initiative will also benefit expectant mothers and visitors, whose meals are prepared in the same kitchen.

Angela Holton, catering officer at the hospital, said, "Displaying calorie counts was the final piece in the puzzle to get a gold award. Every day we put up calorie and allergen information on the blackboard."

Janis Morrissey, dietician with the Irish Heart Foundation, commented the hospital.

"This is the highest level of the Healthy Eating Award and recognizes workplaces that have achieved a particularly high standard," said Ms Morrissey.