Archeologists Janie Crone and Christine Tarbet on site in Broad Street this week as the Teamwork group carry on digging in the background.

History to repeat itself after dig?

By LEADER REPORTER

AN ANCIENT CITY centre site where Limerick people toiled at intensive industrial activity in the late 1500s could soon be a workplace for their 20th century counterparts.

The site, on Broad Street, is currently being excavated by a group of young Limerick people under the supervision of three archaeologists employed by Limerick Corporation.

The dig is being carried out in an area four of the designated inner city area which because of special grants and tax incentives is almost certain to be developed. This, taken with the fact that the Corporation have singled out this 30 x 20 metre site for excavation, indicates that some form of development is almost certain to take place there soon.

Teamwork

Since June of this year a 12-strong group employed by Limerick Civic Trust on a Teamwork scheme have been carrying out a dig in the area for the Corporation.

Led by Ms. Christine Tarbet along with other archaeologists, Mr. Brian Hodkinson and Ms. Janie Crone, the dig is scheduled to be completed by the end of August.

Limerick Corporation and Waterford Corporation are the only two local authorities in the country who have commissioned such digs. When the excavation is completed, the site will be owned by developers to move in as all the possible information that can be extracted from the site will have been uncovered by the diggings.

Ms. Tarbet explains that while they had not uncovered anything spectacular, the work had produced some very enlightening items.

Iron smelting

"We have found the remains of furnaces dating back to the late 16th century which indicates that a fairly intensive amount of iron smelting was being carried out at this location," she said.

She pointed out that it would take the team as long again as the dig had taken to sift through the items uncovered to determine exactly what activities were carried out at the site.

However, she is happy that the site was the location of some intensive industrial work by the standards of the time.

Two kilns for drying grain have also been uncovered with the remains of some barley and rye giving rise to speculation that maybe beer was brewed at the site by our ancestors.

A host of broken pottery items, some dating back to the 14th century, have also been found and these will be examined in detail later.

This older pottery came from France, indicating trading links with the continent dating back to 1300s. Much of the latter pottery found appears to be of native origin and to have also been made in Limerick.

Publication

A detailed report on the site is to be published by the trio when they have completed their work and this will be available to the public.

Also, any person wishing to visit the site is more than welcome to do so. However, the dig is scheduled to be completed by the end of the month and any interruption would delay the work in progress. Nevertheless, each Friday at 2 p.m. the archaeologists on site will be happy to show the public around.