Drainage work uneartehs 17th century bomb

By JESSICA QUINN

EXCAVATIONS of the Abbey River have unearthed another 17th century mortar bomb.

The newly-discovered mortar bomb, complete with gunpowder, weighs over 15 stone and is around 14 inches in diameter.

Archaeologists have been examining the river bed for historical finds as part of the main drainage scheme.

The mortar bomb is believed to be in a good state of preservation despite being submerged under the Shannon for centuries.

According to director of archaeology with Limerick Corporation, Edmond O'Donovan, the bomb dates back to the Williamite sieges of Limerick.

The unexploded mortar bomb was removed by Army bomb disposal experts from Collins Barracks, Cork.

The mortar bomb will be moved to Haulbowline naval docks in Cork, where it will be examined and X-rayed.

MR. O'Donovan explained: 'Standard procedure in these cases is that the find is always reported to the Army in spite of the fact that it has been submerged in mud and water for over 300 years one never assumes that such a find is safe.'

This precautionary measure was taken, he said, because even today farmers in France and Belgium are being injured by unexploded munitions from World War One.

This is the third mortar bomb to be found in the river since the work began.

'We are delighted with the find as the excavations in the Abbey River are rapidly unearthing a veritable treasure trove of Limerick history. Other finds include a pike believed to be dated at 1798 and a revolver which may have been dumped in the river circa the Irish Civil War period,' said Mr O'Donovan.

But, he said, it is not only artefacts of war that are being found in the river.

'To date, significant finds have been made of common household implements from medieval times and a number of rare medieval seals used for stamping documents have been uncovered. He revealed that an exhibition of these finds is being prepared by Limerick Corporation.

'Limerick Corporation as the main agency involved in the main drainage project are to be complimented for their imaginative approach to archaeological investigation during the work. A special exhibition is being prepared to display the various archaeological finds in the Jim Kemmy museum in the near future.'