

HISTORY

A stairway to history in Limerick Church

by **Bernie English**
bernie@limerickpost.ie

A STAIRWAY that was donated to an English hospital by a local family is to be returned for use in a Limerick church.

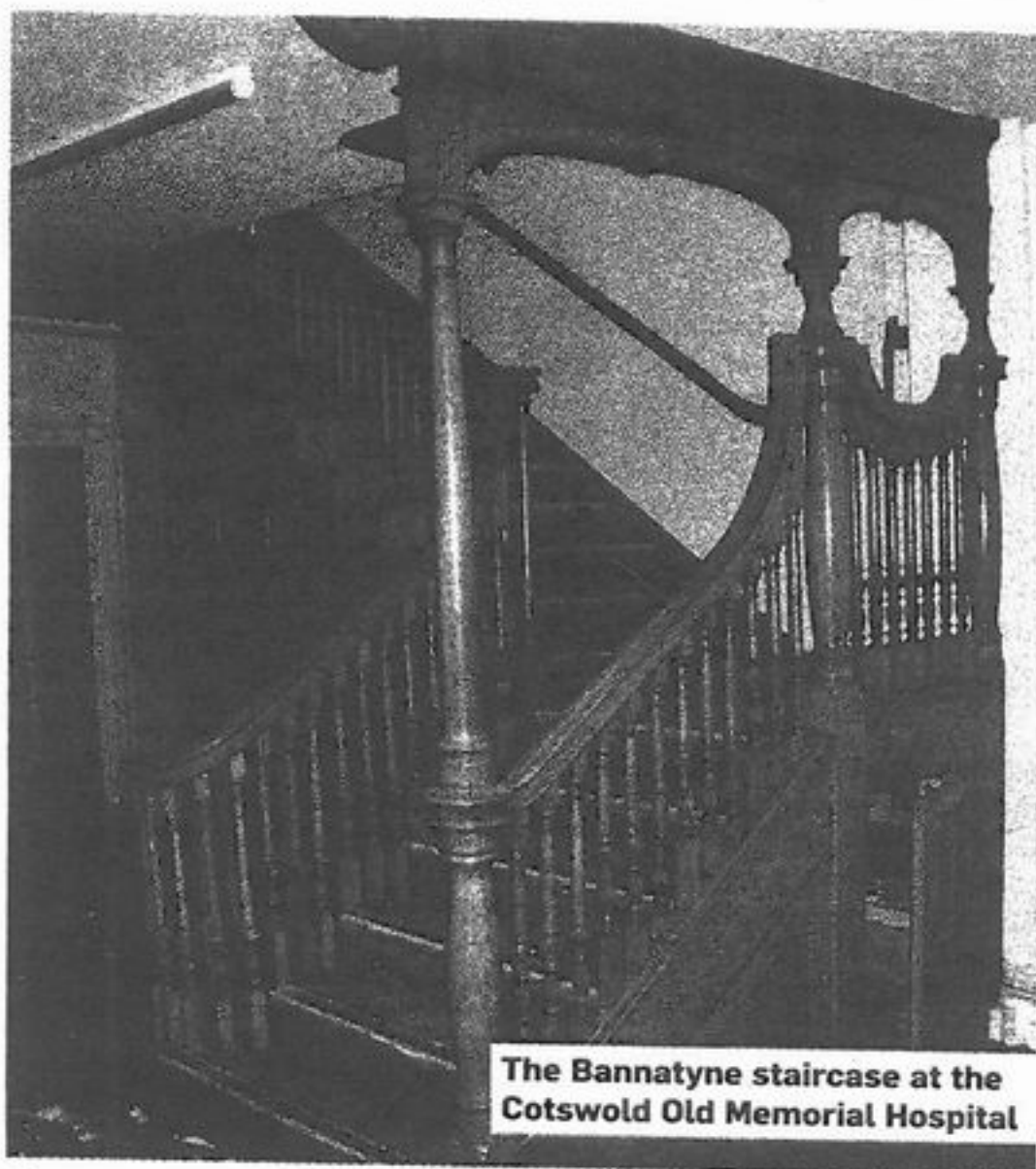
Cotswold District Council will fund the removal of an historic oak staircase from the Cotswold Old Memorial Hospital and transfer it to the custodianship of the Limerick Civic Trust.

The staircase, which is regarded as an official war memorial, was donated to the hospital by the family of Major Edgar James Bannatyne, who was a member of the Royal Flying Corps during World War 1 and died at Rendcomb airfield in the Cotswolds in 1917.

The hospital is being demolished and the council wanted to ensure that the staircase was preserved for posterity. The line of the family has now died out but they are remembered as leading merchants who helped to bring prosperity to Limerick.

Limerick Civic Trust will honour their memory by installing the staircase in St Munchin's Church on Church Street in King's Island, which contains a number of graves and monuments commemorating the Bannatyne family. The Trust is currently converting the Church into a Military Museum.

Chief Executive David O'Brien said



they were very grateful that Cotswold District Council gave them custodianship of the historic staircase.

"For over 30 years, we have been involved with the conservation and

preservation of our heritage, so we very much appreciate the origins and story behind the Bannatyne staircase. We are delighted to be able to provide a very fitting home for the staircase in St Munchin's Church

which we are currently converting into a museum, allowing us to ensure this unique war memorial will be open to the public."

St Munchin's Church was built in 1827 and renovated in 1980 by Limerick Civic Trust. When the conversion to a museum is complete, the Trust plans to exhibit two military collections already in its care – the Carroll Collection, which is currently housed in Trust's headquarters at Bishop's Palace, and the Armstrong collection.

They are also working with several interested parties on the repatriation of other artefacts of Irish historical significance from the UK.

"Our vision is to tell the military history of Limerick from the time of the Siege of Limerick forward. The siege was the last stand of a great European war and Limerick's part hasn't been properly recorded," Mr O'Brien explained.

"The Carroll Collection gives us one vista into this colourful military history. It was gifted to the Limerick Civic Trust by June O'Carroll Robertson, a descendant of the Carroll's of Tulla and Lissenhall in Co Tipperary. We believe there are other families in the UK who would consider donating items of historical interest with a connection to Limerick. Artefacts related to the military history of the region are of particular interest to us."

Lyme's disease

■ IRELAND South MEP Liadh Ní Riada has called on the Government to address the growing problem of Lyme's disease. The Sinn Féin politician was speaking after meeting with members of the Lyme's disease support group, the Lyme's International Association, in Europe. Ms Ní Riada said greater awareness of the causes, symptoms and preventions now could save huge amounts of money and suffering in the future. "Lyme's disease is a bacterial disease spread by tick bites that affects humans and many animals, including dogs, cats and horses," she said.

Art auction

■ LIMERICK Boat club will hold an art auction on Sunday, February 25 to generate funds for their 'Raise the Roof' campaign, to help finish the roofing at the boat club. The event will take place at Jerry Flannery's new music venue on Catherine Street. Viewing will begin at 2:30pm and the auction will start at 3:30pm. There will be sixty pieces on show from a number of local Limerick artists. John Shaw from Shaw's auctioneers will conduct the sale and the event promises to be a great day out with a large turnout expected.

Family support

■ THE JACK and Jill Foundation, which helps provide home-care nursing for families with sick children, has given a helping hand in 108 cases in Limerick in the last decade. The figures were revealed as Topaz garages announced details of a car raffle to raise much-needed funds for the charity. Over a two-month period, customers can buy €5 raffle tickets for a new SEAT Ateca SUV, worth €30,000.

SMART