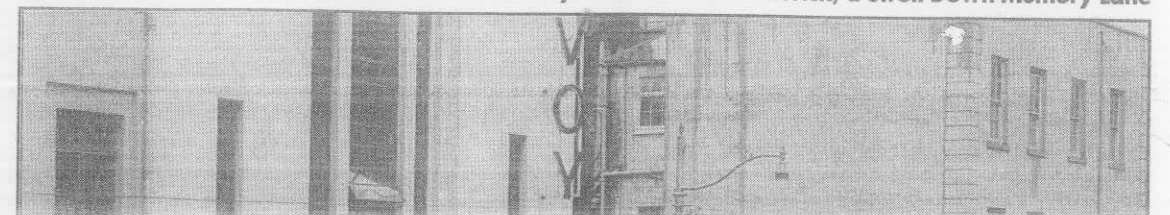




Pantomime time at the Savoy in the 1960s. The Compton Organ is very visible. When the Savoy was demolished a few years ago the organ was left in a garage or shed and is in a pretty sorry state. It is hoped the bring it back to its original state.  
□ Pictures courtesy SEAN CURTIN: Limerick, a Stroll Down Memory Lane

# New Savoy bar relives memories





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# New Savoy bar relives memories of a golden age

By AINE FITZGERALD

ON the evening of Thursday December 19, 1935, the Savoy Cinema and Restaurant, Bedford Row, opened its doors to the public.

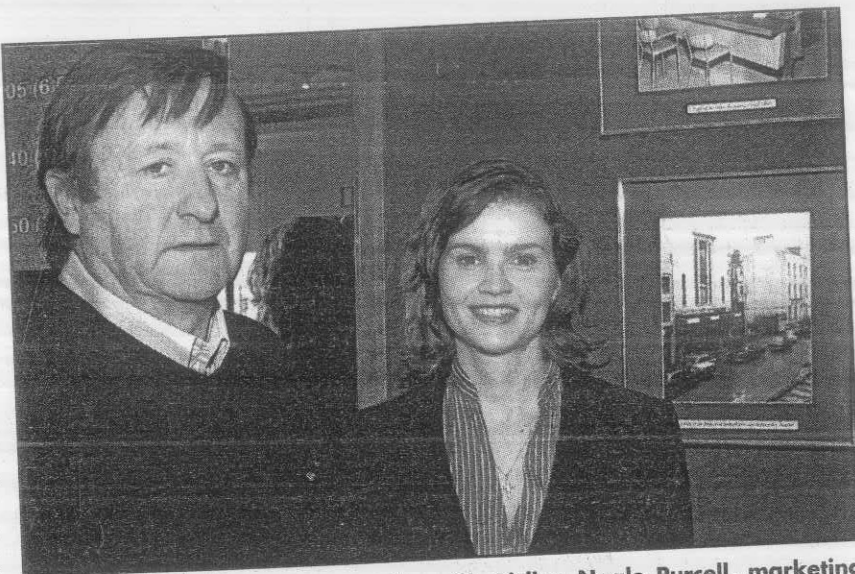
Within a few weeks, it became one of the show places for the nation, offering both live stage shows as well as movies, in the greatest of comfort and luxury.

Seventy-two years later, that same unique atmosphere is on offer at the newly-opened Savoy Bar in the Limerick Marriott Hotel, built on the site of the old theatre.

Although it is only in pictures and memorabilia, there is no mistaking the tangle tie to the past.

"We hope to evoke very pleasant memories of the past. We really want to give a feel for what it was like in the theatre in the old times, but at the same time I think that the link to the past fits well into the new setting of the new Savoy Bar," said Aisling Nagle Purcell, marketing manager with the Limerick Marriott Hotel.

Designed by Leslie Norton, the original Savoy cinema / theatre was



Sean Curtin of the Limerick Leader with Aisling Nagle Purcell, marketing manager of the Marriott Hotel, in front of some of the old photographs of the Savoy which can be seen in the newly-opened Savoy Bar in the hotel (LL)

atmospheric in style, and seated about 1,500.

The first picture screened there was Brewster's Millions, and for many years the cinema continued to draws movie and theatre lovers from all over Ireland.

Even following its closure by Irish Cinemas in 1974, the Savoy continued

to be used afterwards for live shows and movies for several years.

To the regret of many, however, it was demolished in 1988/89 and replaced by an apartment building and a six-screen multiplex cinema that retained the Savoy name. The multiplex cinema that replaced the original

Savoy and retained the Savoy name was itself demolished in 2005.

Today, with the assistance of Sean Curtin of the Limerick Leader, and Denis Leonard, director of Limerick Civic Trust, the new Savoy Bar on Henry Street captures this long history and has become a haven for past

Savoy theatre-goers, and, indeed, anyone with a penchant for movie and theatre history.

"A lot of people are coming in and having a look around and they are really glad to see that we have kept that history alive for them. The style and luxury that was so synonymous with the Savoy. We really wanted to give a feel for what it was like then," explained Ms Nagle Purcell.

"Denis Leonard helped to point me in the direction of the books and stories of Limerick's past, and Sean helped me in picking out the pictures that would reflect the history of the Savoy best, including the different types of shows, such as Tops of the Town. The Savoy has made a comeback in the Limerick Marriott Hotel," she said.

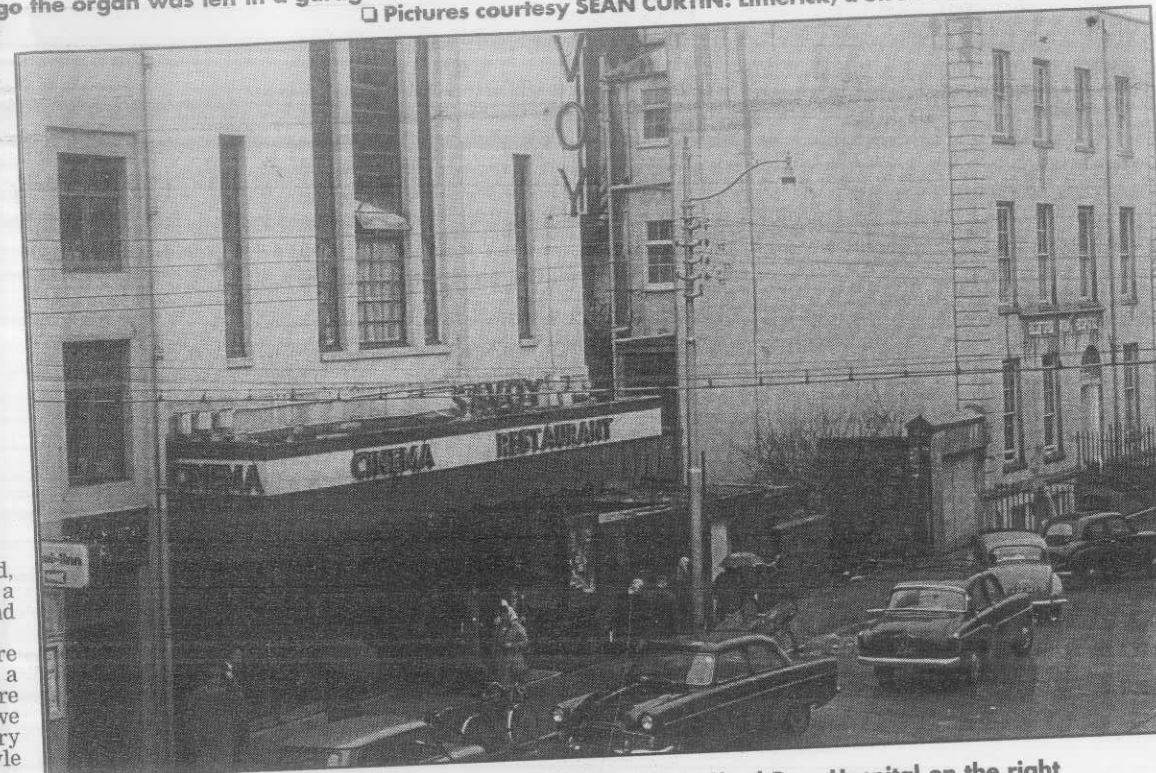
And in an attempt to bring their customers down memory lane, management at the Savoy Bar have been innovative in their use of the senses to evoke memories of those early Savoy days.

Songs from the big movies of the 1930s onwards play softly in the background-just loud enough to evoke a little memory.

Meanwhile, many people have contacted the manager of the hotel expressing interest in donating various items from the early days of the Savoy-some items of which are already on display in the new bar.

One such item is a ledger dating back from January 12, 1963, which chronicles the weekly receipts. The novel wall-hanging, shows that paid submissions on the Sunday were £2,939, and also states that the weather on that particular day was cold and dry.

Movies being screened included the Print of Death starring John Warwick, and The Naked Edge starring Gary Cooper.



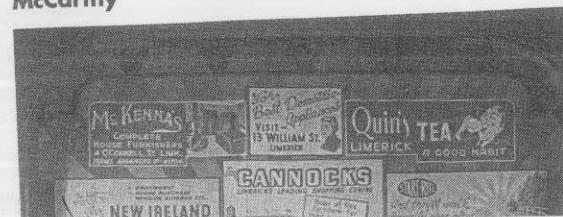
The Savoy Cinema on Bedford Row with the Bedford Row Hospital on the right



Jack Cruise gives last minutes instructions prior to opening night in the late 1950s



The staff at the newly opened Talk of the Town restaurant in 1963 pictured with chef, Maurice McCarthy



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