

LEADER BRIEFS

Nurses action

MANAGEMENT at the HSE West and nurses unions have warned elective surgery will be cancelled as a result of the planned three-hour work stoppage by nurses at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital this Friday. The action takes place from 9am.

St Mary's Park

RESIDENTS of St Mary's Park are being asked to list their top five priorities in a questionnaire on the planned regeneration of the estate. A copy of the questionnaire is available on Limerick City Council's website and must be returned to the project managers by Friday, May 11. Return questionnaires to Eamonn Boyle, Tom McNamara & Partners, Block 3, Ballymaley Business Park, Gort Road, Ennis, County Clare.

Sick days

LIMERICK workers are less likely to lose earnings through being off sick, a survey by Combined Insurance has found. Fourteen per cent of Limerick reported they were financially impeded by ill health last year, compared with 66 per cent in Galway reporting their income was affected by illness. One in three people nationally reported they had lost money through being out sick.

Carbon footprint

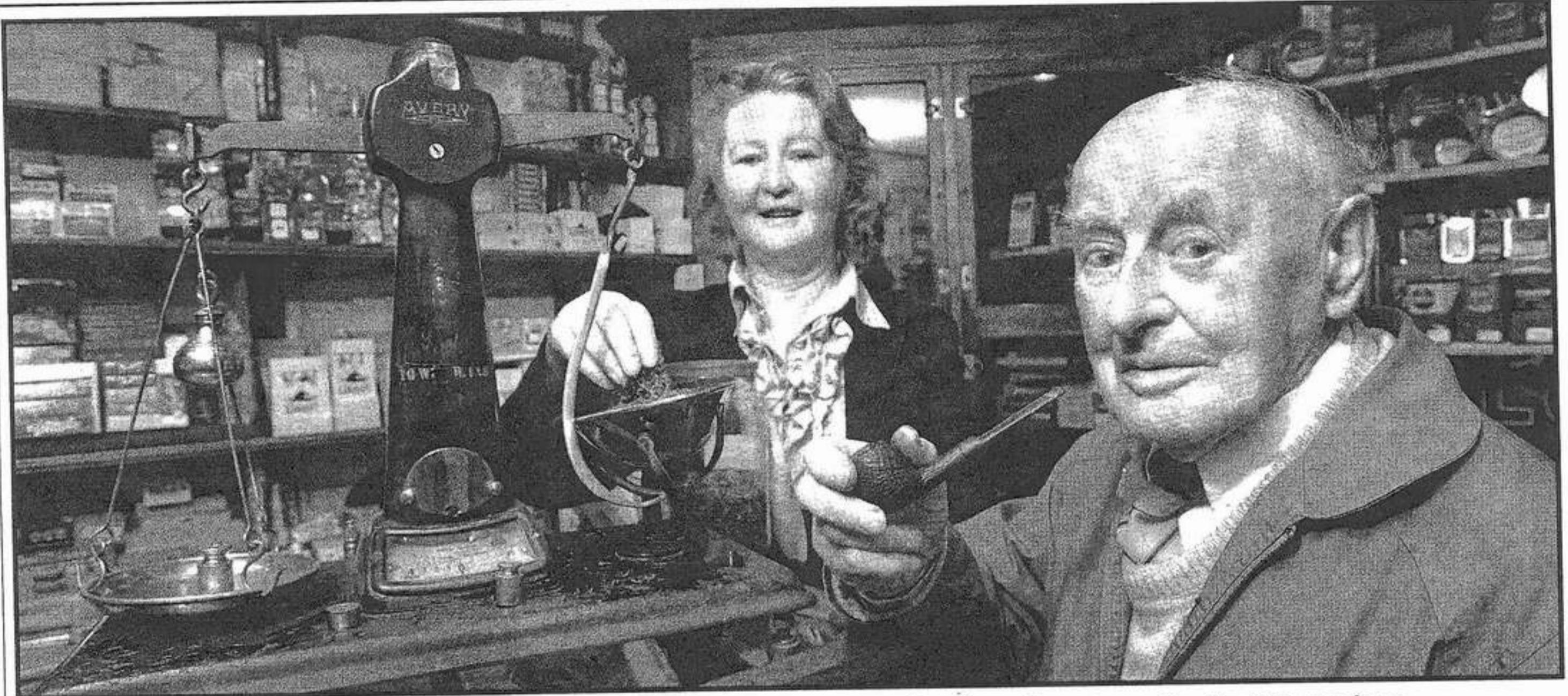
LIMERICK and the Mid-west is "living beyond its means" when it comes to meeting Kyoto targets, the Renewable Energy Skills forum has claimed. RES chairman Cllr Johnny Flynn said in Limerick city and county energy emissions were above the Kyoto target by 409,000 tonnes and this figure could rise to 709,000 tonnes over by 2010 meaning the Government could face a bill of €25 million from the EU.

Photography course

APPLICATIONS are being invited for a week-long intensive digital photography course in LIT, Clare Street campus from July 9 next. The deadline is May 16 next. Course costs €500.

World Cinema

WORLD cinema comes to the Belltable this Wednesday at 8.30pm featuring Pan's Labyrinth.



Owner of Cahill's Tobacco Store on Wickham Street, Eleanor Purcell, weighs tobacco for customer Ger Pigott, Farranshone.

Old world store to blow with the times

By LEADER REPORTER

ONE of the oldest shops in Limerick is set to get its first coat of paint in nearly 100 years.

At a time when many of Limerick's old buildings are being demolished to make way for new developments, the owner of Cahill's tobacconist on Wickham Street is determined to bring her premises into the 21st century without altering its unique charm.

The traditional style tobacconist has changed little since it first opened its doors to customers in 1870, and has catered for some seven generations of pipe smokers, spanning three centuries.

However, the owner of the family business has

now decided that the time has come to give the old world premises its first coat of paint in living memory. Owner Eleanor Purcell said the facelift was part of a plan to bring the shop into the 21st century without compromising any of its traditional values. "We really can't remember the last time the outside of the shop was painted but certainly not since my late father's time and he started working here in 1932," she explained.

According to Eleanor they never got around to painting the crumbling shop exterior simply because they kept putting it on the long finger.

"I guess we felt that some of our long-standing customers might be a little apprehensive about change so we just left things the way they were

and never got around to modernising the place," she added.

Cahill's is the oldest tobacconist in Ireland and still sells pipe tobacco on an old-style weighing scales. Many customers point out that walking through the door of Cahill's is like stepping back in time.

One of Cahill's longest standing customers, Gerard Piggott from Farranshone, has been going into the shop for the past 65 years. The 83-year-old makes a journey to the shop once a week with his faithful companion 'Ahane Og'. "I started smoking a pipe when I was 18 and I come in here every Saturday with my dog for my 'medicine',

joked the 83-year-old. "I'm glad that there's still at least one decent tobacconist left in

Limerick and its nice to have a shop in town that's similar to the way things were in the old days," he said.

The Wickham Street premises is steeped in tradition and in the 19th century it housed a snuff factory in the basement. In recent years, a tenant rented rooms overhead the shop where he made hurling sliothars by hand for some 60 years. Aside from the new paint job on the crumbling exterior customers can also expect some changes inside the shop with the introduction of new products like a range of quality coffees, teas and hand made chocolates. "The coffee beans will be ground in front of customers to take home and the smell of tobacco from yesteryear will soon be replaced with the delightful aro-

mas of coffee and chocolate," explained Eleanor. "This means that people who don't smoke will still be able to enjoy the experience of coming into the shop and purchase something and hopefully it will also mean that we will be

able to keep the door open for another 50 years!" she added.

Cahill's tobacconist is one of several family-owned businesses on Wickham Street that boast a long tradition of customer service.



Eleanor Purcell, owner of Cahill's Tobacco Store on Wickham Street, prepares to bring her business into the 21st Century.

Wrangler
FOOTWEAR

SWATRAGH €79.99
Black/grey, Tan/Brown, Brown/Beige

SAGGART €79.99
Black/Beige, Brown/Tan

SKELLIGS €79.99
Brown/Tan, Beige/Brown

LEAVYS
SHOES

113 O'CONNELL STREET, LIMERICK
15 WILLIAM STREET, LIMERICK