

shop displays. Toys were also lining the shopping centre aisles, probably giving mothers pushing trolleys and trying to keep control of little tots, a huge headache. Whatever happened to the excit-

End of era as O'Sullivan's Shoes close

by Mary Earls

ONE of Limerick's longest established family businesses, O'Sullivan's Shoes, is to bring down the shutters for the last time within two months.

Limerick people who remember getting their feet measured in O'Sullivan's as children will no longer be able to bring their kids for a fitting.

Marking the end of an era, the O'Sullivan family said it is with regret that they are to close their O'Connell Street and Sarsfield Street premises after 67 years trading.

A family member said: "Unfortunately, the rapidly changing face of retail in the city centre over the last number of years has made it very difficult for small family businesses to compete".

Eleanor O'Brien, chairperson of the Limerick City Business Association (LCBA), said that small family run businesses are finding it harder and harder to compete with large English chain-stores.

City centre shopping has also been hit by retail parks and shopping centres in the suburbs, which

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• weather

MILD, blustery weather with showers, will turn cool. Stronger winds promised. Sunny spells next week.

subjectivity in Berkeley, with Limerick Philosophical Society, Mary Immac. Soc., Sth. Circ. Rd. 8pm.

MILES, Men in Limerick Experiencing Separation, meets Thursdays, 8pm in Social Services Centre, Henry St. Tel. 087-2603 603.

OVEREATERS Anonymous meets Social Services Centres, 8pm weekly. Contact Molly 086-0574 751.

many parents is that any new building would not be in keeping with the area, and detract from the beauty of Pery Square and its magnificent Georgian facades.

A spokesperson for the Limerick Archaeological Society told the Limerick Post that they were keeping a watching brief. "We are aware that something is happen-

JUST DON'T KNOW AT THE moment". Meanwhile, there is speculation that the Limerick Boat Club and the site on which is stands under Sarsfield Bridge, is to

Limerick City hold the "superior lease" on the premises. However, the Limerick Boat Club committee have recently asked for a

all the more puzzling, according to Mayor Joe Leddin, and also that the company is displaying no active interest in selling on the site.

Talking to the Limerick Post, Mayor Leddin said: "The Council is frustrated that we can't secure the land. "Combined with the old Guinness site now in our possession, this would provide great scope for a desirable mixed development of housing, retail and recreational components. For years as a councillor, I raised the issue of the old Guinness site and now as mayor I'm going to write to the Board of CIE to ask them to dispose of their unused site which is now attracting illegal dumping, anti-social behaviour and all sorts of undesirable activity".

Mayor Leddin said he is puzzled that there has been no response to their interest in purchasing the site.

"Even if CIE puts it on the open market, we will bid for it but I'm puzzled as to why they are sitting on it, despite listing is as a non-essential core land".

He stressed that although there are other ways of securing the land (through Compulsory Purchase Order or having it listed as derelict), the mayor said it would be "preferable to exhaust all other avenues first" and that he is hopeful of a positive reply from the company.

Telephone calls by the Limerick Post to the company failed to secure an official comment on the issue.

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customers find more convenient for free parking and handy locations.

"It is very unfortunate that O'Sullivan's Shoes is closing because these family owned businesses give customers more choice and variety and this is what always made Limerick different to other cities. We had a huge range of home-owned retail businesses. But this is diminishing and it isn't necessarily a good thing because it gives us less choice," said Ms O'Brien.

City centre rents have also been pushed up by foreign multiples coming in and being well able to afford high rents, thus inflating the price, she explained.

Maria Kelly, CEO of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce said that it was "obviously hugely distressing to hear that long established family businesses like O'Sullivans are closing down.

"Family businesses are the lifeblood of the city centre and should be encouraged in order to provide a thriving and unique shopping experience in the city centre. There is a difficult position with competition on the outskirts of the city. Hopefully the opening of the Opera Shopping

Centre and the Savoy Centre will change things," she said. Ms O'Brien added that the high rates have also affected small businesses.

"They did come down this year and we are hoping that they will come down next year as well. This has helped small businesses. And you still can't beat the atmosphere of city centre shopping, especially in the run up to Christmas, where the lights are expected be even more spectacular than last year.

"Limerick City Council paid for half of the money for the lights last year. But family run businesses in Limerick city have always been the backbone of our funding drive. Few outside businesses contribute towards the city lights and it is the small businesses that keep the city alive," she said.

The O'Sullivan family also said this week that they would like to thank their loyal staff for their contribution to the business over the last number of years and all their customers for their loyal custom.

The family business which was run by sisters, Eimear, Derville and Caroline O'Sullivan, is to stay open for another two months.

FRIDAY 20

GAMBLERS Anonymous meets 8.30pm; Mondays, Wednesdays also; Social Services Centre, Henry Street.

DEBTORS Anonymous meets weekly in Social Services Centre, 8pm. 087-912 9352.

SCRIBBLERS Writers meet Pier One, 11.30am weekly. All welcome.

SATURDAY 21

BRENDAN Kenneally's two new books are launched at Culsie Poetry Festival: Now and When, Then is Now, 6pm Daghda Space, John Square, all welcome.

LIMERICK Walking Association meets 11.45am Davin Arms.

SUNDAY 22

Limerick Walking Association meets 11.30am at UL car park, Bus Terminus; Wednesdays 7.30pm Fennessy's Bar, South Circular Rd.

MONDAY 23

THOMOND Archaeological & Historical Society hosts lecture by Dr Dagmar O'Riain Raedal on Irish Monks & Monasteries in Medieval Germany; Mary Immac. Coll., Sth. Circ. Road, 8pm.

LIMERICK City Sports Partnership holds Sports Capital Grants Workshop, 7-9pm, Pastoral Ctre, Denmark St. Book 061-468542.

HAVE you a problem with drugs? Narcotics Anonymous meets Mons, Weds, Fris at Social Services Ctre, Henry St. 8.30pm.

WEDNESDAY 25

REIKI Tummo Energy Clinic, St Saviour's Community Hall, Parnell St, 7.30-9.30pm. Free appointment; tel. Ger 087-9399 517.

LIMERICK Camera Club meets weekly 8pm, Room 202 Mary Immaculate Coll, Sth Circular Road. New members welcome, ring Paul 086-3378 478.

WHITE House Poetry Revival hosts Galway born Gary King, fiction writer and poet. 9pm, open house.

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