



HEARTBROKEN: Dolores DOLORES IS COMFORTED AS MUM DIES

EUROMILLIONS lottery winner, Dolores McNamara, is today being comforted by family and friends ahead of her mum's funeral tomorrow morning. Heartbroken Dolores spent the last week with her ailing mother, Betty O'Donovan, who was suffering from cancer. The pensioner finally lost her battle for life on Friday leaving Dolores grief-stricken just three months after she scooped €115 million and became Europe's biggest ever lotto winner. Betty's remains will be removed from Cross's Funeral Home, Lower Gerald Griffin Street to nearby St John's Cathedral this evening at 7.30pm. The burial will take place after 10am funeral mass tomorrow morning.

YOUTH HELD FOR SERIOUS SEX ASSAULT

A 16-YEAR-OLD youth has been arrested for questioning in connection with a serious sexual assault on a woman. The youth is being held under Section Four of the Criminal Justice Act and can be detained for up to 12 hours before being charged or released. He is the third teenager to be questioned in relation to the attack. Two other youths were released and a file was sent to the DPP. In the incident, the woman is believed to have been sexually assaulted in the Boherbee area of Tralee, Co Kerry and again at a house by a man who said he would help her find her missing belongings.

PROBE INTO EXTORTION ON LOCALS

A MASSIVE probe into an alleged extortion racket involving non-Irish nationals is now under way in several counties. Top detectives are spearheading the investigation, which has extended from Co Monaghan to the Irish midlands. According to senior garda sources, demands for varying amounts of up to €1,000, have been made by Lithuanian gangs operating from Dublin. Gardai quizzed four people suspected of involvement in the racket. They were detained at different locations in Cavan and Monaghan and questioned by detectives from the National Crime Unit.

SPECIAL REPORT / NEW FEARS OVER BIRD FLU



BIRDBRAINS OF A FEATHER: Rogue trader Richard O'Brien (right) has bought stock from Pegasus Birds in Essex (left), where an infected parrot died from the dreaded virus

YOU FLOCKING IDIOTS

Birdbrain bought stock from a cowboy dealer

THE ROGUE bird trader exposed by the Sunday World last week has bought stock from the cowboy dealer who unleashed bird flu in Britain.

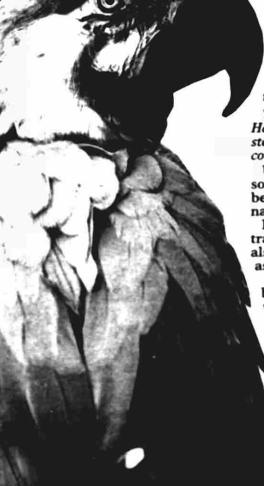
Birdbrain Richard O'Brien shipped two macaws into Ireland from notorious Pegasus Birds in Essex, where an infected parrot died of the dreaded virus.

And the Portlaoise pet shop boss brought a fresh shipment of birds in from Belgium this week at the height of the avian flu alert according to informed sources.

EU health chiefs are trying to shut down the dodgy dealers, as bird flu claimed two more human lives in Vietnam over the weekend.

If unleashed here it could kill thousands and destroy Ireland's €360m poultry industry.

Deadly



A parrot imported from South America died at the Pegasus aviary from the Bird Flu after it was quarantined with birds from Taiwan.

Tests showed the parrot died from the deadly virus, which medics fear could mutate into a deadly form of human flu.

The owner of the company, Brett Hammond, is a convicted fraudster, who was previously exposed as cowboy dealer by a TV show.

UK politicians are furious that so-called 'biosecure' centres are being run by convicted criminals.

Like Hammond, Portlaoise trader and Richard O'Brien has also fallen foul of the authorities as a result of his business.

He is facing an investigation by authorities in Kent after he was stopped by customs with a van literally stuffed full of birds and pet rodents.

O'Brien regularly travels to Belgium in his 05-reg Transit to buy songbirds and parrots from both legitimate dealers and at dodgy bird markets.

He returned from Belgium this week with empty cages after learning of the



THE PET SHOP BOY: Richard has brought birds into Ireland during the height of the flu

By EAMON DILLON

Sunday World's expose during a purchasing trip.

Meanwhile, the Irish Government moved to ban bird markets and shows and pigeon racing could be next.

Package

Agriculture Minister Mary Coughlan ordered the strengthening of the country's defences against the potentially fatal avian flu.

As part of the new package every fowl in the country will have to be identified and registered from November 7.

A Department of Agriculture spokesman said that the registration would involve all poultry, including small flocks of birds kept at private homes, and game birds such as pheasants.

"The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that we know where every bird in the country is should there be an outbreak of this disease," said the spokesman.

The move comes as a fourth outbreak of bird flu in a week was reported in Russia.

Four villages around the city of Omsk have been quarantined by police and birds destroyed after the disease was found.

It follows outbreaks last week in the city of Tula where more than 2,000 birds suddenly died.

On Saturday the disease was found further east among geese and chickens near Chelyabinsk in the Ural Mountains.

The new rules in Ireland impose an immediate ban on the collection of poultry and captive birds for poultry markets, shows, exhibitions and cultural events.

It also makes record-keeping

mandatory and the reporting of unusual patterns of bird deaths at commercial premises.

"The ban on the collection of poultry and captive birds for markets, shows, exhibitions and cultural events will be reviewed before December," a statement from the department said.

Risk

The statement quoted the Minister as saying that the measures she had introduced were 'entirely consistent' with our approach to date.

"It represents a further measured and proportionate response to the risk of the introduction of the disease," he said.

Meanwhile, the Irish free-range poultry industry could be under threat following calls from British MEPs to restrict free-range farming.

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