



Laura Barnes and Bertie Ahern at the launch of the refurbished James Joyce Centre where she is director

with Miss Herbert, with work on a Joyce exhibition in New York's Buffalo University.

Then, in March 2001, Miss Herbert, Dr Crispi and Miss Barnes all appeared together at a Joyce conference in Antwerp. On Friday, March 30, Miss Herbert and Miss Barnes delivered a joint paper together.

In 2002, Miss Herbert and Miss Barnes were credited with working together on an online bibliography of Joyce work and, in 2003, they are both credited for their work on an exhibition in the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma.

Also in 2003, Miss Herbert, Miss Barnes and Dr Crispi were all at an annual Joyce workshop at the Joyce Foundation in Zurich.

In 2004, when Miss Barnes was appointed to curate the ReJoyce Festival in Dublin, one of those at her beck and call was Miss Herbert.

The pair also curated the Beckett Audio-Visual Library, which was officially opened in April 2006.

Most recently, they both appear as current staff members of the James Joyce

Centre in North Great George's Street, where Miss Herbert is responsible for special programmes and Miss Barnes is the acting director.

Miss Barnes, for her part, has always insisted the deal was 'kosher beyond kosher', arguing that she deliberately kept her name secret to avoid any conflict of interest.

But her accounts have, at times, differed inexplicably. She has told one newspaper that she always intended selling the manuscript only to the National Library and another that there were many possible purchasers.

Last week, she hit the headlines again when she appeared to have received internal Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism information before it was made public.

In an extraordinary phone call to Westmeath TD Paul McGrath on the morning of December 12, Miss Barnes threatened the politician with legal action after he had asked a series of five parliamentary questions about the Joyce deal and State payments she received as a consultant.

Mr McGrath was astounded by the call

since the order paper for that day had not yet been published.

He has since written to the Ceann Comhairle and Oireachtas Committee on Procedure and Privilege chairman Dr Rory O'Hanlon to complain.

MISS BARNES said that she had been contacted by the department to confirm details in the responses that officials were preparing for Mr McGrath's questions.

She later defended her call to the Westmeath TD, saying she had been angered because 'he wanted to know everything about me short of what I had for breakfast.'

Last night, Mr McGrath said his only interest was to ensure the expenditure of Government funds was fully transparent.

'I'm not interested in what she had for breakfast or with whom she had breakfast. What I am interested in is that taxpayers' money is spent properly and that the Government is getting value for money,' he said.

Quotes of the week

'They just have a fear of not buying anything'

An Arnott's shop assistant explains why so many people will be returning goods next week after deciding that they don't actually like them

'These teams of ours do not come from a self-confident, buoyant nation-state. They come from a rottenly led, degenerate, devolved regional province of the Brussels-based EU'

Author FREDERICK FORSYTH, on England's failures at rugby, football and cricket

'I back horses according to their names. I don't bother with the form'

Health Minister MARY HARNEY'S approach to gambling throws some light on how she runs the country's health services

'I figured it was an economic f*ing necessity to keep it. And it may also be that I don't have a face like Rock Hudson'**

Dubliners legend RONNIE DREW, 72, who has been diagnosed with throat cancer, explaining how he grew his beard on medical advice to hide some warts and kept it once enquiries started coming in for 'the beardy fellow'

'Mel B is no oil painting'

KERRY KATONA, former singer with the girl band Atomic Kitten, on the ex-Spice Girl



'I can't lie to you, she hasn't brought us anything this Christmas'

YOHANE BANDA, father of the Malawian boy Madonna, pictured, hopes to adopt

'Long live Iraq. Long live Iraq. Long live Palestine. Long live jihad and the mujahideen. God is greatest'

SADDAM HUSSEIN, the deposed tyrant who was executed yesterday

'Soul is all the hard knocks, all the punishment the black man has had, all the unfulfilled dreams that must come true'

Godfather of Soul JAMES BROWN, who died this week aged 73

'There's nothing wrong with Gerry Ford, except that he played football too long without a helmet'

Remark attributed to fellow former President Lyndon Johnson when once describing GERALD FORD, who died this week aged 93

'If telly vice in your room not perform, do not investigate with screw pusher, you may get shocking electrics. Instead attack hotel electric man'

Warning notice in Tokyo hotel