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CONOR McGregor and Floyd Mayweather look set to tear strips off each other again. Verbally at least. The pair faced each other in a boxing match last August, going ten rounds before Mayweather sealed his 50th victory in the ring.

But now a UFC rematch appears to be on the cards after Mayweather posted a video of himself stepping into the Octagon.

McGregor responded by saying, "F*** the Mayweathers" — and it

looks like the feud between the pair is well and truly reignited.

Discussing another fight with Mayweather, Conor said: "I'd do as I please against him inside the Octagon. If he does do it, I know he's flirting with it, I'd have respect for him."

Having been beaten by Mayweather once, McGregor clearly wants to settle the score. I'm just not sure the public has the stamina for many more months of the old rivals and their incessant mudslinging.

I AM a big fan of Derry Girls, the new comedy on Channel 4.

Set in the 1990s, the sitcom follows the antics of four Catholic schoolgirls. Although it hardly paints Derry in the best light, I was amused to see tourism chiefs attempt to make the most of the show's popularity.

During an episode about sectarianism and the July 12 marches, an ad urging people to visit Derry aired during the break. I guess you can't blame them for trying.



IF you struggle to pack light for a short holiday, spare a thought for Kate Middleton's hairdresser.

Amanda Cook Tucker, left, joined the Duchess of Cambridge on a four-day Sweden and Norway trip this week.

With pressure to keep the royal tresses in tip top condition, poor Amanda's luggage included 13 brushes, six combs, three hair tongs,

two hairdryers and seven types of hair product.

Amanda put a snap of the haul on Instagram with the caption, "Think that's everything" — with the post quickly going viral.

Thankfully the royal plane was on hand for the journey.

The fees to check that lot in with the likes of Ryanair would have blown even the Queen's travel budget.



PLIGHT OF HUTCHES IS PITIFUL

IT is sometimes hard not to feel sorry for the Hutch family.

The ongoing feud with the Kinahan gang has resulted in 12 members of the clan and their associates being killed in recent months.

Gang boss Gerry 'The Monk' Hutch, above, is in hiding, with his life in danger, having lost three nephews and a brother to the violent rivalry with the Kinahan mob.

Moving scenes played out in the capital this week at the funeral of Derek 'Del Boy' Coakley Hutch, with a family friend reminding the gathered congregation that "this is a family, not a cartel".

Indeed friends and locals in inner city Dublin marched last week with Del Boy's mother in a show of support for the family's ongoing suffering.

Some will argue that their plight is a reminder of the high price that comes with having family members involved in criminality.

It is also a sign of just how deadly the powerful Kinahan cartel is — and everything must be done to stop their bloody rampage.

PIERS BUTTERS UP OLD PAL DON

IT was never going to be the toughest of interviews but Piers Morgan must surely have felt ridiculous asking Donald Trump if he considers himself a feminist.

The ITV presenter has long been a vocal supporter of the US president, who he became friendly with after appearing on *The Apprentice* in the US. And that relationship paid off when Piers scooped a one-on-one with the leader of the free world.

In an interview that critics have blasted as being too soft and cosy, surely hardened hack Piers was aware that asking a man who famously boasted of grabbing women "by the p****" if he's a feminist was laughable.

Thankfully, even Trump has enough humility to admit that branding himself as such would be "maybe going too far".

I don't think anyone would argue with that.

Changes don't give feminism a sporting chance

GOODBYE grid girls ... pick-and-mix feminism has won again.

This week, the role of glamorous women as ambassadors for sports events was in the spotlight as two organisations announced they were ditching the long-standing tradition.

The Professional Darts Corporation announced last weekend that "walk-on girls" — the ladies who escort male players to the stage — will be axed from upcoming events after discussions with broadcasters. Formula 1 quickly roared

into action on Wednesday with an announcement that its "grid girls" are no longer in keeping with its "brand values".

The move received a mixed response, as some hailed it a victory for feminism, while others insisted it was a clear case of political correctness gone mad.

For me, it's difficult to see how this is a positive for women — it's denying females work in a job they enjoyed.

Thousands of women are set to lose a good income because their once-valued job is now deemed to be setting a bad example to young girls.

It seems to me to be a knee-jerk reaction to the #MeToo scandal, with women

everywhere rightly standing up to sexual harassment and inequality.

But are we now assuming that because these women are participating in a male dominated sport that they are somehow victims that are being objectified against their will? The girls have staunchly argued that this is not the case.

Calling for the ban on 'grid girls', 'walk-on girls' and their ilk in other sports like boxing, the Women's Sport Trust said they believe women working as models at sports events is encouraging ladies not to aim higher.

The group explained: "We're asking (young girls) to look and admire the successful, talented, strong men taking part in the competition — whilst the role of the women is purely based on their physical appearance."

Unfortunately, this statement fails to recognise that not all young girls dream of being sports stars.

In fact, it simply belittles those who dream of growing up to be models.

The suggestion is that women who have jobs that are focused on their appearance are letting down the female cause.

The fact that these women are there by choice, because they enjoy it and also make good money, has been overlooked simply because the girls involved are "glamorous".

In this case, it seems the term is being used almost as a slur on the ladies involved. Punishing women because they are attractive to men seems worryingly backward to me.

And if glamour and sport is so abhorrent, should we consider axing Ladies Day at race meets?

Sadly, this kind of feminism reeks of double standards. While feminists on one hand say that women should be able to wear what they want, this latest manoeuvre now suggests that looking sexy at a male-orientated sporting event is somehow shameful.

Bowing to politically correct pressure, the sports involved say that the practice of female ambassadors is "at odds with modern societal norms".

They say having women there to promote the sport is no longer appropriate and it needs to be "updated".

To me, telling women that they can't work in certain roles seems to be sending us back in time, not forward.



MAURA'S TROLLS NEED TO GROW UP

IF you've nothing nice to say, say nothing at all.

It's a good message to live by whether that's in the real world or on social media.

Telly presenter Maura Derrane was under the spotlight this week after she was nastily trolled online over an outfit she wore on her RTE Today TV show.

The particular ensemble, above, was a perfectly inoffensive skirt and stripey top.

It was posted on the show's Facebook page for interested viewers to see where the various pieces came from.

However, as has become almost too commonplace, many of those who commented on the picture took the opportunity to tell Maura in no uncertain terms how much they disliked her attire — and the rest.

There were a few positive comments but they were very much in the minority, and for the most part they were just plain mean and nasty.

The presenter was told she was too old for the ("badly ironed") outfit, while others weighed in on her make-up.

Speaking about the commentary, which was brought to wider attention by a caller to Ryan Tubridy's radio show, Maura said: "I have to say, if it gets really nasty, I think it can be very hurtful."

At a time when cyber-bullying of teens is at a record high, I find it mind-boggling that grown adults — the majority female and many of them mothers to boot — still think it's OK to say awful things about other people on social media.

While most parents will tell their kids to be kind to others and to never bully anyone, perhaps they would do well to also practice what they preach.



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IT'S a First World problem but 'prosecco smile', the phenomenon of rotting teeth caused by the tippie, is no laughing matter.

It's emerged that those who drink too much of this cheap yet delicious bubbly drink are putting their pearly whites at risk.

Dr Mervyn Druian, of the London Centre for Cosmetic Dentistry, said: "Unlike wine, which you often have with a meal, it is very easy to just keep sipping prosecco and have a few glasses without noticing."

"It is acidic and it has sugar in it so, while a

few glasses are fine, if you drink too much of it you are going to have a problem."

Bad as that may be, I prefer to look to other studies before making any rash decisions about my beloved bubbles.

Scientists previously found that the polyphenols in prosecco improve blood flow. And another study claimed that seven or more glasses of wine per week lowered the risk of diabetes by 25 to 30 per cent.

Prosecco may leave your teeth a little worse for wear, but there's still plenty to smile about.



THE current transatlantic airlines battle is working out a real treat for consumers.

In recent months we've seen the launch of low-cost carriers Norwegian and WOW Air, which both offer great value flights to the US.

At the moment Norwegian are offering sale fares to the States from €99 each-way, while WOW Air have one-stop transatlantic flights from €129 each-way.

Then this week, Aer Lingus fought back against the blow-ins by revealing new "saver fares" that allow people to fly to the US from

€169 each way. This includes cabin luggage and meals, while you have to pay extra for checked baggage, headphones and blankets.

It's great news for anyone who has family and friends in the US and the added bonus is that with extra charges for bags, it's likely to stop people losing the run of themselves while shopping in New York.

We may be delighted to splash the cash on slightly discounted Ugg boots and Michael Kors bags, but paying extra for checked luggage for a weekend break? Not a chance.



GETTING A-ED OF HIMSELF

ACTOR Ed Skrein has been praised for pulling out of the upcoming *Hellboy* reboot after he was cast as a character of Asian heritage.

The *Deadpool* star, 34, above, said he did not know the race of Major Ben Daimio when he accepted the part in the comic book adaptation.

In a move widely praised, British Skrein said he was stepping down "so the role can be cast appropriately".

But if you ask me, it's not really his decision on what the ethnicity of the person cast in a given role is.

By Ed's logic, the casting of black actress Noma Dumezweni as Hermione Grainger in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* would never have happened, nor would Jodie Whittaker be starring as the first female Dr Who.

Incidentally, the *Hellboy* reboot also stars mixed-race actress Sasha Lane in the role of Alice Monaghan — a character who the comics portrayed as a pale Irish redhead.

Where's the outrage over that?

HIGH HORSES & HEELS IN TEXAS

MELANIA Trump was on the back foot this week after she was faced with criticism over her choice of shoes.

The First Lady of the United States was mocked online after she was pictured heading to the disaster zone left behind by Hurricane Harvey wearing a pair of stilettos.

I get that it looks a little ridiculous to wear a pair of Manolos when you're flying out to meet people who've lost everything, but, to her credit, FLOTUS had tied up her hair and put on a pair of runners by the time Air Force One reached its destination.

In response to the critical reaction, Stephanie Grisham, Mrs Trump's communications director, said in a statement: "It's sad that we have an active and ongoing natural disaster in Texas, and people are worried about her shoes."

It's hard to put the boot into that very valid point.

Mother tongue's Bearla alive but can we save it?



IRISH isn't a dead language but it is a badly wounded one.

This week, the language that Peig Sayers almost single-handedly murdered, was dealt another blow as it was revealed that Bank of Ireland will no longer offer its ATM services as Gaeilge.

The news was met with outrage by the Irish-speakers, while the rest of the country collectively shrugged its shoulders.

That massive gap between those who care and those who don't is the reason our poor language is in such a bad way.

I'm a huge fan of Irish and like a lot of people I regret the fact that I'm not better at speaking it. It's not for want of trying — this sad Gaeilgeoir wannabe spent four years in college trying to become fluent enough to pass as a poor man's Sharon Ni Bheolain.

I even spent a few months working in Irish-speaking organisations in an effort to improve.

Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to get me anywhere near the standard that our native Irish speakers are at.

My poor grammar and fluency simply became more embarrassing as time went by and I wasn't able to chat comfortably with Gaeilgeoirs who did their best to make me feel at ease.

Even now I break into a cold sweat when I run into my old college lecturer who inevitably attempts to strike up a conversation in the mother tongue.

But the odd thing about my appalling Irish is that I was quite okay at it at school, at least by Leaving Cert standards.

I threw in enough memorised phrases like "ar nos na gotha" (as fast as the wind) to muster up a B3 in honours.

It wasn't an amazing mark but enough to make me — wrongly — think I could go on to become close to fluent with a little effort. This was not the case as I soon discovered native speakers are at a different level to those of us who can scrape an alright mark in school.

Clearly letting us learn seanfhocail for 14 years in primary and secondary school is not translating into a country of capable Irish speakers.

To their credit, Gaeilgeoirs



want the rest of us to be able to speak like them so the language can thrive.

Yet the gap between fluency and those with a cupla focal is too wide for it to be an all-inclusive language. And there's nothing being done to change that as far as I can see.

Classes for adults who want to brush up aren't cheap either at around €180 for ten weeks.

So now, almost ten years after I finished studying Irish, I — like 99 per cent of the population apparently — never use it.

Explaining why they will no longer offer services in Irish, Bank of Ireland said: "When we analyse our ATMs which provide an Irish option, we find fewer than one per cent of ATM transactions on those devices are completed in Irish."

This week we heard politicians and Gaeilgeoirs alike berate the bank over this decision.

Unfortunately, BoI are not the problem but merely a symptom of a far bigger illness.

Irish is in need of an urgent intervention. Hundreds of millions is spent each year on translation tools and other facilities, like buttons on ATMs, but perhaps putting it towards overhauling the education system would be money better spent.

Ironically, Peig's hated tome opened with the claim that she has one foot in the grave.

So too does Irish, and this class language needs an urgent lifeline if it's to survive.



WE MAY FORGIVE IMELDA

IMELDA May faced a backlash from some fans after cancelling a gig to sing the national anthem ahead of Conor McGregor's 'money' fight with Floyd Mayweather.

The Dublin singer was set to headline a festival in Rugby, England, on Saturday but announced the night before that she would not be performing.

The decision left some outraged that she had ditched her fans for the chance to perform on a bigger stage — with around 50million tuning in to see the big fight in the US alone.

Explaining her reasoning, Imelda said: "I did not make the decision to cancel lightly."

"I did not do it for money by the way. I did not do it for fame."

"I am fully aware my performance will be probably forgotten in two seconds. I simply felt duty called."

Obviously it was a difficult choice for Imelda and I think the majority of her fans would understand that it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform at the much-anticipated bout.

And to her credit, the Liberties star knocked it out of the park. Bravo.

PAIR GoT HISTORY

GAME OF Thrones is famous for its epic rivalries between its characters.

However, I was amused to find relations between the cast members are just as hostile. Two of the actors Lena Headey (who plays Queen Cersei) and Jerome Flynn (Bronn, or better known as one half of Robson and Jerome) previously dated and apparently have to be kept apart at all costs.

As two of the shows' booziest characters, maybe a meeting of minds over a tippie could sort it all out.

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● THERE are a Lotto conspiracy theorists out there it seems.

Earlier this week, the National Lottery was forced to deny a Lotto Plus 1 draw fix after a very brief trick of the light made a 38 ball look like a 33, which was also visible in the drum.

Many speculated online that we were being had by the folks at Lotto HQ, who had planted two 33 balls.

However, anyone with a dash of scepticism and a tiny bit of vision could see

this was not the case. Eventually, the ball barons issued a denial, saying: "The weight and size of all Lotto balls, and the numbers, are strictly checked in advance of each draw."

"This process, as well as the draw itself, is independently observed by our auditors, KPMG."

Now, hopefully, my unshakable faith in those Lottery officials will result in more than my usual "better luck next time" ticket results.

SOME things you shouldn't mess with, and putting protein in a selection box completely takes the good out of it in my book.

Fulfil, the folks behind the popular protein bars, right, have begun selling a selection box with six different flavours.

The horror!

Not that I'm a fundamentalist. Though, if Cadbury's sees fit to ditch the Double Decker for a Twirl bar I'll be forever grateful.



● SOME 30,000 people are now believed to have been screwed over by lenders in the tracker mortgage scandal.

TDs this week heard from four borrowers who paid over the odds after being denied cheap interest rates by banks.

And when I say over the odds, I'm talking €400-plus a month in some cases — the difference between putting

food on the table and not. The pressure saw people lose their homes, suffer ill health and even take their own lives.

While the notion of greedy banks is nothing new, the deceit in some of the cases outlined was clearly criminal.

No compensation can make up for a decade of such hell, but the banks should be made to pay heavily for their actions.



LA-DI-DA
AT ALDI
AND LIDL

I'M a big fan of German budget supermarkets Lidl and Aldi.

I like their no-nonsense approach to shopping, with minimal effort going into fancy displays. 'What you see is what you get,' seems to be the motto.

But while both German supermarkets appear to lack airs and graces on groceries, their middle aisle is a different story.

Last week, Aldi was flogging an equestrian range in its middle aisle.

Ladies Country Boots that look perfect for toff types were being advertised for €24.99, along with kids jodhpurs.

Next week, fans of sous vide cooking can get all the must-haves.

It took some serious Googling to find out that sous vide is a — presumably posh — method of cooking in vacuum-sealed plastic packaging.

Meanwhile, Lidl have begun teasing shoppers with their Christmas Deluxe range, which includes Deluxe Serrano Reserva Gammon Joint, not to mention the crab claws and lobster.

Both these budget supermarkets are proof that you don't have to be rich to enjoy the finer things in life.

PONY ALLURE? LET'S BE BLUNT

MY Little Pony: The Movie is coming to cinemas soon — and god help the parents who will have to sit through it.

In an apparent bid to make it more palatable to mums and dads, the trailer shows all the big name stars voicing the cartoon horses.

It bizarrely zips between the animation itself and scenes with voice stars Emily Blunt, inset, and Liev Schreiber in the studio.

It seemed odd to me that a kids' movie would try and sell tickets by showing as little of the actual animated action as possible.

The plot on IMDb reveals how "Twilight Sparkle, Applejack, Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy and Rarity embark on an epic journey to save Ponyville from a dark force".

Hmm, hopefully for the producers' sake there's a lot of adult Blunt fans out there.



And the Act Like We Don't Know Oscar goes to...

THE recent revelations about Harvey Weinstein show that Hollywood has a little bit of self-analysis to do.

If you cast your mind back to the Oscars in February, you'll probably remember the fiasco when Moonlight's Best Film award was wrongly handed out to La La Land.

Who could forget the look on Warren Beatty's face?

But the speeches at that event were also memorable in their own right as they were the most political ever seen at the glitz fest.

Many of the winners used the podium to hit out at US president Donald Trump and his plans for walls with Mexico. Quite rightly, you might say.

However, one man's name was mentioned even more often than Trump was alluded to — that of Weinstein.

The great Hollywood benefactor always

gets a shout out from the grateful winners whose movies he's backed.

In fact, at the 2015 ceremony the former Miramax studio head was famously thanked more often than God.

This year he sat with now estranged wife Georgina Chapman like a king among his loyal subjects, and watched as they rattled on about the horror of the US presidency.

These rich and famous people used their influence to try and change people's political opinions, while casually ignoring the fact that a known sex predator was in their midst.

And make no mistake that Weinstein's behaviour was known.

Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, whose careers Weinstein launched when he produced Good Will Hunting 20 years ago, have both denied that they were aware of any impropriety on the part of the Tinseltown power-player.

A journalist's claim that Damon rang her up to kill a story about Weinstein has been denied by the actor, who says

he would never dream of doing such a thing. His good friend Ben also denies any knowledge of Weinstein's sex pest status, despite dating Gwyneth Paltrow for three years after she claims she was given the Harvey treatment.

It's funny that something like that wouldn't come up in conversation. Funny in the "unbelievably laughable" rather than "ha-ha" sense, that is.

George Clooney is either smarter than Ben and Matt or has a better publicist.

He had the good grace to acknowledge he knew of rumours, but dismissed them as he thought they were attempts to smear the names of actresses who had been helped career-wise by Weinstein.

Of course, Matt and Ben's denials are the minority, with many actors and actresses now coming forward to tell their stories.

The bravery of Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan, who spoke out in the original and damning New York Times story, must be commended.

As Juliette Lewis said, they had everything to lose and nothing to gain from speaking out.

As well as being about stars and the lucrative movie industry, this is a story that runs deep into the political sphere.

Weinstein was known for his hefty donations to both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

With Clinton's campaign focusing on the treatment of women, it seems so sadly ironic that an abuser was one of her most prominent benefactors.

It also suggests that while in a room of liberals — with a Democrat-backing bully at the centre — condemning Trump was the easy thing to do.

It was as easy as being silent about that other elephant in the room.

Actress Brooklyn Decker summed up the Weinstein saga by pointing out: "We condemn 'grab them by the p**y' and we condone this."

I think it's time Hollywood stopped preaching from the podium until they're happy to condemn all monsters — not just the ones that it's cool to publicly hate on in a room full of their peers.

**CREEP ...
Weinstein
with wife
Georgina at
Oscars bash
this year**



BEVVIES
FOR THE
NAVVIES

IF you thought some of the shoddy building work in the boom was bad, imagine how it was back in 16th century.

A study has found that stonemasons working in Dublin in 1565 were given an allowance of 14 pints of ale per day.

Dr Susan Flavin, history lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, found that the ale downed was also highly alcoholic with a strength of seven to ten per cent.

The boozed-up builders were also getting more than their fair share of calories from the pints, with each coming in at around 400-500, compared to 180-200 for a pint of modern bitter.

Most likely drunk with bulging bellies, it's little wonder there's not many buildings crafted by those sturdy stonemasons are still around . . .



TAX HAS
NO FIZZ

A SUGAR tax sounds great in theory but I'm not sure it's the answer to our obesity crisis.

One in five Irish kids is overweight or obese and now drinks with a high sugar content are to go up in price.

But the stats to prove a sugar tax will fix this are thin on the ground.

The sugar tax will add just ten cent onto a typical 330ml can of fizz, which I doubt is enough to sway anyone.

Education and not taxation is more likely to make kids think twice before they open a can.