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Neither impressed nor repressed

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SECRET DIARY OF ENDA AGED ALMOST 66

I AM now close to chiselled perfection. I was flat out on sit-up number 3,412 this morning when Fionnuala popped her head in and told me I was a machine. She also said Noonan was on the phone. "Hi Michael," I said, "I just did 6,000 sit-ups." He said I was an

inspiration, and then asked how Fionnuala was. "No idea Michael, I haven't seen her in days. I've been working out." Noonan pointed out that she answered the phone and handed it to me so I could have this conversation. "Oh, I've seen her alright, that's

never been in question. The pair of us were just out chatting to a man in a pub with a pint in his hand who said he'd be lost without me." Noonan told me that it was 6am, and also said something about sit-ups. "Chance would

be a fine thing Michael! I haven't done a sit-up in years. "Bad back from carrying all those idiots in Cabinet!" Noonan hung up, so I went back to eating my block of mild cheddar cheese. Then I thought about what I was going to wear on Paddy's Day.



● PEOPLE were queuing up last week to be head-butted by a footballer following the Anthony Stokes/Elvis Presley civil case in the High Court. The ex-Celtic striker was hit with a €230,000 damages bill for his loutish attack on Anthony Bradley. While his actions were reprehensible and the injuries to the impersonator significant, social media was abuzz with people offering to take a beating in exchange for a life-changing amount of cash. And no, I'm not going to finish this piece with an Elvis pun...



KIAN TO APPEAR SERIOUS

ON the very rare occasion I watched The Voice, I often thought that most of the judges weren't really suited to the job.

Bressie never set the music world on fire, yet sat there critiquing others as if he was Quincy Jones.

Wannabe rock star Kian Egan, above, was just laughable, going on as if he was anything but a backing singer in a boyband.

So I was pleased to see I wasn't completely deluded when I read Keith Duffy's withering put-down of the ex-Westlife stool-topper over the weekend.

He told "arrogant" Kian and Nicky Byrne to chill out and stop going on as if they're Bob Dylan, "singing songs about humanity and saving the world".

The former Boyzone man called himself out for what he was — a bloke who played for screaming girls — while lambasting the lads' big egos.

You don't read interviews like this anymore because everyone's afraid to say it as it is, so for Duffy to call them out was a most welcome development.

How great is it getting in US?

DONALD Trump is determined to make America great again.

I'm still not sure how one measures greatness. Maybe with a thermometer, protractor or hygrometer, an accelerometer or even an anemometer.

It's still early days, but we've yet to see any evidence of increased greatness.

What we have seen is proof the president is still locked in a brave battle with words, using up to 100 different ones every day.

He insisted over the weekend that the "White House is running so smoothly. So smoothly". He also came out of the classic, "When you look at what's happening in Sweden — Sweden! Who would believe this? Sweden!" and "We don't want people with bad, bad ideas coming into our country". Too late for that surely, considering everyone in his administration lives there already.

I'm going to chart America's progress by Donald's vocabulary. So in all future columns I'll pick out some of the most impressive words he uses to see if his country is becoming great again.

We're Late Late to the smut party

DURING the 1960s, the Carry On crew had audiences in stitches with their unique brand of smutty wit.

The innuendo-laden "ooh matron" schtick had a still-conservative Britain laughing because the films parodied everything that was so quintessentially them.

It held a mirror up to an evolving society and the changes that brought, from the sexual revolution to feminism and the country's determination to escape the grim post-war mind-set.

Around that time, Benny Hill was running fast around trees and hanging out with Hill's Angels babes to a funny jingle that had 21million falling off their chairs. Some sections of society were appalled, but progressive types lapped it up.

While 50 years later we all scratch our heads like Laurel and Hardy and wonder what the fuss was about, it was simply the hint of sex at a time when most people were still basically repressed.

Now we have our very own smut king in Al Porter. And while many people here in Ireland continue to keep the sexuality bottled up, young Al decided some time ago to forego the subtlety in favour of a more direct approach.

His is less implicit, more hit-you-in-the-mush-with-a-rubber-dildo explicit.

Al's appearance on The Late Late Show's St Valentine's Day



OLD HAT . . . Ryan & Al on Valentine's show

special and the reaction to it confirmed, if we ever needed it, that Irish TV audiences remain caught in the Sixties by either taking offence to this sort of stuff or being joyously receptive to any old rubbish for a larf.

On the show, itself a trashy throwback to The Word in the Nineties, hugely-successful Al introduced himself (for the sixth time) to the ultimate mainstream audience by making wacky sex jokes.

One was about hoping for a wooden spoon up his backside from his mother, joking "Go on Ma, you might as well", Ryan Tubridy doing a Rose (he used to go out with a pageant winner, you see) and another about Linda Martin's "f***y". Many either thought these quips were hilari-

Ooh matron!

ous or despicable. Hundreds of young, hip people took to Twitter to hail comic genius, hundreds more wrote to RTE to complain.

Then there were those of us neither remotely impressed nor repressed and who thought it was at best a bit Julian Clary — only 30 years too late.

Clary broke the mould with a very camp act in the Eighties, the sort of stuff that could have earned him a beating in those intolerant times.

Al's in safer territory, the world having moved on considerably since then, but it's hard to believe audiences are still reacting, in one way or another, to more vulgar forms of the "ooh matron" drivel decades after it was a thing.

Row back to, I think, 2013 in Murphy's Laughter Lounge.

A camp guy in a dazzling purple suit pranced on to the stage and said: "I know what you're all thinking. Is he or isn't he? Well, I am. I'm from Tallaght."

For the next 45 minutes I cracked up laughing at every sex joke the young chap who turned out to be Mr Porter made.

I told anyone who'd listen the following week that we'd seen the next big thing.

Later that year I laughed again, possibly at Electric Picnic, through an act in which he once more opened with his Tallaght line, and made the same sex jokes.

After seeing him again the following year for another smutty set at the Laughter Lounge, the law of diminishing marginal utility kicked in and I was over it.

He's now one of the most successful stars of comedy in this country, and I know for a fact that other popular comedians are envious of the trail he has blazed for himself.

But then he did his Late Late routine, and not only was I thinking it's time for this chap to broaden his range a bit, but wondered which previous decade the audience and programme was stuck in.

Jokes about having your mother ram a wooden spoon where the sun doesn't shine aren't funny unless you're a mentally-challenged teenager.

Neither was the Rose thing (a quip I'm sure he's made before), and who wants to hear about Linda's privates?

While it's puerile nonsense, surely we should be mature enough not to bother complaining about it either.

No doubt it's supposed to be outrageous, but it came across as attention-seeking, old hat and boring.

He's not breaking any mould because two-bit comedians the world over have been making smut jokes for 50 years.

Those getting upset are the same type of people who got wound up over Carry On back in the day.

One would hope that as a society we would be able to watch or ignore that Late Late Show episode with the quiet contempt it was due.

However, it seems we're only now at the same stage of evolution as the Britons of the Sixties who couldn't get enough of the Benny Hill-Carry On output — either as fans or fierce critics.

Their attitudes began shifting half a century ago, but if the Late Late nonsense is anything to go by, it seems we're still stuck in the past.



MARIAN'S SUN DISS GOES ON

MARIAN Finucane once again didn't bother reading out our front pages over the weekend.

For a few minutes every Saturday and Sunday, she goes through the papers with all the flow of someone reading them for the first time.

Most weekends she avoids the Irish Sun and Irish Sun on Sunday — which, by the way, are the only national titles in growth as per the most recent circulation figures.

I don't think Marian, above, likes us but that's okay because I don't like her show either.

I prefer to listen to programmes such as Sean O'Rourke's, where I feel the presenter does more than just turn up for a few hours to go through the motions.

CHAMP OF THE WEEK

MARK MAY
THE guy who fills in for me when I'm busy tried to make a virtue of the fact that he



wrote his column on his day off last week, and even referred to himself as a hero.

In my book, he's an idiot.

CHUMP OF THE WEEK

JOEY BARTON
THE Burnley midfielder's despicable

— and entirely in character — stamp and dive against non-league heroes Lincoln in the FA Cup on Saturday was very embarrassing indeed.

