

Those other Mandelson email correspondents



Those potential Kenny Jacobs replacements

Morgan McSweeney

The Westminster high-flyer has had his wings clipped following a series of blunders caused by the Peter Mandelson fiasco. With Keir Starmer looking like he's about to crash and burn at any moment, McSweeney is starting to look like excess baggage.

Larry Murrin

Farmers are claiming the Bord Bia boss has his head stuck in the clouds. However,

Murrin is refusing to take off just yet and may have to endure plenty more turbulence in the weeks and months ahead.

Gregory Campbell

Made a lot of unnecessary noise during President Conolly's recent trip to Derry and most agree he needs to cool his jets. Was hoping to fuel controversy in order to generate some cheap publicity but ultimately hit the skids.

New deluge of flood articles

Met Éireann has issued new status orange and yellow rain alerts, after a fresh deluge of flood articles hit the country's newspapers. Although there has already been saturation coverage, more reports are expected to rain down hard over the next few days as the torrential updates continue.

"The papers are absolutely drowning in this stuff," accord-



ing to a spokesman for the National Emergency Co-Ordination Group. "The climate in newsrooms very much favours a landslide of graphics, analysis and eye-witness accounts, as readers vainly swim against the tide.

"Local authorities and the Red Cross are on standby should anyone get submerged beneath this ocean of fillers."

GOVT WARNS MUSK IT WILL DO NOTHING

TAOISEACH Micheál Martin has issued another furious warning to Elon Musk after X refused an Oireachtas committee request to answer questions on the Grok scandal.

Wringing his hands strenuously, Mr Martin said: "The time for empty gestures about social media platforms acting responsibly is long gone. It's obvious that the company's latest decision is slightly disappointing, so our only course now is to sigh audibly."



Communications minister Patrick O'Donovan went even further, describing Mr Musk as "one of our greatest job creators who has already succeeded in getting millions of people to leave X."

Independent senator Groanin Mullen asked if chatbots could stop the ongoing scourge of digitally explicit images coming out of Leinster House, particularly those showing the naked ambition of highly concerned politicians.

The poster features a man in a green and white sports jersey with 'vodafone' and 'RBS' logos. The background is a close-up of a person's face. Text on the poster includes: "A GRUESOME HORROR SHOW" JOHNNY SEXTON, "WATCHED IT THROUGH MY FINGERS" PETER O'MAHONY, ANDY FARRELL, CAELAN DORIS, and a large "SEND HELP" text. Below that, it says: "THEY THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE CRUISING, BUT THEN THEY CRASHED AND BURNED. NOW, WITH LITTLE HOPE OF ESCAPING THEIR PREDICAMENT THEY MUST PRAY FOR RESCUE TO AVOID A BLOODBATH."

The image shows two men in suits. The man on the left has a speech bubble that says "We're lifting the cap". The man on the right has a speech bubble that says "On our profits!".

Who thinks Big Phil will get UN gig?



Ursula von der Leyen
Phil dedicated his life to public service around Europe's hot spots but then found himself disgraced for something he did not do, ie follow basic pandemic rules. Ironically, his closest colleagues (especially me) flung him under the Brussels gravy train, leaving him with only his huge pensions for company.

him loads of cushy EU jobs. Such an uncool, disloyal guy. PR suits him – not a top UN post where yours truly would shine. Don't be shocked if he churns out a hopeless memoir next, lol.



Simon Harris
Not just my old mentor but what a character. Sadly targeted by selfish hacks publishing blatant facts about him. It won't be easy taking over from Dr Hu Hee of China, who will leave very big boots to fill – but at least that's one thing Phil has always been good at.



Leo Varadkar
Considered himself my bestest friend ever when I was in charge and got

him loads of cushy EU jobs. Such an uncool, disloyal guy. PR suits him – not a top UN post where yours truly would shine. Don't be shocked if he churns out a hopeless memoir next, lol.

That new-look Dáil menu Dishes affected by the new price hike include...

- Coalition in the soup
- Government's smoked election prospects
- Backbenchers' beef á la Micheál
- FF and FG's goose cooked
- Mixed berry crumbling infrastructure
- Cheesed off electorate

SIX NATIONS TO SCREEN DURING IN-GAME ADVERTISING

Rugby fans have taken to social media to express their frustration following the news that RTÉ and Virgin Media are to controversially screen Six Nations coverage in between breaks in their advertising. Supporters had been hoping to avoid the gruelling experience of watching Ireland slump to a seemingly inevitable mid-table finish but the new announcement has scuppered the plans.



"For interested parties, the match will be available to view at selected intervals between our scheduled advertising," explained one media analyst.

"Those few fans still interested in watching the Ireland team can rest assured that all highlights from the match will be shown between the ads – so, none if the France game is anything to go by."



FLOODING HORROR LATEST

- ← Micheál Martin denying he's washed up
- ← Simon Harris swamping social media
- ← Government pretending to give a dam
- ← James Browne employing watery logic
- ← Cabinet looking increasingly stagnant
- ← Flooding victims left high and dry

Valentine's day messages

Ryan Tubridy to Kevin Bakhurst

You've seen the news,
my gleaming grin
How it seems I have it all...
But all of this, my love, I'd bin
If only you would call

Fianna Fáil to Micheál Martin

We've been together now so long
It's like you are our father
But from next week we'd like you gone,
Though tonight is what we'd rather

Donald Trump to Donald Trump

There has never been a love like this
In the history of mankind!
When I see myself I feel more bliss
Than even Jeff helped me find

MICHEÁL TO ATTEND WHITE HOUSE

Taoiseach Micheál Martin confirmed that he has received an invitation to the White House on St Patrick's Day. "I am proud to maintain this long-standing tradition of completely glossing

over the US's increasingly toxic role in geopolitics in exchange for a free holiday. Though I am slightly worried after he mentioned that Delta Force would be looking after my transport."

IRISH WINTER OLYMPICS HOPEFUL



My specialty is going downhill very fast

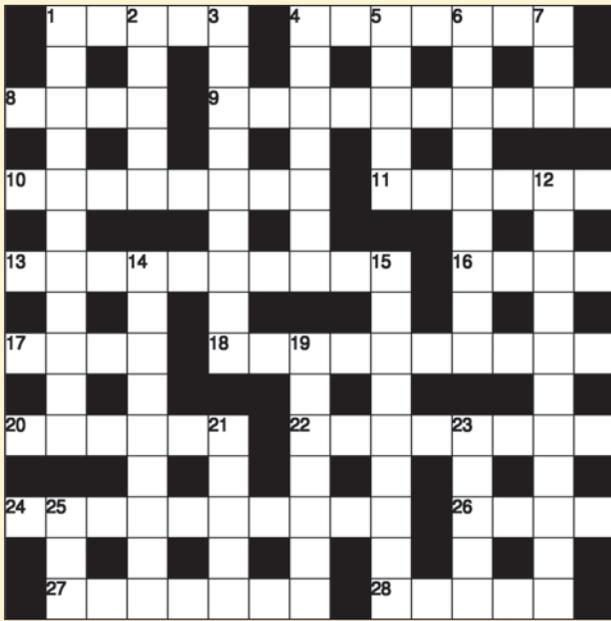
Just like the Irish rugby team

THE ADVENTURES OF FESTY O'SEMTEX





Win a Shannon Rollerball in Bog Oak, (RRP €110), www.irishpens.ie



Crossword by Procrustes

ACROSS

DOWN

- 1 Head off for Rory McLroy's first club and land in the biggest water hazard running! (5)
- 4 Calls into question claim of little mischief makers who brought in broken firearm. (7)
- 8 Exotic resort for holidaymakers involved in cannibalism. (4)
- 9 The house mother, or father, is interrupted by the Irish Bill. (10)
- 10 Copy contains little French word for lust. (8)
- 11 Holy place in Malmo squeezes in worshippers, many non-Swedes, almost none 4 Down. (6)
- 13 Crazy Italian one causes break-up of friendship? By act of driving one party away? (10)
- 16 Balls! Or, in short, bullshit! (4)
- 17 Order your young lad to leave Kemosabe's hat stand as is: ignore suggested alteration. (4)
- 18 It certainly won't be boring when, just at the exit, cement crumbles. (10)
- 20 It's funny; short play, begun by Stephen King initially, is ended by what acid-users do. (6)
- 22 It's been shown conclusively to be all right inside, even if one was goaded into reacting. (8)
- 24 After game, Rod slims down so much he becomes a very, thin figure, albeit a hothead. (10)
- 26 It sounds as though there were long lines of people waiting to hit Hurricane Higgins' balls! (4)
- 27 Local anger at all those shots being fired. (7)
- 28 I'm in the red, but it should be in the white as it's covered in frost! (5)

- 1 During stormy April like to deal with problems as they are, not as you'd like them to be. (11)
- 2 When there's gambling, drugs and prostitution, ring in and report with this. (5)
- 3 On broken plate rice is ruined so you will just have to produce another dish just as good. (9)
- 4 Prospero's subservient spirit is broken by someone from the Mediterranean area. (7)
- 5 Being on the spectrum, it has a light, splitting effect among Capri's mountains. (5)
- 6 Like any one of Cluedo's locations, though none of them is actually called that. (5,4)
- 7 It would be neither good nor right to start out in Singapore and end up in Wisconsin. (3)
- 12 In Belgrade, nun was butchered, but this may just be an apocryphal tale! (5,6)
- 14 All that's left for the next generation is a five-door, four wheeler. (6,3)
- 15 Well-connected lobbyist representing Head of Trawler-men's Association. (9)
- 19 On just a whim, EU's policy for farmers suddenly takes on mainly Asian cereal crop. (7)
- 21 Party giver gets a plant that originated in the orient but is now widely distributed. (5)
- 23 Computer company turns up with an old guy who had a razor-sharp approach to problems. (5)
- 25 It provides cover for one who drinks altar-wine, but is also into Malbec. (3)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY * required

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Closing date: Fri 20 Feb

Post only to: CROSSWORD COMPETITION, Phoenix Magazine, 44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2, Ireland

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTION:

Across: 1. Warts. 4. Posited. 8. Knit. 9. Ostracised. 10. Scornful. 11. Remark. 13. De-escalate. 16. Hide. 17. Etna. 18. Eisteddfod. 20. Trains. 22. Uncommon. 24. Courtesans. 26. Aria. 27. Residue. 28. Drift.
Down: 1. Windcheater. 2. Rotor. 3. Snowflake. 4. Patella. 5. Stair. 6. Triumphed. 7. Dye. 12. Radiologist. 14. Spaniards. 15. Exercised. 19. Soutane. 21. Sherd. 23. Miami. 25. Our.

LAST ISSUE'S WINNER: Mark Leahy, Phibsboro, Dublin 7

Craic & Codology ... Craic & Codology ...



That all-change Irish Times update

Yes, it's the biggest transformation ever seen in Ireland's news media as the *Irish Times* unveils its latest style update to the waiting world.



But why is the paper of record so desperate for attention? There is a long answer to this question (see *Fintan Tool* p3-9), but the truth is we're taking into account our ongoing drift away from breaking news – or, indeed, news in general.

Here at the *Irish Times* it's all

about style over substance – but what style(book)! And, alongside our paper-free office culture, we have now added a news-free element.

There's more. For now, our dusty old stylebook is ruling out such popular expressions as 'old rope' and 'going forward' – a big no-no for obvious reasons at Tara Street Towers.

Other changes:

- Tabloid format, comic sans typeface, laughing emojis etc.
- AI taking over all editorial functions, including laying off journalists.

FURY AS "DEFENCELESS" IRISHMEN SET UPON IN PARIS

By Alec Adoo

Communities across Ireland were left outraged after a guileless group of compatriots were brutally battered by a gang of Frenchmen while on a recent visit to Paris. Eye witnesses described the victims as "defenceless" in the prolonged attack, which occurred in the Stade de France area. The group of 15 hapless individuals were reportedly taking a leisurely



stroll and enjoying the scenery when they were set upon, while a large crowd of French citizens egged on the perpetrators.

"A thorough analysis of what went wrong is under way," said one Andy Farrell. "I

want to assure the public we'll do everything in our power to make sure something like this doesn't happen again for at least another seven days."

Scribble Box



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relax

sunshine106.8

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