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a Happy and Peaceful Christmas**



**Prizes to be won!**

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# Wishing all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas

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## Going Forward: A New Challenge

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on us, like it has on many other magazines, organisations and businesses globally.

Unfortunately we are faced with a landscape that has irreversibly changed since the Big Issue first hit the streets in 1995. To meet this challenge Ireland's Big Issue must also change.

We have reluctantly decided, albeit with a heavy heart, to host the magazine digitally only for the foreseeable future.

From now on, Ireland's Big Issue will focus our support on the Irish Homeless Street Leagues. This volunteer-driven, non-profit has been using the power of sport to transform the lives of men and women who've found themselves affected by social exclusion all across Ireland - north and south. By continuing to support the magazine online you'll be helping to develop resilient individuals and stronger communities, connecting people and promoting equality and diversity, inspiring and motivating those affected by social issues.

We will also be adjusting the content to reflect the times we live in whilst endeavoring to provide an informative and enjoyable read.

We thank you for your support to date and ask that you continue to help us. As there is no charge for Ireland's Big Issue we do need your support to continue highlighting the issues that impact our lives and bring you a truthful, balanced view of what is happening in our world.

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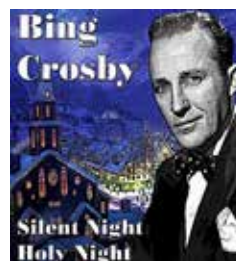


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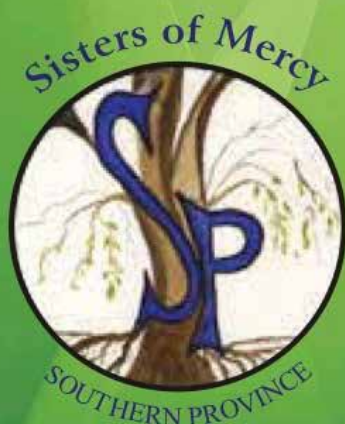
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## Editor's Note



It's over twenty years since I wrote my first Christmas Editor's Note and massive changes have occurred during that time at home and abroad, *some good some bad*. Sometimes it feels that we have no control over what happens in our lives and to some degree that is true, but we do have choices and those choices can and do make a difference.

As the majority of us in Ireland look forward to the festive season and enjoy the camaraderie of being with family and friends, that such occasions brings, we perhaps should take a little time out to reflect on how lucky we are.

It disappoints me sometimes to hear people complaining about trivial things instead of embracing the positives in their lives. Think for a moment of how lucky we really are, we were born in a country that has a healthy democracy, enjoys a decent standard of living, education, health care, social welfare and enjoys a degree of comfort. There is also plenty of work available if people wish to earn a living; while no one would say everything is perfect, even the cynics amongst us would have to admit, it's really not too bad. Think for a moment what your life would be like if you lived in the rubble of a decimated Gaza, war-torn Ukraine, Sudan, or any of those other countries that deny people a proper democracy.

Let's face it, we are lucky and free to live the life we choose; what we do with that freedom is what's important. Do we dwell on the negative, bemoan the fact that some people seem to have it all: money, education, health, appearance etc or do we play the cards we've been dealt - free as individuals to navigate our world and make our own choices?

So as Christmas approaches and we have time to enjoy and reflect, be mindful; there are people out there who need a helping hand, and you can help. There are so many ways you can be supportive to those less fortunate - the choice is with you. I'm sure whatever way you choose to help, it will make a difference.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our readers and friends whose continued support enables us to highlight the individuals, the real issues and interesting stories that make up our world, while lending support to Ireland's Homeless Street Leagues. Without *your* support it would *not* be possible

***On behalf of Ireland's Big Issue***

***I wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas***

***Sean***

# Letter To my Younger Self with Alice Taylor

**A**uthor Alice Taylor (86), takes us back in time to her days as a girl in a little village named Innishannon in Co. Cork.

At the age of sixteen, I felt that I was too tall, too thin, my legs were too long and my nose too big. I was a mismatch of contradictions struggling to make sense of life. It was a pre-electricity world when the work on our farm was done by horses and all our food was produced inside the farm gate.

Each morning we walked three miles down a hilly stony road into our secondary school in the local town. This school, which was the first lay secondary school in Ireland, was set up in the 1950s by an enterprising young couple for parents who could not afford to send their children to expensive boarding schools then run mostly by religious orders. Prior to those lay secondary schools these children had no choice but to take up manual work on nearby farms and big houses or emigrate to countries all over the world.



Making the transition to secondary school was for me a bewildering experience. Here I was introduced to the rudiments of algebra and trigonometry with which I found no affinity, but English opened the door into a delightful world. Our brilliant English teacher was a volatile lady not blessed with patience but whom in retrospect I can now understand we drove to the outer regions of mental torture. But in the midst of the mayhem that prevailed, she strove desperately to cultivate in us a love and appreciation of the great poets and Shakespeare. In frustration she yelled and shouted at us and eroded our teenage confidence with her cutting wit.

**These children had no choice but to take up manual work on nearby farms**

One Friday evening she instructed that over the weekend we do an essay on A Wet Day in Our Town. My imagination took off and so decided to turn a wet day into a sea of bright coloured umbrellas as viewed from an



upstairs window in the town centre. I enjoyed the writing and was confident that I had turned out a masterpiece! However, my literary endeavour was in for a torpedo when, the following week, my copy book came whirling through the air back over the heads of the students in the front desks accompanied by a scathing analysis.

“Alice Taylor, I have no idea what on earth you are trying to do but there isn’t a beginning or end to that bloody thing” she yelled.

But strangely enough I was not fazed by her analysis and remember thinking “That’s actually very good, but you don’t get it”. So maybe she was also unwittingly cultivating in me a sense of my own voice. She endeavoured as well to cultivate in us some appreciation of classical music and taught us the words and air of Brahms Lullaby, The Drinking Song from La Traviata and if the surrounding hills were buried in snow resulting in reduced attendance, she tried by playing on some type of record player of the time to introduce us via the harmony of Greensleeves to the slow waltz. So, despite the fact that she nearly killed us and herself in the process she certainly strove to inculcate in us an appreciation of writing, art and music.

That beautiful building, however, with no grounds attached but for the graveyard behind a high stone wall was never designed to be a school and in later years a much larger modern school with playing fields attached was built in the next village. The little church shrank into the oblivion of abandonment and each time on going home and passing by it tugged at my heart strings and I wished that by some miracle it might once again recover some semblance of its former glory. And then a miracle happened! A visionary by the name of John Paul McAuliffe came on the scene. Born on the Cork-Kerry border in

1939, he emigrated at the age of 20 first to London and then to Australia where he founded a successful business and became extremely wealthy. But he never forgot his roots. In 2012 on returning to his home he heard that the local



people were endeavouring to raise funds to acquire this church and preserve it as a community and cultural centre. He stepped in and paid for the building and the entire restoration which would go on to cost one-and-a-half million, and finally, in 2020

the restoration was completed.

Last Christmas I returned to my old school and viewed the final restoration and saw the realisation of a dream that had endowed this culturally rich barony with a showcase for its diversity of talents. This first viewing of my old alma mater which was to be the venue for my recital caused my heart to flutter with anticipatory excitement. As I climbed the incline fronting the now transformed building mixed emotions cascaded through my mind. It was many, many decades since I had last walked up this path. It was good to just stand there soaking in the magnificence of the entire transformation. My eyes drifted over to the shadowy corner that

**it is  
only in retrospect that we see  
clearly**

was once our classroom, and my thoughts went back through years to the teacher who had strove so desperately to inculcate in

us an appreciation of English. Was she smiling enigmatically in the shadows?

Maybe it is only in retrospect that we see clearly all the happenings which at the time we thought meaningless, but were in reality shaping you.

**‘A Place Called Home’ (Brandon Books) is available in good bookshops & online.**



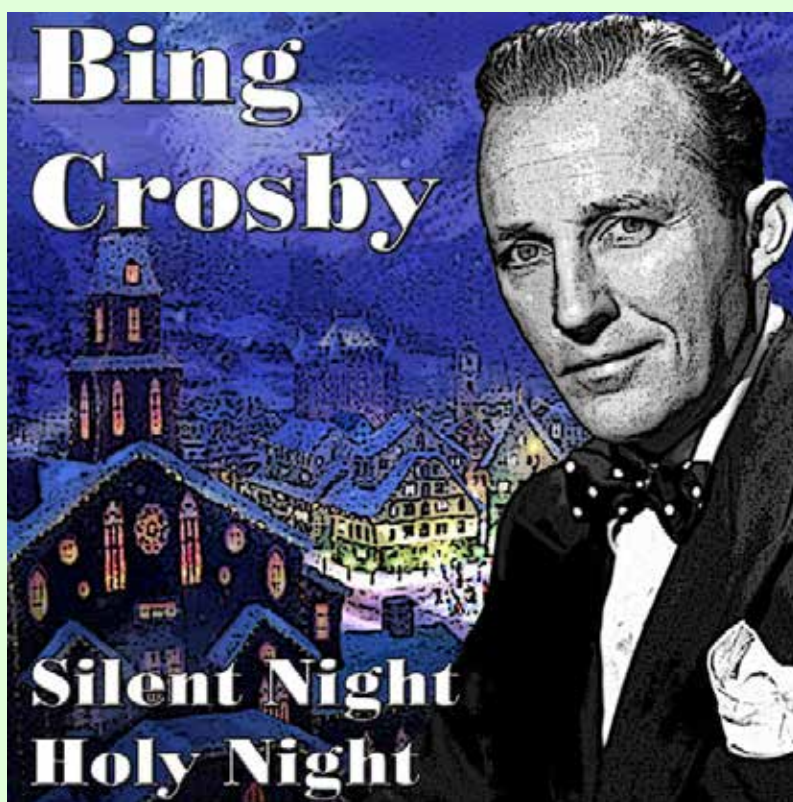
# The Stories Behind Our Favourite Yuletide Songs

Christmas is a time of joy, celebration, and, of course, music. yet the origins of some of these beloved songs are not as cheerful as one might expect Shaun Anthony explores some of the most notable Christmas songs and the unexpected tales behind them.

## *Silent Night - 1818*

“Silent Night” is one of the most cherished Christmas carols, with its origins tracing back to Austria in 1818. Written by Joseph Mohr, a priest at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, the song was born out of necessity. When the church’s organ broke just before Christmas, Mohr decided to repurpose a poem he had written to commemorate the end of the Napoleonic Wars. He asked a friend to compose music for the poem, resulting in the serene melody we know today. The song has since been translated into numerous languages and remains a staple of Christmas celebrations worldwide. A version of Silent Night recorded by Bing Crosby in 1935 sold a whopping 30 million copies.

bedridden, on the losing end of a two-year battle with cancer. This left Bob to look after their four-year old-daughter, Barbara.



One night, Barbara asked her father, “Why isn’t my mommy like everybody else’s mommy?” As he struggled to answer his daughter’s question, Bob remembered the pain of his own childhood. A small, sickly boy, he was constantly picked on and called names. But he wanted to give his daughter hope, and show her that being different was nothing to be ashamed of. More than that, he wanted her to know that he loved her and would always take care of her. So he began to spin a tale about a reindeer with a bright red

nose who found a special place on Santa’s team. Barbara loved the story so much that she made her father tell it every night before bedtime. As he did, it grew more

elaborate. Because he couldn’t afford to buy his daughter a gift for Christmas, Bob decided to turn the story into a homemade picture book.

## *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*

A version of Silent Night recorded by Bing Crosby in 1935 sold a whopping 30 million copies.

As the Christmas season of 1938 came to Chicago, Bob May wasn’t feeling much comfort or joy. A 34-year-old ad writer for Montgomery Ward, May was exhausted and nearly broke. His wife, Evelyn, was

In early December, Bob’s wife died. Though he was heartbroken, he kept working on the book for his daughter. A few days before Christmas, he reluctantly attended a company party at Montgomery Ward. His co-workers encouraged him to



share the story he'd written. After he read it, there was a standing ovation. Everyone wanted copies of their own.

Montgomery Ward bought the rights to the book from their debt-ridden employee. Over the next six years, at Christmas, they gave away six million copies of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer to shoppers. Every major publishing house in the country was making offers to obtain the book. In an incredible display of good will, the head of the department store returned all rights to Bob May. Four years later, Rudolph had made him into a millionaire. Now remarried with a growing family, May felt blessed by his good fortune. But

there was more to come. His brother-in-law, a successful songwriter named Johnny Marks, set the uplifting story to music. The song was pitched to artists from Bing Crosby on down. They all passed. Finally, Marks approached Gene Autry. The cowboy star had scored a holiday hit with "Here Comes Santa Claus" a few years before. Like the others, Autry wasn't impressed with the song about the misfit reindeer. Marks begged him to give it a second listen. Autry played it for his wife, Ina. She was so touched by the line "They wouldn't let poor Rudolph play in any reindeer games" that she insisted her husband record the tune.

Within a few years, it had become the second best-selling Christmas song ever, right behind "White Christmas." Since then, Rudolph has come to life in TV specials, cartoons, movies, toys, games, colouring books, greeting cards and even a Ringling Bros. circus act. The little red-nosed reindeer dreamed up by Bob May and immortalised in song by Johnny Marks has come to symbolise Christmas as much as Santa Claus,

evergreen trees and presents. As the last line of the song says,

"He'll go down in history."

## *Little Drummer Boy*

Before it became world famous as the "Little Drummer Boy," the song was originally titled "Carol of the Drums" because of the repeating line "pa rum pum pum pum," which imitates the sound of a drum.

It's not certain who wrote the song, but the "Little Drummer Boy" is

believed to

have been written by Katherine K. Davis in 1941. The song lyrics are said to be based on an old Czech carol. It was recorded for Decca as "Carol of the Drum" by the Trapp Family Singers in 1951 and credited to Davis.

But Davis isn't the only person credited with writing the song. According to some reports, Henry Onorati and Harry Simeone penned the lyrics to the song.

Just as it's not entirely certain who deserves lyrical songwriting credit for the "Little Drummer Boy," questions surround the music composition credits for the song as well. Jack Halloran recorded it in 1957. His daughter, Dawn, stated in a letter to famous music collector Jerry Osborne that her father "did the original choral arrangement and recorded it for Dot Records in 1957." She added, "Dot, unfortunately, didn't put the single out for the 1957 Christmas season, and Simeone succeeded in getting composing credit (along with Henry Onorati and Davis) for a piece he had nothing to do with."



**Bob May**

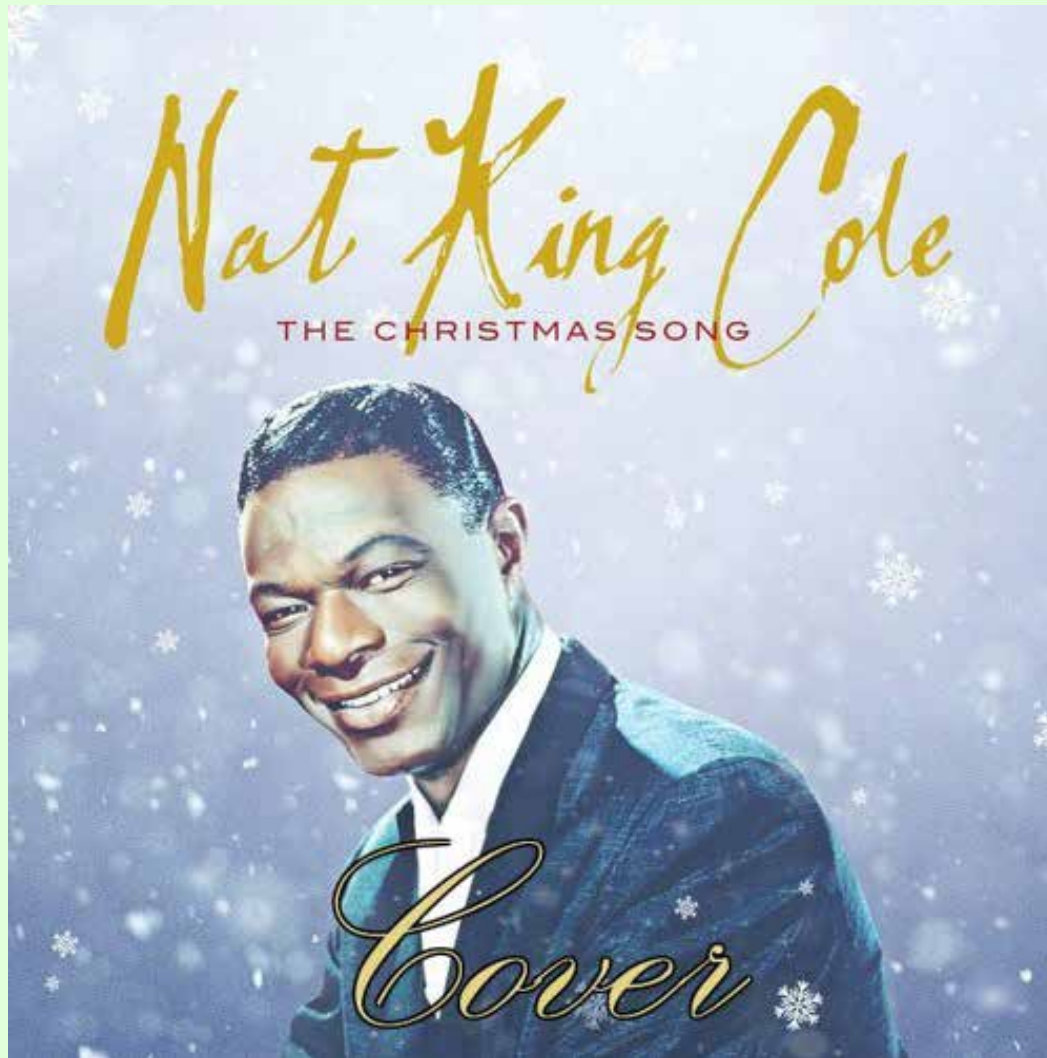
**The song was pitched to artists from Bing Crosby on down. They all passed.**

## Do You Hear What I Hear?

Written in October 1962 by husband-and-wife songwriting duo Noël Regney and Gloria Shayne, “Do You Hear What I Hear?” emerged during a time of great tension—the Cuban Missile Crisis. The song serves as a poignant plea for peace, with lyrics that directly call for unity and hope. Gabrielle Regney, the couple’s daughter, recounted how her father was inspired while walking through New York City, observing babies and feeling a deep sense of urgency about the world’s state. The line about a star dancing in the sky was a metaphor for the looming threat of nuclear war.

overwhelmed by the heat of the summer and started to think of Christmas and cooler weather. And that first line of lyrics captured a childhood memory for Wells, who grew up in Boston and remembers street vendors selling roasted chestnuts around the Christmas season.

Of course The Christmas Song has been recorded by a huge variety of singers including, in more recent times, Camila Cabello, Shawn Mendes and Ariana Grande.



## What Child Is This?

Written in 1865 by William

Chatterton Dix, “What Child Is This?” was inspired by Dix’s personal journey of faith after a serious illness. Originally titled “The Manger Throne,” the hymn reflects his newfound Christian

beliefs. The melody is set to the tune of “Greensleeves,” which adds a haunting beauty to the lyrics. The song has become a staple in Christmas services and celebrations around the world.

## The Christmas Song


When we think of “The Christmas Song”, our minds often go to the wonderfully magical vocals of Nat King Cole. He was actually the first singer to record it in 1946, and the first African American singer to release a holiday tune (it opened the door for Lou Rawls, Ray Charles and many others to record their own takes on yuletide classics.) Written by Robert Wells and Mel Torme, the song came together in July of 1945 at Lake Tahoe. The duo were gathering for a regular writing session and by the time Torme arrived, Wells had already jotted down what would become the iconic first four lines of the song. Torme asked what inspired those lyrics, and Wells mentioned he was feeling

His wife, Evelyn, was bed-ridden, on the losing end of a two-year battle with cancer.

As we listen to these beloved Yuletide carols this Christmas it’s fascinating to reflect on their origins. Many of these songs were born out of personal struggles, historical crises, or a longing for peace and joy. They remind us that even in times of hardship, music has the power to uplift our spirits and bring people together. So, as you enjoy the festive tunes, take a moment to appreciate the rich histories behind them and the messages they convey. Have a peaceful Christmas everyone!








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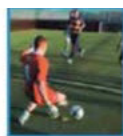
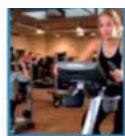
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# Band Aid- 40 Years On

**Colin Alexander Looks at How the problematic Christmas hit changed the charity sector.**

In November 1984, BBC journalist Michael Buerk presented a series of dispatches from the small town of Korem in northern Ethiopia. He described the scenes he encountered as a famine of “biblical proportions” and that aid workers in the region had told him it was “the closest thing to hell on earth”.

The broadcasts had a profound emotional effect upon viewers in the UK, many of whom had not seen full colour images of a famine before. They inspired two popstars – The Boom Town Rats’ Bob Geldof and Ultravox’s Midge Ure – to write the charity single Do They Know It’s Christmas? It was hastily recorded by the super-group Band Aid.

But the lyrics did not paint a full picture of the famine. They recycled many of the old colonial tropes of Africa as a barren land requiring western salvation. In this case the famine was primarily the result of mass migration and destitution caused by a war involving Ethiopia and Tigre and a near total disregard for human life by the combatants.

*Where nothing ever grows, no rain or rivers flow,  
Do they know it’s Christmas time at all?*



Bob Geldof

These inaccuracies didn’t seem to matter to the many politicians, musicians, journalists and members of the public who got on the Band Aid wagon. Despite societal, economic and political decolonisation efforts since the 1980s, the record remains a firm Christmas

favourite 40 years on. Indeed, Geldof himself told The Conversation (see full quote at the end of the story) that there is endemic hunger due to the unforgiving soil conditions and that water is scarce save for a scattering of unreliable wells, adding:

**“the closest thing to hell on earth”.**

“This little pop song has kept hundreds of thousands if not millions of people alive.”

Band Aid, and the subsequent Live Aid concerts in July 1985, were watershed moments for the wider charity industries.



Afterwards, fundraising became much more of a spectacle. Donors were re-imagined and empowered as “saviours”. Celebrities began to view endorsement of charities as a key part of their star profile. Governments – rather than footing the bill for humanitarian assistance solely themselves and viewing it as a moral obligation of statehood – now encourage public donations and offer to add to the total through gift aid tax relief.

Many charities have become more entwined with corporate money despite sometimes quite obvious conflicts of interest. While there has also been excessive veneration towards the charity exploits of billionaires, despite them giving away only a microscopic amount of their total wealth.

These developments are all highly problematic because they arguably discourage civic consciousness and may reduce the likelihood of charities offering genuine solutions to societal or ecological problems.

### Changing debates on charity

The Victorian era had a far less stifled public debate about the role of charity in society. Some of the most

renowned British public thinkers of the time openly discussed and disagreed upon how best charity should operate. Thomas Carlyle, Andrew Carnegie, Friedrich Engels, Samuel Smiles, Oscar Wilde and – perhaps most notably – Charles Dickens all gave treatises on the subject.

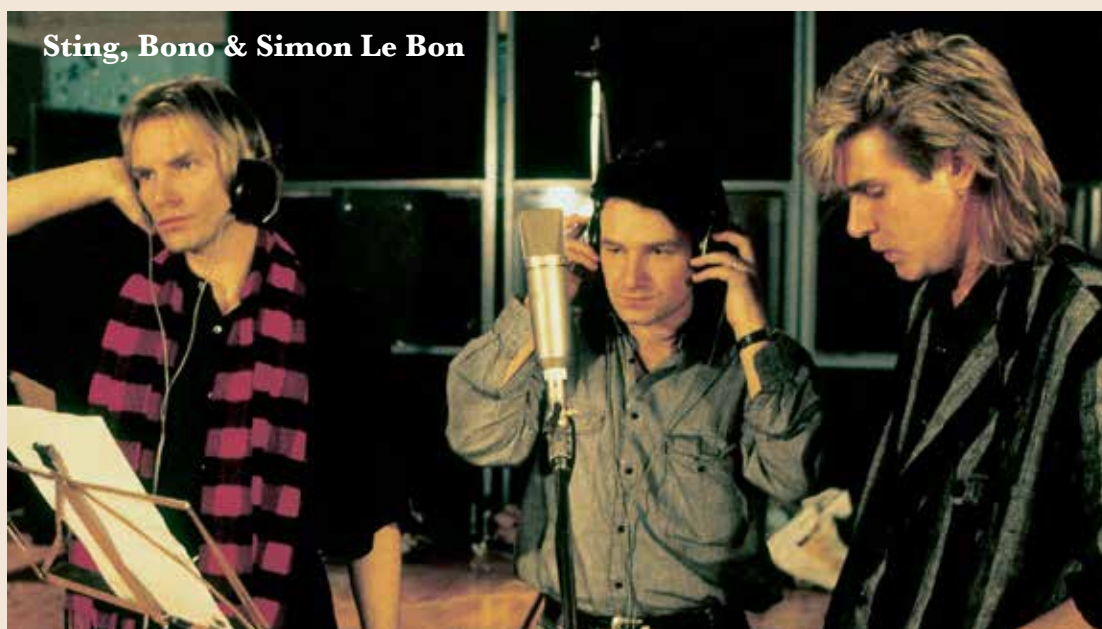
There is little criticism of the charity model itself. What critique of charity there has been post-Band Aid



**Celebrities began to view endorsement of charities as a key part of their star profile**

has personalised around obviously harmful individuals like Jimmy Savile – who used charitable exploits as a cover for his abuse – or focused upon specific examples of clear poor practice. In the past decade the most highly publicised of these in the UK have been: the story of elderly woman Olive Cooke who was hounded by charities for

money before committing suicide, the Oxfam scandal where it was revealed that the organisation’s employees were using sex workers in Haiti, and the collapse of the charity Kids Club in 2015.



Being charitable has always given donors and charity workers what economist James Andreoni termed a “warm glow”. This refers to the quick and easy confirmation of righteousness that donors can receive from giving, the achievement of which may be their primary motivator for selecting the cause.



Since Band Aid, charities have intensified their focus upon warm glow within their fundraising communications, while minimising the extent to which donors should concern themselves with introspection as to how they might be contributing to the harmful circumstances others find themselves in.

The Band Aid style supergroup has inspired many other charities and campaigns. In the immediate aftermath of Band Aid, in early 1985, USA For Africa recorded *We are the World*. While in the UK there have been charity single releases for Children in Need, after the Grenfell tower fire and even The X Factor finalists have come together for the charity Help for Heroes.

More broadly though, since 1984 the charity industries have been less conservative around using entertainment as a form of fundraising. For example, Richard Curtis has stated that his establishing of Comic Relief was directly inspired by Band Aid and Live Aid.

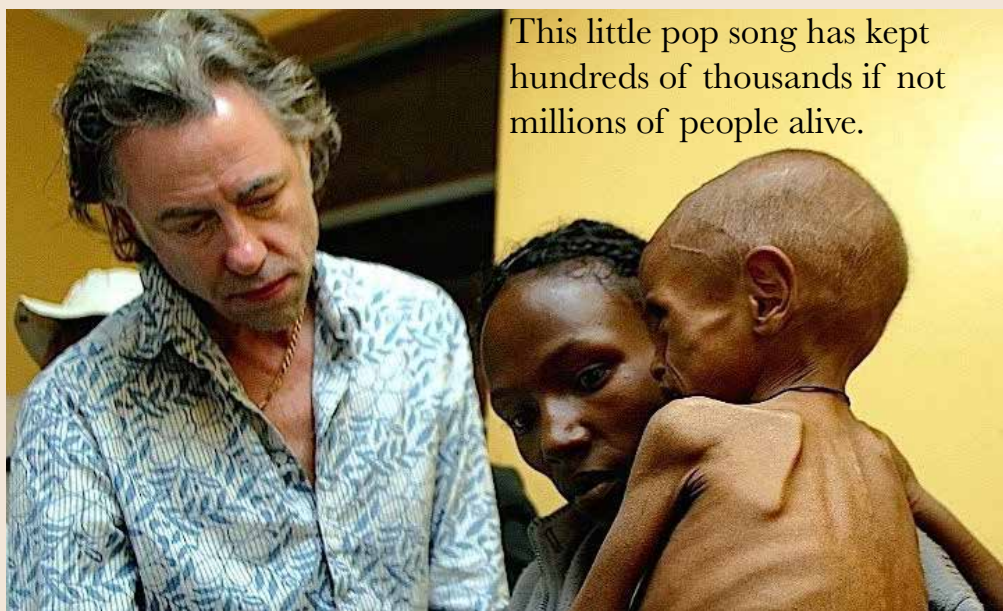
Instances of so-called “poverty porn” have also become commonplace across the charity sector as organisations compete with each other for public attention. This describes videos wherein the recipients of charity – against the backdrop of sad violin or piano music – are reduced to mere “victims” rather than full humans looking for agency.

We may be much more entertained by charity now. But on account of the Band Aid format, we are now arguably less knowledgeable about why some people suffer terribly around the world – and in no better a position to put an end to it.

---

### Geldof's response in full

*Haha ... It's a pop song ffs.  
There IS endemic hunger due to the unforgiving soil*



This little pop song has kept hundreds of thousands if not millions of people alive.

*conditions. Water IS scarce save for a scattering of unreliable wells. Rain IS increasingly unreliable. Climate change affects the poorest first and worst. War exacerbates these conditions. Xmas IS celebrated throughout Ethiopia according to their own calendar i.e. two weeks after our holiday. Religious and other traditional ceremonies were abandoned throughout 1984-1986 and more recently in the same areas for more or less the same awful reasons. These are*

*not “colonial tropes” they are empirical facts. It is in fact your correspondent's piece that is the cliched trope. The same argument has been made many times over the years and elicits the same wearisome response. Are you certain it isn't some ChatGPT scam thing?*

**against the backdrop of  
sad violin or piano music – are  
reduced to mere “victims” rather  
than full humans**

*This little pop song has kept hundreds of thousands if not millions of people alive. In fact just today Band Aid has given hundreds of thousands of pounds to help those running from the mass*

*slaughter in Sudan and enough cash to feed a further 8,000 children in the same affected areas of Ethiopia as 1984. Those exhausted women who weren't raped and killed and their panicked children and any male over 10 who survived the massacres and those 8,000 Tigrayan children will sleep safer, warmer and cared for tonight because of that miraculous little record. We wish that it were other but it isn't. “Colonial tropes” my arse.*

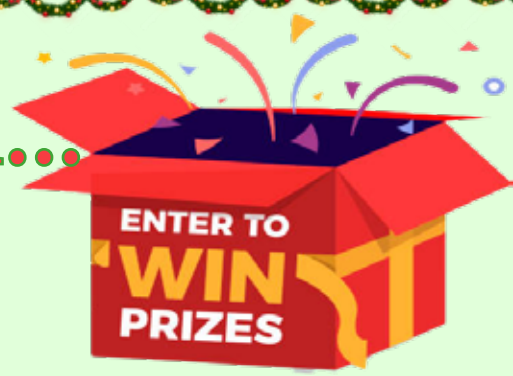
**Author**  
**Colin Alexander**  
**Senior Lecturer in Political Communications,**  
**Nottingham Trent University**

**First published on The Conversation**





# Prizes to be Won...



**BARRY'S  
TEA**

## A Year's Supply of Barry's Tea

As a family-owned Irish company since 1901, Barry's Tea understand the importance of tea in Ireland. The Barry's Tea story begins in world class tea gardens where the Master Blenders select the finest tea leaves from Rwanda, Kenya and the Assam Valley of India. Over the decades, this commitment to quality without compromise has maintained Barry's Tea reputation for exceptional quality, taste and consistency. For more information, please visit [www.barrystea.ie](http://www.barrystea.ie)

To be in with a chance of winning: What year was Barry's Tea established?

**PANDORA**

Pandora jewellery are offering a surprise package for one lucky Big Issue reader. To be in with a chance of winning, answer the following question: What is Pandora's Instagram handle?

Is it: @theofficialpandora or @pandoracharms



Fitbit are offering a lucky reader the chance to win a Fitbit Versa 4. To be in with a chance of winning:

What's the recommended number of steps per day? Is it a) 500, b) 3,500 or c) 10,000

**DUBLIN  
HERBALISTS**

Dublin Herbalists' creams and oils are made up of carefully chosen floral waters, natural butters, and active ingredients to intensely hydrate, deeply nourish and brighten up tired and weary skin. Everything they put in their products is natural, and never, ever tested on animals and their packaging is made from materials that are recyclable.

To be in with a chance of winning a carefully chosen selection of their most popular products, answer the following question:

What kind of packaging do Dublin Herbalists use?

Cabbages & Roses are gifting one lucky reader a £100 gift voucher for their website [www.cabbagesandroses.com](http://www.cabbagesandroses.com).

To be in with a chance of winning, answer the following question:

What is Cabbages and Roses website?

**CABBAGES & ROSES**  
**£100.00 GBP**



[cabbagesandroses](http://cabbagesandroses.com)

**All answers to: [info@irelandsissuesmagazine.com](mailto:info@irelandsissuesmagazine.com) by 28th December and be sure to put competitions in subject line of email.**

## Deputy David Cullinane

Teach Laighean /  
Leinster House,  
Baile Átha Cliath 2 /  
Dublin 2  
Éire/Ireland



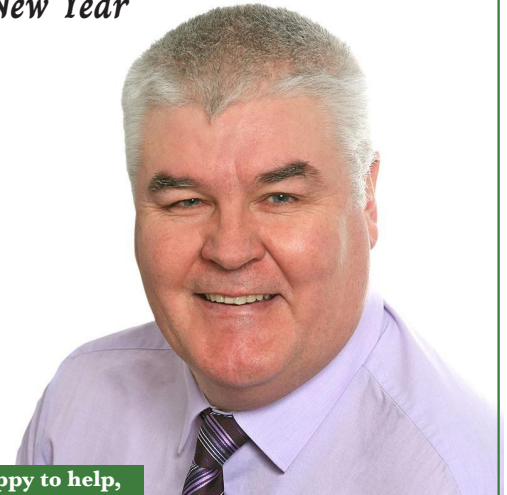
david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie  
(00353) 1 6183176

Advice Centre/Constituency Office:  
135 Barrack Street, Waterford  
(00353) 51 856066

**Sinn Féin**



*Wishing everyone a very  
Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Year*



I am always happy to help,  
should you need me.

**Johnny Mythen TD Co. Wexford**

Phone: 087 114 2100

Email: john.mythen@oir.ie



**MANDATE**  
TRADE UNION

**THE UNION FOR RETAIL, BAR AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORKERS IN IRELAND**





# Chloe Kenna

*Wins Football for all International Player of the year 2023*

What a brilliant year it's been for Ireland's Homeless Street Leagues. Our ladies team won the Big Issue Cup at the Homeless World Cup in Korea in September while our men's team reached the Quarter finals.

To top it all off, Chloe Kenna picked up the FAI football for All International Player of the Year 2023 award in November. Chloe was captain of our women's team that finished a remarkable 4th in the Homeless World Cup in Sacramento, California in 2023. It was a major achievement for Chloe and the Irish Street Leagues. Chloe was presented with her award by FAI President Paul Cooke prior to the recent women's international match at the Aviva. It was a memorable evening for Chloe and her family.



Frances Kavanagh (IHSL) Chloe Kenna and Ladies (IHSL) team coach Mary Byrne



FAI President Paul Cooke with Chloe

# Alfred Hitchcock:

*The Master of Suspense and the Iconic Films You Should Watch this Christmas.*

**A**lfred Hitchcock is one of the most prolific and equally successful filmmakers of our times. He needs no presentation because he has given us many of the greatest moments in cinematic history. At Christmas there's always a Hitchcock movie or ten on repeat, so let's take a look at a few of the very best. *Shaun Anthony reports.*

Alfred Hitchcock, often referred to as the "Master of Suspense," left an indelible mark on cinema. His unparalleled ability to create tension, combine psychological depth with thrilling narratives, and his innovative techniques transformed the thriller genre. My five favourite Hitchcock movies always seem to be repeated during the Christmas season and if you haven't seen them - lucky you, you're in for a treat, so buckle up for deep dive into the iconic classics: Dial M for Murder (1954), Rear Window (1954), Psycho (1960), The Birds (1963), and Marnie (1964), unpacking their creation, behind-the-scenes challenges, and the genius of Hitchcock's storytelling.

## **The Making of Dial M for Murder (May 1954)**

Hitchcock's Dial M for Murder made 70 years ago is an adaptation of Frederick Knott's successful stage play. The film rights were bought for £1000 by film producer Alexandra Korda and sold to Warner Bros for £30,000. The story revolves around Tony Wendice, a husband plotting to murder his wife, Margot, to gain her wealth, only to see his scheme unravel. Hitchcock's mastery turned this straightforward narrative into a tense, visually dynamic experience.

The film was shot in 3D, a trend Hitchcock approached with skepticism. Instead of using 3D for gimmicky thrills however he employed it subtly, heightening the claustrophobia of the single-location set and emphasising key props, such as the scissors used in Margot's self-defence. Hitchcock also used Kelly's wardrobe to great effect from upbeat colours at the start to more somber colours as the evidence mounts against Kelly. One choice that didn't go his way was Kelly wearing a night gown as she answered the phone, he wanted her to put on a



dressing gown but she insisted a nightgown is what her character would wear, Hitchcock was happy to go along and it worked out as a more realistic option. The 3D fad was fading by the time the film was released, and most audiences saw the film in standard 2D.

Even so, the technical sophistication remains evident.

It was Grace Kelly's first Hitchcock movie starring as Margot, the elegant yet vulnerable wife, alongside Ray Milland as her scheming husband Tony. Hitchcock had a unique rapport with Kelly, admiring her blend

**Her father once said she was only "a slim cut above being a streetwalker."**

of sophistication and humanity. Off-screen, however, production was rife with tension due to Kelly's affair with Milland. Married since 1932, Milland's relationship with Kelly (who was known for her



raging libido) caused considerable scandal, straining his marriage and his professional reputation. Kelly, despite her butter-wouldn't-melt face and ladylike poise was

quite a force to be reckoned with according to the book 'Hitchcock's Blondes' by Laurence Leamer. Leamer alleges that the Pennsylvania native had a mischievous side, but particularly when it came to men,

"Despite her upbeat attitude, Grace was a far more complex person than most around her imagined, and far more manipulative than her angelic face might suggest. People huddled around her, seeking her attention, and she knew how to use them."

According to Leamer, Grace used her charms to seduce countless men, often dating one man but sleeping with others (usually much older, very wealthy and married) at the same time, enjoying the drama and jealousy between the men vying for her affections. Her father once said she was only "a slim cut above being a streetwalker." Still, Hitchcock, known for his ability to manage his actors' egos and personal issues, ensured Grace and Milland's affair didn't derail the production. Ultimately,

Dial M for Murder succeeded because of Hitchcock's talent for extracting maximum tension from minimal settings. Kelly's understated performance and Hitchcock's

precise direction made this a quintessential thriller.

### **Rear Window: A Study of Voyeurism and Isolation (August 1954)**

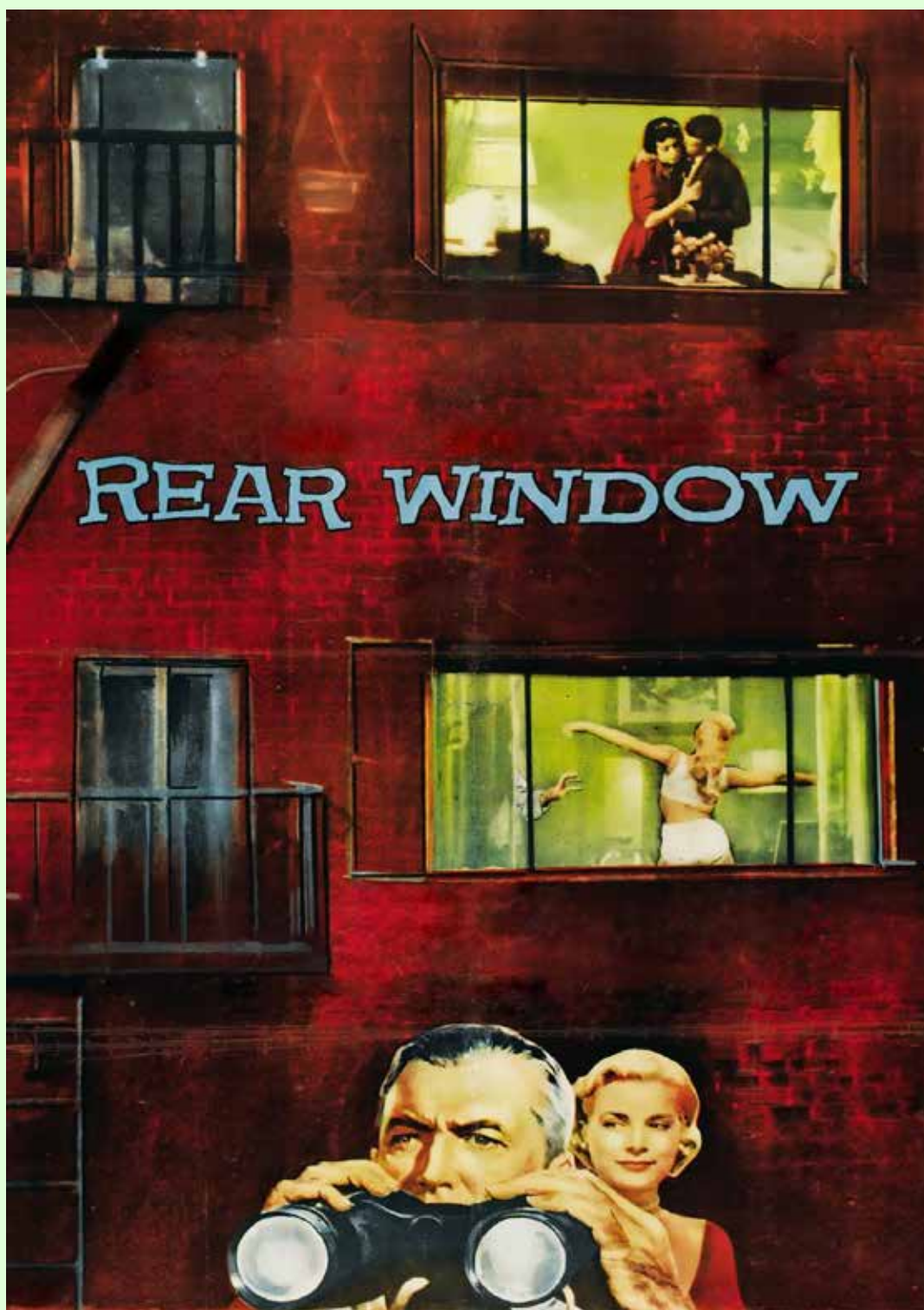
Released the same year as Dial M for Murder, Rear Window is often considered one of Hitchcock's masterpieces. The story follows L.B. "Jeff" Jeffries (James Stewart), a photographer confined to a wheelchair, who becomes obsessed with observing his neighbours through his rear window. When Jeff suspects one

of them has committed murder, his voyeurism turns into a dangerous investigation.

Grace Kelly played Lisa Fremont, Jeff's glamorous girlfriend.

Her performance balances elegance with determination, showcasing her chemistry with Stewart.

Hitchcock used Kelly's magnetic screen presence to great effect, casting her as a character who begins as seemingly



**The  
audience becomes  
complicit in his voyeurism, a  
hallmark of Hitchcock's ability to  
engage his viewers psychologically.**

superficial but reveals depth and courage. The challenges of *Rear Window* lay in its unique setting. The film was shot entirely on a single set—a sprawling, meticulously designed courtyard and apartment complex. Hitchcock's innovative use of the confined space created a sense of intimacy and tension, drawing viewers into Jeff's perspective. The audience becomes complicit in his voyeurism, a hallmark of Hitchcock's ability to engage his viewers psychologically.



The production was not without difficulties. Paramount initially resisted the project, doubting its commercial viability. Hitchcock, confident in his vision, financed the film himself, foregoing his usual salary for a share of the profits—a gamble that paid off immensely when *Psycho* became a box office phenomenon.

Audiences were unprepared for *Psycho*'s twists, particularly the early death of its apparent protagonist, Marion, and the revelation of Norman Bates' psychological torment.

These narrative risks redefined audience expectations and solidified Hitchcock's reputation as a cinematic innovator.

Despite the challenges of limited space and perspective, *Rear Window* was a critical and commercial success. Its exploration of voyeurism, human curiosity, and moral ambiguity continues to resonate with audiences and scholars.

### **Psycho: Redefining Horror (1960)**

*Psycho* marked a turning point in Hitchcock's career and in cinema. Released in 1960, the film shocked audiences with its audacious storytelling and psychological depth. Adapted from Robert Bloch's novel, it tells the story of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh), who, after embezzling money, ends up at the Bates Motel, where she encounters the eerie Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins).

Hitchcock took significant risks with *Psycho*. Shot on a modest budget with a television crew, the film departed from the polished aesthetics of his earlier work. The infamous shower scene, in which Marion is brutally murdered, is a masterclass in editing and sound design. Using rapid cuts, with Bernard Herrmann's screeching violins, and suggestive imagery, Hitchcock created an iconic moment of terror without showing explicit violence.

**Its  
ambiguous ending  
and lack of a traditional  
score contribute to its unsettling  
atmosphere, cementing its place in  
cinematic history.**

### **The Birds: Nature as Terror (1963)**

In *The Birds*, Hitchcock moved from psychological horror to ecological terror. Released in 1963, the film follows Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren), a socialite who visits a small town that suddenly comes under attack by flocks of aggressive birds. Based on Daphne du Maurier's short story, the film combines suspense with a sense of existential dread.

The production was fraught with challenges, particularly the technical difficulties of working with live birds and special effects. Hitchcock's insistence on realism led to scenes where Hedren was placed in close proximity to live, often dangerous birds. One infamous scene, where Melanie is attacked in an attic, reportedly required five days of filming and left Hedren physically and emotionally drained.

Hitchcock's relationship with Hedren was notoriously difficult. While he discovered and mentored her, casting her in *The Birds* and later *Marnie*, Hedren has spoken

about Hitchcock's controlling behaviour and unwelcome advances, which strained their professional relationship.



Despite these challenges, *The Birds* remains a powerful exploration of chaos and humanity's vulnerability in the face of nature. Its ambiguous ending and lack of a traditional score contribute to its unsettling atmosphere, cementing its place in cinematic history.

### **Marnie: A Psychological Puzzle (1964)**

*Marnie* (1964) marked Hitchcock's final collaboration with Tippi Hedren and remains one of his most complex films. The

story centres on Marnie Edgar (Hedren), a troubled woman with a compulsion to steal, and Mark Rutland (Sean Connery), the man who attempts to unravel her psychological trauma.

Hitchcock saw Marnie as a deeply personal project, delving into themes of repression, guilt, and identity. However, the production was marred by tensions between Hitchcock and Hedren. Hedren has described Hitchcock's behaviour during *Marnie* as obsessive and controlling, which affected her performance and their professional relationship. Hitchcock used his contract with Hedren to refuse her permission to work on other movies for 2 years after they fell out, effectively damaging her budding career.

Technically, *Marnie* is notable for its stylised use of colour and visual motifs. Hitchcock used vivid reds to symbolise Marnie's trauma, creating a striking psychological landscape. However, the film's reception was mixed. While some critics appreciated its daring themes and performances, others found it overly melodramatic.

In recent years, *Marnie* has undergone critical reevaluation, with scholars praising its exploration of psychological depth and Hitchcock's willingness to

confront taboo subjects.

### **Why Hitchcock's Films Are Loved**

Hitchcock's enduring appeal lies in his mastery of suspense and his ability to explore our most primal fears. His films are meticulously crafted, with every shot, sound, and line of dialogue serving a purpose. By placing ordinary people in extraordinary situations, the audience could relate, and also feel the anguish of the characters.

His innovative techniques—such as the use of subjective camera angles, long takes, and pioneering special effects—redefined cinematic storytelling. The psychological complexity of his characters,

#### **Tippi Hedren in *The Birds***



**Hitchcock used vivid reds to symbolise Marnie's trauma, creating a striking psychological landscape.**

particularly his exploration of guilt, voyeurism, and moral ambiguity, adds depth to his thrillers. Hitchcock would often test props out (sadly on his actresses) to hear how loud they screamed and thus judge whether they were frightening enough for the movie; he slipped a mannequin prop of a decayed Mrs Bates into Janet Leigh's dressing room. Then, he waited for Leigh to return to the room and listened. Because she screamed hysterically, he used the prop.

Hitchcock's collaborations with actors like Grace Kelly, James Stewart, and Cary Grant brought his characters to life with charisma and nuance and there's little doubt he was a cinematic genius.

### **What's your favourite Hitchcock movie?**

**Tell us on X (formerly Twitter) @BigIssueIreland**



# Blocks are still the best present to buy children

**W**ondering what to buy children at Christmas? Research has shown that blocks are best. *Kim Simoncini and Kevin Larkin explain why.*

With Christmas looming, many people will be considering what present to buy for their children, nieces and nephews, grandchildren and friends. Soon, if not already, we will be reading lists of the top trending presents for 2024. These lists will no doubt include, and may even be totally dominated by, all the latest gadgets and devices.

The purpose of these lists is to attempt to persuade parents of young children if they want to give their child the best start in life, and all the advantages for doing well later at school, they need to purchase the latest technology.



Missing from these Christmas lists, but what should actually be at the very top in terms of learning, are blocks. Blocks have been part of children's play for a long time. But there's still no other toy that compares in promoting all areas of children's development. Any early childhood teacher can easily identify all the areas block play develops including fine motor, social, language and cognitive skills.

**Blocks develop spatial reasoning skills**

As children experiment by stacking, balancing, or building with blocks, they need to share, respect other children's constructions, ask for desired blocks and describe what they are creating. Perhaps more importantly, children develop problem solving skills, creativity and imagination in creating their masterpieces. Finally, let's not forget persistence where children try again and again to build

the tallest tower or most elaborate castle.

Less well known is that blocks also foster spatial reasoning. Spatial reasoning is the ability to mentally manipulate objects or to think in a way that relates to space and the position, area, and size of

things within it. We use spatial reasoning skills in everyday life when we read maps, pack the car for holidays, assemble flat pack furniture or cut cake into equal slices.

**Missing from these Christmas lists, but what should actually be at the very top in terms of learning, are blocks**

Spatial reasoning skills are linked to mathematics skills. Children who have good spatial skills tend to have better maths skills. Many people are unaware of the research, but early mathematics skills are a better predictor of later school success than either early reading or social-emotional



skills. Block play helps children understand many mathematical concepts in number, measurement and geometry. During block play children count,

tall), the forms of shapes (for example rectangle, circle, square) and other spatial properties (like bent, pointy, curved).

measure, estimate, pattern, transform, and learn about symmetry.

Perhaps most surprising to readers will be the research that shows spatial reasoning skills are the best predictor of whether children will end up in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related career. Spatial skills are especially important in STEM related jobs where people are required, for example, to create or read X-ray and ultrasound imaging, engineering and architectural designs, or cross sections of heating and plumbing systems.

### **Blocks also help develop spatial language**

Block play also fosters spatial language. When children play with blocks they hear and produce more words related to spatial reasoning including things such as beneath, above, next to, behind, and so on.

One study showed block play elicited more spatial language than any other type of play. The other types of play included playing with puppets, playing house, shops, school, zoos, chefs and throwing a ball.

Other research that looked at spatial language showed the more spatial words children heard, the more spatial words they produced and the better they performed on spatial tasks. In this study, researchers looked at language relating to the spatial features and properties of objects such as the dimensions of objects (such as how big small, wide,



**children  
develop problem solving  
skills, creativity and imagination in  
creating their masterpieces**

### **Different blocks for different ages and stages**

There are a wide variety of choices for blocks for children including MegaBlocs for really young children, Duplo, wooden blocks or waffle blocks for preschoolers, and Eco bricks and Lego for older children.

These age guidelines are suggestions only. My ten and fourteen year old daughters will still play with the wooden blocks. Much of the reason blocks are such enduring toys is due to the fact they're "loose parts". That is, they can be moved, arranged, combined, taken apart, and put together in any number of ways. Froebel, the father of kindergarten, created ten gifts for children of which six were blocks.

The best way to engage children in block play is to play alongside them and show your interest and enthusiasm in block building.

My friend has a ritual of playing half an hour every afternoon with Duplo with her three young boys aged five, three and one. She says it's her favourite time of day.

So, when those lists appear in your inbox or on social media, just remember the best toy of all is likely to be missing.

First Published on The Conversation

Authors:

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# A LITTLE BIT OF IRISH

PHRASE	TRANSLATION	PRONUNCIATION
Merry Christmas to you	Nollaig Shona Duit	Null-ig HUN-uh ditch
I built a snowman	Thóg mé fear sneachta	Hohg may far SHNOKH-tuh
I bought a Christmas tree	Cheannaigh mé crann Nollag	HYAN-ig may krown NOL-ug
Here's a present	Seo bronntanas duit.	Shuh BRUN-tuh-nuss ditch
Where's the stockings?	Cá bhfuil na stocaí?	Kaw will nuh STUCK-ee
Santa is coming	Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht.	Taw DAH-dee nuh NOL-ug egg tyahkht
Where's Rudolph?	Cá bhfuil Rudolph?	Kaw will ROO-dollf

## Word Power

**O**ver the next few issues we'll be attempting to increase your word power. Have a look at the words below and afterwards see if you know their meaning. This issue, it's words beginning with B.

Word	Pronunciation	Answers
1. Poinsettia	poin-set-ee-uh, -set-uh	1. A plant of the spurge family, native to Mexico.
2. Wassail	wos-uhl	2. Liquor for drinking and wishing health to others on festive occasions, especially Christmas Eve
3. Magi	maj-ahy	3. Refers to the Wise Men or kings from the east who visited the newborn Jesus.
4. Pfeffernüsse	pef-un-ah-seh	4. A traditional German spice cookie, often associated with Christmas.
5. Bethlehemite	Beth-le-hem-ite	5. Someone from Bethlehem, or a member of religious orders originating from Bethlehem.
6. Christingle	chris-ting-gil	6. A symbolic object used in Advent services in some Christian traditions,
7. Advent	ad-vent	7. The period beginning four Sundays before Christmas
8. Immanuel	Im-ann-u-ell	8. Another form of "Emmanuel," meaning "God is with us.
9. Tinselry	tinsel-ree	9. Excessive use of glittery or tacky decorations, often associated with Christmas decorations.
10. Hanukkah	han-oo-kaa	10. An eight-day Jewish holiday often celebrated around Christmas time.
11. Krampus	kram-puss	11. A horned, folklore creature from Central European Christmas traditions, who punishes naughty children.
12. Amaryllis	am-uh-ril-is	12. A flowering plant often associated with Christmas decorations because of its striking red and white blooms.

How did YOU score?  
10 or more - Perfection!  
6-9 Brilliant.  
3-5 Well done.  
0-2 Must do better.





Is í ár dteanga féin í.  
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[forasnagaeilge.ie](http://forasnagaeilge.ie) | [gaeilge.ie](http://gaeilge.ie) |    



# Screen Scene



## Mary \*\*\*\*

**Starring:** Anthony Hopkins, Noa Cohen  
**Run Time:** 110 mins  
**Streaming:** Netflix  
**Available:** 6th December

This winter, you're invited to journey back in time to experience the story of the Nativity from a fresh perspective: through the eyes of Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus Christ. Directed by D.J. Caruso (Disturbia) and written by Timothy Michael Hayes, this uplifting biblical epic follows Mary, Joseph, and their newborn son, Jesus, as they flee the relentless pursuit of King Herod, portrayed by two-time Academy Award winner Anthony Hopkins.

Through Mary's eyes, this coming-of-age biblical epic tells the story of one of history's most profound figures and the remarkable journey that led to the birth of Jesus. Chosen to bring the Messiah into the world, Mary (Noa Cohen) is shunned following a miraculous conception and forced into hiding. When King Herod (Anthony Hopkins) orders a murderous hunt for her newborn baby, Mary and Joseph (Ido Tako), go on the run — bound by faith and driven by courage — to save his life at all costs.



## Andre Rieu's 2024 Christmas: Gold and Silver \*\*\*\*

**Starring:** Andrew Rieu  
**Run Time:** 180 mins  
**Streaming:** In Cinemas  
**Available:** 7th December

Celebrate Christmas with André Rieu's dazzling Christmas Concert, "Gold and Silver," exclusively in cinemas! This magical event embodies the festive spirit of the season, bringing joy, warmth, and sparkle to the big screen.

Get ready to be transported to the wondrous world of enchanting glamour that is André's winter wonderland! Under the sparkle of 150 chandeliers and 50 Venetian candelabras, feel your heart warm with the magical melody of all your favourite Christmas classics. André Rieu will be joined on stage by his beloved Johann Strauss Orchestra, along with special guest artists and the young and talented Emma Kok.

Don't miss this chance to celebrate music, love, and Christmas sparkle, with André Rieu's new Christmas Concert in cinemas - "Gold and Silver."







### Jack in Time for Christmas \*\*

**Starring:** Jack Whitehall, Michael Buble  
**Streaming:** Prime Video  
**Run Time:** 103 mins  
**Available to watch:** 6th December

Just in time for the holiday season, comedy lovers can watch Prime Video's latest Christmas special led by comedian and actor Jack Whitehall.

The special sees Jack Whitehall stranded in the US with just four days to make it back to the UK for Christmas. Part scripted comedy, part unscripted travelogue – Jack is joined by a star-studded cast including Michael Bubl , Dave Bautista, Rebel Wilson, Jimmy Fallon, Daisy May Cooper, and Tom Davies who help (and hinder) along the way as he tries to make it home.

Jack In Time For Christmas is a barrel of laughs and is a perfect watch to watch with the family this Christmas.

### Our Little Secret \*\*\*

**Starring:** Lindsay Lohan, Ian Harding  
**Streaming:** Netflix  
**Run Time:** 99 mins.  
**Available to watch:** Now

Lindsay Lohan is quickly becoming a holiday rom-com fixture on Netflix; in 2022, she starred in Falling for Christmas, and earlier this year she won hearts with Irish Wish. Now, with Our Little Secret she's doing what she now does best - feel-good films.

The movie tells the tale of two resentful exes — Avery (Lohan) and Logan (Harding) who are forced to spend Christmas under the same roof after discovering that their current partners are siblings. This could easily be a Hallmark movie - yes, it's gooey and predictable in the best possible way.



# Ireland are World Leaders..... in Consuming Fast Fashion

**We** are constantly bombarded with ads to “shop like a billionaire” on Chinese apps but unfortunately our environment is suffering. Do we need to take a leaf out of France’s book? Liz Scales reports.

Twenty years ago, Ireland set a global precedent. In a determined battle against one of the world’s most formidable industries, the Irish government achieved a milestone by enacting a nationwide smoking ban in 2004. This legislation prohibited smoking in workplaces, bars, and restaurants, making Ireland the first country in the world to implement such a comprehensive restriction. While controversial at its inception, the government’s efforts have since proven remarkably effective. In the two decades following the ban, the smoking rate in Ireland has plummeted from 27% to just 18% by 2024, signifying a reduction of approximately 800,000 smokers.

quarter of the world’s population lives in countries that restrict smoking in bars, workplaces, and on public transport. Ireland’s pivotal role in this movement has underscored how effective government intervention can initiate meaningful societal change when consumer-driven approaches fall short.

However, Ireland is now confronted with a new, yet equally formidable, adversary—one that poses dire consequences for both the climate and public health. Like the tobacco industry, the fast fashion industry wields significant financial clout, employing sophisticated strategies to divert attention and whitewash its image in the face of criticism.



**Irish people consume twice the amount of textiles compared to the EU average...**

Inspired by Ireland’s leadership, more than 70 countries have enacted similar bans. Today, a

“Irish people consume twice the amount of textiles compared to the EU average,” notes Mark Sweeney, Chair of Charity Retail Ireland and Donated Goods Strategy Manager at Oxfam Ireland.



According to the most recent statistics from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), per capita use of new textiles in Ireland stands at 53 kilograms per year, more than double the European average of 26 kilograms.

This surge in consumption has been largely driven by the proliferation of alarmingly cheap and often poorly-made clothing from the likes of AliExpress, Shein and Temu produced en masse in China. Demand for such garments is fuelled by aggressive marketing on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok and prices far below the true social and environmental costs.

Mr. Sweeney emphasised the overwhelming presence of such marketing: “I am bombarded by ads from every corner of the internet. They appear on nearly every website. My two young children, while playing games on my iPad, are inundated with ads for brands like Shein and Temu every few minutes. The sheer volume of these advertisements is a significant part of the problem. Advertising plays a critical role in driving overconsumption.”

The marketing strategies of these companies are not limited to traditional advertisements. These fashion giants rely on influencer marketing, offering generous incentives to individuals with a strong online presence to promote their products in a seemingly genuine and authentic manner (and let’s be honest, most influencers will say anything for freebies and a few quid ... I’m continually astonished people believe these unscrupulous gifters)! This sounds harsh as I’m sure many aspiring YouTubers and other content creators feel honoured by offers of collaborations that offer free clothes and cash - but as viewers we need to realise that such creators are all

about the hashtag ad. Of course, not every online

creator is like this, for instance Skerries’ Melanie Murphy routinely turns down such offers and Keelin Moncrieff, a Dublin content creator with a background in fashion, has dedicated a large portion of her online platform to

addressing environmental concerns and advocating for sustainable clothing, particularly through second-hand stores and charity shops as alternatives to fast fashion.

“When I completed my studies in fashion buying, I began exploring career options. In Ireland, the main

opportunity was working for Penneys, a significant fast fashion producer,” Moncrieff explains.

**Advertising plays  
a critical role in driving  
overconsumption**

In March 2023, fast fashion behemoth Shein reported a record-breaking profit of \$2 billion (€1.87 billion), according to the Financial Times. The total value of goods sold on its platform reached \$45 billion (€42.1 billion), despite the average price of a garment being around €9.

“There was no focus on sustainability during my studies—no discussions on the environmental impact of textiles,” says the 25-year-old content creator. “The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to climate change. This should have been a central part of our curriculum.”

Moncrieff further elaborates, “I had firsthand experience with the inner workings of the industry—how textiles are sourced, the massive profit margins, and the cost-cutting measures that enable large corporations to maximise profits.”

According to Oxfam, approximately 63,000 tonnes





of textiles end up in Irish landfills annually. Across Europe, textile consumption ranks as the fourth-largest contributor to environmental degradation and climate change, trailing only food, housing, and transport.

With nearly 120,000 Instagram followers, 112,000 TikTok followers, and 88,000 YouTube subscribers,

Moncrieff reflects on her journey toward sustainable fashion, seeking ways to dress stylishly without purchasing new items.

“A huge part of social media and influencer culture revolves around the idea that we must

constantly buy new things to keep up with trends,” she notes. “The fashion industry has shifted from seasonal cycles to weekly product drops, which is where the term ‘fast fashion’ originates.”

Sweeney agrees, pointing out that the affordability of fast fashion encourages bulk purchasing. “People buy these items in large quantities because they’re so cheap. If something doesn’t fit, they dismiss it as a minor loss.”

This influx of discarded fast fashion items has created a growing burden for charity shops. “Charity shops are meant to support fundraising efforts for good causes. Our goal is to offer high-quality products at affordable prices, but the flood of fast fashion into our stores is problematic. The public does not associate charity shops with fast fashion because we aim to provide durable, well-made clothing,” Sweeney explains.

Looking ahead, textile waste is poised to become an even more pressing issue for Ireland. Sweeney warns that upcoming European Commission regulations will restrict the export of textile waste, and new legislation, effective

January, will prohibit the disposal of textiles in domestic waste.

A spokesperson for the Department of the Environment echoed these concerns, stating: “At the EU level, we are actively participating in policy and legislative developments related to textiles. The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles aims to hold producers

accountable for the entire lifecycle of their products, including waste management. The goal is to make producers responsible for the environmental consequences of the goods they place on the market.”

Sweeney points to France’s recent legislation as a potential model

for Ireland. Earlier this year, the French government introduced stringent regulations targeting the fast fashion industry. These measures include a ban on advertising fast fashion products and the introduction of environmental levies on low-cost clothing.

**This is similar to the way we regulate cigarettes and alcohol—it reduces the temptation to purchase**

“This is similar to the way we regulate cigarettes and alcohol—it reduces the temptation to purchase,” Sweeney remarks. Moncrieff concurs, adding that such measures would greatly benefit Ireland. “Limiting where these retailers can promote their products would make a significant difference.”

Sweeney concludes,

“The full impact of fast fashion on public health and the environment may not become apparent for another generation, but we cannot afford to wait. The Irish government would do well to consider the measures France is implementing and act accordingly.”







Because laughter is  
the best medicine!



Which of Santa's reindeer has bad manners?  
Rude -olph!

What do you call a reindeer wearing ear muffs?  
Anything you want because he can't hear you!

What do reindeer always say before telling you a joke?  
This one will 'sleigh' you!

How does Rudolph know when Christmas is coming?  
He looks at his calen -deer!

What do you give a reindeer with an upset tummy?  
Elk-a-seltzer!

How do you get into Donner's house?  
You ring the deer-bell!

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas ?  
It's Christmas, Eve !

What do you have in December that you don't have in any  
other month ?  
The letter "D" !

What do you call a letter sent up the chimney on Christmas  
Eve ?  
Black mail !

Who delivers cat's Christmas presents ?  
Santa Paws !

Why does Father Christmas go down the chimney ?  
Because it soots him !

How many chimneys does Father Christmas go down ?  
Stacks !

Why is Santa like a bear on Christmas Eve ?  
Because he's Sooty !

Danny had recently passed his driving test and decided to  
ask his clergyman father if there was any chance of him  
getting a car for Christmas, which was yet some months  
away. 'Okay' said his father 'I tell you what I'll do. If you can

get your 'A' level grades up to 'A's and 'B's, study your bible  
and get your hair cut, I'll consider the matter very seriously.'

A couple of months later Danny went back to his father  
who said 'I'm really impressed by your commitment to your  
studies. Your grades are excellent and the work you have put  
into your bible studies is very encouraging. However, I have  
to say I'm very disappointed that you haven't had your hair  
cut yet.

Danny was a smart young man who was never lost for an  
answer. 'Look dad. In the course of my bible studies I've  
noticed in the illustrations that Moses, John the Baptist,  
Samson and even Jesus had long hair.'

'Yes. I'm aware of that...' replied his father '... but did you  
also notice they walked wherever they went?'

The TV game show was really close. One contestant was  
asked to name two of Santa's reindeers. The contestant  
gave a sigh thinking that he had finally been given an easy  
question, "Rudolph and Olive!"

The host asked the contestant, "We'll accept Rudolph but  
can you explain Olive?"

The man looked at the host incredulous and said, "Sure  
everybody knows that, it's in the song, he then proceeds to  
sing 'Olive' the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him  
names..."

There once was a czar in Russia whose name was Rudolph  
the Great. He was standing in his house one day with  
his wife. He looked out the window and saw something  
happening. He says to his wife, "Look honey. Its raining."  
She, being the obstinate type, responded, "I don't think so,  
dear. I think its snowing." But Rudolph knew better. So he  
says to his wife, "Let's step outside and we'll find out." Lo  
and behold, they step outside and discover it was in fact  
rain. And Rudolph turns to his wife and replies, "I knew it  
was raining. Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear!"

On the Sunday before Christmas a priest was walking down  
the main street on his way to see a parishioner. However,  
he wanted to post a parcel urgently so he asked a young  
boy where he could find the post office. When the boy had  
directed him, the priest thanked him and said, 'If you'll  
come to the Church this evening, you can hear me telling  
everyone how to get to heaven.' The boy replied, ' yeah right,  
I think I'll give your sermon a miss. If you don't even know  
your way to the post office, how will you lead me to heaven?'

# THE GUINNESS CURSE

## *Wealth Fame and Generational Tragedy*

**T**he Guinness family is best known for its brewing empire, Guinness stout, an Irish classic that has become one of the world's most recognised brands but the family's legacy of success is intertwined with a darker tale of personal tragedies, known as "The Guinness Curse. *Sineád Dunlop reports.*

### ***Building the Guinness Empire***

The Guinness legacy began with Arthur Guinness, who founded the Guinness Brewery in 1759 with an extraordinary 9,000-year lease in Dublin. The brewery became a powerhouse, and over the centuries, the Guinness family accumulated vast wealth and influence, branching into politics, the arts, and philanthropy.

With fame came intense public scrutiny. The Guinness family's private lives—marred by tragedies and struggles—became public, contributing to the narrative of a curse.



### ***Early Shadows of Misfortune***

The idea of a "curse" emerged as early as the 19th century, when Arthur's grandson, Sir Arthur Edward Guinness, known as Lord Ardilaun, faced a lonely life despite his public success. His marriage to Lady Olivia Hedges-White, who struggled with mental health, was childless and marred by

isolation, foreshadowing the personal challenges the family would face for generations.

**...marrying him three years later in Berlin in a ceremony that had Adolf Hitler as a guest.**

***Bryan Guinness Abandoned by Mitford Sister***

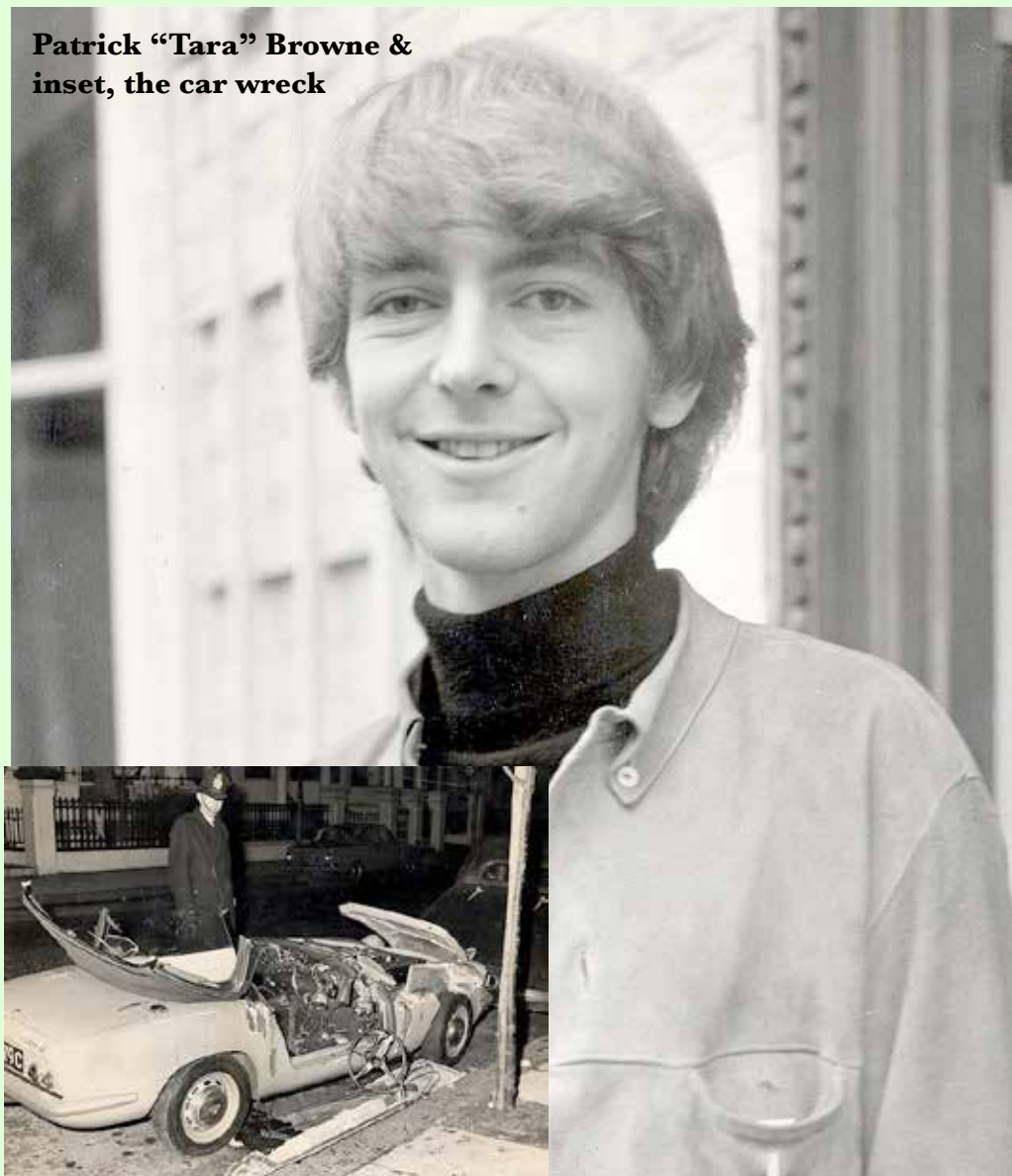
Bryan Guinness, the son of Lord Moyne -Walter



Edward Guinness-, was a man of gentle nature who found himself intertwined with one of the infamous Mitford sisters, Diana Mitford. Married in 1929, Bryan and Diana were well-known members of the Bright Young Things, a group of young aristocrats and socialites in 1920s London - but things went downhill in 1932. That was the year that Diana met Sir Oswald Mosley, who soon became the founder of the British Union of Fascists, and began an affair with him. In 1933, Diana had swiftly abandoned Bryan and their two children for her new lover, marrying him three years later in Berlin in a ceremony that had Adolf Hitler as a guest. Their allegiances would later have the couple imprisoned without trial during World War II.

## ***LSD Induced Car Crash Inspired Beatles Song***

**Patrick “Tara” Browne & inset, the car wreck**



The 1960s counterculture brought the Guinness family another high-profile tragedy. Young socialite Patrick “Tara” Browne and Moyne’s great-nephew was an icon of London’s cultural scene and a friend to The Beatles (he introduced Paul McCartney to LSD). In 1966, he died in a car accident at just 21 years old (he was driving through southwest London in his light blue Lotus Elan sports car, having availed of LSD, when he crashed into a parked van). The death of Tara

Browne was still making headlines a month later. The coroner’s report covered in The Daily Mail in January 1967 began the inspiration for a Beatles song, with John Lennon starting the track and bringing the newspaper over to Paul McCartney’s place to finish it. Starting off with “I read the news today, oh boy” and including the line “he blew his mind out in a car,” Sgt. Pepper’s epic final track “A Day in the Life” was inspired by Guinness’ accident. Browne

### ***The Assassination of Lord Moyne***

One of the most notorious tragedies came with Walter Edward Guinness, or (the aforementioned) Lord Moyne, a high-ranking British politician and Minister of State in the Middle East during World War II. In 1944, while stationed in Cairo, he was assassinated by the Jewish extremist group Lehi, shocking the public and marking one of the most high-profile tragedies in the family’s history. Lord Moyne’s death not only deepened the family’s association with sorrow but also drew their personal misfortunes onto the world stage.

**...Sgt.  
Pepper’s epic final track  
“A Day in the Life” was inspired by  
Guinness’ accident.**

### ***Addiction and Mental Health Struggles***

Repeated struggles with addiction and mental health issues within the family also strengthened the notion of a curse. Lady Henrietta Guinness, a cousin of Tara Browne and heiress of the Guinness family fortune had a

turbulent life of high-profile romances. She was with her boyfriend, Britain's best-known beatnik, Michael Beeby, when he crashed his Aston Martin in the French Riviera. The accident left her badly injured. Later, after nearly marrying three different men, including an Italian sous-chef, Beeby, and a hairdresser, she ended up settling down with medical school dropout and chef Luigi Marinori in Italy, and having a daughter. Tragically, in 1978, at the age of 35, she threw herself off the Ponte delle Torri bridge. Having been treated for depression for some time, she is known to have once said,

"If I had been poor I would have been happy."

Her tragic death echoed through the family, and Garech Browne, Tara's brother, retreated from public life, deeply affected by the sorrow that had come to define the family's legacy.

In 1978 John Guinness, a British diplomat, was involved in a car accident. While John, who was driving, survived, the accident proved fatal for his four-year-old son, Peter. Additionally, an unnamed 17-year-old Guinness family member died from a suspected drug overdose. A third descendent, Major Dennys Guinness, was also found dead in a cottage in Hampshire the same year. It seems 1978 was a particularly 'cursed' year for the family as the grand-daughter of Maureen Guinness, 18 year old, Natalya Citkowitz, the daughter of Lady Caroline Blackwood died after she hit her head on the bath and drowned (she'd been using heroin whilst bathing). Blackwood herself lived a deeply troubled life and was best-known as being a muse for artists, such as her husbands Lucian Freud, Israel Citkowitz, and

Robert Lowell. She battled alcoholism, struggled to make relationships work and created a deeply unstable and dysfunctional home life for her children.

**John & Jennifer Guinness**



## ***Kidnapping Plot***

John Henry Guinness, was chairman of the Dublin bank 'Guinness and Mahon' and the sixth cousin of the chairman of the Guinness Brewery, his well-off status made him and his family the target of a kidnapping on 8th April 1986. He returned home from work that day to the sight of his wife and

daughter tied up. The abductors attacked him and tied him up as well and then escaped with Mrs. Guinness. A ransom of \$2.6 million was demanded for her return. After John freed himself and called the police, it took

them eight days to find and free her without payment of the

ransom. Unfortunately, the kidnapping wouldn't be the only traumatic event for this family. Just two years later,

John, aged just 52 died from a 500-foot fall from Yr Wyddfa Mountain in North Wales. He was climbing with his wife, son, and three friends.

**If I had  
been poor I would have been  
happy.**

The kidnapping of Jennifer Guinness was not the only incident in 1986. One night in June of the same year, students at Oxford's Christ Church College were celebrating the end of final examinations. Among them was Olivia Channon, the 22-year-old daughter of Trade and Industry Secretary Paul Channon and heiress to the Guinness brewing and banking fortune. The next morning, she was found dead, lying fully clothed on the bed in a friend's dorm room. She had overdosed on heroin and alcohol. Three people were arrested and charged for supplying the heroin, including Channon's best friend Rosie Johnston and her third cousin Sebastian



Guinness. The judge reportedly told Guinness that he had been “weak and foolish” despite all his privilege and sentenced him to four months’ imprisonment for possession of cocaine and heroin.

resemblance to Tara Browne’s fate. As each generation faces misfortune, the Guinness Curse remains a powerful narrative, reinforcing public fascination with the family’s story.

### ***A Recurring Theme***

Addiction became a recurring theme within the Guinness family. Wealth and access to indulgence often led to substance abuse, with family members like Benjamin Guinness known for alcoholism, adding a sense of inevitability to the family’s troubles. In recent years, family members such as Ailsa Guinness have openly addressed the family’s struggles with mental health and addiction, hoping to reduce the stigma around these issues and end the secrecy that previously surrounded them.

### ***The Horse-Drawn Carriage Tragedy***

Sheelin Rose Nugent, the 31-year-old niece of Guinness heir the Earl of Iveagh, was the victim of a freak accident in 1998. October 30th seemed like a calm day when Nugent was driving her horse-drawn Romany caravan on a small road near her mother’s home. It was actually her mother’s birthday, and she was planning on taking six of her young relatives for a ride in the caravan during the festivities later. Nugent was an experienced horsewoman, but in the mysterious incident, something spooked her horse and sent it speeding toward a bend in the road. Unable to reclaim control of the animal, she was thrown out of the caravan and crushed to death beneath the wagon. According to witnesses, there were no other vehicles in the area, nor bright lights or loud noises. Whatever scared the horse and caused the accident remains a mystery to this day.

### ***Recent Tragedies and the Curse’s Continuation***

The tragedies within the Guinness family persisted into recent decades. In 2011, another descendant of Edward Guinness died in a car accident, bearing an eerie



### ***Guinness Mansion Death***

On 31st July 2020, Honor Uloth, the 19-year-old granddaughter of Benjamin Guinness, the 3rd Earl of Iveagh, was involved in a fatal accident. Uloth was at the Guinness mansion in Sussex during a BBQ party with family friends. After soaking in the hot tub, she had decided to take a dip alone in the pool. A short while later, her younger brother spotted her lying unconscious at the bottom of the pool. By the time she was pulled out, she was found to have a broken shoulder and brain injuries. Rushed to the hospital, she passed away six days later. It is theorised that Uloth hit her head and shoulder on something while she was jumping or entering the pool, rendering her

immobile and unconscious as she fell underwater but no one is certain.

### ***Examining the Origins of the “Curse”***

**Growing up in an environment of privilege can create isolation, and the pressure to live up to the family name often adds strain.**

Psychologists and historians have suggested that the Guinness family’s tragedies may stem less from a curse and more from the challenges inherent in extreme wealth and fame. Growing up in an environment of privilege can create isolation, and the pressure to live up to the family name often adds strain.

### ***Poignant Reminder***

The Guinness family story serves as a poignant reminder of the complex lives behind the public image and a testament to the power of resilience in the face of generational hardship. While the “Guinness Curse” may live on as a story, the family’s efforts to redefine their legacy offer a new narrative—one of honesty, healing, and hope.

# Patricia Scanlan's Book Club



Patricia Scanlan was born in Dublin, where she still lives. She is a #1 bestselling author and has sold millions of books worldwide. Her books are translated in many languages. Patricia is the series editor and a contributing author to the award winning Open Door Literacy series.

**This issue, Patricia brings her favourite books of the moment.**



## **A Kennedy Affair – Emily Hourican – Hachette Books Ireland**

Two powerful families. A changing world. When Kathleen 'Kick' Kennedy left England to return to America, Europe was facing war and Billy Cavendish, future Duke of Devonshire and the man she loves, had told her he could never marry her. Now, in 1943, as London stands a shell of its former self, Kick returns hoping to reunite with Billy - but there are many obstacles ahead. Lady Brigid Guinness has swapped high fashion and exclusive dinner parties for long shifts as a nurse helping wounded soldiers, forming a close bond with one in particular.

And yet the only person she can really talk to is a man shunned by her inner circle. Meanwhile, wide-eyed Sissy Maddington has arrived from Ireland under the care of the Guinness family. She's eager to explore everything London seems to offer - while she tries to forget where she came from. As the three women navigate a changed city, they each discover a capacity for love they never could have expected. But will they find the strength to stay true to themselves?

## **Water – John Boyne – Doubleday**

The first thing Vanessa Carvin does when she arrives on the island is change her name. To the locals, she is Willow Hale, a solitary outsider escaping Dublin to live a hermetic existence in a small cottage, not a notorious woman on the run from her past. But scandals follow like hunting dogs. And she has some questions of her own to answer. If her ex-husband is really the monster everyone says he is, then how complicit was she in his crimes? Escaping her old life might seem like a good idea but the choices she has made throughout her marriage have consequences. Here, on the island, Vanessa must reflect on what she did - and did not do. Only then can she discover whether she is worthy of finding peace at all. Can you ever truly wash away your past?



## **Christmas with the Queen – Hazel Gaynor, Heather Webb – Collins**



December 1952. While the young Queen Elizabeth II finds her feet as the new monarch, she must also find the right words to continue the tradition of her late father's Christmas Day radio broadcast. But even traditions must evolve with the times, and the queen faces a postwar Britain hungry for change. As preparations begin for the royal Christmas at Sandringham House in Norfolk, old friends—Jack Devereux and Olive Carter—are unexpectedly reunited by the occasion. Olive, a single mother and aspiring reporter at the BBC, leaps at the opportunity to cover the holiday celebration, but even a chance encounter with the Queen doesn't go as planned and Olive wonders if she will ever be taken seriously. Jack, a recently widowed chef, reluctantly takes up a new role in the royal kitchens at Sandringham. Lacking in purpose and direction, Jack has abandoned his dream to have his own restaurant, but his talents are soon noticed and while he might not believe in himself, others do, and a chance encounter with an old friend helps to reignite the spark of his passion and ambition. As Jack and Olive's paths continue to cross over the following five Christmases, they grow ever closer. Yet Olive carries the burden of a heavy secret that threatens to destroy everything. Christmas Day, December 1957. As the





nation eagerly awaits the Queen's first televised Christmas speech, there is one final gift for the Christmas season to deliver...

### **Maybe Next Christmas – Emma Heatherington –Penguin**

On Christmas Eve, sweet-natured, obsessively organised hotel manager Bea and over-worked A&E nurse Ollie meet on the flight home to Ireland. They talk, sparks flying, the whole way. But when the plane lands, they wave goodbye, each secretly wondering if they'll ever meet again. A few months later, they bump into each other in London. The chance encounter leaves them breathless, until a tiny misunderstanding means that, yet again, they part as strangers. But as the next Christmas draws near, fate, it seems, won't give up on Bea and Ollie... The only question is, will they listen to what the universe seems telling them?



### **As the Tide Turns at Tredagh – Caroline Lynch – Clay Hill Publishing**



Drogheda, Ireland, 1864. Ellen Cooney is fit to burst with happiness. Her sailor husband is on his way home from a long sea voyage. But devastation awaits on the quayside of her beloved Drogheda. Crippled with grief, Ellen knows she must keep her young family out of the dreaded 'Poorhouse' at all costs. In time, Ellen glimpses a spark of hope for the future. However, it seems that circumstances, and an unimaginably malign force may drive her to make the biggest mistake of her life. Options are few for a woman in such a man's world. Are the rest of Ellen's days to be blighted by the choice she had to make? Peggy, Nicholas, Larry, who can she trust? Can she find the strength and means to calm the turbulent tide of her life and navigate her way to happiness? It's time for her to take control.

### **This Boy's Heart: Scenes from an Irish Childhood – John Creedon – Gill Books**

This Boy's Heart is set in a city-centre household bursting with humanity, with a cast of a dozen children and another dozen adults, including beloved aunts, an American writer, an African doctor and a Scottish bookie. The streets outside are teeming with brewery horses, Christian Brothers, beat clubs, dance halls, a Turkish Delight shop -- and a pub where a child could sit up on a high stool and smoke his cigarette in peace. Summers are spent farmed out to friends and family in the countryside, with hilarious tales of donkey derbies and cow chases. Set in wildly contrasting worlds — from urban exotica to spacious meadows, from the classroom of fifty boys to the open road — these stories of friendship, fun, family and folklore take you on a heart-warming journey into an Irish childhood.



### **Waterford Whispers News 2024 – Colm Williamson – Gill Books**



Is it the news or is the Waterford Whispers news? The ever-popular stocking filler is back with all the biggest stories from 2024 and tonnes of exclusive new content, Waterford Whispers style! From biting political commentary to irreverent pop culture references, this seasonal institution is the perfect gift.

### **Milly McCarthy and the Christmas Calamity – Leona Forde (Author ) Karen Harte (Illustrator) – Gill Books**

It's coming up to Christmas and Milly's class is prepping for their end-of-term performance. This year they've decided on a festive concert, so they can each showcase their favourite talent. Milly can't wait to take part – though she never anticipated quite such a starring role ... and really, it was totally NOT her fault that she literally brought the house down ... The stage is set for a truly festive fiasco for our favourite cailín from Cork!



Happy Christmas Everyone



**Thank you for your support**



From all at

The Irish Homeless Street Leagues

*Every morning you have two choices:  
To sleep with your dreams  
Or wake up and chase them*





# The Podcast Review

**We source the best selection of podcasts each issue. This time we bring you, Begin Again with Davina McCall, Elon's Spies, The Calm Christmas Podcast, The Gift and Short History of.**

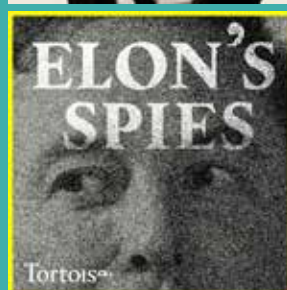
## Begin Again with Davina McCall (Midlife)

This show is dedicated to empowering people to embrace midlife as their most transformative era yet. Davina's guests will share stories of growth and rediscovery, letting you in on their own life journeys - many of which have challenged outdated narratives and ideas. Whether it's through expert insights, candid discussions, or real-life inspiration, Begin Again will be a supportive community for everyone to explore the revitalising second act of life. Davina wants everyone to know that midlife is not the start of the end; instead, it's the perfect opportunity and time to Begin Again.



Kempton chats country living, living naturally and sustainably and how we can enjoy a 'less Christmas' - that is, spending less money, experiencing less stress and feeling less pressure.

Perfect for relaxing, so grab a latte, a gingerbread man and stick in your earbuds for a real treat.



## The Gift (Technology)

Without us realising, an enormous DNA database has been created online. But what happens when online ancestry tests reveal more than you had bargained for? Totally captivating as each episode reveals a complex story with a stunning realisation at its core. This may make you rethink buying an Ancestry DNA Test for a loved one this Christmas ... you have been warned!



## Short History Of ... (History)

Amazing civilisations like the Mayans and the Aztecs. Remarkable peoples, like the Vikings and the Ancient Egyptians. Fearsome warriors like the Samurai and the Spartans. Fascinating figures steeped in mystery, like the Ninjas and the Knights Templar. Then there are events that changed everything: the California Gold Rush, Watergate, the Mount Vesuvius Eruption, the Black Death.

You may have heard of these things. But ever wish you knew more? This is the podcast for you.

## Elon's Spies (Conspiracy)

Does Elon Musk use covert investigators to gather intelligence on people with whom he has an axe to grind? That's the suspicion this series digs into, featuring an extensive interview with the British diver he called "pedo guy" after his astonishing underwater cave rescue of a trapped team of young Thai footballers.



## The Calm Christmas Podcast (Festive)

Chosen by The Times and Ideal Home Magazine as a festive favourite, this No1 Christmas podcast is a cosy listen during these colder nights. Beth



## How to:

Search "Google podcasts" in the Play Store app (if you've an Android phone). iPhones comes with Apple podcasts app installed. Open the app and type in the name of the podcast you want or you can just browse categories whilst there.

# Crucial Services this Christmas

**T**here are many services available to people who may find themselves in difficulty over the festive season, if you or someone you know need help these services are there for you; just get in touch.



**If you are homeless or struggling in Dublin**, The Order of Knights of St. Columbanus are providing hot dinners to homeless guests across 2 locations - Mansion House and RDS. Please call 00353 (0)1 6761835 or email [info@knightsfstcolumbanus.ie](mailto:info@knightsfstcolumbanus.ie)



**If you need help or advice - north or south of the border**, find yourself homeless, suffering domestic abuse, rough sleeping, or if you need pointed in the direction of appropriate services, please contact DePaul on the following website (all links are on this page) <https://ie.depaulcharity.org/get-help/>. If you are in IMMEDIATE danger and are physically unsafe (male or female) please call Women's Aid on 1800 341 900 or in NI call 0808 802 1414



**If you're in NI and find yourself lacking** over Christmas and need help, please email Belfast Homeless Services on [LizRocks@belfasthomelesservices.com](mailto:LizRocks@belfasthomelesservices.com) or call 07885 282950



**If you're in the Cork area** and need help over the holiday season, please contact 021 427 4240 or email [info@goodshepherdccork.ie](mailto:info@goodshepherdccork.ie). Whether you're homeless, need advice, need emergency accommodation or need access to services in the Cork area, please contact Good Shepherd.



**Human Trafficking:** If you consider yourself one of the following: a victim of modern slavery and in need of assistance, nominated to make referrals to Government service for victims of modern slavery or simply a concerned individual who believes they've come into contact with someone in need of assistance - please contact the Salvation Army on 0300 303815. You can also email on [ireland@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:ireland@salvationarmy.org.uk) or call the Belfast number on 028 9067 5000.



**Child Welfare:** If you are concerned for the welfare of a minor. Please contact Tusla on the following website <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/report-a-concern/> or phone 0818 776 315



**An animal is for life, not just for Christmas.** If you are concerned about the welfare of a dog or any animal, please contact ISPCA on 0818 515 515 or email [helpline@ispca.ie](mailto:helpline@ispca.ie)

As neighbours, friends and fellow humans, let's look out for each other. Pop in and check on elderly neighbours; offer a seat at your table at Christmas if you can. If you've spare toys, offer them to someone you think could use them, if you've surplus food, donate to your local food bank. Let's work together to spread kindness and do our best to serve others this Christmas and beyond.



# Discount Corner



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