

# "An Irish Christmas"

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## Background

In July 2006, our baby boy Tommy, came into this world. He was born with severe neurological and cardiac problems. Declared terminally ill, he was placed under palliative care, to be eventually looked after in our home.

The ability of my wife and I to cope, has been largely due to the support of two charity organisations, The Jack and Jill Foundation for Sick Children, and to the Mayo/Roscommon Hospice. Their inestimable support left me wondering what I, as a musician could do to help *them*. And so it was, that I got the idea to record a Christmas song and put it on the net for free, but with the option for people to make a donation to these charities, if they so wished.

Maybe there is a time for everything.

The initial idea for this song had been sleeping in a drawer for a number of years, until October/November 2008, when once again, as Christmas loomed on the horizon, I awoke "*An Irish Christmas*" from it's slumber and got it to sing to me.



A light cocktail swing feel and those high heavenly harmonies from old Hollywood black and white musical movies, turned out to be a very influential backdrop! But how could I find, ferry, feed, drink and pay thirty or forty musical choristers from Heaven, Hollywood or anywhere else? Well, I couldn't, but I found two, *Deirdre McCabe and Karol Mullaney-Dignam*.

Neither had met the other before, but fortunately they were both studying in Maynooth, so they arranged to meet up and go through the parts. From their arrival at *Paul Gurney's* studio in Longford, to the end of the session, there was an atmosphere of fun and professionalism. At the end of the day, I watched two people leaving Longford, one for Maynooth and one for Mohill, leaving behind twenty four voices and a lot of smiles!

On the second day, our family friend and master fiddle-player, *Matt McGranaghan* arrived at the studio. With his customary ease, he put down the string parts, using three fiddles, one of which is my father's. This will forever mean so much to Dad, and it was a snippet of one of his favourite tunes I chose for Matt to play at the end of the song.

An Irish Christmas went on the net barely in time for Christmas 2008, yet still had a few thousand downloads, and the money raised was presented jointly to the two aforementioned charities. Hopefully, with the advantage of having a little more time, last year's result will surpass itself in Christmas 2009.

Little Tommy, in defiance of his prognosis, is now 3 years old, and little does he realise what a catalyst he has so far been, in the support of those who care for sick children like himself.

While it's home is [www.anirishchristmas.ie](http://www.anirishchristmas.ie) the song has not yet been officially released on CD, nor has it been recorded by anyone other than myself (the recording submitted here).

Frank Simon

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## An Irish Christmas

My Christmas is an Irish Christmas

Merry, wonderful and bright

All those fields in Ireland

Forty shades of green once

Now one shade of white.

My Christmas is an Irish Christmas  
Though I'm oh! so far away  
And so, from far across the miles, I'm dreaming  
Of an Irish Christmas day.

My Christmas is an Irish Christmas  
Each and every heart a-glow  
Although the winter winds may blow  
Don't they know  
My Christmas  
Has a shamrock in each flake of snow!

My Christmas is an Irish Christmas  
Family laughter, candle-light  
And so, from far across the miles, I'm dreaming  
Of an Irish Christmas night  
And all that remains for me to do  
Is to wish an Irish Christmas to you.