

AT THE  OF FAMILY LIFE

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR 20/21

ni4kids

MAGAZINE



 **CAT DEELEY**
Catching Up At Christmas

 **JOY TO THE WORLD**
Giving Gifts of Kindness

 **'TIS THE SEASON**
Making Magical Memories & Festive Fayre

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The Professional
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ni4kids Christmas & New Year 20/21

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

WOW! What a year! It's hard to believe that we will soon be saying goodbye to the extraordinary events of 2020 but how will you remember it? As a nightmare best forgotten? Or a time when we all pulled together for the greater good and suddenly realised that real superheroes are the people you can depend on in everyday life – their superpowers all very human qualities we hope to inspire in our children as they grow into adults... kindness, strength of character and never giving up. I asked Cat Deeley the same question in my interview with her for this issue (page 9), fascinated to find out how someone so famous would respond. Her reply was exactly the same as I would have expected from any other parent, the first thing that came to mind was all about the kids. And that's the other truth that we were reminded of in 2020, slow down, enjoy your family time together and make the most of every moment. This Christmas might not be exactly the same, but after the last nine months we all deserve it to be extra magical.



Turn these pages to discover our gift to you; crafty kids' ideas to evoke memories of Christmases long ago (pages 16 & 17), family food recipes to fill you with serenity and joy (page 18) a WOW Guide full of wonderful ways for getting into the Christmas spirit (pages 24 & 25) and please make sure you enter our big Christmas competition to win a Precious family portrait session worth £800.

Merry Christmas!

Nadia X

Get in touch: Email me at editor@ni4kids.com

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THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

From bottom clockwise: The Disney Collection, From £12, Polarn O Pyret | Kids Christmas Penguin Plate, £1.50, Matalan | Luxury Santa Hat, £1, Poundland | Christmas Eve Gift Set, £10, RNLI Shop | Personalised Christmas Elf Mug by Loveabode, £9.50, Next | Disney Winnie The Pooh Christmas Duvet Set Toddler, £14, George at Asda | Personalised Reindeer Family Christmas Eve Box, From £21.99, Treat Republic | Family Christmas Polar Bear Pyjama Set, From £7, M&S | Christmas Alphabet Colouring Book, £6, Not On The High Street | Personalised Matching Family Christmas Pyjamas, From £9.50, Rachel J Designs | Globally-inspired Children's Christmas Box, £14.99, ArtsEkta | Santa's Coming Festive Wooden Christmas Eve Kit, £7.49, Ginger Ray | Warmies Long Hot Water Bottle Elephant, £15, Gordons Chemists

2 Billion

The estimated amount of people around the world who celebrate Christmas.

Everybody's Talking About

NEWS | PRODUCTS | PEOPLE | PLACES

13%

The number of kids in NI aged 8 or under who plan to leave out hand sanitiser for Santa.

At Christmas the average family spends... £33 on Christmas jumpers, £42 on a tree, £35 on decorations and £36 on festive pyjamas.

CRINGEWORTHY CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without at least a few embarrassing moments for parents, but one that might be missed this year (which topped a recent poll of the most likely to cause a red-faced mum or dad) is their child crying on Santa's knee. Other cringeworthy moments that happen during the festive season include youngsters telling a relative they don't like their present, asking them how much it cost, or opening the wrong gift. The poll of 2,000 parents, commissioned by Virgin Media, also revealed 15 per cent of youngsters told someone what their gift was before they'd opened it and 12 per cent cheekily ate all the chocolates from the Christmas tree. A fifth of parents even have embarrassing photos as a result of a trip to Santa's grotto – with 38 per cent of kids pulling off Santa's beard and 35 per cent running away. Almost one quarter of parents (22%) have had to say sorry to Santa for something their child said or did while visiting a grotto.



Top 10 ways kids have embarrassed their parents at Christmas:

1. Cried when they saw Santa at a grotto.
2. Told someone who gave them a present that they didn't like it.
3. Told someone what their Christmas gift was before they'd opened it.
4. Eaten all the chocolates off a Christmas tree.
5. Asked someone how much money they spent on their Christmas gift.
6. Found Christmas gifts in the house which were meant to be from Santa.
7. Eaten someone else's Christmas chocolate.
8. Unwrapped the presents under a Christmas tree which weren't meant for them.
9. Told someone they didn't like their Christmas dinner/cooking.
10. Told someone they didn't like their Christmas jumper.

Take The Film Buff Challenge!

Movie-loving schoolchildren are being encouraged to take up the Film Buff Challenge, a new online educational activity that can be completed in school or at home. Education charity, Into Film's latest free educational resource, encourages young people to watch short, thought-provoking films and review or respond to them to earn silver, gold or platinum certificates. The Challenge offers ten very short films primary school aged 7–11 and another ten for secondary school pupils aged 11–14. The Challenge will run this entire academic year. To access the free resources go to intofilm.org/resources/1693



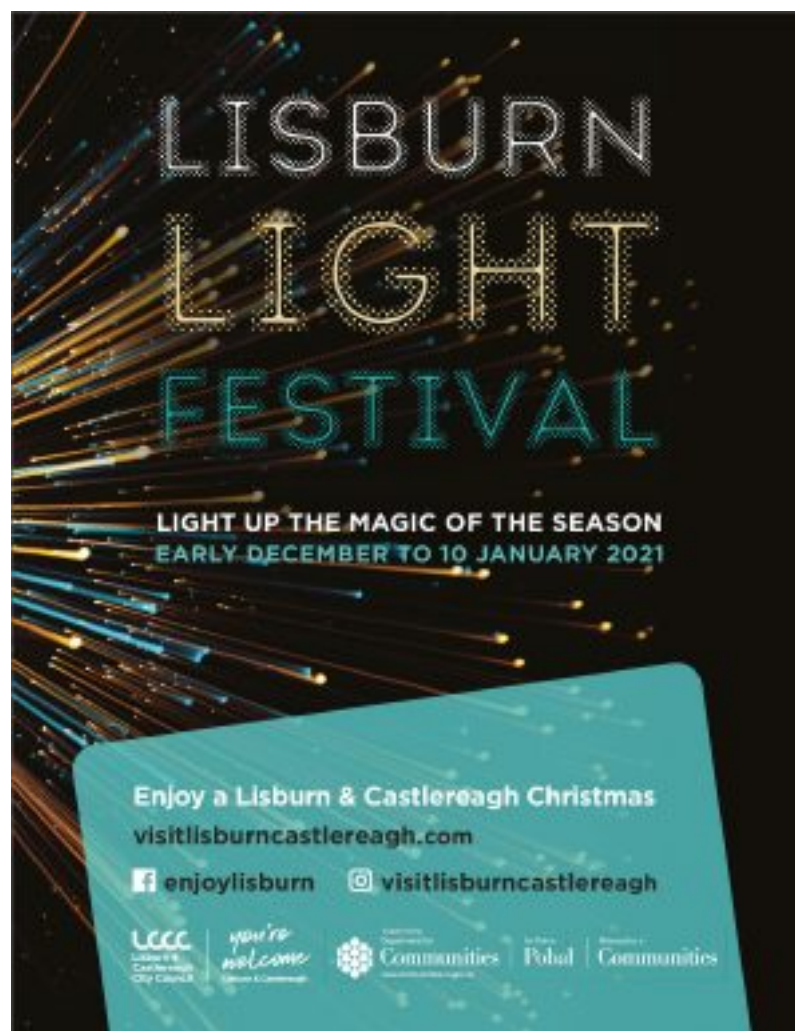
Teacher Michelle McAlonan and pupil Georgia from Cliftonville IPS prepare to take up the Film Buff Challenge



A Fab New Way To Say Thank You Teacher

Giving their teacher a little thank you gift at Christmas is a long-standing tradition for pupils and parents, and many will be even more keen to show

their appreciation after this extraordinary year. However, finding the right gift, and collecting for it in a Covid-secure way, are both key considerations this year. With Fintech's **Collection Pot**, a digital Pot is created which parents and carers can contribute to online, adding a personal message from their family. Once the Pot closes, the teacher receives an email inviting them to spend their Pot. Pots can be redeemed on a range of national retailer gift cards, local gift cards or withdrawn to a UK/Ireland Visa debit card. With research suggesting 62 per cent of unneeded teacher gifts go to charity, this is a super stressless way of saying thanks but also giving teaching staff a choice of their perfect present.





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'Tis The Season To Be Jolly?

As with every holiday this year, even Christmas hasn't escaped the curse of covid and the festivities will look very different! We now know that up to three households will be permitted to form an exclusive bubble between 23 and 27 December, so we were keen to find out from our readers what impact they think the restrictions will have on their Christmas plans, what alternatives to their normal traditions they have organised and if, after the year like no other, can they still make this 'the most wonderful time of the year' for their family?

The majority of readers who shared their thoughts on the three household rule felt that it simply wasn't enough for family gatherings, with one reader, **Sharon Fullerton**, explaining that she felt like she had to 'choose' between their grandchildren if she wanted to see family members over the holidays. She said, "As a grandparent I feel we are being forced to choose between our grandchildren. Obviously we can only meet with one of the families as they have to be able to meet their other grandparents too. I understand we have to still take care." **Samantha McGivern**, who emailed in her thoughts, agreed that the household restriction was a 'strange one' adding, "We will be having my dad (my mum is currently in a nursing home which means I haven't been able to see her in months either) but in order for us to see my husband's parents on Boxing Day they have to have us solely in a bubble! So we won't see either of our siblings." Some readers felt that the restrictions would result in people with larger families breaking the rules in order to be with their loved ones. **Carmel McKinley** from Belleeks said, "The three household rule is not good enough for a big family like my own. I'm one of six children and my husband one of five. Do we have to pick and choose who sees our own parents at Christmas? I think a lot of people with big families will ignore the rules. It's not fair feeling we have to do something 'wrong' to see my own parents and for them to see their grandchildren at Christmas!" **Mandy McDonnell** from Newry agreed with Carmel and added, "In regards to the three households being able to get together, it is

great that we are able to do this but will put a lot of families in a very difficult position, especially ones that have a larger family. If there are four different families does one get left out? My guess is a lot of families will either have to be apart anyway because of the three rule or possibly a lot of families are going to break this rule." Another reader, **Beth Rodgers** from Ballyholland shared what she would miss most about her usual yearly traditions such as the Christmas Market in Belfast. She said, "For the last eight years myself, my mum, sister and uncle would head to the Belfast market for a fun day of shopping and then finish it off with some nice food. We cannot wait until next year – we will enjoy it all the more for missing it this year." A few responders have planned to get creative in order to be able to see family members over the festive period. **Kelly Mooney** from Ballynahinch said, "I was happy to hear that we will be allowed to be with family over Christmas but as the youngest of seven the rule of three will mean that we won't be able to be with everyone. We are also hoping for good weather so perhaps we might see other family members on a Christmas walk." **Jenny McGreevy** from Armagh echoed this sentiment and added, "We are grateful we can extend our bubble for Christmas and will meet other family outdoors for walks." With regards to calls from some to close the schools early **Lasairiona McMaster** from Larne said, "My son is in a small school that have gone above and

beyond for Covid awareness and protection so my view on schools is somewhat different to many others, I don't think they should close early, no." Another reader disagreed on this stance and said, "If we're going to get a handle on the spread I think they (the schools) need to close early and for longer." Earlier this month, Education Minister Peter Weir stated that schools will remain open until the official school holidays begin. He stated: "I will once again stress that there are no plans to extend the Christmas holidays for schools. I believe this would only cause further disruption to children's education and lead to an increase in levels of stress and anxiety."



ni4kids' View

Across every holiday this year families have been willing to adapt their plans and Christmas is proving to be no exception. The magic of the holiday is still alive and well and if this year has shown us anything it's not to take the little things for granted!



COFFEE & CATCH-UP

The phrase, 'I don't know how she does it', could have been written for this lady. A former well-known face of primetime UK TV, five-time Emmy nominee for 'Outstanding Host' and BAFTA Award winner **Cat Deeley** is now one of the foremost television presenters in the US. From 2006 to 2019, Cat has presented the US dance reality hit television show, *So You Think You Can Dance*. She was the first ever Brit to host on *Regis & Kelly* as well as becoming the first regular entertainment correspondent for both Jay Leno's *The Tonight Show* and *Good Morning America*. The incredibly busy mum of two boys – Milo (4) and James (2) – is also a UNICEF Ambassador, has 259K Instagram followers and has just written her debut children's picture book. WOW! Luckily Cat still managed to squeeze in some precious time to chat (virtually) to Ni4kids about her inspiration for *The Joy In You*, her favourite place in Northern Ireland and her plans for Christmas...



© Joseph Sinclair

INTERVIEW BY NADIA DUNCAN

Q) Describe yourself in only five words?

A lovable, self-deprecating reprobate.

Q) What do you think you will remember most about 2020 when you look back in years to come?

2020 is the year we moved home and I taught Milo to read and ride his bike.

Q) Your debut picture book, *The Joy in You*, encourages children to believe in and express themselves. Was your inspiration concern about the impact of the pandemic on children's mental health and wellbeing?

Actually no ... The book was written long before the start of the pandemic. It was my boys, who were really the inspiration behind the book, it's a love letter to them. However, it is now more important than ever that kids feel empowered to talk about their emotions and feelings. I feel the more we all talk to each other the

better we will get through this, with the least amount of damage, both children and adults. I think we all need to be reminded right now to seek out the joy in life and the joy in us. Starring a very cute koala *The Joy In You* shares a humorous, upbeat, and empowering message of finding what makes you happy and is a warm and wonderful bedtime story to be shared and enjoyed as a whole family.

"I think we all need to be reminded right now to seek out the joy in life and the joy in us."

Q) As a UNICEF UK Ambassador, is there any message that you would like to share with our readers at Christmastime?

I've been a UNICEF UK Ambassador for 10 years and in all that time I have never witnessed a crisis quite like the Coronavirus pandemic that is so far-reaching and of this scale; in fact it's the biggest crisis for children since World War Two! This Christmastime, UNICEF needs our support more than ever, to reach children and their families both here in the UK and around the world, who have been severely impacted by the pandemic and especially in countries where the health systems are already so fragile.

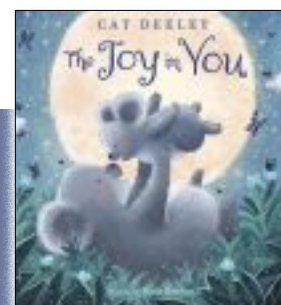
Q) As a frequent visitor to our shores with husband Paddy KIELTY, do you have any special places that you like to visit in Northern Ireland?

The whole family love walking on the beach at Dundrum Bay, Newcastle, where Paddy grew up. There's nothing like it for 'blowing the cobwebs away'. The boys enjoy playing in the dunes and rock pooling.

Q) What are your plans for Christmas this year? Do you have any special family traditions?

This year we are going to my mum and dads, with my brother and his family. We don't really have any traditions, apart from general wildness! All the kids will run downstairs in a dizzying state of excitement to see 'if he's been'. Then glorious mayhem will ensue and everyone will stay in their pyjamas 'till lunchtime!

THE JOY IN YOU by Cat Deeley with illustrations by Rosie Butcher is published by Random House Children's Books HB £12.99, out now.



THE GIFT OF KINDNESS

Words by Elizabeth McGivern

Kindness can go a long way, especially at Christmas, and after a year in which we've seen some truly remarkable charitable acts it couldn't hurt to introduce some kindness into your own home this festive season. From thoughtful crafts for loved ones, to charities you can support as a family, there are always small ways to show you care and help to brighten up even the darkest of days.

KINDNESS POSTCARDS

If you can't be with those you love this Christmastime then you could always send a little happiness their way with a thoughtful, homemade postcard. It's a great way to bring a personal touch to your message and it means the kids can get involved too. Let their artistic nature take over so they can draw, paint and create their very own festive scene and let them write their personal message on the back. Grown-ups can provide the words for younger children but don't forget to draw a vertical line to divide it in half where you can write the address. Of course, you could always simply send Christmas cards, but where's the fun in that? Remember, the postal service is extremely busy at this time of year so be sure to get your picturesque postcards stamped and sent as soon as they're done!

COLLECTING LITTLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

We know that the kids will be on their best behaviour ahead of Santa's visit on Christmas Eve, but if you want to go a bit further and make sure that there's even more goodwill in your home then why not introduce a kindness jar! Throughout the run-up to Christmas place an empty jar in a communal family area and every time someone does something kind around the house you can add a jellybean (or treat of your choice) to the jar. These can be small things such as: hanging up their clothes without being asked, putting away their shoes or being kind and thoughtful to their siblings. However, should there any instances when kindness hasn't been shown to each other, a treat gets removed from the jar. On Christmas eve, you can all sit down and enjoy eating your kindness jar contents together as a family.



SHARING SWEET TREATS

There's no better way to spread some festive cheer by baking some sweet treats for others! Why not try this yummy snowman biscuit recipe you can deliver to a special someone and let them know they go perfectly with a hot chocolate.

Ingredients: 125g butter | 125g golden caster sugar | 1 egg | 1 tsp vanilla extract | 250g plain flour. **To decorate:** 400g white fondant icing | icing sugar | 100g pack mixed red, yellow, black and blue ready-to-roll icing | tube white icing | tube black icing

Method: 1) Heat the oven to 190C/170C. Cream the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, then beat in the egg and vanilla. Stir in the flour and mix to a soft dough. Tip onto a lightly floured surface and knead. Put the dough on a plate, cover and chill for at least 2 hrs. 2) Roll out the dough – make sure the surface is lightly floured – to a thickness of around 0.5cm. Use a cookie cutter or water glass to stamp out 7cm rounds. Re-roll the trimmings and repeat. Make sure to have enough for the body and the head of each snowman. The stamp out for the head should be slightly smaller than that for the body. 3) Transfer the biscuits to two lined baking trays and bake for 8-14 mins until the edges turn lightly golden in colour. Leave to cool. 4) To decorate, roll out the white fondant icing on a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar. Stamp out circles using the same cookie cutter or glass as before, then use a dab of the white tube of icing to stick a fondant round on each biscuit. 5) Knead together some of the yellow and blue icing to make green icing, then do the same with the red and yellow icing to make orange (or buy the right colours ready-made). Roll out one icing colour at a time. Stamp out a 7cm circle of icing, cut in half and stick on for a hat. Cut a strip of another colour for other decorative additions to your snowman such as a scarf. 6) Decorate the hats with icing spots and stripes, if you like. Roll out balls of coloured icing, poke holes all over with a cocktail stick and stick on as pom poms. Mould lumpy balls of the orange icing for noses and roll out balls of the black icing for eyes. Press down to flatten, then stick on with white icing. 7) Use the tube of black icing to pipe rows of dots for the smiles. Leave to set.

SPREADING JOY WITH KINDNESS

There are so many charitable initiatives that need a helping hand this time of year and it's a wonderful way to help those in need after a year in which many charities' fundraising efforts have been hit so hard by the coronavirus restrictions. Here are a few suggestions of good causes that could really use your support this Christmas...

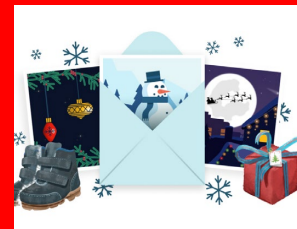
A LETTER FROM SANTA

Send a personalised 'Letter from Santa' all the way from Lapland and support the NSPCC. You can choose the background design and fill in your child's personal information such as age, best friend's name or particular achievements throughout the year. The requested £5 donation will help a child who has been abused to express their feelings when they can't find the words.



BE A SECRET SANTA FOR A CHILD

This Christmas, vulnerable children in the UK need a **Secret Santa** more than ever. Become a Secret Santa for Action For Children and you could make sure more children and young people have a hot meal, a present or a safe place to sleep.



JINGLE ALL THE WAY

The annual Christmas campaign for the NI Hospice is asking us to spread festive cheer by taking part in one of their virtual Jingle events. From a virtual bake off, to donning your favourite Christmas Jumper, there's so many ways that you can help give the gift of care to local children who need it most.



GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

Shop with **Concern** and you could give a precious life-changing gift of school fees for a child, a farm animal that will provide food and a livelihood for a family or something as simple as a radio for a remote community to tune into the world – all of which mean so much more than just another pair of socks for dad!



WIN A FAMILY PORTRAIT SESSION WORTH £800!



What better way to celebrate the start of this new year than by capturing a beautiful image of your family as a reminder of how precious our loved ones are, how we all pulled together in 2020 and can now look forward to a bright new beginning in 2021.

We've teamed up with Precious Photography, Lisburn, to offer one lucky reader the fabulous prize of a Family Portrait Session and a Framed 20" Wall Portrait of their choice worth a whopping £800! Photographer Helen Savage has over 10 years' experience working with families and children of all ages. She knows just how to make you all feel at ease and actually enjoy the experience, creating stunning portraits that will last for generations. The relaxed and friendly studio is fully equipped with the latest equipment and beautiful props and backgrounds to ensure that she captures all the gorgeous images you are hoping for.

To be in with a chance to win this most precious of prizes, simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this simple question:

Q) WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS FAMILY-FRIENDLY PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO?

A) Precious B) Delightful or C) Stunning

NB: There will also be some runner-up prizes worth £175 each chosen which include a session and a framed 7" Desk Portrait. To be in with a chance of winning a runner-up prize, please be sure to check the marketing opt-in box to allow Precious Photography Studio to contact you.

Terms & Conditions: The closing date for this competition is Friday 8 January 2021. One winner will be selected at random from all entries received. Editor's decision is final. No cash alternative. Usual Ni4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.



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SCHOOL OPEN DAYS

MAKING THE WISE CHOICE

Finding the perfect school to suit your child can be a daunting task and, with most events this year, the search for the right fit is going to look a little different... but all is not lost. With the safety of your family at the centre of the decision, schools across Northern Ireland are going above and beyond to present virtual open days that will help you in your journey to find the perfect school. Even though you can't be there in person, these online events will help make your selection that bit easier. After all, this is the school that you are entrusting your child's education to and it's not a choice that should be taken lightly. Your virtual experience can be just as insightful and informative as those done in person, and you'll still be able to gauge those all-important first impressions, find out pertinent information and allow your child to see if they can envision themselves walking through the halls, sitting in the classes and taking part in those extra-curricular activities when the time comes. Just as every child is unique, each school will also have its own individual strengths. The key to unlocking the best possible outcomes for your child, is finding the right environment for them to succeed in. In this special feature, local schools provide an insight into the opportunities that they could 'open the door' to for your son or daughter.

Ballyclare Secondary School



VIRTUAL OPEN EVENING

Video Available
from Thursday 7th
January 2021 at
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encouraged to do their best in all that they undertake. There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care within school and our aim for all children is that they build their own success story.

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Please visit our website **branielps.com** to take a virtual tour of what Braniel Primary School has to offer or follow us on Twitter @BranielPS



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We are a school that is driven to achieving excellence in all areas of the curriculum, and indeed, all aspects of your child's life. We are truly a caring school at the heart of the community. We produce well rounded, multi-talented young people who are an asset to our society, contributing positively and enriching the skill set that complements the already talent-rich culture that makes our area so special. This school is a centre of high standards, high expectations, high achievers and high values! Our pupils and their families are central to our desire to provide a high quality secondary educational facility in the Dundonald area, a



school that adds value to its pupils and the economy of the area. You deserve happy children who feel valued, respected and content. Children who are nurtured in an atmosphere that is rich in learning. Children forever growing through their everyday experiences and development of a mindset which values life-long learning.

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ENROLLING

from 7 January 2021
via www.eani.co.uk/parents/admissions

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CRANMORE INTEGRATED PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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and I think the teachers are the best you can get. Mr Doherty is our Principal, he takes an interest in all of us and gives out lots of exciting awards. My school has a very creative atmosphere and it encourages discussion and values the opinions of everyone. I think Cranmore is the best school in the world! **Written by a pupil of Cranmore IPS.** Applications open 7 January 2021. Apply via eani.org.uk/parents/admissions

LAGAN COLLEGE*A school for all children*

As Northern Ireland's first planned integrated school, Lagan College is very proud to be a co-educational 11-18, all ability school that meets the needs of a wide range of young people from over 50 feeder primary schools.

We are committed to academic excellence and high quality pastoral care, as well as creating and promoting a strong integrated and inclusive ethos based on core Christian values of respect, reconciliation, service and equality. We are very proud to say that we were awarded an astonishing fifth Eco Schools 'Green Flag Award' and are one of only ten UK 'Eco Ambassador' schools.



Learning and developing together is at the heart of what we do. We celebrate effort, achievements and diversity. We provide a range of learning opportunities and educational visits beyond the classroom and offer over 40 different extra-curricular clubs. Alongside all-Ireland level cross-country runners, all-Ireland basketball champions, Northern Ireland hockey champions, Northern Irish dance champions, football champions, GAA and netball teams, we believe that we have something to offer all children at Lagan College.

MOSSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL*Together towards excellence*

Children have only one opportunity to receive a quality education and it is the job of everyone at Mossley Primary School to ensure that it is the best it can possibly be.

We have an ambitious vision to serve through the ethos we create, the environment we maintain and the standards we expect. We aim to equip our children with the skills to succeed in an ever-changing world, the understanding that will enable them to seize the opportunities that are given to them and the generosity to think not only of themselves but others. Our school is



underpinned by Christian values and we express these in the life of school, while remaining open to all children, recognising that diversity in the school community enhances the educational experiences of all our children. We believe that character counts and we aim to model and encourage our children to develop respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, grace, fairness, care and citizenship.

**Mossley Primary School****You are invited to our
VIRTUAL OPEN DAY**

We go live on Monday 4th January 2021
Join us at the link provided and experience our fabulous pupils and all aspects of school life.

To get further details on the link to our tour Call **02890 833019**
or email **smulligan771@mossleyps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk**

Mossley Primary School, Hazelburn Road, Newtownabbey BT36 5NA
T. 02890 833019 • www.mossleyps.co.uk



CRAFTY KIDS: AT CHRISTMAS

Old-fashioned, handmade, home-baked, and homespun are all words that describe **Chris Myers'** perfect Christmas. In this modern, hectic but beautiful world of ours sometimes it is nice to take stock of what is important, especially at this special time of year. Setting a calm but magical scene for the festive season using a traditional palette of red and green will evoke memories of Christmases long ago...



TOMTE OR LITTLE NISSE

It is very common to see these little characters dotted around homes in Scandinavia. They never fail to make you smile. You can just imagine them hiding in the woods...



YOU WILL NEED

Wooden bobbins	White wool roving
Red acrylic paint	Small buttons
Felt in assorted colours (red, grey, black)	Template
Stranded embroidery floss (thread)	Paintbrush
Small silver bells	Scissors
	Needle
	Hot glue gun

1. Paint the wooden bobbins using red acrylic paint and leave to dry completely.

2. Copy the template **here**. Fold a piece of felt in half and pin the hat template on the fold. Cut around the template (do not cut the folded part).



3. Fold the hat in half and stitch along the long edge (leave the bottom open) using blanket stitch. When you get to the top of the hat, add a small silver bell. You can also blanket stitch around the rim, if you like.



4. Using the hot glue gun, attach the wool roving to the bobbin along with the button (this will be the nose of the Tomte). Place some glue along the inner edge of the felt hat and press the hat firmly onto the bobbin. Make sure that the little nose is just peeping out from under his hat.



It is quite amazing how these little ones put everyone in a good mood. They are small enough to be concealed in obscure places and when discovered, a little chuckle can be heard from the person who found them.



GINGERBREAD HANGING DECORATIONS

I have been making these gingerbread decorations for years to liven up my little tree in the kitchen. I also use them to decorate gifts and often put several into old mason jars to be given as gifts themselves. Salt dough is a lovely way to make cinnamon-scented decorations that will last and last – even if you can't eat them! They need to be stored in an airtight container and the lovely warm Christmassy scent will be released every time you open the jar.

ni4kids Christmas & New Year 20/21

YOU WILL NEED

Ingredients

225 g plain Flour
180 g mix of ground cinnamon and cloves,
plus extra for dusting
225 g table salt
240 ml water
1 tsp cream of tartar

Cookie cutters
Baking sheet
Scissors
Baker's twine

1. Preheat the oven to 225°F (110°C/gas mark 1/4). Put all the ingredients into a bowl and mix until the dough is smooth and not sticky. If it does feel sticky, add more ground spices not flour. The dough is ready to use when the rough feel of salt has gone.

2. Lightly dust a board or surface with ground spices (not flour) and roll out the dough. Using spices will give the dough a "gingerbread" look.

3. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes and lay them on the baking sheet (no need to grease). Remember to poke a hole in the top of the decorations BEFORE you bake them. Bake in the oven for about 3–4 minutes until they harden; don't be tempted to bake on a higher heat or they will crack and break. Remove from the oven and let cool.

4. Cut a piece of twine (I like to use red and white baker's twine), fold it in half and thread the loop through the hole in the top of the decoration. Thread the two tails through the loop and pull up to secure. Your decorations are now ready to hang!



Craft ideas from *Scandi Christmas* by **Chris Myers**, published by CICO Books (£12.99) Photography by Caroline Arber © CICO Books

THE COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

Fill the busy pre-Christmas period with food to fill you with serenity and joy. Creating these delicious winter warmers will make you slow down, spend time with loved ones and make your home and table feel truly festive...

LENTIL SHEPHERD'S PIE WITH SWEET POTATO

A family classic, updated here with a hearty lentil and vegetable stew and a fluffy sweet potato topping. Served steaming hot right out of the oven, this pie is delicious as a main or as a tasty side dish.

Serves 4 (generously)

Peel and dice the sweet potato. Cook in a saucepan of boiling salted water for 15 minutes or until soft. Meanwhile, thoroughly wash, trim and thinly slice the leek. Peel and dice the onion and carrots. Peel and crush the garlic. Heat the vegetable oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Briefly sauté the onion and garlic. Stir in the lentils, carrots, leek, corn and tomato paste and gently sweat. Deglaze with the wine, Worcestershire sauce and vegetable stock. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Drain the sweet potatoes, then add the butter and milk to the saucepan. Use a stick blender to mash the mixture well. Season with salt. Transfer the lentil and vegetable mixture to a 26 x 20cm ovenproof dish and spread the sweet potato mixture on top. Bake for 20 minutes, then switch to the grill function and grill until the top turns golden brown. Remove the pie from the oven, divide into portions and serve.

3 sweet potatoes, about 1 kg (2 lb 4 oz)

Sea salt

1 leek

1 onion

2 carrots

1 garlic clove

1 tbsp vegetable oil

1 cup (200 g) dried red lentils

½ cup (100 g) tinned corn kernels, drained

1 tbsp tomato paste (concentrated purée)

100 ml (3½ fl oz) red wine

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

300 ml (10½ fl oz) vegetable stock

Freshly ground black pepper

20 g (¾ oz) butter

50 ml (1½ fl oz) milk

TIP

Shepherd's pie goes particularly well with a fresh lamb's lettuce salad drizzled with a fruity dressing.



WHITE CINNAMON & ALMOND CRACKLES

A perfect combination of fragrant cinnamon and white chocolate. If you want to use these crackles as a gift, we suggest you make enough for yourself as well. Otherwise they might never make it to the intended recipient...

¾ cup (100 g) slivered almonds

200 g (7 oz) white cooking chocolate

4 tbsp puffed quinoa

½ tsp ground cinnamon

1 pinch sea salt

Makes about 20

Toast the slivered almonds in a dry frying pan over medium heat. Melt the white chocolate in a heatproof bowl sitting over a saucepan of simmering water.

Combine the quinoa puffs and almonds with the cinnamon and salt. Stir the mixture into the melted chocolate. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Use a teaspoon to scoop spoonfuls of the chocolate and almond mixture onto the tray.

Leave to set completely. Transfer the crackles to pretty boxes or a cookie tin. They will keep for 1–2 months if they're tightly sealed.



TIP

Allow your creativity to go wild with this recipe. Use different types of nuts or seeds with the remaining ingredients to make your very own crackles recipe.

Recipes courtesy of **Advent** by Kerstin Niehoff and Laura Fleiter. Murdoch Books, £12.99. Photography by Laura Fleiter.



5 Steps To Sweet Dreams

Here we are, Christmas is upon us, and 'tis the season for parents to worry about whether their kids will (or won't) sleep come Christmas Eve so Santa can sneak those presents under the tree without getting caught red-handed. But no need to panic! Sleep expert **James Wilson AKA The Sleep Geek** is on hand to help with five super suggestions to help us all snuggle down for a peaceful night before Christmas...

I'm not here to make those worries worse, or to offer a regimented, prescriptive, hard to stick to list of rules that will just make our stress and anxiety worse. So firstly, don't get too het up. It is one night, and our children's excitement and wonder is a

beautiful (if not tiring) thing. No matter how poorly your children sleep, and no matter how early they get up, it isn't really that important, because it's Christmas! But if you are concerned a restless night will result in a grumpy Grinch making an appearance before you've even made it to Christmas dinner, here are my top tips to try...

1. Have a targeted bedtime in mind, but if they are still buzzing and wired, don't send them to bed, but continue to try and wind them down. Before bed we need to create a drop-in heart rate, be relaxed, and a drop-in core temperature, be cooler. A bath or shower about an hour before bed will help the latter as it raises our core temperature and then as we get out it drops. Then get the little ones ready for bed, teeth brushed and good to go. In our house we have Christmas PJ's to try and help this process. It also means as they are winding down as soon as you see signs of sleepiness you can get them into bed and (hopefully) snoozing.

2. Think about your pre-sleep Christmas viewing. Although we all know that Die Hard is the best Christmas film ever, I wouldn't recommend it as a family favourite on Christmas Eve. The same goes for Gremlins. Gizmo might be cute, but we don't want nightmares caused by Gremlins. Think about watching The Snowman, Santa Claus The Movie, Miracle on 34th Street or Elf. Perfect pre-sleep viewing that will help the kids feel relaxed.

3. Think about sleep at the beginning of the Christmas holidays as getting it right then makes Christmas Eve easier. Try and support your children in getting a regular sleep pattern, which is driven by a consistent wake up time. If you want them to sleep as well as possible across the Christmas holidays, then don't let them lie in for more than an hour and a half past their usual wake up time. This will also make it easier for them to re-adjust to going back to school or nursery.

Having suffered from insomnia from a young age James decided to tackle the problem hands-on in his late twenties by training as a sleep practitioner. This, along with his personal experience with poor sleep, gave him a unique insight in helping people to solve their sleep issues, and so The Sleep Geek was born. James also offers an informative sleep guide to help parents with younger children. To find more from James visit thesleepgeek.co.uk



4. A note for the adults. Remember that alcohol is not a sleep inducer but a sedative, so it does not give good quality sleep. A drink on Christmas Eve is fine, but too much will leave you feeling shattered the next day and less able to handle the excitement, arguments and having to put together countless toys on Christmas Day.

5. For us parents who might be struggling with earlier and darker mornings (and of course Christmas morning is likely to be particularly early) it may be worth investing in a sunshine alarm clock or a light box to help you rise easier during dark winter months. The sunshine alarm clock rises like the sun; it pulls you out of the deepest stage of sleep and even if you still need an audible alarm, you will be more likely to stay awake if your room is bathed in light. The lightbox can then be used as you start to get ready for the day. The light box mimics the light frequencies of the sun and reminds your body it's daytime, even if it is dark outside. This should leave you feeling more alert and less lethargic in the morning and ready to face the excitement of Christmas day!



this issue we are loving...


 Ni4kids loves


ANSWERING YOUR SKIN'S SOS

If your skin is starting to stress with central heating, being indoors more, and wearing face coverings, step forward **SOS Serum**, the brainchild of respected Scientist and Chemist Bruce Green, a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry. The calming formula is perfect for those with Eczema, Dermatitis, Psoriasis or those who struggle with wind burns, dry or reactive prone skin. Suitable for all ages, even babies, the soothing

serum contains calming Burdock Leaf Extracts and the refined extract of cooling Peppermint and Lauromacrogols which acts as an anaesthetic to soothe the skin. £15 (50ml) from

soссерum.co.uk

THE GIFT OF A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

We can't think of any sleep-deprived parent who wouldn't love to receive a gift from

Ragdale Hall Spa's

bestselling *Sleeprange*

this Christmas. At a time when taking care of you has never been more important, the products are infused with calming lavender essential oils to create a sense of tranquillity, and a heavenly night-time ritual. The Sleep Pillow and Body Mist are top sellers, and a go-to for achieving a restful night's slumber so you can wake up feeling refreshed, and ready to take on your world. Gift sets start from just £5 from M&S and online at **ragdalehall.co.uk**



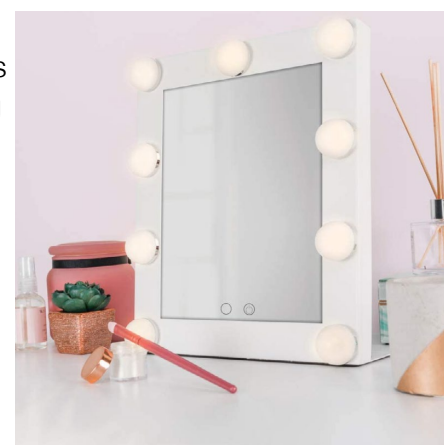
GOODNESS FROM GOATS

Kendamil, the pioneering baby & toddler brand has unveiled **Kendamil Goat**, the first of its kind to contain Human Milk Oligosaccharides - the third largest solid component in human breastmilk. Not only is goat's milk easier to digest, it is less allergenic and supports the development of the immune system. Goat milk formula is often a solution for parents whose children are allergic to cows' milk, because it does not contain alpha-S1 casein, an allergen found in cows' milk. £20.99 from **kendamil.com**



TOP OF OUR WISH LIST

As movie stars and models know, lighting is everything and this **Carmen LED Hollywood Mirror** will help you create a flawless face every single time. The smart control touch screen will give you extra illumination, ready for your Insta picture perfect close up, plus it will look absolutely fabulous on your dressing table darling! Now half price £24.99 (RRP £49.99) from Gordons Chemists.



HEALTH UPDATE

Button Battery & Small Toy Warning

The Public Health Agency is warning parents and guardians about the dangers of lithium button cell batteries, which are used to power many children's toys – but are highly dangerous if accidentally swallowed – and is also urging everyone to ensure any toys bought for Christmas are age-appropriate. Hilary Johnston, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager at the PHA, said: "Young children are naturally inquisitive, and explore the world in part by putting things in their mouths. As new and interesting electronic items are introduced into the family home, the potential for children to swallow button cell batteries increases, and this can lead to choking, burning or poisoning. This can cause serious, life-changing injury, and if not caught in time, can be fatal."

There are a few simple things that can be done to help protect young children from the dangers of button cell batteries:

- battery compartments should be checked to make sure they can't be opened or broken easily;
- parents need to ensure that battery compartments are screwed shut when possible;
- keep spare batteries in a safe place out of reach of children;
- if you suspect your child has swallowed a button battery, seek medical help immediately.

Hilary added: "We want parents, grandparents, childminders and carers to be aware of the dangers associated with these batteries and to understand that these seemingly harmless objects can cause serious injury to children. Treat them the same way you would any poisonous substance – out of reach and out of sight." For more toy safety advice visit **rospa.com/home-safety/advice/product/toy-safety**



Ask the Pharmacist Indigestion

Richard Dunn is a community pharmacist with Gordons Chemists.

With selection boxes everywhere, it's hard not to overindulge at this time of year however the end result can often be indigestion. While not uncommon in adults, it is rare in children and if suspected they should be seen by their GP to investigate further.

Many people find after eating a large meal or drinking too much that they suffer from indigestion. Symptoms can include feeling full and bloated, heartburn, nausea, belching, pain or discomfort in the upper part of the chest. The symptoms of indigestion are often described as 'heartburn', which you may experience as a burning pain behind your breastbone. Although eating a large meal is a common cause of indigestion, it may also be caused by drinking excess alcohol, smoking, drugs such as aspirin or anti-inflammatory medicines, pregnancy, stress or being overweight. In most cases, there is no underlying medical reason for indigestion. However, indigestion can also be caused in other ways and it can sometimes be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, particularly if you experience recurrent bouts. If you are unfortunate enough to suffer from indigestion you can treat it with simple over the counter remedies available from your local pharmacy. Simple antacids such

as Rennies™ can be effective and work quickly. The effect of an antacid only lasts for a few hours at a time, so you may need to take more than one dose. If heartburn is a problem, it could be worth trying an alginate such as Gaviscon™. Acid reflux occurs when stomach acid leaks back up into your oesophagus and irritates its lining. Alginates form a foam barrier that floats on the surface of your stomach contents, keeping stomach acid in your stomach and away from your oesophagus. Most people will not need to seek medical advice for their indigestion. However, it is important to speak with your pharmacist or see your GP if you have recurring indigestion and especially if you have experienced it for the first time over the age of 40. Likewise, if your indigestion leads to persistent vomiting or vomit containing blood or if you have lost a lot of weight unintentionally it would be best to see your GP as it could be a sign of an underlying health condition that requires more immediate attention.

Gordons Chemists is the largest independently owned retail pharmacy chain in Northern Ireland. Established in 1980, Gordons Chemists now has 61 pharmacies on the high street and in shopping centres across Northern Ireland and Scotland. Products described are available at most pharmacies and Gordons Chemists does not endorse any individual product. Always consult your pharmacist in relation to your individual symptoms.

The Beauty of Gordons is the Price!

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Learning 4 Fun: DINOSAURS IN IRELAND

By Dr Mike Simms

Almost a thousand different types of dinosaur are known from around the World, from *Ankylosaurus* to *Zuniceratops*. How many can you name? The first dinosaur fossils were found in England almost 200 years ago. Dozens of different types have been found in Britain since then, but only two small pieces of dinosaur bone have ever been found in Ireland. Where are all the Irish dinosaurs? Were they driven out by St Patrick? I don't think so. There is a much better explanation and to help us understand why there are almost no dinosaurs here, let's think about when and where dinosaurs lived.

WHEN AND WHERE DID DINOSAURS LIVE?

The oldest dinosaurs are in rocks around 240 million years old, from the Triassic Period. Most dinosaurs lived during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods, but they became extinct around 66 million years ago (except for birds, which are feathered dinosaurs!). All dinosaurs lived on land, but sometimes floods swept them into lakes and rivers where they were buried by layers of mud and sand. This is why most dinosaur fossils are found in rocks formed in ancient rivers and lakes. Don't confuse dinosaurs with other animals that have similar names and lived at the same time as the dinosaurs. Ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs and mosasaurs lived in the sea, and pterosaurs flew through the sky, but none of these are dinosaurs.

THE WRONG SORTS OF ROCKS

Most rocks in Ireland are too old to contain any dinosaur fossils. Some rocks in Northern Ireland are too young, such as those of the Giant's Causeway. Being volcanic lava, the Giant's Causeway rocks wouldn't contain fossils anyway. Ireland has hardly any rock at all that is the right age for dinosaurs. Most rock of the right age is in Northern Ireland, but what rock we do have here was deposited in the wrong places for dinosaurs. The Triassic rocks here were deposited in a desert – not a good place for dinosaurs to live or to be fossilised. Our Jurassic and Cretaceous rocks were all deposited on the seabed, a good place to be fossilised but far from where dinosaurs lived. These rocks are full of fossils, including the bones of ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs, but we would not expect to find a dinosaur in them.

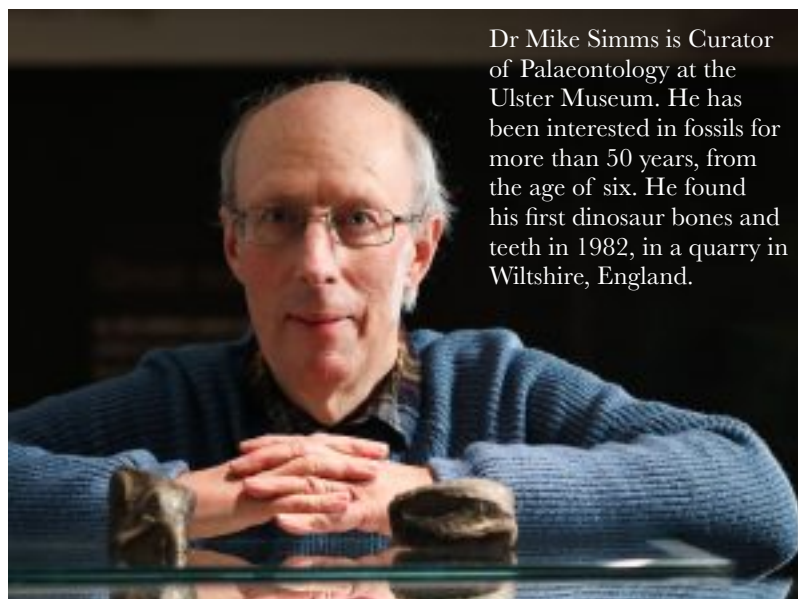
ROGER'S DINOSAURS

Both of the Irish dinosaur bones were found by a schoolteacher called Roger Byrne. He was from Jordantown on the shores of Belfast Lough and, in his spare time, he liked nothing more than to go looking for fossils on the shores of County Antrim. Roger could tell that these two fossils were different from other bones that he had found and gave them to the Ulster Museum. We realised that they were dinosaur bones a few years ago, but Ireland had no dinosaur experts to identify them for sure. As the Ulster Museum's Curator of Palaeontology, I am an expert on fossil ammonites rather than dinosaurs. It needed real dinosaur experts to say for certain what kind of dinosaur they came from. I took the bones to Portsmouth University and showed them to my old friend Professor Dave Martill. He worked with Robert Smyth, who is originally from Ballymoney, to identify which dinosaurs they might be from.



Artists impression of a scelidosaurus. Painting by Julian Friers.

Roger found the two bones at the same place on Islandmagee, so we thought that they would be from the same dinosaur. But they weren't! One is part of the thigh-bone of a four-legged, armour-plated, plant-eater called *Scelidosaurus*. It probably was a distant ancestor of both *Stegosaurus* and *Ankylosaurus*. The other is part of a shin-bone



Dr Mike Simms is Curator of Palaeontology at the Ulster Museum. He has been interested in fossils for more than 50 years, from the age of six. He found his first dinosaur bones and teeth in 1982, in a quarry in Wiltshire, England.

from a two-legged, meat-eating dinosaur called *Sarcosaurus*. It was a distant ancestor of *Tyrannosaurus*. Neither of Roger's dinosaurs were very big, maybe three metres long from the tip of their nose to the end of their tail.



Artists impression of a sarcosaurus. Painting by Julian Friers.

HOW DID THEY GET HERE?

If most of our rocks are too old or too young for dinosaurs, or were deposited in places where dinosaurs didn't live, so how do we have any dinosaur fossils at all? These two bones come from grey mud deposited on the seabed right at the beginning of the Jurassic Period, 200 million years ago. They ended up far from where any dinosaurs were living and must be from animals that were swept out to sea, perhaps by a storm. When they sank to the seabed they were fossilised along with all of the sea shells and other fossils that are so common in those rocks. We are very lucky to have these dinosaurs at all, and so grateful that Roger gave them to the museum for everyone to see. How many school teachers do you know that have found a dinosaur bone? Roger found two, and they are the only two ever found here!

Keep an eye out on National Museum NI's social media channels to find out when the bones will be available to see at Ulster Museum.

If you have an interest in finding out more about local geology visit Belfastgeologists.org.uk or you can follow Belfast Geologist's Society on



The Reading Corner

Our selection box of Christmas crackers and super stocking fillers...



One Time Before - personalised storybook
PB €19, HB €25, delivered in a gift wallet from onetimebefore.com

A unique, timeless and personalised magical storybook that takes a much-loved little one back in time on a unique adventure to when you were their age. Create characters who look just like the little one you're creating the book for and how you looked at the same age. Travel back to conkers in the school yard, fizz bombs and the A-Team, and allow memories to flood back with books available travelling back to the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s. A perfect, timeless keepsake to be treasured for many years.



AGE 3+

The Puffin Keeper by Shirley Hughes
HB £12.99, published by Puffin

It's that magical time of year: Christmas. The time of carol singing, tree-decorating and of course lots of presents. However, in the excitement of new toys, will Dave forget about his old friend, Dogger? This is the very special story of one boy and his beloved toy – who always manages to be found...



AGE 5+

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by Chris Riddell HB £25, published by Macmillan Children's Books.

Feast your eyes on Chris Riddell's unique visual interpretation of Carroll's magical story and characters in this glorious new edition that will captivate both children's and adults' imaginations. This gorgeously produced edition of one of the most influential children's books of all time is lavishly illustrated in full colour throughout and would make a beautiful gift for all the family to treasure and share for years to come.



AGE 5+

That Christmas by Richard Curtis, illustrated by Rebecca Cobb

HB £12.99, published by Puffin.

From international film phenomenon, Richard Curtis, and award-winning illustrator, Rebecca Cobb, comes a heart-warming tale of a magical, unconventional Christmas. Christmas is the same every year, isn't it? Same food, same routine, same visiting the neighbours and going for a walk. Except for the year of 'That Christmas'. At that Christmas suddenly children get the chance to make their wildest festive dreams come true...



AGE 3+

The Twelve Days of Christmas or Grandma is Overly Generous by Alex T. Smith HB £9.99, published by Macmillan Children's Books

This witty new take on the festive poem describes how Grandma's presents start off quite sensible and manageable but soon get quite out of hand. Alex T. Smith, creator of *How Winston Delivered Christmas*, brings us another delight to make part of every child's Christmas traditions.



AGE 8+

Future Friend by David Baddiel

HB £12.99, published by Harper Collins Children's Books

The year is 3020. Pip@256X#YY.3_7 is lonely and bored going to virtual school on her G-Glasses, until the day that Pip explores a glowing ring in a lab and finds herself in a warehouse in 2019 where she meets Rahul. A terrifically entertaining time-slip adventure that combines action, laugh-out-loud humour and the importance of friendship, in a story that asks the question – what would happen if your best friend came from the future?

WIN A COPY OF DRAW WITH ROB AT CHRISTMAS

Are you thinking of getting ready for Christmas? Then look no further. Rob Biddulph's Draw with Rob at Christmas is here to help everyone get prepared for the festive season with a host of arts and crafts activities.

In this 64-page, full colour activity book budding artists can learn to draw their favourite wintry characters including polar bears, elves, snowmen and Father Christmas himself. Help is also at hand in writing your letter to Santa, creating decorations, making your own Christmas cards and even a thank you letter template for after the big day.

Whilst Christmas might yet be different this year, families at home wondering what to do can still pick up a pencil and #DrawWithRob. And with perforated pages so that you can easily tear out artwork and creations – celebrating Christmas has never been so much fun!

We have five copies of this fabulous festive title to give away so to be in with a chance to win simply visit ni4kids.com/competitions and answer this question!

Q. THIS CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY BOOK INVITES LITTLE ONES TO DRAW WITH WHO?

A) BOB B) RUDOLPH OR C) ROB

T&Cs: The closing date for this competition is Monday 4 January 2021. Editor's decision is final. Usual Ni4kids T&Cs apply. Visit ni4kids.com/competitions for details.





NB Booking in advance is required for most venues and numbers will be limited in order to comply with social distancing protocols.

Follow The Belfast One Christmas Trail

Explore Belfast City Centre safely this festive season and take on the challenge of spotting the colourful gingerbread house-themed Christmas props in the windows of local businesses on Belfast One's magical **FREE** outdoor Christmas Trail. Suitable for the whole family, the trail will run from Fri 11 Dec – Sat 2 Jan. Download the app and make your way around the City, being sure to keep your eyes open so you don't miss the candy canes and gingerbread characters! Find all 10 props by answering a question at each location point for your chance to WIN a £250 Belfast City Centre Gift Card! By following the map, families will uncover magical fairy houses along the way before discovering three special Santa Post boxes, where children can send their own letter to the North Pole. Listen out for Santa on Cool FM's Breakfast Show to see if your little one's letter is read out! Head into Starbucks stores at CastleCourt, Victoria Square or Castle Lane and tell staff you're taking part in this magnificent trail to claim your golden chocolate coin (while stocks last!). Don't forget to use the Hashtag #BelfastChristmasTrail in your pictures on social media! Visit belfastone.co.uk/Christmastrail for more details.



Elves' Got Talent

The Junction has recruited the creatively renowned team at Cahoots NI to create its very own Christmas Panto, which will be performed as a drive-In spectacle in support of the NI

Out-Of-This-World Illuminations

They are more used to searching for bright lights in the sky, but this month Armagh Observatory and Planetarium will shine the spotlight on its historic grounds for a dazzling outdoor family event. **Space Lights** is a new spectacular outdoor light show rescheduled on selected dates from Wed Dec 16 to Wed Dec 23. The grounds will be transformed into a magical world of sound and light including space themed sculptures which will provide an out-of-this-world backdrop for the perfect 'Insta' moment. To book and find out more about upcoming events visit <https://armagh.space/>



Make Magical Memories

Can you spot all the magical elves and fairies hiding in Hillsborough Castle's enchanted gardens? Wrap up warm from Fri 11 Dec – Sun 3 Jan and see if you can find all their secret hideouts as you follow the festive garden trail. Uncover the stories of the magical elves and fairies favourite winter plants and trees and discover the folklore surrounding Christmas. Santa will also be stopping off for a visit on selected dates. Book at hrp.org.uk



The Magic of Christmas

The Ulster Orchestra is delighted to announce 'The Magic of Christmas' will be broadcast on RTÉ. Conducted by Paul Campbell, it features Emma Corry, Emma Morwood and schoolboy singing sensation Cormac Thompson. This wonderful one-hour Christmas show features an array of enchanting carols, festive music and a few little surprises for all the family to enjoy! Tickets £12 per household from ulsterorchestra.org.uk

NI Children's Hospice as part of its Jingle All The Way fundraising campaign. For more details visit thejunctionshopping.com or book directly via **Eventbrite**



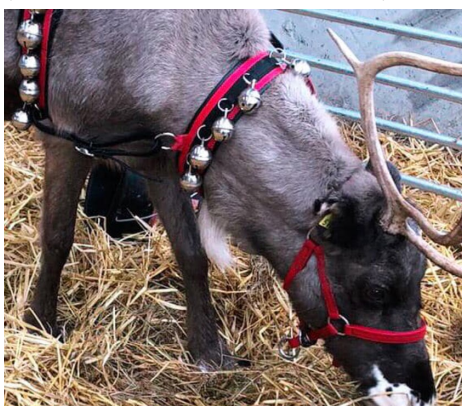


Please remember

Circumstances could change on a daily basis, therefore please check with the venue directly before setting off on your journey.

agic and Mistletoe at Magheramorne

through the enchanted forest with live Christmas characters at Magheramorne Estate, Antrim. Until Thursday 17 December you can visit animal friends in the farmyard, inside Santa's workshop, enjoy the nativity scene and not only will little ones receive a special gift from Santa, there will be nibbles and refreshments for the entire family. The Christmas shop will also be open and selling handmade treats and goodies. Discover more at magheramorneestate.com



istmas

announce its festive spectacular *'The Nativity'* online at 7pm on Fri 18 Dec 2020. Special guests Ian McElhinney, Peter



Family Festive Favourites

Christmas may be different this year but at the Lyric Theatre the show will go on! Join festive favourites Conor

Grimes and Alan McKee in a Christmas special audio recording of *The Nativity*...What the Donkey Heard, or take off to magical worlds with family Christmas spectaculars from the past: *Peter Pan: The Musical*, *Alice: The Musical* and *Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf* until Sun 3 Jan. Visit lyrictheatre.co.uk to book.



MOVIES

Cinemagic will be sharing a favourite festive film choice daily in December in their movie Advent Calendar video series on Cinemagic TV. Here's their top picks to get into the Xmas spirit through the magical world of film. Just click on the image to watch their Advent Calendar review!

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

(2000), Cert PG, Amazon Prime Video/ Sky Movies

In this live-action adaptation of the beloved children's tale by Dr. Seuss, the reclusive green Grinch (Jim Carrey) decides to ruin Christmas for the cheery citizens of Whoville. Reluctantly joined by his hapless dog Max, the Grinch comes down from his mountaintop home and sneaks into town to swipe everything Christmas-related from the Whos. However, the bitter grump finds a hitch in his plans when he encounters the endearing Cindy Lou Who.



Arthur Christmas

(2011), Cert U, Netflix

Santa's (Jim Broadbent's) clumsy son Arthur (James McAvoy) sets out on a mission with Grandsanta (Bill Nighy) to give out a present they misplaced to a young girl in less than two hours.



A Christmas Carol

(2009), (U), Disney+ A Christmas Carol is a 2009 American 3D computer-animated Christmas dark

fantasy written and directed by Robert Zemeckis. It is a film adaptation of Charles Dickens's 1843 story of the same name and stars Jim Carrey in a multitude of roles, including Ebenezer Scrooge and the three ghosts who haunt Scrooge.[4] The film also features a supporting cast consisting of Gary Oldman, Colin Firth, Bob Hoskins, Robin Wright, and Cary Elwes.





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