

This animated story of Saint Patrick relates how important the patron saint of Ireland is to the Irish people. It is based on input from Irish school children.

The clip - which features the voices of school children attending the [Rutland Street Primary School](#) (in North Dublin) in the 1960s - is from "Give Up Yer Aul Sins." How (and why) the tapes were made - and then resurfaced decades later - is a story all by itself. Even more improbable is how the [recordings were used](#) as source material for this animation (which was created by Dublin-based Brown Bag Films in 2002).

David Rolston provides the background information:

*The story of how "Give Up Yer Aul Sins" came to life is one of personal, social and creative serendipity that would be completely implausible if it weren't true.*

*An Irish Catholic priest finds a spool of discarded reel to reel tape in the trash of his local Parish. Curious, he loads the tape into a player, and from the speakers pour a recording of Dublin school children retelling biblical stories. There's an intangible quality to the recordings which touches him, and evokes memories of his own childhood, and an Ireland which in many ways is receding into the distant past.*

*He recognizes the thick accents and colloquial use of language must place the origin of the tapes somewhere in Dublin's rough inner city. Making inquiries through another priest, he is able to track down the originator of the recordings, an elderly retired teacher named Peig Cunningham, originally from Donegal who had taught in the North Dublin Rutland Street primary school in the 1960s.*

*Peig had purchased a tape player, and used it in her class as incentive to the children to learn her Biblical lessons. She tells the children that if they do a good job, they will end up on the Radio, a small lie to encourage their efforts. She keeps the tapes with her for over thirty years.*

*In the grasp of old age, it is almost at the exact moment when her health is deteriorating that she is visited by the aforementioned Priest, one Father Brian D'Arcy. He tells her he has come to inquire about the story of the tapes, and convinces her to allow him to take copies, managing to eventually get excerpts played on Irish public radio, where they generate immediate feedback from listeners wanting more.*

*Through contact with Father D'Arcy, EMI records agrees to secure the rights from Peig and release them on CD. To everyone's surprise, the recordings become an enormous hit, eventually generating double platinum sales. Peig Cunningham's lie has become truth, as her students become a staple of the Irish airwaves.*

*Eight years later while driving cross country, animator Cathal Gaffney hears one of the recordings for the first time on a radio station. It's the rambling impassioned story of John the Baptist as told by a young girl. The innocence of her voice in combination with her often hilarious reinterpretations and turns of phrase, capture his imagination.*

*A friend tells him about the CD, which he tracks down and spends a weekend devouring. He is so enamoured with "Give Up Yer Aul Sins," that he immediately begins to work out how he might go about making a short animated film based on them, and convinces his commercial animation company, Brown Bag films to get behind the idea. The resulting film, "Give up Yer Aul Sins" [a Bible story about John the Baptist] goes on to win various Irish film festival awards.*

*The little animated film from a small Dublin commercial animation house, finds itself improbably entered into the American Academy of Arts and Motion Pictures competition for best animated short. Producer Darragh O'Connell believes he's the victim of a practical joke when he receives word that the film [about John the Baptist] has become one of the five nominees for the 2002 Academy awards. A phone call eventually verifies the fact, and although the film doesn't win (the winner that year was a Pixar film costing millions of dollars) the resulting publicity leads to even further notoriety and eventually the commission of a series of seven episodes for Radio Television Ireland (RTE). The resulting collection of stories is now available in a [DVD collection](#) distributed by EMI.*

*Using traditional hand drawn 24 fps cell animation, the Irish animators bring the stories to life in all their eccentricity. Peig Cunningham had written her versions out as a way of simplifying them and clarifying the morals, and she would read them aloud to her students, who would then be called upon to recite the lessons in their own words. This technique unwittingly became the foundation for the humor of the series, as the children struggle wonderfully with the Biblical source material and the complicated religious themes and Catholic doctrine.*

*"Give Up Yer Aul Sins" is a charming endearing entertainment that also manages to capture the intangible process of learning at that critical moment when the children were attempting to make the transition from rote recitation to personal understanding. The animation reflects their intellectual struggle as each performer re-envisions the story in a way they can understand and relate it to their own life, while at times clinging to Peig's source text as they parrot phrases like "Shockin Holy Saint" and "Give up yer aul sins".*

*Brown bag wisely provided a framework for the stories, recreating Dublin center and scripting introductions performed by an actress standing in for Peig, who had only recorded the children themselves. The animation is lovingly meticulous in its efforts to recreate a child's point of view, and the archtypal characters are designed simplistically and act out the often literal minded interpretations the children infer.*

*There are also a number of artistic and design decisions imbued into the episodes that reflect the deep affection Brown Bag and its financial supporters at the RTE had for the source material. From the recreation of vintage 1960 Dublin buses, to the hand added flaws and defects which makes the films appear to have been unearthed in a manner befitting the tapes, to the lip-synching of the children as they stutter and wrestle with their developing linguistic capabilities, these films were clearly a labour of love.*

*After the fact, what has surprised the creators of the series the most is how they have found an audience outside Ireland. They perhaps underestimated the success with which their animations help illuminate the source material and clarify the narrative thread even when the performers themselves inevitably wander from it. In the same way that the recordings managed to capture the imagination and inspire their archivists and animators, "Give Up Yer Aul Sins" the series illuminates the capacity of its performers to imbue these tales with their own wondrous and fertile imaginations. The resulting films will transport many an adult back to simpler and more magical times.*

This video - "The Story of St. Patrick" - is a short clip from the series.

### Credits:

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Hilarious-Story-about-St.-Patrick>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Hilarious-Story-about-St.-Patrick>