



## NEWS RELEASE

Thursday 10th May

*For immediate release*

*Images available*

### **Edinburgh's Christian Aid George Street Sale opens with John Byrne's self-portrait and a rare Ian Rankin first edition as star items**

From a hastily-gathered table and a couple of boxes of books set up in the church doorway in 1974, this annual event is believed to be the biggest charity book sale in Britain and one of the largest in the world.

Hundreds of volunteers and experts from as far afield as America and Europe have been keenly sorting and pricing over 60,000 donated books and collectables. Buyers will be queuing round the block from the early hours, eager to find a rare gem.

The patron for this year is author, playwright and artist **John Byrne**. Patrons from previous years have included Ian Rankin, Rt. Rev Rowan Williams, Julia Donaldson, Alexander McCall Smith, AL Kennedy, Liz Lochhead, Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and Alexander Stoddart.

**John Byrne has generously donated a self-portrait called 'Self-portrait with a small bird'. Organisers of the sale are inviting sealed bids with the deadline being 10.30am on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, the first morning of the sale. The reserve price is £5,000.**

Other highlights this year include a signed first edition of Ian Rankin's first book, *Knots and Crosses* (1987).

Another rare find is *The Ruined Abbeys of the Border* (1865) illustrated with six photographs by Wilson and Thompson, both Scottish pioneers of photography; the text is from Howitt's *Ruined Abbeys & Castles of Great Britain*. Using photographs as illustrations in books was, at that time, very unusual.

Also of interest of collectors will be the complete works of Sir Walter Scott, including the *Waverley Novels*, *Poetry and Prose* in a hundred beautifully bound volumes, published in 1844.

Mary Davidson, Sale Convener said; "We hope that people will come along and find treasures among the books and other things for sale, remembering that the money they spend will help to support some of the poorest communities in the world".

The Christian Aid Sale, one of the largest charity book sales in the world, takes place from **10am on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May until Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May at St Andrew's and St George's West Church, George Street, Edinburgh.**

The annual sale of books also includes antiques, ephemera, pictures, records, sheet music and toys and has raised several million pounds for Christian Aid.

**To make a bid for the self-portrait by John Byrne please email [churchmanager@stagw.org.uk](mailto:churchmanager@stagw.org.uk)**

**ENDS**

**For more information please contact Esme Allen on 0131 2401528 or 07969 157856 [eallen@christian-aid.org](mailto:eallen@christian-aid.org) or Mary Davidson, Sale Convener 07714 186754. Free to use professionally taken photographs are available.**

Notes to Editors:

1. Christian Aid Week unites over 20,000 churches across the UK & Ireland every year to support our global neighbours in need who are suffering through no fault of their own. Christian Aid and its global partners continue to provide support for people seeking a safe place to call home, with essentials including food and shelter, as well as advocating for policies to protect & help them on the ground.

2. Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities in around 40 countries at any one time. We act where there is great need, regardless of religion, helping people to live a full life, free from poverty. We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance in tackling the root causes of poverty as well as its effects. For more info:

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk>

3. Find out more about Christian Aid Scotland at [www.christianaid.org.uk/scotland](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/scotland) and follow us on Twitter:

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