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The Southland Times

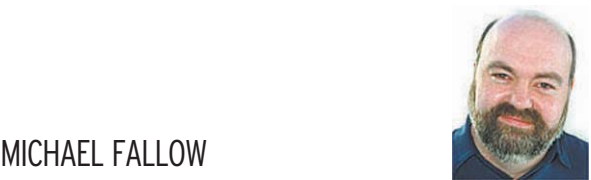
# Unwind

**KATHY BATES**  
listens to  
her bra  
D5



# A work in progress

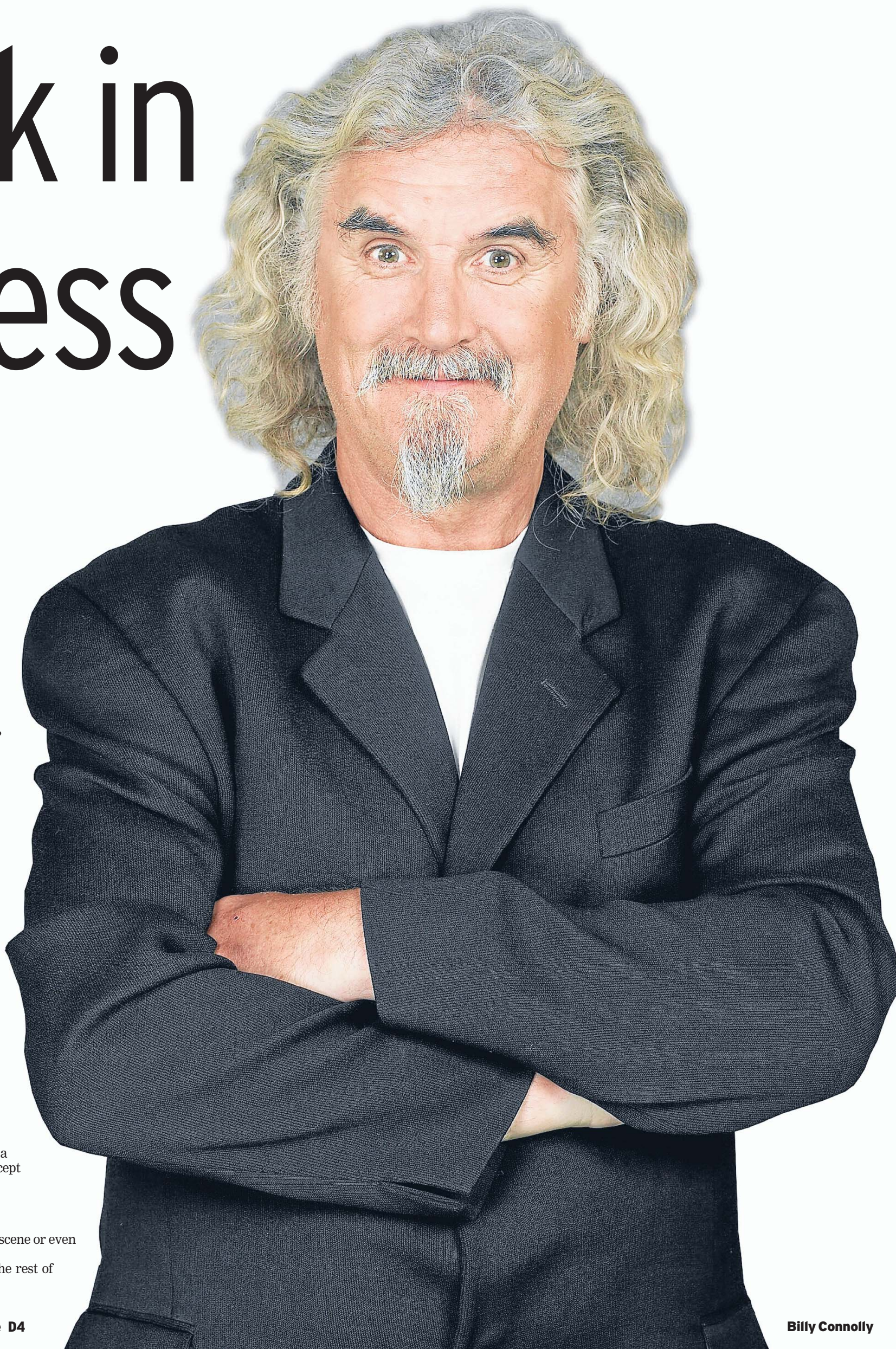
Billy Connolly performs at Stadium Southland on Waitangi Day.



MICHAEL FALLOW

**B**EFORE you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes. “And after that,” adds Billy Connolly, “who cares? He’s a mile away and you’ve got his shoes.” Not a big one for aphorisms, is our Bill. He’s even had a crack at rewriting the *Desiderata*: “Tread gently on anyone who looks at you sideways . . .” Tell you what, though. There’s a little Buddhist saying that he’s clearly fond of quoting without any need to subvert it. “Learn what you should be doing and do it.” It is hard to escape the conclusion that Billy Connolly is doing just that, through both his standup routines and his acting. It turns out what he should be doing is getting our attention and rewarding it. His gifts are just about undeniable. Consider the remarkable elasticity and texture of his spoken words. It’s an all-but-guaranteed failure if anyone else tries to tell a Connolly joke; partly because they’re often heroic in their length, intrepid in their little diversions, and frankly hard to remember afterwards. On top of that, it’s stupidly hard either for any other teller to remove his accent, or reproduce it. His swearing is, in itself, much less an issue than people make out. Connolly was once notorious for the fearlessness of his swearing, but nowadays it’s more for the sheer expressiveness of it. The cadences. Any dullard can swear dully. Connolly’s an enthusiastic and educated swearer. Anyway, there’s profundity behind the profanity; a generosity of spirit towards most human failings except meanness, against which he rages. Just not meanly. Someone called him a crank who isn’t truly crotchety. “I like my anger,” he once said. “I’ve always found it comforting.” The number of people who consider Connolly essentially obscene or even faintly obscene has either dwindled or been found out. Their ranks don’t seem especially large or troubling, for the rest of us, anyway. Can’t speak for the man himself.

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Billy Connolly

## Matrimonial swelter

**MATE**  
MARK WILSON



**I** WAS at a great wedding on the weekend – my good friends Tim and Sally were getting married. It had been a long time coming. When they first got together Sean Fitzpatrick was still captain of the All Blacks and Mayor Tim was about to begin his second reign over Invercargill. You daren’t have asked for a nicer day, it was pushing 30 and you couldn’t buy a cloud even if you tried. I decided the best way to deal with the now well-out-of-my-Invercargill-upbringing-comfort-zone heat was to have a cold shower 40 minutes before departure and sit in the office in my underwear with the window open allowing a weak New Zealand economy-like breeze to waft in. I donned my dress pants, shoes and long sleeve shirt only 10 minutes before my rendezvous with the wedding-bound taxi fleet, glanced briefly at my suit jacket which had been worn only once in three years and thought no way in hell was that a good idea. On the way to the meeting point I was intercepted by two other sweaty wedding bound mates and stared somewhat enviously at the skimpy attire their lovely partners had on – they looked far more comfortable. I was, at this stage, having front sweats, back sweats, arse sweats – things were turning pear shaped rapidly. The only solace we could see for our wilting bodies was a quick handle in the air conditioned surrounds of the Speight’s Ale House. The respite was only temporary as the wedding was held at a sheltered riverside homestead which amplified the already oppressive heat. Everyone was battling, looking stunning in their suits but suffering harder than United States equity markets. I thought to myself “why don’t we just kick along to summer weddings in dress shorts and jandals, everyone would be a lot more comfortable”. I’ve never been one to dress up nor to encourage attire simply for the sake of tradition or ceremonial purposes unless perhaps it’s a lack of attire, that I’m more partial too. Too often we dress for flair not function. A great example – ties, just what do they do? They have no practical use and if anyone can tell me they enjoy wearing them, you’re just crazy! As humans we are on this never-ending carousel where we judge people on what they wear not who or how capable they are. I’m not advocating for holes in your strides, paint on your muscles-T and a backwards cap, of course tidiness has its place but I think we need to get over ourselves a little and not force this impending sense of inappropriateness on those who just want to be cool and comfortable at work, a function or on a night out. The bridal party looked stunning though and the day, apart from bum sweats for Africa, was perfect.

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