

EPISODE 3 – THE JOURNEY



SUMMARY

The landlord's agent instructs the children to go to the workhouse as they have no means of support. They decide to go to Castletaggart to search for the great-aunts. With the help of Mary Kate, they escape from the workhouse group. They set out on their journey, full of excitement. The going is difficult and becomes more so when Michael injures his leg. Peggy is very upset when Michael kills a baby rabbit for food. However, later she eats it with relish!

BEFORE VIEWING

Ask the pupils to pay particular attention to the contribution of each child to their survival on the journey.

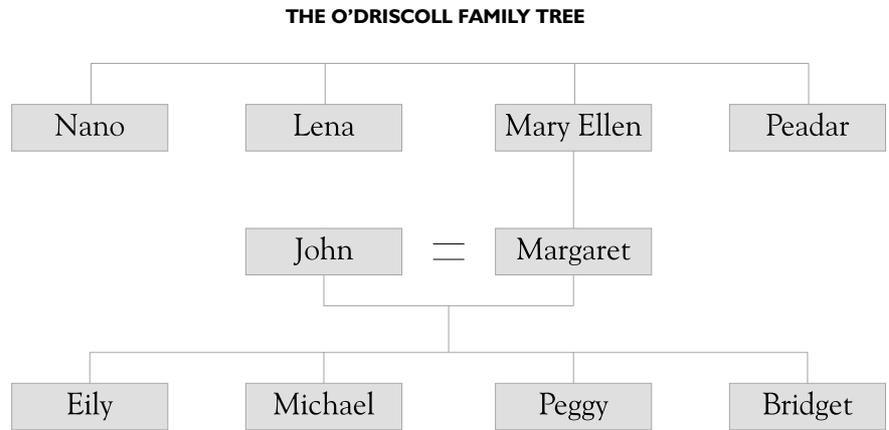
AFTER VIEWING

Frame questions to elicit a summary of the episode using the summary above as a guide. Ask the pupils to write their third journal entry entitled 'On the Road'.

WORKSHEET ACTIVITIES TABLE – AT A GLANCE

W/SHEET NO.	TITLE	ENGLISH	HISTORY	SPHE / PSHE
13	The Family Tree		Family history	
14	Starvation		Oral history	Alternative food sources
15, 16	Workhouses Newry Workhouse	Reading a plan	Documentary evidence/social welfare	Punishment
17	Folk Medicine	Using IT		Folk cures/use of plants
18	Landlords	Discussion and reading	The landlord system examined	

THE FAMILY TREE



MY FAMILY TREE

1 Look at the O'Driscoll family tree. What relation was Peadar to Margaret? What relation was Michael to Lena? What relation was John to Mary Ellen? What relation was Eily to Mary Ellen?

2 Draw up your own family tree in the frame above, going back as far as you can on both your mother's and father's side. Start with yourself, add your brothers and sisters, and build back from there.

STARVATION

The children had little food to bring with them so they ate what they could find as they went along: wild strawberries, edible roots and a rabbit. With the meal, potatoes and milk they had, this, while it lasted, formed a balanced diet.

When the potato crop failed, people had no adequate substitute for this nutritious vegetable and malnutrition caused diseases such as anaemia, swollen and bleeding gums, painful joints, diarrhoea, itching and scaling of the skin, inflammation of the mouth, damaged sight leading to blindness.

Read the extracts on this page and list the foods eaten when the potato crop failed.

ORAL SOURCES

Thomas O'Flynn, John Melody, Attymass, Ballina, Co. Mayo

Rabbits, hares and wild fowl were caught by having rights to hunt, the flesh was used and their soup, mixed with Indian meal, was considered excellent. Bull calves sold for half a crown and were not kept. They were slaughtered for food. Sheep provided most of the meat used and sheep stealing was common. Pigs were reared on a small scale and disappeared altogether when the potatoes failed. Goats were plentiful on the mountains and were practically wiped out for food during the Famine.

Seán Ó Beirne, Malin, Inishowen, Co. Donegal

They used all the usual foods to be found along the shore: dulse, sloak, famanach, wilks, barnacles, brailins, aghaus, cockles [dulse and famanach are seaweed, the rest are shellfish]. And dulaman. This dulaman is a growth somewhat like carageen moss or as they call it here in Inishowen 'crothar' and is not edible until after the first severe frost in Winter. It is not left to bleach like carageen but can be cooked [boiled] immediately after being pulled. It has to be boiled for two or three hours.

Mrs Fitzsimons, b.1875, Sheepstown, Delvin, Co. Westmeath

The people used to gather the leaves of the dandelions and boil them. Then they strained the water off and made gruel by putting meal into the water. They used to make drinks from the holly berries too.

John Treanor, b.1870, a retired scutcher, Forkhill, Co. Armagh

The people had to live on brawlum. It was a handful of meal and a head of cabbage. It was yellow meal though, you know, and maybe a dumpling if they had a fistful of flour. It was made anont of the butcher [made without any meat]. There was no meat in them days.



Indian meal (maize)

Seaghan Mac Cártha, b.1893, national teacher, An Bóthar Bui, Newmarket, Co. Cork

She [Máire] lived on herbs and turnips during the period after her husband died. She ate caisearbhán [dandelions], samha [sorrel, sour dock], nettles, turnips and anything she could find. Poor people could be seen crawling along the ditches looking for herbs, and their mouths were green from the leaves they were eating. Poor Máire's mouth was often green, but she lived through it all. She helped to nurse me and was a very decent soul. May the heavens be her bed.

Seán Ó Duinnshleibhe, Glenville, Fermoy, Co. Cork

In winter, men, women and children would be seen stalking through a turnip field where grew the turnips, to pick up any root of those vegetables left in the ground. In extreme hunger the children used eat grass.

Seán Ó Duinnshleibhe, Glenville, Fermoy, Co. Cork

They had no food for the cattle save hay alone, but none for the hens. The hens did not lay for the want of food, and then they became less and less until there were none. They had been killed and eaten.

Hugh Byrne, b.1915, Blindennis, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow

His father told him that a hungry man used to draw blood from the first thing he'd meet with. One man attacked a fox but he was so weak the fox snapped at him and took his arm off. Half the population died from hunger and were buried in the ditches.

P. Lennon, b.1900, Crossbridge, Co. Wicklow

People ate sycamore seeds. There were two kinds of haws they used eat, but one kind was poisonous. Many died from eating the latter because they didn't know the difference.

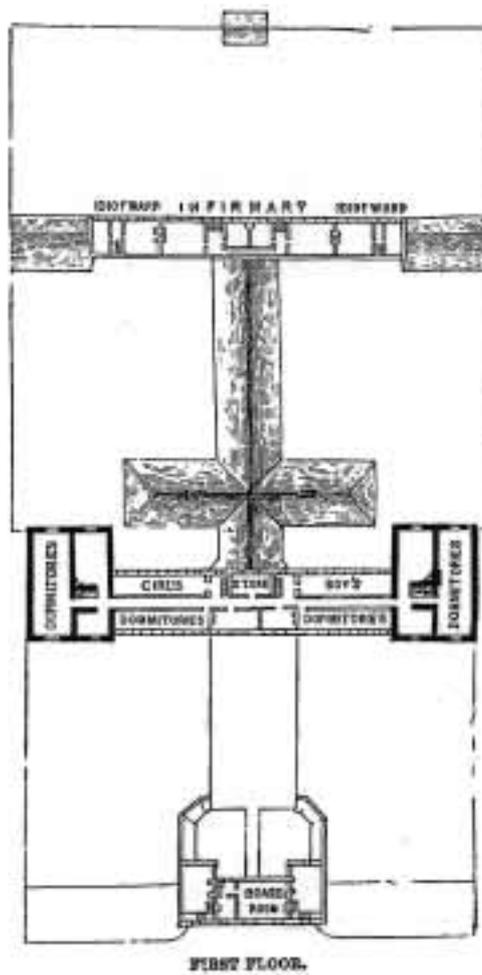
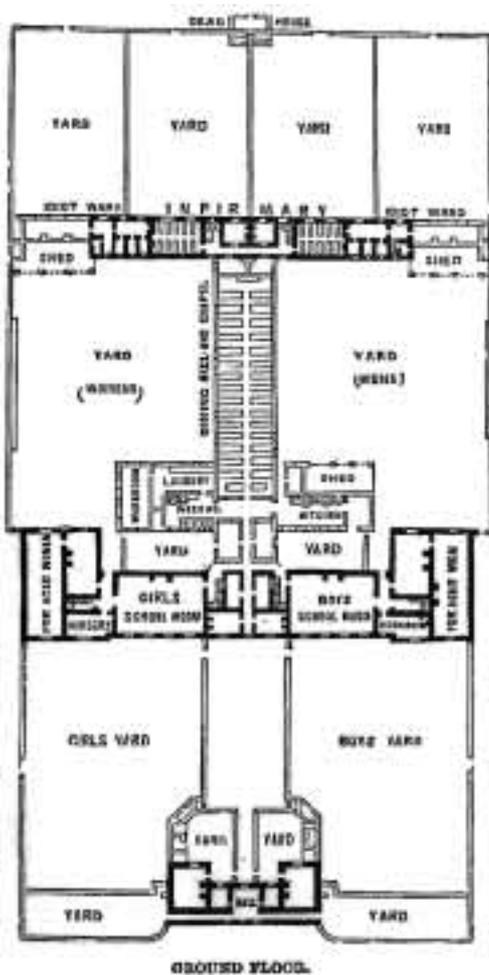
WORKHOUSES

In 1839 Ireland was divided into 130 districts called Poor Law Unions. Each Union was to have its own workhouse to accommodate the destitute of the area.

- These were harsh places where families were split up by age and gender. Food was basic, fever rampant and discipline strict.
- In the winter of 1846, around 2,500 people died each week in the workhouses.
- In 1847 Lord John Russell's government ended government relief of any sort and the burden of funding fell to the local landlords.



Clifden Workhouse, Co. Galway



STUDY THESE PLANS AND ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

- 1 How many workhouses were established in Ireland by 1846, the year in which *Under The Hawthorn Tree* is set?
- 2 What do you think happened in the hall of the workhouse?
- 3 Why are there two small front yards beyond the hall?
- 4 What was directly over the girls' schoolroom?

- 5 Which side of the building did the girls and women inhabit?
- 6 Where were the very sick accommodated?
- 7 What, do you think, was the purpose of the four small yards at the back of the buildings?
- 8 Why, do you think, was there such strict segregation of the sexes?

NEWRY WORKHOUSE

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

EXTRACT FROM THE OFFENCES AND PUNISHMENT BOOK OF NEWRY WORKHOUSE, 1851-5.

The maintenance of discipline in Newry workhouse was notoriously difficult, due to overcrowding and to lack of harmony between the over-worked officers of the workhouse and the Board of Guardians. The master and matron were assaulted. Discipline was a matter often referred to in the master's reports to the guardians, whereas in most other Unions in Ulster it was apparently not pressing enough to be considered worthy of notice. This general situation may explain the severity of some of the punishments.

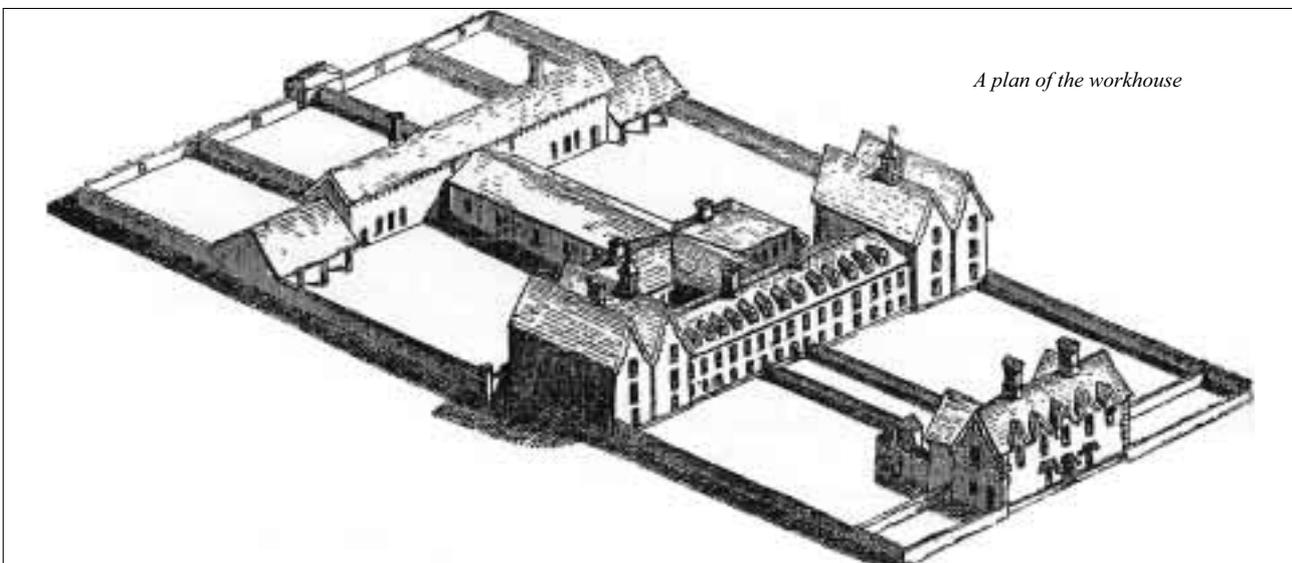
At an enquiry into indiscipline on 6 April 1850, the master explained his method of punishing by producing 'a leathern taws', which he said he used in preference to a ratan or rod, because he considered it less severe.

PUNISHMENT AT NEWRY

Twenty-nine women at the mill	Neglecting and refusing to work	1851 24 th July	Dinner and supper milk stopped
Owen Trainor	Stealing onions	1 st September	Flogged
James Acheson	Going to town without permission	14 th February 1852	6 hours in lock-up
James Close	Refractory conduct	14 th February 1852	6 hours in lock-up
Francis Campbell John Burns	Absconding with Union clothes	1 st December 1853	Flogged
Mary Carroll	Refusing to work and damaging her clothes	8 th November 1854	9 hours in lock-up
Mary Carroll	Persisting in refusing to work	9 th November 1854	7 hours in lock-up

Above is a document from Newry workhouse. Read it and answer these questions:

- In what county is Newry?
- What book are these pages taken from?
- Why was there a problem with discipline in the Newry workhouse?
- What do you think a 'leathern taws' looked like?
- Which punishment, in your opinion, was most severe?
- Why do you think Mary Carroll refused to work and what was her punishment?
- Francis Campbell and John Burns were flogged for trying to escape. Why do you think they tried?



A plan of the workhouse

FOLK MEDICINE



Mary Kate gives the children cures to take with them on their journey: one for fever, one for stomach ache and cramps and another for cuts, wounds and stings.

Folk medicine has a long and respected tradition in Ireland. In many parts of rural Ireland there were people like Mary Kate who were said to have cures for certain human and animal ailments. Often the cures were passed on from one generation to another, or were known only to special people like the seventh son of a seventh son.

The cure could be a prayer, a particular sign or ritual, or the application of a special preparation made from local sources.

Lone thorn trees were thought to have healing powers. If a patient transferred a rag from around their ailment to the thorn tree the ailment was also transferred to the tree, and the patient was cured.

Certain wells were renowned for having healing properties. Usually these cures were obtained by drinking the water or by saying a prayer or leaving some object at the site. These places often became places of pilgrimage.

1 Check out the labels on shampoo and cosmetic containers.

How many plants can you find in the list of ingredients?

2 What are they used for?

3 Sketch the plants with help from a reference book/disc.

HERE ARE SOME UNUSUAL CURES

- **For a stitch in the side** – rub the part affected with unsalted butter and make the sign of the cross seven times over the place.
- **For weak eyes** – a concoction of the flowers of daisies boiled down is an excellent wash to be used constantly.
- **For the mumps** – wrap the child in a blanket, take it to the pigsty, rub the child's head to the back of a pig and the mumps will leave it and pass from the child to the animal.
- **To cure warts** – on meeting a funeral, take some of the clay from under the feet of the men who bear the coffin and apply it to the wart, wishing strongly at the same time that it may disappear ... and so it will be.

Lady Wilde, 1887

If you know any local cures e-mail them to us at: Channel 4 website: <http://www.channel4.com/schools>. Go to the Forum section and click on the *Under the Hawthorn Tree* topic.

Here is an example: In West Cavan chewing the leaf of a hawthorn used to be recommended as a cure for heartburn.

LANDLORDS

- Landlords were the most powerful people in the country, both economically and politically.
- They lived on the rent they got from their tenants and on the sale of their crops.
- It was from the landlord class that Members of Parliament were elected to Westminster. (There had been no Irish Parliament since the Act of Union in 1800.)
- The landlords contributed to the cost of the government Famine Relief Schemes through taxation.

I Read and discuss the accounts below of people's memories of the landlords in their area – some good, some bad.

ORAL SOURCES

Michael Howard, b.1883, a farmer, Gladree, Belmullet, Co. Mayo

When the Famine of Black Forty-Seven was nearly over, and the most of the people of West Connaght were dead of cold and hunger, a man left Belmullet with his boat and went to England for a cargo of meal to try and save some of the lives of the poor people. This man was known as John Lally, who had owned a boat of his own, and was living in a small house in Belmullet. When this man came from England with his boatload of Indian meal to the pier at Belmullet, the landlords that were in Connaght at that time took

Conchubhair and Solomon Ó Néill, b.1860s, farmers, Cratloe, Co. Clare

One landlord (Lord George Quinn) cleared out several families in the townland of Ballymorris, for non-payment of rent. Against this, Mr Maunsell (afterwards Lord Emy) gave seven pounds to each householder who left (1852 and for years after). If they remained he did not press them in any way, or leave a process at any man's door. Neither did he ask a vote from any of his tenants in O'Connell's time. He was elected MP for Limerick and also became a Catholic.

A landlord's residence



An enlightened Co. Limerick landlord, Thomas Spring-Rice

Séamus Reardon, b.1873, Boulteen, Eniskeane, Co. Cork

I must say they [the landlords] were not all alike. My grandfather, God rest his soul, went to pay part of his rent to his landlord, he was a Bantry man.

'Feed your family first, then give me what you can afford when times get better,' he told him.

So when times improved there was two years rent due on the majority of the small farms and very little hope of paying it later. This was a serious matter for the poor landlords. The rich landlords could afford to lose a little.

William (Bill) Powell, b. 1869, Eniskeane, Co. Cork

Yes, the famine was man-made. It was our rulers that saw to it that our food was shipped away to England from us, and left the people here starving.

Mrs Hanniffe, b. 1867, Kilkeaskin, Cairbre, Co. Kildare

Fifty families were evicted from this district of Kilkeaskin by a local landlord. The thatch of the roofs was torn off even before the poor people had time to leave.

ABSENTEE LANDLORDS

In *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, the local landlord, Lord Edward Lyons, goes back to England and leaves his estate and the collection of rents in the hands of his agents, Jer Simmonds and Tom Daly.

2 What effect do you think it had on an area if the landlord was an 'absentee landlord'?