



Fugitives!

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Aubrey Flegg

Teaching Guide

By PETER HEANEY

RATIONALE AND THEMES

Fugitives! is a story about how friendships and loyalties can be tested by events and circumstances. Following the tradition between Norman and Gaelic families, Fion O'Neill, nephew of the Irish chieftain Hugh O'Neill, has been fostered to the Norman De Cashel family. He and the De Cashel children, James and Sinéad, have become like siblings. Sir Malachy De Cashel had supported Hugh O'Neill at the Battle of Kinsale, but was pardoned by the King when the Irish were defeated. However, Sir Arthur Chichester, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, has decided now to extend his influence and has set about a policy of 'divide and rule'.

James, Fion and Sinéad must decide where their loyalties lie as they witness for themselves the effects of Chichester's policy.

The main themes of the story are:

- Loyalty
- Friendship
- Courage
- Pride
- Honour
- Forgiveness
- Refugees
- Greed

SUMMARY

James, Fion and Sinéad struggle to realise their destiny and to survive in seventeenth-century Ireland, a country racked by danger.

Though they have been friends since childhood, they must now take sides as they struggle to find and save Hugh O'Neill's son, Con.

The story is driven by intrigue and a determination to save Con from Sir Arthur Chichester.

APPROACH

The guide is divided into four sections to reflect the main transitions within the story. The story itself is rich with opportunities to identify and examine the consequences of taking alternative actions, and also provides many wonderful moments to relate to characters and events.

Although the story has an historical plot, the themes are universal and lend themselves easily to discussion of contemporary issues: eg refugees and colonialism. The story also offers a child accessible context to examine some of the divisions that exist within modern Ireland.

UNIT I The Secret War PP9-76

SUMMARY

James De Cashel's sleep is troubled. Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, and his young son, Con, are asleep, and James resents their presence and the friendship that Hugh and his own father have.

At dawn, Con manages to slip out of the castle, hoping to visit the Pale. He is drawn further into the Pale than he realises and comes face-to-face with Sir Arthur Chichester.

Meanwhile, James has taken his concerns to his tutor, Dr Fenton. Fenton proceeds to turn James against Hugh. He sends James off to vent his frustration on Hugh's nephew Fion, who has lived with the De Cashels since he was a child.

Though the boys have often quarrelled, today there is something different in James's needling of Fion. Before Sinéad can intervene, the boys go to settle their quarrel by fighting a duel.

In the Pale, Con discovers that Chichester

is leading a troop to capture his father. To avoid being curfewed in the town, Con is forced to guide them. He manages to escape, but he gets lost in the woods until he meets a strange man, who looks like a beggar though he's a poet, who directs him; Con calls him 'Haystacks'.

Sinéad chooses this time to ask Hugh to prevent the boys' duel. She is alarmed when he lets them fight, because she doesn't know that the armourer has given them blunted swords. James disarms Fion, but both boys realise that their quarrel isn't over.

Sinéad seeks out Fion, and they discuss the poisoned atmosphere. They realise that James has fallen under the evil influence of Dr Fenton. Sinéad confirms their suspicions when she discovers Fenton spying in the papers in Hugh's room.

As Sinéad confides her suspicions to Hugh, Con reaches the De Cashel castle with the news of Chichester's approach. The castle erupts in a frenzy as Hugh makes preparations to leave immediately.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (**Read pp20-21**): Fenton has persuaded James that it is acceptable to tell *some* of the truth only. Do you think it is honourable to deceive someone by telling *part* of the truth? How do you think Fenton manipulated James so that he accepted what he said? What questions do you think James should be asking himself about their relationship?
- (**Read pp28-29**): When Sinéad releases Saoirse into the air, it seems as if she is able to fly with the bird and escape her prison for a while. Why do you think Sinéad believes she is imprisoned? What do you think she is trying to escape from? If you were to dream of escaping, can you describe what you would like to escape from?

- **(Read pp65–66):** Fion and Sinéad realise that Fenton has been poisoning James’s opinions against Hugh. Fenton is a spy and is working secretly, but they can see the effects of his influence on James. How do you think you could deal effectively with someone who was saying things about you behind your back? What do you think the effects of a ‘rotten apple’ would be within your group of friends?

ACTIVITIES

1. Chichester:

(Read pp15–16) Con comes face-to-face with Chichester. As the Lord Deputy’s cold eyes pick him out from the crowd, it seems as if he can almost sense Con’s fury.

Con will never forget the sensation of that first look. Later he is able to recall every detail of the man and decides to draw what he saw.

Do you think you could help Con to create the portrait of Chichester from that first meeting, the moment when their eyes locked in a cold, hard stare?

2. I should have ... :

(Read p17) Con has been caught unprepared and has attracted Chichester’s attention unnecessarily. He has made no real preparations for his foray into the Pale and has put himself in real danger. As he sits speechless, he thinks angrily of the preparations he could have made that would have allowed him to take advantage of this opportunity of meeting Chichester.

As he thinks, it dawns on him that there were three things he might have done to prepare. What do you think the three things were?

Can you work in small groups to decide what you think Con might have done to prepare and select the best three? Can you explain how you decided what his preparations might have been?

3. Saoirse’s View:

(Read p30) In her imagination, Sinéad is able to soar with Saoirse above the castle. She can see every detail of the layout of the grounds and the defences. She decides to draw a plan for Uncle Hugh to show him how well they are defended. Do you think you could help her to draw the plan using Saoirse’s view, and explain what each of the details is?

4. The Children:

(Read pp20–22) Fenton is a spy who has been employed by Chichester to report on what happens at the De Cashel castle.

Chichester has asked Fenton to write a report on James, Sinéad and Fion, and give his opinion on how each of them might be won over to the English cause.

You are in the castle and have discovered Fenton’s reports. Do you think you could make a copy of them quickly before you are discovered? You will need to make your copy using very brief notes. What do you think he suggested as a way of persuading/forcing each of them to support the English?

5. Who Is Sinéad?

(Read pp61–62) Sinéad is a very resourceful and capable girl, who is loved by her family and friends. When Hugh brings her a new dress, she is thrilled and feels that it makes her look like a real lady.

Everyone else who sees her realises that the dress makes her look different.

Can you draw a picture of Sinéad in her new dress and draw six boxes beside it. Now imagine that, in turn, you are looking at her through the eyes of FATHER, MOTHER, HUGH, JAMES, FION and finally SINÉAD herself.

Can you write a comment for each of them to show how they might now describe her? Think about how and why the comments might vary. What adjectives do you think these observers might use?

6. The Secret Place:

(Read p64) Fion has created a hideaway for himself in the falconry. It is a secret place that he uses whenever he needs to get away and be by himself.

Can you describe your secret place and explain what it is about the place that attracts you? You might do a little sketch of it if you like.

7. The Message:

(Read pp72–74) Sinéad has discovered the proof that Fenton is a spy and has rushed out to tell Uncle Hugh. When she finds him on the battlements, she blurts out incoherently everything she has discovered.

When Con delivers his message about Chichester, Hugh compliments him and tells Sinéad that this is an example of how an important message should be delivered.

If you were to help Sinéad compose and deliver her message like Con, what advice would you give her?

Make a list of the three most important things that Sinéad wanted to say about Fenton. Put them in order of importance and then decide how these might be delivered in the clearest way.

You could then read them to the class for them to decide which of the three is the most effective.

UNIT 2 Bonmann – ‘An Bonham’ PP77–134

SUMMARY

Preparations are made to receive Chichester as a guest while Hugh, Fion and Con escape.

James rides out to greet Chichester and escort him to the castle. James leads a force that matches Chichester’s.

The preparations at the castle are complete and Sinéad confirms that her father is aware of Fenton’s spying.

The disguise of entertaining masks suspicion and hostility as Chichester realises that Hugh O’Neill has eluded him. Sir Malachy bristles that his guests are uninvited.

James is busy being his father’s squire, while Sinéad plays hostess to the officers of Chichester’s party. The event sours when Sir Geoffrey Bonmann shows his romantic interest in Sinéad.

The morning sees the mask of civility gone as Chichester imposes a punishing levy on Sir Malachy for supporting Hugh at the Battle of Kinsale.

Chichester demands James as a hostage and when Bonmann suggests Sinéad’s hand in marriage as an alternative, James rises to his sister’s defence. Their father intervenes and states that Sinéad must remain at home until she is of marrying age.

Later, James and Sinéad realise that the family’s security on their land may depend on Sinéad accepting Bonmann’s offer.

Harvest has come and James is sent on a diversion to Dundalk while a cattle raid is organised to satisfy Chichester’s fine. Sinéad manages to alert her brother and he is able to join the raiding party just as they stumble upon a large herd of cattle.

They realise that the cattle have been gathered by Hugh to pay the fine. Fion and James meet and resume their duel.

A clumsy sword thrust wounds James and all enmity between the boys vanishes immediately as they realise how much they care for each other.

Sinéad confides to Fion her horror at how things are progressing.

The three settle back to their routine until the arrival of Hugh's son, John O'Neill, shatters their peace with dramatic news: Hugh O'Neill is to leave Ireland and young Con cannot be found.

Sinéad, James and Fion agree to help find him and see him safely to the boat at Rathmullan before Chichester can capture them all.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **(Read pp80)** Sir Malachy decides to greet Chichester with a banquet rather than a battle. Why do you think he does this? What advantages or disadvantages can you see in greeting him this way? Can you discuss Sir Malachy's options and decide if YOU think he chose the correct course of action? If the decision were yours, could you create a scenario that would outfox Chichester completely?
- **(Read pp98–99)** James has been fooled by the stereotype that since Bonmann is a 'gentleman', he couldn't be a creep. How do you think James's thinking might be flawed? He criticises Sinéad and blames her for Bonmann's behaviour. Do you think this is fair? Do you think Sinéad was right to be friendly at the banquet? Where do you think responsibility lies when behaviour is misinterpreted?
- **(Read pp107–108)** One of the most important decisions affecting Sinéad in her life is whom she will choose to marry. Yet now it is to be decided by her father, Chichester and Bonmann. Neither her feelings nor her opinions are to be considered. This practice still happens today in some cultures. Do you think there is ever any fairness or benefit from a parent making this decision for one of their children? What decisions do you think a parent can justly make for their children, and for how long?
- **(Read pp112–113)** Sinéad now realises that under the terms of the English law of 'surrender and regrant' all their land really belongs to the King. However,

Sinéad is from a Norman family who also acquired the land five hundred years earlier in a similar way. What grounds do you think Sinéad has now for complaint? Whom do you think the land of Ireland should belong to?

- **(Read pp124–125)** When Fion wounds James, he is horrified at what he has done. The hostility between them disappears immediately and completely. Why do you think this has happened and why do you think they were unable to resolve their animosity before James was wounded? What advice do you think you could have given them, either before they began to fight or when Fion had disarmed James?

ACTIVITIES

1. Milord Chichester

(Read pp81–82) Sinéad is very angry, frustrated and frightened that Chichester has the power to capture and behead Hugh. Although she is determined to speak to Chichester, she is also mindful of her mother's words of caution.

Do you think you could help her to prepare a suitable short address/welcome that will both greet him and assure him of the family's loyalty to the King, while expressing her displeasure at his unannounced arrival?

Choose your words very carefully.

When you have finished, you could each perform your address for the class.

2. The Spymaster File:

(Read pp84) Sir Malachy now knows that Fenton has been spying for Chichester.

As Lord Deputy, Chichester keeps a file on all his spies, and Fenton is one of his best.

For a spy to be useful, he needs to be in a place where he can gather useful information and be able to pass on the details without being discovered.

Chichester always carries his file with him no matter where he goes, but during the night Fion manages to steal it and copy the section on Fenton before dawn.

Do you think you could replicate a copy of the file?

You will need to decide what sections it will have and what Chichester has written in them. It will have details of all the information that Fenton has passed on and his comments on all the people at the castle. The file might even be written in code.

3. Chichester Perspective:

(Read pp 91–92) When Chichester and his troop ride out into the clearing, they see James and the guard ride out to greet them.

Make a list of everything he sees and then explain their significance for him.

He had come to arrest Hugh O'Neill and yet he stays for a banquet.

That evening he makes an entry in his diary justifying his decision. He writes down three reasons for his actions. Can you guess what they might be?

4. The Alternative:

(Read pp106–108) The author, Aubrey Flegg, chose for Sir Geoffrey Bonmann to propose marriage to Sinéad as a means of settling the argument over the need for a hostage. Let's say this idea was his second choice and that his first idea was entirely different.

Can you work in small groups to decide what this alternative might have been and how you think it might have affected the rest of the story?

5. The Ballad:

(Read p109) The harper has witnessed the entire episode. In the Gaelic tradition of oral history (history passed on in story or song) he decides to record what he has seen in song.

He has asked for your help in writing the lyrics of the song. Do you think you could write a short one- or two-verse ballad to record what has happened?

Think about the rhythm your song will need, eg lively or slow, then select a suitable melody/air. You can write the lyrics to accompany the tune. You will also need a suitable title for your song. When you have finished, you could perform it for the class.

6. Sinéad's Note

(Read p115) Sinéad has sent a note to James to alert him to the cattle raid and she gives instructions on how to find the raiding party.

Although she has sealed the note, she is still cautious in case the trader breaks the seal, reads the note and discovers her intentions.

Therefore she has to be very careful about how she words the note, but she can't use code or the trader will be suspicious. If he reads the note he must not realise its significance, but the meaning must be

clear to James.

She has asked for your help. Do you think you could help her to write the note?

7. We Talked and Talked:

(Read p125) The outcome of the duel was a great shock for both James and Fion, and their friendship reignites in a torrent of conversation and concern.

When Sinéad asks Fion what he and James talked about, he simply says: 'Memories. It is really our memories that tie us together.'

Do you think you could create three memories that the boys might have shared? Do you think they might have involved an adventure or some mischief perhaps?

You can begin each memory with the words: 'Do you remember when ...?'

8. Dressed to Impress:

(Read p88) James has been dressed in a fine outfit and has been given his father's sword to wear in order to greet Chichester. This seems to have transformed him from a young boy into a young gentleman.

James has no mirror, so he needs your help to imagine the impression he gives in his new outfit.

He was seen by FATHER, KATHLEEN, THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, and CHICHESTER.

What impression did each of them form of him? How do their impressions differ from each other?

Can you draw what you think James might have looked like and then draw a speech bubble for each of the people who saw him to show what each of them thought of him?

Unit 3 In Search of Con PP135–200

SUMMARY

John O'Neill's dramatic news of Hugh's flight has barely sunk in when the routine of the castle is shattered.

Bonmann is approaching with mercenaries and De Cashel expects trouble.

His suspicions are confirmed when he receives Bonmann and listens with growing anger to his accusations. He then evicts him. Bonmann proceeds to surround the castle.

Sir Malachy sends Sinéad, James and Fion

off to search for Con. They use an old, deserted tunnel to escape and are accompanied by Haystacks, the poet and harper.

They reach Fiddler's Hill and stop for the night. They watch flames spring up from inside the castle, and their worst fears are confirmed when Haystacks returns with news that the castle has been destroyed and all have perished at the hands of Fenton.

They realise that they must escape. As they turn to leave, Sinéad sees Saoirse flying high above the ruined castle and, without thinking, whistles to her. But the bird is not the only one to hear her shrill whistle, and Fenton realises that she has survived the fire. He and Bonmann set off in pursuit.

The journey north to the Sperrins is dangerous and the children must avoid raising the suspicions of the soldiers they meet on the way.

At Slieve Gullion they avoid capture by feigning plague and cross the Blackwater just ahead of Fenton.

Meanwhile, Con is oblivious to the fate that is rushing to overtake him. All the cattle have been escorted to the pastures and he has seized the opportunity for a little adventure at the expense of an English scouting party.

Travelling north through the devastation wrought by Chichester and the previous Lord Deputy, Mountjoy, the children are reunited with Haystacks, who has left a letter for Bonmann detailing Fenton's scheme.

They reach the herding camp to discover that Con is missing. With time running out, a herding girl reveals Con's plans, and they ride out to find him.

Fenton has fallen victim to Haystacks's letter and now awaits his fate on the gallows. However, his scheming, combined with Bonmann's ambition, save his life.

The reunion with Con is brief and the children proceed at once to head to the ship.

DISCUSSION POINTS

□ **(Read p137):** James trusts that there is no danger from the King's men; however, his father is not so sure and makes preparations to defend the castle. Do you think that James is being naïve or is his father being too suspicious? When do you think it is right to

fight? What do you think happens nowadays if a country feels under threat?

□ **(Read pp146–155):** There were native Irish fighting on the side of the English against their own people. Why do you think that was? What do you think helped them to make their decisions? Do you think that any of the officers might have been Irish? What opinions do you think the officers had of their Irish soldiers? Why do you think the plan to escape through the fairy site succeeded?

□ **(Read p164):** James's allegiance had always been to the Crown, but now he has changed completely after witnessing what Fenton and Bonmann have done. He feels betrayed and has lost trust in the justice of the Crown. Do you think he is thinking clearly or simply acting in grief? How do you think the events have convinced him that the whole system is unjust and not just Fenton and Bonmann themselves?

□ **(Read pp188–189):** Fion describes to Sinéad the effects of colonisation. Why do you think one country might want to rule over another? What might the people of both countries think about each other? Where do you think the benefits from colonisation lie? Do you think that this type of government still exists today? How might governments justify it, and do you think that you could ever support such a system?

ACTIVITIES

1. Battle Plans:

(Read pp135–136) Seventeenth-century Ireland was a dangerous place. You could never be sure when you might be attacked.

The castle is strong, but De Cashel takes no chances and there is a battle plan in place.

It is the captain's responsibility to make sure that the plan is operating as it should, and he has asked you to help.

You will need to create a checklist of the main points in the plan to show what you expect to happen in each area of the castle and what you expect everyone to do.

2. The Unquiet Spirit:

(Read p154) Sinéad and the others are huddled in the ancient tomb, and in the flickering light of the candle the scene is slowly burned into her memory.

In tribute to the unquiet spirit of the bones she found there, she decides to make a

drawing of the tomb chamber.

Do you think you could recreate Sinéad's drawing? You could use charcoal on grey paper for effect.

3. The Remembrance:

(Read pp163–164) Haystacks has brought the news that everyone has perished in the fire and cautions them to flee immediately, but Sinéad insists that they hold a brief service to honour those who have died.

They gather in a small circle, bow their heads, and each says a brief farewell to the people they loved.

Haystacks listens and decides to use the words spoken to create a lament for De Cashel.

Do you think you could help him to write it? It will have three short verses only: one each for Sinéad, James and Fion.

4. The Memory:

(Read p169) As they ride north together, Sinéad realises that she will never see her home again. She imagines it with a clarity that sears it into her memory.

If you had to leave *your* home forever, what memories would you carry with you? Would they be sounds? Smells? Scenes? Conversations?

Can you work in groups to select five memories that would be most treasured for you and then each person choose three from the list and explain why you have chosen them?

5. Bonmann in a WAGE:

(Read p180) After he has been prevented from crossing the bridge, Bonmann storms into the fort commander's quarters and delivers a thirty-second tirade of complaint about the way he has been treated and how he is on a mission for Chichester.

Unfortunately, the angrier he gets, the more he seems to use words with the letter 'R' in them, which he mispronounces comically.

One of the lieutenants is listening and later mimics Bonmann's outburst to entertain his friends.

Do you think you could copy the performance that the lieutenant gave?

6. The Crossing:

(Read p182) After they bail out the boat, they use it successfully to cross the river.

The boat will carry a maximum of two and

must be rowed across each time.

Can you calculate how many crossings are needed to get them all safely across? Remember that there are four of them.

You can use a diagram to explain your logic.

If Sinéad insisted that she did not want to be left alone on either bank, how could they arrange the crossings in order to accommodate this?

(Solution: first crossing will take two; one returns with the boat to take the third across; repeats to take the fourth, making a total of three outward and two return crossings: Sinéad must be in position 3 in the order and cross on the second run.)

7. Amnesty Ireland:

(Read pp188–189) What Chichester did in Ulster when he was unable to capture O'Neill was wrong. Today he would be charged with 'war crimes'. His strategy was called 'scorched earth', and it had a terrible effect on the people who survived it.

Today, organisations like Amnesty would investigate Chichester's actions and write a report.

The report usually has three sections:

- What has happened and why?
- The impact on the victims
- The legacy of the crime for future generations

If you were asked to complete the three sections on an Amnesty report on Chichester, what would you say?

8. You Are a Fool:

(Read p195) Fenton has been sentenced to hang. However, while Bonmann is cunning and resourceful, he is actually a fool, and Fenton knows this.

Fenton realises that his only chance to escape the noose is to manipulate Bonmann and he decides to appeal to *his greed, his ambition* and finally *his pride*.

He decides to make one argument to each trait and he is successful.

He has to be very careful to make sure that Bonmann sees him as being absolutely necessary to the plan, otherwise there is a danger that Bonmann will simply leave him to hang.

What three things do you think Fenton said, and how do you think he made himself seem indispensable to each of the three?

You can work in groups to create your list.

UNIT 4 Flight and Farewells PP200–255

SUMMARY

The children proceed NW only hours ahead of Bonmann and Fenton. As they pass through Letterkenny, they are recognised by a beggar. They pay him a shilling to silence him.

They hear hooves. It's Haystacks, following them on the road, and they are reunited.

Descending to the sea, they see the French ship making ready to sail.

Con sets off at a gallop, followed by Sinéad, James and Fion, all heedless to Haystacks's shouted caution.

When they fail to burst from the trees below, a plaintive whistle confirms Haystacks's fear: they have been taken.

The MacSweeney chief had allowed the O'Neill party to board their ship, but now he is fearful of retribution. He seizes Con and the others to offer them to the English.

O'Neill, on the deck of the French ship, has heard Sinéad's whistle, but he is helpless and must allow his party to sail away.

MacSweeney has organised a clan meeting to win approval for his plan to hand over the children as hostages. However, Haystacks pleads their case and persuades the chieftain to release the children just as Fenton and Bonmann are sighted.

Their flight continues with MacSweeney assistance as Calum, one of the clan, spirits the children away.

There is word of a second French ship, sheltering at Portsalon, and Haystacks negotiates passage for the children on that.

As they approach Portsalon, they come face-to-face with their pursuers. Sinéad creates a diversion that allows Con to get away, and then she finally escapes Bonmann forever.

Haystacks bids farewell to Sinéad as the ship sails out to sea.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **(Read pp200–202, and 208)** Although Con may one day become clan chief, Sinéad is shocked at his attitude towards his foster family. It is obvious to her that his time being fostered by the O'Brolchains has taught him little. There are many things that Con still has

to learn. What skills and attitudes do you think he will need in order to be a good O'Neill chief in the future?

- **(Read p222)** Con teases Sinéad over the O'Brolchains' stew. Their position is serious and dangerous, yet both are able to joke and tease each other. Why do you think humour is useful in this situation? Can you think of any time when humour might not be appropriate?
- **(Read p233)** The MacSweeney was determined to hand the children over to the English, yet three words convince him to release them and help them escape. What do you think he was thinking of when he set them free? Why did he change his mind so quickly? Why do you think the story of the Hag had such a powerful effect on him?

ACTIVITIES

1. Packed and Ready:

(Read p200) Con decides that he is ready to leave immediately without any packing or farewells.

If you were in Con's position, what would you take with you? How and to whom would you say farewell?

Suppose you could take only three things from home and had time for only two farewells. Could you work in small groups to decide and explain what they would be?

2. Crab Apples:

(Read pp202 and 184–187) The more Con tells the story of the crab apples and his encounter with the English scouting party, the wilder his exaggerations

become.

Do you think you could recreate the version of the story that he told to Sinéad and exaggerate it just enough so that it is entertaining but not quite enough to be completely foolish and unbelievable?

3. Regret:

(Read p216) As Hugh O'Neill watches from the stern of the ship, he realises that all he holds dear is being left behind: *an island, a nation, a dream and his son, Con.*

His thoughts are confused and he is unable to decide which he will miss the most.

Do you think that you could put them in order for him? Which do YOU think he will miss most?

Can you describe very briefly what it is about each of them that you think he will miss and why you think he might miss one more than another?

You should work in groups for this activity.

4. Lost and Found:

(Read pp217–218) Haystacks has time only to compose a three-line lament. He uses the ancient Japanese form Haiku: (5 syllables in the first and last line and 7 syllables in the middle line).

The first line laments the old culture that is lost.

The middle line anticipates the new beginning for the children.

The last line expresses how he feels and his hopes for the future.

Do you think you could help him to create such a Haiku?

5. Seeds of Ireland:

(Read p243) Haystacks tells Sinéad that she is the seed from which a new Ireland will grow.

If Sinéad were visiting Ireland today what might she think of our society? What things do you think she would approve of and what might disappoint her?

You should work in groups for this activity.

Can you decide on the three most important things that affect our lives in Ireland today that you think Sinéad would approve of and explain why you think she might choose them?

Then can you do the same to identify three things that you think might disappoint her.

6. Mise Éire:

(Read p245) Haystacks chants the song of Amergin as the children depart. However, Sinéad finally realises that it is not a lament, but rather a song of hope. Ireland is simply her people and will prosper as each of us uses our skills and talents.

Do you think that you could make a class collage of the many faces of Ireland today? Make sure to include your own face. Then read the poem of Amergin and decide what your contribution will be, eg will you be a wave of the ocean or a beam of the sun?

Write what you think your contribution to Ireland will be on a speech bubble and then stick it onto the collage beside your face.

You can include bubbles from other faces if you wish to show the huge range of talent that exists in Ireland today.

Also by Aubrey Flegg

