



The Silver Stag of Bunratty

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Teaching Guide

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RATIONALE & THEMES

Bunratty is ruled by the Norman sword of Richard De Clare, while his cunning, his military power and a series of shifting alliances ensure his continuing dominance.

Hostage-taking is a common method of forcing allegiance, and when local boy Tuan is offered by his clan to De Clare as a hostage for their loyalty, he finds himself thrust into a Norman world of castles, conquests and conspiracies.

Circumstances combine to create a friendship among a small group of children – Tuan, Matthieu and Maude, two of De Clare's wards, and Clair, a scullion with strange powers. As their respect for each other grows, they find that they have to rely on each other for survival.

The Norman rule at Bunratty is cruel, tainting everything with a sense of foreboding as the simmering Gaelic resentment encroaches on its perimeter.

The children are forced to choose whether their loyalties lie with maintaining the Norman rule or preserving the essence of Bunratty, materialised in the appearance of a huge Silver Stag.

The story is a fast-paced adventure of friendship and survival and the themes include:

- Loyalty
- Superstition
- Friendship
- Courage
- Treachery

SUMMARY

Tuan arrives at Bunratty, a hostage bound and mistreated by his escort, Fat John, the Captain of the Guard. His welcome to the castle is courteous but cold as he tries to integrate to a Norman lifestyle.

He is befriended by Maude and Matthieu, Norman wards of the Lord of the castle. When Cliair, a kitchen maid, joins their group and introduces them to Dame Anna, a reclusive healer and seer, to whom Cliair is apprenticed, their destinies become fused as they undertake an adventure to save the Silver Stag of Bunratty and restore the spirit of Bunratty from the collapsing rule of Richard De Clare.

Maude and Matthieu are barely tolerated by Lady Johanna, mistress of Bunratty, a cruel and unhappy woman who detests every stone in her castle.

When the Silver Stag is sighted, Sir Richard organises a hunt, inviting all his Norman neighbours in an attempt to forge new alliances to support his next campaign to plunder the lands around Bunratty.

Encouraged by Dame Anna who sees the stag as an omen that must not be killed, the children successfully thwart the hunt.

During a skirmish with cattle raiders who are distant cousins of Tuan, Sir Richard takes casualties and plots a vengeful reprisal on Tuan. Cliair overhears the plot.

On Dame Anna's advice, the children flee the castle to seek the aid of Prior Roger Outlaw, a Hospitaller knight whom they had met with Dame Anna.

Eventually, Maude and Matthieu are reunited with their father, and when they all return to Bunratty they discover that Sir Richard has been killed and Lady Johanna, intending to return to England immediately, has set fire to the castle and is loading all her possessions from the dock in preparation for her departure.

As they watch Bunratty collapsing in a shower of sparks, they are stunned to see Dame Anna and the Silver Stag emerge from the flames unharmed.

Dame Anna confirms that their efforts

have ensured that Bunratty will rise again and with her words ringing in their ears they are all free to choose their destinies.

Maude and Matthieu return to their father, Tuan is restored to his family and Cliair follows Dame Anna to the wild places as her apprentice.

APPROACH

The story is an adventure set against resistance to the Norman settlement at Bunratty and it charts the developing friendship between the children that forces them to look beyond the labels of Norman and Gael, establishing a bond between them that eventually ensures their survival.

The historical context of the story provides the opportunity for a discussion-based approach where the decisions taken by the children in the story can be revisited to develop empathy and understanding.

The activities will provide the opportunity to respond through a wide range of communication forms.

Unit 1 Bunratty (pp9 – 78)

SUMMARY

Tuan arrives bound and mistreated at Bunratty as a hostage, his safety depending on his clan maintaining their allegiance with the Norman Lord, Sir Richard De Clare.

His treatment improves once inside the castle and he meets Cliair and Margaret, who tend his injuries.

He is presented to Sir Richard and his wife Lady Johanna, and meets their wards, Maude and Matthieu, who help him to settle in.

Matthieu is cheerful and friendly, but Maude remains suspicious. Their lives have been nomadic, following their father who is a mercenary knight crusader. When their mother died they were sent to various relations until they finally arrived at Bunratty to await their father's return. Maude's relationship with Lady Johanna is barely civil. The children are unhappy to be in Bunratty, and this establishes an immediate bond between them and Tuan.

Cliar's kitchen experience of Norman life is less privileged. It is a tedious routine of cooking, cleaning and laundry duties, under the ever watchful and critical eye of Lady Johanna. Her only relief is the warm companionship of Margaret, the cook, and the caustic gossip about Lady Johanna from the other servants.

When news of the Silver Stag's appearance and the hunt for it is announced, the kitchen hums with superstitious gossip about the doom that the sighting augurs, and Clair steals away to bring the news to Dame Anna.

Circumstances and Maude's reaction to Fat John's ill-treatment of a hound pup combine to gather all four of the children together, breathless and panting behind the door to Dame Anna's tower to escape the captain's wrath.

Following their only route of escape, they take the winding staircase to Dame Anna's room, Matthieu whimpering his fear that she is a witch and they are all to be eaten.

Dame Anna, unprompted, gives them each an insightful assessment of their strengths and challenges them with the task of thwarting the hunt and saving the stag.

Kitchen gossip and overheard conversations confirm when the hunt is to take place. Sir Richard plans to use the occasion to create alliances with his Norman neighbours for his campaign.

The evening before the hunt, the children's first strategy is implemented when contaminated flour is used to bake the bread. Tuan forgets Clair's instruction not to eat any of it and the ensuing hallucinations he experiences confirm that everyone will be very ill by the morning and the children will then be able to execute their plans to make sure that the hunt does not succeed.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read p12): Fat John is a bully who uses intimidation in order to encourage his

men. Do you think that this is ever an efficient way of persuading people to support you or give their maximum effort? How do you think that his men feel and what strategies do you think they might have in order to deal with him? How well do you think they are motivated? How can you tell?

- (Read p36): The superstitious gossip from the kitchen reveals that some people are prepared to believe that there is something supernatural about the stag while others dismiss the idea entirely. Why do you think some people are superstitious? What superstitions do you have? Do you think it is possible to be completely logical and have no superstitions at all?
- (Read p50): Maude states her opinion that she is better than Tuan because he is a Gael and she is a pure-blood Norman. Do you think that some people are better than others simply because of their birth? Why do you think some people believe this and what sort of situations could it lead to if a lot of people believed it of themselves as a group?
- (Read p77): Cliar has effectively poisoned those at the feast by using contaminated flour for the baking. Her intentions were good, but do you think she was justified in putting people's health at risk to achieve her end?

ACTIVITIES

1. Fat John's Secret (Read pp16-17)

Margaret has lived in the castle for a long time and knows all its secrets. Fat John is a bully and Captain of the Guard, but he does not intimidate Margaret because she knows his secret.

When she speaks to him and tells him to treat Tuan properly she tells him what she knows. He is livid, but he dare not provoke her.

If you had the chance to eavesdrop on their conversation, what do you think you might hear? Could you write the dialogue of what they say to each other?

2. Tuan's Tale (Read p26)

Tuan listens in wonder to Matthieu's tale about his family and his father as a knight crusader.

When Matthieu finally asks Tuan about his own family, Tuan decides to create a tale that will equal Matthieu's for excitement and mystery.

Unfortunately, storytelling is not his strength and he is urgently in need of ideas and help.

Do you think that you could help him to create a Gaelic story about his family to equal Matthieu's history?

3. The Continuum (Read pp30-31)

Tuan is still trying to form impressions of all the people he has met so far. It is confusing, so he decides to gather his impressions together in a diagram.

He draws a single line on a sheet of paper and writes the word LIKE at one end and the word DISLIKE at the other.

Then he places each of the people he has met somewhere on the line. Some will be close to one end of the line and some to the other. He also attaches a reason for each person's position.

Do you think you could help him to draw the diagram?

4. Lady Johanna's Rant (Read p34)

Margaret has been summoned to Lady Johanna's chamber to answer several complaints about her housekeeping.

Margaret tries to explain that the weather has made things difficult, but Lady Johanna is in no mood to listen. She interrupts and dismisses Margaret's explanations in a fury of irritation.

Do you think that you could recreate the conversation between them?

How would their tone and language be different yet still show that each of them was very annoyed?

5. Who is Cliar? (Read pp 39-40)

Clair is sure that her personal history holds a mystery. Something deep inside her tells her that the kitchen in Bunratty is NOT her destiny. All that she can remember of her early life is an image of a red-headed woman that she thinks might be her mother.

Dame Anna tells her that she has something to show her and she takes a scroll from a cupboard and spreads it on the table. Cliar sees that it is a family tree. She gasps with shock when she sees her name on one of the branches, and traces her finger through the branches of the tree to discover who her family really is.

Do you think that you could construct the tree to show whom Cliar is related to?

6. The Carving (Read p41)

Each time she passed the entrance to Dame Anna's tower Cliar was fascinated by the carving of the strange figure at the doorway.

It seemed to guard the access to the tower and yet she felt no threat from it.

One day she decided to carve an impression in clay to place beside the door of her own room for protection.

Do you think that you could create a model in clay of what the figure might have looked like?

7. The Plan (Read p57)

Before you read any further in the story you can try this group activity.

You will need to be in groups of four so that each of you can assume the character of one of the children.

Each group should try to create a plan to save the stag that they think might work. Remember that you will only be able to use the resources that the children in the story had available to them.

Compare each of the plans and create a class plan that you agree on by selecting the best parts from each other's plans.

Now read the next part of the book and decide if your plan was as effective as the one the children adopted.

8. Lady Johanna's Letters (Read p60)

Lady Johanna has never really settled in Bunratty, but do you think that she always actually hated the place?

Her servants mock her as the 'White Ferret' but they do not realise that she is a very skilled letter writer.

She has a gift for capturing a mood or feeling in an elegant word or phrase.

Secretly she has written to her sister in Dorset each month since she arrived in Bunratty and her sister has kept all her letters.

Recently these letters have been discovered and put on display in the National Museum in Dublin.

Do you think that you could recreate two of these letters showing the opposite extremes of her feeling for Bunratty and the Irish?

9. Footprints (Read p72)

Cliar reminds Maude that all the events that have happened in Bunratty have left a mark.

It is incredible to think of the power that each of us has to leave our mark and influence the future.

What footprint do you think that you will leave behind? How would you like the world to be different because you have lived? Can you think of three things that will change because of you?

Unit 2 The Hunt (pp79 – 130)

SUMMARY

Despite a subdued start in the morning, the hunt is to proceed and the final preparations are made.

Maude has cajoled permission for Cliar to join them and as the hunt assembles, the children are warned not to obstruct the hounds.

Lady Johanna parades in her fashionable clothes, but only as far as the edge of the woods before returning with her ladies as the hunt melts through the trees.

As the hounds pick up the scent, things begin to go wrong as first one and then another group of hounds and riders peel off from the pack to chase diversionary trails. The hunt quickly fragments and confusion asserts itself completely when conflicting sightings pull what is left of the pack into small, ineffective knots while the children congratulate themselves on the success of their disruption.

With the rest of the pack chasing through the woods after false trails, the children decide to relax and enjoy the food that Margaret has packed for them.

They find a clearing and dismount, and are suddenly aware of an enveloping silence out of which steps the Silver Stag, transfixing them with his presence.

Alarmed by the sound of the hunt approaching, the children remount and instinctively ride towards the Shannon, leading the stag to safety.

As the hounds and riders burst from the tree line, it becomes obvious that something has checked their pursuit. Milling around and cursing, they can only watch in frustration as the stag makes it to the river and swims to safety. Cliar realises from the confusion that her ghost friends from the castle have joined with the children to save the stag.

The hunt is abandoned and the party

returns to Bunratty, weary and dispirited, and empty-handed.

On reaching the castle, they discover that another guest has arrived: the Norman Hospitaller knight, Sir Roger Outlaw. Maude explains that the warrior monk is a skilled arbiter and resourceful negotiator whose influence has calmed many disputes. Tuan is introduced to him at supper while Cliar is startled when one of the ghosts delivers a whispered prophesy while she serves at supper.

The children are summoned to a meeting in Dame Anna's tower where Outlaw, a friend of hers since childhood, is waiting for them. He confirms for Maude and Matthieu that there is no news yet of their father who has been crusading as a Hospitaller.

They are all aware of Sir Richard's campaign plans and are filled with a sense of foreboding for Bunratty.

Outlaw instructs Tuan on how to reach him in the event of them having to flee the castle and agrees to arbitrate between Sir Richard and the Irish, urging Dame Anna to do the same.

When Outlaw leaves, Sir Richard visits Dame Anna to ask for a séance in an attempt to predict the outcome of his campaign.

Cliar feels herself drawn into the vision that Dame Anna is conjuring in the seeing bowl and cries out in alarm at what she witnesses. Doom awaits Sir Richard if he persists.

In a rage he sweeps the bowl aside and storms out. He prepares to pursue the cattle raiders and insists that Matthieu accompany the troop.

By the time Maude has stolen a horse and followed them the bloody carnage of the skirmish is over. Matthieu is safe, but Sir Richard is incensed. He declares that the truce with Tuan's clan is over and vows retribution.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read p80): Hunting was a common practice in Norman times and even today in some places hunting animals still takes place. Do you think it is acceptable for us to hunt animals? Are there any circumstances where you think hunting can be justified?
- (Read p100): The only thing that Sir Richard seems to have wanted from the hunt was the trophy of the stag's head and antlers to hang on his wall.

Can you think of all the things we do in order to win a trophy? Why do you think that we need trophies to motivate us to do things or take part in activities?

- (Read p107): Tuan's loyalties are confused. Instead of seeing things clearly he is now unable to distinguish between the merits of Norman and Irish and is unable to decide what he must do. Do you think it is possible to be clear about issues when friends are involved? What things do you think affect our judgements and prevent us from thinking decisively?
- (Read p115-116): Sir Richard wishes to foresee the future and yet he ignores what he is told. Why do you think people try to discover what lies in store for them? Do you think that the future is already determined or is it possible to change the course of events? Do you think it would improve our lives to know what is going to happen to us?

ACTIVITIES

1. Bunratty Country Life (Read pp80-81)

The hunt has assembled and Lady Johanna takes the opportunity to parade her wealth like a celebrity.

If you were asked by the medieval equivalent of *Hello* magazine or *Irish Country Life* to cover the day and her display, how would you report on it? Can you create suitable text and illustrations?

2. The Stag (Read p90)

Matthieu would never forget either the vibrancy of the scene in the wood or the serenity of the look in the stag's eyes as he watched them from across the still and shimmering pool, his shadow reflecting silver on its surface.

Do you think that you could help him to create an image of what he saw?

Matthieu has tried unsuccessfully to capture the image in paint so perhaps you could try to use coloured tissue paper and silver foil to create the picture?

3. Listen to Me (Read p91)

As they watch the stag, the stillness grows around them all. It seems to each of them that out of this silence a soft, tinkling voice resonates quietly within their minds.

The stag then speaks to each of them, revealing to each a separate and surprising prophesy.

Later they will share what they heard. Do

you think that you could imagine what the stag revealed?

4. Marshal's Report (Read pp94 & 100)

The hunt was a complete disaster right from the start. Both the marshal and Sir Richard are unable to explain what happened and believe the hunt to be cursed.

Sir Richard asks his marshal to investigate what happened and prepare a report.

The marshal decides to try to identify everything that went awry and then provide his best explanation for what happened in each case.

Do you think that you could help him to compile the list for his report?

5. Listen (Read pp106-107)

You will need to work in small groups for this activity.

Both Outlaw and Dame Anna have tried unsuccessfully to reason with Sir Richard. No argument seems to convince him that it is unwise to pursue his campaign.

Can you decide in a group what you think might be a successful argument to sway Sir Richard?

You will need to identify why you think he wants to conduct his campaign. What are his real reasons?

When you identify these you will be able to build an argument that he will listen to.

You could present your arguments in bullet points in two columns: one for his reasons and the other for your argument. Try to find about 3 or 4 arguments/reasons.

6. Outlaw's Map (Read pp108-109)

Tuan's attention wandered when Outlaw described how to find the priory at Knockainy, and his memory has deserted him when he needs to recall the directions.

Can you help by sketching a map for him to summarise the instructions he was given?

Do you think that you could create a map that will help the children to find their way to the priory?

7. Matthieu's View (Read p126)

From under the gorse bush where he rolled when he fell, Matthieu was able to witness everything that happened during the battle.

Later he would recall it for his father.

To help him remember, he created a simple comic strip of what he saw, heard, smelt and felt.

Do you think that you could help him to storyboard it and create the illustrations and text?

The illustrations will need to have a high impact and the text, though powerful, will be very short for each illustration.

8. MacConmara's Report (Read pp126-127)

When they return to their camp the raiders are asked to report on what happened and why they have returned empty-handed and with several of their men killed.

The clan chief demands a full report and the raiding party has to explain all that happened since they left their camp up to and including their skirmish with Sir Richard.

Do you think that you could help them to complete the report?

Remember that it will have to be written in a precise military style, giving only the facts and assessments of the facts. No opinions will be accepted.

9. Maude and Matthieu (Read p127)

Standing shocked and silent, looking at the scene of carnage after the battle, both Maude and Matthieu realise that their impressions of what is to be in battle had been completely romantic and bore little resemblance to the nightmare that was war.

As they make their way home their conversation turns to how the battle has changed the way they now see things.

They are both able to identify three ways that their thinking has changed because of their experience.

Do you think that you could identify how each of them considered that their thinking had changed and why?

How do you think that Maude's and Matthieu's views might differ?

You can work together in small groups for this activity.

Unit 3

Bunratty Falls

(pp131 – 226)

SUMMARY

Apprehension shrouds Bunratty as preparations are made to resist a siege. Maude overhears Sir Richard and Lady Johanna plot to kill Tuan in reprisal for the cattle raid and learns that she herself is to be coerced to marry in order to strengthen Sir Richard's alliance with De Burgh.

She must act immediately. Assembled on the battlements, Matthieu, Cliar and Tuan listen in fury to Maude's report and all resolve to escape from Bunratty that evening under the cover of the festivities organised by Lady Johanna and to try to reach Outlaw's priory at Knockainy.

Gathering only essential provisions, they huddle in the hayloft ready to flee when the moon is hidden.

Their flight is barred by Godric, but before he can act, a flight of doves sweeps from Dame Anna's tower to swirl around his head and create the diversion that allows them to clamber over the battlements and escape.

Cliar spots that one of the birds is wounded and decides to take it to Dame Anna first. She finds her in a strange, trance-like sleep and, leaving the bird, completes her escape, clambering to join the others on the jetty where Tuan has found a small boat to secure their flight.

With Tuan anxiously trying to remember Outlaw's directions they set off. Their intention is to get as far from Bunratty as they can, and eventually, blistered and grumpy, they stop to shelter and rest.

Crowded by the forest, the stream narrows and as they continue they realise that they are not alone.

Suddenly surrounded by a terrifying group of strangers they are bound and dragged to a makeshift camp in the bowels of the forest. Questioned by their captors, Matthieu divulges that they are seeking Prior Outlaw and realises too late that his slip has sealed their fate as hostages.

When some of their captors leave to scavenge more liquor, Matthieu takes his chance to slip his bonds and attack the other guards. Seizing a knife, the children free each other, overpower the guards and escape.

Breathless and with Matthieu feverish

from an infected wound, they cower in an abandoned lair. Matthieu's fever worsens and Maude nurses him until it breaks and he begins to recover.

Moving deeper into the forest, guided by a sighting of the stag, they stumble on a hermit's cottage where they are expected and welcomed.

Rallied and rested, they bid farewell to the hermit and complete their journey to Knockainy without further incident, Cliar using hypnosis on Tuan to help him remember the final set of directions to the priory.

Arriving at night, they persuade a testy monk to admit them and they meet Outlaw. He organises food, rest and a change of clothes before they all set off back to Bunratty escorted by a troop of Hospitaller monks.

A distraught messenger bursts into their camp with the news of the defeat of Sir Richard's army and his death at Dysert O'Dea.

Urged by the realisation that Bunratty is now undefended, they press on and rest for the night in Limerick.

The innkeeper greets them with a surprise guest. It is Maude's and Matthieu's father; however, their reunion is curtailed by the necessity for them to reach Bunratty.

Bunratty is ablaze when they arrive. Reaching the jetty they find that Lady Johanna is loading everything on board ship ready to depart; she confirms that she has set fire to the castle rather than allow it to fall intact to the Irish.

Cliar searches for Dame Anna. She fears that she is too late; however, with the timbers splintering and cracking, they all watch as Dame Anna exits serenely through the swirling smoke across the drawbridge, unharmed.

They all bid their farewells; each departing to follow their destiny. Dame Anna sees that Bunratty will rise again as a result of their courage. In confirmation, they watch for the final time as the Silver Stag appears from the smoke of the castle, pauses to look at them before turning south towards the Shannon and the great Western sea.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read p134-135): De Clare and his wife are plotting a terrible reprisal against Tuan. They believe they have the right to do this as Tuan is a hostage, his safety dependent on his family keeping the agreement with De Clare.

Do you think this is honourable or just? Should Tuan try to escape? What other options might be open to De Clare?

- (Read pp137,148 & 208): Do you think that war can ever be chivalrous? Maude and Matthieu have had their concepts of war challenged by what they have witnessed. Why do you think that war is sometimes presented as an adventure and dying as an honourable thing? Why do you think that some people will accept this as reasonable?
- (Read pp140 & 227-228): The Normans conquered Ireland and settled the Irish lands for themselves. Tuan feels a sense of rage at this. Why do you think that the Normans felt entitled to do this? Do you think it was really different for the peasants whether it was a Norman lord or a Gaelic chieftain who levied their taxes? What legacy do you think this has left for Ireland?
- (Read p206): De Clare persists with his campaign despite several clear warnings that it is doomed. Why do you think he continued? Was he afraid to lose face or did his greed drive him to ignore the risks? Do you think that he was so arrogant that he felt invincible or was he unable to control his anger? What does the evidence suggest was his motivation?

ACTIVITIES

1. Maude's Ideal Match (Read p136)

Maude is horrified when she overhears De Clare and Lady Johanna discuss a husband for her.

If Maude had the opportunity, what might she look for in a partner?

Do you think that you could create the specification that would suit her? Try to think of her character and decide what qualities her ideal partner should have. You can add an illustration if you like.

2. The Knight's Code (Read pp136-137)

Maude has a dilemma. She wants to warn Tuan of the danger he faces but the knight's code demands her loyalty to De Clare.

She decides to break the code for the sake of her friendship.

She remembers every point on the code. There are five. They cover every aspect of a knight's conduct and she has learned them by heart.

Now she recites them like a mantra.

Could you create an illuminated scroll showing the five protocols on the code?

3. Homesick (Read p150)

Tuan remembers his home and resents the prison that Bunratty has become for him. His memories are a comfort to him and soothe his feelings of homesickness.

If you had to leave home, what memories would you cherish? Do you think that you could create a menu of images that you would carry with you to help you deal with homesickness?

4. The Manual (Read p158)

Only Tuan knows how to row the boat. It is a skill that is not easy to learn and there are important safety issues to consider.

The children need your help. If you were asked to compile a simple manual on how to row, handle and steer a small rowing boat, do you think that you could compile such an instruction manual?

The text in your manual will have to be very clear and you should include diagrams and illustrations as well.

Remember that safety will be the most important consideration. Include a section on what to do in the event of the boat capsizing.

5. Guards, Guards (Read p159)

When it is discovered that the children have fled, De Clare is livid and demands that Fat John discover how it happened and who helped them.

Fat John decides to interview Cedric, Margaret and Dame Anna.

What questions do you think he should ask them? What accusations will he level at them and how do you think they will each respond?

He then presents the record of his interviews to De Clare.

Do you think that you could make a copy of the interview notes for each of them?

6. WANTED – Foxface! (Read p164)

When the children reach the priory at Knockainy, Outlaw asks Matthieu to draw a picture of the leader of the band who captured them.

The image is still very fresh in Matthieu's mind and he draws it from memory on a WANTED parchment that Outlaw has given him.

The picture and poster will be used to track the men down.

Do you think that you could recreate the poster that Matthieu drew? What text would you add to the poster to warn how dangerous the men were?

7. Is Mise Cliar (Read pp187-188)

As she listens to the song that Tuan is singing, a memory stirs deep inside Cliar and she finds that she is able to remember the words and accompany him.

It seems that she steps out of time and is suddenly back as a very young baby, gazing at a woman who is singing the song to her.

As she listens, the woman stops singing and Cliar realises that she is talking to her.

Do you think that you could describe what Cliar saw and heard and what it means for her? You can add an illustration if you wish.

8. MacConmara Annals (Read p207)

The MacConmara clan have kept annals for a long time and now they need to add an account of the battle at Dysert O'Dea to the record. They have asked you to help them compile the record.

You will need to include maps and illustrations as well as personal accounts of what happened and the significance of it for the clan.

You should include sections on the lead-up to the battle, any negotiations they had with De Clare and the reasons why they decided to break their treaty as well as what they hoped to gain from the campaign.

9. Time Spans (Read p224)

Before they leave the smouldering ruin that was once Bunratty, the children each decide to leave a message of advice buried in a stone wall that has not been damaged by the fire. They hope that the messages will be discovered in the future and offer encouragement and insight to those who find them.

Recently a team of archaeologists from NUI Galway has discovered them.

You have been invited to the final dig that will reveal the messages.

What do you think each message will say?

10. Class Project (Read p203)

As the children ride for Bunratty accompanied by their father and the other Hospitaller knights, Outlaw asks them to tell him of their adventures.

This account is reminiscent of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

This activity could engage all the class in creating and illustrating an anthology of suitable tales, each reflecting the character of the narrator and involving as many or a few of the travellers as appropriate.

Age-appropriate materials on *The Canterbury Tales* can be found at:

www.historyforkids.org/learn/medieval/literature/knightstale.htm