

# Irish poetry for Year 4

*Selected by*

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Holy Name Catholic Primary School, Liverpool

*for*

The Irish Week, 30 June - 4 July 2003

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NLS Weekly Planner

\* This poem is about a hero who played both Gaelic football and hurling. The children, knowing much about the Irish soccer team, found it hard to believe that people in Ireland played such different and distinctive sports. The poem was, perhaps, the best introduction we could have had to exploring the similarities and differences between 'the peoples of these islands'.

Using the English poem, 'Train Journey', on the last day of the week encouraged the children to reflect further on similarities and differences.



## 1. The Hidden Art

*A Giant Never Dies* by Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Poolbeg, 1-84223-009-3, p. 35

Making a fart  
Is an art.  
  
The wind that comes  
To your behind  
Has a mind of its own  
And its mind  
Is set on blowing  
And the pressure  
Keeps on growing.  
  
So  
to make for quiet release  
You hold it softly,  
Then you ease  
It slowly out between your cheeks -  
If you're lucky it won't leak,  
and no one knows  
you've made a fart.  
  
That's why farting  
Is an art.

## 2. The Forty Shades of Green

*A Giant Never Dies* by Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Poolbeg, 1-84223-009-3, p. 36

In Granda's time, he told me,  
They'd no toilets anywhere -  
They had to do their business  
In the open-air  
  
In orchards, fields and gardens  
Where they would not be seen  
And that's the reason, and Granda says,  
Why Ireland is so green.

## 3. A Giant Never Dies

i.m. Michael Hennessy of Moyvane and Ballyduff

*A Giant Never Dies* by Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Poolbeg, 1-84223-009-3, pp 65-8

'I come from sweet Knockauling,  
John Bradley is my name  
And I'm the king of hurlers  
For hurling is my game.'  
  
So sang young John Bradley  
As he dashed from the TV  
His head full of hurling,  
Great deeds and bravery  
  
On that Sunday in September,  
All Ireland Hurling Day,  
The All Ireland Final over;  
He dashed outside to play  
  
With a hurling stick and rubber ball,  
He hurled on his own -  
He'd no brothers or no sisters  
And so he played alone  
  
*Whack!* against the gable  
Then run and leap and catch  
Re-playing the All Ireland,  
Making it his match.  
  
And then, his mind-game over,  
He ran in home to Dad  
And they talked of hurling heroes  
And the mighty games they played.  
  
Dad told him of the exploits  
Of Big Mick Hennessy  
Who played football for Knockauling  
And hurling for Ballylee;  
  
And how once upon a Championship  
He was called to play  
In the local Football Final  
And on that selfsame day  
  
When the football match was over  
He played for Ballylee  
In the County Hurling Final  
In the great Park of Tralee.  
  
In the centre for Knockauling,  
He scored five points that day  
And when the match was over  
He left the field of play,  
  
No time to celebrate and lift  
The cup of victory -  
He dashed out to the hackney car  
That would take him to Tralee  
And changed Knockauling's colours  
For the green of Ballylee.  
  
Just in time for the second half,  
His team a goal behind,  
Big Mick Hennessy took the field  
And hurled into the wind;  
  
And when the game was over  
He'd scored three goals to win  
And thousands knew they'd never see  
The likes of him again.  
  
The time is some weeks later,  
The place - the Park, Tralee,  
The County Hurling Final,  
Tullybeg and Ballylee.  
  
John Bradley and his Daddy  
Have travelled here this day,  
A treat for young John's birthday -  
Eleven years today.  
  
The game is fast and factious,  
And at half time they see  
The men of forty years ago,  
Knockane and Ballylee,  
  
As thirty men in suits walk out,  
The hurlers of that day  
When Big Mick Hennessy showed to all  
How the great can play;  
  
And as his name is called out  
Each man waves to the crowd  
And at the name 'Mick Hennessy'  
The cheers are long and loud.  
  
But young John Bradley's puzzled -  
The man he sees out there  
Is not as he imagined:  
With glasses, thinning hair,  
  
To young John he looks no different  
To the other men  
Standing out there on the field.  
He realises then  
  
That Mick Hennessy's a story  
Of a giant with a ball  
And what he sees there on the field  
Is not a giant at all.  
  
Yes, Mick Hennessy's a story -  
One that will be told  
When Big Mick is dead and gone  
And young John Bradley's old.  
  
For a giant lives in story  
Among his people who  
Believe in deeds of greatness  
And honour all that's true.  
  
Yes, Mick Hennessy's our story,  
A giant with a ball  
Who once upon a Championship  
Won glory for us all.

## 4. Handwriting

*A Giant Never Dies* by Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Poolbeg, 1-84223-009-3, p. 20

When I was young, my writing  
Was big and fat and tall  
But now I'm ten, my writing  
Is getting very small.

It's fine to have big writing  
When you're learning to write,  
But writing like an Infant  
When you're ten just isn't right.

So I hold my pencil tightly  
And make my letters small;  
I think teeny writing  
Is the coolest kind of all  
Though if it gets much smaller  
It won't be seen at all!

## 5. *The Smugglers of Mourne*

by Martin Waddell, Longman, 0-58212-195-7

Tom Murphy was young  
when his father was hung.  
Poor Tom! Poor Tom!  
They took Tom and tied him  
and hid him away  
in a stone cell  
at Ballaghbeg Quay,  
for he was the son of the smuggler.

page 3 The dark ship came  
into the cove  
by Green Harbour,  
silently, silently,  
in from the sea.

page 9 Such a fight  
in the night!  
It clattered and roared,  
red blood in the water,  
the smugglers at bay ...

Nancy Bell,  
she loved Tom well  
and she came by the rocks  
with a key for all locks  
and she opened the door  
and Tom got away.

A light! A light!  
One light shining bright!  
Just one flash of light,  
flashing again,  
and again  
and then ...  
darkness,  
so no-one would see,  
but Tom and his brave Nancy Bell.

page 10 ... Tom and his brave Nancy,  
they got away!  
They dived in the water  
off Donnegan's rock  
and they swam out to sea.  
But ...

Ranaghan saw them!  
And Ranaghan peeled off his glove.  
He loaded his pistol  
and fired!

Tom and brave Nancy  
crept away from the town  
to the mountains of Mourne,  
above the Mourne shore  
and they hid  
and they waited  
for the dark ship to come.

page 4 Ranaghan waited,  
Ranaghan watched.  
He saw Nancy Bell  
and Poor Tom  
slip out of their cave  
and follow the stream  
down through the rocks  
to Green Harbour.

page 11 Nancy Bell cried,  
she was hit!

Tom clung to poor Nancy  
and he swam  
and he swam  
to the dark ship that was waiting  
to take them on board,  
Tom and his brave Nancy Bell.

They ate berries and roots  
and drank milk from the goats  
in their small cave.

page 5 Ranaghan climbed on his horse  
and he rode,  
and he rode,  
to the Excise Man  
at Ballaghbeg Quay.

Ranaghan swore on the shore,  
and dashed down his glove.  
He was beaten!

But then Ranaghan found them.  
He saw Nancy Bell as she bathed  
in the stream  
and he followed her back to the cave.  
He knew he had found  
where Tom Murphy was hidden.

page 6 Alone on Mourne shore  
were Tom and his Nancy,  
Tom and his dear one,  
his brave Nancy Bell,  
and, from the ship,  
a boat pulled for the shore.

page 13 The ship sailed away  
from the Mountains of Mourne.  
Tom stood on the deck,  
bathed in the blood  
of his brave Nancy Bell.

Ranaghan ran  
to the Excise Man  
and they made a plan  
to capture poor Tom,  
and Nancy as well,  
Tom's brave Nancy Bell.

page 7 Muffled oars,  
and muffled voices.  
Tom and his friends on the shore,  
Tom and his brave Nancy Bell  
and then ...

page 14 Then she stirred,  
and she sighed,  
as she lay in his arms ...  
And Tom knew  
that he'd saved Nancy Bell!

The moon on the Mournes  
was hiding away  
when the dark ship  
sailed into the bay.  
It showed no light  
and it came in the night  
to rescue Tom,  
and his brave Nancy Bell.

page 8 Dark shapes in the night.  
The Excise Men!  
The Excise Men  
with their swords and their sticks  
ran over the shore.

page 15 They sailed far away  
and they never came back  
to the Mountains of Mourne  
where they'd hidden alone,  
Tom and his love,  
his brave Nancy Bell.

## 6. Tortoise

by Basil Payne in *The Poolbeg Book of Irish Poetry for Children*, coll. S. Traynor, Poolbeg, 1-85371-726-6, pp 92-5

I had a pet tortoise oh a pet tortoise like nobody else's (nobody else I knew had a pet tortoise). His head was hard as bark his neck (underneath) soft as a trick fountain-pen snake's his eyes	bird-bright. I lacquered his shell to keep it fresh. He liked fresh lettuce ate it voraciously gallivanting round the garden more like a hare than a tortoise. By night I kept him in a shed. If I forgot maggots crawled next morning inside his shell	(I picked them out with a match-stick). In winter he hiber nated in a box in our coal-shed beside a black heap of top quality English coal. That was his undoing. One morning in February I found him	quite dead under two chunks of it. A pre-fab tortoise-backed tortoise-slack tomb. I buried him cried lied to myself No more pets. Next year I bought a goldfish the next a budgie the next a hamster - all three are since dead.	Pets (any more than people) are not for keeps.  Beekeepers yes gamekeepers park-keepers even are aptly named bird-fanciers greyhound-breeders horse-owners cat-lovers falconers eve - but who ever heard of a tortoise keeper?
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## 7. Winter in Dublin

by D.J. O'Sullivan, *The Wolfhound Book of Irish Poems for Young People*  
eds B. Quinn & S. Cashman, Wolfhound Press, 0-86327-002-6, p. 127

Wild winter-rain comes plashing down  
Turning the grey street jetty-brown;  
Two cyclists skid, pedestrians rush,  
Traffic policemen curse the slush.

On lamp-posts now few sparrows talk,  
On roof-tops now less pigeons walk;  
Only the Liffey sings a song  
And gelid hail that hops along.

No shadow neath the Pillar lies,  
Wind-drownéd are the newsboys' cries,  
Gaunt and bare all the kerb trees stand,  
Each tramway pole's a glinting wand.

## 8. Train Journey

Developing Literacy Skills. Year 4 Poetry, by R. Barker  
A & C Black, 0-71365-872-X, p. 34

This is the  
Nine-fifteen  
Northern Spirit train:  
Newcastle,  
Sunderland,  
Darlington and York,  
Durham and  
Huddersfield,  
Manchester and Leeds,  
Warrington  
and Runcorn  
Liverpool at last.

# NLS teaching objectives - weekly planner

# Irish poetry for Year 4

Class: 9

Yr Group(s): 4

Term: Summer 2

Week beg: 30/06/03

Teacher: Mr Doyle

	Whole class shared reading/writing	Whole class phonics, spelling, vocabulary & grammar	Guided group tasks (reading or writing)	Independent group tasks	Plenary
Mon	'The Hidden Art' & 'The Forty Shades of Green' What type of poems are these? (Humorous) Do they rhyme? Is the rhyme structured? Discuss number & length of stanzas. Do you like the poems. Why/not?	Change tense of 'making', 'comes', 'growing', 'knows'. Make singular/plural - 'toilets', 'orchards', 'fields', 'gardens'. What does this tell us about the words - verbs/nouns?	<i>The Smugglers of Mourne</i> Ahlberg - how does the author create an eerie atmosphere? How is the effect created on p. 16? How does the author use punctuation on pp 14-16 to create an effect? Can you think of a newspaper headline to describe the story?	Chn to change words to identify class of words.  <i>Braun</i> : Change verb endings, pluralisation, add comparative endings, classify words. <i>Dahl</i> : Change verb endings & add comparative endings, classify words. <i>KS/F</i> : Change verb endings to classify verbs.	Read poems again & identify verbs and nouns. How did you tell?
Tues	'A Giant Never Dies' What is hurling? What type of football is the poet referring to? What could we compare to All Ireland Day? How does the poem make you feel? Discuss structure?	'Handwriting' Discuss meaning of 'teeny'. Discuss different ways of forming diminutives: -ette, mini-, adjectives, nouns & nicknames.	<i>Browne</i> : How would you describe the atmosphere of the story? How does the author create this? What is an excise man/smuggler? What strategies could be used to find out meaning?	<i>Ahlberg</i> : Find diminutives for animals & by adding suffixes. <i>Dahl</i> : Find diminutives for animals & by adding suffixes. <i>KS/F</i> : Add suffixes to find diminutive.	Discuss findings of chn. Discuss meanings. Discuss nicknames.
Wed	'Tortoise' What type of poem is it? ( <i>Thin</i> ) Are 'voracious' & 'gallivanting' words associated with tortoises? Why does he use them? Why does he split 'hibernated'?	Add -ing, -es, -ed to words. Do they make sense? What does this tell us about this class of words?	<i>Dahl</i> : How do you think Tom/Nancy feel at different stages of the story? Can you find examples of rhyme in the story? How can we tell Tom & Nancy love each other?	'Winter in Dublin' Give chn copy of poem without title. Chn work in mixed ability pairs to answer questions: What type of poem is it? In what season is the poem set? Where is it set - reference to Liffey gives a clue (use atlas)? Can you think of a title?	Read 'Winter in Dublin' together. How does the river sing? What type of place do you think Dublin is?
Thurs <i>Shared Write</i>	Chn to suggest ideas - teacher to scribe. Write a thin poem in the style of Basil Payne. Choose a pet to write about.	Identify adjectives, verbs and nouns as we write poem by changing endings of words.	<i>Fine</i> : How does the story make you feel? Re-tell the story from Ranaghan's point of view. Why might he be after Tom? Think of adjectives to describe Tom/Nancy.	Chn to work in mixed ability groups to write a thin poem based on a pet. Leave notes & poem from shared write on board as a guide to chn. Chn to type poems & print.	Ask groups to read poems. Show poems to ascertain if they are thin.
Fri <i>Shared Read</i>	'Train Journey' Read list poem of train journey. Discuss what poem is about. Identify syllable pattern. Why does it have this pattern. Clap out syllables to replicate sound of train moving.	Discuss spelling rule in English, each syllable must have a vowel.	<i>King-Smith</i> : How does the story make you feel? Look at the picture of Ranaghan on p. 21. What adjectives would describe him? Look at word 'light' on p. 10. What other words could you use in its place?	Chn copy poem but replace names of English towns & cities with Irish places with the same number of syllabuses.  <i>A &amp; B</i> : use atlas/map to find Irish place names with approximate number of syllabuses. <i>Dahl</i> : Provide list of Irish names to choose from. <i>Five</i> : Give names of places with approximate number of syllables.	Ask chn to read poems. Does swapping Irish place names add anything to the poem?

The NLS objectives for each lesson were all Year 4 Term 3:

Monday SL1; TL4, 6, 7

Tuesday WL12; TL4, 5, 6, 9

Wednesday TL4, 5, 6, 7

Thursday TL4, 5, 14, 15

Friday TL4, 5, 7, 14, 15.

# Holy Name's Irish Week

## The background

In October 2002 Holy Name Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, was invited to work with 'Ireland in Schools', a national voluntary programme which seeks to make the study of Ireland a part of the normal curriculum in schools in Britain.

As History Co-ordinator I was asked to lead Holy Name's participation and, at the initial meeting, was very impressed by the programme. On reporting back to the school staff, I was pleased to discover that the concept of teaching the curriculum from an Irish perspective was greeted enthusiastically. Such was the enthusiasm of the staff that it was agreed to hold an 'Irish week' as a whole school project from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 2 and across as many curriculum subject areas as possible.

## The Irish week

The Irish week was held between 30 June and 4 July 2003 and proved to be a great success. As planned, every class in the school took part and covered some aspect of Ireland and Irish life. Activities were devised for Art, DT, Geography, History, Numeracy, Literacy (literature and language, including some Gaelic), Music and PE subject areas.

The curriculum was enriched through reading the works of Irish authors, learning Irish songs (in both English and Gaelic), taking part in Irish ceili dancing, cooking Irish foods lead by classroom assistants and playing Gaelic football. Various periods of Irish history were covered and the geography of Ireland studied. Visitors to the school throughout the week added to the enriching experience for the children. At the end of the week, whole school celebrations took place to acknowledge the achievement of the children. The sense of fun that the week brought to the learning environment was evident on our celebration day.

## New perspectives

The most pleasing aspect of the week was the way in which children embraced the notion of celebrating the history, geography and culture of Ireland and their obvious enthusiasm for the activities. A brief look at the school registers would testify to the fact that many of the ancestors of the children came from Ireland. However, the week awakened in many children an awareness of their own ethnicity and reinforced for many more the pride that their families have instilled in them about their Irish roots.

Many of the children conducted their own research at home or consulted their parents and grandparents to find out about their 'Irishness' and were glad to share this with their classmates. Throughout the week children were reporting to teachers about the aspects of their own families that had connections to Ireland. This was evidenced by the numerous CDs, tapes, sports memorabilia and other artefacts brought in from home by the children to acknowledge, celebrate and share their Irish heritage. Displays around the school were very quickly added to by contributions from the children's families.

Links with the parish and local community were strengthened by visiting Irish dancers. Links were forged with other agencies across Merseyside. Members of St. Michael's Irish Centre Liverpool were frequent visitors to the school to lead activities. A fundraising day was held with money raised being donated to Irish Community Care Merseyside.

The success of our Irish week is reflected by the fact that reference to a 'week' is actually a misnomer. The week was preceded by parents visiting the school to offer the loan of items and inquire about the forthcoming activities, providing a foretaste of how the children would respond. The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the staff and children was such that many activities were extended to a second week. The 'week' was a truly enriching, fun and educational experience in which the children learnt much about the connection between Ireland and themselves and/or their city.