



## Lesson Plan 7: Kilkenny's Mills

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



This lesson is part of a series of 8 lesson plans based on the "Explore the Nore" poster and River Nore Heritage Audit. It is aimed at 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes in primary schools. The project is an action of the Kilkenny Heritage Plan, and is funded by the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council and the Heritage Council. For further information contact [dearbhalal.edwidge@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:dearbhalal.edwidge@kilkennycoco.ie). Tel: 056-7794925. [www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage/)

### ■ Learning objectives

#### HISTORY

Strand: Local studies

--Strand Unit: My family

--Strand Unit: Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality

--Strand Unit: My locality through the ages

Strand: Story

--Strand Unit: Stories from the lives of people in the past

Strand: Life, society, work and culture in the past

--Strand Unit: Life in the 19th century

Strand: Era's of change and conflict

--Strand Unit: The Industrial revolution

--Changing roles of women in the 19th and 20th centuries

#### Content objectives

- learn about the people, events, issues and cultural experiences which have helped to shape the local community and the environment
- use imagination and evidence to reconstruct elements of the past

#### Skills and concepts to be developed

- time and chronology
- change and continuity
- empathy

### ■ Learning activities

#### **Kilkenny's Mills**

Lesson plan: this section is designed to support a wider discussion on the Industrial Revolution. It involves cues from three photographs at the bottom right corner of the poster: Kilkenny City in 1819, Lady Dysart's suspension bridge and the photograph of the weavers and spinners. The plan involves questions and answers based on these photographs and accompanying resource material.

#### **The Industrial Revolution reaches Kilkenny**

The industrial revolution in Ireland was not as extensive as in Britain, which had large amounts of coal

to fuel the technological changes underway. In Kilkenny, the mid 18th-19th century saw the construction of large mill buildings, breweries, distilleries and woollen factories along the River Nore. In the county as a whole there were 72 corn mills, 44 flour mills and 11 tuck mills (for cleansing and preparing cloth) in the first half of the 19th century. These mills produced grain that was then exported to Britain via ships along the River Nore to the port of New Ross.

### Why build mills on the river?

Rivers were arteries through the landscape and the flow of the currents made them a source of power for turning watermills. They were very important for industry, especially given the paucity of coal – can you see the waterwheel? Most mills were located between Kilkenny and Inistoige where the river was wider. This provided stronger currents and made it more navigable for boats. There are 13 mills from Kilkenny city to the county border with Laois.

### Who are the faces in the photograph?

The industrial revolution meant that large numbers of people were needed to help with all of the extra flour being processed, beer being brewed, and clothes being woven. This meant that many people came from the small hamlets in the countryside to live in towns and cities. If you were alive in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Kilkenny there is a chance that your parents would have been working in a mill. Do you know about where your family come from? Homework task: find something out on the life of either one of your great-grandmothers or great-grandfathers, or an older person that you know.

## ■ Linkage and Integration

VISUAL ARTS

Strand: Drawing

Strand Unit: Making Drawings

Strand: Construction

Strand Unit: Making Constructions

## ■ Differentiation

- Find out whether the mills nearest you are still in operation. What are old mills being used for now? Are they factories now, apartments, or in ruin?
- How it works. Make a drawing of all the different parts of a mill. The weir, the mill race, the mill building, the waterwheel, etc. Show how it all fits together!

## ■ Resources

River Nore Poster

Nore Heritage Audit Vol. 1, pages 30-33, 36-39, 81-91

External references:

<http://www.itsabouttime.ie/primary/pdfs/M8.pdf>, Lets look at old photographs

<http://www.itsabouttime.ie/primary/pdfs/M9.pdf>. Discover buildings by drawing them

<http://www.archaeology.ie/media/archeologyie/PDFS/Irish Field Monuments.pdf>, p21

■ **Evaluation**