



Secrets and Shadows

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Brian Gallagher

Teaching Guide

By Peter Heaney

RATIONALE & THEMES

This is a fast paced story centred on Barry and Grace, children displaced by German air raids during World War II. Barry is from Liverpool and Grace is from North Dublin. As they adjust to living with relatives, they are thrown together and their friendship develops.

The story presents a series of fundamental challenges to them as they initially become suspicious of and eventually discover, hunt down and capture one of Barry's teachers as a Nazi spy.

The themes are:

- Refugees
- Bullying
- Courage
- Making decisions
- Questions of morality
- Friendship
- Empathy
- Neutrality
- War and conflict

SUMMARY

To escape the Liverpool blitz, Barry has been sent to stay with his grandmother in Dublin. Adjusting to his new environment he copes with homesickness; concern for his family and the unwelcome attentions of the class bully in his new school.

A family arrangement introduces him to Grace, a victim of the North Strand bombing, and they strike up a friendship.

Barry becomes suspicious of one of his teachers, believing him to be a German spy.

Confiding in Grace, he enlists her support and together they are determined to uncover the evidence to support their suspicions.

Breaking into Mr Pawlek's house they discover his transmitter and pistol but are

surprised and captured when he returns unexpectedly.

Taken to a remote mountain location, and in fear of their lives, Barry and Grace manage to escape and capture the spy.

As the summer ends and the bombing of Liverpool has eased, Barry returns home and their spy catching adventure merges into memory.

APPROACH

The story is presented in three main sections to facilitate the flow of the action and development of the characters and themes.

The main themes of the story offer opportunity for discussion and empathy within broad topical interest areas.

Individual responses will be effective for all the activities,. However, group discussion will prime and support greater depth to the responses and present the opportunity for readers to enjoy greater benefit from their engagement with the story.

Section 1 Evacuees Pages 7-99

SUMMARY

A Luftwaffe raid has brought devastation to Liverpool. Through the roar of exploding bombs, Barry and his mum desperately seek the safety of the bomb shelter. Anxious for his safety, and with his father at sea with the Royal Navy, his mother decides to send Barry to live with his granny in Dublin.

However, Dublin, despite its neutrality, has not escaped and when German bombs fall on the North Strand, Grace and her mother are left homeless and

forced to move in with her granddad and Uncle Freddie.

Despite the unwelcome attention of Shay McGrath, the class bully, Barry, with the support of Mr Pawlek, the Polish PE teacher, begins to adjust to his new school.

Grace enjoys her granda's company but is irritated with her uncle's mannerisms and appalled that he seems to be trying to impress her widowed mother.

A little intervention from both sets of grandparents introduces Barry and Grace and after a cautious start they become firm friends.

Mr Pawlek takes an interest in Barry and seems very curious about his mother's work in a Liverpool aircraft factory.

Grace secures part time work in a cake shop and when she and her mother revisit the rubble that once was their home she surprises herself by keeping her friendship with Barry a secret.

McGrath, the class bully, continues to torment Barry and when Grace discovers him covered in ash as a result of a prank she is incensed. Barry persuades her not to intervene or tell his grandmother; however she is determined to find a solution for her friend.

Mr Pawlek suggests that Barry take part in the Summer Camp while Grace who is unable to endure neither her Uncle Freddie's flattering behaviour to her mother nor his uninformed and biased commentary on the war excuses herself to put her plan to protect Barry into action.

When Mr Pawlek announces the details of the school trip, McGrath finally goads Barry into a confrontation. As Barry steels himself for the inevitable beating, he is stunned when Keogh, the toughest boy in the school, intervenes on his behalf and issues a threat to McGrath that leaves no

doubt of the consequences for him if he bullies Barry again.

Grace confesses later that she persuaded Keogh to protect him in return for a weekly payment of a rhubarb tart. Initially uncomfortable with the arrangement, Barry eventually accepts her solution gracefully and when she reveals that McGrath's gang have jeopardised her job by pilfering money from her till Barry immediately offers to make up the difference with money he has just received in the post from his mum.

On the school trip to Cobh, as Barry explores the waterfront he is surprised to see Mr Pawlek furtively taking photos of Irish naval vessels moored at Haulbowline. With horror he recalls the close interest that Mr Pawlek had in the location of the aircraft factory where his mother works. His senses jangling, Barry realises that Mr Pawlek must be a German spy.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read pp 7-16) During WW11 there were many civilian casualties in both Britain and Germany as a result of aerial bombing. Today in conflicts like Afghanistan/Iraq this is still happening. Do you think that civilian casualties are an acceptable price to destroy enemy factories and positions?
- (Read p 11) Barry and his mum have put themselves in terrible danger in order to help an old lady. Do you think that you should always think of your own safety first? Do you think it is ever justified to put yourself in danger to help others? Why do you think that people will do this to help a complete stranger?
- (Read p 52) In church and without warning Barry experiences an unexpected 'piercing stab of homesickness'. Do you think that it was significant that this happened in church? What effect do you think being in church have sometimes on the way we think and how we interpret and understand things? Can you explain this effect?
- (Read p 63) Barry has been assaulted by McGrath in plain view of several adults, yet none of them attempted to help him. Do you think this is shocking or simply to be expected? Why do you think that people are sometimes reluctant to help and what might motivate a person to offer assistance. How would you decide whether to become personally involved in a

situation or not?

- (Read pp 73-76) Grace has hired Johnny Keogh to protect Barry. She chose him deliberately because he is a bigger thug than McGrath and fully prepared to use violence. Her aim to protect Barry from McGrath's bullying is a noble one; however do you think that the way she has chosen to do it is acceptable? She has chosen a bully to stop a bully. Is she no better really than McGrath?

ACTIVITIES

1. Can you see what I see?

(Read pp7-16)

In their plane high above Liverpool the bomber crew can only see tiny flashes of light as the bombs explode. On the ground, Barry has a different view.

Do you think that you could help Barry write a short poem (Haiku or Cinquain) for the crew to help them understand the effects that their bombs have at ground level? The poem might examine the differences between what Barry sees and what the crew sees.

For more information try: www.theteachersguide.com/poetrymonth.htm

2. Guernica (Read p15)

As Barry looks over Liverpool he sees a picture of complete devastation. Picasso painted a picture of the Spanish town Guernica after a German bombing raid.

In the picture he cuts and mixes up images to give a sense of the ruin caused by the bombs.

Barry has heard of Picasso in school and the picture and decides to create a similar style picture of Liverpool to describe what he saw that night. Do you think you could recreate his picture? You will need to find and use some of the iconic images of Liverpool to help you. Try these sites: www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/spanish-town-guernica-bombed-20482.html www.pablocicasso.org/guernica.jsp

3. Back Scratching

(Read pp 19, 23, 23,27,29,30,31)

Freddie uses an idiom to explain how he did a favour for the tobacconist that resulted in a reciprocal gesture (You scratch my back...)

Idioms add colour and texture to stories and help to develop characters. They

are not meant to be interpreted literally.

Can you find the idioms in the other six pages and explain what you think they mean. You could draw their literal meanings if you like.

Do you think that you could write a short conversation between two old men and try to use as many idioms as you can?

You will find lots of examples at: www.idiomsbykids.com/

4. Wants and Needs: (Read p 23)

Barry is a refugee. He has to move from his home in Liverpool and live elsewhere. This is still happening today throughout the world with people being forced to flee with whatever they can carry.

Can you make two lists of five things/possessions that you might take if you were to become a refugee in the morning? One list will be the things you will **NEED**; the other list the things that you might **WANT** to take.

Can you explain why you included each item? You can work in groups for this activity.

5. iTunes (Read pp 36-37)

Grace and Barry seem to share musical tastes. Can you listen to some of the songs they have and compare them to the songs you listen to today? Can you explain why you like / dislike them?

If you wanted to impress a friend with your iTunes collection, which would your top five songs be? Can you explain why you choose them?

Try these sites to listen to 1940s songs: www.live365.com/index.live www.last.fm/tag/40s

6. Information Gathering

(Read pp55 & 56)

Mr Pawlek is very interested in everything that Barry has to tell him about Liverpool and with careful questioning manages to get quite a lot of useful information from both him and his Granny Peg.

Can you make a list of the facts that he has learned?

In order not to appear too interested he must keep his conversations casual and so he prepares a list of information he wants beforehand and the questions he hopes will provide it.

Can you help him to prepare his next three questions; who are they for; when

will he ask them and what does he hope to learn from them?

7. North Strand (Read p 57)

The Mass for the victims of the air raid was a solemn affair where An Taoiseach Eamon de Valera made a speech.

The following day Grace's granddad reads the report in the paper and spots Grace in one of the pictures taken.

The newspaper gives a full page cover to the ceremony, describing it and the bombing. It also includes quotes from Mr de Valera's speech and has the full text of the formal letter of protest delivered by the Irish Government to the German Government as well as comments from survivors including Grace's mum.

Could you work in small groups to recreate the page with all the articles you think it included as well as pictures?

You can find some research materials at: www.dublinheritage.ie/historic-photographs/north_strand_bombing.html

www.rte.ie/news/2011/0531/northstrand.html

www.dublincity.ie/RecreationandCulture/libraries/Heritage%20and%20History/Dublin%20City%20Archives/Collections%20Post%201840/Pages/north_strand_bombings_archives.aspx (also at tinyurl.com/9xwm2hj)

8. Fantasy Football (Read p68)

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

Even today there are many Irish players playing football in the English Premier League. Can you select a fantasy team for each of your groups including only Irish players? You can compile a short profile on each of them and explain why you chose them.

Each week you could count the goals they score in order to give your fantasy team a score. You will have to decide together on a small list of rules to decide how to award / deduct points e.g. what do you do if one of your players is red carded?

You can find lists of Irish players at: eurorivals.net/abroad/irish-players-in-england.html

9. Islandbridge (Read p 78)

After Queen Elizabeth visited Ireland in 2011, the government decided to honour those Irish who fought and died in Europe in WW11.

They have decided to award each of the families who lost loved ones with a certificate and a letter to honour their sacrifice.

They have decided to run a competition for school children to compose the letter and design the certificate.

Would you like to submit an entry?

10. The Profile

In school, a popular exercise set by the teacher is to write a short profile titled '*A Boy I know*'.

By coincidence, Grace, McGrath, Keogh and Charlie have chosen to write about Barry.

Could you recreate each of their profiles? Remember that each will have a different style, handwriting and skill level in addition to each of their impressions of him and each of them will focus on different characteristics of Barry.

Section 2 Suspicious (pp 100-144)

SUMMARY

Grace listens with interest to her Uncle Freddie's biased and exasperated interpretation of Churchill's conduct of the war and decides playfully to tease Barry with it. Barry is unwilling to accept any criticism from an armchair general and a sour note develops as he abruptly cuts his visit short.

Determined to mend the rift, Grace visits Barry with a jam tart as a peace offering and relations are restored. He confides his suspicions of Mr Pawlek and after her initial shock Grace accepts his concerns and they both determine to discover the truth behind the P.E. teacher's curiosity about the Irish Navy and Barry's mum's job in the aircraft factory.

Meeting Mr Pawlek after mass, Barry finds that he is still probing and has to deflect his gran's reply to a seemingly innocent enquiry about his mum. Grace joins the conversation and does a little probing herself to test Mr Pawlek's reaction to the recent North Strand bombing.

When they follow Mr Pawlek into the Phoenix Park they are disheartened when he just sits on a bench and they find no evidence that he is a spy.

Barry is annoyed when McGrath picks on his friend Charlie and, knowing he is under Keogh's protection, confronts McGrath and warns him to leave Charlie alone.

When Mr Pawlek announces the first activity for the Summer Camp, Grace decides that she too would like to attend. When she raises the delicate subject of the fee, her Uncle Freddie's attempt to intervene irritates her to the point of retaliation and her mum forces a grudging apology from her.

A compromise over the fee is reached and when both she and Barry visit Mr Pawlek at home on the pretext of her asking to take part in the activities, their attempt to discover any incriminating evidence is again thwarted.

During the first activity at the beach, Grace feigns a stomach cramp and uses the moment of distraction to search Mr Pawlek's bag. Her search reveals nothing and is cut short by Barry's warning shout as Mr Pawlek comes to check she is OK.

It is a close call and Grace is uneasy that Mr Pawlek has become suspicious of them.

Barry receives a letter from his mum bearing good news: his dad is safe; the Luftwaffe raids on Liverpool have eased and she is to visit him in Dublin soon.

He is determined that he will find proof to unmask Mr Pawlek as a Nazi spy.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read pp 104-105): During WW11 Ireland chose neutrality. This meant that they did not offer support to either the Nazis or the Allies. As a result they escaped some of the terrible bombing raids that cities in Britain and N. Ireland endured. Not everyone agreed with this position and many Irish joined the allies to fight. It was not an easy decision to make. In groups could you decide on three arguments to support and three to challenge the position of neutrality?
- (Read p 123): Charlie has decided not to challenge McGrath over his threatening behaviour; however Barry intervenes, secure in the knowledge that Keogh's influence will protect him. Is discretion really the better part of

valour? Should threatening behaviour always be challenged or is it better to tolerate it until circumstances deflates the bully and their threat?

- (Read p 142): It occurs to Barry that people on both sides of the conflict will pray to God for protection. Does this present God with a dilemma? Whose prayers will he listen to? Do you think that God takes sides? If no, then is the prayer wasted? What do you think happens when people pray for conflicting things?

ACTIVITIES

1. Tea Leaves (Read p 100)

During the war food was scarce and rationing meant that imagination was needed both when preparing and also when eating a meal.

Do you think that you could compile a menu of meals for one day both from WW11 and a third world country: then compare them both nutritionally and gastronomically with what you will eat today?

Could you design a poster to make one of the least appetising meals more attractive? You can find useful resources at: www.carrotmuseum.co.uk/history4.html www.historylearningsite.co.uk/homefront.htm

2. 1st Memory (Read p 109)

Barry recalls an outing with his Uncle George as his first memory. We all have a particular fondness for the earliest thing we can remember for ourselves.

Could you describe the earliest memory that you have? Who were the people involved and what happened?

3. Where Are They? (Read p 121)

As Mr Pawlek sits on the bench, his thoughts are in a whirl. In his mind he re-reads the message that he got earlier in the day which he had now destroyed.

The contact had taken him completely by surprise. Now he sat and waited but for what he wasn't sure.

The author Brian Gallagher had considered adding two paragraphs here to show Mr Pawlek's thoughts as he sat on the bench but decided not to include them. He has changed his mind and now wants your help to create a short piece to put into the book just here.

You could send your passages to OBP

when you have finished.

4. Barry (Read pp 125-126)

Mr Pawlek is on his guard and suspects that Barry's interest goes beyond sport and the Summer Camp.

He realises that Barry suspects him of being a spy. He has watched Barry very carefully and two things have convinced him.

Can you decide how Barry might have revealed his intentions? Was it something he said, the way he said it or the way he behaved when he was around Mr Pawlek?

Mr Pawlek decides to set a trap for Barry to make absolutely certain of his suspicions; a trap that Barry will not even realise is there.

What do you think he has decided to do?

5. The Library Card (Read p 139)

Grace unfortunately did not get the chance to examine Mr Pawlek's library card closely. If she had, then she might have spotted that it was not really a library card; rather it was a set of codes and addresses disguised as a library card that Mr Pawlek used to make contact with other spies in Ireland and with his superiors in Germany.

Every letter, space, punctuation mark and detail on the card was significant. However you needed to examine the card closely to discover that it was not a library card.

Could you recreate the card and explain the significance of each detail?

6. Gretel (Read p 139)

Although the photo that Grace found in Mr Pawlek's bag had no information for her, whenever Mr Pawlek looked at it; which he did very frequently, memories flooded into his mind.

Of course, her name was not Gretel; but who was she and why did he risk keeping a photo of her in his wallet?

Could you use the 5 x W & H formula (*who, what, when, where, why & how*) to create the information that Grace sought?

Try to write it from Mr Pawlek's view as a series of memories or reminiscences. You can include a picture if you like to make it more authentic.

Section 3 Proof (pp 146 - 215)

SUMMARY

Grace and Barry escalate their hunt for proof of Mr Pawlek's spying and decide to break into his home in the hope of finding incriminating evidence.

Everything seems normal except for a map of Europe showing Nazi advances and a locked cupboard secured with a padlock. Hardly incriminating, but when a ticket seller knocks at the front door disturbing them, they decide to leave and return later.

Still unnerved by their experience, Barry and Grace try to relax by listening to records while Grace entertains Barry with a mimic of her Uncle Freddie's attempts to impress her mother. Loud knocking at the door convinces them it is the Garda to question them.

Barry opens the door to a surprise: his mum is standing there. Smiling, Barry throws his arms around his teary eyed mother.

Grace manages to ask her granddad in casual conversation about locks and gets some useful advice on how to open them without a key.

Barry is happy that his mum is visiting and when everyone meets after Sunday Mass he is stunned to hear his mum agree to Mr Pawlek's invitation to a music concert the following evening.

Confiding his dismay to Grace, he is comforted when she points out that this provides the perfect diversion for their next visit to Mr Pawlek's house to discover the secret behind the padlock.

Equipped with a lock pick and a bolt cutter, they force entry again to the house. Grace's efforts with the lock pick are unsuccessful and they are forced to use all their strength with the bolt cutter to shear the lock.

Opening the cupboard their suspicions are confirmed when they discover a transmitter and a pistol hidden there.

Before they can decide what to do they are disturbed as Mr Pawlek returns unexpectedly. Grace is caught as she tries to escape and when Barry tries to use the pistol he is easily disarmed.

Bound and gagged, they are left alone while Mr Pawlek leaves to make

arrangements. Despite the ache from a blow, Barry manages to break a vase and secure a sliver of glass with which he hopes to cut through his bindings.

Mr Pawlek has acquired a van and as he drives out of Dublin into remote countryside with the children trussed on the floor in the rear Barry manages to cut through the twine and release himself and Grace.

Instructing Grace to flee at the first opportunity Barry waits until the van negotiates a bend before attacking Mr Pawlek from behind.

Caught by surprise, he loses control and they crash off the road. In the confusion Mr Pawlek becomes trapped in a bog hole and Barry and Grace attempt to flee.

With a warning shot Mr Pawlek regains control. Grace is well within his range and his threat to shoot her forces Barry to get a rope from the van to help him escape from the bog hole.

With Pawlek momentarily distracted as he ties the rope around his chest, Grace seizes the initiative and rolls out of sight and range, shouting to Barry to do the same as Pawlek fires wildly in her direction.

Horrified at what Pawlek has done, Barry charges at him, hurling a rock which knocks him unconscious.

Satisfied that Grace is uninjured, they decide to capture Mr Pawlek and use the van to drag him from the bog hole. Feigning unconsciousness, Pawlek makes a final bid to escape. However a well aimed punch from Grace and her threat to shoot finally subdues him.

Barry and Grace are heroes. But as the summer ends and the air raids have eased over Liverpool Barry is set to return home.

After an emotional dockside farewell, Barry watches Dublin slip under the horizon. He will never forget the summer when he and Grace took on the might of the Nazi war machine and won.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (Read p154): Grace's mum tolerates Freddie's attempts to impress her because she is a guest in the house and doesn't want to offend him. Grace would prefer that she made it clear to him that she was not at all impressed. Do you think that Freddie is taking advantage of the situation knowing that she cannot really tell him to stop? Do you think it would be better for Grace's mother to tell him to stop trying to

impress her?

- (Read pp 171-172): Do you think that Barry's mum was wise to accept Mr Pawlek's invitation to go to the concert with him? She had only just met him and knew very little about him. What do you think influenced her decision to accept? Why do you think that Grandma Peg was happy for her to go too?
- (Read pp 201-203): Mr Pawlek had threatened to kill Grace unless Barry did as he asked him. Do you think he was capable of carrying out the threat? In the circumstances where he was trapped himself and would die if they didn't rescue him, was he justified in making the threat to kill or even wound her? What do you think Mr Pawlek really intended to do with Barry and Grace?
- (Read p 207): Barry's first instinct is to leave Mr Pawlek where he is. He feels that this would be justified because of all the things the Nazis have done. He changes his mind when he remembers the advice his mum gave him about British values. Do you think he would have been justified in leaving him there or did he make the right decision in pulling Mr Pawlek out of the bog hole?

ACTIVITIES

1. Then his mum arrived (Read p 157)

When Grace returned home she told her mother and granddad about the excitement when Barry's mum arrived unexpectedly. She had remembered every detail and all that was said. Work in small groups to recreate a short dialogue between Grace and her mam and granddad as she recalls what happened and answers their questions.

You could perform it for the whole class. Remember, there will be a lot of excitement as the detail is recalled.

2. The Spider's Web (Das Spinnennetz) (Read p 169)

Mr Pawlek is very well organised and like any spy he is anxious to develop contacts that might have useful information. It is also important that he knows all the connections between each of his contacts. In his notebook he organises his contact list like a spider's web with the most important contact at the centre and the other contacts linked by lines showing the relationships. Each contact has a little note

added to indicate how they might be useful. Could you draw his web for Barry's circle?

3. Urgent (Vordringlich)

(Read p 180)

When Barry and Grace find the radio transmitter they also find Mr Pawlek's notepad. There are two messages on it; one from his headquarters in Germany and the other his reply waiting to be sent. They are stunned when they read them. The messages are cryptic but the meaning is terrifyingly clear. Barry knows Morse code and they decide to change Pawlek's reply before sending it themselves. Barry scribbles a new note on a sheet of paper. Could you create all three messages? You can use Google translate to translate your message into German. you can find information on Morse code at: www.learnmorsecode.info/

4. What Shall I do?

(Read pp187-188)

Mr Pawlek has been trained to think clearly in stressful situations. He has been discovered and now has two meddling children to deal with. He does not believe that they had time to warn anyone so he still has a little time to consider his options. He takes a deep breath, calms his mind and begins to think. He carefully and quickly considers what he can safely do; what is risky and whether he can continue his mission.

He picks his way through his options like a tree diagram, rejecting everything else until he reaches a final decision.

Could you design the tree diagram to represent his thoughts as he made his choices? Include the options that he rejected as well as those he chose.

5. Ireland's Neutrality at Stake

(Read pp 211-217)

When Pawlek is handed over and interrogated, the Garda search his house and find a lot of documents. Pawlek had built up many contacts.

His mission was almost completed and was about to be put into action.

A report is prepared for the government. This report has just recently been released.

Use your imagination to create the information that you think it might have contained.

6. Soap Note: (Read p 194)

When Pawlek allows them to go to the toilet, Barry has a brief moment to leave Grace a note explaining his plan. Unfortunately he has neither paper nor pencil. Use your imagination to help him figure out a way to leave Grace a note in the toilet. What do you think it might say?

7. To Honour Bravery (Read p 212)

After everything has settled down and Grace and her mum are now living in her new home, she receives an invitation to a private event at Aras an Uachtarain.

The war is still raging and Ireland is neutral, however Eamon de Valera has decided to award her a certificate to honour her bravery.

Grace is forbidden to tell anyone and has only recently discovered it in the attic of her house.

It has been damaged and faded by time and you have been given the job of restoring it for her, please.

8. Corrections: (Read p 217)

Mr Pawlek (Wilhelm Schmidt) managed to survive the war and when he was released by the Russian army, he decided to settle in Ireland. Today he is 92 and lives close to the Burren in Co Clare.

He has read the book and realises that the story is about his time in Ireland as a Wehrmacht secret agent.

He has decided to write to the author, Brian Gallagher, to clear up some inaccuracies and put his side of the story of what happened and what his intentions towards Barry and Grace really were.

Use your imagination to create a copy of the letter he wrote.

9. Picture Posts: (Read p 215)

Standing at the rail as the ship moves down the Liffey, Barry searches in his bag for his pencil and sketch pad one last time.

He flicks through the pages of the buildings in Dublin that he has sketched and, finding an empty page, begins to draw his final view of the city.

Could you create a copy of two sketches from the book, what you think his favourite was and the final one as the boat left the harbour?

You can find pictures of Dublin at: www.irishhistorylinks.net/pages/Old_Dublin_Black_White.html

10. Evening Herald (Read p 211)

Because Ireland is neutral and Europe is still at war there is strict censorship in the papers about what can be reported. It is therefore decided NOT to report Barry and Grace's role in capturing the spy in detail.

However the editor of the Evening Herald decides to write an editorial piece on the subject of foreign spies and the threat they pose to Ireland's neutrality.

Can you read a daily paper and collect some of the editorials to see how they are written?

Can you write the piece that you think he wrote and how he included Barry and Grace's adventure without giving too much away?

Class Projects

The subject matter of the book is rich in potential for whole class extended project work.

The following topics can easily be incorporated into a scheme.

- Researching famous spies, the conflicts they were involved with and their influences.
- Ireland's neutrality during WW11; the reasons for it and the effect it had both on the nation and the conflict. Comparisons might be made as to whether it would still be an effective strategy in contemporary conflicts.
- Research the role that Irish men and women played during the conflict; their decisions to take up arms for the Allies and whether there has ever been proper recognition from the State for their contribution.
- WW11 and the development of the conflict into a global battle; the effect it had both within Europe and across the globe.

The BBC school's history site has many excellent resources to support these projects, and using Google to search on key phrases e.g. Ireland's neutrality, will help to source appropriate materials.

(It is always good practice for the teacher to vet any site before directing a class to explore it.)