

"I am Dorothy McBride, before I was married I was a Kilpatrick. I was born in the 3rd lock house. Ten of us were born in that house, born in the same bedroom and all reared there. My father's name was George Kilpatrick and he started as a lock keeper around 1921 or 1922. After he was there a short time he married my mother, Sarah Clarke, who was a cook in Lisburn. They married in Lisburn Cathedral though it wasn't a grand marriage and the honeymoon was to walk down to the lock house to live! The ten children were called Nancy, Ruby, Winifred, Georgina, Hugh, Ernest, Jim, Stanley, Dorothy and Margaret. We went to school at Ballylesson School, you left school at 14. I left school on the Friday and started work on the Monday. I married at 18."

This is a picture of Dorothy and two of her sisters sitting on part of the lock gate. Dorothy (age 9) is on the far left. Georgina (18) is in the middle and Margaret (6) is on the right.



What do you notice about the way they are dressed?

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What do Dorothy and Margaret have on their feet?

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How could you tell that this picture is an old picture?

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All ten children were born in the house. Describe how you would have felt to live in the small cottage with your mum, dad, and 9 brothers and sisters.



This is a kitchen garden. All the lock keepers had gardens where they grew fruit and vegetables for their families to eat.

"My father was a lock keeper, he had a wee shop, kept a few animals and looked after the garden. The wages were not very high so he had to raise his own vegetables and we had two goats for milk, though I hated the milk! My father also had cattle, a couple of cows on land leased at Minnowburn and one at home, and pigs down at the side of the house, towards the Lagan, where there were three sheds and our outside toilet. My father worked in the garden between barges coming through, he grew his own peas, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce and had rhubarb and fruit bushes like raspberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants. The potatoes were stored in what in those days you called a 'bung', a mound covered in soil. My mother had hens and two or three geese and a few turkeys, that was her bit of money for Christmas and the like."

Why did George Kilpatrick need to keep animals and grow his own fruit and vegetables?

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What did he get from the:

(a) chickens

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(b) pigs

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(c) goats

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Why do you think the potatoes were covered in a mound of soil or "bung"?

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Dorothy's mother sitting in the cottage with one of her grandchildren.



George Kilpatrick

When did George Kilpatrick wear his "paddy hat"?

Is he wearing it in the picture?

"My father was a bit of a character. He always walked with his hands behind his back, both hands behind his back, you would have seen him coming up the towpath with hands behind his back and with a cap. He had a good hat if he was going anywhere, a paddy hat, but he mostly wore a cap, I used to buy them for him in Gordons in Sandy Row. My father couldn't read or write, my mother taught him to sign his name, I remember her teaching him. I don't know where she got her education but she would have read the paper to him. She read anything that came like invoices. But he was a clever man in many other ways, he could have counted anything, he always dealt with the money. He just never had the schooling; he was working from when he was no age. My mother was a small stout lady and she always wore a jumper or blouse with an over the head overall, a dark overall that you tied at the back. She didn't wear dresses. She had dark hair, straight back, no curls then. A very nice lady."

Draw George Kilpatrick by the canal, wearing his cap and working clothes.

"There was no electric, my mother cooked on the fire, a big, big open fire. My father was allowed coal off the boats; that was one of the perks, massive lumps of coal thrown off the barge that he had to cut up. There were two hobs, one either side of the fire. The kettle was always on one, the tea pot on the other. There was a big fender at the front and that was where she kept the plates warm. She had a griddle, she baked every morning, before we were out of our beds she would have soda bread, potato bread and wheaten bread baked. How she ever did it, I will never know, she never seemed to be exhausted. She also did bannocks and potato bread with apple in it as a treat. For essentials we were sent to bring messages - that was what it was called, you went for messages never for groceries - at the shop at Milltown, Fairweathers it was called."



Why did Mrs Kilpatrick have to cook over the fire?



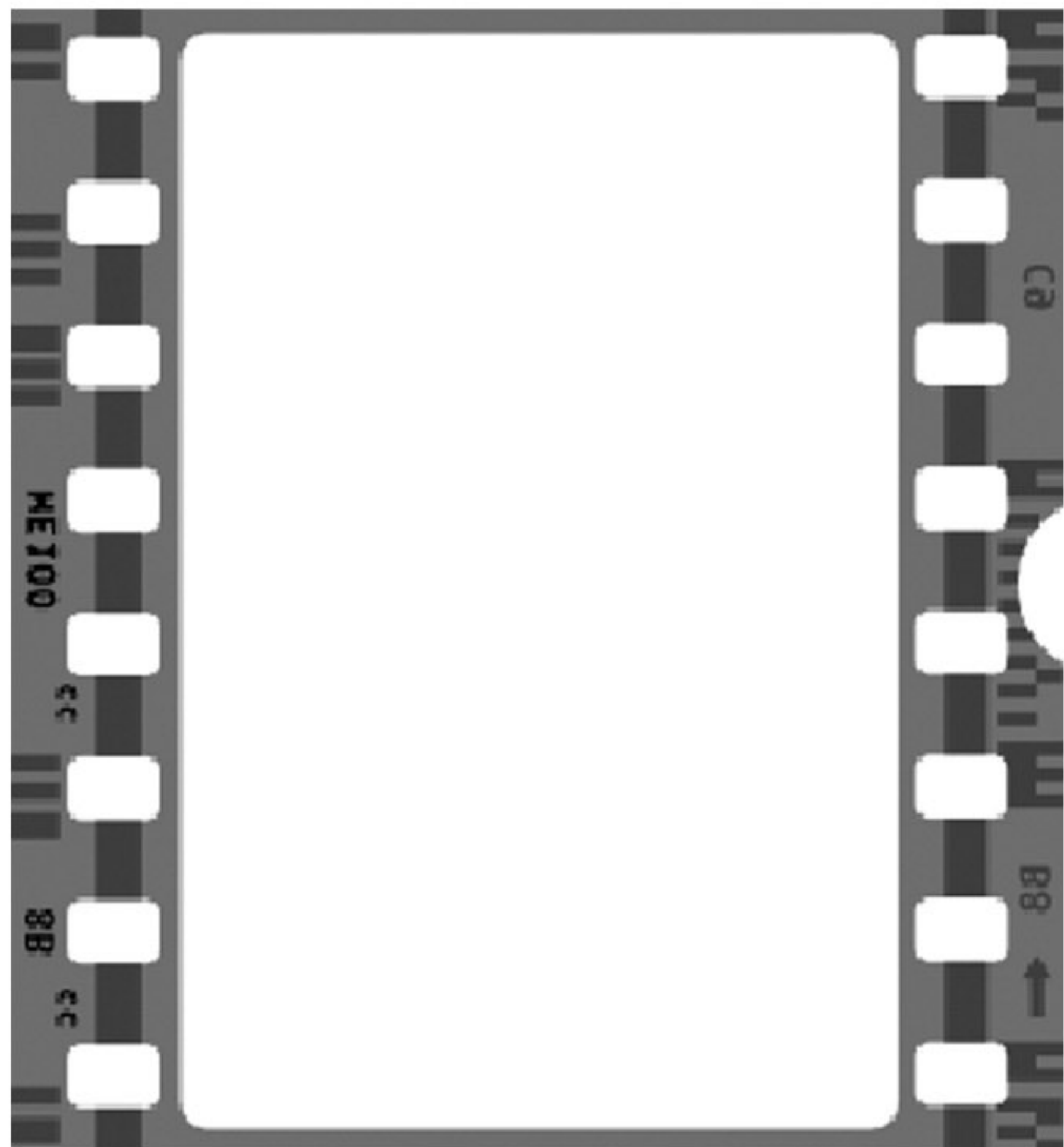
Mrs Kilpatrick generally gave something to the lightermen in exchange for the coal. What do you think it might have been?

Design a poster that Mrs. Kilpatrick could have used to advertise to lightermen what she had for exchange.

"You walked in the front door and there was a small entrance area with a small storage place, a cupboard, and then there was what they called the hall door, with glass - the front door was never closed through the day. Inside, there was a bench at the side of the fire with a wooden top you lifted up, somewhere to put blocks of wood and things like that. That was one of the seats, you sat there. Also by the fire was another storage place where they kept the shoe polish and all kinds of stuff like that. A table at the window, the big massive fire, a sofa and a chair. Then there was the room where my mother and father slept. The stairs were up against the wall, just like a ladder closed in, put up through the day and taken down at night. There were two attic rooms, boys in one, girls in the other, two double beds in each. In each gable was a small window. It was all oil lamps and candles. We used to get our water from a tap just inside Ardnally or from the factory at Newforge, we didn't have a well. We would carry two buckets. This was drinking water, we used the River Lagan for washing clothes and things. We had a tin bath by the fire. When you got older you took a smaller bath upstairs and filled it with the kettle. And yet we always managed to be all right. It was primitive but we were very happy, we thought nothing of it, we were just hard working decent people."

You have been asked by a movie director to set the scene for the opening of his film "The Life of a Lock Keeper". Like Dorothy, you must describe walking into the cottage for the first time.

Is it dark?
Is it spooky?
Is it haunted?
Is it colourful?
Is it bright?
Is the fire crackling?

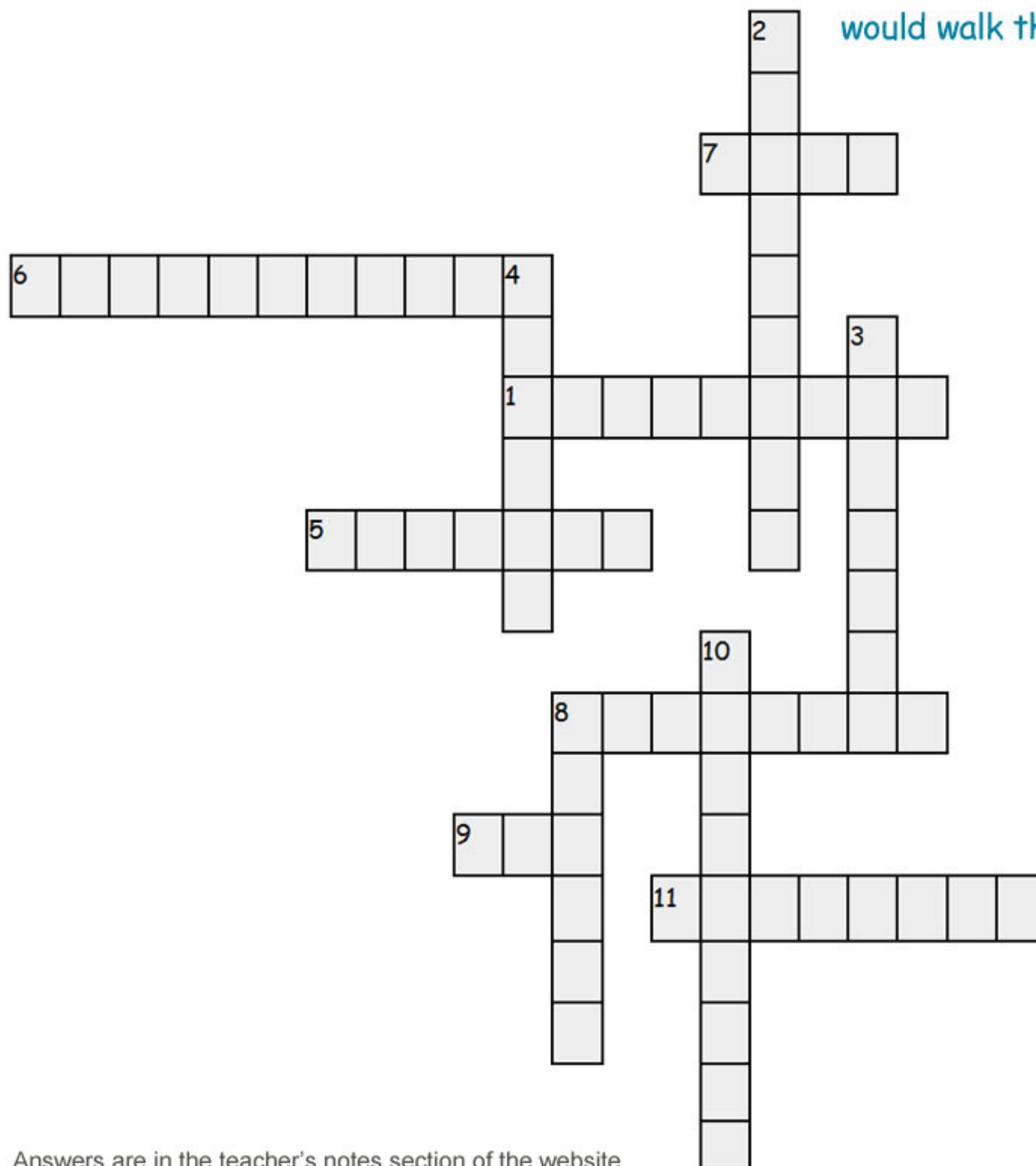




This is a picture of the inside of the lean-to. George Kilpatrick is talking to a man who works for the coca cola company.

Can you see the coca cola ice machine?

"To the side of the lock house was the shop. It had a sloping corrugated roof. My father ran the shop as another way of making a bit of money. He sold lemonade, cigarettes, sweets from glass jars, chocolate bars and newspapers at the weekend. There used to be seats outside and my father sat among the people. If they asked, my parents would do cups of tea but they weren't keen on that because there was that much to do about the place. I remember the time Coca-Cola came, we got this big container like a big freezer. I wasn't very old at the time but I remember you had to get ice for it for the weekend. Someone would take my father to the ice works, which was just below Shaftesbury Square. The shop was open every day but Saturday and Sunday were big days. At that time people walked more than they do now and courting couples would walk the towpath."



Across:

1. Something you could buy to read.
5. Where couples used to walk.
6. What was used to decorate the walls of the shop?
7. What were the shop walls made of?
8. A treat you could buy to drink at the shop.
9. What did Dorothy's parents not like to sell?
11. What used to be at Shaftesbury Square?

Down:

2. A treat you could buy to eat at the shop.
3. When did Mr Kilpatrick need the ice?
4. A big day for the shop.
8. What was the special name given to the shop?
10. A famous drink sold at the shop.

Answers are in the teacher's notes section of the website