The Burren has long had an ancient standing as a centre of learning in the old Gaelic world and many centuries ago people came from all over Ireland to gain recognition by the schools here. This helps to explain the many famous scholars, musicians, inventors and leaders which have come from the Burren, such as Thomas J. Westropp the father of Irish archaeology and John Philip Holland, inventor of the submarine. However as Ireland entered into its modern history, the people of the Burren were also shaped by social, economic and political forces. The grievances which had led to the 1799 north Clare uprising had remained, and continued to trouble both the Burren and the county until Irish independence from Britain. Clare was badly scarred by the Great Irish Famine of the mid nineteenth century. In a devastating ten year period, almost 50,000 people died of famine and disease, 40,000 of these in the workhouses, with the local Ennistymon workhouse being amongst the most notorious. Another temporary workhouse was opened in Kilfenora. Bishop Fallon, the last bishop of Kilfenora wrote ‘let us thus avoid death in a country teeming with abundance of all kind of eatables except the potato, the wretched stable of the worst fed peasantry in Europe.’ Another 40,000 emigrated from Clare. Into this disintegrating world of Black 1847 was born one of the Burren’s most famous citizens, Michael Cusack. He was to become the first leader of the Gaelic revival, and founder of the world’s largest amateur sporting and cultural organisation, the Gaelic Athletic Association. By his act of preservation of the Burren traditions his people passed on to him, Cusack saved the national sport of hurling for those hundreds of thousands who today throng the playing fields of Ireland and the world, including its annual All-Ireland final showcase in Europe’s finest stadium, Croke Park, Dublin.

1A Burren Images
1B Prehistoric People of the Burren
1C Burren Folklore
1D Modern History
1E Written in Stone Crossword

**1E Written In Stone Crossword**

**Across**
1. The Seven Streams flow from here
2. They were hunter gatherers
3. John Holland invented it

**Down**
1. Ireland’s First Farmers
2. It covered the Burren in the last ice age
3. The Kilfenora Cathedral is named after him
1A Prehistoric Peoples of the Burren

Over 7000 years ago, the earliest people came to the Burren following the retreat of the glaciers of last ice age which covered the Burren. These hunter-gatherers were known as the Mesolithic people. Yet it is the first farmers to arrive in the Burren around 6,000 years ago that have had the greater impact on the landscape of this region. These were known as the Neolithic people. They cut down trees and grew crops. They tamed wild animals like pigs, goats and sheep. They did not have to hunt as much any more and they could live in one place. They built and engineered megalithic tombs such as at Poulnabrone – the single most photographed monument in the country. The Burren is sometimes referred to as Ireland’s great outdoor museum and because of its earliest farmers it has one of the richest archaeological landscapes in the world.

Questions
What is the name of the first people to farm the Burren?
What is the Burren sometimes referred to as?
What is the single most photographed monument in the Burren?

To do in the Burren Centre
Name three other megalithic tombs in the Burren
List four extinct animals in the Burren today
What is a ‘fulacht fiadh’?

1C Burren Folklore - The Seven Streams of Teeskagh

The Burren has a rich folklore that has been passed on over the centuries, inspired by the unique limestone landscape, heritage, flora and fauna of the region. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh, Seacht Srotha na Teascaighe is a beautiful natural water feature at the cliff base of the Cahercommaun stone ring fort. Its true meaning, seven streams of the overflowing is said to have came from a bet made on a mythical Spanish cow brought to Ireland by Lon MacLoimtha, the legendary one legged, three handed Tuatha de Dannan blacksmith. The cow was known for her plentiful milk supply which, the proud blacksmith boasted, would fill any vessel in Ireland, no matter what size. A clever young child outsmarted the blacksmith however, and milked the magical cow into a sieve and it flowed through to form the seven streams which we see today.

How did the blacksmith feel after the child milked his magical cow?

Do a storyboard inspired by this legend. Divide your page into four sections, draw a picture and write one sentence under each picture.

Find another legend displayed at the Burren Centre, as well as one from your own locality, and re-tell with your group.

BURREN CENTRE WORKSHEET 1A

BURREN CENTRE WORKSHEET 1B & 1C