

HEARTH AND HOME

Séan Keating drawing of inside a traditional home

What happened around the Hearth?

Life in the Home (1850–1950)
The National Museum of Ireland
– Country Life is home to the Irish Folklife Collection, a collection of objects representing Irish rural life from 1850–1950. This online activity is suitable for Families and Senior Primary (3rd to 6th Class) and Post-Primary Junior Cycle.

The **hearth** was central to daily life in the home and the fire provided the family with **heat** and **light**. It was the focus of the home – hence the saying ‘home is where the hearth is’. The regular tasks of **cooking** and **washing**, as well as social activities such as **storytelling** and **visiting** were centred around the open fire.

That looks like the room on page 3!

museum

National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Country Life

What was work in the home like?

Women's work consisted primarily of activities based around the hearth and home. Fetching water, and looking after young children were daily tasks. Every week the woman of the house also had to wash the clothes and make and repair clothing. Women also worked in the fields and were responsible for the fowl and dairy. All this work created a saying 'A Man's work is from Sun to Sun, but a Woman's work is never done'.

Here's a task:

Can you guess when these jobs were done?

Daily, Weekly or Yearly?

EXAMPLE

Gather water from the well

Daily

B. Wash laundry in the stream

C. Iron the Sunday best

D. Re-kindle the embers to start the fire

E. Help cut and scatter turf

F. Help harvest the crop

G. Take eggs and butter to the market

H. Give food to the animals

the Rambling House

Before television and the internet people socialised by visiting 'rambling' houses.

This is where neighbours gathered to tell stories, play music and cards by the fireside. They might even play riddle games.



Here's a task:

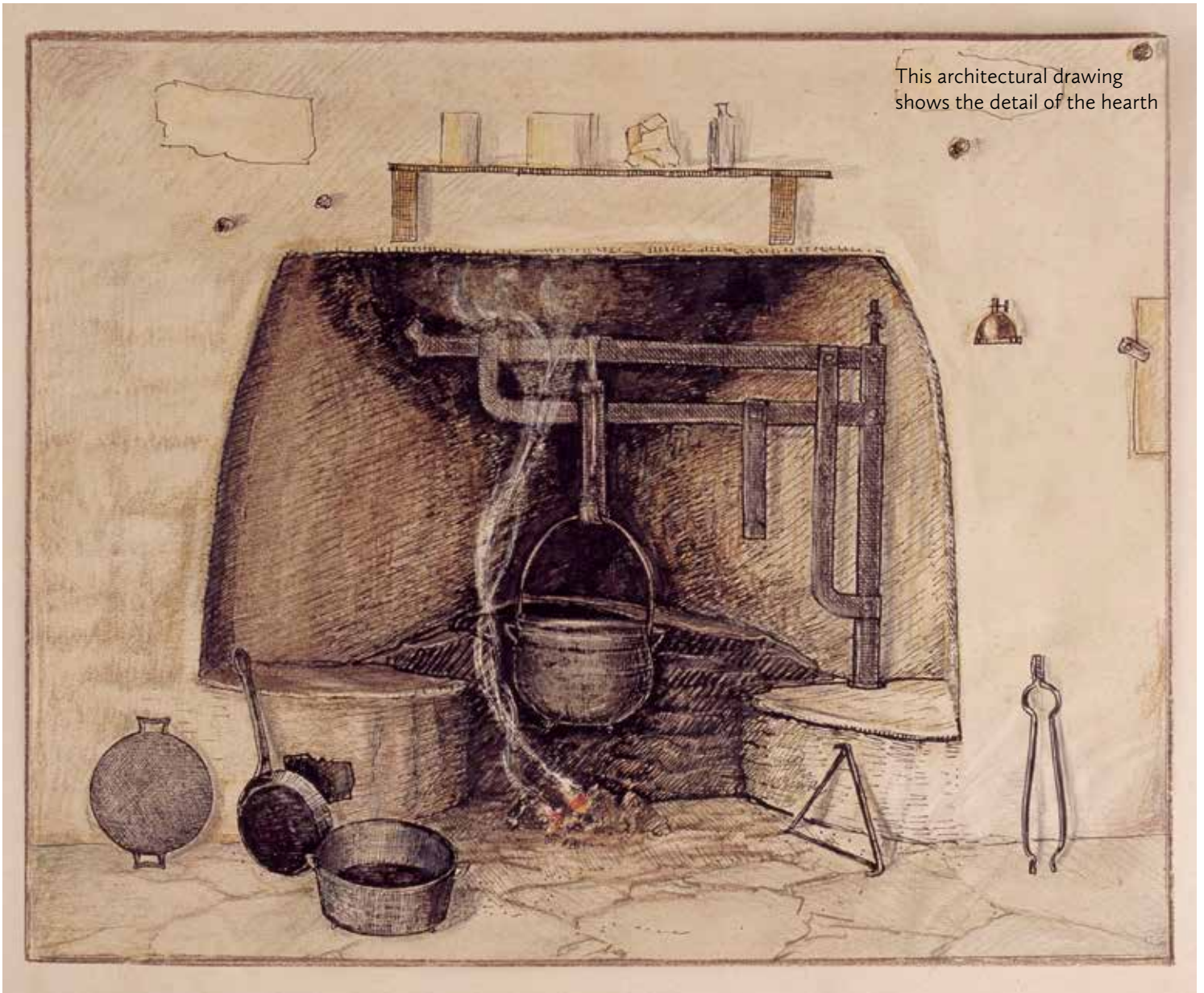
Can you figure out these traditional riddles?

- What am I. I have long legs, crooked thighs, a small head and no eyes?
- What is no use until it is broken?
- The older it gets the smaller it grows?



ANSWERS
• A candle • An egg • Fire tongs

Objects for cooking



This architectural drawing shows the detail of the hearth

Specialised types of cooking equipment were needed to boil, grill, roast or bake food over the open fire.

*Here's a task: **Can you spot these objects in the drawing above?***

tongs

trivet

skillet
pot

crane

griddle
pan

frying
pan

Objects from the *Hearth and Home*

Here's a task:

Can you match the images of these objects with their name?

Wash tub

Quern stone

Box iron

Sugar cutters

Butterprint

Losset

(wooden object for preparing bread)

Sciob basket

Besom

(heather sweeping brush)



Did You Know! When you visit the National Museum of Ireland — Country Life you can view these objects in the **Hearth and Home** exhibition and in our handling collection.

Well done for taking part in this activity.
You can check out more learning resources when you visit our museum website at www.museum.ie