


# Cú Chulainn

Autumn 2001 

BBC TWO NI

Fri 12.25-12.30 pm  
14th Sept- 19th OctKey Stage 1/2  
age 7-11 years 

Cú Chulainn, one of Ulster's most famous legendary characters, is the hero of this five part cartoon series.

In five action filled five-minute programmes we follow his daring deeds from his boyhood to his tragic death.

Upper Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils can learn about his great adventures in Ulster and in Scotland in these short but informative cartoon programmes.

## Programmes

- |                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Growing Up          | Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> September |
| 2. The Name            | Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> September |
| 3. In Love and War     | Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> September |
| 4. The Great Challenge | Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> October    |
| 5. The Hero's Death    | Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> October   |

## N.I. Curriculum

The series is relevant to the N.I. Programmes of Study for History and English:

Pupils should have opportunities to develop communication skills by re-telling stories about the past; for example, pupils should retell the main points of a legend, folktale or story in their own words, such as the legend of Finn McCool or Cú Chulainn.

Work in Geography, Art, Music, ICT and Cultural Heritage can also be incorporated with classes after the programmes.

Courage, loyalty, jealousy, greed, compassion, love and war .... all the big themes and more are here in ..... Cú Chulainn.

Granda is persuaded by his grandchildren to tell them one of his Irish stories.

He relates to them the story of Setanta (a.k.a. Cú Chulainn) who enjoys a happy school-free childhood until he feels that he must fulfil his destiny. An eagle informs the boy that he is special and the God Lugh has a special role for him as a warrior. He must go to Emain Macha to train and learn the skills of war. His arrival is met with consternation by the other trainees. King Conor accepts him but extracts a pledge from Setanta that he will serve the other students. "I will if they will serve me", replies Setanta, so beginning his career as a warrior and a legend.

### **Key words/concepts**

Legend, kinship, loyalty, destiny, oral tradition.

### **Before the programme:**

- ◆ Prepare the pupils by discussing the ideas in the key concepts.
- ◆ Ask pupils to look out for birds and animals which appear, sometimes fleetingly, in the programmes.

### **After the programme:**

- ◆ Discuss the episode drawing out issues eg: education, sport, destiny, co-operation.
- ◆ Setanta was a great sportsman. Explore through reading, writing, art or music present day sporting heroes.



- ◆ Create a class comic strip version of the story so far (to be continued if so wished).
- ◆ Schools are familiar places of learning to pupils. Explore with them other modes and venues for learning.
- ◆ **Worksheet One:** Mark Emain Macha on the Map, (Emain Macha is near Armagh City).
- ◆ **Worksheet Two:** List the creatures you spotted in episode one.

*Please note these worksheets will be added to in subsequent programmes.*



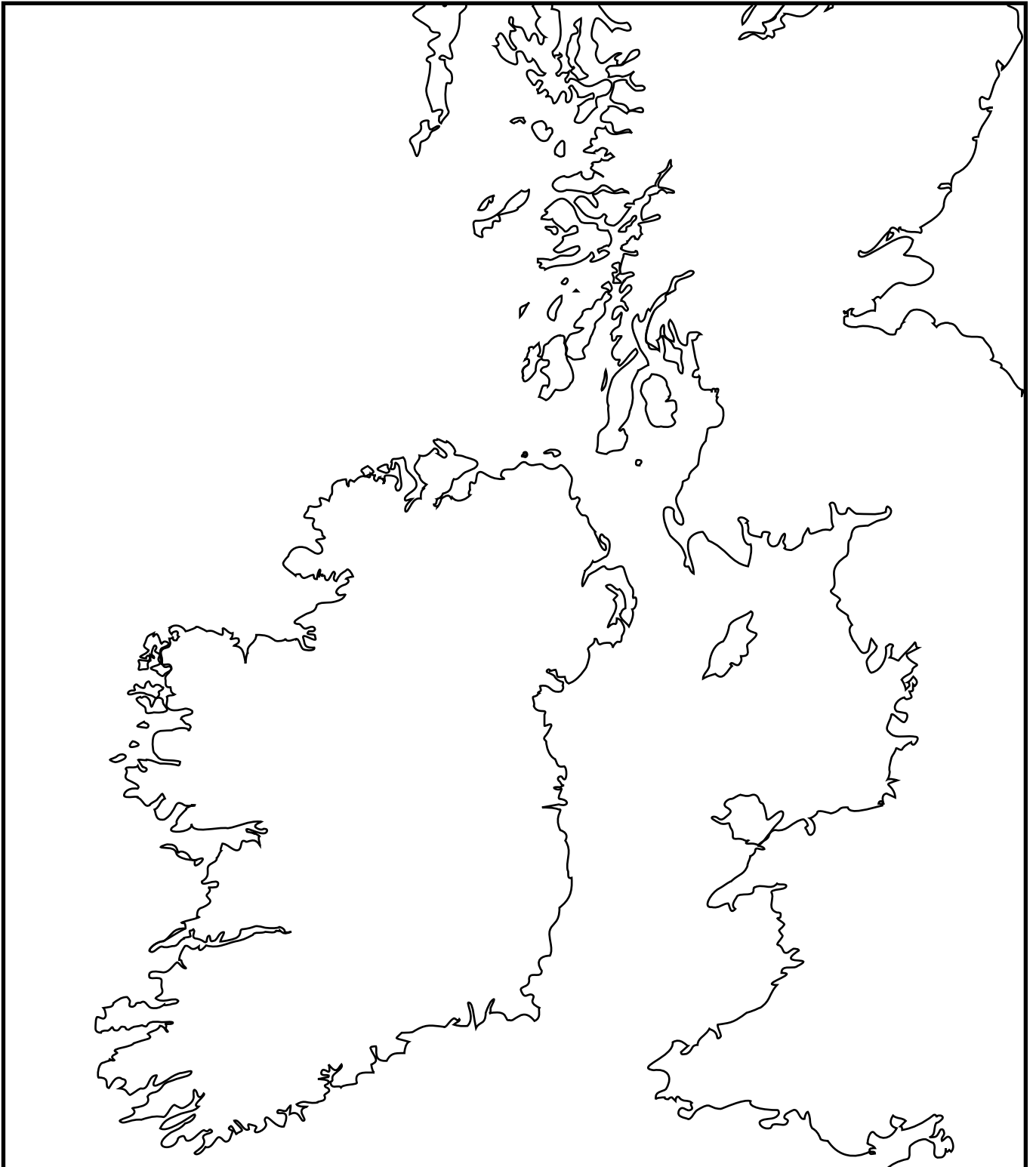
# Cū Chulainn



## Growing Up

Programme 1  
Worksheet 1

To be filled in after each programme using places referred to in the story:

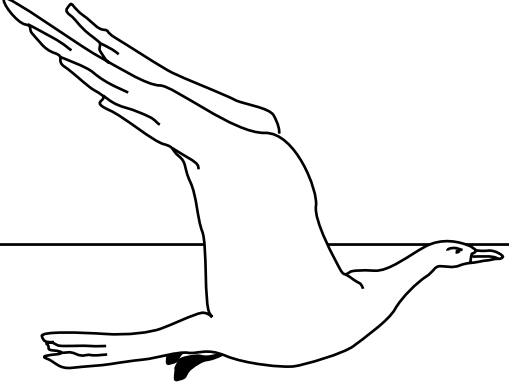
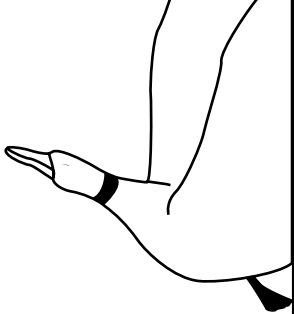

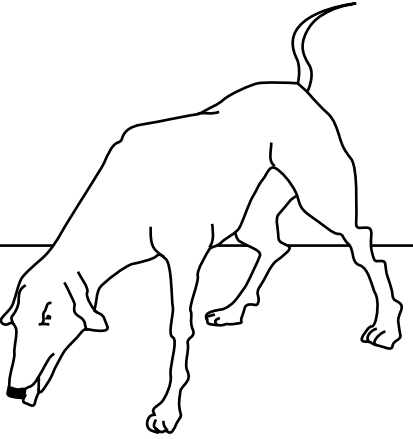
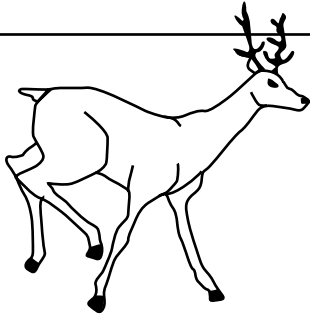
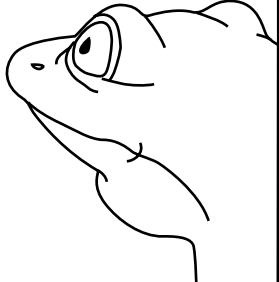




## Growing Up

Programme 1  
Worksheet 2

To be filled in with names of birds and animals observed in the video:

<p><b>1. Growing up</b></p> 	
	<p><b>2. The Name</b></p> 
<p><b>3. In Love and War</b></p> 	<p><b>4. The Great Challenge</b></p>
<p><b>5. The Hero's Death</b></p>	



The arrival and naming of a new puppy sets Granda off on another part of his Cú Chulainn story. Setanta is invited with his friends to a great feast but he starts to daydream and is left behind. By the time he arrives the feast has begun, the gates are locked and worse, the guard dog attacks him. Setanta kills the dog by driving a hurley ball (sliotar) down its throat. The host, Culann, the blacksmith is furious at the loss of the fiercest dog in Ireland. Setanta offers his services as replacement and is duly renamed, Cú Chulainn, Culann's Hound.

### Key words/concepts:

Culann, the blacksmith, Cú, a hound in Irish, daydreaming, self-defence.

### Before the programme:

- ◆ Explain the storyline and keywords.

### After the programme:

Explore:

- ◆ the idea of a guard dog.
- ◆ pets and working animals
- ◆ man's relationship and duty to animals
- ◆ domestic, farm, wild animals,
- ◆ zoos - pros and cons
- ◆ Make a list of stories involving animals in folklore, literature, film, cartoon, t.v., video or computer games.
- ◆ Culann was a Smith, find other names which come from the work a person did; eg: Thatcher, Taylor etc ....



- ◆ Setanta becomes known as Cú Chulainn.  
Examine the importance of names,
  - Proper names,
  - First Names,
  - Surnames,
  - Pet names,
  - Nicknames,
  - Stage names,
  - Brand names,
  - Name changes eg   Cassius Clay  
                              Simon/Peter  
                              Saul/Paul
  
- ◆ Mark on **Worksheet Two** creatures spotted in Episode Two.
  
- ◆ **Worksheet Three:** A script of a radio news interview with Setanta.

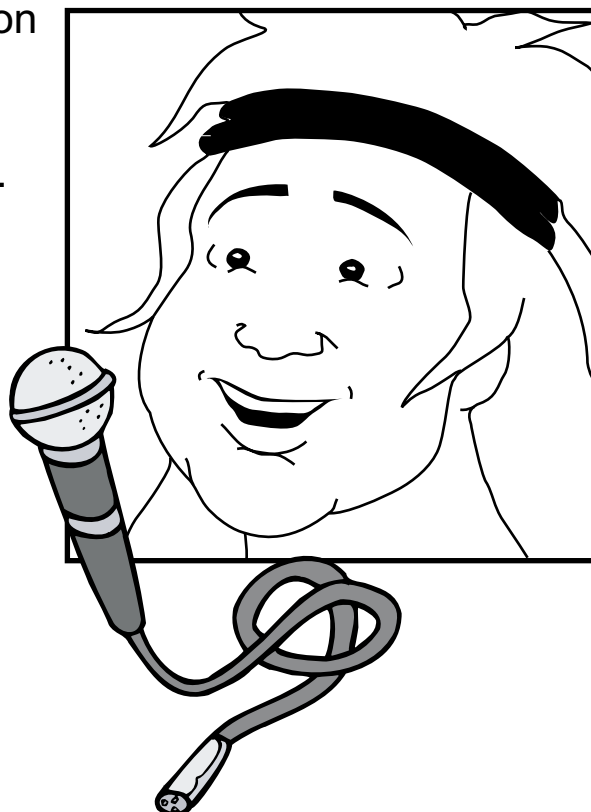
Complete a script of a radio interview with Setanta/Cú Chulainn:

**Interviewer :** Setanta, I hear from now on you are to be called Cú Chulainn.

**Cú Chulainn:** Yes, that's my new name.

**Interviewer :** Why?

**Cú Chulainn:** .....





# Cú Chulainn



## In Love AND War

Programme 3  
28th September

Cú Chulainn falls in love with Emer one of the most beautiful women in Ireland. They pledge loyalty but soon they must part as he has to continue his military studies in Scotland with Scathach. Emer gives him a love token which he promises never to part with. With difficulty he finally joins Scathach's camp and daily improves his skills. As a test Scathach demands his love brooch. He refuses her and he is pitted against a multi-faceted enemy. His love token lost, he returns crestfallen to Ireland. Emer realises he will always put his work first and regretfully they part.

### **Key words/concepts:**

romance, 'soppy' promises, tokens, destiny, choices.

### **Before the programme:**

- ◆ Outline the plot of the episode
- ◆ Discuss themes of love, choice, commitment.

### **After the programme.**

- ◆ Make a list of real or fictional characters who were in love eg: Romeo and Juliet, Ken and Barbie, Tony and Cherie, Posh and Becks.
- ◆ Search catalogues and magazines for love tokens eg: Claddagh rings, engagement rings, Forever Friends toys etc. Make a collage.
- ◆ See how many love songs you can list or sing.
- ◆ Cú Chulainn took 'four days and four nights' to get to Scotland. Explore modern routes and connections between Ireland and Scotland.

- ◆ Scathach's island is not exactly identified. Draw a map of the island and label it. Mark sites suitable for the different warrior skills. Name the sites with suitable names.
- ◆ Design a brochure for Scathach's Island training camp; mention skills, tests, diet sheets, equipment etc...
- ◆ Mark on **Worksheet One**: Errigal, Rathlin Island, Lough Neagh, Scotland.
- ◆ Update your 'Animals and Creatures' on **Worksheet Two**.
- ◆ Create your own Word Search Puzzle Worksheet using words associated with the series.



# Cú Chulainn



## The Great Challenge

Programme 4  
5th October

Granda explains to the children how important cattle were to the economy of Ireland long ago and that rivalry and jealousy were as rampant then as now. Queen Maeve of Connaught wants to own the fabled Brown Bull of Cooley. She offers to buy it but the rejection of her offer angers her so much that she decides that she will own that bull come what may. Maeve lines up a formidable army against Ulster and invokes magic against the Ulstermen. Since Cú Chulainn is not a born Ulsterman he is unaffected by the spell. Single-handed our hero takes on Maeve's men. Cute and cunning Maeve uses her wiles to make the great Ferdia jealous of Cú Chulainn. Against his better judgement Ferdia is lured into facing his friend and kinsman Cú Chulainn. Granda leaves the story to be continued.

### Key words/concepts:

barter, cattle as money, enchantment, spells, honour, jealousy, four Provinces.

### Before the Programme:

- ◆ Talk the pupils through the storyline, explaining this is only Part One.
- ◆ Discuss the key words and concepts.

### After the programme:

- ◆ Discuss why Maeve wanted the bull so badly. Should the bull have been sold to prevent a war? Should Maeve have gone to war to get it?
- ◆ On your computers create some spells and magic potions.

- ◆ On the video freeze the frame showing the Brown bull. Draw him and make up an advertisement as if he were for sale.
- ◆ Using percussion, create sounds to fit the various battle scenes involving Cú Chulainn.
- ◆ Begin a cartoon strip version of the Brown Bull of Cooley story so far.
- ◆ Mark your **Worksheet One** with the Four Provinces of Ireland.  
See :<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/symbols/flags.htm>
- ◆ Update your **Worksheet Two** with Creatures from the Episode.
- ◆ **Worksheet Four** : Mock up of a newspaper report on Cú Chulainn's heroic defence of Ulster. News report to be composed on computer if possible.



# Cú Chulainn



## The GREAT Challenge

Programme 4  
Worksheet 4

Write a report on Cú Chulainn's heroic defence of Ulster:



# The Ulster News



Thursday 16th August 602

## Cú Chulainn Battles On

Exclusive Report by \_\_\_\_\_

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for writing the report.



Cú Chulainn preparing for battle



# Cú Chulainn



## The hero's Death

Programme 5  
19th October

The army of Connaught was making no headway against Cú Chulainn. He was picking Maeve's men off one by one. Ferdia, foster brother of Cú Chulainn, is eventually matched against Ulster's hero. For days they battle it out and by night they assist and nurse each other. They pledge always to be brothers but eventually Cú Chulainn kills Ferdia. Maeve gets her bull but it is a Pyrrhic victory for she loses him soon after. Sadly Cú Chulainn dies of his battle wounds.

### Key words/concepts

Ford, stalemate, chess, foster brother, kinsman, challenge, shame

### Before the programme:

- ◆ recap on the story so far
- ◆ give a brief outline of the story to come (saving the ending)
- ◆ explain key words

### After the programme

- ◆ Continue the comic strip version of the Brown Bull of Cooley story.
- ◆ Brainstorm about professions which care for others.  
Create a collage of people caring for other people.
- ◆ Search the internet for websites giving further information on Cú Chulainn and other Irish legends.
- ◆ Build up a scrapbook on Cú Chulainn using information from websites, library books, information books etc ....

# *The Hero's Death*

Programme 5  
19th October

- ◆ Finish off **Worksheet Two** with creatures from today's programme.
- ◆ Complete the **Worksheet Five**.



## The hero's Death

Programme 5  
Worksheet 5

C	U	C	H	U	L	A	I	N	N	A	C
L	R	E	H	T	O	R	B	L	O	D	O
L	O	H	F	A	R	D	L	A	N	L	O
E	S	U	T	S	V	U	R	U	O	L	L
R	D	E	G	I	B	T	O	D	R	E	E
E	S	R	T	H	M	H	M	S	T	P	Y
T	F	S	O	A	N	S	N	D	U	S	X
S	E	T	A	W	N	E	K	L	R	N	C
L	D	O	D	B	S	T	A	C	D	O	R
U	A	H	T	A	C	S	A	G	A	T	F
F	E	R	D	I	A	M	A	C	H	L	U
R	S	C	O	T	L	A	N	D	E	E	B
E	W	H	Y	E	L	R	U	H	R	V	U
M	E	A	E	V	I	C	T	O	R	O	S
E	R	S	R	A	D	N	A	R	G	L	S

Words can be found vertically, diagonally, horizontally or backwards

**CUCHULAINN**  
**ULSTER**  
**LOUGH NEAGH**  
**EMER**  
**FERDIA**  
**BLACKSMITH**  
**SCOTLAND**  
**HURLEY**  
**GRANDA**  
**SWORD**

**COOLEY**  
**SETANTA**  
**SCATHA**  
**HOUND**  
**BULL**  
**LOVE**  
**WAR**  
**BROTHER**  
**FORD**  
**VICTOR**

**Irish Sagas and Folk Tales** by Eileen Ó Faoláin  
*Ward River Press*

**Great Folk Tales of Ireland** by Mary McGarry  
*Muller, Blond & White*

**The Táin** by Liam MacUistin  
*The O'Brien Press*

**Top Ten Irish Legends** by Margaret Simpson  
*Hippo*

**Myths and Legends of Ireland** by G.M. Garnier  
*Heinemann*

**Over Nine Waves** by M.Heaney  
*Faber and Faber.*

**Legends of The Celts** by Frank Delaney  
*Harper Collins.*

**Early Irish Myths and Sagas**  
*Penguin Classics.*

**Irish Myth and Legend** by Ronan Coughlan  
*Appletree Press.*