



GRESSENHALL
FARM AND WORKHOUSE
MUSEUM OF NORFOLK LIFE

Murder in the Workhouse Script: Chapters 3 & 4

If you wish to follow the script along with the film, tracking times (approx every 30 seconds) are counted down from >10:52< to >00:00< in **red**.

When there are sound effects, these are highlighted in **green**. Images are noted in **blue**.

>10:52< Start of the film

[music throughout] [image of Gressenhall Workhouse with opening titles]

Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse

Murder in the Workhouse

Chapters 3 and 4

This is the third in a series of short films to look at life in the workhouse through a murder mystery.

Everything you need to solve the murder is contained in these films. You will need a pen and paper to record your observations.

A script is available to download if you wish to follow the dialogue.

The characters in this mystery are fictitious, as is the murder. However, all other information about the workhouse is based upon historical events.

>10:23<

[image of workhouse in c1800 with chapter title]

Chapter 3: the schoolmaster

Detective:

This is Gressenhall workhouse. My name is Detective Lightfoot- and I have a murder to investigate.

[Image of Mr Barker]

Mr Richard Barker's body was discovered floating in the workhouse pool. He had drowned, however before this had happened, he had been struck by a heavy, blunt object.

>10:00<

[image of workhouse, note and oakum rope]

In chapter 1, I arrived at the workhouse and viewed the body. Two items of interest were found – a note written upon a scrap of wet paper and some strands of string or rope in his jacket pocket.

[image of watch chain, shoes and Mr Barker]

In addition his watch and one shoe were missing and the back of his coat was torn.

[image of Mr Fuller & Mr Scrivener]

In chapter 2 we met the master of the workhouse, Mr Fuller, and found out what he knew about his staff – at the end of the chapter Mr Scrivener, the schoolmaster informed us that a shoe had been discovered in the workhouse burial ground.

>09:23<

[image of burial ground]

Well of course, we must go to the burial ground but, since Mr Scrivener is present, perhaps we should take the opportunity to speak with him.

[image of Mr Scrivener & locations on workhouse map]

I asked Mr Scrivener what he remembered about last night.

Mr Scrivener:

I left the meeting at half past seven by the workhouse bell and went to settle the boys down in their dormitory.

[images of Victorian schoolboys]

After that I went to tidy up in the boys' school room. Um, yes, two of the older boys act as pupil teachers so we can teach boys of different ages at the same time. But I have to say, I am afraid that the boys are not as tidy as they might be.

>08:45<

[image of Mr Scrivener in locations on map]

I went with him to the boys school room... as we walked I told him he had been seen outside the girls' schoolroom at half past nine.

[image of schoolroom]

Mr Scrivener:

Ah! I remember I had lent a book to the school mistress and I went to there to retrieve it. It was dark and I saw nothing untoward. Then to bed.

[image of Scrivener]

Detective:

I asked him why the Guardians allowed him to leave the workhouse on one evening each week.

Mr Scrivener:

Yes, the Guardian's agreed that I should be allowed one evening's freedom from this place, I shall walk into East Dereham, I think ...

>08:09<

[image of schoolroom]

Ah - here we are at the School Room. (*confident & teacherly now*) I only teach the boys, of course- they wouldn't have a chap teaching the girls! - there's a school mistress for that.

[Image of Victorian schoolgirls, schoolroom, workhouse and taxpayers]

But all the children are taught, every morning, for three hours. Of course, they learn the three R's- that's reading, writing, and arithmetic. We hope that if they learn to read and write they will find good jobs and never return to the workhouse, thereby saving the taxpayers a lot of money!

[image of boys learning farming skills and girls as domestic servants]

In the afternoon the children learn the skills they may use to find work; boys learn about farming of course, on our industrial farm, and the girls learn tasks such as sewing – most suitable if they become domestic servants, working in a big house.

>07:30<

[image of Mr Scrivener]

But I have to say, it is difficult. A chap has to maintain discipline in class; the rules of the classroom are not always obeyed by the scholars! School is *not* a place for discussion, Detective! *My* job is to tell children what they need to know, and *their* job is simply to listen, and to learn.

[image of cane, finger stocks and dunce's hat]

Detective:

Hmm... a cane to strike children if they were badly behaved, finger stocks to lock their fingers in place if they fidget, the dunce's hat for them to wear if they cannot keep up with their lessons- it brought back memories of my own schooling...

>07:00<

[Images of Victorian schoolboys]

Some are very troublesome, and some I have to say are very, very difficult- like that Jacob Flowerdew ...

[image of desk top]

Detective:

I could not help but see some words scratched upon one of the desks; the shape of a loveheart, and the names Mr Scrivener and Miss Bacon, and beneath, the initials JF. Mr Scrivener hastily tried to hide it ...

Mr Scrivener:

Yes, well detective ... boys will be boys

>06:30<

[image of dog]

Detective:

I asked Mr Scrivener about his dog.

Mr Scrivener:

He was just a mongrel but... man's best friend and all that. He only had one eye so I called him Nelson- I kept him as a bit of company.

[images of Mr Fuller and Mr Barker]

Greve discovered him and told the Master, who of course had to tell Mr Barker, and- and then Mr Barker had the dog removed! And now Mr Barker lies dead, beaten to death like a dog himself ... ha!

>06:00<

[image of map with close up of pond]

Mr Scrivener and I walked from boys' school room, through dining hall and past the kitchen, out to the girls schoolroom and the burial ground beyond. He showed me where Mr Barker's shoe had been found, not twenty paces from gate. Something drew me back towards the pond.

[image of pond and pocket watch]

As I neared it, I saw a glint- a glint in the sunlight at the water's edge. I knelt and picked up a golden watch. The watch was stopped at nine o'clock- perhaps the moment when it had entered the water...

>05:30<

[image of workhouse, pond, watch, burial ground, and Mr Barker]

Detective:

I walked back to the workhouse, thinking upon this, and other things.

Mr Barker's body was found in the workhouse pond and his watch suggested it may have been placed there at nine o'clock. And yet, why was Mr Barker's shoe found halfway between the workhouse and the pond? And why was the back of his coat torn?

[image of schoolroom]

I was musing about this when I walked around the corner of the girls' schoolroom, and was almost knocked head over heels by a woman. She muttered something- something which I'm afraid I cannot repeat in present company- and she rushed off towards the dining room. I followed her.

[image of Nancy Flowerdew]

>04:43<

End of chapter 3

>04:25<

Chapter 4: Nancy Flowerdew, the unmarried mother

[Image of Nancy Flowerdew and location on map]

Detective:

The woman was Nancy Flowerdew, a poor female inmate of the workhouse. I finally caught up with her as she entered the laundry yard. She heard my footsteps, and turned.

Nancy:

I didn't kill him! Well I couldn't have done, I was locked up in the unmarried mothers ward. Oh-ar, yes, you as well eh? Giving me that look. I know what you're thinking, cos you're no different to the rest: an unmarried mother, with a child, well in my case three children, born out of wedlock. That's right, I'm not married- and I have had children.

>03:42<

[image of workhouse]

Detective:

I assured her that I was not accusing her of anything - I simply wanted to ask her some questions. She continued.

[images of Victorian women]

And when you are an unmarried mother, no one wants to know you. You can't work 'cos you have a little one, and anyway, people don't want to give you any work 'cos you are an unmarried mother. So for lots of unmarried mothers the only place we can go is the blummin' workhouse.

[image of workhouse & unmarried mothers ward]

>03:15<

And in here, well, they don't want us mixing with the respectable women. So us unmarried mothers are kept in our own ward and they call us the Jacketers, 'cos we're forced to wear a special jacket to show how ashamed we are. Just you imagine how that feels!

[image of Nancy Flowerdew, Mr Barker and Mrs Barker]

Detective:

I replied that I was only a humble policeman and really could not answer such questions. I asked Nancy what she knew about Mr Barker.

Nancy:

Now Detective, you know I am not one to tell stories, and normally I'd carry this sort of thing with me to the grave. But, that Mr Barker, our fine, upstanding chairman of the guardians? Well, let us say that he says one thing and do another. He makes us wear these jackets and calls us immoral, but his wife isn't the only one to share his bed ... if you know what I mean. But of course, all of that gets hushed up: one rule for the men, one rule for the women! And for that matter, one rule for the rich and another for the poor.

[image of the cook and poor people]

>02:15<

Detective:

I pressed her on this matter but she returned to her laundry, muttering.

[images of workhouse laundry and female inmates]

Nancy:

So much laundry to do! Not surprising with so many old people, and young and sick people in here... lots of sheets and clothes. Not to mention the drawers, oh the underwear! You wouldn't think the women'd get through so many pairs...

[image of Victorian drawers (knickers)]

Well, that can be drafty this time of year... Oh it's hard work alright, but we all talk to each other if Matron isn't here, and at least we get an extra ration of beer for working so hard! But I still have to go back to the blummin' Jacketers ward at the end of the day, don't I?

[images of laundry equipment]

>01:37<

Detective:

Lord spare me! I asked her to get to the point.

[images of Nancy, Victorian schoolboys, Nancy's husband, and the schoolroom]

Nancy:

I was just about to! My boy, tha's Jacob, he is a bright boy, not like his stupid fool of a father. He's taught his letters and numbers by Mr Scrivener, he is. Of course, he'd never get an education outside the workhouse, he wouldn't, he is nearly 14 and Scrivener is talking about him being apprenticed to a trade! Not a farmworker- a trade!

[images of boys working, cook, scrivener, desktop and gruel]

Where was I? Yes- Jacob is taught by Mr Scrivener, and he say when Mr Scrivener takes the boys to the dining room at dinner time, well, Mr Scrivener can hardly look at that pretty young Cook. He goes all red in the face and tongue-tied and ends up dribbling into the gruel- as if that could be any more disgusting!

>00:48<

[image of Mr Barker and rural poor people]

Detective:

I left Nancy Flowerdew, pondering upon what she had said- not only about the murder, but also about a society in which the lives of the poor depend so much upon the whims of those above them.

As I left, I heard singing from the other side of the laundry wall.

[image of laundry and workhouse c1800]

>00:22<

[music]

End of chapter 4.