

CURIOSITIES

Curious objects, structures, monuments, landmarks, sights, etc. For example, Wishing stones or "chairs," freaks of nature (i.e. grotesque rock formations)—in fact, any scene or object which may be regarded as queer, quaint or mirth-provoking. Location and description. Any story or legend to be related.

NONE

CUSTOMS ETC. (cont'd.)

THE "STRAW BOYS". A form of Mummary which dates from olden times, is still practised in these parts. On the occasion of a local wedding, a group of young men attired in all sorts of fancy costumes, turn up at the bride's house late at night when the guests are assembled and the capers of these, "the Straw Boys", provide great merriment for the entire party.

Originally, the lads wore costumes made entirely from straw and thus earned the name "Straw Boys" but now a varied and most amusing range of garments may be used, some wearing the straw, another a swallow-tail coat and bowler hat and perhaps another young man will be clad in a pyjama suit.

The "Straw Boys" elect their own leader whose duty it is to ensure that the proceedings are maintained at a lively pace but though the fun usually lasts until the early hours of the morning, and may be quite hilarious, the young men leave usually after a couple of hours entertainment and in orderly fashion.

This custom prevails throughout North Mayo.

CUSTOMS, PATTERNS, ETC.

Brief account of old customs, traditional cures, etc., still practised in the district. Pilgrimages to Holy Wells, Shrines, etc. Patterns.

We are told that St. Patrick converted ~~to Christ~~ King Awley, his seven sons and twelve thousand men. It is presumed that St. Patrick came upon Awley and his sons and followers at Mullaghferry, their place of assembly and that he baptized them all in a fountain.

I have found two wells in the locality but there is no evidence to support a claim to being the above well in the case of either.

One well is in the lands of Mr Nicholas Carroll at Mullaghferry but, although there is an opinion that this is, or was a Holy Well, I could trace no positive connection with St. Patrick.

A second well on the lands of Mr Alex Carson at Ballintain, near Mullaghferry, is also pointed to as the Holy Well. Local people have a belief that the waters of this well possess healing qualities and water is taken from it by some who suffer from stomach complaints, in the belief that it will cure them. It is said that there have been instances of cures being effected through drinking this water.

TOBAR MHUIRE.

About two hundred yards south of Rosserk Abbey, this Holy Well, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, is housed in a small stone building whose walls, two feet thick, measure 11 feet long, 8 feet high and 7 feet wide.

An inscribed stone in the south wall announces that the stone building was erected in 1798 by John Lynett, Rosserk. Another older stone under this, proclaims that it had been placed there by Fr. M. Crean in 1684.

The first stone carries inscriptions in both Latin and English and the inscription on the second stone is Latin.

The most popular day for making this station is August 15th but large numbers of pilgrims visit here from August 15th to September 8th every year.

(Signed)

Conor O'Brien
Surveyor.

(Continued above)

DATE 27.5.43.