

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.

One thing approximating to a curiosity in the parish is a stone just inside the roadside fence, a few hundred yards from Midfield Chapel and in Castlebarrough townland.

The stone itself is uninteresting, being merely a rectangular boulder $7\frac{1}{2}$ long, 38" wide and 36" high, lying inclined to the road. The stone, however is locally famous as "Billy the Puffer's Stone" which name has been given to the stone for generations and for some reason not now known. It apparently is famous as a "ghost stone" and the stories of ghosts that appeared at it are legion. The story goes that a man once attempted to break up the stone but a chip flew into his eye and he lost the sight of it. A second individual who decided to break it up for building purposes suffered exactly the same fate. A third was also smitten by bad luck in the form of an unfortunate accident. Even yet, some people hasten past ~~the~~ Billy the Puffer's after dark.

CUSTOMS, PATTERNS, ETC.

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

On Jan. 1st some people will not pay out money lest they be "paying it out for the year."

On May day many people will not sell, but give away milk lest the year's luck be taken with it.

On St. Bridget's Eve the "bridegogs" go round. These are young people, dressed up and carrying a 'biddy' i.e. a dressed-up doll. They visit neighbouring houses where they sing and please and are usually rewarded.

On Bonfire's night June 23rd fires are lighted in the open air at night.

On Nov's night or Hallow E'en the children usually are given entertainment at home and nuts, apples etc. distributed and games played.

On St. Stephen's day there are the 'mummers'—similar to the 'bridegogs' but without the 'biddy'.

(Signed) Donald J. Laughman
Surveyor.

DATE July 2nd 1944

Beside the Tennis Courts in Brabazon Park is an horizontal flag in memory of a dog owned by Major Hugh Brabazon (who died in 1864).

Granade

My gentle and yeoman companion rests here 7th May 1863.

and not five sparrows sold for two fastings and not
one of them is forgotten before God.

So faithful, lovely, gentle, true,
oh, who can now his place supply.
This grave with tears I will bedew
and breathe o'er it a frequent sigh.

Epitaph to my dog.

The dog is said to have saved his master's life on
one occasion.

In St. Martin's Eve a fowl is killed and its blood sprinkled in the four corners of the house.

The two chairs on which the coffin rests are always tipped over as soon as the coffin is taken out for bearing.

Funerals take the longest route to the graveyard.

The number of lighted candles at a wake must be an odd number.

The gravediggers place spade and shovel in cross formation over the open grave and they remain so until interment.

If a family is especially stricken e.g. if two deaths occur within a short space - the relatives have the custom of three crossing the grave of the second deceased member just after burial.

Some belief yet exists in a few townlands about "stealing the butter".

a visitor should give a hand with the dash.

a man may not light his pipe from a coal of the fire while churning is in progress.

after milking, many people make the sign of the Cross on the cow's side with the thumb which has been lightly dipped in the fresh milk foam.

Concerning may day - if it falls on a Monday a coal to help light a neighbour's fire will not be given.

The first to the well on may day will have the luck of the year.

clocks are stopped and doors and windows opened when a death occurs in the house.

a broken mirror means seven years ill-luck.

The coffin is always carried through the door so that the deceased's feet go first.

oftentimes a ^{young} calf will be seen tethered in a kitchen of a country homestead. There is a half-superstitious belief that the newly born animal will thrive if tied indoors for a time.

A business man leaves much value on the first sale on Monday morning and will oftentimes keep separate the money made thus. Some consider it an ill omen for the week should the Monday's morning bargaining not result in a deal.

At times the bargain is sealed by the purchaser's scraping up on the end of his stick, a piece of mud and smearing it on the animal's back.

One magpie for sorrow - two for joy.

A robin brings good luck to a house.

Wakes are always held. They are quiet and solemn. Tobacco (shredded) is passed around to the pipe smokers and sometimes snuff.

Cases:

- Ringworm. Used by church man.
- Foul-mouth. By breath of child who has never seen its father.
- Chin-cough. Heret's leavings.
- Warts. A fasting spindle rubbed on each morning.
- Sore throat. A stocking of hot salt tied around the neck.
- Warts. Water from hole in a stone, found accidentally.
- Burns. White of an egg. Raw potato.
- Ague. Railed nettles, the juice taken daily if chronic.
- Kidney trouble. Roots of leather boiled and juice taken.
- Back-ache. Poultice of mountain sage, applied over muslin.