

Noord Ierland

Mythen sagen en legendes

Mythen sagen en legenden? 'Het lijkt wel of die Noord-Ieren die dingen hebben uitgevonden', verzuchte Kghylighieo Ghluaghahannan, kenner pur sang, toen ik hem ter voorbereiding op onze wandeling vroeg naar een aantal pittige verhalen om de tocht luister bij te zetten. Daar zijn ze dan.....

Floating Stones

County Cavan

In Ireland there are many stories of stones that float on water.

St Mogue was born on an island near to Templeport Lake in County Cavan, and the priest who conducted his baptism crossed a river on a large floating stone to get there.

The priest returned to the mainland in the same manner he had come, on the floating stone. Thereafter, the stone was kept for many years as a method of carrying coffins to the island for burial purposes. Then a courting couple decided to use the stone as a means for a gentle cruise down the lake.

The stone was hurt by such a silly use, that it broke into three parts ~ and perhaps inevitably the couple drowned.

St Barry once used a stone as a boat to cross the river Shannon. He kindly left the stone to the people who locally used the river as a means of transport. He told them as long as they remained kind and caring to one another, the boat would continue to carry them across the river. However, after many good years of service the stone "boat" sank, cause: the people stopped caring for each other and became selfish.



Vera the Witch



County Sligo

A long time ago, there was an old woman who was a witch. She was many hundred years old. To all around her she was known as the "Old Woman of Bheara". She lived in a house on the outskirts of the Mountain of the Two Birds.

Vera owned a cow. However this was no ordinary cow. The cow was magic, and it gave Vera the very best milk in all of County Sligo. No matter how jealous most people were of Vera's cow, they knew that they could not steal it, for fear of Vera's powers.

One foolish man and his son were not so wise, hence they decided to seize Vera's cow for their own gains. They knew not of the awesome powers that Vera possessed. So, when night fell, father and son snuck into Vera's mountain garden and captured the cow.

Whilst these events were taking place, Vera knew exactly what was happening. She grabbed her magic wand, went outside into her garden and touched the man and his son with it. **In a flash, they were transformed into stone figures.**



Would you believe it that unfortunately Vera slipped in the darkness, and as she fell, her wand accidentally touched her cow. Thus, the cow turned to stone. *It was a tragedy for Vera.* She was now a sad and lonely old woman, with her age finally beginning to take effect.

Vera decided she did not want her lifestyle anymore. Vera asked the fairy wind to take her to the Lake of the Two Geese, which was situated on the top of the Mountain of Two Birds. It was there that she took her own life. She drowned, and to this day remains in the murky depths of the lake.

Returning Stones

Returning stones are known be the most mystical of all stones.

Intended for use as a makeshift anchor on his boat, a fisherman once stole a stone from a wall of a church. The fisherman then went to earn his trade. He found a nice spot to fish, and then threw the stone which was now attached to a rope, overboard. However the stone became dis-attached from the rope. The rope had been securely tied to the stone, or so the fisherman thought. He watched as the stone sunk.

Nevertheless as the fisherman returned home with a smaller catch than usual.

The fisherman passed the church from where he had taken the stone from, and shockingly noticed the stone back in it's original place in the wall!

Another story concerns a stone close to a well, at Ardfert in County Kerry. Many, many years ago a soldier removed the stone from its spot with the use of an ox cart. The ox was then used to cart the stone up Bulloch Hill. The ox reached the very peak of Bulloch Hill, then refused to go any further. Thus the stone was left on the top of the hill overnight.

Expectedly and mysteriously the following morning, the stone had returned to it's rightful place within close vicinity of the well!

The Fisherman's Strange Catch

County Galway

Once, a fisherman from Errismore, hooked a very unexpected catch. A fine day when the fish had been plentiful was drawing to an end, when without warning the fisherman felt a great tug on his line. He thought he had caught a very large fish.

Amazingly, he hauled it in, only to find a small boy who had red hair. The fisherman had always wanted a son, therefore his catch was quite fruitful.

He took the boy home with him and put him on the floor. The child rushed under a bed and stayed there until morning broke.

When the man finally managed to coerce the boy from the under the bed, the boy would not eat or drink anything. The most craved after food was displayed in front of the boy's eyes, and mentions of the happy life the two would have together, could still not spring the boy into action of any sort! The boy just sat timidly, looking uncertain.

By now, the fisherman was also feeling sad. *Something had to be done.* Hence, the man took the boy in his boat, back to the place he had caught him. **The little boy smiled, and dived back into the water from whence he had came, to be never seen again!**



The Little People

Connacht

Also known as the Faery People, the Little People set up their homes close to the houses of humans. The Little People lived just below the surface of the ground, and whenever Irish women were throwing dirty water outside, they would often shout out a warning to the fairies.

The fairies were in their prime during Hallowe'en and May Eve. During this time, babies and newly married brides were particularly susceptible to their silent form of magic.

One May Eve, Mary, the new bride of Sean, was observing her mother-in-law cooking in the kitchen. Her mother-in-law asked Mary if she had proceeded in hanging the whin bushes out, in order to prevent the fairies from coming into the house. However, as soon as Mary had hung the whin out on the wall, a child had appeared from nowhere and taken it.

All of a sudden, the same little child appeared at the door holding a cup. As a presumption, Mary filled the cup with milk, and the child vanished just as she had appeared. Suddenly, a tiny man appeared at the door, asking for a light for his smoking pipe. Again, Mary helped out. She carried a lighted coal to the old man's pipe, then he also disappeared. Within moments of the old man disappearing, Sean came home, but had not seen the child not the little old man.

Sean's mother was certain that the Faery People had paid the house a visit, but was also livid that Mary had offered milk and fire on such a day as May Eve.

Sean gave Mary the ribbons he had acquired for her. As he was doing this, another child came in by the door. Yet this child was so gentle and polite, that Sean's mother warmly invited her into the house.

The child wanted to dance, so a space was cleared for her. Mary was tranced by the power of the dance. Sean and his mother became very concerned for Mary, as this was a faery child with obvious mystical powers.

In vain, Sean desperately attempted to get his wife away from the misgivings of the spell. But try as he might, the spell was more and more having an effect on Mary. The faery magic was luring Mary away to the charms of Fairyland.

For a split second, Mary saw the love in her husband's face, then she was lost. Mary left with the faery child, to never be seen or heard of again...



The Mermaid of Sligo



County Sligo

West of the bay of Sligo, lyes Tireragh. This is where once a chieftain fell in love with a mermaid. The mermaid was sitting on a rock combing her long and beautiful golden hair, when the chieftain first set his eyes on her. Every day thereafter, the chieftain would venture down to the shore to find her ~ and his love grew for her.

One day the chieftain noticed that the mermaid was asleep below her magic mantle. The chieftain knew that if he removed the magic mantle, the mermaid would lose her "fish body" and turn into a woman. With a measure of efficiency, he crept up to where the mermaid was resting, removed the mantle, and concealed it in amongst some rocks.

Without any such warning, the mermaid awoke to find no fish tail of her own, and a chieftain in close vicinity. She instantly fell in love with him. The chieftain somewhat surprised was not going to waste his opportunity, so he carried her away from the rocky seashore to be his loving bride.

They led a merry life and had no fewer than seven children. However, the chieftain knew he had to keep the mantle away from his wife's eyes, otherwise seeing the mantle would lure her back to the sea.

One fine day, when the youngest boy was in the region of four years of age, the chieftain foolishly decided to move the mantle to what he thought would be a more secret and secure hiding place. All the time the youngster's eyes were besotted by the mantle. The mantle seemed to be showing the youngster every shade and colour of the sea.

Excited by what he had witnessed, the boy rushed to inform his mother. For once though she did not share her son's sentiments, hence she did not laugh in her usual form.

She asked her son to take her to the place where he had seen the mantle. The moment she viewed the mantle, she had a longing sense to be back in the sea. So she quickly took her seven children in hand down to the shore, and touched each and everyone of them with the magic mantle. Shockingly, as soon as they were touched they turned into stone figurines. The mermaid did however turn back into her natural form as a mermaid, then she disappeared into the ocean, never to be seen again.

The Monster of Lake Glenade

County Sligo

All monsters have one thing in common, they are scary and fierce some. The ferocious Irish monster of the lake is such an example. It is called the Dabharchœ, the "Hound of the Deep".



A long time ago, a bride who had been recently married, was undertaking the task of washing some of her clothes close to the edges of Lake Glenade. The water was splashing more than she had ever witnessed before, then suddenly appeared the Dabharchœ. Her screams had barely left her mouth before she was destructively consumed.

Terence, her husband, who just happened to be close by, heard the screams of his defenceless wife and quickly came gun in hand to the lake.

All he witnessed were his wife's clothes floating on the surface of the lake. His wife was no more. Then quite dramatically, the horrendous Dabharchœ appeared once more. Terence, quite the hero, shot it dead upon first sight.

As the Dabharchœ sank back into the water, a roar with the sound of a volcanic eruption was heard from the depths of the lake. The roar was quite phenomenal, in that people from miles around the lake came to enquire about it. An old man informed Terence that there were two Dabharchœs in the lake - a loving couple. It then became obvious to Terence, that the living Dabharchœ was in fact mourning the death of it's lost one.

The old man then suggested to Terence, that he should get as far away from the Dabharchœ as possible, because in the end, either he or the Dabharchœ would indeed die. Forthwith, Terence proceeded in riding his trusted horse as fast as it could possibly carry him towards Ben Bulben. However, the Dabharchœ was as quick on land as it was on water, and chased Terence.

Terence arrived at an old castle in Cashelgarran, Ben Bulben. The Dabharchœ had taken a short cut down the side of the mountain on the Grange river, thus it arrived head-on from the opposite direction.

Fearing for his life, Terence quickly hid within the castle confines. As the Dabharchœ approached, sensing only the one chance, Terence jumped out in front of it. The Dabharchœ had been taken by surprise and Terence rammed his long sword in between the eyes of the helpless monster.

That was that, and to this day Lake Glenade is a monster-free zone.