

Halloween's Eve Customs

**Written By Maureen Cunney, Currrower,
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Long ago people were more superstitious than they are now. On Halloween's Eve the night that the fairies and "pookies" are yet believed to go about – even grown men did not like to go out, or especially to pass a fort, for fear of being seized and taken away, by the fairies.

People played many tricks on that night many (of) which now are only folk-lore. I have heard of the following from different people.

The man of the house went out and brought in a sheaf of unthrashed oats. It was placed on the floor and one by one the family were blindfolded and brought before the sheaf. Each pulled a straw, and when everybody was supplied, the number of grains on each one's straw was counted. The number of grains on your straw equalled the number of years you would live.

All the members of the family went to a cabbage garden, blindfolded, and pulled the first heads of cabbage they touch, be it good, or bad. If a person pulled a bad head of cabbage everybody laughed at him because they said that he would marry an ugly person.

When people threw cabbage at the doors, of houses where children resided. When they were out of sight the eldest child came out and took in the cabbage and hung it over the door. If the person who took in the cabbage was a girl, the first man to hit his head on it was to be her husband.

This is a trick which is played here sometimes, to find out who your husband or wife will be:

- Go to a lime- kiln after dark, on November Night, and be sure not to tell anyone that you

are going. Take no light with you. Walk round it three times and the third time, throw in a ball of black knitting thread that you must have with you. Keep the end of the thread in your hand keep pulling the thread out of the lime-kiln, until you have it nearly all up. When you are pulling out the last piece of thread, you will feel a weight on it. Do not look into the kiln, but tug three times at the thread. When you tug, the last time, you will hear the devil telling you the name of the person you will marry.

The foregoing was told to Maureen Cunney, Currower, by William Mullaney, also of Currower.

Here is a trick which young men played to find out who they would marry:- A young man went out after dark, and walked three times round an oats stack and pulled a straw each time. He plaited these together and hung them over his bed. It is said that if he did this, he would dream of the girl he was to marry. If the one he dreamt of was dressed in black, he was to marry a widow.

This is another trick which people made use of to find out whom they were to marry. They went after night-fall to a lime-kiln and walked round it three times. When they were going round the third time, they called for a drink. If they waited for a little while after calling, it was believed that they should see the people they were to marry coming to give them drinks. At twelve o'clock, mid-night, a person got an apple, cut it in two and began to eat it before a mirror. When he had eaten one half, he turned his back to the mirror and ate the other half.

Then he faced the mirror again and it was believed that he saw the reflection of the person he should marry, in it, instead of his own.

These latter were told to a Maureen Cunney by Mary Mc Nicholas Currower, Attymass.

At midnight a person began to comb his hair, with his back to a mirror. After a little while he faced it and saw-it was believed – the person he was to marry, looking over his shoulder.

The above was told to Maureen Cunney by Mrs. Cunney, Lisaniska, Aclare,Co. Sligo.

Now, every woman makes a cake, containing a ring. On November Night, it is cut in pieces and divided among the family. All the pieces are searched and the one in whose piece the ring is, will be married – it is said, before the next November Night.

Children play the following tricks on November Night:- They put three saucers on the table. One contains salt, water, one clay, and another a ring. Each person in turn, is blindfolded and brought to the table. The saucers are then shuffled. If the person puts his hand on the salt-water, he will cross the sea within twelve months. If he touches the clay he will die within a year, and if he, touches the ring he will be married within a year.