

The Story of Jinny the Witch...

It is said that Jinny the Witch's real name was Joney Lowney and she lived about 300 years ago in a cottage on the Ballaglonney back road (near where the Mount Murray Country Club is today).

Joney was poor and used to go around the neighbourhood begging for food. It was noted though that bad luck often fell on those who refused her: *'The cows would dry up, the horse would go lame, the hens wouldn't lay'* and Joney got the blame. But she was also known for doing good deeds. She gathered herbs in her apron and made potions with them. With each curse or cure, Joney's reputation grew.

One night, a traveller arrived at Joney's door. She offered the man some supper and made up a bed on the floor. As he drifted off to sleep he saw strange shadows on the wall. He fancied he saw Joney stepping into a big basket, and with a Whoosh! the basket, with Joney in it, flew out of the door. Thinking he was dreaming, the man fell back asleep and slept soundly til dawn when he saw Joney return with a Whoosh! and step out of the basket, which was full to the brim with fresh herring! Soon the story was all over the neighbourhood. Joney's reputation as a witch, able to get her own way by magic, began to spread.

But she went a step too far when she upset one of the most powerful men in the Island. She had gone along to the Bishop's Mill at Braddan where the Bishop's miller, William Corrin, was distributing sacks of flour to the poor. When she saw the poor quality of the grain being used, she rebuked the miller in front of a large crowd of people.

'You should be giving the best to the poor, not that rubbish!' she shrieked. At those words, the mill machinery stopped dead and no-one could get it going again – ever.

Joney was arrested and charged with practising witchcraft. She was found guilty and locked up in Peel Castle for 14 days. She was also fined the sum of £3 and was ordered to stand at the Market Cross of the four main towns – Castletown, Peel, Ramsey and Douglas, dressed in a long white sheet with a notice pinned to her chest saying 'For Practices in Sorcery and Witchcraft' in big letters. Her punishment might sound harsh, but in fact Joney got off very lightly. If she had lived in England or Scotland she could have been hanged or burnt at the stake. After her release, she returned home and as far as we know lived quietly ever after....



Food and Recipes...

The traditional Hollantide Eve supper was potatoes, parsnips and fish mashed together with butter. The left-overs of the meal were not removed from the table in case the fairies were hungry, and crocks of fresh water were put out for them.

HOLLANTIDE FAIRINGS

3oz. margarine or butter

2 tablespoons golden syrup 2oz. sugar

6oz. plain flour

1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon mixed spice

1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda A little water

1. Melt the fat, syrup and sugar together in a saucepan over a low heat.
2. Sieve the flour and spices into a bowl.
3. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a little water and add to the ingredients in the saucepan, then mix in with the dry ingredients to form a dough.
4. Cover the bowl and leave for at least one hour.
5. Roll out thinly and cut into fancy patterns (traditionally men on horse-back) using a cardboard pattern.
6. Bake in a moderate oven for about fifteen minutes.
7. When the biscuits are cold, decorate with lemon peel, icing and currants.

Quoted from My Grandmother's Cookery Book – 50 Manx Recipes compiled by Suzanne Woolley © 1975.

BUTTER TAFFY

(Adult supervision required)

225g butter

160g caster sugar








1. Put the butter and sugar into a heavy saucepan.
2. Heat at a medium heat until it is a liquid and keep stirring.
3. Once combined and the sugar is dissolved, pour the mixture into a greased baking tray. Put in a fridge for 1/2 hour to an hour to set and cool.



Welcome to Hop tu Naa



Why should we celebrate Hop tu Naa?

-  It's a key part of Manx History
-  It tells us a lot about Manx traditions
-  It's a very old custom
-  It is our way of acknowledging the start of Winter
-  It's a great story
-  Making turnip lanterns takes real skill & bravery!
-  It's Manx!



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Turnip Lanterns...

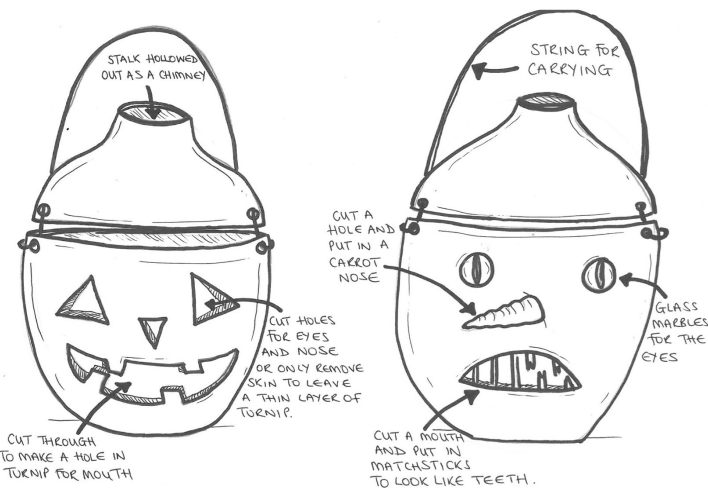
Before the tradition of turnip carving started, cabbages were put onto the end of sticks and used to thump on people's doors!

To carve your own turnip, first you must cut the top off a large turnip* (known locally as a 'moot') and make sure it sits nicely by evening up the bottom. Then you can either hollow it out with a spoon - the traditional lengthy way - or use a drill bit to drill several holes (taking care not to go through the bottom!) and then chip out the remains. (make sure an adult helps!)

Once your turnip is hollowed out you can draw your design on with a pencil and cut out. Traditional designs include Peel Castle, witches and Manx cats - not just scary faces. Some people carefully carve just the skin of the turnip out and leave the thin wall of the turnip - this keeps the wind from blowing out your candle!

Hollow out the stalk of your lid for the chimney and pop a tea light into your turnip (or in modern times, a torch).

* You can also use the stalk as a handle and carve your turnip the other way up - this was often done in Peel.



Songs and Dance...

There are lots of traditional songs associated with Hop tu Naa that were sung door to door by children - a tradition still carried on today. There are many references to Jinny; flying over the house, giving her a penny, 'my mothers gone away and won't be back til the morning'.

There are lots of regional variations of the Hop tu Naa songs but the most popular ones are included below, along with the Manx Gaelic version (pronunciation below each line)

Hop-tu-naa, Hop-tu-naa,

Jinny the witch flew over the house

To get a stick to lather the mouse (OR) Give us a penny we'll chase her out,

Hop-tu-naa, your mother's gone away
and she won't be back until the morning.

.....

Ta shenn Oie Houney, Hop-tu-Naa!

Pronunciation: [Ta shenn ee howna, hop-chu-nay!]

T'an eayst soilshean, Trol-la-laa!

Pronunciation: [Tun aist saw'shin, trol-la-lay!]

x 2

CHORUS:

Hop-tu-Naa as Trol-la-laa,

Pronunciation: [Hop-chu-nay as trol-la-lay]

Ta shenn Oie Houney, Hop-tu-Naa!

Pronunciation: [Ta shenn ee howna, hop-chu-nay!]

.....

Hop-tu-naa, Put in the pot,
Hop-tu-naa, Scald my trot [throat],
Hop-tu-naa, I met an ole woman,
Hop-tu-naa, She was baking bonnags,
Hop-tu-naa, I asked her for a bit,
Hop-tu-naa, She gave me a bit, as big as my big toe.

Hop-tu-naa, She dipped it in milk,
Hop-tu-naa, She wrapped it in silk,
Hop-tu-naa, trol-la-laa.

Jinny the witch went over the house, to fetch a stick to lather the mouse. Hop-tu-naa, trol-la-laa.

If you don't give us something, we'll run away with the light of the
moooooon....

Traditions, Folklore and Facts...

- Hop tu naa is the oldest continuous Manx tradition
- Hop! T'an Oie - means 'it is the Night!'
- The phrase Hop tu naa is thought to derive from the celebration of the Celtic New Year, like Hollantide and Hogmanay - NEW YEAR'S EVE
- It's celebrated on 31st October. In the old calendar it was 11th November - Old Hollantide Eve
- It marks the end of Summer and the start of winter
- It's also Celtic New Year's Eve - Sauin in Manx Gaelic
- Traditions include; songs, dance, turnip lantern carving, divination, stories about the legend of Jinny the Witch and recipes
- Gorse bonfires would be lit to ward off bad fairies
- It was tradition to steal the first salted herring from a neighbour's house
- Girls would guess the name of their future husband by making 'soddag valloo' or dumb cake (flour, eggs, shells, salt and soot!) baked and eaten in silence and then the girl would walk backwards to bed to dream of her future husband! They could also fill their mouth with water and hold salt in their hands then visit their neighbour to overhear a conversation and listen for first man's name mentioned...
- The veil between this world and the next is at its thinnest - supernatural

https://www.culturevannin.im/manx_year.html

Manx Gaelic for you to try!

Turnip - moot
Witch - buitch
Ghost - scaanjoon
Black Cat - kayt doo

Wizard - druightagh
Bat - craitnag
Magic - obbeeyes
Skeleton - ushylagh