

## The History of Blarney Castle and the Blarney Stone

My exhibit shows the history of Blarney Castle and Blarney Stone in County Cork, Ireland.

This is one of the most famous castles in the world and the only one that Legend says will give the "Gift of the Gab" for all that kiss the Blarney Stone. I use stamps, postcards, mail, labels, and tourist novelties in my exhibit to show how the castle was built, the history, and the story behind the legends of the Stone.

### History

The castle was originally built in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century as a timber house. It was replaced by a stone building in the year 1210. The existing castle was built by McCarthy of Muskerry in 1446. **The castle was a typical Norman Castle design.** The McCarthy Clan owned the castle lands from 1314, when Cormac McCarthy was given the Stone of Scone by the Robert the Bruce of Scotland until lost to Cromwell's cannons 1646. It was returned to the McCarthys in 1661 by King Charles II then ultimately lost to England in 1690, following the Battle of the Boyne. The castle was built to defend the land around the Martin River. Bhlarna means little field in Irish.

The legend of the Castle begins with Queen Elizabeth I, and her exchanges with Cormac Teige McCarthy (Lord Blarney). Queen Elizabeth wanted McCarthy to own his lands by Her Royal Decree. Lord Blarney gave many promises and excuses without giving in to the Queen. Queen Elizabeth I, said that McCarthy was giving her

**"A lot of Blarney"**

Part of the same legend says Lord Blarney was on his way to plead with Queen Elizabeth I to keep his lands. He met **Clodhna**, the Queen of the Irish fairies, who told him that if he kissed a stone she had placed high in the castle, he would be given the "gift of eloquent speech" **when meeting the Queen.** Both stories have merged together to give us today's legend.

### The Exhibit is Organized on 8 Double Pages as Follows:

- Introduction: Normans Come to England & Ireland
- Norman Castles in Ireland & Building of Blarney Castle
- Making of Blarney Castle
- Blarney Castle and the Principal English Rulers
- The Legends behind the **Gift of Eloquent Speech**
- History Behind Tourists Kissing the Blarney Stone
- Kissing the Blarney Stone - The Modern & Safer Method
- Epilogue: The Legacy of Blarney Castle & The Stone

Each New Chapter will start with a **Green title**  
Important Material is shown with a **Green Background**  
Important Philatelic information is shown in **Green Text**

### Introduction: Normans Come to England & Ireland & Build Castles

The Norman French invaded England on 14 Oct. 1066 conquering the English during the Battle of Hastings

Cover Cachet design is from Bayeux Tapestry in France showing the Battle



FDC commemorates 1000 anniversary of French Invasion of England in Oct 1066.

0.6 Frame issued 06-04 1966, designed by Claude Haley. Recess printed in Comb 13 perf. Also found imperf

The English Normans invaded Wexford in 1 May 1169. They came at the request of the Irish King of Leinster to settle a family dispute

The Normans began building Castles in Ireland, the first was at Ferrycarrig in Wexford shown in Postcard

Postcard printed by John Hind limited Cabinteely Dublin Ireland 1966



Norman Castle (1169 A.D.), River Slaney, Ferrycarrig, Wexford, Ireland.

Mail from Blarney to England  
Postmarked August 29 1894  
(dated by the letter)

Cancelled by Duplex 79. Issued to Blarney from 1889 to 1898 because of increasing volume of tourist mail.

Most mail during this time was **Postcards**  
Envelopes appear to be scarce

This Number 79 was previously issued to Burrin, Co. Clare in the 1840s and 1850s before the Irish Famine reduced

Co. Clares population

1d Paid letter rate in the United Kingdom



## *The History & Legend of Blarney Castle --- Tabitha Fox*

**BACKGROUND:** This is my first stamp exhibit and I wanted to do this topic because my grandmother is from Ireland. I have traveled there many times. I love Irish castles and legends, and picked this subject because it has both!

**PURPOSE:** My exhibit will show the history of Blarney Castle from its beginnings in the 15th century to its ruin in 1646 at the hands of Cromwell's cannons. I will also explain its legends and how to Kiss the Blarney Stone.

**HISTORY:** Blarney Castle was originally built as a timber house in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and took many different shapes until the existing castle was built in 1446. The Castle was built according to a typical Norman Castle design. The castle was built to defend the land around the Martin River – Bhlarna means little fields in Irish.

**ITS LEGENDS:** The legend of the Blarney Castle began with Queen Elizabeth who wanted Cormac Teige McCarthy (Lord Blarney) to give up his lands to the English Crown -- but Cormac Teige McCarthy kept giving the Queen many different excuses and promises instead of giving up his lands. A frustrated Queen Elizabeth said that McCarthy was giving her "A lot of Blarney".

The second legend says that McCarthy on this way to England to plead his case to Queen Elizabeth -- came across Clíodhna, Queen of the Irish Faires, who told him that if he kissed the stone that she had hidden high in his castle, he would be given the "gift of eloquent speech". Today, these two legends have merged together to make my favorite version of the story.

This exhibit also shows how people over time were said to kiss the stone, which I did when I visited Blarney Castle in April of 2024.

**THE EXHIBIT:** My exhibit uses covers, postcards, stamps, medals etc. to show the History of Blarney Castle and the legend of the Blarney Stone.

**EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS:** There are several interesting items in my exhibit shown that are highlighted with a green background. Much of this material was given to me by friends in Ireland. Their names are mentioned at the end of this synopsis

Items of greater importance are: (scans shown below)

- (1) When I did research for my exhibit, I found there were no stamps issued by any country showing Blarney Castle. My friends in France, Germany and Ireland showed me a link to the German and Austrian Post Offices allowing me to make Blarney castle stamps. The photos for the stamps came from my family and the internet. With help from my grandmother, I made 5 sheets of 10 stamps from German Post and 5 sheets of 20 stamps from Austrian Post. These stamps have a value of 0.95 euros each and can be used to pay for mailing postcards. My family friend, Brian Warren, made postcards from the same photos and we added the stamps and mailed the postcards from Germany and Ireland. These stamps and postcards are shown in my exhibit. He also made 12 specially cacheted envelopes showing Blarney Castle Pages 2, 3 and 4
- (2) A satiric Mulready cover produced in 1840 by J.W Southgate showing the Blarney Stone and postmarked July 1840. The cover was mailed without postage and has large 2d postage due mark on the front. One of 40 known Blarney Stone covers from Mr. Southgate. This is used to start my section on the Blarney Stone Legends on Page 5
- (3) 1911 King Charles I essay stamps both perf and imperf. These were used by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co Ltd when they were designing new stamps for King George V of Great Britain and Ireland. Page 4 King Charles I ordered General Cromwell to put down the Irish Rebellion started in 1641. Cromwell used cannons to destroy many Irish castles including Blarney Castle in 1646



References: - Available from the APS Research Library

Joachim Schaaf and Brian Warren: Irish Postal Rates 1839 to 2014, FAI - German Irish Philatelic Society

Internet Searches:

Blarney Castle, County Cork

<https://blarneycastle.ie/historical/blarney-castle-county-cork/>

Blarney Castle -

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blarney\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blarney_Castle)

About Blarney Castle

<https://www.historyhit.com/locations/blarney-castle-2/>

Link to ordering my own Blarney Castle stamps from German Post

<https://shop.deutschepost.de/shop/individuell/bmi.jsp?productType=type1dmc>

It looks like you can choose the number of stamps on a sheet, either 10, 18 or 20 The value on the bottom right corner can be changed for different domestic and international postage rates

Link to Ordering my own Blarney Castle stamps from Austrian Post

[https://onlineshop.post.at/onlineshop/meine-marke/meine-marke-48\\_375](https://onlineshop.post.at/onlineshop/meine-marke/meine-marke-48_375)

Two links just above the stamp outline tell you what type of images cannot be used. We found that Castle photos can be used



German Post Sheet of 10 Blarney Castle Stamps.  
1 of 3 Sheets. Euros 0.95 pays for international postcard mail



Austria Post Sheet of 20 Blarney Castle Stamps.  
1 of 5 Sheets. Euros 0.95 pays for international postcard mail



Satiric Mulready Cover made by J.W. Southgate. Mailed without 1d postage in July 1840. Cover has large 2d postage due mark in black I am told only 40 of these covers still exist today

*I would like to thank my Mother Anne Fox, Grandmother Jean Benninghoff, Dr Hal Vogel and friends in Ireland and France and Germany: Dr Brian Callan, Hans-Jurgen Goebelbecker, Brian Harman, Pádraig O'Shea, Karl Winkelmann and Brian Warren. They helped me with their time and material and information.*

## Changes I made since GASS 2024 and Indypex 2024

- (1) Added an 1894 Cover with Blarney postmark to the Title Page.  
Mail with 19<sup>th</sup> Century cancels are scarce because there was no Blarney post office until 1889
- (2) Added part of a cover with 1889 Blarney postmark and Number 79 duplex cancel to page 6
- (3) Added a tourist postcard from 1907 with Blarney RSO (Railway Sorting or Sub Office) postmark to page 6
- (4) Added a political satire postcard to page 8  
The postcard states that English claim on Ireland is a Load of Blarney  
Postcard was mailed from Queenstown Jy 1904

## Change I Made after Chicagopex 2024

- (1) Added a cover to Page 4 from a Colonel in Cromwell's Army in Ireland. The Colonel is writing in 1648 from Dublin to his Brother in House of Commons in London about the war in Ireland.