

Hello!

I guess you have been wondering why we carve pumpkins for Halloween. Why so many pumpkins around?

Well, it is time of the year that pumpkins are harvested and secondly I can tell you one interesting story called “The tale of Stingy Jack and the Jack O’Lantern”.

Jack O’Lantern legend goes back hundreds of years in Irish History. Many of the stories centre around Stingy Jack. Here's the most popular story:

Stingy Jack was a miserable, old drunkard who took pleasure in playing tricks on just about everyone: family, friends, his mother and even the Devil himself.

One day, the Devil came across to take Jack to Hell. Jack convinced the Devil first to come and have a drink with him.

The Devil agreed, and after Jack had drunk his fill, as he had no money, he asked the Devil to cover the bill. As the Devil had no use for money, he had none on him, so Jack suggested the Devil to transform himself into a silver coin so Jack could pay the bill.

Once the Devil had transformed himself into the coin, rather than pay the bill, Jack quickly snuck the coin into a small money pouch which had a cross on it, trapping the Devil.

In order to get Jack to let him out, the Devil made a deal with Jack that let him live 10 years of life. The bargain was struck and after 10 years, the Devil returned for Jack and Jack made the request that the Devil go and fetch an apple for him from up a tree. The stupid Devil, who apparently lives to please, climbed the tree and fetched an apple for Jack. While he was up the tree, Jack carved a cross into the bark at the base of the tree, thereby trapping the Devil...(who could apparently turn into a coin but couldn’t turn himself into a bird).

A second deal was struck, this time Jack demanding that the Devil never takes his soul to Hell. The Devil agreed and, being known for honesty and integrity, kept his word once Jack let him go.

Of course, Jack eventually died (maybe he should have asked for immortality and eternal youth?) and upon arriving at Heaven’s gates, whoops! His sinful life made it so he couldn’t get in. He then went and visited the entrance to Hell to try to get in there (for some odd reason), but the Devil wouldn’t let him in owing to his previous promise. Being once again apparently kind and generous, the Devil did give Jack an ever burning coal from Hell to use to light his way to warn other people of Jack’s presence. Jack then placed it in a carved turnip and proceeded to wander the Earth for all eternity.

The Irish brought the tradition of carved turnips to America. But in America, pumpkins were more common and comfortable to carve. When this tradition returned to Britain in the 1990’s, it became popular to carve pumpkins instead of turnips.

So this is the “Tale of Stingy Jack and the Jack O' Lantern”.

Now you know the story and tradition, you have a chance to celebrate Halloween in style!

See you next time! Goodbye!