

Blarney

Have you ever heard someone said to talk a lot of blarney? The term has come to mean deceptive talk peppered with flattery.

It comes from the sixteenth century when Queen Elizabeth I of England was trying to get Irish lords to hand over their castles to her. Cormac MacCarthy, the lord of Blarney Castle, tried to keep his independence without inciting Elizabeth to attack. Having seemingly agreed to deliver his castle to the Crown, he continuously delayed doing so using extensive elaborations on why it could not be done, at least not immediately or without modification. One day in frustration, Elizabeth screamed, "Blarney, Blarney , what he says he never means."

Today you can go to Blarney Castle in southern Ireland and kiss the blarney stone, reputed to bestow the gift of gab. Each year more than 300,000 people come to kiss the Blarney Stone, which is called by some the most unhygienic tourist attraction in the world.