

WEIRD LAWS

MYTH, REALITY,

Myth

OR NOT THE

WHOLE STORY?

Real

Iffy

Have you ever heard of these laws?

While some of them used to be in force or are applicable in places in the rest of the UK, many of them are simply not true!

1. Toilet hospitality

Did you know that if a stranger wants to use your toilet, you legally have to let them...

...At least, according to this myth, which has no evidence of ever being in the statute books.



2. Drunk in charge of a cow

This refers to the offence of being drunk in a public place while in charge of any carriage, horse, cattle, or steam engine, which comes from the Licensing Act 1872.

However, this act does not apply to Scotland, and there is no record of it ever having been prosecuted in relation to cows or horses—though it was extended to include a bicycle after a case in 1950.



3. The mannequin law

It's illegal for a boy under the age of ten to see a naked mannequin—according to this law, which has been debunked by the Law Commission.



Myth

4. The royal flag

Have you ever heard that it is illegal to fly the Lion Rampant?

This presumably came from the fact the Lyon King of Arms Act 1672 established a register of all arms and bearings in Scotland, and later on King Charles II entered the Lion Rampant as his exclusive property.

However, it's very common for lions rampant to appear on family arms and the flag is flown in many different contexts - it's certainly not a prosecuted crime.



Myth

5. Sturgeon fishing

Sturgeon caught in Scotland belong to the Queen, according to this law.

This has got a legal origin in a 14th century English prerogative, however, this is now a protected species and the royal household has declined a sturgeon offered in 2004, which is now in the Natural History Museum.



6. Gambling in a library

There was a law that applied to good behaviour in libraries – the Library Offences Act in 1898, which did originally include the offence of gambling in a library.

However, that has since been repealed and the law never applied to Scotland in the first place.



7. Scots in Carlisle

Apparently Scots in Carlisle are legally allowed to be whipped or jailed by the residents.

However, this, like the purported law about murdering Scotsmen carrying bows and arrows in York, this has been debunked by the Law Commission.



Myth

8. Chimney fires

This refers to a law that makes it an offence to allow a chimney to catch fire.

It does come from the Town Police Clauses act of 1847, but it does not apply to Scotland and there are not examples of any prosecutions under this offence.

The logo for 'Iffy' is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of the word 'Iffy' written in a stylized, cursive, light blue font. The text is centered within a red, scalloped-edged circular shape that has a thin white outline.

9. Violation of sepulchres

In Scots law, disturbing dead bodies or the 'violation of sepulchres' is a common law offence.

It has only been prosecuted a handful of times, but it can come with a steep penalty (potentially lifetime imprisonment).



10. Salt on the road

There used to be a law that prevented salt from being laid down on the roads, which was to protect horses' hooves. Now that we salt roads to remove ice for cars, it is no longer in force.



Real