

Hidden gems and Forgotten People

GLENS OF ANTRIM HISTORICAL SOCIETY & CARRICKFERGUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE HIDDEN AND DESERTED CLACHAN OF GALBOLY, (THE PLACE OF THE FOREIGNER)

Galboly is situated above Garron Point, Co. Antrim on a plateau beneath glowering basalt cliffs resembling gigantic fortifications that cast a partial gloom even on the brightest summer's day. To find Galboly from the A2 one needs to follow one of the limestone tracks up into the hills eventually leading to the village or obtain directions from someone locally.

The buildings all of stone are single story except for one that has an extra floor added. Originally they would have been thatched; latterly they were mostly roofed with sheet metal. In the latter part of the 19th century a popular *shebeen* provided a liquor popular with the residents. There were regular social visits between this part of the world and Scotland. The villagers originally worked on the Vane Tempest estate and a smaller number at Garron Tower for their landlord and later when the building became a hotel having been bought by the famous Larne tourist operator Henry Me Neill towards the end of the 19th century.

According to the population censuses in 1841 for Galboly there were nearly sixty inhabitants but this reduced to only six by 1951. Since then and up until recently, one of the cottages has been inhabited by a single person, a monk from the Abbey at Portglenone. The reasons for the decline are thought to be the change in agricultural practices of the Vane Tempest Estate from crop cultivation to livestock rearing that required fewer farmhands and of course the increasing use of mechanisation. The procurement of clean drinking water was a problem and this had to be brought from a source near the A2 Coast Road in a creamery churn on a donkey cart.

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