

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



### GARNAHOWEY MEGALITHIC TOMB, OUGHTERLIN

This hidden gem, with the main characteristics of a portal-tomb, dates back to the Megalithic period. It is marked on the revised O.S. map of 1900 with the generic name of “Druid’s Altar” and referred to locally as the Giant’s Bed. The Irish name for the tomb, *Géaran na hÁille Bhuí* which translates as the “Sharp or Jutting Stone of the Yellow Cliff”, is particularly descriptive. The “Yellow Cliff” may refer to the rocky outcrops in the area which are brilliantly lit up by an evening sun. The earlier townland Garnahalowey is now subsumed into the larger townland of Oughterlin, west of Rathmullan in Co. Donegal. A small lake in the area is marked on the O.S map as Garnahalowey Lough but known locally as Philemy’s Lough.

The tomb is located on lowland within the Oughterlin Hills which form the southern boundary of the Fanad Peninsula and run roughly from Ray on Lough Swilly to Milford on Mulroy Bay.

The earliest written description known, is from George H. Kinahan (1829 – 1908) geologist and archaeologist. He wrote in an article on megalithic and ancient structures in the barony of Kilmacrenan, Co Donegal in 1889: *It has a large rough flag as a corner stone, 11 ft. by 8 ft. supported by four uprights about 4 ft. high.*

The tomb is situated on dry rocky ground. There are holes in the large capstone, said to have been made by a giant's fingers. There is no local knowledge of earlier drawings or photographs, probably because the terrain makes the site difficult to access.

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