

Hidden gems and Forgotten People

COUNTY ROSCOMMON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



RINN DUIN BEE BOLES

Location: GR OS 40-999549 - Behind St John's House, Lecarrow.

(View of Bee Boles from Entrance to Walled Garden South Elevation)

The purpose of a bee bole was to house skeps (old fashioned beehives) which contain bees so that honey could be obtained. The skeps were made of straw, had a circular base and were of a conical shape. They were often used to ensure pollination of fruit trees, etc. This explains why bee boles are frequently found in walled and flower gardens belonging to country houses. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the heyday of bee bole construction, especially on large country house estates. The base that the skep sits on is variable in design, circular, semi-circular or square and occasionally has a protruding lip for the bees to land on when they return from foraging. The hole in the skep faces onto this lip. Many farms and ordinary homes had bee boles. However, with the advent of the Stewarton and Langstroth renewable hives, skeps eventually ceased to be used.

There are three skep alcoves in the bee bole which is located in the level stone walled orchard which was part of St John's House until it was sold off in 1971. The bee bole is located inside the northern wall. It is of classic design with three semi-circular interiors, with a protruding lip for the bees to land on prior to entering the skep. There is a main entrance to the orchard with a corrugated iron gate in the middle of the west wall. The two stones below the bee bole were used as platforms for additional skeps. One stone was stolen in February 2012.

Owner: PJ Grady, Johnsport Hill. Lecarrow

By: Richard Collins