

## Eastham House

Eastham House, Bettytown was built about 1760, possibly for the Shepherd family who owned Bettystown. In the 1830s the house was occupied by F. Anderson. A three storey house, it still has its original front railings and gates. There is a walled garden to the rear. The outbuildings have been replaced with modern guest houses.

## Elmsgrove House

Elmsgrove house, Killaconnigan, Ballivor was the residence of the Browne family. In 1794 the Bishop of Meath, Dr. Plunkett dined at Mr. Brown's of Killaconikan on his visitation of parishes. In 1815 Bishop Plunkett confirmed Mr. Browne's youngest daughter on his visit to Elmsgrove. Bishop Plunkett stayed at Elmsgrove again in 1816. The Brownes of Elmsgrove were connected to the Brownes of Clongowes Wood. In the 1830s the house was the residence of Mr. Browne, J.P. A fine house, it was described as being pleasantly situated with the attached grounds pleasantly planted. Contiguous to the house is a graveyard. In 1876 Anthony Browne of Elm Grove held 1,017 acres in County Meath.

Killaconnigan Graveyard is about ½ mile from the small town of Ballivor off the Mullingar Road. It is situated on a fort and has some considerable earthworks around it. The Elmgrove demesne surrounded it in the old days but Elmgrove House was demolished some years ago and the land divided. This demesne had south and west entrances with gate-lodges; and on the east wall of the south gate lodge there still exists the coat of arms of the Browne family which was an eagle displayed. Unfortunately the head of the bird is no longer to be seen. The Brownes were the owners of the Elmgrove demesne in years gone by. A footpath leads up to the graveyard from the bye-road and a circular path encloses the slight remains of Killaconnigan church and the graves.

## Ferrans

Ferrans, Gallow, Kilcock was home to the North and Bomford families. Quite a considerable amount of information is available on the Bomford website.

The lands were held by the Bomford family from as early as 1672 but the big house not erected until the 1820s. The house was erected by Isaac North. The cost of the house was probably paid by North's uncle, Isaac Bomford, a Dublin attorney who actually owned the land. Ferransville was described in 1835 as being a neat two storey slated house occupied by Mr. North who later changed his surname to North-Bomford in order to inherit Gallow, 596 acres and Ferrans, 412 acres. Isaac was made a Justice of the Peace for county Meath and was a member of the Board of Guardians for Trim workhouse. When his uncle died in Dublin Isaac North inherited his house in Dominick Street, Dublin. Isaac's wife, Belinda Emily died in 1852 leaving her husband with a young family of seven ranging in age from 18 down to about 3, with one daughter married. Isaac North-Bomford's eldest son was named Isaac. Born in 1834 he became a Captain in the 59th Regiment and served in China, dying unmarried in 1862. The years 1856 to 1860 were the period of the Second Foreign War of China, sometimes called 'the Second Opium War', and Isaac almost certainly took part in this war, at any rate up to the Treaty of 1858. Isaac North-Bomford senior died in 1866 and was succeeded by his son, John, who was born in 1838.

John North-Bomford joined the army and served in Burma and Bengal before returning home to take up his father's estates, following the death of his elder brother. John married twice. He died in 1905 aged 67. His son, John George North-Bomford,

was born in 1883 and reached the rank of major in the service of the Royal Fusiliers. He served in both World Wars, being at Gallipoli in 1916 and serving with the RAF from 1940. He married twice, firstly in 1909 to Hilda Frances Munn and secondly in 1961 to Elizabeth Susan Armstrong. His son with Hilda Frances, David John, was born in 1912 and died in 1949. Major North-Bomford died in 1965 aged 81.

The house was enlarged in the 1860s. A lodge was constructed in 1867. The house was destroyed by fire in 1923 in an attack by the IRA, although the owner also had had a dispute with one of his herds. It was re-built.

The house was occupied by the North-Bomford family until John George North-Bomford died in 1965. The property was sold in 1967 and seven years later the house was burned again and rebuilt again.

Ferrans is now operated as a stud farm by Juddmonte Farms. The stud farm is owned by Prince Khalid Abdullah, a member of the Saudi ruling family and one of the biggest bloodstock and racehorse owners in the world. He was the first Arab owner to win an English Classic when his now famous green colours with white sleeves, pink sash and cap, were carried to victory by Known Fact, who took the 1980 2,000 Guineas.

## Firmount House

Firmount House, Stackallen was described in 1835 as a modern two storey farm house in good repair. Dating to about 1780 Firmount was a gentleman farmer's residence erected by Lord Boyne. A two storey house there was a small plantation between the house and the road in the 1830s. It was vacant for a period in the late twentieth century until it was reconstructed and restored in 1984. Captain Michael Crinion farmed at Firmount for a period after the First World War.

## Firpark House.

Firpark House, Diamor, Oldcastle was a gentleman's residence and the property of Mr. Wade in 1835. A neat stone house it was occupied by the steward of the estate. In 1855 William B. Wade was the landlord of Firpark. A modern entrance from the south has now been constructed and the woods around the house been removed.

## Fosterstown House

Fosterstown House is located just outside Trim on the Summerhill Road. A plain two storey house, the date June 1843 is carved on the base of one of the columns flanking the doorcase. However the house probably dates to the late eighteenth century and was reputedly home to Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, in the 1790s when he was MP for Trim. Fosterstown house was known as Wellington for a period. A thatched gate lodge guards the entrance to Fosterstown. It is unusual to have such a common-place building as a gate lodge to a demesne. The two windows on the south elevation of the lodge are the only windows in the house.

Captain William Foster lived at Fosterstown in the late eighteenth century and it is he who may have erected the house. In 1770 Rev John Achmuty, Rector of Trim, was living at Fosterstown.

In the late eighteenth century the house was the property of the Carshore family. Adam Carshore was portreeve (mayor) of Trim on six occasions between 1780 and 1800. William Carshore who was recorded as residing in Fosterstown in 1802 was portreeve of Trim on four occasions between 1789 and 1799. William Carshore was a

captain in the Trim Yeomanry Corps succeeding in the active command its first Captain, his maternal uncle, Adam Carshore, of Kilcooley, Co. Meath. In 1801 Edward Elliot Chambers of Crowpark married Elizabeth, only-surviving daughter and heiress of William Carshore, of Fosterstown and Trim.

The Chambers family are recorded in Wexford in the 1650s. A descendant of the family, Joseph, married the eldest daughter of Rev. Stafford Lightbume, of Trim. Their son, Edward Elliot Chambers, lived at Crowpark and married Elizabeth Carshore. In 1835 Fosterstown was described as a good dwelling house with offices. The house and ninety one acres were the property of Mr. Chambers. Edward's son, Richard Edward Elliot Chambers of Fosterstown, became an artist in England. He married into a wealthy family - Chandos-Pole-Gell of Hopton Hall. His bride was 36 when they married. Richard travelled the world painting in such places as California, Mexico, Canada, New Mexico, Sahara, Algeria, Middle East and South Africa. The family also had a residence in Devon.

## Foxbrook

Foxbrook is located in the townland of Ballymulmore, Ballivor. A late eighteenth century gable-ended house its name is derived from its owners, the Fox family.

In 1802 Matthew Fox and his family were living at Foxbrook. Matthew was born in 1745, died in 1808, and married Elizabeth Grierson of Doolistown, Trim. Buried at Laracor, Matthew was succeeded by his son, James D'Arcy Fox, who lived until 1850. James Fox married Harriet D'Arcy of Hyde Park, Westmeath in 1803 and appears to have taken the name D'Arcy as a second surname.

The original parkland features surrounding the house and avenue have been removed.

## Frankville House

Frankville House was erected on the western end of Athboy town on the Delvin road.

In 1836 it was described as a neat house of two stories and basement, the residence of Francis Walsh.

A two storey three bay house of late Georgian appearance with Wyatt windows and an enclosed porch the seat of the Walsh family before becoming a Convent for the Sisters of Mercy.

The house was originally called Greenville but its name was changed to Frankville. The Earl of Darnley was the owner of the property and the house was used to accommodate his land agents. The Coggle family resided in the house for a period. The manager of the Athboy branch of Ulster Bank resided in the house until the 1940s when the premises was acquired by the Sisters of Mercy who ran a secondary school in the building and then erected a school in the grounds. This school became a community school and the Sisters disposed of the house in 1998.

## Fraine House

Fraine or Frayne House is located about a mile from Athboy town on a road to Ballivor. Frayne was the property of the Scurlock until they were dispossessed in the seventeenth century. A medieval castle sits on the opposite side of the road to the remains of Frayne House. In 1775 James Taylor held Frayne Castle.

The two storey over basement house was erected in the early eighteenth century, modified in the middle of that century and a new wing added about 1850. In 1836 Fraine House was described as a neat house of two stories, the residence of William

Hopkins. The townland was the property of Sir Thomas Chapman of St. Lucie, Clonmellon. In the 1850s William Hopkins was still occupying the house and lands. Henry Hopkins then occupied Fraine but he was dead by 1880. In 1901 Eleanor Fawcett, a native of Sligo, was living at Fraine House. In 1911 her nephew, George Ernest Moore, a native of Fermanagh was living at Fraine. The house had fifteen rooms, five windows to the front and eleven outbuildings. George Moore married Beryl Cockle of Swinford, Co. Mayo in 1924. Dr. Moore became a well known Meath historian. George Moore died in 1968. Fraine House fell into disrepair.

## Freffans House

Freffans House is about two miles southeast of Trim, in Little Freffans townland and the parish of Laracor. Freffans is a two storey over basement house. The four bedroom house also has a two bedroomed lodge and a courtyard of outbuildings. Erected by the Battersby family about 1823 the house was described as an excellent dwelling in the 1830s. The grounds were nicely planted and ornamented.

William Battersby was born in 1764, the son of John Battersby of Lakefield. He married Frances Preston of Swainstown and settled at Freffans. Their four eldest sons died unmarried and without heirs. Their fifth son, Arthur Henry, had a son and a daughter. Their daughter, Anna Henrietta, married Lambert Disney of Rock Lodge, the neighbouring property. William died in 1848. In 1852 Arthur Henry Battersby was living at Freffans. In 1854 Fanny Battersby was living at Freffans.

In 1901 William Watson, an estate agent, his wife and family were living at Freffans. In 1911 Anne Evelyn Hope Johnstone, a widow, was living at Freffans with her family. The house had sixteen rooms, thirteen windows to the front and fifteen outbuildings.

Freffans was purchased by William Potterton in 1912 and remained in the hands of his son and grandson for most of the twentieth century. Henry Norman Potterton became heir when his elder brother, William Hubert, was killed at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Henry Norman died in 1980 and his son, Scott Potterton, held the house for about ten years before selling it about 1990.

## Gallow House

Gallow Hill House was located near Gallow Graveyard on the Summerhill-Kilcock road. In 1794 Mr. Flanagan lived at Gallow. In 1835 Mr. W. Maher lived in Gallow House, a two storey slated building. Mr. Bomford was the owner of the land and the property was leased to Mr. Maher. In 1854 Patrick Maher was leasing a house and 377 acres at Gallow from Rev. John Potterton and a house and 451 acres from Isaac N. Bomford. The first house may have been Clarkestown and the second Gallow. The house was in ruins by 1900. A complex of farm buildings now stand on its site.

## Galtrim House

Galtrim House is located south of Trim off the Dublin Road on a side road to Summerhill.

Galtrim house was constructed about 1800 as a glebe house for Rev. Vesey Dawson, rector of Galtrim, whose wife was the daughter of Blayney Townely of Townley Hall. Galtrim House was designed by the noted Irish architect, Francis Johnston. A two storey over basement house, the main building is flanked by single storey over basement wings. Bence-Jones described Galtrim as 'the finest of Francis Johnstown's

smaller houses' and having 'an interior of great subtlety.' Dr. Maurice Craig said Galtrim's decoration 'is of the coolest kind imaginable.' Craig wrote that "Galtrim is probably the best of Francis Johnston's smaller houses." Casey and Rowan described Galtrim as a delightful miniature country house with a formal stable court. The stable court has the style and charm of a village market house. The stone lions bear the date 1802. The L-plan single-storey gate lodge, was erected at the same time as the house. The gate lodge was an object to be looked at across the park.

Vesey Dawson was rector of Galtrim from 1794 to 1806. Dawson was married to a daughter of Blaney Townley who employed Johnston to design Townley Hall, near Drogheda. Townley Hall, erected in 1793, was Johnston's best large house according to Maurice Craig. In 1802 Mrs. Dawson had a straw hat factory which gave considerable employment to the neighbourhood especially to young women and girls. Rev Dawson killed when a horse bolted on him. In his will he left a sum of money for the poor of Galtrim.

Matthew Fox from Foxbrooke purchased the house in 1813 from the Dawsons. A new glebe house for the parish clergyman was erected 1815. Matthew Fox who settled at Galtrim was born in 1745 married Elizabeth Grierson of Doolistown and died in 1808 leaving issue James, John, Joseph and William and five daughters. Matthew held the title, 'The Fox'. Tadhg O Catharnaigh was chiefain of Teffia in the eleventh century and, for his wily ways, became known as 'An Sionnach' The Fox. His descendants became proprietors of the entire barony of Kilcoursey in Co Offaly and acquiring the title 'Barons Kilcoursey', they adopted his nickname as their own surname in place of O Catharnaigh, and the chief of the family took on 'The Fox' as a title. The current holder of the title, John William Fox, The Fox, Chief of his Name, lives in Australia.

Matthew's eldest son, James, at Foxbrooke and Galtrim. He is buried in Laracor. His youngest son, Matthew Fox, was curate at Clonard, 1837 and vicar at Galtrim, 1838-43. In 1837 Galtrim House was described as a handsome residence in a well planted demesne and the seat of the Fox.

Matthew's son, James, succeeded at Galtrim. James George Hubert Fox born 1842, served as a lieutenant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Lancers, lived at Galtrim, and died 1919. In 1906 Edward John French, solicitor, of Dublin married Georgina Frances Fox daughter of James George Hubert Fox of Galtrim House.

James was succeeded by his son, Major Brabazon Hubert Maine Fox who was born in 1868. The family also had connections to Tipperary. Major Brabazon Fox was educated at Trinity College, served with Royal Irish Rifles and was a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. The Society members were guests of the Major at Galtrim when they came to examine the motte. Major Fox served in Malta, India and during the First World War. His son, Nial, also served in the First World War. Major the Fox died 1940.

The Eustace family purchased Galtrim 1936 from the Foxes. John Frank Fawcett Eustace, lived at Galtrim. He was married in 1936 to Natalie Annette Diamond, daughter of John Ernest Ardron, their children being, Mary Fawcett, born in 1938, and John Edwin, born in 1947. He sold the house in 1969 to Eileen Mount Charles.

Eileen Mount Charles was the daughter of Captain Charles Wren Newsam and Eileen Ussher, Ashfield, Beauparc. Captain Newsam was the founder of Navan Carpets. Eileen married Frederick Conyngham, 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess Conyngham of Slane in 1950.

In medieval times Galtrim was associated with the Hussey family.

## Garballagh House

Garballagh is located on the Navan road out of Duleek. The house appears to date from the middle of the nineteenth century. A courtyard stands near the house. In the 1830s there appears to have been a small village at Garballagh. The von Homrigh family seem to have owned Garballagh but the Saurin family lived there.

Michael Saurin married Brigid Matthews. Two of their daughters became Carmelite nuns, a son, Matthew, became a Jesuit priest and a son, Patrick, became a lawyer. Their youngest child, Susan Saurin, was born at Garballagh House in 1829. She entered the Baggot Street Convent of Mercy in 1850 and was professed a nun in 1853 taking the name, Scholastica. She was sent to new convents at Clifford and Hull in England. Her superior was unhappy with her performance and Sr. Scholastica refused to reveal what she said to a priest in confession. Her superior tried to have her dispensed from her vows while the Saurin family wanted the local bishop to investigate the treatment of Sr. Scholastica. A commission of enquiry was appointed. Saurin was the only nun to be interviewed and cross-examined on twelve charges of faults against obedience, poverty, charity, and truth. Saurin was required to leave the convent. Her family was furious and vowed to seek justice in the courts. Saurin refused to leave the convent. The nuns confined her in a room in the attic and refused to provide adequate food. In May 1867 she left the convent quietly. A court case was taken and began in February 1869. The case lasted a record twenty-one days and became known as 'The Great Convent Case'. Her superiors were found guilty of wrongfully and maliciously compelling Saurin to leave the convent and of subjecting her to various indignities, assaults, persecutions, and annoyances, including trying to libel her before the bishop. Five years after the case, Saurin entered the Visitation Convent in Bristol under the assumed name of Mary Brown. She remained there until her death in 1915 aged eighty five years. Maria G. McClelland has written an article on Saurin's life and the case proceedings were published.

Michael Saurin held a house and lands from John von Homrigh in the 1850s. In 1876 Michael Saurin held 393 acres in County Meath. Michael Saurin died in 1880 aged 86. Patrick M.V. Saurin lived at Garballagh in the 1850s and 1880s. Patrick M.V. Saurin, bachelor, died in 1895 aged 61.

Michael Saurin bred horses at Garballagh but in 1900 he decided to cease breeding and sold all his horses. In 1901 Michael J.J. Saurin, his wife, Casandra, and family were living at Garballagh. The house had sixteen rooms, five windows to the front and twenty six outbuildings. In 1911 his son, Michael, and wife, Rosanna, nee Maguire, were living at Garballagh.

Michael Saurin of Garballagh house died in 1922 and is buried in Duleek. Michael Crispin Anthony Saurin died June 1976.

## Gaulstown House

Gaulstown is located between Duleek and Balrath Cross. Gaulstown House probably dates to the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1854 Anne Green was leasing the house and 245 acres from William Gibson. In 1876 Mrs. Greene of Gaulstown, Duleek held 303 acres. In 1901 John Greene and his family were living at Gaultstown House. The house had eleven rooms, nine windows to the front and twenty one outbuildings. In 1911 Henry William Greene, son of John, was resident in the house with his family. The Land Commission acquired the property in 1967.

## Gerrardstown House

Gerrardstown, sometimes Geraldstown, House or Castle was located 5 miles from Navan, between Garlow Cross and Kentstown. The neighbouring property was Staffordstown House. In 1835 Gerrardstown house and demesne was the property of Mr. Corbally. The house is near the Nanny river. Attached to the house was a fine lawn, a good garden and a fishpond. In front of the house was the site of a castle and nearby was a mound, possibly a motte.

In 1854 Rev. Dr. Frederick Nolan was leasing Gerrardstown House and 369 acres from Matthew E. Corbally of Corbalton Hall. Nolan was a theologian. He was ordained in August 1806, and served in parishes in England. Nolan was an extreme theological conservative. He died at his home, Geraldstown House, on 16 September 1864, and was buried in the ancestral vault in Navan churchyard.

Captain William Shirley-Ball, 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, lived at Abbeylara, Co. Longford and Gerrardstown, Navan. Captain William Shirley Ball married Jane Wilton and they had two sons, Thomas and Arthur William. William Shirley Ball died in 1866. Arthur William was a lieutenant in the 59<sup>th</sup> regiment.

Cecilia Letitia Humphrys of Ballyhaise married Arthur Shirley Ball, of Geraldstown in 1869. Arthur was High Sherrif of Longford about 1874. Races were held at Gerrardstown in the 1870s. A new red brick house was erected at Gerrardstown in 1872. The hosue had six sitting rooms and fourteen bedrooms.

In 1901 and 1911 Cecelia Letitia Shirley Ball, widow, lived at Gerrardstown. The house had twenty five rooms, eleven windows to the front and twenty seven outbuildings. Mrs. Shirley Ball died in 1924 at Gerrardstown. Gerardstown was purchased by Mr. John Carlin, a Dublin cattle dealer. The house was demolished after the Land Commission took over the estate.

## Gibbstown House



Memorial at Donaghpatrick to Thomas Gerrard

Gibbstown House was situated south-east of Kells near Clongill. The lands originally belonged to the Plunketts but came into the ownership of the Gerrard family. Thomas Gerrard settled at Gibbstown and died in 1719. His son, John, was his heir at Gibbstown. Another son, Thomas, lived at Liscarton. A third son, Samuel, lived at

Noel French's Meath Houses

Clongill. Samuel was a friend and correspondent of Swift and Pope. In 1780 Arthur Young called at Gibbstown, where Mr. Gerrard had one of the most considerable farms in the country. Mr. Gerrard explained his system of management to Young who recorded it in his book which he hoped would help improve agriculture in Ireland.

John Gerrard married Margaret Flood of Castleknock and was succeeded by his only son, Thomas. His eldest son, John, succeeded him but the property then went to Thomas, the son of the third son who had settled at Boyne Hill. John had married Marcella, daughter and heiress of Frederick Netterville of Longford, Co. Galway but they had no children. Marcella Gerrard eventually came to inherit a large estate in county Galway. As she died in 1865 without an heir the Courts decided that her estates should be divided into three portions for different relatives. In 1837 Gibbstown was described as a gentleman's seat situated in a well-planted demesne of about 1270 statute acres.

Thomas succeeded his uncle and went on to be High Sheriff of Meath in 1863 and of Cavan in 1893. Thomas died in 1913 and as he had no children his two sisters, Mrs. Johnstone and Mrs. Collins inherited.

Thomas Gerrard replaced the original house with a very impressive Italianate house, constructed 1871-72. The house complete with a campanile was constructed of Ardbraccan limestone. Designed by W.H. Lynn of Belfast the house had 63 bedrooms and a terraced garden. The house was badly damaged by fire in 1912 and re-built 1912-14. The Dublin Fire Brigade came to put out the fire, travelling the thirty six miles in one hour and twenty minutes. It took seven and a half hours to put out the fire, the top floor was destroyed but the ground floor saved. It was the first major use of motorised fire brigade in the county.

A new church at Donaghpatrick was constructed in 1895, funded by Thomas Gerrard and his sisters, Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Johnston, of Gibbstown House. The medieval tower was incorporated into the new structure.

Major Thomas Collins-Gerrard bred Troytown, winner of the Grand National in 1920. The win was celebrated by bonfires in Navan and on the road to Gibbstown. Gibbstown was designated a Gaeltacht area in the 1930s when migrants from Mayo, Kerry, Donegal and Cork Gaeltachts settled in the area. The house was demolished in 1965 and the fabric of the house was purchased by the monks at New Mellifont, Collon who intended to reconstruct the entire building. The stones were numbered for re-erection but the project never took place. A cast-iron aviary from the house was re-erected in the West End arcade in Drogheda. An extensive farmyard complex of stone and brick buildings, a red-brick gate house and two semi-detached red brick houses erected by Thomas Gerrard, and a number of cottages survive from the estate. The grandiose set of circular cast-iron gates at the entrance to the house is now a protected structure.

There is a Gibbstown in New Jersey and an ale called 'St. Peter's beer' was first brewed by an innkeeper named Thomas Gerrard at Gibbstown near Philadelphia.

## Gormanston Castle

Gormanston Castle is situated just south of Drogheda, near the border with county Dublin and just off the main Dublin road. Gormanston castle dates from about 1363. The old Manor house at Gormanston was low and gabled with a 'long blue parlour' stretching along the whole length of the ground floor. A chapel adjoined the building. The old chapel had a date of 1687 in panel above the doorway and a crucifix. The Yew Walk was laid out in early 1800s as an approach to the chapel.





At the beginning of the nineteenth century the 12<sup>th</sup> Viscount rebuilt the house as a three storey Gothic Revival castle. A four storey building it has castellated towers. The building was rebuilt and extended about 1820 and is now entirely nineteenth century in appearance. The entrance hall, rising two storeys, has late 19<sup>th</sup> century wood panelling and a massive chimney piece decorated with a series of Preston shields. The Library has simple classical plasterwork and Ionic chimney piece. The 12th Viscount intended to erect a larger castle but he ceased all works when his wife died in 1820. 'This day the light of my life has gone out' he wrote in his diary on the day of her death. It is thought that Thomas Wogan Brown and Sir Richard Morrison were both involved in the design of the building at different times. The noted Irish architect, Francis Johnson, is also credited with the design of the castle. Part of the castle was damaged on the night of the Big Wind in 1839.

Sir Robert Preston served as Lord Chancellor of Ireland and was created Baron Gormanston. The title, Viscount Gormanston, was created in 1478 and as the bearer of the oldest title in Ireland they are regarded as the Premier Viscount in Ireland. In 1611 the Prestons of Gormanston received lands confiscated in Ulster following the Flight of the Earls. The Prestons supported the king against Cromwell in the 1640s but their lands were restored in the 1660s when Charles II became king. The title was lost after the Battle of the Boyne as the Prestons took the side of James but it was restored in 1800. The family remained Roman Catholic.

The local foxes gather and hold a vigil when the head of the Preston family is dying. This is said to be in thanksgiving for the deliverance and protection from mauling predators of a vixen and her young by a previous Lord Gormanston. The crest and supporter of the Viscounts Gormanston are a fox proper. As foxes are solitary by nature for them to congregate in any number is most unusual. In 1860 when the 12<sup>th</sup> Viscount Gormanston died the foxes came in pairs and sat under the bedroom window where they barked and howled all night. They were constantly driven away but

returned. On the day of the funeral the foxes were seen walking towards the graveyard in the woods but then disappeared. When the 14th Viscount died in 1927 the foxes surrounded the chapel where his body was lying and despite all efforts to remove them they would not budge until daylight.

The fourteenth Viscount Gormanston, Jenico Preston, was appointed governor of the Leeward Islands in 1885 and two years later he became governor to the larger colony of British Guiana. In 1893 Gormanston was made governor of Tasmania where a mining settlement was named Gormanston in his honour. The family also held lands at Whitewood and in Nobber. The thirteenth Viscount was created Baron Gormanston of Whitewood, Co. Meath in 1868. In 1883 Lord Gormanston held 9,657 acres in Meath and 1,300 in Dublin making a total estate of 10,957 acres.

Lady Elizabeth Butler came to live with her daughter in Gormanstown Castle in the 1920s. Lady Butler was a noted artist specialising in military scenes. The 16<sup>th</sup> Viscount who succeeded in 1925, went missing in action in 1940, presumed killed during the Second World War and his widow asked an acquaintance what would he do with the castle. He replied "I'd give it away with a pound of tea." The writer, Evelyn Waugh, visited the house as a prospective buyer.

In 1947 Gormanston Castle and demesne was acquired by the Franciscan Order from Mrs. Pamela O'Connor, whose husband was the sixteenth Viscount Gormanston. The Franciscans transferred their school from Multyfarnham to Gormanston and opened it as a secondary school in 1954. The present college buildings were built in 1955-6. Distinguished past pupils include Charlie McCreevy and Colin Farrell.

Jenico Preston, 17th Viscount Gormanston, succeeded to the titles in 1940 at the age of seven months after his father was killed during the Battle of France. The Gormanstowns now live in London. The present Lady Gormanston is Lucy Fox, the daughter of Edward Fox, the actor.

The Meath Archaeological and Historical Society was given a guided tour of grounds by Brendan Matthews.

## Grange House

Grange is located at Derrypatrick on the Trim-Dublin road near the cross for Dunsany. In 1835 Grange townland was the property of Mr. Hopkins, Athboy from which Mr. George Murphy of Braymount, Trim held the whole for 31 years at 28s per acre. At the time Grange House was nearly in ruins and occupied by a herd but nearby a new good house was being built. James George Murphy was living at Grange in 1849, his eldest son, George Fitzgerald was born in 1850. In 1854 James G. Murphy held the townland of Grange amounting to 505 acres. In 1884 George F. Murphy married Lady Mary L. Plunkett, daughter of the Earl of Fingal. In 1876 George F. Murphy was living at Grange. George F. Murphy attended a Unionist convention in Dublin in 1892.

In 1901 and 1911 George F. Murphy, his wife and his brother were living at Grange. The house had thirteen rooms, nine windows to the front and fifteen outbuildings.

The stables at Grange were burned in 1905.

In the early twentieth century Lady Mary Murphy lived at Grange. She died in 1927 and her niece Mrs. Kitty Baggally succeeded and lived there until her death in 1955 in a motor accident in France. Richard Romer Claude Baggally married Kathleen (Kitty) Constance Charlotte FitzGerald Murphy in 1910. He had an interesting life. He fought in the First World War and then became Military Secretary to Lord French, the Viceroy of Ireland in 1919. He was commandant of the Alien internment camps, Isle

of Man between 1940 and 1942. In 1922 he re-married and died in the mid-1970s. Kitty was buried in France. Her son, Denis Baggally, then lived at Grange. In 1959 the Agricultural Research Institute – An Foras Talúntais took over the estate of 550 acres. It was the base for an AI centre and then a research centre. In 1997 Grange was chosen as site for the EU Veterinary Centre.

## Gravelmount House



Gravelmount House is equidistant from Navan, Kells and Ardee. The late Georgian house is a three storey over basement. The central door leads to a large hall. To rear is a single storey stone cut courtyard.

In the 1700s Gravelmount was the seat of the Weldon family, one of whom married a daughter of Lord Kenmare. Nicholas Weldon of Gravelmount married Lucy Gorges of Kilbrew, she had previously been married to Lord Howth. William Weldon of Gravelmount had an only daughter, Helen, who became the third wife of John Nugent, heir to the title Earl Nugent of Westmeath in 1748.

On 30 April 1776 William Weldon renounced the Catholic Church and became a Protestant at the parish church of St. Peters. William died after 1802. J.H. Weldon held Gravelmount in 1812 and also had a city residence at 42 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin.

In the 1830s the house belonged to the Rev. R. Langfield and was occupied by John O'Connor. In 1837 it was described as a spacious and handsome house with the demesne comprising about 160 statute acres and the grounds were tastefully laid out. John O'Connor inherited an estate at nearby Ardlonan. O'Connor, son of Rev. George O'Connor of Castleknock, was a graduate of Trinity College and bred horses at Gravelomount.

Charles Yelverton O'Connor was born at Gravelmount, Castletown on 11 January 1843, the youngest son of John and Elizabeth (nee O'Keefe) O'Connor. He was educated at home by his aunt initially. In 1850 the family moved to Waterford, where Charles was educated at the Waterford Endowed School. He was apprenticed to John Chaloner Smith, a railway engineer. At the age of 21 he emigrated to New Zealand. In 1866 he was appointed assistant engineer in Canterbury Province and following steady promotion he became Under-Secretary of Public Works in New Zealand in 1883. He married Susan Letitia Ness and they raised a family of seven. In 1890 was appointed marine engineer for the whole of the colony.

In April 1891 O'Connor took up the position of Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia. He was responsible for the construction of Fremantle Harbour and the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. O'Connor proposed the development of the harbour at the entrance to the Swan river despite opposing expert opinion. Work

began on the new harbour in 1892 with the first overseas passenger ship berthing in 1897 and the works being completed in 1903. In 1897 O'Connor was invited to London where he was made a companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George by Queen Victoria.

O'Connor was engineer-in-chief of the railways, and new lines had to be built. The number of miles of railway was trebled in the first five years he was in office.

O'Connor constructed the Goldfields Water supply system which carried water 330 miles from Perth to Kalgoorlie. A gold rush in the barren desert area of central; Western Australia caused a population explosion, necessitating a water supply be provided. O'Connor's proposals were attacked by the press and many Members of Parliament. He was accused of corruption.

The attacks in the press resulted in O'Connor committing suicide. O'Connor took his own life on 10 March 1902 by shooting himself, while riding his horse into the water at a beach south of Fremantle. The beach where O'Connor died was named after him and a statue of O'Connor was erected in the water there. Less than a year later the Goldfields Water Supply was commissioned.

In 1901 William Hopkins lived at Gravelmount. John Rankin McKeever moved from Wilkinstown to Gravelmount and about 1907 he married his wife, Barbara. John Rankin McKeever died in 1940. His memorial plaque in Kilshine church was moved to Kells church when Kilshine was closed.

## Gravelstown

Gravelstown House is located on the Ardee road from Carlanstown. Gravelstown House was purchased from Nathaniel Manning by Patrick Lynch in 1812 and the Lynch family continued to reside there until 1918. On the night of the Big Wind, 6 January 1839 the roof blew off Gravelstown House. The house had to be thatched for a number of years until slates could be purchased. In 1854 Honoria Lynch was leasing a house, a herd's house and 211 acres of lands from the Earl of Howth. In 1901 Luke Lynch, aged 82, his wife and family were living at Gravelstown. Luke Lynch was a member of the Board of Guardians for Kells Workhouse. He died in 1906. His son, Thomas Bernard, was aged 23. The house had ten rooms, five windows to the front and fourteen outbuildings. T.B. Lynch was a local councillor and chairman of the Board of Guardians in Kells in the early part of the twentieth century. The house then came into the hands of the Farrelly family.

## Green Park

Green Park is in the townland of Jealoustown, civil parish of Trevet, Dunshaughlin. There is a lodge at the entrance to the avenue.

Philip Grierson lived at Green Park. His father, James Grierson of Doolistown, disinherited him even though he was the eldest son. Philip's mother, Mary Anne, lived at Green Park after the death of her husband. Philip later moved to Kildare where he died in poor circumstances.

The main family associated with Green Park were the Garnetts. Henry Garnett, son of John of Balgeeth, established the family at Green Park in the eighteenth century.

In 1837 Green Park was the residence of Cope Garnett. In the 1850s Henry Garnett lived at Green Park and was one of the guardians of Dunshaughlin Workhouse. Cope Garnett also held lands at Green Park in the 1850s. In 1876 Mary Garnett held 362 acres in County Meath while Mrs. H. Garnett held 152 acres and Cope Garnett of

Monkstown, Co. Dublin, held 92 acres. In 1880 W.P. Garnett was living at Green Park.

In 1901 William Yourell held Green Park. The house had fifteen rooms, four windows to the front and twelve outbuildings. In 1911 the Garnett family were again in possession but the house was unoccupied.

## Grennanstown house

Grennanstown House is located to the west of Athboy town. To the north-west of the house there was a ring fort. A large house was recorded in the townland in the Civil Survey of 1656-7. In the middle of the eighteenth century Miss Colt, sister to the wife of Lord Trimleston. married Barnaby Barnwall, kinsman of the lord and settled at Grennanstown, Athboy.

In 1836 the house was the property of Mr. P. Barnewall and was described as a good house of two stories and basement with extensive offices. The townland was the property of the Earl of Darnley. In 1854 James Delaney was leasing Grennanstown House and 668 acres from Richard O'Reilly. In 1876 John R. Delaney of Grennanstown held 265 acres in County Meath.

In 1901 Thomas J. Studdert, a horse dealer from Clare, was living at Grennanstown. The house had twenty rooms, sixteen windows to the front and thirty outbuildings. The house appears to be vacant in 1911.

In 1964 the arable farm of 504 acres at Grennanstown was sold. The lands were acquired by the Land Commission and divided. In 1971 Grennanstown became an experimental combined farm with four farmers sharing a farm of 236 acres.

## The Grove

The Grove is located at Balrath, Kentstown. Casey and Rowan describe the Grove as a pleasant Regency style gabled house with a single bay extension at each end. The house has a pretty fanlight and a Doric door case. The house dates to about 1740. The house has eight bedrooms and six bathrooms. The entrance hall has Prince of Wales feather plasterwork with the old-style period fanlight.

In the 1830s the Grove was the residence of Mr. Walsh. In 1911 Francis Douglas Osborne, a mining engineer was living at The Grove with his family. The house had twenty five rooms and fourteen windows to the front. The house has had many occupants including Tandys, Hollonds, Ormabyes, Nichols, Barretts, Graham-Tolers, Chain-Nixons and Carvills. Mrs Graham-Toler of Durrow Abbey lived at The Grove in the 1950s.

Michael Meade Carvill served as a captain in the Irish Guards and resided at The Grove in the 1970s. The house featured in the 1970s U.S. mini-series, 'The Mannions of America.' The house was re-furbished in 1986 and again in the 1990s.

## Gunnocks

Gunnocks is located near Dunboyncy in south Meath near the Dublin border. Gunnocks was originally a thatched house said to date from 1806 when it was constructed by Laurence Ward. Described as a Georgian front of two storeys and there bays the house has a wing at the side set back.

The Wards came to Gunnocks about 1700 from Whitetown, near Oldtown, Co. Dublin. Laurence Ward was born at Whitestown in 1760 and died at Gunnocks in 1833. John Ward held Gunnocks in the 1850s. Christopher Ward held Gunnocks for a period. His son, Laurence Ward, was born in 1847. Laurence Ward was a member of

the Grand Jury of Meath and a Justice of the Peace. He was chairman of the Dunshaughlin Board of Guardians. Laurence died in 1938 and was buried at Loughsallagh.

His son, Joseph Lawrence Ward, was born in 1909. Joe Ward married Lilla Doyle of Limerick in 1938. Lilla was a great-great-granddaughter of Daniel O'Connell and spent some of her formative years in Nazi Germany. Following the death of her mother Lilla was dispatched by her aunts to Germany to complete her education. Arriving in September 1932 the Weimar Republic was on its knees. Hitler and the Nazis were coming to power. She witnessed the destruction of the school library by the Nazis. After a year she returned to Ireland. She began working in Dublin where romance blossomed with Joe Ward, whose mother had been a school friend of Lilla's mother. Lilla settled into life as a farmer's wife. She died in December 2007.

"Strong Farmer - The memoirs of Joe Ward", edited by Ciaran Buckley and Chris Ward was published by Liberties Press. His memories recount not only his own story of life as a cattle dealer in Co Meath, but also give an account of the trade in the days of his father and grandfather. Cattle and sheep were taken to markets all over the country. Full of stories the book also describes the Economic War of the 1930s. One story tells of a man and wife dressed as nuns who successfully extracted "charity" from towns and villages all over the country, until one of them was discovered one morning shaving.