

Rahinstown House



Rahinstown is located in south Meath close to Rathmolyon. The original Rahinstown House dated from the eighteenth century. A drawing of the houses in the 1830s shows a six bay house of three storeys over a basement. The front door was not centred but to the left, suggesting that the original house may have been added to. About 1870 the old house burned down and was replaced by a large Italianate house and farm buildings. Sandham Symes was the architect for the construction of the new buildings for Robert Fowler in 1871. The house has a three bay front in cement with sandstone dressings and bow windows with curved glass.

Rahinstown is the story of two families the Bomfords and the Fowlers. The Bomfords developed the estate in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century when it was taken over by the Fowler family who already had interests in the area.

Laurence Bomford of Clonmahon died in 1720 aged 103. Sir Arthur Langford of Summerhill let the lands of Baronstown and Rahinstown, 903 acres, to Thomas Bomford. Laurence's eldest son, Thomas, settled at Rahinstown and was Secretary to the Court of Claims in the reign of Charles II. Thomas died in 1740 and left the estate to his brother, Stephen of Gallow. Stephen was succeeded by his son, also Stephen, in 1756. Stephen married Elizabeth Sibthorpe of Dunany, Co. Louth in 1745.

Stephen Bomford died in 1808. His second son, Robert, served as a captain in the Bengal Infantry in the East India Company before returning to Ireland to marry Maria Massy-Dawson in 1792. When his elder brother Thomas died Robert became heir to Rahinstown and succeeded to the estate of 2358 statute acres in 1808. Robert died nine years later in 1817 and was buried at Rathcore. When Robert died Maria his wife was aged 48 and all her seven children were under 21, the youngest being only 7.

Maria Massy Bomford has a memorial in Saint Ann's, Dawson Street, Dublin. She died in 1848 aged 79 years. The family regularly lived at No 7 Upper Merrion Street. The estate was taken over by their eldest son, Robert George Bomford when he came of age. Born in 1802 he served as High Sheriff of Meath in 1832. Robert George married Elizabeth Kennedy of Annadale, Co. Down in 1826. In 1836 Rahinstown Demesne the demesne was well planted with fir and other trees and the house was described as a very good one but the pleasure grounds appeared very much neglected. It was the residence of Mr. R.G. Bomford. He died without an heir in 1846 and his widow married Marcus Gervais Beresford, Archbishop of Armagh. After the death of Robert's mother in 1848 the estate was sold and the proceeds divided among his sisters. Peter Bamford has a very extensive website devoted to the Bomford family.

The Fowlers came to Ireland from England. Robert Fowler was born in 1724 at Skendleby, Lincolnshire. Educated at Cambridge he was appointed chaplain to George II in 1756. Fowler was appointed bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenora in 1771 and in 1779 was translated to the archbishopric of Dublin. He resided at Tallaght while archbishop. He was the first chancellor of the Order of St Patrick in 1783.

In 1766 Fowler married Mildred Dealtry of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. They had a son, Robert, who succeeded him, a daughter Mary (Countess of Kilkenny) and a daughter, Frances, who married Richard Bourke, Bishop of Waterford 1813 to 1833.

In 1789 Fowler voted with fourteen other peers against the Irish House of Lords calling for the Prince of Wales to be made regent during the illness of George III.

Fowler died suddenly on 10 October 1801 at Bassingbourn Hall, Cambridgeshire, where he had resided for two years for his health. He was buried in Takeley churchyard but there is no memorial to him.

Robert's eldest son, Robert was Bishop of Ferns and Ossory 1813 to 1841. Born about 1767 Fowler was educated at Oxford. He married Louisa Gardiner, daughter of Luke Gardiner, Viscount Mountjoy in 1796. Gardiner was a property developer, laying out Mountjoy Square and Gardiner Street. In 1848 Louisa was buried in the family vault in St. Thomas's Church, Dublin next to her husband.

Their eldest son Robert Fowler was born in 1797 and married twice. He settled at Rahinstown. He married Jane Anne Crichton in 1820 and secondly Lady Harriet Eleanor Wandesforde-Butler, daughter of John Butler, second Marquess of Ormonde. He died in 1863. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Robert, who was Deputy Lieutenant, Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff of Meath in 1871. He married Laetitia Mable Coddington of Oldbridge in 1856. He died in 1897.

John Sharman Fowler, the second son of Robert Fowler, joined the Royal Engineers in 1886. Serving on the frontiers of India, South Africa and Ireland Fowler became director of Army Signals. At the outbreak of the First World War, he became Director of Army Signals of the British Expeditionary Force, a position he held throughout the war. By the end of the war Fowler was commanding 70,000 men. Fowler remained in the army after the war, serving in the British Forces in China until 1925.

In the 1901 census Robert H. Fowler, retired Army Captain and Justice of the Peace, his wife, their two sons, two visitors and thirteen servants were in residence at Rahinstown. Robert Henry served as High Sheriff of Co. Meath in 1899. In 1908 a number of cattle drives took place on the estate of Captain Fowler of Rahinstown.

Robert Henry Fowler was the longest lived international cricketer, living to within a month of his hundredth birthday. Born in 1857, attended Sandhurst, joined the Army in 1878 and died in 1957. He married Mabel Glyn in 1890 and they had two sons. His son Robert St Leger Fowler, was also a highly regarded cricketer, being captain of the Eton team while at school there. Joining the army Robert St Leger served as a captain

in World War 1, winning a Military Cross during the defence of Amiens against the last German offensive of 1918. He died from leukaemia at Rahinstown in 1925. George Glyn Fowler, the second son, was killed at the battle of Loos, 26 September 1915 aged 19. There are a number of memorials to this hero in Rathmolyon church including the wooden cross originally erected at Lapugnoy Military Cemetery.

The estate then passed to Bryan John Fowler, son of George Hurst Fowler, third son of Robert and Laetitia Mable Fowler.

Bryan John Fowler of Rahinstown served during World War I being awarded the Military Cross and also won a Distinguished Service Order for his efforts in World War II. Brigadier Fowler was at Fairyhouse Races on Easter Monday 1916 and was summoned away to maintain control in Drogheda. He later became instructor at the Army Equitation School in Weedon. He competed for Britain in polo in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, winning a silver medal. On returning from England, the family lived for a while at Culmullen House before moving to the family estate at Rahinstown.

His son, John Fowler, was a well known horse trainer. He represented Ireland in the Mexico Olympics of 1968. In December 2008 John Fowler was killed in a tree-felling accident on his farm.

Rahood

Rahood House, in the parish of Castletown, south-west of Nobber, was associated with the Cruise family. Patrick Cruise was living at Rahood in the mid eighteenth century. Bishop Plunkett stayed with Mr. Cruise of Rahood on his visitation of 1797 and again in 1800. The house and lands were the property of Colonel Bligh in 1837, who leased the lands of 599 acres to Richard Cruise. Cruise had a large beautiful house on an eminence near the centre of the townland surrounded with wood. Richard Cruise was a magistrate for the county. Richard died aged 84 in 1840. Lt. Col. Alexander Cruise held the house and lands in the 1850s. Francis R. Cruise M.D. held Rahood and also lived at Merrion Square, Dublin. His only son Richard Robert Cruise was living in Harley Street London in 1913. The McKeever family held the house in the early part of the twentieth century. In the 1901 census one member of the family was a Methodist, while another was Church of Ireland while another was Plymouth Brethern. Samuel McKeever lent the IRA a car during the troubled times and it was returned with a bullethole. Sammy was a supporter of de Valera and Fianna Fail. There are three ringforts in the townland and a souterrain was discovered in the 1980s.

Randalstown House

Randalstown House was located to the north of Navan. The house was begun about 1710, extended twice in the eighteenth century and stood to the late twentieth century. A three storey over Basement house Randalstown had a pillared Doric doorcase. Bence-Jones wrote that Randalstown had the most imaginative late-Georgian interior plasterwork with trophies and roped swags on the domed staircase.

The Everards of Randalstown can be traced back to the 15th century. Owen Randill of Rendillstown had a daughter, Olive, whom married Pierce Cardy and inherited Rendillstown. Their daughter, Joan Cardy, married John Everard in the early 1400s and so the Everards came to live at Randalstown. In 1519 Patrick Everard of Randalstown was Sheriff of Meath.



Matthias Everard joined the forces of James II in fighting William of Orange. He served during the siege of Limerick in 1691 and under the Treaty of Limerick he submitted to the King and paid £1000 to be restored to his lands. Matthias renovated the old castle at Randalstown and extended it in 1708 and 1714, thus creating a country house. Matthias died in 1715 and was buried at Kilberry. His younger brother, Christopher, inherited the estate. He completed the new road from Navan to Donaghpatrick which had been started by his brother. In 1720 Christopher erected a banqueting house flanked by a canal and a terrace. In 1744 Randalstown was described as being well wooded and with a great avenue of full grown ash trees.

In 1748 John Everard of Randalstown conformed to the Established Protestant church. About 1780 Thomas Everard added a third storey to Randalstown. The interior was remodelled with the main front on the south side being turned round to the north side where a pillared doorcase was erected. In 1795 Thomas was High Sheriff of Meath and was a member of the Grand Jury from 1785 until his death in 1820. He was succeeded by his son, Matthias.

Matthias Everard of Randalstown, born about 1787, commenced his military career at Gibraltar in 1804. In December 1805 Lieutenant Everard was captured on his way from Gibraltar to England by the French fleet. The English prisoners were held on board the *La Volontaire* which three months later sailed into the British controlled Cape and the prisoners were released. A few years later he participated in the attempt to capture the Spanish colony of Rio de la Plata. He led an attack on Montivideo. Out of the 32 men, 22 were killed or wounded. He was presented with a sword of honour to mark his gallantry by the Patriotic Fund at Lloyds and granted the freedom of Dublin. Promoted to Captain in 1807 Matthias served at Corunna in 1809. After the Napoleonic war Everard was transferred to India and commanded the 1st Battalion at the siege of Hattaras in 1817. In 1821 he was appointed major and in 1825 lieutenant colonel. Everard commanded the 14th Regiment at the storming of Bhurtpore in India in 1825. In 1826 he was awarded the companion of the Order of the Bath. In 1841 he was appointed Colonel and in 1851 Major-General. Matthias inherited Randalstown in 1845 but never lived there. He died in 1857 at Southsea, Southampton, unmarried.

In 1837 Randalstown was the property of Col. Everard but the residence of Henry Meredith. It was described as a fine three storey house with a basement situated in an elegant and extensive estate. In 1855 the property was still occupied by Henry Meredith.

Matthias was succeeded by his brother, Richard Nugent Everard, who died in 1863.

Sir Nugent Talbot Everard was born at Torquay, Devon in England in 1849 and he was the first of the Everards to make their home at Randalstown for more than 60 years. In 1863 at the age of thirteen he inherited Randalstown. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. He settled at Randalstown about 1870. At the time the estate amounted to 2311 acres. Everard was a supporter of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society which established the co-operative movement in Ireland. Everard was elected President of the co-op movement, the I.A.O. S., in 1905. On the occasion of the coronation of King George V in 1911 Everard was created a baronet. He was a member of the Grand Jury of Meath and its successor Meath County Council. He held the position of High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant for Meath, and was a co-opted member of the county council, serving continuously from 1899 to 1922. He served with his wife, Lady Everard, on the Meath Agricultural Society and the County Committee of Agriculture. He served in the Royal Meath Militia and served as colonel in the Regiment in Belgium and at Ypres.

Sir Nugent Everard and his son, Richard, were staying in the Sackville Street Club when the rebellion broke out and remained there while the fighting continued. They witnessed the fighting at the GPO and the surrender of the leaders. Sir Nugent kept a diary now in the possession of the family of the five days of the rebellion.

In 1922 he was appointed to the Senate of the new Irish Free State by William T. Cosgrave.

The demise of tillage farming in the 1880s and the consequent decrease in employment opportunities on the land for his workers made him turn his attention to tobacco. In 1898 Sir Nugent Talbot Everard obtained a special licence to grow tobacco. He was joined in the next few years in the experiment by Sir John Dillon of Lismullin, R.H. Metge of Athlumney and F. Brodigan of Piltown. His tobacco growing is mentioned in James Joyce's *Ulysses* – "there was that Colonel Everard down there in Navan growing tobacco". From 1898 to 1938 the Randlestown area of Navan was central to plans to introduce tobacco growing on a commercial basis in Ireland. The estate had its own tobacco plantation and also acted as a rehandling station – taking in tobacco from the local growers and processing it for sale to factories. At its peak, the industry provided almost 100 jobs and played a vital part in the local economy.

Col. Everard died in 1929 in his eightieth year. He was interred at Donaghpatrick – his grave is near the entrance. There is an article about Sir Nugent Everard in the 2000 issue of *Riocht an Midhe*. After his death the local growers formed the County Meath Co-Operative Tobacco Growers Society. The Co-Operative continued into the 1930s, and closed in 1939, the last year in which tobacco was grown in the county.

Sir Nugent's only son, Major Richard Everard succeeded him at Randalstown but eleven days later died suddenly. His eldest son became Sir Nugent Everard. He decided to join the British army in 1926 and saw active service during World War II. Richard Everard provides much information of the Everard family in the 1993 and 1994 issues of the *Irish Genealogist* journal.

By 1940 Randalstown house was empty and in 1943 it was sold with 412 acres of land to Gerald Williamson. The Williamson family held the property for thirty years until it was purchased by Tara Mines. The house was used for a period as offices for the mines but finally the house was demolished in the 1970s to make way for a tailings dam.



Sir Nugent Everard

Rathaldron Castle

Rathaldron Castle is located to the north of Navan on the banks of the Blackwater river. It is a miniature battlemented country house. Approached by a grand avenue and an impressive castle-style gatehouse the castle consists of a medieval tower house with an added wing which had battlements added about 1800. A traditional story tells of two brothers quarrelling over a woman. It is said one brother killed the other in the "Blue Room" of the castle. The dead man haunted the castle until a priest imprisoned the ghost in the chapel.

The Cusack family held the castle until 1840, it then came into possession of the O'Reilly family who held it until at least 1911. George Lowry held it in the 1920s and 1930s and Meath County Health Board held it in 1937 for less than a year.

The Cusacks were an important family in Meath during the medieval times. Michael Cusack was the eldest son of James Cusack of Portrane, Co. Dublin. Michael married Margaret, daughter of Richard Dexter of Rathaldron and thus acquired the estate. A cross at nearby Nevinstown commemorated Michael and his wife. Michael was succeeded by his eldest son, George, who held Rathaldron and Balreask. The family also held Castletown-Tara. George was succeeded by his son Patrick of Rathaldron.

Patrick married Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Fitzwilliam of Merrion, Co. Dublin. Fitzwilliam Square and Merrion Square commemorate this family. Patrick is also recorded as have married Cicely, eldest daughter of Patrick Nangle, Baron of Navan. Patrick's lands were confiscated under the Cromwellian plantation. Patrick's son, Michael of Balreask, was a lawyer.



His son, Christopher, succeeded to Rathaldron. Christopher was accused of attacking Protestants in Navan in 1641 but this charge was probably false. He was restored to some of his lands at Rathaldron. Christopher supported King James and sat as M.P. for Navan in the parliament of 1689 when Catholics took over the parliament. Then came the Battle of the Boyne and his lands were confiscated. A claim was made that the lands had been transferred to his grandson before the confiscation for treason. The infant was innocent of treason and so the lands went to the grandson, Christopher.

Christopher was succeeded at Rathaldron by his son, Patrick, who was a minor when his father died. As a result of the Penal Laws he had to share his estate with his younger brother Richard. Patrick died in 1744 and by 1769 Richard had managed to buy out other family members and take full charge of Rathaldron. His son, Christopher, succeeded his father before 1792. Christopher was described as a gentleman farmer. Christopher died in 1824 without issue and in 1836 his widow died leaving the estate to her husband's first cousin Charles Cusack.

Charles was brought up in Essex and never lived at Rathaldron. He was well established in business in Liverpool. The Rathaldron estate was encumbered by debt and in 1840 the estate was sold to Fleming Pinkstan O'Reilly of Mountjoy Square, Dublin. He had been dis-inherited by his father in 1800 as a result of marrying without his father's permission. However he still managed to reach the position of treasurer of County Meath. Fleming Pinkstan O'Reilly, died in 1844 in his 75th year. About 1845 the O'Reilly's added two floors of larger rooms. The castle style gateway with its high octagonal towers may be the work of the architect, James Shiels.

Hugh O'Reilly succeeded to Rathaldron. In 1876 the representatives of Hugh O'Reilly, Rathaldron, held 243 acres in County Meath. In 1900 Rathaldron Castle was the seat of Capt. F.L.H. de la P. O'Reilly.

Electricity was installed in 1929. George Lowry held the property in the 1920s and 1930s and Meath County Health Board occupied it in 1937 for less than a year. Later Rathaldron became the home of the Drummond family. Beatrice Drummond of Rathaldron Castle married Herbert Purcell in 1950. Their youngest son, Peter, was

capped in rugby for Ireland six times. Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert ‘Percy’ Purcell served as a pilot in the RAF and as an infantry officer in the Indian Army. During the Second World War he was part of the British army advance into Burma and Vietnam. The castle was completely renovated in the 1970s. Herbert died in 2001 aged 90. Mrs Hickey wrote an article in the 1970 issue of *Riocht na Midhe* on the Cusacks of Portraine and Rathaldron. H.D. Gallwey wrote an article on the Cusacks of Rathaldron in *The Irish Genealogist* of 1982.

Rataine Cottage

Rataine Cottage is located on the road between Robinstown and Dunderry. In 1835 Rataine cottage was described as a very neat cottage on the south side of the townland of Rataine. It had about 30 acres of land attached to it and was the residence of Captain Preston in 1835. The townland was held by Rev. Joseph Preston of Bellinter.

Rathbeggan House



On the old N3 road just south of Dunshaughlin there is a gated house entrance off to the right for Rathbeggan House. At Rathbeggan there is a motte, a large country house, the remains of a church and a graveyard.

In 1641 Richard Segrave, Irish papist, held the lands of Rathbeggan which included a church, two farm houses and three cottages. The other main landowners in Rathbeggan parish were Richard Berford of Ballibene, the Earl of Fingall and Mr. Plunkett of Dunshaughlin. By 1659 the lands had been confiscated by Cromwell and allocated to Sir Walter Kingham. James Standish received a grant of forfeited lands in County Meath. Among these were the lands of Rathbeggan and Porterstown, the barony of Ratoath, in the Patent Roll of 1666.

The origins of Rathbeggan House dates to the seventeenth century. It has two-storeys over basement, with paired, gabled projecting bays, and projecting central bay. The two bays at the front were later additions.

Originally owned by the Standish family, the house and lands came to the Wilkinsons through descent. In 1876 Henry Standish held an estate of 868 acres and died in 1885 aged 71 years, his successor was John Wilkinson who died in 1904, both are buried in the graveyard near the house. The Wilkinson family were closely associated with John Philpot Curran, the lawyer who defended many of the rebels of 1798. Curran's daughter, Sarah, was the girlfriend of Robert Emmet who was executed for his part in the 1803 rebellion. Sarah gave Emmet's watch to the Wilkinson family. I saw the

watch when the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society visited the house a number of years ago. Also in the house were portraits of Curran, Emmet and Lord Kilwarden, who was killed in the 1803 rebellion. The house also held a collection of early photographs taken on glass negatives. The house must not have been substantial as it is not marked on the 1836 OS map while the church and glebe house are. In 1837 Rathbeggan House was the property of John Standish. The house was purchased by the Brindley family who now reside there.

In 1682 the patron of the parish was the Earl of Drogheda and the vicar resided in Drogheda. The church and the chancel wall were still standing but the building was unroofed since 1641. The parish was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The church and the graveyard are located just east of the house with an entrance gate nearest the house. Jonathan Swift was appointed rector of Rathbeggan in 1699, a position he held till his death in 1745. A new church and clergyman's or glebe house were erected in 1817. The church was dedicated to St. Beccan. The main parts of the church building, the nave and the chancel, are gone but the bell tower remains. A story I heard suggested was that the Standish owners and patrons of the church lost the right to appoint the clergyman when the Church of Ireland was disestablished and they quarrelled with the new clergyman who was appointed by the church authorities. As neither side would not compromise the Standish family removed the church and so the clergyman from their parish.

The window sills were used to make steps on the motte which stands to the west of Rathbeggan House. The motte, an oval flat-topped mound, may have been adapted for a pre-existing rath or fort of Beccan. A flint arrow head dating to 1800 BC was discovered at the motte site.

The graveyard has an interesting old font or holy water stoop. The nine gravestones in the cemetery commemorate members of the Ward, Morgan, Gannon, Brutin, O'Connor, Standish, Wilkinson and Norman families.

Michael J. Kenny wrote some notes on the house and graveyard in 1985 and this article is based on those notes and other sources.

Rathcormick House

Rathcormick House is located near Kildalkey. Rathcormick is named after a rath which is situated in front of the present house. Rathcormick is a large three-storey house dating to about 1770 which has been much altered internally. There were formal gardens at the rear of the house. There was an old burial grounds, Gortnakilly at the rear entrance gate.

In 1641 the lands belonged to Sir Luke Fitzgerald. The lands were acquired by Thomas Bligh in 1703. John Potterton acquired a lease of three lives on Rathcormick from Thomas Bligh in 1710 and the Pottertons have lived there since. The property at Rathcormick included neighbouring Rathkenna and comprised 542 acres. The property descended through a number of Johns and Thomases. The family spread out from Rathcormick, holding lands at Balatalion, Clonylogan, Moyrath and various other places nearby. In 1835 Rathcormick was described as an old two storey house with considerable offices the residence of T. Potterton.

Following the passing of the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 Thomas Elliot acquired the freehold in 1905. T.E. Potterton challenged the Land Commission in the 1930s and won the case. It resulted in a new law limiting the Land Commission.

T.E. Potterton is one of the longest established and most respected firms in the Midlands, having been founded in 1886, moved to Trim in the 1960s. Pottertons

opened Trim Livestock Mart, the first privately owned livestock mart in Ireland, in 1957 and Delvin Mart in 1965.

St. Mary's church was erected on Rathcormick lands in 1856 to serve the Pottertons and Kildalkey parishioners. The church was closed in 1963 and demolished a year later.

Homan Potterton was the youngest ever director of National Gallery. Homan Potterton has written two books which tell the story of the Pottertons, Rathcormick and their various branches and properties. His memoir of growing up on a farm in County Meath in the 1950s is *Rathcormick: a Childhood Recalled*. Potterton, *People and Places, Three Centuries of an Irish Family* tells the story of the family and their branches.



I remember Homan's brother, Elliot, who headed the auctioneering firm and was very involved in the local Church of Ireland.

Rathfeigh house

The Bath family held Rathfeigh in medieval times. Sir W. Domville received a grant of the lands of Rathfeigh in 1668. In the 1600s Rathfeigh had one castle. In 1706 Oliver Bomford took a lease of the place for 76 years. His son, Laurence, lived at Rathfeigh in 1745.

Rathfeigh House is marked and named on the 25 inch Ordnance survey map but is not named on the 6 inch maps. In 1902 architect Anthony Scott was commissioned to draw up plans for alterations and additions to Rathfeigh House.

Rathkenny House

Rathkenny House is located 4 miles northwest of Slane. The house was probably erected by Stafford Hussey about 1750. An extension was added about 1780 and in the late 19th century more extensions were added at the rear. Described as a handsome and sophisticated house it has two storeys over basement. There is a fine dining room with wooden floor, pine panelled walls and original marble fireplace and a large drawing room. The windows in kitchen are ten feet from floor level so servants could not look out to see the family or guests. The house has nine bedrooms. To the rear of the house is a stone and brick courtyard with overhead lofts and a series of traditional outbuildings and dog kennels. North of the house lies the walled garden. In the grounds are some of the largest yew trees in Ireland today. To the east of the house stands a portal tomb.

The Hussey family arrived in Ireland with the Normans and quickly established themselves as Barons of Galtrim, an area south of Trim which had been granted to

them by Hugh de Lacy. In the early fifteenth century Matthew Hussey, baron of Galtrim, married Margaret, heiress to the Petit estate of Rathkenny. As early as 1640 the Husseys were at Rathkenny. In 1640 Henry Hussey of Galtrim held the townlands of Rathkenny, Driominstown, Horsetown and parts of Chamberstown and Coghalstown. Stafford Hussey, Baron of Galtrim and his wife, Mary Anne, were interred at Rathkenny under a tablet tomb in the 1770s. The tombstone reads: "Here lyeth the body of Mary Anne Hussey, otherwise Kirwan, wife of Stafford Hussey, Esq., Baron of Galtrim; she departed this life at twelve at noon, on the 9th of July, 1774; she had every quality that could endear her to a husband, with whom she lived forty-five years in an uninterrupted harmony; she was a tender parent, and the real friend of the poor and distressed. May her soul rest in peace. Here also lyeth the body of Stafford Hussey, Baron of Galtrim, who lived respected and died regretted the 13th January, 1776, in the 74th year of his age." The Husseys were a Catholic family and Bishop Plunkett of Meath stayed at Rathkenny on his visitation of 1787. At his visitation of Rathkenny in 1799 Dr. Plunkett offered "congratulations on the male and female schools established and supported by Baron Hussey and his Lady."

John Hussey, son of Stafford, signed a petition to the King for the relief of Catholics in 1795. Dying in 1803 without children, he was succeeded by his brother, Thomas, who had eloped to marry Lady Mary Walpole, youngest daughter of the Earl of Oxford. Thomas was a stopgap M.P. of Aylesbury between 1809 and 1814. In Parliament he supported Catholic Relief in 1812. His only son, Edward Thomas, succeeded at Rathkenny. In 1833 the land steward of Edward Thomas Hussey and a tenant were shot dead, it was presumed that it was a case of mistaken identity as the perpetrators had intended to kill Hussey. Three local men were brought to trial in 1834. One of the men was found guilty.

Edward was succeeded by his son, Edward Horatio. Born in 1807 Edward married Frederica Maria Louisa Irby, daughter of the 4th Lord Boston. In 1876 Edward Hussey of Rathkenny held 2917 acres in County Meath.

Their son, Horatio George succeeded but he died unmarried in 1902 and was succeeded by his brother, Algernon Frederick Edward Thomas, who was born in 1849. The estate was sold under the Windham Land Act of 1903. Owners since then have included the Tiernan, Lane, Hornsby and Mullin families. In 1997 the house on 79 acres was sold for £350,000 to the Prince and Princess of Croy and Solre of Belgium, who were directly related to the Belgium royal family. The house was back on the market two years later with a price tag of £900,000.

Rathnally House

Rathnally house is downstream from Trim on the north bank of the Boyne. Constructed in the early eighteenth century for Thomas Carter, Master of the Rolls, the house was much altered in the nineteenth century.



Thomas Carter, Master of the Rolls

The eighteenth century character can be seen in the garden front and river elevation. The three storey house was designed by Edward Lovett Pearce. Thomas Carter married a first cousin of Edward Lovett Pearce, the architect. Pearce was MP for Ratoath and designed the Houses of Parliament in Dublin, now the Bank of Ireland. There was a four storey block in existence at Rathnally and Pearce designed a block to the rear. Pearce captured a view of the Boyne in the four windows of the drawing room. Below the drawing room is a vaulted kitchen and above a coved bedroom. Carter's town house on Henrietta Street was designed by Edward Lovett Pearce. The architecture of Edward Lovett Pearce and his connection to Rathnally is explored in an article by Jeremy Williams in the Irish Arts Review Yearbook 2001.

Thomas Carter served with distinction at Derry and the Boyne. He managed to capture the books and writings of James II at the Battle of the Boyne. Thomas Carter acquired a large estate of confiscated lands at Robertstown, Ashbourne, after the Battle of the Boyne. Thomas married secondly, Isabella, the dowager Countess Roscommon in 1702 by which marriage he acquired the extensive Roscommon estates in and around Trim. Thomas acquired an estate at Castle Martin, Co. Kildare.

His son Rt. Hon. Thomas Carter was born about 1690 was a very active parliamentarian and became Master of the Rolls. He was a major political figure in the mid eighteenth century in Ireland. He was MP for Trim, Co. Meath (1719–27), and was then returned for Hillsborough, Dungarvan, and Lismore, choosing to sit for Hillsborough (1727–61). Thomas Carter was made Master of the Rolls in Ireland in 1731, a position he held until 1754. Thomas Carter was noted for his rudeness and his loathing of English interference in Irish affairs and his satirical lampooning of political opponents earned him the nickname "Vicious Carter". He opposed Wood's Halfpence. In 1729 he was a leading figure in one of the early road acts. He was a founder member of the Dublin Society, later the RDS. In 1763 the Dublin Journal recorded that 'he built some very useful mills.' A mill house stands close to Rathnally House. Thomas Carter married Mary Claxton in 1719 at St Anne's, Dublin. She was the first-cousin of Edward Lovett Pearce. Carter's son-in-law, Philip Twisden, Bishop of Raphoe, was shot dead allegedly masquerading as a highwayman in London. Twisden's daughter, Frances, Carter's grand-daughter, became countess of Jersey and mistress to King George IV of England. Thomas Carter died at Rathnally in 1763 and was buried at St Patrick's cathedral, Trim.

Carter's eldest son, Thomas, married Anna Armytage, twelve days after his father's death. They had only one child, a daughter, Amma Maria who married Skeffington Thompson in 1779. Skeffington was the son of Thomas Thompson of Muckamore, Co. Antrim. Their son, Robert, joined the church and was rector of Navan and

Athlumney for a period. In 1802 Skeffington Thompson unsuccessfully stood for parliament in the county Meath constituency. Skeffington Thompson of Rathnally died in 1810 and was succeeded by his son, John. John Thompson was High Sheriff of Meath in 1824. In the 1830s Rathnally was described as the seat of J. Thompson, Esq., and pleasantly situated in a well-planted demesne on the banks of the Boyne. John Thompson died unmarried in 1858 and was succeeded by his brother William. William was recorded as holding 2154 acres in county Meath in 1876. William was High Sheriff of Meath in 1896 and died in 1901. Francis D'Arcy Thompson was born in 1865 and educated at Cambridge. He was a descendant of the Rev. Skeffington Thompson, son of Skeffington of Rathnally, who had married a D'Arcy of Westmeath. In 1908 Francis married his cousin, Annie Eleanor, only daughter of William Thompson of Rathnally and came to live at Rathnally. In 1911 Frances D'Arcy Thompson and his family lived at Rathnally. Mrs A.E. D'Arcy Thompson was a noted breeder of poodles and exhibited at Crufts. Major D'Arcy Perceval Pelham Thompson served in the Second World War. He inherited Rathnally from his aunt in 1952. His wife founded a flower show at Rathnally. Major Thomson died in 1973. At that stage the estate amounted to 200 acres.

Ratoath Manor



The Manor House, is located in the village of Ratoath. The Manor House is a long two storey house of late 18th century appearance. The house probably dates to about 1780. The public road in front of the Manor house appears to have been moved out to give an appropriate garden space in front of the house. This would have been done before 1837 as the first Ordnance Survey map shows it.

Bishop Plunkett, bishop of Meath regularly stayed at Mr. Corballis at Ratoath during this visitation of the parishes of Meath in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

James Anthony Corballis purchased Ratoath Manor and part of the barony of Dunboyne in 1813. He was the son of John Corballis, a Dublin timber merchant. The Corballis family commissioned the erection of the High Altar in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral in 1822. The vaults below the altar contain the remains of a number of family members. In 1835 Ratoath Manor was the property of Mr. Corbally. The house was pleasantly situated on the east side of the village and has some ornamental grounds attached to it. The townland is also called Moorlough. James Anthony Corballis died in 1842 aged 69 at Leamington.

According to Art Kavanagh in the 'Landed Gentry and Aristocracy Meath' James Henry Corballis married Constance Jerringham in Brussels in 1863 and when the couple returned to Ireland their tenants unharnessed the horses at Moulden Bridge and dragged the carriage to the hall door of the Manor House. James Henry and his family lived in Scotland for a period. The family lived away from Ratoath until 1919. James Henry Corballis wrote a book entitled "Forty-five years of sport." James Corballis granted a lease of the site for the new Roman Catholic Church to Bishop Nulty in 1870. Emily M. Corballis left funds for the repair and maintenance of the church at Ratoath and also left funds for the poor of the parish to be administered by the parish priest and Protestant rector of Batterstown. James Henry's sister, Emily Matilda, and brother, William, leased out The Manor to Percy Maynard. Percy Maynard of the Manor, Ratoath was field master of the Ward Union until his death twenty seven years later. In 1901 and 1911 Percy Maynard and his wife were residing at Ratoath Manor. The house had fifteen rooms, thirteen windows to the front and thirty one outbuildings.

In 1876 Miss E. Corballis of the Manor, Ratoath, held 167 acres in County Meath, James H. Corballis, The Manor held 941 acres, William H. Corballis of the Manor held 579 acres, John R. Corballis of Ratoath held 1182 acres and John R. Corballis of Milltown, Co. Dublin held 951 acres. Their son was James Frederick Joseph Corballis of Ratoath Manor who served as a captain in the war in South Africa in 1900. He was a captain recruiting during World War I. He was a boxing champion of the army and is supposed to have boxed John L. O'Sullivan.

James Frederick died in 1945. Most of the estate seems to have been lost by this stage. James Farrell became owner from 1946 to 1948. Colonel Mainwaring then became owner and added a wing. The Augustinian order of Sister purchased the Manor and eighteen acres of land in 1951 and converted the house into a nursing home. The Augustinian Sisters extended and modernised the building. Two years were spent renovating the building and in November 1952 the first Augustinian nursing home was opened with accommodation for 50 ladies. A stable was converted to a chapel. The nursing home has a concert hall. Two wings and a new chapel were added. The Sisters sold the Manor in 2002 to Silver Stream Healthcare who run it as a nursing home.

Rathvale

Rathvale house is situated in Tullaghanogue townland on the Athboy-Trim Road near the turn-off for Rathcairn. In the 1830s the house was known as Sherborne Lodge after the landowners family title. The house and estate were the property of Alexander Drake in the later part of the nineteenth century. Alexander Drake was the son of Christopher Drake of Roristown. The family originated at Drakerath. In 1876 Alexander Drake of Rathvale held 352 acres in County Meath.

In 1901 Gerald Leyns Walker and his family were living at Rathvale. Gerald Walker was a breeder of purebred horse. He bred Sergeant Murphy, a Grand National winner. A local police sergeant noticed the mare foaling and informed Mr. Walker who named the horse after him. The horse won the Grand National in 1923 and the race can be viewed as it was filmed by Pathe News.



Photo: Athboy 100

Reginald Henry Walker, son of Gerald Leyns Walker, Reginald married Emily Heather Collins in 1920. Reggie became a top class amateur jockey in England before returning to train at Rathvale. One of his horses, Royal Danoli, was beaten by a matter of inches at the 1938 Aintree Grand National. Reggie died in 1951. Mrs. Heather Walker of Rathvale died in 1959. The house and stud farm were sold.

Ringlestown House

Located outside Kilmessan, Bence-Jones described Ringlestown as a pleasant Victorian house in the late Georgian manner. A pond with a waterfall and fountain were located to the south of the house.

John Wilkinson of Curtistown purchased Ringlestown in the middle of the eighteenth century. About 1840 John Wilkinson built a new house for his younger son, Robert, at Ringlestown. His cousin, one of the Mason Yeates, erected a house of the same design at Grangemocin, Delhusey, Co. Dublin. Robert and his sister lived at Ringlestown until 1885. He erected a shell grotto, created an artificial lake and a bath house. In 1876 Robert Wilkinson of Ringlestown held 124 acres in County Meath. Robert had no children and the property was inherited by his nephew, George. George had been to Oxford and he installed a water pump and a gas plant. George kept driving horse but did not hunt or shoot. George died at another Wilkinson home at Curtistown in the late 1920s.

The Land Commission then acquired Ringlestown. Senator Bill Quirke purchased the house.

Bill Quirke was born in Clonmel in 1894 and was involved with the Tipperary No 8 Brigade IRA. In 1921 he was imprisoned on Spike Island in Cork Harbour by the British forces. He and seven others managed to make an escape from this very safe prison. Quirke took the republican side in the Civil War. There is a story that one day he came face to face with Larry Clancy, a neighbour who was on the pro-treaty side. Both of them were armed. Bill is alleged to have defused what might have been a serious situation by saying, "Larry, if I shoot you or you shoot me, there is not much

in that for either of us, so why don't we both have sense and go home?" For a period in the 1920s he went to America. Returning to Ireland he became involved in his family's auctioneering business. In 1932 he became a senator, a position he led until his death in 1955. He served as Leader of the House. He was a pioneer in the development of the Irish bogs and was at an early stage a director of the Turf Development Board. He was also a member of the Agricultural Credit Corporation and of the Racing Board. In 1936 he moved to Ringlestown. He revived the Tara Harriers and became Master. He served two terms as Mayor of Clonmel in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The family lived in Dublin for a period. Senator Quirke died from a seizure on 5th March 1955 while taking part in the Ward Union Hunt at Garristown. The President Sean T. O'Kelly and the Taoiseach Eamon de Valera attended the funeral.

The house was lived in by Surgeon and Mrs. Pringle during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Seton Sidney Pringle began his career as a surgeon to the Mercer Hospital, to which his father had bequeathed a large amount of money for hospital expansion. During the First World War Pringle served in France as a surgeon in the urgency cases hospital with the French army. In 1918 he became visiting surgeon to Baggot Street hospital, where he worked till 1944. Pringle specialised in abdominal surgery. Known to his students as 'Satan', he had a reputation as a swift surgeon. On his retirement from active surgery in 1944 he moved to Ringlestown House, where he spent his time fishing on the Boyne river and managing his farm. He died in 1955.

Sir Hercules and Lady Langrishe moved to Ringlestown in 1956. Hercules Langriche was created Baron of Knocktopher Abbey, Co. Kilkenny in 1777 and the Hercules who lived at Ringlestown inherited the title in 1973. He died in 1998. A relative is Caroline Langriche who is an actress and became known for her role in *Judge John Deed* as Deed's ex-wife, Georgina Channing, QC, and was also the leading lady of *Lovejoy* in the show's last two seasons. She then moved onto a role in *Casualty*.

Ringlestown was lived in for a period by Mr and Mrs Mel Beecher. An article on the house by John G.S. Wilkinson appears in 'Kilmessan and Dunsany: A millennium memoir'

Rockfield House



Rockfield is just outside Kells town on the road to Athboy. Rockfield is a large two storey house over a low vaulted basement, with a courtyard behind. The yard is earlier than the house so an older house must have stood on the site. The current house is early nineteenth century. The house is similar in design to Williamstown and both may have had the same architect. A curved stone staircase to the first floor is off the entrance hallway. The hall has a period grey marble fireplace and a stone flagged floor. The house had originally three lodges and three avenues. There is a fine Gothic gatehouse dating from 1843.

John Rothwell of Berfordstown, Co. Meath died in 1714 leaving a wife, Mary, four sons and five daughters. His son, John, succeeded him and lived at Cannonstown, the neighbouring townland to Rockfield. John was succeeded by John, son of his second son, Thomas. Richard Rothwell succeeded to his uncle's estates at Berford and purchased the property of Rockfield from his elder brother. In 1763 he married Mary Lowther, daughter and heiress to Hugh Lowther of Hurdlestown. Their second son, Thomas, inherited the estate in 1780. Thomas was High Sheriff of Meath in 1794. He married twice, firstly to Helena Upton in 1795 and then to Letitia Corry of Shantonagh, Co. Monaghan. Thomas's son, Thomas took the surname Fitzherbert and inherited Blackcastle and Shantonagh.

Richard Rothwell inherited on the death of his father, Thomas, in 1817. A number of account books and ledgers belonging to the family from this period are in the National Library. Richard, educated at Oxford, was High Sheriff of Meath in 1839. Richard had architect, William Murray, prepare plans for improvements in 1841. Richard was treasurer of the Meath Horticultural Society. He married Elizabeth, only daughter of Rev. Thomas Sutton, rector of Clongill. Elizabeth recorded the detestation caused by the night of the Big Wind in 1839. A sword recovered from Lagore crannog, Dunshaughlin, was presented to the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy by Mrs.

Rothwell. The Rothwells had a collection of ancient artefacts which eventually ended up in the National Museum of Ireland. Their eldest son, Thomas, succeeded to Rockfield in 1853. Thomas Rothwell held 3161 acres in Meath and 365 acres in Tipperary in 1883. Educated at Magdalene College Oxford he was a member of the Conservative Club, Kildare Street. High Sheriff of Meath in 1867, he served with the Meath Militia. He married Louisa Catherine Hannah Pratt of Cabra Castle in 1866 and died in 1909 leaving four daughters. In the 1901 census Thomas Rothwell and his family lived at Rockfield. The house was home to the Rothwells until the 1960s. The Cameron family then held Rockfield for thirty years.

Rock Lodge

Rock Lodge was in Laracor Parish and is on the Rock Road. Just the outbuildings remain. In 1835 Rock Lodge was described as the newly built handsome residence of Mr. Thomas Disney in Little Freffans townland. The house was erected about 1823. There was a school house at the rear entrance and a nursery across the road from the rear entrance in 1830s

Thomas Disney third son of Brabazon Disney, Professor of Divinity at Trinity College, served as an army officer in Canada, before taking up a position as the registrar for the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham – a retirement home and hospital for maimed soldiers. In 1791 he married Anne Purdon and then became agent to Lord Langford's estate at Summerhill. The couple had fifteen children, fourteen of which survived to adulthood. The eldest son, Brabazon, fought at Waterloo. Thomas, third son became land agent to the Earl of Darnley of Athboy. His brother Lambert was also land steward for the Earl of Darnley and resided at Clifton Lodge. Lambert married Anna Henrietta Battersby of Freffans. Shortly before he died in 1851 Thomas Disney senior was forced to sell Rock Lodge and the estate under the Encumbered Estates Act. Brabazon Disney, son of Brabazon Disney, was rector of Slane from 1815 to his death in 1831. In 1854 Thomas R. Disney was the landowner at Freffans. The Disney's moved to Finglas, Co. Dublin. Thomas Disney was a good friend of the astronomer and mathematician, Rowan Hamilton. A branch of the family had a house called Rock Lodge in Killiney.

Rodanstown

Rodanstown is located near Kilcock. Roddanstown is a late seventeenth century gable ended house of two storeys over basement. The original windows have been replaced with pvc windows. There is a range of outbuildings to the rear of the house. There is a large motte to the west of the house. In the 1830s there was an old mill race to the north of the house.

Rt. Hon William Connolly acquired an estate of 1427 acres at Rodanstown in 1691 and lived there from 1694-1704 and then moved to nearby Castletown, Co. Kildare. Known as the Speaker Connolly, he became one of the richest men in Ireland.

In the 1830s Rodanstown house was the residence of Mr. Morron. The townland is the property of Mr. McVeigh of Drewstown. In 1854 John Morran was leasing the house and 213 acres of land from Ferdinand M. Mc Veigh.

In 1901 George McVeigh of Drewstown was the landlord of Rodanstown. The house was not occupied in 1901 or 1911. It had fifteen outbuildings.

Roristown

Roristown is situated on the south bank of the river Boyne, a mile from Trim on the Kinnegad road. A two storey house it was erected about 1787 by Cornelius Drake. The plasterwork is a blend of late Georgian and early Victorian. The house may have been remodelled in the 1840s. In late Victorian times two large rooms were remodelled and extended to give the house a distinctive curved profile.

The Drake family had settled at Drakerath in north Meath and a castle had been erected there by the family. Columbus Drake, the son of Patrick Drake of Drakerath, was born in 1760 and married Anne Barnewall of Fyanstown castle. In 1795 Bishop Plunkett and his clergy were invited to dine at Roristown with Mr and Mrs Drake in November 1795. The bishop dined there again in 1796. Columbus Drake of Drakerath and Roristown died in 1807 aged 57 years and buried at the Histy graveyard, Staholog. Christopher Drake of Roristown died in 1854 and was also buried in Histy. Christopher was born in 1790 and married Mary-Anne Gannon of Ballyboy. His monument was erected by his son, Alexander James Drake of Rathvale.

In 1835 the property of 259 acres was leased to Mr. C. Drake by Minor Leslie. Roristown was one of the finest houses in the parish and its pleasure ground was very tastefully laid out. The Boyne flowing past added much to its beauty. Mr. Drake also held the neighbouring townland of Kennastown which contained 360 acres.

Columbus Drake was forced to sell his lands at Roristown, Kennastown and Batterstown in the Encumbered Estates Court in 1870. In 1870 George William Cuppage was the tenant at Roristown. In 1896 the estate of Roristown was sold. It amounted to 490 statute acres.

In 1911 Bernard Carew was living at Roristown. Bernard Carew died in 1915. Agnes Eivers inherited the estate. His grand nephew, Vincent C. Eivers, then inherited Roristown. Vincent served as secretary of the Tara Harriers for more than twenty years. In 1960 he established the first bush point to point in Leinster at Roristown. A stud farm was developed at Roristown. A dairy farm was then developed at Roristown. Vincent Eivers was heavily involved in Drogheda milk Producers and in the Royal Meath Agricultural Show. Vincent Eivers died in 1997 aged 89.

Rosnaree House

Rosnaree House is a small late Italianate villa on a wonderful site on the south bank of the river Boyne, just downstream from Slane. Rosnaree has spectacular views of Newgrange, Knowth and the bend of the Boyne. The Neolithic monuments can be seen from the breakfast rooms and the bedrooms which overlook the river. It was at Rosnaree that Fionn MacCumhaill is supposed to have caught and cooked the Salmon of Knowledge. Rosnaree has been identified as Cletty where King Cormac is said to have died from swallowing a fishbone. There is a tradition that Cormac's grave is on the banks of the river at Rosnaree. When a pillbox was being constructed in the 1940s the grave of a woman and an infant were uncovered. The lands, which were once part of the Cistercian Abbey of Mellifont, were later granted to the Earl of Drogheda.



Rosnaree House

The Earls of Drogheda were reputed to have had bad luck having acquired religious lands following the confiscation of the monasteries. Rosnaree was site of one of the major confrontations of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

The Osborne family of Dardistown acquired Rosnaree from the Earl of Drogheda about 1720 and a dwelling was constructed. A pack of hounds were kept at Rosnaree by the Osbornes. In 1835 Rosnaree house is mentioned in the townland and was occupied by Thomas Johnston. In 1855 the main building was added to the original huntsman's dwelling. The Osborne coat of arms was erected over the front door. Rosnaree Catholic church was erected on a site given by the Osborne family of Rosnaree house.

In the 1870s Charles William Osborne of Rosnaree held 689 acres in county Meath. His daughter, Juanita, married Captain Theodore Dalyell, Indian Army, while another daughter, Eva, married Lt-Col. Thomas Evans Acton. Marcus Stuart Osborne, son of F.D. Osborne of Rosnaree, served in the First World War. Serving in France from 3 April 1918 he was killed in action on the 24th of the month. Charles William Osborne died in April 1919 aged 87 years and was buried in Slane churchyard.

The Law family acquired the house in 1925. An ancestor, Michael Law, had raised a troop of horse for King William at the battle of the Boyne in 1690. Robert Law served with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers during the First World War. Robert married Audrey Wallis of Drishane Castle, Co. Cork. A number of pieces in the house come from Drishane Castle. Their son, Michael, served in the Second World War. Michael married Judy Hogarth, a descendant of the great artist, William Hogarth.

Robert Law, a barrister at the Middle Temple in London and the Kings Inns, Dublin, lived in Africa for eight years and assisted in the drafting of the 1995 Ugandan constitution. Robert's mother, Judy Law, lived at Rosnaree until Robert and his wife, Aisling, returned from Africa in 2000, with their son, Emile, and daughter, Iseult. The couple refurbished the interior of the house with rare art and textile collections from their extensive travels in Africa. Robert became involved in the Boyne Canal Action

Group, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) and An Taisce. Robert Law died in 2004.

Ashling trained as a jeweller and has her own silvermark issued by Dublin Castle. She has worked in many mediums including film and sculpture. She trained in Florence in the classical techniques of drawing and oil painting. Aisling's mother was the German-born Irish sculptor Imogen Stuart, her father was the sculptor, Ian Stuart, the son of Iseult Gonne and Francis Stuart. Ashling's grandmother was Iseult Gonne McBride who married the Irish writer, Francis Stuart. Ashling's great grandmother was Maud Gonne who established the Abbey Theatre with William Butler Yeats and was the inspiration for much of his romantic poetry. Maud later married John McBride, one of the executed leaders of the 1916 rising.

Aisling Law founded the Rossnaree School of Art in 2007. The house also provides a venue for functions and accommodation. The house, described as a 'simple but elegant house' by Casey and Rowan is set in 200 acres of pasture, woodland and gardens.

Ross House



Ross House is located on the shores of Lough Sheelin in north-west Meath. A two storey house it was erected about 1780. In the 1830s it was the residence of Mr. Somerville and described as being pleasantly situated and its grounds neatly planted. A ruined boathouse is located on the shores of the lake. A gate-lodge was erected about 1880. In 1854 James Somerville was leasing Ross House and more than three hundred acres of lands from George H. Pentland. In 1901 Skeffington Thompson was living at Ross House with a game keeper. The house had fifteen rooms, eleven windows to the front and nineteen outbuildings. In 1911 Francis D. Thompson owned the house but a servant, Anne Vaughan, was caretaking the house. In recent decades Ross House has been developed as visitor accommodation and as an equestrian centre.

To the east of Ross House stands Ross Castle. Richard Nugent, 12th Baron of Delvin, began the construction of the castle about 1533. It is said that its last occupant was

Baron Nugent, called the Black Baron, who was murdered near Finnea, in Westmeath. The Castle of Ross came to its final fame in the summer of 1644 when Myles O'Reilly, the Slasher, spent in its walls the night before the Battle of Finea. In 1830s the castle was in ruins. In 1864 Anna Maria O'Reilly installed a large plaque in the tower hall. In the late twentieth century Sir David Nugent rebuilt the entire compound as a family estate. It now operates as accommodation for visitors.

Rusk House

Rusk House is located near Dunboyne, on road between Leixlip to Dunboyne. Thomas Wilson was born at Rusk about 1740. John Wilson of Rusk died in 1771 aged 67. The Wilson family are buried in Dunboyne. The Wilson' also held lands in co. Kildare. In 1835 Rusk House was the residence of Mr. Wilson. It was described as a three storey slated house, having a basement and small offices. There were large orchards on the south and east of the house, separated from one another by straight alleys or walks between fir trees. The proprietor considered the demesne to be coextensive with the townland which was bounded by plantations and divided into fields by strong fences. In 1854 John Wilson held the house and townland of Rusk.

Ryndville House

Ryndville House stood in the parish of Rathcore, near Enfield in southwest Meath. The house was demolished in the 1970s.

The Rynd family originated in the Enniskillen area of Co. Fermanagh. James Rynd Grange Beg, Westmeath and Miss Hester Fleetwood of Parktown, Meath, were married on 3 December 1793. They settled at Ryndville. Hester, daughter of Robert Fleetwood, was his third wife. James died in 1814. His widow died in 1850, surviving her husband by thirty six years. Their son, Robert Fleetwood Rynd was born 1798. The family were buried in Rathcore.

Robert Fleetwood Rynd married Maria Longworth Dames of Greenhills, Co. Offaly (then King's County) in 1831. The thatched church of the Roman Catholic community at Jordanstown was situated on the Ryndville Estate. In 1832 Robert Fleetwood Rynd gave the sum of twenty pounds towards the erection of a new chapel at Jordanstown.

In 1835 the townland of Jordanstown, Rathcore parish – the townland was the property of Robert Fleetwood Rynd, his demesne was called Ryndville which comprised about half the townland. The remaining half he tilled himself. The townland has 472 acres. Mr. Rynd also held 800 acres from Mr. Kettlewell in Possetown townland. Half of this was in pasture with the other half in tillage.

Robert Fleetwood Rynd died in 1875 while his widow Maria died in 1893. In 1876 the representatives of R. F. Rynd, of Ryndville held 1,426 acres in County Meath. Their only son, James Fleetwood Rynd, was a colonel in the Leitrim Rifles, received a B.A. from Trinity and was called to the Irish Bar. He died in 1908 aged 75 years. His sister, Maria Jane, married Frederick Cockayne Elton who reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the British army. He was also one of the earliest recipients of the Victoria Cross. Elton received the award for the bravery he displayed while fighting the Russians in the Crimea in 1855. Robert and Maria's daughter Elizabeth married Arthur Hume while another daughter, Emma Arabella, married Major Francis Topping in Toronto, Canada.

As James Fleetwood died without an heir the estate went to his sisters. Maria Jane lived at Ryndville after her brother died. Maria Jane died in 1924 aged 90. Elizabeth Hume, lived at 63 Dawson Street, Dublin and she died in 1936, aged 101. A related Rynd family held lands nearby at Mount Armstrong in county Kildare. A possible relative was Francis Rynd who invented the hypodermic syringe in 1844. Relatives of the Ryndville family now live in Wales.



Ryndville House by Pat Holton - Pat the Painter, who has painted a number of views of the house for the Mahon family. (By kind permission P. Holton)