

**ABBAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**THE GRIMSHAW CROSS.**

This magnificent Celtic Cross with an iron surround is well hidden within the grounds of Carnmoney Parish Church Graveyard at Church Road, Glengormley.

The Church known as the 'Church of the Four Evangelists' in the old parish of Coole was established prior to 1662 (actual date unknown) and the present Church was built in 1856.

The Cross is unusual in that its base is built on iron runners which allow it to be moved across the grave to permit burials. The grave itself is rather overgrown.

The Cross, however, marks the lives of a family whose foresight and expertise were experienced by the people of the area, thus bringing and establishing much needed work.

Nicholas Grimshaw established the first mill for the spinning of cotton twist at Whitehouse, Co. Antrim. He came to Whitehouse from Preston, Lancashire in 1760, accompanied by his father who was also called Nicholas. It was Nicholas snr, whose first venture at spinning cotton, in association with Henry Joy, took place at The Belfast Poor House. In 1800, Nicholas jnr estimated that the cotton industry was employing some 13,000 people and another 14,000 were in indirect employment within a 12-mile radius of Belfast. It was not until 1833 that cotton printing ceased and the Grimshaws then commenced flax spinning.

The first person buried in the grave was Nicholas Grimshaw snr who died aged 63 on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1777. His son who established the local mills, died on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1805 and records show that the grave holds at least thirteen Grimshaws, indicating that the Cross will have been moved many times.

This important Cross marks a great dynasty.

**Maud Hamill.**