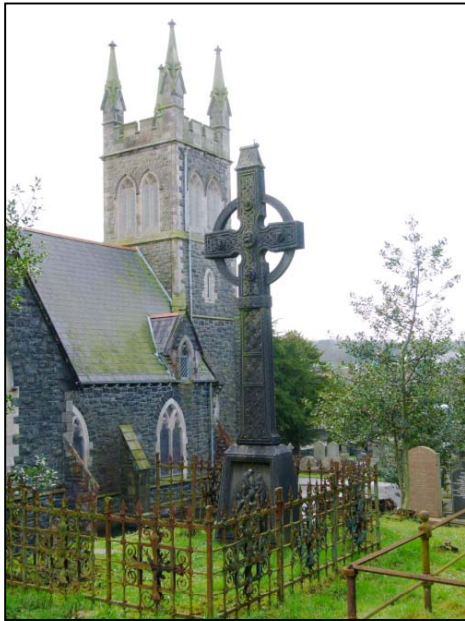


ABBAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



GENERAL WILLIAM JAMES SMYTHE CROSS

Take a walk around to the rear of Carnmoney Parish Church, Church Road, Glengormley and there directly above St. Bridget's Well is this beautiful cross standing tall for all to see and admire. Sadly, the surrounding railings have fallen badly into disrepair and we do hope that they will be restored to their former glory in due course.

The Smythe family has been associated with Carnmoney Parish Church since 1795 when Samuel Smythe became curate and then vicar 1808-1849. His son, George Chichester Smythe became vicar of Carnmoney from 1853-1903. It was Samuel's son, William, however, who chose a military career with the Royal Artillery and rose to the rank of General before his death in 1887.

Despite the long relationship with the Church, the Smythe families insisted on being buried in unmarked graves. The exception to this family ruling was 'The General' who commissioned people to tour Ireland to examine all Celtic Crosses before he decided upon a design for his grave. The Cross that he chose was already in place before he died in 1887. It is engraved with many beautiful borders and designs depicting biblical scenes.

It is said that one of the men who were tried for the Phoenix Park Murders (1883) worked on the Cross as a stonemason.

In his retirement from a military career, General Smythe studied the Irish language and in his will he left £3,000 to the Royal Irish Academy for the encouragement of the use of Gaelic. He left the same amount to the Church of Ireland.

His widow's niece was Lilian Bland, the aviatrix.

Maud Hamill