

10 Walk past the church to Erskine's Felt Works and you will see Mill Road in the distance. In 1786 Nicholas Grimshaw, with his partner Nathaniel Wilson, built **Whitehouse cotton mill** on the Mill Road. Later Nicholas' sons expanded the cotton printing business, providing both workers' housing and a National School. The Glas-Na-Bradán river was diverted to race parallel with Mill Road and provide water-power for the mill. In 1834 the Grimshaws began spinning linen yarn and a year later erected a gas works to light up the village (now the site of the felt works).

John Erskine arrived in Whitehouse at the end of the 19th century and leased the Grimshaw Estate to



produce felt from the waste products of linen-making. The original mill buildings have been replaced by housing and commercial properties.

Nicholas Grimshaw
1743-1805

Now turn back towards Whitehouse Park and return to the car park at Gideons Green.

Additional Information

Druim la Croix (The Place of the Cross)
'The White Abbey'
(Scheduled Historic Monument)

The name Newtownabbey is derived from the ancient monastery, the White Abbey, built around 1250. This abbey was a daughter house of Dryburgh Abbey in Scotland and records show that it was one of the richest abbeys in Ireland at that time. The White Abbey was originally named Druim la Croix as it was believed to possess a relic of the True Cross. The walls of the abbey's chapter house remained until 1925 when the stones were used as building material by a local farmer.

The site of the White Abbey is within the Townland of Whiteabbey, Parish of Carnmoney. No remains are visible today.

Contacts for more information

Museums and Heritage Officer
Newtownabbey Borough Council
☎ 02890 340 064
✉ scurry@newtownabbey.gov.uk
www.newtownabbey.gov.uk

Robert Armstrong
Abbey Historical Society
☎ 02890 861 039
www.nireland.com/the.white.house

Local Studies Development Officer
Local Studies Service
Library Headquarters, Ballymena
☎ 02825 664 121
☎ 02825 664 125
✉ yvonne.hirst@ni-libraries.net

Selected books

THROUGH THE AGES TO NEWTOWNABBEY
Robert Armstrong, second edition, 1997

ORDNANCE SURVEY MEMOIRS:
Parishes of County Antrim I, vol 2
Institute of Irish Studies

BUILDINGS OF COUNTY ANTRIM
C E B Brett, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society/Ulster
Historical Foundation, 1996

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS HOUSES OF IRELAND
A Gwyane & R N Haddock, 1970

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Robert Armstrong
Annie Close



The information in this leaflet is available in
large print on request

heritage walking trails In Newtownabbey

WHITEHOUSE



To get to Whitehouse

Take the M2 motorway, leaving at Junction 2 (Greencastle). Follow the A2 Shore Road (Carrickfergus/Rathcoole direction). Turn right at the Ulster Way sign into Whitehouse Park. Parking is available here at Gideons Green. The walk will take 1.5–2 hours. **Take care on roads at all times.** Children should always be accompanied by an adult.

1 From the car park entrance, turn right into Whitehouse Park and walk a short distance to **The White House**. Records show this fortified dwelling dating back to the 16th century. In June 1690 King William III met his military officers here as a prelude to the Williamite wars in Ireland. The building is now owned by the Whitehouse Preservation Trust.

2 Returning to Gideons Green, follow the Ulster Way sign towards the shore. The monument placed in the centre of the Green commemorates **Gideon Bonnivert**. Bonnivert was a Huguenot soldier whose diary recorded the landing near this site of the European army that accompanied William III to Ireland in 1690. Continue along the path and through the subway. From here you can see the port of Belfast and the famous cranes, Samson and Goliath, belonging to Harland and Wolff shipbuilders.

3 Follow the shoreline path (Whiteabbey direction) until you reach the second of two prominent turrets (towers). These turrets were used as World War II lookout posts. Walk up the hill and take the steps to the right into Hazelbank Park. **Hazelbank House** replaced an earlier house owned by Alexander George Stewart and sold to David McTear in 1796. In 1904, James Mackie, of Mackie's Engineering Works in Belfast, bought Hazelbank and lived there until his death in 1943. From 1958 the building was used as the town hall for Newtownabbey Urban District Council until it was damaged in 1972 in a terrorist attack. The house was subsequently demolished.



4 Take the path to the right of the children's play area, walk through the subway, turn left onto the Shore Road and walk to **St Mary, Star of the Sea, Roman Catholic Church**. St Mary's was built in the mid-1860s to cope with the growing numbers attending its neighbouring church at Greencastle. Built from black basalt and white sandstone, it is a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture. The tall decorative tower and spire were completed in 1899 along with an impressive peal of ten bells.

5 Continue to **St John's Parish Church, Church of Ireland**. This was designed by Charles Lanyon and opened in 1840. The total cost was £3,000. Originally there was a small school-house beside the church, also designed by Lanyon. It was used as a Navy, Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI) by troops stationed at nearby Merville House during World War II. This has been replaced by a larger church hall. Opposite the church is Rathcoole Housing Estate which was built in the 1950s and was the largest housing project in Europe at that time.

6 Walk past the church and look out for the Ulster Way sign on the other side of the road. Cross here and enter **Glas-Na-Bradán Glen**. The Glas-Na-Bradán river runs through Glengormley to Whitehouse, entering Belfast Lough under the railway bridge at Whitehouse Park. The Glen path exits near the Valley Leisure Centre on Church Road. After a short walk up the path you will meet the road that leads up to Rantalard House. This house was built in the late 19th century with a fine walled garden and sheltering trees. The property is owned by the Housing Executive.

7 Return from the Glen, turn right and walk to **Merville Garden Village**. This was built by Ulster Garden Villages Ltd., founded in 1946 to provide high standard post-war housing in landscaped surroundings. Merville was completed in 1950 with 450 houses, flats and shops, along with a community centre, theatre and gardens. Enter the village, turn left and take the path up the hill. The first path to the right leads to Merville House, built in 1799 and once the home of Sir Edward Coey, the only Liberal Lord Mayor of Belfast (1862). Merville is now a conservation area.

8 On leaving Merville, turn right and walk to the corner with Longwood Road. The shopping complex to the right is where **Longwood House** once stood. This house and estate were designed and built in 1793 by Nicholas Grimshaw, founder of Whitehouse cotton mill. Trees were brought from abroad and planted around the entire estate. A solitary tree can still be seen in the grounds of the Door Store.

9 Cross the road to the shore side and walk towards **Whitehouse Presbyterian Church**. This church was opened in 1866 by the Reverend Henry Cooke, the champion of the conservative side of the Presbyterian church. Due to the kindness of Sir Edward Coey, the new church was opened free of debt. In 1875 the Reverend Robert Barron became Minister, serving for some 60 years. He had a great influence on the area, and the Barron Hall in Glengormley, once a National School, is named after him. The church was damaged in an arson attack in 2002 and plans to rebuild it are under way.

