

Welcome to The Old Courthouse Lifford



## Donegal's Amazing 18<sup>th</sup> Century Court, Jail and Asylum

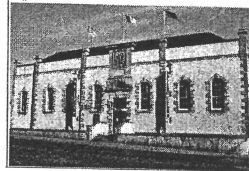


### LIFFORD AND THE O'DONNELLS

For hundreds of years, Lifford has been regarded as the most strategic point in the North-West. This was recognised by Donegal's leading clan, the O'Donnells, who built their first castle here in 1527. Let the Chieftain, Manus, tell you himself in our captivating audio-visual history lesson as he recounts his family's part in one of the most crucial phases in Irish history.

### LIFFORD COURTHOUSE

Built in 1746 and described as "one of the oldest and finest courthouses in Ireland" you will have a chance to witness the re-enactments of famous trials held in this building including the Napper Tandy Trial and the Lord Leitrim Murder and the severity of the sentences meted out to the unfortunate victims.



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Downstairs in the original dungeons you can hear the jailers' keys clanking, the shutting and banging of doors and the discussions between prisoners and their visitors. You will also have an opportunity to experience first hand the feeling of being treated like a real prisoner when you are charged and fingerprinted by our tour guides and prison warders.



### THE COURTHOUSE RESTAURANT:

After your prison experience you will be free to relax in our historic courthouse restaurant which is open to the public 6 days a week serving meals all day from our extensive menu with an exclusive Sunday carvery our speciality.

OPEN ALL YEAR

Mon-Fri 9am-4.30pm

Sunday 12.30-4pm

Late opening for groups arranged on request

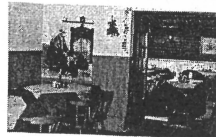
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## Free Issue

Lifford Association for Tourism, Commerce & Heritage Ltd.

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**August**  
2nd Moon Dance  
3rd Pluffy Ducks  
4th Trisha

9th Fresh Vibes  
10th Gainte  
11th Stardust Oldies

16th Adonis Blu

17th Pete & Jerry

18th Fully Booked

23rd Philis

24th Joe Quigley

25th Astro

30th Carisma

31st Spirit of

Freedom

**Clonmany Festival**

2002

Clonmany, Inishowen, Co. Donegal

**Sunday 4th August -**

**Sunday 11th August**

Open Air Concerts

**Sun. 4th August**

4.00pm - Shawn Cuddy Band

9.00pm - Keith & the Showband

Show

**Mon. 5th August**

9.00pm - Mick Flavin

**Tues. 6th August**

9.00pm - The James Peake

Experience

**Wed. 7th August**

9.00pm - Martin Cuffe Band

**Thurs. 8th August**

9.00pm - Diarmuid O'Leary and the

Bard's

**Fri. 9th August**

9.00pm - The Chevys

**Sat. 10th August**

9.00pm - Robert Mizzell & the

Country Kings

**Sun 11th August**

4.00pm - Foyle Showband

9.00pm Kieran Mc Gilligan

**Concert Support Act each night at**

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Enquiries: 077-76477 Mobile: 086

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Website: www.clonmany.com

Late opening of bars and hotels

Street Subscription €3.00 Full list of

events in local press

printed. Apparently he was dubbed "Rabbie" by the locals in deference to the famous Ayrshire poet. Thanks Charlie and apologies for the mix -

**Autumn Evenings**

Dear Courthouse News,

I am writing to you regarding the

evening classes in the Courthouse. I

would be very grateful if you could

tell me if there will be evening

classes running this year as I would

be interested in attending. I will look

forward to hearing from you soon

Yours sincerely,

Sinead Mc Cafferty.

Ballybofey.

**Lifford Library**

Please note Lifford Library has

moved to the Old Courthouse. At

the moment they are bringing their

catalogue system up to date and will

be closed for a week or two. We'll

let you know of the opening hours

and any other developments in our

next issue.

**STOP PRESS - LATEST NEWS**

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Lifford Association For Tourism,

Commerce and Heritage have

applied for funding to undertake a

feasibility study for the provision of

a river bus on the river Foyle

operating between Lifford and

Derry.

**Memory Lane**

This photograph was given to us by

Cole Corser, a visitor from Austin,

Texas. He was in Lifford retracing

his family connections to the town.

His grandparents, Kathleen and

Eugene Henry O' Doherty, lived

here at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c in

the house known locally as

Ballyduff Cottage. If any of our

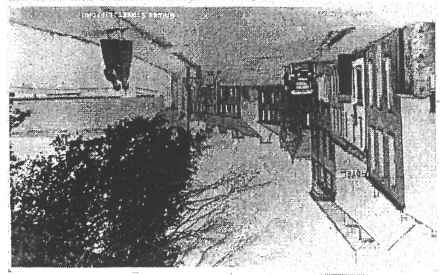
readers knows anything about the O'

Doherty's could you please get in

touch with us at the Old Courthouse

so we can pass the information on to

Mr. Corser.



**Your Letters**



**A Man's A Man For A' That**

In our last issue we included a poem

by Robert Burns of Ballyast. A

relative of his, Mr. Charlie O'

Donnell, has since been in touch to

let us know that his real first name

was James and not Robert as

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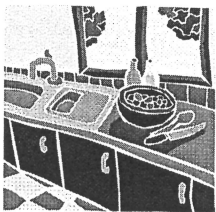


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## Evening Classes

We are now taking enrolments for  
the following classes:

Guitar (Beginners) 8-8.45pm

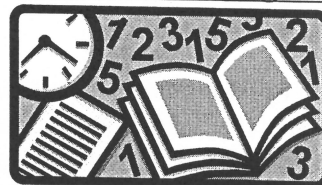
Guitar (2<sup>nd</sup> year) 9-9.45pm

10 week courses beginning Tuesday  
17<sup>th</sup> September. Fee - 80 euro to be  
paid by 10<sup>th</sup> September.

Dressmaking 7.30-9.30pm

10 week course beginning Thursday  
19<sup>th</sup> September. Fee - 100 euro to be  
paid by 12<sup>th</sup> September.

## Tutors Required for Autumn Evening Classes Programme



We are now planning our 2002  
evening class programme and are  
looking for tutors in the  
following subjects:

Painting  
French  
Spanish  
German  
Singing  
Jiving

Colour Me Beautiful

If you are interested in teaching  
any of the above please contact  
Gillian – tel (074) 41733

## Vacancies! Vacancies! Vacancies! Student Summer Scheme Vacancies



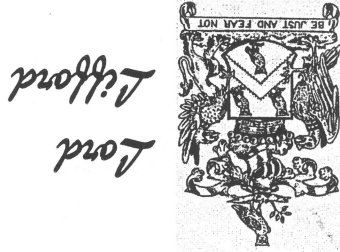
Interested in Donegal history and  
would like to work in a mid 18<sup>th</sup>  
century heritage centre? Then the  
place for you this summer is the Old  
Courthouse, Lifford. We have 5  
vacancies for tour guides,  
receptionist, shop assistant and  
researcher/writer.

For job interviews phone Gillian at  
the Old Courthouse, Lifford, tel. 074  
- 41733

## Donegal County Archives Open Day

Following the success of last years  
Open day, held in Donegal County  
Archives during Heritage week,  
another Open Day will take place  
this year, on Tuesday 3 September.  
This year it will be held in the  
Training Room, in the County  
House, Lifford.

On display will be examples from  
the County Archives collection, and  
this year the theme will be Donegal  
towns. Archives on display during  
the day will include valuation books,  
workhouse records, railway prints,  
maps, plans, drawings, postcards,  
photographs and posters from towns  
and districts around the county.  
Admission is free.



Lord  
Lifford

Over the last six months while we have been compiling information for the newsletters and our intended glossy booklet, we have had several enquires about Lord Lifford especially when people notice the Lord Lifford stamp that was donated along with other artefacts, to our Courthouse collection.

Apart from that we had found no mention of him anywhere, until a student came here and asked for information on him as he is buried at Crossroads, Killiygordon!

Well this was news to me! So off I go and clamber through long grass, and briars to find out that there is a Viscount Lifford the 4<sup>th</sup> residing there! So I have now started looking for any info that I can find.

The First Viscount Lifford was born James Hewitt in April 1712, the son of a Coventry draper. He started work as an Attorney's Clerk and progressed through the legal profession, by 1742 he was a barrister at-law, after various appointments over the years he was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland. In 1768, he was created Baron Lifford and in 1781 elevated to Viscount.

Viscount Lifford the 4<sup>th</sup> was a resident of the Raphoe Diocese, he resided at Meenglas, Ballybofey, and together with Sir Samuel Hayes of Stranorlar was the prominent landowner in the area, and owing much to their vision together, helped to expand Ireland's railways of the 1850's. Their representations at parliament helped to secure funding to begin what became the Finn Valley railway company in May 1860, and the construction of the line between Strabane and Stranorlar began at the end of the summer of 1861. After a lot of hold ups, fighting, and huge expense the line was officially opened on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1863.

Viscount Lifford was married twice. His first wife Lady Mary Acheson, whom he married in July 1835 gave birth to five sons and two daughters, before she died in March 1850.

In December 1851, he married Lydia Coote, a widow, and by her had two more sons and four more daughters. Looking through the book "The Donegal Railway's" by Edward M. Patterson, I have found locomotives named after various members of his family. 'Isabella' was the name of one of his daughters from his first marriage. 'Blanche' was the name of his son's wife and 'Lydia' was the name of his second wife. A fourth train was called 'Alice' after one of their

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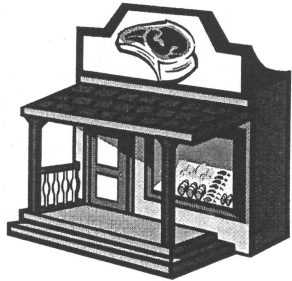
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**July**

**26<sup>th</sup> - Elves Karoke**

**27<sup>th</sup> - Two Amigos**

**28<sup>th</sup> - Friends**

**August**

**3<sup>rd</sup> - Tony Quinn**

**4<sup>th</sup> - Two Amigos**

**10<sup>th</sup> - Deep Thoughts**

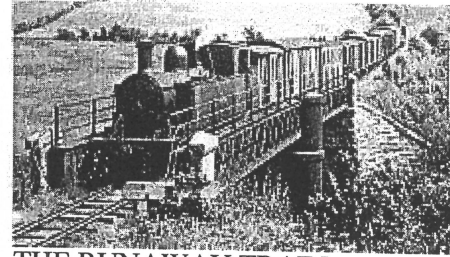
**11<sup>th</sup> - Twilight**

**16<sup>th</sup> - Friends**

**17<sup>th</sup> - Danny Sweeney**

**Private Parties  
also catered for**

daughters. What follows is an account of what happened to one of the trains.

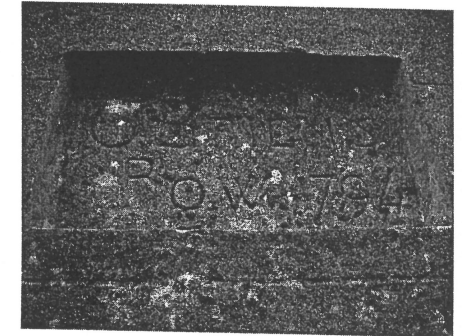


**THE RUNAWAY TRAIN**

Stories about 'Runaways' are legend in the history of the railway. One of the most memorable in the Finn Valley was an August bank holiday special. The engine was **Blanche** (pictured above) and she had brought 13 carriages and 1,000 people back from Ballyshannon, and up through the Gap." *The old brake pipes weren't in too good order after lying out in the weather for months. The driver happened to be one of those who knew it all, and even the presence in the cab of the locomotive inspector didn't curb him. On the falling gradient after Lough Mourne the train began to pick up speed, and before the driver knew, she was away on him. The inspector hastily assumed command, and applied panic measures. Leading sanders on, reverse gear and full regulator! 'The wheels weren't locked, they couldn't lock, she was going the wrong road and she was putting up lumps of coal the size of your fist,' as he told the story 12 years later. The train was*

*booked to stop at Meenglas. They got her halted a quarter of a mile beyond it, but that was better than raking round the curves and into Stranorlar. Brought to a halt, a carriage door opened and two active, if elderly ladies dropped lightly to the ballast. They walked towards the engine and, passing it, called up to the crew 'Thank you, you've saved us a walk - that's our house up there'. They didn't know how lucky they were."*

**O' Brien's Row**



In our 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Old Courthouse News we asked our readers if they knew anything about the plaque in Back Lane, Lifford which states "O' Brien's Row 1794" We now have the answer thanks to Tessie Mc Gettigan who sent us a copy of "A Local History of Lifford" (now out of print) which was compiled twenty years ago by the Lifford Guild of the Irish Countrywomen's Association. It

contained the following under the chapter dealing with local family names;

*O' Briens* were famous in Lifford in the 1700s, although it cannot be ascertained when they came to the area. Daniel O' Brien was a Free Burgess of the Borough. He was first elected Warden of the Borough in 1770, and from 1775 until 1783 he was continuously re-elected warden. There are no records available after 1783.

Daniel O' Briens name was given to a street of thatched houses which was known as "O' Brien's Row". This street has long since been demolished but the name plate has been preserved and can be seen on masonry in the Back Lane. It reads "O' Briens Row, 1794." There are still O' Brien's in the area today.

## Crunchy Fish Bites



Ingredients  
(serves 4)

- 575g/1.25lb whiting or plaice fillets
  - 3 tbsp lemon juice
  - salt and black pepper
  - 300ml/1/2 pint sunflower oil, for frying
  - red chilli, to garnish
- For the sauce
- 400g/14oz can tomatoes or 8fl oz of passata

- 2 red chillies
  - 2 green chillies
  - 4 tbsp light soy sauce
  - 1 tbsp lemon juice
- For the batter
- 50g/2oz plain flour
  - 1 tsp baking powder
  - 2 tsp turmeric
  - 2 tsp groundnut oil

1. Rinse the fish fillets and pat dry with kitchen paper. Remove any bones and cut into bite-sized pieces. Sprinkle with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cover with cling film and put into the fridge for 1 hour.

2. For the sauce, push the tomatoes through a sieve into a pan. Wearing rubber gloves, wash, trim and de-seed the chillies. Chop and add to the pan. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes until thickened. Stir in the soy sauce, lemon juice and salt.

3. For the batter, combine the flour and baking powder, turmeric and seasoning. Stir in the oil and 90ml/3fl oz hot water. Beat to a smooth paste with a wooden spoon.

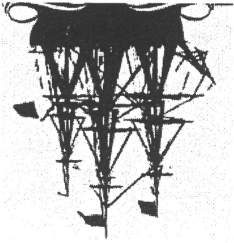
4. Heat the oil in a large pan (or deep fat fryer) to 190C/375F. test the temperature by dipping the handle of a wooden spoon in the oil; small bubbles should form around it. Remove fish from the fridge and pat dry.

identified, or of the least value cast up, I will not fail to advise you - I Booth, Master, from Derry to the Brig Exmouth, of Newcastle, Quebec with emigrants, struck on the two rocks of Sanaig on the west coast of Islay about midnight last night, when all on board perished with the exception of three of the crew, viz.: - John Stevens, seaman, and George Lighthford and Wm. Coyler, apprentices, all belonging to South Shields. It blew a terrific gale from the Southwest, and on Monday I believe all her sails were blown away. She struck on a bold rocky coast and immediately must have gone to pieces. The three men saved were on the main-top, and the mast having fallen towards the shore, they scrambled on the rocks, and succeeded in making good their footing. I have just come from the spot, and only eight of the bodies have been washed on shore, three women, four children, and a boy, but so bruised that nobody could have identified them. The corpses were decently buried, and the same rites will be performed to any more that may be washed ashore. The vessel and everything in her must have been dashed into ten thousand pieces, and nothing but bits of wool and tattered bed clothes, and men and women's garments, chased and torn on the rocks, have been picked up on the shore. No documents of any kind have been got except one of the sailors' register certificates. Should anything that can be

From you.]

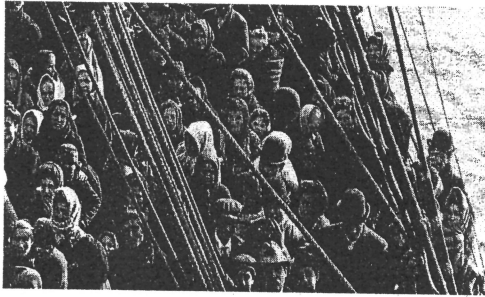
psychic? [If anyone has any information on 'The Exmouth', the crew or passengers, we would like to hear

Is it any wonder the Famine has left many think this an understatement. buried in mass graves, although deaths a day and a total of 5424 epidemic the authorities spoke of 50 were to fall victim to the typhus epidemic which swept through Grosse Ile. At the height of the epidemic the authorities spoke of 50 were to reach shore, however managed to reach shore, however thrown overboard. Those who on the 'coffin ships' and were completed the journey. Many died for Canada that year, it is believed that as many as 1 in 5 never the quarantine station on Grosse Ile. Of the estimated 100,000 who sailed of 1847, many never got further than the journey to Quebec that summer emigrants who managed to survive be, the truth of the matter is, of those Distressing though this account may



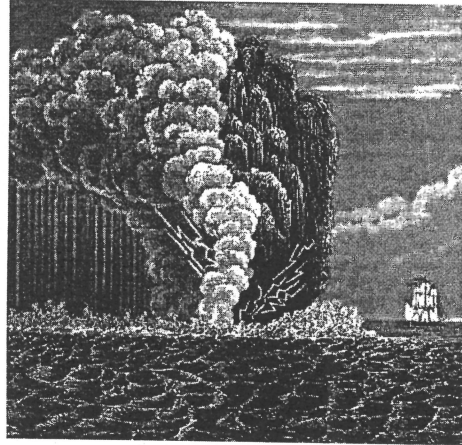
G.T. CHIENE."

in every other seaport town in the kingdom emigration is proceeding on an unusually extensive scale.”



Once on board, most of the passengers must have uttered a sigh of relief as they set sail for the New World and a new beginning. Sadly, for many, it was the beginning of the end. Typhus, already widespread in the countryside reached epidemic proportion as people thronged into the ports seeking a means of escape. One other, uncontrollable factor also added to the misery – severe weather. In some cases, this combination on ships such as ‘The Swatara’ gave rise to conditions which can only be guessed at. Leaving fever-ridden Belfast with 290 passengers bound for Philadelphia, ‘The Swatara’ having been dismasted in the gales of Monday and Tuesday ( 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> April), “put into Lough Foyle on Sunday and is now lying at Moville. This is the third time that she has been obliged to turn back under jury masts since she left Liverpool, about nine weeks ago. Before she left Belfast, a few weeks ago, where she

was re-fitted, typhus fever broke out among the passengers to an alarming extent, and many were cut off by its ravages. Fever is still prevalent.”



The tremendous gales which hit the North West Coast while Samuel Crummer considered his final hours brought further calamity to the passengers and crew of the emigrant ship ‘The Exmouth’ which set sail from Derry on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1847, on what proved to be her final voyage. Already two days at sea, ‘the Exmouth’ ran into trouble off the West Coast of Islay. On board were 208 emigrants chiefly from Kilmacrenan, Letterkenny, Ballyshannon, Stranorlar, Clonmany, Enniskillen, Strabane, Castleterg and Omagh. The following letter from the Islay authorities was received by Captain Ramsey, the Derry Emigration Agent:

5. Working in batches, dip the fish into the batter to coat. Fry for 2-3 minutes until golden; remove with a slotted spoon, and keep warm while cooking the rest. Serve with the sauce and garnish with a chilli.

This is an Indonesian dish and can be served either as a quick snack or a Far Eastern starter.

### Quips & Quotes

It is better to sleep on what you plan to do than to be kept awake by what you’ve done.

It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.

In 40 years time we’ll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos.



Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes.

Don’t be irreplaceable; if you can’t be replaced, you can’t be promoted.

No piece of paper can be folded more than 7 times (Try it).

## Millbridge Open Farm



Fun day out for all the family – see various farm animals and pets.

Other attractions – picnic area, playgrounds, boating pond, go-karts, museum, tearooms and shop.

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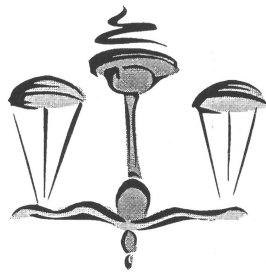
**Competitive Rates**

## LARGE LOSS OF LIVES AT SEA

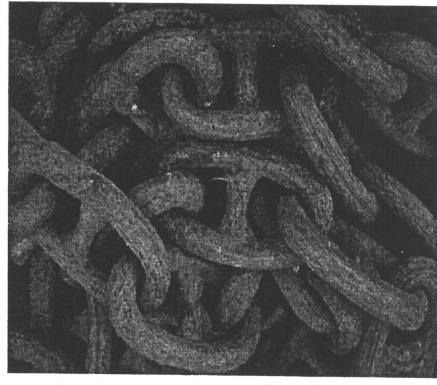
While the Crummer case may have grabbed all the headlines, the newspapers which carried details of his execution also revealed other tragedies unfolding against the backdrop of the Great Famine. As Samuel Crummer waited for his appointment with the "Searcher of Hearts" untold thousands were suffering from starvation and disease while thousands more prepared to emigrate. A small paragraph in one of the local papers for May, 1847, gives us some idea of the scale of events:

"The emigrants who have left this port for the United States of America and Upper and Lower Canada, since the commencement of the season, amount to the large number of 5,003. We have not been able to get a correct return of the number who left this to proceed via Liverpool and Glasgow for North America; but we are sure we are below the mark when we compute them to have amounted to 3,500 persons, giving a total of above 8,000; and from the crowds who daily throng our streets, enquiring for vessels to carry them from famine-stricken Ireland, it is calculated that close on 8000 more will have left before the month of September next. We understand that

*Priests who attended to prepare him for death, the Rev. Mr. Browne, of Strabane, and his coadjutor, the Rev. Mr. M'Geoghegan, were standing at the door, and the latter addressed some words to him in Irish, and when Mr. Fenton, the governor, told him that it was usual to have the face covered, the Priests desired him to be resigned, and one of them patted him repeatedly on the shoulder. Crummer then stood erect on the platform, with his front towards the street, and after a few seconds, which seemed to be passed in prayer, the bolt was drawn, and almost instantaneously life appeared to have left him. There was one convulsive movement of his arms after he fell, but it was only for a moment, and then he hung motionless. One of the policemen on duty was so much affected at the dreadful site that he was led away in an almost fainting state. After the body had been suspended for three quarters of an hour, it was lowered and deposited in a coffin by the hangman, and immediately afterwards it was interred within the precincts of the prison".*



Samuel Cromer, to buy the farm for £100. This action enraged the son who said, "he would take a life or lose his own," before he would be put out of the farm. On Saturday evening the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1846, the old man was seen going into his house in the usual health and was never seen alive again. On the Sunday evening the old man was missing and neighbours, knowing the bad feeling between father and son and the unsatisfactory answers to questions as to where the old man was, had a strong suspicion of Samuel junior and Peggy as having done something to him. On searching a lake near the house on the Monday morning they found the body of the old man at the bottom of a deep pool, with a chain fastened around the body and attached to a large stone of considerable weight. After examination of the body it was obvious that the old man had died a violent death.



## The Last Public Execution in Lifford

In our fifth issue of the 'Old Courthouse News', Billy told you all about the last public hanging in Lifford of the Stewart brothers in April 1831. Well I'm sorry Billy we came across a very interesting case that tells us of the trial of one Samuel Crummer and Peggy Crummer who were charged with the wilful murder of Samuel Crummer, the elder, at Summy, Ardara.

Father and son had lived happily together until Samuel junior married Peggy in May 1845 against the wishes of his father, her being a servant of the family and of a different religion. Peggy was Samuel Crummer's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife. His first was the sister-in-law of Andrew Davis who later testified against them in court. From his address to the crowd before he was hanged, we gather he may have had children with her, but what happened to them we can find no mention. There was a lot of ill feeling amongst the parties, the father was an old infirm man and suffered a lot of abuse from his son and daughter-in-law from the time of their marriage until his death in February 1846. Early in 1846, Samuel senior had made an arrangement with a neighbour,



of Lifford Gaol, forming a semicircle, to prevent the crowd from approaching the building, and the fatal rope was seen attached to the metal bar above the drop. As the sub-Sheriff had been instructed not to admit strangers to the prison, we cannot describe the particulars of what happened within its precincts, but we learned subsequently that Crummer partook of breakfast, with an apparent appetite, at eleven o' clock and that he exhibited no trepidation as the time drew nigh for his execution. While the hangman was putting a large white garment over his ordinary dress and pinioning his arms, he repeated aloud "Lord have mercy on my soul," and before he was conducted to the scaffold he shook hands with the Sheriff and the officers of the prison, to whom he returned thanks for their conduct towards him during his incarceration.

At 13 o' clock precisely he was led out on the drop in front of the gaol, stepping with a cautious but firm tread on the iron grating. A thrill of horror ran through the multitude, and a murmur not of pity but of awe, was heard as he appeared. It was a spectacle that might well appal the stoutest heart, to behold a man of colossal proportions, in full health and vigour, and who had scarcely yet arrived at the meridian of life, and to know that in another minute or two he would be launched into

eternity. He was six feet two in height, and but thirty-two years of age, although an imprisonment of more than twelve months, and the ghostly habiliments he wore, made him look several years older. But if anything could heighten the awfulness of the scene, it was the statement he made on the occasion. The executioner having adjusted the rope, the culprit proceeded to address the crowd in a loud voice, and in a firm and collected manner – "Gentlemen and ladies," said the wretched man, "I am going to inform you that I am about to die, and I wish to tell you that I am innocent, and that I never lifted hand or foot to my poor father, nor would I do it, but ----, of Ardara, swore my life away for a little money in these hard times, I leave my blessing to my children and all my friends, and I forgive all as I hope to get forgiveness myself." We were unable to catch the name of the individual to whom he alluded as having sworn away his life, owing to the screams of a female of weak intellect in a distant part of the crowd, who cried and gesticulated violently while the prisoner was speaking. The executioner, who was brought from Dublin for the purpose, then drew the white cap over his face, when he remonstrated, and, turning towards the door, through which he had walked to the drop, he asked to see the governor of the gaol. The Roman Catholic

A Samuel Brown who was called to the stand recollects that he was passing by the old man's house at about two or three o' clock and saw the old man in his usual health, the next time he saw him was lying on the bed in his house, bound with an iron chain, dead! A month before, Samuel Brown visited Samuel senior and found him crying; the old man showed him black lumps on his hands and said his daughter-in-law had struck him with a stick. She retorted that, "if she struck him he must have deserved it." Samuel junior was sitting on the bed-side when his father told Samuel Brown that his son had pushed him to the back of the door in his room, took him by the private parts and tried to kill him, and said nothing. Several witnesses in court at the time also testified to seeing or hearing the old man being mistreated by his son and his wife.



On the Monday morning the sergeant of police went with others including the magistrate Mr. Hamilton, to the lake which was a little distance from the house where they observed an upturned stone, some straw with blood on it and in the direction of the house they observed the footprints of two

persons, large ones as those of a man and smaller, barefoot ones, as those of a woman.

After being taken from the lake and removed to the house, the body was examined by the surgeon, Christopher Mc Garvey. He found a contused wound on the back of the skull sufficient to cause death, two incised wounds inflicted with a sharp knife or dagger on the left eye and on the side of the face. The lower jaw was fractured; there was a compound fracture of the arm, and chest and a left rib were broken.



In defence of the prisoners James Doherty Esq. addressed the jury and reminded them that the only evidence was circumstantial, "no eye saw the deed committed, save the all seeing eye of heaven!"

Baron Penefather also talked to the jury and told them they didn't need to go over the notes in case the reading would remove the impression which had been left on their minds by hearing and seeing for themselves, there was no doubt that the old man had suffered a violent death and it was up to them to decide at what time and by whom the deed had been done.

The jury retired and in less than an hour returned a verdict of Guilty! The trial lasted from 12 o' clock until past eight o' clock on the evening, and excited the deepest

of the baby she had within the last 6 or 7 months, and who would look after her child with life ending so soon. Her fear I can not imagine. Samuel Crummer was hanged on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 30 days later than the judge had requested. His wife's punishment was commuted to transportation for life. Where she was transported to we do not know, possibly Van Dieman's Land, but she would have been held in prison for at least a year as transportation was suspended between 1846-1848.

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM THE  
DERRY JOURNAL, WED. MAY  
5<sup>TH</sup>, 1847:

EXECUTION OF SAMUEL  
CRUMMER AT LIFFORD

"The extreme sentence of the law was carried into effect on Friday at Lifford on Samuel Crummer, who had been found guilty at the late Assizes for the county of Donegal, of the murder of his father, near Ardara, in that county. His wife had also been convicted together with him of the same offence, but the prerogative of mercy was exercised in her favour by the Lord Lieutenant, and her punishment was commuted to transportation for life. The evidence against both was so circumstantial, but it was so conclusive that a most intelligent jury returned the verdict without hesitation, and the wretched

piteously to her husband and said something to him; on which he replied, 'I do not know a word that after her child with life ending so soon. Her fear I can not imagine. Samuel Crummer was hanged on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 30 days later than the judge had requested. His wife's punishment was commuted to transportation for life. Where she was transported to we do not know, possibly Van Dieman's Land, but she would have been held in prison for at least a year as transportation was suspended between 1846-1848.

interest. The Courthouse was crowded in every part, and the people had difficulty suppressing their emotions of horror as the details of the murder unfolded, especially when the chain and stone man's body were produced.

Before I go on, it is worth reminding you of the year of this terrible tragedy. The potato crop had failed for two previous years and the famine was at its peak. The farm was all the family had and here was the old man threatening to sell it to a neighbour under his son's nose. What would he do then? End up working to survive on what should have been his own farm or out on the road with nothing and maybe having to emigrate? These were hard desperate times and it seems Samuel junior took desperate measures without thinking of the consequences of his actions. On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 1847, Samuel and Peggy Cromer were brought to the bar before Justice Penfather. "Samuel exhibited a stolidity which, under the circumstances, can only be ascribed to that state of intellect which is little above idiocy, and may be designated brutishness. His wife was in tears. The prisoners expressed a fear that they may be transported! When the clerk put the question as why they should not be put to death, the wife looked

to them in this world. His lordship concluded by sentencing the prisoners to be severally hanged by the neck until dead, and their bodies to be buried within the precincts of the prison. His lordship afterwards fixed the first day of April as the day of execution. Samuel Crummer said nothing during his lordships address only to raise his eyebrows in a look of surprise when he heard the words 'hanged by the neck'. Peggy Crummer seemed to hold well together during the address but, on being removed from the dock, her cries could be heard from below, which were those of the bitterest agony; and we understand that she had to be conveyed to the prison in an almost insensible state". We can only imagine the state that she and her husband were in, no doubt she would have been thinking