

# Finn Valley.ie

The Official Website  
of the Finn Valley

The Finn Valley is rich in history, culture and folklore. Our scenery can equal - and often surpass - that found in other parts of Ireland. Lifford Old Courthouse is just one of our many and varied attractions and yet, despite that, our general area was seldom (if ever) publicised until our own website came along.

Since finnvalley.ie launched in late February 2002, we've had more than half a million genuine hits and the figures are growing monthly, attracting visitors from as far afield as America, Canada, Australia and all EU Countries.

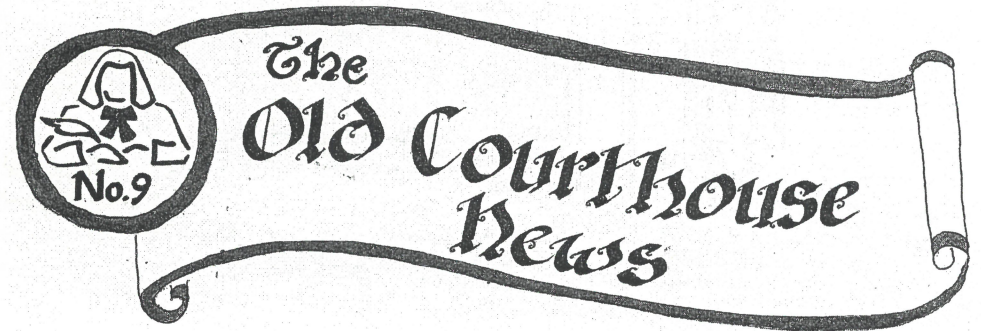
We welcome all Finn Valley related contributions from people at home and abroad, so if you have any local history, old photographs, stories, poems - or if you know of any noteworthy Finn Valley People you feel should be mentioned - we would love to hear from you. All materials will be returned with thanks.

Instead of allowing Dublin, Galway, Cork and Kerry to continue stealing all the glory, please help us to promote our own area and to show the outside world just how much the Finn Valley (and Donegal in general) has to offer the many visitors to these shores.

Visit our website for local history, places, people, tourism information, business listings, message boards and much more.

Our Internet address is: <http://www.finnvalley.ie>  
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**NB: All non-profit, community groups and services are featured free of charge.**



## Free Issue



## KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING

Lifford Association for Tourism, Commerce & Heritage Ltd.



Can you help?

Dear Sir/Madam,

Would any of your readers have any information about various events in my mother's parent's lives? I'm thinking here of events, which by their nature, would have merited local reportage: James Heron's (Herron) appointment and promotion in the Council, his marriage, in 1914, to Mary (Minnie) Gavin, the birth of their three children Sally (1916), Nancy (1918), and Moira (1923) followed by the death of Minnie Heron in December, 1923, and James Heron in March, 1930.

I am also interested in any newspaper or local history references to the McFaddens (Bernard and Catherine) of Coneyburtow House, because my mother and her sisters - after the death of both parents - were taken in by their Aunt Catherine, and lived with her in Coneyburtow House, and later in Dublin, until all three married.

Yours sincerely,  
Anthony Baker-Cassidy,  
Northants,  
England.

Dear Courthouse,  
My friend is still talking about the scones we all had in your restaurant when we were there in August. Is there any way I could get a recipe for them?

Judith Morrison,  
Rockville,  
Maryland,  
U.S.A.

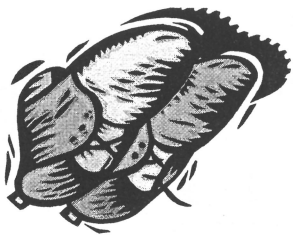
(E-mail on its way. Enjoy. Gillian.)



GOING FOR A  
PINT?

If you had visited  
Lifford in 1835 you  
would have been spoiled for choice.

A survey of the trades found in the town records that there were 10 publicans operating that year. Other trades included 12 tailors, 2 painters, 2 blacksmiths, 1 wheelwright, 2 weavers, 8 carpenters, 2 bakers, 5 grocers, 11 stonemasons and no less than 14 shoemakers!



# HARTES BAR

LIFFORD

074 41268

OCTOBER

**31<sup>ST</sup> FANCY DRESS PARTY**  
Karaoke with the Mad Arabs

NOVEMBER

**1<sup>ST</sup>** Fully Booked

**2<sup>ND</sup>** Heat Wave

**3<sup>RD</sup>** Trisha

**8<sup>TH</sup>** Carisma

**9<sup>TH</sup>** Adonis Blue

**10<sup>TH</sup>** Star Dust Oldies

**15<sup>TH</sup>** Astro

**16<sup>TH</sup>** Philis

**17<sup>TH</sup>** Shyless

**22<sup>ND</sup>** Nite at the Races

Proceeds in aid of the Athletic Club

**23<sup>RD</sup>** Mad Arabs

**24<sup>TH</sup>** Deep Thoughts

**27<sup>TH</sup>** Fresh Vibes

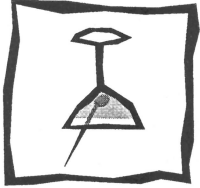
**28<sup>TH</sup>** D. Wilder

**29<sup>TH</sup>** Fully Booked

# ERIN BAR

LIFFORD

074 41741



OCTOBER

**31<sup>ST</sup> PARTY NIGHT**  
Fancy Dress & Karaoke

SPOT PRIZES

NOVEMBER

**1<sup>ST</sup>** Rio

**2<sup>ND</sup>** Hey Sir

**8<sup>TH</sup>** Crazy Crew Karaoke

**9<sup>TH</sup>** Deep Thoughts

**10<sup>TH</sup>** White Lighting

**15<sup>TH</sup>** Twilight

**16<sup>TH</sup>** Larry

**25<sup>TH</sup>** Night at the Races

Proceeds in aid of Argary

National School

# Christmas

at

Lifford Old Courthouse



The Ramblin Scallywags  
Puppet Theatre presents A  
CHRISTMAS CAROL

Plus Come & see Santas toy  
factory in the cells

Write & post your letter to  
Lapland



Receive a gift  
from Father Christmas

7<sup>th</sup> December – 19<sup>th</sup> December  
Monday – Friday shows at 5pm  
& 7pm  
Sat & Sun shows at 1pm, 3pm &  
5pm

BOOKING ESSENTIAL (074)  
41733

Admission: Children €8/£5.50  
stg, Adults €2/£1.50stg

The Courthouse  
Restaurant will be open  
during all shows

## MESSAGE FROM SANTA



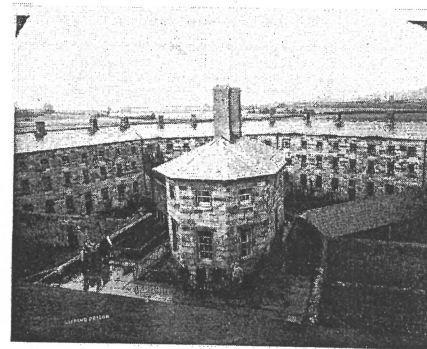
To all the little boys and girls,  
I am coming to your town!  
If you would like to see me  
Let me know, we will put your  
name down!

I have lots of glorious  
presents  
You will be happy that you  
came!  
I am staying at the Old  
Courthouse,  
Father Christmas is my name.

To all the mummies and  
daddies,  
Your child will have a great  
time.  
They'll remember their day at  
the Courthouse,  
Sheer delight will reflect in  
their smile.

Pam Hepburn

## THE SCATTERING OF LIFFORD GAOL



In our last issue we dealt with the final years of Lifford gaol, it's eventual closure in 1884 and the commencement of demolition in 1907 with the resulting fatalities to two workmen. This month we will turn to the story of how the stones from the prison were used and their part in the fulfilment of a prophecy. With walls at least two feet thick, Lifford gaol was a solid construction. When William Finlay's demolition gang completed their task, it generated an enormous amount of valuable building material and a wide-spread demand for anything that could be re-used. At least three churches took advantage of this historical harvest. Some of the stones were taken to Derry and used in the building of the Long Tower church in 1908. Another consignment went to the Church of the Good Shepherd in Sion mills. Closer to home, the stone steps leading to the galleries of the

now demolished R.C. church at Murlog were also taken from the gaol.

Apart from church building, gaol-stones were incorporated in the building of a row of cottages on the Murlog road and in other houses throughout Donegal and Tyrone. Over the bridge, in Strabane, when St Catherine's Industrial School required an extension in 1907, cart-loads of material from the recently demolished gaol were used in 'The Grey Building' which was made up of workrooms, dormitories and a kitchen for 130 'unfortunate and destitute girls'.

### A Prophecy Written in Stone

The story goes that part of the stones of the old gaol of 1793 came originally from Croaghan, where a line of men stood and passed them from hand to hand till they reached the builders at the old monastery of Clonleigh. It is also claimed that some of the stones used to build the gaol came from derelict houses in the locality from which families had been evicted. Some people regard the return of the materials as a fulfilment of a prophecy, which predicted that the stones from the gaol would eventually return to their original purposes.

### When the Dust Settled

When the last cartload of stones rumbled out of Lifford Diamond it brought to an end 114 years of



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Barbie, Bob the Builder in stock**

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from €169/£109stg**

**20" Wheel Boys & Girls Mountain  
Bikes (5 speed grips) from  
€99/£64stg**

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Bikes (18 speed grips) from  
€130/£84stg**

**26" Wheel Ladies & Gents  
Mountain Bikes from €115/£75stg**

**Childrens Bikes (fully ball  
bearings & Tyres & Tubes) from  
€70/£45stg**

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Accepted**

**All bikes guaranteed for 1 year  
& Free service after xmas  
After Hours no problem please  
phone first**



rebellion and attempted murder; bail of course was refused. After some time the trial came on and he was shaved clean and used again but not before they were transcribed by the collector and written down in manuscript form. This extract appears with the kind permission of the Department of Irish Folklore and James McCauley's grandson, Peter Donaghy, Ballybofey.]

"Whether it was a boy or girl it was the rule in them days that none of them would emigrate or leave home by the Motor Taxation Office, The County Archives Department and the Lifford/Strabane Cine Complex. A far cry indeed from the days when the only pictures seen in this part of Lifford were mug-shots of prisoners and the only dance was 'The Hangman's Jig'.

**THE AMERICAN WAKE**

[James McCauley of Selacis was one of the last seanachies from the Drimarone area. His stories were recorded by the late Sean O hEochaidh in 1955 when James was already in his 70's. The following extract was a result of a questionnaire on emigration to America conducted by the Irish Folklore Commission and was originally recorded on ediphone wax cylinder. Due to financial

restrictions, in the early days of the Folklore Commission the wax cylinders were then, unfortunately, too poor to employ counsel, but said a few words in his own defence, his English being very poor. He tried to do his best and he gathered up as much as to give them to understand that he thought it no harm, no crime, as he was only trying to hold his own right, so long as they did not get in, and that he was trying to keep out those who were not his friends: he did not know or care who they were and, what he thought the best part of his defence, he gave them sufficient warning when he "hit the spade with the policeman".

The administrators of the law in their wisdom saw that there were fools on both sides, took a more lenient view of the case, and awarded poor Shemus only nine months hard labour inside the walls of the county gaol at Lifford for his experiment with the spade and the policeman. The spade was taken as a trophy of war on the first occasion and produced in court, but there is no record of what became of it afterwards. Shemus survived his confinement and his acquaintances gave him the title of 'Shemus of the Spade' whenever his name was mentioned".







## SPADE HIT BY POLICEMAN

FANAD MAN GETS  
NINE MONTHS IN  
LIFFORD GAOL

In the days when the landlords ruled the roost it was customary on some estates for eviction 'Notices to Quit' to be served before the First of May every year. Although in most cases it was not acted upon it meant that recourse to the law could be effected immediately should the need to evict arise.

In those instances where eviction did follow, very little resistance was offered although some held the view that "until a man is first turned out he should not be punished for offering resistance". This belief forms the background to this story and is taken from Hugh Dorian's account of 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Fanad, recently published under the title 'The Outer Edge of Ulster'.

"At one time one poor man, when his turn came to get outside like many another, tried to hold his citadel, that is the four walls and the roof tree around and over him, and so tried to keep the officers of the law from entering, and prepared himself for a defence inside the door and armed himself with that

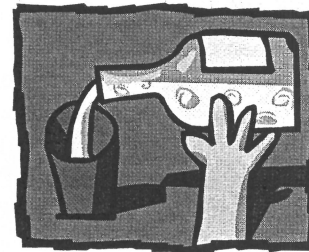
destructive and formidable weapon, the one he was best acquainted and trained with, an old spade, declaring at the same time that he would hit the first man who attempted to enter. No one of the crowbar brigade was so courageous as to venture and there was a short parley. There was the agent foaming, there was the sheriff losing time, and what was to be done?

Without waiting to hear of the determination of a full council of war on the plan of attack, a young half-fool of a policeman thinking to walk into honours by showing his military tactics for the first time and before the eyes of his superior officer, screwed on his bayonet and 'forward' put in his head. The bayonet was knocked aside by the defender, and on the next move, the adventurous policeman got the weight of the old spade just above the ear, which was the cause of leaving him a bandaged-head barrack charge for many a day after, and at last he got a few pounds compensation. It was said that the landlord gave him a gratuity of one pound for his bravery.

Poor Shemus, besieged though momentary successful, was unable to follow up his victory, being overpowered by discipline and superior numbers, and he was therefore forced to surrender, was taken prisoner, and securely handcuffed and conveyed to the county gaol to await his trial for

They danced away then till about ten o'clock and about that time someone would propose that they should make a 'join'. Two men or two boys would get up and one of them would reach his hand for the dresser and take a big plate off it and start at one end of the house and go around. Each person takin' a drink then would generally pay a shilling, and if a person had the pledge and not takin' drink, you would be more than dacent if you were let pay at all. They would like to avoid anyone that wasn't takin' drink.

Anyhow, they would rise a few pounds and when the collection was taken, two smart young fellows would get up and they would go away with the money to the nearest public house or, in them times, to some old man that was in the habit of makin' a drop of the mountain dew or poteen. When these two would leave the house the dancin' and singin' would go on harder than ever until they would come back with the whiskey or poteen. As soon as they would open the door all hands would go to cheer with joy.

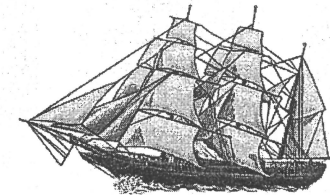


They would get their glasses then and put the whiskey roun' and it

wouldn't be very long until they got jolly, an' they would put in a grand night till about eight o'clock the next day.

But the friends of the people that were leavin' – they didn't enjoy the night so much. It was more like a wake for them because they were sorry and downhearted the whole night long until mornin'. They would be thinkin' all night of their nearest and dearest that was leavin' in the mornin' and they would say that even they did promise to come back in a few years – 'God look to your wit!' they would say, 'How many a person ever went to America and from that day till this they never returned an' it might be the same with you.'

In the mornin' then some of them would get a side-car to take themselves and their luggage away to some conveyance that would take them to Derry. At that time they used to take the big ships from Derry.



It was surely a custom when their neighbours would find out as to what part of America they were going. If they thought they were going anywhere near other relatives

issue we'll look at the plight of those who thought they had escaped only to fall victim to the conditions aboard the coffin ships.

References taken from, 'Famine Diary' by Brendan O Cathaoir and 'The Great Hunger' by Cecil Woodham-Smith, also the 'Strabane/Lifford Notes' 1982.

### My Two Slaves

A SONNET IN TRIBUTE TO MAN'S  
TWO MOST FAITHFUL FRIENDS

*For three score summers, sixty winters  
cold,  
Through twenty thousand days of heat  
or hail.....*

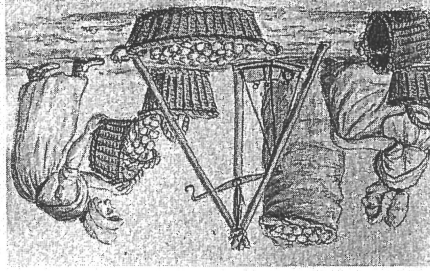
*True beasts of burden, willing without  
fail  
Ye've toiled for me - ne'er having to be  
told!*

*On land or mid sea billows battling  
bold,  
In far-flung climes, through dark or  
sun-dight dale,  
O'er Derg's chastening crags, airborne,  
a-sail.....*

*Ye've helped me on - nor ever asked for  
gold!*

*Ye sought no raiment in those days of  
ease,  
When life was young and miles flew  
passing fleet.....  
Now as I rest with bronchial chest  
awheeze,  
Ye too relax - tired of the dusty street:  
Fell fate in vain tried bring me to my  
knees  
While borne aloft by you, mine own two  
Dominic O'Kelly*

the growing of potatoes for the Ballindrait area. The lane leading to benefit of the people in the "The Blind Lane" and this particular field was greatly respected by the people of the village. By a strange coincidence, the blight of 1847, which devastated the potato crop in the whole country, missed this particular field and the potatoes grew up healthy and very plentiful. The result was, that the people of Ballindrait escaped the ravages of the Famine. After the Famine, the field reverted to the Muirines, as the danger of another similar catastrophe has greatly decreased in the meantime.



However, on a national level, things were deteriorating all over the country. In February, 1847, Daniel O'Connell told the House of Commons in London that he estimates 5,000 adults, and 10,000 children have died, and if they didn't act they would be responsible for the loss of 25% of the population of Ireland. As we know, his words fell on deaf ears and the death toll continued to mount. In our next

especially were sometimes as sad as if the person leavin' was really dead and you would rather not be there at all, if you would be any way soft yourself. As they say, 'They would take a tear out of a stone'.

(to be continued in our next issue)

### LORD LIFFORD



(In a follow-up to our article on Lord Lifford, published in our last issue, we received the following from a reader who hails from the area once owned by the landlord.)

The Flight of the Earls of Tyrone (O'Neill) and Tyrconnell (O'Donnell) presented a golden opportunity to the Crown. Scottish and English settlers were invited by King James I to colonise the lands from which the native Irish were evicted. A high proportion of the new tenant settlers were Scottish Presbyterians. The landlord class were mainly courtiers or servants of the monarch who had rendered meritorious services to their royal master. Many were army officers who had served long and faithfully in costly campaigns and for financial reasons could not be otherwise

they would send presents to them. It was the custom in them times too if the friends thought a lot of the person going to America they would bake a cake or two of good oat bread and harden it thoroughly well and give to them to help them on board the ship. It was better feeding than anything they would get while they were on the ship. In those days it was sailing ships they crossed in, and sometimes they were so long on the voyage that they were half-starved with the hunger before they reached the other side.

There were, of course, different kinds of presents given to these people leavin' home. Some knitted a nice pair of gloves, both for himself and another pair to give some friend in America. Some more would knit a pair of socks, or a jersey or something to remind them of old Ireland.

Well then, when the mornin' would come and the person would be leavin', it was the custom to accompany him a long distance from his home - sometimes for a couple of miles or so. Maybe the father or mother would be too old or feeble to go with them any distance but the young people sometimes went with them long distances - and numbers of those sittin' up on the night before. It was just like a big funeral...and the crying and the last parting was indeed sad to see. The parents

and there was 'nothing whatever' in the hut in the shape of money or food.

Many of the Landlords in Ireland at that time were absentee landlords, and had no comprehension of the distress that the people were in, - in a lot of cases they didn't care.

A report from "The Famine Diary" dated May, 1846, states "Great distress is reported from Templecrane, Co Donegal, where the people seek the removal of Lord Conyngham's unsympathetic agent, Robert Russell." Mr Forster of the Quakers also refers to "the miserable and neglected tenantry of the Marquis of Conyngham, an absentee proprietor who holds an immense tract of land here."



Many a family ended up in the workhouse, which was a last desperate attempt at survival. The people were proud and the workhouse was the last resort, especially since many of these were very badly run. Inspecting officers found that the relief committee at Glenties, Co Donegal, was made up of hopelessly unsuitable persons, "the chairman was a "tinker" as the gipsies of the Irish countryside were called, and two of the guardians had got tickets for the public works". As reported at the time "The Quakers found inmates of Glenties workhouse half

starved, and half naked, the living and dying lay side by side."

The suffering of the people was made even more tragic when I found during my research that there was food being exported from all over the country while the people here starved. A report in the Ballyshannon Herald, June 1846, reports on a procession by mainly women and children through Donegal Town, "preceded by a wretched looking creature carrying a long pole, from the top of which was suspended a loaf of bread.' They halt occasionally and the leader explains the loaf symbolises that, although there is plenty of food in the country, it is beyond the reach of the poor because of its price, and their lack of employment.

He proposes three cheers for several persons who are reserving their potatoes for the use of the town, and the three groans for those who continue exporting to Liverpool. The procession proceeds next to the workhouse, where the destitute are told they cannot be admitted without a recommendation. It is feared that the vessel being loaded with potatoes will be attacked, police are constantly on deck!"

The importance of the potato to the people in Ireland was highlighted in a story that comes from the local Lifford area. When the Famine struck, a Mr. Mulrine donated a large field to the parish on condition that it be used solely for

compensated. Instead they were rewarded with a slice of the territory of the disposed Irish chieftains. One such landlord was Lord Lifford of Meenglass, Ballybofey, who was granted the townlands of Carrickmagrath, Goland, Meenbog, Taughboy, Croaghonagh and Trusk (purchased sometime in the mid-1800's from Sir Samuel Hayes of Drumboe). The total acreage was 11,199.

*Look at type size?*  
The native Irish were grudgingly tolerated where no planter tenant was interested - mainly on what is now referred to as the disadvantaged

areas. The rents were not legally fixed and could be raised at will. If a farmer drained or improved his land his rent would be increased immediately. It is difficult for the present generation of owner-occupiers with security of tenure to understand the efforts and sacrifices which made such conditions possible.

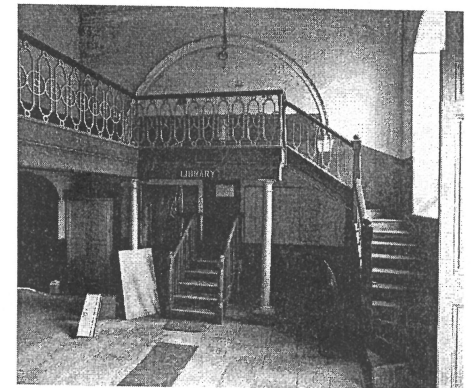
Today, landlordism is but a distant memory. The disappearance of this class paved the way for native government and the triumph of the age-long struggle of our race. It was not until 1903 when the Wyndham Land Act was passed that the way was paved for the final assault.

The landlords raised an objection to the passing of the Act as it was the work of the British Government and the terms were very attractive. The

Congested Districts' Board was set up mainly for the improvement and purchase of land in Donegal from 1891-1923. In the 24<sup>th</sup> Report of the Congested Districts' Board for Ireland (1916) the list of estate purchases for the year 1912 states that Lord Lifford was paid the sum of £14,900.

It was with great joy the tenant occupiers of the Viscount Lifford Estate received a letter from the Secretary of the Congested District's Board on 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1915, asking them to attend at Meenglass Post Office to sign an agreement for the purchase of their holdings.

## MEMORY LANE



I'm sure many of our readers, especially the older generation, will recognise this photograph. It was taken in the entrance hall prior to renovations at the Courthouse, Lifford, at a time when the 'old' library was based here.



down, past the heaps of provisions, some realised a flaw in the soldiers' manoeuvre because once they had not turn around until the end of the drill was completed. This allowed some of the crowd to dash forward and carry off a bag which was soon lost in the crowd. Scenes like this happened on a couple of occasions with the wrecks of the Emily and Messenger bound for Sligo.

Away from the ports however, even this temporary relief was unavailable. As an article from the Quaker newspaper "The Vindicator" reports "At Stranorlar, in County Donegal, on Dec 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr Forster found that no public works had yet been started, many of the inhabitants were scarcely able to crawl! They were existing on a little Indian meal on some days, on a little cabbage on others, and sometimes on nothing at all."

Mr Forster carried on to visit Duncamaghy through very deep snow where he found no public works or any form of employment. Fishing was the local occupation but because of the severe weather it was impossible for the "wreched boats" to go out (a storm in 1839 had destroyed thousands of boats along the west coast and many of these had never been replaced). James Hack Tuke found as many as seventeen persons living in a single hut not six feet high; the children lying on the ground on a little straw,

### The Famine in Donegal

In the year 1846, the signs of dread and want had really set in, but it was in the years 1847/48 that could be called the height of the Famine. In the spring of these two years partly wrecked ships came ashore in Donegal. The first ship, the *Zuleite*, New York with a cargo of Indian corn, flour and meal, had lost it's mast in a storm (of which there were many during that time) and drifted into Mulroy Bay. The people, starving and weak, believed this to be divine intervention on their behalf. Coast guards with swords and pistols, and the constabulary with guns and bayonets couldn't stop the people from carrying the stores away. Assistance was called for and the Red coats soon arrived, a strange sight to those who had never seen a soldier in uniform. The people were initially frightened by these newcomers but they soon found them to be more sympathetic to the starving people than the sneaks dressed in the Blue and Green uniform. The cargo would arrive on the shore in bits and pieces at each tide, and then be gathered onto the beach which gave work and wages to many. The task of keeping an eye on it was not an easy one as the crowd that gathered was huge and restless. As the people watched the Red Coats in their drill up and

would discharge him or her from gaol no matter what his or her crime was. This woman volunteered on the conditions named. She made the Sheriff get her two small creels, which she placed one upon the other, over her head, and with this novel helmet she ascended the ladder, reached the trap-door, and withstood a furious assault, and eventually succeeded in getting through the trap-door, caught the man and kept her grip of him until the soldiers followed her and put the shackles on the fugitive. He was taken down with some difficulty and hanged the same day. A week afterwards the woman was released".

11/11/11

At eleven o'clock on November the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the Great War came to an end. Included among the names of the many thousands who lost their lives in the carnage were those from the parish of Clonleigh, including Lifford and Ballindrait. The list below is taken from the 'Donegal Book of Honour'.

WILLIAM BOYD. Died of wounds. 13<sup>th</sup> October 1916. Age 31.  
 JOHN BOYLE. Killed in action. 30<sup>th</sup> July 1916. Age 18.  
 CHARLES BROWN. Killed in action. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1918. Age 24.

The balcony led on to the upstairs public gallery in the courtroom. It is believed that it was from this balcony that a daring escape was attempted in days gone by. This account was uncovered in an assigned, undated newspaper article held in the County Archives in Lifford.

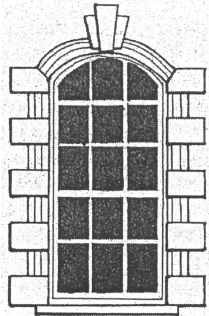
"I heard the old folks say that a female prisoner here (Lifford County Gaol) under sentence of death was set free under the following circumstances:

One morning, the Sheriff came to the prison to take charge of a sailor who was about to be guarded to the gallows for execution. The man managed to escape from the guards just at the door. He ran into the hall and up a ladder that stood there and through a trap-door to the top floor of the Courthouse. Soldiers were sent up after him but having picked up a piece of wood battered the head of each soldier as it appeared at the trap-door.



This warfare went on for some time, till at last the Sheriff went down amongst the prisoners and promised that if any of them volunteered to go up and hold the man above he

'The works of Michael Priestley, architect, both known and attributed')



### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a vast difference between the savage and the civilized man, but it is never apparent to their wives until after breakfast.

Helen Rowland

I am not a glutton – I am an explorer of food.

Erma Bombeck

Life is too short to stuff a mushroom.

Shirley Conran

The only way you can stay as skinny as I am at my age is to starve.

Helen Brown

There are an awful lot of skinny people in the cemetery.

Beverly Sills

## PEARSONS

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### COURTHOUSE FACE-LIFT

We've just heard that we have been given the green light for funding to refurbish and extend our downstairs area. This exciting development means that we will be able to offer an even better service in the future. Watch this space for details!

### DISCOVER DONEGAL

"I do not know what particular part of Southern Ireland Donegal is, but it certainly is not in Southern Ireland".

(Statement made in Seanad Eirean, 1923)

J. CARLIN. Died 24<sup>th</sup> July 1917. Age 21.

FRANK CONNOLLY. Died 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918. Age 29.

JOHN DONNELLY. Died 29<sup>th</sup> October 1915. Age 20.

JOSEPH McCONNELL. Died 7<sup>th</sup> December 1917. Age 22

ROBERT McCORKELL. Died 26<sup>th</sup> August 1914.

EDWARD O'BRIEN. (no date). Age 25.

ALEXANDER PEOPLES. Killed in action. 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915. Age 27.

DAVID PORTERFIELD. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 17.

JOHN PORTERFIELD. Died of wounds. 11<sup>th</sup> October 1918. Age 36.

EDWARD QUINN. Died 9<sup>th</sup> September 1916.

ANDREW RUSH. Died 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915. Age 19.

JOHN RUTLEDGE. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 33.

HUGH SWEENEY. Killed in action. 27<sup>th</sup> June 1916.

HENRY TAYLOR. Killed in action. 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918. Age 21.

JAMES BAIRD. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 19.

ANDREW BRESLIN. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> November 1914. Age 29.

JOHN DIVER. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> September 1917. Age 26.

CHARLES DONNELLY. Died 7<sup>th</sup> November 1917. Age 31.

SAMUEL ELLISON. Died 17<sup>th</sup> July 1917. Age 42.

JOHN GALLAGHER. Died of wounds. 26<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Age 22.

WILLIAM GALLAGHER. Died 30<sup>th</sup> April 1916. Age 20.

JOHN GILLESPIE. Died 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918. Age 30.

JOHN GOURLEY. Died 24<sup>th</sup> July 1916. Age 21.

WILLIAM HUMFREY. Died 26<sup>th</sup> August 1914. Age 23.

ANDREW LINDSEY. Died 30<sup>th</sup> June or July 1916. Age 20.

WILLIAM MACBETH. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 24.

ANDREW McFARLAND. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 26.

DENIS McGRANAGHAN. Died 26<sup>th</sup> October 1916. Age 30.

ADAM McLUCAS. Died 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1918. Age 34.

WILLIAM MURRAY. Died 20<sup>th</sup> November 1917. Age 30.

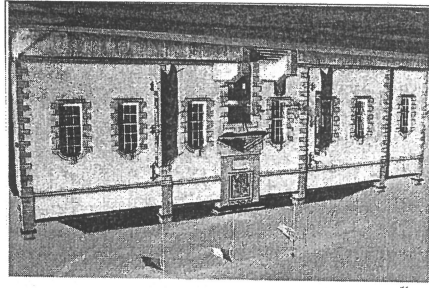
HARRY QUINTON. Killed in action, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 21.

THOMAS ROULSTON. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 33.

JOHN WEIR. Killed in action. 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Age 50.

[Further details of those listed above can be found in the 'Donegal Book of Honour'. We are also looking for any information on those who fought in the First World War and survived. If you know of anyone could you please forward the details to 'The Old Courthouse News', The Diamond, Lifford.]

## THE DIAMOND IN THE DIAMOND



It's amazing the number of old buildings in Donegal that we take for granted. We see them that often in our comings and goings we forget to look at them. In some cases, we don't think of these landmarks at all until they're gone.

The Old Courthouse in Lifford Diamond is a good example of this type of familiarity – a building that seems to have always been there, although it was touch and go a few years ago. Other people, with perhaps a more critical and appreciative eye to the intrinsic architectural significance of our famous buildings take a different perspective on things. Here, for example, are just a few of the descriptions that have been bestowed on the Courthouse over the years:

“One of the oldest and finest courthouses in Ireland”

“One of the finest facades of its date anywhere in Ireland...so richly endowed with elements of a quirky classicism”

“One of the finest buildings in the North”

Let's take a closer look at the history of this 'handsome building'.

First commissioned in 1743, it was built between 1746-1750 under the watchful eye of the Grand Jury and the architect, Michael Priestley. All of this is commemorated in a tablet under the Hanovarian arms of George the Second situated above the front entrance. Written in stone, it states: ' This building was raised by the County of Donegal under the directions of Andrew Knox, Oliver McCausland, George Vaughan, Nathaniel Nesbitt, Francis Mansfield, trustees. Designed and executed by Michael Priestley A.D. 1746 Gilmore Fecit'.

Very little is known about the Court, or Sessions House, as it was also called, during this initial period. We do not know, for example, how much it cost to build although the money, or most of it, would have been raised by a cess or tax levied by the Grand Jury on the county as a whole. (The Grand Jury was not a 'jury' in the legal sense of the word. It was made up of prominent landowners in the area who controlled the administration of the county and was the forerunner of architect...it provides an essential characteristic of the work of the facade many of the elements so and because "it embodies in one know for certain is Priestley's work the only building in Ireland we Courthouse plays a crucial role. It is undeniable and it is here that the impact on the Lifford area, however, places of his birth and death. His don't even know the dates and and artistic personality". Yet we stands out with an identifiable style regarded as the "one figure who practice". For the period, he is plain man, no great drawer of estimates, his skill lies mainly in his area, Mick Priestley remains a bit of a mystery. One of the trustees, Nathaniel Nesbitt, thought him "a history of Lifford and surrounding Despite his contribution to the payment being paid in March, 1755. paid a total of £136,19.6 – the final to wait for his money when he was Mick Priestley of Dublin, also had elsewhere in Lifford. The architect, included a site for a schoolhouse September 1756. This price also instalments, April 1755 and £150 and was paid for in two from the Rev. Thomas Burgoyne for site for the Courthouse was bought Lifford. From these we learn that the now held in the County Archives, Jury Presentments (payments) book gleaned from the original Grand Council).

what we know today as the County

reference which enables us to ascribe to him with confidence, further buildings in the region".

The list of other structures attributed to this man is impressive. In 1774, the nephew of Thomas Connolly, M.P. and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons (1715-1729), is said to have commissioned Priestley to build Lifford House, which became the base for the Grand Jury during the Lifford Assizes. We know it today as the Gateway Hotel. Other famous buildings connected to him include Dunmore House, Carrigans; Prehen House, Co. Derry; Port Hall House, Lifford; Strabane Town Hall; Church of St. John, Clondehorky; Bishop Barnard's Chapel of Ease and Palace, Derry; Strabane canal and new street layout for the Earl of Abercorn; Boom Hall, Co. Derry; and last but not least, a remodeling of the Bishop's Palace, Raphoe. Considering that "in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century there were very few native architects practising in Ireland as a whole, whilst fewer still in the more remote areas", Michael Priestley certainly left his mark in this part of the world. As they say, "the man was busy".

In our next issue, we'll return to the one building we know for certain was Priestley's work and see what was happening inside the Old Courthouse.

(Thanks to Malachy McGarrigle for letting us borrow his dissertation