

Rosanna Duffey, nee Casey/Cazey
(b. circa 1806, d. 1881)

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Rosanna Duffey was born Rosanna Casey (or Cazey) in about 1806. Although a birth record for her in 1806 or thereabouts cannot be found, there are hints that she was not born in Ripon as was stated in the 1881 census but was born outside Yorkshire as noted in the 1841 census (1) (2). We do know that she was a Roman Catholic and, given her surname, may have been of Irish descent. There were a number of families in Knaresborough at the time named Casey or Cazey, connected to weaving, many of whom were born in Ireland but a connection cannot be established.

The first official record found for Rosanna Casey is that of her marriage to Robert Calder, on 8 July 1822 in Ripon Cathedral (3). Both parties were stated, perhaps somewhat inaccurately, to be 18 years of age. Robert Calder was a labourer who was able to sign his name on the register whereas Rosanna signed with a cross. Two years later, a daughter Margaret was born in Leeds according to the 1851 census, although again a birth record cannot be traced (4).

Marriage to Robert Calder was to prove an unlucky choice for Rosanna. By the time they married, he had already had a brush with the law: he had been accused of theft and summoned to appear in court at Ayr with four other men one of whom was his brother Joseph. The record held in the Scotland Court and Criminal Database states that he was the son of Hamilton Calder, a weaver, and was born in 1805 (5). On 1 September 1821 both he and his brother Joseph failed to appear in court and as a consequence both were outlawed (6). The other men were released since the case against them could not be proven. In Scottish law, civil outlawry, defined as defying the laws of the realm such as ignoring a summons to appear in court, prevailed until the 1950s. A person declared outlaw was debarred from all civilized society: no one could give him food, shelter or any support. Small wonder then if Robert and Joseph Calder chose to run away to England and try to make their way there.

More convictions were to follow. On 12 January 1826, Robert Calder, a hawker, was tried at Northallerton and convicted of a felony, namely, '*larceny from a person*' (*stealing plate and wearing apparel*) in Doncaster. The sentence was 7 years transportation, consequently, on 26 January, he was admitted to Millbank National Penitentiary in Pimlico, London (7). Millbank Prison had opened in 1816 as the National Penitentiary for convicts sentenced to terms of imprisonment or for those sentenced to transportation but who had their sentences commuted to terms of imprisonment of 5 to 10 years because they seemed promising material for reform. The prison had been founded on humane and rational principles according to which prisoners were separated into classes, were compelled to work and were to have their religious and moral habits properly attended to. Robert Calder's sentence was for five years but he was granted a free pardon on 28 October 1829 with several other prisoners on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Superintending Committee of the General Penitentiary on the grounds that the prisoners were well behaved, and either had friends to receive them or an occupation (8).

However, this term of imprisonment did not seem to have the hoped-for long lasting redeeming effect on Robert Calder. Having made his way back to Ripon and presumably to his family, he was once again arrested with another man on 15 July 1830 and, given his previous conviction, sentenced to 14 years transportation at the Yorkshire Summer Assizes. This offence was also more serious as it involved burglary: breaking and entering the premises of Thomas Sweeting, a tailor in Ripon and stealing cloth. Three weeks after his trial, he was held in York Castle and then sent to the prison hulk 'Retribution' at Sheerness until arrangements could be made to transport him to New South Wales (9). He was put aboard the convict ship *York* on 27 August 1830 and arrived in Sidney on 7 February 1831 after nearly 6 months at sea (10). There he was bound by indenture to serve his sentence in the employment of Mrs Wather at Parramatta, a farm colony established in 1788 (the second European settlement in Australia) west of Sidney (11). The archive of Convict Bound Indentures for 1831-32 of New South Wales, provides a physical description of Robert Calder as he reached Australia: Age 25, 5ft 7 ¼ inches tall, with a ruddy, fair complexion, light brown hair and hazel eyes. It was noted also that he could read and write, was married with one child, and by trade a groom, pot boy and hawker. His native place was listed as Renfrew, Scotland (12).

That very same year, 1831, by some means which he later refused to disclose, he managed to escape and to find a vessel by which to return to England. According to Rosanna, he made contact with her asking her to join him in Carlisle with the intention that they should make their way to Scotland, to his father's at Paisley (13). Unfortunately they made it no further than the vicinity of Jedburgh when Robert was apprehended and sent back to Ripon. In August 1833, he was held in the House of Correction at Ripon charged with: '*being unlawfully at large before the expiration of the sentence of transportation passed upon him in July 1830*'. Robert Calder pleaded guilty to this at his trial at the Yorkshire Spring Assizes on 22 March 1834 (14). The presiding judge stated that '*his was a capital offense and he would not recommend him to the mercy of the Crown unless he were transported for life*'. Accordingly he was sentenced to death on 22 March 1834 (16).

However, Rosanna, who seems to have remained exceptionally loyal to her husband, intervened on his behalf. In January 1834 the '*Humble Petition of Rosannah Calder, the wife of Robert Calder, late of Ripon, weaver, but now a prisoner in York Castle*' was forwarded by John Cartman the Coroner for Ripon to Lord Melbourne, the Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department. The petition was undersigned by 77 residents of Ripon to support her case. She stated that her husband held a respectable occupation as a weaver (rather than as a hawker as stated at his trial or a groom, post boy and hawker noted on his prison record). Her appeal for leniency rested on the argument that her husband had been falsely accused by his partner in crime who had turned King's Evidence and was himself a man of proven bad character with a lengthy criminal record. She also claimed that she and her nine year old daughter were living in very reduced circumstances with her indigent parents and that she attempted to support herself and family by '*making and selling about Ripon and neighbouring villages ladies' caps, laces and other ornaments*' (13). On 21 April 1834, Robert Calder's sentence was officially commuted to '*transportation beyond the seas for the term of his natural life*' (15).

A final glimpse into Robert Calder's fate comes from his Conduct Record in the Tasmanian archives. He was transported for the second time, leaving from Cork on the Lady Kennaway on 13 February 1835. His gaol report states that his conduct was bad in every respect but orderly when detained on the hulk ship. On arrival he was ordered by the Secretary of State to be worked in the second class chain gang (July 1836). There are several entries noting misbehaviour - mostly being absent from barracks after hours - with punishments increasing in severity: consigned to barracks 1 month, hard labour 3 months, and the final one dated 17 April 1837 records that he was '*out after hours, drunk and disorderly*' and sentenced to the treadmill for 6 days (16). It is not known what happened to him after that date.

When Robert left Yorkshire in 1834 to embark on his life sentence Rosanna could have had no expectation of ever seeing him again. Although technically if she remarried she would be committing bigamy, the practice was not uncommon in Victorian England at a time when divorce was nigh impossible especially for working class individuals. Common law ruled that a person could be presumed dead if they had not been heard of for 7 years and an act of 1822 allowed men and women to remarry if they signed an affidavit that their spouse had died or had been absent for seven years. It therefore is no surprise that on 2 June 1836 Rosanna Calder married by banns one John Duffey in Ripon Cathedral (17). Her daughter Margaret would have been about 12 years old at the time.

This record however provides no additional information about the two parties and is the only document that could be traced that lists them both together. Curiously, both Rosanna and her daughter Margaret appear in the 1841 census for Ripon – but under the name of Calder. They are living in Stammergate in the household of Gordon Leeming, a wheelwright. The whereabouts of John Duffey are not known (2). The following year, Margaret, whose occupation is noted as a servant, married Edward Wood, a hawker, in Ripon Cathedral. Both parties were aged 18 (18). The witnesses to the marriage were Edward's father, also a hawker, and James Benns, a near neighbour of Rosanna and Margaret in Stammergate in 1841. Although Edward was married under the name Wood, in fact the family name was Tetley. Various members of Edward's family, including himself and his father William, used both surnames at different points in their lives.

It is interesting to note that, Rosanna herself, her husband Robert, her daughter's husband, his brothers and her father in law were all hawkers – in other words, they travelled about selling 'small wares' such as handicrafts, inexpensive haberdashery such as ribbons, braid and buttons, needles etc... , or food such as pies. Edward Tetley Wood and Margaret were dealers in pots, as was Edward's brother Crispin whereas their brother John was a horse trader. Their father William by 1851 was a rag and bone merchant in Thirsk. He and his son Crispin found themselves in trouble with the law on several occasions (which may explain the changes in names) and William, was sentenced to seven years in prison for larceny in 1863. By 1871, he was a widower and was an inmate in the Ripon Workhouse (22). He died in 1874.

Rosanna may well have earned a living from hawking for most of her working life for on the 1881 census she is listed as 'formerly hawker, small ware'.

Henry Mayhew, a social commentator writing in the late 1850s, estimated that in the years 1849-1851 there were anything from 30 to 40,000 pedlars and hawkers in London alone (23). Some hawkers were licenced but many were not.. Some were born to the occupation following in the footsteps of other members of the family, for others it might be a last resort -, but for all it was a physically demanding and precarious living with long hours. It was also an occupation that demanded much travelling to find new markets and new outlets for the goods they had for sale. The different birth places of the children of Margaret and Edward Wood illustrate this very clearly. In the early years of their marriage they remained in Ripon where their first child Sarah Ann was born in 1843. John was born in 1845 in Kingston upon Hull, followed by Robert in Rawcliffe in 1848. By the time of the 1851 census, Margaret and her children are to be found in Thorne, (Leeds) where she is employed as a dealer in pots (4). Her daughter Emma was born in 1852 in Hunslet and Louisa in 1855 in Selby. However, both Margaret and Emma died in 1859 within a few weeks of each other (21). Margaret, aged 34, was buried in Knottingley (22).

Unfortunately it has not so far, proved possible to determine what happened to John Duffey after his marriage to Rosanna, nor what happened to Rosanna in the 35 years between the 1841 census and her admittance to the Ripon Workhouse as a widow. They do not seem to have settled anywhere that can be identified through the census records, but that could be explained by the itinerant lifestyle that their occupation required. Additionally the lack of precise information about birthplaces or family added to the frequency of the name Duffy (with various spellings) in the population of Irish origin makes it impossible to link any of references in the records with the John Duffy who married Rosanna. In fact, there are references in the criminal records for both individuals named Rosanna or John Duffey/Duffy but none that can be linked with certainty to the couple discussed here.

We do know however, that Rosanna (Rossannah) Duffey spent the last five years of her life in the Ripon Workhouse, having been admitted on 26 October 1876 (23). She died a twice-married widow, a few months after the census of 1881 at the age of 75, on 27 August (24).

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