



## *RMS Leinster Log*

*August 2017*

*Published by [www.rmsleinster.com](http://www.rmsleinster.com)*

Welcome to the August 2017 bulletin which is being sent to those who have asked to be kept informed of plans for the centenary of the sinking of RMS Leinster in October 1918.

### **Profiles of the rmsleinster.com team**

We thought you might be interested to know a bit about the team behind the rmsleinster.com website.

#### **Will Lockhart**

Will is from Ottawa, Canada. He began researching his ancestry at a young age and heard a tale of an ancestor, Frank Higgerty, who had been "torpedoed in Ireland". In 1996 the only mention of the *R.M.S. Leinster* on the internet was on a wreck diving website. It provided the wreck's depth, coordinates and suggested it may have been torpedoed. Determined to learn more, Will went to Ireland that year, at the ripe age of 22, arriving by ferry from Holyhead. He learned more details through meeting with two historians employed by Irish Ferries and visits to the newspaper offices. On the 10th October 1996 Will was able to see the RMS Leinster's anchor near the National Maritime Museum of Ireland. In the years following Will was surprised by the lack of knowledge about the RMS Leinster's sinking among the Irish. He met many Irish people whilst travelling but none that had heard of the sinking. This did not make sense to him and after connecting online with Philip Lecane he was able to contribute to ensuring the story was not forgotten through the creation and maintenance of the website [rmsleinster.com](http://rmsleinster.com). Will is planning to return to Ireland for the 100th anniversary of the sinking.

## **Philip Lecane**

Philip moved to Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin (known as Kingstown at the time of the *R.M.S. Leinster* sinking) in 1984. He first became aware of the sinking when a number of references were made to it at local history society meetings. Surprised that so little was known about the event, he was drawn to research the story. In 2005, his book *Torpedoed! The RMS Leinster Disaster* was published. In 2003 and 2008 he chaired committees which planned very successful *R.M.S. Leinster* commemorative events. He worked with Canadian Will Lockhart to create the website [www.rmsleinster.com](http://www.rmsleinster.com). In 2015, his book *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli* was published. Shortly after retiring in 2016, he became a volunteer in the Library Service of Ireland's National Maritime Museum, working with Librarian Brian Ellis.

## **Brian Ellis**

Brian has lived in Dun Laoghaire for most of his life. His maternal ancestor, his great grandfather, John Rowlands, was born in Holyhead and was an officer with the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company (CDSPCo.). John Rowlands' nephew, Hugh Rowlands, was a Ticket Clerk with the CDSPCo. and was lost in the sinking of the *R.M.S. Leinster*. A combination of family connections and an interest in family history encouraged Brian to continue research into the crew and passengers who were on the *R.M.S. Leinster* on 10th October 1918. This includes updating the list of those involved, tracing relatives and researching burial records for those who died in the sinking. Brian is the Librarian in the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire.

## **An exciting discovery**

We have made contact with the rural area in Florida from where Perry Taylor, an American casualty of the *RMS Leinster* sinking came. This led to our being given photos of Perry and information on his family. But the most exciting acquisition, is an account by a friend of Perry's of their training and subsequent posting to Ireland during the First World War. The account explains why Perry was travelling on the *RMS Leinster* at the time he met his death. His body was recovered and returned home. We have been given a photograph of his grave. With background information provided by us, a memorial service will be held at Perry Taylor's grave on 10 October 2018, on the centenary of his death. An article on Perry Taylor will be published in an Irish history magazine. Information on this will be given in a future edition of this bulletin.

As you will appreciate, the people who were on the *RMS Leinster* on that day in October were there for a variety of reasons. The stories behind their journey help to give us a sense of how this voyage started for most on board as a routine trip with unforeseen consequences. If you have any particular stories which you think might be of interest please let us know and we may include them in future bulletins or talks.

## **Relatives**

Over 100 people, from Ireland, UK, Canada, U.S.A. and Australia, have so far asked for our bulletins to be emailed to them. With their mutual consent, we have shared email addresses with relatives of the same person. If you know of someone who might like to be included on the circulation list, ask them to send us an email with their contact details.

## **Burial sites**

Of the approx. 550 casualties of the sinking, we have, to date, identified burial locations for about 270 of those whose bodies were recovered. We are currently collecting details of these locations and, where possible, photos of the grave. We would appreciate any burial details or photos which relatives may have. It is intended that we will be able to make as much information available as possible for relatives who may wish to visit these locations. We will also be able to send these details to relatives who may not be able to travel for the Centenary next year.

## **Talks on the sinking of the RMS Leinster**

In the lead up to the centenary, Philip Lecane will give talks to local history and other interested groups, in order to raise awareness of the sinking. As we go to press, talks have been arranged for County Dublin and County Clare in March 2018. They will focus on local casualties from the area in which the talks are given.

## **RMS: A Very Important Prefix**

In 1838, with Liverpool linked by rail to London, the British Post Office decided that all mail to and from Ireland would pass through the port of Liverpool. The City of Dublin Steam Packet Company (CDSPCo) secured the contract to operate the night mail service to Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), thus beginning an association with the County Dublin port and the Post Office which was to last for over eighty years. As the century approached the halfway mark, Holyhead, the port that provided the shortest sea route to Ireland, was linked by rail to London. The CDSPCo secured the contract to operate the day and night services to Kingstown. Ships carrying the Royal Mail were designated *Royal Mail Ship/Steamer*, usually abbreviated to *RMS*. In carrying this prefix, the *RMS Leinster* is linked to other famous ships of maritime history such as the *RMS Titanic* and the *RMS Lusitania*.

## **Update on plans for the centenary**

As well as plans to mark the actual centenary of the sinking on Wednesday 10 October 2018, Ireland's National Maritime Museum is working on plans for a publication, an exhibition and a seminar. We will keep you informed on developments regarding these and other matters which are still at the discussion stage.

## **Can you help promote remembrance of those who were on the RMS Leinster?**

- Do you have photographs of relatives who were on the *RMS Leinster*? If you haven't previously sent them to us, the team at rmsleinster.com would be very grateful for copies of such photographs for inclusion in a centenary publication and/or an exhibition. Don't delay. Now is an opportunity to ensure that your *RMS Leinster* relative is remembered.
- Do you have any skills which you might make available to help promote the centenary of the *RMS Leinster* sinking? Or do you know of anyone who has such skills and would be willing to make them available? Relevant skills could include graphic design skills, ability to work with digital images, editing skills etc. etc. Do any of you speak German? or know someone who does and would be willing to help on centenary work. Under the guidance of the rmsleinster.com team, the work would involve carrying out an internet search to find out more information on the crew of UB-123. If you have the ability to give talks to local groups in your area (history societies, active retirement groups etc.), the team at rmsleinster.com would be willing to provide you with a prepared talk on the sinking of the *RMS Leinster*. Are there any publications in your area that you think might be willing an item to mark the

centenary of the sinking (perhaps using your relative as a focal point for the story)? If so, please let us know and we can discuss with you how you and we could get such an article published.

Remembering all those who sailed on the final voyage of the *RMS Leinster*,

Philip, Will and Brian

The RMSLeinster.com Team

August 2017

*We are sending this email as you asked to be kept informed. If you no longer wish to be contacted by email, please send us an email to that effect with "unsubscribe" in the subject line.*