



RMS Leinster Log

December 2017

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Welcome to the December 2017 bulletin which is being sent to those who have asked to be kept informed of plans to mark the centenary of the sinking of the RMS *Leinster* in October 1918. This Bulletin is currently being sent by email to 160 people.

Outreach

The Federation of Local History Societies is the umbrella organisation for history societies in the Republic of Ireland. Its end of year 2017 Journal has a ten-and-a-half-page article detailing the RMS *Leinster* sinking, informing the Societies of centenary plans and offering to support them in holding exhibitions/commemorative events to commemorate casualties from their area.

Events

Plans for an RMS *Leinster* exhibition in Ireland's National Maritime Museum are progressing.

The crew of the RMS *Leinster* was drawn from the towns of Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire (Kingstown). In recognition of this, a performance by the Dublin Welsh Male Voice Choir is planned for Monday evening 8th October 2018. It is hoped that they will be also be joined by a Welsh Male Voice choir from Anglesey for a joint performance in the Mariners Church in Dun Laoghaire, home of Ireland's National Maritime Museum.

There will be a lecture/seminar in the National Maritime Museum on Tuesday 9th October with commemorative events being held on Wednesday, 10th October, the day of the sinking.

Discussions on the possibility of holding commemorative events, in the days following the centenary, are taking place with the custodians of a number of graveyards and cemeteries in the Dublin area where RMS Leinster casualties are buried. Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin has agreed to hold an exhibition and commemorative talk. We will keep you informed of progress on this, on discussions with the custodians of other cemeteries/graveyards and on plans for other events as these are developed.

Research

Research into the people who were on board the RMS *Leinster* on 10th October 1918 is continuing. With the increasing availability of resources, it is possible to track down and study information in documents, publications etc. to an extent which would not previously have been possible.

At the time of the publication of Philip Lecane's book "Torpedoed! The R.M.S. Leinster Disaster" (2005), research showed that the casualty figures published by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company (CDSPCo), were understated. While the figures published in 1918 were 501 casualties (out of a total of 771 on board), research for the book showed a total number of 532 casualties (out of 778 on board). While research is still ongoing, it currently shows that there were 567 casualties out of 806 on board.

As a result of this research it is also possible to learn more about the people who were involved, including their families, their background and why they were on the RMS Leinster on that fateful voyage.

The discrepancy between the 1918 published figures and the latest research is perfectly understandable when one considers the confusion that would have arisen due to the lack of a passenger list. Because of this, the CDSPCo could only give its best estimate of both the casualty rate and the total numbers aboard the ship. Only in respect of the numbers of crew and postal sorters could definite numbers be given.

Research is ongoing, and it is intended that, to mark the centenary, there will be an interactive display in the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire to provide information for relatives, and other visitors, about the people on board. We are grateful to the relatives who have provided us with information to assist with our research. Regardless of the overall numbers we can only understand this tragedy on a human scale by learning about the individuals involved. We are striving to provide as much information as possible to their descendants and relations throughout the world.

Casualties

It is estimated that the bodies of only half of the casualties were recovered, with most of these bodies being interred in Ireland. A total of 149 bodies were interred in the Military cemetery at Grangegorman in Dublin, with almost 100 casualties being buried elsewhere in Ireland.

Many of the relatives visiting Ireland next October will understandably wish to visit the grave of their relative(s) lost in the sinking. In most cases we will be able to supply burial locations and details.

Did you have a female relative or a child relative on the RMS *Leinster*?

Philip Lecane is working on a project focusing on the women and children casualties and survivors of the sinking. (For the purpose of the project, he is using the United Nations definition of childhood i.e. anyone younger than 18). If you haven't previously been in contact, he would very much like to hear from relatives of female and child passengers. He would be particularly grateful for photographs of female and child passengers. You can email Philip at info@rmsleinster.com

This is the final Bulletin for 2017 and the RMS *Leinster* Team would like to convey their Best Wishes for Christmas to all those receiving this Bulletin. We remember all those on board the RMS *Leinster* for whom Christmas 1917 was their last Christmas. By Christmas 1918 the lives of so many families had been changed for ever by the sinking on 10th October.

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

Brian, Philip and Will

The RMSLeinster.com Team