

## *RMS Leinster Log*

*September 2019*

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Welcome to the September 2019 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 over 200 people.

**Thanks to you, we remembered them**

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## LOOKING BACK

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since the centenary of the *RMS Leinster* was commemorated. At this point it may be helpful to look at what was achieved in 2018. Having previously been publicly commemorated, in 2003 and 2008, by a local committee called *Friends of the Leinster*, the centenary commemoration received the support and recognition of the Irish Government in an impressive public commemoration, on the morning of the centenary, proceeded by an Ecumenical Service in St. Michael's Church, Dún Laoghaire.

An accompanying Official Booklet covering the extensive programme was issued by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in conjunction with:

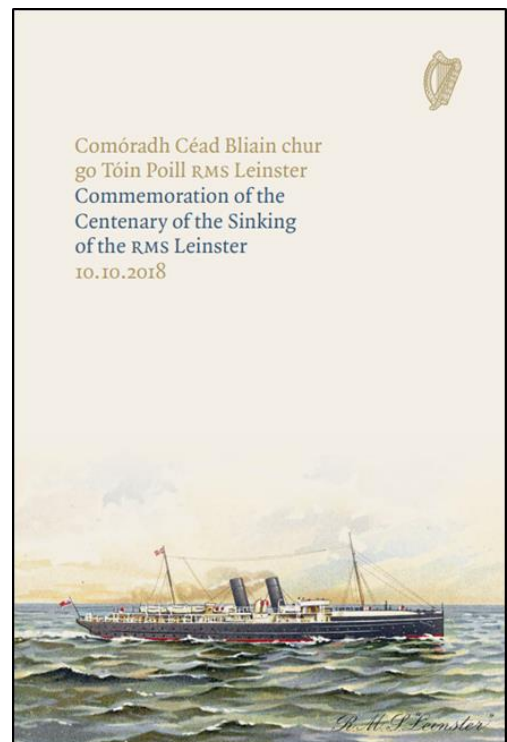
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

National Maritime Museum of Ireland

Mail Boat "Leinster" Centenary Committee

The R.M.S. Leinster Centenary was included in the National "Decade Of Centenaries" and a official booklet was issued prior to the Centenary: This booklet can now be downloaded through the following link:

<https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/10-october-2018-official-centenary-commemoration-of-the-sinking-of-the-rms-leinster-dun-laoghaire/>



The centenary was also marked by an exhibition and a weeklong programme at Ireland's National Maritime Museum in Dún Laoghaire, including a joint performance by the Dublin and Anglesey Welsh Male Voice Choirs and a day-long seminar. The National Maritime Museum's exhibition included display boards, artifacts, a 120 year-old model of the *RMS Leinster* and an interactive touchscreen display containing available information on everyone known to have been aboard the *RMS Leinster*. We are grateful to the National Maritime Museum in Dún Laoghaire for making the touchscreens available for this display. Numerous visitors to the Museum - many from abroad - were delighted to see their relatives permanently remembered on the touchscreen, and we were pleased to get further information from relatives.

An amateur radio station, using a specially allocated call sign (EI 100 MCV), was operated from the Maritime Museum for the commemoration and received worldwide participation.

The centenary was also marked by an exhibition in the Office of Public Works (OPW) Interpretive Centre in the Phoenix Park. Illustrated story panels there told the stories of 12 people who were lost on the *RMS Leinster*. The



OPW held a very moving commemorative service in Grangegorman Military Cemetery remembering the 144 casualties of the sinking who are buried there.

The night of the centenary was marked by a stage production at the Pavilion Theatre, Dún Laoghaire. Funded by *An Post* (the Irish Post Office), it was based on Philip

Lecane's book *Torpedoed! The RMS Leinster Disaster*. *An Post* also marked the centenary with a special commemorative stamp and the holding of a minute's silence in every Post Office in the country to remember the 21 Postal Sorters who were lost in the sinking.

During the centenary a local group *The Mail Boat Leinster Centenary Committee* held a number of events in Dún Laoghaire, including a boat trip to the site of the *RMS Leinster* wreck, and a Centenary Concert in Christ Church, Dún Laoghaire.

A special requiem Service of Remembrance was held in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

The centenary was marked by a number of publications.

Carmel Uí Cheallaigh's *RMS Leinster: The Forgotten Tragedy* is the first ever children's book on the sinking.

Stephen Ferguson of *An Post's* book *Sorting Letters on the Sea* tells the story of the Postal Sorters who worked aboard the ships which carried the mail across the Irish Sea. Philip Lecane's *Women and Children of the RMS Leinster: Restored to History* takes an in-depth look at every woman and child who were aboard the ship.

As in 2003 and 2008, the town of Holyhead held a major commemorative event to remember all those who were lost on the *RMS Leinster*, with a particular focus of Holyhead casualties of the sinking. The Holyhead Maritime Museum held an exhibition on the sinking and created the blog [rmsleinster100.com](http://rmsleinster100.com) to keep people informed of plans to mark the centenary.

In Ireland, the centenary was also marked by commemorative events in a number of venues, including Longford, Ennis and Tulla, County Clare, Ardcath, County Meath and Courtmacsherry & Barryroe, County Cork. Commemorative events were also held overseas including the Isle of Man, Nottingham, Warrington, Southampton and Geneva, Florida.

### ***We Remembered Them.***

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## **RESEARCH CONTINUES**

As you are probably now aware we have assembled a significant amount of information about those on board the *RMS Leinster*. To date we have entries for each of the **811** on board including extra detail for over 500 of them. ***Recently we found information about another casualty, George Walker Cochran of Birkenhead, in a local newspaper, and will be adding details to the website shortly.***

### **Researching the Military**

There were 509 members of the British and Allied military on board *RMS Leinster*, and 360 of them did not survive. Their presence was somewhat downplayed, both by the authorities in 1918 and in the recent commemorations.

Why were there so many military personnel crossing the Irish Sea in October 1918? Most of those that I have so far researched were in Reserve Battalions that had moved to Ireland, mostly from early 1918, and were therefore returning home on leave. The

others were Irish born returning to the UK or the Front after leave at home. Only those from the U.S., Australia, New Zealand or Canada had been in Ireland for R&R, and some of those were visiting relatives of their families that had emigrated.

One of the depressing facts coming up time and time again is the young age of the soldiers, many of them under twenty-one. An English newspaper report that I found relating to one of the victims described an employer appealing against the conscription of one of his workers in 1917. He complained that his business was suffering because of the lack of staff; he was bluntly told by the authorities, "We need these young men".

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission <https://www.cwgc.org/> provides the basic details of military personnel who died in the war. The website 'The Long Long Trail' <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/> gives concise details of every regiment in the British army. The War Memorials that were erected in the 1920s around the UK often listed the local men who had died. Many of these have now been transcribed and put online, some with personal details that have been researched by local historians. So far I have found the equivalent in Ireland for Clare, Waterford and Ballina and there may be many more.

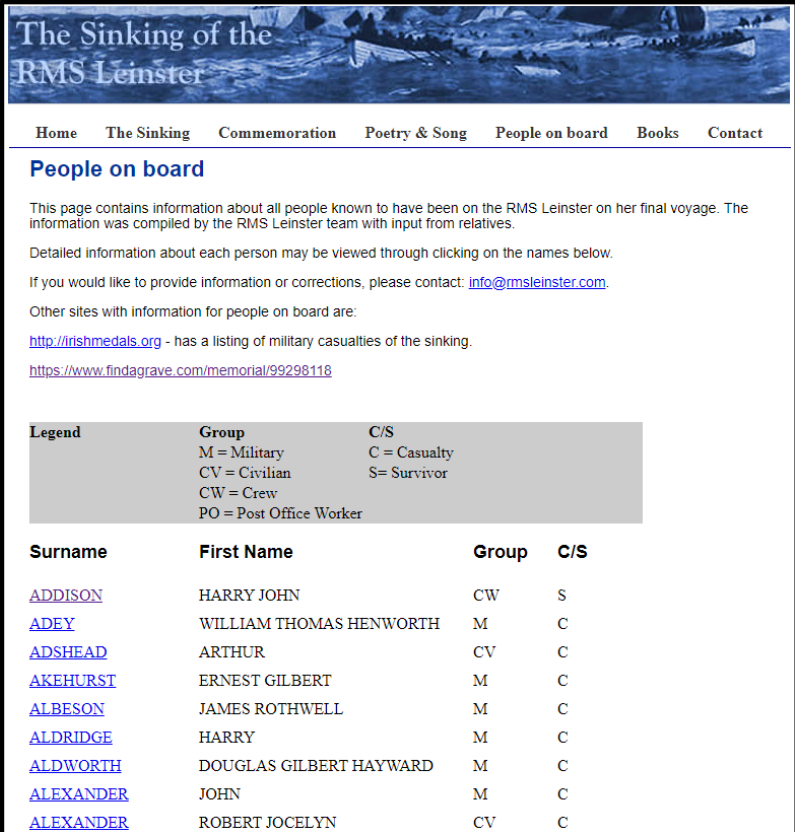
The research is continuing and we welcome any additions or amendments to the information which we have gathered. For the last year this information, regularly updated, has been available on the interactive touchscreen display in the Maritime Museum and has been viewed by friends and relatives and, indeed, by many who were not aware of the *RMS Leinster* story. In the course of our research, and through this Bulletin, we have come to appreciate how worldwide the connection is to those on the *RMS Leinster*.



To ensure that this research is as widely available as possible we have now made the information about all those on board available on our Website ([www.rmsleinster.com](http://www.rmsleinster.com)).

Thanks to our Webmaster, Will Lockhart, this information can now be accessed under the “People on Board” section of the Website. Research is continuing and the information will be regularly updated.

Lucille Ellis



Surname	First Name	Group	C/S
<a href="#">ADDISON</a>	HARRY JOHN	CW	S
<a href="#">ADEY</a>	WILLIAM THOMAS HENWORTH	M	C
<a href="#">ADSHEAD</a>	ARTHUR	CV	C
<a href="#">AKEHURST</a>	ERNEST GILBERT	M	C
<a href="#">ALBESON</a>	JAMES ROTHWELL	M	C
<a href="#">ALDRIDGE</a>	HARRY	M	C
<a href="#">ALDWORTH</a>	DOUGLAS GILBERT HAYWARD	M	C
<a href="#">ALEXANDER</a>	JOHN	M	C
<a href="#">ALEXANDER</a>	ROBERT JOCELYN	CV	C

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## A WORD FROM OUR WEBMASTER

Being a part of the R.M.S. Leinster team over the last years has led to my learning so much more about the events around the sinking and all those affected. The unstoppable dedication, expertise and time put in researching individuals on board, on the part of Philip, Brian and Lucille, is impressive. The team receives regular communication and personal stories from relatives around the world and it really gives an appreciation of how the tragedy impacted so many families. My role is on the technical side and involves managing the rmsleinster.com website. This summer, it was a great accomplishment to publish a webpage for each person known to have been onboard. While some pages have just basic information about the person, others

include photos, longer stories of their lives and families, the circumstances that brought them onboard, and the impact the event had on those left behind. A master list in alphabetical order identifies the person, whether they were military, crew, postal sorter or civilian, and provides a link to their individual page. Putting this together put into perspective just how many people were onboard. It's one thing to say "over 500 lives were lost" (interestingly this number has now grown to 567 with recent research) but creating hundreds of html files, typing each person's name out, linking pages and scrolling the long list over and over gave me a new appreciation of the immensity of this tragedy and the impact it had on so many people.

I'm pleased to be involved in the effort to ensure that the extensive research done is

widely available to those interested, wherever they may be and for years to come.

Will Lockhart, Ottawa, Canada

*(Will's great grand-uncle, Frank Higgerty died in the sinking)*



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## FORMATION OF POSTAL SORTERS RELATIVES GROUP

As was announced in a previous bulletin, Postal Sorter Relative Joan Sugrue has formed a Postal Sorter Relatives Group. Dublin based representatives of the group will shortly meet with an official of *An Post* for a discussion about the aims of the group. If you are the relative of an *RMS Leinster* Postal Sorter, and are not yet on Joan's email list, but would like to be, please contact Joan at [joanlouisesugrue@gmail.com](mailto:joanlouisesugrue@gmail.com)

If a relative of one of the ship's crew would be interested in forming a Crew Relatives Group, we on the *RMS Leinster Team* would be very happy to provide ongoing advice and support to the group. The work of such a group would consist of putting relatives of crew members in contact with each other to share information about crew members.

Other groups could also be formed e.g. Relatives of Australians/New Zealanders/Canadians/Americans/Welsh/Scottish people who were on the ship. Any volunteers?

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## MARKING THE 101<sup>st</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Thursday 10 October will be the 101st anniversary of the sinking of the *RMS Leinster*. Most of those receiving this email bulletin live far from Dún Laoghaire, and families and relatives of those who were aboard the ship (casualties and survivors) may wish to hold their own local commemoration. We on the *RMS Leinster Team* would be pleased to assist with information and delighted to hear about how you

commemorated those on board. If you wish we can include a record of your local commemoration in future bulletins.

On Thursday 10 October 2019, the local members of the *RMS Leinster Team* will gather



at the recovered *RMS Leinster* anchor on Dún Laoghaire's seafront to mark the 101st anniversary. (Will Lockhart, who lives in Canada, will be with us in spirit). We hope to be joined by some of our friends from Holyhead

Maritime Museum, local relatives and friends of those on the *RMS Leinster* as well as volunteers and staff from the National Maritime Museum. We plan to locally advertise the gathering and would love to see those of you who might be in a position to attend. This short service will begin at 9.50 am, with people gathering from about 9.30 am. If you need any further information nearer the time, please contact us at [info@rmsleinster.com](mailto:info@rmsleinster.com)

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**Keeping the Memory Alive**

***The RMS Leinster Team***

***Philip Lecane***

***Will Lockhart***

***Brian Ellis***

***Lucille Ellis***

For information on our privacy policy under Data Protection Regulations see link below:

<http://www.rmsleinster.com/privacy.htm>

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

You can contact us at [info@rmsleinster.com](mailto:info@rmsleinster.com)