

Some *RMS Leinster* Passengers of Particular Interest to Church of Ireland Readers

by Philip Lecane (historian and author of *Torpedoed!: The RMS Leinster Disaster (2005)*).

Barlow

Elizabeth Emma Barlow, Mostyn, Cheshire, England. (Emily E Barlow per contemporary newspapers.) Elizabeth Emma Barlow was born in Riverstown, County Sligo on 23 January 1876, the youngest daughter of Margaret (née Hunter) and John David Barlow, Merchant. At the time of the 1901 census, she was 24, of the Irish Church (Church of Ireland) and employed by Isabel Mary and Harry Stewart J.P. and Captain in the Donegal Militia, in Ramelton, County Donegal. At the time of the 1911 census she was employed by the family of Sir Richard Wingfield Verner 5th Baronet, in Rathmichael, County Dublin. She gave her age as 32. She was buried on 14 October 1918 in Deansgrange Cemetery South West Row O1, 91. Headstone: “*Emily E. Barlow, lost on the Leinster 10/10/1918.*” Burial register 30356.

Blackburne

Four members of the Blackburne family were aboard the *RMS Leinster*: Emily, Charles, Audrey and Peter. Accompanying them was Audrey and Peter’s governess, Rose De Pury.

Emily Beatrice “Bee” Jones was born in Bournemouth on 6 April 1876, the second child of Emily (née Leetham) and the Reverend Henry David Jones. At the time of her birth, her father was attached to St. Michael’s Church, Bournemouth. Her sister Mary Gertrude was born in Aberdeen in 1872 and her brother Robert Leetham in 1878, also in Bournemouth. In 1879, the family moved to St Leonard’s-on-sea, west of Hastings in Sussex, where the Rev. Jones had been appointed Rector of Upper St Leonard’s Church. When Bee was aged three, her mother died in May 1881 at the age of twenty-nine. A stained-glass window was erected in the parish church in her memory. In November 1882, the Rev. Jones married Elizabeth Lucy Kirkpatrick. They subsequently had five children. Presumably Bee was educated at the school which was attached to the parish church. From 1886 to 1890, Bee’s future husband Charles Blackburne was a pupil at the school. As he had moved to the area in infancy, it seems likely that they may have known each other even before he joined the school.

In the 1901 census, Bee, then aged twenty-four, was recorded as being a ‘Law Student at the Temple’. However, she did not complete her studies as, in December of that year, Charles Blackburne returned from South Africa, where he had been fighting in the Boer War, and the two became engaged. Charles went back to South Africa where he took up a post as Manager of a Horse Breeding Department. As this provided him with a salary of £750 a year, he was in a position to support a family. He could not get leave to return to England for a wedding, so Bee and her father travelled out to South Africa. The marriage took place in Durban in February 1903, with Rev. Henry Jones performing the duties of father of the bride and officiating at the

ceremony. Bee's wedding ring was made from a nugget of Klondike gold that Charles had dug up in Canada years earlier and kept for this purpose.

Charles's job as Manager of the Transvaal Horse Breeding Department involved much travelling. Initially the couple's home was small and basic, though they later moved to a larger house. Bee looked after the poultry and the garden as well as entertaining frequent visitors. In November 1901 a daughter was born who only lived for eleven days. Life in the Transvaal was not always easy and after a riding accident and an attack of enteric fever, Bee was advised to return to England, which she did in July 1905.

Charles gave up his job in South Africa in early 1906 to take up a position as Manager of White's Carriage Company in Liverpool. The couple's daughter, Beatrice Audrey (known as Audrey) was born there on 24 June 1907. Shortly afterwards the Blackburnes purchased a house and estate of 250 acres, Tydynn, near Mold, in North Wales. Their son, Charles Bertram (known as Peter), was born there 3 September 1911. When war was declared in 1914, Charles immediately re-joined the army. He was very badly wounded in the left shoulder and repatriated to England. Despite several operations, he never regained the use of his arm. He was assigned to staff duties. In April 1916 he was sent to Ireland and stationed at the Curragh in County Kildare. He served on the British side during the Eastern 1916 Rising. It appears that Bee and the children remained in Mold throughout this period until, in January 1918, it was decided that they should join Charles in Ireland. They lived in *Bellville*, in the Phoenix Park, later moving to 21 Hatch Street in Dublin. On 10 October 1918, Charles was travelling to Cambridge to attend a senior staff course in Cambridge.¹ He was accompanied by his family, and the children's governess, Rose De Pury. Of the group, only Bee survived the sinking. The bodies of Audrey and Governess Rose De Pury were never recovered. The bodies of Charles and Peter were recovered and buried in the Officers Burial Ground in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin.

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On 14 October 1918 the Church of Ireland Primate of All Ireland, Dr John Crozier, held a funeral service in the chapel of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin. The choir of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin were in attendance. The hospital cemetery had not been used for many years. It was opened that day by order of the Viceroy, Field-Marshal Sir John French. General Sir Frederick Shaw, the commander of the British army in Ireland, his staff, and many officers and friends were present. Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Harold Blackburne D.S.O. and his son, seven-year-old Charles Bertram (known as Peter), were buried in the officer's burial ground.

The following three items appeared in *The Times* (London).

12 October: "*One gallant man, highly stationed and very popular in Dublin, was last seen swimming with his little child on his back. He and his two children have perished but his wife was saved.*"

¹ He decided to undertake the course to improve his opportunities of securing a permanent army staff post after the war.

15 October: Death notice: *“On the 10th October, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Harold Blackburne D.S.O. 5th Dragoon Guards aged 42, foully murdered by a German submarine on the Irish mail boat Leinster, with his two children. Beatrice Audrey Blackburne aged 11. Charles Bertram aged 7.”*

19 October: Death notice: *“De Pury- On the 10th October Rose De Pury passenger on the Irish mail boat ‘Leinster,’ the beloved governess of Audrey and Peter Blackburne.”*



Watercolour of Audrey and Peter Blackburne



Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Blackburne.

Boucher²

On 26 October 1900, Alfred Henry Boucher was born at Bunbeg, Dunfanaghy, County Donegal to Rachel Louisa (née Maynard) and William Boucher, a member of the coastguard. His parents were English born and he was the second child and only boy among five children.³ His father had been a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy, who later joined the Coast Guard Service. At the time of the 1911 census, the family was living in Malahide, County Dublin. According to *De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour* Alfred was educated at Malahide National School. Having first worked as a *Paper Trade Worker*, he joined the Royal Naval Air Service. During March 1918, he served at *HMS President II*, a shore base which had a number of locations. He was also based at Fort Tregantle, Cornwall and RAF Cranwell. (On 1 April 1918, the Royal Naval Air Service amalgamated with the Royal Flying Corps to become the Royal Air Force.) According to his Commanding Officer, Alfred had “*a painstaking and persevering disposition*” “*was soon to have been selected for a Cadetship, and to be made a flight officer.*”⁴ Presumably he was returning to duty after a period of leave when he was lost on the *RMS Leinster*. The body of Boy

² Lucille Ellis.

³ His sisters were Ida (older), Dorothy, Nella Ella and Mary (all younger).

⁴ *De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour*.

Alfred Henry Boucher, 251890, Royal Air Force was recovered and buried in Malahide (St Andrew) Church of Ireland Churchyard.⁵



Alfred Henry Boucher.

Campbell⁶

Eileen Hester Louisa Knox-Browne was the third child of Louisa Elizabeth (née Knox-Gore, born County Mayo) and Lieutenant-Colonel John Hervey Knox-Browne, (born Dublin City) of Aughentaine Castle, County Tyrone. She was born on 5 November 1876 at Bunclody, County Wexford and was baptised on 15 December in St Mary's Church, Newtownbarry, County Wexford.⁷ Her siblings were Sarah (known as Madeline) (1868), Thomas (27 May 1870), Augusta (29 September 1874) and Mervyn (21 April 1879). Nothing is known of her childhood, but as Augusta and Mervyn were also born in Bunclody, it seems likely that she spent some of her childhood there. In the 1901 census, her occupation – and that of her mother and sisters – was recorded as “*Lady*,” as was the fact that she and her sister Augusta had been born in County Wexford. On 22 March 1911, she married Royal Navy Lieutenant George Richard Colin Campbell in the parish of Clogher, County Tyrone. Her residence at the time was Aughentaine. Her sister Augusta was one of the witnesses to the marriage and the service was conducted by the groom's father. On 23 March 1914, the couple's daughter Eileen Elizabeth Campbell was born at 89 Lower Baggot St., Dublin.

George Richard Colin Campbell was born 9 October 1886 at Ballyeglish, Moneymore, County Londonderry. Known as Colin, his parents were Lydia (née Morris) and Rev. Edward Fitzhardinge Campbell. Educated at Royal School, Dungannon, County Tyrone, he joined the Royal Navy in 1902. His father conducted the service when Colin married Eileen Hester

⁵ According to Commonwealth War Grave Records, his is one of two war graves in the cemetery. The other is that of Sergeant (Navigator) Gordon Edward Manning (20), 1520513, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, who died 8 September 1944. He was the son of Katherine and William Francis Edward Manning of Malahide.

⁶ Lucille Ellis and author.

⁷ CN, <https://www.irelandanglican.org/csmfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/AngRecord/bunclodyunionindex.pdf> and www.thepeerage.com both accessed 21 January 2018. The dates of birth given for Augusta and Mervyn on the latter site are incorrect.

Knox-Browne in 1911. The couple's daughter, Eileen Elizabeth was born in 1914. Assigned to the Admiralty Compass Department, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander in 1916 and rose to become superintendent of the Magnetic Compass Branch. In 1917, with Henry Theodore Augustus Bosanquet, he co-authored *Navigation, Magnetism and Deviation of the Compass*, a manual for use by aeroplane navigators. The following year, with Dt. G.T. Bennett, he invented the Campbell-Bennett Aperiodic Compass, the principle of which was applied to all compasses produced for the RAF.⁸ A contemporary newspaper said that Lieutenant-Commander Colin Campbell had been in Belfast on naval business. It is not known if he had been posted to Belfast or had made a brief visit.⁹ Colin celebrated his 32nd birthday the day before the ship's final voyage.

All three Campbells were lost in the sinking. Eileen Hester's body was found with Eileen Elizabeth's body still tightly clutched in her arms. They were brought to the mortuary of St Michael's Hospital, Kingstown, where they were identified by Colin's father, the Rev. Edward Campbell. Their deaths were recorded on 5 November 1918 in Rathdown (Kingstown) District. The informant was Edward J. Campbell, 4 Vergemont Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin, who arranged for burial. For some unknown reason, Eileen Hester's name was recorded on her death certificate as Ellen.¹⁰ Colin's body was recovered later. All three are buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery: CE. Officers 29, Dublin. Their grave has a beautiful headstone with a sculpted ship's anchor. There appears to be a dual symbolism in this. Firstly, Colin Campbell was a naval officer. Secondly, a slip of paper was recovered from one of his pockets, on which was written "*Cast all our cares to God, by his anchor hold.*"

⁸ CN, A.E. Fanning *Steady as She goes: A history of the Compass Department of the Admiralty*. FG, BMD, www.thepeerage.com www.cookstownwardead.co.uk/personaldepth.asp?cas_id=323 both accessed 21 January 2018.

⁹ There were 25 members of the Royal Navy on board the *Leinster*. Many appear to have been Irish men and women returning from leave. George Richard Colin Campbell was the second highest-ranking member of the Royal Navy on the ship. Sources: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, An unsigned and undated partial list of casualties and survivors and contemporary newspapers.

¹⁰ Her address was given as The Poplars, Langley, Bucks.



Lieutenant-Commander Colin Campbell



The grave of Eileen Hester, Eileen Elizabeth and Colin Campbell

Louisa Frend (67), Boher, Caherconlish, County Limerick. Travelling to visit relatives Eastbourne, she left her County Limerick home on 4 October and stayed with Mrs Wilson, in Rathgar, Dublin. On 8 October, she wrote to her sister Arabella in Chester, saying she intended to cross on 10 October. On the evening of 9 October, she travelled to Kingstown, with Mrs Wilson. After they said goodbye, she went on board the ship, where she had booked berth for night. On 22 November 1918, her sister, Arabella Frend of Chester, was granted an order to presume Louisa's death. Limerick Historian Patrick J. McNamara said he believed Louisa Frend was a sister or cousin of Second Lieutenant John Frend, Royal Artillery, who was killed in France on 17 January 1917. Louisa Frend is commemorated in Abington Church of Ireland, County Limerick.

Hill and Crawford

Letitia Harriett Hill and her brother Lieutenant Sydney Crawford, Royal Dublin Fusiliers were returning from a visit to a seriously ill sister. Their parents came to the boat to see them off. Known as Haddie, Letitia Harriett Crawford was born on 28 April 1882 in Banagher, King's County (now Offaly), to Elizabeth (née McGrath) and William Henry Crawford, Labourer. She has not been found in census records for 1901 or 1911. On 16 June 1915, at St. Bridget's Church, Stillorgan, County Dublin, she married Second Lieutenant Valentine Hill of the Royal Field Artillery. Her address was Stillorgan Cottage, Stillorgan and Brewery Road, Stillorgan, indicating it was on the corner of two roads. Her father's occupation was recorded as Gardener.

The witnesses to the wedding were Sara Crawford and Sydney G. Crawford, sister and brother of the bride. The groom's address was Brewery Road, Stillorgan, His father was John Hill, Gamekeeper.

Sydney George Crawford was born on 25 August 1897, in Tippinstown, Stillorgan, County Dublin. The 1901 census shows the family address as 2 Tippinstown and County Cavan born William Henry Crawford's occupation is given as gardener and domestic servant. Living in the house were William Henry (52), Elizabeth (41), born County Monaghan, Sarah Jane (17), Dressmaker. Elizabeth (13), Scholar, Ernest Harold (6), Sidney George (3). The 1911 census recorded that William and Elizabeth had been born for 29 years and had 6 children, of whom 5 were still living.¹¹ Those in the family home were William Henry (65), Gardener, Elizabeth (53), Elizabeth (23) Shop assistant. Ernest Harold (16), Motor mechanic, Sidney George (13) Scholar. All of the children recorded were born in County Dublin. (Note the variations in spelling in Sydney/Sidney and Sarah/Sara.)

Haddie and Sydney were lost in the sinking. Haddie's body was never recovered. Sydney's body was washed ashore on the west coast of Scotland, almost a month and a half after the sinking, and buried in Kirkbean Parish Churchyard. At the time his details were recorded by the Commonwealth War Grave Commission, a few years after the end of the First World War, the family were living at Carrickbawn, Torquay Road, Foxrock, County Dublin. An entry in the Vestry notes of St. Brigid's Church of Ireland, Stillorgan, County Dublin for 1920 reads "*Mrs Crawford was allowed to erect a Mural Tablet in memory of her son and daughter, both lost by the sinking of H.M.S. (sic) Leinster.*" On the north wall of the church there is an elegant memorial in the form of an open book. It is inscribed: "*In loving memory of Letitia Harriet eldest daughter of Wm. Henry and Elizabeth Crawford of Stillorgan, Co. Dublin and wife of Captain V. Hill, R.F.A., aged 34 years. Also her brother Sydney George Crawford Lieutenant R.D.F. aged 21 years. He was buried in Kirkbean, Kirkcudbright Scotland 22nd November. Both drowned on the RMS Leinster when torpedoed in the Irish Sea 10th October 1918.*"¹²

Sydney joined the South Irish Horse in September 1914, aged seventeen. In January 1915, he was discharged as medically unfit. Two months later, in March 1915, he enlisted in the 7th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles. He served on the Western Front from December 1915, in the Loos and Hulloch sectors. He later fought at the Somme and was present at the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he served through the Battle of Paschendaele with their 11th Battalion. At some point he seems to have been reassigned to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers 3rd Battalion, which was stationed in the Grimsby area. On 9 October 1918, the day before sailing on the *RMS Leinster*, he was promoted to Lieutenant. As he was on leave at the time, it is not known if he would have been aware of the promotion.

¹¹ William, who was born in 1890 and died on 8 September 1892, as buried in Deansgrange Cemetery, County Dublin.

¹² *The Cure of Souls: A History of St. Bridget's Church of Ireland, Stillorgan* by John A. Ingram.



Sydney Crawford



**IN LOVING MEMORY
OF**

LETITIA HARRIET

**ELDEST DAUGHTER OF W^M HENRY
AND ELIZABETH CRAWFORD
OF STILLORGAN, CO. DUBLIN,
AND WIFE OF
CAPTAIN V. HILL, R.F.A.
AGED 34 YEARS.**

*BOTH DROWNED ON THE
TORPEDOED IN THE IRISH
"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH!"*



ALSO

**HER BROTHER
SYDNEY GEORGE CRAWFORD
LIEUT. R.D.F.**

**AGED 21 YEARS,
HE WAS BURIED AT
KIRKBEAN, KIRKCUDBRIGHT,
SCOTLAND,
22ND NOVEMBER.**

*R. M. S. LEINSTER WHEN
SEA, 10TH OCTOBER 1918.*

"DUTY WELL DONE."

Hobson¹³

Elizabeth “Lily” Hobson was aboard the *RMS Leinster* with her brother Nathaniel and nephew Richard.

*

On 15 April 1882, Elizabeth “Lily” Margaret Hobson was born in Drogheda, County Louth, the youngest of four children of Elizabeth (née Fennell) and Abraham Hobson, an accountant. An elder sibling, Nathaniel had died in 1878, aged four months. Elizabeth’s sister Kathleen¹⁴ Jane was born on 1 September 1879 and her brother Nathaniel James on 24 February 1881. At the time of the 1901 census, the family was living at 46 St Ives Gardens, Cromac, County Antrim. Elizabeth “Lily” (18), was recorded as a bookkeeper, Kathleen (21), as a shorthand typist and Nathaniel (20), as a baker. The older Elizabeth was 54 years old and Abraham (64), was recorded as a commercial agent. The family were Church of Ireland.

At the time of the 1911 census Lily was living at 28 Northumberland Avenue, Kingstown, County Dublin, when she was aged 28 years and was working as a private school teacher. The census records the building as a private school.¹⁵ Also living there were Lily’s parents, Elizabeth (64) and Abraham (74), retired flour merchant. The census recorded Lily’s brother, Nathaniel (30), Master Baker, living at 50 Oakland Avenue, Belfast with his wife Elizabeth Mary (25) and sons Richard Henry “Dodo” (2) and Nathaniel Thomas (1). Elizabeth Mary, Richard Henry and Nathaniel Thomas were Belfast born.¹⁶ Richard and Elizabeth had been married 4 years¹⁷ and had had 2 children, both still living. In 1913 Nathaniel and his father-in-law, Thomas Ham, were declared Bankrupts in the Belfast Bankruptcy Court. Nathaniel had been trading as *N.J. Hobson & Co. Bakery, Confectionery and Catering*. He and his family left Belfast and settled in Daffodil Avenue, Birkenhead. There two more children were born, Reginald in 1914 (died in 1916) and Cecil in September 1918. In January 1915 Nathaniel enlisted in the 5th King’s (Liverpool) Regiment. In 1916 he was promoted to Second Lieutenant and in 1917 he was promoted to Lieutenant.

During the First World War Lily served as a VAD in Bidston Hospital, Birkenhead. A photograph shows two stripes on the arm of her uniform, denoting two years’ service, suggesting that she joined in 1915 or 1916.

¹³CN, Hobson family history researched by Christopher Hobson and by Lucille Ellis. Around 1700, a John Hobson moved from Yorkshire to County Wicklow. While the majority of the family moved to the U.S. and Canada during the 19th Century, a John Hobson remained. One of his children, Abraham (1836-1921) married Elizabeth Fennell (1847-1927).

¹⁴ On her birth certificate, her name was recorded as Cathren.

¹⁵ Lucille Ellis discovered that a local trade directory for 1911 contained an advertisement for a private school, “*Principal Miss L.Hobson.*”

¹⁶ Born on 8 April 1908 at 8 Oaklands Avenue, Belfast, Richard Henry was christened Henry Raymond Ffennell. Though the census records Nathaniel as born in Antrim, he was also born at 8 Oaklands Avenue, on 24 July 1909.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Ham and Nathaniel Hobson were married at Newtownbreda on 1 November 1907. She lived at Ardnaree House, Cregagh, County Down. Her father, Thomas Henry Ham was Secretary of the Ulster Spinning Company. At the time of the marriage, Nathaniel was living at 178 Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

Lily, Nathaniel and his son Richard, known as “Dodo” were aboard the *RMS Leinster*. Family tradition is that “Dodo” had been staying with his grandparents while recovering from a broken leg and that his father and aunt were bringing him home. All three Hobsons were lost in the sinking. None of their bodies were recovered. They are commemorated on the headstone of the family grave in Dunleckney, Bagenalstown, County Carlow. Lieutenant Nathaniel Hobson is also commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton and on the Carlow Great War Memorial in Leighlinbridge. His widow Elizabeth died in Birkenhead in 1966. Her son Nathaniel Thomas married Margaret Enid in 1931. They had a daughter Valerie. First Radio Officer aboard *HMS Breconshire*, Nathaniel died in 1941 of an illness unrelated to the war. Her son Cecil married Barbara Ainsworth in 1941. He also served as a radio officer. He was aboard the merchant ship *SS Myrmidon* which was sunk by U-506 on 5 September 1942, off the West coast of Africa. The vessel was in convoy and everyone aboard survived.



Elizabeth Hobson VAD circa 1917



Nathaniel Hobson



Richard “Dodo” Hobson circa 1913

Palmer

Paul Russell “Gerald” Palmer was born on 4 June 1904 in the Lying-in-Hospital Cork, to Marion née Russell and Paul Palmer, a coachman, of 8 Friar St., Cork. On 13 November 1905, his brother Joseph was also born in the Lying-in-Hospital, Cork. At the time of his birth, his father’s occupation was given as Sexton and the family’s address as Little Island, Cork. On 29 March 1906, Marion Palmer (26), Sexton’s wife, died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 6 months certified. The death was registered by her husband who was present at her death at Little Island. Gerald was under two when his mother died. At some point he became partially paralysed due to an injury to his spine, reportedly due to a fall. He spent much of his early life in the *Cottage Home for Children* in Kingstown and the Infirmary, Shankill, County Dublin. In 1907, an application was made for him to attend *The Cripples Home*, Bray, County Wicklow. Due to a skin disease, which doctors feared might be contagious to other children, he was not admitted to the home until early 1909. At the time of the 1911 census, Gerald was recorded, aged 6, attending the home. The census showed that he was of the Church of Ireland religion, had been born in County Cork and could read and write. When he was fourteen, as was the usual practice of the home, the matron applied for a place for him at Dr Barnardo’s Home, London. Barnardos trained young

people with disabilities for employment. The minutes of the home for 9 October 1918 recorded, “*The Matron’s report was read and correspondence from Barnardo’s Home accepting Gerald Palmer who was to leave for London on Oct 10th.*” Gerald Palmer was lost in the sinking of the *RMS Leinster*. His body was not recovered.

In the final days of 1918 Gerald Palmer’s’ father wrote to the matron of *The Cripples Home*, Bray, County Wicklow.¹⁸

Dec 29th 1918

Dear Matron,

I received your letter today with the sad news of Gerald’s end. My poor boy, how I would have liked to have seen him. Matron I know and deeply regret I have not written to him often but Matron the position I have been placed in, God knows, hindered me. But I never forgot him as you may think. I am sorry my boy William¹⁹ who lives in Derbyshire has not written. I often asked him. Matron, do you really believe he is drowned? If he is I trust he is in heaven now with his poor dear mother where I trust and hope in God I will meet them both. When one’s home is broken up what a separating. I know it all. I hope Gerald will forgive me and Matron that you will. I will often regret it, Matron. A few months ago I went to see my boy William who lives 50 miles from here and we talked it over and Willie was going to get him on the railways along with him as soon as he would leave your home. He got married six months ago and had a home to bring him to but what a great disappointment. If the Great War had not been on Willie would have been over to see him long since. Matron I have been in a very poor way of living and not in good health. I have no money. If I had I would send something to the Home for all the trouble and kindness to poor Gerald. I enclose a ten shillings postal order for a cake for tea for the boys of Gerald’s class. Please accept the same as a small token of my fond love for poor Gerald and pray and all the boys pray, that God will forgive me for all my neglect to him. I am truly sorry, may God forgive me. If you know anything about his end kindly let me know. Matron, did Gerald ever say he loved me or did he ever ask for Willie? I suppose Gerald never had his photo taken. If you have one I would be grateful for same.

I am your obedient servant,

P. Palmer---Poor Gerald’s Father.

No obituary was written on the passing of Gerald Palmer. His story was lost in the mists of time until Bray historian Francis Loughrey came upon his name and details in a minute book for *The Cripples Home* and published the details in his books *Old Bray and its Neighbourhood* and *Sunbeam House, Bray*. Children who died in *The Cripples Home* and its successor *Sunbeam House* are buried in Deansgrange Cemetery, County Dublin. A few years ago, I approached John Giles, Board Member of *Sunbeam House* and told him the story of Gerald Palmer. Even though he is not buried in the grave, I asked if he could be commemorated on the headstone for the children of *The Cripples Home*. In an act of amazing generosity, John Giles arranged for

¹⁸ *Sunbeam House: Bray* by Francis Loughrey. Sunbeam House is the successor of *The Cripples Home* and holds the records of the home.

¹⁹ No birth certificate has been located for William Palmer. Possibly he was the boy who was christen Joseph and that his name, like that of his brother, was later changed.

Gerald Palmer to be given his own commemorative headstone on the grave. He has finally been remembered on a memorial.²⁰

Frances (Fanny) Elizabeth (née Bailey) Saunders was born on 2 December 1866, the daughter of Isabella (née Enright?)²¹ and Robert Bailey, a cabdriver of Clarence St., Kingstown. On 2 October 1888, she married Francis Saunders, a seaman in Monkstown Church of Ireland Parish Church. Her father's occupation was given as coachman. His father, Thomas Saunders was also a seaman. One of the witnesses to the marriage was John W. Bailey, presumably a brother of the bride. On Christmas Eve 1895, Fanny's husband Frank was one of fifteen crew members who were lost aboard the lifeboat *Civil Service 7* while attempting to rescue the crew of the *SS Palme*. Ironically, two days later, the entire crew of the *Palme* were rescued. Among those lost with Frank Saunders (27) was his older brother George (30). The bodies of all fifteen lifeboatmen were recovered. Fanny had been widowed at the age of 29, left on her own to raise five children. The 1901 census recorded Fanny and her family living at 10 Tivoli Terrace North, Kingstown. The family were Frances (34), with Samuel (10), Catherine (8), Isabella (7) and Frances E. (5). Fanny gave her occupation as housekeeper. The family were all Dublin born. The 1911 census recorded the family as living at 53 York Road, Kingstown. Those present were Fanny (Frances Elizabeth) (44), living on a pension, Janet (21), school teacher, Samuel (20), motor mechanic, Catherine (18), draper's assistant, Isabella (17), shop assistant and Frances Elizabeth (15), no occupation listed. In October 1918, Fanny was informed by telegram that her daughter Janet was seriously ill in Liverpool. Fanny booked passage on the *RMS Leinster*, intending to visit her. Lost in the sinking, her body was brought to the morgue at St. Michael's Hospital, Kingstown. A relative later recalled seeing a pair of new red shoes Fanny had bought protruding from under the blanket covering her body.²² On 13 October 1918, three days after the sinking, Janet, wife of Ted Owens and eldest daughter of Fanny and Frank Saunders, died in Liverpool. Fanny was buried in Deansgrange Cemetery, County Dublin: S H2 21. CN, BMD, Records of Deansgrange Cemetery, Darren Blackmore.

²⁰ Another former pupil of *The Cripples Home* was also lost in the sinking. James Gibson was born in Cootehill Union Workhouse, County Cavan on 3 December 1892. His mother Sarah Gibson was a domestic servant and his father was Charles Fisher of Cootehill. James had two disabilities, "*paralysis of the limbs*" and a hearing impairment. He was sent to *The Cripples Home* in Bray. On 1 December 1897, at the age of five, having recovered the use of his legs, he was sent to *The National Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb Poor of Ireland* (commonly known as *The Claremont Institution*,) Glasnevin, Dublin. In 1910, he began training in the carpentry workshop in the Institution. In 1911, having been placed at Spruce Hill Farm, Roscrea, County Tipperary, he unexpectedly returned to the Institution after three days, saying the work was too dirty. In April of the following year, he was offered employment as a gardener and general worker by the Rev. J. McConnell, Rector of Desert Serges, Cork, brother of the Institution's matron. In January 1917, the headmaster informed the Institution's governing committee that "*James Gibson, late pupil, joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers and is now in France. His degree of hearing combined with his ability to lip-read enabled him to pass his medical examination. This lad speaks well but with a peculiarly foreign accent and before joining the army, he had the misfortune to be twice arrested (in Dublin and Belfast) as a German spy. He proved his connection with Claremont, and in both places he was able to call on his friends to speak for him.*" At the time of the sinking, Private James Gibson, 57455 was serving in the Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry. He was one of 9 men from the regiment aboard the ship, of whom 8 were lost. His body was not recovered. He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial to those lost at sea, in Southampton. Source: *The Avenue: A History of the Claremont Institution* by Rachel Pollard (Dun Laoghaire, 2006).

²¹ The writing on the certificate is somewhat indistinct.

²² Relative Darren Blackmore.

Helen Maud (née Jameson) Pugin Thornton was born in Donnybrook, Dublin on 5 December 1856, the second of eight children of Emily (née St Ledger O'Neill) and William W. Jameson, a member of the whiskey distilling family. On 24 April 1879, she married James Jameson (5 June 1848 – 6 December 1896), Justice of the Peace of Windfield, Menlough, County Galway in Donnybrook Church of Ireland parish church. They had one child, Maurice Eyre Bellingham Jameson, (9 May 1888-25 October 1950). Her husband James died on 6 December 1896.²³ She was recorded on the 1901 census as a widow, living at Windfield, Menlough, County Galway. On 2 October 1901, at Trinity Church, Paddington, London, she married William Pugin Thornton (1845-31 March 1913), He was a surgeon, who was born in Kent, England in 1845. The 1911 census records the couple as living in Castlebellingham, County Louth. It incorrectly says they had been married for 11 years. William died on 31 March 1913, leaving Helen widowed for the second time. As well as her address at Bowling Green Castlebellingham, County Louth, she also resided at 6 Drewstead Road, Streatham, London. She may have been going to the latter address when she was lost on the *RMS Leinster*. As no record has been found for her burial, it appears that her body was not recovered. Amazingly, her younger sister Aileen Elizabeth (born 1868) also died at sea on 10 October 1918, at Sulawesi Tengah, Indonesia. On 20 December 1918, in London. the will of Helen Maud Pugin Thornton was probated to Captain Maurice Eyre Bellingham Jameson. She left £584 9s 5d.

Elizabeth Susan Woodhouse was born on 4 September 1888. She was the twin of Emily Mary and the daughter of Emily (née Bradley), Nurse and John Henry Woodhouse, Bookseller of 61 Lombard St., Dublin. John Henry was Church of Ireland. His wife and children were Roman Catholics. The 1911 census recorded Elizabeth her as a 22-year-old shop assistant, living on an upper floor of 49 Grafton St., Dublin with her twin Emily, a bookkeeper. Elizabeth supervised the purchase of hay in County Wicklow on behalf of British government for several months prior to her death in the sinking of the *RMS Leinster*. She was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery: PD 23 St. Pauls, Dublin.

Fanny (née McCalman) Wookey was born in 1859 in Wirral, Cheshire. She married Frederick Wookey in Birkenhead in 1884. The 1901 census recorded the couple living at 2 Backweston Park, Lucan, County Dublin. Also living there were daughters Beatrice M (15), born in Dublin and Nora (9), born in Leixlip, County Dublin. Nora (Frances Nora) and her twin John Neil were born on 22 November 1891. John died on 4 April 1892.²⁴ Both parents were English born. Frederick was described as a Justice of the Peace and a Waterflock Manufacturer. He was the owner of Leixlip Woollen Mills. The family were recorded as being Church of Ireland. The census recorded their son, Frederick (13) as attending Campbell College, Belfast. On 19 March 1915, Second Lieutenant Frederick Maurice Wookey (27), "C" Company, 1st Battalion Royal

²³ He was a Major in the 4th Battalion Connaught Rangers at the time of his death. This would have been a reserve battalion, requiring part-time service.

²⁴ Nora died on 30 September 1939. She and her brother John Neil are buried in the family grave in Leixlip.

Irish Regiment, was killed in action. He was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord: I.22, France. Frederick senior (67) died on 6 July 1918 at Weston Lodge, Leixlip of Cardiac disease. His daughter Beatrice was the informant to his death. Fanny sold Leixlip Woollen Mills. After a number of delays, she set out for England to live with her daughter Beatrice. She was lost in the sinking. Her body was not recovered.

Survivor:

Alice (née MacGeogh) Blacker-Douglas,²⁵ was the only child of Robert MacGeough, Silverbridge, County Armagh. Her Uncle Cornet Ralph MacGeough survived the sinking of *HMS Birkenhead* off the coast of South Africa in 1852. (See chapter “*Women and Children First!*”). She married Maxwell Blacker-Douglas D.L. on 9 September 1891 in Armagh Cathedral. Their children were Robert St. John (Born 30 November 1892), Alice Florence (Born 20 January 1895. Died 2 June 1975 and Charles Maxwell (Born 19 February 1900). Maxwell was elected a director of Royal City of Dublin Hospital (Baggot St.) in 1906 and was appointed a trustee in 1907. Lieutenant Robert St. John Blacker-Douglas, No. 4 Company, 1st Battalion, Irish Guards was killed near Cuinchy, France on 1 February 1915. Aged 22, he was posthumously awarded the Military Cross on 10 March 1915. He is buried in Cuinchy Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais: 11.B.32. He is commemorated in Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Killiney, County Dublin. At the time of the sinking, Alice’s address was Belle View Park, Killiney, County Dublin

²⁵ Contemporary newspapers, the peerage.com accessed 14 May 2018 and *The Irish Guards in the Great War* by Rudyard Kipling (reprint) (Kent 1997).