

## Aberystwyth University

### *Responses to the Sinking of the Leinster*

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This item contains the Dublin core metadata attributes and Curatescape item type metadata fields for a story from the Ports, Past and Present archived collection on the digital repository of Ireland. It has been provided in .odt format for easy copy and pasting.

For more information about the Ports, Past and Present Project, see

<https://portspastpresent.eu/>.

For more information about Omeka Classic, see <https://omeka.org/classic/>.

For more information about Curatescape, its Omeka plugin suite and this item type metadata schema, see <https://curatescape.org/>.

For a .csv containing tabular data for all stories, see the larger collection at

<https://doi.org/10.7486/DRI.ht259b362>.

For an archived snapshot of the story as it appeared between 2020 and 2023 on

<https://portspastpresent.eu/>, see the Relation field below.

## Dublin Core

### Title

Responses to the Sinking of the Leinster

### Subject

RMS Leinster

World War I

Sinking

### Creator

Rita Singer

### Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

### Date

2023

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### Relation

<https://perma.cc/5QJL-NQ48>

### Format

Curatescape story

### Language

English

## Coverage

53.314298280327485, -5.792764502734831

# Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

## Lede

Out of the 771 people on board the *Leinster*, 501 died when it was torpedoed on 10 October, 1918. To date, the sinking of the *Leinster* accounts for the largest loss of life in a single event in the Irish Sea.

## Story

By October 1918, it had become apparent that the First World War was slowly drawing to a close. It was not yet foreseeable whether it would be over by Christmas, a hope annually revived since 1914, but an end to the fighting lay in the near future. When the Royal Mail Ship *Leinster* left port on the morning of 10 October 1918, the weather at Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire) was fine, but the sea remained choppy from previous storms, thus promising a shaky journey to Holyhead for passengers who had not yet found their sea legs, whereas the seasoned crew would go about their business as usual. However, just an hour after having left Kingstown and not yet having cleared Dublin Bay, the *Leinster* was torpedoed by German submarine *UB 123* under the command of Robert Ramm, and sank within minutes. Out of the 813 people on board, 569 died that day. To date, the sinking of the *Leinster* accounts for the largest loss of life in a single event in the Irish Sea.

Except in Holyhead and Dún Laoghaire, who mourned the highest number of losses, the sinking of the *Leinster* has largely fallen out of public memory today. But immediately following the disaster, the shock reverberated around the countries and invoked memories of the sinking not just of the *Lusitania* in 1915, but also other prominent war-related tragedies around the Irish Sea. And as was the case throughout the war, people responded to these events with occasional poetry, condemning the wanton destruction of life whilst championing revenge on the battlefield. One such poem, 'Never Again', was published just a little over two weeks after the sinking of the *Leinster* in the war supplement of the *Carmarthen Journal*:

*I was shipmates with a German in the days before the war.  
For years we were together,  
In fair or dirty weather,  
And I loved him like a brother on the sea and on the shore.  
But if we met to-day  
I'd shake my head and say,  
"Leinster, Lusitania, Arabic, and Falaba,  
These and twenty others are between us on the sea.  
And wherever I'm a-sailing, from Mata-pan to Malabar,  
The foc'sle isn't big enough for you as well as me.*

In addition to creative and journalistic responses, the attack was also discussed in the Houses of Parliament in the following weeks. Michael Joyce, MP for Limerick, was one of the survivors of the *Leinster* and had been on his way to London for his attendance of Parliament when *UB 123* torpedoed the ship. In his previous career as seaman, he had already experienced shipwreck four times. Taking offence with the government's response to this particular sinking and others like it during a particularly tense debate on 30 October 1918,

Joyce told Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, Thomas Macnamara, to ‘[g]o to sea, and learn something’.

### **Factoid**

### **Related Resources**

Hurd, Archibald, *The Merchant Navy. Vol. 3* (London: John Murray, 1929)

Lecane, Philip, ‘The Sinking of the RMS Leinster: The International Significance’, *History Ireland*, 12.1 (2004), 7–8 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27725077>>

Lecane, Philip, *Torpedoed! The R.M.S. Leinster Disaster* (Penzance: Periscope, 2005)

N., G F, ‘Never Again’, *Carmarthen Journal* (Carmarthen, 1918)

<<https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3679226/3679227/7/>>

‘Sinking of Steamship “Leinster”’, *Historic Hansard* (London: UK Parliament, 1918)

<[https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1918/oct/30/sinking-of-steamship-leinster#S5CV0110P0\\_19181030\\_HOC\\_87](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1918/oct/30/sinking-of-steamship-leinster#S5CV0110P0_19181030_HOC_87)>

### **Official Website**

*RMS LEINSTER 1918 – 2018: HOLYHEAD REMEMBERS*. (Holyhead: RMS Leinster Centenary Commemoration Group) <<https://rmsleinster100.com/>>