

S.S. FORMBY  
1917  
S.S. CORINGBEG  
1917

THE WATERFORD  
SHIPPING DISASTER  
1917



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This exhibition has been created by Waterford City and County Council with assistance from the Heritage Council. We would like to thank all of the contributors for the images they provided for use in the exhibition. In particular, we would like to thank the family members of those who were lost for their contributions to this exhibition.

# INTRODUCTION

On 27th December 1917 the Clyde Shipping Company Limited wrote a letter to families throughout Waterford and beyond to confirm their worst fears by stating that all hope was now lost for the return of two Waterford steamships – the SS Formby and the SS Coningbeg.

The “Waterford Shipping Disaster” resulted in the complete loss of the crews and passengers of both ships and had a death toll of 83 people. This loss of life was the tragic outcome of the battle for the seas in the First World War. The two steamships were on a dangerous mission to traverse an Irish Sea that was under siege from German U-boats. They were part of an effort to keep the lines of supply open but they were also men and women working hard to feed their families. These families were left dangerously destitute as a result of their heartrending loss in the days running up to Christmas 1917. In response to this tragedy a fund was established the “Waterford Local Disaster Fund” to raise funds to assist the families so cruelly bereft.

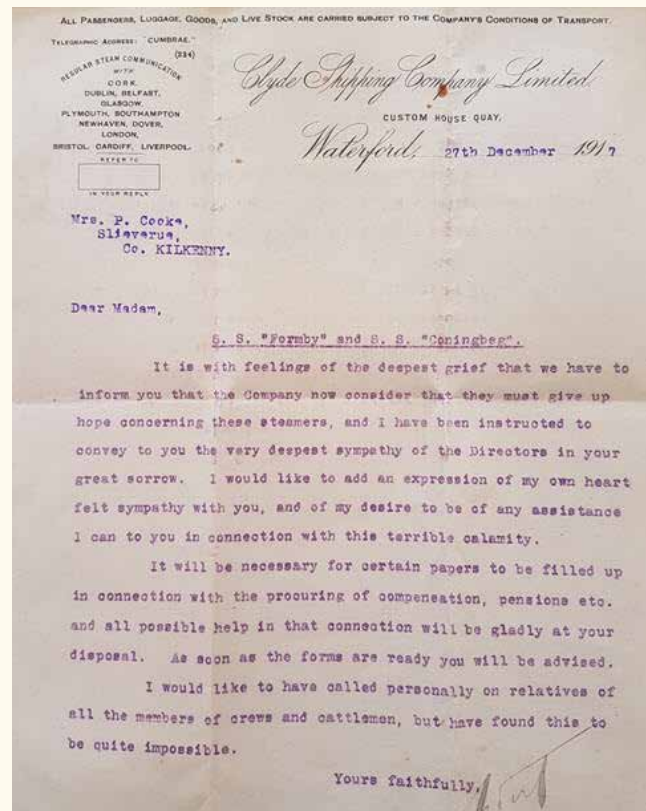


Image Courtesy of Mary Crowe

## FIRST WORLD WAR

On 4th August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany following the German invasion of British ally, Belgium. Ireland was still part of Britain in 1914 and as a result Ireland was at war. Britain was noted for its command of the sea and one of the first moves made on the seas was for the British navy to blockade the North Sea and prevent Germany from receiving cargoes in the hopes of starving its supply line and ending the war. In return the German High Command turned its attention to the supply lines to Britain.

Initially the focus was placed on the Atlantic Ocean but in its efforts to prevent shipping trade from reaching British shores the German navy was not always able to distinguish neutral and passenger shipping from Allied ships and this led to trouble in its diplomatic relations, particularly with America.

In the early years of the war, Prize Rules were followed whereby when a German submarine tracked a ship or boat it surfaced and then searched the ship and passengers (in search of orders or information on codes). Passengers were

allowed off the ship which was then sunk or taken as a prize. Merchant ships were fired upon if they refused to stop or refused to be searched. In some cases submarine captains towed the lifeboats nearer to land. In an effort to protect merchant ships and ensure that cargo made it safely to land the British Admiralty armed merchant ships and gave orders to ram surfacing u-boats, if possible.

On 7th May 1915 the RMS Lusitania was torpedoed by German U-boat U-20 and sunk just off the Irish coast with the loss of many lives. Although a British passenger liner, the RMS Lusitania had a number of international passengers, including Americans and this loss of American life and the torpedoing of the ship without following Prize rules led to an international outcry against Germany and very poor diplomatic relations between Germany and America.



## FIRST WORLD WAR

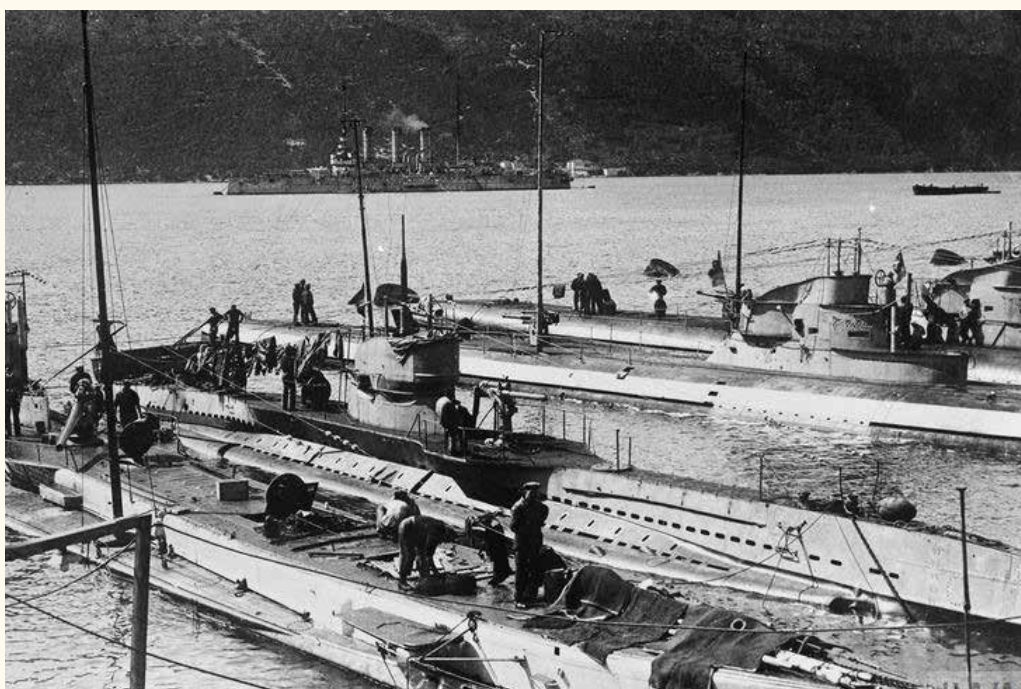
In response to the American demands the German High Command stopped the u-boat campaign on the Atlantic and focused instead on the Mediterranean. However, the need to bring down the British merchant navy and prevent supplies reaching Britain meant the German High Command returned focus again on the south-west approaches to Britain. Thus, bringing German U-boats to the Irish Sea. In February 1917 Germany began an unrestricted u-boat

campaign with new orders to submarine captains to sink all shipping on sight and without warning in the war zones of the English Channel, Irish Sea, North Sea and western coasts of Scotland, Ireland, France and England and Wales. This action brought America into the war and America declared war on Germany on 17th April 1917.

*Proposed by the Right Worshipful Alderman Richard Power J. P. Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mac-Donald, and unanimously Resolved that we tender our deep sympathy to the relatives of the "Lusitania" victims who were so foully and brutally murdered, and also to the owners of the Lusitania, and we wish to place on record our abhorrence of what we consider one of the most fiendish and diabolical crimes in history.*

IE/WCA/LAI/1/A/31

Vote of condolence from Waterford Corporation to the families of those lost on the Lusitania 17th May 1915.  
Waterford Corporation Minute Book



POOLE WP 02706

Torpedo Boats, Waterford Quay. Poole Collection.  
Image reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland www.nli.ie

## IMPORTANCE OF TRADE

The blockades and attempts by both the German and British navies to prevent supplies reaching their destinations demonstrate how important keeping supply lines open was for the war effort and for survival. Without food to feed the population and construction materials to build new ships, submarines, aeroplanes, munitions and other vital supplies the war would be lost. It is because of this that the Irish Sea became a battleground and the lives of those on board the *Formby* and *Coningbeg* were lost.

The Clyde Shipping Company extended its operation in 1856 to trade between Glasgow and the south coast of Ireland. In 1912 the Clyde Shipping Company took over the Waterford Steamship Company's fleet and staff and continued that company's trade route between Waterford Port and Liverpool.

The SS *Formby* and SS *Coningbeg* were built primarily for cattle cargo with some accommodation for passengers. The crew of the two steamships were well used to trade routes and were experienced seamen.

However, during the War these trade routes operated under increasingly dangerous conditions. Mines were laid by German u-boats along the Irish coast to prevent the merchant ships from reaching their destinations and the Irish Sea and south west approaches to Britain were under sustained attack by German u-boats in an effort to stop all cargo.

Unlike the large ships plying the Atlantic that travelled in large protected convoys the merchant ships that travelled on the Irish Sea did not travel in convoys but were equipped with guns and had among their crew the gunners to operate them.

The price of food rose swiftly as a result of the difficulty in getting cargoes safely to harbour and the Board of Trade required proof that any infrastructure project was urgent before it could go ahead. Housing schemes were postponed and much building work was halted due to the difficulty and expense of importing the required materials.



Clyde Shipping Co. Poster showing routes.  
Image courtesy of Des Griffin.

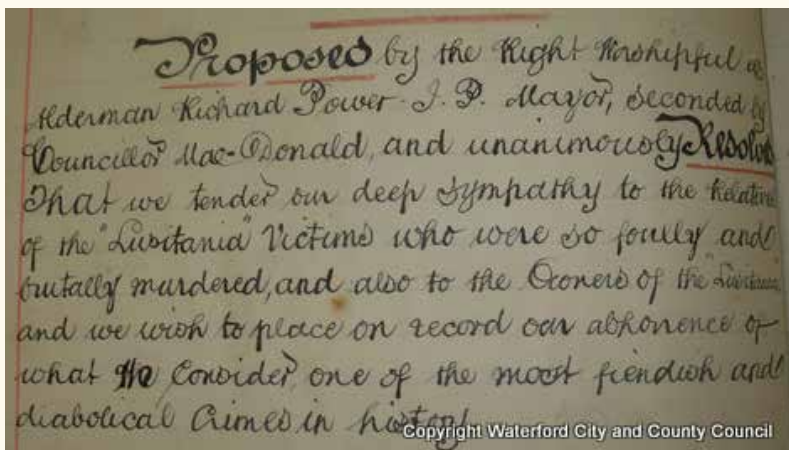


James Wall to the left in front of the railing on a ship in Bristol, 1909.  
Image courtesy of Bridie Lynch

## IMPORTANCE OF TRADE

A Waterford Food Control Committee was established as a sub-committee of the Food Control Committee for Ireland in 1917. The Food Control Committee for Ireland conferred local committees with the authority to fix retail prices of food supplies on 13th December 1917. The Waterford Food Control Committee fixed the highest price for milk at 1s 8d per imperial gallon from 1st January 1918. Discussions were held among local representatives about the shortage of butter and the fact that English buyers were offering increased prices to local suppliers and thus causing a shortage of butter locally.

The high price of food and the need to import materials meant that the work of the merchant ships was vital for the local economy. The SS Formby and SS Coningbeg left Waterford with a full cargo of livestock with prices for such livestock at an all time high and were returning with much needed food and industrial supplies.



[E/WCA/LA1/1/A/30](#)

Resolution of Waterford Corporation to raise wages as a consequence of the increase of 20% in prices as a result of the War. 15th March 1915 Waterford Corporation Minutes



[POOLE WP 0528](#)

Waterford Quay, Poole Collection.

Image reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

## U62

At the start of the war German u-boats were used as part of the defences of the naval base at Heligoland in expectation of an attack by the British naval fleet. Initial u-boat forays into the North Sea were not hugely successful but in September 1914 the U-21 successfully torpedoed and sank the cruiser "Pathfinder" in the Forth estuary. This was followed by further successes and over the course of the war further u-boats were added to the fleet.

U-62 was a modern powerful u-boat of the type U-57. It was diesel powered with deck guns and 6 torpedoes. It was ordered from the shipyard in Bremen in 1914 and was ready in December 1916 for its Captain and crew of thirty-six. The Captain appointed was Kapitänleutnant Ernst Hashagen who had volunteered for naval service on the outbreak of the war and having served with distinction was given his first submarine command in February 1916 – UB-21. His success with UB-21 led him to the command of the larger and newer u-boat – U-62. In his memoir "U-Boats Westward 1914-1918" published in 1931 Kptlt Hashagen wrote

*"Through two long years of war I had been able to gain experience for myself as a U-boat man. Three times I had been at sea in U-22 and many long cruises on UB-21 lay behind me. I am ready"*

In the early years of the war Kptlt Hashagen adhered to Prize Rules and in some instances towed the crews of ships he sank nearer to shore and safety. But this changed with the change in orders from the German High Command and in 1917 U-62 was attacking ships without warning.

In the period December 1916 to August 1918 U-62 sank 48 ships and damaged 5 others

<https://www.uboa.net/wwi/boats/successes/u62.html>

Following the Armistice on 11 November 1918 the Commanders of German U-boats were ordered to surrender their u-boats at ports directed by the British Admiralty. Kptlt Hashagen was ordered to surrender U-62 at Harwich on 21 November 1918. Kptlt Hashagen returned to Germany and was discharged from service 24th November 1919. In 1929 he spoke in England about his experiences at the invitation of Commander N. Lewis of the Royal Navy whom he had taken prisoner in April 1917 from Q Ship 12 and who got in contact with him again after the war. He wrote his memoirs which were translated into English and published in 1931 "U-Boats Westward 1914-1918".





## THE LOSS

The SS Formby was built by the Clyde Shipping Company Ltd. and launched in April 1914 and registered in Glasgow. It was built primarily to carry a cargo of cattle and had accommodation for 39 first class passengers and 45 steerage passengers. She travelled between Waterford and Liverpool and was noted for her good timekeeping. Her captain was Charles Minnards who had been Commodore of the Waterford Steamship Company's fleet and was transferred to the Clyde Shipping Company as a Senior Captain.

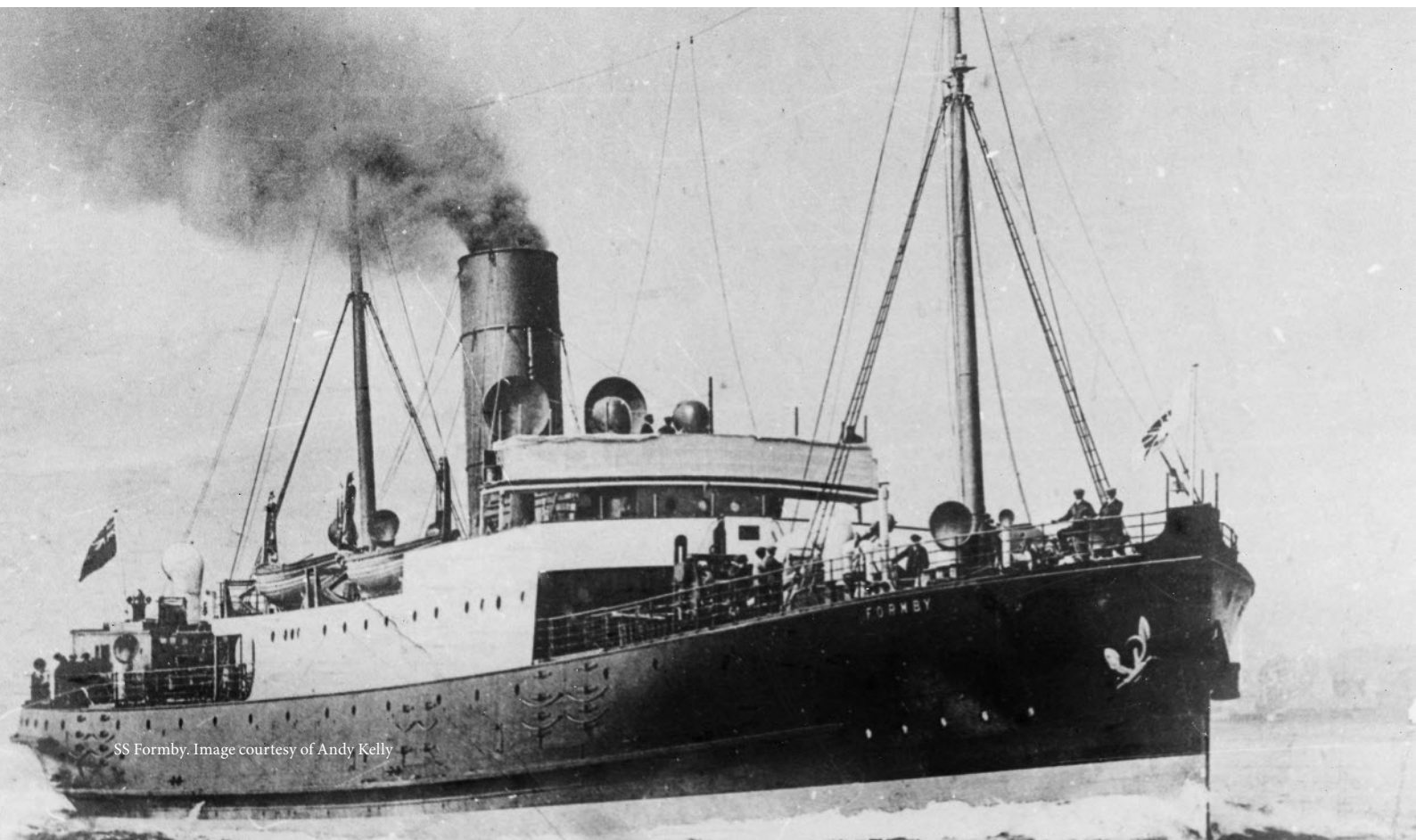
The SS Formby set off for Liverpool on 12th December 1917 laden with 500 cattle with all lights blacked out and its armed gunners at the ready. The crew travelled the 16 hour journey and arrived safely in Liverpool. On Saturday 15th December the Formby left Liverpool loaded with a general cargo of food and industrial supplies. According the Log of U-62 around 6pm the u-boat caught sight of the steamer and pursued.

*7.58pm Bow shot No.1 tube, C/06 D torpedo, 2.5 depth.  
Opponents speed 11 Kn, Interception angle 80 degrees.  
Distance 500m. Hit in engine room. Vessel of unknown nationality. After clearance of the smoke of the explosion (3-4) minutes after the strike, ship sinks with all hands.  
Position of sinking Quadrant 081-D4 west.  
All hands lost.*

The SS Coningbeg was launched at Troon on 7th August 1903 for the Waterford Steamship Company with the name SS Clodagh. When the Clyde Shipping Company took over the Waterford Steamship Company's fleet in 1912 she was modernised in 1913 and re-named the SS Coningbeg. Again she was built for a cargo of 500-600 cattle and had accommodation for 86 first class passengers and 74 steerage passengers. She was captained by Joseph Lumley.

The SS Coningbeg also made it safely from Waterford to Liverpool with a full cargo of cattle and docked safely. On the 16th December 1917 a severe storm hit causing widespread damage and severing the telephone communications between Waterford and Dublin. The Formby was overdue in Waterford but it was believed this was due to her taking shelter from the storm.

U-62 lay submerged on the bottom of the Irish Sea waiting the passing of the storm and the next ship to pursue. Due to the damage to telephone communications the Clyde Shipping Company Office was unable to contact the SS Coningbeg in Liverpool to warn them of the failure of the SS Formby to arrive in Waterford on the 17th after the storm. In the absence of any warning the SS Coningbeg set off on 17th December from Liverpool to make her way home to Waterford.



SS Formby. Image courtesy of Andy Kelly

## THE LOSS

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U-62 sailed on, avoiding naval destroyers and submarine chasers and in doing so came upon another steamship –the SS Coningbeg.

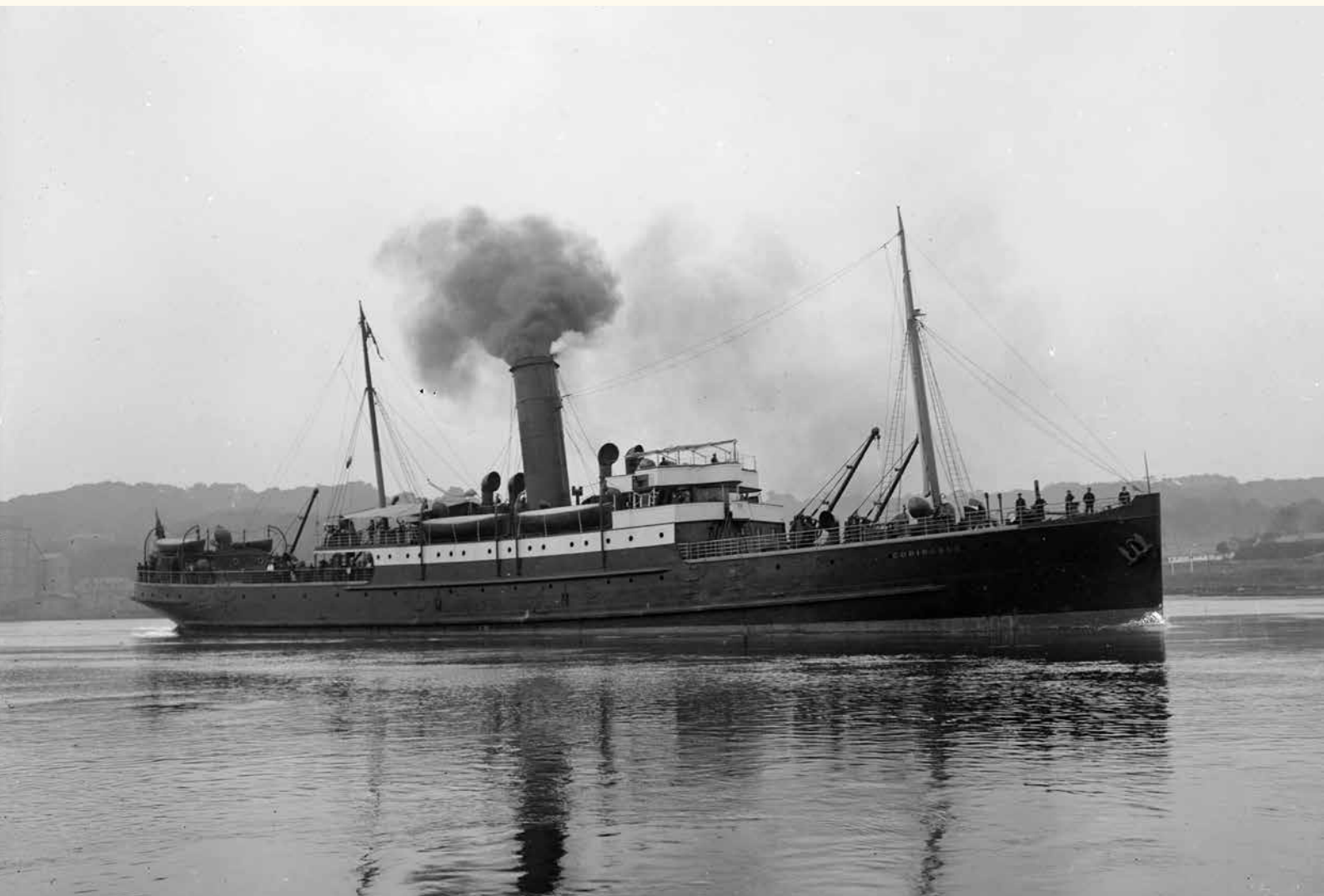
*It is rather dreadful to be steaming thus alongside one's victim knowing that she has only ten or perhaps twenty minutes to live, till fiery death leaps from the sea and blows her to pieces. A solemn mood possesses the few upon the bridge.  
The horror of war silences us.*

From "U-Boats Westward 1914-1918", Memoir of Kptkpl Hashagen on the sinking of the Coningbeg

The Log Book of U-62 records the torpedo attack at 11.45pm on Monday 17th December 1917.

*Vessel in flames, breaks in two and sinks immediately. A few seconds after the explosion only the burning stern is over the water. Three minutes after the hit the vessel is sunk, with all hands.*

In keeping with the tactics of the German u-boats at this time no warning was given. In the meantime on the Quay of Waterford the family and friends of the crew and passengers of the two Waterford steamers waited with growing fears for their arrival.



# WATERFORD LOCAL DISASTER FUND

The families called to the Clyde Shipping Company Office on the Quay in Waterford in search of news but by 27th December the Company were obliged to inform them that no hopes could be held of the survival of the two ships. The crew were due to return in time for Christmas and with a bonus to be paid on their arrival as a result of a pay rise that was to be backdated. So, families in expectation of a happy christmas with much to celebrate were left without hope and without means.

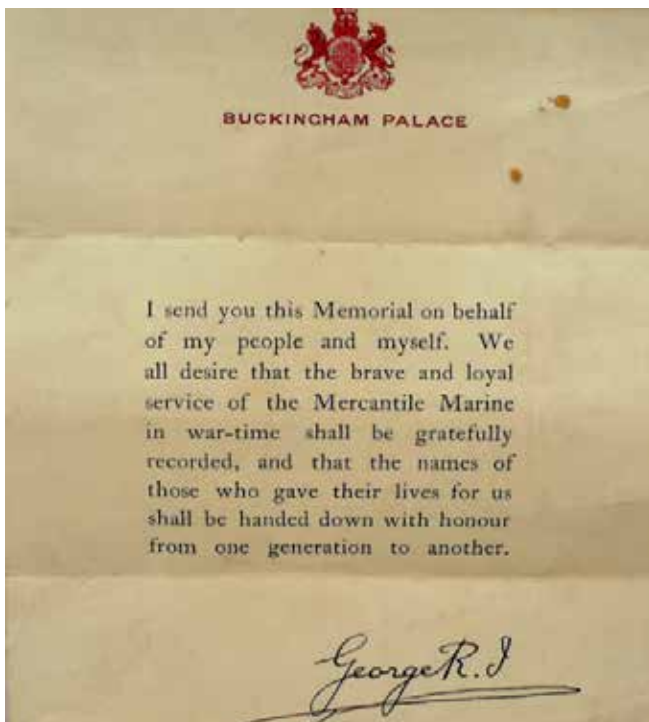
In the aftermath of the loss of the Coningbeg and Formby families in Waterford were left devastated. On Monday 31st December 1917 a public meeting was convened in the Large Room in City Hall by the Mayor for the relief of the wives and families of the seamen of the SS Coningbeg and SS Formby. Over £800 was subscribed to what was termed the "Waterford Disaster Fund" on the spot that night.

The meeting convened by the Mayor, JJ O'Sullivan who was accompanied on the platform by the Very Rev. Canon Furlong PP; Rev. WJ O'Connell, Adm; Rev. E. Nagle; Rev. Dr. O'Hara; Ald. WA Murray; Ald. P. Bowe; Ald. R. Hearne, JP; Ald. Dawson; Messrs. Wm Fitzgerald, TC; D. Hyland, TC; P. Cahill, TC; D. McDonald TC; GA Watt; L. O'Brien; V B Hill (Sailors' and Firemen's Union); Dr. W R Morris, TC;

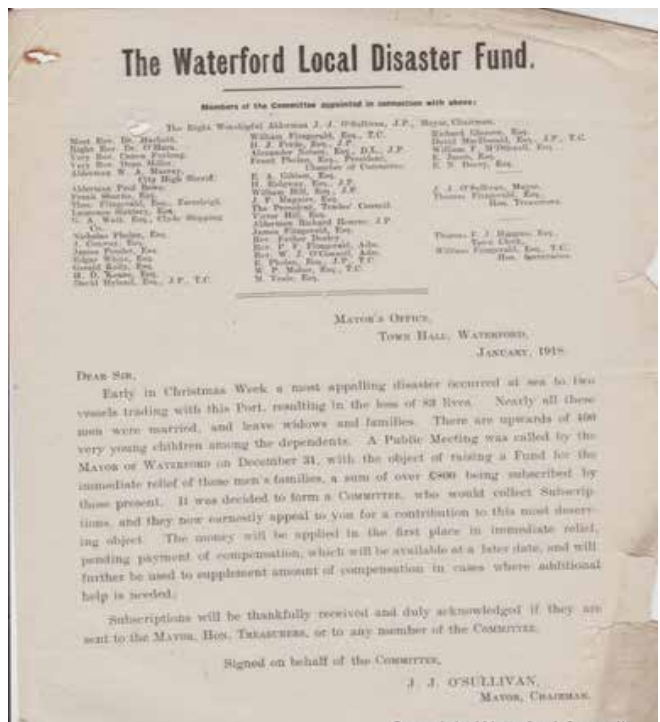
P Phelan, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce. Mr. TF Higgins was appointed temporary secretary to the meeting. Letters were sent out and subscriptions were sought and received from individuals and businesses in Waterford, Wexford, Belfast and beyond.

A report about the meeting appeared in the Express newspaper on 5 January 1918. The paper reported on the subscriptions made to the committee and at that time the amount was £927 4 shillings and 6 pence. The largest donors were the Most Rev. Dr. Hackett, Bishop of Waterford £50. Mesrs. R and H Hall £50; Graves & Co. Ltd. £50; Fitzgerald Bros. £50. Among the many who donated were the Mayor; John Redmond, MP for Waterford, Ald. WA Murray (High Sheriff); G.J. McCarthy, Parade Hotel, JR. Shea, Technical Institute; Sheedys and Grants from Ballybricken and many others from Waterford but also a Mr. Phillipson from Glasgow; Mr. McCarthy, White's Hotel, Wexford and JA Walsh from Belfast. The clerical staff of the Clyde Shipping Co. subscribed £20.

GA Watt company agent for the Clyde Shipping Company in Waterford spoke "I am quite sure that a finer lot of men could not be found in any ships around our coasts. From the masters down they were men of exceptional type...".



Letter from King George V sent to families of the deceased members of the Mercantile Marine. Image courtesy of Mary Crowe.



January 1918 Letter requesting assistance for the Waterford Shipping Disaster

# THE CREW & THEIR FAMILIES

## S.S. FORMBY

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	NEXT OF KIN & DEPENDANTS
Charles Minnards	Captain	56 St. Declan's Terrace Waterford	Mrs C. Minnard - 2
Archibald Gillies	1st Mate	Tayvallick, Colintrave, Arglyshire	Unknown- next of kin listed as M. Gillies
James Rankin	2nd Mate	Linden Bank, Stone, Arglyshire	Unknown- next of kin listed as D. Rankin
Maurice Butler	Carpenter	15 Alphonsus Road, Waterford	E. Butler - 2
William Fortune	Seaman	Churchtown, Fethard, Co. Wexford	James Fortune, son
Edward Burke	Seaman	Dunmore East	W. Burke, son
Thomas Keating	Seaman	Passage East	Mrs S. Keating - 2
John Hurley	Seaman	Passage East	Mr J. Hurley
Thomas Coffey	Seaman	85 Poleberry, Waterford	Mary Coffey - 1
James Clawson	Seaman	Checkpoint	Bridget Clawson
John Burns	Seaman	Checkpoint	Anne Burns - 4
Patrick Doyle	Seaman	37 Doyle Street, Waterford	Catherine Doyle - 4
John Moir	1st Engineer	42 Lower Newtown, Waterford	L.O. Moir - 5
William Lumley	2nd Engineer	26 Thomas Street, Waterford	Joseph Lumley -his father Captain of the SS Coningbeg 1
James Lennon	3rd Engineer	Kilmeaden	Grace Lennon
Thomas Condon	Fireman	27 Roanmore Road, Waterford	T. Condon - 2
Walter Hennebry	Fireman	Kilmurray, Slieverue	B. Hennebry
John Walsh	Fireman	Passage East	J. Walsh - 2
Patrick Cooke	Fireman	Slieverue, Kilkenny	Mrs P. Cooke - 6
George Carpendale	Fireman	40 Ferrybank, Waterford	Mary Carpendale - 5
William Connolly	Fireman	61 Gallows Hill, Waterford	S. Connolly, sister
Richard Murphy	Fireman	53 Newports Lane, Waterford	L Murphy - 7

## THE CREW &amp; THEIR FAMILIES - CONTD.

## S.S. FORMBY

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	NEXT OF KIN & DEPENDANTS
John Kiely	Fireman	8 Grady's Yard, Waterford	J. Kiely, brother
Maurice Hennebry	Donkeyman	Kilmurry, Slieverue, Co. Kilkenny	B. Hennebry
Edward Hennessy	Winchman	Bank's Lane, Waterford	Mrs Mary Hennessy – 5
George Sinclair	Steward	110 Aubrey Street, Liverpool	Mrs G. Sinclair
Annie O'Callaghan	Stewardess	41 St. Joseph's Terrace, Green Street, Waterford	Sister – unnamed
James Morrissey	Cook	14 Parliament Street, Waterford	Mary Morrissey – 6
Christopher Connor	Gunner	Ravensale Cottage, Old Kilmainham, Dublin	Annie Rolls
Daniel Coutts	Gunner	Garths, Widyll, Shetland Island	Mrs D. Coutts
John Hayes	Cattleman	Carrickphierish, Co. Waterford	
Maurice Eustace	Cattleman	6 Lady Lane, Waterford	1
James Manning	Cattleman	Roanmore Road, Waterford	5
John McGrath	Cattleman	Lower Yellow Road, Waterford	3
Dan O'Connell	Cattleman	Grace's Lane, Waterford	3
John O'Brien	Cattleman	Sergeants Court, Waterford	2
Jeremiah O'Sullivan	Cattleman	Faithlegg, Halfway House, Co. Waterford	1
Michael O'Brien	Passenger	Butlerstown, Waterford	Unknown
James White	Passenger	31 Lower Grange, Waterford	Unknown

## THE CREW & THEIR FAMILIES

### SS FORMBY

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Thomas Coffey, Seaman, SS Formby and wife Mary McGuire.  
Image courtesy of Leo Coy.



Mary Coffey, widow of Thomas Coffey, Seaman, SS Formby with his children Thomas and Mary (May) who was born shortly after the death of her father.  
Image courtesy of Leo Coy.

## THE CREW &amp; THEIR FAMILIES - CONTD.

## S.S. CONINGBEG

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	NEXT OF KIN & DEPENDANTS
Joseph Lumley	Captain	13 Percy Terrace, Waterford	Mrs S. Lumley
Donald Livingstone	1st Mate	Bealton, Gracedieu Road, Waterford	Mrs K. Livingstone – 1
M. Millar (Neil McMillan)	2nd Mate	Mannal Scarmish, Argyleshire	Mr Donald McMillar
Patrick Hennessy	Carpenter	28 St. Alphonsus Road, Waterford	Mary Hennessy – 5
Michael Barry	Seaman	15 Parliament Street, Waterford	Mary Barry – 1
Stephen Whitty	Seaman	31 Roanmore Road, Waterford	Mggie Whitty – 1
William Cahill	Seaman	Market Street, Tramore	Ellen Cahill
Patrick Walsh	Seaman	9 The Cottages, Passage East	Nora Walsh – 3
Thomas Griffin	Seaman	21 Doyle Street, Waterford	Agnes Griffin – 9
Nicholas Hughes	Seaman	1 Roche's Street, Waterford	Elizabeth Hughes- 2
Laurence Comerford	Seaman	5 Presentation Row, Waterford	Statia Comerford-4
Michael Phelan	Seaman	43 Castle Street, Waterford	Edward Phelan, son
William H. Johnson	1st Engineer	12 Falkland Road, Egement, Cheshire	Louisa Johnson – 3
Andrew O'Beirne	2nd Engineer	9 Canada Street, Waterford	Mary O'Beirne
John Chestnutt	3rd Engineer	28 Johnstown, Waterford	Mary Chestnutt – 2
John McCarthy	Fireman	47 Lower Yellow Road, Waterford	Johanna McCarthy – 5
Michael McCarthy	Fireman	1 Stephen Street, Waterford	Ellen McCarthy – 3
Richard Kehoe	Fireman	24 Johnstown, Waterford	Hannah Kehoe – 2
Edward Hunt	Fireman	14 Alphonsus Road, Waterford	Jane Hunt – 1

## THE CREW &amp; THEIR FAMILIES - CONTD.

## S.S. CONINGBEG

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	NEXT OF KIN & DEPENDANTS
Daniel Cleary	Fireman	13 Henrietta Street, Waterford	Ellen Cleary – 5
William Dower	Fireman	23 Newport Lane, Waterford	Nora Dower – 1
James Wall	Fireman	13 Grange Terrace, Waterford	Bridget Wall – 6
Patrick Wall	Fireman	94 Gracedieu Road, Waterford	Mary Wall – 4
Patrick Cullen	Fireman	7 Chapel Lane, Waterford	Annie Cullen – 5
James Keane	Fireman	18 Passage Road, Waterford	Julia Keane – 3
P. Wextead (P Wixtead)	Donkeyman	11, Francis Street, Waterford	Mary Wextead
John Sullivan	Winchman	16 Poleberry, Waterford	Margaret Sullivan
Hugh Treacy	Steward	44 Thomas Street, Waterford	Mrs H. Treacy – 5
Elizabeth Phelan	Stewardess	2 Withington Road, Liscard, Cheshire	Miss Ellen Phelan
William Barnes	Cook	Liverpool	1
John H. Chappel	Gunner	6 Weston Street, Barton Hill, Bristol	Mr A. Chappell
Francis Bisacre	Gunner	Unkown	Francis Bisacre took the place of Gunner Charles Basford immediately prior to the sailing in December 1917
Patrick Brown	Cattleman	48 Johnstown, Waterford	
Edward Meyler	Cattleman	Lower Grange, Waterford	2
Thomas Meaney	Cattleman	4 Browne's Lane, Waterford	2
Kieran Grant	Cattleman	3 Blake's Lane, Waterford	
Walter Cullen	Cattleman	1 Newport Lane, Waterford	1
Thomas Pender	Cattleman	1 New Lane, Waterford	
Thomas Dobbyn	Cattleman	74 Doyle Street, Waterford	



## THE CREW &amp; THEIR FAMILIES - CONTD.

## S.S. CONINGBEG

NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	NEXT OF KIN & DEPENDANTS
Patrick Quinlan	Cattleman	14 Cannon Street, Waterford	
Denis McCarthy	Passenger	Greenmount, Cork	
Joseph Brosnan	Passenger	Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry	
Michael Crotty	Passenger	Carrick Road, Portlaw	
James Phelan	Passenger	Barrack Street, Waterford	

List taken from List of the Missing, Munster Express, 6th January 1918 with additional information from The Last Voyages of the Waterford Steamers by Richard McElwee

The numbers of dependants were given by the clerk of the Clyde Shipping Company and there were some errors. There were also shortly some additions as some of the wives of crew members were pregnant at the time and soon new additions arrived into a family with no bread winner.



Captain Joseph Lumley, his wife Mary Elizabeth and children Elizabeth (Lillie), William, Mary, James, Letitia, Joseph and Annie. Image courtesy of Michael Ellis.



Crew of the SS Coningbeg c.1913.  
Image courtesy of Captain James Robinson

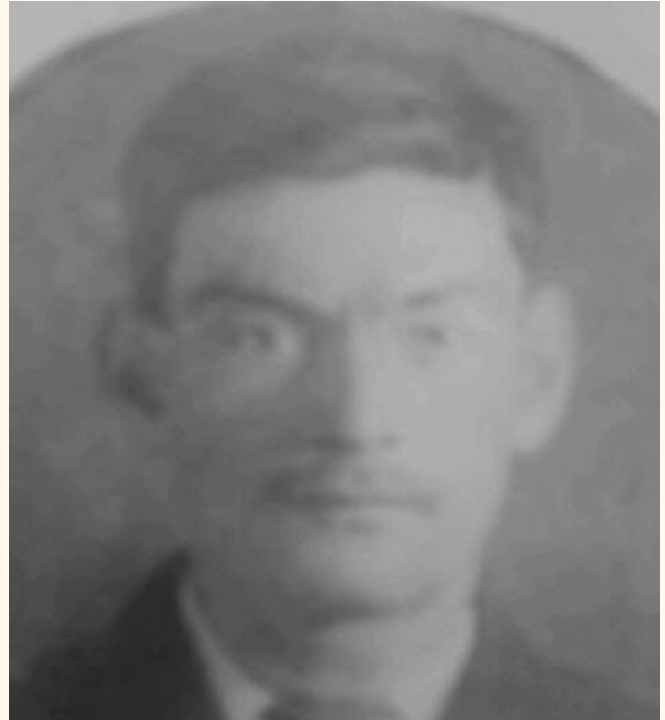
## THE CREW & THEIR FAMILIES

### SS CONINGBEG

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James Wall, Fireman, SS Coningbeg.  
Image courtesy of Marilyn Myers and Ursula Walsh.



Patrick Cullen, Fireman, SS Coningbeg.  
Image courtesy of Michael Cullen.



May and Eily Hunt, daughters of Edward Hunt, Fireman, SS Coningbeg. May was born shortly after the death of her father. Image courtesy of Liz Murphy



Bridget Wall, widow of James Wall from SS Coningbeg and sons Robert and Jack.  
Image courtesy of Marilyn Myers and Ursula Walsh

## THE CREW & THEIR FAMILIES

### SS CONINGBEG

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Edward Hunt Fireman on the SS Coningbeg, wife Jane and daughter May.  
Image courtesy of Liz Murphy



Eileen Attridge, mother of Tommy Griffin, Seaman SS Coningbeg.  
Image courtesy of Michael Griffin



Edward Phelan, seated far right. Son of Michael Phelan, SS Coningbeg and owner of Barber shop O'Connell Street. There is a story in Waterford that KptLt Hashehagen visited this barber shop and asked after the families of the crew in the SS Coningbeg.  
Image courtesy of Noel Widger



Thomas Coffey and 2 unidentified men. Image courtesy of Leo Coy

# COMPENSATION & COMMEMORATION

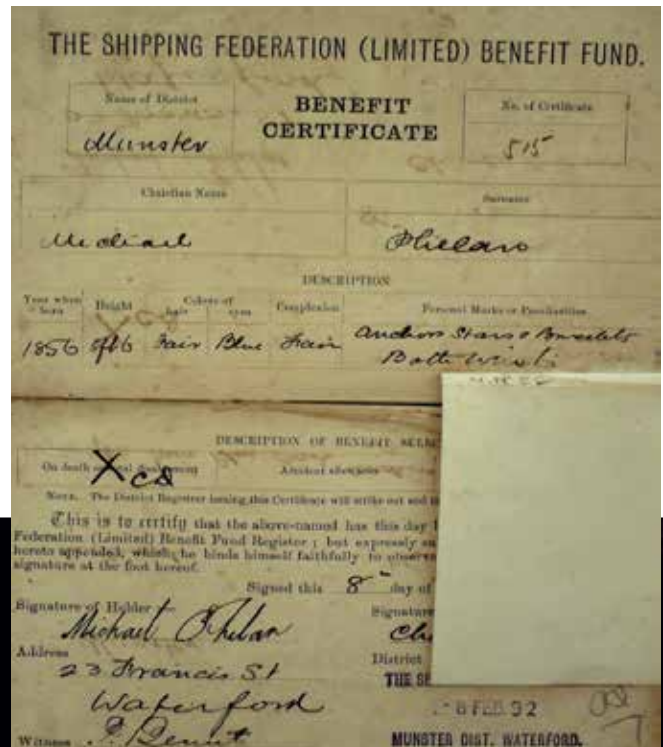
The Waterford Local Disaster Fund was set up to assist the families in the immediate aftermath and to help them to survive until such time as the insurance payment and compensations due to them could be paid. Mr. G.A. Watt from the Clyde Shipping Co. reported at the meeting for the Fund that

*The dependants of the crew of the steamers, excepting the masters, will be entitled to compensation, the maximum amount being £300 but this will take some time to get through as legal requirements must be complied with and I do not see how it can be available in less than 3 months.*

The crew would have paid into insurance schemes and were members of Sailor's and Firemen's Union.

In 1927 the Imperial War Graves Commission built a memorial to members of the Mercantile Marine who died during the First World War at Tower Hill in London and the crew of the SS Formby and SS Coningbeg were listed on this memorial. Family members were given an opportunity to order a copy of the Register and medals were issued.

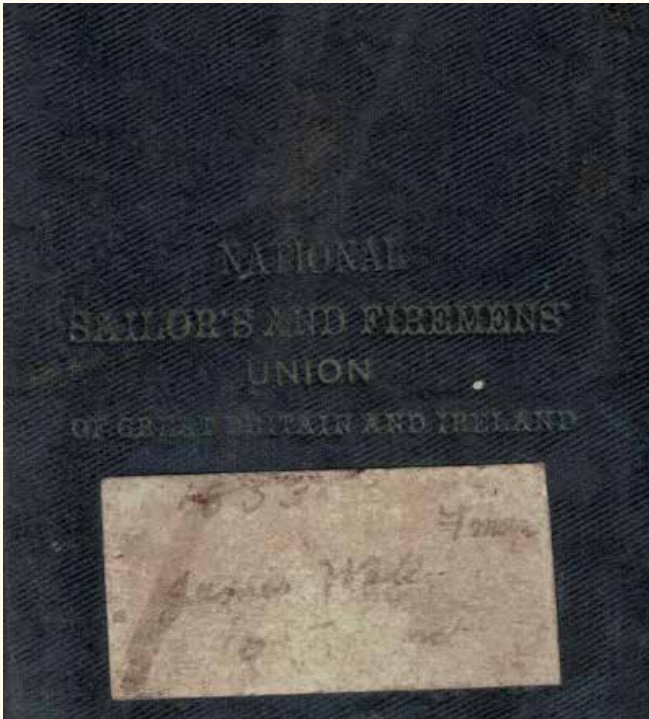
Michael Phelan, Seaman, SS Coningbeg. Shipping Federation Benefit Card. Image courtesy of Noel Widger



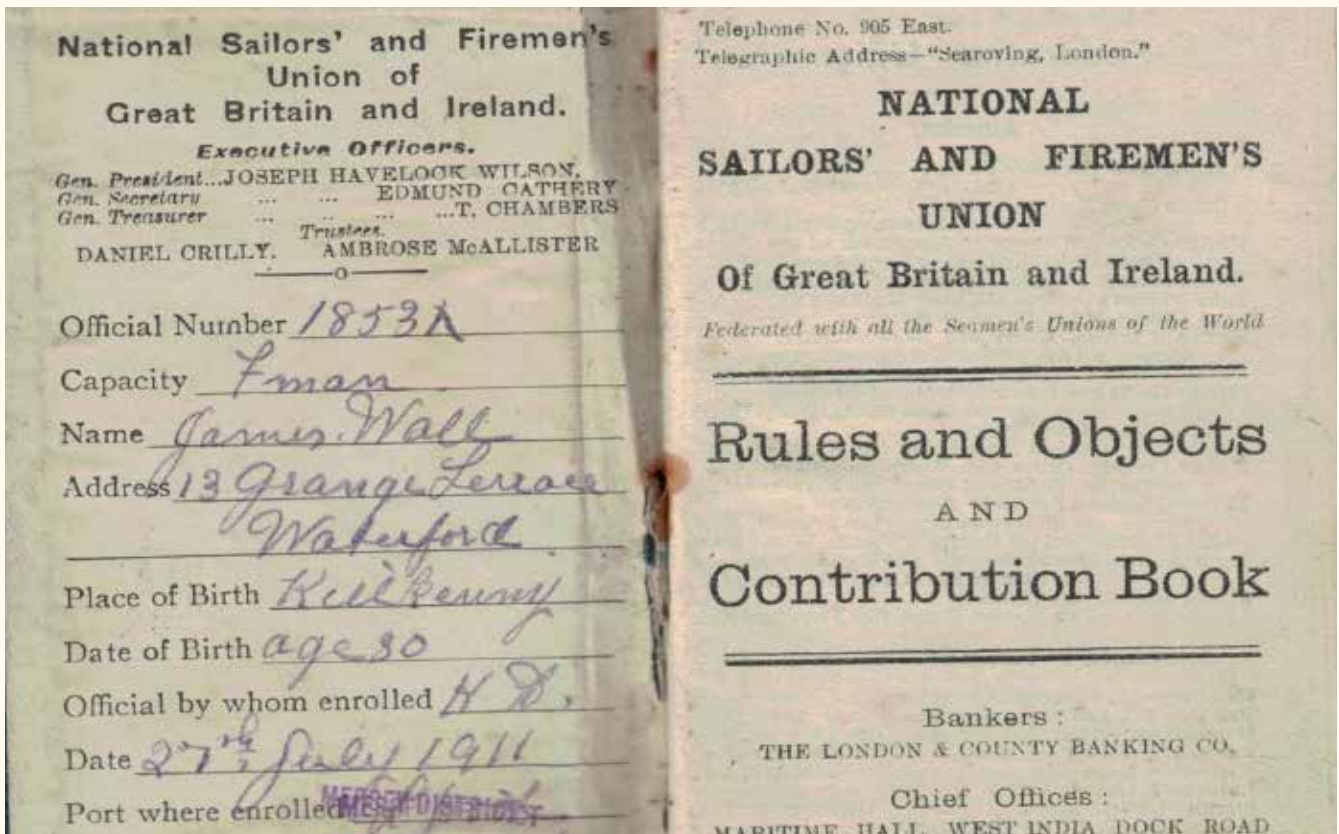
# THE SHIPPING FEDERATION, LIMITED BENEFIT CERTIFICATE.

Shipping Federation Benefit Certificate. Image courtesy of Noel Widger.

## COMPENSATION AND COMMEMORATION



Sailor's and Firemens' Union Book of James Wall, SS Coningbeg. Image courtesy of Bridie Lynch.



Union Book, James Wall, Fireman, SS Coningbeg. Image courtesy of Bridie Lynch.

## THE CREW & THEIR FAMILIES



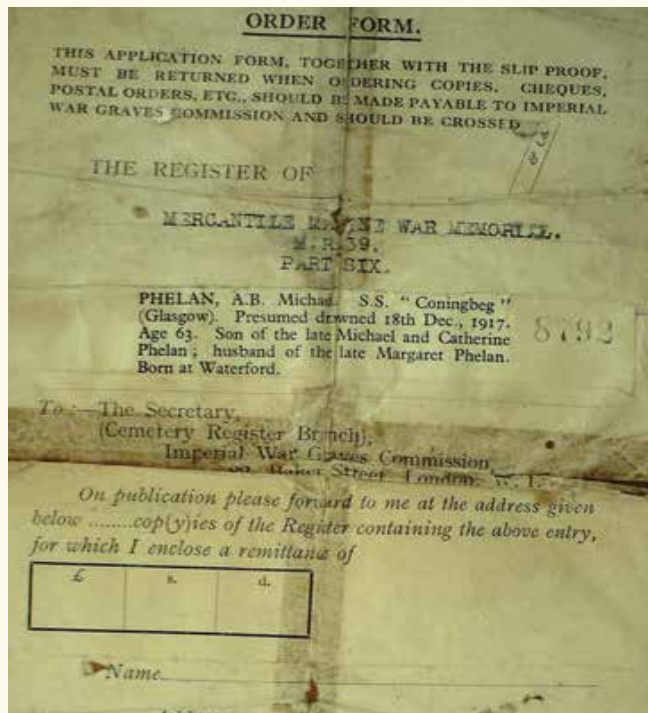
Mercantile Marine Medal  
Image courtesy of Mary Crowe



Medal issued to Patrick Cooke, Fireman, SS Formby.  
Image courtesy of Mary Crowe.



Letter regarding the Imperial War Grave Memorial Register sent to Edward Phelan, son of Michael Phelan, SS Coningbeg. Image courtesy of Noel Widger

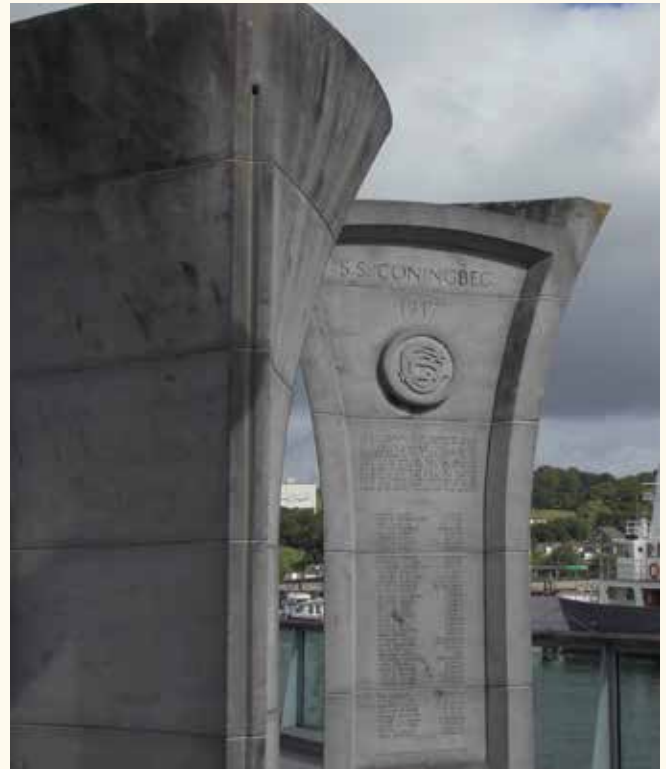


Order Form for Copy of Register from Mercantile Marine War Memorial entry for Michael Phelan, SS Coningbeg. Image courtesy of Noel Widger

## COMPENSATION AND COMMEMORATION

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In 1997 a memorial for all those lost on the SS Formby and SS Coningbeg was placed in the Quay and dedicated by President Mary Robinson.



President Mary Robinson at the unveiling of the memorial with Kathleen O'Neill (née Lumley) and her sister Cissy (Mary) Ryan.  
Image courtesy of Michael Ellis

# FURTHER SOURCES

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**The Last Voyages of the Waterford Steamers**

Richard McElwee, Waterford Book Centre, 1994

**U-Boats Westward 1914-1918**

The Log of a U-Boat Commander, Memoir of Ernst Hashagen. Putnam, 1931

**U-Boats**

[www.uboot.net](http://www.uboot.net)

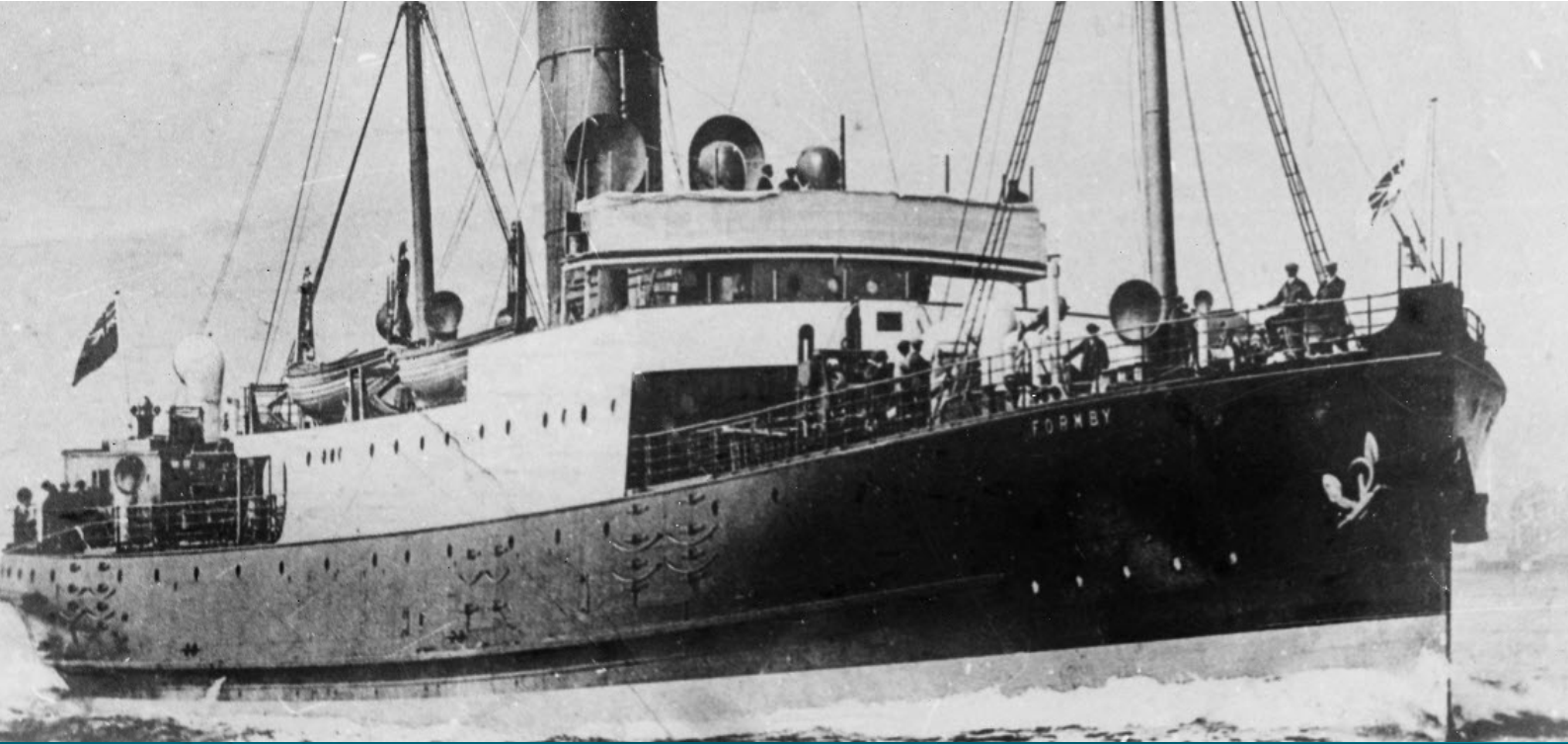
**Imperial War Museum**

[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

**Europeana 1914-1918**

[www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu)





S.S. FORMBY  
1917  
S.S. CORINGBEG  
1917

THE WATERFORD  
SHIPPING DISASTER  
1917

