

## **Clonbur link to R.M.S Titanic**

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012 the Centenary of the sinking of R.M.S Titanic in the North Atlantic, the Clonbur community remembered and honoured one of their own who sadly lost his life on that fateful night.

John Flynn was a native of the townland of Carrahakeen. John was home on a holiday visiting his widowed sister Bridget. Like thousands of other young Irish men and women, John had immigrated to America to 'seek his fortune'. John settled in Boston, Massachusetts, where he worked in the steel industry prior to opening his own business. He met and married Mary Cassidy who hailed from the Doorus Peninsula, Cornamona. When John sailed for Ireland they had a family of six children ranging from 19 years to 3 years.

John spent approximately a month at home with his sister Bridget to help her on the small family farm. After receiving a letter from his wife, he decided immediately to return to Boston. He bought his ticket in Joe Kyne's General Merchants shop, in Clonbur village (Fair Hill House Hotel, today). On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, John made his way to Ballinrobe where he boarded a train to take him to Queenstown (Cobh). Along with hundreds of other passengers John boarded the ill-fated Titanic for his return journey to his wife and children.

Weather reports of that night were that it was a very cold dark frosty night. At 11.40pm R.M.S Titanic hit a massive iceberg and its fate was sealed. At 2.40am the mighty 'unsinkable Titanic' started to sink, it broke in two and made its slow decent to its final resting place at the bottom of the North Atlantic. Tragically John Flynn was among the 1,517 souls who lost their lives that night. If his body was recovered it was never identified.

**Programme of events for Memorial Day:** *Fr. Martin Moran who said the Mass and blessed the house and Memorial Stone is a relative of John Flynn. (Fr. Martins, Great Grandfather was 1<sup>st</sup> cousin to John Flynn.*

**1.15.** *Blessing of ruin of John Flynn Family home in Carrahakeen.*

**2pm.** *Memorial Mass for happy repose of John and Mary Flynn & all who lost their lives at the sinking of Titanic.*

**3pm.** *Blessing and unveiling of Memorial Stone which included traditional music- bagpipes, accordion playing and singing. Traditional Dress was optional. Light refreshments were provided for all.*

For many years the local knowledge of the loss of one of Clonbur's native sons on the Titanic was very obscure and almost totally forgotten. It was as a result of a random search of 'The Titanic Passenger list', on line that his name and place of origin was noted. Otherwise, the Centenary Memorial Day would have slipped by unnoticed. As a result of that wonderful thought-provoking, memorial, emotional day and the unveiling of the Memorial Stone, John Flynn of Carrahakeen, Clonbur is now immortalised in stone and will be remembered and prayed for by all who pass by, or stop to read the inscription and maybe rest awhile to reflect.

The Memorial Stone is situated on the corner of the Carrahakeen road and the Clonbur to Cong/Ballinrobe road, almost opposite Burke's Garage. John Flynn would have traversed these roads

when he lived here in his childhood days and when he was returning to Ballinrobe to board the train to Queenstown.

**Present Day Connection:** In July 2013 two of John Flynn's great great granddaughters, Kendall and Justine Hufford, accompanied by their mother Gretchen Hufford visited the Clonbur area where they met with the small committee responsible for the Memorial Day and they also met with their relatives. They attended a special Mass in St. Patrick's Church, Clonbur, for John and Mary Flynn and family. They were taken to visit John Flynn's blessed ruined cottage and Memorial Stone.

***May all who perished on the Titanic rest in peace? Ar Déis Dé go raibh a h-anam go léir.***

(More photographs to follow)

*Ann McGuigan, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015.*