

# THE MATTHEW SADLIER MEMORIAL PROJECT

## A TITANIC STORY

*Linda Flynn*

THE STORY OF the Titanic and its ill-fated fatal maiden journey is very well known all around the world. When the ship was launched in 1912 it was supposed to be unsinkable and yet sadly the unthinkable happened with 1503 people dying after the ship crashed into an iceberg and sank. There were many Irish people on board the ship, amongst them Matthew Sadlier, a farm labourer aged 19 years from Mohill, County Leitrim.



Matthew Sadlier was the son of Matthew and Kate (Catherine) Sadlier from Clooncoe, Rinn, Mohill County Leitrim. Young Matthew was the youngest of nine children, seven of whom were still alive on census night 1901. The family were living in the shadow of their employers at Lough Rynn, Mohill, their ancestors had served as land agents for the now

■ **The Senior Trade Commissioner at the Embassy of Canada to Ireland, Suzanne Cormie joins Matthew Sadlier Committee chairman Peadar Flynn on stage and addresses the crowds.**



■ **Captain Michael Kelly and first officer John Flanagan on board their fabulously built scaled-replica of the Titanic.**

infamous Lord Leitrim; however, like many families living in County Leitrim at the turn of the century, they had fallen on hard times.

By the time of the 1911 Census, Matthew (Snr) was working as a shepherd. His wife, Kate, at 59, was no longer working and only two children remained at home: Catherine, aged 19 and Matthew Jnr, 18, who is listed as an agricultural labourer. We know that at least some of the family had already opted to emigrate to America because Matthew Jnr was planning to join his oldest brother, Thomas, in Lakewood, New Jersey. This fact is listed amongst the Titanic records. Sadly enough he never reached his destination to start a new life.

The project was initiated by Mohill Foroige in 2012 but was relaunched at a public meeting in February 2014 when the Matthew Sadlier Memorial Committee was formed to

take charge of the project.

The Members of the Matthew Sadlier Memorial Committee are: Peadar Flynn, Chairperson; Olivia Mulkerins, Secretary; Michael Kelly, Treasurer; Linda Flynn, PRO; Sarah O'Connell, Mohill Foroige Leader; Irene Casey, Bridie McIntyre, Ruth Kerr, Ivy Boddy, Rose Keegan, Thomas Glancy, Thomas Mulligan, Kieran O'Beirne, Mervin Lloyd, and John Ward, ordinary members. The Matthew Sadlier Memorial Commit-

tee have worked together with Leitrim County Council and other agencies and raised the necessary funds to commission and install a memorial seat, which has now been placed in Mohill.

### The Titanic Memorial Festival

The Titanic Memorial Festival got underway on Friday night, April 10th, 2015. The Matthew Sadlier Weekend Launch and Variety

■ **Matthew Sadlier's niece, Mavis McElroy, was very honoured to unveil the beautiful Matthew Sadlier Memorial Seat, a fitting tribute to her uncle.**



Show took place in the Canon Donohoe Hall and was a great success. With the Little Acorn Players starting off with a Hilarious comedy one act play. Chris Cronin was fabulous both as host and giving us some wonderful music. Mohill Foroige was singing beautifully. Roisin Kennedy's Dancers gave a fantastic show of their dancing skills. Frank Feery got the crowds going with his lovely music. Michael Kelly and his officers presented a fitting tribute to the man to whom this festival was dedicated, Matthew Sadlier, and all those who drowned on the Titanic. Carmel Hackett performed her wonderful songs. Greg a singer guitar player from Carrick on Shannon gave us a flavor of his musical talent.

Saturday 11th April there was an all-day exhibition of Titanic films in the Canon Donohoe Hall, including the 1955 classic, A Night to Remember, which documents the drama which unfolded the night the Titanic sank. A wonderful day was had by all. The exhibition was very well supported and we raised much needed funds for North West Hospice and Shout in the process. At 6pm The Matthew Sadlier Memorial Committee were joined by the Sadlier Family for the unveiling of a memorial plaque at Matthew Sadlier's Home place at Clooncoe, Rinn, Mohill by Mavis McElroy, Matthew's niece, his oldest living relative. Matthew must have been pleased we were honoring his memory as the heavy rain stopped just in time for the unveiling, allowing



■ **Mavis McElroy, niece of the late Matthew Sadlier seated on the Memorial Seat that bears his name joined by family members from All over Ireland and Great Britain gathered for the Memorial Weekend in Mohill.**

■ **Matthew Sadlier Committee and Representatives of Foroige.**

*Back Row: Kieran O'Beirne, Mervyn Lloyd, Sarah O'Connell, Thomas Mulligan, Linda Flynn & Michael Kelly.*

*Front Row: Ivy Boddy, Olivia Mullkerrins, Peadar Flynn, Bridie McIntyre & Irene Casey.*



the sun to shine down on the event. After this we enjoyed a Cead Míle Fáilte at the Sadlier family homestead, hosted by Paddy Kennedy, the current owner, and Karen who provided tea and snacks. The relatives, Foroige and the Committee had a chance to soak up the atmosphere in the area around Matthew's

homestead.

On Sunday 12th April a special ecumenical service took place in honour of Matthew Sadlier, his family and all who perished on the Titanic, in St Mary's Church of Ireland Mohill. The Senior Trade Commissioner at the Embassy of Canada to Ireland, Suzanne Cormie, rung the bell in the Church in memory of all who perished. There was a colorful parade led by the Kiltubrid Pipeband with a horse drawn carriage and many vehicles themed to the time of the Titanic.

The main attraction was the Titanic, a wonderful scaled copy designed and built by John Flanagan and Michael Kelly. This Titanic has become a very popular attraction to many shows, parades and events. This could not have come about without the great dedication of both John and Michael and their generous sponsors and their families who supported them all the way.

The parade was reviewed by many guests. Committee members were joined by members of Leitrim County Council. St. Manchan's National School Choir sang beautifully and Sean Nós ar an tSionann danced wonder-

fully. The Matthew Sadler Memorial Seat, installed beside the O'Carolan Monument in the town, was then unveiled by Mavis McElroy with refreshments served in The Hunt Hall afterwards. Presentations were made to the Sadler family members. Pat McKenna and Glenshane Country played in the Canon Donohoe Hall from 10 pm to celebrate the successful completion of the project. After this, at 12.30am, there was a Candlelit Procession from the Canon Donohoe Hall to the Matthew Sadler Memorial Seat to finish of the festival.

**Matthew Sadler Remembrance Day 2016**

On Sunday 10th April 2016 the Matthew Sadler Memorial Committee organized a Remembrance Day, in honour of Matthew and all those who died on the Titanic. Sunday Worship Service took place in St Mary's Church of Ireland, Mohill led by Rev Linda Frost. In the evening a remembrance gathering was held at the Matthew Sadler Memorial Seat. Peadar Flynn, Chairman of the Matthew Sadler Memorial Committee, welcomed all who gathered especially the members of the Sadler Family who traveled attend the Remembrance. Fr. Pat Murphy lead the prayers, this concluded by assembled singing the final hymn "Nearer my God to thee" known to be played by the musicians as Titanic sank. Michael Kelly gave a speech and together with Mavis laid a wreath on the seat. Finally the Titanic bell was rung. Everybody was invited to Casey's Pub where delicious refreshments were served and the evening continued with dancing to the wonderful music from Chris Cronin. Mohill Foroige proudly displayed the Foroige Citizenship Award they won for their achievement in taking part in this project. Michael Kelly made a presentation to Mavis McElroy. John McElroy, Mavis' son, thanked the committee and was happy to be in Mohill one year after Mavis



■ **Archive photos of the Titanic and the harbour in Queenstown (Cobh) where Matthew Sadler started his illfated journey.**

unveiled the memorial seat. The Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to Matthew Sadler Project and helped bringing it to a successful conclusion.

**Acknowledgements**

The Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to Matthew Sadler Project and helped bringing it to a successful conclusion. Michael Flynn of Leitrim County Council was very helpful to the committee in bringing about the placement of the seat with the redesigning of the site at Lower Main Street



■ **The memorial plaque place at the Sadler Homestead at Clooncoe, Rinn Mohill also unveiled by Mavis McElroy.**

Mohill and the plaque at the Sadler Homestead in Clooncoe. Joey Smith the craftsman who created the seat did an excellent job in designing and making the seat and plaque, A big thank you goes to Gortletteragh National School Reunion who donated 1000 Euro towards this project. Mattie Kilroy, Caltra, Ballinasloe County Galway, who contributed to the project by sharing his fast knowledge of the Titanic story and also supported the project by donating copies of his book "The Titanic, The West of Ireland Connections" to be sold in aid of the project. Thanks very much to Therese Foy who made many wonderful photographs of the Matthew Sadler Memorial Seat dedication. Thanks very much to Chrissie Kelly who was always there to help out. Thanks also to Gerry Kilrane who researched the Sadler family history and the local history and shared the information he gathered. Thanks to the Mohill Family Support Centre for their support. Last but by no means least a great big Thank You to the Relatives of the late Matthew Sadler who embraced our project. They were very generous to donate to the project and also attended the organized events.

A limited edition booklet was made by the committee for the Matthew Sadler Memorial Weekend. A wonderful commemorative limited edition DVD was produced with all the highlights of very memorable weekend. The festival was covered by the RTE news and Irish TV and even was show in the USA in an Irish News program. This project has put Mohill on the map on a National and International scale and will be a valuable asset to attract tourists and historians to the Mohill Area.

*The Matthew Sadler Memorial Page on Facebook was set up to promote the Matthew Sadler Memorial Committee and is still updated regularly with items of interest to those interested in The Titanic story.*