

134: Thomas Evans

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Thomas Evans

Rank: Able Seaman

Battalion / Regiment: Mercantile Marine S.S. "Lusitania" (Liverpool)

Service Number: ? Date of Death: 07 May 1915 Age at Death: 49

Buried / Commemorated at: Tower Hill Memorial, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Greater London

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Evans and husband of Alice Evans (née Roberts), of Pensby Lane, Barnston, Cheshire. Born at Parkgate

Personal correspondence with Peter Kelly, an Irish researcher who has researched the lives of all those on board the final voyage of the *Lusitania*, together with information at the Liverpool Maritime Museum, has provided much detailed information on Thomas Evans and this is contained in the text and text boxes later in this section.

Thomas was the fifth child to survive (two younger children had died) of Parkgate fisherman Samuel Morris Evans and Jane. Samuel married Jane Mealor of Neston at Our Lady & St Nicholas & St Anne, the Liverpool Parish Church in late 1851 and Richard, their first child, was born in April 1852. In the 1871 census the family was living in Parkgate where Samuel was a fisherman, an occupation he maintained through his life:

Samuel Evans	Head	Married	40		Fisherman	De Neston
Jane	Wife	"	36		"	"
Richard	Son	unmarried	18		"	"
Hannah	Daughter	"	16		"	"
Samuel Evans	Son	"	9		Scholar	Christin Neston
Lemuel	"	"	7		"	"
Thomas	"	"	5		"	"
George	"	"	3		"	"
Mary J.	Daughter	"	1		"	"

1871 census (extract) – Parkgate

Samuel Evans	40	fisherman	born Neston
Jane	36		born Neston
Richard	18	fisherman	born Neston
Hannah	16		born Neston
Samuel	9		born Neston
Lemuel	7		born Neston
Thomas	5		born Neston
George	3		born Neston
Mary J.	1		born Neston

Thomas was born on 3 January 1866 and was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 2 February when Samuel was recorded as a fisherman of Parkgate.

The family was still living in Parkgate at the time of the 1881 census – there were then still seven children living at home with Betsy and Martha having been born since the 1871 census and Richard and Hannah having both married.

Samuel Evans	Head	48		Fisherman	do Parkgate
Jane do	Wife	48			do Ness
Samuel do	Son	18		do	do Parkgate
Lemuel do	Son	16		do	do do
Thomas do	Son	14		Scholar	do do
George Evans	Son	12		Scholar	do Parkgate
Mary J Evans	Daughter	10		do	do do
Betsy do	Daughter	8		do	do do
Martha do	Daughter	6		do	do do

1881 census (extract) – Parkgate

Samuel Evans	48	fisherman	born Parkgate
Jane	48		born Ness
Samuel	18	fisherman	born Parkgate
Lemuel	16	fisherman	born Parkgate
Thomas	14		born Parkgate
George	12		born Parkgate
Mary J.	10		born Parkgate
Betsy	8		born Parkgate
Martha	6		born Parkgate

The details known for the children of Samuel and Jane Evans (all the children were baptised at Neston Parish Church) are:

- Richard Thomas bpt 2 May 1852 Richard (20, fisherman) married widow Ann Rodgers (25, of Neston) at the Parish Church on 24 June 1872 (Ann was recorded as being illegitimate and both made their X mark on the register). Richard was a sea fisherman for all his life and the family lived at Leighton, Parkgate. However, by 1911, Richard and Ann were living at Station Cottages, Heswall where he was recorded to have been married for 39 years with 13 children, four of whom had died. Richard was then 59 and Ann was 68. Richard died in late 1931 aged 79 but at least one son, John, had followed him in the fishing trade.
- Hannah bpt 2 July 1854 Hannah Evans may have married a William Teague (but not at Neston) in mid-1873. Nothing further is known.
- Mary bpt 29 February 1856, buried 17 November 1858 aged 3.
- Samuel bpt 11 June 1858, buried 28 April 1859 aged 11 months.
- Samuel bpt 6 September 1861 Samuel had married by the time of the 1891 census when he was recorded as a fisherman, aged 28, living in Heswall with his wife Margaret (25, born Flint) and two small children. In the 1911 census, aged 48, he was still a fisherman and was living at 9 Station Cottages, Heswall, with Margaret (45, born Chirk) and eight of their children (all born Heswall). Margaret was recorded as being employed in 'fishing and shrimping' and a son, Samuel (17) was working as a fisherman with his father. Samuel and Margaret had thirteen children of whom, in 1911, ten had survived.
- Lemuel bpt 2 February 1866 The baptismal register records *born & privately baptised two years before*. Lemuel married Ellen (sometimes Eleanor) Pritchard of Little Neston in Liverpool in July / September 1883. Lemuel was also a fisherman and although their first child, Eleanor, was born in Parkgate the family moved to Liscard, to Heswall and (by 1898) to near Mostyn. Lemuel Evans remained a fisherman and in 1901 and

1911 was living in Mostyn with his wife, Ellen / Eleanor. In 1911 two of his six children still at home were fishermen – Morris (17) and Joseph (15) – and Lemuel and Ellen had had nine children of whom the six still at home were the only survivors.

- Thomas born on 3 January 1866, bpt 2 February 1866 Thomas is the subject of this account.
- George bpt 15 May 1868 George married Sarah Ann Price of Heswall in Liverpool in late 1898 and in 1901 they were living on Riverbank Road, Heswall. George, a fisherman living on his own account, was 33 and Sarah was 22. By 1911 they had moved to Llanerchymor near Holywell where George, now 43, was a fisherman on his own account. George and Sarah had been married for 13 years but had no children. However, in the household, was Thomas Price (18, born Pensby), a fisherman, who is recorded as an adopted son. It is possible that Thomas was a brother of Sarah.
- Mary Jane bpt 25 March 1870 Nothing further is known.
- Martha bpt 7 November 1875 Nothing further is known.

By the time of the 1891 census Samuel Evans snr, still a fisherman, had moved his family to Wallasey although the reason for this move is unknown:

Samuel Evans	Head	all	66	fisherman				do	do
Jane	Wife	all	62					do	Neston
Thomas	Son	S	25	fisherman				do	do
George	Son	S	23	fisherman				do	do
Bergabette	Daughter	S	14					do	do
Martha Evans	Daughter	S						do	do

1891 census (extract) – 6 String Hey Road, Liscard, Wallasey

Samuel Evans	61	fisherman	born Neston
Jane	56		born Neston
Thomas	25	fisherman	born Neston
George	23	fisherman	born Neston
Elizabeth	17		born Neston
Martha	15		born Neston

Although Thomas Evans was recorded in the census as being at home, with his parents, he was also recorded, as a 'visitor', in the home of farmer Joseph Roberts, and his sister Alice, in Thurstaston:

Joseph Roberts	Head	✓	29	Farmer				do	Thurstaston
Alice	Sister	✓	25					do	do
Thomas Evans	Visitor	✓	25	fisherman				do	Parkgate

1891 census (extract) – Thurstaston

Joseph Roberts	29	farmer	born Thurstaston
Alice Roberts	25	sister	born Thurstaston
Thomas Evans	25	visitor, fisherman	born Parkgate

Thomas married Alice Roberts on 30 March 1892 at St Bartholomew's Church, Thurstaston; Alice was the daughter of Barnston stonemason Edward and Alice Roberts, and at the time of the 1901 census Thomas and Alice were living in Pensby with their two children:

Thomas Evans	Head	M.	35	10	residing school	U.B. Seaman R.N.R.	then	do
Alice do	Wife	W.	33					Parkgate Thurstaston
Thomas Evans	Son		6					Pensby, Ches
Alfred E. do	Son		5					do do
Arthur R. do	Son		3					do do

1901 census (extract) – Pensby

Thomas Evans	35	A.B. Seaman R.N.R. Navyman	born Parkgate
Alice	33		born Thurstaston
Thomas	6		born Pensby
Alfred E.	5		born Pensby
Arthur R.	3		born Pensby

Thomas Evans was recorded as an Able Seaman with the Royal Naval Reserves. Wikipedia records that:

The Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) has its origins in the Register of Seamen, established in 1835 to identify men for naval service in the event of war, but just 400 volunteered for duty in the Crimean War in 1854 out of 250,000 on the Register. This led to a Royal Commission on Manning the Navy in 1858, which in turn led to the Naval Reserve Act of 1859. This established the RNR as a reserve of professional seamen from the British Merchant Navy and fishing fleets, who could be called upon during times of war to serve in the regular Royal Navy. The RNR was originally a reserve of seamen only, but in 1862 this was extended to include the recruitment and training of reserve officers.

A number of drill-ships were established at the main seaports around the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland, and seamen left their vessels to undertake gunnery training in a drill-ship for one month every year. After initial shore training, officers embarked in larger ships of the Royal Navy's fleet (usually battleships or battle cruisers) for one year, to familiarise themselves with gunnery and naval practice. Although under the operational authority of the Admiral Commanding Reserves, the RNR was administered jointly by the Admiralty and the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen at the Board of Trade throughout its separate existence. In 1910, the RNR (Trawler Section) was formed to recruit and train fishermen for wartime service in minesweepers and other small warships.

Officers and men of the RNR soon gained the respect of their naval counterparts with their professional skills in navigation and seamanship and served with distinction in a number of conflicts, including the Boer War and the Boxer Rebellion. Prior to the First World War, one hundred RNR officers were transferred to permanent careers in the regular navy—forever after referred to as "the hungry hundred". In their professional careers, many RNR officers went on to command the largest passenger liners of the day and some also held senior positions in the shipping industry and the government. On mobilisation in 1914, the RNR consisted of 30,000 officers and men.

In the 1911 census Thomas Evans was 'away from home', presumably at sea:

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)			(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)		
I certify that— (1) All the signs on this Schedule are entered in the proper set columns, (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons, (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have omitted all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be fictitious, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous. Initials of Enumerator <i>H Jones</i>			I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature <i>Alice Evans</i> Postal Address <i>Pensby Lane Barnston.</i>		

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1911 census – Pensby Lane, Barnston

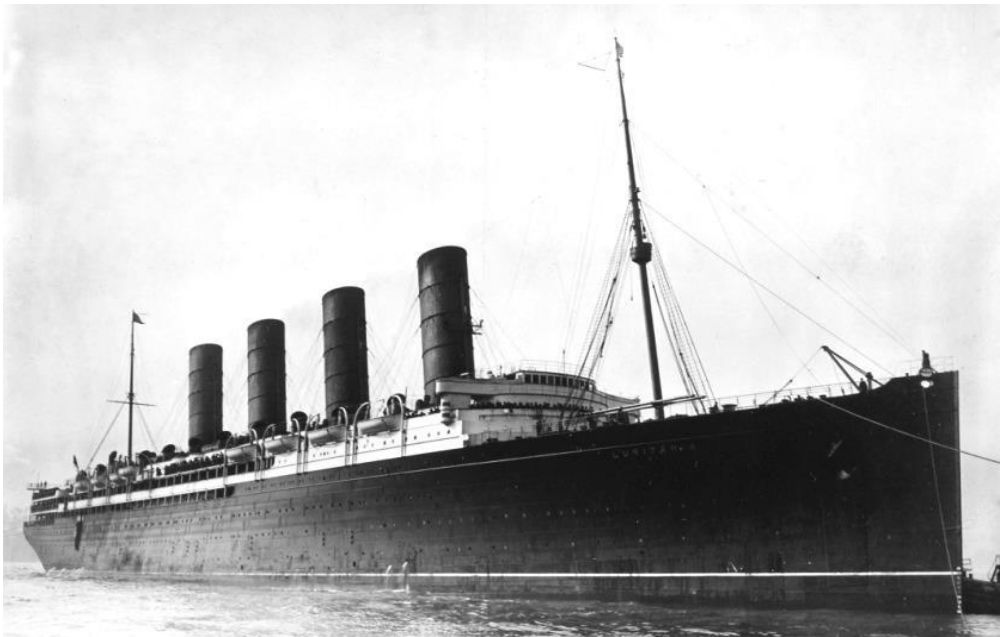
Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Birth
Alice Evans	46	Husband away from home	born Thurstaston
Thomas	16	errand boy, grocer's	born Pensby
Alfred	14		born Pensby
Arthur	13		born Pensby
George	9		born Pensby
Hugh	6		born Pensby

Thomas and Alice had been married for 19 years and all five children had survived.

Thomas Evans signed on at Liverpool on 12 April 1915.

When the RMS *Lusitania* left New York for Liverpool on what would be her final voyage on 1 May 1915, she carried a crew of 696 and 1266 passengers, many being American. It has been recorded that Thomas had been on the bridge with Quartermaster Hugh Johnston just before the torpedo hit. Reports differ on whether he was below decks in the mess hall during the sinking or if he had been on the bridge to help operate the telegraphic emergency equipment as the *Lusitania* went down. As noted earlier Peter Kelly, an Irish researcher who concentrates mainly on researching the lives of all those on board the final voyage of the *Lusitania*, has provided the following information, quoted here without amendment, (and now on 'The Lusitania Resource' website at <http://www.rmsslusitania.info/>):

'The Lusitania Resource' website notes that Thomas Evans junior has expressed anger and suspicion that the Irish were re-fuelling the German U-boats during World War I. Both Evans and his son Thomas married women named Alice.



Able Seaman Thomas Evans [Part 1]

Thomas Evans was born on 3rd January 1866, at Parkgate, Cheshire, England, the seventh child of eleven of Samuel Morris and Jane Evans, (née Mealor). Four of his brothers survived to maturity, Richard, Samuel, Lemuel and George and also four of his sisters, Hannah, Mary Jane, Betsey and Martha. Their father was a well-known fisherman in Parkgate.

Thomas was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 2nd February 1866 and named after his maternal grandfather Thomas Mealor. He was educated in Parkgate, leaving school in 1880 and soon after, went to sea. For about ten years, he was a full-time seaman and sailed to China on the tea clippers and thereafter, and for the rest of his life, he would alternate between making deep sea trips, fishing in the Irish Sea and further afield, and helping his father and brothers with their fishing nets. He had joined the Cunard Steam Ship Company many years before the Great War and served on the *Lucania*, the *Campania* and the *Mauretania*.

On 30 March 1892, he married Alice Roberts, who was the daughter of Edward Roberts, a well-known master mason, who had been involved in the building of many local churches and houses for important local landowners. For a while before their marriage, Thomas had lived at the Roberts' family home, Hillside Farm at Thurstaston, where Alice had kept house for her parents and after their deaths, for her brother. Some time after their marriage, the couple moved to 'Marlfield Cottage', 384 Pensby Lane, Pensby, Cheshire, which Edward Roberts had built for his daughter as a form of dowry. There, they had six children, a daughter, stillborn in 1893, and five sons, Thomas, born in 1894, Alfred Edward, born in 1896, Arthur Richard, born in 1898, George, born in 1901 and Joseph Hugh, born in 1904.

Thomas Evans had the reputation of being a strict father, but the family home was always 'open house' and he and Alice entertained friends there, drank beer and sang, with Thomas occasionally playing the glass harmonica, a skill which he learned at sea. When not drinking at home, his favourite pub was The Black Horse in nearby Heswall where he would drink with his fisherman brothers Richard ('Dick') and Samuel. Occasionally, Lemuel and George would join them there.

Between October and March each year from 1901 onwards, until his death, Thomas senior was employed as a puntsman on the River Dee, by Messrs. Dockray and Brook, renowned local wildfowling, who sold birds in the food markets of Birkenhead and Liverpool. On one occasion Thomas Evans and Leonard Brook were wildfowling when they spotted the No. 9 river buoy which had broken loose from its mooring and they became famous for managing to salvage it.

As a puntsman, he was also an excellent shot and once held the record for duck shooting on the Dee by bringing down 87 birds with three rounds. He regularly took Hugh Brocklebank of the Liverpool shipping company The Brocklebank Line, duck shooting.

They had become firm friends despite the disparity in their ages and social positions, when Hugh Brocklebank was convalescing at the nearby family home, after being wounded during the Anglo/Boer war. In appreciation of their friendship, the Evans' fifth son, Joseph Hugh, was named after the ship owner.

Through his knowledge of the River Dee, Thomas Evans was also associated with Thomas Alfred Coward the foremost authority of that time, on the ornithology of the north-west. With the help of Evans and Messrs. Dockray and Brook, Coward was able to publish the definitive work on the estuary - The Vertebrate Fauna of Cheshire and Liverpool Bay, in 1910.

Thomas Evans signed on at Liverpool on 12th April 1915 for the Lusitania's final trans-Atlantic crossing, as an able seaman in the Deck Department. His monthly wage was £5-5s.-0d., (£5.25p). He joined ship at 7 a.m. on the morning of 17th April, before the liner left the River Mersey for the last time. He was appointed as one of the two helmsmen on board, the other being Able Seaman Hugh Johnston.

[Continued in the following text box]

Able Seaman Thomas Evans [Part 2] [Continued from the previous text box]

He was on duty on the bridge from the late morning of 7th May, during which time he carried out Captain Turner's orders to 'zigzag' the ship to confuse a potential submarine attack. Able Seaman Johnston took over the wheel at 2 p.m. just before the ship was torpedoed and Thomas Evans went below. It is said that he had just reached the petty officers' mess deck in the heart of the ship when the liner was struck and that consequently, he never had any chance to get back to the deck.

His body was never recovered and identified afterwards and as he has no known grave, he is commemorated on the Mercantile Marine Memorial at Tower Hill, London. He was aged 49 years.

He is also commemorated on the family grave in the churchyard of Christ Church, Barnston. The inscription on the headstone states: -

**In Loving Memory of
our dear father
THOMAS EVANS,
WHO LOST HIS LIFE THROUGH THE SINKING
OF THE 'LUSITANIA' 7 MAY 1915, AGED 47 YEARS**

It appears that his age at death, incised on the headstone, is not correct. His name is also engraved on a brass plaque within the church.

In common with all the crew lost in the disaster, Thomas Evans was paid until 8th May 1915, 24 hours after the Cunard had gone down, the balance of wages owing to him, £4-0s-8d, (£4.3p), being forwarded to his widow Alice, in August 1915. In addition, The Liverpool and London War Risks Insurance Association Limited granted a yearly pension to Alice Evans to compensate her for the loss of her husband. This amounted to £41-12s-11d. (£41.64½p.) which was payable at the rate of £3-9s-5d (£3.47p) per month.

Family lore states that Arthur 'Archie' Evans was scheduled to travel to New York with his father on the Cunarder's final voyage, but an accident prevented his making the voyage. His brother Alfred was given the unenviable task of breaking the news of their father's death to their mother and it is also said that Hugh Evans developed a speech impediment which stayed with him for the rest of his life because of the shock that the news gave him. Family anger at Thomas Evans' loss was more directed towards the attitude of Cunard officials than to the Germans, which left Alice Evans, newly widowed and with three sons in the Army and two young ones at home, in extreme financial difficulties.

In a letter to Graham Maddocks, written in 1999, her granddaughter Pauline Evans said: -

My mother told me that my grandmother fretted very much after his death and longed to get close to where the tragic event took place but things were different in those days, funds were insufficient and she had her five boys to look after.

Thomas Evans junior served as a sergeant in The Grenadier Guards in France and died in 1973, aged 79 years, Alfred served as a private in The Cheshire Regiment, in France, Flanders, Egypt and Mesopotamia and died aged 85 years, in 1981 and Arthur served as a quartermaster-sergeant in The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in France and died aged 67 years, in 1965. George Evans died in 1959, aged 58 years, and Hugh died aged 86, in 1990. Their mother Alice had died, aged 56 years, in November 1921. Her age at death on the family headstone, like that of her husband, is also incorrect!

Members of the Evans family are still living in Marlfield Cottage today!



Thomas and Alice Evans, apparently on their wedding day (30 March 1892). Both Thomas and Alice would have been 26.
[photo: courtesy of Val Steele]



Postcard depicting the sinking of the *Lusitania*.



Thomas Evans, supposedly onboard the *Lusitania*
[photo: courtesy Val Steele]

Of the children of Thomas and Alice Evans it is known that

Alfred Edward Evans married Nancy Helena Davies at Holy Trinity Church, Hoylake, in late 1921 and they are recorded in the 1939 Register at 'Evanda', Pensby Road, Pensby:

Alfred E Evans	born 22 October 1896	grounds man on golf links
Nancy H	born 4 June 1900	
Alfred T	born 16 November 1923	apprentice painter
John A P	born 8 August 1928	
Helen Davies	born 5 September 1869	widow, retired householder

Nancy Evans died on Wirral in early 1976 and Alfred died on Wirral in mid-1981. Joseph Hugh Evans (born 15 October 1904) married Eveline M Rose (born 11 May 1909) at St John's Church, Great Sutton, in mid-1930 and at the time of the 1939 Register (29 September) they were living at Marlfield Cottage, Pensby Road, Pensby. Joseph was then recorded as a water service layer. It is not known when Joseph and Eveline died.

Arthur Richard Evans married Hilda Clarke (a sister of the Elsie Clarke who married George Evans?) at Christ Church, Barnston, in late 1921 and at the time of the 1939 Register they were living at Threeways, Whaley Lane, Irby:

Arthur R Evans	born 14 February 1898	builder's labourer
Hilda	born 2 August 1895	

One line of the record has been redacted

Stanley	born 2 October 1927	
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One line of the record has been redacted

It is believed that Arthur and Hilda had at least three children: Kathleen Doreen (Woodchurch, registered late 1922) ; Nigel (Woodchurch, registered late 1923) ; Stanley David (Woodchurch, 1927).

Arthur died on Wirral, aged 67, in mid-1965 but it is not known when Hilda died.

George Evans married Elsie Clarke at St Peter's Church, Heswall, in mid-1927 and in 1939 they were living at 7 Poll Hill Road, Heswall:

George Evans	born 14 June 1901	steam roller driver
Elsie	born 4 October 1902	

One line of the record has been redacted

Ian Stewart	born Neston 17 March 1935	
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One line of the record has been redacted

It is believed that George and Elsie may have had three children : Gordon Alexander (Woodchurch, mid-1929), Ian (Neston, 1935) and Pauline (Neston, registered early 1933)

It is not known when George and Elsie died.

Some of the Evans family, with a wildfowling punt, at Heswall in 1907. It is believed that Thomas Evans is the central figure, to the rear and that Richard (Dick) is to the left front and Samuel to the right front.



A Note on the *Lusitania* and her sinking

RMS *Lusitania* was an ocean liner operated by the Cunard Company that served the Liverpool, England - New York City, United States route on the North Atlantic. The ship was designed by Leonard Peskett and built by John Brown and Company of Clydebank, Scotland. The ship was named after the ancient Roman province of Lusitania, which is now part of present-day Portugal and western Spain.

Lusitania was launched on 7 June 1906 and entered service for Cunard on 26 August 1907. When she entered service, *Lusitania* set the records for the largest and fastest ship afloat, taking these records from the ships of the United Kingdom's naval rival, Germany. *Lusitania* maintained these records until the entry of her twin sister *Mauretania* into the North Atlantic run. *Lusitania*, *Mauretania*, and slower but larger *Aquitania* provided a weekly passenger service for the Cunard Line just prior to WW1.

During World War I, Germany waged submarine warfare against the United Kingdom. *Lusitania*, which had been built with the capability of being converted into a warship, was identified as a target. The German submarine U-20 torpedoed and sank her on 7 May 1915; this was early in the war before tactics for evading submarines were fully developed. The ship suffered two explosions, the second one which could never fully be explained, and sank in 18 minutes. The *Lusitania* disaster killed 1,192 of the 1,960-known people on board, leaving 768 survivors. Four of these survivors died soon afterwards of trauma sustained from the sinking, bringing the final death toll to 1,196.

The sinking turned public opinion against Germany, particularly those in Ireland and the then-neutral United States. Previously the war was seen as being removed from their daily lives, but after the sinking they felt that the war now involved them. The United States joined the war on the side of the Allies (same side as the United Kingdom) and against Germany on 6 April 1917.

Official inquiries in both the United Kingdom and United States into the cause of the *Lusitania* wreck were obstructed by the needs of wartime secrecy and a propaganda campaign to ensure all blame fell upon Germany. In defence of her wartime actions, Germany claimed that *Lusitania*, a passenger ship, was carrying war contraband that exploded upon torpedoing and that the British Government had deliberately exposed *Lusitania* to danger in hopes of bringing the United States into the war on Britain's side.

Arguments on whether Germany's attack on a ship that was carrying passengers as well as war contraband was justified, as well as the nature of the ship's second explosion, continue to be debated today. (<http://www.rmslusitania.info/lusitania/>)

For a more detailed description of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, see pages 152 - 157 in Volume 1 of this work.

LUSITANIA'S CREW.

FULL OFFICIAL LIST.

The following is the official list of the liner's crew:—

W. T. Turner, commander; J. C. Anderson, staff-captain; J. D. Piper, chief officer; A. K. Jones, first officer; P. Hefford, second officer; J. T. Lewis, intermediate third officer; R. J. Allen, junior third officer; C. E. Bestie, junior third officer; W. Robertson, carpenter; John Brown, joiner; John Davis, bo'sun; Sikking Florence, bo'sun's mate; Wm. Egan, A.B.; Wm. Williams, master-at-arms; Peter Smith, master-at-arms.

A.B.'s and Seamen.— Thomas Evans, James Sileking, C. T. Knight, N. R. Johnstone,



Liverpool Echo - Saturday 8 May 1915
The first part of the extensive list recording the name of Able Seaman Thomas Evans.

A plate, made in 1929 by C. Mackay, with an etching of the *Lusitania* and inscribed *RMS Lusitania, torpedoed 7 May 1915*.
Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool

The Evans' grave in Barnston churchyard, Wirral

In Loving Memory of our dear father
THOMAS EVANS
Who lost his life through the sinking
Of the 'Lusitania' 7 May 1915, aged 47 years

Also our dear mother
ALICE EVANS
Who passed away 24 November 1921
Aged 57 years

"In the midst of life we are in death"

JOSEPH HUGH EVANS
(HUGHIE)
Son of above
Died 30 October 1990
Aged 86 years

Also **EVELINE MAY EVANS**
Died 30th August 2002 aged 93 years
Dear wife of Hughie
& much loved mum and dad of Val

[Although Thomas's age is recorded on the grave as being 47 he would have been aged 49 years and 4 months when he died]



It is not clear when Samuel and Jane Evans, Thomas's parents, died.

Joseph Duncan – Parkgate survivor of the sinking of the *Lusitania*

Although Thomas Evans drowned when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed on 7 May 1915, Joseph Duncan survived and is believed to be the only other person with a local connection to have been on the *Lusitania* at the time of her sinking.

Recorded initially by Cunard as being an assistant steward on the *Lusitania* the *Birkenhead News & Advertiser* for 15 May 1915 recorded his occupation as a cook and noted that he had made about seven trips on the ship. Joseph was also listed as a cook in the report of survivors landed at Queenstown (The *Cambria Daily Leader* 8 May 1915). The *Birkenhead News* recorded that Joseph:

‘..was assisting to lower a boat when he was knocked overboard. He succeeded in scrambling into a boat but was subsequently washed over again on account of the boat capsizing.

Many of the occupants were drowned as a result of this second disaster but Mr. Duncan was picked up by a steamer and taken ashore.’

Joseph Duncan lived at ‘Ryley's Castle’ in Parkgate, a whitewashed house located above the Parade and once the house of a customs officer.

