



The Centenary of the sinking of the Lusitania On 7th May 1915

**The Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery laid floral tribute on the grave of
Canon Ernest Edward Maxwell Phair on the 7th May 2015 to mark the 100th Anniversary of the
sinking of the RMS Lusitania on 7th May 1915.**

**Rev. Phair, the Canon at St. John's (CoE) Cathedral in Winnipeg, who was returning to England for
a short vacation, perished along with 1201 passengers and crew when the ship was torpedoed off
the coast of Ireland and is buried in Brandwood End Cemetery**

He is buried in Brandwood End Cemetery Birmingham – Section B2 Grave 894



Cunard Liner RMS Lusitania

Reverend Canon Ernest Edward Maxwell Phair

Reverend Canon Ernest Phair, 44, was a British subject and faculty member of St. John's College in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Phair was on board the final voyage of the *Lusitania* to take a short vacation to England. Phair was lost in the *Lusitania* disaster. His body was recovered (one of 289 recovered) and he is buried in Brandwood End Cemetery Birmingham – Section B2 Grave 894

Canon Ernest Phair was born in 1870 in Fort Alexander, Manitoba, to Archdeacon Robert Phair of Rupert's Land, Canada. Phair was sent to England for his early education. He returned to Canada in 1881 to enter St. John's College Boy's School in Winnipeg. Canon graduated from St. John's College with a degree in Classical Studies and won a university scholarship and the Governor-General's medal in 1889.

Phair served as private secretary to Lieutenant-Governor John Schultz for four years. Phair then returned to England in the winter of 1895-6 to study Theology. Phair became an ordained minister and served an English parish until 1902, when St. John's College appointed him to be one of its faculty.

In May of 1915, Phair was taking a short vacation to England and booked *Lusitania*.

His cabin on board was C-3, shared with Reverend Henry Wood Simpson and Duncan Hanes. The stewardess in charge of their cabin was May Bird.

At the time of the torpedo impact, Phair may have been at lunch or just finished, as his roommates Reverend Simpson was still eating and Duncan Hanes had already finished.

Phair, Canon Ernest Edward Maxwell

Winnipeg Tribune, 8 May 1915

Rev. Ernest Edward Maxwell Phair:

He was born 27 December 1870 at Fort Alexander, Manitoba, Canada.

His parents were Robert (b. 17 June 1839 in Tyrone, Ireland) and Martha Mary (nee Smith; 1840-1903) Phair who had married in 1865 (?) and his brothers and sisters included Hugh Lindsay, b. 9 June 1873 at Fintona, Tyrone, Ireland, William Robert George, b. 31 March 1868 in Ontario, Emily, b. 1877 in Ontario, Agnes Eliza, b. 1882 in Ontario, and Evangeline, b. 1885 in Ontario. He was going to England to his wife and two children.

He was a native of Manitoba, Canada, but had lived in England, where he married Lowellmore Henty Sherlock Hubbard, b. October 1870 in India, on 30 August 1897, Buxton, (Chapel En Le Frith), Derbyshire.

Academically gifted, in 1889 he won the Governor General's Medal at the end of his studies at St John's College Winnipeg and in the following year he was appointed secretary to the Lieutenant Governor.

In 1895 he moved to England to study theology and became a curate at Sparkbrook in Birmingham later moving with his young wife to Stowting in Kent where their daughter Lowella Margaret was born in October 1900. A son Robert was born in Stowting in April 1904 but sadly died that same year in Manitoba.

In 1904 Ernest was appointed Professor of Pastoral Theology and examiner in classics at St John's Cathedral, Winnipeg where he became treasurer to the cathedral. His second son, Edward Maxwell was born in Manitoba in December 1908.

He was the Canon at St. John's Cathedral in Winnipeg (Church of England). The Phair family address in Winnipeg was allegedly 172 Church Avenue. The Cunard Line stated his point of origin was Winnipeg, Canada.

Canon Phair did not survive the sinking of the Lusitania. His body was recovered and identified (No. 79), and was sent to Birmingham, England, as per instructions of his father.'

'Rev. Canon E. E. M. Phair is the second son of Rev. Archdeacon Phair, and was born at Fort Alexander in 1870. He was taken to England at an early age, and received part of his education in the Church Missionary Society's school, and later in London, until 1880, when the family returned to this country.

He was then entered at St. John's College boys' school, and St. John's College, and took his degree with first-class honors in classics, in 1889 (?), winning a university scholarship, and the Governor-General's medal. For nearly four years he acted as one of the private secretaries of Lieut.-Gov. Schultz. His bent at that time was toward theology, and in 1895 he returned to England and studied theology at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

He was ordained in 1895 (?) by the present Bishop of Manchester, then Bishop of Coventry, and was ordained priest the following year by the Bishop of Worcester. He spent four years in Birmingham as curate of Sparkbrook, under Rev. G. N. H. Tredennick, his brother-in-law; and subsequently was in charge of the parish of Stowling, Kent, for a period of four years.

His work in the Old Country varied, as it was between the village community and the thriving city, eminently fitted him for his life's work, which brought him back to Winnipeg in 1902, when he was appointed lecturer in pastoral theology at St. John's College by the late Archbishop Machray.

He has also lectured in the college in classics and English. His career during his college course and afterwards while taking post-graduate classes at Cambridge, stamps him as a man of brilliant intellect, and unusual attainments, facts which have been continually in evidence during the lectures in college.

He had never detached himself from pastoral service, remaining in the cathedral staff, taking his turn at preaching in the cathedral and in the general work connected with the parish." (Winnipeg Free Press, 8 May 1915, p. 9)

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Cunard Liner RMS Lusitania

Commander William Thomas Turner OBE RNR

Sailed 1st May 1915 New York for Liverpool 1962 passengers.

Torpedoed 7th May 1915 at 2.10pm by German U Boat U20 –
Kapitanleutnant Walther Schwieger

12 miles south of Old Head of Kinsale, Cork, Eire.

1201 lost – 289 bodies recovered – 764 passengers and crew rescued.

