

Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham and RMS Titanic:

Elopement on RMS 'Titanic'

RMS Titanic, built at the Harland and Wolfe shipyard in Belfast Ireland, marketed as the largest and most luxurious liner of her time, undertook her first and only voyage in April 1912. The centenary of its tragic voyage will be marked in April 2012. Cobh, Co. Cork, then known as Queenstown, was her last stop, and the last passengers boarded here. The ship struck an iceberg on the night of April 14th 1912 and sank with the loss of over 1500 lives in the early hours of 15th April. Only 40 of the 123 passengers who boarded the 'Titanic' in Queenstown survived. One of those who boarded in Queenstown, was Mary Mullen, pupil of Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham.



Mary Mullen, of Clarenbridge, Co. Galway was born on 6th April 1847, the youngest of a family of eight. She attended Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham as a boarder, along with at least two of her sisters, Cissie and Gretta Mullen. Mary Mullen is recorded in the Abbey records as having entered the school in September 1909.

In April 1912, Mary travelled to Oranmore, Co. Galway with her sister Cissie to travel by train to Dublin. 'She was going back to school.' While saying goodbye to her sister, Cissie 'saw a lad called Lennon looking at me from the train window but didn't think to this until afterwards.' Shortly thereafter, Mary's family received a 'wire from the school saying that she hadn't arrived', and became concerned. Somehow the family ascertained that she had planned to elope to America, with Denis Lennon, who Cissie had seen on board the train. Her eldest brother Joe was 'sent to America to find her.' While, waiting on his ship in Queenstown, (Cobh), Joe spoke with a colleague, who remarked on the tragedy of the 'Titanic'. 'This was the first that Joe heard of it.'

Denis Lennon and Miss Mary Lennon were listed among the 3rd Class passengers on board the 'Titanic'. They are both listed as being 21 years of age, from Ballymahon, Longford, and boarded the ship at Queenstown for their destination, New York City. It is possible that this is Mary Mullen and Lennon from Clarenbridge, travelling as brother and sister, to avoid detection.

The Mullen family solicitors travelled to New York, and interviewed the 'Titanic' survivors, who 'recognised the couple. They said that there was lifebelt for herself but not for him, and so she didn't take one. The police at Queenstown said yes, there were a couple that they would have stopped if they were looking out for 'runaways' but they weren't told of any 'runways' at the time.'

The information on Mary Mullen's tragic elopement was sent to Loreto Central Archives in February 1998, by Patrick Mullin, nephew of Mary Mullen.



Photograph of group of pupils
in Loreto Abbey Rathfarnham,
1910.

Could Mary Mullen have been
amongst this group?