

AN EXPLANATION ??

The weather on the night of 8th December 1904 was described as ever deteriorating with a gale raging. Conditions on these ships were harsh. There were no wheelhouses, radio or electricity and the crew were exposed to the elements whilst on watch.

A magnetic compass, often unreliable, and basic charts were the only navigational aids. This area off the coast of Pembrokeshire was notorious for shipwrecks. A cocktail of vicious tides, confused seas and volatile weather conditions combined to wreak havoc at sea. "SS Clonallon" may have been swamped by heavy seas, especially if her cargo shifted.

The most isolated wave-washed lighthouse in Britain lies 20 miles west of Milford Haven. "The Smalls" marks a body of rocks of the same name, the tallest of which protrudes just 4 metres above the surface. Countless vessels have been lost on these rocks leading to the construction of a 41-metre tower in 1861. "The Smalls" lighthouse, automated in 1987, is still an important navigational aid today. There is a school of thought that the Newry registered ship may have foundered here but there were no reports of any such happening from the keepers on duty. The last reported sighting of "SS Clonallon" came from the keepers at St Ann's Head lighthouse who logged her at 3.30 am.

The circumstances surrounding the fate of the ship and her crew remains a mystery.

We wish to thank,

Mrs Susan Fisher and family.

Rev Fr. Peter Mc Verry SJ.

Rev John Purcell.

Pipe Sergeant Anthony Fitzpatrick, Thomas Davis Memorial Pipe Band.

Martin Keenan, Modern Fireplace Co. & Monumental Works.

Maud Hamill.

Chris Cassidy, Newry City Library.

Mr Louis Coyle.

Killean/Edentubber Regeneration Group.

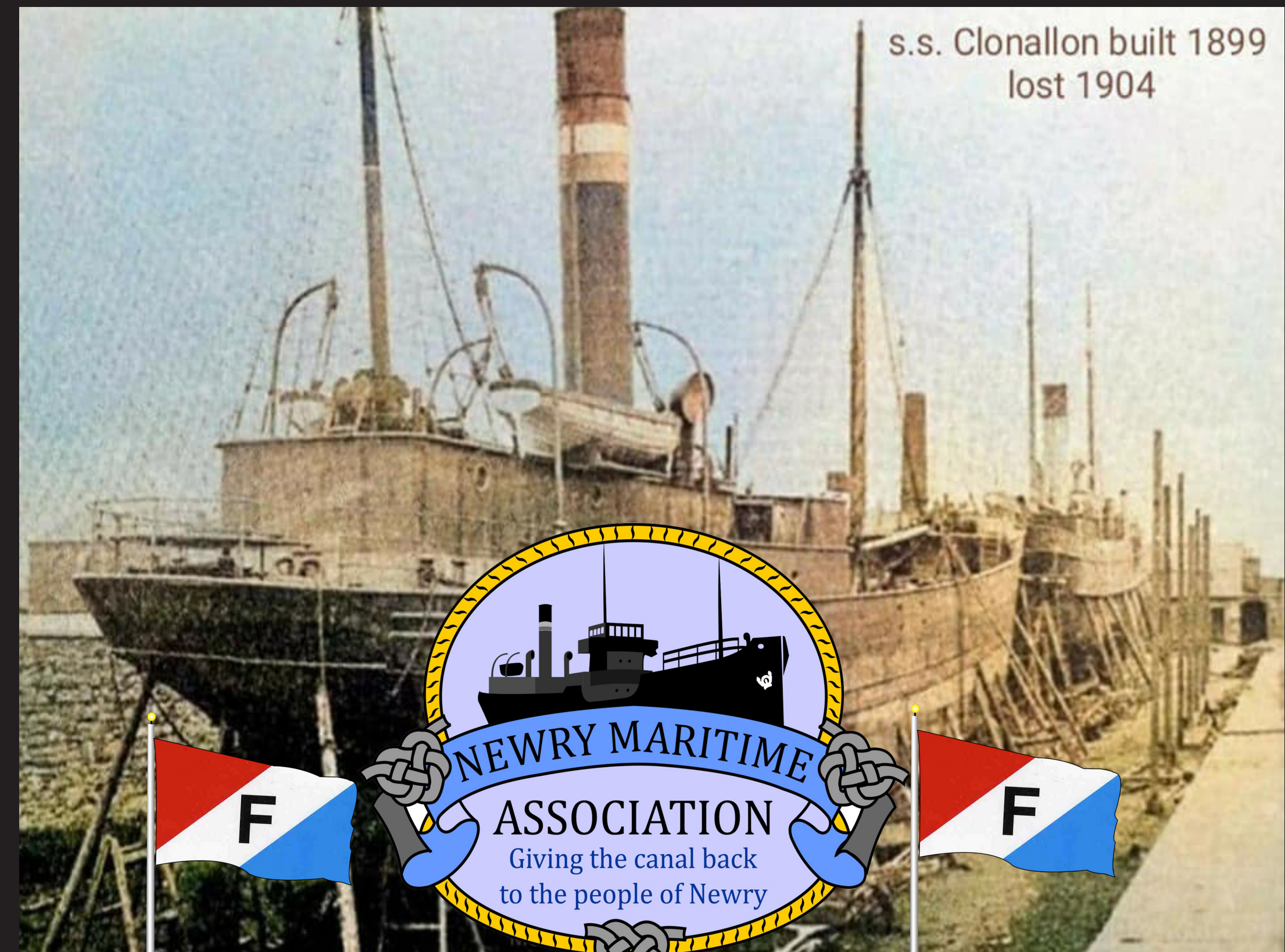
Mr Conan Mc Ateer, Principal, St Michaels PS, Killean.

Kerri Morrow, Newry DEA Coordinator.

For their help and support of this project.



*No crosses mark the ocean waves,
No monuments of stone.
No roses grow on sailor's graves,
The Sailor rests alone.
His tributes are the sea gulls' sweeps,
Forever wild and free,
And teardrops that his sweetheart weeps
To mingle with the sea.*



s.s. Clonallon built 1899
lost 1904

St. Michaels Church, Killean.

Saturday 17th June 2023.

Today we are unveiling a commemorative plaque to complement the memorial dedicated to those men lost on "SS Clonallon" on 8th December 1904. The centenary of this tragedy was marked with the celebration of a special Mass in Killean on 7th December 2004.

The plaque chronicles events surrounding the loss of "SS Clonallon" and her crew, as we know them.



THE SHIP.

"SS Clonallon" was owned by Joseph Fisher & Sons of Newry and was launched from the shipyard of John Fullerton & Sons on the Clyde on 6th October 1899. Company naming policy at the time was to give their vessels place names and this ship was named after a rural townland outside Warrenpoint. "SS Clonallon" was a coal-fired steamer with a carrying capacity of 300 tons and a service speed of 10 knots.

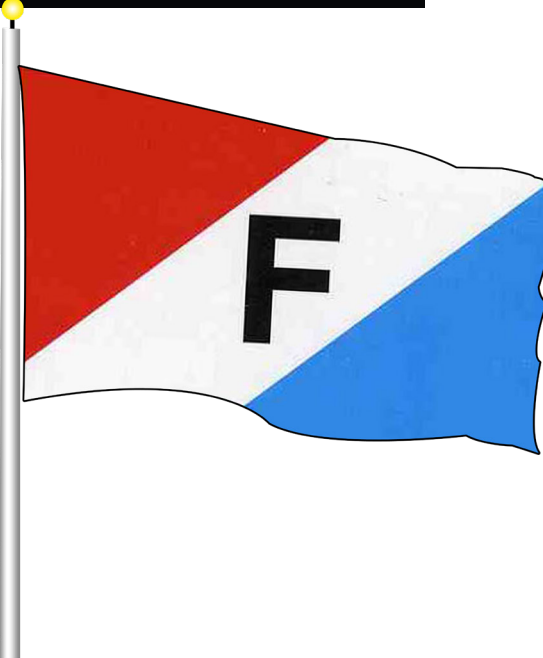
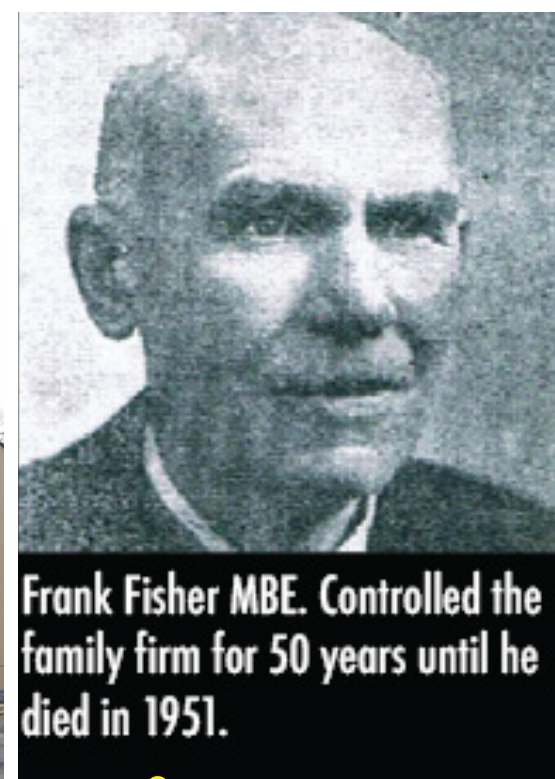


THE OWNERS.

Joseph Fisher established his coal business at Albert Basin Newry in 1852 and over the following 50 years became a leading coal importer and ship owner.

Upon his death in 1902 his son, Frank, assumed control of the firm and his tenure saw the firm develop one of the best-known coastal fleets across Ireland, Britain and North West Europe.

Frank Fisher died in 1951 after a career spanning 49 years during which he consolidated the firm's position as market leader in the coal and timber trade allied to a successful shipping business. His residence, "Rockville" on Dublin Road, was sold to the Parish of Upper Killeavy as a site for a new church. The Church of The Assumption, Dromalane, was opened in November 1954.



THE CREW.

The 8-man crew of the "SS Clonallon" were drawn from Fathom and Killeavy with one exception, George Williams, who came from Bristol. They were,

- Captain James Hollywood (25) Fathom.
- Mate Owen Rice (22) Fathom.
- L/T Hugh Mullan (20) Fathom.
- AB Edward O Hanlon (23) Fathom.
- AB George Williams (24) Bristol.
- C Eng Matthew Murphy (25) Ballinliss.
- 2nd Eng Matthew Cromie (25) Ballinliss.
- F, Man Joseph McQuaid (24) Fathom.

The 7 local men were all parishioners of Upper Killeavy.



THE VOYAGE.

Swansea was a key port for product exports from the South Wales Coalfields. On the evening of Thursday 8th December 1904 "SS Clonallon" left the port fully laden with a cargo of coal for delivery to Messrs Tedcastle Mc Cormick in Dublin. The weather was poor and deteriorating as the collier steamed across Swansea Bay, entering the Bristol Channel before setting a Northerly course for the Irish Sea.

The ship was expected in Dublin by early afternoon on Friday but never arrived. No trace of "SS Clonallon" or her young 8-man crew has ever been found.

Founded in Dublin in 1800 by Robert Tedcastle as a coal-importing firm, they later became shipowners also. The business has transitioned over two centuries and today Tedcastle Holdings is one of the most successful businesses in Ireland. They embrace a diversity of commercial interests including an extensive property portfolio and oil importation and distribution.

Their flagship company, TOP OIL - Fueling Ireland with their ever-familiar green branding, distributes over 1.3 BILLION litres of oil across the island of Ireland annually.

1. St Annes Head Light House
2. The Smalls Light House

