



The sinking of the Cunard ocean liner *RMS Lusitania* occurred on 7th May 1915 during the First World War, as Germany waged submarine warfare against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The ship was identified and torpedoed by the German U-boat *U-20* and sank in 18 minutes. The vessel went down 11 miles (18 km) off the Old Head of Kinsale, Ireland, killing 1,198 and leaving 761 survivors. The sinking turned public opinion in many countries against Germany, contributed to the American entry into World War I and became an iconic symbol in military recruiting campaigns of why the war was being fought.

Among those who died was John Lewis Harris of 280 Belgrave Road, Balsall Heath. He was 28 and a “second butcher” on board the liner. His body was never recovered. Local papers across Britain carried news of the sinking and all of them listed local people who were on board.

IMAGES:

The image (*top*) was issued as a postcard when *RMS Lusitania* was launched. The poster (*right*) was used to try and persuade more Irish men to enlist - as so many Irish were among those who had drowned when the ship was sunk.

