WRJ Fisher d 25 January 1917 on board SS Laurentic





IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF
EDWARD FISHER
WHO DIED 24TH MAR. 1910 AGED 51 YEARS
ALSO OF **W. R. J. FISHER**
BELOVED SON OF THE ABOVE
WHO PERISHED ON THE "LAURENTIC"
JAN. 25TH 1917, AGED 22 YEARS
AND WAS INTERRED AT FAHAN, NEAR BUNCRANA, IRELAND

SS Laurentic was a White Star liner, converted to be an armoured merchant cruiser in WW1, which sank after hitting two mines north of Ireland on 25 Jan 1917. She was carrying gold to buy munitions for the war effort, 20 bars of which remain unrecovered. The *Laurentic* gained notoriety in 1910 during the capture of murderer Hawley Harvey Crippen, in which Chief Inspector Walter Dew of the Metropolitan Police used *Laurentic's* speed to arrive in Canada before the fleeing suspect on SS Montrose.[1] Richard Fisher, Electrician, Mercantile Marine Reserve, is buried in Upper Fahan (St. Mura's) Church of Ireland Churchyard (CWGC).

The *Barrow News 3 February 1917 (from which the picture of Richard Fisher is taken) headlined its report:*

A LOSS TO THE BRITISH BOY SCOUTS

Scoutcraft, as exemplified by the British Boy Scouts, has suffered a great loss by the death of late Scoutmaster Wm. Richard J. Fisher, who was electrician on board the armed cruiser Laurentic when she was mined off the Irish coast. This officer was picked up by one of the boats, but unfortunately was dead, and the body was interred at Buncrana, Ireland. He was born at Dalton-in-Furness on 22 Jan., 1895, and was, therefore, 22 years of age. He served his apprenticeship as electrician at Messrs. Vickers Limited, and was esteemed greatly by his mates, and gave evidence of great promise in his work, He was "hail fellow well met" to all, and was always ready to lend his assistance to anyone, and he will be greatly missed by those who had the pleasure of knowing him. A painstaking worker, the soul of truth and honour, he did his duty to the last.

He first became attached to the St. George's Troop of B. P. Scouts. He afterwards joined Commissioner J. W. Smith, in the Strand Troops of British Boy Scouts[2], as assistant scoutmaster in 1913, and this troop, owing to their labours, grew so much that he was promoted to scoutmaster. He afterwards formed the Victoria Troop, and up to joining the Navy was a valued officer of the B.B.S. A proposal to establish a roll of honour in connection with the Strand Troops is in prospect, but no name will be added to the large list of members who have "gone home" from these troops with greater sorrow that that of Scoutmaster W. R. J. Fisher. His parents and family, who reside at 42, Storey-square, are naturally much upset by their irreparable loss, and to whom much sympathy is extended. They have, however, the knowledge and consolation that he chose to do his duty to his country, and, as events have proved, died for it.

W.R.J. Fisher is commemorated on the War Memorial inside St. George's Church, Barrow.

From *Ancestry* we learn that in the **1901 Census** the Fisher family were living at 10 Market Street, Dalton-in-Furness, The White Horse pub. Head Edward Fisher (43) is a Licensed Victualler (Own Account), born Ulverston; and shares the pub with wife Martha Fisher (37) born Spark Bridge (*crossed out* Egton-cum-Newland); daughter Esther J. Fisher (15) Dress-maker, born Rosside (*crossed out* Ulverston); and sons Edward Fisher (12) no occupation recorded, born

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Laurentic_(1908)
[2] http://www.bbsandbgs.org.uk/history.php An alternative to Baden-Powell's Boy Scout Association.

Askam-in-Furness; and William R. J. Fisher (6) no occupation recorded, born Dalton. Emily Furness (18) born Dalton-in-Furness, is the Domestic Servant.

By the time of the **1911 Census** Edward Fisher had died, and Martha Jane Fisher (47) Widow, Tobacconist (Own Account), born Spark-Bridge, Lancs, was living at 21 Paxton Terrace, Barrow. Sharing the house were Esther Jane Marr (25) Daughter, Married, Tobacconist (Own account), born Ross-Head, Lancs; Edward Fisher (22) Single, Fitter, Ship-building, born Ireleth, Lancs; William Richard Fisher (16) Apprentice Engineer, Shipbuilding, born Dalton, Lancs; Christopher Myers Wilson (12) Nephew, At School, born Rotherham, Yorks.; and Charles Lamb (31) Single, Boarder, House Plumber, born Pocklington, Yorks. *Esther J. Fisher had married John J. Marr at St. George, Barrow, in 1908 (Cumbria BMD).*

Martha Fisher remarried, to John E. Lloyd, at St. George, Barrow in 1914. The “parents” mentioned in the *Barrow News* article are therefore his mother and step-father.