

## Lusitania Commemoration 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015



The Marlow Society and the Marlow Remembers World War One Association jointly organised a ceremony to mark the exact 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Cunard liner Lusitania by a German submarine on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1915. This callous act without any prior warning resulted in the death of 1,198 passengers and crew. This incident helped shift public opinion in America against Germany and influenced the eventual declaration of war a couple of years later. Among the dead was the famous American

theatre producer and impresario Charles Frohman, whose encouragement and support for J M Barrie's play Peter Pan led to its immediate huge success in London and later round the world. Frohman was a frequent visitor to Marlow and greatly loved our town, so much so that he expressed a wish to be buried in our churchyard by the river.

The Frohman Memorial was erected by his friends and admirers and has stood on The Causeway near the war memorial since 1924. A short service, ably led by Father Michael of St Peter's Church, was followed by poems read by the mayor Suzanne Brown, Martin Blunkell and Shaun Murphy of the MRWW1 Association. Geoff Wood led this second part of the ceremony and linked the poems with a description of the ill-fated voyage. Our mayor laid a poppy wreath supplied by Shaun to honour the memory of all those who died and a second was laid



to remember Charles Frohman. Geoff included an imaginative account of the experiences of Charles Frohman and another passenger, Muriel Thompson, during the voyage. Muriel lived locally in Maidenhead and was returning from a holiday in Miami to her family home. Her body was not recovered but she is memorialised in All Saints Churchyard in Maidenhead.

