

# Francis Davis Millet



## RMS Titanic and Passenger Frank Millet – the Broadway Connection

Visitors to the churchyard, of St Eadburgha's Church, Broadway, Worcs, on Snowhill Road, may easily miss something as they pass under the Lychgate, where the following inscription appears:

**'FRANCISCO DAVIS MILLET VIRO IN ARTIBVS LITTERISQVE PRAESTANTI QVI NAVI TITANICA FRACTA  
DVM SPEM TIMIDIS AFFERT MORTEM LAE TVS OPPETIVIT HOC MONVMENTVM SVAVIS  
AMICITIAE MEMORES SODALES PONENDVM CVRAVERVNT'**

The original English translation is: 'Francis Davis Millet met his death with fortitude as the ship *Titanic* sank whilst still giving hope to those who feared for their lives. His dear friends sought the dedication of this memorial in fond memory of his treasured fellowship.

**Or in other words:** *To Francis Davis Millet – A man of outstanding attainment in literature and art who, when the ship Titanic was sunk, gladly faced death while bringing hope to those in great need. His intimate friends have had his memorial erected in memory of a dear friendship'.*

It was in 1932, twenty years after the Titanic disaster, Millet's son Jack (John Alfred Parsons Millet) sent £120 to St Eadburgha's for the creation of the Lychgate. The inscription was devised by two Harvard classics professors.

Francis Davis Millet was the host of a small group of artists, including Americans, who congregated in Broadway at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Millet lived there in both Farnham House and Russell House. The group included John Singer Sargent, whose painting 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose' is famed for its Broadway setting. Millet was born in Massachusetts, USA, in 1846. He was a drummer boy with the Union Forces in the Civil War and graduated from Harvard with a Degree in Literature in 1869. He became a correspondent on the Russian-Turkish War (1877-1878) for several newspapers and married Elizabeth or 'Lily' in 1879.

Millet's most famous painting is perhaps 'Between Two Fires', which like many others of the period, was executed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Abbot's Grange, which Millet salvaged from complete disrepair, apparently with the help of William Morris. The Grange became his studio for many years. In April 1912, Millet booked a first class passage on the maiden voyage of the Royal Mail Ship, *Titanic*, en route home to the United States. She sank on 14 April 1912, having struck an iceberg. Millet was last seen helping women and children into lifeboats. His body was recovered and he is buried at East Bridgewater Central Cemetery, Plymouth County, Massachusetts.

by Stephen Williams, June 2007

St Eadburgha's Church Lychgate

