Learning

Titanic education resource

A useful pack to help your students explore the social class of some of the passengers on board Titanic. The lessons centre on photographs, pictures, written information and artefacts from three of Titanic's survivors, Lady Duff-Gordon, a first class passenger; Elsie Doling, second class passenger; and Rosa Abbot, third class passenger. Suitable for ages 7 to 14 years.

See download - **Three Survivors - Titanic Education Resource.pdf**

Birth of a dream

Harland and Wolff Original Design Drawing for Titanic.

Lord Pirrie was a distant relative of Edward Harland and had started in the Harland & Wolff shipyard as a gentleman apprentice. By now though had risen through the ranks to become the Managing Director & Chairman.

Ismay meanwhile was the Director of the White Star Line shipping company, and by the end of that dinner party, he had agreed to build three super liners to be called Olympic, Titanic and Gigantic (later changed to Britannic).

Titanic dream takes shape

Harland and Wolff drawing office where Titanic was designed.

Their Chief Naval Architect, Alexander M. Carlisle, was to draw up the plans, and on 17th September 1908 the Directors gave orders for both the shipyard and the engine works to begin preparations for construction.

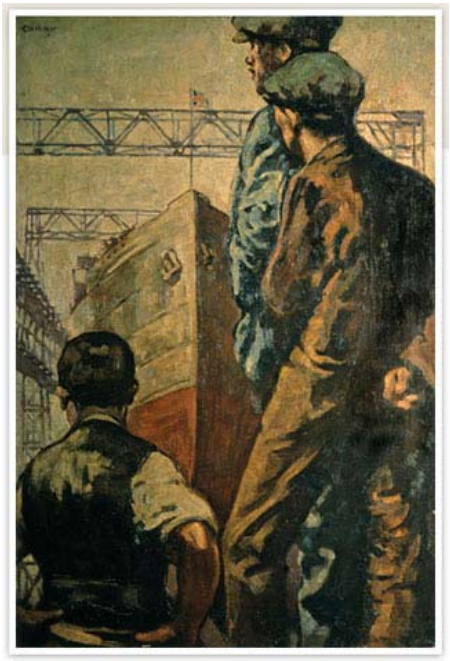
Over the next few months various consultations took place between Harland & Wolff and the White Star Line. Carlisle completed the original designs and when he retired in 1910 he was succeeded by his cousin Thomas Andrews Jr. who completed the work on Titanic.

Life for the Shipyard workers

Shipyard workers going home from Queens Island, Belfast 1911.

It was a long week for the shipyard workers, their days starting just after 6.00am and finishing at 5.30pm, with only Saturday afternoons and Sundays off. For Managers the days were even longer as they were expected to be at their post to supervise before the rest of the men arrived to start the day. The men usually brought enough food with them for breakfast at 8.30am and lunch at 1.00pm (usually called a 'piece').

Dangerous conditions for Shipyard workers



'Men of Iron', oil painting by Belfast artist William Conor.

Before the Titanic even collided with the iceberg that would sink her, eight people had already died while working on its construction. This included a 15 year old boy from Templemore Street, Belfast, after he fell from a ladder on the scaffolding.

Construction: the keel

The layout of the keel is the first stage of the construction of a ship.

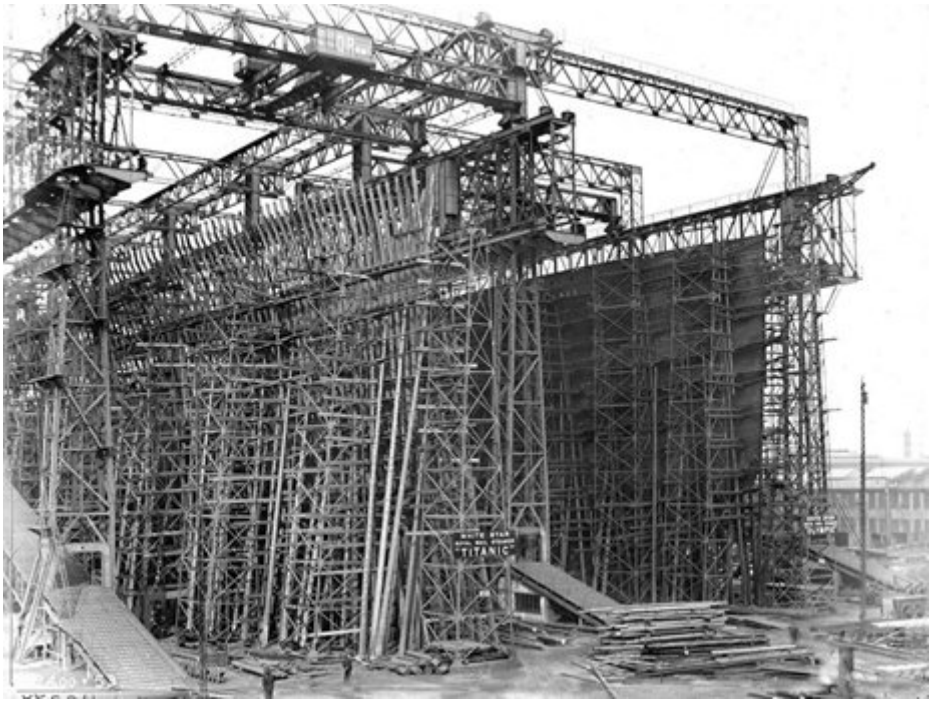
The keel is a key structure, like the backbone of a human body, on which everything else depends. It is made in sections, laid on blocks on a sloping slipway.

Did you know?

The keel of Titanic was laid on 31st March 1909, 3 months after the keel of her sister ship, Olympic, was laid.

There are strong comparisons to be made between the systems of a human body and a ship.

Construction: the frames



After the keel has been laid, construction begins on the frame.

The frame is similar to the ribs in the human body, and it forms the basic shape of the hull. Curved frames are connected to the keel, while steel beams help to hold the frames together and add strength to the structure

Construction: the hull

The next stage in ship building is to rivet steel plates to the frame, in order to form the watertight hull of the ship, like the skin on the human body.

This process is known as shell plating. The plates vary in size and shape depending on where they are positioned on the hull. Plates for Titanic could be up to 36 feet long (almost 11 metres) and weighed many tons.

Launch

On 20th October 1910, amidst a blaze of publicity, Olympic, the first of the three sister ships, was launched.

This publicity was so important that even though the White Star Line had planned to paint the hull of Olympic black, she was painted light grey for the launch in order to show her off best in the photographs.

At the launching stage the liner is still a large, land bound, empty vessel. The launch is simply the process of moving the hull of the ship from the land, down the slipway and into the sea.

The launch of Olympic was a very controlled and dramatic event. Tons of tallow, oil and soft soap were used to grease the slipways. While restraining anchors, chains and cables were used to slow down and stop the thousands of tons of steel hull as it entered the water.

This marked the end of the first stage of construction, however much more work was needed to finish the ship. Next, the newly launched hull went to the fitting out wharf for completion.

