

## Myth & Memory



News of the sinking of Titanic was received with shock and grief. The impossible had happened and the most technologically advanced ship of its time was now lying at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

In Belfast, the city where she was built, grown men are said to have cried in the streets.

Fund raising concerts were held to help bereaved families, but soon the market was flooded with sentimental sheet music and commemorative postcards, as well as other Titanic ornaments and souvenirs.

## Remembrance

There was wide-spread public shock and mourning following the Titanic disaster. In Belfast, grown men were said to have broken down and cried in the streets. But in adversity came opportunity, and many entrepreneurs were quick to grasp and exploit the business openings created by the public's grief.

## Inscribed Shipyard Rivet Punch



*Inscribed shipyard rivet punch commemorating the loss of Titanic.*

Titanic's sinking had a traumatic impact on people at home and abroad. The impossible had happened and the most technologically advanced ship of its time was now lying at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

The loss of the great liner on her maiden voyage was an enormous blow to the self confidence of the Edwardian age. Almost 1500 people - passengers and crew - had gone down with her. There was wide-spread public grieving and quick-witted entrepreneurs, spotting a business opportunity, flooded this hungry market with Titanic ornaments and souvenirs.

This was the beginning of the modern Titanic industry.

### Mourning Titanic Postcard

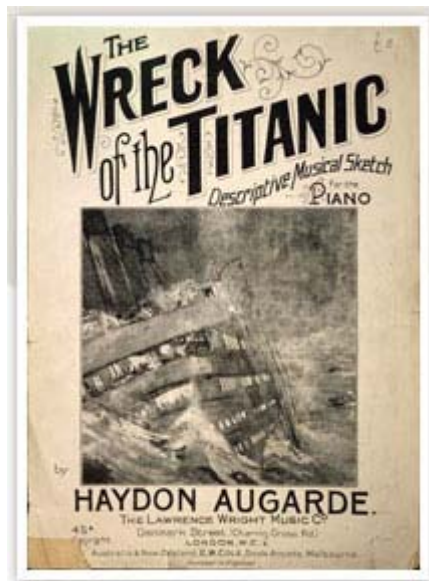


*'Nearer My God To Thee', Titanic memorial postcard 1912.*

There was a widespread sense of loss following the Titanic disaster. Commemorative postcards were a popular way of expressing this grief.

The English firm Bamforth & Co. published a 6-card set illustrating verses from 'Nearer My God To Thee'. The cards pay tribute to the dead and provide reassurance of a heavenly home for one and all.

## Mourning Titanic Sheet Music 'Wreck of the Titanic'



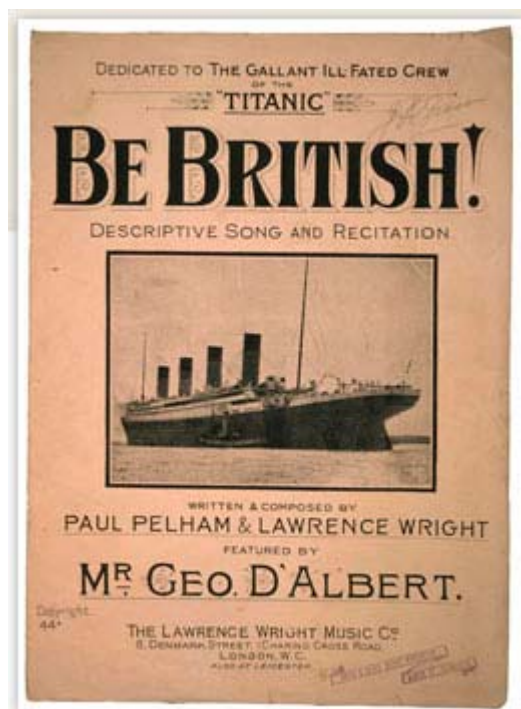
*'The Wreck of the Titanic' sheet music, 1912.*

The Titanic disaster created many commercial opportunities. Among these was the publication of specially composed sheet music commemorating Titanic and those who went down with her.

Most of these sheet music songs were highly sentimental and glossed over the terrible human tragedy of the disaster.

The example shown here, 'The Wreck of the Titanic', incorporated Chopin's Funeral March, but otherwise it was a remarkably cheerful piece.

## Mourning Titanic Sheet Music 'Be British'



*'Be British' Titanic sheet music, 1912.*

The song 'Be British' was dedicated to the gallant and ill-fated crew of Titanic, It included a spoken passage, recited to the tune "Horbury" - Nearer My God to Thee. The sheet music for 'Be British' came with a set of illustrative coloured lantern slides that could be bought or hired from the publisher.

The lyrics include these immortal lines:

*All went well, and the laugh and jest  
And the dance went gaily on,*

*Till they met the ice, and a rasp and a jar,  
Told there was something wrong.*

## Belfast and Titanic

In Belfast, the loss of Titanic had a profound affect. During her short life, she had captured the hearts and the pride of the city of Belfast. The disaster that befell Titanic on her maiden voyage cast a pall of despair over the city – it is said that when the news broke, grown men cried in the streets. For years, the city disassociated itself from the ill-fated ship.

Now attitudes have shifted completely. The city is embracing its Titanic past and is in the midst of creating Titanic Quarter, a multi-billion rejuvenation scheme based around the docklands where Titanic was built.

At its heart will be the Titanic Signature Project, a £97 million world-class visitor attraction to be opened by 2012. It will showcase the story of the Titanic and the wider theme of shipbuilding and seafaring in Belfast, including the engineering, industrial, social, cultural and economic origins and connections.

## News of the Disaster Belfast Newspaper Report



*Titanic disaster reports in the Belfast News-Letter and Belfast Evening Telegraph, 16 April 1912.*

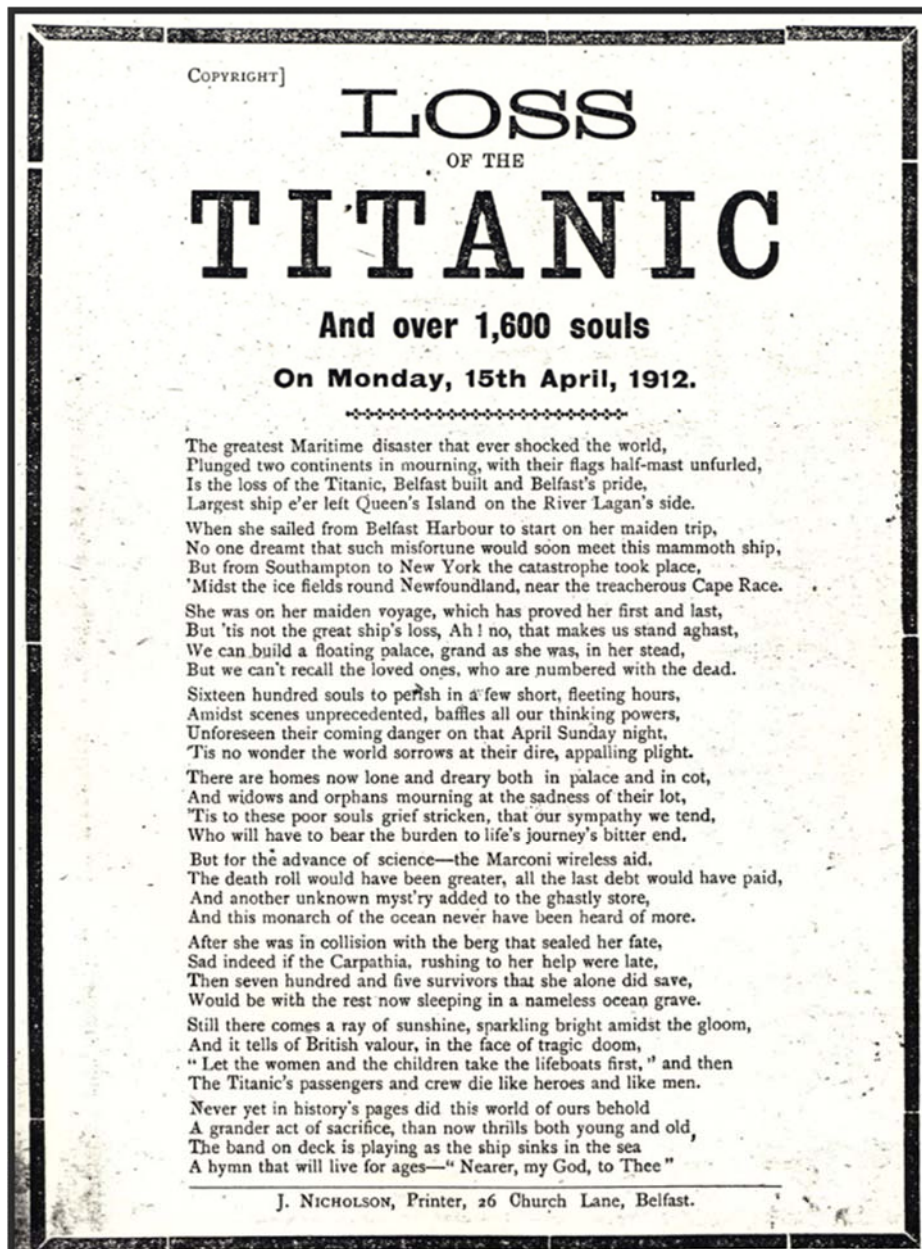
In Belfast, news of Titanic's sinking was received with shock and grief. Grown men are said to have broken down and cried in the streets. It was soon learned that Thomas Andrews and his team of shipyard men - the 'Guarantee Group'- had perished with the ship.

The Guarantee Group was an elite collection of nine of the best men in their field who accompanied each vessel on its maiden voyage to see that all went well.

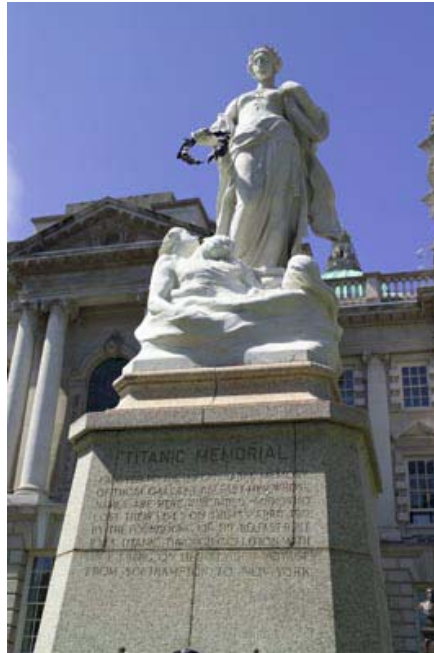
The Harland & Wolff workforce was profoundly shaken by the catastrophe and as a mark of respect the shipyard was closed on Saturday 20 April.

### Loss of Titanic Poem

This poem, printed by J. Nicholson of Belfast, describes the loss of Titanic: "Belfast built and Belfast's pride". Many poems, songs and other tributes were published in the weeks following the tragedy.



## Titanic memorial



*Titanic memorial, east facing.*

The Titanic Memorial was unveiled in June 1920 and commemorates those lost in the tragedy. It was the work of renowned sculptor Thomas Brock.

The monument originally stood in Donegall Square North, but in 1960 was moved to its current site inside the railings on the eastern side of Belfast City Hall.

## Titanic wall mural, Dee Street



Wall mural on the corner of Newtownards Road and Dee Street, Belfast, commemorating Titanic and the Harland and Wolff shipyard workers who created the ship.

## Ship of Dreams Mural, Newtownards road



*Wall mural on Newtownards Road, Belfast commemorating Titanic 'Ship of Dreams'.*  
The mural was unveiled in June 2010 and was dedicated to Titanic and the shipbuilding legacy of east Belfast.

## Titanic on Screen

The story of Titanic combines money, power, ambition and pride, with love, courage, loss and redemption. In fact, it contains all the ingredients for a dramatic screenplay.

Over the years many attempts have been made to dramatise the story, but arguably the most memorable, and certainly the most commercial, was James Cameron's 1997 film, Titanic, winner of eleven Academy Awards. Film buffs also cite the 1958 movie, A Night to Remember, as the greatest Titanic movie ever made before Cameron's.

## A Night to Remember

1958 film 'A Night to Remember' was an adaptation of Walter Lord's book of the same name, published in 1955. Lord had interviewed sixty-three Titanic survivors when carrying out his research. Both book and film were highly successful and led to renewed interest in the story of Titanic.

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The film was produced by William MacQuitty who was born in Belfast in 1905 and became a film producer, writer and photographer.

## Titanic

The 1997 film, Titanic, was hugely successful and incorporated impressive sets and special effects. Directed by James Cameron, the film is a fictionalised account of the loss of the ship.

The central focus is on a love story between two fictional characters from different social classes: Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet). Cameron saw the love story as a way to help modern audiences relate to the actual events surrounding the loss of Titanic.

The film also included characters based on genuine historical figures including Thomas Andrews, Captain Smith, Bruce Ismay and wealthy passenger Colonel J.J. Astor.

## Myth

Titanic: the myths and the mysteries.

From the outset, the Titanic disaster was shrouded in mystery, mistakes and misinformation. Initial newspaper reports even claimed that the ship had survived its collision with the iceberg. This section recounts some of the tall tales surrounding the ship, its passengers and crew.

### Bruce Ismay – callous coward, or courageous survivor?



The myths surrounding Bruce Ismay, Chairman and Managing Director of the White Star Line, almost all centre on allegations of his cowardice. He was vilified for escaping the sinking ship, while fellow passengers drowned.

However it seems that Ismay helped with loading and lowering several lifeboats and according to his testimony, only entered a half-filled lifeboat when that boat was actually being lowered and no other passengers were in the vicinity. His reputation was further besmirched by claims that he had ordered Captain Smith to make a record crossing. His real fault was that he survived.

Ismay was exonerated by the British Inquiry for his actions but he never really recovered from the stigma of Titanic.



## Hope diamond sank with Titanic



*The rumour that the fabulous Hope Diamond was on Titanic when it sank is false.*



*Evelyn Walsh McLean wearing the Hope Diamond.*

This deep blue diamond, famous for supposedly being cursed, was in the possession of Washington socialite Mrs Evelyn McLean, who was not on the ship. The stone does not appear to have brought her, or those dear to her much luck: her son died in a car crash at age nine, her daughter committed suicide at the age 25, and her husband was declared insane and died in a mental institution in 1941.

After Evelyn died in 1947, the diamond was sold off to repay debts.

## Shipyard worker trapped in hull

One of the many myths surrounding Titanic is that a shipyard worker was accidentally trapped in the hull of the ship during construction.

The story is false, but may have originated in the routine tapping of rivets at the end of each day to check that they were correctly fitted.

The sound of this tapping may have encouraged older shipyard workers to tease the younger employees with stories of trapped workers tapping in hope of rescue.

### "We defy God to sink her"

It was believed that the ship yard workers painted "we defy God to sink her" on the stern of Titanic.

This is one of many stories surrounding Titanic that is impossible to either prove or disprove. However, on balance it is likely to be false, as there is certainly no tangible evidence to support such a rumour.

### Bottle of Champagne that Christened Titanic didn't break

It is considered bad luck when the bottle of champagne used to 'christen' a ship fails to break when swung against the hull at launching. However, none of the White Star Line ships was 'christened' in this way, so the story is false.

However, one of the Harland & Wolff workers who had to knock out the wooden supports from the hull of Titanic at her launch, was severely injured in this operation and was taken to hospital. He died later of his injuries.

### No binoculars for the lookouts on Titanic

It is true that the lookouts in the crow's nest of Titanic did not have binoculars.

There were binoculars in a locker used by Second Officer David Blair who sailed on Titanic from Belfast to Southampton. However, for the maiden voyage, Blair was not required on board and when he left the ship he did not inform anybody of the location of the binoculars.

However, it is likely that binoculars would not have helped to save Titanic as they are of limited use in the conditions found on the night of 14th April 1912.