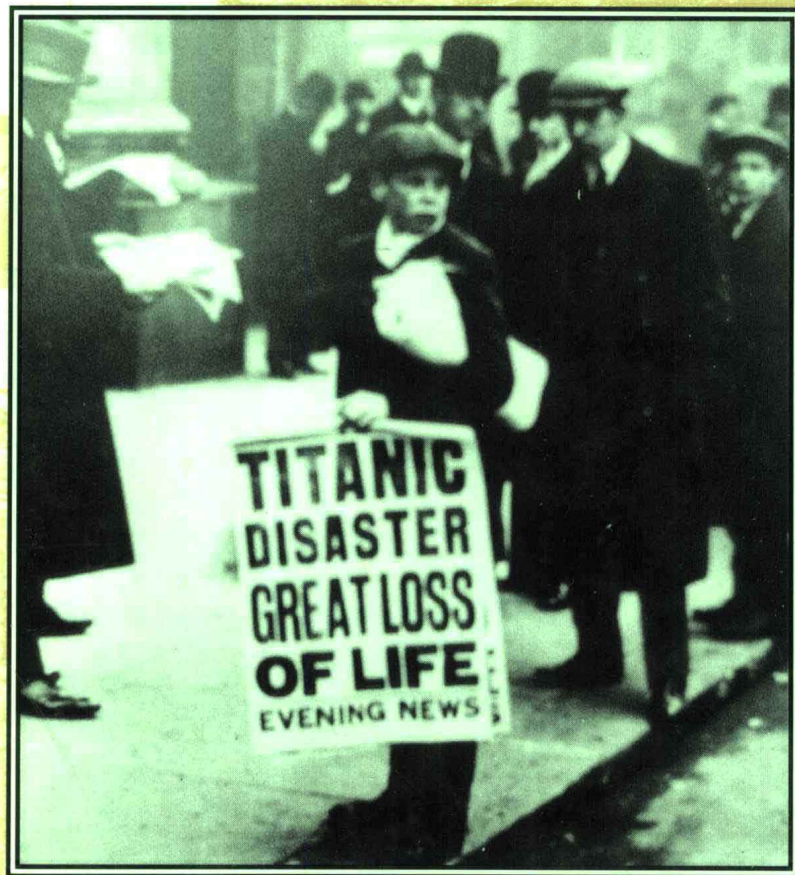




# THE TITANIC DISASTER

As reported in the British National Press  
April – July 1912



DAVE BRYCESON





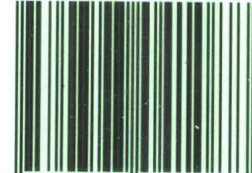
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**DAVE BRYCESON**

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# THE LOSS OF THE STEAMSHIP TITANIC

The Titanic wasn't the first or the last passenger ship to sink, so what was so special about this tragedy that countless books have been written about the events of the night of 14/15 April 1912, films have been produced, societies have been formed, and authentic memorabilia realises astronomical prices at auction? Even the word itself has now become common usage in the English language – my own Thesaurus lists twenty-three alternatives for the word Titanic including vast, enormous, massive, tremendous, mighty, colossal, gigantic and heroic. There perhaps lies our first clue, the Titanic was all of these things. At 46,328 tons she was not only the largest ship afloat but also the largest moving object ever made by man. She was the most luxurious, boasting many features unheard of before on ocean-going liners. But above all, she was new and the object of much admiration and curiosity. Like Concorde sixty-four years later, those with bookings were delighted to be travelling on the maiden crossing – what a story to relate to friends!

A magazine article printed before her departure described the Titanic, due to her construction with fifteen watertight bulkheads, as “Virtually Unsinkable” – and popular conversation, as is its habit, was to abbreviate this to just the word “Unsinkable”. Everyone knew that man had reached the pinnacle of engineering design and had built the perfect ship: the Titanic could not go down. And yet, just five days out from Southampton on her maiden voyage the Titanic was to end her life lying, a sad and shattered wreck on the ocean floor – the ghastly tomb of 1,500 of her former passengers and crew. Her

working life had lasted for just 110 hours and 5 minutes.

It is said that the whole world loves a hero, and there were many heroic acts played out that night. Yet the world had to wait to hear of their telling. Living as we do now in an age of rapidly progressing technology it is hard for us to imagine a time when there were no radio or television services. Had the Titanic tragedy happened today we could all have been aware of Captain Smith's initial distress signals within minutes. Long range Chinook helicopters sent out from Newfoundland could have reached her to drop inflatable life rafts. The final agony of her foundering would have been witnessed on television screens around the world. Reporters would have landed on the Carpathia all eager to secure the first eye-witness accounts of the tragedy.

Things of course weren't like that in the larger and slower world of 1912. The only two methods by which news was spread were by word of mouth and the daily newspapers. It was Spring in England and all was well. The British Empire spread its wings over one fifth of the world's population. The debated questions of the day were the introduction of the Irish Home Rule Bill and the issues raised by the forced feeding of imprisoned suffragettes. At Olympia the Daily Mail Ideal Homes Exhibition introduced the Broadwood-Hupfeld Player-Piano with prices from 40 guineas. On the 28th of March the annual Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race resulted, for the first time ever, in both boats sinking.

And on the morning of Wednesday 10th April, RMS Titanic, the Pride of the White Star Line, slowly began her journey into infamy.

On the evening of Monday 15th, strange, unbelievable rumours began their spread, chiefly around Belfast, Liverpool, Southampton and London – cities with links to the new, great and powerful, Atlantic liner. How could anything have gone wrong – surely it was impossible?

The headlines the following morning were to shake the whole of Britain, and indeed the world, with the news that tragedy had befallen the Titanic. The full story of the disaster was to slowly unfold in the subsequent editions. Man had received a sharp reminder that nature and the natural elements have their part to play in the control of life on earth and not just man himself.

Compiling this book – based primarily on reports from Britain's *Daily Sketch* and *The Times* newspapers – has been, for me, a complete labour of love. It is my fervent hope for those whose first contact it is with a Titanic publication, that you will be enthralled by the story that it tells, and will go on to study more comprehensive works. For those whose knowledge about the disaster is already advanced, I hope that there may lie in these pages the odd snippet of information that is new to you. I have added my own comments, in italics within a double asterix, on a number of

pages where I consider them to be explanatory or necessary. I have attempted throughout to reproduce faithfully all articles as they originally appeared, and this is the reason the astute reader will notice a number of spelling errors, particularly of surnames, in a number of the reports. The years have taken their toll on the condition of the original 1912 newspapers from which my research was taken – it may be that some parts of photographs and captions are missing. My apologies where this is the case, but both the publishers and I felt they should be reproduced for their historic value. Likewise I have reproduced the stories as near as possible to the original – mistakes, punctuation and all – for better authenticity.

So, please, sit back and turn the pages of time, and learn, as the people of Britain did in 1912, of the sinking of the mighty Steamship

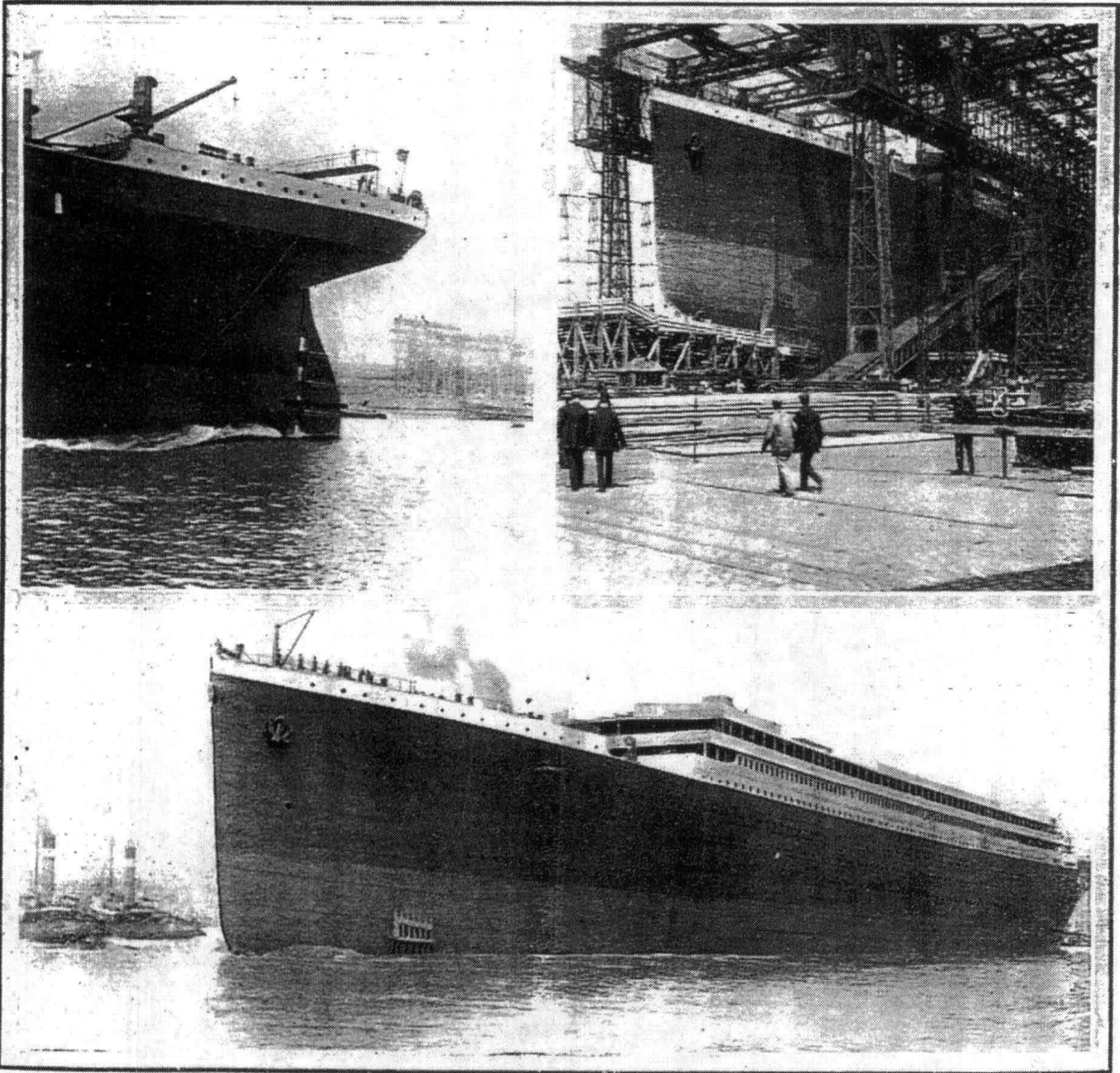
## ***TITANIC . . .***

Dave Bryceson  
Folkestone, Kent  
January 1997

## A TWENTIETH CENTURY MARVEL AFLOAT

The launch. – The vessel, which displaces 24,000 tons, gliding into the scarcely disturbed water.

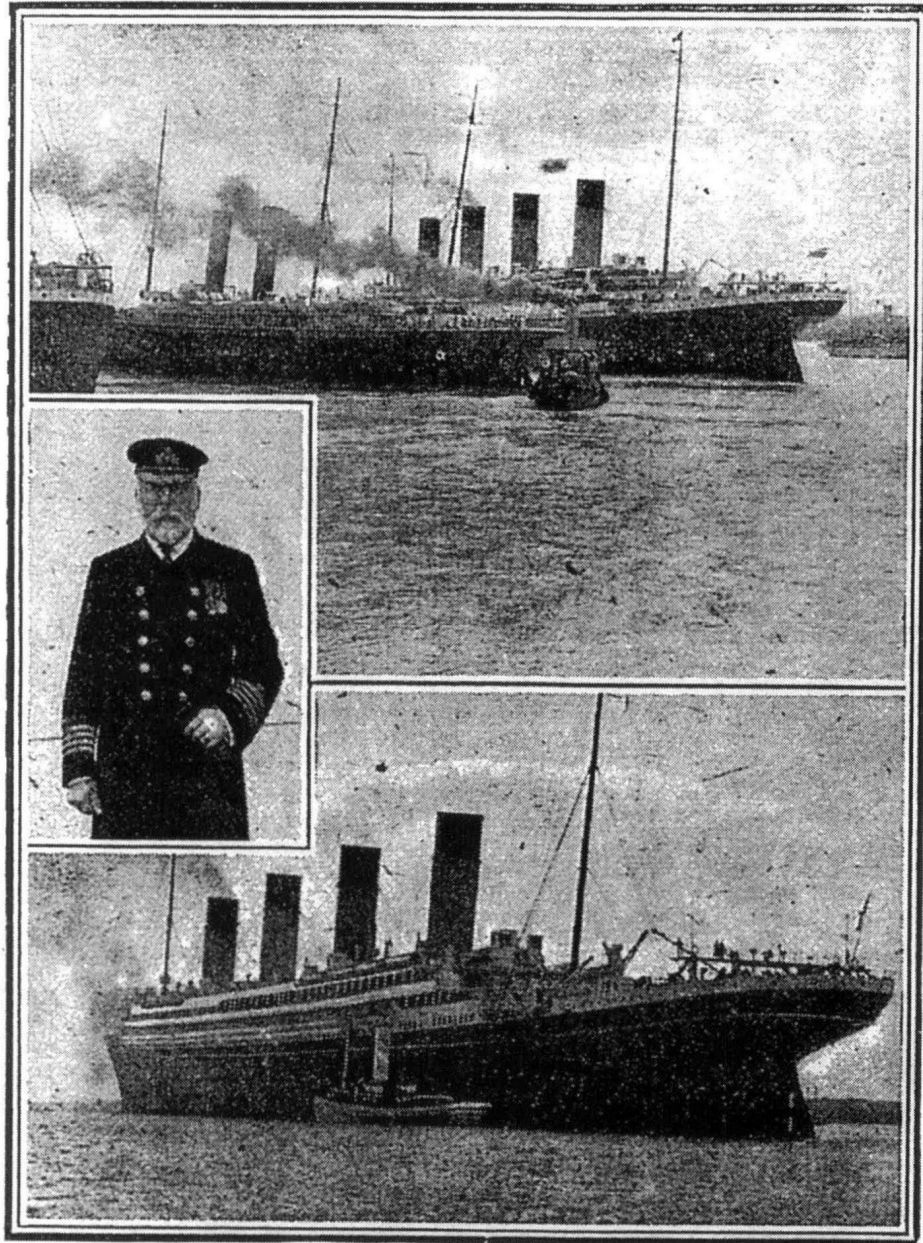
On the stocks. – A bow view showing the vessel's enormous height.



Afloat. – A broadside view showing the Titanic's great length (882 feet).  
**THE GREAT WHITE STAR LINER TITANIC – ONE OF THE TWO LARGEST VESSELS  
IN THE WORLD – LAUNCHED FROM THE YARD OF MESSRS. HARLAND AND WOLFF  
AT BELFAST. "Daily Graphic" photographs.**



## SENSATIONAL START TO LINER'S MAIDEN VOYAGE



A sensational incident occurred at Southampton yesterday, where a big crowd had assembled to see the giant White Star liner Titanic start her maiden trip to New York. As the screws of the world's biggest liner began to work, and she prepared to pass the Oceanic and New York, the latter's stern rope parted, and the suction swung her round into midstream. The Titanic's screws were stopped immediately, and what might have been a serious accident was happily averted. The photographs show – (1) The dangerous proximity of the two great ships, and (2) the Titanic proceeding down Southampton Water after the incident. Commander E.J. Smith, of the Titanic, is inset.

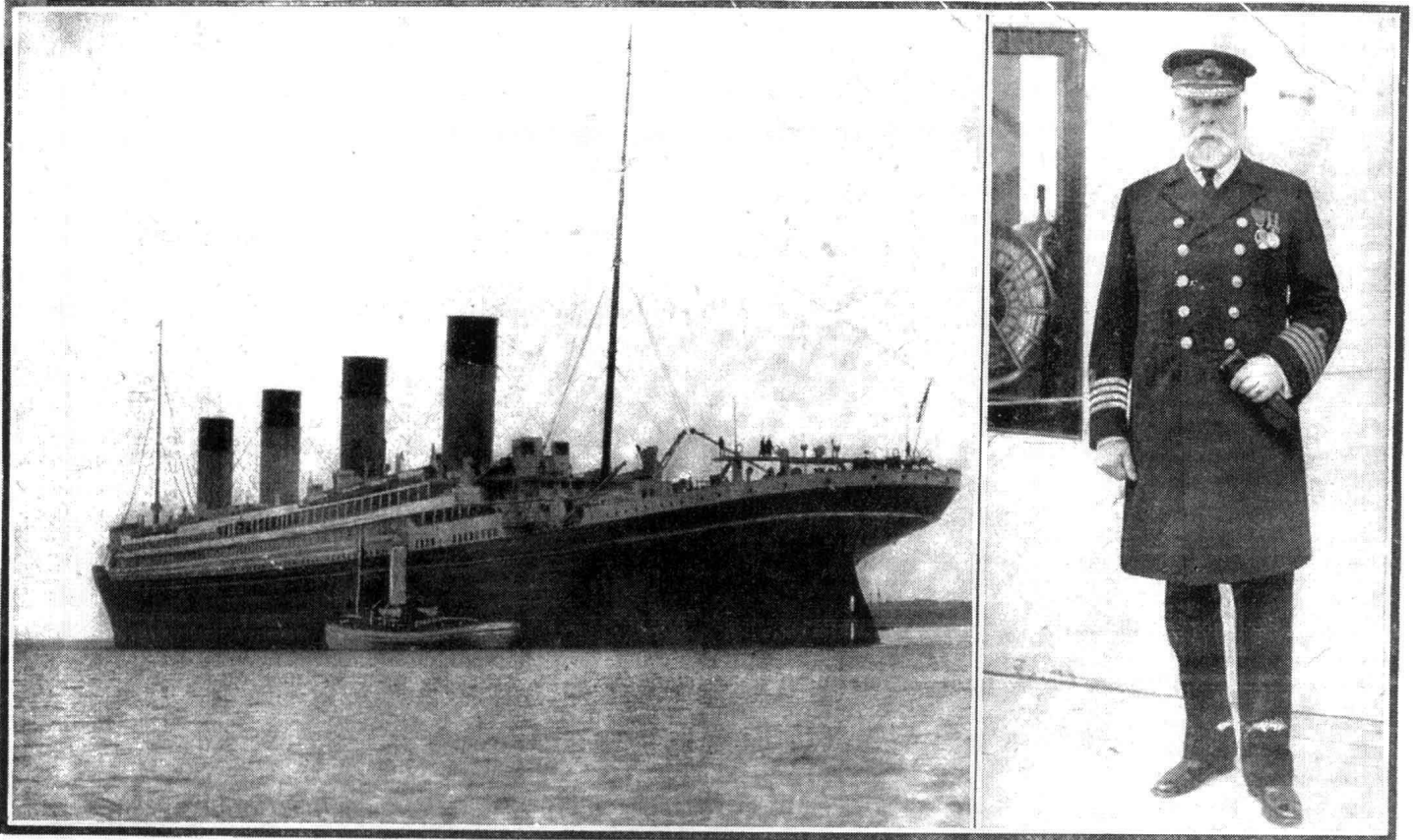
*Daily Sketch Photographs*

# DAILY SKETCH.

No. 968.—TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1912.

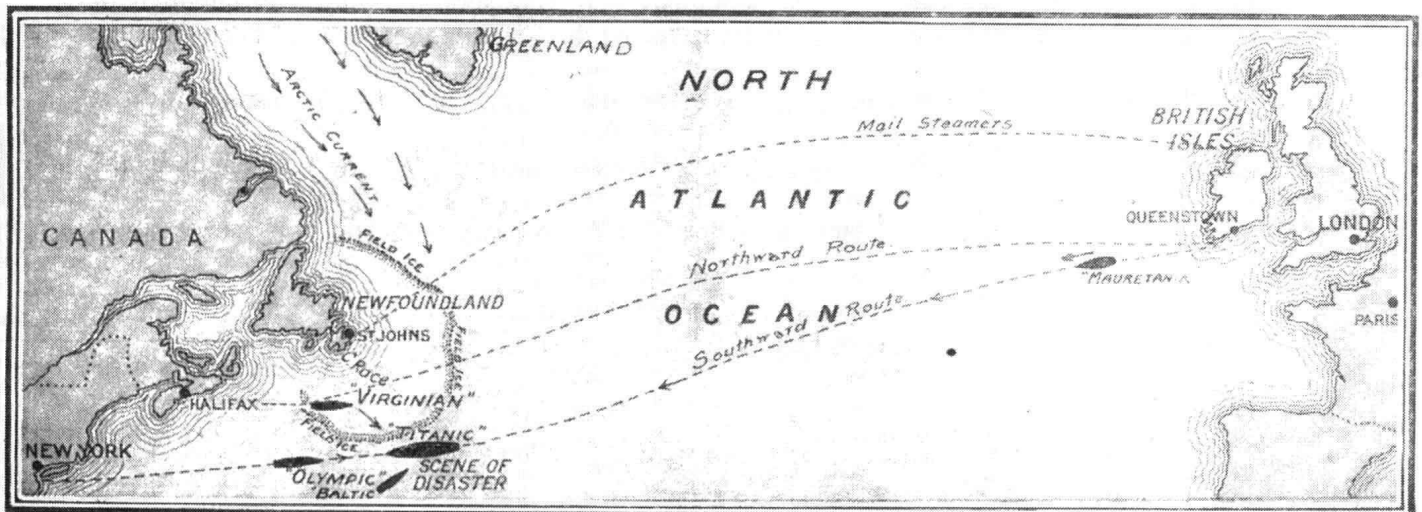
THE PREMIER PICTURE PAPER. [Registered as a Newspaper.] ONE HALFPENNY

## DISASTER TO TITANIC ON HER MAIDEN VOYAGE.



The Titanic leaving Southampton on Wednesday last on her maiden voyage to New York. On Sunday night she struck an iceberg 280 miles south of Cape Race, Newfoundland, and in response to her wireless messages for assistance the Allan liner Virginian, her sister ship the Olympic, and the Baltic raced to her help.

Captain E. J. Smith in command of the Titanic, who was captain of the Olympic when she was in collision with the cruiser Hawke off Cowes. He has been a White Star commander for 25 years.—Daily Sketch Photographs



This map, drawn from the information contained in yesterday's wireless messages, shows the track of the great liner, and how the Virginian, which sailed on the homeward trip from Halifax on Saturday, was able to get to the Titanic first. The Olympic, which also sailed aboard the Parisian and Carpathia, which also got alongside yesterday.

on Saturday, was able to steam towards the Titanic also when she picked up the wireless message. Many of the great liners traversing the ocean highway have been in communication with the White Star liner ever since her accident. The passengers were transhipped

# TERRIBLE DISASTER TO TITANIC

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Feared Loss of 1,700 Lives in Mid-Atlantic

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## 655 KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SAVED

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### Rush of Ocean Liners To The Rescue

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On her maiden voyage the White Star liner Titanic, the largest ship afloat, met with a disaster as a result of which she sank.

Six hundred and fifty-five of the Titanic's passengers and crew are known to have been saved, says the Central News. It is feared that the others have been lost.

There were some 2,300 souls on board, and should the feared loss of life be proved true it will mean that about 1,700 human beings have perished.

The news of the sinking of the great ship was only received at an early hour this morning.

The intelligence was communicated by wireless to the New York office of the White Star Company by the captain of the Olympic.

In mid-Atlantic, shortly after ten o'clock on Sunday night (American time) she collided with an iceberg.

Wireless telegraphy messages were sent for assistance, and in a short time a number of liners were racing to her aid.

The wireless station at Cape Race first picked up the call for help, but very soon afterwards came the announcement that the Allan liner Virginian had received the same message, and was speeding towards the maimed Titanic.

Other great liners were reached by the same signals, and were soon hurrying over hundreds of miles of sea. Three of them, the Virginian, the Parisian and the Carpathia reached the Titanic almost together.

Meanwhile the Titanic had been sinking by the head, and an anxious night had been spent by those on board.

Passengers were put off in lifeboats, and fortunately the sea was calm. They were taken up by the liners without difficulty.

When she left Queenstown the Titanic had on board 2,358 passengers and crew, made up as follows:-

First Class .....	350
Second Class .....	305
Steerage .....	800
Officers and crew .....	903

This is the first disaster of such awful magnitude that has befallen a mammoth liner in the open sea.

# CALLS FOR HELP

## Many Great Liners Race to the Rescue

From Our Own Correspondent

**MONTREAL Monday Night**

Disaster has marked the maiden voyage of the gigantic White Star liner Titanic, for, while steaming through the night some 270 miles south-east of Newfoundland, she struck an iceberg, and is now crawling towards Halifax in imminent danger of sinking. Happily, so far as can be at present ascertained, no lives have been lost, and with plenty of help from other liners standing by, the passengers should be landed safely to-night or to-morrow.

The first notification of the disaster came from the wireless station at Cape Race, which about 10.30 last night picked up the Titanic's message for help. Shortly afterwards came another wireless message from the Allan liner Virginian, which left Halifax yesterday morning for England, stating that she had also picked up the message and was hastening to the liner's relief.

As the Titanic carried no fewer than 2,358 passengers and crew further news was awaited with anxiety. The next message received by the wireless station was even more alarming, for the Titanic's operator reported that the ship was sinking by the head and that the women and children were being put in to the lifeboats.

Then came a long pause, and at 12.27 the Virginian's operator said the last signals received from the Titanic were blurred and indistinct, and that the message had been broken off suddenly.

By this time no fewer than eleven great liners had picked up the despairing "S.O.S." signal and were heading full speed to the rescue. The Titanic's sister ship Olympic, which was herself in collision only a short time ago, was about three hundred miles away on her voyage from New York to Southampton, and while passing the message on she announced that she was racing to the scene.

Another boat comparatively near was the White Star liner Baltic, which will be

remembered as the rescuing ship in the Republic disaster about two years ago. The Baltic, which left New York on Thursday, was east of the Titanic, but promptly put back. Of the other vessels, the Hamburg American liners Amerika and Cincinnati, the Allan liner Parisian bound for Glasgow, the Cunarder Carpathia, the North German Lloyd Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm and Prinz Adalbert, and the French liner La Provence sent wireless messages of encouragement and the news that they were hurrying to the rescue.

Four anxious hours passed, and then came a message from the Virginian that all the passengers had been got into the lifeboats by three-thirty this morning, and that the Titanic was still afloat, though badly damaged and low down by the head. Fortunately the sea was calm and there was apparently no fog.

The Virginian, the Parisian and the Carpathia appear to have reached the Titanic almost together, and although details are meagre, wireless messages received late this afternoon prove that the passengers have all been safely transhipped. The Allan Line officials here have not received any messages from the Parisian and the Virginian, but one transmitted by the Olympic, which was fast coming up with the wrecked liner at the time of despatch, says the majority of the passengers have been taken on board the Parisian, which will put back to Halifax with them.

Another message states that the Virginian is towing the Titanic, and while the Allan officials have no confirmation of this, they admit that it is highly probable. The Carpathia was apparently only able to stand by in case of necessity, for, owing to limited accommodation, she was unable to take many of the Titanic's passengers aboard. The Baltic, which according to last advices was nearing the scene, will also take some of the passengers, and Government steamers from Halifax and Cape Race will complete the rescue work.

Absolutely no details are to hand yet as to how the accident occurred, but messages received throughout the week-end prove that there is an unprecedented amount of ice south of Cape Race, and the Virginian had, in fact warned several other ships.



## ICEBERG DANGERS

### Huge Field in the Track of Liners

The iceberg with which the Titanic collided was one of a huge field which has drifted into the track of west-bound steamers.

According to a Central News message from New York yesterday the liner Carmania has reported that many of the icebergs are mountain-like in size. The French liner Niagara and other vessels have been damaged by the ice.

Interviewed yesterday, a Manchester ship's officer who has made about 200 Atlantic voyages said:- "This is the worst period of the year for ice and fog in the North Atlantic, and icebergs are the one thing an officer dreads in these latitudes.

Rocks and islands we have charted, and know their whereabouts to a nicety, but when a big iceberg comes drifting into your path in the darkness, or in a fog, there is an element of fortune as well as careful seamanship if you avoid trouble.

The routes of liners are chosen so as to bring them as much as possible outside the paths along which winds and currents carry the great masses of ice from the Arctic seas, but icebergs are frequently sighted much further south than the most southerly of the two main routes to New York.

This period of the year is the worst for fog, and frequently there is fog near a big berg when neighbouring parts of the ocean are clear.

Sometimes the only indication that you are near an iceberg is the echo of the ship's whistle, and if you know there is no land near you may be satisfied, if you are anywhere south of the banks of Newfoundland, that you are unpleasantly near an iceberg.

About seven-eighths of a berg is submerged, and while some are almost perpendicular others have submerged ice stretching a great way from the part that is visible.

A ship with the power of the Titanic might rip herself to pieces if she struck a submerged berg this way.

## THIRTY MILLIONAIRES

### New York Excited by Peril of Wealthy Passengers

From Our Own Correspondent

NEW YORK Monday Night

The news transmitted this morning from Montreal of the disaster to the Titanic was received here with absolute consternation, for the passenger list includes many of the most prominent millionaires in this country.

Ships arriving here last week-end, notably the Cunarder Carmania, and the French liner Niagara, reported having encountered great ice packs. The latter had in fact sustained considerable damage and had been compelled to signal for assistance. The Olympic, which left here on Saturday, quickly reported that she was on the way to the rescue, as did the Baltic, the Carpathia, the Amerika, and Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm.

Anxious crowds gathered round the White Star office clamouring for news, but the officials had none to give until quite late in the day. Mr A. S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, made a reassuring statement to the effect that the vessel was absolutely unsinkable and that the watertight compartments would certainly keep her afloat.

Shortly before mid-day (New York time) the welcome news was received that twenty boatloads of the Titanic's passengers had been transhipped to the Allan liner Parisian, which seems to have been the first of the fleet of rescuers to arrive on the scene. The message came from the Olympic, which was then nearing the disabled liner, and later the same vessel reported that the Cunarder Carpathia had also taken off some passengers, while the Virginian was standing by.

Details are as yet fragmentary, but according to messages received from the Olympic, the Baltic, and the Virginian, the Titanic's commander Capt E. J. Smith, acted with commendable promptitude immediately after the disaster. Realizing the seriousness of the

situation, he had the passengers put into the lifeboats, which were swung out ready to launch at a moment's notice, while his wireless operator was filling the air with appeals for help.

Fortunately the seemingly deserted ocean highway was unusually crowded with east and west bound liners and no fewer than twelve were within a radius from three hundred to seven hundred miles. The Parisian, Carpathia and Virginian arrived on the scene between nine and ten o'clock this morning, while the Olympic should have arrived there at two o'clock this afternoon. The passengers will be rushed either to Halifax or New York, and the mails will probably be taken by the Virginian.

The latest messages received here this evening confirm the news that the Titanic is proceeding to Halifax, partly under her own steam, partly in tow by the Virginian. No mention is made of any casualties, and there is every reason to hope that once more the Marconi wireless system has prevented an appalling disaster, and that, with the certainty of prompt assistance, the pluck and good seamanship of the Titanic's officers and crew have triumphed over terrifying conditions.

Apart from the immense value of the great liner and her cargo, the total wealth of her passengers would reach a record figure. There were fully thirty millionaires on board, including Mr G. D. Widener (son of Mr T. A. B. Widener, the Philadelphia millionaire), Colonel John Jacob, Mr J. Bruce Ismay (chairman of the White Star Line), Mr J. J. Astor and his young bride, Mr B. Guggenheim, the famous banker, Mr C. M. Hays, president of the Grand Trunk Railway, with his wife and daughter, Mr Isidor Straus, and Mr J. B. Thayer, president of the Pennsylvania Railway.

Other notable passengers included Mr W. T. Stead, Major Archibald Butt, President Taff's aide-de-camp, and the Countess of Rothes.

#### **INSURED FOR £1,000,000**

The value of the Titanic and her cargo is probably about a million and a half. It is stated that she is insured at Lloyds for £1,000,000 which does not extend to any valuables or specie that she might have been carrying at the time.

## **THE MAN AT THE WIRELESS**

On enquiry at the Marconi headquarters in London yesterday the *Daily Sketch* was informed that the wireless installation on board the Titanic is an exceptionally powerful one. It is in charge of a first class operator, John George Phillips, of Farncombe, Godalming. His parents last night received the following message from their son:- "Titanic making slowly for Halifax Virginian standing by. Try not to worry."

*\*\*For the explanation of this message see article on page 26.\*\**

## **"LIKE AN EGGSHELL"**

### **Liner's Bows Crushed, Twisted and Broken In**

#### **SPLENDID BEHAVIOUR OF THE CREW**

A graphic story of the disaster is told in a brief wireless message from the Carpathia which picked up the Titanic's signals when four days out on her voyage from New York to Gibraltar.

When she struck the iceberg the Titanic was running at reduced speed, presumably from the knowledge of the proximity of ice. Most of the passengers had retired to bed, but they were awakened and terrified by an impact which crushed and twisted the towering bows of the liner and broke them like an eggshell.

The behaviour of the crew was exemplary, and they were assisted by many of the male passengers, who calmed the women and children. The wireless was set going, and as a precaution the majority of the passengers were placed in the liner's boats, which were swung out ready to be lowered.

Though the sea was pouring into the vessel forward, her machinery had not been disabled. It was found that, with the pumps working and the watertight bulkheads holding well, there was a good chance of the liner making port, and the captain proceeded slowly and cautiously in the direction of Halifax, notifying his intention

to the vessels already hurrying to his aid.

It would have been a long and trying wait until the Virginian could come up with the Titanic, but just before daylight the Cunard liner Carpathia arrived, and after an exchange of messages began preparations for the transference of passengers.

As soon as there was sufficient light the boats were lowered away and thirteen hundred of the fourteen hundred passengers on the Titanic were ferried over to the Carpathia without accident of any kind. While the transshipment was in progress the wind began to rise, and for a while the work had to be suspended, but fortunately the calm was renewed.

Altogether twenty boatloads of people were thus taken from the Titanic to the Carpathia. Presently the Virginian also arrived, and while the remainder of the passengers were being transferred to the Parisian the Virginian got ready to attempt the difficult task of towing the Titanic into Halifax.

By this time the Titanic was low in the water, and her foreholds were full, but the captain and crew were sanguine that she would be safely docked. The White Star Company is making special arrangements for the conveyance of the passengers from Halifax to New York. One special train, to carry six hundred, has already been ordered.

According to newspaper reports the Titanic carried something like five million dollar's worth of bonds and jewels, etc, all of which have, it is believed, been saved.

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## SAVED BY WIRELESS

### Valuable Record of Service to Life and Shipping

Wireless telegraphy has a long record of valuable service in Life-saving at sea and the salving of distressed ships since its adoption by the Merchantile Marine.

On March 3, 1899 the s.s. R. F. Matthews ran into the East Goodwin lightship. The accident was reported by wireless to the South Foreland lighthouse and lifeboats were promptly despatched.

On January 1, 1901 the barque Medora, of Stockholm, was waterlogged on the Ratal Bank. The mail steamer Princess Clementine notified the Marconi station near Ostend and a tug was sent out and towed the barque off. Some days later the Princess Clementine herself ran ashore at Mariakerke during a thick fog, intelligence of the accident being conveyed to Ostend by wireless.

Towards the end of 1903 the liner Kroonland disabled her steering-gear 130 miles W. of the Fastnet and had to be put back to Queenstown. The captain within an hour and a half of the receipt of the news by the agent at Antwerp had been instructed as to the measures to be taken. Passengers on board communicated with their friends in all parts of the world, and in some cases obtained money supplies from the purser on the authorities of the replies.

In 1904 two accidents – a stranding and a collision to the liner New York – were reported by wireless, and the Friesland was also located with a broken propeller shaft by the same means.

On January 23, 1909 the liner Republic sank after a collision. Communication was established with the Marconi station at Siasconset and the news was telegraphed to several other vessels, which immediately proceeded to the scene and the whole of the crew and passengers were saved.

On June 10, 1909 the whole of the passengers, numbering 410, and the crew of the Slavonia were saved. The vessel was wrecked on Flores Island, Azores, and was able to communicate with two liners which went to her assistance.

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## COMMANDER SMITH

The Titanic is under the command of Commander Edward J. Smith R.N.R. who had been transferred from the Olympic. Captain Smith was commander of the Olympic when, while in charge of a pilot, she collided with the Hawke. He is sixty years of age, and has been one of the White Star Company's commanders for about twenty-five years.

## THE MAN WHO BROUGHT ASSISTANCE TO THE TITANIC



Mr Jack Phillips, the wireless telegraph operator, who flashed through the darkness the messages calling for assistance for the Titanic. The code "S.O.S." which is used now instead of "C.Q.D." was picked up by vessels within a radius of several hundred miles. Mr Phillips is a son of Mr and Mrs G. A. Phillips, of Farncombe, Godalming. He is 25 years of age, and served as a telegraphist in the Godalming Post Office, afterwards joining the Marconi School at Liverpool. His first wireless appointment was on the Teutonic, after which he was appointed to the Mauretania, Lusitania and Oceanic, being transferred to the Titanic for her maiden trip.

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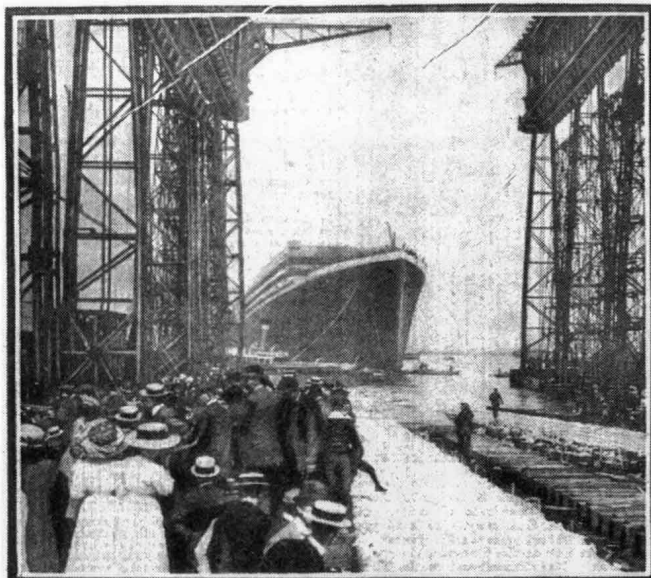
*\*\*Students of the Titanic tragedy will be aware, whether they believe in them or not, that there were a number of premonitions and coincidences of a psychic nature surrounding the sinking of the ship. Devotees of that line of thought may take heart at the following short report in the same edition of the Daily Sketch. Liverpool was of course the port of registration for RMS Titanic.\*\**

## LIVERPOOL IN DARKNESS

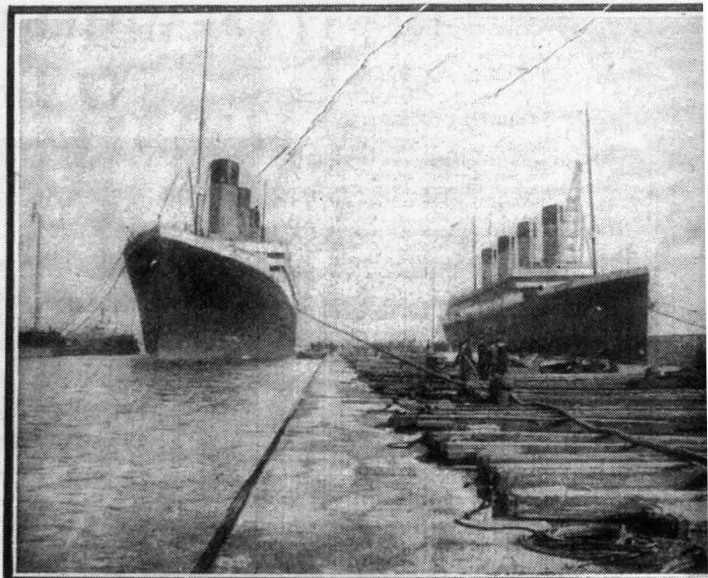
Shortly before nine o'clock last evening the entire electricity supply of Liverpool failed suddenly. The streets were plunged into darkness, electric cars came to a sudden standstill, and all social life was held up. It was fully three-quarters of an hour before normal conditions were restored.



## BIGGEST BOAT IN THE WORLD COLLIDES WITH AN ICEBERG



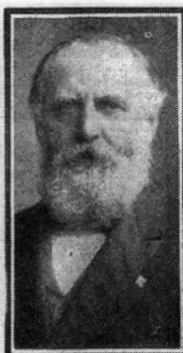
The launch of the Titanic at Belfast.



The Olympic and Titanic alongside each other in Belfast Lough, during the time the Olympic was undergoing repairs after her mishap with the Hawke. This photograph shows the two biggest vessels alongside each other.



Mr. M. Hay.



Mr. W. T. Stead.



Mr. N. Craig, K.C., M.P.



Colonel May.

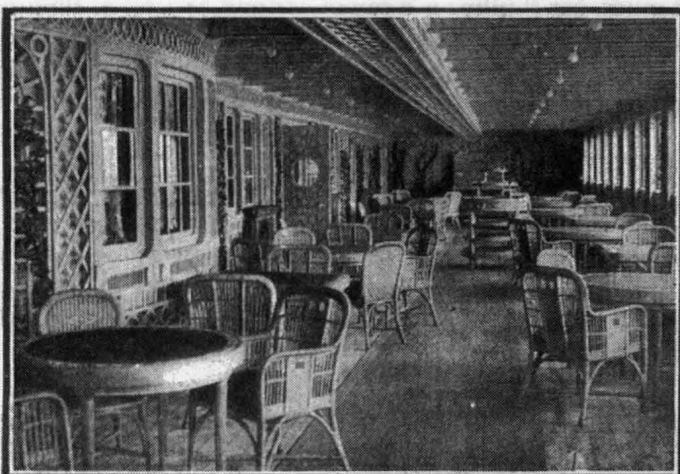


Mrs. Levison.

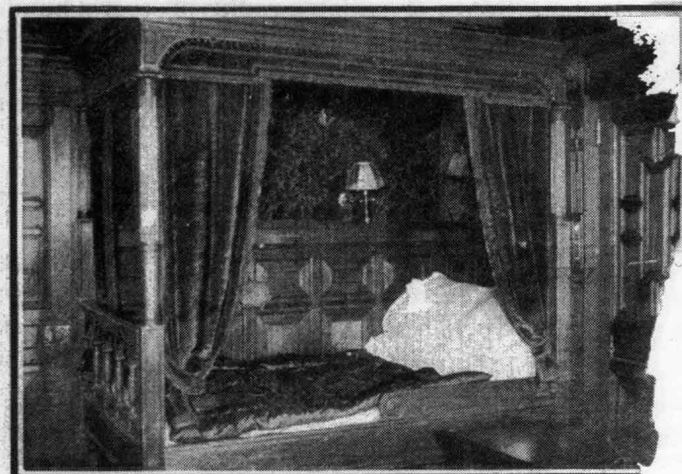


Mr. Bruce Ismay.

There were 2,353 persons on board the Titanic, comprising 350 first-class, 305 second-class, and 800 steerage passengers, and 903 of a crew. Were reproduced portraits of some of the well-known passengers.



The Parisian cafe on board the Titanic—an innovation in ocean travelling.



The luxurious sleeping accommodation in the first-class cabins.