

YARDMEN THEIR WORK, REST AND PLAY

During the 19th and for much of the 20th century, east Belfast was a heaving mass of industrial activity. At its peak, over 30,000 men were employed in the Harland & Wolff shipyard, designing, building and launching ships of a scale and magnificence never before seen. More than 5,000 people worked at the Belfast Ropeworks Company Limited, the world's largest manufacturer of rope and twine (which supplied one-third of all the Allied Forces' binding materials during the Second World War). Busy railway lines carried more than one and a half million passengers through the Holywood Arches junction every year. There were massive glassworks, huge brickworks, vast bakeries and industrial-scale distilleries churning out millions of gallons of the finest Belfast whiskey.

Our story though is concerned with the Yardmen and their families. Descendants of strong-limbed countrymen who came to the area in search of work in the mid-1800s, settled in the redbrick terraces of Ballymacarrett.

They're the Yardmen who built ships "that would wear out the ocean".

Today, the giant cranes of H & W shipyard, Samson (1974) and Goliath (1969), are listed as historic monuments.

On the site where Titanic and her sister ships were built, a new vision is rising with Titanic Quarter developing as a key residential, commercial and entertainment hub with Northern Ireland's largest visitor attraction, Titanic Belfast, at its heart.

TRAIL MAP >>>>>>>>



The Yardmen Trail

Walk in the footsteps of the men who built the ships that would wear out the oceans

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TAKE A WALK

Starting at any point and following the plotted highlights this one hour walking trail will take you on a journey through a part of east Belfast that was home to the shipyard men. You'll discover where they lived; you'll see where they worshipped and you'll visit places where they relaxed.

More than this, you'll experience the deep sense of pride that the communities of east Belfast still hold for the achievements of their Yardmen.

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Follow the Yardmen's stories by visiting www.gotoeastbelfast.com

Ship of Dreams Mural

This stunning artwork pays tribute to RMS Titanic, to the men who created her and those who lost their lives when she sank at 2.20am on Monday 15 April, 1912.

Depicted is Thomas Andrews, managing director of Harland & Wolff shipyard who was on board the vessel and spent his remaining time ensuring the survival of other passengers. He went down with the ship. A letter written by a survivor expresses the courage he displayed to the end:

"Mr. Andrews met his fate like a true hero, realising the great danger, and gave up his life to save the women and children of the Titanic. They will find it hard to replace him."

More information on the other persons depicted on the artwork can be found on the plaque to the left hand side of the mural.

"The Titanic was a ship of dreams, its reality and design began in the mind dream of one man, thousands of others helped create and rivet metal into myth: this artwork celebrates the reality of dreams, caught within one single voyage"

Ross Wilson, Artist.



The Shipyard Church

TITANIC PEOPLE

Westbourne Presbyterian Church was opened for worship on 10 October, 1880 and became known as the 'Shipyard Church' due to the many Yardmen and their families who worshipped there. The Yardmen statue sits across from the church, framed by the twin yellow cranes of Harland & Wolff, Samson and Goliath. One of the church's most prominent ministers was the Rev. William Witherow, a native of Banagher in County Londonderry.

During his 36-year ministry he oversaw works to enlarge the church and organised the building, furnishing and maintaining of the church school. A new and exciting tourist attraction, Titanic People – an exhibition space which tells the personal stories of the Yardmen and their descendants - is being developed in the church.



Templemore Public Baths

Templemore Avenue

This wonderful time capsule, opened in 1893, remains a virtually intact survivor of the Victorian age. These are one of four public baths built by Belfast Corporation (others were at Ormeau Avenue, Peter's Hill and Falls Road). Built at a time when very few houses had bathrooms, these facilities meant that local people could enjoy a swim, and, for a few pence, a steaming hot bath.



In his address at the opening ceremony, the Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Right Honourable Sir Daniel Dixon, said that Templemore Public Baths were for "...cleansing of the body on Saturday, so that the soul might be cleansed on Sunday..."

A commemorative plaque at the entrance to the Baths notes that the actor James Ellis and football legend George Best both swam here – but the list might also include such famous east Belfast names as singer/songwriter Van Morrison, author C.S. Lewis and playwright Marie Jones.



Dee Street Titanic Mural

This poignant wall mural commemorates RMS Titanic and the Harland & Wolff shipyard workers who built her.

Titanic's keel was laid on 31 March, 1909 in the Harland & Wolff shipyard. She was launched into Belfast Lough on 31 May, 1911, and she departed on her first trans-Atlantic crossing to New York on 10 April, 1912.

At 11.40pm on Sunday 14 April, 1912, disaster struck. Titanic hit an iceberg. Two hours and forty minutes later, she sank with the loss of 1522 lives. In her brief life, Titanic had been the largest, most luxurious vessel ever built and her story continues to fascinate today's generation.

The Harland & Wolff emblem is depicted above the cranes of the shipyards. Yardmen are shown and in the centre is Captain Edward Smith, with Titanic at magnificent full steam. The newspaper boy painted at the base of the mural is Ned Parfett. His newspapers carry the headline: "How the Titanic Went Down".

The Great Eastern Bar

273 Newtownards Road

Built in the 1880s, The Great Eastern bar is just a rivet's throw from the heart of Belfast's busy shipyards. It was named after a famous iron steamship, the Great Eastern (1858). This vessel was owned by a successful east Belfast businessman, John McKenna, who later founded Liverpool Football Club. A mast from The Great Eastern is used as a flagpole at Anfield Stadium to this day!

This bar has passed through a number of owners in its time. At the end of the Second World War it was bought by the Hastings family for £13,000, a fortune then. The bar remains frequented by locals to this day.

The Great Eastern has seen a number of incarnations. At one time it was known as the Red Hand Bar and later the Ulster Arms. However, following extensive restoration in the 1970s, it reverted to its original name.

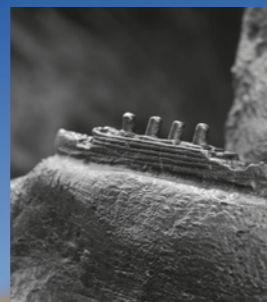


**PATTERN MAKER
RADIOGRAPHER
SHOTBLASTER
FURNACE BOY
RAT KILLER
HOLDER UP
CATCH BOY
HORSEMEN
MACHINIST
LOFTSMAN
DIVER**

The Yardmen/ Dr Pitt Memorial Park

Just opposite the 'Shipyard Church' where many workers from H & W worshipped, artist Ross Wilson's bronze, The Yardmen, celebrates the extraordinary achievements of the east Belfast workers who built Titanic – then the largest moving manmade object on earth - and many other great ships. Unveiled on 28 March, 2012, just days before the centenary of Titanic's leaving Belfast, the three Yardmen reflect the great pride the people of east Belfast have in their community and its world famous achievements. Read more about their story at gotoeastbelfast.com

The sculpture stands before Dr Pitt Memorial Park, which was created as a memorial to a local doctor who provided outstanding services to the people of the Lower Newtownards Road. It stands on a site which was once a busy walkway to the shipyards, where thousands of men trudged to work, wearing their 'dunchers' (cloth caps) and donkey jackets, and carrying their 'piece' (sandwich).



McMaster Street

McMaster Street has been preserved as one of the last surviving complete terraces of late Victorian workers' dwellings in east Belfast. Developed by John McMaster between 1898 and 1908, its houses were built to a good standard, with back entries, running water and flush toilets.

These "Parlour" houses had a front ground floor parlour reserved for special occasions, and a back kitchen, where food was prepared and eaten. A single-storey return contained the scullery, or working kitchen. A tiled yard at the back had an outside toilet and a coal house. Two bedrooms were located upstairs.

The better quality housing of McMaster Street attracted higher paid tenants. For example, No. 42 was originally occupied by a shopkeeper called James McKibben. A fitter called R. H. Doherty took up residence in 1911 and stayed for 30 years. Then from 1941 until 1969, No. 42 was home to a composer called T. W. Logan.

