

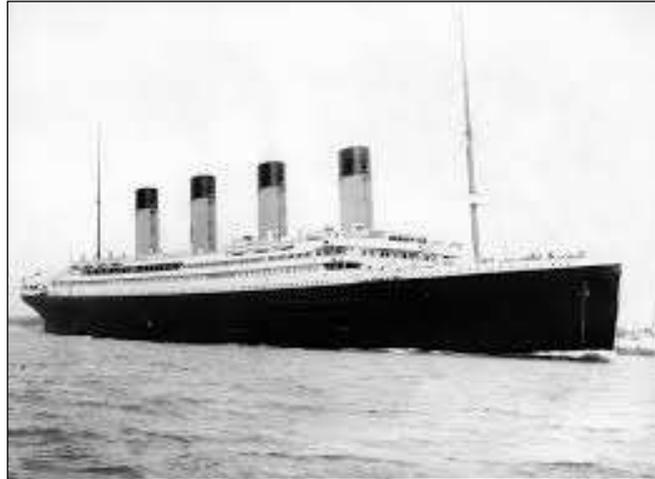
TASMANIAN CONNECTIONS TO THE TITANIC

by

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There are interesting and perhaps forgotten Tasmanian connections to the ill-fated White Star Liner.

I have in my possession a photograph of a small rudder blade with the words "Titanic" embossed on it.



Photo of the blade

"Many years ago, I was shown this blade which was and no doubt still is, held in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

"It is a small blade and I surmise it was originally for one of the launches that would have belonged to the Titanic.

“The blade has not been used and is in a mint condition. The real story behind it is rather a mystery, but I understand that it came to Tasmania through the agency of an old-sea salt, Captain Trevor Ross.”

“Back in 1984 I interviewed Captain Ross and had a work published on him.

“Captain Ross of the RAN was perhaps the longest serving man ever in Australia’s naval history. His career was absolutely amazing and can be viewed online under his name.

“By the time my work was published¹, he had just passed away the month before, aged 96.

“He had an amazing career. Born in Hobart, he returned to Hobart after retirement, having launched his naval career in 1912. He served in two World Wars.

“Some years after 1984 the ex-history curator of the Tasmanian Museum, Peter Mercer, informed me that the museum had a blade from the Titanic. I went along and viewed the blade and took the subsequent photo of it.

“I understand from Mr Mercer that it was Captain Ross who donated the Titanic blade to the Museum. At the time of writing on him, I was not aware that he had done so. It was only years later I learned of the case. It is a shame that I did not find out where he had originally obtained the blade.”

“There is also a marvellous and detailed model of the Titanic in the hotel in Launceston, called The Cock & Bull.



Titanic Model, Cock and Bull British Hotel. Launceston

“The ill -fated captain of the Titanic, Edward Smith (1850-1912) spend his 40th birthday in Hobart, then captain of RMS Coptic. The January 1890 visit was Captain Smith’s first voyage to Australia and New Zealand as master of the RMS *Coptic* (Mercury Jan 27 1890). Captain Smith was Master of the *Coptic* from 1889 until 1894.

¹ Tasmanian Mail 23rd October 1984.



Captain Edward John Smith

“Sister Phyllis CSC with Sister Hannah arrived in Hobart on the *Coptic* in September 1892 at the age of 37 and founded St Michael’s Collegiate School. The Mercury newspaper reported:

“Sisters Hannah and Phyllis - will remain in Hobart and all in all probability start a school for the children of the middle classes. In work of this character they have been very successful in England, where their labours have been much rewarded.”



Collegiate

“The building in the background (note the fluted Doric columns) is Stephenville (which can be seen from Macquarie Street, part of the main Collegiate campus). Sister Phyllis was Principal of St.Michael’s Collegiate for 33 years from 1895 until 1928. The community of the Sisters of the Church - and Anglican order - continued the association with Collegiate until 1973.”

The Titanic is an episode in his book, "The Scandalous Adventures of Captain Watson Wentworth".

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