

LIFE AND  
TIMES OF  
JOSEPH BELL  
CHIEF  
ENGINEER

# TARN TO TITANIC



T I T A N I C

Barrie Bell Hodgson and Ann Freer

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Published in Great Britain in 2013  
Barrie Bell Hodgson & Ann Freer

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ISBN 978-0-9560506-2-5

Printed by Adlard Print, Nottinghamshire



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The Titanic by Allana Anson of Hallbankgate School

# Acknowledgements

For the kind and generous assistance with the project we would like to thank the following.

Cumbrian Headstones, Mark Hodgson

NZETC. [New Zealand Electronic Text Centre], Wellington N.Z.

Encyclopedia Titanica.

Paperspast, National Library New Zealand.

Cumberland News Group, Carlisle.

The Cumberland News, Carlisle 20th April 1912 edition.

Cumbria Magazine, Skipton.

John Lightfoot MBE, South Shields.

Ripley Library, Derbyshire.

Keith Farrell, Tile Films, 'Saving the Titanic' 2012.

Stephen White, Carlisle City Library.

Mrs. M. Brooksbank, Somercotes, Derbyshire.

Mr and Mrs Irving for the Talkin Lads fishing at the Tarn.  
Front cover

Friends for sharing their original photographs.

The Internet.

Thanks to Jo Hodgson for editorial assistance, sharing this historical project with myself, Ann & Brian Freer, in due recognition for Joseph Bell 100 years on.

# Forward

John H Lightfoot MBE CMarEng FIMarEST

Throughout history England has benefited from millions of acts of bravery and heroism by individuals answering the call of duty. The numbers reduce dramatically however for people who acted above and beyond the call of duty. One such hero was Joseph Bell, who as Chief Engineer, remained down in the engine room of RMS TITANIC after its fatal collision with an iceberg. Along with all of his staff, they ensured the lives of as many passengers as possible were saved before eventually making the ultimate sacrifice.

Joseph Bell was born in Farlam, Cumbria and this interesting and informative book is a much deserved record of his life and his final act of heroism 101 years ago. Hopefully it will ensure that he will not be forgotten.

The project to refurbish Joseph Bell's grave and headstone are also to be commended and will prove to be a fitting tribute to his family and the people of Farlam.

As a fellow Marine Engineer, I am very proud of Joseph Bell and all of his engine room staff who gave their lives on that fateful night so that others might live; and I am very pleased to be associated with this book and the refurbishment project.

I congratulate Ann Freer and Barrie B Hodgson on having the forethought and commitment to produce such a wonderful record of a courageous man.



Money raised from the sale of this book will go to the conservation of the memorial stone at St Thomas a Becket Church, Farlam, ensuring the future of his memorial.

**Patrons of the appeal**

Sir Christian Bonington, CVO, CBE, DL

The Bishop of Carlisle  
The Right Reverend James Newcome

Farlam Parish Council

# *Introduction*

History is where we have come from, and this biography of Joseph Bell and his roots in Farlam, Cumberland, attempts to portray a man of great courage and human endeavour for his part in the tragedy of the sinking of RMS Titanic, on the 15th April 1912. Joseph Bell had a significant role, with his fellow Engineers, in the saving of many lives as a consequence of their joint heroism and bravery on that night. After a hundred years this largely untold story of a remarkable figure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, deserves to be



more amply known. His early life in Farlam, Cumberland, now known as Cumbria, was influential on his life for what was to be his future Merchant Marine career.

The Bell families were Yeoman farmers in Farlam, Cumberland, and Joseph Bell was born at home in Farlam House, on 12th March 1861. This water colour shows the yard and at the top the farm house. Being a first child, he was named after both his grandfather and great-grandfather who had been farmers there from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1881 Joseph Bell went to school in Carlisle, at the age of 15, and was apprenticed as an engine fitter at R & H Stephenson & Company Shipyard in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. George Stephenson had been a regular visitor to the Thompson family of Farlam Hall, where the Thompson's collieries were established along the fell side and were serviced by railways that had been developed with the Stephensons. The Rocket of Stephenson fame was used here, and must have been a fascinating and curious subject to young

Joseph. Engineering may have seemed to be a much more interesting future for himself than continuing on the family farm. Having completed his apprenticeship in Newcastle Joseph, in 1883, entered the service of the Mercantile Marine sailing under the flag of the Liverpool & River Plate Steam Navigation Company. They employed him for two years, then later in 1885, Joseph began his career with the White Star Line serving on some eighteen ships beginning with RMS Oceanic and eventually the Titanic, covering a period of 1885 to his death in 1912.



His memorial gravestone in St Thomas a Becket Churchyard, Farlam, Cumbria is annotated with the following:

**JOSEPH BELL AGED 51 YEARS SON OF THE ABOVE MARGARET BELL CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE SS TITANIC WHO WAS LOST WITH ALL HIS ENGINEERING STAFF IN THE FOUNDING OF THAT VESSEL IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AFTER COLLISION WITH AN ICEBERG APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> 1912  
“NO GREATER LOVE HATH MAN THAN THIS. THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS”**

# *History of Farlam*

Farlam a small farming community set in the quiet rural Cumbrian countryside has to the north views of the Scottish Borders and the Solway Firth, a route taken by invading Border Reivers in the past. To the west the peaks of the Lake District can be seen covered in snow, or black against the setting sun. This skyline has hardly changed, could it be this inspirational landscape that encouraged Joseph Bell to travel rather than be a farmer.



The village is on arable land at the foot of the fells that join the north Pennines. There are very few flat fields so modern farming methods have not altered the historic landscape, only reduced the number of farms. Up until the 1970's there were five farming families managing the land, now there is one dairy herd and a racing stable that also stocks sheep. Many of the old farm building have been converted to housing but the footprint has remained largely unchanged.

How long people have been living here is uncertain. Hadrian's wall is only four miles away, nearby is Middle Gelt where the Romans quarried red sandstone and there was settlement at the adjoining

farm of Nether-ton during the occupation. There probably were indigenous people living in the area. After the Romans, came the Danes who settled around the area. The only clue is in some of the local names; a near by stream is called Lineholme Beck, the suffix “holme” is linked with the Viking Norse for water meadow and “line” is where flax for linen was grown or processed. This beck runs through a flat field that was later called Broad Meadow Bog, an ideal place for retting flax to make linen.

In 1066 the Normans invaded Britain, It took them a while to reach Cumbria and even then it was not an easy conquest. The Barony of Gilsland came fully under the control of the Normans in about 1156. Earlier attempts by the Norman, William de Meschines, found the region to be forcibly defended by the Scots under Gilbert, son of Buet. R.Ferguson writes amusingly in 1879 that: “William de Meschines, thus finding that he was the proprietor of the lions hide, whilst still on the lion’s back, sought and received from Henry I a compensation in the grant of the barony of Copeland” When Gilbert Buet died, Henry the II granted the barony to Hubert de Vallibus (Vaux) whose descendants continued to hold it to modern times. The first written records are mainly associated with the church, it was dedicated in c.1175 to Thomas a Becket and often referred to as Farlam Church, although not in Farlam but in the hamlet of Kirkhouse.



Robert de Vaux established a priory at Lanercost in c.1169. The monks were dependant on gifts from the local area. The founding charters were collated in the Lanercost Cartulary by the monks and they made small drawings on the margins. This sketch was made by the charter of Farlam Church. Many of the grants were made by “native” families who were here before the Normans. Walter de Windsor, the grandson of Uchtred,

former Lord of Catterlen, was a Saxon who was granted the Manor of Farlam, one of a number of manors that made up the Barony. He gave the church to the Priory as well as land near Clowsgill. His descendants took the name de Farlam and continued to make gifts of land.

In the reign of Edward III, John de Farlam had no heirs, and the Manor of Farlam passed to Ranulph de Dacre and Margaret Multon his wife and has since been part of the Barony. The accounts of 1485 record 12 farms and a manor house with 40 acres of land, 12 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture and 8 acres of wood. After the dissolution of the monasteries, the church and tithes associated with the priory were transferred to Lord Dacre. According to an audit at that time in 1552, there were two church bells. In 1703 an account was written of the church: " I found it a much more decent posture than I expected, considering the poor and precarious salary; but the present curate is an honest man and deserves a better support. The teaching in ye Quire is a great in-



convenience." The watercolour gives an impression of what the old church may have looked like before it was removed. It was replaced in 1860 by a new one and rebuilt at the top of the hill, de-

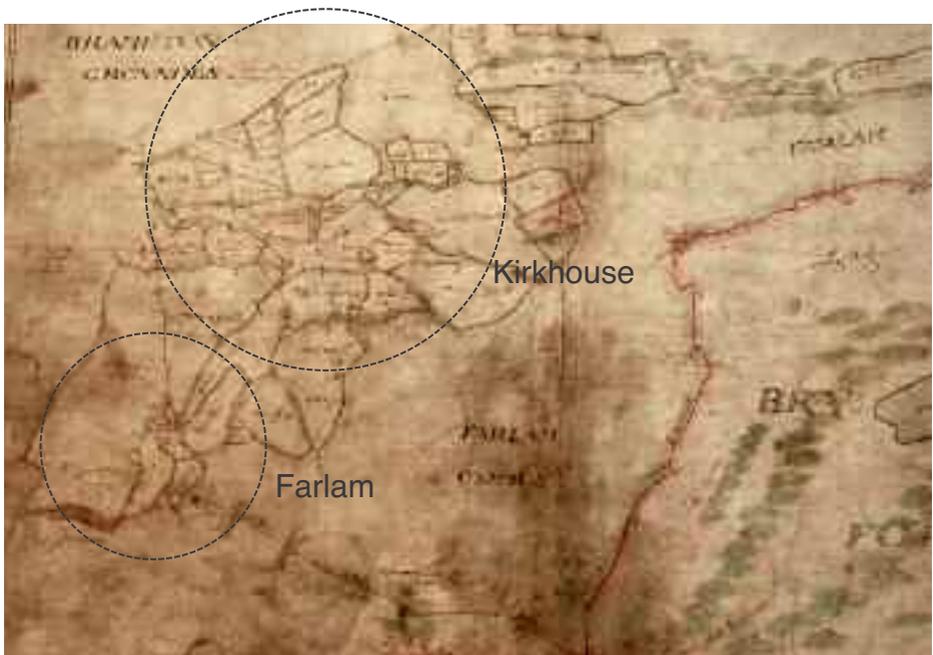
signed by Anthony Salvin in the early English style.

The earliest surviving map for the manor was drawn in 1603, when William Howard finally took possession of the Dacre lands. Thomas Dacre died leaving the estate to his son who died two years later. The estate then past to his two surviving daughters. They were in the care of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who had married their mother after his wife died. Arrangements were made for the daughters to marry the Duke of Norfolk's sons. Anne married second son Philip and Elizabeth age 13 was married to third son William at only 14 years old. The families claim to the estate was contested by Thomas's brother, Leonard Dacre. The claim did not succeed and he returned north and seized the estate and fortified Narworth Castle. Leonard was a supporter of the Catholic rebels who wished to see Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. He raised 3000 men in the pretence of defending his rights and resisting the rebels. When Queen Elizabeth realised his double plans she sent Lord Hudson to arrest him as a traitor. On February 20<sup>th</sup> 1570 Hudson approached Narworth Castle, but finding it heavily defended he started back to Carlisle. At Gelt Bridge, 4 miles from Narworth, Dacre who had followed them, attacked them. Hudson's cavalry was out numbered but charged the enemy's infantry resulting in the death of over 200 men, and many more taken prisoner. It was said Hell Beck ran red with blood; Leonard Dacre escaped to Scotland and then to France where he later died.

Further members of the Dacre family persued legal claims to the estate. William and his brother were arrested a number of times during this period, even spending time in the Tower of London. His family were not popular with Queen Elizabeth and this was exacerbated when he converted to Catholicism. Eventually the Dacres quit their claim to allow the Queen to persue a tenuous right to the estate. Her Majesty was eventually advised to put aside her claim in return for the payment of a huge sum of money to the crown. In 1601 William, Elizabeth and Anne took possession of the title. William wrote, " They were forced to buy their owne, and re-

deem their possessions as mere strangers at a very dear rate.” For thirty years the lands had been poorly managed, the Howards needed to raise money and they set about improving the productivity of the land and security of the region.

Before the family moved permanently to Narworth, a survey was made of all the manors in the Barony. Maps were drawn, and records made of tenants and owners as well as their properties, acreage and rents. The map for Farlam is in reasonable condition. The bundle of maps were being transported when the ship they were on sunk. Although they were rescued some of the detail was reduced.



The description written for the boundary of Farlam Manor can still be identified and follows the modern day parish boundary. The only alteration has been the transfer of the part of Milton village that was in Farlam to join the part that was in Brampton parish in 1931.

The 1603 map from the Howard Family Papers held in the Cumbrian Archives.

The Manor runs east-west along the fertile ground on the side of the fells and Burthwaite Forest. As it heads east the land rises and becomes less hospitable. This led to farming being concentrated in two areas. In the south there were seven individual farms and their buildings in the centre with the farmland radiating out like a cartwheel, this is now called Farlam. The second concentration of farms was around the Manor House; these were spread further apart as the land was more fertile in this area. It was here that the church was erected. At the time of the Lanercost Cartulary this area was called Magna Farlam and later became Kirkhouse. Farlam Village was referred to as Parva Farlam. When administrative quarters were established they broadly followed these areas; West Farlam took in Forrest Head, Farlam and the part of Milton south of the road. East Farlam was Kirkhouse, Bowbank and the outlying farms. As the area became more industrialised and people started living close to the mines, the boundary of West Farlam shifted east to include the edge of Hallbankgate creating two more equal quarters for the administrators of the census.

The following are the thirty five properties in the manor in 1603. The names in bold are the names in the record that are still used. Not all the properties were named so their modern name is included. Next is the type of property followed by the persons name. The spellings are as written in the record.

*Low Lonning*, tenement and grounds, Humfrey Bell; **High Lonning**, tenement and croft, Mr Laiton; **High Lonning**, tenement and croft, Richard Bell; **Kirkhouse**, Rectory, Lordship; **Newgarth**, tenement stone and croft, Jo Hall; **MossHill**, tenement stone and grounds, Steven Peares; **MossHill** free tenement and croft, Mr Dacre; **Silverside**, tenement and croft, Peter Bell; **Silverside**, tenement and croft, Christopher Bell, **Silverside**, tenement and croft, Robert Parnell; Farlam Hall, Manor House, Lordship; Mill, Mill, Lordship; **William Gill**, tenement and grounds, Jo Bell; **Low Bow Bank**, tenement, Lordship; **High Bow Bank**, tenement and grounds, William Bell, **Carnutelye**, free tenement, Mr Dacre; **Melton**, tenement and croft, Richard Brise; **Melton**, cottage and curtilage, William Bell; **Melton**, cottage and ground, .... Hutton; **Melton**, tenement and grounds, Mrs Carlton; **Breckonside**, tenement and croft, Carocke; **Breckonside**, tenement and grounds, George Bell; Boon Hill,

*free croft, Francis Bell; Boon Hill, tenement and croft, Francis Bell; Farlam Hill Farm, tenement and grounds, Alexander Thurlwall; Low Town, Kings ground and house, Robert Waugh; Farlam, Kings ground and house, Robert Bell; Brackenridge, Kings ground and house, Davy Pott; Farlam House, Kings ground, house and yard, Humfry Bell jun; also Farlam, house and yard, Humfry Bell jun; High Town, free tenement and croft, Henry Gill; Prospect Cottage, house and yard, Katherine Milburne; Farlam, a house, Jeffrye Hitherington; Farlam, a house, Richard Hitherington; Stone House, a stone house, Alexander Thurlwall; Black Burne, ferme house stone, Mr Dacre.*

When William Howard died in 1640 the value of the estate had grown. His stance on lawlessness resulted in a more settled border region, he retained bloodhounds to track down criminals. He encouraged new farming practices and began to exploit the natural coal reserves by introducing mining practices from neighbouring counties. This stability benefited the inhabitants; the wealth enabled them to build new houses and a sign of affluence was to have the stone lintels over the doors carved with their initials and dates.

The earliest in Farlam was 1648, probably for John Milbourne.



All the main farmhouses had date stones by the start of the next century.

172\* for John Bell, Boonhill Farm





The Bells took this fashion on board and had initials on many of the lintels, particularly as they developed the farm buildings. The key stone from the arch in the new barns has the initials for

Joseph and Mary and the date 1820. These are repeated on the lower stone which was at the



back door into the house. The J B 1849 carved underneath was for John Bell when he inherited the farm. The letter B in this stone is in a door frame. The stone has been worn and it is difficult to see but there are possibly traces of a J. It was supposed to have been made

by Joseph Bell Chief Engineer of the Titanic.

In the following years the unrest in Scotland and the English Civil War swept over the border counties. Charles Howard, the grandson of William, managed to hang onto the Barony through this period. The family were Catholics but he conformed to the Church of England and housed Cromwell's men at Narworth. As part of the political manoeuvrings at Westminster, all men throughout England were required to swear their allegiance to the Protestant religion. On 28 February 1641, the men and boys aged 18 years and over met in Farlam and 54 names were recorded. Three of these men refused. Seventeen of these were Bells, including John Bell of Boonhill.

During the subsequent restoration of the monarchy Charles Howard changed sides, the Howards retaining Narworth and the lands. The family continued to prosper at Narworth and develop the area.

The Georgian period saw the yeomen farmers prospering, buying up land and benefitting from the start of the industrial revolution. The population of the country was growing and people in the towns needed food and clothes. Mechanisation of spinning and weaving, created opportunities to sell wool, as sheep were well suited to the land. Commercial coal mining started in the area too, with rich coal seams in the fells of the surrounding manors. There was only one pit in Farlam, on Coal Fell. In order to get the coal down and onwards to Carlisle it passed through Kirkhouse. Mining would change the face of the hills for the next century. Frederick Howard started the development of the coalfields, in 1776 the first wagon ways were being laid to facilitate the transportation of coal from Tindale. This brought wealth, jobs and a new emphasis on industry rather than farming.

At the end of this century a major change took place in land management, the open fells that had been available to everyone were enclosed. This act of parliament was known as the enclosure awards and happened at different times in each manor. In 1780 the Bells bought large areas of the common land, as did the other established farmers; the pattern of farms and fields laid out then has largely persisted to the modern day. At around the same time the first wagon ways were being laid to facilitate the transportation of coal in the future.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century heralded a massive population rise; the opening of the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line in 1835 being of great benefit. It allowed coal to be moved to the ports that can be seen in the graph. The population of Farlam village remained largely static after the boundary change. Population growth was concentrated in Hallbankgate with the building of mining houses up the valley, and in Tindale and Midgeholm. Large families lived in small

terraced houses; many had plots of land and space to keep a cow. Each community had a Co-op, a Methodist Chapel and pub as well as a school. The miners working for the Thompsons often lived in properties owned by them, and were paid in tokens that could be redeemed at the colliery shop at Kirkhouse. Mrs Lacy Thompson was a keen supporter of the Temperance Movement, bought out the pub and turned it into a Temperance Hotel, actively encouraging women in particular to take the pledge. The children were well educated. The present school is in the Victorian building dating from 1876, which had over 200 children on the register at



that time, the new building and replaced the old school house which became cottages. Kirkhouse in 1860 showing the old church, a large farm house and a thatched cottage.

Unfortunately the coal began to run out and coupled with the Roachburn pit disaster there was less work. Miners who had come from the North East and some from Ireland left to find work elsewhere. By 1901 there were houses standing empty. The mines continued to close and the population dropped further. Coupled with the reduced family sizes and mechtion of farming, the decline continued, people moved away to find work.

Farlam Parish has gone full circle; farming is now the main land use, whilst most of the residents travel to work in the nearby towns. The population has stabilised at the pre-industrialisation level. The families that are here now, live in twice as many houses as there were in 1800. There is still a Co-op, pub and school in Hallbankgate, and the Parish Church in Kirkhouse. The Lacy Thompson Memorial Hall was built in 1898 by the Thompson family and still provides a function hall for the Hallbankgate community.



# *Bell*

## *Ancestry*

The name Bell is synonymous with the border area, linked with the main Reiver families of the 13th to late 16th centuries when the English Scottish border was a dangerous place. A quick head count using William Howard's survey of 1603 shows a high density of Bells in Farlam and Denton and stretching out through Lanercost but there were none in the neighbouring manor of Talkin only a mile away. These were feudal families who protected their land and property. Joseph's family probably had links to the old Bell clans of the 'West March'.

In 1798 a farm owned by Joseph Warwick came up for sale in Farlam. It was purchased by the Bell family and was to become the family home. The land was freehold and this allowed the owner to be called a Yeoman.

Joseph Bell (born 1767) brought his bride Jane Moses here to start a new life together. They already had a daughter Margaret but tragedy struck as first young Thomas died and then Jane and her daughter quickly followed. They were buried together in Farlam church yard, small stone to the left of the memorial stone.



After a suitable period Joseph married again, this time to Mary Bell, the daughter of John Bell of Boon Hill, the farm at the top of the village. John's family had farmed Boon Hill for at least two hundred years. In 1803 twin boys, John and Joseph were born, neither survived the year. Two years later a healthy baby was born and

called Joseph. He was to be their only child. 31 years later he inherited what was by this time a substantial farm. His father had modernized the house and recorded this with his and Mary's name over the door. Down the yard new barns were built including a large carriage arch. The bottom barn had a four-horse gin to power the machinery which was later replaced with a steam engine.

Joseph and his half sister Margaret grew up and married local farmer's children. Margaret married Joseph Hetherington from Waygill Hill Farm. Joseph's wife, Bridget Bushby, also came from Talkin at Hill House, they were married in 1830 at Hayton Church. They had the second best room in the farm house. Their first child was born the next year and named John, probably after her father, two years later along came Joseph. He was baptised on 7th July 1833. Beautifully scratched into the bedroom window is the name;



*Joseph Bell*  
*23rd July 1833.* Was this a proud parent or a dispirited husband? Had the birth left Bridget weak as a year later she died. Joseph erected an elaborate head stone

for her in Farlam churchyard. Two years later, aged 69, his father died. A third stone was erected between the previous two and this



stone would later include the Titanic engineers' memorial script. The farm was about 150 acres on the north side of the village. Its fields extended down to Talkin Tarn and it was on the edge of the Tarn that in 1843 Joseph was given permission by the Earl of Carlisle to build a boathouse. The family could use the Tarn providing they paid the rent due and it was not required by the Earl



o f

Carlisle. The only other condition attached was that the building would have to be removed if so requested. This didn't happen and it still stands on the south shore of the Tarn. It is now open to the public for viewing birds. There was a small fire place in the room above where the boats were kept. Many years later the young Joseph Bell would have been able to play and fish and probably sail within sight of his home.

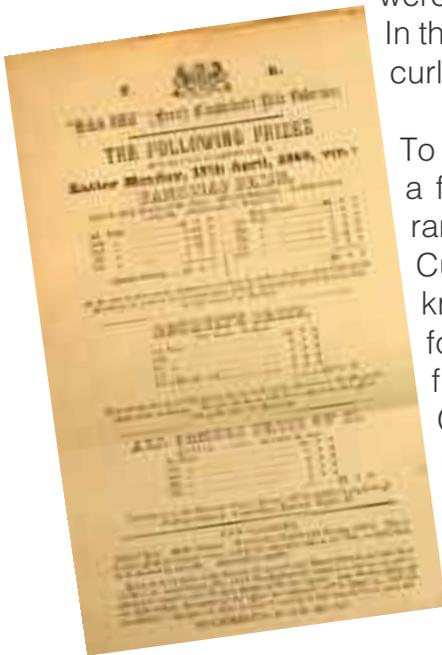
The Tarn was a local gathering point. Many sporting events took place here.

Cumberland wrestling competitions were regularly held, the ring was a permanent feature and appears on the 1868 Ordnance Survey maps. One notable competitor was William Jameson from Penrith, described as 'One of the most noted athletes of the North and for many years Champion Wrestler of England'. He was a big

man scaling up to 17 stones yet so light on his feet that he excelled, not only as a wrestler by virtue of his great weight and strength, but also as a runner and jumper, and in the long leap, and pole leap, being reputed to have cleared the bar both ways at 10 feet 3 inches with the pole. As a wrestler, his recorded major wins were in 1858 at the Talkin Tarn Regatta and Armathwaite. His reputation continued for the next sixteen years until he retired.

The Talkin Tarn Amateur Rowing Club was set up in 1859 but already by 1854 an annual regatta was established. Skiffs were bought by horse and cart to the tarn with competitors coming from as far as Newcastle by train. The local band would play and tents were set up for refreshments.

In the winter the Tarn could freeze solid and curling matches were held.



To the east of Talkin Tarn at Hollows Moss, a field adjoining the Bell farm was a rifle range. It was established to train the local Cumberland Volunteer Rifles Brigade known as the Belted Wills. They were formed in 1860 and drew volunteers from all parts of society including George Howard of Naworth. There were regular rifle drills held here. During the year competitions would be held such as advertised here for Easter 1865. The Brigade also provided entertainment and stage shows in Brampton.

For the next ten years Joseph with his mother Mary brought up the children and managed the farm. They had domestic servants and labourers to help. There was a third child, George, he was born three years before Joseph had married Bridget. There was a bastardy order served on Joseph Bell in 1827 and this child was possibly the offspring. Illegitimate children were quite common in this



and they were married on 10th May 1860 at Hayton Church. The next year Joseph was born on the 12 th March, Jane Watson coming to support her sister after the birth. Their first child was named



after both his grandfather and great grandfather and he was baptised on 4th May in the new Farlam Parish Church. The old church was replaced in 1860 and rebuilt at the top of the hill. Anthony Salvin designed it in the early English style. Subscriptions were collected from notable families and busi-

nesses both locally and further afield including the workmen of Tindale Spelter Works and Kirkhouse. This raised £1735 and six shillings and included £20 from Robert Stevenson M.P. Esquire. Joseph's family supported the appeal making substantial donations, his father donating £20 and his brother £10. John was also on the Building Committee.

Over the next eight years three more children were born. Jane was named after her maternal grandmother, Richard Watson after his maternal grandfather, the only child to have a middle name, and John. Unfortunately the risk to mothers during childbirth struck again. In 1868 Margaret was buried in the old churchyard with her father-in-law. Joseph was left without a mother and John like his father before had a young family to raise. He employed a



housekeeper called Jane Davis who remained with the family for over ten years.

John's younger brother was married first. He married a Margaret Moses from Lanercost an established farming

family. She had a twin called Jane. They set up house at Boonhill and had two children, Bridget in 1859 and Annie in 1861. Joseph and Margaret must have decided that Australia offered their family a better future. In 1863 they left Farlam and caught the SS Great Britain from Liverpool. After about 64 days at sea they arrived in Melbourne on the 16th of December. Before the year was out four-year-old Bridget had died. The family settled down but on the 10th January 1865 Joseph died.



Margaret was either pregnant at the time with George or he had just been born. Margaret buried her husband and made the return journey to Farlam with two young children. She probably felt the change in climate as a new front porch on the house at Boonhill was built in 1866.

Margaret's twin sister had married George Joseph Bell a gentleman farmer from Lanercost and they had moved to Brampton. George was moving out of farming and into surveying eventually becoming the County surveyor and Inspector of Bridges. The three families maintained close contact throughout the rest of their lives.

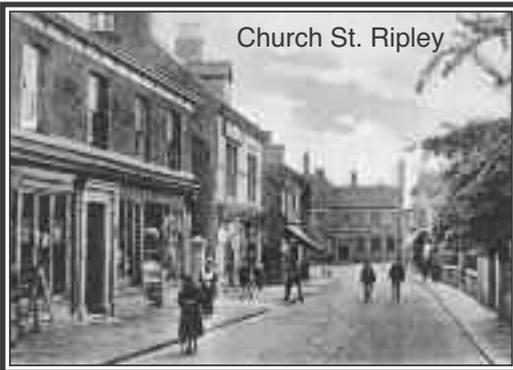
In the early 1870's the three families moved to the rural district of Stanwix on the north side of Carlisle. Although they retired from farming they retained the land and buildings and lived off the income from renting the farms to tenants. Joseph was about 11 years old when they moved to Eden Town. He finished his education in Carlisle before moving to Newcastle. While he was away his younger brother Richard died at 17 years old. Richard was returned to Farlam and buried with his mother.



John Bell, pictured here, was a member of the Westmorland and

Cumberland Yeomanry Cavalry for over forty years and was Quarter Master whilst in Carlisle. He remarried in 1895 to Margaret Jane Franklin, a teacher. She was brought up in Talkin by her grandparents after her parents died. Her mother Jane was the daughter of Margaret Hetherington nee Bell, half sister of Joseph Bell (1805). Margaret had two sisters Amelia Mary and Emma Louisa both were teachers and spinsters. Amelia lived in Crosby at the same time as the Bells and attended Francis's wedding. Maud was a trustee to her will when she died in 1932.

John and Margaret moved to Bristol where he died in 1903. In his will he left an annuity of £50 to his wife and; *all my furniture, plate, linen, china, glass, books, pictures and other household effects and also my consumable stores.* The remainder of the estate was left equally between his children. Margaret moved to Nottingham to be closer



to her stepdaughter Jane, where she died two years later. In 1906 Joseph took out a mortgage on Farlam Farm and bought out his siblings.

Jane had married William Hugh Lowthian in Carlisle in 1886. He was a bank manager initially in Ripley, Derbyshire before moving to West Bridgeford. At the time of the

Titanic's sinking he was the manager of the Midland Bank in Carlisle. They had three children, Gertrude, John and Nora. John was an engineer and Nora became a nurse travelling to Indonesia. In Ripley, William was a bank manager of the Nottingham Joint Stock Bank. They lived



in the accommodation above the bank. At the other end of Church Street was The Grange.

Miss Maud Bates was house keeper here for her uncle. Her father ran a boiler and chain makers in the town. It was probably through Joseph's visits to see his sister in Ripley, that he was introduced to Maud who later became Mrs. Maud Bell.



Joseph, aged 30, had been appointed Chief Engineer to SS Coptic and in the following year Joseph & Maud were married on Saturday the 30th July 1892, at All Saints Church, Ripley, Derbyshire.

Joseph's younger brother John Bell and William Ralph Bates, Maud's brother, were the best men. Jane's eldest daughter was one of the four bridesmaids. Her uncle Mr. George Day of the Grange, gave the bride away, her father having recently passed away.

According to the Derbyshire Times:

"The wedding presents were numerous and valuable, and included a tea service and an address from All Saints Church Sunday School teachers, with which Church she had for many years been identified".

Joseph and Maud set up home at Tynemouth Road, Tottenham. It was here that Francis John was born on the 21st August 1895. In 1901 he went to stay with Jane Lowthian while his sister Eileen Maud was born. His first sister, Marjorie Claire was only two at the



time. Shortly after this the family moved to 1 Belvidere Road, Crosby. It was here that Ralph Douglas was born in 1908.

This photograph is of William Ralph Bates his namesake in 1905 probably with his wife Mary in Somercotes.



Maud's other brother was called Charles Douglas.

William Ralph's daughter Winifred Bates married John Bell Lowthian and they had three daughters. Her mother died and William married again. Edith was a kindly lady and Winifred even named one of her daughter after her. Descendants of this family recall William being a traditional Victorian gentleman in a Homburg hat.



After the Sinking of the Titanic, Maud Bell moved the family to 19 Whitefield Road,, Stockton Heath.

The first child to marry was Francis on the 6th of July 1921. His bride was the daughter of Dr. Robson of Somercotes Derbyshire Marjorie Sybil Dykes Robson. Prior to his marriage Francis was living with his family. This is the start of the newspaper report in the Ripley and Heanor News: "*The Bridegroom, himself a ship's engineer, is the son of the late Mr Joseph Bell and Mrs Bell. His father will long be remembered for his bravery during the sinking of the "Titanic," of which ill-fated vessel he was chief engineer,*



*and in which he gave his life in an effort to save others. The bride is the popular daughter of Dr & Mrs Dykes Robson, and the occasion gave rise to a demonstration of the esteem in which the bride and her family are held. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, the altar decorations consisting of white lilies, the remainder marguerites and fern. The service was fully choral, the organist Mr Bettison, playing appropriate music as the guests*



*gathered for the ceremony.”* After the wedding they lived in Somercotes House with Doctor Robson and family. It was here that Allan Joseph was born in 1926. Mrs Marjorie Sybil Bell died on the 13th of November 1926 aged 31, after only seventeen days earlier giving birth to their first child, a boy, christened Allan Joseph Bell at St Thomas' Church, Somercotes. She is buried in St Thomas' Churchyard, Somercotes, beside her mother and father. Allan survived and went on to have his own family including grand children.

Francis remarried Martha Lewis and moved to London. He died at 47 Chandos Crescent, Edgware in 1942. The death certificate recorded his death due to 'Bronco Pneumonia'. Martha continued living in Edgware for many more years.

Eileen married Gilbert Smith, a solicitor, in 1929. They moved to Shrewsbury and later in life Maud lived with them until her death in 1951. Marjorie never married but lived near the family in Shrewsbury.

Ralph remained in Cheshire and married Nora Rothwell in 1938. They do not appear to have had children of their own but were close to Nora's family. Ralph died in Wimslow on the 3rd of May 1977 and was described as a retired forestry worker. It is possible that he was working for the Forestry Commission at Delamere Forest that is only twenty miles away, but records unfortunately no longer exist to confirm this.



# *Life on the Farm*

Farming traditions and methods have remained largely unchanged in this corner of Cumbria, even the traditional strip field methods being largely overlooked. The hilly nature and shorter growing season meant that crops were planted in the spring after the animals had been overwintered on the land and moved back up to the higher fields on the common land. The fields were edged with what are known locally as dykes, ditches with low walls or soil and on top of that a hedge. These keep the animals in or out depending on the season. A typical farm holding in this area was 100 acres, having a mixture of sheep, cows, and one or more pigs, growing oats, barley and making hay.

There were some important improvements in farming methods in the Georgian period, firstly the understanding of fertilizer. Making manure was a major occupation and the value of the heap was considered in the sale of farms. This coupled with the laying of clay pipes underground to drain the soil, improved productivity. The earlier introduction of turnips in the 15th century allowed more animals to be kept over the winter. Farmers were now able to produce surplus food adding to their prosperity. Farlam Farm had a turnip store and, as with haymaking, everyone would be involved. The turnips had to be lifted and the tops cut off with a special scythe; the cart would bring them into the yard and they were tipped into the basement of the barn. When they were needed for food they were fed into a turnip chopper; by turning the handle the blades rotated, slicing the vegetable being a job a young lad could help with.



The haystacks were built on large sandstone blocks with wooden planks across them to keep them off the ground. The stack yard was at the bottom of the farm and was still being used in the 1960's as seen in this picture.

Sheep would have been kept in the fields, in the summer being rounded up and brought into the yard for shearing, which would have been done with hand



clippers. People who grew up in Farlam remember helping out as children to wrap up the fleeces.

All the heavy work was done with horses, ploughing, harvesting and transporting and Farlam Farm was no different. This drawing by Joseph Appleyard in 1945 shows the horses going out of Farlam in the snow. There would have been at least two horses stabled in the yard and they would need to be prepared for work early in the morning.



To plough an acre of land took a day for a skilled ploughman and equated to an eleven mile walk. Servants were employed at the local hiring fairs. When

Joseph was a lad in Farlam his father had 146 acres on which he employed two men and a boy. Joseph Jefferson was the



ploughman and Samuel Jackson, just 14 years old, was the cow boy.

They both lived on the farm, probably above the stable where it joins the main house, the sec-

ond man lived locally. In the house was the house-keeper, Jane Davis, whose room was accessed from the back porch via a ladder, but she could also move into the body of the house from the bedroom



door in her room. The only heating was from the chimney breast that came up from the main living room. Mary Ferguson was the live-in housemaid, where she slept is unknown.



The room at the left of the front door was the larder. Built into the ground and catching the least sun it was a naturally cold room, around the walls were stone shelves at waist level from the door to the window.

The window sill was stone with a shallow basin carved into it and this had a drain hole to the outside. Meat could be hung on hooks

on the far side and any liquids would flow away. The wear in the stone flags on the floors between the larder and back door into the yard were an indication of the importance of this room for keeping food fresh. Slaughtering a pig was a major event on the farm, usually carried out at Martinmas, 11th November. Old farmers can still recall the event from when they were children; Joseph would have seen this happen as it was a skill passed from father to son. Once the pig was dead bowls were filled with the blood and carried to the kitchen to make black puddings. The meat was hung in the larder and salted to preserve it; the salt was absorbed into the walls and to this day paint will not stick to it. The stone window surrounds have holes that would have been used for the provision of attaching metal bars.

Joseph's grandfather was a progressive farmer; whilst many farms threshed the grain by hand the Bells had a threshing machine installed. Four horses initially drove this but later a static steam engine was installed which was still in use in the early part of the twentieth century. In 1910 John Watson took on the tenancy of the farm, his family being related to the Bells by marriage. His wife retold the following story to her grandchildren; in 1911 Joseph Bell visited the farm and found that the steam engine was not working so he went down to the barn and repaired it.



To Edith Watson's horror he came back with his white shirt covered in oil and grease. Picture of Edith and her four sons.

Also installed in this barn and driven by the engine was a flat bed saw, and the farm benefited from a grain kiln. This building had a metal floor above a fire with a flue and bellows. Oats and other grains could be dried for storage rather than relying on the

Cumbrian weather. Oats were sometimes fed to the pig before slaughter as they improved the whiteness of the meat. The Watsons were the last tenant farmers as in 1963 the farm was sold. The front of the farmhouse was arranged in a classical style with a path from the road to the front door and a path off this to the kitchen door. A monkey-puzzle dominated the centre of the gar-



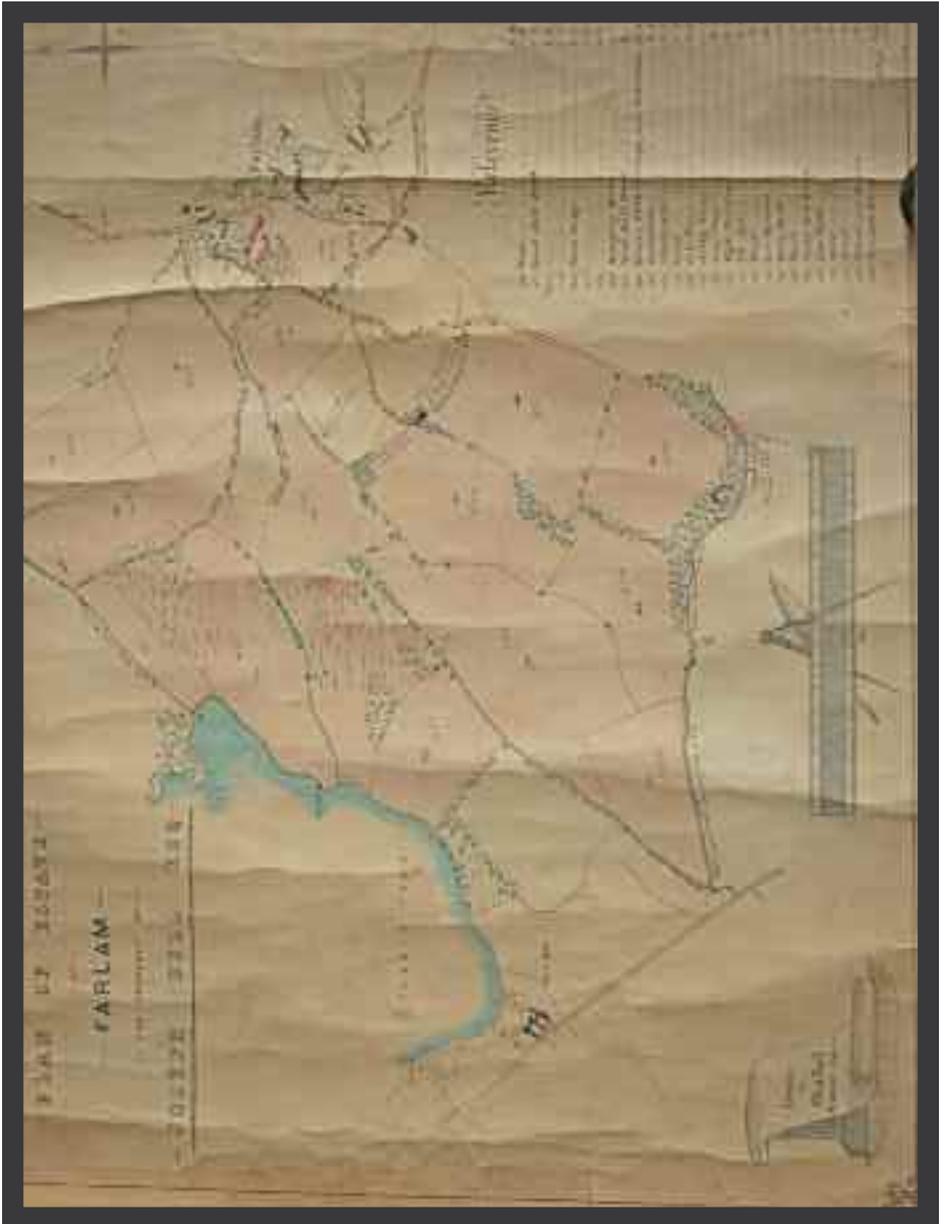
den, the must-have Victorian garden tree. It was removed in the 1970's due to its size. Marking the front edge of the farm and the extent of the farm buildings were two horse chestnut trees. These trees have little practical value and were probably planted as status symbols over two hundred years ago; Joseph would have had

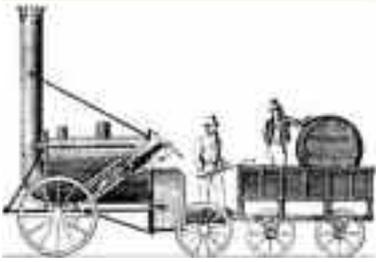
two mature trees to climb and conkers to collect in the autumn. To the side of the house and in neighbouring gardens were fruit trees, one of the farms having an orchard. Harvesting and storing of apples would have been an important activity, along with collecting berries from the hedgerows. The back of the house was probably laid out as a vegetable patch; the children would have helped in the garden and with preparing produce for storing over the winter.

The back door of the house opened onto the kitchen. It had a range but was not a large room. It was probably moved to this position from in the main living room as the house was developed, and the servants could work there without affecting the rest of the house. The coppers for washing were in the building across the yard, near the well. The wash-house had two cast iron pots one three feet in diameter and a smaller one, this building also housed the lavatory. The house was not plumbed for water or electricity until the early twentieth century, the two main bedrooms both had hob grates. This is the one from the main bedroom. The original colour of the surround was a pale brown and the plaster on the walls was teracotta. The wood over the years has been painted green to match green walls and then brown. Water could be kept warm on the flat plates at the side. Personal washing would have been in a basin or tin bath. There were fireplaces in the parlour and the main living room, the house would be quite warm if all the fires were set.



The map of the farm at Farlam drawn by George Bell, Joseph's cousin in January 1911. The pink area denote the farm land. This was the tenant's copy and marks the boundries the Watsons were responsible for.





# *Coal and Steam*

There were many coalmines on Tindale Fell in 1801. Tarnhouse and Talkin Collieries produced 197,015 loads of coal rising to 278,615 loads in 1810. The sites of these coalmines were in the historical Manor of Brampton. The first miners here would, having identified an outcrop of coal on the slope of a hill, work it by very primitive means with the process of 'grooving'. This was by an Adit, a horizontally excavated entrance with the miner tunneling the way in front of him, but not advancing any great distance from the light of day.

The early Naworth collieries, 1819-1838, were owned by the Earl of Carlisle and later came to be known as the Thompson & Sons mines of Kirkhouse. In 1860 Farlam Hall was the home of the Thompsons and their family who lived here in a period of extreme wealth and privilege. Many wealthy people were visitors to the Hall, and included in these was Mr George Stephenson the creator of the first mobile steam engine that was eventually known as The Rocket. Mr George Stephenson was involved with the Thompsons in the surveying of the railway lines and in the development of the coal mining activities of the Thompsons along the fellside. Mr Stephenson and his son Robert were regular guests of Mr James Thompson at Farlam Hall and in doing so made a donation to the new church appeal; in this context they would have met the Bell family who attended the same local church and be familiar with the Stephensons. The Stephensons made and supplied a clock for the Thompson's office at their Kirkhouse works.

Just outside the village of Kirkhouse there was once a thriving

community with coalmines, quarries, a brickyard, railways and farms, but today only the farms and one quarry survive. It was a considerable industrial centre with coke ovens, gas works, foundries, blacksmiths and wagon shops, even to the building of an occasional locomotive. Equipment for the collieries was made here. It supplied the church with gas for lighting purposes, and had its own fire engine, propelled by levers which took six men to work.



James Thompson was the agent for the Naworth collieries from 1819 to 1838. The famous Rocket ended its working life in Hallbankgate and subsequently was presented to the Kensington Museum in London by the Thompson family of Milton Hall, Nr Brampton.

James Thompson purchased Stephenson's Rocket in 1837; it was an early steam locomotive built in 1829 at the Forth Street Works of Robert Stephenson & Co. in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Rocket made a run in August 1837 delivering election-voting papers from Midgeholme to Hallbankgate, a distance of four miles, to help speed up the result of the votes cast. The Roachburn colliery was opened near the railway between Hallbankgate and Tindale Fell and produced 23,259 tons of coal between 1860 and 1863. This was a new coal reserve, and would have been loaded into railway wagons and delivered to Hallbankgate.

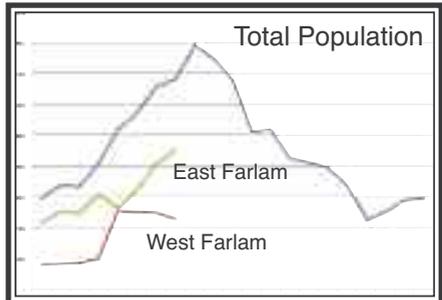
Friday the 16th of August 1889, as reported by the 'Carlisle Patriot', was a day to remember at Kirkhouse. A promise by Mr. C Lacy

Thompson on the occasion of his recent marriage was to bring together the whole of their workpeople to demonstrate cordial good feelings that have existed for generations on both sides, since 1839. The day took the form of a Fete at Kirkhouse for 1600 wives and sweethearts who



were entertained to tea, followed by a concert and dance. The gathering took place in the West Flat field at Kirkhouse, hosts were Mr. & Mrs. C Lacy Thompson, Mr. James Thompson and the venerable Mrs. Thompson of Kirkhouse, the grandmother of the present members of the firm, who was in her 89th year. This lady was 15 years old when the battle of Waterloo took place.

In 1838 the names of the Thompson pits then working were: Howgill, Blacksike, Midgeholme, Baronhouse, Star and Guide. Just over fifty years later in 1889, the names of the working pits were: Midgeholme, Howard, Henry, Byron and Featherstone.



The Population of Farlam Parish in 1801 was 592 and this rose to 1585 in 1881 due to the increase in industrial activity. The population went into decline as the coal became less accessible. In 1908 the Roachburn pit was flooded and three men lost their lives. This was the only serious accident in the area. Unfortunately this very productive pit and its neighbour had to be abandoned due to flooding. Hundreds of men lost their livelihoods and Charles Thompson relinquished the leases on the pits. Mining continued but never to the same high productivity level. After this many more families left the area.



The memorial at Coal Fell reads; *In reverent memory of Jas William Wharton, Hewer who was killed by the flooding of Roach Burn Mine, and of Robert Pattinson, Deputy Overman and Matthew Hilliard Back Overman who bravely returned to the pit and gave up their own lives in the attempt to rescue their comrade. January 28 1908.* On the reverse side it reads; *Greater love*

*hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* A quote used again in the parish in 1912 for Joseph Bell.

It is a reasonable assumption that young Joseph Bell in 1871, then ten years old, would have been attracted by the industrial activity taking place in and around Kirkhouse, as well as watching the trains going past the churchyard. With no mother around and little traffic on the roads, and not needed much on the farm, it must have been an attractive, exciting, and stimulating time for him.

The production and availability of coal in Ireland was, in 1912, a comparatively scarce resource, especially compared to West and East Cumberland. The Cumbrian ports exporting coal to Ireland from 1830 until 1912 were Maryport, Workington, Harrington and Whitehaven. The major port of Whitehaven at its peak in 1845 was exporting 230,000 tons to Ireland but declined thereafter.

The main ports of entry for the coal into Ireland were Dublin and Belfast, with occasional deliveries to Londonderry, Strangford and other eastern Irish ports. Strangford Lough was the birthplace of Thomas Andrews, born in 1873, who was the chief designer of The Titanic.

It is a reasonable supposition that some coal mined in the area of Farlam in 1911/12, may have been delivered to Belfast or Strangford and used to coal the Titanic in Belfast, for its journey to Southampton prior to its fateful voyage in 1912.

# *School Days*

The Bell family were all well educated. There were schools in Talkin, Hallbankgate and Brampton all only a short walk away. These schools were part of the national programme of education but still had to be paid for, this was not an issue for the family. At the time Joseph was born a school master had moved into Far-



lam village and established an independent school. Mr Joseph Forster lived at Tarn View from where the school was run from about 1865 until 1879, when Mr. Forster died. The interior had rooms with interlinking doors. Mr. Forster was born in Bewcastle and taught in various towns in Cumbria. He moved to Farlam as widower and subsequently married the school mistress Alice Lemon in 1871.

This photograph was taken outside Tarn View in the 1870s. It is possible that Joseph Bell and his siblings attended this school and may be in the picture.

There were plenty of children in the village living on the other farms. Town Foot farm was at the bottom of the hill owned by the

Mitchells, this was a large farm employing five men. The oldest child John was nine when Joseph was ten. Half way up the hill was a family of four girls ranging from eleven to three, ideal friends for Jane. There were also James Teasdale and slightly older Henry Proud at fourteen. Boonhill at the top of the village was the home of Joseph Bells cousins, once they returned from Australia. There were children living in Talkin and many of the farms around Kirkhouse had families.

George and Jane Bell lived in Brampton. They were related to the family by marriage and their son Robert was slightly older than Joseph. They lived near the end of the Dandy Line. This was the name of the train line that ran from Milton Junction to Brampton Town station. The Milton station was a mile from the farm and rather than walk all the way into Brampton they may have got the train. Joseph may well have come down to the station just to watch the main line Newcastle to Carlisle trains go by and the shunting of the coal wagons from Kirkhouse onto the main line. He would probably have known the local drivers and it is not inconceivable to imagine him hitching a lift on the foot plate down to Brampton.



In 1872 John Bell, his brother's widow Margaret Bell and in-laws George and Jane Bell all moved to Stanwix near Carlisle. The children needed a new school. According to a report in the Cumberland news in 1961 Mr Thomas Graham wrote "My former neighbour at Edentown, Stanwix, was Joseph Bell, who with the 24 engineers under his command went down with the Titanic." He went on: "Mr Bell was the son of John Bell of Hallbankgate and had been educated at Mr Harrison's school in Carlisle and was brother-in-law of the manager of the Carlisle branch of the London, City and Midland Bank, W H Lowthian." William Harrison had been



a teacher at Brampton academy and possible known to George Bell. Harrison had set up a private Boarding School at Earl Street in Carlisle. In 1872 Robert J Baillie advertises a private school in Chiswick Street which later became Grosvenor

College. These may have become the same school. Grosvenor College was built on the corner of Warwick Road and Warwick Square to a design by designed by Mr.C.J.Ferguson on land that was owned by the Duke of Devonshire hence the school's name. There was accommodation for the education of about 120 boys, varying in age from nine to eighteen. The principal was assisted by a staff of ten regular and visiting masters. Grosvenor House, on an open site in Warwick square south, had room for thirty boarders. The building which is partly Elizabethan in style has an imposing appearance. Between 1895 and 1920 William Sharp Graham was the head master. It was to this boarding school that Francis Bell was sent from Liverpool for his secondary education. He would have relatives living near by in Stanwix. The school's last head master was Frank L. Harrison. A serious fire in 1961 forced the school to relocate and the old buildings were demolished. The school finally closed in 1966.

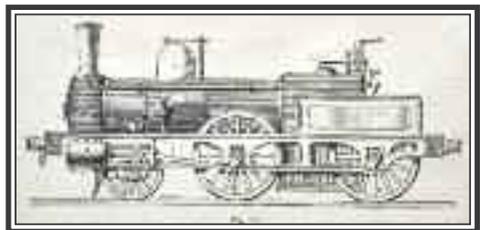


Fig. 29 is a side view of the locomotive in its finished state, and we will begin to work at it in the same manner as in the former model, viz., with the framework, but as some of my readers may have a preference for some special type of engine other than the one drawn, they can easily build it from the following directions, and keeping the same proportions in size as in Fig. 29, which is drawn to an eighth-inch scale.

In the Victorian era developments in printing allowed information about the discoveries that were being made to be widely distributed. Magazines aimed at boys and girls were produced. With

names like The Boys Own, they would include notes on scientific discoveries, gripping stories of heroics in far of lands and often things to make at home. The Boys Own Paper of 1889 printed weekly instructions for building your own working steam train



model as shown here. These instructions were taken from earlier publications by H F Hobden who described how to make working models to full size sailing boats.

Joseph Bell, now aged 15, began his apprenticeship in 1876 with R & H Stephenson & Co, Shipyard, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne as an engine fitter. He had lodgings at 18 Park Road and in 1881 his occupation was described as “engine fitter at works apprentice”. This was one of the many rows of terraced houses built near the Works. The house was the home of Peter Wallace, his wife and son and they rented rooms to four boarders. His cousin Robert, who had completed his apprenticeship lived a few roads away with his new wife.

These images of the “Works” were provided by The Robert Stephenson Trust and more information is available on their web site.



He completed his apprenticeship in 1881 aged 20.

Some of the conditions of Indenture were not to damage or waste materials or goods belonging to his employers, neither were fornication, getting married, playing cards, dice, or any other unlawful games allowed. Visits to taverns, alehouses or playhouses were also out of the question.

The apprentice was paid an initial first year income of 8 shillings a week, with an annual increase of 2 shillings per year if he had been a diligent apprentice and until the indenture of five years was completed. R & H Stephenson were punctilious about attending work, anyone not attending more than one day without permission was liable to dismissal or fine. Lastly there was to be no liquor or smoking on the premises – pretty hard going for ten shillings a week.

In 1912 Francis Bell followed in his father's footsteps, He joining Harland & Wolff.

Life for a young H & W apprentice was both exciting and demanding in its requirements and conditions. It is not possible to confirm if Francis was an ordinary or a premium apprentice at H & W, but likely to be the latter. Being a premium apprentice would be a 'shipyard pupil' whose parent i.e. Joseph Bell, Chief Engineer on the Titanic at the time, would normally make a payment to H & W and Francis would consequently be indentured by them.





# *Bell to Bridge*

The White Star Line was founded in Liverpool in 1845, initially concentrating on the route to Australia, taking advantage of the booming gold mining there. It was estimated that from 1852 – 1857, 226,000 people left Britain to



find their fortune in the Australian gold fields. The first ships of their fleet were chartered sailing ships for the route and RMS Tayleur, a new iron hulled ship was launched and set sail from Warrington for Liverpool on the 4th October 1853. She subsequently made



her maiden voyage from Liverpool on the 19th of January 1854, with approximately 600 passengers and crew.

It became apparent when leaving the Mersey that the compass readings were not accurate, this becoming very clear when she hit rough weather. It became impossible for the crew to steer the ship and instead of travelling south, the ship was travelling west when a gale blew up and she found herself off the coast of Ireland, near Dublin. Anchors were weighed but the line broke resulting in her being dashed against the rocks. Some passengers scrambled ashore but very quickly the Tayleur sank with the loss of 400 lives. The disaster was found by the Board of Trade

enquiry, to have been caused by the iron hull affecting the compasses causing them to be read incorrectly. The rudder also was a new design that had not been tested previously at sea on this type of ship. This disaster seemed to be the forerunner of disasters still to come?

Other ships on the Australian route at the time were Blue Jacket, White Star, Red Jacket, Ellen, Ben Nevis, Emma, Mermaid and Iowa. The company obtained their first steamship, the Royal Standard, in 1863, and on its maiden voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne, Australia, the ship's captain died. In April 1864, Royal Standard struck an iceberg but managed to limp into Rio de Janeiro for repairs. She was the first White Star ship to strike an iceberg, and as we know was not the last one to do this. It was in this decade that Joseph Bell, Chief Engineer, was born. The key dates were; his birth on the 12th of March 1861, it was registered on the 15th of April and he was christened 4th May 1861. In putting the year of his birth into context historically, the American Civil War began on April the 12th 1861 and hostilities continued until 1865. Dame Nellie Melba, one of the most famous operatic sopranos of the late Victorian Era, was born in May 1861 and Queen Victoria's Prince Albert died in this year.

Thomas Henry Ismay purchased the White Star Line in 1867 and with his partnership with Harland & Wolff in 1869 they began constructing ships for the White Star Line. The first White Star ship Oceanic [1] was launched in 1870 followed by other similar ships such as Atlantic, Baltic, & Republic, as well as larger ships Celtic & Adriatic. Over the next



thirty years Harland & Wolff built over seventy ships of which the most famous was Titanic. It was during this period that White Star established their ships' distinctive identity of a house flag, being a red pennant with two tails and a white five-pointed star.

Joseph Bell in 1883, aged 22, after completing his apprenticeship entered the Mercantile Marine with Lamport & Holt, Liverpool, sailing under the flag of the Liverpool Brazil and River Plate Steam Navigation Company formed in 1870. They employed him for two years; the Steamship routes he would have sailed were: Liverpool to Lisbon, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. The Liverpool entrepreneur



George Holt of Lamport & Holt shipping line pioneered the frozen meat trade between the River Plate in South America and the UK. The Holt family home in Liverpool was Sudley House, which was bequeathed to the people of Liverpool on the death of their daughter Emma in 1944. Sudley houses Britain's only Victorian merchant's art collection still in its original domestic setting. Among the collected artworks here are paintings by Gainsborough, the Pre-Raphaelites, Turner, Landseer and Raeburn.

The White Star Line career of Joseph Bell began in 1885, serving in the following ships in their engineering departments, ending with the position of Chief Engineer of R M S Titanic in 1912.

**RMS Oceanic [1]** - made her maiden voyage 2nd March 1871 Liverpool–New York, and later Liverpool–San Francisco–Yokahama–Hong Kong. On her maiden voyage shortly after her departure, she had to return to port because of overheated bearings, and resumed the voyage on the 16th of March carrying sixty-four passengers. This was the first ship to have promenade decks and bathtubs with running water for passengers. The fares to New York were Saloon £16 16s Od [Return £28 7s Od], Steerage £6 6s Od.

**SS Britannic** - maiden voyage to New York 25th June 1874, she broke both the eastbound and westbound records with passages of less than 7.5 days at an average speed of 15.7 knots. Britannic continued on the Liverpool –New York route until in August 1899 she was then requisitioned by the Royal Navy and converted for use as a troopship taking soldiers to the Boer War in South Africa. She then became known as HMT [Her Majesty's Transport]. Until this war was ended in 1902, she had transported around 37000 troops to and from the conflict.

**Oceanic [2]** - RMS was launched on the 14th of January 1899 and made her maiden voyage on the 6th September 1899 from Liverpool to New York. She was one of the finest ships to be built in the 19th century. She was fitted with electric lights and the facility of refrigeration. The ship was reported to have a speed of just over 30 knots; this was considered to be a very competitive speed at the time. Another unusual event associated with Oceanic [2] was that it was the first White Star ship to experience a mutiny on board. The event resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of thirty-five coal stokers who were unhappy with the commanding officers regarding their working conditions.

As a result of the coal strike in 1912, the Oceanic was laid up in Southampton to enable Titanic to have sufficient supplies of coal for her maiden voyage. When Titanic was leaving Southampton on the 10th of April 1912, her water displacement pulled Oceanic out of her berth so much, that a sixty-foot gangway linking her to her pier fell into the sea. Days later at sea Oceanic picked up a lifeboat from the Titanic finding three bodies so badly decomposed that they had to be buried at sea.

**RMS Baltic [2]** - maiden voyage was made on 29th June 1904 Liverpool-New York. Baltic was the largest ship afloat in the world until 1905. On 14th April 1912, the Baltic sent an ice warning message to Titanic: "Greek steamer Athenia reports passing icebergs and large quantities of field ice today in latitude 41 51 N, longitude 49 52 W. Wish you and Titanic all success"

**RMS Adriatic** - maiden voyage 8th May 1907 Liverpool -New York. An additional innovation was the inclusion of the first indoor swimming pool and Turkish bath. On the 5th of May 1912, Bruce Ismay returned from New York on her after he had attended the Court of Enquiry following the loss of Titanic.

**RMS Celtic** - maiden voyage 11th July 1901 Liverpool-New York. Celtic in March 1918 was torpedoed in the Irish Sea. Six people

o n



P Greenwood 1889  
RMS Adriatic

board were killed; the ship remained afloat and was eventually towed to Liverpool to be repaired.

**SS Bovic** - maiden voyage 26th August 1892 Liverpool-New York. The ship was originally designed to carry livestock with a small number of passengers, but was later converted into a passenger ship.

**SS Suevic** - maiden voyage was made on 23rd March 1901. She was specially built to provide the service from Liverpool-Cape Town-Sydney. On her outward voyages carried troops to the Cape and on return, Australian contingents to the Boer War. In 1907 she was shipwrecked off the south coast of England, in one of the largest rescues of its type, all passengers and crew were saved.

On a 1903 voyage, a young officer named Charles Lightoller met a young 18-year old woman who was returning to her home in Sydney, and after a shipboard courtship, the two were married in Sydney on 15 December 1903. Lightoller would later become the second officer on board the Titanic, and the most senior of her crew to survive the disaster.

**SS Athenic** - maiden voyage was made on 13th February 1902 and Joseph Bell was the Chief Engineer. It was launched as a dual-purpose cargo and passenger ship sailing the route London-CapeTown-Hobart-Wellington- New Zealand. She remained on the New Zealand route until the outbreak of World War Two.

**SS Corinthic** - maiden voyage was made on 20th November 1902. The Corinthic was built for passenger and cargo services to New Zealand, her route being London-Cape Town-Wellington New Zealand. 'Colonist' news item Wellington May 9th 1904: CAPTURED POMPOM – Word has been received that the pompom [2 pounder quick firing Artillery Gun] captured from the Boers, was awarded by the War Office to New Zealand as a trophy of the campaign, and was shipped from England by S.S. Corinthic.

**RMS Cedric** - maiden voyage was made on 11th February 1903 from Liverpool-New York. When Titanic sank in April 1912 the Cedric was in New York and her departure was delayed until the Carpathia arrived with survivors, including crew members not required for the Court of Enquiry, who wished to travel back to Liverpool. The ship's log for the voyage from Liverpool to New York of 21st October 1903 states that it was a passage of 2780 miles, and took 7 days, 14 hours and 32 minutes.

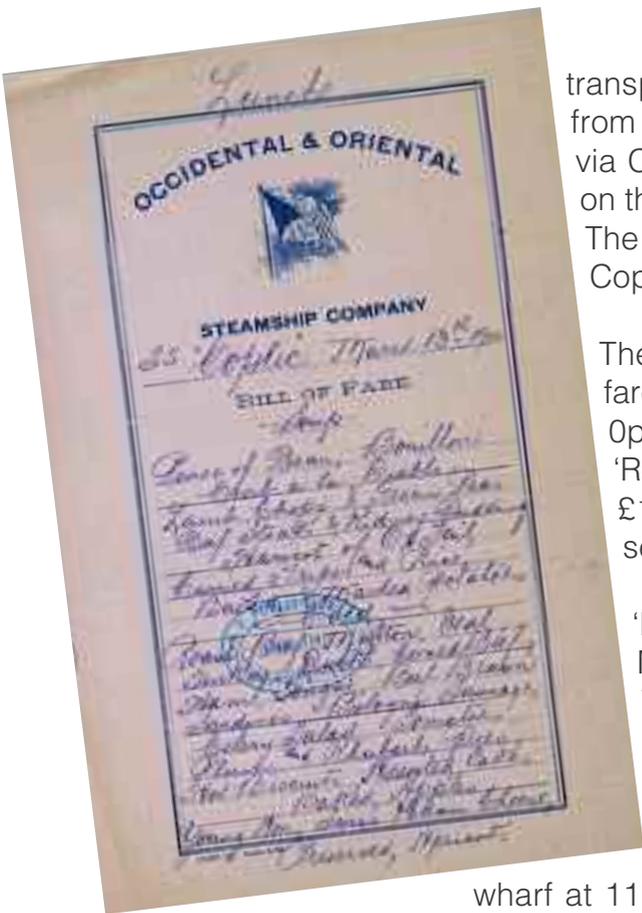
**SS Laurentic** - maiden voyage 29th April 1909 was from Liverpool-Quebec-Montreal. The ship gained notoriety in the capture of the murderer Mr. Hawley Harvey Crippen, in which Chief Inspector Walter Drew of the Metropolitan Police used the speed of the Laurentic to arrive in Canada before the fleeing suspect on

the SS Montrose.

Joseph Bell in 1889 was appointed 3rd engineer to the **SS Teutonic** which was launched on the 19th of January 1889 and was the first White Star ship not to use square-rigged sails. The SS Teutonic was built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast, completed on the 25th July 1889 and delivered to Liverpool, where she was converted into an Armed Merchant Cruiser and equipped with 8 4.7-inch guns. On the 1st of August she sailed from Liverpool to attend the Spithead Naval Review to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria as the first AMC. At Spithead she was inspected by the Prince of Wales and Kaiser Wilhelm 11 on the 3rd of August but the actual review was postponed until the following Monday due to bad weather. The Teutonic had to leave on the Sunday because of her maiden voyage, hence her omission from the review line up. On her return to Liverpool she was disarmed for commercial service and sailed on her maiden voyage to New York. She was an extremely fast ship, and set the transatlantic crossing record twice. The ship was used as a troop transport for the Boer War in 1900. In 1901 she was hit by a tidal wave caused by an earthquake, and consequently two lookouts were washed out of the crow's nest.

In 1890 Joseph Bell was appointed 2nd engineer to the **SS Majestic**, which was launched on 29th of June 1889. SS Majestic was built by Harland & Wolff as sister ship of the SS Teutonic, and delivered on the 23rd March 1890. She had her maiden voyage to New York on the 2nd April. On the 13th December 1899 she was requisitioned as a Boer War transport for service between Liverpool and Cape Town. In 1895, the Majestic had a new captain, a then highly regarded officer Edward Smith, who years later gained fame as captain of the Titanic.

Joseph Bell was in 1891 appointed Chief Engineer, aged 30, to the **SS Coptic** launched on the 10th August 1881. Harland & Wolff built the SS Coptic. She made her inaugural sailing of the service chartered by Shaw, Savill & Co, fitted with refrigerated holds to



transport New Zealand mutton from London– New Zealand, via Cape Horn–South America on the 26th May 1884.

The lunch menu for the SS Coptic March 13th 1900.

The First Class passenger fare was £77, Steerage £7 7s 0p and the First Class 'Round the World' ticket was £105. She remained in service for 44 years.

'Press Association' 17th March 1891: ARRIVAL OF THE SS COPTIC at Wellington March 16th 1891. The Coptic arrived at 9.30 this morning. The vessel got up to the

wharf at 11 a.m. She had unsettled weather, with fog, rain, and heavy N.E. swell, on the way from Hobart. She brings 46 passengers and a full cargo. She is commanded by Captain Kempson, but Mr Acheson, late Second Officer, is now Chief, Mr Whistler [R.N.R.] third, and Mr Northcote fourth; both coming from the Atlantic service. Mr Bell [R.N.R.] succeeds Mr Haliburton as Chief Engineer. This was probably Joseph Bell's first voyage to New Zealand.

'Press Association' 17h December 1891: R.M.S. COPTIC at Wellington December 16th 1891. The Coptic, from London, via ports, arrived in the harbour shortly before midnight yesterday. Her dates were London 29th October, Plymouth 31st October, Tenerife 5th November, Capetown 22nd November, and Hobart 11th December. With the exception of a heavy easterly gale after

leaving Plymouth fine weather was experienced throughout the voyage, which was an uneventful one, and occupied 42 days 20 hours and 32 minutes. Her mail is a very small one, consisting of five bags and one packet. She brings sixty-eight saloon and fifty-eight steerage passengers for all ports. The Coptic is still commanded by Captain Kempson, R.N.R., who has associated with him Mr L D Chapman as Chief Officer, Mr T A Whistler second, Mr J B Ransom third, Mr J M Cables fourth, Mr Joseph Bell Chief Engineer, Mr J L McLellan second, Mr E Lloyd third, Mr J Hodgson fourth, Mr J Purviss fifth, Mr S Scoullar Chief Refrigerating Engineer, Mr G McMahon second refrigerating engineer, Mr W S Inman Purser, Dr W H Murray Surgeon, and Mr H W Ovenden Chief Steward.

Joseph Bell married Maud Bates of Ripley, Derbyshire in 1892, and the wedding was in Belper.

In 1894 he was appointed Chief Engineer to the **SS Ionic** which was launched on the 16th January 1883. This was a cargo liner that sailed from London to Wellington, New Zealand, via the Cape of Good Hope. SS Ionic was built by Harland & Wolff and completed on the 28th March 1883 and was initially a cargo liner. She made her maiden voyage from London to Wellington, via the Cape of Good Hope, in April 1884, setting a new record for the passage. In 1894 Harland & Wolff extensively refitted her.

‘Auckland Star’ New Zealand 7th May 1894 THE IONIC: ‘The Shaw, Saville, and Albion Company’s steamer Ionic, from London, arrived here at 6.55 a.m. to day. She left the Royal Albert Docks, London, on Thursday, March 22nd, at 0.47 p.m., and calling at Plymouth on the 24th and taking passengers and mails on board the Ionic proceeding on her way, meeting with fresh S.E breezes across the Bay of Biscay, from thence strong S.W. to westerly winds until arrival at Tenerife on March 29th. After coaling here she proceeded at 10.32 a.m. the same day for Cape town, experiencing moderate variable breezes to the line, which was crossed

on Wednesday, April 4th, at 5 p.m., thence until arrival in Table Bay on Thursday, April 12th, at 10 p.m., moderate to fresh S.E. Trades. The voyage was resumed on April 13th after having embarked a few passengers. Light to moderate variable winds was encountered to long. 50 deg E., thence strong breezes to an occasional moderate gale, wind varying from N.N.W. to S.W., to long. 100deg E.; from thence to port, rainy, dull and overcast weather was experienced, high following sea and squalls of wind being principally from W. to N.W.

The Mewstone was passed at 6.38 a.m. The Mewstone is part of the Pedra Branca group, in geographical terms it is borderline between being classified as a rock, an islet or an island. It lies at lat.43 deg.50 S and long.146 deg.58 E. in the Southern Ocean. The smaller islands are Mewstone, Eddystone and Sidmouth Rocks. Over fifteen thousand years ago this group was part of the Tasmanian mainland and is listed as a World Heritage site. Three of the islands are composed of dolerite and sandstone that rise vertically from the ocean. Ionic arrived at Hobart Wharf at 1.20 p.m. After landing about 140 tons of general merchandise and passengers, the Ionic left at 6.25 a.m. on 2nd May for Auckland, experiencing on the voyage across S.W. to westerly winds and weather squally and rainy till the coast of New Zealand was sighted. The run down the coast was particularly fine, wind S.S.W. and sea smooth, arriving as above.

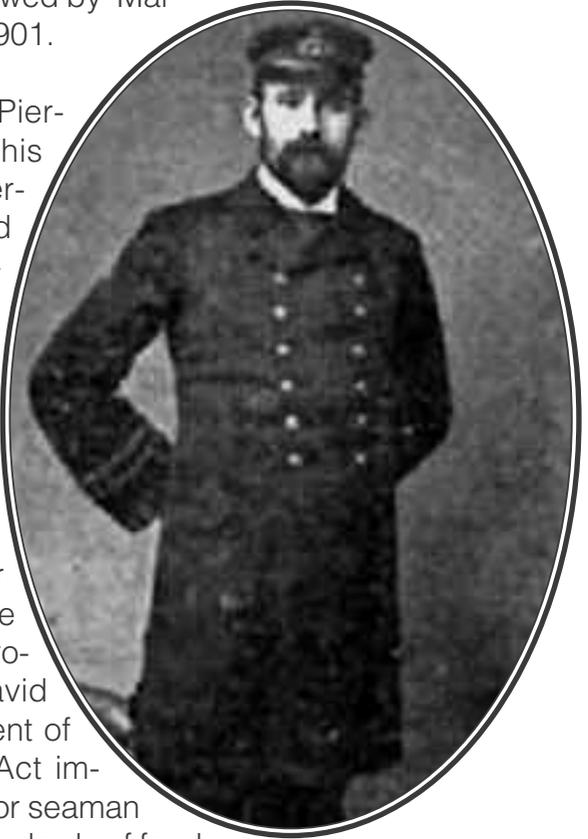
Capt Kidley R N R who is in command, is assisted by the following officers:- Chief Officer, W.L. Dangerfield Chapman [Lieut R.N.R.] : second, R.W.James; third, E.Crosby Roberts; Joseph Bell, R.N.R., Chief Engineer; G.R. McMahon, second engineer; W.Reid, third engineer; Walter S Inm, purser. Since her last voyage to New Zealand the Ionic has undergone extensive alterations at the hands of her builders, Messrs Harland and Wolff. She has been fitted with new quadruple expansion engines of the largest type. Her passenger accommodation has been entirely re-arranged on the lines of the new twin-screw steamship Gothic belonging to the White Star line, and she has been provided with new refrigerating apparatus – Hall's system – capable of dealing with 36,000 carcasses and 217 tons dairy produce. The Ionic leaves Wellington

probably to-morrow evening.'

Joseph Bell had in 1895/6 a photographic portrait taken in Naval uniform in Wellington, New Zealand; it was a pre paid entry in The Cyclopedia of New Zealand dated 1897. It may have been taken for the White Star Line to promote their services to New Zealand.

Back at home Joseph Bell's family was growing. His eldest son, Francis was born 1895, followed by Marjorie in 1899 and Eileen in 1901.

United States financier J Pierpont Morgan in 1902, and his company International Mercantile Marine, purchased The White Star Line. The effect of this was to conceive in 1907, the idea of building the Titanic as well as Olympic and intending to construct a class of ships that could compete with the Cunard Line, for the luxury passenger trade for crossing the Atlantic. The 1906 Merchant Act was introduced in Parliament by David Lloyd George, then President of the Board of Trade. The Act improved working conditions for seaman and regulations covered standards of food and accommodation on British registered ships.



Joseph Bell was living at 1 Belvidere Road, Great Crosby, Liverpool, with his wife Maud in 1908, and their last child Ralph Douglas was born here in that year. As the representative of White Star Company in Belfast, he supervised the installation of the engines

for both SS Lawrentic and SS Megantic. He sailed on the first two or three voyages of each as the Chief Engineer. **SS Lawrentic & SS Megantic** sailed the route Liverpool–Quebec–Montreal. SS Lawrentic was launched in 1908 and made her maiden voyage on 29th April 1909. On the 25th January 1917 the ship was struck by two mines and sank. SS Megantic was launched on 10th December 1908 and made her maiden voyage on the 17th June 1910. The German U-boat U-3 attacked the ship during WW1.

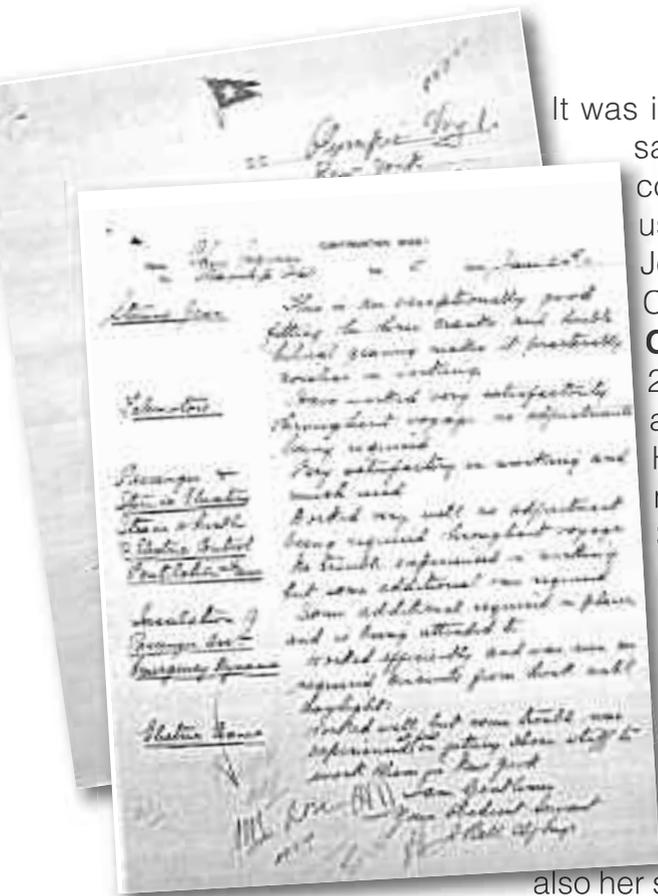
On the 23rd June 1909, The White Star Line declared its last year's profit. The White Star Company's working profit for 1908 was £229,940, compared with £848,486 in 1907. The company had 29 steamers, whose total tonnage was 386,000. The late Mr T H Ismay founded it in 1869. Steamers flying the White Star traded between England and America at first; now they run to Mediterranean, South African, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian ports. The vessels in the New Zealand trade include the Athenic, Corinthic, and Ionic. Titanic's keel was laid down in Belfast at yard No 401.

### **Lieutenant-Commander Joseph Bell RD. RNR.**

Joseph Bell prior to 1912, in addition to his position as Chief Engineer RMS Titanic held also the rank of Lieutenant-Commander in the R N R [Royal Naval Reserve]. He was awarded the Decoration 'RD' that had been instituted in 1908 to commissioned officers, whose recipients were entitled to the post-nominal letters 'RD'. The Decoration 'RD' stood for Royal Decoration, and had been instituted as a Decoration by King George V.



This magnificent silver and silver-gilt oval skeletal badge with a loop for ribbon suspension, was faced with the silver-gilt crowned cipher of King and Emperor George V imposed on a silver rope, a reef knot at the base; the reverse was plain.



It was in 1910 that coal burning sailing ships began to be converted to diesel power, using oil instead of steam. Joseph Bell was appointed Chief Engineer to **R M S Olympic**, launched on the 20th October 1910, it was a sister ship to the Titanic. He was on board for the maiden voyage from Southampton to New York on the 24th June 1911. R.M.S. Olympic was built by Harland & Wolff, launched on the 20th October 1910 and completed on the 31st May 1911, a special day for White Star Line as it was

also her sister ship Titanic's launch day. After a two-day gala visit to Liverpool, her official port of registry, Olympic sailed to Southampton to prepare for her maiden voyage on the 14th of June. On the 21st June 1911, at the completion of the outward leg of Olympics' maiden voyage, when she was temporarily under the command of the New York harbour pilot to be eased into berth by no less than 12 tugs, one of them was caught in the turbulence caused by her enormous propellers and dragged beneath the overhanging stern. About \$10,000 worth of damage was done to the tug, while Olympic suffered only a few scratches and a dented plate.

These pages are extracted from Joseph's five page report on the ships engineering performance.

At the beginning of the homeward-bound half of the voyage at midday on the 28th June, soon after leaving New York's Pier 59, it

was discovered that a passenger had forgotten his glasses. Another pair was quickly manufactured and the well-known aviator Tommy Sopwith attempted to fly them out to the ship while she was still in the narrows, and in full view of the press. Clearly the whole event was a carefully planned publicity stunt, but it all came to naught when the attempt to drop the glasses onto the ship failed, and the spectacles bounced overboard into the sea. Olympic completed the crossing at an average speed of almost 22 1/2kt.

The 1911 census of Ireland showed Joseph Bell aged 50, Maud his wife aged 45 and youngest son Ralph Douglas aged 3 living in lodgings in Belfast. Joseph described himself on the census



as *Chief Engineer, SS Olympic, White Star Line, birth place, Farlam Village near Carlisle, England.* Titanic's hull was launched on the 31st May 1911. Joseph Bell was sent to Belfast to oversee the installation of the boilers and engines prior to the maiden voyage of the Titanic.

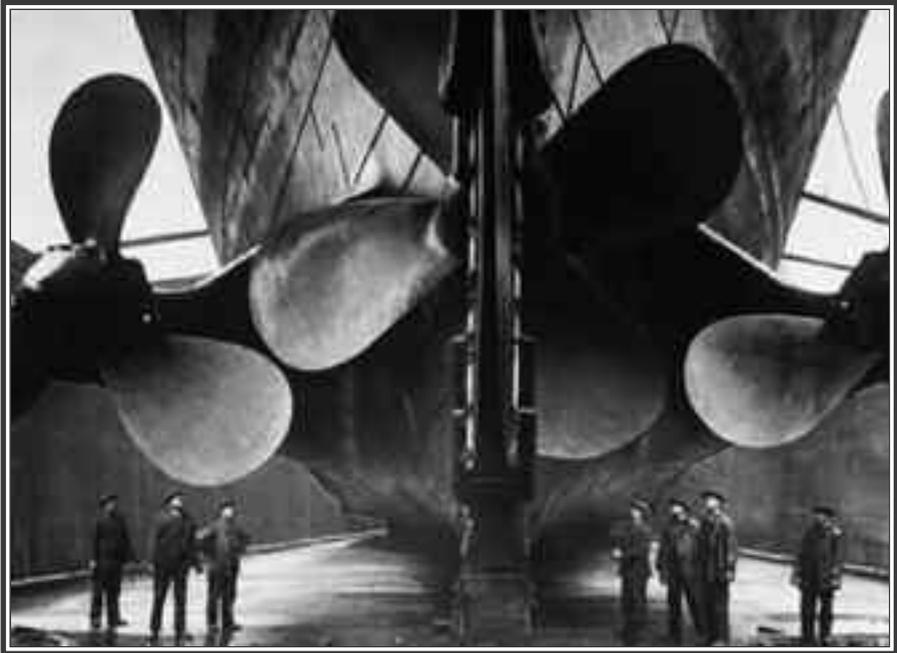
18 Elmwood Place, Belfast

Titanic fitting out was completed on 31st March 1912. The gross tonnage of the Titanic was 46,328 tons. It measured 882 feet long and 92 feet wide. Its eight decks reached the height of eleven storeys. The top of the captain's quarters was 105 feet above the bottom of the keel. Three million rivets held the hull together.

The ship's three propellers were each the size of windmills. Its steel rudder, weighing 101 tons, was 78 & 3/4 feet high. Its three



anchors weighed a total of 31 tons. Its four funnels [one of them a dummy, added for aesthetic balance] were 22 feet in diameter

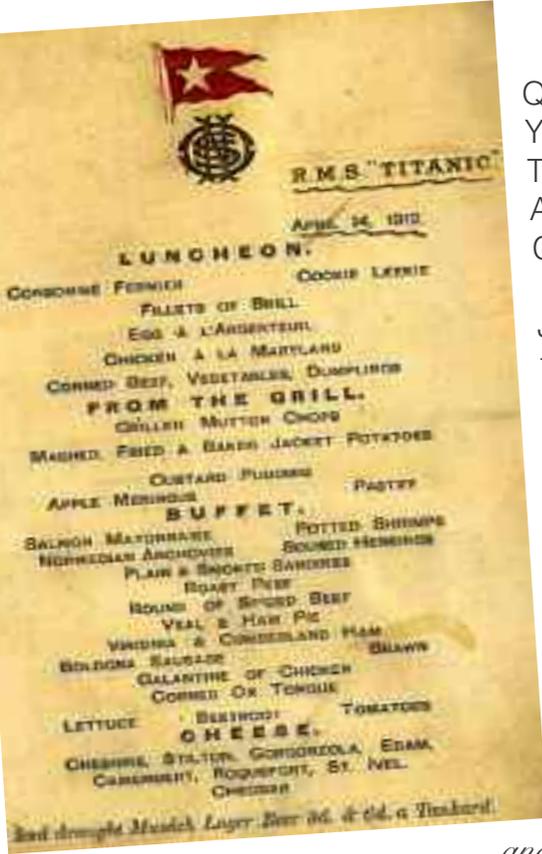


and rose 81 feet above the boat deck.

Joseph Bell signed on for the Titanic voyage at a pay rate of £35 per week, in 2013 the value of this sum would be approximately £1648.50. Joseph Bell was accompanied by his eldest son, Francis John Bell ( Frank), who had been recently apprenticed in marine engineering with Harland & Wolff, from Belfast with the Titanic, and they arrived in Southampton on the 3rd of April.

Francis Bell disembarked the Titanic and returned to Belfast. Titanic left Southampton on April the 10th at midday, leaving





Queenstown in Ireland for New York at 13.30 pm, on the 11th. The lunch menu for the 14th April included Virginia and Cumberland ham.

Joseph Bell wrote a final letter from Titanic to his son Frank:

*Dear Frank,  
I hope that you got to Belfast all right and started work on time; I got your wire from Liverpool.*

*We have made a good run from Southampton everything working A1, we nearly had a collision with the New York and Oceanic when leaving Soton,*

*the wash of our propellers made the two-ships range about when we were passing them, this made their mooring ropes break and the New York set off across the river until the tugs got hold of her again, no damage was done but it looked like trouble at the time. Keep well and be a good lad. Regards to Mrs. Johnston, your loving father.*

*J. Bell*

Titanic hit the iceberg on the night of the 14th of April at 23.40 pm and sank within two hours on the 15th of April.

Mrs. Johnston was the landlady of 18 Elmwood Place in Belfast where Joseph had rooms during the construction phase. It is likely that Francis was staying there when he started work and was probably great comfort to him to have someone who knew his father when the tragic news came through.

Joseph Bell, aged 51 Chief Engineer of the Titanic, died at his post in the engine room with his fellow engineers. As the Titanic began to flood, engineers worked tirelessly on the electrical systems to keep the lights and pumps operational, as well as provide power to the ship's radio that was sending out the 'Mayday' distress signal. Without their sacrifice, many more lives would have been lost. The wreck of R.M.S. Titanic rests on the Atlantic Ocean floor at a depth of 3800m [12,467 ft] off the coast of Newfoundland. Titanic had completed 1,451 miles of the 1,901 miles of her total intended journey before she sank.



# Continuity with White Star



## Francis John [Frank] Bell,

was the eldest son. His Merchant Marine Service Record began at age 24 in 1919. The records denoted the ships that he sailed with, and these records had to be presented every time he signed on as ship's crew. His record ends in 1930, this could be due to a change in the recording systems rather than a career change, but at present it is unknown. The record below illustrates the ships on which he served until 1930.

The first ship listed as 124061 was **SS Adriatic**. She was built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast for White Star and launched on the 20th September 1906, [the same day as Cunards' Mauretania]. The ship

C. R. S.	No. A. No. 10/1003
Name of Seaman	F. Bell
Street, Town	
Rank or Office	1st Engin
Home or Official No. of Ship	145891
Date of Discharge	18 JUL 1924
	VICTORIA BOOKS

had been requisitioned by the Government in 1917/18 and subsequently returned to the Liverpool to New York service. Frank joined the ship in September 1919 as a 4th Senior Engineer. On the 29th September 1919 Adriatic collided with the freighter St Michael. Adriatic was not damaged but St Michael sustained some

damage to her plates. Adriatic returned to the Southampton service in 1919 till 1922, when she returned to the Liverpool service. It is recorded that Frank arrived as a passenger in New York, as listed at Ellis Island on the 8th February 1920, [Ellis Island was the New York principle immigrant inspection station from 1892-1954] his home address was given as Stockton Heath, Warrington. From 1926 she was mostly used as a cruise ship and in 1928 was converted to cabin class. When Cunard and White Star merged in May 1934, it was decided that this was the end for Adriatic, and at the end of the cruise season she was laid up and sold for scrap.

The second ship listed as 110620 was **SS Persic**, built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast for White Star as a cargo vessel for the Liverpool-Cape Town-Sydney route. Frank joined the ship in February 1921. In 1920 she had been refitted to accommodate passengers. Persic had been requisitioned as troop transport during WW1, and was torpedoed by a German U-boat, thought to have been U-87, off the coast of Sicily. She somehow managed to limp in to port under her own steam and was scrapped in 1927.

On the 6th of July 1921, Francis married Marjorie Sybil Dykes Robson, of Somercotes Derbyshire.

The third ship listed as 145910 was **SS Dakotian** built by D & W Henderson Ltd of Glasgow, and launched on the 25th February 1921 as a cargo vessel owned by Leyland & Co Liverpool. Frank joined the ship in April 1922. The ship was built as a cargo liner and on 21st November 1940, she struck a mine and sank off Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, all were rescued. She had been bound from Swansea for St John, New Brunswick, Canada with a general cargo; 1300 tons of tinplate, Christmas puddings and bicycles.

The fourth ship listed as 145891 was **SS Dakarian** registered at the port of Liverpool in 1921. He joined the ship in February 1924 as a 4th Engineer and the route was Liverpool – Houston.

The fifth ship listed as 135476 was **SS Scythian** registered at the port of Liverpool in 1913. Frank joined the ship in June 1924. The route was the trans-Atlantic one between Liverpool and New York. The sixth ship listed as 145433 was **SS Minnewaska [4th]** registered in Belfast in 1923, built by Harland & Wolff and owned by the Red Star Line. She made her maiden voyage from London to New York on the 1st September 1923. Francis was married for the second time to Martha Hannah Lewis of Lambeth, the ceremony taking place on the 21st of July 1928, and one week later he joined the ship on the 28th of July 1928. The ship's route was London – Boulogne – New York.

The seventh ship listed as 144805 was **SS Sophocles** built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast for The Aberdeen Line, launched in 1921 for the Australian trade. She was registered in Aberdeen in 1922, was renamed Tamaroa in 1926 by the Shaw Saville Line who had chartered her, and sailed on the Southampton – Panama – Wellington service. She was converted to a Troopship in WW2 assisting in the evacuation at Dunkirk.

The eighth ship listed as 149751 was **SS Almeda** registered in London in 1926 as a refrigerated cargo liner. Her maiden voyage was from London on 16th February 1927 opening the company's passenger service to the River Plate, calling at Boulogne, Madeira, Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Montevideo and Buenos Aires. The ship was renamed SS Almeda Star on the 7th May, the day before Frank Bell joined the ship on the 8th May 1929 as a 4th Engineer.

The ninth ship listed as 129067 was **SS Highland Rover** registered in London in 1910. The Nelson Lines, who had at least another six ships using the same prefix of 'Highland,' provided a service to Brazil & River Plate. The ship accommodated 80 first, 36 intermediate and 400 steerage passengers. There was a cargo of 2000 tons of refrigerated meat, 2000 tons general cargo and space for live cattle. The ship's route was: London-Vigo-Las Pal-

mas-Rio de Janeiro-Montevideo-Buenos Aires. He joined the ship on 25th July 1929.

The tenth ship listed as 132559 was **SS Highland Piper** registered in London in 1920. Another of the Nelson Line ships whose route was: London-Boulogne-Vigo-Canary Isles-Rio de Janeiro-Montevideo-Buenos Aires. Frank joined the ship on 29th October 1929.

The eleventh ship listed 149981 was **MV Dunster Grange** built at Govan, on the Clyde, Glasgow, and registered in London 1928. The La Plata run was from both London & Liverpool to Montevideo and Buenos Aires. The ship was carrying immigrants from Europe. Frank joined the ship on 14th April 1930 and his voyage was completed on the 3rd of May arriving in the port of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The twelfth and final ship in so far as is known, was listed as 115268 and was **SS Baltonia** registered in London in 1927. The ship's route for the period 1919-1939 was: London to Poland-Latvia-Lithuania and Estonia. He joined the ship on 13th June 1930.

The seagoing career of Francis Bell as far as is known, began at age 26 in 1919 and ended at age 35 in c.1930 after a seagoing career of 11 years. The research continues....

Francis John Bell died on the 19th of February 1942 at Edgware, Middlesex. The death certificate recorded his death due to 'Bronco Pneumonia'.

**Ralph Douglas Bell** was the youngest son and when he was born in January 1908 his father Joseph was involved in the installation of the engines for SS Lawrentic, and would have sailed on her maiden voyage in April of 1909.

Young Ralph must have been very attracted by the idea when growing up near Liverpool, of the thought of a career in the

Merchant Navy, especially when his father was such an important figure with White Star and his elder brother was also to be later apprenticed with Harland & Wolff in Belfast.

We know that Ralph in 1931 aged 23, was employed by White Star as a waiter or plate steward on Britannic [3rd] the ship being built in 1930 at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast as a pas



senger cargo ship. The Britannic was designed for cabin and tourist class passengers for the route from Liverpool to New York. It would appear that Ralph's seagoing career was a very short one,

as he was issued with his discharge papers from the Mercantile Marine Office, Canning Place, Liverpool, on the 15th of September 1931. The discharge papers described him as "Height 5.9 ½ Eyes Grey, Hair Brown, Complexion Fresh"



White Star during the period 1930-1933 suffered trading losses and so by the end of 1933 White Star was technically bankrupt. This brought about the merger in 1934 of a new company to be called Cunard-White Star. This was registered on the 10th of May 1934 and as a result of the formation of the new company, only two former White Star ships were accepted for continued service with Cunard, being the Britannic and Georgic.

Following the merger Britannic was transferred to the London-New York route, the first sailing was on the 19th of April 1935 continuing until the outbreak of the 2nd World War.

In 1938, Ralph married Norah Rothwell and they subsequently lived in Wimslow, Cheshire where he died in 1977.

In August 1939, Britannic was requisitioned for service as a troopship during which time she had, up to the end of the war, carried 180,000 servicemen and sailed over 367,000 miles. Britannic was to be the last ship in service for White Star Line that ended in 1960, after an historic period of shipping history of one hundred and thirty two years.



**John Bell Lowthian**, another member of the Bell family, followed in the White Star tradition, he was a cousin of Francis and Ralph Bell. John was born in 1890 to Jane and William Hugh Lowthian, their only son.

John became a Ship's Engineer with the White Star Line serving in 1919 as a 4th Engineer on SS Megantic.

SS Megantic was built By Harland & Wolff in Belfast and launched on 10th December 1908. Her Port of Registry was Liverpool from where she made her maiden voyage on the 17th June 1909 to Montreal. The ship was used in August 1910 to return the arrested Dr Hawley Crippen to Liverpool, who was subsequently tried, found guilty and hanged for the murder of his wife. In November 1914, Megantic was sailing the Liverpool to New York route but by the following year, was being used as a troopship. For the following three years she was used for military purposes, and it was not till December 1918 that she made her first post-war sailing that was again Liverpool to New York. John Bell Lowthian joined the ship as a 4th Engineer in 1919, after she was reconditioned at Harland & Wolff and resumed her route of Liverpool to Montreal.

John died in 1962 in Lincolnshire aged 72 years and was survived by his three daughters.



# *Tributes & Memorials*

The following articles appeared shortly after the disaster.

The following report appeared in **The New York Times**, New York, on the 23 Apr 1912

## **Titanic Sinking - Engine Room Heroes By Linda Horton**

The unsung Heroes of the room, Joseph Bell's men, kept Titanic's lights burning until she went down, knowing her wound was fatal yet all stuck to their posts, and perished to the last man together with the builders' engineers who were with them. "The lights were burning all over the ship until shortly before she went down." This is the testimony of the survivors of the Titanic. It was her engineers who kept the lights burning, and in the list of heroes who went down with the vessel the names of the men of the engineering force will have a high place. Not one of them was saved, although many of them were off duty, and these had some chance of climbing to the deck. While it will never be known just what happened, it is believed that every one went back to his post instead of to the decks. Engineers stand small chance for life in a sea disaster,

and they know it. It is a tradition that when the engineers on a sinking vessel have done their duty to the last they gather in the engine room, clasping hands while standing about the engines, and so go down with their vessel. The Titanic's engineers have been overlooked in the bestowal of praise. Besides the engineers of the regular ship's force there were on board twenty guarantee engineers, representing the builders and holders of engineering contracts, and so called because they make the first few trips on a new vessel to see that the machinery comes up to the guarantee. All these were the first to know the desperate nature of the damage to the Titanic. They must have worked at high tension, for they were the first to note that rising of the water, the uselessness of the pumps, and the impossibility of keeping afloat. They had little time for thought, however, for they had to keep the dynamos going, the pumps working, look after the bulkhead doors, and keep the stoke hole force at work. Most of them probably died at that last explosion which tore the Titanic asunder as she went down.

The men were assigned each to his own task. There are hydraulic, electrical, pumps, and steam packing men, and besides the regulars the guarantee men were there to lend a hand. It was not a duty call that kept the guarantee men below, for they were in no sense part of the crew. The duty of the guarantee engineers is to watch the working of the great engines, see that they are tuned up and in working order. They also watch the workings of each part of the machinery, which has nothing to do with the electrical light dynamos and the refrigerating plant. The conduct of one man stands out conspicuously, according to the stories told by members of the crew. Archie Frost, builder's chief engineer, representing Harland & Wolff, was not in the engine room when the crash came, but he climbed down the steep iron ladders to the engines and death. When last seen he was there. With him was Thomas Andrews, designer of the Titanic. When the collision came there was no call of duty to keep him from the deck and the only chance of escape, but he would not take that chance. The last time An-

draws was seen by any one alive was in the engine room with Frost and Bell, the Titanic's Chief, and all were working too hard, perhaps, to think much of the slowly gaining waters. Every man in the White Star Line is to day mourning the loss of bluff, genial Joseph Bell, Chief Engineer of the Titanic and Senior Engineer of the line. Bell was 51 years old, and he had spent thirty-six years in the service of the company. He was married, and lived in Liverpool. It is said of him that he was the best marine engineer in Great Britain, and knew more about steam vessels than any other man in his profession. Under him were two second engineers, three third, and twelve junior engineers. Second Senior Engineer Farguarson had been with the company fourteen years, and Second Engineer Harrison had served sixteen years. Although a young man, Intermediate Second Engineer Harry Hesketh had seen nineteen years of service. He began the practice of his profession with the White Star Line, and had never served in any other. The junior engineers, "the kids" they called them on shipboard, each one a mere lad, proved themselves men indeed, for they stuck to their work and went down with the ship.

Engineers are rarely saved. The engineers were not deceived by false hope. They were in a position to know how badly the vessel was injured. Then they worked in an uncertainty, which must have been maddening. On deck the crew and passengers could see what was going on. Down in the engine room they could not tell how the work of lowering the boats was progressing. They had no chance and they must have known it. They did not hear the Captain's last word as the vessel began to sink that duty done, every man must take care of himself. Even if they had they would never have been able to climb up steep iron ladders before they could reach the deck. It was ninety feet from the water line to the boat deck, and they were thirty-two feet below that. "They died like men," said Mr. Hunter, (Secretary of the American Seamen's Friend Society) "and their bravery seems to have been overlooked. It can be said of them that, like the higher officers, they stuck to their posts until death.

**The following newspaper article appeared on the 24th April 1912 in New Zealand.**

**THE TITANIC ENGINEERS.**

The chief engineer of the Titanic, who appears to have perished in the great disaster, was Mr. Bell. He was well known in New Zealand ports, and was formerly chief engineer on the Athenic, in which steamer he made a number of voyages from London to New Zealand. For several years past he had been chief engineer of steamers in the trans-Atlantic service of the White Star Line. The Lyttelton Marine Band will give a sacred concert on the band rotunda at Lyttelton on Sunday next, at 3 p.m., in aid of those who have been left destitute by the Titanic disaster. At the meeting of Woodend householders on Monday night a vote of sympathy with the friends and relations of the Titanic victims was passed.

**INSTITUTE OF MARINE ENGINEERS**

**MEMORIAL DOCUMENT 1912**

This is the verbatim entry from the memorial document for Joseph Bell that was published on the 16th of May 1912.

“Mr Bell, chief engineer of the Titanic, was born at Farlam, in Cumberland, and received his education at a school in Carlisle. His apprenticeship was served at the works of Messrs, Robert Stephenson & Co., Newcastle-on-Tyne. He entered the mercantile marine about 1883, and served in vessels owned by Messrs. Lamport & Holt, Ltd. In 1885, he joined the White Star Line, and it is known that he saw service in the following vessels: - Majestic, Britannic, Teutonic, Ionic, Bovic, Corinthic, Suevic, Athenic, Celtic, Cedric, Baltic, Oceanic, Adriatic, Laurentic and Olympic, from which vessel he was transferred to the Titanic. He had been on both the New York and New Zealand services, and at thirty years of age was Chief in the Coptic. Mr Bell, who was fifty-one years of age, leaves a widow and four children, two boys and two girls; the eldest boy 16 ½ years, has recently started as an apprentice in

marine engineering at Messrs. Harland & Wolff's, Ltd., and accompanied his father in the Titanic from Belfast to Southampton. Mr Bell was a member of the Institute of Marine Engineers, which Institute he joined in 1891, and was also a member of the Royal Naval Reserve. He was a most capable officer and his loss will be keenly felt among a large circle of relatives and friends”.

In the Letters to the Editor in the same document was a letter from “The Marine Engineer and Naval Architect” and read as follows:

“It suggests itself to many that the heroic behavior of the engineers of the Titanic has been in no way acknowledged in the public press, while the fact of not one engineer being saved needs but little comment as to their devotion to duty. It is mentioned that the vessel sank with lights burning and Mr Bell, the chief engineer, in answer to an inquiry, replied he thought the pumps would keep the vessel afloat; this indicates that efforts were made to this end, but unfortunately without avail. While in no way minimizing the self-sacrifice and discipline in other departments, the devotion to duty on the part of the engineers does not seem to be appreciated in saving a much worse panic which would have occurred if the electric light had failed and the ship sunk earlier, and I would suggest the names of the engineers of the Titanic be embodied in some suitable memorial. There is a letter from Lord Charles Beresford in the Times, on the heroic behavior of the crew under the deck, but this is in general and does not convey the full meaning of self-sacrifice to duty by the engineers, which meant safety for so many others. When the mail sorters of the United States and this country are making a special observance of the loss of four of their members in standing by the mails I think we should be failing in our duty to allow the engineers' action to pass unnoticed. It may be observed that many similar cases might be cited of the whole of the engineers being left at the post of duty while the other departments were in a position to save themselves, and even remained at their posts after others had sought safety in the boats, thus taking the final chance of all”



**St Faith's Church**, Crosby Liverpool has a memorial tablet in the north aisle of of the church.

This was the local church for the family after they moved to Crosby. Ralph Douglas Bell, the youngest child, had been baptised at St Faith's on 29 March 1908.

On the day of the sinking of the 'Titanic', April 15th, 1912, St Faith's service register records 'The "Titanic" sunk. 2.20 am'.

On April 24th we read: '6.30 Dead march for those lost on Titanic'

At 8.00 pm on January 6th, 1913, the feast of the Epiphany, at a service recorded as 'Unveiling Tablet', the Bishop of Liverpool presided.

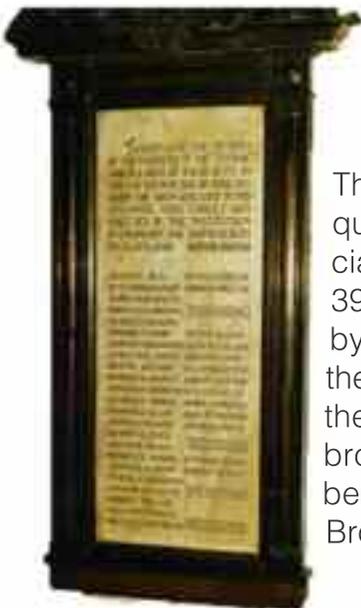
The entry reads 'Tablet in Memory of Joseph Bell, late Chief Engineer of the Titanic.

Collection, after defraying expenses, for Seamen's Orphanage'. The collection came to £6.2.0



estimated as being about £468 in today's money!

### **Institution of Engineers and Ship-builders in Scotland**



The Institution has had a number of headquarters buildings, notably the building specially commissioned and built in 1906-08 at 39 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow, designed by J.B. Wilson. In the foyer of this building, there is a memorial to 36 engineers who lost their lives on RMS Titanic. The marble and bronze memorial was subscribed by members, designed by the sculptor Kellock Brown, and unveiled on 15 April 1914.

# The Memorial to the Engine Room Heroes

Liverpool  
St. Nicholas Place  
Pier Head



The memorial on Liverpool's waterfront is dedicated to the 244 engineers that lost their lives in the disaster. The monument is notable as the first monument in the UK to depict the working man.

Shrapnel damage from bombs that fell during World War II can be clearly seen on the monument.



It was designed by Sir William Goscombe John and constructed circa 1916. It stands 14.6 m tall and although it is most strongly associated with the RMS Titanic, its dedication was broadened to include all maritime engine room fatalities incurred during the performance of duty in World War I.

## The Engineers Memorial, Southampton



Erected in Andrews Park and pictured here in 1942. It was designed and built from granite and bronze by Whitehead and Son of the Imperial Works. The sculptures were by Ferdinand Victor Blundstone and Romeo Rathmann. It was unveiled on 22 April 1914, 100,000 people gathered to hear Sir Archibald Denny, president of the Institute of Marine Engineers say:

"By the manner of their deaths they carried out one of the finest traditions of our race."

"They must have known that pumping could do no more than delay the final catastrophe, yet they stuck pluckily to their duty."

"Driven back from boiler-room to boiler-room, fighting for every inch of draught to give time for the launching of the boats, not one of those brave officers was saved."

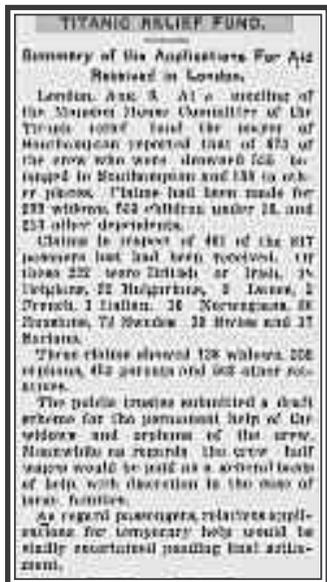
The names of all 35 Officers are carved on the base.



# Aftermath

The Titanic Relief Fund was established by the Lord Mayor of London, who invited subscriptions from the public to aid dependent relatives of passengers and crew lost in the sinking. Over £413,000 was raised. It was calculated that the relief fund would

be required to assist 239 widows, 533 children under sixteen, forty-two children over sixteen and 213 other dependants, such as parents and siblings who had lived, entirely or partially, on the wages of the deceased. Lump-sum payments were made to the government officials of those countries where 'foreign cases' resided and the balance was invested by the Mansion House Trustees, the then Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Boor Crosby, and the Public Trustee, Mr C.J. Stewart, to create income for the continued support of victims' dependants Britain. This article appeared in the Nashua Telegraph on August 6 1912.



The prevailing public reaction to the disaster was one of shock and outrage and this contributed to the success of the fund. One reason was the lack of life boats, although it carried four more than required by maritime legislation. It could have carried sufficient for all the passengers but the White Star Line wished to leave the decks unobstructed so that the passengers could have better views and give the ship a more aesthetic exterior view. It was believed that in the event of an emergency, Titanic's design would enable her to stay afloat long enough for her passengers and crew to be rescued. Lack of training of the crew in life boat drill meant those boats available were poorly utilised. The result was new regulations.

At 12.17 am on 15th April R.M.S. Titanic sent a message to any ship:

"CQD CQD SOS Titanic Position 41.44 N 50.24 W. Require immediate assistance. Come at once. We struck an iceberg. Sinking"  
CQD was the earlier distress signal, SOS had only recently been introduced.

One of the last messages received by SS Birma.



The Titanic sent out a series of distress signals, there was a ship close by, the California, but the only radio operator on board had gone to sleep for the night! The airways were not only used for official communication but also by passengers wish to have telegrams sent. This was common practice on many ships and the operators would sit and send them out.

As a direct result of the Titanic sinking the radio act was introduced. This meant radio communications would be operated 24 hours a day and within every hour there were two, three minute period where no transmission was made to allow distress calls to be received. These were marked as red quadrants on the radio room clock.



The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) is an international maritime safety treaty that was set up in 1914 and covers both life boats and radio watches.