



SAVING THE SURVIVORS

THE SHIPS THAT RACED TO
THE RMS TITANIC



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Historian Rupert Matthews is an established public speaker, school visitor, history consultant and author of non-fiction books, magazine articles and newspaper columns. His work has been translated into 28 languages (including Sioux).

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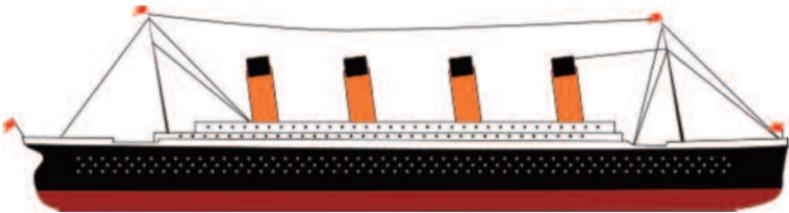
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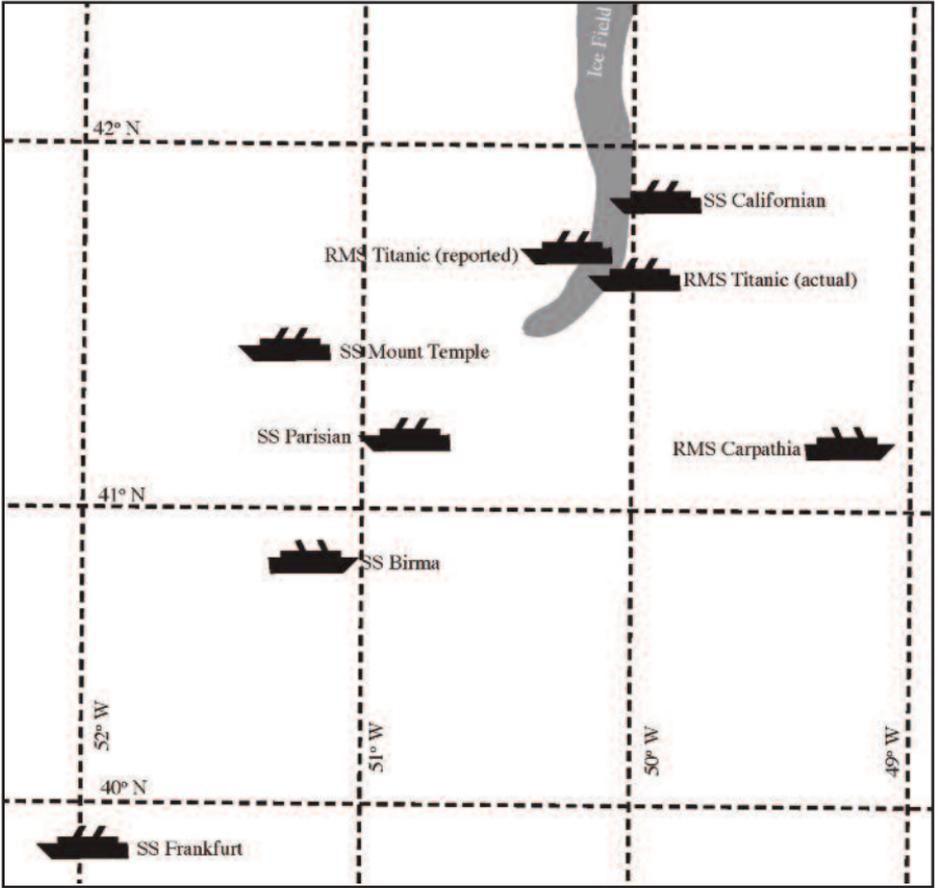
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Locations of the ships known to be closest to Titanic when she struck the iceberg

Chapter 1

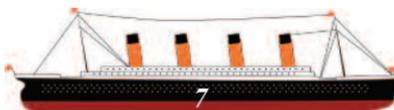
11pm

At 11pm on the night of 14 April 1912 the North Atlantic was a quiet place. The sea was a dead calm with barely a ripple to mark the surface, the air was still and the sky a cloudless dome of brilliant stars.

There were several ships plying the North Atlantic that night, their crews going about their usual business with no inkling of the terrible drama that was about to unfold. Several crews would pass the entire night in ignorance of what was happening for not all ships had radios at this date, especially the sailing craft that still travelled the oceans in large numbers. But for many ships the night would be one of high drama, excitement and tragedy.

The ship most involved was RMS Titanic, the magnificent luxury liner and flagship of the White Star Line, that was on her maiden voyage. She would sink with massive loss of life before dawn came. At 52,310 tons displacement, Titanic was the largest ship in the world. She could in theory steam at around 24 knots, making her one of the fastest ships on the North Atlantic run. However, since this was her maiden voyage and the engines were not yet run in, Titanic had a maximum speed of 21 knots. Her maximum capacity was for 2,435 passengers with 892 crew, a total of 3,327, but due to changes in the date of sailing there were only 1,317 passengers and 885 crew on board that night.

The commanding officer of Titanic, Captain Edward Smith, was a highly experienced and well regarded officer of passenger liners. Aged 62 at the time, Smith had been due to retire but had agreed to command the Titanic's maiden voyage as his final duty to the White Star Line. He had gone to sea aged 17 on sailing merchant ships,



transferring to steam passenger ships when he joined the White Star Line in 1880.

Seven years later he was given command of a ship and soon afterwards was commissioned into the Royal Navy Reserve. This latter did not involve military command but did mean that he was considered fit to command transport or troop ships on active service - and allowed him to fly the coveted blue ensign from his ship. In 1904, Smith became Commodore, or senior captain, of the White Star Line. His crews adored him, his fellow captains respected him and his passengers admired him.

At 11pm, Titanic was steaming almost directly due west. She had previously been steaming approximately southwest along the accepted winter route for crossing the North Atlantic from Ireland to New York. This route followed a line known as the great arc from Ireland to a location southeast of Newfoundland. Ships then would turn at a point around 42° North and 47° West. They would then steam on a direct route to their destination.

This route was designed to keep the ships on as short a route as possible while keeping well away from the area where field ice was to be found. The route was inside the area where isolated icebergs were sometimes to be found, but by April each year these were generally rare as the warmer water melted them. However, the spring of 1912 saw icebergs and field ice come considerably further south than had ever been known before.

Throughout the day, Titanic had been receiving ice reports from other ships. These revealed that icebergs and even field ice were further south than expected. Smith delayed making the turn to a westerly course, presumably because of the ice reports. The new route was to the south of the intended route and outside the area of reported ice. However, ice was known to be in the vicinity, so Smith increased the number of lookouts and gave firm orders that they were to keep a keen eye open for ice.

As is well known, an iceberg was sighted dead ahead at 11.40pm by lookout Frederick Fleet in the crow's nest on the fore mast. First Officer Murdoch ordered the helm to be put over, but it was too late.



Titanic hit the iceberg and Murdoch ordered the ship to stop. At first it was not clear if the damage was serious or not. Captain Smith was on the bridge within a few seconds. He ordered Fourth Officer Boxhall to go below to inspect the damage. He also ordered that the ship's location be calculated in case it proved necessary to radio for assistance.

The position of the Titanic when she struck the iceberg was to prove to be one of the most contentious issues that night, and had a serious impact on the rescue mission. It has never been clear who worked out the position, but it was probably either Smith or First Officer Murdoch. Whoever it was, located the Titanic at 41.44 North 50.24 West.

In these days of satellite navigation it is easy to discover a ship's position. Even an untrained person can look at the computer read out. But in 1912, marine navigation was not much changed from the days when Nelson fought the Battle of Trafalgar. By using a sextant to take sightings on the sun at noon a skilled navigator could calculate the position of his ship to within a mile or so. At night it was more difficult. Latitude could be calculated to within two miles by sighting on the North Star and measuring the angle between it and the northern horizon. Calculating longitude, however, was more difficult. It relied on identifying a star touching the eastern or western horizon and then measuring the angle between the horizon and an imaginary line drawn from that star to the North Star.

Whoever did the calculations on board Titanic got them wrong. The ship was actually at 41.44 North 49.56 West, about 13 miles east and two miles south of the reported position.

The captains of several ships which went to her rescue noted that something was amiss with the position of Titanic as it was reported. However, by that time both Smith and Murdoch had died in heroic and tragic circumstances. Smith in particular had been a popular man among fellow officers, and nobody wished to speak ill of the dead. The matter of where Titanic had actually gone down was therefore glossed over. It was not until the wreck was discovered in 1985 that the truth was revealed.



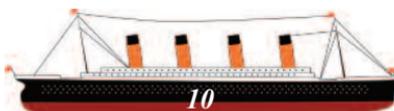
As midnight loomed Captain Smith knew his ship was damaged badly, but did not yet know it was doomed.

Of all the ships known to be involved in the rescue mission, the closest to the Titanic when tragedy struck was the SS Californian. Opinions vary as to her exact position, but it seems likely that she was about 30 miles north of Titanic. The Californian displaced 6,223 tons and had a top speed of 13 knots, though she usually cruised at 10 or 11 knots to conserve fuel. She was a British cargo ship owned by the Leyland Line, and although there were cabins for 47 passengers who did not mind a slow passage, none were on board. She had left London on 5 April and was due to arrive in Boston on 19 April.

The Californian was commanded by Captain Stanley Lord. Born in 1877, Lord went to sea at the age of 13 on a sailing ship, obtaining his Master's Certificate, which permitted him to command a ship, at the early age of 23. He actually gained command of his first ship five years later and in 1911 he took command of the Californian. Lord was reckoned by his crew and fellow captains to be a bit of a "cold fish". He did not socialize much with his fellows and made little effort to make friends. He was, however, undoubtedly a highly competent sea officer and was particularly skilled at navigation. Lord always tended to do things by the book and his relations with his crews could be strained by his lack of sympathy for personal circumstances.

During the afternoon and evening of 14 April the Californian had been steaming almost directly due West. She had passed several icebergs, and Lord had ordered wireless operator Cyril Evans to send out ice reports accordingly. Knowing that ice was about, Lord put an extra lookout on duty. This extra man was placed right in the bows of the ship with orders to watch only straight ahead, while the normal lookout in the crow's nest kept his more general watch all around the ship.

At 10.50pm the Californian came upon a large field of ice floating on the surface of the sea. The ice was low in the water, and Captain Lord had to both turn his ship and put engines into reverse to avoid hitting it. Having brought his ship to a halt, Lord gazed out at the ice. It extended out of sight to north, south and west. Concluding that



further progress in the dark would be difficult and possibly dangerous, Lord decided to stay where he was until dawn. He then calculated his position and ordered Evans to send out a fresh ice report to warn of the presence of field ice.

The position that Lord calculated was 42.5 North and 50.5 West. That put him about 18 miles from the reported position of the Titanic and some 30 miles or more from her actual position.

Having ensured the ice warning was sent out, Lord turned in for the night. He left a watch on duty to keep an eye on things, but with orders that the ship was not to move until he returned to duty on the bridge at dawn.

The radio operator Evans likewise turned in for the night and therefore did not hear any of the frantic radio messages that filled the airwaves that night. If he had picked up the first of the distress calls, the Californian may have reached the Titanic before she sank and so saved everyone on board. The true position of the Californian and the behaviour of her captain and crew have been controversial from the day of the sinking to the present day.

Probably the next closest was the SS Parisian of the Glasgow-based Allan Line. Her position is not known for certain, but she may have been 45 miles southwest of the Titanic. On 6 April the Parisian left Glasgow bound for Boston by way of Halifax, Nova Scotia. At 2.42pm on 14 April she was heading due west along the 42 North line of latitude. At that point the radio operator, Donald Sutherland, received warnings of ice ahead and took them to Captain William Hains. As a consequence the Parisian altered course to west south west.

At about 10pm her lookouts sighted ice to the north, but no ice in her path. This ice is now thought to have been the southern edge of the icefield on the eastern edge of which Californian was to spend the night standing stationary. The position of the ice seen by Parisian was about 10 miles south of where the Titanic hit the iceberg.

With no reason to be concerned, the captain of the Parisian allowed his ship to steam onward and by 11pm she was well beyond the icefield. At about this time, or a little afterwards, Sutherland switched



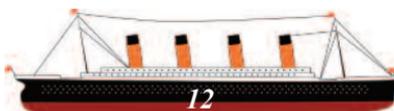
off his radio set and went to bed. Like Evans on the *Californian* he heard nothing of what went on that night until dawn next day.

The position of the *SS Mount Temple* is better known. She was 50 miles west south west of *Titanic*. The *Mount Temple* was a cargo ship of the Canadian Pacific Line. She was an 8,730 ton ship capable of 13 knots under the command of Captain James Moore. She was heading west towards St John's in New Brunswick, on her 62nd Atlantic crossing under Moore, one of the most experienced captains on the North Atlantic run having served 27 years in those waters.

Like all cargo ships, the *Mount Temple* could also carry passengers, and the business of carrying steerage passengers on the westward voyage was a profitable one as the numbers of poor people seeking to emigrate to the USA was high. On this voyage the *Mount Temple* had 1,466 such passengers, plus 10 in more luxurious second class accommodation. Given the high number of passengers, the ship had extra cooks, stewards and other crew totalling 143 in all.

On 13 April the *Mount Temple* had received ice warnings, so Captain Moore had taken his ship further south than was normal. On 14 April he was steaming west on the 41.20 North line. She had a peaceful day and evening, steaming steadily on her course without sighting any ice and few other ships. As night fell, Captain Moore took command on the bridge and sent a man up into the crow's nest on the forward mast to keep watch. He was not expecting to encounter ice, but there were other hazards at sea.

About the same distance away was the *RMS Carpathia*, some 50 miles to the southeast of *Titanic*. The *Carpathia* was a fast Cunard liner of 13,555 tons able to carry 100 first class, 200 second class and 2,250 steerage passengers. She had entered service in 1903 and had spent almost her entire career on the North Atlantic run. In April 1912 she was steaming from New York to the Mediterranean port of Fiume, then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire but now in Croatia and known as Rijeka. In command of *Carpathia* was the highly experienced Arthur Rostron of Lancashire. Rostron was born in 1869 and went to sea aged 19. He joined the Cunard line in 1895 and served on a number of different ships before being given command of the



Carpathia in February 1912. The radio operator on Carpathia was Harold Cottam, aged 21.

The SS Birma was about 70 miles southwest of Titanic. She was a small Russian passenger ship under Captain Leon Stulpin out of Libau, now Liepaja in Latvia. She belonged to the Russian East Asiatic Steam Ship Company and was heading east for Rotterdam, and then for her home port.

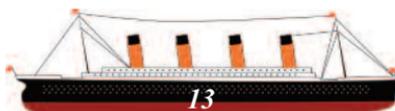
The SS Frankfurt was 140 miles southwest of Titanic. She was a 7,431 ton passenger ship of the North German Lloyd Line with cabins for 108 second class and dormitories for 1,889 third class passengers. She did not have a regular run but steamed between whichever German and American ports her owners needed her to visit. On this occasion she was on her way from Hamburg to Boston.

Unlike the Titanic and the other British and American ships she was not operating a Marconi radio system, but one from the Telefunken company. There was a dispute over patents going on between the Telefunken and Marconi companies at the time, so the operators of the two systems were under standing instructions not to communicate with each other. The orders were widely ignored, but the two companies did use different coding systems and this could lead to confusions.

Altogether more distant, but still involved was the SS Virginian, which was about 170 miles west of Titanic. The Virginian belonged to the Allan Line, a Scottish company that specialised in routes to Canada. She was a cargo ship that could also carry passengers. She was registered at 10,757 tons and had a cruising speed of 16 knots. In 1912 she was on the Montreal run.

A similar distance away was the RMS Baltic, more than 200 miles east of Titanic. Like Titanic, the Baltic was a White Star Line passenger ship and, again like the Titanic, she had been the biggest ship in the world when she had been launched in 1903. The Baltic's 23,876 tons had been surpassed since then but she could still carry 2,800 passengers and manage 17 knots. She was on her way to Liverpool on the night of 14 April.

Steaming at similar distances from the Titanic were a number of



other ships which would play a minor role in the drama to come. These ships were all within radio range of the stricken liner but, as events were to prove, were too far away to even hope to be of assistance.

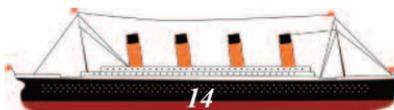
The SS Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm was a prestigious German liner, the flagship of the North German Lloyd Line operating out of Bremen and steaming usually to New York, but occasionally to other North American cities. She was a ship of 16,992 tons capable of a top speed of 17 knots. She had cabins for 46 first class and 338 second class passengers. The steerage passengers were housed in dormitories which could hold up to 1,726 people in cramped conditions. Such overcrowding in steerage was usually achieved on westward bound voyages when emigrants to the USA from Eastern Europe were packed in tightly. On return voyages the dormitories were more than half empty.

RMS Caronia was a Cunard Line cruise ship that took wealthy Americans on cruises to the Mediterranean and elsewhere. She was a ship of 19,532 tons which carried 300 first class and 352 second class passengers. There was provision for third class passengers, but these were not often carried on cruises. The accommodation was kept in place, however, for the few times the ship was put on the trans-Atlantic passenger run. In April 1912 she was commanded by Captain James Barr, an experienced seaman, and was bound for Liverpool from New York.

On the morning of 14 April, Caronia had sent out an ice warning about “bergs, growlers and field ice in 42 North 49 to 51 West. She had received a reply from the Titanic which read “Thanks for message and information. Have had variable weather throughout - Smith”.

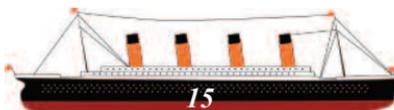
RMS Celtic was another White Star Line passenger ship. She displaced 20,904 tons and could carry 350 first class, 350 second class and 1,000 third class passengers. With a top speed of 16 knots she was one of the slower White Star ships on the Atlantic run.

The SS Cincinnati was, despite its name, a German freighter of 9,733 tons able to make 16 knots. She belonged to the North German Lloyd Line and had no room for passengers.



Saving the Survivors

Even further away was the RMS Olympic, the Titanic's sister ship, some 400 miles southwest. She was steaming on the reverse course to the Titanic, from New York to Southampton. She was almost identical to Titanic, though she was 250 tons lighter. Olympic was under the command of Captain Herbert Haddock, who had been the White Star Line officer responsible for getting the Titanic ready for sea. It had been Haddock who had put the crew together, overseen the loading of stores and equipment and ensured the ship met all regulations. Haddock had handed command of the Titanic over to Edward Smith in Southampton and then taken command of the Olympic as she set off for America. As a senior White Star Line officer he knew Smith well, the two men not only getting on well but respecting each other's professional skills.



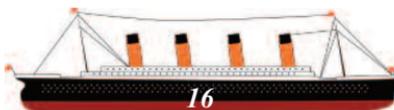
Chapter 2

Midnight

At 12.15am Titanic sent out the first indication of trouble. The message ran “CQD DE MGY 41.44 N. 50.24 W”. The code CQD was the standard distress call of the day, DE meant “this is” and MGY was the call sign for Titanic. The signal was picked up by three ships, the Mount Temple, the Birma and the French liner La Provence. The Cape Race shore station on Newfoundland also received the signal, but the urgency of the situation was not at first clear. Three minutes later the German liner Ypiranga heard the Titanic’s repeated distress calls, together with the new addition that assistance was urgently required.

Radio operator John Durrant on the Mount Temple was in bed in his pyjamas when he heard the message. He tumbled out of bed and replied to Titanic giving his ship’s call sign and asking for more information. At the same time he rang the bell for the night steward to come to his cabin. Within seconds the Titanic replied saying that it could not hear the incoming message properly, but repeating the distress call and this time giving the position of Titanic. Durrant scribbled the message down, added the word “URGENT” and handed it to the night steward with the instruction to take it to Captain Moore at once.

Captain Moore was fast asleep in his cabin when the night steward arrived with the message from Durrant. Moore at once called up the speaking tube to the second officer on the bridge and told him to turn the ship around to head back eastwards. He then pulled on a pair of trousers, jersey and overcoat and ran up the stairs to the bridge. He told the second officer about the Titanic and ordered him to increase speed, then Moore went to the chart room to work out a more precise



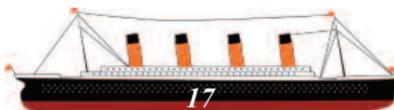
course, he then returned to the bridge, put the Mount Temple on the new course and told Durrant to keep a sharp ear open for more messages.

Moore also sent for the chief engineer, who had also been fast asleep. As the engineer came blearily on to the bridge, Moore told him of the emergency and ordered him to wake up every stoker on board and get them to work down in the engine room. Seeing the engineer was still not fully awake, Moore added “And pour yourself a good tot of rum to wake yourself up. Give some to all the men if you think it will help.” The engineer went below and soon the men were being woken up, given a slug of rum and pushed down below to get to work.

Moore then sent a man to stand in the bows of the ship and keep a watch directly forward for any obstacles - particularly ice. The look out in the crow’s nest remained on duty with orders to keep a lookout further ahead for any signals or rockets that might be from the Titanic. Moore guessed it would be four hours before he reached the sinking liner.

Captain Stulpin on the Birma was at something of a disadvantage. Like most educated Russians in the days of the Czars, he spoke fluent French but his grasp of English was limited to what he needed when in port. He and his radio operator knew well enough that they were receiving a distress signal as they recognised the letters CQD, and they also recognised the position coordinates, but what ship was in trouble and why they could not work out.

Stulpin would later say that he understood the letters CQD stood for the English words “come quick danger”, but this was not the case. The standard distress call was based on the land telegraph signal of CQ, itself based on the French word *sécu* indicating that the following message was for all receiving stations. When Marconi was drawing up his code book for radio signals he adopted CQ as a code indicating that what followed was a general signal for all who could hear it. He then added D for Distress to indicate an emergency signal. Stulpin’s shakey grip on the English language would characterise the Birma’s involvement that fatal night.



Despite not being entirely certain what was going on, Stulpin knew it was his duty to do something. He therefore turned his ship from heading east to northeast, steaming for the position given by “the people signalling”, as he referred to Titanic.

At 12.25am Cottam on the Carpathia left the bridge where he had been talking to First Officer Dean and returned to the radio cabin, where he slept. Some time earlier he had been in touch with Parisian and thought that before he went to sleep he would be polite and say good night. He radioed Parisian, but got no reply. Instead he heard Cape Cod shore station sending out a message saying it had a private message for Mrs Marshal on board the Titanic and asking if any ship could pass them on since Cape Cod could not raise Titanic direct. Mottam agreed, and sent a signal to Titanic “Do you know that Cape Cod is sending a batch of messages for you?”

Titanic cut in abruptly “Come at once. We have struck a berg. It's a CQD OM. Position 41.46 N. 50.14 W.” The letters “OM” stood for “Old Man” and were a common informal term used to indicate that the message was a personal one from one radio operator to the other. Note that the Titanic's position had been changed slightly. Fourth Officer Boxhall had brought a message to the radio room with what he described as a “corrected position”, having worked it out himself. It was, however, still incorrect.

Cottam responded "Shall I tell my Captain? Do you require assistance?"

“Yes, come quick” was the response.

Cape Race heard this exchange and tried to raise both the Titanic and the Carpathia, but received no reply.

Cottam was meanwhile, racing back up to the bridge of the Carpathia. He gasped out the news to Dean, then asked where Captain Rostron was. On being told Rostron had retired to his cabin, Cottam ran at once to the cabin with Dean on his heels. The two men burst through the door without bothering to knock. Rostron was asleep in his cot, having just nodded off. He started to tell the new arrivals off for entering without knocking, but Cottam interrupted to tell him that a distress signal had come in from the Titanic. “Turn the ship around,”



snapped Rostron to Dean, who ran back to the bridge. Rostron then sent Cottam back to the radio room with orders to get back in touch with Titanic.

Rostron pulled on a pair of boots and an overcoat before heading for the bridge. The ship was still turning when he got there and he quickly worked out what heading to take to reach the Titanic. At this point Rostron went down to see Cottam.

“Are you sure it is the Titanic?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Cottam.

“And she requires immediate assistance?”

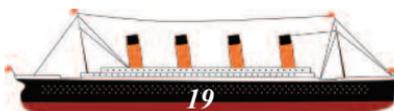
“Yes,” came the reply again.

Rostron returned to the bridge. On his way back up the ladder he saw a team of seamen heading for the open passenger decks with buckets of water and brushes. Cleaning the decks at night when no passengers were about was a regular chore. “Put those brushes away,” Rostron called to the boatswain’s mate in charge of the work party, “and get the lifeboats ready to be lowered.” The men gaped at him. “Not for us,” said Rostron. “Another ship is in trouble”. The men ran off to the boatdeck.

By the time Rostron got back to the bridge the Chief Engineer Johnstone had arrived. Together the two men did some quick calculations. It was going to take four hours to reach the Titanic, which Rostron guessed would be too long. He told Johnstone to rouse every stoker on board, both watches and set them all to work in the engine room. Every boiler had to be fired up to maximum pressure. Johnstone suggested that they shut off steam to all parts of the ship, except the engines. Rostron agreed. Johnstone went to work.

Having got all his men to work - some of them still in pyjamas - Johnstone began shutting off the steam to non-engine areas. The largest of these systems was the ship’s heating system. Pipes of hot water from the boilers snaked all around the Carpathia to fill radiators in cabins, corridors, restaurants and lounges. They were all closed off. The temperature on board began to fall.

Having established contact with the Carpathia, Titanic again sent out a general distress call to anyone who could pick up the signal.



“MGY (Titanic) CQD, Here corrected position 41.46 N. 50.14 W. Require immediate assistance. We have collision with iceberg. Sinking. Can hear nothing for noise of steam.” The message was repeated 20 times.

Durrant on the Mount Temple had been listening to the conversation between Carpathia and Titanic. He decided this was the time to try again to get in touch with Titanic himself. Once again he failed, so he went back to listening to the signals of other ships.

Among the ships to pick up this series of signals from Titanic was the Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm, which replied that the signal had been heard and gave the ship's own position of 39.47 N. 50.10 W.

"Are you coming to us?", replied Titanic. "We have collision with iceberg. Sinking. Please tell Captain to come." The German radio operator promised to do so and went off air while he went to find his captain. The captain, like so many others, turned his ship around and hurriedly calculated a course to take his ship to the Titanic.

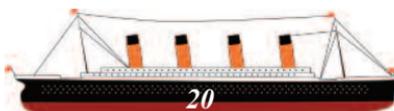
The Titanic then resumed sending a general signal with "I require assistance immediately. Struck by iceberg in 41.46 N. 50.14 W."

These messages were heard, albeit faintly, by the RMS Caronia. Her radio operator repeated the signals to alert as many ships as possible to the emergency.

The same messages were heard by the Mount Temple. When the Titanic took a break from transmitting to listen for replies, Mount Temple cut in with "Our Captain reverses ship. We are about 50 miles off." It was now 12.30am.

A scene of tragicomedy status was played out aboard the small liner SS Virginian. She was over 170 miles (273 km) away when the radio operator picked up the distress call. He at once ran up to the bridge where the first officer was on watch. The officer read the message, then glared at the radio man. The Titanic was a famous ship and was known to be on its prestigious maiden voyage. He believed that the young radio man was having a joke and ordered him off the bridge.

The radio man refused to budge and found himself seized by the arms by two deckhands who lifted him off the ground and at the officer's orders were carrying him towards the stairs that led down to



the radio room. The radio man broke free, ran to the captain's cabin and began punching and kicking at the door. Only then did the first officer think that the signal might be genuine. When the captain emerged, groggy with sleep, he gave orders for the ship to head to the position shown at once. The abashed first officer went to work piling on speed.

Captain Stulpin on the Birma also received the new position. He calculated that his ship was around 100 miles from the unknown emergency. Aware from the frequency of the signals that whatever was happening was serious, Stulpin went down below and woke up all his stokers and gave them orders to shovel coal as they had never shovelled before. He then returned to the bridge to guide his ship through the night.

At 12.34 am Wilhelm Zippel, radio operator of the Frankfurt, sent a message to the Titanic acknowledging receipt of the distress call and giving its own position of 39.47 North 52.10 West.

"Are you coming to our assistance?", replied Titanic.

"What is the matter with you?" signalled Frankfurt.

"We have struck an iceberg and sinking. Please tell Captain to come."

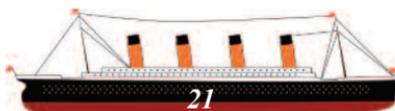
"O.K. Will tell the bridge right away," replied the Frankfurt.

"O.K., yes, quick," confirmed Titanic.

Zippel dashed up to the bridge to inform his captain of the emergency. Captain Hattorff knew his duty. He turned his ship around and began steaming northeast toward the Titanic.

Ernest Moore, the radio operator on the Olympic, overheard part of the conversation between Titanic and Frankfurt. The distance was very great and the signals weak. He could not work out which of the two ships had hit an iceberg, nor how serious the damage was. He spent the next five minutes fruitlessly trying to raise either ship, or to hear other messages. Moore went up to the bridge of the Olympic where he found Captain Haddock. Haddock thought for a moment, then sent Moore back to the radio room to listen for more signals.

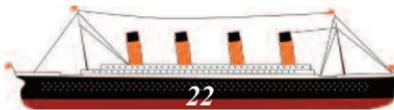
Titanic had meanwhile resumed sending out general distress signals "CQD. I require immediate assistance. Position 41.46 N. 50.14 W."



At 12.50am this was picked up the RMS Celtic. The signal was also heard quite clearly by Moore on the Olympic. This time he ran up to the bridge, not bothering to salute before blurting out the news to Captain Haddock. Haddock at once ordered the helmsman to turn the ship about, then he went to the chartroom to work out a route to the Titanic.

At 12.40am Second Officer Herbert Stone of the Californian was interrupted in his pacing of the silent bridge by apprentice James Gibson. About an hour earlier the lights of a ship had been seen approaching. The ship was right on the southern horizon and had been heading west, like the Californian herself. The strange ship had then come to a halt. The watchers on the Californian had assumed that the ship, like Captain Lord of the Californian, had seen the ice field and decided to wait until daylight before proceeding. Now Gibson had seen a light flickering on the unidentified ship to the south and wondered if it were an aldis lamp. Stone studied the ship for a while, then tried to signal with his own aldis lamp. There was no reply, so he decided that the apparent flashing was merely the masthead light flickering, as such lights were known to do.

At 12.53am the Caronia made radio contact with the Baltic and then signalled "MGY CQD in 41.46 N. 50.14 W. Wants immediate assistance." The Baltic at once put about and piled on speed. She was more than 11 hours steaming away from Titanic, but that did not deter her commander. After all, some 9 years earlier the Baltic had been commanded by none other than the Captain Smith who was now in command of the Titanic.



Chapter 3

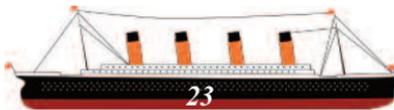
1am

By 1am Captain Haddock on the Olympic had worked out a course to reach the Titanic. He gave the course to the helmsman, then ordered Moore to signal Titanic that her sister ship was coming to the rescue. At the same time he sent a man to rouse the chief engineer and bring him to the bridge. When the chief engineer appeared, Haddock told him to go and wake all his men. Olympic was to be brought to top speed as quickly as possible with every boiler fired up, all engines running at top speed and every man who could stand shovelling coal. Told of the need for speed, the chief engineer vanished below.

At 1am the Cincinnati heard the distress signals from Titanic and replied.

Meanwhile, on board the Carpathia, Captain Rostron and First Officer Dean had been deep in conversation. They were hoping to reach Titanic before she sank and so to take off all the passengers and crew of the stricken liner. Carpathia had a capacity of 2,500 passengers. Most of those places were steerage, used to carry emigrants from Europe to the USA. Since the ship was going from America to Europe most of those places were empty. The first and second class cabins were mostly full, but only 600 of the 2,250 steerage places were occupied. There was plenty of spare space. The new arrivals could go to the steerage areas.

But first the people from Titanic had to be got aboard. Men were sent to rig electric lights all around the open decks of the ship. Gangways to link the two ships had to be manhandled up to the decks and slings got ready to shift children or the injured over. There was always a chance the Titanic might have sunk, so ladders had to let



down the sides of the Carpathia, along with ropes and nets, so people could climb up from lifeboats.

Then the ship's surgeon, Doctor McGhee, was sent for. He was told to expect hundreds of very cold people on board, at least some of whom would probably be injured. McGhee thought for a minute, then said that he needed to comander all three dining rooms to act as first aid clearing stations. As people came aboard they should be sent to a clearing station to be checked over before being sent on to the steerage cabin area. McGhee also asked for a number of cleaners to be given to him to act as orderlies. Rostron agreed. McGhee hurried off to wake up his two junior doctors. Within minutes he had both men in charge of a team of men emptying the sick bay of supplies and carrying them to the dining rooms. Tables were cleared to serve as makeshift examination beds, or operating tables if that proved necessary.

At two minutes past 1am the SS Asian picked up the Titanic's distress call and replied that she was coming to help. At about the same time the SS Virginian was trying to call the Titanic but got no response. At this the Cape Race shore station cut in to tell Virginian that the Titanic had struck an iceberg and required immediate assistance.

By 1.10am Moore on the Olympic had got back in direct contact with Titanic and asked for an update. He was told "We are in collision with berg. Sinking Head down. 41.46 N. 50.14 W. Come soon as possible. Captain says, Get your boats ready. What is your position?"

At 1.15am the Baltic replied to the Caronia's signal of 20 minutes earlier. "Please tell Titanic we are making towards her."

At 1.15am Second Officer Herbert Stone of the Californian saw a flare over the unknown ship to the south that he took to be a company recognition signal. The ship appeared to be of medium size with a single masthead light and some other white lights, apparently from portholes or open doors. The deck lights that had been on earlier appeared to have gone off.

Back on board the Carpathia, Captain Rostron had summoned Purser Brown and Chief Steward Harry Hughes to the bridge to discuss how they were going to cope with the sudden arrival of



hundreds of extra passengers. The first decision was that the entire crew had to be woken up and fed coffee and biscuits, then be mustered to receive instructions. Three routes were decided along which the new arrivals could be channelled from the upper deck through the medical clearing stations and on to the smoking rooms and lounges. At the start of each route there were to be stacked all the spare blankets on board to start the process of warming up the arrivals. In the lounges would be waiting the restaurant serving staff armed with soup, tea, coffee, biscuits, sandwiches, whisky and brandy. From the lounges more routes were decided on to carry the arrivals down into the steerage cabins. Along each route stewards would be stationed to keep everyone moving smoothly and to deal with any questions or panics that arose.

Hughes suggested that it would make things easier if the Carpathia's steerage passengers could be shifted out of their current cabins, dotted all over the ship, and concentrated in a single area. Rostron agreed, but at once foresaw difficulties. The majority of steerage passengers were young Italian, Greek or Hungarian men who had been living in America working on contracts and who were going home either for a holiday or for good. They were all young, tough and hardly any spoke English. Getting them to shift out of their roomy, half empty cabins to pack cheek by jowl into a few cramped cabins was not going to be easy. Hughes said he needed all the stewards who spoke a foreign language, plus all those who were over six foot tall. Rostron agreed.

Brown raised another issue. The noise of the crew moving about, the lifeboats being prepared and food cooked was bound to wake up some of the passengers in first and second class. "Can't have them getting under our feet," he concluded. Rostron told him to station the stewards who looked after the first and second class cabins in the corridors. No passenger was to be allowed out of their cabins. Those who did not stay in voluntarily were to be locked in. At least there would be no language problems, those passengers were all Americans off to the Mediterranean on holiday.

At 1.20am the lookout on the Mount Temple alerted Captain Moore to the presence of another ship. She was steering almost due south



and would pass right across the bows of the Mount Temple. The ship was showing the usual bow, stern and masthead lights of a steam ship at night. Moore tried signalling her with his aldis lamp, but got no reply. The strange ship continued across the bows of the Mount Temple, then turned east to be steaming on a parallel course with the Mount Temple but a mile or so to the south and some distance ahead. Moore assumed that despite the strange ship's lack of communications she must have picked up the distress signals from Titanic and, like himself, was going to help.

At about the same time the *Virginian* informed Cape Race "We are going to Titanic's assistance. Our position 170 miles N. of Titanic."

It was at 1.25am that *Caronia* sent a signal to Titanic, "Baltic coming to your assistance".

At 1.27am Captain Haddock of the *Olympic* went to the radio room and asked Moore to signal Titanic with a question. "Are you steering to meet us?"

The ominous reply from was "We are putting the women off in the boats." If that were the case, Haddock knew, then the ship must be sinking.

Haddock told Moore to signal asking what the weather was like for putting boats off. This was an important consideration as lifeboats were designed to cope with rough seas, but would be helpless in a serious storm. "Clear and calm" came the reply.

Haddock told Moore to reply "Am lighting up all boilers as fast as can." Haddock then returned to the bridge and bellowed orders down to the engine room to get speed up more quickly. By 2am he had got his ship up to a maximum speed of 23 knots and was thundering west through the night.

By 1.30am the stewards on board *Carpathia* had begun the process of moving the steerage passengers. As expected the men did not want to move and it was proving a time consuming business to explain to them in a wide variety of languages why it was necessary. There was much grumbling, some cursing and a lot of delay, but no real trouble.

Meanwhile, the passengers in first and second class had been waking up. It was the cold that woke up Louis Ogden. He tried to turn



on the radiator in his cabin, but it remained stubbornly cold. Hearing footsteps outside, he opened his cabin door to see a procession of crew walking past carrying huge armfuls of blankets and towels. They were followed by more men, each carrying a mattress. Within seconds his usual steward had strode up and told him to get back into his cabin. "Why?" asked Ogden.

"Captain's orders," came the reply as the steward politely but firmly pushed Ogden back inside the cabin.

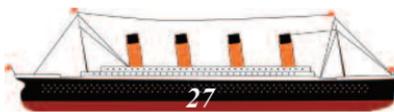
Back in his cabin Mr Ogden found Mrs Ogden awake. Together they listened to the noises of the crew rushing about. Then they noticed the engines. They were pounding at a rate much faster than usual. After a while Ogden poked his head outside again. This time he refused to be ushered back into his cabin without a proper explanation. He pestered the steward for an answer.

"There's been an accident to the Titanic," the steward replied. "We are going north like Hell. Now please get back into your cabin."

Another first class passenger, Ann Peterson, had got out of her cabin without being stopped and gone up to the open deck. Seeing the lifeboats being got ready to be swung out she leapt to the conclusion that Carpathia was about to sink. She rushed back to her cabin and put on her warmest clothes, then went back up to the boat deck.

At 1.35am the Titanic sent out a message reading "Engine room getting flooded." This was taken by all who heard it to be a most serious message. It was the first indication that anyone had had that the liner was sinking so quickly. In a big liner such as Titanic, the engines were located amidships and near the base of the hull. This was so that the big, heavy objects were located in the most stable part of the ship. In rough seas the bows and stern would go up and down with each passing wave, but the central area tended to remain relatively still. If the water were reaching the engines then it must already be flowing halfway along the hull of the ship. That would indicate that the ship was more than halfway to going under. Since the first emergency signal had been sent out at a little after midnight, the ship would most likely have less than an hour to remain afloat.

The signal was alarming for another reason. The radio apparatus



relied on electrical power to operate. The electric system on a ship such as Titanic was powered by the engines. Once the engines flooded and seized up, the electricity system would fail. That in turn would cause the radio to cease transmitting. Once that happened the outside world would have no way of knowing what was taking place on board the Titanic.

As soon as he heard this signal, at 1.35am, Wilhelm Zippel, radio operator of the Frankfurt sent a signal to ask "Are there any boats around you already?" There was no reply from the Titanic. The German ship continued to steam through the night.

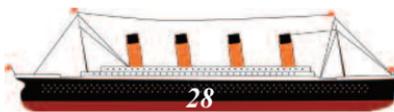
Two minutes later Baltic signalled to Titanic, "We are rushing to you."

Also alarmed by the signal about the engine rooms was the radio man at distant Cape Race. He signalled to the Virginian: "Please tell your Captain this: 'The Olympic is making all speed for Titanic, but his (Olympic's) position is 40.32 N. 61.18 W. You are much nearer to Titanic. The Titanic is already putting women off in the boats, and he says the weather there is calm and clear. The Olympic is the only ship we have heard say, "Going to the assistance of Titanic". The others must be a long way from Titanic.'"

At 1.45am the Carpathia heard the Titanic signal "Come as quickly as possible old man: the engine-room is filling up to the boilers". After that the Carpathia heard only silence and static.

Zippel on the Frankfurt tried calling Titanic again, but got no reply. On the bridge of the German ship, Captain Hattorff had gathered from Zippel that other ships were nearer to the scene of the emergency, but still he pushed his ship ahead.

At 1.47 am the radio operator on Caronia heard weak signals from the Titanic though he was unable to make out what they meant. The radio signal traffic was by this time getting scarce. At 1.55am Cape Race sent to Virginian "We have not heard Titanic for about half an hour. His power may be gone."



Chapter 4

2am

At a little after 2am Ann Peterson was joined on the boat deck of the Carpathia by Mr and Mrs Ogden and half a dozen other passengers. All of them were wrapped up in overcoats, having all thought the ship was in trouble and they had better get up to the boats to be ready to abandon ship. They soon realised that the Carpathia, very far from being in trouble, was racing at top speed through the night.

Miss Peterson had been chatting to the radio operator, Cottam, earlier in the voyage. She offered to go to his cabin and ask him what was happening. She made her way to the radio cabin and found the door wide open. Cottam was sitting hunched over the radio set. He ignored her completely, so she went back to the boat deck.

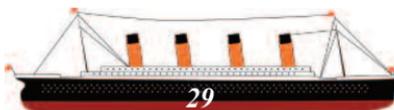
At five minutes past two the radio man on the Virginian heard Titanic calling very faintly, but could not make out any letters for certain. It seemed as if the power going to the Titanic's radio had been greatly reduced.

The radio operator on the SS Asian thought that he heard Titanic call "SOS". He answered that he had received the signal, but heard nothing more.

A few seconds later Wilhelm Zippel, radio operator of the Frankfurt sent the signal that would gain him notoriety. He called Titanic and then asked "What is the matter with you?"

This drew the stinging rebuke from Titanic "You fool, standby and keep out". Zippel decided to keep quiet in future, but he continued to monitor what was going on.

At ten minutes past two the Virginian heard the letter V sent twice. The radio operator was certain that the signal came from the Titanic



as he thought the sparking background noise was the same as that he had heard earlier in signals from that ship. Nobody else heard the signals.

At 2.15am Captain Rostron on the *Carpathia* turned to Second Officer James Bisset who was standing by him. Rostron thought that the *Carpathia* was still about 40 miles from the *Titanic*'s position, but he could not be sure. In all the excitement nobody had been measuring the ship's speed. Certainly she was going very fast, faster he guessed than it was really safe to drive her, but that was still not fast enough.

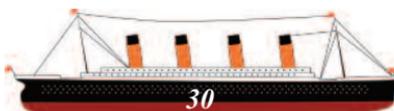
Rostron told Bisset to find two lookout men and go forward to the bows. His orders were to keep a sharp lookout for ice and for the *Titanic*. The *Carpathia* was going fast and Rostron had no wish to hit an iceberg. The lookout in the crow's nest was also changed to get fresh eyes to watch out for ice.

A few minutes later Purser Brown came to the bridge to report that everything was ready to receive the *Titanic*'s passengers and crew. All they had to do now was wait.

At about the same time Captain Moore on the *Mount Temple* decided it was time to start preparing to take on survivors. He roused the rest of his crew and set them to work swinging out the lifeboats ready to be lowered, getting rigging lines ready to lower over the side and stacking spare blankets ready for use. One of his officers joked that the first class passengers from the luxury *Titanic* would get a shock when they came into the rough and ready steerage of *Mount Temple*. Nobody laughed.

The radio operator on the *Virginian* again thought he heard the *Titanic* at 2.17am. This time the signal was "CQ CQ CQ CQ". The CQ code was the standard one sent by a ship about to send a message intended for anyone who could pick it up. The radio operator waited for the intended message to begin, but nothing followed. He wrote on his notepad "Signals end very abruptly as (if) power suddenly switched off. His spark rather blurred or ragged."

After a few minutes of silence, the *Virginian* sent a signal back to the *Titanic*. He suggested that the *Titanic* switch to the emergency set that was carried by all larger ships. There was no response.



The Virginian then sent to Olympic, "Have you heard anything about Titanic?"

The Olympic replied "No. Keeping strict watch, but hear nothing more from Titanic. No reply from him."

Around 2.30am the lookout on the Mount Temple spotted some pieces of ice floating in the sea. They were small, low blocks of ice. In themselves they were no danger to the ship, so Captain Moore continued steaming eastward at full speed. But aware that the Titanic had hit an iceberg and that he was now entering the area of ice, Moore started to become edgy. He sent his Fourth Officer up to the bows with orders that he and the look out already there must watch for ice in the path of the ship. He also sent a message to the engine room telling the engineer to stand by in case it proved suddenly necessary to put the engines into reverse to avoid ice.

About the same time, Second Officer Stone on the Californian noticed the lights of the ship to the south had gone. He had not seen the ship leave, but it had been right on the southern horizon. He guessed it had steamed off to the south seeking a way around the icefield.

At 2.40am Captain Rostron on the Carpathia suddenly let out a shout as he paced the bridge. Far ahead he had seen a green flare briefly arc through the sky. At night ships at sea would fire flares or fireworks high into the sky as they passed each other. Each company had its own distinctive type of firework, and that of the White Star Line was a dark green flare. These big flares could not be fired from lifeboats as they were simply too powerful. If there were White Star Line green flares going up then it must mean that the Titanic was still afloat. Rostron guessed the light was a dozen miles or more away.

Rostron sent for a seaman and told him to start firing the Carpathia's recognition flares into the sky at regular intervals. The first flare soared high into the sky and exploded in a powerful burst of fire and smoke with a loud bang. It could be seen for miles around. Surely, Rostron thought, the Titanic would be able to see the signal and know help was on the way. Impatiently he resumed pacing the bridge.

At 2.45am the Virginian was still trying to raise the Titanic by radio.



Saving the Survivors

The radio operator on the Baltic heard the signals, and also that Virginian was not getting a response. He decided to reply himself, confirming that he had heard nothing from the stricken liner for some time.

At about the same time Second Officer Bisset on lookout in the bows of the Carpathia saw a faint light off the port bow. He looked again and realised that it was the light of a star reflected off the side of an iceberg about a mile distant. Word was passed to the bridge that they had reached an area of icebergs, but the speed never slackened. Carpathia surged on.

At 2.55am Cottam on the Carpathia decided to try signalling Titanic again. His message read “If you are there we are firing rockets.” The message was picked up by several other ships in the North Atlantic, and the lack of response from Titanic was noted and taken to have an ominous meaning.



Chapter 5

3am

At 3am the Mount Temple, still steaming east at full speed, sighted a green ship's light dead ahead. Hopes rose that this was a light on the Titanic, but it quickly became clear that it was a standard light as used by a sailing vessel. Captain Moore could not see even a silhouette of the ship in the darkness, but assumed it was one of the many fishing schooners that operated in the cod-rich seas off Newfoundland. The schooner was steering west, though given the still air it was unlikely to be going fast. Moore turned to starboard to avoid the schooner, but the light on the craft suddenly went out.

Moore was peering ahead into the darkness, wondering where the schooner had got to when suddenly the noise of a foghorn bellowed out of the darkness. The schooner was clearly very close to Mount Temple and, with the light wind, unable to get out of the way. Moore put his engines into full reverse and slammed the wheel over to starboard. The ship juddered, then turned and halted. The foghorn sounded again, this time from further away and again the lights on the schooner could be seen. Moore got the Mount Temple back under way toward the Titanic.

At 3.05am the Virginian again tried to raise the Titanic by radio, but was met only by silence.

The Olympic, meanwhile, was still powering west at full speed. Other ships knew she was on her way, and being slower did not seek to follow. Those in the Olympic's route did do their best to help. The Mesaba, for instance, passed on to Olympic a summary of the latest ice reports, aware that Captain Haddock may well not have heard them.

At 3.10am the Carpathia tried again to get in touch with Titanic by



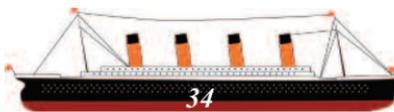
radio. There was no reply from Titanic, but the signal was heard by the Russian radio operator on the Birma. As with most messages heard by the Birma it was received in garbled form. The Russian thought that he was hearing the Titanic signalling to the Carpathia. After a hurried conversation with Captain Stulpin, the Birma radio operator sent a message back to the ship he thought was Titanic. "Steaming full speed for you. Shall arrive 6 morning. Hope you are safe. We are only 50 miles now."

Cottam on the Carpathia picked up the Birma signal and assumed that Birma had sent it because she had heard from the Titanic. Presuming that Titanic was therefore still afloat, Cottam again began trying to raise the Titanic by radio. For the next half hour he made frantic efforts to get in touch.

At 3.15am the Carpathia was still driving northwest at full speed, weaving about to avoid the large icebergs that were coming into sight. Suddenly one of the lookouts gave a cry and pointed toward the north. Coming towards them was another steamer. She was showing only her masthead lights and her side lights, there was no sign of light from cabins or decks. It seemed to be a small freighter, though whether it was lying still or moving slowly was not clear. In any case the men on the Carpathia had other things on their minds: Finding Titanic and avoiding icebergs. The ship was passed in the night. If anyone thought it odd the ship did not fire off any company recognition signals, nor use an aldis lamp to signal the Carpathia as she tore past at top speed, they did not say so.

At 3.25am Captain Moore on the Mount Temple ordered his engines to go more slowly. He was now seeing substantial chunks of ice, and small bergs around his ship. He had to change course several times to avoid the more dangerous pieces. He was now entering the western edge of the ice field. The other ship that he had been following since soon after receiving the distress signals also slowed, but began steering slightly to the south.

At about 3.50am Captain Rostron of the Carpathia started to worry that other ships steaming to the rescue at full speed might blunder into the ice field and share Titanic's fate. He was particularly worried



about Olympic, knowing that she was coming on at 23 knots or faster. He sent a message direct to Olympic marked for Haddock's personal attention. "South point pack ice 44.46 North. Do not attempt to go north until 49.30 West. Many bergs, large and small, amongst pack: also for many miles eastward."

By this time the messages passing between the various ships in range of the Titanic had been picked up by ships further afield. They were not always fully aware of what was going on, often having picked up only partial messages. But by about 3.30am it was becoming increasingly clear to those ships with radio operators still on duty that something very serious was going on indeed. The radio waves right across the North Atlantic began to fill with signals from ships seeking information of what was going on, where it was happening and how they could help. For some reason the idea caught hold that the Cunard cruise liner RMS Caronia was in touch with the Titanic. She was therefore bombarded with messages from other ships seeking information. This served only to irritate the radio operator on the Caronia who was in fact trying, but failing, to get in touch with the Titanic. He irritably bounced back messages, abruptly telling his fellow radio men to cancel their signals.

A little before 4am, Captain Stulpin of the Russian liner Birma calculated that he would be on the scene of the emergency in about two hours or so. He was still rather hazy as to what exactly was going on, but the frantic nature of the messages his radio operator had been picking up made it clear that the emergency was extremely serious. Stulpin deduced that a passenger liner was in trouble, and that large numbers of people would be exposed to the bitter cold of that night.

Stulpin decided to prepare his ship to receive the shipwrecked people. He ordered that every member of the crew was to be woken up. Passengers were to be instructed to stay in their cabins, and stewards would roam the corridors to ensure that his orders were carried out. Meanwhile towels and blankets were to be piled up in the lounge, while the restaurant and all communal areas were to be cleared so that the survivors would have somewhere to sit, lie or rest. Finally the cook was told to make as much soup as he could manage.



The entire kitchen staff was put to work peeling potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables.

At 4am Captain Rostron on the *Carpathia* saw a small green flare ahead of his racing ship. It was low down, as if being held on a lifeboat. He put his engines to slow and steered toward the flare. The flare went out and Rostron stopped his engines. The last thing he wanted to do was run down a lifeboat full of survivors. A few minutes later a green light showed again, and this time it was clearly from a lifeboat. Rostron's heart sank. He had been hoping to find the *Titanic* crippled, but still afloat. Now he knew she must have sunk.

The *Carpathia* began to creep toward the lifeboat, but then an iceberg loomed out of the darkness and Rostron had to turn sharply to starboard. It proved to be only a temporary delay. Within a few minutes the *Carpathia* was alongside the lifeboat.

The first of *Titanic*'s officers to get on board was Fourth Officer James Boxhall who climbed up from the first boat rescued at 4.10am. He was sent immediately to the bridge, even before getting a blanket and a coffee. "The *Titanic*," asked Rostron, "has she gone down?":

"Yes," replied Boxhall. "She went down at about 2.20."

Rostron and his crew peered into the gloom. They could see no other lifeboats, nor any lights. Rostron turned back to Boxhall and began quizzing him about the lifeboats. Boxhall was confident that all or most of the lifeboats had got away before the *Titanic* went down. The loss of life must have been fearful, he knew, but there would be other survivors. But where were the lifeboats?

Then Rostron asked about the green lights that had been seen. Boxhall confirmed that he had been lighting green flares at regular intervals. He had held them aloft in his hand in the hope that other lifeboats and any ship coming to the rescue would see them. This was a puzzle. Flares such as those stored in lifeboats were visible in clear conditions right to the horizon, about nine miles. And yet Rostron had first seen a green flare an hour and twenty minutes earlier, when he had been some 22 miles from Boxhall in his lifeboat.

On the day Rostron put the problem out of his mind - after all he had plenty of other things to worry about. It has, however, been of



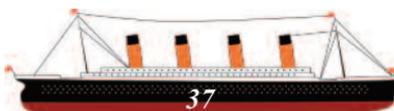
interest to historians since. One solution that has been put forward is that there was an atmospheric temperature inversion that night. Usually air is warmer close to the Earth's surface, and then gets cooler at higher altitudes. However, on the night of the disaster the sea was very cold, while the air above was warmer. The cold sea would have cooled the air close to it, causing a temperature inversion to form.

If the inversion that night had had a sudden change in temperature from the cold layer on top of the sea to the warmer air higher up an atmospheric duct would have formed that behaved like a refracting lens. This would have bent the waves of any light passing through it. A bright light source, such as Boxhall's flare, would therefore have been visible many miles beyond the horizon as the light waves coming from it were bent around the curve of the Earth.

Boxhall was given a blanket to wrap himself in and a hot drink. He was not allowed to go below but was kept on the bridge with Rostron. The Carpathia's captain needed the advice of the only officer so far found alive. Together the two men peered out across the surface of the sea as the light strengthened.

Captain Moore on the Mount Temple was also watching the grey pre-dawn light creep over the ocean - and he was worried. His calculations now put him at 41.44 North 50.14 West, the position where the distress signal had said the Titanic should be. But as Moore and his lookouts peered out into the gloom they could see no Titanic, no lifeboats and no wreckage. All they could see was a mass of ice to the east, south and north. The floating ice was broken into numerous chunks with a few large ice bergs here and there.

The strange ship, whose lights the Mount Temple had been following for some hours, was also visible. She was a small cargo steamer of about 4,000 tons with four masts and one funnel. The funnel was black with a white band around it. On the band there was a device, presumably the badge of the company that owned her, but Moore did not take much notice of it. Moore thought the ship looked to be neither British nor American, judging by the shape of her hull and superstructure. As Moore watched the ship suddenly picked up speed, turned south and steamed out of sight over the horizon.



Moore was uncertain what to do. It was some hours since a message had come from the Titanic. He was now in the position where the stricken ship was supposed to be, but there was no sign of her. If Titanic had gone down, Moore would expect to see floating wreckage or lifeboats, but there was nothing. He nosed first one way, then the other, then stopped his engines and went down to the radio room to find out what Durrand had been hearing on the radio waves. There was nothing new to report.

Back on the bridge Moore decided that either he had calculated his position wrongly or the Titanic had done. No big liner could have steamed straight through the ice field ahead of him, so Moore concluded that the Titanic must have hit ice to the east, not west, of the ice field. He again started up his engines and began pushing slowly east, picking a path through the floating ice. He then turned southeast as the ice seemed more thinly spread there.

Carpathia, meanwhile, continued to pick up survivors from the lifeboats. It was 4.45am before the second lifeboat was got alongside, but by that time several others were in sight. Several were rowing slowly toward the Carpathia. One boat was skipping toward the Carpathia under sail. This was the lifeboat in which Fifth Officer Lowe was in command. All the lifeboats were equipped with a mast and sail, but only Lowe had bothered to get his up and working. Unlike most mariners who put to sea, Lowe had spent much of his youth messing about in small boats. He knew how to get a sail up and how to use the faintest of breezes. He had spent the previous hour moving around the wreckage looking for people in the water, hauling four shivering survivors from the ocean. Now he believed that there would be no more found alive and he headed for Carpathia.



Chapter 6

5am

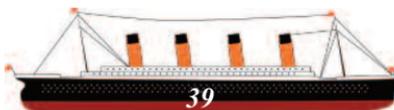
At 5am Captain Lord of the Californian dressed and went back to his bridge. He gazed west across the ice field, then glanced around the empty horizons. He sent for the chief engineer and began discussing with him the chances of pushing slowly through the ice field. In the end, Lord decided to try pushing directly through the field rather than going south to seek the end of it. At that point the engineer suggested they go south to try to find the steamer and added that it had been seen to fire rockets. Lord at once sent the engineer to get radio operator Cyril Evans and ask him to try to contact the ship by radio.

Cyril Evans was getting dressed ready to go back on duty when the engineer came to his cabin. He switched on the radio and sent out a general call announcing that he was on the air and asking for news. The Mount Temple replied that the Titanic had sunk, gave the position supplied by the Titanic some hours earlier and asked Evans if his ship could go to help. Evans sent the engineer back to Lord, who came running down to the radio room a few moments later.

Lord demanded to know the Titanic's position, then did some rough calculations in his head. The Titanic's position was about 19 miles south of his own, and the strange ship that had been seen earlier had been to the south, but only about 10 miles away. He was certain that the ship seen had not been the Titanic, it had been far too small, but he did worry that the flares seen by Stone might have been distress rockets from Titanic, not recognition signals from the mystery ship.

Lord raced back to the bridge and ordered the engines to be put to slow ahead. He then began warily picking his way through the ice.

By quarter past five the lifeboats were coming alongside Carpathia



thick and fast. Some survivors scrambled up ropes or netting, but others were hoisted up in canvas slings. As each came aboard they were given a hot drink, wrapped in a blanket and ushered off toward one of the restaurants to be checked over by medical staff. Most of those who came were physically in good condition. They were cold, but otherwise fine. Those that had got wet were in a worse condition for the sub-zero waters had chilled them badly. As soon as these unfortunates reached the restaurant they were stripped to their underwear, wrapped in heated blankets and given hot coffee laced with brandy.

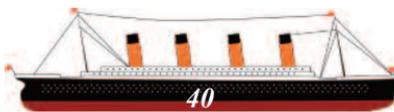
About 5.45am, having got beyond the ice field, Captain Lord turned the bows of the Californian to the south and began to increase speed. He got his ship up to around 12 knots, her maximum speed, but then ordered the engineer to try to go faster and finally got to almost 13 knots.

At 5.50am the Birma came on to the air again, still signalling to Titanic. "We are 30 miles southwest of you", the signal ran.

A little before 6am the Fourth Officer of the Mount Temple spotted a ship far ahead beyond the ice field. It was a liner and for a moment he thought it was Titanic, but quickly he saw it had only one funnel. It was the Carpathia.

At 6.30am one of the men brought aboard Carpathia slumped down on the deck and refused to move. The stewards tried to give him a blanket and lead him toward the medical clearing station, but he sat still. In the end the stewards sent for one of the doctors. Dr McGhee arrived and bent over the man. As McGhee reached out to touch the man's shoulder, the survivor looked up with gaunt and hollow eyes. "I'm Ismay," he said.

Bruce Ismay was Chairman and Managing Director of the White Star Line and had been on the Titanic as a first class passenger enjoying the maiden voyage of the newest addition to his fleet. It was already obvious that during the evacuation the Titanic's officers had imposed a women and children first rule. Most of the survivors were women and children. Many people assumed that it should have been the duty of the White Star Line chairman to stay on board to the end



and help supervise the evacuation, as the Captain and senior officers had done.

Quite how Ismay got into one of the first lifeboats to get away has never been properly answered. From the moment he stepped on to the *Carpathia*, Ismay was shunned by other survivors and by the crew of the *Carpathia*. It was widely assumed he had behaved like a cad and a rogue, he was soon nicknamed “Brute” Ismay. He forfeited his right to be considered a gentleman and was ruined in society, being forced to resign his position at White Star.

All that lay in the future as Dr McGhee stared at him with surprised eyes. “Will you not go into the saloon and get some soup or something to drink?” asked McGhee.

“No,” replied Ismay. “I don’t want anything at all.”

“Do come and get something,” persisted the doctor.

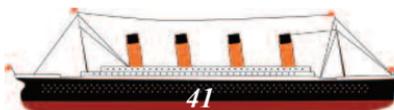
“Leave me alone,” snapped Ismay. “I’ll be much happier here.”

Eventually McGhee managed to bundle Ismay away and get him into his own cabin. Ismay collapsed on to the bed, staring blankly at the wall. McGhee left him there, there were plenty of other people who needed him.

Those survivors moved slowly and silently down the corridors to be seen by the doctors, then on to get bowls of soup, mugs of coffee and glasses of brandy. One odd thing that the stewards of the *Carpathia* noticed was that the majority of survivors refused to eat any food. They took plates of sandwiches or bowls of soup in their hands, but then just looked at the food as if utterly uninterested. Coffee and tea, whisky and brandy were gulped down gratefully, but the plates of food were simply left lying around.

The silent shuffling was broken now and then by outbursts. One woman began shrieking that she had lost her baby, but it turned out the youngster had been taken away by a doctor who was worried by its blue lips and cold limbs. The baby was quite well and being warmed up in the hot press down in the laundry room.

When one young woman learned she was on the *Carpathia* she insisted on being taken to the cabin of Mr Marshall, her uncle who she knew was on board. The elderly man was still asleep when she



arrived and it took some time to explain to him how his niece had suddenly come aboard in mid ocean.

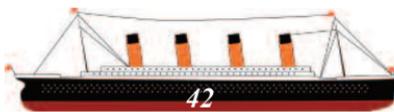
The most popular man on the *Carpathia* was the steward who had a sheaf of telegram forms in his hand. As the survivors walked slowly past him he asked each if they wanted to send a short telegram to a relative. There was to be only one telegram per person. He said that the telegram would be sent free of charge, the Marconi Company having offered to bear the cost itself. Most of those asked eagerly took the slip of paper, scribbled a few words with the proffered pencil and then moved on. When his stack of papers was exhausted the steward slipped away to give them to radio operator Cottam in the radio cabin, then he returned with a fresh stack of papers to hand out to the next batch of survivors.

By 7am the passengers of the *Carpathia* were on deck in numbers, no matter what the crew tried to do. Most were hustled off the boat deck, where survivors were coming aboard, and lined the rails of other decks in their hundreds. The faces peered down on the survivors as they came aboard. One survivor coming aboard recorded “They watched us as if the ship had been in dock and we had rowed up to join her in a somewhat unusual way.”

At just before 7am Captain Lord on the bridge of the *Californian* sighted a cargo ship to his south. As he got closer he saw the ship was slowly nosing its way into the icefield, heading to the west. It was the *Mount Temple*. At 7.30am Lord got to what he estimated was the position given by the *Titanic* as she sank. Like Captain Moore of the *Mount Temple* before him he saw no wreckage, no lifeboats and no bodies. Like the *Mount Temple*, *Californian* also began nosing through the ice field, heading east.

The process of picking up survivors took the *Carpathia* and her crew a long time, the furthest lifeboat having been five miles away as dawn broke. In all 712 people were picked up alive, though one of them died three hours after being rescued. There were also three dead bodies in a boat, and these too were lifted on board *Carpathia*.

The last lifeboat was picked up at 8.30am. It was No.12 and proved to hold Charles Lightoller, Second Officer and most senior survivor



of the Titanic. Unlike the junior officers who had been ordered off in command of the lifeboats, Lightoller had stayed on board the Titanic to the end. Some time later when asked at what time he had left the Titanic, he snapped back “I did not leave the Titanic. She left me.” So she had, diving away beneath the sea leaving Lightoller to swim to a nearby lifeboat.

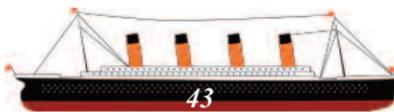
When he came aboard Lightoller was taken up to the bridge to see Rostron. As the senior survivor Lightoller had duties to carry out. A list of survivors had to be drawn up, Purser Brown helped with that task, the news of death broken to survivors on board and decisions made about the future.

Also on the last boat to reach Carpathia was Colonel Archibald Gracie, an American army officer and historian who had also swum off the sinking deck of Titanic. When he reached the restaurant he was handed a warm blanket and told to strip off his wet clothes. These were whisked away by a maid, who directed him toward a stack of rugs in a corner. There Gracie slumped down. Within minutes a hot coffee was pushed into his hands. Slowly the bitter cold left his body. Louis Ogden, who knew Gracie slightly, had recognised him as he came aboard. Ogden now hurried down to find Gracie and lend him a suit. It was some hours before Gracie’s own clothes had been dried out and brought back to him. Meanwhile, Gracie wandered around among the survivors looking for friends and acquaintances, and becoming dejected at how few he could find.

And now a religious service seemed in order. Rostron sent for Reverend Father Anderson, a clergyman on board who he thought could do the job. Anyone who wanted to attend was gathered in the main lounge where prayers were said and hymns sung.

Meanwhile the Carpathia had finally reached the field of floating wreckage. Until then they had been picking up lifeboats from clear water. The officer and lookouts began scanning the floating objects for bodies, or for the living. They saw nothing.

By this time it was fully daylight. Rostron sent a junior officer up to the crow’s nest to get a good view all around. The officer reported that there was a large ice field three miles to the west that ran as far



as he could see to north and south. To the east of the icefield were a number of large icebergs. He counted 25 large bergs, more than 150 feet tall as far as he could judge, and many more smaller ones.

Looking back the way they had come, Rostron saw six icebergs. Any one of them could have sunk his ship and he felt an involuntary shiver as he realised how close the Carpathia had come to sharing the fate of Titanic.

As the Carpathia loitered, one of the officers did some computations. He found that the ship had covered the 58 miles from her starting position to the site of the sinking in an astonishingly fast time. The speed attained by the ship once it had worked up to full speed must have been over 17 knots, given that her cruising speed was 14 knots and her top speed supposedly 16.5 knots that was very good going.

In fact the Carpathia had not achieved such a high speed at all, and had in fact been driving at around 16.5 knots after all. The discrepancy was a result of the incorrect position of the Titanic worked out by Fourth Officer Boxhall. Titanic had, in fact, been about 13 miles closer to Carpathia than anyone had thought. It was for this reason that Carpathia had arrived so quickly, not because she had been going so fast. It was fortuitous that the Titanic's actual location was directly between the Carpathia and the false, reported position. For that reason Carpathia came up to the lifeboats just before dawn. If the actual position had been off to one side, Carpathia might have missed the survivors entirely - with possibly fatal results.

One decision that Captain Rostron had to make was where to go. The Carpathia had been bound for Gibraltar, then on into the Mediterranean. His first thought was to continue on course, but to call at the Azores where he would put the survivors ashore to be picked up by a White Star Line ship. It was Purser Brown who put a stop to that plan. He reported that there was not enough food on board to feed everyone on that lengthy voyage.

Rostron then got out his chart and looked for the nearest port where he knew that liners could dock and where a White Star Liner could collect the survivors if he left them there. That turned out to be Halifax



Saving the Survivors

in Nova Scotia. However, Rostron knew from radio reports that there was much ice between his current position and Halifax. He thought that the survivors had probably seen more than enough icebergs to last them a lifetime and decided against that route. Instead he chose to return back the way he had come to New York. At first the Carpathia nosed through the ice field, but once clear Rostron ordered the engines to be powered up and the ship gathered speed.



Chapter 7

7am

At 7am the Parisian's radio operator Donald Sutherland woke up and went back on duty. He picked up a very faint message from Carpathia that he could not properly make out. He gathered that the Carpathia had some passengers from the Titanic on board and that an iceberg was involved. He dashed up the ladder to the bridge and reported to Captain Hains. Hains told him to get back to the radio and try to find out more. Meanwhile, Hains began plotting a route back toward where he thought Titanic might be.

Sutherland could not raise the Carpathia, but did get in touch with the Virginian. He learned the basics of what had happened and that Carpathia had all survivors on board. Hains decided not to put about, but continued on toward Halifax.

The Baltic was meanwhile still steaming at full speed toward the site of the disaster. Just after 8am she radioed to the Carpathia "Can I be of any assistance to you as regards taking some of the passengers from you? Will be in position about 4.30pm. Let me know if you alter your position." There was no reply, apparently the Carpathia did not receive the message. A few minutes later the Baltic tried again, and this time got through. Harold Cottam provided details of what had taken place and then passed on a recommendation from Captain Rostron that "Am proceeding to New York top speed. You had better proceed to Liverpool. Have about 800 passengers on board." She had come 134 miles since changing course, and now swung around once more.

At 8am the crew of Mount Temple saw yet another ship steaming into sight. This was the Birma, pounding over the southwestern horizon, her black smoke spreading like a smudge over the sky. The



gallant Russian, still unaware of what had happened was racing to the rescue. As she reached the position given her by the radio messages, Birma came to a halt. Captain Stulpin, like Captain Lord and Captain Moore before him, looked around in confusion at the total lack of wreckage. Seeing the Mount Temple and Californian to the east, Birma set off to weave through the ice field herself.

Next to come into sight of the ships milling around the scene of the disaster was the German ship SS Frankfurt. Like the Birma she came from the southwest at full speed, but unlike Birma her captain had a good idea of the situation. Seeing the ice field and the other ships going east, the captain of the Frankfurt steered east to try to get around the southern edge of the icefield.

At 8.30am the Mount Temple got in touch with Carpathia. Again Cottam passed on a message from Rostron to say that there was nothing more that could be done and that Mount Temple should return to her original course.

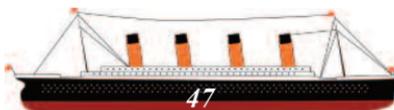
This was easier said than done. The steamer had got well into the ice field by this time in the quest for the Titanic, or at least for survivors and wreckage. She now had the delicate task of turning around and nosing through the ice again to get back to the western edge of the ice field.

Zippel on the Frankfurt heard the message and passed it on to Captain Hattorff. He ordered his crew to stand down and start stowing away the blankets, spare mattresses and other paraphernalia they had got out. He did not at first bear away back to his original course, but still steamed toward the scene of the disaster.

Still far away to the north, but coming south at speed, the Virginian picked up the message. She at once slackened speed and resumed her original course. The Baltic likewise turned aside and resumed her course.

It was about 8.35am when the Californian emerged from the icefield and was able to steam to join the Carpathia at the site where the Titanic had gone down. The sea was strewn with wreckage.

For some time the Carpathia had been nosing slowly around the wreck site. There was not much wreckage - lifebelts, chairs,



cupboards and other wooden objects. There were no bodies, which Rostron thought odd. At 8.50am he decided to call it a day. Captain Lord on the Californian agreed to stay in the area for some hours, nosing around the ice floes and icebergs in case something could be found. Rostron had a last look around the scene of the tragedy, then turned the Carpathia's bows toward New York and ordered the engines to get the ship underway.

As Carpathia moved away she passed close to the Birma. The Russian ran up flag signals, which being coded did not depend on a grasp of English to be understood. Carpathia replied that she had picked up survivors and was heading to America. Birma signalled to ask if there was anything she could do to help, if there were any survivors left to be collected. Carpathia replied "Stand by", but she was by this time steaming so fast to the west that she was out of range of flag signals before a proper reply could be put together.

Captain Stulpin watched Carpathia go, then turned toward the other ship, which turned out to be the Californian. It was Captain Lord who filled Captain Stulpin in on what had been happening. Assured that there was nothing he could do to help, Stulpin resumed his original course. Presumably the vast vats of vegetable soup that had been prepared by the Russian cook were served to the Birma's own passengers.

Captain Hattorff of the Frankfurt also contacted Lord of the Californian to make sure that there was nothing he could do to help. The Frankfurt too then headed off.

The Olympic, meanwhile, had failed to pick up any radio messages for some hours. At 9.15am she sent a radio message to the shore station at Sable Island "Have not communicated with Titanic since midnight". She continued on her course.

The Virginian was also still steaming toward the scene of the disaster. At 9.30am she got in touch with the Carpathia by radio. The message from Rostron was similar to that to Mount Temple "We are leaving here with all on board, about 800 passengers. Please return to your northern course." She did so.

Captain Lord and the Californian continued slowly cruising around



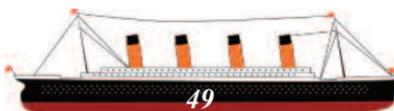
the scene of the disaster. They inspected every bit of wreckage big enough to support a human, searched all pieces of ice and scanned the waters with great care. There were no survivors, there were not even any bodies. Only deck chairs, broken pieces of wood, abandoned lifebelts and the damaged lifeboats left behind by Carpathia. Lord later said that he was surprised at how little wreckage there was floating about “It was more like an old fishing boat had sunk”, he said.

Lord completed one last circle around the wreckage, at about a mile distance, at 11.45am. He then decided that he had done enough. There had not been much hope of finding survivors when he began, now there was none at all. For the third time that day Lord began the difficult and hazardous task of pushing through the ice field. Having done so, he worked his ship up to 10 knots and resumed his original course.

On board the Carpathia the initial rush of getting the survivors on board, looked over by medical staff and down to steerage was over. The passengers and crew of Carpathia had got over their initial shock and most were now settling down to do what they could. Rostron ordered that the stores of the Carpathia be broken open to provide the survivors with whatever personal items could be found. Within a few hours every survivor had a toothbrush and a comb, while many women had acquired hairpins and handkerchiefs, and most men had been offered a collar and a tie.

Meanwhile, the survivors were sorting themselves out. Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon wrote cheques for £5 each for the crewmen who had been in his lifeboat to thank them for their efforts. Mrs Ruth Dodge and her son Washington had got away in Boat No.5 and were convinced her husband had died until she saw him on the Carpathia – he had escaped in Boat No.13. Most other women were less lucky, finding that missing husbands, sons and brothers were nowhere to be found. A great black labrador dog that had been swimming around in the wreckage was warming itself down in the kitchens.

There were two young children who were a total mystery. These two boys had been handed to Lightoller as he was getting collapsible



Boat A away at the last minute. Neither of the toddlers spoke any English at all. One passenger thought they had been travelling with a man called Hoffman, but could not be certain.

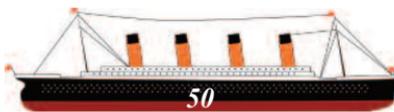
A large number of the survivors had come straight from their beds and had nothing with them except night clothes, a dressing gown and a few oddments. Most had not appreciated that the ship was sinking when they left their cabins, and so had not brought much with them. The problem was particularly acute among those third class passengers, mostly from Scandinavia, who did not speak English. The Carpathia's stewards went around knocking on the doors of cabins asking their own passengers if they could spare any items of clothing for the survivors. By the late afternoon of 15 April most survivors were properly clad, albeit in an odd assortment of trousers, skirts, jumpers, shirts, blazers and socks that did not match and often did not fit either.

Meanwhile, Sutherland on the Parisian had been listening to the radio traffic between the various ships and shore stations. He realised that due to the distances involved not all the messages from the Carpathia and other ships on the scene were reaching land. Sutherland therefore began repeating the signals from the ships in the hope that since the Parisian was closer to land, his signals would be better understood.

In fact his actions only made things worse. At about noon Sutherland repeated a message from Carpathia to say that she was picking up passengers and was "in attendance". This was misinterpreted on shore to mean that both Parisian and Carpathia were on the spot. Moreover the phrase "in attendance" was taken to mean that they were alongside the Titanic, which was therefore assumed to be still afloat. Word spread rapidly that Titanic was afloat, though damaged, and that no serious loss of life had occurred.

At 1pm the White Star Line issued the following formal statement: "The Allan Line, Montreal Office, confirms that Virginian, Parisian and Carpathia are in attendance, standing by the Titanic."

At 3pm the Laffan News Agency went further, though it is not known on what they based their statement. The bulletin read: "At 2pm



the Titanic, having transferred her passengers to the Parisian and Carpathia, was being towed to Halifax by the Virginian.”

At 3pm the Captain Rostron of the Carpathia and Captain Haddock of the Olympic had a conversation over the radio. It began with Rostron signalling “Fear absolutely no hope searching Titanic’s position. Left Leyland SS Californian searching around.” Rostron went on to give a brief summary of events to date as he was then able to piece them together from the surviving officers of the Titanic, and to state how many survivors he had on board. Captain Haddock thanked Rostron, but insisted that carrying the survivors to land was a responsibility of the White Star Line. In any case he knew that Carpathia had been heading for Europe and that a return to America would seriously inconvenience Rostron.

Haddock concluded “Where shall I meet you?”

There was a pause before Rostron replied. “Do you think it advisable Titanic’s passengers see Olympic? Personally I say not.” Rostron at least was aware of the emotional shock the survivors might suffer if they saw a ship identical to the Titanic suddenly steam into view.

Rostron then went to see Bruce Ismay, head of the White Star Line. Rostron told Ismay that the Olympic was on its way, and gave his opinion of what should be done. Ismay appeared to be suffering from shock and had been given opiate sedatives by the Carpathia’s doctor. As Rostron explained to him about the Olympic, Ismay reacted violently and insisted the Olympic had to stay away.

“Mr Ismay’s orders. Olympic not to be seen by Carpathia. No transfer to take place” was how Rostron signalled the conversation to Haddock. Haddock then asked if there were any point in him continuing toward the scene of the disaster and if there was any hope at all in looking for survivors among the floating wreckage. On being told again that there was no hope of any more survivors being found, Haddock finally slowed his ship down from maximum speed to its usual speed and turned back toward Europe.

The radio conversation had interrupted Cottam in his task of sending the short messages written by survivors to relatives. He then



returned to sending the personal messages - nearly all of which were very similar - a simple statement that the person had been rescued.

A short while after radio traffic to Olympic, the Carpathia came to a stop as the engines were cut off. Rostron had decided to bury at sea the bodies that had been brought aboard, and the one man who had died since being rescued. The bodies were, as custom dictated, sewen up in canvas with a heavy weight at their feet. Rostron read a short service on deck, surrounded by his officers and hundreds of passengers from both ships. All the men bared their heads and several women wept as the finality of death and the knowledge of their missing loved ones came home to them. The service lasted only a few minutes before the bodies were tipped overboard. Rostron then returned to the bridge and powered up the engines once again to take Carpathia to New York.

Haddock, Moore and the Olympic were able to render one service to Rostron, Cottam and the Carpathia. The Olympic took on the job of handling radio traffic. For the next few hours it was Olympic which answered queries directed to Carpathia. It was also Olympic which broadcast to the world the first official announcement from the White Star Line about the tragedy.

It was a little after 4pm that a crisis hit the radio transmitter on the Carpathia. The radio suddenly fell silent. The long stream of personal messages being transmitted ended abruptly. Those ships trying to reach the Carpathia by radio got no response. It was some time before anyone on board the Carpathia was aware that something had gone wrong. When a steward brought tea to radio operator Cottam he found the man slumped unconscious over his equipment, the transmitting lever still grasped in his hand. Cottam had been on duty continuously for 40 hours without a break, still less any sleep, in the most trying of circumstances. Now he had simply passed out.

A doctor was called, who diagnosed utter exhaustion and had Cottam carried to his bunk and tucked in. That left the vast pile of telegrams that needed sending, and Captain Rostron was unwilling to be out of touch with the outside world. He asked if anyone else on board could work a radio set. Nobody among his own crew could, but



Saving the Survivors

the Titanic's radio operator Harold Bride had been among the survivors. Bride had stayed on the ship until she went down and swam through the freezing waters to reach a lifeboat. He was down in steerage wrapped in a blanket while his soaking wet clothes were being dried. Although having suffered hypothermia and mild frostbite, Bride volunteered to take over from Cottam. The two men had met a few months earlier, and the camaraderie among the young men who chatted over the radio waves came into play. Bride hobbled to the radio cabin and began work. For the rest of the voyage he and Cottam took turns to work the radio, which remained open and busy continuously.

At 8.25pm on 15 April the Olympic sent "Titanic struck iceberg Monday 41.16 North 50.14 West. Carpathia picked up many passengers in boats. Will send further particulars later." The Olympic then began the long task of sending to Cape Race shore station the names of survivors on board Carpathia, a job that took until 2.30am.

At last the outside world knew that the mighty Titanic had gone down with terrible loss of life.



Chapter 8

Following Days

As the Carpathia steamed west, Rostron held meetings with Lightoller to discuss the disaster. He would have liked to have talked to Ismay, but the White Star chairman would not come out of his room and would not talk to anyone. The Carpathia's doctor judged that he was 'in a terrible nervous condition'. The doctor sent a survivor named John Thayer, who was acquainted with Ismay, to try to talk to him. Thayer recalled that:

"He was seated in his pyjamas on his bunk staring straight ahead and shaking all over. My entrance apparently did not dawn on him. Even when I spoke to him and tried to engage him in conversation he paid absolutely no attention and continued to look ahead with his fixed stare. I have never seen a man so completely wrecked. Nothing I could do or say brought any response."

Together, Lightoller and Rostron's purser drew up lists of survivors. Of the 2,223 people on board the Titanic when she hit the iceberg, only 706 had been saved. As they worked over the figures it became apparent that there had been clear differences between the different categories of people. Of the first-class passengers 60 per cent had been saved, of second class just 42 per cent and of third class only 24 per cent.

The highest survival rate, however, was for children in second class - 100% of them were rescued. The crew had fared particularly badly, with only 23 per cent surviving the disaster. Of the men on board only 20 per cent had got away, but 75 per cent of women and children had survived. The biggest loss rate was among the orchestra, all of whom had been lost. The restaurant staff did little better with a death rate of 96 per cent. Of the ship's officers, Captain Smith, Chief Officer Wilde,



First Officer Murdoch and Sixth Officer Moody had perished when they went down with their ship.

Lightoller, as senior surviving officer, had the melancholy duty of talking to the survivors. Many first class passengers asked for, and were granted, private interviews. Lightoller later recalled that the questions he was asked were always depressingly the same. After giving the names of friends or relatives not on board the *Carpathia*, the person would ask “Could not some other ship have picked them up?”, “Could they not possibly be in some boat overlooked by the *Carpathia*?” “Was it not possible that they might have climbed on to an iceberg?”

Each time Lightoller had to reply that there was no hope at all. Anyone not on board the *Carpathia* was dead. It was a heartbreaking business and it gradually wore Lightoller down. At this point a first class survivor, the 34 year old Countess of Rothes, came forward. She offered to take over from Lightoller in dealing with enquiries from the third class survivors. Lightoller willingly handed over the task and returned to dealing with company business.

In the hours and days that followed, Cottam of the *Carpathia* and *Bride of the Titanic* sent out a steady stream of radio signals to the shore stations. Most of these were lists of survivors and personal messages from those survivors to their families. Others were business messages signed by Joseph Bruce Ismay, but mostly written by Lightoller. Rostron ordered that absolute priority be given to these messages and that no others should be answered or even acknowledged. As he suspected, *Carpathia* was inundated by messages from the press wanting details and stories for their newspapers. They were all ignored. The newspapers were irritated by this and lambasted both the crew of the *Carpathia* and the Marconi company which operated the radio. Rostron was always convinced he had been behaving correctly.

What nobody realised at the time was that there were simply far too many messages trying to be sent out from the *Carpathia* for them all to be handled. Cottam and *Bride* decided that official messages should take priority, and sent the personal message when they could. The



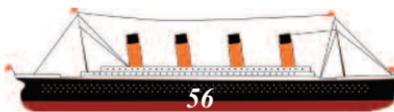
result was that many of the personal messages hastily scribbled by survivors as they came aboard *Carpathia* were never actually sent.

When the survivors reached New York they disembarked on a private quay to spare them the crush of the crowd and pestering of reporters. British school teacher Lawrence Beesley found himself somewhere to stay, then set about booking a passage to take him back to his family in Derby. He bought a newspaper and was surprised to see his name listed among the dead. Not only had his telegram not been sent, but his name had been garbled when the list of survivors was sent out with the result that the White Star Line had not put him down as a survivor in official communications. He ran around to the White Star Line offices to put the matter right, and was grateful when the clerk on duty offered to send a telegram to his family free of charge. The telegram arrived at 8.20am, by which time his parents had been mourning his death for 48 hours.

Less happily, Beesley's garbled name had been misread as that of an American man who had gone down with the *Titanic*. The White Star Line therefore announced that this man had survived and the name appeared in the newspapers. The man's son rushed to New York by train and was escorted by White Star Line officials to the private quay to meet his father as the survivors came off the *Carpathia*. The father, of course, never appeared and the young man collapsed.

As night fell on 15 April, the survivors were got ready for sleep by the *Carpathia*'s indefatigable stewards. There were far more women and children than men among the survivors. They were each given a spare mattress, often a simple paliass stuffed with straw, and a blanket. They were then herded into the saloons, lounges and library, which had been cleared of furniture to make room for the sleepers.

Several of the women complained that in such communal surroundings, when a steward might appear at any moment, it was impossible for them to undress properly. Many of the children were equally upset and distraught. The next morning the stewards went back to work. They went around the cabins in first and second class asking if any men would vacate their bunks to make way for women and children. Soon the communal areas were filling up with men as



the women and children were moved into cabins where they could find some privacy. Not everyone could be accommodated and the library remained a dormitory for women and children until the Carpathia docked.

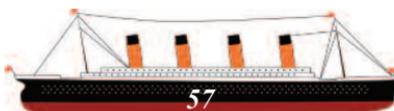
On 16 April the first class survivors gathered in Carpathia's first class saloon and held a meeting. They decided that it was up to them to collect a cash fund which could be spent on three priorities. First to give money to those third class passengers who had lost all their belongings in the sinking. Second to purchase a silver loving cup for Captain Rostron, with medals for his officers and crew. Third to give cash sums to the surviving crew members of the Titanic. A committee was elected from among those gentlemen willing to take on the task.

The first task of the committee was to go round talking to all first class survivors and ask them in confidence how much money they could donate immediately from what they had on them, and how much they were willing to pledge to give in the future once they got ashore and could contact their banks.

The committee next went to talk to the third class survivors. They made a list of everyone's name, marking against it how much cash the person had on them and if they knew somebody in New York with whom they could sleep on landing. One of the peculiar features that came out of this list was that the English tended to have brought the most money with them when they left the Titanic, and the Irish the least. On the other hand, the Irish survivors almost invariably knew somebody they could stay with while the English did not. The Scandinavians tended to have some money, and several of them had somewhere to go on landing.

On the Wednesday the committee of first class survivors added up how much cash they had been able to collect. They then allocated a sum to each survivor from third class depending on their perceived need. The result was that none of the survivors went hungry or homeless when they reached New York. Everyone had enough money to look after themselves until they could get things sorted out.

The committee decided that money pledged in the future would be used to reward the crews of the Titanic and Carpathia. In the event,



the committee did its work well. The money was collected with speed and by the time Carpathia returned to New York from her interrupted voyage to the Austro-Hungarian Empire the loving cup and medals had all been made. A ceremony was held as the presentations were made.

The awards to the crew of the Titanic took rather longer to sort out. The money was collected and administered in New York, while the crew were mostly British. Even so, by July every survivor had been given a reward and the collection fund was wound up.

Another task undertaken by the committee was to try to piece together a coherent account of what had happened, and what to do to make sure it did not happen again. Strictly speaking this task was the business of the British Board of Admiralty which would in due course hold an exhaustive inquiry. Nevertheless the passengers did their best and by the time the Carpathia docked they had produced a document that was printed in several newspapers. The version that appeared in the London Times ran as follows.

SIR:-

As one of few surviving Englishmen from the steamship Titanic, which sank in mid-Atlantic on Monday morning last, I am asking you to lay before your readers a few facts concerning the disaster; in the hope that something may be done in the near future to ensure the safety of that portion of the traveling public who use the Atlantic highway for business or pleasure. I wish to dissociate myself entirely from any report that would seek to fix the responsibility on any person or persons or body of people, and by simply calling attention to matters of fact the authenticity of which is, I think, beyond question and can be established in any Court of Inquiry, to allow your readers to draw their own conclusions as to the responsibility for the collision.

First, that it was known to those in charge of the Titanic that we were in the iceberg region; that the atmospheric and temperature conditions suggested the near presence of



icebergs; that a wireless message was received from a ship ahead of us warning us that they had been seen in the locality of which latitude and longitude were given.

Second, that at the time of the collision the Titanic was running at a high rate of speed.

Third, that the accommodation for saving passengers and crew was totally inadequate, being sufficient only for a total of about 950. This gave, with the highest possible complement of 3,400, a less than one in three chance of being saved in the case of accident.

Fourth, that the number landed in the Carpathia, approximately 700, is a high percentage of the possible 950, and bears excellent testimony to the courage, resource, and devotion to duty of the officers and crew of the vessel; many instances of their nobility and personal self-sacrifice are within our possession, and we know that they did all they could do with the means at their disposal.

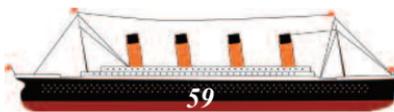
Fifth, that the practise of running mail and passenger vessels through fog and iceberg regions at a high speed is a common one; they are timed to run almost as an express train is run, and they cannot, therefore, slow down more than a few knots in time of possible danger.

I have neither knowledge nor experience to say what remedies I consider should be applied; but, perhaps, the following suggestions may serve as a help :-

First, that no vessel should be allowed to leave a British port without sufficient boat and other accommodation to allow each passenger and member of the crew a seat; and that at the time of booking this fact should be pointed out to a passenger; and the number of the seat in the particular boat allotted to him then.

Second, that as soon as is practicable after sailing each passenger should go through boat drill in company with the crew assigned to his boat.

Third, that each passenger boat engaged in the



Saving the Survivors

Transatlantic service should be instructed to slow down to a few knots when in the iceberg region, and should be fitted with an efficient searchlight.

Yours faithfully,
LAWRENCE BEESLEY.

On the Wednesday night the Carpathia experienced a thunderstorm. This caused a panic and outcry among those women and children still sleeping together in the library. One flash of lightning was followed so quickly by a crash of thunder that it seemed as if a distress rocket had been fired from the Carpathia. The idea caught hold that the Carpathia was herself in trouble. The women grabbed their meagre belongings and their children and began to rush toward the boat deck. It was only with some difficulty that the crew managed to stop them dashing out into the pouring rain that was then lashing the deck. It was some time before order could be restored.

One of the principal concerns of Lightoller, writing telegrams in the name of Ismay, was to get the crew of the Titanic home to England as quickly as possible. Several messages were sent to the White Star offices in New York asking them to arrange passage home at the first opportunity, even suggesting delaying the departure of ships to allow the crew to transfer directly from the Carpathia. It was not to be – Senator William Smith of Michigan had persuaded the US Senate to hold a formal inquiry into the loss of the Titanic. The officers, crew and passengers were going to be wanted in Washington to give evidence. It came as a blow to those passengers and crew who wanted nothing more than to rush home to their families in Britain.

Carpathia was escorted into New York Harbour by a vast flotilla of tugs and private craft. She berthed at the Cunard quay reserved for her, which had been cleared of anyone who could not prove they had business there. The survivors went ashore, most of them in good health and well able to look after themselves. Thanks to the committee of first class passengers and their fund nobody was short of money, while the White Star Line had been busy getting rooms booked for



those who wanted to stay in New York, and transport ready for those who wished to move on.

Back in Britain demands were being made for efforts to help the widows and orphans left by the disaster. On 18 April, the Lord Mayor of London opened a fund at the Mansion House and began organizing fundraising events. Newspapers throughout Britain carried messages asking any dependents of crew members who had been lost to write to the Lord Mayor before 1 July giving details of their names, addresses, the man lost and what his pay had been. The fund was eventually divided up accordingly.

On 19 April the Daily Sketch newspaper started what they called the Save Our Shillings fund, inviting every reader to send in one shilling and kicked it off with a donation of 1,000 shillings by the newspaper itself. 'If you can send no more, send a shilling,' the editorial read. 'If you can afford more, all the better.' In all the fund raised the considerable sum of 18,361 shillings – more than £918.

Individual groups did their bit for those to whom they had a link. An organization of amateur radio operators in Argentina gathered a few pounds that they handed to the British ambassador for the family of Jack Phillips, the radio operator who had lost his life. Seven British orchestras combined their finest talents to lay on a special concert on 24 May, the proceeds of which went to the families of the Titanic's band. Hundreds of other efforts raised large sums to help the bereaved. The townsfolk of Barmouth in North Wales clubbed together to buy a watch for Fourth Officer Harold Lowe, who had been born there, to replace the one he lost in the wreck.

The disaster, meanwhile, had a strong but temporary effect on the stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic. Shares in shipping companies slumped in price as the news of the sinking arrived, but picked up again after a few weeks.

One of the first mysteries to be sorted out was that of the two toddlers travelling with a man named Hoffman. Their photos were widely circulated and appeared in newspapers across Europe. They were found to be the missing children of a Mrs Navatril. She had fallen out with her husband, who had then left with the children,

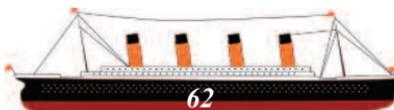


leaving no word of where he had taken them. Mrs Navatril informed the police who began a search and finally found that Mr Navatril had booked passage on the Titanic as Mr Hoffman. The children were returned to their mother.

Other odd stories surfaced. A Mr J.C. Middleton, an American railway manager, had a ticket for the Titanic but cancelled it three days before the ship left port. 'I dreamed that I saw a ship capsized in the ocean,' he said later. 'I saw a lot of passengers struggling in the water. I decided to cancel my passage.' Just as odd was the experience of a Mrs Gracie, the wife of Colonel Archibald Gracie who was on board the Titanic. She was asleep in her sister's house in New York on the night the Titanic went down. Suddenly something woke her up. 'What is the matter?' she called out into the darkness. A voice came from nowhere: 'On your knees and pray', it said. She did so, grabbing a prayer book that fell open at the hymn 'For Those in Peril on the Sea'. She stayed awake the rest of the night worrying about her husband. In fact he survived.

The survivors, as might be expected, enjoyed varied fortunes. Reginald Lee, the lookout who saw the iceberg, died of pneumonia on 6 August 1913 aged only 43. By contrast the on board storekeeper, Frank Prentice, lived until 1982. The last survivor of all was Milvina Dean, a third class passenger who had been only two months old when the ship went down. She lived until 31 May 2009.

Hundreds of others were less lucky.



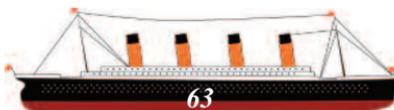
Chapter 9

The Search for Bodies

Even before the *Carpathia* arrived in New York, the officials of the White Star Line were starting the grim process of searching for the bodies. The *Carpathia* had recovered the only body they had seen, and the crew of the *Californian* had seen none at all, but past experience of shipwrecks indicated that some bodies would come to the surface in the days that followed. Social norms of the time dictated that a body should be given a good Christian burial if at all possible, so it was the duty of the White Star Line to recover the bodies for the bereaved families.

The White Star Line turned to the Commercial Cable Company. That company had a number of specialised ships responsible for laying and repairing submarine telegraph cables. The officers were renowned for their ability to navigate precisely to the exact spot on the featureless ocean where a cable lay far below, while the ships were sturdy and able to cope with even the worst weather. Conveniently the ship *Mackay-Bennett* was at that moment lying in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with nothing much to do. White Star hired her at a rate of \$550 per day and gave her crew the task of steaming to the location of the sunken liner and recovering such bodies as could be found floating on the surface.

Before the *Mackay-Bennett* set out, her captain, Frederick Larnder, summoned Canon Kenneth Hind of Halifax Cathedral and asked for a clergyman to volunteer to come on the trip. Hind at once volunteered himself. Next on board was John Snow of John Snow & Co Ltd, the main funeral undertakers in Halifax. He had been hired by the White Star Line to embalm the bodies so that they could be brought back to shore and handed over to the families for burial. The *Mackay-Bennett*



left Halifax just after noon on 17 April. Three days later she reached the position given by the sinking liner. Like several ships that had raced to the rescue, the Mackay-Bennett found no sign of wreckage or bodies. This was no great surprise for Captain Larnder had known that ocean currents would have moved the wreckage some miles from the site of the sinking. He then began the search and before long sighted a mass of floating wreckage. With a sinking heart he saw that the sea was literally covered with bodies, most kept afloat by the cork lifebelts that had failed to save them from the biting cold.

Undertaker Snow did a quick count and estimated that over 300 bodies were to be seen. Not only did he have only around 100 coffins with him, but he realised that he had nowhere near enough chemicals to embalm all the bodies. A radio message was sent back to Halifax demanding that more undertaking supplies be sent out as soon as possible. The sheer scale of the task ahead was apparent, so undertakers from across eastern Canada were summoned to Halifax. The first to arrive, together with their equipment and chemicals, were loaded on to another cable ship, the *Minia* and sent off to join the Mackay-Bennett. Next to leave port was the lighthouse supply ship *Montmagny* and then a sealing vessel *Algerine*.

Back at the wreck site, the crew of the Mackay-Bennett were hauling bodies from the water. The ship's boat was lowered into the body-strewn waters and each body manhandled in turn into the boat. When the boat was full it went back to the Mackay-Bennett for the bodies to be lifted on board in a canvas sling. As each body came on board it had a numbered tag tied to it.

The first body was brought on board at 6.45am on 21 April. It was that of a boy aged about 8. By dusk, when the boat was hauled back on board the ship, the crew had recovered 44 adult male bodies, 4 adult females and two children.

Snow was working as fast as he could, but even so he managed to embalm only 20 bodies before he gave up for the night. Clearly he was not going to be able to cope, so he went to see Captain Larnder. Having hundreds of unembalmed bodies on board was clearly going to pose a risk to the health of the crew. Not only that, but some of the



recovered bodies were broken and injured, presumably having been bashed about as the Titanic sank. Snow suggested burying at sea those corpses which there was no time to embalm. Larnder agreed and told Canon Hind to get ready for a long, sad procession of funeral services.

Then Snow raised another issue. How was he to decide which bodies to embalm for transport back to shore and which was he to leave unembalmed for burial at sea. Larnder, Hind and Snow discussed the matter at some length. Finally they decided that as it came on board every body should be searched for anything that could be used to identify it. Letters and documents would be best, though often ruined by the seawater, but distinctive jewellery, watches engraved with initials or embroidered clothing would also count. Those bodies were to be given priority for embalming. The reasoning was that if a body could be identified, the family should be given the opportunity to bury it on land in a grave which could be visited. When a body could not be identified, the three men believed, there was less need to get it ashore and a burial at sea would suffice. "I've always thought I would be buried at sea," remarked Larnder.

But soon it became obvious this system was not enough. Well over half the bodies had items on them that meant they would probably be identified, and Snow could not embalm that many. Again the three men discussed what to do. It was Snow with his knowledge of funerals and their aftermath who made the decisive point. He explained that while all funerals were sombre and distressing affairs, those of rich men tended to be the worst. Poor people were buried and their families went into mourning. But rich families instead bickered over the will and its meanings, fell out over who should get what object by way of inheritance and became locked into law suits. It did not always happen, he said, but it occurred often enough for him to dread the funeral of a rich man. He had even known instances when relatives living some distance away who had been unable to arrive in time to view the body, had accused their relatives of murder or of simply pretending the deceased had died when he was really alive and well somewhere else. It was decided, therefore, that the bodies that could be identified as those of first class passengers would



all be kept for burial on land so that everyone could be certain that the person was really dead. Those identified as being of third class passengers would be buried at sea if necessary.

At 5am on 22 April the boat was again lowered and the task of recovering bodies began again. There was now a vast amount of broken wreckage floating about. More and more pieces of smashed wood had come up from below, making the task of spotting a floating body more difficult. Only 27 bodies were brought on board. One of them was very obviously that of a rich and important man. His wallet contained £225 in English notes, \$2,440 in American notes, five gold sovereigns and assorted small change. His pockets revealed a solid gold pen, while he wore a gold ring with three diamonds, gold cufflinks studded with diamonds and a belt with a gold buckle. His shirt carried the initials JJA. It was not long before the body was identified as that of the enormously wealthy American businessman John Jacob Astor IV. He had last been seen helping his pregnant wife into a lifeboat, after which he was seen walking off toward the first class saloon.

That evening Canon Hind buried 15 bodies, all of them badly injured and beyond identification.

Next day the boat crew toiled from 6am to 6.30pm, recovering 128 bodies from the vast mass of floating wreckage. Dawn on 24 April revealed the sea entirely covered in dense fog and great waves rolling in from some distant storm. Captain Larnder decided the conditions were too dangerous to send his boat out. Instead the crew were set to work searching the pockets of the bodies recovered the day before, and cataloguing the contents in the hope that identifications could be made. A radio message arrived that the *Minia* was on its way with additional undertakers and supplies. Now confident that he would be able to cope with all the bodies, Snow called a halt to burials at sea. Henceforth all bodies would be embalmed and taken back to land.

On 26 April the weather was much improved so the dreadful task continued. A total of 87 bodies were hauled on board and tagged that day. The *Minia* arrived around midnight, transferring her undertakers and their equipment to the *Mackay-Bennett*. The next day only six



bodies were found, and the day after that just eight. Captain Larnder believed he had recovered all the bodies that were to be found in the wreckage field, so he set course for Halifax.

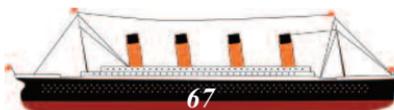
A total of 116 bodies had been consigned to the deep. That left 190 on board. Those were all eventually carried back to Halifax, being landed at Flagship Pier in the naval dockyard on the morning of 30 April.

The departure of the Mackay-Bennet from the scene of the wreck was not the end of the recovery of bodies. The Montmagny cruised the area for a few days, recovering four bodies. On 15 May the lookout on RMS Oceanic sighted a lifeboat wallowing in the waves. The ship stopped to pick up the boat. Not until the boat was alongside was it recognised as being collapsible boat A of the Titanic. The boat had drifted over 200 miles from the wreck site. The boat was known to have been abandoned when it flooded, and the occupants climbed into another lifeboat from which they were rescued by the Carpathia. What had not been clear was the living had left behind the bodies of three men who had already succumbed to the cold. The bodies were in a poor condition and could not be identified. The captain of the Oceanic held a religious service and buried the bodies at sea.

The Montmagny was then replaced by the sealer Algerine, which cruised back and forth in the area, and east along the line of the prevailing ocean current for several weeks. On 22 May the Algerine found a final body floating in the North Atlantic. Possessions in the pockets identified it as that of steward James McGrady. The Algerine transferred the body to a passing ship heading for Halifax while she continued her search.

In June the Algerine was still cruising the North Atlantic. She found an area of sea in which there were floating a number of lifejackets. The lifejackets were found with their ribbon fastenings rotted and broken. The crew concluded that the bodies that had been inside the lifejackets must have slipped free when the ribbons broke and had now sunk. The search for bodies was finally called off. A total of 333 had been found.

Meanwhile, the Mackay-Bennett had landed her sombre cargo of



bodies. The bodies were carried ashore then put in the Mayflower Curling Rink, which could be kept at sub-zero temperatures. Not all the bodies had been embalmed, nor had all identifications been made by the time the bodies were landed, so this work went on in the curling rink.

As soon as a body was firmly identified a short hearing was held in front of William Finn, the official Medical Examiner for the City of Halifax, in an adjacent office. Present at each hearing was Captain Lardner, Purser Frank Higginson, Chief Officer William Stewart and undertaker John Snow.

The routine followed in each case was identical. First to be called was Stewart. He confirmed that the body in question was the same body taken from the sea and given the numbered tag still on it. Then came Higginson who identified the bag of personal effects as being those removed from the pockets of the body. In each case he swore that the bag was tagged with the same number as the body and, referring to his notes, confirmed that the objects in the bag were those taken from the body and that none were missing. Next came Captain Lardner. He explained how the contents of the bag, the clothing or the appearance of the body had been used to make the identification. Some men had business cards in their pockets, others had their names embroidered on their clothing and so forth. Finally came Snow who confirmed that he had supervised the embalment of the body, described any injuries to the body and finally gave his opinion as to the cause of death - usually drowning. The evidence was taken down verbatim and typed up by a clerk. Most of these hearings were over in less than five minutes.

Finn then filled in a form confirming that the attached typewritten document was a true and accurate record of the proceedings. He then declared that the body was that of the person identified, and the document signed by himself, Stewart, Higginson, Lardner and Snow.

A telegram was then sent to the next of kin. This again followed a standard format. It announced that the body of their missing relative had been identified and was being stored in Halifax. The contents of the pockets were then listed. Finally the telegraph asked for



instructions as to what to do with the body and belongings.

Even before the bodies had been landed, bereaved relatives had begun arriving in Halifax. They came in the hope that the body of their loved one would be among those found. It was quickly decided that bodies that could not be identified would be shown to those who had lost a relative of similar age and appearance to the body in the hope it might be the missing person. Once the telegrams started going out the trickle of distraught relatives became a flood.

Nurse Nellie Remby from Halifax Hospital stepped in to take charge. She opened up a first aid station next to the curling rink for the use of relatives. Although staffed by nurses and medical orderlies, the station mostly provided tea, cake and sympathy along with comfortable chairs and a chaise on which distraught ladies could lie down. The care given by Nurse Remby was much appreciated by the relatives and she was highly commended for her work.

Inevitably the poorest relatives could not afford to travel to Halifax, still less to have their relatives bodies transported home for burial. The vast majority sent instructions that the body was to be buried locally and the personal effects posted on. A total of 150 bodies were buried in Halifax, most of them in the Fairview Lawn Cemetery, where a special section was set aside for the burials. Each grave has an identical stone headstone.

All that is, except for one. That is the grave of an unknown boy aged about two years old. His golden curls and cherubic face deeply affected all who saw his body. The crew of the Mackay-Bennett clubbed together, donating some of the funds given them by the Astor family, to pay for a special marker. This grave was marked by a large upright column inscribed "Erected to the memory of an Unknown Child whose remains were recovered after the disaster to the Titanic April 15th 1912". Before long the grave was festooned with flowers and toys. Even today cuddly toys are regularly left on the Tomb of the Unknown Child.

With the burial of the last body, the rescue mission can be said to have truly ended.





The Grave of the Unknown Child

