



## R. M. S. Titanic Wiltshire Connections

### Victims and Survivors

**Akerman, Albert** - Albert was born in Wiltshire in 1884 and died in the Titanic sinking alongside his brother Joseph Akerman. Albert was the younger of the two brothers at age 28. He had signed on to the ship as a steward and like his brother had previously served aboard the *Oceanic*. He also gave his home address as 25 Rochester Street, Northam, Southampton. As a third class steward he received monthly wages of £3 15s. (at 2012 rate this would be £347.44). If Albert's body was recovered it remained unidentified.

**Akerman, Joseph Frank.** - Joseph was born in Salisbury in 1876 and was employed as an assistant pantryman steward aboard the Titanic. He was resident at Rochester Street, Northam, Southampton when signing on as a crew member on 6th April 1912. He had previously been employed by the American Shipping Line and had also served aboard the *Oceanic* another liner owned by the White Star Line. Joseph was married to Emily Kate Francis in the Salisbury Area in 1898. He died in the sinking and was buried at Fairview Lawn Cemetery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on Monday 6th May 1912 his body having been retrieved by the recovery vessel Mackay-Bennett. His body was number 205 retrieved by this vessel. Joseph left 3 daughters and a son. According to the 1901 census Joseph was born in Warminster. His brother Albert Akerman also died in the disaster.

**Bright, Arthur John** - Arthur was born 2nd August 1869 in Sherston Magna, son of John Bright (1846-1876) who was from Lyndhurst, Hampshire and his wife Mathilda Jemima (nee Gomm) 1847-1922 who was from Sherston Magna. At the time of the Titanic sinking Arthur was aged 42 and was a widower resident at 105 Fir Grove Road, Southampton. Arthur had married Ethel Poulton on 6 April, 1901, they later divorced. He later married Emily Jane Harbut (formerly Shewry - a widow) on 16 February, 1908. After her death he married for a third time to Ada Maria Hooper on 15 January, 1910, she also predeceased him. Arthur had two sisters: Mary Ann and Rosina Matilda Jane and three half siblings (Fanny, Joseph and Emily) from Mathilda's second marriage to Thomas P. Cummings.

Arthur was not on duty when the accident occurred he had retired to bed and was asleep. He was awakened by Quartermaster Walter Wynn telling him "The ship's going down by the head." He went to the after end of the ship to relieve his colleague George Rowe. They then phoned the bridge and were ordered to bring up the detonators (distress signals). He assisted Boxhall and Rowe in firing the rockets. After that, he helped uncover and load passengers into the collapsibles, he himself taking command of collapsible D, according to his testimony, Bright remained in that boat until the *Carpathia* rescued them, although some people in the boat were transferred to lifeboat 14 during the night. He was one of the few who testified that the Titanic 'broke in two' before she sank.

**Coutts, Neville** - Neville was born in Salisbury in 1908 but was resident in London. He was travelling with his mother Winnie T. (Minnie as she preferred to be known) aged 36 and brother William aged 9. They were bound for New York to be re-united with their husband and father Mr. William Coutts at 143 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. All three survived

having been picked up by the Carpathia from lifeboat number 2.

**Davison, Mary E.** - Mary was born on 19th February 1878 in Malmesbury daughter of John and Elizabeth Finkenagel one of 7 children. Her father was born in Germany and was a British Subject and had relocated from England to Cleveland, Ohio where his daughter and son in law had made a visit. At age 3 Mary was living with her parents, lodging house keepers, in Westport St. Mary. She married Thomas Henry Davison in the June Quarter of 1902. She had given birth to 2 children during her marriage but sadly both had died very young. Mary had boarded the Titanic with her husband on a voyage which would have taken them on to Bedford, Indiana and then onto Cleveland, Ohio to start a new life. Mary survived the disaster and was rescued by the Carpathia after being evacuated in lifeboat 16. She arrived alone in New York on April 18th where she was cared for by the Junior League. She had written to her parents informing them that they had secured passage aboard the Titanic leaving Southampton on 10th April. The letter arrived at her parent's home two days after the disaster on the 14th April.

**Davison, Thomas Henry** - Thomas was born in Chippenham on the 27th February 1879 and was resident with his wife Mary at 32 Marshfield Road, Chippenham in the 1911 Census and was recorded as being a blacksmith. He had married Mary E. Finkenagel in the June Quarter of 1902. They had had 2 children both of whom had died very young. Their last known residence was in Liverpool, Lancashire. He was travelling with his wife as third class passengers on ticket number 386525 which had cost £16. 2s (£1491 67p 2012 equivalent). He and his wife had visited Ohio 4 years previous and had decided to emigrate to the United States. They delayed their departure so they could experience the adventure of a maiden voyage. Thomas died in the sinking and his body if recovered was never identified. His wife survived the disaster.

**Howard, Benjamin** - Benjamin was born in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire on 10th May 1848. He was baptised on 3rd December 1848 in Ashton-Under-Lyne, the son of Joseph and Ann Howard. Benjamin married Ellen Truelove Arman in the Highworth Registration District on 16th May 1872. He was resident at 85 Cheltenham Street, Swindon and had purchased second class ticket number 24065 for £26. Their intended destination was Idaho. Benjamin was a retired foreman at the GWR works in Swindon. His body if recovered was never identified.

**Howard, Ellen Truelove** - Ellen was born in Moreden, Rodbourne Cheney in 1851 nee Arman and married Benjamin Howard who also perished in the disaster. Her body if recovered was never identified.

**Goodwin Family** - The family from Melksham consisting of Fred aged 42, Augusta 43, Lilian 16, Charles 14, William 11, Jessie 10, Harold 9 and toddler Sidney 2 (Sidney in fact was just 17 months old having been born on 9th September 1910), boarded The Titanic and set sail for New York on 10th April 1912 from Southampton. For further information on the family and their fate please refer to the article on the Melksham Parish Page "The Titanic's Unknown Child"

**Kelland, Thomas** - Thomas was born in Wiltshire in 1894. He was listed in the crew list as living at Commercial Street, Bitterne, Hampshire. He was unmarried and was employed as a library steward. He died in the sinking and his body if recovered remained unidentified. As a library steward he received monthly wages of £3 15s. (at 2012 rate this would be £347.44). Previous to serving aboard the Titanic he had served aboard the Olympic.

**Kerley, William Thomas** - William was born in Shaftesbury, Dorset in 1884 the son of Charles & Emma Caroline Kerley. When signing on as an assistant saloon steward gave his residence as Woodminton Cottages, Bowerchalke (Salisbury) where his father was employed as a farm labourer. William was aged 28 when he joined the crew of the Titanic his salary was £3 15s per month (at 2012 rate this would be £347.44) as a second class steward. Tragically this was to be William's first and only ship. It was first reported that the body of William Kerley had not been recovered, however on or about the 6th June 1912 the S. S. Ottawa an oil tanker spotted a body floating in the ocean 543 miles from the Titanic's final position. There was enough information from articles on the body to identify it as that of William T. Kerley mainly from a wallet with the initials WTK embossed in it there was also some other documentation linking the body to the Titanic. William was given a funeral service aboard the Ottawa and returned to the ocean. There had been a memorial service held in the Bowerchalke Baptist Church and Tom's favourite hymn was sung. News of his death appeared in the parish newspaper on 24th April 1912.

**Lacey, Bert W.** - Bert was born in St. Denys, Southampton, son of George and Ellen Lacey of 277 High Street, Eastleigh, Hampshire where in the 1911 census he was listed as being a house decorator. When he signed-on to the Titanic, on 4 April 1912, he gave his address as 26 Southampton Road, Salisbury. The Titanic was his first ship. As a second class steward he received monthly wages of £3 15s. (at 2012 rate this would be £347.44). His body if recovered was never identified.

**Leather, Elizabeth May (nee Edwards)** - A telegram from Bradford-on-Avon states that news has been received there that Mrs. Leather, a stewardess on the Titanic, and a sister of Mrs. Hickley, wife of Mr. Hickley, of the Trowbridge Road, has been saved. A report was published in the Wiltshire Times on Saturday 20th April. Elizabeth was 41 years of age and a

native of Liverpool, Lancashire she was rescued from lifeboat 16.

**McNamee, Eileen** - Eileen was born on 16th December 1892 in Plymouth, Devon the daughter of Richard and Minnie O'Leary (nee Petheram). The family later moved to Salisbury where Eileen attended St. Thomas's school and Brown Street Baptist Sunday School. She later worked for Lipton's the Grocers in Silver Street, Salisbury where she met her future husband Neal McNamee whom she married on 17th January 1912. Part honeymoon and partly for Neal to take up new employment they booked as 3rd Class passengers on ticket number 376566 which cost £16 2s (£1,491.67 at 2012 rate) their destination being Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On hearing that Eileen was leaving for New York, the Superintendent of Salisbury Baptist Church who was also Mayor of Salisbury at the time, Mr W. Pritchard, gave Eileen a letter of kind appreciation and a gift of a testament. This gift was the last item that Eileen's mother saw her pack into her trunk. Eileen's body was number 53 recovered by the Mackay-Bennett and was buried at sea on 22nd April 1912.

**McNamee, Neal** - Neal was born on 29th August 1884 in Ruskey, County Donegal, Ireland. He was the son of William McNamee, a farm labourer, and Catherine McNamee (nee Gordon). His last known residence was at Portman Road, Boscombe, Dorset although he is recorded as being a provisions manager for Liptons at 41 Silver Street, Salisbury. He was travelling with his new wife Eileen who also died in the tragedy on third class ticket number 376566 which cost £16. 2s (£1,491.67 at 2012 rate) and boarded the ill-fated ship on 10th April at Southampton their final destination being Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. He had met Eileen O'Leary whilst they both worked at Liptons and were married in Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church in Pokesdown, Bournemouth, Dorset. After their marriage Neal worked for a while in Liptons at 216 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset after a short while he was offered a position with Lipton Ltd. In America, Sir Thomas Lipton himself writing a letter of introduction to his General Manager in New York. Neal was 27 years old when he died in the sinking of the Titanic his body if recovered was never identified.

A bench with a plaque and a tree were placed in their memory in Winston Churchill Gardens, Salisbury. The original bench is still there, but void of a plaque. The original tree was destroyed by vandals. On 28 July 1999 a new tree was planted and a new bench and plaque unveiled.

**Phillips, John George** (AKA Jack Phillips) - Jack Phillips was born in Farncombe, Surrey on 11th April 1887. He was the son of Alfred George Phillips of Trowbridge and Ann Phillips nee Sanders of Plymouth, Devon. Three spinster aunts lived at 31 Roundstone Street, Trowbridge at the time of the 1911 census - Ellen Nora, Mary Matilda and Sara Selina.

Jack was trained as a radio operator at the Marconi School in Liverpool, Lancashire and quickly grew to become an experienced and highly respected operator serving aboard The Lusitania, Mauretania, Campania, and the Oceanic. He was then offered the senior wireless operator position aboard R.M.S. Titanic in the employ of Marconi.

Jack Phillips was just a few days past his 25th birthday when he made history. The wireless operator stayed at his post sending out regular messages for help over his wireless which had a signal strength to send messages up to and beyond a five mile radius. On the suggestion of his Captain he switched to sending the newly adopted international emergency signal of S.O.S. having been using the established CQD signal this being the first recorded use of the signal. Jack stayed at his post, Harold Bride ensuring that a lifebelt was worn by him, and both were relieved from duty by Captain Smith. His fellow wireless operator Harold Bride and Second Officer Lightoller later reported that Jack had managed to leave the sinking ship clinging to the same upturned raft as them. However Jack died just before dawn from exhaustion and his body if recovered was never identified.

A message received by the aunts first thought to be from Jack from the Titanic read "Making slowly for Halifax, Practically unsinkable, don't worry." This is now believed to have been sent by an uncle who had been in contact with the ships' owners The White Star Line.

Many memorials survive in honour of John George Phillips including one in Godalming which the community rallied round to fund resulting in the Phillips Memorial, the largest memorial in the World. It consists of a cloister, an open field, a field of wild flowers, and a walk along the River Wey and a drinking fountain here bears the inscription 'The Postal Clerks Association Provided This Fountain and Contributed towards the Erection Of This Memorial'. There is also a large memorial stone on the family grave in Godalming Old Cemetery, Deanery Road, Farncombe, Surrey plus a fine brass plaque in the north aisle of St. Johns' Church in Farncombe. A memorial copper plaque including a portrait of Jack surrounded by a wreath featuring the initial J. G. P. was commissioned by the Godalming Post Office but is now missing. The Post Office in Madrid, Spain also displays a painting or photograph of Jack. A large painting now hanging in the Town Clerks' Office was presented to the Borough of Godalming by the towns' Grammar School in 1913. Godalming museum has a permanent display in his memory and Jack is also named on The Wireless Operators Memorial found in Battery Park, New York.

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**Wiltshire continues its ties with the ill-fated ship.  
Below are a few of the links found in recent times.**

**Saturday 30th September 2006, BBC News reported:-**

**Titanic life vest fetches £43,000 - One of the Titanic's few remaining lifejackets has been sold to a private collector for £43,000 (\$80,000).**

The auction at Devizes in Wiltshire also featured dozens of letters sent by some of the 1,500 people who died when the ship sank in the Atlantic in 1912.

Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge said most items sold for more than expected to collectors from around the world. One letter, in which passenger Edward Colley wrote of an earlier near-miss with a liner, made £18,000, he said. The Irish aristocrat who died on his 37th birthday, had poked fun at the service on board the ship in the letter. "He mentioned, for instance, that the ordinary grub in first class was quite good - but if you wanted anything better you had to pay for it," said Mr Aldridge, who conducted the sale in south-west England.

There was also a telegram from the Southampton-based ship's owner stating she was being towed to safety. The White Star Line's telegram was sent after an inquiry was received from a US senator whose daughter and son-in-law were on board the ship.

**Value from rarity**

Fellow auctioneer Alan Aldridge said: "Initially it was said everybody on board had been saved and the ship was being towed.

"When it was found out it was a major disaster, everyone from the White Star Line denied sending this telegram." The white lifejacket, discovered in the debris after the passenger liner went down after hitting an iceberg in the Atlantic, has been on display in a US museum.

Mr. Aldridge said the lot's value comes from its rarity.

There are only about six or seven lifejackets left in existence, he said.

"The company did not want souvenir hunters, so a lot of things, including clothing, were put in big piles and burned." One letter that never made the burning piles was written on official Titanic paper by a passenger called James Hocking. "Everyone tells me I won't regret taking this trip on the ship," he wrote.



**29th August 2007**

**Is This the Key That Sank the Titanic?**

**MISSING BINOCULARS RIDDLE SOLVED**

This ordinary looking key could have saved the Titanic from disaster.

It unlocks a cabinet holding the ship's crow's nest binoculars and belonged to an officer who was not on board when it left port.

Second officer David Blair was taken off at the last moment in a personnel shuffle and forgot to give the key to his replacement.

Look-out Fred Fleet, who survived the 1912 sinking in which 1,522 died, told an inquiry they would have seen the fatal iceberg sooner with binoculars. When asked how much sooner, he replied:

"Enough to get out of the way."

The key explains at last why the look-out had no binoculars.

Mr. Blair, from Forfar, left the key to his daughter, who gave it to a seaman's charity in the 1980's. Next month it is among

items expected to raise £70,000 at auction in Devizes, Wilts.

## **24th September 2007**

### **SOLD: KEY TO TITANIC**

A key that could have saved the Titanic has been sold for £90,000 at auction.

It was for a locker containing the crow's nest binoculars - but an officer going off duty forgot to pass it on. It meant look-outs had to use the naked eye and the liner sunk after hitting an iceberg on her maiden voyage in 1912 with the loss of 1,500 lives.

The key was bought at the auction in Devizes, Wilts., on behalf of Tesiro, a diamond house based in Antwerp, Belgium.

An auction spokesman said:

"There was a real buzz as the price went up."

## **Saturday 18th October 2008, BBC News Reported**

### **Titanic survivor sells mementoes**

Miss Dean was a nine week old baby when the ship sank in 1912

### **The last remaining survivor of the Titanic has sold her mementoes for more than £30,000 at a Wiltshire auction.**

Millvina Dean sold a suitcase full of clothes, which had been given to her by the people of New York after she was rescued as a baby.

The 96-year-old also sold rare prints of the ill-fated cruise liner and compensation letters sent to her mother by the Titanic Relief Fund.

Miss Dean needs to raise money to pay for her private nursing home fees. She was nine weeks old when the ship sank in 1912 while her family were emigrating to Kansas.

She was placed in a sack and carried to safety along with her mother and brother. But her father Bertram was one of more than 1,500 people who died.

Miss Dean moved into a private nursing home in Ashurst, Hampshire, two years ago after breaking her hip. She said: "I was hoping to be here for two weeks after breaking my hip, but I developed an infection and have been here for two years. "I am not able to live in my home anymore. I am selling it all now because I have to pay these nursing home fees."

At Henry Aldridge and Son in Devizes, the suitcase fetched £10,800, the prints £9,250 and the letters £11,100.

Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge said: "It is a great amount of money, I am sure she will be very happy when we tell her the news.

"The Titanic International Society had bid for the items with the intention of giving them back to Millvina. Unfortunately they were blown out of the water by other bidders."

One of the few known surviving lifejackets, not belonging to Miss Dean, sold for £47,000.

Other lots included a watch belonging to a crew member which sold for £92,000 and a Titanic key that fetched £80,000.

## **Friday 24th April 2009, The Wiltshire Times reported:-**

A mailbag from the Titanic belonging to last living survivor Millvina Dean sold for £2,000 in Devizes on Saturday – before the winning bidder handed it straight back to her.

London-based advertising agency director Trevor Beattie bid nearly £2,000 for the bag and then gave it back to 97-year-old  
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Miss Dean, who sold the bag and other items at Aldridge's sale of Titanic memorabilia to pay for her care at a residential home in Southampton.

The last survivor of the Titanic disaster, she was a babe in arms when she and her mother left the stricken liner in the early hours of April 15 1912.

It is believed she was lifted from the lifeboat to the SS Carpathia in a mailbag. Auctioneer Alan Aldridge was careful not to claim the item was that very bag, but the possibility that it was remains. Mr Beattie bid £1,500 for the bag, which, with buyer's premium and VAT brought it close to £2,000, and then arranged for it to go to Miss Dean, who was unable to be at the sale because of ill-health.

A pass key recovered from the body of first class steward Edmund Stone sold for £50,000.

#### **20th October 2010, The Press Association reported:-**

A woman's account of escaping the sinking Titanic in 1912 sold for £20,000 at auction.

Laura Francatelli from London said she heard an "awful rumbling" as the liner went down and "then came screams and cries" from 1,500 drowning passengers.

Her account was recorded in a signed affidavit for the official British inquiry into the disaster.

The historic document went under the hammer at Henry Aldridge and Son in Devizes, Wiltshire and was bought by an Eastern European collector.

Miss Francatelli, who was 31 at the time, was travelling with baronet Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon and his wife Lady Lucy Christiana, as his secretary.

The account describes how they boarded one of the last lifeboats containing just five passengers and seven crew, admitting they did not consider going back for survivors.

Sir Cosmo later paid the crew members £5 each - now worth about £300 - which some have described as blood money for saving their lives.

Miss Francatelli died in 1967. The document remained in her family until after her death and has since been owned by two private collectors.

An extremely rare lithographic pre-maiden voyage poster, which went for a world record £60,000 for a Titanic poster, was also sold.

It features Olympic in the foreground followed by Titanic in the background, ironically sailing into a sunset, but each underway at sea.

#### **Thursday 27th October 2011, the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald reported:-**

More rare artefacts connected with the sinking of SS Titanic will go on sale at Devizes auctioneers Henry Aldridge & Son on Saturday.

Following the sale in May of a 32ft plan of the ship used at the public inquiry into the disaster, which fetched a record-breaking £220,000, a companion plan, also used at the inquiry, is expected to reach £40,000 to £60,000.

This plan, created for the inquiry by the White Star Line, owners of the Titanic, portrays the mid-section of the ship and one notation says "approximate mean draft at time of accident".

Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge considers this significant. He said: "Interesting indeed that at a time when most reports were referring to the incident as a 'disaster' that this company's prepared plan would refer to an 'accident' in an apparent effort to minimise the perception of liability."

Also in the sale is an original deck plan for first class passengers, which belonged to one of the survivors, Ellen Bird, who was a maid to the wife of Isador Straus, owner of Macy's department store in New York, who perished in the disaster. Its guide price is £30,000 to £50,000.

Other fascinating items include a log page of wireless calls from Titanic and other ships from on board SS Birma. The messages include three messages from the liner Californian whose failure to go to the aid of Titanic is well documented. This lot is estimated at £20,000 to £25,000.

The auction begins at 1pm on Saturday at Aldridge's auction room at Bath Road Business Centre.

### **Last Titanic menu fetches £76,000**

The first-class menu was dated 14 April 1912, the last lunch on board the Titanic

A menu of the last meal served to first-class passengers on board the Titanic has sold for £76,000.

It was among hundreds of items from the ship auctioned in Wiltshire ahead of the 100th anniversary of its sinking in the Atlantic Ocean.

The menu was dated 14 April 1912, the day the liner hit an iceberg and sank, killing 1,522 people.

It featured several courses, such as eggs Argenteuil, consommé fermier and chicken a la Maryland.

Auctioneer Andrew Aldridge said: "It's a fascinating snapshot of life on board as a first-class passenger.

"What we have to consider is that the Titanic was regarded as the finest restaurant afloat and this does illustrate that point. There are over 40 different options for one lunch."

The menu was on the table of the first-class passenger Dr Washington Dodge, a prominent banker from San Francisco who was with his wife and son. The letter had been in Ruth Dodge's purse when she escaped on board a lifeboat. She and her son survived the tragedy.

Other items sold at the auction included a set of keys for the storeroom where the ship's lifeboat lanterns were kept.

The keys, which were used by crewman Samuel Hemming, sold for £59,000 to an American collector.

The keys were used to gain access to a storeroom where the lifeboat lanterns were kept on the Titanic.

"The keys themselves played a part in the story as they were actually used in those last desperate hours," said Mr. Aldridge.

"This is because Mr Hemming received a personal order from the captain as the ship was sinking and it became apparent all was lost to ensure all of the lifeboats were provided with lamps."

One letter auctioned off for £29,000 to a UK collector was written by the second in command of the Titanic, Chief Officer Henry Wilde.

Mr. Wilde was deputy to Captain EJ Smith and died in the disaster.

In the letter to his family, written on Titanic letter-headed stationery, he praises the Titanic, describing her as a "wonderful ship the latest thing in shipbuilding".

A second letter, which sold for £39,000, was written by James Arthur Paignton, the captain's steward.

The auction took place at Henry Aldridge and Sons auction house in Devizes on Saturday afternoon.