

Lost Voices of the Titanic : The Definitive Oral History

by Dave Bryceson

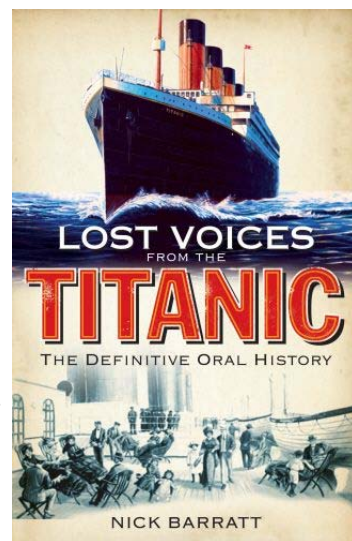
ET Reviews

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Reviewed by Dave Bryceson

I must confess that the name of the author of this new work, Dr Nick Barratt, was not one I had heard of before in Titanic circles. Having obtained a PhD in history he began working for the BBC as a specialist archive researcher and his skills at such work are all apparent in this book. Nick has searched a wide spectrum of archive sources to produce a finely tuned account of the Titanic tale which will be of particular value not only to those whose study into the disaster is at an early stage but also to those whose studies are advanced. The early chapters detail the conception and construction of the great ship and are enhanced with contemporary newspaper reports

It is by many accepted as a happy augury for the career of the great ship that it should be launched on the birthday of Lord Pirrie - Sunday Independent



and testimony from those who carried out the work

If you had seen or known the process of extra work that went into the ship, you'd say it was impossible to sink her - J Thompson, caulker

The next chapters, which deal with the departure of Titanic and the days spent at sea, then the collision, are where the book really comes into its own. The author has selected and reproduced 20 plus items from the 60+ strong Walter Lord-William MacQuitty Collection held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Letters from crew members and passengers alike are here in their entirety - only snatches from which appeared in A Night To Remember. Together they provide a fascinating insight into the actions people took during the emergency and the feelings that they each experienced.

He helped me get into a lifebelt. He told me he was going back down as he felt he would rather die in bed. I never saw him again - Anna Kincaid, 3rd class passenger

There is a fascinating section dealing with the aftermath of the disaster which includes a selection of letters from the Bruce Ismay Archive. They offer congratulations upon his survival and express their support for his actions in leaving the ship. It is notable that they are all written by relatives, friends and employees! Another letter comes from the Commercial Club of the town of Ismay, Montana where the residents had turned down press demands that the town's name be changed.

We hope in a way to exonerate you and keep up the good name of the town of Ismay.

I came across just one statement in the book that I would have to challenge. The author writes 'Many lifeboats nevertheless attempted to save as many people from the water as possible' Little bit more research needed on that subject Nick !

The book contains two sections of photographs that have all appeared in various other Titanic works. As the main feature of this title is the voices of the passengers and crew I feel a good opportunity to show photographs of them all to accompany their testimony has been sadly missed. This is particularly true in the case of Millvina Dean whom the author interviewed shortly before her death. Why no photograph?

That having been said, the main criteria I use to assess new titles joining the ever-expanding Titanic library are Did I enjoy reading it? and Did I learn from it? and this book scores well on both counts. I recommend it to the readership of ET.

Order Lost Voices now through Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk.

Dave Bryceson is the author of *[The Titanic Disaster: As Reported in the British National Press, April-July 1912](#)* and *[Elizabeth Nye - Titanic Survivor](#)* (recently reviewed on ET)

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