

## **Like a Floating Palace**

The first decade of the 20th century witnessed unprecedented competition for emigrants and other passengers for the lucrative North Atlantic run. There was no let up in the number of Europeans seeking a new life in North America whilst wealthy tourists and businessmen sought speed and luxury on their transatlantic travels.

Rival steamship companies found different solutions to the problem of attracting more passengers. For Cunard speed was the answer with turbine driven express liners like Lusitania and Mauretania. At a full speed of 27 knots the ocean shrunk to a mere four and a half days between Southampton and New York. The White Star Line decided that the ultimate in luxury should be the lure for its wealthy clients as well as size and elegance.

The new Olympic class super liner was conceived as an 882.5ft floating palace, providing everything from haute cuisine to Turkish baths, swimming pool and gymnasium. The size also meant that hundreds of steerage class passengers could be accommodated, thereby creating the largest emigrant ships afloat.

The Olympic was completed in 1911 with two sister ships planned. These names would express to the world their sheer enormity and grandeur: Titanic and Gigantic.