

Three Million Rivets

The building of the super liners Olympic, Titanic and Britannic required a similar super effort from Belfast shipbuilders Harland and Wolff. The 882.5ft long, 46,328-ton ships were the biggest ships ever built and consequently the shipyard needed construction facilities of comparable size.

Titanic's keel was laid on 31st March 1909 and from it the double bottom and frames of the ship grew over the next year. The steel plates that formed the ship's side were riveted into position by the hundreds of workers working in teams. Over three million rivets held the thousands of plates in position on the sides and decks of the Olympic and Titanic. A further year was needed to install much of the equipment into the hull and with little ceremony hull 401 was launched on 31st May 1911 and formally named Titanic.

Once alongside the fitting out basin, Titanic's boilers, engines, mechanical and electrical machines were installed.

Over one million man-hours of work were needed to install the flooring, light fittings, furniture and the multiplicity of domestic necessities such as bed linen, cutlery and tableware. The finishing touches to the ship took place in early 1912 with the placing of the masts and distinctive four funnels with her sixteen lifeboats coming on board in February.

