

# TITANIC VOYAGER

## THE ODYSSEY OF C.H. LIGHTOLLER

REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION OFFERING EXCITING NEW EVIDENCE ON THE FATE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST 'UNSINKABLE' LINER

Patrick Stenson

It is a hundred years since the world shook at news of the greatest maritime disaster in history; an event of such magnitude that it will remain forever as a reminder of man's folly in daring to dream that science and engineering hold power over nature.

*Titanic Voyager* is the life story of Charles Herbert Lightoller; 'Lights' to his friends, shipmates and colleagues, who is best known as the only senior officer to survive the sinking of *Titanic*, cheating death by a whisker after being sucked down by the sinking liner when all the lifeboats had gone, a good number of them loaded and lowered under his own energetic supervision.

However, his good fortune in living through the event thrust him headlong into a new ordeal, that of having to face as the most senior surviving crew-member the exhaustive inquiries and courtroom battles which followed. In this updated and revised edition of *Titanic Voyager* the author reveals startling new evidence relating to the sighting of the iceberg (refuting the long-held view that negligence on the part of the captain and crew contributed to the collision), evidence that demands re-evaluation of the official findings.

In this book the author provides a fascinating account of Lightoller's life and sea career which began as a 13-year-old apprentice in sail. He was shipwrecked four times (once on a genuine desert inland), survived a fire at sea, a near drowning, and frostbite and starvation while taking part in the Yukon Gold Rush.

During the First World War Lightoller commanded a destroyer which rammed and sank a German U-boat, yet the legacy of his part in the *Titanic* disaster haunted his post-war career; his association with the White Star Line ending in acrimony. Yet, the call of the sea and the adventure and dangers it offered found Lightoller once again engaged in a great maritime enterprise when, in 1940 at the age of 66, he took his motor yacht over to Dunkirk to rescue troops from the beaches. This was the day 'Lights' discovered that what the sea could take from him, she could also give back. The story of his life and sea career is among the most remarkable of modern times. Herbert Lightoller, in every sense of the word, was truly a *Titanic Voyager*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

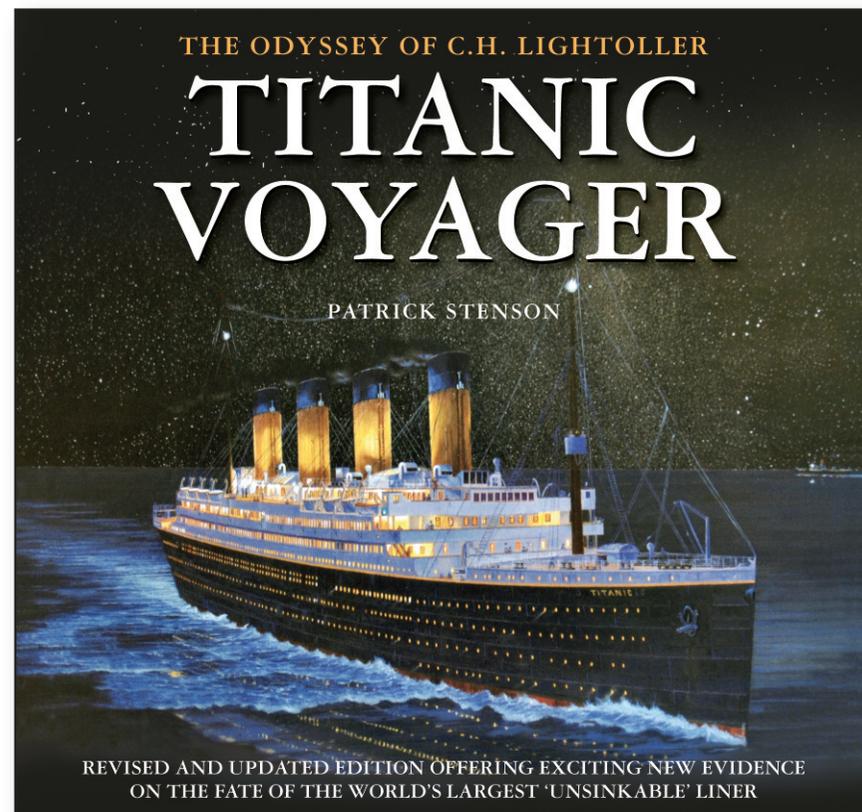
**Patrick Stenson**, before his retirement, was a journalist. He worked in local radio in Manchester and Liverpool, in BBC Television News covering programming in Scotland, and in BBC Current Affairs in London. He continues to write, working from his home in Cheshire.

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Above: A photograph from the Cork Examiner showing Lightoller (left) standing at the gangway doors of the Titanic during her call at Queenstown, Ireland.

Right: Lightoller (circled) appears at the Waldorf Astoria in New York to give evidence at the US inquiry.



Above: An illustration by Ken Marshall showing Lightoller loading Boat No.4 through the windows on A Deck as Boat No.6 rows away. (courtesy Madison Press)



Above: The moment at which the Titanic strikes the iceberg - a painting by Simon Fisher.



Left: Lightoller on the bridge of the Oceanic.

Below: The Carpathia picking up survivors. © S.W. FISHER



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Charles Herbert Lightoller as First Officer of the Titanic from *Time* in 1912. In a photograph, to contrast this portrait of a proud and confident seaman with the photograph opposite, also cover twenty years earlier, showing Lightoller as a young apprentice.

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But the damage to the business was irreparable and too much money had been lost - too much certainly for Herbert's father, whoseone day simply upped and left for New Zealand with a new wife, leaving Herbert and his sisters in the care of an uncle and aunt. For that his sons would never escape him.

Life itself of several family afflictions seemed to be dominated instead by religion, discipline and a perpetual shortage of pocket money. He had to get away - away from the stings and away from those repetitive reports from school which always said he could do much better if he applied himself. The boy knew he could do better but not at Charles Gommers' school and it was evident that the school had reached the same conclusion. And so he reached, at the mature age of fifteen, to go to sea.

On this visit to Liverpool to see the Cotton Exchange and its workings in preparation for the day when he would follow in family footsteps, he found himself immediately drawn to the docks. There were the days when Merseyside was at its prime. Whatever the time of year, there would seldom be any less than a hundred vessels tied up in Liverpool from the finest Irish Linnets loading coal for the Isle of Man to Canning Dock to the most glorious transatlantic steamship of the British Landing-stage, sailing on passengers for New York.

Then there were the thousands of sailors, tradesmen, and apprentices to be seen hard at work to end around the vessels along the quays overhauling their running gear, rigging and painting ships, taking on stores, or unloading cargo brought in from some distant port.

Seldom was he coming upon the prospect of a girl, but when it came to trading across the ocean, all still held the upper hand, mostly in the shape of the big square as there and the rounded barges. These were the ships that looked to the boy as a fair school. Liverpool's skyline more than ever was dominated by a 'forest of masts'. The day a trawler made invited him to come aboard it sailing ship for a look round and even dined on the deck, he mind was made up. The thought of sailing away across the ocean in one of those mightiest windjammers to lands distant and new thrilled the boy to the marrow.



Liverpool Docks in the 1880s.

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Example of a double-page spread.