



SWINDON'S TITANIC CONNECTION

Mr Benjamin & Mrs Ellen HOWARD

The list of passengers on board the White Star Liner RMS TITANIC clearly demonstrates that there were two people aboard who resided in Swindon.

On its maiden voyage in 1912, the great vessel suffered irreversible damage, when it struck an ice-berg in the Atlantic Ocean at 11:40 p.m. on 14 April 1912. The collision damaged five watertight compartments, allowing the sea to rush in. At 2:20 a.m. the following day, 15 April 1912, the technological marvel of the Edwardian age sank.

The disaster - acknowledged as one of the landmark events of the early 20th century - created immediate and immense public attention. At the time, many communication tools had still to be developed. Radio, television, long-distance telephone service, mobile and satellite phones, video-cameras, the Internet - all the telecommunications marvels that we take for granted today - simply did not exist. Instead, telegraphy provided breaking news about the disaster; newspapers and periodicals subsequently developed in-depth features; on-location photography provided a few visual records; and a limited range of official documentation was created to give identity to the 1,518 people who lost their lives.

SECOND CLASS PASSENGERS – TICKET NUMBER 24065 – FARE £26.00 PER PERSON

Mr. Benjamin Howard, age: 63, (retired)
Mrs. Ellen Truelove Howard, (née Arman) age 60,

Hometown: Swindon, Wiltshire, England,
Boarded: Southampton, England,
Destination: Idaho, USA.

Both Mr & Mrs Howard died in the tragedy. Their bodies, if recovered, were never identified.

EARLY LIFE

Benjamin Howard was born 10th May 1848 and was baptised on 3rd December 1848, in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire. His parents were Joseph & Ann Howard.

Ellen Truelove Arman was born 1850/1 in Swindon Wiltshire (birth registered during June quarter 1851).

On 16th May 1872, Benjamin Howard married Ellen Truelove Arman in Swindon, Wiltshire.

CENSUS INFORMATION

1851 137 Cotton Street Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire.

Joseph Howard age 44, born Glossop, Derbyshire, a Spinner,
Ann age 36, born Sandle, Yorkshire,
Sarah age 25, born Glossop,
Mary Ann age 15, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire,
Elizabeth age 9, born Ashton-Under-Lyne,
James age 6, born Ashton-Under-Lyne,
Benjamin age 2, born Ashton-Under-Lyne.

1851 Moredon, Rodborne Cheney, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Henry Wheeler age 34, born Chisledon, Wiltshire, a Tailor,
Mary Wheeler age 30, born Chisledon,
Richard Titcomb age 12, born Preshute, Wiltshire,
Ann Arman age 18, born Chisledon, a servant visiting the family (this *may* be Ellen's mother).

(Mary Titcomb married Henry Wheeler in 1848 in Swindon. As Mary Arman, she had previously married John Titcomb on 13/05/1838 in Mildenhall, Wiltshire, but John died in 1840 in Swindon).

1861 Mill Barn Saddleworth Yorkshire.

Samuel Kenworthy age 30, born Saddleworth, Yorkshire, a Farmer of 14 acres,
Mary Ann Kenworthy age 25, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire,
Benjamin Howard age 13, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, a Farmers Boy, residing with his sister and her husband.

1861 21 Bridge Street Swindon Wiltshire.

Henry Wheeler age 44, born Chisledon, Wiltshire, a Tailor,
Mary Wheeler age 40, born Chisledon,
Richard Titcomb age 22, born Preshute, Wiltshire, Stepson, a Tailor,
Robert Titcomb age 20, born Mildenhall, Wiltshire, Stepson, a Tailor,
Ellen T Arman age 10, born Rodbourne, Wiltshire, shown as a niece to the family.

1871 4 Bridge Street Swindon Wiltshire.

William Scholfield age 37, born Saddleworth, Yorkshire, a Bolt Maker-Railway Works,

Sarah Scholfield age 44, born Glossop,

Benjamin Howard age 22, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, working as a Bolt Maker in the Railway Works. (He is shown as a son-in-law, but there is no wife recorded; he is probably Sarah's brother).

1871 22 Bridge Street Swindon Wiltshire.

Henry Wheeler age 54, born Chiseldon, Wiltshire, a Tailor,

Mary Wheeler age 50, born Chisledon,

Richard Titcombe age 32, born Preshute, Wiltshire Stepson, a Tailor,

William Gregory age 15, born Bristol, Somerset, a Tailor,

Ellen Arman age 20, born Rodbourne, Wiltshire, shown as a niece to the family.

1881 84 Cheltenham Street, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Benjamin Howard age 32, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, working as a Bolt Maker in a Factory,

Ellen age 30, born Moredon, Wiltshire,

William H. age 7, born Swindon,

Frederick C. age 3, born Swindon,

Ethel L. age 1, born Swindon,

Selina Cooke age 16, born Wroughton, Wiltshire, housemaid/servant.

1891 85 Cheltenham Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, (number differs from 1881 census).

Benjamin Howard age 42, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, Assistant Foreman in Bolt Maker Factory,

Ellen age 40, born Moredon, Wiltshire,

William H. age 17, Apprentice Piano Tuner, born Swindon,

Frederick C. age 13, born Swindon,

Ethel L. age 11, born Swindon,

Herbert B. born Swindon,

Edward Albert Bonard, a boarder, age 28, a Piano Tuner from Hackney, London.

1901 85 Cheltenham Street, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Benjamin Howard age 52, born Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, working as a Foreman Bolt Maker Railway Works,

Ellen age 50, born Moredon, Wiltshire,

Frederick C. age 23, born Swindon, an Engine Fitter at Railway,

Ethel L. age 21, born Swindon, no employment,

Herbert B. age 14, born Swindon, an Office Boy at Railway Works.

1911 85 Cheltenham Street, Swindon, Wiltshire.

Benjamin Howard age 62, Retired Foreman, Bolt Shop, G W Railway, born Ashton-Under-Lyne,

Ellen age 60, born Moredon, Wiltshire.

CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN & ELLEN

William Henry Howard

William Henry Howard was born in 1873 in Swindon (birth registered in September quarter). He married Mary Jane Brew in 1895 in Barrow-In-Furness, Lancashire. In 1901, William and Mary were living at 70 Duke Street, Barrow-In-Furness. William was aged 27 and a Piano Tuner Repairman, Mary was aged 25, born Carmarthen, South Wales. Mary's sister, Lily Brew aged 12, born Swindon, was living with them. The 1911 census has William and Mary living at 2 Florence Street, Swindon, without any children. The 1912 North Wilts Directory also shows them living at this address.

Frederick Charles Howard

Frederick Charles Howard was born 1877/8; his birth was registered in March quarter 1878, in Swindon. He arrived in New York on the 22nd February 1911, having travelled on the Oceanic from Southampton, England. It was stated that he was aged 25. (The birth information and census returns would indicate he was 33 then). When Frederick arrived in New York, he had \$25 cash and stated that he was visiting his brother in New York.

Ethel Louise Howard

Ethel Louise Howard was born in 1879 (birth registered during December quarter) and married Opie Smith in 1901 in Swindon (marriage registered during September quarter). At the time of the 1911 census (and the North Wilts Directory of 1912), they were living in the same road as Ethel's parents; 69 Cheltenham Street. They had two children, Edith aged 8 and Howard aged 7.

Herbert Benjamin Howard

Herbert Benjamin Howard was born 16th February 1887 in England and died on 19th August 1963 in Los Angeles, USA.

REPORT FROM THE SWINDON ADVERTISER 16 APRIL 1912

THE TITANIC DISASTER

SWINDON PASSENGERS ON BOARD

RETIRED GWR FOREMAN AMONGST THE PASSENGERS

MR AND MRS BEN HOWARD TRAVELLED ON THE *TITANIC*

"THE AWFUL SUSPENSE"

A calamity which will affect many, if not most, of the towns in the kingdom, has not left Swindon untouched. We regret to learn that amongst the passengers on board the ill-fated vessel there were a Swindon ex-foreman and his wife, Mr and Mrs Benjamin Howard of 85 Cheltenham Street, Swindon.

Mr Howard was for many years foreman over the Bolt Shop of the Swindon G.W.R. Works and retired some years ago.

“He had been ailing for some time”, his daughter told our reporter this morning, “and as he had two sons in America it was thought that a sea voyage to America would benefit his health, and so he and mother went. Yes, it is quite true they travelled on the *Titanic*.

“They left home by the 2.15 train to Southampton on Tuesday, and set sail on the *Titanic* on the Wednesday. I had been thinking of going to Southampton to see them off, but I did not do so.

“We had a post-card from Cherbourg; and only on Friday night a letter from Queenstown – a very nice letter, too. But we little thought,” our informant added sadly, “that this was the last we should hear of them.

“This news coming so suddenly and unexpectedly, has been a terrible shock; but we hope for the best. But”, she added, “it is terribly hard having to wait in uncertainty – with this awful suspense.

“We were more hopeful last night when we heard all the passengers were saved, but now 800 out of 2000 are not many.”

Further conversation elicited the facts that Mr. Howard, who was widely known and respected in Swindon, was an Oldham man by birth, but had lived in Swindon a great many years. Sixty-Four years of age, Mr Howard supervised the Bolt Shop for many years, till his retirement some years ago. His family consisted of three sons and one daughter, two of whom - a son and daughter – are married and live in Swindon. Two single sons reside in America, and to them Mr. and Mrs. Howard were on their way at the time of the disaster.

Contributed by Kevin Bizley
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