

Remembering museum's Titanic hero 110 years on

Tomorrow, April 15, will mark the 110th anniversary of the most famous maritime disaster of all time, the sinking of the Titanic.

The loss of life from the sinking of the unsinkable ship at over 1,500 souls had repercussions across the country in hundreds of cities, towns and villages.

Torquay Museum was part of this national mourning, as Hester Forbes Julian, daughter of William Pengelly, lost her husband Henry.

Henry Forbes Julian was born in 1861 in Cork, Ireland, one of ten children. His parents moved to Bolton, Lancashire, when he was eight.

In school, he developed an interest for engineering, which grew into a devotion to metallurgical research, and ultimately, he became a recognised authority on cyanidation and the joint author of the most widely consulted book on the subject.

His advice on metallurgical matters was sought in Germany, South Africa, United States, Canada and Mexico.

Henry met Hester Pengelly, daughter of the founder of

Barry Chandler, collections and engagement manager at Torquay Museum

Torquay Museum, William Pengelly, while convalescing in Torquay in 1901.

They shared a love of science and travel and Henry abandoned a return trip to South Africa to be with Hester.

The couple married on October 30, 1902, at Upton Church, Torquay. The bride's sister, Lydia, held a reception after the marriage at Torquay Museum in Pengelly Hall.

Henry was no stranger to trans-Atlantic voyages having sailed on the Oceanic, the Adriatic and the Philadelphia.

Hester would often accompany him on these voyages.

His metallurgical work necessitated another trip to the United States and, having reluctantly agreed to undertake the voyage, he was booked on the

Olympic on April 3, 1912.

However, problems with the preparation of a book on slime filtration and cyaniding led to his transfer to the Titanic by the Butters Company.

Henry wrote three times to Hester from the Titanic; she would have been with him but decided not to travel as she was recovering from flu.

The last letter was written on April 11, 1912.

When the Titanic floundered, one survivor reported having seen Forbes Julian among a group of first class passengers helping women and children onto the boats.

"None of these brave men asked to be allowed to go in the boats," a friend who survived the disaster declared. "He was not the man to leave the ship as long as women and children remained."

Hester received letters of condolence from the King and Queen, as well as many friends and relatives, and a memorial to Henry Forbes Julian can be found in St Mary Magdalene Church, Torquay.

A small number of items from the ship and its crew are on



White Star Line First Class chinaware and cutlery
Picture: TORQUAY MUSEUM

Below are artefacts from the RMS Titanic and its sister ship, the Olympic. These include first class chinaware, items used by crew, and objects from the wreck site.

To find out more, please visit: www.titanicmuseum.org

temporary display in the Explorer's Gallery at the museum during April and May.

This is a taster for a special exhibition, which will be held at the museum this summer.

Titanic Museum director Tom Rudderham said: "No other ship in history has left such a mark on the world as the Titanic.

"At the time of its maiden voyage, it was the largest

man-made moving object in history, featured cutting-edge maritime technology and architecture, and carried some of the most famous and wealthy people of its time.

"To mark the 110th anniversary of it sinking, I'm delighted to be working with the team at Torquay Museum to bring an exhibition of Titanic artefacts to Torquay for the summer of 2022."

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