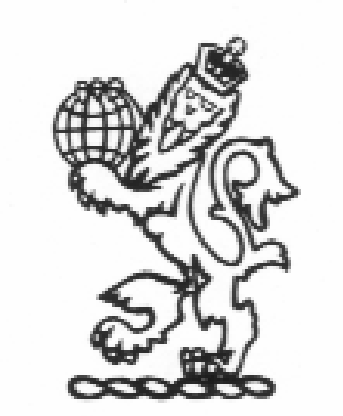
R.M.S. *Carpathia*

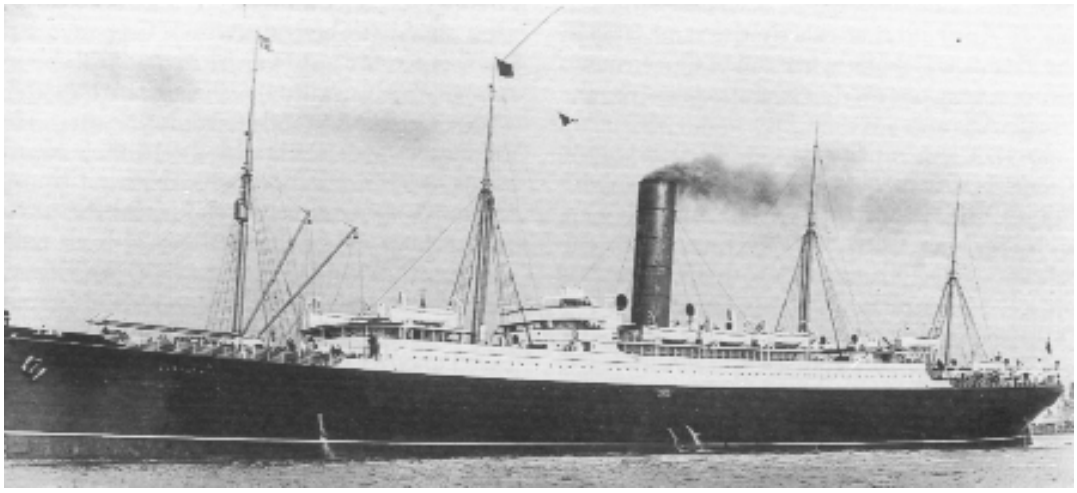


A Brief History

and Suggested Dive Plan

June 2004

R.M.S. *Carpathia*



Above: The Cunard Steamer RMS *Carpathia*. The ship was essentially a smaller version of the S.S. *Ivernia*, and was designed for the Cunard Line's emigrant service between New York and the Mediterranean.

The Twin Screw Cunard steamship *Carpathia* was laid down at the Wallsend-on-Tyne works of C & S Swan, Hunter in 1901. She was launched on 6th August 1902 and, after fitting out, registered 13,555 gross tons. She was 558 feet in length with a breadth of 64 feet 6 inches and a depth 40 feet. Her two quadruple-expansion engines, built by the Wallsend Slipway Company, gave her a maximum registered speed of sixteen knots, although her service speed was usually closer to fourteen.

On 5th May 1903 the *Carpathia* left Liverpool on her maiden voyage, travelling via Queenstown to New York. The *Carpathia* plied the Liverpool to New York or Boston route during that summer, running in tandem with the S.S. *Aurania*, and between November and May she carried immigrants (mainly Hungarian) from Trieste and Fiume to America. As well as providing essential immigrant revenue, these summer cruises to Europe were particularly enjoyed by wealthy Americans on holiday with additional stops being made at the ports of Gibraltar, Genoa and Naples, sometimes including Messina and Palermo.

In 1905 the *Carpathia* was refitted to provide accommodation for 100 first-class, 200 second-class and 2,250 third-class passengers, giving her a new GRT of 13,603 tons. By 1909 she was permanently assigned to the Mediterranean service, only returning to Liverpool at the end of each year for a refit.

This was to remain *Carpathia*'s routine for the next three largely uneventful years, but all of that was to change on the night of 14th/15th April 1912, when the ship was en route for the Mediterranean with 740 passengers, when, at 12.25 a.m. the ship's radio operator, Harold Cottam, picked up the *Titanic*'s SOS call. He immediately took the message to the officers, who then woke Captain Arthur Rostron who was sleeping in his cabin below. Calculating that Carpathia was only fifty-eight miles from the *Titanic*, Rostron immediately doubled the lookout, ordered full speed and headed north towards the *Titanic*'s reported distress position. After weaving her way through the ice fields, at times recording speeds of up to 17½ knots, *Carpathia* arrived at the scene at 4.00 a.m., and by 8.30 a.m. had picked up all of the 712 survivors.

Above: Two views from *Carpathia*'s aft shade deck above the passengers' smoke room, both taken after the *Titanic*'s lifeboats had been recovered. The first picture was taken from the port side looking forward towards the ship's main boat deck, while the second picture (looking aft) was taken from the starboard side but slightly further aft. Note that in the second picture, *Carpathia*'s flag is at half-mast.

With the last boat recovered, Rostron set a course for the Ambrose Channel and New York, leaving Captain Stanley Lord of the Leyland liner S.S. *Californian* (6,223 GRT) to continue the search for any last survivors. *Carpathia* finally arrived back at the Cunard Pier (54) on the evening of Thursday 18th April. It was only then that the full scope of the *Titanic* tragedy became apparent, and that 1,503 had gone down with the ship. The following day Rostron testified at the first day of Senator Smith's US Senate Inquiry investigation into the disaster at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, and C*arpathia* once again departed for departed the Mediterranean.

Left: Captain Arthur Rostron (1869 – 1940) poses with Molly Brown at New York after being presented with a loving cup by the survivors of the *Titanic*.

Rostron's actions would make him famous the world over and he would go on to be knighted and appointed Commodore of the Cunard Line, during which time he would command the company's flagships *Mauretania* and, after the War, *Berengaria* (ex *Imperator*).

For the next two years *Carpathia* returned to the relative obscurity of the Cunard Mediterranean service, although she would briefly return to the limelight in September 1914 when the Cunard Company were fined 111,500 Lire by the Italian Government because *Carpathia* left New York without obtaining the correct clearances from the Italian Consul. From a legal point of view the *Carpathia* had unquestionably broken the rules, but the British shipping lines, including the Cunard, White Star and the Anchor Line, which each operated regular services on the same route, believed that the Italian authorities had ulterior motives for being so excessively harsh. In spite of an appeal at diplomatic level, the fine still had to be paid.

Carpathia continued on her commercial service throughout the war, first operating from the Piraeus in Greece and then, in 1915, being transferred to the New York and Boston run from Liverpool. She was never converted into a troopship, although she had been designed to enable conversion to carry up to 3,000 officers and troops with 1,000 tons of stores, or 1,000 officers and men when transporting cavalry.

Inevitably the *Carpathia*'s luck was to run out. On 17th July 1918, while under the command of Captain William Prothero, the ship was travelling in convoy out of Liverpool and bound for Boston, when struck by two torpedoes from the German submarine *U55* (Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner), some 120 miles west of Fastnet. A third torpedo hit the ship as the lifeboats were being manned. Five of the crew were killed in the explosions. The *Carpathia* sank in the approximate position 49 ^{o} 25' N., 10 ^{o} 52' W. at 12.40 a.m. that day.

Left: Captain William Prothero (1872 – 1954) who was in command of the *Carpathia* on the day that she was torpedoed. He would later become famous as the commander of the Cunard liner *Scythia*.

The remainder of the crew and the 57 passengers on board were picked up by the escort H.M.S. *Snowdrop*, which fired several shots in the process to ward off the surfaced U-boat, and were safely brought back to Liverpool.

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Suggested Dive Plan

Carpathia's main claim to fame is, of course, the fact that she rescued the survivors from the RMS *Titanic*. Therefore, in the event that this story and footage is to be sold to the media then we need to obtain as much material relevant to the *Titanic* story as possible. That said, it should also be noted that *Carpathia* was in service for a little over fifteen years, and this expedition should also be treated as a golden opportunity to expand on the story of the Cunard liner. The foregoing summary was just the briefest of outlines, but a far more detailed summary can be provided in the event that there is any further interest from the media in a serious programme.

General Observations

Once divers are on the wreck, it would be helpful to make as many notes as possible regarding the overall condition. For instance, how deep, is she upright, condition of the hull and superstructure and the hull's overall orientation? Also, please note the position of any of the fallen masts (all four if possible) and, if it has survived, the location and condition of the funnel – it *should* be reasonably nearby.

The Swan Hunter deck plan with which we have already been provided (1/8" = one foot scale) will serve as an important reference to the *Carpathia*, but please note that the plan is dated 1903, so it is possible (actually quite likely) that a number of modifications would have been made in the intervening years before the ship sank. Most changes will probably be relatively minor, but it would be well to bear this in mind.

With regard to the telling of the *Titanic* episode, the most relevant areas of the wreck would be:

The Ship's Bridge: Located at the forward end of the Bridge Deck, between mast # 2 and the funnel. The divers are all old hands at this so I won't bother to give you a detailed list of what to look for her, but needless to say if there are any steering columns or bridge engine telegraphs to be seen then please get as many detailed images as possible. Remind the videographers to keep their movements smooth, to pause on any objects of particular interest and, if possible, get as many closer detail shots as possible. This is vital to make the job of an editor as easy as possible, and we've done it before, particulaly on *Britannic* so you should know exactly what is required.

Captain's Cabin: Located immediately below the ship's bridge, this is where Captain Rostron was sleeping when the ship's radio operator, Harold Cottam, rushed in to tell him that *Titanic* was sinking.

The Marconi Cabin: The Marconi cabin does not seem to appear on the plans that have been supplied, because *Carpathia* entered service long before wireless was coming in to its own. In actual fact, wireless was still a relatively new in 1912, and very few ships were suitably fitted with the necessary equipment. All that would change after the *Titanic*, when wireless installations and a 24-hour watch would become mandatory.

In any event, all the books that I have read seem to suggest that *Carpathia*'s Marconi room was located directly above the aft smoke room, which I have marked (in yellow) on the supplied deck plans. *NB:* Parks Stephenson in America will be fascinated to know how it is laid out, etc. so as much detail in this area will be useful – he was the

person who completed this CGI recreation of *Britannic*'s Mk V Marconi installation, based on the 2003 video that you supplied.

Ship's Library: If penetration divers can get into the superstructure then outside the library (directly beneath the captain's quarters) they may find evidence of the Loving Cup, which was presented to Captain Rostron by Molly Brown after he rescued the survivors of the *Titanic*. If you take a look at the earlier photograph then you'll know exactly what you're looking for. Apparently it may have stayed in the *Carpathia* after he left the ship. There may also be a wall-mounted plaque nearby, but the information on this is a little vague.

Dining Saloons: We may find these rooms surprisingly intact as in the emigrant-class vessels of this time all of the tables and chairs were firmly attached to the floor. In theory this therefore means that the fittings could still be in quite good order, rather than piled up in a heap, as on *Titanic* and *Britannic*. Also, if *Carpathia* sank on an even keel, as seems to be the case from Richie Stevenson's description, then it's quite likely that we'll will find lots of china plates, glass and cutlery, etc. in surprisingly good condition, which will provide some particularly interesting footage.

Cargo Holds: The covers to the cargo holds should all be open by now (after all, it's been 86 years) and the aft section of the ship was completely given over to cargo anyway, so if we can get in the holds then it will be very interesting to see what you find. I'm confident that we won't find anything elicite or any armaments (the ship was going in the wrong direction) but it will be interesting to see what turns up. You'l; can see from the deck plans, the aft part of the ship's hull was reserved almost exclusively for cargo, so these interiors should be relatively open.

Engine Room: The best access to the engine room will probably be via the skylight on the boat deck (just aft of the funnel) but the covers look to be quite substantial so my guess is that you will not have any luck in this direction. Bearing in mind the anticipated bottom times and the lack of familiarity with the wreck, you may chose not to penetrate too deep into this area even if it is accessible.

Torpedo Damage: According to Captain William Prothero's statement, the first two torpedoes hit on the port side; the first in the approximate location of the cross bunker and Hold No. 4, and the second at the forward end of the engine room. The engine room is where the five casualties all died, so the divers need to be conscious of this and should show a little extra respect in this particular area. The evidence regarding the third torpedo is a little ambiguous as it's written, but it seems to imply that it was also on the port side, in the approximate location of No. 5 Hatch. I have marked all three impact points on the ship's profile on the deck plans, but remember that this is a starboard profile and the damage that we are looking for is ON THE PORT SIDE.

Either way, when filming these areas please pause and examine the full nature of the damage in the closest possible detail. Please keep it steady, don't be afraid to go in close and look for the orientation of the buckled plates (twisted in or out, etc.) and the extent to which any riveted seams may have opened up. If a seam has opened up and it is possible to measure the length or height of the damage then that would also be useful. If you find that you are able to retrieve a few iron rivets (five or six) for scientific analysis then this should be considered on a following dive. A bit of hull steel would be nice too, but realistically unlikely and, to be honest, the brittle steel theory is no longer really seen as a critical element in the loss of *Titanic* or associated vessels. The failure of any riveted seams, however, is probably an important factor in the loss of both ships. The Marine Forensics Panel will find it useful and curiously enough Jennifer McCarty is now based in Birmingham (she's currently analysing a couple of rivets from the S.S. *Arabic* for me) so they won't have to travel far.

Standard Visuals: Inevitably an editor would appreciate as many standard cutaways as possible, such as the propellers, the foc'sle (machinery and anchor chains), the anchors, boat deck, counter stern (see if you can pick out ship's name on bow, and name and port of registry (Liverpool) on the stern. So far as the general footage is concerned, make sure that divers don't get too much footage with divers in it and forget about the wreck.

Photographic Stills: While the team will be more concerned with the more immediate video footage, please bear in mind that stills are just as vital for books, magazines and documentary publicity purposes, so the information brought back by Leigh Bishop and Antonello Paone will be equally vital. Having seen their images from *Britannic* in 2003, I don't think that they need any advice further advise, but the important thing is to get as many stills as possible. This could be the last time that *Carpathia* is seen in a completely intact condition, so it will be important to make as detailed a record (visual and written) of the site as possible.

Sonar: Based on the results of the 2003 Britannic Expedition, once again I would say that Bill Smith is autonomous and he and his team should conduct their operations at their discretion. If there is a chance to locate the exact position of the funnel in relation to the wreck, and also any evidence of an associated debris field (such as it is) then that would be very useful.

R.M.S. *Carpathia* – Statistics

Builder:	C & S Swan & Hunter (Wallsend-on-Tyne)
Owner:	Cunard Steamship Company, 8 Water Street, Liverpool
Yard Number:	274
Length (o/a):	558 ft
Length (b/p):	540 ft
Beam:	64 ft 6 in.
Gross Tons:	13,555 (Apr 1903), 13,564 (Nov 1903) & 13,603 (Sept 1905)
Net Tons:	8,764 (Apr 1903), 8,624 (Nov 1903) & 8,660 (Sept 1905)
Screws:	2
Machinery:	2 Quadruple Expansion Marine Reciprocating Engines (Wallsend Slipway Co.)
Boilers:	7 (21 Furnaces, 210 PSI)
HP:	1,340 (NHP), 8,250 (SHP)
Speed:	16 Knots
Passengers:	100 (1^{st}), 200 (2^{nd}), 2,250 (3^{rd})