

Derby Tourism

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History on a plate, as Derby prepares for a Titanic exhibition

Derby is set to host a major Titanic exhibition, during the 100th anniversary year of the fitting, and launch, of arguably the world's most famous liner.

The White Star Line spent a great deal of time, and money, in making sure The Titanic was fitted-out to the highest possible specification.

Equipped with the very best of British engineering, craftsmanship and design, no expense was spared – especially in the First Class area. When it came to the fine china chosen for the First Class à la carte Restaurant, for example, representatives of The White Star Line approached Royal Crown Derby, and arranged to look through their pattern books.

Still in the archives of a company which has manufactured fine bone china in Derby since 1750, the 1911 pattern book has a design with the following hand-written note in red ink across it "Withdrawn, February 1st, 1911". The design had been selected for the Titanic and was no longer to be manufactured for general sale.

Classic in style, and featuring a green wreath, it also incorporated the older style OSNC (Ocean Steam Navigation Company) logo, as opposed to the more familiar White Star flag. The exclusive order itself included 600 dinner plates, 150 soup bowls, 150 breakfast plates, 100 salad plates, 150 breakfast cups and saucers, 100 teacups and saucers.

Almost one hundred years to the very day that order was placed, Royal Crown Derby will stage an exhibition at its Osmaston Road headquarters and Visitor Centre – to commemorate the company's historic association, not only with an "age of decadence", but also the world famous Titanic.

The Royal Crown Derby Titanic Exhibition will open in Derby on Saturday, February 26th 2011, and will then run through until July 2nd. It will feature memorabilia from the doomed vessel, as well as from its sister ship, The Olympic – along with costumes worn by Kate Winslett and Leonardo DiCaprio in the 1997 movie. Its centre-piece, however, will be a recreation of the First Class à la carte Restaurant, with a table 'dressed' as it would have been on its 2012 voyage.

Admission prices to the exhibition will be £5 per adult, £3 children and £15 for a family ticket. The exhibition will be open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm, and 10am to 4pm on Sundays.

Apart from one plate, currently in the safe hands of Southampton Museum, none of the original ware survived the disaster. But Royal Crown Derby has put the range back into full production for the very first time since 1911.

For further details about the exhibition and special commemorative ware, visit www.royalcrownderby.co.uk

For further details about accommodation in the city, visit www.visitderby.co.uk.

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