

# TITANIC QUARTER BELFAST

## THE LASTING LEGACY

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT  
FOR BELFAST



ISSUE  
TWO

# CONTENTS

## 4 NEWS

Who's moving in and what's going on – the latest events from Belfast's newest quarter

## 8 TITANIC FILM INDUSTRY

*Your Highness, City of Ember, Game of Thrones* – Titanic Studios' success in moving pictures

## 12 TECHNICAL CASE STUDY

Technical facts – how the world's largest Titanic visitor attraction was built

## 14 TITANIC BELFAST

That building – and what's in it for you

## 18 CORPORATE HQ

Global financial giant settles in Titanic Quarter

## 22 PROFILE: ERIC KUHNE

The international architect sees his vision realised

## 25 SKILLS: WORK READY

How Belfast Metropolitan College responds to employers' needs in equipping students for work

## 28 PUBLIC ART

*Titanica* and *Kit* grace the new quarter

## 32 LIVING IN TQ

Life in Belfast's coolest new neighbourhood

## 35 PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Who do you think you are? Find out at the Public Record Office Northern Ireland's new facility

## 40 SCIENCE PARK

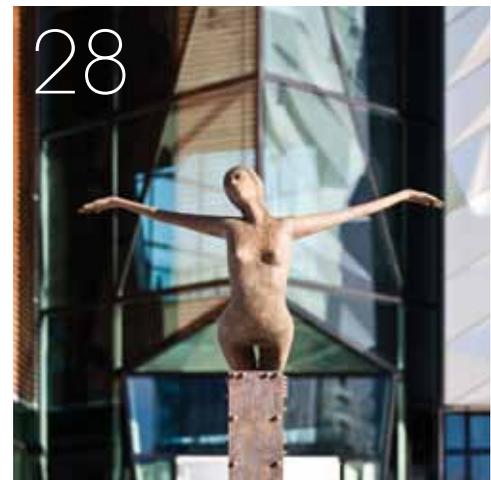
Developing Northern Ireland's Palo Alto

## 44 DOCK CHURCH

Cafe or boat – faith in Titanic Quarter

## 46 TITANORAKS

Getting to the heart of the legendary story with local experts



## TITANIC QUARTER BELFAST

**Executive editor:** Siobhán Crozier

**Freelance editor:** Sarah Herbert

**Art director:** Andy Ritchie

for bn1 creative

**Head of design:** Rachael Schofield

**Production assistants:**

Emily Carrigan Doyle, Joe Davies

**Divisional director of business**

**development:** Paul Gussar

**Office manager:** Sue Mapara

**Subscriptions manager:** Simon Maxwell  
**Managing director:** Toby Fox

**Images:** Harcourt Developments, Roger Kohn, Cliff Hubby, Christopher Heaney, Rita Duffy, Chris Hill, Bobby Given, Nomadic Charitable Trust, RMI LLP, HBO, Northern Ireland Science Park, Heather Coulter, Tony Stallard, Titanic Walking Tours, Sail Training International, Go To Belfast, Chris Bennett, James Newton, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, The U.S. Consulate General – Belfast, Press Eye, Harrison Photography, Donal McCann Photography, Northern Ireland Screen, Ivan Ewart, Dennis Gilbert, Ally Hill

**Printed by:**  
Wyndeham Grange

**Published by:**  
**3Fox International**  
375 Kennington Lane  
London SE11 5QY  
020 7978 6840  
3foxinternational.com

© 2013 3Fox International Limited.  
All material is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of 3Fox International Limited is strictly forbidden. The greatest care has been taken to ensure accuracy of information in this magazine at the time of going to press, but we accept no responsibility for omissions or errors. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of 3Fox International Limited or Titanic Quarter Limited.

For John Paul Doherty:



Titanic Quarter Ltd  
Titanic House  
Queen's Road  
Belfast BT3 9DT  
+44 (0) 28 9076 6300  
info@titanicquarter.com

## Titanic launches again

The £100 million Titanic Belfast building opened its doors in March 2012, becoming the largest and most expensive man-made tourist attraction in Northern Ireland.

The launch was celebrated with a spectacular audio-visual light show, giving the impression that the Titanic was rising up from the very place it was built.

The building was part-funded by the public purse (£60 million) and private developers (Titanic Quarter / Harcourt Developments: £40 million).

## New life for Titanic House

The transformation of the former Harland and Wolff headquarters on Queen's Road into a major business hub has gathered pace with a new lease to leading practice Todd Architects and Planners.

The three-storey building was constructed between 1900 and 1919, and its recent renovation has retained many of the original features.

The move is part of a new lease of life for the building where plans for RMS Titanic were drawn up over a century ago.



## MTV concert in TQ

An open-air concert was staged by MTV at Titanic Quarter in April 2012, six months after the city was picked to host the hugely successful European Music Awards (EMAs).

The Titanic Sounds concert featured musical performances from Katy B, Pixie Lott, Rizzle Kicks, Sean Paul and Olly Murs, against the backdrop of the new Titanic Belfast tourist attraction, the cultural centerpiece to the regenerated Harland and Wolff shipyard, where the great liners were constructed.

The outdoor event attracted 16,000 people, who packed into the Titanic and Olympic slipways for the free concert.

Titanic Sounds was staged in collaboration with Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.



## A PLACE FOR PEACEMAKERS

Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid a visit to Titanic Quarter, where she met with Nobel Peace Prize winners David Trimble and John Hume. Clinton toured the visitor attraction before addressing a lunch organised by the Worldwide Ireland Funds where she was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award to honour her commitment to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

## RiRi rolls into town

From the glitz and glamour of hosting one of Rihanna's music videos to running energetic sports schemes for local children, the T13 skatepark in the heart of the Titanic Quarter has gone from strength to strength since opening in November 2010.

It shot to fame after being chosen as the location for the international superstar's 2011 *We Found Love* video, and those behind the innovative space have consolidated this success ever since.

A testament to the drive, ingenuity and diversity of Belfast's emerging urban sports industry and performing arts scene, the T13 complex is a self-funded social enterprise.

It incorporates an urban sports facility with four art galleries and a cafe and restaurant, as well as several creative spaces used for outreach workshop programmes in sport, art, music and drama.

T13 hosts a range of international BMX and skate competitions, break dance events, art exhibitions and the Zimhyr Classic – a skate and BMX night for the over 30s.

The latest addition to T13's portfolio is the Crane View Kitchens, designed to recreate the atmosphere and, indeed, the menu of a ship worker's canteen.

It boasts views of Harland and Wolff's Samson and Goliath cranes in the massive building dock.



### SLEEPING WELL

A Premier Inn at Titanic Quarter has proved a welcome addition to the area, with high occupancy reported since opening. A short distance from Titanic Belfast, the Odyssey Arena and Pavilion, while close to the airport and city centre, the hotel is ideal for concert-goers, tourists and business guests.

### CITIZENS MEET DUKE

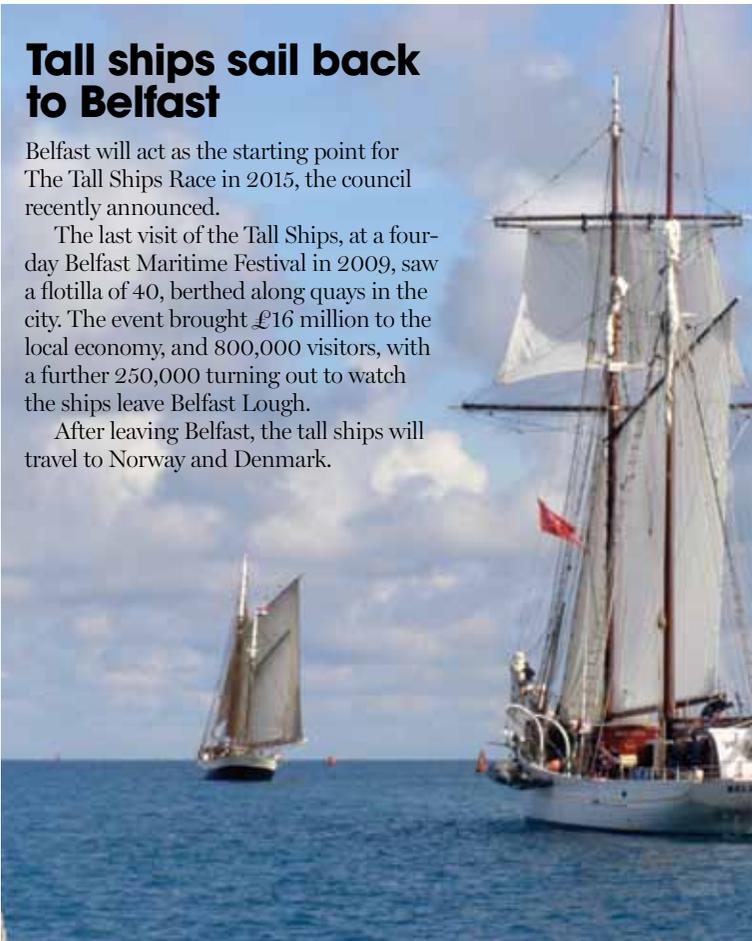
On 29 January 2013, Prince Andrew, The Duke of York, visited Titanic Belfast to talk to over 200 young people from across Northern Ireland who attended an event organised by Co-operation Ireland to celebrate their completion of the first ever National Citizen Service (NCS) project to be run in Northern Ireland.

## Tall ships sail back to Belfast

Belfast will act as the starting point for The Tall Ships Race in 2015, the council recently announced.

The last visit of the Tall Ships, at a four-day Belfast Maritime Festival in 2009, saw a flotilla of 40, berthed along quays in the city. The event brought £16 million to the local economy, and 800,000 visitors, with a further 250,000 turning out to watch the ships leave Belfast Lough.

After leaving Belfast, the tall ships will travel to Norway and Denmark.



## BAFTA CROWNS GAME OF THRONES

Northern Ireland's growing reputation as a leading global film-making location has been reinforced by the recent £8.3 million expansion of Titanic Studios in Titanic Quarter.

The two new 'Hollywood ready' sound stages have been named in honour of local film directors, Brian Desmond Hurst and William MacQuitty, and cement Titanic Studios' reputation as one of the largest and most modern film and television production sets in Europe.

HBO's *Game of Thrones* is the first production to be filmed at the new facility. Producer Frank Vogel,

accepting a BAFTA in May, said: "We'd like to thank Northern Ireland Screen and the city and people of Belfast, who contribute so much to the show's success."

Guests at the opening included

representatives from Titanic Quarter Ltd, NI Screen, Invest NI and descendants of Brian Hurst and William MacQuitty.

Born in east Belfast in 1895 and dubbed the Quentin Tarantino of the 1940s, Brian Desmond Hurst directed the perennial classic, *Scrooge*, in 1951. William MacQuitty, born in Belfast in 1905, produced *Happy Family* and *The Beachcomber* before his biggest hit, the Titanic epic, *A Night to Remember*. He also helped found UTV in 1959.

The new sound stages provide 4,000sq m of additional studio space to complement the existing 6,500sq m already available at Titanic Studios.





## Director gives props to Titanic Belfast

James Cameron, legendary director of the 11-Oscar winning, Hollywood blockbuster *Titanic*, visited Titanic Belfast with producer Jon Landau to open an exhibition of props and costumes, loaned by 20th Century Fox. “These props are sitting around my office or a warehouse at Fox,” said Cameron. “It’s better for the thousands of people that come through here to see them, than for them to languish.”

Asked why he had chosen Titanic Belfast for the launch of the 3D version of *Titanic*, Cameron said: “Now that the museum exists in such an amazing venue, bringing in the international press really resonated with them, as it adds so much more power to the story of what we’re doing.”

Cameron was impressed by Titanic Belfast: “This is such a dramatic structure,” he said. “I expected it to be similar to other displays that honour the history and the passengers – that’s all done here very well and imaginatively but there’s a whole other dimension to Belfast’s particular role.”

## Belfast tops travel mag charts

Belfast is a “treasure” of a city with an “incredible atmosphere”, according to the *National Geographic Traveller* magazine.

The publication declared Belfast one of the world’s top destinations for 2012, boosted by such high-profile events as the centenary of the Titanic and the return of the Tall Ships Race in 2015.

*National Geographic Traveller* editor-in-chief Keith Bellows wrote: “It was great, the food, the incredible atmosphere ... In many ways it reminded me of Cuba, what it was like there seven or eight years ago. You look at where the energy spots are in the world and this is Belfast’s time.”

Belfast is TripAdvisor’s sixth destination in its UK top 10: “... a cosmopolitan destination and ... popular weekend break spot ... Belfast makes for an energising getaway.”

## Love me tender

The SS *Nomadic* is the last remaining White Star Line vessel and was the tender ship that ferried first and second-class passengers from Cherbourg to the doomed Titanic liner.

The restoration of the SS *Normadic* has been given a £3.25 million grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant signals the transformation of both the ship and Hamilton Graving Dock into an attraction dedicated to Belfast’s maritime heritage and the golden age of transatlantic steam travel.

Restoration will retain original panelling and features wherever possible. The lower and upper decks, which housed first and second-class passengers, will contrast with the austerity of third class, demonstrating the hierarchy of travel during the era.

The lower deck will form dedicated education and learning space for events and activities for schools and local communities.



## Queen’s island

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh visited Titanic Belfast in June. During a tour of the centre, they took the ‘Shipyard Ride’ around the exhibits, accompanied by Titanic Belfast chief executive Tim Husbands, and Judith Owens.

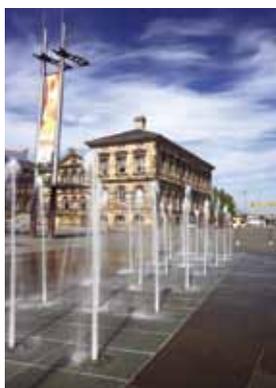
Husbands commented: “During the tour her Majesty and Prince Philip showed great enthusiasm and interest in Titanic and its story.”



## TQ pedals a new bike route

A new cycle route now links east Belfast to the Titanic Quarter via a reopened access road in the former docks area.

Sustrans director Steven Patterson said: “Local people want to make more journeys on foot and by bike – this new route means many more will be able to get around actively and safely. The Greenways in Belfast are hugely popular with locals and visitors alike and this new section completes a strategic link.”





# PICTURE



THIS

Northern Ireland's film and television industry is bucking the recession and providing a significant boost to the regional economy. **Charlotte Goodworth** discovers how Belfast's Titanic Quarter is fundamental to this success

**“An Oscar is the highest possible accolade for film-makers. It has tremendous currency on a massive global scale ... watched by tens of millions ... benefits for both tourism and film-making will come from that exposure”**

Richard Williams  
Northern Ireland Screen

The 2012 Academy Awards threw Northern Ireland into the global spotlight when *The Shore* won Best Live Action Short Film.

Written and directed by Terry George, and produced by Oorlagh George, *The Shore* was filmed entirely in Northern Ireland.

Richard Williams, chief executive of Northern Ireland Screen, the leading government-backed agency for the film, television and digital content industry, evaluates the impact of such an award: “An Oscar is the highest possible accolade for film-makers. It has tremendous currency on a massive global scale – the awards ceremony is watched by tens of millions of people worldwide,” he says. “Terry and Oorlagh George went out of their way to weave Northern Ireland into their success story and wide-ranging benefits for both tourism and film-making will come from that global exposure.”

Terry George was previously Oscar-nominated for his screenplays of *Hotel Rwanda* and *In the Name of the Father*. Of *The Shore*'s Oscar win, he says: “Our little film was inspired by the people of Northern Ireland, protestant and catholic, who after 30 years of war, sat down, negotiated a peace and proved to the world that the Irish are great talkers. I want to dedicate this to them. This is about reconciliation in Northern Ireland, it is really close to my heart.”

In Belfast's Titanic Quarter beats the heart of the North's movie industry, supported in no small part by Titanic Studios (formerly The Paint Hall). This massive structure housed the fabricated steel components of ships to be painted in climate-controlled conditions.

Northern Ireland Screen realised the potential of this 3.2-ha site and took on the lease in 2007 in order to secure the production of *City of Ember*. The producers of this Hollywood blockbuster were able to take advantage of the sheer space – as one of the largest studios in Europe – to create another world within its walls, a post-apocalyptic, subterranean city, something hardly possible in most other facilities.

Even the A-list cast members were impressed by what could be achieved in these Belfast docklands. Tom Hanks described Titanic Studios as “a treat for everybody who worked on the film,” while Bill Murray said, “It has lots of height, real scale, real size. It's a really beautiful job.”



**Left and inset:**  
Natalie Portman,  
Danny McBride  
and James Franco  
square up to the  
cameras during  
the filming of  
*Your Highness* in  
Titanic Quarter.





**Left:** Filming of the BAFTA-winning, fantasy epic *Game of Thrones* in Titanic Studios.

Titanic Studios is a considerable asset to the screen industries – and an essential ingredient of any sustainable industry of this kind – yet one element of a comprehensive package. Williams says: “It is the combination of a studio facility, great locations, production funding and great crews, which give us a very attractive proposition to market.”

In 2009 Universal Pictures chose Northern Ireland – and the Titanic Quarter in particular – as the base for its production, *Your Highness*, which hit cinema screens in 2011. The executive producer was Mark Huffam, who has been involved in film-making for 25 years, on the likes of *Saving Private Ryan*, *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* and box office smash hit *Mamma Mia!*

Local to Belfast, Huffam outlines why the city makes such a good film location: “Belfast is very compact so Titanic Studios are 10 minutes away from the City Airport, which is a few minutes away from the city centre – everything is close at hand,” he says. “Your core crew is

based in Belfast and within an hour you can get to a wealth of locations – from amazing forests to unspoilt pastoral countryside to fantastic coastlines and great beaches. It’s convenient – and convenience keeps the costs down.”

Jimmy Horowitz, executive vice president of Universal Pictures and co-president of production, adds: “Filming *Your Highness* in Northern Ireland allowed us to capture the extraordinary beauty and topography which resemble the medieval European backdrop in which this story takes place. It also makes good financial sense given Northern Ireland’s film incentive programme, the favourable exchange rate and a local infrastructure that is well suited for this type of project.”

Winner of the 2013 BAFTA Audience Award, *Game of Thrones*, is said to be one of the largest television productions in Europe. It is made by HBO, the second largest premium US network and home to acclaimed original drama such as *The Sopranos* and *The Wire*.

Titanic Studios was again the base, as well as locations throughout Northern Ireland, and another studio just half an hour from Belfast, The Linen Mill.

Huffam produced season one and he believes the show has been instrumental in putting the area on the map: “You can’t put a value on what *Game of Thrones* has done for the profile of Northern Ireland. It was HBO’s second biggest show and it’s been a big advert to say: come to Northern Ireland. We can make films and television shows as well as anywhere and better than most.”

Producer Frank Vogel predicts a seven-season run. Accepting the BAFTA, he thanked Northern Ireland Screen, the city and people of Belfast. Rick Hill of northern Ireland Screen estimates *Game of Thrones* has brought £60 million of investment into Northern Ireland, with £20 million from season four, currently in production.

**Below:** From world-class ships to world-class films: Titanic Studios’ exterior.

**Opposite:** The studios’ scale offers set-designers welcome scope for big money productions.



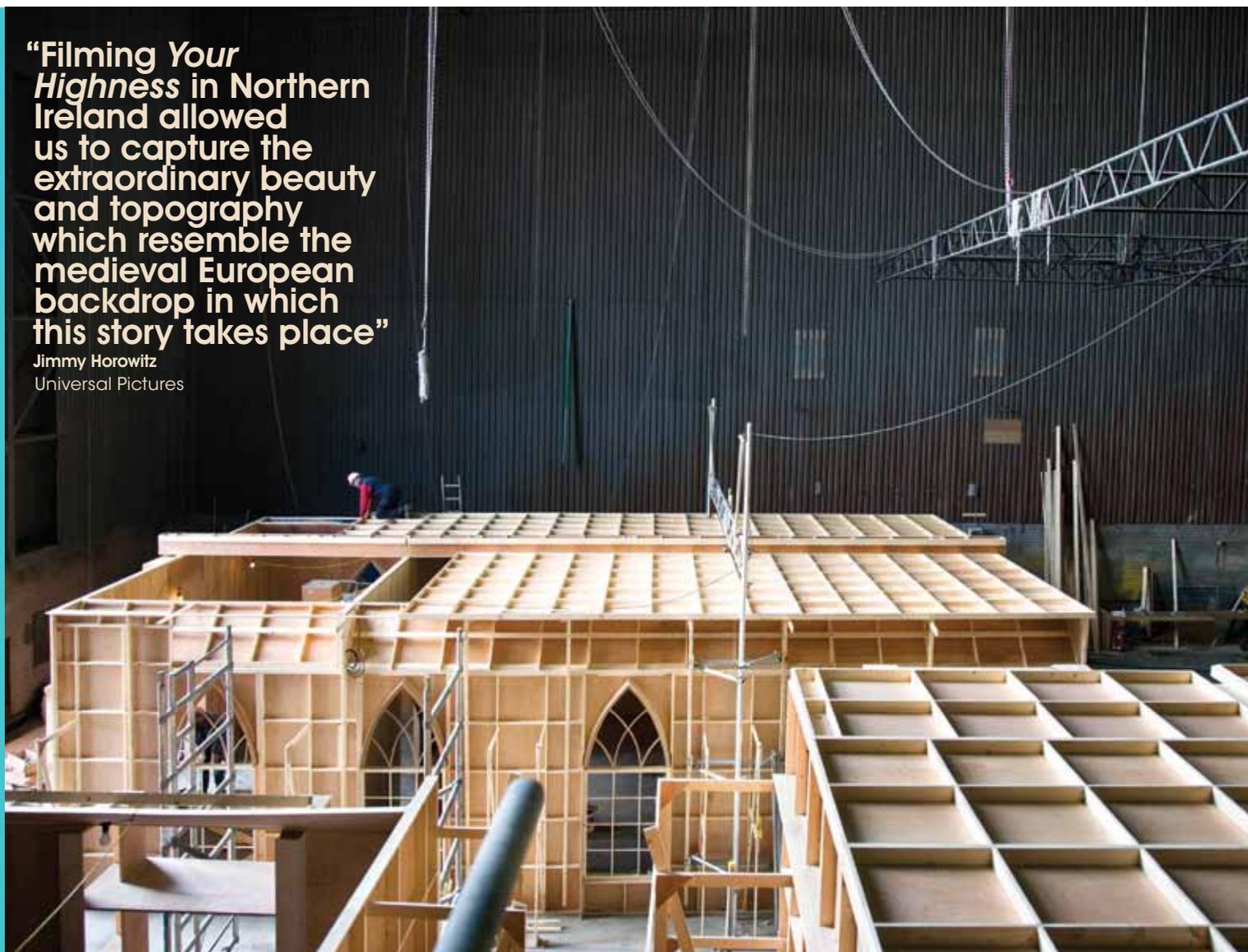
**“You can’t put a value on what *Game of Thrones* has done for the profile of Northern Ireland. It was HBO’s second biggest show and it’s been a big advert to say: come to Northern Ireland”**

**Mark Huffam**

Producer, series one of *Game of Thrones*

**“Filming *Your Highness* in Northern Ireland allowed us to capture the extraordinary beauty and topography which resemble the medieval European backdrop in which this story takes place”**

Jimmy Horowitz  
Universal Pictures



“The financial investment that these shows have made in Northern Ireland spills out into hotels, restaurants, taxis, the timber suppliers and the scaffolding suppliers,” says Huffam. “A lot of traditional suppliers – whose normal form of business has been hugely reduced – are surviving due to the film and television industry, and some are doing much better than surviving. The money from a show like *Game of Thrones* gets spread everywhere.”

The Northern Ireland Screen agency, which provides funding and support for numerous productions, including *City of Ember*, *Your Highness* and *Game of Thrones*, monitors the economic impact of its interventions in the film, television and digital content industries.

According to the agency's figures, the total production funding into the Northern Ireland film, television and digital content production sector between 2007 and 2010 was £9.2 million. The total spend generated from this was £45 million, of which £19 million was on employment. This means that, for every pound invested, £4.80 flowed back into Northern Ireland's economy.

And the situation is set to improve. The total production funding in 2010 and 2011 was in the region of £9.2 million, with estimated spend of £56.3 million (with

£24 million going on employment). This would mean the spend-to-investment ratio would increase to 6:1.

The total value of productions receiving any support from Northern Ireland Screen is on average £55 million a year. Other productions are made without grant funding from Northern Ireland Screen, and the agency plans to scope the total value of productions, including those which it is not involved in funding.

In this economic climate, creating ways of attracting people and money to an area is crucial, and the Titanic Quarter of Belfast, in particular, seems to have the necessary tools in place.

Alongside the inward investment that these large productions bring and the money that their crews will spend, are the jobs created for local people and the worldwide exposure that attracts more and more visitors every year.

Culture Minister Carál Ní Chuilín believes productions such as *Game of Thrones* and *Your Highness* have created a firm foundation on which Northern Ireland can continue to build a thriving industry. “These productions have provided a much welcome boost to our economy and have given us an opportunity to demonstrate that we have the infrastructure and the talent to be successful in this growing sub-sector of our creative industries.” **TQ**

**£4.80**  
the amount  
coming back  
into Northern  
Ireland's  
economy  
for every  
£1 invested  
in the film  
industry

# WE CAN BE HEROES

Titanic Belfast is the city's new icon, taking its place among buildings of international repute, such as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Signature architecture can be catalytic in the successful regeneration of a city's waterfront and it is now Belfast's turn. From Sydney to Lisbon, Capetown to Shanghai, there are heroes behind the scenes who make it happen. *Estates Gazette's* **Nick Whitten** reports

The £100 million-plus Titanic Belfast is the world's largest visitor attraction dedicated to the ill-fated White Star Line ship. The 14,000sq m centre – twice the size of Belfast City Hall, opened on 31 March 2012, in time for the centenary.

The feat of designing, engineering and constructing the world-class building is comparable to building the leviathan ship.

Heritage was a central consideration during the design stage of the project. CivicArts, led by London-based US architect Eric Kuhne, masterplanned the entire Titanic Quarter scheme and designed the Titanic Belfast building. Kuhne says: "This is truly one of the most magnificent things we have ever worked on."

CivicArts worked closely with lead consultants Todd Architects in Belfast

to develop the detail, taking the scheme through planning and on to construction. Todd's managing director Paul Crowe says: "Todd Architects invested almost four years of work into this truly global project, delivering a building which has changed Belfast's skyline and will help transform international perceptions of the city itself.

"Developing a building that reflected the ingenuity, ambition and scale of Titanic was an immense professional challenge – one we are delighted to have met."

In 2009, Pat Doherty, chairman of Harcourt Developments, began construction at risk and ahead of government funding approval. Without this investment, the building would not have been completed in time for the centenary.

Titanic Belfast is the centrepiece of the £7 billion Titanic Quarter development,



one of Europe's largest urban waterfront regeneration schemes, transforming a 75-ha site on Belfast's River Lagan into a mixed-use maritime quarter with a mile-long waterfront.

The ground floor level totals 1,796sq m, which includes an 18-metre high wall covered in sheet metal panels, similar in size to those used on Titanic's hull.

The ticketing desks are designed to duplicate wooden keel blocks akin to those which Titanic's massive 46,328 tonnes rested upon in the Titanic Dock. The entire external facade, which replicates four 27-metre high hulls, is clad in 3,000 individual silver anodized aluminium shards, which are enhanced by reflective pools of water surrounding the base of the structure. Harcourt Construction commissioned German facade constructor, Metallbau Früh, to install the aluminium facade, manufactured by EDM Spanwall.

**Top right:** Hundreds of skilled tradespeople from scores of firms contributed to the project.

**Below:** Workers put the final touches to the huge metal panels, similar in size to those on Titanic's hull.

Of the 3,000 panels, 2,000 are completely unique in form while none of the typical panels

repeat more than 20 times – presenting the image of a cut diamond. From the central atrium, a series of glass escalators, each over 20 metres long, stretch up through a jagged central void. In December 2009, the concrete pour to form Titanic Belfast's foundations became the largest in Ireland's history. MR Concrete oversaw 4,200 cubic metres of concrete from approximately 700 concrete lorry deliveries. More than 100 men from five different companies worked in shifts throughout a single night.

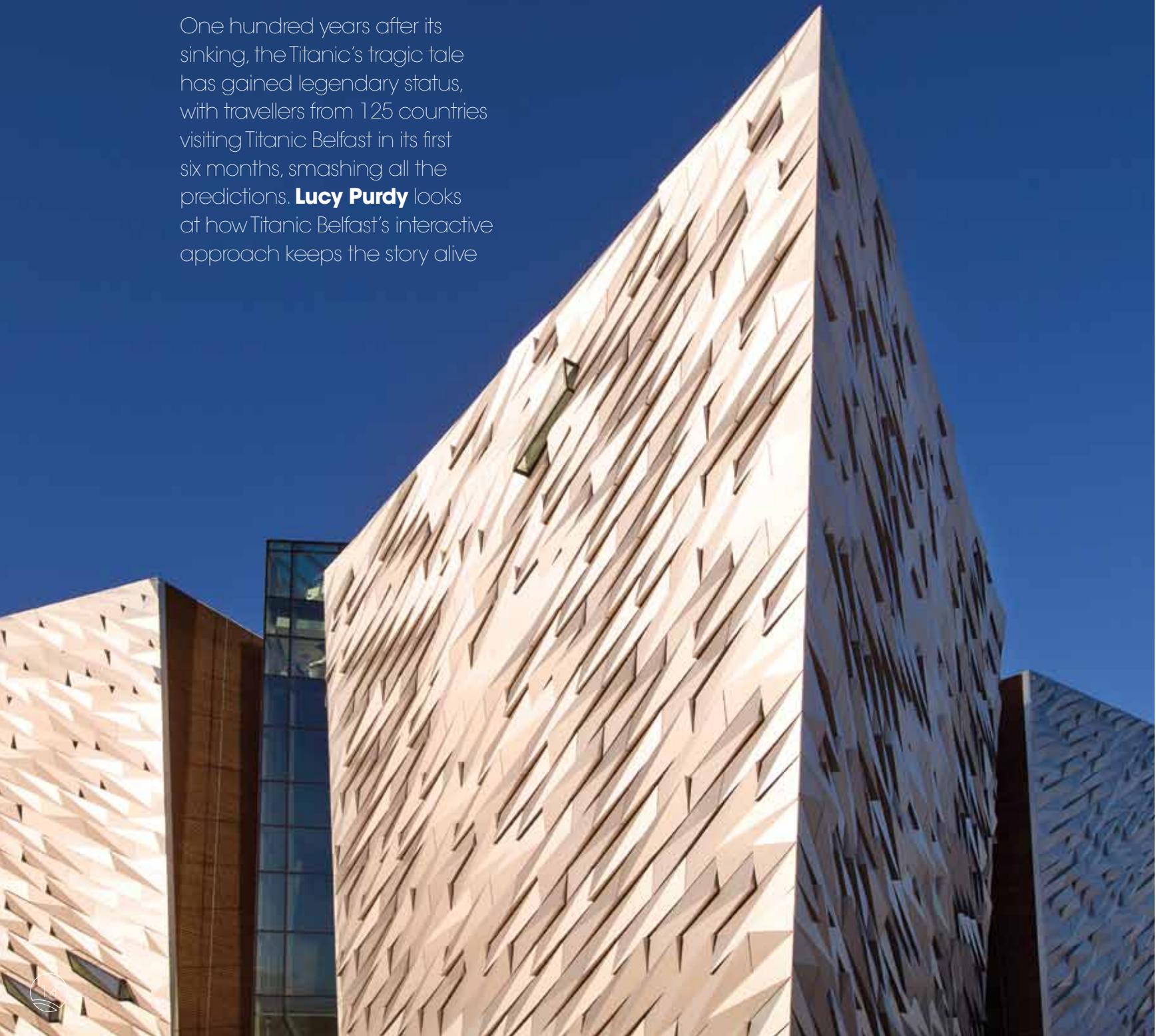
Harcourt Construction's Martin Conway says: "Overseeing the biggest concrete pour in Ireland was a major challenge, which required huge preparation and effort from those people involved."

David Gavaghan, chief executive of Titanic Quarter, adds: "The concrete pour had a strong historical resonance as it took place in sight of the famous slipway on which work began on the Titanic in 1909. The project brings the story of Titanic back to Belfast and helps the city celebrate its proud maritime history and achievements." **TQ**



# STAR ATTRACTION

One hundred years after its sinking, the Titanic's tragic tale has gained legendary status, with travellers from 125 countries visiting Titanic Belfast in its first six months, smashing all the predictions. **Lucy Purdy** looks at how Titanic Belfast's interactive approach keeps the story alive



When the Titanic Belfast project opened to the public in March 2012, First Minister Peter Robinson hailed the complex “a must-see attraction, up with the best in the world” and symbolic of an exciting new era in Northern Ireland. As he cut the ribbon, he stood beside not only visiting dignitaries and journalists from every corner of the world but also to Cyril Quigley, who was just a young boy when he saw the Titanic being launched in 1911.

Titanic Belfast smashed predicted visitor numbers in its first five months, as 500,000th visitor Canadian Lynda Price and her family walked through the doors of the iconic building. The original target for the year was 425,000, but 800,000 visited.

Vast and multi-dimensional, Titanic Belfast extends over nine galleries and combines special effects, full-scale reconstructions and innovative interactive features to whisk visitors along on a fascinating and fresh exploration of the Titanic story, from its conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through to her construction and launch, to the ship’s tragic maiden voyage and catastrophic demise. The focus then shifts to the aftermath of the sinking and discovery of the wreck, then continues into the present day with a live undersea exploration centre.

Titanic Belfast opened its dramatic building 100 years after the great ship set sail. Designed by Event Communications and arranged over more than 3,000sq m of floorspace, the exhibition is the world’s largest Titanic attraction. Exploring Edwardian Belfast, it charts the growth of the Harland and Wolff shipyard and tells the stories of both the passengers who sailed on Titanic and the scientists who found her. While it gives visitors an opportunity to peek behind the scenes of the ship, it also dispels some myths and legends about the tragedy.

Tim Husbands, the dynamic chief executive of Titanic Belfast, once described the ship as the second biggest brand in the world after Coca-Cola. Husbands joined Titanic Belfast after a tenure at Belfast’s Waterfront Hall. He was also at the helm of the Tall Ships Festival in 2009 and instrumental in securing the MTV Music European Awards, held in TQ’s Odyssey Arena in November 2011.

Husbands emphasises the interactive dimension to the experience – as far from staid museums as you can possibly get.

“We have nine galleries and have spent a great deal of time and investment to get the story accurate,” he says. “People might think that once they’ve seen the galleries, they’ve seen it all, but there are so many layers that there will always be something new to see. We’re conscious that we need to keep things moving and fresh.”



**Left:** At Titanic Belfast, the visitor experience tells the full, fascinating story of the Titanic, not just her sinking.

**Above right:** Nine large galleries take visitors on a powerful and multi-layered journey through Titanic’s past.

To that end, Dr Robert Ballard, the marine archaeologist who led the first manned dive to the wreck of the Titanic in 1985, and has become synonymous with the ship’s legend, was brought on board to get involved in the dedicated ocean exploration centre and immersive theatre at the complex. He has provided footage of the wreck to be incorporated into a hi-tech interactive floor, giving visitors a fly-over of Titanic’s final resting place. Further remarkable images of Titanic, including a chandelier, remnants of equipment in the gymnasium, silver serving trays, champagne bottles and a ceramic doll’s head, came from further successful dives, also spearheaded by Ballard.

He says: “Our first dive to Titanic started out in picture-perfect fashion on a gorgeous summer day. But it was a risky venture, as there was no back-up submarine.

“With no hope of rescue if something



**“Our first dive to Titanic started out in picture-perfect fashion on a gorgeous summer day. But it was a risky venture, as there was no back-up submarine”**

**Dr Robert Ballard**  
Marine archaeologist

**Right:** The rusted steel sign welcoming visitors is in sharp contrast to the shimmering angles of the new building.



## TITANIC BELFAST



went wrong, we felt a bit like astronauts landing on a distant planet.

“Titanic will always continue to fascinate, because it is a tragedy worthy of Shakespeare himself. She was the largest moving object of her time; some claimed she was unsinkable, but in one of the greatest acts of hubris in history, she sank on her maiden voyage.”

“For me, discovering Titanic has been an opportunity to motivate young people to become more interested in science and also to encourage further ocean exploration.”

A connection has also been established with the Ryan Institute for Environmental, Marine and Energy Research at NUI Galway, as well as the University of Ulster and Queen’s University, to provide local link-ups and learning opportunities.

“Right from the start, we saw this as a great opportunity to bring the project home,” says Steve Lumby, designer at Event Communications. “We went from a starting point of a deep reluctance on the part of Belfast to tell this story. But there was a chance to bring the project right back to the slipway where Titanic was first built.”

“My priority from day one was to bring the human story back to life – to put that first and regenerate Belfast’s sense of pride in the craftsmanship and workmanship of this ship,” says Lumby. “Any museum is nothing without a story and Titanic is a great story to tell, so it got a head start.”

The project involved a dazzling amalgamation of media techniques: from an atmospheric cart-ride through the shipyards of boomtown Belfast, to a film projection which recreates the completed Titanic on the slipways outside, as well as other smaller but still thought-provoking flourishes such as touch-screen displays of Titanic folklore.

**Above:** A first class passenger room aboard Titanic, recreated.  
**Above right:** Exhibits required months of meticulous research.  
**Right:** A display showing how Titanic passengers were served meals through a maze of galleys and service rooms.



“More than other exhibitions I’ve worked on, this was interactive,” says Lumby. “One of the most difficult aspects was in getting the balance right between celebrating Belfast’s contribution to the Titanic and commemorating those who died. Originally, the sinking was only told from Belfast’s point of view, unlike films or the TV series, which have focused exclusively on the tragedy itself. But a need for more detail became clear. We couldn’t ignore the huge loss of life, but I hope we handled it as sensitively as is possible.”

And was Lumby happy with the Titanic Belfast experience, as its 800,000 visitors appear to be? “I’ve been back recently and I can safely say that I’m happy with it. I can’t compare the Titanic project with any of the others I’ve worked on.

“That’s the best thing about working in this industry – you are always working on a completely unique design – and Titanic Belfast certainly is that.” **TQ**

**“One of the most difficult aspects was in getting the balance right between celebrating Belfast’s contribution to the Titanic and commemorating those who died”**

Steve Lumby  
Event Communications

When US financial services giant Citi opened its Titanic Quarter offices in 2010, it came for the airport on its doorstep and the stream of highly qualified graduates. Now other big businesses are following in its footsteps.

**Elizabeth Pears** charts Belfast's corporate goldrush

**Exceeding expectations:**  
Citi's impressive Gateway offices.



# CITI LIVING

**B**elfast is finally having its moment. Critics are falling at its feet, with *National Geographic* naming it 2012's must-see destination and the *Financial Times* saying it's one of the top ten places in the UK to host a major event – no doubt, off the back of the success of the MTV Europe Music Awards it hosted in 2011.

That event was a pivotal moment for the city, and helped prove it had the infrastructure to meet the demands of an event that requires no fewer than 39 hotels to house production crews, celebrities and their entourages.

The city's boom in tourism attests to this rising profile. In 1998, a trickle of 400,000 tourists made the journey, while today that figure is closer to 1.6 million and rising.

The city is cosy and intimate, with a skyline that mixes the old – historical Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings – and the new – contemporary

designs such as the MAC, Belfast's brand new £18 million arts centre.

So, it's young, pretty and buzzing with energy. But it's also blossoming into a global financial and technology location, a decade of rapid economic growth inspiring developers to make significant investment in the area.

Driving forward the city's reinvention is Titanic Quarter – Europe's largest urban regeneration project and one of the five biggest waterfront projects in the world. The 75-ha development is a mix of apartments, stretches of bars and restaurants and affordable business space – among the cheapest in the developed world – overlooking the River Lagan.

As they say: "If you build it, they will come". Titanic Quarter's plush Gateway Offices caught the eye of US financial giant Citi, which snapped up two offices in 2010 as a new base for the highly skilled team it has grown, from 500 to almost 1,200, since it set up home in Northern Ireland seven years ago.

**"The relatively open access to government is one of the aspects of doing business in Northern Ireland that our senior executives particularly appreciate"**

**Brian McAreavey**  
Managing director, Citi Belfast

“Citi Belfast continues to develop and is now considered one of the premier locations for Citi globally,” says Brian McAreavey, managing director at Citi Belfast. “We have grown to almost 1,200 roles in technology, securities and banking operations, and legal and compliance, with plans to increase this figure to around 1,500. I think it is fair to say that Belfast has exceeded our expectations.”

In turn, Belfast has benefitted from Citi’s presence. As well as an annual injection of £50 million into the economy, and creating hundreds of high-end jobs, Citi coming here has helped send a message to the world that Belfast truly means business.

The mutually beneficial relationship has led to a successful partnership between Citi and the regional government, which understands only too well how important Belfast’s reinvention is to the country’s prosperity.

McAreavey says: “Along with the peer companies in our sector who are also doing business in Northern Ireland, we find these relationships with government at all levels to be open and constructive.”

“In fact, the relatively open access to government is one of the aspects of doing business in Northern Ireland that our senior executives particularly appreciate.”

To cement the city’s attractiveness to Citi-style relocators, Northern Ireland is pushing a pro-business agenda, offering incentive packages for investors including loans, grants and tax breaks as well as full advice and support for new companies.

Citi has been happy to play a role in hosting out-of-towners and singing the praises of its new base. “We view this as part of the contribution that Citi can make to the broader economic development of Northern Ireland,” says McAreavey. “There is also something in it for us if other companies decide to set up operations in Northern Ireland, thereby also contributing to training staff and deepening the talent pool over time.”

With conditions so ripe, the domino effect has already started. Financial companies that have recently expanded into Northern Ireland include the New York Stock Exchange and Chicago Mercantile Exchange, while international fund administration firm Augentius has committed £14 million to open a centre of excellence in Belfast, ahead of competition from Canada, China, India and Dublin.

This latest development means a further 160 jobs over the next two years, with salaries of around £45,000 – an income which goes a long way in Belfast,



The base for Citi’s highly skilled and expanding team.  
**Below left:** MAC, Belfast’s new £17 million arts centre.  
**Below right:** Citi is working closely with Queen’s University to attract graduates



where the cost of living is lower than in any other UK city.

Sensing forthcoming demand for their services, international legal firms like Axiom, Allen and Overy and Herbert Smith have also set up in Belfast, in a perfect example of supply chain in action.

McAreavey says: “The financial services sector is one of the major employers in Northern Ireland. We have operations here from the UK and Irish banks, as well as global banks, insurance companies and exchanges.

“Activities include software development and support, capital markets operations, legal and compliance support, and customer service delivery. We are gaining the reputation of a financial services and capital markets ‘cluster’ at a national and international level.”

As well as its booming economy and government incentives, another big draw for these multinationals is the city’s well-developed communications and transport infrastructure.

George Best Belfast City Airport, minutes from the city centre and right next to Titanic Quarter, offers regular flights to London and other European business destinations. British Airways recently opened a route to Heathrow, and Aer Lingus relocated its operations there from Belfast International Airport, where United Airlines have daily scheduled flights to New York.

For McAreavey, the presence of two world-class universities – Queen’s

## “We are gaining the reputation of a financial services and capital markets ‘cluster’ at a national and international level”

**Brian McAreavey**

Managing director at Citi Belfast

University Belfast and the University of Ulster – is another key resource at the city’s disposal.

The majority of staff at Citi’s Belfast office have been employed locally, with staff including 24 different nationalities helping to create a vibrant multicultural working environment.

Headhunting experienced staff from outside Northern Ireland, if there are any skills gaps, is not proving a problem, as no-one’s going to feel shortchanged by Belfast’s quality of life: competitive salary packages, affordable and stylish accommodation in the city centre and plenty to do in terms of recreation.

Even so, Citi is working very closely with both universities to raise the firm’s profile on campuses to attract the brightest young graduates, and is involved in shaping course content as well as helping to devise new Masters programmes tailored to its needs.

“It is the availability of market relevant skills that will ultimately drive the economy in Northern Ireland forward,” says McAreavey. “Having said that, there is still a shortage of skills in some areas. We and our peer companies in the sector are addressing this by a variety of strategies including comprehensive and high quality training programmes for graduates, seconding in experienced staff from other offices, and attracting hires from more established financial hubs such as London.”

McAreavey adds: “The growth we and our peers in the industry are enjoying show that these strategies are working and that Northern Ireland is a great place for financial services companies to do business.” **TQ**

**Below:** Belfast: a must-see destination as well as a great place to live and work.





For masterplanner Eric Kuhne, the narrative of Titanic Quarter will spin out over the coming decades, in the lives of the people who will make their homes in this series of connected villages, now rising from Belfast's city centre waterside. By **Siobhán Crozier** and **Lucy Purdy**

According to architect Eric Kuhne, one aspect of the Titanic Quarter project's impact is on the psychology of Belfast. "In many ways the real, deep story about the Titanic Quarter and Titanic Belfast is that it has joined this town together again. It has reached out and reminded people that this is a centre, a place where innovation and invention – the finest craftsmen of Europe – poured into Belfast to build these ships." Titanic Quarter designer Eric Kuhne specialises in an international perspective. The charismatic American architect and founder of CivicArts is proud that his practice is working in five continents. From Kuwait's dazzling, multi-billion City of Silk development, to landmark projects in North America and Australasia, Kuhne seems to be able to both think globally and also apply a meticulous eye to detail. Along with design director Mark Evans, Kuhne has been at the helm of projects including the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent and a sweeping overhaul of London's Greenwich Peninsula.

# PUBLIC EYE

Uniting art, architecture, landscape and industrial design, Kuhne describes CivicArts as providing a counterpoint to the anonymity of modern culture. His zeal for the Belfast project is tangible, despite having worked on it now for seven years, he is clearly pleased with how far the Titanic Quarter has come, excitedly pronouncing it capable of “shaking the boots of every other waterfront development in Europe. Nothing comes close to this.”

Take a step back from the ephemeral fireworks and international headlines which greeted the opening of Titanic Belfast, and Kuhne is emphatic when it comes to securing the project’s long term success. While mindful of the importance of tourism, he and his team have been clear that their approach should be to design this as a place primarily for residents – and Kuhne’s vision for this corner of Belfast stretches far into the future.

When Pat Doherty, chairman of Titanic Quarter Ltd, asked him how he was going to start the mammoth design task, Kuhne answered: “Leave it to us. We’re going to rent a car and a driver. We’re going to talk to everybody we can find who has moved out of Belfast over the past 25 years.”

“And so we did,” says Kuhne. “For a week. We drove to all the little towns and hamlets and waterfronts, the fishing villages, and it was magic. We would go into the grocery stores, the pubs, restaurants and marinas and ask people what it would take for them to move back into Belfast.”

The resulting list was so simple, Kuhne says, that all it required was following the time-honoured model of smaller, sustainable villages joined up together.

“London is like that, of course, New York is like that,” he says. “So we ended up with eight vibrant little villages, each one with its own identity. People wanted to be able to walk down to the waterfront, to be safe enough to send their kids down to a corner store for a loaf of bread, some flowers or some food for the dinner table.

“They want to have fresh air, they want to have comfortable flats.”

Almost every apartment in the masterplan is no more than two blocks away from water or a calming green space.

Crucially, believes Kuhne, Titanic Quarter will become an area of Belfast

which, by dint of its newness, belongs to one and all. It is not a territory, but a fresh start for the city and a cause for celebration and pride for everyone.

Key to this pride is the area’s shipbuilding heritage. “Belfast was a booming metropolis,” says Kuhne.

“We taught the planners, the political leadership, the citizens, that not only could they get commercial advantage out of this

**“We taught the planners, the political leadership, the citizens, that not only could they get commercial advantage out of this waterfront, but they could also teach the world again about what made Belfast great”**

Eric Kuhne  
CivicArts

**Left:** Kuhne used his personal touch to weave a mass of maritime metaphors into the scheme.

**Right:** Aerial of the completed Titanic Belfast.

**Below:** Mark Evans’ work was crucial during the design phase.



waterfront, but they could also teach the world again about what made Belfast great.”

“That story of Belfast reinventing itself has been told four times: from building timber ships in rickety old docks along the Lagan to the conversion to steam,” says Kuhne. “Then they started building iron ships before turning to steel when the turbines came in. Then followed aluminium. There is not another shipyard in the UK that came anywhere close to this for centuries – and that story is just monumental.”

Inside the Titanic Belfast building is a six-storey atrium which matches the space between Titanic and her sister ship, Olympic, when the vessels were being built. Stars on the ceiling represent the exact position in the sky on the night she sunk.

Says Kuhne: “We wanted the inside of this museum not to be a bunch of white, painted walls, but to restore the sense of majesty of what it was like for these 28,000 workers to build these leviathans. These were the largest things ever built by man when they were launched.

“Now the new industries, the media centre and the film industry, are restoring that creative entrepreneurial spirit which has been five centuries of Belfast legacy.

“So Belfast has reinvented itself in the most grand way imaginable. This is the catalyst that gets the world to sit up and pay attention.

“No one will get it in my lifetime because this will be a 25-30 year build out. But you know, a great masterplan is like a great constitution: it endures.” **TQ**

As Titanic Quarter grows, different industrial, technological and service sectors emerge, bringing thousands of employment opportunities. Belfast Metropolitan College is in at the beginning of the city's waterfront quarter, equipping students with the skills to secure the new jobs.

**Jessica Pickard** reports



# WELL MET

Belfast Metropolitan College's purpose-built campus, one of its five centres, is at the heart of the city's newest quarter.

"I have been watching this site for ten years and I'd describe what's happened here as wondrous," says Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Belfast Met's principal and chief executive, who sees the growth of Titanic Quarter directly from the window of her office.

"The view changes every day. It's so much more 'lived in' now," she says. "There's more animation, more people passing by. Right now the grass seed has sprouted and the whole area has turned suddenly green."

For McGivern the rationale for building a new £44 million site here is self evident. By 2025 jobs created in the Titanic Quarter are estimated to hit somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000. Many will be in the knowledge industries.

"Our main thrust as a college is strong skills development. The Titanic Quarter is the hub of economic success for the city. Our job is to make sure that students get a

job and keep a job," says McGivern.

Four and a half thousand students attend the site during the day, studying subjects that echo the thrust of local economic development: business, management, communications, design, IT, digital media, finance and tourism.

"It's a moving industrial landscape," says McGivern. "The Titanic Quarter is an engine for growth for the whole city and it's fantastic to be here in the heart of it."

The students' learning extends beyond the classroom. After a successful pilot last year, the 'Fresh' programme will ensure every degree student spends at least six weeks working with a local employer.

These are not traditional work experience placements. The students are tasked to solve real challenges that face local companies and present their work to the boss. "It's a hard market out there," says McGivern, "and they have to be ready for it."

At the upper end of the skills range, the college is heavily involved in Knowledge





Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) – an increasingly popular way of ensuring knowledge that traditionally remained locked up in learning institutions finds practical applications outside. The model is a simple one, but very structured. A college based KTP manager will work with a business to identify an area of strategic need – for example to redesign a product. The problem is then analysed by a panel of academic experts who create a strategic project plan. At this point an external graduate specialist is appointed as a paid employee of the college to take on the brief, jointly managed by the expert panel and the company. The development is paid for by Northern Ireland’s Technology Strategy Board and Invest Northern Ireland, along with other sponsors, with significant financial support available for the project.

So far Belfast Met has attracted funding for over 20 KTP arrangements, working with companies in hospitality, engineering, electronics, media, ICT, textiles, food production, construction, health and packaging.

Clive Gallagher is sales and marketing manager for Breezemount Electrical and Hydraulics, which makes equipment like rising traffic barriers. He was so impressed with the impact of a Belfast Met led KTP that he has set up a second one. The first project helped improve both product range and the geographical size of the market, thinks Gallagher: “Despite the current recession we have increased sales and

## “The Titanic Quarter is an engine for growth for the whole city and it’s fantastic to be here in the heart of it”

**Marie-Thérèse McGivern**  
Principal and chief executive  
Belfast Metropolitan College

**Above:**  
Shipshape – the design of Belfast Met reflects local industrial history.

**Below and previous page:**  
On the Fresh programme, degree students work with local employers for six weeks minimum.



profits well beyond our expectations. I am completely sold on working through KTP with the Met because it works!”

Phil Devlin is the manager for the KTP programme at Belfast Met. “I feel really privileged to be involved in this area – because you can see very tangible results,” she says. “It really is win/win because it’s good for the business, it’s good for our academics and the graduate, and it’s often good for undergraduates who go out to support the work in the field.”

The college is currently working with a group of companies in the Titanic Quarter, on accelerating business innovation.

Belfast Met has had historical connections with this part of the city long before the recent spurt of regeneration activity. In 1906 Belfast Corporation identified the college as the training provider for the shipyard that built prestigious passenger liners including, of course, the Titanic herself.

The college also contributes significantly to the leisure and cultural opportunities in the area. The student total of 4,500 a day at the new site rises to over 10,000 when evening students are included. Many study courses like art or dressmaking for personal interest. “When we first started talking about coming here people looked at me as if I was mad!” says McGivern. “There was a sense the Quarter was far away, not part of Belfast city centre. In fact you can walk here in ten minutes. It’s a lovely walk past the lock and along the river.”

And when you arrive in Titanic Quarter you can eat, socialise, enjoy a cultural event or, of course, study. **TQ**

# ART TO ARC

Public art challenges the artist to create a work true to his or her vision, yet with potential to gain the affection of those who live with it daily. In two pieces commissioned for The ARC, phase one of Belfast's newest waterfront quarter, artists Rowan Gillespie and Tony Stallard have woven the Titanic story into their very different sculptures. The works have become part of the cityscape, fusing despair and hope, the past with the future.

**Fleur Chapman** reports

The paradox of celebrating a triumphant feat of engineering while also commemorating a

large-scale human tragedy has fuelled the inspiration for two remarkably different sculptures in the Titanic Quarter.

*Kit* by Tony Stallard, and Rowan Gillespie's *Titanica* were commissioned as part of Harcourt Developments' drive to champion public art in its projects.

Ironically, Gillespie almost passed on the opportunity. "I was getting my car serviced in Belfast," he says, "and while they were changing the oil, I thought I'd check out this amazing place I'd heard about – the Titanic Quarter.

"I got inspired straight away: the museum's foundations are Ireland's largest single pour of concrete, and the immense aura of the place is so impressive. But on the drive home I thought – it's fantastic, but maybe this one's not for me. I assumed any



**A soaring symbol:** The striking brass *Titanica*, by Irish sculptor Rowan Gillespie, packs a hefty metaphorical punch, despite its small stature.

sculpture would have to be on a 'Titanic' scale, and I work on my own, in a shed at the bottom of my garden."

It was a visit to a Norwegian friend that changed his mind. "Sven is the son of a famous Norwegian shipping magnate, and loves ships' figureheads – he salvages them from the seabed.

"It reminded me that as a boy, I loved the little prancing Jaguar on the bonnet of my Dad's car. So I began to think I didn't have to try to 'compete' with Titanic Belfast – I could whittle everything down to a human scale.

"In fact, if an artist tries to do something massive, it often looks quite puny in relation to its environment."

Gillespie's initial fascination with the figurehead evolved into his inspiration for the piece – to capture the spirit of the Titanic: "The ship had been submerged under the sea for 100 years and now, in a way, it had suddenly emerged, in the shape

of the magnificent new museum. So I thought of my sculpture as representing this resurrection of the Titanic, rusty with time, but resurgent, shooting out of the water."

Situated in front of Titanic Belfast, *Titanica* is a female figure, cast in bronze. The location inspired Gillespie: "From the side, the figure echoes the lines of the buildings around it, as well as the Titanic itself. It's shaped to catch the light and reflect the surrounding architecture.

"But from the front you can hopefully grasp the far more serious aspect of human tragedy. If seen as a silhouette in the dark, it would have a crucifixion feeling to it. The face has a shadow of sorrow, as well as the hope implicit in resurrection.

"The really great paintings of faces in the world are those that portray more than one emotion. It's easy to show a happy-clappy person or great sadness, but I always want to leave it enigmatic enough for people to find their own emotion. That's what I strive for, and I think *Titanica* may have achieved it.

"Seeing the figure in front of that incredible building feels just like popping the Jaguar on the bonnet of the car, it's relatively tiny but hopefully carries the essence," Gillespie concludes.

In contrast *Kit*, by Essex-based artist Tony Stallard, stands 13.5 metres tall, and had to be hoisted into place by cranes operated by Harland and Wolff.

"It was a massive undertaking. I'd always been fascinated by the Titanic, and I wanted to focus on the making of the ship, and – without detracting from the terrible loss of life – celebrate an undeniably amazing achievement," says Stallard.

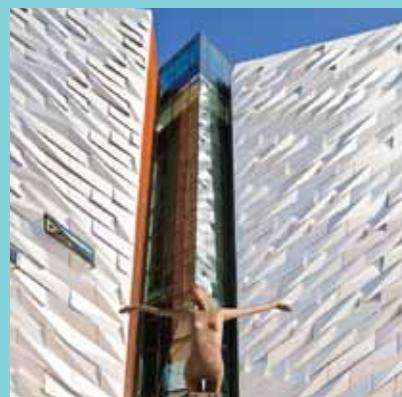
Like Gillespie, his inspiration sprang from a boyhood interest: "When I was a kid, I often used to play with Airfix," he says. "My idea for the sculpture was to include the funnel, hull and propellers, but within a kit.

"It's easy enough having the idea on paper, but making it a reality, that's something else! My timings had to tie in with the overall schedule for the site, and the project's success relied on guys on the street level, guys with cranes, builders. There were lots of meetings."

The internal units of the sculpture are bronze, cast by MSAF in Braintree, Essex, while the galvanised steel frame was fabricated by Harland and Wolff.

Its size, and location at the Abercorn Residential Complex, meant that health and safety issues were given serious consideration, and factors such as wind strength had to be taken into account.

By night, *Kit* is illuminated in blue,



**"I got inspired straight away: the museum's foundations are Ireland's largest single pour of concrete, and the immense aura of the place is so impressive"**

Rowan Gillespie  
Sculptor

## PUBLIC ART

becoming a light structure – increasingly a hallmark of Stallard’s work. “Light is integral to the design and concept,” he says. “It’s just as important a part of the process as the materials used in the piece. In the case of *Kit*, it has added resonance, as part of my initial inspiration came from seeing footage of submersibles lighting the wreck of the Titanic as it lay at the bottom of the ocean. That had a mystical atmosphere, which I wanted to capture.

“But I wanted to make *Kit* playful too, so local people could interact with it. It’s got to have an element of enjoyment. The feedback I had from the architects and builders was that it was fun, an exciting project to work on. It certainly took them out of their comfort zone.

“I think art should be a little bit edgy,” says Stallard. “*Kit* seems to provoke a really spontaneous reaction from the public. It’s mostly well accepted – people see the humour, even if they think it’s a crazy idea. It’s surprising to me that people I don’t know are filming it, putting it on YouTube and talking about it on internet forums.”

Both Stallard and Gillespie are internationally renowned artists, with work on display in cities across Europe, Canada and the US. Making a less visible, but equally valuable contribution to the global art scene is Harcourt Developments, whose support of public art has been recognized by the prestigious Business to Arts Award, which the company has won an unprecedented three times.

Marketing director John Doherty says: “Integrating cultural and artistic elements into all our projects is an important part of our philosophy. The founding directors have had a lifelong interest in painting,

sculpture and the performing arts, and have personal relationships with many artists. For example, Lucien Freud painted three portraits of our chairman Pat Doherty, in a series entitled *Donegal Man*.

“We also consider that investing a small percentage of the overall development cost in decorative, civic and public art makes the projects more aesthetically attractive,” Doherty says. “This adds value to the properties – as well as bringing enjoyment to the local community.”

Another artistic enhancement to the Titanic Quarter is the recent restoration of the original Titanic and Olympic Slipways, which have been designed to acknowledge their historic and cultural significance.

The end of the slipways are decked and shaped like the curved stern and railings of the Olympic-class ships. One slipway has four timber decks alternating with grass lawns, showing the numbers of Titanic’s survivors and victims, in each of the three classes on board – highlighting the high proportion of third-class passengers and crew who perished. Their names are set in glass panels fixed to the vertical keel blocks.

On the other slipway, white stones mark the main deck plan of Titanic, echoing the original blueprint. At night, full-size outlines of Titanic and Olympic are traced by a continuous strip of blue-lit glass embedded in the ground, in the exact positions in which they were built.

Both Stallard and Gillespie view their work as making a small contribution towards restoring the pride of Belfast in what was a triumph of shipbuilding. Gillespie sees a wider symbolic significance in the Titanic Quarter: “There’s such a great energy, people are moving forward, together. I was amazed and humbled that *Titanica* was dedicated by all four churches. It’s a sign of the healing of conflicts.” **TQ**



**Above:** Work in progress – *Kit* is 13.5 metres high and was lifted into place by Harland and Wolff cranes. **Left:** Detail of the *Kit* project. **Below:** Airfix models, a perennial children’s favourite, helped inspire Stallard’s work.

**“*Kit* seems to provoke a really spontaneous reaction from the public. It’s mostly well accepted – people see the humour, even if they think it’s a crazy idea”**

Tony Stallard  
Sculptor





# DOCK OF

# THE BAY

Titanic Quarter is a unique area of Belfast, a new place at the heart of the city, no-one's turf and open to all. The Abercorn Residential Complex attracts a cosmopolitan population and is drawing people back to the city, as they find everything they wanted among the first of Titanic Quarter's new villages. *Estates Gazette's* senior business journalist **Nick Whitten** explores

The Arc in Belfast is the first residential phase in what will eventually be one of the world's top five waterfront developments. That's the considered view of Eric Kuhne, the masterplanner of the 75-ha Titanic Quarter, whose company CivicArts has a notable reputation for waterfront projects across five continents, including Darling Harbour in Sydney, Australia.

On the site of the Harland and Wolff shipyard, where the Titanic was built, Harcourt Developments' growing new quarter that shares the name of the world's most famous ship, is an exciting example of the dockside-living renaissance that is sweeping cities around the world.

It is one of Europe's largest urban waterfront schemes and it is returning the



**Above:** Many Arc apartments have calming views over the Abercorn Basin.  
**Left:** Artist Tony Stallard's sculpture *Kif*.  
**Below:** Large balconies and communal green spaces for alfresco living.



focus of Northern Ireland's largest city back to its magnificent riverside.

Upon completion, Titanic Quarter is estimated to become home to around 20,000 people. And it is off to a flying start with the apartments at the Abercorn Residential Complex (The Arc) being snapped up, mostly by owner-occupiers, eager to live in the city's coolest new waterside quarter.

The Arc encompasses the first phase of regeneration set around the buzzing, well-connected Abercorn Basin.

It is designed by Robinson McIlwaine Architects, one of Northern Ireland's leading firms, whose award-winning design portfolio includes the Waterfront Hall and the new Bar Library, Belfast.

The Arc was completed in December 2010 and includes 474 apartments, a 120-bed Premier Inn hotel, a 500-space

**“It has just been the best move for us and we are very happy. Harcourt have done a great job with everything so far”**

**Sharon McFarland**  
Resident at The Arc

underground car park and 1,860sq m of commercial space.

Comprising six individual buildings, linked in pairs through a first floor podium garden and with secure parking, The Arc creates a serene private community.

The apartments are spacious, with one bedroom options offering up to 61sq m, two bedrooms up to 113sq m and three bedroom penthouse apartments totalling up to 177sq m.

Each apartment is finished to an excellent specification and has views over the waters of Abercorn Basin, private podium gardens or across Titanic Quarter to the Castlereagh Hills.

The homes employ the latest in technology including a full ventilation system with an inbuilt heat recovery unit that precludes the need to open windows.

They are also complemented by private landscaped gardens and each apartment has an integrated music system with built-in control panels and speakers in each of the principal rooms.

In addition, the entire development enjoys fibre-to-the-home (FTTH), providing a 100 megabits per second internet connection to every apartment.

The neighbouring Odyssey Pavilion offers alluring leisure facilities in the shape

of restaurants, bars, cinemas, a tenpin bowling alley, concerts and sports events.

And, within just a short stroll, an array of city centre amenities can also be found.

A five minute drive takes you to George Best Belfast City Airport. There are nearby ferry connections to Scotland and England, and there is also speedy access to the M1, M2 and M3 motorways.

Sharon and Brian McFarland bought a penthouse apartment at The Arc in January 2011. They had previously spent six years renovating a Victorian property on the outskirts of Belfast, but with time to reflect, they realised they wanted something more central and modern.

Sharon McFarland says: “We have found something that really suits our lifestyle. We are close to everything. It is fewer than 10 minutes walk to the city centre for shopping or to St George's Market to buy food.

“It has just been the best move for us and we are very happy. Harcourt have done a really great job with everything so far.”

The move to central Belfast has also been a winner for the McFarland's concrete consultancy business, McFarland Associates, as it has placed them within easy reach of clients.

But it is something unique to The Arc that has proved to be Mrs McFarland's favourite aspect of their new home.

“The best thing about The Arc is the view we have across the city,” she says.

“The view changes as the day goes on. It is different at night-time to what you see in the day and I love that. It's just fantastic.”

Kuhne has said that in Titanic Quarter he aimed to develop something that would persuade the people who moved away from Belfast over the past 25 years to return.

With his design team, he drove to towns, hamlets and villages outside Belfast to seek inspiration for what would bring people back into the city to live. The message was clear – people who had left Belfast missed it, but they wanted to live somewhere they considered safe enough to bring up a family.

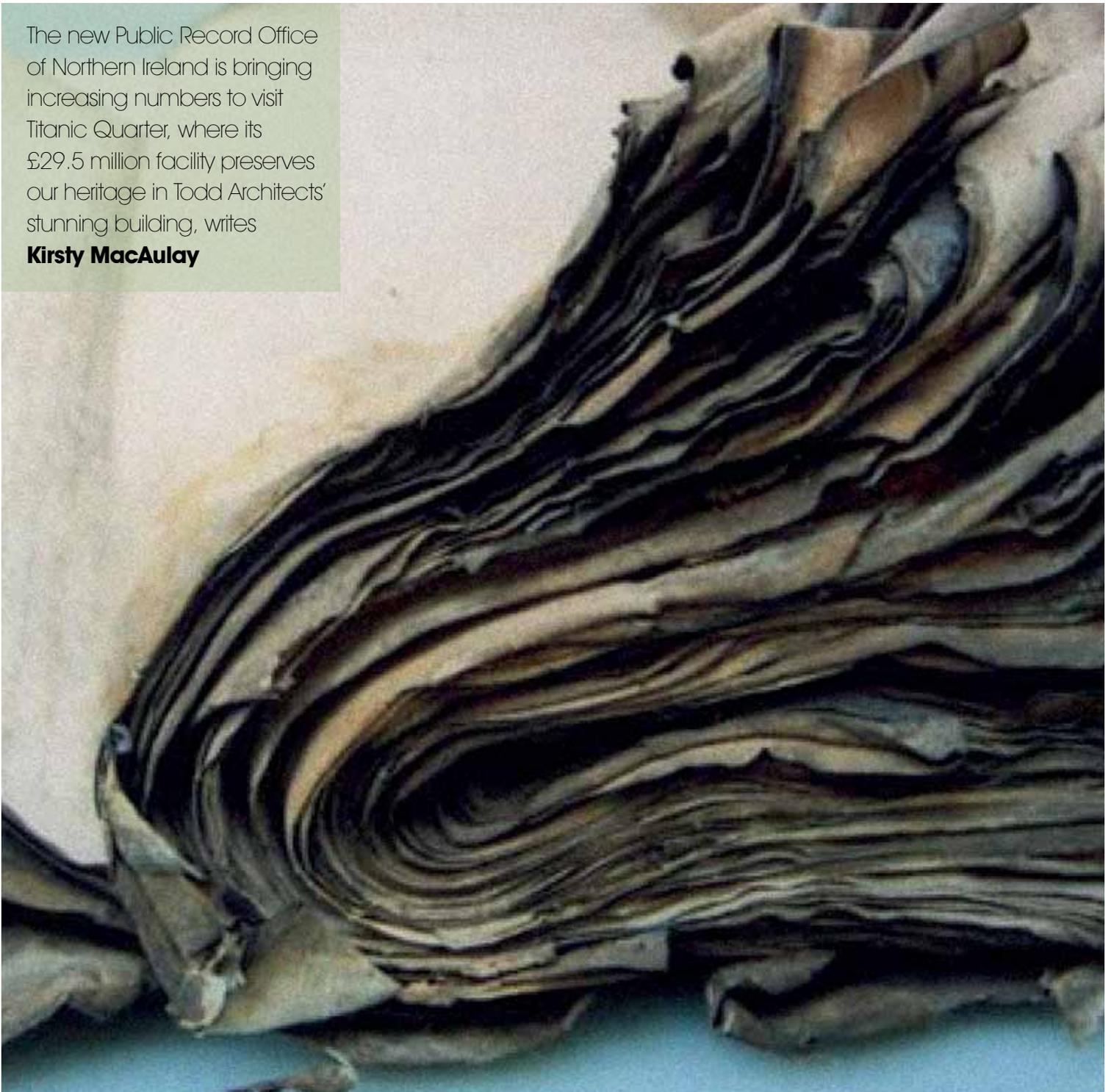
According to Kuhne it was then clear what had to be done. “We're building sustainable villages all pushed together, which is what any great city is like” he says. “London is like that, as is New York. There are 38 villages just on Manhattan. We started with that in mind for Titanic Quarter and ended with eight new villages.”

Kuhne says each village is self-contained and is designed with private parks and central courtyards offering safe places for children to play.

And from the very beginning, adds Kuhne, they received positive feedback from the city's planning team.

“We started getting signals from the planners that we had discovered something quite remarkable,” he says. “Instead of being a sleeping suburb, this is an expansion of an exciting new city centre for Belfast.” **TQ**

The new Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is bringing increasing numbers to visit Titanic Quarter, where its £29.5 million facility preserves our heritage in Todd Architects' stunning building, writes **Kirsty MacAulay**



# A RECORD DEVELOPMENT





The £29.5 million, purpose-built PRONI offices showcase Northern Ireland's public archives.

**“Here you can walk through the door and just have a look around, it’s terrific ... Everybody’s very welcome”**

**Lawrence Stanford**  
Project and marketing manager, PRONI

Whether from plain curiosity, the possibility of discovering a famous relation, the thrill of tracing your roots back to somewhere exotic, or being intrigued after watching *Who Do You Think You Are?* on TV, tracing your family tree has never been more popular. Annual footfall at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) currently stands at about 19,000 and is expected to rise now they are settled in their new premises at Titanic Quarter.

The profusion of websites, including PRONI’s, that can help trace a family tree means that you can find out if you have blue blood – or come from a long line of convicts – from the comfort of your own home, particularly helpful if you’re tracing your family tree abroad. But surely the smell of old records and hands-on deciphering of ancient handwriting are all part of the appeal?

PRONI’s new £29.5 million purpose-built offices offer visitors a relaxed and modern environment with state-of-the-art equipment and permanent exhibitions showcasing extracts from the archives.

The building, which opened in March 2011, has a lecture room, conservation laboratory, reading and search rooms, a cafe and free WiFi throughout. A lot of thought has gone into what the building needed to provide in order to give visitors a more enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The cafe is ideal, as food and drink are not allowed within the main building. When a document is ordered it can take up to 30 minutes to find, so visitors can enjoy a cup of coffee and slice of cake while they wait. Once a document is ready, a notification is displayed on one of the many screens in the building – there is even a screen in the cafe to ensure visitors waste no time in getting straight back to their search.

Practicalities such as bigger tables



**Flexibility and openness were important aspects of the design; it is a very open, airy and bright building**

provide plenty of space and make looking at larger documents and maps much easier. The search room has double the capacity of the previous building at Balmoral Avenue, and the four floors are colour coded, making it easier for visitors to find the area they are looking for. Laptop points allow visitors to update the records on their own computer immediately, rather than having to write up information and transfer it later. There is also a meeting room with CCTV (to ensure the safety of documents) allowing privacy for someone looking at sensitive and possibly upsetting documents.

Security and safety of the records is paramount. This is the first archive in Europe to have a water suppressant system, the boxes that hold the records are fire-retardant for an hour, the doors are fire-retardant for four hours, there are systems in place to check air purity and keep the temperature constant. In short, no stone has been left unturned in the bid to ensure the three million records that PRONI holds, many of which are irreplaceable and very delicate, are protected from any conceivable mishap.

“The building has to be stand-alone,” explains Lawrence Stanford, PRONI’s project and marketing manager. “The flooding aspect was a concern; we looked at the flood records and forecasts for the last 200 years.

**Above:** Felicity Straker Graham’s porcelain cabinet of scripts and scrolls, *Heritage 2010*.

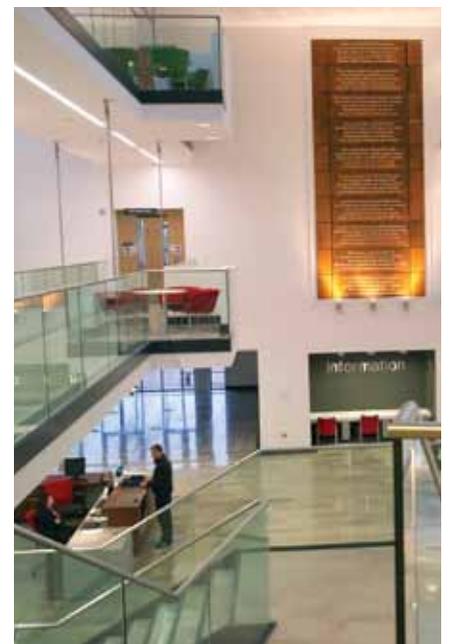
**Right:** Bigger tables in the public search room provide plenty of space for poring over large documents.

**Bottom right:** A corten steel sheet forms the backdrop to *Ulster Names*, the poem by acclaimed Belfast poet John Hewitt.

We looked at the possibility of a tidal wave coming up the dock and global warming and built above predicted levels, so this is probably the safest place in Belfast for records to be. Belfast itself would flood before this building would flood.”

Flexibility and openness were important aspects of the design; it is a very open, airy and bright building. And, in a nod to the area’s history, corten steel (which is often used in the construction of ships) is used throughout the building, even in one of the pieces of art.

According to Stanford, ‘openness’ was the key word when the design was being considered. He explains: “In Balmoral [PRONI’s previous location] unless you were going to register as a user you didn’t get further than the reception desk. Here you can walk through the door and just have a look around, it’s terrific. People who have no knowledge of records can come into the building and use the cafe or the internet facilities, they can look at the exhibition and art; it’s a nice experience. Our hope is that, maybe in five years’ time, they come back as a user or they go away and tell people about their experience. Everybody’s very welcome. We work with schools and universities because they will be



**“I value the opportunity to create artworks in building projects and believe that through this process, we create more imaginative, unique cities and add visual wealth to our built environment”**

**Rita Duffy**

Integrated art co-ordinator for PRONI

the customers of tomorrow – we have to get them in now, get them interested and that is something the exhibition space has done for us.”

The launch exhibition: ‘A century of change, conflict and transformation’ covers the period from 1911–2011, relevant because the census dates from 1911 and the new building opened in 2011.

The centrepiece of the project is the 70th anniversary of the Belfast Blitz complete with a replica Anderson shelter. The exhibition showcases items from PRONI’s vast records including photographs, leaflets, propaganda, personal letters and newspaper reports documenting Northern Ireland through the decades.

And according to Stanford, this is just one of many potential exhibitions that could be held to encourage people to discover what PRONI has to offer. “There’s so much scope for us to have different themes,” he says. “I’d be very keen to take roving exhibitions out so people can get to know us. We’re vying for people’s spare time really, I suppose people could choose to go to a leisure centre or shopping centre but we want to get those people in here.

“Two thirds of our regular customers are local people who are semi-retired or



**Right:** Long porcelain folds by Felicity Straker Graham, who descends from three generations of ceramic industrialists.



retired who come to look up their family tree; it’s very, very popular. We get visitors from the States, Australia and New Zealand too and this is all they come to do, we’ll ask them ‘have you seen the Giant’s Causeway?’ and when they say ‘no’ it does surprise us. We have tour companies who bring people across just to trace their family tree; everybody wants to be Irish!”

But the new building holds more than just old records; PRONI now also offers an exhibition of specially commissioned art. The art that adorns walls, tables and screens throughout the building give it an added layer of appeal, something to get people to come inside and get them talking, as Stanford puts it: “It’s nice not to have plain walls. It makes it interesting.”

Rita Duffy, PRONI’s integrated art co-ordinator, was commissioned to put together the art collection. She says: “I value the opportunity to create artworks in building projects and believe that through this process, we create more imaginative, unique cities and add visual wealth to our built environment.”

Duffy wanted to include a poem in the collection from the outset and when she discovered PRONI holds a collection of local poet John Hewitt’s work, it became clear that this was the answer. The poem *Ulster Names* celebrates place names and includes every county; the perfect piece for the new building. The poem was fittingly transcribed onto corten steel; it sits in the entrance and runs almost the full height of the building.

Another piece, *Heritage 2010* was created from porcelain by Felicity Straker Graham as a tribute to all those who have contributed their skill, patience and expertise to make PRONI the multifunctional source of information it is today. Stanford enthuses: “It is a unique piece of art, everybody is very taken with it.” Understandably, because it embodies all that PRONI offers in this unique new building. **TQ**



**Top left:** A damask linen napkin, similar to those used in the Titanic’s first class dining room, forms this bonnet. **Middle:** This simple, bronze boat alludes to Belfast’s ship-building heritage. **Bottom:** *Native 2010* sounds a surreal note in the exhibition.

Brilliant ideas flow readily from academia. But to become the next Facebook or Apple, young businesses need peer support and help from the experts, to carve their own niche in the knowledge economy, and turn those ideas into successful businesses. **Ben Willis** discovers a hothouse of innovation at Northern Ireland Science Park

# MASTERS OF SCIENCE

One of the many outcomes of the 1998 Good Friday agreement was the development of the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) in Belfast's Titanic Quarter regeneration area. As well as laying the foundations for today's devolved government, the agreement also came with a pledge of funding to create a hi-tech business centre affiliated to Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

From its inception in 2002, the science park has now grown to six separate buildings, housing more than 105 companies which collectively employ 1,500 staff. With further space coming on-stream, this is set to increase to 110 companies, with more than 2,000 employees on site.

Businesses range from small start-ups to larger concerns such as the UK arm of the European IT giant SAP.

According to NISP chief executive, Dr Norman Apsley OBE, the strength of the park lies in its ability to promote the exchange of ideas and skills between individuals and companies through their close physical location.

"We would describe the science park as a 'peer-driven' network," he says. "The reason campuses work so well for

universities is because kids learn from each other far more than they learn from a lecturer. A lecturer or teacher will tend to just speak the syllabus, but the actual learning is going on in the groups, in workshops ... That's the model for the science park, where the learning is done among the tenants."

Because so many of the firms located in the science park are small, possibly spin-outs from research projects in the two universities, the facilitation of this "hothouse" environment has a clear commercial objective: to help fledgling businesses grow.

"Something like two-thirds of the science park is occupied by about 25 companies," Apsley says. "So that one-third left over is really the meat of what we really do on a daily basis, and they are often tiny companies, but with the potential to grow very quickly."

Companies located in the park utilise the space in a variety of ways. Some do not even have a desk on site, using it only for its high-speed wireless connection or to have a business address. Others use shared spaces within the park, where they have a dedicated desk, while some might have a smaller individual space taken on a licence rather than a lease. Another option is a short-term lease on a smaller space, typically up to around 5,000sq ft.





**Left:** The Concourse building, the UK base for European IT company SAP.  
**Below left:** Connections and growth opportunities attracted PathXL to the Innovation Centre at NISP.

**“We would describe the science park as a ‘peer-driven’ network ... where the learning is done among the tenants”**

Dr Norman Apsley OBE  
 NISP chief executive

“What we’re trying to do is make a system whereby whatever size you enter at, your phone number is yours and your address is yours, and you can get up to whatever size you want or even take over a building,” Apsley explains.

As well as trying to help new businesses get off the ground through the physical accommodation and high connectivity levels it offers, NISP also runs a number of dedicated support programmes.

One of these is NISP CONNECT, a collaboration between the park, the two associated universities and Northern Ireland’s Agri Food and Biosciences Institute. NISP CONNECT oversees a variety of programmes aimed at helping businesses grow, from accessing capital to entrepreneurial training and mentoring.

One of its flagship initiatives is the £25,000 Entrepreneurship Award, a competition sponsored by the Bank of Ireland and open to local researchers who have ideas with commercial potential. Shortlisted applicants are given mentoring in skills such as pitching, financial planning and accessing investment before overall winners are chosen. These receive cash prizes totalling £25,000, as well as valuable publicity, which many use as the platform from which to begin their journey towards commercialisation of their innovations.

Another of NISP’s key support initiatives is Halo, the NI Business Angel Network. A joint initiative of Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland, this scheme gives businesses exposure to potential angel investors and venture capitalists. Apsley explains that Halo operates by offering companies training from top business and legal professionals, before putting them in front of a panel of so-called business angels – investors – to pitch their ideas.

When we meet, Apsley says Halo is planning to take a group of local business representatives over to London to meet



**“Down here we are part of a much bigger ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship, and there’s a huge buzz going on around the science park”**

Des Speed  
Chief executive of PathXL



**Above:** Digital pathology software company PathXL was a spinout of Queen’s University.  
**Right:** The area’s shipbuilding history never feels far away.  
**Below:** Samson and Goliath, Harland and Wolff’s distinctive yellow cranes, still dominate the cityscape.

a group of venture capitalists there. “Normally we do it here, but we’re taking eight companies for their first pitch outside of Ireland,” he says. “The venture capital industry lives in London and it’s hard to get them unseated and brought over here, so we’re taking the companies to Pall Mall.”

For the businesses based in the science park, its combination of flexible occupancy options, proximity to similar companies and support services is an attractive mix.

Des Speed is chief executive of PathXL, a young company that creates digital pathology software. With PathXL looking to undergo rapid expansion, Speed says a key attraction of the science park is the affordability and flexibility of the leases.

“We’re doubling our revenue this year, so at some point we’re going to outgrow this particular accommodation,” he says. “But there’s always movement happening [in other companies] so there are opportunities for us to grow here.”

Another key feature of NISP for Speed is the connections it offers with other companies.

Before moving to NISP, PathXL, a spinout of Queen’s, was located in a unit near the university, in accommodation Speed says was “inappropriate” for a professional company. “It reminded me of the surgery of my previous dentist, with little rooms and cracked windows, and it was isolated from so many hi-tech influences,” he says.



“Down here we are part of a much bigger ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship, and there’s a huge buzz going on around the science park,” says Speed. “As a start-up business it’s easy to feel lonely; what being part of a network does is give you the sense that other people are facing the same challenges.”

**B**en Greene, director of SAP Research, an arm of the bigger SAP IT company, has similar thoughts

about the park. When SAP first moved to Northern Ireland, it was co-located with the University of Ulster, but eventually decided it needed to move to bigger premises. A key factor influencing that move, he says, was the need for close proximity to like-minded people and the potential opportunities that presented to forge partnerships.

“One thing that’s very clear in the research environment is that you don’t do something on your own; if you do that you end up in a siloed vision of what the world looks like, which ultimately ends up kicking you,” says Greene. “We wanted to be in that hothouse environment where we could meet other partners, who could bring to the discussion skills or topics we didn’t necessarily have internally.”

In this regard, SAP’s move to the science park has been highly successful. Through meetings arranged by NISP, Greene says he got to know some of the people from software firm SQS, located on the floor below SAP. The two companies identified some joint interests, saw the opportunity to create a bigger project together and, along with IT firm Intel and some academic partners, launched a major collaborative research project.

But beyond the business advantages of being located in the science park, Greene says it is just a pleasant place to work, a factor crucial to staff morale and retention.

“People spend a lot of time in the office, so it’s got to be somewhere they feel happy,” he says. “I also like to be able to go home and talk to my family and say we’re located in a science park next to the Titanic Quarter; it’s kind of a kudos thing. I think everyone feels that about this location.” **TQ**



# CARGO OF SOULS

Unique in Northern Ireland, Titanic Quarter is a mixed community in different senses, a new neighbourhood, open to those of all faiths and none, without the baggage of boundary or identity. Building a community means more than new homes and workplaces – those seeking a connection with others through church use a temporary cafe and may even find it on board a boat, if The Dock Church comes to berth in the Abercorn Dock, writes **Kirsty MacAulay**

Soulless is a criticism often levelled at new developments. Not something, however that Titanic Quarter can be accused of. At the heart of the 75-ha, mixed-use site, which offers housing, a college, science park, tourist attraction and business space, is a unique church, having found ‘meanwhile’ use as a pop-up cafe in an Abercorn Basin retail unit.

Regeneration projects often include elegant spaces and interesting public art to create a sense of place. Titanic Quarter prides itself on this but takes its quest for the wellbeing of its residents and workers further by providing respite for the soul. Importantly, the church at Titanic Quarter provides for all Christian souls regardless of denomination – and will open its gangplank to those of other faiths too. The Dock, currently a work in progress in its temporary cafe, is planned ultimately to be a multi-faith church based on a boat.

Chris Bennett, a Church of Ireland minister and Titanic Quarter’s chaplain, says: “There has never been an opportunity like this in Northern Ireland – a brand new area that is not seen as Protestant or Catholic. We have to take this opportunity, we can’t let it slip through our fingers.”

Fellow chaplain Karen Spence of Sydenham Methodist Church, echoes his view: “This is a blank canvas to create a community. There are many examples of churches working together, each from their own premises. What is different with The Dock is the vision of a shared space, a team working together to serve the Titanic Quarter community.”

The Dock aims to offer a ‘fresh expression of church in Northern Ireland, in a shared space which promotes community cohesion’. Community is at the heart of the



idea, Bennett explains: “Northern Ireland is the story of people huddling in their own little communities and we’ve realised just how dangerous that is and what damage that does to community life. The vibrancy of The Dock Church will be the mix of cultures. Although the group behind it are coming from a Christian perspective, any faith, any belief, any background will be welcomed. The idea is to be a community hub – a place with comfy sofas and a pot of coffee on the go and all kinds of people sitting around having conversations.”

Catholic Brother Finian Gavin, a member of the management board of The Dock, adds: “This is a creative approach to what is held in common among christian churches. We are able to respect difference and focus on our common heritage. I feel very excited to be involved, especially as a “blow in” from the south. As a Catholic and a member of the Christian Brothers I feel privileged to have been introduced to The Dock Church. It leaves me with great hope for the future of the Peace Process. A fresh start at the Titanic Quarter at this time will eventually inspire others.”

Why a boat? According to The Dock’s business plan, it avoids being identified with one community or another, this shared space will be something radically different to the familiar church buildings of all traditions. And what could be more different than a boat? Bennett claims the idea of a church on a boat in the Titanic Quarter just seems to fit. Funds are being raised to finance the plans, although Bennett recognises the scale of the fundraising challenge may mean it is unlikely to be up and running very soon. However he hopes a boat might be purchased and actually in the dock, berthed at Abercorn Basin, at some point in the future.

Options that were considered included the Kittiwake, a bright red lightship from Dublin, and the Arctic Penguin, also a lightship designed to go out in storms to warn other ships away from rocks, which until recently housed a museum in Scotland. The Arctic Penguin captured people’s imagination as Bennett explains: “You show people pictures of it and all of a sudden they get it and they can get behind the whole idea. This boat, it’s the right kind of price, it’s the right kind of size and it has these little tie-ins to Titanic. It was built in Dublin in 1910 (while Titanic was being built in Belfast) and it was initially used as a light ship off the coast of Cork. Titanic’s last stop was at Queenstown (Cobh), County Cork, so its passengers may have seen our boat from the deck as they went past.”

The light image appeals to Bennett: “It ties into the church idea. This will be the light in the middle of the Titanic Quarter,



**Above:** The Arctic Penguin was one of the ships being considered.

**Right above:** Reverend Chris Bennett (right) at a breakfast meeting.

**Right below:** The eye-catching red Kittiwake was another contender as The Dock Church.

where if people need someone to talk to, if they’ve gone through a personal tragedy, if they’re feeling stressed or lonely – whatever it may be, whether they work, live or study here they know that there’s a light they can go to and find somebody to help.

“As the world becomes more socially networked there is still a very deep human need for interaction. There are so many opportunities for us to connect around here; I’m hoping to get stronger links with the college, movie studios, science park and skate park. Usually the church is there for people who live in an area but you don’t have to live at Titanic Quarter to be part of the community here. I would see myself as here for all of those different groups – not just the residents.”

Until the boat is up and running, Bennett is holding monthly ‘Meet the Neighbours’ sessions to get to know people and encourage interaction, something that he feels is going well: “I don’t think I’ve ever come away from a meeting without thinking it was brilliant,” he says.

Dock Walks are held each Sunday, offering a new way of ‘doing church’ as people meet up to walk, talk, drink tea or coffee, listen to music and stop to pray.

The Dock is thinking outside the box of the traditional church, something which particularly excites Spence: “We have no idea how this will pan out. I love the concept; the fact that no-one is saying, ‘this is how it has always been done’. We have dreams of what we would like to see but nothing is set in stone – anything and everything is possible!” **TQ**

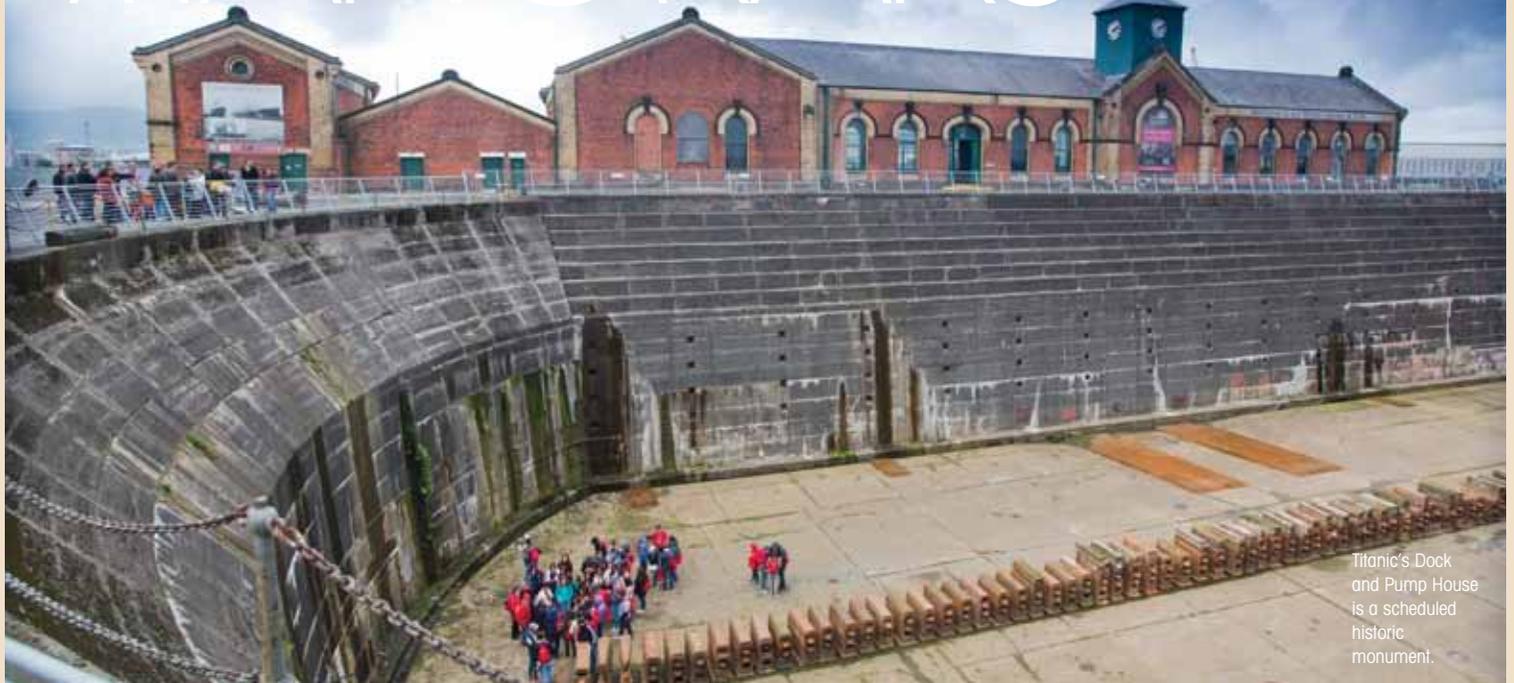
**Left:** Seizing the opportunity: Chris Bennett is passionate about The Dock’s potential to unite.



**“The vibrancy of The Dock Church will be the mix of cultures”**

**Chris Bennett**  
The Dock

# TITANORAKS



Titanic's Dock and Pump House is a scheduled historic monument.

For a small group of Belfast residents, all the Titanic developments just reinforce what they've known for years: that building the biggest ship in the world was something to be immensely proud of, writes **Lucy Purdy**

One bright afternoon on 31 May, 1911, around 100,000 people, one third of the city's population, turned out to watch RMS Titanic being launched

from Harland and Wolff's yard on Queen's Island. It would be almost a year later, after being fitted out and undergoing sea trials, that she would embark on her maiden voyage from Southampton.

But just 13 days after she left Belfast for the final time, the Titanic had sunk to the bottom of the ocean, leaving over 1,500 passengers and crew dead.

Fast forward more than 100 years and the dry dock has become a tourist attraction – a scheduled historic monument, completely unchanged since 1911 – where visitors can go to the bottom of the dry dock and get a true impression of the size of Titanic.

And now the city is embracing its links with Titanic, after a history of shying away from them, with new commercial and tourist ventures springing up in this corner of Belfast. But some residents have embraced the Titanic story with pride for decades. In 1992 Una Reilly – who owns a striking chessboard made from Titanic off-cuts and passed down through generations by her cabinet maker great-grandfather – co-founded the Titanic Belfast Society, which now has 250 members.

She says: "When Dr Ballard made his discovery, the rest of the world got very excited but there was nothing happening here in Belfast. Now we have reclaimed that pride in our maritime history. There is a new, brighter message coming out from Belfast today."

Susie Millar's great-grandfather Thomas was 33 when he worked as an engineer on the Titanic and was on

board when she sank, leaving his two sons orphaned. A journalist and broadcaster, Millar now conducts tours around key Titanic sites, offering a uniquely personal insight into the tragic tale.

"Thomas was going to take the Titanic to New York, settle there, and then his sons were going to join him," she explains. "But like so many others on board, he never made it. I am able to weave his story through the sites we visit on the tour, which is fantastic."

"Belfast struggled to come to terms with what happened because it was such a disaster for the city – this happening to the ship just weeks after it left us. But now, by handling the subject sensitively, it has helped open up this whole tranche of the waterside."

Colin Cobb is another self-professed 'Titanorak' whose fascination with the Titanic began when he was a boy. Inspired by the wrecks discovered in 1985 and then by James Cameron's 1997 blockbuster, Cobb now runs walking tours for visitors from all over the world.

"It started up in 2008 and it was a very simple thing initially, me on my own. And now it has blossomed into this very different beast. The timing turned out to be perfect," he says. "What happened to the ship was a disaster, a terrible accident, but what we focus on is the success story – the pride and innovation with which it was built. We didn't have many natural resources, just the heart of our workers." **TQ**



**"It was such a disaster for the city ... But now, by handling the subject sensitively, it has helped open up this whole tranche of the waterside"**

**Susie Millar**

Journalist and descendant of Titanic engineer