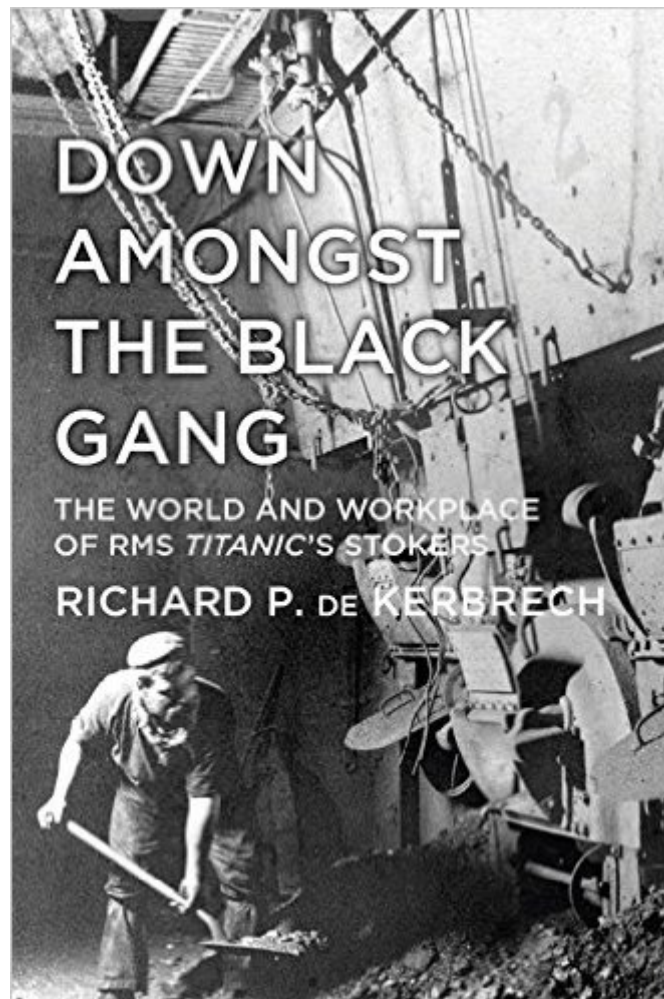


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Down Amongst The Black Gang: The World And Workplace Of RMS Titanic's Stokers



Synopsis

One of the first works to look inside the powerhouse of Titanic-era ships—the manpower that generated the horsepower, including a list of the ship's "black gang" and their fates—Down in the fiery belly of the luxury liners of the Titanic era, a world away from the first-class dining rooms and sedate tours of the deck, toiled the "black gang." Their work was grueling and hot, and this book introduces the reader to the dimly lit world and workplace of Titanic's stokers. It begins with a journey around some of the major elements of machinery that one might encounter in the giant ships' engine and boiler rooms, sure to satisfy those with technical minds, yet in an accessible style that will aid the lay reader's understanding. The human side of working for the Titanic and her contemporaries is also involved in an exploration of stokers' duties, environment, and conditions: what it was like to be one of the "black gang."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The "black gang" -- the name given to those who literally shoveled their way (and Titanic's) across much of the Atlantic -- is the basis of this most interesting book on a little-known aspect of Titanic. While the book admittedly is somewhat technical in nature, the research is first-rate. It describes vividly the hellish working conditions of these tough men, and also the procedures used "down below," well out of sight of the passengers above. Though most of the illustrations of course are of ships other than Titanic, they illustrate the subject successfully and are well-chosen. Recommended reading, especially for liner buffs.

A book for those who are interested in the propulsion system of the Olympic-class vessels - lots of photographs and illustrations to help you further understand the workings of each system. It would seem that the book is more about the engineering aspects of the ship than individual "black gang" members - which is far better for those that are interested in the engineering of the ships. Only part I was disappointed was the lack of coverage of the funnels - their makeup and all that - but, that's really nit-picking - but they are part of the boiler systems and frankly, I thought they should be covered - they are covered in other sources - but seeing this book is about the propulsion system - oh well, only my thoughts. Yes, this is an engineering book - and hence it may be a tad dry to those non-engineers - but if you are interested in this - then it's right up your alley - I was telling an engineer friend about this book and I was reminded of a T-shirt I saw: "Engineers are not boring people - they're just interested in boring things."

Very useful. I've been a Titanic enthusiast for 50 years or so and had only ever read brief and similar accounts of the engineers and their world. Helps to have a basic knowledge of steam engineering. If so, you will enjoy this book thoroughly. Maybe a little light on the human interest but what can you say after 100 years has passed on the individuals. Having said that, there is more here than in other books. Well researched and illustrated.

I have been looking for this information for years. I ran steam plants in the Navy and have been interested in Titanic for many years. It confirmed what I had figured out myself and answered the questions I had.

The stories of the transatlantic liners rarely, if ever, show what was happening below decks. Most books tend to concentrate on the opulence of the furnishings and the rich and famous passengers that graced them. This book is a fascinating record of the men who toiled in harsh conditions for little pay and who were looked on with contempt. A great tribute to the unsung heroes of the stoke hold.

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