

Elizabeth Nye : Folkestone passenger's graphic account

Folkestone Herald

Saturday 4 May 1912

Mrs. Nye's account of the catastrophe Captain Smith and the little girl His last words: 'I must go with the ship'.

Mrs. Elizabeth Nye, daughter of Mr. Thomas I. Ramell, coach builder, Dover Road, Folkestone, has sent to her father and mother a thrilling story of the foundering of the Titanic and the manner in which she was rescued. The letter, which is dated "Royal Mail Steamship Carpathia, Tuesday, April 16th, is as follows:-

"My dear mother and dad, - I expect you have been wondering whether you would ever hear from me again. You have seen by the papers the wreck of the Titanic, but after the most terrible time of my life, I am safe. My nerves are very shattered, I look and feel about ten years older, but I will get over it again after a time. "You will like to hear the truth of the wreck from me, for the papers never tell the right news. We were all in bed on Sunday night at about 11.30, when we felt an awful jerk, and the boat grazed something along its side, and the sea seemed to splash right over the deck. The men in the next cabin slipped on their coats and ran up to see what it was, and came and told us the ship had run into an iceberg nearly as large as herself. "Most of the people went back to bed again, but then came an order 'get up and put something warm on, put on a lifebelt and come on deck.' So I got one underskirt on and a skirt, and stockings, and shoes and coat, and ran up to find a lifebelt, because there were only three in our berth for four of us. A boy from the next cabin stole one from ours, but he went down with it poor boy. We did not have time to go back to our cabins again to get anything, and we did not dream it was serious. I thought I should get back to get more clothes on and get a few other things, but we were put into the lifeboats, and pushed off at once. They put all ladies and children in first. I guess there were 30 or 40 in our boat. It seemed to be the last one lowered with women in it. "When we got away from the ship we could understand the hurry and the order to get half a mile away as soon as possible. For the Titanic was half in the water. We watched the port holes go under until half the ship, only the back half, stuck up. Then the lights went out, and the boilers burst and blew up. There was a sickening roar like hundreds of lions, and we heard no more but THE MOANING AND SHOUTING for help from the hundreds of men and a few women who went down with her. "There were not enough boats for so many people. Twenty lifeboats were lowered, and only fourteen boats were picked up. Several men were on a raft that was thrown out, and their cries for help were so pitiful for so long. Only one fellow, about 21 years old, is alive from the raft. He says the men were pushed off to make it lighter. This man was on it for six hours and then saved. "Just before the ship went down the

Captain, the same Captain Smith of the twin ship Olympic, jumped into the sea and picked up a little girl who was hanging to the ship, and put her on the raft. They pulled him on, too, but he would not stay. He said 'Good-bye boys, I must go with the ship'. He swam back through the icy waters and died at his post.

[. . . piece missing . . continues] only a lighted rope end. We had no drink or provisions. The only thing in our favour was the clear starlight night and fairly smooth sea. "This boat, the Carpathia, of the Cunard line, was going from Halifax to Berlin. She was the only ship near enough to catch the wireless message for help from the Titanic, and then the operators says he was just leaving and closing the door, when he heard the clicking of the wireless. So it was taken just in time, for they never sent another message, and it was an hour and quarter after that before the first lifeboat got to the ship. Of course, she stood still, and waited for us all to come up. They were all in but two when we got in. "We were in the little boat for just five hours and a half before being rescued. They lowered bags for the babies to pull them up, and we sat on a kind of swing and were drawn up by a rope to safety. They have been most kind to us. Led us one by one to the dining room, and gave us brandy. I drank half a glass of brandy down without water. We were all perished, and it put life into us. The ship is, of course, filled with its own passengers, But they found places for us all to sleep, but none of us slept well after going through such A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE This ship stood right over the place where the Titanic went down, and picked us up. Two small boats were picked up later. They were floating. One had seven dead bodies in it, and the other just a dead boatman. They sewed them up in canvas here, weighted them, and gave them a Christian burial at sea. Two small boats filled with passengers capsized. They all went down but two or three, who clung to the upturned boat, and were saved. "We are told that the SS Baltic picked up about fifty men, and the poor women here are hoping their husbands are among the fifty. It is supposed there are 160 more widows through this wreck, and most of them have children. It was so heart breaking to see and hear them crying for their husbands. "We were all gathered together, and our names taken for the newspapers. Of course, they cannot tell how many are dead, but we have on this ship only two hundred crew out of 910 and 500 passengers out of 2,000. I am amongst the fortunate, for God has spared my life when I was so near death again. I have lost everything I had on board. The only thing I saved was my watch Dad gave me eleven years ago. But all my treasures and clothes and some money have gone. I have only the scanty clothes that I stand up in, including my big coat, which has been a blessing. "We expect to land on Wednesday night, or next morning. I shall be so thankful, for I feel so ill on this boat. The boat is not so nice, and we have to sleep in the bottom of the boat. But still, I thank God I am alive. "I could tell you much more of the horrors of Sunday night, but will write again later on land. I can't bear to think of it all now. Will you let Auntie and Edie see this letter, and tell my friends I am safe. You must have all been anxious.

'With fondest love to all, from Lizzie.'

The previous narrow escape to which Mrs. Nye (who is well known in Folkestone) refers, was a serious illness from appendicitis. Her life has been full of sad and trying experiences. Her first sweetheart was washed off the Harbour Pier and drowned. She married a few years later, but had the misfortune to lose her two children by death, and also her husband.

Courtesy of Brian Ticehurst

Copyright Encyclopedia Titanica - **www.encyclopedia-titanica.org** 1996-2015 and third parties (ref: #12568), accessed 23rd July 2015 12:20:15 AM)
<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/elizabeth-nye-folkestone-passengers-graphic-account.html>