

# A collection of letters from the Titanic belonging to its Chief Officer is revealed by family members in Merseyside

by Catherine Jones, Liverpool Echo | Mar 31 2012

AN ASTONISHING collection of artefacts connected with the Titanic's Chief Officer has been unearthed on Merseyside.

The personal items belonging to Liverpool-born second-in-command Henry Tingle Wilde have been in the loft of a family home for many years.

They include his birth and marriage certificates, his will, photographs and a White Star Line officer's cap.

The cache also includes a number of letters penned by the 39-year-old on board the Titanic, the last dated April 11, 1912, which was when the liner called in at Queenstown, now Cobh, near Cork on its last stop before New York.

A similar letter, written on board a few days earlier, was going up for sale in a Titanic centenary auction in Wiltshire today with an estimate of between £25,000-£30,000.

Henry Wilde's grandson, who lives in Merseyside, revealed the collection in a display of artefacts at last weekend's Tribute to Titanic concert at Liverpool Cathedral.

And he said his aunt - the sailor's eldest daughter Jane - "never threw anything away", which is why the family still has a collection of very personal items connected with the tragedy.

He added: "No one ever talked about the Titanic. All this has just been in stuck in the loft for 30 years."

Henry Tingle Wilde was born on September 21 1872 in Highfield Road, Walton, to Henry Wilde and his wife Elizabeth and went to sea as a teenager, apprenticed to James Chambers & Co, Liverpool.

The widower with four young children aged 12 to three had worked for the White Star Line for around 15 years when he moved from Chief Officer of the Olympic to join the Titanic's maiden voyage as second-in-command to Captain Edward Smith.

He helped load the lifeboats but did not survive the disaster himself and his body was never recovered.

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