

The Way We Were

Titanic Trail

Begin your day with a visit to Queen's Island, home of Harland & Wolff, once the world's greatest shipbuilders, and get on the trail of their most famous ship, the legendary Titanic. Here are the offices where she was designed, the slipways where she was launched, the pump house and dry dock where her superstructure was added and SS Nomadic, her tender ship. Enquire at the Belfast Welcome Centre for information on walking tours, self-guided multi-media tours, boat, car and bus tours. Guided and self-guided tours are available of the Thompson dry dock and pump house from the Northern Ireland Science Park at Queen's Island (T: 028 9073 7813).

Grab a bite to eat around the corner at one of the amazing Odyssey Pavilion's enticing and great value restaurants.

Home from the Shipyard

A short bus or cab ride away you can discover how many of the workers on Titanic might have lived. Several streets around the Templemore Avenue area survive from those times, not least the two-up two-down terrace houses of McMaster Street, just off Newtownards Road. Listed in 1994, these small terrace houses are gradually being restored. Popular with schoolchildren, the atmospheric street has been used as a backdrop for 'Cold Feet' and several other television and screen dramas. Look out for the traditional mix of yellow and red bricks in different patterns round the doors and windows here and in neighbouring streets.

Public Baths

Families in McMaster Street would have washed in a portable tin bath in the kitchen with hot water drawn from the range. Or they might have 'splashed out' at the Templemore Public Baths in nearby Templemore Avenue. Opened by Belfast Corporation (now Belfast City Council) in 1895, the building housed two bathing areas for personal washing and two pools for recreational and competitive swimming. If you ask it is still possible to see the remaining bathing area (the other was demolished), which was in use as late as the 1970s. A popular swimming pool, where actor James Ellis and soccer star George Best both swum, it remains an important part of local life.

Sweet Teeth

You can see old-fashioned sweets, as well as honeycomb and fudge, being made in the traditional way at Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory at 60 Castlereagh Road. It's a delicious way to enjoy a slice of our social history (Call 028 9073 2868 in advance to book).

Titanic aficionados might be interested to know it is still possible to see the homes of the founders of Harland & Wolff, which are both listed. You will find Gustav Wolff's house, known locally as 'The Den', at 2 Station Road, Sydenham. The home of Edward Harland, Ormiston House, which later became the residence of Titanic's creator Lord Pirrie, is on Hawthornden Road, just ten minutes from Stormont.

Finally, why not round off your day with a film at the wonderful Art Deco Strand Cinema at 165 Holywood Road. Opened in 1935, its design influenced by the proximity of Harland & Wolff, it looks like a ship with its curved walls and foyer lights in the form of portholes.