



Auld Hands: The Story of the Men Who Made Belfast Shipyards Great

Tom Thompson

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The story of shipbuilding in Belfast is known throughout the world: the great ships, including *Titanic*, *HMS Belfast* and *SS Canberra*; the towering cranes; its contribution to making Belfast a great industrial city. Less well known, but just as fascinating and illuminating, is the remarkable story of the Islandmen – the men who worked in the shipyards and built the world-renowned vessels.

Author Tom Thompson comes from a proud line of shipyard workers. In 1949, aged sixteen, he started work at Harland and Wolff's Joiners' Shop. He found himself in a new world, of apprentices and Gaffers, Hats and Bulkies; where lunchtime religious services ran alongside illegal gambling, and where hard graft and good craic went hand in hand.

This book is a first-hand account of the close-knit community that flourished in the yards, and a wonderful compendium of memories that captures the spirit of a bygone era and provides a fascinating slice of social history.

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