

AV

Market survey: Distribution 11

Analysis: Audio in education 19

Roundtable debate: Integration 22

Technology briefing: EN54 25

Exclusive: AV40 – Video conferencing 31

Remembering Titanic's legacy

PAGE 16





Walking around the plans



DJ WILLRICH

Reliving Titanic

As we mark the centenary of Titanic's sinking, major projects open in Belfast where the ship was built, and in Southampton where it sailed from. *Clive Couldwell* reports

» *Titanic Belfast* explores the sights, sounds, smells and stories of J Bruce Ismay's great ship, as well as the City and people which made her. Southampton City Council's SeaCity Museum features two Titanic exhibitions and a third about the City, designed by Urban Salon. Southampton's exhibition tells the story from the crew's perspective, as most of Titanic's crew were Southampton residents.

Design firm Eric Kuhne & Associates worked with CivicArts on its landmark scheme to breathe life back into Belfast's historic dockyards. Museum and attractions specialist Event Communications created the vision for *Titanic Belfast* and worked on the design of the permanent exhibition housed within its museum. This covers the liner's entire journey, from its conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, right through to its maiden voyage, subsequent place in history and discovery of the wreck.

From the outside, with Todd Architects acting as lead consultant with Harcourt Construction, the Titanic development reflects Harland & Wolff's



Top: The magnificent banqueting suite;
Middle & Bottom: Titanic inquiry and launch

legacy and the wider impact of shipbuilding and the sea on Belfast's development. The building conjures up lots of maritime metaphors; its four projecting segments evoking ships' prows as they plough their way through the North Atlantic swell.

AV specialist DJ Willrich was tasked with converting Event's brief into reality. "The height of the building and the bows you can see are the size of the Titanic and sister ship Olympic which stood on the slipways just outside. The architect also wanted to bring together the crystal effect of the iceberg. The cladding on the outside of the building breaks up the structure and gives it that watery feel," says DJW's project lead, John Doe.

The building's entire facade is clad in faceted, three-dimensional plates in a pattern which recalls the construction methods of the great ocean liners. Developed with the help of specialist facade contractor Metallbau Frueh and manufactured by Spanwall, 3,000 anodised aluminium plates are arranged into a complex asymmetrical design, fracturing the reflected light into a series of abstracted waves and breakers.

The £76m Titanic Belfast visitor experience extends over nine galleries. Multiple dimensions draw together special effects, dark rides, full-scale reconstructions and a variety of interactive features to explore the Titanic story.

The exhibit had to be world-class, inject life back into the shipyard and create a unique and truly memorable visitor experience that would allow visitors to understand the Titanic story in a fully interactive way.

It was a tight schedule. DJW won its tender in February 2011 and arrived on site the following



First Class cabin

Pepper's Ghost



October. The final result was delivered under a strict timescale for the Museum's opening on 31 March 2012. DJW was briefed to work closely with interactive software provider ISO Design and AV consultancy, Graham English and Company.

"Event's development director Kevin Murphy (former director and head of special effects at the Natural History Museum) gave us a kit list to tender on. We also worked closely with Event's chief designer Steve Lumby," adds Doe.

Instant impact was vital and visitors entering the building instantly experience one of DJW's most impressive rooms in terms of AV. Gallery One - *Boomtown Belfast* - features a videoscape of six, 4 x 3.5m screens showing images of Belfast during the 1900s. On another wall, seven monitors show portrait and landscape images of the various industries in the city during that time.

Interactivity from the start

Within *Boomtown Belfast* DJW has installed an interactive made up of four projections on to the floor, where designs of the ship are beamed. A logo lights up and tells visitors to 'stand here' for more information on specific parts of the ship.

Cameras above the visitors use infrared technology to sense their presence, and audio and images are played to give them more information.

CONTACTS

www.titanicbelfast.com
 www.seacitymuseum.co.uk
 www.djwillrich.com
 www.isodesign.uk.com
 www.englishandco.com
 www.rearpro.com
 www.eventcomm.com
 www.urbansalonarchitects.com
 www.civicsarts.com
 www.toddarch.co.uk
 www.syscoav.co.uk

In total, *Boomtown Belfast* features 14 projectors, seven screens, five interactive points, two interactive audio points and ambient audio throughout.

The action continues in Gallery Two - the *Arrol Gantry* - where guests are taken on a dark ride through the shipyard to witness the vessel being built. Video and audio are triggered as the cars make their way through the gallery.

The area's video reveals the launch of Titanic's sister ship the *Olympic* and a window reveal of the slipways outside where the Titanic was first launched into Belfast's Lagan river.

Gallery Four explores the *Fit-Out* and features a 3D video journey of three 6m screens in a box, showing avatar visuals of what each deck of the vessel looked like. Working alongside Paradigm AV and using Dataton Watchout software, DJW ensured all projections were synchronised. CGI footage was provided by ISO design.

Also in the *Fit-Out* area projection is used to bring the story of Titanic's passengers to life as (working with Graham English) DJW's projectors transfer 'memory-like' (Pepper's Ghost) images of people into the set of carefully recreated second and first class cabins.

"The reconstruction builds up as you walk around. A single projection placed the imagery in two archways which pretended to be mirrors. We had to get the dimensions right to make sure everything appeared in the right spot," says Doe.

The Titanic experience ends as it started in Gallery Nine - *Titanic Beneath*. Here, in the large theatre, visitors see a film detailing the discovery of the Titanic wreck on a 12m screen. As they look down to the glass floor they are greeted by a soft edge projected image of the vessel itself under their feet.

The whole spectacle is a paragon of interactivity. "Although there's a great appetite for Titanic at the moment, the public now expects this level of interaction with an exhibit. AV is having to work harder to grab public attention," concludes Doe. ■

SEACITY MUSEUM

Sysco AV completed the contract for the design, supply and installation of the entire AV system requirements for Southampton's £15m SeaCity Museum. Housed in the City's Grade II Old Magistrates Court, the new attraction celebrates Southampton's 2,000-year history as a global maritime port.

There are three galleries - two permanent and one temporary - where Sysco assisted with the design and was responsible for the engineering and installation of all the AV and interactive elements throughout the museum. The first permanent gallery - *Gateway To The World* - examines Southampton's history and culture as well as the City's role in the global context of emigration and immigration.

The second - *Southampton's Titanic Story* - recounts previously untold stories about the 538 people from the City who lost their lives. It features a 1:25 scale interactive section of the ship, where soundscapes and exhibits allow visitors to experience the sights and sounds of Southampton in 1912.

There are also a number of interactives, where visitors can steer the ship, stoke the engines and operate Morse Code. Moving through to the *Disaster Room*, the mood becomes sombre with large, thought-provoking displays and audio that recreate the sequence of events from the moment the ship struck the iceberg through to the rescue of passengers by the *Carpathia*. Powerful oral testimony from survivors and relatives highlights the impact such a loss of life had on Southampton's community.

Visitors then enter the main *Magistrates' Court* where a large-scale immersive projection examines the post-disaster inquiry that was held in London. A significant number of the safety features to be found on today's ships were instigated as a result of the outcome of the Titanic Inquiry.

A third gallery houses a series of temporary exhibitions, the first of which - *Titanic The Legend*, is currently in place. Running until the end of August 2013, this exhibition looks at the Titanic disaster from different angles, examining the fascination the story continues to exert.

www.syscoav.co.uk



MARTIN CLEVELAND



MARTIN CLEVELAND

Top: Hollywood's portrayal of the Titanic disaster; Above: Steering Titanic out of Southampton