



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BENSALEM TWP
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NEWSLETTER FOR MAY AND JUNE 2022

If you haven't been to our Township Building yet, take the time to see how beautiful the Diorama is now that it has been cleaned. We are still working to find a home for the remaining 6 of them.

BRYN ATHYN TRAIN WRECK AND THE TITANIC DESIGNER

Tom Lysley shared two of his hobbies with us on March 6th. No one at the meeting was alive on Dec.5,1921 when the terrible Bryn Athyn train wreck happened. There were actually 3 coal burning engines (# 151, #154, and #156) involved.

Train #151 was going north from Philly and was given a note at the Bryn Athyn station stating "to wait for an express train to pass" but the engineer never read the note thinking it was just the usual note.

Train #154 was a milk train going south to Philly.

Train #151 pulled into the siding to allow #154 to pass but not having read the note the engineer pulled back to the main rail as #156 was coming toward them. Both trains were moving about 30 miles per hour when they collided head on. The impact was tremendous, as the engines flipped over. Hot coals flew and scattered throughout the area. They also hit the wooden passenger cars causing them to catch fire with the passengers inside. Sadly 20 passengers, 5 crewmen and 2 rescuers lost their lives that day all because the engineer never read

the note. The railway was discontinued in 1983 but the name “Death Gulch” remains.

Due to the wreck, railcars were then made of metal and new rules were instituted for engineers.

Tom then shared the story of Thomas Andrews – Chief Designer of the ship RMS Titanic.

In the movie Titanic, Thomas was portrayed only briefly as that story dealt mainly with the passengers and their lives.

Thomas was born in 1873 in Ireland. He married Helen Barbour in 1908 and they had an infant daughter in 1912 when the Titanic was to set sail on its maiden voyage. He was employed by Harland and Wolf in Belfast as head of the drafting dept. and managing director.

Unfortunately, Thomas was also a passenger on that voyage and he perished with the ship. His body was never recovered.

“Titanic Survivor” by Alisa Dupuy

Socialite Eliza Blackwell was born in 1880 and lived during the “Gilded Age” of America. She and a friend, Mary Haines, while in France, booked passage on the wonderful new ship “Titanic” back to America in 1912.

Of course they were on the top deck in a suite that back then cost \$4050. Whatever deck your suite was on, you stayed on that deck, no socializing with those on the lower decks.

Among the 1st class people were John Jacob Astor; Benjamin Guggenheim; Colonel Washington Roebling; and artist Francis Davis Millet. Fortunately, Milton Hershey cancelled his ticket and left on an earlier ship.

After dinner at the Parisien Restaurant, Mary and Eliza retired to their suite. Mary was asleep and Eliza was reading at 11:45 when the ship seemed to shutter and they were told to go out on their deck. There was no panic at that time. The band was playing as they waited at lifeboat #6 with a woman called “Unsinkable Molly Brown” (Margaret Brown).

If you went into the water you would die within 10-12 minutes because it was so cold.

Their lifeboat was picked up by the ship Carpathia and so they survived. Several of the band members bodies were found and they were still clutching their musical instruments.

**This was the largest peace time sinking of a ship.
Google "Unsinkable Molly Brown" to see many pictures from 1912.
Thanks, Alisa for sharing this bit of history with us.**

NEW MEMBERS

Robert & Barbara Briegel

John & Elaine Matthews

Raul A. Morffi

NEW ADDITIONS

Jean Turner donated various articles and items about Bensalem

**Stephanie Morris donated a binder of notes about Lower Southampton
compiled by Betty and Royal Morris**

Susan Breece donated a large amount of Presidential information

IN MEMORY OF

**Raymund Wall, Bensalem Twp. Treasurer for 36 years, died on
March 1, 2022. Ray joined us in 1984 and supported us all these
years. We send our deepest sympathy to his family.**

COMING EVENT/VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**We will hold a FLEA MARKET on MAY 7TH(raindate May 14th)
Volunteers will be needed so mark your calendars and call the office
to help.**

JUNE PICNIC

Our June Picnic meeting will be held on Thursday at 6 pm at the pavilion behind our building. Please RSVP if you plan on attending so we can purchase the correct size of the sandwich tray. If you want to bring a dessert along with your own chair, that would be fine. Mark your calendars with the new meeting time (6 pm) for this picnic. RSVP at 215-639-6575 (office number)

Election

During the last few years we have not held an election due to the Covid pandemic. At this time the officers are as follows: President Kathy Leighton; Vice Pres. Jill Freeman; recording Secretary Renee Kitchenman; Corresponding Secretary Amy Konyves; Treasurer Sally Sondesky. If you would like to join our Board please call Kathy Leighton at 215-639-6575.

CIVIL WAR EVENT

Just letting you know that the Neshaminy Living History group has decided to dissolve due to a lack of land available to hold an event; few re-enactors and general lack of interest by the public. This event was a very good money maker for us so if you have any ideas about how we can raise money, please let the Board know.

SUMMER CONCERTS

Again, we have been asked to sell the 50/50 tickets for the Wednesday night events. Sign up sheet is available. We are paid \$200 and need 4 people for each date. Remember if you are working on a Wed. you cannot purchase a 50/50 ticket that night since we are working for the Township.

DUES ARE DUE FOR 2022

Single membership is \$15; Family is \$20 and Business \$75.

NEW IDEA

We are considering sending the bi-monthly newsletter to our members via email. To do this we need each members e-mail address which some have already provided. This is just a preliminary discussion with no decision made until sometime later in 2022. If you would like to receive your copy of the newsletter this way, please call Joe Gavaghan (215-639-6522) or email to Bubbajoe58@verizon.net with your address.

CALENDAR

May 5th	"Camp William Penn-Civil War Training Ctr. " Mike Jesberger	7:00pm
May 7th	Flea Market Raindate May 14th	8-1 pm
May 21st	Board Meeting	12:00 pm
June 2nd	Annual Picnic RSVP and bring a chair	6:00 pm
June 18th	Board Meeting	12:00 pm

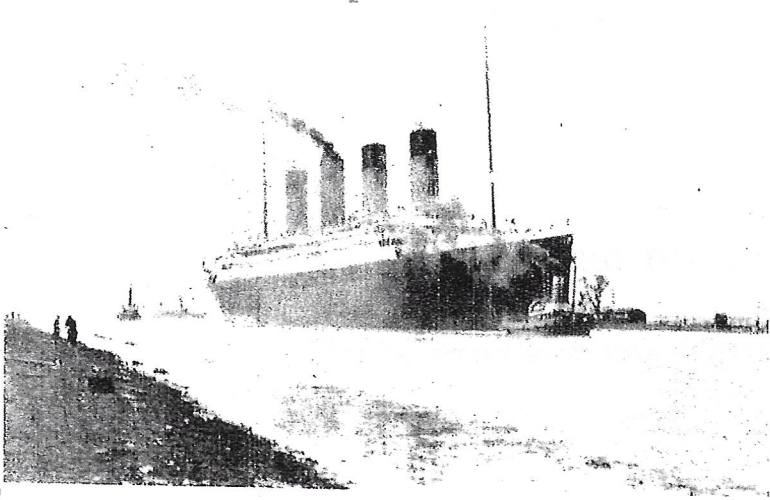
Wishing everyone a wonderful, healthy summer and remember

"A Nation that forgets its past has no future"

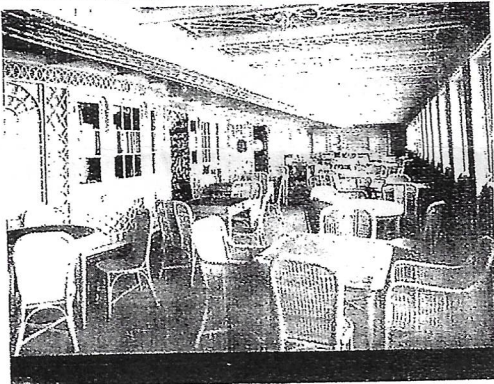
Winston Churchill

The Board

Please Turn Over For Titanic Pictures



Margaret Brown
(Molly Brown)



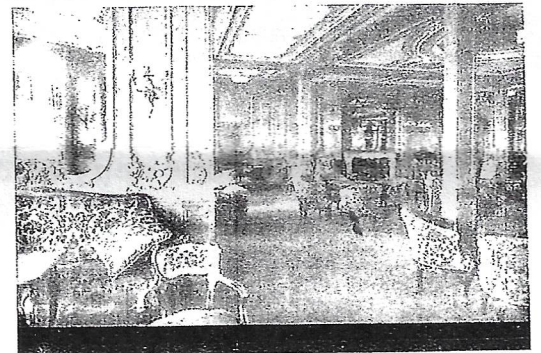
Cafe Parisien



Benjamin
Guggenheim



Edward
Smith
(Captain)



First Class Lounge



Lifeboat



John Jacob
Astor



Thomas
Andrews
(designer)



Survivors on the Carpathia