

Scarborough Sea Wall Heritage Trail Project
Close Shave for a Seaman by Mrs B of Stockton.

Mrs B has always lived in Stockton, but has a soft spot for Scarborough. She was relating this story on Armed Forces Day on 24 June 2023. She had read the storyboards which make up the Sea Wall Heritage Trail including the one about Scarborough's connection to the Titanic. In the preceding week the news had been all about the Titan, a small submarine built to take tourists to view the wreck of the Titanic lying at a depth of two and a half miles at the bottom of the North Atlantic Ocean. The Titan had five men aboard and radio contact with the vessel had been lost on the day it descended. The news had only just come through that wreckage from the small sub had been found on the sea bed near the site of the Titanic indicating that it had imploded during the descent with the loss of all on board. Stories then surfaced of an individual had bought a ticket to be on the Titan on that trip but had withdrawn on the advice of an acquaintance who considered the vessel to be unsafe. There was also the case of a father and son who had perished in the accident. The wife and mother of these reported that the 'tickets' had been bought for her and her husband but that her son had been so eager to be on the trip that she had given him her ticket.

The relevance of the story was that Mrs B's father had been a seaman and he and his wife had spent their honeymoon in Scarborough. At some point, her father had been due to return to Stockton to join his ship. There were two possible trains to catch and her father had intended to be on the earlier of the two. As it happened he left it too late and had to catch the later train, the last available that day. However, there was a problem with that train and as a result he failed to board his ship before it sailed. That ship suffered a catastrophic loss and she went down with all hands. If her father had boarded the earlier train as planned, Mrs B from Stockton would never have existed.