SS Nomadic restored as a major maritime tourism attraction

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Over the last seven years the SS Nomadic has undergone a substantial £7m restoration programme which has seen the vessel which transported first and second class passengers to the ill-fated liner restored to her former glory.

The official opening ceremony was performed by Social Development Minister Nelson McCausland, whose department acquired the SS Nomadic at auction in France in 2006, Arlene Foster MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Dr Denis Rooney CBE, Chairman of the SS Nomadic Charitable Trust before an audience of 150 invited guests on board the vessel.

The SS Nomadic was built on slipway number one in Harland & Wolff Belfast alongside RMS Titanic and RMS Olympic to carry up to 1,000 first and second class passengers and was launched on the 25th April 1911. Today the vessel is permanently moored at Hamilton Dock adjacent to the Titanic Belfast exhibition centre in Titanic Quarter and will be opened to the public permanently from 1st June.

Dr Denis Rooney, Chairman of the SS Nomadic Charitable Trust, said: “We are delighted to be able to give the SS Nomadic back to the city which created her. This has been a complex project as we had to secure substantial funding in difficult economic times and to find the ideal location in Hamilton dock which required substantial work to prepare her for receiving the ship. The last seven years has been a roller coaster of emotions for all those involved in the project but to see the ship in all her majestic glory today has made all of the hard work worth it. The SS Nomadic is a key element in the enduring story of Titanic and I’m confident that the many thousands of visitors who will walk on the same decks as the Titanic passengers did over a century ago will get a unique sense of history and be able to connect to the Titanic experience in a whole new way. The phenomenal success of Titanic Belfast to date has underlined the global interest in the story and now we have a whole new chapter to tell with the SS Nomadic. I would like to thank all of the stakeholders, funders and craftsmen who have worked together to restore one of the most important pieces of Belfast’s maritime history for future generations to enjoy.”

Paul Mullan, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Northern Ireland, commented: “As the sole surviving White Star Line vessel and the only remaining link to Titanic, Nomadic’s pedigree is unsurpassed. Both the vessel and Hamilton Graving Dock are hugely important heritage assets and key links in the wider story of the industrialisation of Belfast, which is why we believed the project had the potential to deliver outstanding results for our £3.25million investment.

Paul concluded: “This unique attraction, right at the heart of the Titanic Quarter, will provide visitors with an authentic experience of life and work in booming industrial Belfast in 1911. It is wonderful to see the vision for Nomadic become a reality, and for our heritage to be preserved for current and future generations to learn from and enjoy.”

Lorraine McCourt, Director of JTS at the Special EU Programmes Body, said: “The SEUPB is delighted to be able to support this project under the European Union’s PEACE III Programme. The restored SS Nomadic will become a cross-community space, where visitors will be able to appreciate the history of the ship-building industry in Northern Ireland and how significantly it impacted on the lives of all of those living in the region.”

The seven year restoration project combined three elements including the Pumphouse, Hamilton Dock and the SS Nomadic where a series of audio visual presentations trace the history of the ship, introduces different characters from the ship's past and provides insights into what it would have been like to be a passenger or crew member. Visitors will also have an opportunity to find out about some of the vessels famous passengers over the years and experience and interact with the history that surrounds the ship.

The project was supported by a number of organisations including the Northern Ireland Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund, SEUPB, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Ulster Garden Villages, Belfast City Council, Titanic Quarter and Belfast Harbour.

Tickets for pre-bookable tours of the ship can be purchased on the Nomadic Belfast website and the tours will commence from Saturday 1st June. Ticket prices are £8.50 for adults, £5 for children and family passes are available from £22.

Further information

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