

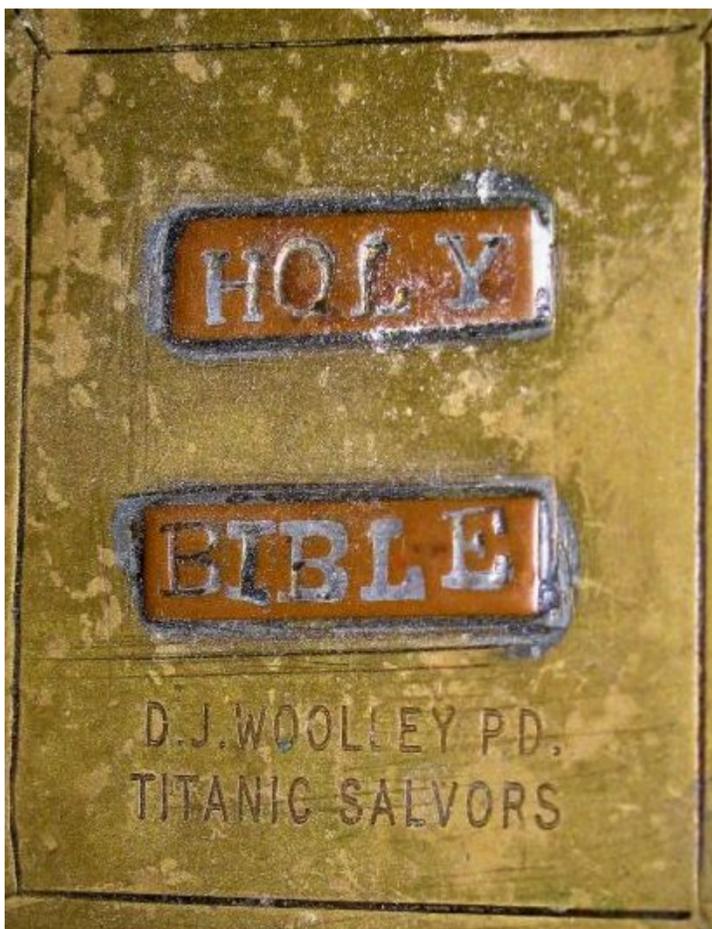
# Epsom's Titanic Ties

31 January 2023



Epsom and Ewell Times' **History Detectorist** purchased this miniature brass bible box from The Princess Alice charity shop in Epsom 2 years ago in the belief it was a piece of World War 1 trench art, but after some light cleaning he was astonished to discover the word "**Titanic**" engraved on it.

Reference is also made to **Douglas Woolley**, who claims to own the salvage rights to the Titanic and who in the 1960s made plans to locate and raise the Titanic, a plan that involved inflating nylon balloons and attaching them to the Titanic's hull.



Although Douglas Woolley's dream of raising the wreck of the RMS Titanic and creating a floating museum in Liverpool was never realised, he wrote a book on the subject and continues to maintain that he owns the salvage rights to the "unsinkable" ship that sank off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic in the early hours of 15 April 1912 after colliding with an an iceberg.

The disaster resulted in the loss of an estimated 1,500 lives, partly due to a lack of lifeboats and 2 of Douglas Woolley's great aunts may also have drowned had it not been for a premonition which caused them to cancel their trip on board the Titanic at the last minute and not travel with their luggage which went down with the ship.

Could it be that the miniature brass bible box had once belonged to one of Douglas Woolley's great aunts, or perhaps one of the survivors of the Titanic?

Having wanted to raise the RMS Titanic, is it possible that Douglas Woolley was gifted the miniature brass bible box after it was salvaged from the wreck?

If the engraving on the miniature bible box was intended to deceive for the purposes of financial gain, then why was the box donated to a charity shop and why is the name "Douglas Woolley" engraved on it when the name of a member of the Titanic's crew would have caused the box to fetch more money at auction?



Unfortunately, Douglas Woolley is now an elderly gentleman and I have not been able to make contact with him, but if any readers can tell me anything about this interesting brass object and how it came to be purchased by myself in an Epsom charity shop, The Epsom and Ewell Times and myself would be delighted to hear from you.

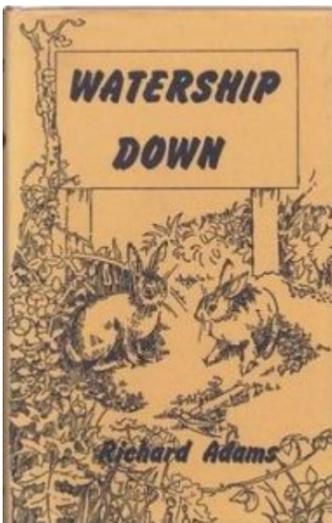
**George Pelham served on the Titanic** as a Trimmer and survived the sinking. It is thought he survived another sinking of a ship during the First World War and these circumstances eventually led to his nervous breakdown and admission to **Horton asylum in Epsom** in 1935. 42 days after he was transferred to the neighbouring **Longrove Hospital** he died and was buried in the **Horton Cemetery** in Epsom on 14th October 1939.

You can read the full story on [www.hortoncemetery.org](http://www.hortoncemetery.org) and also read about the campaign to restore the Cemetery where 9000 patients of Epsom's cluster of psychiatric hospitals were buried between 1899 and 1955 and now lay abandoned.

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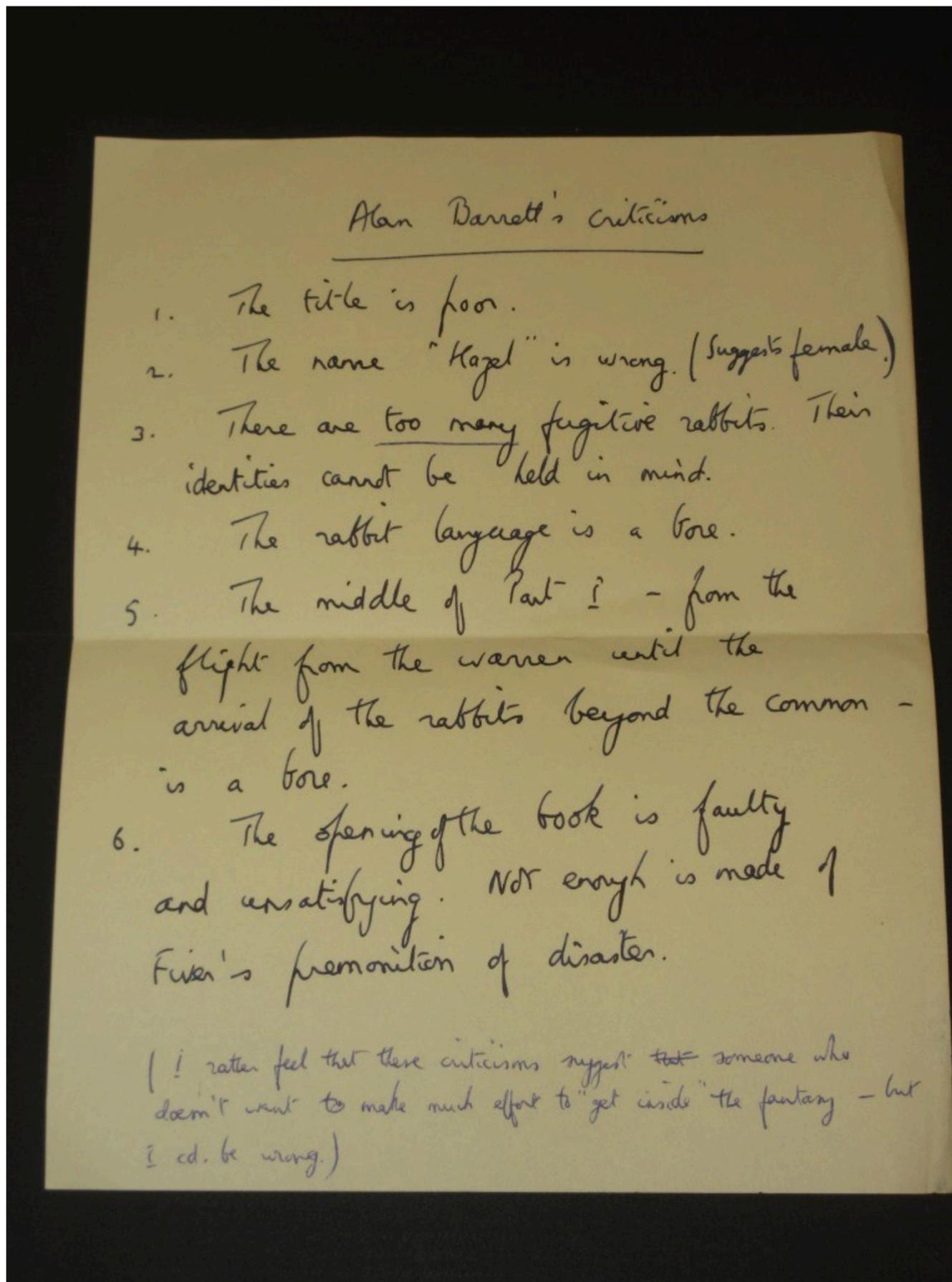
## How “Watership Down” might have been....

31 January 2023



Exclusive to Epsom and Ewell Times a local resident known as “**The History Detectorist**” will disclose on these pages intriguing discoveries. Today's discovery relates to “**Watership Down**”. In the coming months other intriguing discoveries will be revealed.....

The History Detectorist could not believe his luck when he discovered pre-publication notes relating to the international best-selling novel, “Watership Down” that had remained hidden inside a book that had once belonged to the book's author, Richard Adams.



Alan Barrett's criticisms

1. The title is poor.
2. The name "Hazel" is wrong. (Suggests female.)
3. There are too many fugitive rabbits. Their identities cannot be held in mind.
4. The rabbit language is a bore.
5. The middle of Part 1 - from the flight from the warren until the arrival of the rabbits beyond the common - is a bore.
6. The opening of the book is faulty and unsatisfying. Not enough is made of Fiver's premonition of disaster.

(I rather feel that these criticisms suggest ~~that~~ someone who doesn't want to make much effort to "get inside" the fantasy - but I cd. be wrong.)

A lifelong fan of Watership Down, he purchased a box of books from a book dealer who had won them at auction prior to the much publicized sale of Richard Adams's more valuable books which he had collected prior to his passing in December 2016 aged 96.

Among the books purchased from the dealer were papers and photographs that had been found inside the books won at auction which are now known to have belonged to Richard Adams also.

"The significance of Richard Adams's notes were not fully understood until I approached Oxford University and corresponded with Richard Adams's daughters", said the History Detectorist, who went on to discover that Alan Barrett, whose name is mentioned at the top of the notes, was an Oxford University friend of Richard Adams. Barrett would give his opinion on the likely success of many of Adams' books and suggest changes etc. "It would appear that the notes were hidden away for more than 50 years so I was delighted to be able to send copies of them to Richard Adams's family".

Fortunately, in this instance Alan Barrett's criticisms did not deter Richard Adams from publishing his first novel, Watership Down, although at the time the notes were drafted the popular story of rabbits fleeing their home and being forced to find a new one was due to be called "Hazel and Fiver", a title that Alan Barrett clearly objected to and possibly helped to change prior to the first publication of Watership Down in 1972.