

[Ken Marschall - Artist](#) To Kenshin Hiro and Paul Lee: The caption in the Castleknock Chronicle, where the other purported "last photograph" was published, simply says:

"The last photo of the Titanic, taken by Mr. John Morrogh at Red Bay, Crosshaven, after the vessel had left Queenstown."

In his 2004 article for Encyclopedia Titanica, Senan Molony shares his research into the man and his life, including rather remarkable detail on the day the photograph was taken, that Morrogh and a group chased the ship along the coast by car, that a tripod was used, and even adds quotes from participants. I have not seen the apparently contemporary account to which he refers. Mr. Molony confuses a photo taken by Kate Odell with another first-class passenger, Stanley May, and appears to hypothesize some circumstances around the event, using words like "certainly," "very likely" and "probable."

Assuming you're both aware of Molony's article, here are the reasons I am dubious about the Morrogh photo being the last:

- As Titanic swung counterclockwise on her anchor during the period that the two Queenstown tenders were at her sides, the view from the shore south of Crosshaven (i.e., angle of the ship) would closely match that in the Morrogh photo just as she was hoisting her anchor.
- There were a lot of clouds that day, and we're lucky that the sun broke through for Morrogh as he tripped his camera's shutter. The sunlight on the bridge matches two much closer photographs taken from the departing tender Ireland, one by Francis Browne and the other by Kate Odell, as does the amount of smoke (or lack of it) from funnels.
- Such a lack of smoke would be unlikely when a ship is briefly pausing to let off a pilot. Note the smoke coming from Titanic in the Odell image taken from the tender Ireland as the liner steams away from her anchorage. That smoke would not simply vanish when she paused a few miles farther away to let the pilot off.
- Mr. Molony says in his article that Morrogh and his party witnessed the pilot being dropped off at about 2 p.m., but the small vessel seen at Titanic's starboard E-Deck doorway in his photo looks to be about the size of the Queenstown tenders (each 131 feet), operated by the Clyde Shipping Co. of Glasgow. This is much larger than a typical pilot boat. The white blotch just above the boat, if it's not simply a flaw in the printing, must be a blast of steam from her whistle. The fact that the boat seems some distance from the side of Titanic shows that it is apparently moving away. Again, the lighting exactly matches that seen in the other photos taken from the tender Ireland just a minute or two later. What are the odds that the sun would be in exactly the same place (in relation to the ship) a half hour later, after Titanic had departed, turned more to the south and steamed miles, when the pilot was dropped off?
- A higher-res scan of the Morrogh photograph would of course be very helpful. In some published versions of it a "bum boat" appears to be visible to the right of the small vessel, and we know that these boats regularly hitched rides with the tenders, not pilot boats.
- There is no wake behind the ship. Either it's before Titanic started her engines and began to move from her anchorage (my theory) or she was completely stopped, later, for the pilot boat, with no trace of a wake. Usually a pilot transfers from a ship to a boat in very quick order, both vessels never coming to a complete stop. A liner merely slows. There should be some subtle indication in the Morrogh photo of a mild wake visible behind her.

- If we are indeed seeing the pilot boat as claimed, it would be later (at about 2 p.m., as Molony says), with Titanic having turned to head almost due south. Two hours after noon, the ship heading south, the sunlight would be illuminating her starboard side, not just the bridge.

- Titanic's anchorage point can be triangulated from the buildings on Roche's Point and on the other side of the harbor entrance. The "Red Bay" referred to in Molony's article is, oddly, nowhere to be found in the south of Ireland on any map that I could find, even maps from the 1800s. Ringabella Bay, mentioned in the article, is noted on maps and would indeed be ahead of the ship at one point as she turned to depart.

For these reasons I'm doubtful about the claim that the Morrogh photo shows Titanic after she weighed anchor and departed, and *after* the Odell photo. None of my points argues that Morrogh was not on the west side of the harbor entrance and watched Titanic with a small boat alongside, as Molony claims. But I would like to see some proof -- and not just an anecdotal tale that appears to have been elaborated/interpreted by a writer some nine decades later -- that Morrogh was witnessing the pilot boat at 2 p.m. and not a tender at 1:30. If such evidence can be provided I am more than willing to reverse my thinking.

As it stands, I think it's more likely that the Morrogh photo simply shows Titanic before any wake appears at her stern, with the tender Ireland just pulling away. Is that a 131-foot vessel alongside Titanic? We should try to gauge it. It looks about right to me... much bigger than any pilot boat I've ever seen. The Odell image I posted clearly shows a wake, not to mention the smoke of being underway.

As to whether the spot on the horizon ahead of Titanic in the Odell photo may be the Daunt Lightship, as one person wondered, it may indeed, although I haven't checked a map to see how far away it is from Titanic's anchorage. I don't know if the pilot remained aboard to navigate safely around the lightship or not as it was a very well known hazard.

Ken