Pillar Roller Fairleads of *Titanic's* Forward Well Deck

By Bob Read D.M.D.

Introduction

The presence of pillar fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck has been known for some time. However, we have only had a limited number of photos of these fairleads. Additionally, the photos we do have only show the upper part of the fairleads. The configuration of the lower aspect of these fairleads has been largely speculative. Recently a photo has been discovered which suggest a configuration which may have been applicable to *Titanic's* pillar roller fairleads.

Photo Evidence

Figure 1 is a photo of the starboard pillar roller fairlead in *Olympic's* forward well deck.

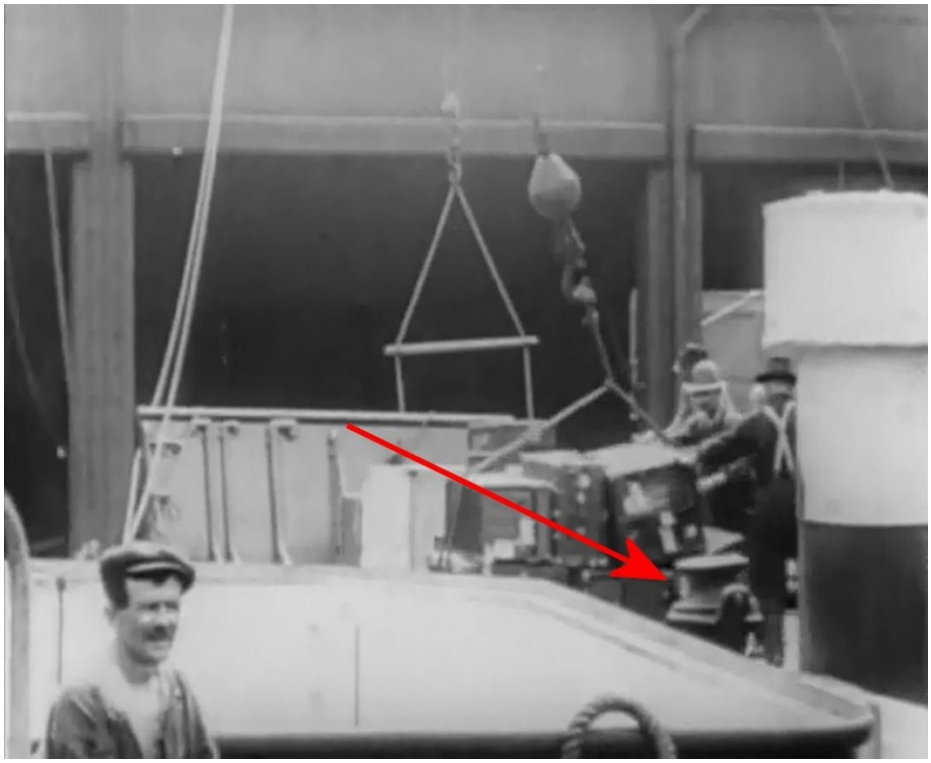

Figure 1

Pillar roller fairlead in *Olympic's* forward well deck

As can be seen, the coaming of #2 cargo hatch obscures any view of the base of the pillar.

Figure 2 was discovered by researcher Vasilije Ristovic.

Figure 2

Pillar roller fairlead (foreground) aboard SS Cymric (1909)

Figure 3 is an enlargement of the pillar roller fairlead.

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Figure 3

Pillar roller fairlead (enlargement) aboard SS Cymric

The upper part of the fairlead is similar to *Olympic's.* The advantage of this photo is that it shows the majority of the base of the pillar. There are twelve large rivets around the perimeter of the base which would be riveted to the steel deck and margin planks fitted around it. Inboard of the rivets, there are four, equally spaced "knees" around the circumference of the vertical pedestal. These "knees" are an integral part of the pillar/base casting. They serve to give extra strength to the vertical pillar. One difference in *Titanic's* pillar fairleads is that the roller fairlead is angled upward approximately five degrees toward the electric winches directly aft of the pillar fairleads.

Function

Some have thought that these pillar roller fairleads directed lines for lifting cargo to the electric winches in the well deck. I don't believe this was the function of the pillar fairleads. Lines to the pillar fairleads had to travel more or less parallel to the deck for the fairleads to function adequately. The lines for lifting cargo traveled through overhead gin blocks directly to the electric winches below.

The purpose of the pillar roller fairleads was to redirect mooring lines from the mooring ports in the well deck bulwarks to the electric winches.

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Figure 4 is a plan view showing how the mooring lines from the different mooring ports were redirected to the electric winches.

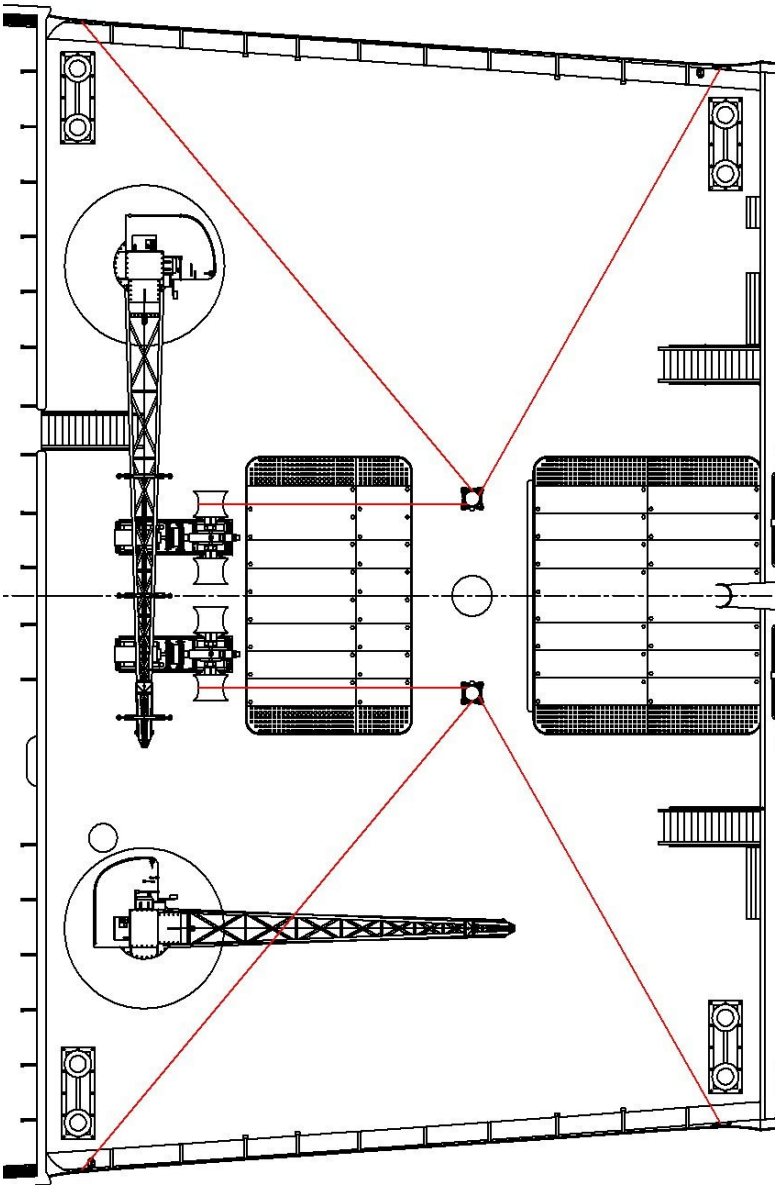

Figure 4

Plan view of how mooring lines were directed to the electric winches

The pillar roller fairleads at the top of the pedestals were angled upward toward the electric winch warping drums. They had to be angled upward because the lower part of the electric winch warping drums was obscured by the #3 hatch coamings which were 30 inches high. The angled fairlead had to direct the mooring lines upward to the upper aspect of the warping drums of the electric winches. This can be seen in Figure 5 which is an elevation of the pillar fairleads, cargo hatches #2 and #3, and the electric winches.

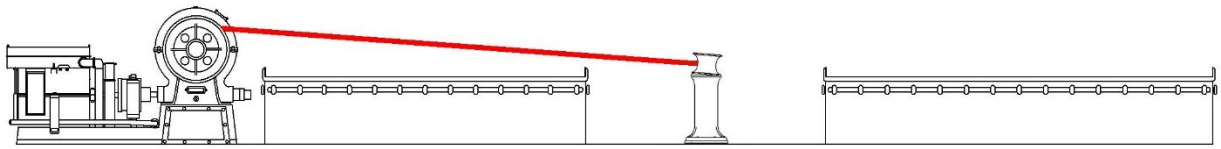

Figure 5

Angled roller fairlead directing mooring line to electric winch

The pillar roller fairleads had a “horn” on their inboard aspects only. This allowed the mooring line to be held near the fairlead while the mooring line was being fed to the warping drum of the electric winch. If, while hauling, the line went slack, the line would not fall to the deck.

Drawings

Figure 6 shows multi-view drawings of the port and starboard pillar roller fairleads.

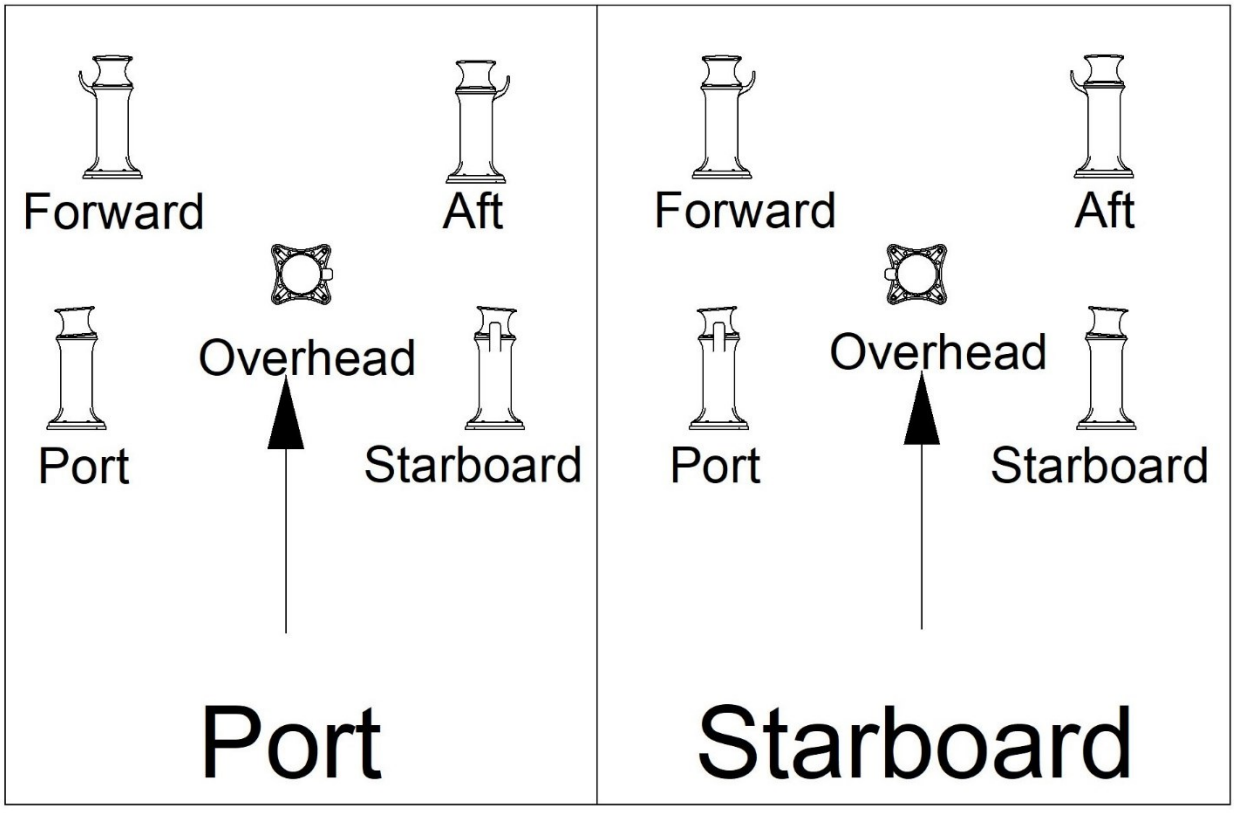

Figure 6

Port and starboard pillar roller fairleads

Figure 7 shows the proposed configuration of the bases of *Titanic's* pillar roller fairleads.

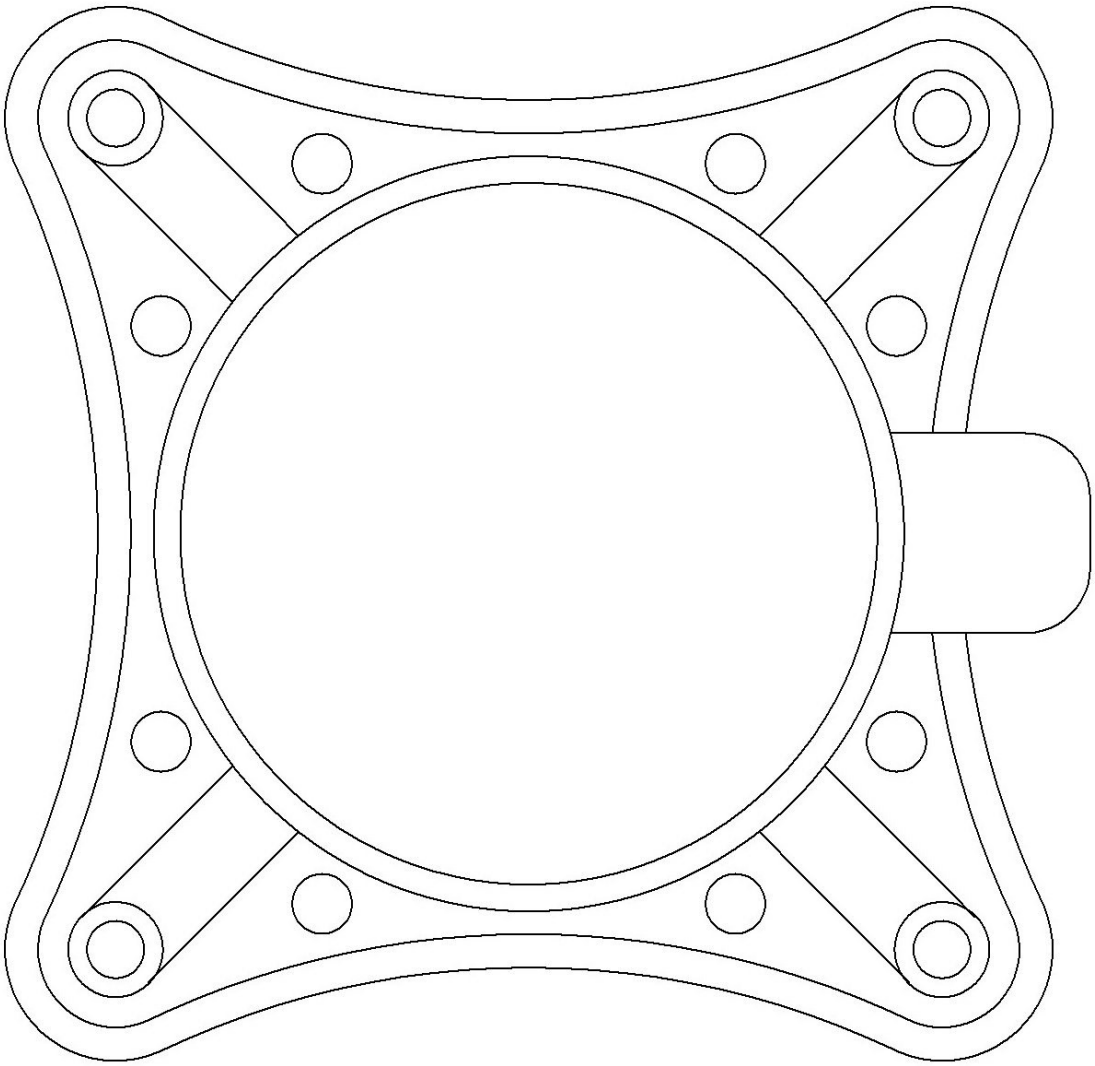

Figure 7

Plan view of proposed configuration of the base of the pillar roller fairleads

Summary

The purpose of this article was to propose a possible configuration of the bases of the pillar roller fairleads in *Titanic's* forward well deck. The proposed configuration is like that seen in a photo taken aboard SS *Cymric.* The structure and function of the pillar roller fairleads has been described.