



Spring 2025 Newsletter.

What great weather for spring, with new life in the fields and local gardens in bloom. The nature and wildlife of a considerable part of the Galloway Hills, however, have seen large areas destroyed by fire and our thanks must go out to those who worked tirelessly to extinguish them.

Earlier this month we published our very first book containing colour photographs. Margie Ferguson and Pam Macmillan have meticulously researched a forgotten female figure, Jane Taylour, who campaigned nationally and peacefully for women to have the right to vote. Their fabulous book, *Stranraer Suffragist Storms Scotland* was very successfully launched in Stranraer Library. The book is now available on our website, with member's discount.



Stranraer Suffragist Storms Scotland

by
Margie Ferguson and Pam Macmillan



Published by
STRANRAER AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY TRUST

Margie Ferguson and Pam Macmillan just before the queues formed!

Margie and Pam have been invited to give a talk to Kirkmaiden History Group at the Ship Inn, Drummore on 24th April at 2.30pm Drummore this month. In further exciting news about their research, MSP Emma Harper wishes to present a motion to the Scottish Parliament:

"That this Parliament congratulates Margie Ferguson and Pam Macmillan on the launch of their book, "Stranraer Suffragist Storms Scotland", recounting the life of Jane Elizabeth Taylour, one of the leading members of the Suffragist movement in Scotland in the 19th and early 20th centuries; applauds the work of Stranraer and District Local History Trust in publishing the book and many others recording and celebrating the rich and diverse history of Stranraer and Wigtownshire, in the South of Scotland, over the years; notes Taylour's pioneering work in leading the Suffragist movement first in Galloway, then across Scotland and the rest of the UK in campaigning for equal enfranchisement for women; notes the hostility and aggressive opposition the women's suffrage movement was forced to operate under during the period prior to equal voting rights being secured;



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and celebrates the sacrifice and dedication of women like Jane Elizabeth Taylour and many thousands like her who each played their part in securing basic democratic rights for millions of women in Scotland and elsewhere on these isles."

What an achievement for Margie and Pam and what an honour for the Trust to be mentioned. We wholeheartedly thank Emma for the motion and add our congratulations to the authors.

Elaine, Tom and I have become involved with the *MV Princess Victoria* Memorial Group, which has been brought together through the local council, largely to arrange the annual memorial service at the memorial in Agnew Park. A number of other local organisations and individuals with connections to the ship, have also come forward to volunteer. Elaine has been voted in as Chair of the Group and I am secretary. The service on the anniversary was taken by Rev. Andy Muir and was very well attended. After many years of organising the event very well, RAOB (The Buffs) have retired from this and handed over the organisation of the event to the *MV Princess Victoria* Memorial Group.



Elaine and Alan Barton lay a wreath at the Larne memorial on behalf of the people of Stranraer. Life ring from the *MV Princess Victoria* on display in Larne Museum.

In January Elaine, along with her husband Alan, were invited over to Larne to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of Stranraer and attended further commemorative events for the *MV Princess Victoria*. Alan's great uncle, Able Seaman Jock Garrett, survived the tragedy. The towns are forever linked in sadness, because of the tragic loss of lives and loved ones in the great storm of 31st January 1953. A further two names were added to the plaque at the front of the memorial at Agnew Park in Stranraer in time for the service, bringing the total loss of life known about to 138.

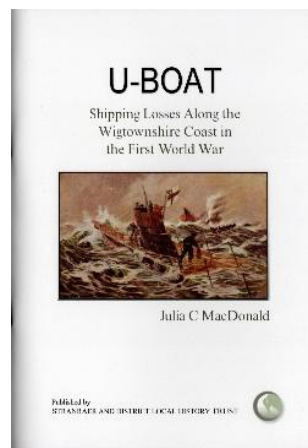


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Earlier this month I was one of a number of speakers invited to talk at Maybole. The Carrick History Society's 'Carrick Women in History' Conference was a full day event at the Carrick Centre. During my talk I took an opportunity to plug Margie and Pam's book!



Once again we are one of the sponsors of the Spring Festival at Wigtown which runs from the 3rd – 5th May. The full programme can be seen and tickets booked through the following link: <https://tickets.wigtownbookfestival.com/sales>. On Saturday 3rd May at 1.30pm in the County Buildings, Elaine and I are talking about The Great War at Sea. We have released another new History Trust publication, *U-Boat, Shipping Losses on the Wigtownshire Coast in the First World War*, which is already available on our website.



The Spring Festival hosts a wide variety of talks, walks and other events, bringing visitors from far and wide to Wigtownshire. Committee member Marion McGowan, whose compelling historical novel *The Priest's Pool* is receiving great reviews, will be appearing at the Festival too. The book has been published by Westering Home. Marion's event is on Sunday 4th May at 10.30am in the County Buildings. Tickets for that event along with the other events can be



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seen and booked using the above link. The beautiful cover for Marion's book has been designed by Port William based artist Lisa Hooper.

Committee members of the Trust are again invited to attend Stranraer Academy's awards ceremonies in June where we present prizes from the Trust for each year for those studying history. In addition, three names have been forwarded to us by Stranraer Academy for consideration for the History Trust Bursary. Bursaries will be awarded to pupils who have accepted their offers for a university place for studying History or a combined degree which includes History, whose names have been forwarded to the Trust for consideration.



We now have over 1100 followers on our Facebook page!

And finally, our AGM is in the Millenium Centre on Thursday the 29th May at 7.30pm, and we would be very pleased to see you there.

Thank you for your ongoing support

Julia MacDonald