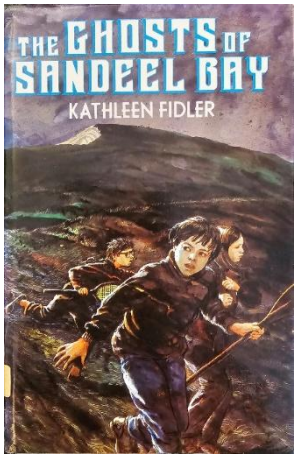
STRANRAER AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY TRUST

Scottish Charity No SC028177 www.stranraerhistory.org.uk stranraerhistorytrust@aol.com

Spring 2026 Newsletter.

As spring arrives with a burst of colour, we welcome you to the spring newsletter to share the latest stories from the Trust.

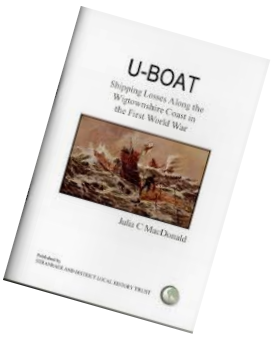
The Trust recently became the custodian of Jack Hunter's Galloway book collection. Around 800 books and pamphlets have now been catalogued, all with a connection to the region, whether through authorship, setting or subject. The collection ranges from tourism brochures and novels to factual works, and while these items will not be available for loan, we look forward to sharing highlights from the collection through our Facebook page and this newsletter.



As Jack was Head of English at Stranraer Academy, it is no surprise that the collection includes books for younger readers. One such title is *The Ghosts of Sandeel Bay* by Kathleen Fidler, an Enid Blyton-style adventure in which a group of friends uncover suspicious goings on near Dunskey House, Portpatrick.

A Wigtown man, Jack was well known in the town's many bookshops. He had a clear fondness for older Galloway titles, while also collecting newer works with a local connection. A set of DI Marjory Fleming series by Aline Templeton sits alongside an 1822 edition of *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell, The Mermaid of Galloway* and the *Legend of Richard Faulder*. Perhaps a gift, there is also a copy of *Rogue Nation* by Alan Clements, a former pupil. It is always worth a look around Wigtown for books with a local connection.

Several of Jack's own local history works are also included in the collection. His book *The Loss of the Princess Victoria* was among the first published by the Trust, and he went on to write a further five titles for us, as well as many others with different publishers.



In November, divers identified the wreck of *HMS Bayano,* the story of the sinking of this ship during WW1 is in our publication *U-Boat, Shipping Losses Along the Wigtownshire Coast in the First World War* which was released last year and is available from our website. We have also offered £150 towards the proposed construction of a memorial to the ship

In January I was invited to give the *MV Princess Victoria* lecture in Larne. The following day along with my husband Andy, we laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Stranraer at the annual memorial service there. We were very grateful to P&O who gave us free return travel across to Larne, and to Dr David Hume MBE from Mid and North Antrim

Borough Council for organising the commemorative events. I was introduced to Jim McCarlie, whose uncle was lost on the ship. One of Jim's other uncles was Eric McCarlie, local photographer in Stranraer for many years. Eric took a number of fairly well known photos of the *Victoria.* When Eric moved away from Stranraer he donated boxes and bag loads of photos, negatives and slides along with their copyright. These now form part of the Nelson-MacDonald collection. Jim McCarlie has loaned probably the only original copies of the building plans for the *MV Princess Victoria* and we are extremely grateful to Alison from J&B Print in Newton Stewart for copying these plans which are around 5ft long for each level of the ship



Memorial Service in Larne



Wreaths laid in Stranraer

At the same time as the service in Larne, the annual memorial service, organised by the *MV Princess Victoria* Memorial Group, took place in Agnew Park, Stranraer. A wreath was laid by Vice Chair, Alastair McGowan, on behalf of the Trust. Services on both sides of the water were very well attended despite the wintry weather.

A new book by Ian Baldie*, Training RAF Webfoots - RAF Corsewall, No1 Marine Craft Training School* - is at the printers – look out for details of a launch in the coming weeks.

The Trust is once again sponsoring The Wigtown Spring Book Weekend, with a great variety of talks, walks, workshops and so much more on the programme. Elaine and I will be talking on Saturday 2nd May at 3pm in the County Buildings, the subject is the Country Post – taking a look at the life of the country postman of the past. Have a look at the programme here



Julia and Elaine will be talking at the Wigtown Spring Book Weekend

Our Facebook page has a following of around 1100 people, where we continue to get enquiries about various matters of local historical research and help out where we can or point in the right direction.

We also get items handed in and research what we can; this included a set of plans, permissions and invoices for the building of houses in Glebe Street, just along from the current shop on the corner.

We continue to provide a weekly historical photo and story for the 'Way We Were' column in the *Free Press*. If you have a photo or story or brief details that you would like to share please send them to us at our email address stranraerhistorytrust@aol.com We'd particularly welcome anything from the 50s- 80s and any details you might have about the photo however brief.

The Trust will once again attend the award evenings at Stranraer Academy in May and June, giving prizes for the study of History in each year.

Finally, the AGM will take place on Thursday 28th May at 7.30pm in the Nordica Room of the Millenium Centre, Stranraer

Thank you for your ongoing support

Julia MacDonald

Honorary Secretary

https://ticket.wigtownbookfestival.com/sales