BIBLIOGRAPHY with READERS REVIEWS

The document contains the Literary Strangford Bibliography (reading list) with readers’ reviews. This bibliography was compiled during the Literary Strangford project by using desktop research as well as consultation with the local community and it is a list of writers and writing connected to Strangford Lough. During the consultation period, interested people living around Strangford Lough were asked whether they would help the Strangford Lough Office to review texts that had been identified. Many people volunteered and their reviews were used in the compilation of the Literary Strangford Map and Guide as well as in compiling biographies for featured writers.

The reviews submitted were comprehensive and very interesting and we wanted to publish them here so that you can learn a bit more about the literature of Strangford Lough and decide whether you would like to read more. The bibliography is divided into sections (Autobiography and Memoir, Children’s, Drama, Fiction etc) and you will find the book list at the beginning and any available reviews at the end of each section. All references highlighted in turquoise have a review available and any that are in dark blue have not been reviewed- we would welcome any further reviews which we could add to this document. Also check out the Literary Strangford biographies for further information on all writers with ♥ beside their names.

The reviews contained in this document do not reflect in any way the opinions of the Strangford Lough Office and are presented here for information only.

Note: New & 2nd hand books can usually be purchased at: www.amazon.co.uk and www.abebooks.co.uk
Library Websites: (http://opac.ni-libraries.net); Linen Hall (www.linenhall.com); Queen’s University (http://qu-prism.qub.ac.uk/TalisPrism/) and University of Ulster (http://libcat1.ulster.ac.uk/TalisPrism/)
Autobiography & Memoir


**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


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**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

_____.*Further Afield and Look What I Found* (Comber: Alkon Press, 1997)

**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** New and 2nd hand Amazon; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None
Mason, Arthur. *Wide Seas and Many Lands* (First pub. 1924; Latest ed. by Pomona Press (print on demand), 2006)

**Purchase:** Reprints & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib, **Online text:** (extract only)

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=2UPlxwoYwsC&dq=Arthur+Mason+Wide+Seas+and+Many+Lands&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=DX3oshiHlvV&sig=Rk5J5svz35c3JoYkJTM4WSFH4k&hl=en&ei=0WAB5qa3EdUoJkArpEcEDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4#PPA7,M1


**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; UU; **Online text:** None

______. *Back Across the Fields of Yesterday* (Donaghadee: Ballyhay Books, 2002).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

______. *The Book of 1,000 Beautiful Things* (Donaghadee: Ballyhay Books, 2003).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** e-book: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


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**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

**LONG SHADOWS CAST BEFORE**

**Reviewed by Wendy Cromie**

This book was written in 1978 by Charles Brett as a record of his family history over the past 300 years. He recounts how his family settled in the Lecale area in 1641 having been granted land by the English government.

P10 refers: Walshestown is on a most attractive site, the tall square four-storey tower-house, probably built in the late sixteenth century and still in excellent order, stands by a stream in a
sheltered and wooded valley looking out over the quiet waters of Strangford Lough and the estuary of the Quoile.

There are very few references to areas around Strangford Lough beyond this, as the author goes on to chronicle his views on the political situation as he grows up and how his family business, based in Belfast (the well known Solicitors L’estrange & Brett) fared through the troubles.

This is not a book I would have picked myself. However, it was an interesting read.

AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT
Reviewed by Sandra Maze

Philip and Mabel Campbell started married life on Copeland Island where they settled for a short time in their own farm. They loved living there but they couldn’t get enough land near their house to make it easy for them to make a living so they had to move. They were very sad to leave their beloved island, but needs must. They searched around the Ards Peninsula to find a little farm, and eventually settled, and established themselves on November 4th 1935, at Ballycam House near Portaferry. Ballycam was a small 19th century dwelling with land attached and the name ‘Ballycam’ means ‘the crooked or twisting townland’ (from the old English ‘tun’ – an enclosure). The house was not near the sea, which was disappointing for them, but they decided to stay.

They reared pigs, hens and cattle as well as sheep, the latter having been ferried from the Copeland Island to their new home. At first they lived in a caravan, then in the calf shed which had been two former pigsties (12ft x 7ft), until the house was rebuilt.

The house was in such a bad condition that it had to come down to foundation level. Only the wall on the east side was well built and, for sheer sentiment sake, they left it standing with the foundations on three sides.

"When the walls were about a foot high, with great ceremony we filled a small tin box and Willie solemnly buried it within the double walls on the south side of the house. In the box we put a St. Brigid’s cross (which is a curiously shaped ‘cross’ of plaited rushes), the day’s newspaper, a coin for luck and the signatures of all the joiners and builders, and their assistants, engaged in the construction of the house. The coin was a shining threepenny piece dated 1936. We did not bury again the old fourpenny piece, nor the bowl of clay ‘churchwarden’ pipe which had been found when the walls came down."

Various references are made throughout the book, to life on the farm, and the local area of Portaferry – see Appendix. Many references are made to local people, such as vets, midwives, neighbours and farm workers. Lovely descriptions are given about working around the farm, coping with the animals, and many stories from their own experience when their baby daughter arrived absolutely light up the pages. There are many stories of life on the farm during the war years – stories of “aliens” from abroad coming to work on the farm and how the authorities were suspicious of foreigners, to the extent of accusing the Campbells of being some sort of collaborators with the enemy! The foreigners were refugees from Germany and Poland. One student at Queen’s University called Oskar came to work in June 1940. Figaro (because he sang all the time!), who had just left school, came to work as a form of National Service. They also had many other (named) refugees who came to live and work on the farm.

The Campbells were very hard working people and found life on the farm tiring and difficult and had many money worries too. The author, Mabel Campbell, started writing novels to make some money, but her first one was rejected by a publisher. The first article she had published was in the ‘Nursing Mirror’. (Mabel had been trained as a midwife.)

However, they loved the life in their part of the world (although they still missed their beloved Copeland Island and returned for short holidays when they could), and there are some beautiful descriptions of the animals, birds, countryside, flowers and farming, all described with love and great sincerity, tenderness and truth.
APPENDIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Reference to Places and Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Portaferry estate agent Mr Dodds, Portaferry Square.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Map of Ards Peninsula showing positions of Copeland Island and Portaferry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mr Dodds (estate agent) suggested the following farms for consideration by the Campbells:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Townland of Ballycam (owned by the Bank for 10 years, this 100 year old house was bought by the Campbells for £850)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(ii) Ballyeasboro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(iii) Townland of Cookstown (with views of Strangford Lough – farm reported to be haunted)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Corrig and Ballybrannigan; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Glastry (this farm had a ‘good’ orchard).</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Ferry Street, Portaferry – Court House in the square – ruined Norman Keep.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lovely description here of life in Portaferry in 1935, with details of various people who lived in the town. Also how people, having come to the town as strangers forty years previously, were ‘almost but never quite accepted’. [sm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Descriptions about ploughing matches and various farming methods in the area. Horses, tractors, ploughing, threshing and stories about workers and neighbours helping each other. Farmer’s wives feeding all the farm workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Going from Portaferry to Balmoral Show. (Originally, Ballycam was primarily a pig farm.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Coastguard Station – (reference to telephone wires). Possibly this was the Coastguard Station at Millin Bay which would have been the nearest [sm]</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>The Campbells sold cream in cartons to a shop in Portaferry.</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>Portaferry boatman and the dangerous ‘Strangford bar with its homicidal tides and races.’</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>Philip Campbell (Head warden of the ARP and representative on the Rural District Council) ‘dashed off to Portaferry to help distribute gas masks’.</td>
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<td>123</td>
<td>Mabel Campbell had the job of phoning round all the houses to summon the ARP’s when there was a air raid – although Portaferry was never actually raided. (She had this job to do as Philip was Chief Warden.)</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>The Campbells had to take in a family who had been ‘blitzed out of Glasgow’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>‘Every house (in the area) was full to overflowing since the (nearby) aerodrome was started’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>German planes could be heard flying over to Belfast which was ‘heavily hit’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next day evacuees arrived in Portaferry. Sir Roland Nugent and Lady Nugent of the Big House' organised the help of several 'Protestant' ladies to prepare food (as at that time there was no WVS yet in existence in Portaferry).

Description of watching bombing raid on Belfast from Windmill Hill, Portaferry. Evacuees were sent to sleep in the 'Technical School'. (200 people)

Dumigan's Pub, Portaferry.

Millers Hill – where people with guns were watching for the hen-stealing foxes.

The road over Windmill Hill into Portaferry and the panoramic view of 'one of the most beautiful views in Ireland'.

Descriptions of all the paper work and record keeping the farmer has to do.

Portaferry Public Elementary School.

'The Rock' – huge outcrop in the middle of Portaferry on which is built the shop of the stationer-confectioner-transport agent-newsagent and taxi proprietor.

Now a bakers shop. [sm]

Bus from Portaferry to Newtownards, then train to Donaghadee and boat to Copeland Island.

Note

I would love to have met Mrs. Campbell. However after a visit to see Ballycam House in June 2009 (after asking a local postman if he knew where it was), I met Mr. Dermot Kelly whose mother bought Ballycam House from the Campbells. The house is not really lived in anymore, but Mr. Kelly still keeps his cattle in the outhouses there and was milking when I visited. I look forward to hearing more from him as he is willing to have a meeting with me and gather more information about the house. He did not know the story about the re-building of Ballycam, so he is keen to hear all about it.

AN ULSTER CHILDHOOD
Reviewed by Doris Haslett

This charming book was beautifully written, telling stories about life at the end of the nineteenth century. It gave a great insight into country life* and its characters, and painted wonderful pictures of the countryside, especially at springtime and harvest. There was no particular reference to Strangford Lough as; it seemed to me, most of the stories related to Downpatrick and the surrounding countryside.

*Page 16: Whether the Barn field should be broken this year, of the Rush Meadow drained; would the Hills bear cutting a second time, and was oats of flax the most likely crop for the Whinney Brae?
THE BLUE CABIN  
Reviewed by Doris Haslett

After the collapse of his business in Scotland the author and his wife came to live in a cabin on an uninhabited island in Strangford Lough. His book paints so many pictures of the different moods of the Lough, of wildlife and of changing seasons.

Page 15, Paragraph 2
Strangford Lough is on Northern Ireland's east coast, with Belfast Lough on the north and the glorious Mourne Mountains to the south. It lies north-south and is almost twenty miles long and three to four miles wide, enclosed to the east by the curving arm of the Ards Peninsula and open to the Irish Sea only at its extreme southern tip, where on a twelve-hour tidal cycle it receives and expels four hundred million tons of water through a steep-sided channel so narrow that the current reaches eight knots and the ferry that crosses between Strangford village and Portaferry is forced to strike a crab-wise diagonal to make the landing ramp, aiming several hundred yards upstream from where she means to go.

Then on Page 16, Paragraph 1
We are told how Norse raiders entered the Lough from the open sea in the ninth century when the words 'strong' and 'fjord' must have slipped off their tongue when they put their heads together for a name. The earlier Irish name, though, was Loch Cuan ('cuan' meaning 'harbour' or 'haven') which much better describes the main body of water to the north.

He continues at Paragraph 2
The largest inland sea in the British Isles, Strangford Lough is a place of beguiling variety, millpond-flat one moment, the next whipped by wind and tide in opposition into a wilful, white topped melee capable of putting even sizable boats to the test.

Chapter 4 page 18 he tells us he had oftten been told, and very much wanted to believe, that Strangford Lough had an island for every day of the year. He tried to make a count using a straight edge and an Admiralty chart and got to just over a hundred, a lot of islands for one Lough , even a big one.

THE BLUE CABIN  
Reviewed by Rosemary Bucknall

I would not attempt to improve on Maurice Hayes' opinion of this delightful book.

However, in the context of the Strangford Lough Project, some more comments might be helpful. This is a very honest piece of autobiography, reaching away to Scotland and to Canada, with simple and interesting vignettes of Michael's family, especially his distinguished father.

Michael's intimate knowledge of Ringhaddy Sound is very apparent, as is his rapport with the local characters. Strangford Lough is depicted not only when balmy and sunny, but also at its most intimidating - particularly the account of the abortive lunch party to Portaferry - all yachts people should take heed! - and also the uncanny experience of being fogbound on a short boat trip home from an evening out. No. Strangford Lough is not shown as some idyllic haven; rather Michael tells a tale of his and Lynn's adapting to and sometimes confronting the difficulties of life on Islandmore, and of achieving a tranquility that seems to be their very own.
BLACK PUDDINGS WITH SLIM
Reviewed by Lily Devlin

This was an autobiography recording the author's boyhood in Downpatrick from the age of ten. His mother had just bought Denvir's Hotel and the family moved from Kililough to live on the premises so we were introduced to the family members, the local characters and 'old Downpatrick'.

Much of the book was interesting and informative, e.g. the opening of the new St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School - Red High, and little anecdotes about everyday life in the Hotel.

Strangford Lough was not mentioned very much at all, Page 136 mentions the Baroness de Ros in Strangford, Page 164 gives a lovely description of a view from the statue at Saul and names all the sights: 'Then to turn round and face the glory of the view. The whole of Co.Down nearly, like a basket of eggs, hill after hillock, Gun’s Island and Delamont Woods and on out to Killyleagh and Shrigley chimney and the lough stretching back up to Comber and Newtownards and the islands, 365 of them, one for every day of the year... And round to the other side to see Strangford and Portaferry and the Narrows as the water raced out past Kilclief…'

Page 224 tells about the prison ship moored off Killyleagh.

TAKE A SECOND LOOK AROUND CO. DOWN
Reviewed by Reverend William Haslett

As Chaplain in Ards Hospital I first had the privilege of meeting Noel Kirkpatrick when he was a patient there some time before his death in August 1995. He was sitting up in bed proudly reading this book which had been published a couple of years earlier and autographed a copy for me.

In the words of his wife Rita whom I subsequently came to know, "Noel always had a great spirit of adventure which led him to caving, underwater diving, hill walking and general exploring. He would have climbed a disused factory chimney from the inside just to get a better view from the top."

He was a unique character, a philosopher with little formal education, but who had a wealth of self-taught knowledge, and his three books including the one under consideration are reminiscences of his adventures based on detailed notes and diaries, and were written after a series of strokes had curtailed his many outdoor pursuits. To read 'Take a Second Look' is to discover fresh insights into often familiar territory gleaned through the author’s meticulous observation and enthusiasm for exploration, often through his skill at underwater diving. The book deals with exploits in his native Comber, Newtownards, Holywood, Bangor, Donaghadee, the Ards Peninsula, the Lead Mines at Conlig, Newcastle and the Mournes and Rostrevor. It is a captivating story.

Up until the late 1960s it was custom for an ex-army landing craft to take lorries from Strangford to Portaferry. On page 142 he tells how on one such journey the boat capsized and one of the passengers was drowned. Shortly after this tragedy, and possibly as a result, the modern purpose built car ferries were introduced in 1969. Previously passengers had been transported across the Lough on a motor boat for sixpence per person with a smaller charge for bicycles.

Chapter 7 (pages 144 – 150 deals with some of his interesting discoveries on the inner side of Strangford Lough. He describes visits in the late 1940s and early 1950s to John Lee, a firm of ship breakers who worked in a sheltered bay two miles north of Portaferry, and gives a detailed account of his inspection of a German submarine, one of the vessels due to be broken up, and of his fascination with a tug-boat about to be demolished which was of similar design to one he had seen years earlier on the Mississippi with funnels side by side rather than the more conventional design of one behind the other. Across the road from the bay was a house outside of which was a genuine 15' high whale bone.

At the harbour of Kircubbin he saw the remains of an old wooden Swedish craft which has been moved from Ringneil near Nendrum Abbey in order to be rebuilt. However for unspecified reasons this did not happen and it was towed away from the jetty to be set on fire and allowed to burn to the waterline. The ship breakers complex was eventually closed and the site levelled for the construction of a runway for a private aircraft landing strip.
On page 148 there is a fascinating account of how having worked his way up from Kircubbin, he entered the water on the mudflats near Mount Stewart clad in a rubber diving suit, face mask, snorkel and fins, slowly drifted to where swans were feeding and had a close under-water view of them feeding on eel-grass. In 1948 in the same locality at low tide on the sand flats he saw tiny chicks emerging from eggs laid on the warm shingle, while above him swooped the parent birds eagerly attempting to guard their young.

A young distance from there in the late 1940s when examining the remains of the water-wheel of a derelict mill at Conningburn he noticed that one of the bricks supporting the main bearing was marked clearly with the name CASTLE ESPIE, whose brick works on the other side of the Lough were also in ruins.

Pages 162-165 describe a visit to Sketrick Island and the ruins of its castle, which contains an infamous murder-hole through which the early inhabitants could pour molten liquids on any unwelcome invaders. There is also a graphic account of how his travelling companions held his feet while lowering him head first through a mysterious narrow hole of an upper room in the Castle. They discovered later that it was possibly an ancient toilet!

Not far from Sketrick Castle on Mahee Island are the ruins of Nendrum Abbey, a 10th century monastic settlement where he examined the remains of a dried up well, the stump of a round tower, and the site of early metal and leather workshops.

In 1993 the Down Cruising Club celebrated its 25th anniversary on board its clubhouse ‘Petrel’, the lightship named after the web-footed sea bird of that name, which is permanently moored at Ballydorn, not far from Sketrick Island. Several such lightships, now all replaced by modern technology, were moored near dangerous reefs around the Irish coast.

Chapter 9 pages 160-175 ‘CASTLE ESPIE AND ON TO CASTLE WARD

The process of manufacturing and exporting the bricks of the former Castle Espie Brickworks are here described in detail. In the 1950s when its remains were still in reasonable order the author on one of his investigative missions entered the dark tunnel of the derelict brick kiln but was forced to effect a hasty retreat when faced by a bullock! On page 169 he related how in 1949 he made a long distance swim clad in a ‘dry’ rubber diving suit from Ballydorn Jetty towards Ringhaddy by way of the island Long Sheelagh where he had a packed lunch, which was none the worse for having been concealed in his diving suit, to Portaferry, and then back to Ballydorn by way of Kircubbin. He had been ten hours in the water and had covered a distance of twenty miles!

The remainder of the chapter page 171 onwards describes visits he made to Ringhaddy, Paddy Menary’s grave on Dunsy Island, and the Pike Stone between Killyleagh and the Quoile Estuary. He relates how he acquired a set of large lobster claws, and remembered a visit he and a friend had made years previously to a water logged wet and marshy outlet of the Quoile, now transformed into a very quiet, tranquil and scenic area by the construction of the barrier across its tidal section.

He also remembered the double-decked passenger steamer ‘Arethusa’ once a popular tourist attraction of the Lough which sailed from the Quoile estuary. She was eventually dismantled at Carrickfergus where, escorted by a flotilla of small craft, she had been towed after the creation of the Quoile barrage.

At Castle Ward in the late 1940s he had an unexpected talk with a charming elderly lady whom he later discovered was Lord Bangor’s mother. Lord Bangor died in November 1950 and his leaded coffin was released into Strangford Lough from the jetty at Castle Ward.

On page 174 there is a detailed description of his exploration of the deserted lead mines on the Castle Ward estate, which had been the source of some of its wealth; and how in 1976 during a two week holiday moored off its jetty he had not only investigated the remains of a sunken wreck which at high tide was completely covered but also visited the extensive grounds of the estate and its magnificent house with its two styles of architecture. He also had his photograph taken with a stuffed bear which he had seen on the earlier visit when he had spoken to Lord Bangor’s mother.

Noel Kirkpatrick was in every respect an exceptional person, and his books bear testimony to his enthusiasm for everything within his reach. In their preparation and production he was greatly helped and encouraged by his talented wife Rita whose many interests presently include membership of the Ards Choral Society.
FURTHER AFIELD AND LOOK WHAT I FOUND
Reviewed by Ann Fee

Sadly this is the last book of a trilogy and was lovingly completed by Noel’s widow Rita. It describes a time prior to their marriage when he explored the highways and by-ways of his beloved NI developing his hobbies of cycling, caving and sub-aqua diving. It is a must read for ‘Old Hands’ of the hostelling, cycling or diving groups of the 50’s and 60’s as he nostalgically recalls life in Rural Northern Ireland prior to the ‘Troubles’.

References to Strangford Lough
Strangford Lough Page 10 end of paragraph 3
Comber. page 75 end of second paragraph and Page 148 Poem '25 Years On'.
Ballyhalbert. Page 86 end of 3rd paragraph

THE DESIRE TO PLEASE
Reviewed by John Nutt

A biography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan 1751 – 1834. Written by his great, great grandson Harold Nicholson from family records and various archives of the time.

It tells of Archibald Hamilton’s upbringing in London and Killyleagh where the family had large estates. The son of a well to do family he also inherited a large sum from his grandfather’s will on the understanding that he include the surname Rowan along with his own. Hamilton did this but took the extraordinary step of making his surname Hamilton Rowan, instead of Rowan Hamilton. A very tall and strong young man he had a sheltered upbringing but was soon involved with his peers in all the activities of the day. Well educated he travelled on the European Continent to Holland, then lived for some time in Paris where he first came across those who wanted to rid France of its Kings and governing classes, in what was to be eventually the French Revolution. He also holidayed in N. Carolina in America and afterwards spent some time in Dublin. This was where he came in contact with members of the United Irishmen and in the passage of time espoused the cause of Irish Emancipation widely in Dublin and Belfast.

As a young man while living in Killyleagh he enlisted as a private in the Killyleagh Volunteers (at that time commanded by his father). Later while still living in Ireland he became more deeply involved with members of the United Irishmen and he was subsequently incarcerated in Newgate Jail for distributing pamphlets. On finding that there may be a case of treason brought against him with perhaps fatal consequences he bribed his jailer and escaped to France. There due to a misunderstanding, as to his standing as an Irish Patriot, he was then held prisoner, when he should have been received as a hero of the Republic. His position was eventually resolved by those republicans in power in Paris and he was released, however, he became disenchanted with French politics and decided to go back to N. Carolina. In total he spent 11 years in exile, five of which were in America before he received a form of pardon which allowed him to return to Hamburg in Germany. He was allowed to return to Dublin in June 1805 and by July of that year had cleared his name in London. He returned from London to Donaghadee and from there to Killyleagh - to a hero’s welcome.

During the remainder of his life he lived in Killyleagh Castle and spent his time there with his wife and family trying to improve the lives of his people in the Killyleagh area and traveling to Dublin to meet his friends. His wife died in February 1834 and his eldest son the following August, these disasters proved the last straw for Archibald Rowan Hamilton and he passed away in November 1834 in Killyleagh.

References to Strangford Lough and its environs
P4 Holidays spent with my mother’s people at Clandeboye & Killyleagh.
P6 Downpatrick & Killyleagh and The Soft Tides of Strangford Lough.
P7 Wild Untidyness of the Ards - Strangford Lough & Killyleagh.
P8 +33 Killyleagh Castle - Killyleagh.
P17+ 181 Killyleagh & Killinchy.
P182 Killyleagh – Hamilton Rowan returns to ancestral home 27/7/1806.
P183 Downpatrick & Strangford Lough.
P184-185 Killyleagh – a centre of Linen Trade etc
P186 Killyleagh Church
P193 Gawen Rowan Hamilton of Killyleagh, uncle of author.
P194 Killyleagh Volunteers 1913.
P194 Grandfathers and great-grandfathers buried in Marine Cemetery above the Lough.
P194 The distant trees of Ardquin & Portaferry.
P199 Commodore Rowan Hamilton son of Archibald Hamilton Rowan returned to Killyleagh but was thrown from a horse and died a few weeks later from internal injuries (the final act which preceded the death of Archibald Hamilton Rowan).

The Table of Contents of this book give a great deal more detail of the principal characters within its pages than I could do justice to in a few short sentences or for that matter the many, many names given in the Index. I found this book very interesting although heavily weighed down by references to so many people, places and events of the time. It did however give me a much greater insight into the history of the time especially the United Irishmen of whom I knew very little or no detail. The information on the Hamilton Family and their influence on the development of Ireland and Ulster in particular, was most enlightening. Living in Bangor I was not aware that the Hamilton family owned vast tracts of land in Holywood, Bangor and Clandeboye or the significance of the titles Dufferin & Ava, Clanbrassil etc. Archibald Hamilton Rowan comes across as a larger than life character, large in stature, large in character. Someone who lived for what he believed in, although often given to spur of the moment decisions. However, faithful to a cause and never afraid that his profile, as one of the gentry, could cause him great problems e.g. as a supporter of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, he did his own thing, irrespective of his peers at that time. He supported the lower classes both Catholic and Protestant alike, against the establishments in London and Dublin. It appears to me that he did not receive the credit due to him in local or Irish history. All in all an interesting read and one which I hope will stimulate me to seek further information and knowledge of people and events in the greater Strangford Lough area.

THE CAREYS
Reviewed by Ruth Thompson

Overview
This is a short, charming and ‘light’ memoir of the Carey family (the ‘head’ of which was Joseph W Carey, the artist and illustrator) written by their friend and neighbour. Part 1 is about the Carey’s life at their home in Knock Road, Belfast, and leads up to the deaths of Joseph Carey and his wife (also an artist) in the late 1930s. It contains many anecdotes and stories about their lives and the quirks of family life.

Part 2 focuses on their daughter, Mary Carey, and her husband, Arthur McCabe, who were close friends of the author. The Strangford interest comes in at this point as Arthur buys a sailing boat and is assisted by the author (herself a sailor) to sail it from Carnalea to Strangford Lough. The McCabes then rent a house a two-storied farmhouse on Eileenmore in Ringhaddy Sound. In this part of the book there are many descriptions and accounts about sailing adventures and mishaps in and around Strangford Lough.

In Chapter 19 the McCabes rent their house on Eileenmore. There are accounts of discovering the pladdies and reefs, and sailing generally. There is also a little information about life on the island, drawing water form the well and difficulties of access in poor weather. Chapters 21 and 22 are the most interesting as the author at this time (around 1942) became Secretary to the German Refugee Committee in Belfast. Part of her responsibility was to make holiday arrangements for the German children. She has the idea of a camp on the west side of Strangford Lough at Ringdufferin House. (Its owner, a Miss Baillie, had recently died.) The house is described as ‘rather squat, two-storied in front and dropping to three at the back’. In Chapter 22 the camp goes ahead. The author records that ‘people in the neighbourhood were very kind to us, asking us out to tea.’ In return, the children gave ‘little recitals’. On the last night of the camp, they picnicked on the island. ‘It was a lovely, wind-still evening and as we rowed back in the dark, still singing, the phosphorescence rippled in the wake and dropped like jewels from the blades of the oars.”
Chapters 23 and 24 refer to sailing around Whiterock, with a little detail about life in Whiterock during the war years. ‘During those war years a bus removed most of the male population at eight in the morning and brought them back at seven at night...’

The book then draws to a close after the death of Arthur McCabe. It is clear that the author of the book was a keen sailor herself who loved Strangford Lough. This comes over very clearly in the attractive and entertaining stories she tells.

AN OLD WIFE’S TALE
Reviewed by Eleanor Rodham

How many of us regret that we do not have a record of family stories told us by our parents. As she acknowledges at the start of her book Honor Rudnitzky had a daughter with the foresight to “prod” her mother to do just that, and a husband who typed “An Old Wife’s Tale”.

Honor was born in 1914 and grew up in East Belfast. In the 1930s she became interested in sailing and took part in regattas on Strangford Lough.

Page 16: "I also began to get interested in sailing. Hitherto the peace of Strangford Lough had only been disturbed by the River Class, raced by the nobility and gentry who lived round the shores. On alternate Saturdays their races were started by Major Blackiston-Houston’s butler with a shot gun on Calf Island, and by a member of Lord Bangor’s household, similarly armed, at Audley’s Roads. The rest of the craft consisted of a few sailing and motor boats from which people caught mackerel or went out for picnics on the islands. But about this time it was decided to start an inexpensive class of racing dinghies for young people and the class chosen was the International Snipe Class. At once the nobility and gentry rose in alarm. Strangford with its ferocious tides was no place for small capsizable dinghies, especially if sailed by inexperienced youngsters."

Page 17 - 19 “Regattas were also held in Strangford, Portaferry and Kircubbin ending in Whiterock. They came to be known as the Strangford Week.” She gives a vivid and amusing account of these summer festive occasions including Lord Bangor’s efforts to call the sailors to order.

In 1938 Honor met her future husband Oskar, a refugee from Hitler’s Germany. His legal qualification was not recognised in Britain and so he studied at Queens University Belfast and became a teacher.

Page 33: During his student years he had a holiday job on Phillip Campbell’s farm in Portaferry. (Page 60: The farm was sold.)

The idea of their marriage, which took place in 1942, was born she says, on a walk up to the windmill above Portaferry, where they sat,

Page 34: “...looking down on the breathtaking view, the little town below, Strangford opposite with the silver swiftly flowing current gleaming between...”

Page 47: After their engagement they sailed at Whiterock, exploring the various islands and landing on Bird Island which was not then a protected bird sanctuary. They cycled to Whiterock. “I remember the smell of honeysuckle as we sped down the Ballymartin Road towards Ardmillan with Strangford and its many islands spread out before us."

Page 56: More fun and a lucky beak at a Killyleagh regatta.

Page 57: For several years they sailed competitively in the Snipe class, finally selling their boat Jenny Wren to Lord Eme in Fermanagh.

Page 70: A Hallowe’en treat for her three daughters and their friends is described. This was to Killynether woods and Scrabo Tower. Mention is made of the two sisters who for many years served farmhouse teas in the tower.

Page 74 - 75: They bought a bigger if somewhat leaky boat, Ocean Spark, rented a cottage near Sketterick and sailed with their children and friends. "We landed on islands, just as Oskar and I had done years before, and the children were delighted to see the chicks chipping out of their eggs as the seagull parents screamed around us."

Page 76: A cottage at Whiterock was another summer residence

Page 90: In 1966 they moved to Libane and bought the Aspidistra, a more seaworthy vessel with a cabin.

Page 110: Strangford Lough was their playground, the view in their eyes when the idea of marriage was born and which they found they could not happily live without.
Children’s

  **Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe;  **Local libraries:** NI Lib.; Linen Hall; QUB; UU;  **Online text:** None

  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Amazon;  **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall  **Online text:** None

  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe  **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall  **Online text:** None

  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe  **Local libraries:** NI Lib  **Online text:** None

  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe;  **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU;  **Online text:** None

THE BELL OF NENDRUM

Reviewed by Carol Moore

From its opening words: "Strangford Lough, a curving sea-arm cutting deep into the east coast of Northern Ireland, is blessed with many islands", this book focuses entirely on Strangford Lough involving the reader in a geographical journey through its islands and currents and a journey through its history.

This is an exciting local adventure which should be read by all children who know Strangford and by many adults. It tells the story of 15 year old Nial Ross, a Belfast boy, who has just acquired a new sailing dinghy which he names Cuan and the week he spends sailing it from his parents’ cruiser at Whiterock.

The tale is told with a yachtsman’s eye to detail and we share Nial’s enthusiasm as he journeys on Strangford past the islands of Conly, Rainey, Trasnagh and Darragh (pages 10/11), navigates Calf Islet (page15) and observes (somewhat reluctantly) his father’s instruction to avoid the Narrows. We share the winds, the currents, the noise of the sea-birds, his observations of places (Sketrick Castle, Nendrum), his navigation of narrow channels and even his experience coming aground, as he familiarises himself with his new dinghy and the lough.

His excitement turns to fear when he encounters a very violent storm and is lost. Believing himself to be between Reagh and Mahee he comes ashore but cannot readily identify where he is as the familiar landmark of the Mahee causeway is not in sight. Here the historical journey begins because Nial has been transported through time and is now on Mahee island in AD 974 looking in amazement at the massive and intact monastic settlement of Aendrum or – as we know it today – Nendrum.

The story which follows is a thrilling recapturing of historical fact – the Viking raid and destruction of the Monastery and the surrounding settlement. This is described graphically and is all the more meaningful to us as it is seen through the eyes of the modern day Nial who acts as translator across time.
As a story alone it's enough to catch the interest of many. But this story is rooted in historical fact – fact we can partly confirm for ourselves by a visit to the ruins or to the Ulster Museum to see the bell which was used to call the monks to prayer and it tells us of places we know and gives us a glimpse of how those places were in very different times. The Bell of Nendrum is a must for all lovers of Strangford.

Drama

  Purchase: New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; Local libraries: NI Lib; UU; Online text: None

♥ Tomelty, Joseph. All Soul’s Night and Other Plays – with introduction by Dr. Damian Smyth - (Belfast: Lagan Press, 1993).
  Purchase: New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; Local libraries: NI Lib; Linen Hall; UU; Online text: None

  Purchase: New and 2nd hand: Amazon; Local libraries: NI Lib; Linen Hall; UU; Online text: None

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN
Reviewed by Carol Clark

This play, whose author was born in Downpatrick in 1962, is said to be “an exploration of loyalty, place and cultural belonging down the familial generations....an important intervention in Ireland’s endless national debate about identity.” It was first performed at Down Arts Centre, Downpatrick, on 2nd October 2002.

The play involves:
- George Linton, a private in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
- A Boer sniper, an elderly Boer farmer
- Harry Smyth, a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery
- Bella Smyth, George’s mother
- George Henry, Bella’s great-grandson

The action takes place during the Second Anglo-Boer War on the night of February 23rd 1900 on a hill near Ladysmith in South Africa, where George lies, seriously wounded. The Boer sniper is waiting for an opportunity to finish him off. Their conversations form the basis of the play: about being Irish but fighting for the British Empire, losing loved ones in conflict and the impact of and desire to avenge the inevitable deaths that occur. The play also includes George “seeing” and conversing with Bella, Harry (who died in India around 1897) and George Henry, a descendant killed in the Troubles in 1973, who is on Gallow’s Hill overlooking Downpatrick. During some of these conversations the reminiscences refer to the area around Downpatrick.

With the caveat that page 18 was missing in the copy I used (page 16 was repeated instead), the following references to the area around Strangford Lough were found. Much of the dialogue referring to the Downpatrick area talks about the road built down the hill not up!

| P19 (George) | “up the Killough Road?”
<p>|             | “...just wavin’ over at the Protestants at the Cathedral and laughing at them that they’d think they were in heaven and it would still be Downpatrick...” |</p>
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| P25 (George) | “Plenty of black oul' holes like Ballynahinch and Comber…”  
“Ye could be in Newtownards.” |
| P25 (George) | “Me da's dead up the Killough Road.” |
| P28 (Harry) | “why would anyone go to Ardglass”  
“...if you were trying to get out of Ardglass, if you wanted to get to St Patrick’s Cathedral or away to Belfast.”  
“Do you know they used to hang people right down there, just behind the Horse Barracks?”  
(next speech) “You can see bits of the oul' post. Not many knows that.” |
| P29 (George) | “Would that be why it’s called ‘Gallows Hill’, your worship?”  
(final speech) “The reason there’s a big wall round the Asylum is not to keep the nutcases in, but to keep the Downpatrick ones out.” |
| P29 (Harry) | Refers to “the workhouse graveyard”... “might as well have been one of them rocky oul’ fields out at Minerstown”  
“(next speech) “Flegs and stone plaques in the cathedral, big crosses up the Killough Road…out at the Flying Horse where the Asylum ones are put. They don’t put that in the Down Recorder.” |
| P29-30 (Harry) | “We import the Newtownards ones and the Newry ones and ours end up exported to Belfast.”  
“down there is the Horse Barracks and this town has the Rifles in it and if they wouldn’t have me in Fountain Street I could go to Newtownards or Belfast or Derry and do the necessary there.” |
| P31 (Harry) | “...Baron Killyleagh who strangled his wife, the beautiful Baroness. Or….to annoy their heirs in the Green Bedroom.... You don't get ghosts down the Strangford Road or up in the Mental...” |
| P32 (George) | “…lookin’ after the sheep out at Raholp…” |
| P36 (George) | “Here or up the Killough Road with me da.” |
| P36 (Harry) | “Go mad and end up out the Ardglass Road or sewin’ smocks down the Strangford Road.” |
| P37 (Harry) | “Good lookin’ girls scrubbin’ tiles for them oul’ bastards at Castle Ward and Mount Stewart. Is it a wonder the paper has somebody hangin’ themselves or floating face up in the Quoile?” |
| P49 (George) | “…several hundred men lay dead in less room than a 2-up 2-down in Fountain Street.” |
| P56 (Bella) | “...why would anybody go to Ardglass…” |

I found the play, said to “give a remarkable portrayal into the psychic landscape of conflict: hatred, guilt, fear, the desire to avenge what can never be put right and the cruelties of chance and fate”, quite moving as it followed the words and thoughts of George as he lay dying, remembering events and people from his past, amusing in places, but also rather confusing – I felt the attempt to mirror and compare these events to those similarly futile deaths during the Troubles did not quite work and was rather bewildering. Others, of course, may differ in their opinion!
**Fiction**

- **Bell, Sam Hanna.** *December Bride* (First pub. 1951; Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2006).
  
  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **.** *Across the Narrow Sea: A Romance* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1987).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **.** *Summer Loanen and Other Stories* (Newcastle: Mourne Press, 1943)
  
  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **Doyle, Lynn C.** *Ballygullion* series of stories (1908–1953).
  
  **Purchase:** Reprints & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **Kearney, Paul,** *The Monarchies of God [Series]* (Gollancz UK and Ace US)
  
  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **King-Hall, Magdalene.** *The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion in the Year 1764–1765* [by Cleone Knox] (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1925).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall **Online text:** extracts at Google Books

- **Lyttle, W.G.** *Betsy Gray, or The Hearts of Down* (First pub. 1888; Newcastle: Mourne Observer, 1968).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU **Online text:** None

- **.** *Daft Eddie; or, The Smugglers of Strangford Lough* (First pub. 1890; Newcastle: Mourne Observer Press, 1979).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU **Online text:** None

- **.** *Humorous readings by "Robin"* (Belfast: Allen, 1886–92).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU **Online text:** None

- **.** *Sons of the Sod: A Tale of County Down* (First pub. 1886; Belfast: R. Carswell, 1915).
  
  **Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU **Online text:** None

- **McAughtry, Sam,** *Blind Spot and Other Stories* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1978)
  
  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

- **McLaverty, Michael.** *Call My Brother Back* (First pub. 1939; Dublin: Poolbeg, 1979).
  
  **Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None
_____ *Lost Fields* (First pub. 1941; Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2004).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

_____ *In This Thy Day* (New York: MacMillan, 1945).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

_____ *The Game Cock and Other Stories* (New York, Devin Adair, 1947).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

_____ *In Quiet Places* (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1989).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

_____ *Collected Short Stories* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2002).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** Publishers **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; UU; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** Publishers **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

♥ **Robinson, Hugh.** *Yarns from the Ards: Tall Tales and True Stories* (Dinaghadee: Ballyhay Books, 2005).

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Rudnitzky, Honor.** *The Trampled Primrose and Other Stories* (Lewes: Book Guild, 2002).

**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** Linen Hall; QUB; **Online text:** None

♥ **Tomelty, Joseph.** *Red is the Port Light* (First pub. 1948; Belfast: Lagan Press, 1997).

**Purchase:** New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None
DECEMBER BRIDE
Reviewed by Brian Lamb

Page numbers refer to the 1981 Paperback edition published by Blackstaff

Specific Locations
Ravara Church and Manse (pp9-15) – The centre of the opening of the novel (Hamilton and Sarah's marriage)
Dufferin Bay – (The scene of Andrew Echlin (seniors) death during a storm. And described in lyrical passage as Frank Echlin rows to his cousin Fergus Pentland's farm (also the starting point of the Echlin's fateful journey on the night of Andrews Echlin's death) (pp 26 – 37)

Hedgrows, ditches and streams - described throughout but in particular in and around the Echlin farm (Rathard) in passages describing Andrew Gomartin/Echlin's childhood. (Chapter 13) Rathard's location is fictionary but must overlook Dufferin bay. A suitable hill farm could stand for it if a well preserved one can be found.

The journey from Ravara church to the lough shore would suggest itself as suitable for part of the trail. Most of the main events of the book take place in and around the Echlin Farm which overlooks the lough and whose lands extend to the shore.

BETSY GRAY OR THE HEARTS OF DOWN: A TALE OF NINETY-EIGHT
Reviewed by Hugh Anderson

W.G.Lyttle's record of the ill-fated Ninety-eight rebellion of the Society of United Irishmen is a gripping account of events in County Down and Antrim in this important period in Irish history. He skilfully combines legend with local and social history to bring to life the conditions of injustice and inequality suffered by many at that time. His story-telling ability and descriptive prose make for compelling reading. This is a record of incredible courage in the face of treachery, mindless butchery, injustice and lawlessness.

Most of the events recorded take place in mid and east County Down. The story begins at Matt M'Clenaghan's smiddy at Six-Road-Ends (now a modern roundabout) between Bangor and Newtownards. Our heroine, Betsy Gray, was born in Saintfield and played an important role in the battle of Ballynahinch. The Ards Peninsula features strongly in the book with accounts of the battle of Portaferry at the Market House and the executions of Rev Porter at Greyabbey and William Warwick at Kircubbin.

One of the most significant historical figures of the period featured in the book is Rev William Steele Dickson who was minister of the Presbyterian Church in Portaferry at that time. Widely recognized to be one of the most influential leaders of the movement Dickson was highly respected for his oratory and leadership skills.
DAFT EDDIE or THE SMUGGLERS OF STRANGFORD LOUGH
Reviewed by John Maze

Introduction
This story was first published in Northern Ireland in the *North Down Herald* and later published in book form, around 1890. It was subsequently republished in 67 pages, with the addition of an Appendix, by the Mourne Observer Press, Newcastle, County Down, Northern Ireland.

Summary
This is a story in which a young man known as Daft Eddie endeavours to thwart the activities of a band of smugglers – ‘The Merry Hearts of Down’ – which carries out its illegal activities in the early part of the 19th century around the Strangford Lough area, and the County Down coast, of Northern Ireland. Eddie is not all that ‘daft’, he is just an awkward and peculiar child of unknown parentage, who has grown up to be a shy young man who loves to be on his own. The smugglers are regarded by the lower class as heroes, and by the upper class as a source of goods which are cheap, because no tax is paid on them.

A certain Commodore Bob is leader of the Strangford fishing fleet and a member of the band of smugglers. He is a large, rough and violent man who thinks nothing of betraying his comrades and assaulting anyone who gets in his way. Willie Douglas, a man from a little cottage on the west side of the Lough, joins the gang after a traumatic initiation ceremony. The gang plan to kidnap a wealthy local magistrate, Mr McFadden, who lives in a big house, Oakville House, on the east shore of the Lough, near Kirkcubbin.

Daft Eddie gets to hear about the plan and, risking his own life, warns Mr McFadden of the impending attack on his home. Eddie falls in love with Mr McFadden’s daughter and, when her father is kidnapped from his home and held to ransom, Eddie endeavours to protect his ‘love’. The kidnappers make sure a ransom note is prepared and delivered by Willie Douglas to a Mr Matthews in Ballywalter. Eventually the gang is located in their hideout, in the hills near Newtownards where they are holding Mr McFadden captive, by a crowd led by Mr Matthews. After a violent fight in which Eddie is fatally injured, Mr McFadden is rescued.

Some parts of the story are set at sea aboard the smugglers’ schooner, and aboard a revenue cutter which pursues the smugglers schooner along the County Down coast. The story includes a considerable amount of violence with people being assaulted, executed, killed, hung and maimed.

The author of the book was obviously very familiar with the Strangford Lough area and the Ards Peninsula. The research carried out on behalf of the Mourne Observer, after the book was written does seem to confirm that much of the book is based on fact. However, the extent to which the story in the book is not true will probably never be known – a ‘cracking good read’ nonetheless.

Comment on dialogue
Much of the dialogue in this book is written in the ‘broad County Down dialect. As a result, unless the reader is familiar with that dialect, the dialogue may have to be read more than once, to fully understand what is being said.

REFERENCES TO PLACES, PERSONS AND EVENTS

General Notes

(i) The spelling of some place-names is not consistent in the book – e.g. Tullynagardy/ Tullynagardy/Tullygardy. This may just be spelling or typesetting errors, the author may have been uncertain as to the correct spelling, or there may simply be more than one way of spelling the place-name.
"Kirkcubbin" appears in the story, and "Kircubbin" (the modern spelling) appears in the Appendix to the book; also, "Cloughey" appears in the story and "Cloughy" in the Appendix. The common spelling of village names may just have changed over time. However it is worth noting that, at the time of this Review, the statutory roads authority in Northern Ireland is somewhat inconsistent, in that roadside directional signposts on the Ards Peninsula variously read – "Cloughey" or "Cloughy" or "Cloghy"!

Sometimes the town at the head of Strangford Lough is referred to as "Newtown", elsewhere it is referred to, in full, as "Newtownards".

In the following References section – place-names are generally in bold type, and the reviewer's personal comments are in italics.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Reference to Place, Person and/or Event in the Book</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eddie (the person named in the title of the book) is buried at Tullynakill (between Ballydrain and Ardmillan), overlooking the western side of Strangford Lough. The leader of the Strangford fishing fleet is Commodore Bob. There is a description of a little cottage, nestling at the base of a sloping hill and close upon the margin of Strangford Lough (which (apparently) was called Lough Cuan nearly 100 years before the story was written).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Willie Douglas lives in the above cottage. The Kroobin' (or Kroobin's) Hole is where Willie Douglas has his boat moored.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A derelict house, in a remote location and known as Nicholas Donnan's house, is thought by the locals to be haunted, but it is actually being used by the smugglers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>One of the smugglers – &quot;Magilton, who lived near Millisle&quot; – is accused of being a traitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Magilton is alleged to have gone in a boat, from a point close to Templepatrick (one mile north of Millisle), out to the revenue cutter lying off Millisle where he stayed for an hour and then returned to Millisle via the Copelands (Copeland Islands off Donaghadee).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Willie Douglas has been selected to execute Magilton, by choosing the only black pebble from a bag of pebbles which had &quot;once lain by the shores of Strangford and been washed by the shores of old Lough Cuan&quot;. He reluctantly does what he is told.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Strangford Lough, which takes it name from the small town of Strangford, was once known as Lough Cuan (or Coin). The author suggests that it may also have been called at one time &quot;Danart&quot;, the name of a lake &quot;by or through the Ardes&quot;, which is referred to in 'John de Curcey's (or Courcy's) Foundation Charter of the Black Priory of St. Andrew in the Ardes'. The Lough extends from Newtownards in the north to Strangford in the south, a distance of 13 miles and, in places it is up to 3 or 4 miles in width.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Robert and Lizzie Barbour, a couple living on Mahee Island, became foster parents to cont'd a baby, called Eddie, the person named in the title of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>When he returns from a rowing trip (aged about 20), Eddie tells his foster-mother that he has been &quot;ower at the White Rock, spyin' fairlies&quot; (most likely at Whiterock, which is opposite Sketrick Island on the west shore of Strangford Lough and about 2 miles away by water).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mrs Douglas tells Eddie that her husband, Willie, has gone to the Kirkcubbin shore to try his luck at fishing. Eddie, not believing her and suspecting he is tied in with the smugglers, rows towards Kirkcubbin.

At the time the book was written, there were many caves around the County Down coast which had once been used by smugglers – “by the shorelands of Greypoint, Carnalea, Bangor Bay, Groomsport, Donaghadee, Millisle, Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, Ballyferris, Cloughey, and Ballquintin Point”. Smugglers ships, passing over the Strangford Bar and into Strangford Lough, were safe once they passed Portaferry.

The location of Kirkcubbin, in relation to Newtownards and Killinchy, is explained and reference is then made to ‘Oakville House’, home of Mr Thomas McFadden, a wealthy magistrate, who lives outside Kirkcubbin, on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough, in the townland of Ballyeasborough. His house has fine views of Belfast Lough, the Antrim Coast, the Copeland Islands and Lough Cuan (Strangford Lough).

Miss Martha McFadden and Mrs Myrtlebrace (Mr McFadden’s housekeeper) are described. Eddie arrives and waits to speak with Mr McFadden who has gone to Ballywalter.

Eddie explains to Mr McFadden, on his return, that in the past robbers have attacked ships heading for ports around the Strangford Lough, ports such as Kirkcubbin, Portaferry and Killyleagh. Even the mail coach to Belfast had also been attacked. He informs Mr McFadden that his home, Oakville House, is going to be attacked.

Mr McFadden arranges for his daughter and housekeeper to be taken to safety at Robb’s cottage, some ½ mile from his home.

After the successful attack on Oakville House, Mr McFadden and two injured robbers are carried away towards Kirkcubbin.

When Robb’s cottage is attacked, Miss McFadden, the housekeeper and Eddie escape. Miss McFadden decides to go "to Gilmer’s first". Gilmer’s was a house on the main road, about a ¼ mile down the old cart-road or lane on which they were travelling, and then to the left.

Miss McFadden was captured by the robbers and taken to “one of the wildest and bleakest parts of the Conlig Hills”.

Daft Eddie gallops on his horse to Bangor to obtain assistance.

To the north-west of Newtownards there is a stream, which meets with another stream at the head of the glen at Tullygardy [sic]. It runs towards Strangford Lough and empties itself into the sea about ½ mile along the shore road at the Flood-gates.

A short distance from the junction of the two streams, over the mountains, are the cont’d Conlig Mines from which lead and silver are extracted by miners, some of whom are members of ‘The Merry Hearts of Down’ – the smugglers’ gang.

At the above junction there is a “lofty rugged rock” at which two miners were standing, waiting for the “Killinchy boys”. Very few of the inhabitants of the New Town (Newtownards) come there. Shortly, two men arrive with their blindfolded prisoner, Mr McFadden.

Arrangements are made for a ransom note to be prepared, with the intention of it being delivered to a Mr Matthews of Ballywalter.

The people of Ballyeasborough are alarmed by the reports of the activities of ‘The Merry Hearts of Down’ – the Downpatrick to Belfast mail coach has been robbed, a house at Saintfield has been plundered, a man has been murdered at Loughries Moss, a schooner at Portaferry has been boarded and its cargo pillaged, and an unsuccessful attempted robbery has taken place at a Mr Morrison’s house near Newtownards.
With the ransom money in his possession, Willie Douglas leaves Mr Matthews. As Willie hurries towards Kirkcubbin, he is viciously attacked by Commodore Bob.

Six men, who have been following Willie Douglas from Ballyeasborough, see Commodore Bob attack Willie and steal the ransom money so, with the help of others, they overpower him.

Bob Commodore is to be taken to Downpatrick Jail in a cart.

"The stalwart farmers of the Ards attack the cart containing the prisoner".

An ancient tree near Kirkcubbin is used as a temporary gallows by the mob of men, to hang Commodore Bob.

Dr Black of Kirkcubbin, whose "ashes repose in Glastry graveyard", is summoned to assist the injured Willie Douglas.

The injured Willie Douglas envisages he will die and be buried at Killinchy.

Willie Douglas refers to the smugglers' cave near Newtown as being as bad as the "auld cave at the ghaist hole at Comer" i.e. the old cave at the Ghost Hole at Comber, a village west of Newtownards.

Kirkcubbin – where the men gather together to rescue Mr McFadden.

Newtownards – towards which the men all march.

Lough Cowan – which the procession of marching men pass.

Mr Matthews of Ballywalter – who leads the band of marching men.

The men proceed through Greyabbey to Newtown(ards), desiring to rescue Mr McFadden from the robbers' cave in Tullynagardy Glen.

The men reach Newtown(ards) in early morning and go to The Londonderry Hotel in Greenwell Street where the proprietor is Andrew (Andy) Martin. He speaks to his wife, Betty Martin, about the robbers' caves in the "old Glen at Tullynagardy."

Men are dispatched to Newtown(ards) to collect turpentine and pitch to start a fire, to smoke out the robbers in the cave at Tullynagardy Glen.

"Tak him tae Gunyin's mill and let the rats eat him" i.e. Take the body of Commodore Bob to Gunyin's mill... (an old, disused and derelict corn mill, situated about ¼ mile from the tree in Kirkcubbin on which he had been hung).

Commodore Bob, having escaped from Gunyin’s mill, finds himself on Gunning’s grazing ground where "stirks" (cattle) graze.

HM revenue cutter ‘Dart’, skippered by Captain Nelson, is on duty in Belfast Lough off the County Down coast, midway between Greypoint (now called Grey Point) and Carrickfergus.

Pirrie’s Castle – known as “Little Clandeboye” – where smuggled goods were stored in underground caverns prior to disposal in Belfast and elsewhere.
His Majesty's revenue cutter 'Dart' is lying off Ballyhalbert. The smugglers' schooner 'Betty', which is skippered by the leader of the 'Merry Hearts of Down', Captain Jenkins, is seen to be heading towards Ballyquin Point.

The 'Betty' sails quickly along the dangerous coast between Ballyhalbert and Strangford Bar (the entrance to Strangford Lough from the open sea).

The story returns to the cave in the Glen of Tullynegardy.

The smugglers' cave is said to be "within a mile of Newtown (Ards)". Mr McFadden thinks that he was on the Killinchy side of Lough Cowan and that he was imprisoned near Killinchy.

Crowds gather at the head of William Street in Newtown (Ards).

The fatally injured Eddie is carried on a door to the Londonderry Hotel in Greenwell Street in Newtownards. Here he insists on going home to his "loved island of Mahee" (Mahee Island) and he is taken to Killinchy where he spent his childhood. He dreams of Lough Cowan, Turneykill (or Tullynakill), Calf Island, Rainish and Sketrick (an island where, at the time of this review, a restaurant called "Daft Eddie's" is situated).

"Daft Eddie of Killinchy" is buried "in the old churchyard of Tullynakill (or, as it was called, Turneykill) ... which overlooks the waters of the (Strangford) Lough".

Betty, the smuggler's schooner rounds Ballyquin Point. It is pursued by HM revenue cutter 'Dart', which hits and founders on Ballyquin Reef.

The government finally clamps down on the 'The Merry Hearts of Down' and the smugglers captured at Tullynegardy are transported for life.

(At the time of the book being written) a descendant of Captain Nelson, commander of HM revenue cutter 'Dart', lived in Portaferry; and descendants of Mr McFadden lived in the Ards.

**REVIEWER'S SUMMARY OF THE BOOK'S "APPENDIX"**

The Appendix to the book – 'Daft Eddie or The Smugglers of Strangford Lough' – consists of stories and data (17 photos with accompanying texts). It resulted from research which was carried out on behalf of The Mourne Observer newspaper, by W.H. Carson and D.J. Hawthorne. The newspaper had decided to research W.G. Lyttle's story to establish the authenticity (or otherwise) of the story.

Various people were interviewed and various places visited. The results of the researchers' enquiries are summarised below:

<table>
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<th>Page</th>
<th>Places Visited and Person Met by the Researchers</th>
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When the researchers met with friends in a public house, Balloo House (near Killinchy), they learned that there was a secret hideout of the smugglers on Island Reagh. They went there and met Mr Hugh Chambers who farms on the island. They visited a beach known as ‘the Brandy Port’, the most northerly deep water landing point on Strangford Lough which is not tidal.

Close by the Brandy Port, in a nearby inland clearing in dense undergrowth there is a large 8ft. x 7ft. flat-topped stone, which is 2½ft. deep. According to Tom Neill of Kilyleagh, there were 13 stone seats placed around the flat-topped stone – a number corresponding to the number of smugglers mentioned. The researchers believed this was the authentic site of the smugglers secret hideout.

The researchers’ next visit was to Kircubbin where they were taken to The Doctor’s Bay by Eddie Floyd (a retired postman). He pointed to Black Neb, a long narrow spit of land pointing across the Lough. He told stories of how the smugglers, when landing their smuggled goods, scared inquisitive locals away. He told of the great-grandfather of Jim Kelly of Cloughy, who saw something he should not have seen one night and simply disappeared.

The researchers visited Greyabbey and saw a swordstick, reputed to belong to one of the smugglers, in the possession of Rev. W.J. Wharton. He had received it from a Mr Thomas McAvoy of Greyabbey. Mr McAvoy’s grandfather, John McAvoy, who was brought up on Mid Island off Greyabbey and had had many encounters with the smugglers from whom he had (apparently) received the stick.

The researchers met a lady who showed them a photograph of descendants of Mr McFadden of Ballyeasborough, the magistrate who was kidnapped by the smugglers and held to ransom.

The researchers, through a keen historian Mr Staveley O’Brien, were taken to a place where the kidnapped magistrate’s house – Oakville House – had once stood, now replaced by a farmhouse. The researchers arrived at Ballyeasborough and were taken into the roadway opposite the Church of Ireland, past Glastry School and then, at a bend in the road, into an avenue which led to a sturdy farmhouse. From discussions with the owner, they were satisfied that this had indeed been the site on which Oakville House had stood.

On leaving the site, the researchers were shown a house on the opposite side of the road from the entrance to ‘Oakville’ avenue which was occupied by a descendant of one of the men who rescued Mr McFadden from the smugglers.

The researchers visited The High Dam on an artificial lake at Tullynagardy, Newtownards which was created by the Glen Laundry. There they met Mr William Cantley, a retired Council clerk of works, who believed that the smugglers’ cave was beneath the lake.

The researchers visited “Frankville” (later to be called Quoile House) which was situated near Downpatrick and which was reputed to have been involved in the storage of smuggled goods.

The final chapter in the book gives details of the Killinchy Players who, at the time of the research, were involved in entertaining audiences, over a wide area, with plays (amongst others) based on W.G. Lyttle’s “The Smugglers of Strangford Lough”, “Betsy Gray” and “Hearts of Down” (thereby perpetuating the stories of Daft Eddie and the Smugglers of Strangford Lough).
"Uprooted"

This short story is located on the Lecale Coast close to Strangford Lough. It tells the story of a farming family who are uprooted from their home and land due to the building of an army camp during the Second World War. (I have spoken to people from around the area and they believe that Michael McLaverty has taken as his location the area around Ballyhornan known as Bishopscourt, where the Army Base was located and where a few Nissan huts can be see to this day).

The family in this story consists of grandfather, son, daughter-in-law and grandsons. It tells of a time when horses were still used on the land and also of a time of transition between horse and tractor.

The story is based in early spring with the family sowing potatoes and the son's longing for a tractor and the grandfather wishing the war was over so that a new tractor may be bought but also his love for the horses. The grandsons are playing with their dog, the larks are soaring high in a clear blue sky when suddenly an army jeep appears along the sea road and stops at one of the fields. Men alight from the jeep and start measuring one of the fields, this gives rise to speculation as to what may be happening, the family surmises that they be building a gun mount or a bomb store. The grandfather is uneasy and seeks news from his neighbour who has only heard rumours of the building of an army barracks. The son has been to the village and heard from the police sergeant that an aerodrome is to be built.

One morning the postman arrives with a letter, which told them, they had to be left their farm within three months and that compensation would be agreed upon. The grandfather was very defensive of leaving his home and goes to see the priest who tells him that several people have received the same news.

The neighbour was the first to leave the area to an old tumbled down house about two miles along the coast. He told the grandfather that he was lucky as he had a family and that they would find a good farm with the compensation money, but the grandfather is loath to leave his land. The son suggests settling in Downpatrick (page 75) for a short time, as it was only ten miles away. The grandfather's response to this is "You can't farm the streets of a town", but the son was thinking of starting a shop and then selling when the war is over and coming back to the area, but the old man cannot see the sense in this as the farm and buildings will be gone.

The family buy the shop in Downpatrick (page 76) but the grandfather is uneasy there. On the last day in the old place the grandfather walks the fields that are as silent as the grave as all the stock has been sold. Scaffolding for the Nissan huts can be seen along the sea road, "and the strokes of the men's hammers sounded to the old man like the pulse of his own blood". On his way back lorries loaded with timber pass him on the sea road.

The family move to Downpatrick and in the evenings when the shop has closed and the grandfather and children have gone to bed, the son and daughter-in-law talk of the last journey they made from the old house of how his father had padlocked the gate and how he had taken a last look at the house, the trees and how he had returned for the old clothesline. They were worried about him, he only left the boys to school in the morning and then he called into the church. At night before he went to bed he listened to the radio. He attended the fair days and once he met up with his old neighbour who tells him that there is now a runway with huts and sheds. The grandfather asks if his house is still standing but the son has the neighbour warned what to say so he tells him that the house is still standing and the grandfather hopes that it will not be tumbled.

About two weeks after his neighbour's visit the grandfather leaves Downpatrick and starts to walk back towards the shore, he gets a lift on a cart and as he gets near he can smell the salt in the air and the dull roar of the sea, but in front of him instead of the familiar fields are huts and sheds with men all around. He walks passed them until he finds himself close to the sea with nothing but the rushing nose of the sea and the long tarred road his neighbour spoke of and beyond them the church and the graveyard. He saw then that his fields were levelled, his house was no longer there was "nothing but vacancy", the dog ran around him but the old man did see or hear him as his "eyes rested on the church and the white headstones in the graveyard".
"Look at the boats"

This story is of a young boy called Peter who has been adopted/foster by a couple from Killard. It tells of his journey from Belfast to Downpatrick along the County Down Railway.

The story starts with Peter leaving Belfast in the company of a nun who leaves him to the railway station with a label pinned to his jacket "Peter McCloskey c/o Mr & Mrs Robert Gill, Killard, Strangford, County Down" (page 199).

Peter's journey brings him from Belfast where the trains journey brings him past the backs of the city's houses, with pigeon sheds, clothes lines stations with tin advertisements and into the countryside with fields newly ploughed and farm houses with hay stacks and bare tress, where sheep rush from the noise of the train. As the train journeys into Downpatrick he sees that the country becomes more "hummocky" with the Mournes in the distance and wild ducks rising from the reed beds.

When he arrives in Downpatrick Robert and Alice Gill meet him and they take him for something to eat and then they start on the journey home. Peter is set up on the cart with a black shawl pinned around him, they climb out of Downpatrick and start to "descend towards the flat spreading land with the long arm of Strangford Lough stretching into it" (page 201). Robert pointed out to Peter "a white column that marked the mouth of the Lough and the open sea" (page 201) "Rock Angus" / "Rocking Goose" and states "Fornenst that is the house, Peter. We're down at the very jaws of the sea!" (page 201). (Barr mouth)

The house is dark and Alice lights an oil lamp and Peter sees the inside of his new home. The fire is out, the floor is flagged, a towel hangs on a nail at the back door and a horseshoe covered with silver paper hangs above it. Alice lights the fire and Robert tells Peter about his time at sea. Peter sits close to the fire and above him are black rafters with coils of rope and rows of salted fish. Alice soon as something ready to eat and Peter listens to the noise of the sea and thinks of the boats he say this morning as he left the orphanage on his way to Downpatrick.

Next morning Peter awakes to the clatter of a bucket and Alice shouting at the seagulls for stealing the hens' meal. Every morning there was the same shouts.

Peter slowly fitted into his new life and often sat with Robert on the upturned boat at the side of the house and would check for any seams of light in the boat.

It was now March and Peter helped Robert to plough the field and set potatoes and corn, as the days went past Peter learned all Robert's phrases "There's no nourishment in land that is easy ploughed", "The soil here'd kill no horse: it's too easily ploughed". Peter chased the crows from the fields and looked for bird nests but Robert told him that the salt had killed the bushes and the birds nested inland away from the sea.

Spring came and the days continued warm and dry Peter carried water from the river and grazed the cow along the roadside. As the cow grazed Peter ran along the sloping bank to the shore and searched for crabs, he found rusted bottle tops and whitened corks he made a boat from these. He lay and watched the tide flow in and out "like a river in flood, flowing out of the Lough to the open sea". "one day when a coal-boat approached he forgot the cow........... It cruised about the bar waiting for the tide to turn and carry it up to Portaferry" (page 207).

Every day he was seen with the cow along the sea road looking for shelduck nests or larks nests. In the evenings the shelduck flew from the Lough (page 207). At night he watched the light from the buoy at the mouth of the Lough (page 208).

Summer came and Robert and Peter fished the lobster pots and Alice would prepare the food. In the mornings Robert and Peter would dig for lugworm. They would row out to the mouth of the Lough (page 209) and when they reached the sea would hoist the sail. Robert taught him the marks "the Mill" and the "Black Rocks" (page 209). Robert showed him how to bait the hooks and always told him to get "The mill and the Black Rocks in line" before he threw out the anchor. They watched the Ardglass herring boats going out. They watched the Isle of Man and Liverpool boats going past on the horizon.

Robert told him of his time on the boats, places he had visited and the fierce storms he had encountered. As night fell the beam from St. John lighthouse would shine (Page 211)

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As winter came Robert nailed boards to the windows to break the force of the tide. In the evenings Robert would bring down his old school bag "Robert Gill, Kilclief National School" (page 212) he would read to Peter through the long winter nights. Alice knitted for Peter and the evening the jumper was finished Robert measured Peter for new trousers. When Robert was in Downpatrick (page 213) Alice fell and she told Peter not to tell Robert, Peter started to notice how Alice now sat always during Mass. Robert continued to tell his stories and Peter asked Alice about them she told Peter that Robert had worked for a while in Liverpool and was at sea for ten years. One evening as they came back from the fishing there was a light in one of the bedrooms and as they came ashore a woman told Robert that Alice was ill and in bed, she had fallen again. Two days later she was taken to Downpatrick Hospital and one morning, early, a policeman arrived to say she was dead. For days Robert sat about the house he sold the cow as he said there would be no one to milk her when he was at the fishing, he was even restless at the fishing and he would often come home early.

One evening as they came home a head wind below up and they had to pull hard against it, as they came ashore Robert said brokenly "The house is dead!" (page 217). The house was changed it was chilly with no fire, it was untidy with no woman to clean, Robert was sharp when Peter tried to help. Robert knew Peter was useful but he didn't want to show Peter this, as he was afraid that Peter would rule him.

One day Robert told Peter he would have to look after himself the next morning as he was going to Downpatrick. Peter watched the boats from his window. Robert woke late and sent Peter to get the horse and cart ready, he made the breakfast. Robert left for Downpatrick and did his shopping he started for home late in the afternoon, but Peter had left.

Page 219 Peter asked the seaman “Could you tell me where Strangford Lough would lie?” The seaman stood beside him “There’s the Copeland Light aft and there’s St John's Lighthouse; midway between them would be Strangford – a treacherous Lough!”

**WAKE THE TRIBE O’DAN**  
Reviewed by Bryan Johnston

This book was based on a small community’s way of life, the fictional Drumcrun, and centered on the village united in traditions/superstitions, competing with the world “outside”. These traditions are endorsed by a Ministry of Culture, keen to preserve, “the oul ways”. It is written in Ulster Scots, with a glossary of Old Scots provided for translation, although it became easy to comprehend the more I read. I picked up the book in Donaghadee library, in the local author’s section, and despite its publication in 1998, it had never been read. I found it enjoyable, and quick to read.

The only association with Strangford, apart from the language perhaps, was a short poem by William Cleland of Ballyhalbert in 1838. Other place names were contrived by the author.

**THE TRAMPLED PRIMROSE AND OTHER STORIES**  
Reviewed by Lesley Spence

Trampled Primrose  
Scrabo is mentioned on pages 3, 4, 5 and 6 Page 6 provides a description of the view from Scrabo and mention of the tea room  
Strangford Lough on page 6 
Newtownards on page 6

Main characters are Ellen, a young girl and May, the family servant. Other characters – mother, father and Auntie Jean
Ellen’s mother is confined to bed and Auntie Jean is running the household. May, the live-in servant, is not much older than Ellen and she is kind to her. On one of her days off they go on a bicycle trip to Scrabo and Ellen is very excited at this expedition. However, the happiness does not last.

**Stamp Duty**
Newtownards gets a very brief mention as the base for the Post Office but the story is set in Carrickfergus.

**RED IS THE PORT LIGHT**
Reviewed by Lynn Gilmore

A dark novel describing a lonely, illegitimate, bachelor (Stephen Durnan) from Portaferry who gets work aboard a coaster, the SS Glendry following the death of his mother. The captain (Captain F. Norton) is a drunkard with a grudge against Durnan who betrayed the captain in court. Durnan’s evidence led to the Captains ruin.

Durnan sets sail from Portaferry on the SS Glendry on passage to a village down the coast called Barholm but the ship gets into trouble and sinks at Strangford Bar. Despite Durnan’s best efforts the captain is lost. Durnan is saved and eventually wakes from a fever in the care of a woman who turns out to be Captain Norton’s widow. A strange relationship develops between the two and eventually they marry and return to Durnan’s cottage in Portaferry. The opportunistic marriage turns sour and murder is the catalyst for Durnans descent into madness.

This book is interesting especially due to the local references. It is also dark and quite menacing but it is an excellent read with some wonderful descriptions and passages of prose.

**P14 Describing the Shore front in Portaferry**
“On one side of the road were the little houses that rested shoulder to shoulder. They were barn shaped, and sparrows and blue tits flitted about the moss margins of the slates.

There were straws and streaks of droppings about the eaves, marking where the sandmartins had nested earlier in the year. Durnan’s eyes caught the crooked windows, and he glanced at the old women stretching their heads coaxingly to the light, stitching rapidly the flowers on linen handkerchiefs that brought them their bread; stitching with their mouths mumping, eager to finish a cloth before darkness came.”

**P15** The row of houses finished with a gable resting against a mass of stones that reached to its chimney; it was the end of the main street of Portaferry.

**P 35 watching the waves at the Bar Mouth**
“Fenner was looking down the Lough. Durnan knew he was watching the waves rise up at the ridge of rocks that jutted from Rock Angus Light. Dark shadows, they looked, rising quickly, like clowns tumbling.”

**P41 Rock Angus and the port light**
“Looking out he could see the long tower that marked the Rock Angus, and he knew they were at the threshold of the bar. Falling on his knees, he crouched into a corner as he lit the port light. A branch of seaweed fell at his feet. He could see its bellied beads shine golden in the gleam of the port light. The wind lifted it, and tapped it fiercely against his boot. Its beads shone with the varnish of the sea, bringing to his mind the colour of his mother’s coffin.

The port light recalled the tabernacle lamp.”

**P 44 Gunns Isle Sound mentioned**

**P 86** reference to a “brace of whaups” (local name for rabbits?)

**P203** “well he’s building a big cathedral in Belfast. It’s a granite job, and all the granite is to come from the Jackdaw Island in the Lough.”
Folklore & Myth
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**Purchase:** None; **Local Libraries:** None **Online text:** [www.archive.org/stream/monksomahieisla00vinyiala/monksomahieisla00vinyiala_djvu.txt](www.archive.org/stream/monksomahieisla00vinyiala/monksomahieisla00vinyiala_djvu.txt)

Poetry and Song
**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None
**Purchase:** None  
**Local Libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall  
**Online text:** None

**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand: Amazon & Abe;  
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**Online text:** www.archive.org/stream/songspoemsverses00duffuoft/songspoemsverses00duffuoft_djvu.txt

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**Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Amazon & Abe;  
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**Online text:** None

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**Purchase:** New & 2nd hand: Amazon & Abe; **Local Libraries:** Linen Hall; UU; **Online text:** None

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**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** www.mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=57391


**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None


**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe (+ e-book available); **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** www.archive.org/stream/balladsofdown00savaiala/balladsofdown00savaiala_djvu.txt


**Purchase:** New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

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**Purchase:** New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; **Online text:** None

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**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU **Online text:** None
The Songs of County Down is a collection of songs, traditional and contemporary from the county. For ease of navigation, the songs are divided into geographical areas:

- the Bangor/Donaghadee area
- the Strangford Lough/Ards Peninsula area
- the Ballynahinch/ Dromore area
- the Banbridge area
- Carlingford Lough/The Mournes
- the Newcastle/Castlewellan area
- the Downpatrick area

The book draws songs from the various traditions found in the county; it includes a number of Ulster Scots ballads and 'Orange' songs. There are annotations provided for most of the songs, stating sources and/or explaining the events/people/places they mention.

Songs referring specifically to Strangford Lough are:
'Lough Cuan's Shore' (p.39) a song of emigration where the emigrant mourns for his native Strangford.
'Strangford's Shore' (pp.44-45) a contemporary ballad composed by Boyce himself for the 1982 Fleadh Cheoil in Portaferry, based on the Napoleonic ballads.
Two versions of 'Sweet Portaferry', the first of which (pp.184-185) mentions 'the waters of Strangford' and the second (p.186) alludes to the 'blue waves of Cuan'.

Other songs of specific interest to the immediate Strangford area include:
'James Porter of Greyabbey' (pp.68-69) which was composed by a direct descendent of Porter, Ormonde D.P. Waters. The Reverend James Porter was a Presbyterian minister from Greyabbey, who published a series of satirical letters and songs in The Northern Star, the newspaper of the United Irishmen in Belfast. In the letters Porter lampooned Lord Londonderry of Mount Stewart. Londonderry had Porter hung on 2nd July 1798 in sight of his Greyabbey meeting house.
'John MacAnanty's Courtship' (pp.52-53), 'MacAnanty, Fairy King of Scrabo Hill' (pp.54-55) and 'The Fairy Review' (p.46) relate tales about John MacAnanty, the fairy King of Scrabo. The book also includes the story of 'The Courtship of King MacAnanty' (pp.263-266).
'The Bright Orange Heroes of Comber' (p.30) which tells of a 12th July march through Greyabbey to Kircubbin.
'Tom Tadger of Killyleagh Town' (p.175)
DOWNPATRICK RACES
Reviewed by Stephanie Conn

From the ‘blurb’

‘The poems in Downpatrick Races, Damian Smyth’s debut volume, tell stories of a county town in the north of Ireland, with a history reaching back two thousand years. The stories are personal narratives of people, places and events which, at times, overlap with larger and noisier public themes – the troubles, civic feeling, economic decline...’

Direct references to Strangford Lough or the surrounding environs.

Quotations

from RACES

‘Stopped at Clough in their own country by an army patrol...’

‘Where have you been? Where are you going? Where do you come from?,

as if the townland of Bright could make sense to anyone,
its two signposts staring at each other across three miles
of rape seed,
that yellow light levelling the bad fields left fallow,

so that even an armoured car would go tacking between roadsigns
as purposelessly as the Flying Dutchman, searching for addresses.
‘Downpatrick’ was easier. ...’

from BAMBOOZELUM

‘You should come to an Upper Room
in Irish Street, where four roads meet.’

‘At the old Town Hall, fresh from Bengal
or Spain or Thailand or, further still, from dark Rathfriland
by way of Jerusalem, the Wizard Banboozelum
brought to Downpatrick his magical hat trick,’

‘And somewhere, I’m sure, in Bright or Tyrella,
And old wizard hides under a sparkly umbrella,’
from WEE JOE
'Wee Joe, farmer's son, fields in Ballynoe and Saul,
Peeling his shirt off bending over drills,
displayed a scaly body scalded sore by oil,
the rich tattoo of eczema deep and pink.'

from THE LOOP

'And out by the circle of stones at Ballynoe,
a station cut off when the tide of the rails went out
is holding its breath for the celandine
shuffling towards it for years along the beaten track.'

from VERONICA
  for Martin Lynch

'Because they spoiled her view of the lough
from the high stone windows of the fishing lodge,
the cabins on their hunkers down at the water's edge,
the dogs barking and the shouts of children,
wet clothes left out to dry on the whins
and weedy gardens infecting the air,

she sent the land agents in and levelled them,'

from HEY PADDY

'At Collin's Corner, Paddy the Cap
sat at the empty horse trough, gabbing.
A solitary army jeep swung round the road
To pull up, farting noisily in the sun.

'Hey, Paddy.' A loose-mouthed Tommy opened up.
'Paddy, where's the road to Bishopscourt?'

...'

'How did ye know me name, young fella?'
  'Hey Paddy, I just guessed.'
'Then guess yer fukkin way to Bishopscourt.’”
from DIVE

‘On the runway of the River Quoile a crossbow bolt has nestled in the long neck of a swan. He turns with it for days to escape himself, circling on the pivot of that pain. ’

from BADGERS

‘Two badgers on the roadside like drunk old men lain down by a stream. One dandles its snout in the tarmac, the other is pressing the long grass flat behind, its fur abandoned to the wind like smoke. Afterwards, they’d have slouched to Audleystown, shouldering their way through hedges and barbed wire, making dogs bark and the lights go on, annoying every thing and every one, padding through the dark, not giving a damn.’

from BIG JIM

‘When Big Jim pushed his bike up from the Quoile along the Bullseye Road’s long gradient, a man he knew was dead stepped from the ditch to walk beside him silently for a while.’

Complete Poems

DOWNPATRICK
i.m. Roy McFadden

I

From here you must go uphill to the coast, narrow hotchpotch 18th-century houses
shoulder to shoulder, holding their breath,
shuffling along the long gradients
to Killough, Ardglass, Kilclief and the seals,
to the suffering tides chewing their way inland,
black molars scattered along the sand.

The blasted trees point inwards and downhill
to a town but poorly garrisoned against the sea
that backs up over flood-gates, tide-mills, weirs,
un gagging the broad tongue of the River Quoile,
breaking through Meadowlands to the Flying Horse Estate,
streets cut adrift on the crust of marshy ground.

II

This was my home town
and we owned none of it.
English Street, Scotch Street,
Workhouse, Gaol, Asylum,
the Georgian houses of Irish Street
rising to the abattoir and the houses
where you would have found us,
drifting in from the townlands,
war ming ourselves by the warm blood,
showing up messily
in Births, Marriages & Deaths,
living in shambles.

III

Dr. Smyth of Downpatrick, his
‘rare combination of great professional skill
United to high and general attainments’
With ‘botany his peculiar study’;
is nothing to me.

Who is he or was he in 1835
is nothing compared to ‘Who would he be?’, the cry that calls up to all his ancestry,
his townland, kin and who takes heed of him,
impressing the English of the Royal Engineers,
correcting their reconnaissance,
muttering around the Barony of Lecale,
Quoniamstown, Struell, Raholp, Ballynoe,
with Lt. Rimington of the Ordnance Survey,
telling him everything.

The local constabulary
in the dark of the morning in the big damp uniforms
in our small living-room down in the Gullion,
come to bully my big rebel brother
and all the lights on like a death in the family.
Everything going into the notebooks for evidence,
at twelve years old I had nothing to say,
stammering and failing to make things not happen.

Dr. Smyth of Downpatrick, whose
'information can strictly be relied upon
for it is from his own personal knowledge and inquiry.'

IV

'Them's wild geese,'
said old Dan Scullion, passing the Asylum,
sprawled in the back of a cart from Kilclief,
entering Down by the Gallows Hill,
bringing the town for the first time, absent,
through Michael McLaverty's In This Thy Day,
into the universe of things told shyly.

'In every flock you'll always get
one lad to know the road.
The rest will follow him.'

PENINSULA

i.m. Joseph & Lena Tomelty

All day we travelled through an empty land,
spending here and there to test the silence

of the sun on corrugated iron and outhouse walls,
big red bricks as hot and stale as loaves.

Here and there, as mute townlands went by,
Marfield, Echlinville, Inishargy,
the perfect pink mosaics of scullery tiling
showed through the tough, stiff grass on the long acre:

glass so shallow, so little in control
of what had been the floor of someone's house,

that you could rip it back off stone like scalp,
exposing everything.

We did just that,

bringing to the homes of those long gone
a fresh new blood of anger and sudden hurt

at something abandoned somewhere along the road:
a hearth, a seal's cry like a child, a dead man's voice.

'That's a five, shaped like a cup hook on the dresser'.
John Quinn, uselessly learning to count in All Souls' Night

while two sons sink like bricks in the lough's black waters:
'The tree planted crooked will never grow straight.'

At Portaferry we paid our fare
and took our posts for a voyage back to earth,

leaving behind a coast of broken delph
-clay pipes, ink, pots, willow blue and brown,

all washed and polished endlessly by the sea
then stacked up on the beach to dry like crabs.

The relics of ordinary lives in bits,
a thousand dressers tipped out on the rocks.

A GIFT FROM DOWNPATRICK

01396

In the concrete exchange in Church Street my father,
who'd lit up the kitchens all round Lecale
with chums of the paraffin that rotted his shoes,
inserted the plugs that made the connections
lighting up the switchboard like a city at night.
At Christmas, the calls came in for the townlands
from London, Vancouver, Cape Town, the old colonies
setting the ornaments astir in the dark
on bedside tables in Ballydonnity and Inch,
call-boxes exploding suddenly to life
at the foot of a lane, scaring rats in the hedges.
But the old exchanges don't work anymore.

The codes have been changed. The lines are down.
In Rostrevor, Banbridge, Newcastle, Kircubbin,
no one answers now when the phone doesn't ring.
It's the wind that sounds in the abandoned homesteads,
rattling each door and window I turn:
the old people now, in beds not their own,
dying in rest homes to the whoops and the cries
of the lost souls around them awake in the dark.
But there are still ways to get through to Downpatrick,
imagining yourself in different rooms listening
to the racket of the telephone down the hall,
then the operator's voice in the receiver,
the delph cups singing for miles on the telegraph poles.

BEARINGS

The heavy water lough that laughs its way inland
is pushing its cloudy milt of ocean salt
along the river's freshwater veins
inflating the dry marshes by the side of the new flat roads
to lap across the sandbags in the shops on Market Street,
rinsing tiles in the Bank, flooding the phone-boxes,
licking the tarmac into shape as an old landscape of ice.
At the magic wells of Struell, the natural world's at work
So that, on St. John's Eve, something must happen there
as anywhere where tidal pressure gauges are.
The pilgrims who make their way to watch the waters rise in the pitched stone tents of eye well, ear well, bathhouse,

have come from the bookies, supermarket aisles, the Arkle Bar. They are looking for miracles and are not disappointed: The ghost of the ocean passes through solid ground.

When the sea goes back the seven wet miles to the coast, along the rim of the pavements and on your shoes a tide line of dirty salt shows the way it went.

**THE DOWN RECORDER**

**Reviewed for Literary Strangford**

**Synopsis**

"The Down Recorder is a long poem in seven chapters, based on stories from the Irish newspaper of the same name in continuous weekly production since 1836." (back cover)

_Smyth_ chooses (dated) extracts from the weekly Down Recorder stretching back to the mid-1800s, picking up the thread with his own reflections upon the text.

_Castleward_ is mentioned on p.100 and again on p.154 in an extract from the paper relating to an old cemetery reputed to be haunted. The extract triggers the poet’s memory of his father’s time, from which memories of people and places come onto the page. The _Quoile_ is also mentioned.

_Killinchy-in-the-Woods_ is mentioned on p.151 in an extract from the newspaper regarding the tragic death of a 16 year old girl.

Then on p.153 _Killinchy_ again features in a poem based on an extract from the paper dated 1847 which tells of the expected arrival of Her Majesty Queen Victoria for the refloating of the ship "Great Britain" which had come aground at Dundrum Bay. The impending arrival creates expectation and excitement in the area and triggers his own colouring and reminiscence of celebratory events.
A Selection of Non-Fiction Texts Relevant to the Literary Trail and the Area

**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** None; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

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**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** New: publisher? 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

Davidson, E. F. *Edward Hincks, A Selection from His Correspondence with a Memoir* (Oxford: 1933).
**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** Amazon; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

Evans, Estyn *The Ulster Landscape* (Belfast [Ulster Folklife ser.], 1958).
**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** Linen Hall; **Online text:** None

Hayward, Richard. *In Praise of Ulster* (First pub. 1938; Belfast: William Mullan, 1946)
**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

Lowry, David E. *Norsemen and Danes of Strangford Lough* (Belfast: John Adams, 1926)
**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand at Amazon & Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** None; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** None

McMahon, Sean, *Sam Hanna Bell, A Biography*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999)
**Purchase:** New: Amazon; 2nd hand: Abe; **Local libraries:** NI Lib; **Online text:** None

**Purchase:** 2nd hand Alibris; **Local Libraries:** Linenhall; **On-Line Text:** None

**Purchase** 2nd hand Amazon: **Local libraries:** NI Lib; Linen Hall; QUB; UU; **Online text:** www.archive.org/details/twocenturiesofli00stevuoft
This is a short biographical account of the man Thomas Andrews, the chief designer of the Titanic. As Michael McCaughan suggests in the foreword to the 1999 edition “Bullock’s memoir …….is essentially celebratory and eulogistic.” It celebrates the life of a highly respected and apparently widely loved member of the Ulster industrial and business elite of that period. Thomas Andrews was born into a prominent Comber family who had a history of providing leadership not just in the Comber community but in the wider Ulster society as well. His parents were Thomas and Eliza, sister of Lord Pirrie, and are described by Bullock as “excellent stock”. They had four children, three sons and a daughter, and Thomas was the second born with an older (James) and younger (William) brother. His sister, also Eliza, was the youngest of the family. Bullock paints a picture of an idyllic childhood in the countryside around Comber and the shores of Strangford Lough where his parents were more like “an elder brother” and “a sister”. However both parents were strong “advocates of temperance” and “encouraged their lads to abstain from tobacco and strong drink”. Tom and his brothers (no mention of Eliza) apparently continued to live their adult lives based on these principles. Tom was educated by a private tutor up to the age of eleven when he then entered the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast. “There he showed no special aptitudes….” but “In the Institution ….was no more popular boy”. He left school when he was sixteen.

May 1st, 1889 Thomas Andrews started as "a premium apprentice" in the Harland and Wolff shipyard. The head of the company his uncle, Lord Pirrie, sought to ensure that no favours were shown and that the boy "must make his way, profiting by no more than the inspiration of his uncle's example". Bullock recounts that he took to his work with enthusiasm. He gained experience in every aspect of the shipyard's work and earned the respect of those he worked with both workmen and management. Bullock quotes many examples of how he helped fellow apprentices and older workmen, during this period. One foreman is reported as saying "'It seemed his delight to make those around him happy. His was ever the friendly greeting and the warm handshake and kind disposition'". During his apprenticeship years and afterwards he took on evening classes in Applied Mechanics, Naval Architecture, Machine and Technical drawing etc. These studies led eventually in 1901, to him becoming a Member of the Institute of Naval Architects, and in 1902 a Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. He was also a Member of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (NY) and an Honorary Member of the Belfast Association of Engineers. His only relaxation at this time was his "weekly game of cricket or hockey, with a day's hunting now and then, or an afternoon's yachting on the (Strangford ) Lough".

His rise through the firm was impressive and after gaining experience in ship repair and responsibility in design and other specialities in 1907 he was made “a Managing Director of the Firm” while remaining “Chief of the Designing Department……and in addition ….Lord Pirrie's Assistant”. Bullock recounts a comment from his guide on a tour of the Yard when asked if Mr. Andrews had knowledge of this or that was told "He could have built a ship himself and fitted her too". Brief mention is made of his marriage to Helen Reilly a daughter of John Doherty Barbour of Dunmurry. Bullock describes her as the "worthiest and most loyal of helpmates". In 1910 a daughter named Elizabeth Law Barbour was born.

Bullock makes much of the high regard in which Thomas Andrews was held by all he came in contact with. He recounts instances of personal involvement with workers at every level in the Firm, and the high esteem the "Islanders" had for him. Mrs Andrews writes about one evening when in the vicinity of the Queen's Island and seeing a group of men making their way home from work her husband had said "'There go my pals Nellie.'“ Adding that his tone of voice indicated that "it was as though the men were as dear to him as his own brothers."

There is a short outline of Thomas Andrews's outside interests which were not extensive since as is stated earlier in the book his work absorbed most of his time and energy. The last two short chapters deal with the Titanic as she set off on her sea trials, the journey from Belfast to Southampton, and on to the maiden voyage and the ultimate disaster. Bullock continues to highlight the strength of character and moral fortitude of Thomas Andrews. He quotes eyewitness accounts of his self sacrificing behaviour in assisting the crew to keep the ship afloat as long as possible and then to get people in to life boats and off the doomed ship. The last sight of him was “throwing deckchairs overboard to the unfortunates struggling in the water below”.

All in all an interesting and informative short biography which makes no apology for eulogising the subject. This tends to present the man as a superhero rather than a gifted, extremely hardworking and apparently very sensitive man. A man who took full advantage of his privileged start in life, not for personal advancement but rather the advancement of the Firm and thereby its workers at all levels.

REFERENCES TO THE ARDS / STRANGFORD AREA
THE BIG WIND
Reviewed by David Clark

This short but entertainingly written and illustrated book describes the severe storm (the "big wind") that struck Ireland in January 1831.

The book is in two parts. The first describes the causes, impact, aftermath and enduring effects of the storm upon the land and its people. The second part takes the form of a gazetteer, compiled from contemporary first and second hand accounts, listing how various Irish areas and settlements fared that night.

References to specific locations around Strangford Lough include:

Part 1, chapter 1, page 28; "sheaves of oats reportedly glided across the mouth of Strangford Lough, touching down near Portaferry".


IN PRAISE OF ULSTER
Reviewed by William Haslett

This book was first published in 1938 with 32 fine illustrations by the distinguished artist J. Humbert Craig RHA. Its author was a prolific writer, dramatist, broadcaster, and authority on the folklore and music of Ireland. His other books include, 'Ulster Songs and Ballads', 'Love in Ulster', 'Sugarhouse Entry', 'Where the River Shannon Flows', 'The Corrib Country', and 'In The Kingdom of Kerry'.

"In Praise of Ulster" which is an absorbing compilation, gives a detailed description not only of the city of Belfast and its growth, but devotes a chapter to each County including Monaghan and Cavan, and included an introductory essay about the origins of the peoples of Ulster, and a tailpiece dealing with "a few scattered observations which may serve to throw up more clearly some of the things I have dealt with in the pages that have gone before." He concludes 'This is a book about Ulster, and if you who read it are led to places of beauty and interest of which you were unaware or unmindful, or to a knowledge of some of our songs and customs or some of our legends and historic happenings which had perhaps escaped your notice, it will not have been written in vain.'

Page 114, paragraph 4
When describing the "tiny port of Strangford" (whose name in Norse means "The Strong Firth") and early Norse settlement so called on account of the strong tide which runs at the narrow outlet of the Lough, he observes that the whole district around Strangford and Portaferry is very rich in defensive castles, showing how strongly fortified it was at the time of its occupation. Near the town is Audley's Castle, and in Lord Bangor's demesne Ward's Castle, and a short distance away at Myra, Walshe's Castle. Travelling south along the coast toward Ardglass, Kilclief Castle (in Irish "The Church of the Hurdle") was built around 1430 by Bishop Ceely as an outpost of the Strangford Lough defences. Together with Ward's, Audley's and Walshe's, this castle made a strong combination,
showing the importance of early settlers attached to the security of that great arm of the sea which ran so deeply into the heart of their territory. (The castles of County Down show English Architectural influence, while in Antrim the influence is almost entirely Highland/Scottish).

Into this arm of the sea County Down dips gently so that the little rounded hills become a vast collection of islands and peninsulas. The upper end of Strangford Lough near Newtownards is shallow and the lower part deep and open, except for the estuary of the River Quoile which is studded with little islands. Between Strangford and Portaferry it becomes little more than a river through which a tremendous tide ebbs and flows, four hundred million tons of sea water passing though the narrows twice a day. Before the coming of the Normans the Irish name for the Lough was Lough Cuan (‘The Harbour Lake’). The hundreds of islands it contains are of all sizes from mere reefs to considerable little islands which can support one or two farmlands.

The little town of Kircubbin, with its pretty harbour on the Lough Shore has its local parliament, which gathers at what is known as “The Stick”, the mast of an old sailing ship which serves as a seat at the gable-end of one of the houses near the harbour. ‘The fate of nations is here nightly decided, and some of the members of this “parliament” are great characters.’

At Portaferry there is a ferry on which you cross to Strangford ‘if you wish’. Portaferry was originally fortified by the Savage family (who later changed their name to Nugent) and between its castle and that of Strangford on the opposite shore it would have been almost impossible for an enemy to force his way into the Lough. At Blackbank Hill to the north of the town there is a superb view of the entire Lough from its entrance to its head dominated by Scrabo Hill and the tower which crowns it.

On the inner coast of the Ards Peninsula the town of Greyabbey takes its name from the Cistercian Monastery founded there in 1193 by Affreca, wife of John de Courcy and daughter of Godfred, King of the Isle of Man, built in redemption of a vow that if she was saved from impending shipwreck on a journey from the Isle of Man she would set up a religious establishment there. As with the other de Courcy religious establishments no Irish monks were admitted to Greyabbey, and its colony of monks was imported from Cumberland.

On the eastern shore of the Lough is Mount Stewart, residence of the Marquis of Londonderry. ‘This demesne is open to the public on certain days and the fine Italian garden is well worth seeing.’ Although ‘In Praise of Ulster’ was written over seventy years ago it is still a splendidly constructed mine of information, and well worth reading.

NORSEMAN AND DANES OF STRANGFORD LOUGH
Reviewed by Rosemary Andrews

This slim book has many references to Strangford Lough or Lough Cuan the harbour lough. The references go from a myth about Cuchulain driving his chariot round Lough Cuan, and bringing down two large birds with a stone from his sling. One turned out to be Dervogilla, the daughter of the king of Rathlin, and her maid. She said she had been looking for him, but he said he was previously engaged. He gave to his best friend Lugaid of the Red Stripe, they lived happily ever after!! From the 5th to the 8th century Lough Cuan is important with its teaching monasteries at Nendrum and Movilla. They are based on the model set by St Martin of Tours. They were Gaulish not Roman institutes. They helped establish great monasteries in Switzerland, Italy and France.

The Viking age opened in the 8th century (Viking only refers to raiders, not all Danes or Norsemen!) opens with small expeditions to Scotland, England and Ireland. The chronicles of England and Ireland record
AD 824. Maghbile (Movilla the monastery near Newtownards) was laid waste.
AD 876. Halfdane was slain at a battle at Lough Cuan.
AD 920. Godfrey of Dublin joined the Danish fleet at Strangford and plundered Downpatrick
AD 923. Danes of Strangford inflict a severe defeat on the Ulster Army and kill Maelduin, son of the Aedh, royal heir to the Province.
AD 923. The Strangford fleet attacked the Royal fortress of Dunseverik, near Ballycastle and took it.

The Strangford fleet was large and important to the Danes and Norsemen who had settled as were the monasteries the learning and people of the Province. The Text shows how the history is intertwined in the history of Europe.
References to Strangford Lough

Page numbers below
5  Lough Cuan and Cuchalain.
6  Nendrum, Movilla monasteries.
7  Nendrum monastery.
13  Downpatrick, Movilla and Nendrum.
14  Lough Cuan.
15  Strangford and Strangford Fleet
16  Nendrum and Mahee.
17  Strangford Lough.
18  Lough Cuan.
20  St Malachy of Downpatrick.
26  Battle at Lecale.
27  Ringreagh, near Downpatrick, where Magnus Barfod is buried.
27  Greyabbey, Alfreeca Danish wife of John De Courci was raised there, she was the daughter of Godred, King of the Isle of Mann and Irish mother Leinster Queen Phinola.
28  Greyabbey and Strangford Lough.
29  Great fort at Downpatrick.
32  Scrabo Hill
34/35  Appendix of Norse names and islands in Strangford Lough.
36/38  Words and names in general use about Strangford Lough. These last references are particularly interesting!

Literary Strangford is part of the Turn o’ the Tide programme, which was initiated through the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is also supported by Ards Borough Council, Down District Council, The Northern Ireland Environment Agency, The National Trust and the Wildlowl and Wetlands Trust. The Programme is being managed by the Strangford Lough Office, 028 4272 8886/ 9005, www.strangfordlough.org.