

Iolaire

Selected list of items in the National Library of Scotland collections about the Iolaire disaster which took place on 1 January 1919.

Items are in English except where stated and can be read at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh unless specified. Library shelfmarks are given in brackets.

Newspapers

[The Scotsman Digital Archive, 1817-1950](#) eResources

- 2 January 1919, p.4. First announcement of a 'shipping disaster'.
- 2 January 1919, p.5. Full article describing the disaster, and naming some of the survivors.
- 4 January 1919, p.5. Further details, including survivors' accounts and messages of sympathy.
- 6 & 8 January 1919, p.4. Demands for an Inquiry and lists of the deceased.
- 12 February 1919, p.7. This outlines the Public Inquiry Jury's findings in detail and makes recommendations for future improvements.

Oban Times. [Mf.N.67. On microfilm]

- 11 January 1919, p.5. This is the first announcement in the Oban Times. Includes Royal message of sympathy & demands for an inquiry.
- 18 January 1919, p.2. Announces 78 survivors & 206 death toll. Also announces hardship payments being made by The Grand Fleet Fund, Lord Leverhulme and others.
- 25 January 1919. Cover. Advert for fundraising event to be held in cinemas in Edinburgh & Glasgow, also a concert in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh with Scott Skinner on 14 February.
- 15 February 1919, p.6. Results of Public Inquiry.

Stornoway Gazette & West Coast Advertiser. [Mf.N.147. On microfilm]

- 10 January 1919, p. 2 & p.5. Pulpit announcements from Established, United Free and Free Churches and a joint statement from the three Moderators. Also extensive coverage of the disaster, with messages of sympathy and a list of the names of survivors and of those lost. Includes iconic image by Mr T R McGee of Stornoway, which was shown with Kipling's Verse, as well as Stornoway's John N Maciver's specially written and moving poem 'Home at last'.



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- 24 January 1919. Cover. Announcement of the setting up of the Iolaire Disaster Fund.
- 14 July 1959, p.7. "Just as it happened: the Island's Greatest Disaster" Part 1 and then in each weekly issue in 6 parts. This reproduces the newspaper coverage from the Gazette articles of 1919 and was published to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the disaster.

Maps

- [Ordnance Survey six-inch maps, 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1960.](#)
- [Ordnance Survey Maps - 25 inch 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1949.](#)
- [Hydrographic Office / Admiralty charts, 1849-1963.](#)

Georeferenced layers:

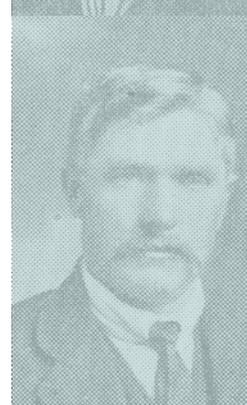
- [Ordnance Survey six-inch maps, 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1888-1913.](#)
- [Ordnance Survey Maps - 25 inch 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1905.](#)
- [Hydrographic Office / Admiralty charts, Stornoway approaches, 1910.](#)

Official Publications

- **Public Inquiry Report, Held in February 1919.** See press reports above.
- **Naval Inquiry Report. Held in 1919 but findings were kept secret until 1970.** Report is held in the National Archives in London.
- The Public Inquiry findings were mentioned in the House of Commons on 26 February 1919. [See Hansard, Fifth Series, Vol 12. Available in the [UK Parliamentary Papers](#) eResource. Please note you will need to [register](#) to access this resource online.
- **Iolaire Disaster Fund Archive.** This is held in the Hebridean Archives in Stornoway.
- **Chinook ZD576 Select Committee Report, 5 November 2002.** Baroness Michie of Gallanach, formerly MP for Argyll & Bute, makes reference to the Iolaire Disaster - "only the Titanic exceeds as Britain's worst disaster at sea during the last century, yet beyond the Minch few have ever heard of the Iolaire". She compares the difficulties in establishing what caused each disaster because no crew survived in either case. [See Hansard, Fifth Series, Volume 640]. Available in the [UK Parliamentary Papers](#) eResource. Please note you will need to [register](#) to access this resource online.

Accounts of the Disaster

- Tormod Calum Domhnallach. **Call na h-Iolaire.** Stornoway: Acair, 1978. The first full account of the disaster to be published, including contemporary interviews and photographs. Gaelic, with an English synopsis and a Navigational Appendix. [QP1.205.6503L]
- Calum Ferguson. **Children of the black-house.** Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2003. This is Ferguson's memoir of his mother Màiread's reminiscences of life on Lewis. As well as



much fascinating background information and detail, there are a few pages on the disaster. They provide a vivid description of the plans to welcome home the men, and of the spread of news of the disaster. Includes a photograph of the Iolaire under its original name Amalthea.

- **An Cogadh Mòr 1914 – 1918.** Stornoway: Acair, 1982. Includes a chapter on The Iolaire disaster, with the iconic photograph of the mast. [Gaelic] [HP3.82.1293]
- **Going down of the sun: the Great War and a rural Lewis community.** Stornoway: Acair, 1997 Chapter 3 has extensive coverage of the Iolaire Disaster, including photos of the lost men, the ship, the Iolaire monument and John F Macleod's Carnegie Hero Fund and Royal Humane Society's medals. [English & Gaelic]. [HB4.215.5.18]
- **"Loyal Lewis" Roll of Honour.** Stornoway, 1920. Detailed listing of Lewis war losses. Includes a section on the Iolaire losses, with coverage of the disaster and the inquiry too. [5.5409]
- **Nis Aosmhor: the photographs of Dan Morrison.** Stornoway: Acair, 1997. Picture 43. Taken in 1963, is of two of the survivors. Dòmhnall Dhò ill a' Choire (Am Patch) (Donald Morrison, Ness) – the man who clung to the mast while it was above water. Finally rescued by one of the small boats around 9-10am the next morning. Also Iain Mhurdo [John F Macleod] from Port of Ness, who swam to shore with a life-line which he used to pull a hawser to shore by which about 40 men were rescued. [HP4.98.153]
- **A record of burials in Ness cemeteries 1916 – 1994.** Stornoway; Comunn Eachdraidh Nis, 1995. p.11 lists the 23 Ness men lost in the disaster [HP4.96.1441]
- Donald M Fraser. **Scottish Disasters.** Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1996. See chapter "The brave that are no more – the Stornoway shipwreck". Gives a factual summary of events, and includes a photo of an Iolaire lifeboat on the beach at Holm Point. [HP2.97.3928]
- **Sea Sorrow.** Stornoway: Stornoway Gazette, 1972. This includes the coverage reprinted from Stornoway Gazette contemporary accounts as well as later information about Iolaire poems. [6.2460]
- **Seanchas. No. 53, Winter 2006.** Published by North Tolsta Historical Society. This issue includes photos and survivors' accounts. [HJ8.4985]
- John F MacLeod. **When I heard the bell.** Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2010. A detailed account, with sources. [PB8.210.663/13]

POETRY

1. Rev. John MacLeod. **"War Widow"**. In **An Tuil: anthology of 20th century Scottish Gaelic verse, edited by Ronald I M Black.** Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998. p.410. [HP2.200.03475].
Not specifically about the Iolaire, but too good to leave out! [Gaelic and English]. First published in Gairm, Aireamh 85, 1973]
2. **Cuimhneachan: remembrance, Gaelic poetry of World War One.** Stornoway: Acair, 2015. [PB8.216.97/10]
Includes a chapter on 'The Iolaire', with 8 poems, all of which are given in Gaelic and English.
3. Ian Crichton Smith. **"The Iolaire"**. In **Saltire Review. Vol 4, Winter 1957, no.13.** In English. [NJ.320/1]



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For further information on the items on this booklist, or about the modern Gaelic or local collections, please contact;

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