

AUTHOR adventures

At Girlguiding Ulster we are huge fans of adventure. It builds confidence, creates a sense of achievement, and encourages girls to discover the world around them.

Adventure doesn't always have to mean bungee jumps and cliff tops though – **Brownie leader Victoria Brown had her own mountain-top moment last month!**

A bid-writer for an engineering company in her day job, Victoria's real passion is books – and she has just had her first book published! With Girlguiding's new reading badges announced last month, what better time to catch up with our very own published author!



We met up with Victoria last weekend at Lorne whilst she was at Brownie camp, to hear all about her author adventures!

Victoria, we are delighted to be in the presence of a published author!! Tell us, have you always like to write?

Honestly, I have always loved to write, ever since I could hold a pencil I've been writing stories. I've also always just loved hearing about the Titanic, but I never

thought the two would merge, so it's a surprise to me as well as everyone else that this book exists!

I think most people from Northern Ireland will have some sort of interest in Titanic, and it's just something that's always stuck with me – it such an emotional story, and the reason why I began to write about it was because anything I read, the focus was always on it being built, the actual journey, the sinking, the survivors. I wanted to know about the bits everyone else seemed to leave out – what happened to the people who were left behind.

What has been the most interesting thing you have discovered about Titanic during your research for the book?

I think what I've found most interesting is the many many attempts there have been to salvage the wreck after it sunk. There have been so many weird and wacky suggestions of how to do it. It's crazy that people had been searching for the wreck since it went down, but it was only found in 1985 when we actually had the technology to get to it. So finding out all the different theories on how we could bring it back to the surface was interesting.



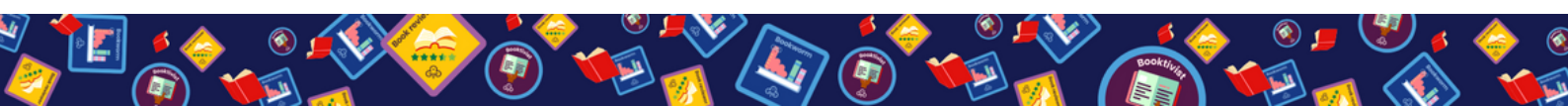
If you got the chance would you go down to see it?

No, absolutely not. It's in the book as to why I wouldn't go down there – that's an incentive for your to read it!



So when did you start writing the book, how long has it taken, what's that journey been like?

So initially it didn't actually start out as a book, it started out as a talk. I was at the public records office for a talk by another Titanic author, and I was really inspired by that. I was chatting to the Head of the Titanic Society afterwards, and said I was really interested in the part of the story that I felt was never told – and asked could I do a talk on that. To my surprise, he just said 'yeah' – I really didn't expect that! So I did enough research to do the talk, but I ended up having so much



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leftover content that I just decided I wasn't done telling that story. I wanted to keep going, and that turned into a book! I went to that talk in October 2022, so it's been a journey! I approached a publisher before I had even finished writing the book, because I knew that was going to be the difficult part – and again, to my surprise, they said yes straight away. I genuinely feel incredibly lucky to have got to this point today.

Tell us about your writing process – do you have a particular room, do you get writers block, what's a writing day like for Victoria Brown?!

Well I live alone, so thankfully my house is very very quiet, so I have all the peace and quiet I need to write. I have a little office where I go, and I have all the blueprints of the Titanic above my desk, and that keeps me inspired. I didn't really get writers block, but as I got to the later chapters I sometimes didn't feel like I knew enough to write the chapter. So the actual learning about what I was going to write was the hard bit, and once I understood what I wanted to say, the writing bit came easily.

Is this you done, or is this the first of many?

I very much hope that it's the first of many! I hoping to do a biography on Thomas Andrews who designed the Titanic, because he really didn't get a lot

of coverage historically until the James Cameron movie came out. There's only ever been one biography on him, and it was written back in 1913, so it's been a long time since he's got any proper coverage. His family home was just down the road in Comber, and I think he deserves more recognition in the overall Titanic story, so that's something I'd really like to do.

Do you have a fiction book in you, or are you a non-fiction writer?

I do actually have a fiction book in me, I'm working on it at the moment. It's based in 1830's Edinburgh, and it's about four boys who go to medical school, then get involved in body snatching to further their medical studies.

That's been really challenging, as I've had to learn all the grisly techniques that they used.

Will this eventually become your full-time job?

I would love for this to be my full-time job, that's the dream!

What would you say to any Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers out there who like writing?

I would encourage them all, if they love writing, to just stick at it, because you never know what might happen. There's actually a few Brownies in our unit who like writing themselves, so I have brought the book in to show them, they were so excited – and it was

lovely for me that I get to show them that it is possible to achieve something you've always wanted to do, even if it seems out of reach sometimes. It's so lovely to see their faces light up whenever they realise big things are possible.

Last question – what are the biggest fails in the Titanic movie, the biggest inaccuracies?

Jack and Rose weren't real! There is however a grave in Nova Scotia of a J Dawson – everyone thought it was Jack and loads of people turned up at this graveyard, but it wasn't Jack, it was actually a Joseph Dawson. After the movie came out they had to hire security guards for the graveyard because so many people were coming and leaving flowers and love letters! The old couple in the bed towards the end, that is real however, which is just heartbreaking.

Victoria, thank you so much! We can't wait read your book!

"The Death Ship" is available to buy now in Waterstones, WH Smith and on Amazon!

