

Leith Victoria museum attracts worldwide interest

A chance discovery of a sports trophy in a Grangemouth second hand shop has helped give further international recognition to Scotland's oldest boxing club at Leith Victoria.

The trophy was unearthed by Ian Mackintosh, a Commonwealth Games historian, who traced it back to Leith Victoria and one of their most distinguished members.

"We realised it had been won by Alex Ireland, our former Olympic silver medallist from the 1920 Antwerp Games and it was the trigger for my wife, Aileen, and myself to get to work searching through cupboards and drawers for other items we could put on display" says long serving club secretary, Douglas Fraser.

"COVID had kicked in so we had time to fill and friends and families of some of our greatest boxers were happy to contribute."

The club's first secretary, in 1919, John Proctor, had donated a collection of medals and there are items relating to the likes of Tancy Lee, the club's first trainer and coach who as a boxer became Scotland's first ever winner of a Lonsdale Belt.

Others associated with Victoria and recognised include Johnny Hill, Scotland's first professional world champion, as well as

Alex Arthur, Jim Rolland, Jim McKenzie, Alex Bell, Tommy Wells, Jackie Brown, James McLean, Billy Black, Eric Bell, Marshall Bell, Kenny McClorey, Fundu Mahura, Alex Arthur and Bradley Welsh.

One of the joys of creating the museum, according to Dougie was unearthing nuggets of information such as when Alex Ireland reached his Olympic final and judges could not separate him and his opponent so an additional fourth round was decreed.

“So far as I know the only instance of an Olympic bout going to extra time” laughs Douglas Fraser, former international referee who has been part of the fabric of Leith Victoria for 62 years apart from a couple of years away.”

As for the worldwide interest in the museum this is summed up by a family from Winnipeg, Canada, who visited and were so taken with Leith Victoria and its history they cleaned the club out of souvenir merchandise!

*The story of Leith Victoria and its display of boxing memorabilia is told in a new book entitled “The Leith Annual” which chronicles life in the port during 2024 through a range of topics, including sport.



Leith Victoria secretary Douglas Fraser with the trophy linked to their former Olympic silver medallist Alex Ireland which was the trigger for a club museum. Priced £15, e-mail hello@leithannual.com for details of where

to purchase.

