



Long walks to freedom in the footsteps of RLS

WITH the coronavirus lockdown due to lift gradually over the next few months, the Club is looking forward to getting back to normal with members free to meet up once more.

In the meantime, it is still possible to visit some Stevenson sites independently within the rules governing taking exercise while enjoying a walk, following the routes outlined in this issue.

And for members not permitted to travel to one of the three locations, there is still much Stevenson-related material that can be enjoyed online without leaving home – further details inside.

During the prolonged pandemic the Club committee has met regularly to consider ways of strengthening our RLS

Annual General Meeting

RATHER than abandon plans for the Club's annual general meeting in favour of an online event, the Club committee hopes that by delaying the date it will be possible to hold the AGM as normal in Edinburgh later in the year. Further details in the Summer Update.

community and furthering our mission to promote interest in the life and works of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Despite setbacks brought about by the pandemic, plans proceed apace to publish our special Centenary volume of essays by people from all walks of life who have been inspired by Stevenson, albeit a year late – further details inside.

Meanwhile the Club continues to maintain its links with its sister organisations in Europe, the USA and Samoa and is happy to keep members abreast of developments there. To this end an up-to-date list of members' email addresses will be invaluable – to ensure you are on it, see details inside.



Fact meets fiction: The Hawes Inn, where David Balfour was Kidnapped

Visit the crime scene of Kidnapped

CRAMOND was one of the Stevensons' favourite destinations for a walk out from Edinburgh, and it was on such a walk that Louis broke the news to his father that he did not wish to become a lighthouse engineer.

The Hawes Inn at South Queensferry was a favourite watering hole for Louis and Charles Baxter after canoeing up the Forth from Granton, and would feature in *Kidnapped* as the place where David Balfour is tricked into boarding the brig Covenant. This walk of around five miles (8km) links the two sites.

Near the Miller & Carter Steakhouse (formerly the Cramond Brig Hotel) on the A90 Queensferry Road outside Edinburgh, enter by a gate to the Dalmeny Estate and walk parallel to the river Almond, then round a right-angled bend and on to pass East Craigie Farmstead.

The way crosses arable fields, passing two tracks on the left which lead into Dalmeny Estate. After around 2 km the track enters woodland and joins the

access to Castle Cottage and the old ferry that once linked the estate with Cramond Village.

On reaching the shore turn left and, after passing Eagle Rock, carry on along the shore, crossing a small stream, until you reach Snag Point, overlooking Cramond Island and expansive sands.

Continue past Long Green Cottage and cross over the Cockle Burn which separates the golf course from woodland. Proceed along the sea-defence wall with picturesque views of Dalmeny House, until meeting the Barnbogle Estate.

Here you leave the shore and follow the fence line to join the Estate Road past Barnbogle Castle, set in fine mature trees, then onward past Fishery Cottage to Hound Point, from which fine views can be had of the three Queensferry Bridges.

Rejoin the Estate road and continue under the Forth Rail Bridge until you reach the Hawes Inn.

A good friend to Louis in Samoa

James Stoddard Winegar 1936-2020

WITH the death of Jim Winegar, Stevenson lovers the world over lost a good friend. It is thanks to him that Louis's last home in Samoa has been saved and restored for countless visitors to enjoy today.

As President of the RLS Foundation he led restoration work on Villa Vailima after it was virtually destroyed by hurricane Val in 1992.

On hearing of the damage wrought by the storm, Jim and Rex Maughan, who had served as a Mormon missionary alongside him from 1956-58, worked together to raise the large sum of money required, along with the drive and management required to virtually rebuild and restore Vailima to its former glory.

This involved replacement of virtually all of the interior furnishings, as recorded in photographs taken while the Stevensons were in residence.

Jim was always pleased to welcome RLS aficionados, and in September 2018 he flew to Samoa from his home in the town of Provo, Utah to join the large audience gathered on the veran-



Well met at Vailima: Jim Winegar welcomes Neil Adam and Judy Turner

dah at Vailima to enjoy a song recital by Neil Adam and Judy Turner.

The pair performed musical versions of Stevenson's Vailima Prayers which he wrote for the daily services in which his extended family and their Samoan friends would take part.

On this unique occasion the warmth of Jim's welcome bore witness, as always, to his friendly and benevolent

character. Mindful of Jim's huge contribution to the Stevenson heritage, the Club's Committee resolved to send a letter of condolence to his wife for over 60 years, Brenda.

In their message they acknowledged the enormous debt which the entire fellowship of Stevenson lovers and scholars worldwide owes to Jim for his legacy to us.



Island girl is queen of chefs



SAMOA'S most famous chef must surely be London restaurateur and Masterchef judge Monica Galetti, who was born Monica Fa'afiti and grew up on the island of Savai'i. Since then she has risen to prominence as co-proprietor of Mere restaurant with her husband David and is a familiar face to all Masterchef fans. But could she cope with the catering for a Samoan feast on the scale of Louis's 43rd birthday celebration at Vailima in 1893?

On that occasion the bill of fare included, by Louis's own reckoning, 'fifteen pigs cooked whole underground, two hundred pounds of beef, ditto of pork, two hundred pineapples, over four hundred head of taro, together with fish, chickens, Samoan prepared dishes, shrimps, oranges, sugar cane, bananas, biscuit and tinned salmon in proportion'.

A walk to Ben Gunn's cave

LINKING Dunblane and Bridge of Allan, the Darn Road is an ancient trackway that mostly follows the east bank of the Allan Water. This walk of around five miles there and back was a favourite of Robert Louis Stevenson when his parents would rent a villa in Bridge of Allan for extended autumn holidays.

From Dunblane railway station, follow Stirling Road, cross the Allan Water, and turn right by the Riverside Hotel to Beech Road. Cross with care the busy dual-carriageway and turn left for 50 yards to the signpost: 'Heritage Public Path, the Darn Road.' As you skirt Dunblane New Golf Club on the left there are lovely open aspects overlooking Kippenross.

Beyond the golf course you pass an attractive high old wall on your right, beyond which lies the Georgian Kippenross House. A gentle but stony descent by a line of beech trees leads to Kippenrait Glen and a footbridge over the Wharry Burn. On the far side a signpost directs you to Bridge of Allan, two miles ahead.

The burn joins the Allan Water and as you carry on, ignoring a footbridge on the right, you come to a hillside cave on your left, Known as Robert Louis Stevenson's cave, it is thought to be the inspiration for Ben Gunn's cave in Treasure Island.

A path, stepped at first, climbs high above the river then crosses Cock's Burn (no footbridge), with a cutting leading to the far bank. Pass on the left the outskirts of Bridge of Allan to reach a tarmac road, Blairforkie Drive, then turn right and cross



Buried treasure: The inspiration for Ben Gunn's cave

the river and impressive weir to reach the A9. Continue by pavement to Bridge of Allan railway station on the left, from which you can take the train home.

Alternatively turn right at the Lecropt children's nursery and follow a sign back to Dunblane, two and a half miles away, past Milsey Bank House. A high footbridge spans the railway line, then a gentle rise leads through charming mixed woodland, through which you descend to the Allan Water. Crossing by footbridge, you reach the sign pointing you back to Dunblane.

Virtually as good as a live RLS Day

FAR from being constrained by the coronavirus, Robert Louis Stevenson Day 2020 presented its biggest and most varied programme ever, with around 30 items enjoyed online worldwide by around 300 visitors a day to the RLS Day website.

These included video contributions from Stevenson fans around the globe, several talks and presentations and musical items including the playing of a new RLS violin, and film footage of the Colinton Tunnel mural, inspired by Stevenson's poem From A Railway Carriage.

The good news is that the items can still be viewed year-round via the website. To beat the lockdown, why not while away an hour or two in Stevenson's company? Simply type rldsday.wordpress.com into your search engine and follow the links.

Vailima's Prayers brought to life in a musical setting

STEVENSON'S *Vailima Prayers* are probably not revisited as often as they deserve to be, even by his devotees. But however familiar the listener may be with Stevenson's text, Neil Adam's musical settings in a new CD, *The Windmill Needs the Wind*, bring a fresh colour to the lines and a fresh sense of the poetry of the prayers.

It has been a bold project from the outset and Adam has been equally adventurous in the instrumentation and the musical resources he has brought to bear, aided by an ensemble of diverse individual talents. If you identify folk resonances, you will also feel the presence of JS Bach; but there is pleasure and revelation all the way through in hearing the words in these new settings.

The prayers are so intimate that different verses will have particular poignancy for individual listeners, but their humanity and breadth of vision speak to all. It is striking how relevant Stevenson's themes still are today.

He speaks again and again of the richness and variety of the natural world and, although he is addressing his own family, his embrace of humanity is international. Now, through the music of *The Windmill Needs the Wind*, Stevenson speaks to us as our contemporary.

Not for the first time, Neil Adam has done justice to Stevenson while producing a thoroughly original work in its own right.

An illuminated edition of the Prayers can be downloaded free from www.neiladamandjudyturner.com/shop where you can also order the CD for \$30 Australian, plus \$10 shipping to the UK (around £22.50 altogether).

DAVID REID

NEWS IN BRIEF

Stay online for the latest Club news

TO keep members abreast of the latest developments within the Club and elsewhere in the RLS world, we are compiling a new, up-to-date list of email addresses. To ensure you are on the list, please email membership secretary Tom Murison, tamurison@hotmail.com

New Stevenson routes

WORK is well under way to create routes in Edinburgh and the Lothians as part of the European Cultural Route In The Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson. Club member Martin White has created two audio trails within Edinburgh, guiding visitors through Stevenson's Childhood Years and University Years. With narration by the Club's own John Shedden, the trails are accessible by smartphone from the Voicemap website Voicemap.me

Meanwhile Stevenson walks in the Lothians, around North Berwick and elsewhere, can be found on the growing *MrRLS.com* website – check it out now to enjoy self-guided walks in Stevenson's footsteps.

Club Centenary volume

PUBLISHING students at Edinburgh Napier University are now working on our Centenary volume of essays by people from all walks of life, telling how they have been inspired by the life and work of RLS. Delayed for a year by the coronavirus pandemic, the book will now be published by Merchiston Press in time for RLS Day 2021 in November. For details of how to order copies, see our Summer Update.

The Stevenson Way to Swanston

AFTER getting an early-morning lift into town in his father's carriage, Robert Louis Stevenson would return later in the day on foot, often taking this route.

From the entrance to Braidburn Valley Park on the corner of Morningside Crescent, go through the park and take the Stevenson Way path along Cockmylane, past Comiston Spring House to cross Fox Spring Crescent before rising further to Caiystane Gardens.

Beyond the Braid Park and Burn the way passes an open-air theatre and an ancient Edinburgh water supply. At the back gate to Comiston House there is a sign for the White Lady Walk, described by RLS in Edinburgh Picturesque Notes.

He relates how, late at night, a carter beheld a lady in white with beautiful clear shoes upon her feet, who looked upon him in a very ghostly manner... and then vanished. The



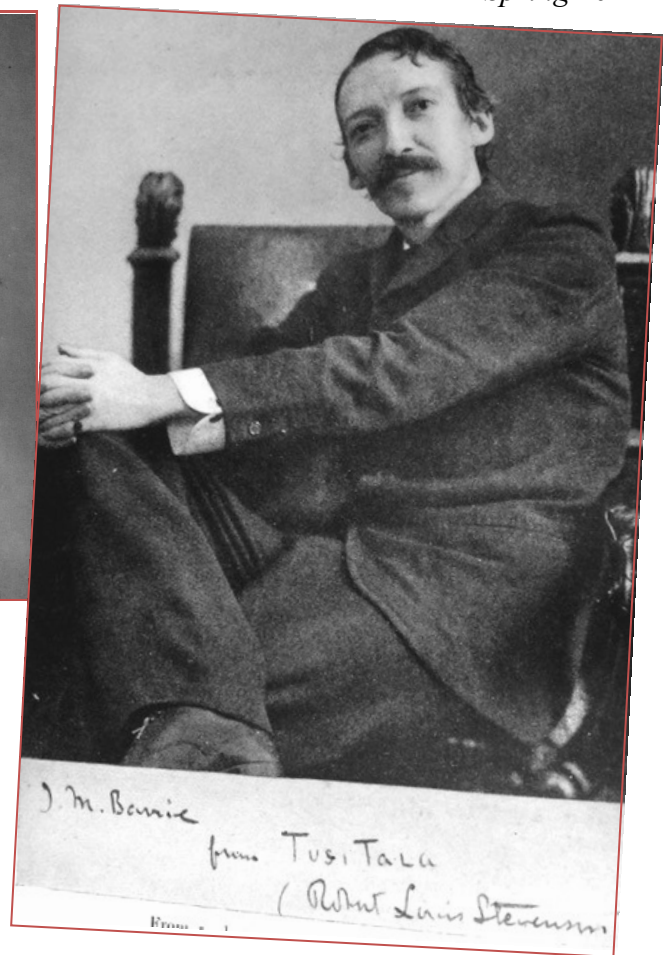
Home from home: Swanston Cottage, Stevenson's summer residence

Stevenson Way then joins a minor road and continues to rise, crossing the main road that leads to the Hunter's Tryst inn, reputedly once haunted by the devil. It was also the headquarters of the Six Foot High Club whose members included Sir Walter Scott.

Crossing the main road with care, you then follow the metalled road all the way to Swanston village, where you can see the thatched cottage once occupied by Stevenson's friend John Tod, the 'Roaring Shepherd'. Swanston Cottage, the summer home of RLS and his parents, is a private residence but views of the house and garden can be had by turning right at Swanston Golf Club and following the perimeter of the golf course – from which you can also see the waterman's cottage where Louis's old nurse Alison Cunningham kept house for her brother.



Friends: JM Barrie and the signed photo sent to him by RLS



From JMB to RLS...

OCTOBER is one of the most capricious months in Connecticut: the temperature can be close to twenty degrees one day, and then you're wiping snow off your glasses the next.

It was during this unpredictable, playful month in 2016 that I found myself in New Haven, where I was fortunate enough to be undertaking a fellowship at the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

The Beinecke Library – one of the most delicate examples of 1960s brutalism – is host to very large collections of manuscripts by both Robert Louis Stevenson and JM Barrie, two figures who featured in the book I was writing at that time, *The Fin-de-Siècle Scottish Revival: Romance, Decadence and Celtic Identity*.

I went to New Haven to get more information about the development of several of their works, and to read some of their unpublished writings. As I was looking through the library's extensive catalogues of materials, I noticed that the Beinecke was home to Barrie's manuscript letters to Stevenson. I couldn't recall ever having read these letters.

I had read Stevenson's letters to Barrie, but I had no memory of ever seeing Barrie's side of the correspondence. Since I was there, I thought I'd take the opportunity to read the manuscript letters, so I requested the relevant box and began reading.

Barrie's handwriting is notoriously opaque – Stevenson protested that Barrie had the second-worst handwriting he had

An important new book by **MICHAEL SHAW** reveals JM Barrie's 'lost' letters to Robert Louis Stevenson. Here Dr Shaw explains how he discovered them in the USA

ever encountered – but, despite the difficulty, I found myself enraptured by the letters. As the correspondence develops, Barrie is at his most open and witty, and the full depth of his affection and respect for Stevenson is revealed. Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson described RLS's letters to Barrie as 'perhaps the gayest' that he wrote, and this spirit was reciprocated in Barrie's letters.

I was especially struck by the fact that although they had never met in person, their letters were incredibly intimate in places. When I finished reading Barrie's side of the correspondence, I resolved to hunt out editions of Barrie's letters, so I could have a copy of these epistles to hand. It was only during that search that I came to realise that Barrie's letters to Samoa had not been published before; indeed, some of Barrie's biographers had referred to them as 'lost'.

And the more I dug, the more I started to see the influence of the correspondence on Barrie's life and work. So I started to consider whether these letters (only sixteen in total – although some run to 3,000 words) might form a volume of literary

correspondence. Happily, Moira Forsyth and Robert Davidson at Sandstone Press saw the potential. Now, over four years later, the volume is finally published.

A Friendship in Letters: Robert Louis Stevenson & J. M. Barrie includes all of the letters Barrie wrote to Stevenson in Samoa, and reunites them with Stevenson's letters to Barrie.

The letters are accompanied with a 10,000-word introduction, where I introduce the letters; explain why Stevenson and Barrie developed such an intimate bond; and outline the impact that the correspondence had on Barrie's work.

The volume also features a series of appendices by Barrie, including a poem he penned after Stevenson's death, 'Scotland's Lament', and a short story, in which Barrie imagines how he might have met Stevenson during his student days in Edinburgh.

Michael Shaw is Lecturer in Scottish Literature at the University of Stirling

CONTACTS

RLS Club Contact: Mitchell Manson,
17 Huntingdon Place, Edinburgh, EH7
4AX. Tel: 0131 557 1933

Email: mitchellmanson@btinternet.com

RLS Club News Editor:

Jeremy Hodges, 21 Russel Street,
Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 7HS.

Tel: 01324 613072

Email: jeremy.hodges@blueyonder.co.uk