

UPDATE

The Robert Louis Stevenson Club June 2016



Kidnapped 130

IN the summer of 1886, an exciting new adventure story was serialised in Young Folks magazine. Since then, readers young and old have been enthralled by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, first published 130 years ago.

And to mark the anniversary, three intrepid adventurers set out to re-enact the epic trek by David Balfour and Alan Breck, raising money for Parkinson's UK, Ocean Youth Trust Scotland and Stevenson Adventures.

From South Queensferry they set sail in the trimaran *Trade Winds*, skippered by Richard Marshall, on the *Kidnapped* route taken by the brig *Covenant* round the top of Scotland to Earraid.

From there Alan Rankin and Willie Gibson, both experienced hill runners, set off on foot at a brisk pace, crossing Mull in two days and Morvern in a day.

At Kentallen the club's Stevenson Way expert Ian Logan met them and they walked to Lettermore, scene of the murder of the 'Red Fox' Colin Campbell.

Then round the back of Glencoe to Signal Rock, where Ian took the reverse route to meet them as they came off the hill. But they were going at such a pace that he just sat down and made a cup of coffee as they vanished down the glen on the Flight in the Heather.

The following day miles of tarmac to Kinlochleven took their toll on feet but Alan and Willie carried on to Rannoch Moor and made Ben Alder cottage next day.

But one had suffered a foot injury and so at Loch Rannoch they made the difficult decision to take a break – as David and Alan did at Balquhider. Latest news at www.kidnapped130.com or on Twitter: #BigSailWalk and @Kidnapped130.



Happy landing: Alan Rankin and Willie Gibson began their long trek at Earraid

...and on the Catriona Trail

IN the year of *Kidnapped 130*, the club ensured the sequel was not overlooked as members followed in the footsteps of David Balfour and Alan Breck on the Catriona Trail.

In Stevenson's novel *Catriona*, David and Alan leave Musselburgh early 'before the first ninepenny coach was due from Edinburgh for (as Alan said) that was a encounter we might very well avoid. The wind although still high, was very mild, the sun shone strong, and Alan began to suffer in proportion.'

Club members made a more leisurely start to their walk led by Ian Gardiner, the driving force behind the Catriona Trail. On a beautiful morning we set out from Musselburgh's Fisherrow Harbour and followed the shore eastwards to the river Esk.

Once over the footbridge we passed the nature reserve complex created for bird populations of many marine species. Heading on we reached the ancient Morrison's Haven, once the port for local industry.

Further south lay the site of the Prestonpans battlefield where Alan fought in the victorious Jacobite army alongside Catriona's father James More Drummond. We had no time for a visit, although Alan insisted on giving David a tour: 'From Prestonpans he

had me aside to the field of Gladsmuir, where he exerted himself a great deal more than needful to describe the stages of the battle.'

A little further along, we passed the home of another key figure in the Catriona story. Prestongrange House was once the home of William Grant, Lord Advocate of Scotland, and is now the headquarters of the Royal Musselburgh Golf Club.

As it was low-tide we could continue along the sea wall to Cockenzie Harbour, of which David Balfour said: 'Though they were building herring-busses [fishing boats] there at Mrs Cadell's, it seemed a desert-like, back-going town, about half full of ruined houses; but the ale-house was clean, and Alan, who was now in a glowing heat, must indulge himself with a bottle of ale.'

Steering clear of ale houses, we made our way through a well-kept communal garden to Cockenzie House, which in David and Alan's day was the home of the Cadell family of 18th-century entrepreneurs.

We were welcomed there by the Cockenzie House and Gardens Trust, who gave us a presentation of its local history. After a late lunch at the Secret Garden Café at the house, we caught the bus back to Musselburgh.

For AGM and Club Events, see over and separate papers



Along the Loing with Louis

A NEW trail inspired by the French travels of Robert Louis Stevenson has been created by the Association RLS de Barbizon à Grez.

The 154 kilometre trail runs from Grez-sur-Loing to Châtillon-sur-Loire, the newest member of the European Network In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson, and follows the route taken by RLS and his friend Sir Walter Simpson in August 1875.

The trail was inaugurated in May by a group who hiked the stages along the Loing Valley from Grez, where RLS would meet Fanny Osbourne, to Châtillon, where he had a less happy encounter with the commissary of police. The team

are now working on a 'Topoguide' to the route, giving information about accommodation, food, services and places of interest. You can visit their website at www.stevenson-fontainebleau.fr



The RLS Club is part of the European Network In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson, certified as a European Cultural Route

An opportunity to bring RLS to book

THE offer of a rent-free stall for the RLS Club at the Edinburgh Book Fair came at short notice, but was too good an opportunity to miss.

Quickly we assembled an eye-catching stall which highlighted our involvement in a growing number of initiatives at home and abroad.

Ian Gardiner's *The Catriona Trail* sat alongside signed copies of John Shedden's *Stevensonian* plays, flanked by *The New Lighthouse on Dhu Heartach Rock*, edited by Roger Swearingen and illustrated by RLS's own sketches.

The National Library of Scotland provided the stand to mount a display of our activities, including the Council of Europe's recent certification of In The Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson as a European Cultural Route. The Writers' Museum added colour with a display of wares from their own shop.

Inspired to write

THIS year's Robert Louis Stevenson Creative Writing Competition for Schools, in Association with Edinburgh Napier University, has seen a rise in entries by adventurous young writers from schools around Scotland.

Our judge is author Louise Welsh, Professor of Creative Writing at Glasgow University, who has confirmed the 11 young writers who will take part in a creative writing masterclass at Edinburgh Napier University in September.

Your Autumn Club Events Programme

JULY 16 RLS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Have your say in the running of the club and meet fellow members at the AGM in the Mackenzie Building, Old Assembly Close 172 High Street, Edinburgh, at 11am (coffee from 10.30).

SEPTEMBER 24 LOUIS'S EDINBURGH

Spend a morning exploring places associated with RLS in Edinburgh's New Town and Leith, led by club member Dr Mitchell Manson. Meet outside St Andrews House, Regent Road, by 10.30am.

OCTOBER 12 RLS: A EUROPEAN JOURNEY

Taking an international outlook, we meet at the French Institute in Edinburgh for a talk on the European Network In The Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and how it

won accreditation as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. This joint event hosted by the Franco-Scottish Society starts at 7pm at the French Institute, 13 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh. Numbers are limited to 35 so book early, by September 30 at the latest.

OCTOBER 21 ROYAL MILE WALK WITH BURNS AND STEVENSON

Join actors John Shedden and Peter Berry in the spirit of the two Roberts as they perform and illuminate with humorous interplay many of the

BOOKING

To book an event or for more information, contact Events Secretary Margaret Wilkie on 0131 477 6738 or wilkiej@blueyonder.co.uk

famous works of two of Scotland's greatest writers during a 90-minute walk up the Royal Mile from the Canongate Church to the Writers' Museum. Meet 11am at the Fergusson statue by the Canongate Church, £8 pp. Lunch option: Vittoria on the Bridge.

NOVEMBER 12 ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The RLS Club's Annual Luncheon will be held at the New Club in Edinburgh's Princes Street. This is always a popular event and early booking is advised. Full details and a booking form will be sent to members nearer the date.

DECEMBER 3 RLS IN AMERICA

Heading Stateside, join Dr Mitchell Manson for an illustrated talk on RLS and his Club in America. Meet 10.30am for 11.00 at The Royal Scots Club, 29-31 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh. £5 reservation by Nov 30.