



**March, 2020**

# Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society

Happy St. Patrick's Day



Moran Taing

Many thanks for those who are working hard on upcoming events. We certainly have a lot going on!

## **Upcoming Events**

**March 6 - Flagstaff Public Library, 1:30 Learn a Celtic country dance!**

**March 9 -Master Chorale of Flagstaff "Tales of the British Isles" Concert March 9<sup>th</sup> Sinagua Auditorium**

**March 14 - Sedona St. Patrick's Day Parade! Be in Sedona at 9am. Call Jude for details 928.606.6327**

**March 14 - St. Patrick's Day in Ireland concert at the Orpheum. NACHS will be tabling this event. Doors open at 6.**

**March 17 - St. Patrick's Day at Uptown Billiards with The Knockabouts 6-9**

**March 17 - St. Patrick's Day at the Weatherford Hotel. Starts at 5.**

**March 18 - How the Celts Influenced Flagstaff. Flagstaff Public Library 7pm.**

**April 5 - Tartan Day Celebration. Uptown Pubhouse at 3. See flyer!**

## Robert Louis Stevenson

By Meredith Young

Many people grew up reading Robert Louis Stevenson's books, but few know about his troubled and short life. Stevenson was arguably one of the most famous Scottish writers in history. He was born in Edinburgh in 1850, and his full name was Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson. Thomas, Stevenson's father, came from a long line of lighthouse designers and engineers, while his mother Margaret came from a family of landed gentry that traced its lineage back to Alexander Balfour (the founder of the Liverpool Shipping Company). Stevenson, his mother, and his maternal grandfather all had trouble with their lungs, which was exacerbated by their living conditions in cold houses and climates. Stevenson was sickly throughout his entire life, which made him extremely thin, and he missed a lot of school. His mother hired private tutors to help teach him to read, but he lagged behind other children his age. Even though he began reading when he was around 7, he would make up stories to tell his mother and nurse, and he began writing much more as he grew older. His father pandered to him at first, even going so far as to have one of Stevenson's historical accounts printed when he was 16, but then discouraged his son from wasting his time on silly stories.

When he turned 18, Stevenson changed the spelling of "Lewis" to "Louis," got rid of "Balfour," and began referring to himself as "RLS." He started an engineering degree at the University of Edinburgh, but quickly lost interest and stopped attending his classes. Whenever he got the chance, Stevenson traveled to nearby islands with his father on lighthouse inspection tours. It was from these picturesque locations that he drew the inspiration for the settings of many of his future books. In 1871, Stevenson told his father that he wanted to pursue a career in literature. His mother was delighted, and his father grudgingly agreed, as long as he went to law school in Edinburgh and was admitted to the bar. Stevenson quickly turned to poetry, began to dress in a Bohemian style, renounced his religion, and frequented bars and brothels. In 1873, Stevenson made several important acquaintances: Sidney Colvin, Fanny Sitwell, and Leslie Steven. Colvin (who eventually married Fanny Sitwell) became Stevenson's literary advisor and edited his letters after Stevenson died. Fanny Sitwell was a maternal inspiration for Stevenson, while Leslie Steven introduced Stevenson to the poet William Ernest Henley. Henley later became Stevenson's inspiration for Long John Silver because of his charisma and wooden leg. During the late 1870s, Stevenson went to France to try and improve his failing health; he finally qualified for the Scottish bar, but never law.

During a canoe trip through Belgium and France, Stevenson met Fanny Van Der Grift Osbourne, an American woman who had three children (one of whom died the year before) and was separated from her husband. Stevenson fell in love with her, and although he went back to England for a year, they met again in 1877 and traveled around France. She returned to America the following year, and Stevenson went to join her in 1879 - without telling his family where he had gone. He almost died on the trip and had to spend a good deal of time recovering in

Monterey, California. By December, he made his way to San Francisco and tried to support himself by writing. He was unsuccessful, and his health took a turn for the worse. Fanny (who was divorced by this time) found him, nursed him back to health, and married him in 1880. They traveled along the west coast before moving back to England. Between 1880 and 1887, Stevenson wrote his most famous works as he moved around in an attempt to improve his health. He wrote *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* while living in Bournemouth, and he named the character of Mr. Poole after a nearby town. His first widely-acclaimed novel was *Treasure Island*, which was quickly followed by *Kidnapped*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Underwoods*, and *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses*.

After his father died in 1887, Stevenson spent the winter with his mother and wife in the Adirondack mountains in New York. There, he wrote some of his best essays and began working on *The Master of Ballantrae*. In the summer of 1888, Stevenson chartered a yacht and left San Francisco for a lengthy trip to the South Pacific. He went to New Zealand, Tahiti, the Samoan Islands, Australia, and Hawaii; in Hawaii, he befriended King Kalakaua and his part-Scottish niece, Princess Victoria Kaiulani. He also made several excursions into other various nearby island chains and lived for a time with a tyrant chief in the Gilbert Islands. Stevenson recorded all of these travels in *In the South Seas*, which was published posthumously. In 1890, Stevenson purchased 400 acres of land in Samoa, and became known as Tusitala, or “Teller of Tales” in Samoan. Fretting that his health was becoming worse, he engrossed himself in his writings, finishing *The Beach of Falesa*, *David Balfour*, and *The Ebb-Tide*. On December 3rd, 1894, Stevenson was trying to open a bottle of wine, when he suddenly asked his wife, “What’s that? Does my face look strange?” before collapsing. He died later that day, at the age of 44, of what was likely a cerebral hemorrhage. The Samoan villagers carried him on their shoulders up to the top of Mount Vaea, and buried him on a plot of land overlooking the sea. Below is the burial elegy Stevenson had written for his own tomb.

Robert Louis Stevenson was such a profound writer that many of his contemporaries lauded his work, and his books (while most of the original manuscripts are lost) still resonate with people today. He has multiple museums and statues dedicated in his honor, along with six elementary schools, a line of British commemorative banknotes, and several memorials. Even though Stevenson only lived a short time, the memories of his life, travels, and works will live on through the ages.

### Requiem

Under the wide and starry sky, Dig the grave and let me lie. Glad did I live and gladly die, And I laid me down with a will. This be the verse you grave for me: Here he lies where he longed to be; Home is the sailor, home from sea, And the hunter home from the hill.

**Good day,**

**The kilt is an important part of Scottish Heritage and preserving the craft of kiltmaking is something that all Scots would be supportive of.**

**If more and more people from around the world learn the craft of the traditional tailored kiltmaking, then we can ensure that this precious knowledge will be passed on to future generations.**

**That's why the Askival of Strathearn Kilt College has created a 100% online course that guides aspiring kiltmakers of all experience levels to access the highest quality of instructions and support on making a kilt in the comfort of their homes.**

**I know that members of Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society endeavour to preserve and promote Scottish culture and tradition in Arizona, so thought that your community might be interested in knowing about the on line training for the traditional tailored kilt?**

**Please pass the link below to all your members who may be interested in the Kilt College on line course and joining our April 2020 intake. The closing date for enrolment is 21 March 2020.**

Your help is much appreciated and please reply with any questions you may have.

Best wishes,

Marion Foster

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[www.askivalofstrathearn.co.uk](http://www.askivalofstrathearn.co.uk)

**MON  
MAR  
9**

**7:30 pm**

The Master Chorale of Flagstaff  
PRESENTS

**TALES OF THE  
BRITISH ISLES**



Benjamin Saunders  
*music director*

**Sinagua  
Middle  
School  
Auditorium**

Featuring the award-winning Celtic band *The Knockabouts*, come to celebrate the beautiful music of the British Isles. Selections will include Celtic fantasies, Irish folk tunes, and Welsh lullabies, as well as the early music of Thomas Morley and all-time favorites of the Beatles.

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.masterchorale.net](http://www.masterchorale.net) or at the door with cash, check, or credit card. Transaction fees may apply.



Funded by



National  
Tartan Day

Celebration Social Event



Sunday, April 5 at 3:00 PM

Uptown Pubhouse  
114 N. Leroux St.

Wear your Tartan !!!  
~ Bagpipes ~ Haggis ~ Silent Auction

SPONSORED BY THE NORTHERN ARIZONA CELTIC HERITAGE SOCIETY  
dedicated to presenting, promoting, and preserving Celtic culture

[www.nachs.info](http://www.nachs.info)

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