

## **FROM RUSSIA ..WITH LOVE**

### **Scot's 200-year-old trans-Siberian travel diary to be celebrated with mammoth train trip tracing the route of his epic journey**

**Daily Record 16 Jul 2016 ANNIE BROWN a.brown@dailyrecord.co.uk**

HE WAS one of Scotland's most accomplished explorers... yet few have heard of John Dundas Cochrane, a naval captain who traversed 3000 miles of the Russian empire on foot. Cochrane, known as the "pedestrian traveller", published a travel chronicle so detailed that it was used by the architects of the great Trans-Siberian Railway.

Now non-profit Russo-Scots organisation the Moscow Caledonian Club are highlighting his achievements with a train journey following the route of his journey.

His solitary expedition dates back two centuries but MCC president Vitaly Mironov hopes revisiting the captain's journey can inspire new links in culture, tourism and trade between Scotland and Russia.

He said: "Captain Cochrane's published diary describes the people of Russia, their traditions and character as well as the nature of the country, its lands and resources. His story is a symbol of the connections between Scotland and Russia and we want to strengthen that relationship.

"He brought the truth of the real Russia and that is what we want people to see. We want Scots to come to Russia and Russians to go to Scotland, so we can both benefit from an enduring friendship."

Vitaly, who helped found the club in 1994, after studying Scottish history at university, said the train journey from Moscow to Vladivostok will show travellers that Russia is so much more than its famous cities, just as Cochrane did.

There are many notable Scots descendants in Russian history, from the 17th-century Alexander Leslie, who became the first foreigner to be ranked general in the Russian army, to Prince Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly, whose family came from Aberdeenshire and who became minister of war during the Napoleonic conflict.

The MCC journey is in November on the Trans-Siberian express and passengers will include 50 Scots as well as Russians, with entertainment being provided by Scottish performers.

Born in 1793 the illegitimate son of Scottish adventurer Andrew Cochrane-Johnstone, Cochrane came from a large family of military gentry, although it is not clear exactly where in Scotland he was born.

After the Napoleonic wars, he, like many naval officers, found himself with little to do. Many were sent to explore uncharted territories to aid the expansion of the British empire.

Cochrane had originally wanted to go to Africa but his superiors refused his request then agreed he could embark on his 1820 expedition, from Dieppe to the far east of Russia, a trip which lasted three years.

Dubbing himself a "rough pioneer", he loved to walk and decided the journey would be more enlightening and safer if he went without companions, wealth or weapons, which would make him a target for thieves and aggression.

His logic was explained in his book, *Narrative of a Pedestrian Journey through Russia and Siberian Tartary, to the Frontiers of China to the Frozen Sea and Kamchatka*.

He wrote: "I am convinced that many people travelling together for the purpose of exploring a barbarous country have the less chance of succeeding, more especially when they go armed and take with them presents of value."

His book is not just a history of Russia but a love letter to a place and people he clearly fell in love with.

He enthuses about the generosity of those he met and the landscape.

At Cochrane's request, the emperor Alexander I gave him a personal written order to be allowed to travel the empire unhindered.

He crossed France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Russia and, briefly, China, to Kamchatka in the far east, mainly on foot, although sometimes he used sledges, horses, canoes and rafts.

Much of the territory he travelled had never been mapped or seen by a European.

He did not speak Russian and relied on those he met having a grasp of German, English and French, the latter used by the upper classes to distinguish them from the peasants.

Some days he walked 20 miles, on others he barely stopped until he had covered 100 and much of his journey was a fight against the biting cold of wildernesses like Siberia.

His letter from the tsar afforded him largely safe passage but it didn't stop him from being mugged one morning. Forced into a forest by musket-wielding bandits, he was stripped and tied to a tree while two "ruffians" raided his knapsack, stealing his glasses, watch, compass, thermometer and cash. They untied him, fed him bread and rum and then bound him again to the tree, later sending a villager to free him. Undaunted, he tied a couple of shirts around his waist as a kilt and walked nine miles barefoot to the historic city of Novgorod, where the local governor gave him food and clothes. He was wined and dined by the wealthy but his book reserves its greatest praise for the starving peasants who shared what they had. Cochrane wrote: "I have received food from a family who were almost in a starving state and am therefore justified by grateful experience in affirming that those who are the most ignorant and uncivilised are the most hospitable and friendly to their fellows." He tells of a post master who hid two roubles in his cap after Cochrane had refused his offer of money.

In another town, a young widow gave him shelter and washed his clothes as he slept.

The journey was perilous and on one occasion he fell into a river and his "clothes became like a firm casing of ice".

Another time, his life was in danger from a forest fire.

As his travels progressed, he suffered from rheumatism.

Dogged and determined, he crossed 2000 miles of Siberia in clothes inadequate for "the coldest season of the year, and in what is esteemed the coldest part of the world".

In Kamchatka in the far east, he married 15 year-old Ksenia Ivanovna Loginova, the local governor's adopted daughter.

His young wife travelled back with him to the UK, an arduous journey which "bore very hard upon her delicate frame".

She was concussed when she fell from a horse and became desperately ill after spending several nights sleeping in a stable with her husband.

When they reached the UK, he published two volumes of his travels but the wanderlust remained.

In 1825, he went to South America and died of fever in Valencia, Colombia, leaving poor Ksenia a widow at 18.

*Captain Cochrane brought the truth of the real Russia that we want people to see*  
**VITALY MIRONOV**

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### Cop dad quiz is probed

**INVESTIGATION**

**POLICE** watchdogs are investigating reports of an alleged rape after the death of a 29-year-old man who was found on a train in the Park.

The 29-year-old's body was found on a train for some distance in Park Road - 10 miles from the alleged site.

The Police Investigations and Review Commissioner will probe the initial response to the investigation after his wife raised the alarm that he had vanished.

Investigative work is under way to establish the whereabouts of James, of Winton, after he got off a bus for a cigarette before it left without him on July 11.

It is unclear how far from the bus there are out through the city's complex network.

A PIR's spokesman said: "The investigation will focus on the initial police response following a report of a missing person."

It is not clear the incident will be investigated, in the case.

A police spokesman said: "We will co-operate fully with the investigation and will address any concerns that may be raised."

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**Trolley dash**  
Seven have the festive spirit as they race with an average load of just two minutes and 43 seconds, according to a trolley dash.

# THE BIG READ REMARKABLE TALE OF II



**ODYSSEY** Map showing Cochran's route from the end of the scale of the journey to back, north to south. He is considered the world's longest railway journey. His odyssey is a 20,000-mile, 100-day trip that he only after leaving the world's longest railway.

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

### HE WAS one of Scotland's most accomplished explorers... yet he has heard of John Cochran, a great captain who traversed 3000 miles of the Russian empire on foot.

Cochran, known as the 'pioneer of the north', published a report in 1812 that it was used by the British to the great Trans-Siberian Railway.

Now, a new public house has opened in the village of Colinton, Edinburgh, to mark the 200th anniversary of his journey.

His military expedition from Colinton to the Arctic Circle is a story of courage and discovery, and it is now being celebrated in a new book by the author of the book, 'The Arctic Explorer'.

His book 'The Arctic Explorer' published here describes the people of Alaska, their traditions and character as well as the nature of the country, its lands and resources. The story is a sequel of the connection between Scotland and Russia.

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### Scott's 200-year-old trans-Siberian travel diary to be celebrated with mammoth train trip tracing the route of his epic journey



**WARRIOR**  
A 200-year-old diary of a Scottish soldier's journey from London to Vladivostok will be used to mark the 200th anniversary of his journey.

The diary, written by John Cochran, a Scottish soldier, describes his journey from London to Vladivostok, a distance of 20,000 miles, in 1812.

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