



Schoolchildren and the Royal Navy could create history in The Trafalgar Way's first ever short story competition

The French have La Route Napoleon, the Americans have Paul Revere's Ride, and now the UK has The Trafalgar Way! This is the historic route between Cornwall and London taken by the messenger delivering news of The Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Admiral Lord Nelson in 1805.

A short story competition has been launched that is going to help put the Trafalgar Way on the map and into the national consciousness. Entrants aged from 7 to 21 are invited to write their own original story on the theme of "An Urgent Message".

Kathy Brown, The Trafalgar Way's Director says: "We have launched a story competition because we too have such a great story to tell. It is the tale of the messenger who sailed directly from Cape Trafalgar off the south west coast of Spain to Falmouth. He then made the dash to London by post-chaise (coach and horses) to deliver this urgent dispatch. This journey usually took three weeks, but he did it in 38 hours. And it was a thrilling race - he beat a second messenger by a whisker!"

There are three age categories in the competition. The £500 prize in the oldest age category, which is also open to Royal Navy personnel, Sea Cadets and Royal Marine Reserves resident anywhere in the UK, is the same amount as the messenger, Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere received for safely delivering the dispatch to the Admiralty on 6th November 1805.

BBC historian and TV presenter Dan Snow, who is one of the competition judges, is a fan of The Trafalgar Way, because, as he says: "This news dramatically altered the balance of power in the world."

He is also interested in the way it brings local history to life along the route, because, as he explains: "The Tale of the Trafalgar Dispatch being rushed from Falmouth to London is like a bolt of lightning revealing a lost world of people and places."

Adam Preston, a writer and Nelson descendant, who has been commissioned to write a short story about The Trafalgar Way, adds: "This is all about becoming a part of The Trafalgar Way story yourself - if you are a winner, you're going to be presented with your prize on HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship."

Prizes include cash, publication of the winning story and, for school entries, a visit to the winner's school by a fully functioning replica post-chaise like that used by the messenger, complete with a pair of horses and postillion. Kathy Brown points out: "This is something that young people are unlikely to ever forget!"

The competition is open to those who live in the counties and districts along The Trafalgar Way. Its route goes through Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Surrey as well as the London boroughs of Hounslow, Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster.

Details of how to enter and the prizes can be found on the Trafalgar Way website:
www.thetrafalgarway.org/storycompetition2018

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Available for interview are:

Kathy Brown, Director of The Trafalgar Way, email kathy@thetrafalgarway.uk and;
Adam Preston, writer, Nelson descendant and author of An Urgent Message, a specially commissioned short story about The Trafalgar Way, email: adam@thetrafalgarway.org

Notes for Editors:

The Trafalgar Way short story competition judges are:

Dan Snow BBC Historian and TV Presenter

Megan Rix, Author

Peter Hore, Author, Biographer, Journalist

Katie Jamieson, Blogger, Adventurer, Nelson expert

Information about The Trafalgar Way

The Trafalgar Way, which runs from Falmouth in Cornwall to the Admiralty in central London, was created in 2005 to commemorate the journey over land made by Lt John Richards Lapenotiere who carried the momentous news of victory at the Battle of Trafalgar and of the death of Admiral Lord Nelson.

Today, a series of 38 bronze plaques located along The Trafalgar Way remembers Lapenotiere's historic journey. A coaching, rather than a walking route, The Trafalgar Way's path traverses some of Britain's most beautiful countryside and through picturesque villages, towns and cities. Along its 271 miles, it passes through seven counties (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey and Greater London). Historic towns and cities along the way include Truro, Bodmin, Launceston, Okehampton, Exeter, Honiton, Axminster, Bridport, Dorchester, Salisbury, Andover, Basingstoke, Camberley, Bagshot, Egham, Staines, Hounslow and Kensington.

The idea to create The Trafalgar Way originated from a group of historians and retired naval personnel working to celebrate the Battle of Trafalgar's bicentenary in 2005. The group set up the New Trafalgar Dispatch to co-ordinate special events for the route's inauguration that year. After 2005, the New Trafalgar Dispatch disbanded, but The Trafalgar Way remains under the custodianship of The 1805 Club.

In 2017, The 1805 Club successfully applied for a grant from HM Treasury's LIBOR fund, set up especially for military charities. This grant allows for significant reinvestment in The Trafalgar Way to ensure the legacy continues for the present and future.

Issued on behalf of The Trafalgar Way by Alison Reijman, email: alisonscolumn@yahoo.co.uk