

Light Again on Dumyat

A welcome return of a children's favourite

The woods of the old Airthrey estate, now part of the grounds of Stirling University, include a tiny folly-castle that feature in an adventure novel for children to be re-launched this autumn.

Light On Dumyat, written by Stirling journalist and broadcaster Rennie McOwan, is aimed at children aged nine and upwards. First published in 1982 by the Saint Andrew Press, it is being re-issued by the outdoor publishing firm Rucksack Readers of Landrick Lodge, Dunblane. The book has been widely used in schools and was once chosen as the theme for a primary schools conference at Stirling University.

Much of the plot centres on Dumyat and the fringes of the Ochils, including the battlefield of Sheriffmuir. The book has strong educational, historical and environmental themes and features a group of four children who form a modern clan and foil a raid on a country house by a gang of thieves.

The 'Clan' involves three local children, Clare (the leader) and brothers Michael and Mot (Tom). They are joined by another boy, Gavin, who is on holiday in the area.

Rennie McOwan says: "I was brought up at the foot of Dumyat and parts of the Ochils and particularly the Airthrey woods were our childhood playground. I am delighted Rucksack Readers are re-issuing the book, as I have had dozens of letters from children over the years asking when it would be on sale again".

Light On Dumyat was followed by three other adventure stories featuring the same children: *The White Stag Adventure* (broadcast by the BBC for schools), *The Day The Mountain Moved* and *Jewels On The Move*, which reached the Scottish Top Ten.

Rennie McOwan is the author of ten books, including *Saint Andrew For Beginners* and *Robert Burns For Beginners*, as well as many articles and scripts for radio and television.



Rennie McOwan, lifelong Ochils enthusiast

Courtesy Whyler Photos

In 1996 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Stirling University for his contributions to Scottish writing and culture. The following year the Outdoor Writer Guild gave him their Golden Eagle Award for access campaigning and his outdoor writings and in 1998 he received a Stirling Council Provost's Civic Award.

He is a founder member and honorary president of the conservation body, The Friends of the Ochils, and the Stirling Literary Society.

Light On Dumyat will be re-launched on September 19 at a reception in Stirling's Smith Art Gallery and Museum and will go on sale at £6.99.

From the *Stirling and Bridge of Allan Reporter* June-November 1908

An Exciting Incident

On Saturday forenoon last as the conductor and driver of the 11 a.m. car from Stirling were reversing the horses at the terminus opposite Oswald Robertson & Coy.'s, chemists, shop, the horses from some unknown cause bolted, making their flight along Henderson Street. A very plucky action was done by the driver, who held on to the reins, and tried to stop the horses, but being drawn along the street for a considerable distance he had to relinquish his hold. The horses continued their mad career along Henderson Street, but when in front of Eagle-ton House the foremost of the two stumbled and fell, the other being shortly afterwards brought to a standstill. On examination it was found that the injured horse had got a leg broken, and had to be shot. The shooting was performed by a local butcher with a humane cattle-killer. As the street was very busy when the horses bolted, it was fortunate that no one was injured. (July 18)