

...continued from front flap.

Byron's emotional awareness of Hellenic lore and civilisation awakened as he travelled through the Ottoman province of Greece, and developed into political awareness as he journeyed to Constantinople and the heart of the Ottoman Empire. He returned to Greece for two seasons of exploratory decadence and untrammelled debauchery and would return to Greece again, dying for the cause of Greek independence fourteen years later.

Lord Byron's Grand Tour is recorded as impressions in his own letters and journals, more methodically in the diary of his travelling companion John Cam Hobhouse, and reflected poetically in the first two cantos of the epic poem that was to make his fame and start his legend.

Ian Strathcarron's re-Tour follows in Byron's footsteps, revisiting the places the poet visited two hundred years ago and comparing what he found then to what one finds there now. At each point the re-Tour meets today's equivalents to the kings, consuls, governors, chieftains and gangsters that the Grand Tour met before it. Witty and perceptive, the re-Tour reveals much about Lord Byron and much too about how the world has changed in two centuries.



LORD STRATHCARRON is an author and adventurer who lives on his yacht *Vasco da Gama*, writing historical travel books and generally trying to stay out of trouble.

More on: www.strathcarrons-ahoy.com



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"Byron's love of Greece, his dramatic role in its struggle for independence, and his understanding of how ancient and contemporary might meet in its lands and on its seas, have made him part of Greek history. It is good to have a book showing us the living context – how this process happened, how we came to share one of our major poets with the Greeks." – RUTH PADEL

"A spirited re-tracing, by land and sea, of the Mediterranean adventures of the 'mad, bad and dangerous-to-know' poet." – JASON ELLIOT



JOY UNCONFINED!

Lord Byron's Grand Tour Re-Toured



IAN STRATHCARRON

LORD BYRON completed his Grand Tour of the Mediterranean between 1809 and 1811, leaving England at the age of twenty-one as an undiscovered soul and returning as 'Byron', with all that implies: the brand, the baggage and the brio.

With the Napolconic Wars at their most complex, the route of this Grand Tour was to be largely seaborne. After leaving Falmouth in Cornwall with his entourage—including his best friend, pageboy, valet and eight portmanteaux for his costumes—Byron arrived in Lisbon to find it occupied by Portugal's allies, the British Army. His amorous adventures started with his landlady in Seville and continued with an admiral's daughter in Cadiz: 'Ah, Vice! How soft are thy voluptuous ways!'

Leaving the horrors of a sweltering and garrisoned Gibraltar behind he set sail for Sardinia and Sicily before arriving in Malta. He soon found himself recruited by British Intelligence by day, and by his 'new Calypso', the fabulous Constance Spencer-Smith, by night. Byron's mission as a British agent was to pacify the notorious local tyrant Ali Pasha in the aftermath of British duplicity against the Ottomans and intrigue against France. On the way he tried his hand at privateering and started his first epic, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

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