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# TRAVEL

A new app has been launched this week allowing Alice in Wonderland fans to explore the town that helped to inspire the story. **ADRIAN CAFFERY** reports

**A** SEASIDE town with links to the Alice in Wonderland story will be celebrating a very important date next year.

Llandudno in North Wales will be marking the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's book by bringing to life Alice and her friends White Rabbit, Mad Hatter and Cheshire Cat like never before.

Carroll was a friend of Henry Liddell, the dean of Christ College, Oxford, who loved Llandudno so much he built a holiday home there for his family, including young daughter Alice, who is said to have inspired the fictional character of the same name.

Curious and curiouser, Carroll and Alice shared many adventures in Llandudno, and the town itself was also a source of inspiration for the author.

Ahead of the landmark year, an interactive smartphone app called Follow the White Rabbit has been created, containing augmented reality – among the first of its kind in the UK.

Animated characters from the book guide you around Llandudno, revealing the interesting stories behind the factual and fictional Alice, while showcasing many of the town's best features.

Along the way, you'll notice that Llandudno has been divided into four card suit quarters – Hearts, Spades, Diamonds and Clubs – with businesses now embracing the town's Wonderland links by including the symbols on floral displays.

The app appeals to Alice fans of all ages and my three-year-old daughter Cerys was in her element as she



## Around with Alice

■ Cerys has tea with the Mad Hatter, both in augmented reality and in reality at St Tudno Hotel. Right, with Alice, below, with Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee



tracked down wooden statues of all the characters from the book.

And the smiles got broader as she discovered a tiny door, the cupcake she'd have to eat in order to fit through it, and a giant version of the White Rabbit's pocket watch.

The cleverest thing about the app is that you can capture images of you and your friends and family with the Wonderland characters.

For instance, I got snaps of Cerys jumping down the rabbit hole, taking a seat at the Mad Hatter's tea party and sitting alongside Alice on the

king and queen's thrones.

The tour ends at Llandudno's Camera Obscura (a real looking glass) where you can enjoy spectacular views of the town's crescent bay. There are plans to open an Alice-themed croquet lawn here, although I suspect animal rights legislation will forbid the use of flamingos as mallets.

A second smartphone app is in development and this will feature characters from the 1871 Wonderland follow up Through The Looking Glass.

It will take you from Llandudno's North Shore to its West Shore via the slopes of the Great Orme headland, Alice Liddell's playground in the 1860s.

No smartphone? No worries. Technophobes can purchase a new Town Trail Map and Souvenir Guide, which complements the apps and is filled with Alice trivia.

The map will help you follow the 55 White Rabbit footprints laid down in bronze throughout the town.

After following the trail for a couple of hours, we'd worked up an appetite so made our way to St

Tudno Hotel, opposite Llandudno's 137-year-old pier.

In 1861, just before the family's holiday home had been built, an eight-year-old Alice Liddell stayed at the hotel (then Tudno Villa).

The hotel's charismatic owner, Martin Bland, has embraced its Alice links and has many collectibles including a first edition book and one signed by the 'real' Alice in 1934.

St Tudno's was awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the British Tea Guild in 2013 and, of course, the hotel offers some mouth-watering Alice in Wonderland Teas.

The £10 mini tea features a choice of sandwiches, a Queen of Heart's jam shortbread and an Eat Me cupcake. The £15 full tea also includes a scone with jam and cream and Welsh cakes.

For £25 per person (minimum 10 people) you'll be served and entertained by a couple of costumed Alice characters.

Perfect for an "unbirthday" party, as the Mad Hatter might say.

There's also a trigger mechanism on menus whereby Alice and the

Mad Hatter from the smartphone app will greet you in augmented reality.

So don't be late, make a very important date with Llandudno!

### NEED TO KNOW

■ **Adrian Caffery and family** travelled to Llandudno as guests of Destination Conwy.

■ **To download the White Rabbit app** search for White Rabbit on iTunes or Google Play or visit [alicetowntrails.co.uk](http://alicetowntrails.co.uk) or [www.facebook.com/AliceinWonderlandLlandudno](http://www.facebook.com/AliceinWonderlandLlandudno). It costs £2.99 with an introductory offer of £1.99 if downloaded before December 31.

■ **Alice in Wonderland Trail maps**, priced £2.99, can be obtained from Llandudno's tourist information centre in Mostyn Street (01492 577577) and local shops.

■ **For more information on St Tudno Hotel** visit [sttudno.co.uk](http://sttudno.co.uk) or call 01492 874411.