

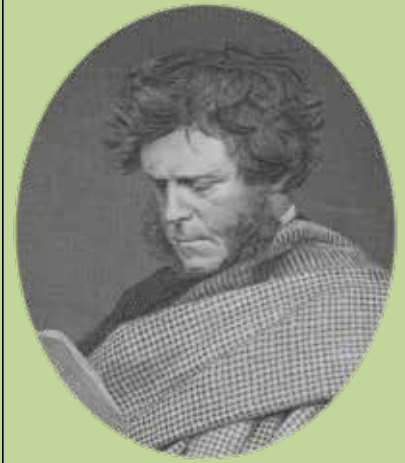
Issue No 35
Summer 2018

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Secretary

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Hugh's News

Newsletter of
The Friends of Hugh Miller



HUNDREDS ENJOY FRIENDS' FANTASTIC FESTIVAL DAY

by Martin Gostwick

"Hello, I'm Mary Anning," said the lady cheerily introducing herself to the volunteers staffing The Friends of Hugh Miller fossils display at the Inverness Science Festival family day (May 5th).

She looked the part in Victorian costume complete with straw hat, cape and full length dress. "I've come to examine your ammonites." We were in the huge main sports hall of Inverness Leisure Centre at the annual festival which is organised by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). Thousands came.

Our readers will know very well that Mary Anning (1799-1847) was the Lyme Regis, Dorset-based fossil collector and dealer who, unlike her Scottish contemporary, died almost unknown but who, with her Jurassic Coast, later won worldwide recognition.

Playing Mary was Alison Parfitt, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery's (IMAG) curator of collections engagement, and she busily started picking up and looking at the ammonites and belemnites found in the late 20th Century on the North East coast of Scotland, which would have been instantly recognisable to Lyme Regis's Mary Anning.



Mary Anning

continued on ps 5 - 7

STAGGERING STAGONOLEPIS

by Martin Gostwick

"Spine-tingling" is the expression our chairman and veteran palaeontologist Bob Davidson used to describe how he recently made a sensational, and extremely rare fossil find - and in most extraordinary circumstances too.

Bob was visiting his old friend, the late great Professor Nigel Trewin shortly before his death late in October last year, (see Obituaries, *Hugh's News*, No 33, Winter 2018), when Nigel presented him with a plate illustration from a monograph by the famed 19th Century Swiss-born earth scientist Louis Agassiz. The plate was taken by Scottish pioneer photographer David Octavius Hill, and is illustrated on p11.

The illustration showed the scales, or scutes, running down the back of an aetosaur, mistakenly identified as a fish in 1844, and named *Stagonolepis robertsoni* after Alexander Robertson, a local farmer and gentleman scientist. It will join Bob's extensive private collection of valuable natural history artefacts along with a specimen of a single *Stagonolepis* scute collected on one of Nigel's many field trips.



Stagonolepis sensation, story continued on p10

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

BIG CHANGE IN AGM VENUE

We are delighted to confirm that our next, 12th annual meeting will be held in Edinburgh, taking place on the same day, and at the same venue as the prize-giving ceremony of the second national Hugh Miller writing competition. The Friends' AGM is open by invitation to individual members of our affiliated groups, the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Highland Geological Societies, and to members of the Scottish Geodiversity Forum.

The following are the details:

TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
will be held at the Scottish Poetry Library
5, Crichton's Close, Canongate, EDINBURGH EH8 8DT,
on Saturday, 16th June 2018
starting on the Mezzanine floor at 10.30am

It will be followed by the writing competition awards ceremony at 2.00pm.

For more information on the venue, please visit: www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk

12th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Our Chairman, Bob Davidson, will open the meeting with a special welcome for Margie Trewin as guest of honour, and in the memory of the late Nigel Trewin.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman will give an address on the "relaunch" of The Friends of Hugh Miller and proposed reorganisation of its work.

3. MUSEUM REPORT

Dr Alix Powers-Jones, property manager, will give a report on the year past and future plans at the Hugh Miller Museum.

4. COFFEE BREAK

This will give our members an opportunity to look round our newly acquired excellent display of fossils, and view a very rare Miller artefact.

5. REVISION OF CONSTITUTION

The following revision to Article 5 of our Constitution is proposed, for submission to the Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Article 5.0 STRUCTURE

The Friends shall, as and when appropriate, invite and elect an honorary patron or patrons who have given notable service in the fields of Scottish science and literature, and to the charity itself.

The administrative structure shall consist of a Management Committee comprising up to eight members, or more if additional eligible candidates appear. Among them shall be a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, and other office-bearers as deemed necessary to further its aims. These may include an Events Organiser, a Membership Secretary, and a Publications Editor. They will be representative of Hugh Miller's interests, of the membership as a whole. and of those actively supporting the Hugh Miller Museum and Birthplace Cottage.

Article 5.1 NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

Each AGM will nominate and elect the office bearers and members of the Management Committee. The office-bearers' posts, and other committee members, must be open to re-election, and to alternative nominations, annually.

STOP PRESS!

MILLER'S NAME ON THEM

Two letters said to be in Hugh Miller's handwriting, or bearing his signature, have been offered as donations to the Museum, reports property manager Dr Alix Powers-Jones. Alix has secured through Museums Galleries Scotland a Heritage Lottery Fund-funded apprenticeship for one year, which will be awarded either to a school-leaver or a late returner, and could lead to an SPQ Level 3 qualification.



DIPPY ON TOUR

The awesome cast of the dinosaur *Diplodocus* made by a Miller admirer, the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, for London's Natural History Museum is coming on tour to Scotland for the first time. It will be on display in Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, from 22nd January to 5th May 2019, and it is hoped that The Friends will be able to take part in some associated events. Watch this space.



REMEMBERING ELIZA

The Scottish Parliament has contacted our member Lillemor Jernqvist about planning a follow-up to the installation in Holyrood 10 years ago of the tableau there honouring 100 great Scots women in the nation's history. Lillemor chose the words dedicated by Hugh to his wife Lydia, "My first, my only love" to be inscribed on the plaque. Lydia was, besides supporting Hugh's writing, an author of best-selling children's books. Lillemor is keen to have the grave of the couple's first born daughter Eliza filmed. She and her partner Derek Lancaster-Gaye contributed generously two years ago to the restoration of the little girl's headstone in Old St Regulus kirkyard (see *Hugh's News* no 27, Winter 2016).



Article 5.2 INFORMATION & MEETINGS

Office-bearers will be expected to submit an annual report on their work to each AGM. It will be an aim to hold the AGM in the first half of each financial year. The Friends will endeavour to hold other meetings and events which will promote Miller's legacy, as and when suitable opportunities arise.

The organisation will produce reports of all its meetings, including the annual meeting, in periodical newsletters, on our website, and other communications, for circulation to the membership, and to any other interested parties by agreement of the Management Committee.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

To be submitted for approval in writing, open to questions.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICE-BEARERS

Nominations will be invited for the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and members of the Management Committee.

Consideration will be given to the nomination and election of three additional office bearers, namely: Events Organiser, Membership Secretary, and Publications Editor.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

To be submitted for approval in writing, subject to any questions.

9. EVENTS FUNDING

Arising from the financial report, the Chairman will propose the establishment of an Events Funding agreement to support our external public activities.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To include any matters members wish to raise not covered so far. Date and location of next meeting.

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT, 2017/18

ONE DOWNER, SEVERAL BIG UPS

As many of you know, I suffered a life-threatening illness in the summer of 2017, just when we were in the run up to our big conference, The Old Red: Hugh Miller's Geological Legacy. I was out of action at a vital time, but I made the hospital staffs caring for me promise that they would do their best to let me go in time for our landmark weekend, 9/10th September, and they did so with just four days to spare. In the meantime, any gap in the organisational effort caused by my absence was more than filled by the rest of the sub-committee involved. This gives me the first chance, having thanked the NHS for saving my life, to thank publicly that team, especially Chairman Bob Davidson, Treasurer Sue Busby, Gavin Berkenheger, and Liz Broumley, plus the volunteers who helped out so much, our projectionist Sara Davidson, and photographer, Laura Thompson. Laura had just taken a degree in earth sciences at Glasgow University, and thanked us for "a great experience." We gratefully acknowledge the five-panel display in the Victoria Hall on "Two Local Heroes" (Hugh Miller and George Romanes) mounted by delegate Caroline Vawdrey.

The conference by general agreement was an outstanding success in every respect. For this we are also indebted to our funders, £1000 from the Palaeontological Association, and £500 each from Edinburgh Geological Society, Cromarty Trust, and Highland Council. In particular I want to emphasise that out of the 51 speakers, delegates

Below: Some of the speakers at the Old Red conference: John Long, Mike Taylor, Elsa Pancirolli, Andrew Ross, and star writer Jane Verburg



and volunteers attending, we made no less than seven new members, all of them notable people in their fields. One of them joined all of seven months later! I quote from her email, because it seems to sum everything up: "I have been intending to join The Friends of Hugh Miller since attending the conference last September. I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and was inspired and impressed at the very high calibre of all the speakers."

This gives me the chance to make the point I do every year about the importance of gaining new members. It is clearly vital to sustaining ourselves as a vibrant, active organisation. We have been losing nearly as many members as we are winning. I believe our new emphasis on increased public activities gives us the best chance of upping our recruitment levels, as shown by the conference.

Let me briefly recap on the further initiatives over the last year. We have had the Hugh Miller Writing Competition II over the winter, again organised by super-activist Lara Reid, and congratulations to her and all those partners, including the Friends, for achieving a higher number of entries than we did in Competition no 1. The prize-winners receive their awards this afternoon, and the first prize is a weekend's stay in Cromarty, courtesy of The Friends. We hope to publish some of the winning entries in *Hugh's News*, as we did the first time.

We received a magnificent donation of fossils in January from architect Mr Calum Anton, who you may remember was the designer of the Museum's Garden of Wonders, and you will have been able to see some of them today.

Friends of Hugh Miller Financial Statement 2017/18

The following financial statement is a true and fair assessment of the income and expenditure for the Friends of Hugh Miller for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Financial Statement as at 31 March 2017

Opening balances as at 1 April 2017	£8,852.28
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INCOME

Membership subscriptions	£3,006.05	
other	£599.00	
Bank interest	£4.61	
Conference	£2,626.30	
	£6,235.96	£6,235.96

EXPENDITURE

Website / online services fees	£157.20	
AGM Meeting requirements	£805.60	
Expenses	£510.88	
Honorarium	£700.00	
Auditors fees	£216.00	
Newsletters	£267.50	
Donation Hugh Miller Museum	£100.00	
Conference	£5,978.41	
	£8,735.59	-£8,735.59

Closing balance as at 31 March 2018	£6,352.65
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Prepared by Sue Busby

Treasurer

Friends of Hugh Miller

22/04/2018

We got an early opportunity to take them out on show at the Inverness Science Festival's family day on May 5th, and Gavin and I were able to give a presentation at a festival "Cafe Scientific" evening the following Friday. We must extend a really big vote of thanks to Calum. We hope to take part, with the fossils of course, at a natural history educational promotion at Glasgow's Kelvingrove Museum early next year.

Over the last year, I have brought out four editions of *Hugh's News*, and must once more pay tribute and thanks to the superb contribution of our production editor, Piers Hemy. Liz Broumley has continued to keep our website up to date in fine fashion, and Gavin Berkenheger has efficiently looked after our Facebook and Twitter accounts. I could not keep going as Secretary without their inputs and encouragement. Since my mega-operation, my physical energy has diminished quite markedly, and I have lost some of my powers of concentration. This is why I am most relieved and glad at the prospect of sharing more of the workload with other office-bearers whose election I commend to you later on the agenda.

My heartfelt thanks again to all who have supported me, both in the job, and personally, over the last testing, but exciting year. Looking ahead, the morale of The Friends, and our expectations of success, are as high as they could be.

Martin Gostwick, Secretary, 16th June 2018

FESTIVAL DAY TRIUMPH

(continued from p1)

These were primarily the specimens in the collection donated earlier this year to The Friends by Calum Anton. There were also of course some of his Devonian fish finds with their spectacular black, shiny scales, and many other items, including molluscs, such as gryphaea (devil's toenail's), and some reptile remains.

Calum came along personally to answer the questions which dozens of eager visitors, mainly young children, came along to ask. It was a pleasure in itself to see Calum, who is nearly 80, pointing out fine details and explaining them to children many less than 10 years old.

It was also such a pleasure for the volunteers with him simply to see scores of young people and their families turning up, faces full of surprise and wonder to see these wonders of natural history collected on their own coastline. We reckoned that somewhere upwards of 200 folk came and had a really good look, many surprised and thrilled to have the opportunity to lift and handle these marvels for themselves.

The whole point of Calum's donation was that his great private collection should come out of its back garden shed and help to educate a new generation about geology and enthuse them into collecting for themselves.

Another key visitor was Sam Clark, UHI development manager of its science hub (STEM), herself a graduate in geology from Glasgow University, who curates another donation from Calum of rocks, minerals and fossils, at the UHI's Inverness campus, for educational use.

This was the first ever public showing for The Friends' collection, and, it is hoped the first of many. Because it was the first time, we had an initial crisis in getting the specimens out of their bubble wrap and labelled, literally



Top: Inverness Science Festival logo
Centre: A family group inspects the fossils on our stand
Bottom: Frieda, visitor Jessica Eddowes, Martin



Top left: Gavin holds forth
Centre left: Calum expounds
All other pictures on this page: Family groups at our stand



Top left and right: Calum explains.
 Centre and bottom left: Gavin and Frieda at our stand
 Centre right: A family group at our stand
 Bottom right: Mary Anning



Above left: Rachel Tulloch and son Adam
Above right: Sam Clark



at the eleventh hour. We are taking steps to achieve more formally accurate scientific naming (see following story).

The volunteers were Gavin Berkenheger, Frieda Goswick and myself. Gavin contributed enormously to the whole show, adding many invaluable touches, such as a Victorian edition of Miller's *Old Red Sandstone*, small lamps, magnifying glass, and not least carrying the heavy boxes of treasure in and out of the hall.

SOME HELP WITH FOSSILS ID, PLEASE!

WE have a request to make of our members and other fellow-palaeontologists. It is to help us properly identify and label the collection of fossils donated to us earlier this year by Mr Calum Anton.

Calum, an architect by profession, is an amateur collector of both fossils and minerals. He found most of his fossil specimens between Eathie and Helmsdale in the late 1970s, and has done his best to identify them correctly. He has also numbered, and given the location of their finding, and compiled a list comprising nearly 80 items, many of them as one or more different parts of the same nodule. For the purposes of their display at future events, and for educational use, he and The Friends want to achieve labelling to a professional standard.

To get this done properly, we need a professional palaeontologist to come and view the collection, which is in the care of our colleague, Gavin Berkenheger, at his home at 17 Balvaird, Muir of Ord IV6 7RQ. The Friends will meet travelling expenses, overnight accommodation, and a fee if necessary, to facilitate this.

Please make contact with the Secretary, Martin Goswick, initially, and liaise with him and Gavin Berkenheger to make the necessary arrangements. A copy of Calum's list is on p9.



The collection, as kept in Calum Anton's back garden shed.

FOSSILS: Scottish unless noted otherwise. As donated to Friends of High Miller. Jan.2018

Item	Name/Style	Era	Geological Era/Locality
01	Mollusc (gryphea)	JUR	Balintore, E.Ross, 1978
01A	21 st C. mollusc (200 m. year time gap)	R	(interest with No 1)
02	Coral (plus cellular structure)	ORS	Portgower/Helmsdale, Sutherland
03	" (slice)		" "
04	Wood	ORS	" "
05	Wood (acid etched to show rings)	ORS	" "
06	Ammonite (part 1)	JUR	Eathie, E.Ross, 1978
06A	" (part 2)		" "
07	Ammonite	JUR	Balintore, E.Ross. 1978
08	Ammonite (part 1, Exposed structure)	JUR	" "
08A	" (part 2)		" "
08B	" (part 3)		" "
09	Petrified Wood (polished)(2 items)		Montana, USA (1 retained)
10	Wood, (2 items)	CAR	Carboniferous coal seam. E. Fife
11	Dendritic 'Ferns', pyrolusite seepage,		On Cambrian limestone – not fossil, Assynt
12 –17	Belemnites (various)	JUR	Staffin, Skye / Balintore, E. Ross 1978/1980
18	Fish,	ORS	Quoyloo Quarry, Dounby, Orkney
19	Fish	ORS	" " " "
20	Wood	ORS	Portgower, Helmsdale, Sutherland
21	Unidentified Fossil (part 1)	ORS	Eathie, E. Ross 1980 (possibly fish skull)
21A	" (part 2)		" " "
22	Dinosaur bone	JUR	South Alberta, Canada
23	Ammonite	JUR	Eathie, E. Ross, 1979
24/24A			
25	Ammonite (smooth shell) (part 1)	JUR	
25A	" (part 2)		
25B	21 st C. nautilus (Ammonite)	R	(of interest with No. 25 – 200m year time gap)
26	Wood (shore boulder)	ORS	Portgower, Helmsdale, Sutherland.
27/27A			
28	Multi ammonite nodule	JUR	Eathie, E. Ross, 1979
29 - 34			
35	Ammonite (part 1)	JUR	Eathie, E. Ross, 1977
35A	" (part 2)		Eathie, E. Ross, 1977
36	Wood + small ammonites	JUR	Eathie, E. Ross, 1976
37	Wood with growth rings	ORS	Portgower, Helmsdale, Sutherland
38			
39	Ammonite (stone fossil)	CAR	Carboniferous stratas, E. Fife
40	Fish, Diplocanthus Striatus	ORS	Beach pebble, Chanonry south beach 2016 *
41	Wood – growth rings & long grain	ORS	Portgower, Helmsdale
42	Trilobite.	C	Fucoid beds, Lochawe, Ledmore, Sutherland
43	Fish (part)	ORS	Beach pebble, Eathie, Easter Ross
44	Rock Boring Mollusc(not fossil)	R	In soft Jurassic shale beach boulder. Eathie
45-46			
47	Small ammonite	JUR	Eathie, Easter Ross 1976
48	Mollusc group (gryphea)	TER	Kinlochaline, Morven

C : Cambrian - ORS : Old Red Sandstone - JUR : Jurassic - CAR : Carboniferous - TER : Tertiary - R : Recent

* Item 40. Found by Leon Chapman, aged 8, October 2016

STAGONOLEPIS SENSATION

(continued from p1)

While Bob was at the funeral, he met with one of their many friends and associates, Dr Alison Wright, who is co-ordinator of the Elgin Museum Geology Group (EMGG). She mentioned that there was to be a field trip the following week to the location of this discovery, at Spynie Quarry, near Elgin, now being worked for roadstone by Tennants (Elgin) Ltd, and would he like to come?

Of course, he would! He was thus in the party on the trip to the quarry, which sits two kilometres north-east of Elgin, Moray. The trip was led jointly by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), who designate the place as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and Gavin Tennant, the quarry operator. The group was joined by visiting vertebrate palaeontologists from National Museums Scotland (NMS) and members of the EMGG. The quarry is famous among geologists as an abundant source of

continued p13



Bob Davidson



Nigel Trewin

Old Red.

Tab. 31.

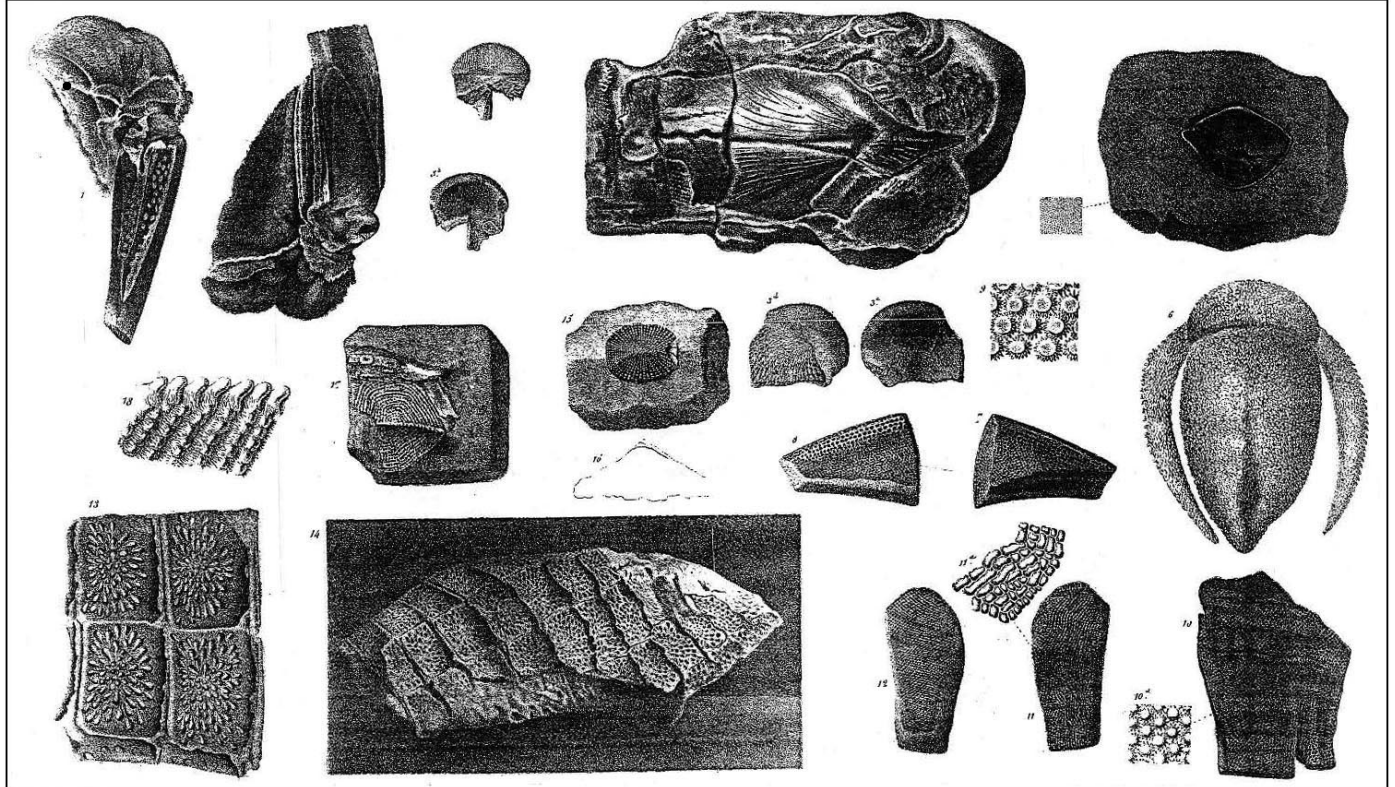
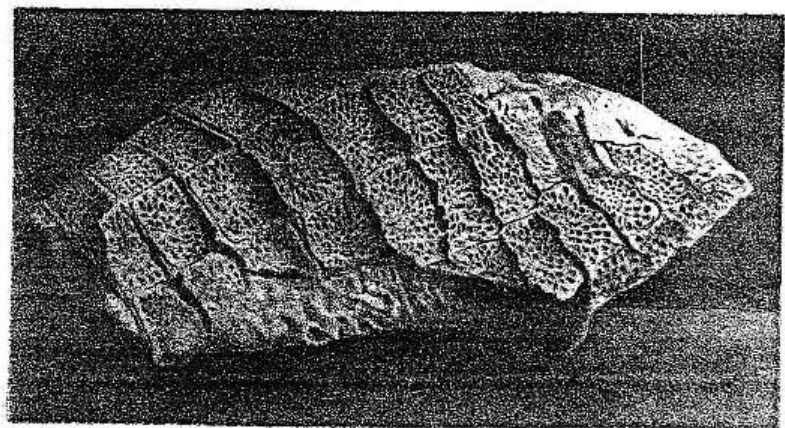
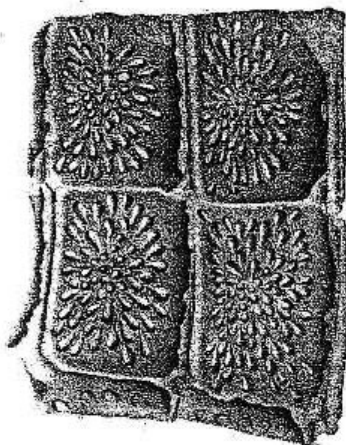


Fig. 1-3. *PTERODACTYLUS* *SAUR* *AG.* Fig. 4. *STAGONOLEPIS* *CUSPIDATUS* *AG.* Fig. 5. *POLYPTRACUS* *PLATYCEPHALUS* *AG.*
 Fig. 6. *STAGONOLEPIS* *FLAVUS* *AG.* Fig. 7-10. *STAGONOLEPIS* *FLAVUS* *AG.* Fig. 11 & 12. *STAGONOLEPIS* *FLAVUS* *AG.*
 Fig. 13 & 14. *STAGONOLEPIS* *FLAVUS* *AG.* Fig. 15-18. *STAGONOLEPIS* *FLAVUS* *AG.*

Above: Plate from the Agassiz monograph
 Below: *Stagonolepis* enlarged from above plate



(continued from p11)

fossils of Triassic reptiles which lived on the Moray Firth's southern shores some 230 to 205 million years ago - but only a single *Stagonolepis* had been found since the quarry became inactive in the late 1900s.

That was until Bob's eagle eye lighted on a specimen which lay in a block quarried in 2007 by the

SPYNIE = TRIASSIC PARK

220 million years ago this area was inhabited by desert dwelling reptiles – YOU may be lucky enough to find their remains....

Stagonolepis



Hyperodapedon



Leptopleuron



Fragments of white/brown coloured bone and rectangular scales have been found – these may resemble bucket-scrapes at first glance.

See the block on the pallet for an example of what you might see.....

Found something unusual?

Tell Gavin and/or contact Elgin Museum 01343 543675

landowners, Pitgaveny estate, for small scale roadstone projects. While he is known for a quick and sharp eye for fossils, he was nevertheless surprised, and a bit chuffed to have beaten to it some of the professional palaeontologists present. He commented: "It was like Nigel's gift was an omen - that I would be only the second to find this fossil since Victorian times. It is something to be treasured in his memory." The block is now on display outside the quarry office to alert the quarrymen to be on the lookout for more fossils.

The aetosaur *Stagonolepis robertsoni* is reckoned to have been about 10ft long, a quadrupedal animal covered in thick, arrowed scales that ran down the length of its body. The original specimens are held in the NMS and Elgin Museum Recognised Collections.

Louis Agassiz, as professor of natural history at Switzerland's Neuchâtel University from 1832, had become extremely interested in the fossil fish of North East Scotland since Hugh Miller's discoveries of Devonian fishes in the 1830s, and the *Stagonolepis* is featured in the aforementioned tome, *Monographie des poissons fossiles du vieux grès rouge : ou système Dévonien (Old Red Sandstone) des Îles Britanniques et de Russie*, published in 1844-1845.

The photographer of the Agassiz plate, D O Hill, was a firm friend of Hugh Miller, who made several calotype studies of the Cromarty man, now held in the archives of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (SNPG), and Louis Agassiz was among the first professional scientists to acclaim Miller for his discoveries.

Footnote: *Stagonolepis Robertsoni* is one of the 100 most important Scottish fossils given a fuller story and illustration in Nigel's outstanding reference work, *Scottish Fossils*, Dunedin Academic Press Ltd, 2013, which is on sale today in our Museum shop in the Birthplace Cottage.



LANDMARK SERIES No 10

CHANCING ON PAISLEY'S HAVEN OF NATURAL SCIENCE

by Martin Gostwick



Paisley Museum

SOMETIMES "surfing" a blog on the web can reveal a hitherto less well known treasure - and one such revelatory blog was recently published online by Paisley Museum's curator of natural history.

One of our keen "surfers," Sidney Dantuma Johnston, was able to confirm from this blog what he had previously suspected - that this Museum contained a small but important collection of Devonian era fossils either collected by Hugh Miller himself, or by some of his contemporaries in North East Scotland.

He has for about 10 years been trying to source the locations of publicly accessible collections which have in one way or another come by some of the tens of thousands of specimens collected by Hugh.

He first learnt about a decade ago of the Miller national collection in the National Museum of Scotland (NMS). After field

trips with the Aberdeen Geological Society to the Cromarty and Eathie fossil deposits, he came across the items in Inverness Museum, including some donated by Hugh himself in 1835. He was able to view online some more held in Glasgow's Hunterian Museum.

Then came his chance surf of Paisley natural history curator, Nicola Macintyre's blog (<http://www.renfrewshireleisure.com/fossil-review-part-2-devonian-period/>) which among others featured a *Pterichthyodes oblongus* collected by Miller from Cromarty's Lower Old Red Sandstone (ORS), a striking *Cheirolepis decipiens* from the Middle ORS, Edderton, and an *Osteolepis panderi* from Thurso.

Also in the collection is an *Osteolepis* marked as obtained from "the late Hugh Miller collections," and a *Diplacanthus striatus*, of which The Friends now possesses a recently found specimen donated by Mr Calum Anton (see story p ?).

These Devonian era fossils formed part of a very significant bequest from a Renfrewshire-based collector, James Haswell (1842-1873). He was a leading light of the Edinburgh Geological Society, but died tragically, cause unknown, at the age of only 31. It is not known how he came by his Miller-related fossils, but he was a contemporary of Miller's when the Devonian fish discoveries were making world news in the natural history sphere.

Paisley Museum and Art Gallery has a very distinguished history, and the most sumptuous Victorian facade. Built in 1871, it is believed to be Scotland's first municipal museum and is renowned for its Paisley shawls and ceramics. Less celebrated these days, but well deserving of more public notice, is an enormous natural history collection. The Museum was originally intended by its benefactors to "show Paisley the world, and the world to Paisley."

Nicola Macintyre writes: "Plans for the £42m million redevelopment of Paisley Museum will involve a new extension to the neo-classical columned Victorian building, to contain a visitor reception, shop and café/restaurant. Extensive refurbishments and repairs will be made to all four existing museum buildings, and an internal redesign will allow a significant increase in the number of objects on display, as well as greater interpretation of the collections."

Paisley may have narrowly missed out on being selected as a UK City of Culture, but its natural history treasures are many and are to be much enhanced by the new facility.

Sidney Johnston would be interested to hear from members of The Friends of Hugh Miller and readers of the newsletter if other museums and individuals hold fossils collected by Hugh Miller.

Note: The images of Paisley Museum and its fossils are copyright of and are reproduced by kind permission of Renfrewshire Leisure Limited on behalf of Renfrewshire Council.



From top: *Pterichthyodes oblongus*, Sidney Johnston, *Cheirolepis decipiens*

BOOK REVIEW

Tales from Kirkmichael, by Dr Jim Mackay

This is an extraordinary compendium, or, to quote the author, truly “a broth of all things Kirkmichael.” It is a history over centuries, from medieval times, right up to date with the amazing rescue of the kirk itself from ultimate collapse and ruin over nearly 20 years by its totally dedicated team, the Kirkmichael Trust. In fact, it takes us to the very exciting present, with a full account of it in its fully restored glory today.

Of special interest, of course, are the gravestones, their shapes, designs, and styles, and especially the stories behind them, real or imagined. The stories are supported by more than 200 top quality photos. No standard guidebook this, indeed the whole volume is produced to the highest values.

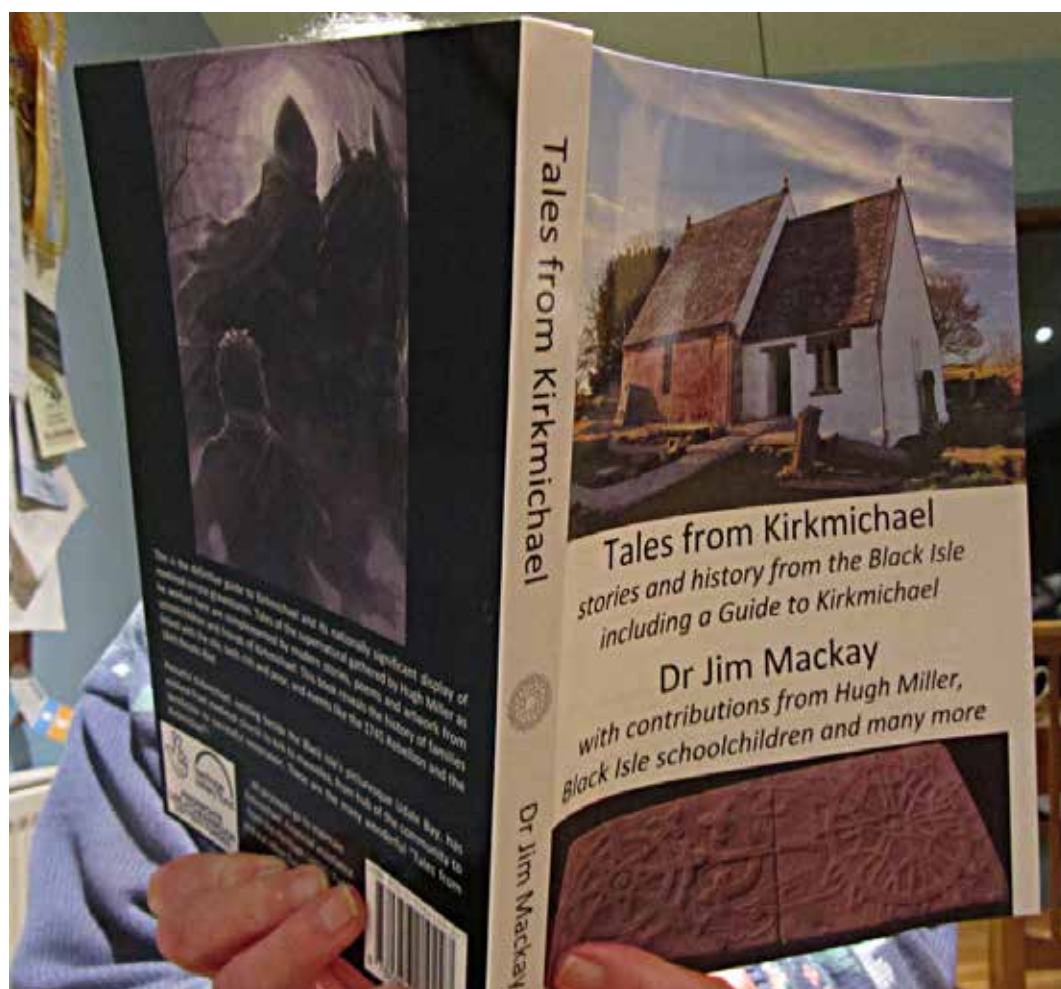
We must congratulate the book for doing full justice to the many connections of the kirk, and those of Cullicudden and Resolis, with our own Hugh Miller, and adding to his stories, following his tradition, with some spectacularly spooky ghost stories contributed by pupils of Fortrose Academy and Cromarty and Tore Primary Schools.

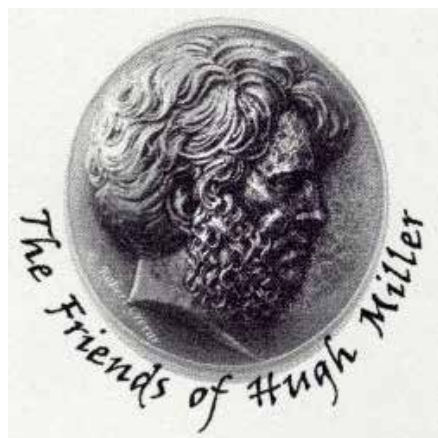
It opens with Hugh's ruminations on the fascination of ancient country churchyards, and follows with all the relevant tales from *Scenes and Legends from the North of Scotland*. Particularly terrifying is “The Wild Wife,” which Dr Mackay has retitled with the devil's query “Shall I reach Kirmichael before midnight?” and added a haunting artwork by Laura MacMahon on the back cover for good measure. There is also “The Watchman of Cullicudden,” and “The Apprentice's Dream.”

Mixed in with the fanciful are the contemporary recorded accounts of milestone historical events, such as the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion and the 1843 Resolis Riots, in which will be found evidence that Miller stood witness for some of the rioters at their trial in Edinburgh. Biographies of some of the most colourful local families add further riches.

It is of more than local interest, encompassing as it does so much of Scotland's heritage, but is unfortunately not generally available. Try contacting the author by email, jim-mackay111@hotmail.com. It can be ordered online at goingtopress.co.uk, price £10 (ISBN 9780956210227) from Browns Books for Students.

MG





MEMBERSHIP FORM

I WISH to become a member of The Friends of Hugh Miller (Registered charity No SC 037351), in order to support its work in making Miller's life and work better known, and in particular to assist in the development of the Hugh Miller Museum and Birthplace Cottage in Church Street, Cromarty. (SC037351).

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