

Issue No 14
Summer 2012

Editor:
Martin Gostwick,
Secretary

Hugh's News

Newsletter of
The Friends of Hugh Miller

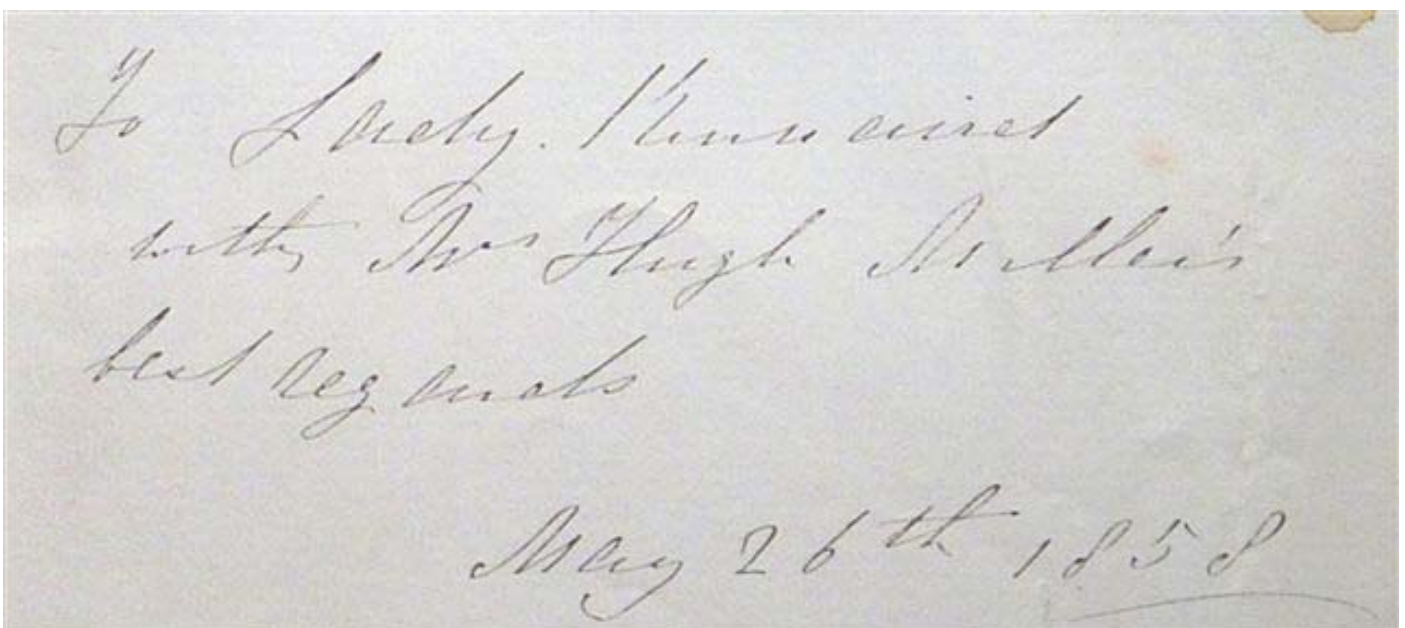


A PRICELESS ACQUISITION



A MOST unexpected book find and purchase might be called a “happy coup.” The Friends certainly thought this the case when we acquired for the Museum a copy of *The Cruise of the Betsey* containing a handwritten presentation slip by Lydia Miller. Although it cost £300, it can truly be called priceless, because it is the first sample of Lydia’s hand to come into the museum’s collections for decades. The book provides fresh evidence of her immense efforts on behalf of her late husband’s reputation, and of the couple’s warm relations with a noble neighbour.

The volume is in a superb binding with full gold edges by a firm called Henderson and Bisset. The firm was established in Edinburgh in 1823, and received a Royal Warrant from Queen Victoria in 1839, the only Scottish bookbinder to gain such an honour. On a slip inserted inside the front cover, Lydia wrote: “To Lady Kinnaird with Mrs Hugh Miller’s kind regards. May 28th 1858.” The date coincides with the family’s departure from Shrub Mount, Portobello, 17 months after Miller’s tragic death.



To Lady Kinnaird
with Mrs Hugh Miller's
best regards
May 26th 1858

In the 7th edition of *The Old Red Sandstone* a note by Lydia 'thanks Lord and Lady Kinnaird for a beautiful and unique specimen of *Parka decipiens* with which this volume, and later editions of the *Testimony of the Rocks*, have been enriched'. She also thanks them for 'all their other kindnesses', and they were clearly providing friendship and support for Lydia. Harriet, their eldest daughter, is believed to have taken the family's near neighbours Lord and Lady Kinnaird as her models for the parents in her children's novel, *Sir Gilbert's Children*, which has recently been republished.

Since the dedication is pasted in on a slip, rather than being inscribed on a page of the book, Lydia probably sent the slip to the publisher or binder to insert into the book, which he then delivered to Lady Kinnaird. Further evidence for this is that Lydia wrote 'slip for the book' on the reverse of the dedication slip. The slip is only pasted on one edge so the note on the reverse can be seen. We are confident the note can be attributed to Lydia personally, after finding the writing very closely matches that in a letter which Lydia wrote to Hugh's mother, a copy of which was kindly supplied by Henry McKenzie Johnston.

This volume was seen advertised on Abebooks, and purchased from a book dealer, Mr John Sanderson, in the USA. Sad to relate that the same dealer sold a matching volume of *The Old Red Sandstone* with a similar dedication last year. Maybe it will turn up on the market in the future and we can reunite the pair of volumes. Our management committee approved the transaction and the volume was delivered to the Museum manager, Dr Alix Powers-Jones at our sixth AGM.



Henry McKenzie Johnston reading "Jamie's Adventures" with children from local schools

"BEATEN FOR HIS CHEEK"



James Robertson

We continue this edition with a review by one of Scotland's leading authors, JAMES ROBERTSON, of the major new Hugh Miller-centred young people's novel. James, a Friends' member, is author and publisher of books for young children, mainly in the Scots tongue, and of such epic works as *And the Land Lay Still*, and *The Testament of Gideon Mack*. He very kindly sent this review to us while in the midst of finishing his own latest novel! We thank him wholeheartedly.

JAMIE'S ADVENTURES IN TIME: Finding Hugh Miller

by Lesley Beake (*For The Right Reasons*, 136 pp, £4.99)

One day when I was nine or ten, on a holiday at Nigg (just a few years before the coming of the oil industry changed it forever), my family took the ferry across to Cromarty and visited Hugh Miller's Cottage. I remember being impressed by this strange, bulky, large-headed man and all he had packed into his life, but I came away with only a vague idea of who he was. It would be nearly twenty years before I returned, and more before I finally read *My Schools* and

Schoolmasters and was hooked.

If only, as a boy, I had been able to read Lesley Beake's excellent novel! Jamie Alexander is an unruly teenager, abandoned by his father and a constant worry to his mother (who is not as caring of him as she might be). Banished from his London school after a fatal accident and a potentially disastrous act of criminality, Jamie is sent in disgrace to his grandfather, who lives at what Jamie considers the end of the earth, i.e. Cromarty. The relationship between boy and old man, at first hostile, gradually softens, and the agent of change is none other than Hugh Miller, whose youthful adventures – not entirely dissimilar to Jamie's – begin to speak to him across a gap of 200 years.



Hugh Miller's new young fans. Henry and his daughter Stephanie Kulesza behind.

First through the ghost stories in the opening pages of *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, then in conversations with his wise but also rebellious grandfather, and also through the intercession of a strange, pale 'ghost-girl' called Alice, Jamie becomes interested in both the legend and the real life story of Miller. With an enviably light touch – the clarity of the narrative is exemplary – Lesley Beake guides Jamie (and the reader) through Miller's schooldays, his employment as a mason, his early interest in geology, his wooing of Lydia Fraser, and so forth. Even the Disruption and his editing of *The Witness* – challenging subjects with which to engage young minds in any age! – are deftly dealt

with. By the end of this short book the reader has acquired more than a passing knowledge of who Miller was and what he achieved, which will surely plant the seeds for further investigation in the future.

The author, through Jamie's chippy opinions, doesn't disguise the fact that Miller's prose can be demanding, and so mostly paraphrases rather than quotes direct from it; but at the same time she makes it clear that there are many delights to be found in his works for those who persevere.

Perseverance – not giving up at the first hurdle – is the lesson that Jamie learns from his grandfather. Lesley Beake also seems to know just when to break off from telling us about Hugh to return to Jamie's own story, which peaks in an exciting episode at the cave below the South Sutor, the very same cave where as a boy Hugh also nearly came to grief.

I enjoyed this novel greatly. I was much intrigued by Alice. It is still not clear to me whether she really existed or whether she was a kind of guardian spirit to Jamie in his time of need. Perhaps both – in which case she is almost a character born of one of Miller's own tales!

What matters more, however, is that anybody, young or old, who reads this book – and it doesn't take long – will come away with a real sense of Cromarty and of its most famous son. In this respect, but also as an entertainment, Jamie's Adventures in Time does a very fine job.

James Robertson

After reading this review, we hope as many of our members as possible will order the book from us, P & P free. It has been priced extremely reasonably. Proceeds of sales accrue to the publishers, ourselves and The National Trust for Scotland. Just email martingostwick@tiscali.co.uk with your order, or phone 01381 600301. Please make your cheques payable to The Friends of Hugh Miller.

NOW FOR THE STORY BEHIND THE BOOK

Alcoholism among ministers of the kirk is a brave subject for a novel to tackle, especially in Victorian times, but Hugh Miller's daughter, Harriet Miller Davidson, is not afraid to tackle the issues. Addiction, she shows, is no respecter of persons, not even in the ministry, supposedly the bastion of respectability and propriety.

Our distinguished member, Henry McKenzie Johnston, was inspired to launch this book into the world by one of his late wife's nieces, Louisa Heard, when she suggested a novel was needed to introduce the young Hugh to readers of his own age.

And then he heard from another relative, Hugh Miller Clarke, of Dublin, of an author who might do the job. Hugh proposed his friend Lesley Beake, an Edinburgh-born prolific writer for young people, now living in South Africa. Lesley tells the story of her



A horrible brawl

commission from Henry for this, her 80th book, in her own words below. Hugh, Louisa, and Lesley herself are all members of The Friends, and as an organisation we supported the venture with a donation of £500 to the publishers, For the Right Reasons, for promotion.

The book was duly jointly launched by For the Right Reasons and The Friends to the media on May 4th at the Bishop's Palace annexe of Eden Court, Inverness,. Among those attending were teachers and pupils from three Moray Firth academies, Millburn, Inverness, Fortrose, Black Isle, and Alness, Easter Ross. Every secondary school in Highland Region has received a complimentary copy.

Here are extracts from a reading of the book by Fortrose Academy student Amy Sutherland.

"I liked the fact that Jamie is like Hugh Miller. I also loved the scary story about the mother and the child on the boat. I had to keep looking behind me to make sure that the woman's ghost wasn't there. I liked the part where we got told that Hugh had a fight with his teacher in school.

"I didn't like when Jamie became ill because I felt sad. I thought he was going to die which, for me, would ruin the story... I also didn't like when Jamie's Grandpa fell off the cliff because I felt really worried. I also liked that part a little bit because I really wanted to read on to see what was going to happen to him."



Mortal peril

Another Fortrose pupil, Dale Harwood “enjoyed the beginning especially the parts where Jamie was on his own in the Cottage” and the grandfather’s cliff-fall.

The two’s comments were not all praise. Both found the narrative a bit hard going in places. Dale wanted a glossary for old, or Scottish words at the back, while Amy would have liked more “scary bits” and more illustrations.

A second public launch took place the next day, May 5th, as a curtain-raiser to our annual meeting, with a wonderful message from author Lesley. The book received generous coverage in two of the Highlands’ local weeklies, the Inverness Courier and Ross-shire Journal.

Rev Richard Burkitt concluded a “double” book launch, introducing the novel by Harriet Miller Davidson, Hugh Miller’s daughter, *Man of Genius*. He said this tale of alcoholism among ministers of the church in the 19th Century, was a very important and still topical book. He emphasised that alcohol addiction is an extremely serious disease. His Inverness charity, For the Right Reasons, helps drink and drug addicts to rehabilitate, and its share of the proceeds from both books will go towards programmes for their recovery. This book, price £7.99, can also be obtained, P & P free, by contacting Martin Gostwick by telephone or email.



... AND THE WRITER’S TALE

The following are extracts from Lesley Beake’s book launch message.

“If this is Saturday, 5TH of May 2012, at about two o’ clock, then I know what you are doing. You are sitting in the rather wonderful cultural centre in Cromarty listening to Martin reading a few words from me, while I am sitting in Cape Town getting ready for two days of visiting schools and talking to children about books. I’m sure I will enjoy it - but I wish I were in Cromarty! Isn’t that the wonder of words and writing, and books? And also of imagination. Hugh Miller knew that. He experienced it first-hand as a boy and then as a young man, striding about the Scottish countryside, a book always somewhere about his person.

After doing the considerable research that this book demanded, I felt as if Hugh Miller had just left, or was just about to arrive ... as if I had known him, perhaps in my Scottish childhood, and only forgotten about him for a little time.

Even given the change in language and style over the centuries, Hugh speaks directly to the reader and, especially in his humour, touches a chord of almost-memory and of affection. Although I viewed the pile of volumes, delivered to me by Hugh’s great-great-great grandson, with some alarm (and they took some reading!), I found myself fascinated by Hugh’s words and world.

The hero of my book, Jamie Alexander (who I named after my own father, James Alexander Dewar), felt the same. Jamie and I together peered over Hugh’s shoulder, back over the centuries between and revelled in this glimpse into what it was like to be somebody else, to be Hugh Miller. When the book was finished, I felt as if I had lost two friends - Jamie Alexander and Hugh Miller - and that was sad.



Lesley Beake

The consolation is that living breathing friends remain from the Hugh Miller story. Henry McKenzie Johnston who nurtured this book - his book - through the various and always charming and polite (even when slightly combative) negotiations. Thank you, Henry. Henry's daughter Miranda and her husband Henry Kitchen - and Elizabeth Sutherland, biographer of Lydia Miller, encouraged me along the way. Martin and Frieda Gostwick made Hugh Miller seem real for me. Reay Clarke patiently educated me in aspects of the serious background to Hugh Miller and researched and masterminded a trip to The Gruids in Hugh's footsteps. Janey Clarke took the time to write about her own early morning moment of Miller magic. Hugh Clarke and his wife Mary Cadogan were, as always, the most wonderful of travelling friends. Professor Nigel Trewin consulted on some of the technical aspects and Alix Powers-Jones read and commented on the story; James Robertson generously shared his knowledge of the Dwarfie Stane. In particular, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr Michael Taylor who not only shepherded me around Miller's Edinburgh and the basics of Scottish geology but also allowed me to plunder his biography of Hugh Miller like a thief in the night, even following up with detailed emails to keep me on the right track. Each person that I met on my Scottish voyage of discovery and self-discovery has a place in my story now - and a place in my heart. Best of all is the remembered light of Cromarty and the sound of it and the warmth of its welcome. Thank you."

FORWARD MARCH

DR. ALIX POWERS-JONES
PROPERTY MANAGER,
HUGH MILLER'S BIRTHPLACE COTTAGE &
MUSEUM
FRIENDS OF HUGH MILLER – AGM 5TH
MAY 2012

Thank you for this opportunity to give an up-to-date situation report (a sitrep) on the last twelve months at HMBCM. It is not quite 12 months for me, as I joined the NTS as Property Manager on the last day of May last year, but it has certainly been exciting. These are a few of the highlights of the year.

My introduction to the NTS has been largely painless thanks to the attentive support of my Line Manager Steve Callaghan, my Senior Assistant Zooulla Spirou and countless members of regional and headquarters staff who I have variously quizzed, bothered and (occasionally) bamboozled with my endless questions. I am grateful to them all for their forbearance and persistence. Getting the basic museum housekeeping, the procedures and processes, the staff training and development are all fundamental to running a "tight ship".

On the ground I am additionally grateful to the host of volunteers (both loyal stalwarts and newcomers) who day by day, staff the



Alix Powers-Jones

front desk and shop, attend the gardens, give tours and variously make the visitor experience that bit more special for our visitors. We couldn't manage without you. If anyone would like to volunteer for front of house or behind the scenes volunteering there is always plenty to do.

With the help of Martin Gostwick, Liz Broumley and Fran Tilbrook we have made good progress this year on the Collection Inventory (making sure that we have everything we think we have in the collection) and a condition analysis of the items (this helps us to identify conservation priorities). This work will speed up over the next few months now that I have persuaded the Trust to give me an additional laptop computer for the volunteers to work upon. Once the inventories are complete we can look at what we hold in reserve and speak to the Registrar about moving the archive of books and documents out of the cottage Reading Room and into drier, more secure storage conditions in the main museum. A cupboard has been prepared for the receipt of the collection.

The longer opening hours (12-5 on 7 days a week) have been reflected in a huge increase in visitor numbers through the door (roughly twice last year's figure) and increased sales. We are, however, not complacent and in these financially straitened times must do all we can to spread the risk.

Part of spreading the risk is to promote and to diversify. Positive publicity, reminding people what we are and reaching out to people who might not know or not care, about the Museum, is fundamental. Examples of this have included the donation of the Charles Bannerman letters; donation of a number of lovely books from the collection of Dr. James Waterston and the publication of new books linked to Hugh Miller, including the delightful children's book "Jamie's Adventures in Time". Photographs in newspapers can go a long way to reaching out to ordinary people and families.

The Museum is having an open gardens day again in June. We are hoping for a repeat of last year's successful day when 50-odd visitors came to see the gardens and we are having a tiny diamond jubilee exhibition to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on 2nd June. We will be using Hugh Miller's reminiscences of a previous Jubilee Queen (Victoria) and her first visit to Edinburgh in 1843. Incidentally does anyone have a two foot length of old bunting we could borrow for the exhibition?

Profile-raising activities have also been going on via our learning and education work. We have developed a formal education framework and are now busy creating lesson plans for primary and senior schools in consultation with local teachers and other heritage organisations on the Black Isle. The key to getting grants for schools' work is partnership working, as it is for informal, lifelong learning projects.



Ishbel Busby is the latest direct descendent to bring her talent and enthusiasm to her ancestor's cause. She is a three times great grand-daughter. Ishbel, aged 21, is studying history at Edinburgh University. She is helping out at the museum during her summer vacation, and is seen here about to greet visitors. She hopes to start a career in museums and galleries when she graduates in a year's time, "so this is good experience." Her mother, Sue Rider Busby, is our treasurer, and Ishbel has been lending a hand in that role too.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Edinburgh NTS Members Centre a snazzy new notice board has gone up last week in the main museum. This board, entitled "Cuilidh" (Gaelic for "Treasure store") is the show case for learning and education at HMBCM and will be seen by all visitors who go out into the Garden of Wonders.

I am hoping that another project that we are trying to develop will be equally successful in getting funding. Members of the Cromarty community (including ourselves) are trying to set up an Oral History project in the town, talking to older people in the community about their memories of buildings, places, events. Almost the town as an archaeological site and the buildings as artefacts. This "narrative record" work fits with other academic narrative work we are doing.

In February I gave a paper about the narrative work of Hugh Miller at a London conference on Challenging History (the nasty bits of history) and how we interpret it in museums. Out of an audience of 120 delegates just three of them had heard of Hugh Miller, although I confess that that was three more than I expected! The links to academic work on interpreting narrative continues as in March I attended the first of a series of 2 year network meetings on dark narrative. The network is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and brings together academics and practitioners from around the country.

Warming to my theme of "narrative" I have also given a couple of evening lectures over the winter to local groups. I chose the topic of Hugh Miller as observational polymath. A man who was a consummate observer and who encouraged others to "Learn to make a right use of your eyes".

This theme was also picked up during the filming last week of a piece for the BBC Scotland series "Grand Tours of Scotland", where on a perfect sunny day a film crew headed by presenter Paul Murton took over the museum for an afternoon. The viewers, when it is broadcast in the autumn, will think that it is always sunny here and a few more people will be introduced to the genius of Hugh Miller.



The BBC's Paul Murton will feature the Cottage in the next series of "Grand Tours of Scotland".

On Friday 7th September this year we are aiming to introduce more people to Miller the Renaissance man when we have a spot at the forthcoming British Festival of Science. For the first time in 11 years this annual science festival is coming to Scotland and will be at Aberdeen. I am looking for volunteers to help me and my staff cover the exhibition spot. I am looking for 3 teams of 3 people so that the work won't be too onerous and so that people can take the opportunity to look around the rest of the festival. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to do a 3 hour spot. Also helping us out at the Festival should be our new Dutch Intern student Elisa, who is due to start at the museum in the first week of August and all being well will stay until Christmas.

So, a busy year past and a busy year to come. Learning is a life-long process.



IN GOOD HEART

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING, 5th MAY 2012 OLD BREWERY CENTRE, CROMARTY

Present: Henry McKenzie Johnston; Stephanie Kulesza; Marek Kulesza; Rev Ken Dupar; John Nightingale; Jennifer Taggart, Pat Davidson; Margie Trewin; Frieda Gostwick; Elizabeth Sutherland; Lillemor Jernqvist; Derek Lancaster-Haye; Muriel Sinclair; Bill Sinclair; Nick Hide; Ann Rider; Roger Busby; Sue Busby; Alix Powers-Jones; (one signature illegible); Russell Kirk; Hugh Miller Clarke; Reay D G Clarke; Miranda Kitchen; Henry Kitchen; Richard Burkitt; Bob Davidson; Nigel Trewin; Martin Gostwick.

Apologies for absence: Lester Borley; Lilian Cameron; Ralph O'Connor; James Robertson.

Henry McKenzie Johnston noted this year marked the 200th anniversary of Lydia Miller's birth.

The minutes of the 5th AGM, 2011 were agreed. The office-bearers, Nigel Trewin (Chairman), Martin Gostwick (Secretary) and Treasurer, Sue Rider Busby were re-elected unopposed. So also were the other five members of the management committee, Henry McKenzie Johnston, May Hunter, Ken Dupar, Lilian Cameron and Ralph O'Connor.

The Museum manager, Dr Alix Powers-Jones presented her "sitrep" report for the last year by invitation.

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT for 2011/2012

This has been a relatively quiet year for The Friends, at least compared with 2009 and 2010. That's mainly because the Museum has recovered from the perilous position in which it was placed for those two seasons, which you all know about. Then, the services of our members as volunteers were all that kept the place open, albeit only on a much-contracted basis.

Our new property manager, Dr Alix Powers-Jones took up her post in May of last year, and her appointment, and the restored opening days and hours, which was facilitated by the magnificent donation to the National Trust for Scotland from Henry McKenzie Johnston, immediately put the Museum on a more secure footing with a forward-looking future.

The Friends of Hugh Miller's main means of communication are by email and post, and principally through our newsletter, which I try to produce as often as possible. There have been three editions since the last AGM. We have changed printers, at a considerable saving in costs, and now use For The Right Reasons.

I am particularly pleased with the continuing series of articles highlighting Miller landmarks. Contributions have included from Dr Mike Taylor on the Coalheugh Well, and Reay Clarke on the Gruids country of the Munro cousins, and myself on the East Church. More are planned, on the archives in the Museum, on the Dwarfie Stane on Orkney, and on Miller's pilgrimage to the poet Cowper's home in Olney, Bucks. If anyone else has a favourite spot which celebrates the man, I'd be glad to have a piece about it.

Our membership has remained static, at 122 which remains a very healthy figure, but we should set our sights on raising numbers if we can, and I would welcome any suggestions in that regard. One idea I've had is to ask existing members to "make a friend a Friend."

We lost Professor Michael Collie, who passed away last July. Michael Collie was a distinguished historian of the natural sciences, especially in the North of Scotland, and a generous donor of books to the Museum library.

LIBRARY'S NEW TREASURES

It is a declared ambition of The Friends of Hugh Miller that the books in the Museum's collection should collectively provide an education and research facility for present and future scholars. With this in mind, we presented five significant additional titles to Dr Powers-Jones at the meeting. They were:

1. *The Cruise of the Betsey*, a unique 1850s edition bearing Hugh's widow, Lydia Miller's handwritten inscription gifting it to her Portobello neighbour Lady Kinnaird in May 1858, as described on the front page. Cost £300.
2. *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, 3rd Ed, 1855. An unusual copy, rebound and bearing its subtitle on the spine, *The Story of My Education*. This gift is in line with a procedure agreed with the property manager of books being acquired either for the collection, or for onward sale. Cost £12.
3. *Memorabilia Domestica, or Parish Life in the North of Scotland*, 2nd ed 1899, by Rev Donald Sage. A celebrated autobiography giving many vital anecdotes conveying the events and personalities in the region, between 1800 and 1840s, up to and including the Disruption. Cost £80.
4. *The Earth on Show*, by Ralph O'Connor. 1st Ed, 2007, Chicago University Press. *The authoritative history of natural sciences in Scotland, 1802-1856, discussing its presentation to the public as spectacle. Contains copious references to Miller's own leading role as a poet of popular science.* Cost £28.
5. *Hutton's Arse*, by Dr Malcolm Rider. Rider-French, 2007 reprint. An excellent contemporary geological history, covering 3 billion years in the Northern Highlands. Cost £16.99



One of the books gifted to the archive.

Our appeal for books for the Museum Library and Retail has achieved modest success. One outstanding donation came from one of our members, Dr Charles Waterston, a 13-volume set of collected works, together with his notebooked, handwritten indexes to four of them, and the very rare book of Miller's Poems.

At Alix's invitation, I contributed several additional information sheets interpreting both buildings and gardens, and have enjoyed cataloguing all the books in the Cottage Reading Room, so that the Museum will have a complete list of them for the first time. And I can tell you there are many gems therein, which you shall learn about in a future edition of the newsletter. Frieda and I collected most of them over some 17 years, but never got round to cataloguing them properly. This should help towards the collection expanding further and becoming a genuine research facility.

We were also instrumental in unearthing, from archives and donations two scrapbooks of printed galley proofs for Miller titles, and two moving letters of his, one to his mother, and one shortly before his death to his partner publisher of *The Witness*.

We have also provided a small team of volunteer gardeners to maintain Lydia Garden during the season, and will be doing the same again this year. I am proud to say four of us attended the big Gardeners' Forum at Fyvie Castle in March.

Our other main contributions to the Museum have principally come through the good offices of the direct descendants and their families. Very soon after the last AGM, Stephanie Kulesza, Henry, and other members of the family took part in the reopening of Cromarty East Kirk on 1st May 2011. Jointly with the Trust, we commissioned as agreed at the last AGM, a plaque naming the Lydia Garden for Hugh and Lydia Miller and their descendants.



The commission was finally carried out by Sutherland Stonework, Golspie, and the plaque was erected in October 2011. As you will have seen in the latest newsletter, one of our members, Charles Smith, strongly disapproved of its materials, lettering and finish. You can't please everybody; I just hope descendants who have had a first chance to see it in situ this weekend will like it.

Lydia Garden maintenance volunteers, from left Fran Tilbrook, Frieda Gostwick, Liz Broumley and Janey Clarke.

The other key contribution has been the efforts of one man; Our management committee member and donor extraordinaire, Henry. He has sponsored not only the publication of the two books launched today, to The Friends direct financial benefit from the proceeds of sales, but two books last year, Lydia's novel, *Passages in The Life of an English Heiress*, and another novel by her daughter Harriet, *Sir Gilbert's Children*.

I believe we should also all commend Henry as beyond praise, for his donation of £600,000 in the last month to the benefit of Cromarty young people. First he saves our museum, then lights up prospects for our town's young people. Bravo!

When we see the Museum progressing so positively with a strong new team, and with our Group's strong support, I feel we can all look forward in good heart.

Martin Gostwick, Secretary

5th May 2012

OLD RED SANDSTONE (ORS) PROGRESSING

Dr Ralph O'Connor sent word that Dr Mike Taylor and himself "have been making good progress" with the edition. The introduction has been the main focus of attention for the past year, and it has gone through several revisions already. We are keen to make the introduction more substantially complete before showing it to a possible publisher to agree a final format. We have both been doing this work in parallel with several other projects with publisher's deadlines, hence the continued delay in completion; but I do want to emphasize that the project is moving steadily forward. Looking at the book afresh has raised several questions, to answer which has meant going back to Miller's original newspaper articles and manuscript correspondence, which has in turn thrown new light on why Miller wrote the book when he did, and in that way. We are both very pleased with the work so far and feel that it has been worth taking the time to do properly and get our facts straight, such a crucial book as it is in Miller's oeuvre.

BUILDINGS HISTORY

Dr Taylor further intimated that he has been working with Lyell Anderson and Sara Stevenson on Miller's collections and their displays and museums over the years. His research into valuation records in the National Archives has thrown new light on the usage of the Cottage and Miller House since Miller's departure in 1840, and confirmed the hitherto provisional opening date of the Cottage museum in the mid 1880s.

NOTE: The opening has previously been given in various publications as in the 1890s, on the basis of the first visitors' book.

MILLER'S NATIONAL PROFILE

Prof Trewin regretted Lester Borley could not make the meeting to contribute on the subject of Hugh Miller interpretation at the National Museum of Scotland. He went on state that he supported the stance that Friends are here to promote HM on as wide a front as possible, and he was sure the mood of the meeting was that we would like to see more representation of HM in NMS. Lester would have the support of Friends in your complaint to NMS. He pointed out that Museum exhibits are decided and planned by Museum staff, and particularly 'designers'. Even Curators have little influence on decisions re exhibits. NMS does have 'temporary exhibitions', and one idea from the AGM was that NMS might be encouraged to mount an exhibition on, or including, HM. Maybe this exhibit could then be shown in Cromarty. There was also a suggestion from the floor that such a mobile exhibit might be initiated in Cromarty and then go to NMS. An observation was also made that we have done quite well in the past year with Miller-related articles and publicity, reaching a broad audience. He stressed that these were just suggestions. He concluded that item of the AGM, by noting that the general mood of the meeting was that Lester should continue with his 'campaign'.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Sue Rider Busby's report was placed before the meeting and approved (see next page).

Friends of Hugh Miller Financial Statement 2011/12

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 2011 to 30 March 2012

Financial Statement as at 31 March 2012

Opening balances as at 1 April 2011 £5,997.33

INCOME

Membership subscriptions	£1,381.00	
other	£2,898.64	
Bank interest	£3.14	
		£4,282.78
		£10,280.11

EXPENDITURE

	£	
Photography	25.00	
Website fees	43.20	
Auditors	360.00	
Newsletters	185.00	
Adventures in Time donation	500.00	
Expenses	156.76	
Honorarium	500.00	
Timber posts, to install plaque	80.00	
Lydia Garden plaque	449.28	
Memorabilia Domestica	48.00	
Hire of room and refreshments for AGM	95.00	
Letterheads and Newsletter	128.20	
	£2,570.44	

Closing balance as at 31 March 2012 £7,709.67

UPDATING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

There was discussion under AOB about the Friends developing a presence in social media. And the topic was raised of needing to find a suitable format to lay out a revised Miller genealogical chart.





Henry's donation of £600,000 for the benefit of Cromarty's young people was greeted with wild enthusiasm by members of the town's youth club when he met them on May 6th to celebrate the gift. Wanda Mackay, the Black Isle's youth development officer called it "life-changing" in terms of the fund's potential.

Henry made the gift in the name of his late wife Marian McKenzie Johnston (nee Middleton), who was Hugh Miller's great great grand-daughter. He has set up The Middleton Trust to administer the fund to promote Cromarty young people's social, cultural and educational opportunities.

Marian's mother, Mrs Winifred Middleton (nee Salvesson), who ran "Mrs Middy's Play Group" in the town until her death in 1988, and that legacy further motivated Henry. When combined with his £600,000 donation to safeguard the Hugh Miller Museum in 2010, his benefactions to Cromarty total well over £1,000,000.



FRIENDS OF HUGH MILLER MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

Having read this newsletter, will Members now please consider some of the following actions:

- Increasing your subscription contribution.
- Making a donation.
- Inviting family or friends to join, with the following message from us:

We have pleasure in inviting you to consider subscribing to the charity, named The Friends of Hugh Miller. The Friends' annual subscription has been set at £10 per person. Subscribers receive a Membership Card, a copy of the constitution, a periodical newsletter and an annual report. We look forward to welcoming you as a Member of the Friends.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I WISH to become a member of the charity, The Friends of Hugh Miller (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.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

..... **Postcode**.....

Tel No.....

Email address.....

Membership subscription is £10 annually, payable by cash/cheque or bank standing order.

We will send standing order and Gift Aid forms on request.

RETURN TO:
MARTIN GOSTWICK,
SECRETARY
THE FRIENDS OF HUGH MILLER,
c/o 55 SHORE STREET
CROMARTY
ROSS-SHIRE IV11 8XL.
TEL NO: 01381 600301.
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