



# Hugh's News

Magazine of  
The Friends of Hugh Miller

Issue No 52  
December 2022

Editor:  
Lara Reid

Production Editor:  
Piers Hemy

***Festive greetings for Christmas and  
the New Year to all our Members***

## GOLDEN FIND ON A BEACH IN SOUTH AFRICA!

In an astonishing story, we hear about a gold mourning ring engraved with Hugh Miller's name, birth date and death date, found by Cornell Swart with her metal detector at Gordon's Bay, South Africa, in June 2022.

*(continued on p2)*



*Cornell Swart with the ring on the beach where she discovered it.  
Credit for all photos of Cornell Swart and ring: © 2022, Cornell Swart*

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**@friendsofmiller**

In June 2022, an unusual email dropped into the Friends' inbox. The message was from Cornell Swart, a local to Gordon's Bay near Cape Town, South Africa, saying that she had found a gold mourning ring bearing Miller's name and dates on her local beach. What followed was a flurry of activity from the Friends who sought to determine the authenticity of this newly found relic and determine how on Earth it ended up on a beach on the other side of the globe.

## An interview with the ring's finder, Cornell Swart

Interviewer: Gavin Berkenheger of the Friends of Hugh Miller (GB)

Interviewee: Cornell Swart, Metal Detectorist and finder of the Hugh Miller Mourning Ring (CS)

**GB: Cornell, tell us the story - how did you come across this ring?**

**CS:** I was hunting on my local beach and I noticed a small area that had lost a lot of sand. Initially I found some old pennies and buttons and that prompted me to stay in the area and check it more thoroughly. I got a very faint, deep signal, and I dug down about 30 centimetres in between rocks and pebbles where I finally located my target. At first glance I felt the excitement that rises when you see gold, and when I looked at the ring I immediately realised it was something special - but the high tide was chasing me, and I wanted to see what else I could find before the tide was too high. So I pocketed the ring and kept searching.

**GB: How did you feel when you learned of the ring's possible provenance?**

**CS:** From the first moment I saw the ring I knew it was special and when I realised it had historical significance I was over the moon. The ring is gold, expertly hand engraved on the outside with the words "In Memory Of", with a square resin stone in the centre that may have contained some hair. The inside is inscribed with the name 'Hugh Miller' and his date of birth and death. I typed the name and dates into Google. To my astonishment, I discovered this name was well-known, and then I found The Friends of Hugh Miller and also



Above: Two views of the ring © 2022, Cornell Swart  
Below left: The ring on the beach © 2022, Cornell Swart  
Below right: A closer view of the ring © 2022, Cornell Swart



the page for the museum in Cromarty.

**GB: How did you get into metal detecting and what else have you found in the past?**

**CS:** My interest in metal detecting was sparked by seeing other detectorists on my local beach and that in turn led me to YouTube and watching videos of people metal detecting. My husband surprised me with a metal detector for my birthday and I was in love from my first hunt. I have found many interesting and beautiful items over the years including old coins, old lead toys, silver and gold jewellery to mention a few.

## UNRAVELLING THIS MYSTERY

By Gavin Berkenheger

On hearing of this discovery, the Friends committee - after getting over their initial surprise and shock - did some of their own digging. Surviving members of the Miller family began trawling through old records and photographs to see whether anything was ever mentioned or seen of a mourning ring and who - if any - of Hugh's surviving family went to South Africa.

It is worth noting here that there is a mourning brooch which the Friends acquired in 2007 from a private seller in Australia containing the same inscription "Hugh Miller Born Octr 10<sup>th</sup> 1802, Died Decr 24<sup>th</sup> 1856". The previous owner of the Brooch was given it by his late mother, but with no detail as to how it ended up in their possession.

The commissioning of mourning jewellery was a common practice at the time of Hugh's death, so these items are not unusual. Mourning jewellery would often contain a lock of the person's hair, one of which is visible in the brooch, but none is visible in the ring - this is possibly due to weathering, or it may never have contained hair.

After consulting with surviving members of Hugh's family and other Miller experts, there was no obvious conclusion as to how the ring ended up in Gordon's Bay, in South Africa. Although Hugh's wife Lydia is not known to have ever travelled to or via South Africa, it is widely known that Hugh's daughter Harriet travelled to Australia with her husband on a ship called the *Carnaquheen* in 1870, possibly via the Cape. There is an old photograph of Harriet, and in it she appears to be wearing both a brooch and a ring. Further scrutiny of this image is required, and we will provide details if more information is unearthed.

Following Harriet's death in Adelaide, her daughters returned to the UK in 1884. A paper discovered by one of Hugh's descendants reads:

*"Harriet (Hugh's daughter) died in 1883 in Adelaide. Her three daughters, Lydia (my gt. grandmother), Jennie and Harriet boarded the sailing ship Hesperus on 10 January 1884 to return to UK".*

On researching the ship *Hesperus*, an article in the South Australian Register, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 1884, reads "calling at Cape of Good Hope and (or) St Hel-



Mourning Brooch

**ADELAIDE DIRECT.—ELDER LINE**  
**OF CLIPPER SHIPS.—The well-known Clipper Ship**  
**CARNAQUEEN, 825 tons register, commanded by**  
**W. Colville, will be despatched from the London Docks on the 5th**  
**March. This beautiful clipper ship, built expressly for the Adelaide**  
**Trade, offers a most desirable opportunity for passengers and shippers**  
**of fine goods. Will carry a surgeon if required.**  
**To be followed by the splendid composite Clipper Ship BELTANA,**  
**A 1 sixteen years. For terms of freight and passage apply to**  
**OGILBY, MOORE, and Co. 6A, Austinfriars, Old Broad-street, E.C.**

Cutting documenting a voyage for Carnaquheen to Australia

**L O N D O N.**  
**STILLING LINE.**  
**ANDERSON ANDERSON & CO.'S**  
**Magnificent Ship**  
**HESPERUS,**  
**1,777 tons, T. Rowe Harry, R.N.R., Commander,**  
**sails on or about 31st inst., calling at Cape of**  
**Good Hope and (or) St. Helena, to land and embark**  
**passengers and (or) cargo. Carries a Cow and takes**  
**a Surgeon.**  
**JOSEPH STILLING & CO.**  
**HENRY SCOTT.**  
**321thre**

Hesperus (South Australian Register, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 1884 Page 1)



Above: Cornell with her metal detector  
 © 2022, Cornell Swart  
 Right: Hugh and Lydia Miller's four children (L-R) - Hugh, 10; William, 17; Bessie, 15; and Harriet, 20. While it may be tricky to make out, it appears Harriet is wearing a ring and brooch similar to the recent finds. From a photograph taken at Heidelberg during a family holiday in Germany in 1860. By kind permission of Inverness Museum & Art Gallery, High Life Highland.



ena, to land and embark passengers and (or) cargo". Without further evidence it is uncertain how the ring ended up to rest in a small cove at the Southern tip of Africa. Possible scenarios are endless - from a family member dropping it into the sea from a ship, to the ring being stolen or bought and latterly lost at the beach. What we do know is that Cape Town was a nexus of the British empire, and mass flows of people going to and from the UK would pass through there on their way to Australia, New Zealand and India prior to the opening of the Suez Canal.

Cornell has kindly donated the ring to the Friends of Hugh Miller who will ultimately look to display it in the museum next to the brooch. The Friends would like to thank Cornell for this unbelievable gift and will make her an honorary life member of the FOHM.

## Seeking an expert opinion (and dreaming up the back story!)

**Stephanie Kulesza, Hugh Miller's great-great-great granddaughter and long-time FOHM committee member, takes up the mourning ring story and speaks to experts in Edinburgh.**

What an exciting few months it has been, not just for the Friends of Hugh Miller, but also for my family, with the news of a possible family heirloom discovery. I am delighted to say that the ring is now safely in the UK, and will be stored until we can take it up to Cromarty to the Museum next spring.

I couldn't resist trying it on – the ring fits my middle finger, and I firmly believe that it is a woman's ring. I'd love to think it was Harriet's own one.

In October 2022, I took the ring to Edinburgh to show it to gemmologist Alistir Tait and Dr. Georgia Vullings from the National Museum Scotland.

Alistir felt the ring was definitely genuine, and 18 carat gold going by the weight of it in his hand (the ring was also tested in South Africa and confirmed as 18 carat). The inscription inside is original. He agreed from the size it was probably a lady's ring.

He couldn't see a hair behind the stone (which he felt was probably glass) but obviously having been so long in the sea and sand, it was difficult to see anything. The discolouration on the inside of the ring may stem from the fact that it's been out in the elements for so long, and this may have damaged the solder. The inscription on the outside of the ring "In Memory of" is heavily inset and would probably have had black niello - a type of silver sulphide, like an enamel - although there's no visible sign of it now. There is no hallmark or maker's mark; this wasn't compulsory in 1856. The engraving is of quite high quality, but back then there would have been lots of engravers who did fabulous work. The head (with the glass) and the band are two components - it would have been made of individual components and possibly different solders as well.

Alistir wondered whether rings like this one would actually have been handed out at the funeral. Hugh's funeral took place on 30<sup>th</sup> December, only 5 days after his death on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1856, and it is unlikely there would have been time to order and make the rings. Customarily the widow would have paid for mourning rings – money was set aside for that - but my personal feeling is that Lydia could not have afforded to give out hundreds of rings – Hugh died intestate; there was not much money and Lydia had four young children to look after.

Georgia felt there might still be hair behind the glass stone as the inscription "In memory of" finishes just by the stone behind which the hair might have been inserted - but Alistir remains doubtful. I guess we'll never know unless we take the ring apart, which Alistir says we definitely shouldn't do! Georgia recommended looking at other museum collections such as the V&A to identify similar examples, and if we could at least find evidence of rings of a similar pattern made in the 1850s that would be useful.

I plan to continue my own research into the ring, and I'll update you if we learn more. If any of our members have any further information or theories regarding the story behind this beautiful ring, please do get in touch! You can email us at [admin@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk](mailto:admin@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk)

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## MEMORABLE DEDICATIONS DISCOVERED

By Martin Gostwick, Easter 2021; edited and updated by Sidney Johnston, Nov 2022

Some intriguing items of "Milleria" have come to light, courtesy of one of our keenest antiquaries. They are posthumous dedications by the publisher of Miller's last book, *Testimony of the Rocks*, to two eminent men of the time.

As well as the publishers' Miller & Fairly's most gracefully written inscriptions to the two great public figures, the volumes also have handwritten short extracts from the book pasted into their content pages. The handwriting in both extracts appears to be Hugh Miller's own.

The antiquary is Sidney Johnston, who sits on the Friends management committee, as well as being a member of Aberdeen Geological Society. Sidney is as active a bibliophile as he is a fossil collector. He says he has acquired the books to facilitate research into some of the questions the two volumes pose, and so they can in future find a "secure home".

One book was sent to George Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll (1823-1900), a talented amateur geologist, who somehow managed to combine pursuing his scientific hobby with his duties as one of Britain's foremost statesmen in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the ten pall bearers at Charles Darwin's funeral at Westminster Abbey. The book came from the Fasque House estate in Aberdeenshire.

The second went to the Rev Dr John Longmuir (1803-1883), another geologist, a very popular and multi-talented Free Church minister. The book came from the library of the late Professor Sydney Ross.

Argyll was known to be a great admirer of Hugh Miller, the self-taught stonemason turned scientist, and is said to have invited Miller to visit him at Inveraray Castle on more than one occasion to enable discussion of their findings and theories.

Miller spurned such opportunities for reasons unknown. He had no fear of powerful great men, shown for example in his open Letter to Lord Brougham, the Lord Chancellor, condemning patronage in the church, and in his coruscating editorials lambasting Clearance landowners like the Duke of Sutherland. But he is understood to have felt much more comfortable with people of his own social class, and the awkward fact that Argyll was married to Sutherland's daughter could have been a factor.

At Miller's death in 1856, the duke was Postmaster General, and later served a term as Secretary of State for India. A Whig, he held great offices of state almost continually under five different prime ministers from 1853 to 1881.

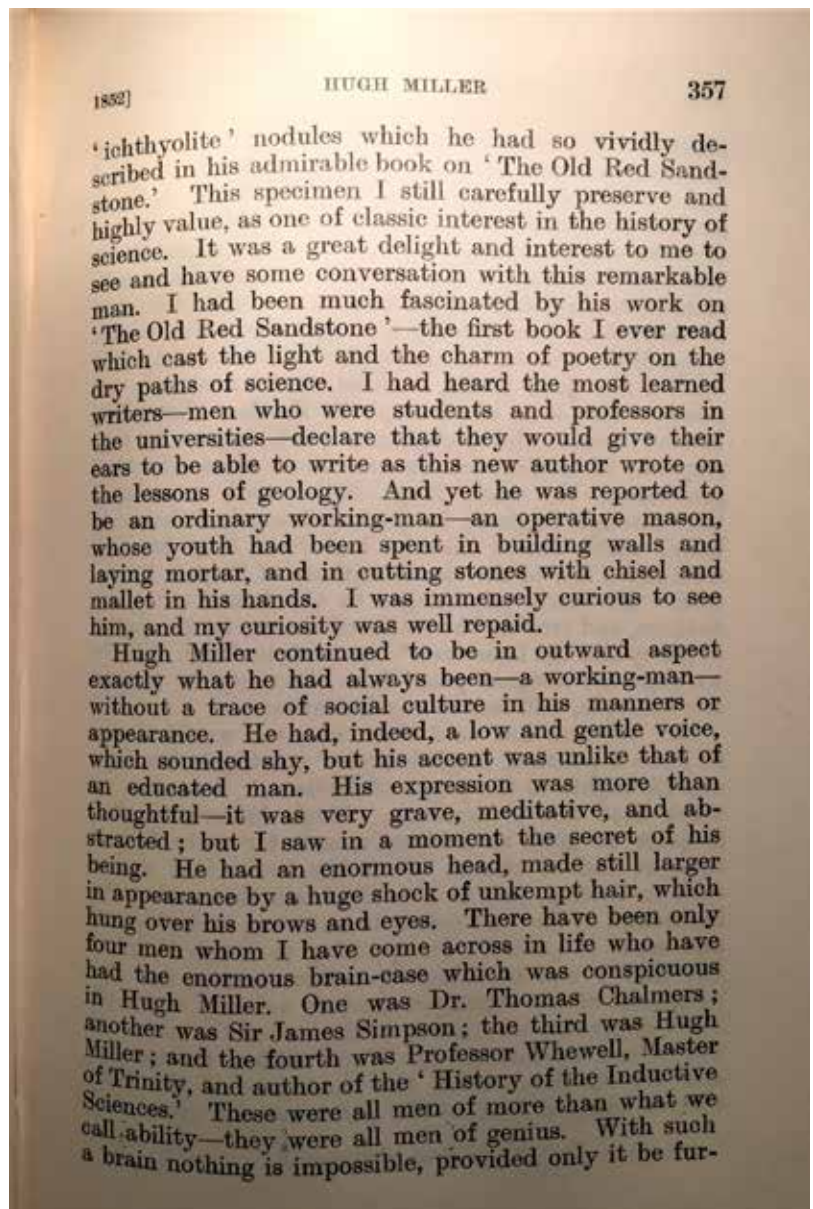
John Longmuir certainly meant more to Hugh than the mighty duke, in that he was a personal friend, as he makes clear in Chapter 1 of *Rambles of a Geologist*. Longmuir ranked as a polymath with a range of abilities comparable to those of Miller himself.

While minister of Aberdeen Mariners' Free Church, he lectured on geology at King's College, Aberdeen, and was a popular platform speaker whose gifts Hugh extols in his article. He was also a poet, a lexicographer and philologist, and author of travel guidebooks.

Miller describes calling on Longmuir at his home on his way north for his annual ramble in 1847, only to find him out. His wife Lillias kindly lets him in to view Longmuir's collection of "the Scotch fossils of the Chalk," specimens of which he proceeds to analyse.

"Greatly more interesting, however than any of the fossil specimens," he adds, "is the general fact that it should be the collection of a Free Church minister, sedulously attentive to the duties of his office, but who has yet found time enough to render himself an accomplished geologist; and whose week-day lectures on the science attract crowds."

He goes on to praise his friend for expounding the science's "picturesque marvels" with a "sound creed" and "right associations" with Divine Creation. Miller is contrasting his approach with the "infidel" pro-



Duke of Argyll Autobiography and Memoirs 1860 - Volume I Page 357.  
Photo © 2022, Sidney Johnston

ponents of materialist evolution.

Both Argyll and Longmuir, like Miller himself and most other Christians of the day, favoured various theories of a "god-ordered" or "theistic" development process as their way of accommodating the logic of deep time into their beliefs.

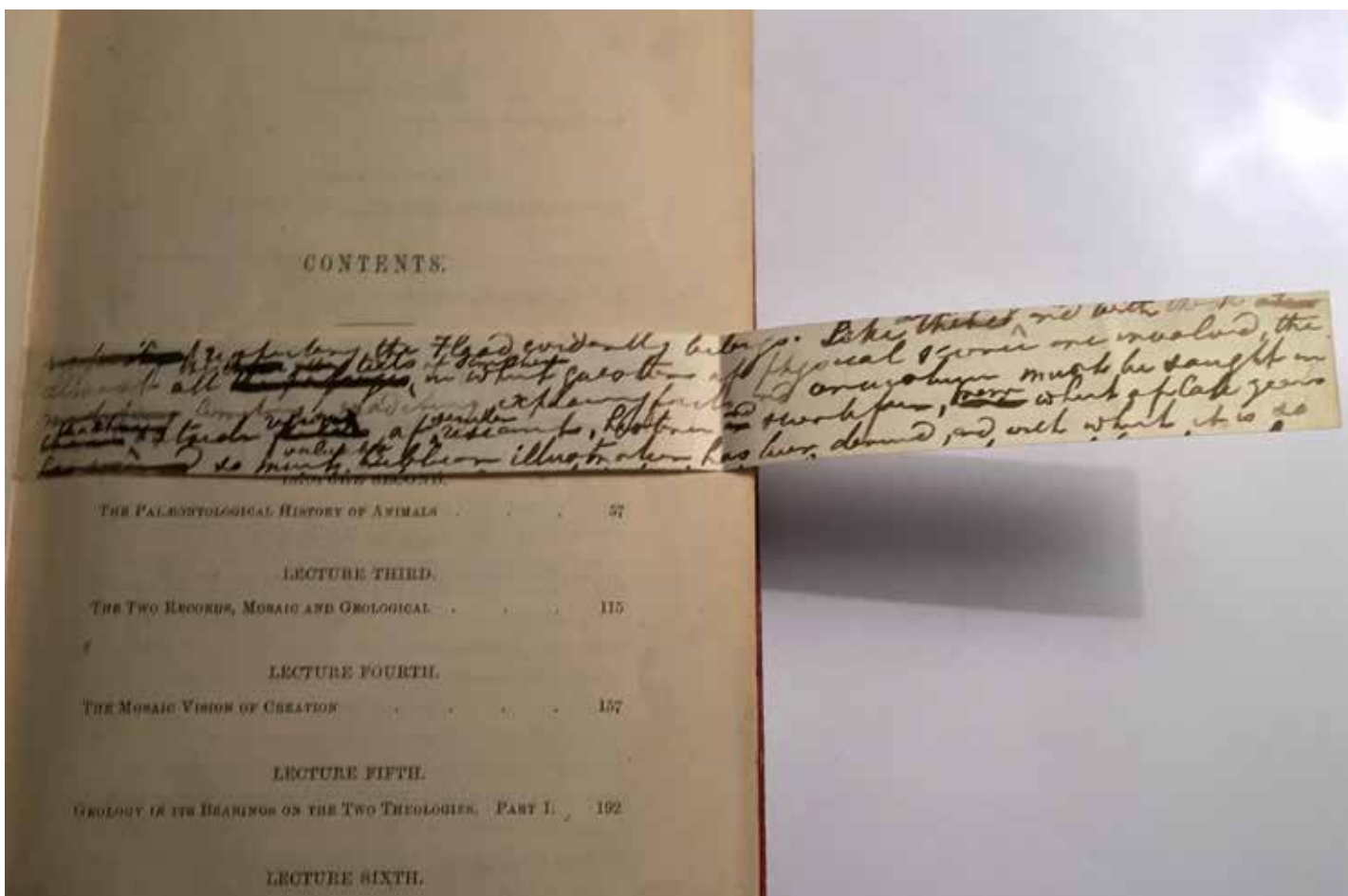
Back to the handwritten notes and the intriguing question of why they are there - they were perhaps intended to serve as a kind of "scrapbook" or memento. The books' owners might have retained handwritten drafts of the book sent to them previously by Miller himself, or the publisher, for comment or on a "peer review" basis.

This was of course Hugh's last book, completed literally on the day before he died, and the tragic circumstances of his death would only have added to the grief felt for his loss among his family, friends, and admirers.

Argyll himself and his wife headed the list of subscribers to the Fund set up to purchase Miller's fossil collection for the nation from his family. Argyll also co-authored the book "Rudiments of Geology" with David Page and Hugh Miller, first published in 1844.

This is the passage pasted into Rev Longmuir's copy, which is contained in *The Noachian Deluge, Part 1*.

*"Like the passages cited, and, with these, almost all the texts of Scripture in which questions of physical science are involved, the limiting, modifying, explaining facts and circumstances must be sought for in that outside region of secular research, historic and scientific, from which of late years so much valuable biblical illustration has been derived, and with which it is so imperatively the duty of the Church to keep up an acquaintance at least as close and intimate as that maintained with it by her gainsayers and assailants."*



Rev. Longmuir's copy of Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks with cutting of Hugh Miller's Handwriting*. Photo © 2022, Sidney Johnston

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*suggestive of an "imaginary conversation" in the style of Landor, between this popular author and his anti-geologic townsman, on the merits of hills in general and in especial those which encircle Comrie "as the hills do stand up round about Jerusalem." They would, I suspect, experience considerable difficulty in laying down their common principles.*

THE PALEONTOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ANIMALS . . . . .

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THE TWO RECORDS, MOSAIC AND GEOLOGICAL . . . . .

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*Duke of Argyll's copy of Hugh Miller's Testimony of the Rocks with cutting of Hugh Miller's Handwriting. Photo © 2022, Sidney Johnston*

The text inserted into the contents page of Argyll's copy contains allusions which are certainly somewhat obscure for the modern reader. Miller has referred to "one of the more brilliant writers of the present day" (identity unknown) describing with a poet's enthusiasm, the "noble mountains" round Comrie. This is a village, a few miles west of Crieff in the Perth and Kinross district of the southern Highlands. Landor was Walter Savage Landor, a 19<sup>th</sup> century English poet.

Hugh has a "comic notion" which is "suggestive of an "imaginary conversation, in the style of Landor, between this popular author and his anti-geologic townsman, on the merits of hills in general, and in especial on the claims of those which encircle Comrie "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem." The two gentlemen would, I suspect, experience considerable difficulty in laying down, in such a discussion, their common principles."

Miller devotes a whole chapter (Lecture 10) in *Testimony to The Geology of the Anti-Geologists*, in which he takes apart the defenders of Biblical dogma concerning the Book of Genesis.

## Addenda:

Since the original writing of this article in 2021, fresh records have come to light from the Duke of Argyll's Autobiography and Memoirs published in 1906. These show that Hugh Miller was his hero and that the Duke did eventually manage to visit and meet with Hugh Miller at his house in Cromarty. Rather touchingly, there is an in-depth description of Miller himself in the Duke of Argyll's Autobiography and Memoirs, 1860, reproduced here for readers' interest. The librarian of the Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle was not aware of a link between the Duke and Hugh Miller.





## SHORT FILM 'VESTIGE' IN POST-PRODUCTION

Lewis Coates - Static Flow Productions

Readers may recall that the Friends of Hugh Miller were approached by Lewis Coates of Static Flow Productions to support the production of a short film about a young boy inspired by geology, set on the English coast. The FoHM committee were delighted to offer both financial and practical support. Lewis provides us with an update on progress, together with some beautiful stills from the film.

'Vestige' is in the final stages of editing and post-production. It has a beautiful original soundtrack created by James Williams and Owain Kelly that uses haunting classical and wind instruments to reflect the piercing weather elements on the Northern English coast.

It has been edited by award-winning editor Andrew McKee based in Manchester who has created an engaging pace for the film - slow and delicate in its intimate moments and fast and thrilling in its more upbeat.

The final stage it is undergoing is final visual effects to create some of the more supernatural elements. This is important to elevate the story from the real world and to include more wondrous science fiction elements that will intrigue and excite the audience.

We are hoping these stages will be completed in November and we will have a full film to share with both the British Film Institute, who have already expressed their joy from the clips we've shown them, and soon audiences across the world.

Thank you for your continued interest and support!



*Top, above left and right: Screen shots from 'Vestige'*

Book review:

# The Cruise of the Betsey, with Rambles of a Geologist, 2022. Facsimile edition, edited by Michael Taylor.

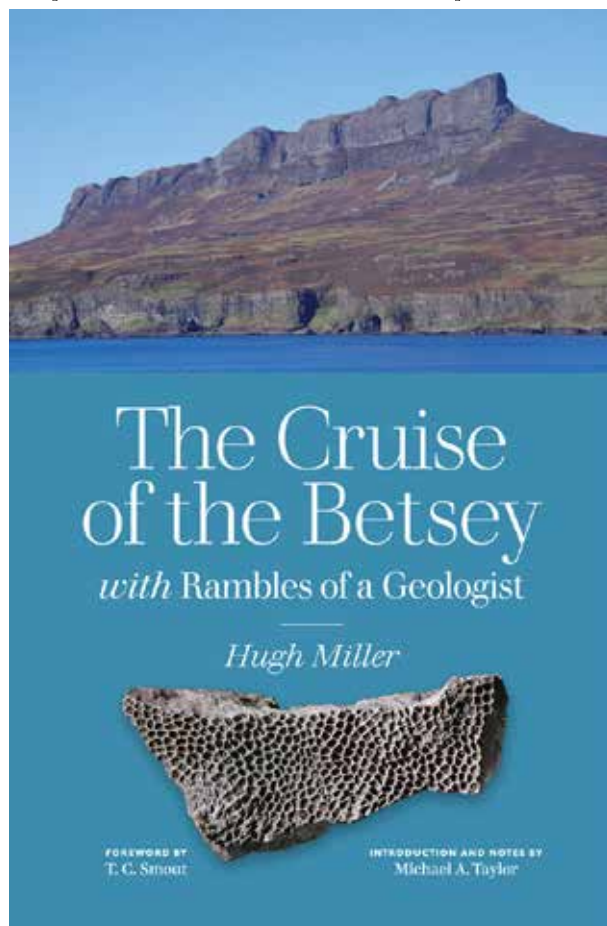
Reviewed by Bob Davidson, Chair of the Friends

The first facsimile in the series, published in 2003, and edited by Mike Taylor, aimed to bring Miller's original writing to a modern-day audience, together with thoughts on his portfolio of Cromarty life, religion, society, journalism and geology, among other topics. This 2022 republication serves to update the reader on changes in our knowledge and understanding the context of Miller's social commentaries and geological interpretations that have ensued in the nineteen years since the 2003 edition. The 1858 text is again faithfully presented in facsimile with explanatory and enlightening footnotes where appropriate. Updates occur subtly throughout but the following are especially prominent. Taylor points readers to the recent, extensive work of Professor Ralph O'Connor into Miller and race, which demonstrates that Miller was firmly anti racist in his views. A welcome section of colour photographs has been included for the first time, some of which illuminate the path of the Betsey through the Hebrides, and Robert Dick's important contributions. The stratigraphic table has been clarified and updated.

This second facsimile edition of Miller's eponymous tome where Miller touches on most of his areas of interest and influence, originally published in 1858, presents an ideal introduction to Miller for newcomers and serves to further enlighten those already in the know.

NMS Enterprises-Publishing – available from National Museums Scotland online shop:

<https://shop.nms.ac.uk/>




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## Supporting the Falconer Museum in Forres

Local readers to the Black Isle may have heard of the temporary closure of the Falconer Museum in Forres. Now, The Friends of the Falconer Museum have just published an anthology celebrating the 150-year anniversary of the Falconer Museum's opening entitled '*Science and Imagination: True stories from the Falconer Museum*'.

Our chair, Bob Davidson, was invited to contribute a short essay to the anthology about Dr. John Grant Malcolmson, who was a friend of Hugh Miller. The book launch was at Forres Town Hall on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November, and Bob was in attendance along with many other contributors. It is hoped that the book will further the campaign to re-open the museum. A full review of the book will appear in the next issue of Hugh's News.

Further details: <https://falconermuseum.co.uk/>

Book review:

# Hugh Miller: Stonemason, Geologist, Writer by Michael A. Taylor, reprinted August 2022

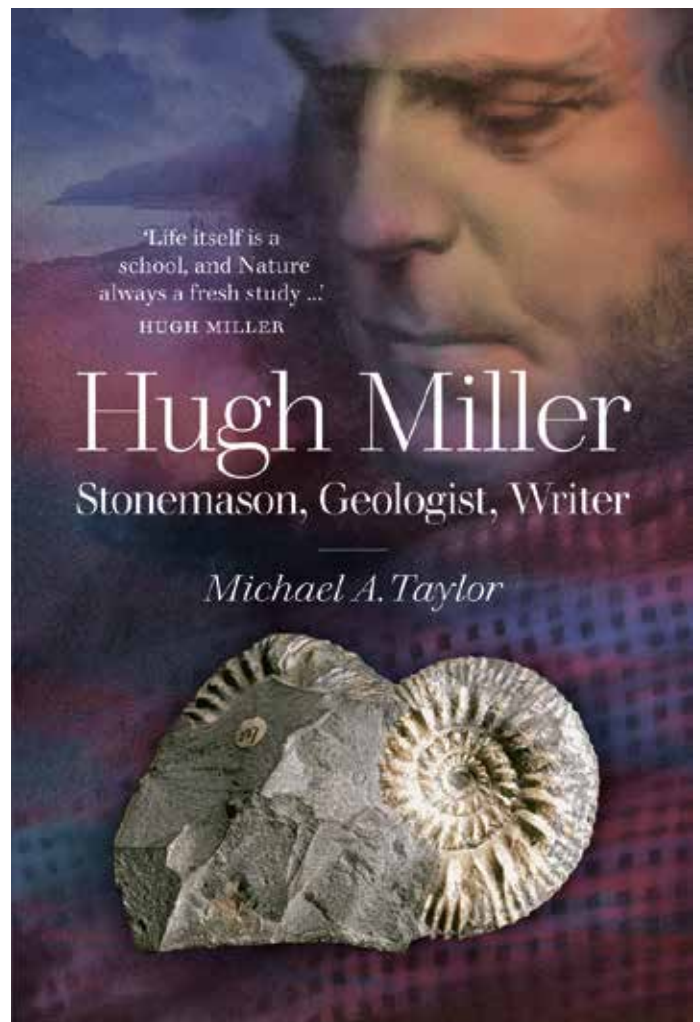
Reviewed by Lara Reid, editor of *Hugh's News*

*"First published by NMS Enterprises Ltd – Publishing in 2007 and long out of print, this reprint has some minor amendments, a beautiful new cover and ISBN. Michael Taylor's biography – the first synoptic reassessment to draw upon new research – quotes generous chunks of Miller's own (very readable) writings and covers the full range of Hugh Miller, from stonemason, through geologist and editor to private family man, with a surprising conclusion regarding his suicide in 1856." (National Museums Scotland, September 2022)*

I was delighted to receive my copy of the reprint of this beautiful biography of Miller by Michael Taylor. I confess, I had never read the original in full, and so I was pleased to make time to read this latest version. Taylor's prose streams effortlessly from the page and carries the reader along, rather like a gold thread embroidered through the history of Miller's life.

Taylor draws a rounded, intelligent picture of Hugh Miller in all his myriad of façades. He deftly weaves Miller's own words into each chapter, leaving the reader with a vivid sense of the man himself speaking. Humour and honesty sparkle in the pages, while details rise to the surface, rather like the way Miller's fish begin to materialise from the depths of history through his own descriptions. As readers we are drawn in to every scene evoked by Taylor with warmth, intellectual debate, and the sense of a mutual solving of puzzles.

Anyone with an interest in Miller, or indeed in Victorian era Scotland and its complex social, religious and political history, would doubtless enjoy Taylor's biography. Add it to your (or someone else's) Christmas list, you won't regret it!



Further information if required from [k.blackadder@nms.ac.uk](mailto:k.blackadder@nms.ac.uk)

Available from bookshops and from the National Museums Scotland online shop:

<https://shop.nms.ac.uk/>

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# Hugh Miller event warmly welcomed at the Portobello Book Festival 2022

*Our editor, Lara Reid, together with palaeontologist and author, Dr Elsa Panciroli, appeared at the Portobello Book Festival in September 2022 to discuss Hugh Miller's legacy and his influence on their own writing.*

By Lara Reid

I was delighted to take part in an event celebrating the legacy of Hugh Miller at this year's Portobello Book Festival, on the afternoon of Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The day dawned unseasonably stormy and wet, with the wind howling and rain lashing down – we all wondered if anyone would turn up!

We needn't have worried – the event (which was the first to be fully booked at this year's festival) was very well attended, and took place in a cosy space at St Jameson's Gate, Portobello.

The discussion focused on how Hugh Miller has inspired modern-day writers. The event was chaired by Jim Gilchrist, former journalist and previous 3<sup>rd</sup> prize winner in the Hugh Miller Writing Competition. I talked about how Miller has inspired my poetry – in particular my most recent pamphlet, *rock|salt* - and I was joined by my good friend, the Highland palaeontologist Elsa Panciroli, who made the journey from the University of Oxford to attend. She spoke about Miller's wide-ranging legacy, his wonderful use of language, and how his words inspired her when she was writing her two recent books, *Beasts Before Us* and *The Earth: A Biography of Life*. We also talked about the high-quality writing that was borne of the writing competition between 2015 and 2020 – Elsa and I worked closely to organise and run the writing competition in latter years. The Friends of Hugh Miller were delighted to hear of this event in celebration of Miller in the town where he lived for the final years of his life, and hope that such connections with the Portobello Book Festival will continue in future.



*Elsa and Lara at Portobello book festival.  
Photo © 2022, Lara Reid*

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## AGM 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

By Stephanie Kulesza

**Our AGM for 2022 took place at The Old Brewery in Cromarty on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022, at 2pm. We were delighted to welcome a few of the winners of the 2020 Hugh Miller Writing Competition to Cromarty (at last!), and show them Miller's beautiful home town and Museum.**

The day started in the morning with a wonderful fossil hunt led by our Chairman, Bob Davidson, taking in the Cromarty shoreline (where Hugh Miller's fascination with rocks and minerals began on walks with his Uncle Sandy). Bob told us much about the geology of the area and explained which rocks to look for which might have fossils inside. Lara's daughters were lucky enough to find a few fragments replete with fish scales! We then headed

back round the loop to the St Regulus' graveyard. We walked up past the Coalheugh Well mentioned by Hugh Miller in *The Old Red Sandstone* as being the site of a totally fruitless attempt to bore for coal in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bob explained to us how the geology would have made this a hopeless enterprise! However, some brave souls did drink the water from the stream – thankfully with no ill effects! We then walked up to the St. Regulus burial ground and walked up Eliza's Path - helped immensely by the wonderful railings which were installed last year and are dedicated to Martin Gostwick - to see the grave of Hugh Miller's first child, Eliza. All in all, a wonderful way to start the day of the first face-to-face AGM since Covid.

The AGM itself followed after lunch in The Cromarty Brewery and members of the Committee made their reports. Chairman Bob Davidson began by mentioning the most significant event since our last face-to-face AGM – that of the very sad and sudden death of Martin Gostwick. Much has been achieved in his memory, especially the Eliza's Path railing, which will remain a lasting testament to Martin's work for Hugh Miller and Cromarty. Most recently, Cromarty Council have rejuvenated the Hugh Miller Monument and a bench dedicated to Martin is planned at its base. Bob also mentioned the fourth Trewin Memorial lecture, which takes place in December of this year.

Our new Editor/interim Secretary, Lara Reid, felt 'humbled and excited' to step into Martin's shoes. She updated us on the 'Miller and Race' issue which had caused some negative publicity and urged everyone to read Ralph O'Connor's brilliantly researched papers which appeared in issues 48 and 50 of *Hugh's News*. She also told us about the short film *Vestige*, produced by Lewis Coates and backed by the BFI, and the FOHM, amongst many other palaeontology and geology associations. This short film will capture the sensitive moments of a young fossil hunter and his grandfather. The Friends have provided a first edition Hugh Miller text and a variety of fossils for use as props during the filming.

Alix Powers-Jones (Property Manager of Hugh Miller Museum) gave an update on the Museum, which, despite the effects of almost two years of Covid restrictions and the inevitable reduction in staff numbers, is looking very positive. She has recruited a whole new Front of House team, is stocking garden plants again and through the Irish Coach Company CIE is welcoming parties of American tourists once a week at the museum. At the Birthplace Cottage, estate workers from Culloden Battlefield are helping to get the gardens up to scratch again. Various projects such as Inclusive Heritage, Tuesday Talks and an Inclusive Café are planned.

Sue Busby (Treasurer) reported that the Friends is in a healthy financial position with over £12,000 in our account as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Stephanie Kulesza (Membership Secretary) reported that we now have 116 Members of which 19 are direct descendants of Hugh Miller. She hopes, with the help of John Armstrong, to promote membership amongst the students at academic institutions – not only in the fields of geology but also in history and literature – all areas in which Hugh was deeply interested.

Finally, Awards of Life Membership were made to Frieda Gostwick, Piers Hemy and Ralph O'Connor in recognition of all their wonderful contributions to FoHM.



*Cromarty shore. Photo © 2022, Thérèse Melville*



*Cromarty walk. Photo © 2022, Lara Reid*



# The Friends of Hugh Miller MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/We wish to become (a) member (s) of the charity, The Friends of Hugh Miller  
Please download and complete the forms below then email to the Membership Secretary at:  
[membership@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk](mailto:membership@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk)

Annual subscription categories and rates, please mark with a cross whichever applies:

Single	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family (1 adult and up to 3 children under 18)	£15*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Couple	£30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family (2 adults and up to 3 children under 18)	£30*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior (under 18)	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... Phone.....

Email address.....

### GIFT AID Declaration for past, present and future donations

Gift Aid is reclaimed by The Friends of Hugh Miller from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order for us to claim Gift Aid on your donation you must complete the form and the box below

Title ..... First name or initial(s)..... Surname:.....

Home address (if different from above): .....

.....

Postcode:..... Date:.....

Signature (optional):.....

**I give my consent to The Friends of Hugh Miller to claim gift aid on all donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years**

(put an X in the consent box)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Stephanie Kulesza, Membership Secretary can be reached at:  
[membership@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk](mailto:membership@thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk) or 07879614005

The Friends of Hugh Miller is a registered charity: SC037351