



Hugh's News

Magazine of
The Friends of Hugh Miller

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Join us for the weekend!

THE SENNACHIE FESTIVAL & FOHM AGM 2025

THE OLD BREWERY, CROMARTY, FRIDAY, 23rd MAY and SATURDAY, 24th MAY, 2025

The Friends of Hugh Miller are delighted to announce a two-day celebration of Cromarty's son, Hugh Miller, and his passion for the stories and legends of his people and their lands.

In a packed line-up for the Sennachie Festival, there is a wonderful mix of authors, musicians and poets. Among them are Dr. Lori Watson, a Lecturer in Scottish Ethnology & EHRC Fellow in Celtic & Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, who will talk about her work. Lori will also entertain us in her other persona as a folk singer and fiddle player, most notably with the critically acclaimed band Malinky. On this occasion, she will be joined by her partner, the award winning musician Duncan Lyall.

Also appearing are authors James Robertson, Ralph O'Connor, Ross Barnett and Elsa Panciroli, along with clar-sach player Gillian Fleetwood, fiddle player Laura Jane Wilkie, and Black Isle poets Gill Shaw and Cait O'Neill McCullagh. The National Trust at Miller's Birthplace Cottage and Museum are also planning activities to complement the festival.

On Friday 23rd May, the 2025 FOHM AGM will take place at the Old Brewery – further details and timings to follow shortly.

A variety of ticket options for the Sennachie Festival events will be announced in late March. Please keep an eye on The Friends of Hugh Miller website <https://www.thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk/latest-news> for updates.



The Old Brewery in Cromarty dates from about 1785, and was restored to its present use for educational courses and workshops in 1989. The building has been Category B listed since 1971.

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Reimagining Hugh and Lydia: A unique forensic art project in Cromarty

Maria Maclennan, a senior lecturer in jewellery and silversmithing at Edinburgh College of Art, discusses her 2024 residency at Cromarty Arts Trust with Hugh's News editor, Lara Reid, and HM's Museum manager, Debbie Reid (no relation!)

Maria's project utilised her forensic art skills to reconstruct Hugh and Lydia Miller in both 3D sculpture and 2D image formats, using traditional and digital techniques, such as 3D scanning and digital clay sculpting. Maria collaborated with staff at the Hugh Miller Birthplace Cottage and Museum in Cromarty in November and December 2024. There are plans for future projects based on Maria's unique work.

LR: Please introduce yourself, tell us a little about your research and what drew you to apply for the residency with Cromarty Arts Trust?

MM: I'm Maria Maclennan, and I've been a jewellery designer for many years – that's always been my main 'hat'. But over the last 15 years or so, my research has primarily involved working with forensic scientists, the police and other investigative agencies, looking at the forensic analysis of jewellery recovered with the deceased. Through this work, I become exposed to forensic art – for example, reconstructing the faces of unknown victims from verbal descriptions, or rebuilding a face from a skull. I recently returned to university to undertake a postgraduate degree in forensic art. I'm from the Black Isle originally, and so when I saw the Cromarty Arts Trust residency call, I thought that would be lovely to immerse myself more into forensic artwork and experiment without restrictions or distractions. I love collaborative work, so it was important to me that I contributed to the community as part of the project. I'd always been familiar with Hugh Miller as a local character and polymath. My uncle was a geologist, and I remember visiting the Museum years ago, and I thought it would be really interesting to do a contemporary reimagining of Hugh Miller using forensic techniques. I was so excited when the Trust accepted my proposal.

LR: And Debbie, what did you think when you first heard about Maria's project?

DR: Maria's initial email grabbed me immediately, because it's exactly the type of interdisciplinary project – blending arts and science – that we love to support. The rest of the staff and I were very excited! I think we were already throwing ideas around before we'd even replied to Maria. This is something fresh and new for the museum. There are several photographs and images of Hugh that have been used repeatedly over the years, and it's almost as though people don't quite see him anymore – but we hope this project brings him and Lydia to life all over again.

MM: Absolutely – this was a very important aspect of the project. Often, with facial reconstruction, we would have a skull to work from, but very few other descriptions or images. With



Top: Hugh Miller - re-imagined

Above: Lydia Miller - re-imagined

Below: Maria Maclennan at her exhibition 'Meeting the Millers' at The Old Brewery..

All photographs in this article provided by, and copyright of Dr Maria Maclennan



Hugh, it was quite different. I collected as many photographic references as I could, together with paintings and drawings. I also used verbal descriptions from texts, looking at how he'd been described by other people. His appearance was very distinctive. We wanted to highlight his bright sapphire eyes, his big mane of red hair, and all of these amazing features, characteristics and aspects of his personality that people talked about. The older, original photographs of Hugh are wonderful, but they lack colour, and are often quite pixelated. It was wonderful to pick out some of Hugh's more distinctive characteristics.

LR: And can you tell me a bit about the process of reconstructing a face?

MM: There are several techniques that forensic artists can use. The first is traditional cranial facial reconstruction where we have a skull, and we identify different landmarks on the skull and build up the facial soft tissues. We take measurements around the orbits to determine the eye position, the projection and width of the nose, the height of the lips, the width of the mouth - there's lots of information the skull can tell us. We then apply these details to make a traditional wax model, or we can take a 3D scan of the skull and rebuild the face digitally. Another technique is post-mortem depiction, where we have a photograph of an unknown deceased person, and we use digital imaging techniques to manipulate the image until it looks like the person would do in life.

For Hugh, I was delighted when Debbie said they had a copy of Hugh's death mask in the Museum. However, it is a miniature of the mask, not an original life size one. We had to work out how to use the details in it to create a life size sculpture; we decided to scan it in 3D, so we now have these rotatable 3D digital versions of Miller's death mask, which is a brilliant resource in itself! From these digital images, I was able to rebuild the face using a specialist haptic arm - a digital pen that moulds digital clay on screen. It's a lot of fun - you can actually feel in the digital space when you're touching the object, it responds as though it is moulding the surface of clay. Debbie also gave me measurements of an existing bust in the museum, which we knew to be closer to life size. I scaled up the death mask using those measurements, and created 3D prints, one of which became the final bust. To create that, I covered the 3D printed bust in a very thin layer of wax, and then painted it. It's livelier than some existing busts, which are usually made from plain stone or plaster. I also created a number of 2D images of both Hugh and Lydia, and all of my work has been gifted to the Birthplace Museum.

LR: I'm curious if anyone has been spooked by the bust or images? I've read about the 'uncanny valley' effect with robots, for instance - is that an aspect of your work in general?

MM: The uncanny valley effect is certainly an important aspect of this kind of work. It occurs when people are spooked by something that looks very realistic but isn't quite human, like an android or an AI-generated person. Debbie's young dog hated my bust of Miller! She spotted it on the windowsill and started barking wildly at it, so it certainly has an impact. I'd be keen to hear what visitors to the Museum make of it this season.

LR: I imagine you had far more references for Hugh than for Lydia. What challenges did you face in bringing Lydia to life?

MM: Yes, reconstructing Lydia was challenging, because there is really only one painting of her by William Kaye, together with some text-based descriptions. Elizabeth Sutherland's book had excellent descriptions of Lydia. I do



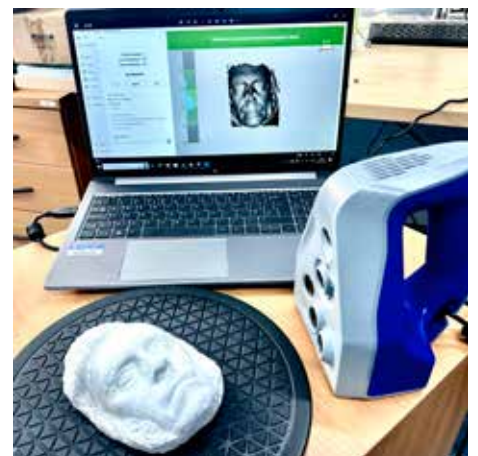
Hugh Miller's face re-imagined



Hugh Miller death mask and portrait



Hugh Miller bust sculpture with 3D digital reproduction



Some of the tools of Maria MacLennan's trade

feel that Lydia is very much a work in progress, and I'd love to hear from any descendants or friends of the family who might have more information or images that I could work with. Even pictures of her grandchildren or great-great grandchildren might be helpful.

DR: It is great from the Museum's perspective to have more visual imagery for Lydia. She played such a pivotal role in Miller's life and in disseminating his writings after he died. It's really important to celebrate her and recognize her importance within Miller's story.

MM: In many ways, this residency was a chance for me to learn and experiment, and I was upfront with Debbie and others about that. With the Miller project this was a first go, and we plan to keep working on all the work I've produced, for sure. The practical community workshop I ran as part of the residency was full, with a waiting list, so I will definitely be back to host more workshops. And we have lots of ideas for building on this project, including some forensic jewellery work on the mourning ring that was discovered on the beach in South Africa.

LR: Could you tell us more about what forensic jewellery entails? I'm sure many of our readers won't have heard of it.

MM: Personal effects, jewellery, clothing, tattoos and body modifications - all of these things inform a person's identity and can maybe help to trace them and identify them. I realized that all of my knowledge as a jewellery designer could be put to excellent use – the technical aspects of the work of a particular designer, serial numbers, hallmarks, engravings, and so on. I was amazed by the mourning ring story related to Hugh Miller. I can just imagine if you were a family member, knowing that an object was with one of your loved ones and worn by them, if you are then able to hold it, it becomes a link through time and space and place. I'm hopeful I can come back to Cromarty and examine the ring and the photo of Harriet, the one where she appears to be wearing a ring very like the one that was found. Let's see what we can do!

The Friends of Hugh Miller committee would like to thank Maria for her fascinating work, and look forward to hearing more about these future plans. We will update our members on any progress. In the meantime, do take time to go and see Maria's artwork and sculpture at the Museum in Cromarty!

Jeanie Morison and Hugh Miller, F.R.S.E., F.G.S.

By Lesley Church

'We Spend our Years as a Tale that is Told' (*Saint Isadora and Other Poems*, 1885)

Jeanie Morison's second husband was Hugh Miller the Younger. She was a poet and writer, and a friend of the poet Robert Browning and his sister Sarianna.

Jeanie Morison (1840-1922)

Jeanie Morison was a Scottish writer of verse, short stories, and critical works, with 18 books to her name published between 1873 and 1913. Many of her poems have a heavy emphasis on God, death, and the life hereafter, but she also tried her hand at drama (*Pontius Pilate*), and her Scottish tales and ballads, such as 'The Honey-Haired Ladye' and 'Nae Man's Land', are an important part of her work. Her most erudite work was the long poem *The Purpose of the Ages* (1887) with an introduction by A. H. Sayce, Assyriologist at Oxford University, and 173 pages of notes. Her first book, *Snatches of Song*, was published in 1873, and her last work, *Poems Old and New*, in 1913.

Morison was a member of the Edinburgh Ladies' Debating Society from 1871, taking part in their debates, and contributing poems and articles to the Society's magazines. She was "one of the mainsprings"¹ of the Edinburgh Browning Society from its beginnings in 1886. Two of Jeanie's books provide her interpretation of poems by Robert Browning: *Sordello* (1889), and *Fifine at the Fair* (1892). She contributed the entry for Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning for the 1903 edition of *Chambers Cyclopædia of English Literature*.

Family Background: Jane Morison Buchanan

Jeanie Morison was born in 1840 in North Leith and baptized Jane Morison Buchanan. Her mother was the daughter of lawyer John Morison (1766-1837) of Hetland, and Jeanie inherited Morison House, Hetland, from her mother. Her father was the Rev. James Buchanan (1804-1870), minister at North Leith church from 1828-1840, and then at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh. In 1843, he left the Established Church and joined the Free Church of Scotland, serving at St Stephen's Free Church until being appointed a professor of Theology at New College, Edinburgh.

Marriage and Widowhood: Jean Morison Campbell

In December 1862, Jeanie married Colonel William Rose Campbell of Ballochyle. Their two children, Mary and



The Bandits' Lair.

*The names of those desperadoes are, reading from left to right,
Back row - J.B. Hill; L.W. Hinxman; J. Horne; G. Barrow.
Front row - J. Linn; B.N. Peach; H. Miller; W. Gunn.*

"The Bandits' Lair" with permission of the British Geological Survey

McIver, were born in Madras, India. William Rose Campbell died in 1872. Jeanie published her first book of poems *Snatches of Song* in 1873. The poems include some which relate to her time in India. It would have been a copy of *Snatches of Song* that Jeanie sent to the poet Robert Browning with a letter dated 11 August [1873] from Morison House, in the hope that the poet would give his opinion of her poems. It is clear from the letter that this is her first contact with Robert Browning.

Jean Morison Miller: Marriage to Hugh Miller the Younger

In 1878, the widowed Jeanie married Hugh Miller (1850-1896), the son of Hugh Miller, geologist and writer, and their son, Hugh Morison Miller, was born in 1880. Jeanie would have known her new husband from childhood. She and Hugh's sister Harriet were close schoolfriends, and Jeanie had been a visitor at the Millers' Edinburgh house. In an article which Jeanie contributed to the *Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine* in 1876 'In remembrance of

Lydia Falconer Fraser: Mrs Hugh Miller' she describes a visit she made just a few days before Hugh Miller's death:

"Well do I remember the bright Saturday forenoon of December 20th, 1856, when I, then a shy schoolgirl, alighted at the Portobello station and made my way to a large square house, which stood in grounds within a high wall a little off the street, known by the name of Shrub Mount, and then the Millers' home. Well do I remember the museum with its many wonders and the plates in the "Testimony of the Rocks" which was then passing through the press, all of which the great geologist explained with as patient a care and as stately a courtesy to the little schoolgirl as if she had been a savant like himself. Still better do I recall the pleasant luncheon table and the charms of the conversation there."

When Harriet married a few years later, she was 'given away' at her wedding, at her request, by Jeanie's father, James Buchanan.²

Jeanie's husband, Hugh, was a member of the British Geological Survey and himself a writer. As well as his contributions to British Geological Survey publications, he wrote *Landscape Geology* - a plea to artists not to disregard geology in their paintings. In this work he shows his knowledge of paintings and poetry and includes quotations from poets including Wordsworth and Keats. In December 1896, his "*scientific romance*", *The Dream of Mr H. - the Herbalist*, was published posthumously. In his dream, Mr H finds himself in a carboniferous forest of the coal period and describes what he sees there.

Hugh died of typhoid in January 1896. The obituary in the *Geological Magazine*³ noted that:

"All who enjoyed Mr Miller's friendship will feel that they have lost a kind-hearted, though keenly sensitive, friend. Strongly imbued with a love of nature and natural phenomena he at the same time kept himself in touch with the intellectual life of our time."

Robert Browning in Edinburgh

Browning was a guest at the University of Edinburgh's Tercentenary celebrations in April 1884. Jeanie's second surviving letter to Robert Browning is dated 2nd July 1885⁴ and provides evidence that she and her husband met Browning at this event, and that for Jeanie this may not have been the first meeting:

"When the bagpipes were parading up and down the long library at Edinburgh University's Reception of her Tercentenary Guests last Spring, my Husband, to whom I had just introduced you said, "Can you stand the din?" to which to our great delight you replied "I like it, my mother was a Scotswoman.""

Jeanie Morison and Sarianna Browning

There is certainly evidence, from letters⁴ dating from 1890 onwards, of a close friendship between Sarianna Browning and Jeanie. After Robert Browning's death in 1889, Sarianna lived with her nephew Pen (Elizabeth and Robert Browning's son) at the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice, then at Asolo, north of Venice, where Robert Browning had spent September and October 1889 rediscovering the place that had been the source of inspiration for his early poem 'Pippa Passes', and where his final collection of poems, *Asolando*, was completed.

The numerous letters that survive between Jeanie and Sarianna provide evidence of Jeanie's visits to Italy. There is no mention of her husband accompanying her, but, as a member of the British Geological Survey, he must have been frequently away from their homes in Scotland himself. In 1892, Jeanie stayed at the Palazzo Rezzonico and from 1893 she was a frequent visitor to Asolo. That she was important in Sarianna's life is indicated in a letter from Jeanie to Pen Browning's wife Fannie (7 November 1894):

"I have just returned from Asolo, to which I was summoned by telegram in the last days of September, to the bedside of my dear friend Miss Browning, then dangerously, almost as it seemed, hopelessly ill..."

A Home in Asolo

By the time of her husband's death in January 1896, Jeanie's older son McIver was in Canada, her daughter Mary had married the Rev. J C B Geddes, and son, Hugh, was 15 years old. Jeanie would have been freer to consider spending more time in Asolo and seems to have been in the process of acquiring a home of her own there - perhaps one of the many properties Pen owned in Asolo.

Two of Jeanie's works were published in Asolo in 1897: an article about the lace school which Pen Browning had set up there, and *Miss M'Graw* - a gentle little tale of a village schoolmistress who provides comfort to a dying child, a depressed minister, a lonely old lady and a heart-broken girl, and ends with her contemplation of her own death and the joys to come in the life hereafter.

She did not spend all her time in Asolo and was still available to take part in debates of the Edinburgh Ladies' Debating

Society, and at the February 1898 meeting of the Edinburgh Browning Society she read Browning's 'Rabbi ben Ezra'.

Sarianna died on 22nd April 1903. It seems likely that after Sarianna's death, Jeanie decided her place was back in Scotland, but she made at least one further trip to Asolo, attending the Browning Centenary Celebrations there in May 1912.

Hugh Morison Miller and Ellena Dimitroff

In October 1906, at Morison House, Jeanie's son Hugh married Ellena Dimitroff. The couple had met in Grenoble when she was a student and he was an honorary assistant lecturer. Over the next years they lived in France, Edinburgh, and then in Aberdeen where Hugh was a Lecturer in English at the university. However, this was to be no happy ever after marriage. The war of 1914-18 and Hugh's departure into the army seems to have caused a rift between them, and after the war ended, the couple lived separately. In 1923, Ellena took action to divorce her husband, and a divorce was granted on grounds of his desertion⁵. Their one child, Jean Ivana Dimitroff Morison Miller, died aged 22, in 1930 at the County Mental Hospital, Rainhill, suffering from what was then diagnosed as dementia praecox. Her address was given as Brook Villa (a private institution for the mentally ill), Green Lane, Liverpool.

Jeanie's Later Life

Jeanie's final book, *Poems Old and New*, was published in 1913 with a dedication to her children and grandchildren. Occasionally, in the following years, her sonnets appear in journals such as the *Common Cause*, *The Woman's Leader*, and *Women's Franchise*. She died in April 1922. At the time of her death, she was living at 4 Randolph Cliff, Edinburgh. Her obituary in the *Woman's Leader* (12th May 1922) described her as a "writer of some distinction...best known as a friend and exponent of Robert Browning" and "an early advocate of the higher education and the enfranchisement of women" adding that:

"those who had the privilege of her friendship will not soon forget discussions on every conceivable subject, politics, theology, even murder trials, in her Edinburgh drawing-room with its wonderful view over the Forth and the blue hills of Fife".



Jeanie Morison, Hugh Morison Miller (her son) with a dog. With permission of the Harry Ransom Center

The minutes of the Edinburgh Browning Society for 19th October 1922 note that Jeanie's son wished to perpetuate the memory of his mother's long connection with the Edinburgh Browning Society by presenting a prize each year to the best student in the Senior Honours Class of English Literature at Edinburgh University. The prize was to be a volume of Browning's poems.

Morison House and the Hetland estate were put up for sale in 1923.

Hugh Morison Miller died in 1934. After World War I, he had become a civil servant in London. Captain Guy Maynard Liddell of 42 Cheyne Walk obtained confirmation (according to the *National Probate Index*). Guy Maynard Liddell was a British Intelligence Officer.

References

¹ Lettice Milne Rae, *Ladies in Debate*, 1936

² Elizabeth Sutherland, *Lydia: Wife of Hugh Miller of Cromarty*, 2002, p.146

³ *Geological Magazine* v3 (2), Feb 1896

⁴ Held at the Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, Texas

⁵ Held at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas

⁶ *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23rd June 1923 'University Lecturer Divorced'

Photograph of Jeanie Morison, Hugh Morison Miller (her son) with a dog.

Browning Family Photography Collection Literary File, 981:0076:0001. Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Photograph entitled "The Bandits' Lair" with Hugh Miller the Younger on the front row.

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Roger Jones; 1965-2024, a Tribute

By Bob Davidson and John Armstrong

It is our deeply sad task to inform our readers that FoHM member Roger Jones, passed away on November 3rd 2024, after a very brief illness.

Roger will be known to some of you, but some acquaintances may have been limited to the weekend of our Cromarty Geology Conference 8 years ago, where he gave a talk on fossil preparation. Roger was also a founding member of the band of enthusiasts dubbed the fossil fish filleters.

Roger was a man of many facets as witnessed by his wide circle of friends, not only in the vertebrate palæontology sphere but worldwide through his love of travel and adventure and of course his glittering career in the banking realm.

An explanation of the term 'fossil fish filleters' seems appropriate. We are a band of enthusiasts brought together by our obsession for going out in all Scottish weathers, digging up rocks and splitting them in the hope of finding a fossil fish inside. Usually when we do this the fish splits through the middle and we get two fillets for the price of one. The one who dreamed up the name lurks in the mist of the early noughties, but memory suggests that it was Roger in cahoots with the late Nigel Trewin, FoHM founding Chairman. Roger certainly had the t-shirts made.

Roger was an enabler, his importance to the FoHM and to the NTS is that he was instrumental, with others, in bringing to the Miller Museum the magnificent cast of *Homosteus milleri* which can be seen on permanent display.

His enthusiasm for adventure combined with his love of digging up fossils inspired him to facilitate nine highly successful seasons of digging in the remote frozen wastes of Svalbard, formerly Spitzbergen, the ninth being summer 2024. These highly professional expeditions have revealed to the world many new important species, which will continue to be published in the years to come. One of these new species is named in Roger's honour, *Cheirolepis jonesi*, an accolade bestowed on the few.

Roger leaves his wife Catherine, and daughters Hannah, Bryony and Pippa and will be greatly missed by a network of friends that covers the globe.



Hugh's Cryptic Corner

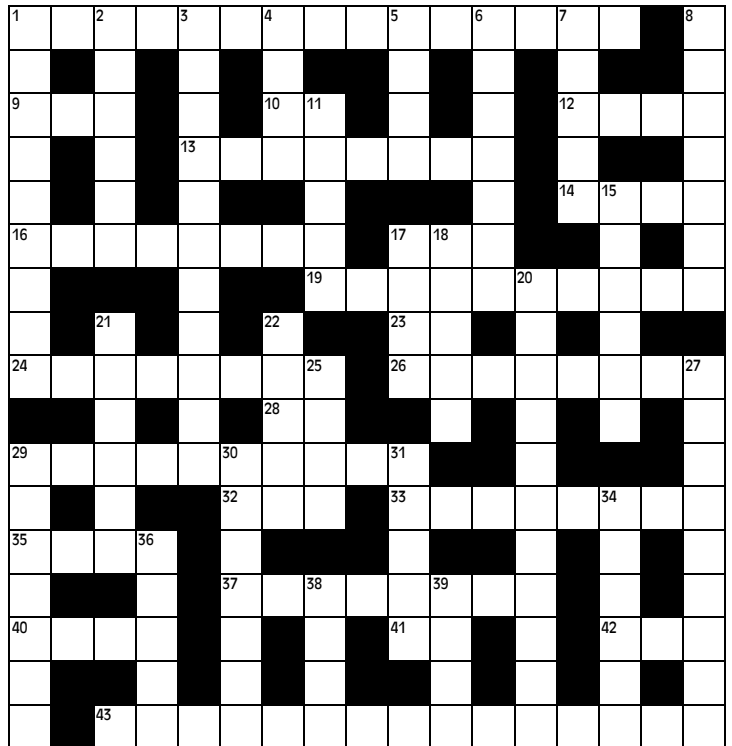
Crossword compiled by Tim Reid

We are pleased to introduce our Cryptic Corner with a crossword compiled by Tim Reid, who far from being "no relation", is in fact our Editor's husband.

The answers will be available on our website, in the news section, at:

<https://www.thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk/latest-news>

Good luck!



Across

- 1 She carved Miller in marble on twisting aeolian mill path (6,5,4)
- 9 Consume half of 2 down (3)
- 10 Exists in existence (2)
- 12 Soil found in Buffalo, America (4)
- 13 Arty rite performed between Cretaceous and Quaternary (8)
- 14 Drunk local loses license for fuel (4)
- 16 Always many variations of reliable character (8)
- 17 Owned fish, lost harbour (3)
- 19 Miller's newspaper article by smartarse on loch (3,7)
- 23 In Earth, God returns! (2)
- 24 Weaved Tory suit containing element 39 (8)
- 26 Sweeper mixes gin while cleaning teeth (8)
- 28 Concerning middling threat (2)
- 29 Do geologists enjoy whisky like this? (2,3,5)
- 32 Hospital department for sentient trees? (3)
- 33 Cor! Weird Michael J Fox character is on the Black Isle! (8)
- 35 Decorative mineral returns no unknowns (4)
- 37 County man has fishy period (8)
- 40 Hammer target for normal people (not geologists) (4)
- 41 Queen's hesitation (2)
- 42 Resin in place (3)
- 43 Added lesson torn roughly from Miller's book (3,3,9)

Down

- 1 Perthshire village that takes the biscuit? (9)
- 2 It thoundth thimble to find Miller'th beach (6)
- 3 Shake the oily itch for fossil fish (11)
- 4 Fruity-sounding couple (4)
- 5 Poor cat? Inside it's a killer! (4)
- 6 Handy user interface confused Hungarian royal dynasty (7)
- 7 Lily loses tail before returning state flower (5)
- 8 In this book, geologist Miller goes on a bit! (7)
- 11 Repair tube in Sally's first marquee (5)
- 15 Hero of Gaul, not quite The Rock? (His friend is a wee star) (6)
- 17 Possible answer to whether or not you're going to Scarborough Fair?
- 18 A tie-back medal (5)
- 20 Witness statements? Try one, taking cash (11)
- 21 Bashful around boob? Find old anvil (6)
- 22 Odd hour to take Norwegian leader to Great Lake (5)
- 25 Beetles, ants and flies not fashionable religious group (4)
- 27 Key crag we confused for sedimentary rock (9)
- 29 Crop circle, no corn, for Miller expert Ralph (1,6)
- 30 Studied, darling? Sound of our largest wild land mammal (3,4)
- 31 Fastest cake in the palace? Depends how you say it! (5)
- 34 Genuine digit heard on famous Venice bridge (6)
- 36 Solvent detected in sexy lollipop! (5)
- 38 Trailing 5-0, I would stare at the abyss (4)
- 39 Press element (4)



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