

Issue No 21  
Spring 2014

Editor:  
Martin Gostwick,  
Secretary

# Hugh's News

Newsletter of  
The Friends of Hugh Miller



## THE GIRL MOST LIKELY...

WE cast the net out far and wide to find a suitable young person to sail on the great Betsey replica voyage which we are sharing jointly with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) – and she has duly materialised, to our great satisfaction. RSGS described Mairi Gilmore of Culbokie, Black Isle, as “just the kind of candidate we were hoping for,” and in her application and interview with us, hugely impressed us with her enthusiasm.

She is a sixth year pupil at Fortrose Academy in the process of completing Advanced Higher Geography as well as an open learning course in Higher Geology. She will then take up a place at Glasgow University studying earth sciences.

The Friends of Hugh Miller will sponsor Mairi's £500 berth aboard the Leader on 6th to 12th September. She is to be joined by other students sponsored by the Edinburgh and Glasgow Geological Societies.

Aberdeen Geological Society, which is affiliated to us, is reported to be interested in supporting the production of educational resource materials for the voyage, and for schools' use thereafter.

Mairi's sponsorship is the first venture of its kind which The Friends has engaged in, as is the partnership with RSGS, and indeed the whole Betsey replica project. All these initiatives should combine to raise our profile considerably.

Mairi is 17, turning 18 in June. She wrote in her application: “The Betsey project seems an amazing opportunity. I found out about the project through my geography teacher Miss Alison Stuart. She has pro-



*Mairi's all smiles at the Scotland Rocks conference in Perth*

Please make every effort to attend our

8TH ANNUAL MEETING

At Cromarty Old Brewery

Saturday 3rd May

2.00-5.00pm

See Agenda, p 13

### INSIDE:

“We are Cromarty” festival	p 3
“Scotland Rocks” conference	ps 4 - 7
Big oil - & wind - need YOU	p 8
Geography, essence of everything	ps 9 - 11
Kirkmichael church saved	p 12
Lively AGM promised	p 13
Lilian activist supreme	p 14

vided me with information on the project from her correspondence with Joyce Gilbert of RSGS.

"Having read the proposals of tracking Hugh Miller's journey with geologists, geographers as well as writers, film makers etc. it seems a great chance to learn more about the geology of western Scotland whilst discovering some of our history in the process."

She went on: "The chance to sail around the west coast of Scotland, as well as learning about the geology, seems a once-in-a-life time experience. Being on a yacht for a whole week would allow you to become completely immersed in the project, unlike school where field work is completed in one day. There always seems to be time



*On the deck of the Leader*

pressures and the observations are normally rushed so the chance to have a whole week available to explore the western edge of Scotland with experts in their fields would be incredible. "

Meeting with Mairi and Alison Stuart at the Academy, I found a young person just made for this trip. The daughter of "outdoor people," she had several sailing holidays on the West coast, and a world tour with her parents behind her. She said landscape had always fascinated her from early childhood. "Wherever I looked, I wanted to know how the land was formed. I never took anything for granted." Now she is studying geology, she has become "fascinated by the stories the fossils tell you, about the history of the planet and the creatures who lived and died on it, and the order and manner in which they have changed."

Discussing the voyage, Mairi is already buzzing with anticipation: "I can't wait to muck in and be part of it. I'll do anything to help the team." She will be joining our Secretary, Martin Gostwick, as the two persons representing the Friends from Miller's beloved Black Isle.



*The island of Rum*

As a follow-up to the voyage, Martin Gostwick is organising a "mini-festival" in Cromarty, soon after the voyage (see story p3), to celebrate it and promote local talents in the arts and sciences.

And the RSGS people have been busy, holding the Scotland Rocks geology conference, and visiting key archives in the capital, including Hugh Miller's NMS collection in its new home at Granton, the Free Church College files and *The Witness*, and the National Library of Scotland for 17th and 18th Century maps.



# "WE ARE CROMARTY"

## Martin Gostwick

This is the very ambitious title we have given to a "mini-festival" we are holding in Cromarty, in association with the Betsey replica voyage. We have chosen it because we seek to project our 21st Century local talents, reflecting those Hugh Miller possessed in natural sciences, the arts, and folklore.

The replica voyage aboard the Leader trawler will, from 6th to 12th September, sail to the Small Isles of Mull, Eigg and Rum tracking Hugh Miller's journey aboard the Betsey in 1844, with geologists, historians, story-tellers, musicians, writers, teachers and students on board.

We have responded to a proposal from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) that we mount a programme of events in Hugh's home town, akin to those which RSGS and ourselves will be holding with local communities during the voyage itself. Please will all members make a note in their diaries of the dates, 23rd – 25th September next, to come here and take part, because good attendances will be vital to its success. It is approaching the end of the summer season, and it should not be too difficult to find accommodation. Let me know if you need help on this.

We have assembled a very exciting package of events to tempt you, one of which will be a film presentation of the Leader's voyage. Another will be a new banner being especially made for The Friends of Hugh Miller by Cromarty Crafters.

We will have exhibitions in the arts from water colourist Mary Maclean, driftwood sculptor Leon Patchett, botanical illustrator Julie Price, and potter Barbel Dister. Most of their work will be original pieces commissioned from The Friends, to be shown for the first time at this event.

continued on page 13

Captions, from top right:

Leon Patchett. 'Heart' (left) is one of his latest productions. Leon is organising the festival's art exhibition for us.

Kenny Taylor, writer, lecturer, broadcaster and musician  
Bob Pegg, story-teller

Barbel Dister, potter. For Barbel, the key to her work is "having fun," and she brings a great streak of quirky humour to her work. The plate she holds here is of "swimming ladies," a choice inspired by her love of swimming in the sea outside her shop's doorstep



# SCOTLAND ROCKS

## "PLANET'S FUTURE IS

Some 40 sixth form students from schools all over Scotland found and handled fossils, pored over magical minerals, mapped Mars, and learnt of brilliant career opportunities. They were tempted towards choosing earth sciences, by a "hugely inspirational and fascinating" talk (as one student described it) by RSGS president, TV's Scottish "rocks star," Professor Iain Stewart.

He started as if trying to put them off. "Rocks are really boring, tedious" he said, suggesting that fellow-students would comment with disdain: 'You're doing stones?' But rocks were fascinating, he went on, because of the stories within them.

He took the audience to the fantastic skyscrapers of Manhattan, New York. Not many New Yorkers would have the faintest idea they owed these buildings' existence to resting on some of the hardest bedrock on the planet – kyanite.

He showed a stone dyke in Aberdeenshire which farmers built up with, to them, useless boulders cleared from their fields. They contained fossil remnants of some of the first plants to come ashore over 400 mya. Then we saw petrified tree trunks of the Carboiferous world on the beach at Crail, Fife.

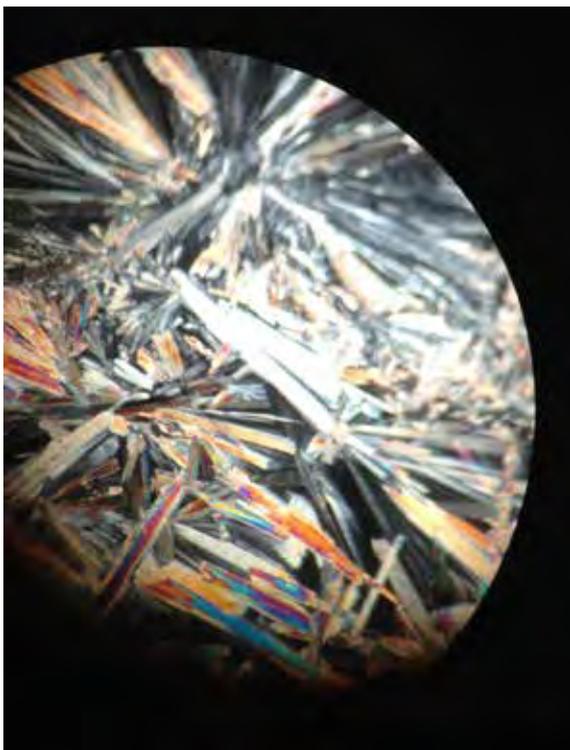
Iain showed a giant shale bing in the central Lothians , remains of the development by James Paraffin Young which initiated the oil and gas industries. He continued discussing how life evolved with the oxygenation of the planet, and the threats to its future posed by carbon emissions today.



*Above: Professor Iain Stewart of TV fame brings his great eloquence to the young audience*

*Below: A fibrous copper sulphite crystal is forming.*

*Bottom right: The conference in full session*



# SCOTLAND ROCKS

## YOURS TO DECIDE"

This was the theme strongly echoed in the concluding debate on energy challenges of the future, where six expert panellists reviewed the options between nuclear, oil and gas, shale gas, coal, hydro, and the range of renewables, and Iain told the young audience: "Yours is the generation which will have to decide on the right balance between the available resources." The panel agreed that reliance on fossil fuels will continue for a considerable time. Probably the liveliest discussion focussed on "fracking" (shale gas extraction); a consensus among the experts seemed to believe that strict well protection regulations would make it safe, but no listener popped up to challenge such comforting reassurance.

*A personal pleasure for me was to meet with Iain Stewart for the first time, and to have a chat about Miller and his complex positions on religion and geology. Iain whipped out his smartphone and showed me pictures he'd taken of a multi-million dollar Creationist museum in Connecticut USA. One showed a Jurassic reptile and an early human in the same scene, with a date of c2,500 BC.*

### PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

## MARS MARVELS, MINERAL WONDERS, FOSSIL SPLENDOURS

WATCHING the Curiosity Mission's robotic tractor Rover at work a million miles away on Mars probably stood out as the most startling – and gripping – experience of the events packed over two days.

Professor Sanjeev Gupta, via a Skype link with him at his base in Imperial College, London, took us to the barren surfaces of the red planet, specifically the Gale Crater, where a colossal research programme is seeking "to determine habitability." He is among a team of 400 scientists and 200 engineers in

*From top to bottom:*

*Joyce Gilbert, Derry Wilkinson of Dundee High School and Mairi Gilmour talk geology by the Friends of Hugh Miller's display*

*The Curiosity's Rover tractor at work on Mars*

*Students, some in 3D shades, look for routes Rover might take to scale Mount Sharp*

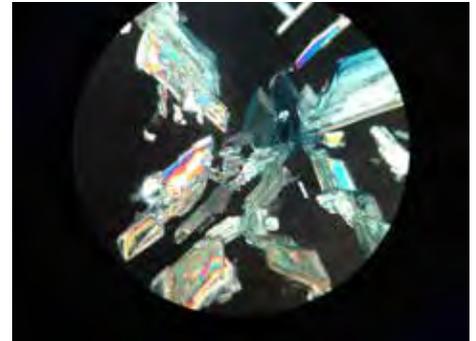
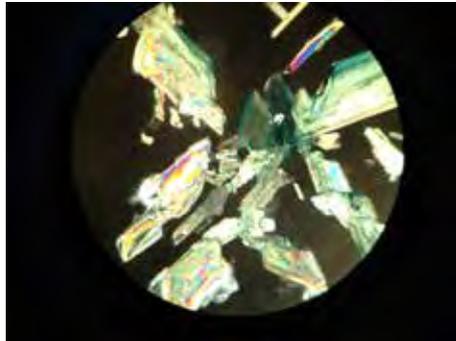


# SCOTLAND ROCKS

the NASA Mars Science Laboratory team, and he demonstrated with irresistible enthusiasm the Rover's multiple capabilities for recording Mars's geology, history and possibilities.

With Rover, we visited Glenelg, a name borrowed from an ancient district in Wester Ross, a suburb of Adelaide, Australia, where Miller's daughter Harriet and her family lived, and a settlement in Canada (as we reported in *Hugh's News* No 15, Autumn 2012, Miller on Mars). The name is palindromic, that is spelt the same from both ends, chosen, as Sanjeev explained, to signify the intention to take Rover there, and return it from whence it came. Evidence was found in conglomerate outcrops at Glenelg of an ancient stream bed. Mars was offering "lots of evidence of water-flow." Similarities between Mars and Earth are being found in fluvial, alluvial fan, lacustrine and deltaic deposits.

The next big project is to scale the foothills of Mount Sharp which rises out of the middle of the Gale Crater. The scientists have to find a route up the slope which will not seriously damage Rover, whose tank-like tyres have already been punctured by exceptionally hard pebbles. The students followed up the presentation, with a unique opportunity to be the first people to attempt a geological mapping of Mars deposits. "The NASA mission scientists are so busy with the enormous amounts of data arriving



*Photos of Magnesium sulphate crystals forming, kindly supplied by the Geobus team with St Andrews University. They were taken, together with the copper sulphate fibres on the previous page under cross polarised light, with apologies (not really necessary) for the quality, owing to the difficulty of trying to steady the camera on the microscope's lens.*



*Perth Museum natural history curator Mark Simmons helps some of the students identify fossils.*

*The Geobus team led the first day's field trip to the East Neuk of Fife, supported by the universities of Edinburgh, Dundee, and the British Geological Survey. The students scrambled among the Carboniferous rocks round St Monans, mapping and taking part in a geological treasure hunt.*

*And it was Geobus again who introduced us to the "magic of minerals" in one of the six workshops, of which I participated in two. A highlight of this, for me, was Iain Stewart using his smartphone to photograph crystals of magnesium sulphate forming on a slide, viewed through a telescopic lens. Talk about the wonders of technology.*

# SCOTLAND ROCKS



Above: A superb *Holoptychius* from Dura Den, Fife, a late Devonian beast closely described by Hugh Miller in *The Cruise of the Betsey\** on a field trip guided by Robert Dick in Sanday Bay, Caithness, the bones of which were "steeped in pitch"

Below: A drawing of *holoptychius*, said to have been a fast swimmer that fed on other bony fish.

## Holoptychius

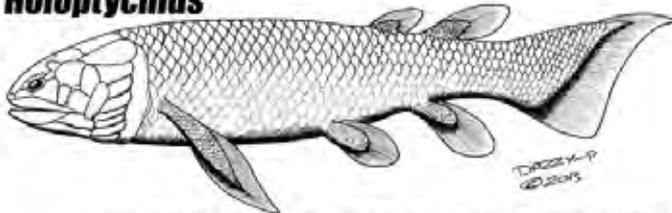


Illustration by Darren Pepper, reproduced on [www.prehistoric-wildlife.com](http://www.prehistoric-wildlife.com) with permission.

*It was a remarkable, and most pleasing, fact that of all the spokespeople, guides and tutors at the conference, somewhere approaching two-thirds were women. And at least half the students were women too. Something which would have astounded Hugh Miller and his Victorian contemporaries, for whom geology was an almost exclusively male field of activity.*

*Perhaps the most striking example of this advance, and career combination, was the specialist in plate tectonics who divides her time between drilling oil wells and professional dancing.*

*"You're a friend of Hugh Miller? You're a friend of mine." Greeting from Mark Simmons, Perth Museum's curator of natural history.*

daily from Mars that they do not have the time to map the deposits."

It was an extraordinary sight to watch the groups working with 3D eye shades, tracing paper, and other tools on this task. Guiding them were the University of St Andrews' Geobus team, an outreach group of teachers and third year students taking earth sciences to schools far and wide.

Edinburgh University postgraduate students took another workshop revealing the delights of Earth Science as a subject. They'd been to Greenland, Cyprus, Spain and Iceland. "We've stood at the top of volcanoes, on ocean crust, and deep sea sediments thrust to the top of mountains, and it all counts as studying!"

Geoparks Shetland were on to finding ways incorporate and integrate earth science into tourism and the heritage sector. BGS showed how they delivered models of geology as a three-dimensional world to a very wide range of user-groups. Dundee University's workshop brought a sediment core from Eastern Scotland showing evidence of long-term sea-level change and extreme events such as tsunamis and storms.

For me, a special chance came up to look at a small sample of Perth Museum's spectacular fossils, among them a humungous *Holoptychius*.

We were set to work to identify and draw various Jurassic creatures, including a devil's toenail oyster, a bivalve, a belemnite, an ichthyosaurus jawbone, a sea urchin, a coral and an ammonite.

From these presentations and workshops, it's fair to say, the participants from some nine schools in all, five of them from round the Moray Firth, did get a fabulous chance, as Iain Stewart put it, "to see and understand the world differently and far more richly." That was certainly made visible not least by the awesome range of sites illustrating Scotland's geodiversity in the posters displayed by Scottish Natural Heritage.

The Friends of Hugh Miller had a display table, and made a new member, Angus Miller of Geowalks, Edinburgh, who received the president's award from the man himself, Iain Stewart.

Joked Iain: "I go prancing the planet exploring it; Angus does it right here at home."

# BIG OIL - & WIND - NEED YOU

Oil and gas giants, and their suppliers need “thousands” of new recruits annually, particularly geologists, a spokesman for their trades association, Dr Alix Thom\*, confirmed.

Last year, the majors like Shell, BP and Total, invested £14.4 billion on developing new North Sea fields, building new drilling rigs and platforms. The North Sea yielded 1.5 billion gallons a day. The industry paid £6.5 billion pa in production taxes alone. It supported 450,000 jobs.

North Sea oil and gas had been extracted for 40 years, and “we have another 40 to go,” with a future beyond that in renewables and many other areas. “Without geology, none of that would happen,” she added.

She emphasised a particular need for exploration skills. “We have 50 wells drilling this year, and 25 due next year.” But the North Sea industry was losing people due to global competition. Dr Thom acknowledged that the industry had in the past neglected training, “but we are learning the error of our ways.”

Oil & Gas UK were lobbying both the Westminster and Scottish governments to ensure that employment issues were recognised. “We have a real need of people not only in the UK but internationally.” The association’s presence, and those of several key practitioners, underlined that message.

An impressive range of young professionals in key areas of geological expertise took a session amusingly called “careers speed dating” to open the students’ eyes to the sheer range of opportunities. One presented the range of services provided by the British Geological Survey (BGS); another spoke for nuclear power, a third worked in shale gas extraction. One young man had launched his own geothermal heating enterprise. Major projects were presented by an engineer for an international construction company. A pollution control officer talked about the complex problems of disposing of waste, industrial and domestic.

Some feedback forms requested “more speed dating, and less debating” next year. The momentum generated by the 2013 and 2014 conferences, and by the RSGS “Earth Sciences Higher” campaign, give strong hope that there will be a “next year.”

\*Dr Alix Thom is the employment and skills issues manager with Oil & Gas UK, based in Market Street, Aberdeen.



# GEOGRAPHY, ESSENCE OF EVERYTHING



Above:  
The Royal Scottish Geographical Society's HQ in North Port, Perth.

Below:  
An extract of local interest from an 1859 map, one of many colourful geological maps.



The Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) is a gateway to the wonders of the universe, housing much of what there is to know about the natural and human worlds in its magnificent headquarters in Perth.

It really took off just three years ago, when it opened The Fair Maid's House as the first purpose-built geographical education centre in the UK, and for the first time made its work and collections publicly accessible

It exists, say its members, to "inform and inspire people to want to know more about our planet, about how it works, and about the impact it has on us, and we have on it."

Here are tens of thousands of books, maps, atlases, paintings, photographs, diaries, and other records of exploration and discovery, from David Livingstone's late Victorian forays in Africa, Shackleton's early 20th Century marches in the Antarctic, through to the first moon landing, and the 21st century mapping of Mars.

RSGS runs the best national talks programme in Scotland, with around 100 illustrated presentations given round the country annually, by explorers, travellers, scientists, artists, journalists and broadcasters. It publishes a colourful newsletter, *The Geographer*, and the academic *Scottish Geographical Journal*, and gives out more than 10 different medals, prizes and awards for achievement.

The Society has part-funded field research for hundreds of students. And for the last two years, it has held the Scotland Rocks geology conferences, the first held at the instigation of Perth High School students themselves, anxious that the teaching and study of geology is in danger of being downgraded.





As its booklet, *Discovering the RSGS*, underlines: "It is critical that geographical sciences are encouraged. They must not become the accidental victims of cuts, or suffer from being inappropriately constrained because they don't quite fit into the science or social studies curriculum."

And president Professor Iain Stewart declares: "There has never been a more critical time for people to understand the Earth, its landscapes and our role in it," a theme on which he enlarged in his keynote speech to the 2014 conference.

A visit to the Society's premises is inspiring, however brief. They could not be better situated. They stand in North Port, just a few metres from the broad sweep of the River Tay, between the brilliant curvaceous glass-fronted Concert Hall, opened 2005, and the Perth Museum in its austere Victorian grandeur. The Society's two buildings are in the same rich Old Red Sandstone hues so familiar in Cromarty. The Society's HQ is in late 18th Century Lord John Moray's house. Beside the entrance a sheet of frosted glass bears the names of famous explorers, mountaineers and other adventurers. A front window offers words to enthuse the public, overtopping swirls of red lava flow.

Next to this is the Fair Maid's House, dating back to the 14th Century, named for the eponymous novel by Walter Scott, and lovingly restored to house the brilliant new visitor centre. I was particularly struck by the most apposite quotations about our interaction with nature, placed around the walls and glass panels, from such luminaries as John Muir, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Freya Stark, Jacques Cousteau, Michael Palin and many others.

Impressive indeed is the Earth Room's great globe showing our planet rotating, as seen from outer space. Luxurious is the Library, with its deep armchairs, study tables, and packed shelves, amidst which is a haunting medieval prayer niche, and objects like ice picks and snow shoes.

Among the Map Room's riches lie two very fine geological maps of Scotland, dated 1859, which would have been in the making in Miller's last years, among hosts of others dating from before and since. "In here, you can plan your own expeditions," remarked education officer Joyce Gilbert.

RSGS is an educational charity with thousands of supporters, like The Friends of Hugh Miller relying entirely on gifts from individuals and organisations. Visit its website [www.rsgs.org](http://www.rsgs.org) to learn more.

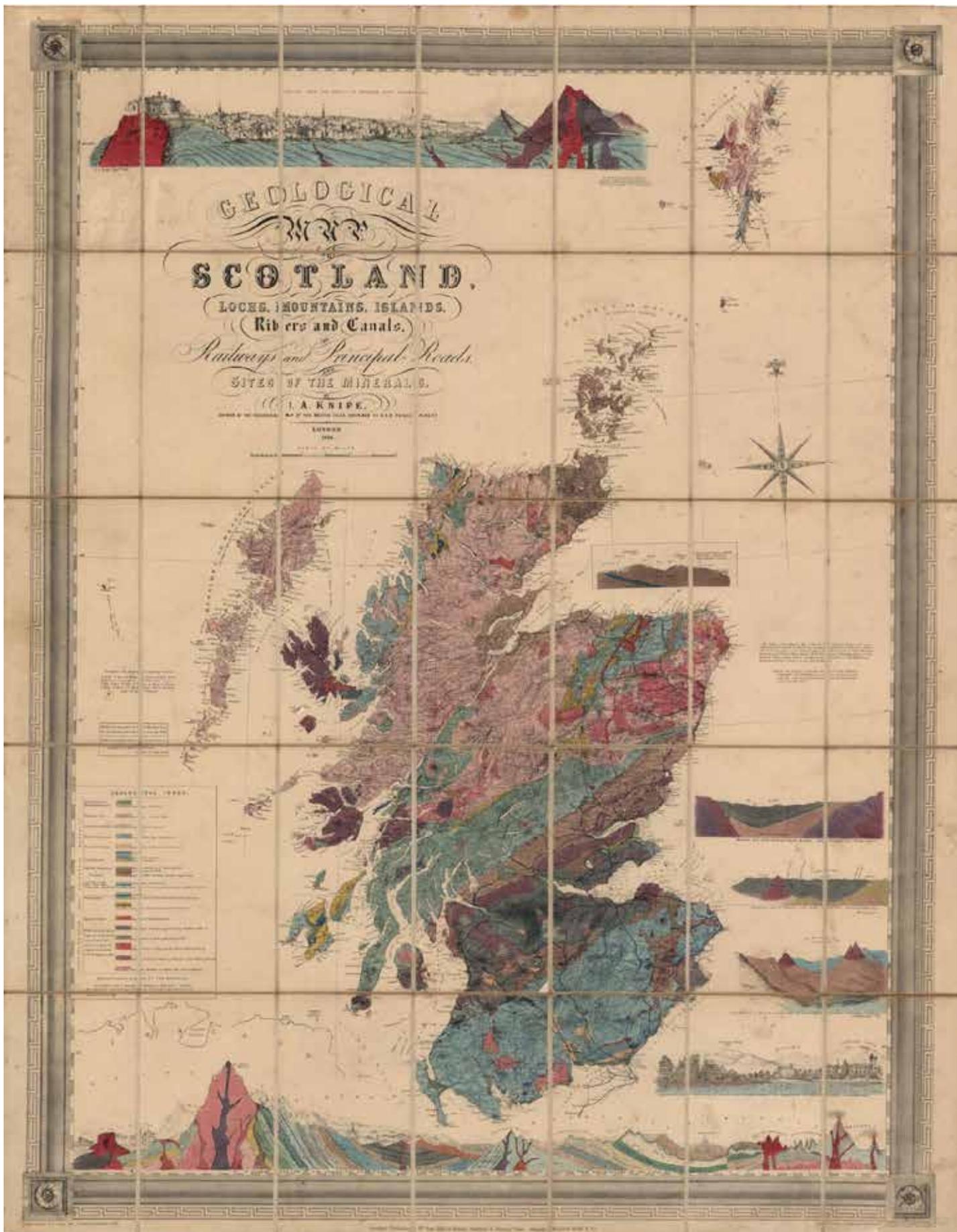
Top:  
The Society's office front window advertising the wonders to behold inside

Above:  
The library positively invites relaxed study

Right:  
Explorer Freya Stark's quote is straight after Hugh Miller's heart

"Curiosity is the one thing  
invincible in nature."

Freya Stark



*"Geological Map of Scotland, Lochs, Mountains, Islands, Rivers and Canals, Railways and Principal Roads and Sites of the Minerals"*  
by J.A. Knipe author of the Geological Map of the British Isles. Published in 1859.

One of the two examples of this fine map held by the RSGS is inscribed to HRH Prince Albert.

# KIRKMICHAEL CHURCH SAVED – AT LAST

IT was most splendid to learn that the ruinous Kirkmichael church at Newhall is at last to be rescued by a £282,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is to be fully renovated as a visitor centre, accessible to the public once again in its uniquely evocative setting on the shores of Udale Bay.



The Kirkmichael Trust's plans are to re-roof the church, and display within the walls some of the finest, and most ornate medieval gravestones. It will also deliver training in traditional building skills and conservation techniques, other educational events and open days.

The Trust is to be congratulated for sheer perseverance, dedication and courage in pursuing the funds needed to preserve this historic kirk over a period of many years, for the last few of which it has been in imminent danger of complete collapse. Further funding is pledged from Historic Scotland, Highland Council and the Robertson Trust.

Hugh Miller devoted almost an entire chapter to the kirk, its burial ground and associated traditions, Chapter XXIX, *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland* (B & W Publishing, Edinburgh 1994).

He described the tombs as "finished after the most exquisite designs, chastely Grecian, or ornately Gothic; and myriads of flowering shrubs winded round the urns, and shaded the tablets in every disposition of beauty."



Top: Kirkmichael set in the kirkyard  
 Above left: Kirkmichael church before the roof collapses in 2012  
 Above right: The 17th century pink sandstone mausoleum, erected by William Grant of Ardoch for his wife Florence Dunbar  
 Below left: Cromarty and the Sutors seen from Kirkmichael

Cromarty's East Church, our Museum and the restored Kirkmichael are sure to be good friends in the future. Now it's the Gaelic Chapel's turn! Its fate is still in the hands of Highland Council.



8th AGM PROVISIONAL AGENDA

# A LIVELY MEETING – AND THAT'S A PROMISE

This year we have invited a number of guests to liven up proceedings.

**Bill Taylor** of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society will present a preview of *The Betsey Project*.

**Alix Powers-Jones**, our Museum Manager, making a very welcome return from illness, will outline her plans for the Museum's future.

We have also invited **Mairi Gilmour** and her teacher, **Alison Stuart** of **Fortrose Academy** to attend – and speak if they are so moved on Scotland Rocks and the future of geology as a subject.



*Alix Powers-Jones,*

*Members of the Management Committee, please note that there will be a preliminary meeting, also at the Old Brewery, between 11.00am and 1pm. A key subject of this meeting will be a recommendation to the AGM for The Friends support of the We Are Cromarty festival, and a review of developments over the past year, including the new website and the increased subscriptions.*

Here are the usual items for the annual meeting in the afternoon:

1. Chairman Professor Nigel Trewin's welcome and introductory remarks.
2. Minutes of the 7th AGM.
3. Bill Taylor on the Betsey Project.
4. Alix Powers-Jones's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Secretary's Report.
7. Discussion
8. Election of office-bearers.
- 9 AOB.

**A public meeting will follow at approx 3.30pm on "The Cromarty Miller Knew," by Dr David Alston.**



*Dr David Alston*

# LILIAN THE ACTIVIST BEYOND COMPARE

Congratulations to management committee member Mrs Lilian Cameron, a non-stop all-round activist, who has been awarded a badge and certificate by the National Trust for Scotland, for her 25 years' service as a volunteer guide at Falkland Palace, where her heroine Mary Queen of Scots ruled for some six years.

Lilian served there once a week, every week, which involved a 25-mile journey each way, paying her own travel costs too, from her home in Dunfermline. She is fluent in French, a very useful asset when guiding the many visitors from the country where Mary grew up.

Lilian is a founder member of the Marie Stuart Society, and loves talking about the tragic queen "who will never die," with visitors and indeed anyone interested in the story. She is currently active in the Society's appeal for funds to erect a plaque at the queen's birthplace, Linlithgow Palace.

While the legacy of Marie Stuart is her first passion, she has also been a dedicated visitor and generous supporter of our own Scots hero, and has served on our management committee since its formation in 2012.

## "WE ARE CROMARTY" continued from page 3

We will have three "talks and walks" on succeeding days, the first, on Tuesday, 23rd September, given by our own chairman, Professor Nigel Trewin demonstrating some of his prize fossils, and leading a field trip to some of the fish bed deposits Miller made famous. The second talk and walk (Wednesday, 24th September) will be led by renowned natural historian Kenny Taylor. And the third (Thursday, 25th September) will be a wander amongst the magical world of Miller's legends by folklorist Bob Pegg. A detailed programme with times will be circulated later.

Member Gavin Berkenhegger, a professional mineralogist, will also be bringing a display from his collection of precious metals, and ready to answer questions on how to search in Scotland for these valuable products. We hope to round off the event with poetry and prose, including Miller's, on the Thursday afternoon, interwoven with some beautiful harp music from Katie Mackenzie, who played so finely for us the opening of Miller's Garden of Wonders in June 2008. And we have invited the Cromarty Youth Cafe to provide us with a rousing finale in the Victoria Hall, by "Wanda's dancing divas," and some of the town's best young musicians.

Up to now, we have received awards of £1,000 from Nigg Energy Park (part of the Global Energy Group) and £500 from the Cromarty Trust. We await a determination to our application to The Highland Council Black Isle Ward discretionary budget, and it will be for our AGM on 3rd May to determine how much we as The Friends can contribute towards the costs.



*Harpist Katie Mackenzie playing at Miller's Yard: Garden of Wonders opening ceremony in 2008.*

## SURPRISE NEW MEMBER

We are especially pleased when young people join our ranks, because this helps keep The Friends going in the longer term, and so we welcome Rona Dunbar, a civil servant living and working in Edinburgh.

She is just completing a geology open learning course as a mature student at Ullapool High School.

Somewhat to her surprise and ours, she was enrolled with us on a permanent basis by her sister, Inverness resident Mrs Lindsay Brown, as a birthday present! She confirmed this gave her great pleasure when she attended the Scotland Rocks geology conference (see ps ??).

Rona is now looking forward to visiting some of the sites associated with Miller in the capital.



## RIP Sir Graham Hills.

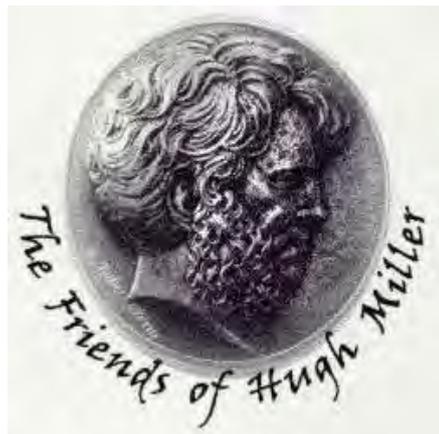
A sad loss has been the decease in February, aged 87, of one of our most distinguished members, Professor Sir Graham Hills. He was a former principal and vice-chancellor of Strathclyde University, and a founder of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

He was never active in our little group, but I imagined him to be an admirer of Hugh Miller, who also rose high from tough beginnings. Sir Graham left school with the equivalent of 'O' levels, and went on to a chair in chemistry at Southampton University, before giving the rest of his career to higher education in Scotland.

He was also, like Miller, a strong controversialist both among his peers, and in the media.

## CORRECTION:

We apologise to poet Alison Seller for misplacing her in our last issue in the Black Isle Writer's Group, when she is in fact a member of the Cromarty Writers Group.



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

I/WE WISH to become a member of The Friends of Hugh Miller

(Registered charity No SC037351).

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Tel No.....

Email address.....

Membership subscription is £15 annually, payable from 1st April, by cash/cheque or bank standing order. A standing order is preferred for administrative convenience, and if you wish to take up that option, please contact the Secretary, details below. A Gift Aid declaration form is also available, which would enable us to reclaim 25p in the £ tax on your subscription.

RETURN TO:

MARTIN GOSTWICK

SECRETARY,

THE FRIENDS OF HUGH MILLER

c/o RUSSELL HOUSE,

55 SHORE STREET,

CROMARTY IV11 8XL

TEL NO: 01381 600301

EMAIL ADDRESS: MGostwick@gmail.com