

Case 5a

PATRICK DUFF (1791 – 1861)

Patrick Duff was one of the Museum's early collectors (see panel on the end wall of the gallery, to your left). In addition to his interest in natural history, he was a keen geologist and knew the local area well. His obituary in the *Elgin Courier* of 5th April 1861 stated that: *There was not valley, a hill, or rock, within these bounds, of which he had no geological knowledge.*

He published a series of articles in 1840 about the geology of Moray in the local newspaper (*The Elgin Courant*) which he drew on for his 1842 publication *A Sketch of the Geology of the Moray*. This was received to great acclaim, as the article from the *City Chronical* shows. The cutting comes from a letter to Duff from his London publishers, Smith, Elder & Co. A transcript of the article is given on the wall above the case.

The copy of the book is on loan and is inscribed to Duff's brother Alexander, a lawyer in Edinburgh. The pages of the book are uncut, suggesting that Alexander may not have been quite as enthusiastic about the geology as the author himself.

Duff corresponded with many in the geological community, including Hugh Miller (1802 – 1856). One of Miller's letters to Duff (also in the Museum's archive) sent in January 1839 includes a sketch and section of the geology around Cromarty.

1. Letter to Duff from JG Smith, Smith, Elder & Co. 3rd June 1842, enclosing a press cutting from the *City Chronicle*, London, published 31 May 1842

This edition of the newspaper contained a favourable review of Duff's book. The article is reproduced on the wall above.

ELGNM: Geology letters: G16

2. Plate V – Fossils of the Wealden

An erratic of Jurassic rock was found at Linksfield, just north of Elgin, which contained the fossils of several marine creatures described by Duff.

ELGNM: Library 1179

3. *Sketch of the Geology of Moray*

Inscribed copy of Duff's 1842 book.

Duff gave this copy to his brother Alexander, a lawyer working in Edinburgh.

ELGNM: Loan: OEF 3681

4. Duff from an 1844 calotype

This portrait shows Duff holding a fossil in his right hand that he found in 1844. Originally thought to show fish scales, it was later realised that these were scutes from a reptile, *Stagonolepis robertsoni*.

The calotype by Hill and Adam is the earliest photograph of a vertebrate fossil.

ELGNM: 1978.580

5. Letter to Duff from Hugh Miller, 27th January 1839

Duff and Miller shared an interest in fossil fish; Miller has illustrated his letter with a sketch map and section showing the position of the Middle Devonian Cromarty fish beds (in blue).

ELGNM: Geology Letters: G4