

TRANSACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS 1868-75: THE SOCIETY'S 'MISSING YEARS'

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The early history of the society was recorded by Sir Hugh Gladstone in his Presidential Address of 1912² – and indicates that the Society, having commenced in 1862, ran ‘in a prosperous condition till May 1875 when its meetings ceased’³. It was ‘re-constituted’ in November 1876 and has continued to the present day. The published transactions do not provide any record of proceedings for the period from 1869 to 1875. In spite of two references by Gladstone there is a perception that nothing happened between 1869 and 1875 – and this apparent hiatus is re-inforced by the existence of two separate series of printed Transactions – from 1862-1869 and then 1876 to the present.⁴

The information gap from 1867-9 until 1874-5 can, however, be filled out to some extent by examining the various reports which appeared from time to time in the local press.⁵ The collating of these extracts is eased by an understanding that at this time in the Society’s history it was organised around having the first, or Annual General Meeting, of each session during the month of December: this was then usually followed by a further five ‘Winter Meetings’ finishing in May. Thereafter, there normally followed five monthly ‘Field Meetings’ until October. Such of these reports that can be found have been collated and the following pages are a summary of the Society’s activities during those ‘missing years’.

Proceedings 1867-68

Volume 6 of the First Series, nominally for the session 1867-68, was not published until 1871 and, probably because of the long gap between the meetings and actual printing, there are undoubtedly some anomalies regarding the dates of reported meetings. There were seven Winter Meetings between the Annual General Meeting on 5th November 1867 and 5th May 1868 and these appear to be correctly and fully reported on in the *Transactions*. A committee meeting was held upon the 29th of April to arrange the summer excursions or Field Meetings. These were planned to be:

1 Editor of the Society’s Transactions 1976 – 2009.

2 *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (Transactions)*, III, volume 1, 1912-13, Presidential Address by Hugh S Gladstone of Capenoch, pp. 15-42. This report was also reprinted separately as *The History of The Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, Dumfries, 1913 – some copies being issued as ‘A souvenir of Nov. 20th, 1912. With the Compliments of Hugh S. Gladstone’.

3 *Transactions*, II, volume 2, 1878-79 and 1879-80, note on title page.

4 The first Series (I) commenced in 1862-63 and ran to six volumes: the sixth and last volume was eventually published under the continuing editorship of the President, Sir William Jardine, in 1871. It records the transactions and proceedings of 1867-68 and the Secretary’s Report for the Session 1868-69. The ‘new’, or Second (II) Series, commenced with a new Volume 1 in 1876-78. There is some evidence that Sir William not only edited this ‘first’ series of *Transactions* but also funded the printing costs – it should be noted that by the early 1870s Jardine was a relatively old man – he died on 21st November 1874.

5 This process has been aided by the retention, among the Society’s records of a scrap- or cuttings-book for the period in question – this includes news-cuttings. While some are fully annotated a greater number only contain MS identifications in the hand of George W. Shirley.

First Field Meeting: 9th May 1868, Auldgirith.
 Second Field Meeting: June 1868, Moffat.
 Third Field Meeting: July 1868, Parton and Dalry.
 Fourth Field Meeting: August 1868, Lochmaben.
 Fifth Field Meeting: September 1868, Auchencairn and Dalbeattie
 Sixth Field Meeting: October 1868, Carloverock or Torthorwald.

Proceedings 1868-69

On page 12 of the *Transactions* there is printed the 'SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR SESSION 1868-9'. This provides no information on the Winter Meetings apart from '... regretting that at the commencement of last Session no Presidential address was delivered, and that generally there has not been evinced among the Members so warm an interest in the Society as is desirable, if it is to go on and prosper. ... specially is this remark applicable to the Field Meetings, which ... were carried out invariably by some half-dozen Members.' He further reports that, with decreases, there were only 89 individuals on the membership roll.

First Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 8th December 1868. Although the SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR SESSION 1868-9 gives no information on the Winter Meetings of that session the following appeared in the local press.⁶

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. - The monthly meeting of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society was held in the Club Rooms, Assembly Street, on Tuesday evening. Mr Robert Murray, St Catherine's, one of the vice-presidents in the chair. There was exhibited by Dr Gilchrist an excellent specimen of the supposed fossil rain-drops, and sun-cracks in the sandstone, from Maiden Bower quarry; and also a number of old and interesting works from the Hutton library, in the custody of the Presbytery of Dumfries. Mr Dudgeon of Cargen submitted a note of rare minerals lately discovered by him and Professor Heddle, in the course of researches in this neighbourhood and in Galloway, which have not been marked in any published work on Mineralogy, and some of which have been observed for the first time in Scotland. Dr Grierson, Thornhill, then exhibited and read an interesting history and description of the *Euplectella Speciosa*, a very beautiful marine production from the Philippine Islands. The *Euplectella* was only introduced to the notice of the scientific world a few years ago, and has created a great deal of attention, owing to the extreme beauty and elegance of its appearance. It is now generally allowed to be a species of sponge. Specimens were at first sold to museums and collectors of curiosities, at an extravagant price, but owing to the recent importation of considerable quantities from Manilla [sic], they can now be obtained at a very moderate price. Mr W. R. M'Diarmid next read an interesting paper, entitled "A Glimpse at Dumfries in the Reign of Charles II." The paper consisted of extracts from the records of the Town Council after the Restoration, most of which were

⁶ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday 12th December, 1868, page 2F.

indicative of the strong spirit of loyalty and submission inherent on the burghal authorities in these days, some casting a curious light on the manners and customs of the times. The meeting was well attended.

The 'SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR SESSION 1868-9' published in the *Transactions* continues by noting details of the programme of Field Meetings for the Session:

First Field Meeting: May 1869, Caerlaverock. Adjourned due to wet and cold weather.

Second Field Meeting: June 1869, planned for Parton but instead of that location a 'select party of six visited Caerlaverock and the district ...' A short report is provided in the *Transactions*, p. 12.

Third Field Meeting: 26th June 1869, Castleton to meet the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club. A full-ish report is provided by pp. 13-15 of the *Transactions* but a much fuller account is provided by the contemporary *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*.⁷ The meeting had been arranged specifically to meet with our Society and the meeting took place at Newcastleton where 'upwards of thirty sat down to breakfast'. Visitors, in addition to those from Dumfries included seven individuals from Northumberland; ten from Roxburghshire and four additional visitors. The Dumfries contingent numbered eleven and were noted to be 'Sir Wm. Jardine, Bart., President; Mr Stark [sic Starke], of Troqueerholm, Vice-President; Provost Harkness of Dumfries; Mr Arch. Harkness, Dumfries; Major Bowden, Lockfield [sic Lochfield]; Mr Maxwell Witham, Kirkconnell; Mr Witham, Kirkconnell; Dr Gilchrist, Crichton; Dr M'Nab, Dumfries; Mr A D Murray, Secretary; Mr R Murray, St Catherine's'. The main interests were geological, botanical, archaeological and historical - sites visited included, among others, Hermitage Castle, Milnholm Cross, Ettleton, Mangerton Tower, Liddel Water and Tweeden Glen.⁸

Fourth Field Meeting: 1st July 1869, Barjarg. This was reported in the *Transactions*, pp. 12-13.

DUMFRIESSHIRE AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.— The members of this society held their third [sic] field meeting for the season on Thursday last, when they visited Barjarg and Lag Towers, Barjarg lime-works, &c. At Barjarg the members present had an opportunity kindly given them by Mr Hunter Arundell of examining many valuable and rare books, including very beautiful and ancient missals, Napoleon medals, &c. In the woods a very large oak tree, 16 feet in girth, and two large larch trees, said to be the first of that kind planted in the south of Scotland, were met with and examined. Close to the house a roe deer was observed within a few yards of the avenue, so tame that it would not move away even when the carriage passed it. Squirrels are said to be now abundant in Barjarg woods, though none of them were observed. After leaving Barjarg, the party drove over to Lag Tower, where nothing very interesting was seen except a barn owl, who was scared from his hiding place, and from thence they proceeded to Glenmidge valley and Auldgirith House. In regard to that valley, a tradition exists that it was at one time the bed of the river

⁷ *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, 'Anniversary Address' by Sir Walter Elliot, 1869-72, pp. 19-44.

⁸ In addition the Society's cuttings-book contains a very full un-attributed news-cutting on this Field Meeting.

Cairn, which was diverted from its course by the “monks of old” cutting a passage through a rock barrier west of Dunscore village, and so letting it flow down past Speddoch to join the Cluden at the Routin’ Bridge, and the appearance of the valley goes far to support the truth of the tradition. A number of interesting plants were found and collected, and although the weather was very hot the party enjoyed their excursion very much.⁹

Fifth Field Meeting: 19th August 1869, Tynron. Only four members were reported as attending. Visits were made to Dr Grierson’s Museum, Thornhill and the Crichope Glen. This was reported in the *Transactions*, p. 15.

DUMFRIESSHIRE AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.—The August field meeting of this society was held on Thursday, 19th. A small party of the members of the society left by the mid-day train for Thornhill, where they were met by Dr Grierson, whose museum they inspected, as well as the new museum now in the course of erection. They then started for Crichope Linn, examining on their way Gatelawbridge quarry, in which are seen in close proximity, not only the red coloured sandstone peculiar to Nithsdale, but a whitish sandstone very rarely found in the district. Very extensive operations are carried on at this quarry, which appears to be inexhaustible; and the working was viewed of a ten-ton crane moved by the power of water carried a considerable distance from the Cample by means of a wooden aqueduct. After this the party were driven to Crichope Glen, the geological and botanical features of which were examined with much interest, and all were delighted with the varied scenery of this romantic ravine. The party returned to Dumfries by the 6 o’ clock train. Their original intention was to have visited Tynron Doon, but, owing to various circumstances, this was departed from. But although the Dumfries members did not find it convenient to visit Tynron on Thursday, a small party of the country members and their friends took advantage of the beautiful day to climb Tynron Doon and visit Killywarren, an ancient seat of the Douglas family. On the north side of Tynron Doon are visible remains of a moat or artificial ditch. Remains of a well, overgrown with rushes, was traced above the moat; and on the very summit towards the south, by removing the turf, sandstones much mixed with lime are to be seen. If a castle ever crowned this eminence, it must have had the highest site of any in the south of Scotland. Killywarren, about two miles further up the Shinnel, is interesting as being an old castle of the Douglas family, which has been roofed in and served the purpose of a farm-house. The coat of arms of the old family, elaborately carved, and a square stone beneath, bearing the date 1617, are inserted above the arched door of the newer part of the house. The huge whinstones which form the foundation of the old tall gable, the small windows, those of the third storey being close in the eaves of the roof, and the curious sloping and triangular garden behind, give Killywarren a very peculiar appearance. Inside the steepness of the stairs and the thickness of the walls are equally remarkable.¹⁰

9 There is a further un-attributed news-cutting in the Society’s cuttings-book - with pencil note by George W. Shirley ‘July? 1868-9’.

10 Un-attributed news-cutting in the Society’s cuttings-book – dated by George W. Shirley to ‘August? 1868-9’.

Sixth Field Meeting: 16th September 1869.

The *Transactions* note that on 16th September 1869 a Field Meeting was held at Rockhall cairn, Rockhallhead Chapel, Thorniewhat Glen and Deil's Dyke. See *Transactions*, pp. 15-16, but a more extensive report is provided by the local press.¹¹-

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

The members of this Society held their last field meeting of the season on Thursday, on which they visited a number of antiquities situated on the elevated ridge of country in the parishes of Torthorwald and Lochmaben. Starting by the train at 11.7 A.M. to Racks Station, the party took the route toward Rockhall, and first visited the site of the cairn or barrow situated in a field to the west of Rockhall House. This cairn, composed of stones originally gathered from the adjacent lands, seems to have been of considerable height, of a circular form, and about twenty or thirty yards diameter at the base. The stones have now been nearly all carted away, and the mound levelled down, in order that the soil might be cultivated. It does not appear that any artificial relics have been found in the cairn, or at least they have not been preserved or heard of. But the plan is exactly similar to those mounds scattered throughout the south of Scotland, which, when opened up, have been found to be the covering of stone cists, containing the skeleton of an aboriginal warrior, buried along with his weapons, consisting of stone hammers and flint arrowheads. If no such relic has been dug out of the cairn at Rockhall, it is not impossible that it may still repose beneath the surface, to be turned up one day in the progress of cultivation.

Passing on to the farm of Rockhallhead, the party proceeded to inspect the site of what "folks say was ance an auld kirk or chapel," as they were obligingly told by a local informant. The traces of such a building are quite evident in the contour of the ground, although not a stone is left above the surface; but the tradition that a part of the dyke bounding the homestead, which gives token of being built with clay mortar, belonged to an old wall of the edifice, is manifestly a mistake. The farm house and homestead of Rockhallhead, however, occupies the site of an ancient camp, which must have been of large extent, and great strength from its commanding position. A large part of the circular rampart and fosse is still in perfect preservation, close to the north side of the stackyard, as also in the interior of the homestead. Indeed, there seems pretty complete evidence that this locality must have been the centre of a primitive settlement. Right above the farmhouse, occupying the site of the fenced oppidum, is the remarkable erection of Rockhall Mote, one of the most imposing and interesting of the earlier antiquities in Dumfriesshire. A road leading up from the farm to the Mote arrests the attention of the observer from the amount of cutting and levelling that must have been originally bestowed upon it, quite incompatible with the importance of the modern field road.

The Mote itself is covered with trees, which in great measure takes away from its appearance at a distance. Some years ago, before the trees were planted, it was

11 Un-attributed in the Society's cuttings-book but dated by George W. Shirley to '? Sepr 1868-9'.

a very prominent and singular object when viewed from a distance, and only a few generations ago was regarded with feelings of peculiar reverence and superstition by the surrounding population. One of the party on this occasion was able to relate that a relative of his own, who farmed the ground half a century ago, moved with curiosity, determined to make a cutting into the Mote. He was strongly dissuaded by his neighbours from attempting any such perilous and impious act; but being a man of strong resolution he persisted in his enterprise, and one fine summer morning went with a few of his workmen, duly armed with picks and shovels to accomplish the task. They set to work, not without fear and misgiving; but hardly had the surface been broken into when the sky, previously bright and serene, became pregnant with the symptoms of change, and a terrific thunderstorm burst upon the hills. Terrified and awe-stricken the labourers threw down their tools and fled from the spot, and from that day to this Rockhall Mote has been left undisturbed.

We doubt very much, indeed, whether any investigation into the bowels of the mound would be repaid. Several of these large tumuli have been opened of late without finding anything but earth and stones, and they seem to be essentially different both in structure and intention from the smaller stone cairns which generally enclose the tomb of a primitive warrior chief. Rockhall Mote occupies a bold eminence on the hill range looking down upon Nithsdale and the Lochar Moss, and commanding one of the most beautiful and extensive panoramic views in the south-west of Scotland. It is a steep conical mound from 40 to 50 feet high, and what is quite singular in such structures, is surrounded by a deep fosse, and an outer rampart running, completely round the mound. It is almost in vain to speculate upon the original purpose of this great work of primitive enterprise. Although fenced like a camp, it is manifestly far too steep to have been occupied as a military position; whilst it would be absurd to suppose that such an incredible amount of labour was bestowed on the erection of a mere watch-tower when the surrounding country abounds in peaks and coigns of vantage. The proximity of the large and strong camp on which Rockhall farmhouse stands, with the cairn about half-a-mile further down, which by-the-by is only one of numerous cairns known to have existed in the same neighbourhood, affords us, if not a clue to the meaning of the Mote, at least valuable ground of connection. There can be little doubt that the Mote-hill was constructed by the occupants of the camp, and probably also the road connecting them. It may have been used as a temple for religious worship; but even thus far we scarcely dare to speculate; for it is anything but clear whether the whole of these relics belong to a Celtic race at all, or whether they are not the skill-less but Titan like labours of a still older and ruder population, whose very conditions and customs are so much a mystery to us that it is in vain we endeavour to trace the meaning or motive of their industry. It is pretty generally admitted, that whatever might be the original purpose of these great conical erections, they were preserved and made use of by subsequent races who had forgotten the memories of their founders; and to this we owe the Saxon designation "Mote," now generally applied to them, signifying their use as gathering places for the Council of the tribe, when met to legislate or deliberate on affairs of public moment.

From Rockhall Mote the party proceeded by way of the Beaconhill, surveying at a little distance the remains of two encampments – one on the Beaconhill, and the other popularly, but falsely, known as a Roman Camp, which has given the name of Camphill to the eminence it occupies. The route was then continued over the Annandale side of the ridge towards Lochmaben, and the botanical members of the party took the opportunity of a ramble through Thorneythwaite [sic Thorniewhat] Glen – a deep and rugged glade, in which, we may mention, that a fern of the *Adiantum* genus was discovered a year ago, which, if indigenous to the locality where it was discovered, has been found for the first time in Britain. At the bottom of the slope, towards Hightae Loch, occurs a long abrupt ridge, which traverses the country for a considerable distance, and which has been reported by not sufficiently careful observers to be a portion of “The Deil’s Dyke,” one of the most, if not the most remarkable of the antiquities of Dumfries-shire and Galloway. This primitive wall is said to begin in the neighbourhood of Wigtown, to proceed along the line of the bay to Newton Stewart, crossing into the parish of Minigaff, and keeping the mountain ridges to proceed along the high lands of Galloway, entering Dumfries-shire at the head of Glencairn, and proceeding, by the way of Tibbers and Durrisdeer [sic Durisdeer], across the country towards Lochmaben, terminating somewhere in the vicinity of Annan. Of this work Daniel Wilson says – “It has been traced through a much larger district of the country than the whole length of the Antonine Wall; and though it lacks the historic interest of that structure, and the valuable legionary inscriptions found along its line, it is never-the-less a remarkable evidence of combined action and primitive engineering skill. . . This ancient wall measures eight feet broad at the base, and is mostly built of rough unhewn blocks of moor stone and trap. In districts where stone is more inaccessible, it is constructed of stones mixed with earth and clay, and at some few points it is entirely of earth. The fosse, which is still traceable along a great part of the wall, is on the north side, from whence we are justified in inferring that the vallum was raised by the natives of the southern districts. It is of course, impossible to assign the age of the builders of this ancient structure with absolute certainty. History is utterly silent on the subject. The very name, which ascribes its origin to the Master Fiend, shows how completely tradition has lost every clue to its builders. The correspondence of the general design to the true Roman walls seems very clearly to point to its erection by the southern Britons after the departure of the Romans, when we know that they frequently suffered from the inroads of the northern tribes.” The supposition thus doubtfully hazarded by Wilson would seem to make the wall a barrier between the Selgovae and the Picts of the north and west, a purpose which in some of its parts it might seem capable of serving, but scarcely at all in others.

On examination of the ridge near Lochmaben, however, it was at once made plain that it is no part of the Deil’s Dyke, but a natural ridge formed by aqueous or glacial action, or both combined, at a period infinitely older even than the times of the Picts and Cymri; so that if the deflection of the dyke from the parish of Durrisdeer [sic Durisdeer] towards Lochmaben and Annan rests upon no better footing than ridges of this description, it may be that the wall continues to keep the hill tops, or terminates, perhaps, in the high lands of Dumfries-shire; in which

case it could be better supposed to be a division between the Cumbrians and the Galweddyll Picts, erected in the fifth or sixth century.

The party reached Lochmaben, after having enjoyed a long and delightful walk, in which they were favoured with most enjoyable weather, and returned to Dumfries by the afternoon train.

Proceedings 1869-70

First Winter Meeting and Annual General Meeting: December 1870.

Second Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 18 January 1870.¹²

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- At a meeting of this society held last week, Mr Starke presiding, the Secretary Mr Corrie read a report of the proceedings of the society for the session 1868-9, including an interesting *resume* of the summer field meetings. Mr Dudgeon of Cargen then read a paper on the coins found at [sic] St Jergan's [sic St. Queran's] well, near Cargen, when it was recently cleaned out, and exhibited a large number of them, mostly of copper. He also intimated that he would present to the society a set of these coins. Mr Dudgeon then described verbally the following new minerals which he had discovered in some lead workings at Cassencarrie, in the Stewartry, viz., kupper-nikel, nikel ochre, cobalt bloom, and a white mineral containing cobalt, nikel and arsenic - the latter he stated he believed to be an entirely new mineral. He also thought he discovered in the same place native arsenic and emerald nikel, but these were doubtful. On the mention of Mr Corrie, seconded by the chairman, a special vote of thanks was given to Mr Dudgeon for his communications, his gift to the society, and his public spirit in clearing out, restoring, and beautifying St Jergan's well. Dr Malan read an instructive and interesting paper in reference to and descriptive of the recent discovery of ancient prehistoric dwellings beneath a deep deposit of volcanic pumice stone in the Grecian islands of Thermia and Santorin, &c., the discovery being made in excavating the pumice stone for use in making the breakwater forming the harbour of Port Said at the Mediterranean mouth of the Suez Canal. Dr Malan received a vote of thanks for his paper, a continuation of which was promised. Dr M'Nab made a communication on "the mode of examining the tissues of plants," giving interesting and elaborate details of experiments made by him, and exhibiting illustrative diagrams.

Third Winter Meeting: February 1870.

Fourth Winter Meeting: March 1870.

Fifth Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 5th April 1870.¹³

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. - The fifth monthly meeting of this society was held

¹² *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 26th January, 1870, page 5D.

¹³ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday 9th April, 1870, page 3B.

on Tuesday night - Mr Starke, Troqueer Holm, presiding. The secretary presented two contributions to the society, and also exhibited a large piece of stone sent to him by Mr Scott, teacher, Clarencefield, covered with beautiful markings like ferns - the result of deposits of zinc. Mr Mitchell read a short notice of a cist or stone grave discovered on the farm of Drummillan, Troqueer. When opened, there were found in the bottom of the grave, mixed with dry gravel, a good deal of wood ashes (oak apparently), and a quantity of a black and calcined substance which had all the appearance of burnt bones. It was situated in a field wherein was a cairn, known as the "Picts' Cairn," erroneously named on the Ordnance Survey Map "Peter's Cairn." Mr Shaw read a highly interesting paper entitled "Notes on some large boulder stones in Tynron and Keir," giving details of them as examined by him in the bed of the Shinnel water and its affluents, and also in a burn near Barndennoch, Keir. Mr R. Maxwell read a long, interesting, and valuable historical sketch of the celebrated feud between the Johnstones of Annandale and the Maxwells of Nithside. A conversation followed upon the reading of this paper, and Mr Aitken, in illustration, read some interesting notes from a printed paper, entitled "Copy of a manuscript tract, addressed to Lord Broghley, illustrative of the Border Topography of Scotland A.D. 1590, with a plate or map of the Borders."

Sixth Winter Meeting: 3rd May 1870¹⁴

DUMFRIES-SHIRE AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The sixth meeting of this Society for the present session was held on Tuesday night - Mr Starke, Troqueer Holm, presiding. At the recommendation of the committee, arrangements were made for the annual excursions, and it was agreed, on the suggestion of Dr Gilchrist, that an invitation be given to the Berwickshire Club for another joint meeting during the present season. The secretary reported some observations he had made in regard to birds in the district. He stated that sand-martins were first seen on the banks of the Nith on the 8th of April; that on the 22d the house-martin and swallow appeared, and the cuckoo was heard; that on the 1st May a pair of sand-pipers were seen on the Nith; and that on the 2d May a brood missel-thrushes took wing. Dr Gilchrist read a short but highly interesting paper entitled, "Notes on the Antiquities of Devonshire," giving various details regarding them. The thanks of the meeting were awarded to Dr Gilchrist. Mr Lennon read a long and exhaustive paper entitled, "Notes on Entomology," which he illustrated by the exhibition of a most beautiful collection of butterflies and moths. A general interest was taken in this paper, and Mr Lennon was warmly thanked for his efforts to entertain the Society. The meeting then separated.

First Field Meeting: [June 1870?]

Second Field Meeting: 7th July 1870.¹⁵

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The second field meeting for this season took place on Thursday last,

¹⁴ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday 7th May 1870, page 3E.

¹⁵ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday 9th July, 1870, page 4C.

when a party of about a dozen, led by their veteran, President Sir W. Jardine, and including Professor Harkness of Cork, visited Kirkconnell, and the neighbourhood. Under the guidance of Mr Nivison, manager of Miss Whigham's collieries, who kindly volunteered his services for the occasion, the party travelled up and carefully inspected the glen formed by the Kirkburn, ending their walk at the old Churchyard of St Connell, on the farm of Kirkland, and at the foot of the hills separating this County from Ayrshire. The walk was both interesting and instructive, from the ease with which the various strata overlying the coal formation could be observed. On returning to Kirkconnell in the afternoon, the party crossed the Nith to the west, and while some of them busied themselves in gathering vegetable fossils, from what is literally a bank of them on the river side, others visited and inspected the remains of what is supposed to have been an ancient fortification, known as the "Picts' or Deil's Dyke," and which is said to have extended along the hill country from the sea in Wigtownshire into and through this County, until it again reached the sea about Annan. Whatever was its purpose, the sharp eyes of one of the party discovered on the line of it an ancient utensil, which satisfied those present that man, and not "the deil," had a hand in its formation. The day was a beautiful one, making the meeting most enjoyable; and through the kind courtesy of Mr Gilmour, of the Glasgow & South-Western Railway, who not only, without requiring the usual three days' notice, gave the members from Dumfries the benefit of a pleasure party order at single fare, but stopped the express at Kirkconnell Station for them, they were enabled to return home by 6.30 P.M. with comfort and speed.

Session 1870-71

First Winter Meeting and Annual General Meeting: 6th December 1870¹⁶

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The first winter meeting of this Society was held on the evening of Tuesday last – Mr Starke of Troqueer Holm in the chair. The office-bearers were elected as follows:- President, Sir Wm. Jardine of Applegirth, Bart.; Vice-Presidents, Patrick Dudgeon, Esqr., of Cargen, R. Murray, Esqr., St Catherine's and Dr Gilchrist; Committee, Dr Kerr, Messrs A. Crosbie, W. Lennon, James Aitken, W. Allan, J. Maxwell, J.C. Aitken, G. Kirkpatrick, Starke, and Jas. Barbour; Librarian and Curator, Mr Starke; Secretary and Treasurer, Mr Corrie, Procurator-Fiscal. The Secretary laid on the table several contributions to the Library. He then read an account of the excursions during the past summer and made some additions to his interesting observations of birds; among these was the fact of a wagtail passing under a young bird which was flying across the Nith in order to prevent its offspring falling into the stream; and an account of a Robin in the garden attached to the City of Glasgow Bank in Dumfries, which imitates the notes of other birds frequenting the same enclosure; a faculty on the part of the Redbreast which has not previously been observed.

Second Winter Meeting: [January 1871?].

16 Unattributed in the Society's cuttings-book but dated by George W. Shirley to 6th December 1870.

Third Winter Meeting: 7th February 1871.¹⁷

DUMFRIES NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- A meeting of this Society was held last night. The attendance was thin, owing to the meeting in the Town Hall, anent patronage. Dr Gilchrist was called to the chair. The Secretary said that the Transactions for last year were in the printer's hands and would soon be ready for distribution. Photograph of skeletons of the extinct *Dinornis* of New Zealand, presented by Mr Robert Scott, jun., New Zealand, formerly of Nithsdale Tweed Mills, was exhibited, and the thanks of the meeting were to be sent to Mr Scott. There was shown the bronze handle of a Roman sword, found at Broomhill, Lochmaben, and presented by Mr Robert Graham. Dr Gilchrist exhibited an ancient seal found at Carlaverock [sic Caerlaverock]. Mr Hastings, taxidermist, showed skins of the chough, pintail duck shot in Galloway; also stuffed specimens of the great crested grebe, spotted woodpecker, and hoopoe, shot in the district. Mr Lennon was to have read a paper on a subject of natural history, but from the paucity of attendance the reading was postponed.

First Field Meeting: [June 1871?].

Second Field Meeting: [July 1871?].

Third Field Meeting: Thursday 3rd August 1871.¹⁸

DUMFRIESSHIRE AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The third field meeting of this society for the season was at Kirkcudbright on Thursday last. A party of six left Dumfries by the morning train, and were joined at Kirkcudbright by several members and the Rev. Mr Underwood. The route was along the Borgue shore of the Dee to the "Mickle Ross," whither the party drove. On arriving there the weather, which had been very cold, broke into a heavy driving rain, but it afterwards cleared, and a beautiful afternoon followed. The party walked round the Ross, and were enabled to gather a variety of botanical and geological specimens. The isthmus connecting the "Mickle Ross" with the mainland was examined with interest, and it was evident that at some distant period the sea at high water had swept over it, as it now sweeps between the Mickle and the Little Ross. On their return the party visited Senwick old church and churchyard, most romantically situated on a cliff overlooking the Dee, where that curious plant the Arum, or "lords and ladies," was found in abundance, in berry, and they walked thence through the wood along the shore to Nunton. At Nunton there are some slight remains of an ancient nunnery, and hence the name. Before reaching Kirkcudbright a visit was paid to Kirkchrist churchyard, also overlooking the Dee, where a curious slab of stone, bearing peculiar markings on its sides and on one of its surfaces, and which had been dug up, was examined. On their return to Kirkcudbright the party visited various places of interest therein, including the site of the ancient castle of "Caercudbright," on the bank of the river, south-west of the town, and thence walked to St Mary's Isle, where they were charmed by the beautiful scenery and flowers to be seen there, the pleasure of the visit being much

17 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday, 8th February, 1871, page 5D.

18 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 9th August, 1871, page 5C.

enhanced by the kind attention of Mr Aitken, gardener to Lord Selkirk. The party from Dumfries reached home at 8.35.

Fourth Field Meeting: Thursday 7th September 1871.¹⁹

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The monthly excursion of this body took place on Thursday to the romantic and picturesque shores of Colvend and Southwick. The weather in the morning was unfavourable, which caused the attendance to be limited, but the afternoon was fine, and the party separated into two bands, one botanizing, and the other examining the antiquities in the neighbourhood, and the geological aspects of the coast scenery.

Fifth Field Meeting: Thursday 12th October 1871.²⁰

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The members of this society had a fine excursion on Thursday last through part of Kirkgunzeon parish. Drumcoltran Tower, a fine old ruin, and Corah, a humbler relic of the past, but memorable as having afforded a resting place for Queen Mary, when hastening from Terregles to Dundrennan, were the special attractions of the visit.

Session 1871-72

First Winter Meeting and Annual General Meeting: [December 1871?].

Second Winter Meeting: 9th January 1872.²¹

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The second meeting of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society this season was held on Tuesday night - Mr Starke, Troqueer Holm, in the chair. A report by the secretary of the proceedings of the society during the session 1870-71 was read. The boots or shoes of the skeleton recently found near Racks, together with some of the bones and part of the woollen cloth in which the remains had been wrapped, were exhibited by the secretary, who also read a short explanatory notice in regard thereto. So far as can be judged, the remains must have been in the moss for several hundred years. A short conversation followed.

Third Winter Meeting: Tuesday 13th February 1872.²²

NATIONAL[sic] HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. – The third meeting of the season was held last night, when a specimen of the Lesser Guillemot, a rare bird here, was laid on the table. From a short notice sent with it to the meeting by Mr M'Kenzie of Barnhill it appeared that he had caught it in a ditch on his farm on 14th January last, having been, as he supposed, driven inland by one of the storms so prevalent last month. A paper by Mr M'Diarmid, at present in Cornwall, entitled "An Afternoon's Walk Across England," giving interesting and instructive

19 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 13th September, 1871, page 7D.

20 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday October 18th, 1871, page 5E.

21 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday January 13th, 1872, page 4D.

22 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 14th February, 1872, page 5C.

notices of the various objects of natural and antiquarian interest, there so plentiful, was read by the Secretary. Dr Grierson of Thornhill exhibited specimens of that curious Lycopodium, the "Resurrection Plant" of California, and then favoured the meeting with a variety of his views on the subject of education of the young, and the influences of museums, local or otherwise, upon the mind.

Fourth Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 13th March 1872.²³

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The fourth meeting of the session was held last night, when a paper by Mr M'Diarmid, describing St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, and giving interesting details in regard to it and the neighbouring town of Marazion, an ancient Jewish colony, was read by the secretary. Dr Gilchrist read a paper on the "Granite Industries of the North of Scotland," by Mr T. R. Marshall of Edinburgh, and was followed by Dr Anderson, Southern Counties' Asylum, with an able and instructive address on "Muscles and Muscular Fibre." Each of these papers was accompanied by illustrations.

First Field Meeting: 1st August 1872.²⁴

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The August field meeting of this Society took place on Thursday week at Newabbey and neighbourhood. The party left Dumfries about mid-day, and were met near Newabbey by Mr Dudgeon of Cargen, Mr Stewart of Shambellie, and the Rev. Mr Downie, R C., Newabbey, whose knowledge of the locality proved of the greatest service. The first object visited was an ancient smelting place on the farm of Millhill, on the property of Mr Carrick Moore, where numerous pieces of slag and charcoal were found; the slag was very heavy, and estimated generally to contain about 50 per cent of iron. It is not probable that smelting operations were carried on here to any great extent; but that it was found profitable in days long gone by, when communication was difficult, and fuel abundant, and no metal was more precious than iron, to fuse and extract that metal from the ore in however small quantities it might be found, there seems good reason to believe. From this spot the party proceeded to a field at the foot of a hill on the farm of Martingirth, on the estate of Kirkconnell, where the locality of an ancient lead smelting place was examined with much interest. Here the soil over an extent of several square yards has been completely lead-poisoned. No vegetation will grow upon it, and it is black with mineral debris. Numberless pieces of charcoal, lead-slag, and some pieces of lead were picked up. Pieces of the slag were found to contain lead in the form of galena, and reduced lead, and also a sulphate of lead, the formation of which must have occupied a lengthened period. An old road, which apparently gave access to the smelting place has recently been discovered in the neighbourhood, and an obviously artificial mound not far off has the appearance of a huge spoil bank. Further up the hill, on the same property, is a field still known as the Leadbells, and here some years ago, a large mass of lead ore (now in the possession of Mr Witham) was turned up by the plough. Leaving Martingirth, the operations at present being

²³ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday, 13th March, 1872, page 5D.

²⁴ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday, 10th August, 1872, page 3E.

conducted in search of minerals on the farm of Woodside, Kirkconnell, under the supervision of Mr Henderson, mining engineer, were examined. An excavation in the solid rock on the brow of the hill, and which was evidently formerly used in the smelting of lead, has been discovered in the course of these operations, and pieces of smelted lead adhering to the crevices, and lead slag have also been found, but as yet no traces of ore have been come upon. The exploration has taken place along the line of a deep trench cut through the field, and in this some extremely fine specimens of rock polished by glacial action may be seen. Mr Henderson furnished the party with a great deal of interesting information, besides supplying them with specimens; for which, on the motion of Mr Dudgeon, he was awarded a cordial vote of thanks. After this, Kirkconnell House was visited, where various antique relics and natural curiosities were examined. Retracing their steps, the party, on reaching Shambellie, ascended the hill, and on the summit examined the site and remains of the old "clachan" of Newabbey regarding which little appears to be known. On the southern slope of the hill a boulder of great size, deposited on another rock, and which had evidently been ice-carried, was examined with some curiosity. On the return to Dumfries, a tunnel in the solid rock at Whinnyhill was examined. Here also the search for minerals is being prosecuted at a point where the granite and greywack[e] meet and mineral traces are more likely to abound.

Session 1872-73

First Winter Meeting and Annual General Meeting: [December 1872?]²⁵

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

The first meeting of this society for the season took place on Tuesday week – Mr Dudgeon, Cargen, in the chair. The following office-bearers were appointed:-

President, Sir W Jardine, Bart. Vice Presidents, Messrs Dudgeon, Aitken and Starke. Librarian and Curator, Mr Starke. Secretary and Treasurer, Mr Corrie. The Secretary read a short report of the proceedings of the society during the season of 1871-72. He also exhibited an ancient leather shoe found in a moss near Lochmaben. Dr Grierson exhibited the skin of a stormy petrel, killed recently at the mouth of the Annan. Mr W G Gibson presented to the society an impression of an ancient bronze seal found in Dumfries a number of years ago, and which is mentioned in the Statistical Account of Dumfries, and is supposed by the Edinburgh antiquaries to be the Privy Seal of James V. Mr Dudgeon read a short paper on "The Evidences of the Subsidence of the Land," particularly in reference to a discovery made by him near Cargen.

THE VINE DISEASE

Dr Grierson then made an extremely interesting statement concerning the ravages of the insect *Phylloxera vastatrix* or vine-pest, and exhibited a piece of vine root from Drumlanrig on which the insect and its ova were seen. Dr Grierson said –

²⁵ Un-attributed in the Society's cuttings-book, but most probably the report of this meeting.

“A considerable time ago, vineyards in the south of France became attacked with an insect that had not before been observed; it was of the nature of an aphid and was found upon the roots of the vines. In the year 1868 its ravages had greatly increased and had become of national importance. It was ascertained that the insect was identical, or nearly so, with an insect that had been doing much injury to the vines in the United States of America, and which had been described by Mr Fitch, by the direction of the United States Government. Yearly the ravages of the insect in France have been extending, and to such an extent have they reached that the question is put whether France has suffered most from the war with Germany or from this insect. Every effort is being made to stay its ravages, the academy of Science of Paris has appointed a committee, and Government offers unlimited mean – a very large sum of money – as a prize is offered for a remedy. Hitherto the only remedy proposed that has received favour is that of stamping out, a phrase with which we in this country were only too familiar during the visitation of the cattle plague. A writer in *The Gardener* in July, 1869, dating from Kent, states that his vines are affected with the same pestilential insects as are in France, and that he believes that in England there are other places where the insect has appeared. Since then the insect has been known to be more or less in England, but there were no recorded cases of the insect having been observed in Scotland until this autumn, when on examining the roots of some vines of an unhealthy aspect in one of the vineries at Drumlanrig they were found to be covered with this insect, and vine after vine in the vinery became affected. The vines in the adjoining vinery next yielded to the devastating insect, and now the vines in both vineries are wholly destroyed. A week or two after the insect was first observed at Drumlanrig, a communication was made respecting it to the Society of Enquiry meeting in the Museum, Thornhill, and partly through this communication it became known to gardeners in Scotland and they were led to examine the roots of their vines that had an unhealthy aspect and up to last week no less than 12 or 13 places became known where the pestilence was. The insect is very small, not larger than a poppy seed; the colour is ochery yellow; and with a pocket lens it is seen to have the general aspect of an aphid. Rarely have they been seen winged, but occasionally they occur in countless numbers, myriads covering the roots of the vines. All individuals examined have been found to be females, all being found to contain eggs, and if there are males, such have not yet been met with. In France the history of the insect has been most carefully studied, but a vast deal of its life history has yet to be learned. To the question, how is the insect diffused, there is no satisfactory answer. The few that have been found winged might be supposed to carry the disease, but according to the French naturalists although they have wings they are quite unable to fly. But surely this will admit of question. At Drumlanrig the progress of the insect in the two vineries destroyed Mr Thomson compared to a fire beginning at one corner and extending to the other. None of the insects were seen above ground, they must have travelled beneath, and they would seem immediately to leave the vine roots they had destroyed and seek for more to destroy. No other plant but the vine does the insect seem to touch. At Drumlanrig it passed by the fig, the peach, and the currant, which were intentionally placed in its way, destroying the vine alone. The insect has been named *Phylloxera vastatrix*. He (Dr Grierson) would

suggest as a remedy, which he would gladly see tried, a decoction of the root of the white Hellebore (*Veratrum Album*) with which the ground wherein the affected vines grow should be saturated. It is immediately destructive to insect life but in no way affects vegetable life. It acts upon the nervous system which it immediately destroys. The white Hellebore can be obtained in quantity if required. Let the Phylloxera Committee of the Academy of Science of France experiment, and if the *Veratrum* is found to be effective, let them keep the money reward offered to themselves, as far as he (Dr Grierson) is concerned; and let the Scotch gardener make use of it, if required, without any fear of infringing upon patent rights.”

Second Winter Meeting: Tuesday 14th January 1873.²⁶

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY – The second meeting of the season was held last night – Sir Wm. Broun [sic Jardine?], Bart., in the chair. The Secretary laid before the meeting various old documents found in the Commissary Clerk's Office. One of these was a resolution, signed by forty-six gentlemen of the county, binding themselves not to allow any servant in their families to take vails or drink-money, nor after Whitsunday 1760, to give any such vails on any pretence to any servant; another document was a petition by John Neilson, huntsman for the shire, for an addition to his salary, and dated 30th April 1787, from which it appeared, in ten parishes of Dumfriesshire, killed 51 foxes, 3 badgers, 1 wild cat and 4 fougarts or polecats – the wild cat was killed in Penpont. The Secretary exhibited a pair of horns of the ancient and extinct red deer of Scotland, which had been found last summer in the bed of the Nith, near Glencaple, by Mr James Marshall, Friars Vennel; his net when fishing for salmon having been caught on one of the points of the antlers. The horns are attached to the frontal bone of the skull, and are quite sound and perfect. Each branch measures 3 feet 6 inches in length, and the width of the tips of the branches is about the same distance. Each horn has seven tines. The weight is 18 ½ lbs. It being mentioned that a portion of the ruins of Lincluden had lately fallen, the secretary was requested to inform the factor for Terregles of the circumstance. Mr Dudgeon of Cargen read a paper on an ancient smelting place in Troqueer, and showed specimens of the slag.

Third Winter Meeting: Tuesday 11th March 1873.²⁷

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- A meeting of the society was held last night – the Rev. Mr Laidlaw, Wanlockhead, in the chair. The secretary laid before the meeting letters of poinding, issued in the name of “Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland.” Both creditors and debtors were denizens of Dumfries. A stone celt, nine inches long by 2 , found on the property of Mr Anderson of Netherwood, in the neighbourhood of the ancient camp, near Trohoughton, was exhibited. Dr Gilchrist read an interesting paper on the ancient Scandinavian burial place at Maeshowe, in Orkney, illustrated by excellent water colours. The thanks of the meeting were given to Dr Gilchrist.

²⁶ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 15th January, 1873, page 5C.

²⁷ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday, 12th March, 1873, page 5D.

Fourth Winter Meeting: Tuesday 8th April 1873.²⁸

ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY MEETING.- The fourth meeting of the session of the Dumfries and Galloway Antiquarian and National[sic] History Society was held last night – Dr Gilchrist in the chair. The secretary, Mr Corrie, exhibited a copy of Geikie's Etchings of character, which was with much interest examined. Mr W.G.Gibson, presented plaster casts of bronze cells [sic: celts] and spearheads in the Crichton Institution Museum. A copy of Mr Wm. Carruthers' F.L.S. British Museum, most recently issued work "A Revision of the British Graptolites," presented by the author, was read before the meeting. Mr Shaw, Tynron, exhibited ten large and beautiful photographs of various objects in the British Museum, and read a variety of critical remarks on the sculpture delineated in the photographs. In connection with this subject Mr Shaw called attention to the propriety of having views taken of all local ruins and objects of antiquity. The thanks of the meeting were recorded to Mr Gibson, Mr Carruthers, and Mr Shaw.

[Fifth?] Winter Meeting: Tuesday 20th May 1873.²⁹

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- A meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday night, Dr Gilchrist presiding. Arrangements were made for out-of-door meetings during the summer at Auldgrith, Mable, Tynron and Cluden. An interesting paper on Duncow, communicated by Mr W.G.Gibson, was read by the secretary, and an ancient plan of Duncow and its neighbourhood was exhibited in illustration of the paper. The cordial thanks of the meeting were awarded to Mr Gibson.

First Field Meeting : 1873,Auldgrith.

Second Field Meeting: 1873, Mable.

Third Field Meeting: 1873,Tynron.

Fourth Field Meeting: 11th September 1873.³⁰

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The fourth field-meeting of the club was held on Thursday last, when a small party visited Irongray, Cluden Mills, Holywood and Lincluden. Driving direct to Irongray Church, the improvements recently effected therein, which have made it worthy of the beautiful site it occupies, were examined with interest, and a unanimous opinion was expressed that the heritors of the parish had set an example of liberality and good taste which might well be followed elsewhere. In the churchyard the tomb of Helen Walker, prototype of Jeannie Deans, was a source of attraction. Leaving Irongray and walking thence by Cluden Mills, the Druidical circle at Holywood, and the banks of the river to Lincluden and Dumfries, the fine scenery and the various objects of interest presented were much enjoyed. The stones forming the Druidical circle were carefully examined, with special reference

28 Un-attributed in The Society's cuttings-book, but most probably the report of this meeting.

29 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 21st May 1873, page 6E.

30 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 17th September, 1873, page 5C.

to certain cup-like hollows in several of them, which were at one time supposed to be artificial, and intended to convey some unknown symbolic meaning; but the party were quite satisfied that the most of these hollows were due to the action of water and small stones, by a process which they had just seen in actual operation at the waterfalls in Cluden close by. In one of the fallen stones certain holes were no doubt artificial, as they were evidently the result of an attempt to split the block up. It was with great regret, on reaching Lincluden, that the party observed numerous signs of quite recent mutilations of the carved stones in the chapel, - a regret deepened by the conviction that apparently nothing is likely to be done to save the beautiful remains of the building from utter destruction.

Session 1873-74

First Winter Meeting and Annual General Meeting : [December 1873 ?].

Second Winter Meeting: 16th January 1874.³¹

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The second winter meeting was held last night, when James Starke, Esqr., of Troqueer Holm, was elected President of the Society, in the room of Mr Dudgeon of Cargen, who had declined to accept the appointment, and Mr Lennon was promoted to the vice-presidentship. After some other business a paper on the birds of Troqueer, as observed near Maxwelltown Loch, was read by Mr Scott. The paper gave many interesting details of the habitats of the birds visiting the loch and its neighbourhood, and noted among them the following rare birds in this district, viz., green sandpiper, kinge fisher, little grebe, &c.

Third Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 17th February 1874.³²

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- At an adjourned meeting held last night, the President, Mr James Starke, of Troqueer Holm, read an address on his acceptance of the office, in which he indicated his intention of making an effort to revive the interest formerly taken in the objects of the society, which, with the attendance at meetings, has for some time considerably fallen off, and Dr Gilchrist gave notice of a motion on the same subject. There were exhibited from the Crichton Institution a fine specimen of the Castor Oil plant, some of its fruit and seeds, and a single fruit of the Bergamot Orange (*Citrus Bergamia*); a Wryneck, recently shot at Holywood; and a Bittern, recently shot near Lochmaben, both now rare birds in this country, were exhibited by Mr Hastings; and it was mentioned by the Secretary that recently when the Nith was low, a large flock of Gulls, sometimes accompanied by Jackdaws, might be seen feeding on the salmon roe deposited in the spawning beds opposite the foot of Assembly Street.

Fourth Winter Meeting : [March 1874 ?].

³¹ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Saturday 17th January, 1874, page 4C

³² *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 18th February, 1874, page 5A.

Fifth Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 14th April, 1874.³³

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. - The fifth meeting of the session was held last night, at which a report by a committee formerly appointed to affecting certain improvements upon the society was considered and approved of, and it will come up at next meeting for adoption. A valuable and instructive paper on "Blood and its tissue relations" was read by Dr Anderson, Southern Counties Asylum; and various exhibits were made by members, including a fine specimen of a male Golden Eagle recently trapped at Glenwhargen, Penpont, a Raven from near Newton Stewart, and a white Heron (foreign). The eagle measured 6 feet from tip to tip of the wings, and the raven 3 feet 6 inches.

First Field Meeting: Saturday, 6th June, 1874.³⁴

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The first field meeting of the season was held on Saturday last, when a considerable party left Dumfries for Thornhill by the midday train, and afterwards drove to Enterkinfoot and visited the ruins of the very old Pre-Reformation Church of Kirkbride, on the farm of that name, in the parish of Durrisdeer, where they were joined by a small party from Sanquhar. The church is believed to have been built in the 12th century, and like all other edifices of the kind and period, was of very small dimensions. One of the gables is still complete, and is surmounted by a belfry; a door-way, two small windows, and what looks like a channel [sic: *chancel?*] arch are also in wonderful preservation. The walls for a height of 2 or 3 feet and a portion of the western gable are also standing. The graveyard is extensive and is still the burying place of two or three families in the neighbourhood. The party greatly enjoyed the magnificent view from the elevated site of the church, which stands on the slope of a high green hill. Having partaken of the kind hospitality of Mr Hyslop, the worthy and respected tenant of Coshogle and Kirkbride - the inspection of whose splendid new dairy, though not strictly antiquarian, was not the least pleasing incident of the day - the party returned to Dumfries in the evening.

Second Field Meeting: Saturday, 4th July, 1874.³⁵

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The second for the season of this Society's field meetings took place on Saturday, the district visited being Closeburn and neighbourhood. The party, which was not very numerous, left by rail, and on reaching their destination visited the old tower of Closeburn, and the extensive lime quarries attracted a good deal of attention. Buchan Ha', which for several years was the residence of the notorious Lucky Buchan and her deluded followers, was visited, after which some time was spent in exploring some of the beautiful scenery between Closeburn and Thornhill.

33 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 15th April, 1874, page 5D.

34 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 10th June 1874, page 7A.

35 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 8th July, 1874, page 7C.

Third Field Meeting: Saturday, 8th August, 1874.³⁶

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The third field meeting of this society for the present season was held on Saturday last, when a small party left Dumfries by rail for Bridge of Dee, where they were met by a number of gentlemen from Kirkcudbright and neighbourhood. Crossing the Dee by the old bridge and passing through the policies of Dildawn, the party proceeded along the left bank of the river until they reached the ancient and beautiful churchyard of Kirkcormack - which derives its name from the Irish saint Cormack, to whom the church was dedicated some time in the ninth century. Some remains of the church, which was ruinous so far back as 1684, still exist. The cemetery was the burying place, among others, of the Maclellans of Auchlane, a branch of the noble family of Kirkcudbright; and a tombstone of millstone grit, and therefore in good preservation, records the death of the Hon. Patrick Maclellan, who died in 1534 at the age of 18. The ruins of Auchlane Castle are distant about three miles from the churchyard. On the opposite side of the river is pointed out the scene of the battle known as Druimcheate between Edward Bruce and the English on 29th June, 1308, in which the latter were defeated and many of them swept into the river. The adjoining farm of Miefield is a very ancient well dedicated to St Ninian, but modernized into "Ringan's." Passing down the valley various objects of natural interest attracted attention, and the geology and botany of the district did not pass unexamined, while the exquisite and constantly varying beauty of the river scenery, enhanced as it was by the broad and stately Dee being in full flood formed a source of pleasure rarely enjoyed. The fish "Doachs" at Tongland were examined and regret was expressed that such obstructions or such a mode of capturing salmon should be permitted to interfere with the rights of fishing in so noble a river. The site of the Roman camp a little further down the river was examined with interest, after which the party proceeded to Kirkcudbright.

Session 1874-75

First Winter and Annual General Meeting : [December 1874?]

[Second?] Winter Meeting: 12th January, 1875.³⁷

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. At a recent meeting of this society - Dr Gilchrist, president in the chair - an interesting paper on "The Transit of Venus" was read by Mr Macfadzeon of the Inland Revenue. After a glance at the result of previous observations, Mr Macfadzeon gave a description of the three methods of utilising the transit of Venus for the purpose of establishing the sun's distance from the earth, viz:- The direct method, De L'Isle's method, and Halley's method. Mr Macfadzeon concluded with a brief account of the results of the recent observations so far as these had been ascertained. The paper, which was illustrated with diagrams, was listened to with much attention, and was highly appreciated.

³⁶ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 12th August, 1874, page 7A.

³⁷ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 20th January, 1875, page 5D.

Final Winter Meeting: Tuesday, 11th May 1875.³⁸

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. - The last home meeting of the session was held last evening, when arrangements were made for excursions during the summer and autumn. Among other interesting notes, it was mentioned by the Secretary (Mr Corrie) that he had this season observed that the brown martin, which usually arrived on the Nith in the first week of April, was not seen in any numbers until the first week of May; that he had as yet noticed only one house swallow on the Nith; and that the swift had arrived simultaneously with the martin, being its usual time, or at least only a few days late. He also stated that he noticed the common birds were generally later than usual in nesting. It was mentioned that a fine young plant of mistletoe raised from the berry, was growing on an apple tree in the garden of Chapelmount, Maxwelltown. A paper on the Druidical remains at Albury [sic: Avebury?] Wiltshire, which are of great extent, was read by Dr Gilchrist, giving many interesting details from personal observation and the works of various antiquarian authors, for which the thanks of the meeting were awarded to him.

Unattributed meetings

The following reports of meetings are taken from the Society's cuttings-book, but cannot be attributed to a date at present. They give further details of the activities of the Society.

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The third field meeting of this society was held on Thursday last at Kirtlebridge and the neighbourhood. The party confined themselves principally to the bed of the Kirtle, which they carefully explored for several miles, noting the interesting series of rock strata therein exposed, and ending their walk upwards at the romantic and beautifully situated old churchyard of Kirkconnell, within the domains of Springkell. Among many curiously carved and inscribed stones in the grave-yard, the greatest interest was centered on those of "Fair Helen" and Adam Fleming lying side by side. On the stone covering the latter a large sword is carved, but the inscription once quite plain of hic jacet Adamus Fleming is now illegible. After spending a pleasant time in a beautiful country, the members from Dumfries reached home by the Caledonian train about 6 P.M.

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. - At a meeting of this Society on Tuesday night - Mr Carlyle presiding - the Secretary read a communication from Mr Hamilton of Ardendee, Kirkcudbright, as to the probable origin of the name of the burgh being "Caercuabrit," instead of, as popularly believed, "Kirk-Cuthbert," and also as to the origin and meaning of many place-names near Kirkcudbright and elsewhere in the Stewartry.

NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- At the monthly meeting on Tuesday evening - Dr Gilchrist presiding - Mr Maxwell of Breoch read a paper

38 *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, Wednesday 12th May, 1875, page 4F.

on the derivation of the word "Galloway," pointing out the probability that it was formed from the Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon word "Gal," and the word "Heth," corrupted to "Weth," with the Latin termination "ia," forming together "Galwethia." The paper, which was highly interesting, led to an animated conversation.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The third meeting of the session was held at Dumfries on Tuesday night – Dr McNab in the chair. Dr Gilchrist read an interesting paper descriptive of the natural features and the antiquities observed by him during a visit last autumn to "St Mary's" one of the Scilly Isles. Dr Gilchrist also exhibited a specimen plant of "Colula Coronopifolia," found by Mr Peter Gray, formerly of Dumfries, in the neighbourhood of London, but not, so far as known, found previously in England. Dr Grierson read a paper, "Some account of my old Garden," giving many interesting details of the doings of the many reptiles, insects, &c., introduced by him thereto, and of the plants growing therein. Dr Grierson also exhibited a number of drawings of ancient stone crosses found in Nithsdale and now in his possession; and showed a specimen of "Tappa" cloth manufactured by the South sea Islanders from the bark of a tree. Dr McNab exhibited a large number of microscopic specimens of the embryos of various seeds, which were examined with interest by the members present.

DUMFRIESSHIRE AND GALLOWAY NATURAL HISTORY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.- The fifth meeting of this society for the season took place on Tuesday night, Mr Starke, Troqueer Holm, in the chair. Dr Gilchrist read a continuation of the paper given at the last meeting, illustrative of "A coal field." Mr Lennon read a short paper on "The functions of the Antennae." Mr M'Diarmid read a "Note on Carlaverock [sic Caerlaverock] Castle." Mr Kirkpatrick mentioned that the "Haw Finch" had recently been shot in Wigtownshire, and that a wood pigeon's nest had been discovered built upon the ground on a hillside, a fact which is believed to be unique.