



The Sir Archibald Geikie Archive

The Geikie Archive at Haslemere Educational Museum consists of letter books, artwork, field notebooks, geological specimens, letters, personal items, manuscripts and photographs.

(1) Who was Geikie?

Sir Archibald Geikie was a famous Scottish geologist, born in Edinburgh on 28th December 1835. He was educated in local schools in the city and at the University of Edinburgh.

He was Professor of Geology at Edinburgh, from 1871-1882. In 1867, he became Director of the Geological Survey of Scotland until 1901.

Geikie became Director General of the Geological Survey of Great Britain in 1882, and remained Director until his retirement in 1901.



Castle ruin at Kilkerrin, Ayrshire, Scotland



Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, USA



Sir Archibald Geikie (1835-1924)

(2) What did he do and achieve as a geologist?

In 1855, aged only 20, he was appointed as a geological surveyor to the new Scottish branch of the Geological Survey. His survey work began in the Edinburgh area, a region rich in volcanic rocks. He became an acknowledged authority on igneous rocks, and devoted much research to them. He also accurately accepted some of the earliest ideas on glacial theory.

In 1860, Geikie accompanied Sir Roderick Murchison (then Director of the Survey) on an important geological reconnaissance survey of the northwest Highlands of Scotland. This later developed into the last major geological dispute of the 19th century, regarding the true geological structure of the area. It was only resolved by Geikie's surveyors after a new interpretation of the district.

Among his most important investigations was his study of the Scottish deposits of the Old Red Sandstone. Other work included studies of the Carboniferous and Permian volcanic rocks of Scotland. He is regarded as a pioneer historian of geology and enhanced the study of geology in Britain through his many readable and popular textbooks, and speaking tours.

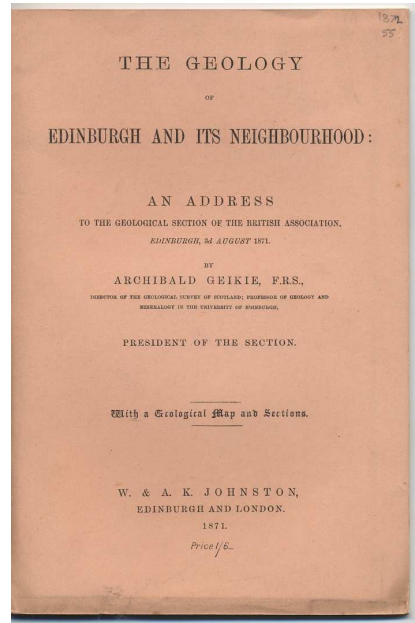
(3) What did he do and achieve as a writer?

His written output was outstanding, with 246 listed publications covering geological survey memoirs, textbooks, geological research papers, biographical works, educational materials, a variety of popular Science Primers and obituaries.

He published many geological survey memoirs, mainly of Scottish areas such as *The Geology of Edinburgh and its Neighbourhood* (1871) and *The Geology of Eastern Berwickshire* (1863).

His geological interest broadened from Scotland through the British Isles to the rest of Europe and America. Many books were published and a selection of titles includes *The Story Of A Boulder* (1858), *Scenery of Scotland* (1865), the major work *Life of Sir Roderick I. Murchison* (Geologist) (1875), *Outlines of Field Geology* (1876), *A Text-book of Geology* (1882) and the two volume work *The Ancient Volcanoes of Great Britain* (1879).

His last work was, *A long life's work: an autobiography*, published in the year he died, 1924. Some of his works were revised in several editions. Many of his books can be read in our library.



Example of Geikie's survey work 1871



The Murchison Medal awarded to Geikie in 1881.

(4) Honours and Awards

- The only geologist to be President of the Royal Society, 1908-1912
- Twice President of the Geological Society
- President of the Classics Association, 1910
- Awarded the Murchison and Wollaston medals
- Was knighted, 1891, awarded by Queen Victoria
- Knight Commander of the Bath, 1907
- Order of Merit, 1913

He held honorary degrees from most British and numerous foreign universities. He received medals from the Geological Society of London, Royal Geographical Society of Scotland, Royal Society of London and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In 1892, a new mineral from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) called Geikielite was named after Sir Archibald Geikie. Samples were obtained from coarse gem-gravels in the Balangoda and Rakwana districts of the island. They were taken to the then Museum of Practical Geology, London (now part of the Natural History Museum) for examination, and subsequently found to be new to science.

(5) Geikie and the World

Geikie first worked in Edinburgh at several addresses and later moved to London. Geikie travelled widely and visited many different countries; this is reflected in his wider academic studies, publications, holidays, and especially through his artwork and lecture tours.

He later retired to Haslemere in 1913. Sir Archibald Geikie became Chairman of the Haslemere Educational Museum from 1914 until his death in 1924, and saved the Museum from closure. His home was Shepherd's Down, Hill Road. He died 10th November 1924, and is buried in St. Bartholomew's Churchyard. It is a short walk from the Museum.

As a result of his academic studies many geographical locations have been named in his honour. These include five mountains, two mountain ranges, two glaciers, and about 19 other geographical features. He even has a feature on the Moon – Dorsa Geikie in Mara Fecunditatis (Sea of Fertility).



The Colonnade, Staffa, Scotland



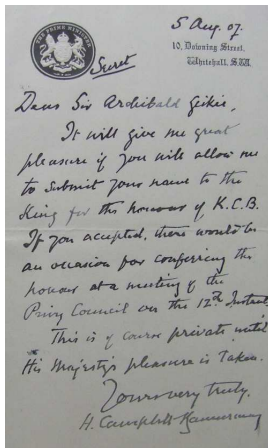
Glaciers in Norway

(6) Artwork

Geikie's artwork consists of beautiful watercolours, pencil, ink drawings and numerous photographs of places he visited (within the British Isles and abroad) and studied throughout his long career. They include subjects like landscapes, geological and geographical themes, architecture and people.

They illustrate Geikie's scientific and artistic imagination. In addition, they captured locations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many of which have changed over the intervening time. Numerous examples of his artwork can be found within his publications that illustrated his thoughts, ideas and developing geological hypotheses. A number of original sketches and paintings were used for the purpose of illustrating his publications, which now forms a part of our collection.

A selection of these is exhibited in our Geology Gallery.



A letter to Geikie from the Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman

(7) Correspondence

This encompasses 36 volumes covering the period from 1869-1917, containing letters to numerous famous people of that period, such as the British Prime Minister, the American President and Charles Darwin. It mostly consists of his outgoing official correspondence. Bound volumes relating to his Knighthood, and Order of Merit are part of the archive.



The Axmouth Landslip, Devon, England. April 1885

(8) Memorabilia

This collection includes Geikie's personal geological hammer, ornate presentation casket on retirement from Edinburgh University (on display in the Geology Gallery), and various medals and awards.



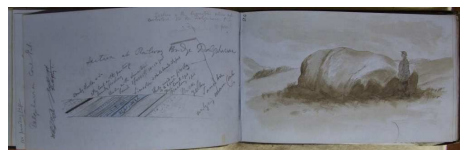
Geikie's geological field hammer



One of Geikie's specimen collection boxes

(9) Field Notebooks

There are 43 field notebooks that illustrate Geikie's geological observations throughout his career, and the many different places he personally visited. They contain geological notes, field sections, tour accounts, Scottish history and various publication drafts. Some wonderful examples are revealed with their watercolour sketches in our Geology Gallery.



Examples from Geikie's field notebooks of Scottish sites

(10) Geological Collections

A large personal collection of Geikie's fossils is held here, and includes a wide range from many British localities and some from other countries.

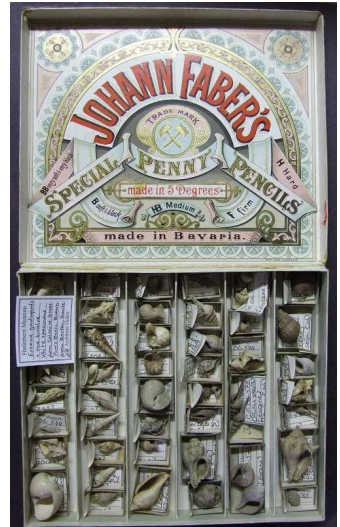
Fossil groups represented comprise brachiopods, bivalves, corals, fossil plants and graptolites. These are stored in Geikie's personally hand made carton boxes, which are quite beautiful as historical items in themselves. Minerals and rocks also form part of his private collection.



A selection of Geikie's marine mollusc fossils



A pair of plant fossils from the Geikie Archive



Example of Geikie's own collection boxes filled with various fossils

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