

James Bennie

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James Bennie

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Timeline

1821 Born September 23rd.

Employed in paper factory. Leisure hours devoted to study of glacial, interglacial and post-glacial deposits of west of Scotland (also collected Carboniferous fossils).

1867 Results communicated to Dr Croll and published in Trans. Glasgow. Geol. Soc.

Joined Survey as Fossil Collector (Scotland). Special knowledge of Carboniferous fossils of

1869 Central Scotland discovered many new forms - first to record Holothusians in Scottish Carboniferous, and arctic plants in silt of former lakes in Boulder Clay.

1899 Murchison Fund.

1901 Died January 28th.

Publications

- Bennie, J. On the surface geology of the district round Glasgow, as indicated by the journals of
1871 certain bores. Transactions of the Geological Society of Glasgow, vol.III, no.X, 1871,
p133-148.
- 1883 Bennie, J. On the glaciated summit of Allermuir, Pentlands. Proceedings of the Royal Physical
Society of Edinburgh, vol.VII, 1883, p307-313.
- 1885 Bennie, J. Note on the contents of two bits of clay from the Elephant Bed at Kilmaurs in 1817.
Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, vol.VIII, no.XXXVII, 1885, p451-459.
- 1886 Bennie, J. On the occurrence of spores in the Carboniferous formation of Scotland.
Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, vol.IX, no.VII, 1886, p82-117.
- 1888 Bennie, J. On the prevalence of Eurypterid remains in the Carboniferous shales of Scotland.
Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, vol.IX, 1888, p499-509.
- 1889 Bennie, J. ; Scott, T. The ancient lakes of Edinburgh. Proceedings of the Royal Physical
Society of Edinburgh, vol.X, pt.i, 1889, p126-154.
- 1890 Bennie, J. On things new and old from the ancient lake of Cowdenglen, Renfrewshire.
Transactions of the Geological Society of Glasgow, vol.IX, no. XVI, 1890, p213-225.
- 1891 Bennie, J. Scenes and sections in Thornton Quarries, East Kilbride, in 1868. Transactions of
the Geological Society of Glasgow, vol.IX, no.XX, 1891, p276-285.
- 1892 Bennie, J. ; Scott, A. "The raised Sea-Bottom of Fillyside" : researches in 1869-70 and 1888.
Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, vol.XI, 1892, p215-237.
- 1893 Bennie, J. ; Scott, A. The ancient lake of Elie. Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of
Edinburgh, vol.xii, 1893, p148-170.
- 1894 Bennie, J. (1894). Arctic plants in the old lake deposits of Scotland : Annals of Scottish
Natural History, 1894, p46-52. (1894).
- 1896 Bennie, J. (1896). Arctic plant-beds in Scotland : Annals of Scottish Natural History, 1896,
p53-56. (1896).

Biographies and obituaries

Obituary - James Bennie. Born 23rd September 1821, died 28th January 1901. Geologists Magazine.
New Series. v. 8 p.143-144. 1901

Horne, J. Obituary notice of the late Mr. Bennie. Transactions of the Edinburgh Geological Society.
v. 8 p.187-193. 1903

History of the Geological Society of Glasgow Glasgow 1908, p. 207

Bennie, J. [Biographical information on James Bennie]. File at BGS

Maddox, S.J. [The life and work of James Bennie](#). Edinburgh Geologist, No. 20 Spring 1988. p11-14.

BGS archives

Ref No	Title	Description
GSM/DC/A/C/8/102, 226	J Bennie: Letter on his appointment.	
GSM/GL/Be	J Bennie	

James Bennie

From: History Geological Society of Glasgow 1908, p. 207

James Bennie was born in Glasgow in 1821, and had begun his geological rambles before the institution of the Glasgow Geological Society. His schooldays were few in number, and he was early apprenticed to the trade of a handloom weaver. Thereafter he entered the service of Messrs. Kerr & Richardson, Glasgow, in whose warehouse he laboured for about twenty-one years, when he was appointed one of the fossil collectors of the Geological Survey of Scotland. His scientific career is divisible into two periods, the first comprising his work in the neighbourhood of Glasgow when he was an active member of the Glasgow Geological Society, and the second embracing his term of service on the Geological Survey.

The volume of memoranda relating to the first period, which he left, reveals his insatiable thirst for knowledge. He resolved to visit the typical fossil-bearing localities of the Carboniferous rocks, and to study the glacial deposits of the Clyde basin. In the prosecution of this work he formed lasting friendships with many of the local investigators who gathered round the Glasgow Geological Society after its foundation, especially with John Young, of the Hunterian Museum, with Armstrong, Robertson and Crosskey, with James Croll and Dugald Bell.

Mr. Bennie contributed various papers on his glacial investigations in the West of Scotland to the Transactions of the Glasgow Geological Society. His most important one, summarising his own results and those of Dr. Croll, appeared in the third volume of the Transactions of that Society on "The Surface Geology of the District round Glasgow."

In connection with the Geological Survey, his labours were chiefly directed to searching the fossiliferous zones of the Carboniferous rocks and to the examination of glacial deposits in different parts of Scotland. His work necessarily brought him in contact with various specialists, including Mr. Etheridge, jun., Dr. Peach, Dr. Kidston, Dr. G. J. Hinde, Mr. Clement Reid, and many others. He not only furnished these men with materials for determination, but he was also able to supply valuable suggestions which yielded important results, and his own special methods of investigation led to new discoveries.

One of his important researches was carried out conjointly with Dr. Kidston, the results of which were given in a paper 'On the Occurrence of Spores in the Carboniferous Formation of Scotland,' published in the 'Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society'. They showed that the spores present in the various coals and dirt beds, which had hitherto been regarded as *Sporangia*, were mainly true macros ones of lycopodiaceous plants, often arranged in groups of four, like those of the recent *Selaginella*.

Reference may also be made to his interesting discovery of the remains of Arctic plants in the old alluvial deposits of glacial lakes, among which may be mentioned the Arctic willow and dwarf birch. With these were associated abundant fragments of the small phyllopod, *Apus (Lepidurus) glacialis*, now confined to the fresh water pools of Greenland and Spitzbergen.

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