Frederick Barke was born in Shifnal, Shropshire. His work as a public works contractor involved him in Drift geology, but he was also interested in Carboniferous fossils, a few of which are housed at Stoke-on-Trent Museum; he collected from the North Staffs, and the Somerset coalfields. In addition it is also recorded that he had a good collection of Carboniferous Limestone fossils. Kidston and Hind are reported to have used material collected by Barke in various monographs.