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TYPE AND FIGURED SPECIMENS IN THE GEOLOGY MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, MONA CAMPUS, JAMAICA

by Ian C. Brown and Deborah M. Langner

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As a result of a recent collections survey, type and figured specimens in the collections of the Geology Museum, Department of Geography & Geology, University of the West Indies, are listed. The museum houses several notable collections, at least one from the late 19th Century. Some of these specimens have only been recently rediscovered in the collections. It is anticipated that this special collection will grow as research on Jamaican geology advances and other specimens "hiding" in the collections are discovered.

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Introduction

The University of the West Indies Geology Museum (UWIGM) is located on the ground floor of the de la Beche Building, Department of Geography & Geology, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus (Figure 1). The UWIGM was established in 1965 when the Department of Geology began to operate a small private museum at its current location. Much of the initial material was part of the teaching collection donated to the department in 1961 by Lawrence J. Chubb (1887-1971) and Howard R. Versey, the Natural History Museum (London), the Geological Museum (London), and the Geological Survey of Jamaica which operated a small museum on its premises at Hope Gardens, Kingston. The Geological Survey collection dated back to 1949 when the Survey was re-established after World War II under the leadership of Verners Zans. During the period 1958–1959, additional material was donated to the Survey by various members of the Geologists' Association of Great Britain for use in teaching the practical areas of geology to School Certificate candidates. However, owing to the growth of the Survey, almost its entire museum collection, together with the display cabinets, was presented to the Geology Museum at the University of the West Indies in 1969.

Several major collections are housed by the UWIGM: the Lucas Barrett Collection, the Institute of Jamaica Collection and the L.J. Chubb Rudist Collection.

Lucas Barrett Collection

Lucas Barrett (Figure 2) made a significant contribution to the understanding of Jamaican geology. He was appointed Director of the Jamaican Geological Survey in 1859, a position he held until an unfortunate diving accident claimed his life in 1862 (Chubb, 1962). Barrett has been credited with the discovery of the Bowden shell bed in the parish of St. Thomas which was described as " the most remarkable Miocene fauna that has been found anywhere in the world" (Chubb, 1959). In addition to his work in Jamaica, Lucas Barrett was well known internationally. He was the youngest Fellow to be admitted to the Geological Society of London in 1855, and was appointed Curator of the Woodwardian Museum in Cambridge in that same year. Barrett's collection, consisting of 153 specimens of rocks minerals and fossils,was acquired from the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom, in 1975 (Draper, 1976). Details of Barrett's life and work are documented in Sawkins (1869) and Chubb (1962).

Institute of Jamaica Collection

The UWIGM acquired this collection from the Institute of Jamaica in 1969. Several items from this collection date back to the late 19th Century and are therefore very important specimens. Unfortunately, the collection has suffered from the loss of documentation, largely due to the 1907 earthquake and hurricane Gilbert of 1988. This collection is now

Figure 1. The Geology Museum, University of the West Indies, Jamaica. The bust of Sir Henry Thomas de la Beche is in the foreground.

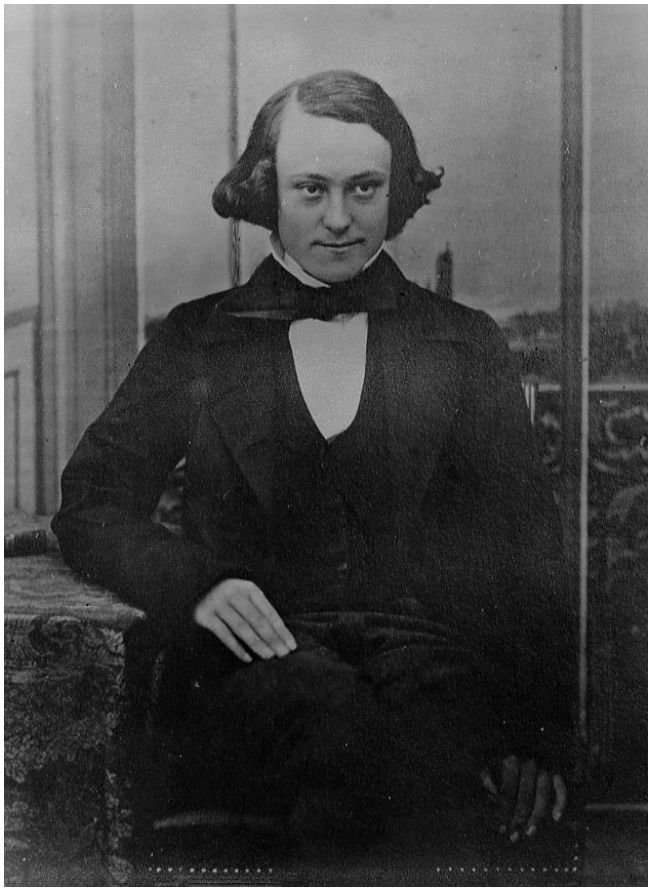

Figure 2. Lucas Barrett (1837-1862). Photograph courtesy of the Mines and Geology Division, Kingston, Jamaica.

Figure 3. Lawrence J. Chubb (1887-1971). Photograph courtesy of the Mines and Geology Division, Kingston, Jamaica.

of limited value (Knell, 1991; Wood and Donovan, 1996).

L.J. Chubb Rudist Collection

Dr Lawrence J. Chubb (Figure 3), came to Jamaica in 1950 while on leave from the University College, London. Although he initially came to Jamaica with plans of retiring from academic work, Chubb's career took a very interesting turn as he could not resist becoming involved with the work of the Geological Survey of Jamaica and was soon appointed as a geologist under Professor Verners Zans, the Director. After seven years at the Survey, Chubb was appointed Deputy Director and assumed the position of Director after the death of Verners Zans in 1961 (Robinson, 1973). It was during these years of "retirement" that Chubb was instrumental in establishing the Jamaica Group of the Geologists' Association, which eventually became the Geological Society of Jamaica. His efforts also led to the introduction of geology as a professional subject to be taught at the undergraduate level at the University College of the West Indies (Robinson, 1980). Chubb concentrated most of his research on the rudist bivalves of the Caribbean and Central America. A monograph on Jamaican rudists (Chubb, 1971) was his last major work before his death. The specimens from the UWIGM figured in his monograph were reported as having been transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. (Chubb, 1971, p. 161), but the type specimens, including the holotype of the rudist *Barrettia coatesi* (Chubb), formerly attributed to *Praebarrettia*, and a figured specimen of *Macgillavryia nicholasi* (Whitfield), formerly named and figured as *Durania nicholasi* (Whitfield), have been relocated in the Museum's collections.

Other important collections include the Verners A. Zans Collection, the Howard R. Versey Collection, and material donated by the Natural History Museum (London), the Geologists' Association of Great Britain and the Geological Survey of Jamaica. Research collections belonging to current members of staff at the Department of Geography and Geology are also housed in the UWIGM. The collections housed by the UWIGM have been discussed in detail in previous papers (Wood, 1995; Wood and Donovan, 1996).

List of Type and Figured Specimens

Many of the specimens listed in this paper remained un-noticed for some twenty years until a recent survey of the collections was initiated in the mid-1990s. The type and figured specimen collection has grown significantly since then and continues to increase as more persons show interest in the UWIGM collection and Jamaican geology in general. Although this paper focuses on the type and figured specimens, it is necessary to note that several other specimens in the UWIGM collection have been cited in various publications. The collection is currently catalogued using two systems. Under the original cataloguing system, items were assigned a catalogue number with the prefix UWIGM (e.g. UWIGM 10782). Under the current system, a date prefix is added to the catalogue indicating the year in which the item was accessioned into the collection. This is in keeping with systems commonly used in other major collections worldwide. The additional prefix code LB after UWIGM designates a specimen in the Lucas Barrett Collection. The items belonging to the Lucas Barrett Collection are listed first followed by the remaining items in the type and figured collection, listed taxonomically.

Lucas Barrett Collection

Actaeonella sp., UWIGM LB 7203; figured in Wood (1997, fig. 2a); Plantain garden River, parish of St. Thomas, Jamaica.

Ampullina sp., UWIGM LB 7265D; figured in Wood (1997, fig. 2b); locality unknown, presumably one of the Cretaceous inliers in Jamaica.

Pholadomya jamaicensis (Trechmann). UWIGM LB 7265B; figured in Wood (1997, fig. 2c); locality unknown, presumably one of the Cretaceous inliers in Jamaica.

Neitha sp. cf. *N. quinquecostata* (J. Sowerby), UWIGM LB 7265C; figured in Wood (1997, fig. 2d); locality unknown, presumably one of the Cretaceous inliers in Jamaica.

Trigonia sp., UWIGM LB 7265E; figured in Wood (1997, fig. 2e); locality unknown, presumably one of the Cretaceous inliers in Jamaica.

Hemiaster sp., UWIGM LB 7265 (1) and (2); figured in Donovan and Wood (1995, p. 134, fig. 1); probably from the Blue Mountain Inlier, Campanian-Maastrichtian (Upper Cretaceous) eastern Jamaica. UWIGM LB 7265 comprises 10 specimens including an internal mould of a crab carapace and 9 spatangoids, identified as *Hemiaster* sp, (Donovan and Wood, 1995).

Arthropoda

Cardisoma guanhumi (Latrielle), UWIGM 1997.16; figured in Donovan and Dixon (1998, p. 825, fig.1) and Collins (1999, fig. 2c, p. 115); collected by H. Dixon from the late Cenozoic coastal exposures at Christmas River, Portland, Jamaica (NGR 257 565); Jamaica 1:50,000 topographic map, Sheet 14.

Bivalvia

Macgillavryia nicholasi (Whitfield), J1A-B (Institute of Jamaica Collection), UWIGM 1997.12; figured as *Durania nicholasi* (Whitfield) by Chubb (1971, pl. 44, fig.1, and pl.45, fig.1); Probably from the *Barrettia* Limestone, Lower Campanian (Upper Cretaceous), Haughton Hall, Green Island, Hanover, Jamaica.

Barrettia coatesi (Chubb). Originally attributed to the genus *Praebarrettia* by Chubb (1967, 1971). UWIGM 4162 (holotype), UWIGM 4163 (syntype) and UWIGM 4164 (syntype); Collected by E. Robinson, referred to by Chubb (1967, p.30); figured in Chubb (1971, pl. 58, fig.3). Base of *Inoceramus* Shales, Peter's Hill Limestone (Santonian-Lower Campanian), Peter's Hill, Central Inlier, northeast Clarendon. Chubb (1971) attributed *B. coatesi* to the Turonian, however, the *Inoceramus* Shales are now attributed to the Santonian-Lower Campanian (Jiang and Robinson, 1987).

Retha tulae (Felix), UWIGM 1997.14; figured in Skelton and Masse (1998, fig.20.5); Collected at Jubilee, from float boulder, on the road from Benbow to Rio Magno, by church to southwest of road; Jubilee Limestone Member, Devil's Race Course Formation, Hauterivian-Barremian (early Cretaceous), parish of St. Catherine, Jamaica.

Macgillavryia sp., UWIGM 11372 (SEM stubs); figured as *Durania* sp. by Davis-Strickland (1989, figs 2-3); collected from float, Rio Minho river bed, Guinea Corn Formation (Upper Cretaceous), Central Inlier, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Chiapasella sp., UWIGM 11375 (SEM stubs); figured in Davis-Strickland (1989, figs 4-5); collected from float, Rio Minho river bed, Guinea Corn Formation (Upper Cretaceous), Central Inlier, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Bournonia sp., UWIGM 11379 (SEM stubs); figured in Davis-Strickland (1989, fig.6-7); collected from float, Rio Minho river bed, Guinea Corn Formation (Upper Cretaceous), Central Inlier, Clarendon Jamaica.

Cephalopoda

Baculites compressus, UWIGM 820; figured in Singer (2000, fig. 1B and 1C, p.241); collected from the Upper Cretaceous Pierre Shale, South Dakota, United States.

Goniatites choctawensis, UWIGM 36; figured in Singer (2000, fig. 3A, p. 243); Mississippian Lower Carboniferous, United States.

Beudanticeras beudanti, UWIGM 585; figured in Singer (2000, fig. 3B, p. 243); collected from the Lower Cretaceous Gault Clay, Folkestone, Kent, England.

Dactylioceras commune, uncatalogued; figured in Singer (2000, fig. 3C, p. 243); Lower Jurassic, Yorkshire, England; although reported as belonging to the collection of S.K. Donovan, this specimen resides with the type and figured specimens at the UWIGM.

Acanthoscaphites nodosus, UWIGM 674; figured in Singer (2000, fig. 3D, p.243); collected from the Upper Cretaceous Pierre Shale, South Dakota, United States.

Acrocoelites sp., UWIGM 636: figured in Singer (2000, fig. 3E, p. 243); Jurassic, United Kingdom.

Gastropoda

Strombus gigas (Linné), UWIGM 1997.1; figured in Pickerill and Donovan (1997, fig. 2, p. 21) and Pickerill *et al*. (1998, fig. 8, p. 26); collected from Unit 10 of Donovan *et al*. (1994), late Pleistocene Port Morant Formation, southeast coast of Port Morant Harbour, southeast Jamaica.

Strombus gigas (Linné), UWIGM 1997.2; figured in Pickerill and Donovan (1997, fig. 3C and D, p. 22); collected from Unit 10 of Donovan *et al*. (1994), late Pleistocene Port Morant Formation, southeast coast of Port Morant Harbour, southeast Jamaica.

Campanile sp. (Iredale), UWIGM 1997.17; figured in Donovan and Blissett (1998, fig. 1, p. 454); collected from the Eocene Chapleton Formation, Yellow Limestone Group, at Wait-a-Bit Cave, south of Green Town, parish of Trelawny, Jamaica (G.R. 951 769); Jamaica 1:50,000 topographic map, Sheet 7.

Echinoidea

Echinonius cyclostomus (Leske), UWIGM 1999.62; figured in Simpson (2001). Collected from the late Pleistocene Falmouth Formation, West Rio Bueno, Trelawny, Jamaica (G.R. 201300E, 202400N); Jamaica 1:50,000 topographic map, Sheet 3.

Vertebrata

Serratolamna serrata (Agassiz). UWIGM 200.1-3; figured in Underwood and Mitchell (2000, p.27, fig. 4); collected from Unit D of Mitchell (1999), Guinea Corn Formation (late Cretaceous), Central Inlier, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Hyrachyus sp. (plaster cast) UWIGM 1997.15; figured in Domning *et al*. (1997, p. 638-641, fig. 1); collected from the Guys Hill Member, Chapleton Formation, Yellow Limestone Group (Early or Middle Eocene), Seven Rivers, St. James, Jamaica.

Trace Fossils

Spirorhaphe involuta (de Stephani), UWIGM 1997.3; figured in Pickerill and Mitchell (1999, fig.2B); collected by G. Draper; Richmond Formation, Moore Town Shales of Jiang and Robinson (1987), Lower Palaeocene, east bank of the Dry River, Portland, Jamaica (NGR 31131557); Jamaica 1:50,000, metric edition topographic map, Sheet 14.

Helminthorhaphe flexuosa (Uchman). UWIGM 1997.4; figured in Pickerill and Mitchell (1999, fig. 2C); UWIGM 1997.5, 1997.6, 1997.8 and 1997.9 cited in Pickerill and Mitchell (1999); collected by R.K. Pickerill, S.F. Mitchell, S.K. Donovan and D.M. Langner; Richmond Formation (Moore Town Shales of Jiang and Robinson, 1987), Lower Palaeocene, east bank of the Dry River, Portland, Jamaica (NGR 31131557); Jamaica 1:50,000, metric edition topographic map, Sheet 14.

Helminthopsis heiroglyphica (Heer), UWIGM 1997.7; figured in Pickerill and Mitchell (1999, fig.2D); collected by R.K. Pickerill, S.F. Mitchell, S.K. Donovan and D.M. Langner; Richmond Formation (Moore Town Shales of Jiang and Robinson, 1987), Lower Palaeocene, east bank of the Dry River, Portland, Jamaica (NGR 31131557); Jamaica 1:50,000, metric edition topographic map, Sheet 14.

Gastrochaenolites isp. (Leymerie) and ?*Gastrochaenolites* sp (Spengler). UWIGM 1997.2; figured in Pickerill and Donovan (1997, fig. 3C and 3D); trace fossils preserved in the shell of the gastropod *Strombus gigas* (Linné), along with two examples of the trace producers; Port Morant Formation (Pleistocene), southeast coast of Port Morant Harbour, southeast Jamaica.

Gastrochaenolites isp. (Leymerie) cf. *G. cluniformis* (Kelly and Bromley), UWIGM 1997.9a and 1997.9b; figured in Mitchell *et al*. (1998, p. 2, fig. 1) and Donovan and Pickerill (1999, fig. 1, p. 198); trace fossil preserved in approximately equal halves of a limestone pebble with the presumed trace producers also preserved in their life position; collected from the Pliocene Bowden Formation of the Lower Coastal Group, east of Port Morant Bay, southeast Jamaica.

Entobia sp. cf. *E. laquea* (Bromley and D'Alessandro), UWIGM 9388; figured in Donovan and Pickerill (1999, fig. 2, p. 198); probably collected from the mid Tertiary White Limestone Group of Jamaica.

Rocks

Septarian nodule, UWIGM 10782; figured in Wood and Donovan (1996, p. 35); unknown horizon and location from the parish of Clarendon, Jamaica.

Septarian concretion, UWIGM 1999.63; figured in Mitchell and Crowley (1999, fig.1A, p. 18); collected from the Upper Cretaceous Slippery Rock Formation, Slippery Rock River, Central Inlier, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Septarian concretion, UWIGM 1999.64; figured in Mitchell and Crowley (1999, fig.1B, p. 18); collected from the Upper Cretaceous Guinea Corn Formation, Rio Minho, Central Inlier, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Septarian concretion, UWIGM 1999.65; figured in Mitchell and Crowley (1999, fig.1C, p. 18); collected from the Lower Eocene Freemans Hall Beds, Chapelton Formation, Lichfield, Clarendon, Jamaica.

Densely welded tuff, UWIGM 1998.4; figured in Jackson and Scott (1997, p.25, fig. 1); collected from the Newcastle Volcanics Formation, Hog Hole River, Gordon Town, St. Andrew, Jamaica.

Pumice encrusted by *Lepas anatifera* (Linné), UWIGM 1998.5; figured in Donovan (1999, fig. 1, pg. 324); collected from the beach on the south coast of the Palisadoes, Kingston, Jamaica.

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ICHTHYOSAUR TO IFFYOSAUR: FROM FACT TO FICTION

by Caroline Buttler and Stephen Howe

Buttler, C.J. and Howe, S.R. 2002. Ichthyosaur to Iffyosaur: from fact to fiction. *The Geological Curator* 7(8): 305-308.

Geology is often presented in the media in a sensational manner, but how do these stories reach the public domain and how much of them are fabrication? Presented here is an account of how a project, concerning the conservation of a Jurassic ichthyosaur, made the news world-wide but in an effort to make it more dramatic accuracy was increasingly lost.

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Introduction

We live in a media age. These days museums actively seek a high profile in order to make the public aware of what they do. But how far can we trust the media to get the message straight? In some quarters any publicity is seen as good publicity, but is this necessarily true? The following is a brief account of how a tale of interesting but straightforward palaeontological conservation in Wales spread world-wide, and lost touch with reality - and all in less than a week!

Background

The story begins in February 2001 with the conservation of a 1.8m long ichthyosaur specimen, which had been in the collections of the National Museums of Wales for over a century. The specimen and its plaster surround had begun to crack, and pieces were becoming dislodged. What was expected to be a short, straightforward job turned into a major conservation project that lasted 11 months.

The specimen, seemingly in rock of Jurassic age, had been donated to the former Cardiff Municipal Museum in the 1880s. Unfortunately, like many others in the collection, it was not numbered, so that its status and provenance were unknown. Entries in the minutes of the Cardiff Library and Museum Committee suggested that a local benefactor, Samuel Allen, had donated it in 1886. No indication was given of its provenance but somebody in the last 35 years had suggested that it might be from Street in Somerset.

The fossil comprises a mandible, most of the vertebral column, one front paddle, ribs and part of the pelvic girdle. Interestingly the mandible was inverted whilst the rest of the skeleton was the right way up. The specimen was set in plaster, which had been painted to resemble the rock matrix and mounted in a wooden frame. Since its original preparation it had been restored at least twice, resulting in further layers of paint and plaster being applied.

Removal of up to five layers of paint showed that parts of the skeleton, including the ends of the ribs had been restored in plaster and painted to resemble bone. It also became clear that some of the genuine bones were not in their original positions. Removal of the paint quickly showed that the skeleton had become disarticulated over the sea floor after death. The original preparators had apparently relocated the bones in order to restore the skeleton to its original state. The front paddle had been reconstructed, vertebrae had been slotted back into place, while the lower jaw had been obtained from another fossil altogether, and belonged to a different species of ichthyosaur!

To conserve the specimen, the wooden frame and all the surrounding plaster had to be removed and replaced with modern, lightweight alternatives. The project revealed a great deal about the techniques and skills of Victorian preparators, and showed how modern conservation practices can make new discoveries about old specimens.

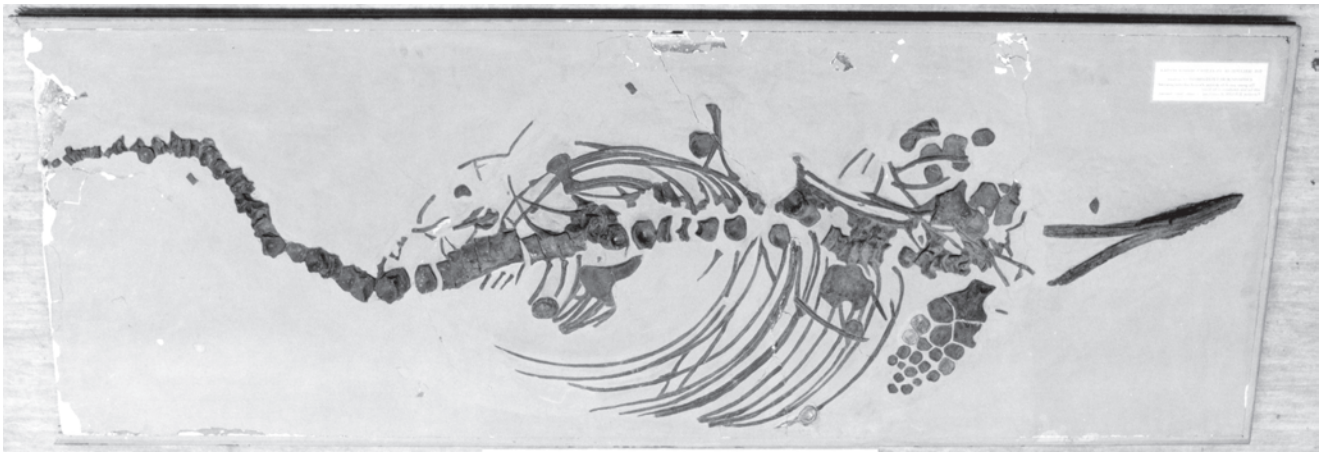

Figure 1. The specimen before conservation

Initial media interest

During the course of the conservation work a number of lunchtime talks were given on the subject in the Museum's new interactive gallery. Because attendance had been disappointing, the Museum's Press Office had attempted a number of ways to enhance their appeal. One talk was advertised on the Museum's web site, which was read by a BBC Radio 4 producer who was seeking subject matter for a South Glamorgan edition of the programme 'Open Country'. Unfortunately, the ichthyosaur project proved not to be suitable for the programme since it was laboratory based rather than outdoors and also the specimen seemingly originated from outside Wales. However, because of the initial interest shown by the BBC the Museum's Press Office realised that the subject might have wider appeal, and accordingly put out a press release advertising the talk and mentioning briefly the story behind it. The hope was for a slightly higher attendance, and certainly not what followed! The talk had been titled 'Uncovering a forgery - the conservation of a fossil sea reptile', a title deliberately made gimmicky in an attempt to enhance it's appeal to the widest possible audiences. However the use of the word 'forgery' proved not only to be a spectacular catalyst but also the most misleading term possible.

The following day the Press Office telephoned advising us that HTV television company wished to film a piece for the regional news that evening. A short interview took place, but the item was not included in the news bulletin that night, and it was assumed that that was the end of the story.

A story germinates

However, as we were to find out, once one media organisation has shown an interest in a story, more tend to follow. The next morning the Press Office arranged for a news service to discuss the story with the conservator, and later that day BBC Wales sent a cameraman and reporter to film it in the laboratory and gallery. An interview was also given to BBC Radio Wales that evening, and one in Welsh given by the Press Officer to Radio Cymru. This sudden surge in interest was rather puzzling until we learned that

Figure 2. The specimen after conservation

Figure 3. The press coverage.

the piece by HTV had been broadcast that lunchtime, under the somewhat sensational headline of 'Fake specimens at the National Museum'.

Prior to the Radio Wales interview a reporter from the *Daily Telegraph* had phoned to advise us that he was writing an article about the 'dinosaur' and wanted to check some points. He had obtained a lot of inaccurate facts and quotes, which were corrected, and subsequently rang again later in the day to check more details. Although he seemed very uninformed about the subject matter he at least made the effort to verify and clarify the story, something no other newspaper felt it necessary to do in the days that followed.

'Iffysaurus' is born

BBC Wales ran the story that night, showing clips of *Opthalmosaurus* from the *Walking with Dinosaurs* series. In a jokey manner they, like HTV the day before, sensationalised the story and hinted that perhaps there could be other 'fakes' on exhibition in the Museum.

The lunchtime gallery talk was scheduled for the third day after the press release. By this time the story of the 'fake' ichthyosaur was in virtually every national newspaper. In each case it had been written up in a dramatic style as reflected by such headlines as: 'Museum dino is a monster con job', 'It's a Jurassic lark', 'Iffysaurus display' and 'Dinosaur is hoax'. The National Museum's Head of Conservation rang up from the Outer Hebrides to say he had just read about it in the local paper!

Every single newspaper article contained errors. They all referred to the ichthyosaur as a 'dinosaur', and most had incorrect quotes. Virtually all of them referred to the specimen as 'Iffyosaurus' or 'Iffysaurus' and stated that this is what it was called within the museum. Unfortunately museum staff seldom give specimens 'cute' names and ''Iffysaurus' was a complete media fabrication. It was interesting

to see how some of the inaccuracies developed. For instance, little information is known about Samuel Allen, the original donor of the specimen, so in the newspapers he became a 'mysterious benefactor'.

At first, these errors and mistakes created feelings of annoyance and horror amongst the museum staff. Particularly irritating was a story of how modern conservation, which had revealed new and interesting information about an old specimen, had been so misrepresented. However, as more reports appeared and the story grew increasingly ludicrous, we realised that it was best just to laugh! The press's finest hour was supplied by the *Sun* which managed to get every fact, bar one, wrong. It claimed that curators thought that the exhibit was a 200 million year old ichthyosaur, until cleaning staff found it had been pieced together from two dinosaurs. They quoted a museum aide as saying "We've been tricked"!

International attention

Amazingly the reports were not just confined solely to the British press. The story made the Reuters list and as a result appeared in newspapers in Europe, North America, India and Australia. However all the articles still contained the same errors. It is plainly obvious that some media agencies treat stories like 'Chinese whispers', leading to the facts becoming ever more inaccurate. This international coverage culminated in a live interview on ABC Radio in Australia.

The internet allowed the story to be even more widely distributed, and it appeared on a variety of websites, and not just those confined to the news. Amongst these were sites discussing bizarre events and phenomena and, probably most disturbingly, a creationist website – giving the ichthyosaur as an example of fossils being fakes.

The media coverage generated a host of enquiries, many via the web, from all over the world, including a schoolboy in Vancouver wanting to know about the specimen so that he could write about it for a school project!

How to control or survive media coverage

So, if you have a story to tell, do you use the press or not? If you do is it possible to keep control and prevent the media from turning it into total fiction? The easy way to avoid embarrassment would be to not talk to the press – but this denies your museum valuable media attention and hinders the informing and education of the public of the work done in museums and scientific institutions.

One way to keep control is to give only live interviews where you can correct any misleading statements by the presenter on air. The problem with a recorded piece is that it can be edited or enlivened with the reporter's opinion or speculation. If you talk to a news service on a scientific subject, you must accept that they probably will get facts wrong and will not bother to check them. These errors will be passed on to the newspapers who will only rarely make their own checks and will probably just exaggerate the inaccuracies. What is news to a paper one day is of no interest the next, so they have little interest in correcting details. Good stories sell newspapers.

You also have to accept that if your story involves a vertebrate of Jurassic or Cretaceous age it will inevitably be called a dinosaur, no matter what it is!

So if you do lose control and the story gets totally distorted, then as long as it does no harm- laugh, shrug your shoulders and just be glad that at least you have raised the profile of your institution.

Postscript

The aim of the original press release was to encourage people to attend a gallery talk on conservation. Was this successful? Was there a record turnout for the talk? Despite the wide-ranging coverage none of the media mentioned that the talk was taking place. So when the talk began, three minutes after a BBC Radio 5 Live interview, only one member of the public attended and the remainder of the audience was composed of members of staff from the Department of Geology!

EDWARD SIMPSON, OR, A SEARCH FOR 'FLINT JACK'

by Parry Thornton

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'Flint Jack' (*circa* 1812-1875) the notorious forger of flint tools and fossils, whose products are to be found in many public and private collections, has been the subject of many biographical essays all of which share one common source. Flint Jack himself gave an interview which was published in a local newspaper in 1866 which achieved wide circulation in both its original and re-printed forms. Despite the warning as to its veracity which opened the article and the already widespread knowledge that its source and subject was notoriously an admitted liar, few later writers questioned the reliability of that account or sought evidence to confirm or refute it. There did exist sufficient contemporary evidence, from potentially more reliable sources, to cast serious doubt upon significant parts of what became the commonly received biography. Some of this evidence is here adduced to raise questions concerning three crucial parts of the Flint Jack story: his antecedents and birth; his early life and associations; and his introduction or inducement to forgery. His use of several pseudonyms and acquisition of many nicknames, varying in different parts of the country, is described, being one of the many difficulties besetting the continuing search for 'Flint Jack'.

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Introduction

On Saturday 29th December 1866 The *Malton Messenger* printed, 'in place of the Annual Christmas Tale' a biographical 'Notice of the Extraordinary Life of Edward Simpson of Sleights. The notorious manufacturer of Spurious Antiquities who is universally known as "Flint Jack"'.[1] This unlikely substitute for the traditional heart warming novelette was produced by Henry Smithson, the proprietor of the *Messenger*, who 'was more at home in a show ring than a newspaper office [but] had the power of associating qualified persons with him in his ventures'.[2] His unacknowledged correspondent who provided the narrative was Charles Monkman of Malton, farmer, amateur archaeologist and 'for a considerable time an energetic collector' of flint and stone implements and other antiquities.[3]

That the *Messenger* – 'a newspaper of no ordinary intelligence and of decidedly antiquarian tendencies' - should print the story of this 'Prince of Counterfeiters' is not, perhaps, surprising.[4] Rather more surprising is that this hurried substitute for the usual sentimental Christmas story - the tale of a deceitful, dissolute tramp, a filthy, fraudulent, convicted thief and vagrant, with apparently few, if any, redeeming traits – should have evoked such widespread interest:

> *The exposure of the deceptions practiced by Edward Simpson, which appeared in the Christmas Number of The Messenger, has aroused the attention of the press in general to an extent we never anticipated. From all parts of England we have received orders for copies of the narrative: in fact, although we published an extra issue of some hundreds, the demand that ensued has caused that number of our paper to be "out of print" in a very short period. One gentleman (Professor Tennant) has so far entered into our views as to enquire the cost of re-production of a special edition of 500 copies, and we are daily in receipt of additional particulars of Jack's doings. The comments of the press are, some of them, quite worthy of reproduction in our columns, …*[5]

This runaway success of the *Messenger* article was just the beginning: its contemporary, the *Whitby Gazette* printed a somewhat shorter version on 5th January 1867, whilst the *Messenger* itself immediately produced a slightly edited reprint in pamphlet form which appeared, with some supplementary material, early in January 1867. Since then the story of Flint Jack has been re-told many times: a score of authors are noted in a short list of articles compiled from many times that number of known references.[6] It is not the purpose of the present essay to retell the story

Figure 1. Flint Jack, an engraving dated 1867 from a studio portrait taken in Salisbury in 1863.

in detail: several of the articles mentioned are readily accessible. Rather it is the intention here to warn readers of *any* of these accounts of the exploits of Flint Jack that the commonly received version *must* be approached with *at least* that degree of skepticism properly accorded to *all* reports – particularly, perhaps, those in the popular press.

With the few exceptions mentioned below, these later articles and pamphlets share, directly or indirectly, one common source – the 1866 Christmas article or its 1867 reprint. Whereas Charles Monkman wrote on the basis of Flint Jack's 'own recital a few weeks ago - he knowing at the time it was, perhaps not so soon, intended for publication'[7] – of the later writers only two had personal acquaintance with their subject. Llewellynn Jewitt (honorary curator of the town and country museum at Derby and founder and editor of the *Reliquary*) writing in 1867, and again in 1882, had met Flint Jack (and in 1868 organised a relief fund for him on his release from Bedford Gaol) – but even he acknowledges his debt for much of his material to the *Messenger* article. Joseph Stevens (honorary curator of Reading Museum) writing in 1894, believed 'he once had a visit from this miserable adventurer' – but acknowledged that his principal source was 'a Malton newspaper'.

As Flint Jack is presumed to have been born in either 1812 or 1815, and to have died in 1875 (the last known 'sighting' was in Malton magistrates court on 21st February 1874) no later writers could have had personal knowledge of their subject, although W.G. Clarke, writing in 1904, claims *various* [unidentified] *correspondents have rendered material assistance* in addition to his reliance on the other articles already mentioned.

Of course, this method of propagating history is both common and acceptable, *provided that* either the source is impeccable, or it is treated critically, and verification or refutation sought. With most repetitions

of the Flint Jack story neither was the case and yet, as will be shown, there was significant contemporary material available to cast doubt upon the veracity, in detail if not in general, of the fabricator's recital to Charles Monkman. Apart from which the duplicitous character ascribed to Flint Jack in the *Messenger*'s opening paragraphs should have stood as a warning to all its readers that the able fabricator of fake flints and fossils was just as capable of fabricating those parts of his own life story which, for whatever reason, he wished either to elaborate or leave obscure. Instead of which the suspension of disbelief expressed by Llewellynn Jewitt seems to have prevailed:

> *This statement has been roundly contradicted by some correspondents to the Malton Messenger, but as I have that statement from Flint Jack himself, and he has no reason for telling me an untruth, I believe it is correct.*[8]

It was not only in correspondence to the *Messenger* that some of Flint Jack's assertions were contradicted, but before discussing some of the questions arising from those assertions and contradictions, illustrated by extracts from the original *Messenger* article (which is itself more than twice the length of the present article) this short summary of Flint Jack's career, published in *The Times* in May 1867, will provide a context for what follows:

> *"Flint Jack."- A notorious Yorkshireman – one the greatest impostors of modern times – was last week sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for felony at Bedford. The prisoner gave the name of Edward Jackson, but his real name is Edward Simpson, of Sleights, Whitby, although he is equally well known as John Wilson, of Burlington, and Jerry Taylor, of Billery-dale, Yorkshire Moors. Probably no man is wider known that Simpson under his aliases in various districts – viz., "Old Antiquarian," "Fossil Willy," "Bones," "Shirtless," " Cockney Bill," and "Flint Jack," the latter name universally. Under one or other of these designations Edward Simpson is known throughout England, Scotland and Ireland – in fact, wherever geologists or archaeologists resided, or wherever a museum was established, there did Flint Jack assuredly pass off his forged fossils and antiquities. For nearly 30 years this extraordinary man has led a life of imposture. During that period he has "tramped" the kingdom through, repeatedly vending spurious fossils, Roman and British urns, fibulae, coins, flint arrow-heads, stone celts, stone hammers, adzes, &c., flint hatchets, seals, rings, leaden antiques, manuscripts, Roman armour, Roman milestones, jet seals and necklaces, and numerous other forged antiquities. His great field was the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire – Whitby, Scarborough, Burlington, Malton, and York being the chief places where he obtained his flint or made his pottery. Thirty years ago he was an occasional servant of the late Dr. Young, the historian, of Whitby, from whom he acquired his knowledge of geology and archaeology, and for some years after the doctor's death he led an honest life as a collector of fossils and a helper in archaeological investigations. He imbibed, however, a liking for drink, and he admitted that from that cause his life for 20 years past has been one of great misery. To supply his cravings for liquor he set about the forging of both fossils and antiquities about 23 years ago, when he "squatted" in the clay cliffs of Bridlington Bay, but subsequently removed to the woods of Stainton-dale, where he set up a pottery for the manufacture of British and other urns, and flint and stone implements, with which he gulled the antiquaries of the three kingdoms. In 1859, during one of his trips to London, Flint Jack was charged by Professor Tennant with the forgery of antiquities. He confessed, and was introduced on the platform of various societies, and exhibited the simple mode of his manufacture of spurious flints. From that time his trade became precarious, and Jack sunk deeper and deeper into habits of dissipation, until at length he became a thief, and was last week convicted on two counts and sent to prison for 12 months.*

Whilst most of the Flint Jack narrative can be neither proved nor disproved and must be accepted 'for what it is worth' corroborative evidence is available for some specific events. For example, there is independent confirmation of some of his visitations in various parts of the kingdom, of his public appearance in London and, of course, of various of his appearances in magistrate's courts – most particularly of that before the Bedford Magistrates in 1867. Clearly there could, and perhaps should, be more such evidence – but many antiquaries, collectors and museum curators who suspected that they might have been 'done' by Flint Jack were naturally reluctant to come forward although, in the *Messenger*'s words:

> *…one and all sail in the same boat; all have been alike victims in the first instance to the cleverness of an arrant rogue; and there are few scientific men who have not been constrained, at sometime or other, to confess themselves "done" by the artful dodges and plausible subterfuges of the Prince of Counterfeiters - Flint Jack.*[9]

However, there are some salient points in the story which were subject to immediate contradiction and

denial by third parties. Some – those who felt themselves maligned – clearly had an interest, but others were, perhaps, more disinterested, and it is to this contemporary evidence, circumstantial or direct, concerning the 'facts' of Flint Jack's birth, early life, the circumstances of his corruption, and aliases, names, nicknames and pseudonyms, that the remainder of this search is directed. The introductory extracts to each part are from the original 1866 *Messenger* article.

1

> *EDWARD SIMPSON, our hero, is a native of Sleights, near Whitby, where he was born in 1815. His parents were in humble life, his father being a sailor.*

Most accounts of Flint Jack accept this assumption of 'our hero's' origin. True, Llewellynn Jewitt expresses some initial doubts:

> *Whether this be strictly correct or not has been questioned, for his deceptions have been so great, so varied and so general, that even this statement might have been one as devoid of truth as many of his others.*[10]

However, Jewitt was able to allay his doubts (to his own satisfaction at least) by quoting the words of Flint Jack himself, which he noted on 10th August 1867 – 'Born at Sleights, five miles west of Whitby. Now 53 Years of age. Don't know when born' – and this despite his being aware of, but giving no credence to, other reports to the contrary in the *Messenger* itself, and in both the *Whitby Gazette* and *Whitby Times*.[11] Others were not so easily convinced: the *Bedford Times* noted – 'Sometimes he has represented himself as a Yorkshireman, at others as a Londoner, but his accent does not confirm either statement'[12] – and John Leckonby of Scarborough, who knew Flint Jack, ends his letter to the *Messenger* with the pertinent question: 'Have you any evidence but his own that he is a native of near Whitby? His accent is not Yorkshire and 20 years ago he was called "Cockney Bill?"'[13] Whilst not conclusive as to his birth, John Stevens, who was not himself well acquainted, reported that: 'it has been suggested by some who were well acquainted with him, and from his dialect, which led to his being called "Cockney Bill," that he was a native of the Metropolis'.[14]

So, if not at Sleights in 1815, when and where was Flint Jack born? To take the date first: 1815 was apparently calculated from the age (52) claimed in 1867. The only serious dissenter is Frank Stevens, (whose father E.T. Stevens, sometime curator of the Blackmore Museum, Salisbury, knew and employed our subject) who boldly asserts – 'Flint Jack was born on 21 May 1812' - but with no corroboration, there the matter must, for the moment, rest.[15]

As for the birthplace, the *Whitby Repository*, comments on the *Messenger* article – 'He begins his narrative with a series of falsehoods, "born at Sleights, near Whitby!"' and, referring to an encounter which took place in Whitby – 'When favouring us with his narrative Jack knew better than even to hint at any of these "facts," reserving them for parties to whom he was less known'.[16] That meeting, which took place in 1866, probably only a few weeks before the better known interview with Charles Monkman, was recounted thus:

> *Last year when he visited Whitby he dropped into a shop where he was accustomed to do a little business, sat down "solid and sober," and at the request of a few friends, "for a consideration" gave the following outline of his life. How far true, the reader must judge for himself, we give the tale as it was told to us. He stated his name to be Edward Simpson, and continued – "I was born, I believe at Carlisle, and reared by a grandmother there. My father's regiment lay at Carlisle some time, but I remember nothing about him at all, neither of my mother."* [17]

Both the fact of this interview, and its substance as stated above, were vouched for by the highly respected Robert Tate Gaskin of Whitby in a letter to the *Gazette*, which also indicated that the 'consideration' was in the form of 'a small gift to wet his throat' - and commented – 'The truth is - the man is totally unreliable, as may be supposed when we know that he rejoices in his craft, and boasts of having befooled every museum in England'.[18] Nor is this all: the *Gazette* –

> *While not wishing to rob the narrative of any of its romantic interest, the following facts, supplied to us by a correspondent, and gathered from very reliable authority, will serve to show that the account given by Jack of his notorious career is not all correct:* - [he] *was not born at Sleights, but is an Irishman, born in the city of Derry, Ireland, brought from the "dear country" to Scotland by his stepfather at the age of eight years, and was soon cast upon his own resources.*[19]

With Derry, Carlisle, London, and Sleights each nominated for the dubious honour of being the birthplace of Flint Jack, it is, perhaps, necessary to question the *Messenger*'s conclusion that although – '*Some doubt has been expressed as to his native*

place, … it is only necessary to state that throughout England he is spoken of and written about as Edward Simpson, of Sleights, Whitby'.[20]

2

> *When 14 years old, young Simpson was engaged as servant by Dr. Young, the late historian of Whitby. The doctor, as is well known, was an ardent geologist, and Simpson was the constant attendant on all fossil-hunting expeditions, and in five years he gathered the rudiments of geology - more particularly of the Yorkshire Coast. He appears to have left Dr. Young's service for that of Dr. Ripley, also of Whitby, with whom he remained six years. The death of his master threw Simpson out of employ-ment, and from this date (1840) he seems to have been a wanderer.*

Doubts about Flint Jack's origins inevitably lead to doubts about his account of his early life and in particular his alleged association with Doctors Young and Ripley. The *Gazette*'s correspondent cited above commented: 'That he was manservant to Doctors Young and Ripley in succession is a pure fiction' – and as neither Dr George Young (1777-1848) nor Dr Richard Ripley (1788-1856 – who was in practice with his brother Mr John Ripley (1797-1851) the surgeon, in Baxtergate) left any evidence of an association with Flint Jack, later denials on their behalf must be given some credence. For example, the Whitby solicitor Thomas Dotchon, in a letter to the *Messenger*, writes:

> *It would be well to enquire if he ever was the servant of either Dr. Young, or Dr. Ripley. Certain Whitby gentlemen, very likely to know, and much more likely to speak the truth than Flint Jack, say no - not beyond occasionally selling them a few geological specimens.*[21]

Also, Edward Tindall, a Bridlington antiquary who knew and dealt with Flint Jack, states -

'I am quite certain that he is not a Yorkshireman, and ... he never was the servant of either Dr. Young or Dr. Ripley, of Whitby'.[22] However, Robert Mortimer, the archaeologist, of Fimber, who had also had an interview with Flint Jack in November 1866 – 'and from the notes we are furnished with extracts which agree almost wholly with the subsequent narrative obtained for the Messenger' - apparently accepted the Young and Ripley connection.[23] Certainly some such association could account for the undoubted expertise which Flint Jack possessed concerning flints and fossils, but as with his birth, Jack gave a very different account when talking with his Whitby friends:

> *I recollect going to Hexham, which was the first place I went to after leaving Carlisle. From thence I got as far as Sunderland and Newcastle. I grew up quite ignorant of all learning and knew no trade up to fourteen years of age. I still kept on wandering from town to town until I reached Scarbro', - there Mr Merry kindly took me into his service and from whom I picked up a little scholarship. I cleaned knives, boots and shoes and went errands, making myself generally useful. During my stay with Mr Merry, and after I left him, I frequently wandered down to the rocks on the scar, and naturally having a taste for fossils, I became acquainted with the first rudiments of geology, &c., whilst at this place. From Scarbro' I got to Whitby. Here I found a wide field for my research and became acquainted with Dr Ripley, who instructed me where to find fossil specimens &c., and I supplied him with them for several years. I also through him got access to the museum and was enabled to add to its collection of fossils, many valuable specimens.*[24]

Mr Merry (probably a misnomer for Dr Murray, the Scarborough antiquary) was also dead at the time of the narration, and it is likely that Flint Jack's acquaintance with him, and with the Doctors Ripley and Young - and as was certainly the case with many of the other gentlemen named in the *Messenger* report - did not, as Thomas Dotchon suggested, extend much 'beyond occasionally selling them a few geological specimens' – probably at the kitchen door.[25] As witness the anonymous 'Whitbiensis' in a letter to the *Messenger*:

> *Flint Jack was neither servant to Dr. Ripley, in the strict meaning of the word, nor to Dr. Young, but probably found that it answered his purpose by making use of their names to his customers for fossils, for both these gentlemen were well known geologists and collectors. These were the days when Jack pursued an honest calling in the petrifactions with which the Whitby strata abound, and of the exact whereabouts of the numerous varieties, no one knew better than himself. I was much connected with the late Dr. Richard Ripley, and have frequently seen the man in the kitchen refreshing himself. The Doctor and his servants were kind to him in that way, as for instance, after a day's trudge among the rocks, when he had brought the results of his search for sale. During his visits, he not unfrequently trimmed up little matters in the back garden, went a few errands, and so on; and in this light he might regard himself as a casual assistant, but assuredly he was no regular servant. This I can aver as a fact.*[26]

There are several other conflicting reports of Flint Jack's doings in Yorkshire in this early period, including a detailed one which has him residing at Scotch Margaret's lodging house in Hull in 1834; collecting fossils for a period of months under the patronage of Thomas Sanders of Whitby; and serving his 'apprenticeship' as a counterfeit potter in the lodging houses of Henrietta Street – at that time the most disreputable street in Whitby.[27] Whilst that street might be thought inappropriate as lodgings for the servant of respectable doctors, it might well have harboured an odd-job man who was also a potential *fabricator of "antiquities"*.

3

> *His taste for geology was suddenly perverted in 1843, when he returned to Whitby, and was there shown by Mr. Dodgson the first British barbed-arrow-head of flint he had ever seen. He was asked if he could imitate it? He said he would try - and from this time his life of roguery began - FLINT JACK became his proper designation. From an honest vendor of fossils he became the fabricator of "antiquities" and the dishonest vendor of his spurious productions.*

Although the *Messenger* apologised in advance 'for any chance introduction of name without leave' (*sic*) its proprietor was obliged to defend his inclusion of the name 'Dodgson' in the following terms:

> *We are requested by Mr. Dotchon to contradict these remarks, on the ground that they are false, and we are quite ready, so far as to express our regret that, from a similarity of name, Mr. Dotchon should have had cause for complaint. In justice, however, we must state that there appears to be a misapprehension on Mr. Dotchon's part, relative to the person referred to in the above paragraph. The Mr. Dodgson mentioned in the notice was stated by Flint Jack to have been dead some time, and we have no reason yet to believe that this statement was false, particularly as our correspondent spells his name differently to that of the Mr. Dodgson spoken of in the paper, and is also a woollen draper, and though a collector of flint implements, has never been a dealer in fossils. We shall, however, make further inquiries into the matter, and if we discover that our correspondent must have been the person referred to by Flint Jack, we shall certainly publish an apology for having made use of his name.*[28]

William Dotchon (a tailor and draper in Baxtergate, who also dealt in jet, and who claimed to remember Flint Jack in the guise of a deaf and dumb match seller from some fifteen years previously) was unlikely, in a town such as Whitby, to be the victim of the sort of coincidence proposed by the *Messenger*.[29] That he would wish to be freed from the opprobrium of being 'the person who tempted young Simpson from an honorable to a dishonest calling' [and thus, in the words of Llewellyn Jewitt 'had indeed much to answer for, and was, of the two, the more culpable'] is understandable.[30] Whether he was over-reacting, or suffering from a guilty conscience is not known, but the *Messenger*'s proprietor was only saved from the threat of further action by the publication of several exchanges of letters with Thomas Dotchon, (solicitor, acting for William Dotchon) and an apology from the article's author:

> *I think, however, you will not be the person he refers to. Whether this be so or not, I as the writer am deeply grieved that I should have given any gentleman cause for umbrage, and in order that this may be avoided in the pamphlets, the objectionable parts shall be struck out. I knew I had an unscrupulous man to deal with in Jack, and I quite expected to be deceived, but I scarcely thought he would lie at the outset. So far as was in my power, I tested his statements. I regret I omitted to do so in the Whitby case. ... I sincerely hope you will accord me your kind forgiveness for having very unintentionally given you any offence, and wishing you the compliments of the season, believe me to be very faithfully yours, Charles Monkman.*[31]

The offending name, along with several others, was necessarily omitted from the 1867 pamphlet re-print, but meanwhile the *Gazette* had incautiously reprinted the offending paragraph unedited, and was also required to retract, which it did in the following terms:

> *One part of the history of "Flint Jack" copied by us last week from the Malton Messenger, appears to have given offence to Mr Dotchon, and we have received a letter from Mr Thomas Dotchon, threatening us with legal proceedings if we do not contradict the statement. ... Had we imagined that the extract would have pained Mr Dotchon's mind we certainly should not have copied it, and regret that we did so. Jack's account of his first thought of forged flints is, it appears, as false as the flints themselves, and as (from all we learn) many more of his statements doubtless are. We are greatly inclined to think that he begins his history with a falsehood in saying he was born at Sleights.*[32]

Messrs Horne of the *Gazette*, Monkman, and Smithson of the *Messenger* (and many others) were learning the hard way the lesson that E T Stevens had learned

long before – that 'his [Flint Jack's] word is utterly unworthy of credit, although he may now and then speak the truth by accident'.[33] As with his birth and early life, Flint Jack told a very different story when speaking with his friends in Whitby. His tempter now becomes, in R T Gaskin's words – *a very wealthy gentleman living miles away from Whitby*[34] - reported by the *Whitby Repository*, with due circumspection, thus:

> *I visited Mr. K- of Malton; I have supplied him with thousands of real good specimens. ... Mr. T. K- shewed me the first genuine articles of flint arrow-heads &c., and said to me: Billy, you could not make a thing like this – it was a barbed arrow head about an inch and a half long. The thought never struck me before about making anything, but I resolved to try. I made a good many attempts before I succeeded, and gave myself much trouble, but with the proper flints I at last managed to make one that pleased me and showed it to him. He said – "Billy, you didn't make this?" to shew him that I did, I sat down and made two on the spot. I used but three tools. I continued to make them and he brought several of his friends to see me as I made them, I soon found a purchaser for them in Jerry Taylor of Bridlington Quay, who took of me as many as I could make, and I know he sold them to a good profit.*[35]

Mr. K - may be identified as T Kendal of Pickering – *a gentleman who paid much attention to archaeological matters* – in Llewellynn Jewitt's words, and who continues with yet another variant of the story:

> *... who* [Mr.Kendall] *showed him* [Flint Jack] *a collection of spurious flints which had been purchased as genuine ones from a Whitby dealer. These were of Jack's make, and on being asked his opinion he frankly told Mr. Kendall he knew where they had come from, and set to work to show the method of manufacture, initiating his patrons into the mysteries . . . Jack declares the kindness of Mr. Kendall overcame him, and he for once resolved to speak the truth. He did it, and had no occasion for regret – he exposed the forgery and retained a friend to whom he could look for a trifle when "hard up."* [36]

Whether there is truth in any of these accounts is far from certain - perhaps little or none, for there was probably no need for a culprit at all: for what is certain is that (in the words of E.T. Stevens) *'There were heroes before Agamemnon, and forgers of flint implements before Flint Jack'*.[37] Doubtless, Stevens had in mind one William Smith, (of whom more anon) but the introduction in the extract from the *Whitby Repository* of the name 'Jerry Taylor' points to the clear possibility that rogue learned from rogue – and that no 'fall guy' was necessary, except to boost Flint Jack's reputation as having discovered for himself the method of flint working.. However that may be, Flint Jack's deceitful use of other's names, whether through forgetfulness or by intention, was matched – indeed, surpassed - by the deceitful use of his own name, and aliases or pseudonyms, which greatly adds to the difficulty of any search for the real 'Edward Simpson'.

4

> *From this time too, he began to acquire his various aliases. These were derived from his peculiarities. We hear no more of Edward Simpson: the active, and more than ordinarily intelligent young fellow who has hitherto borne that name becomes "FOSSIL WILLY" on the Yorkshire Coast (Scarbro', Whitby, Bridlington, &c.); "BONES" at Whitby, Malton, and in the North Riding generally; "SHIRTLESS" in Norfolk, Suffolk, and the Eastern Counties; "THE OLD ANTIQUARIAN" in Wilts., Dorset, and in London; and "FLINT JACK" universally.*

This paragraph contains but a selection of the aliases and nicknames by which our hero was known. Some seven or eight pseudonyms have been noted by various writers, which he is claimed to have used at different times and in various parts of the country; and not less than fourteen nicknames (ignoring minor variants) by which he was also known to his many acquaintances and clients.

Taking the nicknames (for which Flint Jack cannot be held wholly responsible) first, they included Billy; Bones/Bag o' Bones; Cockney Bill; Fossil Willy/ Willie; Flint Jack/Jack Flint; (The) Old Antiquarian; (Old) Skin and Grief; Shirtless; and Snake Billy/ Jack/Willey/Willy. However – and as ever, a caution – several of these are also recorded as nicknames of other forgers, notably of William Smith – who was also known as 'Bag of Bones' 'Fossil Willy' 'Skin & Grief' and 'Snake Jack'.

The aliases or pseudonyms are a different matter, for Flint Jack deliberately adopted different names or aliases, at different times and places, with the inevitable effect – whether or not with the deliberate intention – of making recognition as between one duped client and another more difficult:

> *In Salisbury, "Flint Jack" is the only name by which he has been known, and I remember well speaking to the Rev. Mr. Greenwell, of him, by that name, without his knowing who I meant; but*

upon producing the likeness, Mr. Greenwell [William, a Durham archaeologist] *at once recognised him, and exclaimed in high glee – "why, that's 'Bones,' only think of 'Bones' having been here."* [38]

Although 'Edward Simpson' is commonly referred to as Flint Jack's *real* name, there is no evidence for this other than his own word. His first appearance in the *Gazette* is as 'John Wilson' when, as a '*labourer, well known as a collector of fossils and manufacturer of antiquities, such as flint arrow heads, &c.*', he was charged with a theft at Hawsker, near Whitby.[39] By this alias he was also known to John Leckonby, who wrote – 'His letters to me were always signed "John Wilson," and were generally written from Burlington, where a veritable John Wilson resided, an honest dealer in fossils.'[40] But this assertion should be read in the light of Llewellynn Jewitt's comment:

A correspondent in the Malton Messenger says that letters he has had from Edward Simpson "were always signed John Wilson." As Edward Simpson cannot write, this statement must be as devoid of foundation as many of "Flint Jack's" own representations and doings.[41]

Nor is this the only example of Flint Jack using the name of, or being known as or confused with, a contemporary. There are references to him as 'Jerry Taylor' of Bridlington and, more often, as William Smith, the East Yorkshire forger – both 'veritable rogues' and already mentioned. One of the few people to recognise both Simpson and Smith was Samuel Sharp:

Some years ago two adventurers in Yorkshire acquired an infamous notoriety as clever rivals in the forgery of antiquities. The one was William Smith, alias "Skin and Grief" alias "Snake Willy;" the other was Edward Simpson, of Whitby, alias "Flint Jack." ... With both I have come into contact, and by both I have been victimised, but the latter not lately.[42]

Edward Simpson also appeared as Edward Smith, and at Bedford Magistrates Court in 1867 he was charged as 'Edward Jackson alias "Thomas Simpson" alias "Flint Jack"'. It is from the aftermath of this bungled robbery, for which he was sentenced to twelve months hard labour, that some of the least controversial evidence about the man himself derives.

It is this same prison record which provides a physical description of Flint Jack: five feet six inches tall; weighing a hundred and twenty pounds; grey hair, oval face of sallow complexion with hazel eyes; both collar bones appear to have been broken; varicose veins in both legs. Stated to be fifty four years of age, born in Whitby, Yorks (1812). Single, a tramp of no fixed abode, Church of England, able to read. Flint Jack was photographed at Bedford Prison, and the head-and-shoulders image is recognisably that of Figure 1, which was engraved in 1867 from a studio portrait taken in Salisbury four years earlier:

Mr Stevens here, at his own expense, had Jack's portrait taken in photography by Mr. Treble, and a more faithful one it is impossible to imagine, as my readers who examine the engraving (taken from the very photograph by Mr. Treble), will see.[43]

The accuracy of the likeness in the photograph was also vouched by James Wyatt in a letter to Stevens: 'It is excellent, which is more than I can say of the filthy, dissolute original. The photograph has caught his half-stupid, sinister expression with wonderful success'.[44] James Wyatt, of Bedford, a writer with practical experience of flint-knapping, and considerable archaeological expertise, knew Flint Jack for a number of years and was respected by him:

In reply to my question as to whether he [Flint Jack] *had called under the expectation of selling specimens ... he replied smartly "Not to you, you are too particular! I called to see you and your specimens."* [45]

Despite his undoubted respect for Flint Jack's skill in mastering the obdurate flint, Wyatt's sympathy for the harshness of his life and the criminality into which this (and his taste for rum) led him (Wyatt was instrumental in having imprisonment at Bedford substituted for transportation) – James Wyatt was always very much aware, despite making all allowances, of Flint Jack's innate deceitfulness:

... he did not regard his forgeries in the light of moral offences ... His moral sense in this regard was marvellously blunted, and he is too old to comprehend the acts of imposture which have made him so notorious in the same light as others see them. ... I believe him to be ingrained deceitful and oblivious to all sense of shame. Even to the gentlemen who prepared his biography he carried out his love of imposition, for he has given false accounts of his antecedents, and time and place of birth. Indeed I doubt whether he was born in any part of the county of York as he induced them to believe.[46]

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Just as Flint Jack was able to foist his forgeries on a generation of Victorian antiquaries and collectors only because of their own cupidity and lack of discrimination, and impose deceptions on his original

biographers only through their own willing suspension of disbelief, so many later writers have allowed themselves to promulgate a merely plausible narrative as though veritable and verifiable fact only by their uncritical acceptance of that original 'Christmas Tale'.

Notes and references

The *Malton Messenger* is referred to as *Messenger* throughout; similarly, *Gazette* refers to the *Whitby Gazette,* except in note 2.

1 *Malton Messenger*, 15th December 1866 (advertisement)

2 *Malton Gazette* 3rd May1879 (obituary)

3 J.R. Mortimer (in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Specimens in the Mortimer Museum of Archaeology and Geology at Driffield,* Thomas Sheppard FGS, 1900 - *Notes on the History of the Museum*).

4 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

5 *Messenger,* 19th January 1867]

6 **1867**: Charles Dickens (in *All the Year Round,* 9 March); *Whitby Repository* (Vol. 1, nos 9-12 inc. & re-printed at the *Messenger Office*, 1869); *People's Magazine* (issue dated 6th July); Llewellynn Jewitt (in *The Reliquary* & privately re-printed); **1877**: *Malton Messenger* (1867 pamphlet reprinted); **1878**: Reginald W. Corless (re-printed from the *Driffield Observer*); **1882**: Llewellynn Jewitt (in William Smith's *Old Yorkshire*); **1894**: Joseph Stevens (pamphlet, privately published?); **1904**: W.G. Clarke (in *Cleveland Naturalists Field Club, Record of Proceedings,* Vol. I, no. v, re-printed from the *Transactions of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society,* Vol. vi); **1934:** H.P. Kendall (unpublished manuscript, Whiltby Literary & Philosophical Society); **1944**: J A Stendall in *The Museums Journal,* Vol. 44); **1953**: John Blacking (in *Antiquity* Vol. xxvii, no. 108 - *this a particularly perceptive and sympathetic account*); **1954**: Charles E. Freeman (in *Bedfordshire Magazine,* Vol. 4, no. 29); **1977**: Maurice Colbeck in *Queer Folk*; **1983**: A.G. Credland (and also M.J. Boyd and R. Watson, *The Geological Curator*, Vol. 3 no. 7); **1985**: Michael Richardson and Tom Stamp (booklet, published by Caedmon of Whitby); **1993**: Robert Halliday (in *The Countryman*, Vol. 98, no. 1); **1994**: W.G. Clarke (1904 paper, re-printed by Tom Scott Burns in *A North Yorkshire Moors Selection*); **1997**: Alex Marwood (in *Yorkshire Journal*, No. 19); **2000**: Llewellynn Jewitt (1882 article from William Smith's *Old Yorkshire*, re-printed by Alan Whitworth in *Aspects of Sleights)*

7 *Messenger*, 29th December 1866

8 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867 (footnote)

9 *Messenger*, 29th December 1866

10 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

11 *ibid*.

12 *Bedford Times*, 19th March 1867

13 *Messenger* (re-print)1867 (Supplement)

14 John Stevens, 1894

15 Frank Stevens, 1944 (letter in *The Museums Journal*, Volume 44)

16 *Whitby Repository*, no. 11

17 *Whitby Repository*, no. 10

18 *Gazette*, 12th January 1867

19 *ibid*.

20 *Messenger* (re-print)1867 (Supplement)

21 *Messenger*, 12th January 1867

22 *Messenger*, 16th March 1867

23 *Messenger*, 12th January 1867

24 *Whitby Repository*, no. 10

25 *Messenger*, 12th January 1867

26 *Messenger*, 16th March 1867

27 *Gazette*, 12th January 1867

28 *Messenger*, 5th January 1867

29 *Whitby Repository,* no. 10

30 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

31 *Messenger*, 12th January 1867

32 *Gazette*, 12th January 1867

33 E.T. Stevens, 1864 (in *Descriptive Catalogue of the Salibury & South Wiltshire Museum*)

34 *Gazette,* 12th January 1867

35 *Whitby Repository*, no. 10

36 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

37 E.T. Stevens, 1870 (in *Flint Chips* - 'Forgeries')

38 E.T. Stevens, 1867 (letter in *Messenger,* 30 March)

39 *Gazette,* 7th August 1858

40 *Messenger* (re-print)1867 (Supplement)

41 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

42 *Bedford Times*, 4th July 1865

43 Llewellynn Jewitt, 1867

44 James Wyatt, Bedford, 11th March 1867 (Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum)

45 James Wyatt (unpublished private journal, 18th January 1867, cited by John Blacking, 1953)

46 James Wyatt (unpublished private journal, 18th January 1867, held in the Bedford County Record Office)

LOST & FOUND

Enquiries and information, please to Patrick Wyse Jackson (Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland; e-mail: wysjcknp@tcd.ie). Include full personal and institutional names and addresses, full biographical details of publications mentioned, and credits for any illustrations submitted.

The index to 'Lost and Found' Volumes 1-4 was published in *The Geological Curator* 5(2), 79-85. The index for Volume 5 was published in *The Geological Curator* 6(4), 175-177.

Abbreviations:

CLEEVELY - Cleevely, R.J. 1983. *World palaeontological collections*. British Museum (Natural History) and Mansell Publishing Company, London.

GCG - *Newsletter of the Geological Curators' Group*, continued as *The Geological Curator*.

LF - 'Lost and Found' reference number in GCG.

256. James Dowsett Rose-Cleland Collection.

Wendy Simkiss, Geology Section, Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN (telephone: 0151 478 4287; e-mail: Wendy.Simkiss@nmgm.org) writes:

James Dowsett Rose-Cleland (or Clealand) lived from 1767 to 1852 and collected both palaeontological and conchological material. I understand that he corresponded with Sowerby and is mentioned in Sowerby's *Mineral Conchology*. His name was associated with Castle Espie, Co. Down although he lived at Rathgael House, Bangor, Co. Down. He was also the first honorary member of the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society.

Any information on the whereabouts of his collection would be welcome.

257. Upper Carboniferous crinoids from Kansas City collected in 1889 by Butts and Hare.

Richard J. Gentile (Department of Geosciences, University of Missouri, 5100 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2499, USA; e-mail: gentiler@umkc.edu) is trying to trace specimens of Upper Carboniferous crinoids from Kansas City, collected in 1889 by the amateur palaeontologists Edward Butts, a civil engineer, and Sidney J. Hare, a landscape architect. He knows of material in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Peabody Museum at Yale, and in the National Museum of Scotland. He would appreciate details of any other holdings of this material.

ERRATUM

***The Geological Curator* 7(7) [2002], p. 235:**

Inadvertently the incorrect name and address was given for the paper by Parry Thornton.

The correct address is: Parry Thornton, 3 Church Street, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 4AE, England.