Mechanics Institute
Jan. 3rd 1849

The fourth meeting was held here at 8 oc P.M. Thirty one members and a few visitors were present and Mr. Starke occupied the chair.

Minutes of last ordinary meeting and of a Committee meeting were read and approved of.

Henry Hutchinson Lennox was elected an ordinary member.

The Chairman then delivered his Presidential address on the subject of "the Scope and Spirit of Scientific and Antiquarian Inquiries". On the conclusion of the President's address Dr Gilchrist expressed the pleasure with which the meeting had listened, and moved that a special vote of thanks be given to Mr. Starke which was very heartily accorded. After the President had acknowledged the Vote —

Dr Gilchrist read "Notes on the (so called) Druids' Circle at Holywood" giving an account with the aid of a diagram, of its measurements the positions of the stones, and of the Geol-ogical formation to which each of them belongs. A short discussion followed

and

and Dr Gilchrist promised to refer more fully to the subject ~~more fully~~ on an early date

The objects on the table were then examined Mr J. W. Grierson exhibited some very neat preparations of the Dentition of the Echinodermata. Mr Service showed a Falcon's Hood belonging to Dr Grierson Hornbill, a female Goosander recently captured at Arbigland, a pair of the Little Grebe, one of which was shot at Jardineton, and the other near Bridge of Dee both about a fortnight ago, a Kingfisher shot on the 18th, where they have been numerous during the last few months and as they have also appeared commonly on the Urr and Dee probably there has been an immigration from some other part of the country. Mr Service also exhibited specimens of a number of birds he had ~~also~~ picked up dead, ~~as~~ doubtless killed by the recent severe weather. These consisted of the Wren Long tailed Tit Waterhen, and Redwing, great numbers of the last named species having perished.

Mr Rutherford was then proceeding to make a communication on certain Ephemeræ when Mr McIlwraith rose to order and the Chairman ~~declining~~ decided

that Mr Rutherford was out of order and would require to give notice of his subject.

a number of duplicate copies of the former Society's "Transactions" were distributed amongst the members present; and by the kindness of the President coffee and cakes were then served after which the Rev Mr. Dodds expressed the great satisfaction with which the members had partaken of the good things provided for them by Mr. Starke.

The meeting then adjourned at a late hour.

J. Gibson Starke

Mechanics Institute
Feb. 4th 1879

The fifth meeting of the session was held here at 8 oC P.M. when 19 members were present Mr. J. Gibson Starke occupying the chair.

The Minutes of last meeting were read and approved of.

Mr. John Rutherford, Pleasance, Kirkmichael and Mr. Bruce of Glogarie were elected Ordinary

Members. Mr. Houston exhibited a curious old document being a "Report presented to the King's Ho's Most Excellent Majesty King James I of all the Christenings and Burials within the City of London and the liberties thereof." Mr. Lennon exhibited a specimen of Sphodrus leucopthalmus captured a few days ago in Mr. Service's Seed Shop where one has been captured annually about this time for the last three years. Dr Gilchrist exhibited a prescription book of 1731 and pointed out that the medicines of those days were generally made up of from 10 to 12 articles. Dr Gilchrist also exhibited a number of old newspapers issued about the beginning of this century amongst them being the Dumfries Weekly Journal of June 4th 1808.

Mr Jas. Gibson exhibited a fine specimen of the fossil Productus giganteus. Mr. McVeigh Castlebrae sent an interesting collection of old books Coins &c amongst which may be mentioned the Lives of the Popes 1588, St Jerome's version of the Bible 1498 An Edition of the Bible in 6 little vols. 1671 and Hamilton of Gilbertfield's Wallace in old Scotch Verse 1721

Specially noticeable among the Coins and Seals

were the Great and Small Seals of James VI, two Seals of William Duke of Douglas and Turrenne, and the Seal of the Duke of Albany, Fife, and Monteith A.D. 1396; some silver pieces of Isabella the Catholic of Spain, a coin of Pope Pius the 5th, and a beautiful coin of which six only were struck, to commemorate the acquisition by George III of the title of King of Man.

The remainning five are known to belong - one to the Mint, the second to Windsor Castle, the third to the British Museum, the fourth to the Earl of Derby, and the fifth to the Duke of Athole. The one in Mr. McHugh's possession was presented to him by Lady Margaret Murray daughter of the last King of Man.

Mr. Thomson reported that the Committee, which was appointed at the Special Meeting held 4th Sept. to enquire if a more suitable meeting place could not be got, had agreed to recommend the Society to endeavour to make arrangements for holding future meetings in the Observatory. Messrs. Welsh and Service stated, as members of that Committee that Mr. Thomson had not correctly given their view, which was that the present place was suitable enough but if it was decided to leave, the Observatory in their opinion was the next most eligible place.

Mr. Thomson then moved that the Society should in future meet in some more convenient and accessible room than this. Dr Gilchrist moved, seconded by Mr. Moodie that the Society continue to meet here which was agreed to Mr Thomson's motion not being seconded.

Dr Gilchrist read an account of "Our bird-feeding experiences" consisting of some interesting notes on the habits of the birds which had resorted to the Crichton Royal Institution to be fed during the present severe weather. A discussion followed and many facts were related as to the effect of the frost upon the birds.

Mr Davidson then read a paper on "Alchemy and the Alchemists" and gave an account of the numerous discoveries that had been made by the Alchemists whilst engaged in their investig-ations. A short discussion followed and the meeting then adjourned.

Mechanics Institute

Dumfries 7.3.79

The sixth meeting of the Session was held here this evening at 8 o'c; twenty four members ~~being~~ were present and Mr. Jas Gibson Starke, President occupied the Chair.

The minutes of last meeting were read and approved of.

The Secretary then read a report from the Committee regarding the distribution of the "Transactions and proceeding" printed copies of which were laid on the table, recommending the Society to give one to each Ordinary and Corresponding Member on the Roll and extra ~~copies~~ numbers if desired at 6d each. The Committee also recommended that a copy be sent to each of the three Dumfries Newspapers The Galloway Gazette, Free Press, Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser Annan Observer, The Zoologist and Scottish Naturalist and to the Societies in correspondence with this one. On the motion of Mr. McIlwraith seconded by Mr. Rutherford the report was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Watt, Victoria Terrace was proposed

and duly elected an ordinary member.

Mr. McMurrich gave notice that at next meetnig he would call the attention of the Society to the propriety of holding a Conversazione at the close of this session or beginning of next.

Mr. Rutherford read a paper entitled "Ingenuity of a Spider" giving an account of the habits of Theridion lineatum (Walck.) when providing for the safety of its egg cocoon.

Mr. Rutherford also read a paper on "Instinct of the Wasp" showing the behaviour of a nest of one of the Social Wasps when its nest hole was obstructed with a wisp of hay or dock leaves.

Mr. Rutherford next read "Microscopic Notes" consisting of notes on the habits and anatomy of various microscopic subjects living in muddy ditches at Jordinston. The paper concluded with an account of experiments with frosted Potatoes in which the various changes ~~undergone by a potato~~ that take place in a Potato when frosted were clearly described. Interesting discussions followed the reading of the several papers and some valuable information was

elicited

The Chairman exhibited a fine specimen of Mygale fasciatus, (Koch) from Ceylon. Mr. Rutherford showed in his microscope an interesting series of objects including crystals from a frosted potato. Mr. James Lennox exhibited a copy of the original edition of Allan Ramsay's works which belonged to Robert Burns for eight years prior to his death.

Mechanics Institute
April 5th 1879

The seventh and last Ordinary meeting of the Winter Session was held here at 8 o'c P.M. Mr. McIlwraith Vice President presiding and 18 members present.

The Minutes of last meeting were read and approved of.

Messrs Robert Chrystie, Samuel Chrystie John Nelson, Provost Shortridge and Mr. Arnot were elected Ordinary Members.

The Chairman then brought forward

the motion of which he had given notice "that the Society take steps during the Summer months for holding a conversazione and exhibition of Natural History and other specimens at the close of this Session or beginning of next". The motion was cordially agreed to and the following were appointed to draw up a scheme for the approval of the Society:— The President, Vice-President, Dr Gilchrist, Mr Robb and the Secretary.

The following list of Field Meetings proposed by the Committee was then submitted and approved of, the meetings to take place on the first Saturday of each month as formerly. — May - Kirkmichael; June - Corsock; July - Sloganie; August - from Annan Waterfoot to Brow Well; Sept. Arbigland —

The Secretary brought under the notice of the Society a circular he had prepared with a view to procuring full statistics of the Rookeries of Dumfriesshire and Galloway and asked for the assistance of the members to further the end in view.

A Review of the lately issued "Transactions

as contained in the "Scottish Naturalist" was then read by Mr. Moodie and an animated conversation then ensued as to the best mode of extending the operations of the Society - Eventually it was agreed that a Flora and Fauna of the district be commenced and the Secretary was asked to procure the necessary lists to be marked by members.

The Secretary then read a paper by Mr. Chas. Black on the "Introduction of Badgers at Arbigland" giving an account of their habits &c as observed by him there.

The meeting then adjourned.

Mechanic's Institute, Dumfries
Sept. 26th 1879

The Committee held their usual meeting preliminary to the Annual Meeting at 8 O'C P.M. present { J. Gibson Starke Lt. Service Messrs. Stobbie, Robb, Lennon and Thomson

The Treasurer presented his a/cs for the past Session, but as they were in an incomplete state their consideration was delayed till the Annual meeting.

The Committee were unanimously of opinion

that the proposed Conversazione should at the meantime be postponed and agreed to recommend accordingly.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the annual subscription be raised to 2/6, and that in future new members be charged an entrance fee of 2/6

It was also agreed to recommend that the Committee of the Mechanics Institute be asked for permission to place a bookcase in this room

The Committee recommend as worthy of the consideration of the Society, the suggestion of the ~~Society~~ President - that the Society should approach the Shareholders of the Dumfries & Maxwelltown Astronomical Society with a view to offering their assistance to make the Observatory Museum of more interest to the locality

1879. 80

Mechanics Institute, Dumfries

Oct. 2nd 1879

The Annual Meeting beginning a new session was held here at 8 o'C. P.M. Fourteen members were present; J. Gibson Starke Esq. occupying the Chair.

The Minutes of the meeting held on April 5th were

read and approved of.

The following gentlemen were then proposed as ~~new~~ members and duly elected: — Rev. R. W. Weir; Messrs. W. Maxwell, Terregles Banks; Murdoch Nekerka Gillespie, Queen's Place; Fergusson, Queen St; Smith Commercial Bank; Tennant, The Academy; L. M. Dinwiddie Greenbrae; Allan, Albany Place; McAndrew, New Galloway and McVeigh, Kimmeter Cottage, Annan.

The Chairman then presented the Society, on behalf of Mr. Allan Broun FRS with 5 volumes of the "Makerstoun Observations" & a paper covered Supplement, and also with a volume ~~of~~ entitled the "Trevandrum Observations" and with six small separate papers on astronomical subjects all edited by Mr. Broun. It was moved, and agreed that the special thanks of the Society be transmitted by the Chairman to Mr. Broun for his valuable donations.

The Chairman also presented to the Society ~~his~~ a copy of his "History of the Parish of Troqueer"

The Secretary laid on the table 12 Norvegian Publications ~~he had received from~~ sent by Mr. Charles Holst, Court Paymaster, Christiania, on behalf of the Royal Literary Exchange of Norway.

The following gentlemen were then

elected Office bearers for the ensuing session:— President; Mr. J. Gibson Starke; Vice President, Mr. Jackson With Place; Secretary Mr. R. Service; Assistant Secretary Mr. James Lennox; Treasurer Mr. Adamson; ~~Ass~~ Assistant Treasurer Mr. Moodie; Members of Committee:— Dr Gilchrist, Messrs. Robb, Lennon, Jas. Thomson, Hutton, John Maxwell, Kerr and Stobie.

Mr. D. B. Hart submitted a statement of his a/cs for the past Session which ~~and~~ Messrs Kerr & Moodie were ~~appointed~~ requested to audit, ~~the same~~. Mr. Hart stated that ~~the~~ a large number of the members were in arrears with their subscriptions and Mr. Moodie consented to collect as many of these as possible.

The Secretary's Report of the progress of the Society during the past Session was read and approved of.

The meeting then considered the Report of the Committee agreed to at their meeting held on 26th Sept. — All the recommendations were agreed to and the following gentleman were appointed to consider the best means of approaching the Observatory Shareholders with a view to offering the assistance of the Society to make the Observatory Museum of more interest in the locality — President, Secretary Messrs. Rutherford & Lennon, The meeting then adjourned

Mechanics Institute, Dumfries
Nov. 7th 1879

The second meeting of the Session was held here at 8 o'clock P.M. Eighteen members were present and Mr. J. A. Maxwell, Castle Douglas presided

The minutes of last meeting were read and approved of. Mr. ~~James~~ John Newbigging, Kirkbank, and Mr. McKill, Coal Agent, were elected Ordinary Members. Mr. Wm. McMurraith was elected a Corresponding member and Mr. J. Allan Brown F.R.S. was elected an Honorary member.

The Secretary announced that the valuable collection of nearly 200 species of Zoophytes, Echinodermata, Crustacea, Spongia, and Marine and Freshwater shells, which were arranged on the table, had been presented to the Society by Dr Gilchrist. A special vote of thanks was passed to Dr Gilchrist for his valuable donation, and the Secretary was requested to take charge of them in the meantime.

The Secretary also announced that he had received another portion of the "Verandrum Magnetical and Astronomical Observations" from Mr. J. Allan Brown, and from the Rev. D. Honeyman, Halifax N. S. copies of "Notes on Nova Scotian Geology" and the "Transactions of the N. S. Institute of Natural Science".

Mr. McMurraith then read an interesting and instructive

paper on "Local Anthropology" after which the Secretary read a paper giving details of the "Effects of the weather of the past twelve months upon Animal life".

After these papers were read and discussed, Mr. Moodie submitted the following resolution:— "That in view of the departure of Mr. Wm McIlwraith, late Editor of the Dumfries Courier, for Australia this Society expresses its best thanks for the unwearied interest he has taken in its behalf. Having been a member of Committee since its commencement, and having acted as Vice President during that time, the members would express their sense of the great benefits he has bestowed on the Society by his constant endeavours to maintain and extend its usefulness. In expressing their great regret at the loss of his valuable assistance, the members assure him that he has their best wishes for his future welfare in his new sphere of labour.

Mr. John Maxwell seconded the resolution which was unanimously agreed to. The Chairman having conveyed the resolution to Mr McIlwraith who thanked the ~~meeting~~ members for their kind feelings towards him, the meeting adjourned.

Mechanics Institute
Dumfries
Dec. 5th 1879

The third meeting of the Session was held here at 8 oc. p.m. There were ten members present and Mr. Watt, Rotchell House occupied the Chair.

The minutes of previous meeting were read and approved of.

It was intimated that owing to the state of his health, Dr Gilchrist was unable to face the severe weather, but he forwarded his paper on "Vegetation in 1879 which was read by Mr. Moodie.

Mr. Hastings read a paper on "the Rarer birds that had occurred lately in the district," ~~which~~ noticing in which he noted a number of the rare species that had been sent to him for preservation.

Short discussions followed the reading of these papers, and the Chairman having proposed a vote of thanks to the authors ~~of the papers~~ the meeting adjourned

Mechanics Institute, Dumfries
Jan. 9th 1880

The fourth meeting of the Session was held here at 8 o'clock p.m. Twenty nine members were present and the President occupied the Chair.

The Secretary announced that Dr Gilchrist had presented to the Society a complete set of the Montrose Natural History Society's Annual Reports, and Vol. XIV of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy which bore an inscription showing it to have once belonged to Sir Walter Scott.

The following Gentlemen were proposed for membership and duly admitted — Rev Mr Johnstone, Glebe Terrace; Rev Mr Underwood, Irongray; Mr Watson, Standard Office; and Mr Gray, Brownhall School.

Dr Grierson exhibited a specimen of Asbestos of very fine quality which had been recently brought from Canada by Mr Wallace, Auchenbrack, one of the Farmer Delegates. Dr Grierson also exhibited a Rabbit Skull shewing an abnormal developement of the incisor teeth. He remarked that one side of the jaw had been fractured, probably by a shot, and in healing, the lower jaw had been slightly displaced, so that the teeth passed each

other without contact, and consequently the teeth grew to an enormous length.

The Chairman read along, interesting, and instructive paper entitled "Notes on the Stone Age" and at the close Dr Grierson exhibited in illustration of the paper, Specimens of Celts, Axes, Arrowheads, Flint flakes or knives &c. A number of Stone Axes and Hammers were also exhibited from the Society's Cabinet. The Chairman exhibited two Celts brought from India by Mr Hope, and the Rev Mr. Johnstone exhibited two obtained in the Jed district.

The Secretary read a paper by Mr. Lennon on "Local Museums" but owing to the ~~advanced~~ late hour, it was resolved to adjourn its discussion, and also ~~together~~ the reading of a paper by Mr ~~Mc~~Andrew on the "Carices of the Stewartry" till next meeting.

Mr. Rutherford having proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for his valuable paper, and which were cordially rendered the meeting adjourned —

Mechanic's Institute

Dumfries Feb 6th 1880

The fifth meeting of the Session was held here at 8 oc P.M. . 28 members were present and Mr J Gibson Starke occupied the chair.

Dr Grierson sent for exhibition a the skin of the Canadian Wolf (Canis latrans) (Say) which had been presented to the Thornhill Museum by Mr R. Wallace, Auchenbrack.

Sheriff Hope, Capt. Maxwell of Terregles, E. C. Maxwell of Terregles, and Dr Symons were duly proposed and admitted members.

The Secretary read a letter from Dr Gilchrist enclosing a note from Dr Grey, London, a native of Dumfries, and a well known Naturalist, suggesting the propriety of getting a map of the district printed for the purpose of having it more thoroughly searched. A map of the Brixton district printed for the South London Microscopic and Natural History Club was also sent by Dr Grey to show the sort of map that would be needed for the Society's district. It was agreed to postpone consideration of the proposal until the April meeting.

The Chairman read a second and

concluding paper on "the Stone Age" speaking of the mineral Jade, the material from which the rarest, most beautiful and most valuable celts were made and by the fauna of the Stone age.

Specimens of Chinese workmanship in jade were exhibited, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. ~~Starke~~ Dudgeon of Largew. These included a vase of green jade with ring ears, the whole sculptured from a solid block and inscribed with Chinese characters, a vase of white jade exquisitely carved and representing in relief pilgrims ascending from the foot of a hill to a pagoda at its summit, and on the other side a forest scene; a piece of brown or tortoise-shell jade cut by a Chinese Artist into the form of a lotus leaf with handles fashioned to the shape of lizards; and a vase of white jade richly studded with rubies and emeralds set in gold and having a bloodstone stamp. Mr. Starke also exhibited a New Zealand Club made of native green jade, cut by Mr. E.C. Maxwell of Terreglas, who himself brought it from that country.

The Secretary read a paper by Mr. McAndrew New Galloway, descriptive of the "Carices of the Stewartry" with notes on their habitats and the

distinctions between the various species.

Thirty four species were mentioned and a fine series of specimens of these were sent for examination by Mr. McAndrew, also these it was intimated were to be retained by the Society for reference.

The thanks of the Society were given to the Chairman and to Mr. McAndrew for their papers and the specimens shown.

A discussion then took place as to what steps might be taken by the Society, either to resuscitate the Observatory Museum, or to establish another Museum under their own management. It was again remitted to the Committee previously appointed to meet with the Trustees but who had failed to ascertain who they were to renew their enquiries and endeavour to get a meeting and for this purpose, Messrs. Jas. Lennox, Hutton, and Jackson & Lewis Shareholders of the Observatory were added to the Committee —

The meeting then adjourned.

March 6th 1880

Mechanic's Institute, Dumfries

The sixth meeting of the Session was held here at 8 o'c p.m. Twenty two members were present and Mr Gibson Starke occupied the Chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved of.

The following gentlemen were then duly elected Ordinary members - Messrs. Byth, Dumfries Academy; John Brown, Solicitor; John Meekaw; and John James Clarke.

The Secretary announced that he had received from Mr Shaw, Tynron, as a donation to the Society's Library, a copy of the "Graphic" of 31st Jan. last, containing an article written by Mr Shaw "On the appreciation of beauty by Animals"

The Secretary exhibited a pair of Scaup Ducks (Fuligula marila) male & female, and stated that the Species had occurred in this district during the last winter in very unusual numbers.

Mr Moodie read a paper by Dr Gilchrist on the "Effects of a prevailing wind on Trees". The thanks of the meeting were ordered to be transmitted to Dr Gilchrist for his interesting paper.