

# SANHS AND GEOLOGY IN 1849

- The Story of Dr. William Buckland

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural  
History Society,

*Held at Taunton, on the 26th of September, 1849, at Twelve  
o' Clock, when about 350 persons were present.—An  
adjoining room was fitted up as a temporary Museum.*





# Why was Dr William Buckland invited to SANHS First AGM?

- **Dean of Westminster**
- **First reader of Geology at Oxford University**
- **Supported Mary Anning**
- **Little did Buckland know at the time, but he also identified the first of a group of animals that would later become known as dinosaurs.**





# What did William Buckland say about Geology at the first SANHS AGM?

**“ When traveling over Europe in 1820 with a German Geologist more observant than himself of such matters, his companion whenever they came to a town where there were **more pretty faces than usual**, would say —“We are coming to a good geological formation.”**

**And the moment they got into the mountain regions —the Alps, for instance —**ugliness was the universal characteristic.****

**There was as much difference between the inhabitants of the rich Valleys and the mountaineers as between one of their own well-fed beasts and a half starved Irish or Welsh bullock”**



# What did William Buckland say about Somerset Geology at the first AGM?

**“It had been his lot to traverse the whole of that small mountain chain, and at the end of three weeks, when he had finished his geological map of the district, and stood alone on one of the highest crests of Mendip, viz. on Blackdown, he felt a pride which he never felt before or since; he felt a pride which he trusted it was not improper for him to feel**

**.... that he was the first of the human race whom God had permitted to understand the geological construction of His glorious works in that important part of the county of Somerset”.**



# The sad ending of Willam Buckland

- **Shortly after the first SAHNS AGM, his mental health declined**
- **In the same year – 1849 - Buckman started beating his head and scratching himself**
- **He died in 1856 in a lunatic asylum**
- **3 years later – in 1859 – Darwin (another geologist) would publish his Origin of Species. Thank “God” that Buckland was not around to see this day.**



# I started with a quotation from the first AGM....

**"The study of Natural History had been utterly neglected at our public schools, and he knew certain persons in authority in certain universities of the land who had said**

**that man is good for nothing, for he is addicted to themselves and (the) study of natural sciences.**

**They were ignorant of science themselves and wished to keep others so.**

**It was the old conclusion:**

**Damnante quod non intelligunt."**

**"They condemn what they do not understand"**