

*“...we’ve eaten the last of the
geologists!”*: Geology in
Punch, 1841-1968

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Overview

- research into popular ideas about prehistory
- cartoons a potent source
- create as well as reproducing social relations
 - e.g. class & gender expectations
- Punch – 1841-1983
 - popular UK family magazine, full of cartoons
 - aimed at educated classes
 - wide readership
 - reactionary politics – racist/imperialist/sexist
 - conceit of scientific literacy

Overview

- ~5000 contextualising cartoons between 1841 & 1968
- 21 items about geology
- how do people see geology?
 - who does it?
 - what does it involve?
- not going to trace history of geology
- look at cartoons to see what they tell us in themselves
 - what are readers taking from cartoons?
- NB most cartoons not very funny...

1847, Volume 12, "May"

- geology involves rocks
- geology is science
- middle class men do science
- science involves leisure

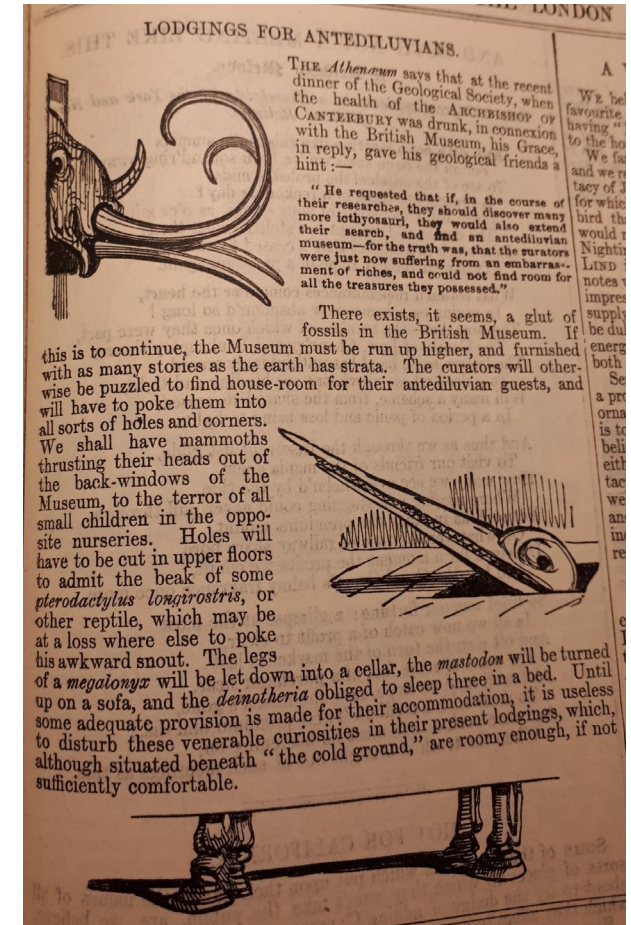


An Association for the Advancement of Science on an Excursion.

1849, Volume 16, page 111

- geology involves fossils of prehistoric beasts
- there is a Geology Society
- the GS holds dinners
- the Archbishop of Canterbury addresses the GS
- there are fossils in the British Museum

LODGINGS FOR ANTEDILUVIANS.



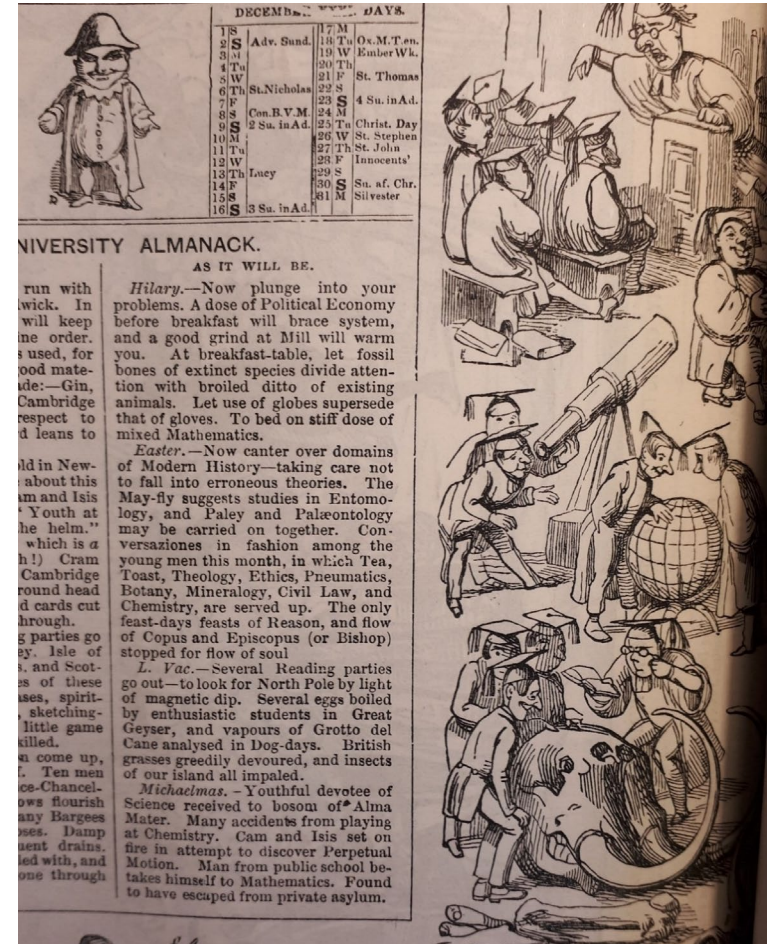
1849, Volume 16, Almanack

- geology involves fossils of prehistoric beasts
- academic men do geology
- minerology should be on the future University curriculum

UNIVERSITY ALMANACK

AS IT WILL BE

...Botany, Minerology, Civil Law...



1870, Volume 58, page 218

- geology involves fossils
- geology is science
- working class men dig
- middle class men do geology
- different classes speak differently

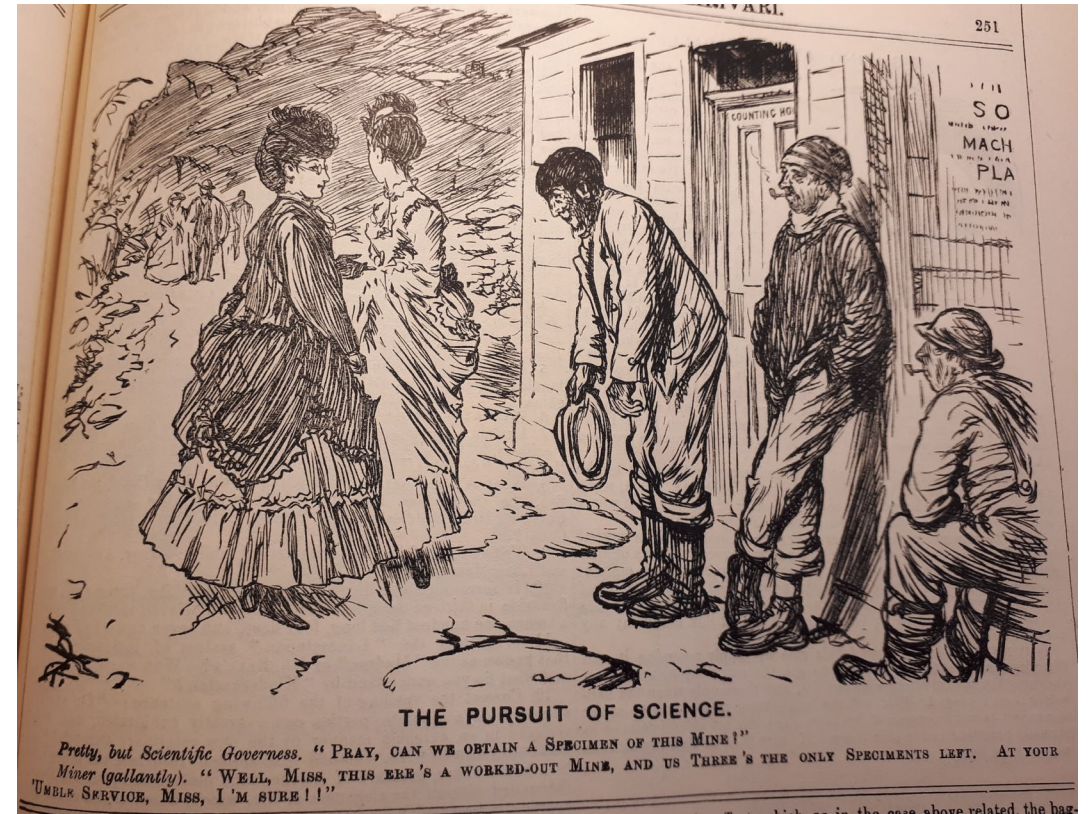


Scientific Pedestrian: "Do you find any fossils here?"

Excavator: "Dunno what you calls 'Vossuls'. We finds nowt here except muck and 'ard work!"

1870, Volume 59, page 251

- geology involves specimens
- geology is scientific
- working class men dig
- middle class women do geology
- different classes speak differently
- pretty women may be scientific



Pretty, but scientific governess: "Pray can we obtain a specimen of this mine?"
Miner (gallantly): "Well, miss, this ere's a worked out mine, and us three's the only specimens left, at your service miss, I'm sure."

1874, Volume 66, page 171

- Economic Geology is a thing
- there is a Museum of Economic Geology
- visiting a MoEG is a leisure activity for middle class men and boys



Papa: "Now, how shall we spend Monday most advantageous? You might take the girls, my love, to the German Bazaar; and I propose that as Charley intends to come out "a Grecian", he and I would have an instructive day at the Museum of Economic Geology.

1874, Volume 67, page 168

- academic men do geology
- geology involves pick axes and hammers



1881, Volume 80, page 47

- geology is a science
- geology involves
 - fossils
 - rocks
 - prehistoric artefacts
- Darwin tells us about evolution
- Lyell tells us about human origins
- Murchison tells us about the earth's composition

SONGS OF THE SCIENCES.—III. GEOLOGY.

SAY, Mastodon, say, how you wandered of yore,
'Mid the Red Crag of Suffolk on Pliocene shore ;
The Ichthyosaurus was gone when you came,
With the strange Pterodactyls, what wonderful game !
But the mild Dinotherium rose on your view,
And the festive Rhinoceros lived with you too.

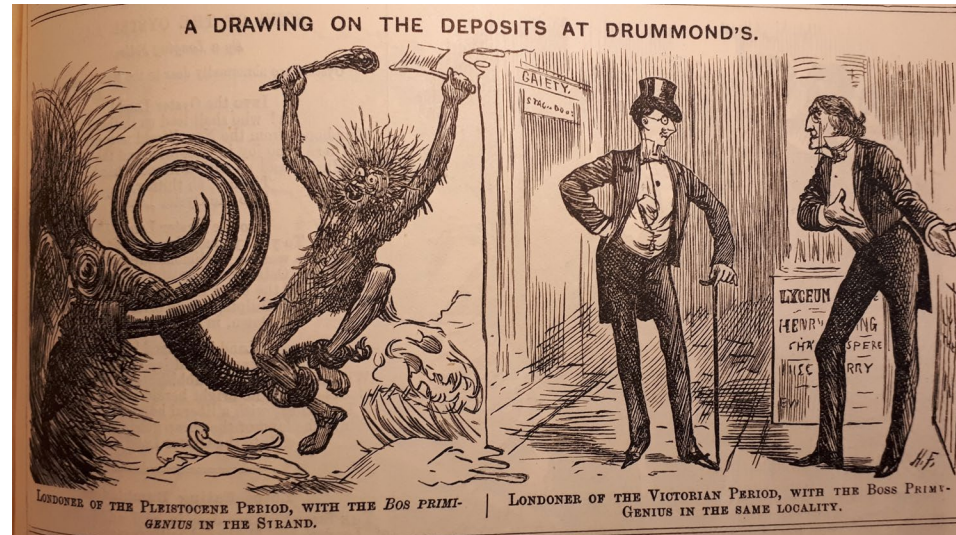
Did you ever conceive with a sort of a shock,
Eozoöns had lived in Laurentian rock ;
And then came the fishes with very fine scales,
While the Trilobite waltzed in the waters of Wales.
In the oolites large Labyrinthodons walk,
Till the Ammonites came with the oceans of chalk.

Oh ! Mastodon, tell when your troubles began,
From the flint-headed arrows of cave-dwelling man ;
Those swells of the Stone Age were *gourmets*, one owns,
For we've proved that they often enjoyed marrow-bones.
While the size of their joints would make modern men stare.
How Sirloin of Mammoth would please the Lord Mayor !

Now we'll bid you adieu, and we'll read how, in sooth,
The Thecodontosaurus could boast a queer tooth :
How DARWIN has told us with labour well spent,
That live types and old fossils have common descent ;
With our LYELL we'll learn how man first had his birth,
And with MURCHISON study the crust of the earth !

1882, Volume 83, page 181

- fossil remains are found in deposits
- deposits are exposed during building excavation



*A DRAWING ON THE DEPOSITS AT DRUMMONDS.
Londoner of the Pleistocene period, with the Bos
Primigenius in The Strand.
Londoner of the Victorian period with the Boss
Primi-Genius in the same locality.*

THE PETS OF THE PLEISTOCENE.

[Fossil fauna have been found in excavating the foundations of DRUMMOND'S Bank, and Mr. ROWLAND WARD writes to the *Times* that "indigenous lions once roared where the electric light now shines at Charing Cross."]

How strange are the wild zoological dreams
That come from exploring old gravels and seams:
The animals must have been truly sublime
That were seen on the earth in the Pleistocene time;
And the Lion, we learn, was in those days "top boss,"
Of the forests that flourished around Charing Cross.

Could they come back again, how the people would stare
To see Elephants walk in Trafalgar's wide square;
There the Irish and Red Deer would muster each morn,
And the mighty Rhinoceros raise up his horn;
While the *Bos primigenius* would come down the Strand,
Arm-in-arm with the Mammoth, to dine at "The Grand."

They'd stare at the statues, and wonder what great
Men had done to deserve so appalling a fate;
They'd see how the smoke-cloud, spread out like a pall
Over London, in darkness envelopes us all;
While the Thames of their time ran quite clear to the sea,
Lo! the Thames of to-day is as black as can be.

They would note crawling cabs, and see folks make a fuss
To get into that hearse on four wheels called a 'bus;
They would find when the snow came all vehicles stop,
And that traders in town might as well shut up shop;
They would see how the Rough was the lord of the street,
And the Peeler, when wanted, was not on his beat.

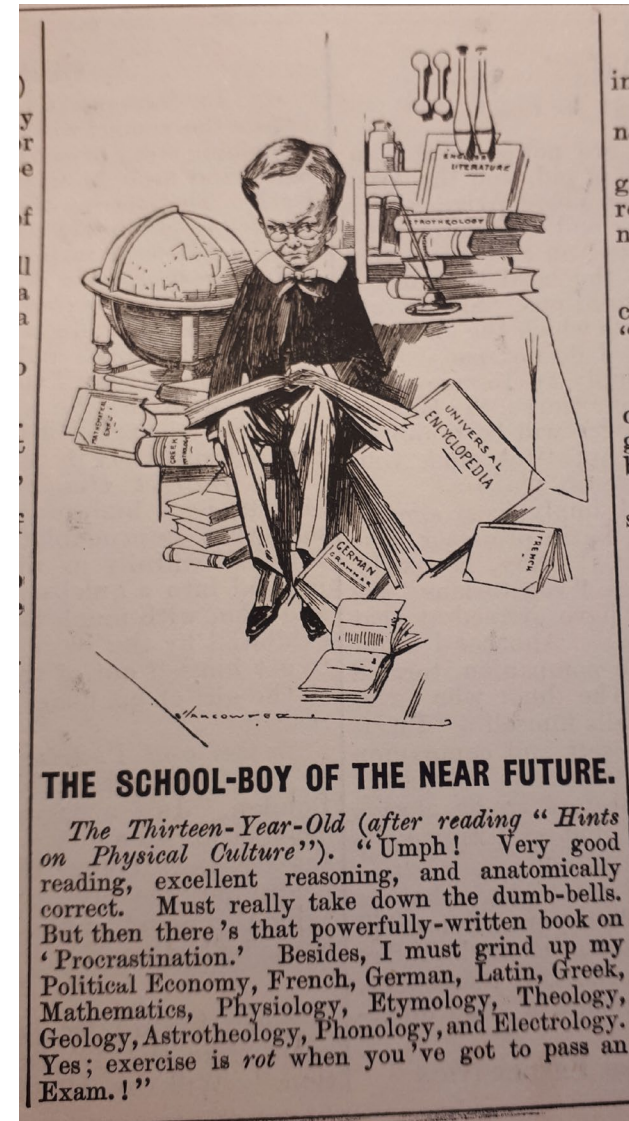
So the Mammoth would think, and the Lion would vow,
That the days when they flourished were better than now
And that Man prehistoric was festive and fat,
Though his shin-bones they say were uncommonly flat:
Then the earth was far freer from troubles and crimes.
Oh, why can't we go back to Pleistocene times?

1898, Volume 114, page 273

- geology should be part of a future school curriculum for boys

THE SCHOOL-BOY OF THE NEAR FUTURE.

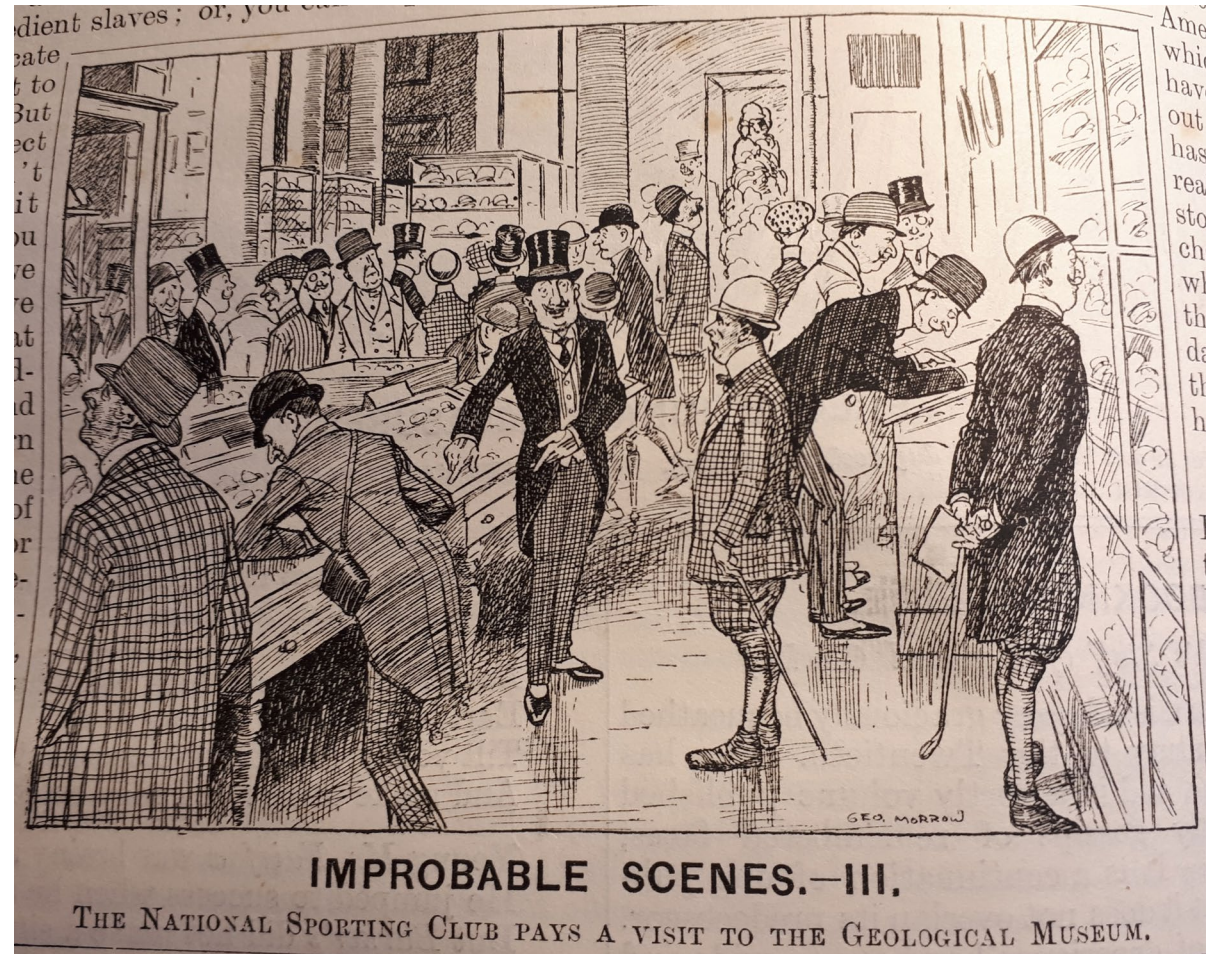
*"...I must grind up my...Theology, Geology,
Astrotheology..."*



1910, Volume 139, page 270

- there is a Geological Museum
- it is unlikely that men who like racing would visit it

*IMPROBABLE SCENES. – III.
The National Sporting Club pays a visit to the Geological Museum*

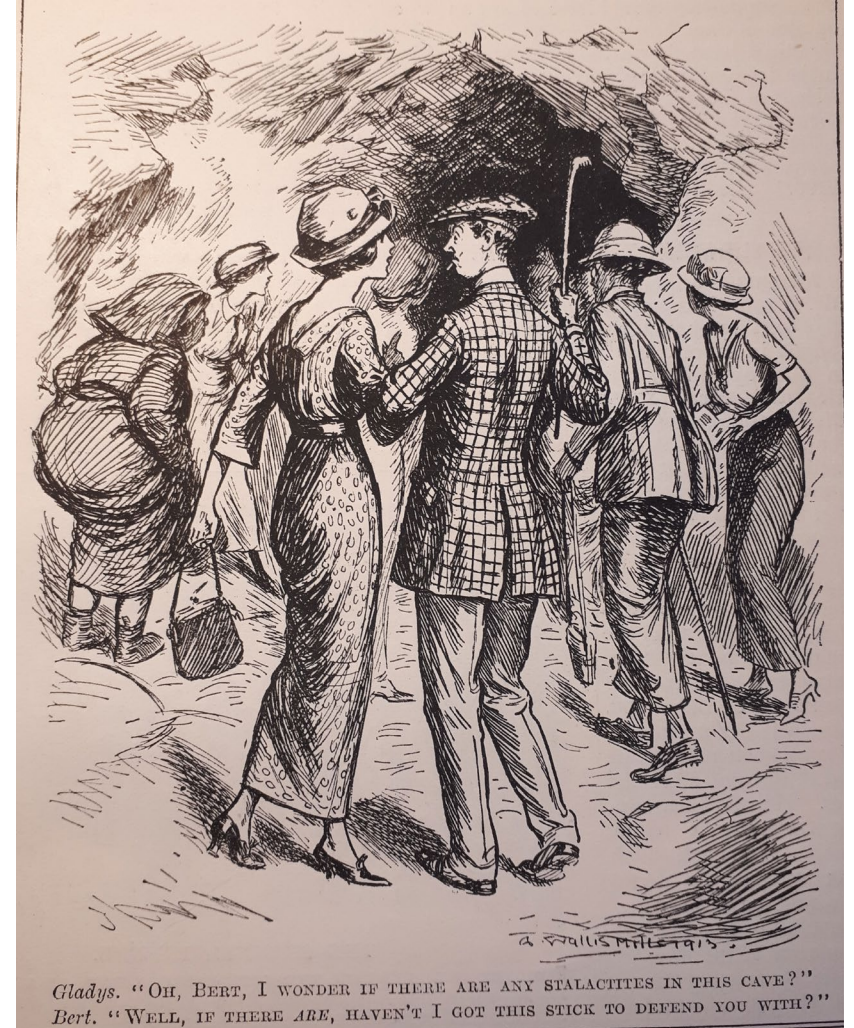


1913, Volume 145, page 185

- working class people are ignorant about geology

Gladys: "Oh, Bert, I wonder if there are any stalagmites in this cave?"

Bert: "Well, if there are, haven't I got this stick to defend you with?"



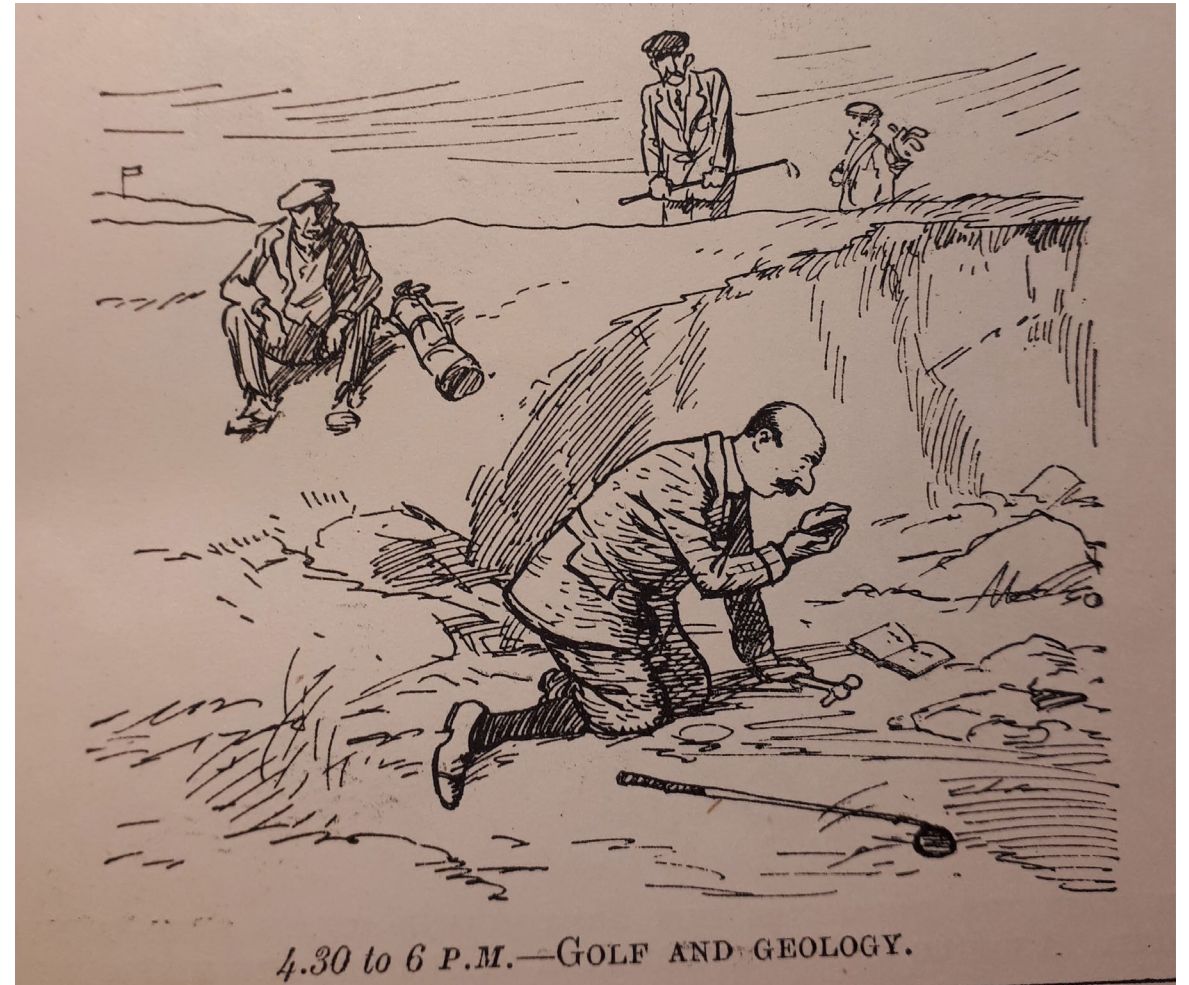
Gladys. "OH, BERT, I WONDER IF THERE ARE ANY STALACMITES IN THIS CAVE?"
Bert. "WELL, IF THERE ARE, HAVEN'T I GOT THIS STICK TO DEFEND YOU WITH?"

1914, Volume 147, page 43

- geology is a suitable activity for men who play golf

A FULL-JOY DAY.

4.30 to 6 P.M. – Golf and Geology.



4.30 to 6 P.M. – GOLF AND GEOLOGY.

1916, Volume 151, page 338

- geology varies by named district
- it is possible to discern different districts from mud
- districts have Latin names
- men know about geology

THE NEW ARMY.

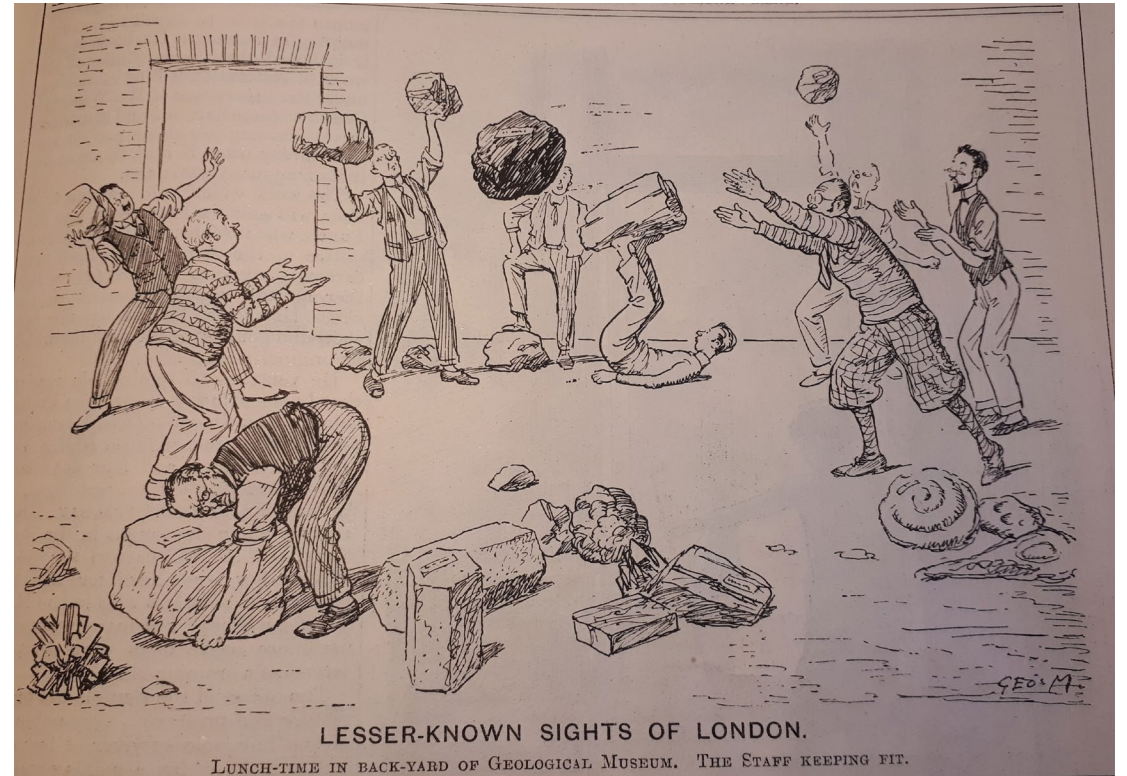
Officer: "Not a puncture, I hope?"

Private Brown: "...I see you've been in the Lower Silurian, Old Red Sandstone, Crystallite and Metamorphic districts."



1926, Volume 171, page 97

- geology involves rocks
- geology museum staff are male

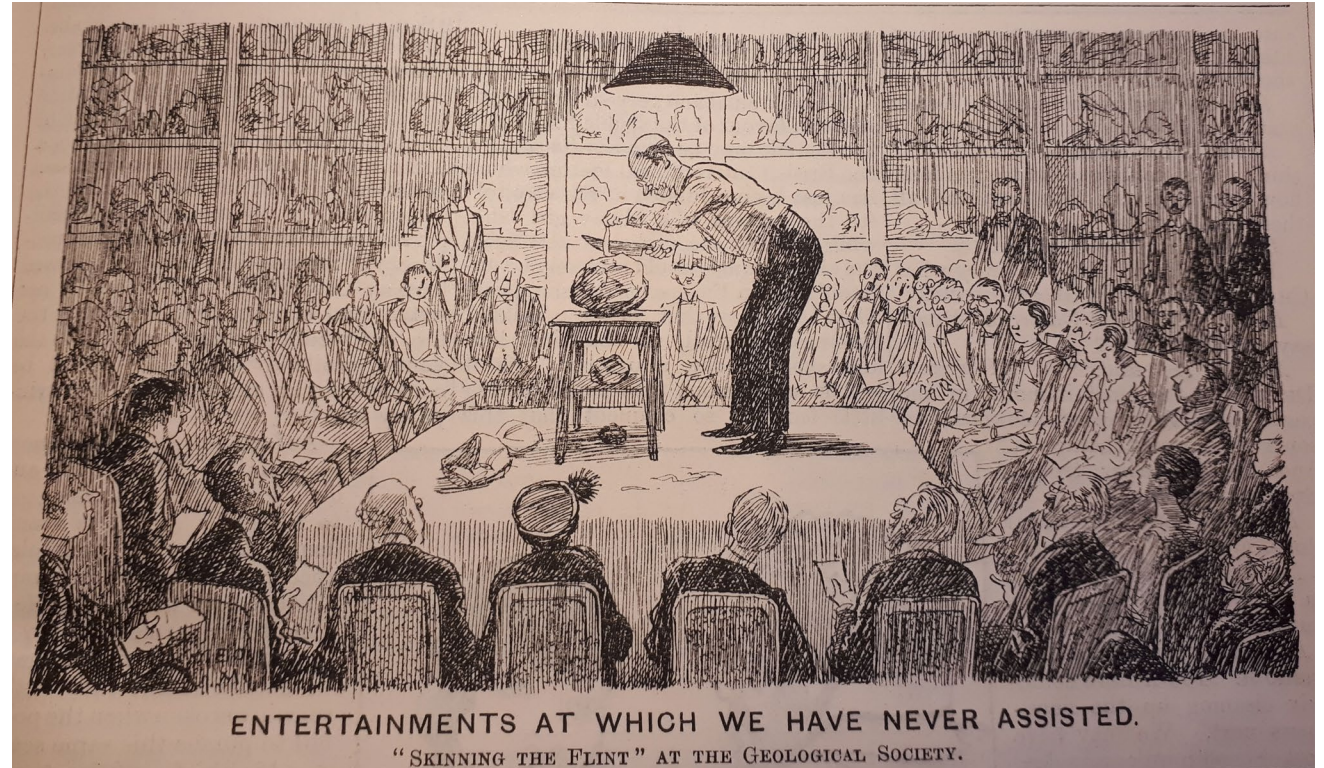


LESSER-KNOWN SIGHTS OF LONDON.

Lunch-time in back-yard of Geological Museum. The staff keeping fit.

1928, Volume 175, page 607

- there is a Geological Society
- men and women attend GS events
- rocks may be investigated layer by layer

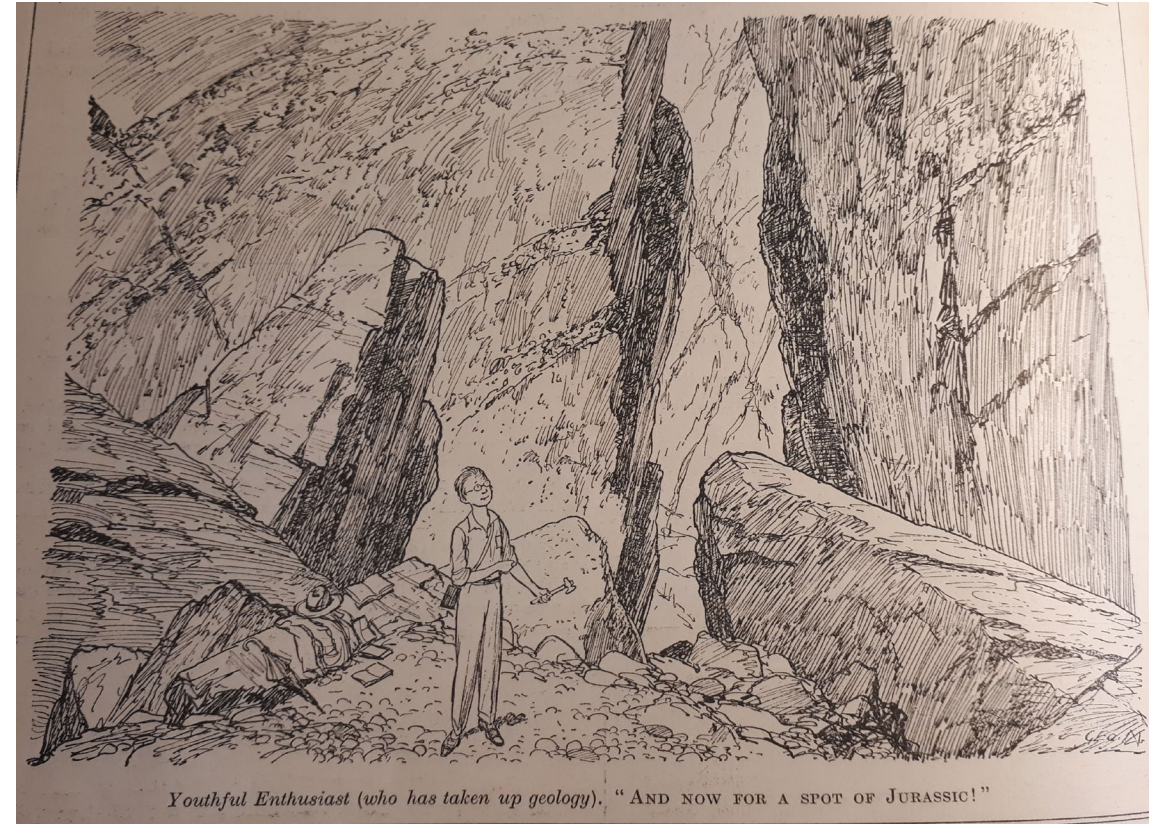


*ENTERTAINMENTS AT WHICH WE HAVE NEVER ASSISTED.
"Skinning the flint" at the Geological Society.*

1933, Volume 184, page 614

- geology involves rock formations
- geology may be taken up by enthusiastic men
- rock types have Latin names

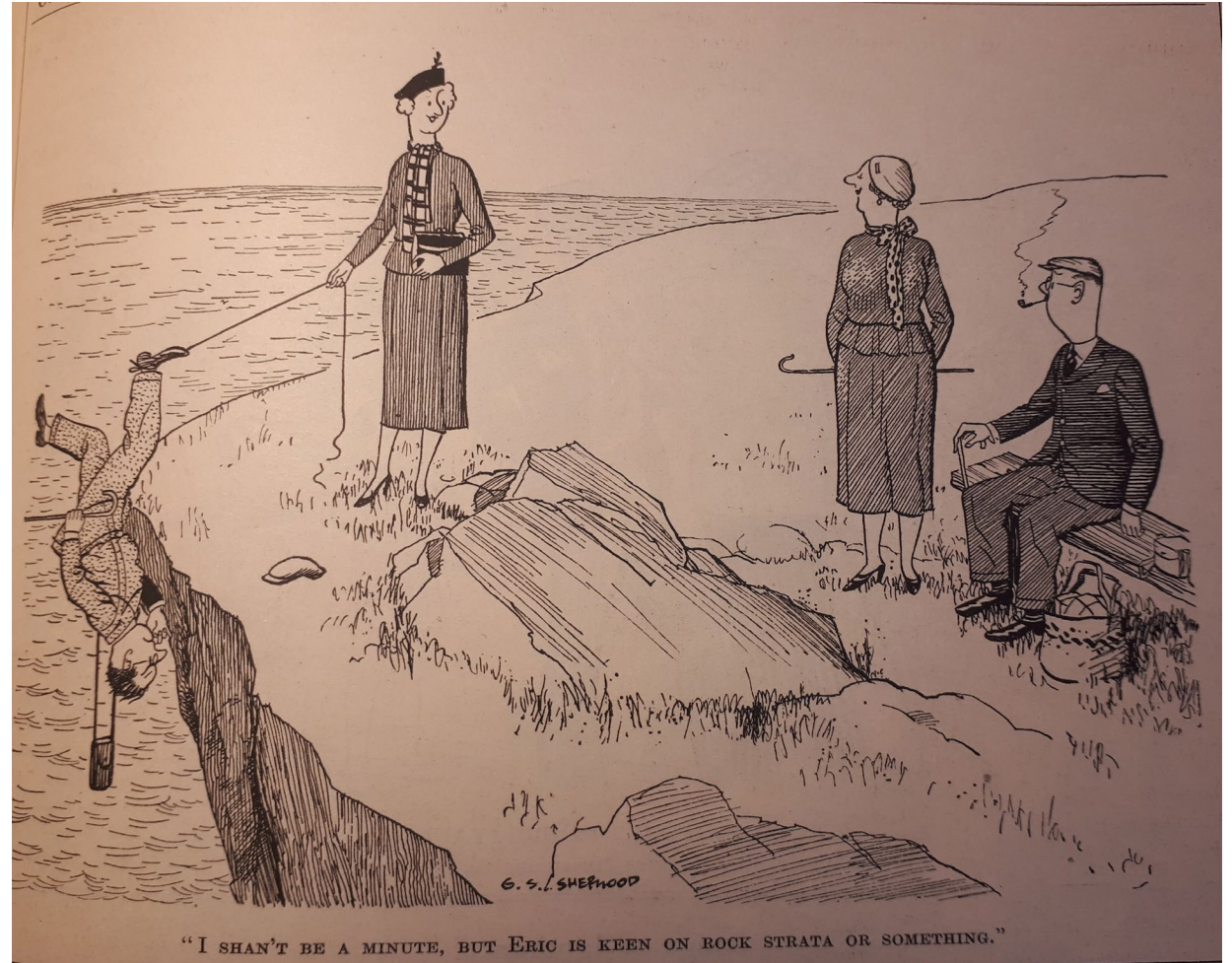
Youthful enthusiast (who has taken up geology): “And now for a spot of Jurassic!”



1935, Volume 189, page 377

- geology involves rock strata
- geology is a pastime for men
- women are ignorant about geology

“I shan’t be a minute, but Eric is keen on rock strata or something.”



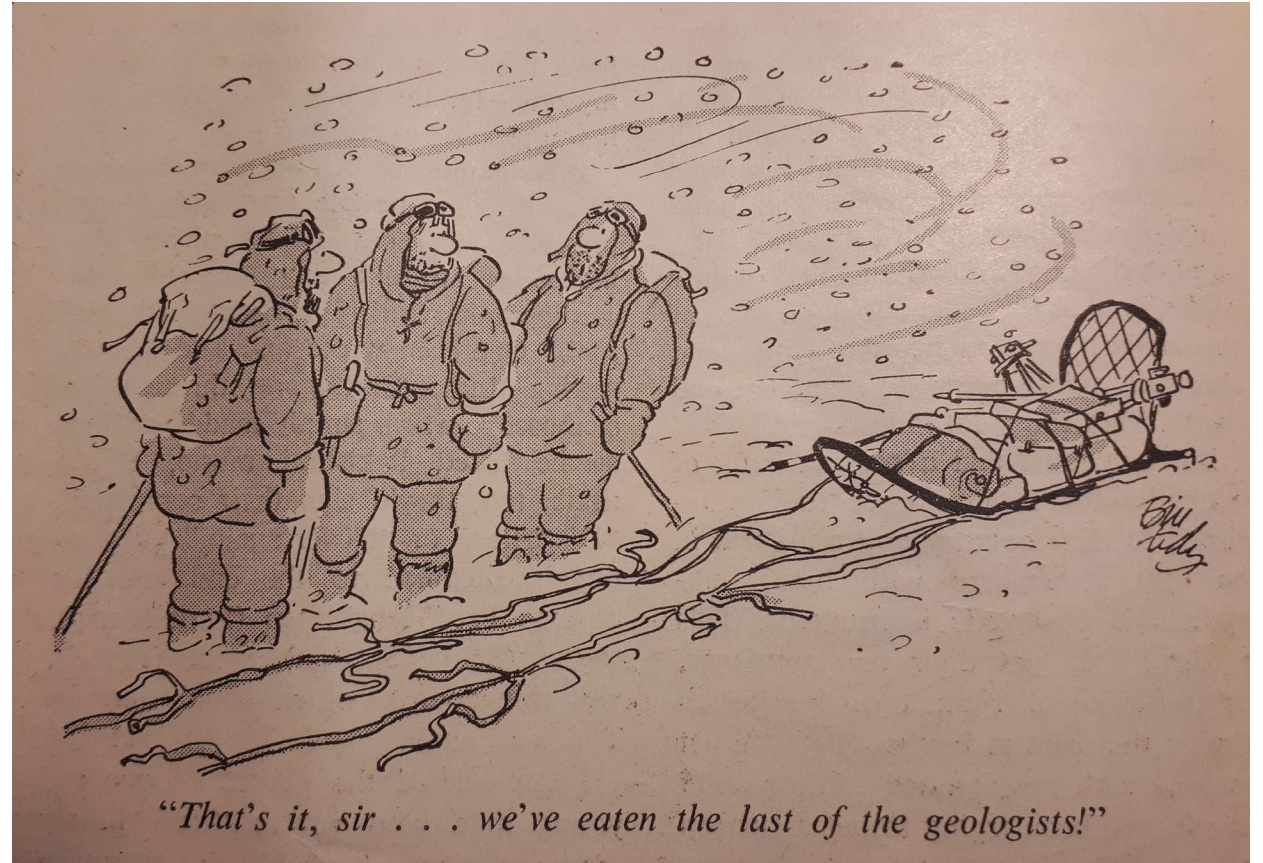
1957, Volume 232, page 704

- Geology is a University subject
- men study geology
- roadmending is an appropriate vacation job for geology students



1967, Volume 252, page 214

- geologists go on polar expeditions
- geologists are lower status



"That's it sir...we've eaten the last of the geologists!"

Conclusion

- important to read cartoons diachronically
- people seeing cartoons in given period are unlikely to know/recall cartoons from markedly earlier or later periods
- longstanding geology themes
 - science
 - involves: rocks, specimens, fossils, digging
 - educated/middle class male pursuit
 - academic subject or amateur pastime
 - no apparent economic significance

Conclusion

- what do people think about geology now...?
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geologist>



Acknowledgements

- thanks to my supervisors, Jeff Oliver and Elisabeth Niklasson