

## **TITLE - P467: Centenary of the Death of Robert Dick**

### **RECORDS' IDENTITY STATEMENT**

Reference number: P467

Alternative reference number:

Title: Centenary of the Death of Robert Dick

Dates of creation: 20th April 1966

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Extent: 1 sheet

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### **RECORDS' CONTEXT**

Name of creators: J.G. Rogers, President of the Societas Botanicas

Administrative history: Robert Dick (January 1811 - 24 December 1866), Scottish geologist and botanist was born at Tullibody, in Clackmannanshire.

His father was an officer of excise. At the age of thirteen, after receiving a good elementary education at the parish school, Dick was apprenticed to a baker, and served for three years. In these early days he became interested in wildflowers.

When his time was up he left Tullibody and gained employment as a journeyman baker at Leith, Glasgow and Greenock. Meanwhile his father, who in 1826 had been removed to Thurso, as supervisor of excise, advised his son to set up a baker's shop in that town. Dick went there in 1830, started a business as a baker.

Throughout this period he zealously devoted himself to studying and collecting the plants, mollusca and insects of a wide area of Caithness, and his attention was directed soon after he settled in Thurso to the rocks and fossils. In 1835 he first found remains of fossil fishes.

Then he obtained a copy of Hugh Miller's Old Red Sandstone (published in 1841),

and he began systematically collecting with hammer and chisel the fossils from the Caithness flags. In 1845 he found remains of *Holoptychius* and forwarded specimens to Miller, and he continued to send the best of his fossil fish to that geologist, and to other geologists after the death of Miller. In this way he largely contributed to the progress of geological knowledge, although he himself published nothing and was never averse from publicity.

His herbarium, which consisted of about 200 folios of mosses, ferns and flowering plants "almost unique in its completeness," is now stored, with many of his fossils, in the museum at Thurso. Dick had a hard struggle for existence, especially through competition during his late years, when he was reduced almost to beggary: but of this few, if any, of his friends were aware until it was too late. A monument erected in the new cemetery at Thurso testifies to the respect which his life-work created.

Custodial history:

## **RECORDS' CONTENT**

Description:

Appraisal:

Accruals:

## **RECORDS' CONDITION OF ACCESS AND USE**

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## **ALLIED MATERIALS**

Related material:

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P467	Letter from J.G. Rogers President of the Societas Botanica to the Dick Museum in Thurso regarding the centenary of Robert Dick's death [1 sheet]	20th April 1966