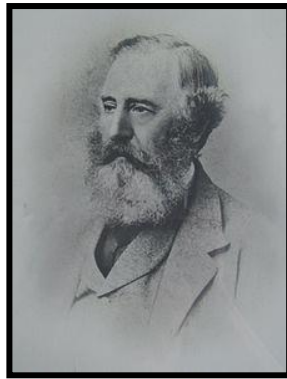


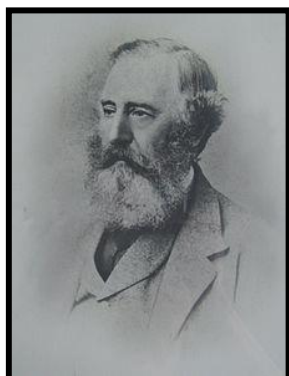
**Robert Lightbody FGS  
(1802-1874)**



Born: Liverpool 22 January 1802  
Died: Ludlow 5 July 1874

## Robert Lightbody FGS (1802-1874)

### 1. Introduction



Robert Lightbody was a stalwart of the Ludlow Natural History Society perhaps, together with George Cocking and Colonel Colvin, largely responsible for its continuance through the 1850s and 1860s. Born in Liverpool he moved to Central Wales prior to taking up the lease of Castle Square House in Ludlow in 1857. He was also a member of the Severn Valley Field Club and the Woolhope Naturalists' Club where he was a somewhat petulant president for the year 1861. He is accredited with the finding of a true fish (*Pteraspis*) in the Silurian (Salter, 1859).

Photo: LMRS

### 2. Family and background

Lightbody was born in Liverpool on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1802 to John Lightbody 'the younger' and Harriet Lightbody nee Hughes - the latter was Shrewsbury born. The parents were non-conformist members of the Unitarian Church in Paradise Street, Liverpool - Robert and his siblings were baptised at the Paradise Street church. The Lightbody family traces its ancestry back to Adam Lightbody of Lower Craigs, Dumfries and Galloway and even further back to William Lightbodie born in 1596. Adam Lightbody moved to Liverpool in about 1731. His son, another Adam Lightbody (1729-1788), is named as a cotton merchant of Liverpool.



Robert was articled to attorney George Ashby Pritts in February 1821 and presumably completed his five year tenure – he is recorded as an attorney in the register of the Freemasons (Liverpool Lodge) for the years 1828-1830 having been initiated on the 2nd January 1828. There is no evidence of Robert acting as an attorney, his profession being variously described in later census as 'Landed Proprietor' or 'Gentleman'.

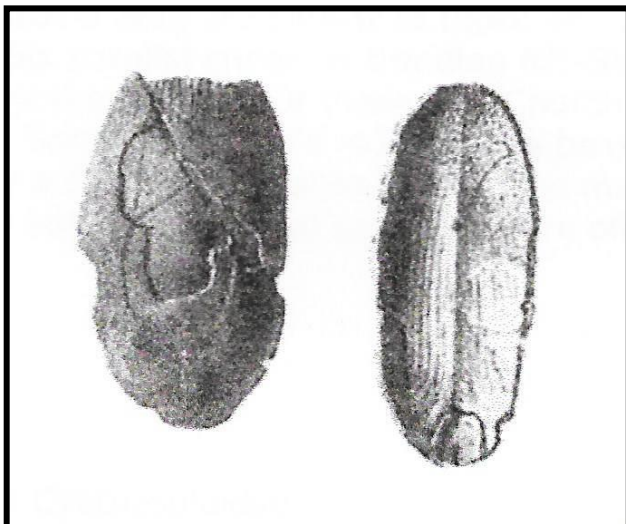
*The Unitarian Church in Paradise Street*

Robert Lightbody married Jane Peele, also Shrewsbury born, at St Julian's Shrewsbury on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1840. Jane was the daughter of Joshua Peele, a wine merchant of Dogpole in Shrewsbury. Lightbody's first child, Eliza Harriet, was born in Liverpool in 1841 but was baptised in Llanllwchaiarn in Central Wales. Four more children were born in Llanllwchaiarn, William Henry (1842), Jane de Courcy (1844), Robert (1846) and Charles John (1848). The family then returned to the Liverpool area where their youngest daughter, Mary Agnes, was born at Grassendale Park, West Derby in 1851 – the family appear in the 1851 census at Grassendale - a draft lease dated October 1851 gives his then residence in Aigburth a suburb of Liverpool.



Finally, on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1852, Robert Lightbody took up the lease of Castle Square House in Ludlow from a Mrs Botfield of Hopton Court. It was here that Lightbody spent the remainder of his life. He purchased the house outright in 1857 although he did retain some land at Llanllwchaiarn having exchanged property with a neighbour in 1858.

Robert Lightbody was obviously well versed in the geology of South Shropshire and North Herefordshire but there is no indication as to how this interest came into being.



He is accredited with the joint discovery, and ownership, of the fossil of what was then the earliest known true fish. The fossil was found in Lower Leintwardine Shales at Church Hill Quarry near Leintwardine and is notable in that it proved that fish occur below the Ludlow Bone Bed (see the Geological Conservation Review; Church Hill Quarry and Salter in the Annals and Magazine of Natural History).

*Pteraspis (Archaegonaspis) ludensis* (Salter).

Lightbody was an active member of three local natural history societies. He acted as president for one term in the Woolhope Club and made several presentations based on his geological experiences. He also published in the Geologist (1860), the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society (1863), the Geological Magazine ((1869) and the Proceedings of the Geologist's Association (1874) and in Nature – the latter two in conjunction with J Morris and the Reverend J D La Touche. He was therefore the first Member of the Ludlow Natural History Society to so publish. The papers were in the main short offerings only on Shropshire geology etc.

#### ***The Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club***

The Woolhope Club, founded in 1851, is based in Hereford and was named after the Woolhope Dome found near the village of Woolhope. It had a strong focus on geology from the beginning - Murchison was an honorary member and attended meetings in the 1850s.

Robert Lightbody was elected to the club in 1855 and remained on the membership list until 1871. He was president for the year 1861 - his *Presidential Address*, made on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1862 (Transactions pp 285-290), claims '*incompetence to discharge his duties of his position*' (see below). He includes within this address a discussion on the classification of the Upper Ludlow, Aymestry and Lower Ludlow beds where he is at variance with Murchison. Lightbody is also mentioned in the succeeding president's address (Transactions pp 256, 259 & 261).

Apart from the presidential address he gave two papers in 1869 on the '*Classification of Rocks at Ludlow*' and '*A Sketch of Geological Time*' (Transactions pp 64-69) the latter a somewhat apologetic address to the club reviewing sedimentary geological formations from recent times through to the Silurian and on to Lyell's description of the cliffs of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. An annotation tells that '*The paper was much applauded, though the patience of the lecturer must have been greatly tried, for in the middle of it the missing hampers began to arrive, and it was not in the nature of all his hearers to remain patient unto the end*'.

The review of the year commenced with the statement; *I am very much at a loss how to address you on this occasion, as I feel very strongly my incompetence to discharge properly the duties of my position. It was very repugnant to my feelings to assume the responsible post of your president .... I trust that in future you will be more fortunate in selecting a leader who will be able to amuse and instruct you. ....*

The Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club was formed in April 1893 by the amalgamation of the Severn Valley Naturalists Field Club and the Caradoc Club. Lightbody was a member of both the latter clubs but he does not seem to have contributed greatly to either organisation. He was present at the opening meeting of the Caradoc Club in 1863 and read one paper to the 1868 Ludlow meeting of the Severn Valley Club on *The Geology of Ludlow* (Transactions pp 125-130). It seems that Lightbody was lax in the paying of his subs and is rarely mentioned in the written records of the field trips of either club. There is one notable exception when, in 1869, he took part in a field meeting, the intention of which was to visit Wigmore. The party got side tracked en-route, missed the fair weather and most of the report is dedicated to a description of the luncheon – one section describes Lightbody pontificating to other club members about the specific nature of the graptolite in Elton.

### ***The Ludlow Natural History Society***

Lightbody's major involvement was within the Ludlow Club. He was proposed for membership by Humphry Salwey in March 1852 and was appointed to the Committee in January 1853 replacing Edward Rogers the then chairman. He, together with George Cocking, took on the responsibility of housing the fossil collection - a note is found in the Committee minutes to the effect that Salter visited the Museum in November 1855 and Lightbody helped to rearrange the exhibits. Lightbody was a very regular attendee at Committee meetings through to the year 1870.

Lightbody donated by far the largest number of fossil specimens of any member to be housed in the Society's museum – over 300 in number, a number which includes many multiple specimens. It would not be sensible to list the specimens here - all but a few were passed on to the Natural History Museum in 1947. But an indication of the breadth of Lightbody's gathering can be given by a listing of the locations from where the fossils were found, this list culled from T. H. D. la Touche's 1928 catalogue.

**Cambrian**                      Pedwardine

### **Ordovician**

*Arenig Series*                      Shelve Church

*Llandeilo Series*                Meadowtown, Builth

*Caradoc*                              Soudley, Cheney Longville, Gratton, Onny River, Chatwall, Horderley Road, Marshbrook, Acton Scott, Corston, Hopesay, Batch Gutter, Long Lane,

### **Silurian**

*Valentian*                            New House Marshbrook, Onny River, White Birches, Minton.

*Wenlock Shale*                    Burrington, Woolhope, Wistanstow,

*Wenlock Limestone*          Church Hill Leintwardine, Dormington, Woolhope.

*Lower Ludlow*                      Church Hill Leintwardine, High Vinnals, Maryknoll Dingle, Evenhay Lane, Stoke Wood, Trippaston.

*Aymestry Limestone*          Palmer's Cairn, Totteridge, Mocktree, Caynham Camp.

*Upper Aymestry*                    Whitcliffe, Wigmore Road.

*Upper Ludlow*                      Ludford Park, Whitcliffe, Conduit Quarry, Norton, Lower Woodgate.

*Downton Sandstone*            Forge Bridge Downton, Ludford Lane, Bradnor Hill Kington.

*Temeside Shales*                Paper Mill Ludlow, Tin Mill Downton, Ludlow Railway Station/Cutting/Tunnel, Farer Hill Ludlow.

### **Old Red Sandstone**

*Lower Old Red Sandstone*    Puddlestone, Leominster, Hopton Gate, Whitbatch, Targrove, Letster's Pole.

Three of Lightbody's fossils remain at Ludlow:

G.00145 *Salopina lunata*

G.00181 *Leurocyloceras whitcliffense* (D/b/49 in the la Touche catalogue)

G.06411 *Pterygotus* sp.

Note that Lightbody's arrival in Ludlow coincided with the arrival of the railway which led to his involvement in the search for fossils at the cutting and tunnel by Ludlow station.

### 3. Lightbody's Bequest

Robert Lightbody was perhaps the most widely known of the Ludlow fossil hunters both for his own collection and for his investigations into the stratigraphy of the Ludlow area. The Lightbody fossil collection was gifted to the Manchester University Museum in 1874/75 – a number of type specimens are listed in Jackman's *Catalogue of Typed and Figured Specimens*, for example the entry:

Phacops macroura Sjogren.

Ordovician (Caradoc Beds).

Acton Scott, Shropshire

E. Coll. Lightbody, L10513

Salter, Mon. Brit. Camb. & Sil. Trilobites (Pal. Soc.), 1864, p.39 pl. IV, fig. 21 (labrum)

*Note.* The original is said to be in Ludlow Museum, but the Manchester Museum specimen appears to be the one from which the figure was drawn.

John William Salter gives due recognition to the access given to him by Lightbody to his 'cabinet' as does Thomas Davidson - the latter also gives recognition to Lightbody's field work in his *British Fossil Brachiopoda* noting, for example, the following as part of a debate on *Lingula cornea*:

*Mr Lightbody, who has devoted much care to the study of the Ludlow locality, seems disposed to concur with Mr. Salter in considering these "Passage-beds" as part of the Lower Old Red Sandstone ..... Mr Lightbody kindly sends me the following note with reference to his locality:-*

*"In the 'Downton sandstone' which underlies the 'Passage-beds,' I have never found any Molluscs except L. mimima and a species of Modiolopsis. This 'Trochus-bed' is at the bottom of the Downton sandstone; and about three or four feet lower is the 'Bone-bed,' which is nearly at the top of the mudstone. Spirifer elevatus occurs in a layer a little under the 'Bone-bed;' and lower still, Pterina retroflexa. These upper beds are yellowish, and underlie the first quarry of Whitcliff next Ludford, and are thin and very fossiliferous – Chonetes lata, Rhynchonella navicula, Orthis lunata, O. elegantula, Goniophora cymbaformis, Serpulites longissimus; and most of these fossils occur also in the Lower Ludlow below; but in true Upper Ludlow I have never seen Atrypa reticularis, nor any Strophomenae. These last come in with the Aymestry upper beds abundantly; but these beds have been sometime, and especially in Whitcliff, confounded with the Upper Ludlow, and consequently the Rh. Naticula band has been put too high up. This bed really belongs to the Upper Aymestry limestone; and even above it can still be seen traces of the honeycomb-structure which has been referred to by Sir R. Murchison as characteristic of the Aymestry limestone. These Upper Aymestry beds are interlaced with calcareous bands, which the Upper Ludlow is not; and below them the limestone get stronger, and composes the mass of the rock, though still too argillaceous to burn into lime. Below this again come the beds of Pentamerus Knightii, like an oyster-bed crammed full of shells crushed together; this they burn as lime. Then come the Lower Ludlow beds; and, as seen at Mocktree, one cannot tell where the Aymestry limestone ends and the Ludlow begins in that fine section along the turnpike-road.*

British Fossil Brachiopoda Vol 3 p. 47-48.

The above suffices to show the detailed knowledge of the Ludlow area acquired by Lightbody, a knowledge well supported by his many writings for the *Transactions* of the Woolhope Club.

A Matter of Gunpowder: Lightbody's days were not all focussed on fossils – the following story researched by Dr Hardman provides some light relief -

While at Castle House. Lightbody had a contretemps with his neighbour Chaplin Hodges of the Ludlow Foundry. Hodges was accused of attempting to blast away part of the cliff face which separated Hodges' abode from Lightbody's garden (located at a higher level) such that the foundations of Lightbody's summerhouse were put at risk. Lightbody tasked Hodges in the company of his lawyer and relative, Mr de Courcy Peele, to desist from blasting the rock face – he was willing to give permission to carry out 'facing' of the rock but not if this involved blasting. Hodges continued to discharge explosives. The dispute was taken to Chancery under a Bill of Complaint filed on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1866 but the outcome is unknown. The rock wall which forms the line of the old town wall, and the summerhouse remains intact although a section close by did fall in 2013.

#### 4. Death and Family

Robert Lightbody died in Ludlow on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1874 and was buried in the Corve Street Graveyard on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1874 just across the path from George Cocking. Jane Lightbody died two years later and was buried in the same grave on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Also buried in the grave is niece Alice Jane Peele (1865-1883) who is accredited with the discovery of the rare Ghost Orchid (*Epipogon aphyllum*) at Bringewood in 1878.

Of his children Eliza Harriet first married Robert William Lloyd in August 1871 the marriage lasting only to the death of her husband one year later. Eliza Harriet then married Van Tromp Tyrell Orgill (1840-1920), the Jamaican born Vicar of Ludford, at St Laurence's, Ludlow on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1878. The couple were living at 42 Mill Street, Ludlow in 1881 and in Brand Lane in 1891 together with children Francis, Mary, Adela, Hester and Reginald. She was living at 14 Burlington Street, Bath with her two daughters, Mary and Hester in 1911. She died in Bath in the year 1918. Husband Van Tromp Tyrell died in Woolwich in 1920.

Robert pursued a career in engineering and settled in Devon after marrying Hilda Friederica. The couple were living at the Beacon, Littleham, Devon on retirement in 1891. He died in 1897. Hilda Friederica died on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1923 at 28 Greycourt Gardens, Westminster, effects £11791 17s 11d. Probate was to Hester Dorothy Orgill.

Jane de Courcy married Charles Ehrensperger a Swiss general merchant and consul. She died in Locarno, Switzerland on the 20 April 1900 – her home address was given as Elmsley Road, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, effects £1558 6s 7d. Charles Ehrensperger died in 1898.

Youngest daughter, Mary Agnes, remained with her father until his death in 1874. She was living as a boarder 'on her own means' in the Beechwood Hotel, Harrogate in 1901 but died in Corwen, Herefordshire in 1931.

Youngest son Charles John emigrated to Australia where he married Mary Elizabeth Blaxland, the grand daughter of the Australian pioneer Geoffrey Blaxland (1778-1853) who initiated and led the first successful European crossing of the Blue Mountains. Charles John died at Toowoomba Station in Queensland on the 30 July 1884. Charles Ehrensperger acted as his executor.

Dr K. Hardman, Dr J. A. Gosling  
July 2018

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Findmypast [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk)

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## Appendix 1 The Lightbody Family

William Lightbodie 1596-

|

Thomas Lightbodie 1616-

|

John Lightbodie 1638-1708 b. *Dumfries*

| Robert 1669- b. *Caerlaverock*

Adam Lightbody 1677-1731

b. Lower Craigs, Dumfries and Galloway

m. (1) Marion Patterson 1685-

John Lightbody 1705-

m. (2) Agnes Nicolson 1684-1748

William 1728-1783 b. *Conleath*

James 1730- b. *Conleath*

Robert 1731-1795 b. *Liverpool*

1733-1762 b. *Liverpool*

|

Adam Lightbody (*Cotton merchant of Liverpool*) 1729-1788

b *Conleath, Caerlaverock Dumfries & Galloway*

d. Bath, bd *Weston* 10.04.1778

m. Elizabeth Tylston 01.12.1755 *St Peters, Chester*

Adam Lightbody 1759-1759

|

John Lightbody (1757-1825)

bpt *Liverpool* 04.01.1757 (Presbyterian) m. Jane ? 1771

bd *Prenton, Woodchurch, Cheshire* 28.09.1825

Adam b. 11.05.1763, c. 01.06.1763 (Presbyterian)

|

John Lightbody Junr 1770- ) of *St Peter's Liverpool*

m. Harriet Hughes *Shrewsbury* 04.05.1801

Mary Ann (1805- b. *Liverpool* 09.08.1805 c. 11.11.1805

John (1817-1880) b. *Liverpool* 03.08.1817 c. 16.09.1817

William (1820- b. *Liverpool* 06.05.1820 c. 11.11.1820

Robert Lightbody b. *Liverpool* 22.01.1802 c. 02.03.1802

.....

Robert Lightbody m. Jane Peele *Shrewsbury (St Julians)* 04.02.1840

1802-1874 1814-1876

b. *Liverpool* c. *Shrewsbury* 20.06.1814

bd *Ludlow* 05.07.1874 bd *Ludlow* 20.06.1876

|

Eliza	William	Jane	Robert	Charles	Mary
Harriet	Henry	de Courcy	John	Agnes	
1841-1918	1842-	1844-1900	1846-1897	1848-1884	1851-1931
b. <i>Liverpool</i>	b. <i>L'chaiarn</i>	b. <i>L'chaiarn</i>	b. <i>L'chaiarn</i>	b. <i>L'chaiarn</i>	b. <i>W. Derby</i>
d. <i>Bath</i>		d. <i>Locarno</i>	d. <i>Littleham</i>	d. <i>Toowondin</i>	d. <i>Corwen</i>
			<i>Devon</i>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Merionethshire</i>