

# **HENRY CHARLES BEASLEY**

**(1836-1919)**



**Born Leamington Priors, 1 March 1836**  
**Died West Derby, Liverpool 1919**

## Henry Charles Beasley (1836-1919)

### I. Introduction

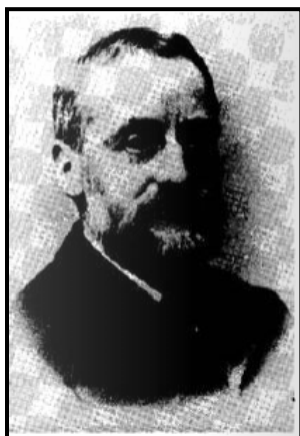


Photo Geological Curator

Henry Charles Beasley was an amateur geologist born in Leamington Priors in 1836 but was working as a commercial clerk in West Derby, Lancashire by 1881. As an amateur geologist he was noted as *'the most eminent British worker in the study of fossil footprints, especially those found in the Triassic Sandstone at Storeton Cheshire'* (Roden 1991). Also, according to the Geological Curator (1985), *'he is perhaps the most important single figure in the field of palaeoichnology'* (the study of fossil footprints, tracks and other trace fossils).

Beasley is recorded as having photographed specimens in the Shrewsbury Museum in 1901 and also appears to have donated just the one fossil to the Museum although this is noted as coming from the 'Beasley Collection'.

An anonymous biography was published in the Liverpool Daily Post & Mercury for the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1919 it reads as follows:

*The death of Mr Henry C. Beasley, at the age of eighty-three, removes from the life of Liverpool one who was well known for many years in scientific circles. His work in geology is known and appreciated not only in his own country but on the Continent of Europe and in America. For over forty years Mr Beasley was an active member of the Liverpool Geological Society, and served the society as secretary for several years, and on two occasions as president. He is best known by his researches and his original work on the remarkable footprints found on the sandstones of Storeton Quarry, in connection with which he was led to the study of similar occurrences in rocks of the same age in other parts of England and in other countries. He described a number of new species or varieties and suggested a classification of the local footprints. He secured valuable specimen slabs from Storeton for the geological department of the British Museum, the Liverpool University, and other public collections. His own valuable collection of footprints and other geological specimens was recently purchased by the Liverpool Public Museum, where a selection of typical and interesting specimens are at present on view in the large hall. Mr Beasley was for many years a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, and he also served in 1901-2 as president of the Liverpool Biological Society, taking as the subject of his presidential address his favourite study of the local Triassic rocks.*

A brief biography by 'W.H.' in the Geological Magazine also notes that:

*Mr Beasley was a most indefatigable and persistent worker at his favourite geological subjects, such work being his relaxation from an active commercial career. His unselfish character and his readiness at all times to assist any fellow-worker endeared him to all who knew him.*

### 2. Family

Henry Charles Beasley was born to Henry and Mary Beasley on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1836 at 36 Bath Street, Leamington Priors (Leamington Spa) in Warwickshire. – he was baptised as a dissenter on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1836 and his birth is recorded at the Dissenters Registry at Red Cross Street, Cripplegate, London on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1837. Beasley married Sarah Elizabeth Jones in Prescott, Lancashire in 1880. They had one surviving daughter Jessie Mildred born in 1886 having lost two other daughters and a son in infancy. Beasley is variously recorded as a commercial clerk' (1881 and 1911), a book keeper (1891) and a merchant's clerk (1901).

Henry Charles Beasley died in West Derby in 1919 and Sarah Beasley followed in 1927.

### 3. Beasley and the Shrewsbury Collection

According to Cleevely the Shrewsbury Borough Museum has some material and reference is made to the Shrewsbury Museum in Beasley 1898. A listing of three Grinshill specimens held at Shrewsbury and examined by Beasley is given in Sarjeant 1984:

1. *Chirotherium* sp. Grinshill Sandstone (Lower Keuper: Triassic, Grinshill Quarries, nr. Clive, Salop. Presented by Mr. Phillips, 1896. On display.
2. Small reptilian footprints. Grinshill Sandstone (Lower Keuper: Triassic, Grinshill Quarries, nr. Clive, Salop. Presented by the Grinshill Quarrying Co., 1982. On display.
3. *Rynchosauroides articeps* (Owen) Morton. Grinshill Sandstone (Lower Keuper: Triassic), Grinshill Quarries, nr. Clive, Salop. Donated by Mr. Phillips, 1896. Rynchosauroid print D of Beasley, 1904 (81). [Illustrated by Beasley photograph 68; see Sarjeant, 1971 (318)], reprinted Sarjeant 1985.

### 4. The Ludlow Collection

Beasley appears to have donated only the one fossil to the Shrewsbury Museum, now located at Ludlow:

G. 2007.0115 *Dorypyge lakei* plus *Paradoxides* 'ex the Beasley Collection'.

Dr J A Gosling  
December 2018

### References

Beasley H C (1898) *Notes on examples of footprints &c from the Trias in some Provincial Museums* Proceedings Liverpool Geological Society **8** 217.

H. W. (1920) *Henry Charles Beasley*. Geological Magazine **57** 94-95.

Sarjeant William A S (1984) *British Fossil footprints in the collections of some principle British Museums* The Geological Curator **3** 541-560.

Sarjeant William A S (1985) *The Beasley Collection of Photographs and Drawings of Fossil Footprints and Bones and of Fossil and Recent Sedimentary Structures* The Geological Curator **4(3)** 133-163.

Tresise G (2003) *George Morton, Henry Beasley and Triassic Footprint Classification* Proceedings of the Geological Association **114** 129-138.