

August 14th

Memory verse:

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,
having this seal,

The Lord knoweth them that are his.

2 Timothy 2:19

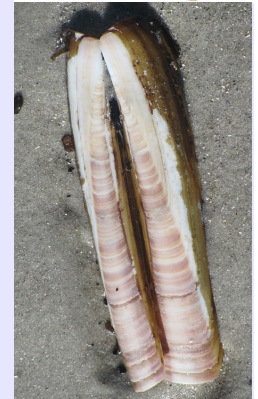
For more about this verse see 9th August.

Lots of fossils today!

If you enjoyed the lesson for 13th January about the mysterious Philp's Cavern you might like this diary entry by Rev. J. MacEnery, F.G.S. who visited the nearby Kent's Cavern in 1829. Unlike Philp's Cavern, Kent's Cavern remains an open tourist attraction and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. I have highlighted some words you may want to look up in your dictionary. Can you make sentences of your own using them? I have also added some pictures of the shells mentioned in the text, as far as I can identify them; you may do a better job at that than I. If you have a seaside holiday this month don't forget to look out for them on the beach.

14th Aug. 1829. — Visited the Cavern in company with Mr. Alliffe.— We commenced by searching the surface mould. In the present case it reposed, immediately, without the **intervention** of a crust, upon the red deposit, from which it was clearly distinguishable by the blackness of its substance, which stained our hands and clothes as if we had been working in a coal mine. On the top it was composed of recent substances, such as the remains of fires, feasts, and other ordinary matters. About a foot beneath, a new scene disclosed itself; fragments of pottery, both plain and ornamented, lay strewn about in abundance, mixed up in a dark crumbling mould containing a quantity of marine and **terrestrial** shells, such as Patella,¹ Limpet, Ostrea, Turbo Pinna, Helix, Solen, &c. Among the broken pottery there were intermixed a multitude of remains of divers species of Stag, Fox, Rabbit, and **Rodentia**; many of the bones were as black as the charcoal layer which contained them, and nearly decayed, so that they were difficult to determine; others tolerably perfect. Among the bones we found some curiously fashioned by art. The **articulation** of the larger **extremity** was left untouched, while the other was tapered to a point and polished. We found three specimens of this sort; one the **brow antler** of a Stag.

A large rock now lay between us and the next stratum; on lifting it over, a still more startling discovery was displayed:- pottery, charcoal, human teeth and bones, flint relics, copper ornaments and mountings of tin, two lumps of virgin copper ore were pressed together into a cake. They reposed upon a large flat stone, against which they had been violently crushed by the **superposition** of the rock which we had just removed. We collected on this spot the remains of two **sepulchral** vessels; one was a plain urn, slightly indented, of coarse sun-baked pottery, at the edge about half an inch thick. It most probably had contained the ashes which were spilt about, and two black spear heads mixed up with it.



¹ General term which includes all three types of limpet found around our coast.

A Traveller's Tale

John Jeremiah Bigsby (1792 –1881), another British fossil hunter was born on August 14th. He was also an explorer who travelled many hundreds of miles in Canada studying the geology and minerals of the country. Below is an extract from his *The Shoe and Canoe Or Pictures of Travel in the Canadas* published in 1831 in which he describes the amazing cone of ice that forms at the base of the Montmorency Falls.



Few visitors will fail to spend a day at the Falls of Montmorency, nine miles from Quebec; it is the first cascade with which the traveller from Europe by the St. Lawrence makes acquaintance. It has been described and sketched times innumerable, and is well worthy of its reputation. Its dress and appearance are very novel in winter; the surrounding pines loaded with masses of snow, and the rocks hung with rows of large icicles; but the cove below is the most remarkable winter feature.

“When the St. Lawrence is frozen below the falls the level ice becomes a support, on which the freezing spray descends as a sleet; it there remains, and gradually enlarges its base and its height, assuming an irregular conical form: its dimensions, thus continually increasing, become, towards the close of winter, stupendous. Its height varies each season; it has not been observed higher than one hundred and twenty-six feet [just under 38 metres](1829): the whole of the preceding season had been unusually humid. The face of the cone next the falls presents a stalactitic structure not seen elsewhere; sometimes it is tinged with a slight earthy hue.” – (Mr. Green, Quebec Historical Society Transactions, vol. ii. 218.)



...The so-called “Natural Steps” are rather more than half a-mile above the Falls of Montmorency... Their ascent, in many parts, from the water is by regular ledges, or steps of horizontal rock. It is a singular spot. The river has been wandering over gently undulating meadows for a few miles, when on a sudden it enters and rushes through a trough, twenty to thirty feet broad and eight hundred to one thousand yards long, cut through a barrier of rock, and thus makes its way to the St. Lawrence.

If you are able to travel for a holiday this summer, don't forget to keep notes of the interesting things you see. These can be about geographical features, like those noted by John Jeremiah Bigsby in the extract above or they can be about the people you meet or the buildings you see. Train yourself to be observant. Ask yourself questions about the area you visit. How do the people here make their living? Are they farmers? Fishermen? Providers of holiday accommodation? When were the buildings built? Are they new? Victorian? Perhaps older? What about the landscape? Is it farmed? Forested? Completely built up? Open grazing land? Are there plants you don't see at home and if so, can you find out what they are? What about animals?

Something to read from history²



Today marks the birth of one of the most enigmatic historians of all time. Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623), known in England as “Father Paul” was born on 14th August. His major lasting contribution to history was to provide a detailed narration of an extremely influential event from documents that no longer exist and from eye witness accounts. Were it not for his great book we would have very little idea what went on at one of the most important councils of the Roman Catholic Church – the Council of Trent.

Paolo Sarpi had a brilliant mind which ranged over many subjects. One of his main interests was canon (ecclesiastical or church) law and he spent his life in the service of his beloved native city, Venice, which during his lifetime was engaged in political conflict with the pope. This resulted in Venice being placed under an Interdict – a papal ban that required the clergy to refuse to carry out their duties in the city. Sarpi's knowledge and abilities helped the Doge (ruler of Venice) maintain the independence of the city and he wrote a history of the whole Interdict crisis but as far as the Pope was concerned this made Sarpi a “wanted man”. He was summoned to Rome but did not go and it was well for him that he did not. A fellow Venetian theologian who did go ended up being put to death at the hands of the inquisition.³ The pope was still determined to be rid of such a dangerous man as Sarpi and an assassination attempt left him near death from stab wounds. Who could imagine that writing history could be so dangerous! Sarpi survived – his greatest achievement was not yet complete.

During his lifetime, Sarpi was famous for his philosophical expertise but the manuscript records of his work in this area have mostly been lost. However, what is not lost is his printed output. This includes the history of the Venetian Interdict and a treatise on the inquisition as well as his most famous book, the *History of the Council of Trent*.

The Council of Trent was the driving force behind the Counter Reformation, the Catholic attempt to put down Protestant⁴ ideas and stop them spreading. In this book Sarpi used rigorous logic backed by strong evidence to demonstrate that this council was far from being a free and open synod of Christians assembled to discuss points at issue between the Catholic and Protestant churches as was claimed. Instead it was a closely packed⁵ gathering, from which Protestants were excluded. Not only that but the Catholics present were firmly controlled by the Italian agents of the Papal Court at Rome.

How ironic that the official Catholic theologian of the Catholic state of Venice should write a book which undermined the validity of the Council of Trent, the decrees of which were the charter of the

2 Information from Yates, Frances A. 'Paolo Sarpi's "History of the Council of Trent"' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* Vol. 7, (1944), pp. 123-143 and other sources.

3 A group of institutions in the Catholic church charged with trying suspected “heretics”. If found guilty, “heretics” who refused to renounce their views were handed over to the state to be put to death, often by burning.

4 Protestants consider the Bible to be their authority rather than the teachings of the church.

5 In the sense of filled with hand-picked members chosen for their views rather than an impartial assembly.

Counter Reformation! There was no way such a book could be published in Italy. A copy of the manuscript was smuggled out of Venice at the request of the English Archbishop, George Abbot, and reached him via a network of Dutch merchants. For safety, the whole manuscript was not sent at once but in separate pieces. Every time Archbishop Abbot received a packet of its pages he wrote back to say that he had received the *canzoni*—Italian songs—safely! Sarpi's name did not appear on the book when it was published in London in 1619 but everyone knew who had written it.

Sarpi had influential Protestant friends such as Giovanni Diodati, about whom we will learn in October,⁶ and William Bedell⁷ but he never became a Protestant himself. “God has not given me the spirit of Luther,” he once said and he lived and died hoping for an internal change in the Roman Catholic Church which never took place.

6 See the lesson for October 3rd.

7 For a novel which tells the life story of William Bedell and Paolo Sarpi see *Trasna na Dtonnta*. Get your copy here: <https://christinaeastwoodbooks.wordpress.com/trasna-na-dtonnta-or-a-tale-of-three-cities>