

**JOHN MACCULLOCH**  
 (6TH OCTOBER 1773 – 21ST  
 AUGUST 1835)



*Figure 1: John MacCulloch © The Royal Society Picture Library*

MacCulloch, born in Guernsey to a Scottish father and a local mother, is a seminal figure in Scottish Geology. Between 1811-1834, he carried out the first truly regional geological survey and drew the first geological map of the entire country.

He was active in Tayside fairly early in his Scottish career, for in 1814 he gave a paper to the Geological Society in London on the rocks of the Hill of Kinnoull, and presented the Society with a collection of rocks from the hill. In 1817 in a report to his superior (Colonel Mudge) he stated that he had examined portions of Perthshire that year.

That MacCulloch enjoyed Perthshire is obvious from a tourist guidebook, which he published in 1823. This describes, in some detail and gushing prose, a broad swathe of country around Dunkeld and Blair Atholl. Also in 1823 he published a paper on some strange concretions from Delvine and again presented specimens of these to the Geological Society.

Possibly the last of MacCulloch's publications on Perthshire geology appeared in 1824 though he admits, "It is long since the above paper was written". The place described is obviously dear to his heart; somewhere which in his 1823 guidebook he states "presents more valuable instruction than perhaps any of equal dimensions in Britain". This is the old limestone quarry beside Clunie Loch, west of Blairgowrie. Here a dolerite dyke cuts through an impure dolomitic limestone deposit forming a number of unusual minerals. He certainly maintained an interest in the site for in his final memoir on his geological map of Scotland written for H.M. Treasury in 1834 he remarks sadly: "There was formerly a fact of geological interest in a trap vein passing into serpentinite at Clunie in Perthshire – now quarried away completely".

Tayside is referred to frequently in this memoir in a manner that shows that MacCulloch had an excellent appreciation of the landscape and geology of the region and how it fitted into the geology of Scotland as a whole. MacCulloch's rock collection, which includes specimens from Kinnoull and Clunie, is held at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

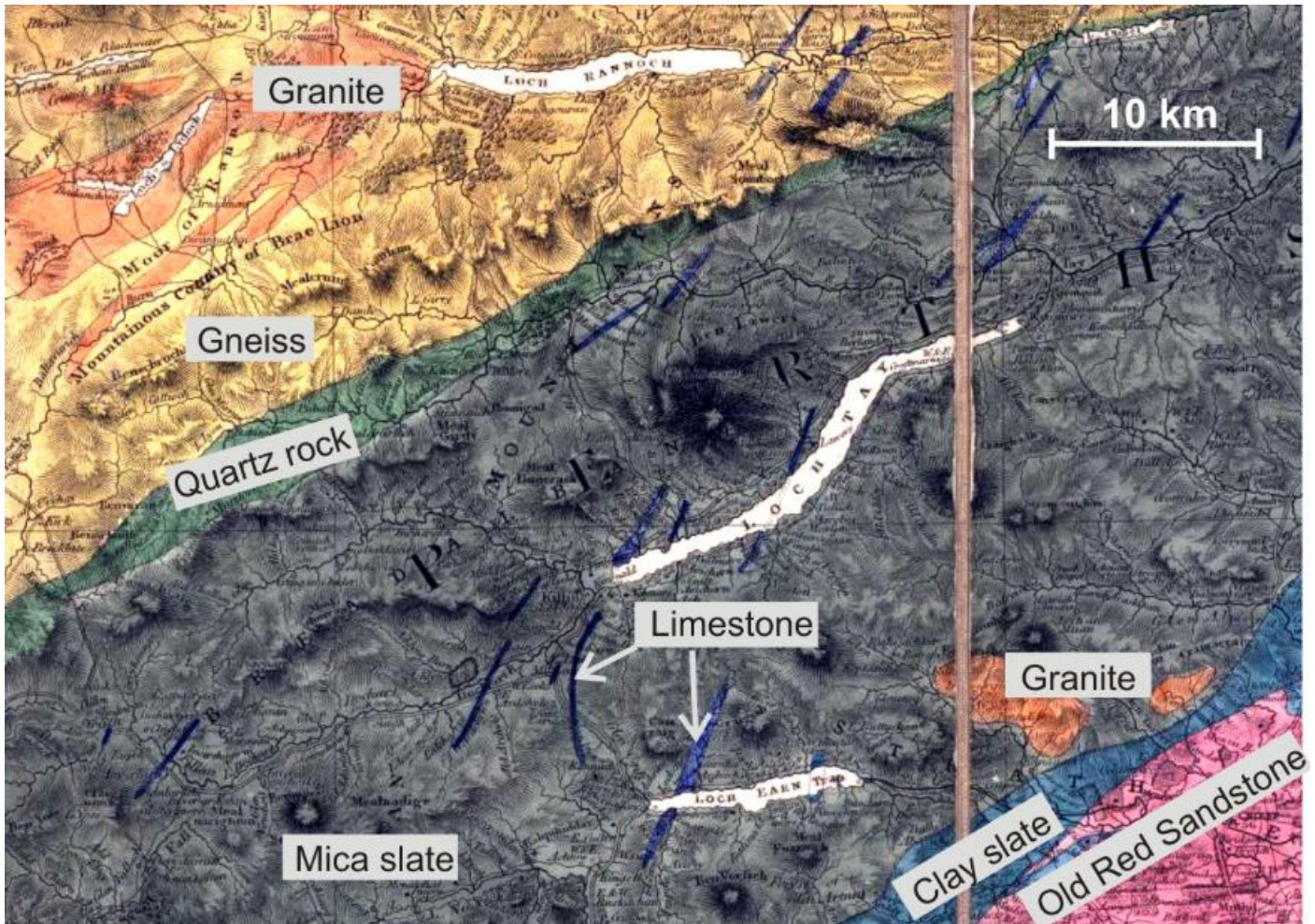


Figure 2: Part of MacCulloch's geological map of Scotland, 1840 edition © National Libraries of Scotland. The Rannoch and Comrie plutons are shown, and the slates of the Southern Highland Group are identified as clay slate. The mica slates and gneisses of the Dalradian have been much subdivided since MacCulloch's day.

**References:**

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