

## People

# Labour of love in the footsteps of a great artist

BY FRANK CASSIDY

A rummage through a box in an Inverness furniture shop that was about to close down led to a life-changing discovery for John Garvey.

Among the reduced-to-clear items at McAvoy's in Academy Street, back in 1969, was a set of prints which caught the attention of the bargain-hunter.

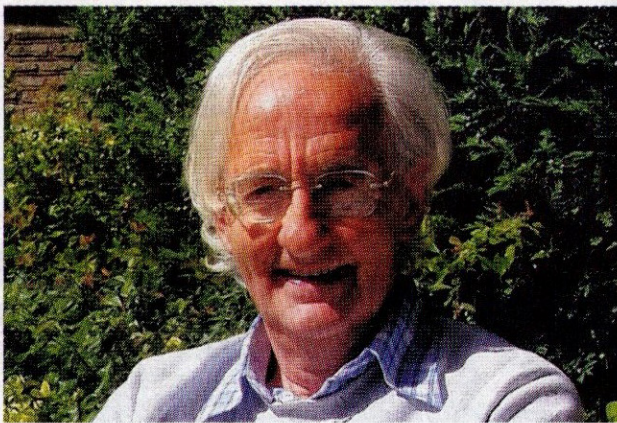
Mr Garvey bought two, unwittingly opening the door to years of research which led him to the Tate Gallery, among many places, and resulted in him writing two books.

Mr Garvey, 75, said he set out on his "labour of love" after being overwhelmed by the images, which had been created in the 1800s by artist William Daniell.

He learned later that Daniell had embarked on a 10-year-long journey around the entire coast of the UK, drawing 308 pencil sketches of locations as he went.

These had been converted into prints, using an intricate process called aquatint, depicting scenery and people with precision.

The more Mr Garvey learned



A chance find sent John Garvey on a fascinating journey

about the man and his technique, the more enthralled he became.

"Daniell was the world's best aquatinter; he paid much attention to detail, and his work can be found displayed in many top Scottish hotels," said the retired physics professor.

"I wanted to find out as much as I could about him. I met some fascinating people while doing so, and was able to build up a picture of what he did.

"Iain Bain, director of publications at the Tate Gallery, whose family came from the Black Isle, provided me with a

facsimile of Daniell's work, which was condensed from eight volumes into two.

"I had been really struggling before that, but I was then able to discover that he had been a member of the Royal Academy of Arts.

"One of his contemporaries there, Joseph Farington, had kept a daily diary for many years which contained numerous references to Daniell."

Having taken the best part of 40 years to uncover the story of the prints he had found in Inverness, Mr Garvey then decided to follow in Daniell's footsteps.

By this time, he had retired from his position at Birmingham University, and his only dilemma was where to start on the marathon coastal expedition.

A visit to friends in Skye was an opportunity to explore that part of the journey, and the end result was the publication, five years ago, of William Daniell's *Isle of Skye and Raasay - An Artist's Journey in 1815*.

Mr Garvey said: "Over three years, my wife and I took photographs from as close as possible to the locations where Daniell had made his sketches.

"Many of the landscapes have changed, with more trees growing now in many sites, but other places have not, including the part of Dunrobin Castle that he sketched.

"It was a labour of love featuring my photographs with Daniell's prints and led me to do the same thing for Inverness and the Moray Coast."

The resultant book, William Daniell's Inverness and the Moray Firth, was released this year.

Visit [www.daniell-on-the-moray-coast.com](http://www.daniell-on-the-moray-coast.com) for more information.