

HERCULES, THE ORIGINAL OLYMPIAN

In Greek mythology, Hercules (Heracles) is the son of the god Zeus and Alceme who was mortal, hence Hercules is half mortal and to prove his worthiness to be a demigod he was tasked with carrying out 12 labours to test his courage, strength and endurance. The story concludes with Hercules successfully completing these tasks and founding the Olympic Games in honour of his Father Zeus.

The BGS statue of Hercules was commissioned as part of the collection of material in the Museum of Practical Geology, London. The items displayed in the museum were selected primarily to "illustrate the fitness of the material for such purposes". The large block of Portland Stone used for Hercules was donated to the Museum of Practical Geology by Messrs. Stewards who quarried this 150 tonne block near Kingsbarrow Quarries on the Isle of Portland, Dorset in 1850. It was finally installed in the Museum in November of 1851 where it was completed in-situ.

The sculptor was Charles Harriot Smith, (1792–1864) and as well as excelling in art and design he acquired considerable knowledge and understanding of geology, mineralogy, and chemistry and became an authority on building stones.

