**THE HIGHLAND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Scottish Charity No. SC004427**

# JANUARY 2019

Dear Members,

Happy New Year and welcome to what promises to be another busy year for the society.

Membership subscriptions are due this month (unchanged at £22 family rate; £15 ordinary rate). If you joined in the last 3 months of 2018 your membership will automatically be extended for this coming year. You can pay by cash or cheque at the forthcoming meeting or by electronic transfer if you prefer (contact details for Alan at the end of the newsletter). If you pay by Standing Order the money will be collected on 10 January.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to let the Treasurer know if your Gift Aid status changes – more information from Alan if required.

**2019 AT A GLANCE:**

Please ensure that you add all the dates below to your new diary – further details below:

23rd January – *The Parallel Roads of Glen Roy*, David Jarman, HGS

20th February – AGM and members rock night

27th March – *An introduction to the Geology of Eigg*, Dr Angus Miller, EGS and Geowalks

13th – 18th April – *Eigg* – self-led excursion

9th – 13th May – *Assynt*, Prof. Ian Parsons, Lochaber Geopark, and Dr Mike Simms, National Museums NI

16th June – *Building stones of Inverness*, Andy Moffat and Dave Longstaff, HGS

21st July – *Glen Feshie*, David Jarman, HGS

25th August – *Kintail and Rattigan*, Andy Moffat and David Longstaff, HGS

9th October – *Dinosaurs and Ice*, Alison Tymon

6th November – *An introduction to the glaciation of the Inverness area*, Jon Merritt, BGS

4th December – tbc

# WINTER PROGRAMME 2019

## **23rd January** – The Parallel Roads of Glen Roy, David Jarman, HGS

Glen Roy is one of the most important sites in Britain for Quaternary geology. It is famous for its three Parallel Roads, which were visited by the Swiss pioneer of the glaciation theory, Louis Agassiz - who saw some of the first evidence for ice shaping the Highlands here - and by Charles Darwin, who misinterpreted them as marine benches. David will discuss briefly how the three Parallel Roads formed as ice-dammed lake shorelines, and how they have been governed by overflow cols at different levels into the Spey headwaters. He will also show how the densest cluster of Rock Slope Failures (paleo-landslides and slope deformations) in the Highlands line the whole glen and consider the ‘recent’ evolution of Glen Roy as a major glacial breach of the Highland paleodivide. Breaks and tilts in the Roads were originally described as ‘blocky isostatic recovery’ after deglaciation (Sissons & Cornish, 1982, *Nature*), but David re-interprets this data as rare geodetic evidence for valley rebound after intense erosion in such a breach.

\* If you have a rock that you would like identified at the Members Night next month (see below) or you have a specimen that you wish to add to the ‘Show and Tell’ PLEASE BRING IT WITH YOU tonight\* **20th February** – **AGM** and Members’ Rock Night

Please come and support our Annual General Meeting – this is an important activity in showing that we continue to comply with Scottish Charity regulations. If you are interested in joining the committee, either as an office bearer or member, please contact Stephen (details at the end of the newsletter) for more information.

There is a particular need to identify someone to act as Secretary of the Society following Alison’s retirement from the position after nine years of exemplary service. For the time being it is proposed that various members of the committee should take over different aspects of the role. But this is not a satisfactory long-term solution, and it would be a great help if a member could volunteer to become Secretary. Anyone willing to do so should contact either Alison or Stephen.

Following the AGM, mineralogist Michael McMullen will give a short talk entitled ‘*Over the sea to Skye ...a mineral collecting experience to Sgur nam Boc and Moonen Bay*’. Michael has collected zeolite minerals from these classic sites in the Palaeogene lavas and will bring some of his specimens along to illustrate his talk.

There will also be an opportunity for members to have help identifying specimens picked up somewhere along the line but now can’t remember where or why! If you have a particularly interesting rock that you would like to share with your fellow members, there should also be time for a ‘show and tell’.

**27th March** – *An introduction to the Geology of Eigg*, Dr Angus Miller, EGS and Geowalks (http://www.geowalks.co.uk/index.html)

The small Hebridean island of Eigg displays a fantastic variety of geology in a beautiful setting. Hugh Miller made some remarkable discoveries here in brief visits in the 1840s. The north and east coast of the island expose Jurassic sedimentary rocks with close affinities to Skye - as well as Miller's famous plesiosaur fossils, dinosaur bones have recently been discovered. While most of the rest of the island is Palaeogene basalt lava flows akin to Skye and Mull, the last known volcanic episode in this area created the unique pitchstone ridge of the Sgurr. A recent reinterpretation of its formation gives field parties plenty to speculate about!

# SUMMER PROGRAMME 2019

## **13th – 18th April,** The Isle of Eigg, self-led

The HGS has booked the Glebe Barn hostel for our exclusive use from Saturday 13th to Thursday 18th April. Note that there is also a suitable ferry crossing on Sunday 14th April if you are unable to join the group in Saturday. This excursion will be self-led but the recent publication of a new guidebook\* means that we will be able to put our time on the island to good use. The geology is varied (see Angus Miller’s abstract above) and readily accessible so please come along and join us!

More information about the Glebe Barn is available at: http://www.glebebarn.co.uk/hostel/hostel.html The hostel is self-catering but previous trips have shown that this arrangement works very well. Supplies can be ordered in advance from the shop so we won’t have to carry everything with us.

A deposit of £50 is payable on booking, either by cheque or BACS transfer (email Alan for details).

\*Hudson, J.D., Miller, A.D & Allwright, A. 2016. *The Geology of Eigg*. Edinburgh Geological Society.

ISBN-13: 9780904440164

Available from the EGS: http://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/publications/geological-excursion-guides/#eigg Price £7.50 for non-members; £6 for members.

**9th May** – *The Stac Fada impact ejecta deposit and the Lairg Gravity Low: Evidence for a buried Precambrian impact crater in Scotland,* Dr Mike Simms, National Museums Northern Ireland. Mike will discuss his interesting (but controversial) paper published in 2015. Time and venue to be confirmed but likely to be 7.30 pm in Ullapool to allow you to attend both the talk and field trip.

**10th – 13th May**, *Assynt*, Prof. Ian Parsons, University of Edinburgh/Lochaber Geopark

This trip will be 3 full-days in the field (Friday-Sunday) with a half-day on Monday, depending on participants’ availability. The group will be based at the Inchnadamph field centre but we will use the private rooms rather than the hostel dorms (http://www.inch-lodge.co.uk/index.html).

Mike Simms will lead the excursion to Stoer on 10th May providing an opportunity to discuss the formation of the Stac Fada Member in the field.

Please let Alison know **as soon as possible** if you plan to join this excursion so that we can make suitable arrangements with the field centre.

## **16th June**, Building Stones of Inverness, HGS members Meet at 10 am outside the Central Library, Inverness – **booking essential**

Further investigation by HGS members into the building stone used in Inverness has been complemented by historical notes provided by Susan Brooks from Inverness Museum. Join the group to see what progress has been made – there is an online tour produced by the museum and we hope ultimately to incorporate the geological information into this.

**21st July**, *Glen Feshie*, David Jarman, HGS

Join David for an in-depth look at the geology and geomorphology of the upper braided reach and glen head. We will also discuss the landscape origins of the Feshie (Glen, gorge, and upper basin) and environs, and focus on ‘why is the finest braided river in Britain here?’!

**25th August**, Kintail and Rattigan, Andy Moffat and David Longstaff, HGS

This will be a day-trip to look at chrome diopside in Kintail and eclogite at Rattigan, both unusual green rocks!

Further details for the day trips above will follow in due course and we hope to add at least one more date towards the end of the summer.

# WINTER PROGRAMME 2019 – 2020

**9th October –** *Dinosaurs and Ice*, Alison Tymon (details to follow)

## **6th November** – An introduction to the glaciation of the Inverness area, Jon Merritt, BGS

The coastal lowland flanking the southern shores of the Inner Moray Firth to the east of Inverness contains an excellent record of the retreat of a major tidewater glacier that flowed out of the Great Glen. Together with a flight of raised late-glacial marine shorelines, there is evidence of several glacial oscillations, including the ‘Ardersier Readvance’, which resulted in the tectonic disturbance of sediments. The area includes a diverse assemblage of glaciofluvial and deglacial features, including the Flemington Eskers and transverse moraine ridges. The hinterland contains a wide range of ice-marginal landforms and numerous sections in glacigenic material formed both during and before the last glaciation. The Middle Findhorn Valley contains a particularly impressive suite of landforms associated with ice-marginal ponding. The district contains a relatively long Pleistocene record, including two well-established interglacial/interstadial sites (Dalcharn and Moy) and the enigmatic rafted deposits of shelly clay and till at Clava, made famous in the 19th Century.

Jon Merritt, presently an Honorary Research Associate of the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh, has studied the Quaternary of the area for over 40 years. He has led numerous field excursions to the area for colleagues and the Quaternary Research Association.

# BEQUEST FROM THE ESTATE OF PROFESSOR NIGEL TREWIN

The society has received a generous bequest from the estate of the Professor Nigel Trewin who died in October 2017. Nigel was a great supporter of our activities, giving talks and leading a number of excursions over the years. If you have any suggestions as to how the money might best be used please contact Stephen with your proposal.

# OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

**The Northwest Highlands Geopark**: The NWHG has recently introduced a scheme to allow individuals to become Friends of the Geopark: https://www.nwhgeopark.com/friends/ for more details.

There are still places available on the NWHG Geotours excursion 5th-11th June - see: https://www.nwhgeopark.com/geotours-2019/ for more information.

**The Lochaber Geopark**: The Lochaber Geopark also has a Friends scheme:

https://lochabergeopark.org.uk/product/membership/

**Friends of Hugh Miller**: The latest edition of ‘Hugh’s News’ is available at: https://s3-eu-west1.amazonaws.com/s3.spanglefish.com/s/27844/documents/newsletters/newsletterdecember18.pdf This includes an account of the field trip run by the AGS in memory of Nigel Trewin in August last year which several HGS members also attended.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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| Chairman: Stephen Young 01349 864141 | sstyoung84@gmail.com |
| Secretary: Dr Alison Wright 01309 671949 | a.j.wright00@aberdeen.ac.uk |
| Treasurer: Alan Thompson 01463 238992 | alanrossthompson@hotmail.com |