



THE HIGHLAND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Scottish Charity No. SC004427

JUNE 2018

Dear Members,

Please see below for more details re the day excursion to Glen Roy on Sunday 15th July. Further information about the trip to Ailnack Gorge on Saturday 11th August will follow in due course. The week-long excursion to Arran went well, despite the rather mixed weather, and the trip to Strontian was most enjoyable. Dave Longstaff has written a report on the latter, which is attached as separate document.

As you are aware from recent correspondence by the Chairman, the society has reviewed how personal information is stored to ensure that we comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, which came into force on 25th May. The policy can be viewed on our website <http://s3.spanglefish.com/s/23153/documents/privacy-notice/hgs-privacy-policy-4.pdf>

Following the committee meeting on 19th June, the society has made donations of £250 to both the Lochaber and the NW Highlands Geoparks. Support for the Scottish Geoparks was endorsed by members at the AGM earlier this year and it was felt by the committee that this was an appropriate use of society funds, given that finances for both organisations are somewhat precarious and that the society's own financial position is currently strong following recent generous donations. Individuals wishing to donate can join the Friends of Lochaber Geopark (details also sent out with this newsletter) or you can support the NW Highlands Geopark at: <https://www.nwhgeopark.com/the-geopark/friends-of-the-geopark/>

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2018

Sunday 15th July – *Glen Roy, David Jarman, HGS*

Meet at Darwin's Rest café, Roy Bridge, PH31 4AE at 10 am (the Lochaber Geopark Interpretation Point).

Parking is limited so we will need to share cars wherever possible. At present, RV points are:

8.30 am Macdonald Hotels Aviemore

9.15 am Wolfrax car park, Laggan

10 am Roy Bridge

Please let Alison know where you plan to join the group so that we can co-ordinate transport. If you don't drive and need a lift, we will endeavour to facilitate a pick-up point for you.

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.

This trip will

* look at the three Parallel Roads, as ice-dammed lake shorelines, and how they have been governed by overflow cols at different levels into the Spey headwaters

* explore the densest cluster of Rock Slope Failures (paleo-landslides and slope deformations) in the Highlands, which line the whole glen

* examine the influence of the 'Dalradian schists' and Caledonide structures on RSF behaviour

- * consider the ‘recent’ evolution of Glen Roy as a major glacial breach of the Highland paleodivide
- * re-interpret breaks and tilts in the Roads, published in Nature as ‘blocky isostatic recovery’ after deglaciation as rare geodetic evidence for valley rebound after intense erosion in such a breach
- * stand at the point at which the history of the site of Inverness (and the Kessock Bridge) begins

We will visit

1. the Viewpoint - pull-in at entrance to glen proper (marked on maps)
2. Brunachan RSF - this involves climbing 125 metres up rough heathery slopes, walking the Middle Road for 2-3 km (depending on weather etc) and descending rough slopes to walk back along the glen road
3. Turret Fan and views into upper glen - this involves a 2 km track walk from the public road-end at BraeRoy Lodge, and short simple ascent

Binoculars are recommended.

Suggested reading:

Gordon, J.E. 1993. Glen Roy and the Parallel Roads of Lochaber. In: Gordon, J.E., Sutherland, D.G. (Eds.), Quaternary of Scotland. Chapman and Hall. London, 328-344. (Geological Conservation Review Vol. 6)

Key, R.M., Clark, G.C., May, F., Phillips, E.R., Chacksfield, B.C. and Peacock, J.D. 1997. Geology of the Glen Roy District. Geological Memoir Sheet 63W. British Geological Survey. The Stationery Office, London.

Palmer, A., Lowe, J.J. and Rose, J. (Eds). 2008. The Quaternary of Glen Roy and vicinity - Field Guide. Quaternary Research Association, London. (includes Jarman, D. The Roy-Lochy rock slope failure cluster: implications for glacial breaching, ice movements, and Parallel Road dislocations pp.98-104.

Saturday 11th August, *Shaping the NE Highlands – the view from Ailnack Gorge*, Prof. David Macdonald, University of Aberdeen

Meet at 9.30 am at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre, The Square, Tomintoul

We plan to leave as many cars as possible in Tomintoul before moving to the Delnabo car park.

This excursion will look at the unconformable relationship between the Dalradian metasediments and the overlying Old Red Sandstone deposits and discuss what this tells us about the palaeogeography of the eroding landmass prior to ~400 Ma and the wider implications of landscape inheritance.

Some of the terrain will be rough-going on heathery slopes but the descent into the gorge is optional and likely to be weather dependent.

Again, please let Alison know if you require a lift to join this excursion as we will car-share wherever possible.

Saturday 1st September to Sunday 2nd September – *Achiltibuie and Coigach*, Pete Harrison, NW Highlands Geopark

This excursion will run as part of the NW Highlands Geopark Geofestival which runs from April to October. The detailed itinerary has yet to be agreed but broadly will be:

Saturday: Achiltibuie itself, Achlochan for the Stour/Lewisian unconformity and the Torridon/Stoer unconformity, the shore at Achiltibuie to see the Stac Fada member and then to Cnoc Mor to see the Lewisian in more detail and the Lewisian/Torridon (Diabaig) unconformity in 3D.

Sunday: Start at Enard Bay and then visit one or two other sites (possibly Reiff, Badentarbat, Achininver, Dornie, or Achduart).

The group will be based in Ullapool for the weekend as Pete has very kindly offered us the use of the high-school minibus, which will simplify the logistics, although it will add travel time to the programme. Of course, if you wish to stay in Achiltibuie (or elsewhere in Coigach) that is absolutely fine! (See <http://coigach.com/directory/category/b-and-b/> for ideas).

WINTER PROGRAMME 2018 – 2019 (more details and other dates to follow)

10th October – *Origin and Early Evolution of Mammals* (tbc), Elsa Panciroli, University of Edinburgh / NMS

7th November – *The Caledonian Unconformity*, Professor David Macdonald, University of Aberdeen

OTHER NOTES OF INTEREST:

The latest news from the Friends of Hugh Miller is available at:

<http://s3.spanglefish.com/s/27844/documents/newsletters/newslettersummer18.pdf>

The winners of the Hugh Miller writing competition have also been announced – more information at:

<http://www.scottishgeology.com/hughmiller/>

There is a new exhibition of Cairngorm quartz crystals (curated by Roy Starkey) at Balmoral Castle (until 31st July) which includes items from Queen Victoria's own collection. The details are at:

<https://mailchi.mp/balmoralcastle/2018-opening-details?e=a6c3f0c636>

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