



**Down to Earth**

*"Earth science learning for all"*

# The Outer Hebrides of Scotland September 1-9 2021



**Beach on Vatersay island**

## **A word from your leaders...**

The Outer Hebrides are a firm favourite of ours and we last visited them in 2017. These remote islands provides us with an opportunity to travel back to a time in the Precambrian when the Earth was far more mobile than it is today. Continents would have split and come together faster than they do now. This is recorded for us in pulses of basalt and granite that are now highly metamorphosed Lewisian Gneiss. It's a unique, almost raw landscape, with beautiful, highly folded rocks.

Colin and Chris will jointly lead this trip, with Chris concentrating on the solid geology whilst Colin concentrates on the 'big picture' that is the landscape whilst discussing the Quaternary ice age features and the recent sediments. Colin will also drive our minibus as we travel from Oban to the Isle of Lewis, with several ferry trips along the way.

We'll be using a number of different hotels, as we move up the island chain. All offer good quality food and en-suite accommodation. This trip begins in Oban and ends at Fort William, both of which are railheads.

Given the length of time since we last visited this area, we urge you to book as soon as possible to secure your place, despite there being a long time before the trip commences.

**Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield**  
**Course Organisers/Leaders**

[downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk](mailto:downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk)

## Getting to the area

Our ferry leaves Oban at lunch time on the first day, and it connects with the morning train from Glasgow. At the end of trip, we finish at Fort William probably in the early afternoon, allowing you to catch a train. If you are coming up by car, you can park at Crianlarich which is a good overnight stop and would enable you to catch the train to Oban. On the return journey passengers can be dropped off at Kyle of Lochalsh, Fort William or Crianlarich. It is even possible to fly to the small island of Barra and to land on the beach!

## Getting around on the trip

For this trip we will make use of a hired 17-seater minibus driven by Colin Schofield. If bookings exceed capacity, we will need an additional car, in which case we would pay all the car costs and fuel, around the tour route. If you are willing to help us in this way, please indicate on the booking form.

## Why the Outer Hebrides?

Geologically, the Outer Hebrides provide us with the largest area of ancient Lewisian Gneiss, with the oldest dating back to around 3 billion years.

There's lots of evidence to point to a very long and complex history that involves the intrusion of Scourie dykes and even later pegmatitic dykes associated with an episode called the Laxfordian. Some of these dykes contain huge feldspar and mica crystals and they have even been quarried.

The Lewisian provides us with an insight into the early Earth, not more so that the area around Rodel where we have the remains of an ancient island arc. The gneisses show spectacular structures that show just how plastic they were, with superb cross cutting relationships on show that testify to several phases of metamorphism.

We are also able to see much later thrusts associated with the Caledonian Orogeny, such as thrusts that are superbly shown on the island of Eriskay and also on Scalpay just off Lewis. There is also a small area of much younger Permo-Triassic sedimentary rock close to the town of Stornoway.

As we are doing quite a bit of 'island hopping' there will be a number of ferry journeys with CalMac. The ferry trip from Oban to Castlebay is more like a cruise of around 5 hours. All the rest, apart from Tarbert to Uig are only a few minutes in duration. These ferry crossings allow us to see the landscape from very different angles, thus providing an added dimension.

## Accommodation & Food



The trip makes use of a number of hotels as we move up the chain of islands. Inevitably, there are a couple of one-night stops.

We begin with 2-nights on Barra and then spend 2-nights on South Uist, then North Uist 1-night, before we spend 3-nights at Tarbert on Lewis. On the final day we leave Tarbert at 7.00 for the early morning ferry to Uig on Skye and then travel across the island to the Scottish mainland at Kyle of Lochalsh.

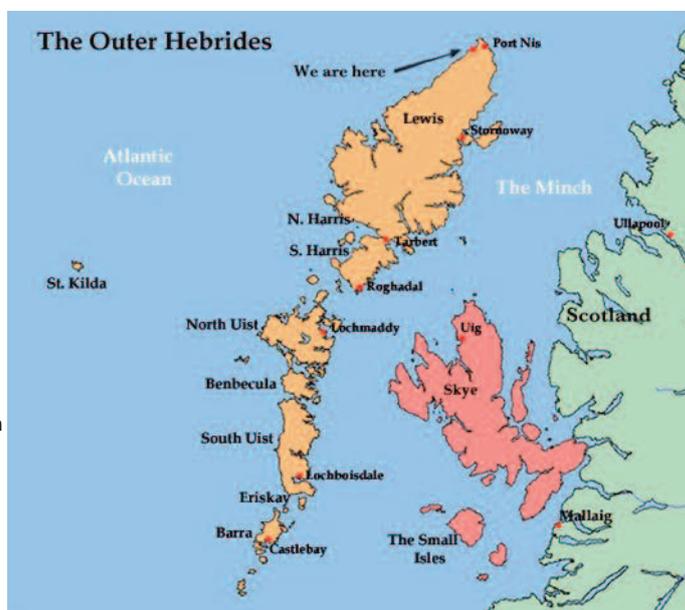
We will take a packed lunch from the hotel for each field day. En-suite accommodation comes as standard. Single rooms are limited to a maximum of three and are subject to a supplement.

All of the hotels used on this trip are ones that we have used on several previous occasions and we know that they are good at accommodating groups like ours.

## Itinerary

The following is not intended to be prescriptive, but to give you an idea of what we hope to cover during this trip:-

- A close examination of the Lewisian of Vatersay and Barra with Tertiary intrusions and faulting in Castlebay
- The Outer Isles Thrust at Eriskay and Scalpay
- The 'moon rocks' and island arc of Rodel
- The 'golden road' route of east Harris
- Fabulous beaches on the Uists and Berneray
- The Standing Stones of Calanais and the Butt of Lewis
- Fabulous banded Lewisian in the remote west of Lewis
- Lord Leverhulme's feldspar dyke in south Harris
- The Permo-Triassic rocks of the Eye Peninsula



## Cost

**For 2 people sharing a double or twin room, the cost of the 8-night tour will be £1595.00 per person; for single occupancy, the cost will be £1795.00 per person and is limited to a maximum of 3.** If you are willing to share, but don't have a companion, just indicate on the form and we will try to help you.

### What's included in the cost?

- The services of Chris Darmon and Colin Schofield as tutors, who will be available to you at all reasonable times
- Accommodation and meals as specified here
- The cost of all ferries and transport used during the trip
- Admission to any museums, exhibitions etc. as visited by the group

### What's excluded from the cost?

- The cost of travel between your home and Oban/Fort William
- Travel insurance
- Incidental expenditure
- Lunch on the final day

## Insurance

Everyone booking a place and paying a deposit is strongly advised to take out holiday insurance. This will cover you against loss of money in the event of cancellation etc. Cover is often included in with your credit card or bank account.

### Your money...

Upon receipt, all monies paid for these trips are placed in a specific 'client trust account' where it cannot be drawn by us until after completion of the tour. This is in accordance with EU Directives and ensures that your money is safe in the unlikely event of corporate failure by Geo Supplies.

## Booking



Please fill in and return a completed booking form.. Your booking will be confirmed upon receipt of either a deposit of £400.00 per person or the full payment.

***The balance of the brochure price will be due by June 30th 2021.***

***This trip will run provided a minimum of 12 people have booked by May 31st. 2021.***

### What happens next?

As soon as we are in a position of confirming that the trip will run - pretty soon if previous trips are anything to go by - we will let you know. You will then be free to start making your own travel plans and to take advantage of any advance fares on the train. Please don't make any such arrangements until we have been in touch with you.

***Please also see information contained in our 'Residential Field Trips 2021'***

**If you have any questions or queries - contact Chris Darmon as follows:-**

**Email: [downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk](mailto:downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk) • Tel: 0114 245 5746 • FAX: 0114 240 3405**

