



Down to Earth

"Earth science learning for all"

Berwick upon Tweed & the Scottish Borders September 6-13 2023

A word from your leaders...

Even after a number of visits, over many years, Chris and Colin still find themselves travelling back to the late 1780s and the experience of James Hutton as he gazed upon the rocks at Siccar Point in Berwickshire. Using just his eyes and applying his extensive field experience to the scene shown here, he was able to declare that "he was peering into the abyss of time". This site is truly the 'holy grail' of geological time and should be visited by everyone as a kind of pilgrimage.

This trip will take in Siccar Point, but also much more of the geology of Northumberland and the Borders. Inland we'll visit the Cheviots, whilst on the coast taking in the geology of Siccar Point, St Abbs Head and Scremerston, to name but a few. We spend a day studying Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh. The Whin Sill will be studied at Bamburgh Castle, and if the tides are right, on Holy Island too.

This trip will provide us with a positive feast of excellent geology with something for everyone! From fossiliferous sediments to a large variety of igneous rocks and spanning a wide range of time periods. It's going to be a matter of what we leave out rather than what we include, there's just so much.

For the entire week of this trip, we'll be based at the comfortable Castle Hotel, which is close to Berwick railway station. They not only have good rooms, they serve copious amounts of food and have real ales. Who could ask for more?

We'll be getting around in our own 17-seater minibus, driven by Colin. We expect this trip to fill up rapidly.

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
Course Organisers/Leaders

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Getting to and from Berwick upon Tweed

Berwick upon Tweed is served by trains on LNER from London, and Cross Country and TransPennine trains from Northern England, Midlands and SW of England. Our hotel is less than 5 minutes walk from the railway station. Berwick is on the A1 with good road links to all parts of the country.

Getting Around

We'll have the use of our own 17-seater minibus for this trip, that will be driven by my friend and colleague Colin Schofield. If numbers exceed the maximum for the minibus, we would need the services of a driver and car. If you are willing to use your car on the trip, please indicate on the booking form. Daily distances will be modest, and the roads good in largely rural areas. If you want to use your own car, that's fine.

On one day, we will use the train to travel into Edinburgh. If you have a rail card, please bring it with you.

Walking

This is not an area of particularly difficult terrain, although there will be a couple of steep ascents and descents of cliffs. We'll get you as close as possible to the relevant sites and will, in almost every case, involve minimal walking distances. Everything therefore should be within the capabilities of all of the party. Not everyone may want to descend the cliff to the Siccar Point unconformity. However, if at any time you wish to 'opt out' that will be fully acceptable and understood. In view of the uncertainties of the weather you are strongly advised to bring all waterproofs and walking boots – particularly as you may be walking over rough ground.

Why Northumberland & The Borders?

The Northumberland Coast is justifiably famous for its superb coastal geology. At Berwick itself and on the south side of the Tweed, Carboniferous rocks, often fossiliferous, are well exposed and affected by superb folding and faulting. Scremerston is a great area to study simple structures in the field, close up. We should be able to study several sections in detail and see how rapidly the Carboniferous environments changed.

A little further South and still on the coast, you will be able to study a cliff in the Whin Sill dolerite which is faulted against Carboniferous sediments. The Howick area is famed for superb sedimentary structures in the Namurian sandstones. In the St Abb's area, it is possible to see Silurian volcanic rocks and see how faulting defines the landscape in a very clear way. At Siccar Point you have the chance to see one of the most famous geological localities in the world, quite literally where the science of geology began with the observations of James Hutton. The Cheviot Hills to the west of Wooler comprise Devonian andesite lavas which are intruded by a large granite. This is one of the most remote places, spanning the Scottish border.

If all this geological variety were not enough, we are also taking in the Carboniferous volcano at Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh's Holyrood Park. This has to be one of the finest bits of geology in the UK, that's steeped in geological heritage, going right back to the time of James Hutton himself.



Itinerary



At this stage, this is meant to be indicative of the course content. Final details will be worked out in accordance with the wishes of the group and the prevailing weather.

- The coastal geology around St. Abb's Head and Siccar Point
- Folded rocks of Scremerston and Tweedmouth
- The Whin Sill at Cullernose Point
- The Namurian sediments of Howick Bay
- Volcanics and granite of the Cheviot Hills
- Arthur's Seat volcano, Edinburgh
- Sedimentary rocks around Cove
- Permian rocks of the South Tyneside Coast
- Rocks and history of Holy Island

Accommodation & Food

Good food and a good night's rest are important elements to our tours and we have worked hard to bring you good value in local accommodation. The Castle Hotel is a 100 yards from the station and is family run and offers good breakfasts and rooms are ensuite, or have private facilities. A 3-course evening meal is included, which will be taken at the hotel. Packed lunches will be sourced locally.

Single accommodation is available, but is limited and subject to a modest supplement. We are happy to help anyone looking for someone to share a twin bedded room – simply indicate on the booking form.



Cost

For 2 people sharing a double or twin room, the cost of the 7-night tour will be £1150.00 per person; for single occupancy, the cost will be £1250.00 per person (limited to maximum of 2, then £1350.00 per person)

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 in the brochure
- The cost of any transport used during the trip
- Admissions to museums, caves etc. as visited by the whole group

What's excluded from the cost?

- The cost of travel between your home and Berwick and return
- Travel insurance
- Incidental expenses
- Lunchtime food on the final day

Insurance

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

Booking

Please fill in and return a completed booking form.. Your booking will be confirmed upon receipt of either a deposit of £250.00 per person or the full payment. ***The balance of the brochure price will be due by June 30th. 2023.***

This trip will run provided a minimum of 12 people have booked by March 31st. 2023.

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.

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 early deals on train/air tickets.

Please don't make any such arrangements until we have been in touch with you.

Also see information contained in our 'Residential Field Trips 2023'

