



Down to Earth

"Earth science learning for all"

The Northwest Highlands of Scotland - Assynt & Coigach

April 10-18 2024



A word from your leaders...

If you asked Chris and Colin what their favourite field trip was, we would both answer 'Northwest Scotland'! So, even though we were last here in 2022, here we are and once again. We've both been at least half a dozen times and we never tire of the place! For the second time, we've extended this to make it an 8-night trip, all based at Assynt where we will be staying at the iconic Inchnadamph Hotel, where the pioneers Ben Peach and John Horne stayed back in the early years of the twentieth century.

Come and join us as we fabulous scenery and spectacular geology. This is the 'home' of the Moine Thrust, where pioneers like Peach and Horne from the Geological Survey first realised that large parts of the Earth's crust had been pushed over other parts. Travel back nearly 3 billion years to the ancient Lewisian Gneiss, see the huge thickness of Torridonian rocks and the karst scenery of the Durness Limestone.

We'll be taking in many of the classic sites that have been studied by the likes of Archibald Geikie and Charles Lapworth, not to mention Ben Peach and John Horne. We'll also be visiting the fabulous Coigach Peninsula and even the site of a 1.2 Ga asteroid impact! This trip has to be a high spot for anyone with an interest in the geology of the UK in general and Scotland in particular.

We'll be getting around the area using our own 17-seater minibus, in the capable hands of Colin. As for the trip itself, Chris will be working on the solid geology whilst Colin will explain the landscape and the glacial features.

Early booking is strongly advised, as we expect demand for this trip to be high.

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
Course Organisers/ & Leaders

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Getting to Inchnadamph

The main field area is about 80 miles NW of Inverness, north of Ullapool. There's a good road all the way. For those coming by rail or air, Inverness is the obvious place to aim for. There is a bus service several times a day from Inverness to Ullapool, and then a bus that passes the hotel.

Getting around on the trip

For this trip we hope to be able to use a hired minibus. My friend and colleague Colin will be doing the driving, ensuring that we are safely transported around the Highland road. Dependent upon demand, we may also need an extra car. Please indicate on the booking form if you are willing to use your car.

Why the NW Highlands?

How do I summarise the geology of the NW Highlands in a few short sentences? This is best described as one of the finest places in Europe to examine Precambrian and Lower Palaeozoic rocks in an orogenic belt, the heart of which passes through Assynt, our chosen base. It was here in the early years of the 20th. century that two amazing geologists, Peach and Horne recognised the existence of massive tracts of country rocks piled up in a series of thrust slices, which can be seen striding across the almost barren landscape.

In just seven field days you'll be able to examine Lewisian Gneisses from the Sourian and Laxfordian, showing repeated metamorphism and exhibiting superb cross cutting relationships. Overlying the Lewisian are the massive sandstone formations of the Torridonian that forms many of the fine mountain peaks. This is, in turn overlain by a fossiliferous Cambro-Ordovician sequence of shallow water sediments including limestone and sandstone. Into all of this comes the Moine Schists courtesy of several thrust planes. Finally, to cap it all off, we have some excellent glacial scenery with evidence for the existence of humans at least 35,000 years ago. In a word - wow!

Accommodation & Food

All of this trip will be based at the renowned Inchnadamp Hotel that offers comfortable accommodation, a warm welcome and good hearty meals. We will be in the capable hands of Richard and his wife Jamie, assisted by their young son Rowan! All rooms are en suite. We will be taking all meals at the hotel and taking a packed lunch for each field day.

Itinerary

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

- Achnahaird to Garvie Bay and the famous asteroid strike
- The Summer Isles & Achiltibuie
- The Moine Thrust at Knochán Cliff
- The coastal geology of Achmelvich and Clachtoll
- The limestone caves of Inchnadamp
- The basal Torridonian at the Point of Stoer
- Ice age features of the Assynt area
- The Cambro-Ordovician rocks of Ledmore
- Laxfordian intrusions of the Assynt area
- A boat cruise on Loch Glencoul to see the thrust (if running)



Cost

For 2 people sharing a double or twin room, the cost of the 7-night trip will be £1495.00 per person; for single occupancy, the cost will be £1595.00 per person and is limited to a maximum of 5. 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 transport used during the trip
- The cost of the boat trip on Loch Glencoul (if possible)
- Admission to any museum, exhibition etc. as visited by the group



What's excluded from the cost?

- The cost of travel between your home and Ullapool/Inverness
- Travel insurance
- Incidental expenditure

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 £300.00 per person or the full payment. **The balance of the brochure price will be due by January 31st, 2024.**

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 - 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. **Please also see information contained in our 'Residential Field Trips 2024'**

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

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