



Down to Earth

"Earth science learning for all"

Fort William & Scottish Highlands October 4-14 2024 (10-nights)

*The fabulous north face of mighty Ben Nevis
(Photo: Lochaber Geopark)*

A word from your leaders...

Fort William is second only to Inverness as a business and tourist town in the Highlands of Scotland. Whilst the town itself may not present its best face, the outskirts beside Loch Linnhe, where the Croit Anna Hotel is situated are fabulous. We've been eyeing up a trip based here for some time and now the opportunity has presented itself!

We will be setting out from Fort William in a host of directions and by several different modes of transport. This will include a trip on the Jacobite steam train to Mallaig, a boat trip on Loch Linnhe and day trips out in our minibus. (Train and boat trips subject to timetables.)

Fort William lies in the heart of the Scottish Highlands and allows us access to a huge variety of different geology. Locally we can study both the Dalradian and Moinean rocks and also the famous Devonian volcanics of Glencoe. Ballachulish is a former slate quarrying village with excellent exposures of the pyrite bearing rock. The famous Great Glen fault passes just to the northwest of the town with the impressive Caledonian Ship Canal following the fault line to Inverness. Further away, we will make our way westwards to see the Jurassic sediments and Tertiary igneous rocks of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, and southwards to Rannock Moor and Tyndrum, the home of Scotland's only mine currently producing gold. And that's just for starters!

The Croit Anna Hotel is a 3-star establishment overlooking Loch Linnhe on the outskirts of Fort William. It will be an excellent base from which to explore the area. As this is a new destination for us, we expect demand to be high so early booking is recommended, especially if you are looking for a single room.

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
Field trip Organisers/Leaders

Email: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk

Getting to the area

The trip starts and finishes in the town of Fort William. For those of you arriving by train, there's a service from Glasgow Queen Street that leaves Glasgow after 12 noon and gets into Fort William just after 16.00. Alternatively there's an overnight sleeper train London Euston. At the

end of the week, there's a convenient morning train from Fort William back to Glasgow. For some of you a flight to Glasgow or Inverness may be an alternative. There's a bus from Inverness down to Fort William.

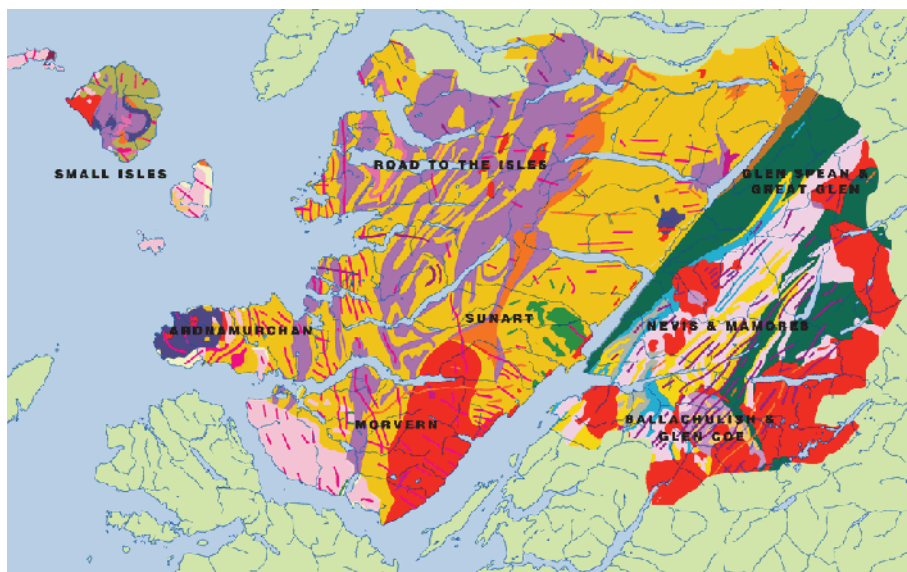
If you are travelling to Fort William by car, the hotel has adequate car parking.

Getting around on the trip

For this trip we will make use of a hired 17-seater minibus driven by Colin Schofield. Dependent upon how many book, we may also need to use a couple of cars. If you are willing to help us in this way, please indicate on the booking form.

Walking

Everything should be within the capabilities of all of the party. We will always try to get as close as possible to the sites, but this may mean that there are some walks of a mile or so, to see the best exposures. There may be some short sections of steep ascents and descents. 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 will be walking over rough ground.



Geological map of the Lochaber Geopark

Why Fort William?



Fort William the resort (Image: Leisureplex)

For more than a century, ever since the railway first arrived, Fort William has been a centre for outdoor activities. It is also home to the Lochaber Geopark, within which many of our locations lie. Scotland's highest mountain Ben Nevis is almost on its doorstep. The UK's largest tear fault, the Great Glen Fault passes close by and divides the Moinian rocks to the northwest from the Dalradian rocks to the southeast.

Just a few miles to the south lies the mighty Glencoe and its rugged landscape that hides a Devonian collapsed volcanic caldera with a number of fairly exotic rocks. Also not far away is the slate village of Ballachulish where Dalradian slates were formerly quarried on a large scale.

Like many a tourist before and after us we will also be using Fort William as a base from which to explore a range of very different geological sites within a radius of about 50 miles. Using a variety of different modes of transport we will examine rocks and landscapes ranging in age from the Cambrian through to the Quaternary. (See itinerary below.)

Accommodation & Food

Good food and a good night's rest are important elements to our trips and for this trip we will be staying at the 3-star Leisureplex 3-star Anna Hotel on the outskirts of Fort William. Here we will have en-suite rooms taking breakfast and evening meals in the hotel. We will enjoy packed lunches for each field day.

Single accommodation is available but is limited to a maximum of 4 rooms on this trip. We are happy to help anyone looking for someone to share a twin bedded room - simply indicate on the booking form.

The setting of the Croit Anna Hotel



Itinerary

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

- Moinian rocks between Fort William and Glenfinnan
- Dalradian rocks around Eilean Donan Castle
- Dalradian rocks of Loch Onnich and Loch Leven
- Devonian fire and Quaternary ice in Glencoe
- There's gold in them thar hills - geology and glaciology around Tyndrum

- The Jacobite steam train to Mallaig
- Boat cruise on Loch Linnhe
- The slates of Ballachulish
- The Old Red Sandstone of Oban
- The Jurassic sediments and Tertiary igneous rocks of Ardnamurchan
- The Great Glen Fault - its impact on the landscape
- The Glen Nevis Geotrail

The Jacobite train crossing Glenfinnan Viaduct.



Cost

For 2 people sharing a double or twin room, the cost of the 10-night tour will be £1495.00 per person; for single occupancy, the cost will be £1695.00 per person and is limited to a maximum of 4.

What's included in the cost?



- The services of Chris Darmon and Colin Schofield 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
- Admission to any museums, exhibitions etc. as visited by the group

The end of the railway at Mallaig and still the geology continues. (Image: Lochaber Geopark)

What's excluded from the cost?

- The cost of travel between your home and the field trip area
- Travel insurance - strongly recommended
- Incidental expenditure

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 July 31st. 2024.

This trip will run provided a minimum of 12 people have booked by December 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, 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 2024'.

The Glen Nevis Geotrail (Image: Lochaber Geopark)

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

Email: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk • Tel: 0114 245 5746 • FAX: 0114 240 3405