



Down to Earth

"Earth science learning for all"

Come and join are eighth Summer School... Shropshire Summer School August 8-15 2026



Harper Adams University is set in beautiful grounds.



Shropshire, England's finest geological county...

After a period of 8 years we are making a return to the place where we held our second Summer School in 2018. Harper Adams University, set in the heart of the beautiful Shropshire countryside was arguably one of our most successful and enjoyable Summer School venues, Harper Adams gives us access to some fine geology. Whilst some of our proposed venues are the same to those offered in 2018, there are also several new offerings.

We need a good venue that will give us a comfortable place to sleep, and food and drink to keep us going! In Harper Adams University, we know that we've found the perfect base. Harper Adams is a highly rated agricultural college, that trains and educates the farmers of the future. It offers lots of en-suite single rooms. There are also rooms suitable for some of our indoor activities as well as restaurant and bar facilities.

The theme for the week is 'field geology in the steps of the pioneers'. This will give us the opportunity to celebrate the work of people like Murchison and Lapworth at some of the very localities that they visited back in the nineteenth century. At some of our indoor sessions you can learn more about these pioneers and their work.

We expect that demand will be high

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
Joint leaders & organisers

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For the Getting to Harper Adams University

The nearest railway station is Telford Central. You can get a bus from Telford Bus Station to the University but you will have to change in Newport for the University campus. If you are coming by road, the University is on the B5062 Newport-Shrewsbury road. The nearest motorways are the M6 and the M54.

Getting Around

We'll have the use of a hired coach on some each day so that we can offer choices of programme to suit your interests and knowledge. No one will be required to drive their own car unless they choose to do so.

Walking

On each field day there will be a choice of venues from those that require modest walking through to others where there be little or no walking involved. Everyone should be able to find something that is within their own capabilities. 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.

The Geology & landscape

Chris first got introduced to the geology of the area as an undergraduate at the University of Hull in the early 1970s. He mapped in the Craven Arms area and led children's fossil hunting holidays from Ludlow Youth Hostel. In the more than forty years since then, he's got to know the area well and to appreciate the huge geological variety contained within it.

Late Precambrian sediments and igneous rocks can be found in the Longmynd and Caer Caradoc. These rocks are overlain by Cambrian quartzites in the Wrekin area with the base marked by an unconformity. These rocks are overlain by fossiliferous sediments from the Ordovician and Silurian. The Ludlow area in particular was a key one for Murchison with both the Wenlockian and Ludlovian defined there.

Characteristic red sandstones form much of the Devonian of the area, covering the high ground around Titterstone and Brown Cle. Here there are also examples of Carboniferous Coal Measure rocks. A large dolerite sill cuts the Devonian at Titterstone Cle. The solid geology is completed by the Permian and Triassic red sandstones that formed in a desert around 200 million years ago.

The landscape that we see today is the result of erosion over the Tertiary and Quaternary. The Ice Ages have left their mark in the form of much glacial and fluvio-glacial debris. In places like Cardingmill Valley we can see the effects of meltwater scouring.

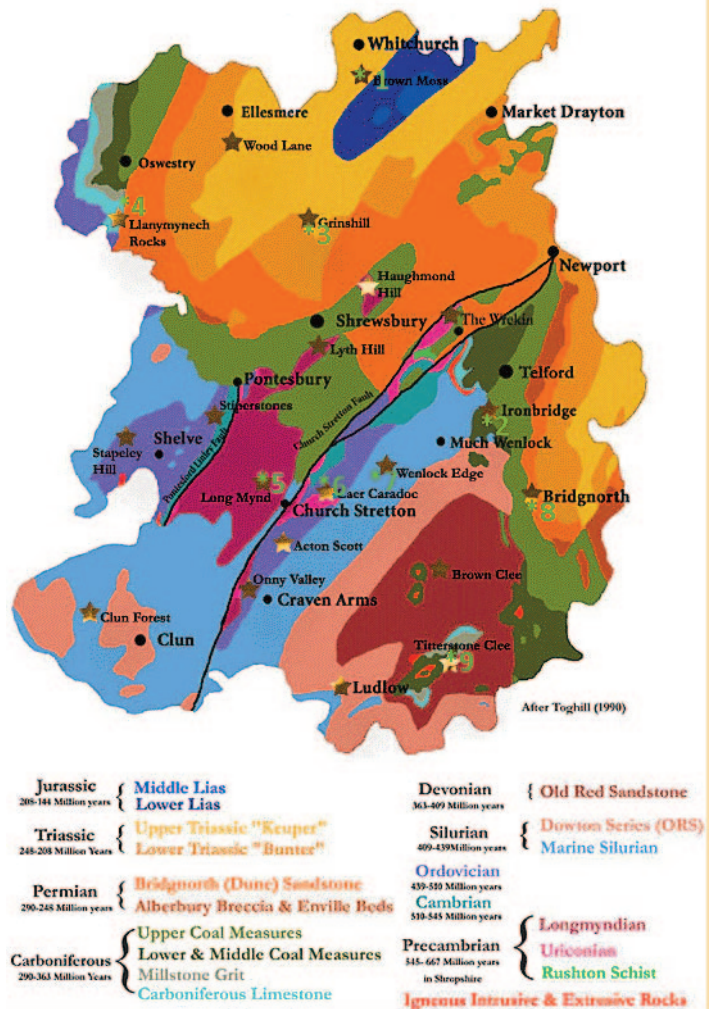
With all this variable geology, it would be surprising if this area wasn't both a cradle of geological science and also the industrial revolution. The limestones have found use over a long period of time, along with coal and iron from the Carboniferous. All this came together in the Ironbridge area in the late eighteenth century and a little later in the Black Country. These areas will both feed into our extremely varied programme for the week.

The Summer School programme

At this stage, this is meant to be indicative of the course content. Final details will be published not later than June when you will be asked to make your choices.

Field excursions...

- Sites in Dudley and the Black Country Geopark
- Geology and the industrial revolution: Ironbridge Gorge, including the world famous museum
- Limestones and coral reefs of Wenlock Edge
- The Wrekin & Ercall Quarries and the Cambrian unconformity
- Murchison localities in the Ludlow area
- Church Stretton and the Longmynd
- The Triassic rocks of Grinshill
- Titterstone and Brown Cle, dthustone and sediments
- Minerals of the Shelve area
- The Lapworth Museum at the University of Birmingham
- The geology of the Onny Valley
- The Lickey Hills country park



Social and evening programme...

We're working on getting a couple of outside speakers in to talk to us and also looking at several social activities, including going to a local pub one evening.

Accommodation & Food

Harper Adams University is well known for its conference facilities and are pleased to welcome us to their campus. Over the years it has hosted many conferences and events, many of which have been in the field of agriculture. Here's what the organiser of the National Herdsman Conference had to say: "The team at Harper Adams provided excellent service, outstanding hospitality with great value for money. Harper is exactly right for our conference."



All the rooms are en-suite. Most are single, with just one double and four twin-bedded rooms. The rooms are clean and simple. All meals will be taken on site in a nearby building where you will be served restaurant quality food by friendly staff. Packed lunches will be available for each field day. A bar may be available each evening for our use.

Cost

As you will appreciate, there's a lot that goes into the organisation of a trip like this, including the arrangement of hired transport. However, we have tried hard to keep the costs as low as possible.

For the twin/double rooms the cost is £1495.00 per person and for the single rooms, the cost will be £1595.00 per person. N.B. There's just 1 double and 4 twin rooms available.

If you would like to join us for the week without accommodation, please see the final page of this brochure for details of our non-resident packages

What's included in the cost?

- The services of Chris Darmon and Colin Schofield as tutor/organisers, who will be available to you at all reasonable times
- Accommodation and meals as specified in the brochure
- Excursions and admissions to all sites as shown above.

What's excluded from the cost?

- The cost of travel between your home and Harper Adams University and return
- Travel insurance
- Incidental expenses

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 April 30th 2026.

This trip will run provided a minimum of 25 people have booked by January 31st 2026.

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 tickets.

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

Non-resident packages

We are pleased to be able to offer two packages for people not wanting to be resident at Harper Adams University.

The Gold Package £625.00 per person

- Access to all of the field programme with no extra charges to pay.
- Access to our transport with pick up and drop off at Harper Adams Campus.
- Access to the evening and indoor programme as available.
- An invitation to join us for the Summer School dinner on Friday night.

The Silver Package £375.00 per person

- As Gold Package, but does not include access to our transport, we meet you at the field locations each day.

Please note: Neither package includes the provision of any food, including packed lunches, apart from the Friday night dinner, these are for you to provide. We advise that you bring something to eat and drink, as many of the trips will not stop at a suitable location for lunch.