



EDINBURGH GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Promoting public interest in geology and the advancement of geological knowledge

Spring Newsletter 2017

Welcome to the latest edition of the Newsletter. The first edition, combining detail of the lectures programme with other events and news, was very well received. This edition highlights the excursion programme which I hope will allow you to plan your summer activities 'on the rocks'! We have also launched our new website – tell us what you think. A huge thank you to new member Gordon Lang who has put an enormous amount of voluntary work and enthusiasm into developing this.

The Society faces some challenges! With Beverly Bergman standing down at the recent AGM after five years as EGS Secretary, we are reviewing this role. Please see the back page for more information and consider offering some support.

Stuart Monro, EGS President, president@edinburghgeolsoc.org



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Sat 4 March
StAnza, St Andrews
- Sun 19 March, 2-4pm
Meetup: Discover Edinburgh's Geology
- 9, 12, 15 April, 1-5pm
Edinburgh International Science Festival: Siccar Point tours
- Wed 19 April, 7pm
Excursion: Dalmeny Railway Cutting
- Tues 2 May, 10am-3pm
Visit & Excursion: National Museums Collection Centre and Wardie Shore
- Wed 3 May, 7pm
Excursion: Crichton
- Wed 17 May, 7pm
Excursion: City Centre
- 20-27 May
Long Excursion: Skye
- Wed 31 May, 7pm
Excursion: Craigmillar Castle Park
- Sat 3 June, 8.30am
Excursion: Fintry Hills
- Wed 14 June, 7pm
Excursion: National Mining Museum
- Sat 17 June, 10am
Excursion: St Baldred's Cradle
- Wed 28 June, 7pm
Excursion: Leadburn and Noble House
- Sat 1 July, 8am
Excursion: Spireslack Opencast Coal Site
- Sat 29 July, 9am
Excursion: Berwick
- Sat 2 September, 9am
Excursion: North Esk Inlier, Pentland Hills
- 9-10 September
Hugh Miller Conference
- 15-18 September
Weekend Excursion: Rhins of Galloway
- Sat 30 September, 10am
Day Excursion: Holyrood Park Mapping Exercise

EGS Grants: Recent Awards

In December 2016, EGS Council approved grant funding of:

- £500 to the Friends of Hugh Miller (FoHM) towards the cost of their two-day geological conference in September 2017 "Updating Hugh Miller's Geological Legacy".
- £423 to West Lothian Council towards printing of five updated geodiversity leaflets on local sites.
- £349 to geoHeritage Fife to produce a leaflet on the Aberdour Geological Trail.

- £250 to the Scottish Geodiversity Forum and FoHM towards the cost of publishing "Hugh Miller's Legacy", a volume of geology-inspired prose and poetry.
- £200 to the Scottish Geodiversity Forum and FoHM to enable Hugh Miller Writing Competition winners to contribute to the StAnza Poetry Festival in St Andrews in March 2017.

The EGS grant scheme supports projects which further the aims of the Society, namely to encourage public interest in geology and to advance geological knowledge. Other recent grants include funding of repairs to the Witchcraig Geological Wall in West Lothian, a geological interpretation panel at Kentallen in the Lochaber Geopark, and public information boards for the Northwest Highlands Geopark. Applications are normally considered twice a year and the next deadline is 31 March 2017. Further details are on the EGS website.

Andrew Rushworth, Chair, Finance and Planning Committee

Kentallen interpretation panel, Lochaber Geopark. *Photo: Ian Parsons*



Geopoetry at StAnza – Saturday 4 March

StAnza, Scotland's International Poetry Festival in St Andrews from 1-5 March, has a landscape and mountain theme. EGS is supporting an event on Saturday 4 March that brings the winners of the recent Hugh Miller Writing Competition to St Andrews to share their poetry,

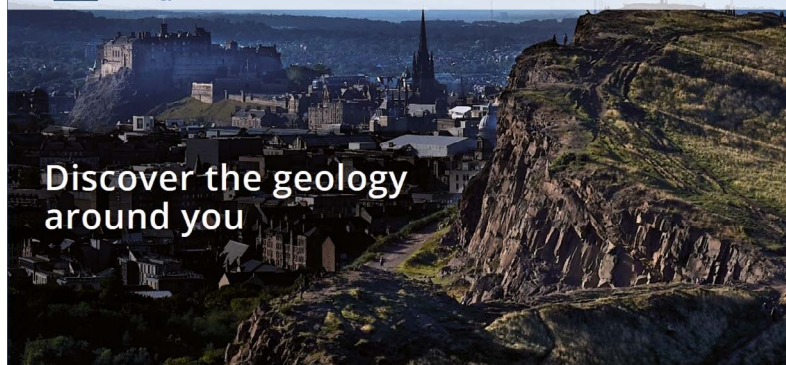
inspired by the writings of Hugh Miller. There is also a fossil drop-in event at the Museum of St Andrews in the morning, organised by Geobus. The Festival includes a wide range of events including geopoetics. Visit stanzapoetry.org to find out more.

Strategy & Promotion

The Society has appointed Angus Miller on a two-year contract to raise the Society's profile, promote its publications and publicise its events and initiatives. His appointment as Promotion Secretary is a key component in the Council's five-year Strategy to bring about a step change in the Society's public-interest activities.

Work so far has included the introduction of our new Newsletter, promotion of EGS membership and planning of public events including three coach trips to Siccar Point during this year's Science Festival. A major revamp of our website has just been completed and I'm sure members will be impressed by the results.

Angus has achieved a great deal so far and is keen to work with other EGS members. Could you help run



the bus trips to Siccar Point? Run a promotional stall? Contribute images for the website? Angus's contact details are on the back page.

Christine Thompson, Immediate Past President

Lochranza Centre and Arran Geofest in September

In October 2015, the company that owned the Lochranza Centre decided to close it, saying there was no future in fieldwork! Senior staff and the local community have received wide support to create a new Community Interest Company to keep the Centre

open and safeguard 14 jobs, 5 of which are held by geology graduates.

The Centre is now thriving, and is open to any groups who want to come and experience at first hand the geology and beauty of north Arran. We were co-hosts of the first Arran Geofest in 2016 and are planning the next one in September 2017 – volunteers welcome! We are also working with partners including the Arran Heritage Museum and National Trust Scotland to move towards UNESCO Global Geopark status in the next few years.

Come and experience Arran's geological treasures: the dyke swarm of Kildonnan, the Drumadoon sill, the myriapod trail. Contemplate process and time at Hutton's Unconformity, only a 25 minute walk from the Lochranza Centre where a warm welcome, accommodation, refreshment and tuition await you.

Stuart Blake, Director, Lochranza Centre CIC,
lochranzacentre.co.uk, 01770 830637



Students explore Hutton's Unconformity on Arran.
Photo: Stuart Blake

Hugh Miller conference 9 - 10 September 2017, Cromarty

The Friends of Hugh Miller are running a 'Miller legacy' conference in September, for geologists, palaeontologists, and all who have an interest in Hugh Miller, fossils and the natural world, with an international lineup of speakers. A new edition of Hugh Miller's great work, *The Old Red Sandstone*, is in preparation and the editors, Prof Ralph O'Connor and Dr Michael A Taylor, will present a paper on their 10 years of research.

As well as Earth science, the conference will include interesting insights into many aspects of history, literature and Victorian society. Associated field trips include a local excursion to Miller's famous Devonian fish bed, and a three-day field trip to the Jurassic rocks in the Brora/Helmsdale area and fossil fish localities in Caithness.



Hugh Miller's gravestone in the Grange Cemetery has been cleaned and re-lettered so that the inscription is readable once again. This project was organised by Andrew McMillan and Lothian and Borders GeoConservation, with generous funding from Edinburgh U3A Geology Group and The Friends of Hugh Miller. The stone on the left, for Hugh's son (also Hugh) was also cleaned and the lettering partially restored. *Photo: Andrew McMillan*

Excursion Programme 2017

At the core of our excursions programme are full-day excursions on Saturdays and shorter evening excursions on Wednesdays. Excursions are led by a geologist with expert knowledge of the locality, and are both informative and enjoyable. Visit the EGS website at www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/excursions/ for details, including excursion route maps. Please read and take note of the Code of Conduct & Safety Guidelines.

Book in advance for all excursions, as numbers are limited for safety reasons. Bookings are taken by Alison Tymon, email aquart1023@gmail.com or phone 01289 305842 / 07831 637634. Give a contact in case of emergency (name, relationship and phone number). Please notify Alison if you have booked and are not able to attend, to avoid disappointing others who may be on a waiting list.

Visits and beginners' events

Sunday 19 March, 2-4pm

Discover Edinburgh's Geology Meetup

An introduction to the geology of Edinburgh for beginners. This event in Holyrood Park is organised by Wild Reekie and EGS. Further details and booking: www.meetup.com/Wild-Reekie/events/237091786/

9, 12, 15 April, 1-5pm

Edinburgh International Science Festival: Siccar Point

Follow the journey of James Hutton, the father of modern geology, from the site of his home in central Edinburgh to the wild coastline at Siccar Point. Book direct with the Science Festival.

Tuesday 2 May, 10am-3pm

National Museums Scotland: Visit to the National Museums Collection Centre at Granton and afternoon excursion to Wardie Shore

The National Museums Collection Centre at Granton houses a huge collection of important mineral and fossil samples. This visit will allow small groups to explore in detail elements of the Palaeobiology and Earth Systems collections. The afternoon excursion will visit Wardie Shore, an important historical location for Carboniferous fossil fish.

Residential excursions

20-27 May

Long Excursion: Isle of Skye Leader: Brian Bell

The Skye and Raasay Long Excursion is fully subscribed with a waiting list. To be added to the list, contact Anne Burgess, longexcursion@edinburghgeolsoc.org.

15-18 September

Weekend Excursion: Rhins of Galloway

Leader: Emrys Phillips

Excellent coastal exposures here show a sequence of near-vertical slices of Ordovician and Silurian sandstones with interbedded siltstone and mudstone. Emrys Phillips will lead this 'hands-on' field excursion where participants will explore outcrops in detail, observing and making measurements to develop a picture of the geological evolution of the area. An introductory meeting on Friday evening, followed by 2½ days fieldwork finishing Monday lunchtime. For further information and booking, contact weekend@edinburghgeolsoc.org.

Saturday excursions

Saturday 3 June, 8.30am

(joint excursion with Geological Society of Glasgow)

Fintry Hills Leader: Con Gillen

The Fintry Hills are part of the Clyde Plateau Volcanic Formation to the south-west of Stirling, and show good examples of varied basaltic igneous rocks that formed

close to eruptive centres, in a landscape of craters and cinder cones. The excursion will include Carboniferous sedimentary rocks and be followed by afternoon tea at Fintry village sports club.

Saturday 17 June, 10am

St Baldred's Cradle, East Lothian

Leader: Fiona McGibbon

This field trip offers excellent exposure in a great coastal setting, a good opportunity to bring together the regional geological story. We will examine Lower Carboniferous sedimentary rocks deposited in a lagoonal setting with periodic higher energy deposits overlying. The igneous rocks get top billing however, including a sill, plug, dykes and some ash: all of alkaline composition and some with evidence of phreatomagmatic activity. There are very clear field relationships.

Saturday 1 July, 8am

(joint excursion with Westmorland Geological Society)

Spireslack Opencast Surface Mine, Ayrshire

Leaders: Graham Leslie and Mike Browne

Spireslack is a stunning one km long, 80-metre-deep canyon cut through Carboniferous-age strata, unparalleled in Scotland. This excursion will explore the sedimentology, structural geology and palaeontology of this coal-bearing succession, and consider applied geoscience and mining issues.

Saturday 29 July, 9am

Berwick-upon-Tweed Leader: Alison Tymon

We will examine good coastal exposures of cyclothems, deposited in river deltas, swamps and shallow sea close to the equator. The strata include coal, fireclay, limestone and sandstone, some containing fossils. We will find structural evidence for the Berwick Monocline and associated faults, formed during the Variscan Orogeny.

Saturday 2 September, 9am

North Esk Inlier, Pentland Hills Leader: Ken Shaw

The North Esk Inlier comprises sedimentary rocks formed in the Iapetus Ocean during the Silurian, ranging from mudstones to conglomerates. We will examine and discuss depositional environments, and how they relate to the fossils, that can be found in loose material. These have been described as 'splendidly preserved as undistorted moulds ... succeeding each other through time and directly linked with changing environments'.

Saturday 30 September, 10am

Holyrood Park Mapping Exercise

Leader: Simon Cuthbert

Holyrood Park in Edinburgh offers a superb section through varied geology, including the eroded Arthur's Seat volcano, a major dolerite intrusion at Salisbury Crags, and Carboniferous sedimentary rocks. This excursion will focus on basic geological map-making, including use of a compass-clinometer, and recording information in a field notebook and paper map.

Wednesday evenings

19 April, 7pm

Dalmeny Railway Cutting

Leaders: Richard Smith and Beverly Bergman

The disused railway line between Dalmeny and South Queensferry has cuttings that present good exposures of some of the local geology. The volcanic and sedimentary rocks of this area formed early in the Carboniferous Period. We will view some of these layers and explore their relationships.

3 May, 7pm

Crichton Kirk, Castle and quarries

Leaders: Mike Browne and Howard Turner

Crichton Castle and Kirk are built of local sandstone, which can still be seen in nearby disused quarries. The sandstone was deposited by rivers in the Carboniferous Period, and contains good examples of cross-bedding. Nearby, on the west bank of the River Tyne, the North Greens Limestone was quarried and burnt in nearby limekilns.

17 May, 7pm

City Centre: Lothian Road, Castle Rock and the Lawnmarket

Leader: Andrew McMillan

We will examine some of the building stones of 17th to 20th century buildings of the city centre, and view the contact between the basaltic plug of the Castle Rock and

early Carboniferous sedimentary strata into which it was emplaced. This is part of the famous crag-and-tail, and we will consider various interpretations of its origin.

31 May, 7pm

Craigmillar Castle Park

Leader: Al McGowan

Quarries close to Craigmillar Castle provided sandstone for building from the 14th century. Several old quarries remain, showing how they are expressed in the landscape once they fall into disuse. We can observe sedimentary structures and variation in grain size that suggest varying depositional energy.

14 June, 7pm

National Mining Museum

The National Mining Museum is based at the Lady Victoria Colliery at Newtongrange, a fine example of a Victorian colliery. This guided tour of the museum and pithead will explore the story of coal and what life was like for the miners and their families.

28 June, 7pm

Leadburn and Noble House

Leader: Brian Upton

A quarry south of Leadburn exposes rocks of Ordovician age, turbidite sequences formed in huge submarine fans. In contrast, near Noble House on the A701 we can see pillow lavas with interbedded cherts, evidence of volcanic activity on the sea floor.

Support required

We appeal to the membership: get involved in the running of your Society! We plan to divide the Honorary Secretary's role between several people, so that it is not overly time-consuming for any one, and have started that process already. If you think you can help us with any of the following duties then please contact the Acting Secretary: handling the Society's correspondence; organising meetings of Council; disseminating news through email, the website and social media; assisting with the running of the lectures; providing other administrative support. Some of these duties would not require being a member of Council, so please consider if you can help.

Membership subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2016-17 were due last October! If you have overlooked making your payment please remedy this now by sending a cheque (payable to Edinburgh Geological Society) to the Membership Secretary, or pay by bank transfer to Edinburgh Geological Society, Sort Code: 80-02-73, Account No. 00285438. Give your full name as Reference.

Contact Barbara Clarke by email or phone if you are unsure about any details of your membership. Please keep your postal and email addresses up to date so that all our publications and information reach you.

EGS News email list

Join the EGS News email list to be kept informed of changes to programmes and other news of interest to members. Please contact the Membership Secretary, Barbara Clarke.

Society contacts

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The Edinburgh Geological Society is a friendly and informal organisation with a wide range of members of varied backgrounds and interests, united in an interest in rocks and the science of the Earth. This newsletter is published in September and March, with details of our lectures and excursions programme.

The Edinburgh Geological Society is a charity registered in Scotland No SC008011

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