



THE HIGHLAND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Scottish Charity No. SC004427

Chair's Annual Report to Members 2014

This report covers the activities of the Society in 2014.

Purpose of the Society

Once in a while it is probably worth remembering the purpose of the Society, which is recorded in our constitution as:

1. To promote the understanding of the science of geology and other earth sciences through the organisation of field trips and lectures.
2. To foster good relations with organisations having related interests.

Field Trips and Lectures

The field trips and lectures are as in previous years our core activities and we have had a varied and high quality programme in 2014. In very brief summary:

15 January [lecture] Jim Blair (Lochaber Geopark) "The Glen Coe Volcano; an update on some recent research"

26 February [AGM followed by short lecture] Peter Christie (retiring Chair) "Some Fossil Collections in Germany"

26 March [lecture] Dr Paula Lindgren (University of Glasgow) "Aqueous Alteration of Asteroids"

26-28 April [weekend field trip] Eddie Lynch (Committee member) "South Skye/Sleat peninsula"

14-21 June [self-led field trip week] Mull, Iona, Staffa

5-6 July [weekend field trip] Fiona McGibbon (Open University) "Strath Fionan"

4 October [day excursion] Dr David Stephenson (British Geological Survey) "Little Glen Shee, Dunkeld and the Hermitage"

5 November [lecture] Dr Dave McGarvie (Open University in Scotland) "Fieldwork in Chile: land of volcanoes and earthquakes"

10 December [evening library visit] opportunity to see the HGS Library collection, arranged by Julie Corcoran (Inverness Library) and Peter Reynolds (member)

Additional detail is available in past Newsletters (see website). I would like to thank all the leaders and lecturers who have given their time and made such a big contribution to the Society in 2014.

As a Committee we recognise that our members encompass all levels of knowledge from beginner to expert, and varying levels of fitness and time constraints. We therefore try to ensure that our mix of field trips caters for everyone. We also like to try new things. Inspired by a lecture by John Faithfull in 2013, we decided in 2014 to try an experiment in having a self-led week in Mull. Here, individual members agreed to lead for a day or half day to a specific area. They each did their research, and provided a short hand-out for the group. As a number of the leaders (myself included) had never been to that part of Mull before it was challenge, but an enjoyable one, to lead the group as we explored and discussed what we found. This was sufficiently successful that we are running a similar week in Mull in 2015, with a view to visiting some new sites as well as revisiting a few.

We are always open to suggestions from members for new topics, lecturers, locations, style of excursions etc.

Other Organisations

As a small Society our funding is limited. During the year we continued to support 'Friends of Hugh Miller' with a small donation. We are members of the Scottish Geodiversity forum, and prompted by our members wrote to the Scottish Government to express our concern about the apparent de-emphasis of geology in Scottish schools and exams. Finally our collection of books is held in the library and is available for reference to anyone (only signed up HGS members can take books out).

Finance

Our main income is from membership subscriptions, and contributions collected at events. Our main outgoings are insurance, and speaker/leader costs. For a self-led trip (eg Mull 2014) we ensure that the amounts paid by the participants cover the costs and any risk to the Society's funds is minimised.

Our cash balance at the year end was £2,217 (£1,874 at the end of the previous year), a net increase in the year of £343. Allowing for the timing of certain payments, and the events held during the year, our finances are broadly in balance and there is no need to consider any change to our membership subscription rates.

Committee

I was appointed Chair at the AGM in February 2014. Peter Christie stood down after 16 years as Chair, and Ann Reynolds resigned as Treasurer but agreed to stay on the Committee and indeed has continued as Acting Treasurer throughout 2014.

I would like to thank all Committee members for their work during the year. The programme of field trips and lectures is organised by our secretary, Alison Wright. Andy Leggatt has continued to maintain and enhance our website. Ann Reynolds has looked after our finances for another year, handing over now to Rhona Fraser.

Although not a Committee member, Peter Reynolds deserves a special thanks for all the work he has done in sorting out our books and maps and in getting the books safely placed in the library.

Alan Thompson
Chair
25 February 2015