



THE HIGHLAND GEOLOGICAL **SOCIETY**

Scottish Charity No. SC004427

DECEMBER 2014

Dear Members,

DATES FOR YOUR (new!) 2015 DIARY

This is a reminder that our meeting on Wednesday 10 December will take place at Inverness Central Library at 7pm. Access to the library (by the bus station) is via the side door opposite the entrance to the Spectrum Centre car park. In case of difficulty, please contact 07747 791826 and someone will let you in!

All other winter meetings will be held at 7.30 pm at Millburn Academy (Diriebugh Road, Inverness, IV2 3QR); the committee usually meet for dinner beforehand so if you would like to join us, please let Alison know – all welcome!

Please note the 2015 membership subscriptions are due at the beginning of January. If you pay by Standing Order, money will be debited from your account on 10 Jan – please ensure that your SO reflects current subscription rates (£15 for Single Members; £22.50 for Family Membership). You can pay by cheque at our January meeting but if you prefer to send the subscription by post then cheques should be made out to the ‘Highland Geological Society’ and sent to Dr Rhona Fraser at: 12, Islands House, Island Bank Road, Inverness, IV2 4SB.

More details re our summer programme will follow but dates agreed so far are given at the end of this newsletter.

Winter Programme 2014-15

10 December

Julie Corcoran and Robert Reid (Highland Library Service) and Peter Reynolds (HGS)

The HGS Library Collection

This is an opportunity to explore our collection held by Inverness library; which comprises gifts and personal bequests of existing and former members, giving the current membership access to a ready-made working collection of geological reading matter including back runs of journals, field guides and other relevant texts. The library staff are moving the collection out of the stack where it is normally housed, for tonight only, to make it easier to access. It will be possible to use the computer catalogue and borrow items on the night. Any member of the HGS who is not a member of the public library can join on the night if they bring along evidence of identity and address (e.g. driving licence, recent utility bill etc.). Reference material, including old memoirs and maps of various vintages, held by the Highland Library Service in Inverness will also be accessible so come along and see what you can find!

28 January 2015

Dr Sue Beardmore (Curatorial assistant (geology/palaeontology), Elgin Museum)

Letters from America: vertebrate palaeontology in Utah, USA.

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah, USA, is situated on the western edge of the Colorado plateau where an almost complete stratigraphic succession of Mesozoic rocks is exposed. Work since 1999 by the Natural History Museum, Utah, and Denver Museum of Nature and Science in the Upper Cretaceous Kaiparowits Formation has revealed a high number of dinosaur (hadrosaur, ceratopsian and rarer theropod types), crocodile and turtle skeletons, with as many as twenty being new to science. Bivalves, gastropods and plant debris occur in thin, dense horizons throughout the formation, often in association with skeletons, revealing something of the transportation processes at the time of deposition. In combination with research in Canada, Mexico and other American localities, a broader picture is now emerging of the North American continent today as being well-vegetated and supporting a wide range of organisms 74-76 million years ago, and crucially just prior to the famous end-Cretaceous extinction.

25 February

Annual General Meeting

Please come and support the important business part of the society's activities, which will be followed by a short talk:

Peter Reynolds (HGS) **How thin sections are made**

Much of our current knowledge of earth processes is based on the study of thin sections - extremely thin slices of rock mounted on microscope slides. Although this may appear to belong to the realm of university research it is within reach of the interested amateur. Our former president Sinclair Ross taught Ann and Peter Reynolds the basics of thin section making and this short illustrated talk shows how it is done.

18 March

Paul Monk (HGS)

50 years in amateur geology: collections, fieldtrips and passion.

Paul will take a stroll through his collecting history, sharing some geological stories along the way, and giving us a tour through a small part of his collections of minerals, fossils and 18th and 19th Century geology books.

22 April

Dr Alan Crane (University of Aberdeen)

Aotearoa: A Plate Margin Journey

Aotearoa (re-named New Zealand by Europeans) is situated astride an obliquely convergent section on the tectonic boundary between the Indo-Australian and Pacific Plates. For the last 24 million years this has been, and continues to be, an active orogenic zone creating one of the fastest rising mountain belts on Planet Earth. Aotearoa is also an area where oceanic segments of both the Pacific and Indo-Australian Plates are being subducted, resulting in associated active strato-volcanoes, rifting and back-arc spreading.

The talk will comprise a travelogue-style DVD illustrating the classic 'Trans-Alpine' rail journey: a flight traverse of the Mount Cook (Aoraki) Range; a boat trip on proglacial Lake Tasman; geysers and lakes of boiling mud of the Taupo Volcanic Zone; a helicopter flight to White Island in the Bay of Plenty (currently New Zealand's most active volcano); plus the consequences of devastating earthquakes for two of New Zealand's major cities. A short power-point presentation outlining the Plate Tectonic Geology of Aotearoa will provide an introduction to the DVD.

Evening meetings are charged at £2 for members and £3 for non-members.

For information:

21-22 March: 'Moray Geology: Past, Present, Future' Conference *Elgin Museum.*

The HGS will be supporting this event which will include a programme of talks at Moray College (University of the Highlands and Islands) and activities within the museum. Please contact moraygeology2015@hotmail.com if you would like up-to-date information about this event.

SUMMER FIELDTRIPS 2015

25 April – 2 May – self-led excursion to Mull

There are still places available at Killunaig Church House (cost £79), plus electricity and communal purchases (~ £10 per person). The week will include a mix of geological itineraries dependent upon the interests of the participants.

16 – 17 May – Oban and the Garvellachs – Roger Anderton

Details to be confirmed but will include a day-trip to Garbh Eileach (the largest of the Garvellachs) to look at the stunning Dalradian stratigraphy, including the Port Askaig Boulder Bed (tillite). Cost of the ferry to Luin and boat trip from Cullipool will be approx. £30.

20 June – Ben Wyvis – Martin Hind

Day trip to explore the evidence for glaciation on Ben Wyvis with Highland Countryside Ranger, Martin Hind. This event will also be open to members of the public.

10 October – Scatwell Mica Mine, Strath Conon – Martin Hind

An opportunity to visit the rock quarries and spoil heaps associated with the mica mine, which was active during the Second World War. This event will also be open to members of the public.

It is hoped to add at least one more date to the summer programme; more details of the above trips will be included in the next newsletter. If you are interested in attending any of the excursions, please let Alison know as soon as possible as numbers for some excursions are limited.

Contact information:

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