

Geowalks: Eigg

Tuesday 31 March to Saturday 4 April 2020

The small Hebridean island of Eigg is an enchanting mix: beautiful scenery, a surprising variety of rocks, and a friendly and innovative local community. There are many geological riches to explore, including important fossil-rich sedimentary rocks and the singing sands, fringed by sandstone cliffs cut by basalt dykes. The famous Sgùrr forms the high point of the island.

Eigg is mostly formed from basalt lava flows and intrusions, the remains of extensive volcanic activity 60 million years ago. These are underlain by sedimentary rocks from the Jurassic Period. The rocks of An Sgùrr were formed by a final, violent volcanic eruption, the last known volcanic activity in this area.

This trip will explore Eigg's geological variety, including the west coast, the south of the island and An Sgùrr. The itinerary will include short walks over rough and sometimes boggy ground.



Outline Programme

Tuesday 31 March Travel to Eigg, departing from Mallaig at 10.10am.

Wednesday-Thursday-Friday Day walks from the Glebe Barn exploring different sections of the island, options include:

1. The west coast. Explore the Bay of Laig and follow the low cliffs of sandstone round to the singing sands; the sandstones contain amazing concretions and are cut by many basalt dykes – my favourite geological walk!
2. Climb An Sgùrr, following a reasonable but boggy path beneath the cliffs and up onto the rocky ridge, for great views of the Hebrides and the mainland.
3. The rough south coast, with caves, intruding dykes, crofting villages and views of the varied An Sgùrr ridge.
4. Walk to the northern tip of Eigg to see the result of post-glacial landslides that have ripped into the layers of basalt lava, and follow the footsteps of Hugh Miller and search for fossil-rich rocks on the beach.

Saturday 4 April Further exploration in the morning, depart Eigg for Mallaig at 12:50.

Details

Accommodation & Catering

We have exclusive use of the Glebe Barn hostel www.glebebarnco.uk, a very comfortable and superior hostel in a fantastic setting overlooking the harbour bay. Accommodation in small shared rooms (2-4 people).

All food is provided, including substantial, catered two-course evening meals, self-service breakfasts and packed lunches.

Cost

Course fee £400 per person. This includes four nights hostel accommodation and all food. The cost does not include travel to Eigg.

Transport to Mallaig

Mallaig is accessible by public transport, either by bus or on the famed West Highland railway. Timings require an overnight stay before the trip.

Booking Conditions

To book, please send a deposit of £50 per person (cheques payable to 'Geowalks', or ask for details to make a bank transfer). Final payment is due four weeks in advance. If you cancel your booking, refunds will be at my discretion and will

usually only be available if someone else takes your place. Travel insurance is recommended – many insurers offer cheap UK-only cover.

In the unlikely event of the trip being cancelled, you will be informed immediately and receive a full refund.

Level of fitness required

The trip will involve short walks often on rough ground (up to 5 miles). There will be some flexibility in the programme, allowing you to opt out and do your own thing if you wish. Suitable for people who walk regularly and are accustomed to rough ground.

Recommended Reading

The Geology of Eigg, John D Hudson, Angus D Miller, Ann Allwright. Edinburgh Geological Society, ISBN 9780904440164. Rum and the Small Isles, in the SNH Landscape Fashioned by Geology Series, 2004. Available from www.scottishgeology.com The Cruise of the Betsey, Hugh Miller, 1858. Facsimile edition published by NMS Publishing, ISBN 1-901663-54-X. Volcanoes and the Making of Scotland, Brian Upton, 2nd edition, 2015. Dunedin, ISBN 978-1-78046-056-7.



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