SUMMER PROGRAMME 2024

27th APRIL

(Joint with BNFC)

THE GEOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE LINFORD KARST AREA

Ian Enlander and Barrie Hartwell

Meet: (for car sharing as Linford is small) Ballygally carpark, 10:30 am.

Then meet: Linford carpark 11.00am

We will take packed lunch at Linford car park midway through the day. See end for location information and H&S issues.

Archaeology

Archaeologically, the area is dominated to the south by the imposing promontory of Knockdhu with its Late Bronze Age ramparts and clusters of hut platforms (excavated by the Time Team). This is too far to visit, but there is ample evidence in the valley and slopes of small rectangular platforms and enclosures, probably booley sites. Braided trackways cling to the slopes above Drains Bog, linking the coast to the interior. On the crest are the enigmatic Linford Earthworks and a Bronze Age burial – or is it a cashel? In the hinterland could be a flint quarry, and 19th century ‘lazy beds’ illustrate the vagaries of farming at the limit of cultivation. Ancient field walls, trackways and earthworks seem to flow over the crest but what is their function, or are they natural? We finish the walk at a standing stone and a view west into the Antrim uplands. Expect more questions than answers in this intriguing landscape. The site gives spectacular views along the basalt escarpment and down to the coast around Ballygally.

Geology

The focus of the geology is on the Linford karst which has developed within a large outcrop/sub-outcrop of Ulster White Limestone (Cretaceous chalk) - karst features including a doline field, a series of sinks and resurgences and a dry valley. This is an active karst system but some features are best explained by peri-/late glacial processes which also account for much of the mass movement features to be seen in the wider area. Some of these features (dolines especially) have been viewed as man-made – iron mines and flint mines - part of the day will be spent disentangling the discussions around man-made v's geological.

Throughout the trip we will look at inter-relationships between the archaeology and geology

Location details

Ballygally car park - search Google maps 'Ballygally Car Park' - 54.898529, -5.860055 - toilets and SPAR shop

Linford - search Google maps - 'Linford carpark and view point' - 54.895599, -5.923176 - no facilities

Health and Safety

Ground generally sound on grass and stone paths but will involve some moderately steep (short) walks. Sound footwear + appropriate outdoor clothing needed. Walking poles may be useful for some of the steeper slopes. Ground can be very muddy with more sheep droppings than you might imagine!

NO DOGS PERMITTED

18th MAY

REVEALING SCRABO:

GEODIVERSITY, GEOCONSERVATION AND GEOSITE MANAGEMENT

Dr Michael Dempster

Earth Science and Heritage Officer, NI Environment Agency

Meet: Scrabo Country Park carpark, 10:30 am.

Scrabo Hill, with its iconic tower, lies just outside the town of Newtownards and overlooks the Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is visible for miles around, having survived the ravages of the last ice age which shaped the rolling hills that surround it.

The geology of Scrabo Hill is an important part of Northern Ireland’s natural heritage. The former sandstone quarries on the south and north sides of the hill were declared as Scrabo Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) in 1995, solely for the geology found there. The sandstone is capped and crisscrossed by igneous rocks to form a unique feature in Northern Ireland’s geology.

This excursion will look at the geodiversity of Scrabo ASSI and the surrounding area, consider the importance of geoconservation, its relevance to sustainable development and the management of such sites.

2nd JUNE

PADDY’S POINT (Strangford Lough)

-and-

CASTLE ESPIE

Mike Simms

15th JUNE

CONLIG / WHITESPOTS LEAD MINES

Ian Enlander

20th JULY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GEOLOGY OF WATERLOO, N OF LARNE

Our Jurassic Coast

Karen Parks

Meet: Larne Leisure Centre carpark, 9:30 am.

Walk along the foreshore with an introduction to the rocks and pebbles on the beach.

This will link to the Triassic and Jurassic rocks and fossils that can be found in the area and covers 150 million years of time and is open to all age groups.

We will start with a walk along the coastal section and hopefully find some of the common fossils in the area and also see the impact of ancient earthquakes and tsunamis in the area and learn why this area is a very important site for Geology. We will spend the morning in this section and the café in the Leisure Centre is a very good location for finishing off with a cup of coffee.

There will be an optional walk in the afternoon along the Whitehead to Blackhead coastal path.

Key fossils that you will find will be ammonites, Bivalves and Belemnites

You will see ancient ripple marks and mudcracks that formed when deserts covered Northern Ireland

17th AUGUST

GLENARM AND CARNLOUGH EVENT

Karen Parks and Mary Watson

Meet: Largy Road carpark North of Carnlough, 10:00 am. Finish: 4:00 pm.

This trip will focus mainly on Glenarm and Carnlough with a talk from Mary Watson from the Carnlough Community Hub. This will be easily accessible to all members and will be in the village of Carnlough. We will be stopping at Garron Point and a few other locations between Carnlough and Glenarm.

To celebrate our 70th Year of the Belfast Geologists’ Society we will be taking a few trips using the famous “Field excursion guide to the Tertiary Volcanic rocks of Ireland” created by C. H. Emeleus and J. Preston, 1969. This trip will look at the geodiversity and biodiversity of a few sites along this coastal stretch with a discussion of the geoheritage of the area. We will be looking at the original field excursion summary and will have the opportunity to look at recent geological maps linked to the East Antrim coast.

14th SEPTEMBER

(Joint with GeolSoc NI Regional Group)

KILLARD POINT

Alastair Ruffell

Meet: Layby at Mill Quarter Bay, Killard Road, 1:00 pm.

Highlights:

•Stratigraphy & tectonics of the Southern Uplands Accretionary Prism

•Killard Interstadial and deglacial complex

•Coastal geomorphology (raised beaches, blowholes, coastal erosion)

•Butterflies, coastal flowering plants, abundant birdlife (sand martins, sea birds, red kites)

•Heritage (WW2, NATO radar, Canadian troopship)

•Lead mineralisation

•Ulster Bank £5 note images

•Geophysics and remote sensing demonstrations

Very moderate walking, minor steep slopes optional.

Designed to tail-end with Archaeology/geology morning events at Portico (Portaferry) European Heritage Weekend (https://www.porticoards.com/)