



THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

Newsletter - November 2025

Lecture Programme

Venue - Kelvin Hall Lecture Theatre

Meet the speaker afterwards and have tea/coffee etc in the Activity Room, Kelvin Hall (Geonatter Room).

Parking is available at the adjoining Bunhouse Car Park (currently £3 for the evening).

Thursday 13th November 2025

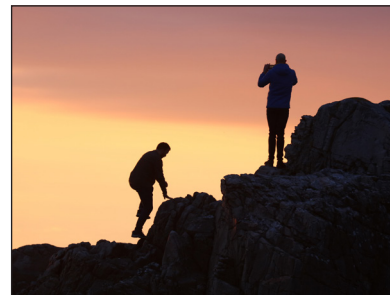
Dr. Brian Bell, University of Glasgow (retired).

“Sedimentary systems in the Paleocene lava fields of the Inner Hebrides”

The spectacular remnants of Paleocene lava fields in the Inner Hebrides are dominated by thick sequences of simple (sheet-like) flows and more complex compound flows. Interbedded with these lavas are sedimentary units, deposited within canyons, broad river channels, lakes and mires. In some cases, sufficient time intervals between eruptions allowed trees to develop on the volcanic landscape, now preserved as moulds and casts, together with slabs of bark and rafts of leaves. Elsewhere, magma interacted with sediment in a dynamic manner, producing a variety of distinctive lithologies, including peperites and hyaloclastites. Understanding the architecture of these volcanic and sedimentary systems allows us to get a glimpse into the dynamic development of these lava fields.



This talk will comprise a pictorial trip through the volcanic sequences of the Inner Hebrides, looking at examples of volcanic-sedimentary systems from Skye, Canna, Sanday, Rum, Eigg and Mull. There will be no mention of rock chemistry or isotope signatures – just field views from his collection of the past forty years!



*Since retiring from his university research and teaching ‘career’, Brian has set up a website which he hopes captures the fabulous geology of the islands of Skye and Raasay (www.skyegeology.com). His swansong is an update of the 2005 BGS memoir **The Palaeogene volcanic districts of Scotland** which he co-authored with his good friend and mentor Henry Emeleus, to be published online in 2026, and which makes full use of his photograph collection.*

Beyond his university work, he also produced revisions of the BGS maps of Skye and was involved with the discovery of the Rosebank and Cambo oil fields.

Furthermore he notes that, to be honest, he had a ‘career’ that allowed him to indulge himself in his passion for field-based geology, which he notes is not really ‘work’...

Recordings of past lectures

Dr. Katie Strang: The Geology of Gilmore Hill and the Gilbert Scott building. <https://youtu.be/WZrnQIucaYo>

GSG YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfNSIvgEbUfLWMsCeNiRm1w/>

Future Lectures

Date	Speaker	Affiliation	Title / topic
11 th December	David Bond	University of Hull	Mass extinctions: are we all doomed? Preceded by the AGM (see below)
8 th January 2026	Iain Neill	University of Glasgow	From collision magmatism to a geothermal future in the Northern Highlands
12 th February	Elsa Panciroli	NMS Edinburgh	T.N. George Medallist lecture. Discovering Mammals in the time of Dinosaurs
12 th March	Keyron Hickman Lewis (Grant Awardee)	Birkbeck College, London	Astrobiology and the Torridonian
9 th April	David Webster	n/a	The Early Evolution of the Dalradian Basin
14 th May	Members' Night		

AGM Notice

The Society Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 11th December, at 7pm in the Kelvin Hall Lecture Theatre, immediately preceding the December Lecture. It will be brief!

New Members of Council

The Council of the Society have co-opted two new Members: Lily Deadman is our new Junior Representative - she is a forth-year Earth Sciences undergraduate at the University. Dr. Iain Neil is a Lecturer in igneous petrology at the University and is on the Editorial Board of the Scottish Journal of Geology.

Five Ordinary Members are standing down at the AGM; at this time we have had several expressions of interest from Society members to become Ordinary Members of Council, and their appointments will be subject to agreement from the whole membership at the AGM. We will also be seeking the approval of a new Secretary (proposed to be Ian Millar) and the appointment of David Webster (current Secretary) as an Ordinary Member, who will take on the Meetings Secretary role vacated by Simon Cuthbert.

Residential Field Trip - Cromarty May 2026

We are still in the process of finalising the details for a trip to Cromarty 22-24 May (3 nights) staying at the Old Brewery with the help of the Friends of Hugh Miller. Booking will be via webcollect and we'll send an email out to all members when this is ready. Quite a few of you have already expressed interest, but if you haven't and are interested in the trip you could email Lindsay Smith at excursions@gsocg.org along with your room sharing preferences.

The trip will be led by local geologist (and fossil-fish expert) Bob Davidson, who has just published a new paper on the fish beds.

Davidson, R.G. and Johnston, S.D. 2025. Hugh Miller the elder and the younger, a geological dynasty enabling a re-interpretation of the Middle Devonian fish-bearing beds of Cromarty. *Scottish Journal of Geology*, pp.sjg2025-003, <https://doi.org/10.1144/sjg2025-003>

New Members

We welcome the following new members joining in October

Aster Bartel - Glasgow

Roderick Allwright - Cumbria

Isabel Queay - Glasgow

Marie Graham - Clydebank

Jane Bottomley - Rutherglen

Stephen Rector - USA

Geonatter

First Wednesdays of the month - next one 5 November. 1:30 Kelvin Hall - All welcome! Bring your rocks and fossils to be identified.

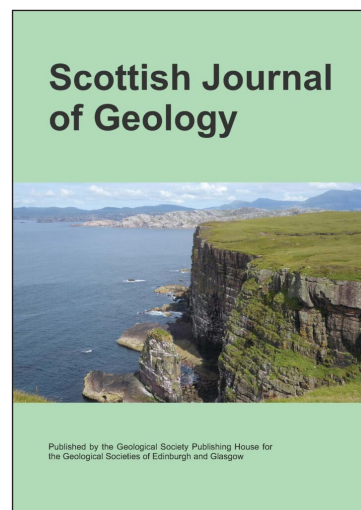
Scottish Journal of Geology

The Scottish Journal of Geology (and before this the Transactions of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Geological Societies) has been published since 1868. The SJG is jointly owned by the Edinburgh and Glasgow Geological Societies. It has seen many notable papers published in it and continues to this day under the current Chief Editorship of Prof Heather Stewart and her four Scientific Editors, all of whom are volunteers. Iain Neill of the University of Glasgow is one of these volunteers on the Editorial Board and he is now a Co-opted Member of the Geological Society of Glasgow's Council.

Members get free access to the on-line version via the Geological Society of London's Lyell Collection. If you want to take advantage of this please email Ian Miller, our Membership Secretary, memsec@gsocg.org to get access.

You can also purchase hard-copies via webcollect.

Go to <https://webcollect.org.uk/gsg/event/printed-sjg-vol-61-orders> to order Volume 61 for delivery in January. Orders need to be placed by the 30 November.



Ian Rolfe 1936-2025



William David Ian Rolfe died in October 2025. Ian joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in 1962, serving as Secretary (1972–1973), Editor (1967–1972) and President (1973–1976), and contributing to the society's 'Excursion Guide to the Glasgow and Girvan area', published in 1992.

From 1986 to 1996 Ian was Keeper of Geology at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (NMS). There, he established a major project to ensure that rare fossils of the world's earliest assemblage of fully terrestrial amphibians, then being excavated at Bathgate by Stan Wood, were recorded and purchased for NMS.

A full obituary will appear in the next Proceedings.

Events at the Edinburgh Geological Society

Wednesday 12 November, 7pm. Lecture by Norman Moles, Honorary School Fellow, School of Applied Sciences, University of Brighton on **The Trainor's Rocks gritstone–conglomerate, Mourne Mountains, Northern Ireland: a volcanic arc-derived channel–fan deposit in the closing Iapetus Ocean**

More details of this and other forthcoming lectures at <https://edinburghgeolsoc.org/lectures/>

New Scientist Discovery Tours - Geology Theme

The New Scientist Magazine organises a number of tours. Their geologically-themed ones can be found at:

<https://www.newscientist.com/tours/geology/>

Geological Society of London - Public Lectures

Free, in-person and online, and open to all:

18 November **“Returning fossil CO₂ to the geologic record through Carbon Capture and Sequestration”** Register [here](#)

15 December **“The Garvellach Islands Scotland a rare record of Snowball Earth”** Register [here](#)

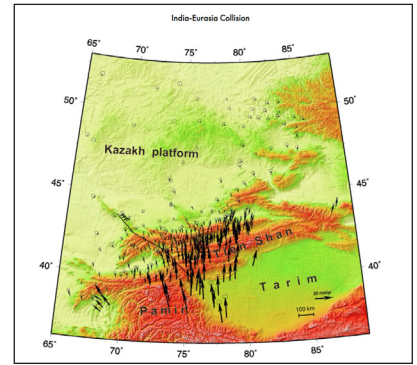
Down to Earth

November episode of Extra [here](#)

Geology Bites

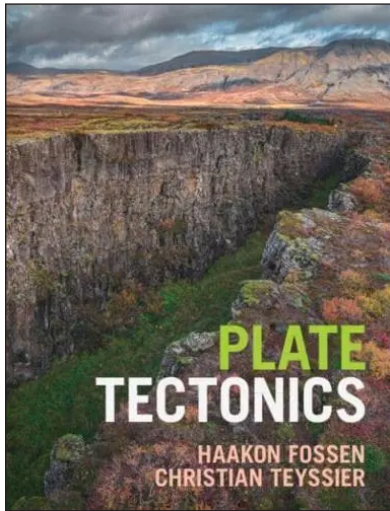
A new episode to enjoy: see www.geologybites.com

In the latest episode, Tom Herring from MIT talks about high-precision geodesy. In the first part of the podcast Oliver and Tom talk about the three main types of geodesy system: GPS-type satellite systems, VLBI, and InSAR. It is the former that is seeing the dramatic cost reduction. They then talk about geological applications of high-precision geodesy, as well as applications to other fields, such as civil engineering (e.g., skyscrapers and dams) and agriculture. It's intriguing to speculate as to what kinds of apps will emerge when mm-level accuracy arrives on our phones



New Book - Plate Tectonics

I've just bought this new book...highly recommended!! (ask Santa nicely)



It presents plate tectonics as a multifaceted, interdisciplinary theory that unites many different geological observations and processes into a harmonious model so that readers grasp how the outer part of our planet works in relation to the deep interior. Supported by clear prose, helpful analogies, and stunning colour imagery, readers will gain an in-depth understanding of how and why plates interact to produce different topography, rock assemblages and deformation features along plate boundaries. Written by an author pairing renowned for their research, teaching, and textbook writing experience, this text offers a truly accessible introduction to quantitative topics. Student-friendly features chart clear paths through every chapter and a rich suite of online resources bring plate tectonics to life.

Review from Rob Butler "... a truly exceptional and excellent textbook."

Another reviewer noted ... "This book on Plate Tectonics is nothing short of outstanding. The illustrations are not just beautiful but truly informative – they bring complex processes to life with remarkable clarity. The detailed geological profiles are extensive and exceptionally well-crafted, providing a deep understanding of tectonic structures across different settings."

Dugald Ross

Tributes have been paid to an islander who discovered evidence of dinosaur footprints in the Isle of Skye as a schoolboy. Dugald Ross, who has died at the age of 68 following a period of ill health, made the discovery years before they were officially recognised as fossils in the 1980s. When he found the footprints his teachers did not believe him, but he went on to help make Skye famous as Scotland's "dinosaur island". An honorary doctorate of science (PhD) that Mr Ross was awarded from the University of Edinburgh University in November 2024 acknowledged his childhood discoveries. Edinburgh University paleontologist Prof Steve Brusatte worked with Mr Ross, who was also known as Dougie, for more than a decade.

More at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yl099j0vgo>



Friends of Hugh Miller

As we are organising a trip to Cromarty next year, it's now a good time to remind members about The Friends of Hugh Miller. It is a small charity set up to support Hugh Miller's Birthplace Cottage and Museum in Cromarty on the Black Isle, where the Victorian geologist Hugh Miller was born in 1802. It aims to promote, celebrate and research Miller's legacy, both by encouraging visitors to the Museum and by hosting regular events to boost knowledge and understanding of Miller, his family and his life.

The Friends of Hugh Miller welcome anyone with an interest in Miller, and/or in Scottish geology or history more broadly, to join us. It is a small, welcoming and enthusiastic group run entirely by volunteers. It has an AGM every spring in Miller's hometown of Cromarty, to which all are welcome to attend. They run events once or twice a year (sometimes more!), and members receive a regular newsletter crammed full of fascinating articles and new research on Hugh Miller and related topics.

For more information see <https://www.thefriendsofhughmiller.org.uk/join-us>

The Scottish Geology Trust have launched a Crowdfunder to raise funds to install a Deep Time Trail at Siccar Point. At present, visitors to Siccar Point are presented with a poorly-defined path and a small info-board; we believe that such a historically important site, and its visitors, deserve better. To that end, the Edinburgh Geological Society is working with the Scottish Geology Trust and the James Hutton Institute to install a Deep Time Trail at the site, in time to celebrate Hutton's Tercentenary in June 2026.

The world will celebrate the 300th anniversary of James Hutton's birth in June 2026, along with a number of other tercentenaries associated with the Scottish Enlightenment. The Scottish Geology Trust, Edinburgh Geological Society and James Hutton Institute will mark this celebration with the development of the Deep Time Trail at Siccar Point.

The campaign offers a variety of unique rewards to thank donors for their support, including beautiful facsimile copies of Hutton's 29 'Lost Drawings'. These were designed to be included in volumes of Hutton's *Theory of the Earth*, but remained unpublished. They were rediscovered in 1968 and provide a remarkable visual record of Hutton's theory and his understanding of the geology of Scotland.

A QR code with the text "Scan me!" above it, enclosed in a speech bubble-like shape.

If anyone is interested in a hard copy of the report "Beaches of Southwest Scotland" A.S. Mather 1979, in two volumes. (A coastal geomorphology survey covering Ayrshire (Vol I) and Galloway (Vol II) with maps and descriptions of each site), then please contact the Hon. Sec.

Secretary: David Webster sec@gsocg.org