



# THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

## Newsletter - March 2026

### Lecture Programme

Venue - Kelvin Hall Lecture Theatre at 7pm.

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

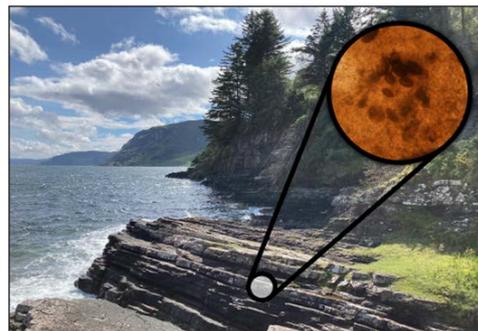
### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026

*Dr Keyron Hickman-Lewis, Birkbeck, University of London*

#### **“The Torridon Group, planetary field analogues, and the search for life on Mars”**

Mars is thought to have been habitable early throughout its history (> 3 billion years ago), when it sustained an atmosphere and stable bodies of liquid water at its surface. Although the surface of Mars is now entirely inhospitable, traces of a putative biosphere may be archived within its sedimentary rock record. The potential of finding fossilised traces of life on Mars has been the driving force behind its exploration for several decades, and continues with the NASA Curiosity and Perseverance rovers, which are currently exploring Gale and Jezero craters. A recent discovery by Perseverance of organic matter associated with reduced mineral phases in the Neretva Vallis river channel has stimulated new interest in the possibility of a Martian biosphere, and these materials have been sampled for eventual return to Earth.

Until we achieve Mars Sample Return, developing hypotheses about Mars' early habitable history requires us to harness understanding of similar localities here on Earth; we term such setting 'planetary field analogues'. In this talk, I will discuss the importance of planetary field analogues for understanding ancient Martian environments, and consider how exceptionally well-preserved fossiliferous sedimentary rocks from the Torridon Group of NW Scotland provide insights into potential habitable environments on early Mars and the types of biosignatures for which we might search following the sophisticated laboratory analysis of Martian samples brought to Earth in the future.



*From 2019–2020 Keyron was a Research Assistant at CNRS Orléans (France) and Università di Bologna (Italy). From 2021–2024 he was Aurora Research Fellow, at the Natural History Museum, London and now is Lecturer in Planetary Exploration at Birkbeck, University of London*

*He is one of the five European scientists in the Mars 2020 science team. The mission is considered the first step for the ultimate Martian challenge: the Mars Sample Return campaign. Mars has been a large part of his PhD research and he has also worked closely with ESA's ExoMars rover team during the last three years. As a scientist for Mars 2020, Keyron will help guide the selection of samples for return to Earth and prepare for their study in laboratories here on Earth.*

*Keyron received a grant of £980 from the Society towards his recent research project which involved systematic major, trace and rare earth element measurements, coupled with collecting detailed organic geochemical data, throughout multiple sequences of Torridonian lacustrine sequences*

### Further Reading:

Hickman-Lewis, K. *et al.* 2025. Aluminous phyllosilicates promote exceptional nanoscale preservation of biogeochemical heterogeneities in Archaean siliciclastic microbial mats. *Nature Communications*, **16**(1), 2726, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-025-57727-4>

Hickman-Lewis, K., *et al.* 2023. Advanced two- and three-dimensional insights into Earth's oldest stromatolites (ca. 3.5 Ga): Prospects for the search for life on Mars. *Geology*, **51**(1), 33-38, <https://doi.org/10.1130/G50390.1>

## **Recordings of past lectures**

Recordings of lectures (back to October 2021) can be found on the Society's website at: <https://geologyglasgow.org.uk/lecture-recordings/>

Recordings are also available (back to October 2023) on the GSG YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfNSIvgEbUfLWMSceNiRm1w/>

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## **Future Lectures**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Title / topic</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> April	Neil Buchanan	Bearsden Shark Group	The Bearsden Shark. Talk at the Hunterian with the fossil shark. Details TBC

Note: there will no Member's Night on the 14th May as the Council have decided that holding indoor lectures in May is no longer viable. However, in the future we will be starting the annual lecture programmes in September rather than October, and running them through to April. They are planned to be held on the 2nd Thursdays of the month as usual.

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## **Residential Field Trips**

### **Cromarty 22-25th May.**

Those who have notified their interest will have received an email from Lindsay with a link to pay the deposit (£50 by 9th March). There are still a few spaces, therefore if you want to come and haven't told Lindsay please do so and she'll see what's available. Details are on webcollect [here](#) but please email Lindsay first if you're not yet on her list! Contact Lindsay at [excursions @gsocg.org](mailto:excursions@gsocg.org)

### **Shropshire March 2027**

If you're potentially interested in this trip also please contact Lindsay [excursions @gsocg.org](mailto:excursions@gsocg.org)

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## **New members**

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Heather Byrne  
Allan Kelly  
Hung Wei Liu  
Caitlyn Morrison  
Malcolm Mundy  
Sam Orr  
Iain Robertson  
Kevin Walsh  
Natalija Ziakina

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## **Subscription Reminder**

Nearly all members have renewed their subscription for this session and the Society thanks them for their support. A few however, have yet to do so and were contacted on 30 October and/or 20 January regarding this. Now is your last chance to do before your membership of the Society ends.

If you choose to renew you can do this by signing into your membership account with WebCollect. If you have forgotten how to do this or your password has expired or been forgotten then please advise [memsec@gsocg.org](mailto:memsec@gsocg.org) and a password reset link will be sent to you.

Our preferred method is by direct debit which allows you to pay now and future payments will be collected automatically on the due date. Alternatively, if you would not like to use that method a number of other payment methods are available such as standing order, bank transfer, PayPal or cheque. If you have any problems with this, or if you don't intend to renew this year, again please advise [memsec@gsocg.org](mailto:memsec@gsocg.org).

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## **Down to Earth**

March episode of Extra [here](#)

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## **Library News**

The University Library has taken all they want and so if you're interested in the remaining copies of old journals and books then you have one last chance to grab something - by 13th March. You can email Lindsay at [library@gsocg.org](mailto:library@gsocg.org) to sort a view/collection time. We will be giving them to a house design company after that deadline. Some of the journals:

- Proceedings of the Liverpool Geologists Association 1920s - 1970s
- Geological Society Quarterly Proceedings 1850s to 1940s
- Geologists Association Proceedings 1900 - 1970s
- Scottish Journal of Geology - 1960s to present
- Yorkshire Geological Society Proceedings (70s & 80s)

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## **Recent Papers on Scottish Geology**

Taylor, J., Bradwell, T., Selby, D. and Lloyd, J.M. 2025. Pattern of British-Irish Ice Sheet advance and retreat: geochemical insights from an offshore Transect. *Journal of the Geological Society*, jgs2025-109, <https://doi.org/10.1144/jgs2025-109>

Griffin, C., Gernon, T.M., Fu, M., Rugen, E.J., Spencer, A.M., Warrington, G. and Hincks, T.K. 2026. Interannual to multidecadal climate oscillations occurred during Cryogenian glaciation. *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, **679**, p.119891, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.epsl.2026.119891>

de Sampaio, P.A., Li, Z.X., Doucet, L.S., Olierook, H.K., Ware, B. and Rankenburg, K., 2025. Evolution of the Ballantrae Complex, SW Scotland: From the opening of the Iapetus to the Taconian-Grampian orogeny. *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, <https://doi.org/10.1130/B38570.1>

Waldron, J.W., DuFrane, S.A., Schofield, D.I. and Barr, S.M., 2025. Is Britain divided by an Acadian suture? *Geology*, **53**(10), 847-852, <https://doi.org/10.1130/G53431.1>

Elliott, F.M., 2026. Recent research into the morphology of the megalichthyid *Megalichthys pygmaeus* Traquair, from the Midland Valley of Scotland. *Scottish Journal of Geology*, pp.sjg2025-005, <https://doi.org/10.1144/sjg2025-005>

Currie, D., Bryce, A., Burnside, N., Grant, H. and Tuffield, L., 2026. Trace and minor element concentrations in sulfide ore material from the Leadhills and Wanlockhead orefield, SW Scotland. *Scottish Journal of Geology*, pp.sjg2025-010, <https://doi.org/10.1144/sjg2025-010>

Reeves J.C., Wogelius, R.A., Edwards, N.P., Manning, P.L. and Sansom, R.S. 2026. Early vertebrate biomineralization and eye structure determined by synchrotron X-ray analyses of Silurian jawless fish. *Proc. R. Soc. B* **293**: 20252248, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2025.2248>

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## **London Pavement Geology**

Something to consider if you're down south; <https://www.londonpavementgeology.co.uk/>

There is a wealth of high quality rock samples of all types to be seen in the capital, mostly visible to the public from the pavement. The site has a searchable collection and there's an app too.

## **National Museum of Scotland**

If you're in Edinburgh why not go to the exhibition "Giants" at National Museum. Our roving reporter says its very interesting and good for all ages. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/exhibitions/giants>

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## **Dinosaur**

If you haven't seen this comedy/drama mini-series then try and catch it on iPlayer. Lots of geological references! Autistic paleontologist Nina (Ashley Storrie) enjoys her routine life working at The Natural History Museum of Glasgow (based on and filmed at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum) and living with her sister Evie, but is shaken when Evie suddenly announces she is engaged to a stranger. Following the end of Series 1, Nina has taken up a palaeontology role on an Isle of Wight dig site. After her role on site ends and she finally returns to Scotland, there's been considerable change since she left 8 months earlier - with work, family and relationships all impacted. See a review in the [Guardian](#)

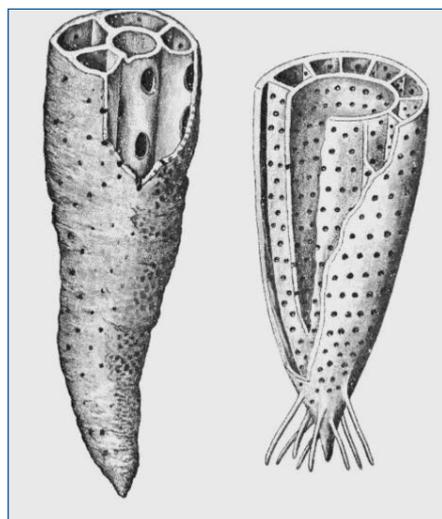


## **Fossil Trees on Digging for Britain**

The Fossil Forest at Brymbo near Wrexham featured on the BBC's Digging for Britain. Go to BBC iPlayer, Series 13, Episode 5.

During work on the Brymbo steel works site in 2003 several large tree-like fossils were uncovered while open-cast mining overlying coal. Five years of excavation has revealed thousands of fossils and over 20 large tree trunk like structures with rooting networks perfectly preserved, some measuring up to 2.5 meters in height.

More at <https://bff.news.blog/discovery/>



## **Geology Bites**

Oliver has just released a new [episode](#) on the first reef builders.

In the podcast, Sara Pruss describes the first multicellular animals to build reefs. They were sponges called archaeocyaths. Pruss explains the evidence that the rise of the archaeocyaths fostered an increase in animal diversity. But they were relatively short-lived, and when they died out in the Middle Cambrian, the diversity declined. Over geological time, reef-building organisms appear and disappear again and again until the corals we have today appeared in the Middle Triassic, about 240 million years ago.

Pruss is currently trying to understand why reefs are such a persistent feature of the geological record, despite the environmental stresses imposed on them. She is a Professor of Geosciences at Smith College.

## **In Our Time**

It's back! Spanning history, religion, culture, science and philosophy, *In Our Time* from BBC Radio 4 is essential listening for the intellectually curious. In each episode, host Misha Glenny and expert guests explore the characters, events and discoveries that have shaped our world. Those looking to enrich their scientific knowledge can hear episodes on black holes, the Periodic Table, and classical theories of gravity, motion, evolution and relativity. Learn how the discovery of penicillin revolutionised medicine, and how the death of stars can lead to the formation of new planets.

There's lots of geologically themed episodes in the archive and the latest is on the Mariana Trench and features Dr. Heather Stewart, who recently gave a lecture in Glasgow to the Society.

The full list of all the Science-themed episodes (with links to the podcasts) can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01gyd7j>



## **Scottish Geology Trust - Siccar Point**

The Trust plan to have the Deep Time Trail completed by the end of April 2026, with the official opening on 29th May, in time for Hutton's 300th birthday. The Society have donated £5,000 towards the project, and our contribution will be acknowledged on the new signage.

A local company [Eyemouth Rib Trips](#) are offering boat-trips to Siccar Point  
Tel: 07599 759900

## **The Geological Society of Glasgow**

<https://geologyglasgow.org.uk/>

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