



THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

Newsletter - January 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 8th January 2026

(NOTE: The lecture will be preceded by a re-run of the society's AGM as the previous one was inquorate)

Dr Iain Neill, University of Glasgow

"From collision magmatism to a geothermal future in the Northern Highlands"

Silurian to Devonian intrusions and volcanic rocks are a key component of the landscape of the Northern and Grampian Highlands of Scotland. Whilst these bodies relate in some way to Caledonian and Acadian orogenesis, a combination of data gaps and wider uncertainty about the nature of collision events on the Laurentian margin have made geologically consistent plate tectonic models elusive. This talk introduces a mix of geochronology, petrogenesis, and various concepts largely ignored in the Scottish literature: slab dynamics, lithospheric stability, and lower crustal magma storage. New U-Pb zircon data lead to the proposal that magmatism from c.450 - 395 Ma is linked successively to long-lived compression in a continental arc, slab roll-back, lithospheric delamination, crustal melting, and finally the far-field effects of Acadian collision related to a newly-proposed suture beneath the English Midlands.

There are immediate implications for deep geothermal energy, as the timing and distribution of high heat granites differs markedly from terrane to terrane. The talk will also touch on how teams from Glasgow, Aberdeen, Portsmouth, Leicester and the British Geological Survey are looking to make better use of the zircon record of magmatic processes to solve pure and applied problems in the Highlands.

As a 'jack of all trades' Iain generates field, petrographic, geochemical and geochronological data largely from igneous, metamorphic and faulted rocks. He synthesises these and other diverse datasets to solve geological problems of relevance to society, including energy generation, resource exploration, and infrastructure development. Though my interests are global, he has a particular focus on the future of the Highlands of Scotland where he was born.

He began my research career at Cardiff University as a NERC-funded PhD student, re-evaluating the origin and tectonic evolution of the Caribbean Plate. At the University of Durham, as a NERC-funded PDRA, he used fieldwork and whole-rock geochemistry to refine models of how mantle-derived magmatism operates during continental collision, which introduced him to the geology of Iran and Armenia and to the integration of analogue data with geodynamic models.

After two years as a University Teacher at Glasgow (2014-2016), he maintained his regional research interests and started broadening their application into areas of economic or societal importance.

These include 1) fundamental connections between magma genesis, plate tectonics and the generation of geological resources, 2) hazards posed by tectonic and volcanic activity in collision settings, 3) low and high temperature geothermal energy sources, 4) the impact of the basement of the Caribbean Plate on modern subduction and 5) the use of Scotland's bedrock in resource generation, infrastructure, and rural development.

On a human level he is keen to work with those interested in economics, politics, and rural development, on the impact that geology may have in Scotland's future. In particular, if you are from or work in the Highlands of Scotland and have an interest in rocks, give him a shout! Iain is on the editorial board of the Scottish Journal of Geology and has recently been co-opted onto the Council of the Society.



Further Reading:

Gemmell, C.A., Neill, I., Wildman, M., MacRae, C., Currie, D. and Einsle, J.F., 2025. New integrations of U/Pb zircon data from Caledonian intrusions in the Southern Uplands of Scotland. *Lithos*, **494**, p.107941. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lithos.2024.107941>

Recordings of past lectures

David Bond: Mass Extinctions. <https://youtu.be/kkA5jziEdiI>

David Webster: the Early Evolution of the Dalradian Basin. <https://youtu.be/K0AE0BaWxOY>

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
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	Birkbeck, University of London	Astrobiology and the Torridonian
9 th April	Brian Bell (Prov)	University of Glasgow	Sedimentary systems in the Paleocene lava fields of the Inner Hebrides
14 th May	Members' Night		

RE-Run of AGM Notice

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 11th December, at 7pm in the Kelvin Hall Lecture Theatre, immediately preceding the December Lecture. Unfortunately we were a few members short of a quorum. Therefore we will rerun the AGM (in person and via live zoom) preceding the lecture on the 9th January. The Agenda, Previous Minutes, Proposals for Council Members and the Proceedings Booklet (containing Reports and the Annual Accounts) are being re-sent to Members via email along with this newsletter. Printed copies of the Proceedings will be available at the AGM.

Geological Society of London - Public Lectures

A recording of the lecture on “The Garvellach Islands Scotland a rare record of Snowball Earth” is available at <https://youtu.be/lnTQXKGObCg>

Down to Earth

January episode of Extra [here](#)

Recent Paper

Stracha, Prave et al. 2026. A metasedimentary outlier of the Laurentian continental margin preserved on the Tonian Loch Ness Supergroup, Scottish Caledonides. *Journal of the Geological Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1144/jgs2025-210>

Geology News on the BBC

The BBC News website features two geology stories, both of which we are supporting financially:

1 The proposed Bearsden Shark Model including an interview with and picture of our own Dr Neil Clark

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4g5jvel0pqq>

2 The Gairloch Museum Deep Time Trail.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyd5nw0y0no>

Geological Society of Glasgow

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

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