

# Geowalks Holidays 2008

Geowalks holidays are opportunities to see fine rocks with a friendly group, in a relaxed, sociable atmosphere. The aim is to have an enjoyable and safe experience while appreciating some of the best areas for rocks and landscape in the UK. For 2008 I'm leading holidays to Shetland, Fife, Torridon and the Antrim coast. Bookings for these trips are now being taken, please get in touch to check availability.

## Geowalks holidays are ...

**Engaging** A chance to learn about geology and appreciate how the landscape around you has formed. These are not field courses, but are opportunities for anyone with an interest to gain some knowledge and appreciate the stories behind the rocks. We'll not pour over every outcrop in detail or spend hours debating esoteric points.

**Flexible** You can sit and enjoy the view, turn back early, choose your own path (as long as you don't compromise your own safety or that of the group). You can relax and enjoy the flowers and ignore the rocks (if you must!). You can choose your own accommodation or stay in basic accommodation with the rest of the group. You can eat out or in, with others or by yourself.

**Sociable** Small groups (usually between 6 and 12) of like-minded people with an interest in the outdoors. Plenty of opportunities to share the natural world, not just the rocks! Meals out, coffee stops and even the occasional beer garden are part of the experience.

## Fife Coastal Path, 12-17 May 2008

The superb and varied coastline of the Kingdom of Fife owes much to the different kinds of rock found here - a mix of sedimentary and igneous rocks formed by different geological processes during the Carboniferous Period. The mix of rocks gives the shape of the coast, some sections are beaches and mud flats, or flat rocky foreshore, in other places there are high cliffs ... there's certainly no monotony here, as each mile is different!

This is a linear walk covering the most interesting part of the coast from Aberdour to St Andrews, split into five day sections of around 10 miles. We'll be on the coastal path for most of the journey with occasional forays onto the rocks. The path is varied, generally in good condition but sometimes narrow, steep or muddy. You can sign up for the whole walk or join us for individual days.

Cost course fee £95 per person, or £20 per day.

## Torridon Mountains, 26-30 May

Torridon's mountains take their hue from ancient sandstone, formed on the fringe of a continent almost a billion years ago. Some parts are covered by sparkling quartzite and other younger rocks. To the east lies a vast slab of schist, pushed into place along the Moine Thrust. This area is geologically less well-known than the Moine Thrust zone in the Northwest Highlands but is in some ways even more interesting. The story is laid out clearly for us to see, with mountain-scale faults and disruptions that make the immense geological forces almost understandable.

This is demanding terrain, we'll be covering 5-10 miles each day on rough paths. However on most days we'll stay below summit level and explore accessible areas.

Cost course fee £120 per person; YH accommodation, breakfasts & lunches £70 per person.

## Shetland -

### \* University of the Third Age, 5-12 June

### \* General trip - open to all, 12-17 June 2008

The wild and remote Shetland archipelago is renowned for its scenery, wildlife, archaeology and rocks, a must-visit for anyone who loves Scottish islands. The geology is very varied; crammed into a small area are representatives of the rocks that make much of the Highlands of Scotland - the Lewisian, Dalradian and Moine metamorphic rocks, granite and Old Red Sandstone. The icing on the cake is a unique assemblage from the Iapetus Ocean floor now visible in Unst in the far north.

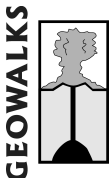
These trips have been designed to give a thorough introduction to Shetland, covering not only the rocks but with opportunities to visit sites of archaeological and wildlife interest. We'll have short walks every day (maximum 4 miles), sometimes on rough ground, and a flexible programme allowing you some opportunities to follow your own interests. The trip is being run in association with Allen Fraser of Shetland Geotours. Allen has more than 10 years experience of showing people the rocks - and more - of Shetland! Visit [www.shetlandgeology.com](http://www.shetlandgeology.com) for further details.

## Northern Ireland coast, 8-13 September

The chalk and basalt coast of North Antrim is visually stunning and includes the Giants Causeway, one of the world's most famous geological localities. There is much else here, though, with the mix of rocks giving the shape of the coast with a variety of inlets, headlands, cliffs and beaches. The basalt found here formed around 60 million years ago as part of a vast outpouring of lava that stretched from Northern Ireland to the north of Skye; so the coast has much in common with parts of the Inner Hebrides. What gives this coast added sparkle, however, is the contrast of the dark basalt with the underlying chalk, formed in warm, quiet seas before the volcanoes began to erupt.

We'll be based in Ballycastle, a small town right on the coast, with good facilities. Several day walks are planned to visit different sections of the coast between Murlough Bay and Port Rush. We will also visit Rathlin Island. The longest day walks will be around 10km, mostly on paths that may be occasionally steep and muddy.

Cost course fee £160 per person. Hostel accommodation, breakfasts & lunches £85 per person.



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