

Iona and the Ross of Mull ~ Wednesday 27 to Sunday 31 May 2009

Mull's scenery owes much to the incredible volcanic activity about 60 million years ago, which produced a thick blanket of basalt lava flows, including the world-famous rocks of Staffa. Erosion since the volcanoes erupted has removed much of the lava, giving us a peek at the diverse rocks below; including Iona's marble, the Ross of Mull granite and more recent sedimentary rocks.

This trip will focus on the island of Iona and the southwest of Mull, including a visit to Staffa if weather permits.

Outline Programme

Note: this is just an outline, days may be rearranged to make best use of good sea conditions.

Wednesday 27 May Meet at Fionnphort on Mull in the late afternoon. Short evening walk to explore the local granite.

Thursday Day exploring Iona, soaking in the peace of this special place. Take a wander to less-visited parts of the island and discover the colourful metamorphic rocks. Time also to explore the Abbey or the sandy beaches of the north.

Friday Boat trip to Staffa and the rugged coastline of western Mull. Perfect time of year for bird watching, but of course our attention will be focussed on the lava flows and the fantastic columns that have formed as the lava cooled. Time ashore on Staffa. If weather permits we will use a local sailing boat (www.boattripsiona.com) for an unbeatable voyage to Staffa and Macculloch's tree on the 'Wilderness' coast of Mull.

Saturday Explore the Ross of Mull. At Ardalanish beach we can trace the junction between the Ross of Mull granite and the Dalradian Schist. At Carsaig, a short coastal walk exploring the Mesozoic sedimentary rocks that were buried by the first lava flows, and some of the intrusions that cut through them.

Sunday Head home, departing Iona mid-morning.

Details

Cost course fee £220 per person; this includes your guide (Angus Miller), boat trip, ferry to Iona and course organisation. B&B accommodation & evening meals at Staffa House www.staffahouse.co.uk - £200 per person, single room supplement £60.

Accommodation

We will be based at Fionnphort on the Ross of Mull. The cost above covers four nights accommodation, breakfast and evening meals at Staffa House. Alternatively you are free to organise your own accommodation on Iona or Mull.

Transport

This trip is organised on a self-drive basis. Car sharing is encouraged, to reduce the cost and our environmental impact, and to make the trip logistically easier.

Passengers are expected to contribute to costs. A rough guide for travel from Edinburgh, transport during the trip and return to Edinburgh would be £60 per person.

Level of fitness required

You will need to be reasonably fit and used to rough walking, but the pace will be moderate with plenty of stops.

Booking Conditions

To book for the whole holiday, send a deposit of £50

(cheques payable to 'Geowalks'). There's a 5% discount on the course fee if you book and pay a deposit before 14 February. The final payment is due four weeks in advance. If you cancel your booking, refunds will be at my discretion and will usually only be made if I find someone to fill your place. Travel insurance is recommended.

In the unlikely event of the trip being cancelled, you will be informed immediately and receive a full refund.

Recommended Reading

Mull and Iona, Scottish Natural Heritage (Landscape fashioned by Geology Series), 2005. ISBN 1-853974-23-4.

Geology and Landscapes of Scotland, Con Gillen, 2003. Terra Publishing, ISBN 1-903544-09-2.

Volcanoes and the Making of Scotland, Brian Upton, 2004. Dunedin Academic Press, ISBN 1-903765-40-4.



Angus Miller, Geowalks

23 Summerfield Place, Edinburgh EH6 8AZ

0131 555 5488 / 0797 997 1310

angus@geowalks.demon.co.uk; www.geowalks.co.uk