

Torridon Mountains ~ Monday 26 to Friday 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 mountain paths and rough ground. However the pace will be slow and on most days we'll stay below summit level and explore accessible areas.

Outline Programme

Monday 26 May Travel to Torridon, meet at the accommodation in the late afternoon. Short excursion in the evening exploring the local area.

Tuesday Visit the Beinn Eighe Nature Reserve, including the visitor centre and the mountain trail on Beinn Eighe; a good introduction to the best of the area's scenery and the variety of rocks in the Moine Thrust Zone.

Wednesday A day's walk near Kishorn, exploring the rough ground to the north of Lochcarron – a little known area, but the best place to explore the complex deformation found beneath the Moine Thrust – mountainsides of bare rock cut by thrusts and folds.

Thursday A mountain day, a chance to get high up and appreciate the bigger picture of how the rocks on the ground fit the large scale pattern of the scenery.

Friday Head for home, with stops on the way to sample the wider area and appreciate the contrast between the rocks of Torridon and the schists to the east.

Details

Cost course fee £120 per person; this includes your guide (Angus Miller) and course organisation
YH accommodation, breakfasts & lunches £70 per person

Accommodation

We will be based at Torridon Youth Hostel – the cost above covers four nights accommodation and self-service breakfasts and lunches. Alternatively if you'd prefer B&B or a hotel you are free to make your own arrangements – please ask for recommendations!

For evening meals there is a choice of eating out or self-catering if you are staying in the hostel. On previous trips most people have chosen to eat out at least some of the time, and good pub meals are available in Torridon, Kinlochewe and Lochcarron.

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 £50 per person.

Level of fitness required

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

stops. The longest walks will cover 5-10 miles on rough paths.

Booking Conditions

To book, send a deposit of £50 (cheques payable to 'Geowalks'). 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.

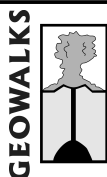
In the unlikely event of the trip being cancelled, you will be informed immediately and receive a full refund.

Recommended Reading

A good general introduction to the area:
Northwest Highlands, Scottish Natural Heritage (Landscape fashioned by Geology Series), 2001. ISBN 1-85397-139-1.

Excellent sources for the wider picture:
Geology and Landscapes of Scotland, Con Gillen, 2003. Terra Publishing, ISBN 1-903544-09-2.

Land of Mountain and Flood, A McKirdy, J Gordon and R Crofts, 2007. Birlinn, ISBN 1-84158-357X.



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