



Down to Earth *extra*

Issue 127 July 2023

NEWS FLASH...

- Final call for Autumn 2023 Residential Field Trips!
- Book almost all of our 2024 Residential Trips!
- **NEW** Simply minerals!

Amazing Quaternary cliffs at Saunton North Devon. The wave cut platform comprises Devonian Picton or Morte Slates. These are coated by barnacles that have been quickly buried beneath variable Quaternary sediments from the last 125,000 years.
(Image: Chris Darmon)

From the Editorial team...

When it comes to human induced climate change we have always subscribed to the view that the geosciences can and indeed should, be part of the solution. The Earth functions as a result of the interactions between a number of interrelated systems. Even if you don't subscribe to the Gaia hypothesis (which some do) it's certainly possible to see how the Earth got itself into the Upper Cretaceous greenhouse world of the chalk and how it got out of it.

Over geological time processes such as weathering and erosion, and volcanic eruptions have been moderators of the Earth's climate. Are we able to use at least the former to work for us to today? Likewise, in places like Cornwall, we have mined metals such as tin and copper to provide the raw materials for industry and now we are returning to the same area to get the metal lithium to provide the batteries for the electric cars of the future.

A recently announced major partnership involving the china clay miner Imerys and British Lithium to accelerate the development of the UK's largest lithium deposit is indeed great news. All too often in the past, local companies such as British Lithium have struggled to raise the capital and handle the upscaling from a pilot plant to full production. This strategic partnership with china clay giant Imerys, itself one of the largest employers in Cornwall, should see the project through to full production.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll learn about what a small UK geophysics firm is using its expertise in the oil and gas field to help with the energy transition. There is surely no better example of the geosciences being a part of the solution when it comes to global climate change. The same knowledge that helped get fossil fuels out of the ground can be used to help with carbon storage and capture.

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
The Down to Earth editorial team

See pages 6-9 for details of our exciting 2024 programme of residential field trips!



news update

Imerys and British Lithium announce partnership to deliver quicker lithium batteries...

Imerys, the leading china clay mining company in the Southwest of England, has announced a major tie up with British Lithium that will see major acceleration of the development and exploitation of battery grade lithium carbonate in the area.

The partnership which is 80% owned by Imerys and 20% British Lithium sees each playing to their respective strengths. Imerys contributes its lithium mineral resources, land and infrastructure whilst British Lithium brings its bespoke lithium processing technology, its technical team and its lithium pilot plant.

The two companies have been working closely for the past six years whilst British Lithium set up and ran its pilot plant. At the same time, they were carrying out extensive drilling operations to prove the size of the potential lithium bearing deposit.

Now, following drilling and resource definition, inferred mineral resources are estimated at 161 million tonnes at a grade of 0.54 % lithium oxide. These resources give sufficient confidence to target a life of mine exceeding 30 years at a production rate of 20,000 tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent per year, potentially enough to equip 500,000 electrical vehicles per year, by the end of the decade, meeting roughly two-thirds of Britain's estimated battery demand by 2030 when all UK car manufacturers convert to electric vehicles.

The partnership will benefit from Imerys' existing mining footprint in Cornwall, its experienced teams, and solid infrastructure, as well as its lithium expertise developed through its EMILI project in France. The mine will adhere to the highest social and environmental standards



British Lithium have been using Imerys china clay material to recover lithium bearing ore. (Image: British Lithium)

and follow the IRMA Standard – the most demanding global benchmark for responsible mining.

The transaction has been approved by the UK Government, under the National Security Investment Act protocol. This venture will reduce the UK's and Europe's dependence on critical raw materials imports, thus contributing to the achievement of the European and British

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climate change targets and the creation of the first fully integrated regional electrical vehicle value chain. The combination of this and the EMILI project in France would make Imerys the largest integrated lithium producer in Europe, representing more than 20% of the announced European lithium output by 2030.

The project will generate new job opportunities and foster economic growth in Cornwall. It builds upon Imerys' deep commitment to the UK and cements its position as a mainstay of the Cornish economy. Today, the Group employs 1,100 people across the UK, of which 830 are located in Cornwall, including five world-class open-pit mine sites in Cornwall and Devon. The project will also build upon British Lithium's entrepreneurial spirit and committed team.



Inside British Lithium's pilot plant which produces lithium carbonate as a finished product. (Image: British Lithium)

Alessandro Dazza, CEO of Imerys, said:

“This acquisition is a milestone in Imerys’ journey to becoming a key partner in the energy transition. Building on our recent investment in the EMILI Project in France, we are uniquely placed to become a leading supplier of lithium in the UK and Europe. We look forward to unlocking the joint potential of British Lithium and Imerys to make Cornwall a successful lithium hub, building on its centuries-old mining heritage.”

Roderick Smith, Chairman of British Lithium, said:

“After working closely with Imerys several years, the Directors, shareholders, and staff of British Lithium are delighted to formalize their partnership with Imerys and are confident that this alignment of interests will propel us toward continued rapid progress. This marks a key milestone for British Lithium, Imerys, and the entire lithium battery industry, as they embark on a journey to establish a sustainable future for lithium production in the United Kingdom.”

This account makes extensive use of press material provided by Imerys, for which we are grateful.

Work on the seawall at Blue Anchor is ongoing as the coastline continues to be battered...

In May of year, thousands of tonnes of granite rock started to arrive in Blue Anchor, near Minehead, as Somerset Council's coastal defence works begin.

Some 13,500 tonnes of rock armour is being placed against the cliffs on the West Somerset coast to reduce continuing erosion and protect a section of the B3191 road – with most of the granite arriving by ship.



Rock armour on the beach at Blue Anchor during a previous temporary job that was carried out in 2022. (Image Aggregate UK)

Somerset West and Taunton Council carried out emergency works to stabilise the wall and reduce the risk of collapse in 2020.

The £3.8m permanent scheme will provide support to the walls and mudstone cliff, as well as a section of road. The fragility of this section of coastline was underlined recently with the indefinite closure of the B3191 at Cleeve Hill, near Watchet.

Rock delivery was expected to take 32 days, with most rock arriving by the vessel, the Hagland Saga. It collected 4,500 tonnes of rock from Glensanda Quarry in western Scotland and travel to Blue Anchor, arriving at the start of May.

The rock was then transferred onto a barge and deposited on the beach at each high tide, subject to suitable weather. The rock will then be moved up the beach at low tide.



Rock from the west of Scotland offshore at Blue Anchor. (Image: Somerset Council)

The vessel will return to western Scotland to collect a further 4,500 tonnes of rock and return to Blue Anchor Bay, repeating the process until all 13,500 tonnes has been delivered.

Access to the beach may be restricted at times and the public are asked to stay clear of rock piles.

Once all rock has been delivered and placed, the upper slope of the cliff will be reprofiled, with all work expected to finish by the end of September 2023. The scheme has been designed by WSP and will be delivered by contractor Kier and subcontractor Kelston Sparkes.

Aggregate Industries operates Glensanda in the remote west of Scotland. It took over the pioneering superquarry set up by Foster Yeoman. It supplies granites aggregate by ship to customers all over the UK and even overseas. It's particularly suited to supplying customers who require delivery by sea such as on this occasion.

We understand that the project is progressing well as at the end of June 2023.

We are grateful to Somerset Council's Debbie Rundle for this press release and to our reader Tony Smith for alerting us to the ongoing work.

Turning carbon dioxide to stone in Iceland - in a bid to stop global warming...

A firm in Iceland is upending conventional wisdom by turning CO₂ into stone. Carbfix takes the greenhouse emissions from industrial plants and dissolves them in water, which is then injected deep underground into vesicular volcanic basalt, where it mineralises, filling the voids.

Whilst it sounds simple, in practice, it's much more difficult and employs cutting edge technology. Iceland is luckily supplied with lots of basalt, much of its pretty close to the surface.

Carbfix describes the method as 'mother nature's way' and as a means of carbon storage it all sounds pretty logical. The Company is now looking to expand its operations worldwide.

Merlin Energy Resources uses its geophysical expertise to help with the energy transition...

Merlin Energy Resources is a small but dynamic geophysics company based in Ledbury Herefordshire. It's a partner in the Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark and also a sponsor of the geopark's Geofest. Our Editor, Chris Darmon was recently there to celebrate the Geopark's 20th anniversary and managed a brief chat with a representative of Merlin.

Like many other players in the energy field, Merlin are coming to terms with the challenges and opportunities posed by the energy transition as we move from a dependency on oil and gas and move towards renewables.

The Company not only embraces and recognises the need for a transition to net Zero it's positioned itself to help clients, do just that. The same expertise that's been used to extract oil and gas can be used to help with carbon storage and capture.



Take this from the Company's website:

"In recent years the serious issue of global warming and its impact on the planet has become evermore clear. The release of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere are the principal cause of rising global temperatures. Most countries are now working towards becoming 'Net Zero' contributors to global warming by reducing their carbon footprint.

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One way to reduce our carbon footprint is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. We can do this by switching to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind or geothermal energy. Where it is not possible to stop the production of carbon dioxide completely (for example power generation, refining or industrial processes) we need to stop those gases from reaching the atmosphere. Therefore, work is underway on projects to capture carbon dioxide at the point of production and store it indefinitely in a safe underground environment.

Most of the Employee Owners at Merlin Energy are passionate Earth Scientists. We embarked on our careers because of our love for this planet and were fascinated with how it evolved. Whilst our careers have largely been spent in Oil and Gas, we are committed to supporting the Energy Transition and using our knowledge to achieve a sustainable future and affordable energy for everyone."

The Editor comments: I'm sure that many people will be surprised and even shocked by the tone of these comments from a respected company that has been in the energy field for the past 25 years, but it's heart warming and so welcome.

Merlin are placing these dedicated and experienced geoscientists in a position where they can help deliver the energy transition that we need. As an employee owned small company they are perfectly placed to help this way. We wish them luck in the future!

BGS makes a positive climate statement - at Glastonbury of all places!

You would not necessarily make a connection between the world's greatest music festival at Glastonbury with climate change, but the need to communicate with a large group of mainly young people was grasped with both hands by BGS.



The Commoditree pictured with members of the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre team. (Image: BGS © UKRI)

Situated in the Green Futures field at Glastonbury, festival goers were invited in to explore how our modern lifestyles wouldn't be possible without rocks and minerals as part of a new touring festival stand called 'Modern life doesn't grow on trees'.

The centrepiece of the stand is #TheCommoditree, a brand-new public engagement installation from the British Geological Survey, funded by the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre as part of the Department of Business and Trade.

At first glance, the tree is a sculpture reflecting the natural surroundings of its festival environment. At three metres tall, it is an eye-catching sight, intriguing visitors and helping them trace the ways in which minerals and rocks are extracted from below our feet and intrinsically wound into our modern lives.

“Raising awareness and the necessity for a sustainable supply of critical metals has never been more important. #TheCommoditree will not only enable people to visualise just how important rocks and minerals are in their everyday lives, but also initiate discussions



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Extra July 2023



Hampshire




Mineral & Fossil Show

Saturday 2nd September 2023
Community Centre, Lyndhurst, Hampshire
(SO43 7NY) 10am to 4.30pm

MINERALS, FOSSILS, PREPARATION EQUIPMENT, GEMS, JEWELLERY & BOOKS. Over 50 tables of SALES & DISPLAYS inc DINOSAURS!

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Refreshments available



Show organised by Southampton Mineral & Fossil Society
For further information, visit our website www.sotonminfoss.org.uk or email show@sotonminfoss.org.uk

around dependence on other countries, the associated security of supply and the circular economy.”

Paul Lusty, Director of the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre

Alongside 'Modern life doesn't grow on trees', BGS are launching a host of resources for schools aimed at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils, including videos and downloads. These classroom activities will explore:

- what are rocks, minerals and metals?
- minerals in everyday life
- the life cycle of a mineral



Great geo-adventures in 2023/4 begin here...

Ice smoothed Proterozoic metaigneous rocks in the Geo Norvegica Geopark in Southern Norway.
(Image: Chris Darmon)

This is almost the last and final call for Autumn trips, with just a few vacancies remaining for twin/double rooms. Grab them while you can!

We have now fixed the entire 2024 programme, with just the Summer School yet to be finalised. We are delighted to announce new venues in Dunbar, Fort William and Porthcawl, along with return visits to popular venues such as Tenerife, Norway and Jersey. If you want to join us especially if you need a single room - you are advised to act quickly.

To view a brochure, go to our website at:
www.geosupplies.co.uk or Tel: 0114 245 5746

Booking forms are only available direct from us.
Email: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk

Field trips 2023/4...

- Berwick & the Borders - September 6-13
- Isle of Man, September 23-30
- Guernsey, Channel Isles, October 7-14
- North Norfolk Coast, October 18-23

2024

- Tenerife, Canary Isles, February 24-March 2
- Scotland Northwest Highlands, April 10-18
- Southern Norway, April 24-May 3
- Edinburgh & Scottish Borders June 10-17
- Gower Coast of Wales, June 23-30
- The Welsh Borderland, July 7-12
- Summer School - Stirling, August tbc
- Llyn Peninsula, Wales, August 31-Sept 5
- Jersey, Channel Isles, September 21-28
- Highlands - Fort William, October 4-14
- The Yorkshire Dales, October 21-26

Early booking is advised, especially if you are looking for a single room.

Browse online at www.geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on 0114 245 5746
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If you haven't joined one of our residential field trips before, what can you expect?

- *Our residential field trips are suitable for adults of all levels of interest and geological knowledge.*
- *Our trips are friendly and informal and usually comprise 15-20 people. Overseas trips are usually larger.*
- *We normally make use of comfortable small hotels and guest houses and all meals are included.*
- *You have the services of Chris Darmon and Colin Schofield as field leaders. Both are highly experienced and knowledgeable field geologists.*
- *For most trips we have our own minibus but on some trips we may also have the use of an additional car.*
- *Dates shown in this listing are the start and finish dates.*

If you still have any questions or queries, don't hesitate to email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or tel: 0114 245 5746

Final call for Autumn 2023 trips...

Bookings continue to come in apace for our programme of residential field trips for 2023. Most of the available vacancies for 2023 are on trips that are due to run during the Autumn period.

Berwick & the Borders September 6-13

This trip includes a visit to the 'holy grail of geological time' at Sillar Point and lots of other amazing places. From our base at the comfortable Castle Hotel, we'll be taking in both coastal and inland locations from Northumberland and Berwickshire. Marvel at folded Carboniferous sediments at Scremerston, the granite scenery of Cheviot and volcanics at St Abbs. This is an ideal place to come as a beginner, as the geology and landscape are 'in your face, and there's such a great variety! **Just a few vacancies for twin/double rooms left.**

Isle of Man (7-nights) - September 23-30

If you've never been to the Isle of Man to study geology before, you have been missing a treat! There's igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks in great variety, along with mineral and even a few fossils! Crucial evidence for the closure of Iapetus Ocean can be found here, along with pillow lavas and limestone from the Carboniferous. For those more interested in recent deposits, there's also some of the UK's finest Quaternary in the north of the island. All this great geology and one of our favourite hotels - what more could you ask for! **Just a few vacancies for twin/double rooms left.**

Guernsey (7-nights) - October 7-14



The Channel Islands have a rich and varied geology that bears little or no relation to the geology of England. In the case of Guernsey there are ancient metamorphic and igneous rocks, some of which go back more than 2 billion years. There's also evidence for an orogeny, known as the Cadomian, that occurred in the late Precambrian. We have secured the excellent Peninsula Hotel that we've stayed in twice before. It's on the NW coast in a quiet bay.

Just a few vacancies for twin/double rooms left.

The North Norfolk Coast (7-nights) - October 18-23

There's not a finer place to round off our 2023 season than a visit to the North Norfolk resort town of Cromer. It gives us access to a unique coastline that takes in the Cretaceous rocks of Hunstanton, as well as some superb early Quaternary sediments that include a visit to West Runton that has yielded the most complete mammoth skeleton yet found anywhere in the UK.

This is also the best area in the UK to see evidence of the 450,000 year old Anglian glaciation with features that include ice wedges and an excellent esker. Finally, any visit would not be complete without taking a look at the rapidly disappearing coastline and how we are seeking to manage coastal erosion.



Hotel de Paris, Cromer - our base for this trip

Finish off the year in style by joining us on this great trip. We can still accommodate people in twin/double rooms.

We're happy to discuss any trip with you and to guide you in your choice. Advice is just an email or a telephone call away!

To obtain a booking form for any of these trips, please, email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746.



Don't worry, we don't bite!

All our educational classes and courses are friendly, informal and open to all.

Come and join us!

Our 2024 programme...

It may seem like 2024 is a long way ahead, but to secure the best deals and to get our first choice of hotels we have to book early! As a result we've now released almost all of our offerings for 2024.

You will not be surprised to hear that a number of trips are already filling up fast - especially the limited numbers of single rooms. Take our advice and make your bookings NOW!

Tenerife, Canary Islands (7-nights) - February 24-March 2 £1295

Having looked at flight schedules for this Winter, we have realised that getting to places like Fuerteventura is not as easy as it used to be, so we've gone instead for Tenerife, where we know that you can still get a reasonably priced flight from your local airport. In the



The amazing volcanic landscape of Tenerife

company of our local guide Isabel, we'll be exploring some of the best geology that this Canary Island offers. Based in Santa Cruz, we'll get to all the main sites, including Pico del Teide (weather permitting).

View the brochure at our website - get the booking form from us!

Northwest Highlands of Scotland (8-nights) - April 10-18 £1495

We spend the whole of the trip based at the iconic Inchnadamph Hotel in Assynt. This is where the pioneers Peach and Horne were based when they surveyed the rocks and structures of the area. There's no better place from which to explore this great area. We take in the ancient Lewisian Gneisses, the Torridonian Sandstones, the sediments of the Cambrian and Ordovician and the Moine Schists. There are so many classic localities on our extensive itinerary!

View the brochure at our website - get the booking form from us!



*This the magnificent Quinag in Winter
(Image: Northwest Highlands Geopark)*

Norway, land of fjords (9-nights) - April 24-May 3. £1995

At long last we are set to return to southern Norway following our last visit in 2019. This trip begins with the fjords of the Bergen area and then moves to the tiny resort of Flam, set at the bottom of a fjord and reached by a world famous railway. We take a fabulous train trip to Oslo and then spend 5-nights as guests of the Geo Norvegica Geopark to the south of Oslo. There we see a huge range of different rocks from Proterozoic gneisses to fossiliferous Palaeozoic sediments to the home of Larvikite.



One of the highlights of the trips is a geological excursion on the Scenic Telemark Canal aboard a vintage boat. (Image: TripAdvisor)

Edinburgh and the Borders (7-nights) - June 10-17 £1095

The historic capital city of Edinburgh and its environs represent one of the cradles of geology. Back in the 1780s, James Hutton and other members of Scottish Enlightenment, toured the area on Horseback and by boat making amazing geological discoveries.

From our comfortable hotel base in Dunbar we'll take in Hutton's Section, Hutton's Rock, Arthur's Seat volcano and the amazing Siccar Point - and they are just for starters! We'll also take in sites on the Firth of Forth and over in Fife as well as the Southern Uplands.

View the brochure at our website - get the booking form from us!

The Gower area of South Wales (7-nights) - June 23-30 £1195

This is an exciting new area for us with excellent geology covering mainly the Devonian and Carboniferous with amazing structures and fossils. We'll be going down the Big Pit coalmine and hopefully seeing some reptilian footprints!

Brochure online - booking form from us.

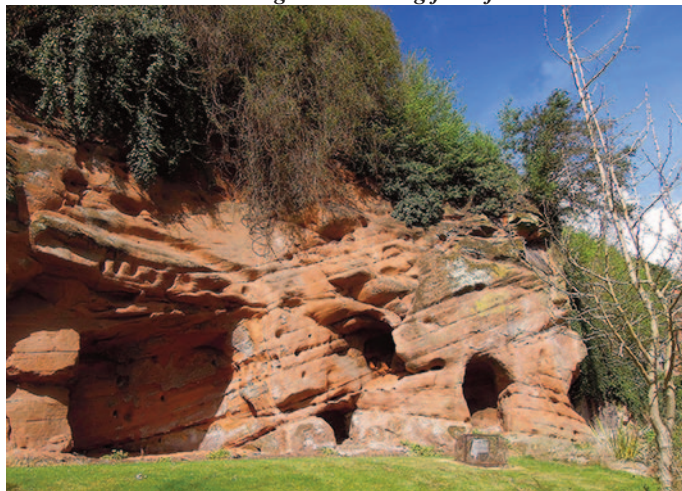


The Seabank Hotel - our comfortable base in Porthcawl, from where we can access all our field localities.

The Welsh Borderland (5-nights) - July 7-12 £895

The English county of Shropshire and the adjacent parts of Wales provide us with some of the most varied geology in the entire UK. We will be sampling rocks from the Precambrian right through to the Triassic with just about everything in between! There will be igneous plutonic and volcanic rocks, sediments galore and maybe even the odd metamorphic rock! There are fossils and minerals too - indeed something for everybody.

View the brochure online - get the booking form from us.

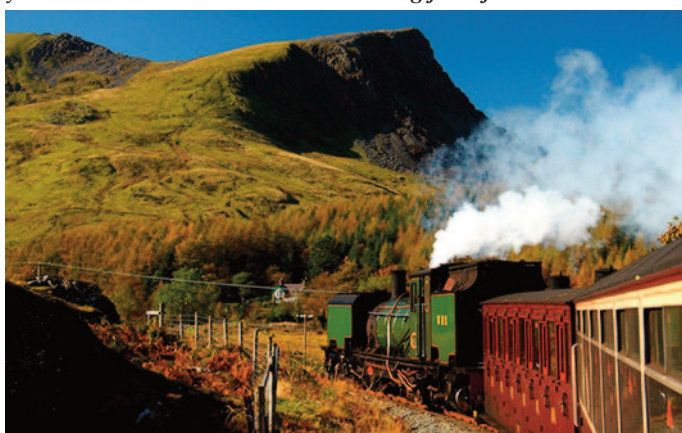


Permian rocks at Bridgnorth (Image: Wikipedia)

If you've never been on a geological field trip before then this is definitely one for you, as well as for the seasoned attendee! Bases at a comfortable guesthouse in the historic town of Bridgnorth, we'll be travelling around the area, including a trip on the Severn Valley railway. *Brochure online - booking form from us.*

The Llyn Peninsula (5-nights) - August 31-September 5 £995

The Llyn Peninsula of North Wales is a very special place, where Welsh is the first language of most of its inhabitants and we enjoy local hospitality at its very best at the Nanhoran Hotel in Nefyn. Some of the geology is similar to that seen on Anglesey, but with lots of added extras! We see elements of an ophiolite complex, along with rare intrusives such as diorites. A highlight of this trip is a steam train ride on the Welsh Highland railway that takes in some of the magnificent scenery of Snowdonia, viewed at a slow pace from the comfort of your train seat. *Brochure online - booking form from us.*



The Welsh Highland Railway (Image: TripAdvisor)

The Channel Island of Jersey (7-nights) - September 23-30 £1250

With Guernsey planned for October of this year, it only seems logical to follow it up with Jersey in 2024. Jersey is the more popular of the

two large Channel Isles and although close to Guernsey on the map, its geology is quite different. There are lots of late Precambrian volcanic rocks from the Brioverian, as well as later intrusive rocks. These combine to give us lots of interesting coastal sections.

To complete the geology, there are some excellent Quaternary sediments that give us an insight into the more recent history of the island. *Take a look at the brochure online and get the booking form from us.*

The Fort William area (10-nights) - October 4-14 £1595

This is one of the undoubted highlights of the entire year. We've gone to the max to bring you a comprehensive 10-night itinerary based in this iconic Highland locality, based in the comfortable Croit Anna Hotel.

We'll be taking in the local geology of Glen Nevis, the volcanics of Glencoe the slates of Ballachulish and also more distant places such as Mallaig and Ardnamurchan. The trip will also include an excursion by boat on Loch Linnhe and a steam train trip to Mallaig aboard the famous Jacobite train which crosses Glenfinnan viaduct. Don't let the Autumn date of this trip put you off!

Take a look at the brochure online and get the booking form from us.

The Yorkshire Dales (5-nights) - October 21-26 £895

Amazingly, we've never managed to base one of our trips in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. We had planned this trip for 2020, but it never happened due to Covid. Our base for the week is the small village of Gargrave, just to the west of Skipton.

From here we'll take in some of the highlights of the National Park, including the ancient rocks of Ingleton and Horton in Ribblesdale, the magnificent Carboniferous limestone with its show caves and the younger rocks of the Yoredales and the Coal Measures. It's the perfect way to end our field season. *The brochure for this trip has just been released - contact us for the booking form.*

If you would like some help or advice before making a booking, we'd be delighted to talk with you - either pick up the phone for a chat, or email us - see contact details below. All prices quoted above are per person in a shared double or twin room.

To register interest, or to get a booking form, email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746

Simply Minerals! new for this Autumn...

Following on from the success of our Simply Rocks! course earlier this year, we've decided to run a similar online course covering minerals during November and December of this year.

Like the rocks course, Simply Minerals! will run for 5 or 6 weeks and will cover all the major aspects of minerals, both those that form rocks and the much rarer ones that provide us with metallic ores and bulk chemicals.

Simply Minerals! is aimed at beginners primarily, but everyone will get something from it. We'll be including a basic set of specimens and some written materials for the course.

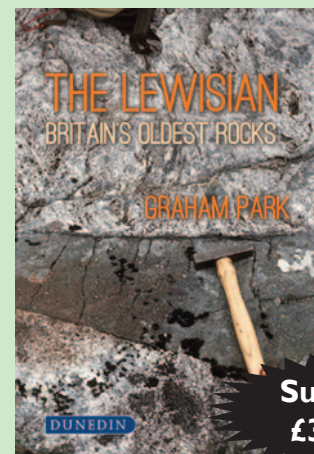
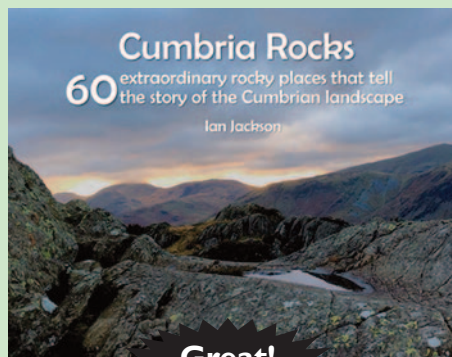
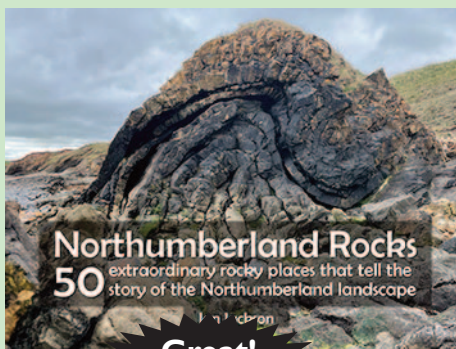
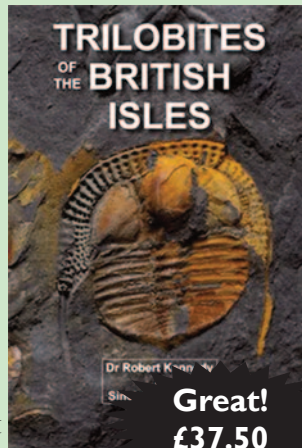
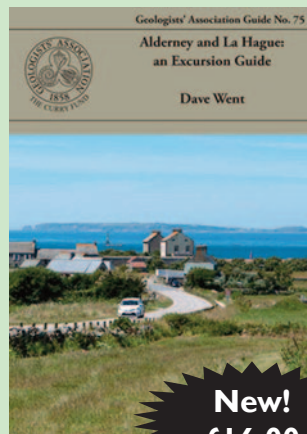
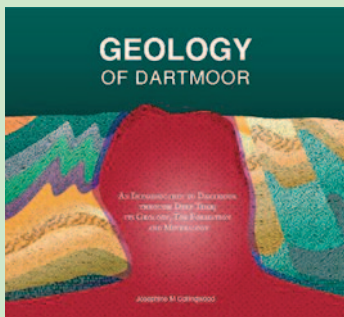
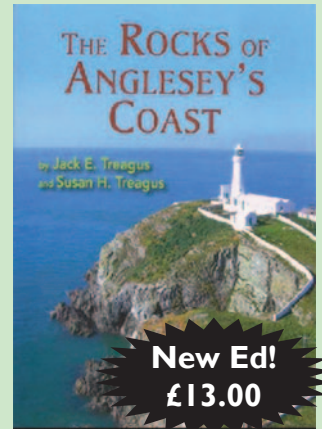
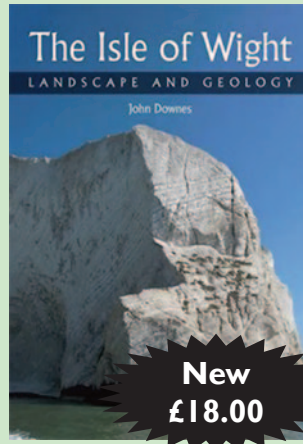
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