



Down to Earth^{extra}

Issue 164 August 2026

NEWS FLASH...

2026 Trips..

- Melrose 2 vacancies due to cancellation

2027 Trips

- All eight trips can now be booked!

First Autumn Zoom sessions!

- The geology of Oman
- Venezuela tectonics

Book for all trips now!

What are you waiting for?

This is the Great Opencast at Parys Mountain, Anglesey, seen in July 2026. The beautiful colours come from a variety of different iron minerals. They are the result of large amounts of scrap iron being thrown into the pit to assist in the recovery of copper by an acid process. The headgear is from more recent work by Anglesey Mining plc.

(Image: Chris Darmon)



From the Editorial team...

Spare a thought for the people of the remote Scottish islands that make up the Shetlands. They are amongst the windiest places in the whole of the United Kingdom. According to the 2024 census, there are around 23,190 Shetlanders, many of whom enjoy a fairly prosperous life with many engaged in work at Sullom Voe, the oil and gas terminal, and others in the still very active fishing industry.

With all of that wind around you'd think that it would be an ideal candidate for a huge wind farm. You'd be right and you would also be wrong. Yes, there is a huge wind farm, recently constructed. The Viking Energy Wind Farm comprises 103 giant turbines that stride out across Central Mainland. Owner SSE Renewables proudly states that it will generate 443 MW, enough wind powered electricity to power around 500,000 homes including every home in the Shetland Islands. But that's not the case, far from it.

In fact most of Shetland's electricity is generated locally with 50% being supplied by the diesel-fired Lerwick Power Station, 30% by the gas-fired Sullom Voe Terminal Power Station and around 20% small independent and community based renewable generators. This is distributed around the islands by overland and undersea cables.

So what happens to all that green wind generated energy? Where does it all go?

Since August 2024, all this valuable energy is transported by high voltage to Kergoed in southern Shetland and then by undersea DC cable to the UK mainland at Noss Head. It is then intended that it will feed down a UK mainland distribution network to be consumed by all those millions of energy hungry consumers. The problem is that it is currently unable to leave the far north of Scotland, because that network does not currently exist!

So currently SSE's Viking Wind Farm is doing little to solve the energy crisis that's being experienced by many in mainland Britain. In fact, it may even be the case that SSE is being paid, not to generate power from its shiny new Viking Wind Farm. Amidst enormous damage to sensitive habitats during construction, almost the only current benefit appears to be a few new geological exposures. The whole thing would even be a touch funny if it wasn't tragic. We have much to fix during this so-called energy transition.

*Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
The Down to Earth Editorial Team*



news update

M 6.8 earthquake strikes southern Japan...

A magnitude 6.8 earthquake has struck the southern Japanese city of Kumamoto, on the main island of Kyushu, late Tuesday afternoon on 28th. July. The epicentre was 20km south of Kumamoto City, which has a population of about 700,000.

As this news item is being composed on July 29th, the death toll stands at 13 with a number of people at a badly damaged shopping mall and a paper mill being unaccounted for.

The quake was felt over a very wide area, including in Seoul, in South Korea. Damage in the immediate vicinity has been extensive with bridges and railways badly damaged. There were initial fears of major landslides and also the possibility of a tsunami but these fears have now subsided somewhat. However there are still likely aftershocks over the coming days.

As to the causes of the event and the local tectonics, this comes from Wikipedia and draws heavily on USGS material:

Kumamoto Prefecture is located on Kyushu, the most southerly of Japan's four main islands. It lies at the southern end of the Japan Median Tectonic Line, Japan's longest, where a system of active faults forks in two directions at the Beppu-Haneyama Fault Zone. Earthquakes occur along the Beppu-Shimabara graben, with epicentres moving from west to east over time. To the southeast of Kumamoto, there is a major southwest-northeast trending strike-slip fault system, consisting of the Hinagu Fault to the south and the Futugawa Fault to the north, parts of which ruptured during the 2016



A house collapsed after an earthquake in Yatsushiro, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, on the 28th.

(Image: EPA Yonhap News, Korea)

Kumamoto earthquakes.

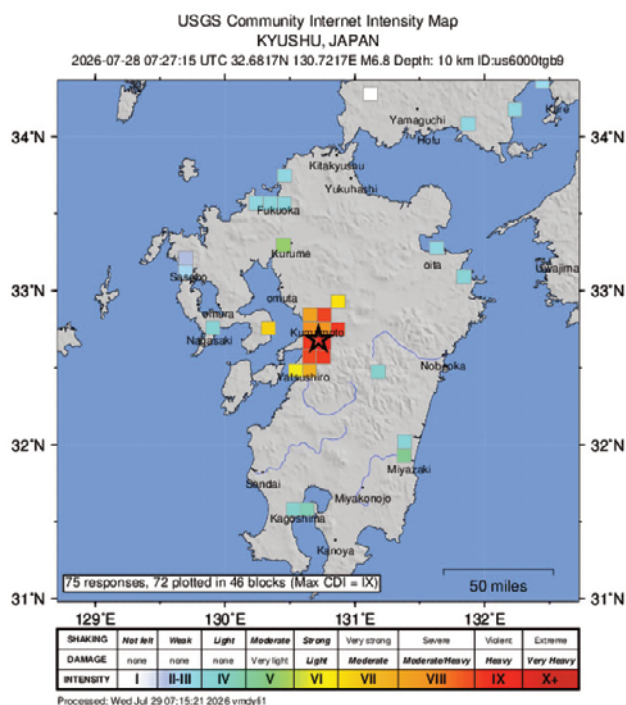
The earthquake occurred at 07:27 UTC on 28 July in Kumamoto

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Earthquake response map for the 28th. July event
(Image: Courtesy of USGS)

Prefecture, Japan. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, the earthquake had a magnitude of MJMA 7.1. However the USGS recorded it as an earthquake of M 6.8 with an epicenter 5 km east of the city of Uto.

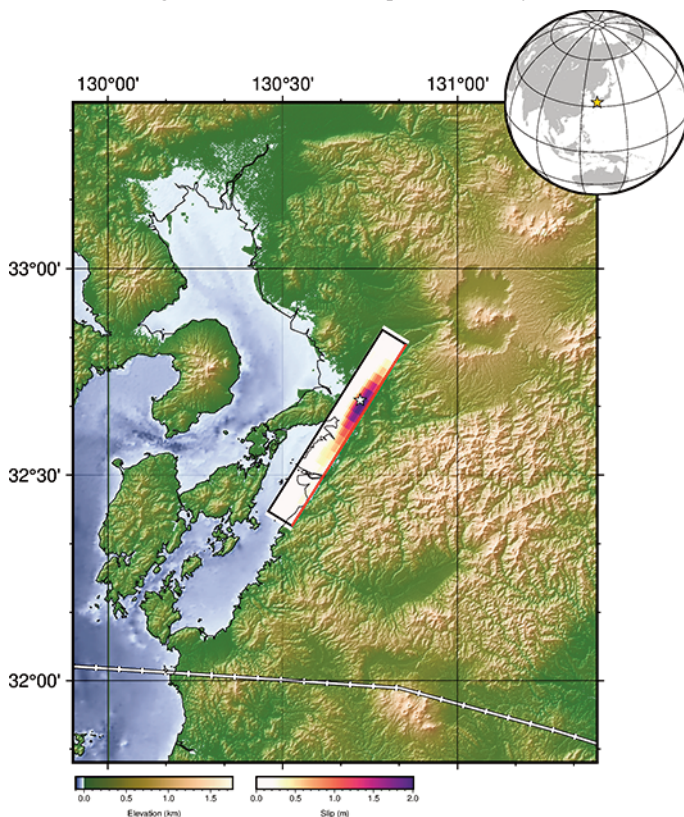
The earthquake was caused by strike-slip faulting. The USGS focal mechanism solution suggested co-seismic slip occurred on either on a northwest-trending left-lateral fault or northeast-trending right-lateral fault. According to Shinichi Sakai, a scientist at the Earthquake Research Institute, University of Tokyo, the earthquake may have been caused by slip on the southern portion of the Hinagu Fault. During the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes, only the northern extent of the Hinagu Fault was activated, causing coulomb stress transfer to the southern portions of the fault.

The USGS modelled an earthquake with slip across a 40 by 15 km on a northeast-trending fault. According to the model, the rupture propagated bilaterally; extending northeast and southwest from the hypocentre and was completed in just over 15 seconds. A maximum slip of 2 m was inferred at a depth of about 5 km near the hypocentre. Towards the surface, the displacement was limited, peaking at 0.9 m.

As for the impact, at least 13 deaths were confirmed. At least 50 people were injured in Hikawa, with 55 more in Kashima, 40 in Uki, 80 in Yatsushiro and 160 more were injured or hospitalized in Kumamoto City. Among those killed was a Vietnamese national who died after a crane collapsed on him. Another Vietnamese national was injured after a wall collapsed.[34]

The second floor of Aeon Mall Kumamoto in Kashima collapsed and there were reports that "many" people were killed. There were also several reports of an explosion at the mall; a person inside a pub 300 m from the mall said he heard an explosion after the earthquake and saw a large cloud of smoke rising above the building. About 55 people were injured in the blast, including one person in cardiopulmonary arrest. At least 10 people were reported missing at

the mall. The cause of the explosion was not known although a government official told the press that there were reports of a gas leak. Police in Kumamoto Prefecture said at least 12 homes collapsed. In Uki, parts of the ceiling at Aeon Mall Uki collapsed. Five people were declared missing after two houses collapsed in the city.



Base map showing the strike-slip fault thought to have moved to cause the earthquake.
(Image: Courtesy of EathScope Consortium)

In Yatsushiro, the chimney of a factory owned by Nippon Paper Industries collapsed, killing two and leaving nine people trapped. Another person was killed by a collapsed house in the city. A section of a bridge also collapsed and fires were reported in the city and in Matsubase. Two residents and a staff at a nursing home in Hikawa were injured by a collapsed wall. According to JR Kyushu, a freight train derailed near Yatsushiro Station. In Kōsa, a falling crane killed one person.

We'll continue to monitor the situation as it unfolds but, so far, the death toll at least is low considering the damage and magnitude of the event. Strict building standards apply and have clearly been largely implemented.

Help rescue the sea-rex, at the Etches Collection...

In August 2022, The Etches Collection - Museum of Jurassic Marine Life undertook one of the most daring fossil excavations in recent British history. Buried twenty metres down from the top of the cliff on the Jurassic Coast was a skull. That of the apex predator of the Jurassic seas – the Pliosaur. This excavation tested the museum and the team to their limits and required a great deal of ingenuity, patience, and determination.

Dr Steve Etches MBE led the team of experienced palaeontologists down the cliff face to dig a two-metre cave using air-powered CP-9

breaker guns. After exposing and loosening the skull away from the rock, the team wrapped it in hessian and Herculite plaster to protect it. With that done, they were left the challenge of getting the skull out of the cave and up to the top of the cliff. Rob Vearncombe, a local dairy farmer, designed and built what we called 'the sled,' which was a two-metre box with a battery-powered winch on two 6-metre skis.



*Hauling up the skull in its sled was a tricky job.
(Image: The Etches Collection)*

This was lowered down the cliff by an excavator and a tractor, whilst Steve and another member of the excavation team went into the cave to ensure that the skull was carefully winched into the box, it was then towed back up the cliff. A process that took more than 15 hours.



*It was a difficult task, but at least two of the team seem to be enjoying themselves.
(Image: The Etches Collection)*

Once successfully excavated, the skull spent three months on Rob's farm before it could be transported to Steve's workshop. During this time, it was later discovered that a mouse had got into the box and made a nest, leaving straw everywhere, the mudstone in which the skull was encased had dried, resulting in the bone cracking and breaking up. Steve was left with a massive challenge ahead of him. After ten months of painstaking restoration and preparation, the skull went on display on the 2nd of January 2024 following the broadcast of BBC documentary 'Attenborough and the Giant Sea Monster' to more than 4 million people on the evening of New Year's Day. The skull was awarded a Guinness World Record for being the most complete Pliosaurus skull in the world. At 95% complete, it certainly is a remarkable specimen.

Today, we are on the cusp of undertaking another excavation. But this time, it'll be much bigger. The rest of the Pliosaurus's body is still in the cliff. We are now in the final phase of fundraising to undertake this mammoth challenge. We are anticipating at least another five to seven metres of body to still be in the cliff, making this the most complete

Pliosaurus found to date. We will be aiming to undertake this excavation during the summer of 2027 and we will be undertaking another fundraising campaign to build an extension to our museum in order to display this magnificent specimen. These certainly are exciting times for our museum!

The Etches Collection – Museum of Jurassic Marine Life is open year round (excluding Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day). You can pay once and return as many times as you like for a year. For more details and events taking place, please visit our website www.theetchescollection.org.

*You can help to rescue the Sea Rex by going to the donation page:
<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/searex>*

Visitors to the 'deep time trail' get an enhanced experience...



*Sight and sound interpretation at Siccar Point. Surely something that James Hutton would approve of.
(Image: Angus Miller)*

Over the past months we've carried a lot about the events that have been arranged to celebrate the tercentenary of the birth of James Hutton.

During the year there are going to be some very obvious improvements to what is now termed 'The deep time trail'. Here we see the state of the art information pillar at Siccar Point. These are being carried out thanks, in part at least, to the crowd funding from enthusiastic supporters in the geological community.

The Editor comments: The events that have been built around the tercentenary of the birth of James Hutton have been good to see. They have involved a number of groups and individuals working together in a common desire to raise the profile of geology. Congratulations!

Stori Brymbo, a unique visitor attraction near Wrexham is now open...

On 13th. July the major site that was formerly Brymbo steelworks opened to the public. The newly launched Stori Brymbo, comprising the steelworks and fossil forest visitor centre is operated and run by the Brymbo Heritage Trust, a registered charity led by Chief Executive Nicola Eaton Sawford and Chair Nick Aymes. Across the site there's involvement from other organisations including CADW and local enterprises.

It has taken a long time to get to this place. I well remember visiting the site with Jacqui Malpas around 20 years ago and being told then how fragile they were. In the intervening years damage and loss must have inevitably occurred, but it's great that we have now got to this point and the general public can now see the Brymbo Fossil Forest for themselves and the fossils have been saved.



*The trees are impressive.
(Image: Brymbo Fossil Forest Project)*

Let the Brymbo Heritage Trust tell you the story...

During work on the Brymbo steel works site in 2003 several large tree-like fossils were uncovered while open-cast mining overlying

coal. After initial assessment by Peter Appleton and Dr Jacqui Malpas, five years of excavation revealed thousands of fossils and over 20 large tree trunk like structures with rooting networks perfectly preserved, some measuring up to 2.5 meters in height! Coal has been mined on the Brymbo site since the 1400's, all the while the miners blissfully unaware of the origin of the coal that they were labouring to extract.

The coal seams themselves were deposited as thick mats of plant debris approximately 300 million years ago in a period of deep geologic history known as the Carboniferous. This period of earth's history is characterised by high levels of atmospheric oxygen (162% of the modern level) resulting from almost planet-wide tropical forests and swamps. At this point in history, North Wales was situated upon the equator, therefore the forest here would have been hot and humid, and the plants and animals unsettlingly unfamiliar.

The forest at Brymbo during this time contained no flowering plants. In fact, it would be quite difficult to find many living representatives of the ancient flora preserved at the site. Instead of deciduous and pine trees the forests contained giant relatives of horsetails and club-mosses along with many groups of primitive plants that bore no ancestors that survive today. In-between the layers of coal at the Brymbo are layers of mudstone and sandstone that represent devastating flash flooding events that buried much of the river-delta in the area in sediment. The exposed rock section at Brymbo represents discrete flooding events that have preserved a variety of environments that are uniquely preserved at Brymbo.

We helped ensure that the site attained 'Site of Specific Scientific Interest' status in 2015, and to then secure funding for the site to be fully fenced. We worked with Natural Resources Wales, the National Galleries and Museums of Wales and Wrexham County Borough Council to conserve and enhance a number of the fossils excavated in 2003-2008, and to mount Brymbo-specific exhibitions in Wrexham and Cardiff. In 2018 the same partners helped us to recruit a full-time palaeontologist to oversee future work. Since then we have provided a number of free 'crash courses' in earth science subjects to attract interested individuals and built a large volunteer base to help curate fossil material and protect the fossil forest.

*The site is open Tuesday to Sunday 10.00 - 5.00 (closed Mondays)
The admission price is £14.00 adult or £12.00 concession. Children under 14, £7.00. There are also family tickets that offer a discount.
The admission covers all of Stori Brymbo which will occupy much of a day.
Book in advance: info@storibrymbo.com*



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Extra August 2026

BGS announces an initiative for kids this Autumn...

British Geological Survey (BGS) has announced the launch of 'Geo-Explorers', an after-school club for kids who want to know more about geology. It's the first time that BGS has done anything like this aimed at youngsters - what a great idea!

The five weekly sessions will run on a Monday and will be held at BGS Headquarters in Keyworth, Nottingham.

A colorful poster for the 'Geo-Explorers' after-school club. At the top, it says 'Join the fun! Register now! Limited spots!' in yellow and green. Below this is the 'GEO-EXPLORERS' title in large, bold, orange letters. To the right is the BGS logo and 'British Geological Survey'. Further right, it says 'After-school kids' club 8 to 11 years'. Below the title, it states '5-week programme from 7 September' and 'Mondays 16:00 at BGS, Keyworth'. The central illustration shows a volcano, a dinosaur skeleton, a microscope, and various geological specimens. At the bottom, it says 'Join us to explore all things geology' and lists activities: 'Arts and crafts • Experiments • Fun themed games • Handling real specimens'.

BGS say:

You can join us for Geo-Explorers, our brand new after-school kids' club for children aged eight to eleven based at our main campus in Keyworth, Nottinghamshire. The clubs run in five-week cohorts and cost £30 for all five sessions.

Courses will run between 16:00 and 17:00 on:

7 September to 5 October

9 November to 7 December

Each 5 week programme covers the same.

To book or find out more go to:

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/geo-explorers-after-school-kids-clubs/>

STOP PRESS: BGS have just announced that its book and map prices will be increased by 20% from August 1st. It will be the first rise for a number of years.

Boulby Polyhalite mine is now growing pak choi...

Boulby in North Yorkshire is currently Britain's only mine producing polyhalite fertilizer. Now a small portion of the empty underground working are home to a unique agricultural enterprise. Working with scientists from the University of Sheffield, mine operators Israeli Chemicals have seen the development of an experimental underground 'vertical farm'. Situated at a depth of 1.1 km the upright growing light beds allow crops including lettuce and pak choi.

This comes from the University of Sheffield:

The project, led by researchers at the University of Sheffield in partnership with socially conscious food producer Farm Urban, will test the viability of growing crops in unique subterranean conditions.



Jacob Nickles (left) and colleagues in the STFC Boulby Underground Laboratory. (Image: Courtesy of STFC)

At the centre of the project is the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) Boulby Underground Laboratory, located in a working polyhalite and salt mine near Whitby. By utilising the site's naturally stable environment, with consistent temperatures and existing infrastructure such as lighting and ventilation, researchers hope to reduce the higher energy costs typically associated with conventional vertical farming. While vertical farming has expanded rapidly in recent years, this will be the first time crops are tested at such extreme depths. The 12-month study is designed to move beyond theory and provide the first real-world evidence of whether underground farming is a practical and profitable way to grow food.

An unusual present idea - limited edition...

'The Cream of the Crop 2025'

As part of their work for Geo Supplies, your editorial team, Chris Darmon and Colin Schofield go to some very interesting places around the British Isles. Whilst they are in these places they often pick up rock specimens, most of which go to students and institutions both here and even around the world. However there are also some rare or unusual rocks that don't form part of our regular stock and it is these that we've gathered together into a limited edition collection that we are offering as our 'Cream of the Crop 2025'.

The set comprises 14 carefully chosen specimens from the British Isles: with: graptolitic shale (Llandrindod Wells), Stanner Rock metaigneous (the oldest in Wales), Old Red Sandstone (Goodrington), Hematite (Cumbria), Folly Sandstone (Silurian), Phyllite (Arran), Newmead Sandstone (Builth Wells), Man-o-War Gneiss (Cornwall), Quartz Porphyry (Cornwall), Honister Slate (Cumbria), Hybrid Rock (Arran), Tonalite (Ardnamurchan), Pitchstone (Arran), Felsite (Loch Ba, Mull). Each set comes boxed with notes and costs £54.95 including postage. The set is available NOW for immediate shipping!

Purchase online at: geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746.

**Available
Now!**

Great geo-adventures in 2026/7 begin here...



How's this for stunning view of British Camp on the top of the Malvern Hills? Come and enjoy more of the same on our visit to Great Malvern in July.
(Image: Courtesy of Visit the Malverns)

We've had a couple of cancellations for our trip to Melrose in the Scottish Borders this October - please contact us if you are interested.

All of our programme of eight trips for 2027 are now available for you to book. We begin with a visit to Furness in the South Lakes of Cumbria and then the Magma Geopark in Norway. In the Spring and Summer we go to Strathpeffer, Eastbourne and Great Malvern with our Summer School in Warwick. Moving to the Autumn we've got a week based in Oban followed by a visit to Whitby. Bookings are already coming in thick and fast!

To view a brochure, go to our website at:
www.geosupplies.co.uk or Tel: 0114 245 5746
Remember that booking forms are only available direct from us:
Email: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk

Residential Field trip programme 2026/7...

2026

- Melrose, the Scottish Borders, October 18-24

2027

- Furness & South Lakes, April 16-23
- Magma Geopark, Norway, May 4-13
- Strathpeffer & Cromarty, May 21-29
- Sussex Coast & South Downs, June 20-26
- Abberley & Malvern Hills, July 18-23
- Summer School Warwick July 31-August 7
- Oban & the Hebridean Isles, Scotland, September 30-October 8
- Whitby, Yorkshire Coast, October 17-23

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

Search online at www.geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on 0114 245 5746
Geo Supplies Ltd 49 Station Road, Chapeltown, Sheffield S35 2XE



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 usually 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 some trips we have a hired minibus but on other trips we will use shared cars, or even public transport.*
- *Dates shown in this listing are the start and finish dates.*
- *Where prices are quoted, they are per person in a shared twin/double room.*

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

Before you book on one of our trips...

We are always pleased to welcome new people along on our trips. So if you are thinking about it, what do you need to know before you 'take the plunge'?

Who are the trips aimed at?

The short answer is that they are not aimed at any particular group of people. Our participants are mainly older retired people who want to keep their minds and bodies active, but younger people are welcome.

Some people have lots of geological field experience whilst others are complete beginners. As one person put it to us "I've forgotten all I once knew and need to come along to hear it again." Our UK trips are all small groups of 15 to 20 people maximum so we can make lots of what we say personal to you.

In recent years we've run several special trips for American geologists and now some of them join us on our regular trips, adding greatly to the character of our field experiences.

Will I be able to manage the walking?

We always try to keep walking to a minimum, but, almost by definition, some walking will be involved. If you can't manage a particular walk, just tell us and it will never be a problem for you not to do it. We have one person who really enjoys sketching - she's done some amazing sketches while the rest of us visit a quarry!

How do we get about on trips?

It varies a lot from trip to trip. Sometimes we hire a minibus, on other occasions we use public transport and at other times we'll make use of shared cars. Look at the details for each trip to find out.

What about accommodation?

We always try to use hotels or guest houses that have ensuite rooms as

standard. Most of our accommodation will provide breakfast and evening meals, but sometimes we eat in local restaurants. We include the cost of all food, including a packed lunch for each field day.

We prefer to use small family run hotels and guest houses but they are getting harder to find, so sometimes we use larger hotels such as hotels in the Leisureplex and Strathmore group. Once again, see the individual trip brochures for details.

Are your bookings safe with us?

Yes indeed they are! We've been in the business of running trips a long time and ensure that all the money you pay us is safe in a client trust account until your trip is completed.

But, above all, our trips are educational informative and FUN! We don't take ourselves or our geology too seriously. After all you are on holiday - and you are paying for it! We look forward to welcoming you on a trip sometime soon.

Still one last opportunity this year...

Due to a cancellation, we still have a couple of vacancies on our trip to Melrose in the Scottish Borders this October.

Melrose in the Scottish Borders, October 18-24 £995

We end the year with a good value 6-night trip to a new area of the Scottish Borders. Melrose is in the heart of an excellent area of fine geology, with sediments from the Ordovician, Silurian and Devonian along with a fine array of igneous rocks, both extrusions and intrusions that mainly date from the Carboniferous.

During this trip we'll be taking in the famous localities of Dob's Linn near Moffat where Charles Lapworth established the Ordovician and Silurian boundary and also James Hutton's famous unconformity at Jedburgh. We'll also have a day in Edinburgh exploring some of the famous sites in Holyrood Park.



The Waverley Castle Hotel on the outskirts of Melrose.

Our base for the trip is the comfortable Waverley Castle Hotel which sits in beautiful grounds on the outskirts of the small town.

Unusually, we have been offered a number of single rooms, at a very modest supplement - but get in quickly to secure your place!

We can still accommodate a few more people in double twin rooms.

Welcome to our exciting world!



The big reveal -

The full list of field trips for 2027...

We are now looking forward to another great season of field trips in 2027. As we are hosting two groups of Americans during the year, it means that the number of trips for general sale will be somewhat reduced. All the more reason to get your bookings in early!

Despite running these trips for a number of years, we've managed to find some great new venues for 2027 and, as a result, have more than 100 confirmed bookings, even at this stage.

If you haven't been with us before, you are particularly welcome, but please don't leave it too long before making your booking. this is particularly true if you are looking for a single room.

Prices shown are per person based on sharing a twin/double room.

Furness & the South Lakes. April 16-23 (7-nights) £1295

The Lake District is arguably our premier National Park and it's an area that many of you will have visited. But how many of you know or have ever visited the South Lakes, known as the Furness area? It's an area of scenic coastline with small coastal communities like Grange over Sands and Arnside. From our base in Grange we'll be able to explore a wide area taking in places such as Ravenglass, St Bees, Arnside, Lake Windermere from Lakeside and quarries around Millom.



The Cumbria Grand Hotel is in the tranquil resort of Grange over Sands - our base for the week

All this from the comfort of the Cumbria Grand Hotel in Grange over Sands. Take advantage of this excellent value package, just as the spring flowers come out!

Sorry, single rooms for this trip have now sold out!

Norway - Magma Geopark, May 4-13 (9-nights) £2595

We have been to Norway on two previous occasions to the Gea Norvegica Geopark where we saw great geology and landscape. This time we are staying in the south of the country but venturing to the Stavanger area which is the location of the fabulous Magma Geopark.

The tour commences with the first night in Oslo where we will be staying in an historic hotel which is actually within the main railway

station. From there, we'll take a 7-hour train journey direct to the small town of Egersund, our base for the entire week. Each day we'll venture out into the geopark with their own geologist. You'll see some amazing ancient rocks including anorthosite, that's much more common on the surface of the moon! There will be visits to former metal mines, a guided tour of a local quarry, as well as walks in the fjord landscape, a boat trip to a local island and much more!



Some of the rocks in the geopark include anorthosite, which is more commonly found on the moon.

(Image: Magma Geopark)

There will be visits to former metal mines, a guided tour of a local quarry, as well as walks in the fjord landscape, a boat trip to a local island and much more!

We can still accommodate a few more people on this trip.

Strathpeffer & Cromarty, May 21-29 £1695

Another new location - not far from Inverness but so very different. The spa town of Strathpeffer was a Victorian favourite for 'taking the waters', But today our hotel has all mod cons and there's no cold baths! It's a great starting point from which to explore the local area which has much to offer the geologist.



The Ben Wyvis Hotel our base for the week

From the local Devonian rocks of Cromarty birthplace of Scottish geologist Hugh Miller to the metamorphics of the local Moine rocks. We'll take in a train trip to Kyle of Lochalsh as well as another to Golspie on the coast to see the Jurassic and Triassic. We also see

some of the younger sedimentary rocks around Lossiemouth to the east of Inverness.

We can still accommodate people in single, double or twin rooms.

Sussex Coast & South Downs, June 20-26 (6-nights) £1095

Based at the Queen's Hotel in the resort of Eastbourne this is a trip that will take in some of the classic chalk cliffs in places like Beachy Head and also some of the Lower Cretaceous rocks in places like Hastings, not forgetting the beautiful landscape of the South Downs National Park.



The Queens Hotel on Eastbourne's seafront

If you've never sampled some of our finest Chalk landscape then do so now! you won't regret it we can assure you. This is English landscape at its very best.

Single, double and twin rooms are available.

The Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark, July 18-23 (5-nights) £1195

Your Editor has had the pleasure of being the President of the Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark for the past five years and along with the geopark volunteers, knows the area well.

Based at the Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern, this trip will take you to places where you can enjoy rocks and fossils from many different periods. We go back to the Ediacaran of the Precambrian to see the hard igneous rocks of the Malvern Hills, right on our doorstep. During the Cambrian and Silurian periods we see fossiliferous



Gullet Quarry in the Precambrian rocks of the Malvern Hills (Image: Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark)

sediments. The Devonian and Carboniferous see are very different sandstones and even coal seams in the Wyre Forest and around Highley in the Severn Valley. Around Bridgnorth we see the bright red Permian sandstones from a desert environment.



The Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern, our base for the trip.

Come and enjoy geology and landscape at its very best! Suitable for all, including those who are new to field geology. Currently there are plenty of vacancies on this trip.

Why come and join our Summer School?

Our Summer School is modelled on those that used to be run by the Open University a number of years ago. All are based on a campus of one sort or another where we can sleep in largely single, en-suite study bedrooms and enjoy on site meals. They are also more than just field trips with dedicated transport each day. There's an evening programme of talks from local experts and also social events. In short - something for everybody, including those with limited mobility!

**Summer School at the University of Warwick £1695
July 31-August 7 (7-nights)**

Our popular Summer School moves to a new location and you cannot get much more central than the University of Warwick, set in countryside on the southern edge of Coventry.



Beacon Hill, Charnwood Forest Geopark (Image: BGS)

This location will allow us access to the rich and varied geology of north Warwickshire around Nuneaton, Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, the Black Country Geopark and the Jurassic rocks of

the local area and also the Cotswolds. In short, something for everybody, from the Precambrian to the Quaternary! *This is the last trip to be released and the brochure is now available on our website. Remember that most of the rooms are singles, so take advantage and make that booking!*

Oban & the Hebridean Isles, September 30-October 9 (8-nights) £1495

Yes, we've found a hotel base in Oban! Now that we can tick that box, we can bring you an action packed week of trips around the surrounding area. With luck we'll get you to the islands of Kerrera, Lismore, Mull, Iona, Luing and Easdale. We'll also take in some of the geology of the mainland, around the Falls of Cruachan, Crianlarich and Tyndrum. You'll see fabulous Scottish geology from the Lewisian through to the Tertiary volcanics with much in between.



The Royal Hotel is on Oban's seafront and is close to the harbour and railway station.

Enjoy the comforts of the 3-star Royal Hotel in Oban where we offer ensuite rooms and all main meals.

Sorry, single rooms for this trip have now sold out!

Whitby on the Yorkshire Coast, October 17-23 (6-nights) £1195

Whitby is the jewel in the crown of the Yorkshire Coast and is truly an all year round resort. We are lucky to have secured a slot in the prestigious Royal Hotel that sits atop the nineteenth century splendour of the West Cliff.



The Royal Hotel sits atop the West Cliff.

With so much geology right on the doorstep we won't be spending hours getting to our field locations. Almost all of the solid geology was formed during the Jurassic period and much of it is very fossiliferous containing everything from humble brachiopods and bivalves through to ammonites and the remains of giant sea reptiles. During this trip we will take in the geology of Whitby and local places including Robin Hood's Bay, Staithes, Grosmont and Sandsend. We'll

use the local buses and also the train to get inland.

As it has been some time since we last visited Whitby, we expect this trip to fill up rapidly, so you are strongly advised to make your booking soon. Currently we still have single as well as twin and double rooms available.

Why not contact us now for a booking form: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746

You can view brochures for all the trips featured here (apart from the 2027 Summer School) on our website at: www.geosupplies.co.uk10

Don't delay as we already have around 100 bookings for 2027!

Autumn & Winter Zoom sessions...

This Autumn and Winter we will be presenting several series of mainly live, hour long Zoom sessions. Some are available as single sessions whilst others are courses consisting of 6 or 10 sessions. Most begin in the middle of November with some continuing after a break for Christmas and New Year.

All our Zoom classes and courses are available to all and are informal and designed to be both educational and enjoyable. We have a great and varied online community. You would be most welcome to join us!

We will present the full programme in our September Down to Earth extra, but for now we bring you two special sessions as 'curtain raisers'. They are open for booking NOW!

**The Geology of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz
Special Session, Monday November 2 £15.00**

The country of Oman and Strait of Hormuz have hardly been out of the news for the past months, ever since the start of hostilities between the US and Iran. But aside from oil and gas, what else is in the geological story?

Explore with us in this extended Zoom session all about the geology of the region. You'll learn why this is such an important and interesting area - prepare for some surprises!

**The Tectonics of Northern Venezuela
Special Session, Monday November 9 £15.00**

The tragic twin earthquakes of June 24th 2026 will probably go down as one of the worst natural disasters of modern times. In this specially extended Zoom session we will explain why this happened by looking at the regional and more local tectonics. We'll also examine what could have been done to minimize the number of casualties, by way of design for buildings and infrastructure, especially bridges and roads.

If two people share the same computer screen the cost is £22.00 for these sessions.

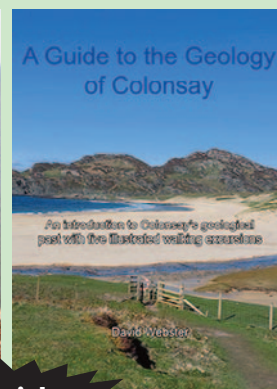
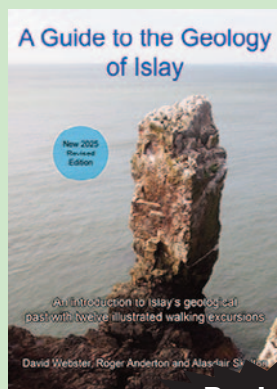
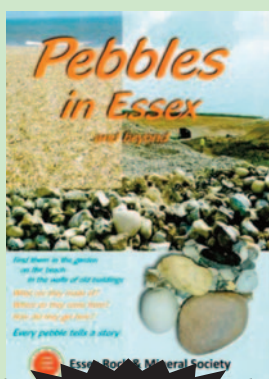
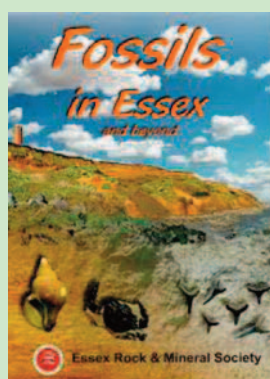
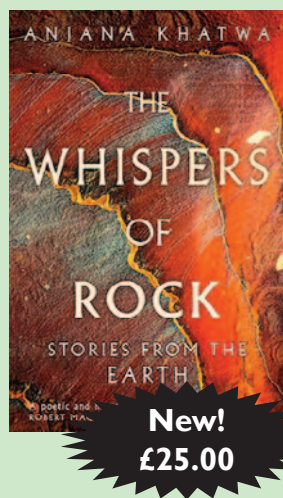
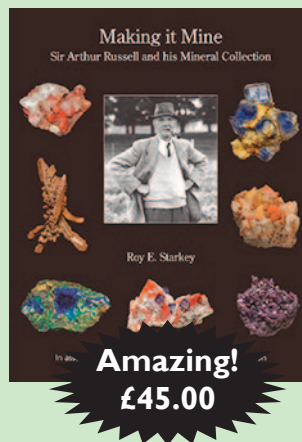
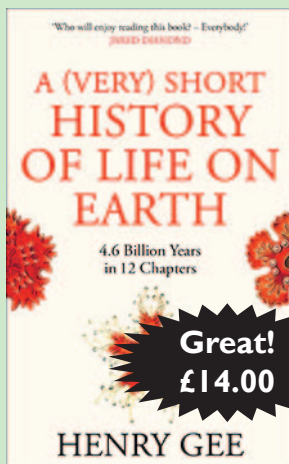
To find out more or to enrol, email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746

To enrol, go to: www.geosupplies.co.uk. enter our online shop FIRST and THEN find the course.

Or ring us on 0114 2455746.

Featured books for August 2026

In each issue we are pleased to be able to introduce you to a range of featured books. Where they are being offered at reduced prices, these will be current to the end of August 2026 provided that stocks are available. This month we feature a variety of different books. Please note, all prices include UK postage.



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