

Geowalks: Mull and Iona

Monday 16 to Saturday 21 April 2018

The islands of Mull and Iona have a rich geological heritage. The scenery and beauty of the area derives mainly from incredible volcanic activity about 60 million years ago, which produced a thick blanket of basalt lava flows that form much of Mull and include the world-famous rocks of Staffa. Within the lava flows there are lots of interesting features, including basalt columns, a famous fossilised tree and in-filled gas bubbles. However, it is not just basalt that we find here, in many places the lava has been eroded away, exposing a diverse collection of rocks below; including Iona's marble, the Ross of Mull granite and sedimentary rocks. In one small geographical area you find some of the oldest and youngest rocks of Scotland, and some important ones from in between!

Outline Programme

There is plenty of flexibility in the programme, to make the best of the weather conditions and also to allow time for your own explorations, bird-watching, etc.

Monday Meet at Fionnphort on Mull in the late afternoon. Short evening walk to explore the local rocks.

Tuesday 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 and the marble quarry. Time also to explore the Abbey or the sandy beaches of the north.

Wednesday Explore the south coast of the Ross of Mull. At Ardalanish beach we can trace the junction between the Ross of Mull granite and the Moine metamorphic rocks, then travel eastwards along an interesting and varied coastline towards Scoor.

Thursday 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.

Friday Visit Carsaig bay for 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.

Saturday Head home, with a potential stop at Loch Buie on the way to see some of the complexities of the Mull Central Volcano. Depart Fionnphort mid-morning.

Details

Cost course fee £420 per person; this includes your geology guide (Angus Miller), accommodation and food, boat trip to Staffa and return ferry journeys to Iona. It does not include transport (see below).

Accommodation & Food We will be based near Fionnphort on the Ross of Mull, in two adjoining holiday cottages – Ach na Brae. Alternatively you are free to organise your own accommodation on Iona or the Ross of Mull with a range of accommodation available, from camping to hotels.

All food provided, self-catering breakfast, lunch and communal evening meals. We will eat out one night.

Transport This trip is organised on a self-drive basis. Car sharing is encouraged, to reduce the cost and to make the trip logistically easier. Passengers are expected to contribute to costs. Fionnphort is easily accessible by public transport from central Scotland, and



the trip is designed to require minimal transport once you get to Fionnphort.

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, please send a deposit of £50 per person cheque payable to Geowalks or bank transfer to Geowalks: Sort code 09-06-66 Account number 40260854. Final payment is due four weeks in advance – programme and reminder will be sent in advance of this.

If you cancel your booking, refunds will be at my discretion and will usually only be available if someone else takes 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.



Angus Miller, Geowalks
23 Summerfield Place, Edinburgh EH6 8AZ
0131 555 5488 | 0797 997 1310
angus@geowalks.co.uk | www.geowalks.co.uk