PLEASE consider giving us some help so that what has been achieved is not lost. Jobs can be shared or even specified for 'only a year' or whatever.

I end the plea with a quote from one of our current committee members: "I can assure you that, if you join the committee, not only will the Society benefit but that your learning and enjoyment of geology will also."
E. D.

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Fossiliferous rock - Clevedon

THE CUILLIN COMPLEX (GLEN BRITTLE and CORRIE LAGAN) MAY 2009

Mellissa Freeman

This was part of Open University field trip to Skye in May 2009 led by Dr. Charlie Bendall and Dr. Bill Perkins of Aberystwyth University.


Photo 1: Charlie and Bob setting the pace

Photo: Mellissa Freeman

The Black Cuillin forms the highest ground on Skye found on the mountainous Cuillin Ridge. With its precipitous drops and ragged Peaks it was formed as a result of the emplacement of the main Cuillin centre.

The day involved a hike up into Corrie Lagan; an ascent of about 600 m – distance of about 5-6 km. On leaving the road (grid ref NG 410 207) we began our climb. Our first stop was to look at the bed of the burn (a stream for those of us who don't speak Scottish…), at some greenish-grey extrusive basalts *(Photo 2).*


Photo 2: Basalt in river bed.

Photo: Lorraine Field

The green coloration is due to metamorphism by the later Cuillin intrusion which hydrated the lavas producing Mg-rich silicates including chlorites and epidote.

Ten metres further uphill we stumbled upon a linear belt of conglomerates which comprised of poorly sorted, rounded cobbles (*Photo 3)* that were grain supported. These were interpreted as an upper river deposit. Some of the pebbles have been identified as coming from Rum in previous studies; Rum is an older volcanic centre than Skye.

Photo 3: *Conglomerate of rounded cobbles*
Photo: Lorraine Field

The matrix of these conglomerates was slightly green showing hydrothermal alteration similar to the basalts seen lower down the slope. A little further up at the bridge we found an outcrop of the conglomerate that had been caught up in a later intrusion. The boundary was visible so this must have been wet unconsolidated sediment when intruded. The section near to the water edge was brecciated and siliceous to look at.

Onwards and Upwards! Further up the hill is a stunning and dramatic gorge *(Photo 4)* complete with 30ft waterfall. It is thought that the gorge has been formed from the glacial erosion of a series of cross-cutting dykes.

Photo 4: Gorge at the base of the Cuillins
Photo: Mellissa Freeman

Lunch was taken at a glacial loch *(Photo 5)* further up the mountain. The ridge bounding the edge of the loch was formed from the terminal moraine.

Photo 5: The view from the loch just after lunch *Photo: Mellissa Freeman*

After lunch we went in search of in-situ rocks. We found some gabbros which contained clino-pyroxene, plagioclase, olivine and magnetite. The cpx formed oikiocrysts enclosing tiny plagioclase crystals and the magnetite caused our compasses to go mad! A steep climb up to the mouth of the corrie ensued. The glacial rock formations were beautifully rounded and striated; created by one unit of rock and ice moving over and grinding away another. These rounded rocks

contained layers of alternating gabbro and clino-pyroxene bands. The bands coalesced in places and some of the layers weren't as plagioclase rich as others indicating some sort of flow was involved.

An arduous climb took us the remaining distance up into to Corrie Lagan itself which was comprised of gabbro with the most common mineral being olivine and some black/blue magnetite. In the corrie walls we could make out dykes and a series of cone sheets (these have been known to be hundreds of metres thick). They are conchoidal in shape and dip towards the centre – most likely fed from a magma chamber at depth.

Photo 6: Glacial formations at the base of Corrie Lagan *Photo: Mellissa Freeman*

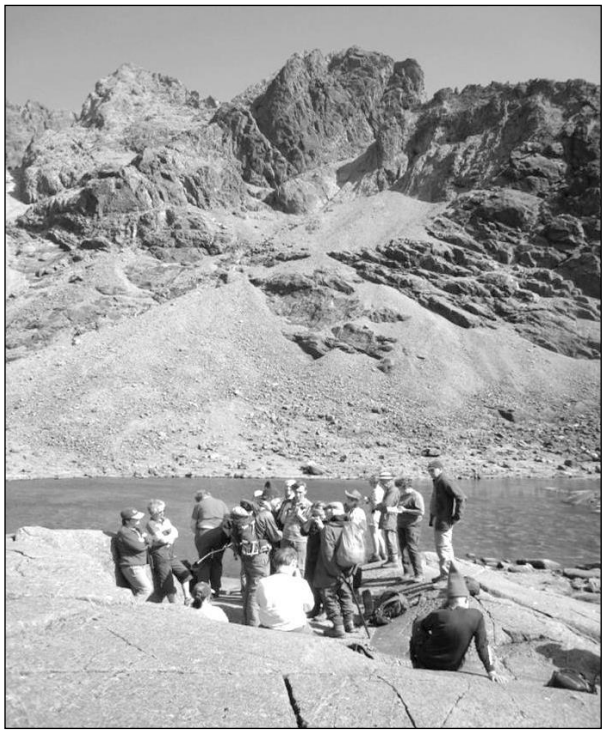

Photo 7: Group in the Corrie

Photo: Lorraine Field

A grand day out was rounded off by a visit to the Sligachan Hotel for a few beers and supper!

Written in association with Lorraine Field (Bristol University), Lexi Cruickshank and Alec Thompson (OUGS)

Seen on a sign:
'Visit the Jurassic World Heretic Coast'
- presumably written by a creationist?

Sign from Milford-on-Sea where we were observing the coastal hazards.

Elizabeth Devon *photo by Peter Kennett*