

So ended another excellent day with Dave Green, it is a pity so few attended.

Thanks to Mike Parr and Sue Price for some of the photos.

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Port Askaig tillite By Isabel Buckingham

I have seen this deposit in the Garvellach Islands when I'd walked much of the length of Grabh Eileach, been taken round the islands by boat and seen the justifiably famous drop stone.



Image 1: The scale object is a 2p piece. I chose this location as the clasts were well rounded and of various sizes. As the rock face was wet the fine laminations show up. I thought "down" was in the 8 o'clock position.



Image 2: This was just to the right of the first image and with the scale object. The pink coarse grained granite clast is very different; larger and angular with the corners not smoothed at all.

Having been on Islay for almost a week, I'd seen a variety of recent fluvo-glacial deposits including what is generally accepted to be a diamictite formed under a floating ice shelf.

Simply, as the continent of Rodinia broke up, (approximately 750 ma ago), and the Iapetus Ocean started to form, initial spreading was followed by the

formation of a series of rifted basins. At the base sits the Argyll group (670-600 Ma) which contains the Port Askaig tillites indicating glaciation. This is followed in the sequence by warm water carbonates.

There is not much parking space in Port Askaig. The superb section illustrated in the guide* is now 7/8ths bolted and netted to prevent rock fall onto the traffic. Only the most easterly part can be approached and seen clearly as trapped debris obscures much of the remainder. It is nothing like what I saw on the Garvellachs. The dark grey matrix is very fine grained and has just perceptible laminations and tiny ripples. The rocks was of very varied sizes, some smooth and rounded and others very angular as shown with 2p as scale object. I could accept this as formed under floating ice.

*A guide to the Geology of Islay by David Webster, Roger Anderton & Alasdair Skelton.

This guide includes 12 geological walks with a whisky recommendation for each. Carol Isla distillery is built on this deposit.

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