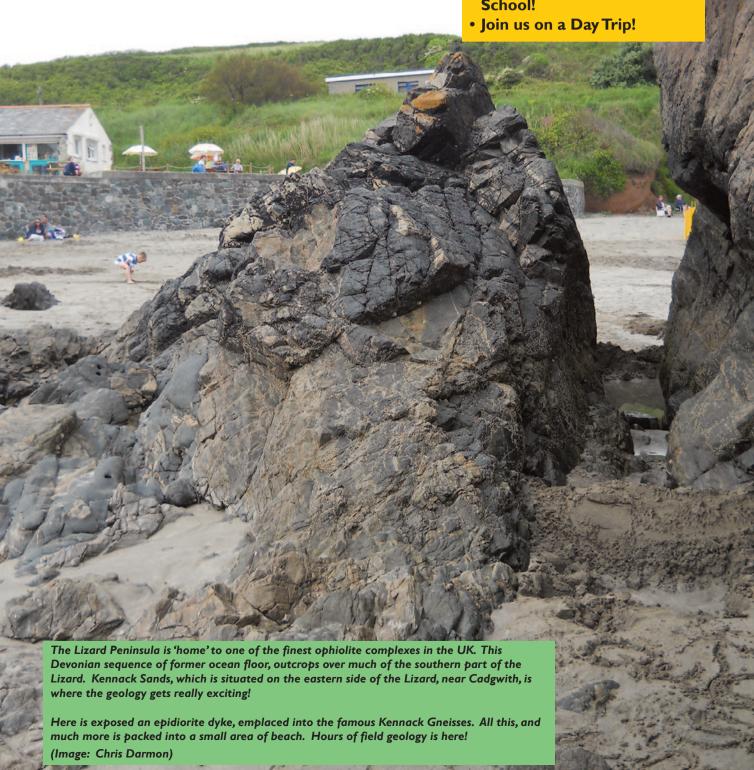


Down to Earth exera

Issue II2 April 2022



- Book a place on a Residential Field Trip in 2022!
- Join us at our Summer School!



From the Editorial team...

As the world in general and Europe in particular comes to terms with the challenges caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, one thing is abundantly clear. Germany, and to a lesser extent the UK, were wrong to entrust their oil and gas supplies to Vladimir Putin's Russia. That said, Germany's response in cancelling the commissioning of the Nord stream 2 pipeline, came as an early body blow to Putin and was exactly the right thing to do.

The spotlight has now turned to energy security across the world. Questions are rightly being asked about the nature of some of the countries who supply the western nations with their oil and gas. Even our own Prime Minister seemed to recognise some of the irony when he visited Saudi Arabia and the UAE recently to secure supplies.

The current situation shines the spotlight on our own reserves in the West Shetland Basin and also the proposal for a new coal mine to serve the needs of the steel industry, off Whitehaven. Should these proposals now be given the green light? Whilst they won't help us in our longer term requirement to cut carbon dioxide emissions, they will make us more energy secure. We should expect announcements on these projects in the months to come.

Perhaps the one good thing to come out of the Ukrainian war thus far has been the announcements from the EU and elsewhere concerning an acceleration of their move away from oil and gas. Definitely a step in the right direction. As for the war itself, let us all hope that this madness, for that is what it is, can come to an end soon and the killing can stop.

Chris Darmon & Colin Schofield
The Down to Earth editorial team

See pages 6-9 for the full spectrum of our 'real' and virtual events!



Amidst the chaos of Ukraine, signs that coal is making a comeback...

With the cost of energy, particularly oil and gas, rising to extremely high levels, some countries appear to be turning to coal to fill the resultant energy gap. At least some of this is due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia with countries seeking new supplies of oil and gas.

There has then been a knock on effect as countries like India, with plentiful supplies of coal, seek to reduce their dependence on oil and gas, in favour of coal.

As this issue was closing for press, the United Nations' Secretary General, Antonio Guterres was warning that these short-term measures might "close the window" on the Paris climate goals.

Commenting on the subject for the first time since the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, the Secretary General said: "The problem was not solved in Glasgow, in fact, the problem is getting worse." Speaking at the Economic Sustainability Summit, Mr. Guterres went on to say: "Countries could become so consumed by the immediate fossil fuel supply gap that they neglect or knee-cap policies to cut fossil fuel use. This is madness. Addiction to fossil fuels is mutually assured destruction."

Instead he asserted, "Countries must accelerate the phase out of coal and all fossil fuels, and implement a rapid and sustainable energy transition, as the only true pathway to energy security."

Citing a "handful of holdouts, such as Australia" Guterres states that coal must be banished. The goal must be a full phase out for richer countries by 2030 and 2040 for all others, including China.

Meanwhile in the UK, the race is on to secure oil and gas from home waters...

The *Financial Times* reports that the UK's North Sea regulator plans the first oil and gas licensing round since 2020, later this year as we seek to secure more domestic oil and gas in the wake of the Ukraine

Some of these would include existing discoveries that are projects that are pretty much ready to go. Whatever is ultimately decided, any moves towards increasing supplies would be unpopular particularly amongst climate campaigners, who will argue that we should be investing instead in renewables.

All this comes as the Prime Minister is preparing to publish his updated energy strategy which is due at the end of this month. It's likely that this will call for domestic energy supplies to be bolstered in the current world uncertainty.

The race to remove Russian oil and gas from the equation is certainly injecting a new pace to the decision making process. Chancellor Rishi Sunak is needing to weigh his options as he considers his budget statement this week, which some people think may include further help for people experiencing real fuel poverty as oil and gas prices go on increasing.

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New Zealand fossil hunter hopes that he's found a giant mosasaur...

We don't often bring you news about fossil finds in New Zealand, but this caught our eye and comes from the Taranaki Daily News.

An amateur fossil hunter found the fragments and pieced them together. He hopes that they are from a mosasaur, a predator that could grow as long as a bus. However experts think that they may come from a prehistoric whale, a no less impressive find.



Fragments of the fossilised skull. The left rock and the bottom rock were part of the jaw. The two protruding gaps in the top rock were, Glen Wilson believes, eardrums. (Image: Glen Wilson/Stuff)

Glen Wilson has been collecting the fossil fragments from the rugged bush for the past 15 years. In total he's got 14 pieces of a massive skull. He thinks they could be the remains of a mosasaur a type of aquatic reptile that resembles a crocodile that lived at the end of the Cretaceous, around 70 Ma.

The skull looks to be a massive two metres long and 1.5m wide. Glen says that he's never heard of anything with a skull that large ever being found in New Zealand before.

After consulting with experts at the Te Papa Museum in Wellington, they have suggested that the remains come from a fossilised toothless whale or baleen. However, Glen thinks that he has seen a tooth in one of the rocks. Hence he is sticking to his idea that this is a mosasaur. These have been occasionally unearthed in New Zealand since the mid-1800s, but are rare.



This is the tooth shape, which would be evidence mosasaur, a type of aquatic reptile, rather than a whale. (Image: Stuff)

The report goes on to say:

"The University of Otago's website says one of the most complete mosasaur skulls, from a creature about five metres long, was discovered in the Waipara area of North Canterbury in 2004. Examples as long as 15 metres, about the length of a bus, have been found in other parts of the world.

Wilson would not give the exact location of the north Taranaki fossil site, but said he visited every year to find new pieces.

"It's a massive area I have to search," he said. "There are two or three thousand rocks. I've sort of been back up over the years. There's a bit here and a bit there, with some covered up by other rocks. I have had all family members and a few strong friends help me, which was no mean feat as the rocks are down a steep bluff."

You can read the full report here: https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-dailynews/news/300542630/taranaki-fossil-finder-hopes-he-has-unearthed-a-mosasaur-a-prehistoric--predator-that-could-grow-aslong-as-a-bus

Cambo oilfield west of Shetland - oil giant Shell reconsiders its position...

As predicted, things are moving fast as the world scrambles to secure oil supplies to cover for the loss of Russian oil and gas. As recently as last December, when oil was \$70 a barrel, Shell announced that it was pulling out of further involvement with the giant Cambo oilfield west of Shetland.

Since then Shell hasn't sold its stake in the Cambo field and in the same period, the oil price has risen and now stands at more than \$100 a barrel. In these changed circumstances it would be surprising if it were not having second thoughts about the decision.

Cambo was discovered in 2002 and is 70% owned by Siccar Point Energy and 30% by Royal Dutch Shell. It is located in some 1,100m deep North Sea waters and some 75km west of Shetland. The field sits on the Corona Ridge geological structure with the oil being held in a Tertiary sandstone reservoir. There are estimated to be 800 million barrels of recoverable oil.

Shell has also recently resubmitted plans to develop the Jackdaw gas field off Scotland's east coast. It's first application was turned down on environmental grounds last year.

If you want to find out more about the Cambo field there's plenty on the internet for you to find.



BGS to resume in-person stakeholder meeting at the Geological Society...

This is from the BGS website:

We are pleased to be able to host you once again in person and hope to welcome you on Thursday 31 March 2022.

Geoscience knowledge and expertise and the in-depth understanding of the subsurface are critical in supporting the global energy transition and in meeting the UK's net zero targets. We are in a privileged position to contribute to these challenges.

At our stakeholder event we will open up a conversation on the development of our new strategy, which will encompass our science, research and organisational vision and mission for the next five years. In partnership with our BGS Board Chair, Sir Keith O'Nions, we will facilitate open discussions on key topics in geological science and research areas. We welcome participation, feedback and input into our future direction as a world-leading geological survey.

The two panel sessions planned for the day are:

- Net Zero: What are the challenges to meeting the 2050 target and how can we use the subsurface to help resolve them?
- Geospatial Data: Why is geological knowledge relevant to protecting our environment and infrastructure in a changing climate?

Whilst it's probably too late to join in-person, it may be possible to join virtually.

Go to: https://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/

Where is coal still being mined in the UK?

Deep coal mining ceased in the UK about five years ago and since then there have been a handful of surface mining operations in four areas, South Wales, Northeast England and in West Lothian and Ayrshire, Scotland.

I recently came across an article by Dorothy Musariri, dated March 12th 2020. It was published online by NS Energy. It lists a number of sites in the areas named above as being active at the time.



The Ffos-y-Fran opencast coal site in South Wales (Image: Stantec)

One of the main companies that has been working opencast coal in the UK, is Banks. A careful examination of their website failed to reveal any sites where coal is still being worked. Instead, there were lots of images of wetland habitats and thriving nature reserves. What we do know is that last year Banks lost a bid for a planning

application on the outskirts of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Not wanting to give up in my quest to find details of at least one working opencast coal mine, I searched for the Ffos-y-Fran opencast coalmine in South Wales. This large site is now being billed, not as a working coal mine, (which it almost certainly still is) but as a reclamation site.



This image from Rob Edwards' environmental website in Scotland comes from an unknown location in 2013 (Image: Rob Edwards)

Amazingly, you begin to get the feeling that we are into an 'information black hole' (yes literally) where we mustn't, at any cost, own up to mining coal! Strange because the South Wales mining operations seem to be geared up to the needs and requirements of the local steel industry.

Finally, I turned to the Ayrshire coalfield where I knew, or thought I knew, of at least one working pit. After the collapse of Scottish Coal in 2013, with the loss of 590 jobs, the industry north of the border has struggled in recent times. A mine operated at Greenburn, near New Cumnock until about 2015, but that is now the site of a wind farm.

In short, I could find no evidence of any coal working currently going on in Scotland. but is this correct? Are you up to the task of tracking down the last working coal mine in England, Scotland or Wales? We'd like to hear from you, better still we'd like to see evidence of coal mining today, from somewhere near you. As the old saying goes "the proof of the pudding is in the eating" so a picture would be great!

Just email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk

Stanhope, Durham





Double digit price increases and widening supply chain problems...

We have previously reported on supply chain issues regarding Suunto compass/clinometers. Whilst that issue continues, there are now issues with a number of specific products across a much wider spectrum of suppliers.

Garmin GPS - The supply of many of these products is being affected by a severe shortage of silicon chips.

Microscopes - There are currently very few of the models that we normally supply from Brunel available. This is being hampered by plant closures due to Covid in China and also shipping problems.

Estwing - we have stocks of some of the popular hammers, but future supplies are not looking so good.

Geonotebooks - We have just been advised of an 11% price increase by Chartwell which will affect onward retail prices going forward.

Last chance to buy Dunedin titles before prices go up...

We've just been advised by Anthony Kinahan of Dunedin Press that the price of all of his popular geology titles will be going up from April 1st.

Smaller format titles in the 'Introducing Earth & environmental sciences' will be going up to £12.00, whilst the larger format titles are now £16.00.

As a Special Offer, we will continue to supply the small format titles at £11.00 each including UK postage, until the end of April (or while stocks last). From May 1st. they will be £13.00 each.

Special offer prices will apply on the following titles:

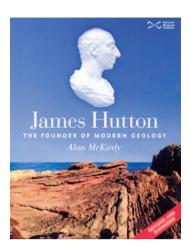
Introducing Geology • Introducing Palaeontology Introducing Volcanology • Introducing Geomorphology Introducing Oceanography

New James Hutton book...

We're pleased to announce the arrival of a new title from National Museums Scotland

In anticipation of the tercentenary of James Hutton's birth in 1726 a new and greatly expanded re-write of the 2012 book has been published.

The price, including postage in the UK - is £16.50



Go to our website: www.geosupplies.co.uk

Or ring us on 0114 245 5746

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Extra April 2022





NORTH CORNWALL - APRIL 2-9

Due to a couple of late cancellations, we are able to offer 2 places for just £1095 in a double or twin room - contact us NOW if you can fill them!

We also have vacancies on Pembrokeshire (which is now based in St Davids), Northeast Scotland and the Summer School.

We also have places available on some of our Autumn trips.

To obtain a booking form and also check the latest vacancies, you can email us as at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on: 0114 245 5746

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

The 2022 programme

- the full list

- North Cornwall April 2-9
- Raasay & Skye April 21-28
- Northwest Highlands April 29-May 6
- Dingle Peninsula May 18-25
- Mull & Ardnamurchan June 4-11
- Pembrokeshire June 25-July 2
- Northeast Scotland July 20-27
- Worcester Summer School August 13-20
- Berwick & the Borders September 1-8
- Minehead, Somerset September 14-21
- Malvern Hills September 28-October 2
- Yorkshire Coast October 10-15

Please note: Everyone booking will be required to have completed a Covid-19 vaccination programme in good time and to be 'fit to travel'.

Brouse 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 mainly comprise 15-20 people. Overseas trips are usually larger.
- We usually use 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.
- During the current period, even if we have a minibus you will be able to use your own car if you wish.
- 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

The 2022 Residential Trip programme...

Please refer to the full list of 2022 trips on the previous page. In this feature we have simply selected those trips with several vacancies.

For the latest vacancy situation email us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk or ring: 0114 245 5746

Pembrokeshire June 25-July2

We've been trying to return to this, one of our favourite areas, for two years! This trip is based at the Premier Inn in St Davids enabling us to travel to all the best sites in Pembrokeshire, and allowing you to travel by train to the field area. (There's a bus service from Haverfordwest.) We'll be taking geological sites at Marloes, St Davids, Broadhaven and Saundersfoot, to name but a few. This is Palaeozoic geology at its best, all folded and faulted in the Variscan Orogeny.

Northeast Scotland July 20-27

This trip examines the coastline of Moray and Nairn, along with some of the inland outcrops. It's known to geologists as the 'kingdom of Dalradia' because its dominated by the metamorphic rocks of the Dalradian formation. That said, we'll also see sediments from the Old and New Red Sandstones and even a little Jurassic. Come and explore an area of Scotland that lies between Inverness and Peterhead, we promise that you will not be disappointed!

University of Worcester Summer School August 13-20

Our annual summer school is beginning to feel a bit like the Tokyo Olympics! We first tried to run it in 2020 and then the University could not accommodate us this year, so we've gone for 2022! We are sure that it will have been worth the wait as we bring you a varied programme of field visits across the Midlands and Welsh Borders, from our bases in Worcester. Accommodation at the University is mainly in en-suite single rooms. Come and join our group of more than 30 people as we explore the geology of the area.

Berwick & the Borders September 1-8

This trip includes a visit to the 'holy grail of geological time' at Siccar 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. In short, there's something for everyone on this week..



Lundy Island, home to the eponymous Tertiary granite

Minehead, Somerset September 14-21

The coast of North Somerset is the 'other' Jurassic Coast with similar geology to that of Dorset, but without the crowds! We'll be taking in the Devonian rocks of Lynmouth and the landscape of the Exmoor National Park. Take in the slower pace of life aboard a West Somerset Railway steam train as it travels between Watchet and Blue Anchor. Weather permitting, we'll also take a day trip to the fabulous Island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel where you can examine a Tertiary granite and marvel at the fabulous birdlife.



Courses in Geography/Geology/Biology and Environmental studies Self taught course, full board and accommodation from £50+vat pppn Tutored course, full board and accommodation from £75+vat pppn

Malvern Hills September 28-October 2

Great Malvern is world famous for its spring water that flows from fissures in the Precambrian rock of the hills made famous by Elgar. Aside from these ancient igneous rocks there are also nearby exposures of Lower Palaeozoic limestones along with sediments from the Carboniferous and Permo-Trias. We'll also be including a trip along the Severn Valley railway to view Coal Measures and dunes.



Chalk cliffs and raised beach caves at Flamborough Head

The Yorkshire Coast October 10-15

This trip is based at the small North Yorkshire village of Hunmanby, just to the south of Filey. From our comfortable guest house base, we'll get to see Jurassic and Cretaceous rocks from Scarborough down to Flamborough. We'll also take in the fine Quaternary cliffs of Holderness and the unique inland scenery that is the Yorkshire Wolds. A great way to round off the 2022 field season!

You can view brochures for all of our trips at our website: www.geosupplies.co.uk Booking forms are only available from us at: downtoearth@geosupplies.co.uk. or ring us on 0114 245 5746

Day Trips...

We're pleased to bring back a few of our ever popular day trips for 2022. These normally commence around 11.00 in the morning and end around 16.00 in the afternoon. Walking distances are moderate and should be within everyone's capabilities.

The cost is £10.00 per person. Currently we are ready to accept bookings on the trips shown below.

April 18 Easter Monday, Rocks of Charnwood Forest

Charnwood Forest in Northwest Leicestershire is a great place to study igneous and metamorphic rocks of the Precambrian. During this day we'll visit several different places and may also see a fossil. Don't worry that it's a Bank Holiday, we'll be avoiding the crowds! *Meeting: Markfield, Altar Stones at 11.00*

May 11 Wednesday, Horton in Ribblesdale, North Yorkshire

For this trip you can travel on the scenic Settle-Carlisle railway if you wish as we examine the local rocks and scenery. Our story begins with the Silurian greywacke sandstones and then moves on to the Carboniferous limestones and the overlying Yoredale series that form the magnificent local peaks. Finally we've the glacial drumlins that litter the valley to think about.

Meeting: Horton in Ribblesdale railway station at 11.00



The Silurian basement rocks at Horton in Ribblesdale are valuable roadstone. (Image: Yorkshire Dales National Park)

June 1 Wednesday, The Lickey Hills country park

This lovely site is on the south western edge of the City of Birmingham and is something of a favourite of ours. It's a great place to discover the relationship between the underlying geology and the landscape and topography of the local area.

The Lickey Hills were visited by Charles Lapworth with his students from Mason College (later Birmingham University) in the 1880s and you will discover that there's a curious connection with him to this day.

Meeting: Outside the visitors' centre at Lickey Hills Country Park at 11.00

To enrol onto these Day Trips, or to find out more, go to our website, and enter the online shop: www.geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on 0114 245 5746

The 2023 Residential Trip programme...

We're busy working on our programme for next year, in the fervent hope that we can finally put Covid behind us. Whilst the final programme may show significant changes from what's given here, we just wanted to wet your appetite a little!

We wanted to particularly draw your attention to the fact that after a gap of more than five years, we are returning to Iceland. This includes an overnight stay on the Westman Islands, 'the Capri of the North'. We're also taking a look at La Palma and the site of the recent eruption.

Overseas

La Palma, February 23-March 2 Iceland including Westman Islands, March 27-April 6

UK trips

Ilfracombe, Devon
Orkney & Caithness, Scotland
Islay, Jura & Gigha, Scotland
The Isle of Man
The Isle of Wight
The Jurassic Coast
The Yorkshire Dales
Porthcawl, South Wales

Cromer Jersey, Channel Islands Summer School, Sunderland

As soon as these trips are ready to accept bookings we'll let you know through the pages of DtoE extra!

Welcome to our virtual world! Virtual Day Schools

There's still time to join the last of our Virtual Day Schools! Our popular Day School format, transcribed from the face-to-face into the virtual, with some lively topics for you to enjoy. Day schools begin at 10.30 and involve three Zoom sessions of about 45 minutes each with time for you to carry out your own guided study in between.

Our Virtual Day School costs £20.00 or £25.00 if you want the background materials in printed form. You can book online at: www.geosupplies.co.uk or ring us on 0114 245 5746

March 30 Torridonian, Old Red & New Red - the continental sandstones of the UK

Through the long geological history of the UK, there have only ever been three really important and thick continental sandstones, the Torridonian, the Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian and the New Red Sandstone of the Permian and Triassic. In this unusual day school we'll take a look at each of these formations. We'll examine their shared characteristics and the environments in which they formed.

Autumn/Winter Zoom Courses

We realise that it's a bit early, but we are already planning our Autumn and Winter Zoom courses! Because the residential programme runs well into October and commences again in February of 2023, we are looking to run 5/6 weeks either side of the Christmas and New Year holiday.

Here's what we have in mind:

Steps towards the rock face (11-weeks)

This is our comprehensive geology course designed for anyone who wants to have a basic introduction to all the major aspects of geology. Despite more than a hundred people completing the course, this will be the first time that it has been adapted for a Zoom format.

Whilst the Steps course has been devised for adult learners, it would also be suitable for school/college students looking for an introduction to geology.

COST: £60.00 (£90.00 for 2 people studying together) with electronic materials. Printed materials £25.00 extra.

Geology of Yorkshire (10-weeks)

This course goes through the geology of Yorkshire, beginning with its basement rocks from the Ordovician and Silurian and then going on through the Carboniferous, Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous and Palaeogene. It ends with the most recent glaciation of the Quaternary. Along the way you'll see how the geology hasn't only shaped the landscape, it's also defined the industries and even the people.

COST: £60.00 (£90.00 for 2 people studying together) with electronic materials. Printed materials £20.00 extra.

Fossils for All (11-weeks)

We've raided our 20-Unit 'Fossils for All'course to bring you a course that focuses on fossils in all of their diversity. From trilobites to brachiopods and corals to graptolites, we explain what these fossils are, where and how they lived and what they tell us about life in the past.

COST: £60.00 (£90.00 for 2 people studying together) with electronic materials. Printed materials £20.00 extra.

Something new for the Autumn...

We've been asked for a selection of 'one-off' evening sessions where people have the choice to sign up for one or all of the sessions to suit themselves. So, we're going travelling around the geological world to bring you something new.



A mining landscape from The Troodos Mountains of Cyprus (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

Entitled "An evening in..." we take you on a virtual tour of some of the finest geology there is to see. In each case we'll use the Zoom session to introduce the area and then set you off to explore as much as you want for yourself, using our material to help you.

We'll be covering:

The Canary Islands New Zealand Iceland The Grand Canyon The Himalayas Cyprus

COST: Enrol on individual evenings for £8.00 or take all six for £35.00! Full details later in the year.



Don't worry, we don't bite!

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

Come and join us!

If you have any questions please ask us.

Featured books for April 2022

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 April 2022 provided that stocks are available. Please note, all prices include UK postage.



