
Exploring the landscape of Assynt. A walkers' guide and map showing the rocks and landscape of Assynt and Inverpolly

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Welcome to BGS - British Geological Survey

Book and map cover main photograph View east up the River Traligill to Conival

Inset cover photographs: **Left** Suilven from the west: Torridon sandstone **above** Lewisian Gneiss Middle Winter in Assynt: Conival **Right** Clear waters in the Port Alltan na Bradhan, north west of Achmelvich

Title page View of Quinag from Glencoul

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How to get to Assynt

The Assynt and Inverpolly areas are in the Northwest Highlands of Scotland, north of Ullapool. The main towns in the region are the ports of Ullapool and Lochinver. By road, the area is approximately 2 hours' drive from Inverness, following the A835 road through Ullapool to Ledmore Junction and then the A837 north-west to Lochinver. Scottish Citylink operates a bus service from Inverness to Ullapool, and Scotrail operates a train service from Inverness to Lairg. From either Lairg or Ullapool, it is possible to catch a local bus to Lochinver.

Tourist information

Most tourist services within Assynt are supplied by Tourist Information (01571 844330) at the Assynt Visitor Centre, Main Street, Lochinver IV27 4LX. The Highland Council Ranger Service (01571 844654) also operates from the Assynt Visitor Centre and maintains the information huts at Achmelvich and Clachtoll. It runs a full and varied programme of guided walks throughout the area. Further tourist information can be obtained from the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board website at www.host.co.uk, from <https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/>, or from the Assynt website at <https://www.discoverassynt.co.uk/>.

Lochinver and Ullapool have a variety of hotel, Bed and Breakfast (B & B), hostel and self-catering accommodation. Hotels can also be found in Kylesku, Drumbeg, Achiltibuie and Inchnadamph; there is a good independent hostel at Inchnadamph and a youth hostel at Achiltibuie. Some of the other villages in the area, including Achmelvich, Clachtoll, Culkein, Elphin and Ledmore, have some B & B or self-catering accommodation. Campsites can be found at Achnahaird, Achmelvich, Clachtoll and Ullapool.

Further reading

Walking in Assynt and the Northwest Highlands

Exploring the far North West of Scotland by Richard Gilbert (2000). ISBN 1-871890-27-6. Descriptions of many of the best walks in the north-west of Scotland, accompanied by spectacular photographs. Available in local bookshops.

A Hillwalker's Guide to Sutherland by Tom Strang (1993). ISBN 0-9522654-0-0. Just about the most comprehensive guide to walking in Assynt and Inverpolly. Available in local bookshops.

Land of Rocks and Lochs: A Guide to Assynt and Lochinver by Nick Kerr (1993). ISBN 1-898151-00-8. A good source of information on the ancient and recent history, wildlife and birdlife of the area. Available in local bookshops.

Geology of Assynt and the Northwest Highlands

Northwest Highlands: A Landscape Fashioned by Geology by John Mendum, Jon Merritt and Alan McKirdy (2001). ISBN 1-85397-139-1. A well-illustrated introduction to many geological features in the Northwest Highlands — the ideal companion to this book. Available in local bookshops.

Geological map of the Assynt district. British Geological Survey, 1: 63 360 Special Sheet. The classic 1923 geological map (reprinted 1969) is like a work of art and is still available in the BGS bookshop — www.geologyshop.com. A revised version of this map is in preparation by BGS.

The Highlands Controversy by David Oldroyd (1990). ISBN 0-226-62635-0. The story of how the geology of the Northern Highlands was mapped and debated during the 19th century. Available in major bookshops.

Classic Landforms of the Assynt and Coigach Area by Tim Lawson (2002). ISBN 1-84377-017-2. Part of a series on classic landforms of the British landscape, this book is a concise, well produced and informative guide. Available in major bookshops.

The Northern Highlands of Scotland (4th edition). British Geological Survey (1989). ISBN 0-11-884460-1. Technical overview of the geology of north-west Scotland. Available in the BGS bookshop — www.geologyshop.com.

Geology and landscape of Scotland

Scotland: The Creation of its Natural Landscape by Alan McKirdy and Roger Crofts (1999). ISBN 1-85397-004-2. A well illustrated, easily readable introduction to the geology of Scotland. Available in major bookshops.

Geology and landscapes of Scotland by Con Gillen (2003). ISBN 1-903544-09-2. A thorough account of the geology of Scotland, with geological concepts explained for non-expert readers. Available in major bookshops.

The Geology of Scotland (4th edition) by Nigel Trewin (2002). ISBN 1-86239-126-2. A detailed account of the geology of Scotland, for those who already have some knowledge of geology. Available in academic bookshops.

Geological History of Britain and Ireland by Nigel Woodcock and Rob Strachan (2002). ISBN 0-632-03656-7. For those who have some knowledge of geology and who want to delve deeper into the geology of Britain, this is a very up-to-date book. Available in academic bookshops.

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Rear cover text

The areas of Assynt and Inverpolly, in the Northwest Highlands of Scotland, are known for their dramatic and varied landscapes. The region stretches from an unspoilt coastline, with white sandy beaches and rocky cliffs, to a land of spectacular mountains and remote lochs. Assynt and Inverpolly have long been visited by geologists who come to study the rocks and structures that underlie this unique scenery. This guide and map describe a series of walking routes, varying from short trails and a boat trip to long days in the hills, which will help you to explore some of the geology of the area and to learn how the landscape has formed. There is something here for everyone, from the Sunday stroller to the keen walker, as well as both amateur and professional geologists. We hope you enjoy exploring the landscape of Assynt and Inverpolly.

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(Figure 1) View of Quinag from Glencoul.

(Figure 2) Panorama.

(Figure 101) The sea front at Ullapool.

(Figure 103) Sunset over Loch Glencoul.

(Front cover)

(Rear cover)



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Map Scale 1:50 000

(Front cover)



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