
NWHG Ref. 007 — Balnakeil

Location, grid reference and photograph

The site is located to the north-west of Durness and north of Balnakeil Craft Village, Grid Ref. [NC 372 688].

(Figure 12) Large chert concretions in Sail Mhor Formation, Balnakeil Bay, BGS Photo P530617 — M Krabbendam.

GCR site reference, block, volume and notified feature of SSSI??

GCR Ref. 303, Cambrian Block, Vol. 18. Notified feature of Durness SSSI.

Description and geological significance

An historically famous geological site of international significance for its Cambro-

Ordovician sedimentary rock sequence. The site is the type locality for the limestones and dolostones of the Durness Group, and includes representative portions of six of the seven Durness Group formations, notably the basal Ordovician age Balnakeil, Croisaphuill and Durine formations. It is one of Britain's outstanding earth science sites, of key importance in studies of transatlantic correlation, palaeogeography and faunas.

Accessibility

There is a car park at Balnakeil but a moderate walk across undulating terrain is required to access the coastal exposures further west. No all abilities access.

Conservation

Low conservation requirement due to scale and location of site.

Visibility and “clarity”

Exposures cannot be seen from the road but are very clear once the individual locations are reached.

Interpretation and interpretation potential

The site area is visited by geology students and researchers and forms an important educational resource for teaching purposes. Key geological features require to be interpreted by a specialist for the general public. A successful guided walk, led by a geologist, has been held. There is no interpretation panel and the site should be included in a future Geopark guide as well as included in any local guided walk.

Key references

PRIGMORE, J.K. & RUSHTON, A.W.A. 1999. Scotland: Cambrian and Ordovician of the Hebridean Terrane. In Rushton, A. W. A., Owen, A. W., Owens, R. M. & Prigmore, J. K. (eds) *British Cambrian to Ordovician Stratigraphy*. Geological Conservation Review Series, 18, Chapman & Hall, 295–315.

RAINE, R.J. 2006. The Durness Group of NW Scotland: A stratigraphical and sedimentological study of a Cambro-Ordovician passive margin succession.



(Figure 12) Large chert concretions in Sail Mhor Formation, Balnakeil Bay, BGS Photo P 530617 — M Krabbendam.