

The De La Beche Spring Tour 2009: The Lake District
Friday 6th March – Sunday 8th March

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30 undergraduate geology students (plus 5 extra driving in a separate car), from 1st years to 4th years, met outside the RSM entrance at 11:30am with field-gear and essentials for a weekend in the Lake District. Two minibuses were then driven from London to Keswick, Lake District, arriving at 9pm in the evening. En route to Keswick the buses stopped at a large supermarket where students could pick up breakfast and lunch foods for the next two days. Once finding the youth hostel, Denton House, just outside the centre of Keswick, everyone was checked in and ready for the outdoor adventures of the weekend.

Saturday 7th March 2009

The day started early with an 8:30am breakfast, leaving for the field at 9am. The day started with a 30 minute drive to Mosedale, where the famous Skiddaw Group of rocks can be seen. The Skiddaw Aureole was formed as thermal metamorphism from a large intrusive igneous pluton altered the surrounding country rock as rings of decreasing thermal metamorphic grade from the centre of the hot pluton. At Mosedale it is possible to trace all the alteration zones and for 1st year students to understand basic metamorphism processes, whilst older years can understand the mineralogy of the rocks.

Three stops were made around the Mosedale area before lunch, looking at three different outcrops that had an increasing metamorphic grade and understanding their protoliths; the first being silts and mudstones, the second being sandstones and the third being greywackes. After lunch we departed Mosedale for the Honister Slate mine, an hours drive away.

At 3pm the Honister Slate Mine was visited, where a tour underground and overground of the mine was undertaken by all. Our guide was informative about the history of slate mining, how the outcrop of slate came to be here, how it formed, why it was so special and the current working mine today.

The day ended with a meal cooked in the hostel by 8 of the older students and eaten together in the large dining hall.

Sunday 8th March 2009

At 9pm the Keswick Pencil Museum was visited, relevant to geologists as the Lake District was where the first graphite was discovered and made into pencils. Two groups were made and whilst one was given a tour of the museum the other was shown an informative video about graphite, how it is formed, where it can be found and how it is used today. The video also included how a pencil is made and the factory in Keswick that produces the popular Derwent Pencils range.

After the museum the 'Bowder Stone' was visited, 20 minute drive from the museum. It is a famous 2000 ton stone, 30ft high with a ladder adjacent to it so visitors can climb up onto it. It is a stone that was carried from Scotland by ice sheets that covered the British Isles in the latest Ice Age. Students could identify the rock, take photos and it was a quiz for people to guess how it ended up here, as many people think it tumbled down from the surrounding hillsides.

From the 'Bowder Stone' the long journey home began. The Lake District was left at 1pm and arrival back the RSM in the minibuses was 10pm. The fieldtrip was a big success and the main problem encountered was that the drive to and from the Lake District was very long and tiresome. It also cut Sunday short by quite a few hours.

Risk Assessment for the Trip:

Hazard	Risk	Preventative measures
1. Traffic	Death or injury from vehicles.	Keep off road, walk facing oncoming traffic.
2. Hammering	Hand and eye injuries.	Wear goggles, don't hammer near others.
3. Inadequate clothing, footwear and equipment.	Hypothermia, ankle injuries, loss of grip, injuries to head/ eyes etc.	Appropriate clothing, appropriate footwear, students lacking hardhat and/ or reflective jacket are not to do fieldwork.
4. Extreme weather. Storms, gales, cold wind.	Flying objects, loss of balance, wind chill, hypothermia.	Suitable clothing, headgear, footwear, obtain weather forecast.

Summary of Finances:

OUTGOING

Accommodation: £14 pppn for 2 nights

Pencil Museum: £2 pp

Slate Mine: £298.35 all inclusive for group including a 10% discount

Minibuses: £220 x 2

T-Shirts: £2.50 pp

Total: £1875.85

INCOMING

Sponsorship: £595 including VAT from Shell

Ticket Sales: £35 pp

Tour Monies from Union: £204.16

Total: £2024.16

Total Profit: 148.31

Pictures

