

In the footsteps of Charles Darwin – NW Midlands and North Wales
June 19-24 2009



A meeting jointly sponsored by The Geologists' Association, The Geological Society of London and The Quaternary Research Association

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth in 2009, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*, this field excursion will visit a number of localities in his home area of Shropshire - Staffordshire and also North Wales. Besides the general Darwin related sites, the emphasis will be on his earlier work as a geologist and in particular his field trip in June 1842 to appraise the evidence presented by William Buckland in 1841 supporting the 'Glacial Theory'. A background to the latter may be found in *Quaternary Newsletter* **112**, 22-28, (2007) and *Geoscientist* **18**, 20-23, (2008). The excursion will be led by Professor Peter Worsley (University of Reading) and will be an opportunity to see aspects of the glacial geology of North Wales. Three nights will be spent at Keele University and two in Llanberis.

The proposed outline is:-

- **Friday 19 June.** Arrive at Keele. Evening meeting to outline the programme and presentation by Peter Worsley on Charles Darwin and the Beagle voyage with special reference to Darwin's work on glacial geology. Overnight on campus.
- **Saturday 20 June.** Exploration of Shrewsbury, mainly on foot, visiting many of the Darwin sites including his birth place at The Mount. Evening charter cruise on the River Severn (MV Sabrina). Overnight on campus.

- **Sunday 21 June.** Excursion to the Maer area of north west Staffordshire, the home of Emma Darwin (née Wedgwood). Walks around the village visiting the hall (subject to permission) where the first sketch of the 'Origin' was written, St Peters Church where Charles and Emma were married, the original site of famed study of earthworm activity and 'vegetable mould formation', the Tertiary Butterton dyke, the 'ice rafted' erratic at Loggerheads. Overnight on campus.
- **Monday 22 June.** Travel to North Wales via the A5 to Capel Curig. Walk around Capel to see ice-moulded landforms seen by Darwin when he stayed at the Royal Hotel (now the Plas y Brenin Mountain Centre). Visit to Cwm Idwal to examine the 'Darwin boulder group' and ice erosional/depositional features. Overnight in Llanberis (Royal Victoria Hotel – Darwin stayed at the 'Royal Victoria' in June 1842). Evening presentation by Michael Roberts (Lancaster) on Darwin in North Wales.
- **Tuesday 23 June.** Visit to Moel Tryfan. Finds of marine shells by Joshua Trimmer in the 1830's were very influential in supporting the 'Great Submergence' hypothesis, Morfa Buchan – Buckland's site of iceberg grounding, Beddgelert, Llanberis Pass ice erosional landforms and erratics. Overnight in Llanberis (Royal Victoria Hotel). Evening presentation by Mike Hambrey (Aberystwyth) on Welsh glaciation.
- **Wednesday 24 June.** Take the first (09.00) departure of the Snowdon Mountain Railway to the summit. Discussion of a wide range of mountain glacial features including the nunatak hypothesis. After lunch both mini buses would return to Keele, one continuing to Reading.

A significant amount of walking will be involved. Climbing over rough ground will be necessary in North Wales. The weather may necessitate modification of the programme. Maximum numbers – 26.

The cost for this meeting will be £350-400 including transport and accommodation during the meeting.

To register please visit The Geologists' Association website at:

http://www.geologists.org.uk/events_fieldtrips.html