

BLS FIELD MEETING - NORTH HARRIS, 2-9 May 2020

draft 5

Local organiser: Tristan ap Rheinallt

Field Meetings Secretary: Steve Price, mobile 07919 311897 for use in meeting only please.

Meeting Base

The Scaladale Centre, Ardvourlie, Isle of Harris, HS3 3AB. Grid Ref NB187105

The Centre lies 15 miles south of Stornoway, Lewis and 11 miles north of Tarbert, Harris.

The BLS has booked the whole of the Centre on a self-catering basis. There are 6 bedrooms of varying sizes, which are being utilised to provide up to 18 bed spaces. Sheets / duvets / towels are provided.

Transport to the meeting

Caledonian MacBrayne operate ferries from Ullapool to Stornoway and Uig to Tarbert.

The bus service W10 (Stornoway – Leverburgh) connects Scaladale with both Stornoway and Tarbert.

Maps

These OS 1:25000 maps cover the field sites currently under consideration:

Explorer 456 - North Harris & Loch Seaforth (the meeting base is on this map)

Explorer 455 - South Harris

Explorer 459 - Central Lewis & Stornoway

Provisional Programme

Note that the programme is *provisional* and may be adjusted at the time to give the best chance of good weather at those sites that are more distant from the road.

We have permission to collect lichens anywhere within the **North Harris Trust** (NHT) area, bordered in red on the attached map, except for the small area shaded green in the vicinity of Amhuinnsuidhe Castle (see Friday 8 May). Note that North Harris Trust land does not include the immediate vicinity of Ardvourlie Castle, near the Scaladale Centre.

This permission from NHT gives us plenty of flexibility in the programme and alternatives for those who does not wish to accompany the main group on the longer (and steeper) walks planned for Wednesday and Friday. For example they might like to consider exploring areas adjacent to the main road in the direction of Tarbert, where there are several parking places; or along the minor road to Rheinigidale (NB2201) where there are parking places for one or two vehicles; or the western peninsula of the NHT area at Huisinis (car park at NA992120). There may also be interest in going further afield to explore cemeteries. Tarbert itself has mature trees, though most are on private land.

Also, the woodland shown on the map on the landward side of the Scaladale Centre is relatively recently planted and the trees are small.

Saturday 2 May.

20.30hrs - gather at the Scaladale Centre after dinner for a short introductory meeting to discuss plans for the week.

Sunday 3 May.

Lower Gleann Sgaladail (NB1709/1809) and adjacent crags, North Harris. OS Map 456.

There is ample parking on both sides of the road where the river (Abhainn Sgaladail) goes under it (NB182099). Alternatively, it is possible to walk from the Scaladale Centre (850m along the road, passing some large lichen-covered boulders along the way). In addition to the river, Gleann Sgaladail has rock outcrops and boulder scree (Lewisian gneiss), with steep crags on both the north and south sides.

Monday 4 May.

Gleann Lacasdail, North Harris (NB1800/1801/1802). OS Map 456.

This north-south glen contains a large loch and two smaller ones, with steep crags on either side. There are several parking areas along the road from Tarbert to Scalpay, with access to the west side of the glen from NB17680038 (along a track that ultimately joins with the main Stornoway-Tarbert road), and to the east side from NB18400045. The underlying rock is again gneiss, with (according to the geological map) abundant metabasic pods.

Tuesday 5 May.

Stornoway Castle Grounds, Lewis (NB4032, 4131, 4132, 4133). OS Map 459.

This is the only extensive area of mature (though mostly planted) woodland in Lewis & Harris, with a good range of macro-lichens, including three species of *Lobaria*. There is a large parking area adjacent to the main road at NB40423255, with the Creed Lodge entrance to the castle grounds on the opposite side of the road at NB40473262. From here it is possible to walk down the River Creed and ultimately reach the shore, the lower part of the valley being more interesting. Several other areas in the grounds have mature trees. Refreshments are available at the Woodlands Centre (NB42183319) and Lews Castle (NB41983320), both locations being accessible on foot from the Creed or by vehicle via the main castle grounds entrance at NB42473375. Stornoway Castle Grounds is a large area, but anyone wanting a change from trees could park at the bottom of the Arnish road (NB425302), west of the castle grounds, for easy access to a rocky coastline, a small loch and other habitats.

Wednesday 6 May.

Coire Loch nan Eang (NB145081), North Harris. OS Map 456.

This is an upward extension of Gleann Sgaladail (see Sunday 2 May for access details), The small lochan in this corrie (Loch nan Eang) has the highest elevation (460m) of any in Lewis and Harris, and is surrounded by steep slopes and boulder scree, the underlying rock on the north-facing slopes being granite rather than the usual gneiss. From the main road, it is a walk of more than 4km, and steep in its latter stages. For anyone not wanting to go the whole way, Loch Mhisteam (NB152089) and surrounding area, at the foot of the final steep ascent, could be explored. Alternatively, and weather permitting, anyone feeling particularly energetic could ascend the slope to the west of Coire Loch nan Eang to reach the summit ridge near Mulla bho Thuath (720m, NB140084).

Thursday 7 May.

Luskentyre, South Harris (NG0699, NB0600 etc). OS Map 455.

There is ample parking at the end of the minor road to Luskentyre at NG066998, next to the modern cemetery. Immediately behind the shore, looking north, is an area of short turf with small rock outcrops and small streams. A walk north from here takes one along a rocky coastline to a headland and beyond. Although the underlying geology in this area consists of granite, or gneiss with granite, there is a strong influence of wind-blown sand, creating base-enriched conditions (and marram-grass dunes to the south). This influence decreases as one moves north and/or away from the coast. Although sheltered to some extent by the island of Taransay, the coast here is nonetheless fairly exposed. Further back along the Luskentyre road, however, there are plenty of parking spaces adjacent to a more sheltered shoreline. Incidentally, the beach at Luskentyre is renowned for its scenic beauty.

Friday 8 May.

Sròn Uladail, North Harris (NB0713). OS Map 456.

The slope below Sròn Uladail (famous in climbing circles and sometimes anglicised to Strone Ulladale) is characterised by gigantic boulders, among which grow rowans that are large by Lewis and Harris standards and probably very old. The underlying geology is gneiss with granite veins. Access to this site requires a long walk (6km) along a good track and path from near Amhuinnsuidhe Castle. This walk initially follows a short stretch of tarmac road. Note that parking space is limited: there is room for two (or three?) carefully parked vehicles at the intersection with the 'main' road (NB05260779) and room for a similar number a few tens of meters along the side road.

Sròn Uladail is a spectacular location, and as well as boulder scree and crags, there is an adjacent loch (Loch Uladail). Anyone not wanting to walk the whole distance could explore Loch Chliostair and the surrounding area, which is on the way at NB0610/0710. In this area, we have permission to collect lichens anywhere beyond the bridge where the Abhainn Leòsaid passes beneath the track (NB056089).

Saturday 9 May.

Vacate the Scaladale Centre after breakfast.

BLS FIELD MEETING - NORTH HARRIS, 2-9 May 2020 – photos of some field sites

Lower Gleann Sgaladail (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhallt)



Gleann Lacasdail (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhallt)



Stornoway Castle Grounds (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhallt)



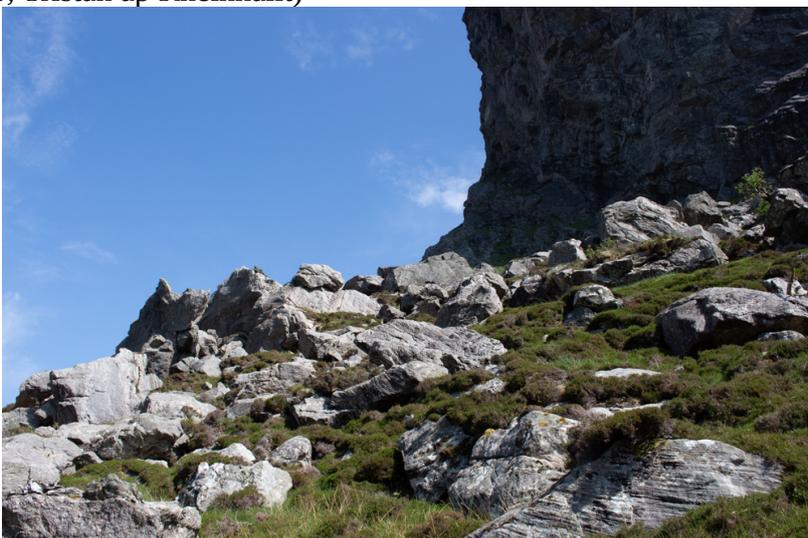
Coire Loch nan Eang (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhalft)



Luskentyre (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhalft)



Sròn Uladail (photo, Tristan ap Rheinhalft)



North Harris Trust Boundary

