Hiking Scotland's Orkney and Shetland Islands

August 6-16, 2014 (11 days)
with Carleton Professor Clint Cowan
Dear Carleton College Alumni and Friends,

I invite you to join Carleton College geologist Clint Cowan ’83 on this unique hiking tour in Scotland’s little-visited Orkney and Shetland Islands!

This is the perfect opportunity to explore on foot Scotland’s Northern Isles’ amazing wealth of geological and archaeological sites. Their rocks tell the whole story, spanning almost three billion years. On Shetland you will walk on an ancient ocean floor, explore an extinct volcano, and stroll across shifting sands, all in the space of a day. In contrast, Orkney is made up largely of sedimentary rocks, one of the best collections of these sediments to be seen anywhere in the world. Both archipelagos also have an amazing wealth of archaeological sites dating back 5,000 years. This geological and archaeological saga is worth the telling, and nowhere else can the evidence be seen in more glorious a setting.

This active land tour features daily hikes that are easy to moderate in difficulty, so to fully enjoy and visit all the sites on this itinerary one should be in good walking condition (and, obviously, enjoy hiking!).

Highlights include:

- The “Heart of Neolithic Orkney,” inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999, including the chambered tomb of Maeshowe, estimated to have been constructed around 2700 B.C.; the 4,000 year old Ring of Brodgar, one of Europe’s finest Neolithic monuments; Skara Brae settlement; and associated monuments and stone settings. These are unquestionably among the most important Neolithic sites in western Europe.

- Excavations at the Ness of Brodgar, a massive ceremonial complex that, in its heyday, must have completely dominated the landscape.

- Eshaness, with some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in the Northern Isles.

- The view from Ronas Hill on a bright day, showing all of Shetland.

- Birdwatching in the Isles, one of the major seabird breeding and feeding areas in the North Atlantic, where more than a million birds breed in very large colonies.

Two minibuses, each with a local driver/guide, will accompany our group, which is limited to only fifteen participants. Our guides will explain in advance the difficulty of each day’s hike(s) and, if you prefer, you can opt out of any hiking excursion and be driven to the next stop; but, bear in mind that a few sites can only be visited if you approach them by foot. The hiking duration for each day is estimated within the following itinerary.

All meals are included, and you will enjoy comfortable accommodations: three nights at the elegant Lynnfield Hotel on Orkney, a comfortable overnight ferry to and from Shetland, and four nights at the remote, charming Busta House Hotel.

Sincerely,

Frances L. Spangler ’91
President, Carleton College Alumni Association
Wednesday, August 6, 2014 - DEPART HOME

Thursday, August 7 - Aberdeen, SCOTLAND | Kirkwall, Orkney
In Aberdeen, Scotland, you will be met at about 3:00pm and transferred to the ferry terminal where our group will board the ferry to Kirkwall, Orkney. We will have dinner aboard the ferry, arrive in Kirkwall at about 11:00pm, and transfer to our hotel. Overnight at The Lynnfield Hotel for three nights. (D)

Friday, August 8 - Kirkwall | Mainland Orkney | Kirkwall
Distance 5 mi. Height climbed: negligible
Following breakfast, we will visit several important Neolithic sites on mainland Orkney, from the Ring of Brodgar, via the Ness of Brodgar excavations, to the Standing Stones of Stenness and Maeshowe, which is Britain's largest chambered cairn. This, the ‘Heart of Neolithic Orkney,’ which also includes Skara Brae (a site we will visit tomorrow), was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999. (B,L,D)

Saturday, August 9 - Kirkwall | Skara Brae | Stromness | Kirkwall
Distance 3 mi. Height climbed: 300 ft.
Today we witness the wreckage of the mountains as represented by the Stromness Flagstone group of rocks. These were ideally suited as building materials and were used by the builders of the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, possibly Orkney’s most exciting archaeological site, which was buried by a sandstorm in about 2450 B.C. It was well preserved and then revealed by another storm in 1850. After visiting Skara Brae we will walk south along the spectacular coast with geos, natural arches, caves, sea stacks, and outcrops of igneous basement rocks; and visit the town of Stromness, an intimate stone-built port huddled against the sea. (B,L,D)

Sunday, August 10 - Kirkwall | Isle of Hoy | Kirkwall
Distance 6.75 mi. Height climbed: 250-500 ft.
This morning we will check out of our hotel and take the ferry to Hoy, the highest and wildest of all Orkney Islands. Our walk will take us to the world famous sea stack (at 450 ft.) known as The Old Man of Hoy. Before returning to the ferry, we will visit the 5,000-year-old Dwarfie Stane, a rock-cut tomb similar to the chamber tombs of the Mediterranean. Return by ferry to Kirkwall, mainland Orkney, in the afternoon. Dinner tonight will be at The Lynnfield Hotel, before we take the overnight ferry from Kirkwall to Shetland at about 11:00pm. (B,L,D)
Monday, August 11 - Lerwick, Shetland | Isle of Mousa | South Mainland | Brae
Distance 4 mi. Height climbed: negligible
We arrive in Lerwick in the morning. After breakfast on the ferry we take the boat to the uninhabited island of Mousa, which is famous for its Iron Age broch—the world’s best-preserved Pictish broch. It rises to 40 feet, and the skill and accuracy of its builders has resulted in a 2,000-year-old construction that appears today as though the builders have just laid the last stone and gone home for the night. Back on mainland we will visit a Viking soapstone quarry on a near industrial scale as well as Jarlshof, which was occupied for more than 4,000 years. The site boasts a remarkable sequence of stone structures: late Neolithic houses, a Bronze Age village, an Iron Age broch and wheelhouses, a Norse longhouse, a medieval farmstead, and a 16th-century laird’s house. Overnight at the Busta House Hotel, located near Brae, for four nights. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, August 12 - Brae | North Roe | Brae
Distance 6 mi. Height climbed: 450 ft.
Today we visit the oldest rocks in Shetland. In addition to the ancient basement rocks, similar to those of Greenland, we see a good exposure of a major fault (similar to the San Andreas) that crosses the highlands of Scotland as well as Shetland. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, August 13 - Brae | Isle of Unst | Brae
Distance 3-6 mi. Height climbed: 330-660 ft.
Unst consists of a block of oceanic crust thrust, which is very much out of place. These enormous masses of thrust rock (called ophiolites) give a rare glimpse into the Earth’s deep interior. Along our way we will encounter some very interesting botany, a Viking longship and replica longhouse, and the northernmost cliffs of the British Isles, which in the spring are home to over 100,000 breeding sea birds. (B,L,D)

Thursday, August 14 - Brae | Eshaness | Brae
Distance 4.5 mi. Height climbed: 200 ft.
The Eshaness peninsula tells a fascinating story of a long extinct volcano. The spectacular cliffs we see today cut right through the flank of what was the Eshaness volcano. It is the best section through the flank of a volcano in the British Isles and a geological ‘must’. The sea has exploited cracks in the volcanic bedrock to carve out the dramatic array of stacks, geos, and blowholes including the Hols o Scraada (Old Scratch, or the Devil), which were formed when the roof caved in at the end of a deep and narrow sea cave stretching more than one hundred yards from the coast. Another highlight is an active storm beach still being shaped by hurricane force winds from the Atlantic in the winter. (B,L,D)
Friday, August 15 - Brae | Ronas Hill | Brae

Distance 5 mi. Height climbed: 800 ft.

Ronas Hill is Shetland’s highest hill (1475 ft.) and topped by a prehistoric chambered burial cairn. The granite summit has a subarctic climate, with patterns created by freezing and thawing in the stony soils and some rare Arctic/Alpine plants. Our walk to the top of Ronas Hill starts at 700 ft. and offers the chance to examine its granites and the freeze-thaw features. On a bright day the views from the top are spectacular. After the walk we will drive to Lerwick for some free time to explore its shops and the excellent Shetland Museum & Archives, before we take the overnight ferry to Aberdeen at about 5:30pm. We will have dinner aboard the ferry. (B,L,D)

Saturday, August 16 - Aberdeen | FLY HOME

Arrive in Aberdeen and transfer to the airport for flights homeward. Flights should depart Aberdeen no earlier than 11:00am. (B)
Faculty Leader

Clint Cowan ('83) has taught Geology at Carleton since 1997, and has led student geology field trips to New Zealand, Belize, and Australia. He has also led Carleton Alumni Adventures programs, including this Orkney and Shetland program in 2013, hiking in Scotland’s Western Isles, and sailing in a tall ship off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. Before coming to Carleton, Clint worked for Shell Research in The Hague and traveled extensively throughout the world. He did his graduate work in the terrains of Newfoundland and Labrador, which are geologically related to the Orkney and Shetland Islands.

Accommodations
We will stay in small, charming, good-quality hotels, and have a couple of overnight ferry trips.

Hotels

August 7-9 (3 nights): Lynnfield Hotel, Kirkwall, Orkney (www.lynnfield.co.uk)
The Lynnfield is centrally located and in an ideal position to tour Orkney. Adjacent to the world famous Highland Park Distillery, it has spectacular views looking out over the town to the north isles. The restaurant’s excellent menus change daily to accommodate deliveries of fresh local ingredients.

August 11-14 (4 nights): Busta House Hotel, Brae, Shetland (www.bustahouse.com)
The oldest part of the house was built in 1588, and it was extended in the 17th and 18th centuries. All of the bedrooms are named after islands around mainland Shetland and are individually decorated to give each a unique character. The cuisine features lots of local produce.

Ferries

August 10 and 15: Cabin on overnight ferries
The ferry company we use for transits Aberdeen / Kirkwall, Kirkwall / Lerwick and Lerwick / Aberdeen is Northlink Ferries (www.northlinkferries.co.uk/). On August 10th and 15th, travelers will stay in two-berth, outside cabins, and single travelers will have a two-berth cabin for single occupancy. We will have access to the comfortable Magnus Lounge during all crossings, and all meals will be served. NOTE: All the other ferry crossings will be short (between 10 and 30 minutes each). On those ferries there are passenger lounges and rest rooms.
What to Expect

This is a good introduction to hiking in Scotland for people with basic fitness, combining hiking and visits to geological and archaeological sites. Daily walking distances will not exceed 6.75 miles, with varying amounts of ascent, and we do not expect to hike for longer than four hours at a time. Most hiking will be on paths, tracks, or quiet roads, although the surfaces can be wet and rough. There will be some steep sections along the way, but no climbs as great as thousand feet, even in total. The actual itinerary is subject to variables such as the abilities and interests of the group and the weather conditions. The local guides know the area very well, and an easier alternative hike is possible on most days. Lunches will be packed and eaten (mostly outside) at appropriate points during excursions/hikes. There will be two local guides with the group, and a minibus for those who choose to skip a hike. Average temperatures in August range from 55 F to 65 F with a fair chance of some precipitation.

Rates Do Not Include: Airfare from/to home; passport and visa fees; inoculation fees; all airport fees and departure taxes; cost of personal, trip cancellation, and baggage insurance; transportation of excess baggage; personal tips; items of a personal nature, such as laundry; alcoholic or other beverages (except as noted above); taxi, telephone, and fax charges; optional excursions or deviations from scheduled tour.

Air Arrangements & Transfers: Round-trip airfare between home and Aberdeen, Scotland (ABZ), is not included. Complimentary transfers between Aberdeen (airport, hotel, or train station) and the ferry terminal on group arrival and departure dates are included. You must arrive in Aberdeen no later than 3:00pm on August 7th and depart Aberdeen no earlier than 11:00am on August 16th. Please check with our office before booking non-refundable airline tickets.

Passenger Cancellation Penalties: All requests by passengers for cancellations must be received in writing. Cancellations received at least ninety (90) days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of three hundred dollars ($300) per person. Cancellations received between sixty (60) and ninety (90) days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of one thousand dollars ($1,000) per person. Cancellations received within sixty (60) days of departure are subject to 100% of the tour cost. For this and other reasons, participants are strongly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. An application will be sent with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.

Prices, itinerary and leader are subject to change. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for whatever reason.

For questions and to hold your space, please contact Carleton College Alumni Adventures at:

800-811-7244

Fax: 603-756-2922  Toll: 603-756-4844  • Email: carleton@studytours.org  • Website: go.carleton.edu/adventures
P.O. Box 938, 47 Main Street, Suite One, Walpole, NH 03608
RESERVATION FORM
Carleton College
ALUMN ADVENTURES

Hiking Scotland’s Orkney and Shetland Islands
August 6-16, 2014 (11 days)

To hold your reservation for seven days while this form and your deposit are in the mail, please contact us at 800-811-7244 or carleton@studytours.org

Name 1:
(as it appears on passport) Carleton Class of:
Name 2:
(as it appears on passport) Carleton Class of:
Address:
City: Zip:

Phone (h) Phone (w) Phone (cell) Email

☐ I/We have read the ‘What to Expect’ section and am/are physically able to participate fully on the program.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
☐ Double (one bed) ☐ Twin (two beds) ☐ Single
☐ I will be sharing with: __________________
☐ Share-please assign a roommate (not guaranteed)
I am a ☐ Non-smoker ☐ Smoker

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENT:
A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to confirm a reservation. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. You will receive an invoice for final payment. Please note that credit cards are not accepted for final payment.

All prices and payments are in US dollars.

DEPOSIT TYPE (PLEASE CHECK ONE):
☐ Check payable to: EOS Passenger Account – CAA North Scotland 8/14
☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ American Express
CC# Exp. Date 3 or 4 Digit Code

Name on Card

Please complete this reservation form, sign the release statement below, enclose your deposit, and mail or fax to:
Carleton College Alumni Adventures
P.O. Box 938, Walpole, NH 03608-0938
Fax: 603-756-2922

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to the Terms & Conditions on the reverse.

Signature Date

Signature Date

Terms & Conditions

Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for whatever reason nor to passengers whose required documentation for entry into any country is delayed or denied. RESPONSIBILITY: Carleton College and its agent, EOS (hereinafter “Sponsors”), and the tour operator, and/or its agents (hereinafter “Operator”) assume no liability for failure to provide the services, transportation, lecturers and accommodations referred to in this brochure to the extent that such services and accommodations cannot be supplied due to delays or other causes beyond the control of Operator, which include but are not limited to sickness, epidemics, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, and acts of God. In the absence of negligence on the part of Operator, the participant agrees that Operator has no responsibility or liability of any nature whatsoever for damage to or loss of property, or injury to, or death of persons due to any act, omission or negligence of any carrier, hotel, restaurant, bus carrier, tender service, sightseeing company, or any other persons rendering any of the services or ground portions of the itinerary. The participant further waives any claim against Operator and Sponsors for any such damage, loss, injury or death. Operator and Sponsors shall not be responsible for any additional expenses, delays, substitution of equipment, and/or any act or omission whatsoever by the suppliers of such services, their agents, servants and employees, and the participant hereby releases any claim arising therefrom. Operator and Sponsors reserve the right to decline, accept or retain any participant at any time. Sponsors and Operator reserve the right to cancel this tour prior to departure, in which case payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part, except when trip cancellation, itinerary changes and/or delays are mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the passenger shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as Operator and Sponsors are able to recover on the passenger’s behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, Operator and Sponsors shall not have any obligation or liability to the passenger beyond the foregoing. All refunds of passenger payments are the responsibility of EOS and/or the Operator, and the participant agrees that Carleton College bears no financial responsibility for refunding of participant’s payments. The passenger contract in use by the carriers concerned (when issued) shall constitute the sole contract between the transportation companies (such as ship operators and airlines) and the purchaser of this tour and/or passage. Participants are encouraged to purchase airline tickets no sooner than 60 days before the tour begins to avoid airline cancellation penalties if a ticket is canceled or otherwise modified subsequent to the participant’s purchase of those tickets. Sponsors and Operator accept no liability for the purchase of non-refundable airline tickets to the tour departure city and return. Baggage and personal effects are at all times the sole responsibility of the participant. By forwarding of deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she agrees with these terms and conditions, and that he/she does not have any mental, physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers. Itinerary: Sponsors and Operator reserve the right to change the itinerary due to weather conditions, availability of changes, political conditions and other factors beyond our control without consulting the participants. Participants have no right to any refund or other considerations in the event of these itinerary changes. Rates are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates, the price of fuel, services and labor may increase the cost of arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices. AS A CONDITION OF ACCEPTANCE, EACH PARTICIPANT MUST AGREE TO AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING RELEASE OF LIABILITY: RELEASE: Notwithstanding anything herein, the signatory clearly understands that the Sponsors are in no way responsible and can assume no liability of any nature whatsoever for the tour and any acts, omissions or negligence by the Operator or by companies and persons with whom the Operator may contract. The signatory has carefully read the list of activities, requirements and conditions as listed in the brochure and application for the tour and is/are aware that the tour and its activities involve the risk of personal injury or death and damage or loss of property. In consideration of the benefits to be derived from participation in the tour, the signatory voluntarily accepts and assumes all risk of personal injury or death and property damage or other loss arising from participation in the tour and hereby waives and releases the Operator and its agents, heirs, executors and assigns, do release and hold harmless Sponsors and the employees, officers, directors, trustees or representatives of Sponsors, from any and all claims, including claims of negligence, illness, personal injury, death or property damage or loss, however caused, arising from or related to this tour. The signatory has read carefully this agreement, and will abide by the conditions set by Sponsors and the Operator as described in the brochure and in the Terms and Conditions of this and other sections as stated herein or elsewhere published. The signatory affirms that he/she has not received or relied on any oral or written representation of Sponsors as a basis for executing this Release.