

11 September 2020

The Lyell Centre opens its doors for a special virtual weekend

Members of the public will get a rare chance to take a look behind the scenes of the Lyell Centre later this month.

Staff from the British Geological Survey and Heriot-Watt University who work at the Lyell will be offering free, online tours and talks on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 September 2020, as part of the annual Doors Open Days weekend in Edinburgh. All of this will be virtual and accessed online from the [Lyell Centre website](#).

The Lyell Centre carries out world-leading research in land and marine conservation, geology and geoscience, and this event provides an opportunity to learn from the experts, including leading scientists and engineers, about how it contributes to understanding the Earth.

‘Visitors’ will be able to join virtual ‘tours’ of some of the facilities at the Lyell; learn how the Earth’s magnetic field is created and why the North magnetic pole moves; find out about the Centre’s involvement with an exciting geothermal energy project in Iceland and see around some innovative scientific equipment which explores the seabed.

Dr Tracy Shimmield, Director of the Lyell Centre, said: “This year, our involvement in Doors Open Days is very different from before but we are excited to still be able to share some of our work with the public using a digital platform. Technology and innovation is a key component of the work undertaken at the Lyell Centre, and we hope that by providing entry virtually this year, we’ll open our doors to even more people than usual.

“The event is free, so it’s a fun and easy opportunity for anyone with an interest in marine conservation, geoscience and geology to explore some of the fascinating work that goes on behind the scenes.”

Dr Laura Wicks, Public Engagement Lead at Heriot-Watt University, said: “In these unprecedented times, it’s even more important for us to engage and inspire our communities with the research we undertake. It’s a great chance to give an insight to what goes into our research, which is usually out of public view, and most importantly, why the research matters.”

The Lyell Centre is a partnership between Heriot-Watt University and the British Geological Survey, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the Scottish Funding Council and Heriot-Watt University.

The magnetic field webinar will be live at 11am on Saturday 26 September and can be booked through [Eventbrite](#). All other tours and webinars can be accessed at any time over the weekend of 26 & 27 September from www.lyellcentre.ac.uk. All tours and webinars are free.

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Notes for Editors

The Lyell Centre

The Lyell Centre is a partnership between Heriot-Watt University and the British Geological Survey, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the Scottish Funding Council and Heriot-Watt University. The partnership enables both organisations to work together combining their expertise in geoscience. Exploring themes ranging from geology and geophysics to marine ecosystems, the Centre's combination of pure and applied expertise employs innovative methods and technologies to society's most important environmental science and energy challenges.

British Geological Survey

The British Geological Survey (BGS) is a world-leading applied geoscience research centre that is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and affiliated to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). BGS core science provides objective and authoritative geoscientific data, information and knowledge to inform UK Government on the opportunities and challenges of the subsurface. It undertakes national and public good research to understand earth and environmental processes in the UK and globally.

The BGS annual budget of approximately £60 million per annum is funded directly by UKRI as well as research grants, government commissions and private sector contracts. Its 650 staff work across the UK with two main sites: the head office in Nottingham and Lyell Centre, a joint collaboration with Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. The BGS works with more than 150 private sector organisations, has close links to 40 universities and sponsors about 100 PhD students each year. Please see www.bgs.ac.uk.

Heriot-Watt University

Heriot-Watt is a specialist, pioneering university with a global presence, world-renowned innovative research, and highly employable graduates. www.hw.ac.uk

Doors Open Days

Doors Open Days weekends are coordinated nationally by the Scottish Civic Trust. They run throughout Scotland every September as part of European Heritage Days. For more information see www.doorsopendays.org.uk or www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk.

This year Doors Open Days is going virtual in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic. Rather than shutting the doors completely, Doors Open Days 2020 has created a digital festival so that people across Scotland and the world can continue to safely explore Scotland's buildings, spaces and places from the comfort of their armchair.