

Trail 1: Unst Heritage Centre

Begin your journey at the Unst Heritage Centre where an exhibition explains the geological story in detail. It is recommended that you visit this before heading out on the trails. Outside the centre a geowall shows a cross section of the geology of Unst.

Unst is an island in two halves. The western side is made of rocks from the former North American continent. These are gneisses and schists that were metamorphosed (changed) by heat and pressure due to burial before the continental collision took place.

The rocks to the east are oceanic, forming an ophiolite. They began as magma beneath the ocean, which cooled and formed layers within oceanic crust. Emplacement tilted the rocks so that we can walk across all the layers that are exposed on the surface today.

Continental rocks

- 1 Westing gneiss
- 2 Hascosay Slide Blastomylonite
- 3 Pelitic schist
- 4 Quartzite / Semi-pelite

Intrusions

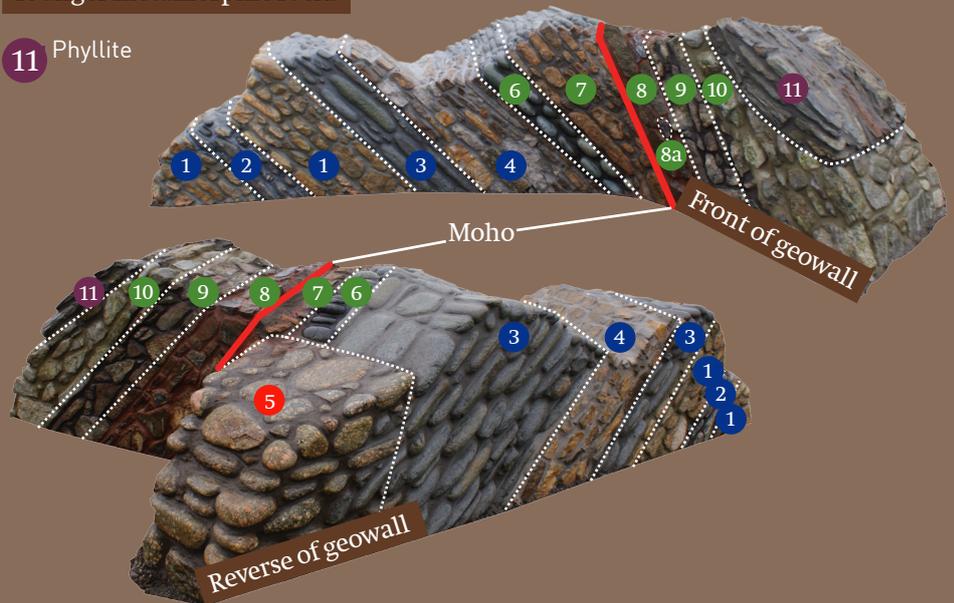
- 5 Skaw Granite

Ophiolite rocks

- 6 Serpentinite
- 7 Harzburgite (mantle rock)
- 8 Dunite
- 8a Chromite within dunite
- 9 Pyroxenite / Wehrlite
- 10 Gabbro

Younger metamorphic rocks

- 11 Phyllite



Directions

Allow 1 hour to explore the Heritage Centre

By car / bike: Take the A970 from Lerwick to Toft to catch the Yell ferry (29 miles). Follow A968 to the Unst Ferry at Gutcher (17 miles). Head north on A968 and follow signs to the Unst Heritage Centre (12 miles).
By bus: Daily buses to the North Isles operate from Lerwick Bus Station. (An overnight stay in the North Isles would be needed if using public transport).

Interpretation

- Geology wall outside Unst Heritage Centre.
- Exhibition within Unst Heritage Centre.

Access



Facilities



Available within the Heritage Centre.



- 1 Central Unst - Wehrlite, pyroxenite and gabbro
- 2 Saxa Vord - Continent
- 3 Keen of Hamar - Dunite
- 4 Clibberswick - Harzburgite
- 5 Balta - Gabbro
- 6 Ham Ness - Gabbro and dykes

Key parts of the ophiolite looking north from Munes