



## PRESS RELEASE

24<sup>th</sup> September 2009

### Darwin rocks Edinburgh

**The British Geological Survey's Edinburgh Headquarters, Murchison House, is opening its doors to the public from 10.00 to 17.00 on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September as part of Edinburgh's "Doors Open Day". Amongst the exhibits, demonstrations and experiments at the BGS will be rocks collected by Charles Darwin from the Galapagos during his voyage on HMS Beagle.**

During the Open Day, the BGS will be packed with demonstrations, experiments and displays of its work at home and abroad, with lots of hands-on activities for even the youngest hands. Visitors will be able to pan for gold, make their own earthquake, examine precious minerals and fossils, and learn about Scottish geology and the rocks used in Edinburgh's buildings. Many aspects of Earth Science will be demonstrated from what's beneath our feet to space weather and the Northern Lights. Visitors will learn how geologists find natural resources such as oil, water, sand and gravel and see exciting volcano demonstrations.



Young visitors examining fossils during a previous Open Day at Murchison House, Edinburgh.

Although Charles Darwin is probably best known for his theories on evolution and *'The Origin of Species'*, he was also a keen geologist. One of the geological features which intrigued him, and may have occupied his mind whilst on those long voyages on board HMS *Beagle*, was the structure and origin of volcanoes. A selection of the rocks collected by Darwin during his visit to the Galapagos Islands in 1835 and Ascension Island in 1836 will be on display.



A programme of illustrated talks will run all day, on the hour from 11.00. Topics will include the Cape Farewell expedition to Greenland, the L'Aquila earthquake, the Forth Replacement Crossing, gold mining in Scotland and the deep-sea drilling programme. The talks will be delivered in a relaxed and informal manner.

Visitors to the BGS Open day in previous years have commented: "Obviously lots of effort put in by everyone concerned – I was very impressed!" IA, Dalkeith. "An immense amount of work has gone into such a wide-varying exhibition – Well done!" RG, Edinburgh. "Very professionally presented by all – and more child friendly than I thought it would be. Will definitely return" FH, Edinburgh.

The BGS Open Day is part of this year's Scottish Geology Festival and Edinburgh Doors Open Day programme. It is a showcase for the wide and varied work in the Earth Sciences that takes place behind its doors. BGS has seen an increasing interest in its work, with an ever growing number of visitors to the Open Day.

The BGS is also hosting a Schools Week from the 28<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October, for school groups and other organised parties.

\*Ends\*

**For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:**

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**Notes for Editors**

The BGS Open Day will take place in Edinburgh at the British Geological Survey, Murchison House, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3LA on Saturday 26 September and is open to the general public from 10.00 to 17.00.

BGS Open Day 2009 flyer: [www.bgs.ac.uk/news/DIARY/A5\\_postcard\\_2009.pdf](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/news/DIARY/A5_postcard_2009.pdf)  
For further information: [www.bgs.ac.uk/education/openday2009.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/education/openday2009.html)

**The British Geological Survey**

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk).