

Edinburgh Geological Society – Excursions 2024



Excursion title:	Spireslack Surface Coalmine (SCM) near Glenbuck, East Ayrshire [NS 27460 63050]		
Date & start time:	Saturday 25 May 2024 09:00am	Finish time:	4:30pm
Leaders:	Dr Graham Leslie, Mike Browne		

Excursion summary:	<p>Spireslack is an abandoned surface coalmine (SCM) at Glenbuck, East Ayrshire, an area with a long history of mining beginning with bell pits sunk for ironstone in the late 18th century. Underground coal extraction in the late 19th/early 20th century, accessed via the Grasshill Pit, was followed by the later surface operations. Underground mining ceased in 1931, presaging the final decline of Glenbuck village – of which there is little trace today.</p> <p>Surface mining began around 2000, and ended in 2008 with the terminal decline of the Scottish coal industry. Spireslack SCM preserves marvellous exposures of coal-bearing Carboniferous strata of Visean to Namurian age. The entirety of the Limestone Coal Formation is exposed in a one kilometre long, over 130 m thick section within the high wall of the Main Void at Spireslack, whilst most of the Lawmuir, Lower Limestone and Upper Limestone formations are exposed throughout the remainder of the SCM.</p> <p>Natural, clean and continuous exposures of these economically important strata are rare, and therefore the exposures at Spireslack give an opportunity to better understand the geology and structural evolution of this part of the Carboniferous within central Scotland, and to study key features in multi-scalar 3-dimensional detail.</p>
Meeting point:	Glenbuck Heritage Village Car Park [NS 27460 63050], via access from the A70 trunk road, immediately west of Glenbuck Loch at [27530 62880].
Transport details:	Travel by coach from Waterloo Place, depart 09:00
Extra pick-up points for coach:	To be decided depending on coach route – check with David Graham
Outline of the excursion route:	From the Glenbuck Heritage Village, the party will walk up to the Spireslack SCM Main Void on a graded track (c. 1km, 80 m ascent) then spend the day exploring the main void, and return to the vehicle(s).
Additional Hazards not included in the <i>EGS Excursion Handbook</i>:	No close approach (<10 m) to the base of the high wall section should be attempted, except under the closest supervision and examination of the local conditions of the rock face on the day.
Control measures required to mitigate against any Hazards referred to above:	See above
Hard hats or Hi-viz clothing needed?	The party should stay together and hi-viz clothing is recommended. Hard hats should be available where needed on approach to high outcrop.
May dogs be brought on the excursion?	No
Toilet information:	None available on site
Geological map sheet:	Sheet 23W Hamilton
References:	A general knowledge of the stratigraphical succession will be useful (see published maps listed above) or e.g., Geology of Scotland (4th Ed.). 2002. See also Ellen, R., Browne, M.A.E., Mitten, A.J., Clarke, S.M., Leslie, A.G. and Callaghan, E. (2019). Sedimentology, architecture and depositional setting of the fluvial Spireslack Sandstone of the Midland Valley, Scotland:

	insights from the Spireslack surface coal mine. Geological Society, London, Special Publications, 488 , 181–204.
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	We will also supply a printable guide in. pdf format for participants.
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------