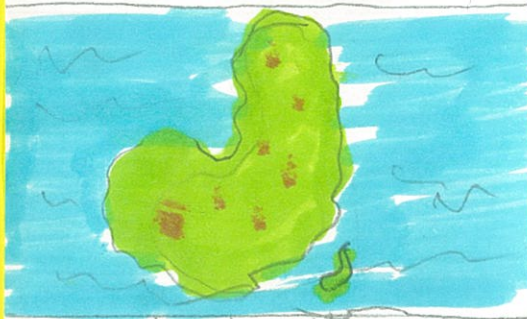


The Geology of Eigg and the Small Isles

By Freya McCarthy

How Eigg was formed



A pyroclastic flow - a hot suspension of rock particles and gases swamped the landscape, reaching the winding bed of a river system carved in the Eigg basaltic plateau. 58 millions years ago, a major volcanic eruption occurred on neighbouring Skye. Filling it to the brim, the suspension collapsed and cooled, becoming the pitchstone that now forms the squirr.

How the squirr was formed



With the oldest rock at sea level and the youngest, the squirr pitchstone, forming the highest ground, the rocks of which the island is formed and their relationship to those of the surrounding areas tell us much about Scotland's geological history. Hugh Miller, the pioneering Scottish geologist, made an important contribution to that history with his discovery of Plesiosaur remains on Eigg during his visits to the island in 1844 and 1846. Even within a short time, excursions to see Eigg are extremely rewarding.

Hugh Miller

Hugh Miller from Cromarty was a highly influential figure in the second quarter of the 19th century. He was a self-taught geologist, writer and editor of a key Edinburgh newspaper in the lead up to the tectonic changes in the Scottish church that culminated in the disruption of 1843.

