

# IN THEIR HANDS: Q&A

What's it like to be a Geologist? Dr Steven Andrews helps us find out.

## DO YOU GET TO TRAVEL IN YOUR JOB AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE LOCATION?

Yes, I have travelled a lot with my job, to go and look at exciting rocks around the world and to attend and present at international conferences.

I have been on 12 trips to east Greenland which will always be my favourite place to look at rocks and explore. It is incredibly remote which means that you have to be self-reliant and can really get away from everything.

## WHICH PARTS OF THE WORLD DO YOU STUDY?

I have spent a long time studying the rocks of northern Scotland, east Greenland and the rocks that lie beneath the seabed in the North Sea and North Atlantic.

## DO YOU FIND COOL ROCKS – WHAT'S THE COOLEST YOU'VE FOUND?

Yes. I particularly love rocks that can tell me a story about what the Earth was like millions of years ago.

My favourite rock (all geologists have one!) is a slab I collected in Orkney when working on my PhD. It displays lots of tiny craters that actually formed when rain drops fell on a muddy surface, like a dried-up puddle. These were later covered by layer after layer of sediment, burying them deeply and eventually turned into rock.

What I find amazing about this rock is that it captures what happened in a few seconds of time, but that moment was 380 million years ago!

## WHAT ARE THE WORST CONDITIONS THAT YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

Although I have camped in temperatures down to -50 degrees in east Greenland, the worst conditions I remember working in was just south of Wick when it was raining so heavily that water was running down my sleeves, down my hands, and on to my pencil which was then soaking my notebook. Miserable!

## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A PIECE OF GROUND IS NOT SAFE?

To assess the safety of any area it is most important to make good observations and think about anything which may give indications that it has been unsafe in the past.



### DO YOU FIND YOUR JOB DIFFICULT?

I have always loved working as geologist which means that as much as it can be difficult at times, overcoming those difficulties is always great fun and hugely rewarding.

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THERE WAS SOMETHING BAD UNDERGROUND?

Geologists are trained to understand what lies beneath the surface of the Earth and make sure that any risks that exist can be minimised. We understand where volcanoes will be active and where earthquakes will occur, amongst other risks, and this helps communities avoid dangerous areas and prepare for risks that may be difficult to avoid.

Thanks to Calum, Leonie, Lily, Morven, Simon and Uri for these questions.  
And thank you to Steven for the answers!

### CAREERS WITH GEOLOGY...

If you're inspired to pursue a career in the field of geology, there are lots of different jobs and specialisms, including in these areas:

Engineering, Environmental consultancy, Geoscience, Mudlogging, Geochemistry, Geophysics, The groundwater industry, Within construction companies

