

West Skye 3:

Idrigill Point and Macleod's Maidens



Idrigill Point and the three sea-stacks, Macleod's Maidens, are located at the SW end of Duirinish in west Skye. The dominant rocks are Paleocene lavas with rare interbedded sedimentary units. The 'mother' is the tallest stack at c.70m, with her two 'daughters' further from the coastline at Rubha na Maighdeanan. It is a worthwhile trek to see the Maidens and the superb views of the coastline that reveal the internal characteristics of these Ramasaig Formation lavas. The views along the 8km hike out (and the 8km hike back!) are spectacular, SW across Loch Bracadale and the island of Wiay towards the Cuillin Hills and the Red Hills.

Aspects covered: Large-scale architecture of Paleocene basaltic-mugearitic plateau lavas; small-scale internal characteristics of the lavas; lateritised tops of lavas; dykes of the Paleocene regional swarm; fault zones.

Route: [Orbost Farm](#) – [Loch Bharcasaig](#) – [Forse](#) – [Brandarsaig](#) – [Idrigill](#) – [Glac Ghealaridh](#) – [Geodha nan Daoine](#) – [Macleod's Maidens](#) – [Idrigill Point](#) (-return [Orbost Farm](#)).

Distance: 16 kilometres (8km each way).

Access is from [Orbost Farm](#), where limited parking is available, on a [minor loop road](#) off the main [Sligachan – Dunvegan](#) (A863) road a few kilometres SE of [Dunvegan](#). From here, the first part of the route is on a good track as far as [Loch Bharcasaig](#). From here, the track south is within a forested area. Where it crosses the [Forse Burn](#), the route south is on a well-defined track, gaining height, passing [Beinn na Moine](#) to the east, then drops down to the abandoned village of [Brandarsaig](#) and then on past [Idrigill](#), which suffered the same fate. The track continues through the valley, [Glac Ghealaridh](#), with [Ard Beag](#) to the east. From here it is a short distance further south on the path before leaving it to cut south to the east side of [Geodha nan Daoine](#). It is from here that the best views of the [Maidens](#) are obtained.

The views along the route to [Idrigill Point](#) and [Macleod's Maidens](#) and the view once you arrive are worth all of the effort.



Figure SW Skye 4.1: Panorama from the path to Idrigill Point, towards the SE, across Loch Bracadale to the Cuillin Hills and the Red Hills. The island in Loch Bracadale is Wiay.

Locality 1 [\[NG 2478 3630\]](#):



Figure SW Skye 4.2: Macleod's Maiden's and Rubha na Maighdeanan, west of Idrigill Point, composed of basaltic lavas of the Bracadale Formation.



Figure SW Skye 4.3: Cliff section between Geodha nan Daoine and Rubha na Maighdeanan, comprising prismatic-jointed sheet lavas with weathered (reddened) tops typical of subaerial exposure and weathering. The prominent weathered top in the middle of the cliff section is not planar, indicating topographic relief on the land surface prior to the eruption of the succeeding lava.



Figure SW Skye 4.4: The sea-stacks, Macleod's Maidens, with the two 'daughters' offshore from the 'mother.' The mother is c. 70m high, with the daughters approximately half of her height.



Figure SW Skye 4.5: One of the daughters of the Macleod's Maidens sea-stacks. It has formed by the mechanical erosion of the prismatic-jointed lavas, leaving a vertical-sided column.



Figure SW Skye 4.6: The cliff section west of Geodha nan Daoine, comprising prismatic-jointed sheet lavas with thick weathered (reddened) tops.



Figure SW Skye 4.7: Detail of weathered tops of lavas in the cliff section west of Geodha nan Daoine.



Figure SW Skye 4.8 Simple sheet and compound ('stratified') lavas in the coastal cliffs NW of Macleod's Maidens.



Figure SW Skye 4.9: Simple sheet and compound ('stratified') lavas with weathered tops in the coastal cliffs east of Macleod's Maidens.



Figure SW Skye 4.11: The island of Wiay in Loch Bracadale, with the Cuillin Hills and the Red Hills in the distance.

Return to [Orbost Farm](#).

End of excursion.



Figure SW Skye 4.10: Detail of simple sheet and compound ('stratified') lavas with weathered tops in the coastal cliffs east of Macleod's Maidens.