

DNHG Geology Trip along Sohar Road, Oman
Friday 20 March

Please see email below from Leslie Butler, Chairman, ENHG Al Ain. The invitation to participate on this trip has been kindly extended to include DNHG members.

If anyone is interested in joining the field trip please email Leslie at lesliebutler@yahoo.com

Al Ain Chapter's next Field Trip will be a highly photogenic geological tour of the Al Ain-Sohar road (Oman Route 7) on Friday the 20th of March. We will meet at 09:00 **in Oman** at the car park of the little mosque just past the Omani Immigration post at Wadi Jizi. That's 56°10'09.3" E, 24°12'58.9" N; or 24.2163611° N, 056.1692500° E decimal. This is just a small, local mosque, by the way, so it won't be in use on Friday morning.

BASIC FEATURES This is about beautiful or interesting geology. There'll be some excellent photo-ops, and a couple of shaded picnic-ops away from traffic noise. However, most of the drive and stops will be along the main road, which usually isn't too busy on a Friday morning. We won't stray far from our vehicles, except at one magnificent broad wadi where a 15-20 minute walk (plus same back again) is well justified, and that'll be late in the morning with no shade, other than at the point where we turn back.

DURATION I'm not sure how long the whole trip will take; It'll depend on how much time folk want to spend in particular places, but I'm guessing three to four hours, not counting getting there and back. We won't be going all the way to Sohar.

GEOLOGY Although I'm billing this as a geology trip, I am not a geologist, and I've selected the stops on the basis of their attractiveness or interest. The tour is based on Route 6 of Ben Jordan's excellent 'Geotrekking in Southeastern Arabia'. I'll have notes available for interested parties, but I won't be lecturing.

COST For most foreign UAE residents, visas will cost AED 85: 35 Dirhams to exit the UAE, and 5 Riyals to enter Oman. They like you to pay by credit card. (No charge for children.) Omani charges vary by nationality and even occupation, so if you're not sure of your status, check www.rop.gov.om/english/dg_pr_visas_agcc.asp

You can claw back some of your visa expense by stocking up on **cheap Omani petrol**. There's a gas station about 6km before the Wadi Jizi border post, and they accept Dirhams.

Did I mention photo-ops? Remember the **photography competition on May 12th**.

TAKE lots of water, snacks, hats and wear good shoes for the loose surfaces. There's some wadi pools you might want to wade into, but only at one site. A camera, of course. Polarised shades enhance the view.

CONVOY ARRANGEMENTS It would help to let me know if you're planning to attend, but I'm not setting a limit on numbers. A few vehicles is preferable to lots, of course, so please pool as much as possible. There are places to park before you enter the Emirati border zone, or you could seek travel partners through this Yahoo ENHG Group. There's a good phone signal everywhere along the route, by the way.

DIRECTIONS from Al Ain: Proceed along Khatam Al Shakhla Street, past the Danat, Sand Golf club etc to the Khatam al Shikhla border post. You don't have to get out of your car here, but make sure you have passports and cash handy. Once through, do not take the truck road to your right but keep straight on, and straight on too through the next two roundabouts. The petrol station above mentioned is a few km after the 2nd roundabout.

Next stop is the Omani border post. Here you park and enter the building. At the desk on your right, you'll see a queue and some piles of forms one each of which you should complete before joining the queue. Visas are usually paid for with a credit card. Once back in the car, you'll be checked by customs, then a tad further on you hand over the paper you received at the desk, and you're free. Our meeting point, the mosque car park, is 100m or so on your right. That's also our first stop, as there are ancient copper workings just up from the trees in this rather pretty location.

FINALLY One reason for entering Oman through Shikhla is the immediate array of contrasting colours and textures nearby and on the horizon. After you clear UAE controls, note the layers of what look like mud slabs to your left, but which are actually . . . well figure it out yourself.

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