



Thursday February 4th 2010

Meston Lecture Theatre 4 at 6.30pm

Where was Odysseus' homeland? The geological, geomorphological and geophysical evidence for relocating Homer's Ithaca

Dr. John Underhill

(University of Edinburgh)



Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are two of the world's oldest texts. The *Iliad* describes events at the end of the Trojan War, believed to have taken place in the 12th century BC during the Mycenaean era, while the *Odyssey* tells the story of the subsequent return of Odysseus from Troy to his palace on the island of Ithaca. The geographical description of Ithaca in the *Odyssey* has long provoked controversy and remains very puzzling. The main clue for the location for ancient Ithaca came from the work of the geographer Strabo. In his *Geography* he makes an unusual and very specific observation of Kefalonia: 'Where the island is narrowest it forms an isthmus so low-lying that it is often submerged from sea to sea'.

The application of geoscience entered the picture in 2003 in an attempt to address the all-important question: could a marine channel, subsequently described by Strabo as a low-lying isthmus, have separated Paliki, the westernmost peninsula of Kefalonia, from the rest of the island during the late Bronze Age? John will be presenting the latest results of his work in trying to solve this 3000 year old mystery

Join us as usual in the Map Room of the Geology Department for tea and biscuits from 5.30

Aberdeen Geological Society www.aberdeengeolsoc.org.uk

President : Prof Nigel Trewin, **Secretary** : Dr Alex Fordham, **Treasurer** : Alan Holmes

c/o University of Aberdeen, Dept of Geology & Petroleum Geology, Meston Building, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE