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the development of well-established concepts in geology, such as thrust faulting.

Overall, the 'Highlands Controversy' holds significance in the history of geology as it demonstrated the importance of questioning established scientific beliefs, and the role that diligent investigation plays in advancing our understanding of the Earth's geological processes.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The region also bears witness to a centuries-old history of human occupation and struggles. The *Highland Clearances* is one of such stories recorded in the landscape by stone walls and fences, with remains of what were once small crofts from which hundreds of farmers eked a living. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries landlords looking for better profits evicted most of these farmers, uniting the land and replacing the small farms with vast sheep grazing. To the right of Loch Inchard, the ruins of these smallholdings can still be seen, each with access to loch fishing, an area of cultivable land and the use of common grazing land in the hills behind.

HIGHLIGHTS

1) The steep limestone cliffs of *Stronchrubie* and *Knockan* command attention. 2) Crafted by glaciation and rainfall, underground water systems and enigmatic caves such as the unique *Ben More Assynt's caves*, protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, entice speleologists with this enchanting subterranean world. 3) The *Bone Caves* are home to an extraordinary narrative, the remains of long-extinct Scottish creatures preserved within their ancient chambers.

ABOUT THE PARK

Area: 2,100 km²

When to visit: May–Dec.

Geopark since: 2004

(RIGHT) VIEW TOWARDS COIGACH AND ASSYNT, THREADED WITH A THOUSAND FRESH-WATER LOCHANS.

