

White Watson's Geological Tablets, the first of which was presented to Whitehurst in 1786. He also drew sections around Coalbrookdale and gave us one of the first diagnoses of what crinoids were, from comparison of the abundant fossils in Derbyshire with modern crinoids then recently discovered off the West Indies. Whitehurst's Matlock sections incorporated information obtained from lead miners and so provide us with indirect data on the miners' knowledge of practical geology in the mid 18th century.

Whitehurst was a member of the Lunar Society, the informal gathering of mid-18th century scientists, philosophers and industrialists, and he was a close friend of such people as Wedgwood, Erasmus Darwin, Boulton, Watt and Priestley. Maxwell Craven has analyzed the correspondence of these and many others, as little of Whitehurst's own papers have survived. He shows that Whitehurst had considerable influence on the others in catalyzing their ideas on almost anything (architecture, hydraulic engineering and minerals to name but a few). He presents us with a fascinating picture of Whitehurst as a generous businessman, a philosopher, a maker of clocks and other instruments such as barometers, and in later life as Keeper of Standard Weights at the Royal Mint. He was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Craven's coverage of Whitehurst's geology is somewhat limited, comprising only one chapter (No. 6) out of eleven; much of this is more concerned with Whitehurst's successors, White Watson and John Farey, as well as with the use of geological materials in ceramic manufacture.

Craven discusses Whitehurst's family history in detail. His family originated in Cheshire and he moved to Derby to avoid competition with his clockmaker father. He had only one child which did not survive infancy, but several brothers and cousins came into the clockmaking business. As well as discussing these, the author makes long digressions on the family history and contributions to industry and knowledge of Whitehurst's numerous associates and descendants, thereby going rather beyond his brief, but interesting reading nevertheless. Among these associates were the artist Joseph Wright and the cartographer Peter Burdett.

Along with Erasmus Darwin and others, Whitehurst made several explorations of Derbyshire lead mines and caves, but it is a pity that few details of where they went and what they saw appear to have survived.

The book is nicely printed with many black and white illustrations; a few of these are rather muddy reproductions and it is a pity that some are not in colour, for example the frontispiece portrait of Whitehurst and the famous painting of the Orrery (page 57), both by Joseph Wright.

Trevor Ford

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