

REVIEWS

Sedimentary Rocks in the Field, by Dorrick A.V. Stow, 2005, Manson: London. 320pp, 471 figures (424 colour photos), ISBN 1-874545-69-3£19.95

Clear observation in the field is a basic geological skill, but it needs systematic recording and integration to bring out the underlying mechanisms and processes if field trips are not to be just another form of visual stamp collecting - enjoyable but not really productive. Professor Stow of Southampton University provides a teaching guide to sedimentary rocks (with recognition and recording of their principal features) in a structured style that enables field interpretation and allows development of subsequent laboratory studies.

Preliminary chapters give a sound introduction to basic field techniques and the principal composition, structures and textures of sedimentary rocks, followed by individual chapters on each type of sedimentary rock. In the last section of the book, facies cycles, architectural elements and facies associations are described, interpreted and compared with sequence stratigraphy. Finally, there is a valuable synthesis of the diagnostic data of depositional environments gathered together in twelve standardised tables. The text is built round more than 400 excellent colour photographs, with a brief description of each to emphasise teaching points. These are complemented by well-chosen line-drawings and tables to make a rounded and remarkably complete guide. The sections on trace fossils and carbonates are especially attractive, but dip anywhere and there is not a dull page in the book. There is a useful appendix with mapping symbols, grain sizes, comparator charts, sediment description check list, stereonet templates and updated stratigraphic timescale and nomenclature.

Books such as this inevitably draw on the work of others, and Stow has selected but modified much material and enhanced its presentation. There is a reference list given entirely to standard sedimentary text books. Disappointingly, 13 text references are not in the list and Fig. 3.13 showing "Standard sequences in different depositional sequences synthesised from original sources" should have had those sources specified, since the book is aimed at those who may wish to amplify details of sequences of which they have been previously unaware.

Clearly, Professor Stow is an excellent teacher and the lucky students in Southampton must have splendid field trips. This is an outstanding book, surely destined to be a classic, whether to take into the field or read by the fire on a wet winter night. With 320 pages on glossy paper the book weighs 0.7 kg. It is a bit heavy for your geriatric reviewer's rucksack (and it would be a shame to get it wet and spoil the pictures), but a copy will be kept in the glove compartment of the car as a field trip necessity. It is recommended unreservedly: buy a copy now before there is need for a reprint.

Gerard Slavin

Geology of the Lincolnshire Wolds, Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service: Lincoln, 2004. A3 sheet, free from 01507 609740 (or EMGS Secretary).

This full-colour folded leaflet is one in a series, *Wonders of the Wolds*, produced in collaboration with the county's RIGS group. It introduces the geology of the Wolds and expands it further under the three headings of landscape and geology, glaciation, and soils and use. There is a very clear but simplified geological map covering the area from Spilsby in the south to Barton on Humber in the north, showing the location of roads and villages. Four types of drift deposits are shown, and the solid geology is simplified to four types of rocks; all eight materials are explained and described. Twelve specific areas of interest within the Wolds are identified, and the geology of each is described; these vary from museums to nature reserves to topographic units. Where appropriate, the access arrangements are described. A few of these were visited on a recent EMGS field trip led by John Aram, who was also involved in this publication. The leaflet is a model of how much information can be packed into a small and accessible document. It is obviously aimed at the interested tourist, but a day out visiting some of the locations in this scenic area would be rewarding and interesting for any EMGS members.

Alan Filmer

Collieries in the North Staffordshire Coalfield, by Paul Deakin, 2004, Landmark: Ashbourne. 160 pp, ISBN 1-84306-138-4, £19.95.

While there is not much geology in this welcome addition to the Landmark Collectors Library of mining history books, it will be of interest to any EMGS members with a coal-mining background. It is a photographic atlas of some 30 collieries, providing a record of a vanished industry in nearly 300 photos. Both surface and underground views are included, together with a few opencast sites. Many photos are in colour and demonstrate the author's mastery of photography in difficult conditions. They are well chosen to illustrate working methods, haulage and ventilation systems, and aspects of miners' lives underground. The photographs were taken largely in two periods, the 1950s and 1980-90s, with a handful of early pictures of special events. While most are by the author, other contributors include Bob Metcalfe and Albert Baines-Davies. Captions include some details of the collieries' life and history; shaft depths are given in most but there are few details of which seams were worked. While the book does not set out to be a history of the Potteries coalfield, an introductory chapter on the coalfield with an area map would have improved it. The last few pages are recent views of the sites where collieries were once working, some less than 10 years ago. Now housing estates or agricultural land, they demonstrate how quickly all traces of a once dominant industry can be erased from the landscape.

Trevor Ford