MERCIAN NEWS

Carboniferous stratigraphy

Recently available is the definitive report on the correlation and stratigraphy of the Carboniferous of the British Isles (Waters et al., 2011). Its significance is that it will be a key handbook essential for any future work on the geology of the Pennines and of the adjacent basins where these rocks underlie large parts of the East Midlands and elsewhere.

This report revises and expands upon the publications for the Dinantian (George *et al*., 1976) and Silesian (Ramsbottom *et al*., 1978), accepting the demise of these two terms to combine them into a single account of the Carboniferous of the British Isles.

In 25 chapters it describes the considerable advances in Carboniferous chronostratigraphy, biostratigraphy and international correlation since publication of the previous editions. The main content is a series of regional descriptions, including ones of local interest for the southern Pennine Basin margin and Peak District and north Staffordshire. Each regional chapter includes a summary geological map and correlation panel, with Coal Measures areas also having a more detailed correlation of coals and marine bands.

For onshore chapters in England, Scotland and Wales the report uses the lithostratigraphy previously described (in Waters *et al*., 2009 and Dean *et al*., 2011), with the text concentrating upon description of the key biostratigraphical evidence for constraining the ages of the successions presented in the correlation panels. The report reflects the great contribution that the search for hydrocarbons, mainly post-dating publication of the previous reports, has had to the understanding of the offshore Carboniferous successions. The report also has a more thorough description of successions in Ireland.

Dean, M.T., Browne, M.A.E. & Waters, C.N., 2011. A lithostratigraphical framework for the Carboniferous successions of northern Great Britain (onshore). *British Geological Survey Research Report*, RR/10/07, free download at www.bgs.co.uk .

George, T.N. and 6 others, 1976. A correlation of Dinantian rocks in the British Isles. *Geological Society Special Report*, **7**, 87pp.

Ramsbottom, W.H.C. and 6 others, 1978. A correlation of Silesian rocks in the British Isles. *Geological Society Special Report*, **10**, 81pp.

Waters, C.N., Waters, R.A., Barclay, W.J. & Davies, J.R., 2009. Lithostratigraphical framework for Carboniferous successions of Southern Great Britain (Onshore). *British Geological Survey Research Report*, RR/09/01.

Waters, C.N. and 18 others, 2011. A Revised Correlation of Carboniferous Rocks in the British Isles. *Geological Society Special Report*, 26, 186 pp, ISBN: 978-1-86239-333-2.

The Ford Fiesta

The Geology Section of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society has a long and distinguished record that includes annual seminars on particular geological themes. The theme for 2013 was to honour Trevor Ford, who has a long association with the Society. A large number of Trevor's friends, colleagues and ex-students gathered at Leicester University to hear six distinguished speakers give presentations covering aspects of Trevor's work and the research that has followed in his footsteps.

The steeply raked lecture theatre with its rear entrance meant that Trevor sat at the very back. But his distinctive resonate tones boomed out from time to time in response to questions or queries from speakers or the audience. The speakers were: Dr Richard Shaw on the life of a modern day caveman; Dr Tony Waltham on Trevor's work in the Grand Canyon; Dr Bill Finches on the geology of the Isle of Man; Dr Noel Worley on Peak District mineralisation in Fordian style; Dr Dave Quirk on the origin of the South Pennine Orefield; Prof John Gunn on the hydrology of the Castleton karst; and Prof Martin Brasier on the iconic Precambrian fossil with a full name that reads as *Charnia masoni* Ford 1958.

These talks showed the wide range of Trevor's research interests and enabled the speakers to reminisce, often very humorously, over their association with him and to illustrate where his pioneering work had led. The day was smoothly organised by Joanne Norris and Andrew Swift, and was a fitting tribute to Trevor's geological career.

Excavations at the Broad Marsh caves

Excavation, clearance and documentation of the sandstone caves under Nottingham has been a long-standing project for a small band of dedicated archaeologists in the Nottingham Historical and Archaeological Society. For the last fifteen years they have been working in the caves just west of the show cave beneath the Broad Marsh Centre, clearing debris from caves that should one day be part of an extended tourist site. They recently cleared down to a lower level, and had to build a timber bridge to maintain access to the spectacular Willoughby House caves. The East Midlands Geological Society contributed to the work by funding purchase of the materials for the bridge, with a grant to the NHAS; this was sourced from the bequest from Beryl Whittacker's estate, and she would be delighted to know that she has supported this work in her home town.

Geological map of Chesterfield

A new version of the geological map of Chesterfield has been published by BGS, as sheet 112 in the 1:50,000 series. Its coverage of the Matlock area gives it local interest for Society members, and it is a step forward from the old One-inch map with a wealth of detail and useful material in the style of the newer BGS maps.