

Geology for Walkers: for the outdoor enthusiast curious about the geological story around them, by Steve Peacock (Published by the author, 2021, 183 pages) ISBN 979-8595445283, £12.00.

Do not be put off by the title. Walking is not obligatory, and this book is a well-written overview of geological process and the geology of Britain. The first half of its pages provide a very readable overview of rocks, plate tectonics and Earth history, presented in an innovative style with plenty of asides, analogies and welcome digressions. The second half then sweeps through the geological history of Britain, painting the broad picture of evolving plate tectonics and palaeogeographies. It is a lot to cover, but the author has told a good story; he may be light on fossils and the mineral resources, but that does not matter when he does describe the origins of water and oxygen, which are so frequently assumed and so rarely explained.

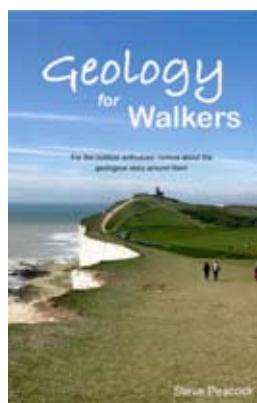
The text is just very good: an unusual style maybe, but refreshing. For a book aimed at the 'popular' or amateur market, it is surprisingly thin on photographs, and few are the author's own, but this is more than compensated by artwork that is exceptional, with maps and diagrams of the highest standard, all newly drawn by the author. As for the 'walking' part of the title, there are passing mentions to things seen on the long-distance footpaths, but this is not a trail guide; instead, it is good armchair material.

For want of a criticism, glacier meltwater did not create karst topography (page 147); even in glaciokarst the role of meltwater is either destructive or minimal. So nothing is ever perfect, but the overall impression is that this is a book firmly based in good science.

The book is self-published under the Amazon umbrella. Consequently it is not easily found. A Google search does not find the ISBN, but does find the book by its title. And it appears to be available only through Amazon, where the price varies daily around £12-something and is currently post free. Amazon do not furnish review copies, so this review is based only on a pdf; the author assures us that the printed book is of excellent quality, and it certainly looks good in the pdf. There is a short preview on the Amazon website, though it hardly does the book justice. This should be a good buy.

It is sad that the combination of a knowledgeable geologist and a good writer is a rarity; but here is the exception. It is a delight to find something midway between the usually turgid style of BGS reports and the geological inaccuracies of too many 'science writers'. The author has recently retired from a professional geological career, and he produced this book as a fun project, with no pressures from editors and publishers. He has done well, with a book that takes a new approach but is also bang up-to-date with sound geology.

Tony Waltham



THE RECORD

Secretary's Report 2020/1

Our individual membership now stands at 162 together with 37 joint members, 0 student members and 30 institutional members. We give a formal welcome to new members who have joined the Society during the year. We regret to record the death of Judy Small in January 2021. She had been a member of the Society for many years and served both on the Council and Editorial Board. She reported on several of the Society's excursions in *Mercian Geologist*.

This year's report is of necessity very short. In common with many societies the Covid pandemic, with its restrictions on travel and on how many people can meet together, and where, has severely affected the activities of the Society. Sadly we were unable to hold our normal programmes of lectures and field trips.

Lack of digital expertise and resources were the main reasons for not holding online meetings. However our members were recommended to engage with The Geologists' Association's excellent lecture programme and we hope many did. EMGS is an affiliated member of The Geologists' Association, and one of our members, Vanessa Banks, is its current President.

With the support of the speakers and leaders concerned, the 2020 lectures and field trips were carried over to 2021 to be held if possible.

Of course Council did not meet in person but its members kept in touch via email and phone throughout, doing what they could to maintain the Society's functions for which we are grateful. For example our overview of developments concerning sites of geological interest continued as in our comments to the planning authorities concerning the possible development of Gregory's quarry at Mansfield for housing.

Many thanks go to David Bate who in his first year as Editor and despite being unable to meet with the previous editor in person for the handover managed to communicate with authors, bring the *Mercian* to print and get it out to members whilst maintaining its high standard.

Council would like to send its condolences to any of our members who have been affected by Covid or lost friends or relations as a result of it.

Janet Slatter