

## BOOK REVIEWS.

RAUP, D. M. and STANLEY, S. M. *Principles of Palaeontology* Freeman & Co., Reading, England. 2nd Edition, July 1978. SBN 0-7167-0022-0. £12.20.

The first edition of this book was well received in 1971 the main criticism at that time being centred on the need for a basic course in fossil morphology before appreciating some of the arguments presented in the book. This still applies and is particularly relevant in the chapter on Identification of Fossils and that on Descriptions, the latter commencing on p.27 and not on p.25 as listed in the Contents page. Given such a background, the book is an excellent précis of palaeontological work on preservation and the fossil record, life-history as illustrated by fossils, population studies, and taxonomic principles all included in Part I of the book. Part II is concerned with the use of palaeontological data in stratigraphy, palaeoecology, evolution and palaeogeography.

Readers may wish to know if it is worth renewing their first editions. A comparison of the two editions shows small changes in Part I. There appears to be some change in headings, some lost, some gained but the overall content is much the same. There is the inclusion of a section on multivariate analysis in chapter 4, Populations as a Unit. More drastic changes are to be found in Part II, particularly the final Chapter 12, Biogeography. In the second edition, the chapter is expanded considerably with a full treatment of climate, dispersal of organisms, plate tectonics and mass extinction. I think that the re-arrangement of the chapters in Part II improves the sequence of material in the text. The improvement in Part II should help in the decision to renew one's old copy.

The revision is completed by an updated bibliography and now there are two indexes - author and subject. The edition is well produced and pleasing in appearance, as was the first edition. The book is recommended for Palaeontologists and Biologists at College or University with a reasonable background in morphology.

F. M. Taylor

WARWICK, G. T., and WHITE, D. E., *Geological Handbook for the Wren's Nest Nature Reserve* - R.J.O. Hamblin, Nature Conservancy Council. 1978. 16pp, 8pls. 20p.

Despite the prevalence of local youths armed with catapults and aggressive intentions, the Wren's Nest Hill continues to be a popular haunt of professional and amateur geologists and of geology students. The main attraction is, of course, the abundant, diverse and beautifully preserved fossils that have gained the Wenlock Limestone of Dudley an international reputation. Superb specimens, particularly of trilobites and crinoids, may be seen in many museums, including the Natural History Museum in Wollaton Hall. These were mainly collected in the last century, when the limestone was being actively quarried, but brachiopods, trilobites, corals, crinoids, bryozoa and other fossils are still to be seen in abundance at the Wren's Nest Reserve (where indiscriminate fossil collecting is now rightly discouraged). In addition, the reserve provides a useful field example of a simple geological structure and an excellent demonstration of the importance of the limestone in the economic development of the area.

The current handbook is the third that has been produced for the area, and repeats some of the content of the previous publications. Visitors to the reserve, however, will still need to obtain a copy of the guide to the geological trail (published in 1975, price 15p), which includes a geological map, a feature which is sadly lacking from the new handbook. The major contribution of the new guide is to describe some new exposures that have been cut through the rocks at Wren's Nest by the Nature Conservancy. By digging a 40 m long trench on the eastern side of the hill and cleaning and extending a nearby quarry face, a complete sequence of strata from the uppermost Wenlock Shale, through the limestone, to the basal "Lower Ludlow Shales" has been exposed. A detailed measured section is included as a fold-out at the end of the guide, providing an invaluable basis for teaching and research. Photographs of the excavations are among the plates, which also include

a view of the western side of Wren's Nest Hill in 1921, before housing estates replaced the open fields.

Copies of the trail guide and the handbook are obtainable from:

Geology and Physiography Section,  
Nature Conservancy Council,  
Foxhold House,  
Thornford Road,  
Crookham Common,  
Newbury,  
Berkshire. RG15 8EL.

R. J. Aldridge.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Dear Editor,

Concerning the book review in *Mercian Geologist* vol. 6, no. 4., p.311. I would like to defend the inclusion of a chapter on Pleistocene Geology within a book entitled *Limestones and caves of the Peak District*. As the author of this particular chapter, I felt it was extremely important to document the sedimentology and climatology of this underestimated *geological* time period. All too often Pleistocene Geology is "relegated" to the geographical sphere, whereas in many cases it is the Pleistocene geological processes which are responsible for uncovering geological structures or for altering the hydrological system which could give rise to speleogenesis.

In N. Derbyshire the Pleistocene period was responsible for modifying the landscape and altering cave formation. Of course many of the caves are also clogged with Pleistocene sediments.

I would, however, like to apologize for omitting the acknowledgement of Fig. 25 to my earlier paper published in *Mercian Geologist* vol. 6, no. 2, with slight amendments.

Lastly I would like to say how easy it is to have little control over what is printed as no doubt Dr. Taylor you will agree. In paragraph 4, line 9 of your review you cite letter S on fig. 41 as being on p.111, whereas it really appears on p.168. Difficult isn't it.

Cynthia V. Burek, May 25th 1978.