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# BOOK REVIEWS

# The Who's Who (or was Who) of geology

SARJEANT, W. A. S. Geologists and the History of Geology, An International Bibliography. Supplement II (1985-1993). Krieger Publishing Company, P.O. Box 9542, Melbourne, Florida, 32902, U.S.A. \$365, 2386 pp. (in 3 volumes). ISBN 0-89464-880-2.

Our founder member, Bill Sarjeant, has extended his great bibliography again. Originally published in 5 volumes in 1980 with 6893 biographical entries for the years up to 1979, it was extended with a 2 volume Supplement I covering 1979-1984. This had 1548 entries. The new Supplement II has 1747 biographical entries of geologists. With crossindexing by countries, subjects, organizations etc. the whole bibliography runs to nearly 45000 entries.

This is a massive work which Bill Sarjeant has compiled as a side-line from his main research subjects of palynology and reptile tracks. Over the years he has card-indexed the data contained in these bibliographies by scouring other bibliographies, reviews, obituaries and histories of science. He also scours the many libraries he has visited around the world. It is essentially an index of as many as possible of those geologists who have contributed to the historical growth of the subject. He has tried to cover all languages using the Latin alphabet, but with an estimated 30000 periodicals around the world which include some geology, doubtless there are omissions. Naturally, your reviewer looked up his own name but it was not listed, but then so far as he is aware nobody has written up his biography as yet, and it is a bit premature for an obituary!

Bill Sarjeant's biographical bibliography is a reference work which should be in every geological library. It will provide the raw material for many historical/geological studies in the future.

The original 5 volume set is still available at \$535 and Supplement I is available at \$195.

Trevor Ford

### Leeds in Stone

DIMES, F. G. and MITCHELL, M. The Building Stone Heritage of Leeds. Leeds Philosophical & Literary Society, City Museum, Leeds. £9 paperback, 112 pp. ISBN 1870737 105.

Building stones are somewhat marginal to geology but this nicely produced little book on our sister city of Leeds by two former officers of the British Geological Survey (Frank Dimes sadly died during the final stages of publication) is a welcome addition to the literature. It starts with an introduction to the history of Leeds and to the geology of the surrounding area before passing on to the history of its many notable public buildings. Some comments are made on the quality and durability of the stones used, mostly local Millstone Grit and Coal Measures sandstones. Comments are also made on imported ornamental stones. However, regrettably little is said on the techniques of quarrying or of shaping the stones. The main part of the book consists of itineraries for 4 walks around central Leeds plus more extended tours outside the City. The book concludes with a classification of the stones used and comments on problems of decay such as rising damp, sulphation and reaction to acid rain. A glossary and bibliography are appended.

Trevor Ford

### Rock around the clock

CRAVEN, MAXWELL. John Whitehurst of Derby; clockmaker and scientist 1713-1788. Mayfield Books, Ashbourne, Derbyshire. £24.99, 272 pp. ISBN 0 9523270 31.

As the title indicates, Whitehurst earned his bread and butter as clockmaker and much of the book is devoted to this theme, which the author has thoroughly researched. However, EMGS members will know of him more as a pioneer geologist. His book on "An Inquiry into the Original State and Formation of the Earth" (1778 & 1786) contains the first published sections of strata across the Derwent Valley at Matlock. These were the inspiration for

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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