Book review

Urban geology in Wales: 3. M. G. Bassett, H. Boulton and D. Nichol. *National Museum of Wales Geological Series No. 26*, September 2009. ISBN: 978-0-7200-0594-3

The book is a collection of 24 papers over 175 pages. The majority are engineering geological case studies in Wales. Of the 59 co-authors 34 are consultants, 11 are from British Geological Survey (BGS), seven are from academia and the balance are staff from the National Museum and public sector organisations in Wales. Of the editors, Michael Bassett and Douglas Nichol are from the National Museum and Huw Boulton is from North Wales Trunk Road Agency (NWTRA) Geotechnical Group in Wrexham County Borough Council.

The book is divided into three sections. Section 1, Urban areas and construction, comprises eight papers: five with a focus on slope stability and three concerning soft ground conditions. Section 2, Geohazards and geoenvironmental issues, contains nine papers: four dealing with slope stability, two on contamination, one on deep drilling, one on abandoned shallow mine workings and one comparing the petrological and engineering characteristics of volcanic deposits in Snowdonia and Monserrat. Section 3 is titled 'General projects', and contains seven papers with a wide range of even more general subject matter, including the stratigraphy of Ordovician bentonite horizons, geographic information system (GIS) visualisation tools, Welsh building stone, Irish Sea marine aggregates and geo-tourism.

This publication is the fifth compendium of engineering geological case studies published by the Museum in the last 10 years, it is the third in a series titled *Urban geology*, the first two were devoted to landslides and their remediation. Like previous reviewers of the *Urban geology* series I struggle with the title. Clearly Wales is largely a rural

country and this is reflected in the geographical location of most of the case studies; there are large urbanised areas in Wales, such as Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor, but none of these areas is covered in this book.

In the preface Michael Bassett states that the purpose of the book (and presumably the series) is to promote and advertise, 'the relevant archival data that we (the National Museum) hold and which are available for public and commercial consultation'. The integrated References section of the book contains papers from the expected sources, namely, *Journal of the Geological Society*, *Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology (QJEG)* and BGS publications, however, there is only one reference to a National Museum of Wales publication, that being *Urban geology in Wales: 2*. To help focus the reader there is a list of Geological Publications of the National Museum of Wales. Excluding a Welsh language version of one publication, 25 publications are listed. There are the five engineering geological case study compendia, concerning landslides and urban geology, there are nine on the subject of palaeontology, three on mineralogy, two are field excursion guides and one presents the papers of H. T. De la Beche.

Notwithstanding reservations about the title and the location of the case studies, this book is a useful compendium of recent engineering case studies in Wales. It would have benefited from an index, but financial sponsorship of the book by professional institutions, government bodies and consultants means that it is extremely good value for money. If there are plans for an *Urban geology in Wales: 4* I would urge the editors either to seek out case studies from the conurbations or change the series title to *Engineering geology in Wales*. I can appreciate that *Rural geology in Wales* does not have the same panache.

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