

SUTCLIFFE, Antony J.: *On the track of Ice Age mammals*. London, British Museum (Natural History). 1985. 224 pp. ISBN 0 565 00869 2. Price £12.95. (reviewed by R.J.G.S.)

This is an excellent book; well written, accurate and up-to-date, the illustrations clear, apposite and plentiful. The coverage of the subject is broad rather than deep. One chapter deals with Ice Ages, their geological features along with associated climatic and biotic changes; another describes the search for Pleistocene mammals in marine deposits, lake sediments, river banks, marshes, caves and volcanic ashes. The problems of relative and absolute dating of faunas are outlined; all the major methods are mentioned and illustrated with examples. Then the British Pleistocene mammal faunas are described, the arrangement is stratigraphic and regional for a selection of sites within the British Isles (Ireland included). The succeeding three chapters describe Pleistocene mammal faunas from East Africa (mainly Olduvai sites), from the New World (examples based on Rancho La Brea tar pits in California and the Cueva Ultima Esperanza with sloths in Patagonia), and from Australia with its marsupial fauna. The book concludes with a chapter on extinction as it relates to Pleistocene mammal faunas.

For a book with so much information packed into its 200 odd pages, it reads very well. It had good index, a glossary and a further reading list. For spelaeologists, the space devoted to cave mammals is inevitably limited, though numerous examples are cited. For cave archaeologists, the space devoted to the hominoid animals is extremely small – a very creditable feature, for the book is about mammals not man. One chapter is on cave paintings with descriptions of their mammal fauna and nothing about Palaeolithic man.

Sutcliffe's book complements Stuart's\* detailed stratigraphic account of British Pleistocene mammal sites and the numerous accounts of Ice Age man. It will usefully fill an empty niche and can be highly recommended both for library reference and for home reading.

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\*Stuart, A. J. 1982. *Pleistocene Vertebrates in the British Isles*. 212pp. London: Longman.