

REVIEWS

Cave Minerals of the World, Second edition. by Carol Hill and Paolo Forti. 1997 National Speleological Society, Huntsville, Alabama. HB 463pp Price £44 ISBN 1-879961-07-5

The first edition (actually the second, because Carol Hill published a more modest volume, *Cave Minerals*, in 1976; but I don't want to confuse you) was published in 1986 and reviewed in these Proceedings (vol. 18. 1, 1987). This new edition is similar in size and weight but actually much longer and rather different.

The Historical Introduction by T. R. Shaw is the same as before. There follows a classification and description of speleothems into 38 different types, as against 25 kinds recognised in the previous edition. This forms about one-third of the main text of the book and is worth studying. Speleothems have received little serious study in Britain and their form and mineralogy deserve more attention than they have received on this side of the Atlantic.

This discussion of speleothem types will be the most useful part of the book for the average caver (if there is such a being). The next section describes cave minerals, 255 species being recognised. The majority of these are classified as "rare", and many as present in "small" or "microscopic" crystals. Most require sophisticated laboratory equipment to identify; identification is not covered in this book, except rather briefly in three pages on laboratory techniques. The book concludes with treatment of 19 Special Topics by various authors, accounts of the "Top ten caves" (none of them British), glossary, bibliography and index.

The previous edition had a section of colour illustrations. The present one is illustrated in colour throughout. There are 333 illustrations, most of them colour photos of high quality. Many of these have no indication of scale, a serious deficiency in an otherwise scholarly book.

The book has twice as many pages as the previous edition, and is printed in smaller type, in three columns instead of two. The total number of words must therefore have been more than doubled. Literature references occupy 70 pages of small type, and exhaustive references lists are given for many speleothem types (e.g. about 180 references for cave pearls).

It may seem unkind to criticise such an exhaustive and carefully compiled book, but if one speculates on other ways in which the material could have been organised, one might conceive of a book dealing with classification, description and mode of origin of speleothems – the latter here partly included in special topics. Such a book would be handier for the "average caver" who will never see more than a few of the minerals here described. The mineralogy after all is to be found in standard works, to which the authors could reply that descriptions of cave occurrences would not be found there. How about putting it in an on-line archive?

To finish on a positive note, Carol Hill is to be congratulated on her work and on this book.

Desmond Donovan

Images Below. by Chris Howes, 1997. Wild Places Publishing. 268pp. Price £22.50. ISBN 0 9526701 1 9.

In 1987 Chris wrote *Cave Photography, A Practical Guide*. This book in itself was an invaluable guide to getting started and continuing to taking underground photographs. *Images Below* is its improved successor and not only gets you started but elaborates on many types of