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Damara Geology

From geosyncline to plate tectonics

Nick Watson, Technical Director, Wardell Armstrong

9th April 2019

Birmingham and Midlands Institute
Refreshments at 6.00pm for a 6:30pm start

The year of 1967 is the official date of birth of plate tectonics. The GSL William Smith meeting 2017 – Plate Tectonics at 50, celebrated that significant birthday by examining the state of the art and looking where it might go in the future. Nick’s talk relates back to the time in the 1970’s when a youthful plate tectonics was gaining acceptance and old continental geologies like the late Proterozoic Damara of Namibia were being re-interpreted along plate tectonic lines. Geosynclinal theory – in its time heralded as the unifying theory in geology to explain orogenic belts – was under the spotlight. The change-over from one theory to another brought out several facets of the geology of the Damara that experts from both camps found difficult to explain. Nick will explore these conundrums in the context of those times by reviewing the geology at a few locations in the Damara, while at the same time introducing the audience to the fascinating geology of Namibia.

About the Speaker: Nick Watson has worked for most of his career as a geotechnical engineer with Wardell Armstrong on construction, waste and mining projects worldwide. There was life before Wardell Armstrong though, including his first job after graduating when he worked for six years as a field geologist in Namibia, mapping in the Damara for the South African Geological Survey. Nick retired from full time work with Wardell Armstrong in 2017 and now has more time to revisit his interest in geology. His talk is based largely on his experiences in Namibia in the 1970s but also on returning there briefly for a symposium on the Damara in 2014 to refresh his acquaintance with the geology.



Forthcoming Talks: The WMRG is constantly on the lookout for fascinating talks. If you would like to present, or know someone who is willing, please contact the WMRG committee (details below) and we will try our very best to accommodate your requests.

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