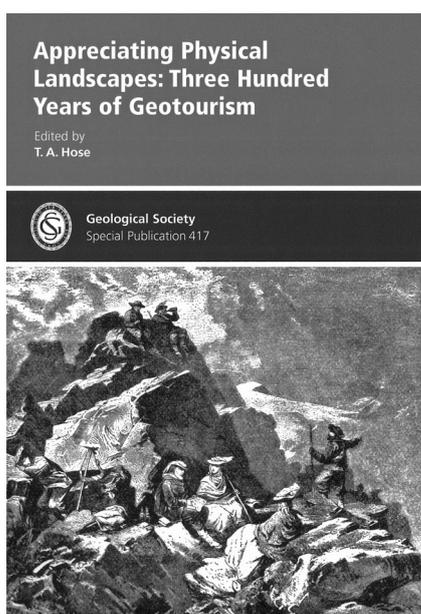


Appreciating Physical Landscapes: Three Hundred Years of Geotourism, edited by T.A. Hose, 2016. Geological Society, Special Publications 417, London. 248 pages. Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-86239-724-8



Named as such, geotourism is a recent concept that combines scientific knowledge of geology and geomorphology with tourist needs and infrastructure. It was introduced in the early 1990s by T.A. Hose, who edited the present book. However, physical landscapes have already been appreciated much earlier by scientists, travellers, writers, poets and painters alike, who all can be referred to as the first “geotourists”. This tome is a kind of a history of geotourism and discusses its various developments from the 17th century to the present day. It is the first publication to present such a wide range of examples of how physical landscapes were perceived and described or depicted in previous centuries. The publication results from a conference, “Appreciating Physical Landscapes: Geotourism 1670–1970”, organised by the History of Geology Group in the United Kingdom in 2012. Selected papers and posters presented at that conference form the scope of the book. This explains the eclectic mix of themes and locations; it offers the reader a wider view on the various aspects of the history of geotourism. The book aims to illustrate the fact that

physical landscapes were of vital importance for the development of travelling, tourism, science, art and writing long before the notion of geotourism was born. Simultaneously, both textual and visual records of the first visits to interesting geosites contribute much to reconstructions of past landscapes and landscape history.

In addition to the foreword and index of names and basic notions, there are 15 chapters, each followed by a list of references. They were prepared by 22 authors, most of them from European countries (13 from UK, 3 from Serbia, 2 from the Netherlands, 1 from France and 1 from Poland; additionally, 2 from Australia). The places described in this tome also refer mainly to localities in Europe. This European perspective can easily be explained by the development of the concept of geotourism first in Europe, and especially in the United Kingdom, where the traditions of studying physical landscape had been well established for centuries.

While most of the chapters discuss specific case studies, the first chapter, written by the editor, offers an overview and in-depth presentation of definitions and the historic background to the beginnings and development of geotourism in Europe, starting with the Grand Tour in the 18th century and enhanced later by the Enlightenment and Romantic ideas of how to understand and admire natural landscapes, respectively. This chapter is especially valuable for readers who are not familiar with the idea of geotourism, as it sets the scene for a detailed analysis of the case studies that are presented in the following chapters. Abundant references constitute additional value to the broad introductory part of the book. The second chapter presents the development of appreciation of physical landscapes in Scotland. The important conclusion is that, while geology became a highly specialised scientific discipline, there was an increased need to engage the casual tourists again, especially by evoking the sense of wonder and personal involvement, which can be achieved by means of e.g., visual art set in the landscape. The next chapter focuses on water-

falls as an inspiration to artists, travel writers and poets. It is based on many examples from Europe but other famous localities in the world are also included. It refers mainly to Romanticism; however, the renewal of interest in waterfalls as popular tourist destinations in recent decades is discussed as well. The next two chapters present the role of landscape painters in documenting physical landscapes. The first one is a biography of an Austrian painter, Eugene von Guérard (19th century), who was especially interested in volcanic landscapes of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and the second one presents Dutch landscape drawings, etchings and paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries. The following chapter draws attention to the role of the first geologists and alpinists in discovering remote areas of northern Norway during the 19th century. The descriptions and images included in their published travel reports today are a valuable source of information for the reconstruction of past landscapes and comparative analysis, i.e., to assess changes in the areal extent of glaciers. The authors also encourage modern tourists to save their digital memories of their travels for future research. The next two chapters present the role of local associations and clubs in the development of geotourism in its early stages. It is exemplified by activities of the Chester Society of Natural Science, the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club (1850–1950s) and the Geologists' Association, founded in 1858. An interesting comparison of past and modern ways of interpretation and promotion of physical landscapes is presented, as well as valuable resources of the Carreck Archive containing documents and photographs of early activities of the Geologists' Association. The Derbyshire's Peak District, which is considered a birthplace of geotourism, is the main theme in the next two chapters. In the first one the various types of cartographic sources available for that region since the end of the 18th century are presented and their role in promoting the physical landscape is assessed. The next chapter discusses the history of tourist exploration of limestone caves of Stoney

Middleton Dale in the Peak District. Although they are protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the documented open access over at least 300 years has resulted in significant disturbance and the removal of speleothems by the first visitors in particular. The next chapter presents the travel journals of William George Maton (1774–1840), which can be described as a first concise attempt to present the 'regional geology' of southwest England. The next two chapters discuss case studies of rise and decline of historical geotourism destinations in Cornwall (e.g., Carclaze tin mine) and French Alpine foreland (three river gorges), referring also to the changing needs of visitors over the centuries. The one but last chapter is the sole one that focuses on central European mountains and presents the long-lasting history of appreciating geology and geomorphology in the Sudetes (written by Piotr Migoń). It proves that recent geotourism developments in the region are based on places of natural wonders that have been frequented by tourists at least since the 18th century. The final chapter presents the history of recognition and appreciation of the loess cover in Serbia, which ranks amongst the thickest in Europe. The chapter contains excerpts and illustrations from travel books and diaries dating back to the 17th century, but also presents recent geotourism developments in the region.

To sum up, it should be stressed that the book is to be seen not only as a history of geotourism but also as valuable inspiration for current geotourism developments, which can build on past experience, both failures and successes, in promoting geology and geomorphology in society. The variety of topics and the easy and comprehensible way of presentation, with numerous and diverse illustrations, make interesting reading not only for professionals but also for everyone interested in appreciation of physical landscapes and landscape history.

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