Imperial College London

BSRG Sedimentary Research

BRITISH SEDIMENTOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

18th to 21st December 2011

Department of Earth Science and Engineering
Imperial College London

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

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BRITISH SEDIMENTOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP
50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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PROGRAMME, ABSTRACTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

BSRG would like to thank the following sponsors for their support:

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CONVENORS AND ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Convenors – Chris Jackson, Gary Hampson (Imperial College London)
Website – Alan Spencer (Imperial College London)
Registration – Georgina Worrall (Geological Society)
Sponsor invoicing – Michael Kyriakides (Geological Society)
Organising committee – Adam Baldwin, Han Claringbould, Fiona Dinwoodie, Amy Dowdeswell, Sebastian Eberhardt, Gavin Elliott, Yvette Flood, Nick Holgate, Byami Jolly, Adam Keay, Matthew Lewis, Benoit Massart, Nikolaos Michael, James Minns, Stefano Patruno, Oliver Roberts, Amandine Prélat, Carla Riccio, Clare Sena, Olivia Sloan, Charlie Twallin, Yuxi Wang (Imperial College London)

Seismic training workshop – Chris Jackson (Imperial College London)
Core workshop – James Maynard, Laura Bennati (ExxonMobil)
Fieldtrip – Martin Wells (BP), Gary Hampson (Imperial College London)

ADVERTISEMENT

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION & CONFERENCE DESK

Sunday 18th December: 09.00 - 17:00, 18:30-20.00 in Royal School of Mines front entrance
Monday19th December: 08.30 - 12.30 in Royal School of Mines front entrance
12.30 - 17.00 outside room 1.31, Royal School of Mines
Tuesday19th December: 08.30 - 17.00 outside room 1.31, Royal School of Mines

All workshops and technical sessions are being held in the **Royal School of Mines building**. You will be able to locate the various meeting rooms on the maps of Imperial College South Kensington Campus and the Royal School of Mines building (overleaf). There will be plenty of assistance throughout the meeting to help you find your way around the campus. Please use the front entrance to the Royal School of Mines (from Prince Consort Road)

NAME BADGES

Delegates for the conference will be issued with name badges on registration; these should also be worn on the campus at Imperial College to enable security to recognise you as a conference delegate.

CATERING AND REFRESHMENTS

Coffee/tea will be served each day at 11.00 and 15.00 in room 3.01. Bagged lunches will be ready for collection at 12.30 in room 3.01. Lunch tickets will be issued when delegates register.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Talk slots are 15 minutes long, including 3 minutes for questions so please prepare your presentations accordingly. Keynote speakers' slots are 30 minutes including time for questions. Speakers should prepare their slides using Microsoft Powerpoint.

Oral presentations, on a CD or USB storage device, must be uploaded to the PC in the correct lecture theatre (room 1.31 or room 1.47) well before the start of the session (i.e. before 09:00, during coffee and lunch breaks, or after 17.00).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Posters should be prepared in portrait orientation and should be no larger than A0 in size. Landscape oriented posters will not fit on the display boards. Fixing materials will be provided. Poster boards will be available from the Icebreaker (18.30, Sunday) in room 3.01. Once fitted, posters can stay on display for the duration of the conference.

Posters should be manned during the Dedicated Poster Session on Monday (17.00-19.00), but they can be viewed at anytime. Drinks will be available during the Dedicated Poster Session.

ICEBREAKER

The icebreaker will be held in Room 3.01 in the Royal School of Mines building from 18.30-21.00. Drinks and nibbles will be provided.

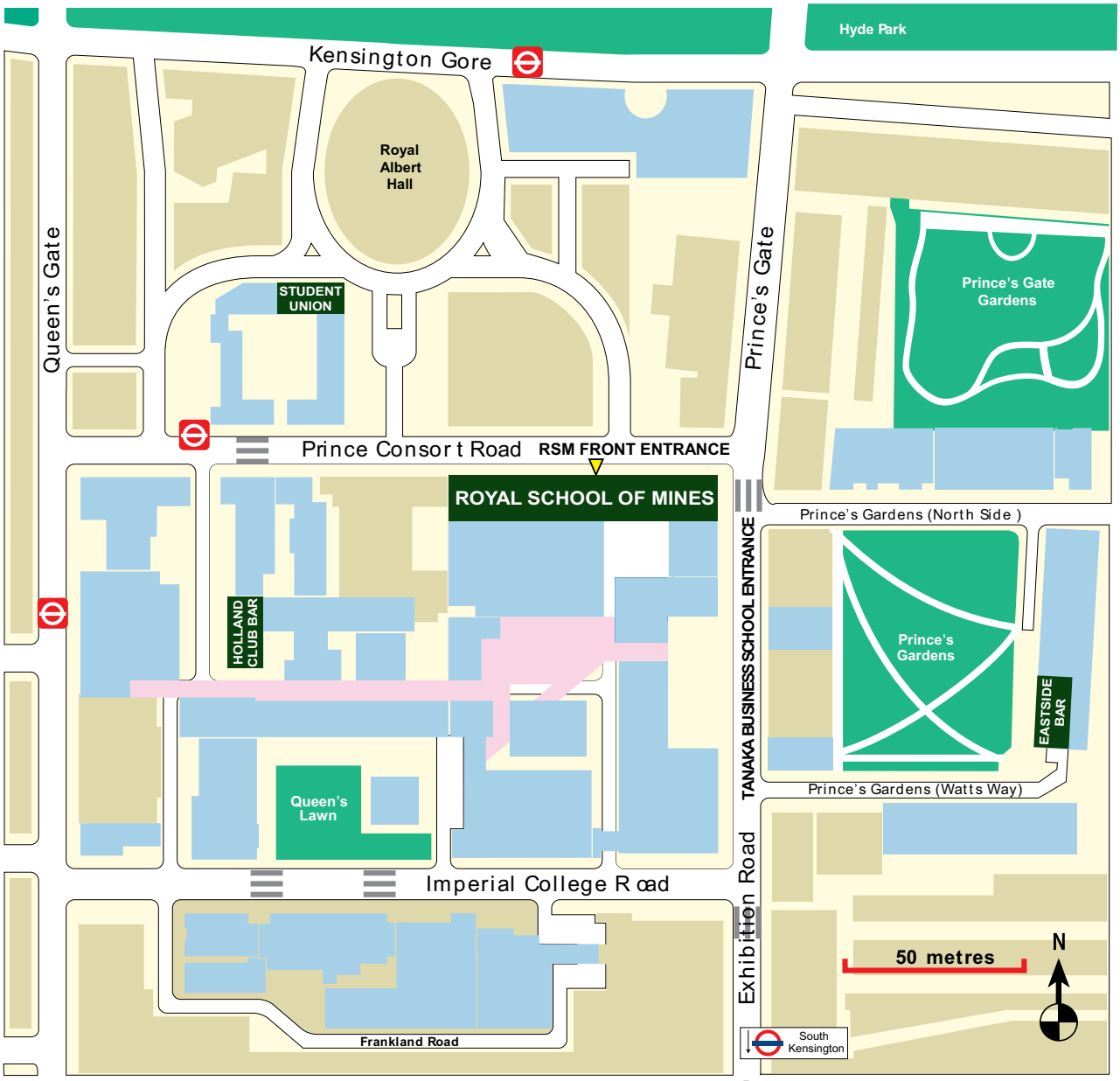
CONFERENCE DINNER
The BSRG 2011 conference dinner will take place on HMS President on the mighty Thames River in the centre of London. A disco will follow a delicious 3-course dinner. Return coach travel is provided - coaches will leave the Royal School of Mines at 19.00 and return at midnight. Cost is payable at the time of registration, and we are unable to take late requests for conference dinner tickets. If you have any special dietary requirements, please ensure that you have notified us well in advance.

FIRST AID
Should you require a doctor or first aid assistance please contact Security in the first instance; internal phone number 58900, external 020 759 58900.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - RESTAURANTS AND BARS
A comprehensive selection of nearby restaurants is given on the following pages. There are three bars on campus (Student Union, Holland Club and Eastside bars; see campus map), and lots of pubs near South Kensington tube station and on Gloucester Road.

South Kensington Campus map

Imperial College London



Main walkway

South Kensington Underground

Bus stops

Building entrances

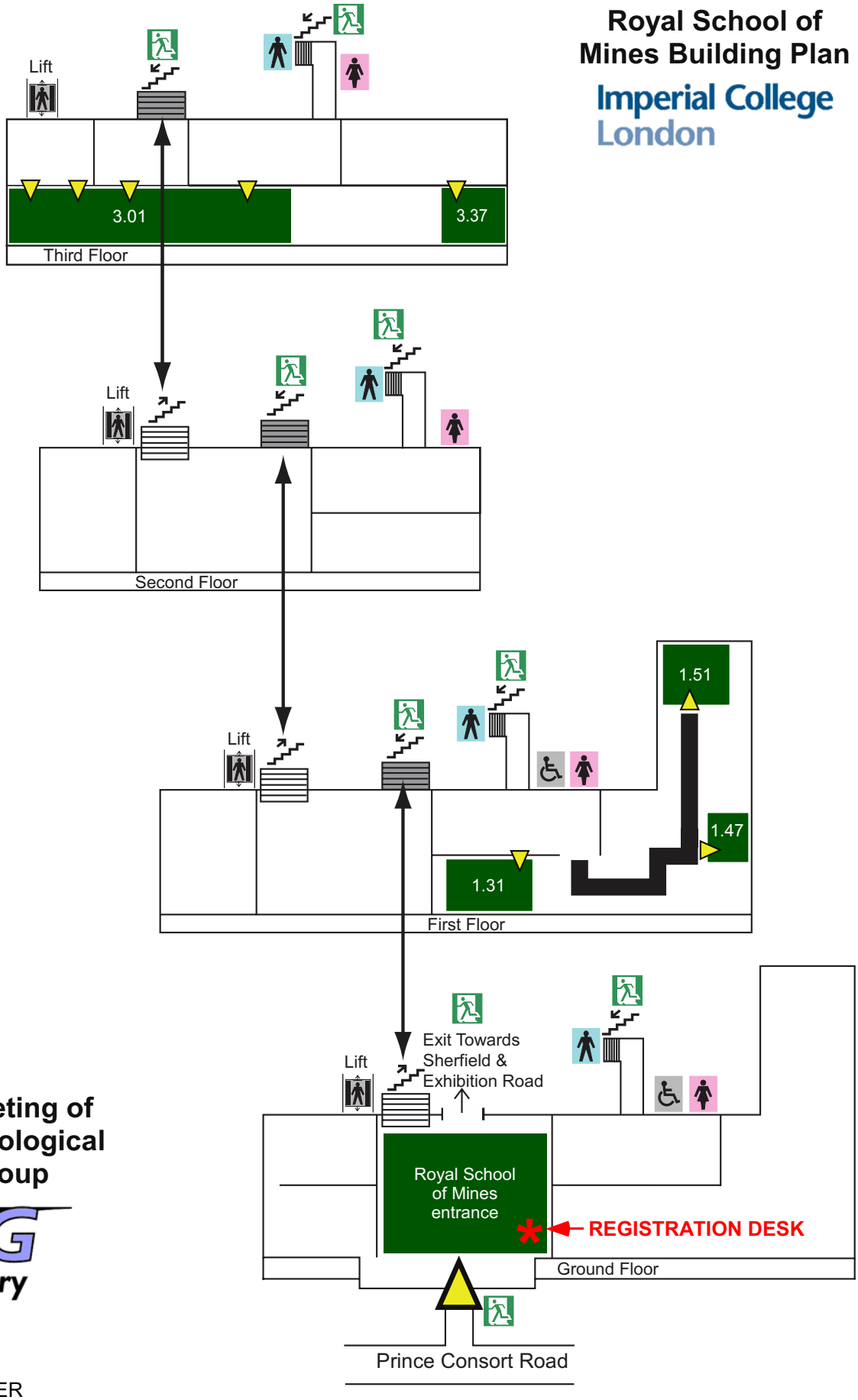
50th annual meeting of British Sedimentological Research Group

BSRG Sedimentary Research

SUNDAY 18TH - WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER
ALL WORKSHOPS, TECHNICAL SESSIONS ARE IN ROYAL SCHOOL OF MINES BUILDING
PLEASE USE FRONT ENTRANCE TO ROYAL SCHOOL OF MINES (FROM PRINCE CONSORT ROAD)

Royal School of Mines Building Plan

Imperial College London



50th annual meeting of British Sedimentological Research Group

BSRG Sedimentary Research

SUNDAY 18TH DECEMBER
SEISMIC TRAINING WORKSHOP - Room 3.37 (Third Floor), 9am-5pm
CORE WORKSHOP - Room 1.51 (First Floor), 2-5pm
ICEBREAKER RECEPTION - Room 3.01 (Third Floor), 6:30-8pm

MONDAY 19TH & TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER
TALKS - Rooms 1.31 and 1.47 (First Floor)
POSTERS, COFFEE, LUNCH - Room 3.01 (Third Floor)
AGM & AWARDS CEREMONY - Room 1.31 (First Floor)

WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER
FIELDTRIP PICK-UP - Royal School of Mines entrance (Ground Floor), 8am
FIELDTRIP DROP-OFF - Royal School of Mines entrance (Ground Floor), 5pm

Type	Name/Details	Cost Low <£10 Medium <£25	Type of Food	Notes
Fast food	**Burger King** 85 Gloucester Road, London SW7 4SS 020 7370 2447	Low	American	Breakfast, lunch and dinner
Fast food	**KFC** 81 Gloucester Road London SW7 4SS 020 7244 9642	Low	American	Lunch and dinner
Fast food	**Subway** 30 Thurloe Street South Kensington, London SW7 2LT 0800 0855058	Low	Sandwich	Lunch and dinner
Fast food	**Pizza Hut** 2 Kensington Church Street London W8 4EP, United Kingdom 020 7376 1800	Low	Italian	Lunch and dinner
Fast food	**McDonalds** 114 Kensington High Street Kensington, Greater London W8 4SG 020 7937 3705	Low	American	Breakfast, lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Nandos** 117 Gloucester Road London SW7 4ST 02073734446	Medium/Low	Chicken	Lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Wagamama** 26A Kensington High Street London W8 4PW 020 7376 1717	Medium/Low	Japanese	Lunch and dinner

Type	Name/Details	Cost Low <£10 Medium <£25	Type of Food	Notes
Restaurant	**Pizza Express** 7 Beauchamp Place Kensington, London SW3 1NQ, United Kingdom 020 7589 2355	Medium/Low	Italian	Lunch and dinner
Eatery	**Whole Foods Market** The Barkers Building, 63–97 Kensington High Street, Kensington London W8 5SE 020 7368 4500	Medium/low	Mixed	Lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Ranoush** 86 Kensington High Street London W8 4SG 020 7938 2234	Medium/low	Lebanese	Lunch
Restaurant	**Sticky fingers** 1A Phillimore Gardens London W8 7QB, United Kingdom 020 7938 5338	Medium	American	Lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Med Kitchen** 3-5 Campden Hill Road London W8 7DU 020 7938 1830	Medium	Mixed	Lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Balans** 187 Kensington High Street London W8 6SH 020 7376 0115	Medium	British/French	Breakfast, lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Zaika Restaurant** 1 Kensington High Street London W8 5NP 020 7795 6533	Medium	Asian/Indian	Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Type	Name/Details	Cost Low <£10 Medium <£25	Type of Food	Notes
Restaurant	**Mimino Georgian Restaurant** 197c Kensington High Street London W8 6BA 020 7937 1551	Medium/High	Russian	Lunch and dinner
Restaurant	**Harrods Food Hall** 87-135 Brompton Road Knightsbridge SW1X 7XL	5*	Global	
Restaurant	**Frankies** 3 Yeomans Row SW3 2AL 020 7590 9999	3* Mains £8.50 - £18.50	Italian	Flagship restaurant from the chain created by Marco Pierre White and Frankie Dettori
Restaurant	**O Fado** 50 Beauchamp Place SW3 1NY 020 7589 3002	3* Mains £13.95 - £20-95	Portuguese	
Restaurant	**Yo! Sushi** 5TH Flr Harvey Nichols 109-125 Knightsbridge SW1X 7RJ 020 7201 8641	4* Plates are £1.70 - £5, (would expect several plates per meal)	Japanese (80+ dishes)	Chain restaurant
Restaurant	**S&P Patara** 9 Beauchamp Place SW3 1NQ 020 7581 8820	4* Average Dinner Price £45	Thai/Asian	Part of a worldwide chain
Restaurant	**Sopranos** 183 Kensington High Street, W8 6SH 020 7937 2458	4* Mains - £6.95-£16.95 Lunch menu offers 1 course@£6.50, 2 courses@£8.50 Dinner menu offers 2 courses@£12.50, 3 courses@£15.95	Italian	Family run

Type	Name/Details	Cost Low <£10 Medium <£25	Type of Food	Notes
Restaurant	**Babylon at The Roof Gardens** 99 Kensington High Street, W8 5SA 020 7937 7994	3* Main courses £18.50-£24	Modern British	Restaurant set in 1.5 acre roof top garden above Kensington complete with flamingos and ducks.
Restaurant	**Byron** 222 High Street Kensington W8 7RG 020 7376 0115	4* Mains £5.50 - £8.25	Quality fast food	Chain restaurant
Restaurant	**Giraffe** 7 High Street Kensington W8 5NP	2* Mains £8.25 - £14.95	Brasserie/Global food	Chain restaurant
Restaurant	**Natural History Museum Café** Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd, SW7 5BD 020 7942 5000	£35 for a Lunch for Two	Deli Café (eg. bacon and cheddar tart with two salads)	£35 for a Lunch for Two
Restaurant	**Ognisko Polish Club** 55 Prince's Gate, London SW7 2PN 020 7589 4635	£25 to £34	French, Italian, Polish	Attire: no trainers Dress Code: Smart Formal
Restaurant	**Da Mario** 15 Gloucester Road, London SW7 4PP 020 7584 9078	£25	European, Italian	Opening Hours 12pm- 11.30 pm , Dress code: Smart Casual
Restaurant	**L'Etranger Restaurant** 36 Gloucester Road, London SW7 4QT 020 7584 1118	£35 - £44	Asian, European, French, French (New),Japanese	Opening Hours: 12pm- 3pm and 6pm to late Dress code: Smart Casual
Restaurant	**Launceston Place** A, 1 Launceston Place, London W8 5RL 02079376912	£55 - £64	British, British (Modern), European	Opening Hours: 12.00 pm to 2.30pm And 6.00 pm to 10.30 pm Dress code: Smart Casual
Restaurant	**Memories Of India** 18 Gloucester Road, London SW7 4RB 020 7581 3734	Under £24	Indian	

Type	Name/Details	Cost Low <£10 Medium <£25	Type of Food	Notes
Restaurant	**Il Borgo Ltd** 13 Gloucester Road, London SW7 4PP 020 7584 3476	£15-£20	Italian	
Restaurant	**Khob Khun** Restaurant 9a Gloucester Road, London SW7 4PP 020 7584 9514	£20	Thai	
Restaurant	**Madsen Restaurant** 20 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 3DL 020 7225 2772	£15-£20	European, Scandinavian	Opening Hours: 12pm -4pm and 5 pm –to Late
Restaurant	**Thai Square** Restaurant 19 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2HE 020 7368 5900	£10-£20	Asian, Thai	Opening Hours: 12.30 pm -3pm and then 5pm to 10.45 pm

TECHNICAL PROGRAMME:

ORAL AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Sunday 18th December 2011	
09.00 - 17.00	Seismic Interpretation Workshop (Room 3.37)
14.00 - 17.00	Core Interpretation Workshop (Room 1.51)
18.30 - 20.00	Icebreaker Reception (Room 3.01)

Monday 19th December 2011	
09.00 - 10.30	• Plenary Session (Room 1.31)
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee and Posters (Room 3.01)
11.00 - 12.30	• Session: The answer lies in the shale I (CMG/BSRG) - (Room 1.31) • Session: Biological and chemical sediments I - (Room 1.47)
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch and Posters (Room 3.01)
13.30 - 15.00	• Session: Deep-water sedimentation: processes and products I - (Room 1.31) • Session: Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture I - (Room 1.47)
15.00 - 15.30	Coffee and Posters (Room 3.01)
15.30 - 17:00	BSRG AGM and Awards Presentation (Room 1.31)
17:00 - 19.00	• Dedicated Poster Session and Reception (Room 3.01)
19.00	Coaches depart for conference dinner (Royal School of Mines front entrance)
24:00	Coaches return to Imperial College (Royal School of Mines front entrance)

Tuesday 20th December 2011	
09.00 - 10.30	• Session: Styles and controls on fluvial and aeolian stratigraphic architecture - (Room 1.31) • Session: Deep-water sedimentation: processes and products II - (Room 1.47)
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee and Posters (Room 3.01)
11.00 - 12.30	• Session: Sediment routing systems - (Room 1.31) • Session: The answer lies in the shale II (CMG/BSRG) - (Room 1.47)
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch and Posters (Room 3.01)
13.30 - 15.00	• Session: Characterisation of hydrocarbon and CO2 reservoirs - (Room 1.31) • Session: Tectonic controls on stratigraphic architecture - (Room 1.47)
15.00 - 15.30	Coffee and Posters (Room 3.01)
15.30 - 17:00	• Session: Biological and chemical sediments II - (Room 1.31) • Session: Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture II - (Room 1.47)

Wednesday 21st December 2011	
08.30 - 17.00	Fieldtrip to Greensand (meet at Royal School of Mines front entrance)

Plenary
Welcome to Imperial College and the 50th AGM of the British Sedimentological Research Group. This plenary session highlights the diverse range of sedimentological studies being conducted in British academic, government and industrial institutes.

The answer lies in the shale I & II
This session, which is held jointly with the Clay Minerals Group (CMG), focuses on the sedimentological, geochemical, petrophysical and geomechanical importance of shales. The talks emphasise the importance of 'unconventional' shale resources in the future of energy production and demonstrate how shales are sensitive geological 'archives' of climatic and oceanographic changes.

Biological and chemical sediments I & II
Biological and chemical sediments are among the most enigmatic and poorly understood on Earth. In this session the importance of these deposits is examined from the grain-scale to the basin-scale.

Deep-water sediments: processes and products I & II
This session focuses on the processes associated with the transport of submarine sediment gravity flows and the sedimentology of their associated deposits. Furthermore, this session explores the intrinsic and extrinsic controls on the stratigraphic architecture of deep-marine gravity flow deposits. This session presents examples from a range of depositional systems and highlights the implications of deep-water stratigraphic architecture for hydrocarbon exploration and production.

Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture I & II
The stratigraphic architecture of coastal deposit is complex due to the interaction of various processes (waves, tides, rivers) and external controls (e.g. sea-level, climate, basin bathymetry). This session presents examples of coastal stratigraphic architecture from around the world and highlights the resultant complexity of these deposits. The role of numerical modelling and modern analogues in understanding these systems is also presented.

Styles and controls on fluvial and aeolian stratigraphic architecture
Fluvial and aeolian deposits form major reservoirs in many sedimentary basins in the world, although they represent some of the most challenging reservoirs to characterise. The talks in this session use modern analogues and outcrop data, and highlight why these deposits are so complex.

Sediment routing systems
A range of extrabasinal and intrabasinal processes control the erosion, transport and deposition of sediment within linked sediment routing systems. In this session the relative roles of tectonics, climate and sediment source area are investigated, and the need for an integrated, holistic approach to basin analysis is demonstrated.

Characterisation of hydrocarbon and CO2 reservoirs
This session highlights the roles that basic sedimentology and stratigraphic analysis play in the characterisation of hydrocarbon and CO_2 reservoirs. Talks from both carbonate and clastic reservoirs, or reservoir analogues, are presented, and the relative roles of small- and large-scale heterogeneities are investigated using subsurface, outcrop and analytical techniques.

Tectonic controls on stratigraphic architecture
Tectonic setting is the first-order control on uplift and subsidence in sedimentary basins. As a result, tectonics controls the generation and growth of sediment source areas and sedimentary basins, as well as the evolution of sediment supply pathways. A range of talks from around the globe use outcrop or subsurface data to document the roles that crustal extension, compression and salt tectonics can have on sediment deposition and stratigraphic architecture.

Talks - Monday 19th December

	Room 1.31		Room 1.47		Room 3.01
09:00-09:15	Plenary (Chairs: Gary Hampson, Chris Jackson)	KEYNOTE: Carbon capture and storage: have our coal and burn it? (Stephenson)			
09:15-09:30					
09:30-09:45		The influence of climate variation on deltaic architecture: implications from analogue modelling (Bijkerk et al.)			
09:45-10:00		Giant intrusions: facies, architecture and flow processes (Ross et al.)			
10:00-10:15		Sedimentology of the Neoproterozoic Chuos Formation, northern Namibia: implications for Cryogenian glaciation (Busfield & Le Heron)			
10:15-10:30		The continuing value of original outcrop studies within the hydrocarbon industry (Hirst et al.)			
10:30-11:00					**coffee**
11:00-11:15	The answer lies in the shale I (CMG/BSRG) (Chair: Harry Shaw)	KEYNOTE: Multi-scale analysis of mudstone successions and shale-gas reservoirs (Taylor et al.)	Biological and chemical sediments I (Chair: Fiona Whitaker)	KEYNOTE: Carbonate clumped isotopes applied to sedimentary systems: promises and challenges (John et al.)	
11:15-11:30					
11:30-11:45		Insights into provenance, transport history, depositional processes and diagenesis from high resolution geochemical studies of turbidite mudcaps (Hunt et al.)		The Messinian Evaporite Complex in the Eastern Mediterranean - A natural laboratory for studying evaporite sedimentation patterns and salt tectonics in a youthful saline giant (Allen et al.)	
11:45-12:00		Investigation of the distribution and composition of organic matter in the Namurian upper Bowland Shale – a potential UK gas Shale (Koenitzer et al.)		Sedimentological clues to fluid-assisted brecciation: the brecciated limestones of the Messinian Salinity Crisis re-interpreted as seep limestones (Iadanza et al.)	
12:00-12:15		Squeezing oil from shale: the sedimentology of the “Alberta Bakken” (Noad)		Facies distribution in the Zechstein Supergroup in the Norwegian Sector of the northern North Sea Basin (Evrard et al.)	
12:15-12:30		Impact of clay mineral diagenesis and burial history on shale gas prospectivity, producibility and reserves: a Golden Zone perspective (Nadeau & Hurst)		Carbonate mud production by marine fish: more questions than answers (Salter et al.)	
12:30-13:30					**lunch**
13:30-13:45	Deep-water sedimentation: processes and products I (Chair: Esther Sumner)	KEYNOTE: Geometrical modelling of turbidite channel systems – implication on reservoir characterisation (Labourdette)	Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture I (Chair: Mike Martin)	Modelling falling stage topset aggradation: Implications for distinguishing forced and unforced regressions in the ancient record (Prince & Burgess)	
13:45-14:00				Use of modern analogues in correlation and palaeogeographic analysis of an evolving coal-bearing paralic succession, Paleocene, Svalbard, Arctic Norway (Lüthje & Nichols)	
14:00-14:15		Meander-wavelength / flow-dimension ratios in freely meandering experimental sandy turbidity currents (Eggenhuisen et al.)		Anatomy of an incised valley-fill at an evolving rift margin: Pleistocene of the Gulf of Corinth, Greece (Gobo et al.)	
14:15-14:30		Development of a confined turbidite system prone to hybrid event beds, Carboniferous, U.K. (Southern et al.)		The role of inherited bathymetry on the architecture of wave-dominated deposits: Book Cliffs and Wasatch Plateau, Utah, USA (Eide et al.)	
14:30-14:45		A subsurface assessment of post-rift bathymetric control on deepwater sedimentary architecture (Duller et al.)		Facies, architecture and sequence stratigraphy of an ancient tide-dominated delta: lower Dir Abu Lifa Member (Eocene), Western Desert, Egypt (Legler et al.)	
14:45-15:00		An integrated characterisation of the Paleocene submarine fans of the Lista and Maureen formations, UK Central Graben (Kilhams et al.)		Tidal signatures from an intracratonic playa lake (Ainsworth et al.)	
15:00-15:30					**coffee**
15:30-17:00	**AGM & Awards Presentation**				
17:00-19:00					**poster session & reception**
19:00 sharp	coaches depart for conference dinner				

Talks - Tuesday 20th December

	Room 1.31		Room 1.47		Room 3.01
09:00-09:15	Styles and controls on fluvial and aeolian stratigraphic architecture (Chair: Arjan Reesink)	Use of a relational database for the classification of fluvial sedimentary systems and the interpretation and prediction of fluvial architecture (Colombera et al.)	Deep-water sedimentation: processes and products II (Chair: Amandine Prelat)	Cyclic step arrays: the critical jump in understanding submarine flows (Sumner et al.)	
09:15-09:30		Sandstone body architecture of distributive fluvial systems (DFS): examples from Spain (Miocene) and USA (Jurassic) (Kulikova & Nichols)		The flows that left no trace: very large-volume turbidity currents that bypassed sediment through submarine channels without eroding the seafloor (Stevenson et al.)	
09:30-09:45		Large-scale fluvial architecture of the Blackhawk Formation, Utah, USA (Rittersbacher et al.)		Sedimentological character of an event bed produced by a high density turbidity current deposition, Buzzard field, UKCS (McKinnon & Kneller)	
09:45-10:00		Evolution of a distributive fluvial system on the Colorado Plateau, USA (Owen et al.)		Characterisation of terminations of hybrid turbidites against confining slopes using natural gamma-ray profiling (Patacci et al.)	
10:00-10:15		Fluvial architecture and geometry of the lower Abrahamskraal Formation, lower Beaufort Group, Karoo Basin, South Africa (Gulliford et al.)		Spilling into confinement: processes in internal levees to submarine channels (Morris et al.)	
10:15-10:30		The point bar to counter point bar transition: insights from modern meandering rivers and implications for the rock record (Hubbard & Smith)		Emplacement dynamics of landslides around volcanic islands and implications for tsunami hazards; insights from the most detailed geophyical mapping yet of such landslide deposits (Talling & Watt)	
10:30-11:00					coffee
11:00-11:15	Sediment routing systems (Chair: Alex Whittaker)	KEYNOTE: Source-to-sink analysis of modern and ancient sedimentary systems (Sømme)	The answer lies in the shale II (CMG/BSRG) (Chair: David Wray)	Identifying lithofacies in Carboniferous mudstones (Graham et al.)	
11:15-11:30				Dynamic deposition of fine-grained intervals from the Namurian of the Edale sub-basin (Davies & Sherwin)	
11:30-11:45		Quantifying the relative role of multiple source areas on the budget, calibre and composition of sediment of an ancient routing system: field examples from the Spanish Pyrenees (Michael et al.)		Plastic deformation, erosion and acceleration of turbitidy currents moving over soft, cohesive, horizontal substrates (Verhagen et al.)	
11:45-12:00		Climate change as a controlling parameter in sediment supply: the Nile Province (Palacios & Kneller)		Genesis and formation of the flutes on cohesive mud beds (Yin et al.)	
12:00-12:15		Provenance and distribution of Upper Jurassic mass flow sandstones and MTCs, Quad 30, Central Graben, UKCS (McArthur et al.)		Bedform development in mixtures of clay and sand: the wave case (Baas et al.)	
12:15-12:30		Orbital pacing of the Ainsa Basin's upper Hecho Group submarine fan deposits, Spanish Pyrenees (Scotchman et al.)		The application of ichnofacies classification to deepwater geohazard assessment: making the most of core data (Clare & Thomas)	
12:30-13:30					lunch
13:30-13:45	Characterisation of hydrocarbon and CO_2 reservoirs (Chair: Mark Wilkinson)	KEYNOTE: Controls on fluvial reservoir performance in dryland terminal fluvial systems (McKie et al.)	Tectonic controls on stratigraphic architecture (Chair: Alastair Robertson)	Constraints to the timing of India-Eurasia collision as determined from the Indus Basin sedimentary rocks of the Indus-Tsangpo Suture Zone, Ladakh, India (Henderson et al.)	
13:45-14:00				Two-stage development of the Late Cretaceous to Late Eocene Darende Basin: implications for closure of Neotethys in central eastern Anatolia (Turkey) (Booth et al.)	
14:00-14:15		Predicting Reservoir-Quality Facies in Low Net-Gross Fluvial Overbank Successions (Stuart et al.)		Fault-Propagation Folding and Syn-Rift Sedimentary Response: An Outcrop Case Study from the Hadahid Monocline, Suez Rift, Egypt (Lewis et al.)	
14:15-14:30		How do stratigraphic heterogeneities impact on flow in carbonate ramp reservoirs? (Fitch et al.)		Role of salt tectonics in controlling fluvial system evolution in the Salt Anticline Province of SE Utah and SW Colorado (Venus et al.)	
14:30-14:45		Porosity characterisation and permeability: a case study of the normal faulted shallow water carbonates of Malta (Haines et al.)		Controls on fluvial sedimentary architecture and sediment-fill state in saltwalled mini-basins (Banham et al.)	
14:45-15:00		Building a schema for outcrop data - towards a standardised nomenclature for sedimentology (Howell et al.)		The interaction between deepwater channel systems and growing thrusts and folds, toe-thrust region of the deepwater Niger Delta (Jolly et al.)	
15:00-15:30					coffee
15:30-15:45	Biological and chemical sediments II (Chair: Veerle Vandeginste)	KEYNOTE: Reactive transport modeling as a route to predicting carbonate diagenesis (Whitaker et al.)	Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture II (Chair: Berit Legler)	A late-Holocene record of marine washover events from a coastal lagoon in Jamaica, West Indies (Palmer & Burn)	
15:45-16:00				Preservation of a drowned barrier complex: implications for interpretation of shallow marine facies (Mellett et al.)	
16:00-16:15		Stylolitization of late Eocene to early Miocene carbonate-bearing lithologies from IODP Hole 317-U1352C (Canterbury Basin, New Zealand) (Vandeginste & John)		Sedimentology and sequence stratigraphy of the Krossfjord and Fensfjord formations, Troll Field, Norwegian North Sea (Holgate et al.)	
16:15-16:30		Four basins and a burial: reconstructing the burial diagenesis of the Derbyshire Platform using numerical models (Frazer et al.)		Lateral variability of basin margin clinothems from the Karoo Basin, South Africa (Jones et al.)	
16:30-16:45		Dolomitisation and dedolomitsiation of shallow marine, Upper Albian-Lower Turonian carbonates of the Jeffara Escarpment, southern Tunisia (Newport et al.)		Sand-prone subaqueous deltas: a subsurface example from the lower Sognefjord Formation, Northern North Sea, offshore Norway (Patruno et al.)	
16:45-17:00		New stratigraphic constraints and depositional model for Lower Cretaceous peritidal deposits of central Oman: implications for facies heterogeneities in carbonate systems (Sena & John)		A Neoproterozoic glacial succession with a clear advance-retreat sequence: the Omutirapo Palaeovalley of northern Namibia (Le Heron & Busfield)	

Posters - Monday 19th December & Tuesday 20th December

Room 3.01

The answer lies in the shale (CMG/BSRG)	1	Siliciclastic sedimentation and sequence stratigraphic evolution of a storm-dominated fine-grained shelf (Flood et al.)
	2	Petrophysical properties of fine-grained sedimentary rocks (Watts et al.)
	3	Predicting porosity preserving chlorite grain coatings using modern analogues: how hard can it be? (Utley et al.)
	4	Ichnofossils as a tool for understanding contourite deposits (Essex et al.)
Deep-water sedimentation: processes and products	5	The deposition and distribution of organic-rich muds by modern turbidity currents on the northeast Atlantic passive margin (Hunt et al.)
	6	Architecture and development of mass-transport deposit internal structure: insights from a spectacular outcrop, Cerro Bola, Argentina (Fairweather & Kneller)
	7	Mass transport deposits: sediment transport and deposition processes in the Mid Eocene deep-marine Ainsa Basin, Spanish Pyrenees (Dakin et al.)
	8	Sedimentology of the A6 core (Ainsa Basin, Mid-Eocene, Spanish Pyrenees) (Cantalejo Lopez et al.)
	9	Concept of equilibrium in composite submarine channel-levee systems and channel deposit character: new insights from experimental modelling (Hunter et al.)
	10	Submarine levee crevasse deposits: their stratigraphic and temporal distribution (Brunt et al.)
	11	Attached and detached deepwater units on a prograding base-of-slope clinothem and its implications for reservoir predictions: a regional outcrop study from the Permian age SW Karoo (Van Der Merwe)
	12	Depositional architecture of the Tertiary mixed clastic-carbonate Rankin Platform, Northwest Australia: implications for clinoform development and slope gully morphology (Fubara)
	13	Origin of Cenozoic sedimentation in the North Viking Graben: depositional vs remobilized/injected models (Olobayo & Huuse)
	14	Controls on hybrid flow transformation processes and resulting deposit character and distribution: a study from the Pennine Basin, Carboniferous, U.K (Southern et al.)
	15	Concentration-dependent flow stratifications in experimental high-density turbidity currents and their relevance to turbidite facies models (Cartigny et al.)
Styles and controls on coastal stratigraphic architecture	16	Flume experiments to test sedimentary bedform development with increasingly limited sediment supply (Van Landeghem & Baas)
	17	Sea bed geology and environmental characterisation in the central and eastern English Channel (James et al.)
	18	A comment on the glacial deposits of western County Clare, Ireland (Langford)
	19	Primary and reworked tsunami deposits at Agaete, Gran Canaria: evidence for mega-tsunami generation from the lateral collapse of an ocean island volcano (Austin-Giddings et al.)
	20	Transgressive development of coal-bearing coastal plain to shallow marine setting, Paleocene, Svalbard, Arctic Norway (Lüthje & Nichols)
	21	The mega-scale interpretation of the Neogene Southern North Sea Delta (Harding & Huuse)
Sediment routing systems	22	Clinoform stacking patterns, clinothem depositional architecture, and the process link Between shallow-marine and seep-marine seposits: key initial findings from IODP Expedition 313 (Hodgson et al.)
	23	Transition from deep- to shallow-marine deposition: the Craven Basin, UK (Bijkerk et al.)
	24	Sedimentology and micropalaeontology of prodelta deposits in the prograding Early Pliocene Colorado River delta, southern California (Robinson et al.)
	25	Abrupt landscape change post-6 Ma on the central Great Plains, USA (Duller et al.)
	26	Quantifying the controls on grain size export from tectonically perturbed catchments: case studies from Sicily, Calabria and Abruzzo, Italy (Whittaker et al.)
	27	Climatic and topographic controls on sand dispersal into NW European Triassic basins (Tyrell et al.)
	28	Determining the palaeodrainage history of the Nile River: investigating rift tectonics and land-ocean-atmosphere interactions (Edwards et al.)

Tectonic controls on stratigraphic architecture	29	Distributary fan lobe characteristics influenced by active salt growth structures, offshore Angola (Jones et al.)
	30	Tectono-stratigraphic analysis of hangingwall depositional systems; South Hadahid Block, Suez Rift, Egypt (De Boer et al.)
	31	Sedimentary evidence from the Vardar suture zone in Macedonia (E. Mediterranean) used to test alternative Tethyan tectonic models (Robertson et al.)
	32	Quaternary tectonic uplift of the Kyrenia Range, northern Cyprus: preliminary field results and objectives (Palamakumbura et al.)
Styles and controls on fluvial and aeolian stratigraphic architecture	33	The Miocene drainage system within the Columbia River Basalt Province, Washington State, USA (Ebinghaus et al.)
	34	3D architecture and internal facies variation of large-scale alluvial fan deposits: implications for the interpretation of the Permian Brockram facies of northern England (Gough et al.)
	35	Morphological and stratigraphical complexity at aeolian dune-field margins (Almasrahy et al.)
	36	Is climate change affecting dune migration rates in Antarctica? (Bristow et al.)
	37	Aspects of the Middle to Late Pleistocene fluvial archive of the River Nene, eastern England (Langford)
	38	A pre-vegetation fluvial style controversy (Martinho dos Santos et al.)
	39	Where are the crocodiles? A sedimentological analysis of microvertebrate sites in eastern Alberta (Noad)
	40	And did those feet, in ancient times...? Unusual sedimentary structures in coal-bearing successions of the Surat Basin, eastern Australia (Martin)
	41	An integrated palaeo-environmental re-interpretation of the Triassic Smith Bank Formation, UK Central North Sea (Wilkins & Archer)
	42	The architecture of a Triassic fluvial sandstone, Rillo de Gallo, Guadalajara, Spain (Martinez de Alvaro & Alexander)
	43	Reconstruction of channel and barform architecture in a Kinderscoutian (Carboniferous) shelf-edge fluvio-deltaic succession (Soltan et al.)
	44	Survival of the thickest? (Reesink)
	45	Modelling the evolution of gold placers (Lowther et al.)
Characterisation of hydrocarbon and CO_2 reservoirs	46	A stochastic modelling approach to determine sensitivity of 3D fluvial channel connectivity to changes in channel morphology and density/spacing (Banham et al.)
	47	Approaches to modelling sand-body gonnectivity in low net-gross fluvial settings (Stuart et al.)
	48	Three-dimensional surface-based modeling and flow simulation of heterolithic tidal sandstone reservoirs: examples from the Eocene Dir Abu Lifa Formation reservoir analogue, Western Desert, Egypt (Massart et al.)
	49	Landform geometry of modern fluvio-deltaic deposits in the Niger Delta: implications for reservoir characterization (George)
	50	Seismic modelling and spectral analysis of outcrop data - insights into the sub-seismic world (Zhang & Kneller)
	51	How much CO_2 will be sequestered by mineral reaction during engineered CO_2 storage? (Heinemann et al.)
	52	Oil charge preserves exceptional porosity in deep overpressured sandstone (Wilkinson & Haszeldine)
	53	Potential Neoproterozoic petroleum systems in Central West Africa? (Le Ber et al.)
Biological and chemical sediments	54	Palaeoenvironmental significance of lacustrine microbialite forms from the middle Old Red Sandstone of the Orcadian Basin (Andrews)
	55	The Permian ‘glass ramp’: new insights from Bellsund, Spitsbergen (Collins)
	56	Evolution of a mixed siliciclastic shelf and carbonate platform during the Messinian Salinity Crisis on the tectonically active southern margin of the Sorbas Basin, SE Spain (Grundy & Hodgson)

BSRG AWARDS

- The **Perce Allen Award** recognises a substantial body of research in any field of sedimentology. Candidates of any age may be nominated for the award;

- The **Roland Goldring Award** recognises noteworthy published research in any field of sedimentology. Candidates should be under 40 years of age;

- The **Harold Reading Medal** is awarded annually for the best publication by a current or recent postgraduate student (normally within 2 years of doctoral award) from a PhD project in the field of sedimentology and stratigraphy. The paper would normally also have been presented as a talk by a postgraduate student at a UK BSRG-sponsored meeting;

- The **Poster Prize** is awarded annually to a postgraduate student, based on their research-in-progress presented at the BSRG AGM. The prize is sponsored by the PESGB;

- The **BSRG Award for Undergraduate Sedimentology** is awarded annually to the best final-year undergraduate sedimentological project at a UK or Irish University;

- The **BSRG Award for Masters Sedimentology** is awarded to the best sedimentological project completed by a student on a one-year taught Masters course at a UK or Irish University.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

ABSTRACTS

Tidal Signatures from an intracratonic playa lake

R. Bruce Ainsworth[1], Kathryn J. Amos[1] and Stephen T. Hasiotis[2]

[1]*Australian School of Petroleum, University of Adelaide, Australia*

[2]*Department of Geology and Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center, The University of Kansas, USA*

This study of a modern-day, dryland terminal splay complex (TSC) from Lake Eyre, central Australia, indicates that sedimentary and biogenic structures previously considered indicative of marine tidal depositional environments are also generated in an intracratonic playa lake setting. Paired mud drapes (bundles) on cross-beds, cross-bedding reactivation surfaces, lateral bundle thickness variations, herringbone cross-bedding, flaser, wavy, and lenticular bedding, and desiccation cracks were observed in shallow excavation pits on the Kalaweerina Creek TSC. Fluctuations in flow velocity and direction required to generate these "tidal" sedimentary structures are attributed to daily changes in wind direction and velocity causing current reversals in the shallow lake here termed "wind tides", along with longer period wind velocity and discharge variations in the feeder river system. Cross sections through vertical spider burrows and ant nests that crosscut "tidal" sedimentary structures can be easily mistaken for *Skolithos, Gyrolithes, Rhizocorallium and Chondrites* which are mostly found in shallow marine environments. These observations suggest that interpretations of similar ancient deposits may require re-evaluation and alternative depositional environments should be considered when interpreting strata containing these classic marine tidal indicators.

The Messinian Evaporite Complex in the Eastern Mediterranean: A natural laboratory for studying evaporite sedimentation patterns and salt tectonics in a youthful saline giant

Hayley Allen [1]*
Alastair J. Fraser [1]
Chris A-L. Jackson [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science & Engineering, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BP, England, UK

* corresponding author: ha210@imperial.ac.uk

The offshore Eastern Mediterranean area is currently attracting considerable oil industry interest following significant discoveries in the pre-Messinian of the Nile Delta, Egypt, offshore Levant, Israel and the Sirt Basin, Libya. In support of this exploration effort, a substantial seismic reflection dataset, which covers c. 250000 km2, has been acquired. Although these data were acquired and processed to image deeper exploration targets, they are now providing important and exciting new insights into the structural and stratigraphic complexity of evaporite-bearing succession associated with the Messinian Salinity Crisis (MSC), which is relatively shallowly-buried and is spectacularly imaged.

It is widely accepted that the MSC, which occurred during the Late Miocene (5.96-5.33 ma), involved a major evaporitic drawdown and refilling of the Mediterranean in the space of just 300 kyrs. This initiated the deposition of a vast salt deposit that consists of halites in the deep basins (below present day water depths of 3000 metres), and gypsums and anhydrites around the basin margins. Sea-level drawdown and exposure of the basin margins resulted in major and widespread incision and karstification of pre-MSC, Eocene age, carbonate platforms.

Although this general picture of the evolution of the MSC is relatively well known, previous studies have failed to successfully integrate observations from subsurface and outcrop datasets; this has led to a confusing plethora of stratigraphic schemes and much debate over the temporal and spatial evolution of the thick evaporite successions of the Mediterranean. Our integrated approach, which uses 2D seismic reflection, well and outcrop data has allowed us to construct a unifying stratigraphic framework and present a revised regional facies map for the MSC in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The project therefore offers us a unique opportunity to re-evaluate the impact of a major eustatic sea-level fall on the facies distributions that occur during the early stage development of a giant salt basin.

Bedform development in mixtures of clay and sand: The wave case

Jaco H. Baas [1]*

[1] School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University

* corresponding author: j.baas@bangor.ac.uk

Wave tank experiments were conducted to determine how the development rate and size of wave-generated ripples change as a function of yield strength in mixtures of non-cohesive sand and cohesive clay. These experiments focussed on cm-scale rolling-grain and vortex ripples at constant maximum orbital velocity, but increasing clay-to-sand ratio of the bed sediment. The results showed that the first appearance of wave ripples on a flat bed is delayed progressively longer as the clay-to-sand ratio is increased, and above a threshold clay-to-sand ratio the bed remained flat for a duration of at least of 2 hours. However, in the experiments where the wave ripples were able to reach equilibrium size, their height and length were independent of the clay-to-sand ratio in the sediment bed. This is in contrast to current-generated ripples in mixed cohesive sediment, which were found to decrease in size with increasing clay-to-sand ratio. It is inferred that this difference is caused by a more efficient clay winnowing process for the wave case, leading to bed segregation into sandy bedforms 'floating' on original, unaffected mixed sediment. The grain size distribution of the sediment within the winnowed bedforms was similar to that of the wave ripples formed in a clay-free control experiment, thus explaining the equilibrium ripple size similarity. The implications of the laboratory research for wave-generated bedform size predictors and sedimentary facies in wave-dominated environments will be discussed.

Controls on fluvial sedimentary architecture and sediment-fill state in salt-walled mini-basins

S.G. Banham [1]*
N.P. Mountney [1]
W.D. McCaffrey [1]

[1] University of Leeds

* corresponding author: eesgb@leeds.ac.uk

The growth and development of salt-walled mini-basins and their coeval infill via ongoing sedimentation typically results in the preservation of complex stratigraphic architectures that are largely dependent on the relative rates of sediment supply versus rates of mini-basin subsidence and salt-wall uplift. This balance dictates the manner by which accommodation space is infilled as it is generated, the sediment-fill state of evolving mini-basins being defined as underfilled, filled or overfilled. Fill-state can vary spatially within a single basin, spatially between adjoining basins, and temporally during the episode of basin development.

Salt-walled mini-basins present in the Salt Anticline Province of the Paradox Basin (SE Utah) evolved in response to progressive sediment loading of Pennsylvanian-age salt, with the area having undergone a complex history of mini-basin subsidence and neighbouring salt-wall uplift during Permian to Jurassic times. A significant part of the infill of the evolving mini-basins is represented by the Triassic Moenkopi Formation and the preserved succession of a dryland fluvial system in which flow was primarily directed parallel to the elongate axes of actively subsiding mini-basins. In some mini-basins, fluvial channel elements are stacked vertically within and along the central basin axes, the position being dictated by the locus of subsidence in a pattern indicative of the presence of elevated salt walls and an underfilled state. In other basins, rimmed synclines have developed adjacent to bounding salt walls and these served as a focal point for major fluvial channel bodies. Mini-basins at equivalent stratigraphic levels can exhibit different states of infilling: sand-poor basins dominated by fine-grained overbank sediments apparently developed synchronously to neighbouring sand-prone basins, demonstrating effective partitioning of sediment route-ways by elevated salt walls, with some basins acting as long-lived major fluvial fairways.

Models that enable the prediction of the proportion and distribution of sand bodies in these types of salt mini-basins are important for reservoir prediction, where the stacking pattern of sand-prone channel elements governs the connectivity of net-reservoir intervals. Field-derived architectural data from this study are being used to constrain stochastic models that describe sand-body connectivity and predict net-to-gross in Triassic reservoir plays in the Central North Sea.

The influence of climate variation on deltaic architecture: implications from analogue modelling

Jochem F. Bijkerk [1]*
George Postma [2]
Johan ten Veen [3]

[1] University of Leeds

[2] University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

[3] TNO, The Netherlands

* corresponding author: eejfb@leeds.ac.uk

Delta architecture is driven by sea level, sediment input and tectonics. In most sequence stratigraphic models only sea level is considered a variable as it is generally dominant. This leads to simplified and potentially false interpretations as sea level variations generally result from cyclic climate variations, which likely vary sediment yield at similar timescales. The current study examines the significance of these climate variations by analogue experiments in a mini-basin with discharge as an additional variable besides sea level.

Four deltas with equal sea level curves and variable discharge curves are generated: 1) constant discharge as in the Exxon concept; 2) high frequency variations in discharge compared to sea level variations; 3) discharge leading the sea level curve by a quarter phase; 4) discharge lagging sea level by a quarter phase. Results from sequence stratigraphic analyses show a variable importance of discharge variations on sediment transport, internal geometry of the delta and the interpretation of system tracts with respect to sea level. High frequency variations (2) show little impact on sediment yield to the delta or on its internal delta geometry. This contrasts with the experiments in which discharge is varied on similar timescales as base level. In the latter case, sediment yield is significantly intensified during parts of the base level cycle while starving the delta during others, which results in strongly contrasting geometries. When discharge leads over sea level (3), the delta receives the bulk of sediment during sea level rise resulting in a strongly aggradational character. Delta front erosion is common during falling sea level but does not lead to incised valleys connected to the fluvial system. When discharge lags sea level (4), the delta receives most sediment during falling sea level resulting in a strongly progradational character during forced regression, with sediment routed to the delta front by connected incised valleys. During rising sea level, the delta becomes sediment starved and is rapidly drowned.

The current research demonstrates a significant but complex influence of discharge on delta architecture in analogue experiments and provides a starting point for examining natural delta systems for the impact of climate variation. The addition of a climate component might improve the accuracy of sequence stratigraphic models and improve their predictive capability.

Two-stage development of the Late Cretaceous to Late Eocene Darende Basin: implications for closure of Neotethys in central eastern Anatolia (Turkey)

Matthew G. Booth [1]*
Alastair H. F. Robertson [1]
Kemal Tasli [2]
Nurdan Inan [2]
Ulvican Unlugenc [3]

[1] Earth and Planetary Sciences Institute, School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh, Grant Institute, Kings Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JW

[2] Department of Geology, Mersin University, Mersin 33343, Turkey

[3] Cukurova Universitesi, Muhendislik-Mimarlik Fakultesi, Jeoloji Muhendisligi Bolumu, 01330, Adana, Turkey.

* corresponding author: m.g.booth@sms.ed.ac.uk

Here we present a type example of an important, but little known type of sedimentary basin formed after ophiolite and related melange emplacement. In this case the ophiolites formed above an intra-oceanic subduction zone and were emplaced southwards onto a passive carbonate platform margin in response to trench-margin collision during the latest Cretaceous. However, the ocean remained partially open and did not suture until millions of years later. The Late Cretaceous-Late Eocene sediments in the Darende Basin formed in this type of setting; i.e. on a continental margin following ophiolite emplacement but prior to suturing of the ocean basin (a modern unsutured example is the Late Cretaceous-Palaeogene of NE Oman).

Sedimentation began during the Late Maastrichtian, probably controlled by active extension along the basin margins. Ophiolite-derived, non-marine clastic sediments accumulated in palaeovalleys, followed by shallow-marine rudist-rich patch reefs and limestones. These, coupled with microbial, often evaporitic, carbonates elsewhere in the basin, record a short-lived shallow-marine transgression, followed by emergence during the latest Maastrichtian. The basin remained emergent during the Paleocene to Early Eocene and resulted in a low-angle unconformity developing. This is in marked contrast with other Central Anatolian basins where deep marine mudstone and turbidite successions were deposited during the Palaeocene (e.g. Ulukisla Basin). Early-Middle Eocene shallow-marine clastics were deposited simultaneously with localised basic alkaline volcanism. Late Eocene marls, shallow-marine Nummulitic limestone, calciturbidites and finally evaporites, successively record deepening, shallowing and finally emergence.

The first phase of basin development (Maastrichtian-Early Eocene) is explained by regional crustal extension. The driving mechanism is seen as slab-pull resulting from northward subduction of the remnant oceanic lithosphere. The Palaeocene unconformity may reflect reduced accommodation space coupled with eustatic sea level fall. The second phase (Eocene) is explained by crustal downflexure to form an under-filled foreland basin during collision of the Tauride-Anatolide microcontinent to the south with Eurasia to the north. Suturing of the Mesozoic ocean (Izmir-Ankara-Erzincan ocean) that separated these

continents effectively ended marine sedimentation during the Late Eocene. However, basin uplift was delayed until after Mid-Miocene time.

Sedimentology of the Neoproterozoic Chuos Formation, northern Namibia: implications for Cryogenian glaciation

M.E. Busfield [1]*
D.P. Le Heron [1]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, Queen's Building, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham Hill, Egham, Surrey, TW20 OEX

* corresponding author: Marie.Busfield.2011@live.rhul.ac.uk

The Neoproterozoic Otavi Group is a carbonate-dominated succession which records two episodes of Cryogenian glaciation along the southern margin of the Congo craton, northern Namibia. Under the snowball Earth hypothesis, these glacigenic successions represent discrete periods of global ice cover, wherein associated ironstone precipitation reflects rapid seawater oxidation following catastrophic ice meltback. Alternative hypotheses propose diamictite and ironstone accumulation as a product of local rift activity during break-up of Rodinia, recording mass flow deposition and hydrothermal iron precipitation, respectively. In the Otavi Mountainland, ironstone deposition is restricted to the base of the older Sturtian glacial succession (Chuos Fm), with a gradational upward transition into the overlying diamictite facies. The latter demonstrates evidence of glaciation in the form of: 1) ice-rafted lonestones and impact-related deformation structures, 2) ice-bed separation features (discontinuous siltstone and sandstone stringers), and 3) highly sheared and attenuated glacitectonites. In the absence of typical glacial indicators (i.e. striated and faceted clasts, striated pavements), these pervasive deformation structures hold key palaeoclimatic significance, both with respect to discerning a glacigenic origin, and to understanding the dynamics and behaviour of a Cryogenian glacial event. In the Chuos Formation, their association with abundant ice-rafted debris, large prograding clinoforms and recurrent reactivation surfaces indicates deposition at or near an oscillating ice-grounding line, whereby inherent slope instability triggers local re-working as massive diamictite facies. Furthermore, the ubiquitous occurrence of stromatolite structures in the underlying ironstones is used to infer that ironstone sedimentation was associated with initiation of, rather than exit from, glaciation. As a working hypothesis, we argue that photosynthetic protozoa encourage soluble iron fixation, CO2 drawdown and concomitant atmospheric cooling.

The Application of Ichnofacies Classification to Deepwater Geohazard Assessment: Making the Most of Core Data

Michael Clare [1]*
Stephen Thomas [1]

[1] Engineering Geology and Geohazards Team, Fugro GeoConsulting Limited, Wallingford, UK

* corresponding author: m.clare@fugro.co.uk

Several recent publications have highlighted the need for high resolution sedimentological logging to provide calibration of geohazard type, magnitude and frequency for input to risk assessments for deepwater oil and gas developments, and subsea infrastructure such as pipelines and cables (e.g. Thomas et al., 2011). The implementation of ichnology is well accepted in petroleum exploration-focussed sedimentology; however, it has yet to receive proper recognition in the field of shallow geohazard evaluation. Often, bioturbation is deemed to be problematic for geohazard assessments; particularly in the assignment of geochronological testing on sediment cores, due to the adverse mixing effects of biogenic activity, as outlined by Owen et al. (2007).

Several sanitised case studies are presented here, from various passive margin, deepwater settings, that demonstrate how the identification and classification of bioturbation can add significant additional information to an integrated geohazard assessment. This is achieved through the classification of ichnofacies, in tandem with sedimentological logging, which directly inform the understanding of depositional and post-depositional processes, and hence any associated geohazards. The case studies include reference to processes which may adversely impact or affect a subsea development, including turbidity and contour currents, translational slope failure, localised modification of intrinsic geotechnical properties by biogenic processes themselves, and also cover the use of ichnology as a proxy for environmental reconstruction and climate modelling for a spatially and temporally referenced geohazard assessment.

Examples of the application of ichnology to geohazard assessment include:

- Frequency assessment of turbidity current events from overbank or levee settings - where insufficient material is available for dating, or has been eroded entirely, within the canyon thalweg;
- Reconstruction of events such as flow flux or transformation within an individual turbidity current episode;
- As a proxy for determining timescales for waxing of contour flow; and hence periods of anticipated enhanced scour potential;
- Use of ichnofabric characterisation to determine recency of slope failure from samples within slide evacuation scars;
- Understanding the modification of geotechnical properties, from localised significant reduction in undrained shear strength, to apparent overconsolidation due to biological processes

Use of a relational database for the classification of fluvial sedimentary systems and the interpretation and prediction of fluvial architecture

Luca Colombera [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]
William D. McCaffrey [1]

[1] School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK

* corresponding author: eelc@leeds.ac.uk

A relational database for storing fluvial architecture information has been developed and populated with literature- and field-derived data from studies of both modern rivers and their ancient counterparts preserved in the stratigraphic record. The database scheme characterizes fluvial architecture at three different scales of observation, corresponding to different types of genetic unit (large-scale depositional elements, architectural elements and facies units). The database records all diagnostic architectural features, including style of internal organization, geometry, spatial distribution and reciprocal relationships. The database classifies datasets - or parts thereof - according to both controlling factors (e.g. basin climate type or tectonic setting) and context-descriptive characteristics (e.g. river pattern or dominant transport mechanism): the data can be filtered on one or more of any of these classification parameters.

Database interrogation returns quantitative information whose principal applications include: (i) the quantitative comparison of architectural data to evaluate the relative importance of different controls; (ii) the development of quantitatively-justified fluvial depositional models - through the integration of data from multiple sources - that overcome many of the fundamental limitations of traditional facies models; (iii) the generation of constraints required to infer borehole correlations and to condition stochastic models of subsurface architecture, referring to either genetic units or material units defined on categorical variables (e.g. fine-grained fraction >20% by volume); (iv) quantitatively-based identifications of modern and ancient analogues for fluvial hydrocarbon reservoirs, aquifers or placers.

These potential applications are illustrated through a range of case study examples that collectively demonstrate how this relational-database approach can be used as a research tool with which to gain novel insights into the various impacts of both autogenic and allogenic controls on a range of fluvial system types. The approach is exemplified by the sequential application of data filters in order to derive a model for braided perennial systems in arid/semiarid climatic settings. By demonstrating how architectural features change through a series of intermediate stages in the filtering process, we highlight the importance of quantitative characterization of sedimentary systems in both pure and applied perspectives.

Dynamic deposition of fine-grained intervals from the Namurian of the Edale sub-basin.

Sarah J. Davies*
Janet Sherwin

Department of Geology, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, England, UK

*corresponding author: sjd27@le.ac.uk

Mudstones have been considered as relatively homogenous and deposited mainly by passive settling under low energy conditions. Recent studies have demonstrated that fine-grained sediments are deposited by a range of dynamic depositional processes including bedload sediment transport by currents, and wave-enhanced sediment gravity flows of fluid mud. This study investigates the variation in micro-textures observed within the fine-grained intervals of the Pendleian to Kinderscoutian successions of the Edale sub-basin. During this period the environment evolved from a mud-dominated basinal setting to a sand-dominated major deltaic system.

Here we compare the fine-grained intervals of the Edale Shales to those within the Mam Tor Sandstones and the Shale Grit. Samples studied in thin section reveal hitherto unreported structures and a variety of depositional processes. Parts of the Edale Shales are clay-dominated and deposited primarily by the settling of flocs, preserved as organo-mineralic aggregates, but there is also evidence for current transport. A range of transport mechanisms, including debris flows, are also apparent in the fine-grained intervals between the sandstone packages of the Mam Tor Sandstones and the Shale Grit. We interpret the presence of broken bioclastic material, distinct bedding, and a variety of lens-shaped structures as the product of active transport events.

Lenses of light-coloured material within darker background sediment are apparent in many thin sections and have a variety of origins. The majority of lenses occur in lines, or in distinct beds, always lying parallel to bedding. Lenses may appear as single features but closer observation of longer, or wavy-edged, lenses reveals that they are in fact composites of ‘stacked’ lenses. Some lenses are predominantly erosional features and others are associated with crushed, transported bioclastic material. We suggest that all these lens types are a product of upslope erosion, transportation and deposition and indicate a dynamic sedimentary environment.

Systematic description and interpretation of the fine-grained intervals within these successions enable the re-evaluation of long-held views on the interpretation of geochemical proxies (e.g. U, Mo). Recognising the inherent variability of fine-grained intervals leads to the development of facies models which honour all aspects of the depositional system.

A subsurface assessment of post-rift bathymetric control on deepwater sedimentary architecture

Robert A. Duller [1]*
David M. Hodgson [1]
Christopher A-L Jackson [2]
Paul A. Spencer [3]
Bjarne Tveiten [3]

[1] University of Liverpool

[2] Imperial College London

[3] VNG Norge, Oslo

* corresponding author: rduller@liv.ac.uk

The bathymetry of the slope and basin-floor determines the routeing and storage of sediment transported by submarine gravity flows. Over relatively long time periods (e.g. >104 yrs) this will determine the sedimentology and depositional architecture of deepwater stratigraphy. However, the manner in which slope bathymetry controls this long-term evolution is poorly understood. From a subsurface perspective, this limits the ability to predict reservoir quality and connectivity in ancient deep-water sedimentary successions. In this study we integrate 3D seismic with wireline log and core data to assess the control that submarine slope relief had on the Early Cretaceous Agat Formation on the Maloy Slope, offshore Norway.

Seismic mapping indicates that the bathymetry of the Maloy slope in the Early Cretaceous was characterised by broad steps (A~0.1-0.2 km, λ~2-4 km) with N-S-trending axes. These topographic features developed in response to differential compaction of mud-dominated, syn-rift and early post-rift sediments across the crests of rift-related fault blocks. Channel and lobe depositional elements are identified from seismic observations and core. Structureless, commonly dewatered, fine & medium-grained turbidite sandstones, and mudstone-dominated debrites ("hybrid beds") are the dominant sedimentary facies. Well correlations, seismic facies mapping and vertical facies stacking patterns indicate that the position, thickness and distribution of the gross depositional elements was influenced by an inherited bathymetry that became progressively subdued over time.

The integrated dataset presented here provides a unique insight into the initiation, growth and abandonment of post-rift deepwater systems along a continental margin, and the influence that remnant bathymetry plays on sediment gravity flow behaviour and depositional architecture.

Meander-wavelength / flow-dimension ratios in freely meandering experimental sandy turbidity currents.

Joris T. Eggenhuisen [1]*
Natalie Duncan [1]
Matthieu J.B. Cartigny [1]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, Utrecht University, 3584 CD, Utrecht, the Netherlands

* corresponding author: j.t.eggenhuisen@uu.nl

Flume studies are a prime means of research into the flow processes in and around sinuous submarine channels. Unfortunately, physical modeling of self-formed sinuous submarine channel initiation and development has proved to be extremely difficult; self-formed channels of sufficient scale and stability to sustain detailed measurements of flow-field characteristics have not as yet been achieved. A viable alternative approach for such experiments has been to design experiments with pre-formed channel morphologies in non-erodible substrates, but such experiments inadvertently raise issues of scaling relations between channel morphology and experimental turbidity flow characteristics.
This paper presents the results obtained from a physical model of erodible channels that have undergone sinuous turbidity currents, and aims to determine a quantitative relationship between submarine channel dimensions and meander wavelength by performing statistical analysis.
Sand-carrying (D50=160 Mu) turbidity currents were introduced at an angle into a straight channel that was pre-formed into an erodible substrate consisting of the same sand as suspended in the flow. Pre-existing and resulting channel and deposit dimensions were determined from digital elevation models (DEMs). These DEMs were generated in ArcGIS from contour plots derived from rectified photographs taken during drainage of the flume. The results show sinuous deposition and erosion, which is interpreted as incipient sinuous channel formation. Analysis shows that a relationship exists between channel width and meander wavelength. The experimental meander wavelength scaling is compared with previous studies carried out on various subaerial and submarine channels. This comparison confirms that the observed incipient meandering obeys well-known geomorphological scaling relations.
This indicates that: 1) Characteristic meandering scales are comparable for experimental flows and natural prototypes over five orders of magnitude. 2) The ratio of meander-wavelength / flow-dimension is a fundamental scaling relation that should be taken into account in future flume studies. 3) Studies with freely-meandering, sand-carrying, experimental turbidity currents are achievable.

The role of inherited bathymetry on the architecture of wave-dominated deposits: Book Cliffs and Wasatch Plateau, Utah, USA

Christian Haug Eide [1]*
John Anthony Howell [1]
Simon Buckley [1]

[1] Uni CIPR (Centre for Integrated Petroleum Research), University of Bergen, Realfagbygget, 4th floor, Allegaten 41, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: Christian.Eide@uni.no

In shallow marine shoreface systems the thickness of the various facies tracts is controlled by a combination of the depth to the respective wave base and the shoreline trajectory. Studying systematic changes in facies thickness within single parasequences and within several parasequences within the same basin can provide insight into dynamics of the depositional systems. Understanding shoreface architecture also has implications for modelling hydrocarbon reservoirs.

Facies tract thicknesses can be measured using conventional field techniques, however such a process is slow and time consuming. In order to collect large volumes of data that are statistically valid, helicopter-mounted lidar-scanning was used to collect data from two very large outcrops from eastern Utah. The first outcrop is a 3 km long section from the Wasatch Plateau which includes the Storrs Member of the Star Point Sandstone and the second is a 30 km long section from the Book Cliffs which includes the Kenilworth Member of the Blackhawk Formation. All of the sections are late Cretaceous in age and were deposited on the margin of the Western Interior Seaway in a sub-tropical climate.

The results of 164 measurements (with 200 m spacing) of shoreface and parasequence thickness suggest two key controls on facies thickness, the sea-level history during progradation and also the bathymetry. A critical aspect of the bathymetry is the position of the final shoreline of the underlying parasequence. Landward of that line, both the parasequence and the facies tracts within it are thin, while on the seaward side there is a marked thickening of both. Bedsets (smaller scale upward coarsening packages) are also common on the seaward side but absent in the shallow water deposits.

The decreased thickness of the shoreface in the shallow water seaward of the pinch-out of the underlying parasequence is proposed to be due to the shallowing of the wave base as wave energy is dampened by the frictional effect of the shallow sea floor. In the deeper water on the seaward side of the pinch-out of the underlying parasequence, the waves are not damped which results in a deeper wave-base and consequently a thicker shoreface deposit.

Facies Distribution in the Zechstein Supergroup in the Norwegian Sector of the northern North Sea Basin

Elisabeth N. Evrard [1]*
Christopher A-L. Jackson [1]
Gavin M. Elliott [1]
Rob L. Gawthorpe [2]

[1] Department Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, London, SW7 2BP, UK

[2] Department of Earth Sciences, University of Bergen, Allegt. 41, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: e.evrard09@imperial.ac.uk

The Zechstein Supergroup (ZSG) is one of the world's best known evaporite-dominated depositional units. This Late Permian unit documents the repeated evaporation of a large saline water body that occupied the North and South Permian Basins. The facies distribution within the ZSG in the UK North Sea is well known; carbonate- and anhydrite-rich, marginal units pass basinwards across a gentle-dipping ramp into halite-rich, basinal units. However, the ZSG facies distribution in the Norwegian North Sea is unknown, despite the fact that this variability has been demonstrated to be the key control on the structural styles associated with the Late Jurassic rift event in the UK sector of the North Sea. In this study we use data from the Norwegian North Sea to investigate the controls on facies distribution in the ZSG. Our study was based on the detailed petrophysical analysis of electrical log data, constrained by lithological cuttings, from 22 wells. Regional stratigraphic correlation panels were used to investigate the vertical and lateral variability of evaporite-related facies in the ZSG, and 2D seismic reflection data were used to relate the facies distribution to the basin structural framework.

Our study shows that the ZSG is composed of mainly halite, anhydrite and carbonates, with minor amounts of claystone, sandstone and potassium salts. Based on the proportion of halite, four depositional zones are identified and these can be mapped. Overall, the distribution of facies is similar to that identified in the UK sector; at the basin margins the ZSG is carbonate-dominated, whereas towards the basin centre the unit become increasingly halite-dominated. However, abrupt facies transitions and thickness variations are observed adjacent to large, intra-basin normal faults; thin, carbonate-dominated successions occur on fault-bounded footwall highs, whereas thick, halite-dominated successions occur in adjacent depocentres. We propose that the distribution of facies in the ZSG was controlled by: (i) syn-depositional normal faulting, which in turn controlled local variations in water depth and accommodation; or (ii) spatially-variable amounts of halite dissolution, which was driven by post-depositional faulting. Towards the end of this talk we will investigate the validity of both these interpretations and then highlight how the ZSG facies variations may have impacted the structural style of the Late Jurassic rift event.

How do stratigraphic heterogeneities impact on flow in carbonate ramp reservoirs?

Peter J.R. Fitch [1]*
Matthew D. Jackson [1]
Gary J. Hampson [1]
Cedric M. John [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science & Engineering, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BP

* corresponding author: p.fitch@imperial.ac.uk

Heterogeneities occur in various combinations over a range of length-scales and make understanding and predicting the production behaviour of carbonate reservoirs challenging. Many of these heterogeneities result from variability in stratigraphic architecture, depositional facies bodies, lithological variation within facies bodies, diagenetic history, mineralogy, pore type and connectivity.

We have developed a hierarchical classification scheme of stratigraphic and sedimentological heterogeneities in carbonate ramps as a first step towards reducing subsurface reservoir uncertainties. The stratigraphic framework often acts as a template for more complex, smaller-scale diagenetic and petrophysical heterogeneities within stratigraphic units. Hence, reconstructing stratigraphic heterogeneities is the first step in constraining heterogeneities in general. Levels one to three of the hierarchy document large- to small-scale stratigraphic architecture, extent and character of discontinuity surfaces, and spatial arrangement of broad environment-of-deposition belts. The distribution of depositional facies and stratal surfaces within the environments of deposition are documented at level four of the hierarchy, and small-scale heterogeneities such as bed geometries and diagenetic features within deposition facies are described at level five. Levels six and seven are composed of heterogeneity at centimetre-to-micrometre scale (e.g. sedimentary structures and pore networks).

The impact of various heterogeneities on reservoir performance is investigated using flow simulation of experimentally designed reservoir models. The hierarchy of heterogeneity is used to provide a framework for the building of high-resolution models in a top-down approach which incorporates more detailed and smaller-scale heterogeneities as we move down the design tree. End-member scenarios of key stratigraphic heterogeneities are constructed, based on project-specific outcrop analogues and published examples, and are incorporated into the high resolution models. Models are constructed using a combination of conventional and surface-based modelling techniques, which enable accurate and efficient capture of heterogeneity geometries. Flow simulation of a series of nested models at different length-scales, combined with experimental design techniques, enables the key stratigraphic controls on reservoir performance to be identified quantified for a range of production mechanisms and fluid types.

Four Basins and a Burial: Reconstructing the Burial Diagenesis of the Derbyshire Platform Using Numerical Models.

Miles Frazer [1]*
Dr Fiona Whitaker [2]
Dr Cathy Hollis [3]

[1] School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol / School of Atmospheric, Environmental and Earth Sciences, University of Manchester.

[2] School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol, Wills Memorial Building, Queen's Road Bristol, BS8 1RJ, UK.

[3] School ofSchool of Atmospheric, Environmental and Earth Sciences, University of Manchester, Williamson Building, Oxford Road Manchester, M13 9PL, UK.

* corresponding author: miles_frazer@live.com

Constraining reactive fluid sources and volumes is a major challenge in the reconstruction of carbonate diagenetic processes. Such quantitative constraints are required to evaluate conceptual models of diagenesis and allow more robust models to be developed. The Lower Carboniferous of the Derbyshire Platform, northern England, provides a data-rich environment where basin-scale numerical models can be used to provide these important constraints. The carbonate succession on the platform hosts economic volumes of Pb-Zn-F-Ba and its tectono-stratigraphic and diagenetic timelines are well established. This provides clear constraints for numerical simulations of fluid flow throughout the history of the system.

The Lower Carboniferous succession on the Derbyshire Platform accumulated upon a footwall high during a period of extensional rifting. Rapidly subsiding basins surrounding the platform accumulated thick, syn-rift sequences of marine, carbonate-mudstones and thin limestones. This sequence was progressively buried by a southward-prograding, fluviodeltaic succession during thermal sag subsidence. Late Carboniferous, Variscan compression led to reactivation of basement faults which resulted in basin inversion. Current conceptual models of mineralisation suggest that overpressure developed within upper syn-rift and post-rift basinal sediments and was released at the onset of Variscan compression.

We use Basin2 to simulate the coupled sedimentological and hydrological evolution of this system. Simulations show overpressure development within the deeper syn-rift basin-fill reaching 7.5 MPa at a burial depth of 2.75 km, with little overpressure development in post-rift sediments. 3.26 km3 per km of platform margin of this overpressured fluid is then released via a permeable fracture zone at the basin margin, which is introduced after maximum burial. Although these fluids represent only 2% of the total volume of the basins, all of this fluid is focussed to a relatively narrow platform margin area. Sensitivity analyses show that overpressures and associated fluid fluxes are slightly reduced by calcite cementation in platform carbonates but are primarily controlled by seal-unit permeability and post-rift deposition rate. Although these results broadly agree with previous conceptual models of mineralization, they emphasise that significant volumes of fluid may be sourced from deeper basinal sediments than previously thought.

Anatomy of an incised valley-fill at an evolving rift margin: Pleistocene of the Gulf of Corinth, Greece

Katarina Gobo [1]*
Massimiliano Ghinassi [2]
Wojciech Nemec [1]
Eivind Sjursen [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science, University of Bergen, 5007 Bergen, Norway

[2] Department of Geosciences, University of Padova, 35137 Padova, Italy

* corresponding author: katarina.gobo@geo.uib.no

Incised valley-fills are known to include fluvial, bay-head deltaic, tidal and possibly barrier bar deposits, and the recent facies models of incised-valley systems have portrayed them as barred or non-barred estuaries with a predictable stratigraphic organization of the deposits. However, departures from a norm are equally important, as they reveal less common basin conditions and broaden the range of comparative models. The present study from the southern margin of the Corinth Rift documents a Pleistocene gravelly valley-fill that lacks evidence of tidal activity, shows strong wave influence in its innermost part and is dominated by deposits of a bay-head deltaic system evolving under a stepwise marine invasion. The Akrata palaeovalley reported here was ~3 km long, ~200 m deep and up to ~2 km wide. It was incised into similar older synrift deposits and axially dissected by a modern river valley with extensive cliff outcrops on its both sides. The infilling of Akrata valley commenced with a coarse-gravelly basal alluvium deposited during relative sea level lowstand. The subsequent marine transgression was initially gradual, resulting in four parasequences formed by the vertical stacking of mouth bars of a shoal-water delta, attributed to autogenic lateral shifting of the delta distributaries under a rising sea level. The next parasequence recorded a larger marine flooding that provided accommodation for a broader shoal-water delta with a uniform wave-worked front. This delta was drowned during the episode of maximum flooding, which provided highstand accommodation for a Gilbert type delta that prograded throughout the inundated valley. The delta progradation recorded further relative sea level changes, reflected in sigmoidal and oblique geometries of the foreset topset contact in the delta's valley-long dip section. The case study shows that the infilling of an incised valley in high sediment-supply conditions may be virtually dominated by the bay-head deltaic system and that wave action may have strong impact in the valley interior if permitted by the valley width, water depth and lack of barrier. Such conditions typify valleys incised in the flanks of active marine rifts, but may also be expected in foreland piggyback basins where intermittent pulses of considerable uplift and subsidence alternate on a short-time geological scale.

Identifying lithofacies in Carboniferous mudstones

Jennifer J. Graham[1], Sarah J. Davies[1], Joe H.S. Macquaker[2] and Mike J. Norry[1]

[1]*University of Leicester*
[2]*Memorial University, Newfoundland*

Email: jjg12@le.ac.uk

Fine-grained sedimentation on broad, relatively shallow-water shelves dominated late Namurian (Carboniferous) environments in northern England. This study examines temporal and spatial changes in the character and distribution of lithofacies in a stratigraphically well-constrained mudstone succession. A biostratigraphic marker horizon can be traced along a 'proximal' to 'distal' transect: from a northern location in the Stainmore Basin, Cumbria, to one in the Bowland Basin through to the North Staffordshire Sub-basin, adjacent to the Wales-London Brabant High, in the Midlands. Using lithofacies variability to understand the controls on sedimentation and distribution of organic matter is important for predicting the location of potential targets for Shale Gas exploration.

Key lithofacies, common to all locations, include homogeneous clay-rich mudstones, lenticular clay-rich mudstones and thinly-bedded mudstones. Thinly-bedded mudstones can be carbonate-rich or carbonate-poor with beds commonly <3mm. Individual lithofacies packages vary from tens of millimetres to a few metres in thickness, and represent changes in the predominant delivery mechanisms for a given period, from suspension settling to advective transport by turbidity and debris flows.

The lithofacies distribution varies between locations. Closer to the sediment supply, mudstones contain a higher proportion of silt-sized grains, exhibit a greater proportion of homogeneous and bedded lithofacies and have average SiO_2 of 52%. In contrast, lenticular clay-rich mudstones dominate the more distal location and are characterised by lower SiO_2 (ca. 45%). Organic matter is primarily derived from terrestrial plant debris and microscopic spores with a component of marine algal matter. Higher TOC abundances (typically >2%; up to 6.5%) are associated with the lenticular clay-rich lithofacies in all locations. TOC abundances for the bedded lithofacies range from 1.5-2.5% proximally to 2-8.5% in a more distal location.

The proximity to the sediment source has an important control on the abundance of siliciclastic material but similar sediment delivery processes occur across the basin. However, the regional comparison of lithofacies suggests that some processes are localised, or reflect a different source, as shown by the variation in composition of the bedded lithofacies. The lenticular clay-rich lithofacies forms thicker packages in distal settings, creating the potential for a thicker source/reservoir rock.

Fluvial architecture and geometry of the Lower Abrahamskraal Formation, Lower Beaufort Group, Karoo Basin, South Africa

Alice R. Gulliford [1]*
Stephen S. Flint [1]
David M. Hodgson [1]

[1] Stratigraphy Group, University of Liverpool, UK

* corresponding author: a.gulliford@liverpool.ac.uk

Kilometre-scale exposures of the Permo-Triassic age Lower Beaufort Group near Sutherland, south-western Karoo Basin, South Africa, were used to determine the geometry and distribution of fluvial sand bodies and sharp-based thinly bedded crevasse splay deposits.

The construction of correlation panels from widespread sedimentary logging over a 350 metre thick stratigraphic succession and the mapping of key surfaces using photomosaics has enabled characterisation of sand body geometry, facies distributions and facies associations. Within the lower Beaufort Group a range of architectural styles have been identified including discrete ribbon sandstone deposits surrounded by floodplain fines and stacked sheet-like sand bodies. These sandstones are interpreted to be from low and high sinuosity channel-belts respectively and are laterally extensive, ranging from 200m to 1200m in length. Some localised clustering of channel-belts adjacent to extensive overbank mudstone deposits is evident. The absence of mature palaeosols within the Lower Beaufort Group represents an environment that experienced rapid aggradation, with local avulsion events. Future work will continue to focus upon determining the main controls upon the rate of aggradation, as well as better understanding the three-dimensional depositional architecture of the Lower Beaufort fluvial deposits.

Porosity characterisation and permeability: a case study of the normal faulted shallow water carbonates of Malta

T. J. Haines [1]*
J. E. Neilson [1]
D. Healy [1]
E. A. H. Michie [1]
G. I. Alsop [1]
N. E. Timms [2]
M. E. J. Wilson [2]

[1] School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen

[2] Department of Applied Geology, Curtin University, Western Australia

* corresponding author: t.haines@abdn.ac.uk

Carbonate reservoirs are highly heterogeneous in their internal texture largely due to the range of depositional and diagenetic processes which form them. Carbonate reservoirs can also be complicated by structural damage imposed by faulting. The observed in situ heterogeneity of carbonate reservoirs creates challenges in characterising and up scaling their physical properties, chiefly porosity and permeability. For example: porosity and/or permeability can be enhanced or reduced around fault zones by burial fluids but the patterns are poorly understood.

Sedimentary logs are used to characterise the Oligo-Miocene stratigraphy of Malta. This study focuses on the lowermost two formations: the Lower Coralline Limestone (LCL) and Globigerina Limestone (GL) Formations. The Late Oligocene LCL Formation is a succession of large benthic foram and coralline algae rich grain-, pack- and wackestones. Unconformably overlying the LCL Formation is the Early Miocene GL Formation which is composed of a succession of planktonic foram rich pack- and wackestones. The GL Formation is subdivided into three members (lower, middle and upper) by hardground-phosphatic conglomerate couplets. Geological maps and cross sections are utilised to define the architecture of normal faults (displacements ranging from < 1 m to 100 m) in the two formations. Four fault architectural components have been recognised: fault core, intensely damaged zone bound by principal fault surfaces, weakly damaged zone and protolith.

Measured porosities (He) range from < 5% to > 35% and measured permeability (N2) varies over 5 orders of magnitude (< 2200 mDs). The variability of porosity and permeability data can be partially explained by depositional facies, indicating the importance of primary facies on the petrophysical properties of carbonates. Porosity and permeability vary considerably into the fault zones; however there are no clear porosity-permeability relationships associated with the defined fault architectural units. The types, sizes and shapes of macropores (> 500 μm2 in area), defined by digital image analysis, also vary into the fault zones. Preliminary results suggest pore types are an important factor controlling the permeability. The permeability of carbonates with high proportions of assumed microporosity (difference between core plug porosity and image analysis determined macroporosity) is generally lower than the permeability of carbonates with dominantly vuggy pore types.

Constraints to the timing of India-Eurasia collision as determined from the Indus Basin sedimentary rocks of the Indus-Tsangpo Suture Zone, Ladakh, India.

Alex Henderson [1]
Yani Najman [1]*
Randy Parrish [2]
Gavin Foster [3]
Eduardo Garzanti [4]
Darren Mark [5]

[1] LEC, Lancaster University, UK

[2] NIGL, BGS-Keyworth, Nottingham, UK

[3] NOC, Southampton University, UK

[4] Universita Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

[5] SUERC, East Kilbride, UK.

* corresponding author: y.najman@lancs.ac.uk

The Cenozoic Indus Basin Sedimentary Rocks (IBSR) are preserved in the Indus Suture zone, Ladakh. They have been used in previous research to constrain the timing of India-Asia collision as having occurred by 50 Ma, based on provenance studies which determine the earliest occurrence of mixed Indian and Asian detritus in the sedimentary record and/or earliest evidence of Asian detritus deposited on the Indian plate (Clift, 2002; Clift et al., 2001). Our study (Henderson et al., 2010a; Henderson et al., 2010b; Henderson et al., 2011) disagrees with these previous findings and we conclude that the sedimentary record in this region cannot be used to constrain India-Asia collision at 50 Ma in the manner previously utilised.

The Chogdo Fm of the IBSR, lying beneath the 50 Ma aged Nummulitic Lst (Green et al., 2008), is proposed to contain both Indian and Asian derived detritus (Clift, 2002), and to lie in sedimentary contact with the underlying Indian plate (Clift, 2002; Clift et al., 2001), thus apparently providing two constraints to the time of collision.

Using a variety of provenance techniques, we were unable to discern any unequivocal evidence of Indian detritus in the predominantly Asian-derived Chogdo Fm. Given the overwhelmingly Asian provenance of the Chogdo Fm, its proposed stratigraphic position, in sedimentary contact with the underlying Indian plate, would provide another line of evidence to date the time of collision at prior to 50 Ma. For this evidence to be upheld, it must be shown that a) the material beneath the contact is indeed Indian rather than Asian plate, b) the material above the contact is indeed Chogdo Fm rather than younger IBSR and c) that the contact is sedimentary rather than tectonic. We studied the critical basal contact of the proposed Chogdo Fm at the three locations where previous work had indicated the formation lay over Indian plate. We analysed the beds above and below the contact using a variety of isotopic, geochemical and petrographic approaches to assess provenance. We showed that at none of the three locations could the above assumptions be upheld.

We therefore conclude that there is currently no evidence in the region for mixing of Indian and Eurasian detritus in the >50 Ma aged Chogdo Fm, nor evidence for Asian-derived Chogdo Fm overlying Indian plate in sedimentary contact. Thus, previously proposed constraints to the time of collision at ca 50 Ma, based on these data, in our view should be reconsidered.

The Continuing Value of Original Outcrop Studies within the Hydrocarbon Industry

Philip Hirst [1]*

[1] BP, Sunbury

* corresponding author: philip.hirst@uk.bp.com

When BSRG held its inaugural year end meeting fifty years ago, original fieldwork was a core element of much hydrocarbon exploration. By the time of the auspicious 21st 'coming of age' BSRG meeting in 1982, many of the postgraduate presentations continued to include a significant field study component. Over the past 30 years, technological advances within the industry have been exponential; low fold 2D seismic has evolved to high resolution 3D volumes which are systematically interrogated on workstations with increasingly sophisticated software. These workstations have become the 21st Century desks of many of us in the industry. And now we have LIDAR technology enabling the capture of detailed point cloud data from outcrops which, with appropriate co-visualisation software, can be viewed alongside seismic and well data. In addition we have witnessed the opening up of exploration of Tertiary deep water systems which often have limited relevant coeval outcrops. Finally but importantly, the prerequisite of ensuring all field work is rigorously HSE compliant has provided an additional challenge both in industry and in academic institutions.

The perception has evolved in some quarters that fundamental observational, field based geoscience is not as critical as it once was. This is far from the case; original observations and data from outcrop (and core) are critical components of the workflows of most major hydrocarbon companies and geoscience consultancies. Robust observational geoscience is essential to temper our workstation analyses, including LIDAR images, and detailed field observations help our understanding of geological complexity across the value chain from exploration to production situations. Active field work has had additional impetus is recent years by the need to understand newly accessed geography (e.g. Libya, Former Soviet Union), to improve poorly constrained depositional models (e.g. glacial systems) and to address new resources (e.g. Coal Bed Methane, tight gas, shale gas); also the exploitation of deepwater Tertiary systems has necessitated detailed research of analogous depositional systems.

In conclusion, in recent years, field work has been undertaken by most of the major hydrocarbon companies in a range of depositional settings and geographies. Original field data remains important to condition workstation interpretations and graduate students who demonstrate strong field competencies in observational science are highly valued. Hydrocarbon focussed companies continue to support MSc & PhD opportunities which include field based components through support of Joint Industry Projects (JIPs) and some direct sponsorships.

Sedimentology and Sequence Stratigraphy of the Krossfjord and Fensfjord formations, Troll Field, Norwegian North Sea

Nicholas E. Holgate [1]*
Christopher A-L. Jackson [1]
Gary J. Hampson [1]
Tom Dreyer [2]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, United Kingdom

[2] Statoil ASA, Sandsliveien 90, 5020, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: n.holgate09@imperial.ac.uk

The sedimentological character and stratigraphic architecture of shallow marine reservoirs are strongly controlled by the physical processes that occur at and near the shoreline (e.g. wave- vs. tide- vs. fluvial-dominated). These processes can be further complicated by syn-depositional normal faulting, which controls subsidence, uplift and accommodation development. We present a subsurface case study from the Middle-to-Upper Jurassic Krossfjord and Fensfjord formations, Horda Platform, offshore western Norway. These formations are dominated by shallow marine to deltaic sandstones, which were sourced from the Norwegian mainland to the east and which pinch out basinwards to the west into offshore shales. The distribution, geometry, and connectivity of these sandbodies are poorly understood, as they have not been the focus of previous work. However, the formations form a significant oil and gas reservoir in the Troll and Brage fields, and a prospective reservoir in the area around the Gjøa Field.

Core, biostratigraphic and wireline log data are used to produce a consistent geological interpretation for the Krossfjord and Fensfjord formations in the Troll Field. In combination, the two formations define an overall regressive-to-transgressive wedge that interfingers basinward with marine shales of the Heather Formation. The facies associations identified in core represent wave- and tide-dominated deltaic, shoreline and shelf depositional environments. Based on facies stacking patterns and abrupt shifts in facies, three regionally extensive flooding surfaces are identified. Analysis of 3D seismic reflection data indicates that both formations contain seismic-scale clinoforms, and that they both thin and pinch out towards the west. However, the limited availability and distribution of core and well-log data restricts the detail and confidence with which seismically imaged architectures can be interpreted. It is therefore intended that these seismic interpretations will be calibrated by numerical modelling of the seismic expression of stratigraphic architectures observed in a range of outcrop analogues from the US Cretaceous Western Interior Seaway. The recognition of pronounced variability in facies character and stratigraphic architecture in the clinoform-bearing outcrop analogues emphasises the need for a robust understanding of their seismically resolved counterparts in the Krossfjord and Fensfjord formations, in order to efficiently develop these reservoirs.

Building a Schema for Outcrop Data - Towards a Standardised Nomenclature for Sedimentology

John Howell [1]*
Nicole Richter [1]
Simon Buckley [1]
Andreas Rittersbacher [1]
Christian Eide [1]
Oliver Tynes [1]
Björn Nyberg [1]

[1] Uni CIPR, University of Bergen

* corresponding author: john.howell@uni.no

Sedimentology, like most aspect of geology includes a vast array of terminology and nomenclature. Whilst the majority of this is well understood by practitioners of the art, there remains significant overlap and ambiguity in the terms geologists use to describe certain aspects of the rock record. Whilst this does not generally present a problem for people working within the subject it does create a very significant challenge when building computer databases. To be searchable, such databases rely on the rigid application of terminology otherwise it is impossible to compare like with like.

As part of the ongoing SAFARI project which is compiling a repository of architectural data from different depositional systems we have set out to describe a standardized nomenclature for clastic depositional systems and to transfer that nomenclature into a series of XML standards. The proposed schema is based around the outcrop and includes a physical description and georeferencing of that location. The standards then use models that describe the lithostratigraphy, depositional setting and sequence stratigraphy of the rocks at the locality. There is also scope for incorporating "other supporting objects" (such as maps, cross sections etc) within the database.

Terminology and categorization are already well defined for much of the description (e.g. lithostratigraphy) and schema already exist for many other aspects such as grainsize, climate zone etc. Much of the focus of the current work has been within the depositional setting model, where a myriad or terms exist and are commonly used. The key challenge is to devise a schema that is rigid enough to be useful, whilst being general enough to be adopted by a significant proportion of the potential user population. The proposed schema is based on a hierarchy from Gross Depositional Environment to Depositional Environment to Sub-Environment to Architectural Element. The schema will be presented and a web based mechanism for comments and feedback will be outlined. An overview of the SAFARI database will also be presented.

The Point Bar to Counter Point Bar Transition: Insights From Modern Meandering Rivers and Implications for the Rock Record

Stephen M. Hubbard [1]*
Derald G. Smith [2]

[1] Department of Geoscience, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4

[2] Department of Geography, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4

* corresponding author: shubbard@ucalgary.ca

Fluvial point bars and their upwards-fining deposits represent one of the original facies models, eloquently linking sedimentary processes and products. Motivated to better predict hydrocarbon reservoir distribution in fluvial meanderbelt deposits, the simple point bar model is revisited in order to provide a framework within which to predict both pathways and barriers to fluid flow in the subsurface. Through analysis of modern, and ancient seismically imaged river systems, significant downstream fining around individual point bars is documented. In the examples studied this fining is associated with the transition from point bar to counter point bar. This transition is morphologically delineated across an inflection point that separates convex downstream scroll bars (point bars) to concave downstream scroll bars (counter point bars).

Based on cores from six point bar-counter point bar transects, the downstream shift in grain size is quantified. Two point bars were analyzed on the modern Peace River in northern Alberta, Canada. Where studied, the average width of the river is 500 m, with an average decrease in net sand to gross interval thickness of 77% (0.88 to 0.11) recorded along 890 to 2785 m long segments of the river. Three tidally influenced fluvial point bars from southwestern Washington State, U.S.A., were also assessed. River widths averaged 180 m and net:gross decreased 42% (0.88 to 0.46) over 600 m along the point bar to counter point bar transition.

Subsurface reservoir strata imaged seismically and penetrated by hundreds of drill cores from the Cretaceous McMurray Formation of Alberta consists of a complex amalgam of tidally influenced fluvial meanderbelt point bar and channel deposits. The channel width in the system is 400-600 m and the shift from point bar to counter point bar corresponds to a decrease in net:gross of 61% (0.98 to 0.37). This facies shift has a significant impact on hydrocarbon reserves and recovery from the reservoir. Based on the dataset collected, the shift from sand-dominant to silt-dominant facies along the point bar to counter point bar transition is predictable. Despite the morphologic and reservoir significance of counter point bar deposits, they are generally overlooked in both modern and ancient meanderbelt systems.

Insights into provenance, transport history, depositional processes and diagenesis from high resolution geochemical studies of turbidite mudcaps

James E. Hunt [1]*
Russell B. Wynn [1]
Peter J. Talling [1]
Christopher J. Stevenson [1]

[1] National Oceanography Centre, University of Southampton Waterfront Campus

* corresponding author: jeh2g08@soton.ac.uk

Direct observation of deepwater turbidity currents is difficult owing to their infrequent occurrence, destructive power and deepwater setting. As a result, modern piston core datasets supplemented by geophysical and geochemical studies provide invaluable datasets. These studies show the importance of understanding the role of mud (0-32 μm) in these systems and the insights into the basin depositional history that can be gleaned from its study. Due to hydrodynamic sorting during the flow pathway, the sand fraction of turbidity currents is often unsuitable for use in provenance studies. Turbidite mud geochemistry provides major insights into the source of the turbidity currents, and due to the similar grain-size distribution intra- and inter-basin comparisons of compositions are more robust. ITRAX XRF analysis of turbidites from the mixed siliciclastic-volcaniclastic Moroccan Turbidite System has shown an ability to resolve differences in provenance for the event beds. Comparing the geochemical composition of correlated siliciclastic turbidites before and after exit of the Agadir Canyon has shown that large volume events are erosive (changing geochemical composition) while smaller flows are non-erosive (unchanging geochemical composition). While turbidite muds do not vary in composition between sites solely within Agadir Basin, showing that these flows are principally non-erosion once unconfined, regardless of volume.

The depositional mechanisms exerted on turbidite muds are complex owing to the inherent cohesive properties. Metre-thick mudcaps have been recorded in the Madeira Abyssal Plain. These turbidite muds have been found to pond into the centre of basin and between rift ridges. Previous studies have indicated potential for non-turbulent processes to be in operation. Geochemical studies of these muds has resolved the turbulent primary transport mechanism, laminar flow transformation on deposition, and final post-depositional remobilisation. These turbidite muds comprise TOC >2% in some cases with volumes of >100 km3. Diagenesis can dramatically reduce the TOC through the propagation of oxidation fronts. High resolution geochemical studies have allowed a better understanding of case examples. Indeed, although affected by the action of oxidation fronts the metre-thick nature of the deposits preserves and buries large quantities of carbon.

Sedimentological clues to fluid-assisted brecciation: the brecciated limestones of the Messinian Salinity Crisis re-interpreted as seep limestones

Annalisa Iadanza [1]*
Gianluca Sampalmieri [2]
Paola Cipollari [2]
Domenico Cosentino [2]
Marco Mola [3]

[1] Dipartimento di Scienze Geologiche, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, Italy

[2] Dipartimento di Scienze Geologiche, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, Italy

[3] Istituto di Geologia Ambientale e Geoingegneria, CNR, Rome, Italy

* corresponding author: aiadanza@uniroma3.it

Brecciation extensively affects the carbonate units developed during the Messinian Salinity Crisis of the Mediterranean Sea. The genesis of the brecciated limestones is controversial: traditionally interpreted as evaporitic collapse breccias, and recently even as the product of mass wasting processes, their relationship to fluid migration has been so far only speculated. The present study, addressed to some key-sections located in Italy (Maiella area; Calabrian Arc; Sicily), placed special emphasis on the comparison of the scales of observation of the fabric. Optical, electronic and cathodoluminescence microscopic techniques were integrated with stable isotopes analyses (d18O-d13C).
The carbonatic beds consist of brecciated marly lime mudstones, cemented and concretioned to different degrees, where brecciation is diffused at the mesoscale but localized at the microscale. The microfacies is mostly represented by a microbial-clotted and peloidal micrite.
The following textural proxies pointing to fluid assisted processes were detected: a) irregular geometries of the geobodies; b) primary fabric overprinting; c) peculiar characters of breccias: absence of gravity segregation and preferential orientation, monomictic and clast-supported fabric;
d) scale- and lithology-independent patterns; e) complex rheology (co-occurrence of brittle and plastic behaviour); f) fabric resembling gas-hydrate infilling sediments; g) association to fluid migration pathways and fluidized portions in the primary fabric.
The geochemical dataset shows wide ranges both in d18O (+7.74 down to -9.64‰ PDB) and d13C values (+4.14 down to -43.7‰ PDB). This can be the composite result of: 1) originally mixed C sources involved in authigenesis; 2) complex fluid-rock interaction; 3) different fluid composition in the different basins: definitely hydrocarbons-charged at places, possibly saline elsewhere.
The investigated bodies result from a fluid migration event that pervasively interested a partially lithified sedimentary column, with localized major inputs. The contextual formation of authigenic phases and the isotopic data converge to depict a fossil fluid seep environment, possibly accompanied by a major event of dissociation of gas hydrates in the Mediterranean Basin. The trigger for fluid migration, leading in turn to the diffused brecciation, is presumably related to high depressurization induced by a major drawdown (up to 1500 m) occurred during the Messinian Salinity Crisis.

Carbonate clumped isotopes applied to sedimentary systems: promises and challenges

Cédric M. John [1]*
Anne-Lise Jourdan [1]
Simon Davis [1]
Annabel Dale [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, United Kingdom

*corresponding author: cedric.john@imperial.ac.uk)

Clumped isotopes is a novel paleo-thermometer based on the laws of thermodynamics and that offers a number of advantages over traditional techniques: it is accurate to within a few degrees, can be applied to any carbonate phases (unlike fluid inclusions) and does not require prior knowledge of the fluid isotopic composition (one of the major pitfalls of traditional oxygen isotopes).

Accurate temperature reconstructions are critical for many sub-disciplines of sedimentary geology. Paleoclimate and paleoceanography rely on understanding variations in sea-surface, deep-ocean and terrestrial temperatures. Changes in high-latitude ice volumes can be deduced from benthic foraminifer oxygen isotope records if these latter are corrected for the temperature of seawater. Diagenetic transformations play a major role in controlling the petrophysical properties of carbonate rocks or cementation of siliciclastic sand horizons. A more accurate reconstruction of temperature and diagenetic fluid isotopic compositions would result in improved subsurface predictions of reservoir rock properties

For the last 2 years, the carbonate research team at Imperial College has been working in the framework of the Qatar Carbonate and Carbon Storage Research Centre (QCCSRC) at developing clumped isotopes for diagenesis. This presentation will give an overview of clumped isotopes, present published examples of applications to highlight the potential and promises of clumped isotopes, but also review the many technical and scientific challenges that need to be overcome to apply this method. Current research projects done at Imperial College that aim at a more streamlined approach to clumped isotopes, including automation of the technique using a prototype system called the IBEX (Isotopologues Batch EXtraction), will also be presented.

Clumped isotopes are likely in the future to become mainstream in the same way that oxygen isotope analysis used to be difficult a few decades ago but are now routinely applied to solve many geological problems. The road to understanding and routinely applying clumped isotopes is however full of promises for new discoveries, and a deeper understanding of geological processes from the reservoir to the molecular scale.

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The interaction between deepwater channel systems and growing thrusts and folds, toe-thrust region of the deepwater Niger Delta.

Byami A. Jolly [1]*
Lidia Lonergan [1]
Alexander C. Whittaker [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, SW7 2AZ, England, UK

* corresponding author: b.jolly10@imperial.ac.uk

Gravity-driven seaward-verging thrusts, landward-verging back-thrusts and associated folds often characterize the slope and deepwater settings of passive margins. These structures, found in the "toe-thrust" region of the system, exert a significant control on sediment gravity flows because they create and determine the location and configuration of sediment depocentres and transport systems. Consequently, a quantitative understanding of the interaction between sediment gravity flows and seabed topography is required to understand these systems effectively. Here we make quantitative measurements of the geomorphic response of submarine channels to growing tectonic structures with the aim of providing new constraints on the long-term erosional dynamics of submarine channel systems.

This study exploits 3D seismic data in the outer toe-thrust region of the deepwater Niger Delta to analyze the interaction between Plio-Pleistocene channel systems and actively growing folds and thrusts. We first mapped folds and thrusts from the seismic data and we used this data to reconstruct the history of fold growth. We then used the sea-bed seismic horizon to build a 50 m resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the sea floor in Arc-GIS. We extracted channel long- profiles across growing structures from the DEM, and made key measurements of channel geometries at regular intervals along the channel length.

Initial results show that changes in submarine channel longitudinal profiles are directly correlated to underlying seabed thrusts/folds. Channels gradients are typically linear to slightly concave, and have an average gradient of 0.90. Actively growing thrusts are associated with a local steepening in channel gradient (up to 200% change) and extends 0.5 - 2km distance upstream of the thrust. Within these "knickzones", channel incision increases by approximately 50%, with a corresponding width decrease of approximately 25%. Our data shows that submarine channel systems dynamically adjust their geometry and basal gradient in order to keep pace with growth of tectonic structures and our results provide new data to test models of turbidite incision.

Lateral variability of basin margin clinothems from the Karoo Basin, South Africa

George Jones [1]*
David Hodgson [1]
Stephen Flint [1]

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: george.jones@liv.ac.uk

The lateral variability of basin-margin scale clinothems (W1-W7) in the Permian lower Waterford Formation has been studied in detail across a 1000 km2 area. Dip exposure of these clinothems occurs along the limbs of a series of east-west trending, post-depositional synclines and anticlines. Correlating logged sections by walking out parasequence flooding surfaces has established a 2D shelf to slope basin profile for successive clinothems W3 and W4 along the northern limb of the Baviaans syncline. W3 is a fluvial dominated parasequence in its most proximal exposures and exhibits large scale extensional deformation at the clinoform rollover with limited delivery of sediment beyond the shelf-edge. In contrast, W4 comprises wave/storm dominated shoreface deposits in its most proximal exposures, and prograded onto the upper slope with widespread erosion. Variability in shelf-edge architecture and facies distributions of clinothems W3 and W4 in the Baviaans input area indicate that the fluvial dominated W3 was unable to supply sediment beyond the shelf-edge. In contrast, the wave/storm dominated W3 shows significant evidence for sediment bypass and channelization beyond the shelf-edge.

Extensive regional correlations across strike lack any compelling evidence for the shelf-edge break in W3 and W4, which indicates that the Baviaans area has a more landward shelf-edge break with an embayed coastal morphology. This lateral variability in architecture and facies may be linked to along margin differences in the location of sediment input points, or infilling of an inherited bathymetry generated by mass failure events in the Baviaans area.

An Integrated Characterisation of the Paleocene Submarine Fans of the Lista and Maureen Formations, UK Central Graben

Ben Kilhams [1]*
Adrian Hartley [1]
Mads Huuse [2]
John Marshall [3]

[1] Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen

[2] School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, University of Manchester

[3] Home Team Lead, Shell UI Europe

* corresponding author: ben.kilhams@abdn.ac.uk

The Paleocene submarine fans of the UK Central Graben are important petroleum reservoir units recording the cyclic input of sand-rich turbidite flows into the post-rift basin. Provision of extensive seismic, well and core datasets by Shell UI Europe has enabled a regional-scale re-evaluation of these deposits. This project aims to map the distribution and quality of the Maureen and Mey sandstone members and advance our understanding of the syn- and post-depositional dynamics within the submarine fans.

The use of regional seismic data allows for observations of the extent, thickness, net to gross, bathymetric interaction and temporal evolution of the submarine fans. Seismic interpretation benefits from correlation with cores and petrophysical data. Core sections (28 wells) have been studied to evaluate facies and how these relate to connectivity, grain size distribution and porosity/permeability trends. Furthermore, integration of a regional well database (338 wells) allows for mapping of formation thicknesses and sand quality. In turn, this has enabled seismic mapping to be ground-truthed enabling a more quantitative approach to attribute analysis.

The Lista sandstones are shown to be deposited in western and eastern fairways defined by the underlying topography with minor sidefans cross cutting this trend. The core and well facies can be divided into end-members based on the proportions of sandstone and mudstone. Analysis of these facies shows that porosity is related to grain size. As the grain size falls distally the quality of the sandstones also decrease. The Maureen interval exhibits a complex seismic signature but integration with well data shows that the main fairways are similar (although slightly offset) to those in the Lista interval. This system also displays complex sedimentological relationships between various chalk facies, mudstones and sandstones. Despite this, a similar relationship between porosity and grain size exists although there is some modification by calcitisation.

Examples are presented of potential scientific advances including clarification of our understanding regarding the spatial and temporal evolution of the submarine fans. Observations are made concerning the impact of basin geometry and salt-induced bathymetric variations on sand quality distribution as well as the validity of previous models. It is hoped that this work will also allow industry workers to consider the remaining prospectivity of these intervals.

Investigation of the Distribution and Composition of Organic Matter in the Namurian Upper Bowland Shale – a Potential UK Gas Shale

S.F. Könitzer [1]*
S.J. Davies [1]
M.H. Stephenson [2]
M.J. Leng [3]

[1] Department of Geology, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, England, UK
[2] British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG, England, UK
[3] NERC Isotope Geoscience Laboratory (NIGL), British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG, England, UK

*corresponding author: sven.koenitzer@le.ac.uk

The Upper Bowland Shale Formation is a source rock for oil and gas reservoirs in Northern and Central England, but may also contain reserves of unconventional gas. For realistic reserve estimates and to identify depositional 'sweet spots', the amount, distribution and composition of organic matter (OM), and their control on gas generation potential needs to be investigated. These parameters, and hence the location of prospective shale gas, supposedly relate to changes in biological productivity and palaeoenvironment. Previous studies have noted systematic differences in the type and origin of organic matter attributing these to changes in environment during the deposition of thin but widespread goniatite-bearing 'marine bands' and the intervening sediments.

110 mudstone samples were obtained from a 40m thick Lower Namurian core section from the Widmerpool Gulf. Methods include thin section lithofacies interpretation, carbon isotope analysis on bulk OM and individual organic components and palynofacies characterisation on isolated OM.

Two main lithofacies groups are identified: (1) a siliciclastic group that includes clay-dominated mudstones interbedded with millimetre-scale, graded silt-bearing mudstones, silt- and sand-bearing mudstones, and centimetre-scale silt-rich mudstones and; (2) a calcareous group of carbonate-bearing clay-rich lenticular or mottled mudstones and calcareous mudstones. The siliciclastic lithofacies group is interpreted to represent a period of frequent influx of sediment via distal pro-delta turbidity currents. This group is overlain by the carbonate-bearing lithofacies group containing the marine bands that are interpreted as predominantly hemipelagic mud deposition in relatively deeper water during rising and higher sea level.

The interbedded siliciclastic group has organic carbon content of 1.5-2.5%, with up to 10% occurs in a few discrete intervals associated with macroscopic plant debris, and heavier more variable, C-isotope values (mean δ13C: -27.7±1.4‰). OM composition varies from plant debris-rich to amorphous particle-rich assemblages. The calcareous group is characterised by a higher organic carbon content (4-5%), lower C-isotope values (mean δ13C: -28.6±0.9‰) and high abundances of granular amorphous OM typically produced by marine algae.

These data suggest that differences in sedimentary processes delivering sediment to the basin influence the type of organic matter as well as affecting the total organic carbon content.

Sandstone body architecture of distributive fluvial systems (DFS):

examples from Spain (Miocene) and USA (Jurassic).

Anna Kulikova*, Gary J. Nichols

Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, TW20 0EX, England, UK

*corresponding author: a.kulikova@es.rhul.ac.uk

The deposits of distributive fluvial systems (DFS) in aggradational settings have a high preservation potential and therefore provide suitable analogues for fluvial hydrocarbon reservoirs. The sandstone body architecture of two DFS successions formed in different tectonic and climatic settings (the Huesca DFS in the Miocene of the Ebro Basin, Spain and Salt Wash DFS in the Jurassic Morrison Formation in Utah and Colorado, USA) have been studied in transects radially from their apices. These provide information about the types and dimensions of sandstone bodies, their organization and their relationships: in turn this provides an insight into the behavior of DFSs.

The main difference in the sandstone body architecture between the two systems is the degree of amalgamation. Isolated sandstone bodies enclosed by floodplain fine-grained deposits are characteristic of the Huesca system while the Salt Wash succession is mainly represented by thick amalgamated sandstone bodies (5-20m) within which individual channel-fill units are difficult to distinguish.

Three sandstone body types have been distinguished on the basis of processes of formation and dimensions: Type 1 – sandstone bodies with width to thickness ratios <15 formed by channelised flow in laterally stable channels; Type 2 - 2-4.5m thick sandstone bodies with width to thickness ratio >15 formed by channelised flow in laterally migrating channels; Type 3 - 0.1-2m thick sandstone bodies with width to thickness ratio >15 formed by poorly confined and unconfined flow in terminal or lateral splays. All three types are identified in the Huesca system, but in the Salt Wash system Type 1 sandstone bodies were less often observed and the succession is dominated by thick sheet-like sandstone bodies (3-6m) of Type 2; thin sheet-like sandstone bodies of Type 3 are also not common due to the low preservation of floodplain deposits.

The downstream and vertical variations in sandstone body architecture are a result of internal organization of the DFSs and are mainly controlled by autogenic processes such as channel avulsion and depositional lobe switching. The depositional architecture of the Salt Wash succession is strongly influenced by the low rate of accommodation creation.

Geometrical modelling of turbidite channel systems – implication on reservoir characterisation

RICHARD LABOURDETTE [1]*

[1] TOTAL, Pau, France

* corresponding author: richard.labourdette@total.com

Turbidite hydrocarbon reservoirs are complex features, which need to be described in detail and represented as clearly as possible. The morphology and internal distribution of elementary distributary channels is dependent on depositional settings, leading to diverse arrangements at different scales.

Reservoir modelling usually requires a description of sedimentary heterogeneity on a scale smaller than that given by seismic resolution. Therefore turbidite channel storeys require a description based on the scales of individual channel bodies.

The morphology of well-imaged turbidite complexes was analysed geometrically to improve the understanding of their individual channel evolutions and assess depositional processes involved. The derived measurements are then treated statistically and compared with channel storey characteristics. Based on this geometric analysis, we have established a relationship between the channel storey confinement degree and the stacking architecture of elementary channel sand bodies. This relationship allows appreciating reservoir architecture and connectivity for different depositional settings characterized by channel storey confinement.

Less-confined channel storeys are thereby characterized by lateral migration patterns with low vertical amalgamation, resulting in a tabular amalgamated reservoir architecture which connectivity is related to preserved elementary channel margin heterogeneities. As confinement increases, down-dip and vertical movement components increase, leading to ribbon reservoir architectures and vertical amalgamation of sand bodies. Resulting reservoir characteristics are highly variable along channel storeys, depending on down-dip and vertical component ratios.

The various depositional patterns recognised in channel migration packages, exhibit different dynamic responses when modelled in a reservoir simulator. These dynamic differences are related to the different preservation rates of bank collapse sediments within each elementary channel bodies. According to these preservation differences, the vertical stacking pattern of channels imposes a better degree of connectivity than the true lateral migration. This effect has been incorporated into a full field simulation models by using geometrical based algorithms (LOSCs). Recognition and modelling of detailed sedimentological heterogeneities, and their distribution along full field models, associated with their own uncertainties, produce a better history match.

A Neoproterozoic glacial succession with a clear advance-retreat sequence: the Omutirapo Palaeovalley of northern Namibia

Daniel Paul Le Heron [1]*
Marie Busfield [1]

[1] Royal Holloway, University of London

* corresponding author: d.leheron@es.rhul.ac.uk

The Sturtian glaciation is the oldest of three Neoproterozoic glaciations which are considered to have developed as global ice-house events during the Cryogenian (mid-Neoproterozoic). At Omutirapo in northern Namibia, a mixed carbonate-clastic succession of Tonian to?lower Cryogenian age occurs (the Ombombo Subgroup). This succession is truncated by a palaeovalley of about 2 km width and up to 400 m depth and this is filled by diamictites and various siliciclastic deposits of the Chuos Formation. We logged a total of 1000 m of the palaeovalley fill from 4 transects up to the contact with the overlying 'cap carbonate' (Rasthof Formation). The strata consist of a basal (~50 m thick) series of ferruginous diamictites, bearing rounded and rarely striated clasts, passing upward into intercalated clast-rich and clast-poor diamictites (~100 m thick) punctuated at intervals by intra-diamictite shear zones. The shear zones include both rotational and necking structures, with local clast injection (and fracturing) by quartzitic dykes, and are hence attributed to subglacial, rather than tectonic, deformation. Above, dropstones become progressively fewer, then absent, then progressively more abundant in green silty shales (maximum 150 m thick). This motif is interpreted to record glacial retreat followed by re-advance. Thus, coupled with the occurrence of clast-rich diamictites and shear zones toward the top of the succession, these data imply the re-advance of ice sheets and their re-occupation of the Omutirapo Palaeovalley, in turn suggesting a clear two-phased glaciation.

Facies, architecture and sequence stratigraphy of an ancient tide-dominated delta: lower Dir Abu Lifa Member (Eocene), Western Desert, Egypt

B. Legler [1]*
H.D. Johnson [2]
G.J. Hampson [2]
B.Y.G. Massart [2]
C.A-L. Jackson [2]
M.D. Jackson [2]
A. El-Barkooky [3]
R. Ravnas [4]

[1] Imperial College London, present address University of Manchester

[2] Imperial College London

[3] Cairo University & Shell Egypt

[4] Norske Shell, Stavanger

* corresponding author: berit.legler@manchester.ac.uk

Stacked progradational packages in the Eocene Dir Abu Lifa Member (Western Desert, Egypt) represent lower delta plain deposits dissected by major fluvial-tidal distributary channels within a tide-dominated deltaic setting. The complex facies architecture within the channels and their lateral relationship to interdistributary zones will be presented. Mutually evasive distributary channels were filled with lateral migrating tidal bars. Tidal indicators are ubiquitous, including abundant mud drapes, sigmoidal bundles and rhythmites. Each channel fill contains a consistent internal architecture that varies from channel axis to channel margin. Erosive channel bases are often lined by mudstones. Above these mudstones, planar to sigmoidal cross-bedded sandstone occurs. However, inclined heterolithic strata dominate the channel fills. Inclined beds are characterized by wavy- to lenticular-bedded layers, interpreted as sub- and inter-tidal bar deposits. Scours filled with mudstone incise into the uppermost part of tidal bars, representing "blind" tidal creeks. The dip angle of inclined beds and overall grain size both decrease towards the top of the channel-fill successions, which is capped by supra-tidal marsh deposits. Lower delta plain deposits comprise laterally extensive coarsening upward successions dominated by heterolithic strata with pedogenically modified tops. Each progradational package is capped by an intensely bioturbated sandstone that records transgression. Distributary channel belts can be related to laterally adjacent prograding delta plain deposits, and the occurrence of pedogenic horizons inside and outside the channelized facies allows correlation between both areas. Despite deep (up to 25 m) erosional relief, the channel belts are not confined to incised valleys. However, channel belts associated with successive episodes of delta progradation are vertically stacked.

Fault-Propagation Folding and Syn-Rift Sedimentary Response: An Outcrop Case Study from the Hadahid Monocline, Suez Rift, Egypt

Matthew M. Lewis [1]*
Christopher A-L. Jackson [1]
Rob L. Gawthorpe [2]
Paul S. Whipp [3]

[1] Department of Earth Science & Engineering, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BP, England, UK

[2] Department of Earth Science, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

[3] Statoil ASA, Sandsliveien 90, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: matthew.m.lewis07@imperial.ac.uk

The early growth of normal faults is typically associated with the development of fault-propagation folds and the deposition of wedge-shaped syn-rift deposits that typically thin and onlap towards at-surface, monoclinal growth folds. Stratigraphic traps may develop on the limbs of these growth folds, although, due to limited seismic resolution and sparse well data, the architecture and facies distribution of early syn-rift stratigraphy is difficult to constrain in the subsurface.

To improve our understanding of the along-strike variability in structural style and the control that fault-related folding has on the architecture of early syn-rift strata we focused on a 2.5 km long segment of the Hadahid Monocline in the Suez Rift, Egypt. Field mapping and sedimentary logging indicate that the monocline dips 40-60 degrees towards the SW and that an, overall deepening-upwards, early syn-rift succession onlaps the monocline limb.

Marked variability in the magnitude of erosion along the pre-rift/syn-rift contact and the overall geometry of early syn-rift succession allow us to recognise four stages in the tectono-stratigraphic evolution of the Hadahid Monocline: (i) T1 - base-level fall and sub-aerial erosion of pre-rift stratigraphy prior to the onset of faulting or folding; (ii) T2 - base-level rise and the initiation of shallow marine sedimentation during a period characterised by limited at-surface deformation; (iii) T3 - initiation of at-surface growth folding in response to the onset of fault-tip propagation, development of a hangingwall syncline and deposition of wedge-shaped syn-rift units that thin and onlap toward the growth fold; and (iv) T4 - amplification of the growth fold, linkage with the adjacent fold segment, continued deposition of cross-sectional wedged-shaped syn-rift package, and formation of a single, coalesced, proto-hangingwall, synclinal depocentre.

This study highlights the control that fault-propagation folding and changes in base-level has on the architecture of early syn-rift stratigraphic traps in extensional settings. In addition, here we emphasise the value of well exposed outcrop examples in reducing uncertainty of future hydrocarbon exploration and production.

Use of modern analogues in correlation and palaeogeographic analysis of an evolving coal-bearing paralic succession, Paleocene, Svalbard, Arctic Norway

Charlotta J. Lüthje [1]*
Gary Nichols [2]

[1] DONG Energy Exploration, Agern alle 24-26, 2970 Hørsholm, Denmark

[2] Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX, UK

* corresponding author: chajl@dongenergy.dk

Correlation using sequence stratigraphic principles requires facies deposited in different environments to be considered as coeval packages. Closely spaced data points may have deposits formed in the same setting but widely spaces ones would be assumed to be different facies in different environments. When attempting correlation some idea of the length scales of different deposits in two dimensions is required, especially in paralic environments, which may comprise a complex patchwork of sub-environments. In this analysis of Palaeocene coal-bearing strata from the Central Tertiary Basin of Svalbard, modern environmental analogues have been used to assist in carrying out the first comprehensive sequence stratigraphic analysis and paleogeographic reconstructions for the Firkanten Formation, the oldest unit in the basin.

Data from cores drilled for coal exploration and outcrop reveal that the Firkanten Formation consists of thick coal deposits, carbonaceous mudstone and sandstone with rare conglomerate beds. Facies analysis indicates deposition in a coastal plain with mires and swamps that graded into tidally influenced lagoons. The coastal plain was protected from wave reworking by sandy barrier bars and a fine-sand dominated foreshore/shoreface environment.

Within this succession there are no chronostratigraphic surfaces that can be used and lithostratigraphic correlation fails even between closely spaced boreholes. Consequently modern analogues of similar environmental settings were used as scale models to constrain the likely width of facies belts in the palaeogeographic reconstructions. Sequence stratigraphic correlation was carried out in a 3D grid in parallel with creating paleogeographic reconstructions requiring numerous iterations before a consistent evolutionary model could be developed.

These reconstructions show a gradual back-stepping coastline with a low-relief wave-induced coastal plain environment from marginal to shallow marine. This transgressive succession can be divided into parasequences bounded by minor flooding surfaces that can be grouped into parasequence sets bounded by major flooding surfaces. There is no evidence for relative sea-level falls within the succession and it is suggested that the tectonic subsidence exceeded rates of eustatic sea level fall. Aggradation is the dominant pattern with creation of thick successions of coastal plain deposits and the thick coal successions.

Provenance and distribution of Upper Jurassic mass flow sandstones and MTCs, Quad 30, Central Graben, UKCS

Adam D. McArthur [1]*
Adrian J. Hartley [1]
David W. Jolley [1]
Stuart G. Archer [1]
Hugo M. Lawrence [2]

[1] Department of Geology & Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, Kings College, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE

[2] ConocoPhillips (U.K.) Limited, Rubislaw House, Anderson Drive, Aberdeen, AB15 6FZ

* corresponding author: adam.mcarthur@abdn.ac.uk

The effect of mass-transport complexes (MTCs) on the distribution of sandstones in deep marine settings has been highlighted in recent research of passive margins, e.g. the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Brazil. Deep marine reservoir sandstones within the Upper Jurassic syn-rift succession of Quad 30, Central Graben, UK North Sea, are associated with large-scale MTCs.

Subsurface data has been integrated to identify olistoliths > 100 m thick and multiple debris flows, proximal to the Josephine Ridge. Seismic studies indicate the MTCs were supplied by footwall collapse from major faults bordering the Jade and Judy horsts, which are composed of Triassic strata. Wireline log signatures identified in the olistoliths confirm a Triassic source. Core studies of the debris flows identified clasts of Triassic sediments. The MTCs are interbedded with Upper Jurassic marine mudstones and coarse sandstones. Distally, wireline and core studies demonstrate the reservoir sandstones to be massive, fine grained and structureless, with a tri-cyclic signature. They are interpreted as the result of mass flows into the deep marine environment. The sandstones were deposited in conjunction with slurry events, comprised of very fine argillaceous sandstone with small clasts (2-3 cm) of claystone and hemipelagic claystone.

Terrestrial palynomorphs recovered from mudstones adjacent to the Judy Horst imply subaerial exposure of the horst; however sediment yield from the Judy Horst is not predicted to be sufficient to supply the reservoir sandstone. Petrographic studies of sandstone mineralogy and heavy mineralogy have been used to examine a variety of potential sources for the reservoir interval, including the Upper Jurassic shallow marine Fulmar and Ula Sandstones, the Middle Jurassic Pentland and Triassic siliciclastic intervals.

Biostratigraphic calibration of the studied intervals demonstrates that the MTCs were emplaced in the Early Kimmeridgian, post dating deposition of the reservoir interval in the Late Oxfordian. The reservoir facies deposition represented the initial stage of rifting, whilst MTCs were deposited during rift climax. The MTCs are not predicted to have had an impact on the reservoir interval due to the non-erosive nature of the debris flows.

The provenance and distribution of the MTCs and sandstones provide insights to the evolution of the rift related topography, with implications for regional paleogeography, sediment pathways and reservoir prospectivity.

Controls on fluvial reservoir performance in dryland terminal fluvial systems

Tom McKie

Shell U.K. Limited, 1 Altens Farm Road, Nigg, Aberdeen, AB12 3FY, United Kingdom

Tom.Mckie@Shell.com

Fluvial depositional systems form heterogeneous reservoirs whose behavior and performance can be difficult to predict. Research on the connectivity of fluvial sandbodies has been driven by the need to define critical thresholds of economic viability and robust development strategies that maximise recovery in low sand:shale successions. However, even in sand-rich reservoirs, where sandbody connectivity is high and tank-like behaviour might be expected, the reservoirs commonly fail to perform as initially predicted.

In sand-rich fluvial reservoirs the geometry and connectivity of the higher permeability (generally coarser grained) lower bar and thalweg deposits defines the flow conduits that drain a lower permeability matrix of upper bar and floodplain sandstones. High initial flow rates may be dominated by these coarse grained features, with longer term rates dependent on the inflow from the finer grained, lower permeability "background" facies into these conduits. In dryland, terminal systems such as the Triassic in the North Sea the geometry of the lower bar and thalweg facies change with position on the fluvial system, ranging from widespread sheets along the bases of proximal, mobile channel belts to more isolated bodies in more distal, avulsive settings.

Bar-draping fines, mudclast lags, reworked calcic palaeosol material and abandonment plugs are commonly occurring features in these Triassic reservoirs, and are a product of the ephemeral to intermittent discharge characteristics of the dryland fluvial systems. These features form very common, low permeability elements which short term well tests sense as lateral flow barriers within individual channel belts. However, long term production typically demonstrates that these have a less detrimental effect than initially indicated and that flow eventually finds routes around these features to drain larger areas than the tests would have predicted.

In many fields the reservoirs are stratigraphically compartmentalized. Major barriers recognised across large areas are the result of regional interfingering of the fluvial systems with distal floodbasin fines (e.g. playa) as they expanded and contracted in response to long-term, climate-driven changes in discharge. In smaller fields the channel belts may be larger than the field extent, in which case bar-top fines capping single channel belts are capable of forming field-wide vertical flow barriers. The former can be predicted, the latter form more random barriers.

Sedimentological character of an event bed produced by a high density turbidity current deposition, Buzzard field, UKCS.

Mark McKinnon [1]*
Ben Kneller [1]

[1] University of Aberdeen

* corresponding author: mark.mckinnon@abdn.ac.uk

Basinwide thick turbidite sandstone beds are uncommon but important features of confined deepwater sheet systems. They can be seen in both outcrop and subsurface datasets and provide stratigraphic markers, and are often extremely important reservoir intervals making it essential to understand their geometry and depositional processes. The Lower B4 megabed in the Upper Jurassic Buzzard field is an example of a thick basinwide sand sheet. It has been studied using full wireline log suites from over 40 wells across the Buzzard basin, 9 of which have core penetration through the megabed interval. Detailed core logs, grain size and poroperm data have been used to characterise depositional character, to document facies changes across the basin, and to interpret the processes involved in deposition of the megabed.

The Buzzard basin is bounded by E/W extensional faults and has an eastward palaeoslope giving rise to a broadly eastward sediment transport direction. The Lower B4 megabed consists of structureless and laminated sandstone up to 85ft thick. The bed is wedge-shaped, thickening distally but maintaining a constant thickness laterally across the basin. It can be divided into five distinct intervals: coarse grained high permeability layer, structureless fine-medium sandstone, laminated fine-medium sandstone, upper dewatered layer and a "scalped" top zone. Both the bed base and bed top are sharp contacts, with no fine cap; the bed base is largely non-erosive but is commonly underlain by a zone of sandstone injection. The structure of the megabed is characteristic of a deposit produced by a single high density turbidity current.

The flow evolved through the basin resulting in a variable facies succession within the megabed. The coarse grained high permeability interval was deposited by a basal tractional layer largely confined to the axial and proximal area. The fine-medium sand intervals were transported in a higher velocity turbulent layer which was able to outrun the basal layer and deposit ahead of this basal layer. The presence of tractional laminae is dependent on the suspended load fallout rate. Fluid trapped within the interval rose to the top of the bed producing the upper dewatering layer, with deformation increasing upwards. The scalped top is produced by an overriding MTD which is unrelated to the megabed deposition. By mapping these subtle facies variations, we are able to model the permeability distribution; a key aspect of reservoir development.

Preservation of a drowned barrier complex: implications for interpretation of shallow marine facies

Claire L. Mellett [1]*
David M. Hodgson [1]
Barbara Mauz [1]
Andreas Lang [1]
Ian Selby [2]
Andrew J. Plater [1]

[1] School of Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 7ZT, UK

[2] The Crown Estate, 16 Burlington Place, London, W1S 2XH, UK

* corresponding author: mellettc@liverpool.ac.uk

Landscape response to relative sea level during the Quaternary is documented using an integrated dataset of multibeam bathymetry and 2D seismic reflection profiles from the Hastings Bank area in the northern English Channel. Mapping and interpretation of nine seismic stratigraphic units calibrated to lithological information from multiple vibrocores, has enabled the identification of fluvial, shoreface, barrier, beach ridge, washover fan, back-barrier and tidal environments of deposition. The interpreted landscape evolution is as follows: (i) fluvial incision of bedrock during sea-level lowstand; (ii) progradation of a shoreline and development of a barrier complex as sea-level rises; (iii) recycling and breaching of the barrier complex; (iv) rapid drowning of the barrier complex; (v) landward migration of the shoreline through continued sea-level rise; and (vi) complete abandonment and sub-marine preservation of the barrier complex during sea-level highstand. The previously undocumented, yet exceptionally well preserved, drowned barrier complex at Hastings Bank records phases of barier initiation, instability and retreat, and documents coastal response to high rates of sea-level rise. Barrier retreat is characterised by a phase of overstepping where rapid rates of sea-level rise drown the barrier and resultant deeper water depths limit reworking by waves, followed by a phase of discontinuos retreat where the shoreline steps back through continuous rollover puncuated by minor overstepping events (overstepping by rollover). The evolution of Hastings Bank is used as a foundation to construct a conceptual model, outlining the mode of barrier retreat and preservation potential as function of the balance between sediment availability and rate of relative sea-level rise. Validation of this model using data from coastal and shallow marine facies is required in order to constrain rates of relative sea-level rise and sediment supply, with the aim of predicting preservation potential of shallow marine facies.

Quantifying the relative role of multiple source areas on the budget, calibre and composition of sediment of an ancient routing system: Field examples from the Spanish Pyrenees.

Nikolaos A. Michael [1]*
Alex C. Whittaker [1]
Andy Carter [2]
Philip A. Allen [1]

[1] Imperial College London, South Kensington Campus, London SW7 2AZ

[2] Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

* corresponding author: nikolaos.michail07@imperial.ac.uk

Constraining spatial and temporal trends in depositional volume, grain size and composition within ancient sediment routing systems is a key challenge for sedimentologists and stratigraphers. Central to this is the role of different sediment source areas in determining the locus, magnitude and characteristics of down-system depositional stratigraphy.
We tackle this challenge in the Escanilla Formation - part of a middle-upper Eocene, 200 km-long sediment routing system sourced primarily from the Axial Zone of the Spanish Pyrenees and deposited on top of a tectonically active fold and thrust belt in the south-central Pyrenean unit. This sediment routing system encompasses a wide variety of depositional environments from proximal fanglomerates, alluvial fan complexes, braided river and lacustrine deposits in the Tremp-Graus and southeast Ainsa Basins to deltaic slope and deep marine turbidite deposits in the western Ainsa and Jaca basin. We focus our study in the fluvial segment of this routing system.
We use sedimentary logs, interpreted panoramas and available chronological information from palaeomagnetic and biostratigraphic analysis as a template for presenting new sedimentological data in the form of grain size trends, clast lithology variations and variations in detrital thermochronology and geochronology signals. Based on field mapping we delimit the fairway of the sediment routing system and divide it into time intervals. Within this 4D stratigraphic framework we trace grain-size and sedimentary facies from the proximal areas to the distal depozones. We calculate a sediment budget for the Escanilla and relate it to observed grain-size and facies trends in order to understand the controls on down-system evolution.
Two major source areas contributed to the stratigraphic architecture of the proximal alluvial fan complexes of the Gurp and Sis paleovalleys and the distal fluvial depocentres (Viacamp and Lascuarre) of the Tremp-Graus and eastern Ainsa basins. We calculate the sediment efflux from these fans and hence their relative contribution in the stratigraphic record in these basins. A preliminary sediment budget shows a good match between the sediment efflux of mountain catchments and the sediment deposited both in the wedge-top basin and exported to deep sea depocentres in the west. Future work is aimed at better constraining the total sediment budget and its partitioning in terms of grain size fractions and depositional environments.

Spilling into confinement: processes in internal levees to submarine channels

Emma Morris [1]*
David Hodgson [1]
Stephen Flint [1]
Rufus Brunt [1]

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: e.a.morris@liverpool.ac.uk

Submarine channel-levee systems are commonly simplified into axial (channelised areas) and marginal (external levees and overbank). However, a common observation from seismic sections is that in large (km's wide and 100's m deep) confined slope systems there is a significant component (>50%) of an opaque seismic facies. Interpretations of this component of the fill include terrace deposits, mass transport deposits, abandonment and internal levee deposits, although analogues at outcrop are rare. One well-documented example is exposed in Unit D, Fort Brown Fm., Karoo Basin, South Africa. Unit D at the C/D ridge is a deeply entrenched slope valley with a dominantly heterogeneous fill (70%). Six behind outcrop research boreholes cored through Units C and D along the C/D ridge allow detailed characterisation of sedimentary facies and interpretation of sedimentary processes operating during deposition. This high-resolution database allows detailed analysis of the significant heterolithic component that makes up >70% of the fill. Interpretation of sedimentary processes, lithofacies distributions, and unit thickness supports an internal levee interpretation. There is also a trend from channel-proximal to channel-distal settings. In channel-proximal locations, beds are 5-20cm thick and generally exhibit normal grading from very fine-grained sandstone to siltstone. Climbing ripple cross-lamination is common and examples of multidirectional current ripple lamination are present. In channel distal localities, sandstone content decreases markedly (from 50%-<5%), siltstone bed thicknesses are 2-20cm, fine-grained sandstone beds are less than 1cm and ripple lamination is rare. Individual bed thickness decreases upwards as the levee becomes siltier, with fewer occurrences of ripple lamination suggesting increasing confinement or waning in flow density. This change in facies suggests that there are several stages to levee development through time, related to a combination of allogenic (e.g. sediment supply) and autogenic (e.g. channel migration) processes.

Impact of clay mineral diagenesis and burial history on shale gas prospectivity, producibility and reserves: a Golden Zone perspective

Paul H Nadeau [1]*
Andrew Hurst [1]

[1] University Aberdeen, Dept Geology & Petroleum Geology

* corresponding author: phnad1@gmail.com

The advent of significant North American shale-gas production had an enormous impact on US domestic as well as international gas-markets. The geological controls on the prospectivity and producibility of shale-gas reservoirs remain however, problematic. Shale-gas reservoirs are essentially mature source rock intervals that have retained hydrocarbon gases. They have inherently low permeability, which has a strong control on their producibility; composite source-rock, seal and reservoir lithologies. Low permeability combined with very strongly-held capillary-bound formation water gives shale-gas reservoirs extremely poor reservoir characteristics that are entirely predictable from clay mineral diagenetic and petrophysical models. Permeability is so low that these rocks are likely to retain overpressure from deeper burial environments even after uplift and erosion. Overpressure is observed in several shale-gas basins where uplift and erosion of shales occurred, and when preserved may be a vital factor that determines the economic producibility of many shale-gas resources. The reduction of rock confining stress following uplift and erosion is a further reservoir characteristic that helps to facilitate fracture propagation and thereby increase the bulk permeability and allow access to greater gas volumes. Reports that the shale-gas reserves occur mainly within the kerogen matrix of the mature source rocks, rather than within the water-wet mineral-bounded shale pores, support these views. If correct, this implies fundamentally different hydrocarbon reservoir dynamics than that of conventional gas reservoirs, and therefore a need for the development of innovative numerical, petrophysical as well as geological reservoir modelling.

Dolomitisation and Dedolomitsiation of Shallow Marine, Upper Albian-Lower Turonian Carbonates of the Jeffara Escarpment, Southern Tunisia.

Richard Newport [1]*
Cathy Hollis [1]
Stephane Bodin [2]
Jonathan Redfern [1]

[1] School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, Manchester University, Manchester, M13 9PL.

[2] Institute for Geology, Mineralogy and Geophysics, Ruhr-University Bochum, Universitatsstrasse 150, D-44801 Bochum, Germany.

* corresponding author: richard.newport@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Reservoir architecture of mid-Cretaceous carbonate reservoirs in Tunisia is in large part controlled by dolomitisation. Despite this fact, very little work has been conducted to determine the extent and timing of dolomitisation and its impact on reservoir quality.

This study examines superbly exposed section along the Jeffara escarpment of southern Tunisia, which provides an excellent opportunity to study the extensively dolomitised Upper Albian-Lower Turonian shallow water carbonates of the Zebbag Formation (Rhadouane, Kerker and Gattar Members), which are potential outcrop analogues for reservoirs currently under production and appraisal in North Africa.

During the mid-Cretaceous Tunisia was situated around 11ºN, and covered by a shallow epeiric sea that formed as part of the southern Tethyan margin.

Facies analysis of the Rhadouane (Albian-Cenomanian) and Kerker (Cenomanian) members reveals stacked upward-shallowing packages from bioturbated skeletal packstone-grainstones to algal laminated wackstones-grainstones, with rare ooid shoals, tidal bars and evaporite horizons. Facies analysis within the Gattar (Lower Turonian) Member has proved difficult due to the pervasive and fabric destructive nature of the dolomitisation. Dolomitisation within the lowermost Rhadouane (Albian-Cenomanian) and Kerker (Cenomanian) Members is incomplete and non-fabric destructive.

Planar dolomite fabrics throughout the Zebbag Formation suggests dolomitisation occurred at temperatures <50ºC, and lack of compaction features suggest a limited amount of burial. Stable isotopic analysis of Δ13C and Δ18O of dolomite gives values ranging between 0.83 to 3.92° and -1.97 to -0.33° respectively suggesting a marine origin of fluids. Later fractures provided conduits for hotter dolomitising fluids, recrystallising planar-e dolomite to non-planar dolomite.

Dedolomite and calcitisation is common within the Zebbag Formation occurring in thick, ~1.5m beds, within large non-strata bound fractures and as replacement of cores of dolomite rhombs by calcite. Dedolomite layers are laterally discontinuous, and return to pure dolomite compositions over a distance of centimetres. Stable isotopic analysis of dedolomite gives values ranging between -8.11 to -7.28° for Δ18O and -8.12 to -2.91° Δ13C. Highly depleted Δ18O values suggest that dedolomitisation occurred at elevated temperatures and/or via

meteoric ground waters and negative Δ13C suggests possible interaction with soil derived CO2.

Squeezing oil from shale: the sedimentology of the "Alberta Bakken"

Jon Noad

Murphy Oil Canada Ltd

jon_noad@murphyoilcorp.com

The Exshaw Formation of Western Canada comprises a heterogeneous succession of black shales in the lower part, and siltstones and limestones in the upper part. It is late Famennian to middle Tournasian in age, straddling the Devonian-Carboniferous boundary. The Exshaw Shale is considered the primary source rock of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin. It was deposited during an anoxic event associated with the Late Devonian extinction.

The Exshaw Formation is equivalent to the lower and middle members of the Bakken Formation of southern Saskatchewan. The Bakken occupies around 200,000 square miles of the subsurface Williston Basin, and is a prolific source rock when thermally mature. It also hosts producible oil reserves. Total reserves of the Williston Basin are estimated at up to 24 Billion barrels, with perhaps 4 billion barrels recoverable. By the end of 2010 production rates had reached 458,000 bbl/day.

The Bakken comprises a striking succession of two shales sandwiching a dolomite. The shales are organic-rich, open marine shales deposited in anoxic conditions, while the middle dolomite member was deposited in shallower conditions as a coastal, carbonate bank. The low porosities (around 5%) and permeability (averaging 4 milliDarcies) are enhanced by natural fracturing, and horizontal wells drilled into the dolomite "carrier bed" access this fracture network at depths of three kilometres. Recovery is however likely to be less than 5% of the overall reserves. Successful horizontal wells have also been drilled into limestones of the underlying Big Valley Formation.

In southern Alberta the Exshaw Formation is unconformably overlain by the Banff Formation, and unconformably overlies the Wabamun Formation. The detailed stratigraphy comprises an underlying anhydrite passing up into limestones of the Three Forks Formation. These are unconformably overlain by the lower Exshaw shale, which is organic rich but not calcareous. This is overlain by a fine grained cemented siltstone. The Upper Exshaw shale is silty and organic rich, overlain by fissile dark grey shale. This passes up into lime mudstone and then into interbedded limestone beds and less abundant siltstone beds.

A sedimentological interpretation of these beds will be presented, together with a discussion on how the divergent character of the Bakken and Exshaw sediments affects potential drilling, completion and production.

Evolution of a distributive fluvial system on the Colorado Plateau, USA

Amanda Owen*[1], Gary Nichols[1], Adrian Hartley[2], Gary Weissmann[3]

[1]*Royal Holloway University of London*

[2]*University of Aberdeen,* [3]*University of New Mexico Albuquerque*

*corresponding author

The Jurassic Morrison Formation outcrops extensively across the Colorado Plateau of the Western United States. The Morrison Formation consists of, from oldest to youngest, the Tidwell Member, composed of lacustrine and fluvial facies, the Salt Wash Member, composed of predominately fluvial facies, and the Brushy Basin Member, composed of lacustrine and fluvial facies. Previous and current work on the Salt Wash has established that the member is distributive fluvial system sourced from the southwest of the plateau showing a radial paleocurrent pattern flowing in a north, east and south-easterly direction.

This current study on the Salt Wash Member reveals two scales of progradation within the succession. Firstly, a large scale progradation of the Salt Wash Member is seen over the Tidwell Member and the marginal marine Stump Formation in the north. Within the proximal and medial areas a complete progradational sequence is not observed, and there is a sudden transition from the Tidwell Member to large scale fluvial channels of the Salt Wash Member. This is thought to be the result of low accommodation and lateral cannibalisation of previous channel deposits. However, in the distal areas a complete progradational package is observed from the marginal marine to coarse conglomeratic fluvial sandstones. These coarse conglomeratic sandstones that top the progradational package here are not commonly observed in the medial areas suggesting by-passing of coarse sediment, the presence of an axial river system or a secondary source area in Central Utah. The progradation of the Salt Wash over marginal marine deposits in the distal areas, implies a marine connection and control over the architecture of the deposits, as opposed to the downstream lacustrine control suggested by previous authors.

As well as the documentation of the large scale system progradation a second, much smaller scale progradation can be observed within the medial and distal portions of the Salt Wash Member. These smaller scale progradational cycles are observed throughout vertical successions and represent the progradation of channel belts into floodplain areas. These two different scales of progradation together provide a record of the filling of the basin, at both the small scale with regards to channel belt migration to build the fan itself up, as well as the larger scale of the fan building out into and filling the basin.

Climate change as a controlling parameter in sediment supply: The Nile Province

Zonia Palacios [1]*
Ben Kneller [1]

[1]Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, King's College, AB24 3UE, Scotland, UK.

*corresponding author: zonia.palacios@abdn.ac.uk

The Nile is considered to be the world's longest river, 6,690 km from its source in Burundi, along the White Nile, to its delta on the Mediterranean Sea. Its drainage basin covers approximately 2,880,000 km^2 (Sestini, 989) including parts of Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Egypt, amongst others, spanning many different geographic regions and climate zones.

The relationship between sediment delivery to the ocean and controlling factors such climate, tectonics, human impact etc. is complex (Syvitski and Milliman, 2007) and changes with time as these controls change. This study examines changes in Nile sediment flux since the Oligocene using accumulation rates in the Nile Submarine Cone (NSC) as a proxy. The study involved interpretation of 2D and 3D seismic data covering the majority of the NSC, through a combination of biostratigraphic and other well data and based on cycles at the 3^{rd} order scale. Once the seismic mapping was completed the horizons were depth-converted applying a variety of different algorithms to assess potential errors and quantify uncertainty. The resulting volumes were then decompacted, and sediment volume calculations performed to obtain sedimentation rates per unit time.

Dramatic variations in sediment delivery rate over the past 30 million years or so are immediately apparent. Although a late Miocene increase may be due to drainage basin capture in the Nile headwaters as a result of the Messinian sea level fall in the Mediterranean, the huge increase in sediment delivery since about 3.5 Ma can be ascribed to the onset of the East African Monsoon. High sedimentation rates during the late Pliocene are associated with wet periods that can be identified in ODP wells 967 (Eastern Mediterranean) and 721 (Arabian Sea), and with the change in vegetation from woodland to grassland. The subsequent (Pleistocene) fall can be ascribed to the dessication of the entire northern third of the drainage basin which has delivered little sediment to the NSC since the early Pleistocene.

A Late-Holocene record of marine washover events from a coastal lagoon in Jamaica, West Indies

Suzanne E Palmer [1]*
Michael J Burn [2]

[1] Department of Geography and Development Studies, University of Chester, Chester, CH1 4BJ

[2] Department of Geography and Geology, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston 7, Jamaica

* corresponding author: s.palmer@chester.ac.uk

Coastal lagoons provide excellent repositories of marine washover events within the sediment record. There remains, however, an underrepresentation of these records within the Caribbean. To address this shortcoming a multi-site, multi-proxy project has recently been initiated at coastal lagoons on the south coast of Jamaica. This research aims to (1) provide records of washover events within the region, and (2) investigate the potential for attributing palaeowashover deposits to event type within the local setting. Manatee Bay (17°51'02"N, 76°59'15"W) comprises an enclosed lagoon separated from the coastline by a contemporary mangrove forest. To the north the lagoon is bordered by almost pristine limestone dry-forest communities. The depositional environment of Manatee Bay comprises woody (mangrove) peats that have accumulated ~1.0 m over the late Holocene and are punctuated by marine washover deposits. A suite of 15 sediment cores recovered from Manatee Bay provide records of multiple marine washover events that are characterised by stratigraphically distinct coarse bioclastic sand units. The bioclastic sand units that are dominated by plates of the calcareous green alga Halimeda spp., benthic foraminifera, and soft coral and sponge spicules, are likely to have originated from the compositionally similar sands of the offshore seagrass beds and beach areas. The depositional history of the lagoon suggests spatial variation in the thickness and number of overwash events associated with proximity from the coastline and alongshore variations in the coastal geomorphology.

Characterisation of terminations of hybrid turbidites against confining slopes using natural gamma-ray profiling

Marco Patacci [1]*
Annalisa Iadanza [2]
William McCaffrey [1]
Peter Haughton [3]

[1] Turbidites Research Group, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, UK

[2] Dipartimento di Scienze Geologiche, Universita' degli Studi Roma Tre, Roma, Italy

[3] UCD School of Geological Sciences, Dublin, Ireland

* corresponding author: m.patacci@leeds.ac.uk

Hybrid event beds are a common component of deep marine clastic sequences, and are interpreted to reflect the development of different rheological zones within particulate gravity currents. An idealised hybrid event bed includes a basal massive sandstone, succeeded by a banded sandstone, a muddy debrite and a laminated siltstone cap, though there are many variants on this scheme. When such beds occur in confined basins, their character and distribution can be strongly affected due to interaction between the parental current and the confining slope. The Crete-de-la-Barre section (Annot Sandstone, SE France) allows investigation of the lateral margin of a turbiditic sand body confined in a small basin. Tabular bed architecture at the km-scale and good outcrop quality allow virtually every bed to be correlated across a transect at a high angle to the confining topography for around 1.5 km. Hybrid beds are common within 1000 m of the confining slope. Debritic divisions thicken toward the palaeoslope and can make up over half of the entire bed thickness some 10-50 of meters from their pinch-out.

Sedimentological graphic logs were recorded at several localities along the cliff to capture the lateral facies variability within individual beds. However, clay abundance within each recognised facies is difficult to estimate in the field. Nevertheless this is important for both better understanding the behaviour of the flow that deposited such beds and for a more detailed characterisation of rock properties. Measuring natural gamma ray emissions for a selected number of beds has been undertaken with two similar portable gamma-ray detectors to evaluate if the resulting data could be used as a proxy for vertical and lateral clay trends. A number of beds were scanned at different positions with a vertical resolution of 8 cm. Data for one hybrid bed for which a large number of measurements is available show that gamma-ray emission of the basal clean sandstone division increases toward the bed pinch-out. Although further testing is required to better validate this methodology, it is likely that at least in this system gamma-ray trends can be interpreted as variations in mud content which cannot otherwise be detected in the field. Gamma ray profiles can therefore be tied to the sedimentary lithofacies model and can provide better characterisation of the rock properties next to beds pinch-outs.

Sand-prone subaqueous deltas: a subsurface example from the lower Sognefjord Formation, Northern North Sea, offshore Norway

Stefano Patruno [1]*
Gary J. Hampson [1]
Christopher A-L. Jackson [1]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, South Kensington Campus, London, UK

* corresponding author: s.patruno09@imperial.ac.uk

The Upper Jurassic Sognefjord Formation forms the main reservoir in the super-giant Troll Field, Horda Platform, offshore Norway. The unit has previously been interpreted as a delta system fronted by a spit. Here we integrate core sedimentology and 3D seismic geomorphology to refine the depositional model of the lower part of the formation.
We distinguish three, 10-40 m thick, wave-dominated regressive-transgressive packages bounded by major flooding surfaces. In the west, these packages consist mainly of well-sorted, cross-bedded, coarse-grained upper shoreface sandstones; in the south-east they become dominated by hummocky cross-stratified, fine-grained lower shoreface deposits. The presence of coarser, more poorly sorted sandstones in the north-east indicates greater proximity to a fluvial sediment input point. No evidence of subaerial exposure is observed.
Each of the three packages corresponds to a set of seismically resolved, westerly-dipping clinoforms; the major flooding surfaces form the seismic "envelopes" of the clinoform sets. All of the packages thicken westwards, until they reach a maximum where the clinoform "envelope" rolls over to define a topset-foreset-toeset geometry at the position of maximum regression. Both individual clinoforms and reflections bounding the clinoform sets are oriented sub-parallel to the edge of the Horda Platform (N005-N030).
Individual clinoforms form near-linear segments of 1-13 km strike extent. In the eastern half of the area, clinoforms are thin (10-15 m) with large dip extents (1.0-3.0 km) and gentle dips (1°-4°). Towards the west, clinoforms gradually become thicker (15-35 m), narrower (0.2-1.5 km) and steeper (5°-11°). Topsets are consistently well developed, except in the westernmost area, where some clinoform foresets are top-truncated. Stratal geometries imply forced regression within each package, but normal regressive stacking of packages.
We interpret deposition by fully subaqueous, wave-dominated, linear clinoforms that prograded westwards across a shallow-marine platform. Clinoforms were fed by a river outlet at the north-east and sculpted by the action of currents sub-parallel to the clinoform strike. Facies differences towards the west were mainly driven by increased wave energy and proximity to the river outlet. Although the clinoforms are sand-rich, both their geometry and the inferred depositional regime resemble mud-dominated shelf clinoforms observed in modern wave- or tide-dominated deltas.

Modelling falling stage topset aggradation: Implications for distinguishing forced and unforced regressions in the ancient record

Guy D. Prince [1]*
Peter M. Burgess [1]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, TW20 0EX, England, UK

* corresponding author: g.prince@es.rhul.ac.uk

Distinguishing between forced and unforced regressive strata is important for prediction of sediment bypass and reconstruction of relative sea-level histories. Conventional sequence stratigraphic models distinguish between forced and unforced regressive strata through presence of aggradational topset (no aggradation during forced regression) and style of shoreline trajectory (descending in forced regressive strata and flat to rising in unforced regressive strata). However, because present models contain implicit assumptions about sediment supply and the response of coastal plain and fluvial depo-systems to falling and rising relative sea-level, it is possible that these two scenarios are an over simplification of a more complex reality.

This work investigates how topset aggradation might develop during relative sea-level fall using a simple diffusional stratigraphic forward model. Multiple two-dimensional model runs, (2My duration, and constant sediment supply and discharge rates representative of small to medium river systems) suggest that sediment transport rate may be a key control on topset aggradation. Modelling a range of sediment transport rates for amplitudes of relative sea-level fall from 0 to 100m shows that with relatively high rates of sediment transport, multiple model runs create strata with 9% to 0% of total deposited supply volume deposited as topset. Conversely, relatively low sediment transport rates lead to higher volumes of topset deposition ranging from 37% to 10%. However, critically, high sediment transport with no relative sea-level fall leads to topset aggradation very similar to that resulting from low sediment transport and high amplitude relative sea-level fall. This is an example of non-uniqueness, showing that topset aggradation can occur during falling relative sea-level as well as steady to rising relative sea-level, depending on rates of sediment transport. This result has been tested and verified with different rates of relative sea-level fall and with additional three-dimensional model runs.

This has some important implications for interpretation of relative sea-level history and sediment bypass. The results suggest that shoreline trajectories are likely to be a more reliable method to distinguish forced from unforced regression, and that interpretation and prediction of sediment bypass history may be more complicated then current sequence stratigraphic models suggest.

Large-Scale Fluvial Architecture of the Blackhawk Formation, Utah, USA

Andreas Rittersbacher [1]*
John A. Howell [1]
Simon J. Buckley [1]

[1] Centre for Integrated Petroleum Research, University of Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: andreas.rittersbacher@uni.no

Fluvial depositional systems in outcrops are characterised by their lateral and vertical stacking patterns which are themselves a function of often complex, interrelated controlling mechanisms. These controls include changes in base level, climate and source input. A dataset of more than 400 dimensional measurements has been collected and analysed from the non-marine Blackhawk Formation of central Utah. Data have been collected using a helicopter-mounted lidar system which allows the rapid collection of large volumes of data whilst still providing full 3D control on measurements.

Cretaceous strata of the heterolithic Blackhawk Formation and the overlying Castlegate Sandstone of the Wasatch Plateau and Book Cliffs areas in central Utah have been scanned and geometric data have been extracted from 35 km of virtual outcrops. Dimensions of the mapped sandbodies range from 5 to 700 m in width and from <1 to 23 m in thickness. The distribution of the individual sandbodies in the stratigraphic column reveals a number of trends including 1) an upward increase in maximum sandbody width; 2) a slight upward increase in sandbody thickness; 3) an upward decrease in the number of channels per 10 m interval and, 4) a slight upward decrease in the frequency of erosion surfaces. Previous authors have attributed vertical changes in the fluvial style within the Blackhawk/Castlegate system to be due to either gradual or abrupt changes in accommodation. The results presented here suggest that successive preserved fluvial systems are larger but the absence of an increase in erosion frequency suggests that while an upward decrease in accommodation may have contributed to these changes it is not the only control. The results of this study suggest that the entire succession is the deposit of a large distributary fluvial system on a vast alluvial plain. Such settings are common in modern alluvial systems. The identification of distributary fluvial systems has important implications for the prediction of reservoir quality and connectivity in ancient systems which form hydrocarbon reservoirs.

Giant Intrusions: Facies, architecture and flow processes

Jessica Ross [1]*
Jeff Peakall [1]
Gareth Keevil [1]

[1] University of Leeds

* corresponding author: ear4jar@leeds.ac.uk

Sand injection in the subsurface is a topic of significant investigation currently within earth sciences and large-scale sandstone intrusions have been documented in a wide variety of sedimentological settings. The ca. 40,000 km2 North Sea Basin province, the 2000 km2 Faeroe-Shetland basin intrusion province and the Panoche intrusion complex along a ~150 km lineament in California demonstrates the scale of some provinces. The sandstone injections hosted in the Jurassic strata of SE Utah could equally be classified as a large sandstone intrusion province, cropping out over 20,000 km2, occurring in the Carmel Formation and the Gunsight Butte Member of the Entrada sandstone.

Fieldwork was carried out in SE Utah to establish the facies present in a giant intrusion complex. The variety and distribution of facies described is broader than previously thought and provides compelling insights into the flow processes occurring during sand injection. Particularly the concentration and rheology of flows and parameters required for transport of clasts larger than 4 m in pipes. The architecture of the intrusion complex studied is described as pipe dominated, although major sills do occur. The total intrusion depth is estimated based upon source rock analysis and evidence for extrusion at other localities, thus completing the tripartite architectural elements of a large-scale sandstone intrusion province.

Carbonate mud production by marine fish: more questions than answers

Michael A. Salter [1]*
Christopher T. Perry [2]
Rod W. Wilson [3]

[1] Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M1 5GD, England, UK

[2] College of Life and Environmental Sciences (Geography), University of Exeter, Exeter, EX4 4RJ, England, UK

[3] College of Life and Environmental Sciences (Biosciences), University of Exeter, Exeter, EX4 4QD, England, UK

* corresponding author: michael.a.salter@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Mud-grade carbonates are volumetrically important sedimentary components in many modern and ancient shallow marine carbonate environments. The origins of carbonate mud in limestones are often problematic to resolve due to the obliteration of original grain textures during diagenesis, and mud sources in modern settings are necessarily used as analogues. Numerous sources of both aragonite and high-Mg calcite mud have been identified and are well understood. In addition, our recent work identifies marine bony fish as a prolific, but previously unrecognised, primary source of mud-grade carbonates in shallow tropical open marine settings. Here we consider factors controlling the growth of these crystals and the potential sedimentary implications.

Carbonate precipitation occurs continuously within the intestines of all marine bony fish as a by-product of their physiological requirement to constantly drink seawater. These carbonates are ultimately excreted into the open marine environment as mucus-bound mud-grade low- and high-Mg calcite crystals that exhibit a diverse array of crystal morphologies, many of which are unique in the tropical marine environment. By combining production rate data with site-specific fish biomass data, it is estimated that fish presently excrete 6 million kg $CaCO_3$/yr across the entire Bahamian archipelago, representing up to 70% of carbonate mud production in certain environments. However, although similar carbonate crystals are abundant in surficial sediment samples from the Bahamas, the ultimate fate of these carbonates has yet to be determined.

A key consideration with respect to the sedimentary significance of these carbonates is that of their preservation potential. High-Mg calcites are metastable in seawater and their stability is widely considered to decrease with increasing $MgCO_3$ content. Those with >18 mol% $MgCO_3$ are often considered to be subject to processes of rapid dissolution. Measured $MgCO_3$ content in fish-derived Mg calcites varies with fish species, ranging from 1 to 40 mol%. Thus it is reasonable to speculate that they will have different preservation potentials according to their chemical composition. It is therefore important to understand the controls on crystal growth within different species. Potentially important factors include: i) microbial communities within the gut; ii) availability of bicarbonate within the gut; iii) mucus membrane composition; and iv) sequestration of cations for physiological purposes.

Orbital pacing of the Ainsa basins Upper Hecho Group submarine fan deposits, Spanish Pyrenees

James I. Scotchman [1]*
Kevin T. Pickering [1]
Stuart A. Robinson [1]
Paul Bown [1]
Marcelle BouDagher-Fadel [1]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, UCL (University College London), Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, U.K.

* corresponding author: j.scotchman@ucl.ac.uk

The sediment flux to a basin is controlled by a complex combination of tectonics, climatic variability and stochastic events, thereby creating a cryptic geological record. Deconvolving the effects of individual factors controlling sedimentation can often be challenging, due to a variety of reasons including a lack of outcrop, a poor understanding of the regional tectonic framework and insufficiently detailed geological maps. Many of these deficiencies can be overcome within the deep-marine Ainsa basin where detailed research over the last decade has provided a very extensive knowledge base.

The Ainsa basin comprises ~4 km of middle Eocene deep-marine sediments which accumulated within the tectonically active South Pyrenean Foreland Basin and thrust-top basin. Basin stratigraphy is a succession of ~25 discrete sandy submarine fans and interfan deposits belonging to the Hecho Group. Deep-marine sedimentation is believed to have occurred over an ~10 Myr duration, suggesting that each submarine fan occurred every ~400 kyr. With this pacing being comparable to the long eccentricity Milankovitch cycle, Pickering and Bayliss (2009) hypothesised that sand supply was paced by climate and/or sea-level variability whilst tectonics control the loci of deposition. Here we test this hypothesis within the Upper Hecho Group (Banaston, Ainsa, Morillo and Guaso submarine fan systems) using a refined basin age model and the creation of floating orbital time scales between submarine fans. Using calcareous nannofossil and large shallow benthic foraminifera, the Upper Hecho Group is believed to have been deposited over a 7.9 Myr duration (early Lutetian to latest Lutetian/early Bartonian): this yields an average sediment accumulation rate (SAR) of 43.2 cm/kyr. Stratigraphic time series analyses of interfan fine-grained sediments indicate the presence of short eccentricity, obliquity and precession Milankovitch cycles. These floating time scales provide average SARs of 36, 28 and 25-33 cm/kyr for the Banaston, Ainsa and Guaso systems respectively. Applying these age models to the three systems suggest that submarine fan deposition potentially correspond to specific eccentricity minima. As in the Pleistocene, such Milankovitch forcing could be linked with ephemeral glacio-eustatic lowstand conditions, associated with increased coarse sediment flux to the deep-marine Ainsa basin.

Reference

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New stratigraphic constraints and depositional model for Lower Cretaceous peritidal deposits of central Oman: implications for facies heterogeneities in carbonate systems

Claire Sena [1]*
Cedric M. John [1]

[1] Imperial College London

* corresponding author: cn208@imperial.ac.uk

Data from outcrop studies provide valuable information on the lateral and vertical variability and stacking pattern of carbonate facies. The current study focuses on the Barremian-Aptian carbonate platform that outcrops in a 500x1000 m long butte in the Haushi-Huqf area of central East Oman, and that conceptually delineates aspects of peritidal carbonate distribution and associated facies heterogeneities. The geometries recorded include tidal flat beds broadly continuous over 10s of km, but also infilled storm scours 10s of meter long and shoal facies that pinch out laterally. The vertical evolution of the carbonate system is characterized by the stacking of 7 different types of meter-scale facies sequences. The large-scale stratigraphic succession displays an overall vertical trend of subtidal facies at the base, intertidal-supratidal in the middle and subtidal facies at the top of the succession. This facies change is interpreted as representing a nearly complete eustatic cycle combined with a change in platform geometry and the development of microbial mounds on the shelf. Stable isotopes of carbon offer new time constraints suggesting the Qishn Formation in the Huqf area is a lateral equivalent to the Shuaiba Formation and was deposited during the earliest Aptian. The results presented highlight that low-angle carbonate systems of the Middle East, usually assumed to have broad and homogeneous facies belts, can in fact present several closely juxtaposed environments of deposition conferring meter-scale lateral and vertical heterogeneities to the rock unit. Constraining these complex geometries is critical to improve carbonate reservoir flow models for hydrocarbon recovery.

Development of a confined turbidite system prone to hybrid event beds, Carboniferous, U.K.

Southern, S.J. [1]*
McCaffrey, W.D. [1]
Mountney, N.P. [1]
Kane, I.A. [2]

[1] School of Earth and Environment, Woodhouse Lane, University of Leeds, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS2 9JT

[2] Statoil Research Centre, Postboks 7200, NO-5020, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: s.southern88@gmail.com

Sedimentary gravity current deposits exhibiting both turbiditic and debritic characteristics (collectively known as hybrid event beds [HEBs] have been recognised in deep-water fan systems from a variety of basins over the last decade. Features of such deposits (e.g. evidence of high flow matrix strength and shearing during emplacement) imply that at least part of the parental flows were not fully turbulent, at the time of deposition. Bathymetry is often considered to play an important role in triggering downstream transformations from turbulent to transitional or laminar flow, through promoting flow bulking and clay enrichment following incision and/or through forced flow decelerations due to gradient reduction or flow interaction with obstacles.

Understanding the mechanisms driving the onset of transitional and hybrid behaviour is important as this may help better predict the distribution and extent of associated clay-rich sandy facies that typically have poor reservoir properties. Furthermore the distribution of such deposits can provide insight into the wider system response such as the presence and persistence of upstream slope disequilibrium related to tectonism or sediment supply changes that may link with sea-level or climatic changes.

New research in the bathymetrically complex Southern Pennine Basin, Northern England, Carboniferous, documents the character and distribution of HEBs in a basin floor to base-of-slope fan system that banked against a downstream confining slope. Comparative field outcrop studies of basin margin and centre settings indicate the following: 1) flow bulking and clay enrichment over above-grade slopes is considered to have been the principal driving mechanism of flow transformation; 2) forced bathymetry-driven flow decelerations had no apparent further effect on flow transformations; 3) length scales (flow run-out distances) in the basin were sufficient to allow autogenic flow transformations prior to any additional influences of confining bathymetry - which would otherwise have resulted in forced flow transformations and differing HEB characteristics and distributions; 4) HEB character may be influenced by, and thus record, changing substrate type; 5) HEBs can also be sources of heterogeneity in relatively more proximal sand-rich settings; 6) HEB characteristics may provide a means by which models of basin infill can be assessed (e.g. progradation vs. aggradation; progressive vs. out-of-sequence deposition).

Carbon capture and storage: have our coal and burn it?

Michael Stephenson [1]*

[1] British Geological Survey

* corresponding author: mhste@bgs.ac.uk

In countries which rely heavily on coal to generate electricity, carbon capture and storage (CCS) could be a technology to allow continued growth, but also CO2 emissions reduction. In Britain the Government predicts that CCS could be an industry the size of present day North Sea oil. According to 2006 figures, rocks under the UK North Sea could store about 22 billion tonnes of CO2 which is 180 years production of CO2 from the UKs 20 largest point sources (e.g. power stations). However basins with high potential for CCS need to be surveyed and this is a central role for geological surveys, being an expansion of their traditional role as inventory-maker of subsurface natural resources. The role of the survey includes accurate storage capacity estimation to attract company investment and improve general financial investor confidence, as well as developing basin-wide modelling to handle multiple use of pore space, for example oil and gas production, natural gas storage and water extraction.

In depth sedimentological studies are also coming into their own as the importance of reservoir heterogeneity, sedimentary geochemistry and long term interactions between CO2 and reservoir materials are realised. Until now modelling of subsurface CO2 injection and migration has for the sake of simplicity assumed homogeneous reservoir rocks, and modelling has concentrated on interactions over years rather than hundreds or thousands of years. In this talk I will show some modelling and simulation of (1) buoyant CO2 in physical trapping; (2) CO2 dissolution in formation waters over thousand-year timescales; (3) pressure in closed and open reservoirs; and (4) heterogeneity, for example in the Mid-Triassic Helsby Sandstone Formation exposed around Runcorn, which is an onshore equivalent of a possible target for future CO2 storage for point sources in Liverpool, Manchester and Deeside.

The flows that left no trace: very large-volume turbidity currents that bypassed sediment through submarine channels without eroding the seafloor

Stevenson, C.J. [1]*
Talling, P.J. [1]
Wynn, R.B. [1]
Masson, D.G. [1]
Hunt, J.E. [1]
Akhmetzhanhov, A. [2]
Frenz, M. [1]
Cronin, B. T. [3]

[1] National Oceanography Centre, Southampton

[2] Lukoil

[3] Deep marine

* corresponding author: cjs1e08@noc.soton.ac.uk

Turbidity currents are one of the most important flow processes for moving sediment across the surface of the Earth. Submarine channels are often conduits for these flows, exerting a first order control on turbidity current flow processes and resulting deposit geometries. Here we present a detailed examination of the Madeira Channel System, offshore northwest Africa, using shallow seismic profiles, swath bathymetric data and a suite of sediment cores. This shallow (< 20 m deep) channel system is unusual because it was fed infrequently, on average once every 10, 000 years, by very large volume (> 100 km3) turbidity currents. It therefore differs markedly from most submarine channels which have well developed levees, formed by much more frequent flows. A northern and a southern channel comprise the Madeira Channel System, and channel initiation is associated with subtle but distinct increases in sea-floor gradient from 0.02º to 0.06º. Turbidity currents passing through the northern channel deposited thin (5 to 10 cm) ripple cross-laminated sands along the channel margins, but deposited no sand or mud in the channel axis. Moreover, these flows failed to erode sediment in the channel axis, despite being powerful enough to efficiently bypass sediment in very large volumes. The flows were able to reach an equilibrium state (autosuspension) whereby they efficiently bypassed their sediment loads down slope, leaving no trace of their passing.

Predicting Reservoir-Quality Facies in Low Net-Gross Fluvial Overbank Successions

Jennifer Y. Stuart [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]
William D. McCaffrey [1]
Douglas A. Paton [1]

[1] Fluvial Research Group, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds

* corresponding author: eejs@leeds.ac.uk

The distribution of sand bodies within fluvial overbank settings is strongly controlled by processes that dictate the style and frequency of overbank flooding via the breaching of levees, the generation of crevasse splays, and the development of minor tributary channels. In particular, size, longevity, spatial distribution and style of connection of splays to primary channels govern the distribution of sand bodies within overbank settings. The presence of reservoir-quality facies in otherwise mud-prone fluvial overbank successions is important as such sand bodies can provide significant connectivity between neighbouring major channel elements in an avulsion-prone channel belt.

Although determination of 3D architecture and overbank connectivity is crucial for reservoir prediction in low net:gross floodplain settings, typical well spacing in hydrocarbon provinces (several km) is too great and the total number of wells too few for the development of accurate predictive models. Likewise tertiary splay and minor distributary channels (~3m thickness) are below the vertical resolution of seismic data.

Results from a subsurface case study demonstrate 3D architecture of reservoir-quality overbank deposits in low net:gross settings. A study of secondary and tertiary fluvial elements deposited in interseams of the Late Permian Rangal Coal Measures (Bowen Basin, Queensland), utilizes a suite of densely spaced well data from a database of well logs acquired during coal prospecting at the South Blackwater Mine. Where well-spacing was too great to allow accurate correlation and hence modelling of tertiary channel elements, dimensions from modern analogues (including Cumberland Marshes, Saskatchewan, and the Ob River, Siberia) have been used as a proxy to produce stochastic models of potential sand-body distributions. The dimensions of modern analogue secondary and tertiary channels form the basis of a database which is being used to model probable spatial distributions of such channels in seismic data.

An integrated workflow is presented for the modelling of sub-seismic features using a combination of well, analogue and seismic data to model potential distributions of sub-seismic reservoir quality deposits. Preservation and connectivity of tertiary channels is shown to vary as a result of channel thickness and width, channel percentage of infill and frequency of crevassing. These in turn are governed by allogenic controls, most notably accommodation space and climate.

Cyclic step arrays: the critical jump in understanding submarine flows.

Esther J. Sumner [1]*
Jeff Peakall [1]
Daniel R. Parsons [2]
Stephen E. Darby [3]
Robert M. Dorrell [3]
Russell B. Wynn [4]

[1] School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, UK

[2] Department of Geography, University of Hull, UK

[3] School of Geography, University of Southampton, UK

[4] National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, UK

* corresponding author: E.J.Sumner@leeds.ac.uk

Field scale submarine channel gravity currents are notoriously difficult to measure and thus directly investigate due to their inaccessible location and infrequent nature, which is compounded by present sea-level high-stand. An exception to this is the almost continuous density-driven current that results from the inflow of saline Mediterranean water, via the Bosporus strait, into the Black Sea. This flow has carved a sinuous channel system in water depths of 70 to 120 m containing a series of prominent scours at the upstream end. Despite being driven by the salinity contrast, the flow is sufficiently energetic to transport and rework coarse sand within the channel network. The relatively shallow depths of the channel and the continuous nature of this current provide a unique opportunity to study three-dimensional flow dynamics and the interaction of the flow with a seafloor channel network. Thus, it provides a rare analogue for channelized dilute sediment-laden turbidity currents.

There has been speculation for nearly half a century that hydraulic jumps are an important process in submarine density currents. Hydraulic jumps have been implicated in causing the development of submarine fans, large scale (km-scale) scouring, the formation of cyclic steps and channel genesis. However, until now this has been inferred from a combination of small scale laboratory experiments and making inferences about flow processes from the geological record and modern bathymetry. We provide the first direct field evidence of hydraulic jumps in a submarine density current. The largest jump imaged is in phase with a 100 m scour in the seafloor, this scour comprises one in a field of scours. As seafloor gradient declines, rather than undergoing a single jump, multiple jumps develop and scour the seafloor, forming a cyclic step array. Strong vertical velocities across the jumps, combined with a smaller than predicted decrease in forward velocity should be sufficient to maintain sediment in suspension well beyond the scour field, thus explaining the commonly observed transition zone between the base of submarine canyons and ultimate fan deposition.

Source-to-sink analysis of modern and ancient sedimentary systems

Tor O. Somme [1]*

[1] Department of Earth Science, University of Bergen, Allegaten 41, 5007 Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: tor.somme@geo.uib.no

The application of a source-to-sink methodology for the analysis of sedimentary systems include qualitative and quantitative assessment of external and internal forcing factors that are involved in the production, transportation and deposition of sediments, from catchment erosion to deep-marine fan deposition. The temporal aspect of source-to-sink analysis can cover the entire spectrum, ranging from daily processes and events, to long-term basin fill over tens of millions of years. The temporal aspect is crucial for interpreting the linkages between source sediment production and sink deposition. On short timescales (hundreds to thousands of years), the resulting stratigraphy is mostly event-driven and tectonic and eustatic controls are often negligible; segment morphology is often well contained and age control is generally good. On intermediate timescales (tens of thousands to millions of years), eustatic, climatic and tectonic factors work in concert to control stratigraphic development; preservation of segment morphology is largely area dependent. When long timescales are considered (millions to tens of millions of years), tectonics is the main driver of sediment production, accommodation and preservation. Studies on ancient systems are often hampered by poor time control, lack of high-resolution data and lack of segment preservation due to denudation, erosion and tectonic deformation. Thus, whereas source-to-sink analysis on modern systems investigates the mode of sediment dispersal in areas where the actual extent and geomorphology of the landscape and seascape is relatively well constrained, the analysis of ancient systems partly involve the reconstruction of the onshore and offshore segment morphology. These differences are illustrated here by examples from the Quaternary Golo system off Corsica (France) and the Late Cretaceous More-Trondelag deep-marine fan systems along the Norwegian North Sea margin. These studies demonstrate how source-to-sink approach may help improving the interpretation of stratigraphic variability in modern and ancient sedimentary systems.

Emplacement dynamics of landslides around volcanic islands and implications fof tsunami hazard; insights from the most detailed geophyical mapping yet of such landslide deposits

Peter Talling [1]*
Sebastian Watt [2]

[1] NOC

[2] University of Southampton and NOC

* corresponding author: Peter.Talling@noc.soton.ac.uk

Most of the material erupted in volcanic island arcs is ultimately deposited as marine sediment. The marine sedimentary record therefore provides an archive of volcanic events, which may include deposits from pyroclastic density currents, tephra fallout and flank collapse. The largest events preserved in the marine record are landslides associated with volcanic edifice collapse. Such events are among the largest mass movements known on the Earth's surface. For example, deposits off Dominica, south of Montserrat, cover an area of 3500 km2, far exceeding the largest known subaerial volcanic debris avalanche deposit (from Mount Shasta, with an area of 675 km2). Volcanic island landslides may generate devastating tsunamis. However, accurate assessments of tsunami hazard rely on a full understanding of landslide failure processes and emplacement dynamics.

We have used geophysical data to investigate the record of large landslide deposits offshore Montserrat, exploring internal deposit structures and landslide deposit relationships. The high-resolution data is among the most detailed yet collected over submarine volcanic landslide deposits, and has been interpreted in preparation for drilling of these deposits during IODP Leg 340, planned for February-March 2012.

Our results show that the largest landslide deposits (maximum volumes of 20 km3) include a dominant component of seafloor sediment, and occurred in multiple stages. Both these factors imply a reduced potential for tsunami generation. Similar failure dynamics are indicated by deposit morphologies further south in the Lesser Antilles, offshore Dominica, Martinique and St Lucia, and may be widespread. At Montserrat, deposits were triggered by deep-seated volcanic edifice collapse, and contain individual blocks with volumes >107 m3. The frequency of the largest failures corresponds to the development of individual volcanic centres on the island: one deposit is of Soufriere Hills age; the previous one of Centre Hills age. Following these largest failures, other smaller flank collapse deposits occur, interbedded with extensive pyroclastic fans. However, there have been prolonged periods during the history of Montserrat characterised by low levels of marine volcaniclastic input, reflecting long-term cycles of edifice growth and destruction.

Multi-scale analysis of mudstones and shale gas reservoirs.

Kevin G Taylor [1]*
Joe Macquaker [2]
Simon Pattison [3]
Kate Dobson [1]
Peter Lee [4]

[1] University of Manchester

[2] Memorial University, Newfoundland

[3] University of Brandon

[4] Manchester University

* corresponding author: kevin.taylor@manchester.ac.uk

Fine-grained organic carbon-rich sediments (mudstones) are increasingly being targeted as hydrocarbon "reservoirs" as either gas-bearing or oil-bearing shales. Such hydrocarbon sources are predicted by many analysts to provide plentiful and long-lasting reserves globally, including in the UK, as evidenced by recent reserve-announcements, market forecasts and gas-price adjustments in the USA.

Reservoir quality within gas- and oil-bearing shales is controlled by a number of factors, including organic-matter content and type, maturation, sedimentary and diagenetic heterogeneity and frackability. Mudstones have been shown to be highly heterogeneous rocks, in contrast to previously prevailing wisdom, composed of highly reactive organic and inorganic components, sedimentary fabrics resulting from many depositional mechanisms, and pore-structure evolved during both early and burial diagenetic processes. As a result, they are challenging reservoirs. A key requirement for characterising these reservoirs, and mudstone successions in general, is to make observations and analyses at a range of scales, from basin-scale through to pore-scale. This presentation will provide an overview of the approaches that can be taken and examples of resulting data that can be generated to inform this endeavour.

Outcrop study of mudstone successions has allowed sequence stratigraphic frameworks for mudstone variability to be constructed, and the distribution and nature of stratal surfaces and associated diagenetic alteration to be recognised. Low magnification thin section observations have shed light on the depositional mechanisms operating in mudstones, which include advective processes such as storm-deposition and wave-enhanced sediment gravity flows, and marine-snow productivity events in the water column. Electron microscopic analysis has highlighted that the diagenetic pathways taken by marine unconsolidated muds are a key factor in controlling the mineralogical, chemical and physical properties of resulting mudstones. Here, we argue that these pathways, particularly during early diagenesis, are largely pre-determined by the initial mineralogical composition of the sediment. Finally, the novel application of X-ray tomography allows the 3 dimensional distribution of mineral and pore networks to be quantified and modelled, with significant insights into reservoir quality and potential permeability pathways.

Stylolitization of late Eocene to early Miocene carbonate-bearing lithologies from IODP Hole 317-U1352C (Canterbury Basin, New Zealand)

Veerle Vandeginste [1]*
Cedric M. John [1]

[1] Imperial College London

* corresponding author: v.vandeginste@imperial.ac.uk

Stylolites are irregular discontinuity planes that are thought to result from localized stress-induced dissolution during burial or tectonic compression. The genesis of stylolites and the controls on stylolitization are still debated. Moreover, the impact of fluids resulting from stylolitization, and thus the interplay of stylolitization with fractures, porosity, cementation and fluid flow is complex. All of these processes are important diagenetic effects that can alter intrinsic properties of the host rock, with implications for hydrocarbon prospection. The current study takes a macroscopic, petrographic and geochemical approach on late Eocene to early Miocene carbonate-bearing rock samples from the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Hole 317-U1352C (Canterbury Basin) to get a better understanding of the stylolitization process. The results indicate an inverse relation between stylolite amplitude and the clay content in the host rock. Evaluation of the stylolite spacing shows clustering of stylolites. The majority of the stylolites are bedding parallel and probably started developing during mid-late Miocene, whereas the oblique stylolites with perpendicular peaks might be linked to the late Pliocene to early Pleistocene regional northwest-southeast shortening. Quantitative image analysis suggests that the amount of limestone dissolved during stylolitization is larger than the cement in the host rocks, implying a significant amount of fluid probably escaped the open system. No evidence is found for fluid flow along stylolites, at least not for fluids that were not host-rock buffered.

Role of salt tectonics in controlling fluvial system evolution in the Salt Anticline Province of SE Utah and SW Colorado

Joanne H. Venus [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]
William D. McCaffrey [1]

[1] Fluvial Research Group, University of Leeds

* corresponding author: eejhv@leeds.ac.uk

The proximal part of the Permian Cutler Group of southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado is characterised by a succession (up to 4000 m thick) of conglomerates and sandstones of mixed fluvial and aeolian affinity that infill the foredeep of the Paradox foreland basin. The style of accumulation of much of this succession was influenced by active salt tectonics associated with movement at depth of the Pennsylvanian Paradox Formation. Throughout Cutler times, progressive salt withdrawal in the area east of Moab resulted in localised subsidence, culminating in the creation of a series of salt-wall-bounded mini-basins known as the Salt Anticline Province. Assessment of the role played by active salt tectonics in controlling fluvial system evolution has been possible through the collection of a suite of 81 sedimentary logs (total logged thickness of ~6000 m) and 10 architectural panels (representing an outcrop belt ~5 km in length).

Cutler Group sediments in the Salt Anticline Province undergo dramatic thickness variations, being less than 250 m thick over salt highs but approaching 4000 m thick in adjacent mini-basin depocentres only 500 m away, laterally. Facies associations and architectural relationships demonstrate a range of styles of syn-sedimentary salt movement that resulted in predictable changes in fluvial system behaviour. Multi-lateral and multi-storey channel complexes in the salt mini-basin centres indicate overfilled basins subject to repeated sediment reworking along major fluvial fairways. By contrast, isolated channel elements separated by overbank elements prevail adjacent to salt diapirs and indicate only infrequent episodes of sediment reworking. Onlapping and unconformable relationships seen both at outcrop and in subsurface data demonstrate at least 5 phases of Cutler Group sedimentation. Facies and palaeocurrent analyses reveal complex drainage patterns, which demonstrate how successive phases of salt uplift repeatedly forced the diversion of fluvial systems along route-ways parallel to the uplifted salt walls. During tectonically quiescent episodes, fluvial systems rapidly filled available accommodation in ponded mini-basin depocentres before re-establishing preferred flow pathways over buried salt highs.

This research serves as an outcrop analogue study with which to potentially develop generic architectural models for use in understanding subsurface salt provinces such as those in the Triassic of the Central North Sea.

Plastic deformation, erosion and acceleration of turbitidy currents moving over soft, cohesive, horizontal substrates

Iris Verhagen [1]*
Jaco Baas [1]
William McCaffrey [2]
Alan Davies [1]

[1] School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University, Menai Bridge, LL59 5AB, Wales, UK

[2] School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, England, UK

* corresponding author: ospa03@bangor.ac.uk

That many aquatic environments have soft, muddy substrates, has been largely ignored in process-based models of Earth-surface flow. However, a soft cohesive substrate with fluid-mud properties is believed to interact differently with a passing turbidity current than a sandy substrate in terms of erosion and deformation.

Changes in flow and substrate properties caused by flow-substrate interactions, are closely related to changes in bed shear stress, flow turbulence properties, substrate erodibility, flow density and rates of deposition. This study aims to quantify the interaction of turbidity currents with soft, muddy beds in terms of changing flow properties, bed erosion and plastic deformation.

Laboratory experiments were carried out in the Hydrodynamics Laboratory at Bangor University (Wales, UK). Kaolin-clay laden turbidity currents with increasing initial concentrations (from 0.4 to 12.5 vol%) were created and monitored while moving over soft, fluid-mud like, kaolin-clay deposits with initial concentrations between 6 and 13 vol%. Ultrasonic Doppler Velocity Profilers (UDVP), Ultra High Concentration Meters (UHCM) and an HD video recorder were used to observe the interactions between flow and substrate at various contrasts in clay concentration.

Four types of flow-bed interactions are identified: 1) no interaction, 2) formation of a solitary bed surface wave travelling in front of the turbidity current ('leading wave'), 3) shear waves at the flow-bed interface, and 4) mixing and erosion. The type of interaction that occurs is believed to be controlled by the difference between the flow and bed concentration.

The most notable result is the acceleration of turbidity currents over a horizontal, plastically deformable, cohesive substrate. The boundary conditions at which this acceleration takes place are under investigation, but the data suggest that erosion and changes in the geometry of the flow, associated with plastic deformation (i.e., shear waves), are key to explaining the changes in turbidity current velocity.

The results of this study may explain the large continuity of some turbidite deposits in modern oceans and the geological record and provide insights into the facies characteristics and architectural properties of these turbidite deposits.

Reactive transport modeling as route to predicting carbonate diagenesis

Fiona Whitaker [1]*
Peter Smart [2]
Katherine Cooper [1]

[1] School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol

[2] School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol

* corresponding author: Fiona.Whitaker@bristol.ac.uk

Reactive transport models (RTMs) can improve our capability to predict carbonate diagenesis by 1) helping to develop better conceptual models based on chemically and physically realistic scenarios, 2) providing quantitative estimates of rates and distribution of diagenesis, and 3) describing diagenetic geobodies which can be used to populate reservoir models. This presentation explores elements key to developing meaningful RTMs, using examples from early meteoric diagenesis.

Vadose diagenesis is driven by flows which are essentially vertical and can be captured in 1D models. However, most systems need to be simulated in 2D or 3D, with systematic differences in diagenesis predicted for different platform geometries. Predictions of diagenesis from RTMs are only as good as the processes included in the model. For example, PCO2 is a major diagenetic driver and thus it is important to incorporate the effects of root and microbial respiration into models of vadose diagenesis. Furthermore, reaction rates in natural systems can be orders of magnitude slower than in the laboratory, reflecting the reduction in both reactivity and contact between reactive fluid and mineral surfaces over time. This is seen in comparisons between early meteoric diagenesis in systems dominated by inter-granular porosity and those with significant secondary permeability. Temporal changes in boundary conditions (e.g. relative sea-level and climate) are a particular challenge for modeling early diagenesis. For example, shallow meteoric alteration occurring over thousands of years is driven by seasonal alternation between periods of recharge and evaporation that cannot be represented by some average condition.

When configured correctly to capture key elements of the diagenetic systems, RTMs can contribute to better prediction of reservoir quality. The challenge now is to incorporate more sophisticated feedbacks between diagenetic alteration and key rock properties, such as permeability and reactivity, at a range of scales.

Genesis and formation of the flutes on cohesive mud beds

Daowei Yin [1]*
Jeff Peakall [1]
Dan Parsons [2]

[1] School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds

[2] Geography Department, University of Hull

* corresponding author: nicholas.t.yin@gmail.com

Most of the previous studies on the genesis and evolution of bedforms have focused on aggradational bedforms within cohesionless sediments, with very few investigations that concern erosive bedform genesis and evolution. Those studies that do exist have primarily been based upon flume-scale experiments using plaster of Paris as a base material and there have been no systematic investigations on the influence of bed material properties, notably shear strength, on erosive bedform generation and evolution. The research presented here details the genesis and formation of erosional bedform features within natural (soft clay) cohesive sediment beds under the effect of both open-channel plain water flows, and sediment-laden (D50 = 150 mm) flows. A series of flume experiments are presented where the un-drained shear strength of the bed material is systematically varied under constant flow conditions. The results are conclusive: plain water flows alone do not form erosional structures in beds with appreciable shear strength. Particulate-laden flows do form erosional features in such beds, and the shear strength of the bed material plays a key role in determining the erosional features developed. Harder mud substrates tend to form features analogous to bedrock river channel bedforms such as pot holes, flutes, furrows, broad gullies and mud waves. Softer substrates form features similar to those produced in the harder mud substrates experiments, but they tend to be both less prominent, less variable and more flutes like in morphology. As in the classic flute models, these features possess a principal furrow/depression on the upstream end with a steeply sloping lee side and gentler upstream-facing foreside tail. However, notable differences between the classic flute model and those formed in the natural muds used here are noted, with an absence of i) a medium ridge, ii) lateral ridges, iii) lateral furrows, and iv) rounded rims. Moreover, the features on mud bed do not array in order so regular as those produced on plaster of Paris. The results therefore point to a need to revise our classic model of flute morphology and also highlight a boundary to their formative conditions, with implications for interpreting such features in the ancient.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

ABSTRACTS

Morphological and Stratigraphical Complexity at Aeolian Dune-Field Margins

Mohammed Ali Almasrahy [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]

[1] University of Leeds

* corresponding author: eemaa@leeds.ac.uk

The Rub' Al-Khali of south-eastern Saudi Arabia is also known as the "Empty Quarter", covers an area of 650,000 km2 and is one of the largest sandy deserts in the world. The region is covered by the latest generation of public-release satellite imagery, which reveals a varied range of dune types, the morphology of which changes systematically from central dune-field areas to marginal areas where ephemeral fluvial systems dominate.

A series of quantitative approaches have been employed to characterise the complexity present in a range of dune-field settings where large, morphologically complex and compound bedforms gradually give way to smaller and simpler bedform types at dune-field margins. Parameters describing bedform spacing, parent morphological type, style of subordinate bedform superimpositioning, bedform orientation, lee-slope expression, along-crest sinuosity and amplitude have been recorded in a relational database, along with geographical co-ordinate information. Additionally, parameters describing interdune size (long and short axis dimensions), orientation, style of connectivity to neighbouring interdunes, substrate condition (dry, damp, wet), and nature of any associated sedimentological processes are also being recorded.

Quantitative data collected from the modern Rub' Al-Khali dune fields are being used as a basis for constraining forward stratigraphic models devised using "DuneModeller" software developed in-house at Leeds with which to predict how various configurations of aeolian dune and adjoining interdune morphological elements give rise to complex stratigraphic architectures in response to various styles of migration and accumulation.

Results are being used to generate a range of synthetic three-dimensional stratigraphic architectures with which to illustrate the range of possible sedimentological complexity likely to be present in the preserved dune-field margin successions. Appreciation of this complexity has significant applied implications because interdune and dune-plinth elements typically act as principal and subordinate baffles to flow, respectively, in aeolian hydrocarbon reservoirs, whereas dune lee-slope elements typically form effective net reservoir. Results from this study are being used as input into reservoir models with which to account for heterogeneity in aeolian successions, including models describing the Permian Auk Formation of the Central North Sea and the Jurassic Norphlet Sandstone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Palaeoenvironmental significance of lacustrine microbialite forms from the Middle Old Red Sandstone of the Orcadian Basin

STEVEN D. ANDREWS [1]*

[1] CASP, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge

* corresponding author: steven.andrews@casp.cam.ac.uk

The form of microbialite accumulations is largely the product of environmental processes and microbial activity. Recent work has largely concentrated on the identification and classification of microbialites with little attention being paid to their environmental significance. This study describes the environmental distribution of the varied microbialite forms recorded from the predominantly lacustrine Middle Old Red Sandstone sequences of the Orcadian Basin. Comparisons are made with Triassic examples from East Greenland and modern microbialite accumulations and a model describing the palaeoenvironmental distribution of the examples studied is presented.

The Middle Old Red Sandstone of northern Scotland was deposited in a predominantly lacustrine setting. Climatically driven lake level fluctuations resulted in the generation of cyclic sedimentary sequences. Microbialites are recorded from both steep, basin margin coincident settings and lower gradient settings where the lake margin is distant from the basin margin. In the latter case microbialite development is largely restricted to transgressive lacustrine sequences during the deposition of which, reduced rates of sedimentation resulted from the migration of sediment input points towards the basin margin. Microbialite sheets, domal mounds, aligned mounds (and associated runnels), sand cored microbialite mounds and reefal microbialite accumulations have been identified representing the transition from more sheltered to more exposed environments. In basin margin coincident settings microbialite accumulation is restricted to areas of low sedimentation where they coat boulders and pebbles.

Primary and reworked tsunami deposits at Agaete, Gran Canaria: evidence for mega-tsunami generation from the lateral collapse of an ocean island volcano

Wendy D Austin-Giddings [1]*
David R Tappin [2]
William J McGuire [3]

[1] Aon Benfield UCL Hazard Centre, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, UK, British Geological Survey, Kingsley Dunham Centre, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG, UK

[2] British Geological Survey, Kingsley Dunham Centre, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG, UK

[3] Aon Benfield UCL Hazard Centre, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, UK,

* corresponding author: wengid@bgs.ac.uk

Coarse-grained, fossiliferous deposits, draping hill-slopes at high elevations on ocean island volcanoes, have been interpreted as sourced either from sea-level highstands or from tsunamis generated by volcano lateral collapse. Previously interpreted as the result of a sea-level highstand, coarse-grained, fossiliferous sediments located at Agaete, on the north-west coast of Gran Canaria have recently been re-interpreted as having been sourced from a tsunami; itself triggered by a volcano flank failure. The sediments occur at several locations in Agaete at altitudes as high as 188m apsl and up to 2 kilometres from the coast. They comprise seven facies, all of which are variably graded, matrix- and clast-supported and contain a diverse assemblage of volcanic clasts, large beachrock boulders and a shallow marine fauna. All the facies have sharp, erosional bases. The upper facies of the conglomerates are all finer-grained, reverse-graded, clast-supported and better-sorted than the lower facies of the sequence. At one location the upper conglomerates comprise prograding beds that are interpreted as alluvial. The lower facies of the conglomerates are interpreted as primary tsunami deposits, whereas the upper facies are best explained as tsunami deposits that have been reworked. The alternative, marine highstand, interpretation of the coarse-grained deposits is discounted on the basis of (i) an absence of supporting geomorphological features such as a marine terraces and/or a wave cut platforms; (ii) the composition and sedimentary features of the sediments; (iii) the distance of the deposit exposures from the coast; (iv) elevation of the deposits; and (v) diagenetic features indicative of sub-aerial deposition. Gran Canaria is in its erosional post-shield stage of development and the NW coast has experienced 40-50 m of tectonic uplift over the past ~1.75Ma. Thus a tsunami with minimum run-up heights of 36 to 166 m is the only mechanism that may explain the presence of the Agaete conglomerates at their present elevations. On the basis of the large run-up heights, the only likely candidate source for the tsunami is a volcano lateral collapse within the archipelago. The Guimar collapse event on the neighbouring island of Tenerife, dated at around 0.8Ma BP, is presented as the most probable source.

A Stochastic Modelling Approach to Determine Sensitivity of 3D Fluvial Channel Connectivity to Changes in Channel Morphology and Density/Spacing

S.G. Banham [1]*
N.P. Mountney [1]
S.A. Cain [2]
W.D. McCaffrey [1]
J.D. Collinson [3]

[1] University of Leeds

[2] LukOil, London

[3] John Collinson Consulting Ltd, Beech, Staffordshire

* corresponding author: eesgb@leeds.ac.uk

Prediction of 3D channel-body connectivity is essential for the characterization of subsurface reservoirs and for effective evaluation of their resource potential. Yet, even in mature hydrocarbon provinces, depositional sedimentary models inevitably rely on data from a relatively small number of usually widely spaced 1D wells. Therefore, most reservoir characterizations are dependent on the application of an outcrop analogue with which to elucidate 3D sedimentary architecture. However, even in well exposed outcrop successions, the geometric properties of channel systems cannot usually be fully constrained and estimates of key parameters including channel width, thickness, length, density/spacing, plan-form shape (sinuosity), orientation and style of sand-body storey stacking typically each have associated uncertainty.

One method to determine the sensitivity of clastic fluvial sedimentary systems to variations in estimates of channel size and shape is the application of a stochastic modelling approach to predict 3D sand-body connectivity for various scenarios. This study uses Reckonnect stochastic modelling software to predict 3D channel-body shape and connectivity within the Permian Organ Rock Formation and the Triassic Moenkopi Formation, two contrasting fluvial successions exposed across large areas of south-eastern Utah, which are considered to be analogues for a variety of fluvial reservoirs, including parts of the Triassic Central North Sea. By defining the range of most probable values for key geometric parameters for mixed channelised and sheet flood successions, probability envelopes have been constructed that have been used to quantitatively describe the range of likely channel connectivity. Crucial to the applicability of this approach is the speed of the modelling approach, which allows multiple realizations to be executed in reasonable time, thereby making it feasible to depict a range of possible end-member scenarios of likely sedimentary architecture.

Transition from deep- to shallow-marine deposition: the Craven Basin, UK

Jochem F. Bijkerk [1]*
Paul B. Wignall [1]
Colin N. Waters [2]
William D. McCaffrey [1]
Joris T. Eggenhuisen [3]
Ian A. Kane [4]

[1] University of Leeds

[2] British Geological Survey, Keyworth

[3] University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

[4] Statoil Exploration R&D, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: eejfb@leeds.ac.uk

Turbidite systems may terminate due to switch-off and abandonment, tectonic occlusion of the basin or as a basin transition from being under- to overfilled. The close association of turbiditic and deltaic sandstones in the Craven Basin suggests that the top seal of turbidite systems is more likely compromised in settings where their termination is caused by overfilling of the basin. Connection to the fluvial feeder system across a block-basin transition might provide a further pathway for hydrocarbon migration.

The Craven Basin is bounded proximally by the Askrigg Block (to the north), a tectonically stable high on top of which a carbonate platform developed during the Early Carboniferous. During the Early Serpukhovian the basin was in transition from syn- to post-rift tectonic domains; at this time incised valleys cut across the platform and fed coarse-grained siliciclastics into the basin, commencing with a sand-rich turbiditic succession up to 500 m thick. Exposures predominantly show channel to proximal lobe depositional settings. Directly above this succession is a predominantly fine grained interval (50-350 m) containing distributary channel and mouth bar sands, indicative of deltaic development which is followed by a sand-rich delta system (50-100 m) showing Gilbert-type deltas with newly recognised mass-flow deposits in the delta toe. This system developed south of the Askrigg Block in a zone of rapidly increasing accommodation space. On the Askrigg Block feeders to the turbiditic and deltaic successions are present enabling correlations with the source area of the basin.

The Craven Basin provides a case study for deep- to shallow marine, and block- to basin transitions in a rapidly subsiding fault-bounded basin. The relative importance of sediment input, eustacy and tectonics in such settings is further examined by mini-basin experiments at the Eurotank Laboratories which provide a controlled environment with source to sink control on the sediment flux, base level and tectonic regime. Analyses include digital elevation models at predetermined intervals providing volumetric constraints on deposition, bypass and erosion; video coverage; and lacquer peels showing the resultant deposits.

Is climate change affecting dune migration rates in Antarctica?

Charlie Bristow [1]*
Paul Augustinus [2]
Ed Rhodes [3]

[1] Birkbeck College University of London

[2] University of Auckland

[3] UCLA

* corresponding author: c.bristow@ucl.ac.uk

Antarctica is the coldest, driest, and windiest continent on Earth, and like deserts elsewhere this polar desert contains sand dunes. The greatest concentration of sand dunes in Antarctica is in the Victoria Valley, one of the McMurdo Dry Valleys. Ground penetrating radar (GPR) is used to image dune stratigraphy, and optically-stimulated luminescence (OSL) to determine when the sands were deposited. The ages of phases of sand acumulation identified from the GPR stratigraphy range from the present-day to ca. 1.3 ka BP. The OSL ages are used to calculate end-point migration rates of 0.05 to 1.5 m yr-1 which are lower than migration rates from photogrammetry and field surveys undertaken over the past 50 years. There appears to be an increase in rate of dune migration within the last 50 years that coincides with the modern rise in CO2 and the warmest temperatures in Antarctica during the past 800 ka.

Submarine levee crevasse deposits: their stratigraphic and temporal distribution

Rufus Brunt [1]*
Willem van der Merwe [1]
David Hodgson [1]
Stephen Flint [1]

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: rufus.brunt@liv.ac.uk

Distributive deepwater systems typically feature a lobe fed by a genetically related channel, where down dip channel extension can lead to the accumulation of characteristic thinning and fining upward external levee successions directly above lobe deposits. However, discontinuous thick-bedded lobe-like sandstone units are encountered as isolated bodies within the extensive external levee units of the Fort Brown Formation, Karoo Basin. These bodies are interpreted to have been deposited as crevasse splays by rapidly expanding and decelerating flows that breached the levee crest. The crevasse splay deposits are up to a kilometre in width and a few meters in thickness, typically thickening slightly away from the source channel. They are dominated by rapidly deposited sandstones, sand rich debrites and are often associated with accumulations of slumped levee, resulting in a deposit that is higher net-to-gross than the host levee. Spatial and stratigraphic relationships drawn from field outcrop data suggests that crevasse events occurred preferentially in the more distal parts of the channel-levee system and more frequently late in the constructional history of the levee. Partial infill of relatively low-relief channels during system retreat may cause this as effective confinement to flow is reduced increasing the likelihood of levee breaching. However, if supply to the levee breach is maintained, an erosively confined crevasse channel may develop, exploiting the gradient of the levee surface and open slope accommodation space.

Sedimentology of the A6 Core (Ainsa Basin, Mid-Eocene, Spanish Pyrenees)

Blanca Cantalejo Lopez [1]*
Kevin T. Pickering [1]

[1] UCL (University College London), Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, England, UK

* corresponding author: ucfbbca@live.ucl.ac.uk

The A6 core (Ainsa Basin, Mid Eocene, Spanish Pyrenees) is one of the eight wells drilled as part of the ongoing Ainsa Research Project undertaken by University College London. The A6 Well was drilled to a subsurface depth of ~ 230 m with ~ 97% of core recovery. Using planktonic foraminifera zonation, the age of the core is within the upper mid-Lutetian very close to the P11-P12 zones. Spectral studies of bioturbation intensity suggest sediment accumulation rates of ~ 30cm/kyr, yielding an estimate of 0.8 Ma of stratigraphy for the entire A6 core.

The A6 core comprises essentially hemipelagic marlstones, laminated, very thin- and thin-bedded normally-graded sandstones, silty and muddy siltstone turbidites. The upper 45 m of the core is characterised by numerous cm to m-scale sediment slides and debris flows deposits, containing redeposited nummulites and some shallow-marine material, such as coral fragments. These fauna-rich layers occur as mm- to cm-thick packstones.

At 72 m, there is a 15-cm-thick duplex structure with calcite veining. This zone is associated with a prominent spectral peak in the gamma ray log. This is interpreted as a post-depositional thrust with an unknown, but likely small, offset.

The depositional environment for the A6 core is interpreted as a combination of off-axis fan lateral-margin deposits along the base-of-slope from a sand-rich proximal basin-floor submarine fan (Ainsa III fan), and interfan deposits.

This poster presents representative core from Well A6, together with detailed sedimentary logs and petrographic data.

Concentration-depended flow stratifications in experimental high-density turbidity currents and their relevance to turbidite facies models.

Matthieu J.B. Cartigny [1]*
Joris T. Eggenhuisen [1]
Ernst W.M. Hansen [2]
George Postma [1]

[1] Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University, P.O. box 80021, 3508 TA Utrecht, The Netherlands

[2] Complex Flow Design A.S., Trondheim, Norway

* corresponding author: m.cartigny@geo.uu.nl

High-density turbidity currents are characterized by density controlled flow stratifications. Field evidence indicates that deposits formed under such density stratified flows differ from those of low-density flows. Furthermore, the deposits of high density flows reveal evidence for small-scale, unsteady surging flow behaviour in the form of crudely stratified deposits and abundant internal erosional surfaces, which were attributed to unsteady traction carpet sedimentation. The mechanisms that produce unsteady traction carpets are as yet unknown and only inferred by speculation.

This study presents experiments of high-density turbidity currents (varying in initial sediment concentration between 9-26 vol%) moving quasi steady on an inclined bed surface, being close to their equilibrium slope in a 4 m x 0.5 x 0.07 tank. The velocity profile and turbulence intensity of each flow was established by a UVP probe. Three distinct internal flow layers are distinguished on the basis of their observed behaviour as captured by a camera. The experiments show the relation between the maximum velocity, shear stresses and the equilibrium slopes for the different types of high-density turbidity current. UVP probes are also used to measure the overall velocity and turbulent intensity profiles of the flows, and the change therein as a result of different stacking patterns of internal flow layers.

Velocity and camera data are combined to study the unsteady interactions between the different flow layers over time, and the modifications of their interactions as overall sediment concentration increased. Small-scale auto-generated fluctuations with clear control on the depositional behaviour of the flow emerged. By combining these observations with grain size sorting mechanism the different flow layers are linked to distinct depositional expressions.

The Permian "glass ramp": new insights from Bellsund, Spitsbergen

Daniel S. Collins [1]*
Stephen P. Hesselbo [1]
Conall Mac Niocaill [1]
Dierk Blomeier [2]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3AN, England, UK

[2] Norwegian Polar Institute, The Polar Environmental Centre, 9296 Tromsß, Norway

* corresponding author: daniel.collins@seh.ox.ac.uk

Preliminary results focusing on the sedimentological, paleontological and diagenetic aspects of the ~340m-thick Kapp Starostin Formation in west Spitsbergen are presented. Six major microfacies associations comprise these strata, environmentally representative of a mixed silicalastic-carbonate-biosiliceous, variable energy, shelfal ramp. An initial comparison to previous studies in central and NW Spitsbergen will evolve with further microfacies and diagenetic characterisation, whilst understanding of the paleolatitude of deposition will also likely be improved after processing of paleomagnetic data. Age characterisation of the strata and documentation of mid- to late-Permian carbon cycling may also be possible after generation of organic carbon isotope curves through the upper parts of two studied sections. This study forms parts of a Spitsbergen-wide investigation into Carboniferous-Permian strata of the Boreal realm. Instigated by the Norwegian Polar Institute, the aim is to address the temporal evolution and spatial variations within the expansive depocentre that developed, as well as addressing the still complex lithostratigraphic nomenclature. No doubt the findings of this large-scale study will have fundamental implications for future hydrocarbon exploration in the Barents Sea.

Mass transport deposits: sediment transport and deposition processes in the Mid Eocene deep-marine Ainsa Basin, Spanish Pyrenees

Nicola C. Dakin [1]*
Kevin T. Pickering [1]
John Millington [2]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, England, UK

[2] Nexen Petroleum UK Ltd, Charter Place, Vine Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1JG, England, UK

* corresponding author: ucfbncd@ucl.ac.uk

The Mid Eocene Ainsa basin, Spanish Pyrenees, preserves unprecedented exposures of ancient deep-marine sedimentary deposits including a wide range of mass transport deposits (MTDs), interpreted as the result of debris flows and sediment slides. The Ainsa deep-marine sedimentary succession is divided into eight depositional systems, comprising sandstones (from turbidity currents) in several sandbodies that were fed from a fluvio-deltaic point source in the southeast. Each of the eight depositional systems also contains up to several hundred meters of stratigraphic thickness of fine-grained sedimentation that accumulated when the coarser-grained clastic supply was switched off to the basin. The 400-kyr long eccentricity Milankovitch cycle is believed to be the primary mechanism controlling the deposition of the thickest sandbodies, where long-term global climatic trends and eustatic sea-level changes affected the stability of the basin slopes causing large-scale submarine-slope failure (MTDs), followed by a healing of the submarine slopes when relative base level was again raised. A wide variety of MTDs occur, typically in predicable vertical sequences throughout the basin. MTDs include intraformational slumps and slides, pebble-rich mudstones and chaotic deposits with large visco-plastically deformed sandstone rafts up to 10 m in length. In many cases, MTDs accumulated on the lower slope and proximal basin floor prior to the main sand influx to the deep-marine basin. The composition of MTDs is related to the provenance area for the sands (upper and mid slope, shallow-marine shelf and coastal areas, and the fluvio-deltaic environments). We identify a range of sediment transport processes, from translational coherent slide masses to complex multiphase granular flows that deposited pebbly sandstones, mud-flake breccias and clast-supported conglomerates. Some of the debris-flow deposits exhibit finite yield strength able to support large rafts of semi-lithified sandstones. This poster presents the range of chaotic deposits, discusses their geometry and interprets transport and depositional processes.

Tectono-Stratigraphic Analysis of Hangingwall Depositional Systems; South Hadahid Block, Suez Rift, Egypt

Jord P. de Boer [1]*
Rob L. Gawthorpe [1]
Christopher A-L. Jackson [2]
Ian R. Sharp [3]

[1] Department of Earth Science, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

[2] Department of Earth Science & Engineering, Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

[3] Statoil Research Centre, Sandsliveien 90, NO-5020, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: Jord.deboer@geo.uib.no

We use field data from the Oligo-Miocene Suez Rift to investigate the stratigraphic development of footwall-sourced, syn-rift depositional systems that were deposited in the immediate hangingwall of a major, rift-bounding, normal fault system. The studied hangingwall succession is cut by a series of syn- and antithetic normal faults, which present-day divide the study area into two distinct sub-basins: the Gebah Half-Graben and the Abura Graben, which are described here. The aim of the study has been to examine the relationship between normal fault growth and sedimentary response.

The Gebah Half-Graben, located in the immediate hangingwall of the rift-bounding fault system, exposes a 300 m thick sedimentary fill consisting of:

i) A lower, 200 m thick package of conglomeratic debris flow deposits intercalated with three, 5 to 35 m thick, MTDs.
ii) An upper, 100 m thick package of highly-bioturbated fine to medium grained sandstone intercalated with conglomeratic intervals, with locally well-developed clinoforms. Palaeocurrent data indicate sediment transport away from the border fault, towards the S and SE.

Further to the west, in the Abura Graben, the syn-rift succession comprises 3 upwards coarsening packages of siltstone to highly-bioturbated fine-grained sandstone to coarse-grained, clast-supported conglomerate. Two, 5 to 20 m thick MTDs are developed in this succession, capping the lower two coarsening upwards cycles. Palaeocurrent data indicate sediment transport towards the S and SE. The total stratigraphic thickness is 420 m.

The MTDs in both sub-basins consist of matrix supported breccia (meter sized clasts) of pre-rift lithologies with, at places, 20 m sized boulders. The conglomeratic units show a higher erosive character at their bases (particularly towards the bounding fault), and an increase of extrabasinal clasts towards the top of individual units. A decrease in thickness and clast size is observed away from the faults (over 1 km distance).

Our results indicate that the stratigraphic fill of both studied outcrops show increasing vertical organization, from initial chaotic coarse grained units into more progradational units with well-developed clinoforms. The Abura Graben to the west shows a more distinct

separation of events, presumably indicating a more "distal" setting relative to the bounding fault and sediment input.

Abrupt landscape change post-6 Ma on the Central Great Plains, U.S.A.

Robert A. Duller [1]*
Alex C. Whittaker [2]
James B. Swinehart [3]
John J. Armitage1 [4]
Hugh D. Sinclair [5]
Andrea Bair [6]
Philip A. Allen [2]

[1] Department of Earth & Ocean Sciences, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 3GP

[2] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College, London, SW7 2AZ

[3] School of Natural Resources, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68583-0961

[4] Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris, 1 rue Jussieu, 75238 Paris, cedex 05

[5] School of Geosciences, The University of Edinburgh, Grant Institute, Edinburgh, EH9 3JW

[6] Department of Geological Sciences, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, 80309-0399

* corresponding author: rduller@liv.ac.uk

The principal control on landscape evolution in the central Great Plains of the USA over the past 10 Myrs is contentious. Rock uplift and associated incision has been suggested as the key driver, but the documented shift in local climate at this time raises the question of whether tectonics was the sole control. Sedimentary data collected from upper Miocene and Pliocene successions of the Nebraskan Great Plains demonstrates a two-fold increase in the mean grain size (from 20 mm to > 40 mm) exported from the central Rockies across the Mio-Pliocene boundary. This change implies a 3-4 fold increase in specific stream power, meaning that Pliocene rivers draining the central Rockies were considerably more competent than their Miocene predecessors. Our data supports tilting of the Miocene Ogallala Group after 6 Ma, but we demonstrate that the transport slope of the lower part of the Pliocene succession (~4-3.5 Ma) is unaffected by any subsequent tilting. These data allow us to constrain the timing of differential surface uplift in the Great Plains to between 6 and 4 My; the wave-length and short duration of this tilting is best explained by initiation of dynamic topography. High topographic gradients were maintained in the Pliocene, but incision in this period was not continuous; in particular a significant episode of aggradation from ~3.5 to 2.5 Ma is best explained by high sediment supply relating to the warm, wet mid-Pliocene climate optimum. Initiation of the modern pattern of incision of the North Platte system occurred at ~2.5 Ma, not from the end Miocene as is sometimes supposed, reflecting the onset of major Northern Hemisphere glaciation.

The Miocene Drainage system within the Columbia River Basalt Province, Washington State, USA

Alena Ebinghaus [1]*
David W. Jolley [1]
Adrian J. Hartley [1]

[1] University of Aberdeen

* corresponding author: a.ebinghaus@abdn.ac.uk

The Columbia River Basalt Province (CRBP) forms a plateau, which is constructed by a series of Miocene-age tholeiitic basalt flows. The basalt flows are ascribed to the Columbia River Basalt Group, which is formally divided into 5 formations. The lava flows are intercalated with fluvial, lacustrine and shallow marine siliciclastic and volcaniclastic sediments, which were deposited during the quiescence of eruption events.

This work aims to reconstruct a model for the Miocene drainage system of the west-central part of the CRBP, to characterise the factors, which controlled sedimentation, and the affects on the paleo-ecosystem.

Based on the stratigraphy, field observations and paleocurrent data, 5 different evolutionary stages of the drainage system are differentiated. Stage 1 (c. 16 Ma) sediments were deposited during a phase of high eruption tempo, which limited the drainage system to the periphery of the lava field. Stage 2 interbeds (c. 15.6 Ma) were deposited during the first period of quiescence, and led to establishment of a network of fluvial channels, lakes and associated soil horizons. From this time onwards, volcanic activity waned significantly and periods of quiescence between phases of volcanic activity increased. Stage 3 (15-14.5 Ma) is characterised by lacustrine facies, which consisted of either isolated lakes, or lakes with seasonal connections to a fluvial system. Lakes or wetlands were probably formed by damming of previous river channels by earlier basalt flows. Stage 4 (14.3-12 Ma) and 5 (c. 11 Ma) interbeds represent a phase of increased fluvial sedimentation. At this stage, the paleotopography played a significant role in controlling the distribution of both lava flows and river channels, as lava flows apparently followed the path of older river valleys.

Palynological data provide evidence for a broad range of plant populations on the Columbia Plateau and are associated with warm to temperate humid climatic conditions. The calculations of the mean annual temperature (MAT) and precipitation (MAP) support this climatic trend.

Determining the palaeodrainage history of the Nile River: investigating rift tectonics and land-ocean-atmosphere interactions

Laura D. Edwards [1]*
Yani Najman [1]
Ben C. Kneller [2]
Peter Butterworth [3]

[1] Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK

[2] School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, Meston Building, Aberdeen, UK

[3] BP Egypt, Exploration and Production, 14 Road 252, Digla, Maadi, Cairo, Egypt

* corresponding author: l.edwards4@lancaster.ac.uk

It has been proposed that Nile river hydrology is directly forced by events ranging from solid earth tectonics to, large-scale oceanographic and climatic changes (Hammann et al. 2009); ocean anoxia and sapropel development (Scrivner et al. 2004) as well as hominid dispersal and ancient civilizations (Osborne et al. 2008); and that its palaeodrainage has the potential to record plume and rift related tectonics (Pik et al. 2008). Therefore, the palaeo-Nile cone sediments have the capacity to provide a unique archive to research these interactions.

We propose to conduct a provenance study of the well-dated Nile cone sediments to document the time of transition from locally sourced detritus to initiation of an extensive Nile drainage catchment. This study will also address temporal variations in palaeodischarge. We will work on BP Egypt's Oligocene-Recent cores from the East and West Nile deltas, integrating results with subsurface seismic and well data to provide information on sediment nature, regional flux and dispersal pattern. Robust provenance interpretations are best derived when a multi-technique approach is used. Therefore, we will use techniques which discriminate between detritus from Red Sea Hills, the Blue Nile / Atbara rivers which drain the Ethiopian Continental Flood Basalts, the White Nile river which drains the ancient African craton, and aeolian dust. These techniques will include determination of mudstone Rb-Sr and Sm-Nd isotopic characteristics, sandstone petrography and heavy mineral analysis, clay mineralogy, chemical composition of minerals such as ilmenite, clinopyroxene and Cr-spinel, and U-Pb detrital zircon and rutile dating. A better understanding of the Nile's palaeodrainage will help to determine the timing of rift tectonics since the associated uplift is proposed to have resulted in initiation of the Nile drainage. It will also contribute to understanding regional land-ocean-atmosphere interactions which its discharge records.

The documentation of spatial and temporal variability in core samples studied will enable a greater understanding of correlative changes in porosity, permeability and sediment dispersal patterns which have implications for well correlation and the distribution of reservoir systems. Furthermore, the study will establish a better insight into controls on the development of sapropels.

Ichnofossils as a tool for understanding contourite deposits

Hayley J. Essex [1]*
Dorrik A. V. Stow [1]
Helen Lever [1]

[1] Institute of Petroleum Engineering, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS, UK

* corresponding author: Hayley.Essex@pet.hw.ac.uk

Contourite deposits are scientifically and economically valuable but are notoriously difficult to identify in the geological record. One of the major issues encountered in their study is the pervasive presence of bioturbation which in some cases can completely destroy primary sedimentary structures. This is a result of the slow rate of deposition in contourites which provides ample opportunity for organisms to disrupt the sediments. In the absence of other evidence it follows that the bioturbation itself could be a subject for study.
The study of bioturbation, ichnology, can yield valuable insights not only into the formation of contourite deposits but can also provide palaeoclimatic data. As contourite deposits are formed via bottom currents which are linked to global ocean circulation, changes in climate are recorded in the faunal assemblages.
The recognition of ichnofossils in the marine sedimentological record is complicated by the fact that most of the records available take the form of marine sediment cores (except marine records now exposed on land). Ichnofossils are difficult to reliably identify directly from core observations therefore more sophisticated techniques must be employed. The use of X-radiography and X-ray Computed Tomography (CT) permit the analysis of ichnofossils below the surface, the latter technique allowing for 3-D reconstructions.
Future investigation aims to identify characteristic contourite specific ichnofossil assemblages to greatly improve our understanding and interpretation of contourite deposits.

Architecture and development of mass-transport deposit internal structure: insights from a spectacular outcrop, Cerro Bola, Argentina

Luke Fairweather [1]*
Ben Kneller [1]

[1] Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, AB24 3UE, UK

* corresponding author: l.fairweather@abdn.ac.uk

The internal structure of mass-transport deposits (MTDs) in seismic is often complex and difficult to understand, especially because little or no lithological framework can be obtained. Nonetheless, the model of headwall extension and toe compression is commonly applied to understand the distribution and types of strain that occur. The magnificently exposed (some 8 km of outcrop) mass-transport deposit at Cerro Bola, Argentina provides an opportunity to observe such structures, for which provide a tool to understand transportation process and history.

Observed is a broadly tripartite division of structures, with transitional boundaries, each division is characterised by different lithologies, and distinct strain types. The lower zone consists of large rafts of protolith sediment that surround blocks of arkosic sandstone derived from the underlying deltaic sequence. These have been complexly deformed with much folding and boudinage, to the degree that some blocks occur in 'trains' of folded boudins. Sand streaks in the surrounding matrix show evidence of strain superposition from extension to compression and vice-versa elucidating the complex deformation history of the MTD. The middle zone consists of more homogeneous silty mudstone that lacks significant stratification; however numerous sheath and recumbent fold types, and slide-surfaces dominate this section. The upper zone consists of well stratified sediment that lacks any blocks or rafts unlike the previous zones, and is deformed by thrusts and dekameter upright folds. Such structures may be formed in numerous ways which commonly include rotational strains associated with progressive simple shear, transitions from simple to pure shear related to translation and spreading, and potentially irregularities of the basal shear surface.

Our observations illustrate that (1) strain is complex and varies stratigraphically as well as longitudinally and (2) extension and compression structures occur throughout the MTD mass and are often superimposed, and that such structures do not necessarily infer multiple movements but the complex spatial and temporal variation in stress with the MTD.

Siliciclastic sedimentation and sequence stratigraphic evolution of a storm-dominated fine-grained shelf

Yvette S. Flood [1]*
Sarah J. Davies [2]
Mike J. Norry [2]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BP, England, UK

[2] Department of Geology, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, England, UK

* corresponding author: y.flood11@imperial.ac.uk

This multi-disciplinary study of a mudstone-dominated storm-influenced shallow marine siliciclastic shelf enables assessment of spatial and temporal lithofacies variability within a sequence stratigraphic system. Logs measured from three transects record the Late Sinemurian-Early Pleinsbachian Pabay Shale Formation, of the Lower Lias Group of the Hebrides Basin fill in NW Scotland. Combining sedimentology, petrology, palaeontology, ichnology, geochemistry and sequence stratigraphy; 16 siliciclastic lithofacies are distinguished, grouped into four associations interpreted to represent different depositional environments: offshore, offshore transition zone, lower shoreface, and middle shoreface. Sedimentary structures include hummocky cross-stratification, planar cross-stratification, and wave-ripple cross-lamination. The presence of sedimentary structures, macro and micro lithofacies architecture, a high proportion of disarticulated shelly material, and distinctive ichnological fabrics support the hypothesis that sediment was continually reworked within a highly oxygenated shelf environment, due to erosion and transport by storm processes and extensive burrowing. The mixing of water by storm currents extended bottom water oxygenation into the offshore zone increasing primary productivity in the water column, and prompting a significant degree of surface-water interface colonisation. These observations are incompatible with models which suggest that fine-grained lithofacies were deposited through settling of clay grade particles from suspension in low-flow regime, offshore zones. Whole rock geochemistry reveals that a significant proportion of the sediment within the Pabay Shale Formation was derived from the Neoproterozoic Moine Supergroup, situated on the Scottish Landmass rather than the Hebrides Platform. The sequence stratigraphic organisation of the facies associations suggests that the succession encompasses nine parasequences which are stacked to record overall progradation that contrasts with coeval, regional transgression. Thus the progradational architecture of the Pabay Shale Formation indicates that sediment supply outpaced any increase in accommodation generated by subsidence of the Hebrides Basin or by a eustatic rise. These data and interpretations demonstrate the importance of understanding fine-grained sediment deposition when constructing depositional models.

Depositional Architecture of the Tertiary mixed clastic-carbonate Rankin Platform, Northwest Australia: Implications for clinoform development and slope gully morphology

Asu Fubara [1]*

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: asu.fubara@liv.ac.uk

A study of slope-confined gullies that dissect a prograding, mixed clastic-carbonate, Miocene-age, clinothem succession on the Northwest Shelf of Australia, has enabled a better understanding of their geometry, and the role they play in the construction and degradation of submarine slopes. By integrating a 1500 km2 three dimensional seismic reflection survey, well logs and core data, the spatial distribution of slope-confined gullies suggests variations in relative sea level, latitude and sediment productivity are the key controls on their development. The evolution of the basin margin has been constrained by detailed seismic facies mapping and analysis of the shelf-edge trajectory through time. The clinoforms are relatively steep (2-8°) and dips of up to 26° are locally observed in association with concave-upwards, slope failures. Intense gullying of the slope began after the Middle Miocene and the gullies extend from the shelf edge to depths of over 150 m. The gullies are 150 to 400 m wide and display relief of 4-15 m. An evolution from erosional, “v”-shaped, asymmetrical gullies, to evenly-spaced, aggradational, “u”-shaped gullies is observed. Lateral variability in the geometry and stacking patterns of the gullies appear to correlate with along-strike variations in clinoform dip, sediment rate and sediment supply direction, which may all have been controlled by a major paleoceanographic reorganisation in the Middle Miocene.

Landform geometry of modern fluvio-deltaic deposits in the Niger Delta: implications for reservoir characterization

Chinotu F. George [1]*

[1] University of Aberdeen, School of Geoscience, Meston Building, King's College, AB24 3UE. Aberdeen Scotland, UK

* corresponding author: chinotu.george@abdn.ac.uk

Mapping the geometries of geo-bodies and translating analogue into subsurface modeling from studies of surface and near-surface deposits, in the Niger Delta is the key concept of this research. It bears relevant implication for the oil and gas industry as it can improve our understanding of spatial distribution of reservoir properties.
GIS technique using Landsat and SPOT satellite images have been used to map the surface or near-surface deposits. The spatial distribution; shape, size, orientation and connectivity of fluvial and tidal channels, point bars, barrier bars, braid bars and related landform on the surface were measured.
Results show that fluvial deposits cover 60% of the 70, 000 Km2 area of the onshore Niger Delta. The fluvial channel (River Niger) width decreases moving downhill by roughly 3m every 2km in the Nun and Forcados arms. On the contrary, the tidal channels width increases downstream at a faster rate, i.e. 20m every 2km. The tidal channels are also, wider at the East and West Flanks and dies out between 40 km to 150km off the coast. It has been observed that the narrower tidal channels are at the center and they are characteristically at a high angle with the coastline. The width at tidal channel's mouth ranges from 1 to 2 km. The length-to-width ratios of the point bars fall within 1.3-1.9, while- the length ranges from 1600 to 6359m and the width from 750 to 5700m. The River Niger is highly braided with decreasing braiding index downstream, the braided bars range in length from 800 to 8500, in width from 180 to 3200m and the length-width ratios range from 2 to 6. The sedimentary bodies are statistically scale invariant, that is, the overall geometry is not affected by change in size.
Results are useful to constrain parameters during modeling of geometric properties of reservoirs and predicting unknown geometric parameters from the known ones. In turn this increases our chances finding, drill and manage oil and gas.

3D Architecture and Internal Facies Variation of Large-Scale Alluvial Fan Deposits: Implications for the interpretation of the Permian Brockram Facies of Northern England

Amy Gough [1]*
Stuart M. Clarke [1]
Philip C. Richards [2]
Antoni E. Milodowski [3]

[1] Basin Dynamics Research Group, School of Physical and Geographical Sciences, Keele University, UK.

[2] Marine, Coastal and Hydrocarbons, British Geological Survey, Murchinson House, Edinburgh, UK

[3] Permo-Triassic Reservoirs and Storage Cross-Cutting Project, British Geological Survey, Kingsley Dunham Centre, Keyworth, UK.

* corresponding author: a.gough@epsam.keele.ac.uk

Alluvial fans are key environments in the proximal setting of arid continental basins. Their facies and element geometry are influenced by interactions between the varied depositional processes of the fan, including debris-flow, fluid-flow, fan-surface fluvial, overbank, and the evolving climate. Spatial and temporal variations in facies architecture can be pronounced and localised, making the interpretation of the relative position within the fan system from limited and disparate outcrop problematical, such as with the outcrops of the Brockram Facies, northern England. Furthermore, strong variations in facies architecture over short distances can have important implications for fluid migration through ancient fan systems, heightening the importance of a sound interpretation.

In this work we examine well-exposed fans from the Permian succession of the Cutler Group of the Paradox Basin, U.S.A as an analogue for the Brockram Facies. We develop three-dimensional sedimentological models through the proximal, medial and distal fan. In each model, particular attention is given to the characteristic depositional processes, their spatial interactions and their evolution through time, in order to emphasise those features that are particularly characteristic of spatial and temporal position within the fan system, thus providing the basis for an interpretation from the limited and disparate outcrop of the Brockram Facies.

The Cutler fans were deposited in a continental basin subject to arid-monsoonal climatic cycles, varied sediment supply and changing base level. Proximal deposits consist of facies attributed to bed-rock failure, with input from fluid-flow dominated processes and proximal debris flows. The mid-fan succession is predominately composed of sediment gravity flows and fan-surface fluvial systems with intercalations of incised channel architecture, sheetflood sedimentation and sieve facies. The distal fan is dominated by fluid gravity flows and braided fan-surface fluvial systems. Within each of the spatial models, the facies and architecture are influenced by climate cyclicity. Periods of aridity are characterised by debris flow dominated facies, whilst periods of elevated humidity are characterised by fluid flow dominated facies. A systematic and progressive increase in fluid or debris flow facies can be a clear indicator of climatic cycles.

The work is applied to the poorly exposed Brockram Facies of the Eden Valley, UK.

Evolution of a mixed siliciclastic shelf and carbonate platform during the Messinian Salinity Crisis on the tectonically active southern margin of the Sorbas Basin, SE Spain

Marion P. Grundy [1]*
David M. Hodgson [1]

[1] School of Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool, 4 Brownlow Street, Liverpool L69 3GP, UK

* corresponding author: M.Grundy@student.liverpool.ac.uk

Analysis of the Messinian Sorbas Basin-fill has focussed on the stratigraphy of the northern margin to basin centre sediments. Stratigraphic relationships and unconformities, including the widely debated hiatus due to drawdown during the Messinian Salinity Crisis (MSC), are defined by this research. However, the southern margin stratigraphy and depositional environments are poorly documented.

The WNW/ESE trending Lucainena Ridge from Llano Berenjeno to Hueli has been mapped as Messinian limestone and considered contemporaneous to the patch and fringing reefs of the northern margin. This study, however, has identified a mixed conglomeratic siliciclastic and carbonate facies that thicken into a NE-SW trending syn-sedimentary fault. This contrasts with the basinward stepping reef carbonates at the northern margin.

Lateral facies variations and unconformities along the Lucainena Ridge highlighted by this study between the Tortonian and the Azagador, Abad, Cantera, Sorbas and Zorreras Members could be attributed to a combination of active tectonics and changing sea level driven by MSC-related base level changes.

The southern margin is both stratigraphically and tectonically more complicated than the simple models presented from the northern margin. Further work within this study will to attempt to resolve some of these complexities to produce a clear tectono-stratigraphic analysis of the southern margin of the Sorbas Basin.

The Mega Scale Interpretation of the Neogene Southern North Sea Delta

Rachel Harding [1]*
Mads Huuse [1]

[1] University of Manchester

* corresponding author: rachel.harding@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

During the Neogene, a giant delta system advanced from Fennoscandia through northern Poland, northern Germany and into the southern North Sea. The extent of the delta and its catchment approached that of the modern Amazon with the drainage basin extended for almost 3000 km to the East and Northeast.
A database of high-quality 3D seismic data, 2D seismic data and a dense population of borehole penetrations will enable an extremely detailed 3D chronostratigraphic subdivision of the delta on a regional scale. The level of detail in combination with a stable epicontinental base makes this delta ideal for studying the utility of sequence stratigraphic concepts and methodologies allowing us to test global sea-level curves for the post-middle Miocene and compare these with recent sea-level records from passive margins facing the open ocean.
Mapping key sequence boundaries and creating thickness map allows us to determine the evolution of the delta; the depocenters, progradation directions, palaeo-environments and the delta extent, through time. Initial observations suggest that the delta reached the UK southern North Sea. Several progradation directions are observed in the Netherlands North Sea and salt tectonics played a large role in the diversion of sediment supply locally. I will be presenting the initial findings of this project in the poster.

How much CO2 will be sequestered by mineral reaction during engineered CO2 storage?

Niklas Heinemann [1]*
Mark Wilkinson [1]
Tony Fallick [2]
Stuart Haszeldine [1]

[1] School of Geosciences, The University of Edinburgh, The Kings Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh, EH9 3JW

[2] Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre, East Kilbride, G75 0QU

* corresponding author: N.Heinemann@sms.ed.ac.uk

Geochemical models sometimes predict the growth of substantial quantities of carbonate minerals during engineered CO2 storage, on a timescale of only a few years or decades, i.e. geologically instantaneously. In contrast, the case of Fizzy Field, a real-world example of a natural CO2 accumulation from the Southern North Sea, was presented by one of the authors (MW) at the BSRG AGM in Birmingham in 2007. The conclusion was that between 0 and 25 % of the total CO2 in the field is sequestered as carbonate minerals, in this case dolomite and subordinate dawsonite. The quantification of the sequestered CO2 is made difficult by the occurrence of ordinary diagenetic dolomite within the fields, from which the sequestration CO2 must be somehow distinguished

An attempt was made to improve the above estimated proportion of CO2 that is locked up as carbonate minerals in Fizzy. Core samples from the Fizzy Field, and a low-CO2 control, the nearby Orwell Field, were re-analysed using step-wise extraction of CO2 from the carbonates, and analysed for C and O stable isotope ratios. The hope was that the acid-extraction technique would initially dissolve the outer (later) proportions of the dolomite crystals, enabling effective separation of the early (ordinary diagenetic) dolomite from later (sequestration) dolomite.

C and O isotope data from the two fields are superficially similar, but reveal that the Fizzy dolomites have a low-del13C component which is absent from the Orwell control. This is interpreted to be partly-sequestered present-day CO2 charge. According to our method, between 0 % and 20 % of the present-day CO2 charge in the Fizzy Field is sequestered as dolomite after some tens of millions of years.

Clinoform Stacking Patterns, Clinothem Depositional Architecture, and the Process Link Between Shallow-marine and Deep-marine Deposits: Key Initial Findings from IODP Expedition 313

Hodgson, D.M. [1]*
Browning, J.V. [2]
Hesselbo, S. [3]
Mountain, G. [4]
Proust, Jean-Noel [5]

[1] University of Liverpool

[2] Rutgers University, New Jersey

[3] Oxford University

[4] Rutgers University

[5] University of Rennes

* corresponding author: hodgson@liv.ac.uk

A dip direction transect of three research boreholes collected during IODP Expedition 313 were located to intersect seismically imaged Miocene clinoforms on the New Jersey margin. The clinoforms are 100-300 m deep with maximum slope gradients of 1-4°, and prograded across the continental shelf. The seismic architecture indicates a clinoform rollover trajectory from low angle (flat) through high angle (rising) to falling, allowing the succession to be divided into different clinoform sets. The extensive core and well log dataset is tied to key seismic surfaces, which permits analysis of the sequence stratigraphic relationship between current-driven processes in top-set deposits, and gravity-driven processes in toe-set deposits. The depositional architecture from core analysis reveals two clinothem types. Type I clinothems have thick top-set (where preserved) and foreset deposits, but thin toe-set deposits. The foreset deposits comprise thick (~100m) coarsening-upward successions that preserve shallowing-upward from silt-prone offshore to clean quartz sands in shoreface settings. The toe-set deposits are thin and silt-prone suggesting limited down-slope sediment supply. In contrast, Type II clinothems have thin top-set deposits, variable foreset deposits, and thick toe-set deposits. The top-set deposits are poorly sorted glauconitic coarse-grained deposits that overlie erosion surfaces, suggesting degradation of clinoform top-sets by fluvial processes. Toe-sets deposits of Type II clinothems are coarse-grained, and are dominated by poorly-sorted glauconitic deposits with complete macrofauna, interpreted as debrites, which are intercalated with normally graded beds interpreted as turbidites. The toe-set deposits are interpreted to have formed coalesced base-of-slope apron supplied by gullies. Commonly, the basal surface of Type II toe-set deposits is sharp and deeply bioturbated suggesting an unconformity.
Type I clinothems are found in rising clinoform sets, whereas Type II clinothems are found in flat clinoform sets, which together with the sedimentary facies, supports that the Type I clinothems formed during relative sea-level rise, and Type II formed during relative sea-level fall. However, a 2D grid of seismic lines suggests that clinothems may transition laterally from one type to another. Ongoing research aims to chronostratigraphically tie the succession into eustatic sea-level changes in order to refine sequence stratigraphic models of

clinothems

The deposition and distribution of organic-rich muds by modern turbidity currents on the northeast Atlantic passive margin

James E. Hunt [1]*
Russell B. Wynn [1]
Peter J. Talling [1]
Christopher J. Stevenson [1]

[1] National Oceanography Centre, University of Southampton Waterfront Campus

* corresponding author: jeh2g08@soton.ac.uk

Modern deepwater turbidite systems have shown deposition of large volume unconfined turbidity currents on the Western European passive margin. The modern core dataset held at BOSCORF at the NOC has allowed the detailed study of deposits from nine deepwater abyssal plains in order to critique the depositional processes affecting the turbidites. Turbidite muds pose significant heterogeneities within potential reservoir intervals and comprise potential sealing facies. Moreover, turbidite muds from the modern northeast passive margin also contain >2% TOC. Thus, these deposits could present analogues for potential hydrocarbon sources from turbidite muds. Understanding the processes of deposition and controls on distribution from these modern systems is important; since this detail can be applied to analogous ancient systems representing regions under exploration or development.

Metre-thick mudcaps have been observed to thicken in subtle basin lows. Previous studies have eluded to deposition from highly concentrated non-turbulent (laminar) flows. Grain-size and geochemical vertical and spatial profiles indicate that fluid turbulence is instead the primary transport mechanism for sediment dispersal. However, during sedimentation yield-strength fluids are generated as the fine-grained material consolidates. This is then able to flow under laminar flow conditions and redistribute the mudcap preferentially into the basin lows as fluid muds.
On basin margins there is additional evidence to suggest that the rapid deposition of metre-thick mudcaps has led to destabilisation of the accumulation. This has led to remobilisation of the mudcap deposit as a yield-strength mudflow. Understanding the architectures of these turbidite muds and the controls on their distribution is captured here in an unparalleled core and geophysical dataset. In addition, understanding the distribution of organic carbon within these turbidite muds is important for quantifying carbon burial. The hope is that the heterogeneities resolved in the present study can be used to aid petroleum system evaluations both from reservoir and source rock perspectives.

Concept of Equilibrium in Composite Submarine Channel-Levee Systems and Channel Deposit Character: New Insights from Experimental Modelling

Katrina Hunter [1]*
Bill McCaffrey [1]
Gareth Keevil [1]
Ian Kane [2]

[1] Turbidites Research Group, University of Leeds

[2] Statoil Exploration R&D, NO-5020 Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: k.h.hunter06@leeds.ac.uk

Sinuous submarine channel systems are important for conveying sediment into deep marine basins and are major morphological features that vary greatly in size from a few metres wide to a few kilometres, with depths from a few metres to a few hundred of metres and may extend for thousands of kilometres into the basins. Turbidity currents are considered the key agents of sediment transport in submarine channels. Due to the nature of turbidity currents, obtaining direct measurements is difficult in active channels and therefore the interaction between turbidity currents and sediment transport is poorly understood.

The relationship between the evolution of turbidity currents and sinuous channels is investigated through physical modelling of scaled experiments using a channel model with 15 bends, allowing for the examination of velocity distribution, inner-channel and overspill flow properties, alongside their associated deposits. A known initial mass concentration of silica flour was used to create nominally identical particulate turbidity currents. Flow structure evolves and adjusts to the channel form progressively along the system. Velocity and overspill are greatest in the proximal bends, forming coarse-grained over bank deposits. The intra-channel deposit becomes progressively finer towards the distal bends and remains finer grained than the overbank deposits in distal areas as flow velocity decreases and overspill is predominantly confined to the outer edge of the bend apex stripping the flow of the coarse grains as the basal part of the flow runs up the outer bank. Additional experiments attempt to address the relationship between axial slope and turbulence. Current understanding of flow development led to the prediction that the turbulence of the flow would decrease as the axial slope was lowered. Preliminary data show an unexpected trend in the results whereby turbidity current turbulence decreases from a 3° to 2° slope and increases from a 2° to a 1° slope, indicating a turbulence low at the mid slope angle. These initial findings raise questions as to how the turbulence structure relates to the degree of flow equilibrium within the channel.

Sea bed geology and environmental characterisation in the central and eastern English Channel

Ceri James [1]*
Bryony Pearce [2]
Roger Coggan [3]
Jackie Hill [2]
Jennifer Plim [4]
Rob Clark [5]

[1] British Geological Survey, Nicker Hill, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG also School of Ocean Science, Bangor University.

[2] Marine Ecological Surveys Ltd, 24 Monmouth Place, Bath, BA1 2AY

[3] Cefas, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0HT

[4] British Geological Survey, Nicker Hill, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG

[5] Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority, Shoreham, BN43 5BP

* corresponding author: jwcj@bgs.ac.uk

The need for effective stewardship of the marine environment through integrated management, balancing the requirements for development and exploitation with nature conservation and legislation has been widely recognised. However, implementing such a strategy requires a significant knowledge of the nature of the sea bed. Acquiring such knowledge in the central and eastern English Channel has been the focus of a series of surveys to acquire high resolution data incorporating a suite of geophysical techniques including multibeam, sidescan sonar, boomer shallow sub-bottom profiling allied to sampling and ground truthing, and married to a legacy sea bed morphology dataset which has been digitised to provide an enhanced template for sea bed characterisation across an area of over 12,500 sq kms.

The data has enabled geological interpretations to characterise the relationship between solid geology and sediment at the sea bed and the controls both ancient and modern which have influenced the nature of the sea bed. This in turn has provided the basis for integrating ecological interpretations of the marine biology with the geological interpretations to provide maps of sea bed habitat.

The area has a diverse sea bed with extensive areas of rock platform, channel systems infilled with Quaternary sediment and areas of sand wave fields and sand banks. Their distribution is influenced by modern tidal conditions, the impact of glaciations and sea level rise and fall and the structure and lithology of the underlying solid geology. The variablity in the sea bed geology has influenced the diversity and abundance of the biology and habitat.

Distributary Fan Lobe Characteristics Influenced by Active Salt Growth Structures, offshore Angola

Gemma Jones [1]*
Lidia Lonergan [1]
Mike Mayall [2]
Stephen Dee [2]

[1] Department of Earth Science and Engineering, Imperial College London, UK

[2] BP Exploration, Sunbury-upon-Thames, Middlesex, UK

* corresponding author: gemma.jones09@imperial.ac.uk

The infill history of a salt constructed mini-basin in the compressional domain of the gravity driven salt system on the Angolan passive margin is reconstructed using a high resolution three-dimensional seismic dataset and well constrained biostratigraphic data. Evolution of the basin infill is documented using a series of sedimentation rate maps linked with a structural analysis of the salt structures bounding the mini-basin. The salt wall on the western side of the mini-basin has grown at a different rate to the salt cored anticline on the eastern side of the mini-basin and consequently the basin has tilted through time. In response to this tilting the depocentre has shifted laterally. Furthermore a northeast-southwest orientated extensional growth fault has compartmentalised the mini-basin.

Seismic amplitude analysis of the youngest part of the mini-basin infill reveals channelised fan lobe deposits forming where a deepwater channel system enters the mini-basin through the gap between salt structures. Exceptionally high resolution three-dimensional seismic data (high frequency data with a 2 ms vertical sample rate and a bin-size of 6.25 m) allows the plan-view morphology of the fan lobe to be imaged in unprecedented detail. The geomorphology of the fan deposits varies on either side of the compartmentalising growth fault. South of the growth fault, a series of later deepwater channel systems are present which laterally migrate and change in morphology in response to mini-basin evolution.

Both depositional fan lobes and deepwater channel systems commonly infill salt-constructed mini-basins, reacting to topographical changes as the bounding structures evolve. By using detailed biostratigraphy in conjunction with high quality seismic data this unique quantitative study allows new insights into these complex interactions.

Aspects of the Middle to Late Pleistocene fluvial archive of the River Nene, eastern England

Harry E. Langford [1]*

[1] 16 Magnolia Avenue, Longthorpe, Peterborough, Cambs PE3 9QT, UK

* corresponding author: h.e.langford@ntlworld.com

Late Middle to Late Pleistocene fluvial sedimentary deposits at Whittlesey, eastern England record a complex sedimentary sequence. Geochronological data provide a reliable age framework for aggradation in the lower River Nene catchment from marine oxygen isotope stage (MIS) 8 (minimum) to 2. Aggradation (ca. 5 m OD) and downcutting (ca. 2 m OD) levels were broadly similar in each of the three glacial and two interglacial stages; only in the last glacial stage (Devensian) is there evidence for downcutting below ca. 2 m OD. Palaeontological data are available for each of the five stages, and there is evidence for cryogenic deformation in MIS 6 as well as the Devensian. As far as I am aware the late Middle to Late Pleistocene deposits at Whittlesey represent the longest contiguous fluvial record in the UK. The late MIS 7 faunal and floral record at this site also appears to be unique as there is no other directly comparable assemblage in the UK. In particular the assemblage contains the only record of the gastropod Theodoxus danubialis outside of the Thames catchment and the only MIS 7 record in the UK. Of particular interest is a limestone-rich gravel that appears to have been deposited in MIS 8 and suggests a link with glacial outwash entering the Nene catchment from the north. River Nene 3rd Terrace deposits at the southern end of the dry valley formed by the glacial outwash are interpreted as an "alluvial"delta fan complex that impounded the proto-Nene and formed a lake upstream. Deltaic deposits to the north of the dry valley indicate that a lake also occupied the River Welland catchment upstream of Uffington. The formation of these features provides a geomorphological explanation for the observed distribution of terrace deposits in both the Nene and Welland catchments. The fluvial depositional record at Whittlesey therefore also has an important bearing on our understanding of the MIS 8 ice margin in East Anglia and the southern North Sea basin. Although there is evidence of a MIS 8 ice margin to the northwest of Whittlesey, The Wash does not appear to have been impounded at this time. In contrast, there is substantive evidence for drainage disruption recorded in MIS 6 deposits, which indicates that The Wash was impounded at this time; although the ice did not reach as far as Whittlesey and so far there is no evidence for MIS 6 subglacial or proglacial deposits in the immediate area.

A Comment on the Glacial Deposits of Western County Clare, Ireland

Harry E. Langford [1]*

[1] 16 Magnolia Avenue, Longthorpe, Peterborough, Cambs PE3 9QT, UK

* corresponding author: h.e.langford@ntlworld.com

This presentation looks at glacial deposits on the northwestern margin of the Burren in County Clare, Ireland. A limestone breccia at Murroogh has been previously interpreted as a glaciotectonite, but certain criteria, including aggradation of discrete boulder beds and lenses of waterlain material, are observed that question this interpretation. Further south along the coast, at (Poll na Dibe quay) Derreen, allochthonous clasts are observed in diamicton squeezed into joints in the bedrock limestone. A different facies architecture to that at Murroogh is observed here though, and different processes to those at Murroogh are evident. The calcareous breccia at Murroogh is overlain by a matrix-supported diamicton, and similar material is found eastward in the valley of the Caher River, at the aptly named Kyber Pass. The exposed section is interpreted to be part of a streamlined subglacial landform. Looking westward along the section it does appear as if a boulder pavement is present in the deposit, but traversing the gaze 90° to the north reveals a completely different facies architecture. At Stormy Hall, north of Finavacra there is evidence of vertical and horizontal pipe flow within matrix-supported diamicton, with water-escape features accompanying the vertical pipes. It is possible that the pre-existing subterranean drainage network developed in the Carboniferous Limestone may have played a role in subglacial and proglacial processes and that the role of landfast ice should not be overlooked.

Potential Neoproterozoic petroleum systems in Central West Africa?

Erwan Le Ber [1]*
Daniel P Le Heron [1]
Damien Delvaux [2]
Bernie A Vining [3]
Maria E Bertoni [1]
Gerd Winterleitner [1]
Imasiku Nyambe [4]

[1] Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway University of London. Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom

[2] Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), B-3080 Tervuren, Belgium

[3] Baker Hughes, Bentley Hall, Blacknest, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4PU, United Kingdom

[4] School of Mines, University of Zambia, P.O. Box 32379, Lusaka, Zambia.

* corresponding author: e.leber@es.rhul.ac.uk

Neoproterozoic petroleum systems, which occur in basins across China, Oman, Russia, and Brazil, are a frontier area for both academic research and petroleum exploration. Globally, oil and gas accumulations are known to occur in Tonian (1000-850 Ma), Cryogenian (850-635 Ma) and Ediacaran (635-540 Ma) strata. These viable discoveries have given a momentum for new studies in Central-West Africa where exploration is underway.

To understand the Neoproterozoic petroleum system of central-west Africa a collaboration program is established between the Royal Holloway, University of London and the Royal Museum for Central Africa (MRAC, Belgium), the University of Namibia and the University of Zambia. The area of study is articulated between the West Congo Belt, the Lufilian Belt (DRC, Zambia), the Otavi Mountains. Aims of our group are 1) to define the mega regional tectonostratigraphy, 2) the sequence stratigraphy and 3) to define the best source rocks, reservoirs and seals in these Neoproterozoic successions.

Northern Namibia provides good exposures of the middle to late Neoproterozoic strata, including two glacial successions and overlying cap carbonates; meanwhile, early Neoproterozoic outcrops are observable in the open pits of the Copperbelt District in Zambia. Finally, the extensive collections of rock samples and archives from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the MRAC complete the fieldwork dataset. Field descriptions and sample analyses will help to improve the knowledge and the understanding of the individual study regions, as stepping stones toward a mega-regional model.

Modelling the Evolution of Gold Placers

Robert I. Lowther [1]*
Jeff Peakall [1]
Robert J. Chapman [1]

[1] The School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

* corresponding author: eeril@leeds.ac.uk

Since their discovery in the 1890's, the gold placers of the Yukon Territory, Canada, have produced an estimated minimum of 16.7 million crude ounces of gold, and so remain of significant economic importance to the area. In 2010 alone 51,302 crude ounces of gold, worth US$50.3 million, were produced around 90% of which originated from the Dawson Mining District. The auriferous high bench 'White Channel Gravels' (WCG) of the Dawson Mining District are situated in the drainage of the Klondike River and continue to be an important mining area. However, although the formation of WCG is generally ascribed to a Pliocene braided river system there have been very few detailed studies of the sedimentary environment, particularly in the context of the formation of gold placers.

In general, current understanding of the formation of economic placer deposits relies on studies of heavy mineral accumulation on a grain or bedform scale. However, exploration for placer deposits demands an understanding of controls on formation at the reach and system scale. This project aims to increase our knowledge of placer formation and evolution on the reach and system scale, in particular focusing on the WCG deposits. The sedimentary architecture of the WCG is characterized using both new sedimentological data and existing work. This approach enables the development of a new depositional model for the auriferous gravels, that expands our knowledge of placer deposits on intermediate and large scales. Future work will utilise this model to produce generic exploration criteria.

Transgressive development of coal-bearing coastal plain to shallow marine setting, Paleocene, Svalbard, Arctic Norway

Charlotta J. L¿thje [1]*
Gary Nichols [2]

[1] DONG Energy Exploration West of Shetland, Agern AllÃ© 24-26, 2970 HÃ¸rsholm, Denmark

[2] Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX, UK

* corresponding author: chajl@dongenergy.dk

The Late Paleocene Firkanten Formation of Svalbard, Artic Norway, represent the lowermost unit of the Paleogene succession and the initiation of the formation and depositional infill of the Central Tertiary Basin of Spitsbergen. It consists of thick coal deposits, carbonaceous mudstone and sandstone with rare conglomerate beds.

This is the first comprehensive facies model, sequence stratigraphic analysis, and paleogeographic reconstruction of the Firkanten Formation, based on new borehole cores and outcrop data. Facies analysis has led to interpretation of the succession as the deposits of a coastal plain setting, in contrast to the delta plain environment previously suggested. Thick coals and carbonaceous mudstones were formed in coastal mires protected from marine incursions by sandy barrier bars. In other parts of the succession, coastal deposits are represented by lagoons with moderate tidal influence. The coastal plain deposits are overlain by well-sorted, fine-grained sandstone formed in foreshore and upper shoreface environments containing abundant glauconite, with thin pebbly beach deposits occurring in places. There is little evidence for fluvial influence in the Firkanten Formation.

A basin-wide sequence stratigraphic correlation scheme was developed by using modern analogues of paralic environments to constrain the likely width of facies belts in the palaeogeographic reconstructions. The resulting stratigraphic framework comprises parasequences grouped into parasequence sets revealing an environment dominated by aggradation in a step-wise transgressive setting showing an overall retrogradational pattern over a basin floor that was subsiding due to flexural subsidence. The flexural subsidence was sufficient to keep pace with eustatic sea level falls, indicated by the lack of evidence for sea-level fall or incision. The detailed palaeogeographic reconstructions show a gradual back-stepping of a low-relief coastline following each flooding event. Extensive mires were established behind lagoons, tidal flats and sandy beach barriers along a wave-dominated foreshore. This study provides a new interpretation of this high-latitude, early Cenozoic coal field and is a case study of the formation of thick (up to 5 m) coal seams in a coastal plain setting.

And did those feet, in ancient times...?
Unusual sedimentary structures in coal-bearing successions of the Surat Basin, eastern Australia

Mike Martin

Advanced Geoscience Team, BG Group, 100 Thames Valley Park, Reading RG6 1PT

email: mike.martin@bg-group.com

The Walloon Coal Measures (WCM) within the Surat Basin, eastern Australia, are the focus for Coal Seam Gas (CSG) exploration and development activity. Over 90 fully cored wells exist from this intracratonic basin where the WCM are between 300 – 800m thick. As part of recent efforts to improve understanding of this Middle Jurassic (Callovian) succession, a significant amount of sedimentological core logging has been undertaken and eight wells (more than 2km of core) have been described in detail.

The sediments were deposited in an alluvial plain setting within an interior basin that has no recorded contemporaneous marine influence. Coals, the principal economic interest in the basin, typically form plies (beds) of less than one metre which stack vertically into seams (amalgamation of plies) which can exceed 10m in thickness.

The coals are closely associated with an overbank facies association comprising variably interbedded fine sands, silts and shales. Within this association a recurring, unusual, compactional deformation structure has been recognised. At least two classes of these structures have been tentatively identified and whilst of little recognised significance to CSG activity, these structures are the focus of the talk. Examples of the structures will be presented, together with supporting evidence for the theory of their origin.

The architecture of a Triassic fluvial sandstone, Rillo de Gallo, Guadalajara, Spain

Maria J. Martinez de Alvaro [1]*
Jan Alexander [1]

[1] School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, England, UK

* corresponding author: m.martinez-de-alvaro@uea.ac.uk

Research on bedform geometry and interaction between sediment and water is essential for the reliable reconstruction of ancient fluvial systems and the interpretation of sedimentary structures. Re-examination of sedimentary structures with advances in understanding of bedforms should lead to an improved interpretation of depositional environments. With this in mind, a number of case studies of fluvial cross-bedded sandstone are being undertaken. This poster presents initial field observations of the early-mid Triassic Prados Sandstones (NE Guadalajara, Spain). This unit is more than 30 m thick and has previously been interpreted as meandering channel deposits, even though there is little evidence for lateral accretion in the exposures examined. The Prados Sandstones are medium to fine sand grade with intercalated layers of finer sediments arranged in fining upwards sequences. Previous work records that the Prados Sandstones consist of 40-74% quartz, 16-40% feldspar, and 2-30% fine lithic fragments (dominantly slate and schist). Soft intraformational clasts are also present and these locally form pebble conglomerates. The good quality exposure allows detailed observation of cross-bedding style and geometry. Initial observations demonstrate a predominance of trough cross bedding and suggest a variation in cross-bedding style with sandstone composition and position within the sandstone. Cross-bed sets thickness ranges from < 0.1 m up to 0.6 m, and set size is generally smaller at the top of each fining upward sequence. The variation in set geometry and distribution is being assessed. The research that is now being undertaken aims to improve previous interpretations of these deposits as well as achieve a better understanding of the sedimentary structures identified in the studied area.

A Pre-Vegetation Fluvial Style Controversy

Maurício Guerreiro Martinho dos Santos [1]*
Renato Paes de Almeida [2]
Nigel P. Mountney [3]

[1] Programa de Pós-Graduação em Geoquímica e Geotectônica - Instituto de Geociências Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. Present address: Earth Sciences, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, UK.

[2] Instituto de Geociências - Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil.

[3] Earth Sciences, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, UK.

* corresponding author: mauricioguerreiro@yahoo.com

Many preserved pre-vegetation fluvial systems (PVFS) are usually interpreted as accumulations of sheet-like elements composed of coarse-grained sandstones and conglomerates, with little mud-content. The absence of land plants prior to the Silurian not only enabled the development of distinctive fluvial environments with poorly stabilized channel-banks and flood plains, but also resulted in a lack of chemical weathering that led to a low proportion of mud and soil production. High rates of sediment yield due to high run-off rates and great discharge variation as a consequence of the absence of vegetation cover, resulted in bypass of fine-grained deposits to distal areas of many PVFS. Although sedimentary evidence to indicate repeated re-working of bars and minor-channels resulting in the generation and preservation of broad, tabular, stacked sandstone sheets has previously been regarded as the dominant sedimentary style in such systems, recent detailed studies have demonstrated the widespread presence of substantially more complex stratigraphic architectures.

The Guarda Velha Formation of southern Brazil is a >500 m-thick fluvial succession of Cambrian age, high-resolution architectural analysis of which indicates a markedly different type of fluvial system to that envisaged in traditional facies models for PVFS. The succession preserves a great variety of bedform elements, many nested hierarchically within channelized elements. Despite the absence of vegetation cover, this fluvial system was able to develop long-lived, major channelized networks. We show both 5th-order surfaces of channel macroforms representing long-lived hiatuses between compound cosets of in-channel deposits and the surrounding strata, and clear evidence of perennial barforms preserved as both downstream- and lateral-accretion macroforms. Architectural analysis reveals significant variations in geometry, with reservoir characteristics far more complex than that of simple, wide and stacked sandstone-sheets. This study demonstrates that PVFS can be as complex as many present-day fluvial systems. Existing facies models for PVFS are not effective in accounting for climate and palaeoenvironmental characteristics of such systems. Results have far-reaching implications, including development of models to account for fluvial processes on Mars.

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Three-dimensional surface-based modeling and flow simulation of heterolithic tidal sandstone reservoirs: examples from the Eocene Dir Abu Lifa Formation reservoir analogue, Western Desert, Egypt

Benoit Y. G. Massart [1]*
Prof. Matthew D. Jackson [1]
Dr. Gary J. Hampson [1]
Dr. Berit Legler [2]
Prof. Howard D. Johnson [1]
Dr. Christopher A.-L. Jackson [1]
Marcus Sarginson [3]
Rodmar Ravnas [3]

[1] Imperial College of London, UK

[2] University of Manchester, UK

[3] Norske Shell, Norway

* corresponding author: b.massart09@imperial.ac.uk

Tidal heterolithic sandstone reservoirs are highly heterogeneous across a wide range of length-scales. Consequently, effective flow properties may be poorly predicted using data that do not accurately represent the three-dimensional (3D) distribution of mudstone and sandstone within the reservoir. We present a novel, surface-based modelling approach, which honors the observed geometry of geologic surfaces that control such lithologic variability (e.g. contacts between laminae, beds, and facies units). Quantitative geometrical data to condition the models are obtained from an outcrop analogue, the Eocene Dir Abu Lifa Member (Western Desert, Egypt), which records deposition in a tide-dominated deltaic and estuarine setting.

The workflow uses template surfaces to represent heterogeneities in 3D depending on their geometry, rather than their length-scale. The region of interest is subdivided into "elemental volumes" that stack together, and in which heterogeneities have the same geometry. Different geometric input parameters are used to characterize the distribution and 3D orientation of template surfaces in the elemental volumes (e.g. laminae thicknesses within a cross-bed). Mudstones are modelled as mud drapes that line the heterogeneity surfaces, with their extent and continuity defined using a mudstone frequency function derived from the outcrop analogue.

Generic 3D mini-models (volume of 9 m3) of sandy tidal bar deposits comprising stacked cross-beds have been generated with a range of mud drape coverage, which can be linked to a sandstone fraction observed in core. A cornerpoint grid conforming to the surfaces was generated, and the models were flow simulated until steady state was reached. Results show that effective permeability measurements are highly dependent on the volume of rock considered, as heterogeneity surfaces are continuous at centimetre length-scale (e.g. core plugs) but discontinuous at metre length-scale (e.g. cross-beds). At metre length-scale, effective vertical permeability decreases faster than effective horizontal permeability as sandstone fraction decreases, because mud drapes become more laterally extensive. Effective horizontal permeability also decreases faster in the dip direction of the cross-beds than in their strike direction as sandstone fraction decreases. This pattern of 3D anisotropy is related

to a higher density of mud drapes in the toesets, relative to the foresets, of cross-beds within sandy tidal bar deposits.

Where are the crocodiles? A sedimentological analysis of microvertebrate sites in eastern Alberta

Jon Noad
Murphy Oil Canada Ltd.
jon_noad@murphyoilcorp.com

Sedimentological analysis of two relatively fossiliferous microvertebrate sites in eastern Alberta suggests that the contrasting faunas they have yielded may be related to the contrasting depositional environments in which they formed. Although collecting has been confined to surficial picking on the outcrop, a total of more than 400 elements have been recorded and identified.

The outcrops occur within the Oldman Formation, which is Campanian in age and comprises dominantly braided river deposits interspersed with floodplain silts and mudstone beds. The microvertebrate sites are exposed along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, one at Sandy Point and the second at Ferry Crossing. Sedimentological analysis of the two sites has led to an interpretation of the Sandy Point site (SPM) as representing an ancient pond, while the second site (FCM) is interpreted as a crevasse splay deposit.

SPM is characterised by a 10 cm thick, ironstone cemented, massive siltstone, with abundant plant material including branches and Metsequoia cones. The bed extends laterally for perhaps 30-40 m, and has yielded many well preserved gastropods, or water snails. The vertebrate fauna is dominated by garfish remains, with roughly equal proportions of therapod and ankylosaur teeth, and fewer hadrosaur teeth. In contrast the sediments of FCM are silty, very fine grained sandstone beds with dipping cross-beds and some climbing ripples. These extend laterally for at least 50 m, although erosion means that that this is a minimal estimate. The beds are almost devoid of plant and invertebrate fossils, but have numerous bone fragments, as well as turtle carapace. Fossil teeth are mainly crocodilian and hadrosaurian, with lesser therapod material.

It is theorised that the contrasting depositional settings may lead to the observed diversity in preserved faunal material. A pond (SPM) would have more garfish, snails and plants, while a crevasse splay or less perennial channel (FCM) may host crocodiles, and collect a more representative sample of teeth due to transport of carcasses into the channel by local erosion. Further research could examine other microvertebrate sites, or modern microvertebrate accumulations, and their taphonomy.

Origin of Cenozoic Sedimentation in the North Viking Graben: Depositional vs Remobilized/Injected Models

Oluwatobi Olobayo [1]*
Mads Huuse [1]

[1] University of Manchester

* corresponding author: oluwatobi.olobayo@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Standard models for basin evolution typically involve rifting, subsidence and sediment infill. The fill of sedimentary basins is typically subdivided into sequences bounded by time significant surfaces in sequence stratigraphic analysis. However, over the past decade a number of basins have been documented to comprise of post depositional remobilization and injection which produces geometries and stratal relationship not considered in standard basin models and for which there is no commonly accepted methodology or mode of formation. The best documented case of basin wide sand remobilization and injection is the Cenozoic North Sea basin, but even after half a century of exploration, the full extent of these features is only beginning to be realised.

This study utilizes a 29,000km2 basin-scale merged 3D seismic survey and extensive well database to examine the whole Cenozoic succession of the North Viking Graben in order to document depositional, modified depositional (remobilized) and fully injected sand bodies; their mode of formation and impact of fluid flow. Seismically, there are two end-types observed in the study area; (i) those that discordantly cross cut ~200ms TWT of back ground stratigraphy with lateral extent of ~2km and (ii) those that form mounds with dimensions ranging between 100-150ms TWT, ~5km wide and ~10-15km laterally. They occur at different levels in the Tertiary units and exhibit high amplitude anomalies with peculiar morphologies that support a different origin to them that is contrast to the depositional conventional model that is commonly attributed to these sand bodies.

A distinctive high amplitude continuous seismic reflector is observed within the Oligocene sediments that correlates to an increase in well log density and sonic velocity. We suggest this boundary was formed from silica diagenesis resulting in porosity reduction, fluid expulsion and increase in pore pressure. Our working hypothesis is that the formation of this boundary could have triggered overpressure generation, which facilitated liquefaction and subsequent pressure build-up in the sands causing them to fluidise and remobilize/inject into lower permeable mud dominated units.

These post-depositional processes have significant control on changes in original reservoir architecture, connectivity/fluid migration, geometry, property and in some cases can form stand-alone reservoirs. On the other hand, they can cause seal breaching and also pose risk during drilling

Quaternary tectonic uplift of the Kyrenia Range, northern Cyprus: preliminary field results and objectives

Romesh N. Palamakumbura [1]*
Alastair H. F. Robertson [1]
Hugh D. Sinclair [1]
Dick Kroon [1]
Mehmet Necdet [2]

[1] Earth and Planetary Sciences Institute, School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh, Grant Institute, Kings Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JW

[2] Geology and Mines Department, 1 Lefkonos, Strovolos, Lefkosia, Cyprus

* corresponding author: R.N.Palamakumbura@sms.ed.ac.uk

The Kyrenia Range experienced surface uplift from near sea level in the Late Pliocene to ~1000m at present. A flight of Quaternary terraces is exposed along the northern and southern flanks of the range, becoming successively younger with altitude and distance from the central range. The highest terrace (Karka), up to 365 m above sea level (asl), fringes the mainly Mesozoic-Early Cenozoic carbonate rock core of the central Kyrenia Range. This terrace is dominated by poorly sorted, non-marine scree-type breccia and mass-flow deposits, with clasts of mainly Mesozoic limestone/dolomite and some Paleogene pelagic carbonate/volcanic rocks. The next terrace below, the Arapköy (Klepini) Terrace ~285 m asl, exhibits the earliest shallow-marine calcarenite, passing upwards and laterally into aeolianite and then into channelised conglomerates and braided stream deposits. Below this, the Çatalköy (Ayios Epitikos) Terrace (~50-70 m asl) shows a comparable order and range of facies. Beneath this, the prominent Eutyrrhenian Girne (Kyrenia) Terrace (~20m asl) is dominated by littoral calcarenite, passing upwards into cross-bedded aeolianite. Finally, just above sea level is a thin Neotyrrhenian terrace composed of littoral calcarenite. All of the shallow-marine calcarenites are dominated by bioclastic debris, including bivalves, calcareous algae, rhodoliths and solitary corals. An important objective is to date the terraces and correlate them with their non-marine equivalents exposed along the southern margin of the range. Dating can be achieved using a combination of palaeomagnetism (for >750ka terraces; i.e. pre first magnetic reversal), optically stimulated luminescence (e.g. <250 ka aeolianites) and U-series dating of well-preserved corals in younger terraces.
Geomorphology can be used to shed light on the relative rates of uplift and any tilting through time. For example, GIS and digital elevation modelling can help quantify terrace morphology and indicate any structural influences on uplift. The analysis of the distribution, altitude and geometry of fluvial incision features (e.g. knick points) can indicate phases of increased uplift or erosion. The combined information to be obtained aims to test alternative models of crustal uplift including localised fault-controlled uplift (along a large-scale strike-slip 'tectonic escape' zone) versus deep-seated regional uplift (related to break-off of the oceanic leading edge of the African plate).

Survival of the thickest? Non-uniformity affects dune preservation in river channels

Arnold J H Reesink [1]*

[1] University of Brighton

* corresponding author: A.J.H.Reesink@brighton.ac.uk

There are ‘more gaps than record’ in the stratigraphic record. But does this imply that preservation in river channels is dominated by recurrence of erosion? ‘Extreme events’ dominate the geological record. But does that mean that periods of quiescence leave no evidence in river channels? Flume experiments have shown that roughly a third of the thickest river dunes remains preserved in the sedimentary record for considerable range of flow conditions. This suggests that the deepest scours of the thickest dunes dominate river-channel deposits… However, recent work does not support such a simple, uniform-flow model.

Firstly, GPR images from the Parana River, Argentina show an abundance of complete dune forms. These dune forms occur only in the higher parts of the channel and the majority of their top reflectors can be traced onto bar foresets. This suggests that complete burial is favoured in flows around the upper parts of bars, where changes in flow direction and proportional flow depth are larger. Secondly, comparison of GPR profiles and set thicknesses suggests that dune sets associated with inclined reflectors are thicker on average. Finally, 1:1 flume experiments and field investigations show that overtaking bedforms can lose all their sediment on their host lee slope: flow deceleration simultaneously leads to increased deposition and decreased erosion. Thus, subaqueous dune preservation is controlled by both temporal *and spatial* dynamics. Non-uniformity promotes preservation at all flow stages, not just when the dunes are at their thickest.

Sedimentary evidence from the Vardar suture zone in Macedonia (E. Mediterranean) used to test alternative Tethyan tectonic models

Alastair H.F. Robertson [1]*
Branislav Trivic [2]
Nevenka Deric [2]
Ioan I. Bucur [3]

[1] University of Edinburgh

[2] University of Belgrade, Serbia

[3] Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

* corresponding author: Alastair.Robertson@ed.ac.uk

Sedimentological data are commonly used to elucidate depositional processes. However, sedimentology also contributes to an understanding of geological development through time, especially when combined with data from other disciplines. For example, alternative tectonic models of the Tethyan ocean and its margins can be tested using sedimentary evidence from the Vardar suture zone in the E. Mediterranean region. The suture zone, of latest Cretaceous-Early Cenozoic age, extends through Greece and former Yugoslavia, including Macedonia. It is delineated by emplaced oceanic crust (ophiolites) and separates several microcontinental units. Sedimentary rocks are dominantly of Triassic to Late Cretaceous age.

We have carried out nine traverses across the Vardar suture zone from north to south through Macedonia and have made comparisons with adjacent regions of Greece and Albania. Precambrian and Palaeozoic units were metamorphosed, followed by rifting and the construction of a subsiding Bahama-type carbonate platform during Late Triassic-Jurassic. Platform deposition culminated in the accumulation of radiolarites, here dated as Late Jurassic (syn-or pre-Early Tithonian). The intact succession culminates in terrigenous turbidites (up to ~100m thick). This was followed by emplacement of a relatively thin (<500m) laterally persistent (>200 km N-S) sheet of sheared blocky serpentinite. Associated debris-flow deposits are dominated by ophiolitic clasts. After emplacement, the ophiolitic rocks subaerially weathered to form local Fe-Ni accumulations. A shallow-marine transgression ensued, allowing mixed carbonate-siliciclastic sediments to accumulate during Late Jurassic (Late Tithonian) to mid-Cretaceous. Thick (several km), mixed terrigenous-carbonate gravity flows were then deposited during the Late Cretaceous (with localised basaltic volcanics), followed by W- and SW-directed thrusting and folding.

The sedimentary evidence points to rifting during the Triassic to form a small ocean basin (Vardar ocean) bordered by a subsiding carbonate platform. Ophiolites formed by spreading within the Vardar ocean during Mid-Late Jurassic. This was followed by flexural subsidence of the carbonate platform and the emplacement of ophiolitic rocks. The Vardar ocean still remained partially open, however, allowing passive margin-type deposition to resume during the Cretaceous until this was terminated by suturing of the Vardar ocean during latest Cretaceous-Early Cenozoic time.

Sedimentology and micropalaeontology of prodelta deposits in the prograding Early Pliocene Colorado River delta, southern California.

Paula Robinson [1]*
Professor David Jolley [1]
Professor David Macdonald [1]

[1] The University of Aberdeen

* corresponding author: paula.robinson@abdn.ac.uk

The Pliocene delta of the ancestral Colorado River is well-exposed in the Fish Creek-Vallecito Basin, southern California. Its deposits include a thick unit of pro-delta rhythmites that are accessible along the Fish Creek Wash, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. By analysing palynomorphs from the prodelta rhythmites (Early Pliocene, c.5 Ma), we can demonstrate the environment into which the sediments were being deposited, as well as the environments from which the sediment was sourced and through which it had travelled.

The rhythmites consist of couplets of very fine sand or silt, interbedded with silty mudstone on a centimetre-scale. Silt samples were collected at regular intervals throughout the 100 m section of the rhythmites and prepared for palynological analysis by hydrofluoric acid digestion. This talk describes the changing population of pollen and dinoflagellates with the sedimentology in order to understand evolution of the delta system, and to gain an insight into the changing plant assemblages with the progradation of the delta and the establishment of delta-top successions. The study also looks at pollen evidence for environments in the river catchment at the time of deposition.

There is a clear relationship in the changes of pollen types, dinoflagellate activity and sedimentology representing a significant shift in the location of the primary trunk channel during this early stage in the delta's history.

Reconstruction of channel and barform architecture in a Kinderscoutian (Carboniferous) shelf-edge fluvio-deltaic succession

Roman Soltan [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]
William D. McCaffrey [2]
Douglas Paton [3]

[1] Fluvial Research Group, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK

[2] Turbidites Research Group, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK

[3] Basin Research Group, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK

* corresponding author: ee07r2s@leeds.ac.uk

Millstone Grit outcrops of pebbly, arkosic sandstone form a complex array of tor outcrops at Brimham Rocks, Summerbridge, North Yorkshire, UK. The succession forms part of the Lower Brimham Grit, a sequence of fluvio-deltaic origin within the N7 mesothem with R. reticulatum - R. moorei and R. nodosun - R. dubium goniatite marine beds forming the upper and lower boundaries, respectively (Kinderscoutian Regional Stage: ~318 Ma). Throughout the Kinderscoutian, the palaeoenvironment represented by the Lower Brimham Grit was supplied with sediment delivered from a range of provenances, predominantly eroded remnants of the Caledonian Mountains that lay to the north and northeast. The system formed a shelf-edge delta that ultimately delivered sediment to a series of submarine fans developing in distal, deep-water parts of the Craven Basin.

The complex array and three-dimensional nature of the outcropping gritstone tors generate features suited to high-resolution architectural analysis. Sedimentological data consisting of 1D sedimentary logs, 2D architectural panels, pseudo-3D fence diagrams, and palaeocurrent rose diagrams have been collected from the Lower Brimham Grit succession to establish the detailed depositional palaeoenvironment responsible for generating the preserved stratigraphic architecture. Sedimentary lithofacies present include simple trough- and planar-cross-bedded sets, compound cosets of cross-strata, low-angle-inclined ripple-laminated sandstones, planar-bedded sandstones, gravel sheets and rare thin siltstone beds. Individual lithofacies are arranged into common associations defining a variety of architectural elements including single-storey, multilateral- and multi-storey channels, downstream- and laterally-accreting macroforms and gravel sheet-like bodies, which collectively are indicative of accumulation in a poorly-confined network of fluvial channels developed between major sandy barforms. The overall succession represents the preserved product of an upper-delta plain system that was traversed by a dynamic, frequently avulsing braided fluvial system.

This high-resolution study of preserved sedimentary architecture forms part of a broader research programme that is investigating the mechanisms by which a series of Carboniferous fluvio-deltaic successions present across much of the Pennine region delivered sediment from shelf-edge deltas to slope and submarine fan successions in the Craven, South Pennine and North Staffordshire Basins.

Controls on hybrid flow transformation processes and resulting deposit character and distribution: a study from the Pennine Basin, Carboniferous, U.K

Southern, S. J. [1]*
McCaffrey, W. D. [1]
Mountney, N. P. [1]
Kane, I. A. [2]

[1] School of Earth and Environment, Woodhouse Lane, University of Leeds, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS2 9JT

[2] Statoil Research Centre, Postboks 7200,NO-5020, Bergen, Norway

* corresponding author: s.southern88@gmail.com

At their simplest, hybrid event beds (HEBs, also called linked debrites), comprise tiered deposits in which a relatively clay poor sandstone is overlain by a highly mud-rich sandstone. This vertical sequence is considered to represent flow state variation at a point during flow passage, with the beds sampling a longitudinal structure in flow rheology consisting of a relatively turbulent front and increasingly cohesive rear. In the last decade HEBs have been documented in various deep-water clastic systems from basins of varying age, configurations and size. Bathymetry is often considered a key role in triggering flow transformations through promoting flow bulking and clay enrichment following incision and/or through forced flow decelerations following gradient reductions or reversals. Further controls on the flow, once transformed, include basin size and configuration that influence flow run out length scales, in turn affecting flow transformation and the resulting deposit. Longer length scales, and accompanying longer transformation durations, are considered to promote development of a transitional flow state zone, associated with banded sandstone deposits, between the flow's cohesive rear and fore-running relatively turbulent front.

As deep-water clastic systems contain many of the world's largest petroleum reservoirs gaining an understanding of the controls on flow transformation to hybrid flow states is essential for better prediction of the character, extent and distribution of associated clay-rich sandy lithofacies which are typically associated with poor reservoir quality in both distal and proximal settings. New field data from the Pennine Basin, comprising detailed lithofacies analysis and correlation panels from basin centre and margin settings, document the character and distribution of HEBs. A comparison with systems at other scales highlights the effects of flow run out length on the mechanisms and duration of flow transformation and thus the resulting deposit characteristics and distributions within basin infill. These effects include; 1) type and number of lithofacies comprising event bed motifs; 2) proximal vs. distal event bed expressions (e.g. thickness and style of heterogeneity); 3) HEB extent (e.g. basin margin confined vs. relatively unrestricted); 4) rates of flow transformation inferred from rates of thickness change of the linked debrite; 5) presence of banded lithofacies.

Approaches to Modelling Sand-Body Connectivity in Low Net-Gross Fluvial Set tings

Jennifer Y. Stuart [1]*
Nigel P. Mountney [1]
William D. McCaffrey [1]

[1] Fluvial Research Group, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds

* corresponding author: eejs@leeds.ac.uk

The presence of reservoir-quality facies as secondary and tertiary splay and distributary channel deposits in otherwise mud-prone fluvial overbank successions can serve to provide significant connectivity between neighbouring major channel elements in avulsion-prone channel belts. However, conventional subsurface datasets (well and seismic data) typically are of insufficient resolution to accurately predict subsurface architecture for such minor fluvial elements.

Although well-log and core data provide excellent vertical resolution, typical well spacing in hydrocarbon provinces is several km, and in mining provinces is >100 m; the lateral resolution is therefore too great to accurately determine the 3D architecture of small-scale, tertiary channels. Likewise, tertiary splay and minor distributary channels (~3m thickness) are below the vertical resolution of seismic data.

Where well-spacing is too great to allow accurate correlation and hence modelling of tertiary channel elements, dimensions from modern analogues (e.g. Cumberland Marshes, Saskatchewan, and the Ob River, Siberia) may be used as a proxy with which to provide key attributes for input into stochastic models that demonstrate potential sand-body distributions and connectivity. The dimensions of modern analogue secondary and tertiary channels form the basis of a database, which is being employed to model probable spatial distributions of such channels in well and seismic datasets. Results from a subsurface case study demonstrate 3D architecture of reservoir-quality overbank deposits in low net:gross settings.

A study of secondary and tertiary fluvial elements deposited in interseams of the Late Permian Rangal Coal Measures (Bowen Basin, Queensland), utilises a suite of well logs from the South Blackwater Mine to estimate infill proportions of fluvial and overbank architectural elements. Channel width and sinuosity data is estimated from the modern analogue database. The resulting channel dimensions and infill proportions have been modelled stochastically using Reckonnect software, producing ranges of probable connectivity between channels, and probability of channel intersection by pseudo-wells in the modelled study area. The modelled interval predicts that the occurrence of these minor channels adds significantly to the connectivity of the interval as a whole, forming conduits for connectivity between neighbouring reservoir deposits, despite them not being recognised in the primary data.

Climatic and topographic controls on sand dispersal into NW European Triassic basins.

Shane Tyrrell [1]*,
Peter D.W. Haughton [1],
Patrick M. Shannon [1]
J. Stephen Daly [2].

[1] UCD Sand Provenance Centre, School of Geological Sciences, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

[2] National Centre for Isotope Geochemistry, School of Geological Sciences, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

*corresponding author: shane.tyrrell@ucd.ie

The Northwest European Triassic succession comprises the Early – Middle Triassic Sherwood Sandstone Group (SSG) and the Middle – Late Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group. These represent the deposits of large-scale endorheic drainage systems which accumulated in the arid to semi-arid interior of the Pangaean Supercontinent and infilled a series of wide, extensional rift basins. Provenance analysis of SSG equivalent sandstones in a range of basins, from the southern UK through to the northeast Atlantic Margin, has allowed regional Triassic palaeodrainage patterns to be constrained. This approach utilises the Pb isotopic of detrital K-feldspar which is an abundant framework grain in these sedimentary rocks.

When integrated with current Triassic palaeogeographic and climate models, the results suggest that both topography and flooding associated with an annual monsoon are likely to have been responsible for pre-sorting and ultimately transporting sediment from upland areas. This combination of processes can also account for the textural maturity, mineralogical sub-maturity and generally good reservoir quality of the sandstones. Significantly, the data highlight the presence of two distinct drainage domains: 1) the 'Budleighensis' domain, where systems flowed from south to north and were derived and controlled by the remnant Variscan Uplands; and 2) the Atlantic Margin domain, where drainage was oriented NW-SE and sediments were dominantly derived from Archaean-Palaeoproterozoic rocks including the Nagssugtoqidian of eastern Greenland, the Rockall Bank and the Lewisian of northwest Scotland and its offshore equivalents. The drainage divide separating these domains coincides with the Irish and Scottish massifs. Although these areas were of sufficient relief to act as a drainage barrier, they themselves appear not to have been a significant source for siliciclastics.

Predicting porosity preserving chlorite grain coatings using modern analogues: How hard can it be?

James Utley [1]*
Patrick J. Dowey [1]
Richard H. Worden [1]

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: james.utley@liverpool.ac.uk

Iron-rich chlorite (chamosite) grain-coatings can help preserve porosity in deeply buried clastic sandstones, beyond what would otherwise be expected during normal burial and diagenesis, as they inhibit quartz cementation on grain surfaces. Presently there seems to be no reliable way of predicting the distribution of chlorite grain coatings during petroleum exploration and appraisal.
The Leirarvogar Estuary, SW Iceland has a two to three metre tidal range, and is linked to a 250 km2 drainage basin of Tertiary and Pliocene-Pleistocene basalt volcanics, Holocene glacial sediments and peats. The estuary has been mapped and comprehensively sampled, to investigate how clay mineral assemblages vary across fluvial and estuarine environments. The identification and quantification of complex mixtures of poorly crystalline clay minerals found in many modern environments poses significant challenges. Extensive X-Ray Diffraction and complementary Fourier-Transform Infrared analyses have been successfully employed to positively identify and semi-quantify the clay minerals present.

Attached and detached deepwater units on a prograding base-of-slope clinothem and its implications for reservoir predictions. A regional outcrop study from the Permian age SW Karoo basin, South Africa.

Willem van der Merwe [1]*

[1] University of Liverpool

* corresponding author: woeke@liv.ac.uk

The description and recognition for detached units associated with clinothems in deepwater outcrops are rare and difficult to observe and describe. One of the largest expose (>4500km2) slope to base-of-slope and basinfloor systems, Units A to F of the Laingsburg and Fort Brown Formations in the Permian age Laingsburg depocentre, gives the very unique opportunity to describe and differentiates between attach and detached systems.

The Laingsburg depocentre represents a prograding system with the base-of-slope shifting broadly from the West towards the East. Exposures of Units A represents basin floor depositional systems with a base of slope area not expose and show little to no effects of topographic controls whereas Unit B represents a base-of-slope system. Units C, D, E and F are presented as upper to mid-slope systems, which shows deeply entrench sand and levee filled channels in the proximal positions and attach distributary channels towards the distal areas with lobe deposits interweaving with levees. The deposits of Units C and D cause the prograding of the base-of-slope basinward which constitutes a possible topographic high in the proximal areas. Units E and F are characterised by deep entrench channelised valleys filled with muds and silts which cuts down into the topographic high for the supply of sediment towards the distal basinfloor areas. Sediment that feeds these singular entrench channel feeders are rapidly bypassed and filled up by muds and silts which cause the detachment of the sand-rich thick depositional lobes from the base-of-slope feeder channels. Units E and F shows also well defined areas of channels, levees and lobes with a low percentage of interweaving. The vacant areas (detachment areas) shows facies associations of distal levee fringes and areas of deformation. Thus the detach systems represents high energy erosional bypass environments detached from low energy depositional environments.

This dataset provides and exploration scale insight and understanding of how different segments of a prograding slope evolved over time in terms of gradient, morphology and hence the degree to which sand was stored or bypassed to the basin floor for attached and detached systems. The study also exerts an important predictable control on seal geometries and the distribution of sedimentary facies and architectural elements at reservoir scale.

Flume experiments to test sedimentary bedform development with increasingly limited sediment supply.

Katrien J.J. Van Landeghem [1]*
Jaco H. Baas [2]

[1] School of Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool, 4 Brownlow Street, Liverpool, L69 3GP, England, UK

[2] School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University, Menai Bridge, Anglesey, LL59 5AB, Wales, UK

* corresponding author: katrien.vanlandeghem@gmail.com

From geophysical data documenting extremely large and symmetrical sediment waves in the Irish Sea, we get the impression that the supply of mobile sediments could play a significant role (Van Landeghem et al, 2009). From flume experiments, it apparent that both the geometry and organisation of small sedimentary bedforms depend on the mobile sediment supply limitation (e.g. Tuijnder et al., 2009).

With uni-modal sand (d50 = 0.264 mm) in a uni-directional recirculation flume tank, we aimed to document sedimentary bedform development with gradually decreasing mobile sediment supply.
From preliminary data analyses, we observed that the sinuous ripples formed in ample mobile sand progressively became more organised (height and spacing more regularly) when sediment supply became increasingly limited. These sediment-starved ripples also formed with reduced height and length, as expected. As the sediment supply was progressively decreased, the trend of decreasing bedform steepness (height/spacing) reversed, with ripples also becoming slightly higher and longer again. This would suggest that for certain percentages of sediment supply limitation, there is perhaps a window of opportunity for sediment-starved sedimentary bedforms to transform towards isolated bedforms, growing higher and steeper.

Where the initial mobile fraction was so sparse that it no longer covered 100% of the underlying bed, individual barchanoid ripples formed instead.

This and other information from our flume experiments cannot easily be extrapolated to the shelf sea environment, but it will guide us to carry out targeted experiments in the future, increasingly incorporating elements in the flume that better represent the shelf sea natural environment, e.g. bi-directional flow, erodible lag deposits underneath the mobile bed, lateral variations in sediment supply etc.

Petrophysical properties of fine grained sedimentary rocks

Charlotte L. Watts*
Sarah J. Davies
Mike A. Lovell

Department of Geology, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, England, UK

*corresponding author: charlotte.watts@le.ac.uk

There is a growing appreciation that fine-grained sedimentary rocks are highly heterogeneous both sedimentologically and petrophysically. Mudstones, known by various terms including the often misused term shale, are volumetrically significant comprising some 60 % of the sedimentary record and are economically important, acting as source and cap rocks in conventional hydrocarbon reservoirs, source/reservoir rocks in shale gas plays, and locations for nuclear and chemical waste storage. Mudstones can be composed of variable proportions of silt- and clay-sized particles (including clay minerals) and may also contain a significant component of sand-sized grains. Different proportions of these grain sizes, the types of clay minerals and the heterogeneity of the fabric will influence the petrophysical properties (including porosity, effective porosity, and permeability). Depositional processes contribute to mudstone heterogeneity and typical fabrics include lamination, ripple cross-lamination and grading. Component types (for example, clastic, productivity-derived or authigenic) are also used to describe mudstones. Mudstones may be characterised petrophysically from their natural gamma ray signature, which is dependent on the proportion of potassium, thorium and uranium; or by their NMR response - where the water within the formation can be separated into clay bound, capillary bound or free fluid based on the restriction imposed on the molecule by its surroundings. The clay minerals have a strong effect on the petrophysical properties of mudstones due to their strong interparticle forces caused by their surface ionic charges and their large surface area per unit volume; these properties can lead to considerable bound water volumes.These separate fluid proportions are an essential part in understanding the role of free versus bound fluid and in determining effective and total porosities. Other log responses such as density are affected by the diversity of minerals, including pyrite, while resistivity log responses depend strongly on the clay mineralogy and the cation exchange capacity of the clay minerals. Understanding the individual and combined effects of the mudstone mineralogy, grain size distribution, and sedimentary fabric are key to improving our ability to predict in situ petrophysical properties and behaviour from downhole logs.

Quantifying the controls on grain size export from tectonically perturbed catchments: Case studies from Sicily, Calabria and Abruzzo, Italy

Alexander C. Whittaker [1]*
Sebastian Erhardt [1]
Alexander Norori-McCormac [1]
Faye Knight [1]

[1] Imperial College London

* corresponding author: a.whittaker@imperial.ac.uk

The magnitude, locus and characteristics of sediment export from catchments to neighbouring basins plays a significant role in controlling depositional stratigraphy. Fundamentally, the boundary conditions for sediment release from catchments are set by tectonics and climate, modulated by lithologic, hydrologic and geomorphic controls operating over the relevant time or length scale. A predictive understanding of sediment export to basins therefore requires (i) the integration of data illustrating the characteristics of sediment delivery within catchments and (ii) detailed constraints on how this supply signal evolves down-system, for a wide range of controlling variables.
Here we address this challenge. Firstly, we present a detailed data study linking hillslope sediment supply to trunk stream grain size evolution for three catchments with drainage areas > 30 sqkm in northern Sicily where tectonic uplift rates are > 1 mm/yr and where lithologies are well-mapped, using both sieved weight fraction and Wolman point count methodologies. We find that sediment input from coarse debris flows, rather than landslides, plays a dominant role in setting channel grain size and that coarse-fraction sediment export from catchments is intimately linked to channel-hillslope geomorphic coupling.
Secondly, we present detailed data on grain size export from the outlets of more than 40 tectonically perturbed catchments across Sicily, Calabria and Abruzzo, where we have excellent constraints on tectonic uplift rates, lithology and catchment hydraulic geometry. We demonstrate that for catchments in topographic steady-state, grain size release is strongly controlled by rock type, but is insensitive to drainage area and local uplift rates that are < 1 mm/yr. In contrast, for catchments responding transiently to tectonics, the calibre of sediment release is strongly controlled by the degree of tectonic perturbation. The southern Italian data-sets allow us to provide first order estimates of the volume and grain size distribution of sediment exported to the Straits of Messina as a whole, and we use terrace data to show there has been little change to this sediment release signal in the last 200 kyr.
Together, these results allow us to evaluate the relative importance of upstream source controls in setting the characteristics of sediment release from tectonically perturbed catchments to basins and provide new data to test the outputs of sediment routing system models.

An integrated palaeo-environmental re-interpretation of the Triassic Smith Bank Formation, UK Central North Sea.

Anne D. Wilkins [1]*
Stuart G. Archer [2]

[1] Department of Geology & Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE, Scotland, UK

[2] Department of Geology & Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, King's College, Aberdeen,AB24 3UE, Scotland, UK

* corresponding author: a.d.wilkins@abdn.ac.uk

The Triassic Smith Bank Formation (SBF) of the Central North Sea, has, for a considerable length of time been considered by many to comprise hundreds of metres of monotonous fine grained rocks. Historically, the Smith Bank Formation was interpreted as ephemeral lake, playa and distal floodplain deposits that accumulated within depressions created by halokinesis, across a gently undulating continental plain.

Here we show that the equally important occurrence of windblown silt deposits (loess) within the earliest Triassic of the Central North Sea, has to date, been underestimated. In comparison to the water lain deposits, loess can be shown to have significantly different petrographic characteristics in terms of its micro-fabric, micro-structure, cementation and detrital mineral assemblages.

The integration of both sedimentological and mineralogical micro-petrographic techniques confirms the meso-scale core observations that there are two main facies types within the SBF: (i) Stratified and (ii) Non-stratified. The stratified facies represent playa and floodplain environments while the non-stratified represent an environment of loess deposition.

The relative importance of each environment varies as the result of subtle climatic variations from hyper-arid to semi-arid. It is likely that the detrital source for the playa and floodplain via fluvial activity was consistently available, whereas the source of loess only intermittently supplied detritus during extended periods of hot, dry climatic conditions.

Oil charge preserves exceptional porosity in deep overpressured sandstone

Mark Wilkinson [1]*
Stuart Haszeldine [1]

[1] School of Geosciences, The University of Edinburgh, The Kings Buildings, West Mains Road, Edinburgh, EH9 3JW

* corresponding author: Mark.Wilkinson@ed.ac.uk

Exceptionally high-porosity sandstones at burial depths in excess of 4km are reported from oil provinces worldwide, yet the mechanism of porosity preservation remains controversial. There has been debate since the 1920s concerning the role of oil charge in preserving porosity. Here we present a large subsurface dataset from the Jurassic Fulmar Formation, UK Central Graben, in which average porosities in excess of 20% at 5500 m burial depth are common, but are found in fewer than 10% of oilfield sandstones worldwide. We interpret the data to show that the exceptional porosities are predominantly the result of early oil charging preventing cementation and chemical compaction. The effect is strongest in sands with relatively low detrital clay contents, so that sedimentary facies is still a controlling factor in reservoir quality. Overpressure and authigenic grain coatings also have some porosity-preserving effect.

The most dramatic evidence that reservoir quality is related to early oil charge is the spatial distribution of the porosity: the maximum porosity of the Fulmar Formation is systematically highest immediately below the top seal, and decreases below this despite uniform sedimentology. Hence, porosity is preferentially preserved where oil first accumulated in these unusually homogeneous reservoirs, at the top. In addition, the early-oil hypothesis can explain why, anecdotally, many hydrocarbon reservoirs have less aquifer support than would be predicted from the permeability of the crestal oil zone, i.e. cementation in the aquifer has not been retarded by the presence of oil, so the aquifer sands are less permeable than predicted from crestal well data.

An early oil charge prevents or significantly retards the chemical compaction and cementation of a sandstone reservoir, preserving porosity. There is independent evidence for early oil charging of reservoirs within the Central Graben, from fluid inclusion studies and K-Ar age dates of authigenic illite. If a reservoir receives the oil charge after compaction and cementation, then clearly there will be no porosity preserving effect.

Micro-quartz grain coatings, which have been proposed to preserve porosity during burial, are associated with only 5 % extra porosity in sands that exceed the worldwide average sandstone porosity by almost 20 %.

Seismic modelling and spectral analysis of outcrop data- insights into the sub-seismic world

Hongjie, Zhang [1]*
Ben Kneller [1]

[1] Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE. UK

* corresponding author: hongjie.zhang@abdn.ac.uk

Turbidite channels are important hydrocarbon reservoir types but difficult to predict due to their complex internal architectures and highly variable facies. The well-exposed, late Cretaceous San Fernando slope channel system in Baja California, Mexico, provides a good opportunity to analyze the internal architecture and lithofacies variation at unprecedented scales. Forward modeling and spectral decomposition methods provide the possibility to detect spectral features of the different architectural channel complex elements and lithofacies associations which are typically below seismic resolution.

The San Fernando slope channel system is a conglomeratic, deep-water channel-levee system that trends oblique to the slope, and consists of at least four channel complex sets (sensu Sprague 2002) each bounded by an erosional surface, where axial parts are controlled by a contemporaneous fault; architecture and lithology information from San Fernando outcrop were utilized to construct a detailed geological model that includes lateral and vertical architecture and lithology changes. The scale of the geological model is unique, in that the vertical scale is 250m and 2500m in horizontal, much larger than any reported in literature.

Presented seismic forward models of the slope channel system illustrate seismic responses of different typical slope channel lithofacies associations, show the effect of physical property variation on seismic expression and spectral response. For the same channel-levee model, different physical property input results in widely differing seismic expression. Identification of amalgamated channels in the axial part is hard due to their similar lithofacies association, and the strong reflection in marginal parts makes the seismic expression of geometry misleading. Spectral analysis of synthetics shows that thin, non-amalgamated channels are detectable at low frequencies and channels' discontinuity shows up at high frequencies, the axial amalgamated channels are not revealed at any frequencies. Preliminary tests on different internal architecture models indicate that some of them could be detectable by using spectral decomposition. The results highlight how this approach has the potential to improve the identification of sub seismic architectural elements in conventional subsurface seismic data, thus enhancing reservoir prediction.