

Leopold-von-Buch Medal awarded to Brian F. Windley

Prof. Brian Frederick Windley, Leicester, United Kingdom, is one of the leading field-based tectonicians of our time with emphasis on Precambrian crustal evolution, and he is best known for his textbook “The Evolving Continents”, published in three editions since 1977. Brian has made numerous important and innovative contributions to our understanding of tectonic processes governing the evolution of the continental crust from the Archaean to the Cenozoic, particularly in applying plate tectonic principles to understand the geology of Precambrian terranes. He was one of the first to recognise the difference between Archaean low-grade greenstone belts and high-grade granulite belts and was instrumental, together with his co-workers, to unravel the complex Archaean and Palaeoproterozoic geology of West Greenland. His work in southern India contributed significantly to recognise the role of carbonic metamorphism in the formation of granulites. He was also instrumental in understanding the Precambrian geology of Madagascar and its correlation with parts of southwestern India.

Apart from Precambrian geology, Brian and his colleagues have been deeply involved in research on the early Palaeozoic to Cenozoic tectonic evolution of Central Asia, and his most-cited paper is on tectonic models for accretion of the Central Asian Orogenic Belt (2007). His work on collisional and accretionary orogens led him to study the Kohistan Arc in Pakistan and ocean plate stratigraphy in Japan and to apply the knowledge gained from these field-based studies to understand the tectonic evolution of Proterozoic and Phanerozoic orogens.

Besides his worldwide activities, he also made important contributions to the geology of the United Kingdom in studying the Lewisian Complex in Scotland, blueschists in Anglesey, the Ballantrae Suture in southern Scotland and the subduction-accretion history of the Neoproterozoic to Cambrian Mona Complex in Wales. His extensive field experience led to innovative syntheses of Archaean to Phanerozoic plate tectonics, and in much of this work Brian tried to demonstrate that the types and evolution of many rocks and orogens of Precambrian age are little different from those in the Mesozoic to Cenozoic.

Brian Windley has published more than 340 papers in international journals, and he was editor or co-editor of seven books and of ten thematic issues of international journals. He also participated in many international activities such as several International Geological Correlation Projects, the Early Crustal Genesis Project of NASA, the International Lithosphere Project, the European Geotraverse Project, and the Subcommittee on Precambrian Stratigraphy of IUGS.

Brian began his geological career in 1963 as a geologist of the Geological Survey of Greenland after studying at the universities of Liverpool and Exeter. He then became Lecturer at the University of Leicester, then Reader, then full Professor, and since 2001 is Emeritus Professor at the University of Leicester. He was Head of the Geology Department at Leicester for several years and is a Visiting Professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan, the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China, and Honorary Professor at the Chinese Uni-



versity of Geosciences in Wuhan, China. At Leicester he mainly taught courses in Structural Geology and Evolution of the Earth, led many field excursions and supervised a large number of research students and post-doctoral research fellows, some of whom are now leading scientists in their respective home countries. His numerous international activities and high scientific recognition are also documented through his membership in several editorial boards of leading international geoscience journals and his organisation of several international conferences, particularly in cooperation with the Royal Society of London, the Geological Society of London, and the NATO Advanced Study Institute.

Brian Windley has contributed significantly to our understanding of tectonic and metamorphic processes that govern the evolution of the continental crust, mainly through extensive fieldwork, often in remote areas. One of his main achievements is the demonstration that modern-style plate tectonics operated through most of the Precambrian. The Deutsche Geologische Gesellschaft – Geologische Vereinigung recognises these achievements by awarding the Leopold-von-Buch Medal to Brian Frederick Windley.

Alfred Kröner, Mainz