



***Book Review***

## WEDDED TO THE ROCKS

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**C**hris Park (2017) **WEDDED TO THE ROCKS: The Life and work of Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873)**. 329 pages. ISBN 9781548851705 Self-published, printed by Create Space, available from Amazon.com

The pioneering early 19<sup>th</sup> century English geologist Adam Sedgwick is best known for having discovered and named the Devonian and Cambrian periods, based on extensive field mapping of the rocks in different parts of Britain and Europe. He was a defender of catastrophism and argued strongly against uniformitarianism that was gaining ground during his life time, and he played a leading role in the debate between creation and evolution. He taught geology in the

field to Charles Darwin, and was later highly critical of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural succession; nonetheless the 2 scientists remained close friends until their dying days.

2018 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his appointment at Woodwardian Professor of Geology at the University of Cambridge. This, the first full-length biography of Sedgwick, situates his geological work into a life rich in variety and colour. He was a complex and fascinating character—an ordained minister in the Church of England and a friend of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; he campaigned against the slave trade, and helped shape the reform of Oxford and Cambridge Universities.