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Book Review

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Book Review

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***Geology Bites* podcast** by Oliver Strimpel; https://www.geologybites.com; Twitter @geology_bites; Facebook @geologybites; Instagram oliverstrimpel

Along with an estimated half a billion people worldwide, I am an enthusiastic consumer of podcasts, and have been since the mid-noughties. I listen to lots of different genres, and several months ago was excited to discover *Geology Bites* by Oliver Strimpel. The podcast has a simple format, in which Strimpel talks to a leading geoscientist about a key aspect of their research: what they discovered, how they went about it and why it is important. Each episode runs for about half an hour, with new episodes appearing every week or two.

The episodes, numbering more than 50 at the time of writing, cover an impressively diverse range of topics, from the climate to the core, mountains to mass extinctions, supercontinents to snowball Earth, and mineral deposits to mantle plumes. The speakers include some of the foremost experts in their field and, after a somewhat Oxbridge-centric beginning, comprise a geographically varied bunch, of whom around one-third are women and several are early- or mid-career scientists.

Each episode opens with a short introduction and welcome from Strimpel, after which he asks his guest a series of questions aimed at unravelling the subject matter in a manner that is comprehensible to a layperson, but compelling to all with an interest in the Earth system. Strimpel's introductions are always thoughtful and informative, and are delivered with a clarity of expression that reflects both a solid understanding of the discipline and careful research into the specific topic of interest.

Strimpel has an interestingly broad scientific background. Starting with physics as an undergraduate, and astrophysics as a PhD student, he then became a museum curator, first in London and then in Boston, where he discovered the value and challenges of communicating science to the general public. He later became a patent attorney, and currently works for a large tech company in the US.

To satisfy his desire to understand the processes that have shaped Earth since it first formed four and a half billion years ago, Strimpel took courses at the Open University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then was persuaded by Mike Searle to take on a research project as a visiting fellow at the University of Oxford dating movement on the Karakoram fault, a major Himalayan structure. *Geology Bites* grew out of his desire to share what he had learnt. Searle is his guest both for episode one, where he talks about the fundamentals of mountain building, and for the milestone 50th episode on ophiolites.

The podcast has its own website (www.geologybites.com), and each episode its own page, on which are posted captioned illustrations and a bibliography of further reading for those wishing to delve deeper.

There are an increasing number of fine earth-science podcasts, many of which I listen to, but usually only when the episode is focused on my specific (solid Earth) interests. With *Geology Bites* I enjoy listening to all of the episodes, regardless of the subject matter. I have learnt a great deal about many topics that I knew almost nothing about before. If you haven't already done so, I strongly recommend you have a listen.

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