

# **“STRATA” SMITH: The Surveyor Whose Map Changed the World!**

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## **SUMMARY**

The title of Simon Winchester’s best selling book “The Map That Changed The World” sums up the momentous impact that Surveyor William Smith’s Geological map of part of Britain had on the Geological Community of the whole planet! For once, likely deposits of oil or mineral bearing ore could be readily identified by the analysis of the layers of surviving fossil specimens prevalent within the core samples extracted within the vicinity of the countryside tested. No longer was it necessary to engage in hit and miss wholesale and excessively costly excavations vandalizing the pristine environment to hopefully strike a rich vein of metal bearing material or aquifers holding underground water supply or oil/gas bearing cavities for future exploitation. Surface reconnaissance could be carried out to investigate the occurrence of any fossil remains which could lead to deeper archaeological searching in lower, older tiers of the ground strata pointing towards the likely probability of the surrounding area to contain those materials which would provide raw fuel and metals for refinement, development and refined fuel resources for domestic and commercial usage. The fact that “Strata” Smith was trained as a cadastral surveyor with practical experience in sub-surface mine and canal excavation measurements provided him with the necessary analytical qualities and alert mind to formulate his revolutionary method of matching the fossil record with the evolution of the earth which produced the creation of various types of geological deposits over millions of years. It would then be subjected to sedimentary and metamorphic processes which would naturally manufacture the different categories of material capable of refinement into the invaluable resources coveted by the human occupants to carry out construction and fuel the modern media of transportation and home warming desired by modern human inhabitation of our planet. Follow William from his early years practising as a land and mining surveyor through his formative period during which he most ingeniously derived his brilliant method of geological strata prediction through the diagnostic consideration of prevailing fossils which brought about the bestowal upon him of the “Father of Geology”. There is also a

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fascinating and thrilling added Australian connection to this story which features Simon Winchester's visit to the Australian National University in Canberra and how this institution came to possess one of the best preserved prints of this legendary 1815 Smith Map in the World.

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