

Tales from the Oil and Gas Fields and Thereabouts

Some 20 years ago the author decided to write a series of stories about events and people he encountered during his career with the oil industry as a petroleum geologist. This comprised a total of 61 stories plus two from pre-oil days. After that he did not do anything with them until his daughter persuaded him that he should publish them on Amazon Kindle. He thought other geologists might be interested in his experiences and mentioned this to two ex-presidents of the AAPG. They both liked the idea and told him to contact Hans Kraus who looks after “Historical Highlights” in the AAPG Explorer. Hans was keen on publishing his history as long as there was no mention of the Kindle book --- except in the author’s accompanying biography.

The talk will cover many of the tales in the book starting with the unusual account of how the author, a liberal arts graduate became an oil geologist. The next section will cover the discoveries he was associated with, including four major ones: Sarir in Libya, and Prudhoe Bay, Kuparuk River and Endicott in Alaska. All these have interesting tales associated with them. He will then consider the eight field seasons he experienced in Alaska including his cruise up the Inland Passage as assistant to the first mate, his very narrow escape in a helicopter crash, and his struggles trying to work out Brooks Range tectonics, among other things.

If time permits, the author would be delighted to elaborate on several other of the more interesting stories.

Biography

Christopher Lewis graduated with honors in French, German and Geography at Cambridge University in 1955. He spent a year as a trainee insurance broker at Lloyds of London and then decided to become a geologist. He graduated with honors in Mineralogy and Petrology at the University of London in 1960. He intended to teach or do research at a university, but was persuaded by British Petroleum to devote his energies to “soft rocks”.

He spent almost over 30 years working full time in the petroleum industry, almost entirely with BP and its associates. He was lucky enough to be closely involved with several oil discoveries, four of which were major ones: Sarir in Libya in 1961, and Prudhoe Bay, Kuparuk and Endicott in Alaska. He spent eight seasons field mapping in Alaska, chiefly on the Alaska Peninsula and the Brooks Range. He also spent two years in London overseeing BP’s exploration activities in the “Americas”, which, in fact stretched from West Greenland to the Falkland Islands. Most of the activity was in Canada, the US, Colombia and Peru.

He took early retirement from BP/Sohio in 1987. Besides being a consultant for Alaska exploration he helped set up in Houston, Energy Exploration Management Company, which was funded by Noranda Mines through John Masters at Canadian Hunter with the ambitious aim of finding giants in the onshore US. The company lasted just three years.

Since then he has chiefly provided a service of Basin and Play Evaluation in the US using the Nehring Data Base of Significant Oil and Gas Fields and Reservoirs. He has been a close friend of Richard Nehring for many years and like him, takes a keen interest in US oil and gas reserve estimates.

