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European Coal Geology

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Although there has been extensive closure of underground mines throughout the European Union, coal remains a major energy source. The growing energy demands of the developing countries mean that the world’s coal consumption continues to increase. The European Union has long established coalfields and considerable research experience in coal exploitation and utilization. This knowledge base will be important in the future development of coal. This volume of 17 papers on many aspects of European coal geology illustrates the depth and breadth of this research. The chapters cover a wide spectrum of interests in European coal geology from sedimentological, geochemical and exploration models, to exploration drilling and economic evaluation of coal deposits, on a local and country-wide scale, as well as the environmental aspects of coal burning and disposal of CO₂.

These papers were put together to fill a gap that exists in the literature on regional coal deposits. A forum for pure research papers already exists, catering for papers which are usually biased towards detailed geochemistry, petrography or sedimentology of coal and coal-bearing strata. This volume encouraged papers in which the description of coal deposits was specifically orientated towards the application of the research in the exploration for, exploitation of and environmental considerations required in the study of coal. Such an extensive spectrum of papers will appeal to a wide audience, ranging from researchers, lecturers and students to professionals in industry. The well-balanced content of the book should provide a particularly attractive read for those who seek an update on some of the coal deposits of Europe.

The low number of papers relating to geophysical exploration is unrepresentative of the amount of active research in this field. Several papers were expected from the British Coal Technical Services Research Executive at Bretby, but they were not able to publish their state-of-the-science findings because of the upheaval in the British coal industry at the time of going to press.

The editors are particularly grateful to Ms Gail Williamson for helping with the many essential administrative tasks associated with putting together a volume of this size. Naturally, they thank the authors and the referees of the manuscripts for providing the material for this book. They are grateful to those companies and organizations who provided finance either directly or indirectly. In particular the editors would like to acknowledge Atlas Exhibitions International Ltd, Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd, British Coal plc, British Geological Survey, British Drilling and Freezing Co Ltd, Golder Associates, Hall & Watts Systems Ltd, KRJA Ltd, Leicester University Bookshop, Peter J Norton Associates, Pergamon Press, Roberston Geologging Ltd, John Wiley & Son Ltd and World Mining Equipment. British Coal Opencast kindly supplied the photograph used to illustrate the front cover.