

Ery Hughes, Summer 2012 – South Africa

Over the summer I undertook my part II mapping project on the Vredefort Dome, South Africa. The project involved producing a geological map with associated cross-sections and a report. The area we choose to map was the Vredefort Dome which is the largest and oldest impact crater on Earth. It extends from Parys to Johannesburg and the area we decided to map was the collar which is a set of well-exposed, overturned units close to Parys.

We stayed with a local farmer who introduced to all the local landowners which was incredibly helpful as without this I don't think it would have been anywhere near as easy as it was for us to get land access. He also drove us into and out of the field everyday so that we wouldn't have to rent a car or leave the car unattended during the day.

The geology was absolutely fascinating and the rock types out there were totally unique. We spent twenty-eight days mapping an area about fifteen square kilometres. There were three pairs mapping the area and we worked in roughly parallel North-South running strips. Once back in Cambridge I've had to produce the geological map and also write the report which consists of discussing the rock types found, the structures, the metamorphism, impact-related features, sedimentology of the area and a geological history which brings all these ideas together. This will count as twenty per cent of my part II grade.

The whole trip was incredibly fun – around the mapping trip we spent travelling around South Africa including the Drakensberg, the Garden Route and Cape Town. We met a lot of very interesting people along the way and it was amazing to be able to experience another country for a prolonged amount of time and feel like you know it a little better. It has definitely been a highlight of my time at Cambridge and a huge bonus to doing the geology degree here.