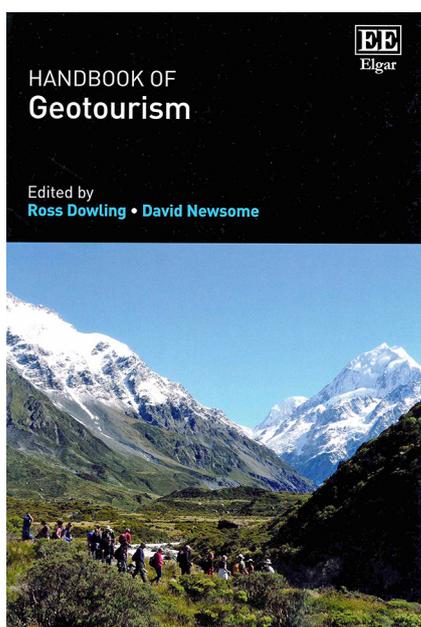


Book reviews

Handbook of geotourism, by Ross Dowling and David Newsome (Eds.), 2018. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Cheltenham, UK. 520 pages. Hardback: price £190, ISBN: 9781785368851.



Geotourism, or ‘The provision of interpretive and service facilities to enable tourists to acquire knowledge and understanding of the geology and geomorphology of a site (including its contribution to the development of the Earth sciences) beyond the level of mere aesthetic appreciation’, as it was defined by Thomas Hose some 25 years ago, is a rapidly developing branch that gains an increasingly wider audience and scientific recognition. Maybe two simple facts support this above statement. Firstly, in China only, the total number of people visiting geoparks has reached approximately 1.5 billion, and secondly, hundreds of scientific papers have been published on geotourism to date, and specialised journals devoted to the issue have been established. Taking into account the young age of geotourism (having been present only since the mid-1990s), such figures are truly impressive. It also explains why a new textbook dealing on the subject is a welcome addition.

The present tome, which came out three years ago, is edited by Ross Dowling and David New-

some, who both rank amongst the most distinguished experts in the field and wrote other papers and books on geotourism. Dowling and Newsome invited as many as 54 authors from 21 countries for this time, the main idea being to present the most up-to-date knowledge and approaches, but viewed from a much wider perspective than just the English-speaking world. Of equal importance, from the start, was the view that such a publication would be within the scope of interest of representatives of the academic community (scholars and students) and practitioners alike. It must be said that the authors, who dedicated their output to the late Professor Susan A. Moore, have achieved their ambitious goals and equipped readers with a valuable view on the subject matter.

The volume is divided into six parts, preceded by a separate chapter on the definition, characteristics and international perspectives of geotourism. This offers an interesting insight into the history of geotourism and the way it has been defined and perceived by various researchers over the years. The authors have attempted to discuss opposing views on how geotourism should be understood, i.e., in a narrower, geological sense (thus, as a ‘type of tourism’, according to the distinction made by Dowling and Newsome) or in a much broader, ‘geographical’ way (i.e., ‘an approach to tourism’). Considerations over this ambiguous topic were followed by a proposition for a unifying definition, which, I believe, might serve as a reference for years to come. In subsequent paragraphs of this chapter other key issues of geotourism are discussed, including a brief – yet much needed at this stage – literature review, with indication of the main research themes across the globe and of the discussion over the organisational side of geotourism, such as the emergence of new academic journals or the organisation major scientific conferences.

The first chapter, written by the editors, serves as an excellent introduction that encourages readers – even those not familiar with geotourism – to study the phenomenon. The following portions of

the book are organised in a logical manner, allowing the reader to, first, become acquainted with the basis of the science and its practical applications and, secondly, to acquire knowledge from valuable case studies. It is worthy of note that each part begins with a short preface, which helps to familiarise with the issue at hand. The first part is devoted to the relationships between geology and tourism; this theme is explored in six chapters in an attempt to provide answers to fundamental questions, such as: Who is a *geotourist*? How to transfer geoscientific knowledge to a wider public? How to make use of geographical information systems in geotourism? And many more.

The next three parts focus on geotourism theory and practice, covering a wide range of problems: development and management in geotourism, including sustainability issues (part II), perspectives of developing geotourism in urban areas (part III) and approaches to interpret geoheritage and educate visitors (part IV). These parts cover 13 chapters which, although prepared by various authors and in a different style, form a consistent and fascinating (geo)story. The last two parts discuss case studies from different parts of the world, with part V devoted to geoparks and part VI exploring the development of geotourism in selected areas.

It is certainly not an exaggeration to claim that the present volume ranks amongst the most comprehensive text books on the subject to have come out to date. Its great advantages include the most recent outlook on the subject (but with impressive historical references), its logical structure, international perspective, clear orientation towards both researchers and practitioners and the in-depth insight into (geo)education and (geo)interpretation. I believe Dowling and Newsome have progressed markedly since the publication of the book 15 years ago (Newsome, 2006). The *Handbook of Geotourism* is very likely to become a leading textbook on geotourism and, as such, should be recommended to all educational institutions.

References

Newsome, D., 2006. *Geotourism – sustainability, impacts and management*. Elsevier. 260 pp.

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