

from slick text output by word processors to material bashed out on a somewhat rickety typewriter. Unusually for such a publication there is one colour figure.

This book is definitely not for everyone. It is primarily aimed at a fairly narrow circle of specialists. The widest appeal exists in the sections on tectonics and palaeomagnetism. Outside the mafic dyke and sill fraternity, I doubt whether very many individuals will buy the book. However, at a little over £40.00, it should definitely have a place in most institutional libraries.

J. D. CLEMENS

Hutchison, R. and Graham, A. L. *Meteorites: the key to our existence*. London (Natural History Museum), 1992. 62 pp. Price £5.95.

This latest booklet in the series (which has

previously produced *Gemstones, Crystals, Volcanoes*) is clearly written and copiously illustrated with over 80 photographs and diagrams. The style is popular yet authoritative. In addition to dealing with the origin of meteorites and their abundance, details are given of their classification and of the various types. There is also a section on their terrestrial, cosmic-ray exposure and formation ages as well as on the formation intervals, e.g. about 150 m.y. for plutonium, meaning that plutonium was formed in a star just 150 m.y. before the formation of the sun and planets, and a useful discussion on time and the origin of the planets. It is argued that the relative cheapness of meteorite recovery contrasts sharply with the wealth of information which they provide. This booklet should be recommended to all Earth Science students.

R. A. HOWIE