

## Where Giants Lay Buried

Isaac Newton said he'd seen further  
    'By standing on the shoulders of giants'  
Then William Smith took his shovel  
    And scratched the surface of the land  
  
He painted vibrant new colours  
    Across this green and unknown land  
Smith saw deeper, and  
    He knew *where* those giants lay buried  
  
The giants that had spent 3 billion years  
    Pulling and pushing, growing and grinding  
To carve and polish this Emerald Isle  
    This chalk-white isle,  
    This coal-black isle  
    This red-sandstone isle,  
    This glistening-ore veined isle  
He laid these colours bare  
    And changed our world forever  
  
His whole life was devoted  
    To leaving 'no stone un-turned'  
Un-recognised, un-catalogued,  
    And un-appreciated  
  
And still Smith's stones lie,  
    Laid out like jewels  
Preserved for the nation  
    In a great vault of knowledge  
'*Subterranea Britannica*',  
    Was '*Terra Incognita*' no more  
  
This low-born Cotswold farmer,  
    This seeker of buried treasures  
Undreamt of by lesser,  
    Perhaps more pampered minds  
  
He took upon himself the role of anatomist  
    Peeling back the flesh of foliage and soil  
Presented Britain's bare bones for all to see  
    Like a surgeon before his eager students

In mine and road-cutting  
    Canal and drainage ditch  
        With his feet and with his fingers  
He teased out the secrets  
    Long hidden by Mother Nature  
  
From Cornwall's rocky toe  
    Dipped in the stormy Atlantic  
Across the gentle honeyed stone  
    Of fertile Midland vales  
To the soft sandy shores  
    Of Norfolk's rounded rump  
Up the craggy Pennine spine  
    Blackened by those Satanic Mills  
To the lofty heights  
    Of Scotland's peaks  
  
And 200 years on  
    Every mine and road and tunnel  
Every water well and reservoir  
    Mankind's reading of the  
    Great history book of the rocks  
The piecing together of the mighty  
    Jig-saw puzzle of Earth-time  
Folded and faulted  
    Baked and eroded  
  
It all owes a debt to this great  
    Man of the soil  
Sprung from a 'dust whom England bore,  
    Shaped, made aware'  
  
His life's work that was worth  
    A King's Ransom,  
And was finally rewarded by  
    A King's Pension  
Before he was laid to rest  
    In Northampton town  
Under a slab of English sandstone  
Down amongst the Giants  
    That he had awoken

Lewis Entwistle