

## **SEDGWICK STREET NAMED AFTER**

### **ADAM SEDGEWICK (1785 - 1873)**

Born in Dent, Yorkshire, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1785 he was third child of an Anglican Vicar.

In 1804 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, which became his chief home for the rest of his life. After being made a fellow in 1810, he was ordained; he later became a canon of Norwich. In 1818 he was elected to the professorship of geology, not because he knew anything about geology but on his general merits. However, he began enthusiastically to study the subject, giving lectures and making geological tours, but he constantly allowed himself to be diverted by business irrelevant to his geological work.

During 1821-1824 Sedgwick carried out researches in the north of England—on the Magnesian Limestone and New Red Sandstone and in the Lake District—but he delayed in the announcement and publication of his findings. Nevertheless, his standing in the world of science at that time and his general popularity were recognized by his being elected president of the Geological Society of London in 1829 and president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1833.

In 1831 Sedgwick began the work which will always be associated with his name: the establishing of a rock-succession, the revealing of a grand structure among the mountains of North Wales, and the consequent founding of the Cambrian system. He did not put his researches into writing, and this was the chief cause of the regrettable controversy which eventually developed with Roderick Murchison over priorities of discovery and nomenclature among these Lower Palaeozoic rocks (as they soon came to be called). However, Sedgwick did compose a few important treatises on the structure of rock-masses. In 1839 he and Murchison reported the results of their joint work which founded the Devonian system.

Thereafter Sedgwick's duties at his college and university caused his geological work, other than his lectures and the augmentation of his collections, to be almost entirely laid aside. Sedgwick never married. He died at Cambridge on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1873. His lasting memorial is the Sedgwick Museum at Cambridge, opened in 1904, one of the most famous geological schools.

