

Interactive comment on “Hydraulic fracturing in thick shale basins: problems in identifying faults in the Bowland and Weald Basins, UK” by David K. Smythe

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This is a preliminary response to Dr Westaway. Substantial responses to him and to the several other commenters are in course of preparation. I take all comments seriously.

Dr Westaway complains that Mr Clarke, of the Lancashire exploration licensee Cuadrilla, appears to have presented a substantially revised stratigraphy of the Bowland Shale in the Preese Hall-1 well.

I took the trouble to pre-order the released well data from DECC’s agents in early 2015, and obtained it on the day of release on 17 April 2015. Perhaps if Dr Westaway had taken the same care in sourcing his data, about which he has written and published

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so extensively, he would not now be in the litho- and bio-stratigraphic mess he finds himself in.

As part of the well package, there is a 795-page final well report dating from August 2012. It includes a biostratigraphy report prepared for the operator by Dr Nick Riley (MBE), explaining the reasons behind the revised stratigraphy.

In my view there is no excuse for Dr Westaway to have submitted for publication any paper going into detail on Preese Hall-1 after mid April 2015, as he has done, without taking into account the substantial new body of information in the public domain represented by the released well data package.

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