

## James Verdon – an introduction

Posted on 26th November 2014 by [Professor David Smythe](http://www.davidsmythe.org/frackland/?author=1)

Dr James Verdon is a post-doctoral research fellow at [Bristol University](http://www1.gly.bris.ac.uk/~JamesVerdon/). He has run a prolific blog, Frack-land, since 2011, under the pseudonym Dr JV, in which he declares: “I am an applied geophysicist based at the University of Bristol, UK. My interests include tight and shale gas, hydraulic fracturing, geomechanics, and carbon capture and storage”. His introductory post states: “To frack or not to frack? That is the question. I intend to find out. On the way I hope to inform, engage and enlighten.” Fair enough, you might say, but in practice most of his postings are very partisan, pro-fracking; not surprising from someone who is funded by the industry. He has also commented in *The Guardian* under a pseudonym.

I shall comment on some of his postings in later posts. This will be something of a catch-up exercise, since many of these postings of his require rebuttal and correction.

Categories: [Frackademics](#), Tags: [UK](#), [Verdon](#)



### Professor David Smythe

I am Emeritus Professor of Geophysics in the University of Glasgow (a courtesy title). I retired from the University in 1998 and live in France, where I continue my research in geology and geophysics.

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## Response to James Verdon – an introduction



*SadButMadLad*

15th December 2014 at 9:59 pm

Considering that Verdon knows the industry and publishes research and actually works I would have thought that he knows a lot more than you do, you who is out of date with the technology in the drilling business.



*Professor David Smythe* Post author

16th December 2014 at 11:45 am

Congratulations! You are the first to comment on my new blog. However, I am permitting your comment to appear only because it illustrates the mediocre quality of much of the debate around fracking:

1. You accuse me of being “out of date with the technology in the drilling business”. **This is an *ad hominem* attack** (i.e. playing the man, not the ball), presumably taking your cue from one of James

Verdon's posts of 2013 on his own blog.

2. **You have not bothered to read the science yourself.** This includes my later posts on James Verdon. In addition, if you look at my website where I discuss [Dr Verdon](http://www.davidsmythe.org/professional/insolence.html#Verdon) (<http://www.davidsmythe.org/professional/insolence.html#Verdon>), in the company of other 'frackademics', you will find a [link](http://www.davidsmythe.org/fracking/geosteering.pdf) (<http://www.davidsmythe.org/fracking/geosteering.pdf>) to a detailed discussion showing that it is James Verdon, not I, who misunderstands the technology of drilling.

As for me being out of date; I consulted for the oil industry from after my retirement in 1998 up till three years ago. I keep my computers (a high-end Windows PC and another similar one running Linux) up to date with sophisticated software for which the licences would cost you between \$50,000 and \$100,000. The programs are, of course, heavily protected from piracy by software keys, dongles, etc. You don't even get to access demo versions or updates unless you are a serious registered potential or actual customer.

If I were "*out of date*" why would the oil industry be prepared to hire me? I have foregone such paid work during the last three years, working instead *pro bono publico* on environmentally important geological issues such as nuclear waste disposal and shale gas. My numerous and highly technical reports in these areas would have cost of the order of £100,000 at proper commercial rates. **So whom should the public trust more, Mr SadButMadLad; myself or Cuadrilla-funded Dr Verdon?**

Your comment is the first and last of its type that will appear on my blog. However, I shall always welcome constructive criticism and discussion around the science.

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