

# **THE 4.2 ML WARWICK EARTHQUAKE OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2000**



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## **BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

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# **THE 4.2 ML WARWICK EARTHQUAKE OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2000**

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# **THE ML 4.2 WARWICK EARTHQUAKE OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2000**

## **1. SUMMARY**

On 23 September 2000, many residents of Warwick were awoken by an earthquake of local magnitude (ML) 4.2, at 05:25 am (04:25 UTC). It was felt up to a maximum intensity of about 5 on the European Macroseismic Scale (EMS) (Grünthal, 1998) in Warwick, Leamington Spa and Stratford-Upon-Avon, close to the epicentre, and was felt over a total area of about  $50,000 \text{ km}^2$  (Isoseismal 2). The earthquake was located about 2 km west of the city of Warwick at a depth of 14.4 km. This is the largest earthquake to occur in the UK since the 5.1 ML Bishops Castle earthquake of 2 April 1990, which was located near the Welsh border, about 100 km WNW of Warwick. The well-constrained focal mechanism for the Warwick earthquake indicates almost pure normal faulting on a NW-striking fault plane, either dipping moderately to the NE or to the SW. The T-axis is horizontal and strikes NE-SW and the P-axis is vertical. The location and orientation of one of the possible fault planes is consistent with the strike and dip of the SW-dipping Whitnash fault, which lies 5 km east of the earthquake epicentre. However, seismic lines reveal many similarly oriented buried faults in the region, and so the earthquake could equally have occurred on a buried fault parallel to the Whitnash fault.

# **2. INTRODUCTION**

The 4.2 ML Warwick earthquake is the largest earthquake to occur in the mainland UK since the Bishops Castle earthquake of 2 April 1990 event (5.1 ML), which was located 100 km to the WNW (Figure 1). The size of the event is not unexpected in the UK, as magnitude 4.0 ML and larger events occur about once every two years. The last event of similar size was the Arran earthquake (4.0 ML), which occurred on 4 March 1999 (Bott et al, 2002). The Warwick earthquake occurred in an area where few historic and instrumental earthquakes have previously occurred. Only 7 events have been instrumentally located within 20 km of Warwick since 1970. Historically, a few similar-sized events have occurred between 40-50 km away (1768, 4.1 ML Tewksbury; 1937, 4.0 ML Walsall; and 1940, 4.0 ML Coalville) (Figure 1). The largest recent instrumental event (May 1994, 3.0 ML) occurred 17 km to the southwest of the Warwick earthquake and was felt in Stratford-upon-Avon (Figure 1). The Warwick earthquake occurs at a transition zone between a more seismically active region to the northwest and a relatively aseismic region to the southeast, which can be observed in both the instrumental and historic earthquake catalogues. This event also had no aftershocks indicating that it could be a high stress drop event, with all the stress being relieved at once. Faulting possibly occurred along a pre-existing zone of weakness of similar faulting style and favourably oriented to the current stress conditions. Other events of magnitude greater than or equal to 4.0 ML in Britain are investigated to determine the existence and expected number of aftershocks and foreshocks.

TheWarwick earthquake was felt up to a maximum intensity of about 5 EMS in Warwick, Leamington Spa and Stratford-Upon-Avon, close to the epicentre. The area of isoseismal 2 EMS was about 50,000 km<sup>2</sup>, including Cheadle (85 km to the north), Gloucester (65 km to the south), Peterborough (95 km to the east), and even as far as Builth Wells (100 km to

the west). Over 2,400 responses to newspaper questionnaires and through the BGS 'Earthquakes' website (http://www.gsrg.nmh.ac.uk) were received on the felt effects of this earthquake, which were used to construct a macroseismic map for this event (Figures  $12 \& 13$ ). No significant damage was reported for this event.

# **3. EARTHQUAKE LOCATION**

The Warwick earthquake was recorded on BGS seismograph stations throughout the UK and data mostly from the Hereford, Swindon and Keyworth networks were used along with the LOWNET velocity model to obtain a location. Figure 2 illustrates the geographic distribution of stations with respect to the epicentre, used for the location. Arrival times at these stations are listed in Table 1. Location output and magnitude calculations are also provided in Tables 2a and 2b. The LOWNET velocity model (Table 3) was derived from the LISPB refraction profile (Bamford et al, 1976; Bamford et al, 1978; Assumpcao and Bamford, 1978). This velocity model is a good average UK velocity model and provides reasonable locations for most UK earthquakes; epicentres for larger events locating close to where they are most strongly felt.

Seismograms of the Warwick earthquake as recorded on the Hereford network are shown in Figure 3. The location of the epicentre is approximately 2 km west of the city of Warwick itself. The estimated error in epicentral location is calculated to be 0.9 km and the depth was computed at 14.4 km  $\pm$  7.5 km, indicating a range of between 6.9 and 21.9 km in depth. The depth is not particularly well constrained, the closest station being 39 km away (station SSW). The local magnitude, an average taken from three orthogonal pairs of horizontal components from strong motion instruments, was 4.2 ML (Table 2b).

The overall location quality of the hypocentral solution obtained using HYPO71 (Lee and Lahr, 1975) is classified as 'fair' C (B\*C), with a 'good' statistical fit for the data (B) and 'fair' azimuthal distribution of stations (C) with an azimuthal gap of 95º. The location errors were calculated relocating the event 50 times using HYPO71 and by randomly perturbing the velocity structure by  $\pm$  10% and also the phase arrival times. A one standard deviation change in location is quoted for the epicentral and depth errors, which are estimated to be 0.9 km and 7.5 km, respectively. Table 4 lists the details of the error analysis. A plot of the perturbed epicentres reveals an elliptical region approximately 2 km long and about 1 km wide. The direction of elongation is WNW-ESE and reflects the station configuration with respect to the epicentral location (Figure 2).

There were no aftershocks recorded for this event, which is unusual for events of this size in the UK. The 1999 Arran earthquake (4.0 ML) had two aftershocks, the Bishops Castle (5.1 ML) had six, and the 1984 Lleyn Peninsula event (5.4 ML) had well over 200. The foreshock and aftershock activity of moderate-sized earthquakes in southern Britain is investigated in Section 7 of this report.

## **4. FOCAL MECHANISM**

A focal mechanism was computed for the Warwick earthquake using the program FOCMEC (Snoke et al, 1984). This program can utilise both P-wave first motions, as well as SV/P amplitude ratios. It works on a grid-search method to find out which solutions fit the data and lists all possible solutions. The user specifies the number of allowed polarity errors and the increment in degrees for the grid search. Using all available data from the UK seismographic network and the UKNET broadband network operated by AWE, eighteen impulsive P-polarities were used, of which two were dilatational and eighteen compressional. One SV/P amplitude ratio for station CWF was also added. The resulting focal mechanism (Figure 4) is well constrained with just eleven possible and similar solutions with no polarity errors and a 5º-grid increment. The SV/P amplitude ratio does not provide much additional constraint to the solution, but was included here for completeness. The focal mechanism shows almost pure normal faulting on a NW-striking fault plane dipping moderately either to the northeast or to the southwest. The 'average' P-axis' is vertical and the T-axis is horizontal and strikes northeastsouthwest. The maximum horizontal stress, or intermediate stress axis, strikes NW, and is consistent with the regional compressional stresses. These are thought to be due to the ridge push force from the Mid-Atlantic ridge located to the north and west, and from the northward collision of Africa into Europe to the south.

Since the focal depth (14.4 km) for this event was poorly constrained, focal mechanisms were determined for a series of fixed depths, to determine if this had a strong influence on the resulting mechanism. As can be observed (Figure 5), the focal mechanisms for depths between 12 and 18 km are not significantly different from that calculated for a depth of 14.4 km (Figure 4), with a similar or fewer number of possible solutions. However, for depths of less than 12 km and over 18 km, the number of possible fault-plane solutions increases, though the focal mechanisms still represent predominantly normal faulting. The only difference is that the dip and strike of both focal planes are less constrained, because the station polarities mostly plot around the edge of the focal sphere (Figure 5). The instrumentally calculated depth of 14.4 km has large potential errors  $(\pm 7.5 \text{ km})$ , but the macroseismic depth (12-13 km) is in good agreement with this estimate. The focal mechanisms shown here indicate that this earthquake was a normal faulting event for a depth range of 8 to 22 km.

#### **5. MEASURED GROUND ACCELERATION**

Ground accelerations for this event were measured on three strong motion instruments. The ground accelerations are summarised in Table 5, the largest being recorded at Keyworth, in Nottinghamshire, a distance of 76 km from the epicentre. The measured accelerations were 17.3 mm/sec<sup>2</sup> on the vertical component, 16.6 mm/sec<sup>2</sup> on the north-south component and 20.8 mm/sec<sup>2</sup> on the east-west component (Figure 6). A response spectra (pseudo-relative velocity) was calculated for station KEY2 and indicates that energy in the 5-6 Hz range was excited during this earthquake at this site (Figure 7). Both peak vertical and horizontal accelerations were also measured from unsaturated velocity records from high and low gain seismographs and are shown as a function of distance in Figure 8. Predicted peak horizontal ground accelerations from several empirical attenuation relations (PML, 1982; Ambraseys and Bommer, 1991; Dahle et al, 1990) for an  $M<sub>S</sub>$  4.0 event are also shown. These relations are currently used for seismic hazard studies in the UK and generally overpredict the ground accelerations for the distances shown, as has been observed for other UK earthquakes (e.g the recent 1999 ML 4.0 Arran earthquake, Bott et al, 2002; Musson et al, 1994). However, the predicted horizontal peak ground accelerations shown here are for a surface-wave magnitude  $(M<sub>s</sub>)$  4.0 event, equivalent to a magnitude 4.4 ML, given the relationship between  $M_s$  and ML of Marrow, (1992) and

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so slightly larger than the Warwick event. The empirical attenuation relations were also developed from recordings of events of  $M_s = 4.0$  from both Europe and California and so may not be appropriate for the UK. However, one would expect the attenuation of peak ground accelerations for small events to differ from that of events large enough to cause significant damage to structures, due to the difference in both the frequency content and the duration of the highest accelerations. The average ratio between horizontal and vertical accelerations measured for the Warwick earthquake is 1.53 (the range is 0.94- 2.56), though only 18 measurements with two components were determined and these are from stations at distances between 76 and 800 km (Figure 8).

#### **6. GEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL SETTING**

The geology under the Warwick area (BGS, 1984, 1989; Old et al, 1987) comprises a thick sequence of Carboniferous and Permian rocks, unconformably overlain by Triassic and Jurassic rocks (Figure 9). The Carboniferous and Permian rocks are sedimentary, varying from deltaic coal measures of the Warwick coalfield, to subaerial red sandstones, marls, and fluviatile rocks. The Triassic stratigraphy is similar but becomes brackish up section eventually resulting in marine conditions towards the upper Triassic and into the Jurassic. The Carboniferous lower and middle Coal Measures unconformably overlie the Cambrian Merevale Shales.

The geologic record around Warwick reveals several periods of deformation (BGS, 1984, 1989; Old et al, 1987; Chadwick and Evans, 1995). Basement rocks, beneath the Carboniferous cover strata, are not well understood, though it is likely that major fault lines were developed or reactivated during the Caledonian tectonic events of the early Devonian. Carboniferous times were marked by extensional basin development, manifest in the Warwick area as sequences of upper-Carboniferous post-rift strata. Basin inversion occurred after deposition of the Enville Group (the end- Carboniferous Variscan events) with localised fault reversals and associated folding. Subsequent regional erosion led to development of the sub-Triassic unconformity. Triassic through early Cretaceous times were marked by renewed extensional basin formation. Subsequent to this, the major structural events are likely to have been related to Cenozoic basin inversion, though hard evidence of this is lacking in the Warwick area.

The Knowle basin and also the Worcester basin further to the west were both formed as a result of roughly E-W directed Permo-Triassic extension (Andy Chadwick, BGS, written communication, 2000). The major Permo-Triassic basin-bounding faults lie within the hanging-wall blocks of underlying Variscan thrusts and were probably formed by reactivation of these older structures (Chadwick and Evans, 1995). A series of Permo-Triassic and younger, N-S and NW-SE-striking normal faults crosscut the region. Some of these are associated with the Meriden fault, which lies to the west of Warwick and marks the eastern boundary of the Knowle basin and the western edge of the Warwickshire coalfield.

The structural development of the region appears to have been influenced by basement structural trends that have been periodically reactivated through the geologic record and under different tectonic regimes. Some N-S basement structural trends in the region are thought to date back to the Precambrian (Pharoah et al 1987) and were thus also reactivated during Variscan times. Faulting continued into the Jurassic and Cretaceous, resulting in a few NW-SE-oriented faults which also cut lower Jurassic rocks,

such as the Whitnash and Princethorpe faults (Figure 9).

The preliminary instrumental location of the Warwick earthquake places it just west of the W-dipping Warwick fault (Figure 9) which along with other parallel faults form part of a series of Permo-Triassic and younger, steeply-dipping normal faults, with either approximate N-S or NW-SE strike. The depth of the Warwick earthquake of 14.4 km is not particularly well constrained because the closest seismograph station to record the earthquake was 40 km away. Location errors are of the order of 1 km horizontally and 7.5 km in depth, indicating that the proximity to the Warwick fault does not necessarily indicate it as the source structure. The preliminary focal mechanism indicates almost pure normal faulting on a NW-SE oriented plane, dipping either to the NE or to the SW. The style and orientation of the focal mechanism (Figure 4) is more consistent with the NW-trending W-dipping Whitnash fault that lies about 5km to the east of the earthquake epicentre. Equally likely, the Warwick earthquake may have occurred on an unidentified buried fault. Seismic lines from the Worcester basin (Chadwick and Evans, 1995) reveal many such buried faults. The minimum compressive stress direction derived from the focal mechanism is consistent with the regional minimum horizontal stress being oriented NE-SW as determined from borehole breakouts and from other focal mechanisms (Brereton and Evans 1987; Marrow and Walker, 1988; Ritchie and Walker, 1991; Marrow and Henni, 1994). The maximum horizontal stress (intermediate stress axis) is oriented NW-SE and is consistent with the regional NW-SE compression which is thought to result from the ridge-push force from the mid-Atlantic ridge to the north and west and the northward-collision of Africa into Europe to the south.

# **7. INSTRUMENTAL SEISMICITY AND ANALYSIS OF DEPENDENT EVENTS**

The area around Warwick has experienced few earthquakes, though historically, similar-sized events have occurred some 50 km from this event (Figure 1 and Section 8). There have only been 7 events within 20 km of the Warwick earthquake in the last 30 years of instrumental monitoring, the largest, with a magnitude of 3.0 ML, occurred 17 km to the SW (Figure 1) near Stratford-Upon-Avon. When analyzing the instrumental record, the uniformity of seismographic coverage for the UK must be taken into account, since the station distribution has been gradually developed over a period of 30 years.

Southern Britain has not experienced uniform seismographic coverage with time over the instrumental period (since 1970). In the 1970s, only the network around Edinburgh (LOWNET) was operational, and so during this period, only events of about magnitude 3.0 ML and over would have been uniformly detected under average noise conditions. However, an event of this size would almost certainly have been felt and thus recorded in the catalogue. Since about 1980, earthquakes of 2.5 ML and larger should have been uniformly detected in southern Britain, because of the installation of additional stations in England and Wales. From 1995, earthquakes as small as magnitude 1.5 ML should have been uniformly detected (under average noise conditions), due to a further expansion of the network. Figure 10 illustrates historical and instrumental events of magnitude 3.0 ML and over prior to 1980, and events of magnitude 2.0 ML and over since 1980. Seismic activity is much higher to the north and west of the Warwick event , and lower to the south and east. A plot of only instrumental earthquakes of magnitude 1.5 ML and larger since 1995 (Figure 11) also illustrates the same general pattern, though many of the events in the Midlands are coal-mining related and not tectonic in origin.

The Warwick earthquake therefore appears to be located at a boundary between the more seismically active region to the north and west and a less active region to the south and east. This change in seismic activity could be related to southernmost edge of the last large glacial ice sheet to cover Britain (about 18,000 years before present) and so related to post-glacial relaxation. It might also be related to a change in the basement structural grain with faults to the south not being favourably oriented to the current stress conditions, or it could reflect some other change in the nature of the basement, the aseismic region defined by the London-Brabant platform. Another alternative explanation is that it marks the edge of a region of hot mantle to the north, which lies beneath the majority of the British Isles, and has only been observed in recent tomographic studies (Goes and Govers, 2000; Marquering and Sneider, 1996). The effects of an elevated mantle temperature beneath the UK on its uplift history and on its relation to seismicity in the UK are discussed in Bott and Bott (2002).

The Warwick earthquake did not have any foreshocks or aftershocks and occurs in a region of low seismicity. Other events in the UK instrumental catalogue of similar size are investigated to determine typical foreshock and aftershock activity. The historical record is difficult to analyze in this manner since small aftershocks may not have been felt and thus not reported. The instrumental record, however, can provide additional evidence of dependent events that are too small to be felt. Table 6 summarizes all the instrumental events in the UK of magnitude 4.0 ML and larger, in terms of their dependent event activity. The definition used here for a foreshock is any event occurring in the same region in the week prior to the mainshock, and an aftershock is an event occurring in the same region during the year following the mainshock. Two-thirds of the events have foreshock or aftershock activity or both. The average maximum aftershock magnitude (ML) is 1.5 units below that of the mainshock magnitude, though the difference in magnitudes varies from 0.2 to 3.6 units. Three of the earthquakes without dependent event activity occurred in the early to mid 1970s when few seismographic instruments were operational. These events may have had small dependent events that were not large enough to be felt or detected, much the same as events in the historical catalogue.

Therefore, we can conclude that, despite such a small data set, the Warwick earthquake is unusual in not having any aftershock activity compared to other UK earthquakes of similar size or larger. One explanation for this could be that the earthquake occurred along a pre-existing normal fault of favorable orientation to the current stress conditions resulting in complete stress relief. However, it is thought that aftershocks result from both dynamic and static stress changes caused by the mainshock to the surrounding rocks, and that these stress changes can trigger events on nearby faults that are close to failure. Thus another explanation for the lack of aftershocks is that the Warwick earthquake did not cause the necessary changes in the surrounding stress field to trigger other events, or there are no nearby faults that are close to failure.

# **8. HISTORICAL SEISMICITY**

Historically, Warwick itself has not experienced any earthquakes of this size but the surrounding regions appear to be more seismically active. The largest historical events within 100 km occurred on 6 October 1863 and 17 December 1896 near Hereford with estimated magnitudes of 5.2 and 5.3 ML respectively (Figure 1). The 1863 Hereford earthquake was felt across most of England and Wales and into northern France indicating that it was quite large (similar to the felt area of the 1984 Lleyn Peninsula event), though no significant damage was reported (Musson, 1994). The maximum intensity is only 5 EMS. The 1896 Hereford earthquake, however, was also felt over a similar area, but caused extensive damage to chimneys in Hereford itself, with the worst damage occurring in villages just to the east of Hereford (Musson, 1994). A maximum intensity of 6 EMS has been assigned to this event. This event also had several substantial foreshocks (two of magnitude 4.1 ML) some hours prior to the main event, and a few weak aftershocks. The 1863 event is thought to have been deep, owing to its large felt area and lack of high intensities, whereas the 1896 event is thought to occur at a similar depth to the Warwick event.

The closest historical earthquake to Warwick (about 25 km to the north) was the 31 January 1888 Birmingham event with a magnitude of 3.2 ML. Several similar-sized events to the Warwick earthquake are reported in the historical record about 40 to 50 km from Warwick. These include; the 4.1 ML earthquake at Tewksbury on 21 December 1768, about 45 km to the SW; the 4.0 ML (instrumental magnitude) Walsall earthquake on 9 July 1937, 40 km to the NW; and the 4.0 ML Coalville earthquake on 14 July 1940, about 50 km to the NNE (Figure 1). Musson (1994) believes the magnitude of the 1937 Walsall earthquake to be much lower (~3.0 ML) based on macroseismic evidence and suggests that this might have been a shallow collapse event producing large surface waves. This would explain the high instrumental magnitude but very small felt area, which is commonly observed for shallow mininginduced events (Musson, 1994). The event near Coalville could also be mining related but not much is known about this event.

# **9. MACROSEISMIC STUDY**

Initial reports suggested that the Warwick earthquake had been felt over a wide part of the Midlands and surrounding area, and into Wales. A macroseismic survey was completed using the BGS methodology described in Musson and Henni (1999). Questionnaires were placed in many regional and local newspapers giving extensive coverage over the felt area. Additionally, an electronic questionnaire was made available on the main BGS web site, and on the BBC news site from which 400 e-mailed responses were received, the most for any UK earthquake so far.

The total number of usable replies was 2,460, of which 2,299 were positive and 161 were negative. From the larger settlements sufficient replies were received to allow the assignment of intensities, but many small hamlets and isolated farms contributed single questionnaires, from which it was more difficult to establish reliable values. The total number of places from which replies were received was 283 (after amalgamating replies from very close settlements less than 2 km apart). The large number of replies received is partly a function of the strength of shaking in the most affected area, but is also influenced by the fact that the shock occurred in the heart of the English Midlands, a well-populated area.

The highest intensity experienced was 5 EMS, which was observed quite widely over an area around and south of Coventry, and east of Stratford-Upon-Avon (Figures 12 and 13). In this area, there were many intensity 4 and 5 observations, and some borderline cases. Intensity 5 EMS was generally distinguished by an increased number of reports of objects thrown down, a greater level of alarm, and a greater tendency for the shaking to be described as strong. Objects thrown down included a large vase of flowers, books thrown from shelves, tools from hooks and a clock thrown off a wall. In a number of

cases alarms were set off, and in one case at Claybrooke the automatic fuel cut-out in a car (designed to operate in case of a collision to stop engine fires) was triggered. This last occurrence is something of a novelty in macroseismics (such devices being quite recent in manufacture) but evidence of quite strong shaking. In some places (e.g. Daventry) the shock was perceptible out of doors, though the time of day that the event occurred (05:25 BST) meant that few potential observers were outside. There were no reports of people running outside in fright, though some people did go and investigate. Animals (pets, cage birds, horses) were alarmed in many cases. A very common report was the creaking of house joists.

No serious damage was reported. The following excerpts from the macroseismic survey give some idea of the types of minor damage that occurred:

Coventry South East - "… cement pointing fell out of roof - not there day before …"

Daventry - "... some plaster fell off ceiling above front door ..."

Kenilworth - "…cracked cast iron downpipe at the rear of the house … ceiling cracks enlarged … one or two new cracks in internal plaster …"

Nuneaton East - "… plaster fell from wall … damage to window pane … the window cracked …"

Rugby North East - "… ridge tiles shifted …"

Rugby South West - "… some broken china and a fallen roof tile …"

The most distant reports were from Hay-on-Wye and Builth Wells in the west, some 120 km away, Witnesham (near Ipswich) to the east, a distance of just under 200 km, Wakefield to the north, at around 150 km away and Winchester to the south, at about 150 km away. The total felt area is over  $51,300$  km<sup>2</sup> (Isoseismal 2), as shown in Table 7.

The distribution of intensity points and isoseismals is shown in Figure 12, with an inset map of the epicentral area shown as Figure 13. Isoseismals can be drawn for intensity 5, 4, 3 and 2 EMS. As is usual, not many places can be assigned an unqualified intensity 2 observation. But the scarcity of reports from heavily populated areas such as South Yorkshire and the Thames Valley indicates that the intensity was generally 2 in these areas. The isoseismals show an elongation in the NE-SW azimuth, especially those for intensity 3 and 4. The areas within each isoseismal (rounded to the nearest 100  $km<sup>2</sup>$ ) are shown in Table 7.

Macroseismic parameters were calculated according to the procedures described in Musson (1996). The magnitude was calculated to be 4.1 ML from both the 3 and 4 isoseismal. The macroseismic depth is around 12-13 km. These values (for both magnitude and depth) are within the error margins of the instrumental determinations, showing that both methods of calculation are in good agreement.

#### **10. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

The Warwick earthquake with a magnitude of 4.2 ML, was the largest earthquake in the UK since the 1990 Bishop's Castle earthquake (5.1 ML). It occurred in a region that has not experienced many local earthquakes, though several similar-sized historical earthquakes have occurred in the surrounding regions, 40-50 km away. This earthquake appears to lie at a transition zone between a seismically active region to the north and west (Midlands and Welsh borderlands), and a less active region to the south and east. This transition is evident in both the instrumental and the historical record. In the Midlands to the north, several earthquakes appear to be associated with coal-mining, however more detailed studies (for example, Lovell et al, 1997) reveal that some of the events were also of tectonic origin, since they occurred at greater depths than typical coal-mining related activity and had no midweek peak of activity. This transition zone might reflect the southern extent of the last large glacial icesheet or could be related to some other phenomena, such as a change in the structural grain of the basement or the edge of a region underlain by hot mantle.

The Warwick earthquake did not have any foreshocks or aftershocks, which could indicate complete stress release along the fault, being favorably oriented with respect to the current stress conditions. An investigation into the foreshock and aftershock activity for events with magnitudes = 4.0 ML in southern Britain indicates that this is unusual. About two thirds of the events have at least one aftershock and the other three events with no aftershocks all occurred in the early to mid 1970s when few instruments were recording in the area. Small events, such as ones similar in size to the aftershocks of the Bishops Castle event (the largest had a magnitude of 1.5 ML), could have been missed at this time, not being large enough to be recorded or reported as felt. One of the large historical earthquakes around Hereford (1896, 5.3 ML) had significant foreshock and some weak aftershock activity reported. Another explanation for the lack of aftershock activity could be that the earthquake did not produce large enough stress changes in the surrounding rocks to trigger any events on nearby faults that might be close to failure, or that there were no faults nearby close to failure.

The Warwick earthquake occurred close to the Warwick and the Whitnash faults, two Permo-Triassic or younger faults associated with the Meriden fault which marks the eastern edge of the Knowle basin that lies to the west of Warwick. The Meriden fault occurs along a structural weakness, which appears to have been reactivated throughout geologic history under different tectonic environments. The focal mechanism indicates normal faulting on a NW-trending fault plane, either dipping to the NE or SW. The SW dipping plane is consistent with the strike and dip of the Whitnash fault, 3 km east of the epicentre. The epicentral location is well constrained, but the depth is not, and could be between 6.9 and 21.9 km (1 sd). The calculated depth of 14.4 km, however, appears reasonable and is also consistent with macroseismically-determined source parameters. This earthquake, however, cannot be definitively associated with the Whitnash fault, since many similarly oriented buried faults may exist such as those revealed on seismic lines in the nearby Worcester basin. This earthquake could easily have occurred on a buried fault.

The T-axis determined from the focal mechanism is oriented NE-SW, consistent with horizontal minimum stresses determined from borehole breakouts (Brereton and Evans 1987) and other UK focal mechanisms (Brian Baptie, unpublished work; Ritchie and Walker, 1991; Marrow and Henni, 1994; Marrow and Walker, 1988). The P-axis is vertical, but the maximum horizontal stress (the intermediate stress of this focal mechanism) is consistent with NW-directed compression. This regional compression is also evident in borehole breakouts (Brereton and Evans 1987) and other focal mechanisms and results from the SE-directed ridge-push force at the Mid-Atlantic ridge and from the NW-ward collision of Africa into Europe (Ritchie and Walker, 1991). This earthquake appears to be a result of reactivation of an older SW-dipping fault that is favourably oriented under the current stress field.

The earthquake was felt over a large area  $(\sim 50,000 \text{ km}^2)$  and a macroseismic map was constructed from the responses to the macroseismic survey. The macroseismic epicentre is about 10 km to the ENE from the instrumental one, but this may be affected by underlying geologic deposits, the source mechanism, and possibly directivity of slip along the fault plane. There is a NE-SW elongation observed in the isoseismal lines, which might result from the radiation pattern of this earthquake. The fault is normal faulting with the P-wave nodal planes (therefore shear-wave maximum) along the focal planes. This would result in larger shear-wave amplitudes in the NE-SW direction.

Recorded ground accelerations from the Warwick earthquake are less than the predicted empirical relations used for UK seismic hazard studies, at least for distances greater than 76 km. This has been observed for other UK earthquakes (Musson et al, 1994; Bott et al, 2002). Three 3-component sets of ground accelerations were recorded for this earthquake on the BGS strong motion accelerometers, the maximum horizontal acceleration being  $20.8$  mm/sec<sup>2</sup> at a distance of 76 km. In addition, horizontal and vertical peak ground accelerations were measured from all unsaturated velocity instruments by differentiation and removal of the instrument response. These provide a basis from which an empirical attenuation relation for the UK might be determined in the future. The average ratio between horizontal to vertical ground motions was found to be about 1.5, at distances greater than 76 km.

## **11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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#### **TABLE 1 INPUT DATA FOR THE HYPO71 LOCATION PROGRAM**

HEAD

RESET TEST $(3) = 0.500$ 

 SSW 5158.00N 98 9.01E 291 CWF 5244.31N 9841.54E 203 HAE 52 2.21N 9727.40E 260 KEY 5252.67N 9855.46E 59 KEY25252.74N 9855.38E 76 SKP 5143.31N 9911.42E 212 KTG 5219.58N 9935.89E 83 SWN 5130.82N 9811.96E 192 HLM 5231.10N 97 7.16E 429 KUF 5237.02N 9936.56E 38 MCH 5159.84N 97 0.10E 219 HBL252 3.05N 9657.81E 437 SSP 5225.06N 9653.29E 428 HEA 5121.50N 9844.17E 100 HGH 5138.27N 9711.66E 223 KBI 5315.26N 9828.33E 272 WOL 5118.77N 9846.63E 158 HTR 52 4.71N 9643.93E 337 SWK 51 8.90N 9745.17E 266 LLW 5250.95N 9620.10E 213 SCK 5252.78N10045.04E 61 MMY 5410.56N 98 7.86E 427 BHM 5112.78N10110.44E 100 4.000 0.000 5.900 2.520 6.450 7.550 7.000 18.870 8.000 34.150 10. 80. 105. 1.73 4 1 1 1111 SSW IPU 000923042352.81 CWF IPU 000923042355.21 62.00ES 2 HAE IPU 000923042357.29 KEY IPU 000923042358.86 KEY2EP 4 000923042358.88 SKP EP 2 000923042359.25 KTG EP 3 000923042359.33 SWN EP 4 0009230424 0.29 10.78ES 2 HLM IPU 0009230424 0.55 KUF IPU 0009230424 0.65 MCH IPU 0009230424 1.92 13.60ES 2 HBL2EP 4 0009230424 2.25 SSP IPU 0009230424 2.70 14.95ES 2 HEA IPU4 000923042402.68 HGH IPU 0009230424 3.31 KBI IPU1 0009230424 3.68 WOL IPU4 000923042403.49 HTR IPU 0009230424 4.23 SWK IPU1 0009230424 7.45 LLW IPD4 000923042410.20

SCK IPU4 000923042413.00 MMY IPU4 000923042417.19 BHM IPD4 000923042420.86 10

## **TABLE 2a OUTPUT FILE FROM HYPO71 LOCATION PROGRAM**



# **TABLE 2b INDIVIDUAL MAGNITUDES CALCULATED FOR EACH STATION**

# **STATION MAGNITUDE**



### **TABLE 3**

# **DEPTH / CRUSTAL VELOCITY MODEL USED IN THE WARWICK EARTHQUAKE LOCATION**



## **TABLE 4 ERROR DIAGNOSTICS: 50 PERTURBED HYPOCENTRES**

The initial epicentre, using a trial depth of 10.00 km was 4:23:45.83 426.57 km E, 264.82 km N Depth 14.42 km



Epicentre standard deviation = 0.93 km

Depth standard deviation = 7.53 km

#### **TABLE 5**



# **PEAK GROUND ACCELERATIONS MEASURED ON STRONG MOTION**

# **TABLE 6**

# **DEPENDENT EVENTS FOR UK EARTHQUAKES OF MAGNITUDE = 4.0 ML (1970-DATE)**



§ Within the week preceding the event

\* Within 1 year following the event

## **TABLE 7**



# **MACROSEISMIC RESULTS**

Macroseismic magnitude  $4.1 \text{ (A}_3)$ ,  $4.1 \text{ (A}_4)$  (instrumental 4.2 ML)<br>Macroseismic depth (km)  $12-13$  (instrumental 14.4 km)

12-13 (instrumental  $14.4 \text{ km}$ )

Maximum intensity  $(I_{max})$  5 EMS (Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa and Stratford-Upon-Avon)



TABLE 8 - SYNOPSIS OF RESPONSES FOR THE WARWICK EARTHQUAKE OF THE  $23^{\text{RD}}$  SEPTEMBER 2000























**Figure 1. Historical and Instrumental seismicity within100 km of the Warwick earthquake.**



**Figure 2. Stations used to locate the 23 September 2000 Warwick earthquake**



**Figure 3. The Warwick earthquake as recorded on the Hereford network**





Emergent arrival

e



 $Z = 8$  km

 $Z = 10$  km

 $Z = 12$  km

 $Z = 14$  km



**Figure 5. Computed focal mechanisms for the Warwick event at various fixed depths**



**Figure 6. Ground accelerations from the Warwick earthquake measured on the strong motion instrument KEY2 at 76 km**



**Figure 7. Response spectra for station KEY2 for the Warwick earthquake at 76 km, 5% damping.**



**Figure 8. Measured horizontal and vertical peak ground accelerations for the ML 4.2 Warwick earthquake compared to empirical attenuation curves for a MS 4.0 event**



**Figure 9. Geological sketch map of the Warwick area showing the location of the 23 September 2000 magnitude 4.2 ML, Warwick earthquake.**



**Figure 10. Historical and instrumental earthquakes of southeastern Britain showing all ML > 3.0 events prior to 1980 and all events of ML > 2.0 since 1980.** 



**Figure 11. Instrumental seismicity of southern Britain for magnitudes > 1.5 ML from 1995 to 2001**



**Figure 12. Macroseismic map for the Warwick earthquake**



**Figure 13. Inset of epicentral region of the macroseismic map of the Warwick earthquake.**