

MISCELLANEOUS

On The Kola Peninsula

"I've read that a shaft almost 15 kilometres deep is being drilled on the Kola Peninsula. How will this enrich our knowledge about the earth's inner core?" (T. Sinyavskaya, Perm). D. Guberman, Project Head, replies: "We've already drilled down more than 12 kilometres and are now almost at the 13th kilometre. It takes 8 hours just to lower the drill, another 8 hours to do the drilling, and just as long to bring the drill back up to the surface. Each day brings us 10-12 metres closer to the earth's core.

Research inside the shaft has already disproved some long-standing assumptions about the structure of the earth's crust. For instance, it was believed that 10 kilometres down the structure of the earth's crust changed radically. However, rock samples brought up from a depth of roughly 12 kilometres hardly differ from samples taken at a depth of 8, even 6 kilometres. The earth is not 'dead' at this depth, as scholars previously believed. It is 'alive': gases and mineral solutions have been discovered in crevices. This would indicate that the process of mineral formation at significant depths is continuing. This conclusion has practical significance in that new minerals can be searched for deep beneath the earth's surface.

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