PART 9

ASPECTS RELATED TO

EXPLORATION MANAGEMENT
9.1 METHODS OF CONVEYING THE ESSENCE OF AN INTERPRETATION TO MANAGEMENT, WHILE RETAINING POINTERS TO SIGNIFICANT UNCERTAINTIES

9.1.1 The contour map

The basic rules of contouring are summarized in the pre-course notes (section 1.2.1). In the present section we assume that all participants are already well skilled at contouring; our concern is with matters beyond basic technique.

If we ever get a chance to finish an interpretation, it emerges as a set of fair-drawn contour maps and isopachs, mostly in full lines, with the faults appearing as thick black lines redolent with authority. Here and there, perhaps, is a dashed line suggesting an element of doubt — usually on the edge of the map where it matters little. But generally, the maps appear definitive and convey an impression of finality. Between ourselves, however, we know that this is nonsense. We have guessed a continuity here, accepted a leg jump there, phantomed here, put in a questionable fault there, failed to resolve a mistie here, not bothered to include the feathering angle there, and finally accepted one contour solution (whether by hand or by machine) without appraising the alternative solutions.

And, of course, we cannot be blamed for that (or at least for most of it) because that is the inevitable consequence of being forced to present the final results in the form of contour maps. If something is to be contoured it must, sooner or later, have a single accepted value; we might be able to accommodate a single zone of doubt, but it is virtually impossible to accommodate multiple zones of doubt on contour maps (and even less so on isopachs).