The Old Red Sandstone of Great Britain

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In this reference list the arrangement is alphabetical by author surname for works by sole authors and dual authors. Where there are references that include the first-named author with others, the sole-author works are listed chronologically first, followed by the dual author references (alphabetically) followed by the references with three or more authors listed *chronologically*. Chronological order is used within each group of identical authors.

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iphitum Chordata). Primitive juviess vertabrates which have examed since the Casebran Period, they include a large master of extent matrice and freshwater groups, but are now reduced to two hagitables and lampress. Igae (sing alga): a large and diverse division of the plant langdom, consisting of mainly aquatic organisms. Simple plants that base no true steam, muts or leaves, they contain chilorophyll and therefore can photosymbesize. They range from microscopic single cells to very large muts-cellular structures. Hochribonous: descriptive/of fossils or rocks that lived or formed elsewiness to those current position.

Glossary

This glossary provides brief explanations of the technical terms used in the introductions to the chapters and in the 'conclusions' sections of the site reports. These explanations are not rigorous scientific definitions, but are intended to help the general reader. Detailed stratigraphical terms are omitted as they are given context within the tables and figures. Words in **bold** type indicate an internal reference to another glossary entry.

- Abrasion: the process of wearing away parts of fossils or rocks by sediment-laden water or air. The process produces an increasingly smoothed and rounded outline shape.
- Acadian Orogeny: the Early to Mid-Devonian phase of mountain building (late Caledonian) along a collision zone between Avalonia and Laurentia, after the subduction of the Iapetus Ocean and the production of a range of mountains stretching south-westwards from Scandinavia, through northern Britain and Ireland, Greenland and North America.
- Acanthodian: any member of the extinct (Silurian–Permian) class Acanthodii (phylum Chordata). These primitive jawed fish, the so-called 'spiny sharks' with spine-supported fins and a covering of small scales, occupied both marine and fresh waters.
- Accretion: the build up of sediment by physical processes such as water and wind.
- Acme: the point of maximum sea or lake level (highstand) during a marine or lacustrine transgression.
- Adhesion wart: a small, irregular, wart-like sand acccumulation formed by wind that changes direction rapidly whilst blowing over a moist sand surface.
- Aeolian: descriptive of sediments carried and deposited by the wind.

- Age: a geological time unit (cf. chronostratigraphy), usually taken to be the smallest standard division of geological time.
- Agglomerate: a pyroclastic rock with predominantly rounded clasts greater than 64 mm in diameter.
- Aggradation: the building upwards of a river valley or floodplain by accumulation of fluvial deposits; can also be applied to material deposited by other agencies, such as wind or sea.
- Aggregate: a mass or body of rock fragments and/or mineral grains.
- Agnathan: any member of the class Agnatha (phylum Chordata). Primitive jawless vertebrates which have existed since the Cambrian Period, they include a large number of extinct marine and freshwater groups, but are now reduced to two: hagfishes and lampreys.
- Algae (sing. alga): a large and diverse division of the plant kingdom, consisting of mainly aquatic organisms. Simple plants that have no true stems, roots or leaves, they contain chlorophyll and therefore can photosynthesize. They range from microscopic single cells to very large multi-cellular structures.
- Allochthonous: descriptive of fossils or rocks that lived or formed elsewhere to their current position.

- Alluvial: a term applied to the environments, action and products of rivers or streams. Alluvial deposits are composed of clastic material deposited in river channels and floodplains.
- Alluvial fan: a cone-shaped deposit of waterlaid deposits at the confluence of a tributary stream with the main river.

Alluvium: sediment deposited by rivers.

- Ammonoid: any member of the extinct subclass Ammonoidea (class Cephalopoda). Important zone fossils for the Palaeozoic and Mesozoic eras.
- Anastomosing: descriptive of a system which branches or contains a network; for example the channel pattern of a braided river, or the veins on a leaf which form a netlike pattern.
- Andesite (adj. andesitic): a fine-grained volcanic (extrusive) rock containing more than 53 wt% SiO₂. Intermediate in composition between a basalt and a rhyolite.
- Anglo-Welsh Basin: a Devonian sedimentary basin that occupied a large part of what is now Wales and England, in which the Old Red Sandstone was deposited.
- Anoxic: literally 'without oxygen'; often used to describe an anaerobic environment.
- Antecedent: of a river or drainage system controlled by a pre-exisiting system.
- Anticline: an arch-shaped upfold of rocks produced by tectonic activity with younger strata on the outermost part of the arch and older rock in the core (cf. syncline).
- Arenite (adj. arenaceous): a general term for a detrital, clastic sedimentary rock made of sand-sized particles.
- Argillite (adj. argillaceous): a general term for a fine-grained, clay-rich, clastic sedimentary rock.
- Arkose (adj. arkosic): an arenaceous rock that contains at least 25% feldspar.
- Arthropod: any member of the **phylum** Arthropoda, the largest and most diverse phylum of the animal kingdom. These invertebrate animals are characterized by a segmented body and paired antennae, wings or legs. Examples include insects, **crustaceans** and arachnids.
- Ash (volcanic): unconsolidated deposit consisting of pyroclastic material (glass shards, crystals etc.) less than 2 mm in size. In consolidated rocks the term is commonly

used to denote the size of individual volcaniclastic fragments (e.g. coarse-ash grains and fine-ash grains).

- Autochthonous: descriptive of fossils or rocks that lived or formed in their current positions.
- Avalonia: a small early Palaeozoic crustal plate consisting of parts of the maritime states of North America, England, Wales, south-east Ireland and part of western Europe, which split from Gondwana early in Ordovician times and moved northwards, colliding with Laurentia during the Silurian Period.
- **Avulsion**: the process when **aggradation** on a floodplain diverts a river channel to a new course, at a lower elevation on the floodplain.
- Axial drainage: a river drainage system that flows along the axis of a valley or basin.
- **Ball-and-pillow structure**: a sedimentary structure with a hemispherical shape resembling balls and pillows. Caused by **sand** sinking into fluidized muddy **sediment**.
- Baltica: an early Palaeozoic crustal plate consisting of much of present-day northwestern Europe, including Scandinavia, European Russia and parts of Central Europe. The plate formed the south-eastern continental margin of the Iapetus Ocean and amalgamated with Avalonia before moving northwards from Late Ordovician times and colliding with Laurentia to form the Caledonian mountain belt.
- **Bar**: a lenticular deposit, usually **sandy**, formed in and at the margins of a river channel, or offshore of a beach.
- Barrier deposits: sand deposits that accumulate in shallow, offshore waters by wave action.
- **Back-barrier deposits**: shallow-water deposits formed on the landward side of a barrier.
- Basalt (adj. basaltic): a fine-grained, usually darkcoloured, basic, volcanic (extrusive) igneous rock. It usually occurs as a lava or dyke.
- **Basement:** the oldest rocks recognized in a given area; a complex of **metamorphic** and/ or **igneous rocks** that underlies all the sedimentary **formations**.
- **Basin**: an area of **subsidence**, or depression, usually of considerable size, in which **sediments** and/or volcanic **strata** accumulate.
- **Basin-fill**: the sedimentary succession deposited in a **basin**.

- Basin inversion: the tectonic process in which basin-fill is uplifted.
- **Batholith**: a very large (over 100 km²) igneous intrusion, most commonly granite, that extends to great (unknown) depth in the Earth's crust.
- Bed: in lithostratigraphy, a subdivision of either a member or a formation; the smallest unit within the scheme of formal lithostratigraphical classification. Also used informally to indicate a stratum within a sedimentary rock succession.
- Bedding plane: a planar feature in sedimentary rocks representing an original surface of deposition. Conspicuous bedding planes may indicate a short interruption in, or change in character of, sediment deposition.
- Beyrichiacea: named after Beyrich, a German palaeontologist, an extinct group (late Ordovician?-early Carboniferous) of marine ostracods, which have biostratigraphical use.
- **Bioclast** (adj. **bioclastic**): a sediment grain consisting of comminuted fossil remains.
- **Biofacies**: a **facies** defined by its characteristic **fossil** assemblage, and reflecting a specific set of environmental conditions.
- **Biogenic**: produced by living organisms or biological processes.
- **Biostratigraphy:** the stratigraphical subdivision, classification and correlation of sedimentary rocks based on their fossil content.
- **Biota**: the **flora** and **fauna** of a particular place; or the faunal and floral assemblage of a **bed** or other **stratigraphical** unit.
- **Bioturbation**: the physical disturbance of unconsolidated **sediment**, such as by burrowing and feeding, caused by the organisms living on or in it. These disturbances are often preserved as **trace fossils** in ancient **sediments**.
- **Biozone:** in **biostratigraphy**, a restricted unit of **sedimentary rock** defined by its **fossil** content, most usefully by **species** of narrowly defined temporal, but wide spatial, range, and named after one or more abundant or characteristic species.
- **Bivalve:** any member of the **order** Bivalvia (**phylum** Mollusca (*see* **mollusc**)). These marine invertebrates are characterized by bodies enclosed in two, hinged, often mirrorimage, shells (valves). Modern examples include cockles and mussels.

- **Boudinage**: a structure in strongly deformed sedimentary or metamorphic rocks, in which an original competent layer between less competent layers has been stretched, thinned and broken at regular intervals into bodies resembling boudins or sausages.
- **Brachiopod**: any member of the **phylum** Brachiopoda. These marine invertebrates are superficially similar to **bivalves** but with a different anatomy and two hinged shells that are typically dissimilar.
- Braided river: a network of converging and diverging (anastomosing) streams.
- **Braidplain**: the floodplain of a **braided river** system.
- **Breccia**: a rock composed of angular broken fragments greater than 2 mm in diameter; can be **pyroclastic**, sedimentary or **fault**related.
- Breconian Stage: a local chronostratigraphical division of the Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian Period for the Anglo-Welsh Basin. Roughly equivalent to the more widely known Emsian and Pragian stages, it follows the Dittonian Stage.
- **Bryozoan**: any member of the **phylum** Bryozoa. These very small, moss-like aquatic organisms often form permanent colonies, linked by their box-like skeletons of **calcium carbonate**.
- **Calc-alkaline**: of a suite of **igneous rocks** characterized chemically by the steady increase in iron content relative to silica during evolution of the magma.
- Calcareous: containing large quantities, or composed, of calcium carbonate.
- Calci-: prefix indicating containing/composed of calcium carbonate.
- **Calcite:** the most common, rock-forming crystalline form of **calcium carbonate**; the main constituent of **limestone** and the shells of many **brachiopods**, echinoderms and other invertebrates.
- **Calcium carbonate** (CaCO₃): a colourless or white crystal compound, which occurs naturally as **limestone**, marble and chalk.
- Calcrete: a soil rich in calcium carbonate, indicative of arid or semi-arid environments. In the geological record, the term is used for a fossilized soil (palaeosol) rich in carbonate that is now a limestone or dolomite.
- **Calcretized**: of a **sediment** that has been altered wholly or partly to **calcrete**.

- **Caldera:** a circular, **basin**-shaped depression, usually many times greater than the size of any individual volcanic vent, caused by collapse of the roof of an underlying magma chamber following an eruption; also refers to the underlying volcanic structure.
- **Caledonian Orogeny:** a major period of mountain building that took place about 430 million years ago, associated with the closure of the ancient **Iapetus Ocean** that was situated between Scotland and the rest of present-day Britain.
- Caledonides: the Palaeozoic mountain chain that extended in a NE–SW-direction from Spitsbergen, eastern Greenland, Scandinavia, Scotland, northern Ireland, the Lake District of England, Wales into eastern Canada and the USA, which resulted from the closure of the Iapetus Ocean.

Caliche: see hardpan.

Carbonaceous: containing carbon.

- **Carbonate:** a mineral salt of carbonic acid, usually referring to the common sedimentary form of **calcium carbonate** in **limestones** and invertebrate shells, but also encompassing other minerals, notably **dolomite**.
- Carboniferous Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from 362 to 290 million years ago, it precedes the Permian Period.
- Carious weathering: differential weathering that produces honeycomb outcrop.
- Cataclasis: the deformation of rock by fracture and rotation of aggregates and mineral grains.
- **Cataclasite**: a rock containing angular fragments formed by **cataclasis**.
- Cement: the mineral 'glue' that holds particles together in sedimentary rocks.
- Cementstone: argillaceous limestone and dolostone.
- **Cephalaspid:** any member of the extinct order Cephalaspida (class Agnatha (see agnathan)) with both an exoskeleton and endoskeleton of bone. Also referred to as Osteostracans. Characterized by a solid bony head-shield and broad cornual processes.
- **Chalcedony**: a variety of **quartz** that is composed of microscopic crystals or fibres.
- Channelized: of fluvial deposits formed in a river channel.
- Chert: microcrystalline silica (quartz and chalcedony), which may be of organic or inorganic origin. It occurs as layers or

nodules in **sedimentary rocks** (mainly chalk and **limestone**).

- **Chlorite**: a green mineral, an anhydrous silicate of magnesium and alumina.
- Chloritize: the conversion of a mineral to chlorite.
- Chronostratigraphy: the subdivision and correlation of rock units on the basis of relative age. The hierarchy of principal chronostratigraphical units to which layers of sedimentary rock are allocated through the study and interpretation of their stratigraphy is erathem, system, series and stage, which are related, respectively to the geological time units of era, period, epoch and age. Rocks of the Devonian System (a chronostratigraphical unit) were laid down in the Devonian Period (a geological time unit).
- **Class:** a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms, which consists of one or several related **orders**. Similar classes are grouped into a **phylum**.
- Clast: (adj. clastic): a fragment of a pre-existing rock. *See also* bioclast.
- Clay: an extremely fine-grained sediment (grain-size less than 0.004 mm) composed of so-called 'clay minerals'.
- Claystone: indurated clay, consisting predominantly of fine material and clay minerals.
- **Cleavage:** a plane of incipient parting in a rock, produced by the alignment of platy crystals such as mica in response to confining pressure during deformation.

Coeval: belonging to or formed at the same time.

- **Concretion:** a rounded or irregular mass of mineral matter concentrated around a nucleus and formed during **diagenesis** in a **sedimentary rock**.
- **Condensed deposit**: a thin deposit formed where there was reduced sedimentation and/or **subsidence**.
- **Conglomerate**: a sedimentary rock consisting of pebbles (cf. breccia).
- **Conodont (Conodonta):** an extinct group of small eel-like marine animals, characterized by assemblages of paired tooth-like structures made of bone-like material. These 'teeth' have considerable use in **biostratigraphy**.
- **Contemporaneous**: formed or occurring at the same time.
- Contiguous: touching, in contact.
- Continental: of sediments formed in a terrestrial, non-marine environment.

Cornstone: a concretionary limestone characteristic of arid terrestrial environments (synonymous with calcrete).

Cornua (-ates): a horn or horn-like projection.

Correlation: the tracing and identification of a

- stratigraphical unit away from its type area by comparing lithologies and/or fauna.
- **Crevasse splay**: a small fan-shaped accumulation of **sediment** formed when a river breaks through its banks or **levee**.
- **Cross-stratification**: subsidiary bedding surfaces oblique to the upper and lower bounding surfaces of a particular **stratum** and representing ripples or dunes formed in the **sediment** by water currents (or wind). Large-scale features are named '**cross-bedding**', small-scale features are known as '**cross-lamination**'.
- Crossopterygian: in some systems of classification any member of a mainly extinct order (Crossopterygii) of lobefin fish of the subclass Sarcopyterygii (*see* sarcopterygian), class Osteichthyes.
- **Crustacean:** any member of the **class** Crustacea (**phylum** Arthropoda (*see* **arthropod**)). These animals typically have two pairs of antennae, a pair of mandibles and often many other appendages, and are mainly aquatic. Examples include lobsters, barnacles and wood lice.

Cryptic: unidentified, hidden or unseen.

- Crustal extension: expansion of the Earth's crust by tectonic forces.
- **Cyclothem:** a succession of sedimentary layers, representing a sequence of depositional events that tend to be repeated; the result of cyclical sedimentation.
- **Dalradian**: a large tract of (mainly) late **Precambrian** metamorphosed **sedimentary rocks** in the Grampian Highlands of Scotland and the north of Ireland.
- **Debris flow**: a deposit formed by the downslope movement of water- and air-bourne material.
- **Delta** (adj. **deltaic**): a tract of **sediment**, typically fan-shaped, deposited where a river enters a lake or the sea.
- **Denudation**: the combined processes of weathering and erosion that wear down landscapes.

Depocentre: the centre of (greatest) deposition. **Desiccation crack**: a crack formed when wet

sediment dries out.

- Devonian Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from 418 to 362 million years ago, it precedes the Carboniferous Period and is part of the Palaeozoic Era.
- **Dextral**: of lateral, right-handed movement along a geological **fault**.
- **Diachronous:** descriptive of a **lithological** unit, or **contiguous** rock body, that was deposited at different times in different locations and therefore differs in age from place to place.
- **Diagenesis:** (adj. **diagenetic**): the postdepositional changes in mineralogy and texture of **sediments** and organisms that combine to produce rocks and **fossils**. The term excludes **metamorphic** alteration.
- Diamict: a poorly or non-sorted noncalcareous terrigenous sedimentary rock or unconsolidated sediment that contains a wide range or particle sizes.
- **Disconformity** (adj. **disconformable**): a break in continuity of deposition, (**unconformity**), where the **beds** above and below are parallel and therefore show no angular discordance.
- **Dissolution**: the natural process of dissolving a solid; also known as solution.
- Distal (adj. distally): far from the source.
- **Distributary channel**: a river channel along which **sediment** has been transported.
- Dittonian Stage: a local chronostratigraphical division of the Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian Period for the Anglo-Welsh Basin. Roughly equivalent to the more widely known Lochkovian Stage, it follows the Downtonian Stage and precedes the Breconian Stage.
- **Dolerite:** a mafic, igneous rock that generally occurs in dykes and sills.
- **Dolomicrite**: a sedimentary rock consisting of clay-sized dolomite crystals.
- **Dolomite** $(CaMg(CO_3)_2)$: a white or colourless mineral with a structure similar to calcite but with some calcium replaced by magnesium.
- **Dolostone:** a **limestone** whose **carbonate** fraction contains more that 50% **dolomite**.
- **Downtonian Stage:** a local chronostratigraphical division of the Old Red Sandstone for the Anglo-Welsh Basin. Of Silurian age it is roughly equivalent to the Přídolí Series, and precedes the Dittonian Stage.
- **Dyke**: a sheet of **igneous rock** that has 'intruded' or 'cut through' pre-existing rocks.
- 359

- Early Devonian Epoch: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy) of the Devonian Period. Ranging from 418 to 394 million years ago it includes the Lochkovian, Pragian and Emsian ages.
- **Ecosystem**: habitat or environment inhabited by a group of animals and/or plants.
- **Eifelian Stage:** a chronostratigraphical division of the Middle Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Eifelian Age. The fourth stage of the Devonian Period it is dated to approximately 394–387.5 Ma and is preceded by the Emsian Stage and followed by the Givetian Stage.
- **Emsian Stage:** a chronostratigraphical division of the Lower Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Emsian Age. The third stage of the Devonian Period it is dated to approximately 409.5–394 Ma and is preceded by the Pragian Stage and followed by the Eifelian Stage.

Ephemeral: short-lived, intermittent.

- **Epichnial cast**: a **trace fossil** cast that stands proud of the **sediment** or **bedding plane** surface.
- **Epoch**: a geological time unit (cf. **chronostratigraphy**), of shorter duration than a **period** and itself divisible into **ages** (e.g. the Late Triassic Epoch).
- **Epsilon cross-bedding: cross-bedding** formed by **lateral accretion** on a migrating **point bar** in a meandering stream.
- **Equigranular**: a texture in which all the crystals are approximately the same size.
- Era: a major geological time unit (cf. chronostratigraphy), which is divided into periods (e.g. the Palaeozoic Era).
- **Erosion**: the wearing away of the land's surface by mechanical processes such as the flow of water, ice or wind.
- **Euramerica**: the continental mass of northwestern Europe and North America, formed when the **Iapetus Ocean** was subducted during the **Caledonian Orogeny**.
- Eurypterid: any member of the extinct (Ordovician–Permian) order Eurypterida (class Merostomata, phylum Arthropoda (see arthropod)). These large aquatic organisms (up to 2 m in length) superficially resemble scorpions.
- **Eutrophic**: a body of water with high levels of plant nutrients, with correspondingly high productivity.

- **Evaporite** (adj. **evaporitic**): a sediment or mineral grown from a saline solution by evaporation of water, which may be marine or **continental** in origin.
- Exotic (extraformational): a rock or block unrelated to the rocks with which it is now associated, which has been moved from its place of origin; or of a pebble or clast from outwith a depositional basin, or of a conglomerate composed of such pebbles or clasts.

Extramontane: outwith a mountain belt.

- **Extrusive**: descriptive of **igneous rocks** that have been extruded onto the Earth's surface, rather than being intruded beneath the surface.
- Facies: the sum total of a rock's lithological and gross faunal/floral characteristics that together reflect the particular environment in which it formed.
- Famennian Stage: a chronostratigraphical division of the Upper Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Famennian Age. The sixth and final stage of the Devonian Period, it is dated to approximately 376.5–362 Ma and is preceded by the Frasnian Stage.
- Family: a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms, which consists of one or several related genera. Similar families are grouped into an order.
- Fanglomerate: a sedimentary rock containing angular rock fragments cemented in a finergrained groundmass; formed of coarse material in an alluvial fan.
- Farlovian Stage: a local chronostratigraphical division of the Old Red Sandstone of the Devonian Period for the Anglo-Welsh Basin.
 Roughly equivalent to the more widely known Famennian Stage, it extends into the beginning of the Carboniferous System.
- Fault: an approximately planar fracture surface in rock along which there has been some movement of one side relative to the other.
- Fauna: animals; often referring to the characteristic animal assemblage of a region/time period.
- Feldspar: a widespread, ubiquitous group of rock-forming silicate minerals that are the essential constituents of many igneous rocks. Variations in composition divide the group into two series – the 'alkali feldspars' with end-members albite (Na-rich) and orthoclase (K-rich), and the 'plagioclase feldspars', with end members albite and anorthite (Ca-rich).

Feldspathic: a rock rich in feldspar.

Felsic: a pale-coloured rock poor in iron and magnesium minerals and rich in quartz and feldspar; the opposite of mafic.

Felsite: a field term for glassy and fine-grained felsic igneous rocks. Also called felstone.

Felstone: see felsite.

- **Fenestrae**: cavity structures, which are generally infilled with crystals, also called 'birdseye structures'.
- **Fissile**: descriptive of a **sedimentary rock** that contains very thin bedding or **cleavage laminae** along which the rock splits into thin sheets.
- Flagstone: a hard, thin-bedded sandstone, firm shale, or other rock that splits easily along bedding planes or joints into flat slabs.
- Flashy: of streams that flow as a result of sudden, heavy rainfall in tropical and sub-tropical areas.
- **Flexural subsidence**: **subsidence** of the Earth's crust caused by loading in association with mountain building.
- Flora: plants; often referring to the characteristic plant assemblage of a region/time period.
- Flute mark/cast: a structure formed by small eddies that carve depressions in the surface of a sediment deposit. The cavities are asymmetrical in outline, with the deeper or thicker part at the upstream end, and are generally preserved on the base of the overlying bed as a 'cast' of the depression.

Fluvial: relating to a river or river system.

- Flysch: deposits of dark, fine-grained, thinbedded sandstone, shales, and clay, typically syn-orogenic and thought to be deposited by turbidity currents.
- Fold: a bend in rock strata produced by earth movements.

Foliation: the planar arrangement of minerals, or other textural or structural features in rocks.Footwall: the upthrow side of a geological fault.Foreset: the steeply dipping surface of cross-

bedded strata.

- Formation: a succession of contiguous rock strata that is distinctive enough in its lithology from the surrounding rocks to be mapped as a unit; the fundamental unit of lithostratigraphy.
- Fossil: the preserved remains of an animal or plant. See also trace fossil.
- **Frasnian Stage:** a chronostratigraphical division of the Upper Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Frasnian Age. The fifth stage of the Devonian

Period, it is dated to approximately 382.5– 376.5 Ma and is preceded by the Givetian Stage and followed by the Famennian Stage. Friable: descriptive of a rock that is crumbly or

easily broken.

GCR: Geological Conservation Review, in which nationally important geological and geomorphological sites were assessed and selected with a view to their long-term conservation as **SSSIs**.

Gedinnian Stage: a chronostratigraphical divison of the Lower Devonian Series in Belgium, France and Germany. Roughly equivalent to the Lochkovian Stage.

Genus (pl: genera): a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms, which consists of one or several related species. Similar genera are grouped together into a family.

Geochemistry: the chemistry of rocks.

- **Geopetal**: a sedimentary fabric that records the way up at the time of deposition. Commonly found in cavity fills within **limestones**.
- **Geotectonic**: large-scale **tectonic** deformation of the Earth's crust.
- **Gilgai**: the microrelief of small depressions or valleys and ridges on a soil surface. Found in soils that contain large amounts of **clay**, which expand and contract during wetting and drying.
- Givetian Stage: a chronostratigraphical division of the Middle Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Givetian Age. The fourth stage of the Devonian Period, it is dated to approximately 387.5– 382.5 Ma and is preceded by the Eifelian Stage and followed by the Frasnian Stage.
- Glaebule: a concretion found in palaeosol profiles.
- **Gneiss**: a coarse-grained, inhomogeneous rock, common in relatively high-grade **metamorphic terranes**, characterized by a coarse **foliation** or layering more widely spaced, irregular or discontinuous than that in a **schist**.
- Gondwana: a grouping of the major southern continental plates of Africa, Australasia, Antarctica, South America, India, several smaller plates and fragments of what are now parts of Mediterranean Europe, which together formed a massive southern supercontinent straddling the South Pole in early Palaeozoic times and began to split up when Avalonia broke away in early Ordovician times.

- Gorstian Stage: the older chronostratigraphical division of the Ludlow Series of the Silurian Period.
- **Graben**: a linear block of crust downthrown between two parallel **faults** to form a **rift** or trough-shaped valley.
- Graded beds: beds that show a change in grain size through the bed. Normal graded bedding is a fining upwards sequence. In reverse graded bedding, the grain size coarsens upwards.
- **Grampian Orogeny:** the first mountainbuilding event of the **Caledonian Orogeny**, in the **Ordovian Period** from about 477 to 442 million years ago.
- **Granite**: a pale-coloured, coarse-grained, typically **plutonic** (**intrusive**) **igneous rock**, with a high SiO₂ content. Commonly found in **batholiths** and veins.
- Granitoid: a general term used to encompass unspecified coarse-grained, quartz-rich igneous rocks that may include compositional types such as granite, tonalite and granodiorite.
- **Granodiorite**: a coarse-grained **igneous rock** similar to **granite** in texture but containing slightly less silica.
- **Graptolite**: an extinct marine colonial organism belonging to the **class** Graptolithina (**phylum** Hemichordata) and characterized by a cup- or tube-shaped, highly resistant exoskeleton made of collagen.
- Graptoloid: any graptolite belonging to the order Graptoloidea. The graptoloid exoskeleton is characterized by relatively few branches (stipes), lacks strengthening rods (dissepiments) and is without thecal (cup) differentiation. Typically planktonic.
- Great Glen Fault: a major geological fault that trends north-east and crops out from Fort William to Inverness in Scotland and extends to the Shetland Islands and beyond. It separates two terranes and was active in the Devonian Period.
- Greenstone: general term for massive basic igneous rocks that have been (partly) meta-morphosed.
- Greywacke: a poorly sorted, clastic sedimentary rock composed of fragments of rocks and crystals and set in a clay-rich matrix.
- Groove mark/cast: a structure thought to be formed by the movement of objects along a stream bed by a continous current. These straight narrow depressions are a few milli-

metres deep and serveral centimetres long and wide, and may be preserved on the base of the overlying **bed** as a 'cast' of the depression.

- Group: in lithostratigraphy, a grouping of two or more formations with significant unifying lithological and/or genetic features.
- Half-graben: an elongate trough bounded by a normal fault on one side only. See also graben.
- Halite: the chemical name for sodium chloride, common salt (NaCl).
- Hanging-wall: the downthrow side of a geological fault.
- **Hardpan:** the indurated surface horizon of a soil, such as **calcrete** (caliche), formed in arid and semi-arid climates.

Heterolithic: of varied lithologies.

- Heterostracan: any member of the extinct order Heterostraci (class Agnatha (see agnathan)). Characterized by extensive head armour of large plates and a pair of common branchial openings on either side.
- Hexapoda: a superclass of the phylum Arthropoda (*see* arthropod) characterized by having six legs, and consisting of the classes Insecta (insects) and Parainsecta.
- Hiatus: a break or gap in sedimentation.
- **High**: a region or area that underwent little or no **subsidence** and sedimentation.
- Highland Boundary Fault: a major tectonic and terrane boundary extending northeastwards across Scotland separating the Scottish Highlands from the Midland Valley. It was active during the Devonian and Carboniferous periods and experiences minor seismic activity today.
- Highstand: a period of highest lake or sea level.
- Holotype: the single specimen (the so-called 'type specimen') selected to epitomize a particular named species.
- Honeycomb weathering: a form of chemical weathering in which numerous pits occur on a rock exposure, causing the surface to look similar to a large honeycomb. It typically occurs in arid regions, affecting granular rocks such as sandstones and tuffs.
- Horst: an upfaulted block of crustal rocks, often on either side of a graben.
- **Hydrocarbon**: an organic compound comprising hydrocarbon, oxygen and carbon, the term is also commonly applied to the energy compounds oil, gas and coal.

- **Hydrothermal**: of heat generated from hot subsurface rock or groundwater.
- Hypabyssal: descriptive of an igneous intrusion, or its rock, emplaced at a depth intermediate between plutonic and volcanic.
- **Hypolimnion**: the layer of water below the thermocline in a lake that is non-circulating or perpetually cold.
- Iapetus Ocean: a former ocean that separated the early Palaeozoic crustal plates of Laurentia and Baltica plus Avalonia until the ocean floor was subducted in Ordovician-Silurian times during the Caledonian Orogeny. It divided the present British Isles and its trace is situated between what is now Scotland and the northern part of Ireland, and the rest of Britain.
- Ichnofauna (ichnofossil): an assemblage of trace fossils.
- Ichthyofauna: the fish of a particular region.
- **Igneous rock**: a rock that has formed from the cooling of molten magma, either following volcanic (extrusive) activity or intrusive processes. It consists of interlocking crystals, the size of which depends on the rate of cooling of the magma.
- **Ignimbrite:** a volcaniclastic rock, typically silicarich and pumiceous, formed by deposition from a pyroclastic flow; may partly or wholly comprise welded **tuff**.
- **Imbrication** (adj. **imbricated**): a sedimentary fabric typically displaying elongate fragments that are aligned in a preferred angle to the line of bedding.
- Index fossil (index species): a particular fossil (or species) that gives its name to a biozone.
- Inlier: an outcrop of older rocks surrounded by younger rocks commonly exposed by erosion (cf. outlier).
- **Intercalation** (adj. **intercalated**): layering within a sedimentary sequence of different rock types.
- Intraclast: a fragment of rock derived from coeval parent material rather than an 'older' (extraformational) source.
- Intraformational: of conglomerate containing clasts derived from the local depositional area.
- Intramontane (intermontane): within a mountain belt.
- **Intrusion**: (adj. **intrusive**): an **igneous rock** that has formed as a body intruded into other rocks below the Earth's surface.

- Joint: a fracture in a rock that exhibits no displacement across it (unlike a fault).
- Karst (adj. karstic): descriptive of a distinctive terrane developed upon a soluble rock, typically limestone; characterized by caves, sinkholes and dry valleys.
- **Kinematics**: the mechanical processes involved in sedimentary **basin** formation.
- Lacustrine: relating to, formed within, or produced by, lakes.
- Lag deposit: a concentrated layer of coarse grained sediments, such as pebbles or bones, which accumulates at the bottom of a channel or the sea floor during deposition from strong currents.
- Lagerstätten: a rock containing exceptionally abundant or exceptionally well-preserved fossils that are of considerable intrinsic interest.
- Lamina (pl. laminae, laminations): the finest layer within a sedimentary rock, typically less than 10 mm thick.
- Laminated: descriptive of a bed with a fabric composed of laminae.
- Laminites: thin layers of generally fine-grained sediment, reflecting rapidly fluctuating, often seasonal, changes in sediment supply or environmental conditions; characteristic of lakes and other shallow basins of deposition where there is a restricted bottom fauna.
- Lapillus (pl. lapilli): a pyroclastic fragment of any shape with a mean diameter of 2–64 mm.
- Late Devonian Epoch: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy) of the Devonian Period. Ranging from 382.5 to 362 million years ago it includes the Frasnian and Famennian ages
- Lateral accretion: the build-up of sediment by river currents flowing obliquely to the main drainage direction.
- Laurentia: the major North American crustal plate in early Palaeozoic times that straddled the equator, prior to the subduction of the Iapetus Ocean; comprised mainly of the ancient Precambrian core of the Canadian Shield, Greenland, Scotland and north-west Ireland.
- Laurussia: the amalgamated plates of North America and Russia, following the subduction of the Iapetus Ocean.
- Lava: an igneous rock formed during volcanic eruptions (molten rock at the Earth's surface).

Levee: a broad ridge alongside a river or stream, deposited by floodwaters when they overtop the channel banks.

Limestone: sedimentary rock composed of calcium carbonate, often partly derived from the shells of organisms.

Lingulid: any member of the order Lingulida, extant shellfish of the phylum Brachiopoda (*see* brachiopod). Much more abundant in the Palaeozoic Era than at present.

Litharenite: an arenaceous rock composed of lithic clasts.

Lithic: relating to a rock clast found within a sedimentary rock.

- Lithification: the conversion of sediment into rock.
- Lithoclast: a mechanically deposited rock fragment, normally greater than 2 mm in diameter, derived from any older, (pre-existing) lithified rock.
- Lithofacies: a facies defined by sedimentary rock type (using, for example, colour, texture and mineral composition).

Lithology: descriptive of the constitution of a **sediment** or other rock, including composition, texture, colour and hardness.

- Lithostratigraphy: the organization and division of strata into mainly mappable rock units and their correlation, based entirely upon their lithological characteristics. Units are named according to their rank in a formal hierarchy, namely supergroup, group, formation, member and bed.
- Littoral: descriptive of the zone between highand low-water marks on a shoreline.
- Load cast (structure): a protuberance of sand or coarse clastic material that extends downwards into a finer-grained, softer underlying material such as wet **mud** or **clay**. Produced by downsinking and unequal settling and compaction of the overlying material.

Lochkovian Stage: a chronostratigraphical division of the Lower Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Lochkovian Age. The first stage of the Devonian Period, it is dated to approximately 418–413.5 Ma and is followed by the Pragian Stage.

Lower Devonian Series: a chronostratigraphical division of the Devonian System comprising the rocks deposited during the Early Devonian Epoch. It includes the Lochkovian, Pragian and Emsian stages.

- Lowstand: a period of lowest sea level or lake level.
- Ludfordian Stage: the younger chronostratigraphical division of the Ludlow Series of the Silurian Period.
- Ludlow Bone Bed: a thin, lenticular marker horizon of phospatized fish fragments in south Wales and the Welsh Borderland. It was formerly taken to mark the base of the Old Red Sandstone and marks the base of the Přídolí Series in the Anglo-Welsh Basin.
- Ludlow Series: a chronostratigraphical division of the Silurian Period.
- **Macrofossil**: a **fossil** that is easily seen by the naked eye.
- Mafic: a rock rich in magnesium and/or iron minerals.
- Magnafacies: a major continuous belt of deposits that is homogeneous in lithological and palaeontological characteristics and that extends obliquely across time planes or through several chronostratigraphical units.
- Marker band/bed/horizon: a bed or layer within a rock succession with distinctive, easily recognizable characteristics that allow it to be traced for long distances or to serve as a reference or datum, and thereby enabling correlation.
- Mass flow: the transport, downslope under the force of gravity, of large, coherent masses of **sediment**, tephra or rock; commonly assisted by the incorporation of water, ice or air.
- Massif: a very large topographical or structural upland feature.
- Massive: descriptive of a bed or layer of sedimentary rock with an apparently uniform structure and lacking bedding fabric or lamination.
- Marl: a fine-grained calcium carbonate-rich mud or clay.
- Matrix: the fine-grained sediment or crystalline cement that infills the spaces between larger grains.
- Matrix-supported: a conglomerate in which the constituent clasts are not in contact with each other.
- Medial: of the central parts of a depositional system.

Megafossil: macrofossil.

- Megasequence: a very thick sequence of sedimentary rocks.
- **Member**: in **lithostratigraphy** a subdivision of a **formation**.

- Meta-: a prefix commonly used to indicate that a rock has been affected by low-grade **metamorphism**, while still retaining many recognizable features of its origin (e.g. metasedimentary).
- Metamorphic rock: a rock that has been altered by the action of heat and/or pressure, without melting.
- **Metamorphism** (adj. **metamorphic**): the process of radical alteration of the mineralogical and/or physical nature of rocks as a result of pressure and/or temperature.
- Micrite: microcrystalline calcite; typically a lime mud.
- Microfauna: microscopic animals.
- Microflora: microscopic plants
- Microfossil: a microscopic fossil.
- Microgranite: a type of granite with characteristically small crystals.
- Microspar: a recrystallized component of limestone rocks comprising mosaics of small (4–50 microns) crystals of calcium carbonate.
- **Microvertebrate**: the small **fossil** remains of vertebrates, whether they be of juveniles of a large **species** or a small species. Remains tend to be disarticulated teeth and bones, and are usually size-**sorted** and deposited together by the processes of transport and deposition, especially by water currents.
- Mid-Devonian Epoch: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy) of the Devonian Period. Ranging from 394 to 382.5 million years ago it includes the Eifelian and Givetian ages.
- Middle Devonian Series: a chronostratigraphical division of the Devonian System comprising the rocks deposited during the Mid-Devonian Epoch. It includes the Eifelian and Givetian stages.
- Midland Microcraton: a triangular area underlying the English Midlands that was a stable, cratonic area on the south-east flanks of the Lower Palaeozoic Welsh Basin.
- Milankovitch cycles: periodic shifts in the Earth's orbital parameters, thought to be one of the driving mechanisms behind glacial events.
- **Miospore**: a general term for any **fossil** plant spore smaller than 0.2 mm.

Modiolopsid: a species of bivalve.

Molasse: of a **basin** and its deposits that form after a period of mountain building, the deposits being derived from the mountain range.

- **Mollusc:** any member of the **phylum** Mollusca, which comprises about 5000 **species**. These invertebrates are characterized by a fleshy soft body and, usually, a hard shell. They may be marine, freshwater or **terrestrial**, and examples include gastropods (snails, limpets), **bivalves** (oysters, mussels), and cephalopods.
- **Monocline**: a **fold** in which **strata** of otherwise uniform dip are locally steepened.
- Mud: a mixture of clay and silt.
- Mudflat: an area of predominantly fine-grained mud deposition.
- Mudstone (mudrock): a fine-grained sedimentary rock; lithified mud.
- Myriapod: any member of the extant (Silurian-Recent) class Myriapoda of terrestrial uniramous arthropods, which includes the centipedes and millipedes, some of which were amongst the first land-living animals.
- Nautiloid: a member of the subclass Nautiloidea (class Cephalopoda). These marine invertebrates possess a multi-chambered external shell of calcium carbonate which may be straight or coiled. Only one genus, the *Nautilus*, survives today.
- **Neoproterozoic**: the youngest **period** of the Proterozoic Eon of the **Precambrian**, preceding the Cambrian Period.
- New Red Sandstone: a sequence of red, largely desert and fluvial sedimentary rocks, which was formed in the Permo–Triassic period.
- **Nodule**: a small **concretion**, generally roughly spherical or ellipsoidal.
- **Offlap:** the successive build-up of **strata** in a prograding sequence in a shrinking sea or on the margin of a rising landmass.
- Old Red Sandstone: a classic term applied to the terrestrial, largely clastic facies of late Silurian to earliest Carboniferous age in Britain; characterized by red sandstones, mudstones, siltstones, conglomerates and calcretes.
- **Oncolite** (adj. **oncolitic**): a spherical or subspherical particle, up to 5 cm in diameter, which is produced by the **accretion** of sedimentary material on to a mobile grain through the action of **algae**.
- **Ophiolite**: an ordered sequence of petrogenetically related **ultramafic** rocks, gabbros, sheeted **dykes** and **basalt lavas** that originated through the generation of oceanic crust, but were subsequently thrust (obducted) onto continental crust.

- **Opilionid:** an **order** of the **class** Arachnida (**phylum** Arthropoda (*see* **arthropod**)) commonly referred to as 'harvestmen' or 'daddy longlegs'.
- **Orcadian Basin**: a **Mid-Devonian** depositional **basin** in north-east Scotland in which a thick succession of **lacustrine** and **fluvial** deposits accumulated.
- Order: a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms, which consists of one or several related **families**. Similar orders are grouped together in a **class**.
- Ordovician Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from 495 to 290 million years ago it is the second period of the Palaeozoic Era and precedes the Silurian Period.
- Orogen: a mountain belt produced by continental collision and uplift.
- **Orogeny:** a process of mountain building during which the rocks and **sediments** of a particular area of a continent are deformed and **uplifted** to form mountain belts.
- Orthoconglomerate: a conglomerate with an intact gravel framework, characterized by a mineral cement. Associated with coarsegrained cross-bedded sandstones.
- Osteichthyes: a class of the phylum Chordata, also referred to as 'bony fish'.
- Osteolepid: any member of the extinct family Osteolepidae (order Osteolepiformes, subclass Sarcopterygii (see Sarcopterygian); lobefinned fishes.

Osteostracan: see cephalaspid.

- Ostracoderma: a popular name applied to the extinct division of jawless and armoured agnathans.
- Ostracod: any member of the subclass Ostracoda (class Crustacea (see crustacean), phylum Arthropoda (see arthropod)). These small invertebrates are mostly less than 1 mm in size and consist of two calcareous valves ('shells'). They can be found in a wide range of aquatic environments, both in fresh- and salt-water.
- **Outlier**: an outcrop of younger rocks surrounded by older rocks (cf. **inlier**).
- **Overstep:** a relationship in which a younger series of sedimentary **strata** rests upon a progressively older series of strata, the older and younger series of strata being separated by a plane of **unconformity**.
- **Overbank deposit**: fine-grained sediment (silt and clay) deposited from suspension on a floodplain by floodwaters from a stream channel.

- Pachytheca: a primitive, non-vascular Early Devonian plant fossil.
- Palaeo-: 'ancient' (occurring or formed in geological time).
- Palaeocurrent: a river current in a geological, fluvial deposit.
- **Palaeoclimate**: the climate at a particular geological time.
- Palaeoecology: the relationship between organisms and their environments in the geological past.

Palaeokarst: ancient karst landform.

Palaeomagnetism: the magnetic alignment of iron minerals imparted to a rock at the time of its formation: also the science of the reconstruction of the Earth's magnetic field and continents in geological time.

Palaeontology: the study of **fossil fauna** and **flora**, including their evolution and the reconstruction of pre-existing environments.

Palaeosol: an ancient or 'fossilized' soil.

- **Palaeoslope**: the depositional slope at a particular geological time.
- Palaeozoic Era: a geological time division; the first major division of geological time characterized by abundant life. It precedes the Mesozoic Era and is subdivided into 'Lower' and 'Upper' divisions at the top of the Devonian Period.

Palyno-: prefix indicating 'pollen' or 'spores'.

- **Palynomorph**: a microscopic, acid-resistant, organic-walled body studied in palynology.
- Ped: a naturally formed unit of soil structure.
- **Pedogenic**: of processes relating to the development of soil profiles.
- **Pelite**: a general term for fine-grained, clayrich, clastic sedimentary rocks; often applied to metamorphosed mudstones.
- **Penecontemporaneous**: formed or existing at the same time.
- **Peneplain** (adj. **peneplained**): a virtually flat and featureless landscape of considerable size, caused by prolonged **weathering** and **erosion**, especially mass-wasting and sheetwash.
- **Period**: a geological time unit (cf. chronostratigraphy); of shorter duration than an era and itself divisible into epochs.
- Permian Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from about 290 until 250 million years ago, it follows the Carboniferous Period and precedes the Triassic Period.
- **Permo-Triassic**: a period of geological time spanning the **Permian** and **Triassic periods**.

- **Petrifaction**: a process of fossilization whereby organic matter is converted into a stony substance by the infiltration of water containing dissolved inorganic matter, which replaces the original organic materials, thereby often
 - retaining the structure of the materials.
- **Petrography:** the study of the origin, mineral composition, texture and history of rocks; includes **petrology**.
- **Petrology**: the study of the mineral composition, texture and systematic classification of rocks.
- **Petromictic**: comprising a mixture of different rock types (normally with regard to **sediment** pebble composition).
- **Phosphate**: a compound salt of phosphoric acid, a mineral commonly associated with the preservation of bones and shells.
- **Phosphatic**: descriptive of a rock containing large quantities of **phosphate**.
- **Phosphatize**: the process of becoming enriched with **phosphate**.
- **Photosynthesis:** the process whereby green plants trap light in chlorophyll and use it to synthesize carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and water.
- **Phyllarenite**: a litharenite composed mainly of fragmented metamorphic rocks such as slate, phyllite and schist.
- **Phyllite:** a metamorphic rock rich in the ferromagnesian mineral mica and texturally intermediate between slate and schist.
- **Phylum** (pl. **phyla**): a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms, which consists of one or several related **classes**. The phyla are grouped together into two kingdoms, the Plantae (plants) and the Animalia (animals).
- **Phytoplankton**: plant forms of **plankton**, for example diatoms. They are often microscopic and with limited powers of locomotion, so mainly dispersed by wind and tide.
- **Piedmont**: a sloping area at the bottom of a mountain or mountain range.
- **Pisoid** (**pisolith**): a large ooid with a diameter of more than 2 mm.
- **Pisolite:** a sedimentary rock consisting manly of **pisoids**.
- **Placoderm:** any member of the extinct class Placodermi. A group of primitive **Palaeozoic** jawed fishes, with a dermal armour in two parts, one covering the head, the other the trunk, which are sometimes articulated.
- **Plankton** (adj. **planktonic**): minute aquatic organisms that drift with water movement.

- **Playa**: the flat dry bottom of a desert **basin**, often the bed of an **ephemeral** lake and underlain by **evaporites**.
- Pluton (adj. plutonic): an intrusion of igneous rock emplaced at depth in the Earth's crust.
- **Point bar**: a lenticular deposit formed on the inside bend of a meandering river channel.
- **Polychaete**: a group of annelid worms, some bearing bristles, tentacles and hard organic tooth structures (scolecodonts).
- **Polygonal:** refers to arrays of **desiccation cracks** in patterned ground, and subaqueous shrinkage cracks formed in **mudrocks**.
- **Polymictic**: descriptive of a **conglomerate** that contains **clasts** of many different rock types.
- Pragian Stage: a chronostratigraphical division of the Lower Devonian Series, comprising the rocks deposited during the Pragian Age. The second stage of the Devonian Period it is dated to approximately 413.5–409.5 Ma and is preceded by the Lochkovian Stage and followed by the Emsian Stage.
- **Precambrian**: a widely used term to encompass the time preceding the Cambrian Period. It extends from the formation of the earth (4600 Ma) to the beginning of the Phanerozoic Eon (540 Ma).
- **Přídolí Series:** a chronostratigraphical division of the Silurian System comprising the rocks deposited during the Přídolí Epoch. The final series of the Silurian Period it is dated to approximately 419–418 Ma and immediately precedes the Devonian Period.
- **Progradation**. the advance of a sedimentary **facies** or belt of facies as a result of a change in sea or lake level, or uplift of the source area.

Proximal: near to the source.

Psammite: an arenite.

- **Pseudomorph**: a replacement product, composed either of a single mineral or an assemblage of minerals, that retains the distinctive overall shape of the parent crystal.
- **Pseudonodule**: a primary sedimentary structure consisting of a ball-like mass of **sandstone** enclosed in **shale** or **mudstone**. It is the result of the settling of **sand** into underlying **clay** or **mud** that welled up between isolated sand masses. Characterized by a rounded base with upturned or inrolled edges.
- Pteraspid: any member of the extinct (Palaeozoic) order Pteraspidiformes, also known as heterostracans, abundant in early Devonian times.

- **Pull-apart basin**: a sedimentary **basin** formed by the pulling apart of adjacent blocks by **transcurrent faults**.
- **Pyroclastic**: descriptive of unconsolidated deposits (tephra) and rocks that form directly by explosive ejection from a volcano.
- **Quartz**: a rock-forming mineral composed entirely of silica (SiO₂); one of the most common minerals of the Earth's crust.
- Quartzite (adj. quartzitic, quartzose): both an arenaceous rock composed primarily of quartz, and a metamorphic rock formed of quartz.
- Quaternary Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). The latest period of geological time and the last period of the Cainozoic Era, it ranges from 1.8 Ma to the present day.
- **Radiometric dating**: methods of dating rocks or minerals using the relative abundances of radioactive and stable isotopes of certain elements, together with known rates of decay of radioactive elements. Radiocarbon dating can extend back to only 50 000 years, but other elements (potassium, lead, uranium) can be used to obtain dates of the order of tens to thousands of millions of years.
- **Red beds:** a collective term applied to continental sedimentary successions that are predominantly red in colour due to the presence of iron oxides and hydroxides formed in a highly oxidizing environment.
- **Regolith**: a layer of unconsolidated, **weathered**, broken rock debris that lies below the soil and above the bedrock below.
- Regression: retreat or contraction of the sea as a result of a fall in sea level or uplift of the land.
- **Relict**: descriptive of a geological feature surviving in its primitive form.
- **Reworking**: the natural excavation and transportation of **sediment** or **fossil** material that is then re-deposited elsewhere.
- Rheic (Ocean): an approximately E–W-oriented ocean that opened up at the same time as the closure of the Iapetus Ocean and separated part of Gondwana (in part, what is now Brittany and central Germany) from southern Britain, northern France and northern Germany during the Silurian Period; its closure resulted in the Variscan Orogeny.
- Rhizocretion: a hollow, concretion-like mass that formed around the root of a living plant.

- **Rhizolith**: a **concretion** (normally **calcitic**) replacing a root.
- **Rhyolite**: a fine-grained, pale coloured, acid $(SiO_2 > 63 \text{ wt\%})$ volcanic (**extrusive**) rock, with the same chemical and mineralogical composition as **granite**.
- **Rhythmite**: a unit of a rhythmic succession or of **beds** that were developed by rhythmic sedimentation.
- **Rift**: a depressed area of continental crust produced by tensile stretching of the crust and down-faulting along parallel **faults**.
- **Rip-up clast**: a fragment of **sediment** that was eroded from river banks and re-deposited in the succeeding sedimentary layers.
- Rotliegendes: 'red layers', a German stratigraphical term applied to the largely continental deposits of Lower to Mid-Permian times, which are commonly reddened with iron oxide minerals.
- Rudite (adj: rudaceous): a coarse-grained sedimentary rock, either consolidated as in a conglomerate, or unconsolidated as in a till.
- Sabkha: a salt-encrusted supratidal surface or coastal flat bordering a lagoon. Inland forms frequently support sand dunes.
- Sand: sediment particles typically between 0.625 mm and 2 mm in diameter.
- Sandbar: a bar or low ridge of sand that borders the shore and is built up, or near, to the suface of the water by currents or wave action.
- Sandstone: a sedimentary rock composed of lithified sand grains between 0.625 mm and 2 mm in diameter.
- Sand volcano: an accumulation of sand resembling a minature volcano formed by the expulsion of liquefied sand to the sediment surface.
- Sand wedge: a body of sand shaped like a vertical wedge, with the apex pointing downward, formed by the filling in of thermal contraction cracks.
- Sarcopterygian: any member of the subclass Sarcopyterygii, class Osteichthyes. This group of bony fishes, characterized by paired 'fleshy fins' and internal nostrils includes the crossopterygians and the dipnoans.
- Scandian Orogeny: the phase of the Caledonian Orogeny that affected what is now the Scandinavian countries, when Baltica and Laurentia collided in the Ludlow Epoch.

Schist: a coarse-grained metamorphic rock that displays a strong foliation (schistosity) that is

commonly defined by mica alignment.

Scolecodont: the fossilized jaw of an annelid.

- **Scoriaceous**: descriptive of **lavas** that are very highly **vesiculated**, giving them a 'clinkery' appearance.
- Sediment: granular material such as sand or mud derived from the weathering and erosion of pre-existing rocks, biological activity (e.g. shells and organic matter), or chemical precipitation (e.g. evaporites).
- Sedimentary rock: a rock composed of sediments, deposited by water, wind or ice.
- Sedimentology: the study of sediments and sedimentary rocks, including their deposition, structure and composition.
- **Seismic**: of movements in the Earth's crust causing earthquakes. **Seismic reflection** is the technique whereby artificially created seismic waves are differentially transmitted by rocks of differing density and recorded on their return to the surface.
- Series: a chronostratigraphical division comprising all of the rocks formed during an epoch; it can be divided into stages.

Shale: a mudrock that splits easily into layers.

- **Shearing**: deformation of a rock body by the sliding of one part relative to another part, in a direction parallel to their plane of contact.
- **Sheet flood**: a broad expanse of rapidly moving water and debris, not confined to a channel and usually of short duration due to rapid runoff in an arid area.
- **Shoreface deposits**: the deposits formed on the shoreward part of a barrier in shallow sea or between the seaward limit of the shore and the horizontal surface of the offshore.
- Siegenian Stage: a chronostratigraphical divison of the Lower Devonian Series in Belgium, France and Germany. Roughly equivalent to the Pragian Stage.
- Silcrete: an indurated silica soil (or palaeosol); the term was originally used for a conglomerate of sand and gravel cemented into a hard mass by silica.
- Silicification (adj. silicified): the process of conversion of a sediment, plant or animal to chert by hydrothermal and/or chemical processes.
- Sill: a tabular body of igneous rock that is more-or-less concordant with the bedding or foliation of the host rocks.

Silt: a fine-grained sediment intermediate in grain size between clay and sand. Siltstone: a rock made of silt.

Silurian Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from 439 to 418 million years ago, it precedes the Devonian Period.

Siluro-Devonian: a period of geological time spanning the Silurian and Devonian periods.

- **Sinistral**: of left-hand lateral movement along a geological fault.
- **Sinter**: a chemical **sedimentary rock** deposited by precipitation from mineral waters of springs, lakes or streams.
- **Sorting**: the ordered distribution of grain sizes. in a sediment or sedimentary rock.
- Sparite (sparry calcite): a limestone in which the sparite cement is more abundant than the micrite matrix.
- **Species**: a category used in the taxonomic classification of organisms. Similar species are grouped together in a **genus**.
- **Spherulite**: a spherical mass of acicular crystals, commonly **feldspar**, radiating from a central point; commonly found in glassy silicic volcanic rocks as a result of devitrification.
- **SSSI:** Site of Special Scientific Interest; the designation of an area of land for statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Stage: a chronostratigraphical division comprising all of the rocks formed during an age, and usually taken to be the smallest standard unit.
- Staurolite-grade: a medium grade of metamorphic rock, based on the amount of temperature/pressure it has been subjected to, this referring to the presence of the index mineral staurolite.
- **Stratigraphy**: the study of the temporal and spatial relationships within a rock succession.
- Stratotype: a sequence of sedimentary rocks at a particular locality chosen as the standard against which other sequences can be compared. Stratotypes are established for lithostratigraphical and biostratigraphical units, both regionally and internationally.
- **Stratum** (pl. **strata**): a **bed** or single layer in a succession of rock.
- **Stratovolcano**: a cone-shaped volcano with a layered internal structure.
- **Strike**: the trend of a geological surface (e.g. a **bedding plane**) measured at right angles to the direction of maximum slope or dip.

- Strike-slip: a tectonic break in which the predominant displacement is lateral rather than vertical.
- Stromatolite: a laminated or mounded structure composed of carbonate trapped by cyanobacteria. Known in rocks throughout the geological record, they form in warm, shallow tropical seas in the present day.
- Subaerial: of environments that exist and processes that operate in the open air.
- Subarkose: a sandstone with insufficient feldspar to be termed an arkose, intermediate in composition between an arkose and a pure quartz sandstone.
- **Subduction**: the process of one crustal plate descending into the mantle beneath another during plate convergence and collision, with the release of energy in the form of earthquakes and often accompanied by volcanicity.
- **Subsidence**: the sinking of a local or regional portion of the Earth's surface with respect to its surroundings.

Subtidal: formed, or occurring, below the tides. Sulphide: a compound of sulphur with a metal

or semi-metal, such as pyrite FeS_2 .

Supratidal: above the tides.

- Synaeresis crack: a subaqueous shrinkage crack, formed by the loss of pore water from clays due to changes in salinity of the surrounding water.
- Syn-: prefix indicating 'together' or 'contemporaneous with'.
- Syncline: a downfold of rock produced by tectonic deformation; the youngest rocks occur in its core.
- System: a chronostratigraphical division comprising all of the rocks formed during a period; can be divided into series.
- **Talus**: an accumulation of rock litter at the foot of a slope, generally with a wide size-range (up to several metres) and ungraded. Also called scree.
- Taxon (pl. taxa): a named group of organisms of any rank.
- **Tectonism** (adj. **tectonic**): deformation of the Earth's crust and the consequent structural effects (e.g. **faults** and **folds**).
- Terrane: a small crustal plate or fault-bounded fragment of a larger plate, with distinctive characteristics, which may have been displaced considerable distances from its original site and welded to another plate during plate tectonic movement.

- **Terrestrial**: of or relating to the Earth or the Earth's dry land.
- Tetrapoda: four-footed vertebrates including amphibians, reptiles and mammals.
- Thelodont: a member of the extinct order Thelodonti, class Agnatha (see agnathan). Characterized by their shark-like dermal denticles, which are commonly fossilized as separate elements within the sediment.
- Thermal subsidence: subsidence of the Earth's crust as a result of heating.
- Throw: the amount of vertical displacement between the rocks on either side of a fault.
- **Thrust fault**: a **fault** characterized by movement or rocks under lateral compression along a low-angle fault plane.
- **Trace fossil (ichnofossil):** a **biogenic** sedimentary structure produced by activity of an organism within a substrate; examples include burrows and footprints.
- Transcurrent fault (strike-slip fault): a fault in which the major displacement is horizontal and parallel to the strike of a vertical or subvertical fault plane. Localized zones of deformation due to pressures and tensions across the fault occur at bends in the fault and can give rise to conditions of transtension. The latter process may cause the formation of rhombic-shaped basins, graben, or marginal basins that may be the focus of rift-related volcanic activity.
- **Transgression** (adj. **transgressive**): the inundation of the land due to sea-level or lakelevel rise, and the resulting sedimentary deposits.
- Transpression: crustal shortening as a result of oblique compression across a transcurrent (strike-slip) fault or shear zone.
- Transtension: crustal extension as a result of oblique tension across a transcurrent fault or shear zone leading to localized rifts or basins.
- Triassic Period: a geological time division (cf. chronostratigraphy). Ranging from 245 to 208 million years ago, it is the first period of the Mesozoic Era, and is preceded by the Permian Period.
- Trigonotarbida: an extinct (Silurian-Carboniferous) order of primitive chelicerate arthropods, which includes some of the earliest land-living animals.
- Trough (cross-) bedding: cross-bedding formed in three-dimensional dunes in which the foresets (trough sets) are concave upwards.

Truncation: the cutting or breaking off of the top of a geological structure or landform.

Tuff (adj. **tuffaceous**): cemented and **lithified** volcanic **ash**, comprising rock and crystal fragments from an explosive eruption.

- **Turbidite**: any **sediment** or rock transported and deposited by a **turbidity current**, generally characterized by **graded bedding**, large amounts of **matrix** and commonly exhibiting a Bouma sequence.
- **Turbidity current**: a highly turbid, dense current carrying large quantities of **clay**, **silt** and **sand** in suspension which flows down a submarine slope through less dense sea water.
- Type locality/area: the place where the type section (or stratotype) for a stratigraphical unit is located, or from where the type specimen of a fossil came.

Type section: see stratotype.

- **Type specimen**: a single specimen designated as typifying a named **species** or subspecies. *See also* **holotype**.
- **Ultramafic**: of an **igneous rock** in which darkcoloured (iron/magnesium) minerals comprise more than 90% of the rock.
- **Unconformity**: the surface that separates two sedimentary sequences of different ages; it represents a gap in the geological record when there was **erosion**, and/or **tectonism** and/or no deposition. There is often an angular discordance between the two sequences.
- Uplift: movements that raises or upthrusts the Earth's crust, as in a dome, arch or orogen.
- Upper Devonian Series: a chronostratigraphical division of the Devonian System comprising the rocks deposited during the Late Devonian Epoch. It includes the Frasnian and Famennian stages.
- Variscan Orogeny: the period of mountain building in Europe that occurred in the Carboniferous and Permian periods as a result of the closure of the Rheic Ocean.

Vascular: of plants with conducting tissue.

- **Varve**: a sedimentary **bed**, layer, or sequence of layers deposited in a body of still water within a year, and usually during a season.
- **Vertisol**: a mineral soil rich in calcium and magnesium and with 30% or more of **clay**. Deep wide cracks develop when the soil is dry.
- Vesicle: a gas bubble cavity, usually in a consolidated lava or shallow intrusion.
- **Volcanic arc**: a generally curved or arc-shaped, linear belt of volcanoes above a **subduction** zone along a continental margin.
- **Volcaniclastic**: generally applied to a **clastic** rock containing mainly material derived from volcanic activity, but without regard for its origin or environment of deposition (includes **pyroclastic** rocks and **sedimentary rocks** containing volcanic debris).
- Volcanism: volcanic activity.
- **Vug** (adj. **vuggy**): a cavity in a rock, which may contain a lining of crystalline minerals.
- Wacke: an impure sandstone that consists of a mixture of angular and unsorted or poorly sorted mineral and rock fragments, with an abundant matrix of clay and fine silt.
- Wadi: a gorge-like valley formed in arid or semiarid environments.
- **Weathering**: the chemical alteration and physical breaking down of rocks through the effects of exposure to the weather.
- Welsh Basin: the Lower Palaeozoic sedimentary, deep-water basin that occupied much of what is now Wales.
- Wenlock Series: a chronostratigraphical division of the Silurian System. It is preceded by the Llandovery Series and succeeded by the Ludlow Series and extended from about 430 to 424 million years ago.
- Zone: a stratigraphical unit in many categories of stratigraphical classification. In **biostratigraphy** a zone is defined on the occurrence of a defining **fossil** (**index fossil**), or by the entry of a particular fossil taxon (*see biozone*).

1, 1 1, 1

Note: Page numbers in **bold** and *italic* type refer to **tables** and *figures* respectively

Abdon limestones 170, 218 Abercriban Oolite 259 Abercriban Quarries 7, 214, 220, 258-62 **Brownstones Formation 258 Carboniferous** Limestone 258, 259 Grey Grits Formation 7, 220, 258-62 Lower Limestone Shale Group 258-62 Castell Coch Limestone Formation 259 Plateau Beds Formation 258. 259-60, 262 Aberlemno Quarry 6, 8, 127, 161-3 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 161, 163 Dundee Flagstone Formation 161-3 Scone Sandstone Formation 161, 163 **Melgund Sandstone** Member 161 see also Tillywhandland Quarry and Turin Hill Acadian Orogeny 5, 14-16, 130, 137, 190, 211, 215, 218, 227, 228, 256, 268, 300, 307, 322 acanthodians 8, 110-12, 161, 163, 166, 229, 230, 277 Achanarras Fish Bed 22, 107, 116

Achanarras Hill 90, 91 Achanarras Limestone Member 6, 24-5, 90-3, 111 Achanarras Quarry 6, 8, 22, 24-5, 27, 90-3 Achanarras Limestone Member 6, 90-3 Lower Caithness Flagstone Group 90-3 Robbery Head Subgroup 90-3 **Upper Caithness Flagstone** Group 90-3 Latheron Subgroup 93 adhesion warts 99, 100, 101, 176 Afforsk Fault 113 Afon Dulais 254 Afon Sawdde 240, 243 see also Sawdde Gorge Afon y Waen 7, 9, 214, 220, 262-5 Afon y Waen Fish Bed 220, 262-5 Lower Limestone Shale Group 262, 264 Plateau Beds Formation 7, 262-5 Afon y Waen Fish Bed 220, 262-5 Aglaophyton major 120 Albadesmus almondi 143 **Albion Sands Formation** 212-13, 217, 281-4

Albion Sands and Gateholm Island 7, 11, 214, 281-4, 293, 299 Gray Sandstone Group 282, 283 Milford Haven Group 282 **Albion Sands Formation** 281 - 4Lindsway Bay Formation 282. 284 Red Cliff Formation 281-4 Sandy Haven Formation 281-4 algae 34, 53-6, 75-8, 93, 117, 120, 162-3 Aller's Mill 185 Allt a'Mhuilinn Mudstone Formation 139 Althaspis leachi 219, 274-6 A. senniensis 219, 251-3 Alves and Scaat Craig Beds 24-5 amphibians 100, 180 anaspid 143 andesite 16, 28, 119, 121-4, 128, 139, 142, 147-8, 151, 153, 157, 176-7, 199 Angle Syncline 287 Anglesey 5, 16, 211, 212-13, 214, 216, 218, 221-8, 274, 317 Anglo-Welsh Basin 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 15-16, 17-18, 163, 170, 178, 186, 211–323

Annandale 199, 202 annelids 121 annulatus sextantii Biozone 179 Apiculiretusipora 252 araneae 121 Arbroath 127, 134-5, 167-8, 199 Arbroath Paving Stone 161 Arbroath Sandstone Member 134-5, 167-9 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 128-35, 139, 151, 158, 161, 163, 166-7, 170-1, 176 Ashbank Sandstone 134-5 Buttergask Flagstone 134-5 Catterline Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 146, 152-3 Barras Conglomerate 134-5 **Rouen Bay Sandstone** 134-5 St John's Knapp Sandstone 134-5 Three Wells Sandstone 134-5 Craighall Conglomerate Formation 134-5 Deep Conglomerate Formation 134-5 **Dundee Flagstone Formation** 6, 8, 134-5, 139, 161-4, 166, 167 Finavon Conglomerate 134-5 Hatton Conglomerate 134-5 Montrose Volcanic Formation 12, 134-5, 139, 167 **Ruchill Flagstone Formation** 134-5 Callander Craig Conglomerate 134-5 Gartan Conglomerate 134-5 Inchmurrin Conglomerate 134-5 Scone Sandstone Formation 128, 134-5, 161, 163, 166-8, 170-2, 176, 178 Arbroath Sandstone Member 134-5, 167-9 Auchmithie Conglomerate Member 134-5, 167

Campsie Limestone Member 7, 134-5, 170-2 **Dunblane Sandstone** 134-5 **Melgund Sandstone** Member 161 **Red Head Sandstone** Member 134-5, 167 Sheriffmuir Sandstone Member 134-5, 176-8 **Tannadice Sandstone** 134-5 Archaeoperisaccus 73 Archaeothrix contexta 120 A. oscillatoriformis 120 Archanodon jukesi 221 Archidesmus sp. 143 A. macnicoli 166 Ardmore–Gallanach 8 Arenicolites 157, 220, 299 Argyll Field 73, 132-3 Arkelton Hill 202 Arnton Fell 202 Arran see Isle of Arran Arthostigma sp. 157 arthropoda incertae sedis 121 arthropods 139, 218 Aberlemno Quarry 6, 162 Den of Findon 114-16 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 303-4, 308 Freshwater West 293 Llansteffan 211 Milton Ness 161 Pantymaes Quarry 7, 246-50 Porth-y-Mor 224 Rhynie 6, 10, 117, 120-4 Tarbet Ness 100 The Toutties 6, 140, 143-5 Tillywhandland Quarry 166 Ascomycete 120 Ascomycete fungi 117 Ashbank Sandstone 134-5 Asterolepis orcadensis Zone 85 Asteroxylon 117 A. mackiei 120 Auchenaspis 9 Auchensail Quarry 7, 10, 127, 178-80 Strathmore Group 179 **Teith Sandstone Formation** 7, 179-80 Auchmithie Conglomerate Member 134-5, 167

Auchtitench Sandstone Formation 128, 136 Avalonia 5, 13-15, 245 Avon Group see Lower Limestone Shale Group Avre of Huxter 31-3 Ayrshire 7, 16, 128, 137-9, 204 bacteria 56, 109, 111-12 Badbea Breccia 24-5 **Baligill Quarry 74** Ballagan Formation 181, 185-6, 199, 201, 203 Ballanucater Farm 10, 139, 178, 180 Balleich Lava 134-5 Balmaha 131 Balmerino to Wormit 12, 139 Balnagown Group 6, 24-5, 96-102 Gaza Formation 24-5, 97-102 Tarbet Ness Formation 24-5, 97-102 Baltica 4, 13-15 **Bannisdale Formation 206** Banniskirk Quarry 8 Barras Conglomerate 134-5 Barren or Basement Group 24-5 **Basal Breccia Member 142** Basement Complex 27 Basement Group 302 Bay of Berstane 6, 24-5, 27, 28, 59, 71-4 Eday Marl Formation 71-4 Lower Eday Sandstone Formation 72 Upper Eday Sandstone Formation 72 Bay of Sannick 84 Bay of Skaill 10, 64 Bay of the Stairs 68-9 Beaconichnus 157 Beaconites 59, 60, 72, 114, 115, 159, 161, 180, 304-5, 311, 321 B. antarcticus 244, 288, 290, 296, 311 B. barretti 218, 291, 296, 295, 297, 311 Belgium 17 Bell Hill 199 Ben Nevis and Allt a'Mhuilinn 12, 139

Ben Nevis Volcanic Formation 12 Benton Fault 215, 219, 284, 293, 300 Berriedale Flagstone Formation 24-5 **Berriedale Sandstone Formation** 24-5 Besom Farm Quarry 9 Bettws Fault 254 **Biggar Volcanic Formation 136** Billia Croo 52, 53 biostratigraphy 16-17 bioturbation 60-1, 72-3, 79, 96, 275, 313 see also burrows biozones fish 17-18, 212-13 miospores 17-18, 212-13, 258 Birk Beck 201 Birkenia sp. 143 Birrenswark Volcanic Formation 199, 203-4 Bishop's Frome Limestone (Member) 213-18, 227 Cusop Dingle 234-9 Devil's Hole 228 Oak Dingle 230 The Scar 232 see also Chapel Point Calcretes Member; **Psammosteus** Limestone bivalves 220, 229-30, 241-3, 277-89, 290 Black Cock Formation 240 Blackhall Limestone 173 Black Isle Syncline 96, 106, Black Mountains 211, 218, 219, 220, 234, 235 Black Nore Point 312, 318 Black Nore Sandstone Formation 212-13, 219, 312-18 Black Park, Edderton 8 Black Rock to East Comb 12, 139 Blaen-gweche Farm 254 **Blaenavon 268** Blairgowrie-Edzell 134-5 Blo Geo 49, 51 Blorenge 271 **Bochruben Formation 104** Bodafon Formation 218, 221-2, 226

Boddin Point 160 Bofrishlie Burn Sandstone 134-5 Boghole and Whitemire Beds 24-5 Bogmore, Muckle Burn 8 Bohemian 13, 17-18 Borrowdale Volcanic Group 205-7 Borwick 66 bostonite 69 Bothriolepis 9, 174, 184, 185, 186, 220-1, 264-5, 266-7 B. bicklingi 184 B. bydrophila 174 Brachyacanthus scutuger 165 brachiopods 220, 241-3, 259, 264-5, 266-78, 299, 315 Bracklinn Falls Conglomerate 134-5 Bradnor Hill Quarry 9 breccia 22, 24-5, 26, 74-8, 102 - 7Breck Ness 53, 55 Brecon Beacons 211, 219, 220, 234, 254, 274 Brecon Beacons Quarry see Craig-y-Fro Quarry Breconensis-vallatus Zone 18 Breconian 17, 212-13, 215, 219, 220, 253 Heol Senni Quarry 251-3 Ross-on-Wye, Royal Hotel 7, 271-4 Breinton 232 Brendon Hills 319 Bressay Flagstone Facies 24-5 Brewin's Bridge/Canal 11 Bridge of Allan 176-7 Brindister Flagstone Formation 24-5, 47 Bring Fault 27 Bristol 4-5, 317 Bristol Channel 16, 301, 307 Bristol Channel Landmass 211, 216-17, 290, 317, 322 Brobury Scar see The Scar Brontoscorpio sp. 229 Brown Clee Hill 273 Brown and Grey Sandstone Member 140-2, 144 **Brownstones** Formation 212-13, 219, 322 Abercriban Quarries 258

Caeras Quarry 7, 253-6 Craig-y-cwm 269 Craig-y-fro Quarry 257 Duffryn Crawnon 265-6 Heol Senni Quarry 251, 253 Ross-on-Wye, Royal Hotel 7, 271 - 4Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 7, 274-6 bryzoa 289, 299, 301 Buchlyvie Sandstone 134-5 Buckie Beds 24-5 Burnmouth 199 **Burnside Sandstone Formation** 129, 138-9, 167-9, 173-4 burrows 111, 190, 220, 230, 235-9, 248, 288, 290, 304-5 see also bioturbation Burton Cliff Formation 212-13 **Bute Conglomerate Formation** 138 Buttergask Flagstone 134-5 Buttermere Formation 205 Cabrach 28, 117 Caddroun Burn 202-3 Caeras Conglomerate Member 254-6 Caeras Quarry 7, 214, 219, 253-6 Brownstones Formation 7, 253 - 6**Caeras** Conglomerate Member 254-6 Lower Limestone Shale Group 254 Millstone Grit 254 Caithness Basin 3-6, 8, 10, 21-5, 24-5, 28-30, 74-96 Caithness Flagstone Group 22 South Stromness Coast Section 52-6 Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay 56-9 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 64, 67 calc-alkaline lavas 134-8, 139 Caldey Island 293, 308 Caledonian intrusions 3, 15-16, 22, 102-7, 127-30, 139 Caledonian Orogeny 14-16, 21-2, 106, 128, 182, 199, 211, 217, 221, 227-8, 255, 322

Callander Craig Conglomerate 134-5 Camarotoechia nucula 255 Campsie Limestone Member 7, 134-5, 170-2 camptonite 66 Canas Solais 97, 98 Capel Berach Beds 243 Capel Horeb Member 242, 243, 245 Capel Horeb Quarry 10, 11 Caradoc 4-5 Carboniferous 3, 13, 17, 187, 199-200, 202, 206, 212-13, 265-8 Carboniferous Limestone 7. 10, 221, 254, 258, 259, 265-8, 269, 302-7, 317 Cardiff 217-18, 221 Carlin Craig 147 Carmarthen Fans 211, 220, 254 Carmel 254 Carn Mor 102 Carn Powell Member 240 Carnoustie 167-8 Carreg Cennen Castle 254 **Carreg Cennen Disturbance** 217, 246, 250 Carreg Cennen-Llandyfaelog Fault 219, 256 Carrick Hills 12 Carrick Volcanic Formation 136 **Carron Sandstone Formation** 134-5, 140-5, 145-6, 149-50 Carse of Gowrie 168 Castell Coch Limestone Formation 259, 265, 266 Castlehaven 100 Castle Haven Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-8, 150-1 Castle of Cowie Member 134-5, 141, 142, 144 Castle of Qui Avre 66 Castle of Old Wick 85 Castlemartin Corse Anticline 292 Castracollis wilsonae 121 Catterline Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 146, 152-3 Cefn Esgair South Borehole 264 Cennen Valley 217, 219, 254 centipedes 117, 121 cephalaspids 8, 9, 143, 161, 163, 166, 176, 230

Cephalaspis 166, 219, 229, 230, 252 C. pagei 162, 166 C. powriei 166 C. scotica 177 Ceratiocaris sp. 143 **Chapel Point Calcretes Member** 203-7, 212-17, 237, 305, 306, 308-11 see also Bishop's Frome Limestone; Psammosteus Limestone Chapelton Burn Member 136 Cheiracanthus 108-11 C. latus 111, 112 C. murchisoni 110, 112 Cheirolepis 108, 111 C. trailli 110, 112 **Cheviot Volcanic Formation 199** chilopods 121 **Chondrites 289** Chonetes striatella 255 chronostratigraphy 13, 16-17 Cil-yr-ychen Quarry 254-6 Clashbenny Formation 138 Clee Hills 211, 218, 219, 221 **Clee Sandstone Formation** 212-13, 219 Clevedon 312, 314, 317 Clevigarth 48, 51 Clew Bay Fault Zone 132-3 Cliff Farm 277-8 climate 15, 116, 121, 128, 160, 176, 204, 219, 227, 253, 255, 258, 280, 306-7, 311 climatiid 229 Climatius reticulatus 166 Clocksbriggs (or Wemyss) Quarry 161 Clousta Volcanic Rocks 12, 24-5 **Clun Forest 211** Clydach Valley 254 Clyth Subgroup 24-5 **Cnoc Fyrish Conglomerate** 24-5 Coccosteus 34, 108, 110-11, 220, 317 C. cuspidatus 34, 55, 66, 110, 112 Coccosteus Bed 108, 109, 111 Cockburnspath 137, 181, 199, 202 **Cockburnspath Formation 184** Cockermouth Lavas 208

Coldra Limestone 218 conglomerates see named units Conglomerate Facies 24-5 **Conglomerate Member** 287-90, 294, 298, 300 **Conigar Pit Sandstone Member** 212-13, 250, 294-6, 300, 303, 305, 307 Coniston Group 206 conodonts 286, 287, 291 Cooksonia 10, 252, 257-8, 302 C. caledonica 10, 162 coprolites 109, 111, 165 Cornulatichnus 59 C. edayensis 60 Cornwall 3 Cosheston Group 212-13, 215, 219, 220, 253 **Burton Cliff Formation** 212-13 Lawrenny Cliff Formation 212-13 Llanstadwell Formation 212-13 Mill Bay Formation 212-13, 253 **New Shipping Formation** 212-13 Cotti Geo 38 Courceyan 17, 128, 187, 205, 208 Cove Harbour 181-2 Cowie Harbour 140, 142, 143 Cowie Harbour Conglomerate Member 134-5, 140-2, 144 Cowie Harbour Fault 140 Cowie Harbour Fish Bed 140, 141. 143-4 Cowie Harbour Siltstone Member 134-5, 140-5 **Cowie Sandstone Formation** 134-5, 140-6, 149 **Basal Breccia Member 142** Brown and Grey Sandstone Member 140-2, 144 Castle of Cowie Member 134-5, 141, 142, 144 Cowie Harbour Conglomerate Member 134-5, 140-2, 144 Cowie Harbour Siltstone Member 134-5, 140-5 Purple Sandstone Member 141, 142, 144

Red Sandstone Member 140-2, 144 Cowiedesmus eroticopodus 143 Craig of Monievreckie Conglomerate Formation 134-5 Craig na h-Iolaire 102, 104-5 Craig-y-cwm 7, 214, 268-71 **Brownstones Formation 269** Carboniferous Limestone 269 Millstone Grit 269 Quartz Conglomerate Group 7, 268-71 Craig-y-cwm Formation 268-71 Garn-gofen Formation 268-71 Wern Watkin Formation 268, 269, 271 Senni Formation 269 Craig-y-cwm Formation 212-13, 221, 268-71 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 7, 10, 214, 257-8 **Brownstones Formation 257** Senni Formation 7, 257 Craig-yr-Hafod 268 Craighall Conglomerate Formation 134-5 Crawton Basin 130-1, 144, 149, 151, 154 Crawton Bay 6, 12, 127, 131, 151-5 Catterline Conglomerate Formation 152-3 **Crawton Volcanic Formation** 12. 151-4 Whitehouse Conglomerate Formation 152 Crawton Ness 151-3 **Crawton Volcanic Formation** 12, 134-5, 146, 151-4 Creag Dhearg 102, 105 Creag nan Clag 102-6 Crieff-Callander Basin 131 Crigiau Stream 234, 236, 239 crinoids 241, 289 **Cromlix Mudstone Formation** 128, 134-5, 155-7, 170-2 Cross Fell 199, 200 Cross Fell Inlier 206-, 208 Crossgates-Burnside 168, 178 Crovie Fault 113-14 Crovie Group 24-5, 29, 113-16 Cruaday Quarry 8, 55, 66 Crussolum sp. 121 crustaceans 117, 121 Culzean Harbour 12, 139 Cusop Dingle 7, 214, 217-18, 234-9 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 7,234-7 **Bishop's Frome Limestone** 234-9 Townsend Tuff Bed 234-6, 238-9 St Maughans Formation 234-5 Cwm Mill 9, 218 Cwmyniscoy Mudstone Formation 265 Cwrt-yr-ala Formation 212-13, 221 cyanobacteria 117, 120 Cyathaspis 9 C. banksi 244 Cymbularia carina 244 Cyrtospirifer verneuili 220, 264 Dalradian Supergroup 155, 192-3, 195 Southern Highland Group 193 Dalmary Sandstone 134-5 Daren Cilau 271 Dawsonites sp. 180 Dawston Burn 202-3 Deep Conglomerate Formation 134-5 Deepwell 232-3 Deerness 56-9, 70 Deerness Syncline 27 Deerness Volcanic Member 12, 57 Debeubarthia splendens 257-8 Den of Findon 6, 8, 28-9, 112-16 Crovie Group 113-16 Findon Group 112–16 Gamrie Fish Bed 112, 113, 116 Devil's Hole 7, 9, 214, 217, 228-9 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 228 **Bishop's Frome Limestone** 228 St Maughans Formation 228

Devon 3, 5, 13, 211, 215, 317, 318-23 Dickmont's Den 169 Dictyocaris 162 D. slimoni 143, 145 Dictyocaris Member 141, 142, 145 Digedi Brook 238 Dingle Peninsula 64 Dinley Burn 202-3 Diplacanthus 108-10 D. crassisimus 110 D. (Rhadinacanthus) longispinus 112 D. striatus 110, 112 D. tenuistriatus 112 Diplichnites 114, 166, 218 D. gouldi 249 Diplocraterion 114 diplopod 140 Dipple Brae 8 Dipterus 51, 79, 83, 108-9, 116 D. valenciennesi 8, 110 Dittonian 17, 212-13, 213-17, 219, 221, 277-8 Aberlemno Quarry 162-3 Cusop Dingle 212-13, 217 Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 274-6 Djuba Water Syncline 39 dolerite dykes 170, 189 dolomite 61-3, 65-7, 87-90, 163-6 Doolie Ness Conglomerate 134-5 Dornoch Firth 29, 96 Dow Craig 172, 174-6 Downie Point 144, 145-51 Downie Point Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-7, 150-1 Downie Point to Dunnottar Castle see Dunnottar Coast Section Downton Castle area 9 **Downton Castle Sandstone** Formation 9, 212, 212-13, 217, 240, 244 Downton Group 9, 10, 17, 212-13, 215-17, 235-40, 247, 284 Downton-Dittonian boundary 9 Downtonian 7, 17, 212-17, 235, 247, 284, 291-301 draas 99, 101

Drepanophycus spinaeformis 180 Dryden Flags Formation 118-19, 122, 124 Lower Shales 118-20, 122 Rhynie Cherts Unit 117-120, 123 Shales with Muddy Sandstones 118-20, 122-3 Upper Shales 118-20, 122 White Sandstones 118-19, 122, 124 Duffryn Crawnon 7, 214, 220, 265-8 Avon (Lower Limestone Shale) Group 265 **Cwmyniscoy Mudstone** Formation 265 **Castell Coch Limestone** Formation 265, 266 **Brownstones** Formation 265-6 Grey Grits Formation 265-6, 268 Pembroke (Carboniferous Limestone) Group 265 Plateau Beds Formation 7, 265-8 Dulas Bay 218, 222 Dulas Brook 234, 239 Dumfries 200, 202 Dun Chia Hill (Loch Duntelchaig) 6, 24-5, 28, 29, 102-6 Grampian Group 102-4 **Bochruben Formation 104 Inverness Sandstone Group** 103 Dunbar 199 Dunblane Sandstone 134-5 Duncansby Head 30, 82-4 Dundarg Fault 115 Dundee Flagstone Formation 6, 8, 134-5, 139, 161-4, 166, 167 **Duneaton Volcanic Formation** 136 Dungavel Hill Conglomerate Member 136 Dunnet Head 28, 30, 69 **Dunnet Head Sandstone** Group 24-5, 30, 69 Dunnicaer 147 Dunnottar Castle Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 145-7, 149

Castle Haven Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-8, 150-1 Downie Point Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-7, 150-1 Strathlethan Sandstone Member 134-5, 146-7, 150 Dunnottar Coast Section 6, 127, 131, 139, 145-51 **Catterline** Conglomerate Formation 146 **Cowie Sandstone Formation** 145-6, 149 Dunnottar Castle Conglomerate Formation 145-7, 149 Castle Haven Conglomerate Member 146-8, 150 - 1Downie Point Conglomerate Member 146-7, 150-1 Strathlethan Sandstone Member 146-7, 150 Stonehaven Group 145, 149-50 Carron Sandstone Formation 145-6, 149-50 Tremuda Bay Volcanic Formation 146, 148 Whitehouse Conglomerate Formation 146 Dunnottar-Crawton Group 128-31, 155 Craig of Monievreckie **Conglomerate** Formation 134-5 **Crawton Volcanic Formation** 12, 134-5, 146, 151-4 Lintrathen Tuff Member 153-4, 155, 158 Dunnottar Castle Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 145-7, 149 Castle Haven Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-8, 150-1 Downie Point Conglomerate Member 134-5, 146-7, 150-1 Strathlethan Sandstone Member 134-5, 146-7,

tion 134-5 Doolie Ness Conglomerate 134-5 Rob's Cove Conglomerate 134-5 Tremuda Bay Volcanic Formation 134-5, 145, 146, 148 Whitehouse Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 139, 146, 152 Dura Den Fish Bed 174 Dura Den Member 138 East Moor Cliff 302, 304 East Scapa Fault 27 Easter Rova Head 6, 24-5, 26, 43-7 Eastern Hole 181, 185 Eastern Hole Conglomerate 185, 187 Ebullitiocaris oviformis 121 Eday Group 6, 24-5, 56, 58-9, 61, 83, 84 Eday Flagstone Formation 6, 24-5, 56-9, 61-3, 72 Eday Marl Formation 24-5, 56-7, 59-61, 71-4 Lower Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 56-8, 61-3, 72 Middle Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 60, 61-3 Upper Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 60, 72 Eday Flagstone Formation 6. 24-5, 56-9, 61-3, 72 **Deerness Volcanic Member** 12, 57 Eday Marl Formation 24-5. 56-7, 59-61, 71-4 Eday Syncline 27, 59, 61 Edzell 131 **Edzell Mudstone Formation** 156 **Edzell Sandstone Formation** 156 Eifelian 4-5, 12, 17, 24-5, 26, 30-7, 66, 108-12 Den of Findon 6, 8, 28-9, 112-17 Tynet Burn 6, 29-30, 107-12 Wick Quarries 85-90

Gourdon Sandstone Forma-

Eifelian-Givetian 8, 24-5, 29-30, 113-17, 212-13, 319 Achanarras Quarry 8 Den of Findon 8, 28-9, 112 Melby 8 South Stromness Coast Section 26-7, 52-6 Tarbet Ness 29-30 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 24-5 Elgin 28-9 Ellen's Geo Conglomerate 24-5,94 **Emphanisporites** 251 Emphanisporites-micrornatus-Streelispora-newportensis Zone 295 Emsian 10, 24-5, 64-7, 94, 129, 211, 212-13, 218 Auchensail Quarry 10, 178-80 Melby 37 Sarclet 94 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 24-5, 64-7 Eoarthropleura sp. 121 **Eoarthropleurids** 121 Eophalangium sheari 121 Erieopterus 162 Esgryn Brook 234, 236, 237, 239 Eshaness Coast 12 'Ethie' lavas 12 eurypterids 144, 162-3, 166 Euthacanthus sp. 166 E. macnicoli 166 euthycarcinoid 117, 121 Exnaboe see The Cletts Exnaboe Fish Bed 51-2 Eycott Volcanic Group 205 Eyemouth 137, 181, 199 **Evemouth Volcanic Formation** 199 Fairlie Sandstone Formation 138 Fairtide Rock 277-8 Famennian 4-5, 17, 24-5, 137-9, 213-16, 220, 221 Craig-y-cwm 268-71 Glen Vale 172-6 Largs Coast 7, 127, 188-92

Siccar Point to Hawk's

Heugh 184, 187

Famennian-Courcevan 7. 127-8, 137-9, 181-7 Farlovian 17, 212-17, 220, 221 Farlow Sandstone Formation 221 fault-bounded basins 7, 47, 112-17, 284-6, 287-9, 290-1, 302-7 faulting 152, 158, 211, 250 Albion Sands and Gateholm Island 284 Dunnottar Coast Section 146, 149-51 Glenthorne 318-19 Little Castle Head 285 Pantymaes Quarry 246 Red Point 74-8 Rhynie 117-24 The Cletts 47-8 The Toutties 140, 142, 144 Tynet Burn 108 West Angle Bay (North) 287-91 see also named faults Fenno-Scandian High 73 Ferryside 219, 252 Fersness 61-2 Ffynnon limestones 218 Fidler Geo to Wats Ness see Footabrough to Wick of Watsness Fife 127, 137-9, 168 Fidlar Stack Monocline 40 Finavon Conglomerate 134-5 Findon Fault 113-14 Findon Group 29, 112-16 Fintona Beds 178 fish 13, 17-18, 29, 30-7, 83-5, 110-12, 173-6, 202-5, 217-18, 220-1, 259, 277-80, 288, 290-1, 295-6, 297 Aberlemno Quarry 6, 8, 90-3, 161-3 biozones 212-13 Achanarras Quarry 6, 8, 90 Cusop Dingle 229-30 Den of Findon 112-17 Devil's Hole 7, 9, 228-9 Duffryn Crawnon 265-8 Greenan Nev Coast 59-61 Heol Senni Quarry 7, 9, 251 Llansteffan 308-10, 310 Oak Dingle 7, 9, 229-31 Pennyland 6, 8, 26, 78-83

Portishead 312-18 Red Point 74-8 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 7, 181, 184-7 Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay 56-9 The Cletts 10, 26, 47-8, 50-2 The Toutties 6, 8, 140-5 Tillywhandland Quarry 6, 8, 161, 163-6 Tynet Burn 6, 8, 107-12 Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 274-6 Wolf's Hole Quarry 7-8, 176 Flimston Bay Fault 292-4 Footabrough to Wick of Watsness 6, 24-5, 37-43 Melby Formation 39 Sandness Formation 39, 41 Sulma Water Formation 39 Walls Formation 6, 39-43 Forbidden Cave 167, 169 Forest of Dean 214, 219, 271, 274, 312, 317 Forest of Dean Coalfield 211, 221 Forfarshire Fish Bed 164 Fovers Pluton 102, 104, 106 Frasnian 4-5, 8, 9, 17, 24-5, 129-30, 212-17, 221 Frasnian-Famennian 129-30, 211-16, 219-21, 262-5 Afon y Waen 262-5 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 220 Freshwater West 220 Portishead 220 Tarbet Ness 29-30 West Angle Bay (North) 220 Freshwater East Anticline 301 Freshwater East Formation 212-13, 293, 294, 299, 301 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 7, 10, 11, 214, 217, 220-1, 293, 301-8 **Basement Group 302** Gray Sandstone Group 301-2 Lower Limestone Shale Group 301, 306 Milford Haven Group 302, 303 Freshwater West Formation 302, 303, 305-6

Rat Island Mudstone Member 303, 305, 307 **Conigar Pit Sandstone** Member 303, 305, 307 Moor Cliffs Formation 301-7 **Chapel Point Calcretes** Member 305, 306 Pickard Bay Tuff Bed 301-4, 306, 308 Rook's Cave Tuff 301-4, 308 Townsend Tuff Bed 301-4, 306, 308 Pembroke Group 302 **Ridgeway Conglomerate** Formation 301-3, 305-8 Skrinkle Sandstones Group 301-3, 306-8 Tenby Group 302 Freshwater West 7, 214, 217-18, 220-1, 291-301, 307 Gray Sandstone Group 292-4, 299 Lower Limestone Shale Group 291, 294 Milford Haven Group 294 Freshwater East Formation 293, 294, 299 Freshwater West Formation 294-5, 300 **Conigar Pit Sandstone** Member 294-6, 300 **Rat Island Mudstone** Member 294, 296, 300 Moor Cliffs Formation 293-4, 299-300 Townsend Tuff Bed 291, 293, 294, 300 **Ridgeway Conglomerate** Formation 291-2, 294, 296-8, 300 Skrinkle Sandstones Group 291-2, 294, 297, 298, 300 West Angle Formation 294, 298-301 Heterolithic Member 294 Conglomerate Member 294, 298, 300 **Red-Grey Member 301** Gupton Formation 294, 298, 300

Lower Sandstone Member 294, 298, 300 Stackpole Sandstone Member 294, 298, 300 Freshwater West Formation 212–13, 294–5, 300, 302, 303, 305–6, 308–9 Conigar Pit Sandstone

Member 212–13, 250, 294–6, 300, 303, 305, 307 Rat Island Mudstone Member 212–13, 294, 296, 300, 303, 305, 307 fungi 117, 120

Gala Group 181, 182 Gamrie Bay see Den of Findon Gamrie Fish Bed 112, 113, 116 Gannochy Bridge 155, 157 Gannochy Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 155-8 Gannochy Tower 155-7 Gargunnock Sandstones 138 Garn-gofen Formation 212-13, 221, 268-71 Garthna Geo 64-6 Garthna Geo Fault 64 gastropods 241, 244 Gateholm Island see Albion Sands and Gateholm Island Gateholm Stack 282 Gaza Formation 97-102 Gedinnian 10, 17, 212-13 Aberlemno Quarry 162-3 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 7, 10, 257-8 Porth-y-Mor 221-8 Sawdde Gorge 240 **Gelliswick Bay Formation** 212-13, 217-18, 250 Geminospora lemurata 72 Geo of Hellia 68-9 Gerdipaddle Syncline 40 Giants's Rib 318-20 Givetian 4-5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 17, 21, 24-5, 27-8, 212-14, 216 Achanarras Quarry 6, 8, 90 Bay of Berstane 71-4 Easter Rova Head 43-7 Footabrough to Wick of Watsness 26, 37-43 Greenan Nev Coast 59-61

John o'Groats 6, 83-5 Old Man of Hoy Coast 68-71 Pennyland 6, 8, 78-83 Red Point 6, 74-8 South Fersness Bay 61-3 Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay 6. 56-9 Tarbet Ness 29-30 The Cletts 6, 8, 47-52 Wick Quarries 6, 85-90 Glen Burn 173-6 Glen Coe 16, 128 Glen Vale 7, 127, 137-8, 172-6 Burnside Sandstone Formation 173-4 Glenvale Sandstone Formation 173-4, 176 Kinnesswood Formation 173, 175-6 **Knox Pulpit Sandstone** Formation 7, 172-6 Lower Limestone Formation 173 Blackhall Limestone 173 Pathhead Formation 173 **Glenvale Sandstone Formation** 138, 173-4, 176 **Glenbervie Porphyry 154** Glenthorne 7, 214, 318-23 Hangman Sandstone Formation 318-23 Hollowbrook Member 322 Little Hangman Member 322 Rawn's Member 322-3 Sherrycombe Member 322 Trentishoe Member 318-23 **Ilfracombe Slates 318** Lynton Formation 318 **Glewstone 272** Glomites rhyniensis 120 Glyptolepis 108, 111 G. leptopterus 110 G. paucidens 110 Glyptopomus 174, 314 Golspie 28 Gondwana 5, 13, 14, 16 Gosslingia breconensis 219, 258 **Gourdon Sandstone Formation** 134-5 graben 127-30 Graemsay 26, 53 Grampian Group 102-4

Grampian Highlands 8-9, 105 Grampian Highland Terrane 130-3, 135, 137, 153, 157-8 granites 64-7, 102, 105-6 Gray Sandstone Group 7, 213 Albion Sands and Gateholm Island 282, 283 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 301-2 Freshwater West 292-4, 299 Great Conglomerate 132-3 Great Conglomerate Formation 199 Great Furzenip 292, 298 Great Glen Fault 14, 15-16, 22, 29, 102-7, 132-3 Great Scar Limestone Group 205 Green Beds 243 Greenan Nev Coast 6, 24-5, 27-8, 59-61 Eday Marl Formation 6, 59-61 Middle Eday Sandstone Formation 60 Upper Eday Sandstone Formation 60 Greenheugh Sandstone Formation 181-2, 184, 186 Grey Grits Formation 7, 212-13. 220, 258-62, 265-6, 268, 271 Greystoke 206 Greywacke Conglomerate Formation 136 Groenlandaspis 314, 317 Grossilepis brandi 184 Gupton Formation 7, 212-13, 287-90, 291, 294, 298, 300 Lower Sandstone Member 294, 298, 300 Stackpole Sandstone Member 288, 290, 294, 298, 300 **Gwna Melange 317** Gwynfe Formation 212-13, 240-2, 243-4 gypsum 54-6, 89-90 Gyroptychius 92, 113 Hagshaw Hills 135 Haist Pebbly Sandstone Member 69 half-graben 189-92

halite 59, 71–4, 82, 89

Ham Skarfskerry Subgroup 24-5 Hamar Anticline 40 Hangman Sandstone Formation 7, 211, 217, 318-23 Hollowbrook Member 322 Little Hangman Member 322 Rawn's Member 322-3 Sherrycombe Member 322 Trentishoe Member 318-23 Harra Ebb Sandstone Formation 24-5, 64-7 Hatton Conglomerate 134–5 hawaiite 134-5, 146, 148-51 Hawk's Heugh see Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh Hazeldean Burn 184 heavy minerals 38, 39-43, 154, 215, 221, 227, 322 Hellia 68-9 Helman Head Formation 24-5, 94 Hemicylaspis 9 Hemiteleaspis beintzi 143 Heol Senni Quarry 7, 9, 214, 219, 250-3 **Brownstones** Formation 251, 253 St Maughans Formation 251, 253 Senni Formation 250, 251, 253 Heterocrania rhyniensis 121 Heterolithic Member 287, 289, 294 heterostracan 143, 145, 277 hexapods 117, 121 Highland Border Complex 147-54 Highland Boundary Fault 4, 16, 22, 26, 128-36, 155-8, 188-9 Hill of Borwick 66 Hill Head Red Bed Subgroup 24-5 Hillhead Group 24-5 Hirst Rocks 181, 183, 186 Holburn Head Quarry 8 Hollowbrook Member 322 Holoptychius sp. 9, 174, 184-6, 201, 220, 264-7, 288, 291, 298, 314 H. nobilissimus 201, 203, 221 Homosteus milleri 34

Horneophyton lignieri 120 Horse Shoe 168 Horse Tooth Stone 66 Horse Neck 281, 282 Hostinella sp. 229, 303 H. beardii 219 hot spring 117-24 Hoy Sandstone Formation 24-5, 27, 68-71 Haist Pebbly Sandstone Member 69 Hoy Volcanic Member 6, 24-5.68-71 Lang Geo Sandstone Member 69 Lyre Geo Sandstone Member 69 **Trowie Glen Sandstone** Member 69 Hoy Volcanic Member 6, 24-5, 68-71 Hughmilleria norvegica 143 Hutton's Unconformity 185, 199, 201 North Newton Shore 7, 185, 192-5 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 7, 181-7 Huxter 30-1 Iapetus Ocean 13-16, 128 Iapetus Suture 4, 13-16, 128 ignimbrites 131, 137, 154 Ilfracombe Slates 318 **Inchbervis Castle 172** Inchbonny 185 see also Jedburgh Inches and Holm Burn Flagstone Group 24-5 Inchmurrin Conglomerate 134-5 insects 117 Inverclyde Group 158, 173, 181, 192-3, 199-200, 202 Ballagan Formation 181. 185-6, 199, 201, 203 Kinnesswood Formation 6, 7, 128, 137, 158-9, 168, 173, 175-6, 181, 184-7, 192-3, 199, 202-4 Inverness 28-9, 102, 104 Inverness Sandstone Group 103 Ireland 64, 67, 131, 178, 217

Irish Sea 127, 239, 255 Ischnacanthus 166 I. gracilis 166 Isle of Arran 7, 134, 192-5 Isle Port Conglomerate Member 136 Isopodichnus 114 Jedburgh 137, 186, 199-202 John o'Groats 6, 8, 30, 83-5 John o'Groats Sandstone Group 83-5 Last House Formation 83 John o'Groats Fish Bed 83-85 **Upper Caithness Flagstone** Group 83, 84 Mey Subgroup 83-5 John o'Groats Fish Bed 83-5 John o'Groats Sandstone Group 24-5, 29-30, 79, 81-2, 83-5 Last House Formation 83 John o'Groats Fish Bed 83-5 Johnston Thrust 293 Kaellan Hellier 65 Kame of Hoy 68 Kampecaris 143, 229 Kelly Burn Sandstone Formation 138, 187-8 Kelso 203, 204 Kerrera see South Kerrera **Kerrera Sandstone Formation** 139 Kidstoniella fritschii 120 Kidstonophyton discoides 120 Kidwelly 219, 254 **Kilgour Craigs 174** Kilkenny Bay 311-13, 316 Kilmorack Group 24-5 King's Quoit 305 Kinnesswood Formation 128, 137, 168, 199 Glen Vale 173, 175-6 Largs Coast 187 Milton Ness 6, 158-9 North Newton Shore 7, 192-3 Palmers Hill Rail Cutting 202 - 4Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 181, 184-6 **Kirk Rigging 183**

Kirkbean 199-200, 202-5 Kirkwall 27, 71 Knock Castle 188-90 **Knock Farril Conglomerate** 24-5 **Knox Pulpit Sandstone** Formation 7, 128, 138, 172-6 Krispiromyces discoides 120 Krithodeophyton croftii 219 Laidlehope Burn 202-3 Laird's Burn Member 136 Lake District 4-5, 132-3, 211 Lake Distict Massif 199-202 Lake Forfar 131, 166 Lammermuir Fault 199, 200 Lammermuir Hills 200 Lanark Basin 15-16, 128-38 Lanark Group 129, 134-7 Auchtitench Sandstone Formation 128, 136 Dungavel Hill Conglomerate Member 136 Laird's Burn Member 136 Wiston Grey Volcaniclastic Sandstone Member 136 **Biggar Volcanic Formation** 136 **Carrick Volcanic Formation** 136 Duneaton Volcanic Formation 136 Greywacke Conglomerate Formation 136 Pentland Hills Volcanic Formation 128, 135-6 Swanshaw Sandstone Formation 136 **Chapelton Burn Member** 136 Isle Port Conglomerate Member 136 Lang Geo Sandstone Member 69 Lang Rigg see Melby Langiella scourfieldii 120 Langholm 199-201, 202-3 Langiophyton mackiei 120 Lappie Farm 174 Largs Coast 7, 127, 187-91 **Kinnesswood Formation 187** Skelmorlie Conglomerate Formation 187-8 Stratheden Group 187

Kelly Burn Sandstone Formation 187-8 Last House Formation 83 Latheron Subgroup 24-5, 75, 93 Laurasia 73 Laurencekirk lavas 171 Laurentia 4-5, 13-16, 128, 217 Laurussia 13-16, 211 lavas 131, 205-8 Lawrenny Cliff Formation 212-13 lead 54-5 Leanach and Dores Sandstone 24-5 Leck Leenaun Fault 132-3 Ledbury cutting 9 Ledbury Formation 212-13 Leintwardine Formation 241 Leperditia sp. 244 Lepidocaris rhyniensis 121 Leptodesma cf. lichas 264 Lerwick 26, 43 Lerwick Sandstone Facies 24-5 Leverbulmia 117 L. mariae 121 lichens 117, 120 Liddesdale 199, 202-3 Lindsway Bay Formation 212-13, 217, 282, 284 lingulids 259, 264, 267, 282, 293, 299, 301, 302 Lingula sp. 220, 264, 289, 306 L. cornea 244 L. minima 241, 244 Lintrathen Tuff Bed 153-4, 155, 158 Little Castle Head 7, 11, 214, 217, 284-6, 293 Sandy Haven Formation 284-6 Pickard Bay Tuff Bed 284 - 5Townsend Tuff Bed 7, 11, 284-6 Little Furzenip 292-4 Little Hangman Member 322 Little Mell Fell 205, 208 Llanddeusant Formation 212-13, 240-1, 245 Llandeilo 4-5 Llandovery 4-5, 181, 218, 211 Llandybie 253, 254

Llandyfaelog Disturbance 308 Llangefni 218 Llanishen Conglomerate Formation 212-13, 217-18 Llanover Quarry 10 Llanstadwell Formation 212-13 Llansteffan 7, 214, 217-18, 253, 308-11 **Chapel Point Calcretes** Member 7, 308-11 Freshwater West Formation 308-9 Llansteffan Castle 308-9 Llanvirn 7, 10, 206, 302-3 Lligwy Bay 218 Llyn-y-Fan Fawr 219, 254, 256 Loch Duntelchaig see Dun Chia Hill (Loch Duntelchaig) Loch Ness 102 Loch Ruthven 102-3 Lochkovian 4-5, 9, 14-16, 17, 128-30, 199, 212-13, 215 Freshwater West 293-301 Heol Senni Quarry 7, 9, 252 - 3Oak Dingle 9 Pantymaes Quarry 246-50 Porth-y-Mor 227 Sawdde Gorge 240 Long Mountain 211 Long Quarry Member 240, 242, 245 Long Quarry (Sandstone) Formation 10, 212-13, 217, 240, 241 see also Tilestones Formation Longcroft Fault 118-19 Longcroft Tuffs 118-19, 121, 124 Lorn Plateau Volcanic Formation 8, 12, 16, 128, 135-7 Loups Bridge 155-7 Lower Abdon Limestone 212-13 Lower Caithness Flagstone Group 24-5, 85-6, 90, 94 Badbea Breccia 24-5 Berriedale Flagstone Formation 24-5 Berriedale Sandstone Formation 24-5 Clyth Subgroup 24-5 Ellen's Geo Conglomerate 24-5,94

Helman Head Formation 24-5.94 Hill Head Red Bed Subgroup 24-5 Lybster Subgroup 24-5, 85 **Robbery Head Subgroup** 24-5, 90-3 Lower Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 56-8, 61-3, 72 Lower Limestone Formation 173 Blackhall Limestone 173 Lower Limestone Shale Group 221, 254, 258-62, 264, 265, 286-7, 289, 291, 294, 301, 306 **Castell Coch Limestone** Formation 259, 265, 266 **Cwmyniscoy Formation 265** Lower Melby Fish Bed 31-5 Lower Mell Fell Conglomerate Formation 199-201, 205-8 Lower Nodule Bed 107-109, 111 Lower Roman Camp Formation 240, 241, 243 Lower Sandstone Member 294, 298, 300 Lower Shales 118-20, 122 Lower Stromness Flagstone Formation, 24-5, 52-6, 64, 66-7 Lower Wallop Quarry 11 Loxonema conicum 244 L. gregaria 241 Ludford Lane and Ludford Corner 9, 11 Ludlow 4-5, 13-17, 256 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 7, 10, 302-3, 307 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 240-3, 245-6 Sawdde Gorge 240-3, 245-6 Ludlow Anticline 241 Ludlow Bone Bed 4, 9, 10, 11 Ludlow- Přídolí 9, 11, 217 lungfish 180 Lybster Subgroup 24-5, 85 lycopsid 117 Lydney 7, 9, 214, 217, 277-80 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 277-8, 280 **Psammosteus** Limestone 7, 277-80

St Maughans Formation 277–80 Lydney Harbour 277–8 Lynton Anticline 319 Lynton Formation 318 Lyonomyces pyriformis 120 Lyonophyton rhyniensis 120 Lyre Geo Sandstone Member 69

Mackiella rotunda 120 Maiden Kaim 148 Main Cliff, Tynet Burn 107-12 malachite 289, 303 Malling Conglomerate 134-5 Manorbier Bay 302-5 Marloes 11, 213, 281 see also Albion Sands and Gateholm Island Marloes Anticline 281-2 Marloes Fault 293 Marloes Sands 211, 281-2 Marly Brae 183 Marsett Formation 205, 207 Matta Taing see Melby Melby 6, 8, 24-5, 26, 30-7 Melby Formation 6, 30-1, 37 Lower Melby Fish Bed 31 - 5Upper Melby Fish Bed 31, 33-7 Melby Rhyolite 31 Sandness Formation 31 Melby Fault 25, 26, 30, 31, 39 Melby Fish Beds 24-5 see also Lower Melby Fish Bed; Upper Melby Fish Bed Melby Formation 24-5, 25-6, 30-7 Footabrough to Wick of Watsness 39 Melby 6, 30-1, 37 Melby Rhyolite 31 Melgund Sandstone Member 161 Mell Fell Conglomerate Formation 4, 7, 199-202, 204-8 Mell Fell Trough 4-5, 205-8 Mellerstain Hill 203 Merbach Brook 235, 238 Merbach Ridge 232, 235 Mercia Mudstone Group 312-13 Merse of Berwickshire 200, 202

Merthyr Tydfil 258 Mesacanthus sp. 34, 55, 66, 108, 110, 166 M. mitchelli 166 M. pusillus 110 Mey Subgroup 24-5, 79, 83-5 Michrhystridium 72 Microbrachius dicki 83 Micrornatus newportensis Zone 139, 163 Microsphaeridiorbynchus nucula 241 Middle Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 60, 61-3 Middle Mell Fell Conglomerate Formation 199-201, 205-8 Middlewood Sandstone 235 Midland Valley of Scotland 4, 8, 13-16, 127-95, 227 Midland Microcraton 14-16 Milford Haven Group 212-13, 282, 294, 302, 303 **Albion Sands Formation** 212-13, 217, 281-4 Freshwater East Formation 212-13, 293, 294, 299, 301 Freshwater West Formation 212-13, 294-5, 300, 302, 303, 305-6, 308-9 **Conigar Pit Sandstone** Member 212-13, 250, 294-6, 300, 303, 305, 307 **Rat Island Mudstone** Member 212-13, 294, 296, 300, 303, 305, 307 **Gelliswick Bay Formation** 212-13, 217-18, 250 Lindsway Bay Formation 211, 212-13, 282, 284 Moor Cliffs Formation 212-13, 215, 217, 250, 293-4, 299-300, 301-7 Red Cliff Formation 212-13, 281-4 Sandy Haven Formation 212-13, 281-4, 284-6 Mill Bay Formation 212-13, 253 Millbuie Sandstone Group 24-5 Millburn Geo 47 Milleromyces rhyniensis 120 Millerosteus minor 79

millipedes 140, 143, 145, 166 Millstone Grit 254, 269 see also Tenby Group Milton Ness 6, 127, 137-8, 158-61, 167, 176, 199 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 158 **Inverclyde Group 158 Kinnesswood Formation** 6, 158-9 Milton of Noth Andesite 119 Minehead 319, 320, 322 miospores 17-18, 28, 73, 176, 180, 208, 251 see also spores Mitcheldean 274 mites 117, 121 Modiola sp. 306 M. lata 290 modiolopsid bivalves 229-30, 244, 277 Modiolopsis sp. 230, 241, 244 M. complanata 230, 244 M. complanata var. trimpleyensis 277 Mona Complex 222, 317 Monington-on-Wye 232 **Monkeys Fold Formation** 212-13, 273 Monograptus colonus 206 Monograptus ultimus Biozone Montrose 128, 139, 158 Montrose Volcanic Formation 12, 134-5, 139, 167 Moor Cliffs Formation 212-13, 215, 217, 250, 293-4, 299-300, 301-7 Moray 21-5, 28-30, 107-12 Moray Firth 28-9, 96-7 Mousavord Loch Anticline 39 Muckle Castle 58 **Mudstone Facies Association** 247Musselwick Fault 293 myriapod 229, 247, 249 Nairn Sandstone 24-5 Nairnside 102 Nairnside Fish Bed 24-5 Nant ddu 265 nautiloids 241, 289

Nematophyton taiti 120 Nematoplexus rhyniensis 120 Neobeyrichia lauensis 241 Ness of Clousta to the Brigs 12 Ness of Duncansby 83-4 Nesting Fault 26, 43, 47 New Aberdour see Den of Findon New Red Sandstone 3 **New Shipping Formation** 212-13 Newark Bay see Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay Newport 218, 271 Newton Marlstone 235 Niandt Limestone Member 24-5, 66North Bight of Rovahead 44 North Esk River 6, 127, 134, 155-8 Dalradian Supergroup 155 Dunnottar-Crawton Group 155 Lintrathen Tuff Bed 155, 158 Strathmore Group 6, 155, 157-8 Cromlix Mudstone Formation 155-7 Gannochy Conglomerate Formation 155-8 Teith Sandstone Formation 155, 157 North Minches Basin 21 North Newton Shore 7, 127, 137, 185, 192-5 Dalradian Supergroup 192-3, 195 Southern Highland Group 193 North Sannox Grits 193 Inverclyde Group 192-3 **Kinnesswood Formation** 192-3-195 North Sannox Grits 193 North Scapa Fault 27 North-eastern Scottish Mainland 21-4, 28-30, 74-124 Northern Ireland 178 Northumberland 4, 16 Northumberland Basin 139, 199, 200, 204 Nothia aphylla 120 Noust of Nethertown 53-5

nematodes 120, 121

nematophytes 120

Oak Dingle 7, 9, 213-18, 229-31 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 230 Bishop's Frome Limestone 230 St Maughans Formation 229-30 Ochil Fault 132-3 Ochil Hills 16, 128, 175 **Ochil Volcanic Formation** 134-5, 139, 176-7 Old Castle Head 302-5 Old Hall Bay 148 Old Man of Hoy Coast 6, 24-5, 27, 28, 68-71 Hoy Sandstone Formation 68-71 Haist Pebbly Sandstone Member 69 Hoy Volcanic Member 6, 68-71 Lang Geo Sandstone Member 69 Lyre Geo Sandstone Member 69 **Trowie Glen Sandstone** Member 69 **Upper Stromness Flagstone** Formation 68-71 Old Millstone Quarry 66 **Oldhamstocks Basin 182** olivine diorite 57, 59 Onchus wheathillensis 284 opilionid 117, 121 Orcadian Basin 4, 6, 8, 10, 15-16, 21-124, 137, 159, 163, 166 Orkney 3, 4-5, 6, 8, 12, 21, 24, 26-8, 52-74 Orlock Bridge (-Kingledores) Fault 4, 132-3 Orthis (Dalmanella) elegantula 254 Orthoceras 241, 289 osteolepid 108-112 Osteolepis 110, 111 O. macrolepidotus 58, 66, 110, 113, 221 O. panderi 8 ostracoderm 244, 253, 275, 293, 302, 305, 311 ostracods 241, 244, 289 Ousdale Arkose 24-5

Outer Isles Basin 21 Oxendean Burn 9

Pachytheca sp. 139, 162, 229, 244, 279, 282, 293, 310 Palaeoblastocladia milleri 120 Palaeocharinus rhyniensis 121 P. tuberculatus 121 P. bornei 121 Palaeocteniza crassipes 121 palaeography 13-16, 22, 30, 67-8, 71, 73-4, 78-9, 82, 85, 90, 93, 93, 107, 128, 132-3, 167, 176, 186, 199, 203-4, 208, 216, 221-2, 227, 245, 290, 302-3 Palaeomyces agglomerata 120 P. asteroxyli 120 P. gordonii 120 P. borneae 120 P. simpsonii 120 P. vestita 120 Palaeonitella cranii 120 Palaeospondylus gunni 91 Palaeotydeus devonicus 121 Palmers Hill Rail Cutting 7, 199, 200, 202-4 Inverclyde Group 202 Ballagan Formation 203 Birrenswark Volcanic Formation 203-4 **Kinnesswood Formation** 202 - 4**Riccarton Group 202** Stratheden Group 203 palynomorphs 38, 72, 145 Pantymaes Quarry 7, 214, 246-50 **Mudstone Facies Association** 247 St Maughans Formation 246-7, 250 Sandstone Facies Association 247-50 Papa Stour 8, 26 Parabughmilleria sp. 166 Paraprotacarus birsti 121 Parka decipiens 162, 229, 248 'Passage Group' 202 Pathhead Formation 173 Pease Bay see Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh Pease Burn 181, 183

Pebbly Beds see Caeras **Conglomerate Member** Peerie Castle 57 Pembroke Group 265, 302 Pembroke Syncline 301 Pembrokeshire 4-5, 16, 211, 214, 217-19, 221, 227, 262 Pen-Cerrig-Calch 271 Pengau (Pen-y-gau) Farm 219 Pennan see Den of Findon Pennyland 6, 8, 24-5, 26, 29, 78-83 John o'Groats Sandstone Group 79, 81, 82 **Upper Caithness Flagstone** Group 6, 78, 79, 82 Mey Subgroup 79 Penrith 199, 204, 206-8 Pentland Hills 16, 128, 135, 136 Pentland Hills Volcanic Formation 136 Pentlandia macroptera 57, 83 Perton Lane 10 Pettico Wick to St Abb's Harbour 12, 139 phytoplankton 23, 41, 52, 82, 93, 166 Pickard Bay Tuff Bed 240-2, 244, 284-5, 301-4, 306, 308 Pinksey Gill Beds 201 placoderms 110, 112 Planolites 264, 276, 289, 321 plants 10, 11, 17, 139, 164-6, 178, 187, 219, 220, 251, 290, 295-6, 303, 315 Aberlemno Quarry 6, 8, 161-3, 162-3 Afon y Waen 264-5 Auchensail Quarry 7, 10, 178-80 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 7, 10, 257-8 Cusop Dingle 236, 238-9 Duffryn Crawnon 7, 267 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 7, 10, 303-7 Freshwater West 292-301 Glen Vale 175 Heol Senni Quarry 252-3 Llansteffan 310 Lydney 277-80 Melby 32-7 Milton Ness 159-61 North Esk River 157

Pantymaes Quarry 247-50 Rhynie 6, 10, 117, 120-4 Sawdde Gorge 241-4 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 7, 9, 187 Tillywhandland Quarry 8, 164-6 West Angle Bay (North) 290 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 66 Plateau Beds Formation 212-13, 219-20 Abercriban Quarries 258, 259-60, 262 Afon y Waen 7, 262-5 Duffryn Crawnon 7, 265-8 Pneumodesmus newmani 140, 143, 145 Pobie Skeo 31, 35 Point of Ayre 12 Point of Blo-Geo 48, 49 Point of Ness 54 polychaete worms 72, 121 Polygenetic Conglomerate 199, 206, 208 polygonalis-emsiensis biozone 258 Pont-ar-llechau bridge 240, 241, 243 Pont-ar-llechau Member 242-5 Pontypool Limestone 218 Pooley Bridge 7, 199, 200, 204-8 Borrowdale Volcanic Group 205 - 7Marsett Formation 205, 207 Mell Fell Conglomerate Formation 204-8 **Ravenstonedale Group 205** Yoredale Group 205 Poraspis polaris 229 Port Albion 98 Port Schuchan to Dunure Castle 12, 139 Port Skerra 28, 74 Port Tarsuinn 96 Port Tarsuinn Fault 97 Port Tarsuinn Member 96, 101 Porth-y-Mor 7, 214, 218, 221-8 Bodafon Formation 221-2, 226 Porth-y-Mor Formation 221-7 Traeth Bach Formation 221-5

Traeth Lligwy Formation 222, 224-7 Porth-y-Mor Formation 212-13, 218, 221-7 Portishead 7, 9, 214, 219, 220, 227, 268, 312-18 Black Nore Sandstone Formation 312-18 Mercia Mudstone Group 312, 313 Portishead Formation 312-18 Woodhill Bay Conglomerate 312, 314-18 Woodhill Fish Bed 312, 314, 315, 317-18 Portishead Formation 212-13, 220, 221, 312-18 Woodhill Bay Conglomerate 312, 314-18 Woodhill Bay Fish Bed 312, 314, 315, 317-18 Pragian 4-5, 17-18, 24-5, 116, 129, 139, 212-13, 213-17 Caeras Quarry 254-6 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 258 Rhynie 117-24 Prague Basin 17 Pre-lava Sandstones 118-19. 121, 124 Presipe 301-4 Pretannia 217, 245, 284, 285 Přídolí 4-5, 7, 9, 10, 17, 129, 211-14, 215-18, 232-4, 234-9, 240-6, 284-6 Cusop Dingle 7, 234-9 Freshwater East 10 Little Castle Head 7, 11, 284-6 Lydney 277-80 Sawdde Gorge 235, 240-6 The Scar 7, 232-4 Priest's Nose 302-3 Primrose Hill Quarry 219, 252 Protacarus crani 121 Proto-Southern Upland Fault 132 - 3Protochonetes ludloviensis 241 Protopteraspis 178, 228 P. gosseleti 219, 229 Protopteridium thomsonii 10, 66 Protospeleorchestes pseudoprotacarus 121

Prototaxites sp. 178, 180, 229 P. forfarensis 162 Psammosteus Limestone 7, 170, 215, 217, 218, 227, 231, 245, 246, 277-80, 294 see also Bishop's Frome Limestone, Chapel Point **Calcretes** Member pseudo-anticlines 115, 235, 279-80, 282, 293-4, 296, 299, 303-5, 308, 310 pseudonodule 34, 40, 81 Pseudoprotacarus scoticus 121 Pseudosauripterus anglicus 220, 264 Psilophyton 139, 157 Psilopbyton Zone 10 pteraspids 8, 176, 178, 228, 253, 294 Pteraspis cf. dunensis 276 P. dixoni 219, 252 P. mitchelli 177-8 P. rostrata 178, 230 P. rostrata var. trimpleyensis 230 Pterichthyodes milleri 34, 110 Pterinopecten sp. 220, 264 pterygotid arthropods 229 Pterygotus 143, 162, 166 Ptychomaletoechia omaliusi 220, 264, 267 **Purple Sandstone Member** 141, 142, 144 Purton Passage see Tite's Point Pwll-y-Wrach 235 Quantock Hills 319 Quarry Haven see Den of Findon Quarry Hill Sandstone Formation 119, 124 Ouarter 188, 189-91 Quartz Conglomerate Group 7, 213-16, 221, 268-71, 316 Craig-y-cwm Formation 212-13, 221, 268-71 Garn-gofen Formation 212-13, 221, 268-71 Wern Watkin Formation 212-13, 221, 268, 269, 271 Qui Ayre Sandstone Formation 24-5, 64-7

Raglan Mudstone Formation 7, 212-13, 215, 218-19, 228, 230, 232-3, 234-7, 240-6, 277-8, 280 Ramnageo 64, 66 Ranns of Kutch 73 Ram's Head 38, 40 Rat Island Mudstone Member 212-13, 294, 296, 300, 303, 305, 307 Ravenstonedale 204 Ravenstonedale Group 205 Marsett Formation 205, 207 Rawn's Member 322-3 Red Cliff Formation 212-13, 213, 215, 217, 281-4 Red Head Sandstone Member 134-5, 167 Red Marl Group 235, 247, 284, 301 Middlewood Sandstone 235 Newton Marlstone 235 Red Point 6, 24-5, 29-30, 74-8, 111 **Upper Caithness Flagstone** Group 75, 78 Latheron Subgroup 75 Red Rock 181, 184-6 Red Sandstone Member 140-2, 144 Red-Grey Member 220, 287-91, 294, 299, 301 Redbank Cliff 232 Redheugh Mudstone Formation 181-2, 184, 186 Redheugh Shore 181, 183 Remigolepis 184, 185-7 Remyophyton delicatum 120 Reston Group 129, 137-9, 199-202 **Cheviot Volcanic Formation** 199 **Evemouth Volcanic** Formation 199 Great Conglomerate Formation 199 Rhadinacanthus longispinus 111 Rhamphodopsis threiplandi 91 R. trispinatus 111 Rheic Ocean 211, 239, 322 Rheic suture 16 Rhenish 13, 17-18

Rhinopteraspis crouchi 9 R. dunensis (=cornubica) 219, 252, 253, 276 cf. Rhinodipterus 220 rhizocretions 187 rhizoliths 158-61, 176, 223 Rhynchertia punctata 120 Rhynia 117, 120 R. gwynne-vaughanii 120 Rhynie 6, 10, 24-5, 28-9, 117-24 Dryden Flags Formation 118-19, 122, 124 Lower Shales 118-20, 122 **Rhynie Cherts Unit** 117-120, 123 Shales with Muddy Sandstones 118-20, 122-3 Upper Shales 118-20, 122 White Sandstones 118-19, 122, 124 Longcroft Tuffs 118-19, 121, 124 Pre-lava Sandstones 118-19, 121, 124 **Tillybrachty Sandstone** Formation 119, 124 Windyfield Chert 117-19, 121, 124 Windyfield Sandstones and Shales 118, 119, 121 Rhynie Basin 29, 119, 124 Rhynie Cherts Unit 117-120, 123 Rhynicoccus uniformis 120 Rhyniella praecursor 120, 121 R. vermiformis 120 Rhynimonstrum dunlopi 121 Rhyniognatha hirsti 117, 121 Riccarton Burn 202, 203 **Riccarton Group 202 Ridgeway Conglomerate** Formation 4, 211, 212-13, 217 - 20Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 301-3, 305-8 Freshwater West 291-2, 294, 296-8, 300 West Angle Bay (North) 7, 286-8, 290-1 Riera Geo 94 Ritec Fault 5, 211, 215-18, 220, 285-6, 288-91, 293, 300-1

River Wye 232, 234, 271 Robbery Head Subgroup 24-5, 90-3 Robert's Linn 202-3 Rob's Cove Conglomerate 134-5 Rock Hall 159 Rook's Cave 302 Rook's Cave Tuff 301-4, 308 Rosebrae Beds 24-5 **Rosneath** Conglomerate Formation 138 Ross-on-Wye, Royal Hotel 7, 214, 219, 271-4 Brownstones Formation 7, 271-4 **Rotliegendes** 11 Rotten Craig 31, 36 Rouen Bay Sandstone 134-5 **Rousay Flagstone Member** 24-5, 27, 61-3 Rova Head Conglomerate Formation 24-5, 43-7 Roxburghshire 199 Royal Hotel see Ross-on-Wye, **Royal Hotel** River Usk 234 **Ruchill Flagstone Formation** 134-5 **Ruperra Limestone 218** Rusophycus 114, 264 **Ruthery Head 142** Sabrinacanthus 9 S. arcuatus 277 Sacquoy Sandstone Member 24-5, 27, 61-2 St Abb's Head 132-3, 139,

199-200 St Abb's Volcanic Formation 132-3, 139 St Anthony's Anticline 309 St Anthony's Cottage 308-10 St John's Knapp Sandstone 134-5 St Maughans Formation 9, 212-14, 217-18 Cusop Dingle 234-5 Devil's Hole 228 Heol Senni Quarry 251, 253 Lydney 277-80 Oak Dingle 229-30 Pantymaes Quarry 246-7, 250

Sawdde Gorge 240-1, 245-6 The Scar 232 Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 274, 276 Samson's Footmarks 79 Sanday 57, 58 Sandness Formation 24-5, 26, 31,39 Sandsting Plutonic Complex 24-5.38-9 Sandstone Facies Association 247 - 50Sandwick Fish Bed 10, 24-5, 27, 53-6, 64, 66, 116 Sandy Haven Formation 212-13, 281-4, 284-6 Sanguinolites sp. 220, 259, 268 Sarclet 6, 24-5, 28, 29, 93-5 Lower Caithness Flagstone Group 94 Ellen's Geo Conglomerate 94 Helman Head Formation 94 Sarclet Group 6, 93-5 Sarclet Conglomerate Formation 94 Sarclet Sandstone Formation 94-5 Ulbster Mudstone Formation 94-5 Ulbster Sandstone Formation 94-5 Sarclet Conglomerate Formation 24-5, 94 Sarclet Group 6, 24-5, 93-5 Ousdale Arkose 24-5 Sarclet Conglomerate Formation 24-5, 94 Sarclet Sandstone Formation 24-5, 94-5 **Ulbster Mudstone Formation** 24-5, 94-5 **Ulbster Sandstone Formation** 24-5, 94-5 Sarclet Head 93, 94 Sarclet Sandstone Formation 24-5, 94-5 sarcopterygians 111 Sauripterus 220, 264 Sawdde Gorge 7, 217, 240-6 Black Cock Formation 240 Carn Powell Member 240

Gwynfe Formation 240-2, 243-4 Pont-ar-llechau Member 242-5 Llanddeusant Formation 240-1, 245 Lower Roman Camp Formation 240, 241, 243 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 240-6 Green Beds 243 Pickard Bay Tuff Bed 240-2, 244 Townsend Tuff Bed 240-1, 244, 246 St Maughans Formation 240-1, 245-6 **Tilestones Formation 240–5** Capel Horeb Member 242, 243, 245 Long Quarry Member 240, 242, 245 Trichrûg Formation 240 Upper Cwm Clyd Formation 240 Upper Roman Camp Formation 241 cf. Sawdonia 178, 252 S. ornata 180 Scaat Craig 8 Scandian Orogeny 4, 13-16, 128-30, 158, 168, 217 Scarvister Syncline 39 Scolenaspis sp. 229 S. cf. whitei 229 Scone Sandstone Formation 128, 134-5, 161, 163, 166-8, 170-2, 176, 178 Arbroath Sandstone Member 134-5, 167-9 Auchmithie Conglomerate Member 134-5, 167 **Campsie Limestone Member** 7, 134-5, 170-2 Stanley Limestone 7, 170-2 Dunblane Sandstone 134-5 Melgund Sandstone Member 161 **Red Head Sandstone** Member 134-5, 167 Sheriffmuir Sandstone Member 134-5, 176-8 Tannadice Sandstone 134–5

Scottish Border Basin 4, 14-16, 199, 199-201, 202-8 Scurdie Ness to Usan Harbour 12, 139 scutigeromorph 121 Seamill Sandstone Formation 138 Securiaspis 178 S. caledonica 177 S. waterstoni 177 Senni Formation 212-13, 219 Craig-y-cwm 269 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 7, 257 Heol Senni Quarry 250, 251, 253 Sennicaulis bippocrepiformis 219 Shales with Muddy Sandstones 118-20, 122-3 Shannochill Conglomerate 134-5 Shap Wells Conglomerate Formation 206, 208 Shap Wells Trough 206 Shapinsay 27, 57-8 Sheriffmuir Road to Menstrie Burn 12, 139 Sheriffmuir Sandstone Member 134-5, 176-8 Sherrycombe Member 322 Shetland 3-4, 6, 8, 12, 21-2, 24-5, 30-52 Shingly Geo 48, 49, 51-2 Shirehampton Formation 317, 318 Siccar Point Conglomerate Member 181, 182, 184 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 7, 127, 137, 181-7, 192 Inverclyde Group 181 Ballagan Formation 181, 185, 186 Eastern Hole Conglomerate 185, 187 **Kinnesswood Formation** 181, 184-7 Gala Group 181, 182 Stratheden Group 181-2 Greenheugh Sandstone Formation 181-2, 184, 186 **Redheugh Mudstone** Formation 181-2, 184, 186

Siccar Point Conglomerate Member 181, 182, 184 Sidlaw Anticline 167 Sidlaw Hills 16, 128 Siegenian 9, 10, 17, 212-13, 213-17, 219 Silurian 4-11, 12, 13-17, 129-37 Silurian-Devonian 9, 288 sinistral shear 130-1 Skelmorlie Conglomerate Formation 138, 187-8 Skerry of Ness 52, 53 Skiddaw Group 205 Buttermere Formation 205 Tarn Moor Formation 205 Skolithos 79, 110, 157, 175-6, 220, 235-6, 243, 249, 259, 288 Skomer Basin 282 Skomer Island 293 Skrinkle Haven 301, 302-3, 302-7.306 Skrinkle Sandstones Group 212-13, 220, 262, 286-91, 291-2, 294, 297, 298, 300, 301-3, 306-8 Gupton Formation 7, 212-13, 287-90, 291, 294, 298.300 Lower Sandstone Member 294, 298, 300 Stackpole Sandstone Member 288, 290, 294, 298, 300 West Angle Formation 212-13, 287-91, 294-301 **Conglomerate Member** 287-90, 294, 298, 300 Heterolithic Member 287, 289, 294 Red-Grey Member 220, 287-91, 294, 299, 301 Sloagar 10 **Smerwick Group 64** Smuggan Syncline 40 Solway Basin 16, 199-200, 202, 204 Somerset 311-18, 322-3 South Bight of Rovahead 45 Southern Highland Group 193 North Sannox Grits 193

South Fersness Bay 6, 24–5, 27, 28, 56, 61-3 Eday Group 6, 61 **Eday Flagstone Formation** 61-3 Lower Eday Sandstone Formation 61-3 Middle Eday Sandstone Formation 61-3 Upper Stromness Flagstone Formation 61-3 **Rousay Flagstone Member** 61-3 Sacquoy Sandstone Member 61-2 South Head see Wick Quarries South Kerrera 12, 139 South Ronaldsay 27, 58 South Shore of Moray Firth and Strath Nairn 24-5 South Stromness Coast Section 6, 24-5, 26-7, 52-6 **Caithness Flagstone Group** 52-6 Lower Stromness **Flagstone** Formation 52-6 **Upper Stromness Flagstone Formation** 52-6 Sandwick Fish Bed 53-6 South Wales Coalfield 4, 5, 211, 221, 254-6, 256-62, 265-71 South Wilkhaven Fault 96-7 Southern Upland Fault 14-16, 128-30, 132-3, 136, 188-9, 199 Southern Uplands 4, 9, 12, 13-16, 128, 137-9, 199-201, 202-5 Southern Uplands Terrane 129-30, 131-3, 137-9, 199-202 Southern Uplands-Longford Down High 132-3 Spittal Beds 24-5 Spittal Quarry 8 ?Sporogonites sp. 180 spores 116, 139, 213-17, 221, 295 Albion Sands and Gateholm Island 282, 284 Craig-y-Fro Quarry 258

Freshwater West-Skrinkle Haven 303 Sarclet 94 West Angle Bay (North) 287-8, 291 zonation 212-13 see also miospores Stackpole Sandstone Member 288, 290, 294, 298, 300 Stanley Limestone 7, 170-2 Steath Geo 48-52 Steeple Rock 168 Stegotrachelus finlayi 51-2 Stensiöpelta sp. 230 Stirling 127, 134-5, 138 Stob Dearg and Cam Ghleann 12, 139 Stockiemuir Sandstone Formation 138 Stonehaven Basin 15-16, 127-35, 140, 142, 144, 145 Stonehaven Group 130, 131, 140, 144, 145, 149-50 Carron Sandstone Formation 134-5, 140-5, 145-6, 149-50 **Cowie Sandstone Formation** 134-5, 140-6, 149 Storey Arms Quarry see Craig-y-Fro Quarry Stourborough Hill Syncline 38-9, 43 Strath Rory Group 6, 24-5, 96-102 Strathclyde Group 181 Stratheden Group 127, 129-30, 137-9, 168, 181-2, 187, 199-201, 203 Burnside Sandstone Formation 129, 138-9, 167-9, 173-4 Bute Conglomerate Formation 138 Clashbenny Formation 138 Dura Den Member 138 Fairlie Sandstone Formation 138 Gargunnock Sandstones 138 Glenvale Sandstone Formation 138, 173-4, 176 Greenheugh Sandstone Formation 181-2, 184, 186 Kelly Burn Sandstone Formation 138, 187-8

Knox Pulpit Sandstone Formation 7, 128, 138, 172-6 Redheugh Mudstone Formation 181-2, 184, 186 Rosneath Conglomerate Formation 138 Seamill Sandstone Formation 138 Skelmorlie Conglomerate Formation 138, 187-8 Stockiemuir Sandstone Formation 138 Wemyss Bay Sandstone Formation 138 Strathfinella 158 Strathfinella Hill Conglomerate 134-5 Strathlethan Bay 146-7, 150 Strathlethan Sandstone Member 134-5, 146-7, 150 Strathmore Basin 4, 15-16, 128-35, 154, 166-9 Strathmore Group 6, 129-30, 134-5, 155, 157-8, 171-2, 179 Bracklinn Falls Conglomerate 134-5 Cromlix Mudstone Formation 128, 134-5, 155-7, 170 - 2Dalmary Sandstone 134-5 Gannochy Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 155-8 Malling Conglomerate 134-5 Shannochill Conglomerate 134-5 Strathfinella Hill Conglomerate 134-5 Teith Sandstone Formation 7, 134-5, 139, 155, 157, 170, 176-8, 179-80 **Buchlyvie Sandstone** 134-5 Tom Dubh Conglomerate 134-5 **Uamh Beag Conglomerate** 134-5 Strathmore Syncline 140, 145, 155, 157, 158 Strathpeffer Group 24-5 strike slip movement 13-16, 21, 22, 25, 128, 131-7, 140, 142, 144-5, 188-9, 250, 256, 305

stromatolites 6, 22, 54-6, 64-7, 79, 81 Stromness see South Stromness Coast Section Stronsay 27, 57-8 Struie Group 24-5 Sugar Loaf 271 Sulma Water Fault 39, 41 Sulma Water Formation 39 Sumburgh Head 8, 47-8 Sutherland Geo 48-9, 51-2 Svalbardia 10 Swanlake Bay 302 Swansea Valley Fault 215, 219, 256 Swanshaw Sandstone Formation 136

Taghanic highstand 73 Talgarth 218, 234, 235 Tannadice Sandstone 134-5 Taracliff Bay to Newark Bay 6, 24-5, 27-8, 56-9 Caithness Flagstone Group 56-9 Eday Group 6, 56, 58-9 **Eday Flagstone Formation** 56-9 **Deerness Volcanic** Member 57 **Eday Marl Formation** 56-7, 59 Lower Eday Sandstone Formation 56-8 Tarbet Ness 6, 24-5, 29-30, 96-102, 106 Balnagown Group 6, 96-102 Gaza Formation 97-102 Tarbet Ness Formation 97-102 Strath Rory Group 6, 96-7, 100 - 2Tarbet Ness Formation 24-5, 97-102 Tarella 257 T. trowenii 219, 258 Targrove Quarry 10 Tarn Moor Formation 205 Tautilicaulis 302 Tay Bank 7, 127, 131, 170-2 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 171 - 2Scone Sandstone Formation 170-2

Campsie Limestone Member 7, 170-2 Strathmore Group 171-2 Cromlix Mudstone Formation 170-2 Teith Sandstone Formation 170 Tealing Fish Bed 139 Teith Sandstone Formation 7, 134-5, 139, 155, 157, 170, 176-8, 179-80 Buchlyvie Sandstone 134-5 Temeside, Ludlow 9 **Temeside Mudstone Formation** 9, 217 Tenby Group 7, 10, 302-7 see also Millstone Grit Tenby-Angle Basin 213-17, 220, 289-291, 307 Tesseraspis tessellata 229, 277 tetrapod 100-1 Tewel 142 Thalassinoides 72 The Cletts 6, 8, 24-5, 26, 47-52 Brindister Flagstone Formation 47 Exnaboe Fish Bed 51-2 The Flaes Syncline 40 The Scar 7, 214, 217, 232-4 **Raglan Mudstone Formation** 232 - 3**Bishop's Frome Limestone** 232 Townsend Tuff Bed 232 St Maughans Formation 232 The Snook 113, 114, 116 The Toutties 6, 8, 127, 130, 140-5 Stonehaven Group 140, 144 Carron Sandstone Formation 140-5 Cowie Sandstone Formation 140-5 **Basal Breccia Member** 142 Brown and Grey Sandstone Member 140-2, 144 Castle of Cowie Member 141, 142, 144 Cowie Harbour Conglomerate Member 140-2, 144

Cowie Harbour Siltstone Member 140-5 Purple Sandstone Member 141, 142, 144 **Red Sandstone Member** 140-2, 144 thelodonts 9, 25, 212-13, 229, 235-6, 237, 276, 286, Three Steps Geo 48-50, 52 Three Wells Sandstone 134-5 Thurso 29, 30, 78-83 **Tilestones Formation 217.** 240 - 5Capel Horeb Member 242, 243, 245 Long Quarry Member 240, 242, 245 **Tillybrachty Sandstone** Formation 119, 124 Tillycoultrie 12, 139 Tillywhandland Quarry 6, 8, 127, 131, 161, 163-6 Dundee Flagstone Formation 6, 8, 163-4, 166 see also Turin Hill and Aberlemno Quarry **Tintern Sandstone Formation** 212-13, 221, 312, 317 Tite's Point 9 Tom Dubh Conglomerate 134-5 Tom Mor 102-3 **Tomintoul 28** Tongwynlais 221 **Tongwynlais Formation 221** Too of the Head 12 Tornquist Sea 13-15, 73 Tournaisian 4-5, 17, 155-6, 189, 202-5, 212-17, 221 Largs Coast 189 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 187 Tower Burn 181-3 Townsend Tuff Bed 7, 11, 212-13, 217, 232, 234-6, 238-9, 240-1, 244, 246, 272, 284-6, 291, 293, 294, 300, 301-4, 306, 308 Towy estuary 308 trace fossils 100, 218, 224, 302, 303, 304-5, 307 Abercriban Quarries 220 Afon y Waen 264

Den of Findon 114 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 302, 304-5, 307 Freshwater West 295-6, 298 Glen Vale 175-6 Greenan Nev Coast 59-61, 60-1 Llansteffan 308, 310-11 Milton Ness 159-61 North Esk River 157 Pantymaes Quarry 247, 249 Porth-y-Mor 224 Portishead 313, 315, 317 Tarbet Ness 100-2 The Scar 233-4 Tillywhandland Quarry 6, 8, 163-6 West Angle Bay (North) 288, 290 Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 275-6 Trachyophytes 120 Traeth Bach Formation 212-13, 218, 219, 221-5 Traeth Dulas 221, 224-5 Traeth Lligwy 221, 224-5 Traeth Lligwy Formation 212-13, 219, 222, 224-7 Traeth yr Ora 222, 227 transpression 4, 13-16, 128-30, 215-17 transtension 5, 14-16, 211, 215-16, 284 Traquairaspis campbelli 143, 145 T. (Phialaspis) symondsi 228-9 Tredomen Quarry 218 Tremadoc-Arenig 14 Tremuda Bay Volcanic Formation 134-5, 145, 146, 148 Trentishoe Member 318-23 Tricbopherophyton 117 T. teuchansii 120 Trichrûg Formation 211, 240 trigonotarbids 117, 120, 121 Trinkie Pool 85, 87, 89 Tristichopterus alatus 83 Trollochy 151-3 Troup Head 113, 114 Trowie Glen Sandstone Member 69 Tudhope Quarry 201

Tugford see Oak Dingle Turbochelius helicites 241, 244 Turin Hill 8, 10, 161, 163 see also Aberlemno Quarry and Tillywhandland Quarry Turinia pagei 212–13, 229, 230, 275 Turkey Cottage 240, 244-5 Turnberry Lighthouse to Port Murray 12, 139 Turriff Basin 4, 21-2, 24-5, 28-9, 112-17 Tweeddale 199 Tynet Burn 6, 8, 29, 30, 107-12 Coccosteus Bed 108, 109, 111 Lower Nodule Bed 107-9, 111 Upper Nodule Bed 107-11 Tywi Anticline 245 Uamh Beag Conglomerate 134-5 Ulbster 94 **Ulbster Mudstone Formation** 24-5, 94-5 **Ulbster Sandstone Formation** 24-5, 94-5 Ullswater 204-7 unconformities 11, 28-9, 113, 114-15, 117, 142, 199-201, 315-17 Abercriban Quarries 259 Dun Chia Hill (Loch Duntelchaig) 102-7 Freshwater East-Skrinkle Haven 220 Freshwater West 220, 295 Largs Coast 190-2 North Newton Shore 7, 192 - 5Palmers Hill Rail Cutting 202 - 5Pooley Bridge 205-8 Siccar Point to Hawk's Heugh 7, 192-5 Whiting Ness 6, 166-9 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 65-7 see also Hutton's Unconformity Undichna 218

Upper Abdon Limestone 212-13 **Upper Caithness Flagstone** Group 6, 24-5, 75, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 90-3 Ham Skarfskerry Subgroup 24-5 Latheron Subgroup 24-5, 75, 93 Mey Subgroup 24-5, 79, 83-5 Spittal Beds 24-5 **Upper Cwm Clyd Formation** 240 Upper Eday Sandstone Formation 24-5, 60, 72 **Upper Leintwardine Formation** 241 Upper Melby Fish Bed 31, 33-7 **Upper Mell Fell Conglomerate** Formation 199-201, 205-8 Upper Nodule Bed 107-11 Upper Roman Camp Formation 241 Upper Shales 118-20, 122 **Upper Stromness Flagstone** Formation 52-6, 61-2, 64, 66-7, 68-71 **Rousay Flagstone Member** 24-5, 27, 61-3 Sacquoy Sandstone Member 24-5, 27, 61-2 Uraniacanthus sp. 166 Uskiella spargens 219 Vaakel Craigs 47-8, 49 Vale of Eden 199, 200 Variscan Orogeny 4-5, 182, 211, 268, 285 Ventarura lyonii 117, 120 vertebrates 17, 219-21, 235-6, 238-9, 251, 276, 277-80 Verybachium 72 vitrinite 140 Voe of Footabrough 37-38 Volcanic rocks 8, 12, 15-16, 26, 34, 57-9, 68-71, 83, 105-6, 118, 128, 131-6, 139, 140-5, 199-200, 234-6, 238-9, 284-6 Volcanic Conglomerate Member 142 volcaniclastic 12, 136, 146-51 volcanoes 132-3

Wales 11, 13, 211, 217 Wales-Brabant Massif 288, 319, 322 Walls Boundary Fault 14, 22, 26, 37, 39 Walls Formation 10, 24-5, 37-43 Walls Peninsula 25-6, 31, 39-3 Warebeth 24-5, 53-5, 66 Wats Ness 31-2 Watsonosteus fletti 83 Wauchope Burn 201 Wayne Herbert Quarry 9, 218 Welsh Borderland 4-5, 11, 13, 176-8, 211-15, 213-15, 217, 227, 239, 250, 256 Wemyss Bay Sandstone Formation 138 Wenlock 3, 4, 7, 11, 13-16, 14, 17, 128-30, 140-5, 211, 281-4, 302 Albion Sands and Gateholm Island 7, 281-4 Freshwater West 299, 301 The Toutties 140, 144-5 Wern Watkin Formation 212-13, 221, 268, 269, 271 West Angle Bay (North) 7, 214, 217, 220, 221, 286-91, 301 Lower Limestone Shale Group 286-7, 289, 291 **Ridgeway Conglomerate** Formation 286-88, 290-1 Skrinkle Sandstones Group 286-91 Gupton Formation 7, 287-90 Stackpole Sandstone Member 288, 290 West Angle Formation 287-91 **Conglomerate Member** 287-90 **Red-Grey Member** 287-91 West Angle Formation 212–13, 287-91, 294, 298-301 Conglomerate Member 287-90, 294, 298, 300 Heterolithic Member 287, 289, 294 Red-Grey Member 220, 287-91, 294, 299, 301 Wester Rova Head 44

Weydale Quarry 8 Wharley Point 309, 311 Wharley Point Anticline 309 Whitcliffe Formation 241 White Sandstones 118-19, 122, 124 Whitehouse Conglomerate Formation 134-5, 139, 146, 152 Whitehouse Den 8, 139 Whiting Ness 6, 127, 137, 166-9, 178 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 166 - 7Scone Sandstone Formation 166-8 Arbroath Sandstone Member 167-9 Auchmithie Conglomerate Member 167 Red Head Sandstone Member 167 Burnside Sandstone Formation 167-9 Dundee Flagstone Formation 167 Montrose Volcanic Formation 167 Wick Quarries 6, 22-4, 29, 85-90 Lower Caithness Flagstone Group 85-6, 90 Lybster Subgroup 85 Wick of Watsness see Footabrough to Wick of Watsness Wiegeltaspis n. sp. 230 Wilderness (Land Grove) Quarry 7, 214, 219, 274-6 Brownstones Formation 7, 274, 276 St Maughans Formation 274, 276 Wilkhaven Jetty Fault 97 Wilton Road 271 Windermere Supergroup 206 Coniston Group 206 Windyfield Block 117-24 Windyfield Chert 117-19, 121, 124 Windyfield Sandstones and Shales 118, 119, 121 Winfrenatia reticulata 120 Winsle Anticline 293

Wiston Grey Volcaniclastic Sandstone Member 136 Wolf's Hole Quarry 7, 127, 176-8 Arbuthnott-Garvock Group 176 Scone Sandstone Formation 176, 178 Sheriffmuir Sandstone Member 176-7 **Ochil Volcanic Formation** 176-7 Woodbank Series 256 Woodhill Bay Conglomerate 312, 314-18 Woodhill Bay Fish Bed 312, 314, 315, 317-18

Yellow Hammer Rock 319-22 Yelting Geo 69 Yesnaby and Gaulton Coast Section 6, 24-5, 26-7, 53, 64-7 Caithness Flagstone Group 64,67 Lower Stromness Flagstone Formation 64, 66-7 Sandwick Fish Bed 64, 66 Upper Stromness Flagstone Formation 64, 66-7 Yesnaby Sandstone Group 6, 64-7

Qui Ayre Sandstone Formation 64–7 Harra Ebb Sandstone Formation 64–7 Yesnaby Sandstone Group 6, 64–7 Harra Ebb Sandstone Formation 24–5, 64–7 Qui Ayre Sandstone Formation 24–5, 64–7 Yoredale Group 205

Zosterophyllum 162, 180, 229, 257–8 Z. llanoveranum 219 Z. myretonianum 162–3 Zosterophyllum Zone 10, 162