Nature on your doorstep

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Ordovician Trilobites of Mid Wales 1

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See Ordovician Trilobites of Mid Wales 2 for Trinucleid Trilobites

Trilobites are an extinct group of arthropods, which lived in the seas between about 520 and 250 million years ago. They were one of the most diverse animal groups, and formed an important part of early marine ecosystems. Their hard exoskeletons are often found as fossils.

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Ordovician

Ordovician rocks cover much of mid Wales and represent a time when the area was home to volcanic islands surrounded by ocean. Most of the rocks are mudstones or shales laid down at the bottom of the sea between the islands. The Ordovician period lasted from around 445 to 485 million years ago, with the trilobites found at Ordovician sites in mid Wales being from 460–470 million years old.

Trilobite Fossils

Trilobites had three main parts – a head (cephalon), thorax and tail (pygidium). Most trilobite fossils found are just separate body parts. Whole exoskeletons like those on this sheet are quite rare. To grow bigger, trilobites regularly moulted off their old exoskeleton, breaking it apart. Many trilobite fossils are moults rather than whole animals.

Scale Bars

All scale bars are 5mm except *Geragnostus* (middle right), which is 1mm.

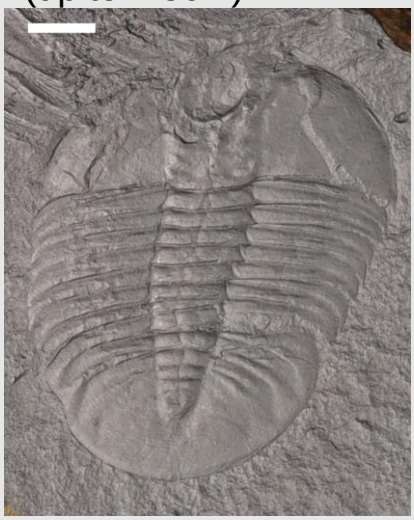
Please do not hammer at cliffs, or at any fossils in layers of solid rock.

Cnemidopyge
(up to 3cm)

Degamella
(up to 2.5cm)

Microparia
(up to 1cm)

Barrandia
(up to 2.5cm)

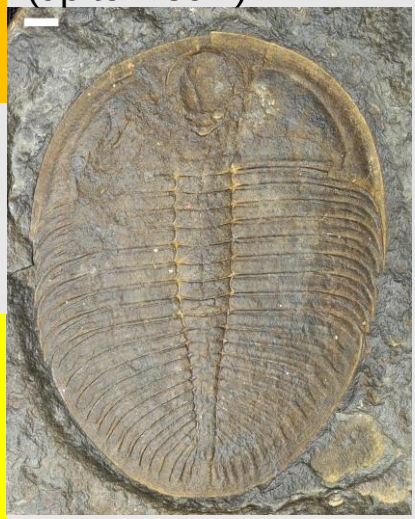


Homalopteon
(up to 3.5cm)

Geragnostus
(up to 1cm)

Colour

The fossils in the middle row have been artificially darkened to appear clearer on photographs. This is **not** their natural colour.



Ogygiocaris
(up to 12cm)

Ogyginus
(up to 11cm)

Platycalymene
(up to 6cm)