

The Welsh Basin in the Silurian.
Y Basn Cymreig yn y Silraidd.

Introduction

The solid rocks seen in the cliffs and on the beach around New Quay belong to the *Aberystwyth Grits Group*, and were deposited during the early *Silurian Period* (about 430 million years ago). At this time most of Wales was a deep marine area (the *Welsh Basin*), with shallower water in the English Midlands, and a submarine slope between, running from the Welsh Borders to south-west Wales. To the north-west lay the *Iapetus Ocean*.

These rocks are all *sedimentary*, formed from mud, silt and sand deposited in layers or beds on the sea floor. They were then hardened or *lithified* to rock, and compressed into folds (upfolds or *anticlines*, downfolds or *synclines*) and fractured along planes of weakness (*faults*).

Each layer of sediment was transported into the area as a dense and turbulent suspension flowing as a submarine avalanche, triggered by a storm or an earthquake - a *turbidity current*. This would have started on the submarine slope, and gathered momentum as it descended. It then spread out over the deep sea floor, sometimes scouring into the sea floor to produce *flute casts* (infilled V-shaped hollows), caused by vortices in the current, or *groove casts*, made by objects, such as pebbles or shells, dragged along the sea floor by the current. As the current waned, a *turbidite* was deposited, formed of sand at the base, grading through silt to mud at the top. The lower part of each turbidite, a *sandstone* (or *grit*, hence the name *Aberystwyth Grits*) or *siltstone*, is more resistant to erosion by the sea than the upper *mudstone* (lithified mud). In some beds the central portion has laminae which have been folded into convolutions, before lithification, and truncated by the laminae above.

Rhagymadrodd

Creigiau o Grŵp Grutiau Aberystwyth a welir yn y clogwyni ac ar y traeth o gwmpas Cei Newydd: cawsant eu dyddodi yn ystod Cyfnod Silraidd cynnar (tua 430 miliwn o flynyddoedd yn ôl). Yn y cyfnod yma gorchuddiwyd y rhan fwyaf o Gymru o dan fôr dwfn (y Basn Cymreig). Ar yr un pryd gorchuddiwyd Canolbarth Lloegr gan ddŵr bâs, gyda llethr danforol yn rhedeg rhynghdynt, o'r Gororau i gyfeiriad de-orllewin Cymru. Gorweddi'r Cefnfor Iapetus i'r gogledd-orllewin.

Creigiau waddod yw'r rhain i gyd, wedi eu ffurfio allan o fwd, silt a thywod, a waddodwyd mewn haenau neu welyau ar waelod y môr. Cawsant eu caledu (lithiffo) i ffurfio craig solet, ac wedyn eu cywasgu i blygiadau (i fyny mewn anticlin, i lawr mewn synclin) a'u holtrai ar hyd planau gwan (ffawtiau).

Cariwyd pob haen o waddod i'r ardal fel daliant trwchus ac afluxydd, yn llifo fel afalans tanforol - *cerrynt tyrfedd*. Ysbardunwyd y llif gan storm neu ddaeargrynn. Byddai hwn wedi cychwyn ar y llethr tanforol, ac wedi cyflymu wrth ddisgyn. Yna, lledaenodd allan dros waelod y môr dwfn, weithiau yn sgrwio i mewn i lawr y môr gan y gynhyrchu *rhychnodau* (pantau siâp-V, wedi eu mewnenwi), a achoswyd gan drobyllau yn y cerrynt, neu *rigolnodau*, a grêwyd gan wrthrychau fel cerrig mân neu gregyn, a lusgywd ar hyd llawr y môr gan y cerrynt. Wrth i'r cerrynt arafu, dyddodwyd gwaddodion o feintiau mwya a mwya mân, yn cychwyn felly gyda thywod ar y gweled, silt yn y canol a mwd ar y brig. Wrth i'r cerrynt wanhou, gwaddodwyd *tyrfedduau*, yn cynnwys tywod ar y gweled, yn gradio i fyny trwy silt i laid ar y top. Mae'r haen isaf o bob tyrbidit, sy'n cynnwys *tywodfaen* (neu *grut*, sy'n rhoi'r enw Grutiau Aberystwyth) neu *garreg silt*, yn fwy gwydn yn erbyn erydiad gan y môr na'r *garreg laid* uchaf (mwâd wedi ei lithiffo). Mewn ambell haen, mae gan y rhan ganolog laminau sydd wedi eu plynwyr mewn i laminiau anffurfiedig (cyn cael eu lithiffo), a'u blaenorri gan y laminau uwchben.

Olion ffosil yw'r marciau a wneir gan anifeiliaid wrth iddynt symud dros y gwaddod ar lawr y môr neu dwrio i mewn iddo. Y rhain yw'r unig olion cyffredin o anifeiliaid yn y creigiau yma, er bod ambell gragen a ffosilau eraill (graptolitaun planctonig neu arnofiol) wei eu canfod. Gwelir hefyd, yn enwedig yn safle 4, *goncretiadau côn-mewn-côn*: tyfaniâu cemegol, caletach na'r graig a ffurfiwyd yn fuan wedi dyddodiad y gwaddodion.

Ar ddiwedd y Cyfnod Silraidd (tua 395 miliwn o flynyddoedd yn ôl) ciliodd y môr o Gymru. Cafodd y creigiau yma eu cywasgu yn gryf a'u codi, ac, fel y gwellir ar y traeth, ffurfiwyd plygiadau tynn: cribau anticlinaidd a chafnau synclinaidd yn rhedeg o'r gogledd i'r de. Ffurfiwyd hefyd, naill ai bryd hynny neu'n nes ymlaen, wythienau a fewnlenwyd gan y mineralau gwyn *cwarts* neu *galsit*.

O'r cyfnod yma i'r *Gorgyfnod Trydyddol* (65-2 miliwn o flynyddoedd yn ôl), y cyfnod pan gadodd tirlun heddiw ei fowldio, ni wyddom lawer am hanes yr ardal hon. Mae'n bosibl i rai o'r ffawtiau gael eu ffurfio yn yr ysbaid yma.

Ar ddechrau Oesoedd Iâ'r *Pleistosen*, tua dwy filiwn o flynyddoedd yn ôl, roedd y tirlun fwy neu lai yn ei ffurf bresennol, a lleoliad yr arfordir o gwmpas Cei Newydd hefyd yn debyg iawn i heddiw. Cafwyd olyniad o Oesoedd Iâ yn ystod y cyfnod yma, gyda'r diwed-



Location 7. Turbidite unit.
Safle 7. Uned tyrfeddit.

Trace fossils are the markings made by animals moving on or burrowing into the sediment on the sea floor. They are the only common remains of animals in these rocks, although occasional shells and other fossils (planktonic or free-floating *graptolites*) have been found. *Cone-in-cone concretions* are chemical growths which formed not long after the sediment was deposited. They are harder than the rock, and are common, especially at Location 4.

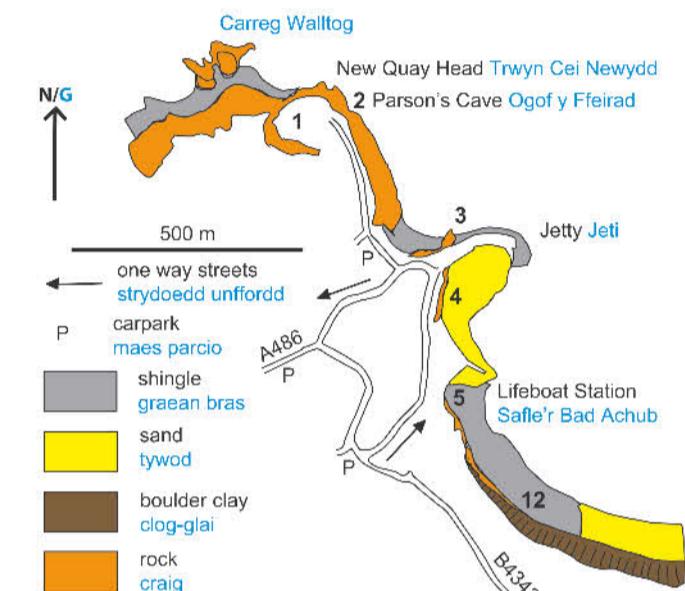
At the end of the Silurian Period (about 395 million years ago) the sea withdrew from Wales, when these rocks were strongly compressed and uplifted, forming tight folds as seen on the beach, whose anticlinal crests and synclinal troughs run north-south. Veins, mainly infilled by the white minerals *quartz* or *calcite*, were also produced, either at this time or later.

Between this time and the *Tertiary Era* (65-2 million years ago), when the present day landscape was moulded, very little is known of the history of this region. Some of the faults may have been formed in this interval.

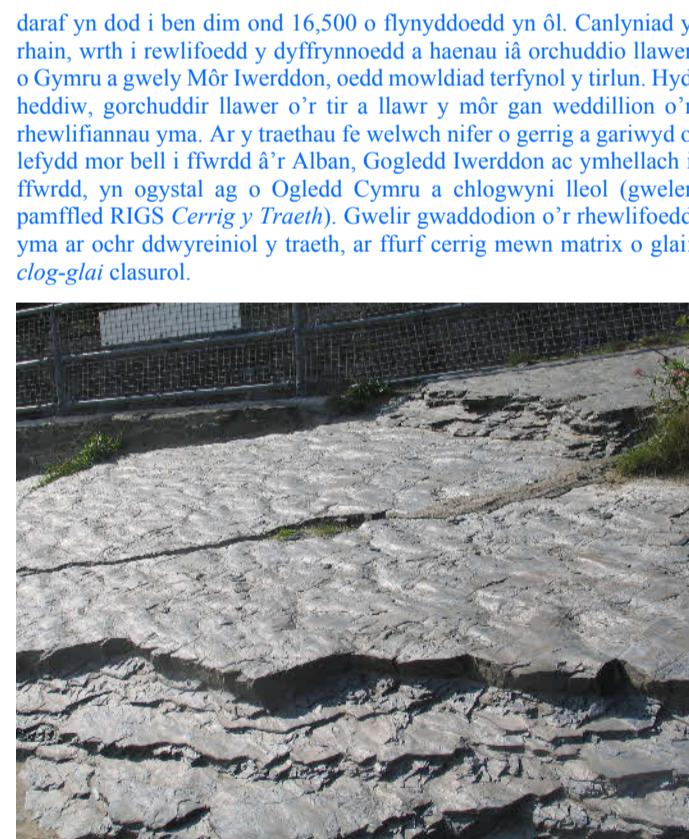
At the start of the *Pleistocene* Ice Ages, about two million years ago, the landscape had assumed more or less its present form, and the position of the coastline around New Quay was probably not very different from today. A succession of Ice Ages occurred during this time, the most recent ending only some 16,500 years ago, resulting in the final moulding of landscape, as valley glaciers and ice sheets covered much of Wales and the bed of the Irish Sea. The debris left by these glaciations still covers much of the land and the sea floor. The shingle beaches include many pebbles brought from Scotland, Northern Ireland and further away, as well as from North Wales and the more local cliffs (see the RIGS Pamphlet *Pebbles on the Beach*). Deposits from these glaciers are found at the east end of the beach. These consist of pebbles, in a matrix of clay: a classic *boulder clay*.



Location 4. Vein of quartz.
Safle 4. Gwythien cwarts.



Map of New Quay, showing locations 1-12.
Map o Gei Newydd, yn dangos safleoedd 1-12.



Location 4. The top of a sandstone with ripple marks.
Safle 4. Pen uchaf tywodfaen gyda chrychnodau.

Leaflet financed by the Curry Fund of the Geologists' Association/Noddir y daflen gan Gronfa Curry Cymdeithas y Daearegwr www.geologistsassociation.org.uk/

For further information see our website/Gweler ein safle wê www.geologywales.co.uk/central-wales-rigs/

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Further reading/Darllen pellach
Geologists' Association Guide No.54: The Aberystwyth District. 1995.

Safety and Access
Rock surfaces and boulders can be slippery, especially between locations 3 and 2. Rock falls can occur - do not go under overhanging cliffs. All locations, except 1, are tide-dependent.
Diogelwch a Mynediad
Gall wyneb creigiau a chlogeini fod yn llithrig, yn arbennig rhwng safleoedd 3 a 2. Gall cwmpiau o greigiau ddigwydd - peidiwch a mentro o dan glogwyni ordo. Mae pob safle, ag eithrio safle 1, yn ddibynol ar y llanw.

Printed by/Argraffwyd gan Cambrian Printers Aberystwyth





Location 1. New Quay Head quarry. Sandstone beds, up to 0.5 metres thick, were quarried for building stone.

Safle 1. Chwarel Trwyn Cei Newydd. Chwarelwyd gwelyau o dywodfaen, o drwch hyd at 0.5 medr, ar gyfer carreg adeiladu.

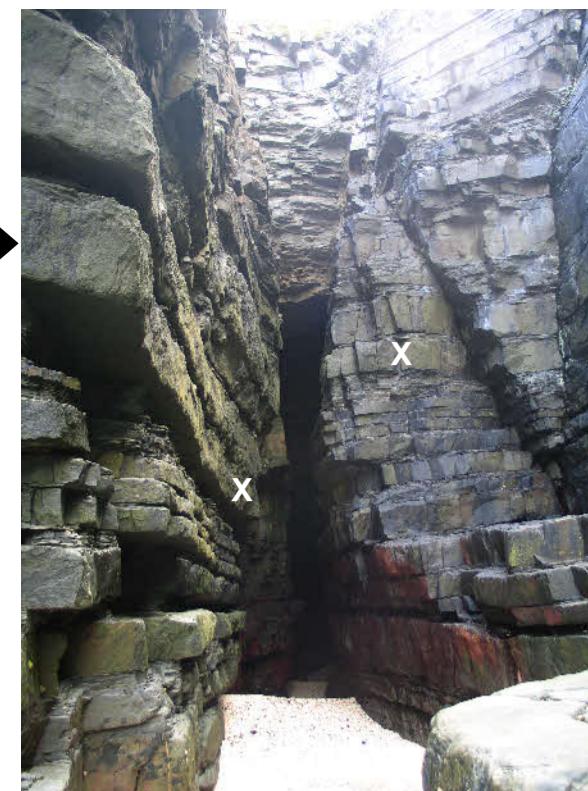


Location 3. Anticline on the north side of the harbour pier. The crest runs almost due north.

Safle 3. Anticlin ar ochr ogledol glanfa'r harbwr. Mae'r grib yn rhedeg bron yn union i'r gogledd.

Location 2. Parson's Cave. View looking south along this gully, which is excavated along a fault. Beds can be matched on each side of the fault, for example bed X, showing that the fault has a downthrow to the left (east) of about two metres.

Safle 2. Ogof y Ffeirad. Golygfa yn edrych i'r de ar hyd y gylly, sydd wedi torri ar hyd ffawt. Gallwch gydweddud gwelyau ar naill ochr a'r llall o'r ffawt, er engraffft gwely X, yn dangos fod gan y ffawt gwympr i'r chwith (dwyrain) o tua 2 medr.



Location 4. Concretions: chemical growths in the mudstones.

Safle 4. Cnapiau: tyfiannau cemegol yn y cerrig llaid.

Location 11. Boulder clay overlying solid rock. The surface between them marks a gap in the geological record at New Quay, from the Silurian Period about 430 million years ago to the Ice Ages, only some 16,500 years ago or more.

Safle 11. Clog-glai yn gorchuddio craig solid. Mae'r wyneb rhyngddynt yn marcio bwlc yn y cofnod daearegol yng Nghei Newydd, o'r Cyfnod Silwraidd, tua 430 miliwn o flynyddoedd yn ôl, i'r Oesoedd Iâ, dim ond tua 16,500 o flynyddoedd yn ôl neu fwy.



Location 10. Boulder clay above the solid rock. Arrows show the boundary (unconformity). Syncline (downfold) in the solid rock.

Safle 10. Clog-glai dros y craig solet. Mae saethau yn dangos y ffîn (anghydffurfedd). Synclin (plŷg i lawr) yn y graig solet.



Location 9. Sandstones and mudstones. The mudstones split along cleavage (marked in white), formed during the compression and folding of the rocks in the Devonian Period. In contrast the sandstones do not have cleavage.

Safle 9. Tywodfeini a cherrig llaid. Mae'r cerrig llaid yn holli ar hyd holtt (dynodir mewn gwyn) a ffurfiwyd yn ystod cywasgiad a phlygu'r creigiau yn y Cyfnod Defonaidd. Mewn cyferbyniad, nid oes gan y tywodfeini holtt.

12

11

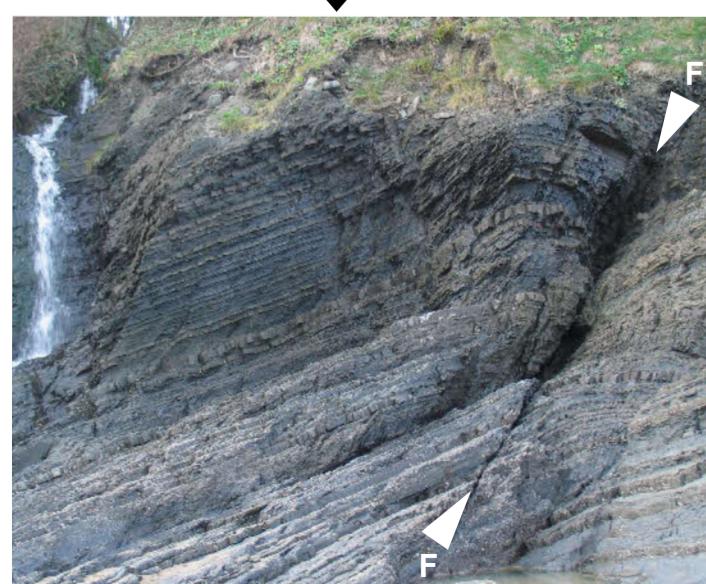
Boulder Clay Clog-glai

10

9

The cliffs at Locations 12 to 5. The solid rocks are formed of thin sandstones and mudstones, in contrast to thick sandstones at Locations 1 to 3. The boulder clay cliffs are very much less resistant to weathering than the solid rock cliffs, and tend to form earth pillars, as at Location 11. East of Location 12 there are mud slides, bringing down trees onto the beach.

Y clogwyni wrth Safleoedd 12 i 5. Tywodfeini a cherrig llaid tenau sydd yn ffurfio'r creigiau solet, mewn cyferbyniad a'r tywodfeini trwchus wrth Safleoedd 1 i 3. Mae'r clogwyni clog-glai yn llawer llai gwrtiannol i hindreuliad na'r clogwyni craig solet, ac yn tueddu i ffurfio pileri o bridd, fel yn Safle 11. I'r dwyrain o Safle 12, ceir llithriadau o laid, yn cario coed i lawr at y traeth.



Location 6. Flute casts on the under surface of a sandstone layer. The current would have flowed in the direction of the arrow.

Safle 6. Rhychnodau ar arwyneb is haen o dywodfaen. Byddai'r cerrynt wedi llofo yn nghyfeiriad y saeth.



Location 6. The undersurface of a sandstone layer, with trace fossils - the tracks and burrows of organisms living on or beneath the sea floor.

Safle 6. Arwyneb is haen o dywodfaen, gydag ôlion ffosil - olion a tyllau organebau oedd yn byw ar neu islaw llawr y môr.

Location 8. Strata inclined to the southeast, with a small fault (F-F) also inclined to the southeast.

Safle 8. Strata yn gwyro i'r de-ddwyrain, gyda ffawt bach (F-F) hefyd yn gwyro i'r de-ddwyrain.

Location 7. Syncline (downfold) and anticline (upfold). The layers on the right are vertical.

Safle 7. Synclin (plŷg i lawr) ac anticlin (plŷg i fyny). Mae'r haenau ar y dde yn fertigol.