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A Revised Correlation of the Cambrian Rocks in the British Isles

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M. Williams and N.H. Woodcock

This work reviews the correlation of the British and Irish Cambrian with the current (though incomplete) international standard for the Cambrian. Since the earlier edition of 1972, the basal and upper limits of the Cambrian system have been internationally agreed; so this account excludes Tremadocian rocks but includes some that were formerly considered Neoproterozoic. Half of the series and stage subdivisions are internationally agreed, but for the undefined divisions of the Cambrian the standard used here makes use of data from Avalonian successions.

Since the first edition was published, almost every aspect of the Cambrian in the British Isles has been subjected to new study. Here, the plate tectonic make-up of the British Isles is reviewed, new radiometric ages and isotopic studies are summarized and the biostratigraphy is enhanced by the study of acritarchs, especially in the Irish successions.

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Cover illustration:

The Great Sugarloaf mountain, County Wicklow, Ireland. The Great Sugarloaf is made up of a thick quartz-arenite and forms part of the Bray Head Formation of the Cambrian Bray Group. View from the south.

Photograph: P.M. Brück