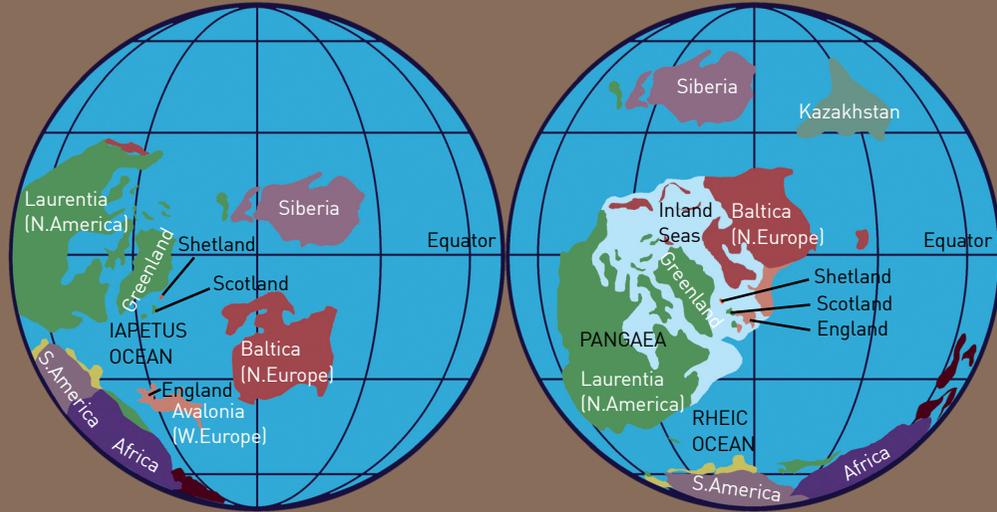


Introduction



Shetland, Scotland and England before and after the closure of the Iapetus Ocean

Take a look beneath a long vanished ocean. Discover a magma chamber beneath the waves and see how a massive collision has brought the ocean floor to the surface.

Unst and Fetlar formed when a slab of ocean crust and mantle was thrust onto an ancient continent. This stranded ocean crust is called an ophiolite. Today you can walk across the rocks of the ancient continent and 'through' the layers of oceanic rock within the ophiolite.

Each trail focuses on part of the geological story, but it helps to keep the overall picture in mind.

The rocks of the ophiolite formed in layers in a magma chamber beneath the Iapetus Ocean. 420 million years ago the Iapetus Ocean closed and these rocks were caught between two colliding continents. The ocean crust was thrust, bent up steeply and left sitting on top of continental crust. You will see this continental crust in the west of the islands and explore the stranded ocean crust in the east.

The reverse of this card contains important advice for a safe and successful trip.



The Keen of Hamar and the Heogs

How to use this guide

This guide uses a series of sites and trails to reveal the story of the Shetland ophiolite. You will discover the contrast between the oceanic and continental rocks and explore the layers of rock that formed beneath the floor of the Iapetus Ocean. You will probably need two or three days to explore all of the places covered by this guide. Individual trail cards give the times needed to complete each section.

Location maps show you how to reach each of the sites by car or bike and details about public transport are given where appropriate. You may wish to hike between some of the locations, for which an Ordnance Survey map (OS Explorer 470 1:25000) is strongly recommended.



Looking east across the ophiolite (trail 4)

Keep safe

- Shetland's weather is very changeable so be prepared for bad weather. Take warm, waterproof clothing, sturdy footwear, food and hot drinks.
- Check the weather forecast before going out and heed local advice.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Terns and skuas defend their nests by 'dive-bombing' intruders. To deter them, hold your arms or a stick above your head and move out of the area.



Parking



Toilets



Viewpoint



Waymarked route



Wheelchair access



Food



Information



Intellectual difficulty

Key to symbols