

Carbon isotope ($\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$) and facies variability at the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary (Silurian) of the Midland Platform, UK

Blain, John Allan; Wheeley, James; Ray, David

DOI:

[10.1139/cjes-2015-0194](https://doi.org/10.1139/cjes-2015-0194)

License:

None: All rights reserved

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Blain, JA, Wheeley, J & Ray, D 2016, 'Carbon isotope ($\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$) and facies variability at the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary (Silurian) of the Midland Platform, UK', *Canadian Journal of Earth Science*.

<https://doi.org/10.1139/cjes-2015-0194>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

Publisher Version of Record available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1139/cjes-2015-0194>

Validated Feb 2016

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

1 **Carbon isotope ($\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$) and facies variability at the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary (Silurian) of**
2 **the Midland Platform, UK**

3
4 John A. Blain^{a*}, David C. Ray^a and James R. Wheeley^a

5 *Corresponding author

6
7 ^aSchool of Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, B15
8 2TT, United Kingdom;

9
10 * john.a.blain@gmail.com

11 daveray01@yahoo.com

12 j.r.wheeley@bham.ac.uk

31 **Abstract**

32 The Wenlock-Ludlow series boundary (Silurian) has been recognized as a time of pronounced sea
33 level rise and the end of a globally recognised Late Homerian Stage (Mulde) positive carbon isotope
34 excursion (CIE). However, the precise timing and synchronicity of the end of the excursion with
35 respect to the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary is debated. Within the type Wenlock and Ludlow areas (UK),
36 high resolution $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ isotope data are presented across the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary, and within a
37 range of carbonate platform settings. Correlation between sections and depositional settings has
38 been based upon the characteristics of high-order sea level fluctuations (parasequences).
39 Comparisons between parasequence bounded $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values reveal clear spatial variations, with
40 lighter values recorded from more distal settings and heavier values from shallower settings.
41 Temporal variations in the $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values are also documented and appear to reflect local variations
42 in carbonate provenance and productivity in response to sea level rise. While $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values converge
43 in all sections towards the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary, the apparent end of the Mulde CIE appears
44 diachronous and is progressively older within more distal settings.

45 **Keywords:** Carbon Isotopes, Carbonate Platform, Mulde, Sea Level, Silurian.

46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

61 Introduction

62 The Silurian is characterised by a highly dynamic, glacially mediated climate, associated with
63 strong eustatic sea level fluctuations, marine biodiversity crises and carbon isotope excursions (CIE)
64 (Calner 2008; Munnecke *et al.* 2010; Melchin *et al.* 2012). Four prominent positive CIEs are
65 recognized within the Silurian (the Ireviken (Early Sheinwoodian), Mulde (Late Homerian), Lau
66 (Ludfordian) and Klonk (Silurian-Devonian Boundary) events, see Saltzman & Thomas 2012) and are
67 increasingly used as a means of stratigraphic correlation (Cramer *et al.* 2011). The Homerian Stage of
68 the Wenlock Series is associated with the double-peaked and globally recognised Mulde positive CIE;
69 the upper peak of which occurs in the latest Homerian, with elevated $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values continuing
70 towards the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary. In addition, the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary is associated with
71 a well-established, globally recognised transgression that likely begins in the very latest Homerian
72 and peaks in the middle Gorstian (Ludlow Series) (Loydell 1998; Johnson 2006; Johnson 2010;
73 Melchin *et al.* 2012).

74 Within the southern United Kingdom, Wenlock and Ludlow age strata are exposed on the
75 Midland Platform and the eastern part of the Welsh Basin (Cherns *et al.* 2006). These exposures,
76 particularly those of the Midland Platform, are of global significance in that they contain the Global
77 boundary Stratotype Sections and Points (GSSPs) for the constituent stages of the Wenlock
78 (Sheinwoodian and Homerian) and Ludlow (Gorstian and Ludfordian) series. A compilation of key
79 sections produced for the British Geological Conservation Review Series (Aldridge *et al.* 2000), and
80 more recently, a field guide for the International Subcommission on Silurian Stratigraphy (Davies *et al.*
81 2011), provide details of the type Wenlock and Ludlow series.

82 The GSSP for the base of the Gorstian Stage is in Pitch Coppice Quarry near the town of
83 Ludlow, Shropshire (SO 472 730). The stratotype point is the base of the Lower Elton Formation
84 (LEF) where it overlies the Much Wenlock Limestone Formation (MWLF) (Lawson & White 1989).
85 Graptolites questionably assigned to *Neodiversograptus nilssoni* Zone have been collected
86 immediately above the base of the LEF. However, the absence of graptolites from other parts of the
87 Homerian-Gorstian interval in the type area, alongside an absence of biostratigraphically useful shelly
88 fossils, conodonts and palynomorphs, make it impossible to precisely correlate the stratotype point
89 with the base of *N. nilssoni* Zone; the base of *N. nilssoni* Zone being globally used to recognise the
90 base of the Gorstian (Melchin *et al.* 2012). In light of this biostratigraphic imprecision, carbon isotope

91 chemostratigraphy may help improve correlation of the Homerian-Gorstian boundary. However, while
92 the upper peak of the Mulde CIE is reported from the MWLF at Pitch Coppice Quarry (Corfield *et al.*
93 1992; Thomas & Ray 2011), both regionally (Marshall *et al.* 2012) and globally (Cramer *et al.* 2006),
94 the precise relationship between the Homerian-Gorstian boundary and the upper peak of the Mulde
95 CIE is unclear.

96 In an attempt to improve the correlation of the Homerian-Gorstian boundary on the Midland
97 Platform, recent studies have focussed on sequence stratigraphy (Ray *et al.* 2010; Ray *et al.* 2013),
98 and the stable isotope record (Cramer *et al.* 2012). In particular, detailed studies of the relative sea
99 level changes within upper MWLF and immediately overlying LEF have identified a series of highly
100 distinctive and regionally traceable parasequences. These parasequences can be traced across
101 much of the northern and central Midland Platform and are documented within the type Wenlock
102 (Wenlock Edge, Shropshire) and type Ludlow (Ludlow anticline, Shropshire) areas (Ray *et al.* 2010;
103 Thomas & Ray 2011). Furthermore, within these same areas, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ determinations have identified
104 the upper peak of the Mulde CIE (Corfield *et al.* 1992; Marshall *et al.* 2011; Marshall *et al.* 2012).
105 Based upon the regional correlation of the declining $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values, Marshall *et al.* (2012) identified a
106 diachronous end to the Mulde positive CIE. In particular, elevated and regionally anomalous, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$
107 values were reported 6m into the LEF at Lea South Quarry, Wenlock Edge. These values were
108 attributed, in part, to locally high carbonate productivity and or upwelling taking place close to the
109 shelf-basin margin. If correct, such diachroneity would cast doubt on the use of CIEs as a means of
110 high resolution correlation.

111 Presented herein are three sections containing the MWLF-LEF boundary interval, the
112 associated parasequences and the declining upper limb of the Mulde CIE. Together these sections
113 represent a platform to platform margin transect, as developed within the type Wenlock and Ludlow
114 areas. Such sections allow for the regional expression of the Mulde CIE to be compared against
115 sequence stratigraphic determinations and across differing palaeoenvironments.

116

117 **Lithostratigraphy and sequence stratigraphy**

118 The transition between the MWLF and LEF has been investigated along Wenlock Edge at
119 Benthall Edge Quarry (SJ 664 034) and Lea South Quarry (SO 594 982), and at Goggin Road (SO
120 472 719), Ludlow (Fig. 1). While these sections do not contain useful age diagnostic fossils,

121 parasequence based correlations have been used to link to nearby sections that do. Age diagnostic
122 graptolites corresponding to the latest Homerian *M. ludensis* Zone are regionally reported from the
123 upper MWLF and *N. nilssoni* Zone graptolites are reported from the LEF (see Aldridge *et al.* 2000;
124 Ray *et al.* 2010). Based upon regional palaeoenvironmental considerations, during late Homerian
125 times, (Shergold & Bassett 1970; Scoffin 1971; Ray *et al.* 2010) Benthall Edge and Lea South
126 quarries corresponded to patch reef and barrier reef settings (reef tract), respectively, while Goggin
127 Road corresponded to a platform margin setting (off-reef tract) (Aldridge *et al.* 2000; Thomas & Ray
128 2011). In terms of relative sea level change, the upper MWLF is associated with a marked relative sea
129 level fall (falling stage systems tract) corresponding to parasequence 10 (PS10) of Ray *et al.* (2010)
130 and the widespread establishment of reefs and shallow-water carbonates. The overlying
131 parasequence 11 (PS11) marks the onset of regional transgression, resulting in localised reefal build-
132 ups and shoals in areas of high carbonate productivity (Lea South Quarry), and, more widely, the
133 onset of the drowning of the carbonate platform (Benthall Edge Quarry and Goggin Road). The
134 commencement of the LEF is typically associated with parasequences 12 to 15 (PS11 locally) and
135 sees the rapid and progressive replacement of carbonates by off-shore shales. Minor diachroneity of
136 the MWLF-LEF boundary along Wenlock Edge reflects the lithological criteria originally established by
137 Murchison (1872), which ties the top of the MWLF to the top of the crinoidal grainstone beds. Owing
138 to local variations in carbonate productivity, the occurrence of the last prominent crinoidal grainstone
139 beds varies from the top of PS10 at Benthall Edge to PS11 at Lea South Quarry (see Ray *et al.*
140 2010). Within the Ludlow area the replacement of limestones by shales defines the MWLF-LEF
141 boundary and occurs at the top of PS11. The correlation of parasequences between all three sections
142 has been based upon their distinguishing characteristics, which include shale-rich flooding surfaces
143 overlain by upward-shallowing limestones (as determined on sedimentological and faunal grounds). In
144 particular, PS10 is by far the thickest of the parasequences observed (>9 m) and is also the most
145 strongly progradational, with a range of lithofacies representing environments from the lower limits of
146 storm wave base and the euphotic zone to around fair-weather wave base. Above the lithological
147 transition into the LEF begins with the locally variable PS11, above which a marked shift from
148 carbonates to off-shore shales occurs at the transition between PS11 and PS12 and the Homerian-
149 Gorstian Boundary. Thus correlation has been achieved by the identification of PS10 and overlying
150 succession of thinner and dominantly retrogradational parasequences (Fig. 2).

151

152 **Carbon Isotope Stratigraphy**

153 Each section was logged and sampled at 0.4m intervals, increasing to 0.2 m around the Wenlock-
154 Ludlow boundary. Up to 2 mg of carbonate rock powder, per sample, was analysed using the
155 University of Birmingham's SILLA laboratory facility. This method of analysing bulk rock for stable
156 isotopes, which inevitably does contain some skeletal material, has been shown to provide reliable
157 results in other Silurian studies (e.g. Cramer *et al.* 2006; Marshall *et al.* 2012; Jarochowska *et al.* In
158 Press). The powdered carbonate was placed in a vial in a heated sample rack (90°C), where the vial
159 head space was replaced by pure helium via an automated needle system as part of an Isoprime
160 Multiflow preparation system. Samples were then manually injected with approximately 200 µl of
161 phosphoric acid and left to react for at least 1 hour before the headspace gas was sampled by an
162 automated needle and introduced into a continuous-flow Isoprime mass-spectrometer. Duplicate
163 samples were extracted from each vial and a mean value obtained for both $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$. Samples
164 were calibrated using IAEA standards NBS-18 and NBS-19 and reported as ‰ on the VPDB scale.
165 An external precision of better than 0.1 ‰ is typically achieved for both $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$. In total, 100
166 samples provided results (Table S1¹).

167 Goggin Road is 1.1 km south of the Gorstian GSSP (Pitch Coppice) and appears lithologically
168 rather similar. The section contains the upper third of PS10 and the majority (2.4 m) of PS11 (PS10
169 and PS11 are c.12 m and 2.14 m thick at Pitch Coppice; Thomas & Ray 2011), with the base of the
170 LEF and the Gorstian Stage just above the top of the current exposure (PS11-PS12 boundary). Within
171 the basal 1.8 m of the Goggin Road section, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values show limited variability and fluctuate
172 between +1.00 ‰ and +1.71 ‰ (mean +1.39 ‰). Above which, the remainder of the values are
173 generally lower (mean +0.58 ‰) and show considerably more variability (+1.41 ‰ to -0.76 ‰). Minor
174 positive shifts in values are observed towards the tops of PS10 and PS11.

175 Lea South Quarry contains the uppermost part of PS10, PS11 and the majority of PS12. The
176 MWLF-LEF and Homerian-Gorstian boundary coincides with the top of the thickest crinoidal beds and
177 here occurs at the top of PS11. $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values show a steady decline throughout (+2.99 ‰ to +1.23
178 ‰), with a minor peak (+3.4 ‰ at 2.3 m) close to the base of PS11, and a minor fall (+0.9 ‰ at 11.3
179 m) and plateau in values around the base of PS12.

¹ Table S1 – Stable isotope results (*supplementary material*).

180 Benthall Edge Quarry contains the upper half of PS10, PS11 and part of PS12. The MWLF-
181 LEF boundary coincides with the top of the thickest crinoidal beds and here occurs at the top of PS10
182 (Ray *et al.* 2010). Within upper half of PS10, $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values gently rise from around +2 ‰ to a peak of
183 +3.35 ‰. Values then rapidly fall towards the top of PS10 with a value of +1.76 ‰ at the PS10-PS11
184 boundary (6.6 m). Above, PS11 values plateau, fluctuating between +1.58 ‰ and +2.04 ‰, before
185 falling and plateauing again (+1.09 ‰ to +1.32 ‰) across the boundary between PS11 and PS12 and
186 the Homerician-Gorstian stages.

187

188 **Discussion**

189 $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values obtained from the three sections have been compared with respect to their relative
190 positions within PS10, PS11 and PS12 (Fig. 3). Such a comparison reveals clear spatial variations
191 with lighter $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values recorded from more distal settings and heavier values from shallower
192 settings. Such a relationship is well documented within the Silurian and has been demonstrated in
193 near age equivalent successions on Baltica (Jarochowska & Munnecke 2015). This is particularly
194 evident in the mean $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values from PS11; Goggin Road +0.7 ‰, Lea South Quarry +2.6 ‰,
195 Benthall Edge Quarry +1.8 ‰. The difference between sections is the likely result of local variations in
196 carbonate provenance, biological activity and sea water circulation (see Saltzman & Thomas 2012).
197 At Goggin Road, the limestones likely result from a mixture of in situ and derived carbonates; as is the
198 case at Benthall Edge Quarry. As Goggin Road represents the most distal of the sections, in situ
199 carbonate production will likely reflect the lighter $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values more typical of the open ocean, while
200 carbonates derived from shallower-water carbonate production will be somewhat heavier. A
201 particularly notable feature of PS11 at Goggin Road, and to a lesser extent Pitch Coppice (Thomas &
202 Ray 2011), is the variability of $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values. Such variations may reflect pulses of platform derived
203 carbonate deposited during storm events. This mechanism in combination with the relative sea level
204 falls associated with individual parasequences, may also explain the minor positive shifts in values
205 observed towards the top of PS10 and PS11. By way of contrast, Lea South Quarry is exclusively
206 representative of shallow-marine in situ carbonate productivity and contains the highest mean $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$
207 values within PS11. Here, reef masses flanked by crinoidal grainstones are a common feature. The
208 steady decline in $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values throughout PS11 reflects the best documentation of the declining
209 limb of the Mulde CIE, with a minor fall and plateau in values around the base of PS12 likely

210 corresponding to the end of the CIE; at a value of around +1 ‰. It is of note that a very similar carbon
211 isotopic trend, including a plateau in values around +1 ‰, was produced by Marshall *et al.* (2012),
212 however the plateau in values and the apparent end of the Mulde CIE does not occur until some 6m
213 into the LEF (PS14). However by comparing the relative positions of the same Lea South Quarry
214 isotope data between Marshall *et al.* (2011) and Marshall *et al.* (2012), it is clear there has been a
215 degree of uncertainty as to the exact position of the data with respect to the stratigraphy at Lea South
216 Quarry. Owing to such issues particular care has been taken in this study to correctly attribute isotopic
217 values to the appropriate parasequences.

218 Spatial variations in $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values make the identification of the end of the Mulde CIE
219 difficult. Within Benthall Edge Quarry, the steady decline in $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values observed at Lea South
220 Quarry appears to correspond only to the upper 2.2 m of PS10, above which values plateau just
221 below +2 ‰ in PS11, before falling and plateauing again around +1 ‰, across the PS11-PS12
222 boundary. Based upon the start of plateauing values, the end of the Mulde CIE might be attributed
223 here to the base of PS11, or perhaps by comparison with the Lea South carbon isotope curve, near
224 the top of PS11. At Goggin Road the identification of the end of the Mulde CIE is especially difficult,
225 but may correspond to the transition between slightly elevated values with limited variability, and
226 values that are generally lower and show considerably more variability, which occurs 2.2 m below the
227 top of PS10.

228 However, the lowered CaCO_3 content within the uppermost MWLF at Goggin Road and the negative
229 shift in $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values may reflect meteoric diagenetic processes. To test for the effects of diagenetic
230 overprinting $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values were plotted against $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values for each section (see Saltzman &
231 Thomas 2012). There is no correlation between $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values at Lea South Quarry and
232 Goggin Road ($r^2 = 0.0087$ and 0.0483 , respectively), while Benthall Edge Quarry comparisons
233 suggest a weak correlation between values ($r^2 = 0.2975$). Furthermore, at the level of individual
234 samples diagenetic overprinting may be indicated by coinciding low $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values. Such
235 coinciding values appear in samples from Benthall Edge Quarry (6.6 m) and Goggin Road (2.0 m and
236 4.8 m) (Fig. 3) and include samples attributed to the end of the Mulde CIE in both sections. However,
237 in both sections the broader trends in values remain and indicate that the end of the Mulde CIE
238 occurs well within PS10 at Goggin Road and in association with the onset of plateauing values in
239 PS11 at Benthall Edge Quarry. Of additional note is the apparent absence of diagenetic overprinting

240 at Lea South Quarry, the most shallow-water/proximal section, making meteoric diagenesis as a result
241 of subaerial exposure within the more distal sections highly unlikely, and suggesting a primary carbon
242 isotopic signal for Benthall Edge Quarry and Goggin Road sections. Thus, according to the age
243 control afforded by the parasequences, the end of the Mulde CIE appears to occur within
244 progressively older strata within more distal settings. More broadly there is a convergence of values
245 within all sections towards the PS11-PS12 and the Wenlock-Ludlow boundary, which may be
246 interpreted as corresponding to the true end of the Mulde CIE; at a value of around +1 ‰. However,
247 the PS11-PS12 boundary also corresponds to a marked increase in the rate of transgression,
248 resulting in the widespread establishment of a more distal depositional setting which may have had
249 the effect of lowering $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ values and regionally bringing to an end the Mulde CIE.

250

251 **Acknowledgements**

252 We wish to thank Wayne Davies (Natural England) and Nicola Cowell (Mortimer Forest, Forestry
253 Commission), Katy Bickerton (Edge Renewables), Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Wildlife Trust) and
254 Ernest Carter (Aggregate Industries) for granting access and sampling permissions for Goggin Road
255 and Lea South Quarry sections respectively. JRW dedicates his contribution to this work to June
256 Everitt (1923–2012). We wish to thank Jiri Frýda and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful
257 comments. This is a contribution to the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) Project 591 -
258 The Early to Middle Palaeozoic Revolution.

259

260 **References**

261 Aldridge, R.J., Siveter, David J., Siveter, Derek J., Lane, P.D., Palmer, D. & Woodcock, N.H. 2000.
262 British Silurian Stratigraphy, Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 19, Joint Nature
263 Conservation Committee, Peterborough, 542 pp.

264 Calner, M., 2008. Silurian global events – at the tipping point of climate change. *In* Mass Extinctions.
265 *Edited by* A.M.T. Elewa. Springer-Verlag, Berlin and Heidelberg. pp. 21–58.

266 Cherns, L., Cocks, L.R.M., Davies, J.R., Hillier, R.D., Waters, R.A., Williams, M. 2006. Silurian: the
267 influence of extensional tectonics and sea level changes on sedimentation in the Welsh Borderland

268 and on the Midland Platform. *In* The Geology of England and Wales. *Edited by* P. J. Brenchley and P.
269 F. Rawson. The Geological Society, London, pp. 75–102.

270 Cramer, B.D., Kleffner, M.A., Saltzman, M.R. 2006. The Late Wenlock Mulde positive carbon isotope
271 excursion in North America. *GFF*, **128**: 85–90.

272 Cramer, B.D., Brett, C.E., Melchin, M.J., Männik, P., Kleffner, M.A., McLaughlin, P.I., Loydell, D.K.,
273 Munnecke, A., Jeppsson, L., Corradini, C., Brunton, F.R., Saltzman, M.R. 2011. Revised correlation
274 of Silurian Provincial Series of North America with global and regional chronostratigraphic units and
275 $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ chemostratigraphy. *Lethaia*, **44**: 185–202.

276 Cramer, B.D., Condon, D.J., Söderlund, U., Marshall, C., Worton, G.W., Thomas, A.T., Calner, M.,
277 Ray, D.C., Perrier, V., Boomer, I., Patchett, P.J., Jeppsson, L. 2012. U-Pb (zircon) age constraints on
278 the timing and duration of Wenlock (Silurian) paleocommunity collapse and recovery during the 'Big
279 Crisis'. *Geological Society of America Bulletin*, **124**: 1841–1857.

280 Corfield, R.M., Siveter, D.J., Cartlidge, J.E., McKerrow, W.S. 1992. Carbon isotope excursion near the
281 Wenlock-Ludlow, (Silurian) boundary in the Anglo-Welsh area. *Geology*, **20**: 371-374.

282 Davies, J.R., Ray, D.C., Thomas, A.T., Loydell, D.K., Cherns, L., Cramer, B.D., Veevers, S.J.,
283 Worton, G.J., Marshall, C., Molyneux, S.G., Vandenbroucke, T.R.A., Verniers, J., Waters, R.A.,
284 Williams M., Zalasiewicz, J.A. 2011. Siluria revisited: A field guide. International Subcommittee on
285 Silurian Stratigraphy, Field Meeting 2011 (*Edited by* D.C. Ray), 1–170.

286 Jarochowska, E., Munnecke, A. 2015. Silurian carbonate high-energy deposits of potential tsunami
287 origin: Distributing lateral redeposition and time averaging using carbon isotope chemostratigraphy.
288 *Sedimentary Geology*, **315**: 14-28.

289 Jarochowska, E., Munnecke, A., Frisch, K., Ray, D.C., Castagner, A. In press: Faunal and facies
290 changes through the mid Homerian (late Wenlock, Silurian) positive carbon isotope excursion in
291 Podolia, western Ukraine. *Lethaia*. Online publication DOI:10.1111/let.12137

292 Johnson, M.E. 2006. Relationship of Silurian sea-level fluctuations to oceanic episodes and events.
293 *GFF*, **128**: 115–121.

294 Johnson, M. E. 2010. Tracking Silurian eustasy: Alignment of empirical evidence or pursuit of
295 deductive reasoning? *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, **296**: 276–284

296 Lawson, J.D., White, D.E. 1989. The Ludlow Series in the type area. *In* A Global Standard for the
297 Silurian System. *Edited by* C. H. Holland and M. G. Bassett. National Museum of Wales, Geological
298 Series, Cardiff. pp. 73-90.

299 Loydell, D.K. 1998. Early Silurian sea-level changes. *Geological Magazine*, **135**: 447–471.

300 Marshall, C., Thomas, A.T., Ray, D.C. 2011. Reef and inter-reef facies in the Much Wenlock
301 Limestone Formation and overlying Lower Elton Formation, Lea Quarry South, Wenlock Edge. *In*
302 *Siluria Revisited, a Field Guide. Edited by* D. C. Ray. International Subcommittee on Silurian
303 Stratigraphy Field Meeting 2011. pp. 113-120.

304 Marshall, C., Thomas, A.T., Boomer, I., Ray, D.C. 2012. High resolution $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ stratigraphy of the
305 Homerian (Wenlock) of the English Midlands and Wenlock Edge. *Bulletin of Geosciences*, **87**: 669-
306 679.

307 Melchin, M.J., Sadler, P.M., Cramer, B.D. 2012. The Silurian Period. *In* The Geologic Time Scale
308 2012. *Edited by* F. M. Gradstein, J. G. Ogg, M. Schmitz, G. Ogg. Elsevier, New York. pp. 525–558.

309 Munnecke, A., Calner, M. Harper, D.A.T. Servais, T. 2010. Ordovician and Silurian sea–water
310 chemistry, sea level, and climate: A synopsis. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*,
311 **296**: 389–413.

312 Murchison, R. I. 1872. *Siluria. The history of the oldest known rocks containing organic remains, with*
313 *a brief description of the distribution of gold over the Earth, 5th ed.* John Murray, London:, xvi - 523
314 pp.

315 Ray, D.C., Brett, C.E., Thomas, A.T., Collings, A.V.J. 2010. Late Wenlock sequence stratigraphy in
316 central England. *Geological Magazine*, **147**: 123–144.

317 Ray, D.C., Richards, T.D., Brett, C.D., Morton, A., Brown, A.M. 2013. Late Wenlock sequence and
318 bentonite stratigraphy in the Malvern, Suckley and Abberley Hills, England. *Palaeogeography,*
319 *Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, **389**: 115–127.

320 Saltzman, M.R., Thomas, E. 2012. Carbon Isotope Stratigraphy. *In* The Geologic Time Scale 2012.
321 *Edited by* F. M Gradstein, J. G. Ogg, M. Schmitz, G. Ogg. Elsevier, New York. pp. 207-232.

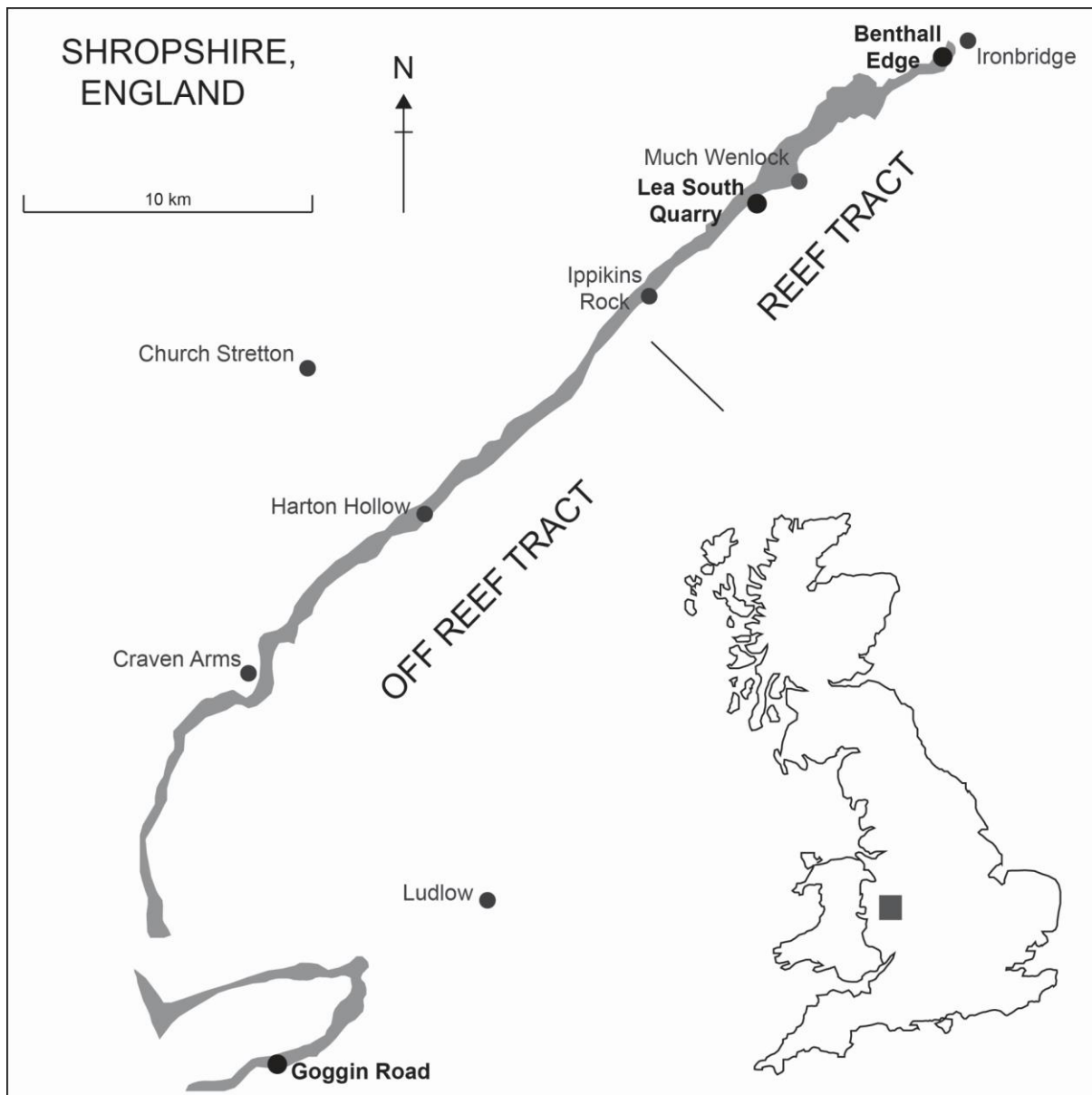
322 Scoffin, T.P. 1971. The conditions of growth of the Wenlock reefs of Shropshire (England).
323 *Sedimentology*, **17**: 173-219.

324 Shergold, J.H., Bassett, M.G. 1970. Facies and faunas at the Wenlock/Ludlow boundary of Wenlock
325 Edge, Shropshire. *Lethaia*, **3**: 113-42

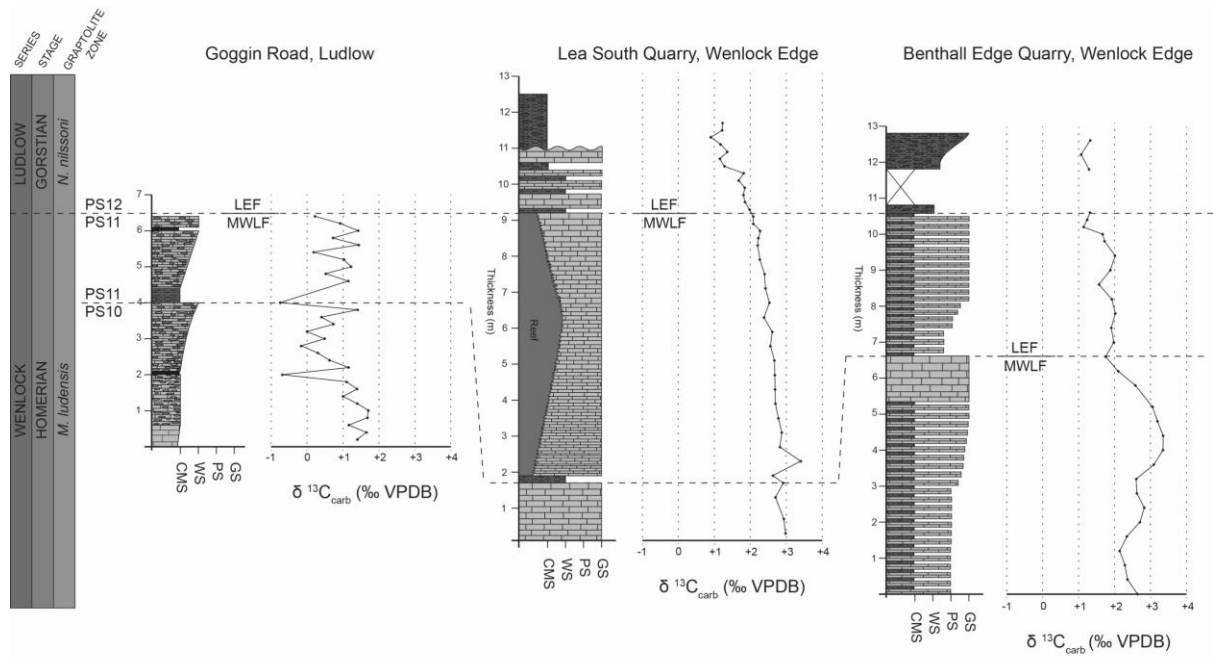
326 Thomas, A.T., Ray, D.C. 2011. Pitch Coppice: GSSP for the base of the Ludlow Series and Gorstian
327 Stage, Whitwell Coppice. *In Siluria Revisited, a Field Guide. Edited by D. C. Ray. International*
328 *Subcommission on Silurian Stratigraphy Field Meeting 2011. pp. 80-84.*

329

330 **Figure 1.** An outcrop map of the Much Wenlock Limestone Formation showing the location of
331 sections and facies belts.

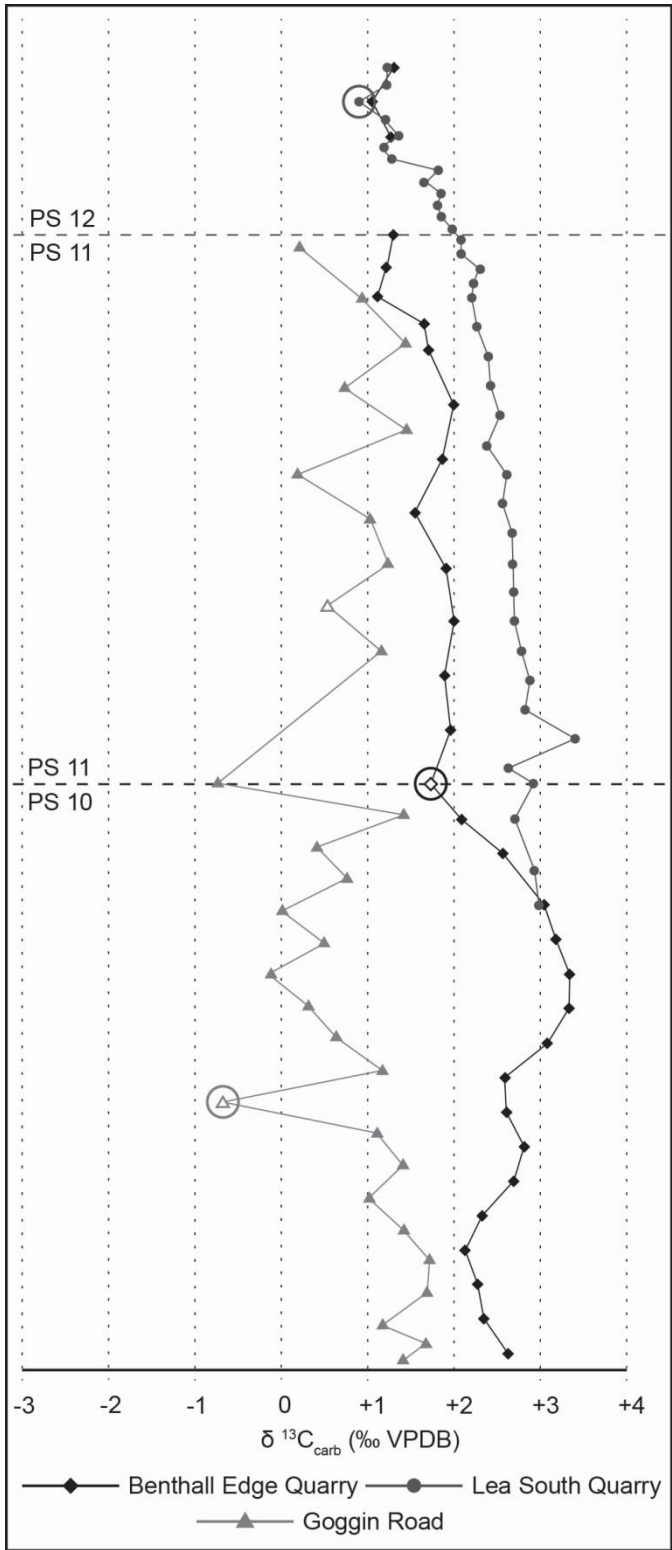


332
333 **Figure 2.** Key lithostratigraphy, sedimentology, parasequences and $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ data from Goggin Road,
334 Lea South Quarry and Benthall Edge Quarry. CMS – carbonate mudstone; WS – wackestone; PS –
335 packstone; GS – grainstone. MWLF – Much Wenlock Limestone Formation; LEF – Lower Elton
336 Formation.



337 **Key** ■ Shale ■ Bedded carbonate ■ Carbonate nodules ■ Bentonite horizon - - - Parasequence boundary

338 **Figure 3.** A comparison of $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ between Goggin Road, Lea South Quarry and Benthall Edge
 339 Quarry with respect to the relative position of values within parasequences 10 to 12. Circled data
 340 points represent apparent end of the Mulde CIE in each section. Unshaded data points correspond to
 341 samples which may have been affected by meteoric diagenetic processes.



342

343

344 **Table S1.** $\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ data from Goggin Road, Lea South Quarry and Benthall Edge Quarry
 345 sections. Highlighted values (grey) denote samples which may have been affected by diagenesis.

346

347 **Goggins Road**

Location	Position in section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
PS 10			
GR	0.20	1.40	-6.03
GR	0.40	1.65	-5.16
GR	0.60	1.16	-6.49
GR	0.80	1.68	-6.41
GR	1.00	1.71	-5.70
GR	1.20	1.40	-6.82
GR	1.40	1.00	-6.89
GR	1.60	1.39	-5.59
GR	1.80	1.10	-5.62
GR	2.00	-0.69	-8.64
GR	2.20	1.15	-6.76
GR	2.40	0.62	-6.69
GR	2.60	0.30	-5.62
GR	2.80	-0.12	-7.44
GR	3.00	0.49	-6.88
GR	3.20	0.00	-5.19
GR	3.40	0.74	-8.40
GR	3.60	0.40	-7.20
GR	3.80	1.41	-5.44
PS 11			
GR	4.00	-0.76	-4.74
GR	4.60	1.15	-6.30

Location	Position in Section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
GR	4.80	0.51	-7.65
GR	5.00	1.13	-5.15
GR	5.20	1.03	-5.76
GR	5.40	0.19	-4.88
GR	5.60	1.43	-5.63
GR	5.80	0.72	-5.69
GR	6.00	1.42	-5.09
GR	6.20	0.93	-5.22
GR	6.40	0.22	-5.33

348

349 Lea South Quarry

Section	Position in section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
PS 10			
LS	0.20	2.99	-5.42
LS	0.60	2.94	-5.93
LS	1.30	2.70	-7.05
PS 11			
LS	1.70	2.92	-4.75
LS	1.90	2.63	-5.43
LS	2.30	3.40	-4.96
LS	2.70	2.82	-7.48
LS	3.10	2.86	-5.66
LS	3.50	2.78	-7.68
LS	3.90	2.70	-7.64
LS	4.30	2.69	-6.98
LS	4.70	2.69	-6.56

Location	Position in section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
LS	5.10	2.67	-5.70
LS	5.50	2.55	-5.46
LS	5.90	2.60	-7.50
LS	6.30	2.39	-5.97
LS	6.70	2.53	-6.31
LS	7.10	2.43	-7.39
LS	7.50	2.40	-7.74
LS	7.90	2.26	-5.63
LS	8.30	2.20	-5.89
LS	8.50	2.23	-7.57
LS	8.70	2.26	-7.39
LS	8.90	2.07	-6.86
LS	9.10	2.07	-5.81
PS 12			
LS	9.30	1.99	-7.58
LS	9.50	1.85	-5.77
LS	9.70	1.81	-7.33
LS	9.90	1.84	-7.36
LS	10.10	1.68	-6.77
LS	10.30	1.82	-6.83
LS	10.50	1.29	-7.21
LS	10.70	1.15	-6.46
LS	10.90	1.32	-5.45
LS	11.10	1.16	-6.15
LS	11.30	0.90	-5.08
LS	11.50	1.22	-5.24
LS	11.70	1.23	-4.32

351

352 Benthall Edge

Section	Position in section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
PS 10			
BE	0.00	2.64	-4.87
BE	0.40	2.35	-5.66
BE	0.80	2.29	-4.80
BE	1.20	2.14	-5.18
BE	1.60	2.44	-4.66
BE	2.00	2.70	-4.61
BE	2.40	2.82	-4.87
BE	2.80	2.62	-4.20
BE	3.20	2.60	-4.92
BE	3.60	3.09	-4.30
BE	4.00	3.34	-4.25
BE	4.40	3.35	-4.35
BE	4.80	3.19	-4.53
BE	5.20	3.05	-4.28
BE	5.80	2.60	-4.91
BE	6.20	2.12	-6.62
PS 11			
BE	6.60	1.76	-5.63
BE	7.00	2.00	-4.22
BE	7.40	1.93	-6.03
BE	7.80	2.04	-4.23
BE	8.20	1.95	-4.10
BE	8.60	1.58	-4.84
BE	9.00	1.90	-5.27

BE	9.40	2.03	-6.07
Location	Position in Section (m)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)	$\delta^{18}\text{O}_{\text{carb}}$ (‰ VPDB)
BE	9.80	1.74	-7.09
BE	10.00	1.68	-6.06
BE	10.20	1.15	-4.73
BE	10.40	1.25	-6.20
PS 12			
BE	10.60	1.32	-6.17
BE	11.80	1.30	-4.76
BE	12.20	1.09	-5.39
BE	12.60	1.34	-7.50

353