

# Sponges

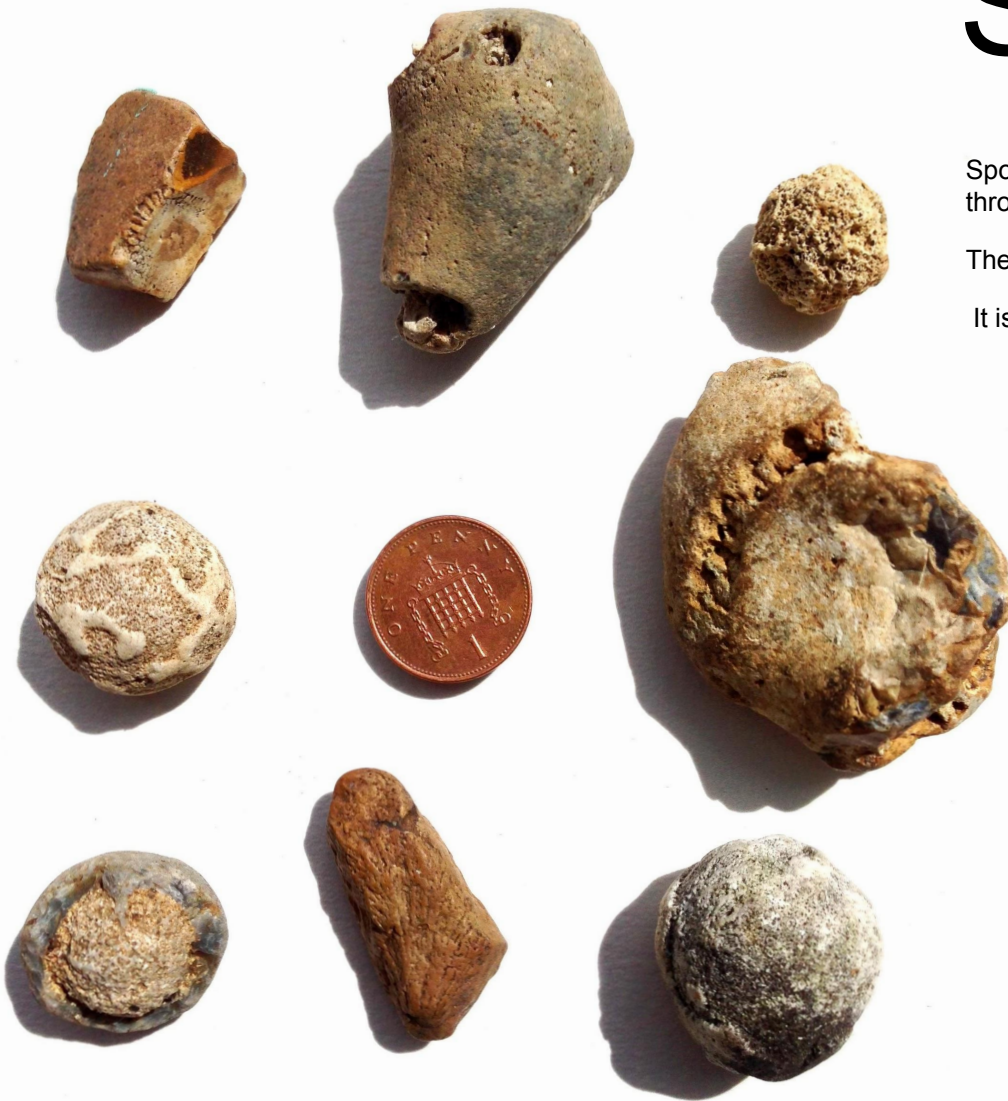


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Sponges are primitive animals that live in the sea. Most do not move, they pump water through their porous skeletons to filter out particles of food.

The term sponge is most commonly used to describe the skeleton of the sponge.

It is the sponge skeleton that we find as fossils.



Things to look out for:

- tiny holes
- round or branching shapes
- spongy texture



# Gryphaea



*Gryphaea* is an extinct species of oyster. They belong to a group of invertebrates called bivalve molluscs. Bivalves have an external, two-part hinged shell that protects their soft body.

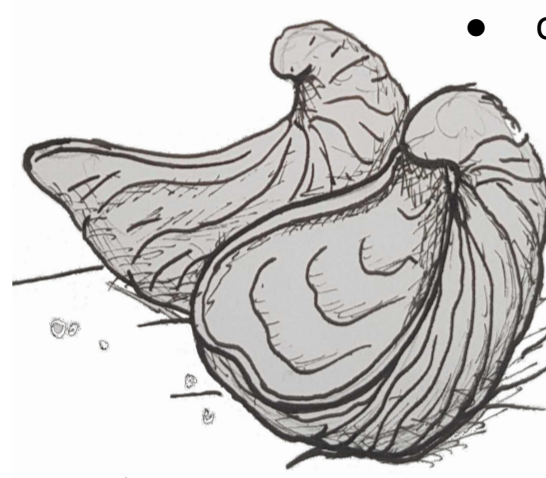
In English folklore fossil *Gryphaea* are often referred to as 'Devil's toenails' because they resemble the devil's 'cloven hoof'.

*Gryphaea* fossils are most often the larger, thicker left valve of the shell.

These are more likely to survive than the thin, flat right valves.

Things to look out for:

- flaky layers
- curved, thick ends
- often worn smooth by water



# Belemnites



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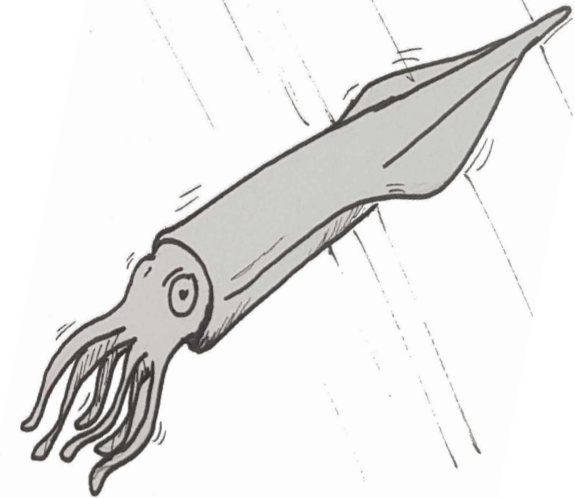
Belemnites are extinct marine animals. They are a type of mollusc called cephalopods, and are closely related to today's squid and cuttlefish.

They had a squid-like body but, unlike modern squid, they had a hard internal skeleton.

It is this hard part that becomes fossilized.

Things to look out for:

- cones, or very straight sided cylinder shapes
- cone-shaped hole in the centre





# Sea urchins

Sea urchins are a type of echinoid. They are still alive today and are related to starfish and sea lilies. They have long spines attached to their bodies.

The spines do not survive well, but their shells, called tests, do and are very distinctive because of their five-fold symmetry.

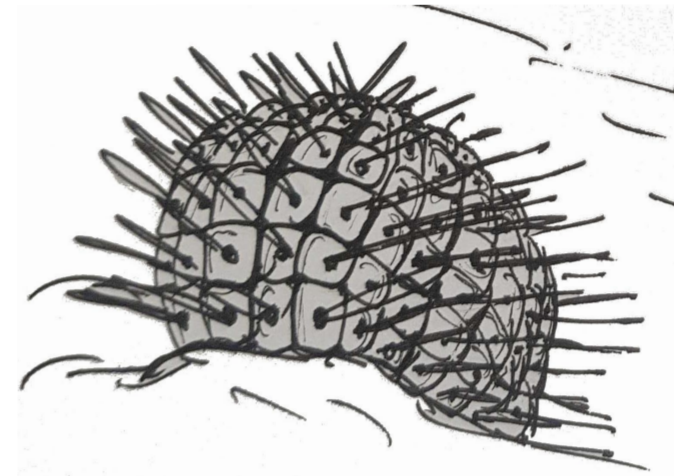
You might find a whole sea urchin, but more often you will find the impression of a small section of the shell.



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Things to look out for:

- regular rows of holes, often in pairs
- five-fold symmetry i.e. features like rows of holes are in multiples of five



# Sea lilies

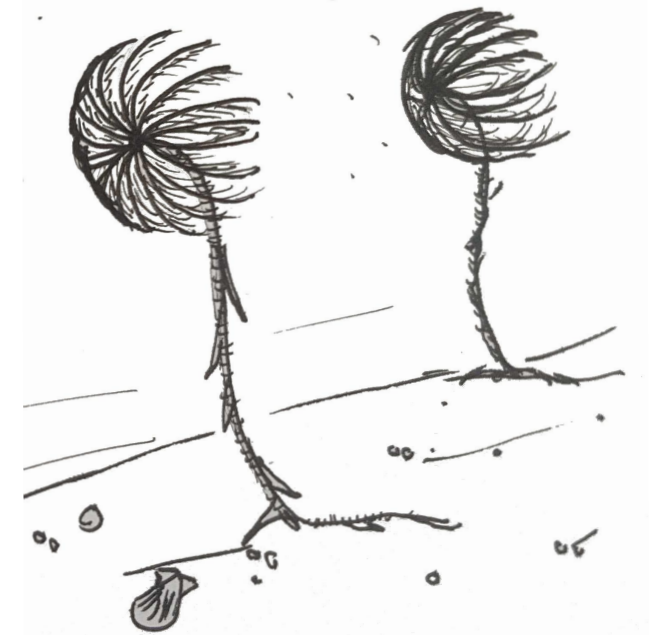
Sea lilies or crinoids are still alive today. They are not lilies or any type of plant. They are part of a group of animals called echinoderms, and are most closely related to sea urchins and starfish.

The mouth is surrounded by feeding arms and they attached to the sea bottom by a stalk.

It is very rare to find the 'heads' but you might find pieces of the stalk or feeding arms.

Things to look out for:

- single disk shapes
- stacks of disks that form the stalk or feeding arms





# Shells

Other thick, ribbed shells often leave imprints in the flint and are easy to spot. They are often other bivalves like the scallop *Pecten* and the extinct *Inoceramus*.

Often the imprints look exactly like shells you might find on the beach today.



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Things to look out for:

- ribs and ridges
- partial shell shapes

