



# British Earthquakes



Some of our SciBar participants prepared this glossary, independently of Dr Stimpson. Your feedback on the level of information and usefulness of the SciBar glossaries is most welcome.

<p><b>Amplitude</b> The maximum size of a peak or trough seen on a seismometer trace. When calculating magnitude of an earthquake, amplitudes are corrected for distance of the seismometer from the hypocentre.</p> <p><b>Body wave</b> Seismic wave that moves through the interior of the Earth. P- and S-waves are body waves.</p> <p><b>Crust</b> The outermost layer of the Earth, from 10-65 km thick. The upper 15-35 km of the crust is brittle enough to produce earthquakes.</p> <p><b>Epicentre</b> The position on the Earth's surface directly above the hypocentre of an earthquake.</p> <p><b>Fault</b> A weak area in the crust where fracture occurs during tension or compression and along which there is slip during an earthquake. May not show at the surface.</p> <p><b>Glacial rebound</b> Slow rise of the Earth's surface in areas that were once covered by ice sheets. Can trigger earthquakes.</p> <p><b>Hertz (Hz)</b> The unit for wave frequency. 1 Hz is one wave per second.</p> <p><b>Hypocentre</b> The point within the Earth where an earthquake starts, due to stresses exceeding the strength of the rock. Also commonly called the focus.</p> <p><b>Iapetus suture</b> Major fault system in UK, result of the collision of palaeocontinents about 400 million years ago. May be linked to some earthquakes in the present time.</p>	<p><b>Intensity</b> Measure of the effects of an earthquake, describing the damage caused at a particular place. Intensity varies with distance from the epicentre but magnitude remains unchanged.</p> <p><b>Magnitude</b> The size of an earthquake measured on the Richter scale. Other magnitude scales exist, such as the body wave magnitude and surface wave magnitude scales.</p> <p><b>Microseism</b> A faint vibration that is not due to an earthquake, but to wind or wave action, traffic or industrial 'noise' such as wind turbines or cracking around tunnels.</p> <p><b>P-wave</b> A type of body wave in which the material shakes back and forth in the same direction as the wave is travelling, similar to a sound wave. Also called compressional waves.</p> <p><b>Plates (tectonic plates)</b> Sections of the outermost layer of the Earth, often bigger than continents, which can move relative to each other.</p> <p><b>Richter scale</b> Measure of an earthquake's amplitude on a logarithmic scale. Each whole number increase in magnitude represents a tenfold increase in measured amplitude.</p> <p><b>S-waves</b> A type of body wave in which the material shakes back and forth at right angles to the direction the wave is travelling. Slower than P-waves. Also called shear waves.</p> <p><b>Surface wave</b> A disturbance from an earthquake that travels near the surface of the Earth.</p>
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**Useful weblinks:**

[www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/](http://www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/) Map of events for the past 30 days, with links to other useful resources.

09 May 2011

**During the Barnaby Festival in Macclesfield, on Sunday 19 June at the Park Tavern in Macclesfield, Roger Barlow will reprise his popular Bollington SciBar talk on Antimatter. Time: 6.30pm as usual – note one-off venue.**