



find out about the ROCKS and MINERALS, the QUARRIES and MINES of GOBLIN COMBE



FIND OUT ABOUT ...

Living rock

Fossils of sea creatures are found at the tops of hills. They are found at the top of Cleeve Toot. How is this possible? This was one of the first questions that early geologists needed to answer, as well as other puzzles posed by the rocks on which we live.

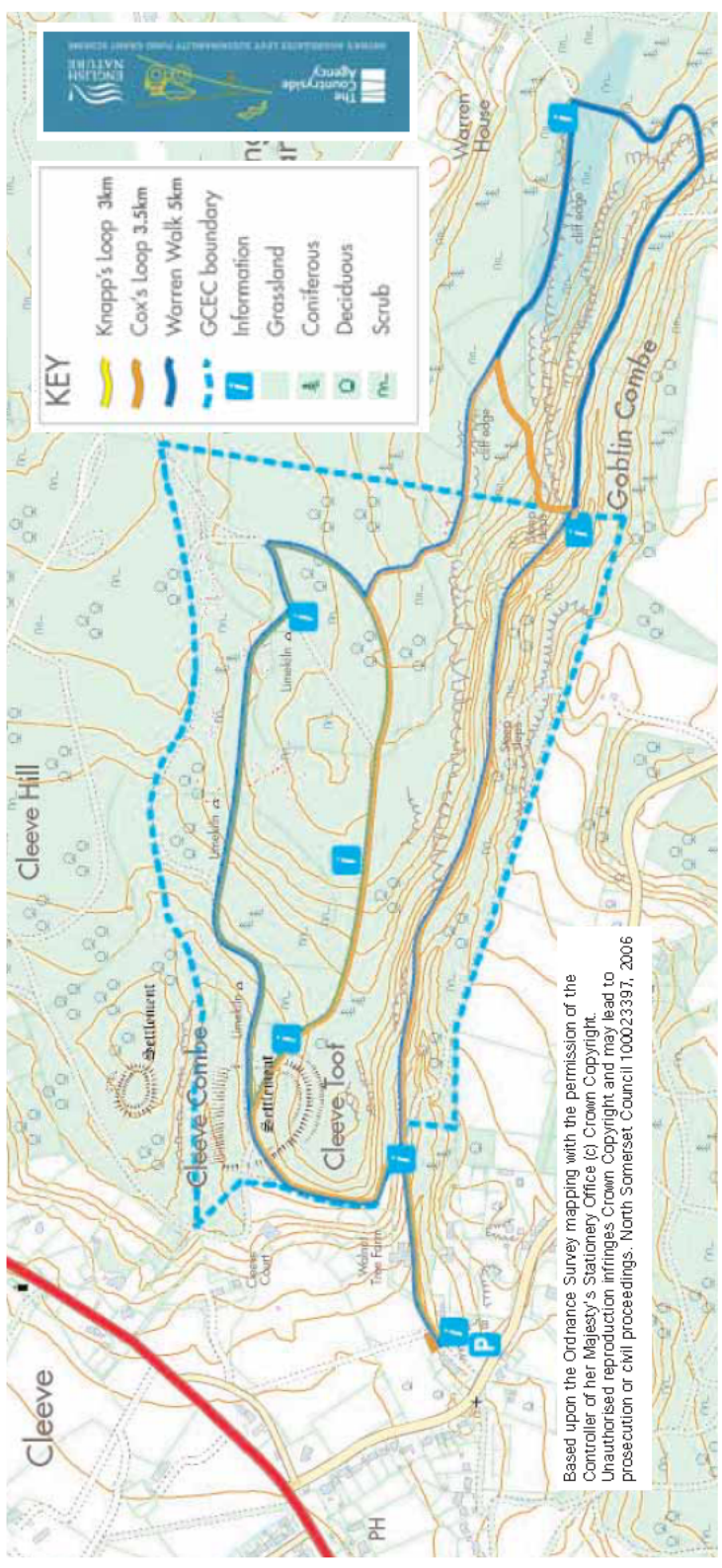
Gradually a picture has emerged – of an ever moving and changing landscape, of layers of rock being laid down, then subjected to great movements of the earth's crust that has folded these layers into hills and mountains, which in turn are being eroded by the weather, washed down rivers as silt, and into the sea.

right: Fossil coral found in Goblin Combe from a reef in an ancient sea, that flourished over 300 million years ago in the Carboniferous period.



main picture: The view from the top of Goblin Combe, looking south west towards Brean Down. The Down is part of the chain of Mendip Hills, which are predominantly Carboniferous Limestone.

below: Timeline. Geological time is counted in hundreds of millions of years. It is against this scale that we measure the rate at which rocks are laid down or the speed at which continents collide.



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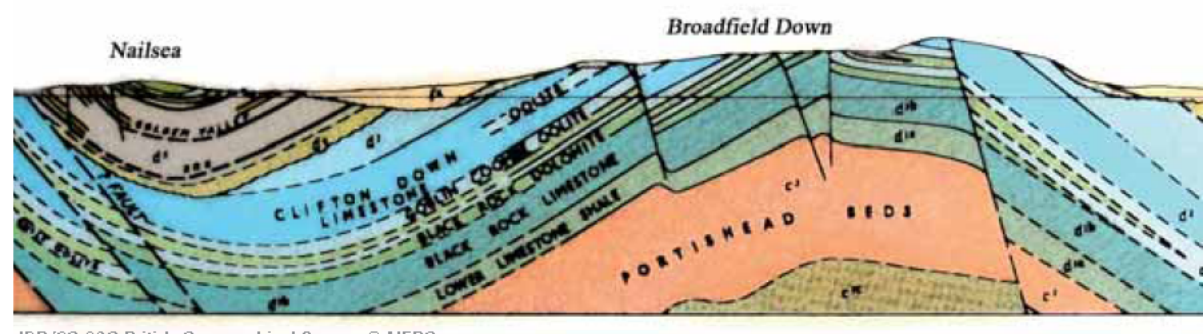
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above left: You can see the diagonal strata of the limestone in the quarry at the car park at the entrance to Goblin Combe. The red staining is from iron oxide leaching into the rock.



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above right: The blue and green rocks in the diagram represent Carboniferous limestones. This rock was formed in a shallow sea about 300 million years ago from the remains of marine animals – mainly shellfish and corals.

The pinkish brown areas represent Devonian Old Red Sandstone. This was made from rock that had already been eroded down to small particles. This sand was carried along ancient rivers into a vast freshwater basin, where it settled down to make a new rock between 408 – 362 million years ago.

Water and metals

Water is, and always has been, at work in the landscape, and not just wearing away the rocks.

During the Jurassic period mineral-rich water bubbled up from the hot depths of the earth. This left deposits, containing lead and zinc, in faults and fissures in the rocks that now form the Mendip Hills, as well as the area around Goblin Combe.

Limonite and Haematite, both forms of iron ore, are found in the Goblin Combe area. This is iron that has leached out of other rocks, and been re-deposited by water in the fissures and faults of the limestone.

