

Portishead – Limestone & Conglomerate

Near the start of Peter Hardy's excellent book, "The Geology of Somerset", he discusses the fossiliferous Carboniferous limestone found at Portishead (near Bristol). In 2006 I visited this area while on holiday. The Portishead beach area contains highly folded limestones (formed by the Clevedon fault) which are overlain by coarse conglomerates (figure 1 & 2).



Figure 1: General view of Portishead beach area



Figure 2: Folded limestones

The conglomerates "represent the basal layers of the Triassic period" and "mark the end of a long period of erosion, during which the Carboniferous deposits were cut down and broken up into boulders, pebbles and sand."

The exposed folds of limestone on the beach are quite dramatic and also fossiliferous (figure 3):



Figure 3: Fossil crinoid stems

Unlike Peter Hardy I didn't find a trilobite on my visit, but maybe you will?

Lee Russell,
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