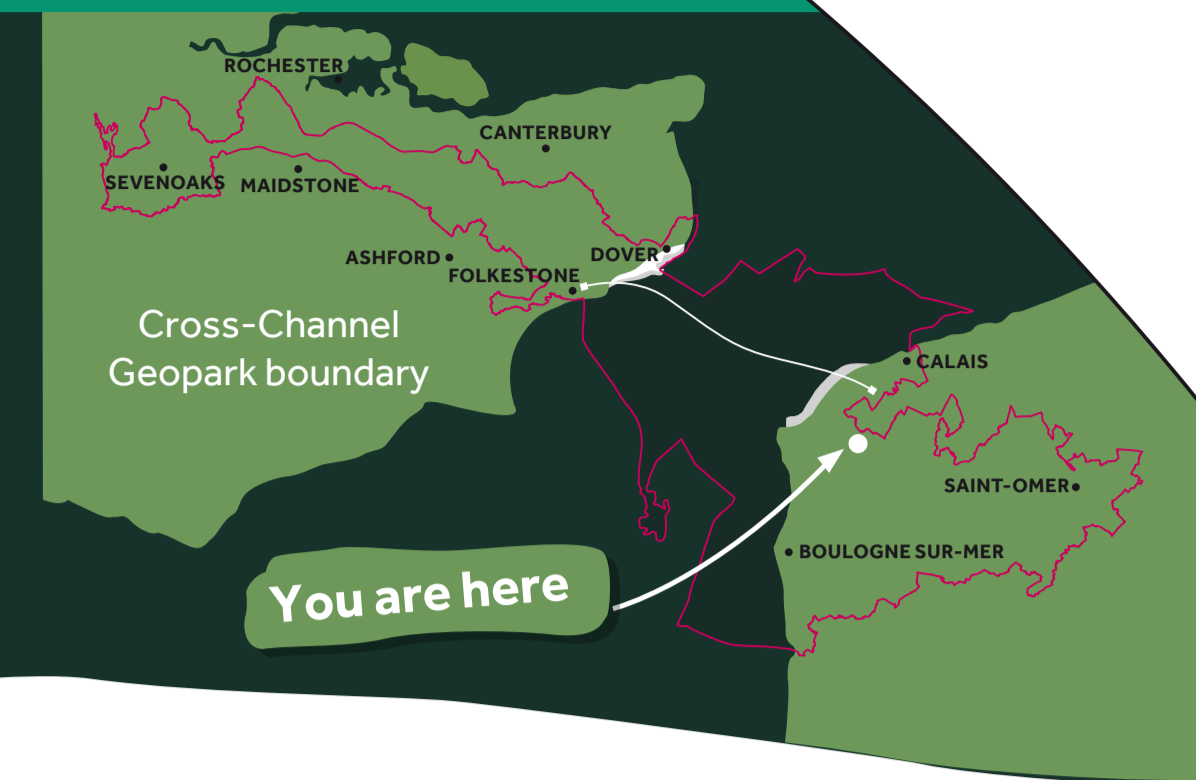


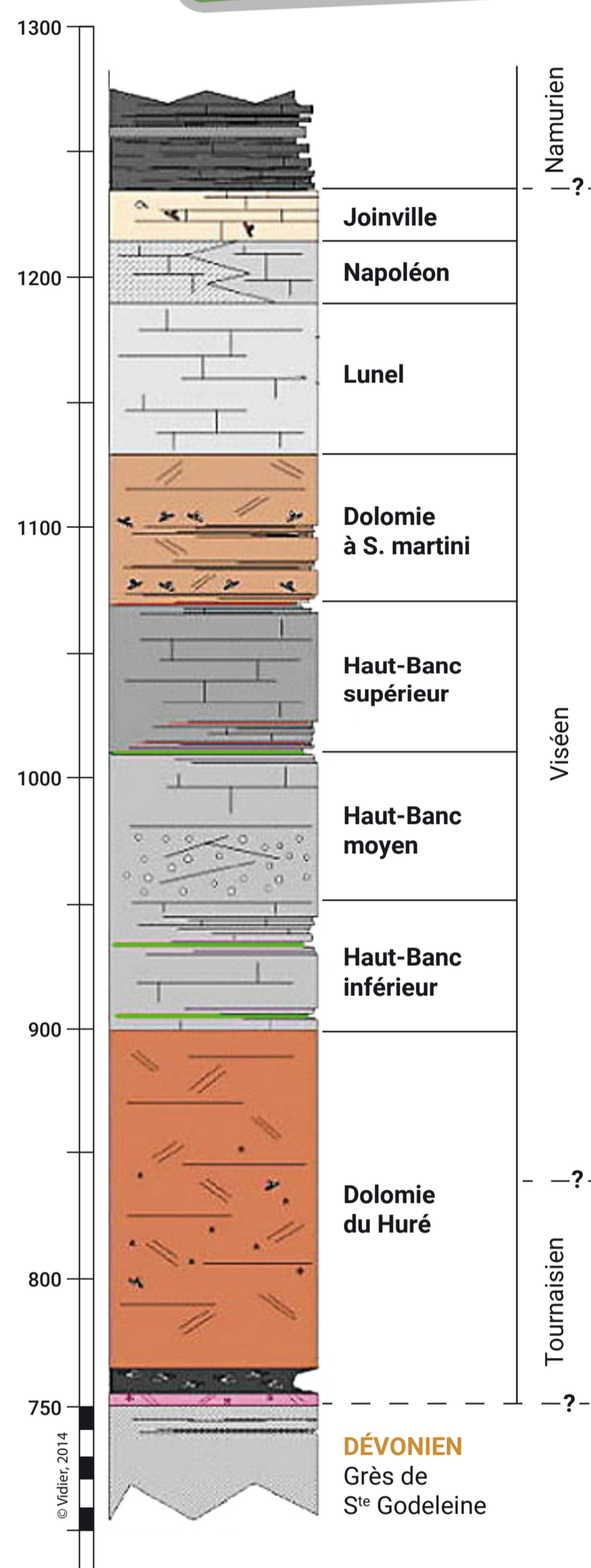


# An open book on geology



The quarry basin extracts various types of rock, mainly limestones, which are sedimentary rocks composed primarily of calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>). For a long time, these limestones were used by the Carrières du Boulonnais as marble stone. Today, their extraction serves various industries.

## The Formation of the Limestones of the Carrières du Boulonnais



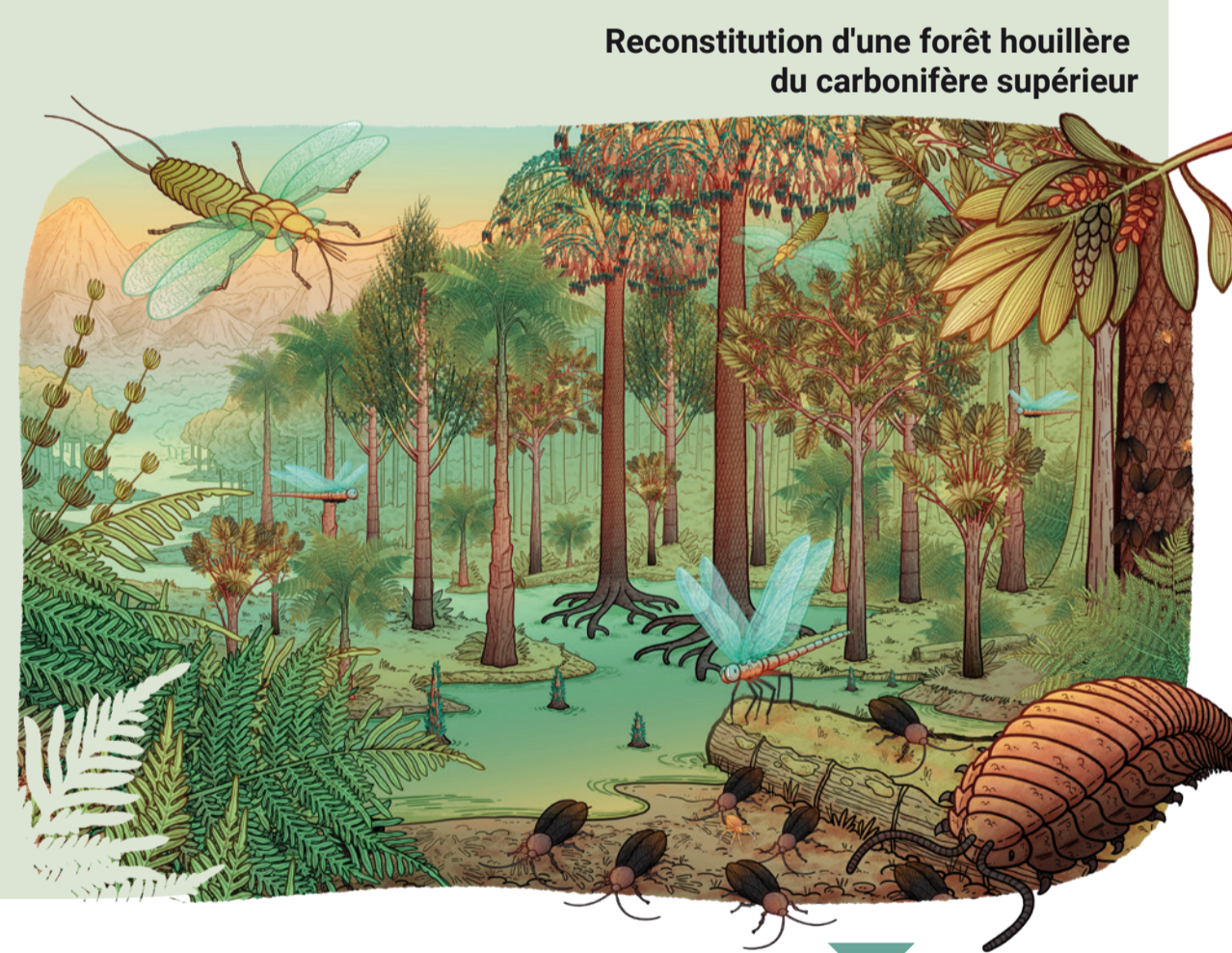
The formation of these limestones dates back approximately 345 to 330 million years, during the lower Carboniferous period (Viséen stage). They were formed in a shallow sea and resulted from successive deposits linked to the activity of filamentous algae (stromatolites).

These successive deposits gave rise to limestone beds with varying characteristics, historically known as:

- Joinville Limestone
- Napoleon Limestone
- Lunel Limestone

## A Testament to the Geological Past

The Upper Carboniferous period was marked by the development of vast swamp forests, whose burial eventually formed the coal layers found in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coal basin.



Long before the exploitation of this coal basin, coal was first discovered and mined in the Boulonnais region. This lesser-known history can now be rediscovered thanks to the Carrières du Boulonnais site.

## A Historic Quarry: Limestone Extraction

The rock extracted from this quarry is a very hard limestone, known as marble stone or more commonly as "Boulonnais marble." It owes its name to its ability to be polished, giving it a shiny appearance similar to that of marble.

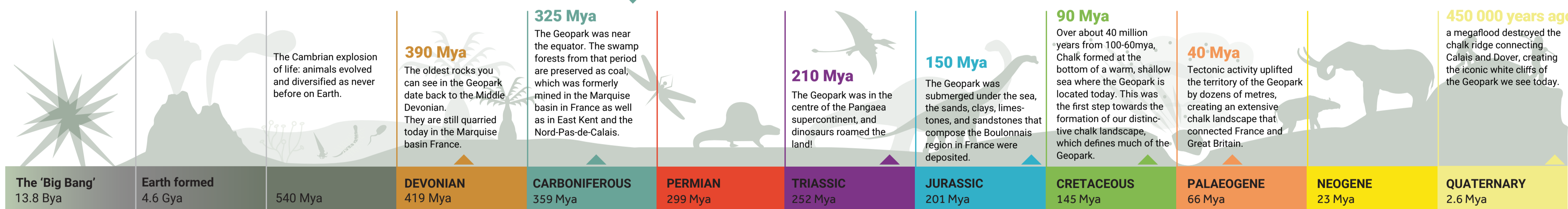
Limestone extraction at the Carrières du Boulonnais began in 1896 under the direction of Auguste Poulain. In the past, the limestone was quarried in large blocks for various uses:

- Construction
- Paving
- Decoration

Many historic buildings in France, England, and around the world were built using this limestone, including:

- Salle des Pas Perdus at Montparnasse Train Station (Paris)
- Villa Medici in Florence (Italy)
- Tokyo Station (Japan)
- University of Mexico (Mexico)

One of the most iconic examples of this limestone's use is the Colonne de la Grande Armée, located in Wimille, near Boulogne-sur-Mer. This 54-meter-high column is also a geosite of the Geopark Transmanche. Dedicated to Emperor Napoleon, it was built using limestone extracted from this quarry, known as Napoleon Marble.



\*Ga : milliards d'années - Ma : millions d'années

This is a Cross-Channel Geopark Geosite



Find your next adventure  
[kentdowns.org.uk](http://kentdowns.org.uk)



The Marquise Quarry Basin is a remarkable geological site, designated as a "geosite" within the Geopark Transmanche. This initiative is led by the Parc naturel régional des Caps et Marais d'Opale (France) and the Kent Downs National Landscape (England) to promote and recognise the geological heritage of the region under UNESCO.



This project is co-financed by the Green Fund.

