

PARC NATUREL RÉGIONAL DES CAPS ET MARAIS D'OPALE LE MONT D'ECLEMY : WHEN GEOLOGY SHAPES THE LANDSCAPE

Welcome to mont d'Eclemy in Sanghen!

You are standing on the GR (Grande Radonnée) de Pays – Tour du Boulonnais and the Ventu d'Alembon trail.

In the foreground, the Lincques River winds quietly from west to east, eventually joining the Hem Valley and collecting other streams such as the Loquin. You can spot it by the trees, reeds, and shrubs that line its course through the valley. The hedgerows surrounding fields and meadows create a bocage landscape typical of the Pays de Licques. This patchwork of greenery is bordered by a cuesta of hills, partly wooded, that define the horizon. The villages add to this harmonious landscape. To the west, you can see Alembon, while to the east, Sanghen and Herbinghen blend together, with the church of the latter visible in the midground. Modern elements such as high-voltage power lines, antennas, and the water tower blend into the scenery, partially hidden by hedgerows, helping to preserve the balance of this landscape.

EAST

WEST

Sanghen

Alembon Woods

Chalk hills of the Pays de Licques

Church of Herbinghen

Did you know?

Chalk is a white, soft, and porous rock (which means it allows water to pass through). It forms on the seafloor over millions of years from tiny fragments of marine organisms' shells. Chalk also contains many fossils, such as ammonites, sea urchins, shells, and other marine animals. To imagine the size of a coccolith consider that a single cubic centimetre of chalk contains several billion of them.



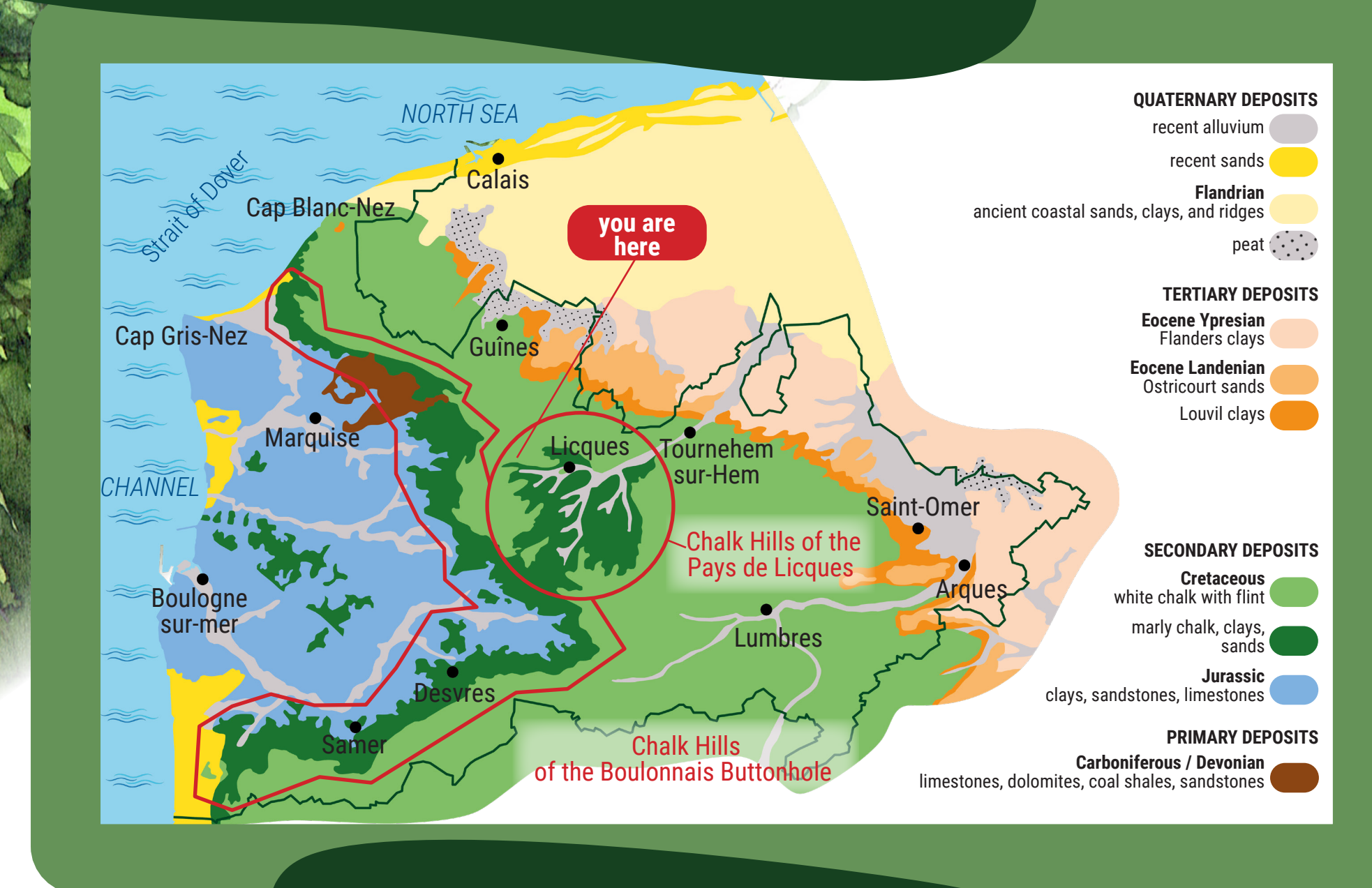
Hillsides on limestone soils: biodiversity reservoirs

The hillside of mont d'Eclemy is formed on chalk. Its slopes are steep, with dry, well-drained soils. These conditions support the development of chalk grassland (meadows that grow on chalky soils), where rare plants and animals thrive, but they are fragile. These habitats host exceptional biodiversity, but they are fragile and threatened by the abandonment of farming and deliberate afforestation. Careful management is essential to preserve this unique ecosystem.

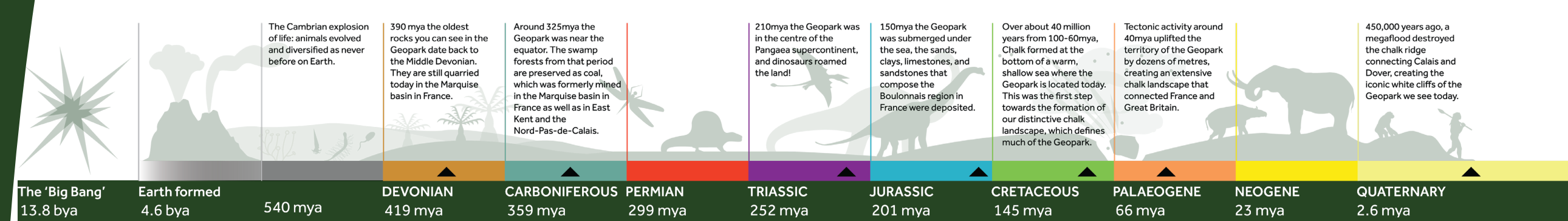
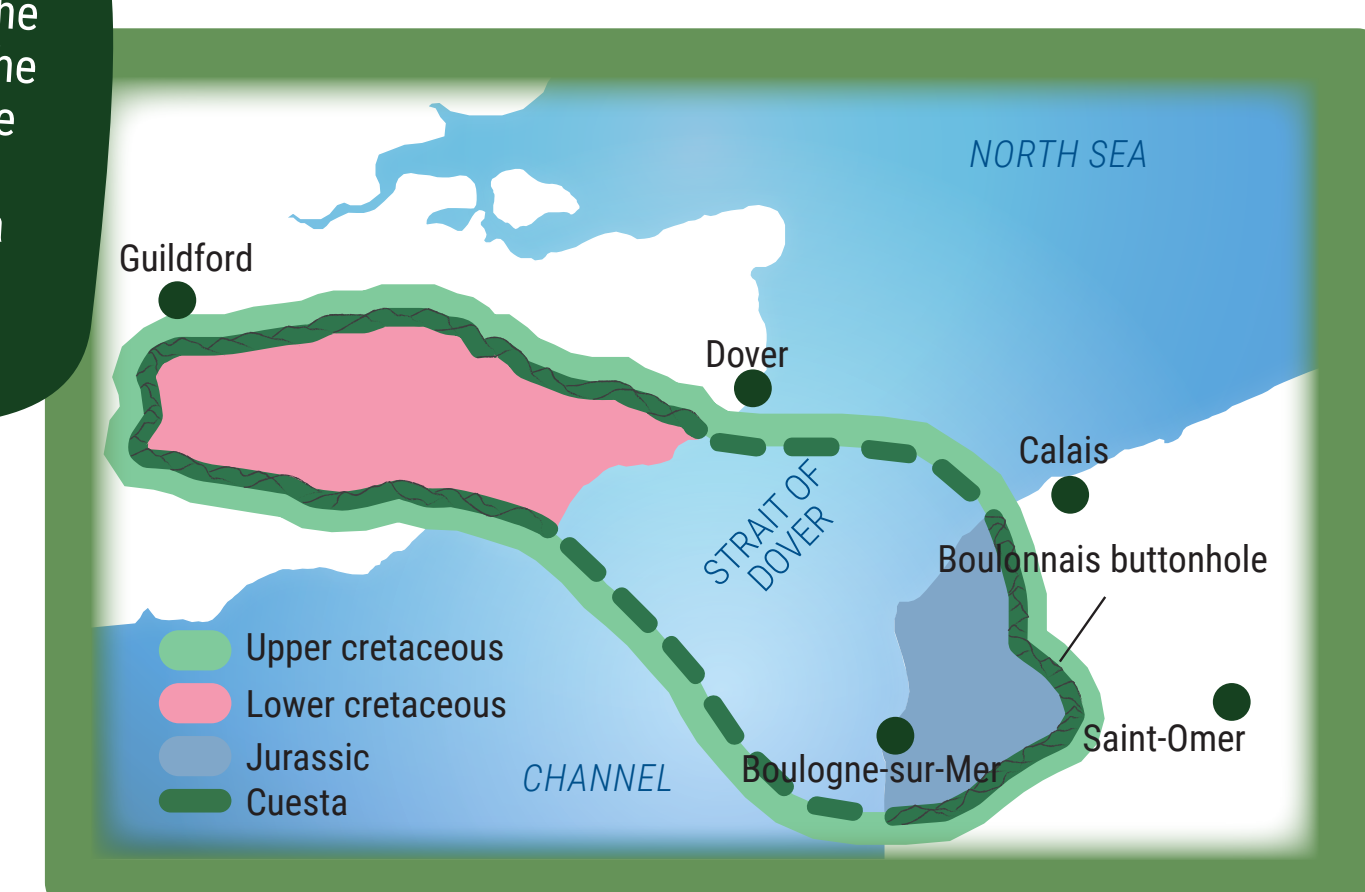


The geological formation of mont d'Eclemy

Mont d'Eclemy is part of a chain of hills surrounding the Pays de Licques, a region that forms a small "buttonhole" adjacent to the larger Boulonnais geological origin. The Artois plateau, formed around 40 million years ago, has been shaped over time by flowing water. In the Boulonnais area, erosion was more intense, creating a wide depression that stretches all the way to Kent, known as the Weald-Boulonnais buttonhole. Around Licques, erosion was less pronounced. The resulting landscapes are similar: steep chalk hills rising above a bocage landscape, dotted with scattered houses.



A "buttonhole," a geological term, refers to a depression, a type of basin carved by erosion at the centre of a large-scale, upward fold. This allows the older rock layers beneath to outcrop at the surface. The edges of a buttonhole are usually marked by a cuesta of hills. This is the case in the Boulonnais.



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