INTRODUCTION TO KILVE

Thank you for enrolling on our fossil hunting event.

Kilve is set on the north coast of Somerset, east of Watchet. The beautiful coastline stretches from Watchet, through Doniford Bay, St. Audries Bay and Quantoxhead to Kilve. The Jurassic rocks form a spectacular backdrop to the fossil-rich beaches, where ammonites and marine reptile remains are often found.

There are many different species of ammonite at Kilve, the most common being *Psiloceras planorbis*, which is found as a flat ammonite exposed on the foreshore. This particular ammonite can be found with a stunning iridescent shell.

The general rule is loose material can be collected but hammering bedrock or cliffs is strictly prohibited. Ammonites are relatively common in the shales, represented by one of the earliest Jurassic ammonites, *Psiloceras planorbis*, and there are also trace fossils to be seen but these are almost impossible to extract and are best left alone.

Ammonites can be recovered and these are best preserved when they are found in nodules. Bones of both ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs can be found, sometimes matrix free but usually in nodules, like the ammonites. Some ammonites are huge, so bring a camera!

THE GEOLOGY

The foreshore and cliffs at Kilve are early Jurassic in age. Over 12m of limestone and shales from the Lower Lias is exposed at Kilve. These contain *Psiloceras planorbis* succeeded by a thick sequence of shales with a few thin limestones. Above this are about 18m of shales in which limestones become more numerous and more massive upwards from the bucklandi zone.

The Lias dips eastwards and continues to Quantoxhead. Within these dark shales, occasional limestones appear containing the ammonite *Coroniceras*. The strata at Kilve also dips seaward and there are a multitude of sloping ramparts on the shore that gathers up debris and nodules.

The major faults along this part of the coastline can clearly be seen, especially with the hard limestone blocks on the foreshore, which, in some cases, form stepped circles and are almost hard to believe that they have been made naturally by the sea.

The site is SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), so using hammer and chisels on the bedrock is forbidden. Collect from loose stone and boulders on the foreshore.
The main tool here will be your eyes! Look carefully on the foreshore among the many rocks, with a good chance of finding fossils to bring away.

We hope you enjoy your day at Whitehaven. Please visit our website for further events which might be of interest to you at https://ukafh.com/


WHAT FOSSILS MIGHT YOU FIND?

At any fossil hunting event, you cannot be guaranteed to find fossils. The frequency of fossils depends on the rates of erosion of the cliffs, by the sea and weather and of course, if others have already scoured the site beforehand! However, Kilve can have a high frequency rate of finds, if conditions are right. You should be able to find various ammonites, some too large to collect but many found as complete specimens or as good sized fragments on the foreshore.