

Belfast Hills

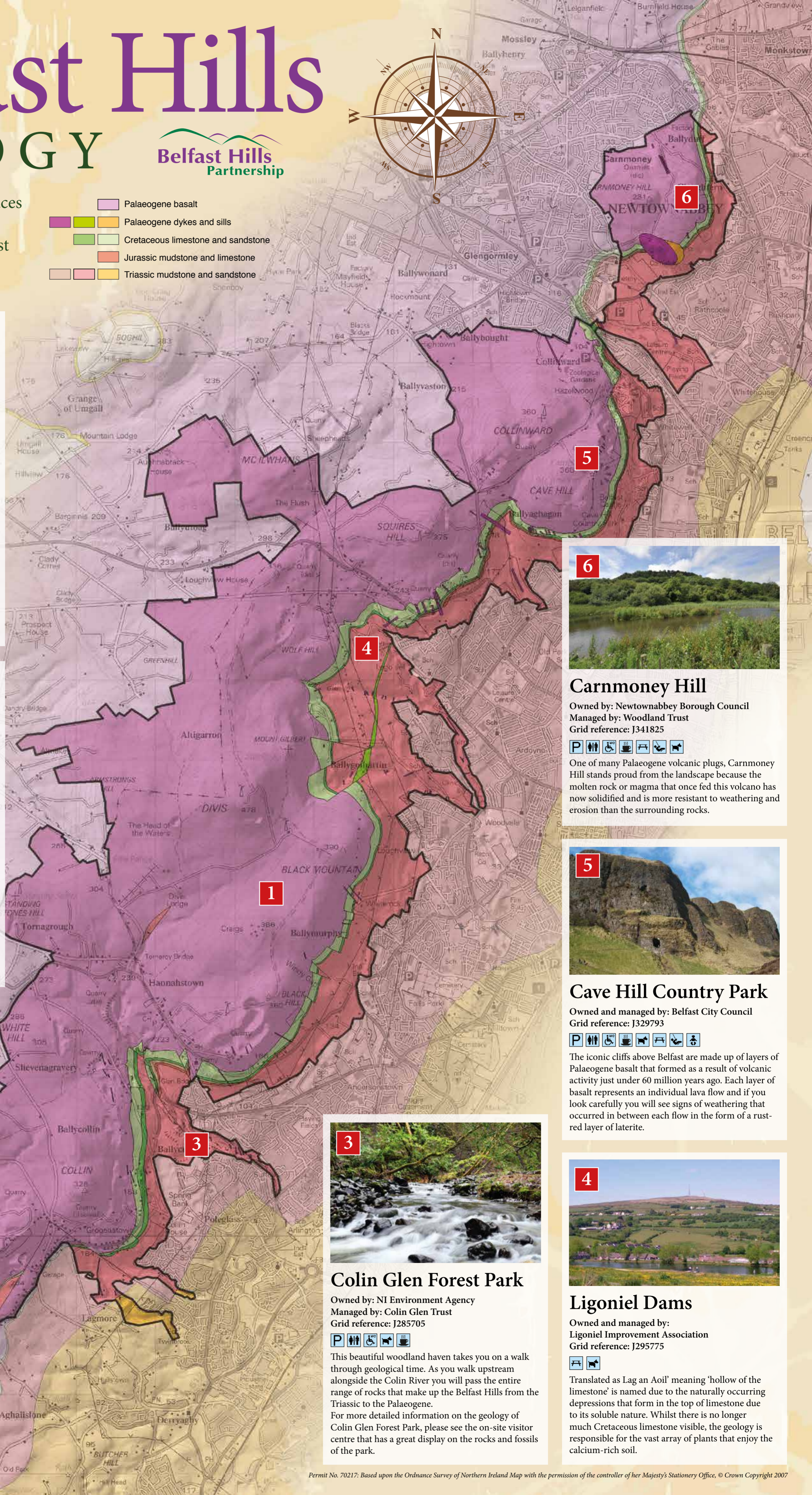
GEOLOGY

Belfast Hills Partnership



There are a huge number of places that you can go to explore the geological heritage of the Belfast Hills. A number of publicly accessible sites are:

- Palaeogene basalt
- Palaeogene dykes and sills
- Cretaceous limestone and sandstone
- Jurassic mudstone and limestone
- Triassic mudstone and sandstone



1

Divis and Black Mountain

Owned and managed by: National Trust
Grid reference: J266742



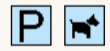
Divis Mountain (meaning Black ridge) and Black Mountain are just two examples of sites that get their names from the geology, in this case from the Palaeogene black basalt that they are both composed of. Black Mountain has been the site of a quarry for many years where the basalt extracted is crushed and used for road stone due to its hard-wearing properties.



2

Belshaw's Quarry

Owned and managed by: NI Environment Agency
Grid reference: J229671



An old white limestone quarry, Belshaw's displays the Cretaceous limestone with the Palaeogene basalt immediately above. There is also a small outcrop of Triassic mudstone beneath the limestone. This site is outside the boundary of the Belfast Hills. It does however represent the entire geological succession of the area and is deemed to be of exceptional importance.



6

Carmmoney Hill

Owned by: Newtownabbey Borough Council
Managed by: Woodland Trust
Grid reference: J341825



One of many Palaeogene volcanic plugs, Carnmoney Hill stands proud from the landscape because the molten rock or magma that once fed this volcano has now solidified and is more resistant to weathering and erosion than the surrounding rocks.



5

Cave Hill Country Park

Owned and managed by: Belfast City Council
Grid reference: J329793



The iconic cliffs above Belfast are made up of layers of Palaeogene basalt that formed as a result of volcanic activity just under 60 million years ago. Each layer of basalt represents an individual lava flow and if you look carefully you will see signs of weathering that occurred in between each flow in the form of a rust-red layer of laterite.



3

Colin Glen Forest Park

Owned by: NI Environment Agency
Managed by: Colin Glen Trust
Grid reference: J285705



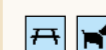
This beautiful woodland haven takes you on a walk through geological time. As you walk upstream alongside the Colin River you will pass the entire range of rocks that make up the Belfast Hills from the Triassic to the Palaeogene. For more detailed information on the geology of Colin Glen Forest Park, please see the on-site visitor centre that has a great display on the rocks and fossils of the park.



4

Ligoniel Dams

Owned and managed by: Ligoniel Improvement Association
Grid reference: J295775



Translated as 'Lag an Aoi' meaning 'hollow of the limestone' is named due to the naturally occurring depressions that form in the top of limestone due to its soluble nature. Whilst there is no longer much Cretaceous limestone visible, the geology is responsible for the vast array of plants that enjoy the calcium-rich soil.