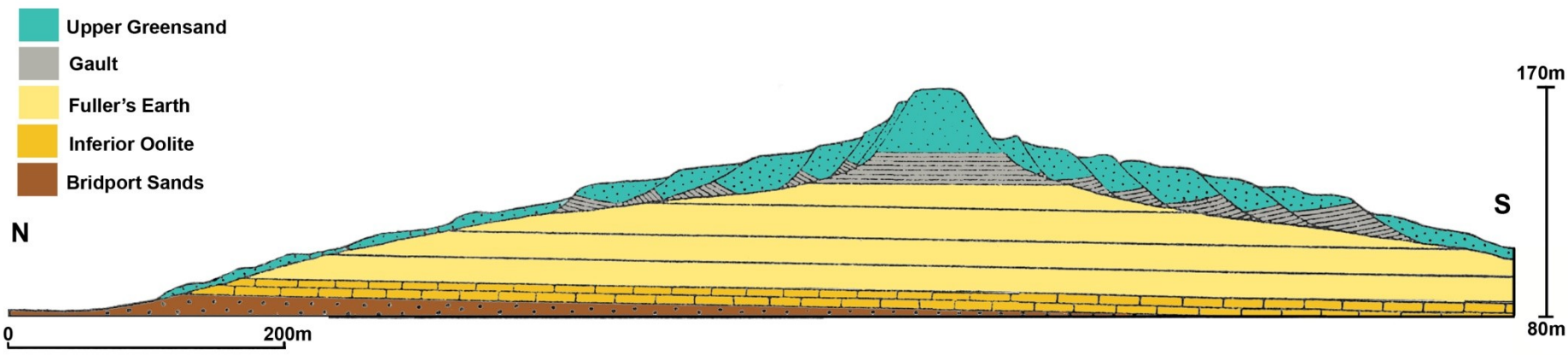
Preserving Our Geological Heritage

Vinney Cross Road Cutting

NGR: 508 928

The exposure of Inferior Oolite at the Vinney Cross R.I.G. site



Section through Shipton Hill
(adapted from Wilson et al, (1958) *BGS Memoir Geology of the Country around Bridport & Yeovil Fig. 26c*)

This section of Inferior Oolite strata was exposed when road improvements to the A35 trunk road between Bridport and Dorchester were made in the 1980s.

It is situated about 2.5 miles east of Bridport at the base of the northern side of Shipton Hill. This distinctive boat-shaped hill is capped by Upper Greensand which has slipped on all sides leaving a narrow platform at its summit with broad terraces and gentle slopes on the sides of the hill. It is probable that the landslips occurred at the end of the last Ice Age due to melting ice trapped in cracks and fissures in the Greensand and the underlying Gault clay.

Shipton Hill viewed from the south-west near Shipton Gorge

The Inferior Oolite was laid down in the Middle Jurassic, between 178 and 170 million years ago. It is a bed of fossiliferous limestone lying above the Bridport Sands and below the Fuller's Earth clays *(see diagram above).* At Vinney Cross the exposure is the topmost section of the Inferior Oolite comprising a hard yellow conglomerate limestone with marly partings capped by the Zigzag beds, a nodular limestone with fossils. A thin bed of iron-stained marl, 'the Scroff', separates the Inferior Oolite from the Fuller's Earth above.

Brachiopods in the rubble at Vinney Cross