

The Burren through the Ages



When you stand on the Burren today you look out on a **rocky landscape**. But 350 million years ago the Burren was a tropical **sea**! The bones of ancient sea creatures fell to the sea bed and became fossils, which formed layers of limestone rock. Many fossils can still be found in the rocks, such as CORALS, CRINOIDS (relatives of starfish) and GASTROPODS (a kind of snail).

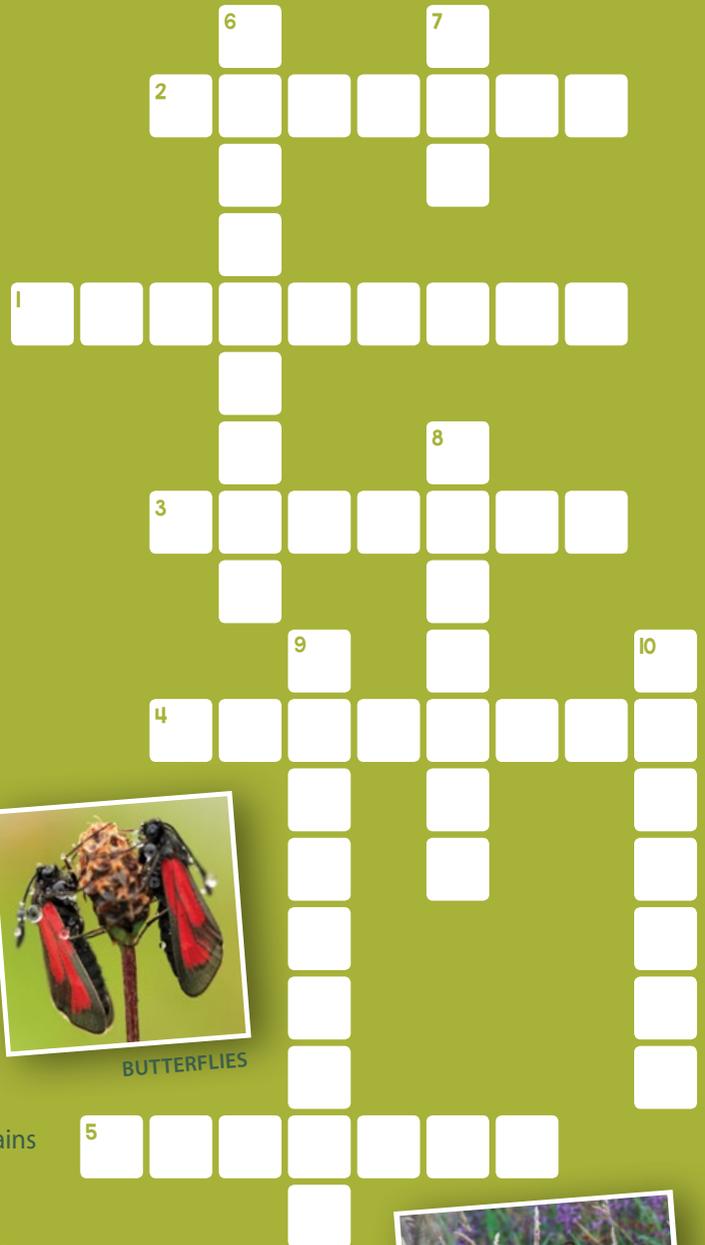
Earthquakes caused the limestone beds to rise up above sea level and the Burren became a warm dry land covered in pine **forests**. During the Ice Age frozen rivers called **glaciers** moved across the land, sweeping away the trees and soil. The glaciers left behind big rock boulders called ERRATICS. The melting ice from the glaciers seeped into the ground and became underground rivers which carved out caves.

Later, **forests** grew on the Burren once more and giant deer, woolly mammoths, wolves and brown bears roamed the land. Bones of brown bears have been found in Aillwee Cave, where they used to hibernate for the winter.

About 5,000 years ago humans first settled on the Burren and began cutting down the trees. The top layers of soil were swept away once more, leaving just the limestone **rock**. This is what we now see in the Burren.

Crossword

Complete the crossword below.



ACROSS

- 1 Extinct Irish animal with enormous antlers (5, 4)
- 2 Ancient relative of the starfish (7)
- 3 This huge woolly animal had long tusks (7)
- 4 The type of sea which used to cover the Burren (8)
- 5 Boulder left behind by a glacier (7)

DOWN

- 6 Animal whose bones were found in Aillwee Cave (5, 4)
- 7 The Irish name for this animal is *madra rua*, meaning red dog (3)
- 8 Rocks formed from the remains of plants and animals (7)
- 9 Word to describe an animal, meaning it comes out at night (9)
- 10 Frozen river from the Ice Age (7)



BUTTERFLIES



A FOX HIDING