

Swansea bay again cuts off these chains for a considerable interval; beyond which on the east they are resumed in the south of Glamorganshire. On this side, however, the limestone alone is at first seen (the subjacent sandstone not rising to the surface) until we arrive at the head of the river Ely near Hensol Park, where the old red sandstone again emerges, forming the outer and lower chain of the mountains into which the coal-basin here swells. This sandstone is probably the fundamental rock throughout the vale of Ely, but it is concealed by overlying deposits of the newer sandstone and lias; nor does it appear in any great quantity till the river Taafe is crossed. Beyond this river it stretches through Monmouthshire, circling round the east end of the south Welsh coal-basin, and (with the exception of a small tract near Uske which exhibits the subjacent transition limestone,) occupying the whole interval between this and the corresponding coal-basin of the forest of Dean; on the north of which it rejoins the great Herefordshire sandstone district which we have before traced, being here interposed between the carboniferous limestone of that field, and the transition limestone chain of Mayhill. The old red sandstone circles round the eastern edge of the forest of Dean, approaching within half a mile of the Severn, but touching it only in one point. Overlying beds of newer red sandstone abut against it in this direction.

We have lastly to trace this rock in the exterior chains of the Somerset and South Gloucester coal-basin. It may be traced round the northern apex of this field, emerging in the escarpment of the hills of carboniferous lime, from Sodbury on the east to Thornbury on the west; and it here also separates that limestone from the calcareous beds of the transition suite. It is here, however, much obscured by overlying deposits of calcareo-magnesian breccia.

Again, the same rock is to be traced on the west of the limestone ridges, forming the well known defile of the river Avon below Clifton, but similarly obscured; and in the prolongation of the exterior ridges of this coal-field on the west, this sandstone may be traced along the coast of the æstuary of the Severn, emerging from the carboniferous limestone from Portishead point to Clevedon.

Lastly, the Mendip hills (the southern boundary of this coal-field) exhibit an axis of this sandstone which emerges from beneath their calcareous strata, not in a continuous line indeed, but so as to form all their most elevated summits: namely, Black down, Nine barrow down, Pen hill and Maseberry beacon.