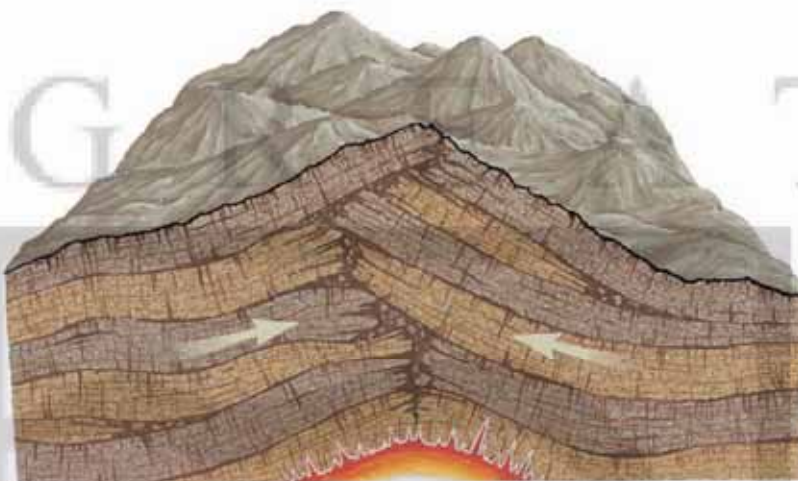




The malicious mountain *A' bheinn nimheil*

Pronounced: A veen neeval

Across from here is Ben Nevis *Beinn Nibheis*, Britain's highest mountain (1,344 metres, 4,409 feet). The Ben has very unusual geology.



1. 500 million years ago: Collisions between huge plates in the earth's crust created a chain of massive mountains.



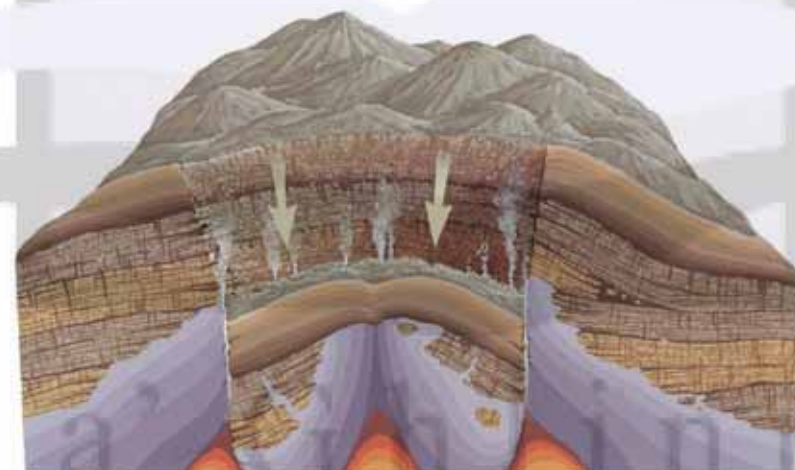
2: Pressure and heat from these collisions melted the underlying rock into lava, which erupted onto the surface around Ben Nevis and then cooled.



3: Molten rock still inside the mountain cooled more slowly to create layers of granite, a different rock from the cooled lava on the surface.



4: Layers of lava and ash built up on the surface of the mountain.



5. 425 million years ago: The layers of lava and ash became so heavy that they collapsed into the molten rock still inside - a process called "cauldron subsidence".



6. Over millions of years, ice and water have worn away the top 2-3 kilometres (1.2-1.8 miles) of the Ben, exposing the layers of granite (which are now concentric rings) around a core of cooled lava.

Did you know...?

"Ben" is from the Gaelic *beinn* meaning peak. "Nevis" is thought by some to come from the Gaelic *nimheil* meaning poisonous or malicious, although others think it derives from *nèamh*, the Gaelic for heaven! The Ben's great height and quickly-changing weather conditions mean that it can certainly be a bad place for ill-prepared walkers and climbers.