

GEORGE'S FIELD NOTES

LOCATION: ROCKY BEACH ,PORT MACQUARIE

GEOLOGICAL FEATURE: HONEYCOMB WEATHERING

ROCK UNIT: PORT MACQUARIE MELANGE, LAST 10,000 YEARS

Honeycomb weathering is a process that can affect many different types of rocks, and it only happens at the beach.

Many rocks, and especially sedimentary rocks, are full of tiny little gaps in between the grains which make up the rock. At a microscopic level, many rocks look very similar to sponges - full of holes.

At the beach, every time a wave crashes tiny little droplets of sea water are splashed up into the air. These droplets are called sea spray. When the sea spray lands on a rock, the sea water can soak into the little gaps in the rock and dry up. Sea water has sea salt dissolved into it, and when the water dries all of that salt is left behind and grows a little salt crystal.

Sometimes this crystal is bigger than the space it's trying to grow in, and the crystal breaks the grains apart and makes a bigger hole in the rock.

Over time, this process builds up to create strange shapes and holes in the rock that resemble a beehive or honeycomb.

