
A walkers' guide to the geology and landscape of eastern Mendip

Andy Farrant with contributions from Elaine Burt, Sharon Pilkington, Ian Thomas and Mark Woods

Bibliographical reference: Farrant, A R. 2008. A walkers' guide to the geology and landscape of eastern Mendip. Book and map at 1:25 000 scale. (Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey.) ISBN 978 085272 575 7

British Geological Survey © NERC 2008 All rights reserved

Contents

Acknowledgements

Useful websites

Introduction

Rocks of Mendip

The Ice Age

Geology and man

Great Elm and Vallis Vale

Mells and the Wadbury Valley

The Whatley area

The Vobster area

Stoke St Michael and Oakhill

The Nettlebridge Valley

Gurney Slade and Emborough

Beacon Hill

Shepton Mallet and the Douling area

Torr Works and Asham Wood

Holwell and Nunney

Geological glossary

Useful information

Further reading

Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

The website to accompany this guidebook can be found at: <https://www2.bgs.ac.uk/mendips/>

Acknowledgements

This book and map have been produced by the British Geological Survey (BGS) with funding from the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). The authors, designers and cartographers are based at the British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham.

We would like to thank those who have contributed text and photographs. Sharon Pilkington and John Knight (both from Nicholas Pearson Associates) provided information on the wildlife and biodiversity of Mendip, while Ian Thomas (National Stone Centre) provided data on the aggregates industry. Thanks are due to members of the Mendip Society, the Somerset Geology Group, the local Wildlife Trusts and the Mendip Hills AONB office including Jim Hanwell, Jim Hardcastle, Hugh Prudden, Richard Bull, Mike Simms, John Chapman and Lin Carter, who kindly read proofs of the book or provided useful comments. Thanks are also due to the late John Cornwell, who provided much information on the industrial archaeology of the region, and who sadly passed away during the production of this guide. Paul Stevenson (Palaeoscene) produced the artwork, and the figures were drawn by Paul Lappage (BGS). The University of Bristol Spelaeological Society is thanked for permission to reproduce figures from their Proceedings.

The book was edited by Audrey Jackson and Joanna Thomas, and designed by Adrian Minks. Photographs were taken by Andy Farrant, Sharon Pilkington, Elaine Burt, Paul Witney, Adrian Minks, Mike Simms, Martin Whiteley and Peter Glanvill. Photographs taken by BGS staff are all in the BGS collection. High quality prints can be obtained from BGS photographic services. BGS photographic materials are © NERC.

Photographs courtesy of the Somerset Geodiversity Audit, (funded by the GAAAQ Somerset MIST Project) were taken by Steve Parkhouse, Clive Nicolas, David Allen, David Roche and Peter Scott, are © David Roche GeoConsulting. The full audits are available from www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/countryside/geodiversity/

Printed in the UK for the British Geological Survey by Halstan & Co Ltd, Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

This guidebook and map has been prepared by the British Geological Survey with funding from the Sustainable Land-Won and Marine Dredged Aggregate Minerals Programme (SAMP) funded through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), administered by the Mineral Industry Research Organisation for The Department of Communities and Local Government.

This publication and references within it to any methodology, process, service, manufacturer, or company do not constitute its endorsement or recommendation by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, The Department of Communities and Local Government or the Minerals Industry Research Organisation.

Useful information

How to get to Mendip

Car: The Mendips are about 25 km south-west of Bristol, approximately one hour's drive via the A37 to Shepton Mallet, the A39 to Wells, or 20 km from Bath via the A367 to Radstock or the A36 to Frome. The A371 connects Weston-super-Mare with Wells and Shepton Mallet, while the A361 links Shepton Mallet and Frome.

Rail: Frome, Bruton, Castle Cary and Bath are on the national rail network.

Bus: Wells is a hub for local bus services, including services to Weston-super-Mare, Bristol and Bath (via Gurney Slade). Local buses link Wells and Shepton Mallet and Frome, either via Stoke St Michael, Leigh-on-Mendip and Chantry, or Cranmore and Nunney. There are also buses from Frome to Bath via Mells and Radstock. National Express coach services operate from Wells to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Birmingham, London, London Heathrow Airport and Weymouth. Radstock, Frome and Shepton Mallet are also served by National Express services.

Cycle: The National Cycle Route 24 runs from Frome to Radstock, via Mells. Part of the route is along the old railway line between Radstock and Frome.

Tourist information

The Mendips are a popular tourist destination and there are many facilities for visitors. A huge amount of information is available from the Tourist Information Centres located at:

Cheddar Gorge: The Cliffs, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3QE. E-mail: cheddar.tic@sedgemoor.gov.uk Tel: 01934 744071. Fax: 01934 744614.

Frome: The Round Tower, 2 Bridge Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1BB. Tel: 01373 467271. Fax: 01373 451733. E-mail: frome.tic@ukonline.co.uk. www.frometouristinfo.co.uk/

Shepton Mallet: 70 High Street, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5AS. Tel: 01749 345258. E-mail: sheptonmallet.tic@ukonline.co.uk. www.sheptonmallet-touristinfocentre.co.uk/

Wells: Town Hall, Market Place, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2RB. Tel: 01749 672552. E-mail: wells.tic@ukonline.co.uk.

Sedgemoor Services: M5 (southbound). (Closed Sat & Sun in the winter months). Tel: 01934 750833, Fax: 01934 750646. E-mail: somersetvisitorcentre@somerset.gov.uk

The Mendip Hills AONB office can provide information about activities within the Mendip Hills AONB. Their office is located in the heart of the Mendips at the Charterhouse Centre, near Blagdon, BS40 7XR, Tel. 01761 462338. Their website has much useful information on the Mendip Hills www.mendiphills.org.uk/

Accommodation

Most of the local towns have a variety of hotel, bed and breakfast, hostel and self-catering accommodation. There are also a large number of campsites and caravan sites within easy reach of the Mendip Hills. Some local caving clubs also have huts with bunkhouse accommodation.

Details can be obtained from the tourist information sites listed above.

Figures

(Front cover)

(Rear cover)

(Figure 96) River Mells, Great Elm.

(Figure 97) Cranmore Woods.

(Figure 98) Moorewood Colliery incline, near Gurney Slade.

(Figure 104) The flat unconformity surface at Tedbury Camp Quarry. © Martin Whiteley, Barrisdale Ltd.

(Figure 105) Mossy drystone wall. © Sharon Pilkington.

(Figure 106) Old mill waterworks, Harridge Wood.

A walkers' guide to the geology and landscape of eastern Mendip



Eastern Mendip



British
Geological Survey
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

(Front cover) Front cover.



The Mendip area is well known for its gorges, caves and cheese. It is a special landscape, rich in wildlife, heritage and natural resources, and owes much to its underlying geology. The Mendip Hills have long been visited by geologists and tourists, who come to admire the spectacular rocky gorges, limestone uplands, gushing springs and subterranean streams. For those who wish to learn about the area, this guide gives details of the geology and natural history, and will help you to understand how the landscape is formed. There is something here for everyone, from the keen local walker to the tourist, the ambler and the scrambler. We hope you enjoy exploring the Mendip landscape.



© NERC 2008

(Rear cover) Rear cover.



(Figure 96) River Mells, Great Elm.



(Figure 97) Cranmore Woods.



(Figure 98) Moorewood Colliery incline, near Gurney Slade.



(Figure 104) The flat unconformity surface at Tedbury Camp Quarry. © Martin Whiteley, Barrisdale Ltd.



(Figure 105) Mossy drystone wall. © Sharon Pilkington.



(Figure 106) Old mill waterworks, Harridge Wood.