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# Introduction

## Welcome to eastern Mendip

The Mendip Hills are a special landscape, with a wide variety of rock types and wildlife habitats condensed into a small area. This diversity makes this one of the best areas in the country to appreciate the relationship between geology, landscape and natural history. This varied and dramatic scenery is largely the product of a fascinating geological history that stretches back many millions of years and encompasses a wide variety of different environments. The legacy of mineral extraction and quarrying, coupled with natural rock outcrops provides ample opportunities to examine the geology and landscape at first hand.

This book and map will introduce you to the rocks and landscape of eastern Mendip. This guide has been divided into a number of regions, described in each chapter, which can be explored singly or in combination, either on foot or by car. For those interested in finding out more about the geology and natural history of the region, further information and links can be found on the accompanying website [www.mendiphills.com](http://www.mendiphills.com), and in the companion guidebook and map for western Mendip.

## Exploring the geology and landscape of the Mendips

Please remember that part of the area is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) and many of the sites described in the text are either protected nature reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

The majority of sites described in this guidebook can be seen from roads and public footpaths or are on open-access land. The exceptions are the large working quarries. Some localities are accessed by footpaths across farmland, so please respect the wishes of the landowner and if you have a dog, keep it under control. Visits to any localities on private land need the prior permission of the owner. Mention in this guide does not imply a right of way.

Always remember that the cliffs, quarries and caves that so often provide the best exposures for study are also inherently dangerous places. Never enter a working quarry without obtaining permission or first visiting the quarry office. Caves should not be entered unless in the company of an experienced caver. Many caves and old quarries are on private land and the wishes of the landowner must be respected. The use of a geological hammer is not necessary at any of the localities, especially geological SSSIs. If a hammer is used, please do so sparingly, and with appropriate safety equipment.

**Contact the Mendip Hills AONB Service** (01761 462338) <http://mendiphills.org/> for more information on access to the countryside and details of caving and climbing clubs.

Numbered locations [1] are shown on the accompanying map and where possible in the illustrations. National Grid References are given in the form [ST 489 123], and all lie within Grid Zone ST.

Finally, always remember:

**'leave only footprints;**

**take only photographs'**