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# **A walkers' guide to the geology and landscape of western Mendip**

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

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## Useful information

### How to get to Mendip

**Car:** The Mendips are about 25 km southwest of Bristol, approximately an hour's drive via the A38, or the A39. From the M5, take junction 20 and follow the A371 to Banwell, Winscombe, Cheddar and Wells, or the A368 to Churchill, Blagdon and the northern flank of Mendip. The B3134, B3135, and B3371 cross the central Mendip plateau via Burrington Combe and Cheddar Gorge.

**Rail:** Yatton and Weston-super-Mare are both on the national rail network.

**Bus:** Wells is a hub for local bus services, with National Express coach services from Newcastle, York, Birmingham, London, London Heathrow Airport and Weymouth. Local buses link Weston-super-Mare and Wells via Cheddar and Winscombe, Wells and Bath, Wells and Bristol, Wells and Wookey Hole. There is also the Chew Valley Explorer Bus between Bristol and Cheddar via Burrington Combe and Charterhouse.

**Cycle:** The National Cycleway Route 3 crosses the Mendip Hills and links the Bath–Bristol Cycle path to Wells.

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:frome.tic@ukonline.co.uk). [www.frometouristinfo.co.uk/](http://www.frometouristinfo.co.uk/)

**Shepton Mallet:** 70 High Street, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5AS. Tel: 01749 345258. E-mail: [sheptonmallet.tic@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:sheptonmallet.tic@ukonline.co.uk). [www.sheptonmallet-touristinfocentre.co.uk](http://www.sheptonmallet-touristinfocentre.co.uk)

**Wells:** Town Hall, Market Place, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2RB. Tel: 01749 672552. E-mail: [wells.tic@ukonline.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:somersetvisitorcentre@somerset.gov.uk)

The Mendip Hills AONB office can provide information on 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 <http://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. There is a Youth Hostel in Cheddar. Some local caving clubs also have huts with bunkhouse accommodation.

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

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## **Rear cover text**

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.

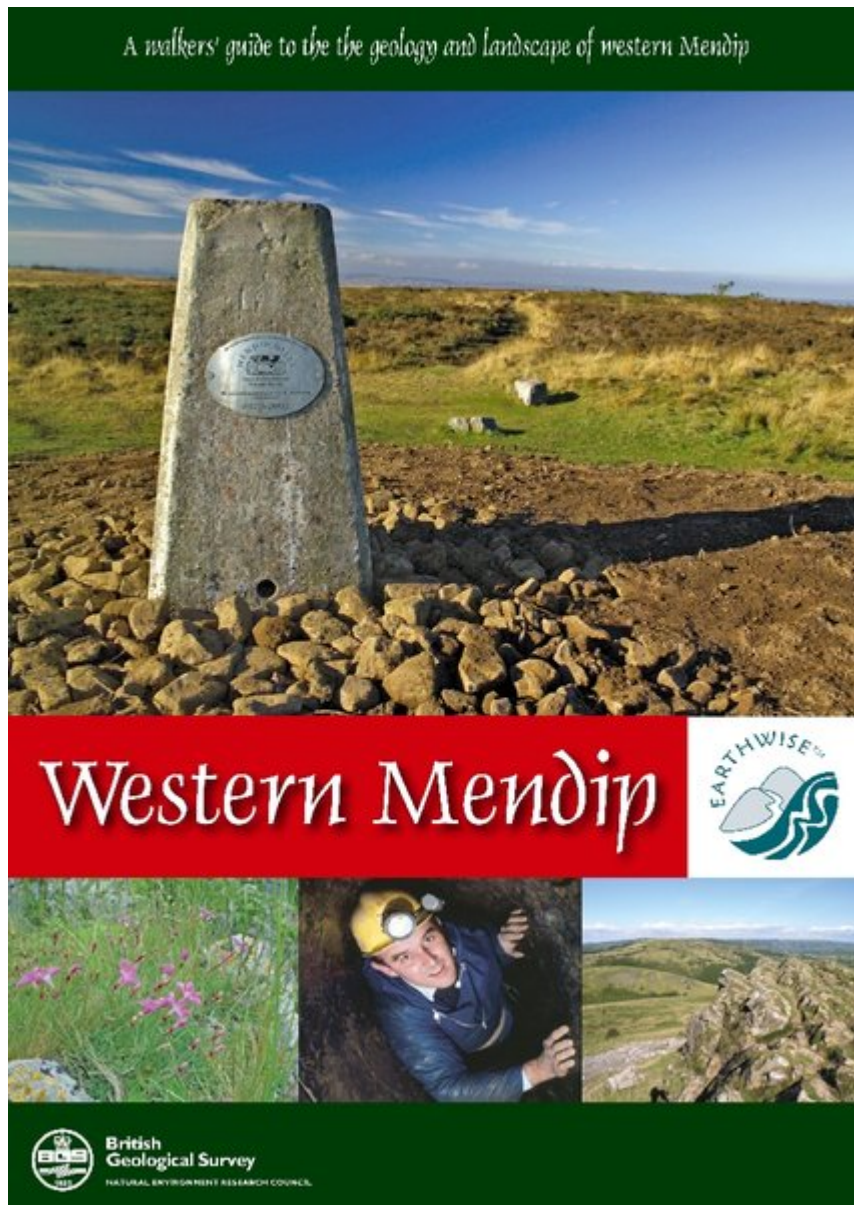
The Mendip Hills have long been visited by geologists and tourists, who come to admire the spectacular rocky gorges, limestone uplands, gushing springs and subterranean streams. For those who wish to learn about the area, this guide gives details of the geology and natural history, and will help you 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

## **Figures**

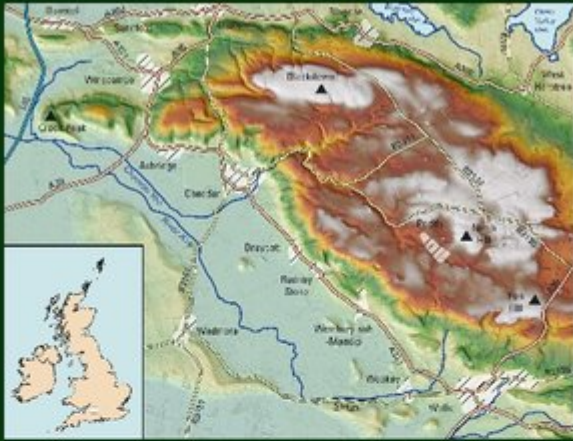
(Figure 122) West front, Wells Cathedral.

(Figure 123) Green Lane, Axbridge Hill.

(Figure 124) Dulcote fountain, created in 1861, out of a block of tufa. © M Simms.



(Front cover).



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*(Figure 122) West front, Wells Cathedral.*



*(Figure 123) Green Lane, Axbridge Hill.*



*(Figure 124) Dulcote fountain, created in 1861, out of a block of tufa. © M Simms.*