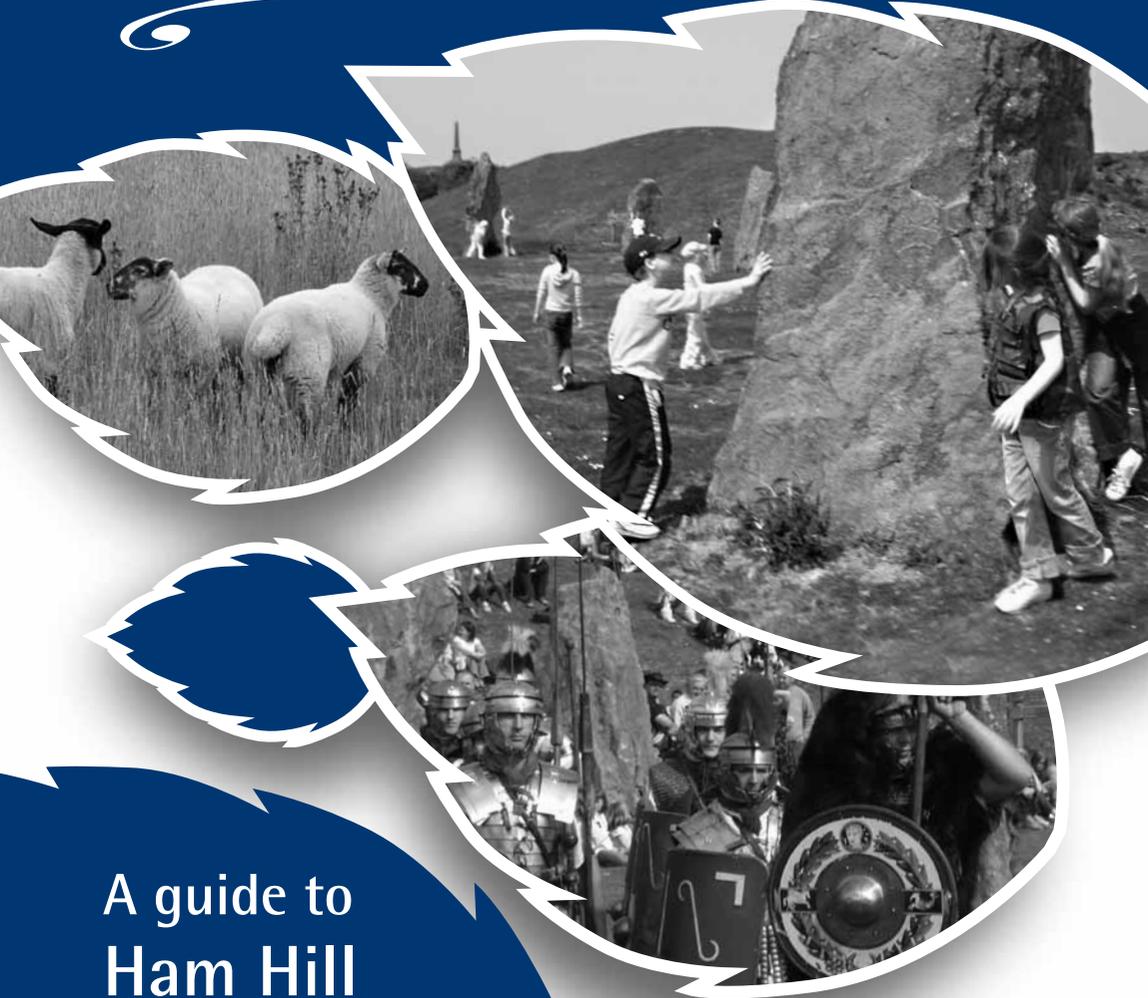


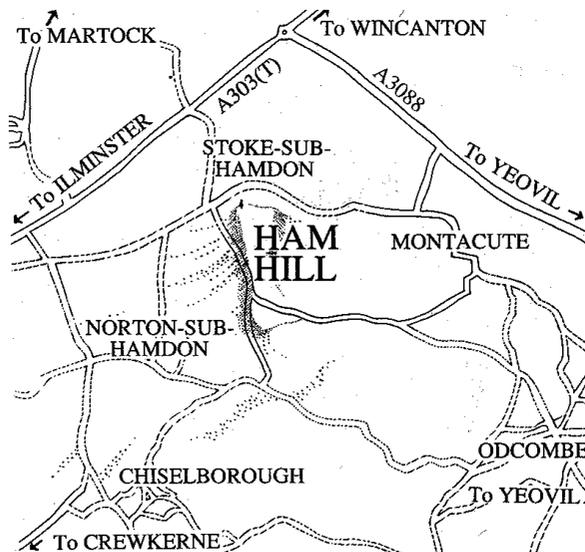
Ham Hill Herald



A guide to
Ham Hill
Country Park



Ham Hill is situated approximately 6 miles west of Yeovil, and the war memorial is clearly visible from the A303. The villages of Stoke and Norton sub Hamdon are situated at the foot of the hill.



Parking - there is ample free car parking available in a number of locations, but please refrain from parking in the pub car park as this is for patrons only.

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please contact the address below.

Este documento encontra – se didpanlén portugis, a pedido.

Dokument tem jest na yczenie udost pniany w jzyka polskim.

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Disclaimer

All information contained within this booklet was correct at time of going to press, March 2009

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Acknowledgments

Photographs (except historic) by the late John Davies.
Illustrations by Dave Bennett, Dennis Pearce, Richard Godden,
Brian Wiles, Hilary Portman and Madeleine Smith

Welcome to the Ham Hill Herald

Offering superb views of the South Somerset Moors, Exmoor and the Mendip Hills, Ham Hill has something for everyone. Large wildflower meadows, steeply sloping Iron Age ramparts, a deserted medieval village and historically managed woodlands all offer fantastic opportunities to explore this unique piece of Somerset countryside. This booklet aims to tell you a little more about this fascinating site, and hence make your visit an enjoyable and memorable one.

Since 1975, Ham Hill Country Park has existed as open access countryside for everyone. In more recent times, with financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage, we have purchased additional land of heritage value and included it within the Country Park, this includes the areas known as Witcombe Valley and the plateau fields. Since the year 2000, the Country Park has covered an area of over 400 acres of open access land.

The land is managed by a small ranger team and a dedicated group of volunteers. With so many important historical features and habitats within the Country Park, a detailed management plan has been written for the site. The document has been approved by all the agencies involved with the running and protection of the Country Park, including English Heritage, Natural England, Somerset Wildlife Trust, and DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), and sets out a comprehensive annual work programme. This management plan is a public document and if you would like to know more about it, please contact a member of the ranger team.

South Somerset District Council owns about half of the land within the Country Park, while the rest belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall and some local private landowners. The District Council does however manage the whole park by agreement with the owners. Our aim is to keep the park as safe and clean as possible, and to preserve the heritage and wildlife for future generations.

We hope you enjoy your visit to Ham Hill Country Park. If you have any queries, comments or suggestions, please contact the ranger team, contact details can be found on page 1.



Sylvia Seal
District Councillor
Portfolio holder for Health & Well Being

A Brief History of Ham Hill

INTRODUCTION - Ham Hill has a long and fascinating past. It was prehistoric man who first recognised the advantages of settling on top of this raised hamstone outcrop. Little has survived the intervening 4000 years, but just enough has remained to let us know they were here.

Intensive occupation on the hill starts in the Iron Age. Roundhouses were built, fields created and the settlement flourished. Trading links were wide and the 200 acre size of Hamdon Hillfort testifies to the powers it held in the South West. Huge treeless ramparts, with palisades and a hamstone scree were meant to deter would be invaders. All went well until the first century A.D. when a fighting force to conquer all others invaded England. Under Vespasian's command, Hamdon Hillfort succumbed to Roman occupation.

EARLIEST SETTLERS - Ham Hill has been used by man since Stone Age times, and flint tools have been found here. Thousands of years ago the surrounding area was an inlet of the sea. The South Somerset Moors which can be seen northwards from the hill are still a flood plain for the local rivers (being only a few metres above sea level). In ancient times, the hill was not only a natural choice for a defensible position, but would have been one of the few areas locally which remained dry throughout the year.

In Stone Age times the hill, especially the northern spur would probably have been a focus point for people and a point of navigation through the surrounding countryside of wet areas and woods or forests. With the addition of the war memorial, the hill remains a prominent landmark for travellers along the busy A303.

LATER COMMUNITIES - An Iron Age tribe made the hill their main northern fort 'capital' about 2000 years ago. It is these

people who are generally credited with constructing the earth ditches and ramparts around the hill to form what is known as a hillfort. The remains of these ramparts can still be seen today, although it must be remembered that over the centuries soil has slumped down the hillside, and the ramparts and ditches are considerably gentler and lower than when they were originally constructed.

In this area the Iron Age people would have belonged to a tribe called the 'Durotriges', and within the area in which they ruled are known to be around forty hillforts of similar construction to Ham Hill. From its huge size, Ham Hill was obviously an important stronghold and may well have controlled the upper reaches of the Parrett Valley. This important settlement needed protection. Inner ramparts were the main defence, with deep ditches and steep banks being created as an obstacle to oncoming attackers who found it difficult, probably almost impossible to get a foothold whilst under attack from sling stones and other airborne 'missiles'. Competent 'slingers' could often 'see to a victim' at a distance of 60 metres (200 feet). The hillfort must have been an awesome sight to attackers. First they would have to encounter the lower ramparts, then the upper ramparts under a hail of airborne missiles from above, not to mention trying to climb over the bank defences, or batter and burn their way through the huge entrance gates.

ROMAN INVADERS - The invading Romans took over the hillfort around AD 43, and used the hill for policing the area. Roman legions built the nearby Fosse Way, better known today as the A303/A37 which can be seen from the war memorial. The Romans then built their local centre at Ilchester. They were generally acknowledged as being the first people to quarry hamstone. A coffin made of hamstone can be seen in Dorchester Museum, and is widely accepted by historians as evidence of quarrying by the Romans.

About the Iron Age Hillfort

Ham Hill is a hillfort with two or three ditches and ramparts, probably constructed in the Iron Age. These earthworks were constructed by hand and usually followed the natural contours of a prominent landscape feature; often a hill. Exactly why these hillforts were built and what role they played is not fully understood as every case is different

Around the top of the upper rampart there probably would have been a dry built hamstone wall or wooden palisade to provide extra protection against attackers. It is more likely with the availability of so much stone nearby that a wall would have been constructed. This would have lasted longer, and required less maintenance than a wooden palisade.

Over the years natural slipping of the earth down the bank would have silted up the ditch. This would need to be cleared out regularly, with any spoil being dumped along the outer edge (top of the next lower) rampart. At strategic places around the hillfort, gaps were left in the ramparts as entrances. These entrances were heavily defended, including the use of huge wooden gates. Quite how many entrances there were at Ham Hill is unknown, as no full archaeological excavations have ever taken place.



An Iron Age artefact excavated at Ham Hill. This is a decorative bucket handle, in the shape of an ox head.



TOP: A reconstruction of an Iron Age gateway at Hamdon Hillfort.

BELOW: A reconstruction of one route into Hamdon Hillfort. Looking up The Combe from East Stoke village. The points of the roundhouse roofs are near to where the Prince of Wales Inn stands today.

BOTTOM: The ramparts in the 1960s. Part of the work of today's ranger team is to conserve the ramparts, this may mean removing trees and scrub in many places.



A Glimpse Into Iron Age Life

Life in the Iron Age was very much community based. Extended family groups of one tribe lived in clusters of thatched roundhouses. The huts were 5 - 15m in diameter, with wattle and daub walls and a central fireplace for cooking and heating. Within the settlement special roundhouses were put aside for meeting places and workshops.

Iron Age people wore bright colours and ornate jewellery. Vibrantly patterned tunics, cloaks and trousers were often in tartan material. Cloaks were fastened with brooches and they wore necklaces, arm rings and hair pins. There is some evidence that they tattooed their skin and often painted it (usually blue) before important ceremonies, or going into battle.

Their ability to defend and maintain ownership of such a large hillfort as Ham Hill probably meant that the tribes-people were highly respected in the local area. A hillforts tribal chief maintained order and prosperity in the settlement, this meant keeping the people happy (by having plenty of feast days) and maintaining important trading links.

Specialist craft workers within the settlement produced goods like pottery,



fabrics, woven baskets, jewellery and weaponry. These were traded and exchanged for commodities not available to the people living at Ham Hill e.g. slingstones from Chesil Beach. Most of the population would have been agricultural workers, tending crops and livestock for the hillfort. Other important tribe members were the religious leaders (Druids), warriors and bards (storytellers). As the Iron Age people had no written language bards had an important role to play in entertainment and passing on tribal stories.

The warrior class was very important and well respected within the tribe. One of the greatest tribal warriors and leaders of the Iron Age was Queen Boudica. Women held an important place in Iron Age society and Boudica's resistance to the invading Romans was well documented by Roman historians.



An Iron Age Family

Archaeological digs in the early 1900s and recent geophysical surveys, have produced some evidence for at least two concentrated areas of occupation on Ham Hill. Round houses, trackways and field systems divided up the hillfort's plateau. The hillfort was a busy settlement, with its inhabitants farming the land and trading for goods and weapons.

Interpreting and understanding the Iron Age people that once lived on Ham Hill is challenging as little evidence remains, but by using archaeological knowledge from other Iron Age sites, and what we know from Ham Hill, an artist created the reconstruction drawings within this publication.

Today the hillfort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is of national importance to Britain's heritage, and part of the ranger team's work is to protect the impressive earthworks and underlying archaeology.

LEFT:
How an Iron Age village may have looked.

The Roman Arrival

Following the Roman invasion in AD43 many hillforts were cleared of their defeated inhabitants and Roman forts built over the sites. As a stronghold of the hostile Durotrigan tribe a garrison of some kind may have been established on Ham Hill. Finds of metalwork from the northern end of Ham Hill (near the war memorial today) suggest a Roman military presence. The coin finds and archaeology of the hill in the south show that civilian occupation continued throughout the Roman period.

Ham Hill was an excellent tactical position for the Romans. There would have been little need to improve upon the existing fortifications, but it is likely that they did build some kind of military garrison. The proximity to the Fosse Way must have been beneficial. The original Roman surface being around 2m below today's A303.

On the northern spur (near the war memorial) there are two areas of interest. The 'equestrian camp' is a raised rectangular earthwork. Early archaeologists thought that this feature was the remains of a Roman army camp. Their theory was later backed by the discovery of some scale armour. The armour section found is relatively rare, composed of 39 pieces of copper, each with two holes in to allow them to be stitched to a linen or leather tunic, it is now held at the British Museum.



Nearby is the "amphitheatre", a circular depression in the lea of the Iron Age ramparts.

Modern research has shown that both these features are more likely to be medieval earthworks. However, archaeologists today still feel that there must have been some kind of military building on site, they are just not sure where it was.

Significantly later in the Roman occupation the inhabitants of the hillfort constructed a large rectangular building, on the eastern side of the hill. It was a 19 roomed construction, made of hamstone, providing us with the evidence for the beginnings of organised quarrying at Ham Hill. The building appears to have been the centre of a large farming estate exploiting the rich farmland of the area. The site was excavated in the 1920's and more recently (1990's) it was the subject of geophysical surveys, both sets of data match well and confirm the presence of the building, quite probably a villa. If not a massively important military site, Ham Hill was valued for its stone and quarries. Ilchester was the new administrative centre for the area and was also partly constructed of hamstone.

It is unlikely that any new fieldwork will be carried out for three reasons; the cost, the fact the Ham Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the knowledge that modern ploughing has already massively damaged the remains. The field will now be managed as hay meadow and the villas remains will be protected.

To learn more about the Romans in the South West visit one of the local museums at Yeovil, Taunton or Dorchester.

LEFT: A reconstruction of how Ham Hill's Roman villa may have looked.

Medieval and Victorian History

In medieval times, as today, Ham Hill fell into the three parishes of Stoke sub Hamdon, Norton sub Hamdon and Montacute. In the 13th century the Beauchamp family from Montacute introduced rabbits to the hill, in a large warren complex, to farm them for meat. A century later one thousand of the rabbits were stolen and the warren seems to have fallen into disrepair, but it does explain today's name for one of the meadow fields, 'The Warren'.

We know about the presence of an abandoned village in the bottom of Witcombe Valley. Medieval in origin, there is little written evidence for the hamlet. The last record dates to 1566 when twelve tenants each held 10 acres of land, but by 1671 the hamlet had dwindled to only one house. What happened? No one really knows.



How medieval villagers may have looked

During the 16th century, quarrying was the main activity on the hill, and it was in 1542 that Leland, the private chaplain to King Henry VIII, visited the hill and 'marvelled at the fine stone quarried here'.

RIGHT: Artist's impression of a Victorian quarry on Ham Hill

An enduring legacy of medieval Britain is the 'frying pan'. A circular feature, near the war memorial, the frying pan is the old livestock show ring from past medieval fayres. Starting on April 25th (St Mark's Day), a large fayre took place on Ham Hill, much like the Bath and West Show today. The constant parading of animals around a ring has created the recognisable circular landscape feature seen today. Its perfect shape misled early archaeologists into thinking it was a Roman amphitheatre.

The mid to late 1800s were busy, industrial years, with 24 small quarries operating on the hill, and employing up to 200 men. A special court operated at this time to help regulate men that worked on the hill. The courts of the hundreds regularly met on the hill and were led by the sheriff. Ham Hill was fast becoming an important meeting place.

It was George Mitchell from Montacute who really put Ham Hill on the map; every Whitsun Monday George organised a rally. Hundreds of labourers joined together in a political demonstration to march up the hill to the accompaniment of seven brass bands, to help fight the cause for fair pay and rights for the agricultural labourer. Photos from the 1870s show George Mitchell talking to the crowd, tightly gathered in the area known as the frying pan.



The History of Excavation & Investigation

There has been relatively little archaeological excavation on Ham Hill. Any that have taken place occurred in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Much of this work is fragmented, with reports missing, or not completed for some of the digs. Others are well documented for the finds, and the actual works undertaken, but omit exact locations. As a result, most of the information is considered to be incomplete.

A report in the 1990s by the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) bridged some of the gaps in the archaeological record. But evidence is still so slim that no firm interpretation of the history of the hill can be made. Below is a summary of some of the excavations and unplanned discoveries that have taken place over the years on Ham Hill.

1882 - Accidental discoveries by agricultural labourers of Roman coins and vessels.

1906 & 1920 - RH Walter discovered the remains of a rectangular building whilst excavating a rubbish pit. The finds point to occupation between 1st and 4th centuries AD and indicate a Roman influence, today's interpretation is of a villa site.

1907 - an excavation report describes the discovery of a 'Romano-British dwelling and workshop', though nothing remains today due to quarrying.

1908 - Hadrian Allcroft surveyed the 'amphitheatre', now known as the 'frying pan', believing it was Roman & linked to the villa.

1930s - an incomplete report describes the excavations at the rectangular enclosure near the war memorial. Described as an 'equestrian camp', the discovery of perforated stones may indicate a use relating to the medieval fayres as an animal holding pen.

1930s - Gray excavated on the northern spur. Interpretation of the digs shows the remains of four roundhouses with various associated pits.

1977 & 1992 - The Roman villa site was mapped again using geophysical techniques. The results match well with the original 1907 excavation reports; with an unusual layout of rectangular buildings and courtyards.

1990s - struck flints, various pieces of pottery and evidence for industrial activity were found on the hillfort plateau during the surveying for the Royal Commission report.

1992 - a geophysical survey of the hillfort interior was undertaken to try and discover its past land use. Surface remains and earthworks have been severely disturbed by farming and quarrying, making topographical interpretation difficult. The geophysical surveys were excellent, however the survey had to be cut short due to financial constraints.

1990s - Throughout the 1990s various aerial photographs were taken, geophysical surveys and topographical evidence mapped to feed into the RCHME survey.

2002 - Wessex Archaeology were commissioned to carry out a dig on land owned by the large quarry to ensure that future quarrying will not damage any remains. The area was fully surveyed and recorded.

As Ham Hill is such an important archaeological site it is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This makes it illegal to remove any material from the site and anyone caught using a metal detector will be prosecuted.

Geology & Quarrying

The geology of Ham Hill is unique. The warm golden hamstone, a Jurassic shelly limestone, has many special features and is one of the reasons for Ham Hill's exciting past and its current habitats.

Being a sedimentary rock, hamstone was built up in layers, each layer depicts a different time in our geological past, like the pages in a book. Hamstone is so unique and descriptive that areas of the hill are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS). This means that all quarrying activity is limited to certain areas of the hill, and that the countryside ranger team must ensure that some of the old quarry faces remain exposed, and do not become covered by vegetation, allowing geologists and palaeontologists to study them.

Hamstone has been quarried for centuries and this practice continues today. All of the villages around the hill are built of this special stone and it gives the area its unique character.

Hamstone is a limestone composed of crushed up fragments of shells and other sea creatures, all cemented together by calcium carbonate. The fossils, including ammonites, in the rock date the stone to 170 million years ago, the Jurassic period. The distinctive golden colour comes from iron compounds present in the rock.

The layer of hamstone is actually quite thin. It is like a cap, sitting on top of Yeovil Sands. This raised plateau of hamstone has created the Ham Hill we know today. The raised hamstone cap created a natural high point that our ancient ancestors settled on and fortified as a hillfort. The nature of the stone meant later settlers started quarrying for building stone, so creating the lumpy bumpy landscape we know today. The nutrient composition of the stone creates a very specific, nutrient poor, soil that supports a rare grassland habitat. Hamstone really is the heart of Ham Hill.



TOP: Pickmarks from Victorian quarrying can still be seen on some quarry faces.

ABOVE: The old deep quarry. Source and date of picture unknown, believed circa. 1892.

BOTTOM: The old deep quarry today. The quarry has been filled in by at least a third since the picture above.



A History of Quarrying

There have been quarries on Ham Hill since Roman times. Montacute House, Sherborne Abbey and many villages around the area are built of hamstone. In the past working the stone was a difficult job. Pick marks can still be seen on some rock faces, reminding us that the stone could only be quarried using hand tools. Explosives could not be used, as they would have shattered the stone into tiny pieces, and made it useless for building.

There were at least 24 separate quarries on the hill at the end of the Middle Ages. Each had its own workshop, and by the 17th century most were roofed to protect the mason and the stone from the weather. During the 18th and 19th centuries individual quarries were 20 foot square and produced freestone and roofing tiles which can be seen on many old houses and some churches in neighbouring villages. The quarries expanded greatly during this time, and by 1880 over 200 men were employed. In Victorian times the stone was obtained by cutting channels, up to 15 cm wide, round each block, using a pick like tool called an 'adze' or 'jadd'. A huge metal wedge was then driven underneath the block to lift it. By the end of the 19th century blocks were being hauled to the surface with steam powered cranes, before being transported to the quarry yards on wagons, which ran along tramlines. The northern spur (memorial area) must have been a mass of quarry scrapes, cranes and tramways, a truly busy industrial landscape.

Stone was cut and carved by hand by a large workforce of masons. Various saws were used, some circular blades being over 2 metres in diameter. Other blocks were cut by pushing them onto vertical blades, which were worked up and down. The stone was taken from the hill by horse and cart, and masons used local rivers such as the Parrett and Yeo to transport the quarried stone. Transportation of quarried stone could

often be expensive, with the costs being more than the stone was actually worth. As river trade declined, stone not being used locally went to Yeovil and Pen Mill stations for transportation to various destinations throughout the country.



A Victorian workforce standing in what is now the large working quarry.

For centuries Ham Hill has been an important source of building stone, with most activity taking place on the southern side of the hill, where the stone is thickest and of the best quality. Quarrying temporarily ceased in 1962. In recent years two quarries have resumed working.

The small quarry at the northern end of the hill supplies a little stone, but the majority of the building stone is extracted from the Ham Hill Stone Company's quarry situated close to the southern boundary of the hillfort, behind Hilltop bungalow.

Today stone is still quarried by hand and not with explosives, however heavy plant machinery is now used rather than small hand tools such as hammers. Harvey's Masonry Works, which is situated at the quarry, is the only one remaining on Ham Hill and produces Hamstone products for both restoration work and new buildings. The masons still carve the stone using traditional methods.

Stories of the Hill

Many people find enjoyment walking on Ham Hill and taking in the panoramic views. It can be an inspirational place and many people have put pen to paper to describe the site. Llewellyn Powys from Montacute has written some of the most famous accounts of the hill. His words help bring to life the industries and atmosphere of yesteryear, but also reflect the peace that can still be found on the hill.

“And how rewarding to walk on Ham Hill on a fine spring day when the fields of Long Load and High Ham lie prosperously awaiting the return of another summer; when the daisy paddocks immediately below are patched with the drying amber-coloured skins of the gloving factories; when dandelions are out everywhere in the roadside hedges; and the songs of larks are so loud that they all but drown the scranell pipings of the little Hebditch shepherd boy” . Llewellyn Powys, Somerset Essays 1937.

“In April, Witcombe echoes every few minutes to the mocking laughter of the woodpecker, as in lifting flights it casts a glancing volatile shade across the green turf, close cropped by mild eyed sheep from the Abbey Farm. On both sides of the field’s steep slopes the gorse grows in dark masses rendering the air balmy soft in this windless sanctuary of sheltered peace. No field near Montacute is better placed for hearing the cuckoo for the first time, or indeed for seeing the first swallow, fresh in from the restless waves of sea beyond Golden Cap.” Llewellyn Powys, A Montacute Field.

As well as the written word there are many tales of ghosts and sightings well known in Somerset folklore. The history of the site has provoked a huge range of tales throughout the ages.

A Norman princess is said to have been associated with a chapel on Ham Hill. There was indeed a chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross, the site of which was probably near

the Prince of Wales Inn. It almost certainly ceased to be used after about 1535, but its memory lingered on. Village girls from the late 18th century knew of some consecrated ground on the hill, as a small crumb of comfort if their liaison ended in trouble.

Another story tells of treasure! An old lady, now deceased, once told she had heard of a great treasure to do with a monk from Glastonbury, who buried it under seven shelves near the Stoke approach to the hill. Such treasure we might think of as silver or gold, but surely the buried treasure of Ham Hill is the golden limestone, now spread throughout the land.





Wildlife & Habitats on the Hill



Introduction

Ham Hill Country Park is a very diverse site that supports a patchwork of habitats, and as a result many different plant and animal species are found here. With two types of grassland, scrubby patches, semi-natural woodlands and tufa streams, the site is alive with wildlife throughout the year.

Woodland and scrub

There are some wonderful woodlands to explore within the Country Park. The ranger team practice traditional methods to manage them such as coppicing and thinning, ensuring the long life of trees and varied woodland plants below. In early spring, the woodland floors are a sea of yellow when the lesser celandines are the first flowers to emerge, closely followed by primroses, violets and then in April a carpet of bluebells. Although the woodlands are made up of mostly native species such as ash, oak and hazel, there are some areas of sycamore trees due to disturbance throughout the years and also a few coniferous species such as firs and pines, which were introduced exotics from when the woods were part of the Montacute estate.

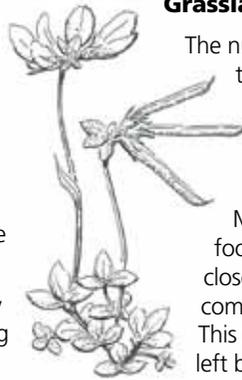
If you walk as far as Pit Wood you may see dragonflies and damselflies buzzing around, hunting in the grassland. These insects are the most beautiful colours, and generally dragonflies are bigger than damselflies. The only sure way to tell them apart is to study them when they are resting; damselflies fold their wings behind their backs, whilst dragonflies keep their wings open.

Close to Pit Wood is Horses Wood, which is frequented by Greater Spotted woodpeckers due to the amount of dead tree left standing. The wood is situated in the wide, open area known as Witcombe Valley, which is grazed

during the summer months to maintain a tussocky grassland habitat where buzzards can be seen by day, and owls by night. This grassland is also home to many green woodpeckers that feed off the many ants nests, and many fungi species that thrive in the humid grass tussocks.

Walking along the scrub-edged paths from one area to another offers a chance to glimpse a variety of wildlife species, from the beautiful blackthorn blossom of spring, to the prehistoric looking bracken, and hedgerow plants of summer, followed by the browns and reds of Autumn. As you walk along you are likely to see many small hedgerow birds such as robins, blackbirds and finches.

Grassland and meadows



The nutrient poor soils found across the majority of the Country Park support a rare type of grassland (calcareous). Nationally important for its many flowering plants, it is similar to Sussex Downland.

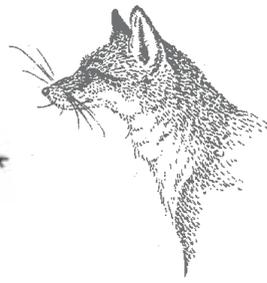
Many plant species such as birds-foot-trefoil and wild thyme live very close together in a tightly knit matt, all competing for a few limited nutrients. This grassland covers the hilly mounds left by Victorian quarrying and it changes colour throughout the summer

as the yellows, purples and whites of the wildflowers bloom and fade. Butterflies are frequently seen on warmer, calmer days in this habitat, also attracted to the buddleia shrubs that grow on this more disturbed ground.

In the summer the traditionally managed hay meadows (through cutting and grazing) are alive with wildlife. Buttercups, vetches, orchids, cranesbill and many attractive grasses create a wonderful scene, whilst hundreds of



insects buzz around them. The tall grasses and flowers of this habitat provide ideal areas for ground nesting birds, and there is a good population of skylarks in these meadows.



Repair work is continually carried out on the dry stone walls that separate the meadows. Walls like these provide excellent habitats for all sorts of wildlife. Insects will use the smallest nooks and crannies, which will in turn attract birds, reptiles, and small mammals. Very quickly communities will develop in the new walls and if you sit patiently you may be lucky to see the lives of the inhabitants of this set of high rise flats!

Please do not pick the flowers as they will quickly die, and more people will be able to enjoy them in their natural setting. Also please keep to the mown paths in meadows so as not to disturb birds and other wildlife, and keep dogs on a lead.



There are historical reports of adders living on the hill; we are still waiting to see one, although we know that the area supports grass snakes and slow worms.

Ham Hill has a thriving population of badgers; the mix of woodland, scrub and grassland is the perfect mix for these elusive animals. On a warm evening, sit quietly in the woodlands and watch out for a family emerging in search of food, or test your tracking skills and look out for setts and foraging trails.

Warning

In the summer months a plant called wild parsnip grows and flowers on Ham Hill. The plant is tall with yellow upside-down umbrella shaped flowers. Avoid getting the sap from this plant on your skin as if exposed to sunlight it can cause blistering. If your skin is blistered after visiting Ham Hill do not be alarmed - cover up the blisters so that they are not exposed to sunlight, and seek medical attention if they do not start to reduce within a few days.

Wildlife Facts

There is a good population of roe deer often seen roaming on the hill - the best time to see them is at dusk in the quieter areas of the Country Park such as the Pit Wood area.

There are four different species of orchid in the meadows - Strouds West is the best place to see them in June. Early purple, common spotted, Southern marsh and Pyramidal orchid can all be found if you look closely!

The population of skylarks in one of the rougher meadows is well established. When walking the fields in the summer months you will hear the distinctive calls of the birds and if your eyes are quick enough you may see them zooming around up above you. On advice from the Somerset Wildlife Trust, the far meadow is left as rougher, tussocky grassland providing an ideal ground nesting habitat for these birds.



Horse Riding & Cycling

Ham Hill Country Park is open access land for walkers. Horse riders and cyclists have access only on bridleways. Public bridleways on and around Ham Hill are shown by dotted lines on the map below. (horseriders also have open access in Witcombe valley)

Please do NOT gallop through this area.

We ask that people with mountain and BMX bikes do not cycle in the picnic area, or the area from the Ranger's Office up to the war memorial. To minimise collisions and conflict with other users please respect the 'No Cycling' signs. Please remember that cyclists do NOT have a right to be on public footpaths! BUT cyclists do have a right to be on bridleways. A designated mountain bike area can be found at the back of lime kiln park.

HAM HILL CODE FOR HORSE RIDING RESPONSIBLY:

Care for the land

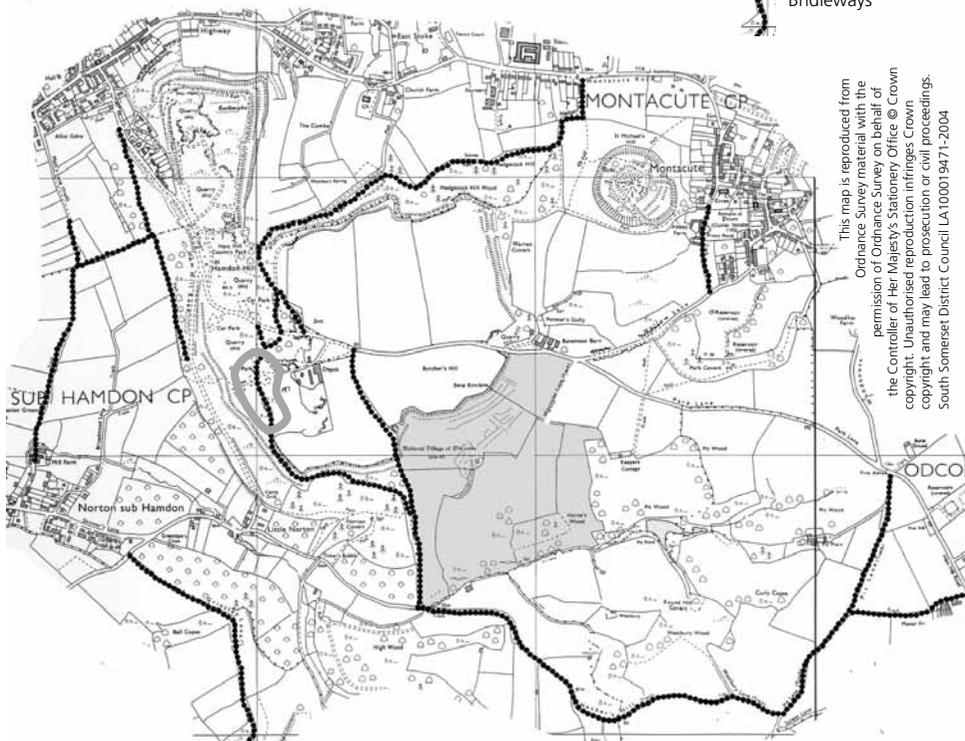
- Do NOT stray off the line of the path.
- Do NOT damage timber, walls or hedgerows by jumping.
- Remember that horses' hooves can damage surfaces in bad weather.
- Pay particular attention to protected areas that have significant historical and biological value, as they are extremely sensitive to damage - all of Ham Hill Country Park.

Courtesy to other users

- Remember that walkers, cyclists and other riders may be elderly, disabled, children or simply frightened of horses.

Consideration to the land owner

- Leave gates as you find them.
- Ride slowly past all stock.
- Do not gallop anywhere on site.



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Points of Interest on Walks

A - IRON AGE RAMPARTS looking down and northwards from outside the Prince of Wales Inn there is an excellent view of the ramparts, and a feeling for what impressive structures they are. The Durotriges tribe who lived on Ham Hill from c.750 BC to the 1st Century AD built these steep banks and ditches. They fortified the natural high point of Ham Hill to create a defendable and secure hillfort. Some archaeologists believe that the banks were covered in a layer of hamstone, with a wall or palisade fence at the top. This must have created a stunning effect from the lowlands, demonstrating the power of the hillforts inhabitants.



B - QUARRYING - there are two active quarries on Ham Hill. The largest is in the centre of the park adjacent to Hilltop bungalow. A smaller quarry operates near the war memorial and this site provides stone for a variety of uses including repairs to local buildings. The quarry workers are very aware of the historical and geological significance of the site, and are able to quickly contact expert help if they believe they have unearthed something special. All quarry workings on the hill are subject to a licence and have time clauses and boundaries attached.



C - STRIP LYNCHETS - standing outside the Prince of Wales Inn and looking down into the valley, terraces in the field can be seen. These terraces are called lynchets, and have been created by the continuous ploughing of the field in one direction. They were created during the medieval period, when farmland was at a premium. All land needed to be cultivated, even the steepest slopes, thus terraces were created on the lower slopes of Ham Hill.



D - WAR MEMORIAL - The war memorial was erected in 1923 to commemorate those who gave their lives in the Great War. Further names were later added of those who died in World War II. The memorial is a well known landmark in the Country Park and to travellers along the busy A303.



Heritage Panels - Five panels explaining a little more about the hill's history can be found around the Country Park. Each panel deals with a different period of history and includes reconstruction drawings of how the hill may have looked at that time.

Country Park Map



Ham Hill is protected by law as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Any sort of excavation and the use of metal detectors are strictly prohibited. Police action will be taken.

Places and Features of Interest at Ham Hill Country Park

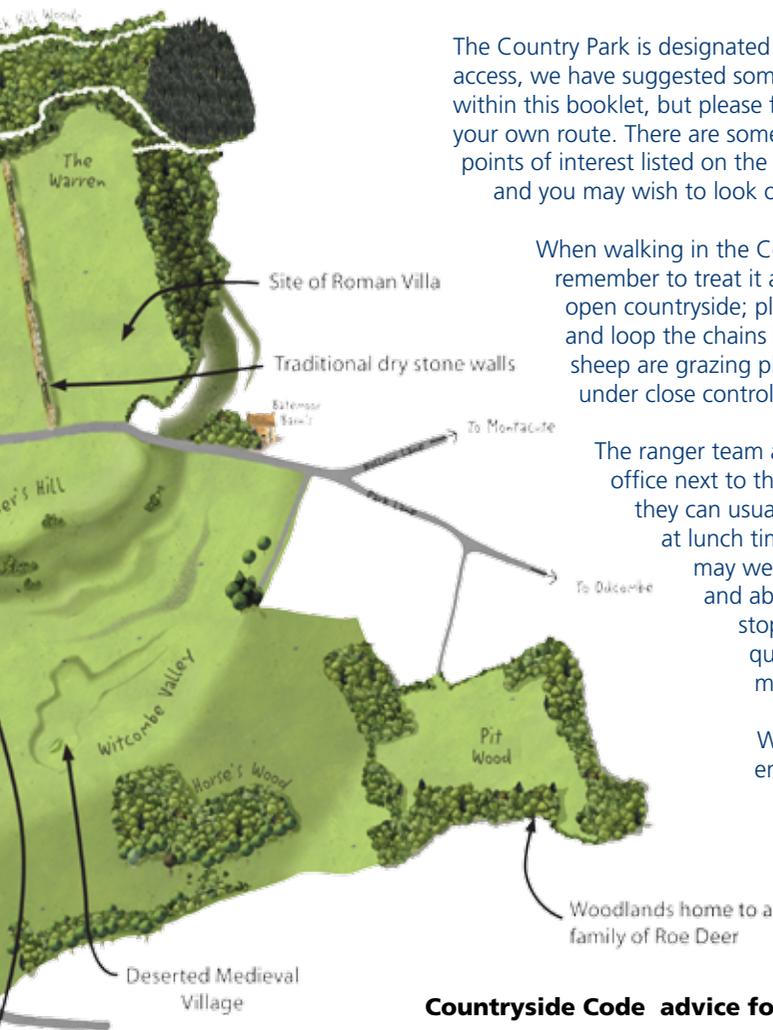
Welcome to Ham Hill Country Park, we hope that this map will help you explore this fabulous 400 acre site.

The Country Park is designated for open public access, we have suggested some walking routes within this booklet, but please feel free to choose your own route. There are some of the main points of interest listed on the adjoining pages and you may wish to look out for these.

When walking in the Country Park please remember to treat it as any other area of open countryside; please close all gates and loop the chains behind you. Where sheep are grazing please keep dogs under close control or on a lead.

The ranger team are based in the office next to the public toilets, they can usually be found there at lunch times, otherwise you may well see them out and about on site, please stop them and ask any questions that you may have.

We hope you enjoy your visit.



Countryside Code advice for the public

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Points of Interest on Walks



E - WITCOMBE DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE - the ridges, banks and ditches at the bottom of the valley are all that remain of a once small, but busy hamlet of the 12-17th centuries. With Batemoor Barns behind, and fenced pond area in front, it is possible to see raised hut platforms. Each platform supported a timber-framed house with wattle and daub walls, and a livestock enclosure or pen. The fenced pond at the bottom was once the midden (rubbish tip) and many archaeological finds have come from here.



F - THE "TIMESTONES" - two stone sculptures representing the spirit and historical past of Ham Hill. The circular stone is carved with intricate patterns taken from designs seen on a Celtic bucket handle excavated from the hill. The standing stone is modelled on a Bronze Age axe head. On mid summers morning, at sun rise, the positioning of the stones means that the sunlight falls through the hole on the circular stone and lights up the axe head behind.



G - STONE CIRCLE - built by the quarry men from the small active quarry located just behind the circle. The first stones were erected in 1998, and the last stones were placed in 2000. The circle is a monument to the memory of all the men and women who have lived and worked on Ham Hill over thousands of years. The future of the circle is not known as the hamstone monoliths belong to the quarry manager.



H - LIMEKILN - Tucked away to the side of Limekiln Car Park is an old limekiln furnace. It was used to make lime for cement and agricultural purposes. Limestone (hamstone) was fed into the kiln, with fuel, either wood or charcoal. The immense heat created caused a chemical reaction to take place and the product of this was lime. This would have been drawn out of the bottom through the hole still visible today. The kiln itself is built of Portland Stone and Hamstone, and the chimney is brick lined. Lime production was thought to have started on Ham Hill in Roman times.

Heritage Panels - Five panels explaining a little more about the hill's history can be found around the Country Park. Each panel deals with a different period of history and includes reconstruction drawings of how the hill may have looked at that time.

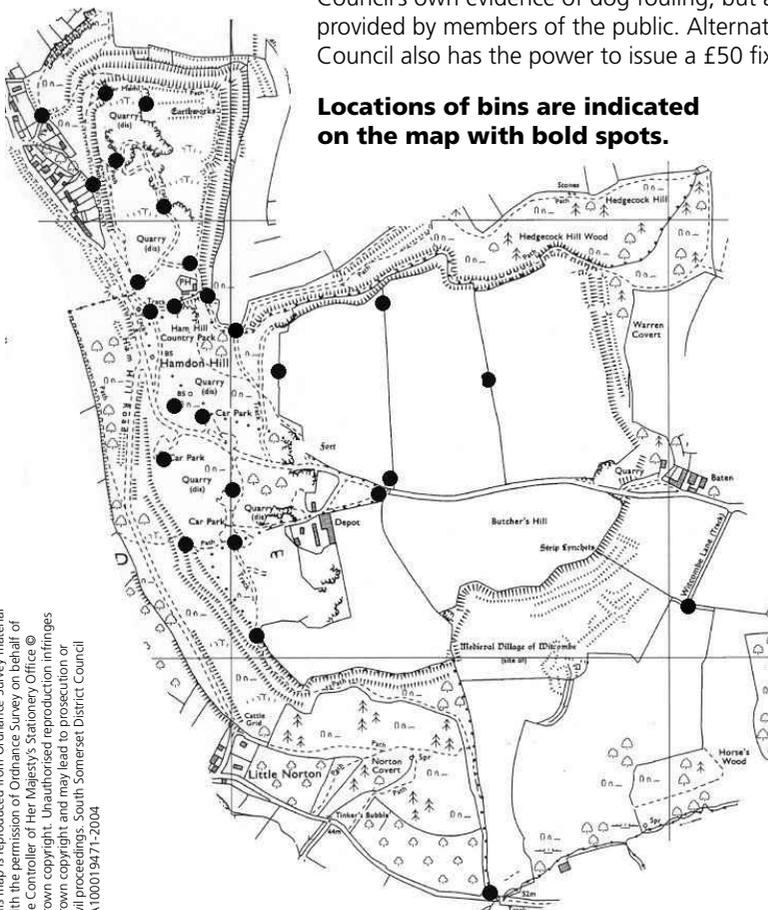
Dog Owners Guide to Ham Hill

Dogs are welcome on Ham Hill, but in response to increased complaints about dog fouling, sheep worrying and dogs not being kept under proper control. Please remember to:

- Give your dog plenty of exercise but keep him/her under control.
- You are legally responsible for your dogs conduct.
- Sheep are used to manage much of the Country Park land. When they are present signs will be on the gates, dogs **MUST** be kept on a short lead in these areas.
- Never let dogs foul in the Country Park.
- Always clean up after your dog if they do foul in the Country Park.
- Please use the poop bins - these are plentiful and are located across the Country Park.
- If required, free poop scoops are available on request from the Ranger's Office.

South Somerset District Council's Dog Wardens are not anti-dog, but encourage responsibility in dog owners. In the past prosecutions have been taken, not only on the Council's own evidence of dog fouling, but also on evidence provided by members of the public. Alternatively the Council also has the power to issue a £50 fixed penalty fine.

Locations of bins are indicated on the map with bold spots.



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Work of the Ranger Team

As a team we need to make sure that we protect and conserve the geology, archaeology and ecology of Ham Hill, whilst also managing the Country Park for the huge range of visitors it attracts.

The main area of the Country Park is an Iron Age hillfort, beneath the grass and trees lie unique archaeological remains. By removing some scrub and tree species we are protecting these remains, which could be damaged by tree root growth.

Ham Hill is also important for the rare calcareous grassland it supports. This grassland is nationally important due to the wide variety of plant and animal species it contains, up to 25 species per square metre of habitat. Sheep grazing removes rank grasses, and slows their rate of re-growth thus protecting native wild flower species. This in turn encourages colonisation by butterflies and other insects. Therefore on the hillfort we prioritise grassland conservation over scrub areas.

We do not intend to remove all of the scrub and tree thickets - if they are carefully managed they can support a different range of species to the grassland: areas will be left allowing all species to co-exist on the hill. Off the hillfort e.g. in Witcombe Valley and Pit Wood we are actively managing for woodland. Management includes planting wildlife corridors - a wide hedgerow that will link isolated woodland fragments, and allow the migration of species.



To preserve the important grassland habitats of Ham Hill we graze each area on a rotation. Each area of Ham Hill Country Park has a detailed plan setting out when and for how long each unit should be grazed. This system ensures that the flora is not over grazed and damaged, and means that at any one time within the park, there will always be at least 60% of the park's land sheep free. When sheep are present there will be warning signs on gates, and outside the ranger's office a map will give up to date information on their whereabouts.

To make the job of livestock management easier, the hill was divided into grazing units e.g. Witcombe Valley, and the plateau fields. The fencing is designed in such a way that it should never restrict access to walkers or park users. It should in fact improve access for dog walkers, as you can be sure that when walking your dog off the lead that the sheep are secure elsewhere on the hill. We ask that if you are walking your dog in with the sheep that it is kept on a lead.

The Ranger team are always working on a wide range of projects, such as repairing and rebuilding the drystone walls, improving access onto the site including creating steps and safe routes, monitoring the woodlands for regeneration and planting corridors to increase the woodland area, continuing scrub and woodland management on archaeologically sensitive areas, encouraging educational visits and volunteer working groups.

Being a ranger gives you a very wide breadth of work. In effect we look after the rock beneath our feet to the birds in the sky, not to mention everything that falls in between!

LEFT: Volunteers help the Ham Hill Ranger Team plant a wildlife corridor in Witcombe Valley.

Ham Hill Voluntary Ranger Team

To manage Ham Hill effectively, we need the valuable assistance and support of volunteers to help with a variety of work. No formal qualifications or experience are needed. All that is required are enthusiasm, some old clothes, a sense of humour, and a willingness to help conserve our heritage.

We encourage volunteers to work on Wednesdays. By focusing on one day, we can normally ensure that volunteers will be working in teams, this is not only a benefit from a safety point of view, but it means that we can tackle larger tasks.

Work arrangements for volunteers are very flexible, depending on you, and how you would like to be involved with the team. Anyone is welcome to turn up as often as they like, whether it's all day or just an hour. We welcome everyone to come and get more involved with the Country Park. All ages and abilities are welcome – you don't have to have any previous experience or special skills.

If practical conservation volunteering is not for you, then why not help out our Ranger team in other ways such as:

- Surveying and monitoring wildlife
- Leading walks or talks
- Assisting with events/education sessions
- Helping around the office
- Joining our Friends of Ham Hill group

We also take work placement students from many local colleges. As a longer term volunteer, we can offer you training in various countryside skills and use of some power tools.

If you would like more information on the Ham Hill Volunteer team please contact the Ranger's Office on 01935 823617.

"The first mention of volunteering at Ham Hill Country Park came during an interesting talk by the rangers at Yeovil and District Natural History Society. With retirement looming, volunteering seemed a good way to be able to contribute something to the maintenance of the Country Park and enjoy the fresh air, all at the same time.

The work is quite varied, from replacing footpath signs, laying a water pipe, clearing scrub, pulling up Ragwort, and of course litter picking. I can recommend the Wednesday work day for its good social atmosphere. The rangers are good to work with and have made me feel very welcome. Why not come and join us?"

John Day, Volunteer



ABOVE: Working parties help preserve the archaeology by carrying out woodland management.

BELOW: Longer term, student placements learn traditional countryside skills like dry stone walling.



Ranger Recommends

In Spring

A walk around Pit or Horses Wood to see all the spring flowers including bluebells, primroses, stitchwort, violets and wood anemones. Best in April and May. Included on the circular walk on page 26.

In Summer

An orchid ramble around the the wild flower meadow. Peer through the waist high plants to search for invertebrate life and marvel at the range of species buzzing around. Listen for the skylarks and see if you can spot one on the wing. Sit down in one of the meadows and just look and listen for five minutes. Best June to August. The circular walks on pages 25, 26 and 29 all pass through the meadows.

In Autumn

Wander in the woodlands and scrubby areas searching for blackberries and sloes. Watch the birds and squirrels stocking up for the winter ahead. The park will be awash with the beautiful reds, browns and orange's of autumn. Take a walk through the woods and collect some leaves and other autumn treasures on the way! Best September to December. The circular walks on pages 25, 26 and 28 all take in a range of woodlands.

In Winter

Ham Hill is a great place to come and see some winter greenery as well, as there are evergreen trees, holly bushes, ferns and mosses still flourishing in the more sheltered areas.

Get a sense of the size and majesty of the hillfort when the vegetation has died back. See for 23 miles on a clear and bright day. Understand why our ancestors chose to live here.

Best on a frosty morning. The circular walk on page 25 goes past all the best viewpoints, or for a shorter route try the one on page 27.

A note from the artist who has kindly drawn most of our illustrations of plants and animals.

I thought back to the days before the war when as a youngster I was taken to Ham Hill. The quaking grass was my Mum's favourite and a few stalks came home with us to spend the next months in a vase on the mantelpiece. Next season they were replaced. I was taught you could see vibrations caused to the earth as the grass quaked. They certainly did quake, even with no wind. The sow thistle intrigued me as it had prickles but they were not of the painful type. My father showed me how the bird's foot trefoil got its name from the pods and the autumn lady's tresses were the last orchid of the season. So small that we really had to search for them. Ham Hill was the only local place we found them.

Dennis Pearce

Yeovil and District Natural History Society



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Quaking Grass
Briza media

Prickly Sow-thistle
Sonchus asper

Autumn Lady's-tresses
Spiranthes spiralis

Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
Lotus corniculatus

All Ability Trail

Distance: about 1.25km (almost 1 mile)

Start: Pedestrian gate on loop road off main road.

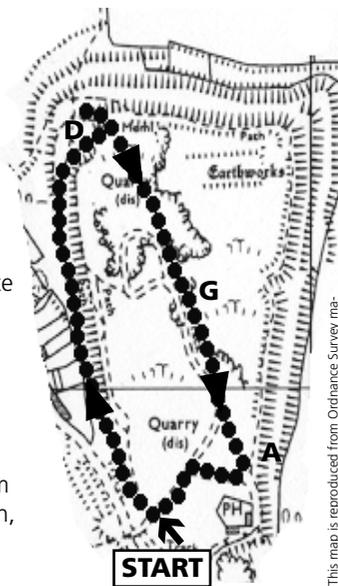
Points of Interest: A, D, G - see pages 16 & 19

There is a gravelled path from near the Ranger's Office to the war memorial and back. This path has been constructed to enable those who are less able bodied, or those with wheel chairs and buggies to get to the war memorial and enjoy the views. Users should note that there are some gradients along this route, and some users may require assistance in places. NB: Quarrying takes place in this area and at times the route may deviate from that shown on the map.

Start: Car parking area on the left before the Prince of Wales pub.

Go through the first gate on your left from the main road, which eventually leads to the war memorial. From the war memorial, continue to follow the surfaced path, which leads you past the stone circle on your right and old quarry face on your left.

Follow surfaced path exiting at the gate opposite the Prince of Wales pub.



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ABOVE: The landscape at Ham Hill Country Park is forever changing as the focus of quarrying moves. The area that changes the most is the one featured in the photograph above - the area between the loop road and the war memorial. New earth bunds will be made and old ones removed. The ranger team will always erect warning signs when the quarrying activity changes, please take note of these and do not enter active work sites.

Answers to Kid's Pages on pages 31 and 32.

A=Hazel, B=Dog Rose, C=Ash, D=Oak, E=Badger, F=Deer,
G=Dog, H=Fox, I=Rabbit, J=Woodmouse, K=Squirrel. Who am I? Hedgehog

Iron Age Amble

Distance: 5.5 km (3.5 miles)

Start: Norton Car Park.

Points of Interest:

A, C, D, E & F, see pages 16 & 19

With road behind, leave car park along path on left by stone bin. Follow path to 'crossroads' by fence corner. Continue straight ahead keeping fence on left hand side. At end of fence continue straight ahead along well defined path, ignoring any paths leading downhill on right until reaching T-junction overlooking the open grassland of Witcombe Valley.

Turn left slightly uphill alongside stone wall to enter field. Continue ahead around edge of field (hedge on right) to exit through gap beside metal gate (near road). Immediately turn right into field through small wooden gate next to large field gate. Turn right along edge of field with hedge on right. At corner of field near stone wall, bear left along

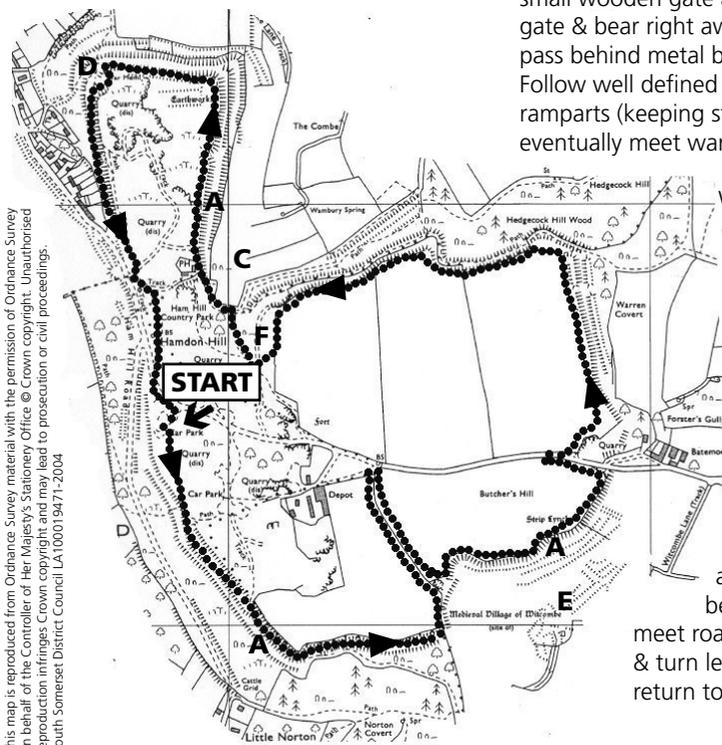
fenceline (Witcombe on right). Follow fence to eventually meet wooden gate onto road. Turn right across road & shortly turn left into layby and through small gate (by large gate) into field.

Follow fence line on right around boundary of field, keep following fence line ignoring small wooden gate on right. Fence line bends left with dry stone wall/fence now on right. Straight ahead into next field, fence still on right. Continue straight ahead into next field with fence on right. Exit field by small wooden gate, near interpretation panel.

Walk straight ahead to stone sculptures. Bear right at sculptures along path gently down hill signposted as 'Bridleway Montacute' to meet metal gate & stile at path junction. Turn left along path, through small gate & turn left up stone steps. Through gate & bear right up slope to tarmac loop road.

Turn right & follow the tarmac loop road to small wooden gate ahead by bin. Through gate & bear right away from gravel path, to pass behind metal bench near stone plinth. Follow well defined path around top of ramparts (keeping steep slope on right), to eventually meet war memorial.

With views behind walk down stone steps. Bear right at bottom of steps along gravelled path & follow to small wooden gate & tarmac road. Bear right and then immediately left towards Ranger's Office (do not go onto main road). Shortly bear right on wide grassy path through picnic area, at path junction bear right gently uphill to meet road. With care cross road, & turn left to walk along verge to return to Norton Car Park.



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Medieval March

Distance: 5.5 km (3.5 miles)

Start: Lime Kiln Car Park.

Points of Interest:

A, B, C, E, F & H, see pages 16 & 19

From centre of car park & with road in front, take footpath on right signposted to Montacute & Stoke to shortly meet road. Straight across road to follow wide path, shortly, at the bottom of the slope, there is a narrow path downhill on the right which takes you to the old deep quarry this is an optional very short detour, otherwise continue ahead to the stone sculptures (Timestones). Turn right slightly uphill to gates on skyline into field. Turn left to walk around edge of field (boundary on left), through small gate & continue ahead along edge of field, through another gate & along two sides of field to eventually meet gate onto road.

Turn left along the road, at road junction turn right along stoney track. At end of track turn left to walk around edge of corral (livestock pen), through small gate & bear right downhill, through field gate & continue along bottom of valley. Shortly turn

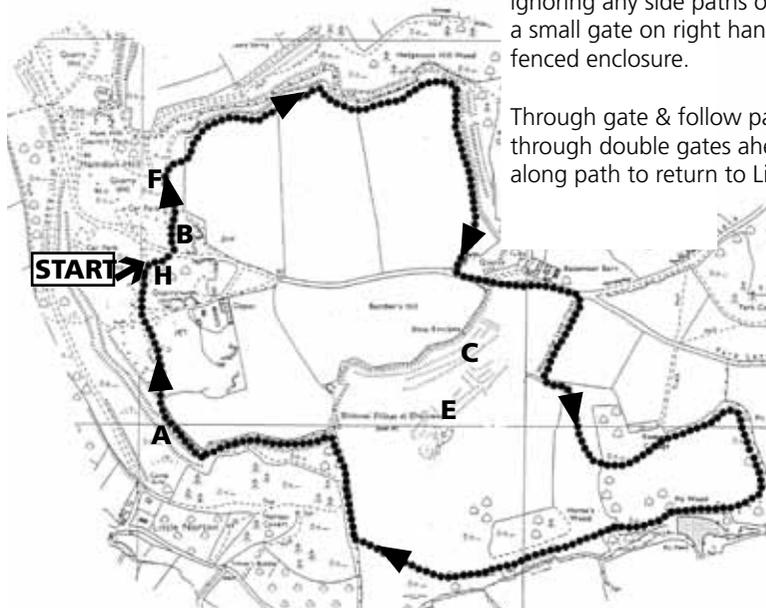
left gently uphill and through double gates into woodland. Straight up hill to emerge at open grassland. Continue straight ahead across grassland, bear left at track junction to go gently uphill to fence/hedge to right of cottage at top of hill bear right along field boundary, keeping hedge/fence on left.

Pass through field gate & continue along track, as track bears left towards gate (DO NOT GO THROUGH GATE) turn right along grassy track downhill & through woodland. At bottom of hill, through field gate to open grassland. Continue ahead along edge of field (fence on left) to pass through another field gate onto track along line of conifers.

Along track to emerge at open grassland. Continue almost straight ahead following fence on left, through gate & newly planted area, & continue ahead. At corner of fence & valley bottom, ahead bearing very slightly right uphill towards trees to pass through small wooden gate into woodland.

Turn right along path uphill, through kissing gate & continue ahead uphill keeping open grassland on right. Shortly after double gates on right hand side near top of hill, turn left along path (do not enter open grassland at very top of hill). Continue along this path, ignoring any side paths on left, to come to a small gate on right hand side at edge of fenced enclosure.

Through gate & follow path ahead, pass through double gates ahead & continue along path to return to Lime Kiln Car Park.



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Quarrying & Views

Distance: 4 km (2.5 miles)

Start: Norton Car Park.

Points of Interest:

A, B, C, D, E, F, G & H, see pages 16 & 19

With road behind, leave car park along path on left by stone bin. Follow path to 'crossroads' by fence corner. Continue straight ahead keeping fence on left hand side. At end of fence continue straight ahead along well defined path, ignoring any paths leading downhill on right until reaching T-junction overlooking the open grassland of Witcombe Valley.

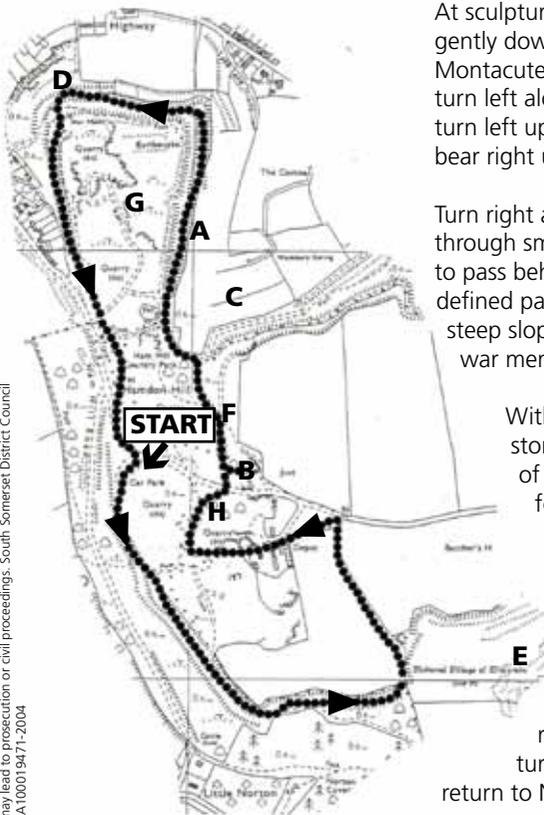
Turn left slightly uphill alongside stone wall to enter field. Continue ahead around edge of field (hedge on right) to exit through gap beside metal gate (near road). Immediately before road turn left along path. Path soon

passes between the gates to the main quarry and Hilltop bungalow, continue straight ahead along gravelled path. Path emerges in an open area near a bench and track junction. Turn right here to walk into Lime Kiln Car Park. From centre of car park & with road in front, take footpath on right signposted to Montacute & Stoke, to shortly meet road. Straight across road to follow wide path, shortly, at the bottom of the slope, there is a narrow path downhill on the right which takes you to the old deep quarry this is an optional very short detour, otherwise continue ahead to the stone sculptures (Timestones).

At sculptures take the wide path ahead gently down hill signposted Bridleway to Montacute. At bottom of slope by field gate, turn left along path, through small gate and turn left up stone steps. Through gate and bear right up slope to tarmac loop road.

Turn right along loop road to shortly go through small gate by bin ahead. Bear right to pass behind metal bench. Follow well defined path around the top ramparts (keep steep slope on right), to eventually meet war memorial.

With views behind, walk down stone steps. Bear right at bottom of steps along gravelled path and follow to small wooden gate and tarmac road. Bear right and then immediately left towards Ranger's Office (do not go onto main road). Shortly bear right on wide grassy path through picnic area, at path junction bear right gently uphill to meet road. With care cross road, and turn left to walk along verge to return to Norton Car Park.



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Montacute Loop

Distance: 5.25 km (3.25 miles)

Start: Norton Car Park.

Points of Interest:

A, C, & E, see pages 16 & 19

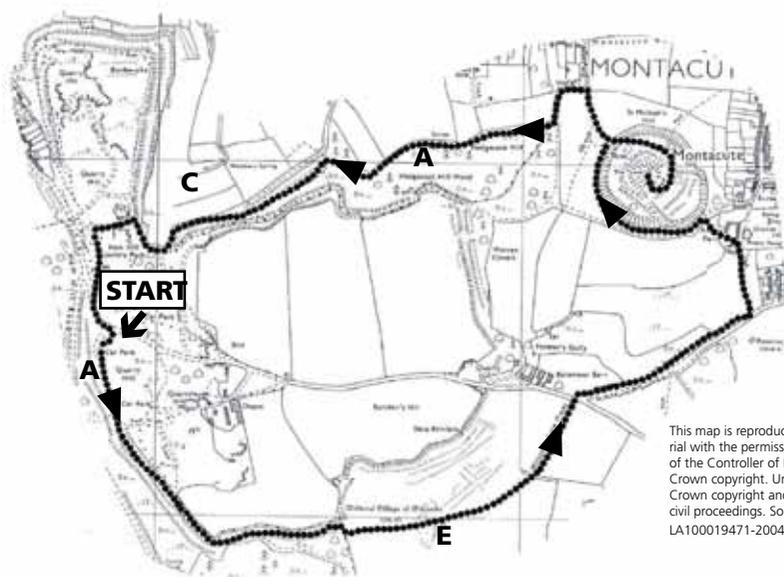
With road behind, leave car park along path on left by stone bin. At path 'crossroads', continue straight ahead keeping fence on left. Follow this path, ignoring any paths leading downhill on right, until reaching T-junction overlooking the open grassland of Witcombe Valley.

Turn right on path slightly downhill & shortly turn left through double gates into open grassland. Continue straight downhill & then bear left uphill on grassy track to meet stoney track. Follow stoney track to road. Cross road & enter field to left of lane. Follow footpath along edge of fields keeping hedge & road on right. Path ends at gate, which opens out onto road. Turn left along road & almost immediately left again along wide grassy track, signposted Montacute Church, towards farm & pond ahead. Shortly before pond, by farm buildings, turn left along permissive path, & shortly bear right up grassy slope & through metal kissing gate.

Continue ahead & bear left to fence line along woodland boundary. Follow boundary around the bottom of the hill, until you come to a stile next to a National Trust sign (ignore first stile on right after a short distance). Climb over stile and follow the wide path up hill - this takes you to St. Michael's Tower. To return retrace your steps to stile by NT sign.

Over stile and bear slightly right downhill to kissing gate. Through gate, down a few steps and turn left along track. Follow track, which soon bears left and gently uphill. Path splits into two, bear right along wide main path along bottom of woodland. Stay on main path which eventually meets steps, up steps and bear right still along main path. Path emerges at main junction by field gate and signpost. Turn right along path, through small gate and turn left up stone steps, through another gate and bear right up to tarmac loop road.

Turn left along loop road and shortly bear right near Ranger's Office to go through picnic area, at path junction bear right gently uphill to meet road. With care cross road, and turn left to walk along verge to return to Norton Car Park.



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Trampling a Timeline

Distance: 6 km (3.75 miles)

Start: The Ranger's Office

Points of Interest:

A, C, D, E, F & G, see pages 16 & 19

From the Ranger's Office turn right along tarmac loop road, pass the Prince of Wales pub and car park on your left, go through small gate ahead. Bear right to metal bench & first panel. Retrace steps to gate and back to building, at building take path on left signposted to Montacute, & after a few yards turn left again, signposted to East Stoke, through gate & down stone steps. Turn right at the bottom through gate. Follow path to track junction by field gate, turn right slightly uphill to stone sculptures.

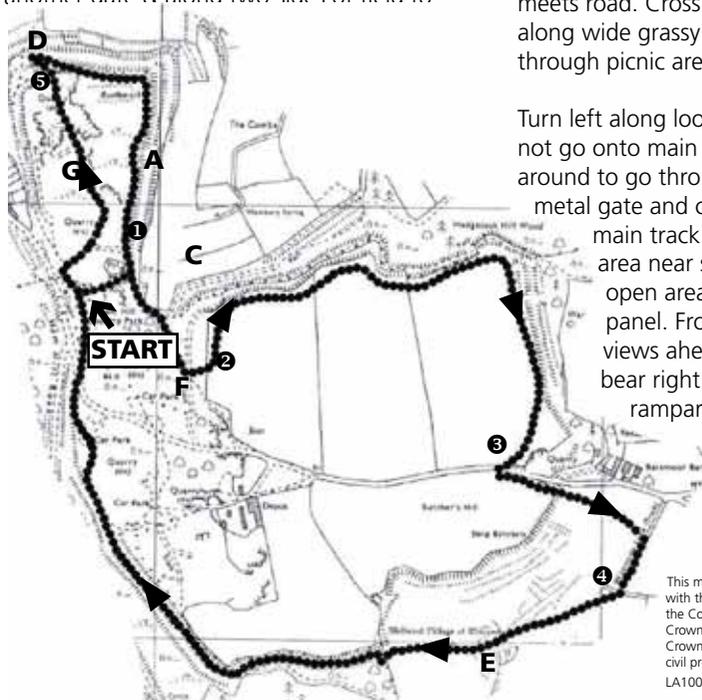
At sculptures turn left to go through double gates in fence on skyline & to second panel. Turn left to walk around edge of field (boundary on left), through small gate & continue ahead along edge of field, through another gate & along two sides of field to

eventually meet third panel & gate onto road. Turn right across road & after a few yards turn left through small gate. Turn left in field to walk along boundary & shortly left again through small gate into the open grassland of Witcombe Valley. Straight ahead, walking almost parallel to road, to stony track opposite. Turn right along track to fourth panel.

At end of track, bear right downhill along well defined grassy track to valley bottom & small fenced off area. Walk straight up opposite side of valley to double gates on edge of woodland. Turn right through gates along path & shortly at track junction turn left along path (do not enter open grassland at very top of hill). Continue along this path, ignoring any side paths on left, to come to a small gate on right hand side at edge of fenced enclosure.

Do not go through gate but continue along path (fence on right), when fence ends continue straight ahead along same path (ignore any side paths) to eventually arrive in Norton Car Park. Straight across top of car park to follow path opposite which soon meets road. Cross road & bear slightly left along wide grassy track, bear left at junction through picnic area meet loop road.

Turn left along loop road & shortly right (do not go onto main road), follow loop road around to go through small gate alongside metal gate and cattle grid ahead. Follow main track which emerges into open area near stone circle. Walk across open area towards memorial & fifth panel. From war memorial (with views ahead and stone circle behind), bear right to follow path along top ramparts back to starting point.



1 2 3 4 5 = Panels

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Education Service

The Ham Hill ranger team are able to offer a comprehensive education service for both schools groups and out of school clubs of all ages. Whether you would like a ranger-led orienteering session, woodland games, history tour or plants and habitats study session, please contact the ranger team on the details below to discuss your requirements. There are also various resources available to facilitate an individual or school-led study in the education centre, such as sweep nets, ID books and management plans.



Bug hunting

Friends of Ham Hill

This enthusiastic group of volunteers meet bi-monthly to think of new ideas to help celebrate, improve and conserve Ham Hill. Achievements of the Friends group include planning and helping to run the annual Ham Hill Heritage Fayre, securing grant funding for several projects, employing a seasonal ranger with money raised, and running many successful guided walks and talks. The work of the Friends group is key to the success of the Country Park, and we are always looking for new members that might like to join the group – contact the Ranger team if you would like to join.

Events

The Rangers at Ham Hill and our other countryside sites: Yeovil Country Park and Chard Reservoir, organise a wide diversity of events throughout the year. The events are designed to give people of all ages an opportunity to learn more about the beautiful wildlife that inhabits the various sites, the fascinating heritage and geology of Ham Hill, and also a chance to explore the great outdoors whilst having fun! Visit the SSDC website for events listings: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/countrysideevents or email as below to join our mailing list, or contact 01935 462 462.

Activities all year round

Orienteering - Ham Hill Country Park has a permanent orienteering course – this involves using a special map with a key to find lots of markers and recording the numbers written on them. **Compass trails** - There are two compass trails, one located in the stone circle for beginners, and the other located in Witcombe Valley for the more adventurous! This involves using a compass

to take certain bearings, pacing out a given distance and finding all the letters in the correct order.

Quiz – Use a map of the Country Park to find various locations, and answer questions about the wildlife, history, geology and rangers of Ham Hill. Find out the answers with clues that are given to you, by investigating, or by reading information panels. Visit the recreation page on the Ham Hill website to download all of the above activities: www.visitsouthsomerset.com/hamhill

Look out club

The Ham Hill and Yeovil Country Park rangers run a junior “Look Out Club” for children aged 8-12 once every two months on a Saturday, which is a morning of fun activities just for children (younger children may attend but must be accompanied by an adult). The activities are designed to promote an interest in wildlife, history and the great outdoors.

We do all sorts of activities such as making bird boxes and feeders, bug hunting, pond dipping, willow weaving, hands on history sessions and usually one ‘away’ trip a year such as kayaking or visiting wildlife sanctuaries. There is a small charge to participate to help cover our costs. For more information on the Look Out Club or to be added to the mailing list, please phone SSDC on 01935 462282, or email as below.

Ham Hill Office: **01935 823617**

Ham Hill email:

hamhill@southsomerset.gov.uk

Ham Hill website:

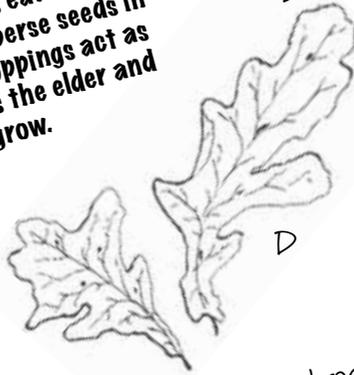
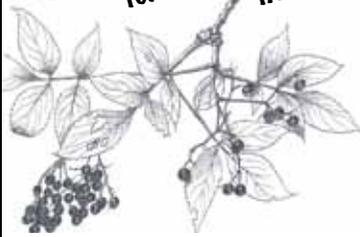
www.visitsouthsomerset.com/hamhill

Who am I?

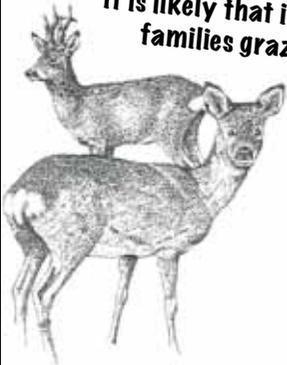
**I am sometimes also known as an 'urchin'.
I weigh 800-1000g
I live on average for 2 years,
but sometimes up to 8.
I hibernate**

Can you find these leaves as you walk around Ham Hill Country Park?
Can you identify them?

Elderberry - Elder bushes and stinging nettles often grow near badger setts. Badgers eat the elderberries and disperse seeds in their droppings. Droppings act as fertiliser & encourages the elder and nettles to grow.



Roe deer - deer do not live in herds like many other animals, they live in families. If you see a large group of deer it is likely that it is two or more families grazing together



Can you track down which animals have left these behind?



Answers: see bottom of page 24

Wordsearch

Can you find the names of some things you might see at Ham Hill? Words can go up or down, across, backwards and diagonally.

L	E	R	T	S	E	K	B	W	F
D	O	K	E	S	T	R	A	O	H
R	F	R	A	V	E	N	X	O	A
I	X	G	C	W	R	E	E	D	Z
B	T	A	S	H	K	J	H	P	E
Y	I	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L
D	B	O	X	T	L	D	P	C	C
A	B	A	K	R	A	L	Y	K	S
L	A	S	H	M	O	U	S	E	O
D	R	A	Z	Z	U	B	D	R	M

- Ash
- Buzzard
- Deer
- Fox
- Hazel
- Kestrel
- Ladybird
- Mouse
- Oak
- Orchid
- Rabbit
- Raven
- Skylark
- Squirrel
- Woodpecker



Which pair has been eaten by who?

One is a squirrel the other a mouse

K



J



Rabbit - Shallow scrapes in the grass, exposing patches of soil, are common near rabbit warrens. Rabbits make them as territory markers, to tell other bunnies to stay away as it's their patch!



Scavenger Hunt - What can you find?
Don't include anything man-made!

Something soft

Something shiny

Something over 100 years old

Something that makes you happy

Something hairy

Something that's been nibbled

Something pretty

Something with a pattern

Something perfectly round

Visitor Information

Telephones

There is no public pay phone on Ham Hill; the nearest phone is situated at the bottom of the hill in Stoke sub Hamdon - opposite the Fleur de Lis. In case of an emergency (to dial 999 only) there is a phone in the Prince of Wales Inn and also the Ranger's Office - however their availability will depend on opening times.

Quarries

There are two working quarries, and many old quarry faces - some hidden in the bushes! The smaller working quarry is near the war memorial, whilst most of the area is protected by earth bunds, there is no gate to prevent access into the area. Hence, unsupervised children may be able to enter the area. The main working quarry is situated on the opposite side of the road behind 'Hilltop Bungalow'. This quarry has a perimeter fence and the site can only be entered through the main gate. **For everyone's safety, please keep away from quarry edges, and do not attempt to climb any rock faces.**

Out and about on Ham Hill

Ham Hill is managed for public open access. Although there are a number of public footpaths and bridleways, people on foot are free to go anywhere on Ham Hill. Please note however that it may not be possible to walk to places in a straight line. There may be old quarry workings, stone walls or sheep fencing crossing your route!

Please remember that Ham Hill is used by a variety of user groups, from dog walkers, horse riders and grazing sheep to mountain bikers and staff undertaking conservation works. Please be alert and considerate to others at all times.

What is strictly prohibited?

Ham Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and any sort of excavations or the use of metal detectors is deemed an offence.

Police action will be taken.

No camping or caravanning please.

Dogs

Dogs are welcome on Ham Hill. We do ask that where sheep are grazing that all dogs are kept on a lead. Up to date details of where sheep are grazing can be found on the notice board outside the Ranger's Office. There are numerous dog bins across the hill and free poop scoops are available from the Ranger's Office. Please clean up!

First Aid

All Ham Hill staff are first aid trained, and a first aid kit is available in the Ranger's Office. Please note that we are unable to dispense any medicines or creams. A pharmacy is available at the bottom of the hill in Stoke sub Hamdon.

Toilets

Toilets are located next to the Ranger's Office and are open during office hours each day. Please note that a R.A.D.A.R. key is required for the disabled toilet. If required a key is available from the Ranger's Office when manned.

Drinking Water

There is a tap available outside the Ranger's Office for drinking water. Please remember to turn off the tap after use!

Police

In an emergency dial 999. For any other enquiries please dial 0845 456 7000. When giving the address to any of the emergency services the address below should be given: Your exact location on the hill, Ham Hill Country Park, Stoke sub Hamdon, SOMERSET TA14 6RW. The Ranger's Office telephone number is 01935 823617. Grid reference of the Office is ST478168.

Barbecues

We do not have any public barbecues. You are welcome to bring your own but please use them in the designated area near to the Ranger's Office. If using disposable barbecues please use the stone platforms provided and not the grass.



AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

Incidents of thefts from parked motor vehicles within the Country Park are high. The police are actively engaged in trying to identify and apprehend the offenders so that we can reduce the level of crime affecting the site.

The **Vulnerable Vehicle Scheme** is designed to heighten the awareness of car owners to the possibility of car crime. Vehicles are identified as being vulnerable if they have items of property left clearly on view, or is in some way insecure. A letter is then sent to the registered owner of the vehicle informing them of the likelihood of a crime being committed on the vehicle.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) regularly patrol the site at Ham Hill. They help the rangers enforce the bylaws for the Country Park and ensure that the site is safe.



Please work with us to reduce this crime trend, taking the following steps could protect your property and help catch the offenders.

- **Don't leave anything on open display in your vehicle - it may attract thieves**
- **Remove expensive items from your car, leave them at home or take them with you**
- **If you remove the security panel from your in car audio system, leave the glove compartment open to show that it is not in the vehicle**
- **Use the "Don't Bother" card when placing the card on the dashboard it will remind you not to leave items on display. (Available from police stations and the Ham Hill centre)**
- **When parking your vehicle ensure it is not hidden from view. Parking in a place with plenty of passers by is the best way of avoiding a break in**
- **If you have a vehicle security device - USE IT**
- **If you see a crime being committed dial 999 and report it straight away**
- **If you have any information regarding a crime call **Crimestoppers** on 0845 456 7000**

**The Beat Manager, Police Station, Kirkham Street, SOMERTON TA11 7NN
Telephone: 01275 818181**

Ham Hill Herald



Walks
Geology
History
Wildlife
Folklore
Maps
Education
Learning
Rangers
Fun

For more information or if you have any queries about Ham Hill Country Park please contact the Ham Hill Office on 01935 823617, email hamhill@southsomerset.gov.uk or visit

www.visitsouthsomerset.com/hamhill

If you need this information in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please contact 01935 462228

Este documento encontra – se didpanlén portugûis, a pedido.
Dokument tem jest na yczenie udost pniany w jzyka polskim.

