

Rocks are Dull

#mendiprocks

Rocks are quite dull and difficult to bring to life in an exciting way. They don't do anything on our human timescale, they operate on a clock we struggle to get our little minds around through forces we struggle to comprehend. Studying them for a living must be a struggle! Wait though, if we do begin to understand them they help us with some really important problems like energy and water use, mineral resources, crops and farming and adapting to climate change. And they're the source of many adventures!

Did you know the Mendip Hills are the birth place of geological mapping? In the early 1800's William Smith worked as a surveyor for the Somersetshire Coal Company, he realised that by studying fossils and the rock layers they were in he could predict other rock layers as they were laid down in a pattern. His first map of the geological layers around Bath was published in 1799, over the next few years he polished his new technique of showing the geological layers through different colours, then in 1815 he produced the first map of the entire country. To see the whole map click [here](#).



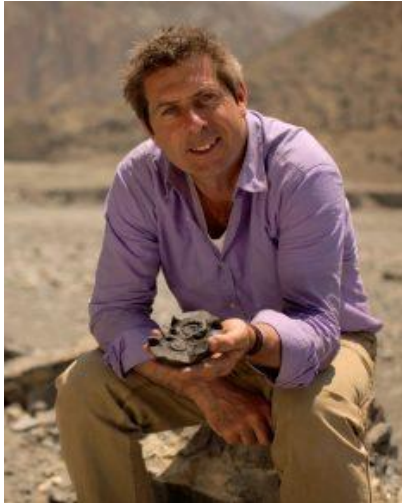
So, the Mendip Hills play an important part in the academic study of geology. Rocks may seem a little dull sometimes, even we must admit that! We're lucky we have lots of 'ologists nearby and those that travel from far and wide to bring the rocks of Mendip to life. This conglomerate of geologists answers our call every year to help put on the Mendip Rocks programme of events. We have a formation of professors, experts and informed locals to lead you on walks, talks and tours that will interpret the significance of our local rocks to life before your eyes.

For eight years now we've been able to access quarries and sites you can't normally get to. We get that quarries in the protected landscape of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are contentious. The Mendip quarries produce twelve million tonnes of stone a year, employ two thousand people, and have an annual turnover of £150m.

Our understanding of geology has been expanded by quarrying and in some cases amazing cave systems have been opened increasing our knowledge of archaeology. But they are literally digging away the area. Wildlife has adapted in some instances

to the quarries but in other areas it will have impacted on species. There are many arguments for and against, the best thing would be to go on one of the quarry tours and see for yourself.

Seeing geology up close, from the exposed seams at Ubley Warren through to the intimate Ebbor Gorge, is one of the 12 special qualities of the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These 12 qualities define the naturally beautiful and nationally protected area.



Rocks can be dull, unless you get up close and see how they relate to your life. “Selling Plant Earth: Communicating geology to the public” will be the very subject [Professor Iain Stewart](#) from many television programmes talks about on 12th October at the Somerset Earth Science Centre. Here a real expert tell you why rocks aren't dull.

To book on to the Professor Iain Stewart event click [here](#). Or take a look at the [Mendip Rocks! 2019](#) events programme.