



# Exploring The Stiperstones

Discover Shropshire

## Dramatic rocks and sheltered valleys

The Stiperstones area is a stunning landscape. It has dramatic and wild scenery, sheltered valleys with villages and hamlets linked by narrow country lanes. The area is steeped in history and folklore - there are ancient cairns, hill forts and historic lead mines as well as spine-chilling tales of The Devil, Wild Edric and local witches. It is also a haven for wildlife and includes The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve. Look out for magnificent birds of prey, delicate wildflowers and some of the oldest holly trees in Europe.



The Stiperstones skyline

This leaflet has been produced by Shropshire County Council with help from Natural England, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, Shropshire Mines Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and South Shropshire District Council. Photos by Ben Osborne.



To explore more of Shropshire's beautiful landscape and to find out more about its people, nature and history go to [www.discovershropshire.org.uk](http://www.discovershropshire.org.uk)

**Safety First**  
The Stiperstones area is high ground. Weather conditions can deteriorate rapidly, particularly in winter. The paths are rocky and steep in places. It can also be boggy, especially after rain. Please make sure you have suitable clothing and footwear.

**Ordnance Survey Maps**  
If you plan to explore the area on foot, horse or cycle we recommend that you use the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 216 Welshpool and Montgomery.

**Bus services**  
Shropshire Hills Shuttles bus service runs at weekends and Bank Holidays through the summer season. [www.shropshirehillsshuttles.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehillsshuttles.co.uk) 01743 251000

**Shropshire Wildlife Trust**  
[www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

**Natural England**  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

**Shropshire County Council** 0845 678 9000  
[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

**The Bog Visitor Centre**  
The Bog, Stiperstones, Shropshire, SY5 0NG.  
01743 792484 [www.bogcentre.co.uk](http://www.bogcentre.co.uk)

**Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**  
01588 674080 [www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk)  
[www.shropshirehills.info](http://www.shropshirehills.info)

**Contacts and useful information**

## Industrial remains

The countryside seems peaceful and rural today but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this was a busy industrial area with a series of small mines extracting lead, zinc, barytes and other minerals. There is a long history of mining, dating back to Roman times, but the main period of production was the 1870s when this area produced over 10% of Britain's lead. Snailbeach Mine was the largest, employing hundreds of miners. You can visit the mine and enjoy a self-guided tour of the extensive range of nineteenth century buildings including the Engine House and a blacksmith's shop.

The miners worked long, gruelling hours in difficult and dangerous conditions. Their wages were poor and work was intermittent. Many miners had smallholdings on the surrounding hills, where they kept a few animals and grew fruit and vegetables to supplement their income. Most of the smallholdings have been abandoned but some garden plants remain, with laburnum and lilac adding unexpected flashes of colour in hedgerows. You can see the intriguing remains of smallholders' homes and fields at Blakemoorgate and Brook Vessons.

## Amazing wildlife

The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve is famous for its red grouse, buzzards and ravens as well as the heather that colours the ridge purple in late summer. The Hollies is another beautiful and captivating nature reserve with gnarled and ancient holly trees shaped by centuries of pollarding, when branches are regularly cut from a tree. At The Hollies, the trees were cut by local smallholders for winter fodder for their animals. The smallholdings at Brook Vessons have some of Britain's largest rowan and fruit trees.



The Hollies

The spoil heaps from the abandoned lead mines have been slowly reclaimed by nature and the mine reservoirs are home to a variety of aquatic plants and animals.



Broad bodied chaser dragonfly



Explore The Stiperstones landscape at a leisurely pace, enjoying the countryside, discovering villages and hidden valleys, and relishing the far-reaching views from the high ground. There are nature reserves with glorious heathland, pasture with ancient holly trees, historic lead mines with surviving buildings and abandoned smallholdings with the evocative remains of miners' homes and gardens. Wherever you go in this very special landscape it will delight and enthrall you.



**The Stiperstones** is a spectacular 6 mile/10km ridge dominating the skyline with craggy rock outcrops surrounded by heather heathland. It is a wild and beautiful landscape with outstanding wildlife, fascinating geology and a rich tapestry of mining, farming and folklore. Most of The Stiperstones is a National Nature Reserve, owned and managed by Natural England.

**Tankerville Lead Mine** is a local landmark with its tall octagonal brick chimney and Watson's Engine House which have been recently renovated by the Shropshire Mines Trust and Shropshire County Council.

### Snailbeach Lead Mine

was the most productive mine in Shropshire in the nineteenth century. There is a trail around the well-preserved mine buildings with information provided by the Shropshire Mines Trust, who also organise underground tours in summer.

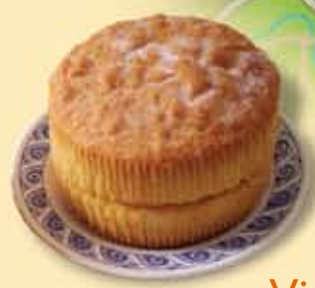


**Blakemoorgate** is a collection of abandoned smallholdings that were once the homes of miners from the Snailbeach lead mine. The old fields have a rich flora with mountain pansy and heath speedwell.

### Brook Vessons

nature reserve is managed by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. People lived here once, but now only the walls and hedges of their farms remain, shaded by spectacular rowan, birch, holly and crab apple trees.

**The Hollies** is one of the oldest groves of holly trees in Europe. Some of the ancient and gnarled trees are around 400 years old. The Hollies is a Shropshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve.



### The Bog Visitor Centre

has information about the area and the community that developed around The Bog Mine. Run by volunteers, the centre sells local crafts and refreshments. The Flenny Bank and Mucklewick Walks start from The Bog car park.

**Mucklewick Walk** - a 6 mile/10km circular walk from The Bog car park. It includes Nipstone Rock, part of The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve, as well as farmland with wonderful views towards the Welsh hills.

**Flenny Bank Walk** - a 4.5 mile/7km circular walk from The Bog car park taking in Shelve Pool and its wildlife, local farmland, woods and splendid views to Corndon with its characteristic flat topped summit.

**Shropshire Way** - a long distance footpath giving a 140 mile/225km circuit of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve.

**Stiperstones Stomp** - a 5 mile/8km walk from The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve car park along the broad but rocky ridge down to Habberley Village. You can walk back or use the Stiperstones Shuttle Bus service as both the NNR and Habberley village are on the route.

**The Stiperstones All-ability Trail** - a 545yard/500m trail which starts from the car park with resting places, a tapping rail and wind-up sound boxes along the route. There are excellent views of The Stiperstones ridge and The Long Mynd.

To follow these routes and for details of the full rights of way network we recommend Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 216.