

Wildlife

The decline in industrial activity combined with the lack of agricultural improvement means that Kit Hill has become an oasis for wildlife.

Climbing to just over 1000 feet (334m) above sea level, Kit Hill is the highest point of Hingston Down ridge, within the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Apart from small scale cultivation in the Bronze Age and Medieval times, Kit Hill has only ever been lightly grazed. This, combined with periodic cutting and burning of vegetation, has enabled heathland to survive. Characterised by a mix of heathers, gorses, grasses and bilberry (known locally as whortleberry) this is a precious remnant of Western Heath habitat.

The Hill is currently managed by a system of grazing, cutting and burning. This helps to maintain the heathland - if left completely on its own the ground would revert to scrub woodland.

The Hill supports a variety of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals. Stonechat, skylark and tree pipit nest in the heathland, while buzzard and kestrel hunt overhead. Furry moth caterpillars are common on the heather and during the summer months the sunny slopes are popular with basking adders.

On other parts of the Hill, deciduous woodland is returning and the old quarrying works have become valuable wetlands; coming alive with frogs and toads in spring and dragonflies and damselflies throughout the summer.

Nature has even reclaimed the mine workings with bats roosting deep underground. Much of Kit Hill's flora and fauna is nationally rare and protected by law.



A wild, rugged granite hilltop famous for its fine views and fascinating history, Kit Hill Country Park forms a dominating feature to be seen for miles around.

Enjoying Kit Hill

With its 400 acres (152 hectares) for public enjoyment, Kit Hill Country Park is an ideal place for a wide range of activities including bird watching, kite flying and picnics. Access to all car parks is good with stunning views in all directions. At the summit, three viewing tables help you identify features as you view the surrounding countryside. This is suitable for wheelchair users.

There are many miles of path for exploring, which include:

- Some level walking around the summit with a number of rest places which is suitable for wheel and pushchair users. However, due to the wild, rugged nature of the Hill, many of the paths are unsuitable for most pushchair and wheelchair users. Check www.cornwall.gov.uk for further details.
- A circular walk of approximately 2 miles, waymarked by distinctive granite posts.
- A circular permissive horse trail over 3 miles in length marked with wooden posts and blue arrows.

Various events celebrating the beauty, history and wildlife of the Hill are available throughout the year - see local press or Countryside events programme for details.

Volunteers assist in the management of the Hill. Tasks vary from practical conservation 'on the ground', to helping with events, site inspections and survey work. All abilities welcome no experience required. See back page for contact details.

As part of the ongoing management of the Hill is grazed with livestock. Please close gates when you pass.

Dogs are welcome, but please keep them on a lead in sensitive areas or car park edges, consider other people's dogs and place in bins provided.

Protect plants and animals. Do not pick flowers and take your litter home.

Take Care! Due to its industrial past, there are many potentially hazardous features on the Hill.



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History

As the highest and most distinctive hill in the vicinity, Kit Hill may have had religious significance in prehistoric times. At least 18 burial mounds occur on its slopes, including one beneath the summit chimney, and traces of early field systems can be seen on aerial photographs.

Prehistoric people left their mark with a Neolithic long barrow (approx. 3000 BC) on the lower eastern slope and Bronze Age round barrows (2000-1500 BC), forming part of a line of barrows along Hingston Down.



For thousands of years Kit Hill has been a focal point for human activity.

In more recent times, Kit Hill was an important strategic point above the natural boundary of the Tamar River. In the 9th Century, the battle of Hingston Down was fought on the lower slopes, when combined forces of the Cornish and the Danes were defeated by the invading Saxons, bringing an end to Cornish independence.

In the 18th Century, in commemoration of this ancient battle, Sir John Call of Whiteford, near Stoke Climsland built a folly - a five-sided enclosure intended to imitate a Saxon or Danish fort. The remains of the folly can be seen as the boundaries to the grassed area at the summit.



Since 1929, the Old Cornwall Society has lit an annual Midsummer's Eve Bonfire at the summit.

Getting to Kit Hill



Walk / Cycle: Leave the car at home. There is a multi-use trail linking Callington to the Hill and onwards to Gunnislake. Secure bike parking is available.

Public transport: For the latest information on buses and trains please visit the Traveline SW website at www.travelinesw.com. Gunnislake railway station is approximately 3 miles to the east.

Where to go on access land

- Kit Hill is access land to enjoy on foot or on the horse trails but take care as many of the features are potentially hazardous. Please stay on the paths - the access symbols displayed at some of the entry and exit points will help guide you.
- Go to www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk for maps of all access land in Cornwall and for up to date information and what local restrictions may be in place.



Kit Hill is managed by Cornwall Council.

For further information please contact:
Cornwall Council, Kit Hill Office, Clitters, Callington, Cornwall PL17 8HW Tel: 01872 323468 or email: environment.volunteers@cornwall.gov.uk www.cornwall.gov.uk
 AONB Link: www.tamarvalley.org.uk
 World Heritage Site: www.cornishmining.org.uk

If you would like this information in another format please contact:
 Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY
 Telephone: 0300 1234 100
 Email: enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk
www.cornwall.gov.uk

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Mining and quarrying

The granite form of Kit Hill originated as molten rock which cooled and solidified deep within the earth's crust. Stress fractures formed during cooling created conduits through which mineral-rich fluids flowed. As these fluids cooled, crystallisation took place forming lodes containing metallic ores of tin, copper and tungsten.

The quarrying of granite started through the simple exploitation of surface moorstones weathered from the surrounding bedrock. Over time this activity gave way to well-developed industrial-scale bedrock quarries, the latter eventually occupying two main sites on the northern hill slopes. The larger south-eastern quarry was last to operate closing in 1955.



In 2006 Kit Hill was included with other historic mining landscapes across Cornwall and west Devon as part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site (www.cornishmining.org.uk).

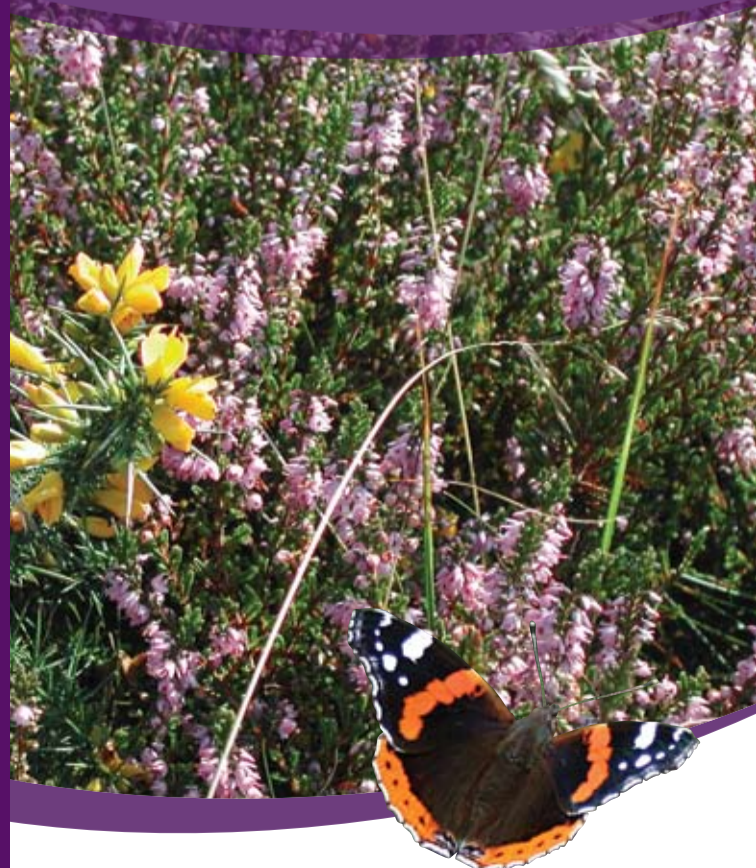
Metallic mineral production is known to have commenced on Kit Hill from a least the medieval period when tin in 'shode' form (stones of tin ore weathered from the 'back' or upper parts of the lodes) was exploited via small dry pits or by more extensive excavations using the application of water to remove waste. Later, narrow outcrop workings were developed to directly exploit tin lodes and by the 18th century deep shaft mining had commenced assisted by adit drainage.

The rather ornate landmark chimney which dominates the summit of the Hill dates from 1858 and was part of the pumping arrangements for a series of mining concerns which operated until 1885. Mining last took place at Kit Hill during the First World War when tin and tungsten were sought and many mining relics relating to this and other workings remain.

Both granite and metals have been exploited on Kit Hill for millennia and these combined activities have shaped its landscape creating a fascinating legacy for the visitor to discover.



Kit Hill Country Park



a wild, rugged granite hilltop famous for its fine views and fascinating history

Exploring Kit Hill

The Hill is an archaeological and geological treasure store, having been extensively mined and quarried from medieval times up until as recently as 1955. Formerly owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, Kit Hill was given to the people of Cornwall in 1985 to celebrate the birth of Prince William.



The Quarry

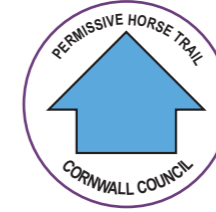
Large scale quarrying, for quality granite, began in the 1880's. The granite was used for sea defences in Plymouth, London and as far away as Singapore. The stone was shaped and finished within the quarry and lowered on trucks down the incline to sidings which connected to the 3'6" gauge East Cornwall Mineral Railway. Look out for dragonflies and damselflies over the water throughout the summer.



Horse trail

Horse Riders can enjoy the Hill by using the circular horse trail, way-marked by wooden posts with blue arrows. Access onto the trail is from four points around the periphery of the Hill and there is plenty of scope for riders to vary their route.

Please do not ride on the footpaths or the summit. For a more detailed leaflet on the horse trail please write to the address overleaf.



-  Shared use path
-  Roads
-  Way marked walking trail
-  Linking footpaths
-  Horse trail
-  Boundary of Open access land
-  Telephone
-  Horse trail access point
-  Parking
-  Rest place
-  Viewpoints
-  Barrows
-  Information point

In case of an emergency

The nearest telephone is located at Louis Cafe and Rangers Office (not 24 hours).

The Grid reference of the Summit car park is SX 37476 71380.

Walking trail

There is an easy to follow trail, way marked by distinctive granite posts. Allow 2 hours to fully enjoy the walk. The path is uneven and can be wet in places. **Please close all the gates and keep dogs under control.**

Image © Ron Bushell



Trails

Look out for walking and horse trail way markers.



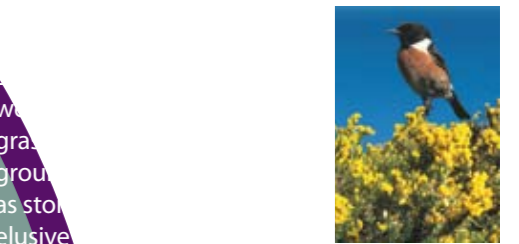
North Engine Shaft

Also known as Old Crumbly, is over 200 metres deep. The smaller shafts, now protected by fencing, were used for ventilation and prospecting.



South Kit Hill Mine

Opened in 1856, reached a maximum depth of over 100m. Around the chimney lie the remains of an engine house with its flywheel slots and six circular 'buddles' where crushed rock was stirred to separate heavy tin ore from waste 'tailings'.



Summit Stack

The Summit Stack, built in 1858 for the Kit Hill Great Consols/ Kit Hill United mining complex, is a famous landmark. It stands on one bastion of a pentagonal earthwork which is thought to have been an 18th century folly. The chimney served a steam engine that pumped water and lifted ore from the deep mine workings. The tunnel like flue, which carried arsenical fumes, crossed on the approach to the main mine shafts. Below these remains lies a Bronze Age burial mound.