

Welcome to Middledown Nature Reserve

What to look out for:

- In spring you may see brown hare on the grasslands
- In summer look for wild thyme flowering on the anthills and yellow rattle in the hay meadows with its distinctive seed pods
- In autumn brightly coloured wax-cap fungi can be found nestling in the sward
- In winter flocks of redwings and fieldfares can be seen feeding on the hawthorn berries

Middledown Nature Reserve is owned and managed by Somerset Wildlife Trust. This 40 hectare (100 acre) site is important for its flower-rich grassland on carboniferous limestone outcrops and neutral hay meadows lying on thicker soils.



History and management

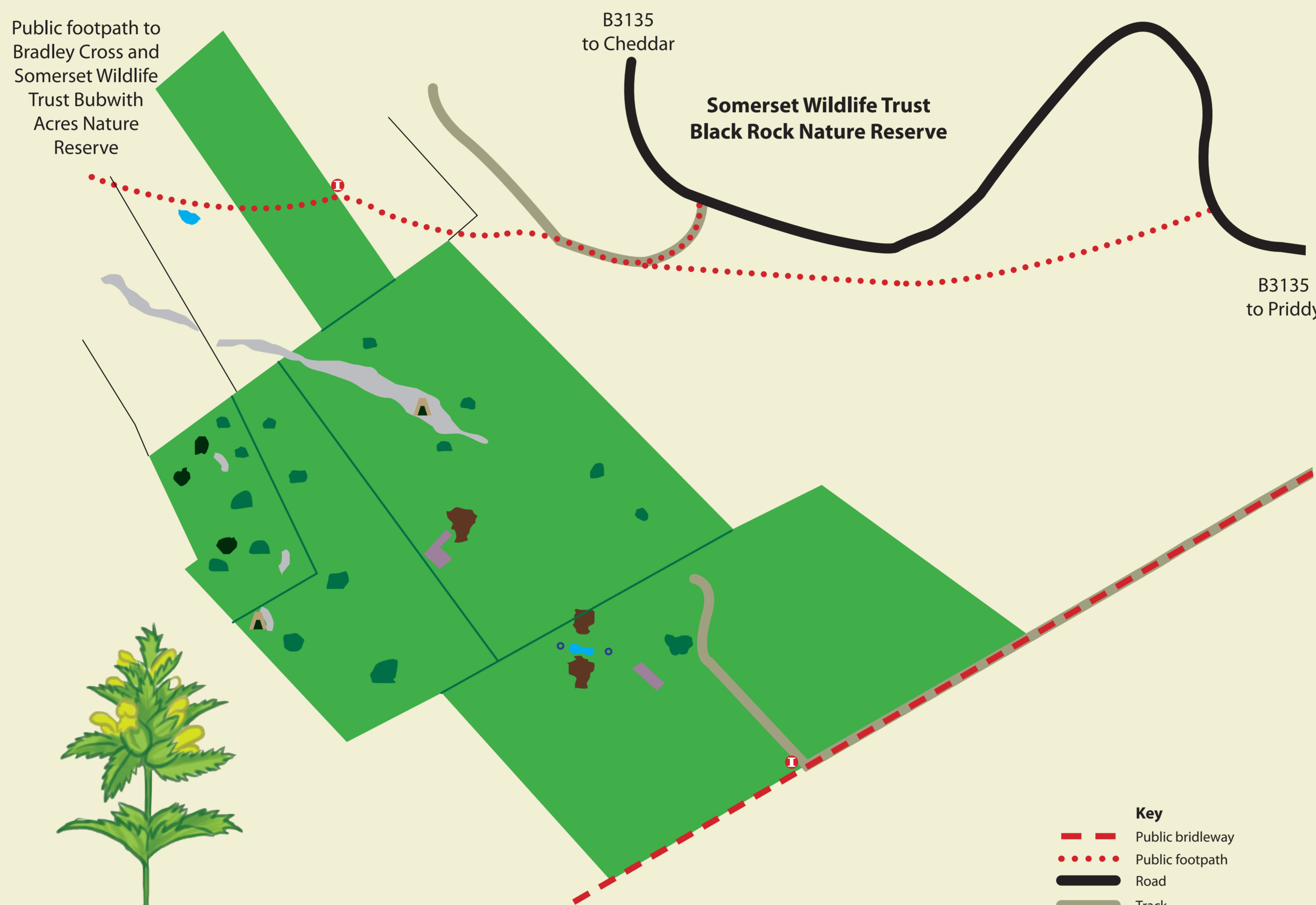
The dry-stone walls found on the reserve are typical of the Mendip landscape and date back to the field enclosures of the 19th Century. The two groups of ruined buildings were probably once part of a farm. The shallow depressions still visible beside many of the structures suggest that stone for the walls and buildings was quarried on site as was customary on Mendip.

The fields are maintained by hay cutting the meadows and otherwise by grazing with sheep, cattle and Exmoor ponies. This keeps the vegetation low to allow flowering plants to flourish. Scrub and bracken are being controlled to prevent them from dominating the grassland.

Meadow restoration work

In some less flower-rich areas of the reserve we have undertaken work to introduce a variety of species as part of the Coronation Meadows project, which aims to fulfil HRH Prince Charles' vision to create new flower-rich meadows in every county. The ground was prepared by harrowing to create bare patches for seeds to germinate in, after which seed harvested from Somerset's Coronation Meadow - our Chancellors Farm Reserve - was spread by volunteers. By the following year, both yellow rattle and eyebright had established, with more species expected to appear over time. Local school children also helped to grow and plant plugs of other key species such as bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed and cowslip.

Public footpath to
Bradley Cross and
Somerset Wildlife
Trust Bubwith
Acres Nature
Reserve



Key	
	Public bridleway
	Public footpath
	Road
	Track
	Field Boundary
	Information board
	Grass
	Scrub
	Bracken
	Trees
	Rock outcrop
	Ruins
	Pond
	Sinkhole/Doline
	Limekiln



A living landscape

Middledown has been a Somerset Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve since 1998 and was bought with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Wyvern Environmental Trust. Somerset Wildlife Trust relies on your support to manage such outstanding places for wildlife and people. In the Mendip Hills we are aiming to create a Living Landscape by working to restore, recreate and reconnect wildlife habitats. To find out ways to support our work, including becoming a member and volunteering, please go to somersetwildlife.org. You can contact Somerset Wildlife Trust at enquiries@somersetwildlife.org.

! Access and safety

- Visitors on foot are welcome to walk in the reserve throughout the year. Please do not ride or cycle
- The paths and tracks have uneven surfaces in places and can be slippery in areas of exposed rock
- Parts of the site are kept for hay, so please avoid trampling the crop
- Please pay attention to any safety signs
- Animals may be grazing at any time of year, therefore please keep dogs under close control
- No camping, fires, organised games or other recreational activities permitted

Permissive Access

This land is private but the public are permitted to use it on foot until further notice. Highways Act 1980 Section 31 (3)

Save Our Magnificent Meadows

This interpretation panel has been produced as part of Save Our Magnificent Meadows, a UK-wide partnership project to transform the fortunes of our vanishing wildflower meadows, grasslands and wildlife, primarily funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. magnificentmeadows.org.uk