

If you would like to explore more of the island's quarrying history continue south down the Coast Path on either side of the island to Portland Bill, also the scene of past quarrying. On the east coast you can see the remains of cliff side quarries and piers used to ship stone from the island. On the west side, the Coast Path follows an old tramway under the tipping bridges and past disused quarries. Follow pathways across the island and see modern quarries exploiting better quality 'inland' stone.



The Portland Stone Experience book and walk cards gives further information on Portland's quarrying history.

The pack was funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and produced by the Portland Coast and Countryside Project, a partnership of Natural England, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset Countryside which aims to promote conservation, awareness and enjoyment of Portland's wildlife and landscape for local people and visitors.



portland Quarry Trail

Portland's quarrying history has created a unique landscape to explore.

In a short walk, less than two kilometres, find out about the famous Portland rock and quarries, how the stone was worked and transported over a century ago and the wildlife living there now.

Follow the routes of the original horse-drawn tramways which carried wooden wagons, laden with stone, from quarries down to sea barges at Castletown.

The trail explores contrasting quarry landscapes, old and new; it takes you under bridges, through tunnels and secret rocky gullies; it passes old horse troughs, quarrymen's shelters, ancient fossil forests, hidden sculptures and abundant wildlife.

Join the trail at a number of places, choose a short or longer circuit or just visit one of the main sites of interest. Whatever you choose, you will be sure to find out something new about this fascinating island.

Leaflets for the Verne Local Nature Reserve,
King Barrow Quarries and Tout Quarry

Castletown to Verne Hill

From Castletown this is a steep, steady climb.

The trail follows the steep Merchants' railway incline, built in 1826 to transport stone. The weight of the laden trucks descending pulled the empty ones up, using a chain on a drum. Stone sleepers from the original tramway can be seen. Teams of horses brought stone to the top, others waited at the bottom to take it to barges in the harbour.

At the top of the incline, the trail passes under a subway into the Verne Local Nature Reserve where it divides following the two original routes of the Merchants' railway around the hillside.

Alternative routes from the Local Nature Reserve to the quarries

Yeates Incline

This is a steep, uneven and often slippery path.

The trail follows the lower Merchant's railway line to the bottom of Yeates Incline where it climbs steeply up under three bridges. This incline brought stone from quarries down to join the Merchants' railway. At the top, the trail continues south past the High Angle Battery and out to the Coast Path. Following this south, takes you past Nicodemus Knob, a pillar of unquarried rock before turning back west to join the track into King Barrow Quarries Nature Reserve. Alternatively, at the top of the incline it doubles back to New Ground.

Old Hill to Priory Corner

This is a flat, even footpath across Old Hill with either a steep descent to Priory Corner or a steep climb on a paved road, up to New Ground car park.

The trail follows the lower Merchants' railway line across Old Hill. There are steps down to Priory Road and across to Priory Corner where the beautiful stone carving, The Spirit of Portland, marks where the trucks were loaded for their journey down the Merchants' railway. The trail then joins the Coast Path along the top of West Weares to Tout Quarry.

Into King Barrow Quarries

The trail leads to King barrow Quarries either by a flat walk from New Ground Car Park to the entrance of the Dorset Wildlife Trust Reserve or by an old tramway gully; an uneven, rocky but interesting route into King Barrow Quarries. Owned by the Ministry of Defence the gully is closed very occasionally for bridging exercises!

The trail follows the route of a tramway which came from King Barrow Quarries to join the upper Merchants' railway line. The trail crosses Verne Hill Road and then over the Yeates Incline by a footbridge. It then continues either up to New Ground car park or turns southwards into King Barrow Gully.

From King Barrow to Tout

This is a short, slightly undulating path.

The trail crosses Easton Road to follow the route of another tramway line through the northern part of Inmosthay Quarry to Tout Quarry. Several tunnels, under Wide Street, linked Inmosthay to Tout. It is hoped one will be restored between the two quarries as part of this trail.

