

# Protecting Eridge Rocks

## Eridge Rocks

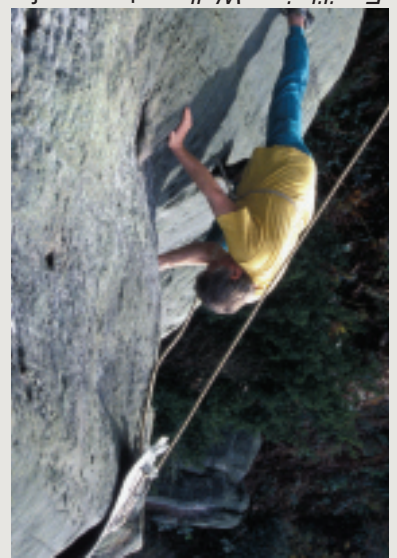
Nature Reserve & climbing guidance



Taking Care of Sussex



Climbing is permitted on the rocks under an agreement between Sussex Wildlife Trust and the British Mountaineering Council. To protect the important wildlife interest of this site please stick to designated climbing areas and follow the Sandstone Climbing Code.



*Equilibrium Wall* - note use of carpet

There are no bolts in place above the climbs at Eridge, and many of the belays require a second full-length rope, rather than just a long sling, particularly for the climbs on the blocks above the car park and on the *Eridge Tower*. The best belay for *Portcullis* on the *Eridge Tower* is from a sling attached low down on the birch tree the other side of the shallow gully behind the block. This should keep any movement of the karabiner to a minimum.

### If you are climbing here please:

- use a non-stretch belay rope or sling
- make sure the karabiner hangs over the edge of the crag
- make sure moving or stretching ropes do not come into contact with the rock
- walk off when you have finished a climb,
- do not lower off
- do not abseil

*Earthrise*

Sandstone is vulnerable to damage as it is one of the softest rocks. A hard concrete-like crust covers lightly compacted sand. Once the crust is broken rapid erosion occurs. Climbs are done using a top rope, or rope and belay are necessary as any weighted rope moving over the rock will cause permanent damage. To help preserve the fragile sandstone environment for all to enjoy, please follow the code, and encourage others to do so.

Natural England which is the statutory body that protects this site. In the event of damage to the rocks or its environment climbing could be banned. The sandstone outcrops of the Weald are the only area of rocks for climbing in the South East, and are probably some of the most heavily climbed in the country.

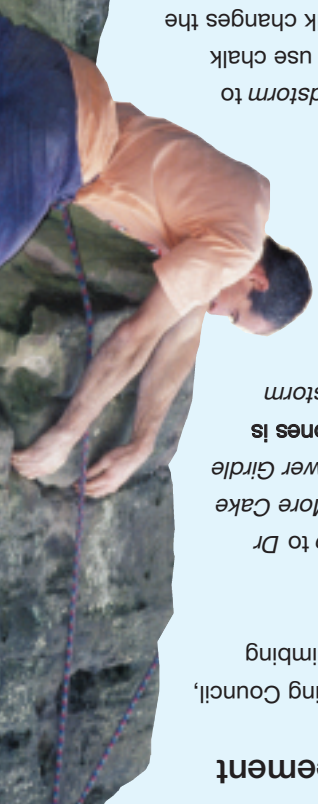
### Belays at Eridge

### The Eridge Climbing Agreement

The Trust and the British Mountaineering Council, supported by local climbers, have a climbing access agreement as follows:

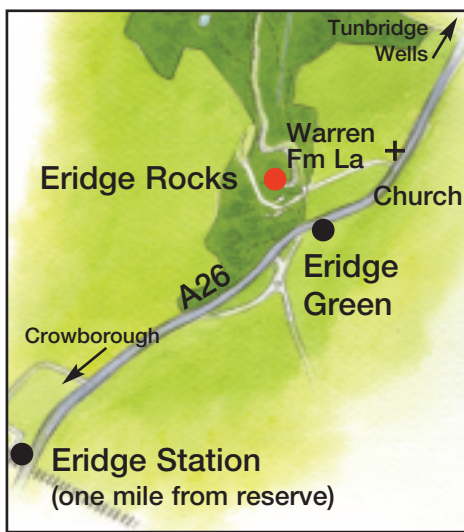
1. Climbing is allowed from *Heffalump* to *Dr Kemp's Cure*, from *Sandstorm* to *More Cake for Me*, and from *Dusk Crack* to *Tower Girdle* inclusive. Climbing outside these zones is forbidden. The area between *Sandstorm* and *More Cake for Me* is very sensitive, with many rare plants, so please be extra careful here.
2. Climbing by organised groups is not permitted.
3. Use of chalk is forbidden from *Sandstorm* to *More Cake for Me* inclusive. Chalk changes the pH of these acid rocks and can seriously damage elsewhere as little as possible. Please use chalk remove loose sand and debris.
4. Do not remove any greenery, whether vegetation or lower plants. When cleaning holds take care only to remove loose sand and debris.
5. The rock at the top of the blocks above the car park (Equilibrium Wall etc.) is extremely fragile with deep rope-grooves. Please use a piece of old carpet to protect the rock from the belay rope (which is necessary as the trees are too far back for the use of slings).

*Portcullis*



### How to find us

Eridge Rocks is located in Eridge Green, four miles south of Tunbridge Wells. From the A26 turn into Warren Farm Lane whose entrance is next to a small church.



Continue up the private track to a small car park. There is a bus stop near entrance of lane. For public transport details phone Traveline: 0871 2002223.

Sussex Wildlife Trust is the county's leading wildlife charity. Our aim is to help people enjoy, understand and take action to conserve the wildlife and landscape of Sussex.

Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield BN5 9SD  
Tel: 01273 492630  
Web: [www.sussexwt.org.uk](http://www.sussexwt.org.uk)  
WildCall, the wildlife information service: 01273 494777  
Registered Charity No: 207005

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For more information on climbing in the UK please visit [www.bmc.org.uk](http://www.bmc.org.uk)



Cover by Tony Buckwell  
Other photographs Ian Smith  
Illustrations by John Davis

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The impressive sandstone outcrops create a unique environment. The sponge-like qualities on the rock ensure a moist micro-climate that is perfect for the collection of rare ferns, mosses and lichens to thrive.



*tunbridge filmy fern* (5x actual size)

Tunbridge filmy fern is a tiny plant with delicate fronds which can easily be mistaken for a moss. As the name suggests it was discovered in the Weald but is more typically found in the mild climate of western Britain.

The rocks have long held a fascination for people. Today the site is popular with rock climbers. In Victorian times the rocks were used for entertaining with lavish dinner parties and plays being held here.

The international importance of the rocks and the lower plant communities they support is reflected in this reserve's designations as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Regionally Important Geological Site.

### Walking on the reserve

The site is relatively flat and has a good network of unmade paths along the base of the rocks and through the woodland. There is a kissing gate at the car park and no stiles.



*yew*

Climbing on the rocks should only be attempted if you are a properly equipped, experienced climber.

# Eridge Rocks Nature Reserve

Eridge Rocks is home to a large number of species living at a small-scale. Tiny plants, mosses, lichens and fungi - many so rare that they are only found at a few sites in Europe - flourish here in the moist, warm environment provided by the sandstone cliffs and woodland floor.

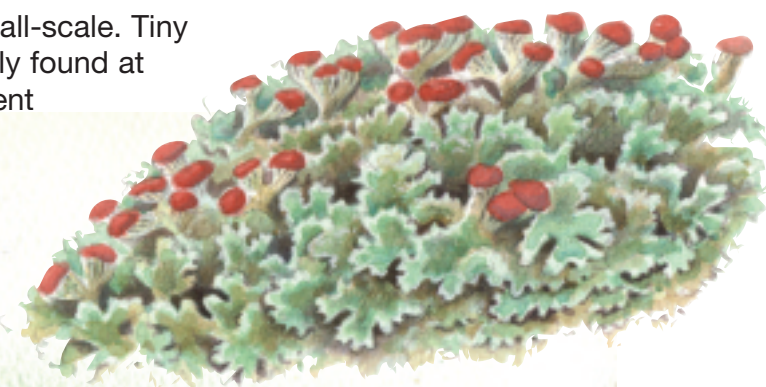
These delicate species need the damp conditions to be maintained as they are susceptible to even the smallest change in humidity. As they grow very slowly it is hard for them to recover if they are removed from the rocks.



*Aulacomnium androgynum*



*Brazzania trilobata*



*Cladonia incrassata*



*Cladonia caespitica*



tawny owl



Fungi growing on deadwood

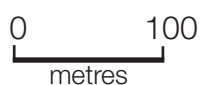
Sweet chestnut is common in coppice woodlands across Sussex. Its timber is ideal for fencing, building and furniture.



sweet chestnut

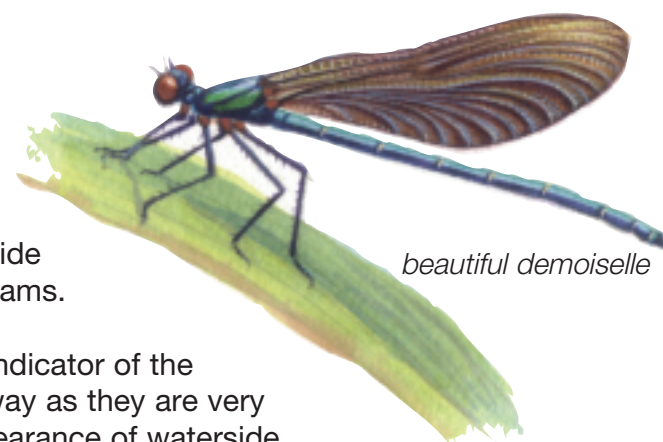
*Twit-twoo* is the hoot of the tawny owl. The characteristic call is actually a duet: *Twit* is the male and *twoo* is the female.

This owl is territorial, usually living in woodland and feeding on a variety of small mammals, birds and frogs.



- Reserve boundary
- - - Footpaths
- ● ● General indication of where climbing is not permitted. Full details are available in the Eridge Climbing Agreement (overleaf), and in the Climbers' Club Southern Sandstone guidebook'

This stunning damselfly is found here alongside the woodland streams.



beautiful damselfly

They are a good indicator of the health of a waterway as they are very sensitive to the clearance of waterside vegetation and pollution.