

## History of the cottages

There has been settlement in the Stiperstones area since prehistoric times and lead mining in the hills since the Romans.

The most recent active lead mining spanned the 19th Century while barite continued to be mined until 1955. It was during this time that small settlements began to spread up the hills and across the common land of the Stiperstones.

Small 'squatter' cottages were built by the miners who were allowed to stay if, it is said, they could build the chimney in one night and have smoke coming out of it by morning. They could then take their time to build the rest of their house. The families paid a small rent to the estate and would walk for two hours or more across the steep exposed hills to reach the mines, the church and the school. Small whitewashed stone cottages and clearly marked cart tracks to the rows of dwellings were quickly in place as small communities developed. Each cottage was built to a similar design – a garden, root store and a byre for a cow or sty for a pig.

These remote settlements were inhabited as late as the 1950s and there are still local residents today whose families came from 'up on the hill'.



## Facilities and opening times

The settlement can be visited at any time. Information about the site and a sound box with extracts from the book 'Once upon a Hill' can be found in the Cattle Byre. There are also composting toilets.

The cottages are open on the first Sunday of each month between April and October 11am – 3pm. There are two cottages, volunteers to welcome you and a roaring fire to warm you on cold days.

Please keep dogs on leads at all times to protect grazing animals and ground nesting birds.

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For more information about events and volunteering opportunities, please email [Stiperstones.events@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Stiperstones.events@naturalengland.org.uk) or phone 01743 792294



## The Stiperstones National Nature Reserve Blakemoorgate Cottages



## Getting to the cottages

The walk up takes about 45 minutes, it is steep and demanding and appropriate footwear and clothing should be worn. Please take your own refreshments.

The map will help you find the cottages. The **red route** has circular Blakemoorgate Cottage waymarkers and starts at the steps going uphill next to the mine visitor centre.



The **red route** is the path miners would have used to get to and from work. It is a slightly shorter, but steeper path which goes through woodland and can be muddy.

The **blue route** is longer but less steep, it goes past Lordshill Chapel and through the Hollies nature reserve.

Why not make it a circular walk and go up one route and back down the other?

