

14.0 WOOKEY ISLANDS

14.1 Although the Wookey Islands can be divided into the

- *Lower Sheppey Valley* (G1)
- *Bleadney-Wookey Ridge* (G2)
- *Polsham-Lodge Hill Hillocks* (G3)

and has a great diversity of landform and vegetation patterns, this very diversity is an area-wide characteristic giving rise to attractive scenery. To the south, as they rise out of the moors, the small knolls and ridges are a varied foreground to the Mendip Hills (Photograph 27). Viewed from the north, along the edge of the Mendip Hills, the hillocks and ridges, interspersed with patches of low ground and moor, are a transition to the open moors linking usually with Glastonbury and the Poldens on the horizon.

14.2 Lower Sheppey Valley

- Undulating landform
- Parkland
- Woodland blocks
- Large fields and low hedges
- Setting of Wells

14.2.1 This undulating landscape, rising to low broad hillocks south of Keward is an important part of the setting of Wells, as discussed in

Fringes. It screens the industrial edge in the west. To the east it is undulating parkland linking the Sheppey Valley to the parkland around the Bishop's Palace and The Liberty.

14.2.2 Fields are generally very large and hedges are low, so that the two Park Woods stand out all the more and the undulating landform is emphasised. Footpaths radiate out from Wells and there is a high level of public use.

14.3 Bleadney-Wookey Ridge

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Broad ridge rising above surrounding hillocks | • Small fields |
| • Frequent hamlets and farmsteads | • Winding lanes |
| • Modern roadside development | • Orchards |
| • Conglomerate & Carboniferous Limestone buildings | |

14.3.1 This area rises as a distinct ridge above the Moors landscape, in contrast to the much smaller rounded hillocks. To the north there is a broad, low shelf rising out of the moors and most of the settlement lies along the B3139 on this shelf, with the village of Wookey on land dipping down either side of the River Axe. Lanes extend past small, narrow, rectangular hedged fields down to the moors and Knowle and merge into a quite intricate pattern of rhyes around the edge.

14.3.2 The settlements of Bleadney, Henton, Yarley and Worth, and the farmsteads in between comprise a mixture of modern buildings and older buildings in conglomerate and Carboniferous Limestone. To the south the land rises steeply from the edge of these settlements to Yarley Hill and Callow Hill. While the network of small fields and lanes typical of the area continues over the crests, the scrub and patches of woodland on the steepest slopes echo the patter of the Mendip Hills to the north.

14.3.3 In contrast to the gradual transition to the moors on the northern side, in the south there is an abrupt change marked by Perry Lake Lane and ending in the conspicuous knoll on which the remains of Fenny Castle lie.

14.4 Polsham-Lodge Hill Hillocks

- Steep hillocks
- Pasture with occasional arable
- Varied, irregular field patterns
- Scattered farmsteads
- Small copses on hillocks

14.4.1 The characteristic feature of this area is the rounded hillocks, which usually have closely-grazed pasture, but occasionally have small copses along the mid slopes. In the north east they emerge from the Mendip Hills footslopes, but to the west, such as at Chalcroft Hill they form a more abrupt contrast with the moors. Between them is a landscape

enclosed by the steep slopes but with views between the hillocks suddenly opening up.

14.4.2 In contrast to the low hedges and open character of the hillocks, the land between them is made up of small irregular fields in complex patterns, bounded by hedges but with rhynes on the lowest ground, where occasional pollards can be found.