

## SITE

**Name:** Kents Cavern

**Parish/Area:** Wellswood

**Local Authority:** Torbay

**National Grid Ref:** SX 934 641

**OS Sheets:** 1:50K, 202, 1:10K, SX96 SW

**Locality Description:** The site is located within the Wellswood area of Torquay off Ilsham Road.

**Nature and Status of Site:** Partially excavated cave system beneath Torquay now operated as a show cave. The site is designated as a [Site of Special Scientific Interest](#) (SSSI), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and is a gateway site for the [English Riviera Geopark](#).

**Summary of Geological / Geomorphological Interest:** Kents Cavern is an important Quaternary Site for studies in palaeontology and stratigraphy. Cave deposits have yielded numerous vertebrate remains of the Late Pleistocene age including hyena, cave bear, cave lion, mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and bison. Sediment remains have been assigned to the Hoxnian Interglacial Period. The cave has yielded tools made by hominids close to *Homo heidelbergensis*, around 500 million years ago.

**Safety Considerations:** None to note.

**Educational Age Groups:** Primary, Secondary, College/6<sup>th</sup> Form, University.

**Parking and Access:** There are good public transport links into Torquay both via rail and bus services. For timetable details, visit [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk). If travelling by car, road signs in Torquay indicate the direction to the caverns, which are now a show cave. A large car park lies outside the entrance to the site. Educational tours are operated for all age groups, with booklets/manuals provided to the students by the site operators. An entrance charge is made. For details contact the information line on Tel: 01803 215136 or visit the [Kents Cavern](#) website.

A trip to Kents Cavern can form part of a linked site study visit which includes Hope's Nose to Walls Hill and/or Daddyhole (see separate entries in Register). For more information on Geological sites in Torbay, visit the [English Riviera Geopark](#) website.

The English Riviera Geopark team is happy to facilitate group visits to this and other sites located within the Geopark, which can be tailored to requirement. For more information contact Geopark Education and Community Officer on 01803 528841 or email [e.beale@englishrivierageopark.org.uk](mailto:e.beale@englishrivierageopark.org.uk).

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For further information on the cave visit: [www.kents-cavern.co.uk](http://www.kents-cavern.co.uk)

**Detailed Geology:** Kents Cavern is famous as a bone cave, and has been known to man continuously since Palaeolithic times. In 1824 Thomas Northmore discovered bones of extinct mammals and in 1825 Buckland found a flint knife-blade, the earliest record of a human artefact from any cave. It was important as it showed for the first time that early man had co-existed with the extinct Pleistocene animals that had previously been refuted on religious grounds due to the Biblical chronology of man. The cave has been excavated for the last 140 years, with much of the remains still unexcavated. For long periods it was used as a den by hyena and most of the bones found are the remains of their meals. Practically every large bone and antler found in the cave earth shows marks of hyena teeth. The sedimentary cave deposits are mainly the result of sedimentary flow from the last glacial periods, with two distinct cave floors being developed indicating two separate stages affecting this area (Riss Glaciation and Wurm Glaciation). The series of flint artefacts, allegedly from Abbevillian onwards, and ending with Magdalenian tools made from reindeer antlers, complete a Palaeolithic suite of international importance.

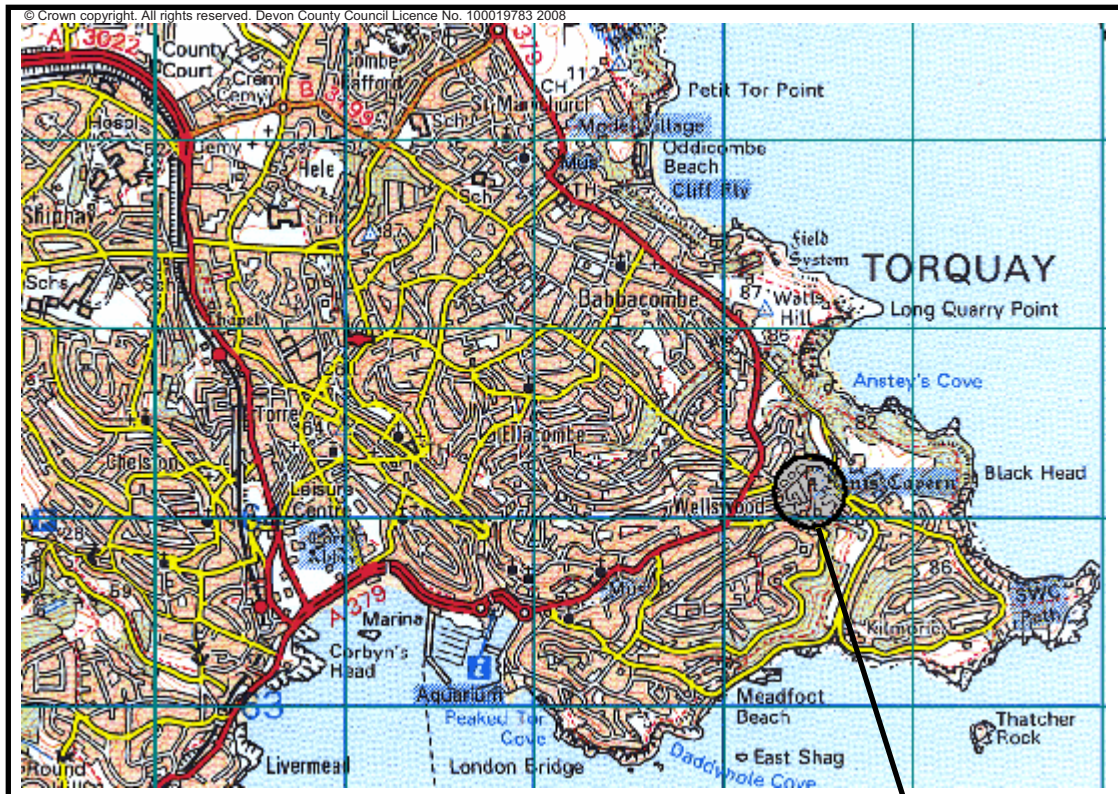
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For a detailed break down on the geology and history of the caves, Kents Cavern Ltd can provide student booklets for educational use.

## LOCATION PLAN

### KENTS CAVERN, SSSI WELLSWOOD, TORBAY

National Grid Ref: SX 934 641



Scale 1: 40,000



Site Locality

Located on Kents Lane,  
opposite Stoodley  
Knowle Convent School

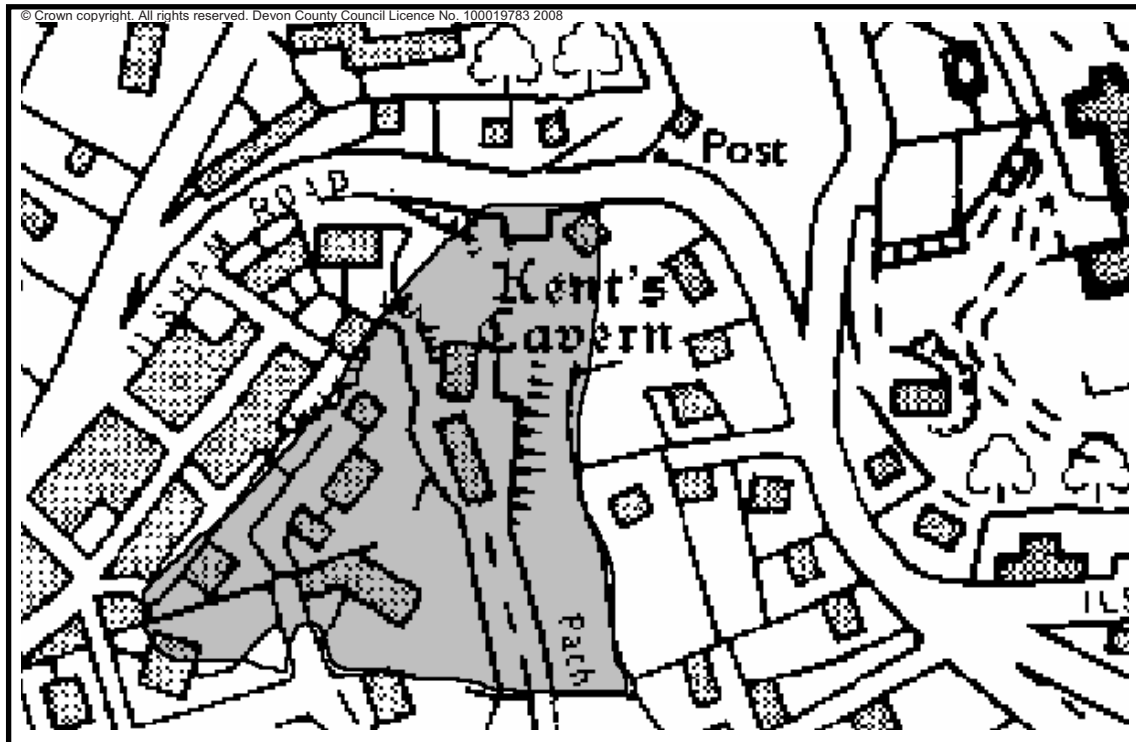
### Parking and Access

- Good Public transport links within Torquay, including rail and bus services. For timetable details, visit the [traveline](#) website.
- If travelling by car, follow signs for Kents Cavern show cave. Ample car parking is provided.
- Can form part of a linked site study visit with Hope's Nose to Walls Hill and Daddyhole.

## SITE PLAN

### KENTS CAVERN WELLSWOOD, TORBAY

National Grid Ref: SX 934 641



Approx. Extent of  
underground cave

Scale 1: 2,500

### Main Points of Interest:

- A famous and important Quaternary cave site, significant for studies in palaeontology and stratigraphy and for explaining environmental and faunal changes.
- Notable for the presence of sedimentary rare deposits and human artefacts (first discovered in 1825).
- Cave deposits have yielded numerous vertebrate remains (including cave bear, lion, sabre-toothed tiger, mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and bison) of Late Pleistocene age.

# KENTS CAVERN

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Panoramic views of cave formations in Kents Cavern



istocene cave bear skull in-situ in the roof of Kents Cavern (torch for scale)