

# PORTRAIT OF THE QUANTOCK HILLS

Craig Hutchings

The Quantock Hills are probably one of England's best kept secrets, nestling in against their larger cousin Exmoor. But the Quantocks are so much more than a 'little Exmoor'. This gentle ridge of uplands rises from just a few feet above sea-level at Taunton and climbs to 1260 ft at Wills Neck, before dipping its shoulders in to the Bristol Channel, a mere 12 miles later. Size for size, in these few miles that make up the Quantocks, there can surely be a no more beautiful place in Britain. Indeed Coleridge and Wordsworth captured their simple beauty in verse and in doing so, wrote some of this country's most celebrated literature while staying in the hills in the 1790s.

Indeed, little has changed since those heady days of the romantic poets. So little wonder, with all the wonderful facets the hills have to offer; the open moorland, Jurassic coastline, charismatic farmland and magnificent woodland, the Quantocks were awarded in 1956, the distinction of being England's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

This collection of over 140 superbly composed photographs depicts one of England's little gems. Although recognized nationally for its natural beauty, never before has such a varied and intimate portrait of the hills been assembled. Shot from dusk till dawn, subjects from moor, to coast, farmland, woodland and wildlife, have been brought to life by photographer Craig Hutchings who demonstrates his love of this wonderful landscape, not only through the well known vistas but those secret places only a local would know.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in the county town Taunton, Craig can be described as an Englishman by birth and a son of Somerset by the grace of God, such is his love for his native county. He was introduced to photography by his father Ron in the 1970s, while still at school. From this early introduction, a great passion for photography grew, with Craig photographing just about everything and anything over the next 30 years. So being brought up in the shadow of the Quantocks and now a resident of the hills along with his wife Bev and two daughters Amberley and Emily, little wonder that Craig knows just about every combe, cairn and tuft of heather on them. To capture the ever-changing light which dances across the combes and moors, has become a burden of delight. Forever drawn to early mornings, late nights and endless hours of waiting for the perfect shot, Craig has devoted much of his recent life to building up this superb collection of images.

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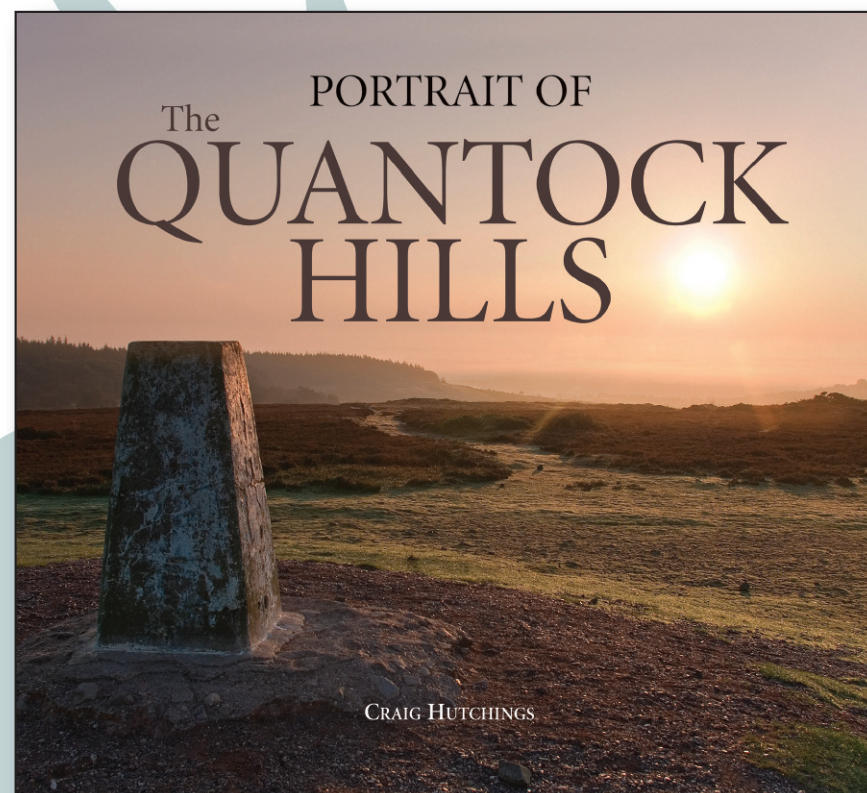
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Watchet Harbour.



East Quantoxhead.

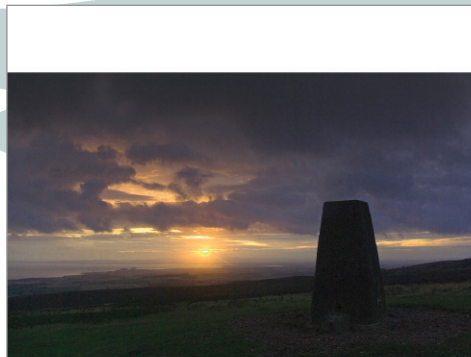


Black Hill.

*Red Deer, Blue Sea*  
 With the Welsh coastline a mere  
 15 miles away, the good folk of  
 Cardiff, as they wake to a beautiful  
 late summer's morning, are totally  
 unaware a herd of red deer have  
 come out of Smith's Combe to  
 catch the early morning sun  
 overlooking the principality.



Example of a double-page spread

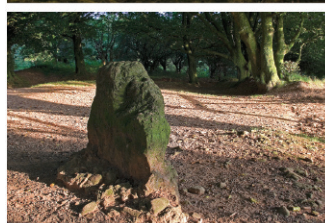


Dig Point  
 The Ordnance Survey's trig point on Beacon Hill watches the sun rise over the Bristol Channel.

**Trincombe**  
 A most important landmark on  
 the hills rising between  
 Wills Neck and Great Hill,  
 a marker for the Bronze  
 Age Trincombe Stone.  
 Here the sun is setting behind  
 a lone tree with the Breidden  
 Hills in the distance.



**Trincombe Stone**  
 Once this line arrives from the  
 distant past stood proudly out  
 in the open for centuries to  
 find their meaning. Today  
 however, it looks rather forlorn  
 sitting in amongst the brack  
 hedgerow that has sadly been  
 allowed to grow up around it.



Above: As dawn breaks at  
 Hare Knap, the first rays  
 of sun illuminate the cairn  
 as a fantastic vista of the  
 Quantocks stretches out  
 before it.

Left: Not looking out of  
 place, Cothelstone Hill is  
 the home to a fine herd of  
 pure-bred Exmoor ponies.