

Sue Goodfellow

The special features of Dartmoor's ecology.

We're standing on Haytor Down and we're between Saddle Tor and Haytor Rocks themselves and we've got a fabulous view here, we can see right the way down to the sea and we can see right the way across to Princetown, and I think this really illustrates one of the special features, if you like, of Dartmoor's wildlife, flora and fauna, because down on the coast things are pretty mild in the south west and the sea keeps things pretty mild and so you've got species down there which actually have adapted to relatively mild winters; but if you look across to Princetown you're looking into the middle of the moor and you're actually talking about a very different climate, and yet they're actually not very many miles apart and Haytor sort of straddles that divide really. And so on Haytor you can have species, for instance in the bog just below us, which are perhaps more typical of south western Europe, particularly Portugal and western Spain, and these are called Lusitanian species and we've got species in the bog down there that only grow in south west England because that's where they're adapted to, and yet on the tors we've got lichens that are found much further north normally and are actually indicative of much more arctic conditions; so on Haytor we're straddling, perhaps, the divide between a warm coastal south west belt and a really upland, typical British upland environment.