

Sue Goodfellow

The significance of the lichens found in the area.

Lichens respond to micro climates and they evolve to make the best of a particular micro climate and for instance behind us we've got a boundary stone, on the top of that boundary stone is a lichen that is growing there because it's been enriched by nutrients from bird droppings, because it's on one of the very few places in this area where birds can perch, so you've got that sort of diversity on Haytor Down which is actually really very exciting. Lichens indicate pure air, the more lichens you've got, the more species of lichens you've got and the more lush growth you've got the purer the air, and there are some species in particular that are very sensitive to air pollution so we've got species on Dartmoor, for instance, that you won't get in the New Forest, you won't get in London, because of changes in the air there, so they show clean air, to start with, they also show damp air, and an Atlantic climate, so the fact that we've got warm wet westerly winds in winter really does benefit lichens, and it's one of the factors of Dartmoor's wildlife that is internationally significant, we've got really rare species here and they do really repay further examination, because they're fascinating when you get down to that very detailed level.