

Maurice Retallick

Changes in weather patterns.

You alluded earlier to one of the causes of change of vegetation on the moor is climate change, can you tell me about your observations of the changes in the climate on Dartmoor?

Well they are drastic in my lifetime, just out over the hill we have a newtake which is an enclosure of common land, which is private land, not common land, and there areas there that have been very very wet all my lifetime, and there are areas there that you wouldn't dare ride a horse through in the summer, you can now quite happily ride a horse through there in the winter, in the wet time. The soil water retention ability seemed to have a drastic change in the great drought we had in 1976, there seemed to be a lot of opening of fishers in the ground and the structure – we have heavy rains and we have sporadic thunder showers all the year round and the water is standing on the ground and suddenly in a few days time its all gone, it is changing and there's not so much water being retained and there's a greater run off and we haven't got the very wet and very dangerous bogs and mires that we used to have.