

Kevin Page

Haytor granite

What is it about where the granite has been quarried, why is it quarried here rather than elsewhere?

Well the granite varies a little bit, we believe now it was actually effectively injected in a series of sheets, the sheets are [of] slightly different composition, some sheets, for instance, have big crystals, maybe ten centimetres plus long, some had small crystals up to only a couple of centimetres, the problem with the big crystals of this mineral feldspar, they tend to fracture when they're worked, so you don't want to try and shape a stone with lots of big crystals, it won't be very good, so you therefore look for the granite with the smaller crystals, and that's why quarries like Haytor and Merrivale are where they are, because the granite has a particularly uniform regular structure of relatively small crystals which makes it much simpler to work as a stone, and shape.

And what makes granite so great as a building material?

Its very hard, quartz is very hard, it will scratch steel and the granite itself is absolutely superb, I mean these rocks have been here sitting on this surface here for tens or hundreds of thousands of years and they resist nature, ok, Dartmoor is very very slowly dissolving at a few millimetres per thousand years but on a human timescale that doesn't matter, basically you have a very hard strong rock which is great for building lighthouses, dockyards, bridges, whatever you want, its solid.