

Deborah Griffiths

Introduction to the Meldon area.

Here we are in an area of open moorland and we're just south east of a small hamlet called Meldon, which itself is about five miles south west of Okehampton, right on the very northern edge of Dartmoor; and we're standing in the valley of the river which is called the West Okement, which obviously gave Okehampton its name, just at the point where it's joined by a brook called the Red-a-ven Brook. And because we're on the very edge of Dartmoor, on the very edge of the granite mass we're also in an area of very variable and interesting geology. And for me the really interesting thing about Meldon is that these natural resources, the water, the rocks and the minerals have been widely exploited in the recent past and we've got this really remarkable but quite complex industrial archaeology: quarrying and mining, lime burning and glass manufacture, and then of course nearby we've got the railway and all the things that are associated with that. And we've got some industrial archaeology of the future, perhaps, in the form of the Meldon Reservoir, which lies further up the river and which was constructed about a hundred years after the viaduct.