

Tom Greeves

Description of the clapper bridge.

Well this is one of the wonders of medieval Dartmoor, it's the finest of a certain type of bridge called a clapper bridge; now we don't actually know what the word clapper means but it's a very old word and its used of bridges of this type of construction, where you've just got simple but massive stone slabs supported on stone piers and spanning a river, and this is the finest of many that exist on Dartmoor, and it actually gives its name to this settlement. The settlement's called Postbridge and this is the name of the bridge, the word 'post' is actually an old Dartmoor word for the slabs themselves, at least that's what we think. The basic elements of the bridge are four huge slabs of granite, the two end slabs, the first slabs that you walk onto from either bank are about 15 feet long and about six or seven feet wide and each thought to weigh about something like eight tons and in the middle there are two slabs side by side which are slightly smaller and they're thought to be about four tons in weight. And the granite itself is quite distinctive, of the slabs, it has these large white rectangular chunks in it which are feldspar chunks which is very particular to certain areas of Dartmoor and the granite, which is why people think that the source of the granite was as far away as one and a half or two miles distance, which is fantastic to think of the medieval people selecting this stone and then taking that trouble to bring it here, its wonderful.