

Christopher Gardner-Thorpe

The origins of the railway.

The railway's quite old really, it started as a tram-road up to the Walkhampton quarries, the quarries which are on the hillside down on the way to Plymouth are massive granite quarries which produced a lot of granite which eventually went to build places such as Buckingham Palace, Nelson's Column, Vauxhall Bridge in London, New Scotland Yard and many other buildings. So these were served by a tram-road in the 1820s, built in 1820, to these Walkhampton quarries and in 1823 the Plymouth and Dartmoor Railway Company developed this and in 1825 a horse tramway was formed with the first iron railroad in Devon; we're used to granite rails down at Haytor, but this was an iron railroad and in 1827 it was extended to Princetown.