

# Bodmin Moor

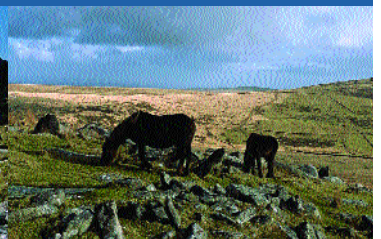
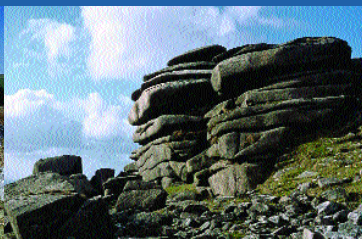
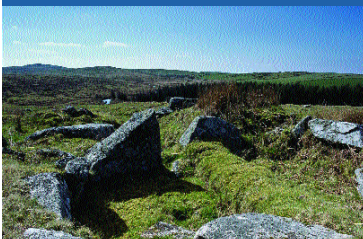
## *Key Landscape Features*

The upland landscape of Bodmin Moor owes its existence to the underlying granite mass, the largest of several such intrusions into the surrounding killas rocks which form the main body of Cornwall. The relief is undulating with large, gently convex, rolling moorland and more prominent tors, often capped with granite outcrops and distinctive silhouettes. The moor is drained by many streams and small rivers which exploit weaknesses in the granite. Slopes steepen dramatically towards the edge of the mass, and shadow falls and cascades occur.

The soils are poor and acidic, but the vegetation is suited to the conditions. In the valleys there are areas of peat and blanket bog resulting in drainage changes caused by very early tin streaming. The exposure of the moor has influenced the pattern of vegetation and settlement, contributing to the erosion of the granite tors and helping to create the mires and bogs.

Colliford and Sibleyback lakes form dramatic and surprising extents of water reflecting the mood of the sky: rich blue on a bright day, but sombre, grey and threatening in winter. Dozmary Pool is famous for its association with Excalibur.

The extraction of China clay in areas of the moor has had some impact on the landscape, although older tips are clothed in heath scrub. The works at Brown Gelly and Rough Tor are clearly visible.



## *Landscape Character*

The moorland is open, consisting of coarse grassland and wet heathland. In some areas this is grazed to a fine sward by cattle and sheep. In others it is scrubby with bracken and gorse. It is generally unenclosed, and with a lack of trees and undulating relief, there is a sense of vast scale and distance.

On the moorland fringe the landscape is more enclosed, with pasture and some cultivated areas incised by narrow, often wooded, river valleys. Below this lie richer farmlands of the more fertile killas, a landscape of small scale fields and sinuous boundaries indicating their prehistoric and medieval origins.

Most settlement occurs on the fringe of the landscape, clusters of houses or farms cling to valley sides or in sheltered hollows. Local buildings are characterised by granite stone and slate roofs, often surrounded by woodland, giving villages such as Altarnun, Blisland and St. Neot a secluded character.

## *Built Heritage*

Historical remains are clearly visible and these form key elements of local character. The earliest remains are Neolithic long cairns and hill top enclosures. Bronze age ritual remains include stone circles, stone rows, and cairns. Bronze Age domestic remains of settlements and fields are separated from the ritual landscapes.

Traces of former occupation and enclosure are still visible as the stony remains of prehistoric round and medieval long houses, associated with remnant field boundaries.

The general lack of trees, shrubs, buildings and roads make these patterns clearly visible and increases their influence on landscape character.

