

**Location & Access:** Located on the eastern edge of Dartmoor at SX 757770 near the village of Haytor Vale.

Access via the B3387 road from Bovey Tracey 3 miles to the east, or Widecombe-in-the-Moor 2 miles to the west.

Car parks at SX 766 771 and SX 759 767.

Can be reached by public bus from local towns – although timetables are seasonal. Bus 193 (Wednesdays and Fridays); Bus 271 – the ‘Hay Tor Hoppa’ (Saturdays); Buses 270, 272, and 274 (Sundays and public holidays)

Hay Tor



**Key Geography:** Granite tor, with splendid views across Dartmoor on a clear day.

**Description:** Hay Tor is popular with both visitors and locals partly as it is one of the more easily accessible of the Dartmoor tors, but also because of the spectacular views it commands from its height of 457 metres across Dartmoor and the South Hams.

The imposing mass of Hay Tor rocks can be reached by a short but steep ascent of 800 metres from the Visitor Centre car park at 766 771. After crossing the B3387 road outside the Centre, a rough path can be followed directly uphill towards the left hand side of the rocks. After passing the first granite outcrop, a right turn takes you between two huge granite masses, a feature known as an ‘avenue tor’. By continuing to the end of the avenue, you can gain a great view into Becka (or Becky) Combe.

To avoid the steep climb from the Visitor Centre, it is also possible to reach Hay Tor by a shorter walk up a gentler slope from the car park further to the west at 759 767.

Tors – the craggy granite outcrops synonymous with Dartmoor – were formed some 280 million years ago when the area now known as south west England was involved in a period of mountain building. Rocks from the Devonian (415 – 370 million years ago) and Carboniferous (370 – 280 million years ago) periods were forced up in Alpine proportions. Around the same time, magma cooled and solidified from a temperature of between 900 and 1000 degrees Celsius as it was pushed up underneath the older rocks above, creating the granite of Dartmoor. The overlying rocks were slowly eroded away to expose the granite at the surface, and subsequently shaped by processes of weathering and erosion – particularly during the freezing and thawing processes during the Ice Ages – to form the distinctive appearance of the many tors found on Dartmoor.

*(continued overleaf)*

**Curiosity Questions:**

- # A typical Dartmoor tor can have up to 60 species of lichen growing on its bare rock. What is lichen?
- # What are the three commonest minerals found in granite?
- # Can you name the two towns visible from Hay Tor (on a clear day!)
- # What are ‘Frog’s Failure’, ‘Diamond Sky’, and ‘Rock Lobster’?

**Further information:**

[www.dartmoor.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk)

[www.visitdartmoor.co.uk](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk)

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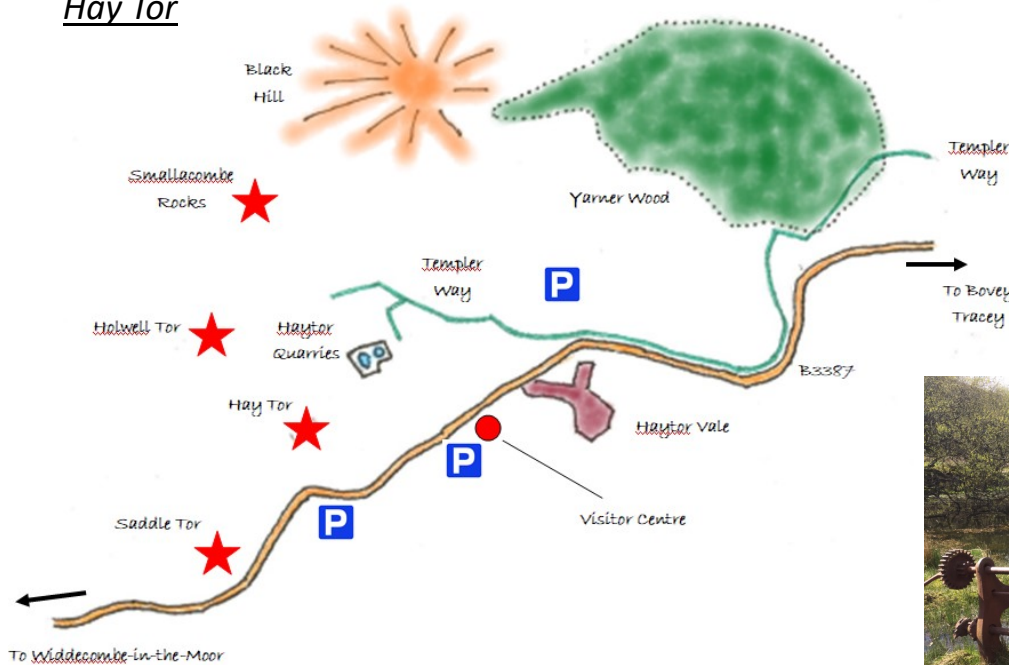


Hay Tor

Just below Hay Tor is Haytor Quarry. This was the largest of five granite quarries in this area, and was worked from the late eighteenth century and sporadically throughout the nineteenth century until the 1860's. In 1825, Haytor granite was used for the foundation stone of London Bridge. The quarries are now secluded sites of some beauty, with ponds in the old workings alive with dragonflies, newts and fish. A keen eye can spot evidence of old quarrying methods by spotting the shot holes in the quarry faces, piles of waste cut granite slabs, and the distinctive marks left by feather and tare cutting. – Here, a line of circular holes was driven into the granite using an iron bar (known as a jumper), and into these holes were set metal wedges (known as tares) supported on either side by pairs of concave metal pieces, called feathers. The tares were hit by a hammer until the stone split along the line of the holes.

The old quarries are linked by a tramway, built in 1820 to transport the granite down to the Stover Canal, where it was then taken on to Teignmouth Docks. Horses were used to draw the 3 ton trucks along the track of granite setts, rather than iron rails. The tramway now forms part of the Templar Way walking trail.

Hay Tor



Safety

Dartmoor experiences very changeable weather conditions, so check a forecast before your visit.



Haytor Quarry

**Answers to Curiosity Questions:**

# A typical Dartmoor tor can have up to 60 species of lichen growing on its bare rock. What is lichen? (A primitive plant formed by the symbiotic association of a fungus and an algae that can live in extremely harsh conditions, tolerating almost complete dessication). # What are the three commonest minerals found in granite? (Feldspar, quartz and mica. Look out for giant milky feldspar crystals (called phenoliths) in the granite of Hay Tor). # Can you name the two towns visible from Hay Tor (on a clear day!) (Newton Abbot and Bovey Tracey). # What are 'Frog's Failure', 'Diamond Sky', and 'Rock Lobster'? (Hay Tor climbing routes).