

Site notified to Secretary of State on 17 September 1997

County: Devon **Site Name:** Merrivale

District: West Devon

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Local Planning Authority: West Devon Borough Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority

National Grid Reference: SX 540760 **Area:** 488.3 (ha)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 191 **1:10,000:** SX 57 SW/NW/NE

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 17 September 1997 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

This is a Geological Conservation Review site. The boundaries of the site fall entirely within the Dartmoor National Park.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

The Merrivale area encompasses Cox Tor, Staple Tors and Roos Tor and Merrivale Quarry (currently working) on the west side of Dartmoor, about 5 km east-north-east of Tavistock.

Merrivale is an area of outstanding geomorphological importance for its assemblage of tors and periglacial landforms. It illustrates many of the classic features of tor morphology and their relationships to bedrock jointing and rock type. The clearly demonstrated association of tors with periglacial landforms, including altiplanation terraces, block fields, blockstreams and solifluction lobes is particularly significant in the context of the different theories of tor formation and slope evolution. Further, on the slopes below Cox Tor, there is an occurrence of earth hummocks. This feature is extremely rare in southern England. Although they have been described as periglacial features, their mode of origin remains unclear. The variety of landforms and the clear relationships between the individual features make Merrivale a prime area for the study of this type of Quaternary landform assemblage.