
Chapter 4 Granite landscapes

Introduction

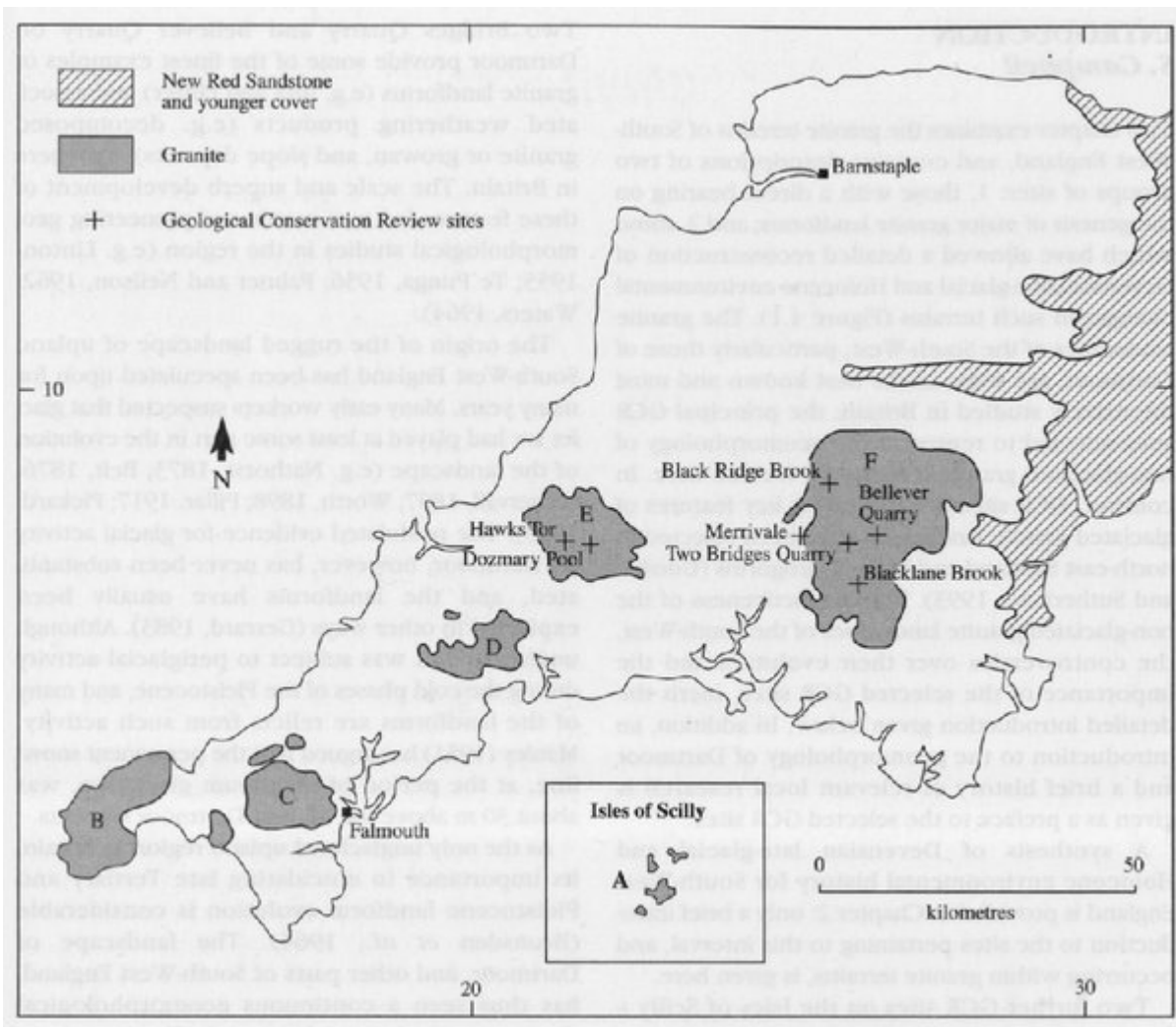
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This chapter examines the granite terrains of South-West England, and contains descriptions of two groups of sites: 1. those with a direct bearing on the genesis of major granite landforms; and 2. those which have allowed a detailed reconstruction of Devensian late-glacial and Holocene environmental changes in such terrains (Figure 4.1). The granite landscapes of the South-West, particularly those of Dartmoor, are some of the best known and most intensively studied in Britain: the principal GCR sites selected to represent the geomorphology of non-glaciated granite terrains are located here. In contrast, GCR sites demonstrating key features of glaciated granite landscapes have been selected in north-east Scotland and in the Cairngorms (Gordon and Sutherland, 1993). The distinctiveness of the non-glaciated granite landscapes of the South-West, the controversies over their evolution and the importance of the selected GCR sites, merit the detailed introduction given below. In addition, an introduction to the geomorphology of Dartmoor and a brief history of relevant local research is given as a preface to the selected GCR sites.

A synthesis of Devensian late-glacial and Holocene environmental history for South-West England is provided in Chapter 2: only a brief introduction to the sites pertaining to this interval, and occurring within granite terrains, is given here.

Two further GCR sites on the Isles of Scilly — Peninnis Head (granite landforms) and Higher Moors (Holocene vegetational history) — also have a bearing on the evolution of granite landscapes. For convenience, they are considered in a regional account of the geomorphological development and Quaternary history of the Isles of Scilly (Chapter 8).

[References](#)



(Figure 4.1) Location of GCR sites in relation to: A, Isles of Scilly Granite; B, Land's End Granite; C, Carrunellis Granite; D, St Austell Granite; E, Bodmin Moor Granite; and F, Dartmoor Granite. (Adapted from Floyd et al., 1993.)