

## *Chapter 4: Timmy Visits Bodmin Moor*

Lying on the south west fringes of the moor, on the route from Dozmary Pool where Excalibur had been tossed amid the windswept and rugged tors of the high moor, down to the River Camel, sits the blissful and pretty village of Blisland, with its thatched cottages with virile stone walls, nestling around the wide expanse of the village green. Betjeman loved the parish church here, and here, too, is the Blisland Inn, perhaps the epicentre for real ale experiences in the South West. Dogs are very welcome at the Blisland Inn, but their enthusiasm might not be for the warm welcome of the landlord, but from the buzz of the paranormal which radiates throughout the entire village. The Inn had once been called the Royal Oak Hotel, and it was here that a resident died during the 1920s but his troubled ghost remains, searching for consolation. And when visiting the bar, it's best to stand. Certainly it's never wise to sit down in what is colloquially know as the 'Dead Man's Chair'. Timmy often communicates with his ears: when they lie flat, right back and smoothed aerodynamically along the top of his head, he's excited and ready for fun. But when they stand proud, to attention, then something is causing him concern. And when the hackles rise, then there is definitely some electricity in the air. Timmy can sense what has happened, even if it happened a very long time ago.

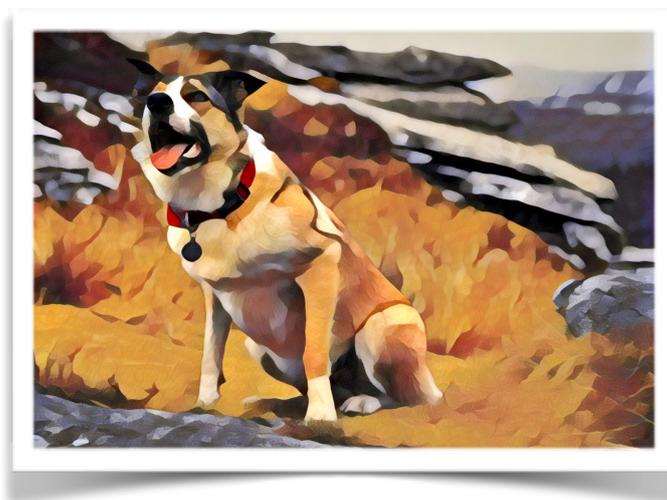


Timmy on the way up to Roughtor to enjoy views to the sea, Dartmoor, and Exmoor

Almost central, high on Bodmin Moor lies Jamaica Inn, an old coaching inn dating from 1750. Here lies the historic smuggling den, captured in the famous novel by Daphne DuMaurier. The spectres most regularly encountered are the evil highwayman who passes through the locked doors, with his large, three-cornered hat; upstairs in Room Five is the ghost of a distressed mother and child, whilst at night in the courtyard is Jack, the murdered, youthful smuggler, frantically pacing back and forth. Jamaica Inn lies adjacent to a primary ley line, which boosts the power of Bodmin Moor's local ley lines, as well as transferring the earth's energy around Britain. This line links Bury St. Edmunds to Avebury, the granite stack rock formation known as the Cheesewring, Jamaica Inn, St. Michael's Mount, and the tip of the Lizard. This pulsating energy, boosted by the Cheesewring of course helps to explain the spooky reputation of Bodmin Moor, and of the countless apparitions reported at Jamaica Inn—allegedly the most haunted place in Britain. Dogs are very sensitive to the power of ley lines, and they are especially sensitive to hauntings. At Jamaica Inn, all dogs are especially energised by the atmosphere, and a Super Sleuth dog will have much to sniff out, particularly as there are so many historic nooks and crannies to explore. Did somebody drop crumbs from their sandwiches, or chips on the floor? Is the sticky, old slate flooring imbued with the flavour of spilt Betty Stogs or Doombar? Or has Timmy sensed the presence of the highwayman?

Roughtor is the second highest point of Cornwall, and close by lies the spot where Charlotte Dymond was murdered, allegedly on her way to Blisland. For this crime, Matthew Weeks was hanged in Bodmin gaol. Their ghosts are frequently reported all around the southern fringes of Bodmin Moor. The walk up to the summit is a gentle gradient, and just as at Haytor Rocks and Bellever Tor across the Tamar, it's possible to throw your ball from the top so that it bounces down amongst the granite crevasses for any enthusiastic furball to chase, retrieve, and repeat. Here when the skies are blue there's no need for binoculars to look across to Delabole with the sea behind, scan up the coast to Widemouth Bay, look north east to see the mass of Exmoor rising to the horizon, then turn to behold Brentor and the majestic hulk of Dartmoor.

Meanwhile, Timmy always breaks his journey at the old Davidstow Airfield, which dates originally from 1943. From here Wellingtons fitted with state-of-the-art radar and crewed by the loyal and faithful Polish airmen, would patrol the seas for enemy submarines. This is the place where many a Karol met his only true love, Morwenna the milkmaid from the nearby farmstead, who would regularly bring samples of clotted cream to the airbase to teach the Polish heroes one vitally important rule called 'jam first'. You take your sliced scone—no need to butter it—then apply a layer of strawberry jam, followed by lashings of clotted cream, liberally smeared. Now the area has become the home of Davidstow Cheddar (a favourite of Rick Stein) but sometimes, only when the conditions are right, it's possible to sense that Karol has returned on his quest to be reunited with Morwenna. Timmy always hunts them out on his scamper along the runway, nose to the ground with legs slightly spread, hovering up the scent trail.



Timmy views Devon from a safe distance