



**STARRING ROLE:** Sheepstor, Dartmoor, as seen in Steven Spielberg's War Horse. The director, pictured right, says the landscape is unlike anything else in the world

# No effects needed on the moor

OSCAR-winning Hollywood director Steven Spielberg has heaped praise on Dartmoor saying he believes there is no place like it in the world.

by **TRISTAN NICHOLS**

Herald Reporter

Speaking shortly after the UK premiere of 'War Horse' – which was partly shot on the land above Sheepstor – he said he considers its landscape and skyline to be the film's "third character".

The acclaimed director previously wrote a letter to The Herald explaining he felt he had "hardly scratched the surface" of what Dartmoor has to offer.

And speaking on national television, he again spoke of his awe at filming on location.

"There's no place like it [Dartmoor] in the world," he said.

"When I got to Dartmoor I suddenly realised I had a third character that I needed to include in War Horse and that was the land and the sky.

"Dartmoor plays a major role. We had three days of amazing sunsets and we actually took advantage of them.

"There was no sky replacement. Audiences are so used to digital enhancements or replacements that they don't trust cinema any more.

"They see a movie and if they see something beautiful and it strikes them emotionally, they think 'well that was fake' or 'they did that on the computer'.

"Not a single shot in this movie has sky enhancement or a replaced sky or landscape.

"That is Devon and Dartmoor, and those are the tors on the moors. It is pretty extraordinary country."

Spielberg, whose films include Saving Private Ryan, Jaws and Raiders Of The Lost Ark, spent several weeks in August 2010 filming scenes for War Horse.

The film is based on a novel of the same name by Devon writer Michael Morpurgo.

The book tells the moving story of a horse sold to the cavalry and then shipped to France during the First World War, and his young owner's mission to bring him home.

Actors involved in the film include Oscar-nominated Emily Watson and David Thewlis, who played Professor Lupin in the Harry Potter films.

Spielberg's location researchers are not the only ones to have noticed Dartmoor's unique qualities.

Location teams for the forthcoming James Bond film have also visited and looked at the moorland above Sheepstor.

However it is understood the teams instead chose to film scenes in Wales.

A host of Hollywood actors and film companies have chosen to set up camp and shoot scenes in Plymouth and the surrounding area in recent years.

Christian Slater and Neve Campbell filmed scenes at the Royal William Yard for Churchill: The Hollywood Years in 2003.

More recently Tim Burton chose to shoot scenes for Alice in Wonderland at Antony House in Torpoint in 2008.

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**ON LOCATION:** Burrator reservoir features in a scene from War Horse