

ENCLOSURES – PAST AND PRESENT AND OPPOSITION TO THEM



The True Levellers (Diggers)

A BRIEF HISTORY

“And hereby thou wilt *honour thy Father and thy Mother* : Thy Father, which is the spirit of community, that made all and that dwels in all. Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her children. Therefore do not hinder the Mother Earth from giving all her children suck, by thy Inclosing into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power.”

[Gerrard Winstanley *The True Levellers Standard Advanced: Or, The State of Community Opened, and Presented to the Sons of Men*, 1649]

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Enclosure of land used by the people as an essential part of their lifestyle whether, as in the past, it was grazing livestock and fowls, cutting furze and bracken for fuel and bedding or, today, for leisure and recreational pursuits, has been going on for over half a millennium. This is a short account of land enclosure and popular resistance to it.

THE FEUDAL MANOR

The feudal system, based on the manor, was, in essence, a source of privilege for the nobility with their 'rights' enforced by laws enacted by the monarch and themselves.

The manor, a single administrative landed estate containing pieces of land held by various tenants, became the normal English economic unit usually 'owned' by a knight who held land from the Crown and was dependent on staying in royal 'good books' for continued 'ownership'. The fundamental political feature of feudalism was the downward delegation of power with all power resting upon ownership of land, the King being sole and ultimate owner of all land who granted it to his loyal supporters in return for military and other duties favourable to himself.

The manor was commonly divided into the lord's 'demesne' under his immediate control, and tenanted land whose serfs – tied to their lord's manor – provided the labour needed to work their master's land, and to whom they paid rents and taxes 'in kind'. Arable land was carried on in large open fields on which the inhabitants farmed long narrow strips: each person having numerous strips scattered across the field enclosed with temporary fencing while crops were being grown, after which fencing was removed and animals were free to wander. Each peasant's strips were spread widely across the manor; what crop to sow, when to plough and when to harvest were communal decisions. Tillage was not for profit but generally for local consumption: few towns then existed.

Apart from the strip fields, the other major source of sustenance for the peasantry (and others) was the common and 'waste' land that gave grazing for animals, timber for building, wood for fuel, game for eating and many other benefits essential for existence.

Despite wide geographical variations the trend was always the same: open fields of the Middle ages were transformed into the fenced, hedged or walled fields of individual farms so characteristic of today's landscape.

DECLINE OF FEUDALISM

By the 13th century there was the beginning of a very gradual transformation of feudalism as a slow revolution started to change village life. The inefficient, wasteful, uneconomic and conservative strip-farming denied go-ahead individuals from trying out new farming methods and personal initiatives and, despite elimination of the previous egalitarianism of land quality, there was a movement whereby each peasant gave up his scattered individual plots for a unified plot of land surrounding the family home.

Previous organisation of the manor where serfs were bound to the soil and owed labour services to their lord was being altered by a number of factors: growth of central government; replacement of feudal services 'in kind' by money payments and emergence of the wage labourer; growth of towns; the trade and export of wool for sale in the market rather than the previous universal rural subsistence economy.

Feudal nobility, ever greedy to enlarge their own 'home farm' (demesne), resisted erosion of their powers by expanding properties through reclaiming waste land and marshes for their own benefit, so adding considerably to the area under cultivation. It was not a universal success and the peasantry resisted: the Peasant Rising of the late 14th century was one such major insurrection.

The gradual move towards enclosure of open fields and waste land brought about a change in employment relationships as the Lord of the Manor frequently became an absentee landlord remote from his tenants. The old system whereby the peasant made payment to the lord with labour or, sometimes, money, gave way to a system of landlord, tenant and labourer relationships entirely based on money: rent from the tenant; wages from the landlord. In general the free peasants who had owned a share of the land in the open-field system became the tenants; serfs become the labourers – a class of migrant wage labourers able to travel from manor to manor looking for work.

Individualism began to replace communal activity; the competitive instinct reasserted itself; commercial forces came into play; land became a commodity that could be bought and sold or exchanged; large farms 'ate-up' smaller and less efficient ones; there was a slow concentration of land in fewer and fewer persons and growing inequality between estates as a class of prosperous tenants materialised.

THE TUDOR ENCLOSURES

The 15th and 16th centuries were times of political turmoil in England. Landlords made undignified scrambles for yet more wealth: rents were hugely increased; there was a shortage of corn and general provisions as more and more land was enclosed for sheep. Growth of sheep farming led to depopulation – eviction, loss of agricultural employment, loss of common lands – and made a deep impression on the popular mind which regarded grazing as a fundamental evil. A popular proverb of the time was: “Enclosures make fat beasts and lean poor people”.¹

The increasing decline of feudalism was accompanied by the rise of capitalist methods of production. The nation passed from being a producer of wool to being a manufacturer of cloth – so ‘kick-starting’ ascendancy of a capitalist textile industry. Finance was now derived from people who might have no direct contact with the work force, or even of the industry itself.

There was a growing export trade to the European mainland and rise of a merchant class that was the principal beneficiary (compare with Cornish tin and copper mining throughout the ages where wealth always benefited the middle men – the merchants – rather than those who actually created this wealth). The ‘wool capitalist’ bought the raw wool; gave it out to the spinners – mostly women and children working from their homes; collected it again; handed it on to the weavers, dyers, fullers and shearmen while paying for each process at fixed rates.

Feudal agriculture was generally collective and centred around the plough team as well as joint cultivation of common lands that were both legacies of a distant tribal past. To quote from A.L.Morton: “Such a collective agriculture could not pass directly to capitalist agriculture the individual peasant cultivation of the fifteenth century was a transitory form arising from the break up of the manor. The peasantry had to be atomised, broken up into solitary and defenceless units, before they could be integrated into a mass of wage labourers taking part in capitalist production. Here lay the importance of the enclosures of the Tudor period.”²

Enclosure of common land had gone on ever since the Black Death in the late 14th century but was not carried out in all parts of the country: much land remained in the open field system until the end of the 18th century. However, extensive 16th century Tudor enclosures were of decisive importance to the environment and to society: land changed from open fields to enclosure; from arable farming to sheep pasture. As prices for wool reached new heights it was more profitable for landowners to

¹ E Lipson *The Economic History of England* (1915, 1956) page 164

² A L Morton *A People's History of England* page 166

enclose common land and their previously large open fields with fences and hedges, and fill them with sheep. Peasants' rents were forced up and, unable to pay their landlords were evicted and had to leave the land.

A consequence of this was that, as sheep farming required fewer workers compared with growing crops, there was widespread dispossession of the peasantry at a time of population increase; sweeping social change was bound to occur as wealth was relentlessly transferred from the labouring masses to a small class of merchants and capitalist farmers.

As in earlier centuries the peasantry did not take these events lying down: rebellions broke out against enclosure of common land, one of the most important being in Norfolk during 1549. This was led by Robert Kett when thousands of peasants began to take down hedges and fences enclosing common land. When Kett's rural 'army' stormed and captured Norwich – then the second most important town in England and centre of the wool trade – local landowners appealed to the young King Edward VI for help: an army of 13,000 troops crushed the rebellion.

Another huge but, again, unsuccessful rebellion took place in Cornwall: enclosure being a key grievance. A large crowd marched on Exeter. Robin Meneer, in his *Post-Mediaeval Hedges In Cornwall (1540-1840)*³ describes how one of the causes of the Cornish protest of 1549 – the Prayer Book Rebellion – was the enclosure of monastic lands and that a contemporary writer stated: “it was generally agreed amongst them [the Cornish], that no inclosure should be left standing but that all lands should be held in common”. That summer the king, Edward VI, supported landowners and decried the “great number of rude and ignorant people [who] plucked down many hedges [and] disparted their parks...”. Martial law was declared and nobody was permitted “to pluck down any hedge, pale, fence, wall or any manner of enclosure...” Following defeat of the Rebellion using foreign mercenary soldiers some 900 Cornishmen were killed in cold blood on orders of the London Government: “For most of the remainder, their lands were confiscated, so that they became farm labourers, still working the land but now for a 'foreigner' from upcountry.”

The large number of people involved in these anti-enclosure revolts alarmed Parliament which passed laws attempting to calm the situation: they insisted that recently converted pasture land be returned to arable farming and a poll tax was imposed on sheep. But the very people who were

³ *Post-Mediaeval Hedges In Cornwall (1540-1840)* © Robin Meneer 2007 (Draft version 26th March 2007) <http://www.cornishhedges.co.uk/PDF/post-med.pdf> and Cornish Hedges Library <http://www.cornishhedges.co.uk/>

tasked with enforcing these laws were local landowners who had been enclosing the land in the first place. The laws were usually ignored and enclosures continued unabated.

Acts of Enclosure normally had to be obtained with consent of 4/5th of the occupiers but, since most of these were tenants of one or two big landowners, usually Lord of the Manor, consent was easy to obtain with improper pressure and bribery – force and fraud were as much in evidence as in earlier centuries. Most former tenant farmers became wage labourers on the land or found work in towns. Frequent riots and civil disobedience against the Enclosures broke out in the countryside and continued on and off for many decades.

THE LEVELLERS AND THE TRUE LEVELLERS (DIGGERS)

The 17th century parliamentary leadership of the Civil Wars and the English Revolution wanted to establish the rights of private property and capitalist exploitation.

Until that time the monarch ruled by ‘divine right’ and had absolute authority over all aspects of life within the kingdom. This autocratic power tended to favour his noble relatives, friends and hangers-on, while the growing wealth and ventures of the increasingly influential merchant class found themselves ‘fenced-in’ and unable to function or expand as they thought fit.

The fight against enclosure of common land was also an issue that drove the Revolution against the monarchy. The landlords, led by the king who was, after all, the biggest landlord of them all, were enclosing the commons by fencing them in to create large fields. These new farms were often leased to wealthy farmers to produce food to be sold on the market: to put it simply, enclosures were the new farming method of the rich. This was production not for immediate consumption, as of old, but for the market.

Despite widespread popular protest against enclosures, parliament betrayed the poor and in 1643 voted to carry on the previous royalist policy of enclosure. Vigorous movements erupted against this policy of favouring the rich and ignoring the poor who, after all, supplied the rank and file of the Parliamentary army that had defeated the Royalists. Two of the most prominent protest movements were the Levellers and the True Levellers, or Diggers as they came to be called.

The Levellers had no coherent agenda before 1649, but were broadly committed to the abolition of corruption within the Parliamentary and judicial process; toleration of religious differences; translation of law into the common tongue; and some kind of expansion of the suffrage. These aims

fluctuated, although Levellers tended to hold fast to a notion of "natural rights" that had been violated by the king's side in the Civil Wars. [The term 'leveller' was used in 17th-century England as a term of abuse for rural rebels: in the Midland Revolt of 1607 the name referred to those who 'levelled' hedges in enclosure riots.]

The Diggers were much more radical and wanted to abolish private property altogether and had little time for organised religion; they worked out a programme for the poor and, unlike any other radical grouping, tried to put it in to practice: their communes were the first step in a sort of general strike of the poor who would simply refuse to work for the rich.

Diggers' attitudes grew out of the writings of Gerrard Winstanley which encompassed a worldview envisaging an environmental interrelationship between humans and nature, and acknowledging the inherent relationships between people and their surroundings. In April 1649 a group of Diggers began to plant vegetables and build houses on common land in Surrey when food prices were at an all-time high: they also intended to pull down all enclosures.

Cromwell's army chief, with a body of troops, was sent to interview Winstanley and others, but concluded they were doing no harm and advised local landowners to seek redress through the courts. Consequently the Diggers were harassed by gangs organised by the Lord of the Manor and lost the court case: they eventually abandoned their land in August 1649 and moved elsewhere where they were also driven out. By 1651 the movement had collapsed: the power of the State and local landowners being too much to withstand, as well as indifference of the poor who depended on landlords for work, fuel and food, and on common land – where it still remained – for their traditional rights.

18TH AND 19TH CENTURY ENCLOSURES

A massive series of private acts of enclosure in the early 18th century transformed many remaining communally cultivated open fields into large compact farms where new scientific mixed farming could be profitably carried out: 4000 acts covered some seven million acres before the General Enclosure Act of 1845.

In addition, much waste land and common land not under the plough, on which villagers had long-standing customary rights, were now enclosed. Lesser tenant farmers were evicted or ruined by exorbitant rents, forced out by their inability to compete with larger up-to-date farms. Land became more and more concentrated in fewer hands: there was a marked decrease of farms under 100 acres

and increase of those over 300 acres –a decline of some 40,000 separate farms. From 1717 until the Napoleonic Wars in 1820 more than four million acres were enclosed under numerous Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. Meneer mentions one interesting local instance: “In 1788, 6 acres of Bostraze moor, a common near St Just in Penwith, 'lately hedged in and enclosed' by Archelaus Thomas was then rented to him by Wm. Bosvargus for 3 lives at 19/- a year”; he also tells us that “In an Act dated 1831 the Duchy of Cornwall joined the movement towards the enclosure of commons which enabled the Duchy to grant leases for the purpose of improving waste Lands by cultivation or otherwise”.

Each common to be enclosed generally had to have its own Act of Parliament and this was an awkward and expensive hindrance for landowners: they sought an easier way out. In 1845 a General Act was passed by Parliament that gave more authority to local commissioners for enclosing land. For the rural poor this was the final destructive stage of traditional life.

Nevertheless Parliament did not always approve enclosure and directed that: “abandoned homesteads should be rebuilt, and that enclosing hedges and ditches should be removed”. But the landed gentry, who were usually the local magistrates and whose ruling class allies made the laws, flouted the ruling and continued to brazenly continue large-scale enclosure with extensive hedge building. It was frequently the case that villagers only found out was in store for them when the petition for enclosure had been presented to Parliament as a done deal.

One of the necessary conditions of an enclosure award was that boundaries had to be fenced: this usually cost more than the value of the land and normally had to be done within a year, although internal hedges had no time limit imposed. Some awards were made retrospectively, even back a century, “thus legalising an earlier fait accompli”.

Information on land ownership in Britain is not easy to come by.

The majority of large estates have origins in appropriations and handouts from past monarchs: William the Conqueror donated lands to himself and his faithful followers, and it is from them that so many ancient ‘English’ and ‘Cornish’ families derive. Henry VIII redistributed 10 million acres of dissolved monastic estates to his supporters and nobility willing to reject the Church of Rome, embrace the new Church, and impose it in their particular areas. Other major land redistribution took place according to political allegiances during the time of Oliver Cromwell and after Restoration of the monarchy. More recently land has been redistributed through enclosure acts and purchase: most

freeholds of owner-occupied houses and businesses that exist today derive from big landowners cashing in by selling off small parcels of their land to property developers.⁴

The Land Register, formed in 1925, only managed to register about half of all land. However, prior to this, a report entitled *The Return of Owners of Land* was submitted to Parliament in 1876 that covered all landowners of over one acre. The UK's biggest landowners were appalled and successfully managed to 'bury' it for 126 years when its contents were finally revealed. This showed that 189,000 families owned two-thirds of the UK's 60 million acres, of which nearly 30 million was owned by the top 40,000. By contrast Britain's 16.8 million homeowners accounted for barely 4 per cent of the land (2,400,000 acres). Some 10 per cent of land could not be accounted for.

Further classification was carried out in 1876 by John Bateman and published as '*Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*' listing those people with holdings over 3,000 acres. This showed a huge concentration of ownership with 710 landowners owning one quarter of England and Wales. In some counties the concentration was even greater. In Dorset, for example, 34 landowners owned nearly 60% of the county.⁵

The process of enclosure was habitually accompanied by deception, force, resistance, and bloodshed, and remains the most controversial area of agricultural and economic history in England whereby rich landowners used their control of state institutions – laws, police, courts and, in extreme cases, the army – to appropriate public land for private benefit. This created the landless working class so desperately needed to provide labour required for the newly developing industrial revolution of Victorian Britain.

“The common People are filled with good words from Pulpits and Council Tables, but no good Deeds; For they wait and wait for good, and for deliverances, but none comes.”

[Gerrard Winstanley *The True Levellers Standard Advanced: Or, The State of Community Opened, and Presented to the Sons of Men*, 1649]

⁴ [Excerpt from *Land Value...for Public Benefit* by Jerry Jones (New Edition)] September 2008
<http://www.labourland.org/downloads/papers/WhoOwnsPaper.pdf>

⁵ Land Essays http://www.tlio.org.uk/pubs/LE2_lowm.html

20TH & 21ST CENTURY ENCLOSURES

Previous enclosures – mostly by the landed gentry and the Crown – are now being supplemented by Government agencies and national charities with funding from public sources, rather than earlier private finance.

One of the worst government schemes took place in the second half of the 20th century when generous grants were given to landowners to break in and plough up moorland, and this at a time when there was a glut of food. It proved so unpopular with the public and conservation groups that it was abandoned in the mid-1980s, but not before significant damage to the environment and local archaeology. [For more on this please go to CONTENTS – Archived Articles - *Déjà Vu.*]

These agencies, together with a number of tenant farmers and private landowners (not normally short of money), are benefiting from having their land freely stock proofed by courtesy of the public yet, as this continues, the public is being denied their former free unobstructed access to much open moorland and coastal land.

21st century enclosures are as unpopular as in the past and have been implemented in West Penwith under the Natural England HEATH Project, funded principally by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) managed through Interreg IIIB with offices in Lille, northern France. Once initial stock proofing had been completed under HEATH these areas are grazed under the Higher Level Stewardship financed through DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) which is also responsible for fencing many areas not done under HEATH. Thus most of open access land in West Cornwall is being, or has already been, fenced with barbed wire and grazed with cattle – few places remain untouched by these iniquitous schemes.

It is apparent from the Natural England completion report to the Heritage Lottery Fund⁶ that out of 2912.9 hectares of land in West Cornwall to be stock proofed and grazed under the HEATH Project [listed as New Grazing, Better Infrastructure, Better Informed and Creation], 1321.4 hectares are in West Penwith, the remainder being on the Lizard and at St Agnes.

Both Natural England and the National Trust are the principal landowners who will benefit from this project: NE owning almost 42% of this land and NT about 30% - the remainder mostly either privately owned (18.4%) or owned by Cornwall Wildlife Trust (8%). [see details: Annex 1].

⁶ Heritage Grants: Final Payment Request and Completion Report by Natural England (17/3/2009)

In West Penwith, where NE does not own any HEATH Project land, the NT owns about 51%, the CWT nearly 9%, with some 37% being privately owned. Most, if not all of this land was declared open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) that introduced new rights for people to walk on areas of open country and registered common land. It is now clear that this right is being seriously restricted by lengths of barbed wire fencing, numerous gates and a few cattle grids, some of which has been placed within areas of open access land – not just around their perimeter.

As in previous centuries, there is angry and determined opposition to these enclosures although, now, this is primarily directed against powerful national institutions backed by the government⁷ rather than individual landowners.

It is the repugnant policies of Natural England that are financing ugly scars of barbed wire fencing across our once beautiful and unspoilt open wilderness and magnificent coastline. Their arrogant, patronising and dictatorial methods refuse to consider the concerns and suggestions of local residents, and they have the nerve to express surprise at the degree of opposition to their ruthless assault on the countryside in the name of a dubious programme to promote biodiversity. Public finance is being used to restrict our freedom of movement and destroying the last vestiges of untamed wilderness and ripping the heart out of a much loved landscape

All that Save Penwith Moors and their supporters are asking for is that a few relatively small areas of open access moorland are left cattle and fencing free for the public to enjoy in peace and safety – is this really too much to ask for when there are so few cattle-free places remaining in West Penwith?



⁷ Natural England is ultimately responsible to the Minister for Marine and Natural Environment at DEFRA

ROUGH SKETCH MAP OF HEATH PROJECT GRAZING AREAS

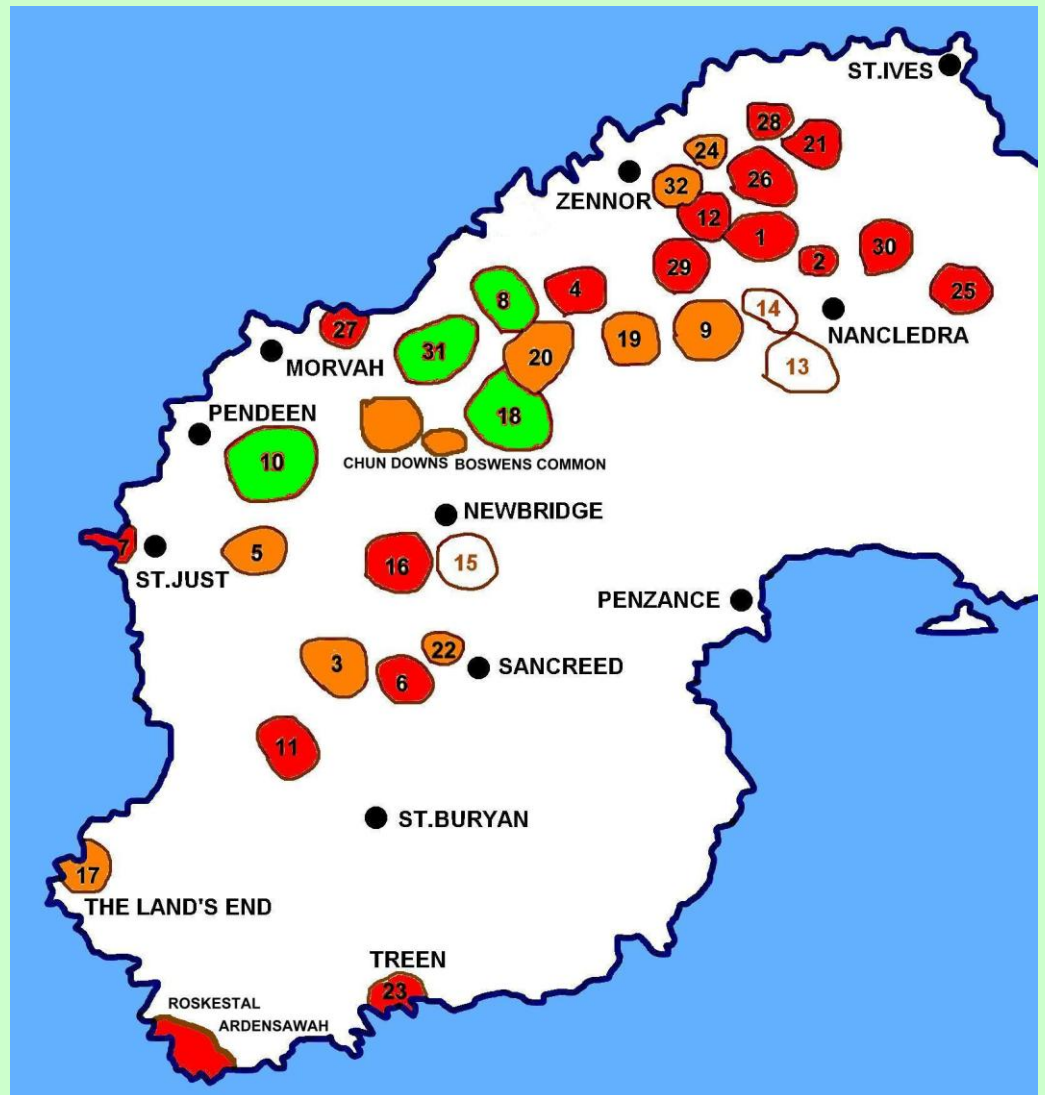
Note this does not include many other areas fenced and grazed under Higher Level Stewardship.

Red = new grazing, better infrastructure, better informed, creation

Orange = other priorities, challenging to progress, no grazing but better prepared

Green = those areas for which SPM request a grazing exemption

1. Amalveor
2. Baker's Pit
3. Bartinney Down
4. Bosporthennis
5. Busvargus
6. Caer Bran
7. Cape Cornwall
8. Carn Galva
9. Carnaquidden
10. Carnyorth Common
11. Chapel Carn Brea
12. Foage
13. Gulval Downs
14. Gulval Tonkin's Downs and Trenwin
15. Higher Botrea (Bosvenning & Roskennals)
16. Higher Botrea
17. Land's End
18. Lanyon
19. Mulfra Common
20. Nine Maidens
21. Rosewall Hill
22. Sancreed Beacon
23. Treen Cliff
24. Tremedda Common
25. Trecrom Hill
26. Trendrine
27. Trevean Cliff
28. Trevega Wartha
29. Trewey Common
30. Trink Hill
31. Watch Croft
32. Zennor Hill



ANNEX 1

Heritage Grants: Final Payment Request and Completion Report (17/3/2009)

A list of sites considered under the HEATH project and their final level of involvement

(NOTE: only those areas in West Penwith named)

1. New Grazing: 24 sites totalling 2224.7 hectares.

6 owned by NE: 1212.50 hectares

11 owned by NT: 507.2 hectares [Carn Galva, Watch Croft, Trevean Cliff, Trevega Wartha, Treen Cliff, Chapel Carn Brea, Trencrom Hill]

1 owned by NT/MOD: 130 hectares (Predannack Airfield)

2 owned by CWT: 65 hectares [Bakers Pit]

4 owned privately [PV]: 310 hectares [Lanyon Farm, Carnyorth, Roskestal, Ardensawah]

2. Better Infrastructure totalling 166.2 hectares

4 owned by NT: 141.2 hectares [Bosporthenis, Rosewall Hill]

1 owned privately: 25 hectares [Trewey Common]

3. Creation: 37 hectares

2 owned by NT: 10 hectares

2 owned by CWT: 28 hectares [Caer Bran]

4. Better Informed totalling 485 hectares

2 owned by CWT: 139 hectares [Higher Botrea]

3 owned privately: 201 hectares [Trendrine Hill, Trink Hill, Amalveor Downs]

2 owned by NT: 145 hectares [Boscaswell, Foage]

5. No Grazing required: 272.2 hectares

6. Other Priorities: 177 hectares [Land's End]

7. Ungrazed Areas of Larger Holdings: 51 hectares [Bakers Pit (part)]

8. Challenging to Progress: 322 acres [Mulfra Downs (PV), Chun Downs (CWT), Busvargus Common (PV), Nine Maidens Common (PV)]

9. No grazing but better prepared: 459 hectares all privately owned [Zennor Hill, Tremedda Common, Boswens Common, Bartinney Downs, Tredinnick, Sancreed Beacon, Carnaquidden Downs]

10. Put off by criminal damage: 40 hectares [Pordennack Point (PV)]

11. No progress: 221 acres [Woongumpus Common (PV), Bosulow Common (PV)]

So for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 where stock proofing and grazing has/or is intended to take place

Out of 2912.9 hectares

Natural England owns 1212.5ha (all outside West Penwith) 41.6%

National Trust owns 868.4ha(Note: Predannack Airfield NT/MOD taken as 65 ha) 29.8%

MOD owns 65ha 2.2%

Cornwall Wildlife Trust owns 232ha 8%

536 hectares are privately owned 18.4%

Between them NE and NT own almost 80% of land under HEATH in West Cornwall

For West Penwith ONLY total acreage under 1, 2, 3 and 4 = 1321.4 hectares

NT owns 668.4 hectares 50.6%

[Carn Galva, Watch Croft, Trevean Cliff, Trevega Wartha, Treen Cliff, Chapel Carn Brea, Trencrom Hill, Bosporthenis, Rosewall Hill, Boscaswell, Foage]

CWT owns 117 hectares 8.9%

[Bakers Pit, Caer Bran, Higher Botrea]

Owned privately 536 hectares 40.6% (of which 100 ha is along coastal strip)

[Lanyon Farm, Carnyorth, Roskestal, Ardensawah, Trewey Common, Trendrine Hill, Trink Hill, Amalveor Downs]




TIME TO PUT AN END TO IT

Relentless enclosure of land used by the people as an essential part of their lifestyle whether, as in the past, it was grazing livestock and fowls, cutting furze and bracken for fuel and bedding or, today, for leisure and recreational pursuits, has been going on for over half a millennium.

As in previous centuries, there is angry and determined opposition to enclosure of moorland although, now, this is primarily directed against powerful national institutions backed by the government¹ rather than individual landowners.

It is now the repugnant policies of Natural England that are financing ugly scars of barbed wire fencing across our once beautiful and unspoilt open wilderness and magnificent coastline. Their arrogant, patronising and dictatorial methods refuse to consider the concerns and suggestions of local residents, and they have the nerve to express surprise at the degree of opposition to their ruthless assault on the countryside in the name of a dubious programme to promote biodiversity. Public finance is being used to restrict our freedom of movement – grant funding should be withheld.

Much of our peninsula is owned by the National Trust and a few wealthy landowners. It is all very well for the landed gentry to enjoy their private gardens, woods and wildlife shooting areas, those of us who are less fortunate will now be left to run the gauntlet of unpredictable cattle and marvel at miles of new barbed wire fencing and numerous gates that are destroying the last vestiges of untamed wilderness and ripping the heart out of a much loved landscape. **IT IS NOW TIME TO PUT AN END TO IT!**



Ian McNeil Cooke (Co-ordinator Save Penwith Moors)

edited 29th December 2009

¹ Natural England is ultimately responsible to the Minister for Marine and Natural Environment at DEFRA