

ARCHIVED NEWS 2012 - CARNYORTH COMMON

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ADDED 28th January 2012

CARNYORTH COMMON – burns, firebreaks & barbed wire



Left: Another controlled fire has taken place near Higher Botallack.

Right: More firebreaks have been cut – some on land of unknown ownership.

A complaint has been sent to Cornwall Council concerning old barbed wire still remaining on this open access land that poses a dangerous hazard to the public, even after some wire was removed after a previous complaint last October. SPM has also requested that, as a gesture of good will and a long awaited visual enhancement of the environment, the ruinous wooden stiles and fencing posts could be taken away at the same time – they have been an eye sore for decades (below).



ADDED 4th February 2012



THE MAGIC 47

The report by English Heritage [EH] published in November 2011 *Management recommendations following reports of damage to the monument* states on page 4 that “Visitor numbers can be heavy at the monument [Tregeseal Stone Circle], with 47 counted during a two hour period on the 5th August 2011”. This very precise figure is strange since other attendees at the meeting did not recall anything like that number of individuals although there were more people on the

moor than any of us had seen there for a long long time, even for a fine morning at the height of the tourist season. Coincidence? Don't believe it for a moment. SPM thought this would be a likely strategy by Natural England/English Heritage to 'disprove' our contention that the Common has become a 'ghost moor' since cattle were introduced.

A reliable source now informs us that this figure of 47 was given to the EH official at the end of the meeting, but that the figure referred to the number of people on and around the Common, not just at the circle which would have meant an average of one person every two and a half minutes interrupting the meeting. So it appears that the Report has been 'sexed up' to insist that visitors can be "heavy at the monument" - they certainly weren't on that August morning.

We now know that the person making this precise figure was standing for much of the meeting on the Carn Kenidjack side of the circle with his back to the moors. So how could he see exactly 47 people? Is this 'magician' seeing double, treble or even quadruple, or is he merely mathematically challenged?

HE SHOULD GO FOR AN EYE TEST

ADDED 11th February 2012

BARBED WIRE AGAIN



As reported below a complaint was sent to Cornwall Council [08/11/2011] concerning hazardous old barbed wire left behind on Carnyorth Common after a controlled burn. Although some of this was quickly taken away, more still remains on-site with no further action taking place. A further complaint has been made with a suggestion - again - that, as a gesture of good will towards the public who ultimately pay for these agri-environmental schemes through taxation, the ruinous wooden stiles and fencing posts, that have been an eye sore here for decades, also be

removed.

It is an appalling indictment of those tasked with managing our environment that so little care is taken to ensure the safety of public users of this unique landscape and, as I understand it, the landowner/occupier is legally responsible and can be sued in the civil courts “by someone for injury or damage resulting from the state of the land” [see http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/CA%20150-1%20liability_tcm6-27731.pdf].

DEFRA's *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock - Cattle* page 14 (83) states: "You should keep all the farm's fields and buildings clear of debris such as wire or batteries (with their risk of lead poisoning), or plastic or sharp metal objects that could injure the cattle or rip out their ear tags and damage their ears." <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb7949-cattle-code-030407.pdf>

STOP PRESS (Friday 17.37): an email was received from the Natural England Lead Advisor, Land Management and Conservation based in Truro that he had been informed by the HLS agreement holder that the redundant fencing was removed yesterday morning; i.e. the day after our complaint was made. Quick work. So we can have some effect after all.

However there is still old barbed wire on the border between the burnt open access land and the grass field where grazing animals are sometimes seen.



ADDED 28th April 2012

LOOKS FAMILIAR? cattle at Tregeseal Circle - again



I was informed at the beginning of the week that cattle are now once again on Carnyorth Common for the first time since last year and I walked around there on Wednesday morning.

A group of seven cattle, including 6 longhorns, were grazing – guess where – in and around the circle where they were using the stones as rubbing posts, and I have taken photographs and video to substantiate this. I could see no evidence that any remedial or preventative measures have been taken to safeguard this scheduled monument and a report has

been sent to English Heritage and Natural England.

As I have been criticised in the past for testing the stones for stability I did not do so again but have suggested that English Heritage send an official to inspect the site on a regular basis.

OBSTRUCTION – OFFICIAL



After many months of correspondence with Cornwall Council, their Legal Department has declared this gate – part of stock proofing for Carnyorth Common – to be an ‘obstruction’ and the issue has been sent to the enforcement officer for action.

ADDED 5th May 2012

CATTLE AT CIRCLE - VIDEO

See the recent video of cattle using Tregeseal Circle stones as rubbing posts with potential for yet more damage (taken on 25th April 2012) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDyNqYD15-o>

ADDED 12th May 2012

LETTER TO *THE CORNISHMAN*

A letter has been sent to *The Cornishman* in response to an article published on 3rd May “Footage ‘shows cattle damaging stone circle’”.

ADDED 26th May 2012

“ANCIENT STONES' PROTECTION MAY TAKE MONTHS”

So runs the title of an article in last Thursday’s issue of *The Cornishman*.

After several years of persistently denying that cattle were causing any damage to the circle it now appears that Natural England have grudgingly acknowledged what SPM were always well aware of – and reported – almost 36 months ago. A Natural England spokesman is now quoted as saying that traditional herd management and supplementary feed would be used to draw livestock away from the circle. If this is the case why did they not try it out years ago instead of having to be dragged reluctantly into the real world?

Read the full story at <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Ancient-stones-protection-months/story-16173610-detail/story.html>

NO WATER FOR GRAZING STOCK

Surprise surprise! Almost immediately after complaints were put on Facebook last Sunday that there was no water available for grazing stock on Carnyorth Common, the concrete water trough was found to be full by Tuesday evening. It begs the question whether Facebook is a more effective method of getting anything done than contacting Natural England? We are well aware that the ‘opposition’ read our posts.

PONIES HAVE TO CROSS BARBED WIRE

Last Wednesday morning I saw two very frisky ponies in the field at the Kenythorpe end of Carnyorth Common who then crossed onto the recently burnt area. To do this they had to cross over old barbed wire left over from the 1980’s; this is an obvious danger to grazing stock as well as to walkers, but despite several attempts many months ago to get its removal Natural England tell me that the grazier is unwilling to do so.

Posted on Facebook Thursday 24th May: “Met the two frisky ponies tonight on Carnyorth! Out for a lovely evening ride across the moor. Came upon a woman, out walking with 2 dogs , being harassed by 2 wild ponies. They were worrying her dogs and she was struggling because they would not go away. My pony was totally spooked by these loose ponies on narrow rocky path. The woman ended up going through the gorse to get out of the way. Lucky... for her, but not for me, the ponies obviously chose to follow my pony. I had to dismount as I did not like idea of pony bolting and had tricky walk off the moors with 2 ponies following! Not a good experience but I will not let this stop me riding up there. Why the hell are 2 small ponies running around up there ? All they are achieving is stopping the last few remaining members of the public that do still ride up there. Wonder if the farmer is aware that if they are allowed to keep grazing in the big grass field then they are going to be 2 very poorly ponies”.

This is a more 'real' warning sign than those small green ones currently on the gates around the Common - it refers to ponies on the Lizard.



ADDED 16th June 2012

CARNYORTH COMMON MEETING

An on-site meeting was held on Friday 15th June by invitation of our local Member of Parliament that included three SPM members, 2 Natural England officials and two local farmers.

A walk around the Common in a strong gale – but no rain – discussed various issues concerning biodiversity, archaeology and general management; this was followed by food and drink at the North Inn, Pendeen, and further discussion during which SPM made it clear that, although we want a resolution to current problems of grazing and fencing, we were in no way abandoning our current campaign objectives but do support some kind of protection for the whole of the West Penwith environment. All things considered a worthwhile get together.

HAS NOTHING BEEN LEARNT?



June 2012: Tregeseal Circle
'maintenance' of heather and
western gorse under the Natural
England stated aim of "Restoring
the Sea of Heather". Orwellian
double-speak: DESTRUCTION
= RESTORATION.

PUBLIC CHAIRMAN: PROF. CHARLES THOMAS SPEAKERS & SLIDES PUBLIC DEBATE CORNWALL TRUST for NATURE CONSERVATION	THE PENWITH MOORS A VANISHING LANDSCAPE? 7.30pm THURS OCT 25th St JOHN's HALL, Pz. MEETING
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Public Meeting in – yes – 1984

ADDED 23rd June 2012

CARNYORTH MEETING

SPM were disappointed that both the Natural England Area Manager and Historic Environment official could not attend the meeting on 15th June, especially as the latter might have been able to clarify measures being taken to prevent further serial damage to Tregeseal Circle.

It is noteworthy that much was made of expanding heathland maintenance/access etc across West Penwith, yet the meeting did not really address or even appear to understand our basic campaign issues (confined to a few locations) of fencing as a visual eyesore and hindrance to access, as well as many people not being comfortable about walking or riding where there are free-roaming cattle. Perhaps this 'expansion' was a tactic designed to draw us away from concentrating on our campaign locations?

However it was overall a useful meeting but only up to a point and we wonder why it has taken so long for such a meeting to be called – perhaps ministerial input to get things sorted down here?

Despite the various unlawful, unsatisfactory and neglectful activities carried out under the auspices of Natural England we are prepared to keep an open mind for the moment although the 'proof of the pudding' will be what happens on the ground. In the meantime our campaign will continue.

TREGESEAL CIRCLE

A Natural England official referring recently to cattle access to water – there are two concrete water troughs on this Common – that this was done to attract cattle away from the Circle.

This does not make any sense: both water troughs have been in the same locations about half a mile away from the Circle since their late installation during the summer of 2010 (cattle had been on the Common since May 2009), yet serial damage was caused to the Circle by the longhorns up until late 2011.

It was reported last Thursday that the Circle area was once again full of cattle dung with sods of turf pulled up. Clearly the animals are still being drawn to this grassy patch and were seen grazing only about 100 yards away.

ADDED 15th September 2012

CARNYORTH COMMON - Re-registration as common land

Application has now been made by SPM to re-register this area as common land which will – if successful – give legal protection from further unaccountable and unrestrained ‘development’ of the type recently imposed. Please support this initiative that we believe is in the public interest.

ADDED 29th September 2012

SPM MEET WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

Three members of SPM were invited to an informal meeting with five Natural England officials on September 19th at the North Inn, Pendeen.

The cordial meeting lasted over 2 hours and ranged over a large number of items. Post-meeting enquiries to the senior NE official confirmed:

- That there were no written monitoring reports for Carnyorth Common;
- That the Common was not where NE would wish it to be in terms of biodiversity progress;
- That the ‘occupiers’ of the Common had been given a list of management actions to be carried out this winter;
- That smaller heifer cows would be employed next year and grazing levels would be increased;
- That there is no record of when cattle are out on the Common;
- That more old decayed barbed wire would be removed;
- That it is “unlikely” that sole non-grazing schemes could be introduced within current lowland heath options;

- That their main concern was delivery of “good quality heath land” and that “we feel” grazing schemes are the best management option.

ADDED 20th October 2012

LAWFUL OBSTRUCTION

On 10th September 2012 Cornwall Council finally gave consent for this gate near Hectors House on Carnyorth Common to remain in place after almost 4 years being an obstruction of a public right of way. However there are still ongoing issues!



ADDED 27th October 2012

LAWFUL OBSTRUCTION

Cattle have again been around the Circle and one of the stones is again destabilised. Dung, hoof prints, cut-up ground and cattle hair on several stones show up the culprits.

ADDED 10th November 2012

CARNYORTH COMMON

According to English Heritage stock has now been taken off the moor for the winter, probably on advice from Natural England - time will tell.

ADDED 24th November 2012

CARNYORTH GATES & SIGNS

The farmer has been asked by Natural England – as has been suggested before – that the gates around Carnyorth Common are tied back when stock are not present and the small reversible green warning signs turned around to indicate this. However he says that gates cannot be tied back because if stock escape from his neighbouring fields onto the Common they might reach the road and cause danger to the public.

But how did he manage before all the stock proofing was installed on the Common 4 years ago?

As far as the signs are concerned “he was indifferent” – so why bother to have them there at all if their purpose is to be completely disregarded? And why doesn't NE, who I believe commissioned the signs in the first place, insist that they are used as intended?



ADDED 8th December 2012

CARNYORTH GATES – AGAIN

Following on from our request that gates should be left open when stock are off the Common a letter was sent on 26th November to the Cornwall Council Countryside Officer (Cormac) pointing out that consent for installing gates across public rights of way was expressly given to

prevent the ingress or egress of animals, and that consent only applies while this legal need exists. When stock are taken off the Common for the winter – as we have been told is now the case – then surely this legal need no longer exists during this period and therefore gates SHOULD be left open. To date no response has been forthcoming.

Edited October 2016

[See also Carnyorth Common archived news 2013-2014](#)