

**LANYON FARM CROFTS**  
**ARCHIVED NEWS 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014**

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**ADDED 28th May 2011**

### **NEW HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS TO INCLUDE MEN-AN-TOL**

New 10-year HLS agreements to take effect as from 1st May this year have just been made that cover all the areas with which we have been concerned over the past three years – National Trust properties of Watch Croft and Carn Galva; Lanyon Farm crofts of Men-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit.

All these agreements include a grazing regime as well as some mechanical/manual work – mostly bracken clearing – and significant amounts of fencing will take place under Capital Works. Apart from Lanyon Quoit Croft – where grazing may take place in Year 1 – all other grazing will begin in Year 2 after May 2012.

**ADDED 18th June 2011**

### **PONIES ESCAPE ONTO THE ROAD**

A group of about six ponies were put onto Lanyon Quoit Croft a few weeks ago as part of Higher Level Stewardship. Last week the ponies got out onto the road – probably over the low stile near the Quoit – and went nearly half a mile down the road until they were stopped near the farm yard before being put safely out of harm's way. I had a look at the stile on Wednesday 15th June: the larger steps are only about a foot high – and this is probably where they got into the road.

This incident very fortunately did not cause any traffic accidents but the potential was certainly there, especially as car numbers are relatively high at the moment due to tourism. It is obvious that this area was not safely and effectively stock proofed before animals were introduced and represents yet another piece of exceptionally slapdash planning and lack of forethought.

**ADDED 3rd September 2011**

### **“YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS”**

A report was published in *The Cornishman* on Thursday 25th August about herbicide treatment to control bracken near Lanyon Quoit. See “Young conservationists play part in project to control bracken at ancient landmark” <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Young-conservationists-play-project-control/story-13199953-detail/story.html>

2012

ADDED 14th July 2012

MEN-AN-TOL GATES



Two new gates have been installed to add to recent barbed wire fencing as part of the enclosure of Men-an-Tol Croft in preparation for introduction of cattle. The iconic holed stone is arguably the most visited prehistoric site in the Land's End Peninsula and a popular area for public recreation: babies in pushchairs, children, adults, dogs, horse riders and the disabled will soon have to share this open access moorland with freely roaming cattle – it does not bode well.

**ADDED 16th March 2013**

### **CATTLE NOW ON MEN-AN-TOL CROFT**

Walked around Men-an-Tol Croft on Thursday morning and noticed a distant group of about 10 cattle on the moors near a large backup field where the two gates had been left open; dung/hoof prints show cattle have been along many of the newly cut tracks and new barbed wire has been put very close to the main stile giving access to the moor and holed stone – surely a hazard to visitors and definitely not Best Practice. One stone of the monument showed that it had been used as a cattle rubbing post (reddish hair) with a few hoof prints in the grass. [NOTE: The churned up ground by the holed stone is the result of people pressure not cattle.] Let's hope that we do not end up with a repeat of the Carnyorth experience with cattle damaging a scheduled ancient monument.



**ADDED 30th March 2013**

## **WORLD FAMOUS BRONZE AGE MONUMENT UNDER THREAT**

The heathland around the Men-an-Tol in West Cornwall, a legally protected scheduled ancient monument, is now being grazed by cattle. Hoof prints and cattle hair on the stones show that they are being used as convenient ‘rubbing posts’ with the potential for damage as happened many times at Tregeseal Stone Circle.



I have just been informed that the grazier has agreed to remove his cattle (they are not longhorns) during the Easter period after which the situation will be reassessed. By Saturday morning all evidence of the cattle had been removed and the ground either side of the holed stone smoothed over.

Now that stock proofing Men-an-Tol Croft (Lanyon Farm) has resumed after an interval of over three years since HEATH Project works ended it is salutary to remember why this is being done.

In a BBC radio interview, ‘Conservation Grazing in Cornwall’ first broadcast on Radio 4 by *Open Country* on 4th September 2010, the tenant farmer was asked “and why do you want to

do that?” [fence, graze and manage the moors under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)]. He responded by saying – twice – that it was “purely financial” but that he was “Not an expert in heathland management”.

This farmer is the only one I have heard so far who has the guts and honesty to publicly tell the truth why he would sign up to HLS: most others dress it up with ‘sincere’ desires to protect archaeology; to benefit wildlife; to improve access, and to reduce scrub and bracken.

Listen to the whole interview at

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00tjvhj/Open\\_Country\\_Conservation\\_Grazing\\_in\\_Cornwall/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00tjvhj/Open_Country_Conservation_Grazing_in_Cornwall/)

### **HAS DEL TROTTER VISITED MEN-AN-TOL RECENTLY?**

After complaints by SPM of new barbed wire placed adjacent to a stile on this public right of way this amazing ‘safety’ addition was discovered on Monday 25th March. It seems that Trotters Independent Traders [T.I.Ts] may have been employed to add their mark to this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at the most visited ancient site in the Land’s End Peninsula. Tasteful isn’t it? Well done chaps – but why not just use a length of plain non-barbed wire? Or take it away altogether.



**ADDED 6th April 2013**

**MEN-AN-TOL IN THE NEWS**



SPM co-ordinator and Peggy at the holed stone.

<http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Safety-Style-lacks-style/story-18607131-detail/story.html#axzz2PUNC4VBH>

Western Morning News 3 April 2013: “Ancient monument 'damaged by cattle” -  
[http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Ancient-monument-damaged-cattle/story-18595207-  
detail/story.html#axzz2PUNC4VBH](http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Ancient-monument-damaged-cattle/story-18595207-detail/story.html#axzz2PUNC4VBH)

ITV West Country News “Action groups warns cattle threaten monument” – interview with  
Save Penwith Moors at the Men-an-Tol (duration just over 2 minutes)  
<http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/story/2013-04-03/cattle-threaten-monument/>

ARCHAEOLOGY - A publication of the Archaeological Institute of America: “Cattle  
Enjoy Bronze Age Monument with a link to article in the Western Morning News  
<http://www.archaeology.org/news/722-130403-england-cattle-men-an-tol>

Other reports of this incident have been published on-line

MEGALITHIC PORTAL <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=111>

THE MODERN ANTIQUARIAN

<http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/post/120546/news/menantol.html>

**ADDED 12th October 2013**

## **HISTORIC ANCIENT SITE BECOMING A DUNG HEAP**



Cattle helping to improve (?) public access to the famous Men-an-Tol monument, a legally protected and – to many – a sacred place, where the area around it is being ‘enhanced’ with piles of livestock dung.

A problem with this is that the grassy area is quite small and if cattle continually assemble here it will gradually be covered with their excrement. There is also the potential danger for surrounding

grass and ground being steadily degraded by the cattle – this is happening now and may well undo the good work done by CASPN volunteers in regularly repairing the human erosion either side of the holed stone.

Although the holed stone is unlikely to be destabilised – it is set in concrete – the two adjacent uprights are not similarly ‘protected’ and could become unstable if cattle start using

them as convenient rubbing stones on a regular basis as has happened over a dozen times at Tregeseal Stone Circle near St Just.

The Men-an-Tol is a very popular location for parties of local school children as well as visiting families from all over the world. Its present state gives a very poor impression of the care given to Cornwall's antiquities and is unacceptable. The sooner this area is returned to its pre-grazing condition the better.

**ADDED 19th October 2013**

### **HOW SENSITIVE CAN YOU GET?**

I met half a dozen cattle at the Men-an-Tol site this morning but, after shouting and waving my arms, they refused to budge so, as I had my dog with me I decided to turn back and retrace my steps.

As at Tregeseal Circle on Carnyorth Common that has had stones destabilised by cattle rubbing against them over a dozen times since 2009, the animals at this site

are gathering around the stones and using the two uprights as rubbing posts as well as covering the area with many dozen heaps of dung and churning up the public right of way - virtually impassable downhill towards the stream.



After complaints earlier this year about interaction between cattle and this monument a spokesman for English Heritage was quoted in the *The Cornishman* (11 April 2013) as saying: "We do not, however, expect cattle activity to cause damage to the stones or its setting, but will continue to monitor the site." A Natural England spokesman said it was "committed to the sensitive management of both the natural and historic environment of West Penwith" but would "ascertain whether there is any need to review grazing management for the area."

Despite these patronising words – and that is all they are – it is high time the authorities responsible, who have so far shown extreme inertia in doing anything about long standing problems associated with the ubiquitous and very expensive Natural England fence-and-graze-all policy, take a long hard look at what is being done to our ‘natural and historic environment’ and adopt some positive remedial action.

The Men-an-Tol, a legally protected Scheduled Ancient Monument is, probably, the most popular frequented ancient monument in the Peninsula and an iconic part of Cornish Heritage: stock should be removed immediately before the site gets further degraded. It is high time the grazing management regime is reviewed and replaced by manual maintenance and the removal of all new fencing and gates.

## **OPEN LETTER**

This ‘Open Letter’ has been sent to officials at English Heritage, Natural England, Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network and our MP.

“More potential trouble at Men-an-Tol!

As at Tregeseal Circle the cattle are gathering around the stones and using the two uprights as rubbing posts as well as covering the area with heaps of dung and ruining the public right of way - virtually impassable down towards the stream - by churning it up.

This is not an isolated out of the way site - and that would be no excuse anyway - but, probably, the most popular frequented ancient monument in the Peninsula and an iconic part of Cornish Heritage. It is high time remedial action was taken after this warning message - preferably by removing grazing stock from this Croft and undertaking manual maintenance.”

**ADDED 2nd November 2013**

**SENSITIVE – SUCCESSFUL – PROVEN**

Following on from submission of a letter from Save Penwith Moors to *The Cornishman* it was decided to run the issues raised as a ‘story’. This was published in the newspaper on 31st October under the heading “Conservation group claims cows are threatening ancient stones”.

The animals are part of a so-called conservation grazing agreement arranged through Natural England and a spokesman for this government quango was quoted in the article: “Natural England is committed to the sensitive management of both the natural and historic environment of west Penwith”, and that conservation grazing is a “proven and successful technique” whereby animals graze historic sites to “help prevent” invasive vegetation from

overrunning “important natural habitats and historic monuments” and “enhancing wildlife interest and maintaining public access that might otherwise become overgrown.”

The idea that anyone could even consider it is sensitive management to install many miles of new barbed wire fencing, dozens of gates and a few cattle grids across West Penwith open access land – both inland and coastal – beggars belief.

While it is true that some ancient monuments may be in danger of becoming overrun with invasive vegetation and that conservation grazing may be “proven” in other areas, this is certainly not true of the Men-an-Tol where the grassy surround has been grazed for decades by rabbits, or for Tregeseal Circle where, after five years of conservation grazing, vegetation still has to be cleared by CASPN volunteers rather than the longhorn cattle.

In addition public access is being degraded – not maintained – as the public right of way either side of the monument is being turned into a sea of mud by livestock and becoming impassable in places to all except the most intrepid rambler.

Read more on *The Cornishman* site: <http://www.cornishman.co.uk/Conservation-group-claims-cows-threatening/story-19997942-detail/story.html#!#ixzz2j6uH35Lt>

**ADDED 16th November 2013**

**MEN AN TOL**

Warning was given to English Heritage and Natural England of the potential for cattle damage to this site when their presence was first noticed in March this year. It then seems that they were removed from the area during the summer months but were returned in early October.

On 9th October I sent photographs and details of severe cattle degradation of the Men an Tol monument and surrounding area to the English Heritage Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments in Bristol covering this area (copied to Natural England and our MP) and asking for cattle to be taken off the site before further damage was caused.

On 10th November I had a reply telling me that my concerns had been passed on to EH Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments who was in the process of completing a response.

On 15th November I was sent a copy of a response from the 'principal inspector' to a visitor who had been to the monument with her children and sent a complaint on 29th October about the state of the Men an Tol with heaps of dung, cattle roaming among the stones, and how she felt too intimidated to actually go onto the site – the previous peace and quiet of the moors was ruined and she had never seen it in this state during previous visits.

Despite finding the time to respond to this complaint, it is now the 16th November and I still have not been contacted by EH - no rush then - so I have today sent an email and more photographs to the 'principal inspector' and await a response. More on this later.

**ADDED 23rd November 2013**

**MEN AN TOL – AGAIN**

A response has now been received from English Heritage and a reply sent by SPM to the official concerned.

**ADDED 30th November 2013**

**UNSIGHTLY BUT NOT 'DAMAGED'**

A reply from the English Heritage Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments regarding recent complaints about the state of the Men-an-Tol states that a photograph from 1997 shows "there has been erosion to some depth around the stones prior to the reintroduction of grazing". But that this, together with remedial work done later, means that the ground between the stones has been disturbed: "This is why we do not consider that the observed disturbance of the ground by cattle and people, whilst it can be unsightly, constitutes damage to the monument."

But then why do these 'guardians' of Cornish heritage constantly complain about visitor pressure causing erosion damage to the site?

[NOTE: to the best of my knowledge the cattle have now been removed from this area but will probably be returning in the spring.]

**ADDED 7th December 2013**

### **BUTCHERY AT THE MEN-AN-TOL**

There has been much recent mechanical cutting on this croft, some of it reasonably acceptable but some of it done in a totally insensitive manner that does nothing for the environment at this popular and important site. The public footpath to and from the monument has now been widened to about three times its previous width.

This has been done as part of a Natural England agri-environmental agreement but does nothing to inspire confidence in their stated aim to “to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England’s [sic] traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.”



**ADDED 29th January 2014**

**AGENCIES IN TOTAL DENIAL OF THE FACTS**

Natural England work closely with other agencies, groups and individuals “to support the sensitive management of the Cornish historic environment through environmental stewardship”.

The condition of scheduled monuments “has been directly improved by the support provided through environmental stewardship”

“In respect of Men-a-Tol, English Heritage has confirmed that the management carried out by the local farmer (and supported by environmental stewardship) will improve the condition of the scheduled monument.”

[extracts from DEFRA response to KBCL dated 17th December 2013]

“At Men an Tol our very experienced staff have monitored the site and we are content with the proposed management. Both people visiting and cattle can cause erosion of the turf and topsoil and this can look unsightly However, as the ground around the stones has been repaired in the past and the erosion refilled more than once, and part of the monument is set in concrete, we believe that the current level of erosion is not damaging any undisturbed archaeological deposits.”

[extract from English Heritage response to KBCL dated 6th January 2014]

**ADDED 26th April 2014**

**PONIES NOW OUT ON MEN-AN-TOL CROFT**



A small group of ponies (I counted 5) were standing and lying down close to the Men-an-Tol on the morning of 24th April. It is unclear whether these are to be in place of cattle or as well as.

A notice placed by the gates leading to the lane to the monument states that the ponies will be on site until October and are, apparently, used to people and dogs – let's hope that people and dogs are used to ponies. We do not want any repeat of the accident that happened to a walker on Chapel Carn Brea.



*Right:* Sign on the Lizard from a few years ago that refers to grazing ponies.

The animals have, according to the owner, been put on site to reduce the amount of scrub and help restore the croft into a “rich wildlife habitat”.

Although to date ‘scrub’ reduction under a Higher Level Stewardship agreement has been done by mechanical means to create long wide areas of mostly grass, only time will tell what impact the ponies will achieve .

If you walk these moors please report any problems to me at [info@savepenwithmoors.com](mailto:info@savepenwithmoors.com)

## **MONEY IS THE REAL REASON**

Although the owner of the ponies states that the ponies will help to restore the croft into a rich wildlife habitat, when the tenant farmer was asked during a BBC *Open Country* interview in September 2010 why he wanted to partake in Higher Level Stewardship, his answer – repeated twice – was “Purely financial”.

His honesty to admit this on live radio is to be welcomed and makes a sharp contrast to other recipients of HLS money who hide behind a smokescreen of conservation, benefits to archaeology, better public access etc etc.

To listen to the whole programme go to

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00tjvhj/Open\\_Country\\_Conservation\\_Grazing\\_in\\_Cornwall/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00tjvhj/Open_Country_Conservation_Grazing_in_Cornwall/) The start of the relevant interview is at 17.35 minutes.

ADDED 7th June 2014

## LAMINITIS

A section of Men-an-Tol Croft has now been fenced off to prevent the ponies from developing laminitis.

What is laminitis? “Laminitis is a disease of the (pony’s) foot that can vary in severity from the merest hint of lameness to a situation described as 'sinking', which can be fatal.....In other words, whatever the cause, it is important to feed a low sugar, low starch, high fibre diet, with calorie intake controlled when necessary.” For details see <http://www.topspec.com/laminitis-in-horses/>

The question to be asked is why restricting the ponies to one area of the croft will make any difference to the dangers of catching this disease when the vegetation for grazing does not appear to be any different from that across the whole of the croft.



**ADDED 28th June 2014**

### **THE HOLED STONE AND THE PONIES**

On 7th June SPM sent a query to Natural England (Truro) concerning ponies on Men-an-Tol Croft that were fenced into a large area on the western side because – according to a notice by the stile – of the possibility of laminitis. We could not understand the rationale behind this since the mixed grazing vegetation across this whole croft is broadly similar. Perhaps you would be kind enough to explain why this has been done.

The following reply has been received:

“Thank you for your email enquiry below. We have spoken to Mr \*\*\*\*\* the HLS agreement holder on Men-an-Tol croft, we offer the following comment.

As a precautionary measure a temporary electric fence has been installed by the pony grazier to reduce the likelihood of laminitis occurring in the ponies currently grazing Men-an-Tol Croft.

The temporary electric fence has been installed to restrict the amount of fresh grass the ponies can get at on the croft, unrestricted access to fresh grass at this time of year has potential to increase the risk of laminitis developing in the ponies.

The temporary electric fence will remain in place until the risk of laminitis developing in the ponies has reduced or until the ponies have been removed from the croft, which we anticipate being in about a month’s time.

A notice has been placed onsite by the owner of the ponies to inform visitors of the circumstances that have necessitated the use of temporary electric fencing, a telephone number has been provided if further information is required from the grazier.

Thank you again for your enquiry.”

This response yet again throws up more questions that have now been sent.

### **AND THE MONEY**

I have been doing some maths for Men-an-Tol Croft although figures should be taken as a rough guide only.

The croft is 57.29 hectares and is under the following management options:

HO2 restoration of lowland heath @ £200 per ha

HL16 Shepherding supplement @ £5 per ha

HR2 Supplement for native breeds at risk @ up to £70 per ha

HR5 Bracken control supplement @ £35 per ha

HR7 Supplement for difficult sites @ £50 per ha

Assuming these all apply to the whole area of the croft then the total annual payment comes to approximately £20,500.

The actual amounts per hectare are taken from the Natural England Higher Level Stewardship handbook dated January 2013 section 2.2.1 page 15 at [Higher Level Stewardship - Publications and products](#) Contains a full summary of capital items and their payment rates.

**ADDED 5th July 2014**

## **INDUSTRIOUS PONIES**

The 'laminitis' sign and temporary electric fencing have now been removed from Men-an-Tol Croft. There is, of course, no notice warning visitors to the 'stones' that wild animals are now free to roam across the whole area and might be encountered at any time. Here are the ponies on Thursday morning doing a grand job of trampling down bracken and scrub while improving biodiversity.



## **More on THE HOLED STONE AND THE PONIES**

Following on from the queries raised about the ponies on Men-an-Tol Croft [see above 28 June 2014] further enquiries were made on 27th June.

Thank you for your response to my questions on Laminitis. I have consulted with my colleagues who add these further queries.

1. Why was the issue of laminitis not considered before it was decided to graze ponies on Men-an-Tol Croft?
2. Have there been any cases of laminitis with these ponies and/or others used locally for 'conservation grazing' under agri-environment agreements?
3. Exactly who has adequate experience of equine management to be able to monitor and, if necessary, treat the ponies. We do not believe that either the grazier or the owner have this expertise. They are both cattle men, and cattle are not equines. If they claim to have this expertise, they must prove it, not only to Natural England but to the RSPCA and SPM.
4. There is so much sugar in this year's grass that laminitis is a greater risk than in most years. Reducing the grass area is no guarantee of prevention.

A response was received three days later:

Thank you for your email enquiry below about laminitis in ponies further to my response to your original email enquiry of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014. I have nothing to add to my response sent 20<sup>th</sup>

June 2014. I can only suggest that if you have any specific queries regarding stock welfare or management on private land they are best directed to the landowner or grazier concerned.