

Maintaining the Legacy



Where shall we go from here?

Bridging the Gap



Britain's oldest national conservation body – 150 years old this year - campaigns for common land, village greens, open spaces and rights of public access, in town and country, in England and Wales.

The Foundation for Common Land established nine years ago is dedicated to keeping commons alive for economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

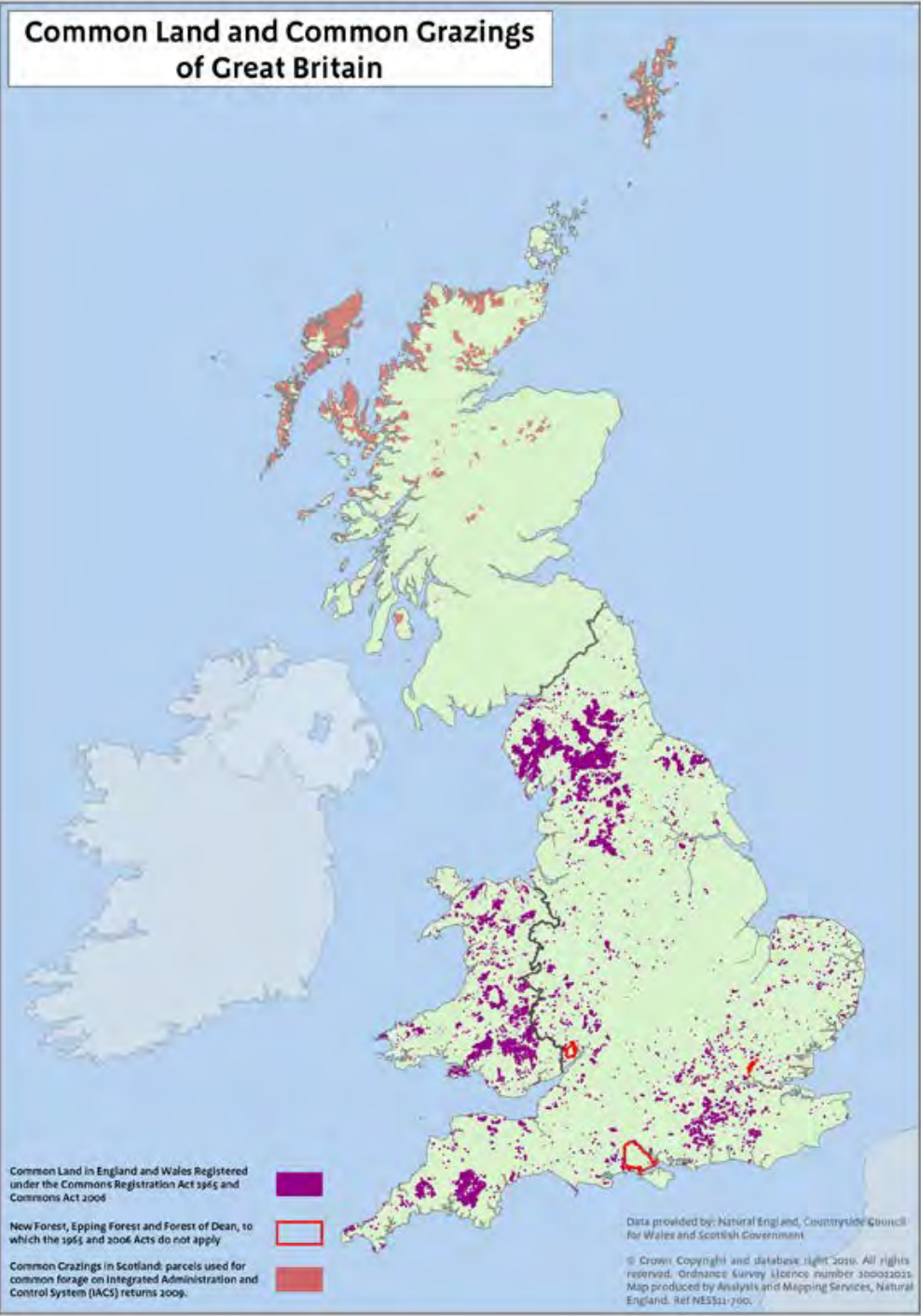


So ... Britain's oldest and youngest conservation bodies are both focused on common land. Why?



**21st century commons face major new challenges ...
... across Britain, and Europe
Chilterns AONB Commons Project so important**

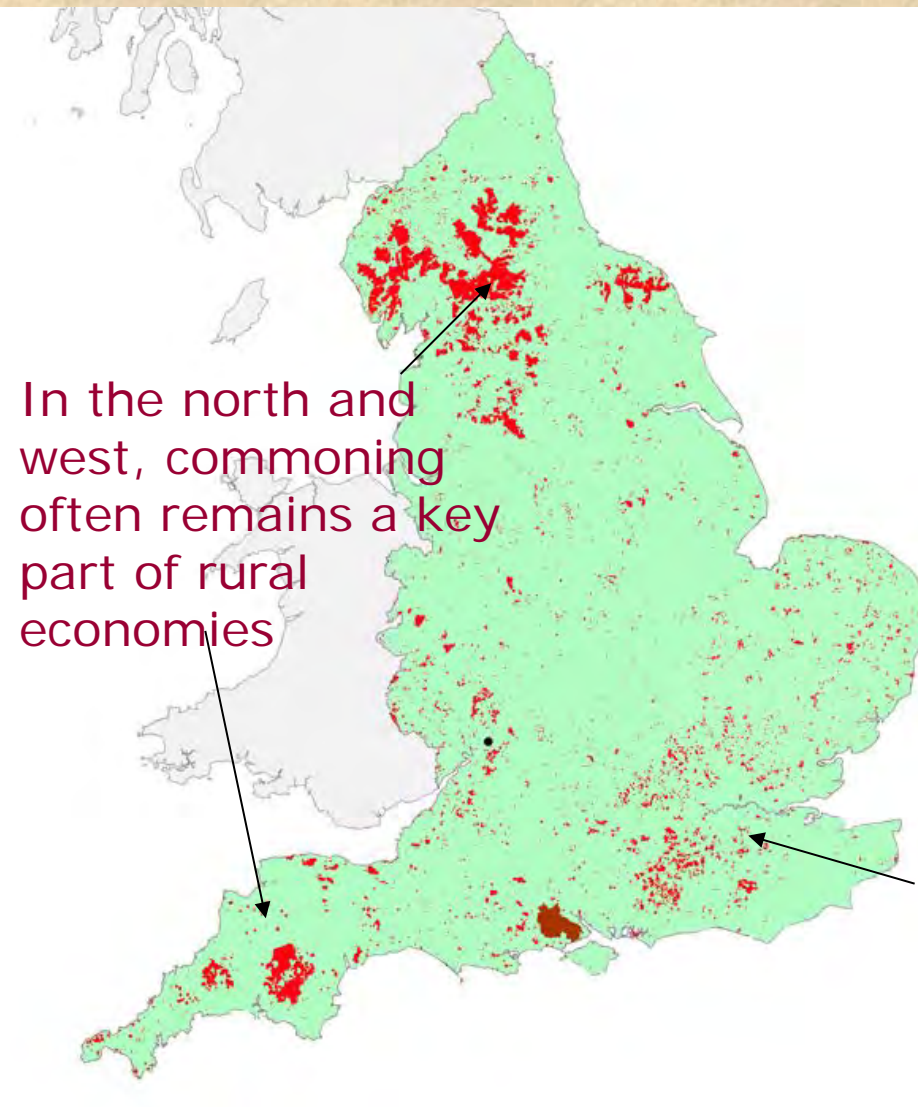
Common Land and Common Grazings of Great Britain



	hectares	% land
Scotland common grazings	591,901	7
Wales registered common land	173,366	8
England registered common land	372,941	3
New Forest	21,995	
Epping Forest	2,458	
Exempted by Order	1,020	
Forest of Dean	3,100	
	1,166,781	5

Commoning

There is a major division between the commons of south-east England and those of the north-west.



In the south east, whilst there may be many rights, there are often NO active commoners



Period of renewed threat paradoxically comes at a time of increased interest and study of commons and their history



Settlements connect with common land by funnels of pasture
extending between enclosed fields





Bronze Age settlements and walls around enclosed fields. Wide walled droves with routes out onto the unenclosed (common) pasture. Just like today.



Bokerley Dyke, massive earthwork, forms boundary between Hampshire & Dorset. The dyke alignment is pre-historic. It also distinguishes between enclosed fields and unenclosed (common) grazing of Neolithic times. Just as it does today.

Competitive Feasting

Neolithic causewayed camps – at the very dawn of agriculture, demonstrate massive seasonal feasting.
Chemical analysis of 80,000 animal bones from Stonehenge show huge numbers driven hundreds of miles from major uplands.
Drove roads are thousands of years old.
Commoning is probably as old as farming.

International interest in commons

Burgeoning global interest in commons. Seen as instructive concerning sharing resources, governance institutions and sustainable management.



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF THE COMMONS



Examples include Fisheries, Climate, Pollution, Water, Communal Grazing, Intellectual Property, Business.



Elinor Ostrom
Nobel Prize for work on commons



Best systems are those managed locally with least interference from external authorities.

Dynamism on Commons



Whilst commoning is ancient:
Historically commons have changed
Areas used have changed
Rights have changed
Exercise of rights has changed
The 1965 Act froze commons, rights and attitudes

Common Rights



Villagers from Great Wishford celebrating their common rights at Salisbury Cathedral where Knitch Ladies perform a dance.



**They read a charter asserting
their rights, and then yell
*'Grovely Grovely and All Grovely'.***

The record of customs shows that these are legal *rights* (not allowances or privileges).

The charter emphasises that they *are* rights, have *ever* been rights, and *ought* to be rights.

They are of considerable antiquity. In 1597 they were described as *old ancient customs, time out of mind*

But the dance, at least in its current location, cannot predate the building of Salisbury Cathedral in the early 1200s.



Main Registered Rights of Common



Turbary – peat



Pannage - pigs



Pasturage



Sand, gravel, clay



Others: reed, samphire, sea lavender ...



Estovers – wood/bracken



Animals ferae naturae



Piscary - fish

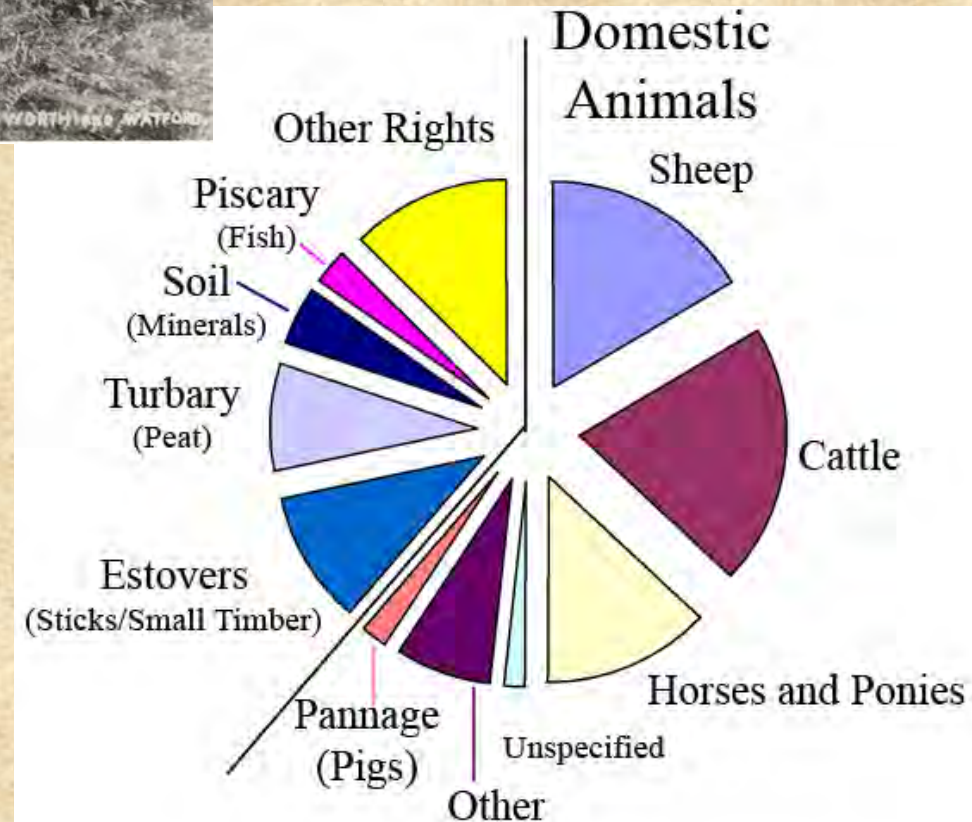
Types of Right Registered



About 65% of all rights are for domestic animals

A wide range of other rights are registered but may be rarely used

There is no register of whether rights are used, just whether they exist.



[Number of Commons where each right is recorded]

A photograph of a forest in autumn, with trees displaying vibrant yellow and orange foliage. The ground is covered in fallen leaves.

Unifying principle is that commons serve a community who share and benefit from land they do not own



Gypsy camps, making pegs, bodging and using commons for amenity form part of this use of the land as a shared resource.

People sharing the land are at the heart of commons.

The loss of commons



Once the life blood of communities.

At one stage +/- 50% England.

Now they cover 3% (2% in Chilterns)

‘Enclosure’ refers the extinguishment of common rights, so that land becomes the exclusive property of the landowner.

As people were removed from the land this has led to waves of unrest.

Slaughter



Mousehold Heath: 15,000 commoners gathered before taking Norwich in 1549. Led by Kett brothers. Divisions between rich and poor dangerously wide. 12,000 cavalry and artillery, mowed down commoners, killing 3,000. Kett hanged from abbey tower.

Edward VI's diary 1549:

"To Oxfordshire the Lord Grey of Wilton was sent with 1500 horsemen and footmen; whose coming with the assembling of the gentlemen of the countrie, did so abash the rebels, that more than hauf of them ran their ways, and the other that tarried were some slain some taken and some hanged."

Ringleader William Boolar hanged as ringleader in Watlington market.

Parliamentary Enclosure and the Loss of Amenity

Millions of acres enclosed 18th & 19th C.
Uprisings widespread eg Otmoor.
Agricultural riots unsuccessful.
6 million acres followed 1845 Act alone.



£100 Reward AND PARDON.

WHEREAS it hath been represented to His Majesty's Government that the Laws have been violated by maliciously disposed Persons conspiring together, and riotously and tumultuously assembling by Night and cutting the Fences and destroying the Bridges on

OTMOOR,

whereby serious injury has been done to the Property, and the Peace of the Neighbourhood has been disturbed;—Now, in order to discover and bring to justice the Offenders,

A REWARD OF One Hundred Pounds

is hereby offered to any Person who shall give such information to any of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Oxford as shall lead to the conviction of any Person or Persons upon any Indictment that may be preferred against him or them for having actually committed any of the crimes of

Felony, Riot, or Conspiracy,

upon the Moor, or for having instigated or encouraged the commission of any of those Crimes either by Words, or by giving Money or Beer.

And, as a further encouragement, HIS MAJESTY'S

FREE PARDON

is hereby promised to any Person giving such information.

By order of His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department.

Whitehall, March 2, 1833.

WANDSWORTH COMMON

"E'en now the devastation has begun,
And half the business of destruction done."

To the Inhabitants & Working Men OF WANDSWORTH & BATTERSEA.

Will you allow Bankrupt and Speculating Builders, Land Societies, Beershop Keepers, Railway Companies, Tailors, Gentlemen, and Noble Lords, to rob you and your children of their Common Rights and Footpaths, and the liberty of walking on God's earth, without a struggle? During the last thirty years enclosures have been made by the late Mr. W. Kellar and the late Mr. Wilson, the enclosure for the Telescope, the enclosures by the Railway Companies, the Patriotic School, the St. James's Industrial School, the enclosure by the Prison, the enclosure by Mr. Costeker and Mr. Smith, making a total of upwards of 200 acres! Most of these enclosures have been filched from the Common and resold at an enormous profit.

WHAT'S THE REMEDY? Down with the Fences! Preserve your Footpaths, show Lord Spencer and the Vinegar Men on the Board of Works, who have neglected their duty, that you are determined to maintain your rights like true Liberals and keep them like true Conservatives.

Follow the Noble Example Mr. Augustus Smith, who destroyed three miles of Fence on Bick's Common; the Men of Winton who broke down the Fences erected by the Earl of Galloway; the Men of Buckinghamshire who broke down the Fences on Northall Common; the Men of Surrey who broke down the Fences on Shalford Common, and so Preserved their Rights!

Men of Battersea and Wandsworth, GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE!

Cursed is he who removeth his neighbour's Landmark, and robeth the poor of his inheritance and joineth land to land to increase his riches.

DOWN WITH THE FENCES!

HAMPSTEAD HEATH



THE NEAREST POINT TO LONDON FOR FUN AND FRESH AIR

BY UNDERGROUND

Concerns for amenity turned the tide.
Formation of Open Spaces Society, 150 years ago.
Saved Hampstead, Wimbledon, Wandsworth.



Action by Open Spaces Society at Berkhamsted



Within a year the society turned from a London to a national body.
It also took direct action.
In 1866 it sent 120 navvies armed with implements to Tring overnight.
They marched 3 miles to rip down fences erected across
Berkhamsted Common, and by 6am had left them in neat piles.

Changes and Neglect of Commons

Commons are being lost across Europe, where from Portugal to Turkey, Norway to Bulgaria, millions of hectares of land (and even villages) are abandoned.

The lack of engagement by communities is a massive threat to commons

MoD propose to deregister massive area of common land – enclosure on unseen scale.





Chilterns Commons Project exemplar:

- Achievements**
- Engagement of communities**
- Scale of interest**
- Maintain the momentum**
- Stay involved with YOUR commons.**
- You are part of a wider community**
- Chilterns**
- England and Wales**
- Society involvement**



Keep the legacy alive