



Castle Dore Hillfort Management and Grazing Plan

A Monumental Improvement Project

Site Report

Cornwall National Landscape

September 2025



Cornwall
National
Landscape



A Monumental Improvement Project:

The Monumental Improvement Project was delivered by Cornwall National Landscape between 2022-2025 and sought to ensure that 40 at risk and vulnerable Scheduled Monuments, spanning 6000 years of Cornish history, were better identified, supported and enjoyed by a wide range of people.

The Project was funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Cornwall Council, Historic England, National Trust, Cornwall National Landscape, Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL), Cornwall Heritage Trust, Cornwall National Landscape Trust.

The Project was supported by a Partnership Board, made up of representatives from Cornwall National Landscape, Historic England, Cornwall Archaeology Society, Cornwall Heritage Trust, National Trust and Cornwall Council.

A Lasting Legacy:

The Purpose of this document is to record the interventions of the Monumental Improvement Project in one summary and provide guidance and recommendations on the future management of Castle Dore Hillfort. This management plan has been written by the Monumental Improvement project and informed by the Partnership Board.

This document references the *Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites (Annex A)*, designed to be used by landowners and volunteer groups in carrying out ongoing monitoring and maintenance, including a methodology approved by Historic England, ecological considerations, statutory designations, a reporting framework and risk assessment.

The Toolkit and resources including archaeological, ecological and management information, can be found on the site-specific webpages on the Cornwall National Landscape website.



Funded by
Historic England



Castle Dore Management plan

Contents

Site Overview	3
Designations	4
Visiting & Contacts	5
Monumental Improvement Interventions	6
Management & Maintenance Recommendations	8
Ongoing Site Management & Monitoring Recommendations:	8
Putting recommendations into practice:	9
Future Opportunities:	9
Vegetation/scrub clearance methodology:	9
Ecology Overview	10
Archaeological Overview	11
Risk Assessment	14

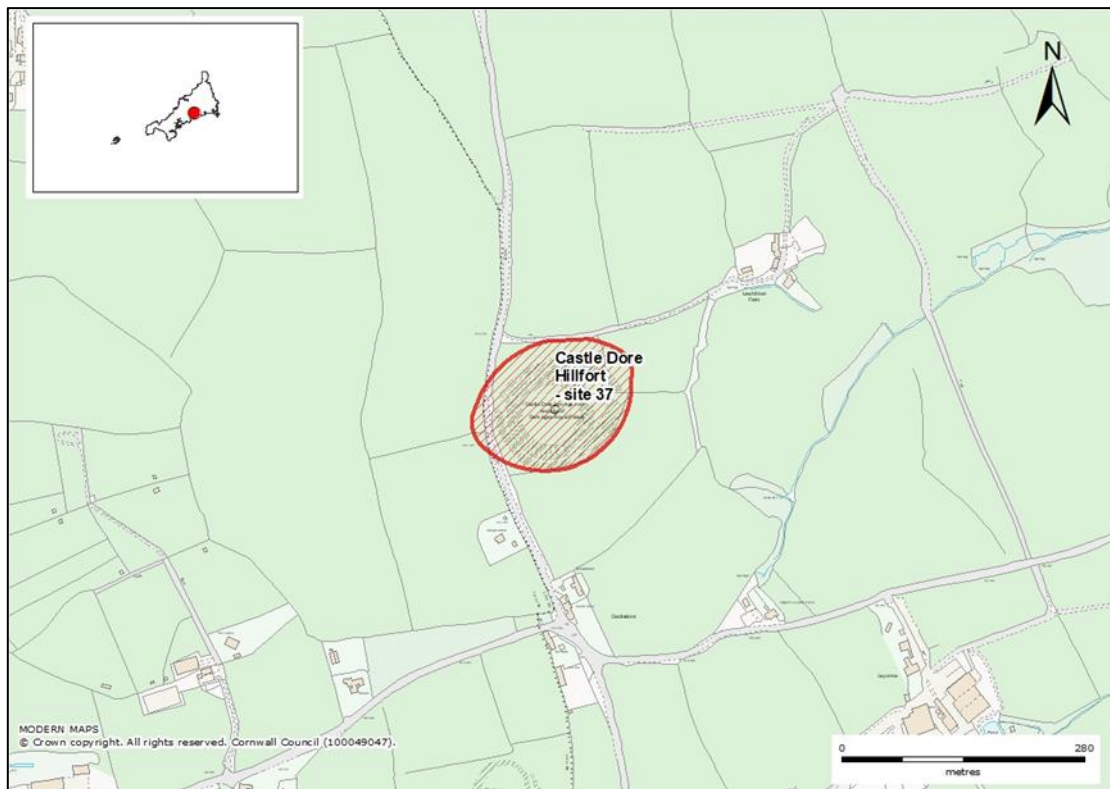
Site Overview

(Use this information when completing HER Monument Monitoring and Recording form)

Site Name:	Castle Dore
Scheduled Monument Number:	1006691
Site Type:	Hillfort
Site Grid Reference:	SX 10352 54831
Site W3W:	flown.spirit.equipment
Site Postcode:	PL24 2UA

Details:

Castle Dore is a small multivallate hillfort, situated on a prominent ridge overlooking at least two tributaries to the River Fowey. The hillfort survives as a roughly circular central area defined by a well-constructed inner rampart and ditch with a further, mainly concentric, outer rampart and partially buried outer ditch which diverge from the inner rampart only on the east to form a more complex entrance annexe.



Designations

HE Designations: [Scheduled Monument](#)

NE Designations: N/A

Other Designations: [Cornwall National Landscape – Section 10 – South Coast Eastern, Registered battlefields](#)

Site Status on HAR (Heritage at Risk) register: Removed from the HAR in 2024 as a result of the conservation works undertaken by the Monumental Improvement Project.

Link to CIOSHER web page for this site:

https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=10&xcoord=210349&ycoord=54836&wsName=CIOS_historic_environment&layerName=Scheduled%20Monuments

Link to Historic England's webpage for this site:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1006691?section=official-list-entry>

Link to Cornwall National Landscape webpage for this site:

<https://cornwall-landscape.org/monument/castle-dore-hill-fort/>



Visiting & Contacts

Landowner (s): **Private Landowner**

Contact Email: **None** – private landowner.

Site Specifics

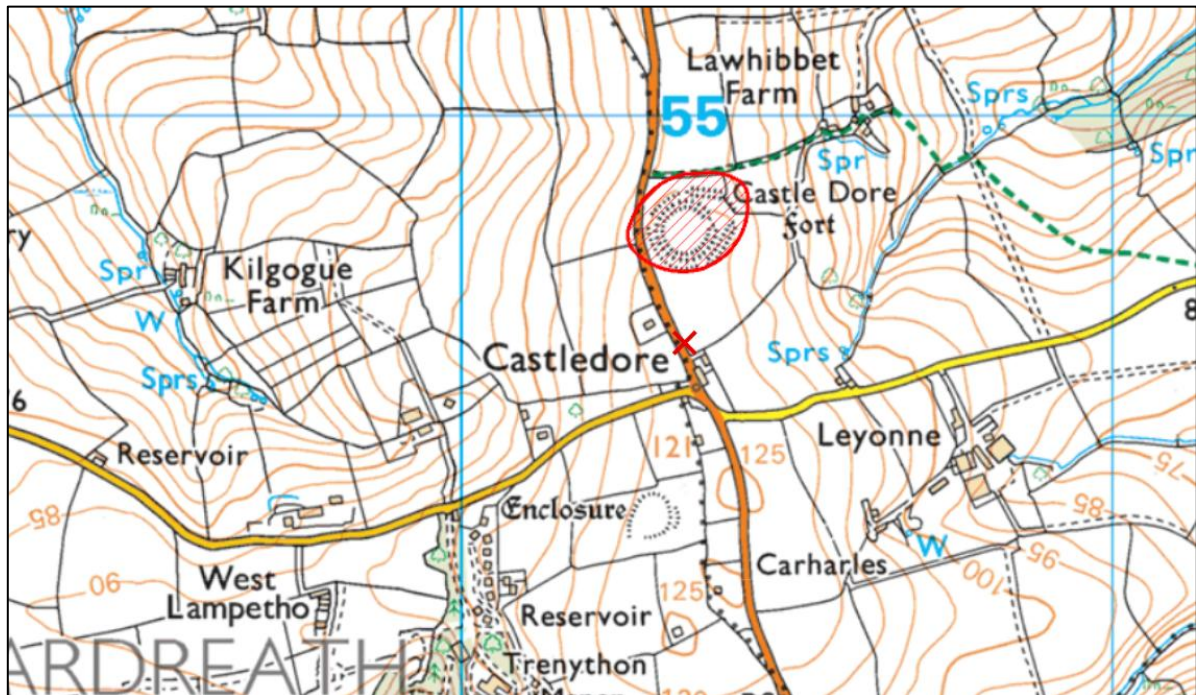
Nearest Tool Hub & Contact Person: **Bodmin Moor Tools Hub at the Minions Heritage Centre**

Relevant Volunteer Organisation: **Cornwall Archaeological Society**

Contact: **volunteering@cornisharchaeology.org.uk**

Tool Use: **Hand tool only**

Parking for site: **Park considerably and carefully in Castle Dore Layby** see **X** in map below. **NGR: SX 10344 54650** **W3W: unpacked.elder.assorted**



Monumental Improvement Interventions

Site priorities identified during Monumental Improvement Development Stage:

Priority	Project year	Action
Longer term	3 (post project)	Annual scrub clearance Dec-Feb as necessary and monitoring of repairs by volunteer groups

Vegetation management	Interpretation	Survey & Monitoring
To be carried out by CAS or local community groups,	Landowner to check and report to Cornwall National Landscape on any issues	Monument Watch monitoring through CAS or local community groups

Threats Identified at Castle Dore:

- The principal threat at Castle Dore is erosion of the ramparts and the formation of desire lines across the site.
- There is also some animal burrowing on the south side of the site threatening the stability of the monument.

Interventions during Monumental Improvement Delivery Stage:

- A condition survey was undertaken in 2021 by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, identifying threats to the monument and proposing a range of interventions aimed at enhancing the condition of the site and raising its profile with the local community.
- An ecological survey of the site was completed in 2021 by Woodfield Ecology, identifying habitat types and compiling an inventory of notable species to inform future conservation and land management plans.
- A geophysical (magnetometry and resistivity) survey undertaken.
- Conservation work undertaken in Summer 2023 to repair 4 key areas of erosion of the ramparts.
- Relocation of water trough and field gate north side of the monument.

- Relocation of public access gateway and interpretation.
- Archaeological recording across all work carried out.
- Further fencing works allowing vehicular access around the monument without damaging earthworks.
- New onsite Interpretation panel with reference to new archaeological interpretation and the site's involvement in the English civil war.
- A new grazing management plan has been produced by **Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG)**, with new recommendations on balancing site grazing (essential to keep the site clear of vegetation), without causing damaging erosion to the monument.
- The site was removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register in 2024.
- Relevant Volunteer Organisation(s) have been engaged and supported throughout the Monumental Improvement Project. Volunteers have received hand tools safety training to assist in the future management of the site as part of the legacy programme.

Assets created during Monumental Improvement Delivery Stage:

- New site-specific webpage hosted on the Cornwall National Landscape website.
- New digital interpretation including a site overview, ecological information, surveys and reports.
- Aerial photography of the site captured by drone showing the archaeological features in plan.
- 360 panoramic photography hosted on the Cornwall National Landscape website allowing virtual tours of the site.
- Ground Photography of the site, recording conditions of the monument and its setting in the landscape.
- Creation of the Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites to assist in the future management of the site.
- New on-site physical interpretation with a QR code for more information on the Cornwall National Landscape website.
- Interpretive short film.
- An artist's reconstruction illustration was commissioned and developed alongside archaeologists showing the site as it may have looked during its use.
- Summary report of conservation repair and archaeological investigation.

Management & Maintenance Recommendations

Ongoing Site Management & Monitoring Recommendations:

Monitoring:

- *Relevant Volunteer Organisation* such as CAS, to carry out periodic monitoring visits to the site focussing on the following threats to the site.
 - Areas of erosion, particularly around areas of shade on the inner and outer banks, and the four priority areas noted in the 2023 conservation repairs report.
 - The level of vegetation around the site, especially where gorse or maturing trees may obscure the monument.
 - The condition of the interpretation.
 - The condition of the fencing around the site.
 - Any increase in the activity of burrowing animals across the site should be reported to Historic England using the online monitoring form.

Scrub Management (extracts from Grazing Management Plan – see Annex B):

- Established scrub should be cut and removed outside of the bird nesting season (September – March).
- Young scrub and regrowth can be cut at any time, provided there are no nesting birds present.
- Roots are to be left in place, stumps treated to prevent regrowth and cut material removed from the site.
- A grass seed mix of Fescues and Bents should be broadcast onto bare areas and after removing scrub.
- Scrub clearances could be supported by an activity led by Relevant Volunteer Organisation, for example C.A.S. For best practice volunteer scrub clearance methodology on scheduled monuments, please refer to: ***Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites.***
- Landowner should maintain access to the site via the verge from the layby parking by kerb trimming annually.

Grazing Management (extract from Grazing Management Plan – see Annex B 1):

- Sheep grazing should take place during spring and summer with a desired sward height of 5-10cm. Typically April to September, however this may need to be reduced in very wet or dry years.

Please note that any fencing or supporting infrastructure to implement the recommended grazing plan is likely to require Scheduled Monument Consent and should be carefully considered in collaboration with Historic England.

Putting recommendations into practice:

- For specific Landowner advice please refer to the Castle Dore Grazing Management Plan (Annex B), (Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group South West, 2025).
- Please refer to the *Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites (Annex A)* for a best-practice guide to carrying out scrub clearance and monitoring work at heritage sites.
- All site work must be accompanied by a Risk Assessment covering all attendees and activities.
- **A record of work** should be made and a copy sent to the secretary of the Relevant Volunteer Organisations: e.g. Cornwall Archaeological Society, Historic England and Historic Environment Record (HER). You can find a template for your records and a link to the HER online form in the *Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites (Annex A)*.

Future Opportunities:

- Opportunity to increase interpretation through the Cornwall National Landscape website.
- Guided walks with local experts, e.g. CAS Area Reps.
- A public event/school visits with experts in prehistory or Civil War to increase awareness and highlight the changing use of the site over time.
- Increase area of geophysical survey.

Vegetation/scrub clearance methodology:

Please refer to the *Toolkit for Volunteer Monitoring and Maintenance at Heritage Sites (Annex A)* for a best-practice guide to carrying out scrub clearance and monitoring work at heritage sites.

For site-specific considerations, please refer to the section below.

Ecology Overview

Taken from: ECOLOGY BRIEFING NOTE – SITE 37 CASTLE DORE HILLFORT
Commissioned by the Monumental Improvement Project in 2021

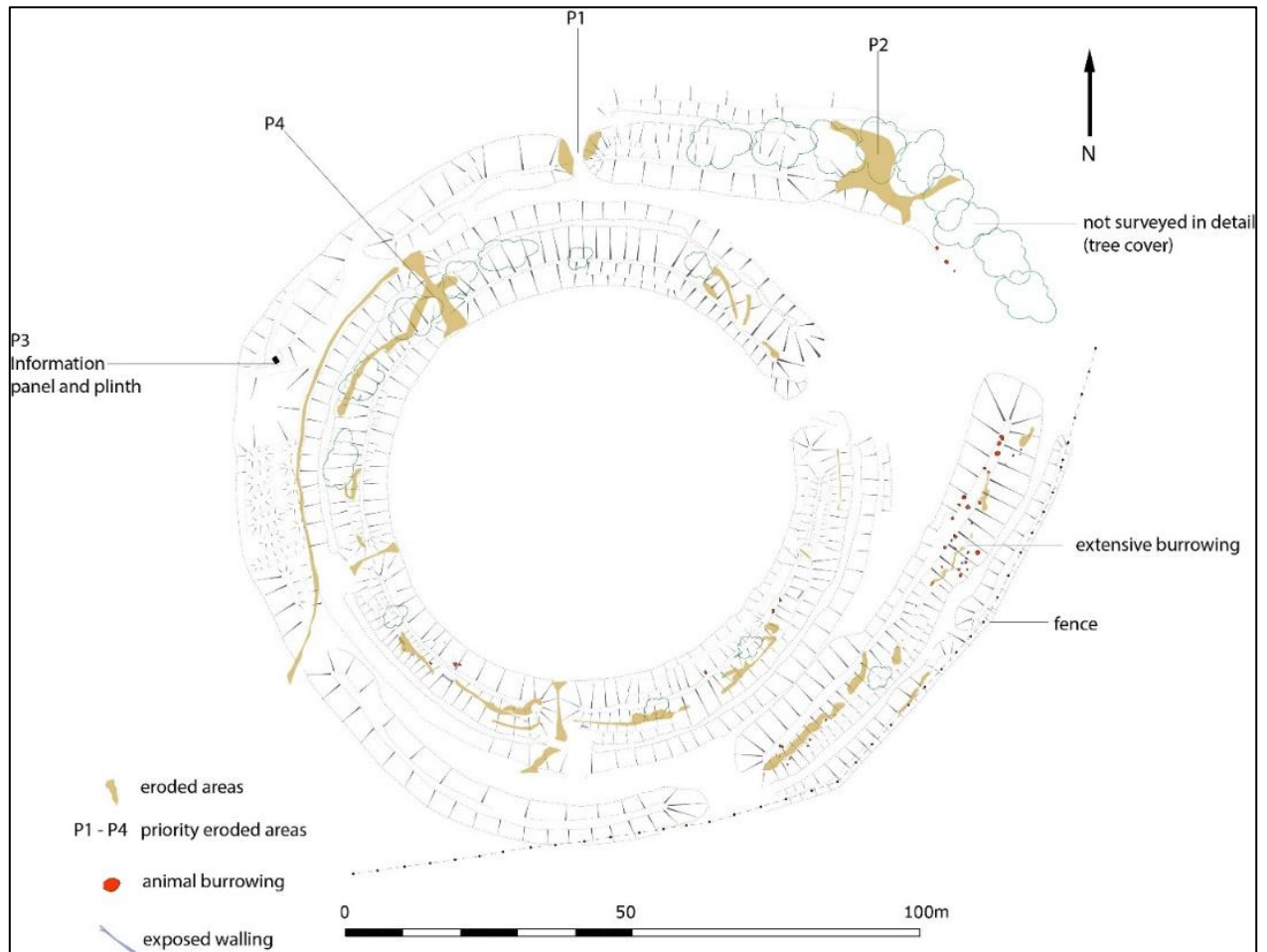
The full Report is available to download on the [Cornwall National Landscape](#) website and includes details on types of work likely affect the following species, a calendar for helping to plan work at the monument, and opportunities for ecological enhancement of the site.

Key species at this site:

Birds	Mammals	Reptiles/ Amphibians	Flora & Fungi	Invertabrates
Skylark Yellowhammer	Suitable habitat for Dormouse Dissused badger sets Rabbit burrows not currently in use	Low suitability due to intensive grazing	Balm-leaved Figwort Wavy St John's-wort Welsh Poppy Wild Cabbage	None specified

1. FURTHER SURVEY AND MITIGATION CALENDAR													
FURTHER SURVEYS		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Dormouse survey	Dormouse nest-tube surveys involve monthly visits spread over most of the survey window. Note – only required if scrub clearance proposed within hedges or habitats directly connected.												
MITIGATION		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Breeding Birds	Avoid vegetation removal during the main nesting period, or undertake a pre-clearance check (by trained volunteer) for nesting birds												
Dormouse	Work to confirmed Dormouse habitat will require a Natural England licence which will impose timing restrictions.	Timings pending results of further surveys and any licence requirements.											
Reptiles	Avoid earthwork, erosion repair or removal of scrub roots and stumps during the hibernation period												
KEY:													
Optimal Periods for Survey													
Periods when certain types of activity within suitable habitat for this species should be avoided or be subject to specific controls													

Archaeological Overview



J. Gossip CAU: 2021 survey plan showing surviving earthworks and principal threats

Taken from Historic England's listing:

Castle Dore is a small multivallate hillfort, situated on a prominent ridge overlooking at least two tributaries to the River Fowey. The hillfort survives as a roughly circular central area defined by a well-constructed inner rampart and ditch with a further, mainly concentric, outer rampart and partially buried outer ditch which diverge from the inner rampart only on the east to form a more complex entrance annexe. The inner ditch is extant whilst that associated with the outer rampart can be traced, although it is now infilled on the west side of the earthwork. In the 19th century, McLauchlan illustrated Castle Dore with three banks and a possible obliterated outwork on the east side called 'Castle Meadow' (McLauchlan 1849) and aerial mapping analysis suggests further earthworks existed to the south and east, forming annexed outer enclosures. This feature partly shows on Lidar imagery, which also shows a former

boundary further to the east in the field south of Lawhibbet Farm which appears to be a continuation of the main boundary to the south. It is possible that this is part of one very large outer enclosure or field system contemporary with the main hillfort.

Parts of the interior and defences were excavated by Radford in 1936-37, indicating that the two ramparts were of glacis construction and originally of equal size. During the occupation of the hillfort, the inner bank was raised to 2.5m high and revetted with stone, and at the same time the inner entrance was re-designed with an in-turned entrance passage. The outer entrance was not excavated. A ditched and banked roadway appeared to link the two entrances, with entrances into enclosures on either side, although these features do not survive today. So-called 'lazy beds' on the western side, modified from the outer rampart are recorded by Radford as having belonged to a former cottage standing on this side of the site (Radford 1951), although there is no direct evidence for this. The site is frequently entered from the north but this, along with other breaches in the ramparts, is modern.

Castle Dore was recorded as early as 1470 by William of Worcester who described it as "a delapidated castle by the name of Dirford, near Golant" and John Leland in 1535 as 'Castledour'. The site has been linked to 'Lancien', the palace of King Mark (Mark Cynawr or Marcus Cunomorus) who appears in Arthurian tales, and whose son Drustans, (Tristan) is commemorated on a nearby pillar (the Tristan Stone, near Fowey; HER).

Radford's findings suggested that Castle Dore originated as a multivallate site and that the entrance was altered during its occupation. Some twenty Iron Age huts were located in the interior and Radford attributed lines of post holes, amphorae and a bead to a post-Roman phase, consisting of a hall with an attached kitchen which he interpreted as the palace of King Mark. However, the archaeological evidence for this phase was extremely scant due to plough damage which had removed much of the stratigraphy and more recent re-examination of the evidence (Quinnell and Harris 1985) has re-dated Radford's post-Roman phase to the Iron Age, with all structural phases falling between the fourth and first centuries BC and the rectangular structures are now interpreted as granaries. The earliest ceramic sherds sealed beneath the inner rampart are dated by Quinnell and Harris to the 5th or 4th centuries BC. The majority of pottery from the interior of the fort comprises fully developed south-west decorated Iron Age pottery, dated to 4th to 3rd centuries BC. Cordoned ware is also represented in later contexts at Castle Dore which Quinnell and Harris suggest has a date range of 80-50 BC to AD 100 (Ibid). Two oval structures might suggest Romano-British or later occupation, although pottery assemblage

seems to indicate abandonment before the Roman period as no Roman or post-Roman finds have come from the site.

The site was the scene of a day long civil war battle on 31st August 1644 when Parliamentary forces retreated into the earthworks as a culmination of the Battle of Lostwithiel. Under the command of Major-General Philip Skippon, Parliamentary forces retreated into Castle Dore following a skirmish at Trebathevy to the north, holding the position into the night. The Earl of Essex fled to Plymouth from Fowey, leaving Skippon with no clear instructions and in command of five regiments of Foot spread along a line to the west and east of Castle Dore. The morale of the Parliamentary Foot was sinking fast and during the night many of the troops deserted their posts. King Charles I spent the night in nearby fields among his men and although Parliamentary guns were fired in the King's direction, these had no effect. The Royalists knew it was simply a matter of time before the trapped Parliamentary force requested terms and on 2nd September 1644, Skippon's Parliamentary Army surrendered and were allowed to march away after handing over 42 guns, 100 barrels of gunpowder and 5,000 muskets and pikes.

Civil war finds were made during Radford's excavations and cannon balls have been found in various parts of the area. The HER notes that some of these remain with their finder, Mrs Watts of Trees Mill. In 2008 a large number of musket balls found by metal detector in fields south of Tywardreath may represent a late phase of this battle (MCO53839).

Risk Assessment

Before any work takes place, a comprehensive Risk Assessment should be created. A template has been prepared for work carried out at this site and should be updated for future events – with any new risks considered. The template can be found on the Cornwall National Landscape website and with the Relevant Volunteer Organisation.

Some key issues which should be included in a risk assessment:

- Grazing livestock may be present at the site.
- Uneven, slippery ground with hidden stones across the site.
- No toilet facilities nearby.
- Restricted vehicle access.
- Access to the site is along a busy road without pavements.

NB: This is not an exhaustive list and individual circumstances of each group and site conditions should be considered in creating a risk assessment.

