PAL 3 West Moor

Eluvial streamworks cutting between Leskernick and Buttern Hills with Brown Willy in the distance (Pete Herring October 2020).

Location, geology and topography

Centred: SX 192811

Extent: 767 ha (1894 acres)

Geology

Bedrock geology is granite of the Bodmin Moor Intrusion, formed between 330.9 and 272.3 million years ago during the Carboniferous and Permian periods, and superficial deposits are granite boulders and head, formed in the Quaternary period, 2.5 million years ago to the present (BGS Online Viewer).

Topography

A group of rounded hills in the NE quarter of Bodmin Moor. The northern three, Buttern Hill, Bray Down and Carne Down rear up above the Penpont Water and the lower land to its north. Leskernick Hill and Hendra Downs are the principal hills in the southern part of the PAL, with several low hills, or higher undulations to their east, hills now no longer named on maps, but referred to here as West Moor, given that Westmoorgate opens directly onto this area.

Buttern Hill reaches 346 metres, 1135 feet and is as low as 246 metres, 807 feet at its NE base, beside Bowithick Marsh. It has some small granite outcrops on its higher slopes and clitter on its western and northern sides and a scatter of moorstones.

Bray Down also reaches 346 metres, 1135 feet, and falls to 232 metres, 761 feet, on its northern side. The northern slopes is especially steep. There are small tors including a tiny cheesewring west of the summit and several dense clitter streams on the northern and western slopes.

Carne Down is considerably lower than the two preceding hills, reaching 296 metres, 971 feet, and falling to 238 metres, 780 feet, on the western side of the PAL, to the stream between it and Bray Down. Fewer outcrops and moorstones than Buttern and Bray.

Leskernick Hill reaches 329 metres, 1079 feet, and falls to 258 metres, 846 feet, beside the River Fowey to the west. Some small outcrops and tors on the higher slopes and prodigious clitter streams on the west and south sides of the hill, and smaller patches on the east and north sides.

Hendra Downs. Only the lower NW slopes are included in the PAL. The hill itself is a massive lump and reaches 368 Metres, 1207 feet, but in the PAL the land falls from 304 metres, 997 feet, to 252 metres, 826 feet, again beside the River Fowey. Relatively stone free, just occasional moorstones.

West Moor. The hill to the W of Darras reaches 295 metres, 968 feet, and falls gently westwards to 254 metres, 833 feet, in the valley between it and Bray Down.

The **Penpont Water**, a tributary of the River Inny which flows into the Tamar rises in the wide and dangerous Ninestones Marsh to the NW of Buttern Hill. It runs eastwards along the N side of the PAL. The Penpont Water is fed by small tributaries whose valleys separate Buttern and Bray and Bray and Carne Downs and at their southern ends originate in further marshes and separate some of the small hills of West Moor.

The **River Fowey**, from which Foweymoore was named, rises on the western side of Buttern Hill and runs SE along its base and that of Leskernick Hill, with several small narrow marshes beside it.

Current management and structures of ownership, commoners, etc:

Much of this PAL is common land, but ringfences separate off privately owned and managed land on Bray Down and Carne Down.

Buttern Hill is included in the common of High Moor, CL194.

The eastern hills including Leskernick Hill, Hendra Downs, the southern parts of Bray and Carne Downs and West Moor are included in the common of West Moor, CL110.

Subdivision of the PAL

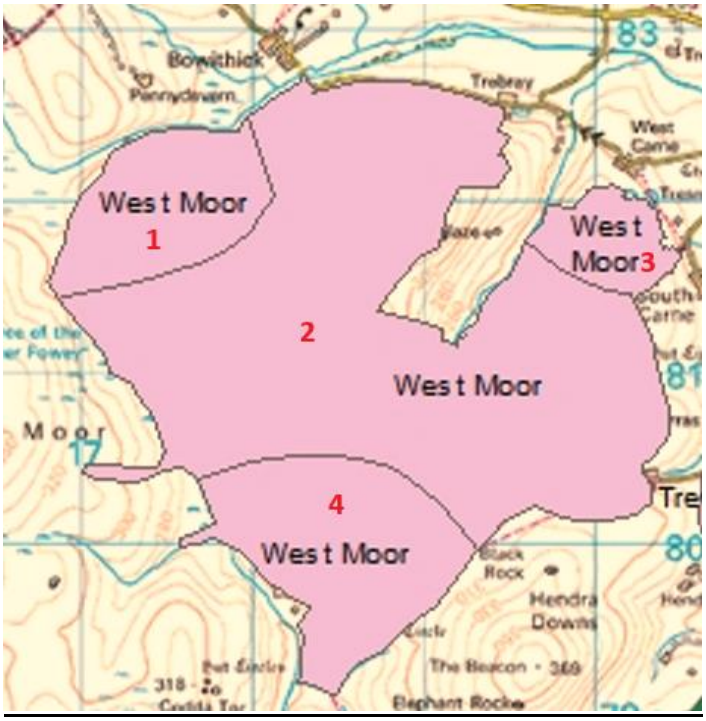
The PAL has been previously divided into these four parts. 3.2 is the main body of the PAL and the other three smaller areas contain particular dense clusters of archaeological remains.

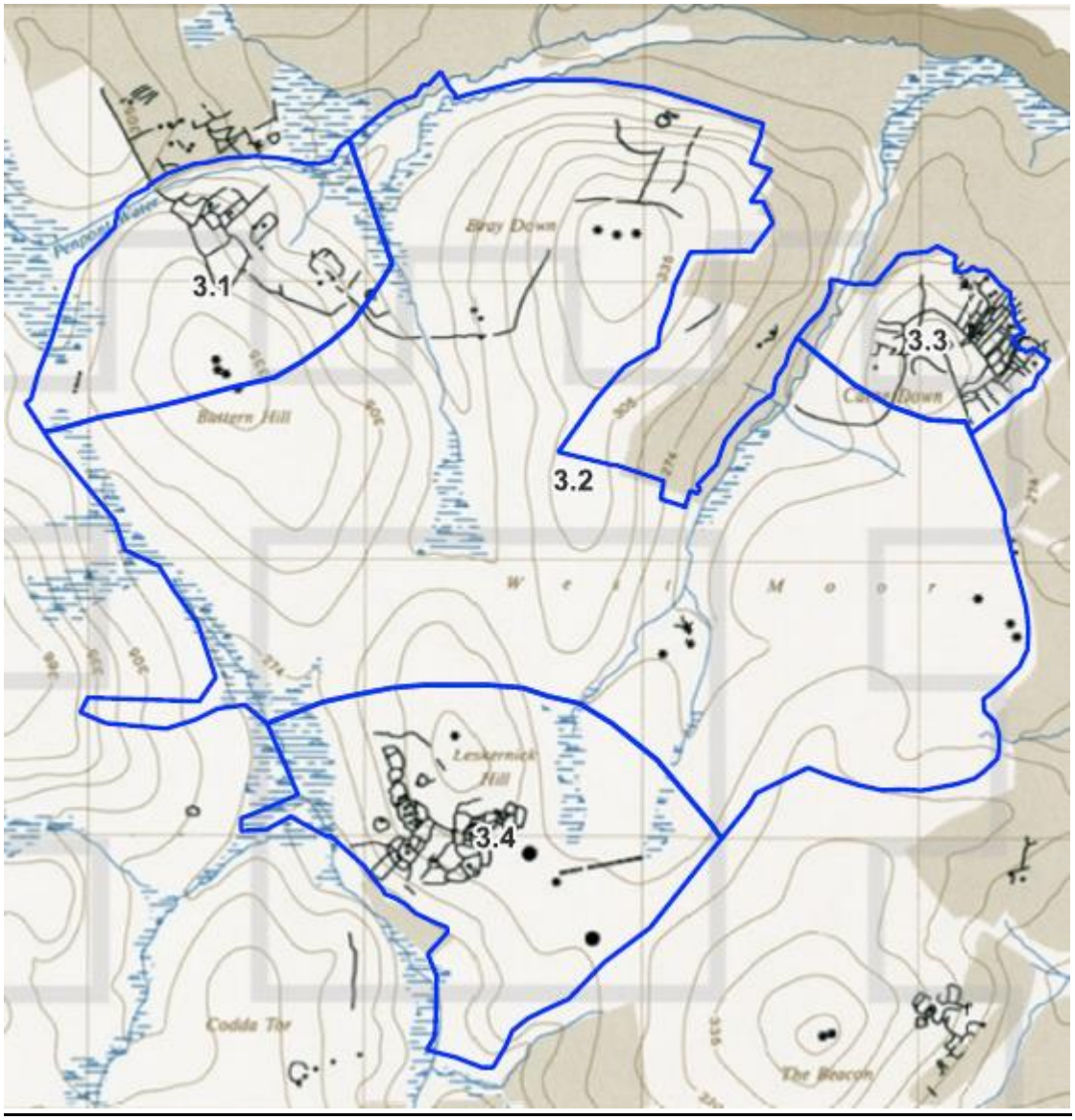
PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill; 86 hectares (212 acres)

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor; 515 hectares (1272 acres)

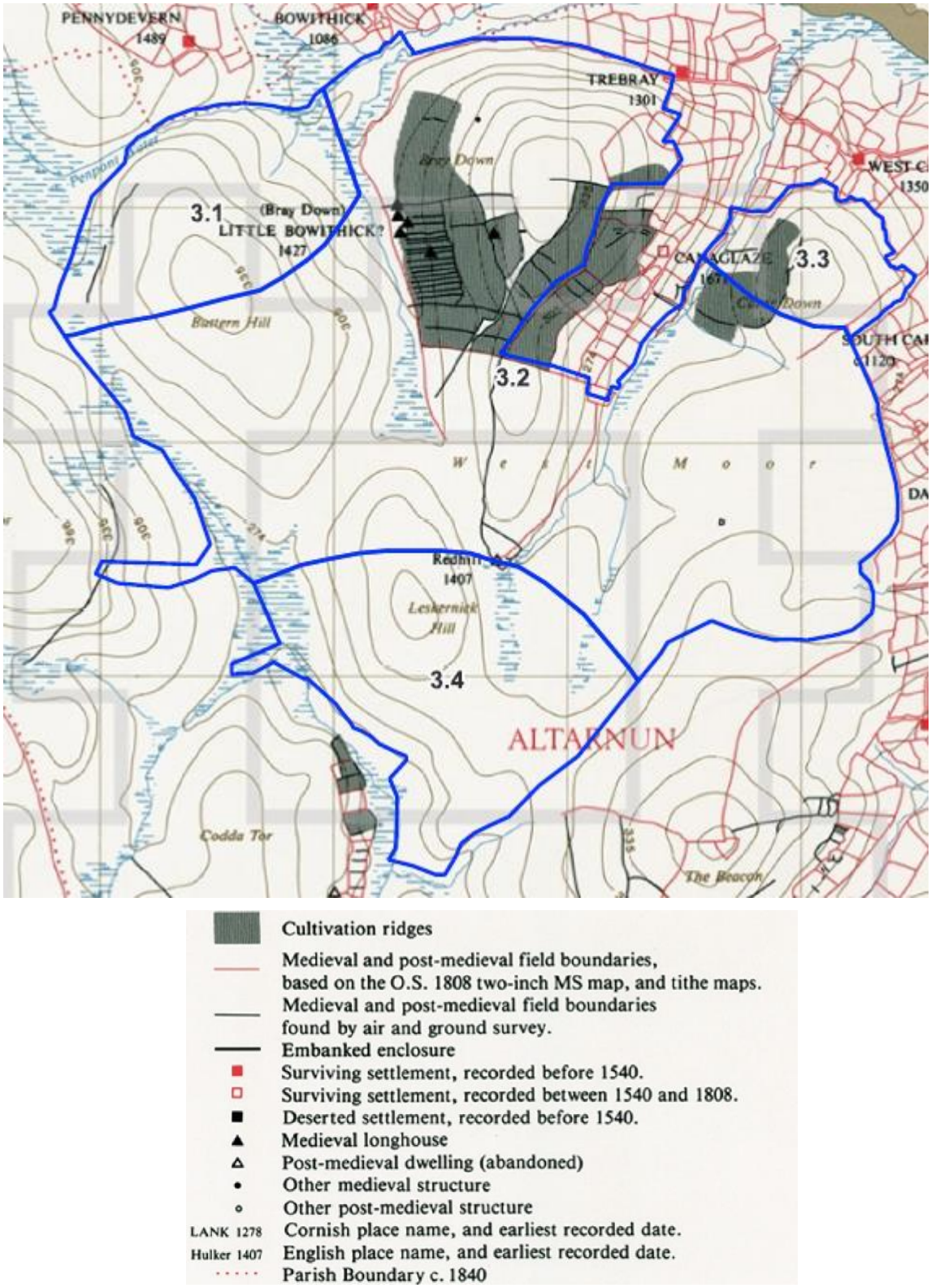
PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down; 36 hectares (90 acres)

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor; 130 hectares (320 acres).





Extract from Prehistoric overview map (Johnson and Rose 1994, Map 1; reproduced with permission of Cornwall Council and Historic England). Areas 3.1, 3.2 and 3.2 are defined largely through these prehistoric remains.



Cultivation ridges

Medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, based on the O.S. 1808 two-inch MS map, and tithe maps.

Medieval and post-medieval field boundaries found by air and ground survey.

Embanked enclosure

Surviving settlement, recorded before 1540.

Surviving settlement, recorded between 1540 and 1808.

Deserted settlement, recorded before 1540.

Medieval longhouse

Post-medieval dwelling (abandoned)

Other medieval structure

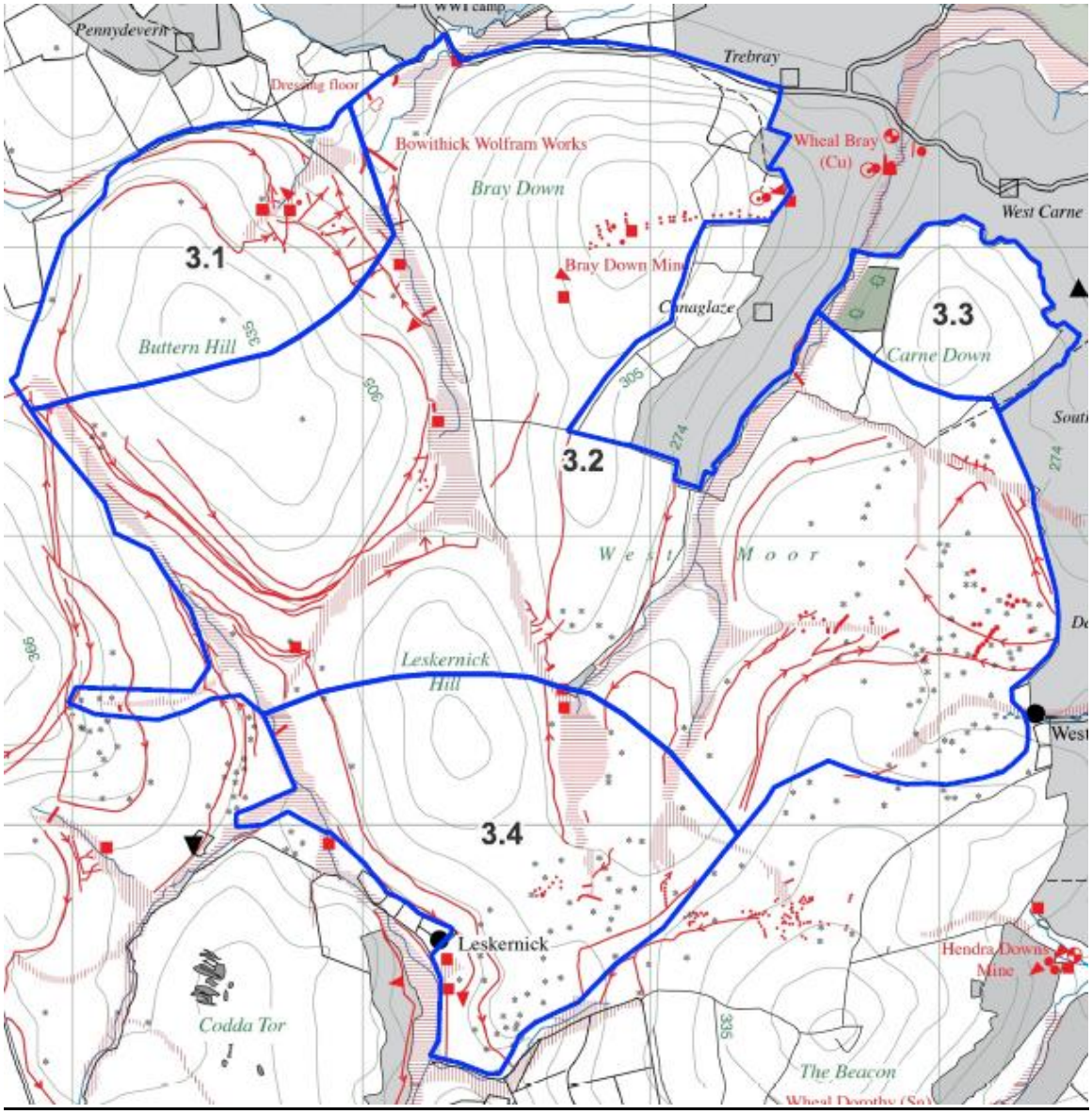
Other post-medieval structure

LANK 1278 Cornish place name, and earliest recorded date.

Hulker 1407 English place name, and earliest recorded date.

Parish Boundary c. 1840

Extract from Medieval and later landscape to c1808 overview map (Johnson and Rose 1994, Map 2; reproduced with permission of Cornwall Council and Historic England).



Limit of survey
Coniferous woodland
Broadleaf woodland
Mixed woodland
Waterbody
River
Medieval field systems
Medieval pasture boundary
Post-medieval field boundary
Thoroughfares (tarmacked)
Byways and other tracks
Railway
Tramway
Settlements: Medieval
1808–*c*1840
*c*1840–*c*1880
later than *c*1880
Turf cutting
Turf stead
Flat rod line (certain)
Flat rod line (uncertain)

Quarry
Dump
China clay pit
Leat
Wheel pit
Adit
Engine house
Horse whim
Mineral Working
Eluvial streamworks
Alluvial streamworks
Leat
Tinners' building
Wheel pit
Horse whim
Engine house
Flat rod line
Shoad and prospecting pits (smaller)
Lode back pits (larger)
Openworks
Shaft
Adit
Dump
Railway
Tramway

Extract from Post-medieval and industrial overview map (Herring et al 2008, Map 1; reproduced with permission of Cornwall Council and Historic England).

Land use history

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill; 86 hectares (212 acres)

Pre-1748

Early Bronze Age ritual and ceremony at the summit where there is a line of several cairns, one with a cist. A stone row on the NW lower slopes was later called Ninestones (as the adjacent marsh is named that from it).

On the middle and lower north-eastern slopes are remains of a rectilinear field system, possibly coaxial, and thus probably Middle Bronze Age (later 2nd millennium BC). It contains several roundhouses. It has a rather irregular but nevertheless certain upper limit, a form of terminal boundary which served as the limit of the common that the south-western 80% of Buttern Hill comprised.

Medieval and post-medieval industry in the form of eluvial streamworks on the NE slope of Buttern Hill and alluvial streamworks in the Pennydevern valley and at Bowithick.

But for most of prehistory and also history Buttern Hill was common grazing. Numerous leases refer to as running as one with High Moor and Foy Moore which lay to its west. In the 18th century it was still called Butterdowne or Buttery Down (Herring 1986, Appendix 2), possibly a result of memories of the livestock being milked on the hill, their produce turned to butter.

Thomas Martyn's 1748 map.

'Buttern', perhaps a contraction of Butter Down, was shown in profile. The marsh to its NE was called Black Pit.

c1810 OS drawing

Shown as rough grazing and called Buttern Hill. An unfenced track ran along its western foot.

c1840 Tithe Map

Shown completely empty and as part of TA 2700 'West Moors', with no Landowner or Occupier recorded, and with a note in the Apportionment: 'The [Tithe] Rent Charge in lieu of the Tithes accruing from these Lands is apportioned on the Estates to which the same are appurtenant.' Unfortunately, it does not elaborate on those estates, but, as noted above, there are numerous post-medieval leases of farms in the lowlands of Altarnun and St Clether that indicate commoning rights on these Moors.

c1880 OS map

Shown as coarse grassland with variable densities of furze clumps, densest on the lower northern slope.

c1906 OS map

Most of the hill was not resurveyed in 1906. The eluvial streamworks on the NE slope of Buttern were shown as 'West Moor Stream Works (Wolfram)'.

Modern

Continues to be an area of rough grazing in common.

The eluvial streamworks on the NE side were reworked in the early decades of the 20th century.

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor; 515 hectares (1272 acres)

This is one of the largest areas of continuous open ground on Bodmin Moor, and its use throughout most of prehistory and history has been dominated by summer rough grazing, with extensive streamworking and shode working in the late medieval and post-medieval periods.

The western side of Bray Down is also included in this part of the PAL. The northern part of that is not common land and has the reminas of a medieval hamlet and its strip fields.

Pre-1748

Away from Leskernick Hill and Buttern Hill, there are very few prehistoric remains on West Moor. A recently discovered stone circle near Westmoorgate, and a thin scatter of small Early Bronze Age cairns, including several close to the stone circle. Bray Down has a line of more substantial cairns at its summit.

The whole of the PAL would have been an area of open rough grazing land, probably operated as a common and probably used primarily in the summer, from May to October.

On the lower northern slope of Bray Down is a later prehistoric 'round', an enclosed settlement with a strong bank and external ditch, plus an outwork on its uphill side. Some of the banks on the very steep slope on which the round lies may have been associated with it.

Despite being an ancient common, the historic landscape of West Moor is not, however, entirely open. It has the texture of a streamworked landscape, with numerous long leats catching run-off water from downs or drawing it direct from the streams, including the young River Fowey, and running it to reservoirs held back by low earthen dams, and then moving it to streamworks to facilitate initial and secondary dressing of the excavated shode.

There are also the cuttings of the streamworks themselves, and some of these are massive, up to 18 metres deep (between Buttern Hill and Leskernick Hill). In their bases are the complex earthworks produced by the streamworkers as they excavated the shode. Elsewhere are lines of prospecting pits, dug by streamers and miners looking for shode, and shodeworks, dense clusters or shambles of small pits dug when retrieving shode.

Another feature in the open ground is the large rectangular Drift Pound attached to the southern ringfence on Bray Down. This would have been used for distraining those livestock found to be on the common without permission when the grazing animals were rounded up by people of horseback and their marks carefully checked.

Thomas Martyn's 1748 map.

Martyn showed 'Brey' Down in profile, taking care to show its flat plateau. The only other place-name he added was 'Trewint' which was placed in the SE part of the open moor, the area nearest to the old manor of Trewint.

c1810 OS drawing

The drawing shows all the land in this sub-PAL as open rough ground with the exception of the ring fence around the home or hamlet common of Brey Down. The drawing is exceptionally useful in showing two sides of the Drift Pound attached to the S side of that ring fence and mentioned above (pre-1748). This suggests that it had gone out of use some time before 1810.

Black Rock, is shown as a rocky outcrop on the NE slope of Beacon, a local landmark in an otherwise relatively featureless area of downland.

Several open-sided and long-distance trackways are shown crossing the West Moor, including the one from Westmoorgate and those that entered from Trevillans Gate.

c1840 Tithe Map

As noted above (PAL 3.1) the Tithe Map shows very little on West Moors, but it does show the Drift Pound (as TA 2701), now apparently reinstated as a small field belonging with the Moor and its commoners, not with Bray or Cannaglaze and their farmers, whose ringfence it is attached to. That it was back in use might suggest that the need for drifts had increased again.

c1880 OS map

This shows the moors as open rough grassland with variable densities of furze clumps. 'West Moor' was printed across the cnetre, over Leskernick, Bray Down and Carne Down. The drift pound on Bray Down was shown as a small field and the smallholding at Redhill was shown with four buildings and two small fields.

Disused tin streamworks were shown in most valleys and the barrows on Bray Down were also included.

c1906 OS map

Little change; still rough grassland with furze. Redhill still occupied (though with fewer outhouses).

Modern

Continues to be common rough grazing.

PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down; 36 hectares (90 acres)

Pre-1748

Early Bronze Age cairn on the summit of the hill.

Probably Middle Bronze Age coaxial field system on steep NE slope, with roundhouses and lanes, the latter leading through the fields to the rough grazing at the summit and with links to the open downs of West Moor to the south.

Quite similar arrangements in the later medieval period with fields on the lower northern and western slopes, with lazybed ridges surviving on the western slopes.

Thomas Martyn's 1748 map

Shown as a rounded hill in profile. Open ground.

c1810 OS drawing

Shown as rough grazing with a lane leading across the down form West Carne hamlet.

c1840 Tithe Map

The ring fenced hill was recorded as TA 2684, Carne Down, , land use 'Coarse Pasture and owner and occupier the Rev William Bray who also owned and occupied Canaglaze and Bray Down to the west of Carne Down.

c1880 OS map

Land cover was rough grassland with a few clumps of furze. Roundhouses were plotted as 'hut circles'.

c1906 OS map

Little change.

Modern

Still rough grazing.

PAL 3.4 The southern part of Leskernick Hill,

Pre-1748

A remarkably well-preserved prehistoric landscape. The southern half of this rounded hill contains one of the best-preserved roundhouse settlements and associated curvilinear accretive field systems in Britain. It was laid out partly in response to the remains of earlier ritual and ceremonial monuments: an apparently Neolithic propped stone, two stone circles, a long stone row, several cairns and a barrow. Beyond the fields, and where the monuments were places, was open pasture.

This continued to be used in the early medieval period when several transhumance huts were built, some of them within the remains of the prehistoric houses and fields. The early remains contributed to the hill's name, in the Cornish language, the Les coming from *lys*, 'court' as in the sense of a gathering place for decision-making, and here presumably a reference to the substantial round houses, which would have intrigued those who saw them. Interpretation as a court would have been reasonable. 'Kernick' comes from the adjectival form of carn, rock, reflecting the extreme rockiness of the place in which the 'court' had been created. That those who coined and accepted the name did see the roundhouses suggests that the ground was open in the medieval period (the earliest surviving documentary reference to 'Leskernycke' was in 1568.

A small farm was created beside the river to the SW of the hill in the post-medieval period. Otherwise, the hill has remained open land since prehistoric times and was part of the extensive rough grazing used in common, probably continuously since early prehistoric times.

Thomas Martyn's 1748 map

The hill was shown in profile and the land open. The name Leskernick was written in italics above the hill, indicating that it applied to the whole downland.

c1810 OS drawing

Shown as rough grassland with the clitter depicted on its western and southern side. Open-sided trackways run around the hill's western side and three cross the plain between the hill and the Beacon.

c1840 Tithe Map

Leskernick Hill was not distinguished on the map; instead it was just part of the extensive West Moors (TA2700). The smallholding was recorded as being occupied by Charles Colwill and owned by the 'Lords of the Manor of Penpont' (centred on Altarnun churchtown). It was a mixed farm with one of the three fields being 'Arable & Coarse Pasture', the others being 'Coarse Pasture & Arable'.

c1880 OS map

Land cover (apart from that smallholding) was shown as rough grassland with clumps of furze. Roundhouses on Leskernick Hill were plotted carefully and labelled 'Hut Circles'. The cuttings of disused streamworks were also shown, as were the unfenced trackways.

c1906 OS map

No change.

Modern

Continues to be open ground used as rough pasture. A campaign of archaeological investigation of the prehistoric remains was undertaken in the late 20th century by the Institute of Archaeology at University College London (Bender et al 2007).

Historic Environment

Headlines

- Extensive **open downlands** that have seen minimal subdivision and appear to have served as extensive grazing lands, probably organised as **commons** from early prehistoric times.
- A significant complex of Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age **ritual and ceremonial monuments to the south of Leskernick Hill** includes a long cairn, a long stone row, two stone circles, and several cairns.
- A **smaller complex of ritual and ceremonial on West Moor**, also Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, includes a stone circle and several cairns.
- A Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age **stone row** on Buttern Hill.
- Numerous other Early Bronze Age **cairns** in the PAL including several unusually low-lying as well as numerous on hill tops.
- Exceptionally well-preserved Middle Bronze Age **roundhouse settlement** set among **curvilinear fields** on the southern and western slopes of Leskernick Hill.
- Middle Bronze Age **roundhouse settlement** within a **coaxial field system** on Carne Down.
- Early medieval **transhumance huts** among the roundhouses on Leskernick Hill.
- Later medieval **drift pound** on Bray Down, an important element of more recent commoning.
- Well-preserved later **medieval longhouse hamlet** on western slopes of Bray Down set within a carefully laid out **strip field system**, strip widths measured by Cornish rods.
- Remarkably well-preserved complex of **alluvial and eluvial streamworks** with associated **leats**, **reservoirs**, **tinners' buildings** extends to all parts of the PAL. Some still operated in the early 20th century, but they may also have medieval or even prehistoric origins and surviving elements.
- **Wolfram working** in the Bowithick Marsh area.
- Extensive areas of **turf cutting** associated with scores of **turf steads**, in all parts of the PAL.

Summary of main heritage assets

This section is divided into main periods and themes and the text is further divided to cover each of the four subdivisions of the PAL.

Prehistoric ceremonial and ritual

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age **stone row** (MCO18489) on lower western slopes, known as Ninestones in early modern period. Quite large stones by Bodmin Moor standards.
- Line of **6 Early Bronze Age platform and ring cairns** on the summit of Buttern Hill (from N to S: MCO4219, 4220, 4223, 4221, 4224, and 4222). The largest cairn, MCO4223, has upright stones forming kerbs and has a much-photographed cist to north of centre, its capstone displaced.

Cist and displaced capstone in platform cairn on Buttern Hill, with Brown Willy (left and the southern slopes of Rough Tor (right) visible in the distance (Pete Herring, April 2007).

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

- **Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age stone circle** on hill to NW of Westmoorgate (MCO55419). Known as the Westmoorgate stone circle. Approximately 31 metres in diameter. All its stones have fallen. Summit of Brown Willy is due west, and the equinox sun probably sets behind it from here.
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** NW of stone circle on West Moor (MCO4653).
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** ENE of stone circle on West Moor (MCO4654).
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** E of stone circle on West Moor (MCO4655).
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on low rounded spur of land E of Redhill (MCO4411).
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on low rounded spur of land E of Redhill (MCO4412).
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on low rounded spur of land E of Redhill (MCO4413).
- **Large Early Bronze Age tor cairn** at W end of line of three on the summit of Bray Down (MCO4203). A **small cheesewring, a natural monument** continues the line to the west.
- **Early Bronze Age kerbed platform cairn**, the central one of a line of three on the summit of Bray Down (MCO4204).

- **Early Bronze Age kerbed platform cairn with a ring cairn on top**, the eastern of a line of three on the summit of Bray Down (MCO4205).

PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

- **Large Early Bronze Age cairn** at the summit of Carne Downs (MCO4270).

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

- **Early Neolithic propped stone** on small outcrop to SW of Leskernick Hill's summit. Its large capstone and smaller supporting stones create a small rectangular window through which the summer solstice sun sets on the skyline to the NW. The propped stone is also the feature on the skyline of Leskernick behind which the summer solstice sun set c3700 BC (Herring 1997). Note that the HER has misplaced the site by c75m. It is actually at SX1827 8019.
- Probable **Early Neolithic long cairn** on NW slopes of Hendra Down. It is 18 metres long, 4.0m wide and trapezoidal. It is oriented NW and aligned on the propped stone on Leskernick Hill at SX 1903 7955 behind which the midsummer solstice sun sets (see Herring 1997).
- Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age **stone row** 316 metres long, on plain to SE of Leskernick Hill (MCO18494). Stone setting at W end where Rough Tor comes into view when walked along (Herring 1997; Tilley 1995; Bender et al 2007).
- Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age **stone circle**, on plain to SE of Leskernick Hill (MCO18450).
- Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age **stone circle**, on SE slope of Leskernick Hill (MCO18451). Large central stone, possible a fallen **standing stone**. Excavated by UCL in 1990s and fills of pit beneath central stone radiocarbon dated to 1750-1540 cal BC (Bender et al 2007, 88-89).
- Early Bronze Age **barrow** (MCO4466). On plain among stone circles and stone row and on the alignment between the long cairn and propped stone. Interpreted by RCHME as an industrial spoil heap, but there is no pit associated with it.
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** at summit of Leskernick Hill (MCO4470). Inward leaning stones give its fabric a 'petal' character.
- **Early Bronze Age cist** on lower southern slope of Leskernick Hill (MCO22738). Close to the edge of the curvilinear field system.
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on higher southern slope of Leskernick Hill (MCO4383). Within the curvilinear field system.
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on lower southern slope of Leskernick Hill (MCO4468). Close to the edge of the curvilinear field system.
- **Early Bronze Age cairn** on southern slope of Leskernick Hill (MCO4469). Within the curvilinear field system.

Prehistoric domestic and agricultural

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- A probably **Middle Bronze Age accretive field system** with at least **10 roundhouses** on NE slopes of Buttern Hill (MCO20891). Fields are a mix of curvilinear and rectilinear.

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

- Settlement of **two probably Middle Bronze Age roundhouses** on NE slopes of West Moor (MCO20507). No associated fields so possibly a pastoralist settlement.
- Fragmentary **probably Middle Bronze Age curvilinear field system** on low rounded spur to E of Redhill (MCO20889)
- Fragmentary **probably Iron Age rectilinear field system** on the higher northern slopes of Bray Down (MCO20897),possibly associated with the round nearby.
- **Later Iron Age or Romano-British Enclosed settlement** or **round** on the steep northern slopes of Bray Down. Undisturbed so in good condition (MCO20522). Contains two levelled areas within which may be house platforms. Associated with substantial outworks to the SW and N (MCO 22872 and 22873 respectively).

PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

- **Middle Bronze Age roundhouse settlement** and **coaxial field system**, on the summit and steep NE slope of Carne Down (MCO20757). Fields run across the contour and depend from a strong NW-SE bank following the contour at the crest of the NE slope. At least 16 roundhouses plotted from aerial photographs.

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

- A beautifully well-preserved **Middle Bronze Age settlement** and **curvilinear and accretive field system** comprising at least **44 round houses** occupying 21 hectares on the SW slopes of Leskernick Hill (MCO19921). Several roundhouses and other features investigated by UCL in 1990s (Bender et al 2007).

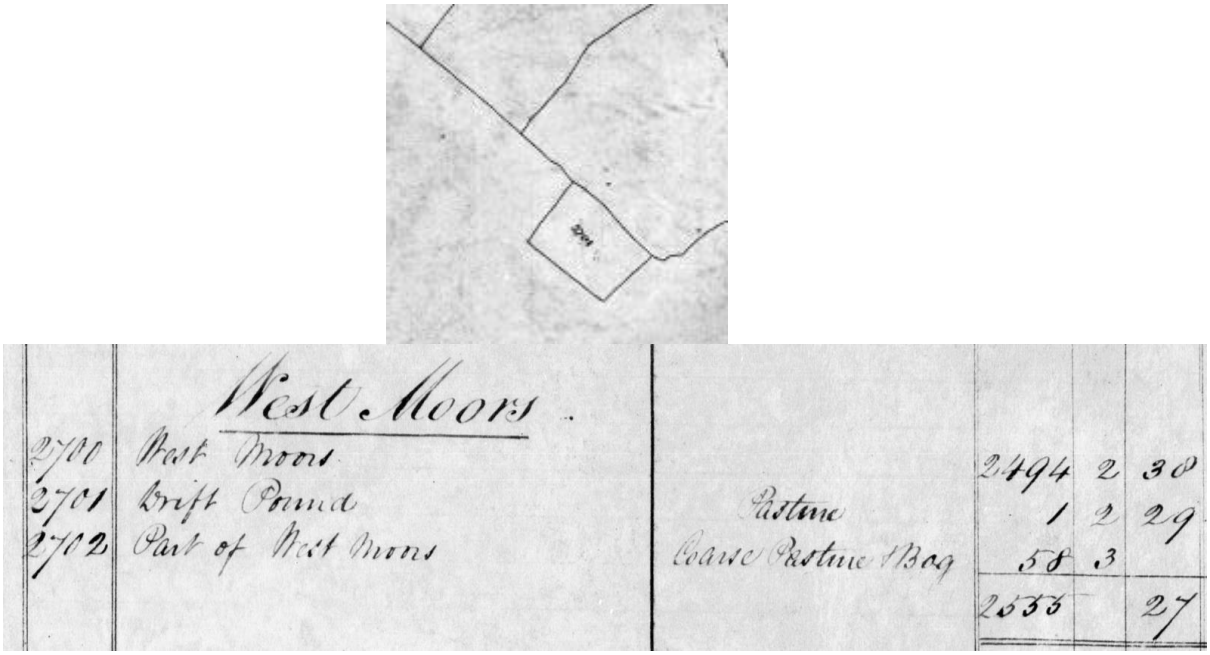
Medieval

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- Part of the **medieval commons** of High Moor.

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

- Very well-preserved **hamlet of five longhouses** and **other buildings** and **yards** and **enclosures** on the lower western slope of Bray Down (MCO13580).
- Extensive **medieval strip field system** on the western slopes of Bray Down, associated with the longhouse hamlet. The core fields were laid out by measuring using the Corish rod Widths are precisely multiples of 4 rods of 18 feet (5.5m) length. Incorporates **a broad lane** that runs southwards onto the commons of West Moor and **further strip fields** on the higher eastern slope (MCO20898). Also contains extensive areas of narrow ridges, the remains of spade-dug lazybeds.
- **Pasture boundary** on higher western slope of Bray Down (MCO22889), apparently dividing the grazing lands of the Bray Down longhouse hamlet from that of Canaglaze.
- **Drift Pound** attached to the ring fence of Canaglaze at SX 19148119. Not yet included in HER. Shown on Altarnun Tithe Map (TA 2701, Drift Pound), associated with 2700, 2494 acres of commons. Strong stock-proof hedge with large slabs. Probably later medieval or early post-medieval.



PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

- **Medieval outfield system** with **lazybed cultivation ridging** (MCO20896) on the western slopes of Carne Down, possibly secondary to an eluvial streamworks to its south.

PAL 3.4 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

- Several **early medieval transhumance huts**, small and sub-rectangular, are built within and close to the Bronze Age field system on the south and west slopes of Leskernick Hill (see Bender et al 2007, 135).

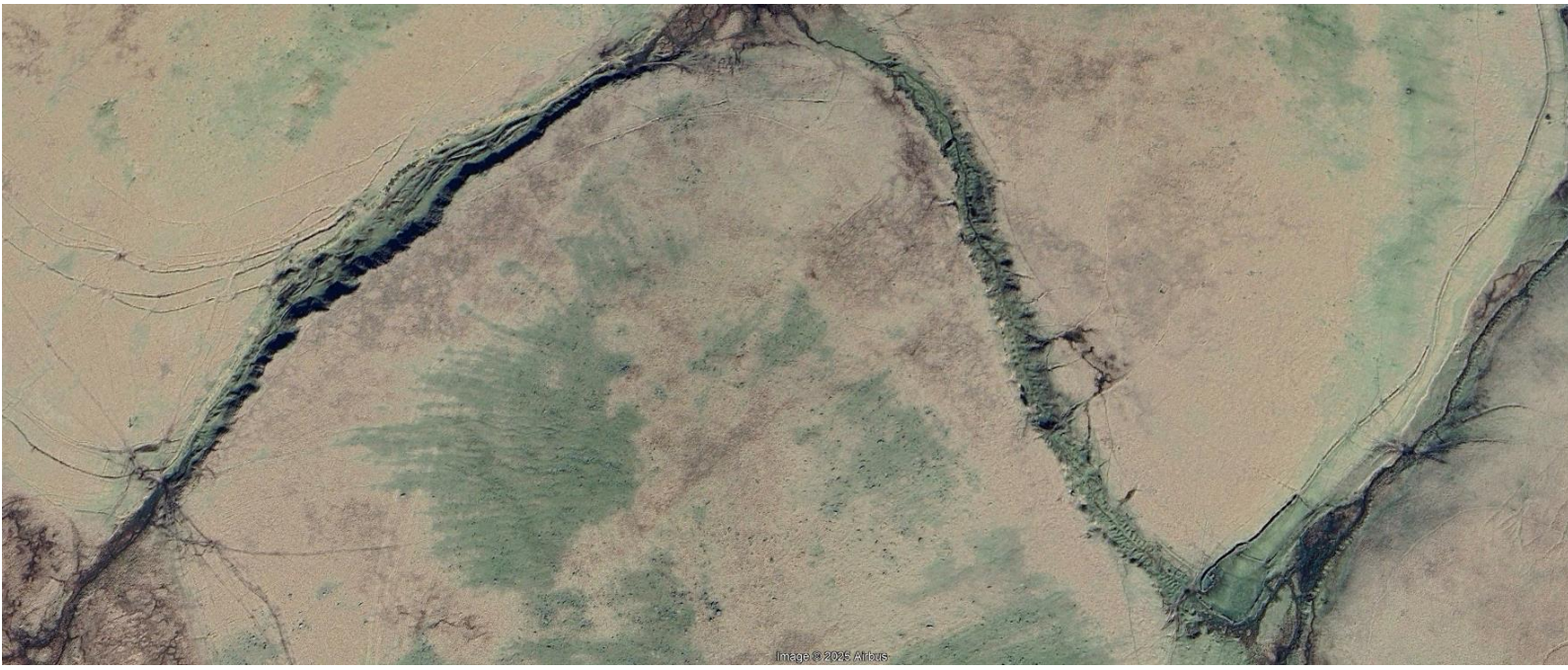
Industrial

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- **Alluvial streamworks** in valley to N of Buttern Hill (No MCO number, PRN12012). Includes Gerrard Type 3 spoil heaps.
- **Tinners' building** (MCO23626) in streamworks PRN12012.
- **Eluvial streamworks and leats** on NE slope of Buttern Hill (MCO23628). Worked from NE to SW, with differing types of working distinguishable from dump types. Cutting to 10m deep. Reused in early 20C as West Moor Wolfram Works, probably the context for concrete floors on S side.
- Extensive **Alluvial and eluvial streamworks** in valley to NE of Buttern Hill (MCO23661). Multiple phases of working detectable.
- Rectangular **tinners' building** (at SX 1767 8214, not recorded in CSHER) on slope to NW of eluvial streamworks on NE slope of Buttern Hill. Remains of fireplace visible and a well-defined **turf stead** is immediately to the N.
- Massive **earthwork dam** for **reservoir** (MCO24256) in valley between Buttern and Bray. Apparently formed a lake on which a dredger floated to work the alluvial deposits here.

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

- Remarkable **eluvial streamworks** in the valley between Buttern Hill and Leskernick Hill (MCO23634). **Cutting** reaches 18.0 metres deep and was presumably worked over **many episodes**, deepening the cutting each time. Served by a number of run-off water **leats** dug along the contours to the north west of the works. These still run with water after heavy downpours.
- **Eluvial streamworks** (MCO23652) between Leskernick Hill and Bray Down. Another **very deep cutting**, up 18m deep and with neatly defined **spoil heaps** at the base, some towards N parallel with the central drain, others at quite acute angles to it. **Dams and leats** associated with the workings, especially on Bray Down side. Crosses a watershed so drains run NW to join the Penpont Water at Bowithick in the northern three-quarters of its length and SE to turn along E side of Bray Down and join the Penpont Water between Trebray and Trelyn in the southern quarter.
- Substantial **leat** drawn from the River Fowey (MCO23646).



Two eluvial streamworks north of Leskernick. The deepest to the left is that on the southern edge of Buttern Hill and that to the right is against Bray Down. The patterns of spoil heaps in the bases of the cuttings are very distinct on the 2025 aerial image created by Airbus, available through Google Earth Pro. Leats and dams for the reservoirs that were used in dressing the shode are also visible.

Detail of image above showing dams on right (east side of the cutting with run-off leats guiding water into them and the patterns of spoil dumps clearly visible in the base of the cutting. Material courtesy of Airbus 2025 via Google Earth Pro.

PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

No industrial remains recorded here.

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

- **Eluvial streamworks** at the head of an alluvial working on the lower slopes of Hendra Downs (MCO27920). Different areas of working characterised by differing patterns of dumps. A complex of **leats** and **two dams** supplies the working areas.
- **Alluvial streamworks** downstream to the north of the above eluvial streamworks. Not given a MCO number in HER, but recorded in 1990 as PRN 12025, with Type 3 dumps (Rose and Herring 1990, 363).
- **Alluvial streamworks** in the floor of the River Fowey west of Leskernick Hill (MCO23640). Different types of working, characterised by patterns of waste dumps; majority are Gerrard type 3 (parallel works). There are also cuesta works and hatchworks.
- **Lodeback** works on plain to S of Leskernick Hill (MCO24061).
- **Prospecting pits** in neat lines on lower slopes of Hendra Downs, apparently associated with eluvial streamworks (MCO24105).
- **Two adits** cut into east bank of River Fowey to S of Leskernick farmstead (MCO23642 and 23643).
- **Tinners' building** on edge of alluvial streamworks to S of Leskernick farmhouse (MCO23645).
- **Stone splitting** in the clitter and among the moorstones of Leskernick. Includes some abandoned unfinished articles including a **millstone** on the W slope (MCO56975).

Post-medieval and modern

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- Numerous **turf steads** both on the hill itself, for skimmy turf and on its lower slopes beside valley marsh bogs. Includes 5 steads (MCO49484) on NE slopes

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

- A small **stone shelter** occupies part of the summit Bronze Age cairn on Leskernick Hill (MCO 22874).
- Numerous turf steads both on the slopes (for stacking dried skimmies) and beside the valley marshes). Most were plotted by RCHME, and some are recorded in the HER (MCO23647, 24063, 24064).

Significance of landscape visibility

PAL 3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

The NE slope is busy with patterns of prehistoric field boundaries, associated roundhouses, leats (serving the eluvial streamworks), turf steads (for temporary storage of peat skimmed from the hill's surface) and hollow-ways created as people brough livestock onto the downs for summer grazing. There are also prospecting pits, and stone-splitting pits, some of the latter with wedge marks, others with drill marks.

Away from the NE quarter, Buttern is one of those hills that have extensive grazing with very few features to break the grasslands. The cairns and the cist at the summit, the stone row on the lower NW slope, and the parallel leats on the southern slopes are significant features in an area of extensive rough grazing. The cairns are placed where there are good views to the great hills of Brown Willy and Rough Tor and there are carefully designed perspectival effects when walking along the stone row, where Brown Willy disappears from view as Leskernick propped stone pops into view (Herring 2008).

Buttern stone row from N end with the summit of Brown Willy visible above the rounded down of High Moor. At the southern end Brown Willy has disappeared but the propped stone on Leskernick Hill pops into view over the intervening slope of Buttern Hill (Pete Herring, May 2016).

Travellers passing through the cairn group on the summit of Buttern, with Brown Willy beyond.

PAL 3.2 The main part of West Moor

Superficially an area of featureless rounded downs running on into each other and into the distance. When on the ground they are seen to be crisscrossed by historic features, especially leats and streamworks, and hollowed trackways, and spattered with rows of prospecting pits, scatters of shode pits, areas of stone splitting, turf steads and occasional prehistoric features like cairns and a stone circle, near Westmoorgate.

At their heart is a lonely smallholding created in the early 19th century and abandoned in the early 20th, and now marked by possibly the most solitary tree in Cornwall, an old hawthorn probably planted when the house it sheltered was still occupied.

The hawthorn at Redhill smallholding (Pete Herring, August 2005).

By March 2023 the hawthorn had been ravaged by age and storms leaving a bird's nest very vulnerable (Pete Herring).

This part of the Moor also contains the western side of Bray Down where there are the extensive remains of medieval strip fields and lazybeds, as well as the group of longhouses that accommodated those worked them. These are becoming overgrown with furze, as is the later prehistoric round on the northern slopes, and it is also approaching the line of Bronze Age cairns on the hill's summit.

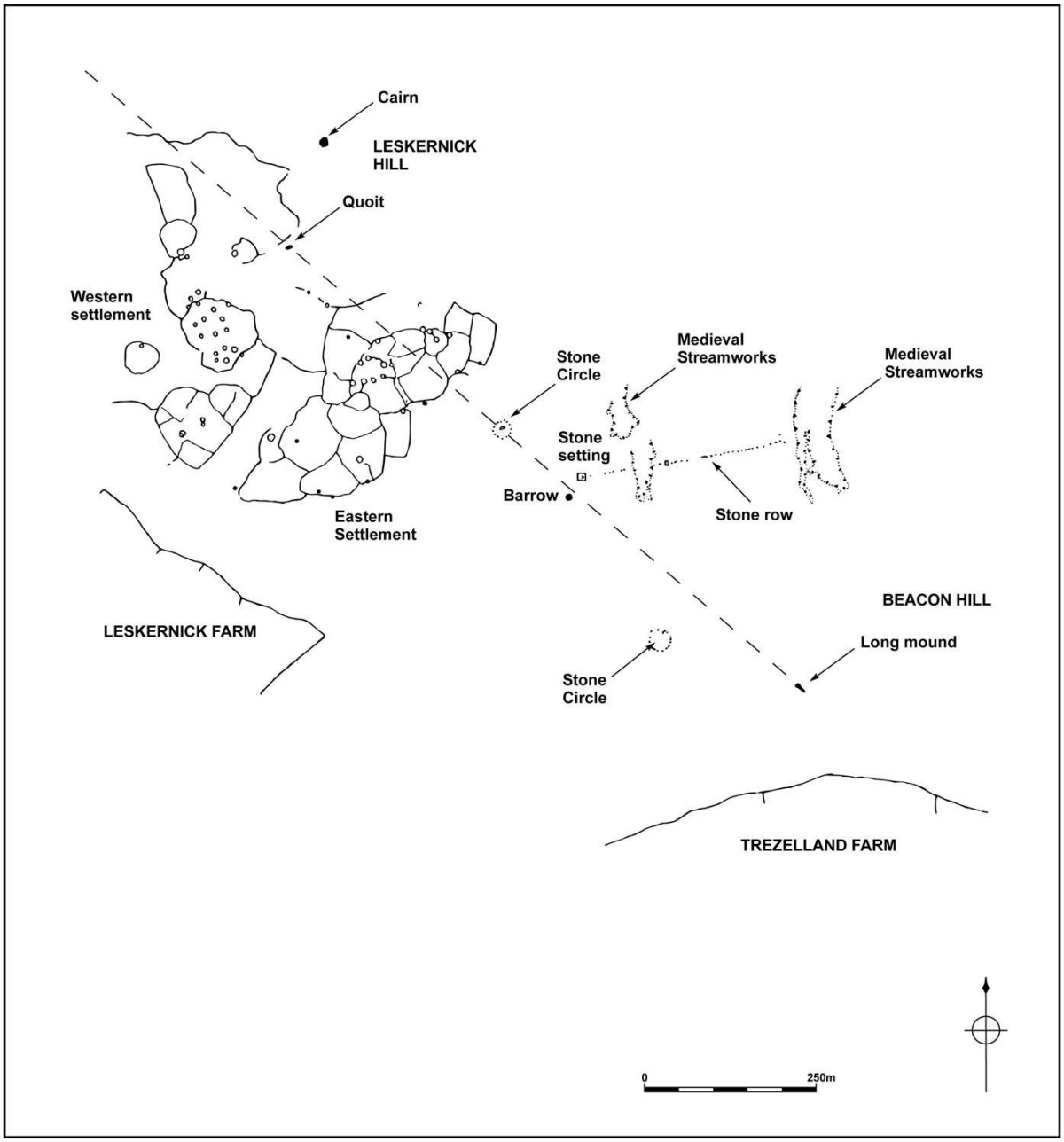
PAL 3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

Bracken and furze cover large parts of the prehistoric and medieval field systems, but it is still possible to trace many of the banks and areas of lazybeds.

PAL 3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor.

The southern slopes of Leskernick at a distance appears a dense jumble of clitter but on approaching it is seen to be laced with the lines of stony banks, the boundaries of curvilinear Middle Bronze Age fields. Clambering around the clitter, houses and trackways emerge and disappear as we have to zigzag through the rocks. In and out of view above us is the propped stone, possibly the earliest artificial feature on the hill, and incorporated into the views from all of the roundhouses on the hill's western side, but from none of those on the southern.

On the plain to the south of the hill the intervisibility of features is more formalised, but just as exciting and interesting. Here a long mound, probably an early Neolithic long cairn, was aligned on the propped stone and the midsummer solstice sunset. The northern of two Early Bronze Age stone circles was placed on that line, as was a Bronze Age barrow, at the point where the propped stone fell out of view when walking towards it from the long cairn.



The alignment of the long mound and propped stone (then termed a 'quoit') with the barrow and the western end of the stone row apparently also respecting it. (From Herring 1997).

There are other significant features on the hill, including an unusual 'petal' cairn at its summit, and the more subtle remains of transhumance huts, tucked into sheltered laces amongst the roundhouses and fields.

Designations

Historic Environment

Scheduled Monuments

Heritage Assets assessed as being of National Importance

This part of Bodmin Moor was not covered by English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), undertaken in the 1990s and early 2000s.

However, evaluation by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit of sites of National Importance on Bodmin Moor identified the following within this PAL as candidates for formal assessment for Scheduling using the criteria employed by the MPP (Rose and Herring 1990).

Following the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) these non-designated heritage assets are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. 'Substantial harm to or loss of [these] should be wholly exceptional' (NPPF, para 206).

Natural environment designations:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

All except for the northern part of Carne Down is in the Bodmin Moor, North SSSI, 1001252.

Special Areas of Conservation

NA

County Wildlife Sites

Yes, the northern part of Carne Down is in NC/CN7/N.

Cornwall Conservation Areas

NA

Other designations

Common Land

Buttern Hill is included in the common of High Moor, CL194.

The eastern hills including Leskernick Hill, Hendra Downs, the southern parts of Bray and Carne Downs and West Moor are included in the common of West Moor, CL110.

CROW Access Land

Yes, whole PAL.

Registered rights of way.

- Bridleways in eastern and southern parts enter the PAL from Carne Down, Westmoorgate, Trezelland and Codda directions.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

No

Change between 2005 and 2022

(Overview derived from comparison of CCC 2005 aerial photography, available as a basemap on the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, and the Airbus 2025 satellite imagery as viewed from Google Earth aerial photos.)

3.1 Northern Buttern Hill

- Little change.

3.2 The main part of West Moor

- Little change on the common.

- Significant increase in furze cover on west and north slopes of Bray Down. Much is now nearly closed canopy, obscuring important archaeological remains and causing livestock to follow narrow passages causing erosion.

3.3 The northern part of Carne Down

- Some increase in furze cover.

3.2 The southern part of Leskernick Hill, and parts of Hendra Down and West Moor

- Little change.

Issues

Spread of furze.

- Reducing the diversity of the ancient rough grasslands and their flora and fauna, including their invertebrates.
- Obscuring the more ephemeral archaeological remains.
- Will begin to cause erosion as vehicles and livestock are confined to ever narrower tracks.
- Encourage tick-borne diseases in livestock and wild fauna.

Opportunities

To better guide grazing levels on the common by closer understanding of the flora and fauna of the ancient semi-natural grasslands.

Recommendations

General approach

Retain open ancient semi-natural grassland with easy movement in all directions.

Specific recommendations

- Keep the important remains of Bray Down medieval hamlet and its fields, and the Bray Down later prehistoric round clear of furze.
- Further research
    - Little has been published on the ownership and administration of the extensive commons of West Moor and Buttern Hill. It appears to have been part of Penpont manor.
    - The drift pound was presumably an important element of their historical administration, being a substantial structure.
- Further archaeological recording.
    - The Bray Down cairns and their relationship with a small cheesewring on their line to the west will repay close survey and study.
    - The longhouses at Bray also require closer study, and the strip field system (with its carefully measured widths of strips) also requires closer recording and study.
    - The drift pound has unusual boundaries designed to retain livestock securely. It requires recording.

Adjusting the extent of the PAL:

PAL 3 West Moor

'The glory of the West Moor area is to capture the full extent of the incredible leat systems that feed all the dams and streamworks' (Nicholas Johnson, former County Archaeologist). The original PALs mapping was hampered by being done ahead of the publication of the second volume on the Bodmin Moor archaeological survey which included a map of all the leats and streamworks. The PAL's boundaries need adjusting to ensure inclusion of all those leats and dams.

PAL 3 West Moor part 1, Buttern Hill and Bowithick

1 Extend the NW boundary to include all of the streamworks and leats in the Pennydevern valley and on the eastern edge of High Moor.

2 Extend the western boundary onto High Moor to include all the alluvial streamworks in the River Fowey and it its moorland tributaries on High Moor.

3 Extend the N boundary at Bowithick to include all of the important early 20th century wolfram dressing floors.

PAL 3 West Moor part 2, Leskernick and High Moor

1 Extend the western side of the PAL onto High Moor to include all of the leats and streamworks plotted there.

2 Include Codda Tor and its well-preserved cairn group and later Bronze Age roundhouses and enclosures on the east slope and turf cuttings on the west slope.

PAL 3 West Moor part 3, West Moor

1 Extend onto the rough ground of Hendra Beacon, the streamworks and prospecting pits and shode-works on the northern slope, a prehistoric roundhouse settlement and rectilinear field system on the SE slope and the 'natural monument' known as Elephant Rock on the south slope.

References

Bender, B, Hamilton, S, and Tilley, C, 2007. *Stone worlds, narrative and reflexivity in landscape archaeology*, Walnut Creek, California

Herring, P, 1997. Early prehistoric sites at Leskernick, Altarnun, *Cornish Archaeol* **36,** 176-185

Moore, P, 2024 *Bodmin Moor's Boundary Markers, a Legacy in Stone*, Peter Moore

Appendix 1 2007 PAL text

3 West Moor

Historic Environment

This PAL contains important ritual landscapes, with each prominent summit marked by a number of prehistoric cairns (Bray Down, Buttern Hill, Leskernick Hill and Carne Down). The Leskernick area has a significant number of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, including a propped stone at the summit, aligned on a long cairn on Beacon Hill. There are also nine different types of cairn, two stone circles and a stone row on and around Leskernick. There is another stone row on Buttern Hill and a newly discovered stone circle near Westmoorgate and as well as the summit cairns, there are numerous smaller low-lying cairns.

Leskernick Hill is also the location of two exceptionally well preserved and clearly defined Bronze Age settlements and associated field systems comprising at least forty-four round houses and other small structures occupying approximately 21 hectares, fields ranging in size from 0.2ha to 1.0ha. Diameters of the houses range from 3.7m to 8.7m and the walling varies from low turf covered stony banks to

substantial double faced slab walls filled with small stone. There are numerous entrance gaps to the fields, some original, others more recent. The Leskernick area was the focus of a project by University College London in the 1990s.

More fragmentary prehistoric settlement survives to the north of the PAL, on Buttern Hill, Bray Down and Carne Down, with associated field systems. The PAL also contains one of the very few late Iron Age/Romano-British enclosed farmsteads (or Rounds) on the open moor, at Bray Down.

Scattered among and inside the ruined prehistoric round houses at Leskernick are numerous sub-rectangular transhumance huts, the summer dwellings of those who brought herds and flocks to the Moor for grazing in the early medieval period. High levels of summer grazing continued through the medieval and post-medieval periods, maintaining the open rough ground inherited from prehistory. Attached to the perimeter hedge of Bray Down is the 'drift pound' used for impounding livestock found grazing without permission. West Moor was a common shared by numerous manors in and around Altarnun.

The deserted medieval settlements on this part of the moor are located away from the main foci of prehistoric activity, enabling a clear understanding of both the prehistoric and medieval phases of activity in the West Moor PAL. Bray Down has one of the best preserved longhouse hamlets on Bodmin Moor. Much of Bray and Carne Downs are covered in the remains of an extensive open field pattern, which extends into the surrounding enclosed farmland. Many of these enclosures have the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation.

This PAL also contains some of the best examples of alluvial and eluvial tin streamworks in Cornwall, many of which are medieval or later in date but with the potential to be of prehistoric origin. Associated leats, reservoirs and tinner's shelters are found all over the area, some of which are associated with post medieval stream working. Bray Down also contains a very good example of early shaft mining, drained by an adit and operated by a horse whim. Lode back pits and probable tinners' shelters add to the complex, which is well contained and survives well due to its remote location.

There are several ruined post-medieval smallholdings on and adjacent to this PAL – the best-defined being that at Redhill. Here tiny fields were effectively gardens; the main agricultural activity being the grazing of the moor.

Further evidence of exploitation of the moor's resources come from the numerous turf steads (peat stack stands) and early granite moorstone splitting sites dotted around the whole of this PAL.

Natural Environment

Notified Features:-

Acid Grassland – Bristle Bent grassland (U3 - *Agrostis curtisii* grassland), Bent-Fescue grassland (U4 - *Festuca ovina - Agrostis capillaris - Galium saxatile* grassland), Mat Grass grassland (U5 - *Nardus stricta - Galium saxatile* grassland)

Wet Heath – Deer Grass – Cross-leaved Heath wet heath (M15 - *Scirpus cespitosus - Erica tetralix* wet heath), Cross-leaved Heath – bog moss wet heath (M16 - *Erica tetralix - Sphagnum compactum* wet heath)

Valley Mire and other mire communities – Bog Asphodel – bog moss mire (M21 – *Narthecium ossifragum - Sphagnum papillosum* mire), Purple Moor-grass – Tormentil mire (M25 - *Molinia caerulea - Potentilla erecta* mire), bog moss bog pool community (M2 - *Sphagnum cuspidatum/recurvum* (fallax) bog pool community), Bottle Sedge – bog moss mire (M4 - *Carex rostrata - Sphagnum recurvum* (fallax) mire), Star Sedge – bog moss mire (M6 - *Carex echinata - Sphagnum recurvum* (fallax) /*auriculatum (denticulatum)* mire)

Aggregations of non-breeding birds – Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)

Populations of nationally scarce butterflies – Marsh Fritillary (*Eurodryas aurinia*), Silver-studded Blue (*Plebejus argus*).

Butterflies which have experienced substantial declines – Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*), Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*), Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*), Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*).

Nationally rare and scarce dragonfly species - Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly (*Ischnura pumilio*), Small red Damselfly (*Ceriagrion tenellum*).

Outstanding Dragonfly Assemblage

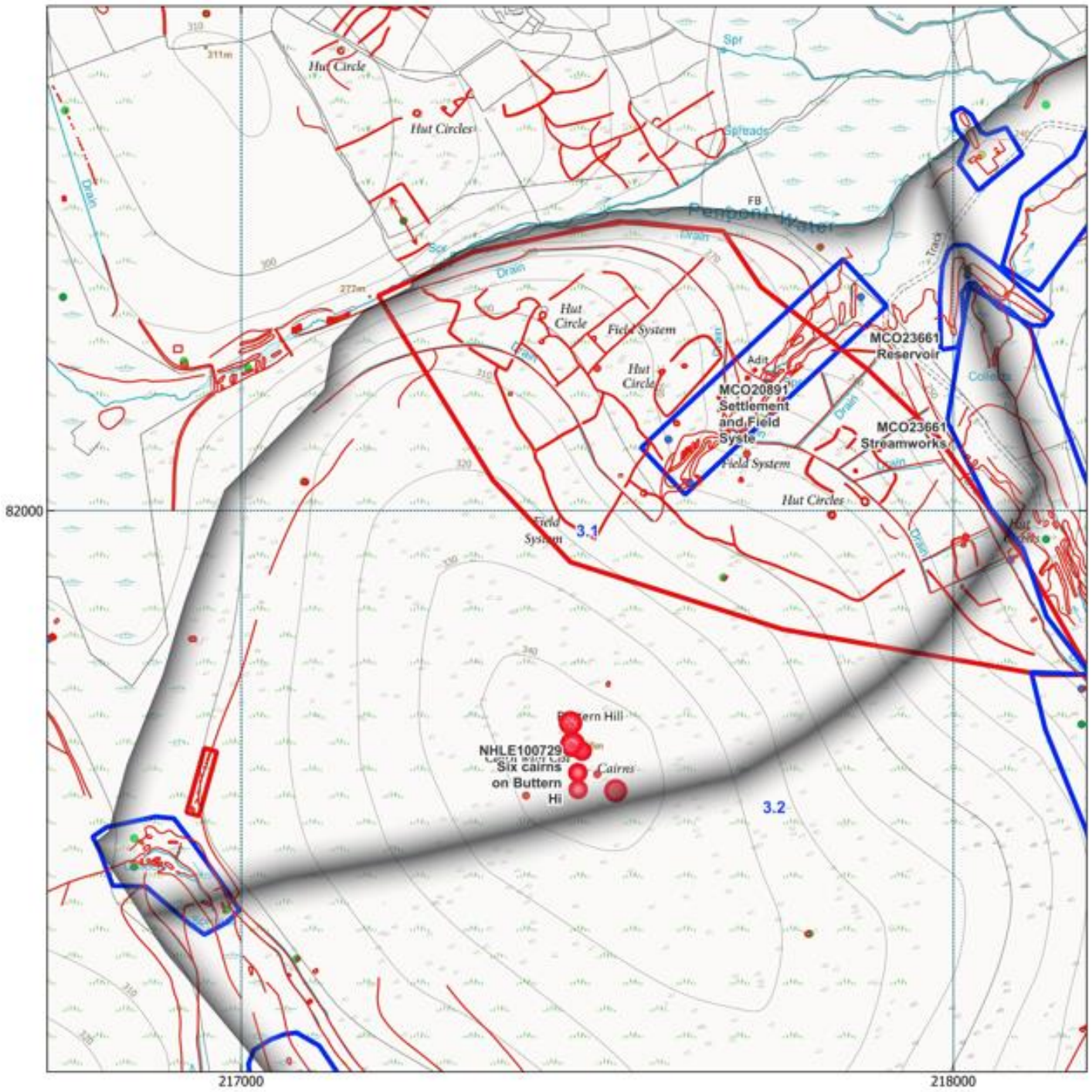
Extensive Valley Mire systems.

Designations

Small clusters of sites have been Scheduled (Nos. 15015, 15036/7, 862, 863, 1047 1045). Leskernick remains unscheduled, as do many other elements of this PAL, reflecting the vagaries of the Scheduling process rather than the importance of this area.

Bodmin Moor North SSSI (units 9, 12)

Vision



PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

Prehistoric

Early Medieval

Romano British

Medieval

Post Medieval

Modern

Dominant Habitat: Dry Acid Grassland

Habitat Change: Little

Notes: Little change.

PAL 3 West Moor 1

www.statement-heritage.com

Cornwall Council

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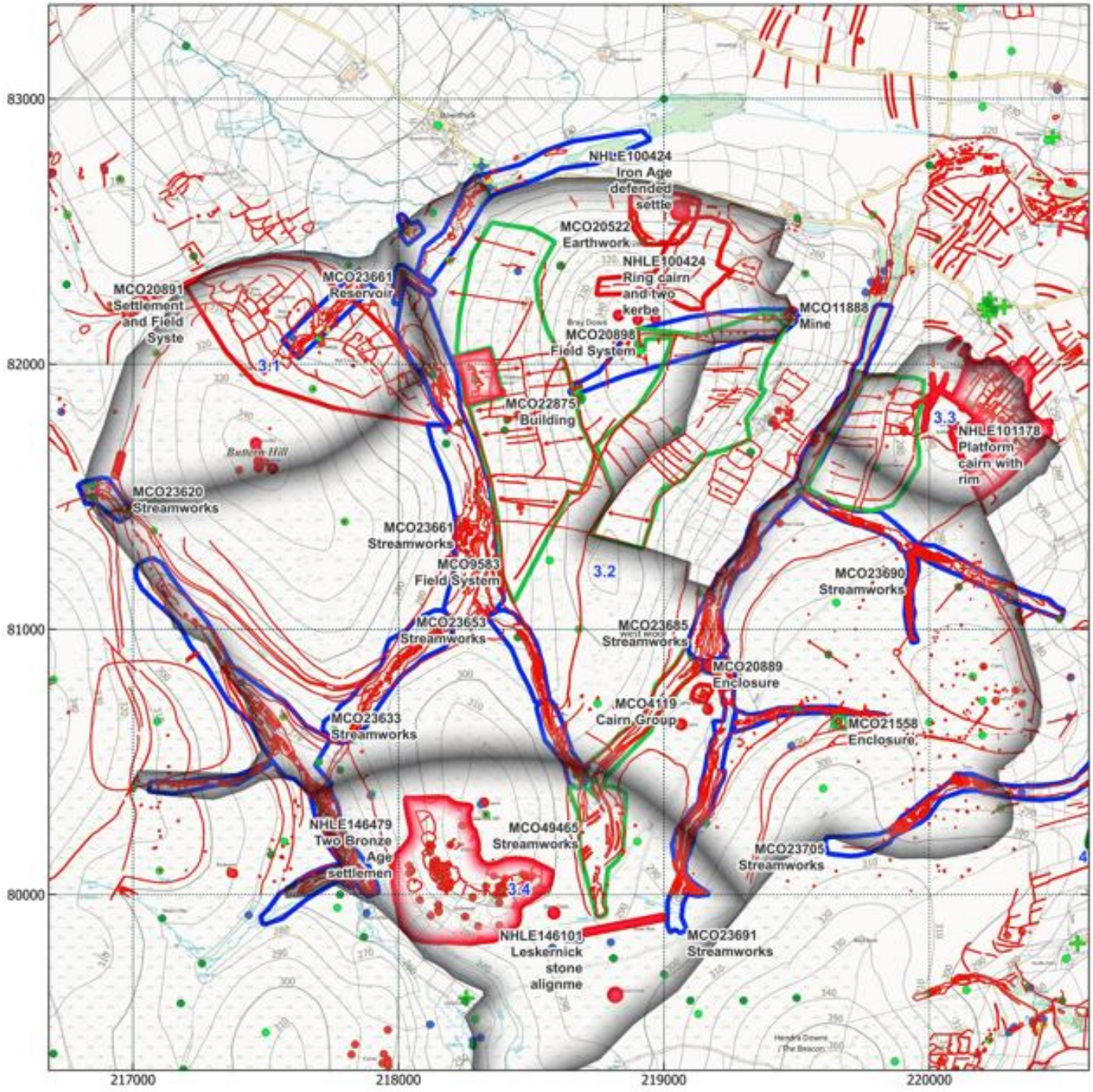


PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

Prehistoric

Early Medieval

Romano British

Medieval

Post Medieval

Modern

Dominant Habitat: Dry Acid Grassland and Heath Mosaic

Habitat Change: Medium

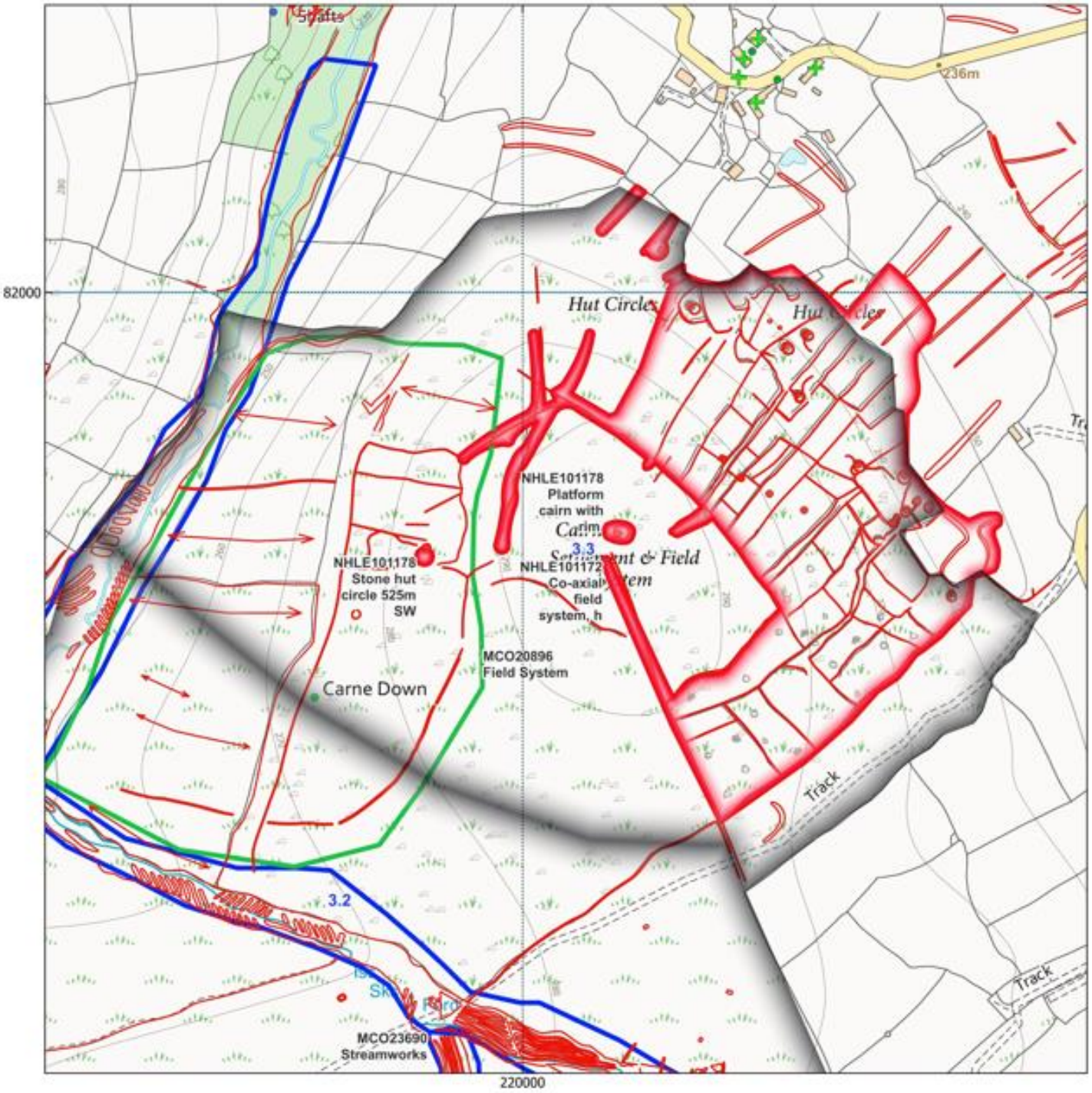
Notes: Little change on the common.
Significant increase in furze cover on west and north slopes of Bray Down. Much is now nearly closed canopy, obscuring important archaeological remains and causing livestock to follow narrow passages causing erosion.

PAL 3 West Moor 2

www.statement-heritage.com

Cornwall Council

0 100200 m



PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

Prehistoric

Early Medieval

Romano British

Medieval

Post Medieval

Modern

Dominant Habitat: Dry Acid Grassland and Heath Mosaic

Habitat Change: Medium

Notes: Some increase in furze cover.

PAL 3 West Moor 3

www.statement-heritage.com

Cornwall Council

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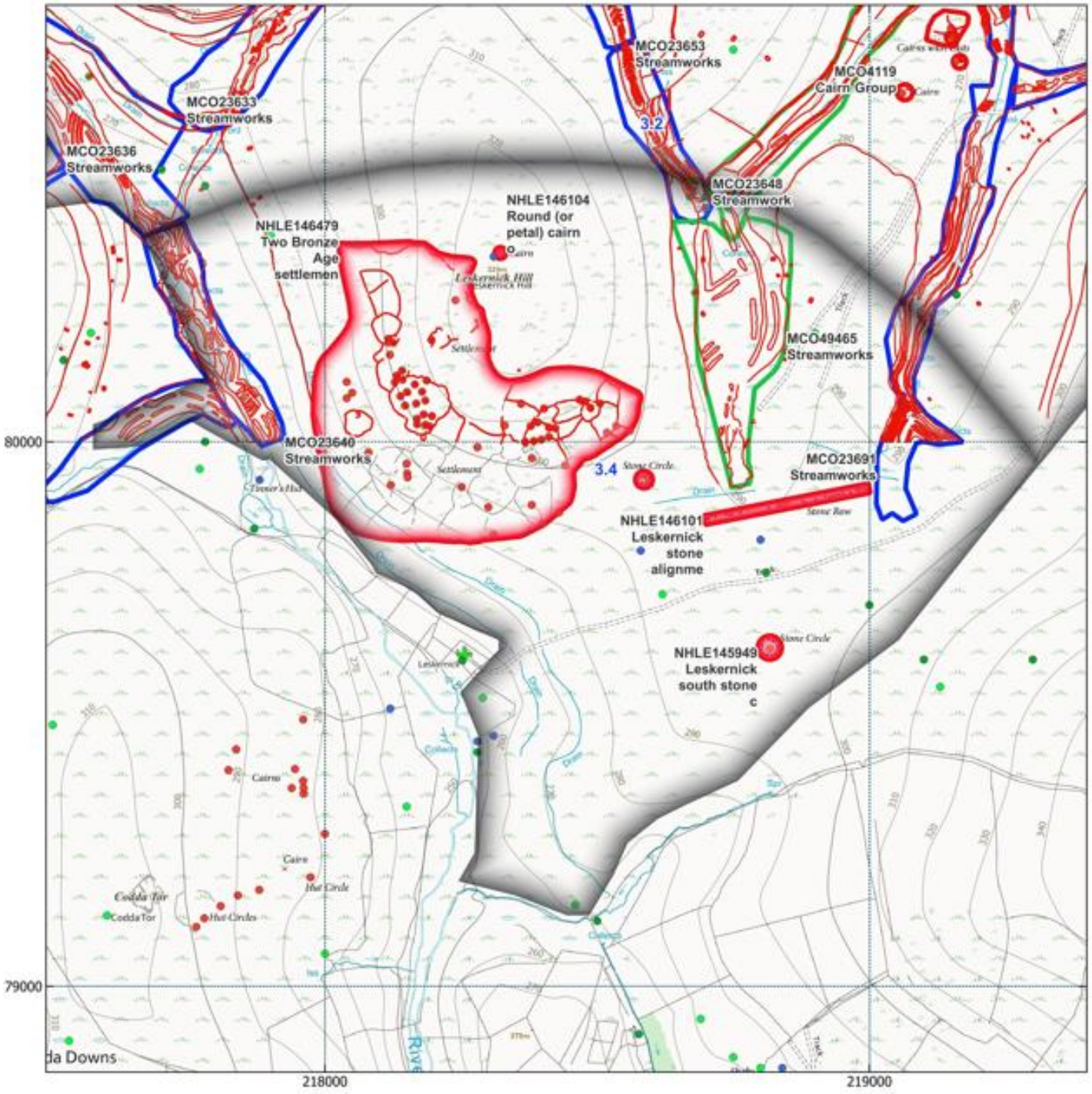


PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

Prehistoric

Early Medieval

Romano British

Medieval

Post Medieval

Modern

Dominant Habitat: Dry Acid Grassland

Habitat Change: Little

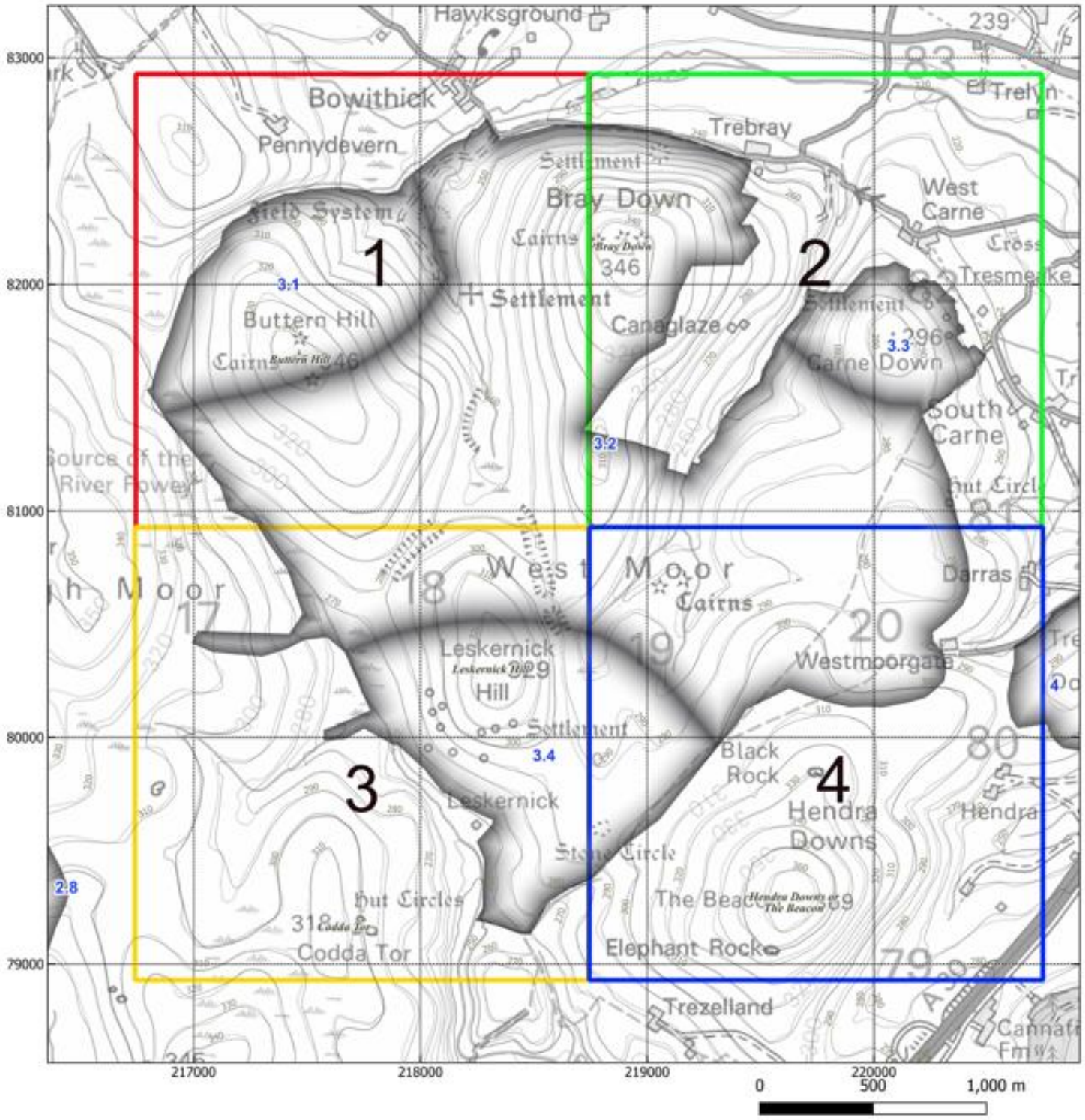
Notes:

PAL 3 West Moor 4

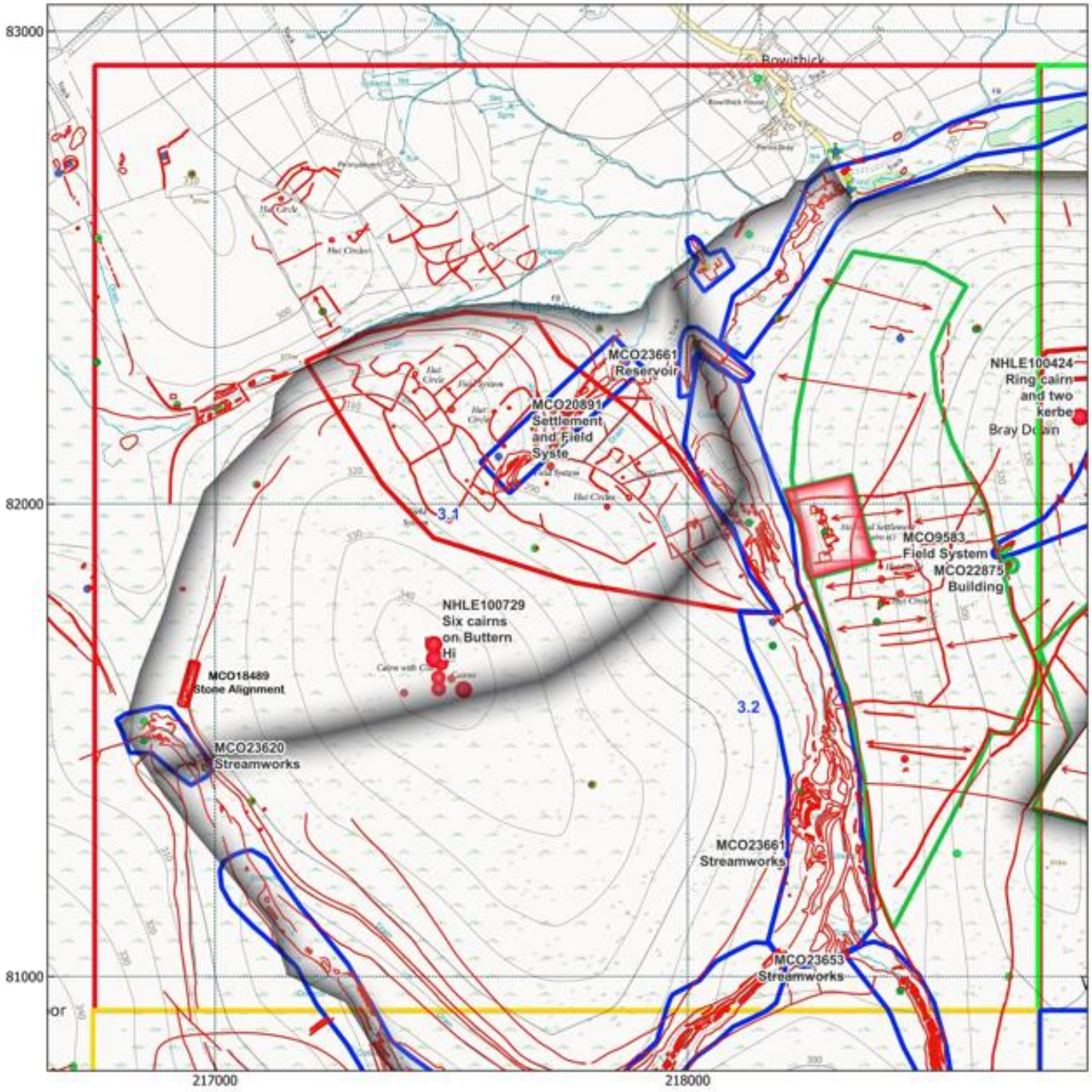
www.statement-heritage.com

0 100 200 m

Cornwall Council



PAL 3: West Moor: Index Map



PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

CRoW_Access_Land___Natural_England

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

- Prehistoric
- Early Medieval
- Romano British
- Medieval
- Post Medieval
- Modern

3.2 West Moor 2 Detail
Map no 1

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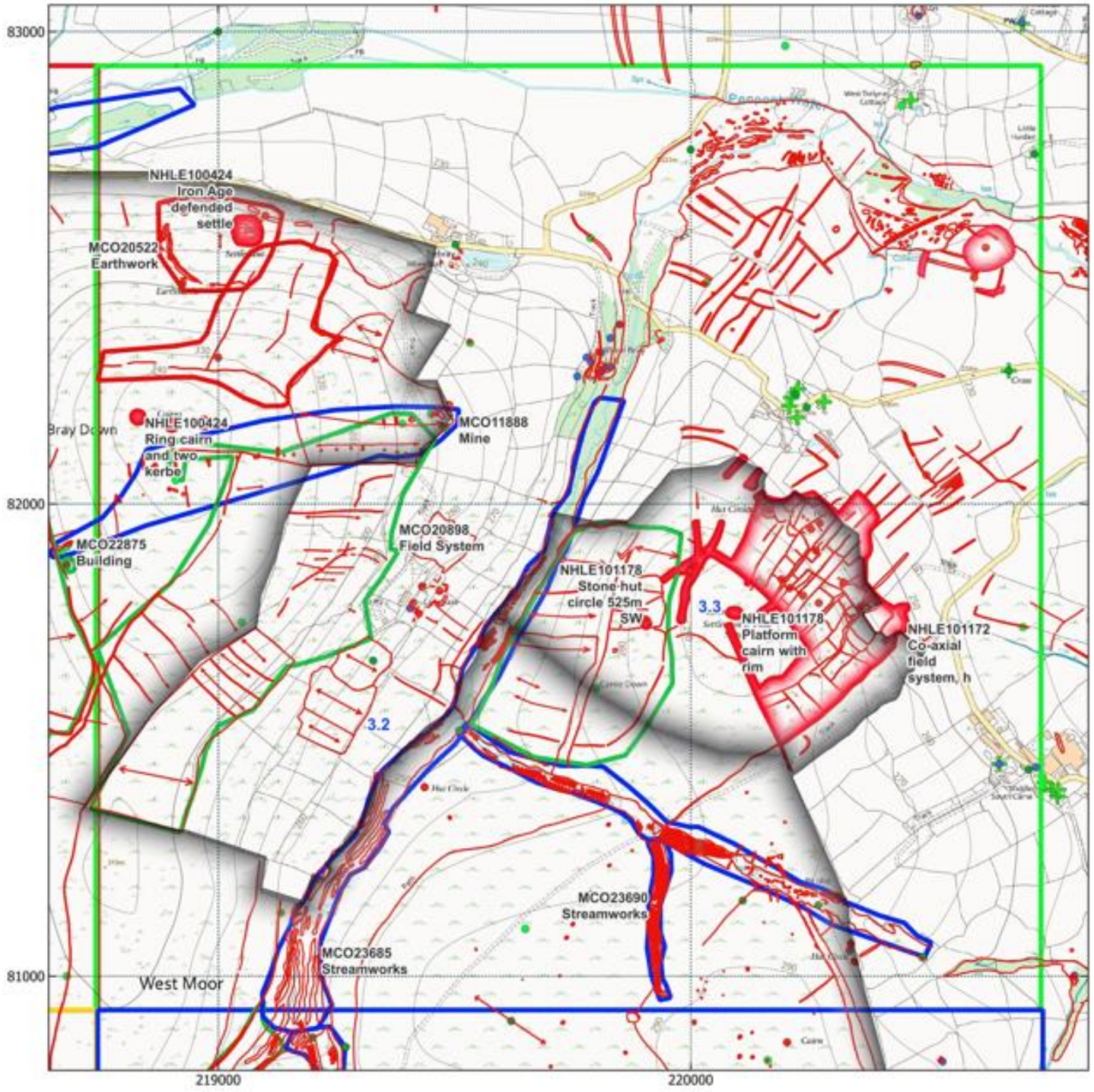

PAL Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments @ Risk

CRoW_Access_Land___Natural_England

Feature Groups

Prehistoric

Medieval

Post Medieval

Aerial Mapping Transcriptions

CSHER point data

Prehistoric

Early Medieval

Romano British

Medieval

Post Medieval

Modern

3.2 West Moor 2 Detail
Map no 2

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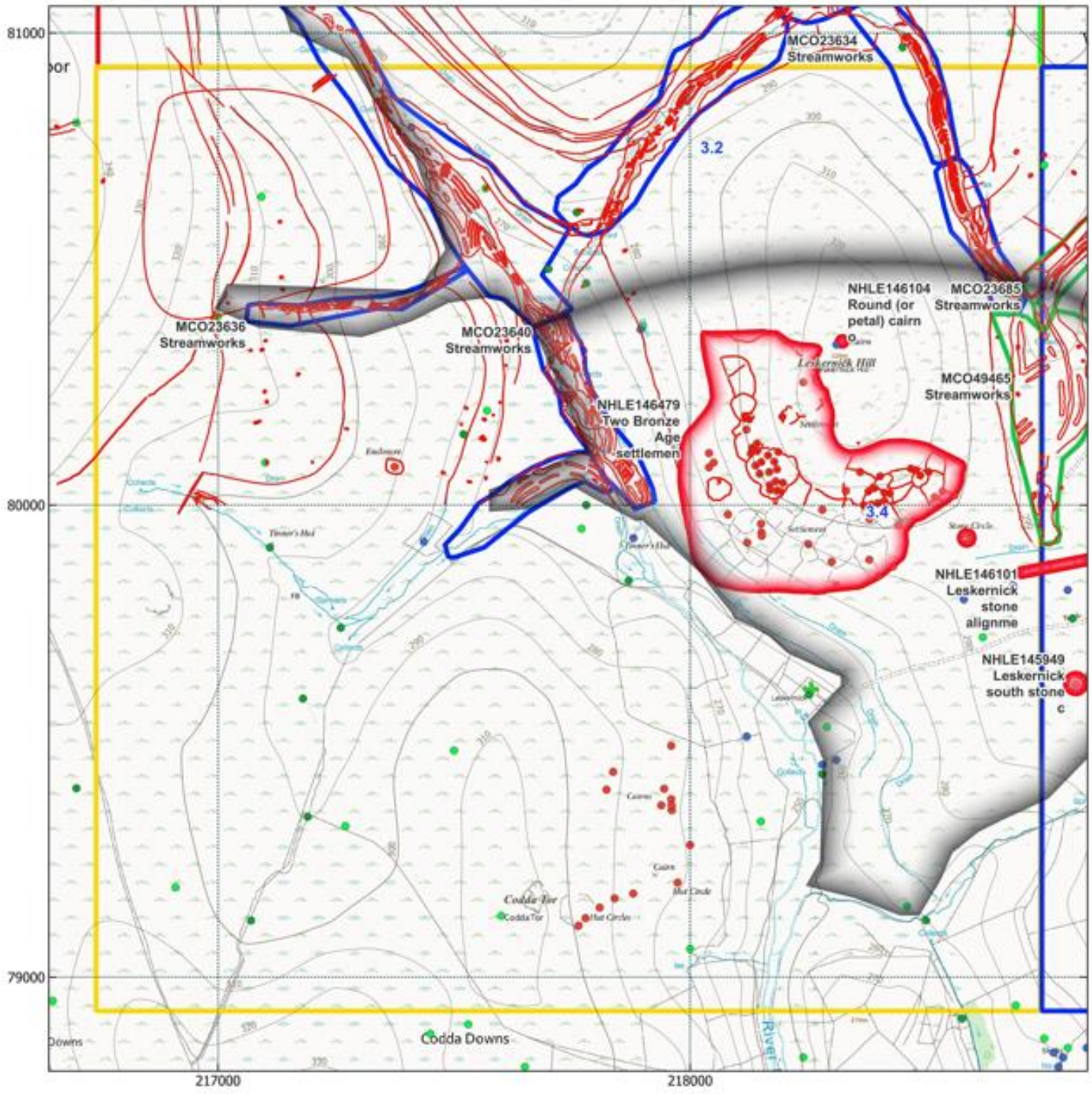

3.2 West Moor 2 Detail
Map no 3

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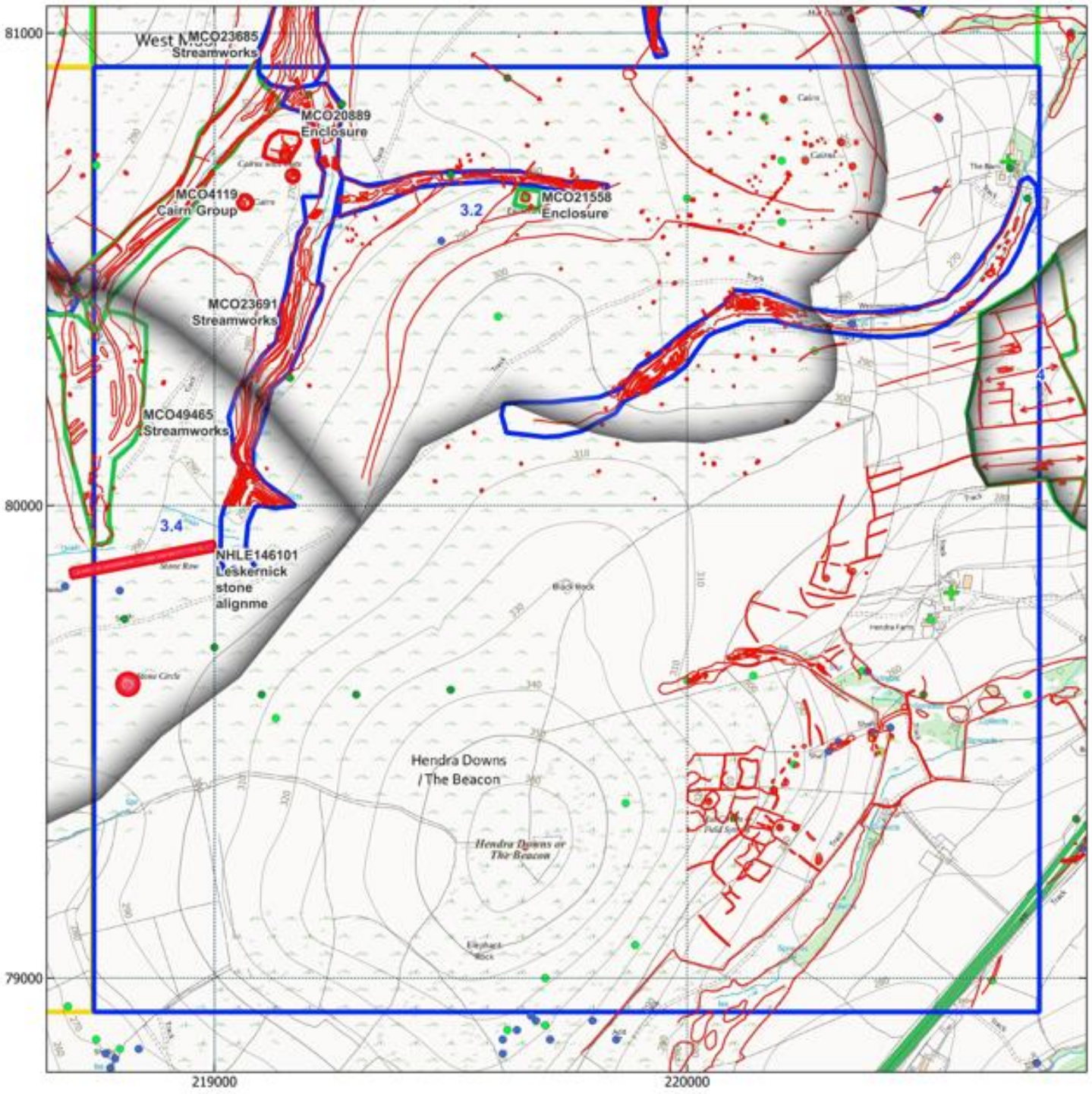

3.2 West Moor 2 Detail
Map no 4

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