

PAL 7 Trehudreth Downs, Blisland, Historic Environment Action Plan



## Location, geology and topography

Centred: SX 126728

Extent: 45 ha (112 acres)

### *Geology:*

Granite (based on BGS Online Viewer). No tors but there is a loose scatter of moorstones on the western and north-western slopes.

### *Topography*

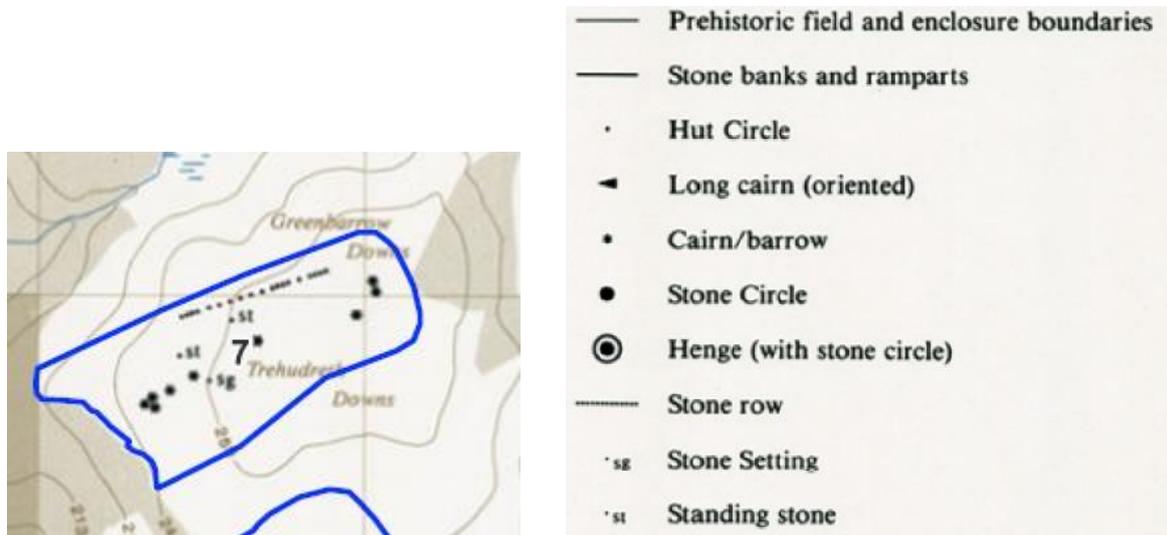
An unusually extensive area of very gently sloping summit ground, almost like a plateau, with Greenbarrow cairn at its summit at 270 m (885 feet), slopes gently westwards and steepens just west of the most westerly group of cairns.

There are no streams in the PAL, but run-off leats drew surface water for industrial and agricultural uses at times of heavy downpour.

A number of small irregular shaped ponds, apparently very shallow, have formed on the plateau. They are included on modern mapping but not on the early editions of the 1:2500 mapping. They may be absent from those because they appeared so shallow, or temporary. They need closer examination to establish whether they are artificial and modern, or natural and ancient.

### *Current management and structures of ownership, commoners, etc*

Divided into two commons. Western two-thirds is CL142 Trehudreth Downs, and the eastern third is CL144 Greenbarrow Downs.



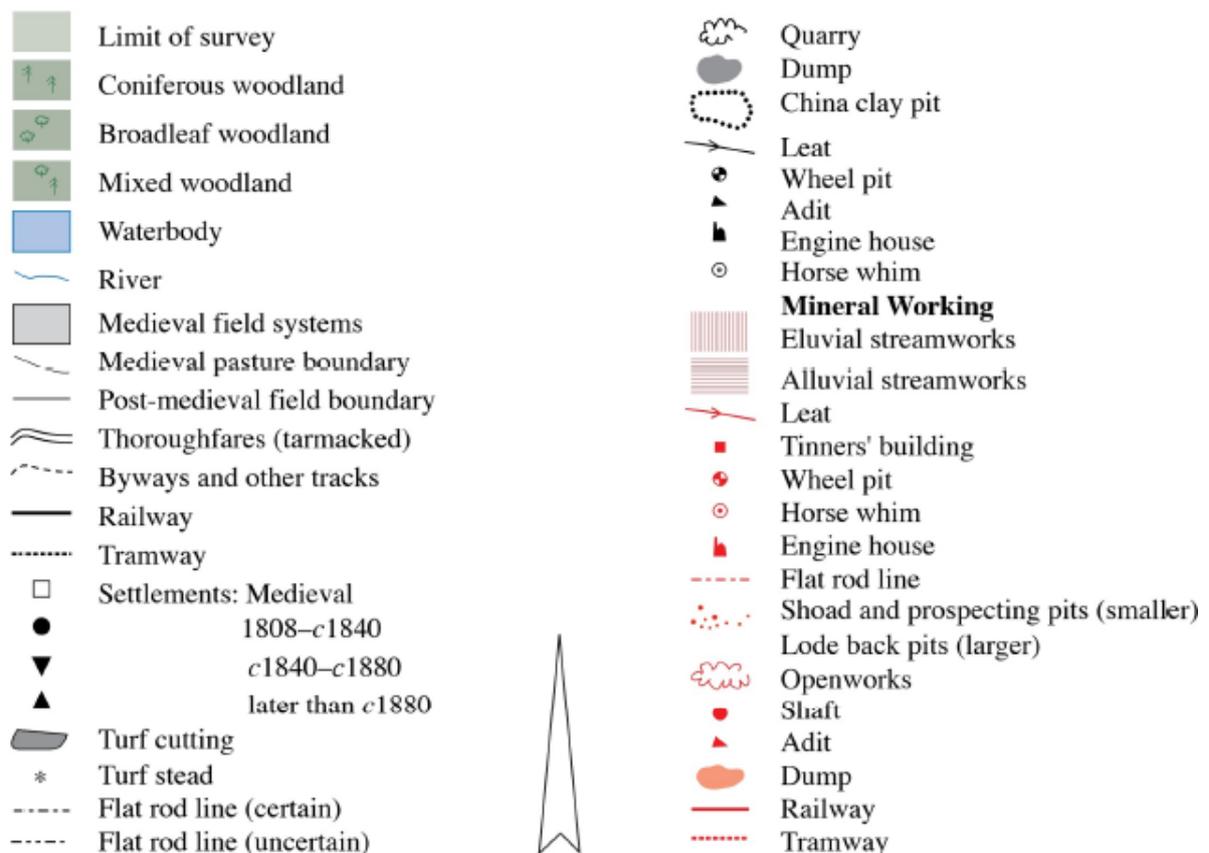
*Extract from Prehistoric overview map (Johnson and Rose 1994, Map 1; reproduced with permission of Cornwall Council and Historic England).*



- 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).





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

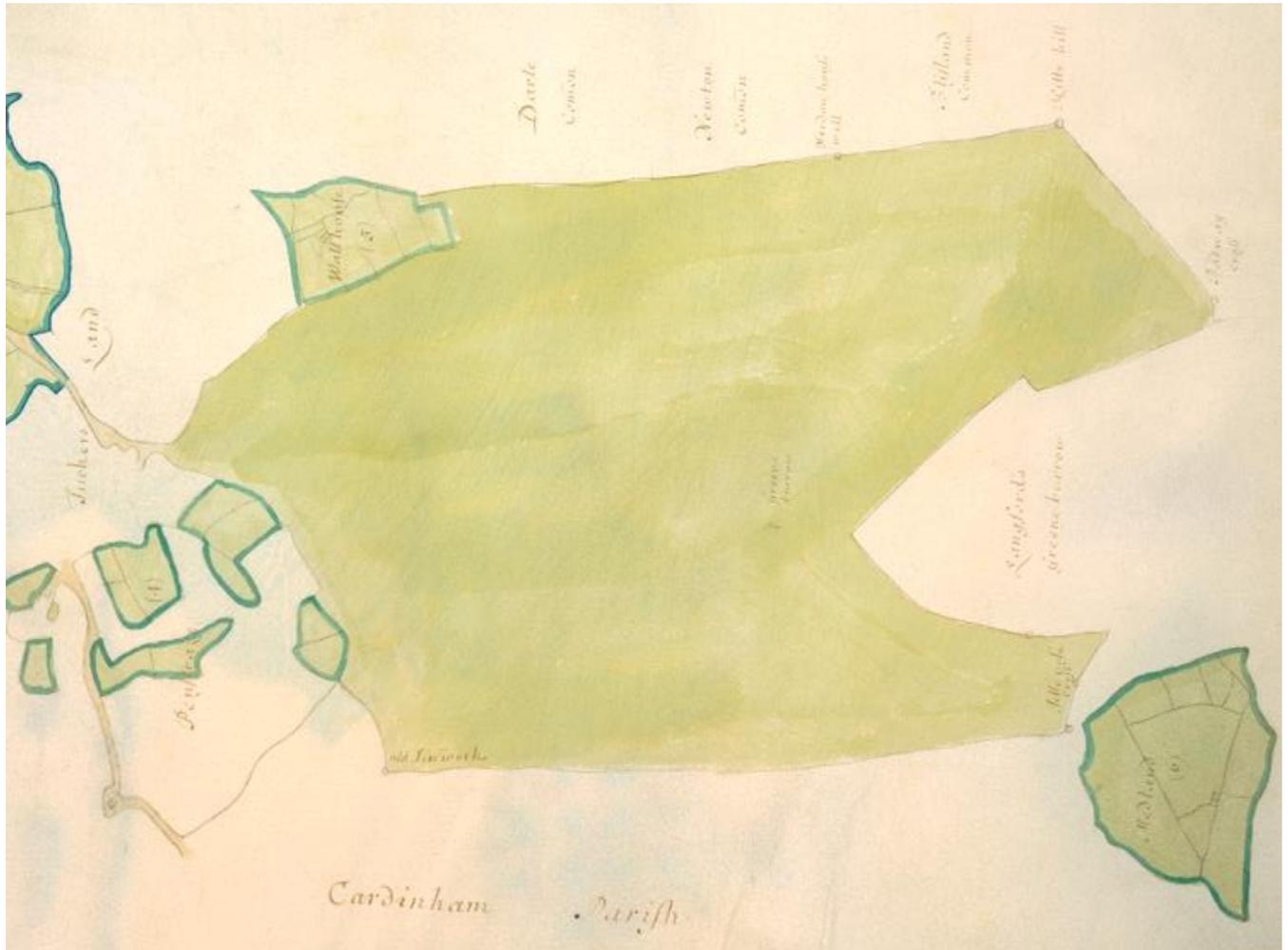
### Pre-1748

Survival of the stone row, standing stones and cairns indicates that the area in which they stand has continued to be unimproved land since early prehistory. It was probably used as open grazing in later prehistory and also through most of the historic period. It is almost certainly the area of 100 acres (obviously either rounded up or down) of Pasture recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book under the manor of Trehudreth (Thorn and Thorn 1979, 5,17,4). Such pasture would have been used in common by the manor's tenants, for grazing and for domestic fuel (turbary).

A possibly brief exception during the medieval period saw the western half of the line of cairns and the western end of the stone row brought within a large enclosure of rough ground, the hamlet common that would have been used by tenants of Penstroda. Further downhill to the SW is an area of former farmland enclosed in parallel strips that was part of the Penstroda hamlet's mixed farming land, used occasionally for arable, as indicated by the survival of lazybeds. It is possible that any prehistoric remains that survived there may have been removed as part of the medieval farming.

The whole PAL had become part of two undivided commons by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when it was shown as one continuous area of 'common' on the Trehudreth map in the 1695 Lanhydrock Atlas. It was shown using the pale green wash that was the convention used for such land, indicating a closely grazed sward (Holden et al 2011, Lanhydrock Atlas, Map 4\_63, Trehudreth scheme). The 1695 also shows 'old tinwork'

in the SW corner of the common, indicating that these were already disused 330 years ago.



Extract from the 1695 Lanhydrock Atlas (from Holden et al 2011).

*Thomas Martyn's 1748 map.*

Shown as open ground with the perimeter of Penstroda already withdrawn to the present line. The lane across the down is shown open-sided and passes beside the barrow of Green Burrow, represented as a low rounded mark.



*c1810 OS drawing*

Shown as open ground with three barrows recorded and Peverals Cross beside the road.



**c1840 Tithe Map**

Has 'Trehedraeth' Common separated from Green Burrow Common by a broken line and what are probably two bound stones. Grazing would have been unconfined, presumably, but turbarry and stone gathering would have been confined by these lines.



**c1880 OS map**

Shown as rough grassland with patches of furze over much of the common. Bound stones mark the division of the two commons.

**c1906 OS map**

Little change.

## Modern

Still used as rough grazing.

## Historic Environment

### Summary of main heritage assets

#### *Prehistoric ceremonial and ritual*

An important complex of later Neolithic or early Bronze Age monuments placed on the summit plateau, including a long stone row, several standing stones (including two stone settings), and a linear arrangement of cairns that culminates in two large and complex platform cairns at the highest ENE end of a straggling row. All the cairns are in view of Roughtor, as is the stone row, whose ENE end is also where the summit cairns of Brown Gelly come into view when walking along the row from the WSW end. The line of cairns is broadly parallel with the line of the stone row, reinforcing the sense that all were interconnected as one complex. The standing stones and stone settings are all close by (see Appendix for a description made by Prof Chris Tilley in 1995).

The stone row ‘...may be marking the northern boundary of the high sacred space which the barrows and standing stones occupy’ (Tilley 1995, 31-32).

Detail:

A **stone row** (MCO18502), now surviving as two stretches of low erect stones on precisely the same alignment and presumed to be remnants of a single long row, up to 475 metres long. The south-westerly stretch is 62 metres long, the north-easterly is 64 metres long. The upper ENE end is marked by a much longer stone (1.9 metres), now fallen, similar to the tall end stone of the Leskernick stone row, which is in a position marked by the sudden emergence on the skyline of the great cairns of Brown Gelly when walking along the row from the WSW (Gerrard 2018). Roughtor is visible along the whole length of the row.

**Stone setting** (MCO7523, PRN 1669). Erect triangular slab 1.6m high, with a second large stone to the south-east, separated by 0.9m from the first and set approximately at right-angles.

**Standing stone** (MCO7521), possibly a taller stone snapped off. Several smaller stones immediately adjacent may be related.

**Pair of large cairns** at the summit of Greenbarrow Downs. Both have complex forms.

- Green Burrow (MCO4440) itself is a kerbed platform with a low rim and a large central mound, slightly eccentrically placed towards the southern side of the platform, drawn in section as Johnson and Rose 1994, fig 26.6:



- The second cairn (MCO4441) is a simpler platform cairn with a rim bank and a central mound, drawn in section as Johnson and Rose 1994, fig 25.13:



**Group of smaller cairns** forming a straggling 800 metres long line to the WSW of the two summit platform cairns. From the WSW:

- MCO4598, PRN 1646.2. 10m diameter platform cairn, 0.5m high.

- MCO4600, PRN 1646.4. 6m diameter, 0.5m high, disturbed on S side.
- MCO4599, PRN 1646.3. 6m diameter, 0.5m high.
- MCO4335, PRN 1646.6

### *Prehistoric domestic and agricultural*

No remains at surface.

### *Medieval*

Extensive remains of medieval strip fields defined by now low rounded banks with external ditches and some containing well-preserved patches of cultivation ridges, the lazybeds that were dug by hand with spade and shovel.

These fields are the remains of the upper NE extent of the subdivided fields of the medieval hamlet at Penstroda, to the SW. Penstroda's perimeter hedge was withdrawn in later medieval or post-medieval times but was already in place along the current line by 1695 (being shown there in the Lanhydrock Atlas; Holden et al 2010, 380).

### *Industrial*

MCO24313 Surface run-off water was carried by a **leat** running due south across the contour from SX1243 7264 that survives as a low earthwork to a well-preserved **V-shaped reservoir** formed of substantial banks. Probably associated with an eluvial tin streamworks in the fields of Penstroda, now removed.

MCO23956 Surface mining, including a run of **lode-back pits** centred SX 1252 7227, just north of Peverell's Cross. Also prospecting pits directly associated with these workings. They were recorded as 'Old Tinwork' on the 1695 Lanhydrock Atlas map of Trehudreth Common, so were already redundant by that date (Holden et al 2010, 380).

### *Post-medieval and modern*

MCO 78081 Clapper bridge formed of 11 granite slabs, crossing a leat that was probably carrying run-off water from the Moor to the fields of Poldew to the NW.

There are numerous granite boundstones in the PAL, too numerous to describe individually here. They were recorded in 2006 as part of the Blisland Commoners Association Boundary Stone Project (Langdon 2006) and were also included in Peter Moore's 2024 survey of all the boundstones on Bodmin Moor. He recorded eight in the Trehudreth Downs part of the PAL and two more in the Greenbarrow Downs part.

The former (Trehudreth) have the marks of HP and M↑P, the Hayward and Morshead families, or in one instance just H, and marked their portions of the open commons here (Moore 2024, 99-104).

The latter (Greenbarrow) also have the marks of HP and M↑P, the Hayward and Morshead families (Moore 2024, 57-63).

## Designations

### Historic Environment

#### *Scheduled Monuments*

NHLE 1005458 Barrow group on Greenbarrow Downs, a legacy record with no detailed description. It comprises six cairns, three of which are in the Cornwall and Scilly HER as MCO4440, MCO4441, MCO4602, but the other three are apparently misidentified as barrows

### *Heritage Assets assessed as being of National Importance*

This part of Bodmin Moor was not covered by the Monuments Protection Programme (MPP).

The existing Scheduled Monuments (above) were not reviewed in light of the findings of the Bodmin Moor Survey.

Neither were those following sites which were assessed as satisfying the criteria for National Importance using the criteria employed by the MPP and were therefore proposed as candidates for formal assessment for Scheduling during the Evaluation of Bodmin Moor (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).

- **Stone row**, MCO18502 (PRN 1672).
- **Standing stone**, MCO7523 (PRN 1669).
- **Standing stone**, MCO7521 (PRN 1664).
- **Stone setting**, MCO22905 (PRN 3618).
- **Cairn group**, MCO4155 (PRN 1646).
- **Medieval field system**, MCO22283 (PRN 1712).
- **Medieval enclosure**, MCO52106 (PRN 72591)

### **Natural environment designations:**

#### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest*

Within the Bodmin Moor North SSSI; see Appendix of main HEAP report for notofocation.

#### *Special Areas of Conservation*

No

#### *Cornwall Conservation Areas*

No

### **Other designations**

#### *Common Land*

Western part is still in Trehudreth Downs, CL142, and the east is on Greenbarrow Downs, CL144.

#### *CROW Access Land*

Yes

#### *Registered rights of way.*

None.

#### *Neighbourhood Development Plans*

Blisland, made Sept 2023.

## Significance of landscape visibility

Extensive views northwards towards the great hills of Rough Tor and Bronwenelyn (Brown Willy). Also, a possibly significant view to Brown Gelly hilltop and cairns from E end of stone row.

The stone row has low stones (rarely higher than 0.25 metres high. These are increasingly difficult to find; and it is already difficult to see more than two or three stones at a time, and thus to perceive the site as a stone row.

Greenburrow Cairn is a platform cairn, a type from which landscapes are viewed, has a particularly good view N towards Rough Tor and Brown Willy.

The linear group of cairns is placed where from each the tors of Rough Tor can be seen, part of a widespread pattern known as the Rough Tor Effect (Farnworth et al 2024).

## Change between 2005 and 2025

(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.)

- Some increase in furze cover on the NW and W slopes, despite some recent cutting on the W side.
- Some of the furze in the NW slope will soon merge to create a closed canopy, preventing livestock moving other than through narrow passages, causing erosion.
- The stone row is being lost to vegetation, including thousands of small low furze plants. Possibility of extensive furze inundation in a few years' time.
- The growth of the furze is concentrating animal tracking, leading to increased erosion.

## 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. Keep the important remains of the stone row, stone settings and cairns clear of furze.

## Specific recommendations

- Address the growth of furze on the cairns.
- Adjust grazing to push back the conversion to furze, especially around the stone row and stone settings.
- Further archaeological recording.

## Adjusting the extent of the PAL

1 Extend N side to include whole of the medieval field system and lazybeds and eluvial streamworks as well as the 'wonderful' flat rod trench for the power line from the enormous 15 metre diameter Gawnes waterwheel to the Temple China-Clay Works.

2 Extend on the S side to include remainder of the medieval field system and early lode-back working and to link to Peverell's Cross.

## References

Gerrard, S, 2018 Featured row – Trehudreth Downs, *The Stone Rows of Great Britain*, <https://stonerows.wordpress.com/2018/03/05/featured-row-trehudreth-downs/>

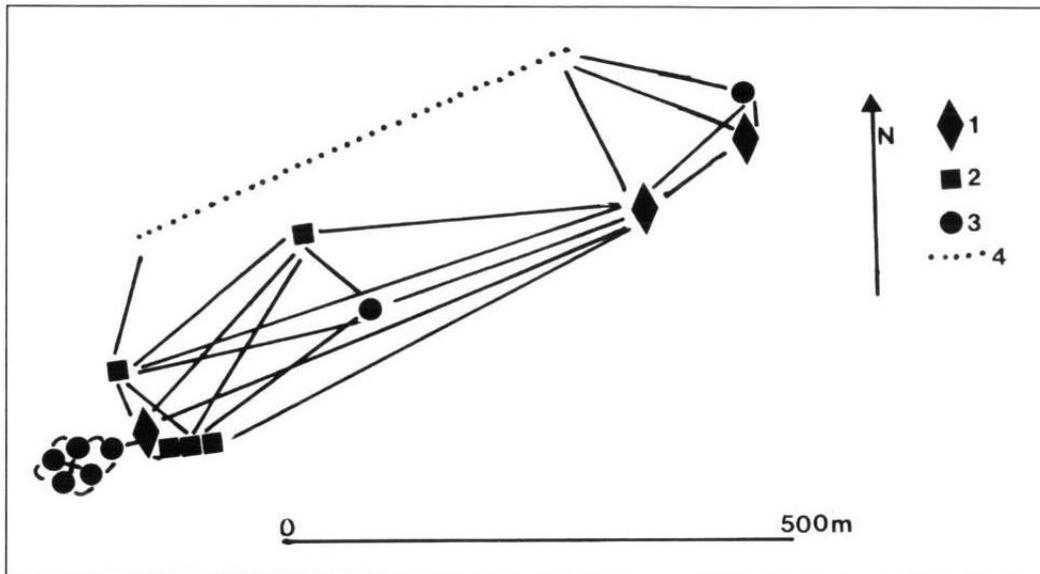
Holden, P, Herring, P and Padel, OJ (eds.) 2011 *The Lanhydrock Atlas*, Cornish Editions, Fowey, 27-40  
Johnson, N and Rose, P, 1994 *Bodmin Moor, an archaeological survey, volume 1: The human landscape to c1800*, English Heritage, second edition in 2008, English Heritage, Swindon

Langdon, A, 2006 *Blisland Commons Boundary Stone Project*, Blisland Commoners Association

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

Tilley, C, 1995 Rocks as Resources: landscapes and power, *Cornish Archaeology*, **34**, 5-57

## Appendix



*Fig 10 Intervisibility patterns between cairns and monuments on Trehudreth Downs, west Bodmin Moor (for location of stone row see Fig 4). 1: Large platform cairn; 2: Standing stone; 3: Small cairn (<10m diameter); 4: Stone row*

Extract from Tilley 1995.

'On Trehudreth Downs a complex of cairns and standing stones occurs to the south of a stone row, while in the area immediately to the north none are known. These monuments are all situated on the top and western and eastern edges of a plateau with the stone row running diagonally up its side. The complex consists of two standing stones, one of which is surrounded by smaller stones at the base, a group of 3 or 4 stones in a row, and ten cairns. Three of these are large and probably originally possessed platform type mounds. The other seven cairns are small and inconspicuous. Patterns of intervisibility between these monuments and the stone row are shown in Fig 10. The groups of standing stones are all intervisible and with the two largest cairns which are situated on high points with panoramic vistas. One of these large cairns at the western end of the plateau, just before the land starts to dip down to the west is associated with a group of standing stones. The smaller cairns are situated on sloping terrain and are only locally visible clustering near to, but down-slope from the larger ones. The stone row is not visible from any of these cairns. Only some of the monuments on the plateau are visible from the row itself: a standing stone at the SW end, three barrows at the NW end, another standing stone and the largest and most prominent barrow of all as one moves up or down its course. The stone row is not aligned in relation to any of the monuments, nor does it in any obvious way lead up to them. It may be marking the northern boundary of the high sacred space which the barrows and standing stones occupy' (Tilley 1995, 31-32).

## Appendix 2 2007 PAL text

### 7 Trehudreth Downs

#### *Historic Environment*

Trehudreth Downs is a striking prehistoric ritual landscape contained within a relatively small area of just over 44ha, where maintaining the inter-visibility of the numerous features is crucial. At least nine cairns have been recorded, along with barrows, standing stones, a stone row and a stone setting.

The stone row consists of two separate sections, both on a north east-south west axis and both on exactly the same alignment, but 350m apart and not inter-visible. A very small mound and two earthfast stones were identified on line between the rows, although their location could be fortuitous. The line bows slightly, probably because some of the stones are displaced. The largest stone may be a terminal stone. The cairns run on a similar alignment to the stone row, with clusters of five small cairns to the west and three larger platform cairns to the east.

In its original form, the stone setting would have consisted of three, possibly four, large stones in an arc, with a concentric arc of slight bank immediately outside it. Although superficially the stones roughly align on the cairn 30m to the east, on slightly higher ground, it is clear that the setting is quite separate from the cairn and the outlying orthostat. Locally, the stone row, menhir, and Greenbarrow cairn are visible, and an orthostat is prominent on the near horizon. There are extensive views west to Hensbarrow Downs and Castle an Dinas, while Roughtor and Brown Willy form a magnificent backdrop to the east. Many of the other Bodmin Moor tors can also be seen from here.

On the western edge of the PAL, extending onto the moor from the enclosed land, are the low earthworks of medieval fields with cultivation ridges; in this area lines of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century boundstones with property owners' initials engraved on them are a particularly conspicuous feature.

### *Natural Environment*

Fragmented Western Heath and Acid Grassland

### *Designations*

Individual cairns have been Scheduled as a group (No. 916), although the area would be better served by a blanket Scheduling, taking in all the other constituent parts of this prehistoric landscape.

No current NE designations.

