

## PAL 15 Mutton's and Berry Downs, St Neot, Historic Environment Action Plan



Northern slopes of Berry Down to Mutton's Down, January 2006 (Pete Herring).

### Location, geology and topography

Centred: SX 197691

Extent: 63 ha (156 acres)

#### *Geology*

All but the southernmost tenth of the PAL is on Granite, an igneous bedrock formed between 330.9 and 272.3 million years ago during the Carboniferous and Permian periods. This cuts through the Trevoise Slate Formation and Rosenum Formation slate and siltstone, sedimentary bedrock formed between 393.3 and 372.2 million years ago during the Devonian period, which forms the southern part of the PAL.

A dyke of felsite, an igneous bedrock formed between 298.9 and 252.2 million years ago during the Permian period cut, run through part of the granite area, in the dip between the two hills, running broadly E-W (British Geological Survey online viewer).

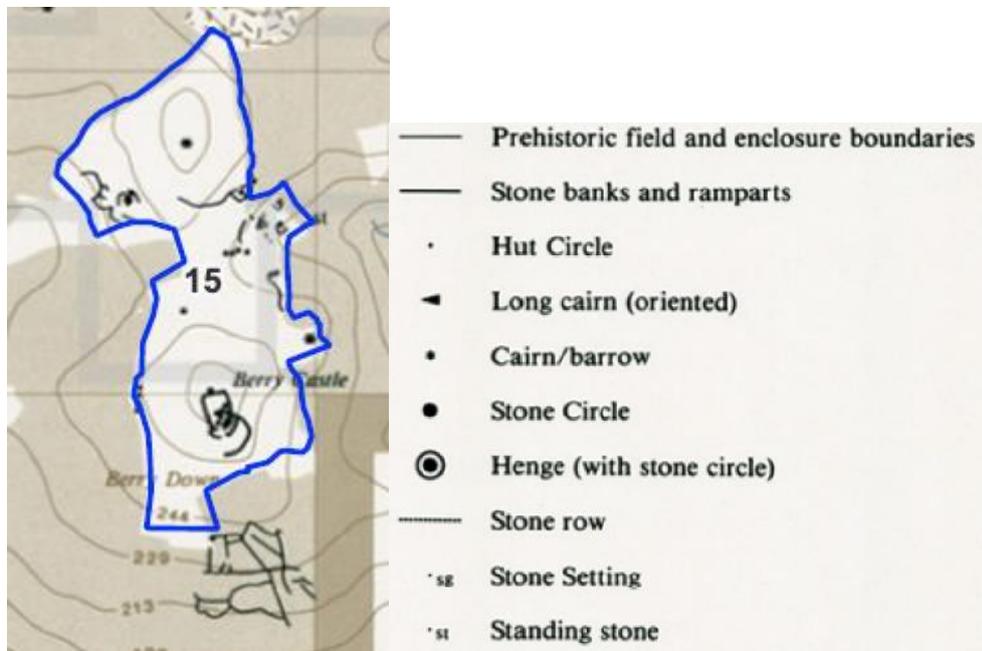
#### *Topography*

Two distinct rounded hills separated by a col. The southern hill, Berry Down, which reaches 280 metres (918 feet) has a small tor to the west of its summit and there are several smaller outcrops on the NNW and SSE slopes and many large boulders as well as numerous moorstones and small clitter streams.

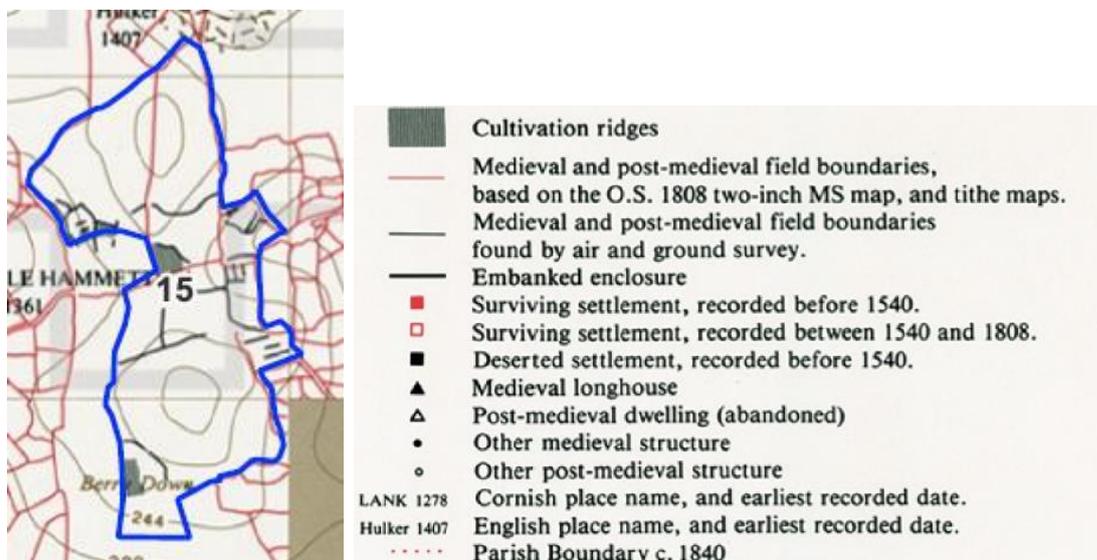
Mutton's Downs reaches 282 metres (925 feet) high and it too has a number of small tors and granite outcrops, large boulders and clutter streams.

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

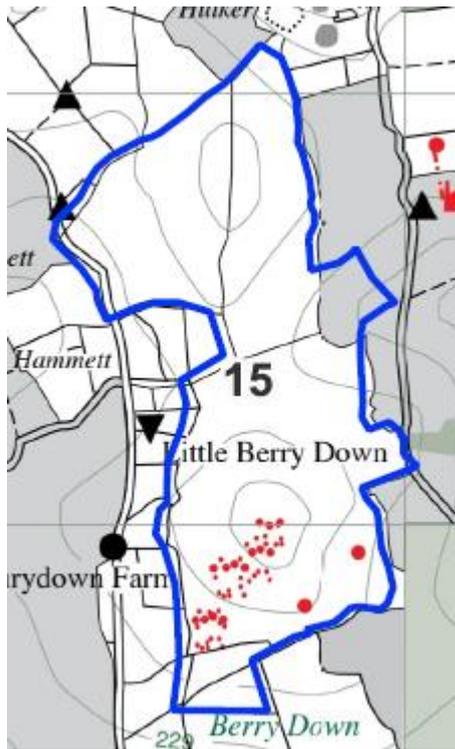
The whole area is privately owned land.



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



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–c1840
- c1840–c1880
- later than c1880
- 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
- Tanners' 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

### *Pre-1748*

These are two discrete and distinctive tor-topped hills that attracted attention in early prehistory as places for ritual and ceremony. A possible Early Neolithic tor enclosure underlies the late prehistoric (Iron Age) hillfort on the higher southern slopes of Berry Down.

Both hills had Early Bronze Age cairns at their summits, and these would have been set within open pastures, probably grazed in common.

Half a millennium later, in the Middle Bronze Age, or the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, accretive field systems with roundhouses were laid out on the SE and SW slopes of Mutton's Downs. These may not have been long-lived and for most of the prehistoric millennia the hills would have continued as rough pastures.

In the medieval period the southerly slopes of both hills were used for outfield cultivation, again probably short lived and for most of the medieval and post-medieval periods the hills were used for rough grazing. Berry Down survived as a common until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Mutton's Downs was already in private ownership.

Berry Down has lines of lode-back and shode pits on its south-western slopes that may have early later medieval or early post-medieval origins, but which were deepened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by shaft mining.

Martyn's Map (below) indicates that Mutton's Downs had an earlier Cornish name, Carboul Tor, and it was called Carboalf and Carboule in 1695 when shown in the Lanhydrock Atlas as Pasture (Holden et al 2011, 322). Berry Down was named from the fort on its higher slopes.

### *Thomas Martyn's 1748 map*

As noted, Mutton's Downs was named Carboul Tor when Thomas Martyn showed it in profile. Berry Down was also shown in profile, with a small pimple at its summit, possibly representing the Early Bronze Age platform cairn. Lanes on the edges of both hills were shown unhedged, suggesting that the hills were still open.

### *c1810 OS drawing*

Berry Down is shown with the hillfort nicely surveyed with two parts and with two cairns to its north. The perimeter of the fields of Bowden on the east side was indicated carefully, leaving most of the land as rough ground. Carboul Tor was still named as such and the rough ground that covered it was shown still running away northwards unbroken as far as Lord's Park, on the SW slopes of Brown Gelly.

### *c1840 Tithe Map*

Higher and Lower Berry Down (TA 2829 and 2830 respectively; most of this part of the PAL is in the former, and just a sliver is in the latter) were included among St Neot's Commons and Waste.

The land in the PAL on Mutton's Down is largely in the same two large enclosures that survive today, divided by the beautiful drystone wall. That to the west (TA 569) was now called Mutton's Down and recorded as Pasture. It was occupied by Edward Alford and owned by Thomas Robins Esq as part of Tremaddock tenement. The eastern half (TA 922) was still called Carbowl, and recorded as Pasture, and was occupied by Daniel Mutton (owned by The Hon Anna Maria Agar of Lanhydrock). Presumably this

Mutton was the source of the hill's modern name, though it is a little odd that the Tithe Map has the other half of the hill named from him.

A third enclosure in the PAL, on the SE slopes of Mutton's Down, was shown on the Tithe Map as TA 147, part of the farm of West Northwood. It was called Fern Ground and recorded as Arable, despite being rocky and containing substantial remains of prehistoric houses and fields. Its use for arable is likely to have been only very occasional.

#### *c1880 OS map*

All of the land within the PAL was shown as rough grassland with clumps of furze, relatively open on Mutton's Downs, denser on Berry Down.

The hillfort was carefully surveyed, including its roundhouses, shown as Hut Circles. The ring cairn to its north was erroneously labelled a hut circle.

#### *c1906 OS map*

No substantial change.

#### *Modern*

Still used as rough grazing.

## Historic Environment

### Headlines

- **Early prehistoric hilltop enclosure** on Berry Down, probably reused as **later prehistoric hillfort**. Several **prehistoric roundhouses** within the enclosure may relate to this later use.
- **Early Bronze Age cairns** on the top of Mutton's Down, at the summit of Berry Down and on NE slopes of Berry Down.
- A **dozen or more roundhouses** associated with probably **Middle Bronze Age curvilinear fields** on SE and SW slopes of Mutton's Down.
- Line of **prehistoric roundhouses** on lower western slope of Berry Down.
- **Medieval fields and lazybeds** on all slopes of Mutton's Downs and on SW slopes of Berry Down.
- A **possible medieval structure** within the prehistoric hill-top enclosure on Berry Down.
- **Surface mining** on SW slope of Berry Down, including **shode-works** and **lode-back works** and a **Shaft mine** on southern slopes of Berry Down.

### Summary of main heritage assets

#### *Prehistoric ceremonial and ritual*

**Possible site of an Early Bronze Age cairn** on the summit of Mutton's Downs (MCO4508).

**Early Bronze Age kerbed platform cairn** (MCO18704) immediately N of the hilltop enclosure on Berry Down. Note, misidentified as a roundhouse in the Scheduled Monument description. Its diameter (15m is significantly larger than Bodmin Moor roundhouses and its location on an exposed hill-top would be highly unusual). Its fabric was robbed on its southern side presumably when the later prehistoric hillfort was constructed.

**Early Bronze Age kerbed platform cairn** (MCO18708) on the NE slopes of Berry Down. Unusually low-lying.

### *Prehistoric domestic and agricultural*

Berry Castle (MCO25) is a good candidate to be an **Early Neolithic tor enclosure** (c3500 BC). Formed of stony banks, linking natural outcrops (tors) and including the higher roughly rectangular enclosure (A) and the lower more irregular enclosure (B). This would probably have been a gathering place for the local community, with room for gatherings of several hundred people. The upper northern enclosure appears to have been repurposed as **later prehistoric (probably earlier Iron Age) hillfort**, with increased the breadth and height of its banks, but no ditch.

There may be slight remains of another **early prehistoric hilltop enclosure** (MCO43844) on the high SW slopes of Mutton's Downs (identified from patterns seen in aerial photos – needs verification on the ground).

A probably **Middle Bronze Age curvilinear field system with roundhouses** (MCO21232) on the SW slopes of Mutton's Downs. Fragments of at least 8 fields survive and 3 or 4 roundhouses.

A probably **Middle Bronze Age rectilinear and curvilinear field system with roundhouses** (MCO21228) on the SW slopes of Mutton's Downs. Fragments of at least 6 fields survive and at least 12 roundhouses.

A N-S line of **four prehistoric roundhouses** on the lower western slopes of Berry Down. No associated field or enclosure boundaries, so **possibly a pastoralist settlement**.

### *Medieval*

An area of **strip fields** containing **lazybeds** on the southern slopes of Mutton's Downs (MCO21234). Further areas of **lazybeds** lie to the north (MCO43843) and more **rectilinear fields** to the NE of the hill (MCO43849).

Another **medieval strip field system** with **lazybeds** lies on the S slopes of Berry Down (MCO20566).

### *Industrial*

An area of **surface mining, trial shafts**, and **prospecting pits** (MCO11835) on the western and southern slopes of Berry Downs, some pits extending to the summit. Two distinct runs of shode and lode-back pits, one E-W and the other a caunter lode running SW-NE overlies the prehistoric hillfort on the hill's summit. **Two shafts**, one informally capped on the E-W lode now contained within a rectangular stone built enclosure.

### *Post-medieval and modern*

**Second World War gun emplacement** on S slope of Berry Down (MCO43767).

Spectacular drystone wall splits Mutton's Down running N to S.



*Drystone wall with projecting coping stones splitting Mutton's Down (Pete Herring, January 2006).*

### Significance of landscape visibility

Mutton's Downs is dominated by its great N-S wall; the prehistoric and medieval archaeological remains being partially overgrown by furze and bracken.

On Berry Down the summit tor and the adjacent ring cairn, and the early tor enclosure and later prehistoric hillfort are significant features, though these two are at least partially overgrown.

### Designations

#### Historic Environment

##### *Scheduled Monuments*

NHLE 1004455      **Earlier prehistoric hillfort with outwork and outlying stone hut circle known as Berry Castle**

NHLE 1004662      **Hut circle village 330yds (300m) W of West Northwood Farm**

### *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.

The 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).

- **Possible site of an Early Bronze Age cairn** on the summit of Mutton's Downs (MCO4508).
- A probably **Middle Bronze Age curvilinear field system with roundhouses** (MCO21232) on the SW slopes of Mutton's Downs.
- Area of **strip fields** containing **lazybeds** on the southern slopes of Mutton's Downs (MCO21234).
- **Medieval strip field system** with **lazybeds** lies on the S slopes of Berry Down (MCO20566).
- An area of **surface mining, trial shafts**, and **prospecting pits** (MCO11835) on the western and southern slopes of Berry Downs.

### **Natural environment designations:**

#### *Sites of Special Scientific Interest*

NA

#### *Special Areas of Conservation*

NA

#### *County Wildlife Site*

Yes, part of NC/CN7/S6.1, Browngelly Downs.

#### *Cornwall Conservation Areas*

NA

### **Other designations**

#### *Common Land*

Not common land.

#### *CROW Access Land*

Yes, whole PAL.

#### *Registered rights of way.*

Bridle way crosses centre of PAL E-W in the dip between the two hills. Footpaths cross the SE slopes of Berry Down.

#### *Neighbourhood Development Plans*

No.

## 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.)

- Furze cover on higher and middle slopes of Mutton Down's has increased considerable and on NW and SW slopes has formed a closed canopy. The same applies to the SW slopes of Berry Down.
- Bracken cover has increased considerably on Berry Down
- Tree cover in SE corner of Berry Down increased.
- Area of ancient semi-natural grassland has greatly diminished.

## 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 Berry Down tor enclosure and hillfort, its summit cairn, and those on Mutton's Downs, and the prehistoric roundhouses and fields on both hills clear of furze.

### Specific recommendations

- Address the growth of furze on the tor enclosure, hillfort, cairns, and roundhouse settlements and their fields.
- Adjust grazing to push back the conversion to furze.
- Further archaeological recording of the roundhouse settlements, and a more detailed analytical survey of the tor enclosure and hillfort.

### Adjusting the extent of the PAL:

LIDAR and other mapped resources on the historic environment have been examined. No change is required to the PAL extent; it includes the principal known archaeological remains on Mutton's and Berry Downs.

# References

## Appendix 1 2007 PAL text

### 15 Mutton's and Berry Downs

#### *Historic Environment*

This PAL is typical of the small areas of unenclosed moorland surrounded by improved intake land, so characteristic of southern Bodmin Moor. Despite its relatively small size, this area preserves a largely intact prehistoric landscape.

The PAL is dominated by the two opposing summits of Mutton's and Berry Downs. A cairn is situated on the summit of Mutton's Downs and appears to be surrounded by an enclosure, surviving as a low earthen bank, approx. 103m by 92m. It has been suggested that this may be a nationally rare Neolithic tor enclosure, as found on Roughtor and at Stowe's Pound.

Berry Down is dominated by a hillfort (known as Berry Castle) potentially a Neolithic tor enclosure in origin but re-used in the Iron Age. The hillfort survives as an enclosed settlement located just below the summit with an annexe and outwork below it, on the south facing, boulder-strewn hillside. Within the principal hilltop enclosure are the remains of possibly nine houses, and just outside it, to the north, is a possible ring cairn.

There are three main clusters of houses within this PAL, discounting those associated with Berry Castle, although isolated houses are to be found all over the area.

To the west of Mutton's Downs is a discreet settlement of possibly three houses, one within a small enclosure or pound and a multi-phase field system of curvilinear and rectilinear fields.

To the south east lies the most extensive prehistoric settlement and associated fields. With one exception, all the houses are on the south-east facing slopes of the north side of the valley. Preservation of the houses is varied, from extensively robbed examples, to a very well preserved house with annexe. The associated field system survives in a very fragmentary condition, because of subsequent clearance and cultivation in the area in the medieval period. The complex now appears to consist of four individual contrasting groups of houses; a group of four houses, dispersed amongst a series of small oval enclosures and irregular small fields; two tighter clusters of 4 & 5 houses respectively, some freestanding and some associated with very limited fields/boundaries, and finally, a large isolated house with annexe.

A row of four houses lie to the west of Berry Castle, along the edge of an intake bank.

Areas of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation survive throughout the PAL but do not dominate the prehistoric landscape. A well-preserved corn bank (and possible ditch) is an important feature, crossing the area from west to east in the valley bottom, dividing the two uplands.

An area of post medieval mining, trial shafts, and prospecting pits runs over Berry Down, with one lode crossing the hillfort.

#### *Natural Environment*

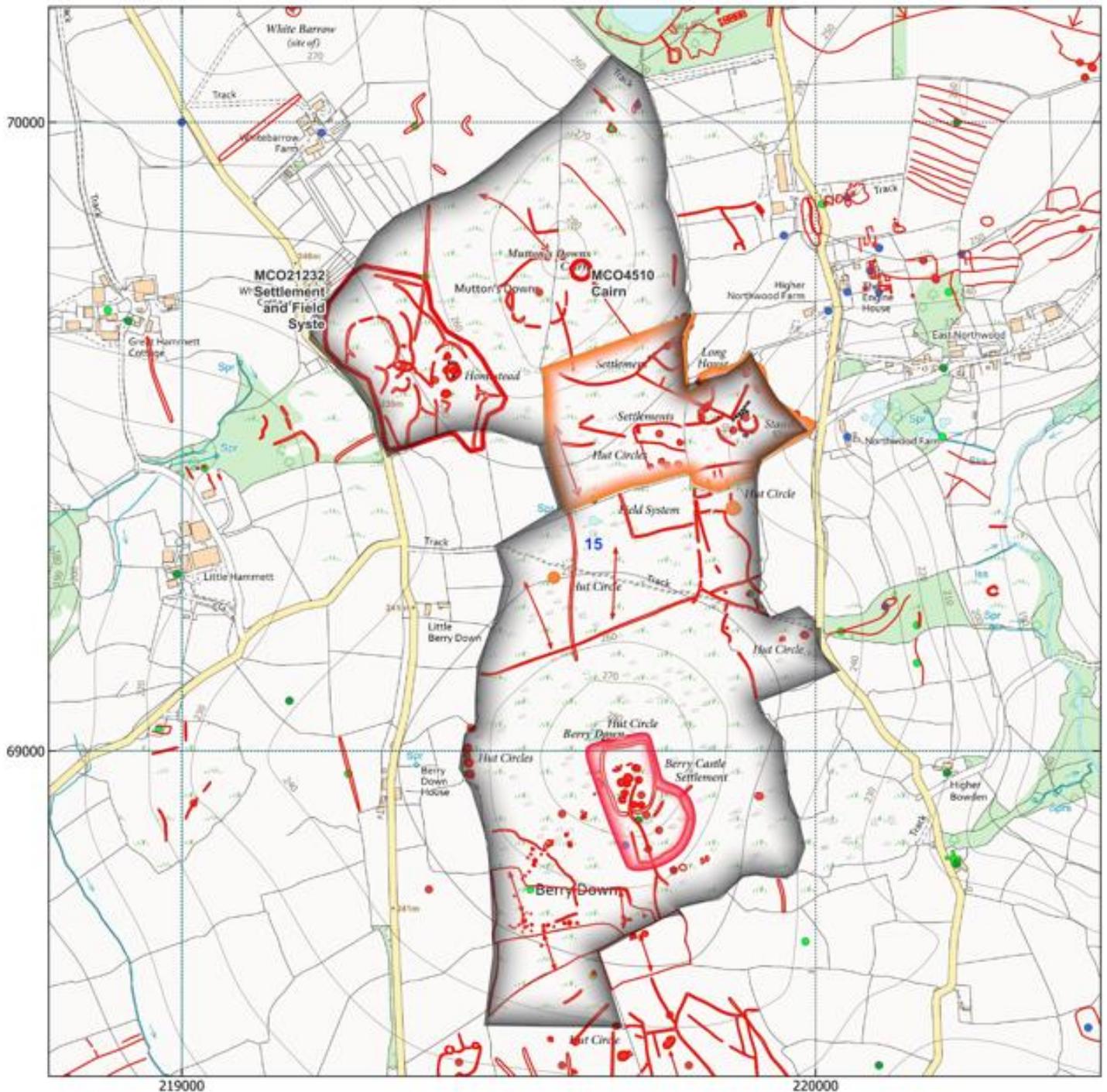
Acid Grassland, Bracken and Scrub

#### *Designations*

The most extensive settlement (including two outlying round houses) on Mutton's Downs is a Scheduled Monument (No. 956), as is Berry Castle hillfort (No. 392).

No current NE designations.

#### *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 with extensive bracken cover

Habitat Change: Considerable

Notes: Furze cover on higher and middle slopes of Mutton Down has increased considerably, forming a closed canopy on NW and SW slopes. The same applies to SW slopes of Berry Down. Bracken and tree cover on Berry Downs have also increased.

## PAL 15 Mutton's and Berry Downs

[www.statement-heritage.com](http://www.statement-heritage.com)

Corwall Council

Contains OS Data © Crown  
Copyright, All Rights Reserved  
2025 Ordnance Survey  
AC000817921

0 100 200 m

