

**Bampton Commons Community History
Project 2012-2013**

for

‘Commons Stories’, University of Lancaster

**Katharine Cooke, Patricia Garside and
Bernard Kirkbride**

Bampton and District Local History Society

This report on the history of Bampton Commons was compiled following the University of Lancaster ‘Commons Stories’ Cumbria workshop held in November 2012. Local historians, commoners, and other local people from Bampton attended the workshop and subsequently they provided a valuable platform for the research. The aim was to discover how Bampton commons had changed since 1900 in their use, appearance and governance with an emphasis on oral as well as documentary evidence.

Copyright: Bampton and District Local History Society

Sources

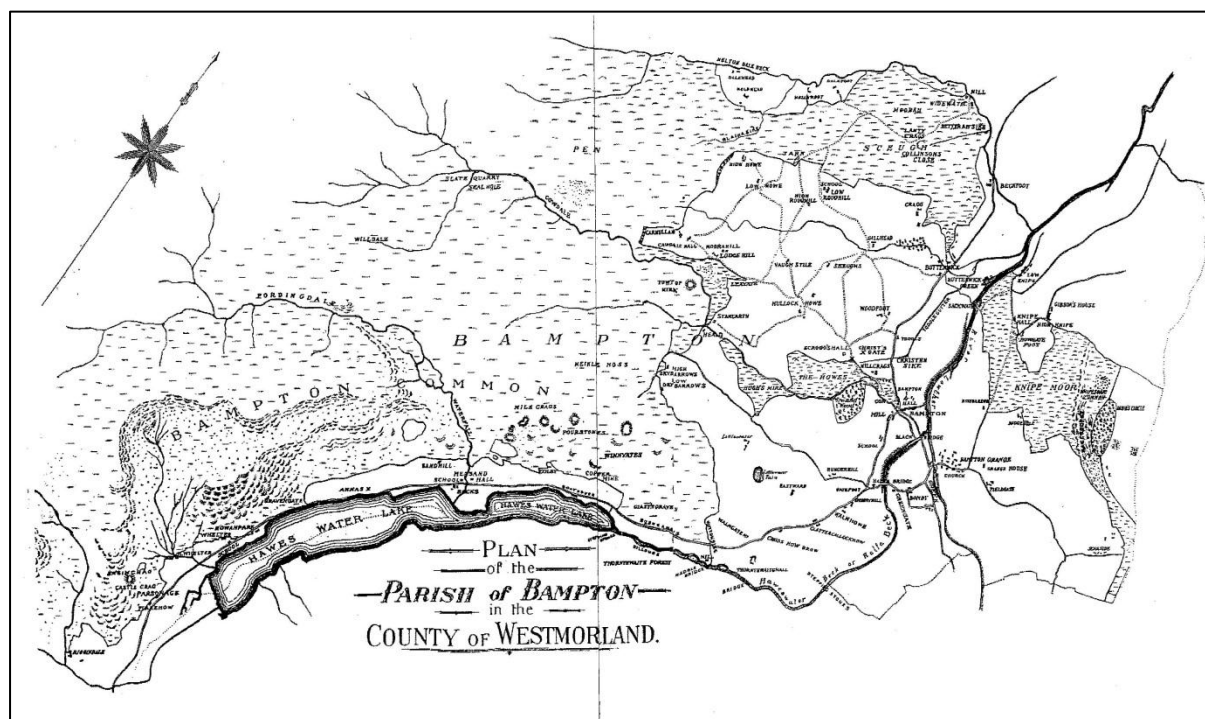
The focus of the Bampton study was primarily the twentieth century and oral testimony was an important source. Informal interviews were conducted with commoners and farmers. An open meeting was held in February 2013 with landowners, owners of common rights, members of the Bampton and District Local History Society (BDLHS) and the current and immediate past presidents of the Askham and Bampton Commoners' Association. In addition, 12 'Commons Stories' Questionnaires were distributed with 6 completed and returned. Recent and historic photos and postcards of Bampton commons were collected. Documentary sources consulted included the 1836/9 Bampton Tithe Map, Bampton Endowed School Records and a postcard collection held in the Tinclar Library (Bampton). Minutes used were from Bampton Parish Council, (CAS K WPC 47 1894-1949) Bampton Commoners Association and Manchester Corporation Waterworks Committee, (Manchester Reference Library). Newspapers consulted were *Manchester Guardian*, and *the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald*. Of particular value were private collections of press cuttings and correspondence between the Lowther estate, Bampton parishioners and Friends of the Lake District relating to common land between 1940 and 1947. The Lowther's own records for the twentieth century, however, remain with the estate office and could not be made available.

Bampton Common Land

Bampton parish, located south of Askham and west of Shap, extends to 10,925 acres (4421 ha) and 66% of this is common land.

There are seven areas of common land in Bampton, varying widely in size, history and topography. The largest, Bampton Common, is open fell side stretching from lake level (c.240m) along the west side of Haweswater to the ridge of High Street and including High Raise, 802m, the highest point within Bampton parish. Yewsmire and The Howes is a continuous area stretching from the Bampton-Askham Road towards Bampton Common and bounded by farmsteads and ex-farmsteads. On the east side of the Lowther Valley is Knipe Moor and Scar. Its underlying rock is limestone, in contrast to the commons on the west side which have underlying igneous rock.

There are a further four smaller areas of common land located in the valley bottom, three immediately adjacent to the River Lowther (Chapel Green, Bomby Green and Butterwick Green). Fieldgate is located below Knipe Scar, close to the road between Bampton and Shap. Each of these smaller areas is surrounded by enclosed fields.



Map of Bampton Parish (M. E. Noble, *History of the Parish of Bampton*, 1901)

Table 1 **Bampton Common Land**

<i>Commons Registration Number</i>	<i>Name of common</i>	<i>Extent</i>
CL84	Yewsmire and The Howes	39.44ha
CL85	Bampton Common	2576.85ha
CL88	Butterwick Green	16.00ha
CL89	Knipe Moor and Scar	120.00ha
CL90	Bomby Green	6.00ha

CL91	Chapel Green	00.06ha
CL92	Nr Fieldgate	00.05ha

Because the River Lowther and Pow Beck, its tributary at Butterwick, are fordable, stock could migrate from one area to another – Knipe Moor/Butterwick Green/ Bampton Common (via Sceughs) were effectively one undivided area of common land with overlapping heafs. This fluidity became highly significant as attempts were made in the 20th century to impose boundaries on Bampton Common Land and to quantify people's common rights. Significant also is the shifting character of rivers and becks which change their course through natural and manmade forces. Chapel Green, for example, is not identified as common land in the Tithe Map because in 1836 the area was under water in a large oxbow lake. Similarly 'Bombey (sic) Pool' is shown as a long stretch of water occupying a large area of Bomby Green.

Ownership of Common Land in Bampton

The 1836 Tithe Map did not allocate ownership of Bampton commons to any named individuals since no tithes were due. The map showed a number of individual enclosures on Bampton and Knipe Commons used both for pasture and for plantations. Parliamentary enclosure had a minimal effect in the parish. Records detail only one enclosure award (1846) affecting Sackwath common field close to the River Lowther's west bank between Bampton and Butterwick. No common land was involved. (Tinclar Library copy)

By 1900, most common land in Bampton was in the ownership of the Lowther family. There was, and has continued to be, some doubt about the status of particular areas of common land, notably Bomby Green and Chapel Green. The 1910 Inland Revenue District Valuation Book (North Westmorland) lists 6889 acres of Bampton Commons in the ownership of the Earl of Lonsdale but records 'Bampton [Bomby] Parish Green' in the ownership of the Parish Council, presented by Joseph Noble, Parish Clerk and a local farmer. (CAS [K] WTDV/2/5) Three years later, following correspondence with Mr Rook, the then District Valuer, Bampton Parish Council expressed the belief that the council had the power to fence and let Bomby Green ['the village green'] on an annual basis. (CAS (K) WPC 57) Bampton Parish Council

Minute Book November 1913) No evidence has been found that this in fact occurred, however. More recently it is notable that an application for title to the Bampton Commons made to the Land Registry in 2012 by Dowager Countess Lowther and others did not include Bomby Green or Chapel Green. (Papers Bampton Commoners Association. Land Registry Durham Office) Ownership of the other 5 areas of common land was claimed by the Countess on the grounds that they had been manorial waste. (Bampton Commoners Papers)

In the twentieth century, it was Manchester's acquisition of land for the construction of the Haweswater Dam, reservoir and associated water catchment works that fundamentally changed the balance of landownership on Bampton Commons. A conveyance dated 23 February 1923 between Lord Lonsdale's Trustees and the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of Manchester conveyed 434 acres of enclosed land in Bampton and 6104 acres of its common land to the Manchester authority. The effect was to divide ownership of common land in the valley with the west side primarily the property of Manchester while the east remained with the Lowther estates. With the change of ownership came a change in philosophy. Manchester saw Bampton Common primarily as a water catchment area rather than as a farming resource.

In 1935, acting on the understanding that it had acquired the fell rights of farm properties in Mardale, Manchester Corporation ordered that all farming operations other than hay and sheep farming should be discontinued by September 1936. They took this step in the interests of water quality even though flooding of valley was not expected for 4-5 years. Furthermore, fell rights associated with flooded farms were acquired by neighbouring surviving farms. (Commoner, Open Meeting, Feb 2013) Manchester and its water operations introduced novel concepts to the idea of common land, especially that such rights could be destroyed, reassigned or bid for. Surprisingly, there is no record of objections to these changes or their consequences for common rights.

In recent decades, there have been small but significant changes of management in holdings close to the Haweswater Dam. United Utilities has let Naddle Farm to RSPB who will manage the land in pursuit of explicit environmental objectives notably the conservation of flora and fauna. These objectives have involved

curtailing access through temporary fencing as well as changing traditional husbandry and farming practices. The new philosophy introduces a different emphasis to the use of commons in that it foregrounds national and even global environmental objectives rather than the original concept of a resource for local, individual need. A public meeting called to discuss future management of the land being acquired heard considerable unease from neighbouring farmers that their common rights, especially to grazing, would be adversely affected.

Regulation and management

It is widely believed in Bampton that until the introduction of the Commons Registration Act in 1965 there was no formal procedure for organising the commons. Manchester Corporation had attempted to formalise common rights on the land in its possession and in 1936 produced a codified list of heafs. (Tincler A6/39) It is not clear if any action followed. Because of limited mobility, farmers were all known to one another over many years and disputes continued to be settled locally between them. One respondent volunteered the view that 'in those days there was a bit of a free for all before registration'. Whatever the formal position, it seems that no-one bothered residents using the Common so long as their activities did not compromise others. When aspects of common land needed attention, the Parish Council worked with the appropriate owner and commoners to remedy the problem. An example is the repair of the pedestrian bridge on Knipe Moor crossing the river Lowther between Knipe and Bampton. The bridge had been built by Lord Lonsdale and a few other property owners in 1883 for the use of their tenants and children to get to school. When it fell into disrepair in 1902 and again in 1936, members of the parish council resolved that the cost of repair should not fall on rates but on the builders. Lord Lonsdale agreed to pay half the cost and the parish council asked for voluntary contributions for the balance. By 1937, the bridge required renewal, and the parish council adopted a similar approach, this time paying a small amount itself and getting Westmorland County Council to make a contribution in addition to Lord Lowther.

Until the 1960s, managing the commons and their heafs was a cooperative local process. Material in a private collection provides evidence from several incidents throwing light on how this informal regulation operated in the 1930s and 1940s –

these relate to unauthorised structures on Bomby Green, stone crushing on Bomby Green and proposed limeworks on Knipe Scar

Unauthorised henhouses

The erection of three henhouses on Bomby Green were objected to by a commoner who wrote to Lowther Estates Ltd. calling attention to the 'disgraceful' condition of the area where they had been constructed. He asked whether permission had been given for the three henhouses and pointed out that their presence was interrupting weed clearing operations thereby depriving other commoners of their grazing. Lowther's reply was dismissive but a further letter of complaint emphasised that the privileges accorded to this person were unfair 'particularly when the person is not a native of the parish nor works in the parish'. Correspondence between other users of Bomby Green claimed that weeds on the common had previously been cut by two commoners but that this was now impossible, adding the 'poultry was such a nuisance I could not keep them out of my potato plot'. The issues were obviously complex – the owner had favoured one user at the expense of others without consultation, the favoured user was 'not local' and local sensitivities were being injured because the owner was 'encouraging a man of this type when far worthier people wish to have the use of the common'.

Clearly among commoners there was a sense of what constituted proper behaviour in relation to common land – the 'good' fulfilled unwritten, traditional obligations in the interests of greater welfare while the 'bad,' whether user or owner, allowed personal benefit to undermine a common resource. When traditional mutual expectations could not be maintained, the remedy in this case was to lobby the owner.

Quarrying and Stone crushing

During the 1930s and 1940s, there was much concern about the use of Bomby Green for stone crushing. While some of the stone was said to have come from walls in the flooded Mardale, some came from the quarry opened by Lowther on The Howes, common land at the northern entrance to Bampton . Both the quarry and the stone crushing were much more significant issues than the henhouses and involved not only commoners but also Bampton Parish Council, and the Lake District Preservation Society and the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society.

Parishioners, however, were reluctant to agitate through these pressure groups, preferring to negotiate with the parties directly involved. Meetings of the Commoners were called to discuss this 'encroachment of commoners' rights'. In this case the owner of The Howes (Lowther) was identified as the 'villain' who, mindless of the local impact, demolished a complete crag and 'sold Bampton for 6d a ton'. By 1939, activity at the quarry had ceased but it remained derelict with rusting machinery left unattended. On the grounds that 'as a Commoner I was losing some of my valuable grazing rights', the parishioner who had been given authority to pursue the case by the commoners' meeting, successfully put pressure on the owner of the derelict machinery to get it removed. The grounds cited were environmental – the quarry was ugly and dangerous – as well as legal because commoners had lost grazing.

Stone crushing on Bomby Green proved a more difficult case. The crusher belonged to Westmorland County Council while the land on which it stood belonged to Lowther as Lord of the Manor. The legal position was uncertain and whereas the quarry was derelict 'the stone crusher is very much a lively institution'. The County Council, 'vandals', were reported as 'unwilling to do anything' and uncertainty remained about whether they intended the operation to be permanent or temporary. Certainly, several large stone heaps spread around the stone crushing machinery remained on the Green throughout most of the 1930s. Initially, attempts were made to clarify the position in discussion with the local authorities. A resolution was achieved when the County Surveyor agreed to tidy up the site and to seed areas of grass that had suffered from being covered with stones. The compromise was accepted since some of the crushed stone had been taken from the River Lowther and this was beneficial since failing to keep the river clear 'would be fatal for the valley' in floods.

Lime works on Knipe Scar

The limestone escarpment at Knipe was an important resource for commoners. It provided grazing, turf, bracken and limestone, an important manure as well as a building material. 'From time immemorial' it was claimed, commoners had the right to gather limestone without limit to the area where they gathered it and it was thought that they had probably set up the limekiln on the scar to burn the stone for subsequent use. Efforts to change this situation were said to have been

unsuccessful in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries after 'stout resistance' from commoners.

In 1941, a limeworks company approached the Lowther Estate with a view to opening lime quarries on Knipe Scar. As Lord of the Manor, Lowther had mineral rights on common land but in this case the extent of commoners' rights to the stone appeared to limit this. Since the proposal involved not only quarrying but also largescale lime burning in kilns, the proposals were very unpopular. Knipe Scar, some 300m in height, dominated the village of Bampton and was thought '...to mark the edge of the Lake District'. The fear was that 'Lowther is of course out to make money' and with the unsightly lime works 'would spoil the look of the valley'. Since the Rural District Council had not prepared any planning schemes, it was feared that 'Lowther estates can make any mess they like and get away with it'. Efforts were made by parishioners, in collaboration with the Friends of the Lake District, to divert the interest of the Lowther estate to other possible sites, notably at Orton or nearer Shap. These efforts were successful and the cutting of the skyline on Knipe Scar was avoided. The principle that 'We do not raise cash by damaging the beauty of the countryside' was said to have been vindicated. In 1942, it was agreed that the kilns would be constructed close to the Shap-Penrith road 'miles away from Bampton' and not affecting Knipe commoners 'in the slightest'. This outcome was welcomed by protestors because of its aesthetic and legal impact and also for practical reasons – it was noted that new works would provide local employment after the War at a time when Manchester Corporation's Haweswater scheme was ending. The Knipe Scar incident showed again the preference of many parishioners for behind the scenes diplomacy while permitting more public pressure to be applied by Friends of the Lake District through letters to the press.

Post War Regulation

In the post-war period, attempts to formalise the management of common land disrupted this customary process of negotiation and persuasion. The 1965 Commons Registration Act required the boundaries of common land to be determined, and owners and users of common land to be registered. Those claiming common rights had to quantify them and this was not straightforward. In Bampton, some of the grazing rights claimed were over-estimated but were under estimated in

others. During the registration of common land 1965-1968 some commoners failed to register any grazing rights at all. Several respondents suggested that large landowners had encouraged their tenants to register large numbers of stock. These problems were later compounded with ESA (Environmentally Sensitive Area) status as stock numbers derived from registration documents bore little resemblance to actual use. Generally the imposition of regulation 'from outside' by bodies with little local knowledge (SSSIs, ESAs) and the oversight of DEFRA/MAFF and English Nature/Natural England has led to problems including loss of 'ownership' of commons locally. It has also led to tension between farmers because of a perceived lack of fairness in the process. As one farmer put it 'Mapping and enforcing does not work. No or light formal regulation does'.

In an effort to redress the balance, an association of commoners – the Bampton Commoners' Association - was set up in 1983. It subsequently amalgamated with the neighbouring Askham Commoners' Association. In practice, commoners' associations have tended to become incorporated into national and international schemes at the expense of local interests. Along with other associations, Bampton commoners are making alliances with bodies such as the NFU and Federation of Cumbria Commoners to lobby national and European bodies. At the same time, all payments for ELS (Entry Level Schemes), HLS (Higher Level Schemes), and UELS (Upland Entry Level Schemes) are paid to commoners' associations who divide up the money among the participants. Each common requires an internal agreement binding all parties and clearly setting out their respective responsibilities and payments due. There are currently fears that CAP reforms will reduce funds for subsidies and stewardship schemes. (*British Farmer and Grower*, April 2013 p 34) Managing decline may provoke further tensions which the commoners' association is not well placed to resolve since it has no real powers of enforcement. (*Cumbria Farmer* April 2013 p5) The association is supporting a current proposal led by the Federation of Cumbria Commoners for a Commons Council for Cumbria to play a role akin to the Manorial Courts where disputes can be aired and resolved. (*Cumbria Farmer* April 2013 p5)

At a more general level, Bampton and its commons were protected by their inclusion in the area of the Lake District National Park set up in 1951 while in 1981 the boundaries of the Lake District Planning Board were extended to include the parish.

Nevertheless, local intervention still played its part. Because of increased traffic on the roads, Bomby Green was no longer grazed by local farmers and the grass had become very rough. After a failed attempt to tidy it up in 1999-2000, a management committee of local people was set up in 2009. The Bomby Green Management Committee operates as a sub-committee of the Commoners' Association with support from Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Hay Meadow Project. After much debate and consultation to determine the views of the local community, a workable scheme has been developed which has had a marked beneficial effect on the appearance of the Green and on its wildlife (see below Appearance and use) The management of common land in Bampton today shows very clearly how national and international schemes coexist with local action.

Uses of common land in Bampton

CL90 Bomby Green

Changes in the ownership and management of common land in Bampton have produced some notable changes in its use. Bomby Green is a good example. Historically Bomby Green was grazed to a smooth sward, mainly by sheep. Geese were also kept on the green even as recently as the 1990s. Horses, too, have been kept, though the last horse on it, early in the 2000s, was tethered.



Horses on Bomby Green, 1970 (photo: Bowman Family)

Interestingly we were told of sheep kept by a landlord of the nearby public house, "The Crown and Mitre" though no rights are registered to this property. The feeling is

that prior to registration, anyone could keep animals and geese on the commons. Small numbers of sheep were kept on the green in the middle of the last century. The area on the east of the river is still grazed by a local farmer. When the river is low, these sheep can cross the river, find their way off the green and explore the lanes in neighbouring areas. For the most part, this is accepted as 'the way things are'.

The recently formed Bomby Green management committee initially proposed the reintroduction of grazing with the aid of cattle grids but this was shelved as was the idea of a short spell of grazing using a cow herd to prevent cattle wandering. Instead with the help of local farmers an area was cut and the arisings baled and cleared. This has been repeated yearly (increasing the area slightly but leaving some patches rough) and the result is not only an improved appearance but better quality grass and a wider range of wild flowers. Yellow Rattle, sown to improve the quality of the grass, has spread so well that further sowings are not needed. Small patches of other wild flowers have been tried. The tree and scrub belt along the river, which has grown up in the lifetime of some villagers has also been tackled.



Wood and scrub growth, Bomby Green, 2010 (photo: Helen Farrow)

Care is taken to leave a wildlife corridor while improving access for recreational use. A second round of funded support from Cumbria Wildlife Trust will enable the work to continue. A ditch which runs alongside the road, so overgrown that its presence went unrecognized, has been cleared and its retaining wall repaired. This has helped reduce flooding at houses on the south west of the green.



**Members of Bomby Management Committee inspecting the excavated wall and ditch, 2012
(photo: Tony Hall)**

Currently Bomby Green's main recreational use is dog walking. Horse riders also take a route over the green rather than ride on the road. Each November 5th the village bonfire is lit on the green, attracting a large crowd from as far away as Penrith to its firework display. Occasionally an overnight caravan stays despite a Lowther Estates' sign saying this is not allowed. There are no permanent structures on the green, but a local farmer keeps a bonfire at the far southern tip and there is a short washing line.

An area of hard standing, occasionally used for car parking, probably marks the site of stone crushing which took place during the building of the Hawewater dam. As described earlier, stone from the original walls of Mardale buildings and fields, possibly augmented by pebbles dredged from the river nearby was crushed here and taken for use during the construction of the dam.

CL85 Bampton Common

Despite the formidable structures associated with the construction of the Haweswater Dam and its associated works which continued well into the 1950s and 60s, Bampton Common has experienced considerable stability. We were told that during the War, prisoners of war, probably from the camp at Shap Wells, were used to dig land drains on Bampton Common to improve drainage. In the late 1950s, high up on Bampton Common above Cawdale two conifer plantations were created – now

known locally as “the eyebrows” because of the way they lie either side of the ridge. More recently, in common with other areas, the Common has seen some reduction in grazing especially since the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001. In the area of Bampton Common known as Sceughs the owner, United Utilities, forbids the grazing of cattle in the interests of water quality in the catchment area. A 3 month ‘closed season’ operates while sheep are removed for lambing and the taking of peat has been forbidden. Moreover, recent changes in the management of Naddle seem likely to bring further significant changes.

United Utilities have entered into an agreement with the RSPB who are to manage Naddle Farm with explicit environmental objectives. RSPB have acquired Naddle’s common rights including a heaf that stretches from Riggindale Beck to Measand Beck. On this area, trees have been planted, both individual trees in protectors and a plantation. These areas were fenced, a controversial move that required an Act of Parliament, needing renewal in about 15 years. This and other measures had both environmental and practical objectives. European Union directives lie behind the drive to improve water quality. Ofwat is reluctant to allow the cost of treatment to be borne by the water rate payers so there is pressure to improve water quality at source. This means efforts are being made to reduce peat leaching into the water. The RSPB supports this as it improves the habitat for wildlife. The tree planting is part of this process. The woodland was funded partly by Natural England who are involved via the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and United Utilities who, as water authority, paid a share of the cost for which farmers would otherwise have been liable. Fencing and tree planting change the appearance of this part of the fell while they also curtail the rights of other commoners and walkers.

CL89 Knipe Common and Scar

Spared the intrusion of the lime works threatened during the War, Knipe Common has nevertheless been the site of numerous different infrastructure works – waste collection points, metal dumps, electricity poles, a milk stand, a post box and telephone box, water hydrants and direction posts.



**Infrastructure for services -
post, telephone and roadsigns
on Knipe Moor**

(photos: John Garside)



Sheep grazing numbers have decreased allowing the growth of bracken, gorse, tough grass and reeds with the occasional tree sapling emerging from the resulting thickets. The Lowther Estate has leased areas of bracken to a local business which harvests and uses it as an ingredient in compost. While farmers are pleased to see the bracken cut, there are misgivings about the owners' right to sell commoners' rights in this way. Another outside intervention changing the use and appearance of Knipe Moor, is the granting of SSSI status to the River Lowther at this point. The right of commoners to take gravel from the river for gate bottoms and tracks is now curtailed by the Environment Agency in the interest of spawning fish and white-clawed crayfish, a protected species. This has resulted in more and larger gravel beds showing in the river, restricting river flow, increasing erosion and leading to localised flooding.

A few ponies still graze here but geese or cattle are no longer to be seen. Knipe Scar attracts walkers and sometimes there are picnickers along the river's edge. In the past, there was a swimming pool and diving board in the River Lowther upstream of the pedestrian bridge from Knipe. The beacon on the Scar is still lit on national occasions though more frequently the site is used for kite flying. Bonfires used to occur for local families but were discontinued after World War Two. Horse events continue to take place over the Scar and the Moor as well as organised fell races. Dog walking is frequent. In the past, hunting, shooting and fishing occurred and hound trailing took place. Nowadays, it is RAF navigational training that is more likely to sound across the Moor

It seems changes in activities have affected wildlife. There are more badgers and otters but fewer ground nesting birds, especially curlews, lapwings, oyster catchers and skylarks.

CL88 Butterwick Green

As explained previously, Butterwick and Knipe Moor in practice operate as a single entity. Respondents identified similar tendencies to fewer and less varied uses, with increased recreational use by visitors and reduced opportunities for locals especially in field sports. Two events take place annually along the River Lowther, however, between Butterwick Green and Knipe Moor which attract a good deal of local interest and participation. These are the homemade raft race and the duck race, both staged

at August Bank Holiday, but not advertised outside the local area. They provide an opportunity for locals to let their hair down, building unlikely craft to negotiate the river and having small wagers on a flock of plastic ducks. These events make full use of the linked areas of common land as a shared recreational resource.

CL84 The Howes and Yewsmire

The common known as the Howes, named from the beck which runs down its southern edge, becomes at its western limit Yews Mire. The two are often documented together, though locally the Howes is well frequented and Yews Mire perhaps barely known. Yews Mire as its name suggests is largely sour and marshy ground. Both areas continue to be grazed.

At its eastern edge the common borders the valley road which runs from Askham to Mardale. Here is immediately apparent its distinctive feature, multiple outcrops of the igneous rock, known colloquially as Borrowdale blue. To either side, enclosed fields run down from the fell to the valley floor. At the present time there are horses, mostly confined to Yews Mire, and sheep belonging to local farmers. In the last thirty years there have been horses and also goats, the latter only for a short period as they needed to be tethered.



Hens and horses on The Howes (photo: Yvonne Grundy)

There are still a few hens which roam at the bottom of the common, belonging to a local man who has no recognized rights. This does not cause a problem. Sixty or so years ago, geese were kept by one villager and another had a donkey and two pigs

as well as hens. Before registration, it seems that, within reason, there was little restriction on keeping a few domestic animals on the common.



Goats grazing near the quarry, The Howes (photo: Yvonne Grundy)

There is a road which runs upwards through the lower part of the Howes. This leads past Mill Craggs the walls of which border the Howes here. Its barns, now converted into two units of housing, one let for holidays the other permanently occupied, occupy small fields within the commons. Above this there is an unmade track which leads to a small reservoir enclosed by stone walls. This track and another a little higher up give access to a house (now known as Crossgates but earlier marked on maps as Scroggs Hall) which borders directly onto the Howes here. Both of these buildings are centuries old.

Older members of the community talk of other less substantial buildings on the common, some used for storage, some for housing and possibly an isolation building for someone sick. One resident recalled that his father had a shack near the gate to Foulmart Fold on the Howes where wagons and all sorts, possibly black market, were kept. There was also a temporary building on the Howes very near the beck where a TB sufferer lived until he was admitted to the sanatorium at Blencathra. School admissions to Bampton Endowed School record a family who sent children to the school between 1934 and 1946, giving their address as simply 'The Howes', though the first child's address was 'The Bungalow, Mill Craggs', which may give some indication of the type and whereabouts of the dwelling. There may be traces of these buildings but they are not easily discernible. Some people remember that,

during and after World War Two, tanks based at Lowther Park used the Howes for testing or practice.

The road itself through The Howes was made up in the first half of the twentieth century. Figure 10 shows the track unmade on a slightly different line and with a gate where the cattle grid is now. Undated, this picture was certainly taken after electricity was run, along poles which are visible, along the valley. Without any other explanation it seems likely that electricity had been installed in preparation for the building of the Haweswater dam, possibly in 1929. Equally the road improvement is probably connected with the management of the catchment area for the Haweswater reservoir. An additional intake diverted from Heltondale beck runs beneath the commons and has an easily seen inspection point just off the track to the reservoir. This very small reservoir is the point at which Howes Beck is diverted into the main reservoir. The cattle grids which mark the limits of the commons on the road and the work to make the new dam were carried out in the 1950s, by a firm called Nuttalls, who mixed the concrete on the common below Crossgates and ferried it in dumper trucks along the track to the reservoir. Lumps of concrete can still be seen. Manchester Corporation marked important steps in the completion of the water network focussed on the Haweswater dam, including the intake pipeline from both becks which was officially opened on October 3rd 1959. Manchester City Corporation Water Works must have made a major impact on this area and their successors, United Utilities still have a presence, as one of their work force monitors the reservoir on a daily basis.

In the last twenty years the houses which run up the hillside here, adjacent or close to the common land, have changed in character. From 7 occupied in 1992 there are now 10, with planning permission for another. Equally there are now 24 residents as against an earlier 11, with considerably more when the two holiday cottages are occupied. Although in 1992 there were 3 farms and now there is only one, the land continues to be farmed in much the same way by farmers living nearby. The main changes are in additional use of the road, with parking and passing, and increased recreational use, for dog exercise, walking and just larking about. In summer there is an established overnight camp set up by young people, with a fire. Not allowed according to Lowther Estates' notice at the bottom of the Howes, this is widely condoned by those living locally. Mountain bike and motorbike use is less welcome

but persists. An amusing aside on our time and place is the frequent use of the rocky outcrops above the old quarry on the lower Howes where visitors attempt to get a mobile phone signal.

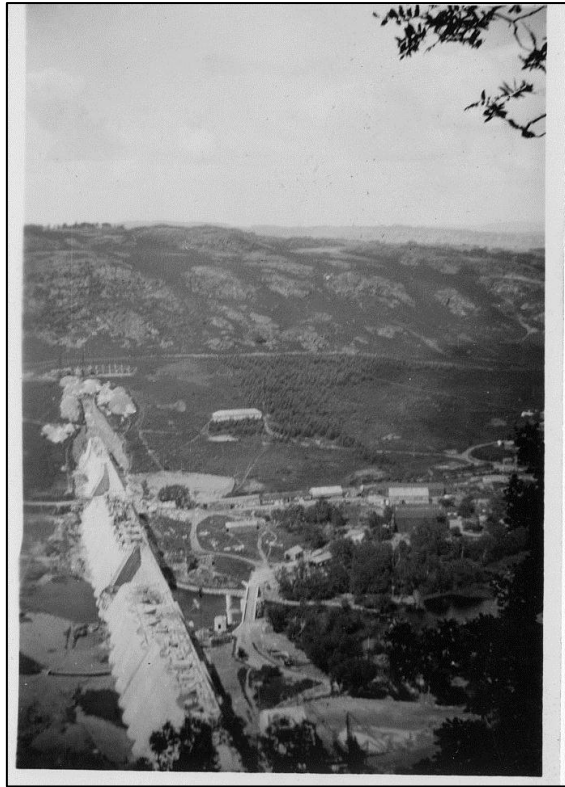
CL91 Chapel Green/CL92 Above Field Gate

These two small pieces of 'waste' were registered as common land in 1965-1968. Twenty seven instances of common rights were registered for Chapel Green and nineteen for Field Gate. These were the usual grazing and gathering rights but many of the numbers involved seem excessive for such small, marginal areas. Today, they are barely used – a public footpath runs through the land opposite Field Gate though the land is gated while at Chapel Green, use seems to be confined to a parking area and a bench.

Conclusions

In origin, it seems that the basic assumption concerning common land was that whatever benefit commoners enjoyed was for their own use – they should not trade their rights, make them available to others, or degrade the resource. Common rights attached to a property, not to individuals, families or to the community as a whole. The mutual system of land ownership and villagers' rights were underpinned by the discipline and regulation offered by manorial courts and mutual cooperation.

In the twentieth century, landholding and farming practices underwent considerable change and as the process of modernisation came to affect even remote rural places like Bampton, there were marked changes in common land and in attitudes. Most significant were demands on land for hitherto unlooked for services and increasing national and eventually global environmental concerns. Most noticeable and visually invasive for Bampton have been the growing number of infrastructure works - including mining, quarrying, road building, water supply, electricity supply, refuse collection, milk supply and communications. Many of these functions were required, not locally, but nationally and even internationally. The greatest and most long lasting of all were the reservoirs, tunnels, weirs, aqueducts, water treatment and pumping stations associated with Manchester's dam at Haweswater.



**Ariel photo of Haweswater Dam under construction with Bampton Common beyond
(photo: Boe family collection)**

Bampton Commons abound with the physical remains of these projects designed to meet the needs of a modernising urban society rather than local requirements.

The use and appearance of Bampton common land continues to change as regulation occurs as a result of policies taken at the national and European level. The commoners' association is less a conduit for local concerns and more a device for implementing schemes from outside bodies. Common rights have become concentrated in fewer hands and the idea of common land as a resource for villagers as a whole is being eroded.

Appendix: Common Land and Heafs in Bampton Parish 1936-2013

In 1936, Manchester Corporation compiled a list of 'heafs' on the common land that it had acquired in Bampton for the Haweswater reservoir water catchment area. At this time, 33 farms were identified. In 1968, Commons Registration listed 37 farms and 22 cottages, the latter with minimal rights on the Bampton commons. Currently, very few of these minimal rights are in fact exercised and amalgamations mean that there are only 18 working farms in Bampton.

Name of farm	Currently operating	Manchester Heaf List
	2013	1936
Bampton Hall	no	yes
Bomby Farm	yes	yes
Butterwick Crag	no	yes
Crossgates	no	yes
Dalefoot	yes	yes
Denny Hill	no	no
Low Drybarrows	?	yes
High Drybarrows	?	yes
Eastward	yes	yes
Fell End Farm	no	yes
Fieldgate	yes	yes
Gillhead	yes	yes
Grange House	yes	yes
High House	no	no
High Howe	yes	yes
High Hullockhowe	yes	yes
High Knipe	yes	yes
Howgate Foot	no	yes
Hungerhill	yes	yes
Keldhead	no	yes
Knipe Hall	no	yes
Littlewater	no	yes
Littlewater Farm	yes	yes
Low Hullockhowe	yes	yes
Low Scarside	no	no
Millcraggs	no	yes
Moorahill	no	yes
High Roughill	yes	yes

Low Roughill	yes	yes
Scales Farm	?	no
Scar View Butterwick	no	yes
Scarside	yes?	yes
Setterah Park	yes	no
Thornthwaite Hall	yes	yes
Town End	no	yes
Walmgate	yes	yes
Walmgate Foot	no	no
Whale Farm	no	no
Widewath	no	yes
Woodfoot	yes	yes
Yew Tree House	no	no
Totals 41	18 (+4?)	33

Cottages (defined as having commoners' rights for <5 sheep, or mostly geese/hens, a cow, 2 ponies)

Bampton Vicarage
 Bampton Endowed School
 Beckfoot
 Bleabridge, Butterwick
 Bomby Green Gate
 Bomby Waters
 Bridge End, Bampton Grange
 Corn (Conn) Cottage
 The Cottage, Butterwick
 Dawes House
 3 Garden Cottages, Bampton Grange
 Greenacres, Fell End
 2 Knipe View
 Hollin View
 Lowther Cottage, Low Knipe
 Moor End, Knipe
 St Patrick's Well Inn
 Scar View, Butterwick (L Holme)
 Scar View, Butterwick (M Docker)
 Su Simba, Bomby
 Sunset View, Bomby
 Wheat Close, Gatefoot
Total 22

Note: Very few of those listed currently exercise the rights claimed. There are no known flocks of geese and only 2 or 3 flocks of hens. There are 2 or 3 horses/ponies on Butterwick Green/Knipe Moor and a small number of Fell Ponies on Bampton Common.

Farms recorded on Manchester Corporation 1936 list of Heafs, but not on 1968-70 Commons

Registration

Skews

Vaugh Steil

Carhullan

Stanegarth

Bridge End Cottage, Bampton

Grange Farm

Greengate

Heald

Butterwick Low Crag

Butterwick (Thompson)

Text and images: copyright, Bampton and District Local History Society

<http://www.bampton-history.org.uk/>