Federation of Cumbria Commoners

Affiliated with Lancashire & Northumberland

Newsletter Summer 2017

Looking Forward,

Well the days are starting to get noticeably shorter and the summer could have been more helpful, it's a blessing that we now have wrapped bales to fall back on.

I am pleased to see the Lake District has now become a World Heritage Site. I know some of you will have mixed feelings but I am sure it will help to protect our hefted flocks of traditional breeds and our traditional way of farming going forward. We should all feel proud of what we do. The Lake District is the second most visited place outside London and they come for the landscape, mostly created and looked after by generations of fell farmers. This farming system over time has had to adapt and change and I think we are now approaching another period of change. Let's make

sure whatever changes are made, future generations can still see a future and find a way of making a viable living out of farming. There are some organisations that would be quite happy to see our farming system and way of life go. We will, one and all, have to stand up for ourselves and find a positive way forward to make sure our ancestors did not do all their work for nothing. Once the traditional skills to run this unique farming system are lost there is no way back.

Despite what Michael Gove said the other day, I think it will be a long while before we find out what the end of Brexit will look like for farmers and farming.

Joe Relph (Chairman)

Update: The work of the committee—your voice on the fell and in national and local meetings …….

We are making sure that immediate concerns are dealt with alongside looking to the future. The next section gives you a flavour of what we have been doing.

Brexit—working out the Federation's position

We can't send out a newsletter without mentioning Brexit. We have been following what the NFU, NSA, Foundation for Common Land, the Upland Alliance and others are saying should replace the CAP after we leave the EU. A lot of good sense is being talked, but there's not much about commoning.

The Federation was set up because the government didn't understand commoning and thought it could be bolted on to support payments and schemes designed for owner occupied land. We've had to pay the price of delayed and incorrect payments and agri-environment prescriptions that are undermining commoning, rather than optimising the value of what we give to society. It's often been uncomfortable arguing our case from a position of relative weakness as we know that, on average, CAP support provides around half of the income on hill and upland farms. But on the plus side we are getting our messages across. In a recent speech Michael Gove stated that it's mostly the work of farmers that keeps the landscape beautiful and delights the millions of visitors to Cumbria.

But we can't rest on our laurels. The outlook for farming is unsettled, uncertain and full of risk. So we will be writing a short paper setting out our ideas about what is needed to sustain commoning into the future. If you'd like to comment on draft

versions of our paper, please send Viv an e-mail—viv@cumbriacommoners.org.uk.

When the paper is ready we will sent it to Ministers and local MPs. Also to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, North Pennines AONB, the National Trust, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, United Utilities, Natural England and other organisations who can, and do have a direct influence on farming and commoning in Cumbria.

Lake District—a World Heritage Site

The Federation welcomes the granting of World Heritage Status to the Lake District. We are immensely proud that the work of past and present hill farmers and shepherds has been recognised of international importance by UNESCO. Commoning is still deeply interwoven into farming and the culture of the Lake District. It has stood the test of time by constantly evolving to take account of shifts in global markets, government policies and new technology.

Over the years the Federation has been involved with the development of the World Heritage nomination bid, mainly to make sure that the descriptions of fell farming and commoning in the nomination documents are accurate. We now plan to get involved in the development of the World Heritage Management Plan to make sure that plans are in place to protect the integrity and authenticity (UNESCO words) of fell farming and its cultural heritage. We want to see the present number (more or less) of active farm holdings in the Lake District are still around in fifty years time and producing quality food and livestock, maintaining the cultural heritage, keeping soils fertile and restoring nature.

BPS Mapping errors need resolving as commoners underpaid by around £330,000 per year

The RPA uses arial photography and digitised maps to calculate the area of a common qualifying for BPS payments. Arial photography is considered reliable but cloud and shadow can obscure features making interpretation difficult. In Cumbria a disproportionate number of commons have "lost" eligible areas since they were last mapped for SPS. This puts into question the reliability of interpretation of eligible and ineligible features on commons.

With the help of information provided by David Morley of H & H Land & Property, we have analysed RPA's area eligibility data for105 commons. Forty five commons have gained hectares usually small amounts, but 60 have lost land ranging from 0.03 of

a hectare to a whopping 600 hectares! Of course there will be some ineligible land that doesn't qualify for BPS, but not the 6,146 ha according RPA data. At 2017 values this equates to over £330,000 per year. It seems very probable that some heather moorland, blanket bog, rushes and gorse have been interpreted as ungrazeable scrub and ineligible for BPS. In most cases this vegetation can be grazed and should be eligible for payments.

It is hard for individual graziers to work out what is going on as the RPA's computer system isn't up to letting individual claimants see the maps for their common. The Federation has decided to step and act as a conduit between RPA and Commoners' Associations to get these maps and the RPA are happy with this arrangement. We have contacted the affected Commoners' Associations to let them know that there is a significant reduction (either number of hectares or % of the total common) between the measured area for SPS and BPS 2016 for their common and, if they wish, we can get electronic copies of the maps for them. We have sent a list to RPA, but as yet we haven't received any maps back—they work slowly!

If on inspecting the commons maps the Commoners' Association considers that some of the land shown as ineligible is actually eligible, then the commoners will need to take geo-tagged photographs of these areas along with a written explanation and request for amendments. They could perhaps including screenshots from Google Earth as well. Some commoners' associations will be able to do this work themselves, while others may want to instruct professional advisors.

We have found out that Cumbria is not the only county to be plagued with mapping errors on common land. We will be lobbying with others to make sure that the RPA improves its mapping and quality control systems and commoners are paid the correct BPS payments first time round. This should save both the RPA and commoners significant costs and time involved in reviews and appeals.

Minchinhampton Retrospective Compensation Scheme

Many of you will have received letters from the RPA saying that your application for compensation has been successful, or for some, unsuccessful. You should also have received payment and a remittance advice. We understand that the RPA will not be able to provide a detailed breakdown of how the payment is calculated.

If you are concerned that your payment is incorrect, especially if your common is subject to mapping errors as the payment will be based on the BPS eligible area, or you do not understand why your application was unsuccessful you should get in touch

with the Commons team in Exeter. Access to the Commons team is through the Customer Support Centre Helpline number (03000 200 301).

John Muir Trust will lease Glenridding common

We were disappointed that the Members of the Lake District National Park Authority voted in favour of leasing Glenridding Common to the John Muir Trust for a three-year term. Commoners local to Glenridding common told us they wanted the Federation to object and we stood our ground. You can read our letter of objection on our website. We later found out that the Federation was the only organisation who objected to this proposal.

Now the decision is made, the Federation commits to encourage the John Muir Trust to actively communicate and engage the two graziers, the contiguous graziers and the Federation in all aspects of the development and implementation their 3-year management plan. If the graziers are unable to work directly with the John Muir Trust, then the Federation will be the conduit between the John Muir Trust and the graziers. We will also be asking for a review at the end of the 3-year term.

Fighting to stop MoD deregistering Hilton, Murton and Warcop fells

The Federation has been working with local and national organisations to campaign to stop the Ministry of Defence (MoD) deregistering Hilton, Murton and Warcop commons. The MoD wants to privatise around 1% (4,500 hectares) of England's total common land if Cumbria County Council grants it permission. This would be the largest enclosure since the major enclosures of commons in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

We say the deregistration would be unlawful and flies in the face of undertakings made by the MoD at a public inquiry held in Appleby in 2001, to keep the commons registered in perpetuity. William Patterson of the Hilton Commoners' Association has told us that 'When the MOD negotiated the buy-out and extinguishment of the commoners' grazing rights (known as 'stints') on Hilton Fell, Murton Fell and Warcop Fell, one of the fundamental issues was MoD's agreement to leave the fells on the commons register. On the strength of this undertaking, the commoners accepted the buy-out. It is a breach of trust that the MoD now wants to cancel that undertaking without making a further agreement. '

The campaign started in March after the MoD re-applied to Cumbria County Council to de-register the three commons. The public were given 2 months to respond and

27 organisations and individuals did so, including us. We heard through the grapevine the MoD were surprised by the number of objections. The Council then gave the MoD 2 months to review and respond to these 27 representations and a Treasury Solicitor on behalf of the MoD sent a letter of response on July 4th. We have seen his letter but are not convinced by his arguments. It's now up to Cumbria County Council to review all the applications and representations and then decide what to do next. Watch this space.

Forming a Commons Council—a slow burner

A big thank you to all of you who attended the meetings last January and February about forming a commons council for Cumbria and Northumberland. Eighteen commoners' associations have said that they are interested in being part of a commons council. Together they cover approximately 46,500 ha. of common land. We calculate that we need around 65,000 ha. of common land to form a commons council to make it financially viable.

We are now in a quandary. We would like to keep the momentum going, but are increasingly concerned that Defra doesn't have the resources to support the establishment of our commons council if we ever get to that stage. Unfortunately Defra lost practically all its commons expertise when Grant McPhee and Hugh Craddock left the end of 2015. Claire Horton took over. Although helpful and willing she is no replacement for Grant and Hugh and has not been able to provide us with answers to some fundamental questions. Now she is about to go on maternity leave.

We are very clear that we do not want to be in the same position as Bodmin and Brendon Commons Councils. Currently they are councils in name only as they wait for Defra to approve their rules—Brendon has been waiting for over two years now. This is causing immense frustration among the commoners and any momentum gained by forming their own commons council is now slipping away.

In early July we wrote to Marie Southgate, Defra's new Deputy Director of Land Use (see page 9 for a letter of introduction from her) to ask for a guarantee that Defra will continue to support and commit resources to establishing a Cumbria/ Northumberland Commons Council and for Brendon and Bodmin Commons Councils too (we want to see all commons councils up and running). To date we have had no acknowledgement of our e-mail. This is not good enough. We will follow up our e-mail and ask the Foundation for Common Land to help us raise this issue with Defra. Over the last 10 years a considerable sum of public money has been spent on developing the commons council concept, so far there is very little to show for it.

A portrait of East Stainmore Regulated Pasture CL17 & 18

William Steele, Chairman

Stainmore common is a remote area of moorland lying to the north and east of Brough and Kirkby Stephen. It covers an area of 2541 hectares and rises to a height of 1848 feet. It is made up of three sections: Leacet (187 ha) to the north west of the B6276 Brough to Middleton in Teesdale road; North Moor (1283 ha); and the South Moor (1071 ha). The North Moor is divided from the South Moor by the A66 and the old Stainmore Railway Line. The whole of the eastern side of the common forms the county boundary between Cumbria and County Durham. There is one public bridleway which was an ancient drovers' road, it runs through the North Moor starting at the Old Punchbowl Hotel and goes into Baldersdale. All the land is covered by the CROW Act.

The vegetation is a mixture of heather, bent grass, sphagnum moss, star moss, cotton grass and blanket bog. There are historic features including a disused slate quarry on North Moor, two old stone quarries on South Moor and a reservoir used to water the steam trains on the old Stainmore Railway.

East Stainmore Regulated Common was designated under the Enclosure Acts 1845 – 1899 with the Regulation Award in 1890. It is a stinted common and a stint is defined as the legal right to graze one ewe without a lamb, and four ewes and lambs at foot occupy five stints. The common is managed by a Board of Conservators who at the time of enclosure were able to "execute any works of drainage, manuring, or levelling, plant trees or in any other way improve or add to the beauty of the common". The Board of Conservators is made up of seven graziers who formally meet once a year and there are minute books dating back to 6th May 1890. They collect annual stint forms from each rights holder who declares the number of stints they hold; the owner of the stints (in case of rental agreements); and the stock to be grazed. The Conservators are, in effect, keeping a live register.

The freehold and sporting rights are owned by the Blackett-Ord family on Leacet, on the North Moor by the Tufton family and the South Moor by the John Brazil Trust. The whole common is used for grouse shooting and full-time game keepers are employed. The North Moor alone has a ten-year average of over a thousand brace per year.

The whole common is in the North Pennines AONB. Leacet is a SSSI and also in the MoD Danger Area of Warcop Army Camp. All three sections of the common are in Higher Level Stewardship schemes. The Leacet and North Moor schemes expire in 2019 and the South Moor scheme in 2020. At present there are 13 active graziers, 1 on Leacet, 7 on North Moor and 5 on South Moor delivering the scheme. A few years ago the graziers on North Moor collaborated with the North Pennine AONB Peatscapes in an experimental grip blocking project comparing stone, timber and heather blocks. This year the commoners have agreed to support the regeneration of a lowland moss and have donated sphagnum moss as seed and vegetative material. This work has been done with the permission of Natural England.

Many of the children of the graziers are showing an interest in continuing to graze and manage the common. On one level future prospects are favourable, but much will depend on the result of negotiations for leaving Europe.

New Faces at the Lake District National Park and the National Trust

These two organisations have recruited farming officers and we have asked them to write a short piece about themselves by way of introduction.

Briony Davey: Farming Officer, LDNPA

I am starting work for the Lake District National Park Authority from the 1st August for 2 years as Farming Officer. I am from an upland beef farm on the edge of the Forest of Bowland and have worked for the past 8 years as Farm Conservation Adviser for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Here I have helped farmers with all aspects of agri environment and with Catchment Sensitive Farming and other projects. As such I have a lot of experience working with farmers in the Dales but I am really looking forward to working with farmers in the Lake District. I can be contacted on 07766 367529 or 01539 792675 or email briony.davey@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Will Cleasby: Farming Advisor Project Manager, National Trust

My name is Will Cleasby, on the 14th of August I start working at the National Trust as their Farming Advisor Project Manager. My new role involves working with the National Trust's farming tenants across Cumbria to build a sound working

relationship, sharing the National Trust's 'Better Working Together' farming plan for the Lake District. Getting farmers input into this plan is going to be crucial. I have previously been employed by the Eden Rivers Trust, initially in project delivery roles but over the last 4 years taking on the manager and then director roles. Outside of my 'proper job' I am a partner in our family farm based near Temple Sowerby, playing an active role in the day to day running the farm which is home to the Cleaden herds of pedigree Charolais and Limousin Cattle. I am looking forward to working with you all in the near future.

New face at Defra: Marie Southgate, Deputy Director of Land Use

We received the following letter from Marie Southgate

"I am writing to let you know that I have joined the Land Use team in Defra. To give you some background, my previous job was with Department of Culture, Media and Sports, where I had covered broadband policy and telecoms markets. I appreciate the importance of common land which is highly valued and enjoyed for its importance to our landscapes, natural and historic heritage, communities, agriculture and economy and for the many benefits it delivers. I am very supportive of the natural environment and look forward to working with the Land Use team. I appreciate the importance of common land and the key role they play in water collection from Upland catchments. The peatlands is another key policy area that we need to support in terms of carbon storage and protecting the climate."

Navigating the Commons Regulations 2014 – a spirit sapping exercise?

Tim Cartmell

We often blame Europe for complex regulations. Indeed our required obedience to European law was a reason for many to vote for Brexit. But if you want a good gulp of our own bureaucracy then I recommend to you a read of the Commons Registration (England) Regulations 2014. These Regulations implement part of the Commons Act 2006 and set out the procedures and detailed rules for applications and the 15 "CA" forms to be used for applications.

Case Study: registering a historic event

Form CA14 is used to register an historic event that happened before June 2005. For example, you the, Seller, sold part of some land which had rights attached to it. You retained the rights in question, therefore you severed the rights from the land. This was possible pre-2005, but the Commons Act 2006 has put a stop to it.

As you only sold part of the land, you have to do an apportionment as well. You have to find out how many rights were attached to the area sold and now severed and held by you "in gross" or unattached to land, and how many rights under your same entry in the Commons Register remain attached to the land you did not sell and continue to own. You might think that this could be reasonably simple as all you have to do is send in an acreage apportionment calculation with form CA14.

Sadly this is not the case. Section 8 of the form CA14 is baffling. You are told to *"Specify the name and address of the owner of the land to which is attached the part of the right of common which is the subject of the primary application".* And you read a note alongside which says *"If you are applying to register an apportionment you must submit a separate primary application along with this application. A primary application can be made where only part of the apportioned right attached to land has been surrendered, extinguished, varied, severed from the land to which it was attached, or is the subject of a statutory disposition"*

You want to register the severance which is also an apportionment. You are told to give the name and address of the present owner of the land *"to which is attached"* the rights you have severed more than 12 years ago. This doesn't make sense. You detached the rights over 12 years ago and are now getting round to registering the event. Your solicitor could have done it at the time, if he or she knew about it, but even so it was not necessary to register the event there and then. It appears the people drafting the Regulations based them on what the unaltered Register presently says, rather than taking into account the fact that many historic events went unregistered. In other words the drafting doesn't take account of the reality on the ground.

Also be aware that this has all changed with the 2006 Act and Regulations. If you don't register historic events before the 14th December 2018, the present owner of the land to which the rights were attached before you sold the land may get the rights back.

The words "*primary application*" appear for the first time in Section 8 of the CA14 form. As there is no CA form specified for a "primary application" and no clear guidance on the CA14 form as to what a primary application is, or why it is different (if it is) to a historic event a deduction from the instruction *"If you are applying to register an apportionment you must submit a separate primary application along with this application*" is that you have to send in 2 x form CA14 to complete the exercise in my example. One to register the severance and the other to register the apportionment which was made by the severance. If you search the Regulations you will find an application to register an apportionment must accompany a primary application and severance is an example of a primary application. As section 8 of form CA14 is headed "details of the apportionment" why can you not fill in the one form - you wonder at the logic of why are you told to send in 2 applications? Why not ask for 5 forms instead for good measure?

What fees should you be paying?

To muddy the waters further, you are supposed to use form CA3 to register apportionments. A "primary application" is also needed to accompany the CA3 application and you are required to pay a fee of £210 to register the apportionment. But going back to our case study above, if you send a second form CA14 to register the apportionment you don't incur a fee. The notes to the form CA14 do not explain this, while the notes to the CA3 form suggest that you have to use a CA3.

To confuse matters even further, for a mere £55 fee you can register your claim to a straight historic apportionment by a CA15 "declaring your entitlement to a right of common". But beware this is not as final as the CA3 route as it can be removed by the County Registration Authority if it is later challenged. A CA15 will, though, keep the RPA happy and you can collect your basic if payment as long as the declaration is on the register.

What is going on here?

Trying to make sense of all this and find some logical explanations to the Regulation is not easy. It seems that those who drafted the Regulations decided that there would be no fee to register an historic severance and consequently no fee for the apportionment the severance gives rise to. But a straight historic apportionment (e.g. on a sale of part of the land in say1990 to which rights are registered with the apportioned rights attaching) costs £210 using CA3 (pre April 2015 this could have been registered for no fee). They also decided that one form was not enough, unlike

before the 2014 Regulation. Then we had one form for all applications to change the register, now we are required to use one of (or two of) 15 forms. Could we not go back to the old days before we lose the will to live?

Missed opportunities

Unfortunately the 2006 Act and the 2014 Regulations will not result in bringing the common registers up-to-date and make it easy to see who owns what rights. One reason is because the cost of registering amendments (e.g. historic straight apportionments) can exceed the value of the rights by the time you have employed a lawyer to read the Regulations and paid the County Council fees etc. So some people will not bother. It would have helped the cause of bringing the registers up to date if Defra had allowed straight forward historic apportionments to be registered for no fee during the 3-year transitional period expiring in December 2018.

One good thing is that the 2006 Act and Regulations allow wrongly registered land to be de-registered. Of course you will need a separate application form, CA13, and pay the County Council fee of £1050. This is a sizeable sum and there will be the lawyers' fees on top of this. So small pieces of land, perhaps incorrectly registered by over keen Parish Council clerks in the late 1960's whose mapping skills was limited may not get de-registered.

Let us ask the Federation to tell our next Minister of Agriculture to achieve the object which has been missed: of simply getting the registers put right – with the emphasis on simply.

Caldbeck Commoners' Association challenge the Government's realignment of payments under an HLS Agreement

In April 2013 the Caldbeck Commoners' Association entered into a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement with Natural England for 10 years from 1st May 2013, under which about £300,000 a year was payable half yearly in arrears, in return for the management of stock numbers, some tree planting and fencing and other management prescriptions

The HLS Agreement incorporated the HLS handbook. That handbook states *"Very rarely, it may be necessary for us to vary your agreement in line with changes to European law and in other exceptional circumstances. In applying for the scheme, you are accepting that such changes may be made at any time."*

You may remember that in 2014 Natural England wrote to all HLS agreement holders saying that the EU required them to realign their agreements so they all were paid on the basis of a calendar year starting on 1st January 2015. For agreements with start dates between February and June (like Caldbeck) the first payment for a calendar year would be made at the end of the calendar year in question and the second payment half way during the following year. The practical effect of the change to the Caldbeck Commoners (and many others) was that NE would withhold about £104,000 of the money they had contracted to pay for about 8 years. For other HLS Agreement holders whose agreement started between July and December their payments were advanced – they were better off.

Upon questioning National England it transpired that the EU had been requiring the UK to make all Agreements start and run from 1st January from around 2007, and the UK had been fined £1.6m for 2008 and 2009 for not complying and faced the risk of continuing financial penalties unless they implemented a uniform start date for all Agreements. As there had been no change in European law made after the commencement of the Caldbeck Commoners' contract with Natural England in May 2013. Natural England had to rely upon "other exceptional circumstances" to make the change. The Caldbeck Commoners argued that for there to be such other exceptional circumstances on which they could rely, those circumstances must have arisen after the date of the April 2013 contract.

The NFU Legal Assistance scheme paid for a Barrister's Opinion. The Barrister advised that a case against NE was good to require them to make the payments in accordance with their contract: they could not unilaterally change the terms as they had purported to do.

A letter before action was sent to NE and they instructed Defra lawyers. They said, unsurprisingly, that NE was within its rights to make the change, and they argued that any case should have been brought within 3 months of the 2014 notice from NE that the change was to be made, in accordance with Judicial Review principles. The NFU paid again for the barrister's second Opinion, and the advice was as before: the case was good. The claim was in contract, it was not a judicial review of public law.

Everyone knows that litigation is expensive and that while you may think your claim is very good and be reinforced with professional advice, there is usually a counter argument and the Judge in Court must rule as he or she decides. If you lose you are usually ordered to pay the other side's costs as well as your own. Furthermore, in a case such as this where a lot of people are affected by the outcome the possibility of

an appeal by NE to the Court of Appeal, should they lose, must be real, so doubling the costs risk.

The NFU funded all fees to date and they indicated they would fund our further fees (solicitor and barrister) for the case, but they would not fund any fees we were ordered to pay NE if we lost the case. We knew that at the outset, but we hoped to get insurance to cover that risk when we had the legal Opinions which the insurers would need to see.

Through our lawyers (whose fees were again being met by the NFU) we went to the specialist insurance market for what is called After the Event Insurance (ATE) and asked for insurance cover of £75,000. All the legal Opinions were sent to a number of insurers for the risk and premium to be assessed. We hoped that the single premium would be under £10k, and we would ask for contributions from other similarly affected commons and landowners to meet that premium. In the event we only received one quote asking for a premium of £30,000. This was more than the interest on our money which was being deferred for 8 years making it difficult to ask for and receive external donations to support us. We had to abandon the cause, roll over and surrender to the deep pockets of government. We thank all those commons who expressed an interest in supporting us.

New Legislation: Environmental Impact Assessment needed for works on common land

On 16 May 2017, the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 took effect in England. These require that works on common land above a certain threshold have to be assessed against the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). For example, if a proposed fence exceeds 2km within a sensitive area - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park or a Scheduled Monument – or 4km outside a sensitive area, the applicants must apply for EIA screening.

What you must do if your works on common land are covered by the new Regulations

Projects which equal or exceed one or more thresholds or which are subject to a screening notice may not proceed without being considered for consent by Natural England. The process of applying for consent is:

- a person wishing to undertake a project must make a screening application to

Natural England;

- Natural England has 35 calendar days, from receipt of an application, to assess and inform the applicant of its screening decision;
- If the project is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment, it will be allowed to proceed. However, if Natural England considers it is likely to have a significant effect, it may not proceed without consent

If consent is required (and if the applicant still wants to carry out the project), the applicant must produce an Environmental Statement (ES), and make an application to Natural England. In this case, the applicant may write to Natural England for a scoping opinion which would describe what the ES should contain. Natural England will check the application and consult the public and others. Natural England will make a consent decision on whether or not the project may proceed. There are rights of appeal throughout the process.

Mervyn Edwards' Hefted Flocks Project

Many of you will know Mervyn Edwards, a retired government farming adviser who has worked for many years in Cumbria. For the last year Mervyn has been talking to commoners and recording the location of hefted flocks grazing on common land and freehold fells in the Lake District. He has also recorded the breeds of sheep kept and changes that have occurred since 1990.

Mervyn plotted and labelled the boundaries of the commons and freehold fells on the four OS Explorer maps covering the Lake District. He then added the approximate location of each fell going flock identified by farm name and, where appropriate, coupled with additional information where more than one flock belonging to the same farmer was grazing the common. In total Mervyn has recorded information on 73 commons, 271 graziers and 309 separate fell going flocks. The numbers of graziers and flocks have declined by approximately 18% over the last 25 years. Eighty three graziers are grazing 112 flocks on freehold fells.

Mervyn has gifted these maps to the Federation. This work represents a really valuable snapshot in time and we are extremely grateful to Mervyn for undertaking this project in his own time and at his own expense. The Lake District National Park Authority are looking into digitising this information as it is important baseline information for the World Heritage Site and to make it available to all.

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