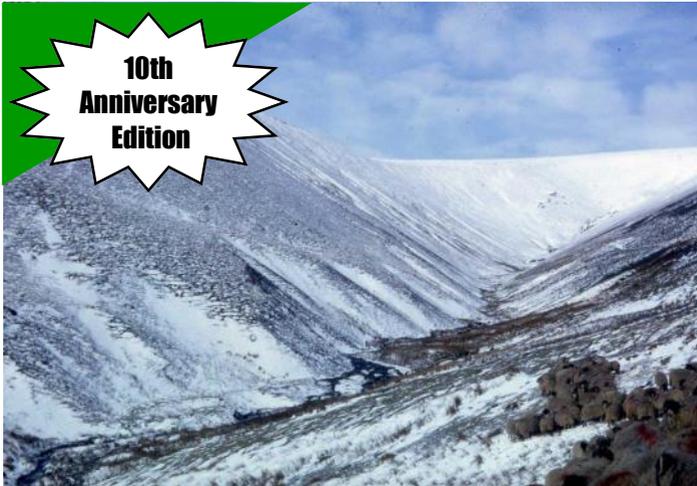


Affiliated with Lancashire & Northumberland
Newsletter Winter 2013/ 2014



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and CONFERENCE

Friday 7TH March 2014

The AGM will be followed by a talk from **George Monbiot**: Journalist, environmentalist, re-wilder and opinion former within the conservation movement.

Do join us - more details see page 15

Looking Forward,

In this newsletter, as well as looking forward, we are allowing ourselves a moment to reflect on the first 10 years of the Federation with views from some of the people who have been involved over that time. Having been involved from the start myself, it is pleasing to see the current stable financial circumstances that the Federation enjoys. However I think, above all, everyone involved over the years can be proud of the reputation the Federation has earned as one of the “go to” organisations, when views and input on issues to do with commons are required, be that from government organisations, the media or others concerned with commons matters.

Our main concerns currently revolve about the next round of the CAP and how this will affect hill farmers and commoners. Whilst it is good news that the SPS rates for SDA and non SDA land are to be harmonised, your Federation, alongside others has been campaigning to encourage Dera to adopt the proposed uplift in SPS on moorland which encompasses almost all common land. This movement of money up the hill is critical to underpin our fragile upland farming economy and to counter the impending removal of UELS. It also seems very likely that the new environmental land management schemes (NELMS) will be highly targeted, competitive and therefore difficult to get into. The new schemes will also expect to buy more environmental change thus putting a lid on production and cannot in my view be seen as an income stream that will be accessible to the majority of upland farmers.

We are currently planning our AGM. We can guarantee it will be interesting, lively and challenging. Our speaker George Monbiot is not a friend of hill farming or sheep. He has gone on record saying that the Lake District is one of the most depressing landscapes in Europe and the fells have been thoroughly “sheepwrecked”. We know that George Monbiot’s opinions are listened to within the conservation movement and by the general public, while the hill farmers’ voice is not widely heard. So we have created the opportunity for you, our members, to have a dialogue with him and explain how we have shaped the moorlands and countryside. We know that it is far from being a wildlife desert. So please come and listen and make your views heard.

Finally, as always I urge anyone with an interest in farming the commons of Cumbria to consider getting more involved with the Federation, I would recommend it as both an engaging and enlightening experience. I’m sure that with the input of members old and new it will go on being as vital and relevant to the needs of commoners for the next ten years!

Dave Smith, Chairman

To celebrate our 10th Anniversary we asked former Chairman and Administrators to tell us about their time at the Federation. Here’s what some of them said.

Harry Hutchinson: Chairman, 2003—05, 2008 - 09

The Federation grew out of an increasing concern that the opportunities and threats facing common land were not well understood among policy makers. The Federation was launched at a conference in 2003 and I was elected its first Chairman. Our first priority was to set our aims and objectives and get our constitution right. Enormous thanks to Tim Cartmell for his

work in drafting and re-drafting our constitution. At the same time we had to very quickly get up-to-speed with emerging policy, clarify our ideas based on our experience, formulate and agree our position on numerous issues such as stocking policy, overgrazing/undergrazing, the proposed commons legislation, and later decoupling, SPS, cross compliance and a whole load more buzz words. We then held meetings with Natural England (English Nature as it was) and Defra to explain who we were and our views.

Five years later, I took up the role of Chairman again. The issues hadn't that changed much, but the Federation was much better known and well respected and policy makers were seeking our views. I do believe that we are listened to and we have influenced policy towards common land for the better, albeit in a small way. This would not have happened without the Federation and the great team of committee members and administrators over the years. I would also like to express a special thanks to Andrew Humphries for his sterling work in getting the idea of the Federation off the ground, his continued input, support, invaluable help and good council over the years.

Kit Nicholson: Administrator, 2003

When I think back to the first years of the Federation, my first thought is of the impressive people who led the organisation. Andrew Humphries, of course, was so instrumental in gaining support and interest across such a wide range of people and organisations. His contribution is huge. Harry Hutchinson was an amazingly effective and energetic chairman. The committee members brought the combined experience of some of the wisest commoners, who have exceptional skills in working towards a consensus.

Other memories include the need to educate officials from Defra and English Nature (as it was in those days) on how commons and commoners work. There were one or two officials who understood commons. But they moved on within a few months. How many times did we have to explain that 'the owner of the common' could not be compared with a landowner? And how many times did we see the lights go on behind those officials' eyes, as they began to appreciate what commons are. The most effective educating sessions were on walks across the commons.

Behind the work of the committee, was the groundswell of concern from commoners across the county. My memory is of huge suspicion and anger towards English Nature. This seemed especially strong in the Lakes, though it also came from some of the Pennine commons. Those feelings came from a decade or more of decisions on agri-environment schemes that seemed arbitrary and unjustified. To most commoners, it seemed that the middle management of English Nature was

composed of ecologists hell bent on re-wilding the uplands. In some cases, I am sure that this was true.

Looking back it seems amazing that until 2003 there was no grass-roots-based organisation to speak up for commoners on issues that were of concern to them generally. The huge interest shown when the concept of a Federation was first put forward demonstrated the need for an umbrella organisation to represent the commoners' views at a national level, and to be accepted as such by other stakeholders.

Roger Connard: Administrator, 2004 -06

During my term as Administrator, perhaps the central challenge for the Federation was to try to convince government, environmental organisations and the public at large that common land, an asset in the modern world so highly valued in terms of landscape, nature and recreation, was largely the result of agricultural management by commoners over many generations; that livestock on commons were much more than a mere management tool to be deployed at the behest of other interests; and that the future well-being of common land was dependent primarily on the financial viability of commoning. It was recognised, of course, that in a number of cases there was a need for improved management, since many of the old management structures had disappeared during the twentieth century. For this reason, the Federation was actively engaged in monitoring and trying to improve the legislation then before Parliament. The Commons Act 2006, as it became, fell short of being the complete legislation that the Federation had hoped for, but at least it went part of the way and recognised the essential central role for commoners in any future management structures.

Administratively during this period of the Federation's development, the main challenge was to move from "free" membership (the cost of running the Federation in the early years had been covered by grant aid) to each member paying a small annual contribution. I am pleased to note that membership has held up well despite this change. I am also pleased to see how much the website has improved since those early days, since paying members rightly expect to be kept well-informed of what is being done on their behalf. Keeping still is never an option! Though inevitably there have been some disappointments, I know the Federation has come a long way since its first years and my good wishes go to it for the next ten.

Carl Walters: Chairman, 2006

10 years of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners! How time flies! I remember thinking it was a great idea when it was first suggested that commoners joined forces

to try to make their voice heard, and indeed it was. At the start a period of discovering just how many other people were talking about commons and in how many places commoning was being discussed, without a single commoner present, or even anyone who had the faintest idea what commoning was all about. The Federation at least addressed that problem but it often seemed an uphill struggle to get anyone to listen and to get those who did listen to understand and having done all that, all too often that person had moved on to another department! The same problem still exists, but it isn't as commonplace now as it was then. Nowadays those people and organisations generally have the Federation on their list of people to consult and finding the time to reply has become more challenging!

It has to be said that none of the Federation's achievements would have been possible without the likes of Andrew Humphries and Julia Aglionby and the list of excellent administrators we have been fortunate to have over the years. The vital contributions from members, committee members and chairmen have also played their part and need to continue for the Federation to carry on being effective, so make sure the committee know what you are thinking!

Fiona Southern: Administrator, 2006 - 2008

There were a great many issues that crossed my desk during my three years as Administrator but perhaps the two most significant were the implementation of the Commons Act and the introduction of Upland Entry Level Stewardship. The Federation's role in both was fundamental to ensuring benefits for commoners throughout Cumbria and beyond.

I began my post as Administrator almost exactly as the Commons Act entered statute in the middle of 2006 and worked closely with Carl Walters, the then Chairman, to explain to members what the Act would mean for them, particularly the changes to consent requirements for works on common, which had been simplified and made more relevant to modern day common management. We also worked with Cumbria County Council in lobbying for Cumbria to be one of the three pilot areas for the updating of the Commons Register. Unfortunately we were disappointed to be told that rollout in the county would not occur until 2011 – if only!!

In 2008 we successfully secured Defra funding for a study into the possible formation of a Commons Council for Cumbria. The work was undertaken by Julia Aglionby and the outcomes of this study are continuing to inform decisions about the future role of the Federation and the debate about Commons' Council status.

We were asked to represent the interests of upland commoners on Defra's upland

ELS hill farming group. This required a number of trips to Birmingham to lobby for commoners against stiff opposition from other upland farmers. This was perhaps the most successful aspect of my work and we were able to ensure that UELS would only be paid where commons were grazed to a minimum level by self-maintained, hefted flocks. Most crucially our lobbying secured the payment of an additional Common Land supplement of £5 per ha. There happened because the Federation explained the additional difficulties and hardships facing upland commoners and argued the case for the funds to be targeted at commons rather than more generally across the uplands.

I was fortunate to work with three different Chairs, Carl, Elizabeth Moore and Harry Hutchinson. All committed a considerable amount of their own time to benefit commoning and were unstinting in their support and advice.

Sarah Cattenach: Administrator, 2009

My time with the Federation was so short I am not sure what I can say other than I was very proud to be associated with the organisation and the people involved with it at the time. During my time we started to look at Commons Councils and how they could fit in with the Cumbrian Commons and benefit the graziers and owners of those areas. The people involved with the FCC are totally dedicated to helping and moving things forward, the passion and dedication to their community and each other is quite remarkable. They are such hard working individuals and give of their time so generously for the sake of themselves and their fellow farmers.

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE: UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

Once again we have been busy over the last six months representing and supporting the commoners of Cumbria. Below is a selection of the activities that we have been involved with.

Campaigning for an uplift in the Moorland rate. Defra has confirmed it will merge payment rates in the severely disadvantaged areas (SDA) (non-moorland) and lowland regions. This works out as a 21% increase on SDA land to €236/ha (196/ha) - up €41/ha (£34/ha). They have not yet confirmed an increase in the Moorland payments, saying they need to undertake further analysis and consultation before reaching a decision by the end of July 2014.

Most common land in Cumbria is above the moorland line. The loss of UELS will see the end of specialised support to the hills apart from future agri-environment schemes and it is unlikely that these will be universally available to all common land or moorland. We need to

persuade NFU to back hill farming and come out in favour of the modest uplift in the moorland rate. If you are a member of NFU, please can you make your voice heard to support livestock farming above the moorland line

Providing an expert voice to shape how the New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS) will work on commons. For the last six months we have provided practical input to a working group to examine how NELMS will be implemented on common land. It has been an interesting but difficult and often frustrating process. So far we have looked at the overall scheme design. When we more or less agree with what Defra/ Natural England are proposing and suggest some small tweaks to the design these are generally well received. But when we point out potential big flaws, this doesn't go down well. As yet they have not shared the detailed options with us. Rather than taking a partnership approach with we are concerned that decisions are made first and then communicated rather than developed together. We will continue trying to commons proof the new schemes.

TB pre-movement testing on commons: We responded critically to Defra's proposals to introduce impractical TB testing requirements for cattle movements to and from common land. The consultation is now closed and we expect the results of the consultation to be announced in the Spring.

Stocking rates on commons: Freedom of Information request: we are concerned that Natural England may wish continue reducing or maintain low stocking rates when an agri-environment scheme ends. We have started to gather information about what consents and restrictions are currently operating on common land to see if there is any common practice. Our first step was to submit a FOI to Natural England for copies of all consents given by Natural England (or its predecessors) under subsection (3)(a) of section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to any person or body to carry out a notifiable operation consisting of or relating to grazing on common land in Cumbria. Natural England was not able to give us this information within the 20 working days target and has asked for more time. We have agreed to this.

RSPB Naddle and Swindale farms: We continue to raise concerns with RSPB about their plans for a further reduction in sheep numbers on the two farms they tenant at Naddle and Swindale near Haweswater in partnership with United Utilities. These plans include removing sheep altogether from the common known as the Waters. We believe that this could have very serious and long term implications for neighbouring commoners and how they farm the commons. We have written letters to RSPB, attended meetings with commoners who are affected by RSPB's plans and talked to Directors and Board members of RSPB.

We are urging RSPB to take a long term view when making decisions about land and resource management. We would like to see RSPB engaging in a real sense with local commoners and hill farmers who have a wealth of knowledge and experience of the area.

A portrait of Bampton Common, Cumbria

This article has been written by Carl Walters, committee member for Lakes North Central

There are seven areas of common land in Bampton, on the eastern edge of the Lake District. They vary widely in size, history and topography. The largest is Bampton Common, open fell 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. It covers 2788 ha.

In 2000/2001 Bampton common joined an ESA scheme. The payment rate was £25/ Ha + £5 commons supplement. Around 5,178 sheep grazed the common at a stocking rate of approximately 0.86 ewes/ha.

In 2006, the Commoners' Association started negotiations for entry into a Higher Level Stewardship scheme. The UELS/HLS agreement was eventually signed in 2010! Currently, there are 14 active graziers and 2 landowners in the scheme. There are 16 hefts and a maximum of 3,650 sheep are allowed to graze in August, equivalent to 1.3 sheep /ha. The average stocking rate is 0.75 sheep/ ha - a reduction of over 1/3 from previous levels. The total payment is £60/Ha.

Other HLS conditions include a grazing calendar restricting monthly sheep numbers, minimum stocking levels, a shepherding plan to keep sheep off the blanket bog between November and March. A few horses are included in the UELS/HLS agreement, but no cattle graze the common, due to the fact that it serves as water catchment for the Haweswater reservoir. Sixty ha has been fenced off and planted with native trees to create woodland that in time will mirror the existing woodland on opposite side of the reservoir. Individual shrubs have been planted along water courses and in areas where the ground is judged to be unstable.

Approximate sheep calendar:

20th Nov- gather for tugging. Sheep returned to fell 4 to 6 weeks later.

Weekly shepherding of sheep off the blanket bog areas through till March.

February gather for scanning and return singles to fell

20th April-gather for lambing. April- gimmer hoggs returned to fell

May- ewes and lambs returned to fell
20th July- gather for shearing. July- ewes and twins returned to fell
Sept/Oct- gather to wean lambs and take draft ewes off.

The active graziers recognise that they are luckier than some, because United Utilities UU (part owner of the common and owner of a number of farms around the common) agreed to undertake the woodland creation. This included consultation on where to site the trees, obtain secretary of state consent for the fence, fence construction, planting, beating up and ultimately the removal of the fence. UU undertook this work as part of their Sustainable Catchment Management (SCAMP) project to increase the quality of the water supply to Manchester.

The other commons in the area are Helton fell (538.25 ha) and Askham fell (225.5 ha) with 7 active graziers. Butterwick Green (16 ha) and Knipe moor/Knipe scar (119.5ha) with 4 active graziers and Yewsmire and the Howes. Also Bomby green (5.5 ha), which unlike the other commons it is not grazed. Recently a management group of local volunteers formed to manage the green for wildlife.

The Bampton and Askham Commoners' Association meets once a year and covers all the commons mentioned, all are in UELS/HLS schemes and have separate grazing groups. The Association also incorporates 'cottagers' who are householders with rights attached to their properties (often for ponies, hens, geese and sometimes for small numbers of cattle or sheep and mostly un-used). The constitution is fairly basic and covers use, management of animals, gathering, weed/bracken control, animal health and welfare, procedures at meeting and election of officers. Membership subs for Federation of Cumbria Commoners are taken out of the HLS/UELS money (by agreement between the commoners).

The Association has two main concerns for future. First is the woodland creation and management. Will UU keep their side of the deal, maintain the fences and remove them when the permission ends and, more importantly, will we want them removed? Will unfenced woodland be a nuisance?

Second is stock numbers. If this current UELS/HLS scheme cannot be replaced by a similar agri-environment agreement when it ends, then the graziers will have to rely on increased sales livestock to maintain income levels. Will they be able to restock quickly enough and/or will they want to restock? Will the sheep just disappear from the fells? Indeed will there still be enough commoners farming in 20 years time?

Part 1 of Commons Act 2006 is to be implemented in Cumbria

The Federation welcomes the long-awaited news that the registers of common land throughout England are to be brought up-to-date. The short WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT was issued on Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006 by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Defra on 9 January 2014

"I am pleased to announce the next stage in the implementation of Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006, under which the registers of both common land and town and village greens can be amended. Part 1 will be fully implemented in the counties of Cumbria and North Yorkshire. These counties have been chosen because they have the highest hectareage of common land and are amongst the most agriculturally active counties in England, in terms of commoning.

Many properties were wrongly registered when the registers were compiled in the late 1960s under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and Commons Registration Authorities have not had the power to amend them. The result is that those properties have been adversely affected for over 40 years. This has had a knock-on effect on the owners' ability to sell those properties. I wish to enable this situation to be resolved so I intend to implement section 19(2)(a) and paragraphs 6-9 of Schedule 2 to the Act throughout England.

Section 19(2)(a) allows for the correction of mistakes made by Commons Registration Authorities when recording entries in the registers. Paragraphs 6-9 of Schedule 2 allow for the de-registration of land that was wrongly registered as common land or town or village green.

The question of further implementation of Part 1 in England will be considered again as soon as resources permit, which I expect to be within the life of the next Parliament at the earliest"

What does Part 1 mean for commoners in Cumbria?

The following article was written by Sam McAlister partner at Minihan McAlister Solicitors who specialise in agricultural law. Sam has a particular interest in commons. www.minihanmcalister.co.uk

On 9 January 2014, DEFRA ministers announced further implementation of Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006. Part 1 aims to update and improve the registration system for common land and is likely to come into force in Cumbria in October 2014. It will finally be possible to update grossly out of date common land registers – mistakes made nearly 50 ago can be corrected, land incorrectly registered as common land can

be deregistered and, in relation to rights held in gross (i.e. not attached to land), there will be a mechanism for ensuring that the registers are kept up to date in the future.

However, Part 1 is not without its shortfalls. Two problems have been highlighted in previous issues of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners' newsletters (see Spring / Summer 2012 and Autumn / Winter 2012) and these are yet to be rectified or resolved. These back issues can be downloaded from the Federation of Cumbria Commoners' website.

To date, there has been no definitive record of common land and rights. The Commons Registration Act 1965 required (with limited exceptions) all common land and rights to be registered. However, the 1965 Act contained a number of deficiencies which have caused legal uncertainty and prevented effective management of common land. Commoners in Cumbria must be alive to the fact that out of date registers and register entries should now be updated. Those who have gained rights, or extinguished them, but have failed to amend the registers as they should have, must not miss the boat. Those claiming rights under a commons register entry which includes land in column 5 which they do not own must sort that out or lose a proportion of their rights. If the registers are not updated during the 'transitional application period' (which is likely to be a period of 2-3 years, starting in October 2014), those rights that should have been registered may become extinguished and previously extinguished rights, if the land to which they used to attach remains on the register, will be revived.

Effective implementation of Part 1 requires active participation from those with common rights and commoners are urged to keep an eye out for further updates from the Federation of Cumbria Commoners via the website and newsletter and also from DEFRA. You are strongly advised to get your entries checked out. Your land agent or solicitor should be able to help, or refer you to someone who can. If you do not know whether or not your rights are correctly registered and want to check your entries yourself, copies of the registers can be obtained from the Commons Registration Authority. If your rights are attached to land, you will need a copy of the OS plan 2nd edition showing the fields to which the rights are attached in column 5 of the register entry. These maps can be obtained from Archive Centres or from www.old-maps.co.uk.

Both the Commons Registration Authority and the Archive Centre in Carlisle are at Lady Gillford's House, Petteril Bank Road, Carlisle, CA1 3AJ (telephone 01228 221026 / 01228 227285). There are also Archive Centers in Kendal, Barrow and Whitehaven, details of which can be found at www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives/archivecentres.

What size is your common? Do you and RPA agree?

Notional Areas and Single Payments: a cautionary tale from Mungrisdale Common CL 293.

This article has been written by Andrew Humphries

Single Payments (SPS) to individual claimants on common grazings are based on a notional share of the common. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) makes the payment by calculating the proportion of registered rights held by a claimant stated as a notional area. The Oxford dictionary defines notional as: ***Knowledge...purely speculative, not based on fact...***

The term notional is appropriate since securing an accurate figure for the area of a common can present a challenge. The following is a tale from Mungrisdale which has taken more than 18 months of patience and persistence to sort out.

In November 2011 the notification letter from RPA in respect of the notional area allocation for the Low Beckside claim on Mungrisdale common was based on the size of the common as 1,235 ha. But in the 1950s, the Royal Commission on Common Land reported the common as 1,783 ha (4404 acres) – a difference of more than 500 ha.

In early 2012, I began the process of questioning this apparent difference in size. The RPA helpline staff though willing were not trained in common land issues so little progress could be made. I next went to the Commons Registration office (CRO) in Carlisle who proved more informative and their GIS check showed a calculated area of 1815 ha - some 46% greater than the figure used by RPA. However despite recognising that this was an error, the CRO were legally unable to alter the register since Part 1 of the 2006 Act dealing with the rectification of errors has only operated in a number of pilot areas, not including Cumbria. *(This has since changed and corrections to the register can be made from October 2014 onwards.)*

A number of enquiries later eventually led me to the RPA Land Change Detection/ Geographical Information Services unit in Exeter. They produced a GIS check and concluded 'as far as RPA is concerned the size of Mungrisdale Common is 1815 ha and not 1235 ha. I was then told to take this issue up at Sheffield where I was informed the payments calculations could be revisited. But this was subsequently rescinded as the RPA payments section only either recognised the area on the registers, or that recalculated by the Aberystwyth Biological Survey. I was not ready to give up and my next step was to get a letter of support from my MP, Rory Stewart. After a significant delay the Agency CEO and two government ministers asserted in unison that there

was no case to answer and that I should commission and pay for an independent survey. This I did not pursue since the problem was not of the commoners making.

I then asked Aberystwyth if they could find the detailed area table in the Biological Survey. They couldn't, furthermore the research unit no longer exists. However a few days later the Librarian rang and said the survey showed a recalculation of the common to 1753 ha. This was not used by the RPA despite what had been claimed.

I returned to Sheffield to reactivate the process. The Director of Operations gave me an assurance that an investigation would follow, but two months later nothing had transpired. A colleague board member of the Foundation for Common Land advised me to ask for a full disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act. Which I did. This generated some action, progress accelerated, but then the request was put on hold pro-tem. Recognition of the problem seemed to have taken root, but more months passed with no resolution in sight. The Foundation for Common Land stepped in and asked Simon Lunnis of RPA to get involved and he has proved very helpful. I was assured that the payments would be recalculated back to 2005 and the claimants informed. I reminded the agency that rectifying the payments was a key outcome, but implementing lessons learned was at least as important.

I am happy to report that the process of calculating and making the back payments is progressing well. RPA are also considering what lessons need to be learnt from this case. These include the need for a radical change to the process of complaint resolution; the role of face-to-face contact; training for RPA staff; the process for re-mapping commons. I also believe that commoners' associations, the Federation and the Foundation can play an important role in helping claimants and the Agency.

This has been a long and complex exercise and highlights the lack of access to a timely and transparent system of administration. Agency staff and claimants should be able to resolve most matters relatively informally. Success should not depend on a Freedom of Information request.

The lessons I take from this case is just how it rests on individuals to be vigilant that the RPA has got the figures right and pursue and make the case. RPA should recognise the potential for error and the need to be open to questions and respond in a timely and customer-focussed manner. Local commoners' associations, the Federation and the Foundation are important links in a chain and can help to make a difference. Common rights holders need to share information and work collectively on governance and administration, just as they do on the physical management of the common. Graziers are independent spirits who also need to value interdependence in protecting their rights.

Brendon Commons to have the first Commons Council

Congratulation to the Brendon Commoners who are to have the first-ever commons council under the Commons Act 2006. Brendon Common is an agriculturally active common located in the Devon portion of the Exmoor National Park . It is principally a heather moorland and extends to some 1,380 hectares .

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ran a consultation during October 2103 to gauge the level of support for such a council. The result was that 89 per cent of the 53 respondents supported the proposal for a council. The Secretary of State was satisfied that substantial support has been shown. The next stage is to appoint a returning officer to facilitate the first elections and appointments, so that the Council can be fully operational from day-one of its existence

Our work to establish an umbrella commons council in Cumbria continues. We have a much bigger job on hand as we cover many commons and a large number of people who have legal interests in the land and are likely to be involved in, or affected by the commons council. We are still working on the proposal to submit an Establishment Order to the Secretary of State. We are in contact with the Brendon commoners and will be following how they get on. and hope to learn from their experiences.

Obituary: John Udale Jackson, 1942—2013

Born at Weasdale, Newbiggin on Lune, John grew up on the family farm. He helped his father from an early age with the farm's prize winning Rough Fell sheep and soon began showing in his sheep with great success. But other commitments curtailed his showing. He took over from his dad in 1968, shepherding his the sheep on the slopes of the Howgills overlooking the infant river Lune. John also became involved in other activities. He was chairman of the Ravenstonedale Agricultural Society for 19 years, a member and vice chair of the Rough Fell Sheep Breeders Association for many years and on the Northern Committee of the National Sheep Association for almost three decades. John like to help young people and wasn't adverse to change if it was done for the right reasons.

John was well equipped to represent commoners interests with his practical and wide -ranging knowledge of commoning. He knew how the hill system was managed to the best effect.

He will be missed as a Committee member of the Federation. He rarely missed a meeting and his contributions were always pertinent and to the point. His comments, ready smile and his constant good humour made him a valued member of our Federation. Our sympathy goes to his wife Fanny to his children, Joyce, Pauline, Hazel and David, his seven grandchildren and to the rest of his family.

Annual General Meeting
Friday 7th March 2013
1.30—4.00 pm
Eden Room, Newton Rigg, Penrith

The AGM will be followed by a talk from **George Monbiot**, environmentalist and political campaigner, who will outline his views on re-wilding and his vision for the commons of Cumbria

His most recent book: *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* focuses on the concept of rewilding the planet. Monbiot states "rewilding offers a positive environmentalism. In the book, Monbiot attacks sheep farming as "a slow-burning ecological disaster, which has done more damage to the living systems of this country than either climate change or industrial pollution. Yet scarcely anyone seems to have noticed.

Come and listen to his ideas and take part in a Q & A session.

To reserve a place and for catering purposes please let us know if you are planning to attend. Please contact Viv Lewis, Administrator of the Federation of Cumbria Commoners on 01931 713335, or text 07748185049, or e-mail viv@cumbriacommoners.org.uk

Free to members otherwise £5 payable on the door

Invitation for New Committee members

It is time for our annual call for nominations to fill vacancies on the committee and thus ensure that the Federation continues to be robust and effective.

We are particularly looking for a representative for **Crosby** which includes the following commons: Ravenstonedale (Harter & Green Fell), Crosby Ravensworth, Little Asby, Birbeck Common, Crosby Garrett,, Roundthwaite, Bretherdale Bank, Bretherdale Common, Hardendale Fell, Bank Moor, Hardendale Nab, Northside Common, Harkeld Common, Little Asby (Asby Scar), Little Asby (Grange Scar), Little Asby (Outrakes), Ashby.

Please get in touch and we'll send you a nomination form. Alternatively, if you know a member who is suitable, please encourage them to apply. If you want to find out more before committing yourself, ring Dave Smith, our Chairman.

Federation of Cumbria Commoners Committee 2014

Chairman	Dave Smith	Eastern Fells	017683 61333
Vice Chair	Pauline Blair	Non-regional	01946 861630
Committee			
John Atkinson		Lakes South West	01229 885663
Ernest Coulthard		Kirkby Stephen	01768 371926
Harry Hutchinson		Howgills	01539 620635
Carl Walters		Lakes North Central	01931 713248
Duncan Ellwood		Lakes West	01946 841344
John Rowland		Lakes North	01768 779246
Joe Relfh		Lakes South Central	01768 777675
Vacant		Crosby	
William Steele		Non-regional	01786 341436
Ian Gorst		Lancashire co-opted	01524 770509
Charles Raine		Northumberland co-opted	01434 609000
Robert Benson		Owner Rep co-opted	01931 712577
John Turner (Treasurer)		Owner Rep co-opted	01931 712671
Julia Aglionby		Co-opted	01697 470016
Andrew Humphries		Co-opted	01228 564140

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