

6 Kerrow, Metherin and Pendrift Downs

6.1 Situation

Kerrow Downs are situated approximately one and a half miles north-east of Blisland churchtown and adjoins Metherin Downs to the south. Together they are registered as Common Land no. 184 and are estimated to be 347 acres. The downs were formerly divided into two tracts of land known as Kerrow Downs and Black Downs.²² Pendrift Downs are situated 1 mile north of Blisland churchtown and adjoin Kerrow Downs to the west. Pendrift Downs are Common Land no.185 and is 205 acres.

Today, the registered area recorded as Kerrow Downs consists of three discreet tracts of downland, although the only part which is traditionally known as Kerrow Downs are the large triangular area of downland that stretches from its boundary with Metherin Downs, north to Delford (Delfey) bridge on the De Lank River. This area is bounded by the inbye land at Kerrow Farm in the south-west, the hedge on the western side of the road leading from Penquite to Delford bridge and the inbye land of Moss Farm and Bradford to the east. The registered area also includes a thin strip of land on the south side of the De Lank River between Delford bridge and Bradford, (locally known as the Parade), and another irregular area of land to the south-west of South Penquite, including Penquite Marsh, the Carwen china clay area and the Beacon. The boundary on the western side adjoins Pendrift Downs.

Metherin Downs an 'L-shaped' area of downland, bounded on the north side by boundary stones nos. 184/10 and 184/16, stand beside a low earth bank that divides Metherin Downs from Kerrow Downs. In the south and east, the downs are bounded by the inbye land belonging to Metherin, Carbaglet and Treswigger, while to the north by the inbye land at Moss.

Pendrift Downs are bounded in the north and the north-west by the De Lank River and its tributary, which also acts as the parish boundary between Blisland and St Breward. The western and southern boundaries are bounded by hedges and stone walls throughout their length, dividing the downs from the inbye land of Pendrift and Tregenna.

²² Parish Tithe Map for Blisland, 1840.

6.2 Landscape/topography

Both Kerrow Downs and Metherin Downs consist of undulating ground with gently rolling slopes, while Pendrift Downs slopes sharply running down to the De Lank river. From the Penquite side of Kerrow Downs there are distant views west to the Camel Estuary with, to the east, Manor Common and to the north-east, views of Carbilly and Carkees Tors. At the high spur of land known as the Beacon that rises to 222 metres with the land falling away on three sides, there are good views southward to Blisland church tower, nestled between the trees, with the A.30 and Cardinham Downs on the horizon. Also to the south and west are Lavethan and Shell woods while in the distance to the west are the parishes of Helland and St Mabyn. To the south-east there are views of Colvannick Tor at Temple and to the east Trehudreth Downs.

These areas of common land have a more diverse landscape than Trehudreth and Greenbarrow Downs or Manor Common. Kerrow Downs has short grass with widespread areas of mature gorse and bracken and is overwhelmed by gorse on its summit. Recently, one area of gorse on Kerrow Downs has been cleared and there are plans to cut further areas in the future. The small finger of land along the De Lank river consists of river bank, marsh and small trees. There is a further area of marshy ground, to the south of South Penquite, known as Penquite Marsh. Near Carwen, the area known as the Beacon has short rough grass on its summit but is engulfed with gorse and bracken on its slopes. At Metherin Downs, the short rough pasture is mixed with gorse and bracken, while the low lying area around Carbaglet is marshy. Pendrift Downs has a more stony landscape with outcrops of granite, but is also thick with mature gorse bushes, bracken and Hawthorn trees.

6.3 Archaeology/industry

On the summit of Kerrow Downs can be seen the remains of prehistoric settlements and field systems including stone and earth boundary hedges. There are also the remains of at least two Bronze Age round barrows. On Pendrift Downs there is also evidence of early occupation in the form of hut circles and also later field systems. The most prominent landscape feature, formerly a logan stone (rocking stone), is the Jubilee Rock. This massive granite boulder that has lost its additional rocking stone was carved in 1810 with the arms of

George III on the top, with additional images of Britannia and the Cornish shield of fifteen bezants on the west or front face. On the sides of the rock can be viewed the arms of some of the families mentioned in this report, including both the Molesworths and Morsheads. In addition there are also the arms of the Boscawen and Rogers families. The Boscawen and Molesworth families the joint landowners of Pendrift at the time. There are also Masonic insignia and symbols of Industry, Agriculture, Plenty and Commerce. The whole work was carried out by local workmen and was the inspiration of Lieutenant John Rogers, son of John Rogers of Pendrift. The rock was carved to celebrate the golden jubilee of George III and to infuse patriotic spirit during the recruitment of volunteers to serve in the Napoleonic Wars. The Jubilee Rock has sloping ground on three sides and commands widespread views of the countryside including the Camel Estuary.

Early industry includes evidence of tin streaming on the river De Lank between Delford bridge and Bradford and the remains of China Clay workings near Carwen. Although there is evidence of stone splitting on Kernow Downs, far more can be seen at Pendrift, with the major granite quarries of De Lank and Hantergantick to the north across the valley.

6.4 Kerrow Downs

The settlement of Kerrow is first recorded in 1356 as *Est Cayrou* in the Assize (Plea) Rolls (Gover: 1948, 94). *Ker, Cair, Gare* or *Gear* is Cornish for 'round' or 'fortification' with Kerrow the plural form (Padel: 1985, 50-2), presumably referring to more than one fortification in this area.

Fifteen boundary stones were identified on Kerrow Downs and the additional registered areas. Of these, twelve survive and three are missing. Boundary stones nos. 184/6 and 184/7 are missing in the area known as the Beacon, while stone no. 184/15 beside the De Lank River, east of Delford Bridge has not been found.

Four of the surviving boundary stones, nos. 184/1, 184/2, 184/3 and 184/4, mark Penquite Marsh to the south-east of South Penquite Farm. Stone no. 184/3 is unmarked, while the remaining three stones display **MX** for the Manor of Blisland on one face and **HW** on their reverse face. The **H** and the **W** appear to have been carved at different periods, they are

believed to represent Hayward and Wallis. The **W** is much more worn and less clearly defined than the **H** on each stone. The only boundary stone to survive at the Beacon, no. 184/5, displays an **H** on one face and an **MX** on its reverse. Four stones still mark the old boundary division across Kerrow Downs, nos. 184/11, 184/17, 184/18 and 184/19. Both boundary stones 184/18 and 184/19 show **MX** on their south face, while on 184/18, the north face displays **HW**, and on 184/19 just an **H** is shown. Boundary stone no. 184/11 displays an **M** on its south-east face and **WH** on its north-west face, while stone no. 184/17 has been re-used as a gatepost and the letters are indistinguishable, being set in against the hedge.

Finally, at the northern end of the downs, along the De Lank River between Delford Bridge and Bradford, are stones nos. 184/12, 184/13 and 184/14, all of which display **MX** on one face and an **H** on the other.

6.5 Metherin Downs

Only four boundary stones were identified on maps during the desktop survey, and of these only two survive. Boundary stones nos. 184/10 and 184/16, that mark the northern boundary with Kerrow, survive and display an **M** on one face only. Stones nos. 184/8 and 184/9, have not been discovered. The area where these stones stood is heavily overgrown with gorse.

6.6 Pendrift Downs

The settlement of Pendrift is first recorded in 1318 as *Pendref* in the Episcopal Registers of Exeter (Gover: 1948, 95). The name is Cornish and contains the place-name elements *pen* (an) *dre*, a phrase meaning *pen an tre* 'top of the village' (Padel: 1985, 181). Pendrift is registered as Common Land no.185 and consists of 205 acres.

No boundary stones have been identified on these downs, probably because a major nature boundary, the river De Lank, acts as a boundary on the north and northwest sides of the downs, while the western and southern boundaries are marked by a strong stock-proof stone wall and hedge.

In addition, there is a carved gatepost in the hamlet of Pendrift, just below the downs and although strictly not within the survey area, it was felt worthwhile recording here. The gatepost is situated at SX 10424 74513, at an entrance to a derelict cottage and garden. The post is symmetrically shaped with a pyramidal top and has the Roman numerals from top to bottom reading *IIXCCCC0V*, as a date this does not appear to make sense.

6.7 Analysis

The desktop survey revealed nineteen boundary stones altogether on Kerrow and Metherin Downs, with none on Pendrift Downs. Out of this nineteen, twelve survive on Kerrow Downs and two on Metherin Downs, leaving a total of seven missing. The Blisland parish tithe map shows ten of the nineteen boundary stones were in existence by 1840. Of these, three stones are on the area known as the Beacon, two on Penquite Marsh and seven divide the present Kerrow Downs into two discreet parcels of land (see fig.12).

Fig. 13 A copy of the Blisland Tithe Map 1840, showing the division of Kerrow Down and Black Down.

The tithe map clearly shows a boundary marked by boundary stones or posts running across Kerrow Downs from the south-west at Penquite Marsh to the north-east, west of Bradford. The top or northern area of downland is named Black Down, while the south part is known as Kerrow Down. Below this, to the south, a dashed-line running parallel to this boundary indicates an old boundary bank that divides Metherin Down from Kerrow Down.

The surviving stones dividing Black Down from Kerrow Down display both the letters **W** for Wallis and **H** for Hayward on their north-east face; the letter **W** is much more worn and was probably carved on the stones prior to the Hayward mark. Documentary evidence confirms that Hayward acquired this land after the death of Wallis. The reverse face displays either the letter **M** for Molesworth or **MX** for the manor of Blisland. Here there does not appear to be any consistency; but as Molesworth held the manor of Blisland, either mark was used.

This is made more clear on the tithe map schedule, where the area known as Black Down, parcel no.1780 on the map was under the ownership of John Wallis; he in turn leased it to Zachariah Rogers, while a John Harris was the occupier. Although the tithe map records this area as Black Down, the tithe map schedule records it as Black Pool Common. There are two

pools on the north side of this tract of land and the area is still known locally as 'Blackapool'.²³ Black Down is recorded as being 51 acres, 2 rods and 20 perches.

The parcel of land, no.105, on the tithe map known as Kerrow Down was owned by Sir William Molesworth in 1840 and according to the TA schedule was leased to Ann Lean and occupied by Jane Lanxon, the land measured 44 acres, 3 rods, 35 perches. Metherin Downs or Metherin Common, as it was recorded on the tithe map and schedule, was parcel no.122 and was also owned by Sir William Molesworth and leased to Ann Lean. It measured 42 acres, 0 rods, 3 perches.

Today, Black Down no longer exists as a discreet area of common land, and the whole area is known and registered as Kerrow Downs. It is clear again, that Hayward, who acquired the land from Wallis, added his initial to the boundary stones that already existed.

None of the four boundary stones identified on Metherin Downs by the desktop survey are shown on the tithe map of 1840. Boundary stones nos. 184/10 and 184/16 were both discovered lying down beside the old boundary bank and have recently been re-erected beside this bank.²⁴ Each one has the letter **M** for Molesworth on its south-east face, indicating that Molesworth was the landowner of Metherin Downs. However, these boundary stones don't appear to have been erected at the same time, only 184/16 is recorded on the 1880 map. Furthermore, the shape of the boundary stones are different and also the style of the letter **M** carved on each. As well as marking the boundary between Kerrow Downs and Metherin, they also indicate a boundary for grazing rights. Another two boundary stones, nos. 184/8 and 184/9 that no longer exist, appear to have defined a small area of Metherin Downs that was in separate ownership.

The boundary stones on the narrow strip of land between Delford bridge and Bradford are marked with an **MX** on the outside and a **H** on the inside, indicating that this strip of land was owned by Hayward, while the surrounding land was owned by the manor of Blisland. These stones do not appear on the TA map, but three of them (nos. 184/12, 184/13 and 184/14)

²³ The name Blackapool was mentioned in conversation with Mr Morley Rowe of Higher Metherin.

²⁴ Boundary stones, no's 184/10 and 184/16 were erected on Wednesday 9th November 2005.

are recorded on the 1880 Ordnance Survey maps, suggesting that they were set up between 1840 and 1880. Boundary stone 184/15 is only shown on the 1907 map, suggesting that it was erected later than the other three.

Three further boundary stones were identified at the Beacon during the desktop assessment, all of which, are recorded on the tithe map (nos. 184/5, 184/6 and 184/7), although today only one, no.184/5 survives. It was discovered lying down in bracken beside the road into Carwen and has recently been re-erected.²⁵ The boundary stone displays a **H** on its western face (Beacon side) and an **MX** on its east side (Carwen side) suggesting that at the time they were set up James Hayward owned the Beacon, while some of the surrounding land was owned by Sir William Molesworth for the Manor of Blisland.

²⁵ *ibid*