

Rosenannon Downs Reserve
Archaeological Assessment
A Report to the Cornwall Wildlife Trust
with Draft Map.

Peter Herring, B.A., M.Phil., AIFA

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Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Cornwall County Council

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Maps (at rear of report)

- 1 Location of reserve
- 2 Location of sites

1 Introduction

1.1 Archaeological involvement in the Wild Cornwall Project

The Cornwall Archaeological Unit has been commissioned by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust to prepare a preliminary archaeological and historical assessment of its nature reserve on Rosenannon Downs.

The assessment proceeds from rapid identification of archaeological remains and summary characterisation of the overall historic landscape within the reserve to the preparation of management recommendations to conserve, consolidate and, where appropriate, enhance archaeological sites and historic landscape character. These recommendations will be expected to guide the preparation of the Wildlife Trust's management plan.

1.2 Method statement

A rapid desk-top study was carried out for the reserve. This was confined to material available in the offices of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, and Cornwall County Council's Planning Directorate.

It included consultation of the Cornwall Sites and Monuments Record, and the mapping, text and matrices of the 1994 Historic Landscape Characterisation. Aerial photographs, historic maps and secondary sources (papers and books etc) were studied to identify sites within the reserves and to help understand their landscape history.

Field visit was very rapid (involving a little more than an hour) and necessarily involved little or no recording. The reserve was only partially examined (the overgrown wooded area south of the well was not visited). Important features identified during the desk-top study were verified on the ground. General condition of sites and historic character were broadly assessed.

2 Rosenannon Downs Reserve

2.1 Location, geology, soils, topography and vegetation

Rosenannon Downs (covering 111.2 ha, centred at SW 955 675) lies to the north of Rosenannon hamlet on the southern flank of St Breock Downs in St Wenn parish. The reserve was leased by Cornwall Wildlife Trust in 1999 for 10 years from TC Knowles and JM Moorcroft. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Cornwall Nature Conservation Site (R/NC 15.3), an Area of Great Landscape Value and an Area of Great Historic Value. The reserve is used by local people as a quiet space.

Geology is Staddon Grit, largely unfossiliferous sandstones, thin limestones, silty-bedded mudstones and intraformational conglomerates, believed to be of the Emsian Age, with the southern part of the site on Devonian Meadfoot Beds of slate grit and thin limestone (Adams 1999). There are Quaternary deposits of alluvium, head and valley gravel in the southern valley. Soils are of Hafren series of loamy permeable upland soils over rock with a wet peaty surface horizon on the higher open ground and Denbigh 2 series of well-drained fine loamy soils on the lower ground to the south. Western heath covers most of the downland area of the reserve, with mixed scrub at the eastern and southern edges and in the southern valley. A valley bog has formed around the stream on the eastern side of the downs. Heathland birds like snipe, curlew and stonechat enjoy the downs.

2.2 Historic landscape characterisation

In the Historic Landscape Characterisation of 1994 (Cornwall County Council 1996) the downland part of the reserve was included in the Upland Rough Ground Zone and the lower part of the valley was incorporated into an area of Anciently Enclosed Land. The more detailed work undertaken for this survey confirms this general characterisation for the downlands but would place the valley in the Steep Sided Valley Zone with woodland and wells etc being characteristic.

3 Archaeological and Historical Summary

3.1 Prehistoric

The summit area of the downs contains an important complex of prehistoric ritual monuments. Three substantial Bronze Age barrows (26122.01, 02, and .03) dominate the landscape here, their furzier and darker vegetation helping them stand out from the background heathland. Each has been subjected to robbing (central pits with some upthrow) but each is also well-preserved, enabling original forms to be discerned. One is a simple bowl barrow (26122.02), another is a bowl barrow with a kerb of largely quartzite stones (26122.03) and the third is a platform barrow, possibly rimmed and with an eccentrically placed mound (26122.01). All three are Scheduled Monuments (part of Cornwall 476). Such barrows are normally dated to the 2nd Millennium BC and were used for a variety of rituals, not always including burial or despatch of dead people. (Many fully excavated large barrows in Cornwall produced no evidence of burial or cremation of human remains; Herring and Smith 1991, 21.) These took place within usually circular spaces defined by stones, posts, walling, or ditches, or combinations of these, which may be regarded as having been considered by their creators as more meaningful or sacred than the land beyond. At some time, presumably once the rituals were considered complete, the 'sacred space' was sealed by the construction of the covering mound that survives today. The form of this mound could also be complex, indicating that its construction and subsequent use was also filled with meaning. One of the subsequent uses (whether intentional or not) would probably have been to confirm a community's association with land.

A possible earlier, Neolithic, long cairn was identified in the present survey (60341). It lies immediately to the east of the easternmost barrow (26122.03) and may be overlain (and thus post-dated) by it. It survives as a low stony mound c22m long and 8m wide, orientated almost due east; its eastern end has been disturbed, perhaps by people rifling chambers or other structures (other Cornish long cairns have also had their eastern, or business ends, similarly disturbed: Kit Hill, Bearah, Catshole). Long cairns have only been recognised in Cornwall in the last twenty years (see Johnson and Rose 1994) and there are still less than ten recorded. This one would be the first on St Breock Downs; the nearest ones being on Mitchell Downs and on Bodmin Moor. They are among the earliest monuments constructed by people in Britain (4th or 3rd Millennia BC) and seem to have been venues for communal ritual activity, usually centred on stone-built chambers. Disposal of human remains does seem to have been an important element in these rituals.

A number of other Bronze Age barrows survive on St Breock Downs, along with a stone row (Nine Maidens) and several particularly impressive menhirs (standing stones). As well as the three Bronze Age round barrows noted above, there are other certain, probable, and possible round barrows within the reserve. The certain barrow (60342) was discovered during the present survey on a southern spur from the downs; it has been partly cut into by a modern quarry but is otherwise a well-preserved platform barrow. A small circular mound (60343) immediately NW of one of the three main barrows (26122.01) is probably a small satellite cairn. Towards the west end of the reserve's summit is a low platform (50574) first

recognised by Andy Young of CAU while studying aerial photos; this may also be a small barrow. A number of other mounds previously identified as possible barrows (26122.06, 52024, and 52025) appear on ground inspection not to be so.

The prehistoric remains have survived so well on Rosenannon Downs because it has been subjected to minimal post-prehistoric disturbance. It may reasonably be supposed that other barrows existed in the more improved ground immediately to the east and west of the reserve. The great east-west ridge of St Breock Downs would have been a significant landscape feature in prehistoric times, closing off views from low ground but offering extensive views to those who climbed its sides. There are particularly good views NE towards the important Roughtor area of Bodmin Moor and south to the Hensbarrow uplands.

3.2 Medieval

There are important and extensive medieval features in the reserve which may be considered to be essentially medieval in its extent, being the area of common land (60347) used by the several farming households of the medieval hamlet of Rosenannon. These households can be expected to have turned their livestock onto the downs for summer grazing (typically from May day to Halloween in Cornwall) but there is also archaeological evidence for the cutting of turf (peat) for domestic fuel (60348), both in the deep valley bogs of the south-eastern slopes and also the shallow blanket bog which probably covered the summit and higher slopes. The principal evidence for the latter is a single turf stead (60348) at the summit. If no blanket bog survives now then it is likely that medieval or post-medieval residents of Rosenannon have skimmed it off with their breast spades. Other uses of the commons would have been as sources of furze (fuel and horse fodder), wild fruits and animals, and possibly of building stone.

The eastern side of the downs seems to be defined by a medieval pasture boundary, sinuous in its line and a Cornish Hedge in its form, which separated the Cransworth commons from Rosenannon. Rosenannon's northern side was apparently unfenced until the 20th century so it may be presumed that the livestock turned out here intermixed with those of adjoining unfenced commons, notably those of Pawton to the north and Borlase to the west. A large bank in the valley (50566) may have been built in the medieval period to keep livestock grazing the downs away from the southern marshes. It is possible that a depression near the west end of the summit downs was created as a watering hole or dewpond for livestock grazing the downs, saving them from the walk down to the southern streams.

One of Cornwall's best-preserved strip field systems lies on the south-western slopes of the downs (26153). Low stony banks separate at least forty long narrow strips which run across the contour. These would have been used by the tenants at Rosenannon to obtain just one or two crops (probably of rye or oats given the marginality of the land) before the deal or hurdle fencing surrounding the strips was removed and the area returned to rough grazing. A number of small stone clearance heaps confirms that the ground was cultivated. The use of strips confirms that there were several tenants in the hamlet. It is not clear what are the dates and functions of some scrappy remnants of banks on the summit of the downs (60344) but their poor condition suggests they may be tentatively placed in the medieval period, if not the prehistoric.

To the east of the road in the valley is a medieval chapel site, allegedly dedicated to St Mary Magdalene (26117), and no doubt located here to sanctify a spring of pure water which appears to have had medicinal properties. This spring appears to have been contained by a medieval well house, the lower footings of whose walls survive. A number of shaped granite

stones (considered 14th century by Charles Henderson) existed here or nearby in the early 20th century but these seem to have been removed. The well is partly overgrown and the chapel site is now a rectangular mound with a mature oak tree growing on it.

3.3 Post-medieval

The medieval derived commons have been gradually confined in the post-medieval period. The three lower downland fields of Borlase hamlet, to the west had been taken in by 1808 (OS 2-inch field drawing) but the actual boundary between Rosenannon and Borlase ran a few metres to their east (as shown on the 1840 Tithe Map). A number of boundstones were plotted on this line on that map and one was still shown on the 1881 and 1907 OS maps. It was not sought in this survey but may well survive today, being labelled 'S' on the modern OS map (at SW 9504 6732). The remainder of Borlase's downland was enclosed some time before 1881 (OS map), by the neat turf hedge with ditches each side which still stands. This left Rosenannon Common open with part of Pawton's common into the 20th century. The date of the erection of the northern fence is uncertain.

Also of the 20th century was the enclosure (by fencing?) of a rectilinear block of the southern marsh. This may have been done to protect livestock from the hazards of the bog.

3.4 Industrial

There are two medium-sized shillet or roadstone quarries within the reserve. One, on a spur on the downs (60345), is likely to be 20th century but the other, in the valley (60346), is at least 19th century, being shown as 'old' and therefore disused on the 1881 OS map. At the summit of the downs there are several small pits (60349) which may also be quarries, if not futile prospecting pits for minerals or military exercise trenches.

4 Summary management recommendations

4.1 Statement of importance

Rosenannon Downs may be considered one of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's most important reserves in terms of its archaeological remains and its coherent historic landscape. Three Bronze Age barrows at the summit of the downs (26122.01-03) have been recognised as being of national importance through being Scheduled. A possible Neolithic long cairn (60341) and a fourth Bronze Age round barrow (60342) found during this survey may also be regarded as being of national importance. The well-preserved medieval strip fields (26153) and the remnants of the medieval chapel, enclosure and holy well (26117) may be regarded as of regional importance, if not national. There are a number of other mounds and features at the summit which should be more closely assessed than was possible for this survey when the other sites are reviewed during English Heritage's ongoing Monuments Protection Programme (50574, 52024 and 60343).

Scheduled Monuments are those protected by law under The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983. By law any proposed work affecting such sites requires Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Other features, such as a possible dewpond (52023), the possibly medieval banks at the summit (60344), the common's boundaries (60347), turf cutting remains (60348) and the pair of quarries (60345 and 60346) may be regarded as being of local importance. All features recorded in this survey should be retained and their present condition maintained.

The character of the reserve, the open heathy downland and the scrubby valley and marsh is

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the product of historic land management practices, or suspension of them, and as such is an important element of the reserve. The communities of the heath, marsh and woodland can be regarded as semi-natural rather than natural and as such within the sphere of the historic environment. Areas of heathland on St Breock Downs have been drastically reduced in the 20th century leaving Rosenannon Downs as one of the largest surviving fragments. The reserve is thus important for demonstrating what much of these once significant but now generally undervalued uplands looked like and contained until only a hundred years ago. Recommendations for future land use within the reserve (4.2) are made with this in mind.

4.2 Land use

Land use at Rosenannon Downs is currently as an amenity reserve with no grazing or other agricultural use. There is a recent tradition of controlled burning of the heath to maintain it in reasonable health. No such management appears to take place in the scrub or marsh.

Maintaining the open character of the downs is important for ensuring continued visibility of the important prehistoric ritual monuments and medieval strip fields. Some limited vegetation reduction can be recommended around the holy well and chapel site. The thicker furzy vegetation on the barrows should not be deliberately reduced as it helps these sites stand out so dramatically from the rest of the heathland.

It is recommended that the Wildlife Trust considers reviving the traditional land use of the commons, that which has done most to create and then maintain the open heathy character of the place, ie summer grazing. This could be supplemented by burning where appropriate (for instance to create mosaics of habitat types). There would be some practical requirements (repairing/replacing stock proof fencing, installing cattle-grids on the road) and as the downs are still registered commons it may be assumed that some or all of the present commoners would need to be encouraged to undertake the grazing. The benefits of reinstating traditional practices would be great in terms of the historic environment and presumably also for reinvigorating and sustaining the wildlife communities. Close monitoring would be needed to ensure that there was not impoverishment of communities or erosion of archaeological remains.

4.3 Particular recommendations

The chapel and holy well site (26117) are overgrown. Limited clearance of undergrowth (not of trees) would allow visitors to better appreciate the remains. Once a survey has been undertaken, the County Archaeologist would be able to advise on what if any consolidation is needed on the holy well structure.

Repair of field boundaries around the common (60347) should be *ad hoc*, where needed, rather than wholesale rebuilding (as this greatly reduces historic integrity and value). Original materials and methods should be used. Fencing inside the line of hedges (as at present) may be an acceptable alternative.

Continue to reuse the existing trackways across the common (60347) rather than opening up new ones.

4.4 Interpretation and access

Access at present is from the road which runs across the lower south-eastern corner of the downs. Although ridge-top footpaths approach the summit area from both east and west, there are no registered rights of way across it. As there are important archaeological features at the summit (principally the barrows) it is recommended that these pathways be brought

into the reserve. It is recognised that there are other properties to cross to achieve this so agreements would need to be made with neighbours.

As yet there is no interpretation board on the reserve. As for other reserves assessed for the Wild Cornwall Project, it is suggested that locally obtainable leaflets would be a less obtrusive form of interpretation than interpretation boards and have the advantage of being portable, allowing people to use them as maps to find their way around the reserve. Although the semi-natural habitats are the main focus of attention for visitors to the reserve, the historic development of the site also informs its understanding. It is suggested therefore that any interpretation material should include a summary history based initially on this report. Mention in particular the possible Neolithic long cairn, the Bronze Age round barrows, the medieval commons and strips (and their agricultural uses), and the holy well and chapel. It is recommended that a draft text is supplied to the County Archaeologist for review.

4.5 Further archaeological and historical recording and research

A number of sites identified in the site inventory have relatively poor records which should be enhanced:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 26117 | Holy well and chapel; survey at 1:100. |
| 26122.01 | Barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 26122.02 | Barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 26122.03 | Barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 26122.06 | Possible barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 26153 | Medieval strip fields; plot from aerial photos at 1:1000 and then annotate in the field |
| 50574 | Possible barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 60341 | Possible Neolithic long cairn; survey at 1:100 |
| 60342 | Barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 60343 | Possible barrow; survey at 1:100 |
| 60344 | Banks; plot from aerial photos at 1:1000 and then annotate in the field |

It may be that the survey works recommended here, which are relatively simple, could be undertaken as projects by students. The recording of barrows might be a separate project from the recording of fields, banks and holy well.

It is recommended that the Wildlife Trust also pursue oral history sources to further develop understanding of the history of the reserve. This is work that may be undertaken by the reserve warden or Wildlife Trust volunteers. It would be useful to obtain more information on the following:

The agricultural use of the reserve. When was it last grazed by commoners? What animals? What times of the year? Was there supplementary feeding? Was the heathland ever burnt? How was the marsh land used?

Is there any record of either turf cutting or the gathering of furze for fuel?

Woodland. Are there any memories or records of the trees being harvested?

Management of the boundaries. Has the turf bank on the west side been refurbished?

Holy well and chapel. When was this last maintained? Are there any stories of the healing properties of the water?

Quarry on the downs. Can anyone recall it in operation? What was the stone used for?

Does anyone know what the shallow pits at and near the summit might be? Was there any military activity there?

5 Site List

PRN	NGR	Site Type	Period	Status	Notes
26117	SW 9589 6658	Chapel of St Mary Magdalene and Holy Well	Med		<p>A ruined chapel and overgrown holy well lie below the road in the southern valley. The chapel was labelled but not shown beside a small rectangular enclosure within a larger one on the 1881 OS map. It may survive as mound c5.0m N-S by 3.5m and c0.9m high. A mature oak tree grows on the mound's north end. The fields immediately to the east of the site were called Lower and Higher Chapel Parks in 1840 (St Wenn Tithe Apportionment, 1645 and 1646), presumably named after this chapel. There is a tradition that human remains have been dug up 'in the burial ground adjoining the Well of St Mary Magdalene' (Meyrick 1982, 143). If this was so then the burial ground was presumably the rectilinear enclosure in which the chapel and well stand. The south side of this enclosure was recorded for this survey as a stony bank, presumably a tumbled wall, 0.7m wide and high.</p> <p>The chapel was no doubt located here to be close to a holy well. Its water is pure and never fails, and was still noted in the 1920s for its medicinal qualities (Henderson 1960, 483). Charles Henderson in the 1920s recorded that 'the West and North walls [of the building over the well were] built against the country'. He also noticed that 'half of the pointed archway with a plain hollow chamfer (14th century date)' served then as a gatepost by the roadside (ibid). Other stones had been removed and 'preserved' at the rectory by Mr Rashleigh a former vicar of St Wenn (Quiller-Couch 1894, 33; Meyrick 1982, 143).</p> <p>In the present survey the well was recorded as a spring contained to N, W and S by low shillet walling and open to the east through which side it flows to the stream. Walling reaches 0.7m high above the spring to the north. This is sufficiently high to suggest that there was indeed a small well-house over the spring.</p> <p><i>This appears to be a relatively undisturbed medieval chapel, enclosure and holy well. It should be subjected to a more detailed measured survey and, if appropriate, the remaining stonework should be consolidated, having first taken advice from the English Heritage Field Monument Warden. It may be feasible to reduce some of the vegetation cover to allow local people to reach the well again, and to thereby draw the feature back into the historic environment.</i></p>
26122.01	SW 9551 6789	Barrow	Bronze Age	SM, Corn 476	<p>A well-preserved Bronze Age barrow 13.0m diameter and up to 1.1m high (south side) made up of earth, shillet and quartz. It appears to be a platform barrow with a rim and has an</p>

26122.02	SW 9553 6809	Barrow	Bronze Age	SM, Corn 476	<p>eccentrically placed mound (south of centre) which has been dug into by robbers. There is a possible secondary barrow immediately to its north-west (see 60343). Vegetation cover is more dense than on the downland around the barrow making it stand out as a significant landscape feature.</p> <p><i>Record the barrow by survey at 1:100.</i></p> <p>A well-preserved Bronze Age bowl barrow, 19.0m diameter and up to 2.8m high with steep sides but no apparent kerb. There is a large central robbers' pit. Vegetation cover is more dense than on the downland around the barrow, making it stand out as a significant landscape feature.</p>
26122.03	SW 9559 6803	Barrow	Bronze Age	SM, Corn 476	<p><i>Record the barrow by survey at 1:100.</i></p> <p>A well-preserved Bronze Age bowl barrow, 19.5m diameter and up to 3.1m high with steep sides and traces of quartz kerb stones on all sides. There is a large robbers' pit in the centre and an apparently more recent trench on the west side (c2.0m wide and 0.8m deep), possibly an archaeologist's excavation (no records are known of any such). There is a possible earlier long mound (60341) underlying the barrow on its SE side and a possible bank (60344) linking it with another bowl barrow to the south-west (26122.01). Vegetation cover is more dense than on the downland around the barrow, making it stand out as a significant landscape feature.</p>
26122.06	SW 9532 6808	Mound	Bronze Age? Mod?		<p><i>Record the barrow by survey at 1:100.</i></p> <p>An amorphous mound, recorded as a damaged barrow by the Ordnance Survey Antiquities Division in 1977. It is c8.5m in diameter and 0.2m high on its western side, and just 0.05m high on the east side. A large depression in the centre may be the source of all the mound material and it is possible that this is a modern pit, similar to others in the vicinity (60349), and not a barrow.</p> <p><i>Record the possible barrow by survey at 1:100. Consider for Scheduling as a nationally important monument.</i></p>
26153	SW 9540 6720	Strip fields	Med		<p>An extensive strip field system on the south-western slopes of Rosenannon Downs was first noted by Peter Rose and Ann Preston-Jones of CAU in 1985 (record in SMR). Strips are defined by stony banks typically 1.0m wide and 0.2m high and are generally 10 to 12m wide. They run down the slope and reach lengths of 750m. A few stone clearance cairns have been recorded, and slight hints of ridge and furrow. The strips are probably outfields created in the medieval period by the group of households living at Rosenannon. The strips have been plotted at 1:10,000 by Andy Young of CAU. This is one of the most extensive (c30 ha) areas and best-preserved blocks of undamaged relict</p>

50566	SW 9581 6659	Boundary	Med?	strip fields known in Cornwall away from Bodmin Moor. <i>Plot at 1:1000 from aerial photos and then annotate plan in the field.</i> A curving boundary has been plotted from aerial photos by Andy Young of CAU running downhill from just north of Hill Farm to near the Holy Well and Chapel (26117). It is overgrown on its uphill end but that part which is visible from the road is large, up to 3.0m wide and 2.2m high and is cut through by the road (continuing a short way to its east). This may suggest that it is relatively early and unrelated to the nearby quarry (60346). It could have been created to separate the two areas of common (downland and valley marsh) to enable them to be managed differently.
50574	SW 9533 6805	Possible barrow	Bronze Age?	A circular feature was plotted from aerial photos by Andy Young of CAU. It is a platformed mound, c9.0m in diameter and 0.1m high, with a pit a little west of centre whose upthrow heap (to 0.7m high) appears to overlie the platform, suggesting that it is earlier. It is possible that the mound is a Bronze Age barrow. <i>Record the possible barrow by survey at 1:100. Consider for Scheduling as a nationally important monument.</i>
52023	SW 9521 6800	Possible dewpond	Med? Mod	A shallow, damp depression, c10m diameter and 0.2m deep, was plotted from aerial photos by Andy Young of CAU. It is possibly a dewpond created by commoners grazing animals on the downs.
52024	SW 9552 6807	Aerial photo feature	?	A small circular feature was plotted from aerial photos by Andy Young of CAU. Nothing is visible on the ground but the feature may survive below ground. It is close to a Bronze Age barrow and may have been related to it in some way.
52025	SW 9563 6802	Aerial photo feature	Prehist	A small circular feature was plotted from aerial photos by Andy Young of CAU. On the ground the feature was seen to be disturbance at the east end of a long mound (60341).
60341	SW 9562 6802	Long mound	Neolithic	A low stone and earth mound c22m long running E-W and c8.0m wide (though a little spread to south?). Reaches 0.6m high to south and 0.3m high to north. Aligned to a point just south of the summit of St Breock Beacon. The east end has been damaged by pitting (52025) and the west end appears to be overlain by Bronze Age barrow 26122.03. If this is a Neolithic long cairn then it was probably already quite low when the Bronze Age barrow was built. Previously unrecorded. <i>Record by planning at 1:100. Consider for Scheduling as a nationally important monument.</i>
60342	SW 9529 6774	Barrow	Bronze Age	A fairly well-preserved but previously unrecorded barrow has been cut into on its S side by a modern quarry (60345). As more than half survives, it is possible to measure a

60343	SW 9550 6789	Possible barrow	Bronze Age	<p>diameter of c16.0m. It appears to be a platform barrow to 0.9m high with a central robbers' pit. The quarry cut reveals the barrow's fabric: small and medium shillet stones in an earthy matrix. The barrow was positioned at the end of a short rounded spur on the south-western slopes of Rosenannon Downs. The other three Bronze Age barrows (26122. 01, .02, and .03) are all skylined when viewed from this barrow.</p> <p><i>It is of course important that the quarry is not reopened as the barrow is balanced on its upper edge. Record the barrow by survey at 1:100. Consider for Scheduling as a nationally important monument.</i></p> <p>A possible satellite barrow was noticed during the present survey immediately to the north-west of the large Bronze Age cairn 26122.01. It is 2.5m in diameter and 0.3m high.</p> <p><i>Record the possible barrow by survey at 1:100. Consider for Scheduling as a nationally important monument.</i></p>
60344	SW 9551 6790 Banks to 9557 6800		Prehist? Med?	<p>A low grassy bank runs NE from barrow 26122.01 to barrow 26122.03. It is a very slight feature, c0.1m high and 2.5m wide. There are other similar low banks to the west and south which are fairly straight. It was not possible to plot their positions due to the lack of secure fixed points.</p> <p><i>Plot at 1:1000 from aerial photos and then annotate plan in the field.</i></p>
60345	SW 9530 6772	Quarry	Modern	<p>Shillet quarry cut into spur. Roughly 20m NE-SW by 15m, and up to 3.0m deep. Entry to SE. Cuts through barrow 60342. Flytipping inside includes a signpost with legend: 'Parish of St Wenn. Keep Cornwall Beautiful. Do not tip'. The quarry is shown schematically on the modern OS map but not on 19th and early 20th century OS maps and may be 20th century in origin.</p> <p><i>Do not reopen. The Bronze Age barrow would be very vulnerable if it was to be and any access tracks would have to cross the downs, affecting the character and peacefulness of the reserve.</i></p>
60346	SW 9586 6656	Quarry	Modern	<p>Shillet or roadstone quarry beside road in southern valley. Up to 4.5m deep, opening on to road. Shown as 'old quarry' and therefore disused on the 1881 OS map.</p>
60347	SW 954 675	Common, including tracks	Med	<p>The open common ground shared by the several tenants of Rosenannon in the medieval period and now by several neighbouring farmers. It is largely downland, extending to just north of the main St Breock Downs ridge line, but also includes a significant area of valley bottom, largely marshy, to the east of the hamlet, and the interconnecting steep valley side. The downs are open heath still but parts of the southern commons have become scrubby and woody. As far as can be established the commons are no longer used agriculturally and</p>

are managed primarily through burning. Boundaries vary according to the chronology of the intakes eating into the commons. In the south and east there are medieval derived Cornish hedges; on the west side is a neatly battered post-medieval turf bank, built to be stock-proof (1.5m wide and 1.7m high) with ditches (1.3m wide and 0.5m deep) on both sides. Along the northern edge is a wire fence, typical of much 20th century boundary work on St Breock Downs. This northern edge (which is also the parish boundary against St Breock) was still shown open, unfenced in 1907 (OS map). In the southern part of the common, to the east of the stream, two irregular enclosures were called Great Grove and Grove Moor in 1840 (Tithe Apportionment), clearly indicative of woodland, possibly ancient wet woodland. The smaller northern enclosure, Grove Moor, had been cleared and apparently improved by 1881 (OS map) but is now wooded again. A rectangular intake in the southern marsh shown on modern OS maps post-dates the 1907 OS mapping. It was not visited in this survey but is likely to be fenced rather than hedged.

A number of sunken trackways cross the downs, in addition to the roadway which leads NE from Rosenannon hamlet and cuts off towards Wadebridge partway up the east side of the downs. This crosses a tributary stream by a pipe bridge with stonework heads, the eastern supporting wrought iron stanchions for rails (which have been replaced with tubular metal). Some of the other trackways are still used (as access to the Cransworth settlements to the east of the downs, and to the downs themselves).

Uneven-ness in the boggy land on the SE slopes of the downs can be partly attributed to turf cutting. Hollows tend to have the distinctively straight sides left by turf cutters working systematically across a bog.

At the summit is a possible turf stead (see Higher Predannack Wild Cornwall archaeological report for details of these). It is a playing card shaped platform c4m by 3.5 with an external ditch 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep and an upthrow bank beyond that which is 0.3m wide and 0.2m high. If its identification is correct it suggests that turf was also being cut (skimmed) from the summit of the downs. Commoners would have had turbarry rights on the downs (ie the right to cut turf for domestic fuel).

Around the summit of the downs are several pits, mainly fairly amorphous but including one line of eight contiguous pits of roughly equal size, 1.6 by 0.8m and 0.5m deep, with heaps to both sides to 0.3m high. These are to the west of barrow 26122.02. Elsewhere the pits reach 3.5m across and 0.6m deep with side dumps to 0.4m

60348 SW 957 673 Turf cutting Med, Modern

60349 SW 955 680 Pits Modern

high. It is not certain whether the various pits are related to each other or whether they are industrial (the line of eight resemble prospecting pits) or were created during military exercises. They are likely to be fairly modern.

6 References

Primary sources consulted

Maps

John Norden's map of Pydar Hundred, c1580

Joel Gascoyne's map of Cornwall, c1699

Thomas Martyn's map of Cornwall, 1748

Ordnance Survey Field Drawing, 1808

Tithe Map of St Wenn parish, c1840

OS 1:2500 1st edition, surveyed 1881

OS 1:2500 2nd edition, revised 1907

Modern OS 1:2500 map

Secondary sources

Cornwall County Council, 1996. *Cornwall Landscape Assessment, 1994*, report prepared by Landscape Design Associates and Cornwall Archaeological Unit for the Countryside Commission

Henderson, C, 1960. Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Western Hundreds of Cornwall, *Jnl Royal Instit of Cornwall*, 3

Meyrick, J, 1982. *Holy Wells of Cornwall*

Quiller-Couch, M and L, 1894. *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*.

CAU archive

Material collected for this report, including field notes, are filed along with administrative material in a project file held in the offices of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, under CAU Project Number 2000034.

