

## History of Access on Bodmin Moor.

Some of the history of the access on the moor can be found in Hansard at the second reading of the Bodmin Commons Bill in 1996.

Public Access was wanted by many to be included in the Bill, but the clause relating to public access was withdrawn subject to debate and apparent safeguards.

The Bill was a private Bill, promoted by Cornwall County Council, to deal with a specific difficulty. The promoters felt that it was not appropriate to encompass the wider national question of access.

The BHS and Riding Establishment were “petitioners” asking for horse access to be included.

It was specifically emphasised, however, that nothing in the Bill altered the availability of public access to the commons.

Eventually petitions against the Bill lodged by the British Horse Society and the owners of a riding establishment on the edge of the moor were withdrawn because they accepted that the promoters (Cornwall County Council) met their concerns.

Key Extracts from the debate:

[Mr. Harry Greenway \(Ealing, North\)](#) asked “Why is there not, under the Bill, a right of access to Bodmin moor for horse riders? May I remind my hon. Friend that a similar lack of provision under the Dartmoor Commons Bill in 1985 led to its defeat neck and crop?”

The reply by Mr Hicks was that “in view of my hon. Friend's experiences with the [Dartmoor Commons Bill](#), I am pleased and relieved to tell him that the two petitions that were lodged against the [Bodmin Moor Commons Bill](#) have been withdrawn because the promoters have been successful in reaching an accommodation with the petitioners in respect of horse riding.”

[Mr. Antony Steen \(South Hams\)](#)

My hon. Friend kindly supported me when I piloted the [Dartmoor Commons Bill](#) through the House in 1985 and I pay tribute to him for his support, but my concern about this Bill is that it excludes the statutory right of access for members of the public and the statutory right of the horseman. Why have those two important ingredients been left out? In Dartmoor national park, every walker has a statutory right to walk and every rider to ride across the moor, despite the landowners. As Bodmin moor is not a national park, my hon. Friend has a double duty to include such a provision in the Bill.

[§ Mr. Hicks](#)

Perhaps my hon. Friend was not here when I responded to a similar intervention from my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). As a result of an accommodation agreed by the Bill's promoters— Cornwall County Council—the questions of access for horse riding are covered.

[Mr. Tyler](#)

I emphasise that there is nothing in the Bill that alters the availability of the commons for public access. I reiterate the point that the petitions against the Bill lodged by the British Horse Society and the owners of a riding establishment on the edge of the moor have been withdrawn because they have accepted that the promoters have met their concerns.

I am able to convey to the House the assurance that the promoter, Cornwall County Council, has agreed to seek a voluntary access agreement along the lines suggested at our meeting last week, and the county council has already set in motion the appropriate machinery to make that action take place forthwith.

I accept, as I am sure does the promoter, that that may not meet all the wishes of the Ramblers Association and the Open Spaces Society, which have lodged petitions against the Bill and which, if the Bill is read a Second time tonight, will be entitled to appear before the Committee. However, the Bill is not about compulsion, and Cornwall County Council does not propose to embody compulsion

in the Bill. That is borne out by negotiations that the promoter has already carried out, as I have said, with the two other petitioners—the British Horse Society and the T.M. international school of horsemanship.

Amendments have been suggested by those two petitioners, and will be submitted for the Committee's approval if the Bill is read a Second time tonight. The purpose of the amendments is to ensure that the passing of the Bill and the coming into being of the commoners council will not change the position to the detriment of the British Horse Society or its members on or near Bodmin moor or of the T.M. international school of horsemanship. As a result of that agreement, those two petitions have been withdrawn.

Full details may be viewed on:

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1996/may/21/bodmin-moor-commons-bill-lords-by-order>