Rural History (2004) **15**, 1, 47–67. © *2004 Cambridge University Press*
DOI: 10.1017/S0956793303001080 Printed in the United Kingdom

The Contested Commonlands of the Pays de Bray

HUGH CLOUT
Department of Geography, University College London, 26 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AP.

Abstract The woodlands, meadows and orchards of the Pays de Bray play an important part in the local survival strategy for this section of northern France where 'green tourism' occupies a major role. For centuries, the area contained extensive stretches of common heath and moorland, whose reclamation and replacement by enclosed pastures proved a long and contested process. The present essay exemplifies the ambiguity of the notion of *usages* (use-rights), with commoners claiming that they had legal rights and landowners arguing that these were simply privileges. Attention is directed to long-running conflicts between peasants and *seigneurs*, to the initiatives of entrepreneurs in the eighteenth century, and to the final resolution of disputes after the Revolution of 1789. Long recognised as an area ready for 'improvement', the Pays de Bray is now perceived as a cherished environment to be commodified and conserved.

A Green Oasis

To the present-day visitor the Pays de Bray appears as a 'green oasis' amid the plateaux of Picardy and Upper Normandy (figure 1). Woods and hedge-lined pastures, ancient village churches and *châteaux* contribute to its appeal. Attractive brochures proclaim the opportunities for recreational enjoyment in this clearly recognisable 'natural region' divided between Haute-Normandie and Picardie. During the 1990s policies for rural diversification encouraged the rapidly-dwindling number of farmers to provide accommodation for tourists and to commodify their activities, such as cheese making and cider production.[1] Tourist routes have been way marked and well-designed panels posted at sites of interest. The few remaining stretches of wetland have been recognised as being of European importance. There is nothing in the present landscape to suggest that Bray once included extensive commonlands or that agricultural 'improvers' described it as a 'mauvais pays'. Archival evidence reveals that its resources were perceived in contrasting ways in the past, and that the claims of landlords and others to exploit the commons gave rise to frequent confrontation.

Rather than being an area of harmony, the Pays de Bray was contested territory, with commoners asserting that they possessed legal *rights* to use pastures and woodland as they wished, and landowners insisting that the *usages* (use-rights) were simply *privileges* that they could control or withdraw. Local struggles between commoners and landowners were heightened by royal encouragement for *défrichement* (reclamation) during the eighteenth

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

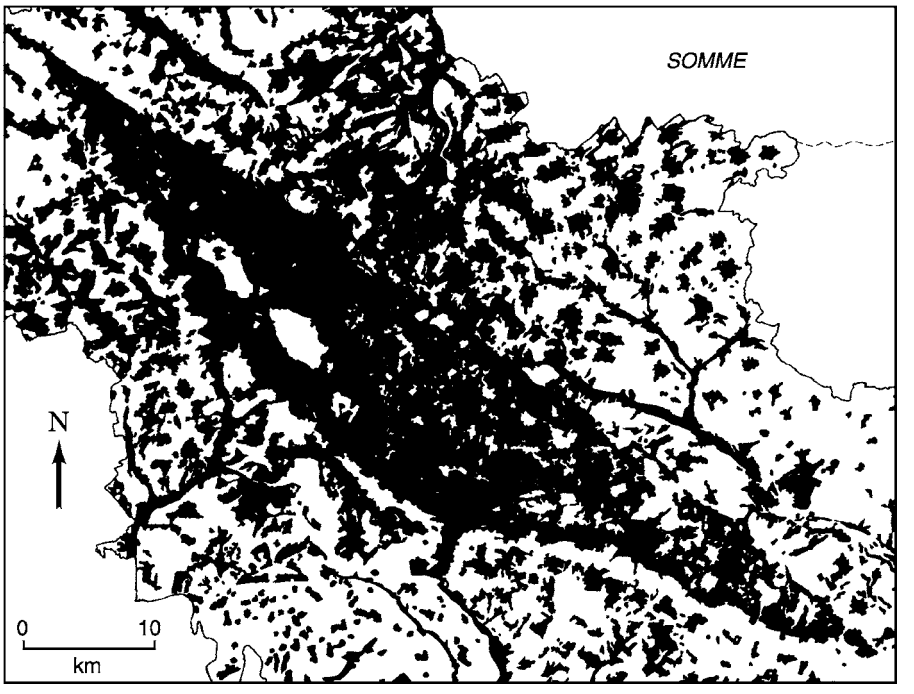


Figure 1. Permanent Grassland in the Pays de Bray, 1965 (after cadastral maps and registers). The white blocks in the western section of Bray are woodland.

century as domestic food production struggled to keep pace with accelerating population growth in this and many other parts of France.[2] Members of provincial agricultural societies translated 'improving' treatises published in England and sought to emulate the progress achieved on estates across the Channel. Peasant farmers remained beyond the realm of such discourse and worked any patches of uncultivated land that might become available rather than seeking to introduce methods to improve soil productivity. Commoners defended their extensive grazing, while 'improvers' lauded the virtues of investment, market orientation, and individual initiative, and sought to enclose areas of rough grazing for intensive use. Most villagers surrounding the 'woods, marshes, bogs and bushes' of Bray perceived them as valuable resources for supporting traditional survival strategies. To some landowners, and especially entrepreneurs residing beyond the *pays*, the same elements offered an opportunity for conversion into profitable pastures and ploughland.[3] Such transformation would, of course, require commonland status to be abolished.

The social conflicts surrounding the economy, habitat and appearance of the Pays de Bray provide a case study of the kind of confrontation that occurred around commons throughout France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4] Legislative changes associated with the Revolution of 1789 proclaimed the freedom of farmers to work their land as they wished and opened the way for villagers to decide the future of the commons. Legislation brought the feudal regime to an end (although many trappings survived) and land previously held by the nobility and the Church was declared State property.[5]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

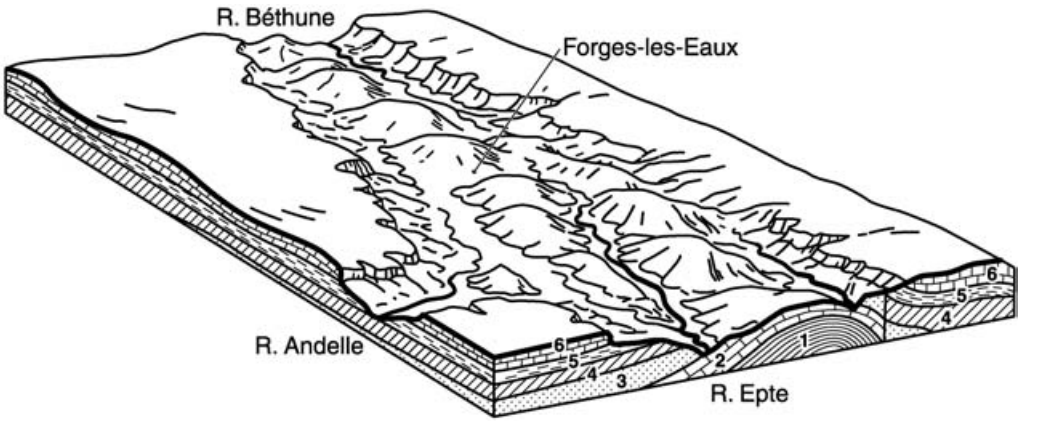


Figure 2. Topography and geology of the western section of the Pays de Bray. 1. Clay; 2. Jurassic; 3. Sands and clays; 4. Gault clay; 5. Chalky marl; 6. Chalk.

Following laws of 1793, villagers were empowered to divide or conserve their commons; even the return of émigré landlords two decades later could not turn back the rise of agrarian individualism. Against this backdrop of social conflict, the varied habitats of commons in Bray and elsewhere in France were appraised, contested, and transformed.

The denuded anticline of the Pays de Bray embraces a range of geological strata beneath the chalk of Picardy and Upper Normandy, with alternating sands, clays and marls constituting various soil types and habitats.[6] Surrounded by steep slopes, Bray is nonetheless topographically diverse, with small hills and ridges alternating with hollows. As a result, it is more readily identifiable on a geological map than a topographic one (figure 2). Springs give rise to streams that flow toward the Seine or direct to the Channel. The well-watered nature of the vale of Bray differentiates it from the surrounding chalk and created extensive wetlands in the past, however many patches of arid sand are also found. Dispersed farms and hamlets in the core of Bray contrast with old-established villages on its margins and on adjacent plateaux.

Défrichement and Exploitation.

In early medieval times, the Pays de Bray comprised part of a wooded area linking the Forests of Lyons, Thelle, Eu and Eawy that was eroded by *défrichement* orchestrated from abbeys, granges and agricultural settlements.[7] For example, Bellozanne Abbey, founded in 1198, served as a base for reclaiming 700 hectares of wetland (figure 3).[8] Surviving woodlands and assarts in the core of Bray were held by several major *seigneurs*, the Bishop of Beauvais being the largest owner of woods and pastures between the river Epte and Beauvais.[9] In 1146 Bishop Eudes granted one-third of his possessions in eastern Bray to Saint-Germer Abbey, including 'the *usages* and pastures of Bray'.[10] Charters dating from 1206, 1222 and 1224 indicate that successive bishops and abbots sold stretches of woodland; a charter of November 1225 confirmed that all accustomed to use the [eastern]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

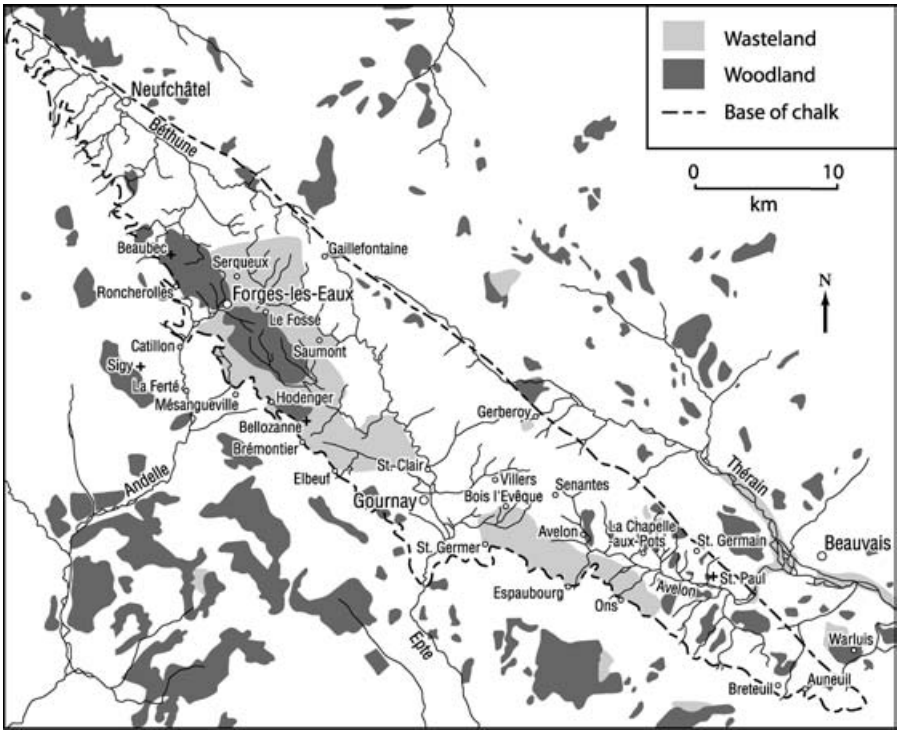


Figure 3. Wasteland and Woodland ca. 1750 (after the Cassini maps).

Forest of Bray 'both for pasture and for wood' would be allowed to do so in future.[11] The ruling related to the Bishop, the Abbot and commoners in a dozen parishes, however 'a part of the forest surrounded by marker stones' was excluded, 'two-thirds of which was reserved for the Bishop and one-third for the Abbot, with no others being entitled to claim *usage* in this section'.[12]

The same charter noted that *défrichement* in the Forest of Bray accompanied recent settlements, including the priories of Chartreux (La Chapelle-aux-Pots) and Bons-Hommes (Saint-Germain-la-Poterie) and isolated farms at Orsimont, Lhuyère, and the Bois de Cailly (figure 4)[13]. The Abbey of Saint-Paul also created farms at Cuigy, Le Compostel, Epluques and La Haute Touffe. Closer to the river Epte, the Abbots of Saint-Germer emulated such enterprises.[14] In 1384 eastern Bray was recognised as being 'as much heath as woodland' and landowners complained that commoners abused their *usages*.[15] To quote later commentators: 'They cut too much wood and were so negligent with livestock that the forest was reduced to rough grazing, with only heather and bracken growing on dry soil, and patches of reeds' being found in hollows.[16] About 1,300 hectares between the Etang de la Muette (near Saint-Germer) and the Espaubourg stream was known as the 'Tailles de Bray', suggesting copses of brushwood.[17]

Similar communal *usages* operated in the Forests of Gournay, [western] Bray, Forges and La Ferté. This area west of the river Epte had been recovered from the occupying English in 1449 when landowners and peasants began the harsh task of restoration.[18]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

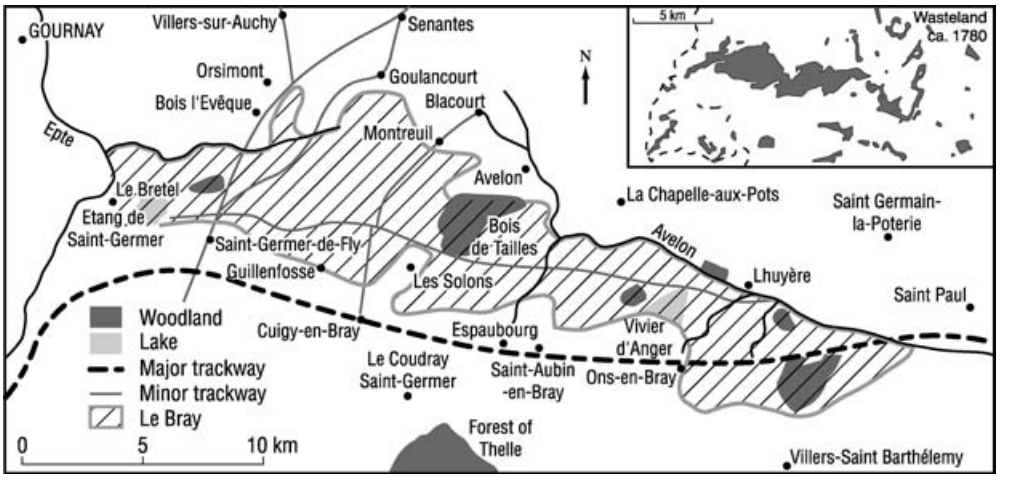


Figure 4. Le Bray. (The main map is compiled from two maps from the 17th century and 1764: ADO C282 and C283. The inset showing wasteland ca. 1780 is compiled from *Plans d'Intendance* by parish: ADO C1 –153).

Farmhouses were built and the rivers Epte, Andelle and Béthune were dredged.[19] Four lakes were reclaimed in the late fifteenth century: the Etangs du Fayel, des Malades, de l'Andelle, and du Roi (figure 3). During the next century, two lakes covering 710 hectares were drained at Bellozanne, together with a lake at Mont-Louvet, and many small wetlands.[20] This work improved the health of surrounding villagers but required constant attention. Permanent grasslands (*herbages*) were established and surrounded with hedgerows, but 'pestilential marshes' survived in damp localities and the Forest of Bray remained 'flanked by arid heaths' having been reduced to half its original extent of 6,100 hectares by 1600.[21]

Disputes and Challenges

In 1539 the Bishop of Beauvais and the Abbot of Saint-Germer took legal action against commoners who felled mature timber without permission and in the same year the Abbot ordered his monks to fell large oaks among 'the hedgerows of Bray' to repair the abbey church.[22] Eight years later, attention was directed to the proliferation of 'moors and heaths' east of the Epte, at the expense of woodland.[23] Grazing of livestock, gathering of timber, and operation of potteries, tileworks, ironworks and other enterprises were tolerated in Bray. The ecological effects were devastating.[24] In 1705 the Justice de Saint-Germer received complaints against shepherds in eastern Bray who failed to respect custom by allowing sheep to graze around marshes and near farmhouses, despite such areas being reserved for cattle and horses.[25] The commoners requested that these shepherds should be fined. Later in the century, cattle and sheep belonging to outsiders were allowed on the commons to the detriment of poor parishioners in adjacent villages who took advantage of the ambiguous status of the commons to graze a few animals of their own or to crop a scrap of land.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The commons were, of course, vulnerable to temporary and permanent encroachments. In 1632, the lawyer Jean Diury reported that squatters at Guillenfosse had made many encroachments on the commons and enclosed some with hedgerows.[26] In 1655 Pierre Diury found similar enclosures at Espaubourg, with lines of poplars planted in damp locations.[27] Commoners were responsible for some of the small encroachments and turned a blind eye to the work of their peers and impoverished neighbours alike. By contrast, they reacted with fury to schemes undertaken by large enterprises. For example, in 1720 Sieur Lée enclosed 25 hectares of Boiville common (Saint-Germer) and constructed a house and kiln to produce tiles and bricks.[28] His earthen banks 'were torn down by malevolent commoners, who threatened to destroy anything else he erected and to let their animals loose among his corn'.[29] Lée took legal proceedings against the commoners who insisted that their access to the commons was blocked by his enclosure.[30]

Claim and Counterclaim East of the Epte

Despite their general tolerance, the *seigneurs* of Bray occasionally surveyed the condition of the commonlands, and sometimes took action against squatters. In 1742 the *Lieutenant de la Justice de Saint-Germer* pronounced against parishioners whose *herbages* had encroached on to the commons.[31] He insisted that this was 'intolerable abuse and prejudicial to the public good'.[32] Those responsible were fined and ordered to destroy their enclosures. Failure to do so would bring in the *procureur fiscal* to supervise the work whose costs would have to be met by the squatters.[33] In the early eighteenth century the residents of thirteen parishes grazed 1,500 head of cattle, 2,000 sheep and 200 horses and donkeys on 4,250 hectares of land in eastern Bray that extended 10 km east/west and 2 km north/south[34] (figure 4). In 1732 François de Rouvray, a Royal bodyguard, obtained a concession from the King to clear 100 hectares of uncultivated land near Bois-l'Evêque farm that was itself surrounded by 'long-established earthen banks'.[35] The parishioners of Senantes claimed that the scheme would prejudice commoners who would lose the resources to pay their taxes. They asked the pertinent question: 'Should one man be enriched at the expense of over a thousand others?'[36] Monsieur Grauchet informed the Cardinal de Fleury (*Premier Ministre de l'Etat*) that parishioners around Senantes had improved the contested site by cutting ditches, removing furze and levelling out uneven land.[37] He feared that if de Rouvray's plans went ahead, ten villages 'would be reduced to ruins and inhabitants would have to beg for their bread'.[38] He believed that without grazing land, the commoners 'would have to sell their horses, sheep and cows: widows and orphans would be reduced to utmost misery; the inhabitants would no longer be able to live in their villages and would have to leave, [use of] these pastures enabling them to pay their taxes to the king'.[39]

The parishioners of Saint-Germer insisted that 'over the last two or three years the surrounding parishes have gone to great expense to improve drainage so that this area now produces good grass and many cattle graze there'.[40] They argued that the Bishop and the Abbot, who permitted them to graze livestock, formally owned the disputed territory. They also maintained that its vegetation was better than elsewhere on Le Bray, which is 'dry sandy soil that only yields bracken that shrivels up and dies in the slightest heat'.[41] If

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

clearance were to go ahead, the occupant of Bois l'Evêque farm would be unable to take his cattle in springtime to this contested pasture. Other commoners would be prevented from moving livestock across Le Bray.[42] The fact that de Rouvray had installed stakes around 100 hectares gave rise to great concern.[43] These arguments went unheeded by members of the *Conseil d'Etat du Roy* who confirmed the concession in 1733.[44]

The Bishop and Abbot duly produced thirteenth-century documents granting them 'rights of ownership, *seigneurie* and justice' in eastern Bray and joined with inhabitants of six parishes to lodge a formal complaint against de Rouvray 'to prevent him undertaking any work on the 100 hectares, or troubling the landowners and parishioners' in any way.[45] In the light of these arguments, his concession was annulled by the *Conseil d'Etat* in 1734.[46] Some commoners insisted that they actually 'owned the land, could graze their livestock on it, and even exclude the animals of the *seigneurs* who really owned it. These reveries and pretences are held by some, perhaps even most, of the commoners'.[47] Landowners argued that an '*usage* was not a right legally speaking, but only a favour or privilege'.[48] This certainly did 'not give the commoners the right to appropriate land that the *seigneurs* had chosen not to cultivate but to allow others the privilege of using as grazing'.[49]

Three decades later others requested the King to concede parts of eastern Bray for *défrichement*.[50] Monsieur Foucard asked permission to clear 70 hectares at Villers-sur-Auchy; Monsieur Laplan requested 75 hectares at Saint-Aubin and Espaubourg; and a company headed by Antoine-François Duhamel sought to reclaim 1,310 hectares over six years, promising to pay a rent (*cens*) of 25 *sols* per hectare to the royal domain.[51] These enquiries revived questions regarding the ownership of Le Bray east of the Epte, and whether clearance might be in the common good.[52] The first issue had been clarified by the *Conseil d'Etat* in 1734, when it confirmed the Bishop and Abbot as proprietors, but this did not stop further challenges. The second issue was explored by Monsieur de Sauvigny of Beauvais who maintained: 'All the inhabitants of the surrounding villages derive their livelihood . . . from the cows they graze on Le Bray . . . The rich may enclose and profit from the division of commonland, leaving the weak and poor – and that is the majority – with nothing to nourish their cattle.'[53] However, agronomic logic showed 'the less land a farmer has, the more intensively he cultivates it, hence the more it produces; [and] the more the landowner and the state profit from tax revenues'.[54] De Sauvigny concluded: 'In order to reach a decision on *défrichement* and division of the commons of Bray, it is a matter of ascertaining the likely advantages, whether they will be transitory, whether this utility will be at the expense of the producers and general commerce of the district, and whether the population may decline since they depend on the commons.'[55]

Faced with such claims, in 1763 the Abbot and monks of Saint-Germer commissioned Jean-Joseph Geisler to undertake a survey, assess the *usages*, and introduce a scheme to rationalise land use.[56] Geisler confirmed that [eastern] 'Bray had once been covered with woods, heath and moor [but] many intrusions have altered the area; I have found that it currently contains 1,380 hectares'.[57] In 1764 the Abbot sought permission from the *Conseil d'Etat* to undertake a *triage* of his land in eastern Bray, whereby the Abbey would retain one-third (and might fell some of the timber) but would allocate the remainder

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to the surrounding parishes provided they proved that their claims to use the commons were valid.[58]

In 1777 Sieurs Boncerf and Courvoisier negotiated with the Bishop and the Abbot over a project to exploit eastern Bray, however this required consent from the chapter of Beauvais and monks of Saint-Germer.[59] The entrepreneurs argued that, 'although left as waste for several centuries, this land is susceptible to cultivation without harming the pastures . . . Even after leaving sufficient grazing for inhabitants who enjoy *droits d'usage*, quite a large amount of land would remain to put under the plough or plant with trees. If well organised, this operation would increase the revenues of the Bishop and the Abbot, and enhance the amount of cultivated land and the well being of surrounding residents. Such a project [they believed] could not fail to be welcomed by the public and protected by the government.'[60] If granted the concession, Boncerf and Courvoisier promised to reserve areas for the Bishop (fifty hectares) and the Abbot (twenty-five hectares) to whom a quantity of 'pure wheat' would be paid each year. They would not touch former commonland transferred legally to parishioners (*cantonnements*), and they would respect and maintain existing roads and ditches.[61] The *seigneurs* were ready to acquiesce, and in April 1778 marker stakes were installed between the lake of Saint-Germer and the Espaubourg stream.[62] The commoners 'believed that the concession had already been granted in secret . . . By virtue of the demarcation line, the parishes find themselves embroiled in a revolution threatening these areas . . . The enterprise is creating serious alarms among the inhabitants, great and small.'[63] On 15th April 1778 the *Conseil d'Etat* received a request to remove the stakes and annul the much-feared concession. Less than three weeks later, it reported that further investigation was needed.[64]

In the same year the Prince de Conti launched another scheme, maintaining that eastern Bray was an extension of the Forest of Thelle granted to him in 1747 as a dependency of the Comté de Chaumont-en-Vexin.[65] He wished to establish farms on this 'dead land', which, he maintained, was entirely uncultivated apart from patches where parishioners had built houses and planted fruit trees.[66] He asserted: 'the remainder is pasture for the surrounding parishes, and . . . is very mediocre'.[67] Once again, marker stakes were positioned and the Prince sought to obtain 'a concession of the commons of [eastern] Bray . . . by letters patent'.[68] Commoners regarded the stakes as an extreme provocation, insisting: 'the war of Bray has been declared, Monsieur'.[69] The Abbot and the *seigneurs* of Ons-en-Bray and Avelon also opposed the Prince's 'usurpation' and his demand that they should present ownership deeds to the *Chambre des Comptes*.[70] This dispute remained unresolved as 1789 approached.

Disputes to the West of the Epte

The woods, moors and heaths west of the Epte also underwent considerable environmental change. By 1650 the spa of Forges-les-Eaux was attracting the royal household and nobility, however earlier reclamation schemes around the Forest of Bray had fallen into disrepair.[71] Conditions began to improve due to the initiative of Jacques de Dampierre, who reclaimed areas of marsh ca.1660 in order to establish new farms.[72] In his capacity as *maître des eaux et forêts*, he had ditches cut to drain the Morette valley, cleared the channels of the Epte and Andelle, had trees planted to stabilise their banks, and started

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to drain disease-ridden marshes around Gournay.[73] André de Mercastel emulated this example in parishes crossed by the Epte and Morette.[74] As in earlier times, land due for reclamation was surrounded by drainage ditches and hedgerows, and was ploughed and sown with cereals for several years before being turned over to permanent grass. Despite these improvements, substantial stretches of marsh, moor and heath remained around 1700.

Marshland fevers were especially severe in the early eighteenth century, with the course of the Béthune and its tributaries having to be cleaned out.[75] Between 1710 and 1726 the Comte de Matignon allocated 180 hectares of wetland to be divided among the parishioners of Dampierre-en-Bray provided they renounced their *usages* in the Forest of Bray.[76] He ordered the channels of the Epte and the Morette to be cleaned once again, and created three large farms and two hamlets.[77] Open ditches and hedgerows characterised these newly-reclaimed areas, with branch-filled drainage trenches being hidden under a covering of soil. Some 2,500 hectares of wetland were converted to ploughland or enclosed pasture in western Bray between 1710 and 1735.[78] Nonetheless, the Morette valley remained a source of disease, with epidemics plaguing man and beast alike.[79] In 1748 conditions on some new farms were so severe that dead animals were thrown to rot in ditches. In the following year the administration of the *généralité de Rouen* ordered that the Epte, Andelle and Morette be dredged yet again.[80]

Promotion of *défrichement* was defined as a patriotic duty of the *Société Royale d'Agriculture de la Généralité de Rouen*, established in July 1761.[81] Its members wrote to the Duc de Luxembourg requesting him to encourage clearance of 3,320 hectares of 'good land' currently under moors and heaths in the Comté de Gournay that was held by his grand-daughters.[82] The *Société* stressed that some households in western Bray paid five bushels of oats to these *seigneurs* in order to use the commons. They believed that stretches of heath might be divided among these households, in the expectation that agricultural productivity would increase.[83] Existing pastoral arrangements were confirmed in a report of 1774 that estimated 500 hectares of commonland remained uncultivated between Forges and Gournay, with a comparable area east of the Epte.[84]

In 1775 the commons of western Bray figured in an ambitious proposal by J-B. Louis de Montigny who requested the King to grant him a concession to reclaim uncultivated land throughout the *généralité de Rouen*.[85] He sought to use territory that was 'currently lost and of no value' to augment the fortunes of the State, provide work for the unemployed, and 'procure more widespread abundance.'[86] His scheme to reclaim 4,000 hectares in thirty-one parishes in the western Pays de Bray over thirty years would require tax concessions and echoed an identical proposal by Sieur Couet d'Eaubonne in 1764.[87] Neither materialised.

The Duc de Montmorency had his own plans and wrote to the King in 1776 to revive a project to drain wetlands and float timber along the Morette to Gournay on the Epte.[88] He proposed that a channel be cut across the heaths of Hodenger and existing watercourses dredged. The northern part of Hodenger parish could 'be regarded as a great spring whose surface is almost continuously covered with water' and might 'serve as a reservoir for the proposed channel'.[89] The Duke estimated that his woodlands in western Bray covered only 2–2,500 hectares rather than 6,000 hectares in medieval times, and the woodland

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

perimeters contained patches of heath grazed by commoners' animals.[90] Despite the sorry state of some timber, he believed that sufficient remained for his canal project to be viable since the ironworks at Forges-les-Eaux that had consumed local timber had been closed.[91] If constructed, the canal would enable much wetland on the Montmorency estates to be drained, permit timber to be dispatched from Bray, and guarantee sufficient flow to keep the watermills of Gournay working.[92]

Under circumstances similar to those east of the Epte, parishioners surrounding the Forest of Bray were allowed to graze livestock and gather fallen timber provided they 'neither cultivated land nor constructed buildings unless express permission had been granted' by the *seigneurs*, 'who sought to contest and restrain these privileges. In fact, the *usages* were often upheld in the courts, but the situation remained precarious'.[93] The very poor squatted in 'wretched huts' on the fringes of the forest and survived mainly by begging (especially at night), raising goats in the woods, and trapping hares and rabbits.[94] These 'poachers, marauders and beggars terrified other parishioners'.[95] Despite the damage that ensued, the Duc de Montmorency and Thomas Legendre de Collandre, who owned the largest woodlands, recommended their forest guards to be tolerant.[96] Similar *usages* operated in the Forests of Gaillefontaine, Beaussault and Des Livrées as in the Forest of Bray.[97]

In 1776 the Duc de Montmorency, as *seigneur* of the Comté de Gournay, made a formal request to the King to reorganise the use of 6,000 hectares granted to his ancestors in 1461.[98] It was argued that the survey by Geisler in 1758 had shown that 'this vast area had previously been under trees' but over half had been reduced to moor or heath.[99] It appeared that 'this degradation could only have resulted from the abusive way that surrounding communities treated their *usage* to graze livestock, irrespective of whether they enjoyed that *usage* legitimately, or had usurped it'.[100] The Duke argued that a *cantonnement* should be introduced 'whereby *usagers* would be liberated from historic dues, and landowners freed from tolerating *usages*'.[101] Instead, a portion of the heathland would be allocated to each household paying dues to the *seigneur*.[102] New plots would be surveyed, and marked out by stakes, earth banks and ditches.[103] Landowners and commoners would share the cost in each parish.[104] In this way, the Montmorency family would be allowed 'to replant the woodlands, or to use them in other ways' and to allocate plots of heath land to the commoners.[105] It was argued that, by clearing and cultivating this land, the parishioners would derive more benefit than by grazing stock on 'moors and heaths that produce only a few blades of grass that shrivel in the first heat.'[106] They might flourish on this reclaimed land that would become 'a considerable source of work . . . and guarantee their subsistence.'[107]

The Duke insisted that it would be advantageous to clear all rough pasture but the commoners needed convincing before such radical action could be taken. Their use-rights had to be verified, and the land-use surveys of 1548 and 1574 checked against Geisler's investigation.[108] A report in 1781 demonstrated that only 2,530 hectares were under trees, with a further 3,430 hectares being moor or heath.[109] The woodland cover comprised different species according to habitat, and was generally in good condition. Rough grazing and heath were found on similar soils to those bearing trees, which added weight to the overgrazing hypothesis. Some land was judged suitable for cultivation or

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

improved grazing, whereas on other areas rough grazing was believed to be appropriate. An order in the *Conseil d'Etat* in 1783 formalised these proposals: 'Each inhabitant would receive 3 *arpents* (1.5 hectares) close to his dwelling: the *seigneurs* would retain half of the total area and be freed of obligations to permit grazing and other *usages*'.[110] Some commoners agreed with the proposed *cantonnement* but many claimed that they had been wronged. Inhabitants around Gournay destroyed earthen banks and ditches outlining the new divisions.[111] Commoners continued to use not only land that was destined to become theirs but also areas defined as the exclusive property of the Duc de Montmorency.[112] The *cantonnement* proved so difficult to implement that by 1789 little of the heath and moorland surrounding the Forest of Bray (2,500 hectares) had been divided and allocated to commoners.[113]

The *Cahiers de Doléances* (registers of grievances) composed in March 1789 demonstrated that village assemblies in Bray held contrasting views on the desirability of maintaining commonland. Inhabitants at Elbeuf-en-Bray requested the King to retain 'the communal pasture rights that we have enjoyed since time immemorial as a result of the titles, that we are about to present, allowing us to graze stock on moors and heaths from Gournay to Forges and beyond, without being troubled by the *seigneurs*, notably the Comte de Gournay who, against all rules of justice, has taken legal action against our residents who, by virtue of representations to the *Parlément de Rouen*, we have managed to restore to liberty'.[114] Parishioners at Bellozanne also wrote about 'rights' to graze stock and collect fallen timber in the Forest of Bray.[115] Their neighbours at Brémontier insisted that 'the heathlands that members of this parish have used for four centuries had been given in full ownership to its inhabitants by the Duc de Longueville, but over the past four years the Duc de Montmoranchy (sic) has wished to relieve us of their possession which would cause great harm to the population and prevent their survival'.[116] Citizens at Bellozanne stressed that 'they and many other parishioners enjoyed undivided use of the adjacent commons, moors and heaths; since these pastures gave rise to all the wealth of the Pays de Bray, the commons can only fulfil their true destination by remaining in their present state and furnishing an abundance of nourishment for immense flocks and herds'.[117] The villagers were, however, willing to contemplate change, for 'if the cultivation of the commons be judged more advantageous to the public good, and division be ordered, then this allocation should be done in the most just proportion; the *seigneur* of the Comté de Gournay should not be allowed ... to choose arbitrarily the land that would appear to be most productive or convenient for him to work'.[118]

A few parishes west of the Epte supported reclamation, such as the inhabitants of Boschyons who requested 'orders be issued for *défrichement* of moors and uncultivated land to commence'.[119] This view was shared in eastern Bray, with parishioners at Espaubourg requesting the commons to be allocated to them for cultivation 'according to the number and needs of the inhabitants, especially those who do not have the same ability as the rich to maintain their livestock. [However] enough commonland should be retained to graze the stock of our own parish and of neighbouring parishes.'[120] The third estate of the bailiwick of Beauvais concurred: 'The commonlands, some of which are arid and others flooded, could be made more useful to the villagers by draining land and planting areas with trees'.[121]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Well in advance of the law of 10th June 1793, according each village the ownership of its commonlands and the choice of retaining them intact or dividing them, the inhabitants of Bray had gathered much information about past encroachments and were engaged in vigorous debate about the appropriate way to proceed.[122] In 1791 the administrators of Gournay district 'believed as a matter of equity that the commons should be divided among all landowners who had claims to them'.[123] They were, however, concerned that any division should not disadvantage the poor. They debated how costs of *défrichement* should be borne and whether those reclaiming land should be exempted from taxation. They recognised that effective drainage was essential in the damp core of Bray and acknowledged this might suffer if land ownership were fragmented. A year later, they drew attention to other possible problems if the 2,500 hectares of commonland extending for twenty four kilometres from Gournay to Beaubec abbey, Serqueux and Roncherolles were divided.[124] They insisted: 'the said commons form an excellent and fertile pasture almost everywhere', rather than being arid or excessively wet, although they acknowledged that patches were marshy and gave rise to disease.[125] 'How', they asked, 'could it be argued that the commons were of no value to the State since they enabled villagers to live comfortably?'[126] If division were implemented, new tracks, hedgerows and ditches would consume quantities of land to the detriment of the (former) commoners. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that distant stretches of land might relinquish their communal status and be converted to enclosed pastures on eighteen-year leases. The ensuing revenue could be used to drain, fertilise and improve the remaining commons, as well as to surface local roads and generate work to assist the poor.[127]

The administrators warned that any drastic changes would 'lead to trouble and disaster'.[128] Commoners had already 'posted seditious notices on church doors, held illegal meetings and sounded the tocsin, assembled on various occasions, even at night, and, armed with implements, filled in ditches, and tore up stakes and hedges' around newly-divided areas.[129] Proposals to encourage the division of commons were welcomed by countryfolk but only when land was appropriate for cultivation.[130] If it were best suited to extensive grazing then it should be left undivided. They emphasised potential contradictions in the proposed law that 'has the double objective of improving the lot of the poor and of encouraging better cultivation'.[131]

Debates of this kind were even more relevant when the *Convention Nationale* passed a law on 10th June 1793 enabling each parish to retain or divide its commons.[132] As members of the new *Conseil Général du Département de l'Oise* recognised, division would be to the detriment of the poor who possessed 'no other means of grazing stock and supporting their family', and lacked sufficient resources to work any plots that they might be allocated.[133] The delegates believed that the opportunities afforded under the law would be 'disastrous for the poor' and threatened to reduce the number of livestock.[134] Abolition of the commons 'may satisfy individual cupidity for the moment and provide some small benefit, but we feel that a greater evil threatens'.[135]

In 1793, Citizen Caron, local agent of the *Ministre de l'Intérieur* in Seine-Inférieure, noted that the law of 13th August 1766 had encouraged *défrichement* of all suitable land in the districts of Neufchâtel and Dieppe.[136] Most soil that remained uncultivated was 'simply commonland that can only be used for grazing'.[137] He stated that the law enabling

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

commons to be divided was working 'in diametric opposition to its intention' in areas best suited to rough pasture.[138] The reason was simple, since it 'placed sterile property into the hands of the poor, and destroyed precious resources for livestock that are the soul of farming'.[139] He concluded that commons under rough grazing should not be divided, and only more fertile areas be designated for reclamation. In his opinion, beneficiaries of new plots should 'pay an annual charge, determined by experts, that would be distributed to indigent citizens in the municipality.'[140]

Uncertainty clearly surrounded the future of the commons of Bray in the 1790s. Many parishioners east of the Epte took the opportunities afforded by the 1793 law into their own hands and cleared patches of rough grazing before their village assembly had voted.[141] The municipal councils of Auteuil, Berneuil, Cuigy, Ons, Warluis and doubtless elsewhere ruled that such unauthorised activity should cease until a collective view had been expressed.[142] A 'large majority' at Saint-Germer voted in favour of division, although those living in the hamlet of Le Bretel insisted that 'the commons provide the only support for the very poor.'[143] At Cuigy-en-Bray, 56 of the 79 members of the assembly voted in favour of total division, fifteen for division of part of the commons, and eight abstained.[144] The result at Gerberoy was less decisive, with 54 in favour and 39 against, however three surveyors were appointed to ensure that division would take place.[145] This process was repeated with varying degrees of enthusiasm throughout eastern Bray. At Cuigy 40 hectares of marshy commonland remained undivided in 1819, with most villagers favouring delay until the line of the highway between Gournay and Beauvais had been determined.[146] A minority wished to proceed rapidly, with one, Augustin Leclerc, being anxious to build a pottery on the plot he expected to receive.[147] The delay at Cuigy was exceptional; by 1810 almost all commonland in eastern Bray had been divided into small plots, and new tracks, hedgerows and dispersed farmhouses installed.[148]

Changes proved more contentious west of the Epte where the properties of the Montmorency family and other *seigneurs* had been requisitioned at the Revolution but would be returned less than two decades later. [149] Not surprisingly, commoners continued to graze their animals, since they had no other means of subsistence, regardless of any changed legal situation. In 1806 forest guards seized 160 cattle grazed within the Forest of Bray by inhabitants of Saumont, and took their owners to justice.[150] The villagers quoted an array of legal documents in their defence, maintained that their 'cattle were being devoured by famine day by day', and sought compensation for the seized stock.[151] The court ruling of 4 floréal An XIII went against them and certainly was not unique. Forest guards took similar punitive action against inhabitants of Le Fossé and other *communes*.[152]

By imperial decree of 8th May 1807, the Forests of Bray, Forges and Gournay were restored to the Montmorency family who had emigrated at the Revolution and whose land had been declared State property.[153] Restoration was, however, conditional upon the division of communal moors and heaths, with each household having a *bona fide* claim to receive 1.5 hectares.[154] Following a decree of 28th February 1809, villagers petitioned the authorities to proceed immediately and remove squatters from portions of commonland that had been cultivated illegally.[155] For example, one Dubos admitted clearing a patch at La Ferté and building 'a small cottage to protect myself, my wife

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and my unfortunate children against the rigours of the seasons'.[156] This infuriated other commoners who removed 'a horse that [Dubos] had hired to harrow the land before sowing oats'.[157] The municipal agent of La Ferté was authorised to remove Dubos and his neighbours, Renault and Fère, from their illegal plots.[158] These men conceded defeat but Dubos had the effrontery to appropriate the land they left before himself being evicted.[159] Such incidents slowed down the *cantonnement* and some villagers resolved matters by brute force. Squatters on the commons of Le Fossé had 'hedges, trees, ditches around their encroachments ripped up by a considerable group of citizens led by the deputy mayor of this *commune*'.[160]

In 1810 the prefect of Seine-Inférieure authorised the *conservateur des eaux et forêts* to implement *cantonnement* in four *communes* in Bray, with all expenses to be borne by Madame de Montmorency.[161] Other *communes* were required to present legal evidence of their entitlement to graze livestock, collect wood, and enjoy other *usages* before *cantonnement* might begin.[162] Forges-les-Eaux, Serqueux and La Bellière failed to do so, which gave rise to further delays.[163] Not all commoners were satisfied with the way 1.5 hectares had been allocated, and ripped up earthen banks and new hedges at Catillon and Roncherolles.[164] Under an order of 1808, the *sous-préfet* of Neufchâtel was charged to supervise their replacement and to ensure that *cantonnement* proceeded. By the end of 1810 the *conservateur* had laid out 591 hectares of new plots for 397 households.[165]

The process was far from tranquil since some communes continued their opposition. Conflicting sets of documentation were produced, with lawyers representing the Montmorency household citing evidence from 1461, 1548, 1574 and 1578 to demonstrate that their whole estate of 6,000 hectares had once been tree-covered and had been degraded as a result of *usages* enjoyed by the commoners.[166] Villagers countered with documents dating from 1579, 1667 and 1777.[167] They conceded that the contested land belonged to the *seigneurs* but insisted that they, as commoners, had the right – not just the privilege – to use it. They also challenged the account of land-use change. Opposition was especially strong at Saumont, Mesangueville, La Ferté, Catillon and Roncherolles whose inhabitants insisted that the moors and heaths had declined substantially, with 2,210 hectares remaining in 1812 compared with 3,430 hectares in 1777.[168] It would appear that 1,220 hectares had been reclaimed 'to the prejudice of local inhabitants who enjoyed *usages*'.[169] Without doubt, just prior to the Revolution, 'the *seigneurs* of Gournay enfeoffed a portion of heaths and moors on which farms and smallholdings were created'.[170]

Further examples were quoted by the inhabitants of Le Fossé who insisted: 'the evidence is before your eyes; if you cross the commons of Mesangueville, Dampierre, Cuy, and Le Fossé you will see the large farmsteads that have been established either on portions of forest or common pasture'.[171] The Counts of Gournay encouraged the town of Forges-les-Eaux to expand over former woodland, hence 'even if the forest has diminished, the income of the *seigneurs* has greatly increased'.[172] Villagers argued that they would suffer if their livestock were excluded from woodlands that were being prepared for replanting by the Montmorency family, since 'over 4,000 cattle' were grazed on woods, moors and heaths between Forges and Gournay, together with 'a large number of calves . . . Foodstuffs are expensive already and will become even more so when a large section of land is removed from pasture.'[173]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The *usagers* were convinced that they would suffer if *cantonnement* were to go ahead, insisting: 'Everyone knows that the population is very numerous on the [outer] margin of the commons, and only resources of rough grazing enable many people to survive. Take away those resources and you will make them unable to pay their taxes and rent, force them to send their children to beg, and reduce them to the most frightful misery since they are in an area that harvests very little grain.'[174] Villagers argued that an allocation of 1.5 hectares per household was insufficient to feed the present quantity of cattle. If *cantonnement* were to proceed, then they feared the number of livestock would decline, as would the volume of manure, and the quantity of butter for dispatch to Paris.[175] Food prices in the capital would rise, while in Bray many inhabitants would be unable to fund the clearance of their new plot and would be reduced to greater misery. Some would discover that their newly acquired land was infertile and their low crop yields would not cover costs. Villagers, like their administrators in Rouen and Beauvais, argued that land quality should be examined as part of the *cantonnement* process and be used to help determine whether the soil should be retained for communal grazing, be planted with trees, or divided for cultivation or improved pasture.[176]

Local opposition waned rapidly and eleven *communes* around the Forest of Bray requested division of their commonland during 1812.[177] Doubtless, the arguments of agricultural 'improvers' played their role in this change of heart. Perhaps more important was the realisation that improved highways enabled Bray to satisfy a share of the growing Parisian demand for butter, cheese and other foodstuffs, and that this potential was better realised from individual pastures than from rough grazing.[178] Ten years later, Goube reported that in Forges-les-Eaux *canton* 'one of the greatest possible agricultural improvements has taken place. Over 2,500 hectares of moors and arid heaths have been cleared and converted to ploughland, enclosed pastures and plantations. New houses have been built. This great benefit is due to the zeal and enlightenment of MM. Thomas and Fossé [local landowners] who have done everything to conquer opposition and dispel prejudice.'[179] In the adjacent *canton* of Gournay, 'heaths, moors and marshes have been cultivated; everything has been converted to arable or *herbages* according to the terrain'.[180] In 1822 Le Marquis Barbé-Marbois remarked how the Pays de Bray had changed in just a dozen years. 'Moors and peat bogs have been improved; plantations and the plough have given real value to what one might say had none previously; families that suffered miserable conditions only a few years ago now live in abundance. Improvements have certainly not come to an end, since the well being of individuals and the wealth of the district are increasing daily.'[181] By virtue of his concern for improving the lot of prisoners, he observed: 'the fact that this has brought begging to an end [in Bray] has captured my attention; the kinds of offence formerly committed by these miserable people have now become extremely rare'.[182]

Reclamation of waste and replanting of woodlands continued through the nineteenth century but difficulties were still encountered.[183] In 1837 the muncipal council of Gaillefontaine complained that their scheme to create tenanted farms on a stretch of rough grazing had been hindered by 'several rich landowners who profited almost exclusively from these pastures and employed all kinds of manoeuvre to prevent the scheme being carried out; however we persisted with our intentions'.[184] Two years later

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Alphonse Dubreuil informed members of the *Société d'Agriculture de Rouen* that the district of Forges-les-Eaux had experienced dramatic changes. 'Today, gentlemen, this locality is unrecognisable; most of the heaths have been transformed into rich pastures and, with good reason, some pass as the best in the area. Considerable stretches still await transformation. This will be difficult and slow since these parts will require much expenditure, without which results will be less than advantageous.'[185] Glimpses of such changes are conveyed by the annual reports of the *Société d'Agriculture* and the award of gold and silver medals to farmers in the Pays de Bray for under-draining wetlands, ploughing up heaths, replanting woodlands, installing hedgerows, and above all creating new *herbages*.

During the half century after 1830 about 1,000 hectares were converted from uncultivated land to permanent grass in western Bray, and this experience was repeated east of the Epte where many dairy farmers sent their products to the flourishing market of Gournay.[186] Improved highways and the building of the railway network after 1850 enabled the district to capitalise on the burgeoning demands for butter, cheese, beef, poultry and eggs in Paris.[187] The 'greening' of the *pays* continued apace so that by the middle of the twentieth century the whole of the geological core of Bray was under permanent grass or trees (figure 1). However, as D'Arcier remarked: 'if someone from medieval times were to return to the forests of Bray he would find them virtually inexistent' by comparison with their former vast extent.[188]

The present landscape that is being marketed as part of a local development policy embracing second homes, countryside recreation, leisure, tourism and rural crafts, rather than mounting agricultural surpluses, is far from being a 'natural' response to a well-watered environment. Rather it is the outcome of complex struggles between landowners and landless, communities and individuals, traditionalists and innovators, rich and poor. Central to centuries of contestation was the notion of *usage* and the bitter debate over whether this involved legal right or tolerated privilege. Central too were the contrasting perceptions of moors, heaths and wetlands that were appreciated as vital components of the traditional pastoral economy by family farmers but were reviled by improvers in quest of agricultural intensification. In our own times they have become recognised as elements of 'wild nature' but are of course components of the cultural landscape that have been contested, modified and transformed across many centuries. The Pays de Bray and other once-recognised *mauvais pays* in old rural Europe are now the areas being most emphatically cherished and commodified.

Notes

1. H. Clout, 'Le Pays de Bray: un lieu de mémoire', *Etudes Normandes* (2002): 4, 87–99.
2. K. Sutton, 'Reclamation of Wasteland during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in H. D. Clout (ed.) *Themes in the Historical Geography of France* (London, 1977), pp. 247–300.
3. Sixteenth-century view by Saulx Tavannes, quoted in A. Demangeon, *La Picardie et les régions voisines* (Paris, 1905), p. 428.
4. The changing extent of uncultivated land in France in the nineteenth century is considered in: H. Clout, *Agriculture in France on the Eve of the Railway Age* (London, 1980), pp. 74–5; and H. Clout, *The Land of France 1815–1914* (London, 1983), pp. 46–59.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

5. A. Soboul, 'The French Community in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Past and Present* 10 (1956), 78–95.
6. J. Sion, *Les Paysans de la Normandie Orientale* (Paris, 1909), pp. 103–8.
7. S. Noël, *Essai sur le Département de la Seine-Inférieure*, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1795), I, p. 31; A. Maury, *Forêts de la Gaule* (Paris, 1867), p. 325.
8. A. Guilmeth, *Description géographique, historique, monumentale et statistique des arrondissements du Havre, Yvetot et Neufchâtel* (Paris, 1838), III, p. 191. Pre-Revolutionary measures varied greatly from place to place. Pre-metric items have been converted to 'Royal measure' and then to metric form. However, conversions are only approximate since before 1789 'Royal measure' was not used consistently throughout the study area. For purposes of calculation, 1 *acre* = 0.83 ha; 1 *arpent* = 0.51 ha; 1 *mine* = 0.32 ha; 1 *lieue* = 4 km.
9. Archives Départementales de l'Oise (hereafter ADO) H 1405, Le Bray: inventaire, 1146–1615.
10. Ibid., 1146.
11. Ibid., 1225.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.; C. Fauqueux, *Géographie de l'Oise* (Beauvais, 1951), p. 12.
14. L. Deladreue and L. Pihan, *Géographie Physique et Historique du Département de l'Oise* (Beauvais, 1886), p. 51.
15. ADO H 1405, 1384.
16. L. Deladreue and L. Pihan, *Géographie*, p. 51.
17. Ibid.
18. J. Malicorne, *Recherches Historiques sur l'Agriculture dans le Pays de Bray*, 3 vols. (Rouen, 1899–1902), I, p. 30.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 40–41.
21. Ibid., p. 68; II, p. 8.
22. ADO H 1405, 1539.
23. ADO H 1405, 1547.
24. M. Oliver, La Poterie dans le Pays de Bray, *Annales de Normandie, Supplément* (1954), 45.
25. ADO 3353, Justice de Saint-Germer, avril 1705.
26. ADO H 1406, 14 mai 1632.
27. Ibid., 19 avril 1655.
28. Ibid., Commune de Boisville, 1722.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. ADO H 1406, Sentence du Lieutenant de la Justice de Saint-Germer contre certains riverains des communes de Bray ayant entrepris sur icelles, 22 août 1742.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. ADO H 1406, Communes de Bray (1734)
35. ADO H 1407, Paroisse de Senantes: Mémoire à Mgr. Le Cardinal de Fleury, 29 juin 1732.
36. Ibid.
37. ADO H 1407, Requête de M. Grauchet de Senantes à M. Le Cardinal de Fleury, 2 juillet 1732.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. ADO H 1407, Lettres de la Paroisse de Saint-Germer (1732)
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. ADO H 1407, Arrêté du Conseil d'Etat du 21 avril 1733.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

45. ADO H 1407, Lettre au Roy, à Nos Seigneurs de Son Conseil (1734)
46. ADO H 1407, Arrêté du Conseil d'Etat rendu le 27 juillet 1734; L. Deladreue and L. Pihan, *Géographie*, p. 51.
47. ADO H 1406, Mémoire touchant la propriété et l'usage du Bray qui s'étend depuis Saint-Germer jusqu'au ruisseau d'Espaubourg (1734)
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. ADO Fonds de Troussures. Affaire des Communes de Bray, 1761–1778.
51. L. Deladreue and L. Pihan, *Géographie*, p. 51.
52. ADO Fonds de Troussures. Affaire des Communes: Mr. De Sauvigny, 10 novembre 1761.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. ADO H 1408, Procès-verbal d'arpentage, 1763. Le Grand Bray.
57. Ibid.
58. ADO H 1408, Triage de Bray, 5 avril 1764.
59. V. De Beauvillé, *Receuil de documents inédits concernant la Picardie* (Paris, 1867), p. 515.
60. ADO Fonds de Troussures. Affaires des Commune de Bray, 1761–1778.
61. Ibid.
62. ADO H 1407, Communes de Bray: Affaire Conty, 18 avril 1778; V. De Beauvillé, *Receuil*, p. 515.
63. ADO H 1407, Communes de Bray: Affaire Conty.
64. Ibid.
65. L. Deladreue and L. Pihan, *Géographie*, p. 53; V. De Beauvillé, *Receuil*, p. 515.
66. ADO H1 1624 (387), Réponse à la lettre de M. de Vergennes de 29 octobre 1785, par M. Auxcousteaux.
67. Ibid.
68. V. De Beauvillé, *Receuil*, p. 515.
69. ADO H 1407, Communes de Bray. Affaire Conty, lettre à M. Le Procureur de l'Abbaye de Saint-Germer, 14 mai 1778.
70. L. Graves, 'Précis statistique du canton du Coudray-Saint-Germer', *Annuaire de l'Oise* (1841), pp. 91–2.
71. F. Bouquet, *Histoire des Eaux de Forges* (Rouen, 1893), p. 14.
72. J. Malicorne, *Recherches*, II, p. 87.
73. Ibid., p. 88.
74. Ibid., p. 90.
75. Ibid., III, p. 12.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., p. 14.
78. Ibid., p. 16.
79. Ibid., p. 18.
80. Ibid., p. 20.
81. Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime (hereafter ADSM) H1 1507, Extraits des registres de la Société Royale d'Agriculture de Rouen, année agricole 1775. All other provincial agricultural societies adopted a similar position on défrichement.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. ADSM C 2865, Défrichements: Généralité de Rouen. Table générale alphabétique des terres vaines et vagues et terrains incultes à défricher, 1774.
85. Archives Nationales (hereafter AN) Q1 1383, Titres Domaniaux: Généralité de Rouen. Sur la requête présentée au Roy en son Conseil par Jean-Baptiste Louis de Montigny, 30 mai 1775.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. AN Q1 1378, Requête présentée au Roi en son Conseil par le Duc de Montmorency, 17 février 1776.
89. Ibid.
90. M. Devèze, *La Vie de la forêt française au XVIe siècle, 2 vols*. (Paris, 1961), I, p. 235, 240; S. Noël, *Essai,* I, p. 33.
91. J. Vidalenc, *La petite métallurgie rurale en Haute-Normandie sous l'ancien régime* (Paris, 1946), p. 33; B. G. Awty, 'The Continental Origins of Wealden Ironworkers, 1451–1544', *Economic History Review* 34 (1981), 524–39.
92. AN Q1 1378, Requête présentée, 17 février 1776.
93. M. Potin de la Mairie, *Recherches historiques sur la Ville de Gournay, Supplément* (Gournay, 1844), p. 353.
94. J. Malicorne, *Recherches,*III, p. 100.
95. Ibid., p. 101.
96. Ibid., p. 102.
97. Ibid., p. 104–106.
98. AN Q1 1394, Titres Domaniaux. Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'Etat. Sur la Requête du Duc de Montmorency, Seigneur du Comté de Gournay-en-Bray, 29 octobre 1776.
99. ADSM P Archives de l'Empire, Section Domaniale, 22 mars 1806.
100. Ibid.
101. M. Potin de la Mairie, *Recherches,* p. 353.
102. J. Malicorne, *Recherches,*II, p. 103.
103. ADSM P Landes et Bruyères, Rollin, Arrêté de M. le Préfet du Département de la Seine-Inférieure concernant les cantonnements de partie des landes et bruyères de Gournay, Bray et Forges, 23 mars 1810.
104. Ibid.
105. ADSM P Archives de l'Empire, Section Domaniale, 22 mars 1806.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. AN Q1 1394, Titres Domaniaux. Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'Etat, 29 octobre 1776.
109. Ibid., Rapport de Mondian, 1781.
110. M. Potin de la Mairie, *Recherches*, p. 353.
111. ADSM C 185, Rapports des Subdélégations, 1787. Biens Communaux.
112. Ibid.
113. J. Malicorne, *Recherches,*III, p. 104.
114. ADSM B, Cahiers de Doléances, Bailliage de Neufchâtel, Elbeuf-en-Bray.
115. Ibid., Bellozanne.
116. Ibid., Brémontier.
117. Ibid., Bellozanne.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., Boschyons.
120. ADO B 57–58, Cahiers de Doléances, Bailliage de Beauvais, Espaubourg.
121. Ibid., Tiers état du bailliage de Beauvais.
122. ADSM F10 333, Mémoire concernant le partage des communes du cy-devant Comté de Gournay, 27 mars 1792.
123. Report of November 1791, cited in G. Bourgin, (ed.), *Le Partage des biens communaux: documents sur la préparation de la loi du 10 juin 1793* (Paris, 1908), p. 256.
124. AN F10 333, Mémoire concernant le partage des communes, 12 mars 1792.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

128. Ibid.
129. ADSM P, Archives de l'Empire, 29 avril 1807.
130. ADSM F10 223, Rapport au Comité d'Agriculture, par le Commissaire Observateur dans le Département de la Seine-Inférieure, Bevriezier, 24 septembre 1792.
131. Ibid.
132. AN FicV(1), Procès-Verbal du Conseil Général du Département de l'Oise, An VIII.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid., An IX.
136. Bedigis (23 septembre 1793), reproduced in P. Caron, (ed.), *Rapports des Agents du Ministre de l'Intérieur dans les Départements, 1793, 2 vols*. (Paris, 1913), I, p. 61.
137. Ibid., 5 septembre 1793, p. 56.
138. Ibid., 24 septembre 1793, p. 66.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid., 24 septembre 1793, p. 66.
141. ADO L, Administration Communale.
142. Ibid., Auteuil, Berneuil, Cuigy, Ons, Warluis.
143. Ibid., Commune de Saint-Germer.
144. ADO O, Biens Communaux, Cuigy-en-Bray.
145. ADO L20, District de Beauvais: biens communaux. Gerberoy, 1793.
146. ADO O Biens Communaux: Cuigy-en-Bray.
147. Ibid.
148. ADSM 2867: Défrichements: arrondissement de Neufchâtel.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
153. AN F3 II(14), Seine-Inférieure. Biens Communaux, La Ferté-Saint-Samson, 15 juin 1810.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid., 8 février 1810.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid., 12 ventôse An VII.
158. Ibid., 11 fructidor An V.
159. Ibid., 2 messidor An VI.
160. Ibid., Le Fossé, 10 juillet 1806.
161. ADSM P, Landes et Bruyères, Arrêtés de M. le Préfet de la Seine-Inférieure concernant les cantonnements de partie des landes et bruyères de Gournay, Bray et Forges, 20 mars 1810.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. ADSM P, Landes et Bruyères, Arrêtés de M. le Préfet, 20 mars 1810.
166. ADSM P, Rapport général sur les landes et bruyères environnantes les forêts de Forges, Bray et Gournay s.d.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid., Droits d'usage. Le Fossé: mémoire concernant les droits de pâturage dans la Forêt de Bray et les bruyères qui l'environnent, 3 prairial An XI.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press

175. Ibid.
176. Ibid.
177. ADSM P, Bruyères à partager. Lettre de Thomas de Bosincelet à M. le Préfet du Département, 18 juillet 1815.
178. H. Clout, 'The Pays de Bray: A Vale of Dairies in Northern France', *Agricultural History Review* 51 (2003), 190–208.
179. M. Goube, 'Rapport sur la Statistique de M. le Chevalier Cartier' *Travaux de la Société Centrale d'Agriculture du Département de la Seine-Inférieure* 6 (1822), 11–18, p. 15.
180. Ibid., p. 17.
181. Quoted in M. Potin de la Mairie, *Recherches*, p. 353.
182. Ibid.
183. M. Drevet, 'Rapport sur les bois et forêts de l'arrondissement de Neufchâtel', *Extraits des Travaux de la Société Centrale d'Agriculture de la Seine-Inférieure* (1845), 276–311, p. 281.
184. AN F3II (14), Seine-Inférieure: Biens Communaux, 12 avril 1837.
185. M. Dubreuil, 'Rapport de la Commission de Recherches', *Extraits de Travaux de la Société Centrale d'Agriculture de la Seine-Inférieure* (1839), 181–97, p. 183.
186. H.D. Clout, 'The Increase in the Grassland Area of the Pays de Bray', *Erdkunde* 23 (1969), 20–29; Clout, 'The Retreat of the Wasteland of the Pays de Bray', *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 47 (1969), 171–89.
187. R. Abad, *Le grand marché. L'approvisionnement alimentaire de Paris sous l'ancien régime* (Paris, 2002); A. Frémont, *L'Elevage en Normandie: étude géographique*, 2 vols (Caen, 1967).
188. S. d'Arcier, *Gournay et le Pays de Bray* (Gournay, 1950), p. 73.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793303001080 Published online by Cambridge University Press