



COMMONS REGISTRATION ACT 1965

Reference No.10/U/22

In the Matter of Knacker's Hole,
Puncknowle, Dorset.

DECISION

This reference relates to the question of the ownership of land known as Knacker's Hole, Puncknowle, being the land comprised in the Land Section of Register Unit No.C.L.9 in the Register of Common Land maintained by the Dorset County Council of which no person is registered under section 4 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 as the owner.

Following upon the public notice of this reference the Puncknowle Parish Council and the late Mr. J.R. Bridgman both claimed to be the freehold owner of the land in question and no other person claimed to have information as to its ownership. Before the hearing the Clerk of the Parish Council informed the Clerk of the Commons Commissioners that the Parish Council did not intend to pursue its claim.

I held a hearing for the purpose of inquiring into the question of the ownership of the land at Dorchester on 27th February 1973. The hearing was adjourned sine die on account of the then recent death of Mr. Bridgman.

I resumed the hearing at Dorchester on 26th February 1974.

At the resumed hearing Mr. P.J. Kneip, solicitor, appeared for the executors of the will of the late Mr. Bridgman.

The land in question was conveyed to Mr. Bridgman by a conveyance made 30th September 1964 between (1) Lionel John King (2) John Roddick Bridgman. This conveyance related to a substantial area known as the Puncknowle Estate, but there was no specific mention of the land in question in the deeds under which Mr. King held the Estate. It was, however, recited in the conveyance that Mr. King had been in possession of this and other land as part of the manorial estate of Puncknowle from and since 25th March 1953 without acknowledgment of the title of any other person thereto. By a conveyance made 25th March 1953 made between (1) Octavia Evelyn Aldridge Palmer (2) John Roper and Thomas Herman Pring (3) L.J. King there was conveyed to Mr. King the manor or lordship or reputed manor or lordship of Puncknowle or Puncknoll. The title to this manor or lordship can be deduced from a conveyance made 28th October 1913 between (1) Emma Louisa Arundell Mallock (2) Robert Henry Palmer

Mr. King gave evidence, which I accept, that after his purchase he collected a small rent from a tenant for a few years. On 9th March 1961 he obtained from the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food a consent under section 194 of the Law of Property Act 1925 for the erection of a fence with a pedestrian gate across the north end of the land in question. Mr. King then cleared the land of scrub and rabbits, drained it, cleared the ditches and generally reclaimed the land by ploughing it up and laying it down to permanent pasture. Mr. King remained in possession of the land until 1964. Since 1964 the land has been farmed by a company called Puncknowle Farms Ltd, a director of which, Mr. F.C. Woodhouse, gave evidence. At no time since 1953 has there been any adverse claim to the land.



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On this evidence I am satisfied that Mr. Bridgman's executors are the owners of the land, and I shall accordingly direct the Dorset County Council, as registration authority, to register them as the owners of the land under section 8(2) of the Act of 1965.

I am required by regulation 30(1) of the Commons Commissioners Regulations 1971 to explain that a person aggrieved by this decision as being erroneous in point of law may, within 6 weeks from the date on which notice of the decision is sent to him, require me to state a case for the decision of the High Court.

Dated this 21st day of March 1974

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. J. P. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Chief Commons Commissioner