

Ian Mercer

The purchase of the area in 1975.

I'd argued for a long time that we should demonstrate that we were capable of managing a piece of land, so that we could talk to other managers, saying 'We know how it works, we've tried it', you know, that sort of thing, and we decided in the end that we'd stick to commons and woods, because they were the things that were neglected, whereas farmland was farmland and somebody, if he was going to make money out of it was going to look after it, and we'd bought woods before we bought commons, we were buying Wray Cleave in '74, so the idea of occupying land had already got into their heads, and the commoners were quite pleased really, that they suddenly had a landlord that had a responsibility for public pressure. I've always thought that the National Park Authority will only work if it shows the residents, particularly the working residents, that it understands their business thoroughly.