

OldAerialPhotos Help Defend Land Owner's Rights

Aerial photography dating back to the 1940s has provided crucial evidence in a long running battle for public access to a historic site on Dartmoor. A Planning Inquiry has ruled in favour of the landowner who bought the land around Vixen Tor in 2003, closing off access to the general public. The order to open two paths across the land was made by Devon County Council with support from The Ramblers (formerly the Ramblers Association) and the British Mountaineering Council. Following the recent ruling by the Planning Inspectorate this order has now been rescinded.

Bluesky supplied the historic aerial photography complete with certificates of authentication from their OldAerialPhotos archive providing factual and unbiased evidence for further investigation by Air Photo Services, a company that offers specialist interpretation of aerial imagery, consultancy and expert witness services. Director Chris Cox commented, "Acting as an Expert Witness and working on behalf of my client, I was able to establish, using the historic images, that a footpath was not visible in the alleged place. I conducted comparative analysis on other visible paths in the area from the 1940s to the present day to support this claim."

She continued, "The fact that Bluesky were able to supply a full range of appropriately dated and authenticated images in a timely fashion meant that I could undertake detailed analysis, preparing a comprehensive report within the short timescales imposed by the Inquiry."

Planning Inspector Mark Yates ruled that there was not enough evidence to show continuous use of the paths during the twenty years prior to their closure. He said, "I accept that people have walked to Vixen Tor and used routes through the enclosure. However, I am not satisfied that the evidence of public use presented to the inquiry is sufficient to demonstrate the dedication of this route in common law."

This is a second inquiry that has upheld the rights of farmer Mrs Mary Alford. A previous Inquiry, seen as one of the most important test cases for the Right to Roam legislation, ruled that the public did not have an automatic right of way across the land.

The imagery supplied by Bluesky forms part of historically important archive that includes some of the earliest commercial aerial survey images, military photography from World War II and many national archives. Offering a record of most major UK cities and towns, transport and utility infrastructure and commercial property developments, the images are an invaluable resource for anyone with a personal or professional interest in local studies, genealogy, boundary disputes, environmental land use research or town planning. Visitors to www.oldaerialphotos.com can search by simply entering a postcode, address or grid reference. Detailed search results, including the age and ground coverage, of every image that matches the search criteria are displayed and the visitor can choose to purchase a hard copy print, digital image file or photopack which includes historical and current day photos as well as certificates of authentication.

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Notes to editors

About OldAerialPhotos

OldAerialPhotos is a division of Bluesky International Ltd. Holding the largest collection of historically significant commercial aerial photos in the UK, OldAerialPhotos' remit is to preserve, enhance and make these archives available. OldAerialPhotos understands the national importance of such images as a unique record of the development of the UK and has a mission to continue to make them accessible for future generations.

www.oldaerialphotos.com

About Bluesky

Bluesky is a UK-based specialist in aerial imaging and remote sensing data collection and processing. An internationally recognised leader with projects extending around the globe, Bluesky is proud to work with prestigious organisations such as Google, the BBC and Government Agencies. Bluesky has unrivalled expertise in the creation of seamless, digital aerial photography, 3D landscape/cityscape visualisations and prints and also runs a national mapping centre, providing digital mapping, satellite imagery and aerial photography including ultra-high resolution imagery of cities and towns.

www.bluesky-world.com

About Air Photo Services

Air Photo Services provides specialist interpretation of aerial imagery for legal, planning, archaeological and environmental issues. Its director Chris Cox acts as an expert witness in these matters, providing written and verbal evidence in court and Inquiry on behalf of her clients. With extensive experience of interpretation and CAD and GIS mapping from aerial imagery, Air Photo Services has completed over 500 contracts ranging from assessment of land use, mapping of archaeological and natural environments to the provision of advice to central government agencies, private and corporate clients.

www.airphotoservices.co.uk