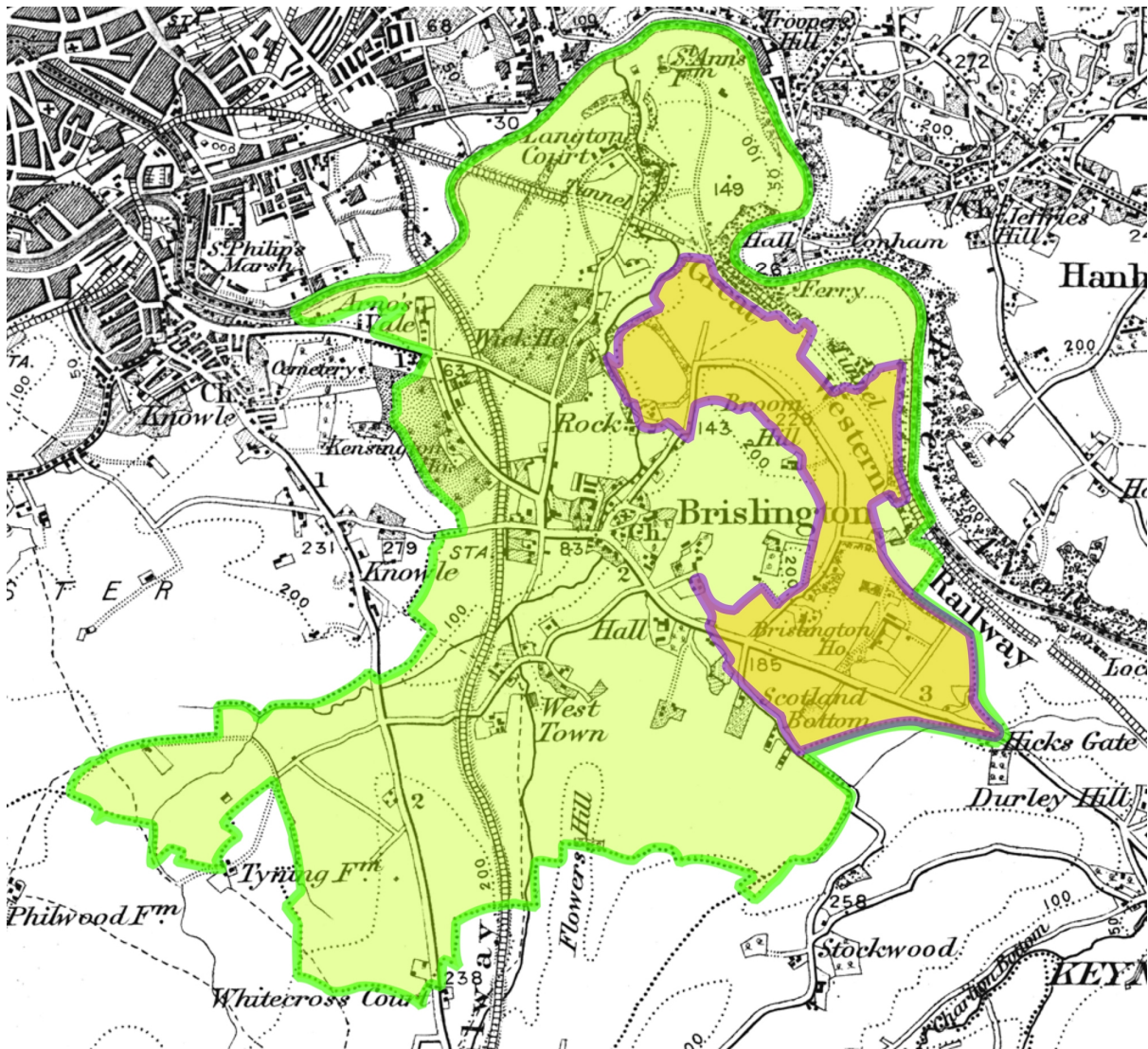


# Brislington Meadows - notes on the 1778 Enclosure

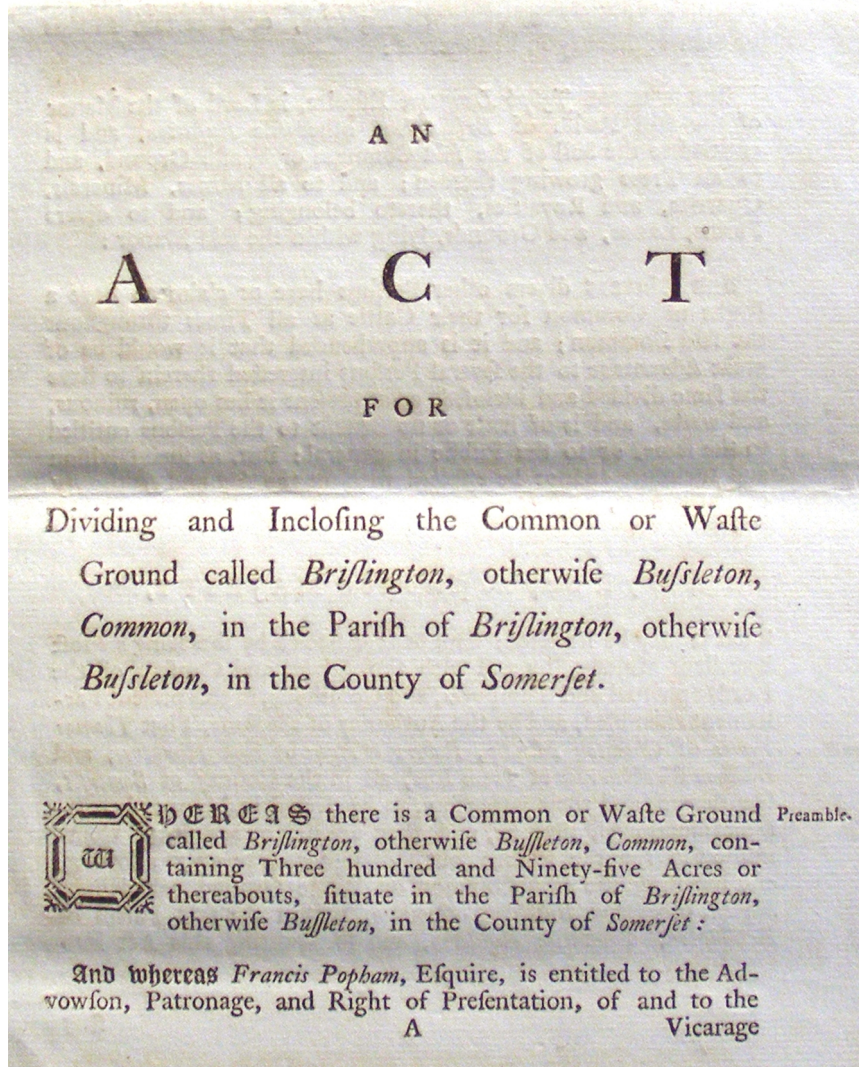
Ken Taylor (2022)

The Act of 1778 that forced the enclosure of Brislington Common, was our local example of a national phenomenon. The sketch map gives an idea of the scale of the change - the Common being enclosed (shown in yellow) takes a large bite out of the parish (shown in green). Five more patches of Brislington were also enclosed at the same time, but - to the best of the author's knowledge - the location of them all isn't yet known.

The parish boundary shown here is based on the 1846 Tithing map. The area enclosed is from a map in the Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton (reference Q/RDE/130) because it dates to the time when this parish was still in Somerset. Underlying the sketch is an Ordnance Survey map (1 inch to the mile) from the earlier part of the 1890s.



Sketch map showing the proportion of Brislington enclosed by the Act of 1778.



### 1778 Act of Enclosure

The bitterness of the sense of social injustice occasioned by the enclosures is frequently cited with reference to an anonymous rhyme known as The Goose and the Common that exists now in many traditional forms:

The law locks up the man or woman  
who steals the goose from off the common,  
but leaves the greater villain loose  
who steals the common from the goose!

Other variants and several more verses may be found online etc (a version quoted by Professor James Boyle has the benefit of his notes on its history).

Part of the land that Homes England is trying to build on was first enclosed by the 1778 Act, and hedgerows - the living heritage of that event - will be affected by their plans. These survivals of the controversial Enclosure of Brislington Common are in both the proposed access route to Broomhill Road and also elsewhere on the upper slopes of Broom Hill.

The whole of the original 1778 Act is available in the digital library wing of Brislington Community Museum ([brislington.org](http://brislington.org)).

## **Bibliography**

Boyle, James 2003, 'The Second Enclosure Movement and the Construction of the Public Domain', *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol 66:33, pp 33-4, Duke University, USA, <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1273&context=lcp> (accessed 19 June 2022).