

PAT JESS

This landscape behind me at Malin Beg is called ladder farms. It's a good description but it doesn't explain very much. In order to understand how it came to be as it is, we need to know something of society processes, the cultural context and the role of the physical environment and how those combine and change over time. In order to reconstruct past landscapes, we rely heavily on secondary sources. For example, the first edition of the Ordnance Survey for this area, taken in the middle of the last century, shows no field boundaries here at all and the settlement clustered up in the middle of what is now a long row of houses.

The change was obviously dramatic, effected through the political process and forced by Act of Parliament. It was socially traumatic as well, but, remarkably, changed agricultural practice extremely little.

[End of recording]