

<http://divergences.be/spip.php?article1206>



Squatting is an ancient right

- Archives - Archives Générales 2006 - 2022 - 2009 - Février 2009 No. 13 - International - Great Britain -

Date de mise en ligne : jeudi 29 janvier 2009

Copyright © Divergences Revue libertaire en ligne - Tous droits réservés

<http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/IMG/gif/Squatters.gif>

There is a widespread folk belief that if a house could be erected between sundown and sunset the occupants had the right to tenure and could not be evicted. Often enquiry into the manorial court rolls shows this to be the case. Unofficial roadside settlements or encroachments onto the 'wastes' between parishes provided space for the new miners, furnacemen and artisans who made the industrial revolution, while cultivating a patch of ground and keeping a pig and some chickens.

Up to 1945 'plotlanders' were able to make use of small patches of land not needed for agriculture, gradually building up weekend shacks into permanent residences, by using their own time and labour rather than large sums of money.

Immediately after the Second World War, homeless people in their thousands squatted in recently-vacated military camps, organizing their own communal services. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, a similar movement erupted across vacant local-authority properties, evolving into long-term housing co-operatives.

Today various kinds of travellers are attempting to settle on their own land, living outside the formal economy and experimenting with a wide range of unconventional dwelling types.

This sort of self-help housing provision is flexible, cheap and creative. It tends to use human capital rather than financial capital, and to evolve slowly from the most basic provision by devising ingenious new solutions.

Colin WARD, *Cotters and Squatters. Housing's Hidden History* (Five Leaves, 2002)

In Great Britain, you cannot simply kick out the squatters if they get in. Squatting is an ancient right.

Legal procedures are therefore required, including a Possession Order.