

## EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Hill's Venture lead mine

PARISH: PEAK FOREST

DISTRICT: HIGH PEAK

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 30955

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK12447927

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument lies on the brow of a hill, 1km east of the village of Peak Forest. It includes the ruins, earthworks and buried remains of the Hill's Venture lead mine.

The western part of the site includes part of a rake, or series of shaft mounds sunk along the line of a lead-bearing vein. The end of the rake marks the end of an important vein known as the Moss Rake, which is here interrupted by an intrusion of dolerite. The Moss Rake was worked here from at least the 1670s to the mid-19th century, but may first have been mined in the mid-13th century. Amongst the shaft mounds is a remarkably small shaft of approximately 0.3m diameter, an unusual feature which has been interpreted as a ventilation shaft.

In addition to these extraction features, which contain evidence of low-level mining technology, a dressing floor survives in the eastern part of the site. This area, where raw material from the mine was broken and washed to produce increasing concentrations of lead, is partly enclosed by a low wall which is included in the scheduling. Within this enclosure a variety of remains including pits and shaftmounds, ruined structures and heaps of dressing waste can be seen. In addition the area includes a crushing wheel. This was a typical component of the dressing process in Derbyshire until the end of the 19th century. A wheel, in this case of gritstone, with a diameter of 1.2m and thickness of 0.3m, rolled on an axle around a track of stone or iron to break up pieces of ore. The crushing wheel is an extremely rare survival. Its presence in situ on the dressing floor indicates that its associated track bed will survive beneath the wheel as a buried feature, providing further evidence for the form and technology of crushing.

All modern field boundaries are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.

### ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Approximately 10,000 lead industry sites are estimated to survive in England, spanning nearly three millennia of mining history from the later Bronze Age (c.1000 BC) until the present day, though before the Roman period it is likely to have been on a small scale. Two hundred and fifty one lead industry sites, representing approximately 2.5% of the estimated national archaeological resource for the industry, have been identified as being of national importance. This selection of nationally important monuments, compiled and

assessed through a comprehensive survey of the lead industry, is designed to represent the industry's chronological depth, technological breadth and regional diversity.

Lead rakes are linear mining features along the outcrop of a lead vein resulting from the extraction of relatively shallow ore. They can be broadly divided between: rakes consisting of continuous rock-cut clefts; rakes consisting of lines of interconnecting or closely-spaced shafts with associated spoil tips and other features; and rakes whose surface features were predominantly produced by reprocessing of earlier waste tips (normally in the 19th century). In addition, some sites contain associated features such as coes (miners' huts), gin circles (the circular track used by a horse operating simple winding or pumping machinery), and small-scale ore-dressing areas and structures, often marked by tips of dressing waste.

The majority of rake workings are believed to be of 16th-18th century date, but earlier examples are likely to exist, and mining by rock-cut cleft has again become common in the 20th century. Rakes are the main field monuments produced by the earlier and technologically simpler phases of lead mining. They are very common in Derbyshire, where they illustrate the character of mining dominated by regionally distinctive Mining Laws, and moderately common in the Pennine and Mendip orefields; they are rare in other lead mining areas. A sample of the better preserved examples from each region, illustrating the typological range, will merit protection.

The Hill's Venture mine represents a rare and valuable example of a small-scale lead mine and associated dressing floor including rare components, and will retain evidence to illustrate technological development in lead mining over a lengthy period. The mine's size and low levels of mechanisation are characteristic of the industry in Derbyshire, and reflect its influence on the landscape. The preservation of the crushing wheel and circle, within an enclosed dressing floor, is particularly unusual and will contribute to our understanding of lead ore processing techniques.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 15th June 1998