

The Lead Rake, West of Great Hucklow

The map below of the western section of the Hucklow lead rake is based on a 19th Century Ordnance Survey Map of the area



Ancient 'groove' workings on Tideslow Rake Mock Mine High Rake Mine Cow Pasture Mine Nether Liberty Mine Watch and Ward Mine Beech Grove Mine Hill Top Mine Gateside Mine

In ancient times the orefield was divided into jurisdictions called Liberties, which were for the most part based on the Manorial boundaries

- Land in the Liberty of Little Hucklow
- Land in the Liberty of Great Hucklow
- The course of the Hucklow Edge lead rake
- Roads

The Great Hucklow Lead Rake

Beneath your feet was once one of the major lead producing veins in the Derbyshire orefield. Mining began here even before the Romans built the fort of Anavio at Brough in 78AD, and archaeologists have traced a Roman road from Brough up the valley to Hucklow Edge.

Mining was active in mediaeval times but really flourished in the 17th and 18th Centuries when increased demand for lead and improved mining methods allowed greater exploitation of the rich veins of lead ore below what is known as Hucklow Edge. The whole area would originally have been peppered with small mines, many long since forgotten, which is why you are advised to keep to the public footpaths and roadways.

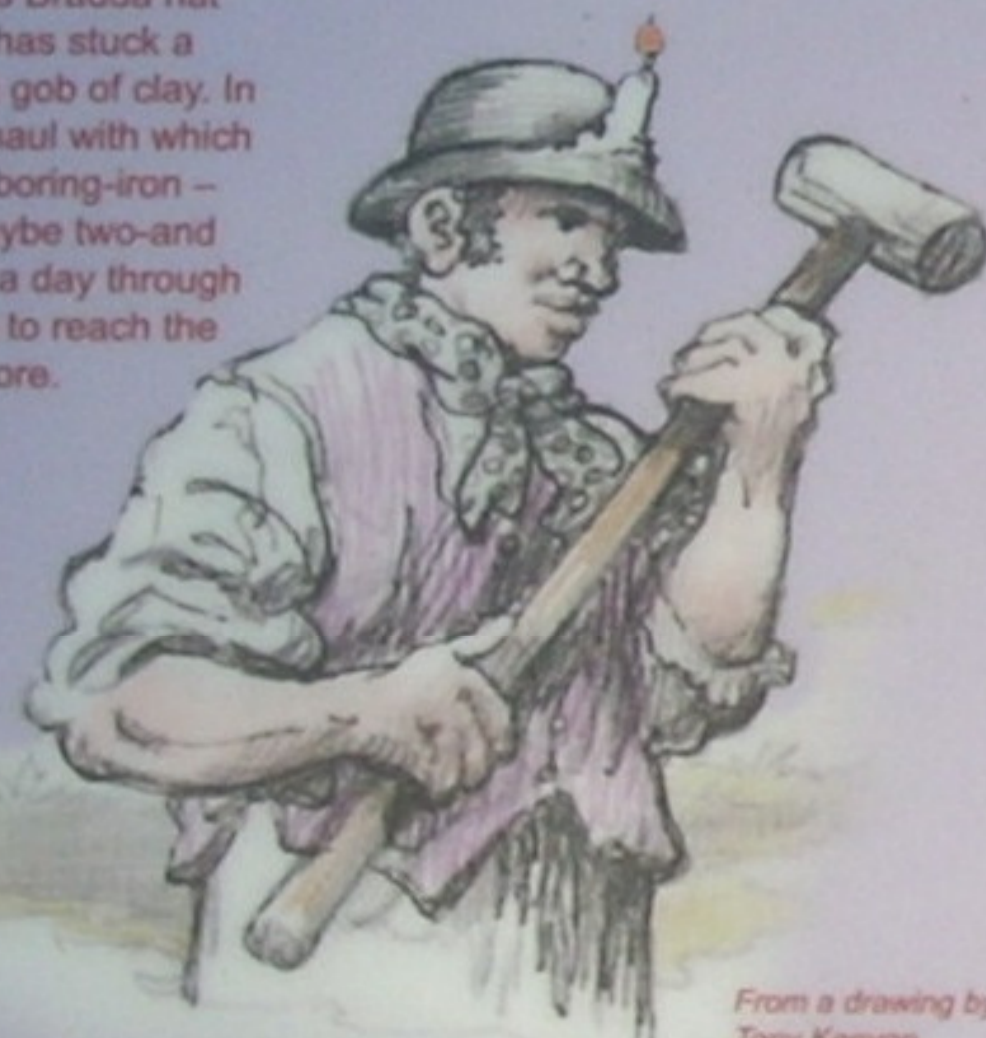
Mines to the west of this board.

To the west is the former mining hamlet of Windmill, and the village of Little Hucklow itself can be seen tucked into the valley to the south-west.

Apart from the impressive remains of the High Rake Mine and a single miner's cottage much of the surface evidence of the Windmill's former importance in lead mining has been obliterated, but the hillocks of waste material from the mines are still to be seen behind the line of houses and also south of the lane leading towards High Rake. In the last century these hillocks along with many others have been reworked for the fluorspar which was originally discarded by the lead miners as worthless waste.

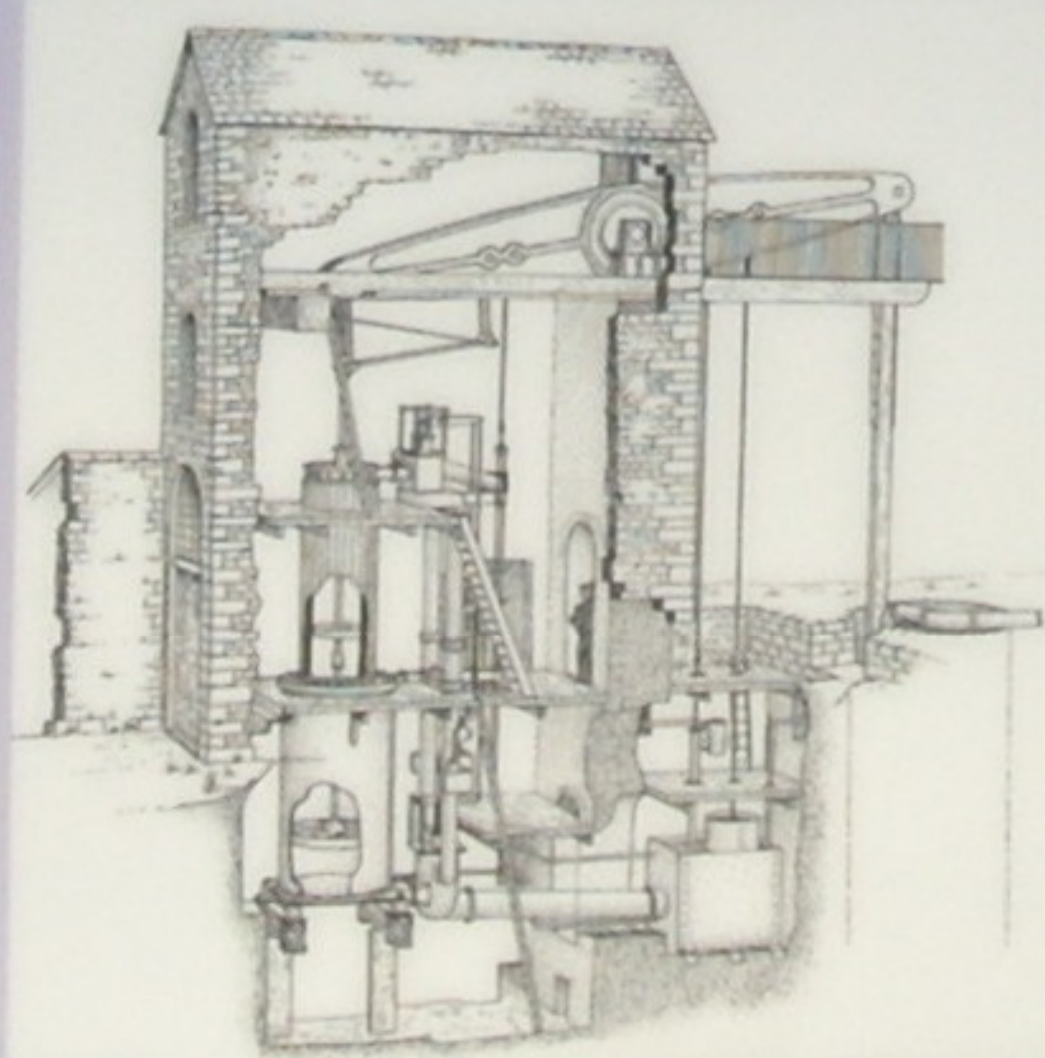
The extensive High Rake Mine site, recently excavated by the Peak District Historical Mines Society, is along the lane to the west past the large semi-circular agricultural shed and is well worth visiting. The remains belong to a 19th Century venture, although the first mention of a mine on this site is in 1577.

T'owd Mon – an old-time miner with his Bradda hat on which he has stuck a candle with a gob of clay. In his hand, a maul with which he drove his boring-iron – tunnelling maybe two-and-a-half inches a day through the limestone to reach the veins of lead ore.



From a drawing by Tony Kenyon

A reconstruction of the pumping engine at High Rake Mine based on the archaeological evidence uncovered recently by the Peak District Mines Historical Society. Drawing by John Barnatt and John Thorpe. There is further information at the site of High Rake Mine.



Drawing by John Barnatt and John Thorpe

There is further information at the site of High Rake Mine.

Mines to the south and east of this board in the Great Hucklow Liberty. You are standing on the site of Watch and Ward mine, later used as a quarry and eventually filled in with road widening spoil from Tideswell.

The spoil hillocks which were on the south along the road towards the village of Great Hucklow were reworked for fluorspar in the 1960s and then levelled. Here the important mines of Beech Grove and Hill Top were situated, the latter probably being the older mine as coins dating from 1605-1680 were found down one of its shafts. The shafts have all been capped and are on private land; the capping of Beech Grove shaft can still be seen from further along the Rake Road leading to Great Hucklow.

Beech Grove and Hill Top mines were originally rivals but became consolidated into the Great Hucklow Mining Company shortly after 1849 following a vicious war waged not only in the courts of law but underground in the tunnels themselves. Further hostilities then continued with the Mill Dam Mining Company over attempts to drain their respective mines of the water which often flooded the levels or passages which had been driven below the water table.

Close to the entrance of Great Hucklow village on the south side a fence surrounds the shaft of Gateside Mine. This mine eventually became part of the consolidated Mill Dam Mining Company.

Both of the consolidated companies were using steam engines by the late 1850s to pump up the water to a drainage sough and to lift the lead ore up the mine shafts. These replaced the earlier horse-powered winding engines called gins.

The Great Hucklow Mining Company was forced to close in 1873 when they encountered toadstone, a hard igneous rock, at a depth of 485 feet and failed to penetrate it to the lead bearing limestone even at 600 feet – a fate similar to that suffered by High Rake mine.



The ancient lead-mining village of Little Hucklow



A reconstructed horse-drawn winding gin at Magpie Mine, Sheldon



Old lead-mining tools found in the workings of Hilltop Mine



The result of hundreds of years of mining on Tideslow Rake



The last remaining miner's cottage at Windmill

Supported by The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund

