

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Lead workings in High Tor Recreation Ground

PARISH: MATLOCK TOWN

DISTRICT: DERBYSHIRE DALES

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 24984

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK29695904 - SK29695884 - SK29925891

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a group of rock cut clefts, produced by the mining of lead ore from sub-vertical veins. It lies close to the summit of High Tor, a prominent limestone crag.

The two main clefts are 'Roman Cave' (running east-west and forming the southern part of the monument) and 'Fern Cave' (running north from the western part of 'Roman Cave'). Both are 2m-5m wide and up to 20m deep, with surviving tool marks on their sides and small underground workings at their bases. There are smaller clefts adjacent to the west end of Roman Cave, and to the west of the central and northern parts of Fern Cave. Fern Cave terminates to the north as an impressive cleft in the cliff of High Tor, where a spoil heap indicates the site of an adit running beneath the exposed workings. The west end of Roman Cave is separated by an infilled length from the cliff face, but an adit and spoil heap in the cliff confirm the presence of workings throughout this length. Archaeological deposits remain in the infilled length, and in the bases of the clefts, where they may well overlie underground workings. Workings are documented here from the 16th to the 18th centuries; an earlier origin is possible, but there is no evidence for Roman working, despite the popular name.

The scheduling excludes modern fences, a wooden kiosk at the east end, and modern tarmac paths, but 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 lead workings on High Tor are one of the finest examples nationally of opencut workings, due to their deep and narrow form. They demonstrate very clearly the relationship between geological structure and the form of mine workings. Their shape has allowed the survival of tool marks on the rockfaces (normally destroyed by weathering), and this is one of the few sites where such features are safely accessible to the public.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 05th September 1996