

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Slitherstone and Linacre lead mines and a limekiln 725m south west of Rowter Farm

PARISH: CASTLETON
PEAK FOREST

DISTRICT: HIGH PEAK

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29963

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK12728156

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the earthwork, buried, standing and rock cut remains of Slitherstone lead mine, Linacre lead mine and a limekiln. The monument is situated to the north of Eldon Hill on high limestone moorland south west of Castleton village. The parish boundary separating Castleton from Peak Forest also serves to divide Slitherstone lead mine on the west side from Linacre lead mine on the east.

It is unknown when the mines were first worked, but surface features are mainly indicative of late 17th to 18th century mining activity with evidence of continued use into the early 19th century also present. Slitherstone mines are documented from at least the mid-18th century when they were known as Two Rakes, Birch Hall and Windle and Rush Mine and Vein. Between 1752 and 1765 it was recorded that John Barber of Castleton freed the founder (the point where the vein was first discovered) and four meers (a linear measurement equivalent to 32 yards) west of and one meer east of Birch Hall mine at Two Rakes Head. It is also documented that Slitherstone Mine was worked to 110 fathoms (202m) by means of horse gin haulage and man-power rather than by steam which was the usual method at this time. Linear rake mining of lead as seen at this site was typical of the Peak District industry.

The mines would have been worked under the jurisdiction of the Barmote Courts, the legal administrative unit governing Derbyshire lead mining. The Derbyshire system of mining was largely based on local mining customs and consisted of individual groups of miners or small mining companies working relatively short lengths of the vein.

The monument survives as a series of earthwork, buried, standing and rock cut remains which include a wide belt of roughly east to west aligned veins and scrins (narrow mineral deposits) extending from the old Edale to Tideswell road, west of Rowter Farm, to the northern edge of Eldon Hill Quarries. The monument also includes belland yard walls (substantial walls built around ore processing areas in order to prevent cattle straying and eating grass contaminated by lead), ruined coes (stone built shelters or sheds), open cuts (veins worked open to daylight), dressing floors (areas where ore was processed), gin circles (remains of horse powered winding apparatus), climbing shafts, water storage ponds and engine shafts. A post-medieval limekiln is also included.

At Slitherstone Mine, in the western half of the monument, three veins run

roughly parallel to each other and are marked by lines of undisturbed hillocks with concentrated areas of activity at intervals along their length. One such area is centred at national grid reference SK12508150, close to the parish boundary, where a stone built belland yard wall surrounds an engine shaft, associated gin circle and the remains of three coes. The engine shaft is known to survive to a depth of 61m. This is the area formerly known as Two Rakes Head.

Further westwards at national grid reference SK12268145 another area of activity is partly enclosed by the remains of a belland yard wall. The northern edge of the wall has been degraded but the features within are clearly discernable on the ground. Included in this area is an engine shaft, which survives to a depth of approximately 46m, a coe and a dressing floor. The concentrated areas of activity are linked by well preserved hillocks, open cuts and shafts which extend to the western edge of the protected area. Linacre mines, on the eastern side of the parish boundary, are slightly different in form. In addition to the three main veins which pass through this area there is a complex of crossing and intersecting small scrins with hillocks, water storage ponds, coes and open shafts intermediately positioned along their length. Although there are several areas enclosed by belland yard walls these are generally smaller than those on Slitherstone mines and contain fewer components.

Detailed earthwork surveys of the mining remains show a considerable level of stratigraphic survival indicating several phases of mining activity. In one area towards the northern edge of the protected area a belland yard wall and hillock overlie part of what is believed to be a crushing circle. The survival of such stratigraphy is rare but where it does survive it helps to illustrate the intensity and chronological range of lead working in this area.

Continuity of activity on the site is evident from a post-medieval limekiln located at national grid reference SK12178141. The kiln is of the 'pudding' or 'pie' type and is situated in the centre of a limestone quarry, the northern edge of which has been cut into a small area of lead workings.

All modern fencing is excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath these 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.

The ore works were an essential part of a lead mining site, where the mixture of ore and waste rock extracted from the ground were separated ('dressed') to form a smeltable concentrate. The range of processes used can be summarised as: picking out of clean lumps of ore and waste; breaking down of lumps to smaller size (either by manual hammering or by mechanical crushing); sorting of broken material by size; separation of gravel sized material by shaking on a sieve in a tub of water ('jigging'); and separation of finer material by washing away the lighter waste in a current of water ('buddling').

The field remains of ore works include the remains of crushing devices, separating structures and tanks, tips of distinctive waste from the various processes, together with associated water supply and power installations, such as wheel pits and, more rarely, steam engine houses.

Simple ore dressing devices had been developed by the 16th century, but the large majority of separate ore works sites date from the 18th and 19th

centuries, during which period the technology used evolved rapidly. Ore works represent an essential stage in the production of metallic lead, an industry in which Britain was a world leader in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sites are common in all lead mining areas and a sample of the best preserved sites (covering the regional, chronological, and typological variety of the class) will merit protection.

Limekilns were first used in Britain in the Roman period when lime was used in mortar. In the medieval period, the replacement of timber buildings by stone structures and the construction of churches, religious houses and fortifications, led to a great demand for mortar and hence the need for limekilns. Many kilns were constructed for a particular building project. By the end of the medieval period quicklime, the product of the limekiln, was being used in agriculture as a means to neutralise soil acidity and break down heavy clay soils. Agricultural use was particularly important in the 18th and 19th centuries. By the post-medieval period quicklime was also used on lead mining sites as a cheap alternative to gunpowder for rock blasting.

The remains of Slitherstone and Linacre mines and a limekiln 725m south west of Rowter Farm are particularly well preserved and include a diverse range of components relating to the mining of these veins. Rake workings of such veins are now rare. This site is an extensive example of a landscape of intersecting rakes of typical Peak District form. The standing, earthwork, buried and rock cut remains provide evidence for both the historical and technological development of what was once a far more extensive, multi-period mining landscape. They incorporate a wide range of mining and processing features, which enable the development of the mine working and its chronological range to be reconstructed. The large veins, smaller scrins, shafts, hillocks and other extraction features provide evidence for methods of extraction whilst other processing areas will contain deposits showing the effectiveness of these techniques. The mining remains also provide an insight into the Derbyshire Barmote Court system of mining and the constraints this imposed on the miners of the area.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 14th March 2000