

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Eldon Hill crushing circle and associated lead mining remains on Eldon Hill

PARISH: PEAK FOREST

DISTRICT: HIGH PEAK

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29964

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK11798114

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the earthwork, buried, standing and rock cut remains of Eldon Hill crushing circle and other post-medieval lead mining remains. The monument is located on a vein of lead ore known as Burning Drake Vein. The vein occurs in the Bee Low Limestone and runs across the summit of Eldon Hill in a north east to south west alignment, close to the southern boundary of Eldon Hill Quarries.

It is unclear when the site was first worked but the crushing circle (an area where ore was crushed ready for further treatment) is believed to be 18th century in origin. The vein 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 are enclosed within a belland yard wall (a wall built around dressing floors in order to prevent cattle straying and eating grass contaminated by lead). The crushing circle is located at national grid reference SK11828115 and is supported on its southern, lower side by a dry stone wall.

The wall appears to be made up of limestone deads (waste rock which contain no ore or insufficient quantities to warrant extraction). The circle is well preserved with surviving paving around the circumference and part of the edge runner stone in the centre of the circle. The circle is approximately 7m in diameter with the remnant of the edge runner stone approximately 17m in diameter.

Approximately 17.5m either side of the crushing circle are the remains of shafts. These are linked to both ends of the monument by open cuts (veins worked open to daylight) and small hillocks (mounds of waste rock). Abutting the western edge of the belland yard wall are the remains of a small, almost square coe (a stone built shelter or shed) which contains the remains of a fireplace and chimney flue.

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.

The remains of Eldon Hill crushing circle and associated lead mining remains are rare, particularly well preserved and include a diverse range of components relating to the mining of Burning Drake vein. The standing, earthwork and buried 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 range of processing and mining features, which enable the development of the mine working and its chronological range to be reconstructed. The shafts, hillocks and other extraction features provide evidence for methods of extraction whilst the processing areas 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.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

This scheduling incorporates a monument which was included in the Schedule on 24th September 1985:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Derbyshire 274

NAME: Eldon Hill crushing circle

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 29964

NAME: Eldon Hill crushing circle and associated lead mining remains on Eldon Hill

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 14th March 2000