

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Faucet Rake lead mines 870m south west and 930m south east of Oxlow House

PARISH: CASTLETON
PEAK FOREST

DISTRICT: HIGH PEAK

COUNTY: DERBYSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29966

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK11068188 - SK12508218
SK12658220 - SK14188243

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the earthwork, buried, standing and rock cut remains of Faucet Rake, a post-medieval lead mining complex which is defined by two areas of protection and includes a number of important surface features. The term rake is given to extraction and ore processing features which follow the line of a lead bearing vein. This was a typical form of lead mining in the Peak District. Faucet Rake is aligned roughly east to west on high limestone moorland north of Rowter Farm. Geologically, the lead bearing vein cuts across the Bee Low Limestones for approximately two miles terminating at the shale/limestone boundary north of Snels Low.

Faucet or Foreside Rake as it is sometimes known, has been worked since at least 1680 but was at its peak of production between approximately 1750 and 1850. The rake 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 is linear in plan and survives as a series of earthwork, buried, standing and rock cut remains which can be traced throughout its length by lines of hillocks (mounds of waste rock which either contain insufficient quantities of ore to warrant extraction, or waste from ore crushing activity) interspersed with the remains of mining shafts, open cuts (veins worked open to daylight), an engine shaft, gin circle (a type of horse powered winding gear) and ore processing features.

Centred at national grid reference SK13448232 is 'Rowter Hole' part of a natural cave system which was modified by miners. Rowter Hole is now visible on the surface as a capped engine shaft with a gin circle immediately to its south. A low mound surrounding the gin circle marks the line of an enclosing stone wall and both the shaft and gin circle sit on the top of a large, levelled terrace. It is believed that Rowter Hole was formerly known as Foreside Rake Engine, a feature which is commonly referred to in 18th century mining documents.

In the westernmost area of protection, centred at national grid reference SK12208215 is the site of the Oxlow Maskill caverns, the deepest natural caverns in Britain. These were known to the miners as 'The Opens' or Rackety

Mine and Maskill Mine. Here, underground washing floors (areas where ore was washed to separate it from other debris) have been recorded. Between 1850 and 1860 it is documented that John and Joseph Jackson, two Castleton lead miners, proposed clearing out and re-stempling the shafts at Rackety Mine (stemples were wooden bars which served as ladder rungs in a climbing shaft). The idea was to open the place to visitors although this does not appear to have happened.

Extending from Rackety and Maskill Mines to the west of the monument are hillocks interspersed with the remains of coes (stone built shelters or sheds), belland yard walls (walls built around extraction and processing areas in order to prevent cattle straying and eating grass contaminated by lead) and shafts. Lines of hillocks and large open cuts also characterise the remainder of the monument. These remain largely untouched although a field to the south of Oxlow House Farm has undergone pasture improvement which has resulted in a small section of the rake being levelled. This section is not included within the area of protection.

The remains are extensive and clearly illustrate the level and methods of ore extraction and processing which were employed along the rake. In some areas very fine detail relating to the exploitation of the rake survives. At national grid reference SK13798236, for example, a large open cut retains rope grooves and notches for a bunning (a wooden plank which was placed between the walls of the worked vein and upon which waste rock was piled). The side of the vein here is also inscribed with the initials 'RD'.

All modern track and road surfaces, fencing, stiles and gates are 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.

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 mining remains on Faucet Rake are particularly well preserved. Rake workings are now rare and this is one of the best preserved in the Peak

District. 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. The wide range of extraction and processing features combined with the historical documentation will enable the development of the lead working and its chronological range to be reconstructed. The long rake, shafts, hillocks and other extraction features provide evidence for successive 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