The Great Hucklow Lead Rake

Beneath your feet was once one of the major lead producing veins in the Derbyshire peakland. Mining began here even before the Romans built the fort of Avonlea at Brough in 78AD, and archaeologists have traced a Roman road from Brough to the valley to Hucklow Edge. Mining was active in medieval 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 on this site were operated by the inhabitants of the village of Little Hucklow itself, with the mine doors set in the side of the hill above the village. 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, a smaller pumping engine (the survivor of the last of the steam-driven pumping engines) stands in the valley above the village. The village’s pottery industry has now moved on, but the kilns and associated remains of the pottery industry are still to be seen beside the line of houses and also south of the lane leading towards High Rake. In the last century these hillsides along with many others have been re-worked for the amount of copper which was originally discarded by the lead miners as worthless waste.

The extensive High Rake Mine site, recently excavated by the Peak District Services Historical Society, is one of the best preserved lead mining sites in the country. The village of Little Hucklow is surrounded by the shafts of a number of lead mines, including the High Rake Mine, which is the most prominent of the group. The village of Little Hucklow is located in the centre of the area and is easily accessible from the main road. The village has a number of interesting buildings, including the old lead mining office and the old lead mining house, which are both worth a visit.

John Barnett, Historic England

A reconstruction of the pumping engine at High Rake Mine based on the archaeological evidence uncovered recently by the Peak District Services Historical Society. Drawing by John Barnett and John Thorpe

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

The result of hundreds of years of mining on Tideslow Rake

An old lead mining tool found in the workings of Hill Top Mine

The ancient lead mining village of Little Hucklow

A reconstructed horse-drawn winding engine in Magpie Mine, Sheldon

The last remaining miner’s cottage at Windmill

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