

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Cup marked stone on Stainton Moor above White Bog

PARISH: ELLERTON ABBEY
STAINTON

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 24536

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE08099574

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

This large irregular shaped stone 2m wide by 1.5m high is situated near the crest of a south east facing slope. This slope defines the parish boundary of Ellerton Abbey with Stainton and the stone has been reused as a boundary marker. From this point there are extensive views across upper and lower Swaledale and Arkengarthdale. About 20 cup marks with diameters of approximately 0.5m have been carved into an area on the upper surface of the stone in a concentrated group. On the north face of the stone the letters 'ED' have been carved, these are believed to represent the name of Erle Drax who was a prominent local land owner.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Prehistoric rock art is found on natural rock outcrops in many areas of upland Britain. It is especially common in the north of England in Northumberland, Durham and North and West Yorkshire. The most common form of decoration is the 'cup and ring' marking where expanses of small cup-like hollows are pecked into the surface of the rock. These cups may be surrounded by one or more 'rings'. Single pecked lines extending from the cup through the 'rings' may also exist, providing the design with a 'tail'. Other shapes and patterns also occur, but are less frequent. Carvings may occur singly, in small groups, or may cover extensive areas of rock surface. They date to the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (2800-c.500 BC) and provide one of our most important insights into prehistoric 'art'. The exact meaning of the designs remains unknown, but they may be interpreted as sacred or religious symbols. Frequently they are found close to contemporary burial monuments and the symbols are also found on portable stones placed directly next to burials or incorporated in burial mounds. Around 800 examples of prehistoric rock-art have been recorded in England. This is unlikely to be a realistic reflection of the number carved in prehistory. Many will have been overgrown or destroyed in activities such as quarrying. All positively identified prehistoric rock art sites exhibiting a significant group of designs will normally be identified as nationally important.

This is a well preserved cup marked stone, surviving in a prominent position and later reused as a boundary stone.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 04th July 1995