

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Linear earthwork at Harker Mires

PARISH: GRINTON

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 24546

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE03709748 - SE04029739

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The linear earthwork extends along the crest of a slight WNW to ESE orientated ridge above Grinton Gill on Harkerside Moor. It is some 356m in length, the eastern edge being on the top of the natural ravine of Grinton Gill, the western end stopping abruptly east of Harker Mires. It includes a substantial rampart, ditched on its south side and with a slight counterscarp bank, barely discernible in places, on the south side of the ditch. The ditch has a maximum depth of 2m and a maximum width of 7m. The rampart reaches a maximum height of 1.5m above ground level, and a maximum width of 8m. Both the rampart and the counterscarp are heather covered with the base of the ditch largely filled with reeds and other water tolerant plants, due to water logging at certain times of the year. Quantities of loose stone from the rampart have fallen down into the base of the ditch particularly at the eastern extent of the monument. The earthwork has been bisected centrally by the intersection of a trackway and footpath. Here the ditch has been filled in and a section of the rampart approximately 5m wide has been carved out and a wider section, up to 12m wide, of the counterscarp has been demolished. Here also the stream emerges from the surrounding marshes and flows via the ditch into the steep sided ravine.

The earthworks are part of a broader group of probable territorial boundaries known as the Grinton-Fremington Dyke system. This includes valley bottom earthworks as well as those in upland locations.

The modern fence crossing the monument is excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath it is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Linear boundaries are substantial earthwork features comprising single or multiple ditches and banks which may extend over distances varying between less than 1km to over 10km. They survive as earthworks or as linear features visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs or as a combination of both. The evidence of excavation and study of associated monuments demonstrate that their construction spans the millennium from the Middle Bronze Age, although they may have been re-used later.

The scale of many linear boundaries has been taken to indicate that they were constructed by large social groups and were used to mark important boundaries in the landscape; their impressive scale displaying the corporate prestige of their builders. They would have been powerful symbols, often with religious

associations, used to define and order the territorial holdings of those groups who constructed them. Linear earthworks are of considerable importance for the analysis of settlement and land use in the Bronze Age; all well preserved examples will normally merit statutory protection.

This is an extremely well preserved and substantial monument, which is likely also to include extensive, environmentally important deposits within its ditch.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 30th June 1995