

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Cup marked stone on Gayles Plantation, 370m ENE of Shooters Well

PARISH: GAYLES

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 27952

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): NZ10750609

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a cup marked stone situated in open moorland on a slight north facing gradient 30m south west of Stone Man Plantation, 370m ENE of Shooters Well on Gayles Plantation. It consists of a flat, roughly rectangular, slab of grey sandstone, 1.1m by 1m wide, partly concealed in thick heather. The upper surface of the stone is decorated with approximately 24 well preserved cup marks with diameters of up to 3cm. The monument is one of a group of prehistoric carved stones on Gayles Moor. Its grid reference by Global Positioning System is NZ1075106098.

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 its original location and is one of a group of prehistoric carved stones in the area. It will also contribute to an understanding of the wider grouping of these stones.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 06th March 1996