

## EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Moss Dam

PARISH: MELBECKS  
MUKER

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 28904

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): NY92180067

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the structural, earthwork and buried remains of the Moss Dam, situated 3.75km north west of Gunnerside village. The monument lies on a watershed between the Gunnerside and Swinner Gills, approximately on the 560m contour above the head of Botcher Gill, within an area of grouse moorland.

The Blakethwaite mines were recorded as part of the Surrender Grant in the late 1790s. By 1806 the leases were split and the Blakethwaite mine set leased separately until its decline in the late 19th century. The Moss Dam is thought to have been built around 1842 by Messrs Tomlin to supply water to a hydraulic engine installed in the west workings of Blakethwaite Level, which had previously been supplied from Sun Hush Dam 1km to the east. The dam, which was fed by a leat carrying water from East Gill Head, approximately 4km to the NNW, is also thought to have supplied water to the Blakethwaite Dams, the subject of a separate scheduling, situated 2.5km to the NNE, and in turn the Blakethwaite dressing floors and smeltpool, also the subject of a separate scheduling, a further 1.25km downstream.

In plan the monument is subrectangular with a NNW-SSE orientation, measuring approximately 270m long by a maximum 120m wide, and includes three adjacent, broadly rectangular ponds connected by culverts. The ponds are defined by a 3m high flat-topped earthen bank with gently sloping internal and external faces. The internal face is retained with a brickwork pattern of edge-laid drystone masonry. The upper pond measures 60m long by 50m wide and consists of a sunken area with earthen bank at the downslope end. The middle pond, 150m long by 70m wide, and lower pond, 55m long by 90m wide, are both entirely enclosed within the earthen bank.

All timber and wire fencing, on the south and east sides, is excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath 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.

The ore works were an essential part of a lead mining site, where the mixture of ore and waste rock extracted from the ground were separated ('dressed') to form a smeltable concentrate. The range of processes used can be summarised as: picking out of clean lumps of ore and waste; breaking down of lumps to smaller size (either by manual hammering or by mechanical crushing); sorting of broken material by size; separation of gravel sized material by shaking on a sieve in a tub of water ('jigging'); and separation of finer material by washing away the lighter waste in a current of water ('buddling').

The field remains of ore works include the remains of crushing devices, separating structures and tanks, tips of distinctive waste from the various processes, together with associated water supply and power installations, such as wheel pits and, more rarely, steam engine houses.

Simple ore dressing devices had been developed by the 16th century, but the large majority of separate ore works sites date from the 18th and 19th centuries, during which period the technology used evolved rapidly.

Ore works represent an essential stage in the production of metallic lead, an industry in which Britain was a world leader in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sites are common in all lead mining areas and a sample of the best preserved sites (covering the regional, chronological, and typological variety of the class) will merit protection.

The Moss Dam is an important survival of the formerly extensive water management system of the Gunnerside Gill lead mining area and contributes towards the understanding of the development of the mines in the 19th century.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 03rd July 1997