

PREHISTORIC ROCK CARVINGS NEAR LADYBOWER TOR, DERBYSHIRE

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INTRODUCTION

Two, much weathered, rock carvings of prehistoric 'rock art' were discovered during the author's large scale survey of Bamford and Moscar Moors made during the late 1950 and early 1960s (Makepeace 1987), and unreported until now.

The carvings lie on the upper surface of a gently sloping outcrop of Millstone Grit, just below the highest part of the outcrop which overlooks Ladybower Reservoir and the old enclosures called 'Moscar Fields' above the Ladybower Inn, at SK 20458695.

Closeby, and just below the outcrop, are the remains of a probable late prehistoric and/or Romano-British settlement, which is also near to two others in the vicinity — Ladybower North and South (Makepeace 1987, 48–9).

THE CARVINGS

The carvings are faint due to weathering because they are open to the elements, and are best seen when the sun is low in the west. They consist of two designs (Fig. 1 and Pl. 1). One is a double ringed oval, and the other a ring or spiral with what appears to be a swastika inside. Much of the original shape of the possible swastika has been eroded by weathering, making it look more like a curvilinear design.

The double ringed oval:

The outer ring is 15 × 17cm diameter, whilst the inner is 9.5 × 7.5cm diameter. Erosion has worn down the south-eastern edges of the rings.

The circle and swastika:

The circle or spiral is 28cm diameter, whilst the swastika is c. 12.5cm maximum width. The swastika is in reverse to the style normally seen.

DISCUSSION

These rock carvings are probably the most northerly in the Peak District, although it is possible that some may be found on the Derwent Edges further to the north. Similar double rings have been found in Derbyshire but generally associated with 'cup marks', as at Rowtor Rocks, Gardom's Edge and Burr Tor (Barnatt and Reeder 1982, 33–4). This Ladybower carving is unique on the East Moors. There are similar carvings, however, on Ilkley Moor, West Yorkshire, especially double rings and swastikas (Cowling 1946, 91, 98).

As far as is known these carvings stand in isolation. There are no prehistoric settlements or burial mounds close by. The nearest are on Bamford Moor and Moscar Moors, but it is possible that later clearance, i.e. 'Moscar Fields' may have destroyed

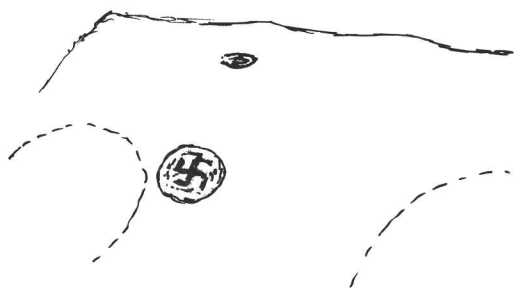


Fig. 1: Sketch of rock carvings near Ladybower Tor.

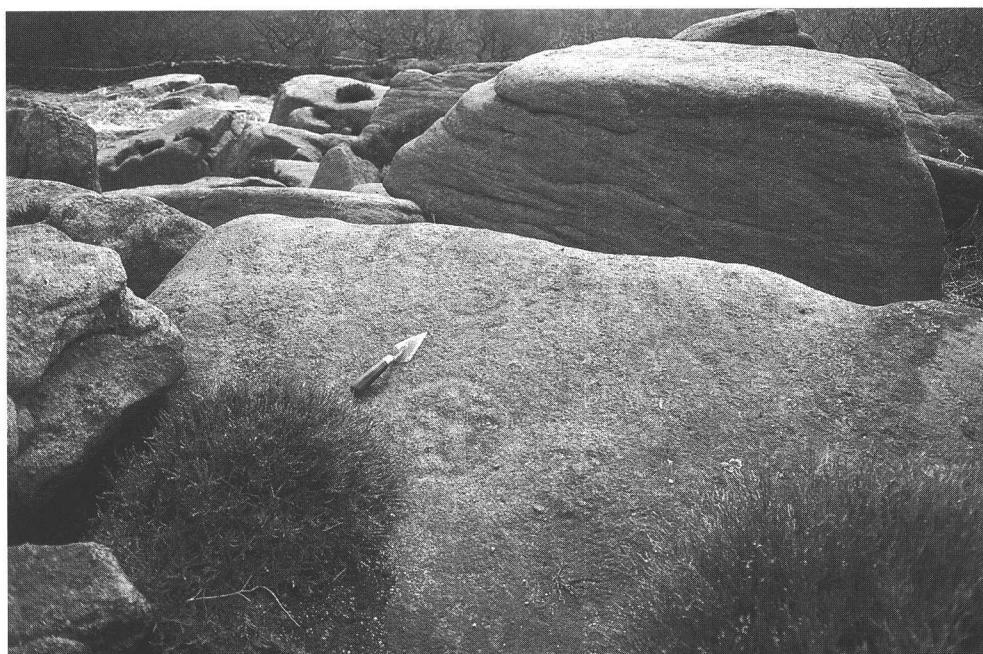


Plate 1: Rock carvings near Ladybower Tor. The trowel is positioned to the left and in between the two designs.

earlier evidence. The nearest rock carving is the 'stick man' on top of the Buck Stone, just below Stanage Edge at SK 231847, which is probably Medieval or Post-Medieval in date.

REFERENCES

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 Cowling, E. T. (1946) *Rombald's Way. A Prehistory of Mid-Wharfedale*: 76–105. Walker Publication.
 Makepeace, G. A. (1987) An Archaeological Survey of Bamford and Hathersage Outseats, Derbyshire. *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 14: 14–55.