

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Wincobank slight univallate hillfort and World War II anti-aircraft gun and searchlight emplacement

PARISH: SHEFFIELD

DISTRICT: SHEFFIELD

COUNTY: SOUTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13375

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK37779099

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument is situated on top of an isolated sandstone hill overlooking the Don valley. It includes the remains of an Iron Age slight univallate hillfort and the site of a World War II anti-aircraft gun and searchlight emplacement. Evidence for Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation has also been found on the hill outside the hillfort and on the lower slopes to the south, north of the Prehistoric linear earthwork known as the Roman Ridge. This evidence suggests the presence in this area of Prehistoric and Romano-British farming settlements centred on the hillfort. However, the extent and survival of these remains are not at present fully understood and so these areas have not been included in the scheduling.

The hillfort comprises an oval enclosure with an internal area of 1.1ha surrounded by a single rampart with an external ditch and counterscarp bank. Although eroded in places, the rampart survives to a height of up to 2.8m from the bottom of the ditch, which has an average width of c.10m. A partial excavation of the rampart and counterscarp bank was carried out in 1899 by E Howarth. In 1979, a watching brief was carried out by Pauline Beswick during the cutting of a drainage ditch through the north-east rampart. Howarth found that the rampart was originally built as a wall 5.5m thick consisting of large stones facing a core of earth and rubble bonded by timber lacing. The counterscarp bank was built from earth and stone cast up from the ditch. Radio-carbon dates from the trench cut in 1979 indicate a construction date of c.500BC while burnt and vitrified stone and charred timber found by Howarth show that the rampart was destroyed by fire, possibly as a result of inter-tribal warfare during the later Iron Age. Although it was once believed that the breaks in the rampart on the north-east and south-west sides represented original entrances, this has now been disproved and it is now believed that the gap on the south-east side is the original entrance as the ramparts turn inwards slightly at this point. A mound set close to the rampart is likely to be the site of a guard tower. An area of flattened earthworks adjacent to the south-west gap is the site of the World War II gun and searchlight emplacement.

All Council notices are excluded from the scheduling though the ground underneath is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Slight univallate hillforts are enclosures defined by a single line of earthworks located on or near the tops of hills. The scale of the earthworks, which may comprise a rampart, a ditch and a counterscarp bank, is small. This, and the fact that they are not necessarily located on the highest or most inaccessible hills but almost exclusively above river valleys, implies they were not primarily defensive features but were sited for ease of communication and access to the greatest variety of resources. Most slight univallate hillforts were built in the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, while most of those that were not remodelled during the later Iron Age had been abandoned by the end of the fifth century BC. Approximately 150 examples are recorded nationally with only a small number lying outside central southern England. In area they vary between 1 and 10ha though, again, those at the upper end of the scale tend to be concentrated in the south. Common features of the internal layouts of slight univallate hillforts include the postholes, stakeholes and trenches of timber buildings, storage pits and hearths, and small finds such as spindle whorls, wool combs, tools and personal adornments. These are indicative of temporary or permanent occupation though some slight univallate hillforts have been interpreted as stock enclosures or redistribution centres.

Slight univallate hillforts are one of the rarer types of monument that characterise the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age and those examples with well-preserved earthworks and internal deposits are considered worthy of protection.

Wincobank hillfort is a well-preserved example of a slight univallate hillfort which lies outside the main distribution. Although the ramparts are somewhat disturbed by erosion and partial excavation, substantial areas, including those around the original entrance, survive largely intact while the interior of the hillfort remains largely undisturbed. The re-use of part of the rampart as an anti-aircraft gun and searchlight emplacement during World War II is also of interest.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 23rd March 1927 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Yorkshire 89

NAME: Wincobank Camp, Sheffield

Scheduling amended on 1st April 1974 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER : South Yorkshire 89

NAME: Wincobank Camp, Sheffield

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 13375

NAME: Wincobank slight univallate hillfort and World War II anti-aircraft gun and searchlight emplacement

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 11th January 1993