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Industrial Archaeology of Cleveland

A Bucket in Guisborough Forest

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An interest in local industrial archaeology, in particular the ironstone mining industry of Cleveland, and duties as a voluntary warden in the Guisborough Forest district, along with a Border Collie requiring enormous amounts of exercise, all combine to ensure that I spend a great deal of my spare time walking in the Cleveland Hills.

It was at a meeting of the forest wardens early in 1996 that the subject of ironstone mining in the Guisborough forest area came up in general conversation with Ian, one of the Forest Enterprise employees. Whilst discussing the remains of the industry still visible in the forest he said "... of course you will have seen the big bucket ?". I hadn't, but his description of the "bucket" aroused my interest and I made a mental note of Ian's description of it's location with the intention of searching for it at the earliest opportunity.

A few days later I headed for the area described by Ian and started the search. It didn't take long; I was amazed to find the "bucket" just a few metres off to the side of the well used track up to Highcliffe Farm, in a place I had walked past on many occasions, oblivious to what was laid amongst the trees less than a stones throw away.

After a brief look at the rusting relic I convinced myself that what I was looking at was a "Kibble", a genuine piece of ironstone mining history. This immediate assumption was based entirely on my recollection of

discussions with others people of a like interest, over a period of many years. These studies involved delving through archives of maps, drawings, newspaper cuttings and field trip notes. In these I had seen a drawing of a Kibble. However, confirmation was required.

I made a sketch and jotted down a few notes on the general construction of the kibble with the intention of discussing with my friend Peter, on my next visit to his home.

My notes are reproduced below :-

14th April 1996

Iron bucket laid on its side in dense undergrowth up against a tree, about 5 metres East of the track up to Highcliffe Farm, about 40 metres North of the gate. Obviously been here for a long time.... the tree has grown up around the bucket. Very rusty.

Made out of overlapping iron plates about half an inch thick, riveted together, with top and bottom hoops also riveted. Roughly triangular bracket on each side..... for rope attachment ? Half filled with concrete.

A chat with Peter a few days later confirmed the possibility that it was a kibble and we made arrangements to go back and take a few photographs the following weekend.

Whilst both Peter and I are of the general opinion that it could be a kibble, it's history remains a mystery and a number of questions remain, for the time being at least, unanswered. ie. "Why was it discarded by the side of the farm track? - where did it come from? - why is it half filled with concrete?" General

enquiries at Highcliffe Farm revealed no further information, but I am sure that there must be someone with a long enough memory to help fill in the background. Any information, either directly to myself or via *Cleveland Industrial Heritage*, would be very much appreciated.

What Else is Out There ?

Continuing the theme of discovery in the Guisborough Forest, earlier this year in the Forest I discovered another interesting relic of the Cleveland ironstone mining industry. An evening spent studying plans of the old Belmont ironstone workings encouraged me to spend some time exploring the area around the site of the 1854 main drift entrance and the quarry (now a lagoon).

It was clear from the old plans that there had been a number of drifts into the hillside adjacent to, and behind the site of the quarry and it occurred to me that, although it was unlikely that all these drifts would have been worked at the same time, there must have been a fairly extensive tramway system existing in that area in order to transfer stone/shale to the tipping point immediately North of the main drift. Having a general interest in all matters relating to railways, I decided that a closer look was in order and I subsequently spent a couple of hours walking the area.

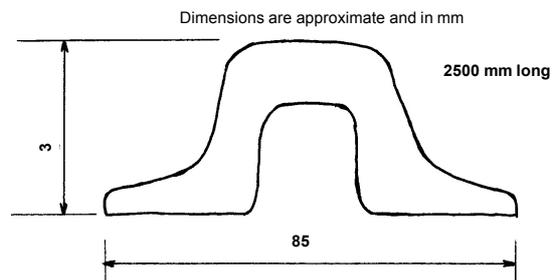
Whilst the sites of many of the drifts can still clearly be seen, even though the area is very densely populated with trees, there are no obvious material remains ie. buildings,



Kibble in Guisborough Forest

walls or shafts. However, a closer inspection of one area close to the quarry revealed, much to my surprise, a length of tram rail, not forming part of a tramway, but apparently discarded and laid partially buried only a few metres from the modern forest track.

The rail is straight and about two and a half metres long having the section as sketched below. There are a pair of holes in the bottom flange at each end of the rail, one pair still retaining the iron nails originally used to fasten it down.



Section of tram rail - Guisborough Forest