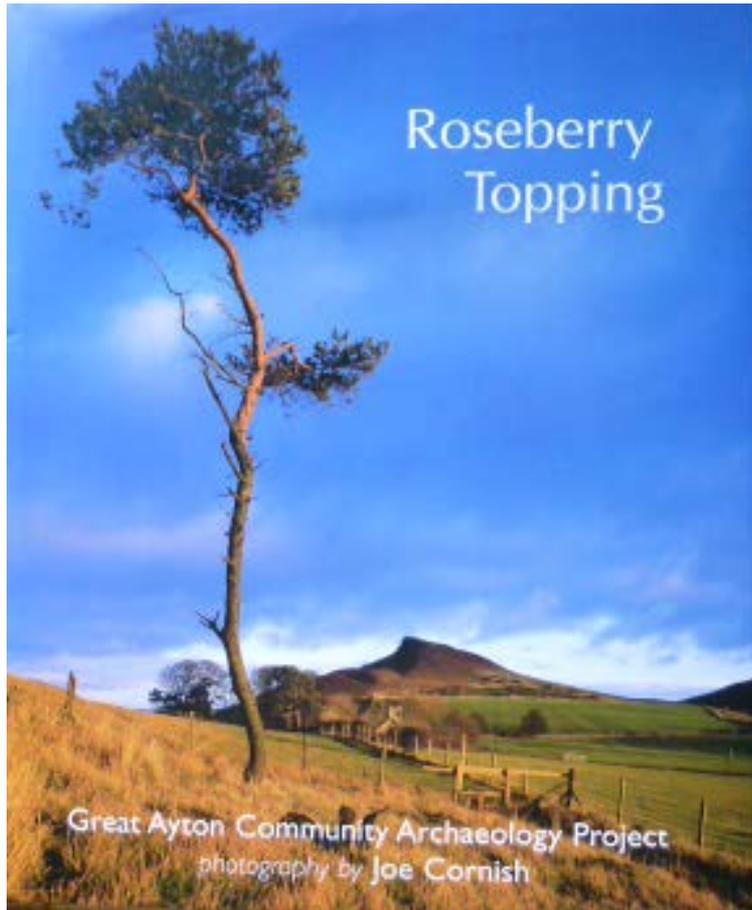


Roseberry Topping

a short tour of the celebrated landmark



The book

“Roseberry Topping”

This presentation is taken from a book, published in 2006, by the local history group Great Ayton Community Archaeology and the landscape photographer Joe Cornish, who lives in Great Ayton.

All 3,000 copies of the publication were sold in six months or so, and copies rarely, if ever, appear on the second-hand market.



Geology

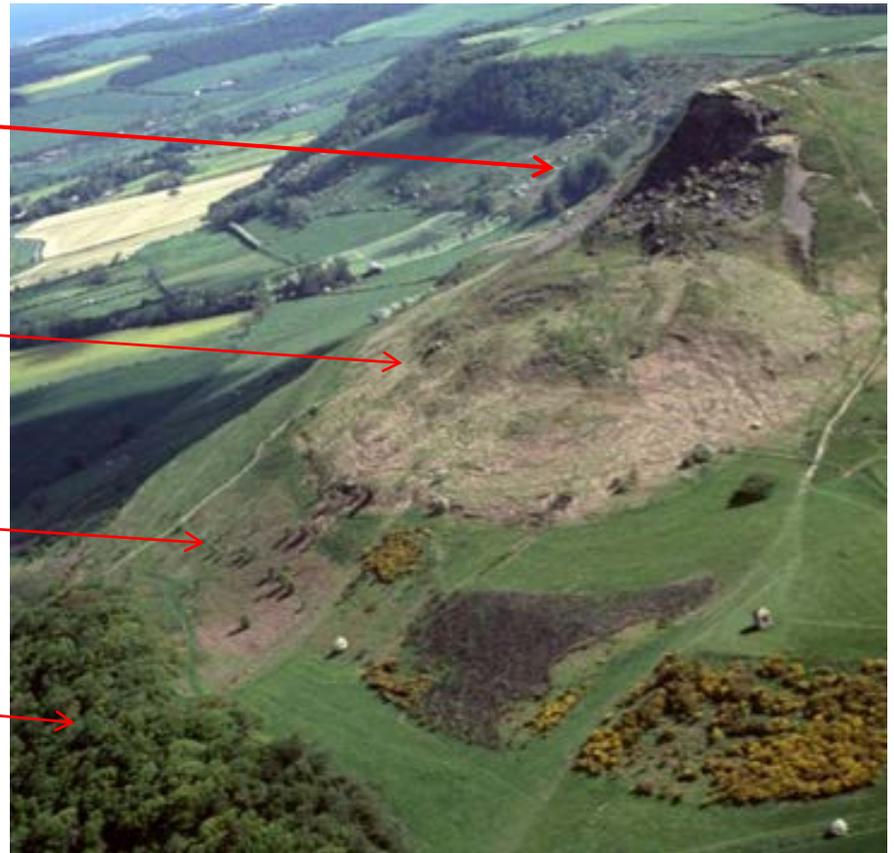
Roseberry Topping consists of almost horizontal strata arranged like a layer cake.

Saltwick Sandstone cap

Whitby Mudstone
(with jet at lower levels)

Cleveland Ironstone

Staithes Sandstone





Origin of the name

The name Roseberry Topping derives from *Othenesberg*, Old Norse for the hill of Odin, named by the Scandinavian invaders. The initial “R” arose from the village of Newton-under- Roseberry, with alliteration of the “r” of “under”.

Toppinn is Old Norse for hill. This became Anglicised into Topping.

Roseberry is the only location in Britain to be overtly named after Odin, and was clearly held in high regards by the Scandinavians.

Lord Rosebery

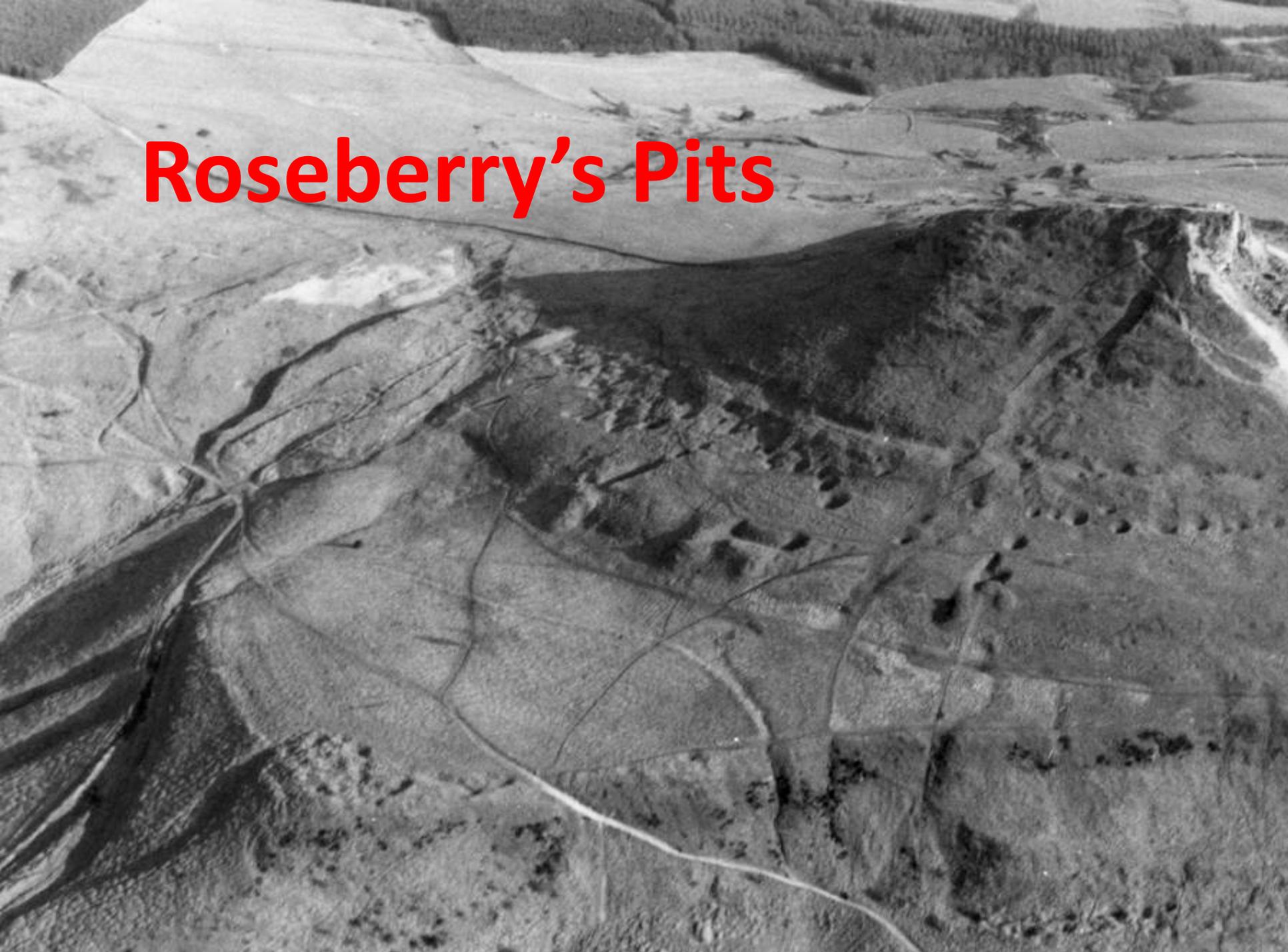


In spite of the slightly different spelling, the title “Lord Rosebery” does derive from the Topping.

The Earldom of Roseberry was created in 1703 by Queen Anne, in recognition of Sir Archibald Primrose’s support for William of Orange. The Primrose family owned land near Roseberry Topping, and thought the name “Roseberry” had a good sound to it, hence they adopted the name for the title. Over the years it lost one of its “r” letters.

The Fifth Earl, shown here, is remembered for having three ambitions; to marry the richest woman in England, to become Prime Minister and to win the Derby with one of his horses. He achieved all three, winning the Derby three times.

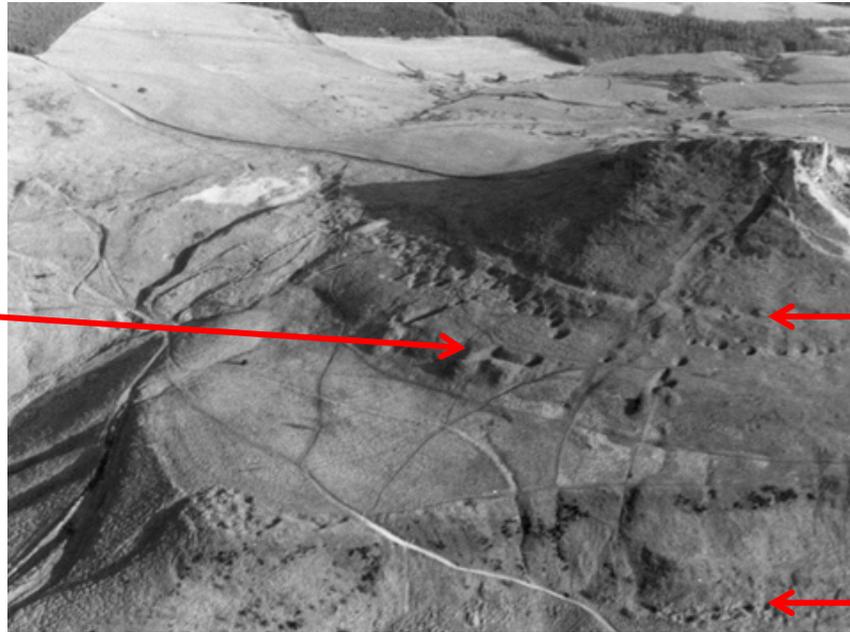
Roseberry's Pits



The surface of Roseberry Topping is riddled with pits. Many fanciful theories have been advanced for their origin, most spectacularly by John Walker Ord in 1846, who saw them as evidence of an ancient British Town.

There are three quite separate groupings of pits, defined by the altitude at which they are situated.

Intermediate pits
between 235m and
245m contours

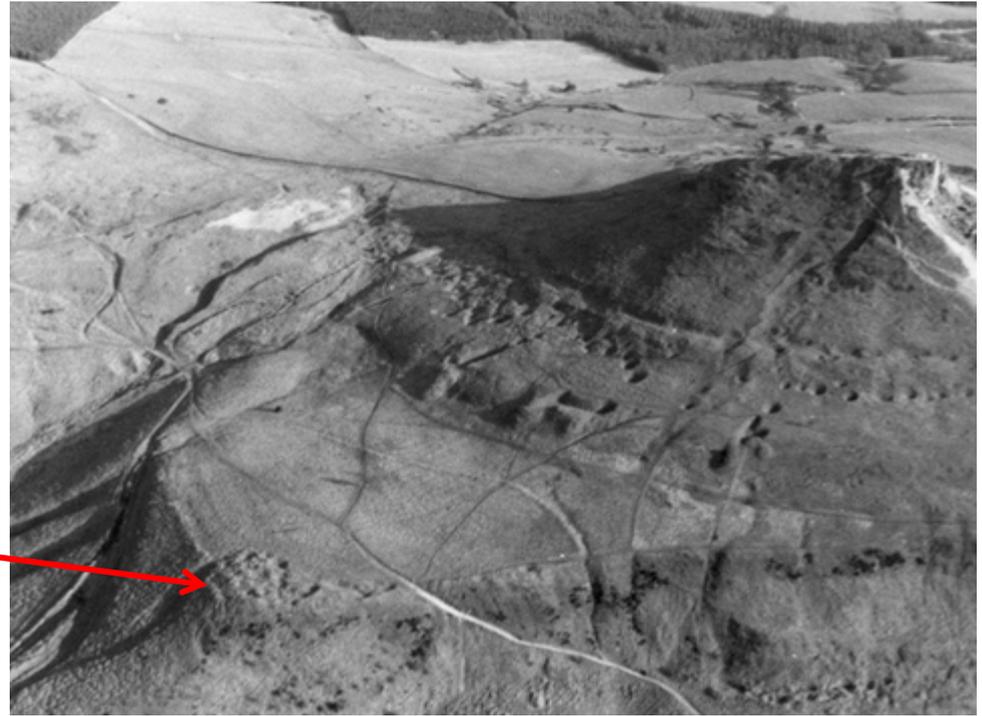


Upper pits at
245m contour

Lower pits at
200m contour

The lower pits run in line running along the top edge of the Staithes Formation sandstone escarpment. Some of the pits are connected by trenches, and look like defensive positions. However, the purpose of these pits is unknown.

At the northern end of the line is a cluster of pits, arrowed above.

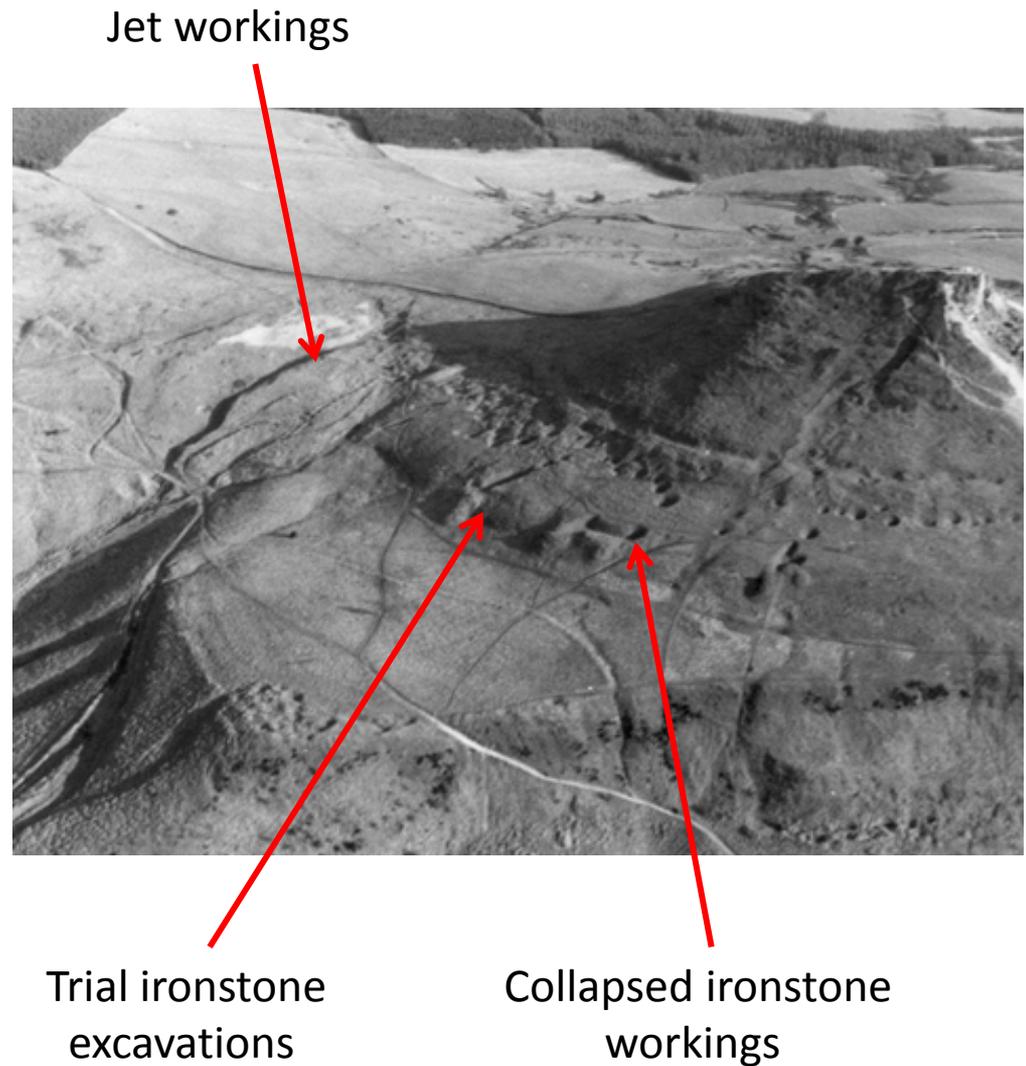


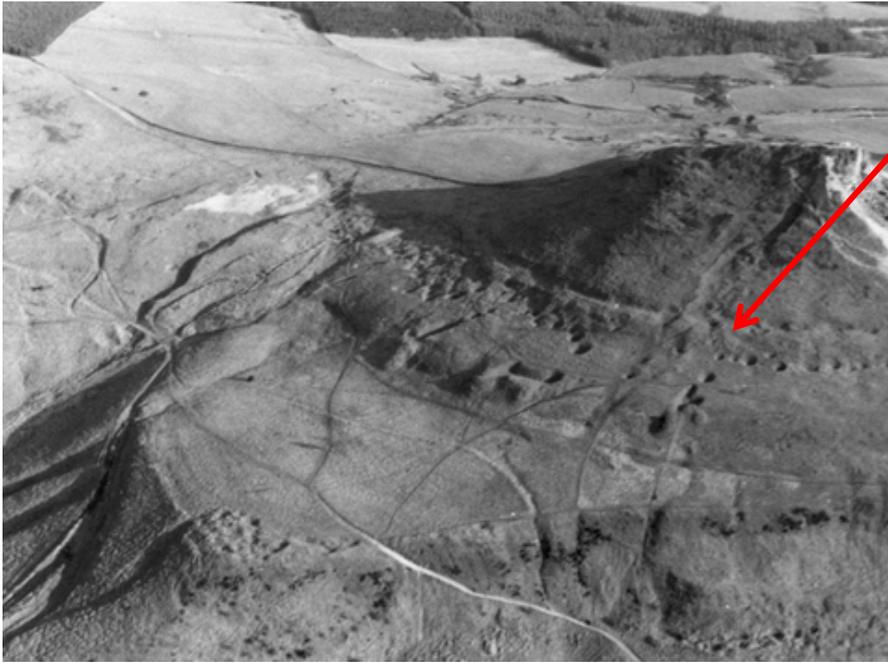
At one place, a landslip has carried several pits *en bloc* down to the foot of the escarpment.

In contrast to the lower and upper level pits, those at the intermediate level can all be explained. They are due to jet and ironstone working, predominantly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are numerous collapsed jet workings on the hillside facing Guisborough, with a large open-cast site.

The large pits on the northern slope were 1870's exploratory excavations for the Roseberry Ironstone Mine. Numerous smaller pits are where mine workings have collapsed.





There is a double circle of depressions around the 245m contour. Originally these encircled the entire hill, but the 1912 rock fall destroyed a section of them.

Their origin is a mystery. Trial auger borings in their vicinity revealed red ochre. Red ochre was a highly-prized substance in prehistoric times. If there had been significant deposits of red ochre, Roseberry Topping would have assumed great strategic and perhaps religious importance. Obviously, most of the red ochre would have been extracted, so little can be found today.



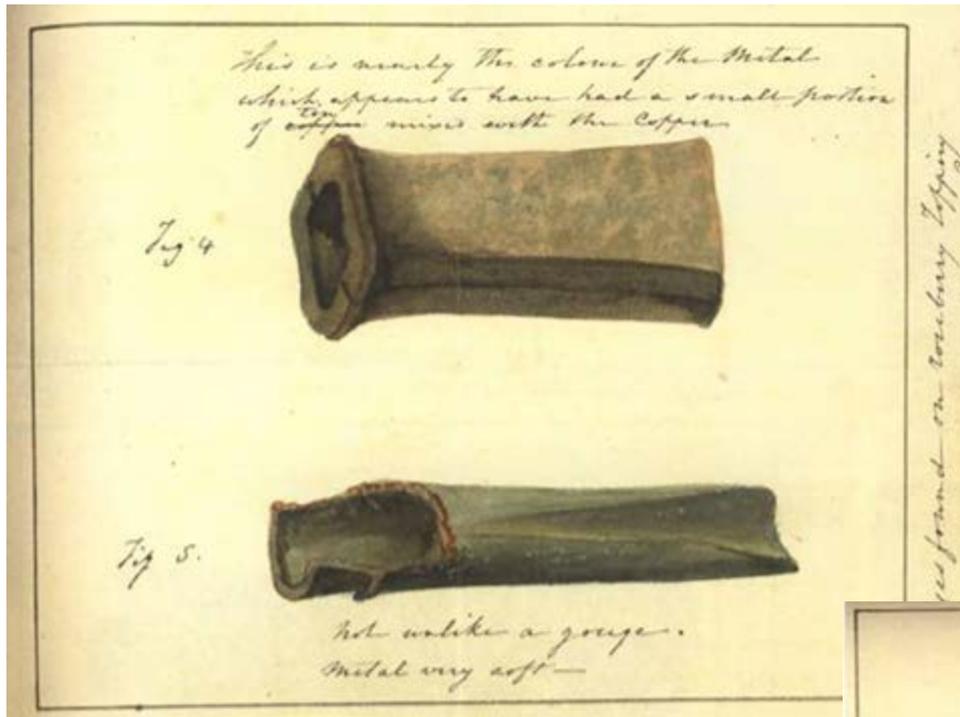
Flint arrow heads have been found in these pits, confirming their antiquity.

The Roseberry Hoard



Site of the
discovery

In 1826, a workman clearing stones prior to cultivation, unearthed a Bronze Age hoard of axes, moulds and other implements.



The Roseberry Bronze Age Hoard is now in the Sheffield City Museum, but a replica is on display in the Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough.

The fragment of the so-called “Druid’s breastplate”, decorated with a moon and stars, caused much debate at the time. It disintegrated shortly after the discovery.



The Roseberry Well



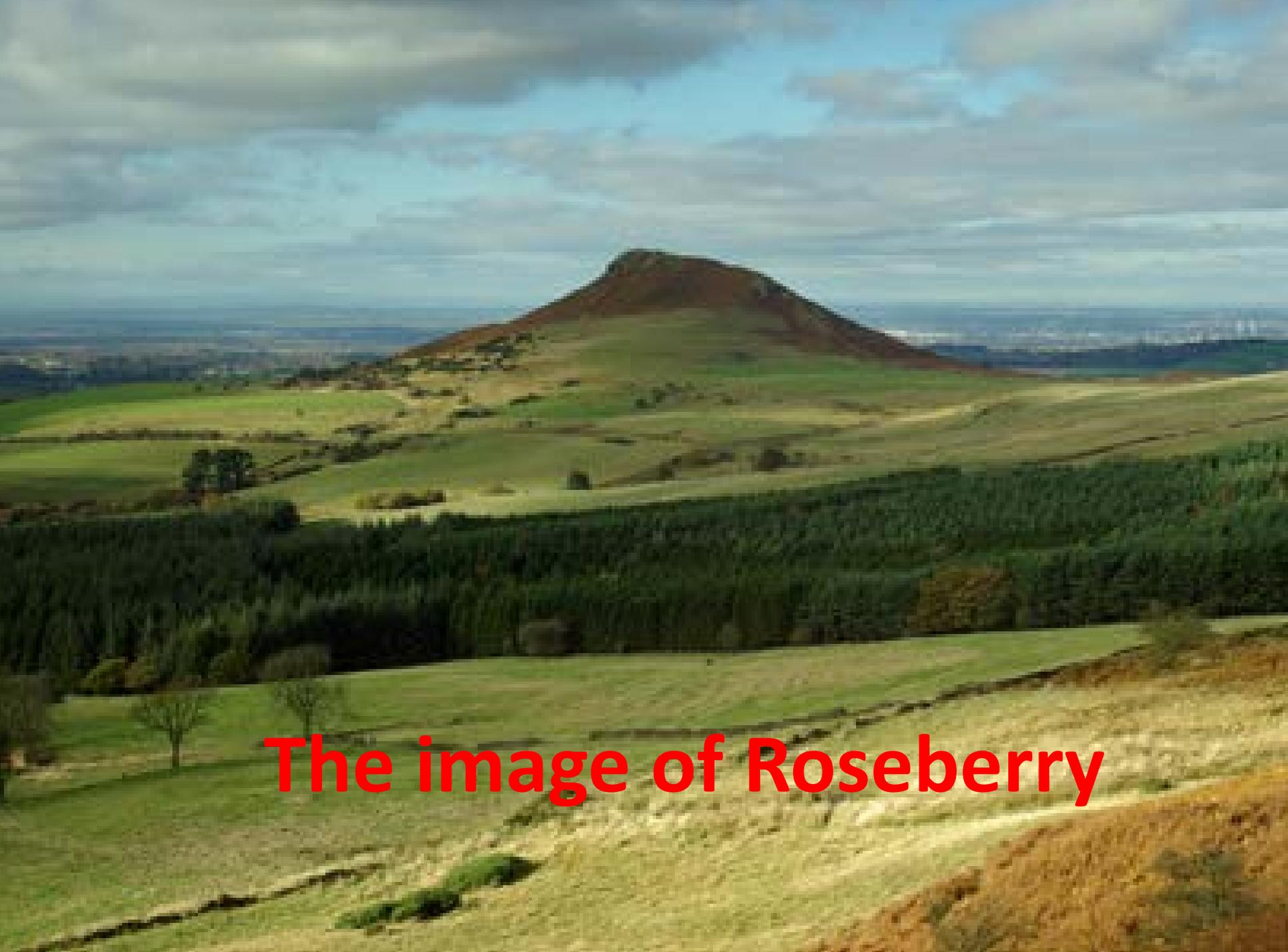


Prince Oswy was the son of King Oswald, a seventh-century King of Northumbria. In the legend of Little Prince Oswy, his death by drowning was foretold. His mother, in an attempt to escape this fate, took her son to the summit of Roseberry Topping. Exhausted, she fell asleep. The little Prince wandered off and stumbled into the Roseberry Well, a freshwater spring near the summit, where he drowned.



Oswy and his mother, who died soon after, were buried at Osmotherley, as the legend has it “Oswy by his mother lay”.

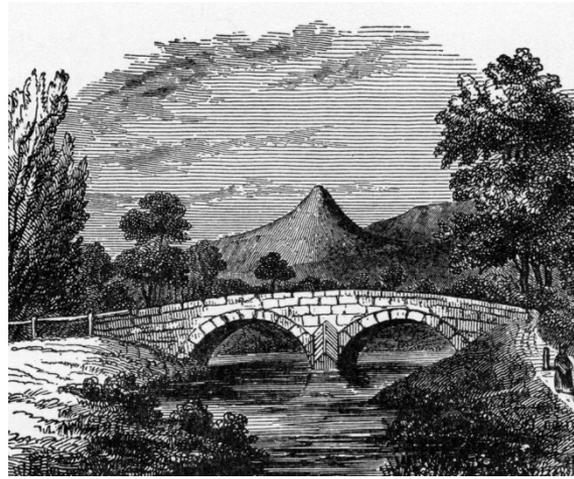
The Roseberry Well is situated on the northern side of the hill, near the summit. It is usually fairly dry, but can be picked out in dry weather by the vivid green vegetation around it. Its waters had a reputation for curing sore eyes.



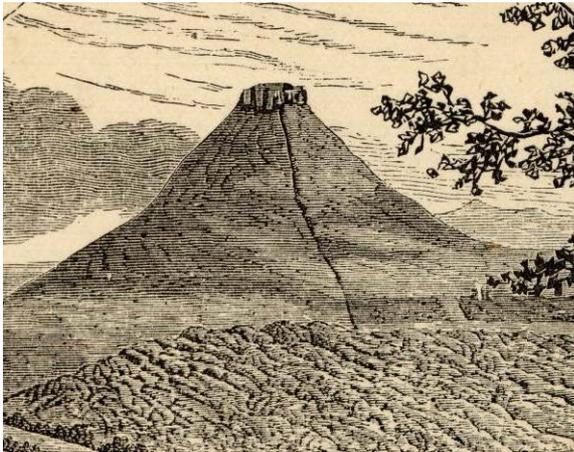
The image of Roseberry



1788



1874



late nineteenth century

The Topping has gradually lost height over the centuries due to erosion and quarrying of its sandstone cap.

Early images clearly show this, although some allowance should be made for artistic licence. The vertical line down the hillside on the left is the dry stone wall marking the boundary between the parishes of Great Ayton and Newton under Roseberry.



Engraving from 1881, showing a view from the present Guisborough Road. Cliff Rigg is more prominent than today, following decades of extraction of its whinstone. Captain Cook's Monument on Easby Moor is on the right. Roseberry Topping is clearly higher than today. Later, the removal of much of its sandstone cap reduced its height. The boundary wall can be seen running down the hillside from the summit.



Roseberry Topping attracts photographers, especially when the bluebells are in bloom and in the snow.

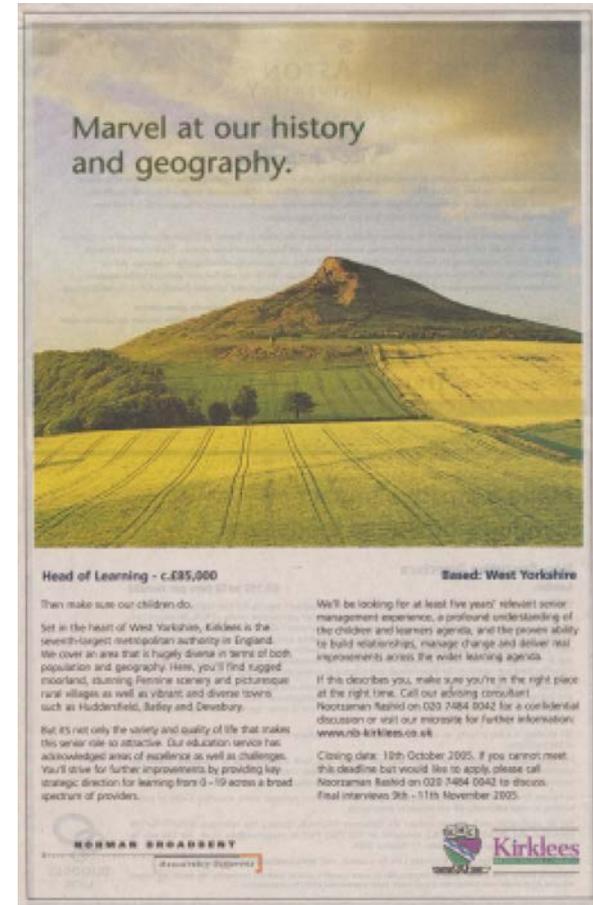


Use and abuse of the image

The image of Roseberry Topping is well-known locally, but is also frequently used in contexts far removed from Cleveland.

A particularly bizarre application was in the advertisement in 2005 for a Head of Learning in Kirklees, West Yorkshire, carrying the phrase “Marvel at our history and geography”.

Elsewhere, the image of Roseberry has appeared on the cover of a book by Alexandra Solnado from Portugal, who claims to have seen Jesus Christ on the summit of mountains.



Marvel at our history and geography.

Head of Learning - c.£35,000

Based: West Yorkshire

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But it's not only the variety and quality of life that makes this senior role so attractive. Our education service has acknowledged areas of excellence as well as challenges. You'll drive for further improvements by providing key strategic direction for learning from 0-19 across a broad spectrum of providers.

We'll be looking for at least five years' relevant senior management experience, a profound understanding of the children and learners agenda, and the proven ability to build relationships, manage change and deliver real improvements across the wider learning agenda.

If this describes you, make sure you're in the right place at the right time. Call our advising consultant, Nicola Mann Field on 020 7484 0942 for a confidential discussion or visit our website for further information: www.nb-kirklees.co.uk

Closing date: 12th October 2005. If you cannot meet this deadline but would like to apply, please call Nicola Mann Field on 020 7484 0942 to discuss. Final interviews 9th - 11th November 2005.

ROMAN SHARRETT
Education Specialist

Kirklees



One of the late Will Taylor's lino-cuts of Roseberry from Aireyholme Farm.



Great Ayton is famous for Suggitt's ices. The cartons are made in Italy, and feature an Italian artist's vision of the hills around Great Ayton, with the Cook Obelisk on Easby Lane in the centre. What passes for Roseberry Topping is on the far left.



The 1912 Rock Fall



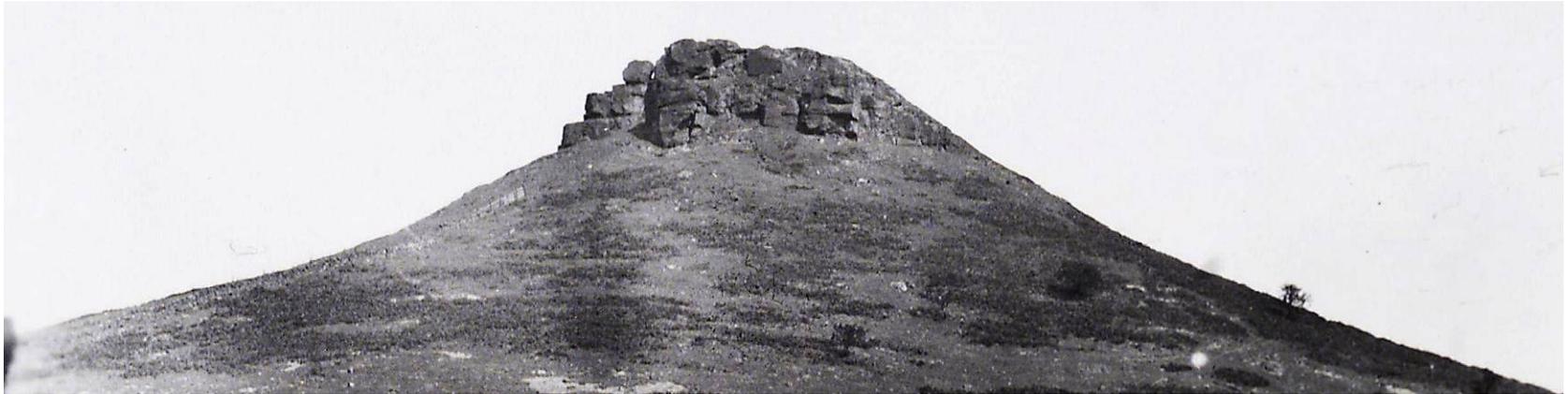
The view of Roseberry Topping in 1855, looking south from Newton under Roseberry. This was well before the 1912 rockfall, which gave the hill its characteristic profile. Notice the trees growing on the western slope, above Newton Woods.



Roseberry Topping shortly after the 1912 rockfall. Note the size of the exposed rock face, and the heap of earth and stone at its base. The rock fall, probably unfairly, was blamed on the Roseberry Ironstone Mine workings under the summit. A more likely cause was the period of heavy rain immediately prior to the incident, which would have greatly increased the weight of earth piled up against the rock face, and lubricated its slippage. A similar slippage had occurred at Clay Bank in 1872 after prolonged rainfall.



In addition to the rock fall, this photograph shows how increasing tourism was affecting the King's Head Hotel. Day-trippers arrived by train, by horse-drawn wagonette, by charabanc and by bicycle. There is a petrol pump outside, a Cyclists' Touring Club sign, and a post box for sending picture postcards. Since the hotel was well known for its draught porter, it is safe to assume that not all who arrived at Pinchinthorpe completed the climb to the summit.



Before and after the 1912 rock fall. The great quantity of earth piled up against the rock face in the upper picture slid down. Then some of the exposed face, now without the support of the earth pile, broke away. There was concern at the time that the height of the Topping would be less than 1,000 feet, which would have resulted in the loss of its status as a mountain.





The summer house



The enigmatic summer house is a mystery. Although a plaque claims it is a shooting box, it is more likely to have been built in the late 18th century as a feature to enhance the landscape, as were the temples at Rievaulx Terrace. It is said to have been built by William Wilson, who lived at Ayton Hall, but there is no evidence for this.

The stonework is of excellent quality, particularly the roof. There are the remains of a wrought iron weather vane. There are large window openings on three sides, with a doorway on the most sheltered, south-east side. Later, a crude brick fireplace was added in the northern corner, with a chimney opening roughly cut into the stonework of the roof.

Three rectangular holes have been cut into the walls around the windows at a later date.



One of the many mysteries of the summer house is its stonework. In sharp contrast to the excellent condition of the exterior stonework, the more sheltered interior surfaces are heavily eroded. A possible explanation for this is that the summer house was built using stone from the steeping pits at the Ayton Banks Alum Works, which closed in the 1770s.



Originally there were shutters provided to close over the window openings. The remaining catches are mounted in larger stones, showing that they were part of the original design. This would suggest that, in addition to its landscape-enhancing purpose, it was intended as a shelter.



There is a possible explanation for the holes cut into the walls around the window openings. At the time of concern about Napoleonic invasions, a chain of beacon posts was set up around the coast. There was a beacon on the summit of Roseberry, which was to be lit if one of the coastal beacons was seen alight. The Roseberry beacon would have been seen by the Pen Hill beacon, which would be lit to muster the volunteers. Roseberry and Pen Hill communicated by signal communication. The Roseberry beacon communicated with Pen Hill.



Roseberry Ironstone Mine



1 Main drift entrance

3 Water reservoir

5 Haulage engine site

7 Line of tramway

2 Secondary drift entrance

4 Cutting to new entrance after 1910

6 Stables

8 Powder house



Foundations of the stables, showing drainage channels in the concrete. The mine employed 30 horses.

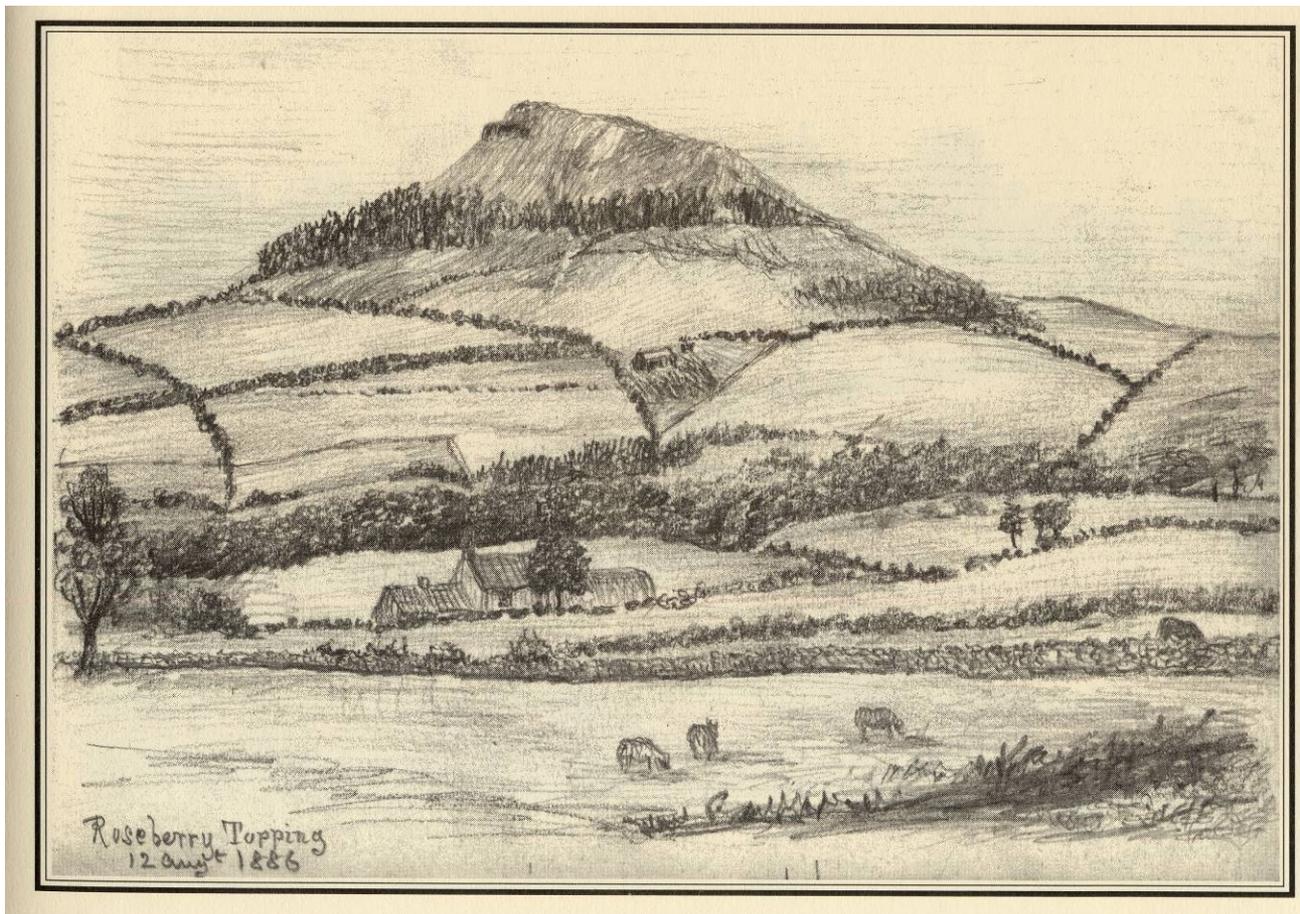


Foundation for the rope haulage engine, with the platform for the operator to stand on. During the first period of operation (1880-87) a steam locomotive hauled ironstone tubs to the incline at Cliff Rigg, from where they descended to the main NER railway. When the mine re-opened in 1906, a static steam engine was used.

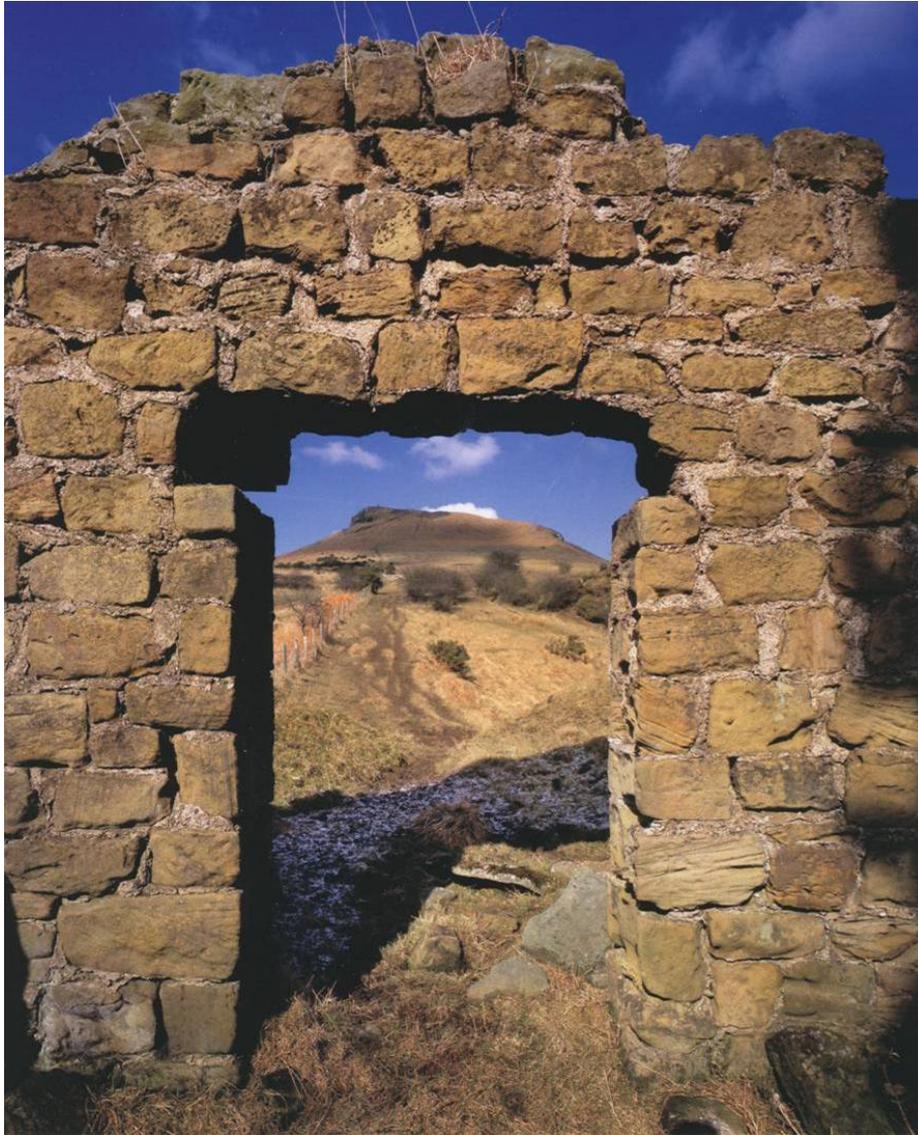


Thomas Williamson with one of the horses at Roseberry Mine. The buildings were all corrugated sheeting, and were auctioned off in 1930 after the mine had closed in 1924. Hence only concrete foundations remain on the site.

Notice the leather visor on the horse's head. This is believed to be a sunshade, necessary as the main entrance faced due south resulting in the horses coming straight out of the darkness on the drift into bright sunlight.



One of the few representations of the Roseberry Mine. Henry Robson from Stockton took sketching holidays in the area around Great Ayton. His 1886 drawing clearly shows the Roseberry Ironstone Mine in the centre of the picture. This after the first short period of operation. The large shed is probably the building seen in the previous photograph. The trees on the southern slopes are still standing. They were later cut down, probably for pit props.



The remaining gable end wall of the Powder House. This was the only stone building on the site, and was at a safe distance from the rest of the works.

The doors were fitted with iron locks operated by bronze keys to reduce the risk of sparking.



The flooded underground workings of the Roseberry Ironstone Mine today.

The mine workings are not far below the surface at their outer extremities, and there are many points of collapse. Recently the ground gave way on the Guisborough side of the hill, opening up the workings.

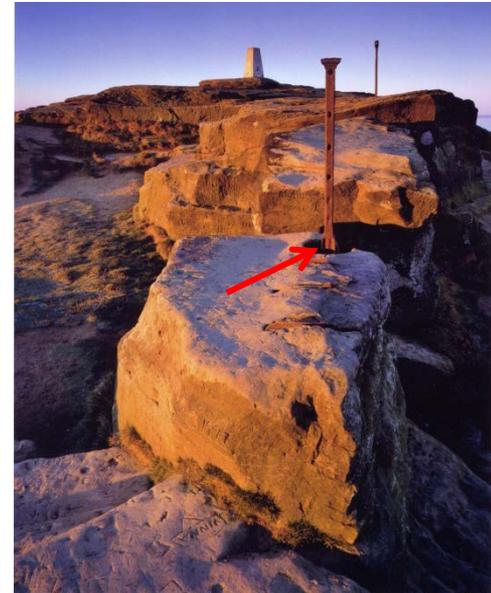
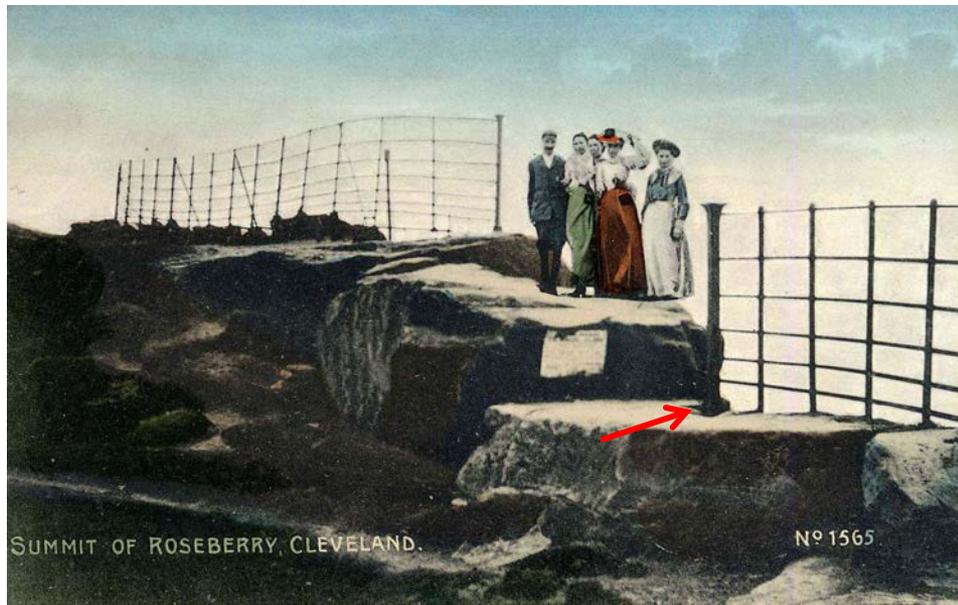


Edward VII's coronation

This huge bonfire was built on the summit to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902. A coronation was a rare event after nearly 64 years of Queen Victoria's reign.

The timber was hauled up by a stationary steam traction engine at the foot of the hill, with a rope passing through a block held on an iron stanchion driven into the rock at the summit. This stanchion still stands to this day, see arrow on left.





Miniature tourists

The postcard above is sometimes described as a group of Victorian tourists on the summit. Certainly, the iron railings guarding the drop down the cliff face do point to large numbers of visitors. Most of the railings were carried away in the 1912 rock fall, but one of the stanchions remains. It is arrowed in each picture.

Since the stanchion is only 42 inches high, the supposed tourists would only be about three feet tall. Also, the right hand figure is virtually standing on fresh air. In fact, they have been added in an attempt to add visual interest to the original image!



Graffiti

Immediately after the end of the Second World War, German prisoners of war, based at Undercliffe Hall, were working on local farms.

In 1947, Heinrich and Walter were at Aireyholme Farm. They carved their initials near the summit of the Topping.

PoW

H

W

1947

Essen



Land ownership

The northern and eastern slopes, including Newton Wood and Roseberry Common, are owned by the National Trust.

The southern and western slopes, including the summer house and the site of the Roseberry Ironstone Mine, is part of Aireyholme Farm and is in private ownership.



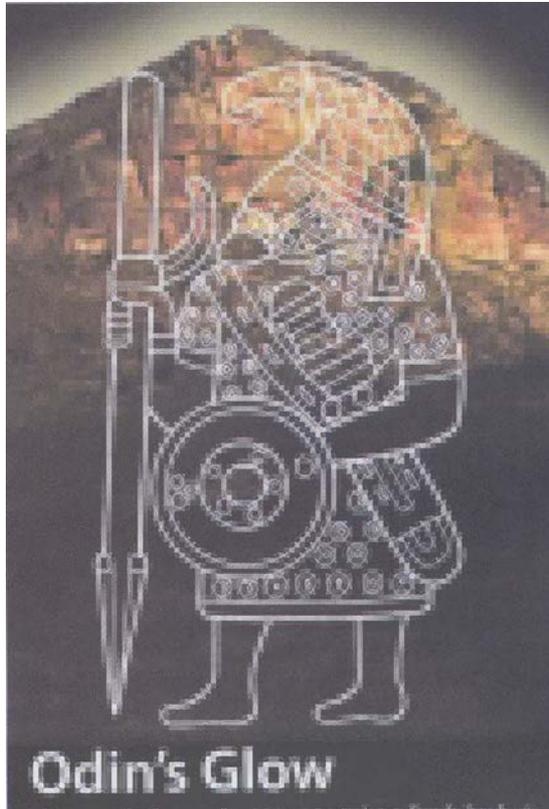
Footpath erosion

The three main routes to the summit have all been paved with stone to control erosion. First was the main path from Newton-under-Roseberry in 1993, then subsequently the paths from Roseberry Common and from the summer house were paved. Stone was carried to the sites by helicopter.



Was Roseberry the cause of the demise of airship R34?

Royal Navy airship R34 was the first vessel to cross the Atlantic in both directions. It was later converted for civilian use, and set off on proving trials from its base at Howden in the East Riding on 27 January 1921. Despite having eight trainee navigators on board, it became lost overnight on the North York Moors, where it hit some high ground. Damaged, it limped back to Howden, but strong winds prevented docking in its hangar. A gale the following night reduced it to the state shown above. Was the high ground Roseberry Topping?



Odin's Glow October 2009

Odin's Glow was a spectacular occasion when the entire northern slopes were illuminated in changing patterns of light. The event was funded by Redcar and Cleveland Council and the Arts Council. Half of Roseberry Topping lies in Redcar and Cleveland, half lies in North Yorkshire.