

CITATION

LEADHILLS - WANLOCKHEAD
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
Dumfries and Galloway / South Lanarkshire

Site code: 915

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NS 865134, NS 871139, NS 880141

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 71
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 329

AREA: 48.77 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Mineralogy: Mineralogy of Scotland

DESCRIPTION

Leadhills - Wanlockhead SSSI consists of three component areas which all lie within 1 km of the village of Wanlockhead in upper Nithsdale. The Leadhills - Wanlockhead district is the most important lead-zinc deposit in Scotland, and was actively worked for over 400 years.

The deposit comprises over 70 veins emplaced into Ordovician greywackes and mudstones which are separated from slightly older shales and cherts to the north-west by a reverse fault. This structure brought the older rocks on top of the greywackes and mudstones where they formed an impervious ceiling which impounded the mineralising fluids in fissures below the fault. Exposures of mineralised veins are exceptionally poor, and the mineralogical interest resides mainly in the mine dumps.

Over 60 mineral species have been identified making this the most prolific Scottish mineral locality. Primary sulphide ore minerals include galena, sphalerite, chalcopyrite and pyrite, but it is for the rare secondary minerals that the site is world-renowned.

The dumps centred on the New Glencrieff Mine have yielded rare primary and secondary minerals including nickeline, witherite, vanadinite and erythrite. Rare secondary minerals, including leadhillite and caledonite, can also be found in the dumps around Whyte's Cleuch. In the vicinity of the Hopeful Vein, the dumps, although overgrown, have produced rare secondary minerals including the only chromium minerals to have been found in the Leadhills - Wanlockhead area.

Leadhills - Wanlockhead is one of Scotland's most important mineralogical sites and its continuing research importance is highlighted by the fact that it has, since 1984, yielded four mineral species new to science.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 9 March 1990
Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004:
5 August 2009.

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 49.5 ha).