

The Old Roads and Trackways of MIDDLETON & SMERRILL



Rake Lane leads to the Newhaven-Bakewell Road and by foot to Hartington via Green Lane.
But was Rake Lane always the main road out of Middleton?

RAKE LANE / GREEN LANE / HARTINGTON ROAD

Rake Lane climbs out of the village towards the historic lead mines and pastures of Middleton. After the Bakewell-Newhaven Road it continues along Green Lane and over the Roman Road boundary to Hartington - a route that AE & ME Dodd date from the 13c., On the 1819 Middleton Enclosure Map the whole length of the road is labelled as Hartington Road. But Rake Lane only tells part of the story of these roads out of the village.

THE COACH ROAD

The Middleton Enclosure Map shows the Coach Road running behind Green Croft Farm to Whitfield Lane where it drops down to join Rake Lane. But the collective memory of Middleton insists the Coach Road once ran through Rake Wood to the Bakewell-Newhaven road as a precursor to Rake Lane. Evidence in Rake Wood concurs; a track continues towards a precisely aligned gate in a wall, suggesting that the Coach Road once passed through the wood on course for the crossroad at the Bakewell-Newhaven Road.

The 1813 Township Map shows a narrow strip of common moorland with enclosures on either side where the Coach Road and Rake Lane leave the village. The Coach Road runs alongside the southern enclosure to join the Bakewell-Newhaven Road. Rake Lane leaves by the northern enclosure heading towards Middleton Common with a branch to Monyash via Middleton Thorn. Its course can be seen in the field before Monyash Road and on LiDAR scans of the area.

By the 1818 Enclosure Map, we see Rake Wood is enclosed and the Coach Road terminates at Weaddow Lane. Rake Lane now bends to meet the old Coach Road with a turning to Monyash on the right. Peter Cavendish thought Rake Lane was an informal track cum seasonal stream running down the narrow valley until the quarries on either side of the road were developed. This would have happened at the time Rake Wood was enclosed. And by the time of the 1841 Surveyors Sketchbook the remains of the Coach Road had disappeared as Middleton Hall was developed.

Further Reading

- 1813 Township of Middleton (Middleton Hall)
- 1819 Middleton Enclosure Map (Derbyshire Records Office)
- 1841 Middleton Estate Surveyors Sketchbook (Middleton Hall)
- 2004 Roads and Trackways of the Peak, AE & EM Dodd,
- 2009 Oral History of Middleton and Smerrill, various
- 2022 LiDAR : Light Detection & Ranging that builds a 3D model of the earth's surface

