

The Old Roads and Trackways of **MIDDLETON & SMERRILL**



The Turnpike entering Friden Bends at the start of the 1830s embankment which lifts the road over the damp fields of Longdale. The original route ran through the gate to the left.

THE GRINDLEFORD BRIDGE TO NEWHAVEN TURNPIKE

The Grindleford Bridge-Newhaven Turnpike* arrived in Middleton via Conksbury and was part of the Chesterfield-Hearnstone Lane Head turnpikes of 1759. Newhaven was a busy terminal with another turnpike to Nottingham and a through route from Ashbourne to Buxton. Busy enough for the Duke of Chatsworth to invest in a new hotel for turnpike coach travellers and stabling for 100 horses.

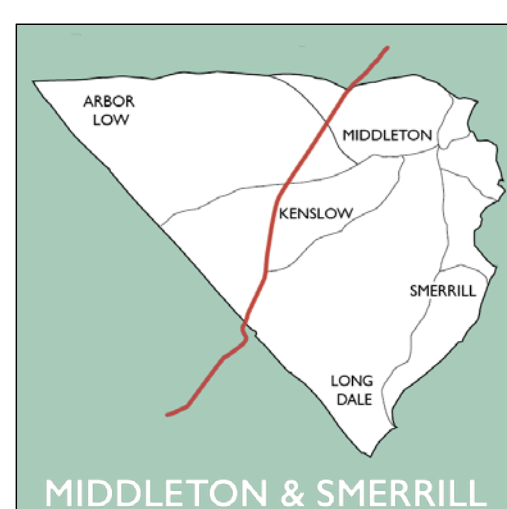
From Grindleford, the turnpike visited Bakewell before climbing the hill from Conksbury to Middleton and Smerrill. Its journey through the parish is a wide road with generous verges; a road which predated and still dominates the field system around it. But a guide stoop from 1709 embedded in a wall reminds us that the turnpike was a rationalisation of earlier pack horse routes and local paths across Middleton Common.

The section across Longdale was improved in 1830 by an embankment raising the road over pooling water, giving the road the exaggerated shape of Friden Bends. Meanwhile, plantations names along the turnpike tell of its local use: Walk Lane Plantation on the worker's route from Middleton to Friden and, in the other direction, Bakewell Road Plantation. Just before it leaves the parish for Newhaven, a slender milestone tells us there are still 147 miles to London.

Further Reading

- 1813 Township of Middleton (Middleton Hall)
- 2008 Turnpike Roads of England & Wales (Derbyshire), Alan Rosevear
- 2009 Guide Stoops of Derbyshire, Howard Smith
- 2004 Peakland Roads and Trackways, AE Dodd & EM Dodd

*A turnpike road is a principal road maintained by a turnpike trust that collected road tolls in Britain in the 17th–19th centuries.



A PALIMPSEST

MIDDLETON VILLAGE HALL
Supporting the community of Middleton and Smerrill