

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



Middleton by Youlgrave was the administrative hub of Middleton and Smerrill in the 1800s. The Square House (in the background) doubled as the estate office and pub.

ABOUT MIDDLETON AND SMERRILL

Middleton and Smerrill is a civil parish in the Derbyshire Peak District. Its distinctive triangular shape is defined by a Roman road, a rich vein of ore, the River Bradford and Rowlow Brook. The parish includes a large neolithic stone circle, the ruins of a Roman settlement, the remains of a medieval village, twelve working farms and a population of around 150. Its village, Middleton by Youlgrave, recorded in the Domesday Book, was rebuilt in the 1820s by the Bateman Family. Middleton was an estate village until the 1960s.

Arbor Low is a well preserved Neolithic stone circle in the north-west of the parish. With some 50 large slabs, a central stone cove and one of the largest henges in the country, it is considered a major sacred site in the UK. Nearby is the enigmatic Gib Hill, a burial mound.

The Derbyshire Portway was a bronze age route through the Peak District. It can be traced from Nottingham, through Wirksworth, over Alport Heights and Mam Tor, and possibly on to Manchester. It crossed the River Bradford at Alport two miles downstream of Middleton.

The Medieval Village at Smerrill, 1200-1400, was an offshoot of Middleton Manor. Nearby stands Smerrill Grange, a 16c. farmhouse and working farm that now occupies part of the site.

Long Rake was a rich vein of minerals along the parish's northern border that included lead ore, calcite and fluorspar and, from a quarry close to Arbor Low, Oakstone Baryte, a stone unique to Middleton & Smerrill. Two mines were established on Long Rake: Long Rake Spar Mine to the east of Middleton in 1867 and Middleton Mine in 1922. Both sites are now used as aggregates depots.

Fullwood Castle was built in the early 1600s by George Fullwood and inherited by his son Christopher in 1624. While labelled on maps as a castle, it was perhaps more a fortified manor house.

Middleton Cross marked the crossing of Derby Lane and Weaddow Lane at the now head of Lowfield Lane. Neville Sharpe (2002) believes the cross was removed by Thomas Bateman, the Middleton archaeologist, and is now in the Western Park Museum in Sheffield.

Middleton Common was once shared by the farmers of Middleton, but as part of the enclosures it was parcelled up into discrete fields to be owned by individuals. Estate maps show this process was well underway by the first half of the 19c. in Middleton and Smerrill.

Guide Stoops were stone pillars placed along packhorse routes in the early 1700s to indicate the way to the nearest market town. Many were removed during the 2nd World War but one remains, built into a wall, where the road from Youlgrave road merges with the Newhaven Turnpike. Alice Twyford, a Middleton Resident, remembered a similar stone at the road junction to Gratton on Weaddow Lane which is marked GP on old maps.

Middleton Thorn was a route marker on the Monyash Road where it crossed the Grindleford - Newhaven Turnpike. It is shown on the 1813 Township of Middleton and the 1845 OS 1" First Series maps. Long gone, its name continues in Thorntree Farm further along the road to Newhaven, while hundreds of Hawthorn and Blackthorn continue to grow along the verges of Monyash Road.

The Batemans were a family of Manchester cotton merchants who bought the Middleton estate in 1815. In the 1820s they transformed the village with new buildings and a new layout, leaving a much changed road system. Maps and surveys commissioned by the Batemans record the village and its roads before and after its makeover.

A PALIMPSEST

MIDDLETON VILLAGE HALL
Supporting the community of Middleton and Smerrill