

# The Old Roads and Trackways of MIDDLETON & SMERRILL



The Middleton and Smerrill boundary, marked by walls and trees, heading towards Minninglow which can be seen on top of the horizon.

## THE NEOLITHIC TRACKWAY & ROMAN ROAD

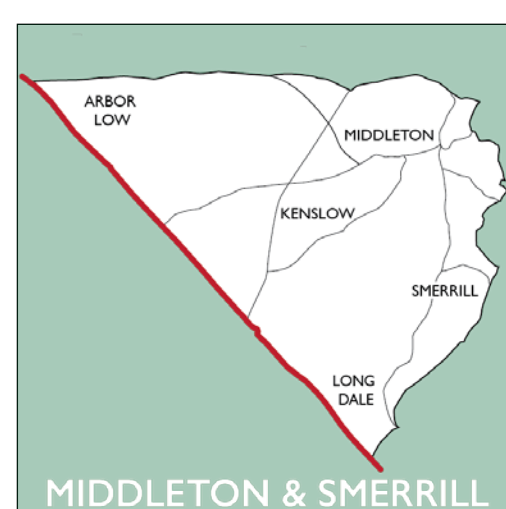
The long diagonal that makes up the north-west to south-east boundary of Middleton & Smerrill runs along The Street, a road the Romans used to travel between Buxton and Derby. But the road itself was built on an ancient trail linking three major Neolithic sites in Derbyshire: the Bull Ring at Dove Holes; Arbor Low in Middleton and Smerrill; and Minninglow, a few miles south of Pikehall. The road seems to have been a recognised boundary between Smerrill and Hartington from as early as the 10c. And a section along the boundary remained in use until local turnpike roads became established in the mid 1700s.

Timothy Darville suggests that individual Neolithic trackways became part of a national network across Britain. Robert & Shirley Johnson continue this theme with the idea that the Bull Ring - Arbor Low - Minninglow highway could have been part of a route linking the Mersey and Humber Estuaries. The Mersey, Goyt and Black Brook make the ascent to the east-west watershed near the Bull Ring, while the Wye, Derwent and Trent take it to the Humber. It's a neat crossing of the lower Pennines with navigable rivers along much of the journey. But was there a role for the Lathkill and Bradford as local feeders?

The Middleton & Smerrill boundary is now a line of walls and trees as it drops down in a slow descent into Longdale before rising again over Smerrill Moor towards Pikehall and Minninglow. At the Green Lane entrance to Middleton & Smerrill an unexpected plaque indicates the direction to Buxton and Derby. It states "Huius viae curam curatores viarum non susceperunt" (This road is no longer maintained by the Highway Authority).

### Further Reading

- 1884 OS 6" to the mile map of England and Wales
- 1997 Prehistoric Britain, Timothy Darville
- 2004 Peakland Roads and Trackways, AE Dodd & EM Dodd
- 2010 Monyash, the making of a Derbyshire Village, Robert and Shirley Johnson
- 2018 Pre-industrial Roads, Trackways and Canals, Historic England
- 2025 The Street (Derbyshire), Wikipedia



**A PALIMPSEST**

**MIDDLETON VILLAGE HALL**  
Supporting the community of Middleton and Smerrill