

## Bubnell Hill



Every picture has its story. This photo was taken 3 years ago from Dobb Edge looking to the west over Baslow

People have been living in and around Baslow and Bubnell for thousands of years. The settlements were given their present names in Anglian Times . As recorded in the Domesday Book they were Basselau "The burial mound of Bassa" and Bubeneli "The hill of Bubba". Both were local chieftains who lived about 750 AD (give or take 100 years or so). Bassa's burial place has not been located. Bubba's or Bubnell Hill is elusive and difficult to appreciate on the ground - but shows up well in the centre of this photo.

The Peak District is divided into two, the White Peak (limestone), and the Dark Peak (gritstone) which surrounds it on 3 sides. Locally the boundary is Hassop Avenue which is just beyond the top of the green fields of Bubnell. The White Peak beyond Hassop Avenue was rich in lead ore, and was mined for generations, leaving the pits and scars you can just make out in the photo on the lower slopes. More recently the area on the skyline has been quarried for fluorspar and barytes, important industrial minerals.

The quarry to the left of the photo, originally Backdale mine, was recently exploited for limestone aggregate, relying on legislation passed after the war to encourage local mineral mining. The size of the quarry was enlarged and it was due for massive expansion. This was contested by the Peak Park on the grounds that limestone was not a mineral. The case was eventually settled in the high court with judgement against the owners. The quarry was closed and has now been landscaped. In 50+ years time it will be a nature reserve

Look at the expanse of the fields in the photo, all part of Bubnell. It has always had a smaller population than Baslow but the same amount of arable land. Its fewer farmers will have been much richer than their Baslow colleagues. Over the last 200 years, the population has gradually decreased, with cottages knocked down and farms amalgamated. This would have a policy decision by the Dukes of Rutland and since 1870 of the Dukes of Devonshire.. Today only two farms and fourteen (large) houses remain.

The fields with their walls were all in place by 1800, appearing on the first map of the area

## **Bubnell Hill**

dated 1799

Originally Wheatlands Lane was part of an important long distance way through Hassop to Baslow and on the east. The early road came over the hill along the present lane as seen in the photo (top left). It then probably came across the fields straight to (the old) Baslow Bridge, near the church steeple visible in the photo. In my opinion the present public footpath along this stretch is a relic of the mediaeval road.

In 1730 there was a farm called Whitlands perhaps near the barn to the right of the lane. Some of the fields in the area were called Wheatlands (1848 Tithe Award) no doubt reflecting the crops grown there in the 1700s and giving the lane its name. The depression in the field to the left of Bubnell Hill is an old stone quarry

Bramley Dale is to the right of Bubnell Hill. The rectangular feature is part of the tree monument planted by the Duke of Devonshire to commemorate the coronation of our Queen Elizabeth. The colour of the leaves depicted "E" and "R". Some years ago it was replanted with conifers and beech. In the time of Queen Elizabeth 1 there was lead smelting in the dale. The woods on the far side could well have provided fuel.

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