

# Baslow in the 1820s

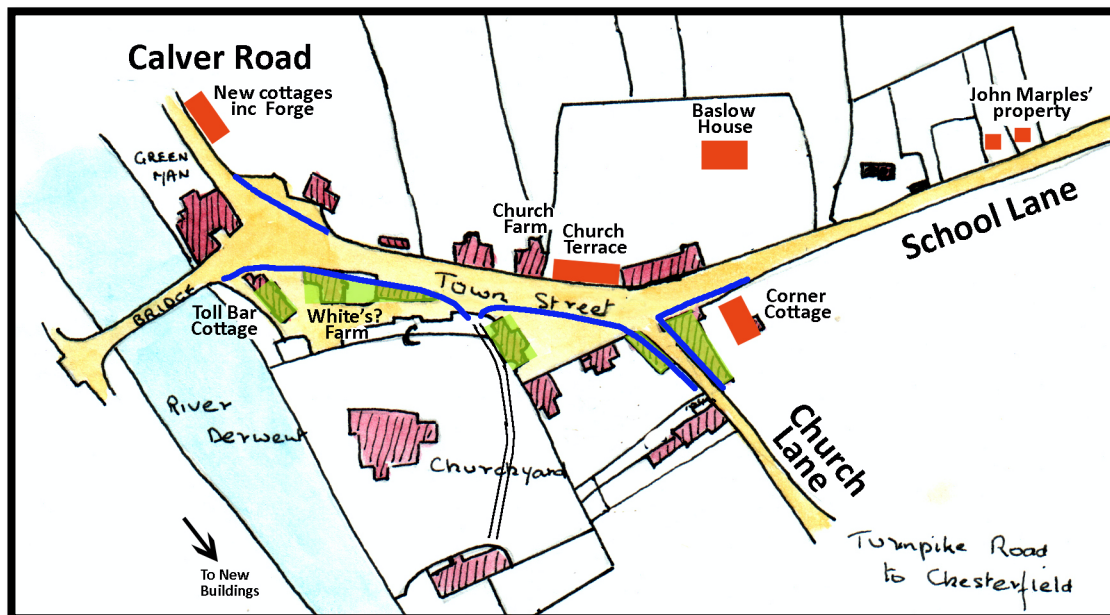
## Bridge End

Baslow is a small village on the river Derwent in north Derbyshire. The name dates back to Anglian times perhaps about 800 A.D. An enduring feature had been the road, which is one of the better cross country routes south of the Peak District hills, especially for commercial traffic. The original ford was replaced at some unknown date by a bridge, which definitely existed by 1500. There were three parts to the village, Bridge End with Town Street and the church, Upper or Over End on higher ground, and Nether End to the southwest at the crossing over the Barbrook.

This article describes the major changes in Baslow in the 1820s with particular reference to Bridge End. Much of the information comes from maps, especially the 1799 Rutland Estate Map, the 1824 Enclosure Award and the 1848 Tithe Award maps.

## Bridge End 1824

The map was taken from the Enclosure Award of 1824



*Houses coloured green were demolished in the 1820s  
Blocks in red are houses built between 1824 and 1841  
The dark blue lines are the boundary walls of the road after the changes*

## Bridge End in 1824

The prominent feature of Bridge End has always been the Church situated on the riverbank close to the bridge. Town Street, now renamed *Church Street* (*modern names are in italics*) starts at the bridge and stretches for 150 yards before dividing. One branch goes uphill to Over End. The other branch, used by the 1759 Turnpike, follows Church Lane to Nether End. Both continue up over the moors to Chesterfield and the east of the country.

The 1824 Enclosure Award Map shows over 20 buildings, many on Town Street, others nearby: two more on the far side of the river are not shown. A mill and a tannery were close by on the road to Calver. All were present in 1799 except for Church Farm and another near Church Lane. Judging from the map, there appears to be an open space (coloured yellow) between the houses on Town Street reminiscent of a village green with the roadway somewhere in the middle.

The Toll Bar was next to the bridge. Close to it are two large buildings between the main street and a track up from the ford. Evidence suggests that it was the homestead of the White family who had

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been prominent in the area for generations. The vicarage was been rebuilt in 1798 and the Patronage of Baslow Church was vested in the Duke of Devonshire in 1811

By the early 1820s, there seems to have been two issues at Bridge End. The first was Churchyard; the Church Wardens were concerned about space available for burials. The other was the main road which was very narrow at the entrance to *Church Lane*. In addition the whole area could have been muddy and untidy.

### Baslow in 1824

1824 was an important year in the history of Baslow. The Duke of Rutland, who was Lord of the Manor and owned 95% of the village, "Exchanged Lands" with the Duke of Devonshire. The latter got a large swathe between the present A619 road and Chatsworth Parish, which he used to extend his Park and install a new drive to Chatsworth House.

In the process, the turnpike was rebuilt on a much better alignment north of the Heathy Lea Brook to become the A619. To complete the exchange, they arranged for an Act of Enclosure. This gave the Duke of Rutland complete ownership of the moors. He could then manage them for "sport" especially grouse shooting and allowed him to include Gibbett Moor in the Exchange of Lands. The few freeholders entitled to a share of the Common Land accepted in compensation assets in the village such as plots of land for building.

At Bridge End two families benefited. Joseph Broomhead, a wealthy local farmer and publican of the Peacock (now *The Cavendish Hotel*) got land at the bottom of School Lane on which he built a house for himself (*Baslow House*) and the row of four houses now *Church Terrace*.

The Marples family, the father John and two sons, John & Joseph, were millwrights living near Abney House. They were given land on School Lane for two new houses and a work yard. Modern premises must have helped the business. As a footnote, the family had relatives in the Sheffield steel industry (Marples is still a name in the City), useful for advice and technical support. There is a family tradition that later John Marples jun. designed Crystal Place. He would certainly have known Paxton and was in position to supply technical advice and help.

### The New Park

When the Duke of Devonshire had acquired the land for his park it was covered with fields farms and houses. Three freeholders were bought out. Some tenants had to move; fortunately most found alternative accommodation. More lost land but alternative employment was at hand.

Creating the Park was a major undertaking. First all traces of previous occupation, the buildings, fields walls, roads etc. had to be cleared meticulously. Then new shelter belts were enclosed and planted and a new drive built on the level ground to the house. Two new lodges at Baslow completed the work. It cost money, much of which would have gone to Baslow in the form of wages, accommodation etc. and support from local craftsmen. In other words a major boost to the local economy.

### Redevelopment at Bridge End

At Bridge End the curate the churchyard was enlarged to its present boundary at *Church Street*. It cost £51 14 8. At a vestry meeting it was decided to raise the rates, but this proved unnecessary as the Duke of Rutland then paid for it. This was only part of the major changes that took place in the late 1820s and early 1830s. It is not known who planned and financed them, but it is reasonable to assume that private individuals, the two Dukes and the Turnpike Trust were all involved. The changes would have taken several years to complete.

First, five houses were demolished (green on the map); the homestead by the bridge, two buildings south of the road near the church and two more at the start of *Church Lane*. This allowed for the churchyard to be enlarged with a new drive to the vicarage. Also the road was realigned with

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proper sidewalks making the area much more pleasant for residents and visitors. Local roads elsewhere in the village were upgraded about the same time.

Next there were two new terrace buildings. One was the row of houses in Calver Road opposite the *Rutland Arms Car Park*. The part nearest the village was a dwelling for the blacksmith (displaced from *Church Street*) with a new forge build behind it; beyond were a plumber and two carpenters. The other row was across the bridge and aptly called The New Buildings - a name it still retains today. It is said that the upper story was originally designed for weavers but by 1841 the census confirms a row of six residential houses with "better class" tenants, none of whom were weavers

A new house *Corner Cottage* was built at the bottom of School Lane. The Toll Bar cottage and the Green Man (*The Rutland Arms*) both had extensive alterations. The original forge and the recently built house opposite the entrance to the church were upgraded to become *Church Farm*.

### People

Many families had to move. Details are not known, but there was a lot of new accommodation in the area so perhaps no-one was left homeless. In 1841 the two new houses, Corner Cottage and Church Farm, were both occupied by two brothers called White. The family is difficult to trace, but it seems that they were related to the occupants of the farm near the bridge, and the houses were provided in compensation loss of their family home.

### Overall

Baslow was and still is set in a magnificent countryside, with no industry or mill in sight. Later censuses show that there was a wide range of craftsmen, more than in surrounding villages. Some residents were known to be rich and others were businessmen with wide connections. These factors, and the improvements discussed above, suggest that it was a prosperous and attractive village. New and better roads from Chesterfield, and Sheffield (in 1803), made travel more reliable and comfortable. Increased long distance and commercial traffic would have helped local economy. It was also a staging post to Chatsworth, which welcomed visitors and deserved its long held reputation as one of the Wonders of the Peak.

Meanwhile a new class of people was emerging in towns and cities with a desire to get out and see the world, and the resources to do it.

Baslow, though it did not know it at the time, was getting ready for tourists.

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