

**In THE MARSDEN FAMILY
OXCLOSE AND PARKGATE**

**In the Parishes of
Baslow and Chatsworth**

Baslow from the west

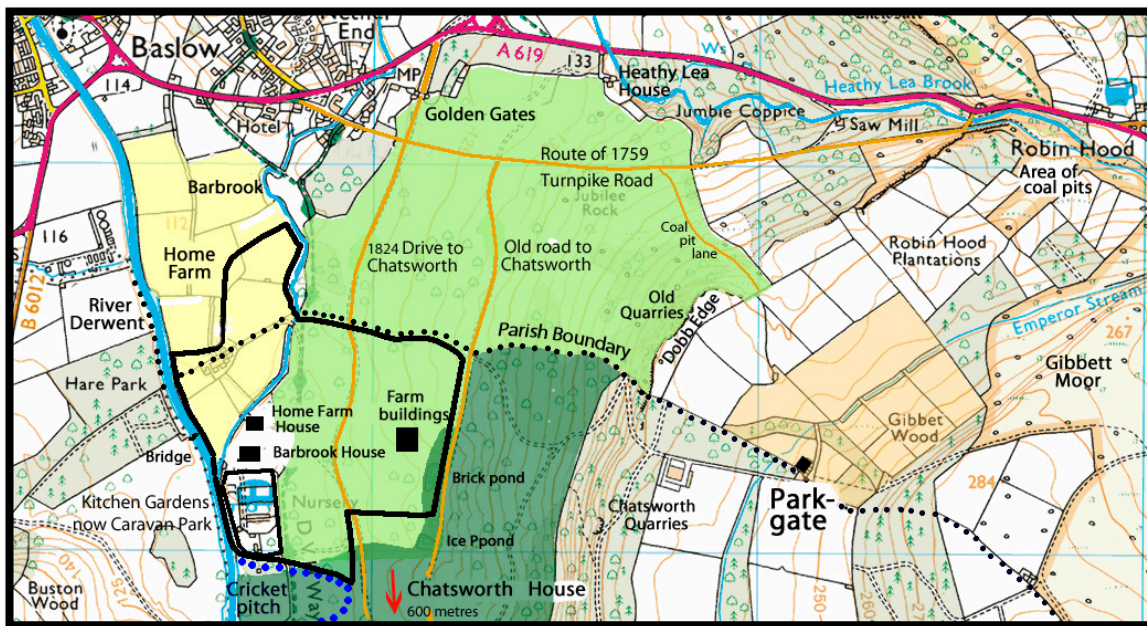


by
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Map of Baslow and Chatsworth Park
Showing features described in article



Area outlined in black shows The Farm at Oxclose in 1695
Area in Dark Green was the northern end of the Park in 1785
Area in Light Green is land added to the Park in 1820s
Area in Orange is Parkgate Farm in 1848 (Tithe Award)
Area in Yellow is the current Home Farm

“Farm Buildings” is the presumed site of the farmhouse occupied by the Marsdens
The Caravan Park is in the old Kitchen Gardens, which were built in 1760
Barbrook House was built about 1830 and demolished in 1960.
The dotted line below the Caravan Park shows the course of the Derwent before the river
was straighten in the mid 1700s

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Introduction

This booklet describes the rise and fall of the Marsden family in Baslow. There are details of a farm (Oxclose) occupied by Marsdens north of Chatsworth House, and of Parkgate Farm. It also describes the extension of the Chatsworth Park in 1824, and how it affected the Marsden family.

Hugo Marsden

Hugo or Hugh Marsden was born about 1570 in Livesely Hall in Tockholes near Blackburn where his family had interests in the wool trade. He came to Baslow as a young man and in 1596 married **Alicia Brough (b1574)** the eldest of six sisters. Alicia's father **Richard Brough (b1549)** was the curate in Baslow. His eldest child was baptised in the village in 1572 so he must have come here before that date. He died in 1592.

It would be interesting to know how the son of Lancashire wool merchant came to know and marry the daughter of the curate in Baslow, but such details are likely to remain a mystery.

Hugh and Alicia had at least nine children. His eldest son **John (b1598)** later lived at Jackflat, an isolated house high above Baslow and just below the present day Wellington Monument. As tenancies were usually inherited by the eldest son, Hugh and Alicia could well have lived in the house before him. The tenancy passed to John's son Robert who died there in 1705.

The house now only ruins shown in the photograph may have been the one belonged to the Marsdens: but there is another ruined farmhouse higher up the valley.

Ruins of a House at Jackflatt



Other members of the Marsden family went on to have a significant influence on the village, mainly because of the success of Hugo's youngest son, **Edmund (b1611)**. The Hearth Tax of 1670 shows Edmund living in one of the larger houses in the village with 2 hearths. One

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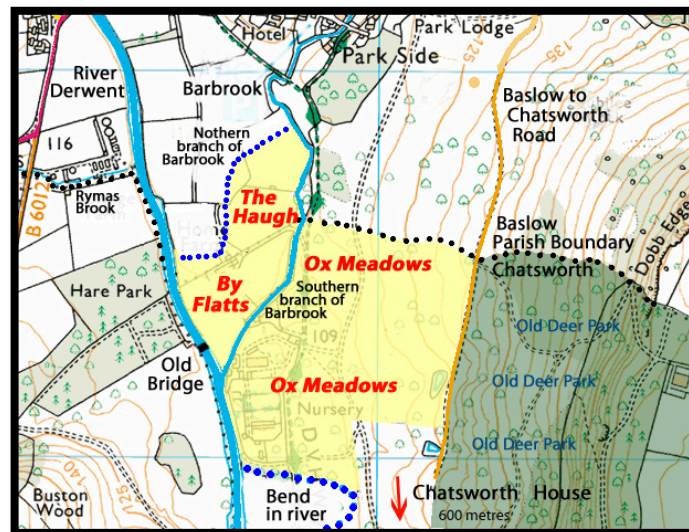
of Edmund's grandchildren Robert lived at "Kesiland", now Rowley's restaurant. This could well have been the site of Edmund's "2 hearth" house.

The 1672 Indenture

Edmund Marsden's name next appears in an Indenture dated 1672 between him and the (third) Earl of Devonshire. The document is a tenancy agreement for a farm close to Chatsworth House. It had become vacant due to the death in 1670 of the previous farmer Jerome Hackett: parish records suggest that he had no family. There is another similar indenture dated 1695, between the first Duke of Devonshire and Edmund's sons **Robert (b1637)** and **Edmund (b1645)**.

It is not known why the Earl gave Edmund then aged 62 the tenancy of this very desirable farm. He had obviously done well for himself, living as he did in a "2 hearth" house. Possibly he had profited from service in some way to the earl, and the farm was a final reward. For the convenience of this article I have called it "The Farm at Oxclose"

Map showing extent of the original Marsden Farm in 1695
Based on William Senior's Map



*The farm is coloured yellow and the original Chatsworth Deer Park is green.
The Barbrook divided into two before reaching the River Derwent:
the northern branch is shown as a dotted blue line
The By-flatts, across the bridge, is not labelled.*

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The Farm at Oxclose

The indenture describes the farm. There were two Oxpastures divided into 16 fields, the Haugh divided into 6 fields, By-flatts (alternatively called The Streams), Bestly, and a second By-flatts across the river Derwent.

William Senior surveyed Chatsworth in 1617. His maps shows two fields both called The Ox Meadows (79 acres in total) between the river Derwent and the road from Baslow to Chatsworth: these must be the Oxpastures described in the indenture. The Haugh and Byflatts (12 acres together) are north of the Barbrook, bounded above by an old branch of the Barbrook, which in 1617 also defined the Baslow Chatsworth parish boundary.

The By-flatts across the river is not marked on the map. The site of Bestly (the spelling varies) is not known but must be nearby. Beastly Gate mentioned below may refer to the same field, or may be an object such as a track or field. There was a bridge connecting the By-flatts to the west bank of the river, the abutments of which can still be seen just upstream from the mouth of the Barbrook. Its presence is indicated in a description of the 1625 Perambulation of Baslow Parish.

The perambulation started at Beastly Gate, suggesting that it is on the Baslow Chatsworth Parish Boundary. At the end of this recorded walk, the party came down the Rymas brook, crossed the Darwen (Derwent) river before reaching "Woeford Close", then "Old Darwen", and finally the starting point of Beastley Gate

The Marsden family occupied Oxclose Farm for the next 150 years was. Perhaps because of their Baslow origins they used Baslow church where are numerous entries in the parish records and inscriptions on gravestones,. Robert and his family were at "The Higher House" at Oxclose and Edmund at "The Lower House". The name Oxclose first appears in 1677, and Higher House and Lower House in 1749. The information is supported by an active group of Marsden family historians.

Chatsworth Park from Wellington's Monument



*The track in the centre left is the original Baslow to Chatsworth Road
The Farm at Oxclose extend across the centre of the photograph.*

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It would seem that Robert's decedents became the main farmers. Edmund's side may have farmed but they also had other businesses. One was a Cutler no doubt in Sheffield, and another a business man with offices in London and Sheffield.

Mid 1700s

The farm at Oxclose remained part of the Chatsworth Estate. The 1760s saw major changes in the Park, some of which affected Oxclose. New Kitchen Gardens were built close to the river Derwent on Oxclose land reducing the size of the farm. A large bend in the river south of the farm was filled in and the Park extended over it. The edge of the Deer Park east (uphill) of the farm was moved further uphill, and the land was used for another extension of the Park up to the Bslow parish boundary.

At the extreme north of the property, the Bar Brook split with two branches flowing down into the Derwent. It was probably about this time that the northern branch was filled in, creating a few extra acres for the farm.

1785

There was a survey of Chatsworth land in 1785, which included a plan of the farm land north of Chatsworth House. It showed a group of farm buildings between the Brick Pond and the Kitchen Gardens (see below): no doubt the Higher and Lower houses stood amongst them. Apart from the Kitchen Gardens, the fields match almost exactly those portrayed on Seniors map and described in the indentures of 1672 and 1695. No other buildings were shown.

The end of Oxclose Farm

The sixth Duke, the bachelor duke, arrived in 1811. He had many ideas to enhance and improve Chatsworth, and the determination and money to implement them. Edensor village had recently been modified. A new bridge had been built over Derwent. There was a grand new driveway leading to the house. But the approach from Baslow and the north remained sadly lacking. The long term closure of Oxclose was inevitable.

The first change was the main turnpike from Baslow to Old Brampton and Chesterfield. It must have been in poor condition because in 1812 he paid for a new turnpike over the moors (the A619) from Robin Hood to Chesterfield past Wadshelf.

We know that **Samuel Marsden (1755-1821)** was the farmer in the Higher House in 1812 where his youngest daughter was born. He died in Ewe Close Farm in 1821 to be succeeded by his son **John (1806-1834)**

A book written by a member of the Marsden family in the early 1900s records

"The Higher House at Oxclose. This was a farm situate at the back of the present kitchen gardens at Chatsworth. The house was pulled down and rebuilt as a residence for Sir Joseph Paxton (then head gardener to the Duke of Devonshire) about 1840, and the land thrown into the Park, the Marsdens having moved to another farm called Ewe Close, situate about one mile from Bakewell and ¼ mile from Hassop Station on the Midland Railway"

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A possible scenaria is this. The sixth duke – or perhaps his predecessor – decided to extend the park across the Farm at Oxclose to the Baslow parish boundary. As a first step, two new hosues were built for the current tenants, one near the entrance to the Kitchen Gardens, the other near the Barbrook (which is now Home Farm House). Some time after 1812, Samuel Marsden moved into his new house taking the name Higher House with him: then before 1821 he moved on to Ewe Close.

The fate of **William Marsden (b1771)** of Lower House is not known. A christening confirms that he was in the Lower House in 1802. He may well have moved into the new house near Barbrook (ie now Home Farm cottage) before leaving the area.

Clearance of the farm and creation of parkland would have started some time after 1812. The remaining farmland across the Barbrook was eventually incorporated into the new Crimea or Home Farm, with modern new farm buildings in the mid 1800s.

Home Farm House

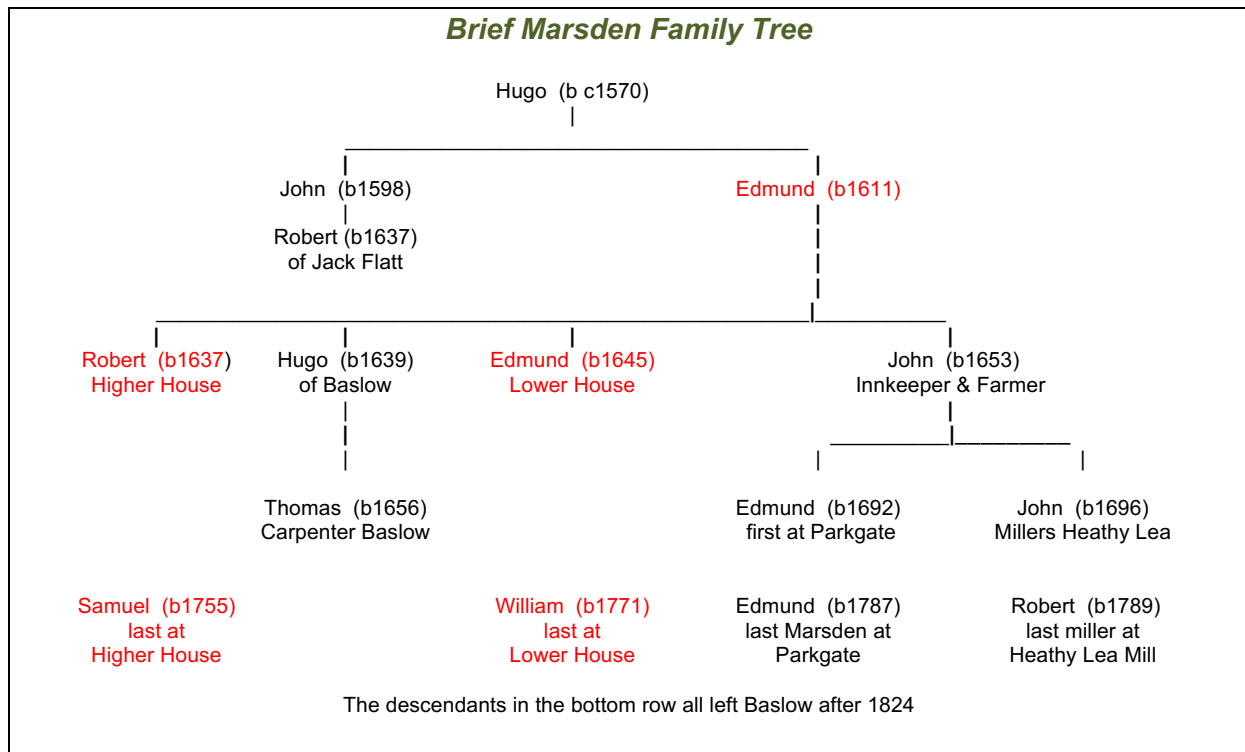


The Marsden Family in Baslow

Meanwhile the Marsdens who had remained in Baslow prospered. In the 1700s it was one of the commonest names in the village . As many were called John or Thomas it is impossible to be sure of all the relationships. Included among then were farmers, Butchers, Carpenters, Blacksmithss and other tradesmen. Another bequeathed 4 shops in the village to his family. Others made their mark in nearby villages.

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Hugo Marsden (b1639) (see the family plan above, 4th row) is described in the records as “of Baslow”. One of his sons **Thomas (b1656)** was a Carpenter who lived in a house near the church called “Kesiland”, later the Prince of Wales Inn and now Rowley’s restaurant. This was one of the few freehold properties in the village, pointing to the status of the family. It may have been inherited from his father Edmund (b1611). Unfortunately Thomas had debts: an Indenture dated 1710 shows that he had to mortgage the property, and some years later had to sell it.

John Marsden (b1653) another son of the first Edmund (b1611) fared well. By the time he died in 1730 he was the publican at the Peacock, the Inn on Church Lane now called the Cavendish Hotel, and a farmer at “Whitlands”, which must have been at the top of Wheatlands Lane. One of his sons **John (b1696)** became the Miller at Heathy Lea Mill. Another, **Edmund (b1692)**, went to live at Parkgate.

Parkgate

Parkgate Farm with its farmhouse is situated south east of Baslow village and adjacent to the old Chatsworth Deer Park. It is on the shelf of land south of Robin Hood, between Dobb Edge and the open expanse of Gibbet Moor. Before the Baslow Chesterfield turnpike was built in 1759 two roads crossed at Parkgate. One was the road from Baslow to Holymoorside (? Halifax Gate), a part of a long distance route from the west (Manchester) to the east (Nottingham), and the other a road from Chatsworth to Dronfield & Sheffield. It features as one of the “Park Gates” (roads into the Park) on Senior’s Map, which also shows a building at the site.

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Parkgate Farm



*Parkgate farm is below the moor in the upper half of the photo.
The house is in the trees adjoining the fields.*

From at least Tudor times there had been significant industrial activity in the area. Baslow was one of the major centres for the quarrying of millstones though production was falling off by the 1700s. The old quarries can still be seen on Dobb Edge near Parkgate. There were similar quarries in Chatsworth south of the parish boundary, one of which was leased to a Mr Rotherham from 1695 to 1745.

Coal mining was well known around Chesterfield. The coalfield extends as far as the Gritstone edges, where thin seams outcrop especially in the Baslow area. There had been small-scale mining near Robin Hood for generations. In the 1760s this was extended with an adit driven from Robin Hood, under Parkgate into Chatsworth parish, resulting in significant production from deep shafts in the old Deer Park. Much of the waste was used to fill in the Chatsworth quarries mentioned above. By 1800 the seams were exhausted and in due course the mine closed. All surface remains in the park were carefully obliterated. The old tract from Parkgate down to Baslow, visible today as a very deep cutting, was noted on one map as Coal Pit Lane.

J.B. Ward, the local walker and historian, recalls a local memory that Parkgate used to be called The Horns Inn. Licencing records show that Parkgate was given a victualler's licence in 1761 confirming an inn on the site.

For centuries the land around Parkgate would have been rough moorland, used for summer grazing but little else. However in the late 1700s the industrial revolution was under way. New towns needed food. Trade was affected by the Napoleonic Wars. Roads were better

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and agricultural techniques improved. All these contributed to an “intake” of marginal land. Moorside farm just north of Robin Hood was started some time after 1760: the old deer park to the south of Parkgate was converted to farmland in the late 1770s and 1780s.

Edmund Marsden of Parkgate

Edmund Marsden (1692 -1760) was at Parkgate by 1730 when his eldest daughter was baptised. His father, John (b1653) the innkeeper and farmer, was a significant person in the village, so one can presume that Edmund had some trade or occupation if not financial backing. It is a reasonable guess that he went to take over as publican at the Horns Inn, or perhaps to start it. He may also have been involved in quarrying or mining or he may have had some role in Chatsworth estate. Several farmers nearby had interests outside the area. A distant cousin Robert Marsden (b1749) from Lower House was a dealer with offices in London and Sheffield. Two members of the Marples family who owned a farm only a few hundred yards away were cutlers in Sheffield. There were other businessmen in Baslow, so it is possible that Edmund had outside interests of some sort.

Parkgate Farm today



Farming in the area only started later in the century, so it is likely that his son was responsible for starting the farm after Edmund's (b1692) death in 1760. Growth was not fast as the farm was only 13 acres in 1824, though it had risen to 47 acres in 1848 and 73 acres in 1871. The Marsden family continued at Parkgate for the next 100 years. The fourth Edmund, (the eldest son was always called Edmund), was succeeded after his death in 1862 by his daughter Mary Ann and her husband George Fearne. Mary Ann in her widowhood continued at the farm until well into the 1900s.

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1824 – The Exchange of Lands

By 1824, the two Marsden families from Oxclose had left the area. That year, the Duke of Devonshire “Exchanged Lands” with the Duke of Rutland, in the process acquiring a large tract of land between Chatsworth and the present main Chesterfield road. This allowed him to extend his park to its present borders, to build a new lodges and a drive to Chatsworth House. Much of the area was farmland with fields and houses so tenants had to be evicted and structures flattened.

In fact few villagers (all tenants) were badly affected, with alternative housing possible, and work clearing fields for those who needed it. However three families with larger properties were badly affected. **Robert Marsden (b1789)**, a distant cousin of Edmund at Parkgate, was the last of a series of millers and farmers at Heathy Lea Mill, which had 9 acres of land. **George Marsden (b1769)** farmed 44 acres from Heathy Lea (house). Sampson Bowler had a house and 72 acres. All had substantial farms, and all went. There is no record of any compensation paid to any of them.

The End of the Marsdens

Families come and families go. In the early 1700s there was a single Marsden family. It thrived, so that by the end of the century it was one of the largest extended families in the village (including Oxclose) many prominent in the village. Despite four Marsden families leaving in the 1820s due to the extension of Chatsworth Park, numbers were maintained up to the 1860s.

The Number of Marsdens in Baslow & Bubnell

From Census returns

YEAR	No of Marsdens	Village population
1841	41	1090
1871	35	811
1880	19	843
1891	10	864
1901	6	796
1911	0	860

Then followed a dramatic decline, so that by 1901 only six Marsdens remained – three boarders who were born elsewhere, a farm labourer of unknown origin, and a single family – an unmarried mother with her illegitimate daughter. And there were none in 1911. Some went to Liverpool to join other members of the family who had moved from the Blackburn area. Others moved to the rapidly developing towns or nearby villages, others emigrated. They all left Baslow, leaving only a memory of a Marsden family, which had played a major part in its history

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Note

Much of the information comes from parish records of Baslow (and Edensor). I am indebted to Neil Marsden for access to the Marsden family tree on the web, and Mrs Dorothy Biggs for copies of the indentures and information of her family. I have also made use of "Chatsworth – a Landscape History" by John Barnatt and Tom Williamson. My thanks to these and other contributors.

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March 2012

Updated Oct 2014