

"THE VANISHED BASLOW GRAND HOTEL & HYDRO"



THE NEW HYDROPATHIC ESTABLISHMENT,
BASLOW, near CHESTERFIELD,
 Will be OPENED for visitors on **THURSDAY, the 18th August.** Prospectuses may be had from the manager, Hydro-
 pathic Establishment, Baslow, Derbyshire.

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AT ROTHERHAM AND BROOK CABINET
 WORKS, CONISBRO',
 AS J. APPELYARD AND SONS.

THERE will be an extensive migration to the Baslow Hydro during the Christmas holi-
 days. The Masonic Amateur Dramatic
 Society are to give a performance, there will
 probably be a concert on the following night,
 and each will finish up with an informal
 dance. Every bed in the establishment, I am
 told, has already been engaged.



Firstly, it is helpful to understand the background and context of those strange institutions called “hydros”.

A millennium and a half ago, the Romans appreciated the benefits of bathing in mineral-rich water. Published by Baslow History Group At practice subsequently died out. There was, however, a resurgence in Georgian and Victorian times. With a preoccupation with their alleged therapeutic properties, it was definitely the thing to do for the well-off in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to combine their holidays with “taking the waters” for their health. Places where such mineral waters occurred grew famous on the back of supposed “water cures”, such as Brighton, Bath, Cheltenham, and Harrogate. Indeed, they were patronised by the aristocracy and even royalty.

It is interesting to note that water treatment, or “hydrotherapy”, has changed somewhat over the years. Right now, in the twenty-first century, it is often used to help horses and dogs make a recovery from injury, as well as being a pleasant holistic relaxation for human beings in poor health. In the twentieth century though it was widely used as a form of rehabilitation after tuberculosis or polio. But back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was actually widely thought to be able to cure everything from arthritis to melancholia. Throughout, it has always involved water at varying temperatures being applied ... either via whole body immersion, or localised bathing of specific parts of the body, or indeed actually drinking it for internal effect.

In the Derbyshire area, a number of places developed as Spa Towns, such as Buxton and Matlock. Buxton was an early starter in the spa stakes, because back in Elizabethan times, Mary Queen of Scots had been permitted to visit the Hall there (now the Old Hall Hotel) to take the waters, in an effort to alleviate her rheumatism. Buxton’s fame came from the pale blue warm waters which bubbled up from the thermal springs beneath what is now the Crescent. The taking of these was enthusiastically taken up by the 5th Duke of Devonshire, who in 1788 built the splendid Crescent adjacent to the spring outlet, to house an Assembly

Room, a Ball Room (thus copying Bath) and a house for his own residence. By 1804, he had given up this town house which became the Central Hotel, flanked on either side by two more hotels, the St Anne's Hotel on the west and the Great Hotel on the east, all catering for the numerous visitors wishing to take the waters, and with a private entrance to the baths. When the railway came to Buxton in the middle of the nineteenth century, numbers increased still further, and led to the building of the Palace Hotel in 1867, which is still the largest hotel in the Peak District. It is interesting to note that the recently completed refurbishment of the Crescent, incorporates, a top-class hotel and spa!

Matlock came to prominence in the 1840's, when John Smedley recognised the benefit of the local water treatment for various diseases and spotted a business opportunities. In 1853 he built and then ran Smedley's Hydro, now used as the Derbyshire County Council offices, having also served during World War II as a Military Intelligence School. The establishment became famous for its water cures throughout Europe, attracting many famous celebrities from Great Britain and the Continent. Once again, the coming of the railway increased patient numbers substantially. This led to an enlargement and rebuilding of Smedley's Hydro in 1886 to provide more accommodation for patients taking the cure. The building was vast, with an impressive entrance, crenelations and a central tower. The Hydro brought many visitors to Matlock with money to spend, and as a result high class shops opened on Dale Road to cater for them.

However, what is not now so widely known, is that Baslow also was the site of a magnificent Hydro Hotel. The Baslow "Grand Hotel and Hydro" was completed and opened in 1881.

The village of Baslow was already a minor tourist resort, with visitors coming from Sheffield and Manchester to view Chatsworth House, Haddon Hall and the wild moorlands, and to fish in the River Derwent and shoot grouse on the Eastern Moors.

I was to see the site of the Chatsworth Mount Hydropathic Company's establishment, and I must confess was more than delighted with the spot, which I found to be one of the most beautiful conceivable, being within a few minutes' walk of Chatsworth Park, and embracing in its wide expanse of unrivalled scenery Chatsworth House, the Park, and the Vale of the Derwent towards Rowsley. The site has been leased from His Grace the Duke of Rutland, K.G., for a term of 99 years and upon it will be erected a commodious mansion, fitted up in a most sumptuous and approved style, which will accommodate about one hundred visitors. I feel sure from what I both saw and heard that the undertaking will prove alike popular and profitable. Erected on an elevated slope, the building will have a noble frontage to the South and will be protected from the North and East winds. The ground, which covers some seven acres, will be laid out for pleasure and recreation. The water is unlimited and unrivalled. Derby Telegraph Feb. 1880

The story of the Duke of Devonshire and the Baslow Hydropathic Establishment is, I see again to the fore. It is a horse that has frequently trotted out and frequently put back in the stable. When the Baslow establishment was first talked about it was asserted that the Duke was so seriously opposed to the scheme that he threatened to close Chatsworth House. The statement was denied. Then, when the foundation stone was laid the story again got wind and was again denied. And three months later it was once more published and once more refuted. The first title thought of for the establishment was Chatsworth Mount and this, it was thought, was distasteful to the Duke. The name was altered, and all objections removed. Sheffield Daily Telegraph Jan. 1881

BASLOW HYDROPATHIC ESTABLISHMENT This enterprise will receive an impetus from the discovery of a spring of pure medicinal water on the Duke of Rutland's moors, sufficiently, near to the picturesque site chosen for the new hydropathic institution to admit of its being easily conveyed thither by gravitation, and sufficiently copious for all reasonable requirements. Although a discovery to the promoters of the company this healing spring is not unknown to the older inhabitants, some of whom, speaking from experience, pronounce it equal to the far-famed Harrogate water of the same nature. There is so little sickness at Baslow that medicinal waters have not been much wanted, but such a boon as this spring affords will no doubt be duly appreciated by many who may be expected to avail themselves of the accommodation which it is the aim of the company now in course of formation to provide?

Sheffield Daily Telegraph Jan 1800

The "Baslow Hydropathic Company, Limited," is rather a long-worded title, as his worship the Mayor found on Wednesday when he tried to trip it off this tongue and failed, amid the kindly laughter of the audience gathered around the foundation stone. Still the word "Baslow" is short enough. Everybody in Sheffield knows where Baslow is, and before twelve months are over a great many Sheffielders will be finding where the Baslow Hydropathic Company Limited, has its local habitation. Sheffield Independent July 1880

The permanently resident village population then totalled 843, roughly about three quarters that of today. There was a post office, a bank, and a school, and there was a gas supply provided by the village gas works constructed in the late 1860's opened 1868. There were blacksmiths, wheelwrights, corn millers, and butchers, serving the local farmers. Also, tailors, shoemakers, and shopkeepers, serving the local inhabitants. At this time, there was only the one old bridge over the river by the church, but many travellers came through Baslow to make that crossing to get to Bakewell and beyond.

Most of the land and property was still in the ownership of the Duke of Rutland and let out to tenants. Those two colossi of Victorian Baslow, the Reverend Jeremiah Stockdale and Dr Edward Mason Wrench, ruled the village with a benign dictatorship. It was a thriving and prosperous time.

The local public houses, the Devonshire Arms, the Cavendish Hotel (then known as the Peacock), and the Wheatsheaf, [The Royal Hotel \(next to the Devonshire Arms\)](#), [The Prince of Wales and the Rutland](#) provided adequate, but not top class, accommodation. The well-to-do who visited Baslow felt the need for a more up-market place to stay, especially the businessmen from nearby Sheffield, who often came for long weekends to escape the grime and smog of their industrial city, notably to shoot and fish. The local inns, they thought, were somewhat beneath their status. It did not go unnoticed that Smedley's Hydro in nearby Matlock was one of the most successful, largest, and best-appointed spas in the whole of England, so it is not surprising that, in order to cash in on this popular vogue, those contemplating a new large hotel in Baslow definitely felt the need for it to be a "Hydro".

Now, in fact, Baslow's waters were not high quality being lacking in minerals, and somewhat peaty and organic, but that did not deter them. Their proposed new hotel would sell itself as a spa, to ride on the back of the popular movement, and attract custom by giving it a unique selling point as against the other lesser accommodation in the local area. Nevertheless, because of the second-rate quality of

the water, the new hotel could actually never offer the usual German, Russian, and Turkish specialised baths, which many spas had.

That company formed to promote the new hotel was named The Baslow "Hydropathic" Company Limited. The prime movers in it were a Mr Henry Pawson, a prominent Sheffield businessman whose firm was Pawson & Brailsford, which actually continued operating in Sheffield to the 1950's, and the Duke of Rutland, who of course had an eye for a profitable venture in his estate village. There was no shortage of original subscribers to the company, as 2,000 shares were quickly sold at £10 each, giving it a share capital of £20,000, which in those days was a considerable sum.

The site chosen for the hotel was a plateau of land lying between the foot of Yeld Wood and

Eaton Hill, then known as Tithe Barn Lane, which was duly acquired from the Duke of Rutland. It extended to no less than 12 acres, affording splendid views out over the Chatsworth Estate to



the south. The architect, a Mr S L Swann, proposed a magnificent Tudor style building, with extensive pleasure grounds.

The foundation stone was laid on the 21st of July 1880 by Edward Tozer, a steel magnate of Steel Peach & Tozer fame and the then Lord Mayor of Sheffield. He was accompanied by Sheffield's Master Cutler, the Duke of Rutland's land agent, and many other local dignitaries, in an elaborate ceremony. They came in 12 carriages and had lunch at the Wheatsheaf.

During the building of the hotel, Baslow boomed, with carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and gardeners, employed on the construction and landscaping. All needed accommodation, feeding and watering, happily provided at a price by the villagers.

The lay-out of the building consisted of an impressive entrance porch, bounded by open verandas on either side. Inside was a large opulent dining room and a sumptuous drawing room. In addition, there were private sitting rooms, which could be reserved by guests for their use alone. Then there was a 58 foot by 30 foot ballroom, which would boast its own Dance Hostess, and a similarly large Billiard Room, each with light and airy glass roofs above them.

On the upper floors, there were nearly one hundred bedrooms, designed



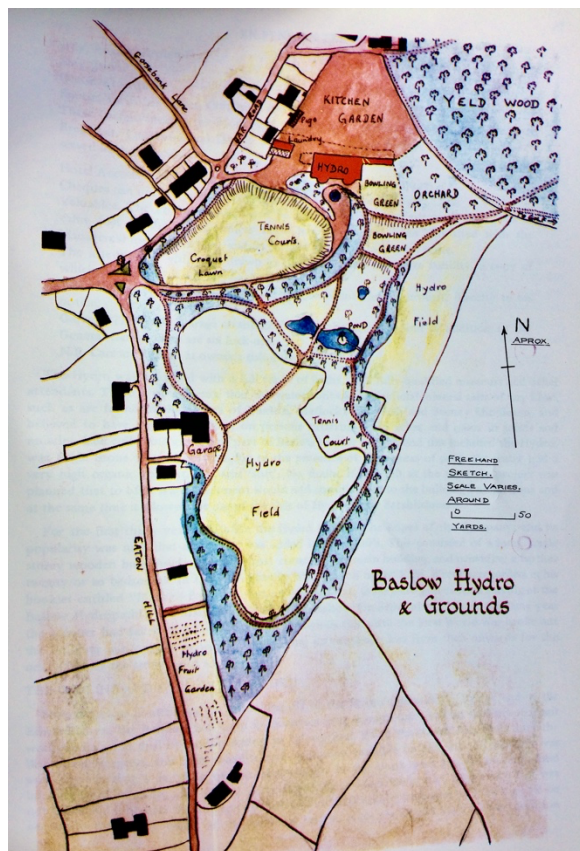
to accommodate 150 persons. There were separate stairways leading to the segregated ladies' and gentlemen's bathing rooms. In the latter, there was a huge plunge bath for full immersions. The bathing rooms would have

attendants and fully qualified masseurs on hand. Down in the basement, there was an office for the Manager, staff quarters, and a large kitchen and scullery. Corridors down there were run along the exterior walls, to ensure that high windows to the outside could keep them well ventilated, and well-lit during daylight hours. Finally, all was topped off with a lofty tower over the front entrance, giving wonderful views across to Chatsworth from the room at the top.

The grounds too were quite something. Entrance was through two ornate gate posts, which are in fact still standing as the frontage to a 1960's bungalow, built on the top side of the green above the village shop. There

was a fountain (still visible in the garden of Fountain House at the end of Hydro Close off Bar Road), accompanied by a pond and waterfall.

Then there was a croquet lawn, bowling greens, tennis courts, and a nine-hole golf course, all for the healthy relaxation of guests. Those less energetic could walk around the flower gardens, a fruit garden, an



orchard, and a one-and-a-half acre kitchen garden. There was even a run of pig sties to provide home reared bacon, a glass house, and a laundry within the grounds. Finally, there were stables, which would ultimately become garages.

For guest excursions, the hotel had a horse and carriage to take people out to the local sights, which was also used to collect guests from the three local railway stations at Bakewell, Grindleford, and Chesterfield. In snowy winter-time,

there was even a six-seater sledge for such trips. When, in due course the horse and carriage was replaced by a hotel motor car, the chauffeur in charge of it was a Mr Henry Hulley, who later in his life founded the eponymous local bus company which is still going.

Once built, the enterprise provided the local council with one third of its rate and gave much employment to local people as chamber maids, waiters, gardeners, and even (at a halfpenny a time) tennis ball retrievers. A Mr Herbert Brightmore, was the gardener there, whose job it was to fire up the boiler which heated the glass house where the exotic plants and fruit were grown.

Such was the initial success and popularity of the Hydro that in the 1890's a long wooden annexe had to be added to provide an additional 20 bedrooms. And the flood of guests was a wealthy one. Although the tariff in 1920 was 16 shillings and 6 pence per day for full board plus afternoon tea, sounding very modest these days, its equivalent now would equate to a five star luxury hotel rate. So, it was not a haunt of the hoi polloi. Despite this though the 1920 terms stated *"cheques can only be accepted by prior arrangement with the Manager"*.



Most village festivities between 1881 and 1913 were hosted in the Hydro grounds. At Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, Dr Wrench saw to it that the celebrations centred on sports taking place on the Hydro lawn. There was running, hurdle jumping, crawling through barrels, and a tug of war, all rounded off with a big bonfire. 1897 was also a busy year, with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and in those twelve months, the hotel gave accommodation to no less than 3,640 guests, with a number even coming from the United States, such was its popularity.

CHRISTMAS AT THE BASLOW HYDROPATHIC ESTABLISHMENT

– At the Baslow Hydropathic Establishment during the Christmas and New Year weeks a series of entertainments were given, which proved a very great success. From Christmas Eve to Friday the ladies and gentlemen visiting the establishment entertained the company by recitations, songs,

charades etc. closing each evening by dancing till the small hours of the mornings. On, which was attended Wednesday a ball was given which was attended by nearly all the visitors, numbering 120 and presented a very gay spectacle. On Saturday Mr. Ernest Moore, Miss Wigfall, Miss Ethel Wigfall, Mr. Macredie, and Mr. Gardener gave a dramatic performance entitled “Our Bitterest Foe” followed by “Sweethearts”. On Monday the same ladies and gentlemen gave “My Friend Jarlet” and on New Year’s Day “Barbara”. On mmm evening Mr. Fozon of

BASLOW in winter is said to be very pleasant. A gay company of Sheffield men, matrons, and maidens mean to try it for a couple of nights at the Hydro.—on the 1st and 2nd of December. They are going over the mountains to Mountain—Mr. Henry Mountain—and, in addition to his generous catering, they are to have the attraction of the Sheffield Masonic Amateur Dramatic Society, who are to afford two or three hours’ enjoyment, after which the drama will glide into a dance. The bill of the play is “Our Bitterest Foe” and “Ici on parle Français.” Next day being Sunday, the Churchwardens who happen to be of the best—and there are nearly half a hundred beds engaged now—will marshal the sinners for service. It is “good form” to go to church at Baslow. In this way, at least, some Sheffield people will be got to hear a sermon, if they have to be pulled over the hills for the purpose. Those seats for two will be rather uncomfortable just now; but there are many shady nooks in the Baslow Hydro, which have been tested and found suitable for light flirtation or serious courtship.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph Nov 1882

Sheffield and Mrs. Fozon sang several duets and songs which were very much appreciated. During the whole time the Hydropathic has been fully occupied by visitors and a great number were disappointed by not being admitted as all the bedrooms were occupied. The visitors came from various parts of the kingdom, but especially from Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Derby etc. Amongst them were several well-known townsmen – Ald. Brittain, Messrs. Herbert Andrew, N. Smith, H. Calver, John Fowler and others. Everyone came away expressing their great satisfaction with all the arrangement that had been made for their comfort and enjoyment. Sheffield Independent Jan 1895

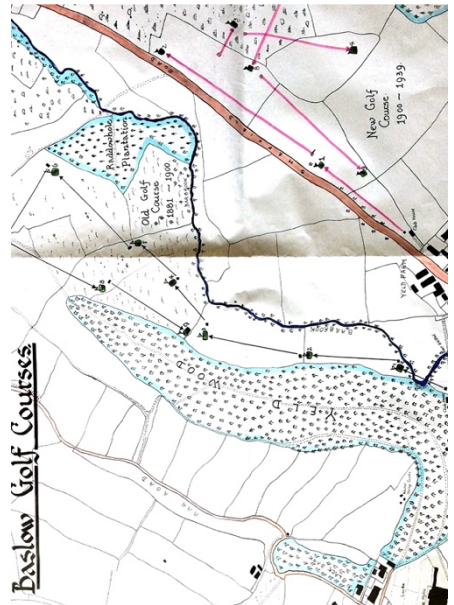


Some of the Hydro's ceramic items

GOLF.

NEW GOLF LINKS AT BASLOW.

The directors of the Baslow Hydropathic Company deserve to be heartily congratulated on their enterprise in laying out golf links for the free use of visitors at the charming Hydro, at Baslow. Golf to many people in their periods of leisure has become a necessity, and golfers flock to establishments where facilities are provided for pursuing their favourite pastime. Happily for the Baslow Hydro, the directors were able, a few months ago, to obtain the use of sufficient land to supply an excellent nine-hole course. It is within four minutes' walk of the Hydro door, lying between Yeld Wood and the old Sheffield Road. The course has been in process of laying out since July, and very great care has been taken in the preparation of the greens and teeing grounds. Drainage work has also been undertaken, and much desirable work done between the holes. The turf, generally, is good, and allows of capital lies. The hazards are the Bar Brook and other natural bunkers. There is a hazard on nearly every hole, making an ideal sporting course. The sixth hole lies at the far end of Yeld Wood, close to the point where the path comes out into the open. This is a great advantage, as it enables spectators to see play without being at all in the way of players. The drive here is from a high plateau across a ravine interspersed with rock, and a bad stroke will land players in considerable difficulties. A professional, formerly junior at Lindrick, has been engaged, and will be at the service of learners at the very moderate fee of 2s. per round.



Sheffield Telegraph Dec 1895

The first golf course

In the news – good and bad

THE DUKE AND THE CORPORATION.

The Sheffield Corporation in their efforts to secure a sanatorium for consumptives have decided that the wooden buildings at Langsett are unsuitable inspected,

Other sites have been inspected, and sinking operations conducted with a view of ascertaining the extent of water supplies.

Recently it was thought that the most suitable place in the district was the hydropathic establishment at Baslow.

The owners of the leasehold were willing to sell to the Corporation, but as the ground landlord, the Duke of Rutland, withheld his consent.

it is felt that it is useless to pursue the matter further.

Nottingham Evening Post May 1907

BASLOW HYDROPATHIC COMPANY LEASE OF THE HOTEL

Today a meeting of shareholders of the Baslow Hydropathic Company was held at the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield to consider a proposal by the directors to lease the hotel and its premises with the option to purchase the same. The chairman proposed and Mr. Pawson seconded dated 18th. November 1900 for the lease to Mrs. Annie Lucy Vogel, of the hotel and premises at Baslow, and the furniture and fixtures therein for the option for the lessee to purchase the same which has been read to the meeting be approved and confirmed and that the directors be authorised to carry out the agreement Mr. Sandford explained that the hotel was leased to Mrs Vogel because Mr. Vogel already had a licence at Mundersley-on-sea but he was the guarantor for Mrs. Vogel in her engagements under the law. The rent was £1,171 for the first year and rising thereafter to £1720 after seven years. Mrs. Vogel had the option to purchase for £28,500.

Sheffield Evening Telegraph. Nov. 1901

PAINFUL CASE AT BASLOW.

On Thursday, at special petty sessions held at the Town Hall, Bakewell (before Mr. W. Fenton, J.I.). Mr. Robert Coulson Taylor, a gentleman of independent means, residing at Clifton, near Bristol, was charged with attempting to commit suicide by cutting his throat in the Baslow Hydropathic Establishment on July 19. - Dr. Wrench said he was called to the establishment and found the accused lying in bed with an extensive wound in the throat. The defendant has since been under his care. He was the same man who was referred to as Robert Coulson Taylor in the certificate annexed to an order in lunacy produced. He (witness) considered the defendant to be a person of unsound mind, and not responsible for his actions. The magistrate discharged the accused, it being understood that he would be conveyed to an asylum.

Derby Daily Telegraph 1890.

His Grace the Duke of Rutland, accompanied by his daughter, the Lady Katharine Manners, visited the Baslow Hydropathic establishment on Wednesday afternoon. The Duke inspected the house and grounds and expressed himself much pleased with all that he had seen and the way in which the establishment was managed.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph Aug. 1891

It is not true that Miss Halton, the popular manager of the Baslow Hydropathic establishment is about to leave.

Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald, Oct. 1892

We have already mentioned that Mrs. Elliot, the lady manager of the Baslow Hydropathic Institution has resigned that position and accepted a similar position at the Maynard Arms in Grindleford. Sheffield Daily Telegraph Feb.1901

Nevertheless, the hotel owners did not have a completely trouble-free ride during these heady years. In 1899, an application was made to the local magistrates' bench for a full drinks licence and this was initially rejected, causing great consternation to the management. The licensing justices noted though that the village already had six fully licensed premises and concluded it should not have a seventh. They knew that the Hydro was already licensed to sell beer and wine and felt that if guests felt the need for spirits too, then they could make their way down the hill to one or other of the village hostelrys. Ultimately though, it seems they did relent.

In 1900, matters were going sufficiently well for the hotel to make a new and better Golf Course, this time over on the east side of the Sheffield Road, as opposed to the original course on the west side of the road.

Then, however, came the Great War of 1914 to 1918. The Hydro certainly did its bit for king and country. On a Saturday evening in January 1915, a meeting was convened in the hotel billiard room, to enlist local men in the Derbyshire Volunteer Regiment of Home Guards. With a reasonable attendance, names of volunteers were taken and a committee formed to organise the local area. Later that year, Mr Mabbott the hotel manager, set apart the ball room for a Thursday evening concert to raise funds for the Red Cross and the Comforts for Servicemen's Fund. Also, the hotel was frequently used to billet officers, some from Canada, to enable them to practice on a Rifle Range set up in Chatsworth Park.

However, after World War I, sadly, the Hydro never managed to recover its former glory. The owners during the profitable times had not put aside sufficient monies to provide for repairs, renovations, and modernisation, the latter now much needed, as the soldiers billeted there during the war had knocked the place about badly. Funds had been withdrawn from the business to instead provide dividends for the shareholders. By 1919, the place was beginning to look very tired and down at heel. The wooden annexe of additional rooms was sold off to raise funds in 1920 but the hotel still struggled to pay its way. Former guests, finding the venue rather

poor now, defected to Harrogate, or Scarborough, or even Switzerland. Mr Mabbot put in a claim to the War Compensation Court, in the mid 1920s, seeking money to reimburse all the damage done by the troops when they were there. Unfortunately, this was not successful, Mr. Abbott instituting his own bankruptcy proceedings.

HC Deb 11 April 1928 vol 162 cc1215–6

1215

73. Mr. C. WHITE asked the Under-Secretary of State for War whether the claim of Mr. R. H. Mabbott in respect of compensation for the use by the military during the War of the Grand Hotel and Hydro, Baslow, has been further considered; whether he is aware that Mr. Mabbott was practically ruined owing to the occupation of his hotel by the troops; and whether he will facilitate a decision being arrived at in the case?

Lieut.-Colonel GUINNESS This case has now been investigated, and the report thereon is 1216 being sent to the War Compensation Court and to Mr. Mabbott, who is at liberty to apply for an early hearing. My information, however, does not confirm the suggestion that Mr. Mabbott was ruined through the use made of his hotel by the troops, and I regret that the Department is not in a position to recommend the grant of compensation.

Mr. WHITE Is the hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that Mr. Mabbott is in the union and that his ruin is largely the result of this occupation?

Lieut.-Colonel GUINNESS I can only say that in his bankruptcy proceedings Mr. Mabbott made no mention of having been ruined by the occupation of the troops. I do not think it is desirable to prejudice the issue by any further statement now.

Mr. WHITE Cannot the hon. and gallant Gentleman facilitate a decision in this case, which has been going on for twelve months?

Lieut.-Colonel GUINNESS I have said that it is now open to Mr. Mabbott to go to the War Compensation Court, and he has been informed accordingly.

Questions were asked in Parliament – excerpt from Hansard

Then came the Great Depression which further ate into takings, with a further drop in guest numbers.

The management resorted to providing a venue for local village meetings, dances, and whist-drives, to supplement the low guest numbers.

However, this tended to put off the few remaining well-to-do guests who were still patronised the Hydro for old times' sake.

So, the Grand Hotel and Hydro finally had to close its door as unprofitable in 1930. It was put up for sale for £5200 and bought by Rev. Howard May, a Wesleyan minister. He may have planned to turn it into a religious retreat or hotel but did nothing with it. Contents were sold off at bankrupt

sale prices two years later, including such bedroom items as soap dishes and chamber pots, all bearing the imprint of the hotel name. And in 1936, a Mr White of Darley Dale paid £3,000 for the right to demolish the empty building and take away the stone for use elsewhere. The land was then sold off for 1930s residential development, such as the houses on Hydro Close and Eaton Drive.

FATE OF A HYDRO.

£50,000 BASLOW HOTEL BEING DEMOLISHED.

Baslow Hydro, which a few years ago was one of the finest hotels in North Derbyshire, is in the hands of the "housebreakers."

Built just over 50 years ago at a cost of £50,000, it has been sold to Mr. Stanley White, of Darley Dale, who is demolishing it.

The floor of the ballroom has been torn up and will be used for the floors of cottages. The walls are to be razed to the ground and the material used for building houses in nearby towns.

Eight years ago, when the Hydro closed, Miss Gill, the housekeeper, was left behind.

Finally the licence was given up, and Miss Gill was left the sole occupant of the Hydro.

Four years ago the Hydro was purchased by the Rev. Howard May (London) for £3,200. Although he never revealed his plans, it is believed that the intention was to use it as a theological college, for, shortly after he took possession, a pulpit was delivered and placed in the theatre of the hotel. But the scheme fell through.

Semi-detached villas are to stand on the site when it is cleared.

Baslow Hydro

WHAT is going to be the future of Baslow Hydro? When it came into the market some time ago, after failing in its original purpose, it was purchased by the Rev. Howard May, a Wesleyan minister, who resides in London, and all sorts of speculations were indulged in as to what his intentions might be. Whatever they are, little or nothing has been done up to the present beyond certain repair work.

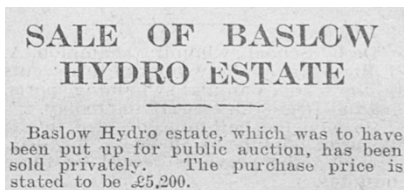
Mr. May, however, may be trusted to let his plans be known in due course. I have heard it suggested that the place may be converted into a Wesley Guild guest house, or hostel, on the lines of Willersley, and it would serve such a purpose admirably. He is not prepared at present to satisfy the curiosity of an inquisitive public, who will no doubt be told everything in due course.

Derby Daily Telegraph July 1932

Nottingham Evening Post Oct. 1935



The Hydro Crest



So, the brightest ever star in Baslow's tourism history had in fact shone for just 50 years, from its start in 1880 to its demise in 1930. Better management might have preserved it through the years to now, and who knows, the



The old gateposts

village today might have had a Novotel, a Best Western, or a Mercure Hotel. But that was not to be. All that remains are gateposts at the original entrance on Eaton Hill, part of a fountain in another Baslow house and the old wall around the grounds at the south of Eaton Drive.

This is based on the talk by Mike Woffenden to the Baslow History Group that was written with the assistance of Mrs Anne Tempest of Baslow and Dr David Dalrymple-Smith of Baslow who provided information for this which is gratefully acknowledged. Other contributors to this article were David Dawson and Mike Holcombe who supplied additional material and designed the booklet. Sketch paintings by the Late John Sheldon.

We acknowledge the kind support of <https://derbyshireheritage.co.uk/> for the use of photographs of the Hydro.

Image of the Hydro Lounge is taken from *Grannie's Baslow* by Judith Stubbs and coloured using AI. Images of the Hydro ceramics from John and Amanda Somers.

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