

**ROADS IN STAND WOOD  
CHATSWORTH**

**OLD and NEW**

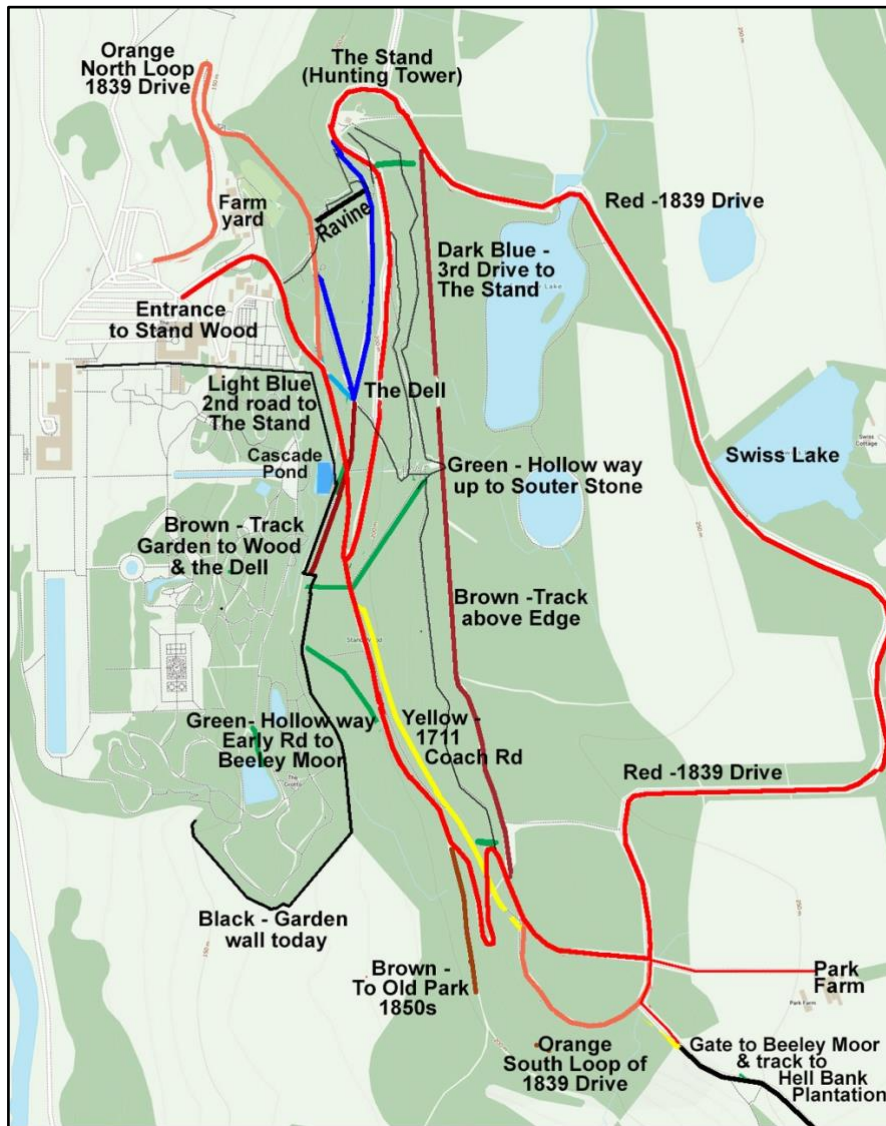


**Hollow way up to the Souter Stone**

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Roads in Stand Wood that remain visible today



More detailed map available in appendix –  
may not be included and not essential for this article

## List of the Roads in Stand Wood, past and present

*If the roads or their remains are visible today, they are marked on the map opposite*

**Green.** The three early roads through Stand Wood in place before 1600.

- To The Stand. Today replaced by tracks through the wood and a hollow way below The Stand
- To Souter Stone. A deep hollow way from garden wall to the Edge.
- To Beeley Moor: Hollow way from garden wall near the large chimney up diagonally to the road, and another at the Edge. (also tracks on the moors).

**Blue.** Drives to The Stand (The Hunting Tower)

There were three consecutive drives from the House to The Stand before 1839. Each took a different route to The Dell. All then used the early road to the top. At some date a private drive was built around the front of the Stand.

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Drive directly up from the House has left no trace.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive was from the Entrance of Stand Wood to the Dell. Later most of became part of the present main road. The last 50 metres is now a footpath.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Drive (see text) started at the House, looped around the outside of the farmyard then went straight to The Dell. Only the last section remains in place.
- All Drives from Dell to the Stand. Last part around front of Stand is now built over.

**Yellow.** The 1711 Coach Road to Beeley Moor

It started at the Cascade Pond and went in a fairly straight line to the gate onto the moor, along the Edge and on for an unknown distance towards Ashover. A section in the upper wood remains and today is used as a footpath.

**Brown.** Connecting roads

- The track from the garden to the Cascade Pond outside the garden wall was made when the wall rebuilt in the early 1830s. It was extended along the route of the early pre 1600 road to the Dell.
- There is another track of unknown date along to top of the Edge from The Stand to the south of the wood.
- Track in Stand Wood from 1839 Drive (present road) to connect with 1850s Grassy Drive from Beeley Lodge to top of Old Park

**Red & Orange.** The 1839 Recreational Drive.

*Note This is not the official name: it is used here as a convenient description only.*

A completely new drive suitable for carriages. It started at the House then took a long loop north of the farmyard before traversing uphill to the south end of the Wood. After another short loop along the Edge, it continued past Park Farm and Swiss Lake to The Stand then down to join the upcoming road.

- **Orange** – Two “loops” in the original drive, around the farmyard and along the Edge at the south end of the wood. They are now tracks used occasionally.
- **Red.** The main road today up through Stand Wood and around the land above. Mostly of it is an upgrade of the 1839 Drive. The start, used to bypass the northern loop, made use of the earlier the 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive to the Stand

**Black.** Footpaths. Most were made in the early 1800s for recreation and enjoyment. They are not described further.

## Introduction

This is the story of the roads in Stand Wood from mediaeval to modern times. How they started, how they developed and why some closed. In a small way it complements the history of Chatsworth house and gardens. It is likely to be of special interest to those who walk in and love the wood.

Stand Wood is on the steep hillside east of Chatsworth, part of an escarpment stretching for miles in both directions. At the top is Chatsworth Edge a line of short crags or steep slopes with occasional gaps. Beyond (east) of the Edge is a fairly flat shelf of land then more hills and finally the start of open moorland. The wood is named after the Stand which was built in the 1750s. It is commonly known today as The Hunting Tower.

William Cavendish and his wife Elizabeth, Bess of Hardwick, bought Chatsworth in 1549, a property which included a house a garden some agricultural land and a large deer park. The deer park, the present Stand Wood and the land above as far as the moors, was mainly open ground with scattered trees and was surrounded by a substantial wall. The family thrived becoming earls in 1618 and dukes in 1694 with the title of Earl then Duke of Devonshire. In the process they acquired much wealth and prestige.

Since mediaeval times or earlier there had been roads in the area attracted by a bridge over the river Derwent and the gaps in the escarpment above Chatsworth. These were public roads that could not be closed even by important dukes, but they could be diverted. They had a significant effect on the development of the estate. They interfered with privacy and the management of the deer park, and they limited expansion of the gardens.

## The Maps of Chatsworth

There are four early maps of Chatsworth. The first was made in 1617 by William Senior. The next was George Barker's Map of 1773 followed by George Unwin's in 1831 and by E. Campbell in 1858. These maps often omit roads (and other features) known to exist. It is assumed that the roads that are shown are genuine.

## The Early Roads through Chatsworth

*Note The term "early road" is used to describe roads in place before 1600.*

There was originally a crossroads at Chatsworth bridge. A south to north main road came up the Derwent Valley, connecting Rowsley Beeley Chatsworth Baslow and beyond, all on the east side of the river. Another long distance road from the west came through Bakewell, up the hill to Ball Cross down to Edensor and across Chatsworth Bridge where it was joined by traffic from Rowsley and the southwest. It continued up the hillside south of the early Chatsworth gardens as a single road called Holmes Lane to a point north of the (later) Grotto Pond. Here it divided into three separate roads.

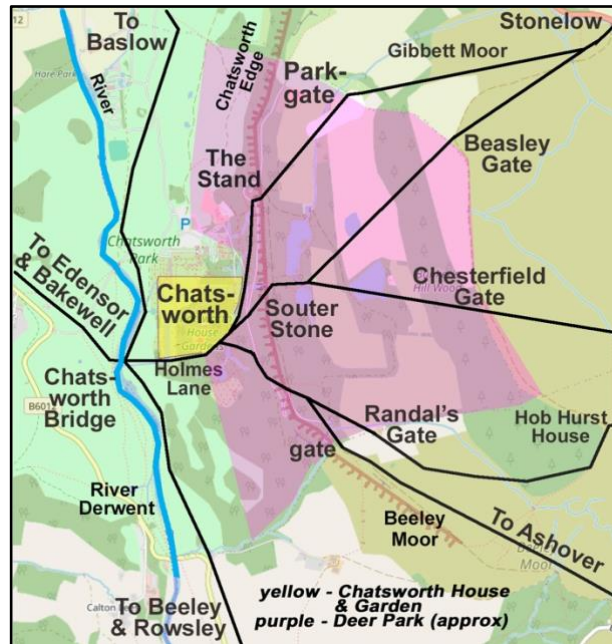
Each of these roads ascended through the wood to one of the available gaps in Chatsworth Edge then crossed the flat shelf of land to a named gate out of the deer park, as shown on the map. They continued for a mile or two over open moorland before descending to lower ground beyond.

- One of the early roads went to The Stand and on to the northeast.
- Another went to the Souter Stone and on to Chesterfield and the east.
- The third went to the south end of the wood then to Beeley Moor Ashover and the southeast.

Traffic was mainly people and horses. Some roads could be used for wheeled traffic but bad weather and winter could make them impassable.

These roads remained in general use until 1760 when turnpikes were built from Chesterfield to Baslow and to Rowsley. The early roads around Chatsworth were no longer essential and the Duke (legally) took the opportunity to close those on the Chatsworth estate. Chatsworth House now had privacy, and the ability to enlarge the gardens which it did in due course. The fate of the roads is discussed below. The roads on the moors remained open to the public until the early 1800s.

## Early Roads in 1600



### The Early Road to The Stand

The early road went diagonally uphill to The Stand then on past Parkgate to Stonelow where it crossed the Heathy Lea Brook. Once up the opposite hillside there were numerous destinations available including Sheffield and the northeast.

Originally the first part of this road as far as the Cascade Pond was just outside the old garden wall. The wall was taken down soon after 1760, but the road remained in place as recorded on Barker's 1773 map. It would have provided a connection into the wood until at least 1773 and probably continued to do so until the new garden wall was constructed in the 1830s. It can be noted that this road, recorded on Barker's 1773 map, was also the boundary of the gardens before 1760.

The early road from the Cascade Pond to the Dell remained in place and is still in occasional use today. Like all the roads it would have been maintained and improved from time to time. Next it continued diagonally up the very steep hillside passing across the top of a deep ravine to reach the Chatsworth Edge about 60 metres south of The Stand. Most of the road except the top few metres has been kept in good condition and can still be used by wheeled vehicles. The original gap in the Edge used by the early road no longer exists - it disappeared during the construction of the 1839 Recreational Drive (now today's road). Once above the Edge the road turned right and continued up a gentle slope before bearing left across the deer park to Parkgate. The first 50 metres up the slope have survived as a substantial hollow way. The start is easily seen from the road, and it is possible to walk the first few metres but then it becomes blocked by scrub. More can be seen further on from another footpath.

From Parkgate it was a short ascent to the crest of a hill which was the site of the old gibbet. The road then descended down Gibbett Moor to Stonelow. Numerous hollow ways on the moor today show that it must have been a busy road.

No part of this road is marked on Wm Senior's map but he does show a park gate where the road left the deer park. Parkgate Farm outside the old deer park has been occupied continuously since the late 1590s. For many years it was The Hornes Inn: there are records of a victuallers licence issued to it in 1760.

Today it is still possible to walk from the Cascade Pond to The Stand along a route that has been in use for perhaps a thousand years.

### 2 The Early Road to the Souter Stone

The early pre 1600 road was a continuation of Holmes Lane going steeply uphill to the Souter Stone, a natural outcrop of rock on Chatsworth Edge which was later converted to a decorative waterfall. According to William Senior's map of 1617 the road divided shortly after the Souter Stone.

- One branch went on to the Chesterfield Gate where it left Chatsworth property and crossed the open moor to Holymoorside and Chesterfield.
- The other branch to the northeast passed through Beasley Gate before descending Gibbett Moor to Stonelow where it joined the road from Parkgate. There are only a few holloways on the moor marking this route suggesting that it was little used. Perhaps it was a diversion created by Chatsworth to take traffic away from the road to The Stand.

Today the part of the road in Stand Wood remains as a deep hollow way from the garden wall to below the Souter Stone, crossing the present tarmac road a few metres uphill from (south of) its branch to The Stand. The lower half is easily seen from the road, the upper half is now restored as a footpath. The final passage through the Edge has been lost, replaced by steps and footpaths.

### 3 The Early Road to Beeley Moor

The road ascended from Holmes Lane to a gap in the Edge about 400 metres north of the park wall. Once on flat ground it divided into two. One branch continued to Randall's Gate now Park Farm and on to Hob Hurst House and Chesterfield. The other (unmarked on Senior's Map) kept closer to the Edge. using the present gate in the park wall to reach Beeley Moor and continued near the Edge to Hell Bank Plantation and on to Ashover and beyond. It was important to Chatsworth as it was the main road to their other house at Hardwick and to London.

It was legally closed to the public in 1760 on condition that the Duke provided a suitable diversion. He duly built a Drift way from Hell Bank Plantation down to Beeley Lodge. A drift way is a road more suitable for people and packhorses than wheeled vehicles. Another new road a carriage way from Beeley Lodge to Edensor completed the diversion. It was all part of a widespread reorganisation of the roads around Chatsworth.

A section of this early road remains as a hollow way. It starts at the garden wall close to the large chimney that served Paxton's greenhouse and goes diagonally up the wood to the present road where it disappears. It is next seen as a broad hollow way above the 1711 Coach Road (see photo below) rising very steeply through a gap in the cliffs of Chatsworth Edge and emerging onto the upper acute bend in the

present tarmac road. There is no further trace of it in the old Deer Park. Once outside the park wall and onto Beeley Moor there are two distinct groups of hollow ways easily seen on satellite maps. One went up the hillside to Hob Hursts House, the other kept to the flatter ground near the Edge and continued to the top of Hell Bank Plantation and beyond.

The closure of the early road to the south end of the wood in 1760 is well documented. The other two roads, to the Stand and the Souter Stone, were closed about the same time but there is no record of exactly how or when this was done.

### The Stand and its drives

The Stand built in the 1570s was an important adjunct to the main house. Initially the early public road was available to reach it, but a better private drive must have been a priority for the Cavendish family. Unfortunately, there was space for only one road up from the Dell, partly because the top of the ravine was close to the Edge, and partly because the steepness of the hillside.

Over the years until 1839 three private drives were built from the house to the Dell and another from the top of the ravine round the front of the Stand, but the stretch between was shared with the public until 1760. In this year the road was closed to the public. Chatsworth then had a drive private all the way from the House to the Stand.

It is possible that Chatsworth did divert public traffic away from the road up from the Dell from time to time. It was suggested above that the road marked on Wm Senior's map to Besley Gaye may have been installed by Chatsworth for this purpose. There are records at Chatsworth dated 1760 showing that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke (who died in 1755) diverted packhorses from Parkgate along the top of the Edge to one of the other two roads leading down to Chatsworth bridge. Many were carrying coal from Brampton and Baslow collieries.

Then in 1839 the new Recreational Drive replaced all the earlier drives.

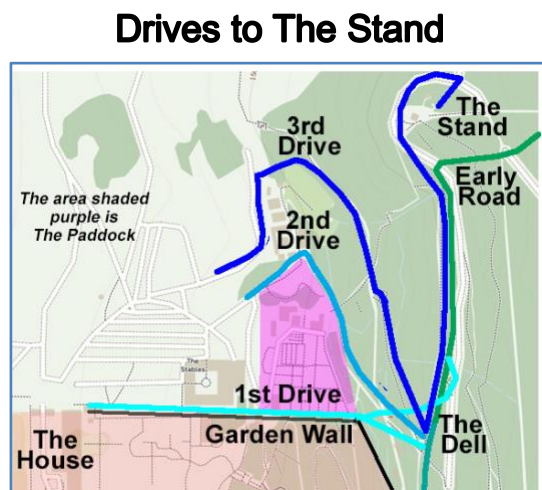
#### 1<sup>st</sup> Drive to The Dell

This is recorded on Senior's [1617] map and Barker's [1773] map. In each the road ascends straight uphill from the house outside the garden wall to the present gate at the northeast corner of the garden. From there the two maps show different ways to the early road to the Stand. In 1617 the drive went left then probably made a loop above the early road before joining it slightly higher up. In 1773 it went directly up from the gate to The Dell.

No trace of either remains today so the exact routes through the wood up to the Dell remain unknown.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive to The Dell

This drive (in use today) is first seen on Unwin's map, so it was installed before, perhaps long before 1831. It started at the present entrance to the wood, curved



around the north of The Paddock then took a direct route to The Dell. The Paddock at the time was a large field above (east of) the stables. By 1858 much of it was orchard. It is now the kitchen garden, the brickyard and woodland adjacent to the road.

It was a quick way up to the wood with good ongoing connections. The later 3<sup>rd</sup> Drive to The Stand and the 1839 Recreational Drive both took long loops around the north of the (present) Farmyard. It is likely that many Chatsworth workers and travellers would have continued using this short route leaving the more pleasant loop for carriages and visitors. In due course when the loops were closed it became the main road into Stand Wood from the entry gate to the point where it reached the 1839 drive. Its continuation to the Dell reverted to being a footpath which carried on up to the aqueduct and the Souter Stone. The footpath is still in use.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Drive to The Dell and The Stand?**

There is a woodland track in Stand Wood which starts near the bottom of the steep steps to The Stand and goes gently up to the Dell. It was well made, broad with substantial culverts. Even today it is in reasonable condition and capable of accommodating wheeled vehicles. Also the quality of the road from the Dell to the Stand is similar in construction suggesting it was upgraded at the same time and that the Stand was the destination. To reach it an acute bend would have been necessary. The Dell is wide enough to accommodate the necessary turning circle for horse and carriage.

Going downhill (north) from the Dell the woodland track ends today at a well used service track, originally the 1839 Recreational Drive. If it continued in a straight line, it would have reached to top of the Farmyard (created years later). Looking at the terrain today there is no sign of such a road along this route but there is a space for one as far as the stream coming down from the ravine. Further on there is also space for a road around the outside of the present farmyard wall descending to the existing track coming from the House (the 1839 Recreational Drive): the surface is smooth, the incline is steady and only moderately steep.

The woodland track looks to be very well made and must have been built for a specific reason. It is suggested that the Duke built a new drive, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Drive to the Stand, from the House around the farmyard to the Dell and upgraded the existing road to the top. It would probably have been after 1831 as it is not marked on Unwin's map and before 1839 or thereabouts when the 1839 Recreational Drive would have rendered it useless. This is consistent with general improvements in the wood around this time, and the spending of money on drives in the wood mentioned in Barnatt and Williamson's Landscape History.

If correct the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke would have spent a lot of money on an expensive state of the art road in the early 1830s then replaced it with an even grander and more expensive one a few years later.

### **The Drive around the front of the Stand**

Initially the early road was used by Chatsworth to reach the Stand from the east. Later a drive was built from the top of the ravine round the front (west) of the Stand finally approaching it from the north - as it does today. The date is not known but maps show that it would have been sometime between 1617 and 1763.

Later the 1839 Recreational Drive using the same route round the front was built over the earlier drive cutting it off completely.

### Retaining Wall at the top of the ravine



The photo shows a retaining wall at the top of the ravine supporting the drive to the Stand. The modern road is uphill to the right and the Stand 100 metres ahead. Just beyond the photo the drive to the Stand turned left. There is no sign today of the early road which would have continued straight ahead to the Edge but there is a modern footpath which follows approximately the original route as far as the tarmac road.

The narrow pedestrian staircase at the upper (northern) end of the retaining wall is part of the network of footpaths in the wood. These were created by Paxton when he was “improving” the area for recreation and pleasure in the 1830s and suggests that the structure itself was built around this time.

### 1711 Coach Road

In 1711 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke built a coach road, a drive, up through Stand Wood and across Beeley Moor. At the time the House had just been completed and the gardens restored but access to it was poor. The public road through Stand Wood was extremely steep at the top, probably muddy and even unpassable in winter. The new drive provided a more comfortable ride for the Duke and a more impressive access for visitors.

Little is known about the road itself. There are few records and no maps record it. There are features on the ground described below. More information comes from the Ombersley Court painting, dated early 1700s (on show in Chatsworth House). It shows a coach descending the road to the old garden wall. Beyond is the Cascade House. Hidden behind the wall is the Cascade Pond. The early road from Holmes Lane to The Stand (The Hunting Tower) is ahead coming up from the left alongside the old garden wall. The coachman would have had the option of turning left down the early road and driven round the outside of the garden wall to reach the Chatsworth bridge, or he could have turned right up to the Dell then directly downhill to the House.

The new Coach Road would have started at the Cascade Pond and went in a straight line diagonally up the wood. The first part of the road up from the Cascade Pond was partially replaced by 1839 Recreational Drive (now the main road up the wood): no trace of the original remains. The coach road itself, reduced today to a

footpath, first appears 100 metres beyond the present branch road to The Stand. It goes uphill above (east of) the present road. Near the top of the Edge, it crosses first the early road and then the tarmac road where it makes a double bend, then \*continues on to the level ground. It has been badly eroded by the elements but otherwise is reasonably straight with an easy steady gradient and occasional clues to its original well designed construction.

There is no trace of the Coach Road through the level wood above the Edge to the present gate onto Beeley Moor. Once on the moor it followed the route of the unpaved track for about half a kilometre before bearing left across the moor becoming one of a large group of hollow ways. A causeway over Beeley Brook (now hidden in reeds) about 50 metres above Hell Bank Plantation might be part of the original road. Further hollow ways continue towards Ashover.

The photograph shows the two old roads near the south end of Stand Wood just below the Chatsworth Edge. The modern tarmac road is ahead just out of sight.

On the left is the early road to Beeley Moor which reaches up through the Edge as a steep hollow way. On the right the newer 1711 coach road crosses the old and continues up a much easier incline. The coach road is obviously better made.



When the early road to Beeley Moor was closed to the public in 1760 it may have remained in use by Chatsworth for a while but in due course it was abandoned. The coach road was then the only way to the south end of Stand Wood until 1839. It was needed for access by workers in the wood and the old deer park and by travellers to Beeley Moor and the roads beyond.

### Late 1700s and Early 1800s

There were important changes affecting the old deer park and Stand Wood during this period.

The land above the Edge was taken in for agriculture. Tons of lime would have been needed to neutralise the acid soil and allow the creation of fields for grass and crops. Park Farm was built on the site of the old Randall's Gate. Shelter belts of trees were planted on the level ground and Bunkers Hill Wood was created on the far hillside up to the moorland. The Emperor Lake was added to the three already in place. All trace of the early roads disappeared.

Part of old garden wall was removed in the 1760s leaving no firm boundary between the garden and wood. The gardens later were extended uphill into Stand Wood with a new Pinetum and Arboretum. The garden wall we see today wall was built in the 1830s. It enclosed Holmes Lane and the lower part of its three branches: all have now been landscaped out of existence.

Trees were planted to create the Stand Wood we know today. There was minimal disturbance to the ground. Some of the early roads disappeared when newer ones were built over them. The rest remain and are now hollow ways tracks or footpaths.

### Garden Road to Stand Wood

There would always have been a connection between the gardens and Stand Wood. Until 1760 the early roads were close to the garden wall and a gate was enough. Much of the original wall between the garden and the wood was removed after 1760 but the early road to the Stand was left place. Then in the 1830s a substantial new wall was built enclosing the garden completely. A new connection was needed.

The garden wall has a marked curve in it about 50 metres south of the Cascade Pond in which there is a gate. A road started in the gardens, passed through the gate and continued outside but close to the new wall as far as the Cascade Pond where it joined both the remaining part of the early road to The Stand and the Coach Road to Beeley Moor. Communication was restored. It provided a useful link for many years.

The section close to the garden wall is now out of use and decaying.

### Road at top of The Edge

There is a track from The Stand south along the top of the Edge. It is not known when it was first built, but it would have had many uses over the years, including the diversion of traffic away from The Stand before 1760.

### The 1839 Recreational Drive

*Note: for the convenience of this article it is called the 1839 Recreational Drive*

Much was done to enhance Stand Wood for interest and recreation in the 1830s. There was the aqueduct and above it the Souter waterfall, a new garden wall and a network of footpaths. Previously the land above had been transformed from a neglected deer park to a scenery of lakes fields and woods. In 1839 there was a new project, a single drive to serve both areas. One of the reasons for it was to open up Stand Wood and the land above for recreation, so it was designed to a high quality and was wide enough for carriages. Work commenced in 1839 and took several years to complete.

The drive started near the house and took a long loop around the north of the Farmyard where there were excellent views of the north park and up the Derwent Valley. On its return above the Farmyard it took a fairly level course to reach the garden wall at the Cascade Pond then proceeded diagonally uphill through the wood to the southern end where it needed a zig zag to reach the top of Chatsworth Edge, Once on level ground there was another short loop south along the Edge with views over Beeley to the White Peak. It continued with a long tour past Park Farm and Swiss Lake to The Stand before descending to the upcoming road where an acute turn was needed to rejoin the drive down to the start.

Most of it was over fresh ground with minimal use of existing roads. It cut across the Coach Road just below the Edge and the existing road to The Stand as it rounded the tower, making both unusable. Since 1839 it has been the only way to the Edge and beyond so it has been used by the privileged few to view the scenery from the comfort of their carriages, by workers on the estate, by travellers to Chatsworth from Beeley Moor and not least by visitors enjoying the woods for recreation and enjoyment.

Later the two loops fell out of use and ceased to be drives - but have remained for local access. Shortcuts, roads already in use, were available and were upgraded to

be part of the main drive. The first from the entry gate to the 1839 road was originally the 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive to The Stand. The second at the south end of the Wood was a convenient farm track heading towards to Park Farm.

### Grass Drive from Beeley Lodge to Stand Wood

Later in the 1850s two further drives were created elsewhere in the park for recreation and enjoyment only. They were grass tracks rather than roads, wide, some very wide, and had gradients kind enough for carriages. One started at Beeley Lodge, zig zagged up through the Old Park and entered Stand Wood below the Edge to join the 1839 Recreational drive on its way to Beeley Moor. The upper section is still in use providing access to the top of the Old Park.

### The Drive in the Old Park



### The Roads today

There has been no further change to the roads and tracks in the wood and land above. The main road today, the Recreational 1839 Drive, has been upgraded and partly tarmacked. Recently a few further footpaths have been installed.

### Summary

Stand Wood is well known as a backdrop for Chatsworth House and a mecca for walkers, some enjoying the wood others using it as access to the House. Less well known are the roads through it which have been in regular use for centuries. Some in are still use, others have left only a trace. They add to the rich history of Chatworth and its landscape.

### Note

This article is a story about the roads. It is based on facts available and is the author's personal assessment of how things happened. Some of the ideas and conclusions are not noted elsewhere, especially the 3<sup>rd</sup> Drive to the Stand. There may be other interpretations but hopefully this work will provide a useful starting point for further research and discussion.

Much was learned by walking through the wood. Old maps of Chatsworth and arial photographs give useful further information. Chatsworth, a Landscape History by John Barnatt and Tom Williamson has been used for facts and especially for dates. An unpublished document found by by Hugo Reid (Chatsworth Archives) provided details of the 1760 road closures.

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*The paper may be copied for private use and research purposes.*

*The maps at the front and the key can be printed separately as a summary.*

*The Appendix maps (not always attached) are for more detailed study*