

The History of Robin Hood

A hamlet near Baslow



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INTRODUCTION

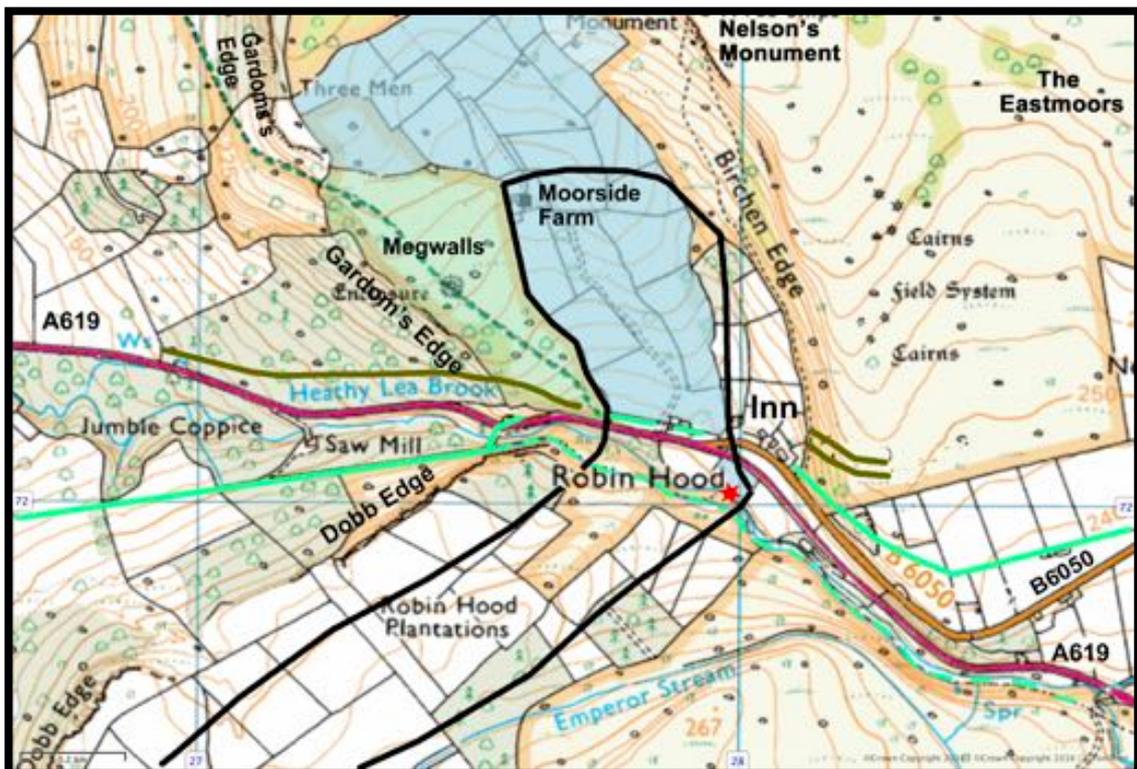
Robin Hood is a small group of houses, a hamlet, in the parish of Baslow. It is a small community, well known for its Inn and for its car park, both popular for visitors and walkers exploring the magnificent countryside. Climbers come to practise on the nearby crags.

The hamlet nestles in a small side valley, high up on the road to Chesterfield. To the east are the slopes and cliffs of Birchen Edge beyond which is the high ground known as the Eastmoors. Between Robin Hood and Baslow are the Edges, a long line of cliffs which dominate the Derwent Valley. To the north of the hamlet they are called Gardoms Edge and to the south Dobb Edge.

The name Robin Hood has always applied to the small group of houses around the present inn, and was first recorded on a map dated 1812. The early origin of the name is not known. The whole area below Birchen Edge was originally called Moorside just as the moors above it were, and still are, Eastmoor.

Today it is mainly a tourist attraction but in the past much has happened. Read on

Map of Robin Hood



- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>Blue filling</i> | <i>Moorside Farm</i> |
| <i>Green filling</i> | <i>Megwalls field</i> |
| <i>Black Line</i> | <i>Approx. area mined for coal</i> |
| <i>Brown Lines</i> | <i>Ancient track-ways</i> |
| <i>Green Lines</i> | <i>Turnpike roads 1759 (1812 dotted)</i> |
| <i>Red Star</i> | <i>"47 foot shaft"</i> |

EARLY HISTORY

The Eastmoors and the higher moors nearby are rich in the remains of Bronze Age settlements. People started farming here perhaps 2000 BC at the start of the Bronze Age and stayed 1000 years before the weather deteriorated forcing them off the higher ground. The fields changed to heath and moorland and remained uninhabited for centuries. The land was not wasted, local inhabitants would have used it for hunting and summer grazing, as a resource for peat, thatching, herbs etc. and many other purposes. Travellers passed over them leaving hollow-ways that are visible today. These activities had little effect on the land itself.

Fortunately much of this higher moorland has escaped development. In the early 1800s the local gentry managed them for "sport" especially grouse shooting: even walkers were discouraged. Then the Water Boards kept the land clear of activity to ensure a clean supply for local towns, and now The Peak District National Park is active in their conservation. As a result, the remains of the Bronze Age settlements are still there. Some are visible above the surface, much more awaits the archaeologist below the soil and peat of centuries. The area beyond the north of Moorside Farm is especially rich in archaeological remains with clearance mounds and enclosures, hut circles and rock art.

Even earlier is the massive Enclosure on Gardoms Edge. It is a third of a mile long, enclosed by a stone bank with seven entrances much of it still standing. Its purpose is not understood but it must have a major significance at the time, perhaps as a gathering place for all the neighbouring peoples. Its construction confirms that it was not a defensive structure

The Lords of the Manor

Robin Hood and the surrounding moorland was for centuries a part of the Manor of Baslow, which belonged to the Duke of Rutland. In 1824 the Dukes of Rutland and Devonshire (Chatsworth) "Exchanged Lands". The part of Baslow south of the present A619 road went to the Duke of Devonshire: some of it was used to extend his Chatsworth Park to its present boundaries. Gibbet Moor and the land south of Robin Hood were both included in the deal.

To facilitate the Exchange, there was also an Act of Enclosure. Normally this was a means of distributing "Common Land" to individuals so they could enclose it and farm more efficiently. Here the objective was rather different. First all the village was surveyed and valued, then small plots of land on the moor were allocated to the few freeholders in the village who had ancient rights to the moors. The Duke then acquired all these the plots in exchange of assets in the village such as land for development, leaving him with total ownership of the moors. He now had the authority to develop them for "Sport", especially grouse shooting. It also allowed him to give Gibbet Moor, originally part of the Common Land, to the Duke of Devonshire as part of the Exchange. No fields were enclosed as a result of the Baslow Act of Enclosure.

The land nearer Baslow destined to become the new Park had been farmland, covered with farms fields and houses. Most needed to be flattened and converted to open grassland. In the process 25 tenants had to leave the area. Looking at the detail, it would seem that no ordinary villager was seriously affected. All had or were given alternative accommodation, and there would have been plenty of paid work available in creating the new park. However some families in larger houses had to leave the area. *(I am indebted to Chatsworth for use of rent books from their archives)*

The Roads.

The road through Baslow has always been important for cross country traffic, especially heavy traffic seeking a lower level route around the south end of the Peak District Hills. In addition, the deeply incised Heathy Lea valley has provided a relatively gentle incline up through the edges to the Eastmoors making it more attractive for wheeled vehicles.

This original mediaeval route out of Baslow is still preserved hidden in the woods to the north of the main road and is visible in the field called Megwalls. It re-appears above Robin Hood as a group of deeply incised holloways curving their way up the hill before heading towards Old Brampton and Chesterfield.



These deep holloways curl up the slope of Birchen Edge from Robin Hood. They are easily seen from the footpath to Nelson's Monument

They fell into disuse after the turnpike reached the hamlet in 1759

By the mid 1700s the old roads, never properly constructed, were becoming inadequate for the traffic of the early industrial revolution. The first Turnpike in the area was built in 1759. It took a new route from Baslow up through today's Park and south of the Heathylea brook, which it crossed by a bridge $\frac{1}{4}$ mile below Robin Hood. The road then continued through the hamlet and on to Old Brampton and Chesterfield. The section east of the Inn (yellow on the map) proved too steep and was re aligned a few years later to its present position as the B6050. As well as facilitating long distance traffic the road gave a welcome boost to the economy of the area.

Today the route of this turnpike is still visible in Chatsworth Park, continuing as a farm track to the bridge over the brook. The bridge exists but it is in a dangerous condition and is scarcely visible through the trees (the footpath we use today takes a different and safe route from the bridge to the Inn). Below the Inn the turnpike can be seen as a terrace parallel to the road each side of the first Robin Hood Farm. The long glade seen from the footpath above the last house is the section that was abandoned because it was too steep.

The 6th Duke of Devonshire inherited Chatsworth in 1812, and with it a desire to improve both house and surroundings. He must have been dismayed by the condition of the 1759 turnpike over the moors: one of his first actions was to promote (and it is said to pay for) a new turnpike to Chesterfield. It started below Robin Hood at the bridge over the Heathylea brook, and took a new route (dotted yellow on the map) up the deep valley close to the stream, reaching the moors at Stonelaw. From there is now the A619, reaching past Wadshelf and on into town.



This lovely bridge was built as part of the 1812 turnpike. It became redundant in 1824 and has remained unchanged ever since.

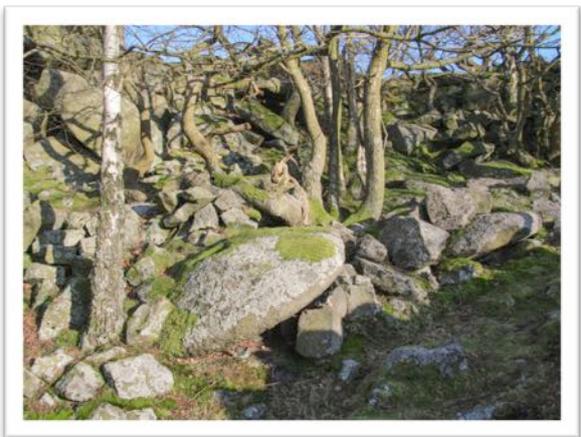
To reach it, cross the Heathy Lea Brook below Robin Hood, then follow a path upstream. Part of the way is the 1812 turnpike, deep in the valley by the stream.

Twelve years later in 1824, the Duke extended Chatsworth Park. As part of the development, the turnpike was rebuilt north of the Heathy Lea Brook from Baslow to the 1812 road at Stonelow. This road the A619 then became the northern boundary of the Chatsworth Estate.

The Stone industry

The Edges are an outcrop of the Millstone Grit sandstones, laid down by a large river over 300 million years ago. The ground tilted, erosion took place and water made the Derwent valley, leaving the gritstone as a long line of cliffs overlooking the valley

Some of the rock was suitable for making millstones, especially around Baslow and Hathersage, both of which became centres for an industry from which stones exported right across the country. Many went through the river port of Bawtry. There are references to millstones in Baslow Court Rolls dating back to the 1360s. Small scale production must have started much earlier, organised quarries rather later. The industry in general faded out in the 1700s, mainly due to the availability of better quality stones from France which were capable of making white flour and in addition did not leave a stone dust that gradually eroded ground down teeth. When the production ceased the quarries were abandoned and with no further use forgotten. They are still there, overgrown by trees but otherwise intact.



This photo shows an old stone quarry just under Gardoms Edge, and a nearly completed millstone propped up and ready for the stonemason. The quarry is now overgrown by oak and birch but otherwise it remains unchanged since it was abandoned perhaps 300 years ago.

There are two main groups of quarries near Robin Hood, one on Gardom's Edge and the other on Dobb Edge, each about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Inn. They are now well hidden

by trees, but accessible by paths leading down through the edges. All have massive screes of waste stone below them, testifying to their activity in bygone years: many are littered with uncut rock and partially finished stones.

The Gardom family came to Baslow in the early 1600s. Their farm covered most of the Barbrook valley and extended over to the Edge to include the old quarries. It is likely that these quarries were worked by the family and gave their name to Gardom's Edge. The Dobb family lived at Cliff Farm in Bubnell in the late 1600 and early 1700s. While there is no evidence to support the suggestion, it is reasonable to think that they had the quarries south of the Heathylea Brook, and gave their name to this Edge.

There were many other uses for the stone such as grindstones, building, gateposts, troughs etc. It seems that Robin Hood was not a major centre for such products, though local stonemasons were active there until well into the 1900s

Coal Mining at Robin Hood

Coal has been mined at Robin Hood since mediaeval times with coal fields both north and south of the road. It has been fully described by Jim Rieuwerts and John Barnett (*PDHS Bulletin 2016 vol 19 no 4, 2015: I acknowledge that much of the data below is based on this article*).

Baslow (or Rivelin) coal is one of the lowest seams of the main Derbyshire/Yorkshire coalfields, with outcrops in several areas near the Derwent valley edges. The boundaries of the Baslow coalfield is outlined in black on the map above, stretching from Moorside farm buildings in the north to Chatsworth Old Park near the Emperor Lake in the south. The outcrop is in general about 200 yards from the Edge itself. The seam dips down to the east.

It is not known when coal mining started. Initially they would have taken coal near the surface: later simple bellpits were enough. In due course this superficial coal was worked out, and more advanced methods were needed to reach the deeper coal further to the east.

The first records of coal mining date back to the early 1600s when leases were granted by the Duke of Rutland for getting coal in the area of Megwalls field. By this time, shafts were in use with tunnels needing pit props radiating from them. Even at



View from Birchen Edge towards Parkgate. The inn is bottom left. The old coal pits show up nicely in the morning sunshine.

Coal was mined up to and beyond the trees in the distance but the remains were cleared by farmers over 200 years ago.

Some can be seen close up from the concessionary footpaths from Robin Hood to Chatsworth

this depth, water was a problem and the records show that “soughs” or drainage tunnels were driven from the nearby Heathy Lea Brook. Slowly the area being mined moved further to the east, with deeper shafts needed to reach to coal.

South of the brook, the “Old Sough” was started in 1692. The adit or exit was downstream of the turnpike bridge. From here it coursed up beneath the Heathy Lea Brook to a point opposite the Inn where it turned south to reach the border with Chatsworth in 1764. This allowed mining at a much deeper level. Eventually the sough was extended over 400 yards into Chatsworth Old Park, draining the Chatsworth Coal Mines.

Some time after 1760, deeper mining was needed to reach the remaining coal. A key feature known at the time as the “47 foot shaft” was situated close to the north bank a field away from the Inn. In fact it was 71 feet deep. A leat brought water from higher up the brook to drive a waterwheel which powered pumps. These raised water to the 50 foot level where it discharged into the nearby Old Sough. From the base of the shaft a new “Deep Level” extended 300 yards or so towards Chatsworth, allowing mining of deeper coal east of the old workings.

There are no written records of mining north of the road. Remains on the ground suggest that there was major mineshaft just a few yards west of the Inn and connected to the turnpike by a short causeway. This dates it to later than 1759. Further shafts extended north along the line of the small valley above the inn - all would have been connected by a sough to the 47 foot shaft.

Production peaked in the 1790s with a rapid decline in the early 1800s. By 1830 little remained, though small quantities were mined over the following decades. There is a tradition that one of the mines was reopened in the 1st World War to provide coal for Paxton’s greenhouse at Chatsworth

The Mining Legacy

Most of the area affected by mining has been cleared away, very efficiently, by farmers and upgraded to agricultural land. However there are still areas where this has not happened. South of the Heathy Lea Brook opposite the Inn



This photograph taken in Moorside Farm shows the remains of an old coalmine shaft. The land is not suitable for crops, but is fine for pasture.

there are over fifty mounds many with central hollows marking old shafts that have caved in. There are similar features by the track leading up to Moorside Farm. Both can be seen from nearby footpaths. There are also larger features showing the position of the later, deeper shafts along the eastern border of the coalfield.

AGRICULTURE

Local residents would have been making use of the moors ever since the Bronze Age farmers left. At first they would have come up from Baslow. Then some would have stayed for the summer, then all the year round. Small plots of cultivation would have spread to the lower lying areas near the hamlet. Farming would have been combined with other occupations, such as getting coal, making millstones, or even work down in the village. The first indication of mediaeval farming, a method of cultivation called cross bedding, can be seen (with difficulty) in Megwalls field. Unfortunately this does not help much with dates.

Today much of the more accessible high ground is farmed, mainly grass but occasional cereal and root crops. There are no records of when this started. There was an increased need for food for the developing industrial cities in the late 1700s, a need exacerbated by the Napoleonic Wars, so probably most of the intake from the moors started about 1760. It is known that Chatsworth converted the Old Deer Park above the house to fields in the late 1700s. At least in Baslow parish, all of this intake was enclosed by walls by 1848, though conversion to farmland took longer. Almost all the fields we see today were already in place in 1848.

Taking in moorland was very hard work, and expensive. Any mining remains had to be levelled; open moorland had to be enclosed with stone walls; the ground had to be cleared of stones and boulders. The peaty soil was very acid, needing many cartloads of lime to neutralise it.

Moorside Farm and The Froggatt Family

Moorside Farm is and always has been the main farm at Robin Hood. It was well described in the 1848 Tithe Award with the map showing the 75 acres. There has been little change since. It covers most of the shelf of land uphill from the road. The part below the farmhouse was the old mining field. The upper part was originally taken in from virgin moorland.



Moorside.

All the fields belong to Moorside Farm. The Baslow coal field extended up to and just beyond the farmhouse in the distance. Most fields have been cleared, though there are mounds and hollows near the house in the foreground

The first known tenant was Samuel Froggatt. He was born in Calver 1721, married in 1752, and moved to Robin Hood where his first son was born in 1753. He came from a prominent family which had a large farm near the village centre. The family also had a long association with lead mining and smelting.

We don't know why he made this move. Perhaps he needed a place of his own, if he stayed in Calver he would have had to work for his grandfather and father for years before eventually inheriting the family farm; perhaps he took on responsibilities for the coal mining which was already taking place on his land; perhaps he had a

business in say Chesterfield (a nearby “farmer” was a well to do dealer with premises in London and Sheffield). But guesswork is not good history!

We also don't know the size or condition of the farm in the 1750s. At best it may have been a going concern, at worst an area of mining debris, a primitive farmhouse and unenclosed moorland.



Whether or not Samuel was involved other activities, at some point the family had to start making a living from the land. First some or all of the land had to be made fit for farming, as described above. There is a tradition in the family that they did this slowly over very many years, celebrating the completion of each field. These events were marked by inscribing the date on a stone near the gatepost. Two survive, one labelled 1853, the other 1861. Progress can be

judged by figures from 1848 Tithe Award Schedule, which recorded 15 acres of oats & wheat, 21 of pasture and meadow and 8 fallow: thirty three acres of heath remained. The clearance was never complete. Some fields, mainly those bordering the lane to the farmhouse, are still covered with mounds and hollows, a memory of a very different activity in the past.

Samuel Froggatt died in 1814, to be succeeded by his son Hezekiah (b 1763), then Benjamin (b1802), Hezekiah (b1886) and Benjamin (b1886). The latter died on the farm in 1971 at the age of 85. Five generations of Froggatts occupied Moorside for nearly 220 years. The farm continues as a going concern.

South of the road

Dobb Edge



Dobb Edge is the main feature across the photograph. The old millstone quarries are to the right of the gap. The some of fields above had earlier been part of the coalfield. Beyond is Gibbet Moor. Parkgate Farm is in the centre but hidden by trees.

The far fields upper right were part of the old Deer Park and later the site of Chatsworth coal field. The old road to Ashover came up through the gap to Parkgate and then on over the moors.

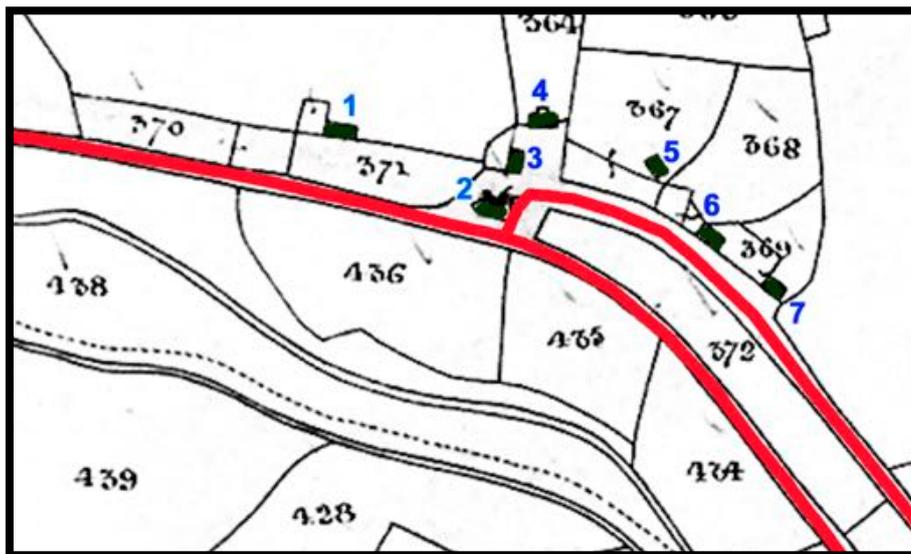
A Duke of Rutland Estate Map dated 1799 showed that most of the fields that exist today around Robin Hood, including all of the old coalfield, had been enclosed by 1799. A few extra enclosures were made later but there have been no significant changes since the 1848. Tithe Award of 1848 lists the tenant farmers on the fairly flat stretch of land above Dobb Edge. They include Thomas Savage the Innkeeper at Robin Hood, Edmund Marsden who had the land around his home at Parkgate and other tenants who resided in Baslow.

Farming continues today, with the land used for grazing sheep & cattle and for providing hay & silage. Some original fields are now woods.

THE ROBIN HOOD HAMLET

Robin Hood emerges from the past with no indication of its early history. The first definite evidence is in Parish records with entries dating from 1733 for people living at "Moorside". At the time this covered the whole area below Birchen Edge. Today Moorside refers only to the farm. Robin Hood is the small area of houses close to the Inn.

Robin Hood Hamlet based on 1848 Tithe Map



- 1 Robin Hood Farm (the house nearest to Baslow)
- 2 The Toll House near the road junction, now demolished
- 3 A building now demolished to the left of the entrance to the Inn
- 4 Robin Hood Inn
- 5 The homestead of the innkeeper, now demolished
- 6 The upper Robin Hood Farm, originally two cottages
- 7 A smaller building, next to the footpath to Birchen Edge, long demolished

The red lines are the turnpikes serving the area in 1848

The People & Houses of Robin Hood

The Froggatt family

The main Froggatt family lived at Moorside Farm, as described above. The lower Robin Hood Farm (No 1) was built in 1798 for Samuel's second son **Jason Froggatt**. Jason was a whitesmith - a tinsmith who also used other metals. He worked at home but later had a hardware business in Chesterfield. The house has been occupied by his family ever since.

The Savage family & The Inn

There has been a Savage family in Baslow since the early 1600s, but a definite family tree only starts with **John Savage**, born about 1720. By 1747 he was living at Moorside: we don't know when he or perhaps his parents came to live there. John was a farmer and a shepherd with status in the community. We know this because he was involved in producing the 1772 Shepherds Book, which describes in detail the sheep marks used by all the farmers in the Baslow.

The family homestead (No 5 and now demolished) was situated in the upper part of the present car park. It must have been in the family for generations: in 1848 it was occupied by **Thomas Savage** grandson of John. At the time the farm had 35 acres both north and south of the road. There were also a few fields south of the brook which can be identified today by the presence of the mining remains.

The Inn



The Robin Hood Inn

A welcome sight for tired walkers. The main door still has the name Charles Ollivant on the lintel. His homestead (farmhouse) was in the general car park to the right of the picture

A building on the site of the present Inn (No 6) is shown on all the early maps. There is no evidence that this or indeed any other building in the area had ever been an inn before 1848 though this is certainly a possibility. It was occupied in 1841 by a John Savage (not a farmer) who died in 1842. It seems that Thomas helped by his brother a baker then took the opportunity to create (or restore) an inn on the site, running it from his homestead next door. The 1851 census confirms him as Innkeeper and Farmer. He was assisted by his sister Hannah Ollivant. On his death he was succeeded by Hannah and then by her son Charles.

The Ollivant family

Charles Ollivant then his son Joseph and then his grandson Charles ran Inn and farm until the mid 1900s. When Charles died in 1963, the farm was broken up and the homestead demolished. The Inn retained some land. Fields north of the Inn became mini golf course used by customers of the Inn for several years. More fields immediately across the road from the entrance to the Inn car park are now used for overflow parking.

The Herrington and Kay families

The two other families lived in the hamlet, both at the upper Robin Hood Farm (No 6). The Herringtons were stone masons, and can be traced back to the late 1700s. In the late 1800s a Herrington married into the Froggatt family and went to live in the lower Robin Hood Farm.

John Kay lived at Clod Hall until the 1820s when he and his family were moved to Robin Hood. This remained their home until the early 1900s. They were mainly farmers and labourers. His eldest son George a stonemason was given a house on Eastmoor.

The Toll Bar

There have been two toll bars at Robin Hood, the original one was by the bridge over the Heathy Lea Brook $\frac{1}{4}$ mile downstream from the Inn. When the new road was built in 1824, it was moved to a new position on a triangle of land close to the Inn, where the "New" road to Chesterfield (1814) diverged from the "Old" road (1759). It remained in use until the tolls were abolished in 1878 and was demolished soon after. The triangle disappeared recently when the junction was pgraded

FEATURES NEAR ROBIN HOOD

The Three Men



The Three Men

This photo is from the north looking down the Derwent Valley. Chatsworth parkland in the background. The slightly raised edge of the Round Barrow is visible in the photograph.

The view is magnificent. On a good day you can see on the horizon the trees that mark the site of the barrow at Minninglow

The Three Men are cairns on the crest of Gardoms edge, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile north west of the Inn. There are two local stories about their origin. In the first a father and two sons were travelling from Baslow towards Chesterfield in a howling blizzard and perished "miserably" on this exposed and bleak spot. In the other version three clergymen from Yorkshire were returning home from a funeral in Eyam in 1740.

The weather deteriorated into a blizzard and they got lost. Two died, the third was still alive when found next morning. Versions of the story vary. Either way, it is said that the cairns were erected in their memory.

Equally interesting is the platform on which they were built. It is a Round Barrow, dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. Most of the original barrow has disappeared, but the base can be discerned as a slight raise around the cairns. These barrows were large structures used for burials, but they also had a symbolic purpose for the people living nearby. Its prominent position was intentional and at its original height would have been seen from miles around.

Nelson's Monument & The Three ships

Nelsons' famous victory in 1805 was a joyful event with commemorations around the country. His monument in Baslow was erected five years later in 1810 on the crest of Birchen Edge half a mile north of the Inn.. Its sponsor is not known, probably the Duke of Rutland, but according to local tradition it was carved and erected by two local stonemasons: Sampson Savage and George Herrington both of whom lived in Robin Hood. The latter left his initials "G H" at the base of the monument.

A hundred years later the battle was commemorated by Baslow villagers who were marched up to the monument to hold a service on the site. The event was repeated in 2005 but the walk was only from Robin Hood.



The Three Ships

Ever since Trafalgar, these rocks have been called The Three Ships.

Don't miss the names on the rocks – and check the spelling

The short grass below them provide an excellent place for a picnic: as a diversion you can watch the climbers on the cliffs below Nelson's Monument.

Behind the monument are three large rocks or tors. By some quirk of geology they were left standing when all the surrounding ground was eroded away. These natural features have been named The Three Ships and complement the monument by having carved onto them the names of three of Nelson's ships.

Victory

Defiance

Royal Soverin

Megwalls

Megwalls is the old name for the field between Gardoms Edge and Moorside Farm. The boundary wall marks the outcrop of the Baslow Coal. The farmland to the east used to be the coalfield where all old features have been destroyed by mining or cleared by the Froggatts. Megwalls was spared and as a result it is full of archaeological interest.

A public footpath crosses the field. Within yards of the bottom style, there are remains of the 1759 turnpike including the original culvert over a small stream.

Close by is a group of deep hollow ways, the original mediaeval road from Baslow to Chesterfield. Higher up is the old trackway curving across to Moorside Farm. In this area, difficult to see, are traces of cross bedding the remains of mediaeval field cultivation. Further on, nearer the edge and hidden in bracken, is a Bronze Age Stone Circle. Near the top and close to the footpath are a group of stone mounds, probably clearance mounds of stone unwanted and piled in heaps when the area was first cultivated perhaps 4000 years ago.

Catstones

This is an outcrop of rock, prominent at the top of Megwalls field. The name is interesting and probably very old but there are no clues about its origin.

Cupola

Cupola is a small group of houses in the valley of the Bar brook on the A621 road out of Baslow to Owler Bar. It is only a mile from Robin Hood with a good connecting footpath between them. There had long been lead smelting in the valley. In 1760 it was the site of a new cupola, a state of the art lead smelting facility which displaced the older smelters nearby. It used coal which must have come from Robin Hood. The cupola buildings have been very carefully demolished.

Heathy Lea Mill

The mill is on the Heathy Lea Brook a ½ mile below Robin Hood. In the early 1600s it was used for smelting lead. Later it was a corn mill before being converted to a saw mill in the 1860s. It is now holiday accommodation.

Parkgate Farm

Today Parkgate is an isolated Chatsworth Estate house well hidden by trees half a mile south of Robin Hood. In pre-turnpike days it was a cross roads. An important long distance route came up from Baslow through Dobb Edge to Parkgate before continuing over the moors to Ashover and on to Nottingham. It crossed the local road from Chatsworth to Sheffield as it came out of the old Deer Park, thus the name Park Gate.

The name appears on Senior's map of Chatsworth map dated 1617. By 1723 it was a dwelling occupied by Edmund Marsden. A local resident remembered it as The Horns Inn, a detail confirmed by a court record which showed that it was given a victuallers licence in 1760. Once the turnpikes were established, the inn would have lost much of its custom except perhaps from coal miners and travellers reluctant to pay the toll. The Marsden family remained at Parkgate, developing the farm which they occupied until well into the 1900s.

Newbridge Farm



This was the site of a small coal mine in the 1700s & early 1800s. By the time of the Tithe Award of 1848, it was called Moss Farm. Later it became Newbridge Farm.

The “New” bridge over the nearby Blackleash brook was part of the 1759 turnpike. It replaced an older bridge upstream.

Clod Hall

Clod Hall is on the road from Curbar Gap to Wadshelf. Before the turnpikes came in 1759, it was at the meeting point of 5 roads, from Dronfield, Chesterfield, Chatsworth, Baslow and Curbar, and is marked by the mediaeval Wibbersley Cross. There was early lead smelting in the area especially at the nearby Hare Edge

In 1824 the Duke of Rutland took ownership of the moors which he developed for grouse shooting. At the time it was occupied by the Kay family. He moved them to Robin Hood, and installed James Grant a gamekeeper. Born in Scotland, he must have learned his trade on one of the highland estates.

Today

By the 1700s, the millstone industry failed, and later the coal ran out. Agriculture spread on the lower slopes while the moors were managed for grouse shooting. The hamlet became quieter. With no further development, traces of earlier activities remain spread across the ground, enhancing the experience of walkers, climbers and tourists who come from miles away to enjoy Robin Hood, the Inn and the countryside.

And the road is as busy as ever, especially heavy goods traffic. Some things never change

Nelson’s Monument, overlooking Robin Hood and Moorside Farm

