

including School Lane to Hassop

Wheatlands Lane is the minor road from Baslow to Hassop. It starts at West End in Baslow and heads in a westerly direction between the old council houses. It soon reaches open farmland, passing Bubnell cliff Farm on the left before turning briefly north for 200 metres then west again. Further on the summit of the hill marks the boundary of Baslow & Bubnell parish. At this point the road enters Hassop Parish and is called School Lane. It descends round the southern end of Bank Wood with Oxpasture Farm and the old Hassop School House on the right, crosses a small stream and joins Hassop Avenue a short distance from the Eyre Arms, a total distance of three kilometres.

a. The name

There are six fields (1848 Tithe Award) north of the upper part of Wheatlands Lane containing the field name Wheatlands. John Marsden 1653-1730 was publican at the Peacock Inn and also farmer at "Whitlands". This suggests that his homestead was near these fields. There is no trace of it today though a barn in the area may possible mark the spot. It is likely that the lane got its name from the farm, and that wheat was grown in the area around the early 1700s.

b. The Traffic

Today the road is little used. In earlier times, before the 1759 Turnpike, it was one of the two roads between Baslow and its market town of Bakewell (the other was through Pilsley and Ball Cross). It was also one of a network of long distance cross-country routes from east to west. The fact that it became one of the first Turnpikes, shows that the route must have been important and well used, providing one of the options between Cheshire (and its salt) & Lancashire, and Chesterfield & the east.

c. Early Routes

The only physical trace of the early Baslow to Hassop road is a pair of holloways east of Oxclose farm coursing diagonally up through the wood towards the crest of the ridge.

The public footpath from the (old) Baslow Bridge marks part of the boundary between Baslow and Bubnell. It also provides a direct route from the bridge to the straight upper part of Wheatlands Lane. It could well be the fossilised remains of the original mediaeval road.

d. The Turnpike

Roads in Britain in the 1700s were bad and getting worse because of increasing industrial and social activity. Improvements started with the creation of Turnpike Trusts, which raised the money and received income from tolls on traffic on their roads.

The first near Baslow was the 1739 Turnpike from Chesterfield to Bakewell via Chatsworth and Edensor. This was followed by the 1759 Chesterfield to Hearnshaw Lane Head (near Peak Forest) Trust, which had two branches. One was through Curbar Gap and Stoney Middleton, the other was through Baslow and Great Longstone, part of which was Wheatlands Lane.

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In general the new Turnpike, now Wheatlands Lane followed the route of the old road. There were two diversions, both to achieve easier inclines. The first was from Bubnell Lane up to (near) Bubnell Cliff Farm. The other was from the summit at the Parish boundary down to (near) Oxpastures Farm.

e. Later Developments

Initially it must have been fairly busy. Competition came in 1801 with the opening of the Baslow Bakewell turnpike. Later long distance travellers from Chapel in the Frith and Tideswell preferred the alternative road through Stoney Middleton to Baslow. Wheatlands Lane became the minor road for local traffic that we know today. But Baslow is still busy with long distance traffic.

David Dalrymple-Smith

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