

Parkgate

Parkgate is in a little known corner south east of Baslow. It is high above Chatsworth Edge, nestling below the edge of Gibbett Moor, and not far from the lakes above Chatsworth. Surrounded by trees, it is invisible from every direction. Despite its isolated position, Parkgate in its time must have been a place of some significance. It has always been in Baslow Parish and was the property of the Duke of Rutland until 1824 when ownership passed to the Duke of Devonshire.

It is marked on the map made in 1617 by William Senior for the first Earl of Devonshire. It is at a cross roads, where the road from Chatsworth to Dronfield leaves the old Deer Park (the name means the gate or way from the Park) and the ancient "main road" from Baslow over the moors to Chesterfield and Ashover. There is an old tradition that The Hornes Inn stood at this crossroads, confirmed recently by the finding that it was issued with a licence in 1760.

Nearby at Dobb Edge there were quarries producing millstones and other products. Chatsworth colliery was even closer, a series of shafts drained by a sough (tunnel) over a mile long leading north to the Heathy Lea Brook near Robin Hood. Another feature of interest was the gibbet in the crest of the hill above the farm, giving its name to Gibbett Moor. Industrial activity was fading away by 1800

Parish records list inhabitants at Parkgate going back as far as 1594 when there is note of the death of Frances son of Edward Sanderson. Over the next 125 years there are a births and deaths from a dozen different families. Robert Stafford an educated man and an auditor of Chatsworth accounts died there in 1703: Edmund Marsden a member of a leading Baslow family came to live there in the 1720s probably as Innkeeper. These were both men of substance in the village, suggesting that the (main) building there was more than a peasant's dwelling.

From the 1720s continuity was provided by the Marsden family. Six generations lived there. The last Edmund died in 1866 and the farm passed to his daughter Mary Ann (married name Fearn) who carried on as a widow until her death in the early 1900s. Her successor was Henry Bark

They saw the arrival on the turnpike roads in the late 1700s, a blow that drastically reduced their trade. Quarrying and coal mining disappeared by 1800 leaving the Inn isolated with little custom. Inevitably it had to close. The Marsdens became farmers, helping to "take in" open moorland for grazing and crops. By the mid 1900s Parkgate could no longer support a household, so nearby farmers took over the fields. The farm was 13 acres in 1824, rising to 49 acres in 1848. The land is now managed by Chatsworth. The house, hidden away and off the beaten track, is virtually unknown. It is leased to a Chatsworth employee.

David Dalrymple-Smith

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