

NB see my article on Robin Hood (dds)

I enjoyed the article by Rieuwerts and Barnatt on “Coal Mining in the Peak District ‘s Eastern Uplands”, especially the part that described the Baslow Coalfield. As a very amateur local historian I can add a few further details.

To summarise the Baslow or Ringinglow coal seam lies above the Chatsworth Grit, and outcrops at several places above the Derwent Valley, including at Robin Hood. The outcrop is a short distance from the Edge itself. The coal field extends from above Moorside Farm southwards into Chatsworth Old Park. The more superficial coal nearer the Edge has been mined since medieval times. Deeper mining further east came later.

The Duke of Rutland was the Lord of the Manor of Baslow, owning Robin Hood and its the coalfield. In 1824 the Dukes of Rutland and Devonshire “Exchanged Lands” enabling the Duke of Devonshire to extend his Park. At the same time the 1759 Turnpike road was re-routed north of the Heathy Lea brook. This new road now the A619 became the northern border of Chatsworth estate.

Samuel Froggatt (1721 to 1814) was the eldest son of a prominent Calver family. He married in 1752 and by 1753 was living at Moorside near Robin Hood. He was tenant of Moorside farm probably on arrival, but this cannot be confirmed until 1848.

The 1848 Title Award Map & Schedule shows the fields in the area and their owners. Moorside Farm covered all the coal workings north of the road except for a few deep shafts to the east. Part of the wall to the west of the farm followed the outcrop of the coal seam as shown by Rieuwerts in his article. The small stream flowing down to Robin Hood Inn and the turnpike road marked the east and south limits of the farm.

In addition the farm had two areas not covered by this description. The first is a small extension across the small stream close to the Robin Hood Inn: this includes the short causeway from the 1759 turnpike to two large shafts. The second is a single field south of the road named in the Tithe Award as Engine Close: this field, immediately south of the Inn and close to the main brook, is the “47 foot shaft.

The coalfield south of the Heathy Lea Brook was drained by two soughs, as shown on a 1832 map commissioned by the Duke of Devonshire. The old sough, started in the 1690s, eventually reached well into Chatsworth. The Deep sough, more to the east, met the old sough at the 47 foot shaft but at a lower level. (NB it was south of the road, so became Chatsworth property after the 1824 Exchange). The shaft was equipped with a water wheel and pumps to raise the water into the old sough, which then discharged into the brook 600 metres downstream.

The waterwheel was installed after 1784, the date was first suggested in a document by Robert Marsden dated 1784

The shafts or mines close to the Robin Hood Inn would have needed drainage. The obvious solution was to the Old Sough, just over 100 metres away and significantly lower than the Heathy Lea Brook. The tenancy connection between the post 1759 mine shafts, the 47 foot shaft and Moorside farm suggests that the north was responsible for the shaft and its expensive pumping arrangements, and that the

sough was at the deep level. If so it would have extended north to dewater the shafts further up the small valley above the Inn. Perhaps at the start or maybe later the Deep Level from the south made use of the 47 foot shaft. Of course other scenarios are possible.

It is tempting to think that the Duke of Rutland had plans in the 1750s for developing the coal mines, north and south of the road to supply a new cupola in the Barbrook valley, and for using the proposed turnpike for moving more coal to users in the area. Samuel Froggatt arrived at Moorside a few years before the 1759 turnpike, to take over (probably) a farm littered with of coalmining remains. Perhaps his early responsibility was to coal mining rather than farming.

It is relevant to note that the lead smelting cupola in the Barbrook valley was commissioned about 1760. There is a reasonable track to Robin Hood, and it must have relied on the mines here for its coal supply.

Later

Production peaked in the 1790s with a rapid decline in the early 1800s. By 1830 little remained and large scale mining ceased, though small quantities were mined over the following decades. Coal authority records (John Barnett PDMHS newsletter 2020) show that it was reopened briefly in 1912 with 5 workers underground. 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.

Other

There was active mining in 1735: a Baslow farmer paid his rent partly in cash and partly in loads of coal.

The paper mentions several other Baslow residents.

Christopher Gardom - coal pit rents 1641 etc. He came to the village in the early 1600s, probably direct to Yeld Farm which later became the family home for many generations. The farm included the Gardom Edge quarries, suggesting that he was involved in the Millstone business.

Robert Marsden (prob of Heathy Lea) proposals for Baslow Colliery in 1786

There were three generations of Robert Marsden in Baslow. The first (1725 to 1787) may have been the miller at Heathy Lea. His son was born in 1763, and his grandson in 1789. The last was definitely the miller at Heathy Lea Mill.

Edward Boler (Bowler) lived in a farm at Nether End. He died in 1764

And, irrelevant to coal, Robert Dobb and his son John lived in Bubnell Cliff Farm between 1660 to 1730.

References to the Bulletin of the Peak District Mines Historical Society Ltd. "Mining History" Vol 19 No. 4. Winter 2015,

Timeline

- 1628 Note of rent for Colepit Pasture
- 1636 John Woodhouse of Crich. Grant to work coal. "pit props involved"
suggestion sough
- 1642 John Woodhouse & Christopher Gardom rent £10 biannually
- 1646 Woodhouse & Gardom sough
- 1650 – 60 ? coal north of the road worked out
- 1673 Lease to James Bretland of Dronfield. Mention of sough
- 1692 Permission to James Bretland to dig a sough
- 1692 James Bretland dig a sough
- 1692 Old sough started
- 1714 Sough near or at Chatsworth Park boundary (report to barker)
- 1759 Toll to Calver Lime Kiln Works reduced
- 1764/5 Edward Bowler working Baslow Moor
- 1780s Deep level started
James Herrington interviewed
- 1786 Robert Marsden Proposed buildings, and water lifted by waterwheel into
old sough
- 1790 Probably most active period of mining
- 1811 Farey Waterwheel present
- 1832 map workings 720 yards, including 460 yards into Old Park
- 1873 Trial working (failed)
- 1873 Report by Coke : (sough) seam worked in 3 periods, early, 1790 and 1830
- 1914 Hearsay – mine opened in 1st World War

Further Notes

- Coke Report - shaft - 71 ft, pumpway level - 50ft
- Coal overlies Chatsworth Grit
- Early name of north mining area Maggwalls
- Early mining described as "Close spaced shafts"
- In north coal extends 500 yards then end at a fault
- Comments by George Herrington (from his father)
- pumps driven by waterwheel
 - Level to stream downstream (The Old Sough tail)

Notes on Baslow Coal

Water lifted 7 yards from the Deep Level

South 66 to 85 hillocks + more in improved fields . 25 to 29 shafts further south

Remains buildings, sough bank east of turnpike bridge

Sough tail 1692 sough, north bank west of turnpike bridge

Chatsworth mines (near Park Gate) closed probably before 1811