

Today's Journey

YOULGREAVE, MIDDLETON BY YOULGREAVE, MONYASH

We had toyed with the idea of going to Ashbourne to see our grand daughter but had put that off because the family had mentioned shopping at Chesterfield, so we decided to go to Chelmorton Flagg area. We got the 6.1 out of Matlock towards Bakewell. Matlock is very busy right now with a new road by passing the town being constructed. So if you know Matlock on a good Summers day without the hold ups, and just the roundabout you can imagine the traffic jams being caused. I was glad I wasn't called in for Statute Duty. The Surveyor of the Highways would have to find a substitute if I had been.

The driver manoeuvres carefully around cyclists in Darley Dale risking life and limb on a busy A6 while across the broad valley on the hillside the sleepy hamlet of Stanton Lees looks on, far from the madding crowd. Who had all gone to Bakewell to escape the chaos in Matlock.

We had a good half hour or so to wait for our connection and it was going to be tricky trying to stay out of the shops, especially when Patricia noticed a sale at the first shop we pass after getting of the bus.

"It's going to be hot today, we need to stock up on water, " I said. We go to a shop where supplies of the stuff have virtually run out. We look for a bowser. All this is nicely making the seconds tick away. There is another shop I tell her at the far end of town that sells water. Finally we have our H2O and to prove I am not entirely rotten, I buy her TWO gluten free cakes. I don't know what she wanted in the sale but it would have cost the earth in comparison and you would not have been able to eat it. No this was the better option I told her. She would thank me later I said.

Bakewell was full of tourists, cameras pointing, shoppers toiling and chuntering about how late the buses were. A cavalcade of bridesmaids walked from the Registrars Office to the flower bedecked gardens near the roundabout and surrounded the latest Mr and Mrs legally fashioned at Bakewell.

As we sat waiting for the bus, now ten minutes late the old Red Lion faces us. The Bakewell Pudding shop beckons us, the smell of chips wafts in the air. Our bus leaves or should have at twelve o'clock, a bad time gastronomically. It is now twenty minutes late. A couple waiting for the Castleton bus are told they are at the wrong stop. They scurry, bags and all around the corner. Panic ensues, are we in the wrong place as well. I recheck sign, timetable board and book. No this is the right place.

Had we been here in 1857 and it seemed like it, we could have gone up the road to the square block of the Rutland Arms and ask coach proprietor **William GREAVES** for a coach and horse.

The "Enterprise" coach left from here, in the Summer season only but only at six in the afternoon, the mail coach had left at eleven thirty in the morning so we had just missed that connection.

Soon we are thirty five minutes late, the crowd has grown to a considerable number. Finally a bus turns up. A cheer goes up, reminiscent to the one Jonny Wilkinson got at Chesterfield when he kicked the winning points in Rugby's World Cup. Unfortunately for us, it wasn't our

bus. I call Patricia back and soon we have the bus shelter and the street to ourselves. Nearly fifty minutes later the Youlgreave bus turns up. So that is where we go. We have given up on the Chelmorton journey.

We now have to travel back towards Matlock catching a glimpse of Haddon Hall through the beech hedge that borders the property. We turn right at Picory Corner and wend our way up the road past Alport. This pretty hamlet was the home in 1829 of **Francis and James KENWORTHY**, the former a papermaker and the latter a dyer. A **James KENWORTHY** makes an appearance in the burial register of Youlgreave in 1869, he is described as of Youlgreave aged 88. **Elizabeth BREWER** of Alport also was buried at Youlgreave she was 83 when she departed Alport in October 1863. We to depart Alport and head on towards Youlgreave. Here, just outside the church one of the locals when getting of the bus is told to go straight home.

"Ah" he says.

"When thes had a gallon eh" someone calls out. The passenger says nothing but heads straight to the pub.

The last time we were here the weather was freezing. Today it is the opposite. We go right through the village as far as the bus will take us.

When we get off Patricia mentions we have passed a shop near the Church.

"We're not going that way" I explain.

"I need some water" she replies, "I drank it waiting for the Chelmorton bus".

It really is hot and so we walk back through the village watching people sat at tables outside the Farmyard pub. The tower of the church dominates the skyline.

Just as we get to the shop the shopkeeper comes out and starts to lock up. Patricia says she only wants some water and the man kindly opens up and sells her the precious stuff. As he was closing there was not time for her to look around the rest of the shop. So some good things can happen after all I thought.

Leaving the village towards Coldwell End, home to **Isabella DALE** until her death aged just six in 1885 we walk the slight incline passing the paved way called King Street. It must have been all of two slabs wide, like a pavement, but hardly a street. I don't know which King it was named after, but calling it a street it must have been Joe King.

We stop and eat and drink, Patricia enjoys her cakes and we both admire the view looking back towards Stanton. Soon it is time to leave Youlgreave and head into the unknown.

Leaving Youlgreave on our right is an allotment which should win hands down the "Youlgreave in bloom" competition. Not for it's flowers but for the colourful array of garden furniture it displays.

Orange garden sheds, blue water butts, white benches, green plastic sheeting, yellow bamboo canes and rusty zinc panels all surrounded by typical limestone walls, with a backdrop of a summer blue sky with fluffy white clouds it can't fail to win.

We now come to a junction, one road to Monyash the other to Middleton by Youlgreave.

Monyash is some six miles away, at this point uphill and no pavement at the side of the road. Middleton is downhill from where we stand and gets the nod.

The road turns one way then the other between ivy clad walls. Pavement on one side only.

Patricia says she remembers the place although we have never been here before. She insists she knows it. Then it comes to her. Round here are some tall cliffs where a woman so distressed at losing her lover threw herself off. Her voluminous dress acted as a parachute and she was saved.



"That's Stoney Middleton" I tell her. Another place we have not been to, although gone through on many occasions.

She ponders over the fact that there is also a Middleton by Wirksworth.

" Why do we have to have so many Middletons, it's confusing, there should just be one".

That would leave you with two Wirksworths and a new place called Stoney I tell her.

No wonder people get lost she says.

I check the back of her ear to make sure her postcode is still legible.

Turning the corner a series of kerbstones each carry a part of a story about soggy dogs in the dale. How many hikers have walked up that road to walk back down again to read the full inscription?

The sign says Middleton by Youlgreave and we are greeted on our left by a flourishing meadow with pink, purple, white and yellow flowers all competing with feathery grass. In the distance stark against the dark green of the trees stands the skeleton of a thunderstruck tree. On our right a wheat field shining white in the sun for as far as the eye can see. Four sheep have a large field to themselves but they are huddled together in the middle of the field. It can't be to keep warm then I hear one say that he was in Stoney Houghton last week.

"Isn't that where a woman threw herself of a cliff but her dress saved her" said one.

"No that's Stoney Middleton" said another .

"There's to many Stoneys they all agreed.

The sheep have a distant view of rolling hills and fields as shorn as they have been, with the farmers busy gathering in the hay. Tractors and trailers working long hours as farm hands drive them through twisting narrow country lanes.

The road into Middleton is bordered by moss covered limestone walls the stones of which nestle haphazardly as if the first one stopped suddenly and the rest crashed into one another.

We walk alongside the walls of long barns of Castle Farm edging the pavement. Set back of the road and in a hollow is a house with a chimney stack in the middle of its roof top. Small mullioned windows either side of the stack like two welcoming eyes look out over a cottage garden.

Across the road pinned to a tree outside the Village Hall a poster proudly declares on behalf

of the Social Club that there is to be a Musical Afternoon of "Songs through the Years" with a Soloist and a Guitarist. As "everyone" is welcome it is to be hoped that on the fourth of September they have plenty of tea and biscuits as advertised.

The road sweeps around a gentle corner and we get a further glimpse of this very charming village. It is very quiet yet it seems very busy with people popping up everywhere making the most of a very warm day.

Tiny cottages with large tiles, doors half way up walls with no steps to them, ornate chimneys like lego blocks perch on each end of the roof and each property has a limestone wall fronting its garden. These particular cottages look out onto fields that slope gently down to and merges with the wood.

The rectangular block that was once the Congregational Chapel built in 1826 now looks to be a private residence with trellis and hanging baskets adorning the doorway.

Moses HODGKINSON of Middleton however was entered in the Winster Primitive Methodist Roll Book of 1896, later to move to Derby. Also attached to Winster PM was **Harriott** the daughter of **John Joseph Beard** and **Dorothy SWINDELL**. The register does not make it clear if Beard is his surname but in 1849 he was a carrier of Stockport, after Dorothy name is Middleton by Youlgreave.

The farm across the road, one of many in the village it seems had a smithy as recorded on the Ordnance survey map 1923.

It also records finds of Roman keys and coins urns and human remains. Much no doubt found by **BATEMANS. William** and **Thomas** spent years digging up barrows and finding artefacts. It is a pity that most of the stuff is in Sheffield and not in its native Derbyshire, although I don't suppose either of these places existed when these chaps walked the hills carrying urns and keys.

At the side of the road there is an old seat that looks like a railway sleeper on legs. Unfortunately one leg is bigger than the other but as the road slopes it compensates for the discrepancy and sits level. The only problem is that the right hand bit is about four inches of the ground so a tad uncomfortable. It must be in competition with Bradbourne bench.

As we walk round the village we can see that it is somewhere special, a really quaint Derbyshire village, to us it was like discovering a different Rowthorne. A village left in time.

There are no pubs, no grocers or butchers. In fact only one art shop. Still it has the customary red old fashioned telephone box to make contact with the outside world.

There's a "square" of sorts surrounded by long buildings on one side, rows of cottages on another, houses covered in ivy and climbing roses. Cornflower and tall daisies thrive in other gardens peeking over the stone walls.

Down the lane leading to Smerrill stands Green Croft Farm opposite the small church the roof of which is decked with ornate tiles, unlike some other older buildings that have roofs that could become the next "big ride" at any theme park undulating from left to right like the sea of Cape Horn.

We are totally captivated by the place. Had we not missed the bus we may never had discovered such a peaceful place as this is.

In 1829 it may have been a little noisier as farmers **Joseph ALSOP**, **Francis BUXTON** **George CHARLTON**, **Thomas LYGO** and **Michael FROST** probably drank a pint or two at **Mary LOWE'S** described as a victualler. **Stephen SHAW** and **John HOWE** were shopkeepers.

They have long since gone and another long since departed was **John BUXTON**, who was buried in Youlgreave in 1822 aged 82. Others from Middleton also buried at Youlgreave were **Alice Annie TWIGG** an infant in 1876. **James NORMANSHAW** was 89 when he was buried in 1819 and **Mary BUXTON** was buried in 1865 aged 84.

On the road back from Green Croft Farm back into the village is a memorial to the crew of a Wellington bomber that crashed in January of 1944 at Smerrill. The six named were all with the R.A.A.F. The youngest was Sgt **T.D. MURTON** aged 19. **K..J PERETT** was the Flight Officer aged 27 as were Flg Sgts **F.P. DESHON** and **W.T.BARNES**. Flight Sgt **J. KYDD** was 26 and Flt Sgt **L.G. EDMONDS** 25.

The road sign informs us we are some six miles from Bakewell going back the way we came and twelve miles from Ashbourne. The sun is getting ever warmer and we have miles to go. We take a walk back into the village for one last look before we must press on. To our amazement our grand daughter is sitting in her pushchair in someone's garden! Her mum comes out of the cottage and can't believe we are in Middleton. They are visiting grandmother. We had no idea where grandmother lived. All of a sudden about four others come out of the cottage. You must have a drink. Patricia can't believe by not going to Ashbourne she still manages to see her grand daughter. Only dad went to Chesterfield. Out comes the cake, carrot cake, coffee cake, lemon cake, plates of the stuff. Very nice as well. Well for me it was. I like gluten !

We must have been there an hour, our plans have now changed, but thankfully we are offered a lift part way. We insist we have to walk some of the way to Monyash but on the way stop of to visit Arbor Low.

Leaving Middleton sitting at the seven hundred foot mark we pass Middleton Hall, or at least the drive entrance. Here Prince Charles and Diana spent time together during happier days. We finally arrive at the rough lane that leads to Arbor Low on Middleton Common. Arbor Low is a stone circle situated over one thousand two hundred feet above sea level. From up here the views are extensive, looking for miles into the distance with hardly a sign of habitation except the occasional farms. The fields are a mixture of differing shades of greens and yellows. The wind blows hard up here, but on a cold day I would imagine even the woolly mammoth wouldn't venture out without a top coat. There must be about thirty to forty large limestone boulders or stones lying flat although they ought to have been upright if they were meant to be like Stonehenge.

Maybe the circle was an ancient version of musical chairs where one stone at a time was pushed over until the winner was found. The chap blowing the rams horn said he was out of breath and as it took a lot of time to pick the "chairs" up again they went of to play some easier games like hunt the mammoth which they enjoyed immensely and were very good at because there are no mammoths on Middleton Moor today.

Arbor Low farm was the birthplace we were told of one **Nelson PURSEGLOVE**. I can't help thinking, that like his illustrious namesake he put his telescope to his eye and said "I see no mammoth".

The farm house is a small building with plenty of additional outbuildings around it. At the entrance to the farm is a tin where visitors are asked to donate a pound to visit the earthworks if not you may get pecked to death by the black hen that roams at will in the farmyard.

Arbor Low farm is actually called Upper Oldhams Farm on the ordnance survey maps.

We retrace our steps on start our trek to Monyash. Its a long straight road as we step out feet firmly entrenched in Middleton and Smerrill but the cows and sheep over the roadside wall in Monyash and a few moments later we are in Hartington Middle Quarter as the three parish boundaries meet. Not far from here near a lay by is a circular stone, about two and a half feet high with an engraving carved all around it on four levels. So we spent half an hour walking round it trying to decipher what is said. Something about "One day ..your caravan....will you.." After staggering round it like a couple of inebriates we gave up. As we now approach the road that turns right to Monyash the view before us takes in Parsley Hay, Cycle Hire Capital of the High Peak Trail which is just down the road. Parsley Hay Farm just up the road is now called Moscar Farm. At this junction but below ground are the remains of an old Roman Road which cuts across the fields. Not where we are going..

As we turn right and walk up a gentle slope on our left are the remains of Benty Grange which at one time must have been a substantial place. In 1857 **John CRITCHLOW** and **William BAINBRIDGE** both farm from there. The farm sits on the horizon between rows of trees either side of it. It's a long building with one end slightly higher than the other two

thirds. The barns nearby are without roof and the zinc sheeting covering the other barns and sheds now are rusting. The door to the house is blue and the window frames surrounding eight panes in each frame look a pale green. One chimney stands central, and one appears to be at the end of the left house eave. The roof of the older part of the house is still intact, but worse for wear, the odd hole and the ridge tiles sagging near the right hand end after many years holding on against wind and rain in this exposed landscape. Benty Grange lies in Hartington Middle Quarter. Just. The next field after it is in Monyash, and we cross the border without any bother which is lucky because we have left our passports at home.

As we enter Monyash parish, others have left and are to be found in Youlgreave churchyard. In 1824 the eighty five year old **John WEBSTER** made the journey from Monyash as did **Jane BLACKWALL** one year earlier, aged just twelve.

The road down the hill into Monyash is bordered with grass verges on which cornflower and on an outcrop of limestone a rare patch of heather.

Highlow farm, set back on the hillside on our left is partially hidden behind trees but the long winding track picks it out. Beyond and just on the horizon the farm of Middle Street peeks out and like Benty Grange only a limestone wall separates it from Monyash it also being in the Middle Quarter of Hartington. In 1820 **George BUNTING** of Middle Street was buried at Monyash aged eighty. Not to far away there is a Street House Farm and Monyash registers also record a High Street, there is and we can see Middle Street Farm, so possibly there was a Lower Street, Street House and Middle Street are both close to the course of the Roman Road. Is that where they get their names?



The sky is now dotted with cotton wool clouds, some slightly darker edged than others but it is still warm. A couple of hikers walk by. We smile knowing they have the climb and we have the descent.

Patricia tries hard to communicate with the cows chewing in the field below Highlow Farm. She does not seem to get much of a response. I tell her that they are well mannered and do not want to talk with their mouths full, either that, or they don't understand English, they are Friesian after all.

As we look on the vast open spaces before us, with few buildings, the sun shining the fields looking at their near best we wonder what it would be like in a harsh winter with all traces of paths lost under the snow. There are trees up here, but large gaps between them, and in the face of a blizzard it would certainly be a grim place. In 1772 **John ALLCOCK** a blacksmith and **Richard BOHAM** a baker of Winster were both buried on February 5th at

Monyash. A note in the register states that "these two men were starved to death in coming from Winster of Middleton Common".

Also buried here were husband and wife **Richard** and **Mary PALFREYMAN**. She in 1764 and Richard in 1768. Both were from Middleton by Youlgreave. Locals included **Elizabeth DUNN** in 1818 aged 36, and **William ASHMORE** who was buried in 1822 aged eighty one. In 1772 **Turner** son of **Robert LOMAS** the minister of Monyash was buried. Four years later **Robert** would also be dead.

On the 17th May 1781 **Abraham** and **James BERRESFORD** signed their names as assessors of the Monyash Land Tax. **James BERRESFORD** was to collect it. The **BOWMANS** of One Ash Grange which can be approached along the nicely named Milkings Lane were the highest payers The **BOWMANS** were of the Quaker persuasion. Others named on the Land Tax included **Thomas INGLESANT** assessed at a penny ha'penny. **Ralph WILGOOSE** paid eight and a half pence, **Henry SLACKE** was assessed at shilling and Thomas NEEDHAM at eight pence and one farthing. There are over fifty entries covering Monyash so **Jimmy BERRESFORD** had his work cut out having to collect the seventeen pounds one shilling and four pence that was the sum total of the Land Tax of the Monyash inhabitants.

We walk into the village proper and turn down a small cut through by passing the main road that swings around by the green covered village pond. The walk takes us through the churchyard where a headstone to **William HAWLEY** who it seems died in 1855 is situated at the edge of the path. The place name looks like Summerhill, which is a farm in the area, but the stone is slightly eroding so it is difficult at this distance to make out.

The green seems even today to have the main concentration of folks around it. At a shop selling ice cream, drinks and meals and around the pub is where most of the hikers and bikers have gathered.

Robert BAGSHAW was licensee of the Bulls Head in 1829 and he may still be the same one in 1857. The Bulls Head is a house with a taller extension, seemingly just as old next to it. It is bedecked with floral hanging baskets. We don't go in because we fear missing the



last bus.

We sit on the bench awaiting its arrival, the faded red phone box nearby looks like it has been painted in a pink undercoat but the letter box shining bright "letterbox red " got the top coat instead.

The Green is full of people laughing and joking, enjoying themselves as they sit on the green, other sit at "picnic" tables outside the cafe cum shop. The clothing making it seems like a rainbow on the move as one by one they seem to leave the village.

We eye the road to Flagg and Chelmorton where we should have been going. That will wait until another day.

Patricia has one more journey to make. This bus will take us to Bakewell, but then we have to get one into Matlock. She thought this would be the last one.

Down the road from us is the entrance to Lathkill Dale, which starts off well then gets a bit rocky before becoming easier again. Near here is Parsons Tor where the previously mentioned **Robert LOMAS**, the minister, fell to his death. One Ash Grange sits above the dale.

Looking the another way is the road back to Bakewell and the turn off to Sheldon and the Magpie mine. The tall chimney we had seen on the horizon as we came down the hill into Monyash.



Directly behind us a row of stone built cottages is half covered in ivy, the top windows looking like a row of waffles peeking through it. Across the road from the Bulls Head and separated by the village green with its war memorial and what would seem to be an old market cross is the Monyash School. Across from the school and on the edge of the green is a modern glass covered bus shelter with someone waiting for a bus. This is worrying. Where exactly is the bus stop, are there two both going to Bakewell by different routes ? We ask the girl waiting for the bus if this is where we catch the bus to Bakewell.

"I think so" she says.

"What is that stop over there" I ask.

"Don't know, all I know is I got the bus to Bakewell here last time " .

We wait there and sure enough a bus with a number not what we were expecting turns up. Destination Sheffield, but that will do, it goes through Bakewell. It has arrived at exactly the same time as the one we were expecting when sat at the other bus stop. It is the last bus. After that it would have been a long trek to Bakewell.

When we finally get of at Bakewell I ask the driver what happened to the 177. It's this he

said, I forgot to change the number. He also forgot to change it at Bakewell when earlier in the day we "let it go" because it was not going to Monyash but Sheffield. It's at times like these that **William GREAVES** Proprietor of coach and horses at the Rutland Arms would have come in handy !

Michael and Patricia