

# Old Peverel Road

Few aspects of landscape history have had more nonsense written about them than roads and trackways. Generations of antiquaries have sought to identify stretches of modern road or footpath as prehistoric, Roman or medieval, or link references in medieval deeds to routes on the ground. In fact there is generally little evidence for the age of roads in use today, most of which (apart from those built from scratch since the 18th century) have probably been in use since the area through which they pass was first settled, long before they are mentioned in documents or shown on maps.

In some areas there are established traditions of roads built for particular purposes in the Middle Ages which have since gone out of use. An example of this is the 'Old Peverel Road', said to have been built by the first William Peverel to link Bolsover with his other manor at South Wingfield, about ten miles away to the south-west. Most references to this route derive from a comment by Samuel Pegge (1704–96), in his history of Bolsover and Peak castles (1785), that the Peverel Road was then still in existence, though little used. At first sight this appears to be a case of Pegge writing down a local tradition for which there is little evidence.

In fact, there are orders in the records of the court held for the honor of Peverel in the late 16th century that the men of Bolsover should repair the stretch of the Peverel Road leading to Carr Farm, and references to 'Peverel Yat' (i.e. Gate, meaning road) in the same period in the court rolls of the manor of Heath and Stainsby. These appear to be sufficient to confirm the tradition that a footpath between Carr Vale and Heath (realigned when the M1 motorway was built in the 1960s) represents the line of the Peverel Road. Another footpath from Carr Vale to Heath, which follows higher ground past Sutton Scarsdale, has also been identified as the Peverel Road.

From Heath the road appears to have continued south along an existing footpath through Astwith to Hardstoft, and from Hardstoft along the modern road to the northern end of Tibshelf village. Here, according to local tradition, it skirted the village to the east, following Newtonwood Lane and Littlemoor Lane, and then ran through Newton and Westhouses to enter Alfreton along Meadow Lane. From Alfreton the road must have continued south-west, presumably via Oakerthorpe, to South Wingfield, although no evidence has yet been noted for this portion of the route.

In the late 19th century the Ordnance Survey, presumably on the basis of oral tradition given to their field surveyors, attached the legend 'Old Peverel Road' to a footpath running from near Stainsby mill to the Chesterfield–Mansfield Road near Doe Lea. How such a route could have continued north to Bolsover is unclear, although to the south the same footpath extends to Hardstoft. More confusingly, the OS also described two lanes at Middle Duckmanton as the

Old Peverel Road, one of which survives in part as an unmetalled track in the modern village of Duckmanton and the other is now part of Markham Lane. These lie to the west of Bolsover and can hardly have been part of a route to South Wingfield.

There is probably enough historical and topographical evidence, as well as local tradition, to accept that there was a road (which may not have followed the same route throughout its history) connecting William Peverel's castle at Bolsover with South Wingfield. It was presumably created after the two manors were granted to Peverel, rather than before the Norman Conquest. As a through route it would have become redundant once Bolsover and South Wingfield passed into different hands in the mid-12th century. As late as the 16th century, however, the name remained in use in at least two places, and the tradition of a road survived for another two centuries when Pegge was writing. Even today, after the changes wrought by opencast coal working and the building of the M1, most of the route can still be followed on foot and parts remain in use as motor roads.



Figure A (above) Photograph of a track at Duckmanton still known today as Old Peverel Road.

Figure B (right) Map of presumed course of the Old Peverel Road.

