

# The 1298/1300 Perambulations of Wychwood Forest – and after

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## SUMMARY

*In the early 13th century the royal forests of England were usually bounded by natural features such as rivers. They included land and woods which belonged to owners other than the king, and these owners and the other inhabitants of a forest were subject to the Forest Law, which not only forbade the hunting of deer but also inhibited the use of their own woodland. The perambulations discussed in this article were made at a time when such owners were attempting to obtain their freedom from that law, and although the king (Edward I) intended them merely to redefine the existing forests, they were used to accomplish the disafforestation of the private woods, with the area within the perambulations consisting only of the royal woods and manors. In Wychwood the previously compact area was split into three parts, two belonging almost entirely to the king, and the third to the Bishop of Winchester. Intricate routes were taken, usually following manorial boundaries, and these routes are discussed in detail since they provide invaluable evidence for the nature of the landscape and the tenurial structure of the area at that date. The period following the perambulations was one of confusion as the kings confirmed them or revoked them according to the balance of power at the time. In the past it has been generally agreed that they were finally accepted in 1327 when Edward III confirmed them, but the rather scanty evidence for Wychwood suggests that, although there is no record of any further revocation of the perambulations, they were in practice ignored by the king and the forest officials who continued to exercise some degree of control over the 'disafforested' areas. The question of the extent of the forest was not finally settled until 1641, when Charles I, who had attempted to re-impose the Forest Law on areas where it had lapsed, was forced to agree to the bounds as commonly accepted in the twentieth year of the reign of James I. The Wychwood inquisition declared that the forest then consisted only of the area of woodland which had always belonged to the Crown, corresponding to one section only of the c. 1300 perambulations, and this remained as the Forest of Wychwood until its disafforestation in 1857.*

The attention of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries having been directed to the recent Act of Parliament for the disafforesting of the royal forest of Wychwood, it was deemed right that some account of its ancient and recently existing state should be placed on record ...'. Thus began a paper by John Yonge Akerman, secretary to that society, which was read to the members in January 1858, and subsequently published, at a time when it seemed that Wychwood, whether it was regarded as an area over which the Crown claimed forestal rights or as a large tract of woodland, was about to be obliterated from the map of Oxfordshire.<sup>1</sup>

Akerman's paper dealt mainly with two descriptions of the bounds of the forest, the first being that recorded in the perambulation of 1300, and the second that which fixed its extent in 1641.

<sup>1</sup> J.Y. Akerman, 'A View of the Ancient Limits of the Forest of Wychwood', *Archaeologia* 37, 1857, 424–40. A year earlier Akerman had presented a paper which included a study of the bounds of Braydon Forest, in Wiltshire, which had been disafforested in 1823 (*ibid.*, 304–15), but there is no evidence that he studied any of the other forests being disafforested in the same decade as Wychwood.

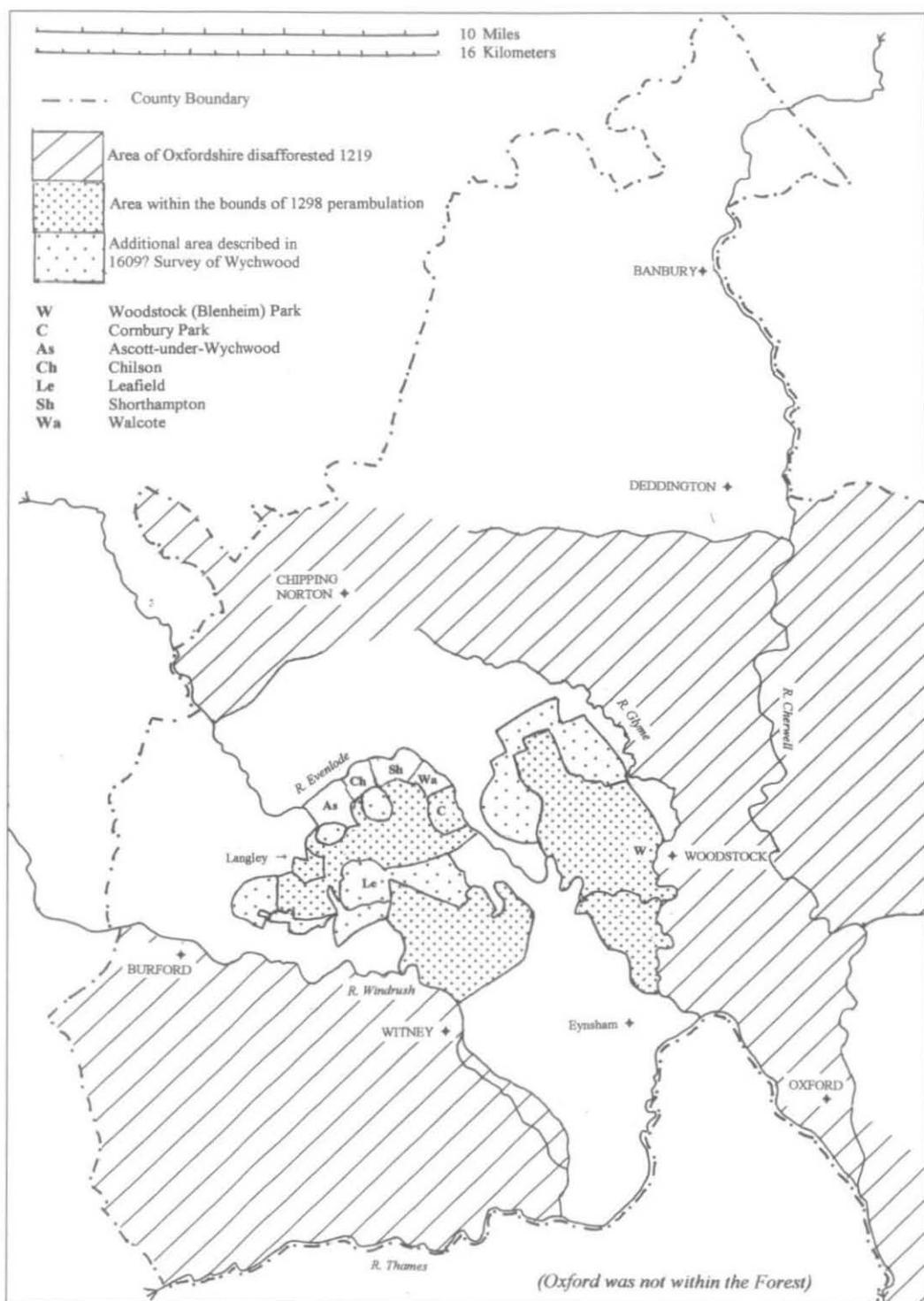


Fig. 1. Oxfordshire forests: Wychwood, Cornbury and Woodstock.

He produced a map to accompany his article, but his identification of the boundary points named in the perambulation was sketchy since he had spent a limited amount of time in studying them, and he was possibly more interested in the local antiquities, such as the North Leigh Roman villa and the barrows at Crawley, Shipton, Asthall and Leafield, which he also described in the paper.

More recently the bounds described in 1300 were studied by Mrs Wickham Steed; she published a brief account in 1961,<sup>2</sup> but this needs to be amended slightly. Another account was prepared by the present author, but this also needs to be amended in the light of further research.<sup>3</sup>

Wychwood is first named as a royal forest in Domesday Book, where it is stated that 'In Shotover, Stowood, Woodstock, Cornbury and Wychwood are the demesne forests of the king. They have 9 leagues in length and the same in breadth'. The Domesday entry does not make it clear whether this figure represents only that part of the forest which was owned by the king, or the whole area under Forest Law, although it seems more probable that it was the latter. It implies that this covered a large swathe of central Oxfordshire, but it tells us nothing about how big Wychwood was, or even what the name meant at that date. However, from the early 13th century the whole of the forest in the western part of the county was generally known as Wychwood, with Cornbury and Woodstock being reserved for the two royal parks, although 'Cornbury' was the name under which the annual *census*, or payment by the forester, had been and continued to be recorded in the Pipe Rolls.

The first indication of the extent of Wychwood Forest is found in 1229. The forests in England had been enlarged under the later Norman and Angevin kings, and this was one cause of the disputes between the barons and King John. The forty-seventh article of *Magna Carta* stipulated that any of John's own afforestations were to be disafforested immediately, while the *Carta Forestae*, in 1217, further ordered that inquisitions should be held to determine which land had been added to the forests since the beginning of the reign of Henry II, and stated that all such land was to be disafforested.<sup>4</sup>

For Oxfordshire there were apparently two inquisitions, one in 1219 and another in 1229, after Henry III had attained his majority, but the only one to survive is the undated 'second inquisition', which is presumably that of 1229.<sup>5</sup>

The jurors of this inquisition stated that:

The lord Henry the king, grandfather of the lord king, afforested the wood of Stanlake and the wood of Ducklington and whatever is between the water of Wenrich and the water of Thames toward the south of Whichewode unto the metes of the county of Gloucester and downwards; north of Wichewode he afforested whatever is between the rivulet which is called Gilling and the county of Warwick, and from Gilling to the other water which is called Glime and from Glime whatever is between Glime and Charewell unto that place where the Glime falls into the Bladen, saving the park and warrens<sup>6</sup> of Wodestock of which the lord king made an exchange with the Templars. [The document continues with a description of Shotover and Stowood, which are not discussed in this paper.] All the aforesaid, the aforesaid king Henry afforested by his will and by Alan de Neville, which never before were forest.

<sup>2</sup> V. Wickham Steed, 'The Bounds of Wychwood Forest', Top. Oxon. 7, Autumn 1961.

<sup>3</sup> B. Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region in the Centuries Before A.D. 1400' (University of Leicester unpubl. M.Phil. thesis, 1980) Appendix 1, 158-74.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (1979), 65, 68.

<sup>5</sup> P.R.O. C47/11/1 (19). The translation is that given in V.J. Watney, *Cornbury and the Forest of Wychwood* (1910), Appendix III, 218.

<sup>6</sup> vivaria.

Following this, the areas described as having been added to the forest were put out of it, and it then became restricted to the land and woods bounded by the Windrush, the county boundary, the Gilling (identified by Mrs Wickham Steed as the Sarsbrook), the Glyme, the lower course of the Evenlode, and the Thames between the points at which the Evenlode and the Windrush join it. This may also have been the area of the forest of 1086 although there is no evidence to prove this.

There was no further alteration in the bounds until the end of that century, when the forests were again among the matters of dispute between the barons and the Crown. The main cause of complaint was oppression by the foresters, although there is no record of this in Wychwood; but new perambulations, describing the bounds of the forests, were requested to see that the legitimate bounds were being observed. In 1297 Edward I, in dire need of assistance from his barons in fighting a rebellion in Wales and wars in Scotland and France, agreed to these, and a perambulation of Wychwood took place in 1298. This was made by two royal justices, John Gilberd and Roger de Hegham, with the assistance of two Oxfordshire men, John de Preus, lord of Great Tew, and Walter de Wyghthulle, holder of three hides in Whitehill in Tackley, and presumably also the forester and other local forest officials.<sup>7</sup> This perambulation, and those of Shotover and Stowood and of other forests elsewhere in England, greatly reduced the area of the forest since in almost all cases the bounds described were those of the royal lands and woods only. Edward I, having given up his war in France, was in a position to ignore the perambulations for the moment, but in 1300 the subject was again raised in Parliament and he agreed to accept them.<sup>8</sup> Another perambulation was made in Wychwood, this time by three royal justices, Roger de Brabazon, Ralph de Hegham and William Inge, and twenty-four jurors selected by the sheriff and drawn from a wide area of Oxfordshire,<sup>9</sup> as well as the forester and other officials of Wychwood, and this was the perambulation discussed by Akerman.

#### THE PERAMBULATION

The course followed in the two perambulations is identical, although the three separate parts into which the forest was divided are given in a different order, and some place names and descriptions differ slightly. The following translation is primarily of the 1300 document, but where the 1298 document differs significantly that is noted. The boundary points are numbered to correspond to those in the accompanying maps.

... the Forest of Wychelwode begins at the bridge which is called Bladenbrugge [1] at the end of the town of Hanebergh

and so descending by the water of Bladene to the inclosure of the pond of the mill called Eynesham Mill [2], including the Forest on the right throughout all the metes and bounds following and excluding without the Forest on the left all the remainder

And so thence by a certain little stream called Cavereswellebrok as far as the long ford

and thence by the same little stream as far as the meadow called Kavereshull [3]

and so between Le Frith [4] and the wood called Mouslee [5] up to the house of Walter le Viniter [6] in the aforesaid vill of Hanebergh on the western side of the said house

and so from the same house to the grange of Robert le Eyr, on the eastern side

and so to Blowend [7] on the eastern side of the sheepfold and croft of the Abbot of Osney

<sup>7</sup> H.E. Salter (ed.), *Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. li, 1908), 92-6.

<sup>8</sup> Young, *Royal Forests*, 140.

<sup>9</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1292-1301), 506; P.R.O. C47/12/10 (14). The jurors are identified, as far as possible, in the appendix to this paper.

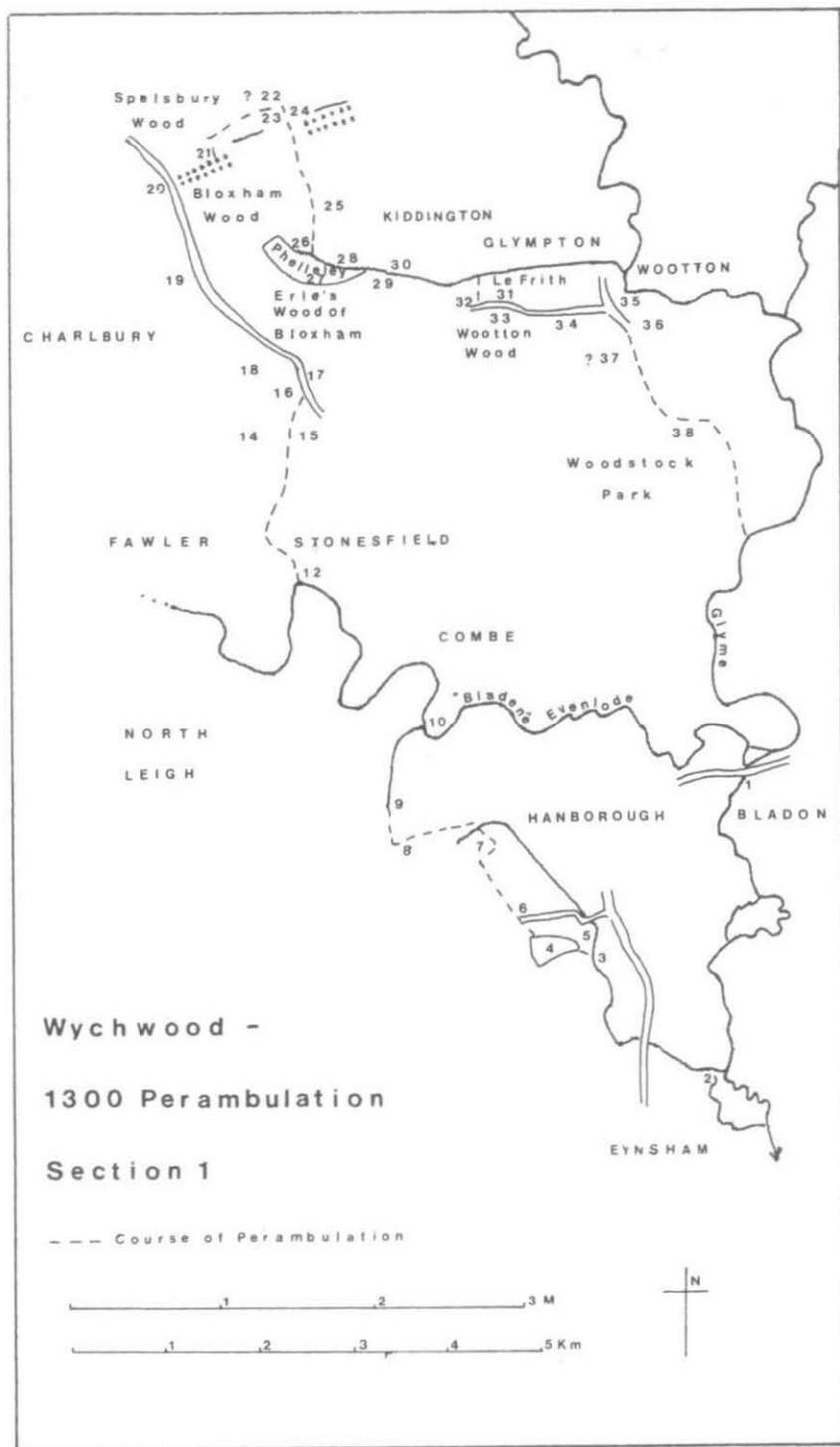


Fig. 2. The perambulations - Section 1.



Fig. 3. The perambulations - Section 2.

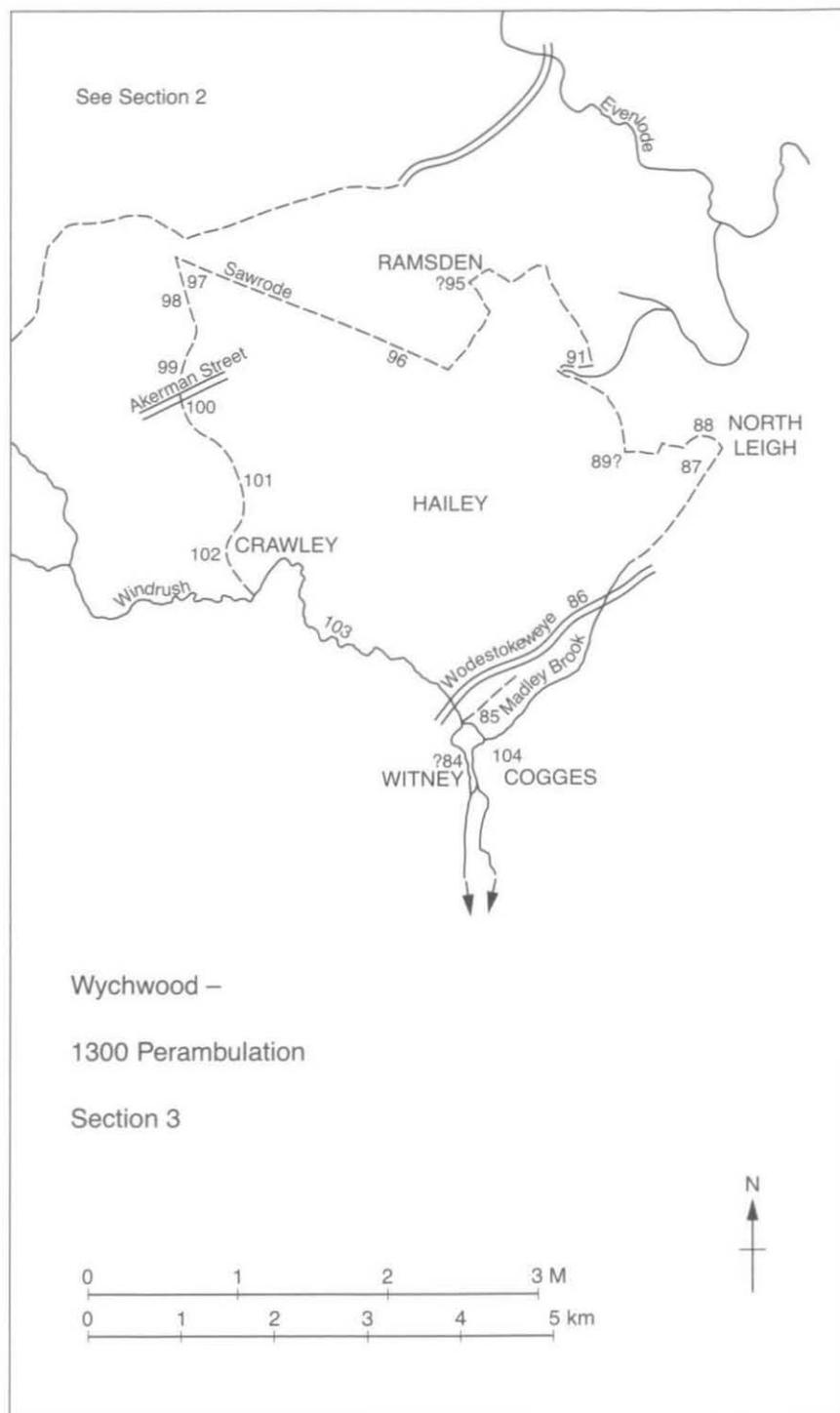


Fig. 4. The perambulations - Section 3.

and so through the middle of Roweleye [8] to the spring where Leyhambrok begins [9]  
 and so descending by Leyhambrok as far as Colneham [10]  
 and so thence to where Colneham falls into the water of Bladen [11]  
 and so by the same water of Bladen to Stuntesford [12]  
 and thence always following the valley of Nettleden [13] as it runs between Stokhey and the  
 field of Stuntesfeld  
 and so between the assart of the Abbot of Egnesham [14] and Gernerswod [15] [1298]  
 [to Gerneleswode only 1300]  
 and so to Rotherewell [16]  
 and so thence directly between the wood called Erleswode of Bloxham [17] and le Forsakenho [18]  
 and thence always by the mereway of that same wood to Dustlesfeld [19]  
 and so through the middle of Dustlesfeld to Grimesdich [20]  
 and so straight by the said Grimesdich between the wood of Bloxham and the wood of  
 Spelesbury [21]  
 and so from Grimesdiche by the corner of the wood of Bloxham next to the wood of  
 Spelesbury to Dichelehegg [22]  
 and so from Dicheleye straight along the hedge running between the land of Henry of Dichele  
 [23] and the land of Agnes de Bloxham [24] to the aforesaid Grimesdich in Dicheleye  
 always following the boundary running between the wood of Bloxham and the wood of  
 Enestan called Le Boxe [25]  
 and so to Felleyshegg [26]  
 always following the little stream as it runs between the land of the Abbot of Egnesham [27]  
 and the land of the Abbot of Wynchecumbe [28] [1298 only]  
 and so [as the stream runs 1300] between the wood of Almaricus de Sancto Amando [29] and  
 the wood of Cudinton in Boxden [30] to Le Frith [31]  
 and so between Le Frith and the wood of the said Almaricus to Bentleye [32]  
 and so straight between le Frith and the wood of Wotton [33] to Poddeleye [34]  
 and so straight along the King's highway running to the house of John de Slape in  
 Wodestokeweie [35]  
 and so straight between the field of Wotton called Eldefeld [36] and Gunnildegrove [37] to the  
 wall of Wodestok Park [38]  
 and so by the wall of the said park to the water called Glyme  
 and so descending by the water of Glyme to the water called Bladene  
 and so by the aforesaid water of Bladene to the aforesaid bridge called Bladenebrigg.

And so thence in another part of the said Forest which begins namely at the Bladene above  
 Fauelorsbrugg [39] inclosing the Forest on the right hand side with all the metes and bounds  
 following and excluding without the Forest on the left hand side all the remainder  
 and so by le Stoniweye to Finestok [40]  
 and so through the middle of the town of Finestok along that same road to Gatesdene Heved [41]  
 and thence between le Newefrith [42] and le Hulwerk [43]  
 and so to le Wysok [44]  
 and thence to le Mereweie [45]  
 and so thence to Dockslade Heved [46]  
 and thence to Stodeley [47] and to the eastern end of the vill that is called Felde [48]  
 and so between Hawe and Ewardesfeld  
 and so thence to Loueburyhurn [49] which extends to Hulwerk  
 and thence all along the mereway to Ellervestobbe [Eldernestub 1298][50]  
 and thence to Sewkeden [51]  
 and so by Sewkedene to Sewkeford [52]  
 and thence to Losnegrove [53]  
 and thence to Westgrove [54]  
 and thence to Stokleye [55]  
 and thence to Mereweie [56]  
 and thence to Hemegrove [57]  
 and thence all along the mereway to Tudevin [58]

and thence to Poreshull [59]  
 and thence to Frethelston [60]  
 and thence to Quernhale [61]  
 and thence to Pochwele [62]  
 and thence to Cuttshacch [63]  
 and thence to le Forsakenho [64]  
 and thence to le croswey at the end of Prestesgrovesende [65]  
 and thence to la Launde de Prestesgrove [66]  
 and thence to Boynhale between the corner of Brestenhale and Boynhale [67]  
 and so to the lowest end of Brestenhale [68]  
 and to the western end of the Hevedweye  
 to the end of Smalstonewey [69]  
 and thence to the western end of Scheteresho [70]  
 and thence to Waddon [71]  
 and thence to Cokkeshotehulle [72] between the wood of the king and the wood formerly of  
 the lord John FitzNigel  
 and so to Rouwereshull [73]  
 and thence to Hodleye [Oldlegh 1298] [74]  
 and so to Longeruggeyate [75] between the wood of the lord king and the wood of Thomas  
 Golafre  
 and thence to Asperleyhurn [76]  
 and thence all along the mereway between the wood of the lord king and the wood of Thomas  
 Golafre  
 and so to Bykeresden at the upper end [77]  
 and so always between the wood and the field to New Cross [78]  
 and thence to Lutleswadesyate [79]  
 and so always by the wood to le Puntfold de Cornbury [80]  
 and so to Nunnechirche [81]  
 and thence to the aforesaid water called Bladene [82]

And so thence in another portion of the Forest which is called Wytteneye which begins,  
 namely at Grimeshevedsden [Grymeshevedmere 1298] [83]  
 and so thence to the house of William le Peskour [*piscator* 1298] [84] inclosing the Forest on  
 the right hand side with all boundaries and marked posts and excluding from the Forest on the  
 left hand side all the remainder  
 and so by the boundaries between the land of Cogges and the field of Wytteneye [85]  
 and so along the boundaries straight to the way called Wodestokesweye [86]  
 and thence to Madlebrok  
 and thence [by Madlebroke 1298] to the spring of Madlewelle [87]  
 and so through the middle of the town of Northleye [88]  
 and so by the way of Northleye to Grundesweleye [89] [omitted 1300]  
 and so thence along a hedge to Sulllesleye [90]  
 and thence to le Forsakenhok [91]  
 and thence to Sigardesthorn [92]  
 and so to Nethergate [93]  
 and thence to Mirabelescrot [94]  
 and so to the house of Walter Alfred [95]  
 and thence to Sawrode [96]  
 and so to Scharpesterte [97]  
 and so thence descending by Bisschopesden [98] to Tremaunemere [99]  
 and so to Alkemannestrete [100]  
 and thence to Colneyshacch [101]  
 and so to Sponden [102]  
 and so to the water of Wenrysh [103]  
 and so descending by that same water to Grimesmede [104]  
 and so thence to Wytteneye. [105]

The jurors also say that the manor of Eynesham with the hamlets woods and other things adjoining which belongs to the Abbot of Eynesham: and the manor of Northley which belongs to the Abbot of Natele with the members and woods adjoining; and the manor of Staunton Harecourt with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to John de Harecourt and John de la Wade; and the manor of Cogges with the members and woods adjoining which the lady Isabella de Grey holds in dower; and the hamlet of Wyvelicote with the wood adjoining which belongs to Robert le Botiller; and the manor of Ministre with the woods adjoining which belongs to John Lovel; and the manor of Asthall with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to Edmund son of Richard of Cornwall; and the hamlet of Swinbrook with the woods adjoining which is held by the Earl of Gloucester as guardian of the heir of Aveline de Lega, James de Crawley, Chancellor of Salisbury in the name of his prebend of the Church of Salisbury, and the heirs of William de Hoo, each for his share of the benefice, were afforested after the coronation of the lord king Henry great-grandfather of the present lord king with such damage that neither they themselves nor their ancestors nor predecessors since the time aforesaid until now were able to take anything from the same woods except with the permission of the foresters and unless those same foresters were willing, nor to receive from those same woods any profit as they were accustomed to have and make formerly before the time of the coronation of the lord king Henry aforesaid without attachment and hindrance of the said foresters.

They say that the manor of Folebroke with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield was afforested with the like damage, of which the woods of Losnegrove, Purveance, Westgrove and Whitele are in the hands of the present lord king because of waste that was made (by the previous owner) in the time of king Henry, father of the present king. And the other part of the said woods is in the hands of the Bishop.

They say that the manor of Teynton with the woods adjoining which belongs to the prior of Derehurst; and the manor of Schipton with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to the Earl of Gloucester; and the woods belonging to the rector of the church of Shipton; and the manor of Ascote which belongs to Roger Duylley with the wood adjoining; and the manor of Podelicote with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to Robert de Hoo; and the manor of Certeden [Sarsden] which belongs to Thomas Golafre with the woods adjoining; and the manor of Chadlington which belongs in part to the lady Isabella who was the wife of lord John Fitznigel with the woods adjoining together with the manor of Richard Douvyll in the same; and the manor of Spelesbury with the members and woods adjoining which the countess of Warwick holds in dower, and the manor of Cherlebyry with the members and woods adjoining which belongs to the Abbot of Eynesham, and the wood of the Abbot of Wynchecumbe which is called le Boxe appurtenant to the manor of Enestan together with the hamlet called Net Enestan and that part of the hamlet of Clivele which is on the west side of the stream called Glyme, and the hamlet of Asterle and Over Cudington with the woods adjoining which belongs to Henry de Williamscothe, and the wood appurtenant to the manor of the Abbot of Oseneye of Cudelington, and the wood appurtenant to the manor of Glymton which belongs to John de St John, and the wood called le Frith appurtenant to the manor of Master Thomas de Abberbury in Glympton were afforested as above with the like damage.

They say that the wood which is called Prestegrove which formerly belonged to the rector of the church of Schipton was afforested as above with the like damage and it is now in the hand of the present lord king because of waste made there in the time of the lord king Henry father of the present king.

They say that the wood of Stokheye which belonged to James le Blund of Faelore was afforested as above with the like damage and it is now in the hand of the lord king because of waste made in the time of king Henry aforesaid.

And the jurors say that all the aforesaid woods have been afforested since the coronation of the lord king Henry great-grandfather of the present lord king as they have understood from the account of their ancestors and other good men and by the common fame of the country and from all the villis more nearly adjoining the aforesaid Forest.

In the map which accompanied his article Akerman contented himself with underlining those place names which survived at that date. Mrs Wickham Steed's knowledge of the locality and the documents was such that she could determine the course of the perambulation almost exactly.

Correlating the bounds with the modern landscape is easiest in the case of the second section since that remained as forest until the 19th century, with only minor alterations, and many of the names in the perambulation are found in later descriptions and maps of the bounds. In the other sections the perambulation in general follows parish boundaries, and difficulties arise only when it deviates from them.

*The first section*

The first few clauses of the first section describe part of the boundary of the parish of Hanborough as it was until the 20th century.<sup>10</sup> Its course is known, and several boundary points in the perambulation can be identified from features which survive or were shown on a map of 1605.<sup>11</sup> The starting point, Bladenebrugge [1], was a bridge over the Evenlode (then known as the Bladen), very close to the existing one which carries the road from Bladon to Long Hanborough. The boundary then followed the river downstream to Eynsham mill, which no longer exists, although a paper mill on the site is shown on Akerman's map. It was located at the place where Hanborough and Eynsham meet (SP449110). From that point the perambulation followed a little stream, which still forms the parish boundary between Hanborough and Eynsham or Freeland. Kavereshull [3] was a field beside the stream known in 1605 as Chasewell Close, Mousle [5] was then Musley Close, and Le Frith [4] still survives as a wood called The Thrift. The perambulation continued around this wood a little further before proceeding in a north-westerly line behind the modern houses of Freeland; houses did not then exist since that area was a heath until its enclosure in 1802.<sup>12</sup> Walter le Vinitier's house [6] presumably lay beside the heath, at the top of the lane leading from Church Hanborough, in Hanborough and so within the forest. However the two boundary points which follow, Robert le Eyr's grange and Blowend (owned at that date by Oseney Abbey and now known as Cooks Corner) were on the heath in Eynsham, and outside the forest.<sup>13</sup> The name of the next boundary point, Roweley [8], did not survive but it must be the point on the heath at which the parish boundaries of Eynsham, North Leigh and Hanborough met. The Leyhambrok [9] is a small, now nameless, stream which forms the boundary between Hanborough and North Leigh and runs down to the Evenlode. The name Colneham [10] survived as the name of a meadow at this location.<sup>14</sup>

The perambulation followed the river upstream to Stonesfield Ford [12], leaving North Leigh, on the left bank, outside the forest, and the royal manor of Combe, on the right, within it. From Stonesfield Ford it followed the valley which forms the boundary between Stonesfield and Fawler to the Ruddy Well [16]. In this stretch Stokhey and the Abbot of

<sup>10</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 159.

<sup>11</sup> Bodl. (E) C 17:149 (137, 138, 139).

<sup>12</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 135-6.

<sup>13</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 128.

<sup>14</sup> P.R.O. LR2/202, 35, Survey of Wychwood Forest. This document is undated apart from one possibly unrelated sheet with the date 1609. It must have been made either in 1608 or early in 1609 and for convenience will be designated as the 1609 Survey. It has been transcribed in B. Schumer (ed.), *Oxfordshire Forests 1246-1609* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. 64), 116-218, and later references will be to that volume.

Eynsham's assart were in Fawler, and outside the forest, and the field of Stuntesfeld (Church Field) and Gerner's Wood (later to become Jenner's Sarte) were in Stonesfield,<sup>15</sup> another royal manor, and so were retained within it.

Up to this point the perambulations followed boundaries which still remain, or remained until recently, but the next section outlines part of an area which lost its identity long ago, the detached woodland which belonged to the royal manor of Bloxham. Some of this lay in Spelsbury parish, and the next part of the perambulation describes it. Proceeding along the mereway which divides that parish from Fawler and Charlbury, it passed first between the Erle's Wood of Bloxham [17] and the Forsakenho [18]. The Erle's Wode was presumably Sheer's Copse, which lies between the two other sections of Bloxham wood recorded in this perambulation, that part of Bloxham wood which remained attached to the royal manor of Bloxham [21] and the wood of Almaric de St Amand [29]. It is not known how and when the Erle's Wood was separated from the others, but in the 1609 Survey of Wychwood Forest (hereafter the 1609 Survey) it was said to belong to the parish of Sesswell's Barton, and Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, had been overlord of part, at least, of that village.<sup>16</sup> Since the Erle's Wood was on one side of the boundary and the Forsakenho on the other, it is clear that the latter was in Fawler, although it has been confused with the site of the hermitage of Phelleley.<sup>17</sup> That lay on the north-eastern side of Bloxham wood, its site being recorded in this perambulation by boundary points [26] and [27].<sup>18</sup> The confusion arises in part because in 1315, when the bailiffs of Queen Margaret, holder of Bloxham, tried to claim it, Phelleley too seems to have been known as the Forsakenho. Salter suggests that 'Forsakenho' was not a specific place name but a general term for a deserted site.<sup>19</sup>

The perambulation continued along the mereway as far as Grim's Ditch [20], which is still visible, passing through the middle of Dustfield [19], a name which survives as that of Dustfield Farm in Charlbury although presumably in 1300 it was an open area which also extended into Bloxham's territory.

At Grim's Ditch the forest boundary deviated from parish boundaries and must have followed the boundary between the manor of Spelsbury, held in 1300 by the countess of Warwick, and Ditchley, which then belonged to the royal manor of Bloxham. Other evidence for this boundary is not very useful,<sup>20</sup> and it no longer exists since the whole area is in Spelsbury parish, and Ditchley 'manor' and the woods of Spelsbury were both acquired in the late Elizabethan period by Sir Henry Lee and were combined to create the modern Ditchley estate.<sup>21</sup> However, it seems likely that the next section of the perambulation – described as proceeding from Grim's Ditch between Bloxham Wood and Spelsbury Wood to Dichelehegg [22] and then back to Grim's Ditch between the land of Henry of Ditchley [23] and that of Agnes of Bloxham [24] – followed lanes which are recorded in the 1609 Survey and are shown on a Ditchley estate map of 1726: Rorehill Lane leading north-west from Grim's Ditch, Spanryding Lane leading north-east from that and meeting another lane which ran along the boundary between Enstone and Spelsbury parishes and led back to

<sup>15</sup> Jenner's Sarte appears in the map of Stonesfield in *V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 182.

<sup>16</sup> Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region', 189; *Rotuli Hundredorum* (Record Commission, 1818) ii, 864-5.

<sup>17</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* ix, 79.

<sup>18</sup> Its site is discussed in E.A. Jones, 'Hermits and Anchorites of Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxiii (1998), 66.

<sup>19</sup> Salter, *Eynsham Cartulary* i, 364.

<sup>20</sup> A rather vague description of the bounds of Spelsbury manor is given in a survey of Edward VI, Oxfordshire Archives DIL.1/a/2.

<sup>21</sup> E. Corbett (ed.), *A History of Spelsbury, Including Dean, Taston, Fulwell and Ditchley* (1931), 136-7.

Grim's Ditch again.<sup>22</sup> The Enstone Tithe Award map shows a boundary stone at the meeting place of the last two lanes, the point at which the forest boundary would turn.<sup>23</sup> The 1609 Survey provides further evidence for this suggestion since the woods and assarts north of the suggested line are described as Sir Henry Lee's own ground, while the land to the south, including Ditchley House, is said to be the king's ground.<sup>24</sup> Henry of Ditchley's land was presumably the original hamlet of Ditchley, associated with Bloxham Wood, and Agnes of Bloxham, in spite of her name, must have held land in Enstone parish (then owned by the Abbey of Winchcombe) probably represented now by the Ditchley Home Farm and estate cottages and buildings, all of which lie to the north of the line of Grim's Ditch.

The forest boundary then followed the Enstone parish boundary southwards, with Bloxham wood on the right, within the forest, and Box Wood [25], in Enstone, on the left. It then reached Felleyshegge [26], the hedge of the hermitage of Phelleley, which by that date was under the care of Eynsham Abbey.<sup>25</sup> This was retained within the forest, and the perambulation implies that its land continued as far as the boundary of Stonesfield, with a small stream separating it from another presumably open area (since it is described as 'land', not wood) in Enstone. The stream continues as the parish boundary between Stonesfield to the south and Enstone and then Kiddington to the north, and the forest boundary followed it, excluding Kiddington Wood, but retaining within the forest the 'wood of Almaric de St Amand', part of which still survives as King's Wood in Stonesfield [29]. This was formerly part of Bloxham Wood but had been separated from the rest in 1232 following the division of Bloxham into two manors. Later, however, St Amand's wood was taken into the king's hand because of an offence and it was never returned.<sup>26</sup>

The next boundary point, Le Frith [31], was a wood in the southern part of Glympton,<sup>27</sup> and the forest boundary turned south and east to exclude this, first following the boundary between Stonesfield and Glympton parishes to Bentley [32], of which the place name has been lost but which was probably at the clearing later known as Callow Hill Common, and then the Glympton-Wootton boundary which at that time had wood on either side, Le Frith to the north and Wootton Wood [33] to the south. At the end of Wootton Wood was Poddeleye [34], which must be at or near Woodleys. The 'King's highway', which formed the next part of the perambulation, has been lost, but may be represented by the straight section of the Glympton-Wootton boundary north of Woodleys.<sup>28</sup> The hamlet of Slape [35] has also been lost, but its name is preserved in that of Slape Copse, at SP426195. From this point the forest boundary left manorial or parish boundaries, and the following section divided Wootton into two parts, its field being on the left, outside the forest, and its woodland within it. The points are clear enough but the course of Wodestokeweye (the road to Woodstock) may have altered since 1300, and Woodstock (Blenheim) Park has certainly been enlarged since that date. The site of Gunnildegrove [37], which was a wood belonging to Hordley and associated with the hamlet of Slape, is possibly now within the walls of Blenheim Park.<sup>29</sup> But

<sup>22</sup> Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region', 188; Oxfordshire Archives DIL I/1/2b.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O. IR30/2/56. The boundary stone is also marked on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey map SP32SE, at SP391215.

<sup>24</sup> Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region', 189.

<sup>25</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* ix, 79.

<sup>26</sup> *Cal. Close R.* (1231-4), 116; P.R.O. C47/11/8, no. 9.

<sup>27</sup> It belonged to Thomas de Abberbury's sub-manor there.

<sup>28</sup> This is shown as a track on the map of Wootton in *V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 260.

<sup>29</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii, 850; J. Bond and K. Tiller, eds., *Blenheim, Landscape for a Palace* (1987), 29.

the general course of the forest boundary is clear, in that it followed the road to the wall of the park and then the wall to the Glyme river and so back along the Glyme to the Evenlode and the bridge over the Evenlode where this section began.

With the probable exception of the 'Erle's wood of Bloxham', the land within this part of the perambulation – consisting of the manors of Hanborough, Combe and Stonesfield, with Bloxham Wood, the wooded part of Wootton and Woodstock Park – belonged wholly to the king.

*The second section*

The following section was also almost entirely royal land although it included part of Finstock, which by that date belonged entirely to Eynsham Abbey as part of its Charlbury estate. This section of the forest was based on the royal park of Cornbury and the demesne woodland, that part of Wychwood which belonged directly to the Crown and did not form part of any manor. This survived as the royal forest until 1857, so many boundary points in the perambulation can be identified exactly from the bounds as recorded in 1641 and in 1854, in preparation for the final disafforestation, and from maps.<sup>30</sup>

This section of the perambulation also commenced at a bridge over the Evenlode, at Fawler [39], and ran along the road through the middle of Finstock to the head of a valley near Gadding Well [41], leaving the northern and western portion of Finstock within the forest while putting the other half outside.<sup>31</sup> From there the perambulation proceeded in a direct line towards Leafield. It notes a number of points on the way and these may have been necessary because there was no track or other linear feature there to be followed. Even in 1854, although a track existed by then, this section was defined by eight or more boundary posts which separated two open areas, Ramsden Heath to the south, in the purlieu of the forest, and the royal 'open forest' to the north; and perhaps in 1300 the landscape had been very similar. Of the boundary points, Hulwerk [43] was the name which had applied to a wood in Ramsden, assarted c. 1270, and later was used for the area of Ramsden Heath which was outside the forest. The name presumably is derived from a stretch of Grim's Ditch located there, of which traces still survive.<sup>32</sup> Le Newefrith [42] must have been within the forest, and its name survived as that of one of the bailiwicks or walks of the forest.<sup>33</sup> The name of Le Wysoke [44] survived as Five Oak Copse, the only piece of enclosed woodland in this part of the royal forest, and the mereway [45] was probably the track which led southwards from the heath between the coppices of the woodland belonging to Shipton manor. This track was later to become the parish boundary of Ramsden, and in 1300 it was presumably already known as the boundary of that hamlet's territory. Studley [47] was the name of a coppice in Shipton's woodland which lay near the eastern end of Leafield [Felde, 48].

The next two boundary points, Hawe and Ewardesfeld, presumably lay on the northern side of Leafield, which belonged to Shipton-under-Wychwood and so should have been excluded from the forest. The two names have not survived, and since assarts are known to have been made in that area it is not now possible to determine the exact course of the

<sup>30</sup> P.R.O. C205/17; *Declaration of the Boundaries of the Forest and Purlieu as ascertained and determined by the Commissioners appointed under an Act passed in the 17th year of the reign of Queen Victoria and Intituled An Act for Disafforesting the Forest of Whichwood* (1854) (P.R.O. CRES 35/1140); Thomas Pride, plan of Whichwood Forest, 1787, reproduced in *Report of the Select Committee on the Woods, Forests and Land Revenues of the Crown*, 1848.

<sup>31</sup> In the 12th century Finstock had consisted of at least three separate small estates, and it may be that this section of the perambulation records an early boundary. *V.C.H. Oxon.* x, 138.

<sup>32</sup> T. Copeland, 'The North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch: a Fieldwork Survey', *Oxoniensia*, liii (1958), 290.

<sup>33</sup> P.R.O. LR2/189, f. 84.

perambulation.<sup>34</sup> It presumably went around the northern and western sides of the village. The next known point is Loueburyhurn [49], later known as Lowbarrow Corner. This is shown on the current Ordnance Survey map to the west of Lowbarrow House, at SP309144.<sup>35</sup> It is now in cleared land, but was formerly at an intersection of woodland tracks between coppices.<sup>36</sup> The phrase 'which extends to Hulwerk' probably refers to one of these tracks, and this 'Hulwerk' was presumably at Lowbarrow House, whose grounds contain another earthwork (marked in the same OS map). However, the men making the perambulation did not take this route, but turned sharply to the north to Ellervestobbe or Eldernestub [50]. This was presumably an elder tree, but the name has been lost and the boundary point in later descriptions was called Lilley's Cross, located at or near SP308154. The boundary then turned sharply again to the south following a valley, Sewkeden [51], which in 1641 was known as Sukedean, Fordwell Bottom or Duckpool Bottom. At that date the boundary in this stretch was said to be marked by 'stones and ancient meets'.<sup>37</sup> The next boundary point, Sewkeford [52] (in 1641 Fordwell pool or the Duckpool of Sukedean), is the site of part of the modern hamlet of Fordwells. In the 1641 bounds parts of the boundary between Lowbarrow Corner and Fordwells are described as separating the king's wood from 'a coppice called Lowborough or Lobury Coppice', and this was a long, narrow northward projection of the woodland belonging to the manor of Asthall.

From Fordwells the perambulation turned to the west, presumably along a track which certainly existed by 1641, when it was referred to at first as the king's highway leading to Burford, and then as a mereway between woods. It excluded from the forest the private woods of Losengrove (Lousie Grove) [53], Westgrove [54] and Stockley [55], which were named in maps of the forest c. 1854. Lousie Grove and Westgrove belonged to Fulbrook and formed a detached part of that parish at that date. These woods have since been cleared, but most of Stockley, which belonged to the little estate in Swinbrook which was held by the Chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral, still survives. To the north of Stockley lay firstly the king's coppice of Roustage, which is depicted in later maps of the forest, and then the wood of Hensgrove [57], which belonged to Swinbrook (and still survives), and the boundary turned northwards between these on another mereway. The 1300 perambulation merely states that the mereway was followed to the next boundary point, Tudevin [58], but later descriptions give more details – an Eldern Stump, Ladyham, Ladyham Corner (still marked on the 1:25 000 OS map at SP293137), and Hengrove Coppice Corner, before reaching Tudhill Cross in South Lawn Plain. This marked the place where Swinbrook, the royal demesne woodland, and a detached part of Taynton parish once met. Poreshull [59] was in the same area. From that point the boundary turned more or less directly north to the Frethelstone [60], a standing stone whose site is still marked on the 6-inch OS maps, at SP286153, although Akerman states that it had been broken up around the time of the final disafforestation and used in road building.<sup>38</sup>

The next three points outline the western boundary of Langley, then the home of Wychwood's forester and so included in the forest although it was excluded by the Stuart and later bounds. Quernhale [61] survived as the field names Upper and Hither Kernocks,<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> B. Schumer (ed.), *Oxfordshire Forests 1246–1609* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. 64, 2004), 108–9.

<sup>35</sup> OS Pathfinder series 1:25000 Sheet SP21/31, Burford & Witney (North).

<sup>36</sup> These tracks are recorded in the 1854 *Declaration of the Boundaries of the Forest and Purlieus...*

<sup>37</sup> P.R.O. C205/17/13/2, reprinted in J.Y. Akerman, '... Ancient Limits of the Forest of Wychwood', 438–40.

<sup>38</sup> Akerman, loc. cit., 430 footnote.

<sup>39</sup> Langley Tithe Award, P.R.O. IR 29 (& 30)/27/85.

in the western tip of Langley, while Cuttेशacch [63] is recorded in 1641 as Cuthatch gate, also named as Forsakenhook Gate. This Forsakenhook, the second Forsakenho [64] of the 1300 perambulation, refers either to Shakenhoof coppice in the royal woodland or more probably to an adjoining field (Shakenhoof Ground) in Shipton-under-Wychwood,<sup>40</sup> and the boundary point must be at SP298164. Many of the following points have been lost following the disafforestation and clearance of Wychwood and of some of the purlieu woods, but the line they described is still the boundary of the new parish created at that time.

Priest Grove [65] survives, and the following points describe the boundary between the forest and the wood and fields belonging to Ascott, first the 'launde of Prestesgrove' [66], later called Woefield Green, then Ascott's wood of Boynal Copse, of which a vestige remains, and Brestenhale, a corner of Ascott's land which projected into the forest and whose name was later corrupted into Braswell or Brazil Corner.<sup>41</sup> Finally there was Scheteresho [70], a field which lay between the forest and the Burford-Charlbury road.<sup>42</sup>

It is impossible to identify the next boundary points, the Hevedweye and Smalstoneweeye [69], since the forest tracks once found in this area no longer exist, but Waddon [71] is recorded in the 1854 description of the bounds of the forest and its purlieu as the name both of a field in Chilson, just outside the forest, and of a riding which ran between the royal forest and the privately owned Knighton Copse. This and Shock's Copse formed a compact area of private woodland whose boundary is described by points [71] to [78]. Not all of the boundary points can be identified, but the boundary in this area is quite certain because it is still that of Chilson parish. Those points which can be identified are Cockshoothill and Lankridge, which gave their names to two of the coppices in the royal forest, and Bykeresden, which was Biggarstone Close, in Shorthampton. The perambulation document is invaluable in helping to prove that the piece of woodland excluded from the forest at this point was that described in Domesday Book under the manor of Sarsden. Other evidence shows that 'Sarsden' consisted not only of the modern parish of that name but also of Pudlicote and Chilson and part of Chadlington, and the lords of two of these, John Fitznigel who had held Chadlington Wahull, and Thomas Golafre who held Sarsden, are recorded here as owning the woods.<sup>43</sup>

From Bykeresden the boundary ran between the woods in the royal forest and the fields of Shorthampton and Walcot, passing first the New Cross [78], which was later described as New Cross or Chadlington Gate, where the road from Chadlington entered the forest, and then Lutleswadesyate [79], which was later also called Walcote Gate, where the road from Charlbury and Walcote entered the forest. The next boundary point, the Puntfold of Cornbury, was presumably at or near the point where Cornbury Park and the forest met. Since Cornbury Park was included in the forest in 1300 the perambulation follows its western edge to the river Bladene (Evenlode), passing Nunnechirche [81], which is a field, Nun's Close, in Walcot.<sup>44</sup> The circuit was completed by the river itself although this is not stated.

<sup>40</sup> Shipton Tithe Award, P.R.O. IR 29 (& 30)/27/123.

<sup>41</sup> *Declaration of the Boundaries of the Forest and Purlieu...*, 1854, 6.

<sup>42</sup> S.R. Wigram (ed.), *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxxi), 245.

<sup>43</sup> B. Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region ...', 186-7.

<sup>44</sup> Place names in Walcot and Shorthampton are taken from the Charlbury Tithe Award, P.R.O. IR 19 (&20)/27/30.

*The third section*

The third section of the perambulation follows, for the greater part, the bounds of Hailey and Crawley, both of which were formerly members of Witney manor and belonged to the Bishop of Winchester. However it deviates from these in two places and these deviations are difficult to interpret. One problem is created by the clauses at the beginning and the end of this section, those referring to Grymeshevedsden, William le Peskour's house, and to Witney itself, and also the statement about 'inclosing the Forest on the right hand side ... and excluding from the Forest on the left hand side all the remainder', when for the greater part of its course this section of the perambulation proceeds in an anti-clockwise fashion with the forest on the left-hand side. Either this was an error, with the clerk just repeating the clause from the earlier sections, or this perambulation in its early stages did proceed in a clockwise direction, and it was not noted when that direction changed. In an earlier discussion of this section it was suggested that these clauses could be explained if the bounds made a loop to include the whole of Witney borough,<sup>45</sup> but Witney records show no evidence that this was the case. A more likely explanation is that the perambulation made a smaller loop, taking in some of the meadow land between the different channels of the Windrush river, possibly the island of Langel which was an extra-parochial area until 1898.<sup>46</sup>

The first boundary point which can be identified without doubt is the boundary 'between the land of Cogges and the field of Wytteneye' [85], which is the parish boundary as it was before Newland (originally in Cogges) was absorbed into Witney. This boundary began at the flood plain of the river Windrush and the perambulation followed it along hedges to Wodestokesweye [86], which is the present Witney-Woodstock road. This was followed for a short distance only and then the forest boundary deviated from manorial and parish boundaries to follow the Madley Brook to its source, the Madley Well [87]. This was the North Leigh pond, which has now been filled in but was once situated between Common Road and Cuckamus Lane, at SP385129.

The following clauses of the perambulation are also difficult to elucidate. When an earlier article was written in which this section of the boundary was discussed, considerable reliance was placed on the 1609 Survey of Wychwood, which describes in detail the whole of the area retained within the forest by the perambulations, as well as the woods which were disafforested at that time. Apart from North Leigh Heath, which was traversed as the perambulation followed the Madley Brook, that document records 470 acres (as measured at that time) of the town closes and arable fields of North Leigh village, comprising all of the area bounded by Church Road, the road to Wilcote and probably a lost road which led back past the modern Bridewell Farm towards the parish boundary. The church, manor house and rectory were included as well as twenty-eight other cottages or messuages with their associated closes.<sup>47</sup> Sir Henry Hobart, James I's Attorney General, must have believed that this description was correct since, when he attempted to force Sir William Pope, the lord of North Leigh manor, to compound for his land, he accused Pope of having removed boundary marks and grubbed out a hedge, presumably that described in the perambulation.<sup>48</sup> So in the earlier article it was assumed that the perambulation route 'through the middle of the town of North Leigh' was along Church Road, past the church and the rectory, and although Grundesweleye and Sulleseye could not be identified, a similar name, Grunsmore, did occur beside the North Leigh to Wilcote road.

<sup>45</sup> Schumer, 'The Woodland Landscape of the Wychwood Region ...', 173.

<sup>46</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* xiv, 5.

<sup>47</sup> B. Schumer, 'An Elizabethan Survey of North Leigh', *Oxoniensia*, xl (1975), 323.

<sup>48</sup> P.R.O. SP14/62 no 59.

But it now seems possible that the inclusion of that part of North Leigh in the 1609 Survey was an error. The Crown's claim that it lay in the forest seems to have been based mainly on references to assart rents and the king's soil in ministers' accounts of the manor in the reign of Henry VIII. However, those accounts had been prepared during the brief period when that king held North Leigh, between the dissolution of Netley Abbey (to which it had belonged) and the grant to Sir Thomas Pope, and the rents referred to had been paid to him as the manorial lord, and merely distinguished rents for land in the original common fields (assize rents) from those for land which had been cleared later.<sup>49</sup> Some at least of this had been cleared after the perambulations, when North Leigh was in theory disafforested, and the assarts were certainly not in the area described, but in the eastern part of the manor.<sup>50</sup>

Sir William Pope, in his reply to the Attorney General, asserted his ownership of the whole of North Leigh, and denied that it was in the forest, or that he had removed boundary marks and grubbed out a hedge. Two of his 'answers' survive and one of them is itself not entirely reliable, since he implied that Winchcombe Sarte and Boxwood, which he also owned and for which he was also being forced to compound, were part of the manor of North Leigh, and they were not.<sup>51</sup> They were in Enstone, and had been earlier held by Winchcombe Abbey, not Netley Abbey. The Crown refuted this part of Pope's statement but made another error by saying that Enstone had been held by the Abbey of Eynsham, in Worcestershire!<sup>52</sup>

There is some justification for Pope's original error since the Enstone land had been included with North Leigh in Hobart's Bill, and in his other 'answer' Pope omitted any mention of the land in Enstone, for which he eventually agreed to compound, and continued to assert his claim that the whole of North Leigh was his, and that it was out of the forest. He had two local men, Lawrence Tanfield and Edward Perrott, to witness this.<sup>53</sup> This, and the fact that the arguments used by the Crown at this time are so illogical, suggest that the evidence of the 1609 Survey as regards the course of the perambulation in North Leigh can be discounted.

Confirmation of this comes from the recent discovery in the records of Witney manor of Grundeswelye and Groundessuyllye as the name of an assart which probably lay somewhere in the New Yatt area.<sup>54</sup> In that case it seems likely that *c.* 1300 most of the 'town' of North Leigh was located near the Madley Well, rather than near the church and manor house, and that the perambulation turned to pass through this in the direction of New Yatt. The 'way of Northleye' was presumably the New Yatt road rather than North Leigh Lane (now Green Lane). No later record has been found of a suitable hedge in this area, but presumably it followed the boundary between North Leigh and Witney manor towards le Forsakenhoke. If this were the route followed, it would mean that only a small area of North Leigh Heath, with access to the Madley Well, was retained within the forest in 1300.

It is not clear exactly what 'le Forsakenhoke' meant at that date, but it is a reasonably fixed point since it was recorded as a field name, Forsaken Hooke, in the 1609 Survey, in the north-eastern part of Hailey, and has given its name to the modern Shakenoak Farm.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> P.R.O. SP14/62 no. 60.

<sup>50</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 146; Schumer, 'An Elizabethan Survey of North Leigh', 314

<sup>51</sup> P.R.O. SP14/62 no. 59.

<sup>52</sup> P.R.O. SP14/62 no. 61.

<sup>53</sup> P.R.O. SP14/62 no.61, SP14/195 no. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Hants. R.O. 11M59/B1/88, 11M59/Bi/92. My thanks to Simon Townley for these references.

<sup>55</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 172.

From le Forsakenhoke [91], the boundary must have followed that which separated Witney manor firstly from Wilcote and then from Ramsden, although it is hard to reconcile its intricate shape with the four boundary points recorded between Shakenoak and the next certain point of the perambulation, Sawrode [96]. Mirabelscroft [94] and the house of Walter Alfred [95] were almost certainly in Ramsden, outside the forest, since William Mirabel of Ramsden is recorded as assarting land there in 1272, and Walter Alfred held land there in 1279.<sup>56</sup>

After Sawrode the boundary points agree well with the former parish and manorial boundary of Witney. Sawrode itself is St John's Lane/Pay Lane, a long, straight track which leads towards Leafield, and which occurs as *sugarode* and *surode* in the two Saxon charters of Witney.<sup>57</sup> At Scharpesturt [96], which was the point of Witney land which almost reaches Leafield village, and which had been called the 'kings steort' in AD 969, the boundary turned sharply southwards down a valley, Bisschopesden [98], passing Tremaunmere [99] which presumably is the point at which Asthall, Witney and Leafield met (SP328139). Akeman Street [100] crosses the valley (at SP328136) and Colneyshacch [101] was presumably a gate located where the woods in Minster Lovell and Crawley met the fields, at or near SP335126. The valley continued as Sponden, a name which had been recorded as *spondaene* in 1044, and was related to Spoonley Copse, which survived in the northern part of Crawley until the later part of the 19th century. This valley was followed to the Windrush.

The Windrush then formed the boundary, dividing Witney manor into two parts, one within and the other outside the forest. The next boundary point, Grimesmead [104], was a meadow on the north-eastern bank of the river, part of which was in Witney and the other in Cogges, presumably being divided by the boundary recorded as point 85. 'To Wytteneye' presumably took the perambulation back to the unidentified starting point of this section of the perambulation.

#### AFTER THE PERAMBULATIONS

What these bounds described was in no way the confirmation of the 1229 boundary which Edward I had expected, since the previously compact Forest had been split into three sections and, apart from parts of Finstock and North Leigh, and probably the Erle's wood of Bloxham, only woods and land which belonged to the Crown, or to the Bishop of Winchester, were included. The men making the perambulation declared that the woods belonging to private owners had been afforested since the coronation of King Henry II and should therefore be put out of the forest, although the only evidence they could bring in favour of this was 'the account of their ancestors and other good men and by the common fame of the country ...'. What other evidence could they have for something which may have happened more than 150 years earlier? Similar claims were made in other royal forests at the same date, so that everywhere the extent of the forests was drastically reduced.<sup>58</sup>

The Wychwood perambulation is dated as 21 February 1300, and the king's dissatisfaction with it, and others, is shown by the fact that in a Patent Roll of 1 April of that year he appointed another set of justices to make perambulations throughout England, 'according to the tenor of the forest charter of Henry III', as had been stated in the earlier appointment of the perambulating justices, but this time adding 'saving always the King's oath, the right

<sup>56</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 78; *Rot. Hund.* ii, 736.

<sup>57</sup> M. Gelling, 'English Place-Names Derived from the Compound Wicham', *Med. Arch.* xi (1967), 99-103.

<sup>58</sup> R. Grant, *The Royal Forests of England* (1991), 157-8.

of his Crown and the actions and claims of the King and all others',<sup>59</sup> a clause which had caused an uproar when it was included in the statute *De Finibus Levatis* in the previous year.<sup>60</sup> No evidence has been found that such a third perambulation was made in Wychwood.

The king was forced to confirm the perambulations in February 1301 and again by an Ordinance of the Forest in September 1305,<sup>61</sup> and it might seem that the question of the bounds was settled. However it was merely the beginning of a period of confusion which in the case of Wychwood was to last for another 300 years. During the first century of this period woods were in and out of the forest more than once since they had become an issue in the struggle for power between the kings and their barons. Edward I applied to the pope for release from his promise to accept the perambulations and, having obtained a bull to that effect in December 1305, annulled the disafforestments in May 1306.<sup>62</sup> He graciously pardoned men for any forest offences which they had committed in the lands and woods while they were disafforested.

However the question of the forest was raised again in the reign of Edward II. In 1315 further perambulations of the forests were ordered, although again there is no evidence that any were carried out in Oxfordshire.<sup>63</sup> In August 1316 the king, at the barons' insistence, agreed that the 1300 bounds were to be accepted, the only qualification being that there should be forty days before this came into effect, so that the foresters could drive the deer from the disafforested woods into the remaining forest.<sup>64</sup> However, in 1327 there were complaints in Parliament that Edward II's confirmation had never been put into effect.<sup>65</sup> By that time Queen Isabella and Mortimer were in power and, to curry favour with the barons, they ordered that the perambulations of Edward I were to be observed. This was confirmed in 1327 and again in 1330 by Edward III, and most writers on the forests, from Petit-Dutaillis on, have agreed that this period marked the turning point in their history. They have assumed that the bounds were accepted, and the present writer has in the past fallen into the same trap.<sup>66</sup> There is some excuse for this. No formal revocation of the perambulations was recorded, the Charter of the Forest was confirmed almost as a matter of routine whenever Parliament convened (the last occasion being in 1416), and the 1300 perambulations themselves were again confirmed in 1377 and 1381.<sup>67</sup>

However, when the rather scanty records of an individual forest such as Wychwood are investigated, it seems that, whatever the legal position, the forest officials disregarded the perambulations and the confirmations, and exercised their authority over the forest as it had existed before 1300. Presumably this was with the consent, expressed or unexpressed, of the king, since the royal response whenever protests about the foresters' actions were raised in Parliament was usually a bland statement that the Charter of the Forest was to be observed,

<sup>59</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1292-1301), 506.

<sup>60</sup> C.R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Mediaeval England*, 139.

<sup>61</sup> G.J. Turner, *Select Pleas of the Forest* (Selden Society 13, 1899), cv; *Rotuli Parliamentorum* i, 177.

<sup>62</sup> *Statutes of the Realm* i, 149. The pope had previously been Archbishop of Bordeaux and thus a subject of Edward I (C. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History*, ii (1914), 225).

<sup>63</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1313-17), 296.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 531-2.

<sup>65</sup> *Rot. Parl.* ii, 169b.

<sup>66</sup> *Statutes of the Realm* i, 255; *Cal. Close R.* (1330-3), 147; C. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and Notes...*, 232, and, for example, J. Birrell (ed.), *The Forests of Cannock and Kinver: Select Documents 1235-1372* (Collections for a History of Staffordshire 4th series xviii), 7; D.J. Stagg (ed.), *Calendar of New Forest Documents 1244-1334* (Hampshire Record Series iii), 34.

<sup>67</sup> *Rot. Parl.* ii & iii, *passim*; iv 659a; *Rot. Parl.* iii, 18a, 116a.

and sometimes advice that the protesters should present their complaints either to Chancery or to the King's Council.<sup>68</sup>

Part of the evidence for Wychwood is provided by the surviving inquisitions into the state of that forest made in the 14th century, and these suggest that any disafforestation following Edward III's confirmation of the perambulations was very brief. In the inquisition of 1332 the twenty-four jurors were all said to live outside the forest, and this implies that, in accordance with the confirmations of 1327 and 1330, the 1300 bounds were being observed.<sup>69</sup> Only freeholders could serve as jurors and there would have been few of these holding land in the king's manors or that part of Witney manor which lay within the limits of the 1300 perambulation. The record is very short and it is worth noting that the offences against the vert and the venison were said to have taken place only 'in the lord king's forest', and the assarts recorded in the document for Enstone, North Leigh, Witney and Charlbury manors were said to be outside the forest. However, in the next surviving inquisition, in 1337, twelve jurors are said to live outside the forest but twelve within it, suggesting a reversion to the pre-1300 bounds, and the same applies to later inquisitions in 1342, 1362 and 1372.<sup>70</sup> The scope of these inquisitions varies but in those after 1342 there is always a record of any coppicing which had taken place in the disafforested woods, an assart in the disafforested East Hill, in Taynton Woods, is recorded in 1364, and offences against the deer are recorded not only in the woods but in the fields of North Leigh, Leafield, Shipton, Chilson and Lyneham, suggesting that the whole of the pre-1300 forest was still under surveillance by the forester.<sup>71</sup>

This was happening not only in Wychwood, since at this time many examples are recorded in the Rolls of Parliament of what was seen as oppression or harassment by the foresters of the people of the forests and especially of those holding land or woods in the 'disafforested' areas.<sup>72</sup> None are recorded there for Wychwood, but in 1345 the Abbot of Eynsham was imprisoned in Oxford Castle, accused of offences against the vert in the other Oxfordshire forest, Shotover.<sup>73</sup> Presumably this offence was merely an attempt to use his own wood there, which had been put outside the bounds by the perambulation of Shotover and Stowood in 1298.<sup>74</sup> In Eynsham itself there was a riot in 1350, when Thomas de Langley, the forester of Wychwood, with others, went there to hold a court. Since he was also a Keeper of the Peace and a justice of oyer and terminer it is not absolutely certain that this court was to try forest offences, but it may have been.<sup>75</sup> In the record of another dispute in 1370 about right of common in Tilgarsley, in Eynsham, it was stated that Thomas de Langley had enlarged the bounds of Wychwood about eighteen years earlier, and this may refer to the events of 1350, or another re-afforestation.<sup>76</sup>

In 1362 and 1364 the 'Chancellor of Salisbury's close', Stockley Wood (now in Asthall), was said to be in the forest, although it was among the woods which had been disafforested by the perambulation, and other such places were Ascott, said to be within the forest in 1375,

<sup>68</sup> *Rot. Parl.* ii, 169b, 367b.

<sup>69</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 145.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 148, 152, 127, 135.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 132, 134, 135, 127.

<sup>72</sup> *Rot. Parl.* ii, 367b; iii, 116a.

<sup>73</sup> *Cal. Close R.* (1343-6), 518.

<sup>74</sup> H.E. Salter (ed.), *The Boarstall Cartulary* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. 88), 180.

<sup>75</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1348-50), 594. Thomas de Langley's commission says merely that he was to inquire 'touching divers trespassers'.

<sup>76</sup> Salter, *Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 107.

and the woods of 'Pirenho', in Stanton, and North Leigh in 1376.<sup>77</sup> Spelsbury's woods were the subject of a dispute around 1402 when the foresters are said to have seized wood there which was about to be sold by the owner, William de Beauchamp, in spite of his claim that Spelsbury was 'near the Forest of Wychwood and outside the ancient boundary of the Forest'.<sup>78</sup> Minster Lovell woods, too, must have been taken back into the forest since in 1442 the forester of Wychwood was specifically ordered to disafforest them.<sup>79</sup> Eynsham's High Wood had been excluded in 1300, but it was definitely said to be within metes and bounds of the forest in 1449. The same applied to Widley Wood, said to be within the forest in 1452.<sup>80</sup>

It is usually held that this period saw the origin of the 'purlieu', those fringes of woodland which were disafforested by the perambulation (the word used for this in the records of the time was usually the French *pouralee*) but in which the Crown, later at least, still claimed the right of herbage for the deer. It certainly saw the first appearance of the associated forest official, the ranger, whose duty it was to patrol the purlieu. A 'riding forester' appears in the Wychwood records for the first time in 1332, and a ranger in 1398,<sup>81</sup> but the only evidence in its medieval records to suggest that any of the disafforested area was regarded as purlieu is found in 1370 when Tilgarsley was rather ambiguously described as then being 'within the puralees of the Forest'.<sup>82</sup> In the other references, given above, the woods were always said to be 'in the forest'.

Perhaps the idea that the size of the forest remained the same is supported by the fact that in 1457 the person who had charge of Wychwood was still paying to the Crown, as the annual *census*, the traditional sum of £7. In 1307 John de Langley, the forester, had protested that the enclosure of a mere sixty-nine acres in Wychwood would be 'to my disinheritation and a grave injury to my office' and, by implication, that he would find it difficult to pay the seven pounds since his income arose from various payments within the forest.<sup>83</sup>

The Crown was still ignoring the 1300 perambulations in 1552, the date of the next surviving record of the extent of the forest, although by then the forester's authority may have become more restricted. This document is attached to a description of the manor of Langley, the former home of the forester, to which the forest was said to belong, and it states:

The limits and bounds of the said forest are as follows: First from the wall of Woodstoke Park and thence to the bridge called Bladenebrige, and so by the water of Bladenbroke [Evenlode] to the water mill of Eynsham and so to le Grymsham [at Witney] and so thence by the rivulet called Wynerushe-water to the bridge of the borough of Burforde (reserving the Bishop of Winchester's manor of Whytney with its appurtenances within the said bounds) which extends in length 12 miles, and from the bridge of Burforde by known limits and bounds to the water of Glyme and so thence to the wall of Woodstoke Park, which extends in length 12 miles, in width in divers places 7 miles and in other places 1 mile ...<sup>84</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 128, 133, 158, 160.

<sup>78</sup> W.B. Paley (ed.), *Select Cases in Chancery A.D. 1364-1471* (Selden Society, 1896), 64.

<sup>79</sup> *Cal. Charter R.* vi, 37; P.R.O. E146/2/14.

<sup>80</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 128; *Cal. Pat.* (1452-61), 27.

<sup>81</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 145; *Cal. Pat.* (1396-9), 350. In Shotover Forest the same man, Richard Forester, was described as riding forester in 1337 and as ranger in 1345: *Boarstall Cartulary*, 172, *Cal. Pat.* (1345-8), 20.

<sup>82</sup> Salter, *Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 107.

<sup>83</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1452-61), 297; Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 104.

<sup>84</sup> P.R.O. LR2/189 f. 83.

The fact that the bridge at Burford had replaced the county boundary as a boundary point suggests that the arable fields and downs to the west of a line leading more or less directly from Burford to the Glyme near Enstone were no longer regarded as being in the forest. In the south-eastern part of Wychwood the description implies that the woods of Eynsham and Cogges were included, but it is not clear whether Stanton Harcourt's woodland was. However, none of these was to be found in the next record of the extent of the forest, the Survey of Wychwood of 1609, although in other respects this agrees with the above description.<sup>85</sup>

The description ignores the fact that in 1480 a 'New Forest', with the new position of its forester, had been created in the northern part of Wychwood, its bounds being given as 'from the town of Charlbury to the said [Woodstock] park, and from the water of Combe [the Evenlode] to the water of Glyme'.<sup>86</sup> This may, however, merely have meant that the responsibility for Wychwood was shared, since in 1482 the New Forest was said to be within the Forest of Wychwood.<sup>87</sup>

This New Forest was possibly the one which, it was claimed, was disafforested by Richard III, although men continued to be appointed to the position of keeper or ranger there until 1604.<sup>88</sup> Some royal officials presumably believed that it had been disafforested, since in 1596, when the royal woods near Woodstock were leased out, they were described in the Particulars for Lease as being 'within the olde precincte of the Forest of Whichwood but not used or reputed as parcell of the same Forest within the memory of man'.<sup>89</sup>

James I came to the throne intending to enforce the forest laws which, he claimed, were 'as ancient and authentic as the Great Charter'.<sup>90</sup> The principal Wychwood record arising from this was the Survey of 1609, prepared so that the holder's title to assarts could be verified and that rents could be re-imposed on all assart lands in the forest. The area covered by the survey lay within that described in 1555, with the exception of the woods of Eynsham and Cogges, which were not recorded, and definitely included the area of the New Forest. With the general decline in the administration of the forests the payment to the Crown of assart rents had lapsed, and in the end bills had to be prepared to force some of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to compound with Otho Nicholson, the collector of the money raised in this way.<sup>91</sup>

Charles I was ambivalent about the forests. He disafforested some, and either sold or leased the royal land and woods in them in order to raise money, a process which had begun in his father's reign. But on those which remained he re-imposed the Forest Law, forced the holding of courts which had lapsed, and re-introduced 'justice seats', the equivalent of the earlier eyres or inquisitions.<sup>92</sup> Local forest courts were held in Wychwood in 1635, 1636 and 1638, and an eyre at Oxford in 1637. These courts were attended only by representatives of the vills in and around the royal demesne woodland, and dealt with offences in that region.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Schumer, *Oxfordshire Forests*, 161–218.

<sup>86</sup> *Cal. Pat.* (1476–85), 177.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>88</sup> T. Hearne, *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliae*, 1716, 16; *Cal. S. P. Dom.* (1603–10), 152.

<sup>89</sup> P.R.O. E310/22/120, no. 28.

<sup>90</sup> R. Grant, *The Royal Forests of England*, 187, citing *Cal. S.P. Add* (1580–1625), 451–2.

<sup>91</sup> *Cal. S. P. Dom.* (1598–1601), 522; *Cal. S. P. Dom.* (1611–18), 20; *Cal. S. P. Dom.* (1623–5), 571. The (undated) documents calendared in the 1598–1601 volume have been incorrectly assigned to ?1600. They must date from 1609 or later.

<sup>92</sup> Grant, *Royal Forests*, 188–91.

<sup>93</sup> P.R.O. C99/93, C116/203, C99/91.

They seem to have been accepted calmly, but possibly being in the forest had always been quite acceptable to the people of that area since they held right of common in the extensive royal woodland – and long ago Edward I had threatened to withdraw such rights if the private woods were taken out of the forest.<sup>94</sup> But there was no such area north of the Evenlode to reconcile the inhabitants to being in a forest, and when in 1638 another eyre was held at Woodstock by the king's Chief Justice of the Forest south of Trent, Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, it caused considerable protest. A petition was presented to Parliament which maintained that at that time 'a perambulation was formed and certain parts not previously within the regard of Wychwood were included therein'.<sup>95</sup> The presumed result of this 'perambulation' was given in a Patent Roll by which the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery was appointed as warden of the 'bailiwick of the honour of Woodstock within the Forest of Whichwood', which was to consist of: 'those parts of Whichwood Forest which extend to the towns of Old and New Woodstock, Bladon, Easham, Staunton Harcourt, Southleigh, Cogges, Witney, Widford, Langley, Minster Lovell, Shipton under Whichwood, Pudlicote, Fyfield, Taynton, Idbury, Bruerne, Sarsdenn, Deane, Chadlinton, Spellsbury, Charlbury, Fawler, Willcott, Northleighe, Hamborrowe, Combe, Stonsfield, Dytchleye, Taston, Fallwell, Neat Enston, Clyvely, Radford, Upper Kiddinton, Asterly, Glympton, Wotton, Hardley and Durnford and their precincts'.<sup>96</sup>

This re-afforested the vills to the west of Burford, some of which had rarely been mentioned in forest records even when that system was at its height, and also Old and New Woodstock, Bladon, Hordley and Dornford, which had not been in the forest since 1229. There was some justification for including Bladon and Hordley, since their woods lay within the pre-1300 bounds, but Old and New Woodstock and Dornford were presumably named only because they were among 'seven towns' of Woodstock manor.

Of the tenants of those 'towns' 118 signed the petition to Parliament mentioned above, not only complaining at the enlargement of the forest, but also stating that:

the said towns and others adjacent, most of which were without the Forest of Wichwood, had been made subject to the forest laws and jurisdiction; that Sir William Ravie, a Frenchman, had been made Ranger and John Watson, Esqr. Steward, and had compelled divers of the petitioners, and others, to serve on juries, at courts of swanmote and other courts, or had fines imposed for their absence; that they had been injured in their rights of vert and venison and that some of them had been sent to London in custody for felling wood on their own grounds.

The people of Wychwood were not alone in suffering from Charles I's attempts to impose and widen the scope of the Forest Law, and in 1641 Parliament forced him to accept *An Act for the Certainty of Forests and for the Meets Meeres Limits and Bounds of the Forests*, by which their boundaries were to be 'those commonly reputed, used or taken in the twentieth year of James I'.<sup>97</sup> It is interesting to note that in the preamble to the Act the perambulations of Edward I were cited, as if Parliament understood them to be the last legal definitions of the bounds of the forests.

<sup>94</sup> *Cal. Close R.* (1302-7), 23, no. 135.

<sup>95</sup> E. Marshall, *The Early History of Woodstock Manor and its Environs in Bladon, Hensington, New Woodstock and Blenheim, with Other Notices* (1873), 177. Marshall dates this petition to 1617, but that must be incorrect on two counts – Henry Rich did not become Earl of Holland until 1624, and was not appointed as a Forest Justice until 1631. A writ to the Sheriff of Oxfordshire states that the Woodstock Eyre was to be held on 27th August 1638 (P.R.O. C99/90).

<sup>96</sup> Patent Roll transcribed in V.J. Watney, *Cornbury and the Forest of Wychwood*, Appendix X, 224. The date is given as 19 January 1638.

<sup>97</sup> *Statutes of the Realm* v, 119.

Subsequently an inquisition was held to determine the bounds of Wychwood as understood in the twentieth year of James I, and the result was the second document quoted by Akerman in his article.<sup>98</sup> The boundary described in it agreed almost exactly with that in the second section of the 1300 perambulation, but excluded Finstock and also Cornbury Park and Langley. The centuries-old connection between Langley and the forest had been broken during the reign of Elizabeth I, and from this time forward it was regarded as a separate manor and was no longer the home of the keeper of Wychwood. The area described was only the demesne woodland, which had always belonged entirely to the king, and this remained as royal property until the final disafforestation of Wychwood in 1857.

The inquisition finally freed the villas north of the Evenlode and those in the south-eastern part of the forest (Hanborough, Eynsham, Stanton Harcourt, Cogges and North Leigh) from any vestige of Forest Law. It made no reference to the private woods around the surviving forest, but later records make it plain that these purlieu woods were still to some extent under the surveillance of the person responsible for Wychwood. Each of the five keepers in Wychwood in the 18th and 19th centuries had some of the private woods included in his 'walk', as well as a part of the royal woodland.<sup>99</sup> The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages continued to have rights of common within the royal woodland, since those rights had been protected under the Act. Both the surveillance and the common rights were extinguished only at the time of the final disafforestation.

In preparation for that event the last description of the bounds of the forest and of the purlieu was made, and it is minutely detailed, following the walls, hedges and lines of posts which marked the boundaries, and recording the pigsties, gardens and other encroachments made by the villagers of Leafield and Langley on the soil of the forest.<sup>100</sup> To readers in the 21st century this provides a picture of a now vanished landscape, but to Akerman it was the present, and he was more interested in Wychwood's past.

In his article on the forests Petit-Dutaillis had confidently headed his penultimate paragraph, in which he fixed on 1327 as the turning point in their history, 'The question settled', but study of the few surviving records of Wychwood shows that another 300 years were to elapse before that state was reached. Young was probably more correct than he knew when he described the perambulations of c. 1300 as 'little more than a curious episode in the long history of the Forest',<sup>101</sup> since it seems that, in spite of the fact that they were confirmed in Parliament on at least four occasions after Edward I had revoked them, and were cited in 1641, the kings and the forest officials, for most of the time, treated them as irrelevant. To the people in and around the forest, who retained a memory that their land and woods had been disafforested more than once, they were a continuing cause of dispute and resentment, mitigated only by increasing laxity in the administration of the Forest Law. At the present day their value lies chiefly in the exceptional information they give about the landscape and the tenurial structure of the Wychwood region at the end of the 13th century.

<sup>98</sup> P.R.O. C205/17/3/2, transcribed on pp. 438-40 of J.Y. Akerman 'A View of the Ancient Limits of the Forest of Wychwood', *Archaeologia* 37, 1857. It is also recorded as Appendix 1 of the '10th Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State and Condition of the Woods Forests and Land Revenues of the Crown ...', *Journals of the House of Commons* xlvii, 238.

<sup>99</sup> The walks are described in Appendix 7 of the above report, 246 ff.

<sup>100</sup> *Declaration of the Boundaries of the Forest and Purlieus...*

<sup>101</sup> C. Petit-Dutaillis, *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History*, 232; C.R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Mediaeval England*, 140.

## APPENDIX

*The men who perambulated Wychwood*

The 1298 perambulation was carried out by two justices, John Gilberd and Roger de Hegham, who had been appointed to perambulate the forests in the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Southampton and Wiltshire on 8 February 1298 [*Cal. Pat.* (1292-1301), 329]. There were only two Oxfordshire men to assist them, neither of whom held land in Wychwood. These were John de Preus (Préaux), who held the manor of Great Tew in 1279 and 1284, and settled it on his son Ralph in 1304 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 230] and Walter de Wyghthulle, who in 1279 held three hides in Whitehill, in Tackley, which was inherited in 1304 by his son John [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 199].

They were presumably accompanied by the forester, verderers and other officials of Wychwood, as was the case in 1300, when there were three justices and a much larger jury. The justices were Roger de Brabazon, Ralph de Hengham and William Inge who were appointed on 23 September 1299, with this appointment being repeated on 12 November of the same year [*Cal. Pat.* (1292-1303), 441, 454].

The jurors were selected by the sheriff, and as can be seen they varied in status from knights of the shire such as Fulk de Rycote and Henry de Bruylly to minor landholders. Adam de Dounhalle and John de Honyngton certainly held land within Wychwood Forest at that date and presumably Robert of Ascott, Nicholas Brown and Richard de Cornwelle did also, but the other perambulators came from a wide area of the rest of the county. One poor man, Walter Hosel, had to come from Oxfordshire's detached manor of Lillingstone Lovell. He presumably knew something about Whittlewood, since Lillingstone lay in that forest, but can have had little knowledge of Wychwood. Information gained in an attempt to identify the jurors is as follows:

*Stephen of Abingdon* is presumably the man who held (with Nicholas de Kingston) four carucates in [Brize?] Norton in 1279 [*Rotuli Hundredorum* (hereafter *Rot. Hund.*) ii, 693].

*Robert of Ascott*, with John de Honyngton and Nicholas Brun the elder, below, and others, assisted at the allocation of land at Churchill, in dower, to Joan, widow of Roger de Nowers, in 1299 [*Cal. Close R.* (1296-1302), 311]. He was also named as a witness to an agreement about common rights in Wychwood between the Earl of Warwick and the Abbot of Eynsham in 1305 [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 178], and was presumably the man who had been a coroner but in September 1303 was in prison for trespasses in Wychwood [*Cal. Close R.* (1302-1307), 54].

*Hugh de Barton* held the manor of Westcott Barton in 1316 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 77] and in 1302 was a juror at a special inquisition into land in Wychwood Forest [*Oxfordshire Forests*, 102].

*William Bernard* held a messuage and half a virgate of land in Stanton St John in 1279 [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 713], acted as juror at the special inquisition to decide whether the Abbot of Eynsham should have his woods in Shotover freed from regard in 1306 [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 211] and served as regarnder for the forest of Shotover and Stowood in 1328 and 1339 [*Oxfordshire Forests*, 146, 149]. These references may be to two men, possibly father and son.

*Nicholas Brown junior* was a juror at the special inquisition held in 1306 to decide whether the Abbot of Eynsham should have his woods in Wychwood freed from regard [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 212]. In 1279 a Nicholas Brown/Brun, presumably his father, held two virgates in Churchill [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 746]. See also under Robert of Ascott.

*Henry de Bruylly*, knight, held Waterstock in right of his wife, who inherited it in 1276, and was knight of the shire for Oxfordshire in 1297 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* vii, 222]. In 1279 he was one

of the mesne lords of Thomley [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 714]. With Thomas de Parco, Fulk de Rycote, William de Scalebrok (see below) and others, he witnessed the grant in 1301 of Rotherfeud Pippard (now Rotherfield Peppard) by Ralph Pippard to Hugh le Despencer [*Cal. Pat.* (1292-1301), 600]. He served overseas in 1297 and 1298 and against the Scots in 1301 [*Knights of Edward I vol. I A-E*, Harleian Society vol. 80, 152].

*Richard de Caune/Canne* held one carucate of land in Kirtlington in 1279 [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 822].

*Richard de Cornwelle* was possibly Richard of Cornwall, illegitimate son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of Germany. He inherited Asthall *c.* 1300, and died in December of that year [*Knights of Edward I vol. I A-E*, Harleian Society vol. 80, 239].

*Adam de Dounhalle* held half a knight's fee in Hanborough (Downhill Farm) and died in 1309 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xiii, 164].

*Henry le Espicer* of Chipping Norton is not positively identified. A Henry le Spicer was a juror at an enquiry about a mill in Tackley in 1328 [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 220] and a Henry Spicer was regarder of Wychwood in 1342 [*Oxfordshire Forests*, 152].

*Gilbert de Gay* held the estate of Brookfurlong/Norbrook in Oddington in 1284-5 [*Feudal Aids* iv, 158], and in 1299 witnessed a deed regarding the manor of Boarstall [*Boarstall Cartulary*, 107].

*John son of Guy* (John FitzWith) held two hides of land in Weston and was the mesne lord of Wardington and Cleydon in 1279 [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 817, 706, 707]. He also held the manor of Ardley and a fee in Wigginton, where he was succeeded in 1309 by his son Robert [*V.C.H. Oxon.* vi, 9; ix, 161]. He was knight of the shire for Oxfordshire in 1290, and was summoned to serve overseas in 1297 and 1298, and in Scotland in 1301 [*Knights of Edward I vol. II F-K*, Harleian Society vol. 81, 152].

*John de Haddon* is probably the man of that name who held six virgates in Haddon, in Bampton Hundred, in 1279 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xiii, 87]. A man of the same name had been verderer of Wychwood in 1256 [*Oxfordshire Forests*, 34].

*John de la Hide*: among men of this name are those who in 1279 held one hide in South Newington and Alkerton, in Newington and in Shutford (four virgates called La Hide), a man who held two virgates in Churchill, and a free tenant in Little Tew [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 150; *Rot. Hund.* ii, 848-9, 707, 746, 875]. A John de la Hyde served as juryman in 1295, with Ralph of Sutton and Robert de Romeny junior (see below), to decide a dispute about the diversion of a stream in Garsington [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 340].

*Ralph de la Hide*: the only record found to date is of a Ralph Hyde, clerk, who was granted the manor of Gatehampton in 1348 [*Boarstall Cartulary*, 59].

*John de Honyngton* of Chadlington held two virgates in Chadlington in 1279 [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 747] and in 1306 was a juror at the inquisition to decide whether the Abbot of Eynsham could have his woods in Wychwood freed from regard [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 212]. See also under Robert of Ascott.

*Walter Hosel* of Lillingstone: no other reference to him has yet been found, but in 1272 a John Hosel of Lillingstone was fined for default at the Oxfordshire Forest Eyre [*Oxfordshire Forests*, 95].

*Robert Neel (Nel)* of Woodperry in 1279 was on the jury for Bullingdon Hundred and held a piece of land in Stanton St John and three virgates and a piggery in the lord's woods in

Woodperry [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 720, 713, 717]. In 1300 he, with William de Scalebrok and Robert de Stoke (see below) was a juror at a dispute about common of pasture in Goring [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 347]. In 1306 he was a juror at the inquisition as to whether the Abbot of Eynsham could have his woods in Shotover free from regard [*Eynsham Cartulary* ii, 211]. In 1309 he witnessed a deed whereby Philip de Mimekan (forester of Shotover and Stowood) granted his bailiwick (except his lands in Headington) to John de Haudlo (forester of Bernwood), and in 1316 witnessed another whereby Mimekan's widow quit-claimed her rights to dower in Shotover and Stowood [*Boarstall Cartulary*, 116, 117].

*Thomas de Parco*, knight, was lord of Brightwell in 1279, holding one carucate of land and the advowson of the church of William de Scalebrook, and was also a mesne lord of Warpsgrove [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 765, 755]. He witnessed charters of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, in 1300 and Ralph Pippard in 1301 (see under Bruylly) [*Knights of Edward I vol. IV P-S*, Harleian Society vol. 83, 5].

*Robert de Romeny junior* in 1279 held a messuage and land in Steeple Aston from his father, also Robert de Romeny, and he inherited the manor in 1301 [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 862, 863; *V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 27]. With Ralph de Sutton (below) and John de la Hyde (above) he was a juror at a dispute in 1295 about the diversion of a stream in Garsington [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 340].

*Fulk de Rucote (Rycote)*, knight, lord of Rycote. 'The lords each bore the name Fulk from 1200 to 1300' [*Boarstall Cartulary*, 307]. In 1292 he was on the jury to decide a dispute about the advowson of Chadlington chapel [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 328], and in 1301 witnessed a deed of Ralph Pippard (see under Bruylly). He was summoned to serve overseas in 1297, and died in 1302. [*Knights of Edward I vol. 4 P-S*, Harleian Society vol. 83, 161].

The next juror is named as William de Sharebrook, but should almost certainly be *William de Scalebrok*. He held Little Haseley in 1279, and was also a mesne lord of Thomley and of Warpsgrove [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 764, 714, 755]. In 1298 and 1306-7 he was knight of the shire for Oxfordshire [*Knights of Edward I vol. IV P-S*, Harleian Society vol. 83, 233-4], and in 1301 he was one of the men appointed to collect taxes in that county [*Cal. Pat.* (1292-1301), 612]. In 1300 he was a juror, with Robert de Stoke and Robert Neel, at a dispute about common of pasture in Goring [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 347] and in 1309 witnessed the deed whereby Philip Mimekan granted the forest of Shotover and Stowood to John de Haudlo [*Boarstall Cartulary*, 116].

*Robert de Stoke*: there may be more than one man with this name. In 1279 a Robert de Stoke was on the jury for Bampton hundred, and held messuages and land in Bampton Doyley, Filkins and Langford [*Rot. Hund.* ii, 688, 691, 697, 700]. A Robert de Stoke, possibly a different man, was one of the jurors, with William de Scalebrook and Robert Neel, at a dispute in 1300 about common of pasture in Goring, and he may have come from North or South Stoke, in that area [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 347].

*Ralph de Sutton* married a daughter of Hugh of Tew, who inherited one third of Duns Tew when her father died in 1284 [*V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 213]. Ralph is recorded as holding it in 1316 [*Feudal Aids* iv, 163]. In 1295, with John de la Hyde and Robert de Romeny junior, he had been on the jury to decide on the diversion of a stream in Garsington. [*Eynsham Cartulary* i, 340].

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