

The Witham Carthusians on Mendip

BY J. W. GOUGH, M.A.

By the terms of Henry II's charter of foundation, the Carthusians of Witham, in addition to lands around their monastery itself, received an extensive grant on Mendip, where the name Charterhouse still preserves their memory. The Dean of Wells has traced the boundaries of their property at Witham,¹ but except for a few rather hazardous suggestions made a good many years ago by Mr. H. W. Underdown,² no one, as far as I know, has yet been able to tell us much about their land on Mendip. Its boundaries were minutely specified in the charter, where we read as follows :³

‘ Preter hec [i.e. the lands at Witham] dedi eis ad pasturas eorum apud terram de Chedderford. Ab Harechina in Hindcomesenda ; usque ad Letherberga. De Letherberga ; usque ad Steinberga. De steinberga ; usque ad Hoppewelle. De Hoppewelle usque ad Staberga. De Staberga ; usque ad Sgaldeberga. De Sgaldeberga ; usque ad Stanam et Banam. Et inde usque ad Petram perforatam ; per medium putei. Et de petra perforata ; usque ad Schinindecliue. Et inde per uallem : usque ad Faldam Latronum. Et inde usque ad Kingduneswestende. De Kingduneswestenda ; per uallem uersus orientem ; usque ad uiam que uadit de Pridia usque ad

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxiv (1918), ii, 1-28.

² *Som. & Dor. Notes and Queries*, ix (1904), 110-111.

³ Transcribed from the original charter in Wells Cathedral library in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, loc. cit. The charter is also printed, but with divergences, in Dugdale, *Mon. Angl.* vi, 1, and was thence reprinted by Hoare, *Monastic Remains of Witham, Bruton and Stavordale*, pp. 9-10.

Chedderford. Et inde supra pratum Johannis Marescalli ; usque ad petram de Pempelestorna. De pempelestorna ; per semitam usque ad collem prati Malherbe. Et inde ad Harestana inter pratum regis et pratum Malherbe. Et de Harestona usque ad petram semite que ducit ad Hindesgrauam. Et de Hindesgraua ; usque ad latam uiam. Et inde usque ad Spinam paruam. Et de illa spina ; usque ad Hedewoldestinga. De hedewoldestiga ; usque ad puteum inter pratum regis et pratum Rugaberga. De puteo illo ; usque ad Redemera. et inde usque ad petram que facit diuisam inter pratum regis. et pratum de Rugaberga. De petra illa ; usque ad aliam petram. Et de illa petra ; usque ad Petram de Cliua. Et de petra de Cliua ; usque ad Latam petram. Et de Lata petra ; usque ad Melcstiesenda.¹ De Melcstiesenda ; usque ad Stanrodam. Et inde ad Begesethle. De begesethle ; usque ad Elweie. De Elweie ; ad Sigodesfeld. Et inde per uallem de Smeletuma ; usque ad Croftam Rogeri. De crofta Rogeri ; usque ad Rugelega. De rugelega ; De Rugelega² ; ad Clotlega. De clotlega ; usque ad Crucem de Melweia.¹ Et inde ; usque ad Smeletuma. De Smeletoma, usque ad Lefwiesmere. Et inde ; ad Snedelesputte. Et inde ; ad Eilsiesmede. Et inde ad Bikwelle. Et inde ; ad suthemeste Rodberga. Et inde ad furcas. De furcis ; per cauum ductum ad platam petram. Et de plata petra ; ad Horswelle. De horswelle ; ad hindeswelle. Et inde ad Walborgam. De Walborga ; ad Harachinam.'

I must confess at once that I cannot pretend to have succeeded in identifying all these place-names : most of them, in fact, have defeated me as completely as my predecessors, but a certain number of them can, I think, be located with varying degrees of certainty, and it may be worth while to make sure how much we know and how much we do not. To begin with, the pastures are said to be ' apud terram de *Chedderford* ' : let us see, then, what we can discover about this. We shall find the Pipe Rolls³ helpful, for it is mentioned there constantly for

¹ These names have been printed as *Melestiesenda* and *Meleweia*, but inspection of the original MS. shows that the second *e* in each case should be a *c*.

² Twice in the MS.

³ As printed by the Pipe Roll Society, except that for 1 Richard I, printed by the Record Commissioners.

a number of years. Hugh de Gundeville held it for an annual rent of forty shillings from the 5th to the 27th year of Henry II's reign, but we must notice that while in thirteen years the name appears as Cedresford' or Chederesford', in nine years it is spelt *Cedresfeld'*. In the roll for 27 Henry II the name Hugh de Gundeville is underlined for deletion, and neither he nor the place occurs in the roll for the next year. For 30 Henry II the entry is 'Mather Wallop xxs. quos habuit hoc anno in Chedereford per breve regis', and then in 31 Henry II we read: 'Et fratribus Chartuse commorantibus apud Witham xls. in pastura de Cedresford' per breve regis'. Similar entries recur for the next four years, but in three of them the form Cedrefeld' or Cedrefelda reappears; then, after an interval, Ceddreford or Ceddeford returns once more in the course of Henry III's reign.

It appears, then, from the Pipe Rolls that this pasture, formerly held by Hugh de Gundeville and latterly by the Carthusians, was known both as *Ceddreford* and as *Ceddrefeld*, and we wonder whether either of these forms was more correct than the other. If we accept *Ceddrefeld*, it might denote an area—possibly the hill-country above Cheddar, but if the name should be *Ceddreford*, perhaps we ought to look out for a definite spot. It is, of course, possible that there was at the same time an area called Ceddrefeld and a spot called Ceddreford, and that the Witham land was known indifferently by either name; but the form Ceddreford occurs somewhat more frequently than the other, not only in the Pipe Rolls but elsewhere also, and under conditions which certainly suggest a definite spot. In the first place, the Witham charter mentions 'the road leading from Priddy to Chedderford', and secondly, 'Cheddeford' and 'Ceddreford' occur as a point in Perambulations of the Forest of Mendip in the reigns of Henry III and Edward I; furthermore it is as Cedderford (*Ceddreford* or *Cedreford*) that the name is spelt in the Patent Rolls about this time.¹

¹ In 1261 the Bishop of Bath and Wells and certain others, 'knights and free men' of the neighbourhood, complained that the Carthusians, under cover of a royal licence to enclose the lands within their metes at Witham and Ceddreford, had also enclosed and occupied lands belonging to the complainants outside the said metes, together with certain 'common pastures belonging to

The name would imply, presumably, a ford over a stream, and there is only one stream on the southern slope of Black Down which could possibly have boasted of a ford, namely the one which is crossed by the road from Charterhouse to Shipham, not far from Lower Farm: moreover, this road follows the course of an ancient trackway,¹ and it is likely enough that there would have been a ford at this point. Part of the stream is now tapped higher up by the Axbridge District Water Works, and the rest disappears into a swallet near the farm, but it is evidently one of the sources of the Cheddar water, so that the name Cheddar-ford sounds a probable one, and it is possible that years ago the stream was a larger affair than it is nowadays. For the moment let us accept the hypothesis that Cheddarford was a ford over this stream near Lower Farm.²

Turning now to the circuit of the Witham lands as described in the charter, we shall find some assistance in the Perambulation of the Forest of Mendip, as performed on May 10, 1298, when a large number of vills, wrongly included within the forest in King John's reign, were declared to be disafforested.³ Our circuit begins at 'Harechina in Hindcomesenda', but let us leave this for the time being, and pass on to the fifth point, 'Staberga'. This is the point where the forest perambulations began, *Stoburghe*, now called *Stowbarrow*, a large tumulus in a

their free tenements in those parts'. Feeling evidently ran high, for the Carthusians in turn complained that some men from the neighbourhood had thrown down and burnt their dikes and hedges, and had actually buried one of their men alive. The upshot was that an inquiry was instituted, presided over by Braeton himself, and a few years later the king declared that as he was bound 'to defend the deeds of his ancestors, and especially the grant which Henry II . . . made to the prior and brethren of Witham . . . in Witham and Cedreford', he therefore prohibited anyone from 'entering any of the lands which they held there within the metes contained in the charter of the said king'. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1258-1266, pp. 165, 184, 412.)

¹ The Ordnance Map marks it as a Roman road, and it is in fact part of the road which Sir Richard Hoare claimed to have traced from Old Sarum to Uphill. Prof. Haverfield (*V.C.H. Som.* i, 350) questioned its authenticity, but there is reason to think that in reality it was of pre-Roman origin.

² Preb. Palmer tells me that Preb. Lambrick of Blagdon first suggested this spot as the site of Cheddarford.

³ Cf. the note at the end of this article.

clump of trees about half a mile N.E. of Priddy Hill Farm, at the meeting-point of the parishes of Priddy, West Harptree and Charterhouse.¹ Taking this as our starting-point, let us go in each direction.

I. *South-west from Stowbarrow.*

<i>Witham Charter.</i>	<i>Forest Perambulation.</i>
<i>Stoberga</i>	<i>Stoburghe</i>
<i>Sgaldeberga</i>	_____
[ad] <i>Stanam et Banam</i>	_____
[ad] <i>Petram perforatam</i>	<i>le Thurleston</i>
<i>Schinindecliue</i>	<i>la Schynyndecliffe</i>

The bounds are anyhow in part identical, possibly entirely, but with the Charterhouse boundaries given in greater detail: possibly, however, between Stowbarrow and the ‘petra perforata’ the Charterhouse boundary ran further to the eastward, and included a portion of Priddy parish.² No sign of a ‘petra perforata’ survives to-day,³ but it was most probably the same stone as that referred to in a forest perambulation of 1219, when the line ran ‘de Stabḡ usque ad magnam petram que stat in diviz̄n̄ inter monachos de Chartuse et manerium de Stok Whitanḡ’, and a perambulation of 1279 evidently describes the same bounds: ‘de Stobureghe usque ad lapidem que vocatur Giffardeston que stat in divisa inter fratres de Charthuse et manerium de Stotwiteng’.⁴

Schinindecliue, I feel sure, we can identify with *Sun Cliff*, a

¹ One need hardly point out the absurdity of the statement in *Rep. Hist. MSS. Com.* iii, 355b, that ‘Stoberg’, whence the perambulation started, was Stoberry above Wells.

² Cf. *infra*, p. 94, n.

³ The Dean of Wells, I understand, has been somewhat inclined to connect the ‘petra perforata’ with a curious hollow water-worn stone, marked on the six-inch Ordnance Map, at the gate of Cheddar Head Farm, but it is not in the right place, though near it.

⁴ This name is puzzling, but I think it must mean Rodney Stoke, called Stoke Giffard in the list of vills disafforested in 1298, when it was held by Johannes Basset and Ricardus de Rodeney. Rodney Stoke parish to-day reaches as far as Sun Cliff, but there is reason to think that the area of the manor was larger, extending into Priddy parish, for in the description of the bounds of the Bishop’s territory on Mendip (printed in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* xxxvii (1891), ii, 89) it is stated that Rodney Stoke perambulation used to include a point in ‘Priddy Marsh’ (a region about half a mile N.E. of Priddy church).

little rocky escarpment just above the road, a quarter of a mile S.E. of Cheddar Head Farm.¹ Hereabouts our ways part company, the forest perambulation continuing in a south-westerly direction towards the edge of the hills, while we go north-westwards, 'per uallem', which can only mean the Cheddar Head valley itself. Preb. Palmer tells me that he connects the 'falda latronum' with an almost dead tradition of a cave, where sheep-stealers were said to have lived, on the slope opposite Cheddar Head Farm, but it now appears to have been filled up, for there is nothing to be seen of it. If this is so, we are still on the right track, and can follow the Charterhouse parish boundary down the road towards Cheddar. Our next points are 'Kingduneswestende', and thence 'per uallem uersus orientem, usque ad uiam que uadit de Pridia usque ad Chedderford'. Looking at the map, we see that the Charterhouse parish boundary goes down the road past Cheddar Head Farm for about half a mile, and then, turning to the right, crosses the hill to the other road, which it follows up the valley to the eastward. Near here must be the 'west end of King Down', but the parish boundary apparently diverges about this point from the old boundary, for the former in about half a mile leaves the road and swings round again to the westward towards Wellington Farm, while the latter must have proceeded as far as the Priddy-Charterhouse road, which crosses the Cheddar road at King Down Farm itself. After this we lose sight of it, but we have at any rate established a section of a mile or two.

Now let us try the other direction, and here we shall find help in a perambulation of the mining liberty of Harptree or Richmond, made on June 10, 1768, which, as can be seen from the map preserved with it at the Waldegrave Estate Office at Chewton Mendip, follows hereabouts the West Harptree parish boundary, which for some distance is also the boundary of Charterhouse.

¹ Cf. in Lord Bath's version of the 1298 perambulation 'descendendo & ascendendo usque Schynendecluye', an unmistakable indication of crossing the Cheddar Head valley. And in view of the phrase 'per medium putei' in the Witham bounds it is interesting (though perhaps a modern accident) that the boundary-wall to-day at the foot of the slope here passes through the middle of a pond. 'Puteus', however, may mean only a pit.

II. North-west from Stowbarrow.

Witham Charter. Forest Perambulation. Harptree Perambulation.

[Stenberg, obviously
should be]

<i>Staberga</i>	<i>Stobergh</i>	<i>Stowbarrow</i>
<i>Hoppewelle</i>	_____	<i>Hopewell Corner</i>
<i>Steinberga</i>	<i>Stenebergh</i>	<i>Stangbarrow</i>
<i>Letherberga</i>	_____	
<i>Harechina</i> in	<i>la Horeclive</i>	
<i>Hindcomesenda</i>		
<i>Walborga</i>	_____	
<i>hindselle</i>	<i>Hyndewell</i>	

Here we have an unmistakable identity, along the boundary dividing Charterhouse parish on the s.w. from West Harptree, Ubley and Blagdon on the n.e. Hoppewelle or Hopewell Corner is probably where the Cheddar road is crossed, half a mile n.e. of King Down Farm. Stangbarrow is a conspicuous barrow, a quarter of a mile s. of Ubley Warren Farm, on the top of which three parish boundaries and four walls meet like a cross. The Harptree perambulation here diverges to the n.e. and does not help us any more, but it has made this last mile absolutely certain.

Continuing, Harechina may well be the same as la Horeclive, and I think the spot may be identified as the series of little rocky cliffs and cuttings just behind 'Bleak House' (once the manager's house at the lead-works sixty years ago, now a ruin), through the midst of which the boundary wall to-day clammers up and down.¹ If this is so, then 'Hindcome' may mean the valley now called Velvet Bottom, and 'Hindcomesenda' the top of it. I do not know where 'Hyndewell' or 'hindselle' was, but the name suggests a connection with 'Hindcome': perhaps it is the spring close to Charterhouse Manor Farm. On the other hand, the forest perambulation says: 'abinde (sc. Cheddeford) usque quoddam fossatum usque Hyndewell', and thence to 'la Horeclive', etc., and one might connect the 'quoddam fossatum' with the cuttings just mentioned, in

¹ These cuttings are obviously artificial, and almost certainly were made in search of lead, but the rocks are very much weathered, and the whole place looks ancient, and is quite different in appearance from the ordinary rough ground one sees about the hills in the parts where mines were at work in more recent times. Is it possible that the Roman mines were here?

which case Hyndewell might be a spring in the minery valley itself. However that may be, after this we are lost again for a time: the Witham charter does not mention Chedderford as a point in the bounds, and I am inclined to think that our boundary may have run more to the northwards, and included Black Down.¹

¹ A seventeenth-century inventory of the manor of Charterhouse Hydon (which was the lineal successor to the Witham property here) speaks of 'Black Downe' as 'a Comon belonginge to the Lord without Stinte and to some of his Ten^{ts} with Stinte' (*Jefferies MSS.* [Bristol Central Library], xv, 113). It would be unsafe to attach much weight to this alone, but confirmation may be found in *L. & P. Henry VIII*, xix, ii, 340 (20), which records the grant after the Dissolution of the 'manor or grange of Hydon' to Robert May, and describes it as lying in the parishes of 'Witham Frarye, Blagden and Predye'. But one must compare with this Grant no. 690 (35) in the same volume, in which the 'manor or grange of Hydon and lands in Hydon' are said to be 'within the parishes . . . of Witham Frarye Blakdown, Cheddar and Predi'. It looks as if 'Witham Frarye, Blagden' were intended to be the same as 'Wytham Frarye Blakdown', and possibly Blagdon parish is not meant at all, but it may be that the parish now called Charterhouse-on-Mendip used to be distinguished as 'Witham Friary Blackdown' from the parish of Witham Friary proper. Hydon was apparently the mediaeval name of this region (cf. *Cal. Close Rolls, 1234-1237*, p. 86, when the Bishop was granted leave to work the mines there), and it has been preserved in the manor of Charterhouse Hydon down to recent times. It may be worth pointing out that Collinson's account of Charterhouse and the Witham properties (*History of Somerset*, vol. ii) is decidedly muddled. On p. 235 he tells us of the grant of *Charterhouse-on-Mendip*, as part of the possessions of Witham, to Robert May. Then on p. 236 he speaks of *Hydon Grange*, s.e. from Charterhouse, which also belonged to Witham Friary, and was included in the same grant, and 'in the old terriers', he says, 'it is called *Temple-Hydon* and *Charterhouse-Hydon*. Southward from Hydon', he continues, 'is *Billerica*, another ancient grange of the same monastery . . .' It is true that Witham had a property called *Billerica* or *Bellerica*, but it was not on Mendip: in descriptions of Witham territory it goes along with Witham itself and Westbarn, and both *Bellerica* and *Westbarn* are still the names of farms in Witham parish. *Charterhouse-on-Mendip* is not distinct from, but the same as *Charterhouse-Hydon*, but *Charterhouse-Hydon* is to be distinguished from *Temple-Hydon*. This lay further to the eastward, in West Harptree parish, and its name survives in the present-day farms of *Temple Down* and *Haydon Grange* in that parish. It was so called because it formerly belonged to the Templars of *Templecombe*: on the suppression of the Templars in 1309 their lands were acquired by the Hospitallers, and we find *Hidon* mentioned in an inventory of their property in 1328 (*Knights Hospitallers in England* [Camden Society], p. 185). The forest boundary by the perambulation of 1298, coinciding with the parish boundary between Charterhouse and West Harptree, passed between *Charterhouse-Hydon* and *Temple-Hydon* (procedendo inter feodum *Templariorum* et feodum de *Chartruse*).

Further on, we come to 'suthemeste Rodberga. Et inde ad furcas. De furcis per cavum ductum . . .', and if these mean respectively the s.e. corner of Rowberrow and the Holloway, we know where we are again; we are once more in company with the forest perambulation, and near, if not exactly upon, the Charterhouse parish boundary, for the forest perambulation of 1298 comes hereabouts to 'Waterscombe' (? the upper part of what further down is called Rowberrow Bottóm) and then, leaving Waterscombe on the right, goes on to 'la Holeweye', which must be the Holloway, the rocky cutting traversed by the old trackway about a mile E. of Shipham. In the first of the two earlier forest perambulations already mentioned we read of the 'magnum iter quod vocatur Holeweie', and in the other the bounds ran 'de Coleweyesfote sicut divide facit inter terram Abbatis de Sancto Augustino (i.e. Rowberrow, held by the Augustinians of Bristol) et terram fratrum Carthusie'.

Practically all the rest of the bounds named in the charter remain obscure: one or two guesses have indeed been made; Knight,¹ for example, suggested that the 'puteus inter pratum regis et pratum Rugaberga', and the 'petra que facit divisam inter pratum regis et pratum de Rugaberga' might be respectively the ancient spring called Pyle Well and the Wimblestone, both near the Rowberrow-Shipham boundary, but we have no evidence that the Charterhouse land extended so far to the w. as this. The 'king's field' may refer to Cheddar, then a royal manor, and the 'pratum Malherbe' may be in Shipham, for this we know to have been held by the Malherbe family in 1298. Preb. Palmer tells me that he is inclined to connect 'Melcstiesenda' with the Milk-way, a name still surviving in the old field-road from Cheddar to Charterhouse *via* Piney Farm (cf. *Milkway Barn*, marked on the six-inch map, a little w. of the farm), and this is indeed crossed by the Charterhouse parish boundary, but without further confirmation the identification remains doubtful. Possibly the 'Cruce de Melweia' of the charter is connected with Milk-way.

One was tempted at first to believe that the land granted to

¹ Knight, *Heart of Mendip*, p. 501.

the Carthusians would prove to be co-extensive with the parish of Charterhouse-on-Mendip, which, though now served from Blagdon, was for long connected ecclesiastically with Witham. We have seen that anyhow for several miles on the eastern side there is reason to think that their boundaries coincided, but in any case they evidently were not specified with such minute accuracy as one would find in modern times. Moreover, in the passages from the Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, already quoted, it was stated explicitly that 'Hydon' included land in the parishes of Priddy and Cheddar, and possibly Blagdon also, and the description of the boundaries in the charter is so long that it certainly suggests a larger circuit than merely that of the parish. Failing the production of further evidence (e.g. old perambulations of Cheddar, or Shipham, or Rowberrow parishes, which might help to establish the identity of some of the place-names), we must rest content with saying that the Witham land on Mendip corresponded at least on part of its eastern side with the parish of Charterhouse, but that its exact extent remains doubtful.

Many writers have given currency to the notion that there was a religious house here on Mendip: it used to be common to speak of Charterhouse having been formerly a 'cell to Witham',¹ and Knight, in his chapter on the place,² while admitting that the evidence for it was slight, and that no traces of any monastic buildings survive, accepted the current belief, and declared that the traditional site of the monastery was where Charterhouse Manor Farm stands to-day. Now the foundation charter says nothing about a monastery or 'cell' here; it speaks only of 'pastures' at Chedderford, and the Pipe Rolls say the same thing.³ The theory is, however, that the 'cell' was planted here as an offshoot from Witham itself, some years after the foundation, but before 1251, for in that

¹ e.g. Dugdale, *Mon. Angl.* vi, 1; Tanner, *Not. Mon.*, Som. xxxi; Col-linson, *Hist. Som.* ii, 235; Thompson, *The Somerset Carthusians*, p. 82 (all the latter no doubt ultimately derived from Dugdale).

² *Op. cit.* p. 496 *seq.*

³ Tanner (*op. cit.*, s.v. Witham [Som. xliiii]) cites further references to Charterhouse, which again speak only of land or pastures, and Dugdale (*op. cit.* vi, 3) cites an Augmentation Office roll of Henry VIII's reign which under Hydon mentions only the 'firma grangiae'.

year there is a reference in the Patent Rolls to 'the land of the prior and brethren of the new Carthusian house in Menedep'.¹ But this need not necessarily mean that there was a new *house* in Mendip; it may equally well mean 'the land in Mendip of the new Carthusian house', viz. Witham itself, which was still young enough to be called new. If this interpretation is correct, the chief piece of evidence for a 'cell' at Charterhouse falls to the ground, and the only other scrap of contemporary evidence which might be supposed to indicate the existence of a community there is in the Patent Rolls of 1374, when Robert and William Cheddre, of Bristol, were permitted to alienate in mortmain to the prior and convent of Witham certain lands and shops in Bristol 'to find a secular chaplain to celebrate divine service daily in the church of Cheddre and do other works of charity there and in the priory of Witham . . .'.² I cannot see that this passage has any bearing on the question of a community at Charterhouse: if one existed, no doubt it would have been conveniently near for one of its members to go and read masses at Cheddar, but in that case he would presumably have been a regular, not a secular chaplain; and if it be thought that 'the priory of Witham' here means a priory or cell on Witham land at Charterhouse, one wonders what need they would have for a secular chaplain there. If a secular chaplain were needed at Charterhouse, surely the more plausible inference is that there was no religious community, but only some shepherds and miners in need of spiritual attention.

Most probably the truth is that Charterhouse remained, as it was originally granted, just a grange, a centre for pasture,³ similar to the grange or sheepsleight at Green Ore, which belonged to Hinton Charterhouse. It is likely enough that some lay brothers lived on Mendip to supervise the place, and no doubt there would have been buildings of some kind, but the idea of a regular community must, I am afraid, be dismissed as a fiction. In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of Henry VIII, the

¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1247-1258, p. 112.

² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1374-1377, p. 8; cf. *V.C.H. Somerset*, ii, 127.

³ It was also a mining centre, which it had been in Roman times, and in 1282 the Carthusians of Witham were given definite permission to work the lead-mines on their land. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1281-1292, p. 73.)

record of that inspection of monastic revenues which was the prelude to the Dissolution, there is no hint of any community there, but only of Hydon as one of the Witham estates,¹ and we have already seen that later on too it was mentioned only as a pasture or grange.² Nevertheless, it certainly came to be believed that there had been a community at Charterhouse, though it is possible that the tradition only arose since the Dissolution, perhaps as an inference from the name of the place and the survival of some buildings connected with the grange.³ The tradition apparently persisted independently of the statements of historians, for rather more than a hundred years ago the well-known Somerset antiquary, the Rev. J. Skinner, rector of Camerton, during one of his many visits to Charterhouse to investigate the Roman remains, was told by a farmer that 'there was an old mansion near belonging to the Religious of Witham Friars', but it was all in a state of decay. And it is remarkable that the site which the farmer indicated was—not Charterhouse Manor Farm—but a spot just behind Lower Farm, and close to the place I have suggested for Chedderford, and there Skinner records that he found the remains of a mill and a fishpond and garden-walls, though all much decayed, and was convinced that Lower Farm occupied the site of the Carthusian house.⁴

The visitor to the back premises of Lower Farm to-day will hardly see much to convince him of anything very definite about its past history: it is, however, probable enough that there was some residence on the monastic sheep farm, and in the valley by the stream at Chedderford, now Lower Farm, would be as likely a place for it as any.

¹ *Valor Eccles.*, i, 157.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 94, n.; also *L. & P. Henry VIII*, xx, pt. ii, no. 1068 (27), where Sir Ralph Hopton was granted 'pasture for a hundred ewes' at Hydon.

³ Cf. the case of the grange of Green Ore, which the older writers all refer to as a cell, with the additional mistake of attributing it to Glastonbury instead of Hinton Charterhouse. (Cf. Dugdale, *op. cit.* vi, 1623; Tanner, *op. cit.*, Som. xxiii; Collinson, *op. cit.* ii, 116. Bp. Hobhouse first drew attention to the error, in *Som. & Dor. Notes and Queries*, vi, 209.)

⁴ Skinner's Journals, B.M. *Add. Mss.* 33653, fol. 179, 181.

NOTE ON THE FOREST OF MENDIP

The Latin text of the Perambulation of 1298 is printed in Collinson, *History of Somerset*, iii, 58–59, and in Phelps, *History and Antiquities of Somerset*, i, 43, both from *Adam of Domerham*, ed. Hearne, i, 194–197. Hearne derived his copy through Edmund Archer from a MS. at Wells, in the possession of the Dean and Chapter, and he also printed (*op. cit.* ii, 685–686) another version from a MS. in Lord Bath's possession (cf. *Rep. Hist. MSS. Com.* iii, 201a), as he says 'cum discrepantiis haud paucis, nequaquam levibus'. Two MS. copies are preserved at Wells, one at the Bishop's Registry (cf. *Rep. Hist. MSS. Com.* i, 93a), the other in the Cathedral Library, and some corrections of the printed text are given from the latter in *Cal. Wells Dean and Chapter MSS.* i, 354. A translation of the perambulation, with a few notes, was published by Bishop Hobhouse in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* xxxvii (1891), ii, 82.

As far as I know, the bounds of the forest have never been traced exactly throughout their length, but enough of the points mentioned can be identified to afford us a fair notion of its position, and it is clear that for the greater part of its course it followed the present parish boundaries; e.g. Stowbarrow, and Sun Cliff, and presently 'descendendo' to the Axe levels, 'inter feodum manerii de Cheddre et feodum manerii abbatis Glasten' [Andredsye, now Nyland: i.e. along the boundary between Cheddar and Nyland cum Batcombe], then 'versus Clyware' [Clewes] and along the old course of the Axe, to the 'Moorhays of Axbridge', and on to a house 'quae est intra forestam in villa de Axebrugge' [the boundary of Axbridge and Compton Bishop] and so, by a lane still called Horne's Lane, 'ascendendo usque montem quae dicitur Calewe' [Callow Hill] to 'Lynleghespoule' [Lillypool Farm] and 'ascendendo per quandam vallem' [Longbottom] to 'Waterscumbe' and 'la Holeweye' [the Holloway], and on to Cheddeford, and so ultimately back to the starting-point. [Stenbergh must be a mistake for *Stobergh* here.] Nothing apparently came of this perambulation: it is doubtful whether it was ever returned into the chancery, for no record of it survives there, and in

April 1300 another perambulation was undertaken, which was confirmed by letters patent dated February 14, 1301.¹ This, the latest perambulation, covered exactly the same circuit as that of 1298, though the points named vary slightly: for instance, Sun Cliff is omitted, and the Abbot of Glastonbury's manor is named ('quod vocatur Ilonde', clearly Nyland); Stangbarrow appears as *Echenbergwe*.

Mendip had been perambulated on two previous occasions. The first was in 1219,² in pursuance of the first article of the Charter of the Forest of 1217, when Henry III agreed that the forests should be of the same dimensions as they had been at the accession of Henry II, excluding subsequent afforestations. The second was in the seventh year of Edward I's reign,³ and was in effect a repetition of that of 1219. These two perambulations did not start at Stowbarrow, but at a place called *Hilake* or *Ylake*, between Merethorne and the 'water of Cheddar'. The circuit, however, though somewhat differently (and more briefly) described, was evidently the same as that of the later perambulations.⁴

Bishop Hobhouse declared that the area thus enclosed was little more than the parishes of Cheddar and Axbridge (a statement repeated by the Dean of Wells, in his description of the efforts which Bishop Ralph de Salopia made to secure the disafforestation of his manors),⁵ but this is clearly an error, for in fact it comprised also the area of the present parish of Charterhouse-on-Mendip. For, in the first place, neither Cheddar nor Axbridge touches Stowbarrow at all; again, if the Carthusian land were now excluded from the forest, we should expect to find it mentioned in the list of villis disafforested, but we do not: on the contrary, we find in order all the parishes which adjoin Charterhouse—Shipham, Rowberrow, Burrington, Blagdon, Ubley, Compton Martin, West Harptree.

¹ *Pat. Rolls*, Supplementary 6a.

² *Chancery Miscellanea*, 12/1 (1).

³ *Ibid.* 12/2 (4).

⁴ For an account of the circumstances leading up to these various perambulations (the commissioners visited all five Somerset forests) see MacDermot, *History of the Forest of Esmoor*, p. 116 *seq.*

⁵ *Som. Rec. Soc.* vol. 39, p. 75.

Again, as we have already seen, the forest perambulations in more places than one are stated to have passed between the Carthusian land and various other lands in adjacent parishes, from which the obvious inference is that Charterhouse lay within the forest: in fact, except on this assumption it is impossible to make sense either of the forest perambulations or of the Carthusian boundaries. The monks, however, enjoyed special privileges, for in 1251 notification had been sent to 'the foresters, verderers and other bailiffs and ministers of the forest' that the Witham land was 'without the regard though within the metes of the forest, and they are to be quit for ever of regard',¹ a measure which was in accordance with a promise made in the foundation charter that they were to be free 'de essartis et regardo forestae infra terminos suos'. By 1337 Bishop Ralph at length secured the disafforestation of his manors in Cheddar and Axbridge,² after which there can have been little, if anything, left of Mendip where the forest jurisdiction still effectively prevailed. Mendip was still included from time to time in the forest inquisitions of Edward III's reign,³ but by that time forest law practically ceased to be administered, in the West of England at any rate, and though Mendip still appeared among the five Somerset forests in the appointments of wardens or foresters, and in other documents, down to the seventeenth century,⁴ this can hardly have been more than a formality.

¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1247-1258, p. 112.

² *Som. Rec. Soc.*, loc. cit.; *Cal. Charter Rolls*, 1327-1341, p. 428.

³ Cf. *Exch. T. R., For. Proc.*, no. 279.

⁴ Cf. MacDermot, *op. cit.*, pp. 177, 179, 258-9, and see the index, s.v. 'Mendip'.