

MEDIEVAL WOODLAND IN WINSCOMBE PARISH IN NORTH SOMERSET

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Summary

This article will look at woodland in the medieval landscape of the parish of Winscombe in north Somerset. Place and field-names indicate the former existence of considerable areas of woodland, and Domesday Book provides evidence to suggest that the western end of the Mendips was formerly densely wooded. Much of the area was part of the Royal Forest of Mendip in the Middle Ages. A fine series of account rolls for Winscombe covering the period from the 13th to the 16th centuries indicates the existence of a number of woods, the clearance of these woods and the subsequent use of the areas. Using early maps, field names and fieldwork, the extent of these early woods can be analysed and mapped. Suggestions can be made about how the management of the woodland fitted into the local medieval economy. The conclusion reached is that Winscombe in the Middle Ages was a parish with a largely pastoral wood-pasture economy; there was probably only limited arable farming. The great extent of pasture in the parish, from the Levels in the north to the limestone uplands of Mendip in the south and centre, together with the former extent of woodland, suggests that much of the medieval economy was based on grazing animals, with the production of meat, milk, wool and other animal products.¹

INTRODUCTION

Winscombe is a relatively large parish of around 1600 hectares or 4000 acres² in the north of the

historic county of Somerset, just inland from Weston super Mare (Fig. 1). It is first documented in the 10th century³ and by the 14th century, before the Black Death struck the area, had a very dispersed and poorly nucleated settlement pattern. There were several large hamlets in the parish, such as Sandford, Woodborough, Barton and Sidcot as well as the village of Winscombe itself. There was also a rather more scattered pattern of single farmsteads and small groups of farms at Nye and Dinghurst in the north of the parish, and at Maxmill, Hale, Wyke and Winterhead in the southern area (Fig. 13).⁴

Agricultural land use in the Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages each rural community needed access to a variety of types of land to sustain itself. Woodland was one of these. While the most important land use for such communities was arguably arable land,⁵ areas of pasture to graze animals and low-lying meadowland where the hay was grown for winter fodder, were also significant. Woodland, far from being the land left over after arable fields had been created and areas of grazing defined, was an important component of the medieval agricultural system. It was managed by medieval farmers to supply timber and wood for a variety of purposes.

The natural vegetation of Britain in the post-glacial period was one of deciduous woodland, called by Oliver Rackham and other scholars the 'wildwood'. Different areas of this were characterized by particular species of tree; in this part of England the

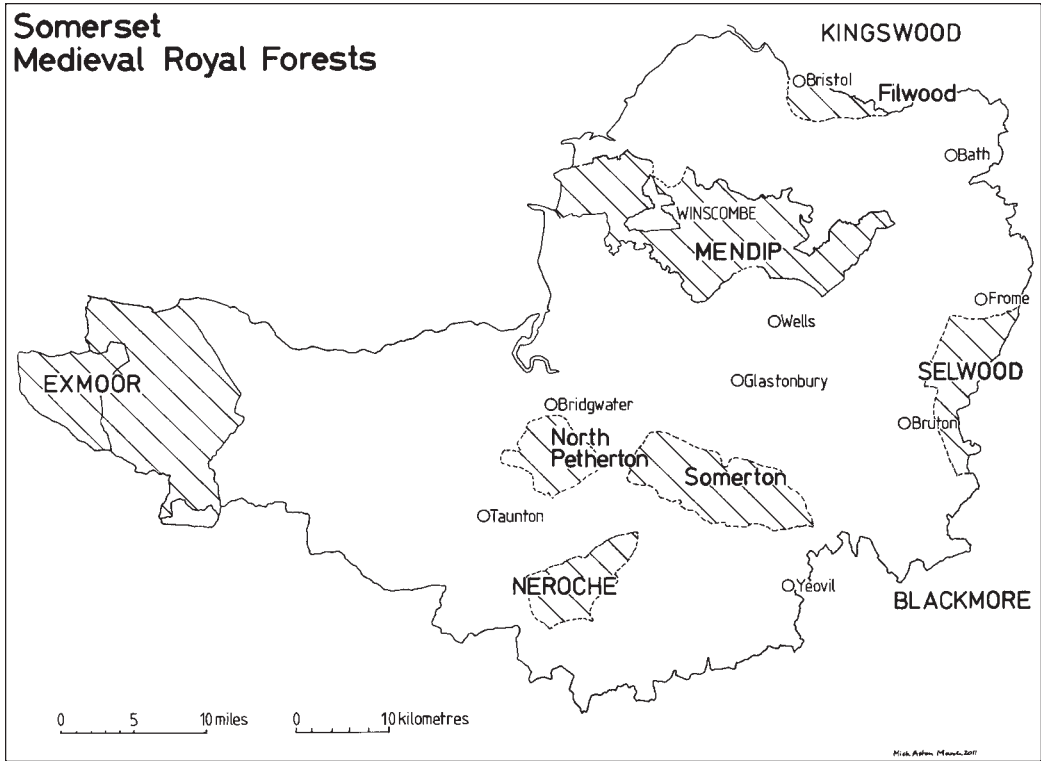


Fig. 1 Somerset medieval Royal Forests with the position of Winscombe parish (partly based on Bond 1994)

lime was dominant, with a bit further west oak and hazel.⁶ While there may have been some natural woodland left in Britain by the Middle Ages, the archaeological and palaeo-botanical evidence suggests very strongly that all native wood had been cleared well beforehand – in prehistoric times.⁷ Woodland in existence by the medieval period was therefore still there because it had been actively conserved and managed. Some of this woodland was less intensively managed, so that it could be used for hunting by the aristocratic elite while large areas of wood-pasture provided grazing and foraging for the local farmers' animals; pigs and cattle were after all originally woodland animals. Grazing and pasture in the woodlands was an important local resource with acorns and beech mast providing winter foodstuff for pigs. But most woods were also managed traditionally to produce the wood and timber used by the populace. Timber came from standard trees, such as oak, elm and ash, grown for several decades and used for large-scale projects –

roof and house construction, bridges, defences, ships and so on. Wood, from shrubs such as hazel was grown as 'underwood' in coppices over five to seven-year cycles, and was harvested for fuel, firewood and charcoal production, fencing, and small-scale work such as wattle work and tool making. The use of the terms 'timber' and 'wood' is therefore meaningful both for the medieval economy and for how medieval woods were managed.⁸

Apart from the woodland areas to be discussed below, much of the medieval parish of Winscombe, beyond its medieval arable fields, consisted of extensive pasture areas (Fig. 13). These were the lowland areas of the Levels, poorly drained and subject to seasonal flooding, and the upland grazing areas on the tops of the limestone hills of the western end of Mendip, in the north and south parts of the parish. Any of these non-arable areas might have been at least lightly wooded at any time in the past; this can be seen sometimes on the maps of the last 200 years.

The topography of the parish of Winscombe

The area of the medieval parish of Winscombe has a very odd shape⁹ which is the result of lumping together various estates in the early medieval period (Figs 10 and 11). But it is also a reflection of the geology and physical geography of the area. This is very varied with a topography of steep-sided hills and wide clay vales. The area of the parish consists of a series of ridges of Carboniferous limestone and other rocks projecting westwards from the main mass of Mendip. Between these ridges are valleys of clay (usually the Keuper Marl or Mercian Mudstone of Triassic age) with the Levels of recent sedimentary deposits to north and south. Large areas are based on the cemented rock geology of the Dolomitic conglomerate also of Triassic age¹⁰ or the recent uncemented ‘head’ deposits. Many of the local streams disappear under these rock formations to reappear as another set of springs a little further away to the west. The drainage itself flows generally in an east to west direction towards the Lox Yeo River that eventually joins the River Axe to the south (Fig. 12). A substantial stream, the Towerhead Brook – ‘the wild boar stream’ of the 11th-century charter, rises at a large spring, Pyle Well, next to the Star Roman villa site, in the adjacent parish of Shipham. This spring lies just outside the modern parish, but the Towerhead Brook flows firstly westwards before cutting through the northern line of limestone hills and out northwards into the Levels. Much of the drainage in the northern half of the parish joins the Towerhead Brook. Most of that in the southern half ends up in the Lox Yeo River and the significance of this has already been discussed.¹¹ Despite the number of springs and streams in Winscombe parish, Francis Knight in 1915 wrote that ‘the parish is not well-watered’.¹² He must have walked around the parish in the summer when some of the streams do indeed dry up; in the winter the whole parish is awash with overflowing streams and waterlogged fields.

THE EVIDENCE FOR WOODLAND IN MEDIEVAL WINSCOMBE

In 1277–8 and 1306–7, and 100 years later in 1396–7, officials of the king, whose role was the management of the Royal Forest of Mendip, came to Winscombe and the expenses of their visits are recorded in the *comptus* or account rolls for the manor.¹³ At that time, Winscombe belonged to the

dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral and so we are entitled to ask – what were royal officials doing in the manor and what had the Royal Forest of Mendip to do with the parish of Winscombe?

Today there are extensive woods in the parish, some of them full of conifers and others seemingly decayed, traditionally managed deciduous woodlands. Most of these are on the steep northern slopes of the limestone hills in the south of the parish, above Barton, Winscombe, Hale and Sidcot. In the northern half of the parish, there are deciduous woodlands above Sandford and Dinghurst, on the north slopes of Sandford Hill and Lincombe Hill and on Knoll (or Knowle or Old) and Churchill Batches. By contrast there is very little woodland on the sunny, south-facing slopes of these hills. The exception is the small area of woodland on the south side of Sandford Hill that borders the neighbouring parish to the east, Shipham. This woodland is not shown on the tithe map of 1840 when the area was part of the open common (presumably grazing) land of Sandford Hill. Nevertheless it looks like old woodland and seems to have been managed in the traditional way of ‘coppice with standards’.¹⁴ Today there are large coniferous plantations on the top of Sandford Hill, above the quarry, where there was formerly an extensive area of common upland grazing. On the tithe map of 1840, the 115 acres of Sandford Hill has no land use indicated; Sandford Wood lies all along the north side slopes of the hill at that time (Fig. 2). These coniferous plantations were probably planted in the 1860s and are first depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1880s. At that time they are named Sandford Wood showing that the name has very quickly moved from the earlier wood on the north side of the hill to the plantation on the hill top. The plantation was still in existence in 1903 but had been cleared except for a central block, which still exists, by the 1930s. Many of the other current woodlands in the parish are recorded on the tithe map as well and many are now coniferous plantations. Except for these recent plantations, however, there are only a few additional woodlands to those indicated in 1840 (Fig. 2). There is now, however, an extensive area of woodland in the south of the parish on the north-facing side of Wavering Down. This wood is above the former common fields of Winscombe and Barton but below the area of open grazing land enclosed in 1799. The enclosure fields are called *Perkham Knowl*, *Sheppards Knowl*, *Broad Knowl* and *Church Knowl*, and the present woodland is at the northern end of these enclosures on the

steepest slopes.¹⁵ Again the maps of 1840 and 1792, and the Greenwood map of 1822,¹⁶ depict the area when it was open common land, and seem not to indicate any area of woodland. It is likely however, as we shall see below, that this wood is the remnant of the medieval wood of Frith.

Despite the scattered nature of the present woodland and the fact that much of it clearly consists of recent plantations, there are sound reasons for believing that the parish was formerly much more wooded and that clearance of the woods took place all through the Middle Ages. The woodland in the parish was an important resource for its various owners; the Abbey of Glastonbury from the late 10th century and then the dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral, the owners of most of the parish from the early 13th to the 19th century.¹⁷

Place-names, probably of Anglo-Saxon origin, indicate areas of former woodland and clearance (Fig. 2), and analysis of areas of woodland in Domesday Book implies large areas of woodland at the western end of the Mendips (Fig. 3); this became part of the Norman royal Forest of Mendip (Fig. 4). In the *compotus* and court rolls for Winscombe, dating from the 13th to the 16th centuries, there are numerous references to woods and woodland, timber, underwood and wood-pasture.¹⁸ Much of the medieval woodland recorded in these documents has disappeared from the modern map but its location can to a large extent be defined by field names on the maps of 1792 and 1840. These medieval documents indicate a long process of felling or 'assarting'¹⁹ whereby the woods were cleared and the land turned over to agricultural use such as arable and pasture. The relationship of this woodland to the Royal Forest of Mendip, which for much of this period included the parish of Winscombe, also needs to be considered as royal officials would have wanted local woodland conserved as far as possible.

Place-name evidence (Fig. 2)

A number of field and place-names indicate the former existence of woodland in the Anglo-Saxon landscape. The meaning and significance of these place-name elements are discussed by Margaret Gelling, Ann Cole and by A.H. Smith.²⁰ These Anglo-Saxon place-name elements include *bearu*, *ced/coid*, *fyrth/fyrthe*, *graefe*, *hyrst*, *leah* and *wudu*. All of these elements can be found in the place and field names of Winscombe parish.

Bearu

This word means a 'grove' or 'small wood' but in place-names it is often difficult to distinguish it from *beorg* meaning a 'hill' or more often a barrow or burial mound. Margaret Gelling comments that 'it referred to a wood of limited extent and was not applied to forest areas'.²¹ She remarks that it is a common element in Dorset and Somerset: a number of Somerset's parish names incorporate the element – Barrow Gurney, North and South Barrow.²² Without detailed place-name research, we often have to rely on the context and position of the names in the landscape to guess at the appropriate meaning; this is frequently the case in Winscombe parish.²³

On both the 1792 and 1840 maps of Winscombe there are a number of fields with some form of the name 'barrow'. Most of these are in the Lox Yeo valley, near Max Mill Farm, and in this low-lying position they are unlikely to refer to man-made burial mounds. As we shall see these names are associated with other names nearby that probably refer to former woodland. We therefore have indications of a much larger area of former woodland in this part of the parish (Fig. 8). Thus we have in 1792 the field names 'Barrow Mead' and 'Barrow Wood', and in 1840, 'Barrow Mead', 'Barrows Wood', 'Bore Barrows' and 'Late Burrows' all to the west of Max mill on the south side of the Lox Yeo river.

It is also possible that 'Woodborough', the name of the main hamlet in the middle of the parish, began as a *bearu* name. Woodborough is almost a lost name in the parish today being used only for the public house in the middle of the village. To most of the present day inhabitants of the parish 'Winscombe' is the name applied to what was the former hamlet of Woodborough rather than to the original settlement on the hill a mile or more away where the parish church stands.²⁴ In the 1280s there is a mention of 'Henry Wrench of *Wodeberwe*'²⁵ and the small water mill at Woodborough is called on the tithe map (plot 951) 'Woodbere mill'.²⁶ The elements *berwe* and *bere* seem often to be derived from *bearu* and so perhaps this hints at the origin of the name Woodborough.²⁷ Such tautologous names, in this case 'wood wood', are common where the meaning of a word for a feature in one language is not clearly understood by newcomers using another language, perhaps the best example being 'Bre(e)don Hill' in Worcestershire and Leicestershire. In effect, 'hill hill hill'.²⁸

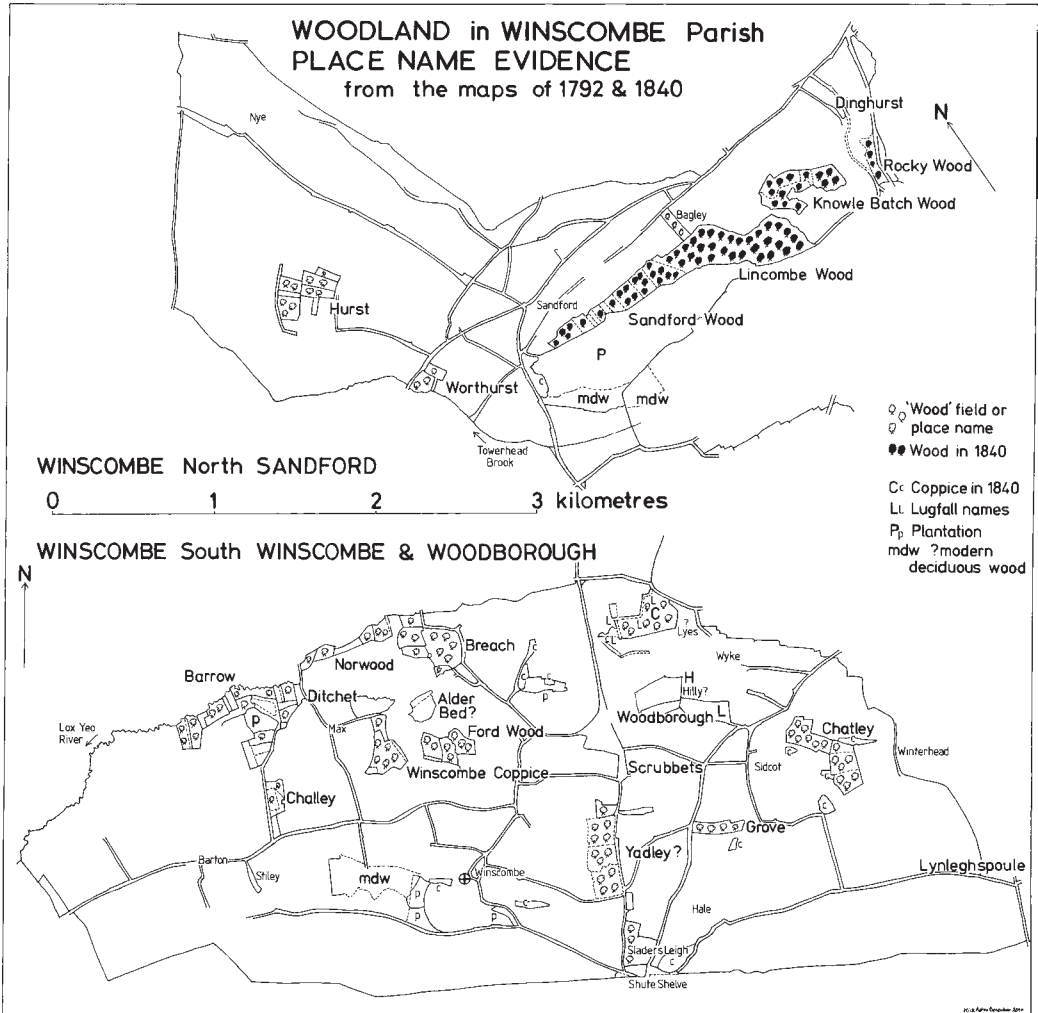


Fig. 2 Woodland in Winscombe parish; the place-name evidence mainly from the maps of 1792 and 1840

Coed

This is the Welsh word (along with *ceto*, *coit* – and Cornish *cos*, *cuit*)²⁹ for a ‘wood’ and often occurs in English place-names as *chet* at the beginning or ending of a name.³⁰ In Winscombe there is a group of fields, to the east of the ‘barrow’ names mentioned above, called *Ditchet*, *Dicheat* and *Dichett* in 1792 and 1840 (Fig. 8).³¹ This might be a similar name to the parish and village name of Dicheat in central Somerset, said by Ekwall to be derived from *geat* meaning ‘opening or gap (gate) in the dike’ (ie the Fosse Way).³² But the fact that the ‘a’ is sometimes

omitted might suggest that the derivation is from *chet(t)* rather than *geat*.³³ This might mean that these field names refer to a dike or earthwork around or at the wood, rather than a ‘gap in the dike’. The latter could still of course refer to a gap in a bank around an area of woodland. The name would however indicate the use of a British (or Old Welsh) rather than an Anglo-Saxon term, an aspect already noted elsewhere in the parish.³⁴

Fyrhth

This name, which means ‘land overgrown with

brushwood' or 'scrub on the edge of the forest' persists today as 'frith' a word for a wood or coppice.³⁵ As we shall see below it was used in Winscombe in the past as the tautologous *Frithwood* but it has not survived as a field name (Fig. 5).

Graefe

This word survives as 'grove' meaning a copse, coppice wood, thicket or brushwood.³⁶ There is a mention of an 'alder grove called *Durnehete*' in 1236 and a 'grove' which may be *Ford Wood* in 1325 (see below)³⁷ but otherwise only two such field names are recorded in 1840 near the farmstead of Hale (fields 75 and 675a); they are not recorded in 1792 so they may be recent names (Fig. 2).

Hyrst

'Hurst', which seems to mean, 'a hillock, a copse, a wood, a wooded eminence' and thus a 'wooded hill', is a very common place-name element.³⁸ There are three examples in Winscombe parish. Dinghurst is the name of a hamlet in the north-east corner of the parish; there is a group of fields called 'Hurst' located near Drove and the probable early settlements at *Blackland* and *Old Hide*;³⁹ and two fields on the parish boundary with Banwell near Sandford are called *Worthurst* (Fig. 2). 'Wooded eminence' would be a good description at all three of these places. The 'Hurst' field names are sited on the slightly higher land above the Levels in the north of the parish and 'Worthurst' is on the slightly higher land above the Towerhead Brook.

There has been much discussion about the name Dinghurst because in some early versions of the name it appears to incorporate the element 'thing' meaning 'an assembly, a council, a meeting'⁴⁰ and this would be of great significance in an early medieval context. However its setting in the landscape clearly suggests that the name is really *Dingle Hurst*, with the first element meaning 'a deep dell or hollow' and the second 'a wooded hill'.⁴¹ This would be an appropriate description of the area today with the deep cleft through the limestone hills, almost gorge-like, followed by the A38 trunk road, and the wooded knolls of Churchill Batch and Old Batch/Knoll Wood nearby (Fig. 2).

Leah

This is probably the most important Anglo-Saxon

term for woodland that we can use to assess the early extent of forest. It means 'forest, wood, glade, clearing'; over time its use changed from an indication of wooded country to one indicating clearance in that woodland, via a phase of use as 'wood-pasture'.⁴² It also seems to have been principally in use, like *tun* for 'settlement or farmstead', mainly in the period 750 to 950 AD. Margaret Gelling notes that 'it may be regarded as established that *leah* is an indicator of woodland which was in existence and regarded as ancient when English speakers arrived in the region'.⁴³

In this part of Somerset, English speakers probably arrived into a 'British' speaking area in the mid to late 7th century and became established over the next century or so. In Winscombe parish there are at least eight names recorded which probably incorporate the element *leah*, all but one of which (Bagley) are found in the southern half of the parish. The parcel called Bagley Field in 1840⁴⁴ lies below Lyncombe wood in what was the later arable area of *Butham*. When it was woodland it might have separated the arable land attached to Sandford from that of Dinghurst. Bagley is first recorded in the mid-13th century (*Bageleya*) as part of a grant of three quarter-virgates of land by Henry Lovestheft to Thomas Melton. Probably it was already cleared land by this date as there is mention of arable land and meadow.⁴⁵

In the southern half of the parish, Challey (and Chally) is a name attached to five plots of ground in 1840 and one in 1792,⁴⁶ and later it was applied to the lane, called Barrowmead Lane in 1840, which formerly ran from near the hamlet of Barton to Max mill. The name was thus associated with the other areas of former woodland near Max Mill Farm (Fig. 8). The name could refer to former woodland between the arable lands of Winscombe and Barton before it was cleared.

The small hamlet of Winterhead lies well away from other settlements on the eastern side of the parish. It has a small area of woodland recorded in Domesday Book. On the tithe map there are four fields called *Chatley*, together with three unnamed copses nearby. Perhaps this was the site of the 11th-century woodland (see below) though the names in 1840 cover a much larger area than is indicated in 1086 – 'a small wood, 3 acres'.⁴⁷

In the *compotus* rolls between 1277 and 1382 there are many references to land, usually arable, at '*la Leghe, Leigh, Lygh* or *Leygh*'.⁴⁸ It would not be possible to locate this presumed *leah* name were it not for the fact that in the *compotus* roll for March

to June 1334 there is recorded '6d from the sale of a hedge ('haia') next to *la Lygh of Bronnrygg*'. If all the references are to the same piece of land, then this suggests that it was near to the Brimridge woodland (see below) (Figs 2 and 6).⁴⁹

The name Lillypool occurs today at the south-east corner of the parish where it relates to a farm shop. In 1298 in the Forest perambulation (see below) Lillypool is called *Lynleghespoule*, a place-name that seems to consist of two words for a 'pool', at least one of them in Welsh, and another *leah* name for a 'wood' or 'clearing'. This name presumably meant 'a wood or clearing with a pool'. The pool or spring probably lay near the south-east corner of the ancient parish and fed the stream which flows through Winterhead and Brimridge and disappears underground east of Woodborough.⁵⁰

Sladers Leigh (709) and *Sliders Lay Cottage* (710) could relate to former woodland near Hale, while *Stiley* (1139), oddly, is in the middle of the hamlet of Barton. Perhaps neither of these names has a genuine *leah* element within them though *Sliders Ley* might have been part of Yadley, if the suggested location for this is correct (see below) and *Stiley* may have referred to part of the woodland on the steep slope above Barton deriving from OE *stig* – a steep path.

One of the most intriguing place-names in the parish is Yadley, or as it is recorded once, *Eadley*. This is used for three parcels of land between Woodborough and Shute Shelve, the watershed on the southern boundary of the parish. Several of the tithe map names include 'Way' and the name 'Yadley Way' is still used today for the deep holloway that runs directly north–south through the middle of the parish between Woodborough and Shute Shelve. It is not clear however to what feature the *leah* of the name was applied. Presumably there was formerly a wood which was either near the southern end of Yadley Lane, where there is still woodland on the north side of the limestone hills, or perhaps near to Woodborough. As we have seen, the place-name might refer to a formerly wooded area if the interpretation of the name is correct. The glebe land of the rectory, as recorded in the tithe award in 1840, may offer a clue to its location. There was glebe land along Yadley Way at the fields called *Higher, Upper and Lower Yard Hill*.⁵¹ Other land in the parish, that formed part of the rectorial glebe in 1840 (*Warn Hill* and *Moorham*), had in earlier times been woodland, as we shall see. It is thus at least possible that these *Yard Hill* fields had also once been woodland, and a

possible name for it may well have been Yadley (Fig. 2).

Other names of plots in 1792 and 1840 that superficially look like *leah* names are probably in fact personal names. Examples include *Whalleys Orchard* in 1792 (plots 129 and 130) and *Nalgus* or *Tillys Paddock* in 1840 (plot 55). Others may be descriptive adjectives. *Hilly Ground* (plot nos. 585, 586) might incorporate *leah* and refer to 'hill woods' or 'hill clearings' but equally, as the land here is very lumpy, the name may just be a description of the locality. It was however part of the medieval woodland of *Brimridge*, so any *leah* element may well be significant.

Wudu

Place-names on the early maps, and indeed in the modern landscape, also carry names with the element 'wood', said by Margaret Gelling to be 'probably the most colourless Old English term for a collection of trees'.⁵²

In the northern half of the parish in 1840 the wood that still survives all along the northern side of the limestone hills is called *Sandford Wood, Lyncombe Wood* and *Knoll Batch Wood*. There is also *Rockey Wood*, near to the latter and still a wood today, lying south of Dinghurst. In the southern half of the parish, there are three fields (not woodland) called *Ford Wood* in 1840 (this wood will be discussed below). There were also eight fields along the Lox Yeo River called *Norwood* (presumably derived from 'north wood' – one plot is called *Northwoods* in 1792, though this could be 'north of the wood') but these had also been cleared by the time of the tithe map in 1840. Both of these former woods are in a part of the parish where it can be shown that there was other woodland in earlier times (see below and Fig. 8).

Copse/coppice

Finally there are a number of 'coppice' and 'copse' names on the tithe map. Most of these seem to have been of recent creation but one can be shown to be part of a former, larger, more important wood and others may have been. *Moorham Copse* (1840 plot no. 534), between Sandford and Woodborough, was the last remnant of an important 14th-century wood (see below); there are still large oak trees at the site today. *Winscombe Coppice*, referred to in a number of 1840 field names, lies in a boggy, poorly drained, part of the parish and was adjacent to areas of former

woodland and alder grove; so the names may well represent further areas of the extensive woodland in the Max mill area (Fig. 8).

There are also of course place-names that indicate clearings rather than woodland. As well as *leah*, one of the meanings of which can be ‘clearing’, there are terms such as ‘breach’ and ‘hay’.

Breach

‘Breach’, from the Anglo-Saxon *breac*, refers to land broken up or newly broken-in plough land, particularly newly cleared land.⁵³ It is represented in Winscombe in 1792 by *The Breeches* and in 1840 by the field names *Great Breach* and *Breach Paddock* and probably by the three fields called *Little Brake*.⁵⁴ These fields are near former areas of medieval woodland on the eastern end of ‘*Wamenhull*’ and are almost certainly the fields referred to in the *comptus* rolls for 1306 (see below in the discussion about Warn Hill).

Hay

‘Hay’ names derive from the Anglo-Saxon (*ge*)*haeg* meaning a ‘fence’ or ‘enclosure’, ‘a fenced in piece of ground’ though it can mean ‘a part of the forest fenced off for hunting’ and as Smith remarks ‘this is the meaning in many place-names of Middle English origin, especially those found in old woodland areas’.⁵⁵ There are a number of ‘hay’ names recorded on the 1792 and 1840 maps, such as *Underhay*, *Netherhays* and *Butthays* but these are mainly small plots, away from known wooded areas and often comprised hedged enclosures next to settlements, such as Barton. As such they are not very useful as indicators of former woodland.

Scrubbet

There are five references in the parish to the term *Scrubbet*. This seems to have been a local dialect word, a diminutive of ‘shrub’ or ‘scrub’, with the meaning of ‘a shrub, brushwood, a place overgrown with brushwood’. In Winscombe it was applied mainly to oaks.⁵⁶ One of these names, *Scrubbets*, refers to a small area of common off the south side of the great triangular common of Woodborough Green, shown on the enclosure map of 1799. Its existence in this location reinforces the impression that these ‘greens’, of which there were formerly a number in the parish, were the last remnants of areas

of wood-pasture that had been derived from former woodland.⁵⁷ Another mention relates to a transaction carried out very much earlier in 1256 in the northern part of the parish somewhere in the Sandford area (see below). This reference suggests that part of the existing woodland on the north side of Sandford Hill was woodland in the 13th century and the term indicates that it was probably scrubby and not mature woodland at that time. A third reference occurs in a *comptus* roll for 1459–60 which records that 20½ acres of underwood in South Bronrigge was sold for 3s 8d an acre, with 50 oaks called ‘scrubbes’ there sold off for 18s 3d. Finally, somewhat later ‘five acres of wood and olde scrubbyd okys’ are listed in 1540 in Sandford belonging to Richard Wyke. This could be the same area as was referred to 400 years before.⁵⁸

Hangra

It is perhaps surprising that there do not seem to be any ‘hanger’ place-names in the parish. This term, derived from *hangar*,⁵⁹ means a ‘sloping wood’ or ‘wood on a slope’, and is applied a lot in Somerset, particularly in the western half of the county, and sometimes the name is transferred from the wood to adjacent settlements. Farms with such names include Foxhanger in Brompton Regis and Mousehanger in Winsford.⁶⁰ It would have been a very appropriate name for the woods on the steep northern slopes of the Mendip limestone ridges in both the northern and southern parts of the parish (Fig. 13).

Lugfall

Finally there are two instances of the term *lugfall* in the parish (Figs 2 and 6). Both are now out in the fields but both can be shown to be associated with former woodland. One field called *The Lugfall Brimridge* in 1840 (field number 588) is on the edge of the former Brimridge woodland (see below). The other *lugfall* names, recorded in 1840, form a group around the former Moorham wood. Here the names of eight separate narrow parcels incorporate *lugfall* – *Penny Mead Lugfall* and *In Penny Mead and Lugfall* for example.⁶¹ The clue to the meaning of this term lies in their location, they are all on the margins of (former) woodland; the names apply to narrow strips, no more than a few metres or so wide, around the edges of the woods. Ronald Zupko records that a ‘lugge’, ‘log’, ‘lug’, or ‘lugg’ varies from 15–20 feet with 16½ feet being the most

common 'occasionally equivalent to a Goad, Perch, Pole and Rod'. It is recorded from the 17th century onwards usually as a linear measure, though once for Herefordshire in 1800, as 49 square yards.⁶²

There seems to have been little discussion, however, of the term *lugfall* among Somerset historians, the exception being Derek Shorrocks, the former Somerset county archivist, writing in 1980. From two groups of legal papers for Sutton Park in Chew Magna and Priors Wood in Portbury, he defined two uses of the term. In one a *lugfall* is a section of the wood under separate ownership/management which ironically, might end up looking like the 19th-century arrangements at Sandford Wood (see below and Fig. 9). By contrast, in 1743 at Sutton Court in Chew Magna, the Stracheys 'possess a *lugfall* all around the park'. John Strachey writes,

'It was always the practice when any person enclosed a park to set the pale or wall 18 feet, which is a woodland lug, within the outside bounds of their land, because they would not trespass on another's land, but leave room to come with carts, timber etc. to repair the bounds of their park; this was called the 'lugfall'.

That these were areas where tenants were allowed to collect fallen branches from the trees in the wood, which might occur after high winds or storms, seems also to be implied. 'In both sets of papers lugg-fall is clearly accepted as meaning the right to take wood in a strip to the depth of a lug in a common zone, that is to say an area on the edge of or adjoining a wood or park'. This definition has implications for the *lugfall* names at *Moorham* in Winscombe. It suggests strongly that *Moorham* was formerly a park – a private hunting area.⁶³ William Greswell writing about Somerset in 1905 notes 'Sometimes a short interval between boundaries was called a 'Lug-fall', a lug being a forest measure (seven and a half feet), perhaps from *Leuca* or *Leucata*,' which is Old French.'⁶⁴

It is of course not known when any of these field and place-names referring to woods or clearances were actually formed or were first used. They have Anglo-Saxon elements in them but they are not necessarily recorded very early on. In many cases our first reference is not until the post-Conquest period, often it is not until the first map sources become available in the 18th and 19th centuries. But there are other documentary sources that can help us to define the extent of the early woodland in the parish.

WOODLAND IN DOMESDAY BOOK (Fig. 3)

In 1086 when the Domesday Book was compiled, woodland was one of the items assessed by the commissioners who were sent out to check the data. Thus a number of villis in the Winscombe area had areas of woodland in their entries; sometimes it was substantial. Winscombe is recorded as having woodland two leagues long by one league wide.⁶⁵ This is almost the largest area of woodland entered for a single vill in Somerset. Bruton is larger with five leagues by one league of woodland recorded.⁶⁶ But it was part of the Royal Forest of Selwood, a vast area of forest that stretched all along the Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset borders (Fig. 1).⁶⁷ There was also a small wood of 3 acres at Winterhead, a separate manor from Winscombe at that date.⁶⁸ There is scrubby woodland around Winterhead today and as we have already seen there are four fields called *Chatley*, a name that probably indicates this former woodland or its clearance.

Oliver Rackham suggests that a league in 1086 was a measurement of twelve furlongs or one and a half miles.⁶⁹ The woodland measurements recorded in Domesday Book can therefore be converted into square miles and acres (and hence square kilometres and hectares). In turn these can be compared with the surface area of a parish today and from that some idea of the percentage of the area covered by woodland in 1086 can be obtained.⁷⁰ There is a slight problem with this approach as the areas recorded for parishes sometimes vary. For example F.H. Dickinson gives the areas for each parish in Somerset in acres for 1841 at the time of the census⁷¹ and George S. Minchin, in the Victoria County History Volume II for Somerset⁷² gives the acreage at the time of the census returns from 1801 to 1901 without any specific date for each parish. The areas quoted by these two scholars are often different. The various numbers do not in fact dramatically affect the percentages of woodland for each parish that can be calculated. These have been computed taking the measurements in leagues as recorded in Domesday Book, and then, using the figure that a league is one and a half miles, at 640 acres to the square mile, converting them into acres. This figure can then be used in relation to the area of the parish to arrive at an approximate percentage of the parish that was wooded in 1086 (Table 1).⁷³ For example, for Winscombe the area of the parish is 3900 acres according to Dickinson or 4158 acres according to Minchin. The Domesday woodland of two leagues,

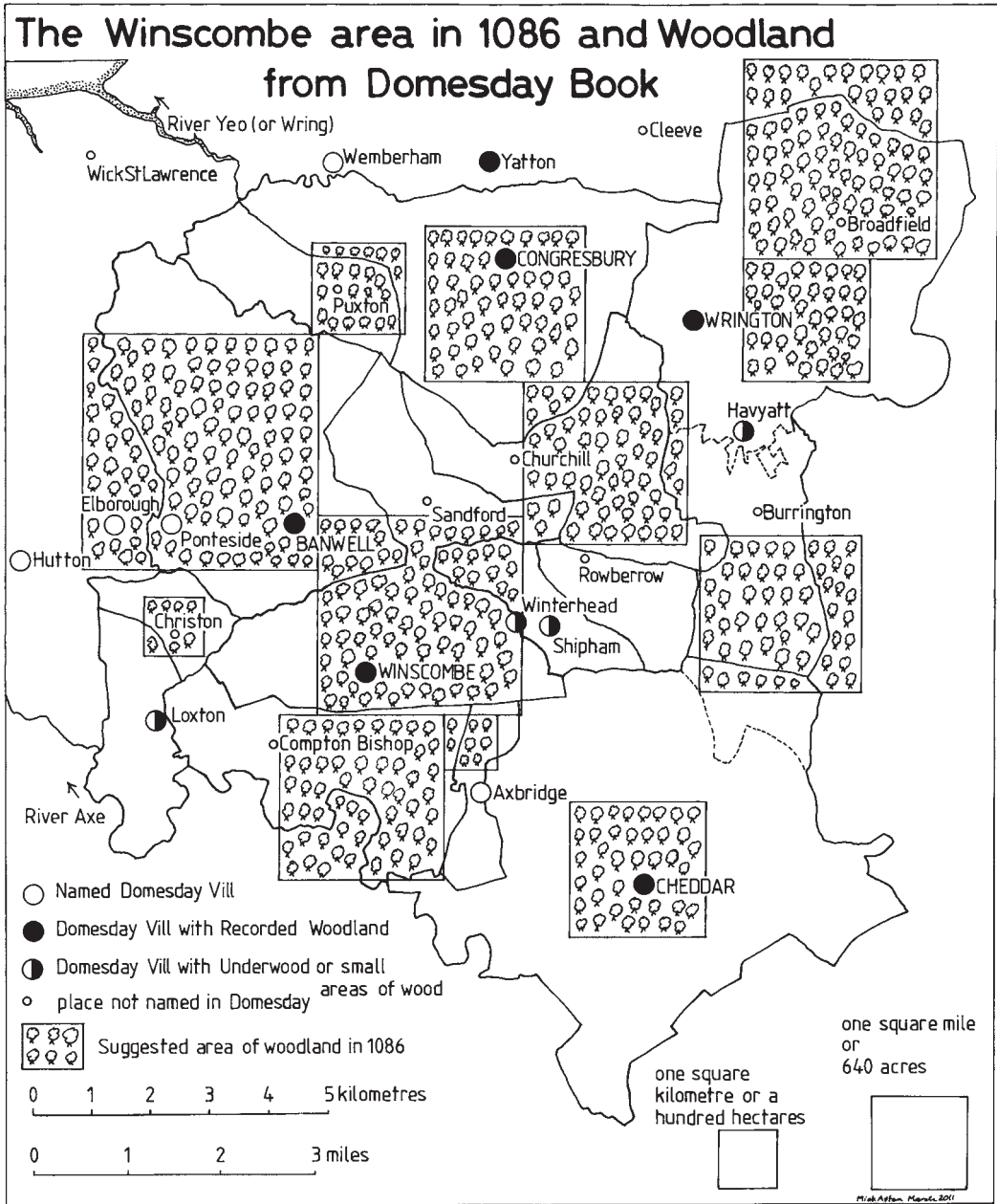


Fig. 3 The Winscombe area in 1086 and woodland from Domesday Book (figures from Thorn and Thorn 1980; see Table 1)

that is 3 miles, by one league (1½ miles) suggests an area of woodland in the late-11th century of four and a half square miles or, at 640 acres to the square mile, 2880 acres. Shipham seems to have been in

Winscombe parish in the Middle Ages but has not been included here in the calculations.⁷⁴ Even if there is a lot of uncertainty about these figures and the league was variable, this figure still suggests a very

large area of woodland with a substantial percentage of the parish retained as woodland or managed as wood-pasture in 1086. Indeed 2880 acres of woodland in 3900 acres of parish indicates around 71%. This compares with an average of 11% for the whole of Somerset as estimated by Oliver Rackham.⁷⁵ Most of this can be accommodated on the slopes and lower land of the parish between the limestone ridges (see below); the tops of the limestone hills and the extensive area of Sandford Moor in the north of the parish may have been relatively poorly wooded. As Henry Darby remarks 'One of the outstanding facts about the landscape of eleventh-century England was its wooded aspect'.⁷⁶

We can compare this Winscombe Domesday figure with other villis in the Winscombe area in 1086 (Table 1, Fig. 3). Many of them have large areas of woodland; none has less than the county average of 11% or indeed anything close to this figure. Much of the central area of these parishes, which was later used for agriculture, would probably have looked even more wooded than the figures suggest. This is

because in most parishes a considerable proportion of their area was either low-lying Levels or the top of the Mendip limestone plateau and probably neither of these zones was densely wooded.

Cheddar (SOM 1,2), which included Axbridge, had an acreage of 7230 (or 7526) with recorded woodland in 1086 2 leagues by ½ a league. This indicates 2¼ square miles, or 1440 acres. This area, as a percentage of 7230 acres, yields a figure of around 19% of the parish as wooded in 1086. Again, these are probably underestimates because the large area of Levels in the Axe valley and the top of the Mendip plateau were probably not very wooded. Today the parish has the impressive ancient wood of Cheddar Wood and also smaller areas in the Gorge and at Mascall's Wood. Axbridge parish includes Rose Wood on the side of Shute Shelve Hill.

For Congresbury (SOM 1,21), Puxton may have been included in the parish in earlier times, though it has been allocated to Banwell in this study. Other places like Wick St Lawrence might also have been included in the ancient parish. The parish has 4280

TABLE 1: EXTENT OF WOODLAND IN WINSCOMBE AND NEIGHBOURING PARISHES

Place	Area of parish (acres)		DB 1086 ref ¹	Area in square miles	Area in acres	1086 woodland as % area of parish		Average % area of parish
	(1889) ²	(1911) ³				(1889) ²	(1911) ³	
Winscombe	3900	4158	DB; 8,2 2 x 1 lgs	4.5	2880	73.84%	69.26%	71.55%
Cheddar	6690	6998	DB; 1,2 2 x ½ lgs	2.25	1440	19.9%	19.13%	19.51%
Axbridge	+540	+528						
Total	7230	7526						
Congresbury	4280	4443	DB; 1,21 2 ½ x ½ lgs	2.8	1792	42%	40.5%	41.25%
Church holding			+ 30 acres	+ 30 acres	1822			
Wrighton⁴	7570	7922	DB; 8,27 2x2 lgs	9	5760	76.35%	72.96%	74.65%
Havyatt			+ 20 acres	+ 20 acres	5780			
Banwell			DB; 6,9 2 ½ x 2 ½ lgs	14.06	9000			
Banwell	4970	4974	45% ⁵	6.3	4050			
Christon	350	574	3.18% ⁵	0.445	285			
Churchill	2430	2444	22.05% ⁵	3.1	1984			
Cmptn Bishop	2510	2536	22.77% ⁵	3.2	2094			
Puxton	+760	+ 613	6.89% ⁵	0.968	620			
Total	11020	11141				81.66%	80.78%	81.22%

¹ Thorn and Thorn 1980 (lgs= leagues), ² Dickinson, ³ Minchin, ⁴ including Broadfield and Burrington,

⁵ % of Greater Banwell

acres (or 4443 acres), the 1086 woodland is 2½ leagues by ½ a league or 2.8 square miles. This represents 1792 acres and Domesday Book tells us that a sub-holding has another 30 acres making 1822 in total. As a percentage of 4280 acres this is an area of over 41% of the parish as woodland. Again, this is probably an underestimate of how wooded the upland part of the parish was because of the extent of the Levels, though the top of the limestone plateau is still very well wooded today. Congresbury has extensive woods in the north-east corner of the parish, including some coniferous plantations, at Urchin Wood and Ball Wood.

Wrington (SOM 1,27) with 7570 acres (or 7922 acres) has Domesday woodland 2x2 leagues or 9 square miles. Wrington must have included the later parish of Burrington and the tithing of Broadfield, and their acreages have been included in these figures. There was also a small wood of 20 acres at Hayyatt in 1086 that has also been included. Without these constituent parts the area of woodland would have been larger than the area of the parish. This area of Domesday woodland represents between 72% and 76% of the area of the parish, similar figures to those for Winscombe. Today Wrington parish has extensive woodland on the south side of Broadfield Down – Simshill Wood and Prestow Wood – and plantations all over the former Wrington Warren to the west of Bristol Airport. Burrington, formerly a parish within Wrington, has extensive woodland on the north side of the Mendips in Mendip Lodge Wood.⁷⁷

The problem of constituent but unrecorded elements of an area is even more acute with the Domesday figures for Banwell (SOM 6,9), the adjacent parish to Winscombe. This has an area of 4970 acres according to Dickinson, or 4974 acres according to Minchin. The Domesday entry for Banwell gives woodland 2½ leagues by 2½ leagues which makes an area of 14 square miles or 9000 acres. As the latter figure is far greater than the parish area, the entry for Banwell must include other places, and their woodland, that are known to have been hamlets of Banwell in later times and which are not separately assessed in 1086. These places are Puxton and Churchill, later chapelries of Banwell; Christon which was a tithing and may have been a chapelry; and Compton Bishop which was also probably a chapelry. The acreages according to Dickinson and Minchin are: Churchill 2430/2444 acres, Compton Bishop 2510/2536, Christon 350/574, and Puxton 760/613. None of these places are separately assessed

and recorded in Domesday Book. If these places, and their woodland, were included within the Banwell entry in 1086, this would make a grand total of 11,020 (or 11,141) acres for the parish area of the 'greater' Banwell. Of this 9000 acres were woodland. This figure indicates that on average, over all the settlements included in the Banwell entry, 81% of the land was wooded in 1086. If these calculations indicate anything like the real situation at that time, and the assumptions about extra settlements are correct, this seems like an extraordinarily large area of woodland on the Banwell estate.

Can we make an estimate of the areas of woodland within the constituent parts of the 'greater' Banwell given that on average 81% of was wooded? The entry for 'greater' Banwell including its probable dependencies is shown on Table 1 with the 11,020 acres of woodland divided proportionately in relation to the size of each of the parish areas. Thus Banwell parish takes 45% of the area of the larger 'Banwell', and therefore the proportion of the Domesday woodland allocated to Banwell is 4050 acres or 6.3 square miles. Similarly Christon is 3.17% and there are 285 acres of Domesday woodland or just under ½ a square mile; Churchill, probably with Stock, is 22% of the 'larger Banwell' and so its proportion of the allocated woodland is 1980 acres or 3 square miles; Compton Bishop 22.77% and woodland of 2049 acres or just over 3 square miles; and Puxton 6.89%, 620 acres or just under a square mile. Some of the woodland indicated by these figures is probably represented by surviving areas of 'ancient' woodland in these parishes.⁷⁸

Today Banwell parish has a lot of woodland around the hills, particularly on the north sides, in the south of the parish – Banwell Wood and the wood on Banwell Hill. Christon has a lot of wood, including coniferous plantations, particularly on the slopes of Christon Hill, Compton Bishop has the ancient wood of King's Wood, partly with sweet chestnut trees, while Puxton today has no woodland. Churchill parish today has little woodland but it includes Churchill Green, which looks like a woodland clearing, and the hamlet of Stock, the name of which could indicate 'a tree-trunk, especially one left standing, a stump, a log of wood',⁷⁹ in other words a woodland clearing.

These are very rough and ready calculations, based on rounded figures in Domesday Book and rounded numbers of acres of woodland with rough percentages derived from these figures. There were other small areas of woodland in other, minor, vills

in the Winscombe area in 1086. In Domesday Book Loxton has 6 acres of underwood, Shipham has 10 acres of underwood, and Winterhead has 3 acres in a small wood. Even though this is in Winscombe parish the 3 acres make little difference to the percentage.

Taken together, these figures suggest that the western end of Mendip was densely wooded at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period and into the Norman period – from the 10th to the 12th century. Winscombe, which included Sandford, at 71% woodland cover, Wrington at 74% and ‘greater’ Banwell with 81%, must have had most of their land area in each parish, that was not Levels or the tops of the Mendip plateau, as woodland. There was little room for extensive open common arable fields. The same was probably true of Congresbury, with 41% of its area wooded. This too has extensive areas of Levels and plateau land. Cheddar at nearly 20% probably represents more typically the relative areas of wooded land to the farmed areas of arable and pasture in a lot of Somerset parishes. Cheddar has extensive areas of Levels as well as the plateau top above Cheddar Gorge, but it also has a lot of fairly level or only gently sloping land which was probably open and farmed by the 11th century. Perhaps Cheddar, as a royal manor, had been more intensively developed and the woodland cleared for agriculture much earlier than on the nearby manors. Many of these belonged to ecclesiastical owners – the Bishops of Wells at Banwell and Congresbury, and Glastonbury Abbey at Wrington and Winscombe. Much of the topography of these estates was ill suited to arable farming and the bishop’s and abbey’s stewards may have seen the estates as being more valuable managed as wood-pasture in the local economy than being fully cleared for arable farming. Whatever the circumstances, this small sample suggests that the royal estate at Cheddar was managed in a different way to the ecclesiastical estates in the area.

THE ROYAL FOREST OF MENDIP

Another aspect of the woodland landscape of medieval Winscombe was the proximity of the Royal Forest of Mendip (Fig. 4). This was one of seven Royal Forests in the historic county of Somerset (Fig. 1).⁸⁰ The Mendips had been a hunting area for the Saxon kings in the pre-Conquest period and hunting continued with the Norman kings in the 11th and

12th centuries when Forest Law was applied to the area. Forest Law was intended to preserve deer for medieval kings and their retinue to hunt but it also sought to maintain the verdure (vegetation) of the area to provide the cover and sustenance for the animals which were going to be hunted, particularly deer. The great palace complex excavated at Cheddar by Philip Rahtz in the 1960s was the centre for this royal hunting activity.⁸¹

The term ‘forest’ was not a reference to the wooded nature of the country, although the majority of royal forests were in fact wooded, but to the special laws that applied in such areas. To begin with, Forest Law seems to have applied to the core of the royal estate, the Cheddar and Axbridge (with Charterhouse) areas (Fig. 4), but later kings, Henry II and John in particular, extended the area over adjacent lands.⁸² We know that this extension of Forest Law took place because of the resentment it caused with the restrictions imposed on the local inhabitants and their farming activities. From time to time surveys were carried out – called ‘perambulations’ – to define which areas were included in the Forest jurisdiction.⁸³ We also hear when areas which had been included within the Forest, and hence subjected to the harsh laws, were ‘disafforested’ – that is taken out of the legal Forest and returned back to the normal laws of the land. From such documentation we can of course learn of the full extent of the forest at its maximum, the names of the places included within the Forest bounds, and those excluded at the time of disafforestation (Fig. 4).

At its maximum extent, following the accession of Henry II in 1154, the Forest of Mendip included the following parishes: Banwell, Blagdon, Burrington, Christon, Churchill, Compton Bishop, East and West Harptree, Hutton, Loxton, Rowberrow, Shipham, Ubley, Uphill, part of Wrington, Worle and Winscombe (Fig. 4).⁸⁴ It is not clear how much of Wrington and Congresbury it included and whether the parish and manor of Bleadon was within the Forest. This vast area was disafforested by 1300. By the time this happened, the inhabitants in these settlements, which included everyone in the medieval parish of Winscombe, had been living under and subject to Forest Law for at least 150 years. This partly explains the references to woodwards (see below) and the visits of royal officials to Winscombe at various dates.

As well as disafforesting a large area in 1298, the bounds of the central part of the remaining forest

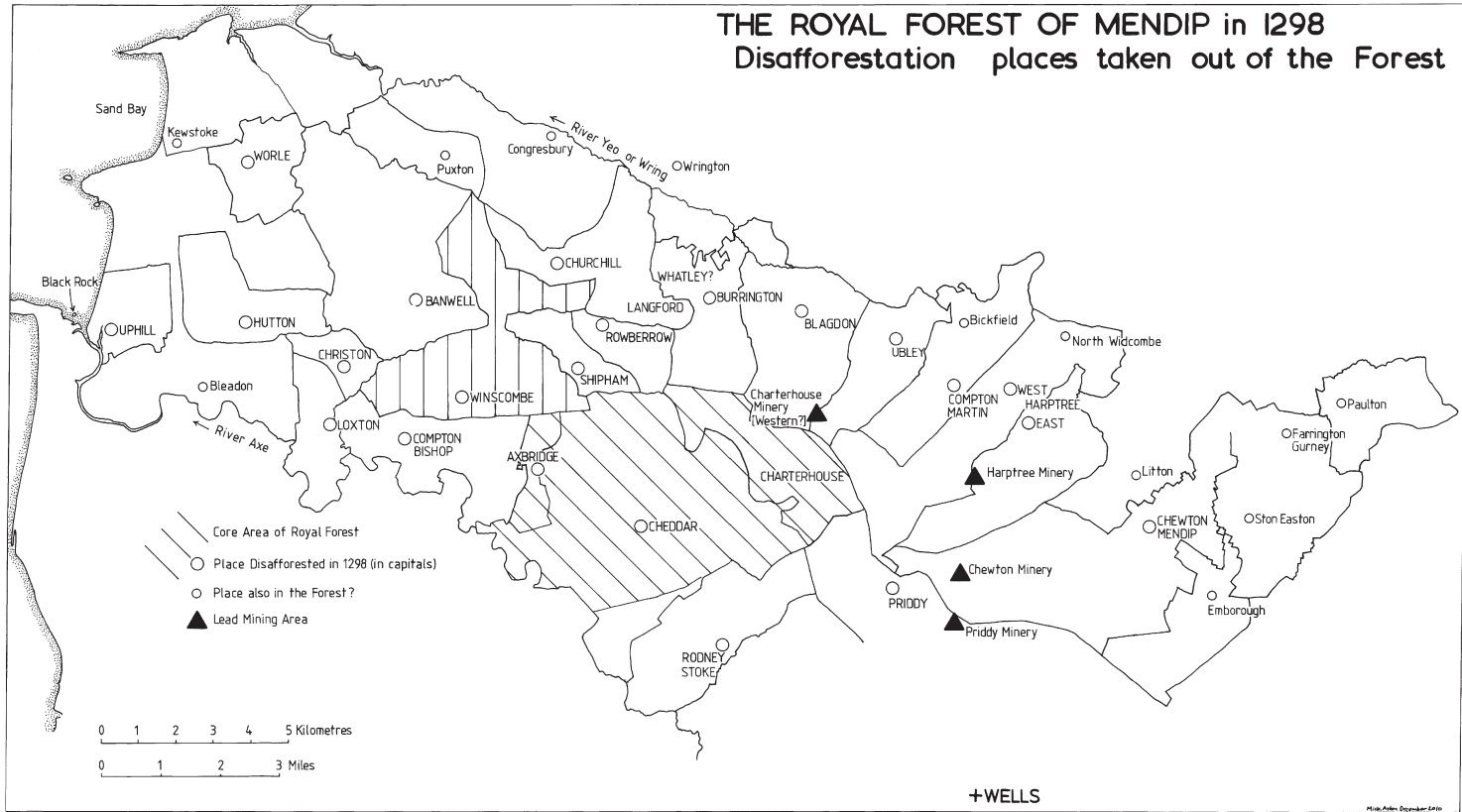


Fig. 4 The Royal Forest of Mendip in 1298; disafforestation – places taken out of the Forest

around Cheddar and Axbridge, were redefined (Fig. 4); as these march with Winscombe a number of features on the boundary of Winscombe are mentioned, 'thence ascending to a hill called *Calewe*, and thence to *la Rudyng*e and through *la Rudyng*e as far as *Lynleghspoule*; and thence ascending along a certain valley and descending as far as *Waterscumbe*'.⁸⁵ This is the south-east part of the parish of Winscombe with Callow Hill, Lillypool and the Longbottom valley between Shipham and Cheddar (Figs 2 and 4).

But despite this long period when Winscombe was included in the Royal Forest, it is almost certain that woodland clearance continued. This is implied in some of the place-names discussed above but enclosure is also implied in the Winscombe Customal of 1290. Labour services for virgaters included, within winter work, 'to fence three perches on level ground, or carry one faggot of fencing and make a hedge thereof, or carry fencing and hedge two perches on a dyke'.⁸⁶ This process must have been going on all through the 13th century even when Winscombe was within the Forest. It continued all through the 14th and 15th centuries as we shall see from the *compotus* rolls.

It is perhaps surprising that in the survey for Henry of Sully, Abbot of Glastonbury, which was carried out in 1189 when both of the abbey's manors of Winscombe and Wrington were included in the Forest, there is little mention of any aspect of the Forest of Mendip.⁸⁷ In Winscombe, Henry the forester held a cottage holding and another similar holding 'for looking after the trees'⁸⁸ but there are only a few other foresters recorded on Glastonbury manors in 1189 and they are all some distance away from Mendip. The Winscombe forester would have been a tenant of Glastonbury Abbey, rather than the king.

'Woodwards' are mentioned in Winscombe in 1189 (see below) and the visits of various forest officials were recorded from time to time. From the *compotus* rolls of the parish of Winscombe we learn a little more about these officials. For example in 1277 four bushels of wheat were provided for two foot-foresters, though the purpose of their visit is not known. However, in 1278 9d in expenses and the cost of five quarters of oats for feeding the horses are recorded, during the visit of the Forest Justiciar. This forest official was Lord Robert *filius Pagani*, that is 'son of Pagan' (Fitzpaine) and the expenses were for 'taking an inquisition of the forest of *Minedep*, by tally with cash'. By the time of the last

recorded visit by royal officials in 1396–7, the Royal Forest, as it affected Winscombe, had been disafforested for 100 years. But Winscombe was an adjacent parish to the remaining core of the royal Forest area, at Cheddar, Charterhouse and Axbridge (Fig. 4) and so there might have been some residual royal interest in the extent of the woodland cover in the parish. After the mid-14th century the foresters were only involved with this much smaller area of the Royal Forest, so these payments and favours to them, recorded in the Winscombe records, begin to look rather dubious, either bribes or some left-over customary payments.

Royal Forest officials probably visited Winscombe to ensure that the area was kept well wooded enough to shelter the king's game. Local peasants were always attempting to clear land for farming and so encroachment on the woodland to create fields diminished the cover for the animals in the 'Forest'. Sometimes this clearance was with the tacit agreement of the landowner so long as a 'fine' was paid. Not just the peasants were involved in this; we often see in the royal records, bishops, abbots, lords, knights and so on were all fined for clearance of land.

WOODLAND IN WINSCOMBE IN THE MIDDLE AGES: DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

From the time that Forest Law was first applied to Winscombe in the mid-12th century, right through to the end of the Middle Ages in the 16th century, the changing fortunes of the woodland in the parish can be seen through the surviving documentation (Figs 5, 6 and 8). This includes the survey carried out in 1189 for Henry of Sully, abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, the Customal for Winscombe compiled in 1290 and the *compotus* and court rolls for Winscombe running from the 1270s to 1540. There are also many references in the documents of the dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral who held the manor for much of the Middle Ages. In the immediate post-medieval centuries there are surveys in 1540, 1572 and 1650 with occasional references to woodlands.⁸⁹

From these documents we can look for evidence of individual woods, how they were managed and how they changed through time, and for the particular officials who looked after the woodland resources. At all times there was a balance between maintaining the woodland, allowing grazing within

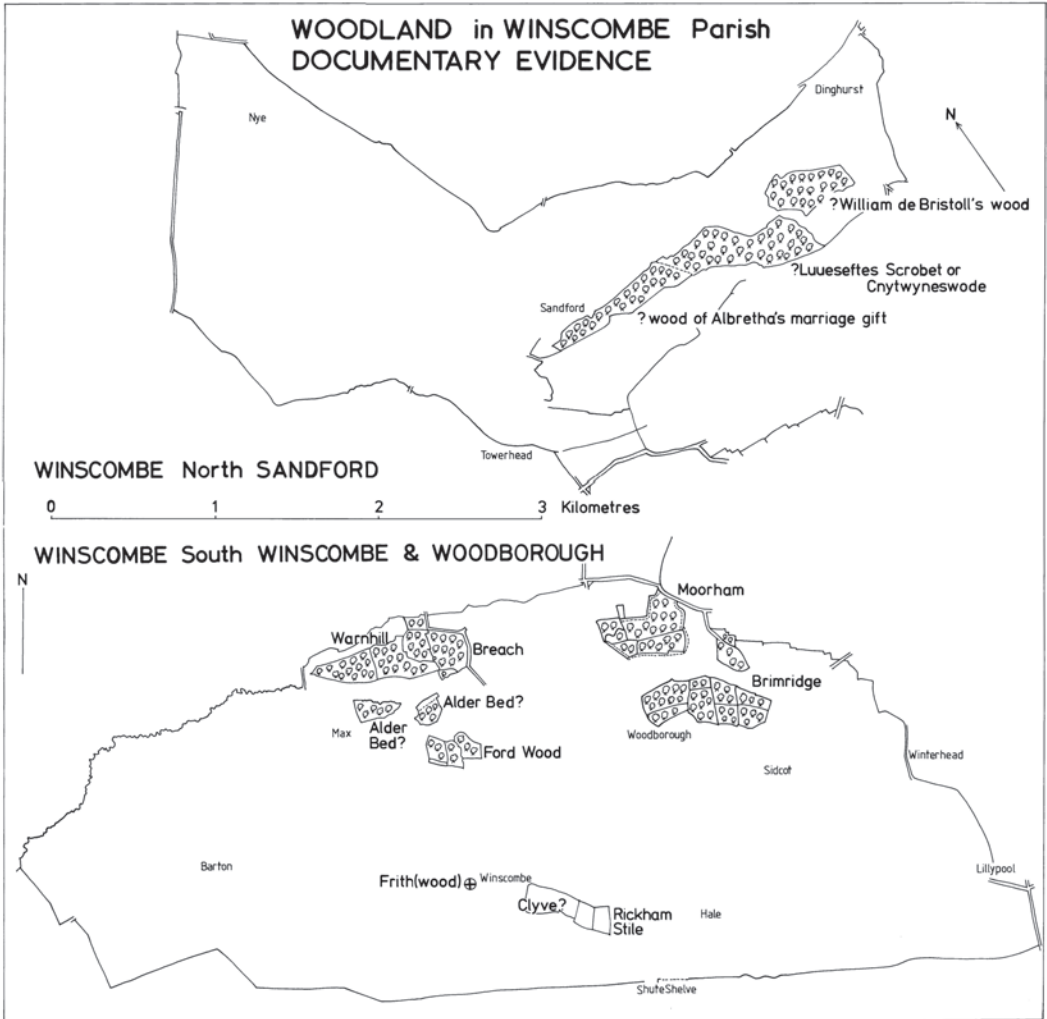


Fig. 5 Woodland in Winscombe parish; the documentary evidence (mainly from court and compotus rolls and the documents of the dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral)

the woods as wood-pasture, which would eventually deplete them, and clearing and turning former woodland over to arable, pasture, or meadow in a process of assarting. In most areas what can be seen from the documents and surviving features on the ground reflects different stages in the intensity of the land use of woodland areas.

The people charged with looking after any woodlands in the Middle Ages were the woodwards. Their role was particularly significant when a manor was in or adjacent to a Royal Forest as was the case

with Winscombe; there they were supported by the wealthier tenants. For example, we are told in the 1189 survey that tenants with one virgate of land, 'ought to give to the woodwards (*wdariis*) of Glastonbury (Abbey) two measures of corn and one penny at the feast of St Martin (November 11) and one penny as hearthpenny'.⁹⁰ Woodwards were important officials appointed by the king and those landowners with property around the royal Forest. Cox and Greswell in 1911 explained the role of the woodward:

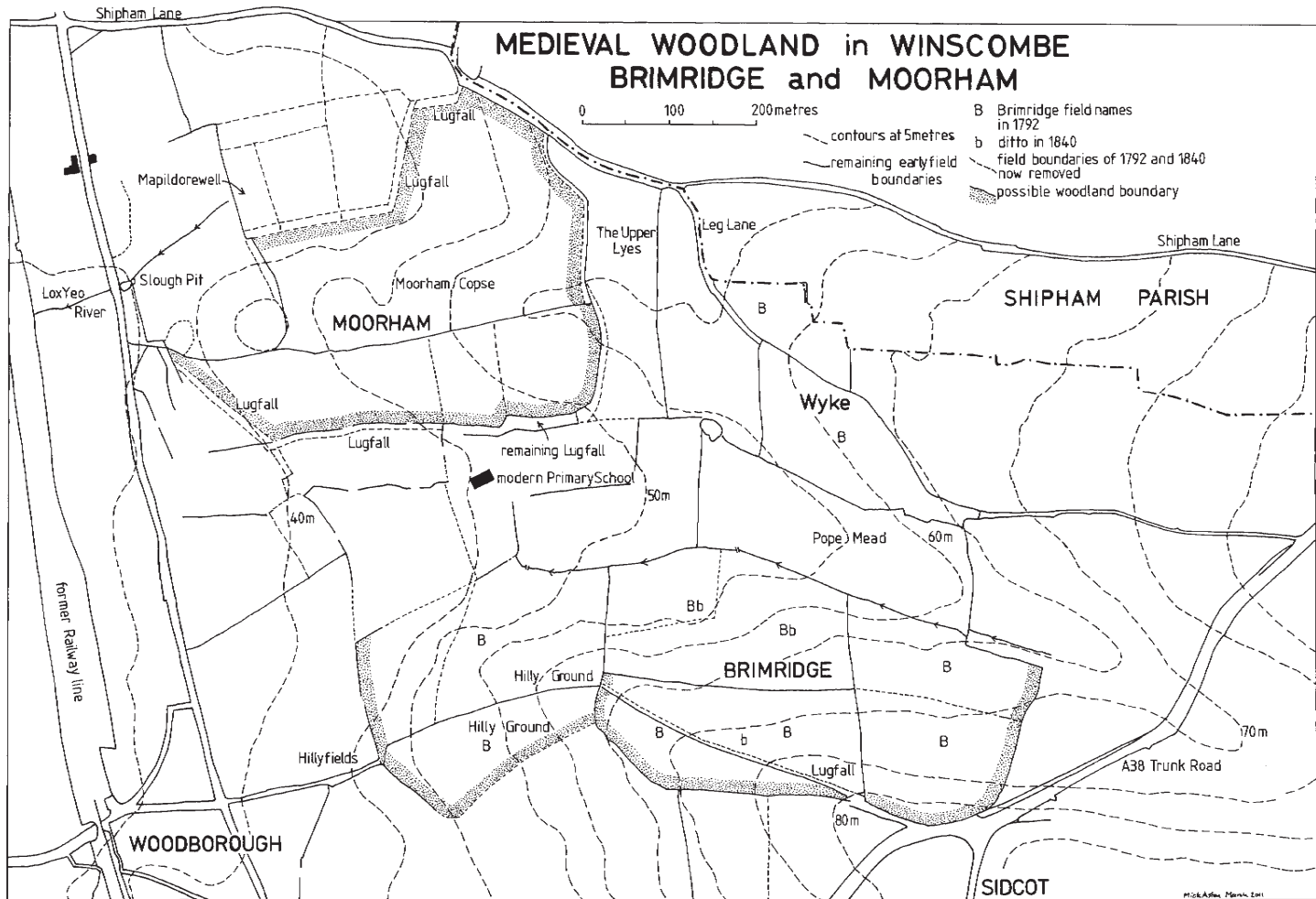


Fig. 6 The medieval woodlands of Winscombe; Brimridge and Moorham

‘A particular feature of the extant rolls of this eyre (1257)⁹¹ is the long list of woodwards together with various references to that office. The woodward though primarily responsible for the actual timber and undergrowth, as the name implies, was also a forester, that is to say he was at the same time bound to protect the venison. To understand the somewhat complicated position of such an office, it is necessary to remember that all the lands within a king’s forest were never entirely royal demesne. Every royal forest had its woods, which were to a limited extent private property. Such woods were not only subject to a general forest jurisdiction, such as the free ingress and egress of the king’s game, but the owners were not allowed without the royal licence to do anything therein that might be held to disturb the deer, such as clearing for cultivation, erecting buildings, burning charcoal, establishing forges, or even cutting down any timber save for their own immediate use. To look after their limited rights all such wood owners were expected to have woodwards, who were also required to guard the king’s venison within that particular wood, with power to attach and present at the forest courts’.⁹²

The records of woodwards in Winscombe are an indication of the parish’s proximity to the royal hunting areas. In the middle of the 13th century ‘Robert Wdeuuard’ was a witness to a gift by Henry Lovestheft⁹³ and in 1310, *de maeremio de Wynescumb* was under the eye of the woodman.⁹⁴ In a court roll for Michaelmas 1467, ‘The lord’s woodward John Giles is instructed to deliver an oak from *Bronnrigge* to Thomas Geffray for making door posts and windows for his hall and an oak to John Frye alias Urched for making door posts for his barn at Barton’; in the same court roll John Giles the woodward is also ‘instructed to deliver an oak to John Kenne of Barton, for making a *camera* (chamber) in his tenement before the next court and also to deliver an oak to John Drotby(?) for repairing his tenement’. In a poorly preserved court roll of 1483 the Lord’s reeve, *messor* (reaper) and ‘wodwarder’ are mentioned because of something to do with ‘the Lord’s acorns and fruit growing in their woods’.

It should also be noted that in the 1189 Survey, we are told that Henry ‘the forester holds one cottage’ for a few services, ‘and for protecting the woods

(*pro custodia nemoris*) he holds another cottage’; so at least one of the Royal Forest officials was actually living on the manor at Winscombe in the 12th century.

There are only a few references to woodlands in the parish before 1300; these include the wood at Sandford called *Lovesthefts Scrobber* recorded in 1257 and the important wood at *Brimridge* near *Wyke* mentioned for the first time in 1290 (both discussed below). But with the beginning of the series of *compotus* and court rolls in the late 13th century, we get far more information about many more areas of named woodland. We can make some attempt to assess the extent of woodland in Winscombe parish from the 13th to the 15th century from these records and show the areas of them on maps (Figs 6 and 8). The *compotus* records were compiled for the manor of Winscombe by the reeves and stewards of the dean and chapter of Wells, as owners of the manor, and show annual income and expenditure. Those from 1277 to 1539 have been examined by Martin Ecclestone as well as the court rolls from 1305 to 1483 (see references at the end).

The following woods in Winscombe are mentioned in these documents. Where field names similar to the documented names are known, from the 1792 and 1840 maps in particular, we can usually get some idea of where the medieval woodland was situated in the parish; their approximate location and extent is shown on Figs 6 and 8.

MEDIEVAL WOODS IN WINSCOMBE PARISH

Barrow Wood and Bargh

There are a few references to *Barrow* in the documents and the word must refer to a wood (as has been discussed above). The large number of *Barrow* field names (including *Barrows Wood*) to be found on the tithe map in the vicinity of Max Mill Farm indicate the likely position of this medieval wood. These names are found to the west of the mill above the meadows of the Lox Yeo River and next to Barrow Mead Lane. There do not seem to be any similar names north of the river in Banwell parish.

The first reference to *Barrow* is in 1278. Medieval references to the wood at *Barrow* relate to farmed land nearby and its use for pasture. In 1278 for example, 9d is paid by ‘Walter called le Parker’, ‘for six acres of land in five pieces next to *la Barrewe* for his life’ while in 1342–3, ‘John de Ban

[?Banwell] and Margaret his wife pay 18d for all the pasture in *les Bawewes* wood, for his life'. Using the wood for pasture would eventually result in it becoming more of a wood-pasture area as grazing animals ate the shoots of new trees and shrubs, so this wood was probably becoming less tree covered by the middle of the 14th century. It is last mentioned in 1572 as 'trees growing in *Barrawe*' but both then and in 1540 most of the area was fields.⁹⁵ The reference to William le Parker (who also occurs in *La Bargh*, see below) might suggest that there was a medieval park at Max.⁹⁶ Some of the field boundaries near Max are very curved in shape with the sort of pattern that might reflect a former park enclosure, though this example would be very small and only a few acres in extent. As we shall see the park referred to in these names is perhaps more likely to have been at *Moorham* (see below).

There are references to a wood called *La Bargh* in both the court rolls and the *compotus* rolls and it seems likely that this wood was near to the Barrow wood. In 1336–7, '18d for the sale of summer pasture in the wood at *la Bargh*' and '3s from W. le Parker for 6 acres of land in 5 pieces next to *la Bargh*' is noted. In a court roll for 1353, '6 acres of *Overland* land next to *le Barghe*' are listed while in the 1452–3 *compotus* roll, 'Nothing from the sale of underwood in *Moreham* and *Bargewode*, because it was sold six years ago' is recorded along with other references to the sale of underwood elsewhere.

There are no *Barge Wood* field names on the tithe map and it is therefore not known for certain where this wood was situated in the manor. However the reference to W. le Parker and his '6 acres in 5 pieces' in 1336–7 shows us that *La Bargh* is near to, if not actually the same as, the woodland of *Barrow* since virtually the same reference occurs in 1278. The names *Burgetfield*, *Burge Field* and *Burges Ham*, occur on the 1840 tithe map;⁹⁷ the first two names are near to Winscombe village and are unlikely to refer to former wood areas but the last is near to the other woodlands around Max mill. The wood was clearly being used for grazing as part of a wood-pasture regime like *Barrow*, and was probably being cleared as well. The use of the term 'overland' suggests additional land, probably originally part of the demesne, which had been added to the land of a tenant. In Winscombe it seems often to be used of newly assarted land as well as former demesne.⁹⁸

The association of *Bargewode* with *Moreham* in 1452–3 (and of *Moreham* with *Brimridge* in 1342–3 – see below) should introduce a note of caution

into the location of a park at *Barrow Wood*, as much of the boundary at *Moreham* has a curvilinear form and is associated with *lugfall* names. However it remains at least a possibility that there was a small park at Max in the 13th century and that the curvilinear boundaries which might indicate the outline of the park enclosure are still shown on the 1840 tithe map. The holding at Max, with the mill, was of a reasonable size, a virgate in 1189 and a half virgate but with free tenure in 1290, and so the occupant here may have had sufficient status to possess a small manorial park.

It seems certain therefore that there was a substantial medieval wood near Max and the name 'barrow' in the field names indicates its extent. Nearby, the *Ditchett* and *Burges* (?*Bargh*) names give an indication of a wider area, while the adjacent *Challey* place-name hints at the extent of a large, former wooded extent. The wood was probably used as wood-pasture with grazing rather than for the production of wood and timber; at least, in the records that are available, there are no references to timber trees or underwood. This regime, as noted above, would eventually have destroyed the woodland as animals ate the new shoots of the trees and shrubs. If a park was created in this area it may have been an attempt to corral animals to prevent further depletion of the vegetation. In any event the woodland eventually disappeared to be replaced by the small enclosures shown on the 18th and 19th-century maps.

Brimridge

There are many references in the *compotus* rolls to a wood at *Brounugg*, *Bronrugg* or *Bronnrigge* at Winscombe in the Middle Ages.⁹⁹ It is clear that this wood was of the very greatest importance for the estate of the dean and chapter of Wells. It is the best documented of the medieval woods in the parish being first mentioned in 1290 in the Winscombe Customal.¹⁰⁰ It produced a lot of oaks for construction work and underwood for other purposes. There are, however, no names like *Brounugg* recorded on the maps of 1792 or 1840. Nevertheless it can be shown that this name develops and changes over time and eventually ends up as *Brimridge*. Over a 300-year period it is recorded in the following forms – *Brounugg* (1342–3), *Bronnrig* (1371–2), *Bronrigger* (1396–7), *Bronrugg* (North and South) (1416–7), *Bron(n)rigger* (1459–60),

Bren(n)rige (1539–40) and *Brundrudge*, *Branrudge* and *Bremridge* (1572) and *Brunridge* (1650).¹⁰¹ It seems clear that the name originally meant *Brownridge*,¹⁰² almost certainly a description of the colour of the dolomitic conglomerate rock which outcrops on the ridge where the wood once stood. *Brimridge* is a name that does occur however on the later maps and so the approximate location of the medieval wood can be suggested. In 1792 there are ten fields on William White's map with the name *Brimridge*¹⁰³ but on the 1840 tithe map there are only three names.¹⁰⁴

These names are all located in the area south of Shipham Lane and north of the unnamed stream that runs from Winterhead to Woodborough (Fig. 6). The wood may have extended either side of this stream and been adjacent to the wood of *Moorham* and the *Hilly* place-names area to the north-west and west respectively. In the *compotus* rolls *Brimridge* names are associated with the activities of the atte Wyke family and they in turn are associated with other named plots in the *Brimridge* area. In 1840 the area in the valley bottom between the suggested north and south parts of *Brimridge* wood is called *Popesmead* and members of the Pope family are regularly recorded in the *compotus* rolls.¹⁰⁵ These records of land held by the Pope family may therefore sometimes relate to the *Brimridge* area. Good examples include 1336–7, '8d from the sale in summer of wood pasture on the north side of Martin Pope's meadow' and 1371–2, 'Nothing from the wood-pasture on the north side of William Pope's land called *le Gore*, because it was used for underwood growing there'. It is likely that both of these references are to land at *Brimridge*. Even if there were no field names to indicate the site of the wood, there are, unusually, two descriptions of its situation in the medieval documents. In the *compotus* roll for 1336–7 it is recorded as '2s from the pasture of a piece of Bronnrigge wood, between the land of Thomas atte Wyke and the windmill' and in the 1342–3 *compotus* roll 2s comes from, 'the pasture of one (missing) of wood in *Brounrigg* between Thomas atte Wyke's land and *Morham*'. As we shall see *Moreham* names occur on the 1792 and 1840 maps and the woodland there is discussed below. The windmill stood some way away on the Lynch in Woodborough¹⁰⁶ but its site would have been obvious from the position of the wood. The atte Wyke family lived on the edge of *Brimridge* wood and took their name from the now deserted hamlet of *Wyke* nearby.¹⁰⁷

The *compotus* rolls show us reasonably clearly how *Brimridge Wood* was being managed in the later medieval period. Early references refer to the 'sale of wood' (1366–7, 1396–7), 'pasture' (1336–7, 1342–3) and 'underwood' (1371–2, 1382–3, 1416–17 and 1452–3 that states that that it was all sold some years ago) and suggest that the woodland was being used to produce small-scale wood, such as firewood. In some years all or part of it was used for grazing. But there are references to oak trees, and occasionally maple, and underwood. More detailed accounts for certain years, in the late 14th and 15th centuries, clearly indicate the type of woodland management referred to by Oliver Rackham, with standard trees (invariably oaks) being grown within underwood coppices of shrubs, such as hazel. For example in 1416–17, 12s was obtained from the sale of underwood from three acres in both *Northbronrugge* and *Southbronrugge* while at the same time £7 6s came from the sale of oaks in both parts of the wood as, 'ordered by the steward as shown by a bill'. These oaks were required for the repair of buildings and 12d was paid 'for felling five oaks and carting them from *Bronrugge*'. Even the by-products were useful as 20d was made, 'from the sale of bark and cropped branches from timber felled to repair the houses this year'. And again in 1459–60, 75s and 2d was made, 'from the sale to various people of underwood from 20½ acres in *Southbronrigge* at 3s 8d per acre', one of the few instances where there is any indication of the size of the wood. At the same time there was 18s 3d from the sale to various people of, '50 oaks called 'scrubbes' in the same wood', an instance of the word 'scrubs' which has already been discussed.

A little earlier in 1452–3 some indication of the problems of getting the trees out of the woods is recorded. Three pence was paid, 'for felling three oaks in *Southbronrigge* and *Northbronrigge* for making the planks for the lord's stable door' and 'ten pence for hiring two men to cart the three oaks from *Bronrig* to (the) Winscombe *curia* [court]'. Other expenditure included, 'nine pence for hiring a man cutting up and 'topping' an oak in *Southbronrigge* that was blocking the 'lane below *Bronrigge* and the watercourse' and 'four pence for hiring a man with his cart hauling the 'toppes' of the oak from *Bronrigge* to the said lane, making a way there'. This sounds like trees blocking an access way and wood being used to reinforce a lane. Perhaps because it was muddy, a brushwood causeway was made to get the timber out of the woods.

The medieval documents also show how *Brimridge* was eventually cleared by assarting and changed into pasture and meadow. Some of the people involved in this clearance process are also reasonably well documented, mainly the atte Wyke family over several generations.¹⁰⁸ The first mention of 'assarts' seems to be in 1319. In that year, 'Philip Louestheft of Wynescumbe'¹⁰⁹ 'quitclaims' to the dean and chapter of Wells 'all his common rights, 'save in an assart by the wood of *Brunrigges* and in all other places now enclosed'.¹¹⁰ By 1336/7 and 1342/3 not only was land being leased 'below the wood' but pasture 'in the wood' is also producing rent – '16d from Thomas atte Wyke for two acres of arable land called *Chalvecroft* below *Brounugg*, held for his life'; '7s from Thomas atte Wyke and Elen his wife for the new rent of a piece in the Lord's Wood called *Brounugg* next to the land of the said Thomas containing 7 acres' and '2s from the pasture of a piece of *Bronnrigge* wood'. These entries for 1336/7 are repeated each year as the same land is leased and re-leased. Encroachment on the wood at *Brimridge* must have been going on all through the 14th and 15th century. One entry for 1366/7 shows what was happening. In that year it is recorded that there was no income from some pasture, 'Nothing from the pasture of a corner in *Bronnryg*, that was destroyed by beasts and affers in the Lord's wood there'.¹¹¹

But there was also increasing concern to conserve the woods as a valuable resource, with expenditure on ditching, embankments and fencing. While the wood was being managed to produce oaks and underwood, admittedly at times with difficulty as we have seen (in 1452/3), in the same set of accounts there is a record of '8d for hiring two men for one day repairing various faults around the *Brinrigge* enclosure, at 4d each' and '12d for hiring three men for one day closing gaps around *Southbronrigge*, at 4d each'. This sounds like the embanked, ditched and hedged boundaries seen around many early woods, which need constant maintenance to prevent grazing animals from entering the wood and eating the new shoots.

By the 16th century the wood was being leased out from the manor, but by this time it must have been somewhat depleted. In 1513–14 a new rent of 13s 4d is recorded from, 'Master Peter (or Patrick?) Carselegh, 'professor of sacred theology', for a certain wood called *Bronrige* granted for a term of fifty years, this year the sixth'. This lease, which therefore must have started in 1507–8, was still being

recorded in 1539–40 when the annual rent (of *Brenrige*) was 15s.¹¹² The main use of the wood for most of its existence was as an important source of timber, particularly oaks, for building work, and there are references to trees being taken from the wood whenever there was a building campaign on the estate and beyond. This occurred in 1396–7 when a barn was repaired,¹¹³ in 1416–7, '12d for felling 5 oaks for the timber and carting them from *Bronnrigge*' when there were further repairs, and in 1452 when other buildings at the *curia* were worked on.¹¹⁴

The references to an assart in 1319 and arable land in *Brimridge* and nearby in 1290 and 1342 are followed by records of underwood and oaks being felled in the late 14th and 15th century. We cannot make too much of this but perhaps the wood was being changed from essentially wildwood to a more managed woodland with coppice and standards as more and more was felled – a process of conservation and management rather than clear felling. This wood needed to be protected from grazing and so there are references to securing the boundary of the enclosures. By 1400 only islands of wood were left – *North* and *South Brimridge* are referred to; by the 16th century '16 acres of arable land called *great brenrudge*' and mention of *Little Brimridge* suggests further depletion and change. In 1539–40 there is a reference to John Mylward paying 12d per annum for pasture in a wood called *Little Brenrige*; by 1600 there was probably little woodland left. Over a 300-year period the wood went from a great area ripe for exploitation, to small areas of carefully managed coppice with oaks and by the 1572 survey much of the *Brimridge* land was ploughed.¹¹⁵

The wood may have been divided for management purposes. Unfortunately the full extent and acreage of the wood is not known for any date and so any divisions within it also are unknown; but it is tempting to see the stream, running from Winterhead to Woodborough, as the boundary between the two halves, north and south. The reference in 1452 to the clearance of an oak tree in *South Brimridge* that had blocked a lane and the stream could be seen to imply this.

The wood seems to have been managed in the 13th century in the classic fashion described by Oliver Rackham as 'coppice and standards'.¹¹⁶ Trees were grown for timber, particularly oaks though a maple is also mentioned in the August 1360 court roll 'John atte Wyke felled a maple in the Lord's wood of *Bronnrigg* without license'. The estate takes out oaks as they need them for building, two, three or more

at a time. In 1452 these are only valued at 1d each. Underwood with shrubs such as hazel is also recorded a lot; it is valued highly at 4s an acre in 1416. But the wood is also grazed by animals either as pasture (two acres were rented to Thomas atte Wyke in 1336) or by animals getting in, as in the 'sheep attack' in 1400 when, 'John Ambler let his sheep destroy part of the Lord's wood called *North Brimridge*'. Such grazing would eventually lead to the destruction of the underwood and the trees so the wood was fenced off from areas of grazing and the enclosures repaired (in 1452). It is clear that the wood was being felled gradually in the 14th century in a process of clearance, or assarting, for agriculture. The small areas of land rented out probably represent piecemeal clearance and there are increasing references to pasture rather than underwood.

Over the 300-year period that the wood is mentioned in documents the wood shrank in area, though there is never any indication of the size of the wood at any date. It became broken into separate smaller areas of woodland denoted by 'north' and 'south', 'little' and 'great' names. By 1396–7 both *Northbronrigge* and *Southbronrigge* are recorded as separate woods, or areas of wood, and these terms are still in use in the middle of the 15th century (in 1459–60 for example). It is likely that the names represented areas on either side of the meadow by the unnamed stream that runs from Winterhead to Woodborough. By 1539–40 it seems that further clearance or shrinkage has taken place as then only *Little Brenrige* is mentioned, with a *greatebrenrudge* recorded in 1572.¹¹⁷ This last reference to the, 'east side of the arable land by the wood called *brenridge*' does at least suggest that there was still a wood at the end of the 16th century despite centuries of woodland clearance.

Ford Wood

As we have seen there are three fields on the tithe map called *Ford Wood*, each down to pasture.¹¹⁸ This wood is not mentioned in the court or *compotus* rolls, probably because it belonged to one of the smaller manorial units at Woodborough. It was associated with Henry Lovestheft's gifts to various monasteries and probably the 'manor' of Ford. In 1325, however, it is recorded that, 'William de la Ford junior has cut down two oaks on the boundary of his and the dean and chapter's lands at *Wynescumb*. It is adjudged by a jury on the spot that the trees belonged

to the dean and chapter and that William is to pay them £10 in silver, and restore the wood'.¹¹⁹

Also recorded is a

'Grant by William de la Ford the younger to the dean and chapter of Wells that they may scour and repair an ancient dyke 5 feet in width dividing their grove from a small parcel of the said William's land on the south side thereof at *Langenacresweye* in the manor of *Wynescumbe*, and plant the same with thorns etc; it having been found by men of the neighbourhood after viewing the same that the said dyke is and always was the true boundary upon the soil of the dean and chapter, and that two oaks which he had cut down were growing upon their soil, wherefore he had paid £10 for damages and given up the timber'.¹²⁰

So we only have a record of the wood because activities there had an impact on the dean and chapter's estate. Because of William's name it is likely that these references relate to Ford Wood; at least it refers to a dyke dividing their grove (see discussion above). The reference suggests an enclosed landscape of banks and ditches with thorn hedges on top, probably with standard trees, in this case oaks, growing on the banks. Ten pounds seems a lot for two trees so perhaps William is being made an example to others. There is no reference to *Long acres way* in any field names on any later maps. However if this reference is to *Ford Wood*, or the boundary of it, the narrow strip of land called *Alderbed* in 1840¹²¹ and lying near the former open field strips of Winscombe lying south of *Ford Wood*, may be the remains of a former lane indicated by the name (Fig. 8).¹²²

The field names which may indicate the site of the medieval wood of Ford are south of the Warn Hill wood and beyond the huge area of *Twinyard* and *Alder Mead* field names in 1840. This was an area that was probably marsh in the past and so the *Warn Hill* (see below) woodland may have extended this far south to Ford Wood and included a lot of marshy woodland or 'carr' as well (see below) (Fig. 8). It was a landscape of embanked reclaimed fields. In the 1305–6 *compotus* roll 20d is paid 'for hiring a man for 16 days, at 1¼d a day digging a ditch, fencing and pleaching at *la Morlonde*, and throwing down the old enclosure (?)'. *Murland* is the name given to two fields in 1840¹²³ south-east of *Ford Wood* and east of *Fidling Wells*. In *compotus* rolls

of 1416 and 1452 and in the Michaelmas 1467 court roll, *Morelond* is referred to as a pasture close and it is near *Alres*, as in 1840 *Murland* is near to the *Alder Grove*. These place-names and references seem to indicate that there were assarts or enclosures of banks, ditches and hedges in the *Murland* and *Alder Grove* areas.

Frithwood

A wood called *Frith*, which as we have seen means wood, or *frithwood*, which is tautologous, is mentioned in 14th and 15th-century documents for Winscombe, usually as a pointer to land elsewhere.¹²⁴ We would probably not have any idea where this wood was located from these references, and certainly know nothing of how it was managed and what it produced, but for a *compotus* roll of 1342–3. This records, ‘12d from Walter le Kyng for pasture (illegible) in *le Fryth* on the west side of the church, for his life’. This and the several references to extensive arable areas below *Frith* (in 1334–7 for example) demonstrate that the wood being referred to was on the steep north side of Winscombe Hill and Wavering Down running from Winscombe westwards to Barton. It was clearly being used for grazing and so was probably thin woodland and wood-pasture.

Moorham

There was a large wood west of *Brimridge* wood in the medieval period called *Moorham* or *Moreham*. With *Warn Hill* it was next in importance to *Brimridge*, with the added interest that it was probably a medieval park. The name survives today in the name of a suburban road – *Moorham Road* – and there is still a prominent clump of old oak trees remaining on what was the edge of the wood. Today part of the southern and south-east corner of the former wood still exists as a hedge with oak trees. The northern boundary along *Shipham Lane* has old oaks in the hedge and wide green verges that could have been *lugfall* strips. On the southern side of the former wood alongside the Winscombe Woodborough County Primary School there is still a surviving *lugfall* strip lined with hedges and old oaks. This is a unique feature in the Winscombe landscape. Otherwise much of the perimeter of the wood and all the hedges and trees within it have

been grubbed out to produce the ‘prairie’ landscape in existence today. The 1946 RAF air photo of the area shows the wooded area in its undisturbed state (Fig. 7).

The wood lay near the headwaters of the Lox Yeo River, east of the ponds at Slough Pit and it contained the spring for the river. On the 1792 map, plot number 536 on the north-west edge of *Moreham* is called *In Maperderwell*, presumably the name of the spring that supplies the river. The name occurs often in the *compotus* rolls for the manor. In 1336–7 eleven acres of barley were sown *Byeste Mapeldorewell* and in both 1366–7 and 1382–3, a reduced rent (from 6d to 2d per annum) is recorded for land on the east side of *Mapildorewell*. Today the site of the spring is not very obvious but the stream, one of the headwaters of the Lox Yeo River, is clear south of the Winscombe Postal Sorting Office. On modern maps there are still drains in this area, and the enclosure, plot 536 in 1792, is clearly visible on the 1946 RAF air photos with areas of ridge and furrow to the east, perhaps the areas of the arable referred to in the 14th century (Figs 6 and 7).¹²⁵

Moreham is not a very well-documented wood being first mentioned in 1342–3 though not specifically as a wood (‘14d from Galfrid Tryllin’ for pasture). In 1452–3 underwood is recorded from the wood, and by the later 15th century it is called pasture. A court roll for 1483 records, ‘Edward Natt for the Steward and with the assent of all the tenants there ... that the pasture called *Moreham* will be held in severalty from the feast of the Purification (2 February) to the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September), on pain of 3s 4d’. This suggests that *Moreham* is no longer woodland but is available to the tenants, perhaps as wood-pasture, over the summer for grazing. It is not recorded again until the 16th century; in 1513–14, 20p is received from John Hawkyngs, ‘for pasture in a certain wood called *Moreham*’ and in 1539–40, ‘6s 7d from Robert Cupper for pasture in a wood in *Moorham*’. This would reasonably suggest that the wood was on the way to wood-pasture and extinction were it not shown as a well-organised wood on later maps. On the 1822 Greenwood map, small rectangular patches of wood are shown with cleared areas between; this suggests that different areas are cleared as the trees and underwood are needed. All around is a track or (unfenced) lane mirroring the outline of the former wood and the *lugfalls* on the 1792 and 1840 maps.¹²⁶

In 1792 three fields are called *Moreham*¹²⁷ while in 1840 there are five fields incorporating the name,



Fig. 7 RAF vertical air photograph of the Wyke, Moorham Wood and Brimridge Wood area in 1946; the almost white field in the centre is the deserted hamlet of Wyke; Moorham is to the left of this with the curvilinear boundary; Brimridge lay mainly to the south of Wyke (CPE UK 1869 4 December 1946 3284) (National Monuments Record, English Heritage, Swindon)

including a large coppice – *Moorham Copse* – which is clearly shown on the Greenwood map of 1822.¹²⁸ As we have seen there are a number of *lugfall* names associated with the wood, and the curvilinear boundaries shown on the 1822 map and the title map of 1840, suggest that this was the area of the medieval wood, as they often have this characteristic curvilinear shape. The fact that the area is surrounded by the *lugfall* strips reinforces this idea. There is also the possibility that *Moreham* was a medieval park, rather than there having been a park at Max as was suggested above. The best *lugfalls* in the parish are at *Moreham* and given one possible origin of these features as being associated with park boundaries as described by Strachey.¹²⁹ *Moreham* must be a good candidate for a medieval park linked to the names of officials with ‘park’ elements in their surnames in 1277 to 1337. Often parks surrounded areas of Royal Forest and the king was careful to

licence and limit those who were entitled to possess a park, as deer often congregated in them. Grants of free warren, in this case to the dean and chapter of Wells as landowner, are often the best indication of attempts to create a park though none is known for Winscombe.¹³⁰ This wood lay in the middle of the parish to the west of *Brimridge*, indeed they both may once have been part of a large tract of woodland before clearance in the 14th century broke up the wood into smaller, separately named, blocks.

Warn Hill and Breach

There are a series of references, mainly in the account rolls, to a medieval wood at *Wamenhill* beginning in 1336–7 (‘1/2 acre of pasture on the east side of Wamenhulle’), and going on until 1540. The place-name *Wamenhull* is first recorded in the Winscombe

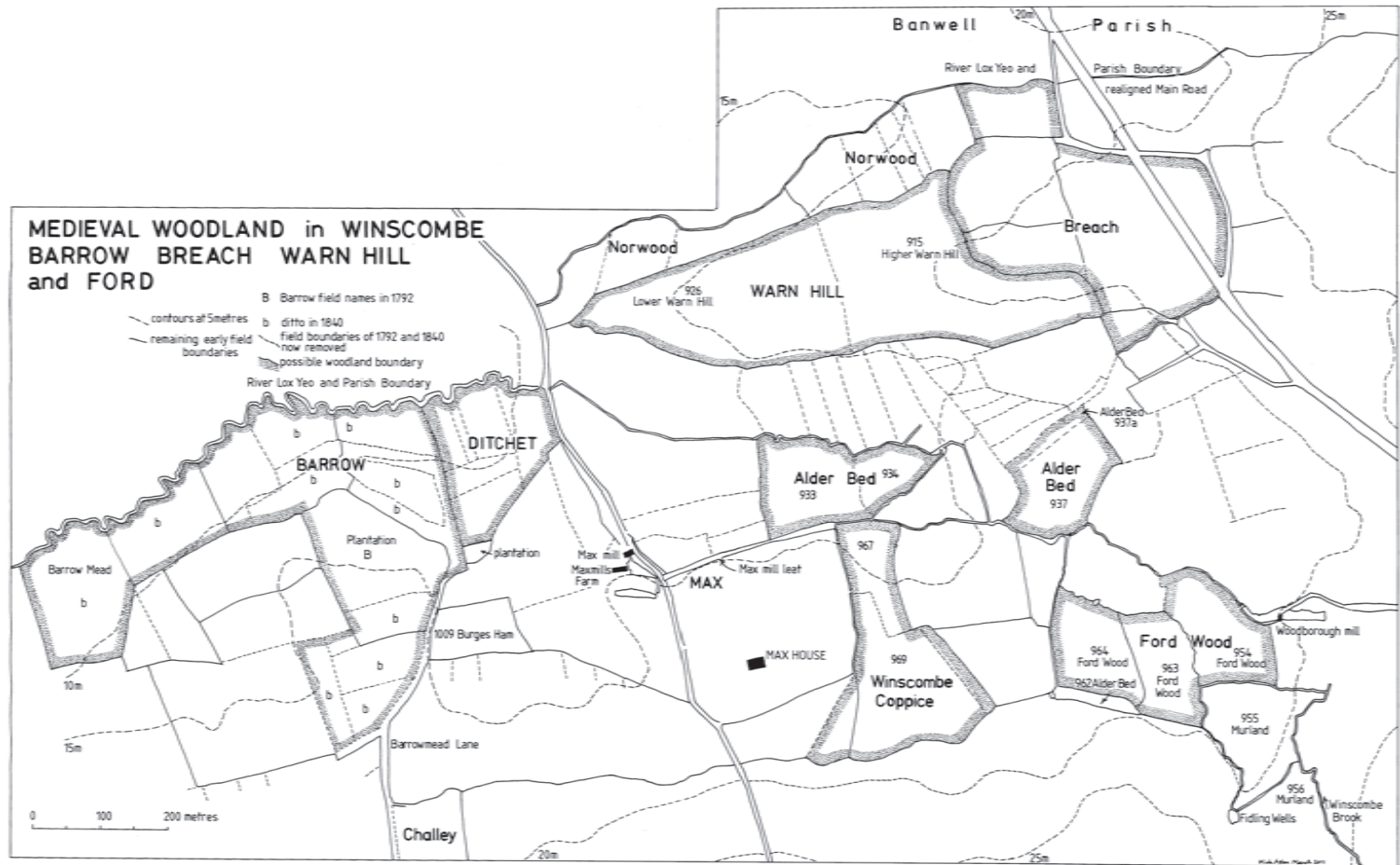


Fig. 8 The medieval woodlands of Winscombe; Barrow, Ditchet, Ford, Warn Hill, and Breach

Custumal of 1290.¹³¹ It is clear from the recorded name *Wamynhull*, *Wammenhille* or *Wamhyll* that the last element is 'hill', but it is not obvious what the first element is and it is very difficult to see what this name derives from. The *wam* element might just be 'womb' 'as used in a topographical sense 'a hollow' or, as in the name of the Somerset parish of Wambrook, 'crooked'; neither seems particularly appropriate for the name of the low hill where *Wamenhill* is thought to be.¹³² There are no names exactly like this on the 1792 or 1840 maps, but the *Wamhyll* version of the name by the 16th century is very close to the name *Warnhill* used in 1792 and *Warn Hill* in 1840, to refer to two fields in the south part of the parish.¹³³

Warn Hill is a low eminence just to the south of the Lox Yeo River. Perhaps the most compelling reason for thinking this is the site of the medieval wood is that it is right next to the *breach* names (to be discussed below) and is associated with the extensive area of woodland around Max mill (Fig. 8). From the 14th to the 16th century land in the wood at *Wamenhill* and nearby was used for pasture. There are references in the *compotus* rolls for 1336–7, 1342–3, 1382–3, 1393–4 and 1396–7.¹³⁴ But despite this indication of clearance for pasture or wood-pasture, it is clear that at least part of *Wamenhill* must also have been managed in the classic way of coppice (underwood) and standard trees usually oaks. It is clearly recorded as a wood, usually with pasture, in 1393–4, 1416–7, 1452–3 and 1459–60 when the lost rents from it are recorded. (In 1459–60 7s was 'lost' because the wood-pasture was used by the lords rather than the tenants.) By 1513–4 and 1539–40 the situation was reversed and the wood was again valuable and producing rent.¹³⁵

That it was managed comes from the several references to underwood, which was of some value, from 1342–3 to 1452–3¹³⁶ and the fact that standard oak trees were also grown there. From the court roll for Michaelmas 1400, 'John Sprynge of Axbridge is presented this day for entering the lord's wood of *Wamenhull* and cutting down four oaks growing there, and taking them away.' More unusual however is the bill attached to the 1393–4 *compotus* roll that records that 14¼ acres of underwood in *Wamenhull* with 96 oaks were sold for 4s 6d an acre to twelve men from outside the parish (the oaks must have been saplings). A lot was happening in this year; an enquiry was held as to, 'whether the reeve John Warre felled and took away 3 oaks from the lord's wood, instead of the 2 oaks that the steward gave him' and, 'that Robert had two bullocks feeding on

Wamenhull the whole summer'. We thus get a picture of a wood with oak trees and underwood but which was also grazed. It is perhaps not surprising that there is no wood there today and that the best example of an assart in the parish is still clearly visible at the eastern end of the former wood.

At the eastern end of the hill with the *Warn Hill* names is the collection of *breach* names already discussed. The clearance of woodland implied by the name *breach* was therefore probably within the *Wamenhill* wood and this was probably taking place around 1305–6. In that year the *compotus* roll under the heading 'Cost of ploughs' records, '15d for buying a ploughshare and a new coulter for a new plough at *la Breche*'.¹³⁷ Usually repairs and new iron work and wood for ploughs are separately assessed under a different entry, often 'expenses', and so it is unusual to mention a place-name as well. Could it be that a plough was broken on tough roots while trying to cultivate the soil of the newly assarted woodland here? The clerk may have been told to put the expense of the new plough against the income from the cleared new land rather than as a normal expense.

A few other references to *breach* occur but they are associated with the cleared land and not woodland. In the *compotus* roll for 1342–3 under 'perquisites', '3 acres of overlond land in *la Brech* held by Nicholas de Rowberry' are recorded, and in a court roll at Easter 1401, '1½ acres of *Overlond* land and meadow are in *la Breche*'. *Overlond* is a term often used for additional, formerly demesne, or assarted land that has been added to a holding. In the same document it is recorded that 'John Wroxhale had without licence pulled down the lord's wood boundary so that the common field called *Breche* was damaged'. Finally there are references in the 1452–3 *compotus* roll to John Northvale's arrears of his rent (2s per annum) for a close called *Wodebreche*'. In a court roll of Michaelmas 1467 Robert Trescell is fined, 'for neglecting his ditch at *Breche* between himself and John Sheryngton' and this may also refer to this area.

Wamenhill wood was part of a much larger area of woodland. To the north all of the fields in 1840 were called *Norwood* (presumably 'north wood') and these indicate that the wood formerly extended as far as the river in that direction. To the south were the fields called *Ford Wood* (see above). Together with *Winscombe Coppice*, these names suggest that most of the land between the Lox Yeo River to the north, the lane to Max mill to the west and the road from Woodborough to Banwell to the east, was

woodland in early medieval times. In the centre there was extensive poorly drained carr land, called *Alderbed* in 1840, and still very boggy today. To the south, the woodland bounded the probable extensive arable of *Oldfield* and the west field of Winscombe, indicated by long narrow strip fields.¹³⁸

WOODLAND IN SANDFORD

The *compotus* and court rolls seem mainly to relate to matters in the southern, Winscombe part of the parish and there is little that refers to Sandford and settlements in the northern end of the parish. This is probably a reflection that this part of the parish was a separate landholding for much of the recorded history of the parish from the 11th to the 16th century. We can see this at Domesday in 1086 when Ralph Crooked or Twisted Hands was the tenant of the Sandford area¹³⁹ and it was still the case in 1540 when there is a separate survey of Sandford.¹⁴⁰ The result is we have much less information about the northern half of the parish than the southern.

A rare exception from the records of the dean and chapter of Wells is the

‘Grant and quitclaim in 1257 by Robert de Sanford, son and heir of Albretha who was wife of Gilbert Wrench, to Giles dean of Wells and the chapter of a wood in *Sanford* (sic) called *Luueseftes Scrobet* otherwise *Cnytwyneswode*, lying between the wood which Henry Luueseft her father gave the said Albretha in frank marriage and that of William de Bristoll, with warranty.’

The next grant recorded refers to the same land but is from Albretha; Robert de Sanford (sic), son and heir of Albretha who was wife of Gilbert Wrench, grants to the Dean and Chapter of Wells, ‘a wood in *Sanford* called *Luueseftes Scobet* otherwise *Cnytwyneswode*, lying between the wood which Henry Luueseft her father gave the said Albretha in frank marriage and that of William Bristoll’.¹⁴¹

Although neither *Louesefts Scrobet*, nor William Bristol’s wood, seem to be named in later sources or are depicted on early maps anywhere in the northern part of the parish, we can work out roughly where the woodland was. This reference also tells us something about the woodland near Sandford. We can be reasonably sure *scrobet* was near Sandford because of a later reference in 1650 to five acres of wood and *olde Scrubbyd okys* listed for Sandford.

They belonged to Richard Wyke who was also holding Maxmill by an indenture dated 1529.¹⁴²

On the later maps of 1792 and 1840, woodland is shown all along the north side of the spur of the Mendip Hills at Sandford, Lincombe and Dinghurst, and as today there are three separate areas of woodland. Sandford Wood was divided into ten separate sections in 1840 (see below and Fig. 9) and it was also separated from Lincombe wood. The boundaries of all these parcels are still evident on the ground under the wood as ruined stone banks. To the east, the woods of Dinghurst are separate again. There are therefore three areas of woodland in 1257 and three areas of woodland today. The wood granted in 1257 called *Luuvesefts Scrobet* lay next to another wood that had also been Henry Loveseft’s.

Frank Thorn offers the following comments

The wood name means the *scrobet* of a man called *Loueseft* etc. The word *scrobet* almost certainly consists of *scrob-* and *-et*, the first element being OE *scrubb* or *scrybb*, meaning ‘scrub (land)’: that is ‘small stunted trees’, ‘brushwood’, ‘underwood’. The second element will be the imported Old French diminutive. This is found for example in *louet*, ‘wolf-cub’, ‘small wolf’, from *leu* or *lou* (Latin *lupus*, modern French *loup*); *louet* gives the English surname Lovet(t). The *-et* suffix seems to have arrived with the Normans and rapidly become acclimatised: one of the estates at Stoke-sub-Hamdon in Domesday Book (SOM 19,14), is called *Stochet*, presumably ‘Little Stoke’ as it is the smallest of three. So we are dealing with ‘*Loueseft*’s little piece of scrubland’. The ‘wood’ has an alternative name in the Wells *Liber Albus*, II, folio 99d, where it is called *alias Cnytwyneswode*. This might be part or all of ‘the wood of a man called Wine [Old English *Wine*] belonging to a knight’. *Wine* is presumably the man who named Winscombe, and it is likely that the wood, or part of it, had by the thirteenth century become part of a knight’s fee: the *Loueseft* family probably held a fee by knight service, this being represented by the part of Winscombe called *Loueshestesfee* (that is, the fee of *Loueshest*) in the Glastonbury Feodary.¹⁴³

Henry Lovestheft¹⁴⁴ was a major sub-tenant of the dean and chapter of Wells in Winscombe and his name occurs associated with a number of grants of

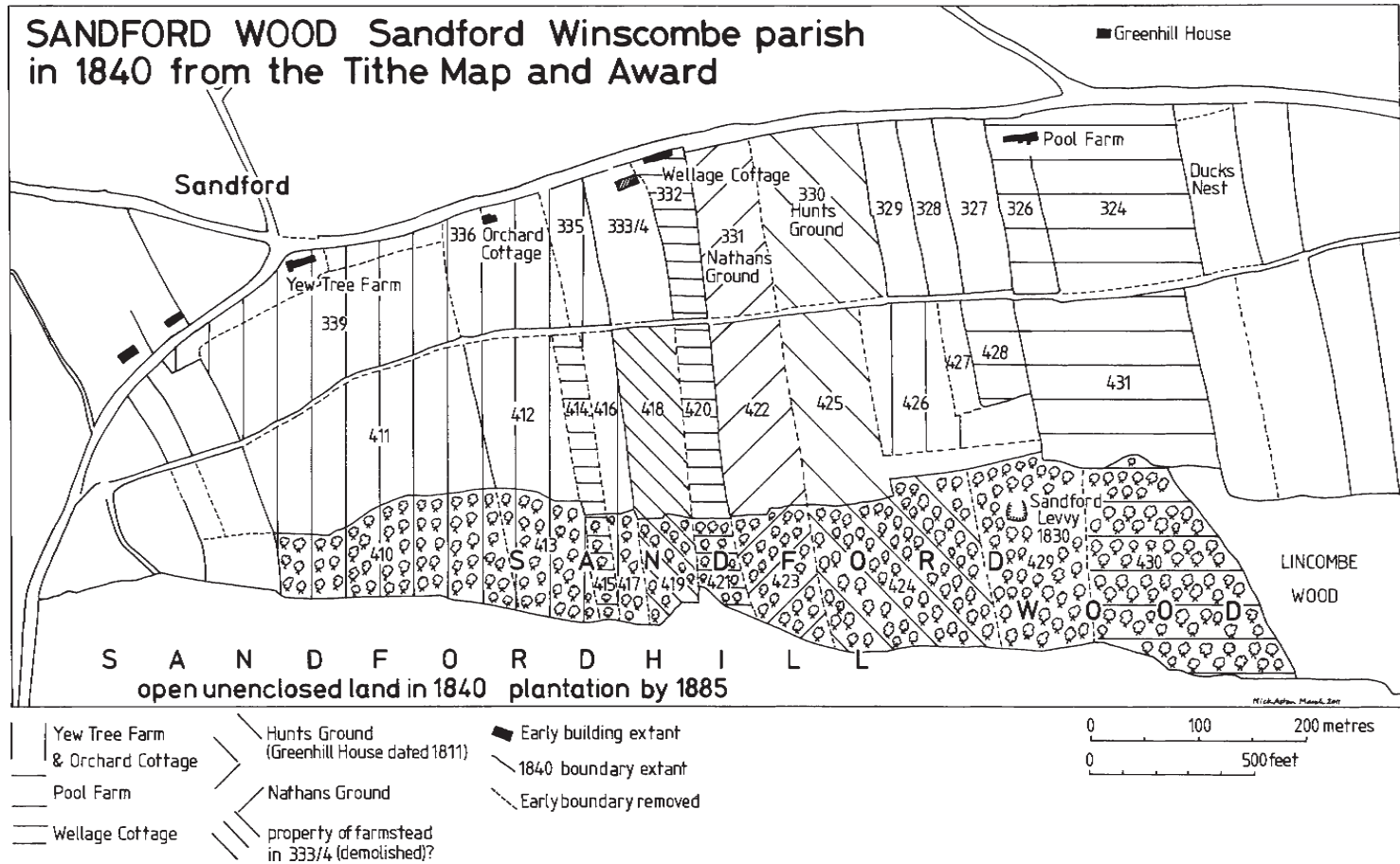


Fig. 9 Sandford Wood, Sandford, Winscombe Parish in 1840 from the tithe map and award

land in the Winscombe and Woodborough areas as well as Sandford woods and that belonging to William Bristoll. It is tempting to see these three woods as the same as the three areas of woodland today, with the 1257 grant referring to Lincombe Wood, between Henry Lovestheft's other wood, Sandford Wood, perhaps as it is joined to Lincombe Wood, and the woods at Dinghurst, belonging to William Bristol. Henry Lovestheft's woods would then still be joined as they must have been once when in single ownership with the Dinghurst woods completely separate. But this must remain conjecture until more evidence is forthcoming. What is clear is that the woods were valuable; one (possibly Sandford Wood) being given as a marriage gift, another which may have been given as well (as Robert de Sandford is clearly an heir) being a suitable offering (a return?) to the dean and chapter. Whatever the rights of local people in these woods, they were clearly privately owned at this time. Also one of the woods had been renamed. *Cnytwyneswode* might formerly have belonged to a *cnihht*, 'a person enfeoffed by a tenant in chief to perform his military service',¹⁴⁵ someone like Ralph Crooked Hands in fact, with the *wyneswode* being 'pasture wood'.¹⁴⁶ Alternately, and less likely perhaps, it was the wood of someone called Knightwyn, who is otherwise unrecorded at this time; though there are at least six tenants with different first names recorded from 1277 to 1459 in the *compotus* rolls with this surname.

This wood in 1840 was attached to specific holdings in Sandford – which each had a part of *Sandford Wood* (Fig. 9). Much of this woodland today is overgrown, unkempt and unmanaged. But there are areas of hazel coppice with standard oak trees and it is thus likely that this steep, north-facing slope was the area of the medieval woodland recorded at Sandford. What became ten separate sections of *Sandford Wood* in 1840 may have begun as separate allocations to new farmsteads along the main road from Pool Farm in the east to Yew Tree Farm in the west. Some of these either late medieval or 16th-century buildings still survive today at the road end of the strips of property,¹⁴⁷ while in other cases farms were either never built or were later demolished. It may be possible to record their remains in test pits in the gardens of modern bungalows, on for example *Nathans Ground* and *Hunts Ground* (Fig. 9).

To the east, Lyncombe Wood, Knowl/Knoll Batch Wood and Rocky Wood look like remnants of early woodland interspersed with irregular areas of cleared ground, one of which became a large common,

Churchill Batch, with a scatter of cottages and at least one limekiln around it. The pattern of field boundaries in the Dinghurst area is what could be expected of a formerly wooded area that has been cleared piecemeal by assarting. The result is a pattern of irregularly shaped hedged enclosures with oddly aligned field boundaries.

UNLOCATED AREAS OF MEDIEVAL WOODLAND IN WINSCOMBE PARISH

There are a number of woods mentioned in the medieval documents that either cannot be located using later field names on maps, that might have been part of alternative names for woods already identified, or where we might hazard a guess at their position from other evidence. These include from the *compotus* rolls *Black Allers* and *Church Allers*, woods at *Budelgore*, *Clyve*, *Faldheys*, and *Ramschaghe*, and underwood at *Leas Caris* and *Vallis*. Further documentary research in future may help to identify the position or clarify the extent of some of these woods.

Allers, Black Allers, Church Allers and Alder Grove

On the tithe map there are four fields between *Warn Hill* and *Ford Wood* called *Alder Bed*. This is a very wet and boggy part of the parish and so it looks as if it was given over to growing alder trees which seem to be able to tolerate waterlogged ground.¹⁴⁸ There is some medieval documentation for these alders, and entries in the *compotus* rolls give us a snap shot of what the local medieval landscape might have looked like. In 1236 Henry Lovestheft gave as an endowment to St James church, Winscombe, his alder grove called *Durnehete*. The description of the location of this grove implies that it was near Ford, a hamlet north of Winscombe, and the 'watercourse to (the) grantor's mill', which must mean Henry Lovestheft's water mill at Woodborough Mill. The document reads

'Charter of Henry Lovestheft, reciting the dedication of the church of Winscombe to St James the apostle by Jocelin bishop of Bath [1206–42] on *vii kal* September [ie 26 August using inclusive reckoning] in the 30th year of his episcopate, and giving as an endowment to the said church, by the assent of his wife and

his heirs, his alder grove called *Durnehete*, extending along the watercourse called *Merstrem* between the bishop and Henry Lovestheft to a meadow of Elias de Ford called *Norkemestemedede* by the new dike, and from the new dike on the east side by a watercourse from Ford to the corner of *Aldithmede* eastward, saving the watercourse to grantor's mill'.¹⁴⁹

As some of these landmarks can be located in the area of the 1840 'alder bed' it suggests that the 13th-century *Durnehete* alder grove was in the same area. It is also likely that the *Black Allers* and *Church Allers* names recorded in the *compotus* rolls from the 1330s, for over 100 years to the 1450s also refer to this area. Place-names with *alor* and *alre* giving *Aller* or *Alre* indicate 'alder' or 'growing with alders'¹⁵⁰ and so these 'aller' names probably refer to alder groves in the parish in the 14th century. The water courses associated with these alder beds are mentioned in the 1366 *compotus* roll when, '12s 4d is paid for scouring 36 raps (about 240 yards¹⁵¹) of the water course at *Blakealres*, 6 feet in width and 5 feet in depth, by piecework at 4d/rap, as ordered by the steward', and similarly in 1393–4, '10s 5d for scouring 50 raps of the old ditch around the cowpasture at *Blakealres*, and lopping and pleaching the hedge, for 2½d a rap and a bushel of wheat'.¹⁵²

The area called *Mor(e)land*, presumably 'moor lands', seems to have been closely associated with the alder groves. It is first recorded in 1305 and then in a *compotus* roll of 1393–4 under 'produce of the manor' – '20d from the sale of alders in *la Morlond* to Robert Geoffrey', and, in 1452–3, '13s 4d for a certain pasture close called *Morelond* and for the demesne *Church allers*'. This name, as *Murlands*, is applied to two fields in 1840 (plots 955 and 956) lying south of *Ford Wood*, *Woodborough Mill* and south-east of the alder groves.

'Underwood' is mentioned in 1396–7 but otherwise references to 'pasture' 'brambles' and 'thorns' suggest that this was a rather wild and undeveloped area. Only in 1335 were alder trees recorded as sold from (*Church*) *alres*.¹⁵³

Budelgore

Land called *Budelgore* is recorded in the *compotus* rolls in 1277–8 and 1305–6; however a wood is not recorded there (in the *compotus* rolls) until 1336–7

to 1342–3. The name is interesting as *gore* could refer to 'dirt, dung, filth'¹⁵⁴ but the term is usually used of small pieces of often triangular or odd-shaped land. In 1277–8 and 1305–6 the name refers to, 'an acre of land and a *gore* of meadow' and in 1371–2 'two acres of meadow' called *Budelgore*. *Budel* on the other hand could be derived from *botl*, *bold*, 'a dwelling, a dwelling place, a house' and therefore indicate an unknown former settlement site.¹⁵⁵

At present it is not known where in the parish *Budelgore* was as there are no names like it recorded on either the 1792 or 1840 maps and no indication of its location in the documents. The only clue is *Budelgore's* apparent association often in the records with 'land', 'fallow land' or 'overland' called *Righamstile*.¹⁵⁶ This name is spelt in various ways in the *compotus* records: 1333–4 *Rychamstigh*; 1334–5 *Rychamstigh*; 1336–7 *Ryghamstigel*; 1342–3 *Righamstighle*; 1371–2 *Risthamstighle*; 1382–3, 1396–7 *Risshamstigh*; and 1452–3 *Russelhamstile*. Whatever this name means it certainly seems to include both the element *stigel* a 'stile, a place devised for climbing over a fence' and *ham* almost certainly in the sense of 'hamm', 'homm' 'an enclosure, a meadow, a water meadow'.¹⁵⁷ The *Rig-*element might refer to *ric* a 'narrow strip' of land or from *hrycg* 'a ridge or long narrow hill'.¹⁵⁸ On the 1792 map plot 174 is called 'Reacham Stile' and in 1840 plots 747 and 748 are called 'Rickham Stile' (Fig. 5). These fields are off East Well Lane and west of Yadley Lane in the south of the parish. Perhaps therefore *Budelgore* was associated with the wood at Clyve, in the Buttercliffe area of 1840 which is next to Rickham Stile.

An alternative is that *Budelgore* wood may have been the same as the wood called *la Gore*. In the 1371–2 *compotus* roll under 'sale of pasture' is recorded 'nothing from the wood-pasture on the north side of William Pope's land called *la Gore*, because it was used for underwood growing there' and also under 'sale of pasture' for 1382–3, '3d from the sale of wood-pasture on the north side of William Pope's land called *la Gor*'.

These field names are accompanied by references to 'new land' in 1342–3 and 'overland' in 1371–2. This suggests an area that may have been cleared or assarted. Clearly there is fallow land and underwood nearby and the land appears to be on the margins of being open and used and overgrown and of little value. As we have seen above this land might have been near *Brimridge*.

Clyve

In 1401 a court roll records that, 'John Wroxhale entered the lords' wood called *Clyve* and cut down (illegible) that grew there, and took them away'. It is not known where the wood called *Clyve* was in the parish but the name means 'cliff' or 'bank', 'the steep slope of a hill-side, an escarpment'¹⁵⁹ and there are several places in the parish where cliff would be a good description of the topography. These include much of the land on the north-facing slopes of the limestone ridges. Prominent wooded areas of these slopes include the land below Wringstone Rocks to the west of Winscombe near Barton and the slopes to the east, which probably included *Frithwood* (see above) and the group of *Buttercliffs* field names east of the church and medieval *curia*.¹⁶⁰ It is possible that 'the wood called *Clyve*' was the same woodland as *Frithwood* or a continuation of it, since it was first recorded some time after *Frithwood* is last mentioned. This north-facing slope bordering the road from Winscombe to Shute Shelve is still very wooded today (Fig. 5).

Faldheys

In the early 15th century there are a few references to a wood called *Fulhey* or *Faldhays*, a rare example in the parish of the place-name *hay* being associated with a wood. The Michaelmas 1410 court roll records that, 'William Ruddok entered without license the lord's wood called *Fulhey* and cut down their trees growing there, and took them away, worth 2s', while in 1416–7 a *comptus* roll records, '3s from the sale of underwood in *Faldheys* this year'. These references suggest a wood with coppice and standards. The wood may have existed earlier as a *comptus* roll for 1342–3 records a fine £4 3s 4d by Laurence atte Freheye'.¹⁶¹ These names with the use of *atte*, suggest that there may have been a farmstead with the same name. If so its location is unknown as there are no similar names on later maps. It is not known where the wood was at present.

Leas Caris

A single entry in a *comptus* roll in 1452–3 refers to 'nothing from the sale of underwood in *Leas Caris* because it was sold last year'; it is not known where this wood was.

Monkecombe

In the Michaelmas 1467 court roll there is an action against Richard Wike of Wyntred (the hamlet of Winterhead), husbandman, because he lopped an oak and an ash at *Monkecombe* that belonged to the tenement that John Bisshopp occupied in 1459. After about 1430, the 'atte Wyke' family seem to have moved from *Wyke* to Winterhead – Richard Wyke was the farmer of the latter in the mid-15th century¹⁶² and so it is possible that *Monkcombe* was a woodland in or near Winterhead. The field names of the area have already been discussed and there is no reference to 'monk' or 'combe'.

Ramschaghe

There must have been a small wood at somewhere called *Ramschaghe*, though we only hear of it once. In the 1305–6 *comptus* roll there is recorded, '12d from the sale of thorns and brambles at *Ramshaghe*', '12d from the sale of six maples there' and, '6s 7d from the sale of four oaks there, 12d, 21d, 22d and 2s each'. Unfortunately, there are no names like this on the maps of 1792 and 1840 and, at present, the whereabouts of the wood is unknown. It is just possible that the 'Ramsherd' field names recorded in 1792 (plot 085) and 1840 (plots 1113 and 1114) to the west of Barton relate to this place-name.

Vallis

Two entries in the *comptus* rolls, for 1366 and 1452 suggest an underwood called *Vallis* or *Valheis*. Rather like *Leas Caris* in 1452 (above), 'nothing from the sale of underwood in *Vallis* because it was sold last year' but the reference in 1366 to, '15s from the sale of 4 ½ acres of underwood in *Brodegore* uppe *Valheis*, at 3s 4d an acre' suggests, at least, that this wood may have been part of *Budelgore*, wherever that was. If *Budelgore* contains *botl* and *gore*, *Brodegore* looks like a different name ('broad gore').

PRODUCE OF THE WOODLAND

The records of these individual woodlands give a clear indication of how the woodlands in Winscombe were used in the Middle Ages. They were used for timber trees, principally oaks, which were used in

various construction projects, and to produce underwood, from coppiced bushes, which had a variety of uses. For much of the time through, the woods would be managed to produce firewood. In the days before the importation of coal, from South Wales and the Somerset coalfield, wood was the main fuel for cooking and heating for both peasants and lords alike. When 40 tenants were fined 1d and 2d each in 1352–3 for ‘gathering wood’¹⁶³ and when eight tenants are charged in the court roll of Lent 1305 with ‘damaging the wood’¹⁶⁴ we are probably seeing no more than the necessity of collecting firewood, to keep warm and to cook with, and of paying a yearly ‘licence’ for the privilege to the land owner, the dean and chapter of Wells.¹⁶⁵

All through the records there are references to firewood; every time the steward comes to Winscombe to hold courts there is a flurry of activity and expenditure and usually this includes carting firewood to the *curia* in Winscombe. An example from the *compotus* roll of 1416–7, ‘6d for carting fuel, from felled wood’; the previous entry, ‘18d for 9 cartloads at 2d a load’ suggests that the payment relates to three cartloads of wood. In the *compotus* roll for 1452–3 is recorded, ‘12d for hiring a man with his cart bringing two wagon loads of fuel from *Southbronrigge* to the Wynescob *curia*, for the Steward’s visit this year, at 6d a load’.¹⁶⁶

Much of the underwood, which is recorded so often, must also have been used for fuel. But there are many other uses for hazel rods. Charcoal production, which might be expected in the woods is never referred to, though the smiths in Winscombe and elsewhere must have needed a constant and copious supply of it.¹⁶⁷ Another important use was for the wattlework in wattle and daub panels in timber building construction, but again the recording of this is almost non-existent. There is only the *compotus* roll of 1278, ‘12d for (illegible)’s expenses for wattling in the manor’. If this was not for building work, hurdles would always have been needed for sheepfolds and temporary animal pens. A whole range of other uses are recorded for small-sized wood such as carts, ploughs, tools, ladders etc as we have seen.

If much of the everyday use of the produce of the woodland is not generally recorded, the same cannot be said for the standard timber trees that were required for construction projects. The records are full of references to oak trees being felled for building work, many of them from *Brimridge*. In Winscombe the *compotus* rolls for 1396–7 record a

project to repair a barn in the *curia*. Under ‘produce of the manor’ 14d is recorded from the, ‘sale of the branches of four oaks felled for the barn’ and, ‘8s from the sale of branches of three oaks also felled for that’ followed by, ‘16d for carting the timber from *Bronrigge*’ and, ‘12d for carting of timber for laths for the same’. The wages of the workers on the barn are noted, ‘12s for the wages of a carpenter making two new ladders with the lord’s timber, and repairing timbers in two bays of the barn, with 2lbs of wheat from stock’, ‘2s for the wages of two men for three days making laths for the barn’ and, ‘12s 6d for the wages of a roofer making a new roof (for the two bays) and repairing defective places in the western part of the barn’. Not only were unwanted branches sold off as is recorded here but other by-products were important. In 1416–17 for example, ‘sale of bark from timber felled to repair the houses’ is noted while in 1452–3 there was, ‘nothing from the sale of oak bark in the Lord’s woods, because there was no felling for repairs’; clearly bark was only available when oaks were cut down for building work.¹⁶⁸

Other building works were further away. Small amounts of timber were constantly being granted for small-scale building work. Examples include oaks for repairs to doorposts and windows, oak for making a chamber in a tenement at Barton and for doorposts at John Beke an oak for the timber he needs for his tenement at Barton’.¹⁶⁹ A court roll for Michaelmas 1467 records, ‘A wooden bridge at Samford was made from 6 or 7 oak saplings from the lord’s wood, to the great detriment of the lords and their tenants, and that the lord’s council have found that an oak was sawn and kept by a certain tenant’. A much smaller bridge, but one perhaps requiring strong planks was repaired in 1483 (reported in a court roll), perhaps in Sandford Moor. ‘The wooden bridge between *Horycrofte* and *Isenacre*, that is over the watercourse there is broken(?) and John Bilyngeham (probably not a local man) should provide before the feast of All Saints [November 1st] a bridge one foot in width, on pain of 3s 4d’.¹⁷⁰ This bridge was clearly only a plank positioned as a footbridge over the rhyne, a simple type of primitive bridge still to be found in the Levels in Somerset. Neither *Horycrofte* or *Isenacre* are names that can be found on the tithe map of 1840 so it is not known where this plank bridge was.

The real importance of the Winscombe woods however is shown in the projects undertaken outside Winscombe parish but using materials from the

woods there. In 1487 a building was put up at the dean's manor of Biddisham, some three or four miles south west of Winscombe. 'At the instant [or insistent] request of the dean he has allowed 6 oaks from the chapter's wood at *Wynnescombe*, for timber for his building to be constructed at *Bytेशam*. Mr John Dicce, the steward of the cathedral church, was assigned to deliver them'.¹⁷¹

Even more remarkable is the supplying of timber and the means of transporting it from Winscombe to the work on the chancel roof of St Cuthbert's church, Wells, in 1342–3. Under 'produce of the manor', '5s 6d is recorded from the sale of the bark of 16 oaks felled for St Cuthbert's chancel' and an added note under 'Expenses – carts' has, 'The big cart repaired this year for St Cuthbert's chancel'.¹⁷² Given the precision of these dates, with the timber probably being felled between Michaelmas (29 September) 1342 and Michaelmas 1343, it would be useful to see if any corresponding dendrochronological dates could be obtained from the timbers in St Cuthbert's chancel roof.

Other projects involving timber of a reasonable size include furniture making. In the *compotus* rolls for 1277, 2½d for repairing a 'board' or table and, '2½d for making a cupboard'. There is also always expenditure on making and repairing carts and wagons and other farm implements. In 1277 for example, a *compotus* roll records 2d for making a wooden harrow and '7½d for felling timber, trimming and sawing it, to make a pair of *pandus*(?) for a cart'. It is possible that this apparent noun is connected with the Latin adjective *pandus*, which means 'flared', 'spreading outwards', 'curved', 'concave', 'convex'. It might therefore refer to the curved shafts or handles of a cart to which the animals were hitched. Clearly carpenters went into the woods and selected what wood they needed. In the 1332 *compotus* roll, '2s 6d for the wages of a carpenter for felling, trimming and sawing timber for stock, to be used for wheels, ploughs and carts, and other necessities'.

Pasture and pannage for pigs

As has been shown above there are many references to the use of the woods for pasture. It is generally assumed that the pigs of the peasants would have been fattened up in the woods at times when there were large quantities of acorns and beech mast for them to eat. The rights to do this were called

'pannage' though as Oliver Rackham explains 'the term pannage properly means a payment by the pigs' owners to the owner of the wood; it was extended to the activity itself and later to other activities of pigs'.¹⁷³ All peasant families would have kept pigs, they were one of the staples of their diet and so access to the woods would have been very important. It is perhaps surprising therefore that there are so few references to pigs or pannage in the records for Winscombe.¹⁷⁴ A rare exception occurs around 1262 when it is recorded for Winscombe that, 'neither the bishop or his free men or any other shall have the right of entry with swine or other beasts into the woods of the said manor at the time of acorns or at other times, save with the consent of the dean and chapter, their farmer or bailiff'.¹⁷⁵ This sounds like an attempt to prevent other neighbouring landowners or their tenants (such as the bishop in the adjacent manor of Banwell) from gaining access to the rich resources which the woodlands of the parish supplied at certain times of the year.

THE STORY OF THE WOODLAND IN WINSCOMBE

Is it possible from this preliminary survey to say how the woodlands of Winscombe developed in the Middle Ages, how extensive they were and how the present, largely woodless, appearance of the area came about? Firstly it is clear that woodland in the medieval period in Winscombe parish was confined to certain geological and topographical areas. The parish is dominated by two ridges of limestone aligned east–west with softer rocks between and beyond these ridges (Fig. 10). In the main central valley, running from Barton in the west to Winterhead in the east, there are a number of smaller ridges with stream valleys between, and a lot of level or gently sloping areas (Fig. 11). From this study it is clear that there is no one topographical area that was particularly favoured for woodland except for the north-facing steep slopes of the limestone hills. The surviving woodland today is by and large in this locality, Sandford, Lincombe and the Dinghurst woods in the north, and the woodland above Barton, Winscombe, Hale, Oakridge and Winterhead to the south.

In the Middle Ages the main woodland seems to have been between Max and Woodborough, *Warn Hill/Breach*, and at *Moorham* and *Brimridge*. The last two were situated on gently sloping south-facing

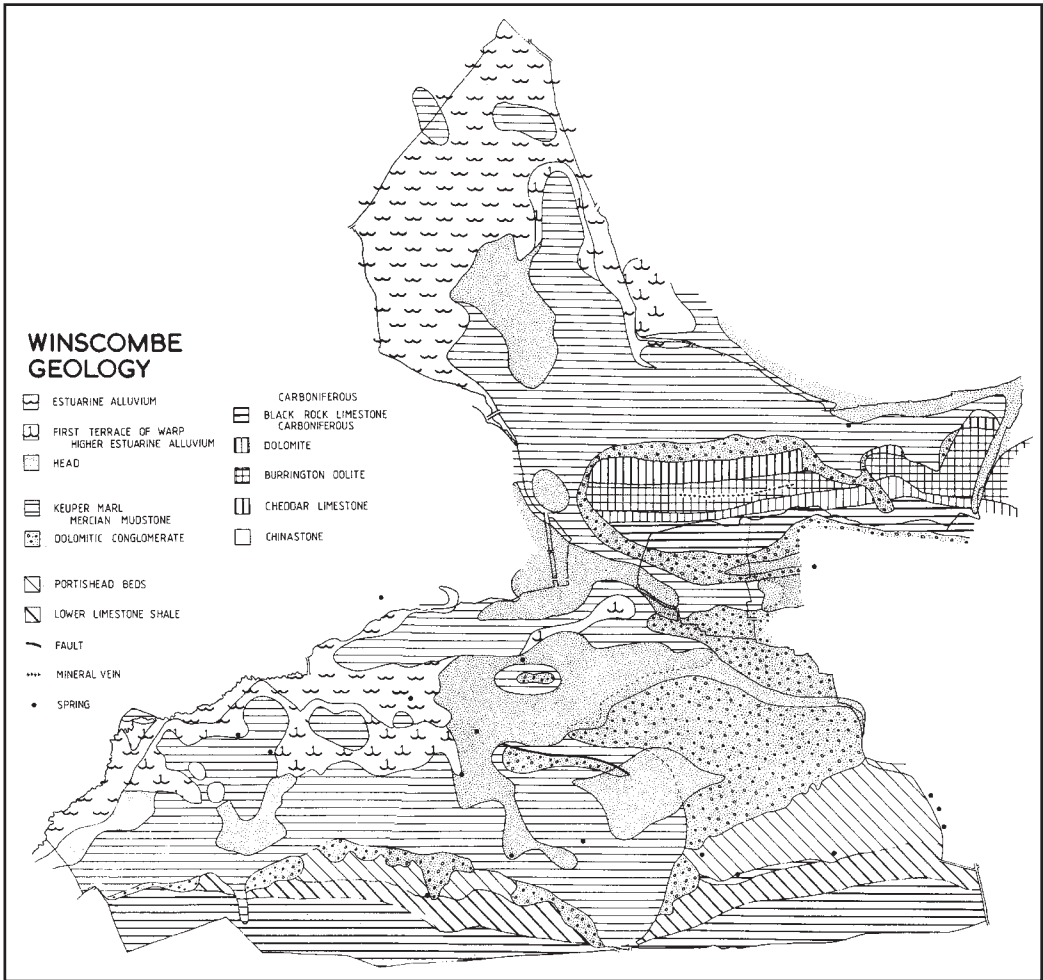


Fig. 10 Winscombe parish – geology

slopes; it is perhaps no surprise that they are now completely cleared and most traces of woodland have disappeared. The same is true of *Warn Hill* on a low ridge with streams of the Lox Yeo on each side. These woods are based on the local geology of Mercian mudstone (*Moorham*, *Warn Hill*) and Dolomitic Conglomerate (*Brimridge*). The woods east of Maxmill covered areas of alluvium with islands of mudstone; but the drainage is poor as has already been mentioned (Fig. 12). Only with a field visit can it be seen why this area would be left to grow alders and patches of scrubby wood for much of the Middle Ages. Little woodland was located on either the limestone, the alluvium of the Levels in the north of the parish, or the ‘head’ deposits that cover much of the centre of the parish. Only steep north-facing

hillsides, on any type of geology, were kept as tree-growing areas.¹⁷⁶

From the distribution of woodland and from the broad distribution of other types of land use an attempt can be made to suggest what the medieval landscape of the parish might have been like (Fig. 13). The extent of the area of the low-lying Levels area in the north of the parish can be seen from the drainage ditches marked on the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey maps and from the section of the *Congresbury Drainage Map of 1826* which covers the north end of the parish.¹⁷⁷ This area was always low-lying and floodable and, although it might at times have been lightly wooded, its main use in the Middle Ages was as pasture, probably with hay and reed production. The upland parts of the parish on

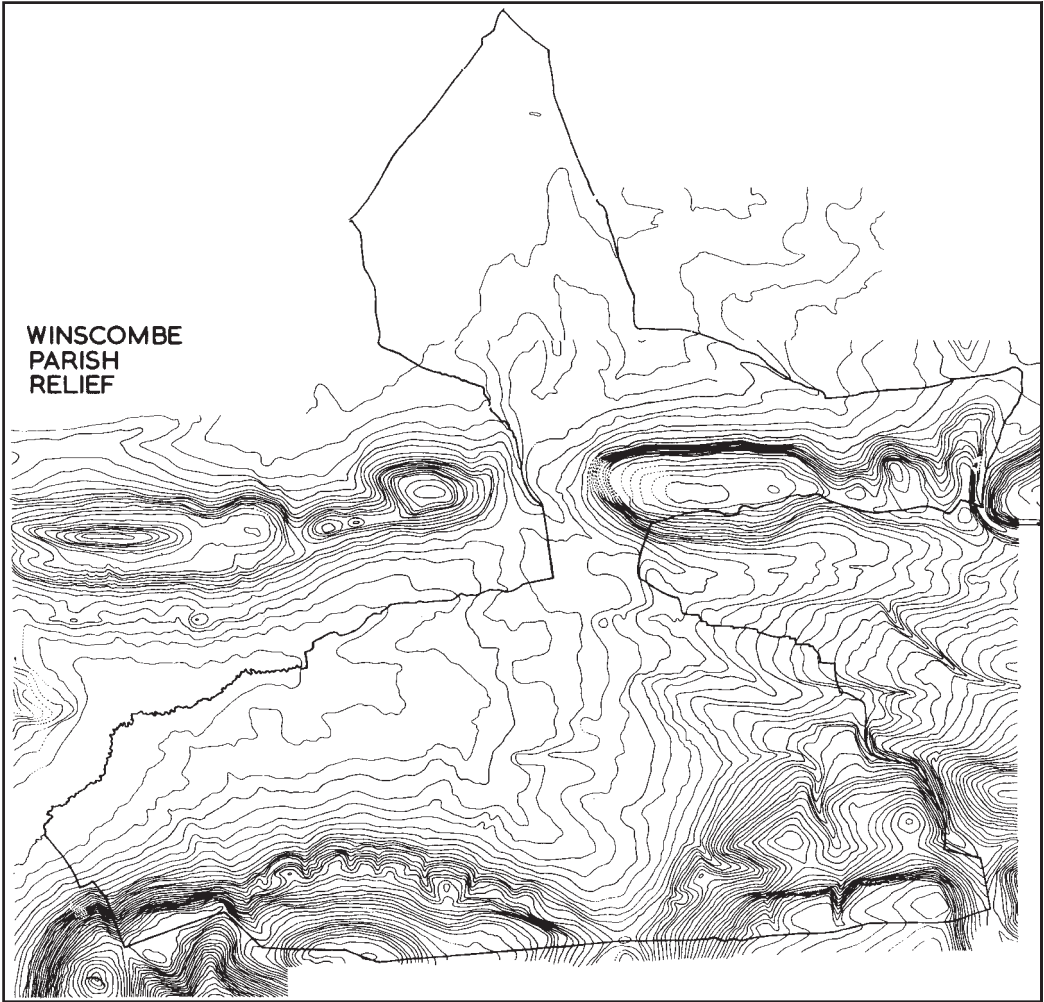


Fig. 11 Winscombe parish – relief

the limestone hills were common, open grazing land, and therefore probably largely treeless, before they were enclosed in 1799. Then the commons on Sandford Hill and elsewhere were sold off and Barton Hill, Wavering Down (otherwise Winscombe Hill), Sidcot Hill, Winterhead Hill and Callow Hill were enclosed with rectangular patterns of new fields which became private land.¹⁷⁸

From the *comptus* records, examined here for woodland, a preliminary and very rough assessment suggests that the main arable areas were around Barton, between Barton and Winscombe, and around Winscombe stretching to Woodborough and Sidcot. There was also arable around Sandford indicated in the 1540 survey. As a very rough sketchy first

attempt, it is possible to suggest approximate areas of arable, meadow/Levels and woodland for Winscombe in the Middle Ages; much of the rest of the area, probably the greater acreage, must have been used for pasture. Figure 13 shows this hypothetical medieval Winscombe landscape at around 1300 AD; further research will undoubtedly modify and clarify this picture in detail.

For the woodland in this landscape, although the details are not clear (of for example precise areas of woodland and degrees of intensity of management), it is possible to outline a series of stages of development over the 500-year period from around 1100 to 1600. At the time that Domesday Book was compiled in 1086 it seems clear that the western end

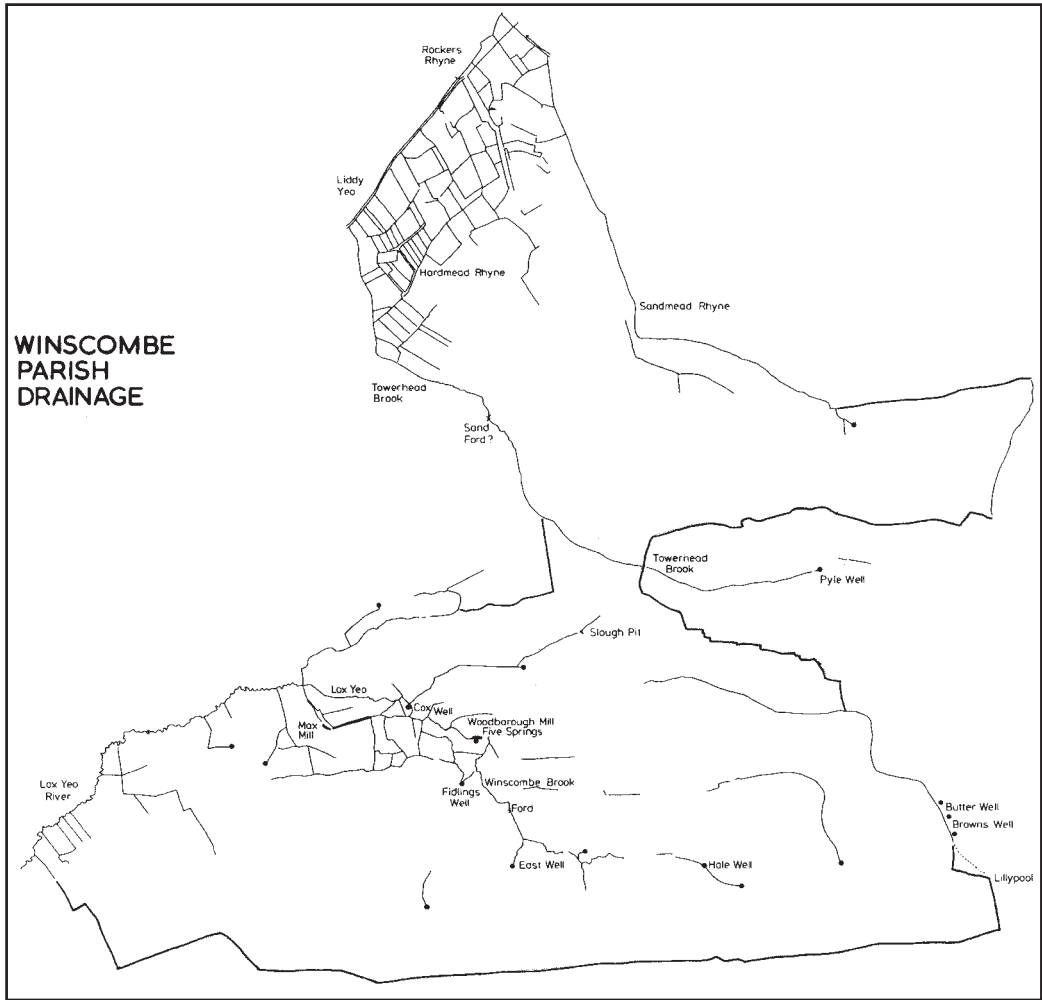


Fig. 12 Winscombe parish – drainage

of the Mendips was well-wooded. It was used as a hunting reserve by Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, based at Cheddar, and much of the area was subject to Royal Forest Law; royal officials sought to preserve as much of the woodland cover as possible. But the medieval population of the area was clearly using the woodlands for their own purposes, as a source of fuel and building materials, and also grazing for their animals. This grazing and deliberate clearance activity, assarting, would inevitably deplete the landscape of trees and open it up to other farming activities – pasture and meadow as well as additional arable areas. Much of this newly cleared land was not kept open, as the core arable areas probably were,

but enclosed with hedges, banks and ditches; these still form the bulk of the field pattern of the parish today. This process of clearance and enclosure, is indicated in the documents from the 12th to the 16th century. Such clearance and enclosure activity would eventually result in the complete removal of the woodland cover of the parish; in many areas and with even some of the larger woodlands like *Brimridge* and *Barrow*, this indeed is what has happened. But woodland was an important resource for rural communities and so the careful conservation and management of the remaining woodlands is evident from the 14th century onwards. This model of change from (virtually) wildwood, through

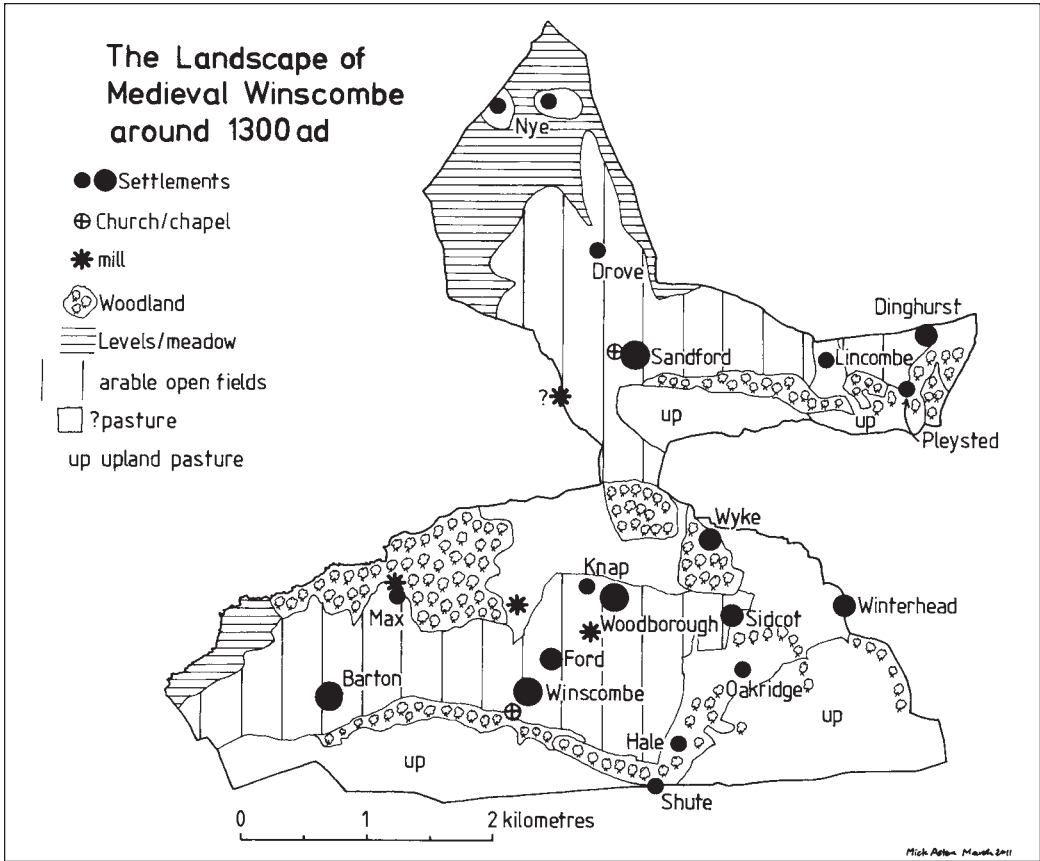


Fig. 13 The landscape of medieval Winscombe c. 1300 AD; a hypothetical reconstruction showing the possible extent of woodland, Levels/meadow, arable open fields, pasture and upland pasture, together with the known medieval settlements

grazing and clearance, to management, in order to produce a continuing supply of timber and wood, should be detectable in other wooded areas of the Mendips.

The remaining wooded areas, left after clearance by peasants, were principally on the steep, northern slopes around the Mendip plateau. There were other areas on the western end of the Mendips where the topography changed from the high plateau top to the broken limestone hills and clay valleys in the areas of Banwell, Winscombe, Wrington and Congresbury. As has been demonstrated above, much of this area was wooded in 1086 when the Domesday Survey was carried out, including the valleys of Winscombe – for example, Winterhead, the valley to the east of Sidcot, and Hale Combe. This part of

the parish was probably well wooded in 1086 and probably still was 200 years later at the time of the perambulations.

In the northern half of the parish the extensive present-day woodland along the north-facing escarpment at Sandford, Lincombe and Dinghurst probably represents medieval woodland never fully cleared from the 11th century onwards. Such steep hillsides were probably always used for wood. John Billingsley writing in 1794 about this northern part of Somerset says ‘the timber is chiefly oak, but does not get to any large size; the woods being for the most part, situate at the declivity of the hills, where there is but little depth of earth. The underwood is cut for wreaths or faggots.’¹⁷⁹ How the woods were managed is not clear from the 1792 map of about

the same time. By the time of the tithe map in 1840, however, Sandford wood above the eastern part of Sandford was subdivided, and allocated to a series of farms along the main east–west road. This may have been an ancient arrangement, whereby each tenement had a section of wood rather than sharing the wood communally (Fig. 9). Certainly research on the surviving buildings to which the sections of wood were allocated, by the Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group, is showing that the farmhouses themselves often date from the 16th or 17th centuries and are of quite high status.¹⁸⁰

At the same time, the small strips of *lugfall* land at *Moreham* and the various sections of the woodland at *Winscombe Coppice* might also indicate that the surviving *Winscombe* woods were divided up in later centuries between tenants of the dean and chapter of *Wells* rather than being used communally.¹⁸¹

The history of the woodland of *Winscombe* in the post-medieval centuries has yet to be written and it will take a great deal of research to understand the changes that resulted in the modern rural landscape. But this study has shown just how much remains, in the documents, on the maps and in the landscape to be examined, in a parish which at first glance does not give the impression that it was ever particularly well wooded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, as will be seen by the frequent references, I am most grateful to Martin Ecclestone for all his work in transcribing, translating and making available to me his work on the *compotus* and court rolls of *Winscombe*. He has also discussed the content of these records with me on numerous enjoyable occasions and checked all the references for me in this article. Frances Neale and Frank Thorn have checked some of these records and we appreciate their help. Tom Maybery and the staff of the Somerset County Record Office in Taunton made the records available and were very helpful with advice; digital photography of the records was carried out by Roy Rice and Chris and Nick Bristow. Frances Neale, Maria Forbes and Chris Bristow have helped with other documentary material, and I am grateful for discussion around many of the aspects covered here. I am also grateful to Frank and Caroline Thorn for discussion about Domesday matters and to Frank Thorn for his thoughts on various names in the parish. Phil and Maddy Knibb

electronically produced map bases and air photos for me to work on for this study.

Teresa Hall has helped in innumerable ways, including checking the figures and preparing the table of Domesday statistics. I am grateful to her for her support and encouragement, for dealing with the modern technology, and for reading and commenting on early drafts. It is also a pleasure to thank Michael Costen and Frank Thorn for reading and commenting on drafts of this article.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ It has already been suggested that this type of economy, together with the type of tenure enjoyed by many tenants in *Winscombe* – ‘old auster’ – may have led to the production of large quantities of cheese and hence to the origin of ‘Cheddar cheese’ (Aston and Hall 2009, 68).
- ² The figure of 3900 acres (1578 hectares) is from the 1841 census as listed by F.H. Dickinson in 1889 (Dickinson 1889, 337); however the tithe award of 1840 gives 4140 acres (1675 hectares). George S. Minchin writing in the *Victoria County History* in 1911 gives 4158 acres (1682 hectares) (Minchin 1911, 352).
- ³ Aston and Costen 2008.
- ⁴ Aston 2010.
- ⁵ It is the intention to deal with arable, pasture and meadow in the parish in the medieval period in a future article.
- ⁶ Rackham 1980, 97–9; 1986, 70, fig 5.2.
- ⁷ Bell 1989.
- ⁸ All researchers in landscape studies owe a great debt to Oliver Rackham for indicating in his books the great significance of woodland and its careful management to earlier people (Rackham 1976, especially 66–95, Rackham 1980, 137–156; Rackham 1986, chapter 5).
- ⁹ As was discussed in an earlier article (Aston and Costen 2008).
- ¹⁰ Francis Knight (1915) discusses the geology; there is now an excellent recent field guide, with a map, by the British Geological Survey (Farrant 2008).
- ¹¹ The drainage pattern of the southern half of the parish is discussed and its significance assessed for the water mill at *Max* in Aston 2010, 66–7 and fig. 8.
- ¹² Knight 1915, 18. In 1902 and 1915 Francis Knight wrote two excellent local histories of the

west Mendip area; Winscombe parish is in the second volume (1915, 15–114).

¹³ As in Aston 2010 much of this article is based on the surviving *compotus*/account rolls for Winscombe, together with a few court rolls. Throughout the text these are not referenced individually but the reference for any particular year can be found (under Primary Sources) at the end of the article. Most of these are in the Somerset County Record Office and a few are at Wells. I am again most grateful to Martin Ecclestone for transcribing and translating these documents and for making copies of them available to me, and also for much enjoyable and helpful discussion about their contents.

The references to royal officials are: 1277–8 ‘four pounds of wheat for two foot-foresters’; 1278 ‘9d for the expenses of Lord Robert, *filius Pagani*, that is son of Pagan (Fitzpaine), Forest Justiciar, for taking an inquisition, by tally’ and ‘five quarts of oats for feeding the horses of Lord Robert son of Pagan (Fitzpaine), Forest Justiciar, taking an inquisition of the forest of Menedep, by tally and cash’; 1306–7 ‘one and a half pounds of oats for feeding the horses of the Forest Warden’; even in 1396–7 ‘two pounds of wheat were given to a Mendip forester’.

¹⁴ The tithe maps for the two parishes east of Winscombe have field names which suggest that there was formerly woodland on the south side of Sandford Hill, Lincombe Hill and Knowle. They are for Shipham, plots 328 and 329 which are coppices called ‘Small Ham Wood’ and ‘Kibbys Wood’, and for Rowberrow, plots 22 ‘East Garley’, 23 ‘Lower Garley’ and 25 ‘Great Garley’ – an example of a ‘leah’ name.

¹⁵ This area was part of a large open grazing area before it was enclosed in 1799 by an Act of Parliament of 1797 (Tate 1948, 47, 94–5).

¹⁶ The 1840 map is the tithe map for Winscombe, the 1792 map that by William White of Winscombe and Shipham; for the 1822 Greenwood map see Harley and Dunning (1981).

¹⁷ Aston and Costen 2008.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Tom Mayberry and the staff of the Somerset County Record office for access to these records; and to Roy Rice and Nick and Chris Bristow for making digital copies of them.

¹⁹ From the Norman-French *assarter*, *essarter* (medieval Latin *ex(s)artare*) meaning ‘to clear land or pull up saplings’ (Latham 1965, 180).

²⁰ Gelling 1984, 188–99; Gelling and Cole 2000,

220–44; Smith 1956.

²¹ Gelling 1984, 189.

²² Ekwall 1960, 28. Frank Thorn (pers. comm.) reminds me that the names Beare and Beer are very common in Devon also, and Michael Costen (pers. comm.) notes that in this part of the world the name *bearu* appears quite late. It does not appear to be an ancient term though still Old English.

²³ For a comparable local study, on Burrington, see Corcos 2002, 130.

²⁴ Aston 2010, 56.

²⁵ Bird 1907, 361; the date is from the beginning of the incumbency of William de la Nye as vicar of Winscombe church in 1282.

²⁶ The mill at Woodborough (Fig. 6) was not discussed in earlier research (Aston 2010) because so little seemed to be known about it. Martin Watts regards it (pers. comm.; Watts 2002) as a small and relatively poorly powered water mill judged by the present limited flow of water through the former position of the water wheel. Maria Forbes reports that the first clear documentary reference to the mill occurs in 1745 (Canterbury Cathedral Archive CCA-U 140/1/6 Lease 5 February 1745) and therefore it is possible that the mill was only created in the 18th century. It is more probable, however, that the mill dates to the 13th century as there are several references to a mill in lands granted away by Henry Lovestheft in the 1220s and 1230s. Sometime around 1236 a ‘gift and quitclaim by Henry Luueseft to the church of St James of Wynescumbe and to Master William de Kaynesham parson thereof and his successors, of one acre of land in Wodborge (Woodborough) furlong called Long Acre, which William the earl held, on the south side of the field next the dyke, with warranty; in consideration whereof the said parson has given the grantor and his heirs a free watercourse running from the spring called Fitelewelle through his land towards grantor’s mill’ (Bird 1907, 360–1; for discussion of the name Lovestheft see Frank Thorn’s comments in note 144). William de Kaynesham is the first parson to be recorded at Winscombe, being instituted sometime in the 1220s. The transaction must have taken place within the next decade or so as a third incumbent is instituted in 1241. Fidlers Well (1792 map plot 676) and Fidling Wells (1840 tithe map plot 598) both refer to a large spring that issues at ST 412 573 just to the

- south of Woodborough mill. Today there is a leat taking water to Woodborough mill, away from the main drainage system leading to the Winscombe Brook and, eventually, to the leat supplying Max Mill (Fig. 8). This is probably the 'free watercourse' of 1226.
- ²⁷ Smith 1956, 23. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) thinks that Woodborough is actually *wudu beorg* – wood hill. The early forms all appear to be 'borge', 'berwe', 'berge' rather than *bearu*. This suggests that the name refers to the Knap where Kildare/Mooseheart stands today.
- ²⁸ Ekwall 1960, 62.
- ²⁹ Padel 1985, 66–7.
- ³⁰ Smith 1956, 92; Gelling 1984, 190–1; Gelling and Cole 2000, 223–4.
- ³¹ In 1792 – plots 449, 596, 702 'Ditcheat', 134 'Ditcheats', 173, 348 and 504 'In Ditcheat'; in 1840 – plots 1016 'Little Dichtett', 1017 and 1019 'Dichtett', 1020a 'Dichtet', 1033 'Dichtett'.
- ³² Ekwall 1960, 146.
- ³³ Smith 1956, Part I, 92, 198. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) doubts this and thinks that the loss of the 'a' is not significant.
- ³⁴ By Michael Costen, in Aston 2010, 84 note 77 about Winterhead.
- ³⁵ Ekwall 1960, 199; Gelling 1984, 191; Gelling and Cole 2000, 224–5.
- ³⁶ Gelling 1984, 192–3; Gelling and Cole 2000, 226–7; Smith 1956, 207.
- ³⁷ Bird 1907, 360 and 363.
- ³⁸ Gelling 1984, 197–8; Gelling and Cole 2000, 234–5; Smith 1956, 276–7. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) comments that Worthurst is an interesting name and suggests that it includes OE *wort*, which means a 'plant', but is also used in the sense of 'medicinal plant'.
- ³⁹ Aston 2010, 59, fig. 30.
- ⁴⁰ Smith 1956, 204.
- ⁴¹ Ekwall 1960, 145.
- ⁴² Lennon 2009, 117. I am grateful to Nick Corcos for this reference. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) comments, 'I am now convinced that this word was used to denote woodland or more probably wood pasture which was enclosed or regulated in some way. It is noticeable across a large area, that personal names are often associated with such *leahs*, which suggests to me that they were often owned or regulated by individuals.'
- ⁴³ Gelling 1984, 198–200; Gelling and Cole 2000, 237–9; Smith 1956, 18–19.
- ⁴⁴ Parcel 434 on the 1840 tithe map; Ekwall 1960, 23, suggests the name might mean something like 'fox' or 'badger' 'woodland'.
- ⁴⁵ Walker 1998, 221, entry 342. See note 144 for discussion of the name of Henry Lovestheft by Frank Thorn.
- ⁴⁶ 1840 Challey Ground plots 995, 996, 997 and 998; Challey Paddock plot 994, and on 1792 map plot 008 Chally Lane.
- ⁴⁷ Thorn and Thorn 1980 5,12.
- ⁴⁸ Examples include – 1277 '5 acres of beans at *La Leghe*'; 1334 23½ acres of oats sown at *la Lygh* (and another 5½ acres there were rented making 29 acres); 1336–7 'new rent for 3 acres of land in the east end of *La Lygh*'; '1366 '3 acres of land in the east headland of *La Leigh*' and 1372 and 1382 '3 acres of land in the East Field of *La Leigh/Leygh*'.
- ⁴⁹ It is of interest that the 1840 plan referred to in note 61 has fields between the former Moorham and Brimridge woodlands labelled 'The Upper Lyes', though on the tithe map of the same date the fields are called 'Shipham Lane Ground'; perhaps this is where the 'leah' was situated, between the woods at Brimridge and Moreham – it is shown in this position on Figs 2 and 6.
- ⁵⁰ Smith 1956 Part II, 68–9 for 'pol'. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) wonders if this is actually a personal name of some sort 'Lynley' from the OE '*leah* where *lin* (flax) grows' with *pyl* – pool, because of the intrusive 's' which looks like a genitive 's'.
- ⁵¹ Tithe map field nos 780, 781 and 783. Michael Costen (pers. comm.) suggests Yadley might contain the common OE personal name *Eata*, as in Yetminster in Dorset.
- ⁵² Gelling 1984, 227.
- ⁵³ Gelling 1984, 233; Gelling and Cole 2000, 266; Smith 1956, 46.
- ⁵⁴ 1792 plot 397, 1840 fields 898, 900 and 916–918.
- ⁵⁵ Smith 1956 Part I, 215.
- ⁵⁶ Smith 1956, Part II, 115; see also p. 95 where the term is discussed by Frank Thorn.
- ⁵⁷ This aspect, of decaying or over-exploited woodland being transformed into wood-pasture and then rough pasture, will be discussed in a future article. It is possible that a number of the 'commons', 'greens' and roadside wastes in the parish of Winscombe began as woodland and only took on their open appearance as a result of subsequent over grazing – see Lennon 2009.

- ⁵⁸ The Survey of 1540; Richard atte Wyke was also holding Maxmill as well as numerous other plots around the parish.
- ⁵⁹ Gelling 1984, 194–6; Gelling and Cole 2000, 230.
- ⁶⁰ Aston 1983.
- ⁶¹ Tithe map plot numbers 527, 528, 528a, 529a, 532, 533, 558, and 565; Maria Forbes draws my attention to a map of 1840 from the dean and chapter's leases held in the Somerset County Record Office (DD/CC/B/110748 Lease No 63 p 180) which shows the strip of land around Moorham labelled 'Lug Fall' on both the east and south sides.
- ⁶² Zupko 1985, 240–1.
- ⁶³ At nearby Blagdon the term seems to have been used for the right to cut living trees (Gray 1905, 14–21; medieval parks are discussed by Bond 1994, 133–44 and Rackham 1980, 188–99.
- ⁶⁴ Greswell 1905, 243; Latham 1965, 274 has *leuca* as 'a measure of land, league or mile'. Frank Thorn comments (pers. comm.): 'The French word is *la lieue*, which is derived like 'league' from *leuca* (see below); they are not necessarily derived from one another. That word is of Gaulish (Celtic) origin. However, there is no reason to connect *leuca* with 'lug' The most likely origin of the latter is Old Scandinavian *lugg*, meaning a 'projection' or 'flap', as in 'ear-lug'. In reference to a wood, it could refer to the corners of the 'frame' or outer square which stick out or to the projecting and enclosing treeless perimeter itself. A meaning 'sidewall of a recessed fireplace' gives the shape you want (Brown 1993 under *lug*). It would be inconvenient if *leuca* meant both a large and a small linear measure.'
- ⁶⁵ Thorn and Thorn 1980, 8.2.
- ⁶⁶ Finn and Wheatley 1967, 173; Thorn and Thorn 1980, 1.9.
- ⁶⁷ McGarvie 1978; Bond 1994, 118 and fig 6.2. Bruton (SOM 1,9) is unhidated, but was clearly a very large estate, with land for 50 ploughs. If any of the woodland had been taken into the Forest of Selwood, one would have expected Domesday to say so. In order to preserve the distinction between manorial woodland and *foresta*, it would be better to see Bruton's woods as being within the manor in 1086 and only later afforested by the expansion of Selwood Forest (Frank Thorn, pers. comm.).
- ⁶⁸ Thorn and Thorn 1980, 5.12.
- ⁶⁹ Rackham 1980, 113; Frank Thorn (pers. comm.) notes, 'Woodland in Domesday is predominantly expressed in leagues and furlongs and it is normally described as a single rectangle; such as '1 league long and a half wide'; or '7 furlongs long and 3 wide'. These figures seem to be arrived at by adding together all the lengths and the breadths of several parcels and they say nothing about the disposition of the woodland on the ground. Traditionally the league has been taken to be 1½ miles or 12 furlongs. These are real measures (not assessments like the hide and virgate), but they are not 'statute measures' and may have varied locally; certainly a further subdivision, the rod or perch was not standardised until recent times. Domesday nowhere says how many furlongs were in the league, but measurements such as '1 league long and 8 furlongs wide' suggest that it contained more than 8 furlongs, and other evidence of this kind suggest 12 furlongs to the league as probable. Moreover the Latin word used for 'league' (*leuga*) and its derivative *leugata* are also used to describe a 'lowy', such as at Tonbridge (Kent) or Ramsey (Huntingdonshire) which is an area of land around a church or castle, usually with a radius of more than a mile. The great scholar J.H. Round maintained that the Domesday league contained only 4 furlongs, as he found it impossible to imagine that there would have been room in Worcestershire and Northamptonshire for the other resources if a league really contained 12 furlongs; see Round (1901) 271–2 and Round (1902) 279–81. However, he seems to have been misled by the Domesday figures and among his great strengths was not the ability to see Domesday resources in the landscape. Moreover, plotting Domesday estates on small-scale flat maps, if that was his method, would have failed to take account of how much woodland could fit on a hill slope. In addition, the assumption that a hide consisted of 120 acres can overestimate the amount of arable on an estate and appear to squeeze out the woodland. Further, Round did not always allow that the Domesday estates were often of greater extent than the parishes which they named. Grierson (1987), 80, is unequivocal that the league was 1½ miles. For a balanced, if despairing, treatment, see Darby (1977) 178–80. Local studies like the present one are vital in clarifying this matter.'

- ⁷⁰ There are obvious dangers with this approach as was pointed out by Cox and Greswell – ‘It is obvious that only a rough measurement was signified’ and ‘It is not to be supposed that any precise square measure is indicated’ (Cox and Greswell, 1911, 547).
- ⁷¹ Dickinson 1889, 337.
- ⁷² Minchin 1911, 352.
- ⁷³ I am most grateful to Teresa Hall for helping with these calculations, for the preparation the table (Table 1) and for checking the figures for areas and percentages.
- ⁷⁴ Aston 2010, 64.
- ⁷⁵ Rackham 1980, 114.
- ⁷⁶ Darby 1977, 171.
- ⁷⁷ Corcos 2002.
- ⁷⁸ Field names and other woodland names have not been examined for these parishes in this study. For the relation of Puxton to Banwell and Congresbury, see Thorn ‘Defining Winterstoke Hundred’, this volume.
- ⁷⁹ Smith 1956 Part II, 156.
- ⁸⁰ Fig. 1 was compiled from information in the following; Bond 1994 for a thorough study of the forests, chases, warrens and parks of Wessex; for Exmoor see map by Aston in Hallam 1978, 42–3; for Mendip see Gough 1930; for Neroche see Sixsmith 1958; Aston 2009, 95; for Selwood see McGarvie 1978; for Somerton see Aston 1984, 187.
- ⁸¹ Rahtz 1979.
- ⁸² Gough 1931. Frank Thorn (pers. comm.) says, ‘Latin *foresta* is first found in Domesday Book, although what it describes has an earlier origin. The word itself is formed from Classical Latin *foris* (‘out of doors’, ‘outside’), meaning land, not necessarily wooded, beyond the bounds of the manor or estate. Not all estates touched each other and between them will have lain rough ground, sometimes wooded which was not exploited for agriculture or was seasonal or used in common by a number of estates. This ‘land outside’ satisfied the Saxon royal love of hunting which the Normans greatly intensified and the word *foresta* soon came to mean ‘land subject to forest law’. The land comprised in a forest was already being increased by being alienated from estates in Domesday, where there are frequent mentions of the woodland of a manor being taken into the ‘King’s forest’. However, forests are not surveyed in themselves in Domesday, since they are a resource belonging to the king, and not readily expressible in terms of money. Where forests are mentioned it is because they have encroached on the arable or the woodland properly belonging to an individual manor. Thus the absence of any mention of Mendip Forest (or of Exmoor or of Dartmoor) in Domesday is no proof that they were not in existence: three foresters at Withypool (SOM 46,3) may have been concerned with Exmoor Forest and the presence of ‘wild’ or ‘unbroken’ mares on several Devon manors around Dartmoor may be strays from that forest. It is quite possible that on Blackdown there was in 1086 the nucleus of a royal forest, appurtenant to the royal manor of Cheddar (SOM 1,2). This will have greatly expanded into local manors, but the original core may only have been incorporated in the surrounding estates (and parishes) upon disafforestation.’
- ⁸³ Gough 1931.
- ⁸⁴ Cox and Greswell 1911, 560; Gough 1931.
- ⁸⁵ Cox and Greswell, 1911, 560.
- ⁸⁶ Bird 1907, 337.
- ⁸⁷ Stacy 2001, 175–8 and 179–86.
- ⁸⁸ ‘Et pro custodia memoris tenet unam aliam cotsetl’ (Stacy 2001, 178).
- ⁸⁹ For the 1189 survey see Stacy 2001; for the Winscombe Customal, Bird 1907, 336–42; for the dean and chapter of Wells cathedral see Bird 1907 and Baildon 1914; for the 1540 Survey of Sandford SCRO T/PH/VCH 38 c/2789; for the 1572 survey of Winscombe see Wells cathedral ADD/2882 folios 1-6; for the 1650 – Parliamentary Survey of Winscombe SCRO DD/cc 110 733 – I am most grateful to Maria Forbes for transcriptions of the last three and for discussing their contents with me on a number of occasions.
- ⁹⁰ Stacy 2001, 176.
- ⁹¹ An ‘eyre’ was an enquiry by justices travelling round to hear cases and complaints. These happened regularly in the Middle Ages with royal Forests in different counties – see Crook 1982.
- ⁹² Cox and Greswell 1911, 550–1.
- ⁹³ Bird 1907, 361.
- ⁹⁴ Bennett 1885, 73; ‘maeremium’ is timber – Latham 1965, 285. Frank Thorn (pers. comm.) says, ‘*maeremium* is strictly ‘wood for construction’. It is a re-Latinisation of an Old French/Anglo-Norman word (*maeresme* etc), itself derived from Late Latin, *materiamen*,

Classical Latin *materies* ('building material'); see Latham, Howlett and others 1975 under *maeremium*'.

- ⁹⁵ In the 1540 survey 'two acres in a close called Barrowmede' and 'three acres in a mede called Barrowmede' and in the 1572 survey '2½ acres in Barrowmeade'.
- ⁹⁶ As well as William le Parker mentioned in 1277 and 1336–7, a Walter le Parker occurs in 1334, suggesting there may have been two park officials or even two parks – but see the Moorham discussion for the more likely location of a medieval park in Winscombe.
- ⁹⁷ Plots 1171 'Burgefield', 1169 'Burge Field' and 1009 'Barges Ham'.
- ⁹⁸ In later documents such as the 1650 survey, 'overland' is usually additional land rented as extra to the main holding. In Winscombe this land is often extra to holdings with 'old auster' tenancy, and seems, as at Shapwick, to have been originally part of the demesne land (pers. comm. Martin Ecclestone).
- ⁹⁹ These are all the spellings from the single 1336–7 *compotus* roll; there are many other variations on the name through to the 17th century.
- ¹⁰⁰ In 1290 there is a reference to 'arable land in Brunerigge' being exchanged for a piece of meadow at Wamenhill and to Thomas atte Wyke, furlinger, renting 'one piece of waste land by Brounrygg Wood rent 6d' (Bird 1907, 336, 340).
- ¹⁰¹ All but the last four names are from the *compotus* rolls; the 1572 and 1650 references are from the Surveys of Winscombe.
- ¹⁰² I am grateful to Michael Costen for discussing this place-name with me.
- ¹⁰³ 1792 plot numbers f 228 Brimridge, n 424 Brimridge, b 11 and 12 both Brummridge, b 71 Higher Brimridge and 72 Lower Brimridge, k 394, 395 and 396 – all Brimridge.
- ¹⁰⁴ 1840 plot numbers 587 and 597 both called Brimridge and 588 The Lugfall Brimridge already discussed above. There is a salutary lesson here for those areas where the tithe map is the first or only early map and source of field names. For there to have been such great loss and change in field names over such a relatively short period of 50 years, suggests the need for caution in using them to indicate historic features.
- ¹⁰⁵ Tithe map 1840 plot numbers 549 to 553.
- ¹⁰⁶ Aston 2010, 75–7.
- ¹⁰⁷ Aston 2010, 60–1. The 'atte Wyke' family can be traced over several generations and their activities are intimately bound up with the woodland at Brimridge and the fate of the settlement at Wyke.
- ¹⁰⁸ Several generations of the family appear in the *compotus* rolls and other records, all usually involved in farming around the Brimridge area. They took their name from a small hamlet now deserted which was on the edge of the wood (Aston 2010, 60–1). A study of the family is being prepared to accompany a topographical survey of the deserted medieval hamlet by James Bond.
- ¹⁰⁹ See note 144 for a discussion of the Lovestheft name.
- ¹¹⁰ Bird 1907, 362.
- ¹¹¹ For affers see Aston 2010, 87, they are mature working or plough horses.
- ¹¹² Peter Carslegh is recorded as incumbent of Winscombe church, instituted in 1520. In 1532 John Carslegh (a relative? son?) becomes the next incumbent and stays in post until 1550. Martin Ecclestone suggests that the early reference should be to 'Master Patrick Carslegh' in 1539–40 and that it was the 32nd year he had held the wood. There may be some confusion here with recorded names.
- ¹¹³ The *compotus* roll for this year contains lots of interesting detail under 'cost of houses' about repairs to two bays of the barn, presumably at the *curia*; included in this is '16d for carting the timber from Bronrigge' and '12d for carting 3 cartloads of timber for laths for the same'.
- ¹¹⁴ For the work on the manorial *curia* at Winscombe see Aston 2010, 74–5.
- ¹¹⁵ '16 acres of arable land called greatbrenrudge' and the land is 'overland' that is additional to the demesne and probably the result of assarting; 'the east side of the arable land by the wood called Bremridge of overland'.
- ¹¹⁶ Rackham 1986.
- ¹¹⁷ All the references are to the *compotus* rolls except for 1572, the survey of Winscombe.
- ¹¹⁸ Plot numbers 954, 963, 964.
- ¹¹⁹ Bennett 1885, 165.
- ¹²⁰ Bird 1909, 363.
- ¹²¹ Tithe map plot 962.
- ¹²² It is intended to look at the medieval pattern of roads and lanes in the parish in a future article.
- ¹²³ Tithe map plots 955 and 956.
- ¹²⁴ Thus we have from the *compotus* rolls, of 1334–5 '25¾ acres under la Frythe Wode'; for 1336–

- 7 '10d from Robert le Smyth for a pasture under Frythe Wode', '12d from the pasture below le Fryth on the west side of Catwityh', 'nothing from the pasture below la Frythwode', and '21 acres under la Frythewode' sown to oats'; and for 1342-3 '0d from Robert le Smyth for a pasture under Frythe Wod held for his life'.
- ¹²⁵ RAF 4 December 1946 CPE UK 1869 3284, I am grateful to Maddy Knibb for help with air photos. All earthworks and field boundaries have now been removed in this area.
- ¹²⁶ Harley and Dunning 1981.
- ¹²⁷ Field names and numbers in 1792 220 Moorham Wood, 221 Moorham, 673 Moorham Copse.
- ¹²⁸ Field names and numbers in 1840 526 Moorham, 534 Moorham Copse, 559 Little Moorham, 559a and b Great Moorham.
- ¹²⁹ See note 62; also Bond 1994, 140.
- ¹³⁰ Bond 1994, 116.
- ¹³¹ Bird 1907, 339 'two acres of meadow at Wamenhull'.
- ¹³² Smith 1956 Part II, 245; Ekwall (1960, 495) for Wambrook, but Gelling and Cole (2000, 9) go for 'womb' as the meaning of this place name as well. Frank Thorn adds (pers. comm.), 'Although the earlier forms of place-names are usually best in determining their etymology, the later forms in Warn- might suggest that the minims (-iii-) of earlier documents have been misread and that Wam- is in fact Warn- for which Ekwall gives several possibilities.'
- ¹³³ Field numbers w670 'Lower Warnhill' and w671 'Higher warnhill' on the 1792 William White map and field numbers 915 'Higher Warnhill' and 926 'Lower Warnhill' on the 1840 tithe map.
- ¹³⁴ 1336-7, '2s from the annual rent for ½ acre of pasture on the west side of Wamenhulle, inherited by John Batyn'; '5s from the pasture at Wamenhulle with a gore there, inherited by Thomas atte Wyke and John Batyn'; 1342-3, '2s from John Batyn for ½ acre of pasture on the west side of Wamenhull, for his life'; 5s from Thomas atte Wyke and John Batyn for pasture at Wamenhull with a 'gora' there, for their lives'; 1382-3, 'lost annual rent for pasture in Wamenhull', similar in 1393-4; 1396-7, '7s the lost ancient rent for pasture in the Lord's wood of Wamynhull, lately John Tipton's, because it is in the lords' hands'.
- ¹³⁵ 1393-4, 'the lost ancient rent for pasture of Wamylhyll Wood; 1416-17, 'the lost rent for pasture in the Lord's wood of Wamenhull, the same in 1452-3 and 1459-60; 1513-4, 1539-40 7s from the herbage of the Lord's wood called Wamhyll that was not charged before the new rental of 1493; 1539-40.
- ¹³⁶ 1342-3, '56s 8d from the sale of 34 acres of underwood in Wamenhull at 20p an acre'; 1382-3, '7s the lost annual rent for pasture in Wamenhull and its underwood'; 1393-4, 'Attached bill referring to the sale of underwood in Wamenhull, sold at 4s 6d an acre, 62s 9d from 14 acres and I perch; 1452-3, 'Nothing from the sale of underwood in Wammenhill, because it was sold four years ago'.
- ¹³⁷ There is a lot of detail in the *compotus* records about the making and repairing of ploughs; there are eight entries about ploughs in the 1305-6 *compotus* roll.
- ¹³⁸ It is intended to examine the arable fields of Winscombe and its hamlets in a future article. A preliminary study is being carried out by Maddy Knibb.
- ¹³⁹ Aston 2010, 62-4.
- ¹⁴⁰ SCRO T/PH/VCH 38 c/2789.
- ¹⁴¹ Bird 1907, 361. One of the witnesses to these grants was a 'Walter de Lyncumbe' and so it is reasonable to suggest that there was at least a farm nearby at Lyncombe in the middle of the 13th century. This was not mentioned or mapped in Aston 2010 and so should be added to fig. 13 of that article. The site of the farm was probably not at the present Lyncombe Lodge, the Avon Ski Centre, but below, where the spring for the Sandmead Stream emerges at NGR c. ST 436 595.
- ¹⁴² SCRO T/PH/VCH 38 c/2789.
- ¹⁴³ Weaver 1910, 62. I am most grateful to Frank Thorn for examining the names in great detail and for providing this information about the term 'scrobet', and for the following note about Henry's surname.
- ¹⁴⁴ Henry Lovestheft's name is spelt in a wide variety of ways; *Luneseftes Scrobet*, *Loueseftes Scrobet* or *Luuesseftes Scrobet*. *Loueseft* itself is problematic, partly because of its varying forms, and the fact that it has not proved possible to find a modern surname that might be derived from them. The forms in *Lun-* and *Lon-* can probably be dismissed as misreadings (common) of two minims (*i*) as an *-n-*, rather than as a *u*. The forms *Lou-* and *Luu-* are interchangeable. These beginnings can often mean that the name is derived from an Old English name beginning

in *Leaf-* or from an Old French *Lou-* ('wolf') name. On the other hand, none of these seems to be combined with a termination such as *-seft* or *-eft*. It is possible that the more correct forms of the name are *Louestheft* (1319) or *Lovestheft* (1382–83), assuming that these are not simply attempts to make sense of the name. It would certainly be easy for a name that was correctly *Louestheft* to be misheard and miswritten. If the correct form is *Louestheft*, then the name is probably what it appears to be – 'theft of love', a dark version of 'gift of love'. This would be a nickname turned surname and could refer to a man who has stolen a woman's heart against her better sense, to a philanderer or an adulterer or to a man who has stolen all the attributes of Venus and Cupid and is therefore charming and handsome. So far, a search has only found this name at Winscombe and at Creech-St-Michael near Taunton and with such limited examples one is hesitant to propose a definitive etymology. The solitary form *Lovescheast*, if it were the true one, might suggest 'love' and 'cheat', from Middle English *chetten*, a form of *escheten* ('to escheat'). In the new index provided by Mary Siraut for the Somerset Record Society's *Kirby's Quest* volume (Siraut 1996), the various forms of the name are gathered under the head-form *Loveshaft*, but this may be a courageous attempt to make sense of the word. The index of the *RCHM Calendar* of Wells manuscripts (Bird 1907; Baildon 1914) groups the forms under *Louestheft*. In view of the above, one could consider standardising as *Louestheft* or 'Lovestheft' and this is what has been done in this study.

¹⁴⁵ Smith 1956 Part I, 102.

¹⁴⁶ Contra what Frank Thorn says in his note above; Smith 1956 Part II, 282.

¹⁴⁷ The SVBRG have begun to record the surviving early buildings here. A full survey of Yew Tree Farm has been completed and a preliminary assessment of Pool Farm, Orchard Cottage and Wellage Cottage made.

¹⁴⁸ In 1840 from west to east plots: 933, 934, 937, 937a; The William White map of 1792 has 'Aller Copse' at plot 136 a tiny plot in the extreme west of Barton. In 1840 it is 1106 'part of Great Moors'.

¹⁴⁹ Bird 1907, 360–1.

¹⁵⁰ Smith 1956 Part I, 9; Field 1972,2–3; Gelling 1984, 220.

¹⁵¹ A 'rap' or 'rope' was about 20 feet (Zupko 1985).

¹⁵² This represents about 1000 feet or 333 yards of ditching and hedging.

¹⁵³ The 1330 court roll records a, 'close of pasture next to the sheepfold and la Blakalres'; this is the only known reference to a sheepfold at Winscombe though a 'sheephouse' is recorded in the *compotus* rolls for both 1276–7 and 1452–3; they are distinctive features in the medieval landscape and it would be useful to know where it was on the manor – see Dyer 1995. *Faldheyas*, associated with 'Black Allers' also contains the element 'fold'.

¹⁵⁴ Smith 1956 Part I, 206.

¹⁵⁵ Smith 1956 Part I, 43–5.

¹⁵⁶ 1336–7 *compotus* roll, '8d from ½ acre of fallow land at Ryghamstigel with the wood called Budelgore, inherited by Henry Boniour for his life' (earlier in the same document there is reference to new land at R.). In 1342–3 a reference to new land at Righamstighle; '8d from Henry Boniour for ½ acre of new land at Ryghamstighle with the wood called Budelgore, for life' suggests there may have been some clearance. The same is probably true for the references in the 1371–2 *compotus* roll, '4s from Richard Dorre and William Mareys' new rent for 8 acres of Overlond at Risthamstighle in year 8' (of their tenancy) and '2s from John and Edith Kyng's new rent for 2 acres of meadow in Bodelgore in year 6' (of their tenancy).

¹⁵⁷ Smith 1956 Part I, 229–230 for *hamm* and Part II, 152 for *stigel*.

¹⁵⁸ Smith 1956 Part II, 83 for *ric* and Part I, 267 for *hrycg*.

¹⁵⁹ Smith 1956 Part I, 98; Gelling and Cole 2000, 153 state that 'it is regularly used of slopes which are 45 degrees or steeper' but 'that all 'clif' features need to be evaluated on the ground'.

¹⁶⁰ Tithe map 1840 plots 754, 752, 751, 750 all called 'Butter cliffs' and 753 'Butter Cliffs Coppice'.

¹⁶¹ Aston 2010, 64–5.

¹⁶² The 'atte Wyke' and 'Wike' family can be traced through several generations in the court and *compotus* rolls.

¹⁶³ Names listed in the court roll for 1352–3; the list includes John atte Wyke fined 2d, William le Pope fined 2d and William atte Mulle (ie mill) fined 1d.

¹⁶⁴ Examples include, '12d Galfrid of the mill in mercy for damage to the lord's wood'; '3d

- Richard le Kyng for damage to the wood'; '2d Richard de la Gore for damage to the wood, 3d Henry atte Stone for the same, 2d Richard Symond in mercy for the same'.
- ¹⁶⁵ Neilson 1910, 52 'But the villein too had need of wood, and his wodericht [wood-right], the conditions under which he could take wood from the woodland of the manor, had to be carefully defined. To cut wood without permission, within the forest or without it, was a very serious offence'.
- ¹⁶⁶ This and other entries like it suggest that there were freelance hauliers with their own carts and wagons available for hire by the 15th century in the Winscombe area. In the 19th and 20th centuries there were hauliers in the parish who would carry goods to and from Bristol and between the several railway stations on a weekly or daily basis.
- ¹⁶⁷ For smiths see Aston 2010, 66.
- ¹⁶⁸ These references are all to *compotus* rolls. Bark would have been needed for tanning leather.
- ¹⁶⁹ All these works are referred to in the court roll for 1467–8.
- ¹⁷⁰ 'Isenaker' is recorded in *compotus* rolls for 1336–7 and 1342 and seems to have been in Sandford Moor in the north of the parish. '18d from Agnes the widow of Isak in le Combe for new rent for one acre of meadow in Sandfordmor called Isenaker'.
- ¹⁷¹ Baildon 1914, 105; Bennett 1885, 144.
- ¹⁷² For the same year under 'liveries of cash', 9s 1d 'for various expenses concerning the chancel of St Cuthbert, as shown in the particulars'.
- ¹⁷³ Rackham 1980, 155. Frank Thorn (pers. comm.) says, "Pannage" and 'pasture' have the same etymological origin. The English 'pannage' is from medieval Latin *pasnagium/pannagium*, itself a Latinisation of Anglo-Norman *pannage*, or Old French *pasnage* which in turn derives from medieval Latin *pastionaticum*, a noun connected with the verb *pastionare* ('to graze'), which itself comes ultimately from the Classical Latin verb *pascor* with the same meaning. Pace Oliver Rackham, the earliest meanings of the Latin nouns (which is the language used in the documents) are simply 'feeding' or 'grazing', without reference to the animal or to their food. These general meanings continue in the Middle Ages in parallel with more specific ones: 'pig-pasture', 'feed for pigs', 'the right to pasture', 'payment for pasture'.
- ¹⁷⁴ The exception is the Christmas feast each year when usually several pigs were slaughtered along with an ox; the *compotus* rolls contain many details about the arrangements for the Christmas feast and its cost.
- ¹⁷⁵ Bird 1907, 360.
- ¹⁷⁶ Farrant 2008.
- ¹⁷⁷ Congresbury etc Drainage Map 1826 Somerset County Record Office D/RA 1/2/94.
- ¹⁷⁸ Commons and wayside wastes were enclosed at Woodborough Green and Scrubbets, Knowl Batch and Churchill Batch and Greenhill in Sandford; these and the enclosed hills are shown on 'A Plan of the Commons or Waste Lands in Winscombe in the County of Somerset as divided, allotted and enclosed by Act of Parliament (1797) by William Brown of Wedmore 1799 Somerset County Record Office Q/R De 13.
- ¹⁷⁹ Billingsley, J. 1794, 13.
- ¹⁸⁰ I am grateful to John Rickard and his colleagues for providing me with copies of their surveys of houses and discussing their research with me in advance of publication of the Winscombe parish buildings volume in their Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group series.
- ¹⁸¹ At Shapwick in central Somerset, Loxley Wood, the main wood of the parish, was thrown open to the tenants for grazing their cattle between August and February, and then reverted to being a private wood of the lord of the manor for the rest of the year – John Knight 1998; Gerrard with Aston 2007, 341–6.

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1305 (131912a/2) 1311–12 (110739/1) 1330 (131909/20) 1350 (131909/13) 1352–3 (131909/4) 1359–60 (131909/9) 1361 (110738/1) 1392 (110738/2) 1399–1401 (110738/3) 1410–11 (110738/4) 1467–8 (110738/5) 1483 (110736/6)

Compotus rolls with date and Somerset County Record Office archives reference numbers (except for 1416–17, which is in Wells)

1277 (131913a/3) 1278 (131908/1) 1305–6 (131908/2*) 1306–7 (131911a/10*) 1332–3 (131909/11) 1333–4 (131909/5) 1333–4 (131909/5) 1334–5 (131914/13) 1336–7 (131909/8) 1342–3 (131909/12) 1366–7 (110739/4) 1368–9 (110739/5) 1371–2 (131909/3) 1374–5 (131909/10) 1375–6 (131909/7) 1382–3 (131910/11) 1390–91 (131910/8) 1393–4 (131910/6) 1396–7 (131910/4) 1416–7 (Wells DC/E7/27) 1439–1442 (S/HY/129) 1450–51 (S/HY 138) (These last two are accounts for Sandford, Winterhead, Crison and Compton (Bishop) tithings and not Winscombe manor) 1452–3 (131914/7) 1459–60 (131914/15) 1513–14 (131920/13) 1539–40 (131921/6).

* a damaged roll so the date may be wrong

1540 Survey of Sandford SCRO T/PH/VCH 38 c/2789
 1572 Survey of Winscombe, Wells Cathedral ADD/2881 folios 1–6
 1650 Parliamentary Survey of Winscombe SCRO DD/CC 110733
 1792 William White map of Winscombe and Shipham SCRO DD/CC 10763
 1799 Enclosure map 'A Plan of the Commons or waste lands in Winscombe' SCRO Q/R De 13
 1840 Tithe map and award for Winscombe 1840 SCRO DD/Rt 195

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