

Pepper Hill, *Yearnebarrowe* and *Catherwell*: Clues to an ancient burial near Hanbury Hill, Stourbridge?

by

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1. Introduction

Most residents of Stourbridge will know of Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill as residential access roads off Worcester Street. Some will use them, as I have done for many years, as part of direct route from the town towards Norton, Pedmore and Oldswinford. That route is, broadly speaking, over a thousand years old, but the hill-top location itself is intriguing. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that it was the site of a locally-important Anglo-Saxon burial mound. It is also likely that this pagan monument attained a degree of ritual or spiritual significance and was eventually taken over as a place of Christian worship. This article will explore that evidence and outline a hypothesis which could account for the existence of several enigmatic place-names in the vicinity.

2. The Site and its Historical Setting

Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill are located in Stourbridge, a town formerly in Worcestershire but, since 1974, administered as part of Dudley Metropolitan Borough in the West Midlands. Stourbridge town — including the area around Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill — is contained wholly within the ancient parish of Old Swinford¹, which probably ante-dates the town. The pattern of local ancient parishes is depicted in figure 1; modern administrative boundaries are also shown to aid identification of the site.

Located between Worcester Street and Hagley Road, 600m south of the town centre, this closely-spaced pair of hills is composed of Middle Triassic Bromsgrove sandstone (formerly known as Lower Keuper sandstone) which rises some 20 metres above the town.² Together, Pepper Hill and Hanbury Hill make up the western-most of three hill-spurs which extend north from the high ground of Oldswinford. The central spur is delineated by Red Hill and extends from the adjoining Junction Road towards Parkfield Road, while the eastern hill-spur underlies Rufford Road and Hungary Hill. Figure 2 illustrates the area's topography and watercourses which were important elements of the landscape until being culverted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Hanbury Hill is both a street-name and the name of the underlying hill, while Pepper Hill has, in modern times, been used only as the name of a route-way (now part footpath and part residential street) running south towards Pedmore. An extension of this route-way, which also included a section of Love Lane, was documented in a description of a land boundary (a perambulation) in a tenth-century royal charter:

of stancofan 7long dune on stiran mere,
'from the stone coves along the hill to sturgeon pool'

It is not known whether the name Pepper Hill has ever been used of the hill itself but, in view of the ancient and presumably well-frequented path that descended towards Love Lane, it seems likely that a proper name — presumably Pepper Hill or an earlier form of the same name — would have become attached to this southern declivity, at least.

2.1 The Salt-Way

Hagley Road (the A491), which descends from Oldswinford between the western-most pair of the aforementioned hill-spurs, follows the course of an ancient road that linked Droitwich to Penkridge.

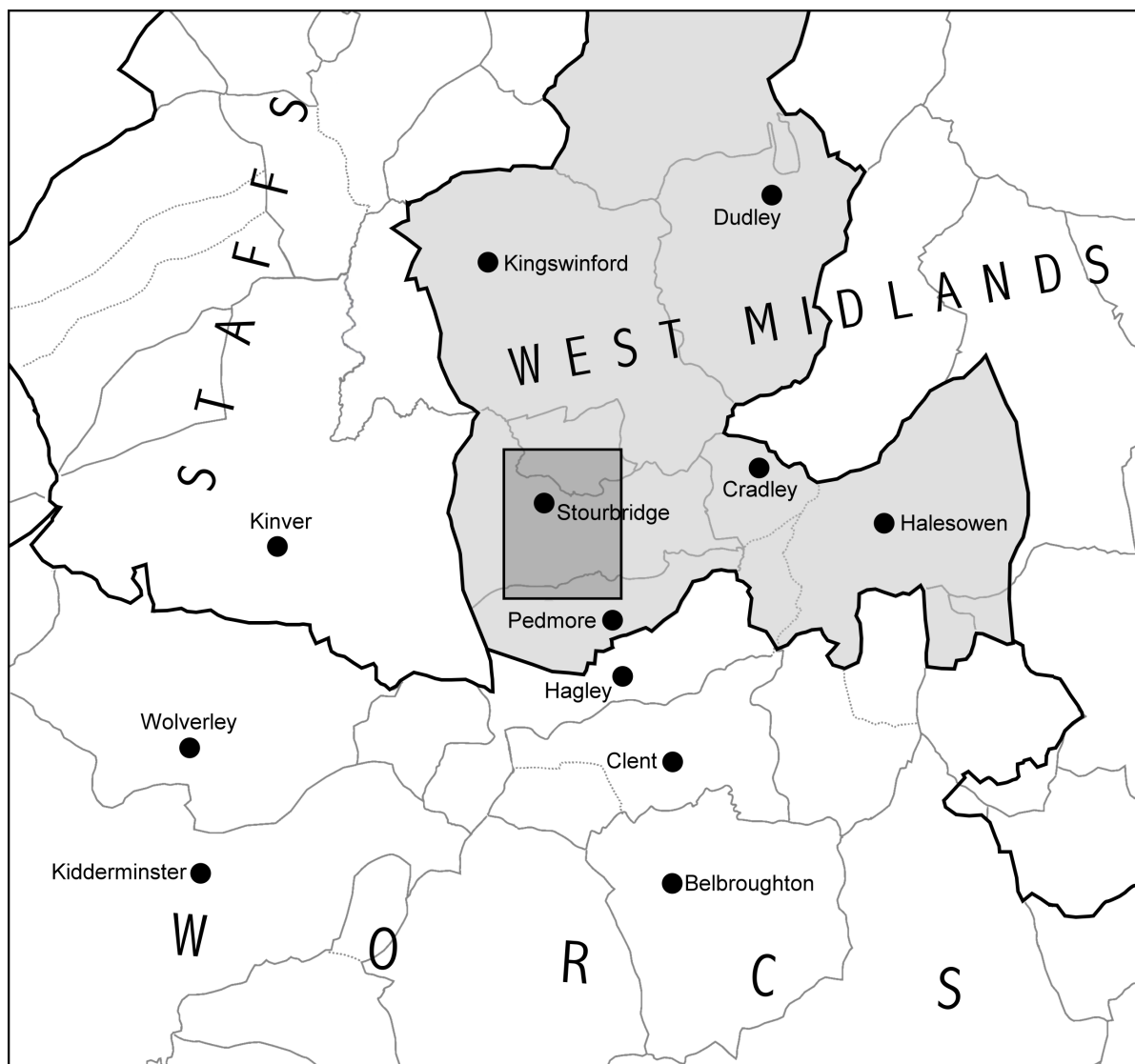


Figure 1. Location of the study area in relation to modern county boundaries (black) and the pattern of ancient parish boundaries (grey). The tinted rectangle represents the area depicted in figure 3.

Droitwich was one of only a few places in England that produced salt in any appreciable quantity, and this road had probably been a major salt-distribution route (a salt-way) from the Iron Age or earlier. As an essential commodity for preserving food, salt was distributed widely, and salt-ways tended to become principal long-distance roads. Stourbridge's salt-way approached the area via Hagley and Pedmore, a route which took it close to Wychbury Hill; and it is likely that the Iron Age hill fort there was built because of Wychbury's proximity to this major road.³

In the immediate vicinity of Stourbridge town, the salt-way's course seems to have varied over the centuries (figure 3). The High Street was constructed — apparently in the fifteenth century⁴ — across a former open field (a large expanse of land that had been farmed communally during the medieval period). While this field remained in cultivation, the salt-way is unlikely to have crossed directly over it (i.e. along the line of the current High Street); it may, instead, have run further east near Vauxhall Road and Foster Street, or even close to the now-culverted Swinford Brook (also erroneously referred to as the Clatterbatch or Kowback⁵) which flowed near the present Stepping Stones and Bedcote Place to join the river Stour a short distance west of the present railway viaduct. Presumably the salt-way then continued west along the Stour, perhaps near Birmingham Street (formerly *Bedcote Lane*), and then along an old path known as *Le Clyff* in 1590⁶ (*The Cliff* in 1837⁷), towards a ford which, until the early post-Conquest period, lay near the point where the A491 crosses the Stour today. The salt-way then continued north, along the line of the A491, past Kingswinford and on to Penridge.

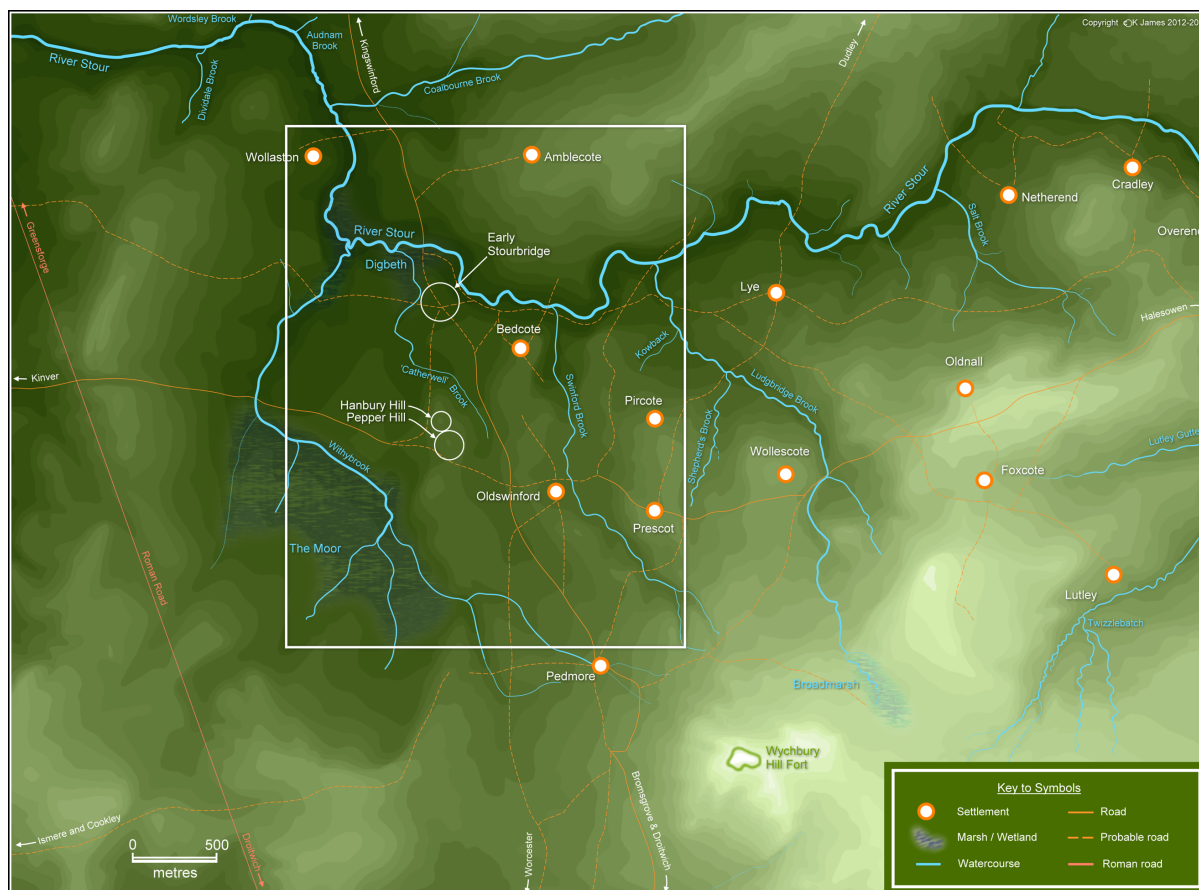


Figure 2. Topography, watercourses and principal early settlements in and around the study area. Lighter background tones correspond to more altitudinous land. The rectangle represents the area shown in figure 3.

2.2 The Swine-Ford and Burhelm's Estate

The ford through the Stour was probably several thousand years old by the time that it was replaced by a bridge in the post-Conquest period. It had certainly been of central importance to the whole area for many centuries. In the late Anglo-Saxon period, it was called *Swynford* or *Swinford*, meaning 'pig- or boar-ford'⁸, perhaps indicating that the ford lay upon a route that was also used for herding pigs. This river-crossing's importance as a landmark on the long-distance salt-way resulted in the whole region (for some miles to the north and south) assuming the same name: *Swinford*.

In around 950 AD the *Swinford* area was mentioned in a royal charter, the same document that referenced the route along Pepper Hill. *Swinford* was, at that date, part of a landholding belonging to King Eadred (or one of his immediate successors, Eadwig or Edgar). The charter records a gift of land from the King, to a noble-man named Burhelm; the land was described as:

'a small estate in that place to which the rustics according to their custom of name-giving and in sportive language have given the name of Swinford'.⁹

This 'small estate' coincided with much (but not quite all) of what later became the manor of Oldswinford, although it also took in parts of Pedmore manor as well. There are a few minor uncertainties in the course of the boundary but it almost certainly passed across or very close to Pepper Hill.¹⁰ Figure 4 illustrates the estate's most likely extent.¹¹

The King's gift of land to Burhelm split the *Swinford* area in two. The part north of the Stour remained in royal ownership: it was recorded as *Rex tenet SUINESFORD* 'The King holds SWINFORD' in the Domesday book¹² and eventually became known as Kingswinford. Within a couple of centuries of the King's gift, there were some major changes to this land unit. It seems that the manor of Amblecote

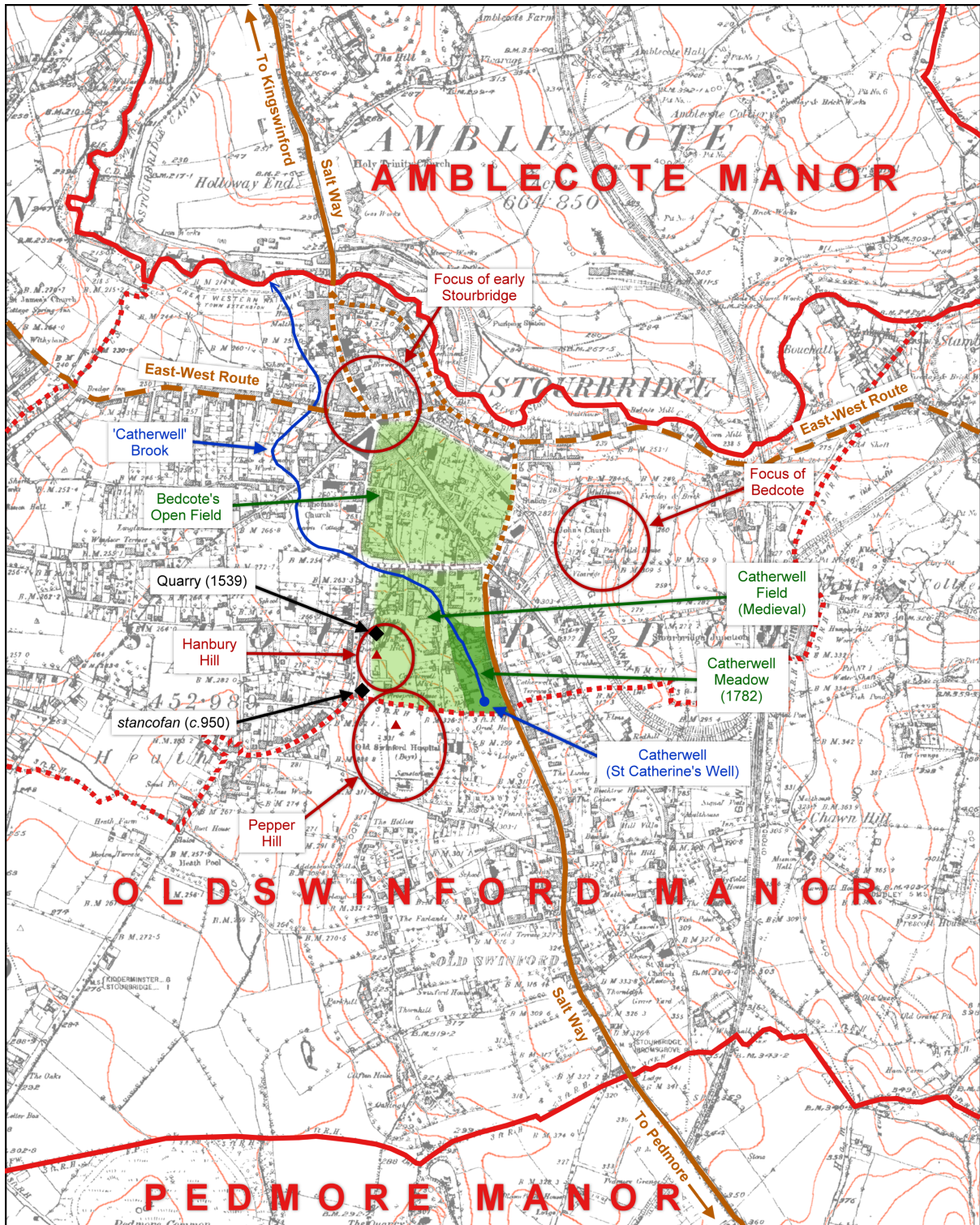


Figure 3. The study area. Manorial boundaries (probably of late-tenth- or eleventh-century date) are depicted as red lines. The dotted red line is the boundary of the 1866 Civil Parish of Stourbridge which, apart from the eastern extremity, is similar to that of the fourteenth-century sub-manor of Bedcote. Major early routes are depicted in brown. Background map: Ordnance Survey (1888).

was carved out of Kingswinford, most likely between 1016 and 1086 AD, although the earlier date is uncertain. And, some time after 1086, Ashwood was added to Kingswinford manor, an association that persisted until 1935.¹³

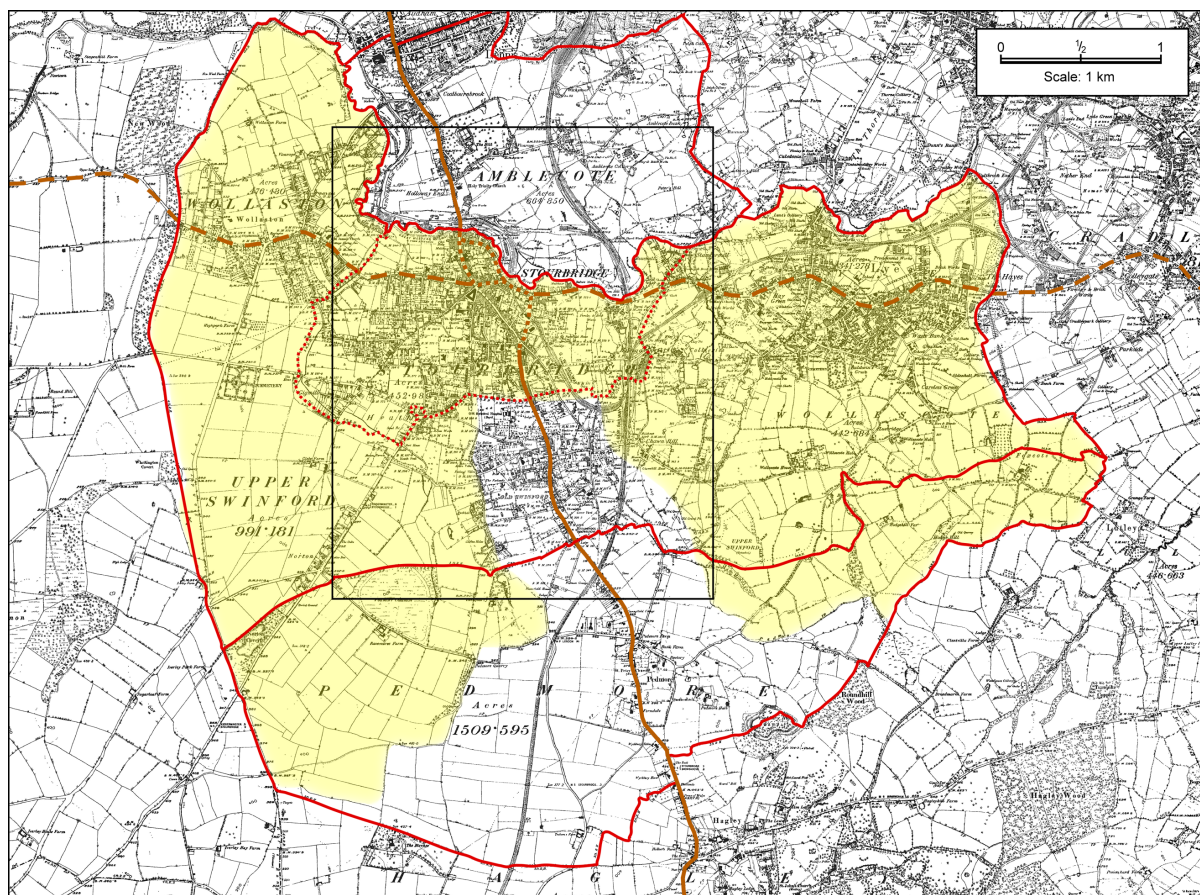


Figure 4. Comparison of local manorial boundaries (red lines) with Burhelm's estate of c. 950 AD described in the Swinford Charter c. 950 (yellow tinted area). The boundary of the 1866 Civil Parish of Stourbridge — which, near Pepper Hill and Hanbury Hill, is very similar to the that of the fourteenth-century sub-manor of Bedcote — is shown as a dotted red line. The rectangle represents the study area illustrated in figure 3. Background map: Ordnance Survey (1888).

There were some significant early boundary changes to the south of the Stour as well. The part of Swinford which had been gifted to Burhelm — along with land belonging to Pedmore, Hagley and Clent (also a royal landholding) — seems to have undergone a significant degree of restructuring. This produced the manorial and parish boundary patterns that are familiar from eighteenth-century Enclosures plans and nineteenth-century Tithe plans and Ordnance Survey (OS) maps.¹⁴ It is not known precisely how this restructuring came about, but it must have been sanctioned by a person of some authority, most probably during the tenth or eleventh centuries.

One thing is clear though: all of this reorganisation produced the manor of Oldswinford, a land-holding that included several pre-existing Anglo-Saxon settlements, including Wollaston, Wollescote and Bedcote, as well as, perhaps, Lye and Foxcote. There is no evidence that Stourbridge itself existed at that time. Indeed, the open field upon which Stourbridge's High Street now stands probably then belonged to the township of Bedcote 'Bettu's / Beta's / Bettica's cottage or dwelling',¹⁵ the focus of which lay close to today's Parkfield Road. This site is located on the tip of the central sandstone hill-spur mentioned in section 2, a site which overlooked both Swinford Brook and the river Stour.

2.3 Bedcote and Stourbridge: Medieval open fields and Catherwell

Stourbridge, like many other towns across England, seems to have been established in the twelfth century, although later dates have also been proposed. It was first mentioned in an Assize Roll of 1255 in which the spelling *Sturbrug* was used,¹⁶ but it is not clear whether this referred to the bridge, an area around the bridge or an early incarnation of the town.¹⁷ The ending *-brug* is a variant spelling of Middle English (ME) *brugge* — itself derived from Old English (OE) *brycg* — meaning bridge,¹⁸ so

clearly, by that date, a bridge had replaced the aforementioned swine-ford at the bottom of Lower High Street.

The town developed on the high ground above the bridge, around the intersection of Lower High Street, Crown Lane, Market Street (formerly Rye Market) and Coventry Street.

It is very likely that Enville Street, Crown Lane, Coventry Street and Birmingham Street represent the course of an ancient long-distance road, the course of which would have defined the northern edge of Bedcote's open field here (figure 3). The field's southern and western extents were constrained by the valley of a minor stream which rose at a spring called *Catherwell* on the eastern flank of Hanbury Hill.¹⁹ The place-name *Catherwell* was almost certainly a corruption of 'St. Catherine's Well', the word 'Well' in this context meaning a spring.²⁰ This would have been a useful — and perhaps widely known — water source for people and livestock travelling along the adjacent salt-way (the A491 Hagley Road). The name of the stream is now lost but, purely for the purposes of identification in this article, and because it originated at the *Catherwell* spring, I will term it 'Catherwell Brook'. This watercourse wound its way north, then west, then north again, passing the later Union Passage, the junction of New Road and Market Street, the bottom of Lion Street, and then along Hemplands and Queen Street before joining the Stour near the former Rolling Mills off Bradley Road.

A track running more-or-less along the line of Market Street²¹ led south from the new town's centre, by the edge of the open field, before eventually crossing the valley of 'Catherwell Brook' near the present-day New Road (i.e. the east-west segment of the 'Ring Road'). The track then ascended up what is now Worcester Street towards an ancient stone-working on the side of Hanbury Hill. Sandstone has been dug periodically from this area over the course of many centuries. A quarry is mentioned in a document of 1539²² and, as we have already seen, the Swinford Charter perambulation of c. 950 AD mentions *stancofan*, 'stone coves or stone chamber', which appear to have lain in the immediate vicinity; this may have been a reference to disused quarry works, or perhaps a rock-hewn shelter.²³

Despite the new town of Stourbridge becoming established on the edge of Bedcote's open field, Bedcote retained its primacy over the area for several centuries. Bedcote's lands — i.e. the township of Bedcote — extended some distance out from both the settlement of Bedcote in the east and the new town of Stourbridge in the north-west.

The whole of Bedcote township continued to grow and in, or before, the fourteenth century, it became a sub-manor of Oldswinford — a process known as subinfeudation.²⁴ Certainly, it had acquired the status of sub-manor by 1365 when the Lord of Oldswinford manor, Sir John Botetourt, effectively 'sub-let' many manorial privileges and duties to Philip de Lotteley who was then, or soon became, the Lord of the Manor of Bedcote.²⁵ It is not clear exactly where Bedcote's boundaries then lay but it is likely they were defined to the west and south-west by the *Withybrook*, which ran from the present Mary Stevens Park, past Fredericks Close and Poole Street, then through Gig Mill and Swan Pool Park, and on via Mamble Road and Lowndes Road to the Stour. The southern boundary ran near Hanbury / Pepper Hill; and the eastern boundary may originally have extended out for some considerable distance to encompass part of Lye or even Foxcote. Figure 5 illustrates the likely extent of Bedcote sub-manor and related land units at various key dates.²⁶

The sub-manor's early boundaries almost certainly reflected those of the township. In many parts of England, township boundaries are considered to underlie, and thus ante-date, the pattern of local ancient parishes, the majority of which originated in the tenth to twelfth centuries.²⁷ Indeed, it is quite likely that a large fraction of township boundaries date back to the mid-Anglo-Saxon period or before.

This is very relevant to the present discussion because, in all likelihood, the central portion of Bedcote's southern boundary ran directly over the high ground between Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill, although somewhat closer to the latter than the former. The highest part of Pepper Hill lay about 40 metres south of the Bedcote boundary, within the now artificially levelled playing fields of Old Swinford Hospital School; and Hanbury Hill's summit still lies near the flats and garages at the upper end of College Road, about 180 metres north of (i.e. within) Bedcote's boundary.

It is important to note that the Bedcote boundary line here seems to have been stable for a very long time. Indeed, it probably followed the same course as the boundary of Burhelm's estate recorded in

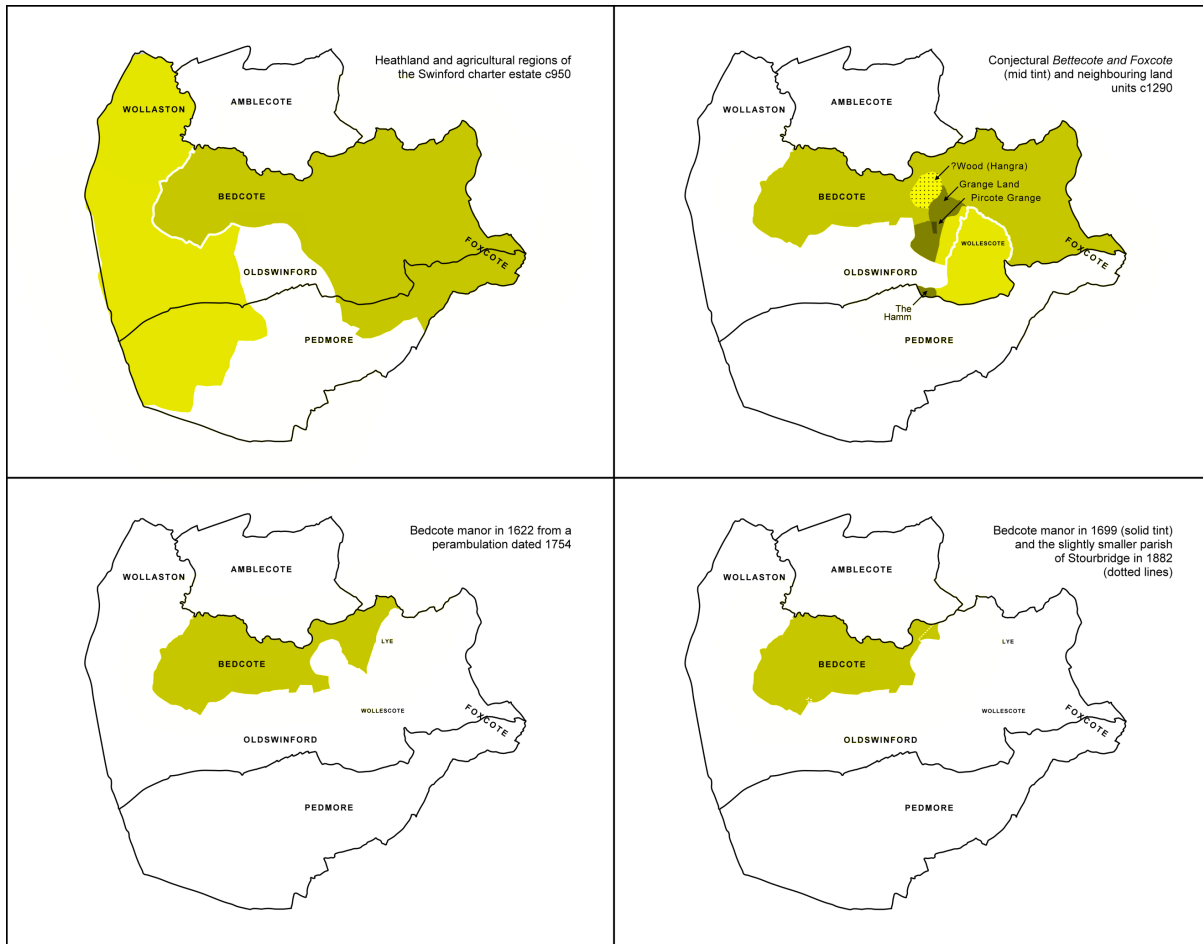


Figure 5. Probable development of Burhelm's estate — i.e. the Swinford Charter estate — of c. 950 after subsequent manorial-boundary remodelling and fragmentation.

the Swinford Charter of c. 950 AD.²⁸ This, of course, means that, in the late Anglo-Saxon period, Bedcote township was an integral part of Burhelm's estate. The nature of the territory south of the Bedcote boundary line (i.e. the area now occupied by Old Swinford Hospital School and Oldswinford village) is, however, less clear but the available evidence suggests strongly that all of this land then accommodated open, or common, fields belonging to the settlement of Pedmore, about 1.7km to the south.²⁹

Pedmore seems to have been one of the area's principal early settlement sites. Place-name evidence suggests that the original hamlet there had been established by Anglian settlers during the first half of the seventh century (see section 2.4 below);³⁰ and it is likely that the settlement of Oldswinford which subsequently grew up near St Mary's church and Church Road was, at that time, relatively unimportant if, indeed, it existed at all.

3. Meaning and Significance of Nearby Place-Names

Place-names often reflect features of the local landscape or land-use that existed when the names were coined. Many of our local examples originated in the Anglo-Saxon or late medieval periods and four of them — *Yearnebarrowe*, *Catherwell*, Pepper Hill and Pedmore — may provide the key to understanding a formative event in the area's history.

3.1 *Yearnebarrowe Hill*: an early name for Hanbury Hill

The earliest occurrence of the place-name Hanbury Hill appears in an indenture of 1709, where it was spelled *Ambry Hill*.³¹ There is no record of the name being used before the eighteenth century, but this doesn't necessarily mean that it is a modern name devoid of historical meaning. If we assume that Hanbury is not a transferred place-name — i.e. that it has not been transferred, for reasons unknown, from elsewhere (such as from the Hanbury near Droitwich) — one might expect its meaning to have some relevance to its location. The first element of this name could have originated as OE *hean* 'high', but it is also possible that it came from OE *hān* 'stone'. The latter term was sometimes used for boundary stones and, as we have seen, Hanbury Hill lies close to a long-standing (and seemingly important) boundary line. The ending '-bury' often derives from OE *burh* 'a fortification', but some examples of '-bury' come from OE *beorg*, 'a hill or mound, circular in plan'.³² However, we have no substantially earlier forms of the name Hanbury to help resolve the matter so these suggestions must be regarded as speculative.

Interestingly, until the nineteenth century, Hanbury Hill had another name, and this is a little more amenable to analysis. An 1837 map of Stourbridge town,³³ labels the hill 'Hanbury Hill or *Yarnbrough*';³⁴ and, in the seventeenth century, a *Yearnebarrowe Hill Field* was referenced in a document recording the enclosure of land there.³⁵ Presumably this land had previously been part of a medieval common or open field, probably that known as *Catherwell Field* which was bounded by the later Worcester Street, Hagley Road, New Road and the Bedcote manorial boundary (see section 2.3).

The name *Yearnebarrowe* has two OE components. The first, *Yearne-*, most likely derives from the OE *earn* 'eagle', although the personal name *Earn* or *Earna* is also possible.³⁶ The second element, *barrowe*, probably originates from the OE place-name element *beorg* which, as previously mentioned, tends to signify a hill or artificial mound (such as burial mound) having a circular footprint. It should be noted that neither of the natural summits here (i.e. Hanbury Hill or Pepper Hill) are round in plan, so one suspects that the use of this word may have signified the presence of a circular *man-made* mound on the Hanbury Hill / Pepper Hill prominence — i.e. near the Bedcote boundary line.

It is difficult to distinguish the summit of Pepper Hill from the rest of the underlying hill-spur — especially as it is now obscured by modern development — and it may be that the names Pepper Hill and Hanbury Hill have, at times, been used interchangeably to refer to the combined land-mass here, i.e. the whole of the aforementioned western hill-spur.

3.2 Oldswinford and Pedmore

We have already seen (in section 2.3) that, before the establishment of Oldswinford manor in the eleventh century or thereabouts, the grounds of Old Swinford Hospital School and the land around the A491 in what we now term Oldswinford village consisted of the open fields belonging to Pedmore. It was only after a high-level reorganisation of the local territorial boundaries, some time after the mid-tenth century, that Oldswinford manor as we know it came into existence. Thus, in earlier times Pedmore's land extended north to the Bedcote boundary in the vicinity of Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill.

The settlement of Oldswinford takes its name from the manor in which it developed; and this, in turn, comes from the Anglo-Saxon *Swinford* 'pig- or boar-ford' which was located where today's A491 crosses the river Stour (section 2.2). This developmental sequence is very unusual: most manors are named *after* their central place, rather than the other way around. The situation in Oldswinford probably reflects the manorial-boundary reorganisation mentioned in section 2.2 together with a relatively late settlement date for Oldswinford.

3.3 Pedmore and Pepper Hill

Pedmore, on the other hand, seems to have been one of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements in the area. There were, of course, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British settlements nearby, but the named hamlet of Pedmore probably dates to the mid-Anglo-Saxon period. Its name started out as the OE form of *Pypba*'s Moor but, like most place-names, has become corrupted over the centuries; and

has been recorded in a variety of forms: *Pevemore* (in 1086, Domesday Book); *Pubemora* (1176); *Pebbemore* (1291); *Pobmore* (1323) and *Pedemore* (1406).³⁷ *Pypba* is an Anglian personal name, probably the leader of a family or clan that settled and drained part of the local moorland on the lower slopes of Wychbury Hill. The name, however, carries a wider significance as it was used by the dynasty of Anglian royals that were in power during, and immediately before, the widespread movement of settlers into the Stour-valley and Severn-valley areas. It is unlikely that King Pypba (regnal dates: c. 593 to c. 600 AD) himself founded Pedmore. A more probable scenario is that it became common amongst Anglians to name their children after this popular royal (just as there are probably many young men bearing the name William or Harry today) and, a generation later, one such Anglian drained and settled a patch of moorland near Wychbury Hill — hence the name *Pypba's* Moor which eventually mutated to Pedmore.

This personal-name seems to have been prevalent in the early seventh century. Several other place-names containing *Pypba* exist within the wider region. It has been suggested that Pepper Wood, Pepwell and (possibly) Peopleton — all in Worcestershire — and Peplow in Shropshire developed from Pypba in much the same way as Pedmore.³⁸ The modern forms of most of these place-names begin with 'Pep...'; and we have another possible example near Hanbury Hill: i.e. Pepper Hill. Unfortunately, no early forms of this particular place-name are known so we cannot state conclusively that Pepper Hill derives from '*Pypba's* Hill'; other explanations are also possible.³⁹ Nevertheless, it is not implausible that the place-name Pepper Hill derives from Pedmore's founding father — especially in view of the evidence (section 2.3) that Pedmore's lands extended to Pepper Hill in the mid-tenth century.

4. A Pagan Boundary Burial and Christian Chapel on Hanbury / Pepper Hill?

So far we have discussed a number of interesting, but seemingly unconnected topics relating to the historical setting of Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill. But we now need to draw them all together in an attempt to make sense of them. The following hypothesis has not been verified archaeologically and, in view of modern development in the area, archaeological proof may never be found. However, what follows is consistent with all of the evidence we have and it provides an explanation for the three enigmatic place-names: *Yeanebarrowe Hill*, Pepper Hill and *Catherwell*, as well as perhaps the name Hanbury Hill itself.

A relationship between territorial boundaries and burial sites has been suspected for over fifty years,⁴⁰ and it has subsequently become apparent that, in many English counties, a statistically significant number of sixth- and seventh-century burials had been placed on such boundaries,⁴¹ i.e. on what we might now term township boundaries. This practice may have been an integral part of boundary formation, perhaps a way for the deceased's descendants to signal their right to occupy a territory.⁴²

Could it be that *Pypba*, the head of the family or clan that founded Pedmore, was buried in a barrow on Pepper Hill, thereby establishing a territorial boundary to separate Pedmore's land from that of Bedcote to the north? The hypothesised location of this barrow, which overlooks the Hagley Road salt-way and a (possibly) well-used spring, is consistent with observations in south-west England that some seventh-century boundary burials seem to have been intentionally conspicuous, i.e. placed in prominent (often elevated) locations near important roads.⁴³ Presumably this was a way for the family of the deceased to advertise their territorial claim as widely as possible.

The presence of *Pypba's* burial mound on the high ground here might account for the place-names Pepper Hill and *Yeanebarrowe Hill*. Even the place-name Hanbury Hill might be explained by this hypothesis: as we have seen, Hanbury could, perhaps, derive from OE *hān* '(boundary) stone' + *beorg*, 'a hill or mound, circular in plan'.

Moreover, it could also explain the nearby place-name *Catherwell*. *Pypba's* hypothetical barrow on Hanbury / Pepper Hill may have served as more than just a boundary marker. A celebrated folk-memorial would have, most likely, become a local assembly site, perhaps one of some ritual or spiritual significance.⁴⁴ There is little doubt that paganism was practiced in many parts of the west midlands area during this period,⁴⁵ and pagan rituals may have continued at the hypothetical *Pypba's* barrow for several generations, before being gradually supplanted by Christian practices during the

seventh and early eighth centuries. It was quite common, at that time, for new places of Christian worship to be built on, or within, former pagan sites. This practice not only obliterated monuments to the pagan religion, it also allowed the new Christian churches to benefit from a ready-made congregation. Indeed, Pope Gregory promoted the appropriation of pagan sites in the early seventh century so that locals could continue to visit the spiritual places to which they had become accustomed.⁴⁶

A hill-top church's dedication to either St Michael or St Catherine may be indicative of previous pagan worship, something which is also often indicated by proximity to significant wells or springs.⁴⁷ It does not seem unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that such a church (or perhaps a small chapel or preaching cross) established near a pagan burial mound (barrow) and a well-known spring might account for the place-name *Catherwell*, i.e. 'St Catherine's Well'. St Catherine's church or preaching cross must have fallen into disuse in antiquity as there is no documentary record of such a place ever existing. However, many early chapels and religious sites are known to have been abandoned after a proliferation in church building during the tenth century.⁴⁸ St Catherine's may have been one of them. The only indication of a Christian site which remains in the vicinity today is the place-name *Catherwell* 'St Catherine's Well' on the eastern flank of Hanbury / Pepper Hill.

5. Concluding Summary

Though it cannot be established beyond doubt, there is circumstantial place-name, charter and cartographic evidence to suggest that the sandstone hill-spur upon which Hanbury Hill and Pepper Hill stand was, in the seventh century, a burial site, perhaps that of *Pypba*, the founder of Pedmore. His burial mound, or barrow, would have marked the then northern limit of Pedmore's lands, serving to separate them from the township of Bedcote.

Some time in the late tenth or eleventh century a new manor of Oldswinford was created from the townships of Bedcote, Lye, Foxcote, Wollaston, Wollescote and a tract of Pedmore's lands which abutted Bedcote, thereby pushing the Pedmore boundary about 900m further south. However, the boundary line on Pepper / Hanbury Hill survived successively as the Bedcote township boundary, then the boundary of Bedcote sub-manor (which later became the sub-manor of Bedcote and Stourbridge) and, more latterly, the boundary of the Civil Parish of Stourbridge.

In the seventh century, *Pypba*'s burial mound would probably have served as an assembly site or focus for pagan worship. With the gradual acceptance of Christianity in the area over the next few generations, this pagan site may have been supplanted by a small church, chapel or preaching cross dedicated to St Catherine. A nearby spring (which probably held some significance in the pagan religion and may have contributed to the selection of this spot for *Pypba*'s burial) seems subsequently to have been named after the Christian site of St Catherine's. The spring's name, perpetuated in the place-name *Catherwell*, eventually came to be applied to a medieval open/common field, a post-medieval meadow, a close, a large nineteenth century house and its grounds, a row of terraced houses in Hagley Road, and a steam-powered saw-mill. In addition to explaining the name *Catherwell*, this scenario also offers a possible foundation for the place-names Pepper Hill and Hanbury Hill, as well as Hanbury Hill's earlier name, *Yearnebarrowe Hill*.

The only thing missing from this story is proof! But if a future archaeologist or builder, or a local resident, were to come across seventh-century bones or Anglo-Saxon grave-goods in the vicinity of Old Swinford Hospital School, perhaps the first explanation they should consider is that they had found the seventh-century burial site of Pedmore's founding father.

Notes

1. The place-name Oldswinford has, at various times in the manor's history, been spelled as either one or two words, the single-word form being the most common except during the seventeenth century (Perry, 2001: 11). Today the single word form is usual except in ecclesiastical contexts or where the two-word form has become incorporated into the name of an institution such as Old Swinford Hospital School.
2. British Geological Survey (2012).
3. Hemingway (2005–6).
4. Hemingway (2002a: 47–8).
5. *Clatterbatch* is a place-name associated with a short stretch of the river Stour just west of the railway viaduct at Stambermill. This part of the river seems to have been re-routed in antiquity, perhaps to create a mill leat. The name *Kowback* (which probably derives from an historical transcription error for *Rowback* or *Robache*) was used for a now-culverted minor stream which flowed from Pircote Grange (an area occupied, since the twentieth century, by Holcroft Road and Hatfield Road) to join Shepherds Brook near the junction of Hardwicke Road and Bredon Avenue. Regrettably, the the historical name *Kowback* has, in modern times, been misattributed by Dudley Council's Historic Environment Team to the brook which runs through Oldswinford (tentatively referred to as 'Swinford Brook' in this article). That error has since found its way into online map databases and Google Maps, a situation which is very difficult to rectify (James 2016: 5-7).
6. Perry (2001: 27).
7. Wood (1837).
8. Hooke (1990: 166).
9. Hooke (1990: 162).
10. James (2014: 121–40).
11. James (2017: 33, Fig.7).
12. Morris (1976: 246a,b).
13. Ashwood was transferred out of Kingswinford to become part of Kinver parish in 1935. At that date all three of these land units were within Staffordshire but, in 1974, Kingswinford became part of the West Midlands; Kinver, including Ashwood, remained in Staffordshire.
14. James (2017: 38–40).
15. Mawer and Stenton (1927: 309–10).
16. Perry (2001: 12).
17. Hemingway (2002b: 29–30).
18. Smith (1956: 54).
19. The place-name *Catherwell* survived until the twentieth century. The earliest reference we have is to *Catherwell Field*, a medieval open or common field belonging to the sub-manor of Bedcote and Stourbridge in 1539 (Perry 2001: 31). This lay between Worcester Street (formerly Heath Road) and Hagley Road (formerly Hagley Street) and was said to be 'bordering upon a quarry', most likely the quarry at the foot of Hanbury Hill. Another reference occurs in 1634 to 'a parcel of land' named *Catherwell*, in the vicinity of Old Swinford Hospital School (Perry, 2001: 164); and, by the eighteenth century, areas called *Catherwell Meadow* and *Catherwell Close* were shown nearby on the Oldswinford enclosures map (Court and Blackden 1782). A *Catherwell House* appears on an early nineteenth century map of the town (Wood 1837) and on the 25-inch OS map of 1902 (Ordnance Survey 1902); and the 6-inch OS map of 1888 (Ordnance Survey 1888) depicts a *Catherwell Saw-Mill* in Prospect Road and a *Catherwell Terrace* just opposite in Hagley Road.
20. Perry (2001: 31).
21. In the nineteenth century, the northern end of Market Street was known as *The Rye Market*, and the southern end *Church Row* (Wood 1837).
22. Perry (2001: 31).
23. This was probably not a working quarry at that time (i.e. c. 950 AD). If it had been functional, the charter perambulation would probably have referred to the quarry as *stangedelfe* 'stone quarry' (as it did for another place in the perambulation) rather than using the term *stancofan* 'stone coves or stone chamber' (James 2017: 20–3).
24. Bedcote may have possessed a manor house, but it has never been found. If one did exist, it probably lay near the site of the nineteenth-century Parkfield House (roughly where the gardens of numbers 123–129

Parkfield Road are today). Indeed, several old roads and tracks seem to radiate from this location (Ordnance Survey Unpublished Surveyor's Drawing 1814; Ordnance Survey 1888). Moreover Court and Blackden (1782) shows an irregularity in the field boundary here as though it once circumvented something of importance. The same map also depicts nearby fields possessing names (*Park Piece, Coneygre Hill*) that are indicative of high-status medieval land use.

25. Perry (2001: 17).
26. The boundary of Bedcote sub-manor (which later became known as 'Bedcote and Stourbridge' and then just 'Stourbridge') can be reconstructed at different dates from a number of historical documents. The latter's boundary can be inferred from a late-seventeenth-century map of Oldswinford parish (Bach 1699) and this is almost identical to the 1866 boundary of Stourbridge Civil Parish depicted on nineteenth-century OS maps (e.g. Ordnance Survey 1888). A precise description of the sub-manor's extent was given during a court case in 1622; a transcription of the court proceedings, made by Bishop Charles Lyttleton in 1754, still survives (Chambers 1978: 31–9). Again, there is very little difference from the boundary lines of 1699 and 1866 except for an additional projection that extended from Hungary Hill towards Lye. The projection may be the stub left when Bedcote sub-manor was cleaved from an earlier, larger land unit referenced as *Bettecote and Foxcote* in 1290. This reference occurs in a *Finalis Concordia*, a legal document, detailing the conveyance of a single messuage and 1/3 carucate of land to a gentleman named Geoffrey de Kynesdele (Perry 2001: 15). Chambers (1978: 40) interprets this reference to *Bettecote & Foxcote* as evidence that the lands belonging to these settlements were contiguous in the late thirteenth century — i.e. that a tract of land must have stretched between these two settlement centres (perhaps including Lye and Wollescote) and that this tract was known (at least locally) as *Bettecote & Foxcote*. Though its status is unknown, it was obviously a clearly identifiable land unit and of sufficient relevance in 1290 to be referenced in an important legal document. *Bettecote and Foxcote* may have been what remained of Burhelm's c. 950 'small estate' after the surrounding region had been reapportioned into the manors of Oldswinford, Pedmore, Hagley and Clent during the late Anglo-Saxon period (James 2017a: 41–2, Fig. 11).
27. James (2017b: 8) discusses the relationship between township and ancient-parish boundaries. A brief overview of the mechanisms behind parish formation can be found in James (2017b: 15).
28. James, K. (2017a: 20–3; 33).
29. James (2017a: 30–40).
30. James (2017a: 22–3).
31. Haden (1988: 156–7).
32. Gelling and Cole (2014: 145–152).
33. Wood (1837).
34. Yarnborough Hill is now the name of a 1960s residential estate road near Oldswinford (Haden 2003: 157, 386), but this is simply an example of modern place-name transference and bears no relation to the ancient landscape.
35. Perry (2001: 40).
36. Smith (1956: 144).
37. Mawer and Stenton (1929: 305–6).
38. Zaluckyj (2001: 23).
39. Haden (2003: 258).
40. Bonney (1966: 25–30).
41. Goodier (1984: 1–21) has found a statistically significant correlation between the distribution of Anglo-Saxon pagan burials and parish boundaries (parts of which, in many instances, are believed to derive from earlier estate and township boundaries). Additionally, in a study of east Kent, Brooks (2007: 143–153) also tentatively suggests that 'funerary monuments were used to visibly differentiate community territories from as early as the sixth and seventh centuries'.
42. According to Van de Noort (1993: 71–2) local élites in England (presumably people such as Pedmore's Pypba and his successors) 'expressed a clear preference for [burial in] barrows, either isolated ... or in groups'; and suggests that such barrows 'would have created a clear link between the successors of the deceased and their land...as ties to the ancestors were made visible'.
43. Turner (2006: 131–8).
44. See, for example, Williams (2011: 252–4).
45. Anglo-Saxon charters for estates in the vicinity of Wolverley, Hartlebury and Chaddesley include place-names containing the OE element *h/āw* 'hill, tumulus' which tend to be associated with pagan burials (Hooke

1985: 43). Additionally, Wednesbury and Wednesfield get their names from the Anglo-Saxon god *Woden* (i.e. *Woden's* fortification and *Woden's* field, respectively); Tysoe means *Tiw's hōh* or '*Tiw's* hill spur'; and Weeford (near Sutton Coldfield) and Weoley (south of Birmingham) come from OE *wēoh* 'a heathen shrine' (Hooke 1985: 40). It is thought most likely that these place-names represent the survival of isolated pockets of paganism in the region for some decades after the Mercian conversion to Christianity in the second half of the seventh century. James (2017c: 17–8) discusses these topics more fully.

46. Aston (1985: 50).

47. Aston (1985: 50).

48. James (2017b: 15).

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