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The Swinford Charter (S 579): A More Complex Origin for Oldswinford?

By KEVIN JAMES

Summary

A late Anglo-Saxon grant issued, ostensibly, by King Eadred is described in a charter of AD 951x959 (S 579). This represents an estate in the vicinity of Stourbridge and Oldswinford, both of which lay in north Worcestershire until 1974.

At least four separate researchers have published their own interpretations of the charter's boundary clause. Some have attempted to follow the outline of the ancient parish of Oldswinford, which straddled the Worcestershire–Staffordshire boundary until the nineteenth century. This approach has met with success in places, but elsewhere the resulting boundary line and waypoint distribution are less than convincing. Moreover, every researcher has encountered significant difficulties in identifying waypoints along the charter estate's southern edge, regardless of whether the parish boundary is followed.

Because the correspondence between parish and charter bounds seems questionable, the present study disregards the parish boundary and, instead, attempts to trace the charter's boundary clause on the basis of landscape and place-name evidence alone. Several new waypoint identifications are proposed; and these result in a continuous and logically explainable boundary route that deviates significantly from the pattern of later parish boundaries.

This new interpretation suggests that the settlement centre and cultivated lands of what is now Oldswinford village were excluded from the grant; and in this respect it is difficult to regard the charter estate as being the direct forerunner of Oldswinford manor and parish. The area omitted suggests that the cultivated fields around Oldswinford settlement extended to no more than about 150 acres in the mid tenth century.

Introduction

The Swinford charter (S 579) represents the grant of a parcel of land, by King Eadred (or, arguably, Eadwig or Edgar¹) to his minister Burhelm in AD 951x959. This estate was carved out of a larger area called Swinford, which appears to have encompassed the present-day centres of Kingswinford, Amblecote, Wollaston, Stourbridge, Lye, Wollescote, Oldswinford, Norton and perhaps parts of Pedmore and Cradley (Fig. 1).

The bounds of the land conveyed to Burhelm are described in the charter's boundary clause by means of twenty-eight waypoints or landmarks. It is agreed by most researchers that the course of the boundary *partially* matches the outline of the ancient parish of Oldswinford. However, there are differing views on the degree of correspondence between the two and, consequently, on whether the charter takes in any part of the neighbouring estates and parishes as well.

Relationship to local land units and boundaries

The charter estate seems to have resided wholly within Worcestershire – although it is not entirely clear which of these land units was established first, and it may be that the charter antedates the county.

In the vicinity of Swinford, the county boundary followed the course of the River Stour (until 1974), thereby dividing Oldswinford parish between Worcestershire and Staffordshire. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the southern part of the parish (which seems to have been coextensive with

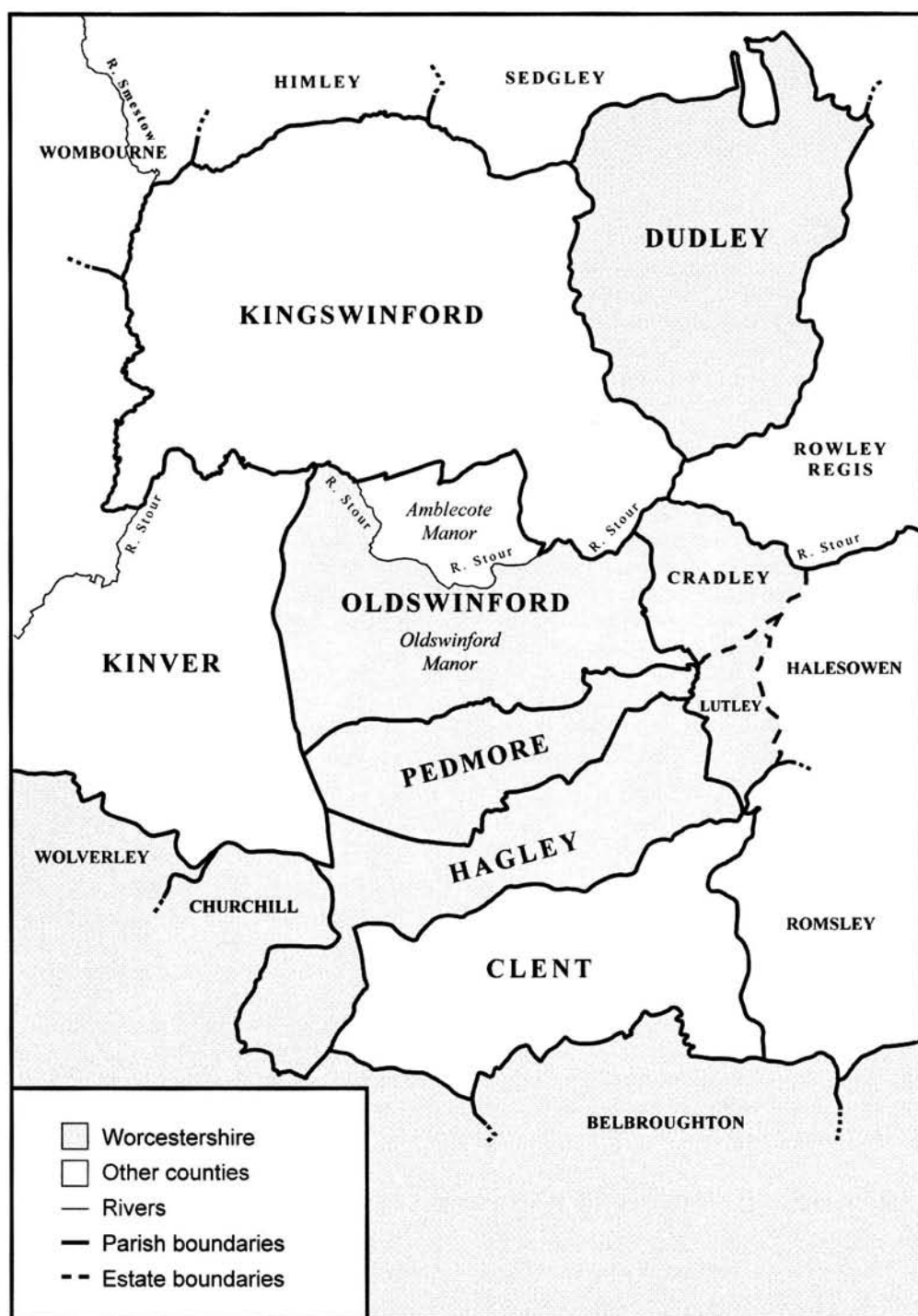


Fig. 1 Nineteenth-century boundaries of ancient parishes and estates in the vicinity of the tenth-century Swinford

Oldswinford manor²) lay in Worcestershire while the northern part (Amblecote manor) resided in Staffordshire. Despite its division between shires, the whole of Oldswinford parish belonged to the Worcester diocese, the northern limit of which seems to have corresponded broadly to that of Worcestershire and may have followed the northern boundary of Hwiccan territory³. P.W. King proposed that Hwiccan lands and the early diocese might have extended north-west to include Kinver, Kingswinford, and Dudley.⁴ While this has not been corroborated by independent evidence, Kingswinford's pre-charter unity with Oldswinford, as well as its Domesday links with Clent and Tardebigge, do suggest an early association with this territory.

The regularity apparent in the local boundary pattern (Fig. 1) seems to indicate a degree of planning in the layout of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley manors and parishes, as well as the estates that made up Cradley and Lutley (both formerly in Halesowen parish). The shape and fairly uniform size of the parishes; the continuity of the southern boundaries of Oldswinford parish and Cradley, and the continuity of the eastern and western boundaries of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley parishes are all suggestive of planned land allocation rather than piecemeal evolution. Indeed, the division of Oldnall, Foxcote and Wychbury hill fort between the local estates and parishes might represent a distribution of resources, which could be further evidence of planned and authoritative apportionment of land.

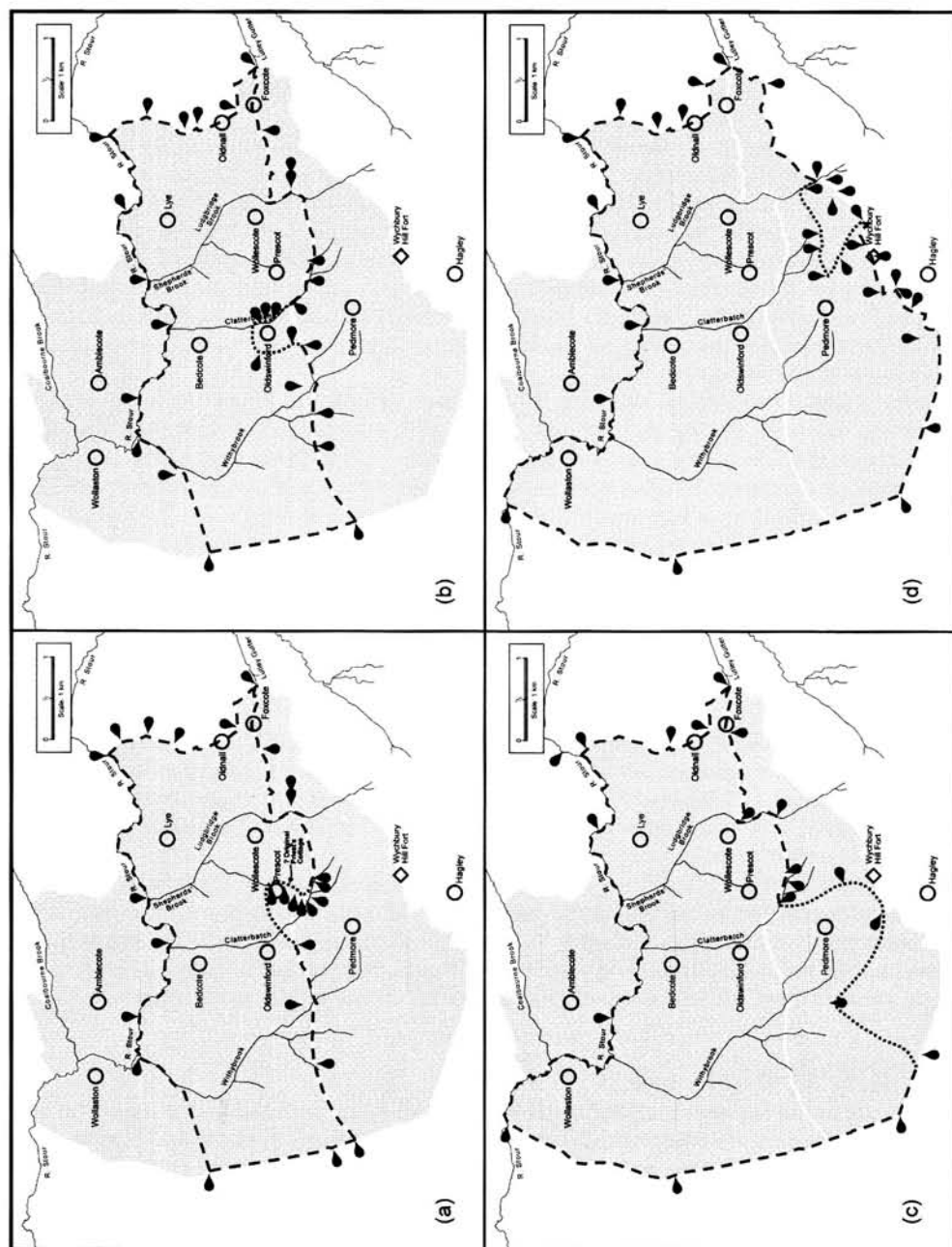
Oldswinford parish (or, at least, the form of the parish depicted in Fig. 1) seems to postdate the charter. An eleventh century or later date for the parish is consistent with the chronology implied by events that followed the death of King Ethelred in 1016. Those parts of the pre-charter Swinford north of the Stour that had been retained by the crown (i.e. Kingswinford, probably including Amblecote) were seized – together with Clent (including Broome) and Tardegigge – by Ævic, Sheriff of Staffordshire, from Ægelsius (or Æthelsige⁵), the Dean of Worcester. As a result, Kingswinford, Clent and Tardebigge eventually became parts of Staffordshire. When Hemming of Worcester recorded these events in c1095, he did not mention Amblecote explicitly. But as Amblecote became part of Staffordshire at an early (though undocumented) date, it is conceivable that it was amongst the lands seized by Ævic – perhaps being, at that time, an integral part of Kingswinford. Presumably the manor of Amblecote was then carved out of Kingswinford some time after 1016. Despite the 1016 seizure, Amblecote remained in the Worcester diocese, as did Clent and Tardebigge. Indeed, the manor of Amblecote has resided within Oldswinford parish (part of the Worcester diocese) for most, if not all, of its history; and this raises the interesting question of whether the postulated division of Amblecote from Kingswinford was linked to the foundation of Oldswinford parish. If it was, that would almost certainly put the date of Amblecote's integration into Oldswinford parish at some time after 1016.

Notwithstanding this evidence, the origin of the local parishes is uncertain – both in terms of their exact dates and the mechanisms of their formation. It has been supposed by previous investigators⁶ that the charter estate represents a precursor of Oldswinford manor and parish. The similarity, or otherwise, of their respective bounds is informative in that respect, and a detailed study of the charter's boundary clause may aid our understanding of the beginnings of these land units.

Previous studies

G.B. Grundy, R.L. Chambers, D. Hooke and J. Pritchard have each published interpretations of the Old English (OE) boundary clause⁷, and two of these authors (Grundy and Hooke) have provided somewhat different translations into modern English. Fig. 2 summarises the boundaries and waypoint distributions proposed by these researchers.

The boundary route envisaged by Grundy (Fig. 2(a)) presents two difficulties. Firstly, the north-western stretch of the boundary excludes Wollaston from the charter estate; yet in all probability, the perfectly straight line on which Grundy says the relevant waypoints lie was established many centuries after the charter, and possibly even as late as 1780.⁸ (This boundary line was subsequently chosen to separate the modern parishes of Upper Swinford and Wollaston when



the ancient parish of Oldswinford was divided into smaller units during the nineteenth century). Chambers expressed similar reservations⁹, but despite them he followed Grundy's north-west route, omitting Wollaston.

The second difficulty with Grundy's interpretation is the unfeasibly close grouping of waypoints near the middle of the southern boundary. It seems that, having recognised the correspondence between a few of the charter's waypoints and the Oldswinford parish boundary (or nineteenth-century subdivisions thereof), Dr Grundy presumed that the charter represented a template for that part of Oldswinford parish lying south of the Stour. However, difficulties in matching three key waypoints to the parish boundary caused him to conclude that there had probably been "some modification in the By. [boundary]" along its southern edge.

Chambers¹⁰ believed that this was "a good deal of understatement of the truth". In an attempt to address this difficulty he tentatively suggested a short detour from Grundy's route. This took him briefly northwards along the Clatterbatch (brook) to exclude a fraction of Oldswinford settlement from the estate. Fig. 2(b) illustrates the boundary suggested by Chambers, which he based largely upon Grundy's observations. Note, again, an unfeasibly close grouping of waypoints near the settlement of Oldswinford, which suggests that Chambers' detour may be too short in extent. Indeed, Chambers noted significant uncertainties in this part of the boundary.

Hooke provided new translations of some elements of the boundary clause as well as several key waypoint identifications.¹¹ These led her to propose a new course for the southern boundary (Fig. 2(c)) which turned south towards Wychbury Hill and Pedmore. By including part of Pedmore parish in the charter estate, Dr Hooke suggested that this might help to overcome a discrepancy between the manse and hideage assessments quoted, respectively, in the charter and in the 1086 Domesday survey.

Perhaps partly because of this discrepancy, Pritchard favoured a boundary that takes in almost the whole of Pedmore and Oldswinford parishes south of the Stour (Fig. 2(d)).¹² In spite of this, she still encountered significant difficulties in matching the charter's boundary clause to the Pedmore parish boundary in the middle of its southern edge.

As these investigators have shown, it is possible to find plausible candidates for some of the charter's waypoints near to the Oldswinford or Pedmore parish boundaries, but attempting to fit *all* of the waypoints into a coherent parish-based pattern produces a less-than-convincing result. The charter estate's southern edge is the most problematic in this respect, and all researchers have reported difficulties identifying key landmarks in this region.

A new interpretation of the boundary clause

Because of the problems that previous investigators have encountered in matching the charter to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century parish boundaries, it is sensible to question whether the bounds of the charter estate really were the direct precursor of the local manor and parish boundaries, or whether the pattern of local parishes resulted from some later (possibly planned) revision of estate boundaries.

For this reason, the following interpretation of the charter bounds makes no attempt to adhere to parish boundary lines (except where such a correspondence is virtually beyond doubt) and is, instead, based solely upon the match between the charter's boundary clause and probable elements of the Anglo-Saxon landscape.

Fig. 3 depicts the topography and watercourses of the area together with likely Anglo-Saxon settlement sites and roads. Altitude is denoted by the lightness of background tone, the height range depicted in this figure being approximately 165 m. The principal east-west (Kinver-Halesowen) route is shown, as is the ancient north-south salt-way (along the line of the modern A491), which appears to date back to the Iron Age or earlier. The figure also shows other tracks that might have existed, in some form, at the time of the charter. It is important to note that the roads shown are based upon the assumption that their courses had persisted with little change until they were



Fig. 3 Topography, watercourses and conjectural road and settlement pattern around Oldswinford in the tenth century

mapped in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,¹³ which clearly might not be an entirely valid supposition.

Of equal relevance would have been the contours, streams and areas of marsh-land represented in Fig. 3. These would have strongly influenced the early pattern of land use and settlement as well as the course of the charter estate's boundary; and for this reason, careful scrutiny of these features is potentially useful in matching the landscape to the waypoints of the boundary clause.

The new boundary proposals are illustrated in Fig. 4, which is plotted on the Ordnance Survey (OS) County Series 6-inch map of 1888. The charter's waypoints are numbered according to the scheme used by Hooke¹⁴, which differs slightly from the numbering schemes used by some other researchers. Several relevant landscape features and field names from other maps and documentary sources¹⁵ have also been transcribed onto Fig. 4.

The charter estate's southern boundary differs markedly from the Oldswinford and Pedmore parish boundaries. Indeed, they coincide over only relatively short segments: primarily along major geographical features and pre-existing dykes where boundary reuse is, perhaps, to be expected.

Fig. 4 shows two possible routes for the eastern boundary: one which follows the western arm of the Salt Brook and the parish boundary, and one that deviates along the Salt Brook's *eastern* arm into Cradley to encompass most of Oldnall hill.

The southern boundary illustrated in Fig. 4 is also somewhat different from previous interpretations. It encompasses much of the (later) Oldswinford and Pedmore parishes, while excluding their settlement centres and agricultural land. This is certainly at odds with the presumption that the charter estate and Oldswinford parish are coincident and coextensive, yet it does possess a degree of self consistency; fits the landscape evidence well; provides a plausible solution to the difficulties encountered by previous investigators¹⁶, and circumvents the apparent need to accommodate seven waypoints within just a ¾ mile stretch of the parish boundary.

The proposed boundary route and waypoint identifications are outlined in the following subsections. Modern English translations are listed for most of these waypoints¹⁷, although a few of the original OE terms have been retained (and italicised) where translation is less certain. The original (OE) form of the boundary clause, as well as further detail of the proposed boundary route, may be found online.¹⁸

The northern boundary

1. First to Swine Ford
2. from Swine Ford to Pecg's Ford
3. from Pecg's Ford to (the) robbers' ford (or deep ford)
4. from (the) robbers' ford (or deep ford) to *deonflinc* ford
5. from *deonflinc* ford to (the) hollow batch (incised streamlet)

The river Stour clearly delineates the northern edge of the charter estate. The boundary perambulation begins at the Swine Ford. This was probably located near to the crossing point of the A491 Stourbridge-to-Kingswinford road (SO 900848), which linked the ancient centres of Worcester and Droitwich to Penkridge and Stafford, although there is an alternative argument¹⁹ for a starting point north-east of the present-day Apley Road (at SO 895854).

It is not known precisely where the next three waypoints – Pecg's Ford, robbers' (or deep) ford, and *deonflinc* ford – were located, but it is likely that they were sited near to where roads bridge the Stour today: i.e. Stamford Road (north of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Bedcote) at SO 907844; Bagley Street at SO 913847, and the A4036 Dudley Road at Lye SO 922849.

The northern boundary concludes at waypoint 5, the hollow batch, which almost certainly refers to the confluence of the Salt Brook with the Stour (SO 931852).

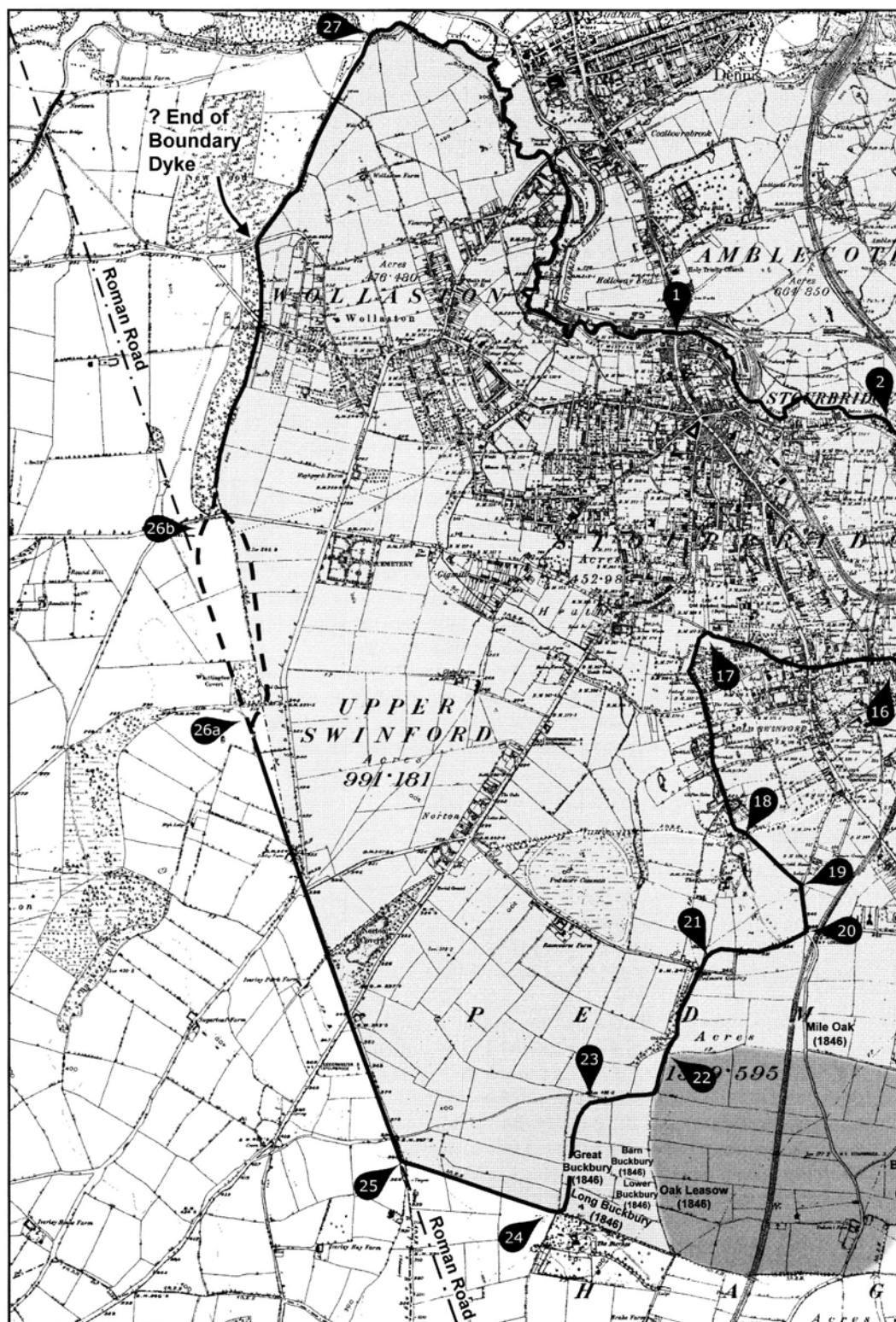


Fig. 4 Proposed extent of the Swinford charter estate

The eastern boundary

6. from the hollow batch to the earth bridge (or causeway)
7. from the earth bridge to (the) *tigwellan* (tile or potsherd spring)
8. then thus to Ymma's holly
9. from Ymma's holly to Cuda's valley
10. from Cuda's valley to the dyke above Foxcote

The charter estate's eastern boundary begins at the Salt Brook, which also marked the north-eastern limit of Oldswinford parish. From this point, previous researchers have followed the parish boundary, which lies along the western arm of the Salt Brook, southwards until the former intersects the head of Lutley Gutter at SO 939834. Whilst there is some place-name evidence to support this route, an alternative, following the Salt Brook's more substantial eastern arm, is also possible. Landscape and place name evidence supports both routes equally (for the reasons already stated the present analysis regards the parish boundary as having no evidential value). Hereafter, the route along the Salt Brook's western arm is designated as route A, with the corresponding waypoint markers labelled 6a, 7a etc., whilst the B designation refers to the alternative (conjectural) route along the Salt Brook's eastern arm.

The earth bridge (waypoint 6) was probably sited somewhere along the main Lye-to-Halesowen road. This crosses both arms of the Salt Brook: at SO 931844 (marker 6a on Fig. 4) and at SO 938846 (marker 6b). Although the exact location of this road's tenth-century incarnation is not known, it is likely, given the local topography (Fig. 3), that it ran close to the line of the present road. An alternative site for waypoint 6a exists a little way to the north of the position marked on Fig. 4 where there is a narrowing of the stream valley (SO 932848).²⁰

Waypoint 7, the *tigwellan* or tile spring, suggests tile-making may have taken place at, or near, this landmark. It could have been located at the head of either arm of the Salt Brook: SO 932843 (marker 7a) or SO 941843 (marker 7b). As pointed out by Hooke²¹ a boundary perambulation of Oldswinford parish recorded in 1733²² notes a Well Leasow just a few tens of metres south of marker 7a. The Moors, a field name recorded on the 1843 Tithe Map of Cradley²³, also indicates a watery site in this vicinity. The principal evidence for the alternative route (via marker 7b) is a spring shown on the 6-inch OS map of 1888²⁴. The geology around both markers is compatible with tile and brick making: marls, sandstone, fireclay, glacial sand deposits and a thick coal seam are all present nearby²⁵.

The location of Ymma's holly (waypoint 8) is not known. As holly trees are fairly transient entities in the landscape, and there is no other documentary evidence to help, the positioning of markers 8a and 8b on Fig. 4 is purely speculative, as is the course of the boundary between markers 8b and 9.

It is probable that waypoint 9, Cuda's valley, represents the stream valley now named Lutley Gutter. It is not clear how far along the valley this waypoint might have been. Near to the parish boundary (SO 939834) the land is flatter and the stream is more akin to, what has been termed elsewhere in the charter, a hollow batch (OE: *holan bæce*) rather than a valley (OE: *dene*). This implies the waypoint could have been some distance to the east where Lutley Gutter is deeper and more valley-like.

To reach "the dyke above Foxcote" referred to in waypoint 10, most previous investigators have turned west at Lutley Gutter to follow the Oldswinford–Pedmore parish boundary. This decision seems puzzling if one takes this waypoint's translation literally: the land does not rise significantly to the west. The only nearby land that is appreciably higher than Foxcote is to the south, lying along the eastern end of the Pedmore–Hagley parish boundary. Field boundaries still run east to west along the ridge of high ground here (SO 933829), extending towards Hodge Hill and then south-west towards Hodge Hole Dingle (SO 926823).

The southern boundary

11. along (the) dyke to the brook
12. to the stone-digging
13. from the stone-digging by the eaves (of a wood) (or by the hill-foot) to Welshmen's croft
14. from Welshmen's croft to the southern hollow batch
15. along the batch to below *eostacote*
16. along the dyke to Grendel's mere (or the pond of the gravelly stream or Green Lea Pond)
17. from Grendel's mere to (the) stone chamber (or stone coves)
18. from (the) stone chamber along (the) hill to *stiran* (?sturgesons') mere
19. from *stiran* mere to the street (paved road)
20. along (the) street to the posts
21. from the post to wind edge (or wind bank)
22. from wind edge to oak *lēah* (wood)
23. from oak *lēah* to *lusedune* (louse, or small, hill or down)
24. from *lusedune* to (?)Sica's fortification
25. from (?)Sica's fortification to the street

The southern boundary of the charter's estate has engendered the greatest disagreement in the literature. Its middle section is certainly the most problematic part of the boundary clause. The solution suggested here follows a sequence of waypoints around the settlement of Oldswinford, thereby excluding it and (probably all of) its cultivated land from the charter estate.

It is likely that the brook referred to in waypoint 11 is the one running through Hodge Hole Dingle at SO 926823 (marker 11a), although a lesser brook lying some 650m to the north-east and fed by a spring at SO 929829 (marker 11b) is another possibility. Whichever of these is the correct location of waypoint 11 it seems likely that waypoint 12, the stone-digging, lay near to Hodge Hole Dingle at SO 925826. Outcrops of red marls and sandstones lie close to the surface on the hillside west of the brook here. A field named Quarry Field is depicted on the 1846 Pedmore Tithe Map²⁶ at this point and stones (perhaps waste from the quarrying process) still litter the ground today.

Either the eaves (edge) of a wood or a hill-foot delineated the course of the charter estate's boundary between waypoints 12 and 13.²⁷ Only the lower slopes of Wychbury hill's north-east face could possibly represent the hill-foot in question. However, the terrain slopes continuously here and there is no *well-defined* hill-foot, which leaves just the alternative translation of waypoint 13: "by the eaves (of a wood)..." If this is correct, it suggests that the area between Wychbury hill and Hodge Hole Dingle was wooded (at least partially) at the time of the charter. The western end of this boundary segment (i.e. waypoint 13) lies at a field labelled Wall Croft on the 1846 Tithe Map of Pedmore²⁸ (SO 918823). The name of this field probably derives from Welshmen's croft (OE: *walacrofte*) in the boundary clause; and in 1846 it was accompanied by adjacent fields, Upper and Lower Wall Ridding, whose names almost certainly share the same derivation (*rydding* being a clearing in woodland, an assart).

A probably related field, labelled Wallcroft on Bach's 1699 plan of Oldswinford parish²⁹, is located a few hundred metres to the north at SO 916828. Most previous researchers have assumed that this field, rather than Pedmore's Wall Croft field, is the one referred to in the charter, presumably because it lies close to the parish boundary; and this may have contributed to the difficulties they encountered in matching subsequent waypoints to the landscape.

Both arms of the Clatterbatch (brook) began near Pedmore's Wall Croft field. It seems that waypoint 14 refers to this brook's southern arm (i.e. "the southern hollow batch") at SO 917824. The somewhat different routes proposed by previous researchers leave only one brook available at this point in the boundary clause, yet the use of the word southern (OE: *sudēran*) in the charter implies a need to differentiate between at least *two* brooks in the vicinity.

The charter estate's boundary clearly follows the southern hollow batch northwest to a location specified as "below *eostacote*".

Grundy³⁰ states that *eostacote* has no meaning, and he interpreted this word as a misspelling of *Preosta Cote*, meaning priest's cottage. It does, however, seem an unlikely mistake to make: omission of a vowel or consonants from the middle of the word might be explicable, but it is harder to believe that a scribe would accidentally omit the initial consonants of a word.

If the intention really was to refer to a priest's cottage, Grundy suggests that this might have been located at the top of Chawn Hill, near to the site of the later Prescott House. Until it was demolished in 1965, Prescott House stood at the junction of Chawn Hill and the A4036 Grange Lane (SO 914833). The location is named Prescott on a plan of 1827³¹, but it is not named on earlier³² plans. The distance of Prescott House from the Clatterbatch (about 500m) led Grundy to suggest that the supposed *Preosta Cote* might have existed somewhere on Doctors Hill (near SO 912831) rather than on Chawn Hill.

Another possibility is that the word *eostacote* is related to *Eostre*, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, though this derivation seems a little unlikely. Pritchard refers to a more plausible interpretation of *eostacote* as meaning East Cottage.³³ This would again represent a misspelling, though of a more likely kind. If this interpretation is correct, East Cottage might have been located near to the eastern edge of Oldswinford settlement – probably south of Chawn Hill – and perhaps near the site of Ham Farm shown on the 6-inch OS map of 1888³⁴ (SO 914829).

Whichever location we assume here for *eostacote*, we would have to depart from the Clatterbatch at some point adjacent to the section of Ham Lane (today called Old Ham Lane) that runs east to west. Hooke³⁵ turns south after waypoint 15, but by proceeding southwards it is very difficult to make subsequent waypoints fit the landscape, and many of the potential southerly routes divide Pedmore settlement or its agricultural land in two. However, a route north around the settlement and fields of Oldswinford seems more promising.

Waypoint 16 refers to a dyke leading towards Grendel's mere (or Green Lea Pond).³⁶ It is not known with certainty where this dyke ran, but Bach's 1699 plan³⁷ shows a long (650m) curved boundary that starts just north of Ham Farm (near the southern end of the present-day Shaftesbury Avenue at SO 914830). This feature terminates the adjoining field boundaries and is considerably longer and more continuous than the latter – possibly indicating a greater age. It is conceivable that it represents the dyke referred to in the charter (or perhaps some artefact thereof). In 1699, the feature's northern end veered back towards the Clatterbatch (brook) near the present-day Church Road, Castle Grove and Stourbridge Junction railway station (SO 909833). The topography of the land here would have made it ideal for damming the brook to form large fish ponds; and indeed, one or more fish ponds existed in the area until the 1950s. It is suggested, therefore, that this location (or perhaps a short distance downstream, north of Brook Road) would be a good candidate for Grendel's mere (waypoint 16).

It is useful to consider the next two waypoints, 17 [From Grendel's mere to (the) stone chamber] and 18 [From (the) stone chamber along (the) hill to *stiran* mere] together.

It seems probable that the hill in waypoint 18 is, in fact, the twenty metre high escarpment of Triassic Lower Keuper sandstone³⁸ that runs south from Hanbury Hill (SO 901837), across Heath Lane (at SO 901835) and then along the line of Love Lane. At its southern end (SO 902827) there lay a notoriously watery site crossed by numerous minor streams (known as The Moor in 1733³⁹) and which still contains a large fish pond today. The pond is documented on Brettel and Davies' 1827 plan;⁴⁰ and, whilst it has clearly been enhanced by damming and small-scale quarrying, it is quite possible that a smaller pool existed in this location during the Anglo-Saxon period. If the present pool does not represent *stiran* mere, it seems highly plausible, because of the watery nature of the surrounding area, that *stiran* mere was located very close by.

Waypoint 18 describes this juxtaposition of linear escarpment and fishpond perfectly; and if that attribution is correct, it is likely that the terminus of the previous waypoint [17: from Grendel's mere to (the) stone chamber (or coves)] also lay somewhere along the line of the sandstone escarpment.

The boundary clause does not specify a route between waypoints 16 and 17, so we can infer that it was probably clear at the time, perhaps following an established road or track. The ancient Halesowen–Kinver road (i.e. Glasshouse Hill and Heath Lane) is an obvious candidate here. If this represents the correct course of the boundary, the stone chamber (or coves) must have been situated near the junction of Heath Lane and Love Lane (SO 901835), perhaps being hewn from the Keuper Sandstone escarpment in much the same way that similar Triassic sandstone outcrops have been worked at other local sites to produce the iron makers' caverns at Wolverley, the Wain House at Caunsall and Kinver's well-known Holy Austin Rock Houses.⁴¹

An alternative site for waypoint 17 exists a few hundred metres further north on, or near to, Hanbury Hill (SO 901837). Quarrying certainly took place in antiquity here, and this might have resulted in structures that could be termed "stone coves". The date of origin of the quarry works is unknown, but there is evidence for quarrying here prior to 1539.⁴² If this is the site of the stone chamber (or coves) we might infer that the quarry had become (temporarily) disused by the mid tenth century otherwise it would probably have been referred to as a "stone-digging" (OE: *stangdelfe*) in the boundary clause (cf. waypoint 12). There is also some tenuous place-name evidence to suggest that a prehistoric barrow – perhaps incorporating some form of stone chamber – might have existed upon Hanbury Hill.⁴³

In the configuration envisaged above, waypoints 16, 17 and 18 would probably be consistent with the charter estate excluding the entire settlement of Oldswinford. Even by 1699, Oldswinford's fields had extended little further west than the bottom of the Love Lane escarpment. More tellingly, Bach's 1699 plan provides clear evidence of medieval strip cultivation in the fields east of Love Lane (i.e. nearer to Oldswinford's centre), whereas most of the fields that had developed west of Love Lane showed no sign of strip farming and are more likely to be post-medieval in origin. It, therefore, seems probable that the proposed boundary line (waypoints 16 to 18) would have excluded most, if not all, of this settlement's cultivated land from the charter estate.

After *stiran* mere we come to waypoint 19, the street (OE: *strete*), which probably refers to the B4187 (formerly A450) Worcester Lane. The word *strete* in the boundary clause indicates a made road; and it seems plausible that if Worcester Lane was, in the tenth century, part of the main route from Oldswinford to Worcester (the diocesan and regional centre), it would have been sufficiently important to be surfaced in some way. The exact point at which the charter estate's boundary might have joined Worcester Lane is unknown, but it is likely to have been within about 100m of the location shown in Fig. 4 (SO 905825).

Once on Worcester Lane, we are directed along it to the posts. The nature and purpose of these posts is unknown and no evidence of their existence remains today, but if the interpretation of the subsequent waypoint (21) is correct, the post(s) would probably have been near the junction of Worcester Lane and what is today Racecourse Lane (SO 905823), or perhaps a few tens of metres further south where Worcester Lane would have forded a small stream that drained into the supposed *stiran* mere.⁴⁴

This location would have afforded access, probably via a rough track, to waypoint 21, wind edge (OE: *windofer*) which, it is proposed, occupied the site now known as Rock Mount (SO 902822). Hooke favours "flat topped ridge" or "tip of promontory" as the translation of *ofer*;⁴⁵ and the suggested location fits that description well. Rock Mount is a twenty metre high north-facing promontory that protrudes from the side of a sandstone escarpment near the junction of the present-day Ounty John Lane and Racecourse Lane. The promontory is, indeed, flat-topped; and it occupies a very exposed position: westerly winds blow almost unimpeded across the low-lying former heath- and moor-land to the west, and are then funnelled and intensified by the escarpment.

The next waypoint is oak *lēah* (OE: *acleg*). The word *lēah* relates to a wood. Its use in the charters might not always indicate the presence of contemporary woodland (e.g. *lēah* might have become incorporated into an early place name while land use had since changed), but where the word is compounded with a tree species it does seem to indicate the existence of a wood at the time

of the charter.⁴⁶ Oak lēah would probably have been managed woodland or wooded pasture, which would have been an important resource in the Anglo-Saxon period.

The 6-inch OS map of 1888 shows an Oakleigh House near to the Oldswinford–Pedmore parish boundary, and this has led some researchers to believe that it represents the location of oak lēah (waypoint 22).⁴⁷ However, this house was not built until around 1870.⁴⁸ As house names could sometimes be prone to a little fanciful invention (particularly during the Victorian era and thereafter), and no earlier reference to this name is known, it is doubtful whether Oakleigh House can be considered reliable evidence of the Anglo-Saxon landscape.

During the tenth century the region seems to have been extensively wooded.⁴⁹ Nineteenth-century maps suggest that oak woodland might have existed in antiquity south-east of Burys Hill: fields named Oak Leasow (SO 901812) and Barkers Oak (SO 909813) are shown a short distance north of the Pedmore–Hagley parish boundary.⁵⁰ It is not inconceivable that oak woodland extended between these fields and perhaps some way to the north and south as well. Some of the longer (and possibly older) field boundaries in the vicinity might even represent a fingerprint of the woodland's former extent, but in the absence of precise dates for the field boundaries this is merely conjecture.

If we suppose that, in the mid tenth century, the area of woodland extended northwards towards Ounty John Lane (as indicated by the dark tinted area on Fig. 4), the charter boundary would come into contact with the edge of the putative oak lēah (at SO899818) on its way to the next boundary marker. This is consistent with the wording of the charter's boundary clause.⁵¹ It does not indicate a route through or along the edge of the wood, but simply says "...to oak lēah", which probably implies that the boundary made contact with the wood at just one well-defined location.

From oak lēah, the boundary then extended to *ludune*. The *-dune* element of this name means hill or down, and the only feature in the vicinity that it might describe is Burys Hill, located near the southern end of Ounty John Lane (SO 897817). Relative to the already elevated landscape, Burys Hill is a low and shallow sided peak lying about 300 metres west of oak lēah. The OE word *lus* means louse, but it was occasionally used to describe something small or insignificant, particularly small hills and barrows.⁵² This adjective accurately describes Burys Hill and seems to be a more likely meaning than the literal interpretation of *lus*- assumed previously. Pritchard⁵³ also tentatively suggested that "lousy" might refer to land with a pig sty (after Field⁵⁴), which is consistent with the idea of the nearby oak lēah (waypoint 22) being a wooded pasture.

Most previous investigators⁵⁵ agree that a likely site for the next waypoint, (?)Sica's fortification, is on the high ground to the south of Burys Hill, near the fields named Great Buckbury, Barn Buckbury, Lower Buckbury and Long Buckbury on the 1846 Tithe map of Pedmore (SO 896812). The geography here would seem to make it a favourable location for a fortified farmstead or settlement. The land falls away steeply to the south, and this site also has access to a potential water supply: a stream valley begins a few metres away and eventually drains southwards into the pools of Brake Mill Farm.

Waypoint 25, the street (OE: *strete*) is undoubtedly a reference to the first century Roman road running north-north-west from Droitwich to Greensforge and Redhill (Uxacona) or Wroxeter (Viroconium). This road (*strete*) forms the western boundary of Pedmore parish and part of the western boundary of Oldswinford; and as it is an extended feature, the main question here relates to the route taken from (?)Sica's fortification to the *strete*. A route close to the Pedmore parish boundary seems most likely, as this follows a natural boundary feature along a sloping ridge of high ground down to the Roman road at SO 889814.

The western boundary

26. along (the) street to (the) boundary dyke

27. from (the) boundary dyke to (the) Stour

28. along (the) Stour so that (it comes) back to Swine Ford

This section of the boundary starts by following the first century Roman road – today overlain by County Lane and Sandy Lane – from SO 889814 until it reaches a boundary dyke (OE: *meredic*). The dyke was, apparently, an established boundary feature at the time of the charter, perhaps representing the western edge of Swinford or of an older estate to which Swinford once belonged.

Today, a pair of banks and ditches run along High Park Ridge north of Dunsley Road (SO 882840), following the modern parish (and county) boundary. These structures are likely to be the remnants of the charter's boundary dyke. The eastern bank now marks the county boundary; its associated ditch lies immediately to the west. A second bank and ditch is located twenty metres further west (inside Staffordshire), on the flank of the ridge. The earthwork is of unknown age, but it is substantial, the east bank being two to five metres high with respect to its now partially filled ditch.

Dunsley Road marks the southern limit of these earthworks, but the underlying ridge of high ground extends southwards a further 1000 to 1500 metres, becoming gradually less distinct towards its southern end. It is not known whether the boundary dyke also extended south of Dunsley Road in the tenth century and has since been levelled for agriculture.

The modern parish and county boundaries depart from the line of the Roman road near its intersection with Sugar Loaf Lane (SO 884825); yet, given the topography of the area and the lack of any visible remnants of the dyke here, it seems unlikely that the latter's southern terminus (and, hence, waypoint 26) could have been located so far south.

The 1888 OS map depicts the 1.5km stretch of the parish boundary between Sugar Loaf Lane and Dunsley Road as a completely straight line, except for a few tens of metres at each end. In contrast, two earlier plans of Oldswinford parish⁵⁶ show this part of the boundary following more westerly, and non-linear, courses. In both cases the parish boundary is depicted as tracing the line of the Roman road for several hundred metres past (i.e. NNW of) Sugar Loaf Lane before deviating eastwards, near Swinford Lane (SO 883833), to rejoin the modern parish boundary. At this point, the Roman road begins to descend through a small valley away from the ridge of high land, and it is conceivable that the charter's boundary dyke joined the Roman road here (marker 26a on Fig. 4). However, there is, again, no evidence to confirm that the dyke ever extended this far south; and until such evidence becomes available it seems reasonable to conclude that waypoint 26 probably lay near to Dunsley Road, the ancient route from Kinver to Halesowen (marker 26b).

The word "from" rather than "along" is used in both translations of waypoint 27;⁵⁷ and this indicates that the dyke's northern end was located some distance short of the Stour, perhaps near the junction of the present-day Hyperion Road and Vicarage Road (SO 882851) where the High Park / Wollaston ridge gives way to Dividale Common and the stream valley of the Dividale Brook.

After reaching the Stour, the final waypoint returns us to the starting point of the boundary clause.

Accuracy of the proposed boundary route

The boundary route proposed above differs markedly from those which have been published before. Consequently, the present proposal can only be justified by a high degree of correspondence between the charter's boundary clause and the evidence available for each waypoint.

The waypoints plotted in Fig. 4 are (unlike in some previous proposals) spaced at quite regular intervals. This is encouraging. Closely, or unevenly, spaced waypoints would have been regarded with some suspicion, unless there happened to be a small and obviously important landscape feature to be circumnavigated. While the uniformity of the waypoint spacing is reassuring, it is not, of course, proof of overall correctness or of the accuracy of any individual waypoint.

To assess the accuracy of the interpretation as a whole it is necessary to consider how closely each waypoint conforms to the various evidential sources, as well as the number of consecutive waypoints that are well supported by the available evidence. A rudimentary, and somewhat subjective, comparison is facilitated by simply totalling the number of descriptive elements in the

boundary clause that are consistent with at least one piece of landscape, place-name or geological evidence along the proposed course of the boundary. For the southern boundary alone, the present proposal is consistent with seventeen independent descriptive elements. This compares with eight consistent elements in the routes proposed by Grundy and Chambers, and ten in the cases of Hooke and Pritchard.⁵⁸

Indeed, in the present interpretation, there are only two waypoints on the southern boundary – i.e. the stone chamber (17) and the posts (20) – for which evidence is weak and circumstantial. Evidence for the remaining landmarks is generally good and, in most instances (waypoints 10–14, 16, 18, 21–25), the suggested locations fit the boundary clause very well indeed.

Because of the large number of waypoints that are well supported by the available evidence; because the waypoints are distributed evenly and lie largely upon points of inflexion, and because there is a credible explanation for the resulting shape of the boundary, I believe the proposed boundary route can be regarded with, at least, a small degree of confidence.

Observations and discussion

The new analysis of the charter bounds yields several interesting results. Firstly, the paved street (*strete*) in waypoints 19 and 20 is probably Worcester Lane (the B4187, formerly A450) rather than, as supposed by previous investigators, the A491 Hagley Road. The charter evidence implies that the paved section of Worcester Lane extended at least as far south as its junction with Racecourse Lane (SO 905823) in the mid tenth century.

Of more significance is the finding that the charter estate's southern, and perhaps eastern, boundaries deviate considerably from those of the local manors and parishes. This is not inconsistent with the view that Oldswinford manor and the associated parish developed some years after the date of the charter (AD 951x959). Where the charter and parish bounds do coincide (i.e. where boundary lines seem to have been stable or reused) they tend to follow prominent landscape features such as the Stour, ridges of high ground and pre-existing boundary dykes.

Surprisingly, the charter's boundary clause appears to have excluded the settlement centre of Oldswinford and its cultivated fields. It had been formerly thought that the Swinford charter represented a direct precursor of Oldswinford manor and parish,⁵⁹ but its markedly different boundary pattern indicates that the developmental links between them may be more complex than first envisaged. Clearly a significant degree of restructuring must have taken place in order to yield the documented (i.e. eighteenth and nineteenth-century) outline of the parish.

Amongst the Worcestershire charters, there are a few instances where charter estates seem to represent sub-units of later manors or *vice versa* (e.g. Bickmarsh and Ullington, S 751)⁶⁰, but it is thought unusual for charter bounds to cut markedly across manor boundaries unless they are outlining entire, perhaps pre-existing, sub-units of land.

It is not known why the outline of Oldswinford manor differs so significantly from the Swinford charter bounds, but (if the solution presented here is correct) the evident realignment of the Oldswinford–Pedmore boundary clearly indicates a link between the foundation, or development, of these two manors. Moreover, the apparently planned nature of the local boundary pattern (Fig. 1) seems to imply a close connection with Hagley, Cradley and Lutley, and might even indicate that all five land units shared a common mechanism, or date, of origin. Such a large-scale boundary reorganization must have been instigated from a position of considerable authority; and the division of Wychbury hill fort, Foxcote and perhaps Oldnall by the local manor and estate boundaries might be evidence of a distribution of resources or of some compensatory element in the restructuring process.

The form of the charter boundary probably reflects a combination of earlier territorial divisions and co-existing (neighbouring) ownership or tenure. The western boundary almost certainly represents an earlier division; and, indeed, waypoint 26 refers explicitly to a pre-existing *meredic* (boundary dyke) which, the charter implies, stretched along the ridge of elevated heath land west of Wollaston.

To the south, the charter estate's boundary circumnavigated a "finger" of land that included Wychbury hill fort, the cultivated fields of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley, and perhaps an area of oak woodland (the *acleg* of waypoint 22); all of which were distributed along the ancient roads linking Droitwich and Worcester to Stafford (now approximated in this region by the A491 Hagley Road and the B4187 Worcester Lane). Both roads appear to have been major and well used routes: the former being an iron-age (or earlier) salt-way; the latter a road of sufficient import to have been paved (near Oldswinford) at the time of the charter. King⁶¹ noted that "in the vicinity of Oldswinford, Stourbridge and Kingswinford, the field patterns seem to conform to the [Worcester–Stafford] road, as if they formed around it". Indeed, it is likely that both roads played a central role in the development of settlements and estates along their route. It is conceivable that the settlements of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley, as well as Wychbury hill fort and possibly *acleg* (oak *lēah*), belonged to a single land unit established around this ancient road network. They may even have belonged to the pre-charter Swinford – perhaps being omitted from the charter estate because of their relatively high value – but there is, unfortunately, no documentary evidence to clarify their status or ownership at this time.

The course of the charter bounds around the settlement of Oldswinford is, perhaps, indicative of the extent of the latter's cultivated land. As we have seen, Oldswinford's fields probably reached no further than the Love Lane escarpment in the west. Their eastern limit could have been demarcated by the dyke referred to in waypoint 16: this is also consistent with Pritchard's interpretation of the nearby *eostacote* as meaning East Cottage.⁶² If this assessment is correct, Oldswinford's cultivated land would have extended to no more than about 150 acres (approximately 1¼ hides) in the mid-tenth century.

In view of the apparent lack of correspondence between the bounds of Oldswinford parish and the charter estate along the latter's southern edge, there is no obvious reason to expect a correspondence elsewhere (apart from where the River Stour, ridges of high land and pre-existing dykes offer significant potential for boundary reuse). Thus, as indicated previously, it seems prudent to regard the parish boundary as having no evidential value in itself; and an analysis based upon only landscape, place-name and geological evidence indicates two equally plausible courses for the charter's eastern boundary: route A that follows the western arm of the Salt Brook (and the parish boundary); and route B, which traces the Salt Brook's eastern arm to encompass most of Oldnall hill.

The charter estate's cultivated land is specified as six *mansæ* (widely taken to be equivalent to six hides) in total. This compares to just three hides (about 360 acres) listed in the Domesday entry for Suineford (the precursor of Oldswinford manor). The difference might be partly explained by loss of land to Pedmore in the vicinity of Foxcote and (?)Sica's fortification, and also, perhaps, by loss of land to Cradley between the conjectural route B and route A of the eastern boundary. However, it is unlikely that migration of the boundary line in these regions can explain the whole of the missing three hides. It is worth noting that the Domesday hideage assessments for Suineford and Pevemore (Pedmore) – being three hides each – can be reconciled more easily with the charter estate's six *mansæ* if the 1¼ hides around Oldswinford village (or, more precisely, around its precursor of unknown name) are excluded from Domesday's "Suineford". The corollary is obvious, but because of the potential for inaccuracy in each assessment, as well as the time elapsed between them (approx. 130 years), the notion that Oldswinford settlement did not become part of Suineford until after 1086 must remain purely hypothetical.

A more reliable inference can be made about particular segments of the parish boundaries. L-shaped steps or "dog-legs" are evident where Oldswinford and Pedmore meet the estates of Cradley and Lutley, respectively, as well as between the settlement centres of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley. These features clearly follow the edges of pre-existing furlongs and headlands, and they almost certainly indicate that the cultivated lands of neighbouring settlements abutted each other at the date the L-shaped portions of the boundaries became established. (This date might not, of course, equate to the parishes' date of origin: throughout their history, their boundaries

will probably have been subject to occasional minor disagreement and revision as evidenced, for example, by the 1733 boundary perambulation where two such disagreements are recorded.⁶³)

It is interesting to note that L-shaped steps occur primarily in those segments of the Oldswinford and Pedmore parish boundaries that differ from the proposed outline of the charter estate. The charter bounds were, it seems, routed around settlements and their associated fields, whereas the parish boundaries appear to have been designed to divide heavily cultivated areas (such as those around Oldnall and Foxcote and between Oldswinford and Pedmore), as well as Wychbury hill fort, in two.

The apparent omission of Oldswinford settlement from the charter estate raises a number of questions: when did this settlement become separated from Pedmore; was the eventual division of land here related to the formation of the parish(es); was it the result of a single boundary modification or a process of gradual evolution; and precisely what territory is represented by the Domesday entries for Oldswinford (Suineford) and Pedmore (Pevemore)?

Evidently, the story of Oldswinford's origin is a convoluted one, and there are many outstanding issues to address, but it is hoped that the present study might offer some insight into the early development of this complex former region of north Worcestershire.

Notes and references

1. Eadred's name appears to have been substituted for Eadwig's in at least one other Anglo-Saxon document; and the witnesses listed at the end of the Swinford charter seem to belong to the reign of King Edgar. Sources may be found in *The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (2010), Department of History and the Centre for Computing in the Humanities, King's College, London, and Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, UK. Online database accessible at <http://www.pase.ac.uk/index.html>
2. R.L. Chambers, *Oldswinford, Bedcote and Stourbridge manors and boundaries* (1978), Dudley Teachers Centre, 42
3. D. Hooke, *The Anglo-Saxon landscape: The kingdom of the Hwicce* (1985), Manchester University Press, 12–13, Figs. 22 and 24
4. P.W. King, 'The minster Aet Stur in Husrere and the northern boundary of the Hwicce', *TWAS* 35 XV (1996), 73–91
5. PASE, *op. cit.* in note 1
6. G.B. Grundy, 'Saxon charters of Worcestershire', *Transactions and Proceedings of The Birmingham Archaeological Society* LIII (1928), 72–75; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 50–60; and D. Hooke, *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon charter bounds* (1990), The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 162–167
7. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 50–60; Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6; and J. Pritchard, *The Anglo-Saxon boundary of Swinford* (undated, but 1997 or later), Hagley Historical & Field Society, PDF document downloadable from http://hhfs.org.uk/hhfs/?page_id=1037, 5–16
8. H. Court and I. Blackden, *Oldswinford inclosure plan* (1782), Stourbridge Public Library
9. Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 59–60 cites the suggested boundary line's "artificial straightness", lack of surviving physical evidence, and a reference to the boundary, in Court and Blackden, *op. cit.* in note 8
10. Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 50–60
11. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 162–167
12. Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 7, 5–16
13. Ordnance Survey, *Worcestershire "County Series" 6 inches to 1 mile map, sheet 4* (1888), Ordnance Survey, Southampton; Tithe map: *Cradley* (1843), Worcestershire Record Office (hereafter WRO), r760/246 BA1572; Tithe map: *Pedmore* (1846), WRO, r760/508 BA 1572; and J. Bach, *Plan of the Parish of Oldswinford* (1699), WRO, r989/126 BA 1535
14. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 162–166
15. Tithe map: *Cradley*, *op. cit.* in note 13; Tithe map: *Pedmore*, *op. cit.* in note 13; Bach, *op. cit.* in note 13; and Oldswinford Parish Register 'Bounds of the parish of Oldswinford', *Oldswinford Parish Register* 3 (1733), 133–134. Dudley Archives, Microfiche #304. An edited version of the latter document is reproduced in Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 43–45

16. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 74–75; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 55–56; and Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 164–165
17. Translations are taken from Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 72–75 and Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 163–166
18. K. James, *The Swinford charter (S579) of AD 951–9: A new interpretation of the boundary clause and thoughts on the origin of Oldswinford and Pedmore parishes* (2013), PDF document downloadable from: <http://www.swinfordcharter.kjdocs.co.uk/>, 7–30, Figs 6–8 and Photographs 1–15
19. James, *op. cit.* in note 18, 10–11
20. James, *op. cit.* in note 18, 12 and Fig. 7
21. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 164
22. Oldswinford Parish Register, *op. cit.* in note 15
23. Tithe map: *Cradley*, *op. cit.* in note 13
24. Shown near the SE end of Tanhouse Lane on Ordnance Survey, *op. cit.* in note 13
25. British Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), *Solid and drift map – Sheet 167* (1975), Ordnance Survey, Southampton
26. Near the foot of Hodge Hill on Tithe map: *Pedmore*, *op. cit.* in note 13. W. Scott, *Stourbridge and its vicinity: Containing a topographical description of the parish of Old Swinford, including the township of Stourbridge...* (1832), Heming, London. 188 also records a functioning quarry in the vicinity
27. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 164 translates the OE as ‘eaves (of a wood)’; Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 73 suggests ‘Hill-foot’
28. Tithe map: *Pedmore*, *op. cit.* in note 13
29. Bach, *op. cit.* in note 13
30. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 73
31. J. Brettel and J. Davies, *Survey and plan of Oldswinford* (1827), Stourbridge Public Library
32. Bach, *op. cit.* in note 13; Court and Blackden, *op. cit.* in note 8; Oldswinford Parish Register, *op. cit.* in note 15
33. Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 7, 13
34. Ordnance Survey, *op. cit.* in note 13. Buildings are shown at this location on: Ordnance Survey, *Worcestershire “Old Series” 1 inch to 1 mile map, sheet 54* (1831), Ordnance Survey, Southampton; Brettel and Davies, *op. cit.* in note 31; and Court and Blackden, *op. cit.* in note 8, but not on the earlier plan by Bach, *op. cit.* in note 13
35. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165
36. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 74 translates this waypoint as ‘Green Lea Pond’, while Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165 favours ‘Grendel’s mere’
37. Bach, *op. cit.* in note 13
38. British Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), *op. cit.* in note 25
39. Oldswinford Parish Register, *op. cit.* in note 15
40. Brettel and Davies, *op. cit.* in note 31 shows the fish pond apparently just south of Oldswinford parish
41. James, *op. cit.* in note 18, 17–19
42. N. Perry, *A history of Stourbridge* (2001), Phillimore & Co Ltd, Chichester, 31
43. James, *op. cit.* in note 18, 18
44. A.H. Smith, ‘Place Name Elements – Part II’, *Engl. Place-Name Soc.* XXVI (1956), 146 states that a post, or *stapol*, may sometimes have been used to mark a ford
45. Smith, *op. cit.* in note 44, 54 lists the meaning of *ofer* as ‘a slope, a hill, a ridge’. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165 favours the more specific interpretation quoted in the present text
46. D. Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, lore and landscape* (2011), Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 125–127
47. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 74; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 56; and Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165
48. H.J. Haden, *The street names of Stourbridge and its vicinity* (1988), The Dulston Press, Kingswinford, 242. (Reissued on CD-ROM by The Black Country Society, Kingswinford in 2003.)
49. PASE, *op. cit.* in note 1; D. Hooke, ‘Recent views on the Worcestershire landscape’, *TWAS* 3S XXI (2008), 92–93; and M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (1992), Leicester University Press, Leicester, 6–19
50. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165; and Tithe map: *Pedmore*, *op. cit.* in note 13
51. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 74; and Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 56
52. Smith, *op. cit.* in note 44, 28
53. Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 7, 15

54. J. Field, *English field names* (1989), Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, Stroud, 145
55. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165; Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 9, 15; and E. Richardson, 'Swinford: In search of a boundary', *The Blackcountryman* XXXI (1997), 55–60
56. Court and Blackden, *op. cit.* in note 8; and Brettel and Davies, *op. cit.* in note 31
57. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 74; and Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 165
58. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 72–75; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 50–61; Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 162–167; and Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 7, 5–16
59. Grundy, *op. cit.* in note 6, 72–75; Chambers, *op. cit.* in note 2, 50–61
60. Hooke, *op. cit.* in note 6, 174–177
61. P.W. King, 'Some roads out of north Worcestershire', *TWAS* 3S XX (2006), 88
62. Pritchard, *op. cit.* in note 7, 13 suggests that East Cottage may have been located "at the eastern end of the estate", though her accompanying map appears to indicate that she uses the word "estate" here to refer to Oldswinford settlement rather than the whole of the charter estate
63. Oldswinford Parish Register, *op. cit.* in note 15 records disputes over the course of the parish boundary in two locations: one near New Wood Gate (SO 886857), apparently since resolved in favour of Kinver, and another at "Upper Swinford" (that part of Oldswinford village along the A491) at SO 905829, resolved by agreement with Pedmore in 1730