THE WINSLOW CHARTER OF 792 AND THE BOUNDARIES OF GRANBOROUGH

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A general hypothesis advanced in the present series of papers is that royal grants of land in Buckinghamshire during the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries related for the most part to land which at the time of the grant was on the internal frontier, that is, the shifting boundary between open country (*feld*) and uncleared forest (*wudu*) or marsh (*fenn*). By such grants, and by the freedom from various fiscal burdens which was usually conferred thereby, settlement was promoted, magnates and thegns were rewarded or placated, minsters were endowed at little immediate cost to the Crown, and provision was made for good order, civil and ecclesiastical, in newly settled areas. Naturally the land in question was not of the best quality, or it would have been cleared earlier; much of it now ranks as grade 4 of the Ministry of Agriculture's five grades.

Of these grants the earliest known is Offa's charter[1] of 4 May 792 (emended from 795 to agree with the regnal year) granting Winslow and three other estates, two of which can be identified with Granborough and Horwood, to St. Alban's church; it would be a slight anticipation to say St. Alban's Abbey, as Offa's monastic foundation is usually attributed to August 793,[2] but there was a church there already, and Bede's account of it implies continuity of worship from Roman times.[3] The "beautiful church worthy of his martyrdom, where sick folk are healed and frequent miracles take place to this day" was on the site of St. Alban's execution and must be distinguished from the shrine enclosing his tomb, which St. Germanus visited in 429, and to which he added the relics of other saints. There is good archaeological evidence that organised Romano-British urban life continued at Verulamium throughout the fifth century.[4] The substance of St. Gildas' complaint (c.540)[5] is that since the unhappy partition with the barbarians (after Mount Badon) his compatriots could not reach the martyr's shrine, not that it had been destroyed; and Matthew Paris[6] recalls the local tradition that though the pagans dismantled the shrine they did not consider the little church worth demolishing. This would be after their victory in 571, which must finally have opened the gates of Verulamium to the Saxons. This church is said to have been preserved by Offa.[7]

The Authenticity of the Charter

Clearly no use can be made of the charter if it is wholly spurious. It was so regarded by W. H. Stevenson[8] but L. F. R. Williams[9] allowed it some small authentic basis. It survives only in 13th-century and later copies, and has usually been condemned as a complete fabrication because it purports to grant freedom from all dues, including the basic obligations from which exemption was hardly ever granted. Probably the

clauses conferring these privileges were interpolated after the Conquest to match the privileges conferred by Edward the Confessor on Westminster Abbey; but this need not throw doubt on the invocation, the proem (though this may have been elaborated) or the dispositive clauses, which are as follows:

†Regnante in perpetuum Deo et domino nostro Jhesu Christo. Licet per totum ubique mundum beatorum martyrum qui suum pro Christo sanguinem fuderunt merita divine laudis exaltacione celebranda sint. eorumque Dei auxilio exempla gloriosa sequenda; precipue nobis tamen beatissimi ALBANI que sub hac Britannie insula gloriosus martyrio effulsit memoria, pia semper intencione et sedula sollicitudine observanda est.

Unde ego OFFA gratia Dei rex Merciorum cum filio meo Ecgfrido pro amore omnipotentis Dei et hujus sancti intercessione terram.xxx^a manensium in locis quorum subinferuntur nomina, domino meo Jhesu Christo ad aecclesiam sancti ALBANI ubi ipse tyro primus in passione victima effectus est, jure perpetuo perdonabo. Eoque delectabilius hanc donationem perficio, quia superna proteccio tam nobile temporibus nostris thesaurum quod diu fuit clausum et hujus terre indigenis abditum revelare dignata est. Haec itaque sunt supradictarum vocabula terrarum. et Uuineshauue xii^{cim} manensium cum terminis suis. et Scelfdune sive Baldinigcotum trium manensium quorum scilicet trium manensium terminati sunt hec. Suanaburna. Heortmere. Stretuuealeb'roc. Item vero .x. manensium ubi dicitur Scuccanhlau. vel Fenntuun cum silva quae cognominatur Horwudu. cum terminis suis. Æt Lygetune .v. manensium quam videlicet terram Alhmundus abbas expedicionem subterfugiens mihi reconciliacionis gratia debet.

The words "qui. . . pro Christo sanguinem fuderunt" occur in the chapter heading of Bede's account of the passion of St. Alban. The *capitula* are found in all the 8th century MSS. of Bede.

This is the text in MS. Cotton Nero D. i f.148 which was printed by Birch[10] and adopted in M. Gelling's *Early Charters of the Thames Valley*. At f.152b there is a text which, though representing a further stage of interpolation, has the better reading 'Æt Wineshlauue' for the first estate. It omits 'sive Baldinigcotum trium manensium' for the second estate, and has the corrupt form 'Etretwealabroc' for one of its bounds; this may, however, justify an emendation to 'Stretwealabroc' or preferably 'Stret. Wealabroc'. Other variant forms in f. 152b are Hertmere; Fentun; Horowuda (perhaps a better form, as the first element is *horu* 'filth'); Æt Lygtune; Alimundus.

Some positive points in favour of the authenticity of the first half of the Winslow charter can be adduced, not least the extreme obscurity of the description of the estates. Of the ten or eleven names mentioned, only four are known to have survived as post-Conquest place-names, and two of these have changed their reference, so that even the identity of the estates has remained doubtful. An 11th or 12th century forger would

surely have given clearer identifications. Further, the very simple ('rudimentary', Gelling) bounds given for the second estate are characteristic of 8th or early 9th century charters. Again, the statement that the fourth estate (or perhaps the whole of the land) was received from Abbot Alhmund as payment for his evasion of military obligations is most unlikely to be the work of a forger. It certainly does not favour exoneration of church land from secular burdens; at most it may suggest that when such land was forfeited it should not be permanently lost to the Church. Alhmund's name appears in the witness list.

It was suggested in *Early Charters of the Thames Valley* that "it seems likely that this 30-hide estate consisted of a single block of land". This is clearly the case for the first three estates, which are linked with Winslow by the names *Suanaburna* and *Horwudu,* but does not necessarily hold for the fourth, the 5 hides *æt Lygetune* confiscated by Offa from Abbot Alhmund, though they are not likely to be far away. The last clause beginning *quam videlicet terram* could perhaps be taken to refer to the whole 30-hide grant, in which case the presumption of contiguity would be strengthened. It was further suggested that "a collection of field-name material for the area might produce some derivatives of the lost place-names". Such a collection is now available in the County Museum.

The first estate: Winslow

There is no doubt about the location of the 12 hides *æt Wineshlawe,* the hill or (more probably) the burial mound of Wine or Wini. The name was not common, but it is that of an early Bishop of Dorchester, and a diminutive Wineca occurs in Winchendon. An entry in the 1509 court roll implies that the Lowe was in Shipton Field. Winslow is assessed at 15 hides in the Domesday Survey;[11] nevertheless the 8th century estate so named may have been more extensive than the medieval manor and parish of Winslow. Matthew Paris describes it as being 20 miles in circumference, about double the present perimeter.[12] The charter conveys Winslow *cum terminis suis,* but does not set them out. The bounds of the present parish and town are very simple, consisting mainly of watercourses, except that its landward boundary with the parish of Swanbourne follows field boundaries and has so many sharp turns (eleven in two miles) that it can hardly be primitive. This suggests that Winslow and Swanbourne were originally one estate, of which St. Albans received, or perhaps retained or recovered, only the Winslow half. All the monastic estates in Mercia were at serious risk during the anti-monastic reaction which followed Edgar's death in 975, and during the Danish wars. Turville seems to be a case where St. Albans was granted the whole estate but was holding only part of it after the Conquest.[13] The dedication of Swanbourne church in honour of St. Swithun is unique in Bucks, and may provide a *terminus ad quem* for the separation of the parishes.

Winslow was an important royal estate and probably a primary settlement. There is no reason to doubt the St. Albans tradition that it was at Winslow that Offa determined to erect a monastery where prayers should daily be offered for himself (they were offered by 12 poor men until 1539);[14] nor that he then and there decided to devote Winslow to this new foundation. His decision to associate it with the shrine of St. Alban, protomartyr of the island of Britain, came some time later, and was taken at Bath. The Winslow charter was executed after this decision but before the new minster was

established; and the Mercian witan which met to approve Offa's munificence was held not at Winslow but *in loco qui dicitur Ætberanforda* (æt Beoranforda, f. 152b). The regnal year is given as 25 at f.148, but as 35 at f. 152b; the latter agrees with the date 4 May 792.

The second estate: Granborough

The three hides *æt Scelfdune sive Baldinigcotum* have the following bounds: *Suanaburna; Heortmere; Stretwealabroc,* which can probably be emended to *Stret; Wealabroc,* with great advantage to the interpretation. The estate can then be precisely identified with the existing parish of Granborough, and it would appear that its two alternative names, which have not survived, represent habitation sites before the village centre shifted to the top of the swelling green hill which gives the parish its present name. (Granborough is now the invariable form; Grandborough, found on the older Ordnance maps and in *The Place-names of Buckinghamshire,*[15] has an intrusive *d* which can hardly have been pronounced and is not recorded before 1600. A late editor of the *Records of Bucks* had a long struggle to persuade the Metropolitan Railway to change the name of Grandborough Road station, and had succeeded when the station was closed.)[16]

The identification of the second estate rests on that of its bounds. The description in the charter relates entirely to linear features, not to points, and although very concise it succeeds in specifying the bounds completely and unambiguously. The bounds start on the north side, adjoining Winslow, and proceed clockwise, or rather sunwise, a rule which is invariable in Bucks. They divide the perimeter neatly into four sections, separated by points where three parishes meet ('triple boundaries'). The first and fourth sections relate to watercourses (Suanaburna, Wealabroc), the second and third to man-made features (Heortmere, Stret). The forms are in the nominative, being introduced by the formula "quorum scilicet trium manensium terminati sunt hec". There must have been some reason for defining this particular estate by its bounds; perhaps it had previously formed part of a larger unit.

The Swanbourne

Suanaburna is the river-name Swanbourne, 'peasants' stream'. The stream is that which bounds the parish of Granborough on the north and east, separating it from the town of Winslow and the parish of Swanbourne, which may originally have formed one royal estate. The starting-point is at Mill Hook, SP 756 259, the triple boundary of Granborough, East Claydon and Winslow. Local tradition points to this site, where the bounds begin and end, as that of the Abbot's watermill; visual evidence is minimal, but the name *Mill hook* occurs in a Fortescue estate map of 1600,[17] and the adjoining fields are still known as Upper and Lower Millhook. This is also said locally to be the site of an old ford which carried the original route from Winslow to Granborough. It was abandoned by most traffic in favour of a bridged crossing upstream by the 16th century, but there is oral evidence that within the past century the ford was still used in summer.

At 761 261 the river (it deserves that name, though locally called the Millbrook) is crossed by the Saltway (shown on the 1600 map) at a point called the Slad, now the name of a small close on the Winslow side. From this close the present parish boundary

leaves the stream for about a quarter of a mile to take in a strip of land which shares the name Biggin Meadow with the riverside meadow on the south side. The stream formerly ran to the north of its present straightened course, but not as far north as the present parish boundary, which may represent a slight medieval diversion to take in the land of Biggin, a grange of the Abbey treated as a separate manor. At 764 264 the Winslow-Granborough road crosses by Biggin Bridge, so named in 1600, but the adjoining ford is still observable. The next stretch is called Granborough Brook in Winslow, Kites Brook in Granborough; Kite Leys occurs on the estate map for what is now Brook Meadow. There is said to have been another watermill at Jill's Hook, 772 266. The course of the stream has varied slightly, and at several points the present parish boundary follows its former meanders. A significant field-name on the Winslow side is Merry Acre, Maeracre in 1600, presumably 'boundary acre'. In John Speed's map of Buckinghamshire (1611) the part of Winslow adjoining the Granborough Brook is called Winslow Heath (c.f. Gorst Hill, Knoll Ground).

At Shipton Corner, 777 267, the triple boundary of Granborough, Winslow and Swanbourne, just below Shipton Bridge on the Winslow-Aylesbury turnpike road, the Swanbourne is joined by the Great Brook formed by two brooks which run respectively north and south of Swanbourne village. That village consists of three 'ends' on higher ground, not on any stream; the river-name had been transferred to it by the time of Domesday, and perhaps much earlier (there is a contemporary example of such transfer in a charter of Offa, 'villa regali nomine Freoricsburna'[18]). The forms Swaneburg 1227, Swanbrough 1606 suggest another line of development of the second element which would have been more appropriate for the village site.

The editors of *The Place-names of Buckinghamshire*[19] appear to have regarded one of these brooks near Swanbourne as having given its name to the village, but there is direct evidence that the name related not to either branch of the Great Brook but to the brook forming the Granborough-Swanbourne boundary. The south-west corner of Swanbourne parish is known as Swains Bourne Field or the Bourne Field, and another of the water-meadows is Swan Bourne Meadow in a farm sale catalogue of 1973. Thus from Shipton Corner, 777 267, upstream to 786 246, the triple boundary of Granborough, Swanbourne and North Marston, the stream is still the *Suanaburna*; and significantly the whole stream is in Swanbourne parish. It has, however, an alternative name: on Lipscomb's map of the Three Hundreds of Ashendon (1847)[20] it is "Oakham or Holcomb gutter". The first form is supported by Oakham Farm (788 257 in Swanbourne parish), perhaps influenced by Oak Field; the latter by the field-names Holcombe Ground in Granborough, Holcombe Close in Swanbourne. The 25-inch map accepts Oakhamgutter.

The bourne has two sources, at 779 210 and 792 214, each at a height of about 470 feet, almost on the Ouse-Thames watershed. Both its headwaters define parish boundaries throughout their length, the former being also the hundred boundary. Oving, which lies between them, must have been a fairly early hilltop settlement, since a name in *-ingas* is unlikely to have arisen after (say) 650.

The form Swains Bourne, reported locally, is backed by *Suaynburn* in the 1469 Patent Rolls, and supports *swān* 'swain, peasant, herdsman' as the first element (in the gen. pl.) rather than *swan* 'swan'. As Mawer and Stenton point out, the Domesday forms *Soeneberno*, *Sueneberne*, *Sueneborne* seems to have been influenced by the

Scandinavian cognate *sveinn* 'swain'; this can also be a personal name, borne even by a king, and they regarded *Suenesham* (1320) in Steeple Claydon and *Swainscome* (1706) in Quainton as containing that name. A certain Suen held two hides in Swanbourne, including meadow for two plough-teams, and other land in East Claydon and Quarrendon in the Confessor's time.[21] The first-named holding was somewhat naturally called *Sueneberie*; it retained its identity until 1624.[22] It may therefore be that Swains Bourne should be regarded as a Danish renaming of this part of the Swanbourne, though a very slight and natural one.

The two headwaters met at a quadruple boundary point only a quarter of a mile upstream at Wet Stocks, 789 244, so that we almost have a junction of five parishes, Granborough, Swanbourne, Hoggeston, Oving and North Marston. Both these boundary points were formerly fords of the Swanbourne, and the east-west routes met at Aylesbury Cross on the Swanbourne-Hoggeston boundary on the Aylesbury road. At the more northerly crossing, the charter boundary leaves the Swanbourne, and the next two miles as far as the next triple boundary constitute the *Heortmere* or *Hertmere*, the boundary of the harts or grown male deer. The name implies a fence to keep the deer out of Granborough at a time before North Marston was settled, and there is in fact an unbroken hedge-line along the whole of this stretch of the boundary, respected by the hedges on either side, and formerly accompanied by a right of way. The identification is supported by the field-name Hartshill in North Marston, adjoining the central section of the boundary. This is *Herthulle* c. 1260–70 in a deed of St. John's manor, North Marston, at Magdalen College, Oxford. A small dome-like hill (about 375 ft.) just south of the boundary at 768 239 in North Marston parish is called Harts Hill in the 1600 Fortescue estate map; on Lipscomb's map it is Forest Hill. It is now known in Granborough as Round Hill, from its form, or Thistle Forest Hill, probably a derogatory nickname dating from the years of agricultural depression; there is a Thistly Field to the east. Towards North Marston it is Mill Hill, from a former windmill on that side of its summit.

The Hertmere runs from Nest or Nast Mead to West Mead; it sweeps boldly across the country between, in two gentle curves, but has a slight change of direction at 770 243, where it crosses the Granborough-North Marston road, perhaps better described as the Winslow-Oving road, for it probably connected those settlements before Granborough or North Marston existed. The site is Dead Man's Cross on the Fortescue estate map, 'cross' denoting a cross-roads. There is no right of way along the Hertmere today, but there was a road or track in 1600; this probably originated as a route from Hoggeston (Hogg's farm) to Hogshaw (Hogg's wood). Dr. A. Morley Davies has commented[23] that for a road to follow a parish boundary is

> ... a sure sign of antiquity, at least in a road which is fairly straight,
> for it shows that the road probably existed before the parish. If,
> however, the road twists or turns, it is more probable that it grew
> up as a right-of-way along the boundary of a township already
> marked out.

Applying this criterion to the Hertmere, it seems likely that Hogg or his people forded the Swanbourne and made a way to his detached area of woodland in the purlieu of Bernwood Forest at a time before what is now Granborough was separated from North Marston; this separation is implied by the charter of 792, when the track was adopted as the southern boundary of the estate conveyed to St. Albans.
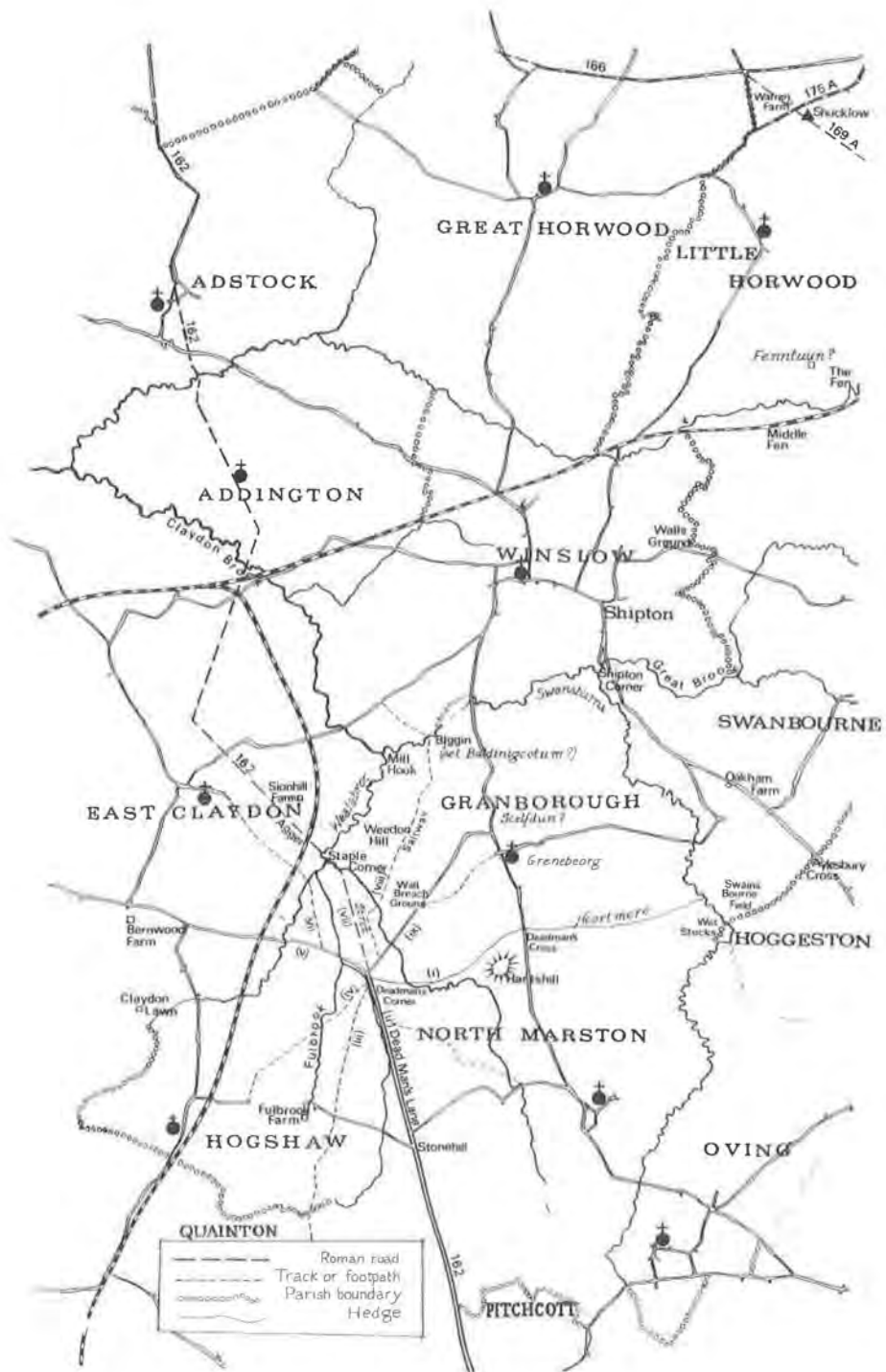
This east-west track, which has been interpreted as a Hoggeston-Hogshaw route, follows the Granborough-North Marston boundary closely for about two-thirds of its length; part of it has survived as a cart-track from 770 243 to 765 241. The last third of the journey, approximately from the last point, was taken in 1600 across part of the former Westmead and Bowmead commons in Granborough, a short distance north of the boundary, probably to secure a better crossing of a small brook which rises about 772 217 and flows through the marshy meadows of North Marston (Brook Meadow, the Slough and the Slad) and (in Granborough) the Red Slow of the estate map. From 761 238 to 759 238 this brook has at some time been taken along the Hertmere, and that boundary is reinforced by a wet ditch for the rest of its length.

The Roman Road

If 'Stretwealabroc' is taken as a single word, it must mean the brook of the Welsh or Britons (*Wēala* gen. pl. of *wealh*) who lived by or across the Roman road; but it seems more likely that two words, describing two sections of the estate boundary, have been run together by the medieval transcribers who did not see a space between the words. The brook runs closely by the street from 758 230 (triple boundary of North Marston, Quainton and Hogshaw) down to 755 238 (triple boundary of Granborough, North Marston and Hogshaw) but at this point they diverge, and the Granborough boundary follows the line of the street, not the brook, until they meet again at 751 249. Hence it seems better to take *Stret* and *Wealabroc* as two successive stretches of the boundary.

The *stret* is a section of the Roman road, no. 162 in the Viatores' numbering,[24] from the posting station at Fleet Marston on Akeman Street to Lillingstone Dayrell, where it joins the Roman road no. 160a (*Buggestret* or *Buggerode*) coming up from Alcester (Alauna) to Towcester (Lactodorum). The 3½-mile stretch from south-west of Pitchcott to south-east of East Claydon, crossing the Ouse-Thames watershed by the col between Pitchcott Hill and the Quainton Hills, has been described by the Viatores as "like the shaft of an arrow", though on the ground there are now slight variations from the straight line. This section of the road, known as Dead Man's Lane, is accurately aligned on Lactodorum. It was used in the 17th century as the coaching route from Aylesbury to Buckingham as far as the Granborough-Hogshaw road. The next 5½ miles as far as Thornborough have fallen completely out of use.

The Viatores describe the whole road from Fleet Marston northwards as 'rather meaningless' and ask 'who would need it?' M. E. Farley saw a gravel surface under the tarmac of the present lane at 763 210, and other sections have been made, but it was certainly very lightly metalled. It may have formed part of a long-distance route from Staines to Towcester, and it certainly served the important Romano-Celtic temple near Thornborough Bridge, where a pagan cultus, probably of the local river-god, continued well into the 5th century.[25] The road has survived where, and only where, it forms a parish boundary; and this points to the significance of this stretch as a frontier during the settlement period.

GREAT HORWOOD

LITTLE HORWOOD

ADSTOCK

166

Warren Farm 176 A Shucklow 169 A

Fenntuyn? The Fen

Middle Fen

ADDINGTON

Claydon Br

WINSLOW

Shipton

Walls Ground

Swanburn

Shipton Corner Great Brook

SWANBOURNE

Biggin (et Baldingcotum?)

Mill Hook

Oakham Farm

EAST CLAYDON

Sionhill Farms

Weedon Hill

GRANBOROUGH Geldun?

Greneborg

Aylesbury Cross

Staple Corner

Wall Breach Ground

hortmere

Swans Bourne Field

Bernwood Farm

Wet Stocks HOGGESTON

Deadman's Cross

Claydon Lawn

Fulbrook

Deadmans Corner

Hartshill

NORTH MARSTON

Fulbrook Farm

Stonehill

HOGSHAW

OVING

QUAINTON

PITCHCOTT

	Roman road
	Track or footpath
	Parish boundary
	Hedge

162

The section of the *stret* forming the Granborough-Hogshaw boundary runs straight from Deadman's Corner (755 238) where traces of metalling were found when a ditch was recently cut across the line, to 752 248, along the line of a hedge known in 1600 as *Bowmead haye*, the course of the Roman road lying in Bowmead on the Granborough side. Although this is on slightly rising ground, the brook seeping off to the left, there are two points at which it is still wet in summer, and which are shown as marshes on the 25-inch map. At Staple Corner, 752 248, the road-builder finally felt compelled to depart from the Towcester alignment which he had hitherto followed, since it would have taken him across very marsh ground and compelled him to cross two streams. The boundary turns half-left and follows the left bank of the little brook coming down from North Marston and the Slough, and at 751 249 the probable line of the street leaves Granborough and crosses the brook formed by the union of the Fulbrook and the Hogshaw/East Claydon boundary stream. Any other alignment would have involved two crossings. This interpretation is supported by the observations of C. W. Green[26] who comments:

> It seems inevitable that the road must move out of the valley, and ploughing in progress on Sionhill in a field which had always been pasture ...... exposed a turn more north-west in a broad ginger-and-white band beneath which a hard layer could be probed as far as the south-west side of the farm buildings. Here then was the road lifting itself out of the fen by a diverted alignment. There was no visible continuation ......

C. W. Green gives 749 255 as the grid reference for the sighting of the old road in new ploughing, but this would be north-east of Sionhill Farm rather than south-west, and is probably a misprint for 749 252. The map at p.373 of *Roman Roads in the South-east Midlands* showing the line of the detected agger is slightly at variance with the map at p.372, which takes the street along the line of a hedgerow as it approaches the line of the old railway and heads for Sionhill. This hedgerow is not aligned with the agger, though parallel to it, and it would involve the double crossing which the engineers were surely seeking to avoid. The Towcester alignment is recovered at Addington, and the probable course of the road links Addington with Adstock, but no metalling is visible until Thornborough, after which the line is certain. The complete loss of a Roman road for five miles is unusual, but once it ceased to be a through route, this section across very wet low ground would be the first to go out of use.

The Wealabroc

The last section of the boundary, that between Granborough and East Claydon, is formed by the *Wealabroc*, the brook of the Welshmen or Britons. In 10th-century Wessex *wealh* came to mean 'serf' but in 8th-century Mercia, on the border of Bernwood, it should have its earlier meaning of 'Briton'; the original sense was simply 'foreigner of Celtic or Latin speech'.[27] The parish boundary leaves the line of the Roman road and follows the side of the brook downstream to 756 259, the triple boundary of Granborough, East Claydon and Winslow, where it joins the Swanbourne (Kites Brook, Mill Brook) to constitute the Claydon Brook (otherwise Bune Water) which separates East Claydon and Steeple Claydon from Winslow, Addington and

Padbury, and joins the Bune (also confusingly called Claydon Brook) at 703 291 to form the river Twin, a major headstream of the Great Ouse. The name *Wealabroc* would have been given by English settlers at a time when the Claydons and Hogshaw were still in the hands of the Britons of Bernwood Forest; Bernwood Farm in Botolph Claydon, a mile east of the brook, is a standing reminder of this. The name should have developed to *Walbrook; no such form is found, but the field-name Wall Breach Ground to the south-east appears to contain the same element.

Dr. Michael Reed has recently drawn attention in *The Buckinghamshire Landscape* (p.74) to two further minor place names, now lost, *Walecombe* and *Comberthornweye*, which refer to the British inhabitants of Bernwood. Indeed Bernwood, before its progressive dismemberment from the 9th century onwards, must have been a classic example of the multiple estates of British origin which G. R. J. Jones has described in the *Agrarian History* and elsewhere. Various services were rendered to its *caput*, the hill-town of Brill, from land well outside the medieval forest. In particular, land at Swanbourne paid rent measured in bowls of honey; this render has a very archaic appearance, and there is a Walls Ground and Walls Close (otherwise Braggenshaws) on the Swanbourne-Winslow border.

The Wealabroc has three headwaters:

(i)   a stream rising near Claydon Lawn at 735 234 on the 325 ft. contour, perhaps originally higher; this constitutes the boundary between Hogshaw and East Claydon.

(ii) the Fulbrook, rising in the moat of Fulbrook Farm (750 225) at 375 ft. It derived its name from its opaque waters (cf. the Celtic contrast between the dark Thame and the clear Wendover). It gave its name to a hamlet in Hogshaw parish, and is within that parish throughout its course.

(iii) a brook rising on the slopes of Quainton Hill at 753 217, just above the 500 ft. contour. This constitutes the Hogshaw boundary with Quainton from its source down to 757 230, where it meets the Roman road, known hereabouts as Dead Man's Lane. The acute angle between the brook and the lane is the northernmost point of Quainton, and is called the Lower Steert, probably from *steort* 'tail' rather than *stræt*. From this point, which is the triple boundary of Quainton, Hogshaw and North Marston, the brook closely follows the Roman road (No. 162) northwards to Dead Man's Gate, 755 238. The road (now a bridleway) is in North Marston, the brook itself in Hogshaw. At Dead Man's Gate it picks up another trickle coming down the Hertmere, and then leaves the Roman road and seeps into the Fulbrook at 753 240. (The Ordnance maps are quite misleading as regards this last section; the smaller-scale maps omit it, the 25-inch map shows it as flowing the wrong way. Since 1980 it has been bypassed by a new drainage channel dug across the adjoining Holland's Meadow in Hogshaw.) This is the longest of the three streams, it rises highest and has the best claim to be the Wealabroc, though this point does not affect the interpretation of the charter boundary.

Deadman's Corner

The Hertmere reaches the *stret*, with its accompanying brook, at 755 238, the point where the Granborough-Hogshaw road crosses it and turns sharp right. The

highway verge expands into a small green, and the name of this significant point is Deadman's Corner, about a mile west of Dead Man's Cross on the Granborough-Marston road. The field to the south-east is Deadman's Ground, and at the Inclosure (1797) the gate between Granborough and North Marston actually on the Roman road was called Dead Man's Gate. The adjoining gate between Granborough and Hogshaw was Burrell's Gate; on the 1600 map it is Fulbroke Gate, either because the Fulbrook is just ahead or because this part of Hogshaw parish is in the hamlet of Fulbrook; Lower Hogshaw farm (751 240) is Lower Fulbrook on Lipscomb's map.

Deadman's Corner is the meeting-place of no less than nine existing or former roads or footpaths, each one coming in from a township or hamlet which was once within the hundred. Starting from the east, they are as follows:

(i)   E: Hertmere, constituting the Granborough/North Marston boundary and coming from Hoggeston. The way shown on the 1600 map runs slightly to the north of this but reaches the same point.

(ii)   SSE: Dead Man's Lane, the Roman road, coming originally from Fleet Marston. It is joined at 756 235 by a footpath coming in from North Marston.

(iii) SSW: a footpath from Waddesdon across the Quainton hills, with a spur coming in from Fulbrook.

(iv)   SW: a footpath from the deserted medieval village of Hogshaw, taken as centred on the site of its church (demolished in 1730). Beyond this is the former detached part of Hogshaw, called Kitehill or Kitehall, a derelict farm deep in the woods (723 221) which no county history mentions, though it probably represents a pioneering English settlement far into Bernwood.

(v)   WNW: the road from Middle Claydon and Botolph Claydon.

(vi)   NW: a bridleway from East Claydon. At present this joins (v) at 751 241, but formerly it is thought to have met the Roman road (vii) north of Deadman's Corner. Indeed, local opinion is that East Claydon was on the Roman road, though field-work by the Viatores does not support this. Lipscomb[28] says that East Claydon is "at the intersection of ancient roads, which having been gradually disused, and at length superseded by the formation of a modern turnpike road through the neighbouring town of Winslow, are now scarcely to be traced"; thus (vi) may well represent the coach route to Buckingham.

(vii) NNW: the Roman road, originally providing a route from Adstock and Addington.

(viii) NNE: the Saltway, so named on the Fortescue estate map, coming from the deserted medieval hamlet of Biggin and probably from Winslow. It approached Deadman's Corner across the former Bowmead Common, but was diverted to meet (ix). In 1979 this part of its course was again diverted by the Aylesbury Vale District Council on to (vii), the line of the Roman road; thus an old route has been combined with one still older.

(ix)   NE: Hogshaw Road from Granborough.

Of these nine ways, only (v) and (ix) are metalled roads, though (ii), now a cart-track, was a road until the 19th century. This convergence of routes is clearly significant. There is a curious analogue in Bedfordshire: Deadman's Oak is the meeting-

place of Wixamtree hundred[29]. The tracks which meet at Deadman's Corner come in from all the villages of the Domesday hundred of Waddesdon, with the exception of its detached part at Creslow (whose Domesday listing may be no more than a clerical error). The hundred is in fact a grouping of settlements on either side of the Roman road — not on the road, which passes only two houses (Stonehill and Sionhill) in its ten-mile course across lonely country between Fleet Marston and Addington. In the late 6th century the surviving section of the road was probably adopted as a frontier between English and British areas. Some agreed point on the boundary would have been needed where the two peoples could meet and conduct whatever transactions they found necessary; and such a meeting-place could well remain in use when the road ceased to be a frontier, while remaining a township boundary. The grouping of townships which constituted the hundred would have originated soon afterwards, while the road was still reasonably metalled; probably, therefore, in the 7th century. When the southern stretch became impassable, access from Waddesdon, Fleet Marston and Quarrendon would have become inconvenient, and by the 11th century the *caput* of the hundred had been fixed at Waddesdon, no doubt because this was the largest centre of population. Adstock, Hoggeston and Creslow, which were included in the hundred in 1086, but were remote from Waddesdon, were transferred to other hundreds.

It was probably at some time in the 7th century that Bernwood with its British inhabitants was taken over by the Mercian kings as a royal forest, with Brill as its centre; Penda's reign seems most likely, and the Britons might well have welcomed this as a protection against English settlers who would naturally covet the swine-pasture and timber which the forest provided. Two of them succeeded; Long Crendon secured Tittershall Wood, eight miles from the village, and it would appear that Hoggeston obtained Hogshaw, the route between the two giving rise to the Hertmere which was adopted as the boundary between Granborough and North Marston.

This last statement may involve a slight anachronism; in the 8th century, North Marston was probably an uncleared chase. Previously Granborough, North Marston and Pitchcott may well have constituted a single great estate with simple boundaries consisting almost entirely of watercourses and the Roman road. The boundary between North Marston and Pitchcott is obviously artificial. Picca's cottages may have existed in the far south of this estate almost as soon as the settlement in the north at *Baldinigcotum*, with miles of uncleared wood and marsh between them.

In both cases the *-cot(e)* names probably related to the humble homes of dependents of the ceorl who gave his name to lands newly opened to colonisation, probably in the eighth rather than the seventh century, since *cot(e)* does not occur in the corpus of place names recorded up to 731[30]. If the field-name Weedon Hill in Granborough were original it would point to occupation in the first half of the seventh century, before the conversion (*wēoh*, idol), but it may well be a transferred name from Weedon in the Vale of Aylesbury.

Æt Scelfdune sive Baldinigcotum

The interpretation of the second estate as Granborough has so far depended entirely on the description of its bounds, which though very brief is accurate and sufficient, if the word-division *Stret/Wealabroc* is accepted. In 792, however, Granborough was a

hill, not the village centre, and the estate was identified as *æt Scelfdune sive Baldinigcotum*; the disjunctive *sive* varies in sense, but it is at least clear that this incipient community of three hides had as yet no settled name. The forms are in the dative, used as locative (sing. and pl. respectively). *Scelfdun* should mean a hill which is or has a shelf or ledge; the sense 'ledge, shelving terrain' is accepted for *scylf* by A. Campbell.[31] The green hill on which the village centre of Granborough now stands has a kind of shelf or step between the summit and the Swanbourne (Kites Brook); its north end is now known as Mill Hill (mentioned in the court rolls of Winslow, 1347) or Millknob Hill, from a windmill mound (perhaps a tumulus) at 767 258; its north slope is Swinhill (mentioned 1432), its south-west slope Hollow Hill, corrupted to Holly Hill. On Lipscomb's map the whole shelf is Bigging Hill, from the deserted manor of Biggin which stood between it and the brook (Biggyng 1335–49, Bygging 1467, Biggyn 1479, Biggend 1551, Biggin 1586, Bigend 1620, Bygyn or Berry farm 1677). The name can hardly be earlier than the 11th century, but the habitation site may well be that of the cottages associated with Bald, or the cottages on the 'island' associated with Bald if the name contains the element *ēg*. Morley Davies[32] says of this element "It means literally an island, and was applied to settlements near the water but just safely out of reach of floods". This would hold good of the Millhook and Biggin fields south of the brook.

Biggin Manor had its own chapel which stood "a little below the bridge which unites Winslow and Granbow fields, near the river-side".[33] The parish processions on Rogation Monday halted here before a cross "in the large hollow of a beam of it". The chapel was pulled down about 1680 by John Deverell of Swanbourne and the cross may be the 15th-century alabaster Crucifixion with St. John and the Three Marys, long preserved at Millhook Farm but now in Granborough Church.

Various earthworks remain in Biggin Field (including Biggin Ground and Biggin Meadow), among them a pear-shaped enclosure surrounded partly by a bank and partly by a ditch, traces of other enclosures and what the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments[34] describes as "a straight line of entrenchment consisting of a strong rampart and ditch, with gaps, resembling embrasures, in the rampart"; locally it is regarded as the bank of a fishpond. It is not claimed that any of these are of Middle Saxon date, but this looks the right neighbourhood for the cottagers, while Bald could overlook them from the *Scelfdun*.

The estate had gained the name *Grenebeorge* by 1042–49, when Ægelwine 'niger' restored it to St. Albans[35]. If Leofstan became abbot about 1048[36] the charter could be more closely dated. The name is in line with the gnomic verses prefixed to the Abingdon text of the Chronicle 'beorh sceal on eorþan grene standan'[37], but the second element was often taken as *burh* (dat. *byrig*) and the historians of St. Albans mention that the Sheriff had to ascertain whether Grenesbury and Grenesborowe were one and the same[38]. (The forms Greneberne 1285, Grenbourn 1348 add to the confusion.) When the name was adopted the village would already have been centred on the hilltop, 768 250, where the church and other public buildings are grouped round the crossroads. Nevertheless the transfer was not complete; the village has a second centre downhill at what was until the Inclosure its village green, 767 252, where two inns stood and one survives. This is on the 'shelf', or rather in a slight depression (the Dene) between the shelf and the summit. Granborough seems to be an excellent illustration

of the finding that the most stable feature of a village is in general not its location or its name, but its boundaries.

The third estate: Horwood

Like the second estate, the third has alternative names: *ubi dicitur Scuccanhlau vel Fenntuun*, the sense of *vel* being quite classical, "call it which you will". Clearly the two names cannot relate to the same locality. Scuccanhlau is Shucklow, the hill or mound of the demon, identified by Mawer and Stenton[39] as Shucklow Warren, now Warren Farm. In fact Warren Farm took its name from Shucklow Warren, which covered a large area before the Inclosure, but this in turn must have taken its name from a barrow, at or very near the highest point of the Horwoods (502ft. at 794 319), just south of the Roman road no. 175A from Willen and Secklow across Whaddon Chase to Little Horwood. In his description of this road, C. W. Green comments[40]

> At the turn south [S.W.] to the village [of Little Horwood; at 799 322] the ancient line continues ahead .... beside a field once known as Shucklow, the barrow of the demon or evil spirit, but this landmark has also been swept away. The road is now entering an area of Celtic and Roman finds around Winslow[41] ....

The omitted words are "along a parish boundary" but in fact the boundary between Great and Little Horwood in this neighbourhood follows the Roman road no. 166, not 175A. Apart from this, the only correction needed is the deletion of the word "once", since the name Shucklow is still current, with only the slightest change in pronunciation. It occurs as *Shuckla* in the field-names collected in 1977 by the Bucks County Museum (rather as Secklow became Seckley in 17th-century terriers) and it refers quite specifically to a small field in which the highest point occurs, and to no other parcel of land. No trace of the barrow remains, and formally *hlaw* could be simply 'hill', but the summit is too flat for this to be likely. The choice of the highest point is natural enough; Secklow, a hundred meeting-place, is at the highest point of Bradwell Common, a site now occupied by the city centre of Milton Keynes (the name, which could well have been given to the new city itself, survives as a road-name Seckloe Gate). Some confusion has been caused by the statement in the Hertfordshire *VCH*[42] that Scuccanhlau has been identified with Shecklow in Bucks; no such form is known for either site.

In view of current usage, the heading 'Warren Farm' in the Place-name Society's Buckinghamshire volume could be replaced by 'Shucklow (lost on map but survives locally)' and in the Index the name should no longer be italicised as lost.

The word *scucca* 'demon' occurs in *Beowulf* and was used for Satan in the Old English translation of Matthew iv. 10 'Ða cwæd se Hælend to him "Gang þu sceocca on-bæc" '. In Early Middle English it became *schucke*, but is not on record after c.1230. The suggested derivation from a root **skuh* 'terrify' is supported by the Bedfordshire verb *shuck* 'shrink, draw back' which occurs in Bunyan. The noun survived in the eastern counties, and has a specialised meaning. Shuck is a fiend who prowls along ancient roads such as the Peddar's Way. He is more often heard or felt than seen; indeed to see him is a portent of impending death or disaster. He can change his shape, but is usually a calf-sized black dog with a shaggy coat or mane and fiery

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eyes like saucers.[43] In the words of a Garveston informant 'He has a lane, and a place out of which he come, and he vanish when he hev gone far enough'.[44] Near Woughton-on-the-Green, six miles from Shucklow, a spectral dog comes out of Curley Bush but 'keeps to the other side of Woughton, and never far from the bush'.[45]

Clearly at Shucklow, Shuck is the guardian of the barrow, close to a Roman road and near a Roman cross-roads. The usual Germanic dragon *(draca sceal on hlæwe,* whence the various Drakelows) seems to have been replaced locally by a Celtic dog-fiend *(cwn annwn).* It may be significant that Shuck and his analogues are often found in areas of late Celtic survival — the edge of the Fens, the forested areas of North Bucks, the Cotswolds[46] and the South-West. In Cornwall the road between Bodmin and Launceston is haunted by a dog as big as a calf, with eyes as large as saucers and a foaming mouth.[47]

It would appear that the name Shucklow has been suppressed rather than lost. In recent years a resident of Little Horwood intending to call his house by that name thought it better to rename it Goblin Cottage.

Fenntuun, in contrast to Shucklow, is the farm in or by the fen, and must surely be in the river-valley. The most eligible site is that of Horwood House (796 296) built in 1914 on the site of a mansion of 16th-century date[48], nearly a mile south-east of Little Horwood church, on a slight spur, just above the 400 ft. contour, some 20 ft. above the brook which separates the Horwoods from Winslow and Swanbourne. To the south-east is The Fen, at the triple junction of Little Horwood, Mursley and Swanbourne (800 294). To the south of Horwood House is Middle Fenn, on the Swanbourne side of the stream (794 290). These clues may seem insufficient, but the element *fenn* is very rare in field-names in Buckinghamshire (it is not listed by Mawer and Stenton) and does not occur at all in place-names except in the adjectival form 'fenny'. Other terms were preferred for low-lying, marshy ground (e.g. *mersc, mor, slæd, sloh)* probably because of the ominous associations of *fenn;* the gnomic verses already quoted have 'þyrs sceal on fenne gewunian/ana innan lande'. Fens were more suited to solitary monsters than to farmers.

The mortal fear inspired by the self-igniting flames of marsh gas was a living tradition in the writer's family in the Ouse valley a century ago, and in the Fens 'the lantern man will always try to come agin you and to kill ye, if so be he is able'.[49]

Again, as in Granborough, we have two names for an estate, neither of which can relate to the existing village centre, and neither of which survived as the name of a parish or even a farm. The names *Scuccanhlau* and *Fenntuun* were both too ill-omened; in consequence, Great and Little Horwood take their names from *Horwudu,* which might have been taken in the Middle Ages as 'hoar wood' (grey, venerable with age) rather than 'hore (dirty) wood'; indeed *hore* from *horu* disappears after early Middle English, while 'holtes hoar' was a familiar tag.

The nucleation of the villages probably took place well after 792. Reed has pointed out[50] that "of the twelve occupation sites in [Great and Little] Horwood [since Roman times] we know the names of only four". In the settlement period, as in the Roman period and probably earlier, habitation sites were movable within ancient estate boundaries, and the Horwoods seem to represent a single large estate. The 10 hides are conveyed *cum silva quae cognominatur Horwudu cum terminis suis;* the implication is that the wood (or perhaps the estate) included its bounds, but these

were apparently so well known as to need no description. The bounds of the second estate may have been recited because a larger estate was being subdivided.

Luard in his edition of the St. Albans Chronicle[51] identifies *Horwudu* as "Harwood, part of Brill Forest". He probably meant Horwood, which was often spelt Harwood in in the 18th and 19th centuries, but although Great and Little Horwood lay wholly within Whaddon Chase, that chase did not form part of the royal forest centred on Brill. Offa's grant may well have related to the whole of what became the parishes of Great and Little Horwood; the boundary between them was clearly drawn around existing furlongs, and cannot be primitive. In the 11th century, however, St. Albans Abbey held Little Horwood but not Great Horwood; again, they may have prudently settled for part of what had once been theirs.

The fourth estate: æt Lygetune

At present there can be no certainty about the identification of the 5 hides *æt Lygetune* which Offa had seized from Abbot Alhmund. The Hertfordshire *VCH*[52] says "possibly Luton, co. Beds". If the whole grant relates to a compact block of land around Winslow, the fourth estate should be Swanbourne if Winslow then excluded that parish, or Mursley if Winslow included Swanbourne. In either case the second, third and fourth estates would then be arranged clockwise around Winslow, starting in the south. The Herts *VCH* thought that the grant included the greater part of Mursley hundred, but this seems to rest on a wrong identification of *Scelfdun* as Salden; this was followed by Sawyer, but the early forms of Salden show it to be most unlikely; they point clearly to *sceald, denu* as the elements, and 'shallow valley' suits the site. Scelfdun could well have developed to *Seldon under Norman influence, and the resulting confusion with Salden may explain why the name did not survive.

There is no evidence that St. Albans Abbey ever held or claimed Mursley or Salden, but in the 11th century it did possess a fourth estate in North Buckinghamshire, namely Aston Abbots. The name Aston is a puzzle, since there is no corresponding Weston; Mawer and Stenton suggested that it might have been so named after its acquisition by St. Albans, as being the most easterly of the Abbey's Bucks estates. If so it would have had an earlier name, and if this was *Lygetun* the change would have usefully distinguished it from the much more prominent Luton and the nearer Loughton. Aston was left to the Abbey by Wulf under the name Easttun, as he had it from Edward the Confessor, and with that king's consent,[53] but as at Granborough this may well be a recovery of land lost in the Danish troubles or in the Mercian anti-monastic reaction of 975-83. Wulf's will is listed by M. Gelling under Herts, but there should have been a cross-reference in the Bucks list.

A possible alternative suggestion is at Cold Brayfield, where Old Layton is mentioned as a manor in the early 17th century, and subsequently appears as an alternative name for the principal or composite manor of Cold Brayfield.[54]

The four estates of Winslow, Granborough (with Biggin), Little Horwood and Aston Abbots all remained in the possession of St. Albans Abbey until the Dissolution. Even after they had passed into lay hands the four parishes remained in the Archdeaconry of St. Albans and the diocese of London until 1845, when they were transferred to the Archdeaconry of Buckingham in the diocese of Oxford,[55] and the connection between St. Albans and its earliest royal endowment finally came to an end.

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4. K. Branigan, *Town and Country: Verulamium and the Roman Chilterns* (1973), p. 144.
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