OLDSWINFORD PARISH BOUNDARY:
LANDSCAPE, OWNERSHIP, AND PLACE-NAMES RECORDED IN THE 1733 PERAMBULATION
by

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This article discusses the landscape around Stourbridge as it was during the early eighteenth century. The town developed in the ancient parish of Oldswinford; and, in 1733, a perambulation of the parish (i.e. a description of landmarks along its boundary) was recorded in the *Old Swinford* Parish Register*. We will analyse this perambulation and the place-names mentioned within it in some detail.

The present study's purpose is not to establish the course of the boundary at that date; it is already well known from maps dated 1699,[1] 1760,[2] 1782,[3] 1827,[4] 1846[5] and, of course, from the County-Series Ordnance Survey (OS) maps which were published from *c.* 1884 onwards.[6] Rather, the object of the exercise is to locate each of the perambulation's landmarks as accurately as possible along the parish boundary line. Not only does this add to our knowledge of Stourbridge's landscape in the early 18th century, it also helps to establish a historical framework for some of the individual locations. Many of the landmarks mentioned are of wider historical interest, and attempts are made to explore their context and to relate them to other elements of the area's history.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARISH BOUNDARY

Many of England's parishes were established between the tenth and twelfth centuries; and there is little evidence for major changes in their boundaries until as late as the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

These so-called 'ancient parishes' were generally founded in order to minister to the occupants of specific manors or estates, so there is often a very close correspondence between parish and manor boundaries. Sometimes an ancient parish will include more than one manor, as is the case with Oldswinford parish (which incudes both Oldswinford manor and Amblecote manor) and, in other cases, a manor might include more than one ancient parish. Broadly speaking, however, the ancient parish boundaries which survived to be mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the nineteenth century, reflect an earlier pattern of post-Conquest manors and Anglo-Saxon estates. In certain places there is reason to suspect that parts of that early estate pattern may even have originated during the Roman period.

Fig. 00a recreates, from known ancient parish boundaries, the local pattern of manors which seem to have pertained in about 1200 AD and which persisted until modern times (i.e. the nineteenth century or later). Near the centre, we see the manors of Oldswinford and Amblecote, separated by the river Stour. Together these formed the ancient parish of Oldswinford. To its south is Pedmore parish, and to the north, the parish of Kingswinford. For context, fig. 00b shows the modern-day county boundaries overlaid upon the ancient-parish boundary pattern. The shaded area represents the post-1974 Dudley Borough.

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* *It is traditional for ecclesiastical documents to use the two-word spelling 'Old Swinford', whilst civil references generally spell the name as one word, 'Oldswinford'. An exception occurred around the seventeenth century, when the two-word spelling became ubiquitous. This is why, for example, the two-word spelling is preserved in names such as 'Old Swinford Hospital', which was founded in 1667.[7] Unless directly quoting such names or titles, the one-word form will be used throughout the remainder of this document.*
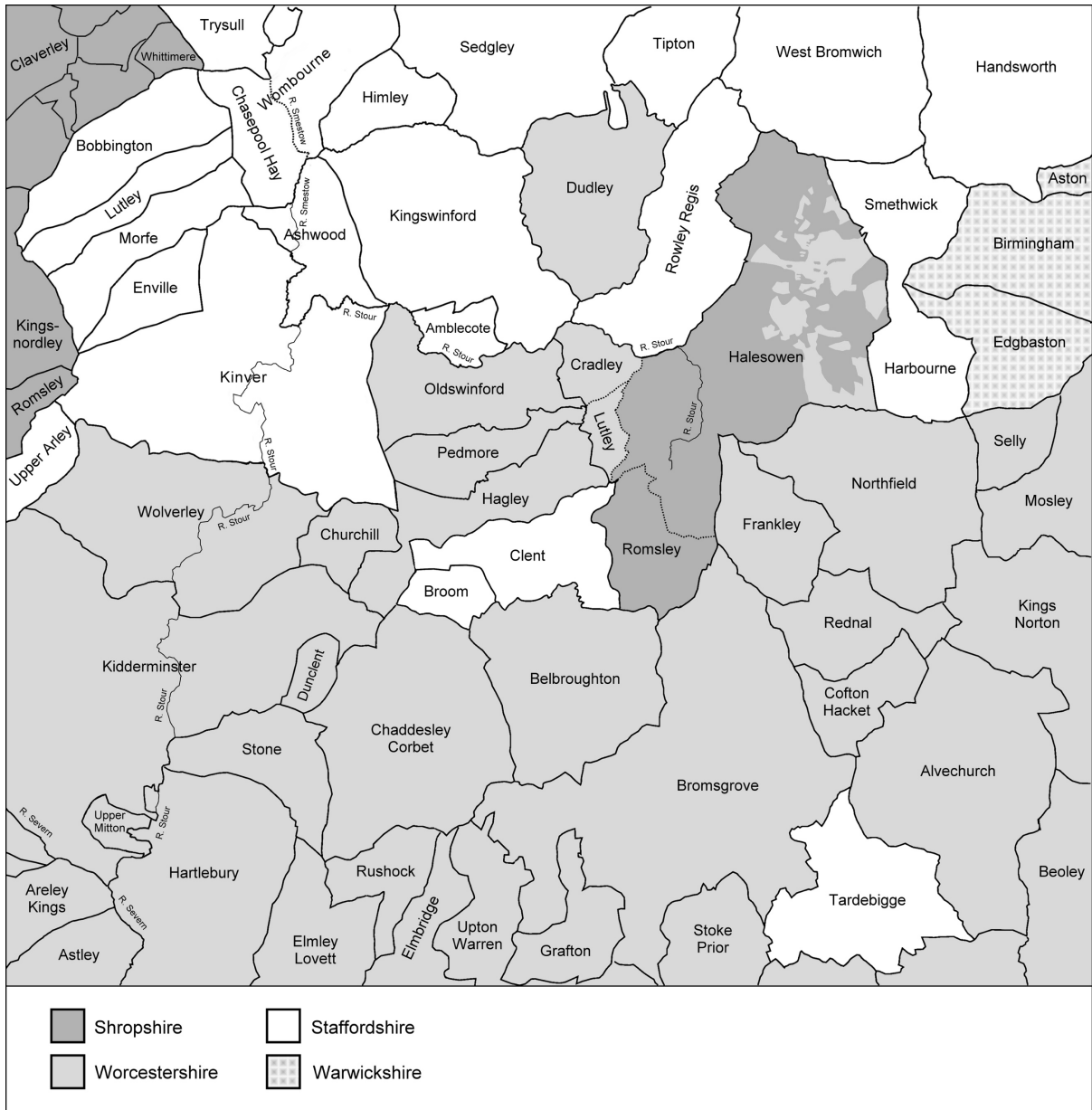
Figure 00a. *Likely pattern of ancient parishes, and their county affiliations, in about 1200 AD.*

Prior to about 955 AD, the land occupied by the manors of Kingswinford, Amblecote, Oldswinford, Pedmore, and perhaps Hagley and Clent as well, belonged to a region named Swinford after a ford on the Stour through which pigs were herded. At that date Swinford became divided along the line of the river. The king (Eadred, Eadwig or Edgar, it is not clear which) retained the section north of the Stour, while the portion to the south was gifted to a noble-man named Burhelm.[8] It seems that sometime later (after about 1016), Amblecote manor was carved out of Kingswinford; and a fairly extensive re-planning of the landscape around Burhelm's estate and Pedmore, resulted in the formation of Oldswinford and Pedmore manors.[9]

Amblecote lay considerably closer to Oldswinford parish church than it did to Kingswinford, and this may have been why it ultimately became part of Oldswinford parish (in the Worcester Diocese), despite Amblecote being located in Staffordshire rather than Worcestershire.[10] It is quite unusual for an ancient parish to be split between two different counties in this way.
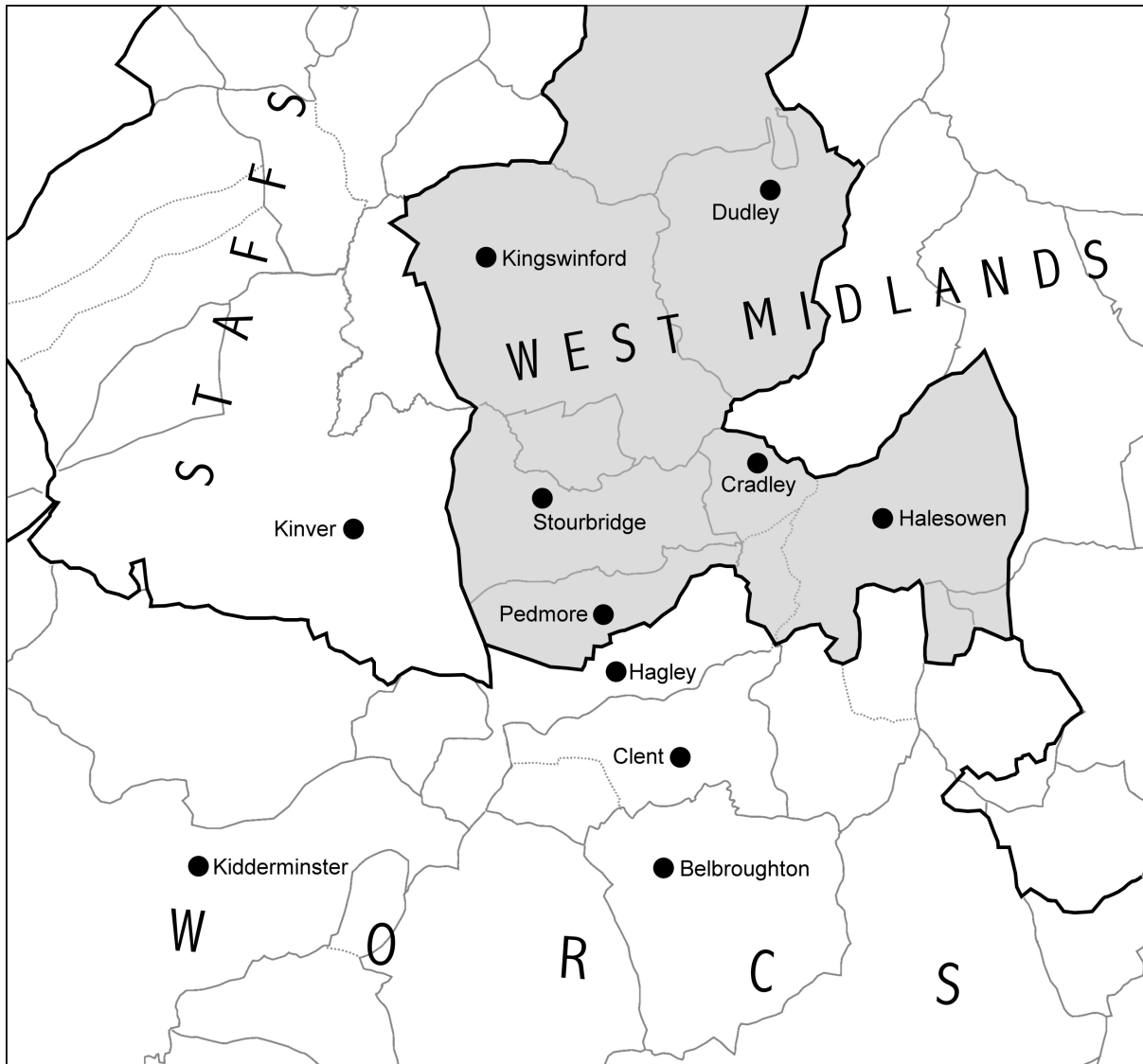
Figure 00b. *Pattern of ancient parishes overlaid with modern county and borough boundaries. The grey tinted area represents Dudley Metropolitan Borough.*

In its entirety, Oldswinford parish occupied several square miles of land extending between Brettle Lane in the north and Stourbridge Golf Course in the south, and from Wollaston Ridge and Norton Covert in the west to Lye and Foxcote in the east. The parish boundary recorded in 1733 enclosed the whole of Oldswinford and Amblecote manors, thereby spanning over two miles of the river Stour.

THE LANDSCAPE IN 1733

The perambulation is less than 300 years old, so it is certainly not ancient history. Although the local area was at that time beginning to see a rise in manufacturing industries, such as the Stourbridge glass trade, much of its economy was still agricultural. Large parts of the parish, especially in the west, consisted of moor-land and heath that was exploited as common land by parishioners.

Our description of the parish boundary was compiled about 60 years after Andrew Yarranton's abortive attempt to make the Stour navigable; and about half a century before the advent of the canals and turnpike roads. Travel and transportation were fraught with difficulties as most roads were little
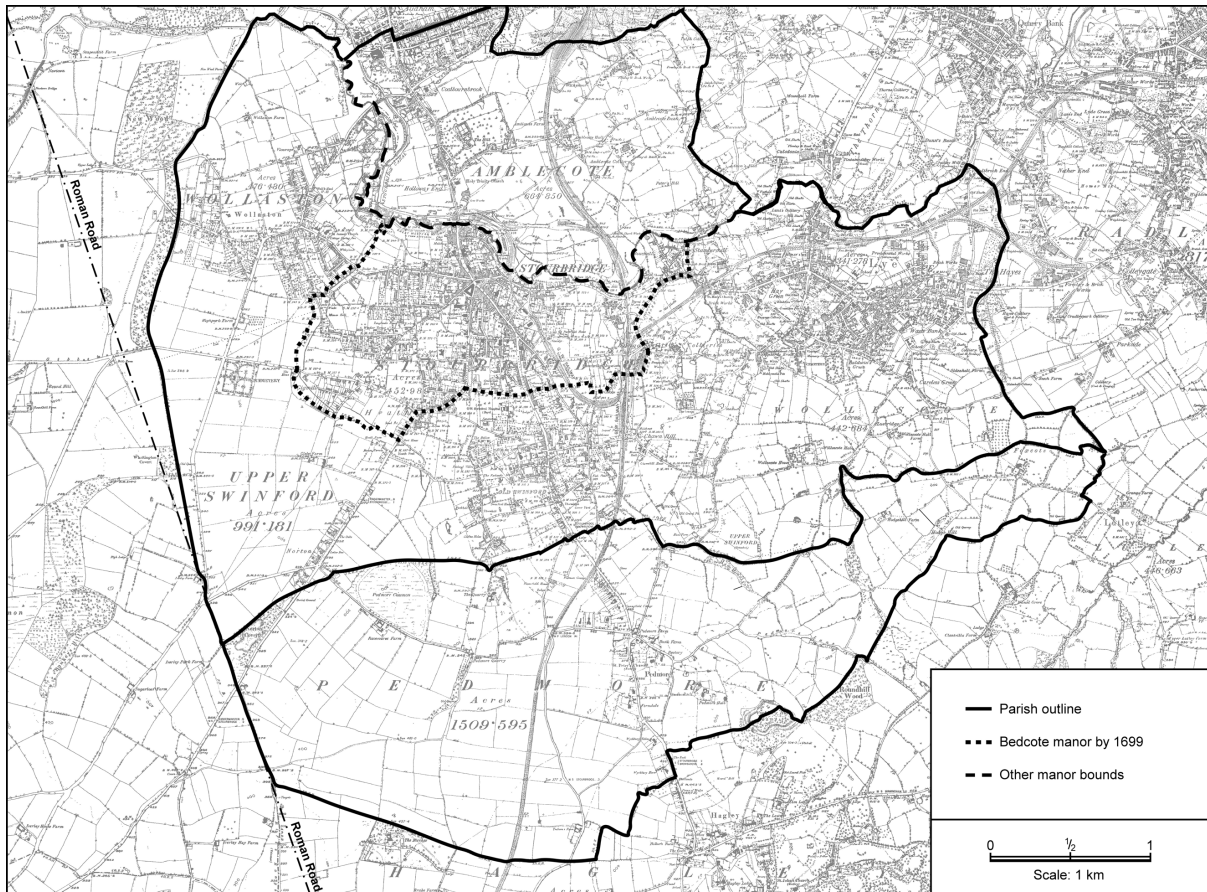
Figure 00c. *Ancient parishes and manorial boundary pattern around Stourbridge, on composite Ordnance Survey 6-inch map dated c. 1888. We see Amblecote manor in the north and Pedmore manor in the south. The manor of Oldswinford lies in the middle and within that lay the sub-manor of Bedcote (later known as Bedcote and Stourbridge). The parish of Oldswinford included the manors of Amblecote and Oldswinford (including Bedcote). Pedmore manor had its own parish which shared the same boundaries.*

more than muddy tracks. Some of those tracks were recorded in the perambulation and, while several still exist as roads and tracks today, some have left little trace.

The oldest surviving map of Oldswinford parish had been produced just 34 years before the perambulation,[11] although this map excluded the inferior manor of Bedcote and Stourbridge, and showed only *parts* of the Oldswinford parish boundary. The parish encompassed several separate townships, including Bedcote & Stourbridge, Lye, Wollescote (including Foxcote), Wollaston and, of course, Oldswinford village itself. The land belonging to the village was divided into areas named Lower and Upper Swinford, the latter subsequently becoming the modern-day Norton. Bedcote & Stourbridge had actually become a sub-manor of Oldswinford during the 14th century.[12] And Wollaston had been claimed (by its owners) to be another sub-manor of Oldswinford but those claims appear to have been unfounded, the confusion perhaps arising because Wollaston had been the only township within Oldswinford manor to have been enclosed within the Norman forest of Kinver and, until the area was disafforested in the 14th century, had been subject to a completely separate legal regime — i.e. forest law.[13]

Although some sections of the manorial boundary between Amblecote and Oldswinford — i.e. near Yarranton's excavations south of Wollaston Mill — appear to have been refined in the seventeenth century, Oldswinford's parish boundary seems to have changed little since the medieval period. A few other parts of the parish boundary remained only vaguely defined until the eighteenth century and, as we will see, at least two disputed segments of the boundary were recorded in the 1733 perambulation.

THE PERAMBULATION IN THE 'OLD SWINFORD PARISH REGISTER'

The perambulation of 1733 was recorded in volume 3 of the *Old Swinford Parish Register*, covering the years 1719–35.[14] It is the most detailed of the three known perambulations of the area (the other two being that of Burhelm's estate written in *c*. 955 AD[15], and the 1622 perambulation of Bedcote manor transcribed by Bishop Lyttelton in 1754[16]); and contains references to numerous individual fields, houses and their owners, as well as to several long-standing, but now disused, place-names. The perambulation is reproduced below in full.

The Bounds of the Parish of Old-Swinford Against Kingswinford, Kinfare, Pedmore and Hales-Owen. Taken in the year 1733.

The Bounds against Kingswinford Begin by the River Side in Mr. Dudley Brittle's meadow over against Low Lunt, all which meadow but about the upper fourth part is in Old-Swinford: the first x which marks the bounds against Kingswinford is on Gray's Bank near Scuts Gutter, which runs up to the Level leasow which is Paul Rogers's and so by the Ditch and Widdow Allchurch's Garden and House to the x on Amblecote Bank: thence round Whittimore by the Gutter Side and Through Mr. Raybold's Ox leasow to the Gutter Mouth Meadow, and so to the Phimbriel leasow at the corner of Brittle Lane: then by the North Hedge of the Platt leasows which are Mr. Henzey's to the Stower side over against Wollaston Copy where the Boys sometimes cross the water, and so along by the River Side to the x at Old-ford at the Bottom of Dividale where the bounds end against Kingswinford: and begin against Kinfare and run up to the x at New Wood Gate, about which x there is a dispute between Kinfare and Old-Swinford. Kinfare people say that their bounds Reach to the Green Path leading to the Corner of the Piece of Ground at Old-Ford, and accordingly make their x by the Green Path; the people of Old-Swinford say the Ditch without the wood is the extremity of Kinfare Bounds and accordingly make their x near the Ditch at the Wood gate: from the Gate or Green Path the Bounds run to the x at the South Corner of the wood over against the Ridge, and thence along the Ridge Top to Mr. Haycock's farm: from thence to the x at William Parr's Gate: then over the Hill to the corner of Norton's Piece where the Bounds begin against Pedmore: and to the x near the Top of the Slough Ditch: and Crossing that along the Green trig to Chapman's Gate: and then across the Moor and up Hobson's Meadow to the Lane over against the South Hedge of Job Raby's Garden in Upper Swinford: there was a Dispute many years Between the inhabitants of Old Swinford and Pedmore Concerning their Bounds upon the Hill before Parr's Farm. The Old Swinford Parishioners made a x at Blews Corner over against Porters or Halls House, those of Pedmore made their x at Parr's Corner. But in the year 1730 it was agreed Between the Rectors and some inhabitants of the two Parishes that the bounds should be as they are above Described: then we go from the South Hedge of Job Raby's Garden and Cross the Road, and a Long the Lane to Mr. Spencer's Ground and Down by the South Hedge to James Boucher's meadow and so to John Orford's Meadow: and a Long by the West Hedge to the Ground called Noman's Land: thence up to Longcraft and a Long by the East side of the Hides, which leads to the top of Hob Green: So down by the Water Course of Hob Green Dingle to the Tayle of Woolscoat Pool, and along by the South Hedge of Brookal or Hart's Meadows to Sensal Well: thence up the Vally of Sensal Close to the x ten or twelve yards on the North-West of the Stile leading to Fosent, and by the Hedge Side, then a Long the Path-way of Newbrough's Sensal to Fosent: and a Long Mr. Hill's five Acres to the Little Meadow, and Down the foredraught to the Great Meadow, and a Cross Ludlee Road to the Lower Meadow, and from the Gate Straight a Long the foot Path to the Corner of Pargiter's Meadow Hedge, and down to the Lower Corner of that Piece, where we Make the x against Halesowen Parish: and go up the North Side to the x in the upper furlong: so into the Pikes and up the foot Path into the Broad Innage, and to the x at Oldnal Gate: and a Long the Lane to Mr. Hill's House: so down the Well leasow and down the dingle of the Oldnal leasow which is Mr. Edward Badger's to the Brickill Close, and down by the dingle side to Saltbrook: from thence a Long by the Stower side to the Lye forge: from thence to the first Place in the Bounds above mention'd.

DISCUSSION

Here, the perambulation is broken down into convenient parts, most of them including two, or more, separate landmarks. Each is considered in some detail and, where appropriate, related to other aspects of that location's history.

1. *The Bounds against Kingswinford Begin by the River Side in Mr. Dudley Brittle's meadow over against Low Lunt, all which meadow but about the upper fourth part is in Old-Swinford:*

Low Lunt was a field shown on Bach's 1699 plan of Oldswinford Parish, abutting the Stour's south bank at SO 919850 (fig. 01a). It is known to historians from a 1656 *Indenture of Lease* from Thomas Millward to a Mr Wannerton.[17] The word *Lunt* in this field-name may have derived either from Old English (OE) *land*, which was used for 'selions (cultivated strips) in medieval open fields', or from Old French (OF) *launde*, a word brought to England with the Normans, meaning 'open space in woodland or woodland pasture'.

Richard Chambers interprets the perambulation as implying that *Mr. Dudley Brittle's meadow meadow* lay on the north side of the Stour, opposite *Low Lunt*, but then as a result — and perhaps in an expression of surprise — queries the implications of this for the enclosure of Amblecote's common land.[18]

It seems more likely that *Mr. Dudley Brittle's meadow* actually lay south of the Stour. Firstly because, as we will see throughout the remainder of this article, all of the fields and land mentioned in the perambulation actually lie within Oldswinford parish; and secondly because, if *Mr. Dudley Brittle's*

***Figure 01a**. Extract from Josiah Bach's 1699 plan of Oldswinford parish[19] showing the location of Low Lunt and Mr Gray's Fulling Mill.*
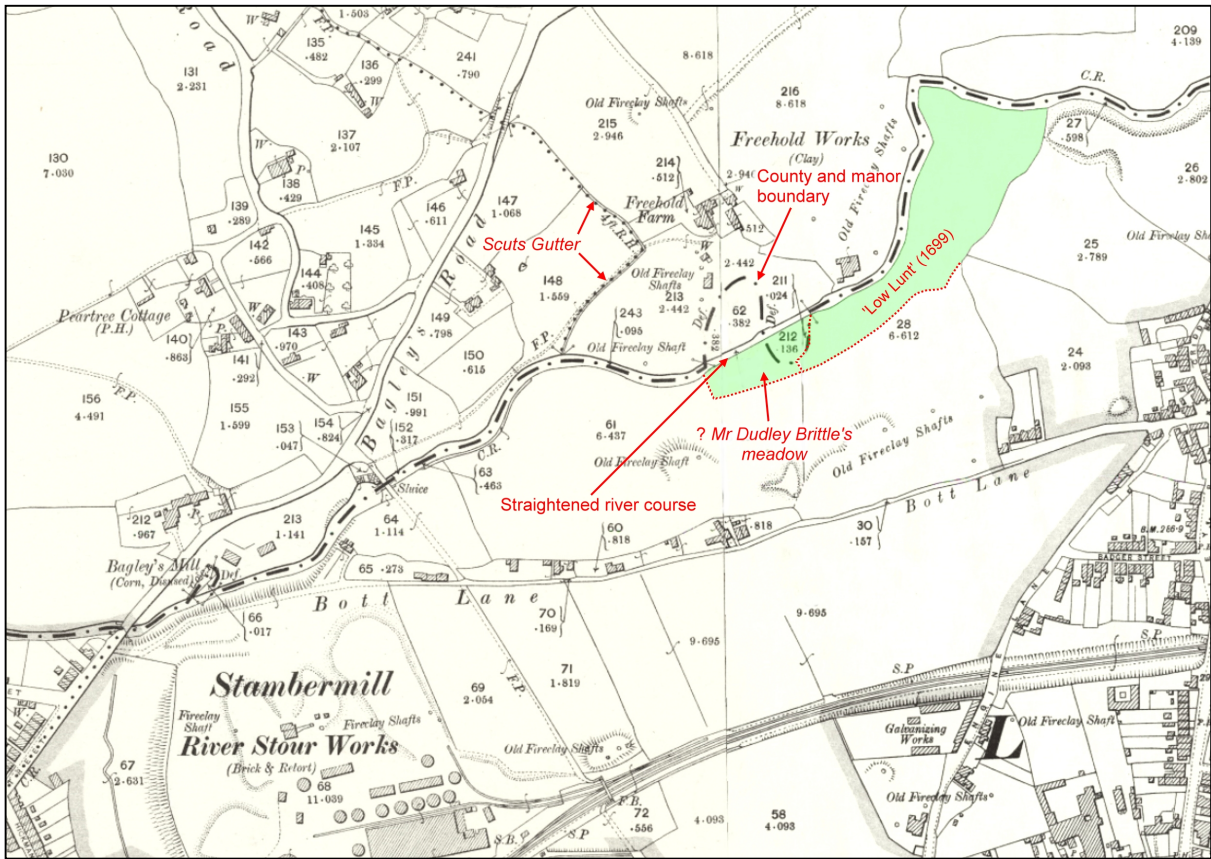
Figure 01b. *Boundary divergence near Mr Brittle's meadow, resulting from a straightening of the river Stour's course. Background map: OS 25-inch, Worcs. sheets IV.10 and IV.11 (1903, revised 1901).*[20]

meadow had been located north of the Stour it would not have been possible for *all...but about the upper fourth part* of it to have lain *in Old-Swinford*, as the perambulation claims.

The term *over against Low Lunt*, surely meant that *Mr Dudley Brittle's meadow* abutted *Low Lunt* on the latter's western side, not on the opposite (i.e. north) side of the river.

Fortunately, old maps, together with the perambulation's statement that *all ... but about the upper fourth part* of *Brittle's meadow* was *in Old-Swinford* parish, may help us here. It is likely that, by 1733, the river Stour had delineated the parish boundary for many hundreds of years, so the perambulation would be puzzling were it not for the fact that the river appears to have been straightened immediately to the west of *Low Lunt*, leaving the parish boundary unaltered, i.e. still tracing the original, meandering line of the Stour. This is clear from Ordnance Survey (OS) maps dating from 1884 onwards[21] (fig. 01b). Thus, if *Mr Dudley Brittle's meadow* had lain south of the straightened river channel, a small portion of Kingswinford parish would have projected into the north-east (i.e. *upper* or upstream) quadrant of the *meadow*.

No alteration of the river's course is evident on the 1699 plan[22] but, given the nature of the plan, this observation cannot be regarded as conclusive. The wording of the 1733 perambulation suggests that at least some of the straightening (e.g. the digging of a new channel) had occurred by that date. Interestingly, the 1782 plan[23] appears to show part of the original river channel still in place so it may be that the straightening evident on nineteenth-century OS maps occurred over many decades.

2. *the first x which marks the bounds against Kingswinford is on Gray's Bank near Scuts Gutter, which runs up to the Level leasow which is Paul Rogers's*

Gray's Bank is presumably related to 'Mr Gray's Fulling Mill' depicted just north of the Stour near Bagley Road on Josiah Bach's 1699 plan (fig. 01a).[24] This appears to be the same mill that was subsequently known as Bagley's Mill. The 1699 map also depicts a field belonging to Mr Gray just south of the Stour, close the the western end of Bott Lane. Presumably, this land or, more likely, ground north of the mill's pond, which extended about 200 metres up-stream, was *Gray's Bank*. Most of this area was referred to as 'Waste' in 1688.[25]

Figure 02a. *Amblecote tithe map (1837)[26] annotated to show Bagley's Mill and the inferred locations of Gray's Bank, Level leasow, and Scuts Gutter.*

Scuts Gutter must have been the name given to the minor watercourse depicted on OS County Series (and some later) maps, running along the western boundary of Amblecote. Its course appears to have been artificially altered in places, and its upper reaches are undoubtedly identical with *the Ditch* in section 3 below.

The name *Scuts Gutter* is almost certainly a reference to couch grass, thus *Scuts Gutter* would have meant 'brook overgrown with couch grass'. This is, perhaps, consistent with the nearby area being waste-land in 1688.[27] The OE term for 'couch grass', *cwice*, appears in many Middle English (ME) field-names as *Scutch* or similar, leading to modern name forms such as Squitch, Scorch, Quick, Coach, and Twitch, the latter being particularly prevalent in parts of Derbyshire.[28]

From its source south of Amblecote Bank (near SO 913854), *Scuts Gutter* descends steeply down the hill-side. Only the lower part of its course is shown in fig. 02b below, but the stream valley (which
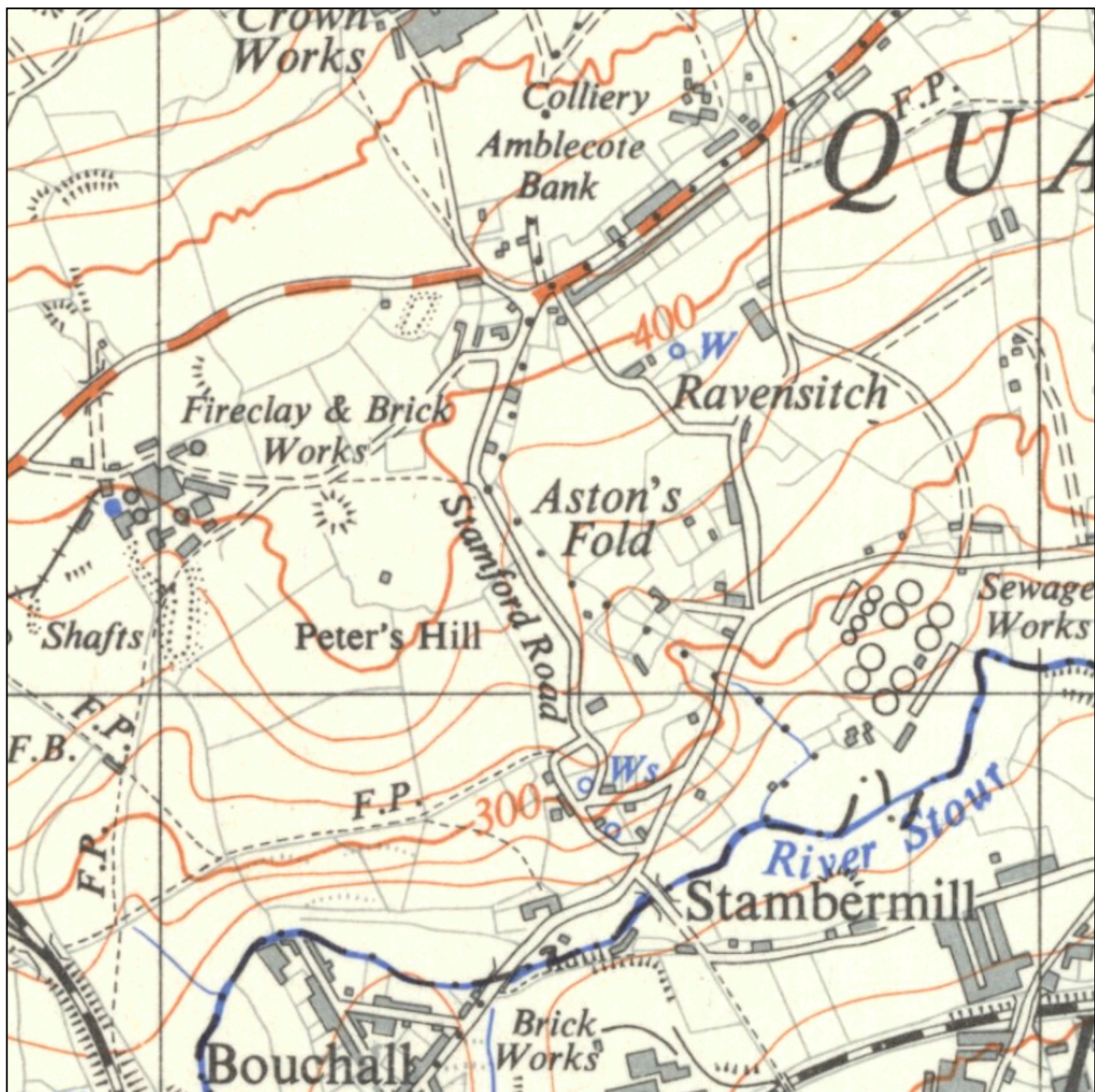

Figure 02b. *Extract from OS Sheet SO98 (1953, revised 1937–49)[29] showing the Scuts Gutter watercourse and stream valley.*

evidently defines the course of the parish boundary) ascends equally steeply, levelling out only around the present-day Broomhill Close and Nuthatch Drive. It is likely that *Level Leasow* lay close by (i.e. near SO 914852). Seven decades earlier, there were five small fields in this vicinity (un-named on an estate map of *c.* 1760[30]) , but these had been reduced to just three fields by 1837.[31] *Level leasow* must have been the one abutting the parish boundary (in both *c.* 1760 and 1837), i.e. the elongated triangular field lying between Stamford Road and the watercourse (*Scuts Gutter*). Outside the west midlands, the term 'leasow' normally indicates pasture land, but around the Black Country it was used in a more general sense to mean any enclosed agricultural land.

3.   and so by the Ditch and Widdow Allchurch's Garden and House to the x on Amblecote Bank:

Near SO 914852, the parish boundary line veers to the north-east and then passes close to another strip of land which was most likely *Widdow Allchurch's Garden and House*. A building, probably being the said house, is depicted here on maps of 1688,[32] *c.* 1760,[33] and 1837.[34]

The location of *Amblecote Bank* is well known and marked on maps today. From here, the boundary continued northwards, close to what is now a footpath linking Hillfields Road, Vicarage Close and Gayfield Avenue.
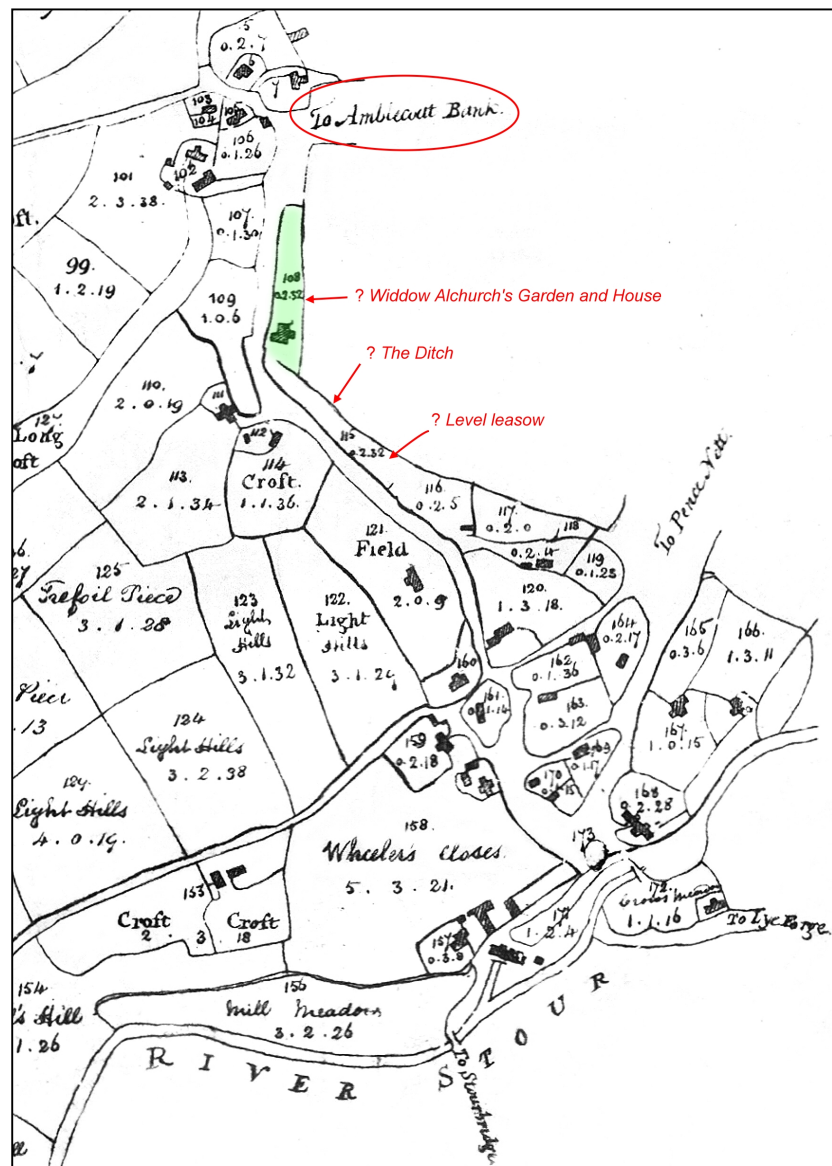

Figure 03a. Extract from the c. 1760 Amblecote estate map[35] showing the inferred locations of Level leasow, the Ditch, and Widdow Allchurch's House and Garden.
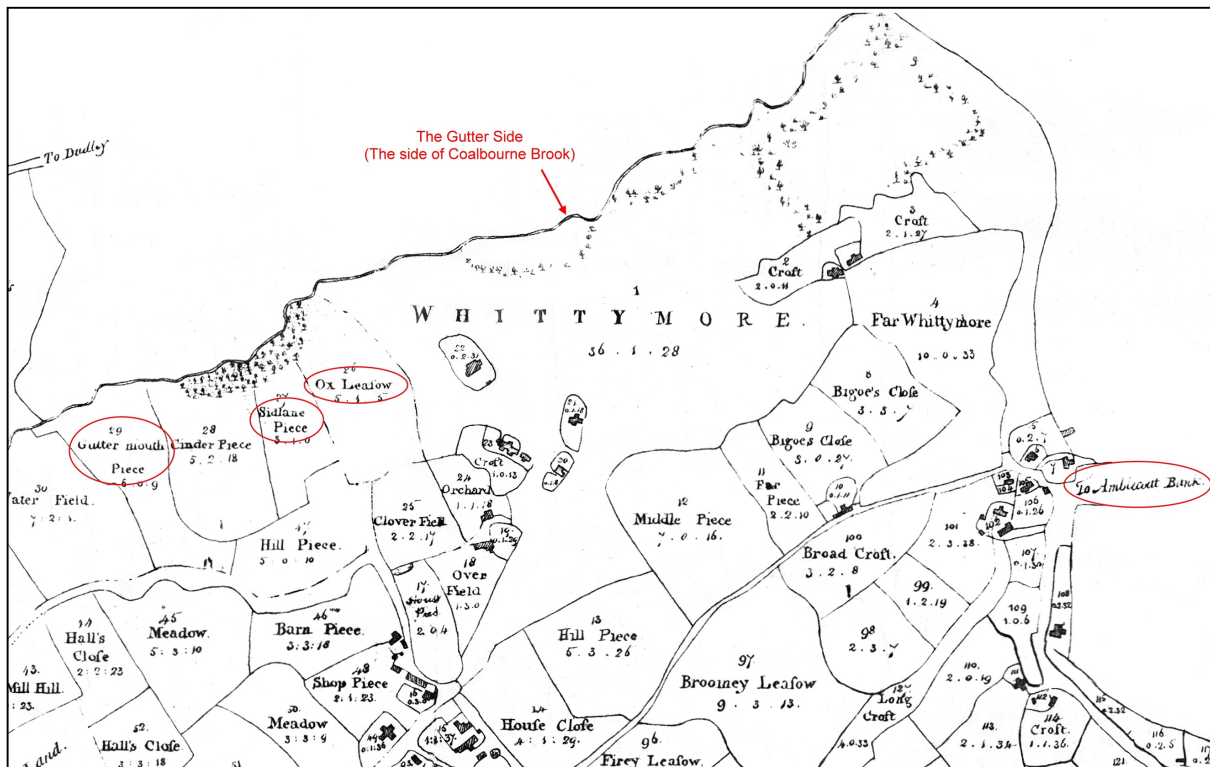
Figure 04a. *Extract from the c. 1760 Amblecote estate map*[36] *showing the Oldswinford parish boundary's course around Whittimore (Withymoor). Several fields mentioned in the perambulation, or noted in the present text are circled.*

4. *thence round Whittimore by the Gutter Side and Through Mr. Raybold's Ox leasow to the Gutter Mouth Meadow,*

Whittimore is the present-day Withymoor area in the north-east quadrant of Amblecote manor (and thus also of Oldswinford parish).

This part of the perambulation describes a lengthy stretch of the boundary around Withymoor, first following a course between the present-day Palm Croft and Barsham Drive to the north-east corner of Sainsbury's car-park (on Turners Lane). It then joins the Coalbourne Brook, which ran along what is now the wooded southern edge of the playing field here.

Much of the Coalbourne Brook is now culverted, but it flowed close to the present-day footpath between Wroxall Close and Troutbeck Drive, through the 1980s-landscaped pool here, and on beneath what is now the railway embankment. This Victorian structure also overlies the greater part of *Mr Raybold's Ox leasow*, a field mentioned in the perambulation. *Ox leasow* extended southwards from the Coalbourne Brook to near the present-day Blithe Close.

Adjacent to *Ox leasow* — i.e. just to its west — lay a field named 'Sidlane Piece' in *c*. 1760.[37] This was part of a cluster of fields named 'Ox Leasows' in 1688[38]. 'Sidlane' appears to be a reference to an ancient lane running north alongside the field from the old manorial hall and Amblecote Farm (and also possibly from an even earlier fortified site near the top of today's Queens Crescent[39]). The route-way may once have connected Amblecote to Buckpool and onwards to 'The Village' and parish church at Kingswinford.

Gutter Mouth Meadow, which was known as 'Gutter Mouth Piece' in *c*. 1760 and 'Oliver's Leasow' in 1688,[40] lay only a short distance to the west, as can be seen in fig. 04a.
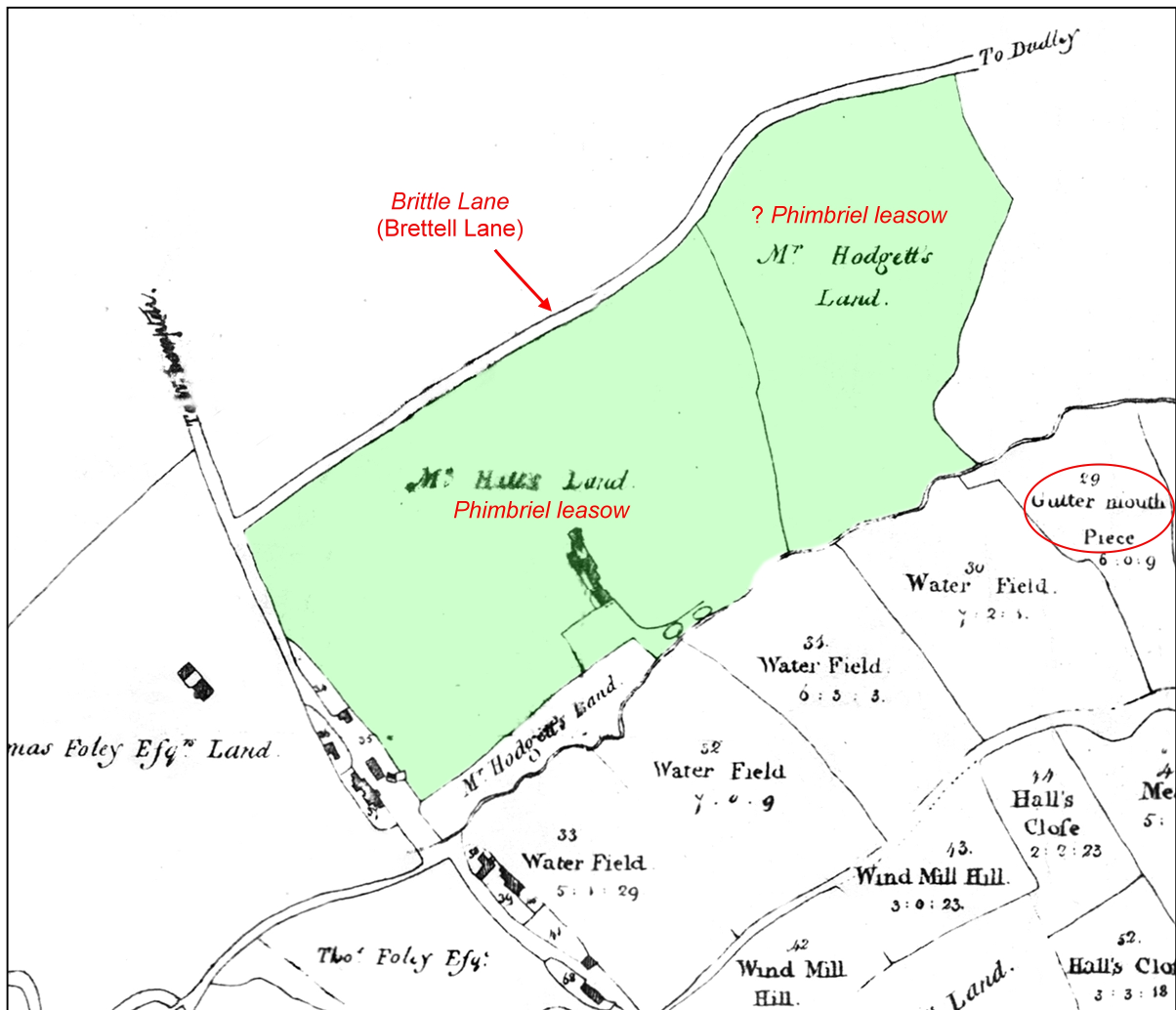
Figure 05a. *Extract from the Amblecote estate map of c. 1760*[41] *showing the inferred location of Phimbriel leasow.*

5. and so to the Phimbriel leasow at the corner of Brittle Lane:

Brittle Lane is clearly a reference to Brettel Lane. *Phimbriel Leaso*w seems to have been a large field which extended between the Coalbourne Brook and Brettle Lane. Part of it belonged to a 'Thomas Hill of Coalbournbrook' (settlement) in the 1760s, a field in which he later built Dennis House.[42] The field to the east, labelled as 'Mr Hodgett's Land' on the *c.* 1760 estate map of Amblecote,[43] may also have been part of *Phimbriel leasow*.[44] A *Fimbrell leasow* is recorded, in 1691,[45] as lying 'north-east of Coalbournebook' (a settlement which lay around the present-day junction of Collis Street and the A491).

The perambulation followed the field's eastern edge (which was defined by a minor tributary of the Coalbourne Brook), reaching Brettel Lane near its later junction with Collis Street before proceeding westwards along the lane to its junction with the Stourbridge-to-Kingswinford road (the A491). It thereby enclosed the area which became Dennis Park. That estate-name derived from the twelfth-century Denis of Amblecote,[46] and was re-used by Thomas Hill for his residence Dennis House (later Hall) when it was first built in the 1760s. It is interesting to note that neither the Dennis estate, nor *the Platt leasows* (see the following section) are represented on the 1688 map of Hon. John Lord Grey's landholdings in Amblecote[47]; his land seems to have extended no further north that the Coalbourne Brook and the Wollaston road.

Finally, taking a northward diversion from the end of Brettel Lane along the A491 (the course of a prehistoric salt-way) for about 70 metres brings us to the next part of the perambulation.

6. *then by the North Hedge of the Platt leasows which are Mr. Henzey's to the Stower side over against Wollaston Copy where the Boys sometimes cross the water,*

The area known as 'The Platts', presumably including the 1733 *Platt leasows*, belonged to Mr Thomas Foley in *c*. 1760.[48] Before that, in the fifteenth century, the land had been home to a family named *Platte*[49] who may well have taken their name from the place itself. 'Plat', 'Platt' and 'Platts' are moderately common place-names. They generally derive from the thirteenth-century ME words *plat* or *plot*, both meaning a small piece of ground.[50] If the place-name had not been transferred there in the form of the Platte's family name, the terminal <s> must represent the plural rather than the possessive form, suggesting that there were several such pieces of ground (plots) at this location.

Platt leasows' north hedge lay roughly along the line of the present-day Dial Lane. This was named for the Dial Glassworks that had been built in 1704 on the north-east corner of Brettel Lane but which was relocated to a site nearer the new Stourbridge Canal in 1788.[51] Near the glassworks, Dial Lane veered north for a few metres to join up with 'Stewkins' (fig. 06b), an ancient road whose name probably comes from the OE word **stacing*, meaning 'staking(s)', i.e. 'something marked out or enclosed with stakes'.[52] These stakings may have been fish-traps on the river Stour (as also seems to be the case in the Worcestershire place-name 'Stakenbridge', for example[53]). The location certainly fell just outside the area in which Amblecote's manorial ordinances had banned the setting of fish traps since at least the sixteenth century. An alternative explanation for stakes here may be that they were used as boundary markers, perhaps dividing the supposed plots of land in and around the Platts estate, or even apportioning segments of the nearby river bank between Amblecote and Wordsley, thereby defining, from an early date, the northern limits of Oldswinford parish.
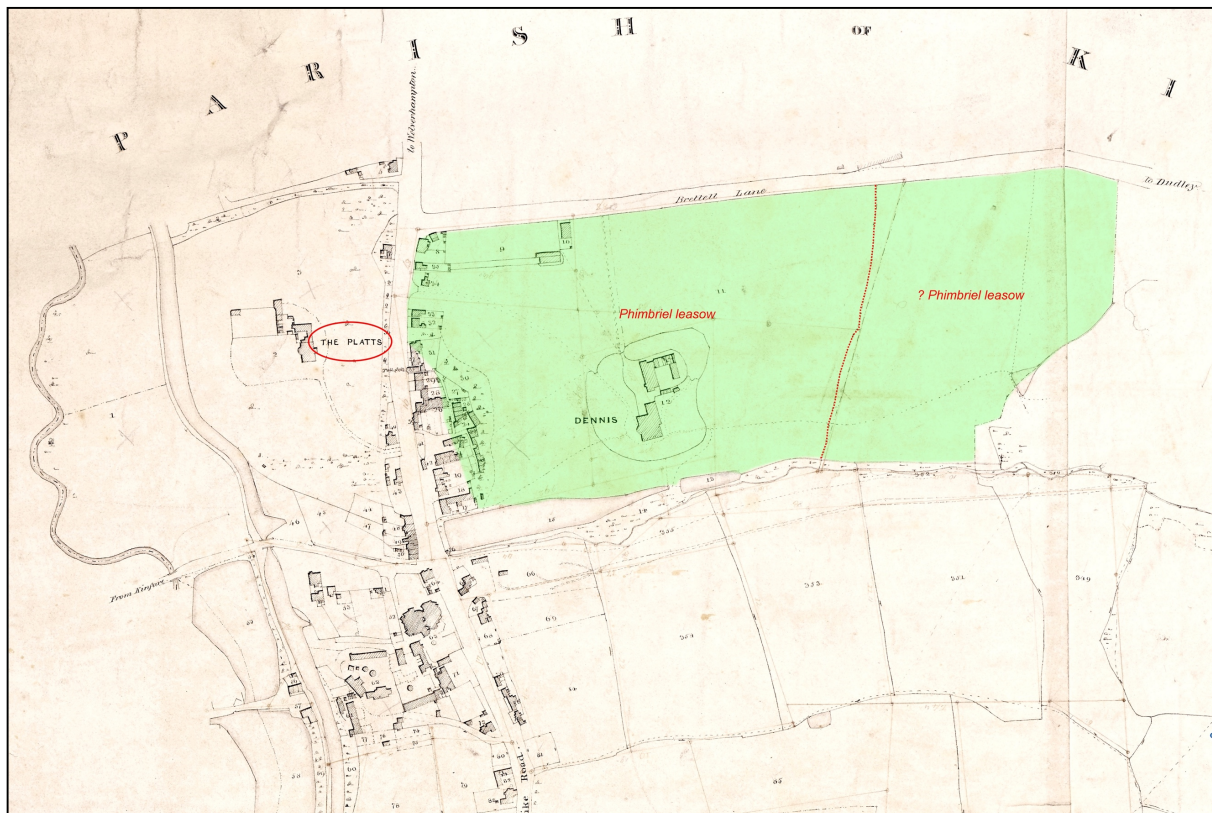

Figure 06a. Extract from the 1837 Amblecote Tithe map[54] showing the 1760s 'Dennis Park' and 'The Platts', with the 1733 Phimbriel Leasow tinted.
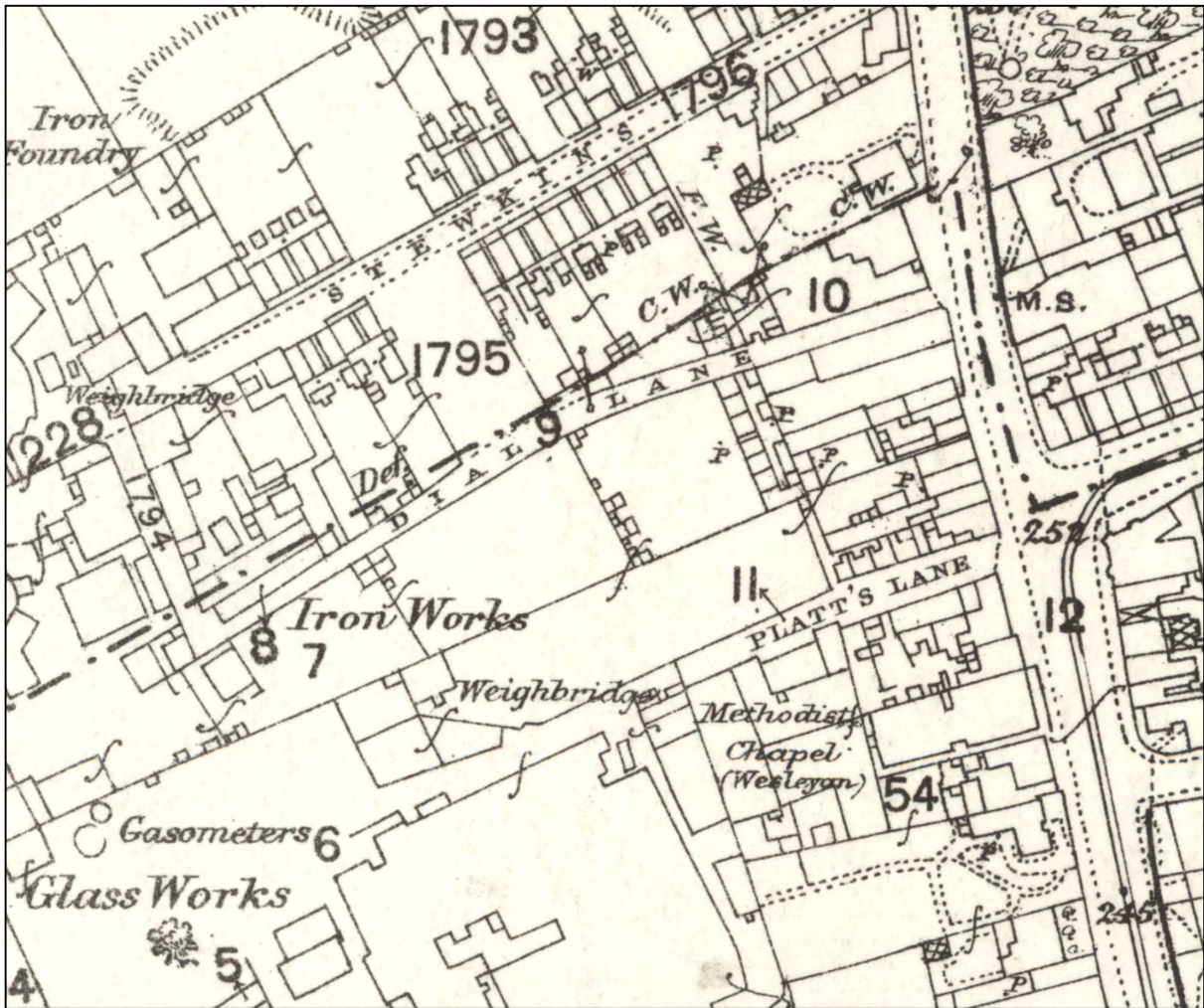
Figure 06b. *Extract from Ordnance Survey 25-inch Staffs. sheet LXXI.6 (1884)[55] showing the Oldswinford parish boundary close to Dial Lane and Stewkins.*

The place-name element *copy* in *Wollaston Copy* comes from the common ME word *copis*, 'coppice'.[56] This was an area of woodland in which trees were regularly cut back to near ground level in order to induce growth of usefully straight and vigorous new branches for subsequent harvesting. *Wollaston* Copy is depicted as a strip of woodland on Court and Blackden's 1782 map of Oldswinford parish, the north end of which lay opposite the *North Hedge of the Platt leasows*,[57] i.e. the coppice lay roughly along the line of the modern-day Richmond Grove. In the late eighteenth century it was owned by Lord Foley; indeed, it seems to have belonged to the Foley family since at least 1699.[58]

The phrase *where the Boys sometimes cross the water* implies that the river was, at least at certain times of the year, shallow enough to be forded, presumably on foot. Such shallowness would be consistent with the notion that the aforementioned 'stakings' were related to fish traps perhaps around eddy pools on the Stour. Traps such as that illustrated in fig. 06d have been used by cultures worldwide for millennia.[59]

7. *and so along by the River Side to the x at Old-ford at the Bottom of Dividale where the bounds end against Kingswinford:*

A place referred to as *Oldeforde juxta* (near) *Stapenhull* was referenced in a historical document of 1343;[60] and clearly it is to be identified with the 1733 perambulation's *Old-ford*. This lay at the lower end of a stream valley known as *Dividale* in 1774,[61] the name being indicative of the fact that the

Figure 06c. *Extract of OS 25-inch 1903 maps[62] showing the location of Wollaston Copy.*
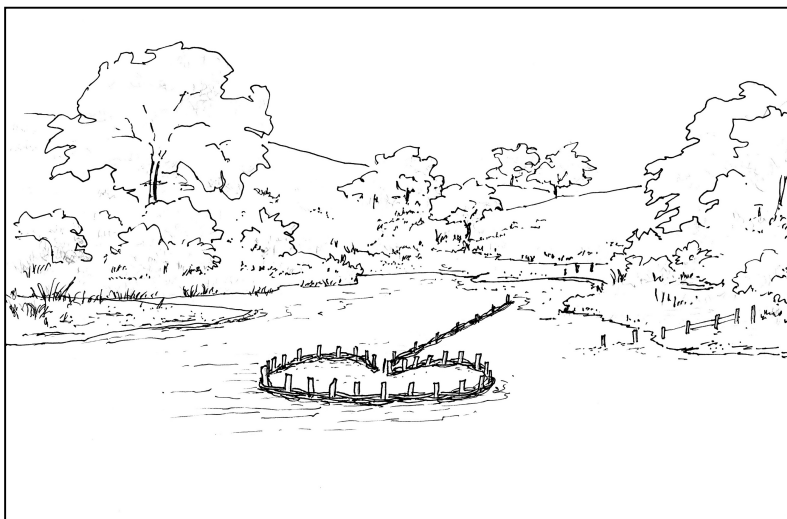

Figure 6d. *Fish trap with stakes and woven hurdles such as may have been used in the shallows of the Stour ('where the Boys sometimes cross the water') near Stewkins. Similar designs have been employed by various cultures since at least the Mesolithic period.*
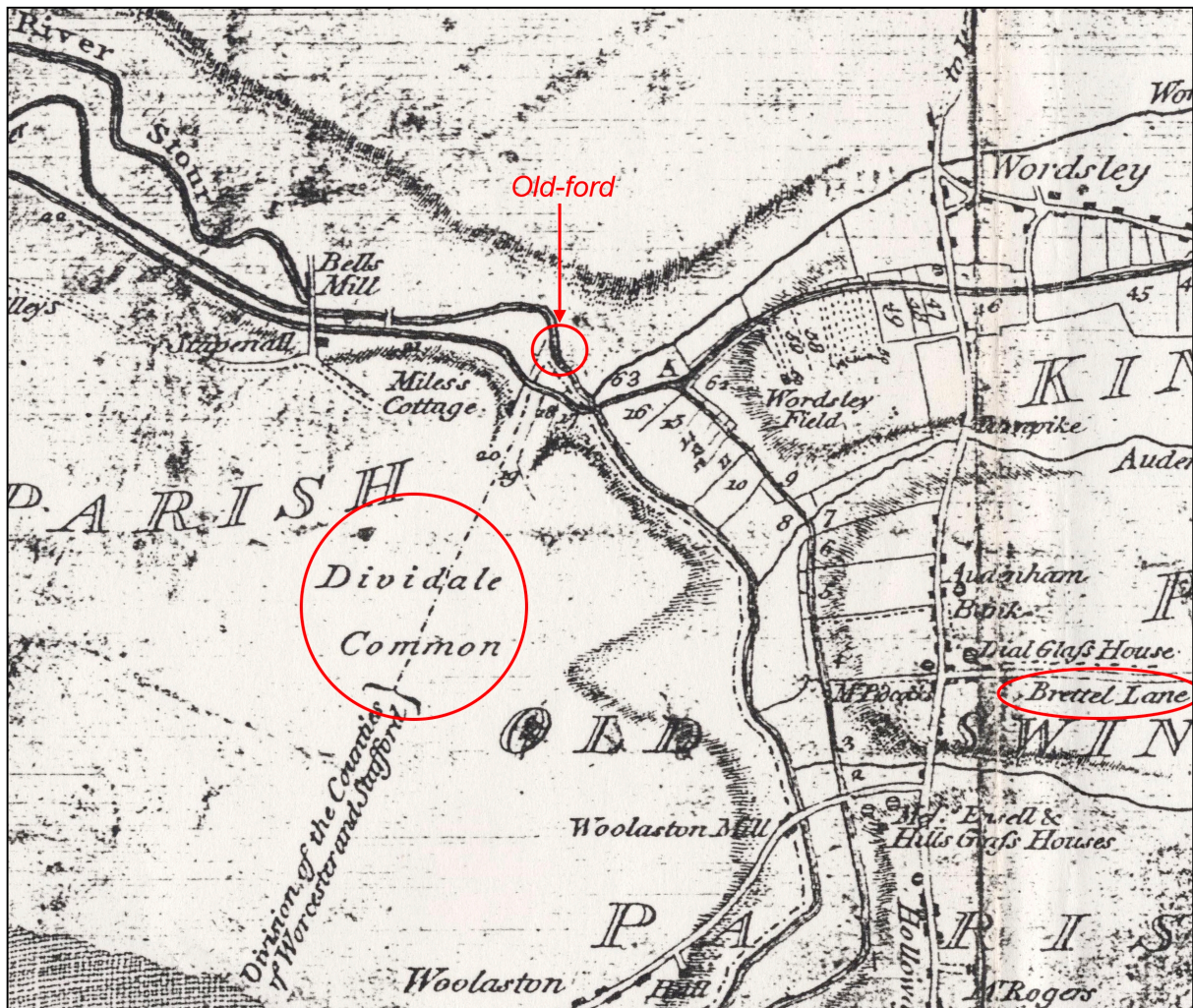
Figure 07a. *Extract from Robert Whitworth's 1774 plan of the Stourbridge Canal[63], showing 'Dividale Common' and the location of Old-ford.*

dale marked the combined county and parish boundary line here (fig. 07a). Signs of a Romano-British farmstead have been discovered near Stapenhill;[64] and it is likely that *Old-ford* was used during the Roman period and thereafter, via a track through Stapenhill to a junction with the Droitwich–Greensforge Roman road at Newtown Bridge.[65] The *Old-ford* river crossing is also part of another ancient route, the *Green Path* (see section 8) which connected Kinver to Wordsley.

8. **and begin against Kinfare and run up to the x at New Wood Gate, about which x there is a dispute between Kinfare and Old-Swinford. Kinfare people say that their bounds Reach to the Green Path leading to the Corner of the Piece of Ground at Old-Ford, and accordingly make their x by the Green Path; the people of Old-Swinford say the Ditch without the wood is the extremity of Kinfare Bounds and accordingly make their x near the Ditch at the Wood gate: from the Gate or Green Path the Bounds run to the x at the South Corner of the wood over against the Ridge,**

Here we join the boundary with Kinver parish, which also served as the dividing line between the counties of Staffordshire and Worcestershire (or, since 1974, between Staffordshire and the West Midlands). Fig. 08a illustrates the locations of the places mentioned in this part of the perambulation. Evidently the dispute referred to has since been resolved in favour of Kinver, as the parish and county boundaries subsequently mapped by the OS now run along the *Green Path* rather than abutting
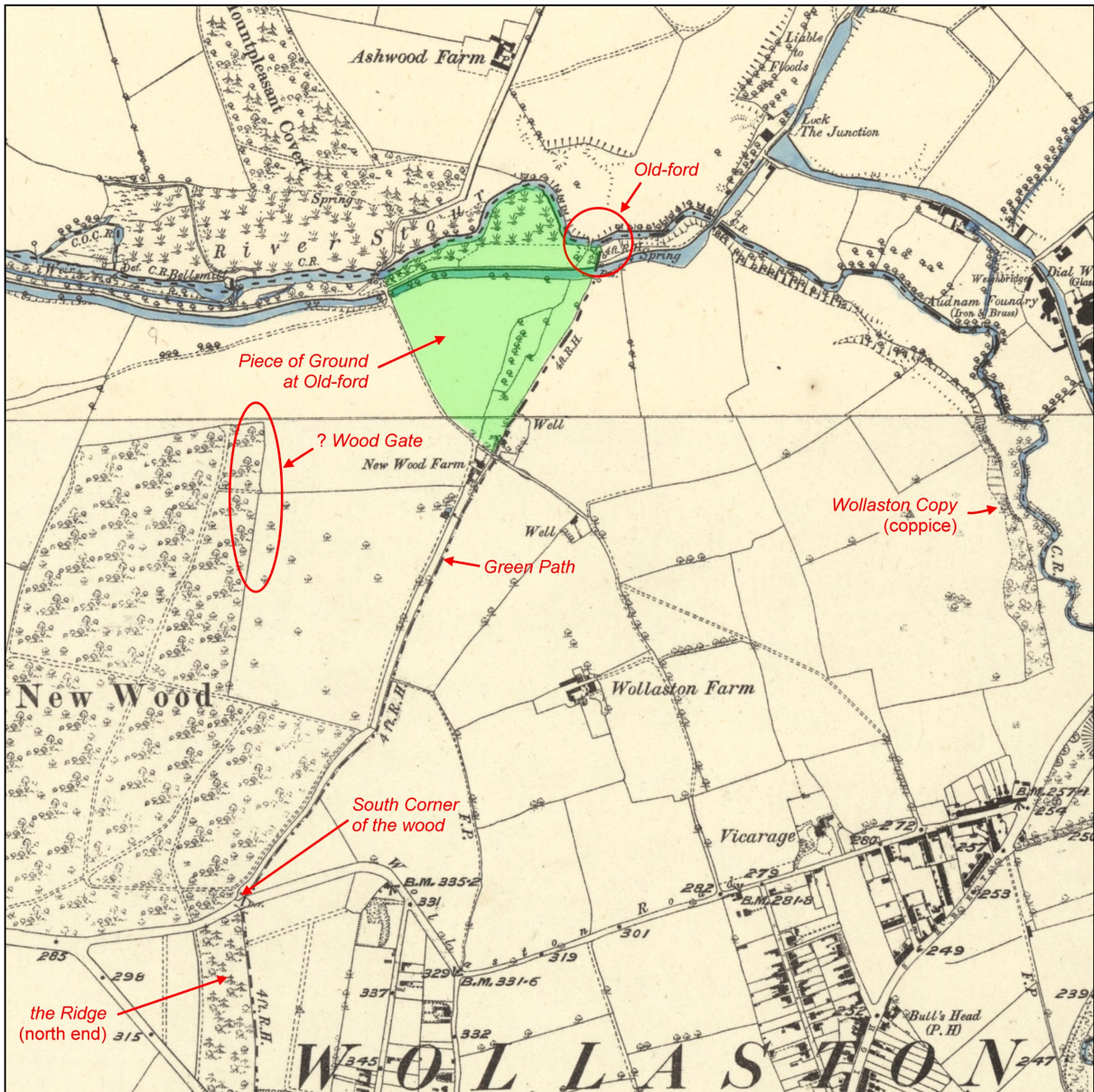
Figure 8a. Extract from OS 6-inch County Series maps of 1884 and 1886[66] showing New Wood, the Green Path, Old-ford and other placed mentioned in the perambulation.

New Wood. As noted in the previous section, the *Green Path*, *Old-ford* and Kinver Street in Wordsley, appear to have been parts of an ancient route connecting Wordsley with the Whittington Horse Bridge and/or Windsor Holloway just south of Kinver.[67] Windsor Holloway is undoubtedly an old road; it certainly existed by 1621, although it may well have been part of a prehistoric network connecting local Iron Age hill forts.[68] I suspect that, during his escape from parliamentary forces after his defeat at the the Battle of Worcester on 3rd September 1651, the future King Charles II rode north from Kinver Heath and Round Hill along the *Green Path* to arrive in Wordsley where he is reported to have sought sustenance at a house at the junction of Kinver Street and High Street (now the A491).[69]

9. *and thence along the Ridge Top to Mr. Haycock's farm:*

From the south corner of New Wood, which today abuts Vicarage Road, we start to ascend the north end of Wollaston Ridge, a linear outcrop of Triassic and Permian sandstones just over 2 km long.[70]

The boundary then crosses Bridgnorth Road which, when constructed as a new turnpike road in the 1780s[71], was cut through Wollaston Ridge. In the nineteenth century, The Foresters Arms pub was built to the side of this cutting in a former gravel quarry. It was undoubtedly so named because the ridge had formed the eastern boundary of Kinver forest until at least 1300.[72]

Moving southwards along the now-wooded ridge-top (fig. 09a), we follow another very ancient feature of the landscape, a set of linear earthworks, or dykes, that were mentioned in a royal charter for Swinford as far back as *c*. 955 AD.[73] At that date, the earthwork, which may have been constructed to mark an Anglo-Saxon estate boundary, was referred to as a *mæredic*, i.e. 'boundary dyke'. It certainly defined the western edge of the late-Anglo-Saxon estate known as Swinford, as well as the Domesday hundred of Clent,[74] both of which probably developed from even earlier territories. One possible context for the dyke's construction was the northward expansion of lands belonging to the Hwicce during the seventh century. The dykes may have been built at this time to separate territories belonging to the Mercian (i.e. Anglian) *Pencersæte* folk group (who seem to have occupied the Smestow valley around Prestwood and Stourton and the high ground to the north), and the Hwiccan *Husmeræ* group (in the lower Stour valley) who probably had British origins.[75]

These boundary dykes, which stretched as far south as the northern end of the modern-day Three Fields,[76] are illustrated in the LiDAR image of fig. 09b. Other parallel earthworks, that can be seen on the break of slope a few metres to the west (i.e. to the left foreground in fig. 09b), may have originated from an earlier phase of boundary demarcation but, if that is the case, they seem to have been greatly affected by twentieth-century (World War 2) sand and gravel quarrying, an operation which required rail tracks extending along the western flank of the ridge in order to carry the extracted material from site.

Figure 09a. Aerial view looking north from the Three Fields over the wooded Wollaston Ridge. New Wood (now with housing intruding into its centre) can be seen behind the ridge; and the Green Path extends north-east to the (also wooded) Stour valley, near the top-right of the picture.[77]
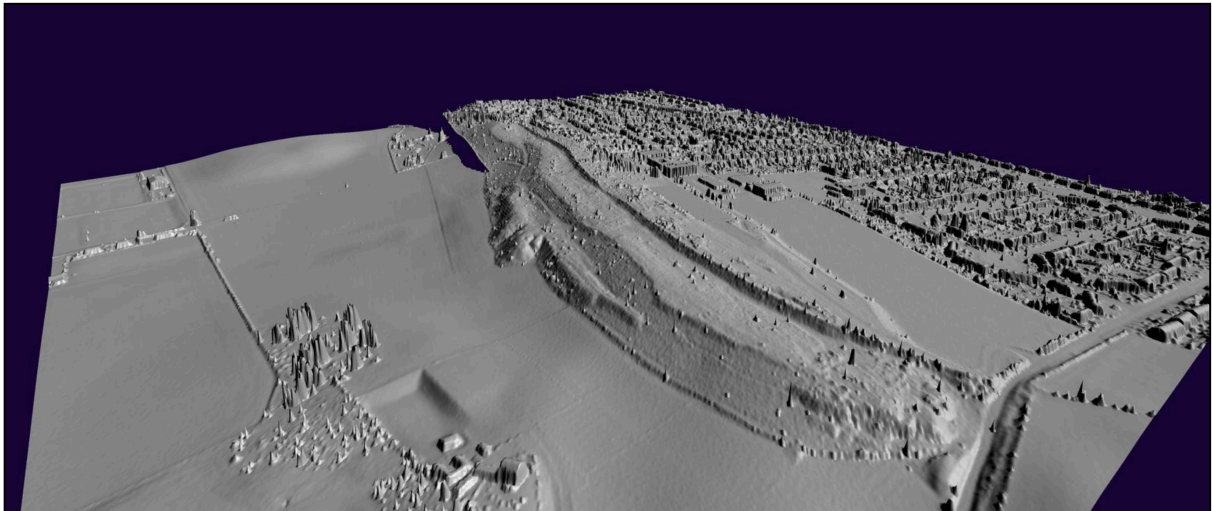
Figure 09b. LiDAR image of Wollaston Ridge showing ancient dykes and twentieth-century quarry workings.[78]

Moving still further south along the ridge we come to Little Iverley Covert (formerly known as Whittington Covert). An ancient quarry lies on the edge of this woodland. The quarry's origin is unknown but, as it is situated very close to the Droitwich-Greensforge Roman road (Margary 192), it may be that it is related to the road's construction during the first century AD. It is also possible, however, that sandstone was quarried here at a later date for the erection of local buildings, perhaps those belonging to *Mr Haycock's farm*. 'High Park Farm' (SO 887842) or (less probably) 'Bott's Farm' (SO 879834), would be contenders for the site of this 1733 farm. The reference to 'Park' in the name 'High Park Farm' may relate to a nearby hunting area that either lay within the medieval Kinver forest or which had been disafforested from it after 1300.[79]
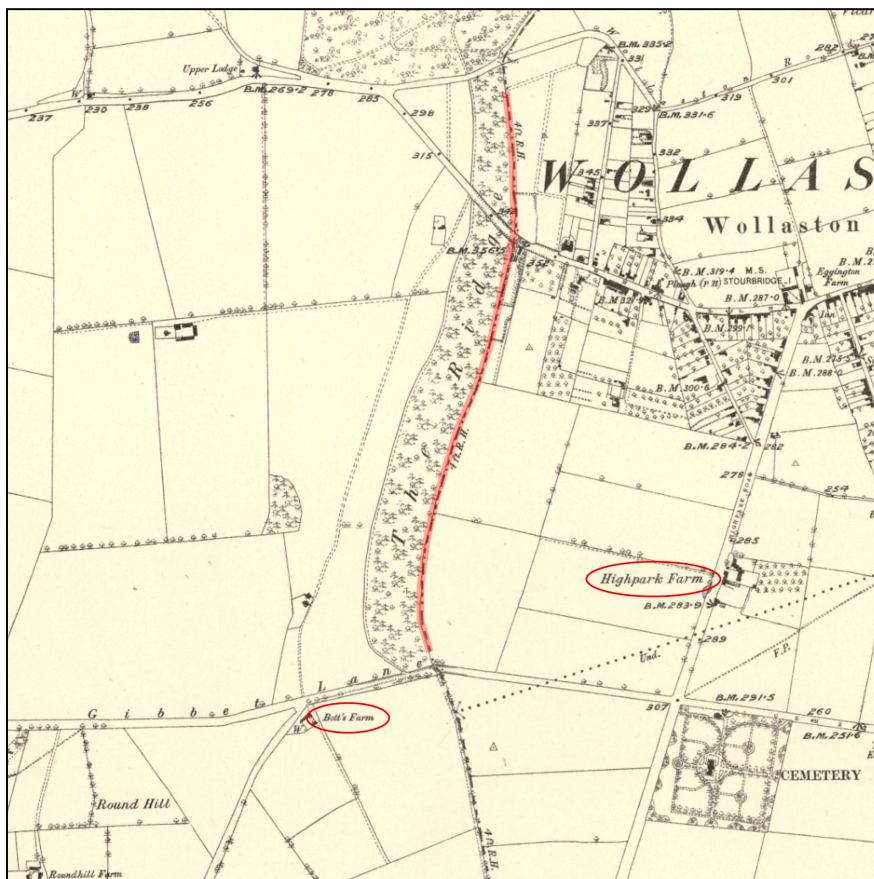
Figure 09c. Extract from OS 6-inch map of 1885 with showing the ancient dyke on Wollaston Ridge and two potential sites for Mr. Haycock's Farm circled.[80]

Figure 10a. *Extract from OS 6-inch maps of 1884–5[81] showing the locations of Norton's Piece and other places mentioned in the text. 'Whittington Covert', circled, is now known as Little Iverley Covert.*

10. from thence to the x at William Parr's Gate:

In view of the subsequent section's reference to moving *'...over the Hill...'*, *William Parr's Gate* probably lay on the relatively low ground near the junction of the present-day Sugar Loaf Lane and The Broadway in Norton. Sandy Lane (also erroneously known as 'Roman Road'), which runs alongside today's Clent View Road, had become a turnpike road (called Dudley Road) by 1782. However, *William Parr's Gate* cannot have been a turnpike gate as turnpike roads were not established in this area until several decades after the 1733 perambulation was compiled. It is likely that *William Parr's Gate* served as an access-way to a property or farm, probably that located at, or near to, the entrance to the modern-day High Lodge Farm. This was known as High House Farm in 1903[82] and Iverley Farm in 1884 (see fig. 10a).

William Yates 1775 plan of Staffordshire depicts a farm, named 'Millwards Farm', here (fig. 10b); at that date it seems to have been surrounded by extensive undeveloped heathland. The farm

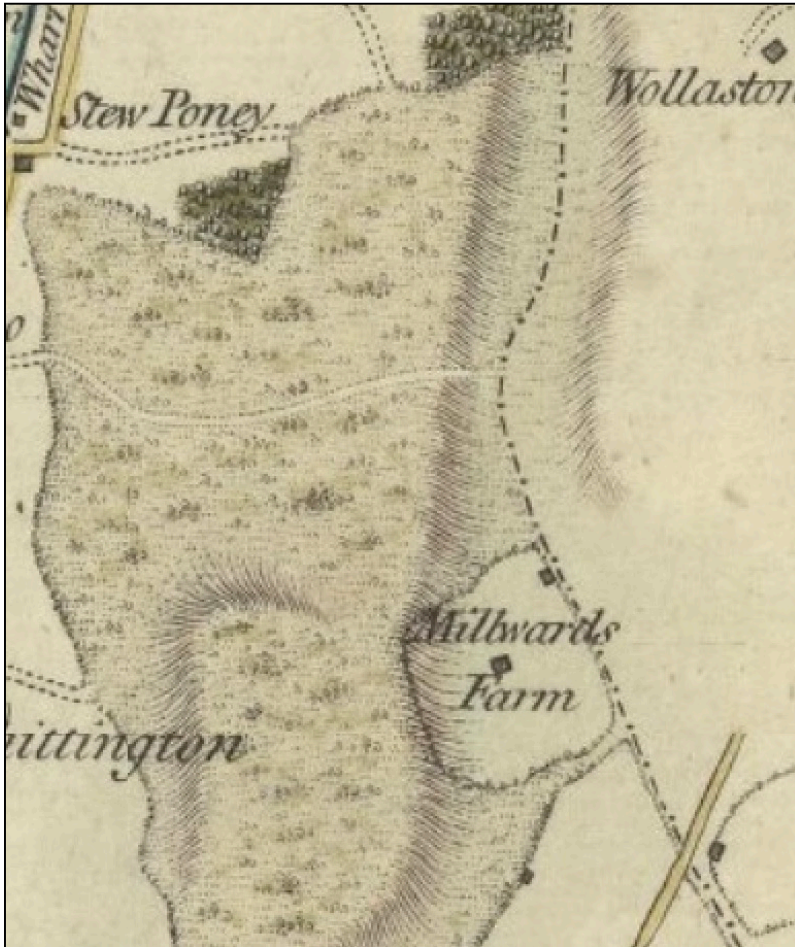*Figure 10b. Extract from William Yates' 1775 map of Staffordshire[83] showing the location of 'Millwards Farm' (at later dates renamed Iverley Farm, High House Farm and High Lodge Farm).*

buildings abut the Droitwich–Greensforge Roman road (Margary 192), and it may be the road's presence which initially encouraged settlement at this site. The fact that the county boundary deviates slightly (presumably around old farm buildings) suggests that it may antedate the boundary and is thus of some antiquity.

11. then over the Hill to the corner of Norton's Piece where the Bounds begin against Pedmore:

We now come to the south end of the Oldswinford-Kinver parish boundary (which coincides with the ancient county boundary) at *Norton's Piece*. This field lay immediately north of Norton Covert. Both parcels of land were named, directly or indirectly, after William Norton, an inn-keeper who owned various fields in the vicinity (including *Norton's Piece*) in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Some of his other landholdings, 'Norton's Hill' and 'Norton's Corner', lay a short distance to the south-west in Pedmore parish (fig. 11a), and others, near the later Studley Court (now in the grounds of Mary Stevens Park) in Oldswinford parish.

His inn may have been located near the Greyhound public house, which is shown on OS mapping of 1882.[84] Although being rebuilt and expanded on at least two occasions since, that inn stood on virtually the same (though extended) site until 2024. Perhaps because of an inn's presence here, settlement soon began to develop in the vicinity and the area around the junction of Greyhound Lane (formerly known as Iverley Lane) and Racecourse Lane became known as Norton. Eventually, in the twentieth century, the name Norton came to be used for the new expanse of post-war housing that extended over the former Stourbridge Common as far north as the Wollaston boundary.
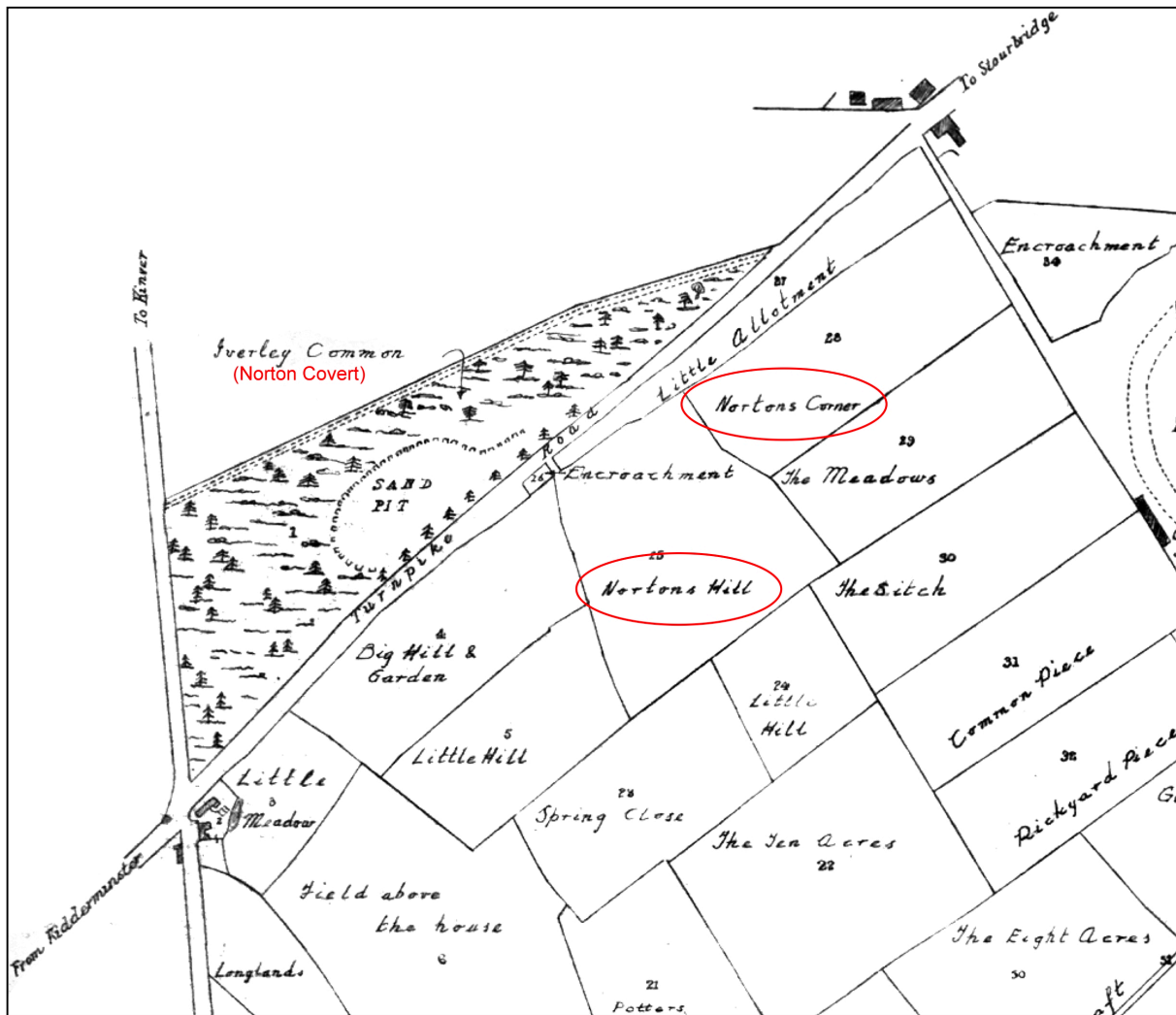
Figure 11a. Extract from the 1846 Pedmore Tithe map[85] *showing 'Norton's Hill' and 'Norton's Corner'. Norton Covert, which lies immediately south of Norton's Piece in Oldswinford parish, was formerly named 'Iverley Common'.*

At the time of the 1733 perambulation, the land we now know as Norton Covert was little more than a triangle of hilly ground, much like the hillocks on the opposite side of the Stourbridge–Kidderminster road (the A458).

These hillocks (including one that lay within the bounds of Norton Covert itself) were formed during the Devensian Glaciation 100,000 to 10,000 years ago.[86] Glaciers further north (probably around Wolverhampton) had scoured the land picking up vast amounts of detritus and, as the glaciers melted, outwash streams carried some of this material south, to be deposited in mounds of sand and gravel when the water encountered the high ground around Iverley and Burys Hill. These mounds are known as drumlins and one of them had lain within the bounds of Norton Covert (formerly known as 'Iverley Common') until its sand deposits were quarried out during the nineteenth century.[87] It was only after this quarrying came to an end that the present tree cover grew up and the covert (woodland) developed.

The whole expanse of drumlins around Norton Covert was known as *Wolfes Wrosne* in 1300. The *wrosne* element of the name comes from the OE word *wrasen,* meaning (in this context) 'contorted ground'.[88] The name's first element might refer to wolves that frequented the area or could, alternatively (and more probably), have derived from a personal name such as Wulfhere.
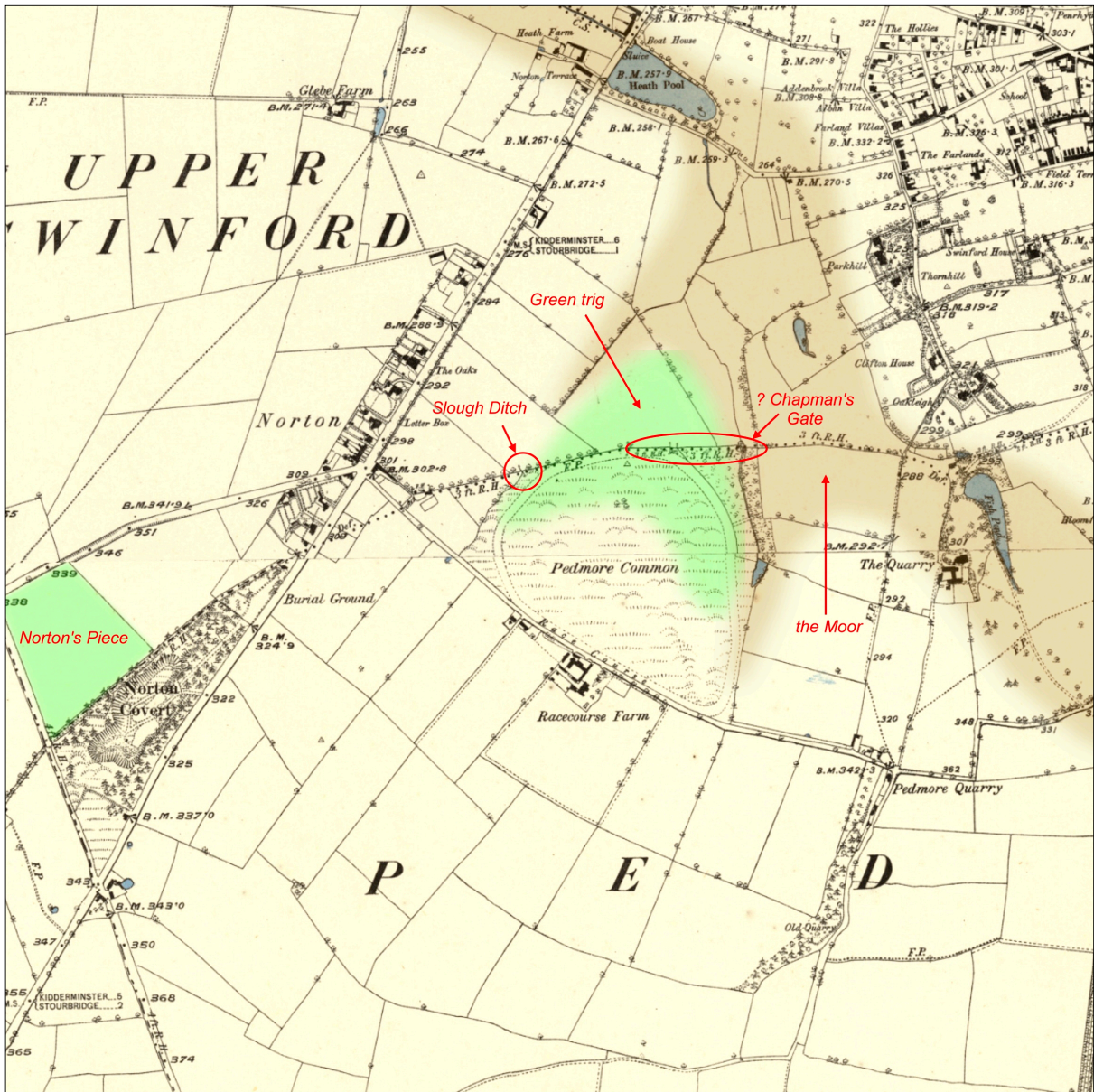
Figure 12a. *Extract from OS 6-inch maps dated 1884–5[89] identifying places mentioned in the perambulation. The two principal arms of the Withybrook extend either side of Pedmore Common. The high ground between them was referred to as the Green trig in the 1733 perambulation. The lower, wetter ground around the Withybrook, which was known as The Moor (here tinted brown), extended northwards to the Heath Pool (now in Mary Stevens Park), and then westwards to the Gig Mill. In 1846, 'Chapman Common Field' lay directly to the south-east of 'Pedmore Common'. The 1733 Chapman's Gate lay some distance away and probably provided access to an earlier (and larger) expanse of land (perhaps a medieval open field) bearing this name. Medieval ridge-and-furrow plough marks have been found on 'Pedmore Common' itself and on the fields to the east; and crop marks of an early unmapped field system have been found south of 'Racecourse Farm'.*

12. and to the x near the Top of the Slough Ditch:

A spring line near Racecourse Lane produces streams (mostly now culverted) which flow northwards across Stourbridge Golf Course and the Oldswinford parish boundary. The word *Slough* almost certainly comes from OE *slōh*, 'a slough, a mire',[90] and the term *Slough Ditch* would suggest that at least one of the streams here had been artificially straightened to help drain the boggy ground around it. This is most likely to have been at SO 894827, close to the junction of the present-day Fairways Avenue and Links Drive, an area that, even today, is known to be susceptible to flash flooding.

Figure 12b. Aerial view showing the wooded Norton Covert (left-hand side) and the Wolfes Wrosne glacial hillocks (in the foreground). The Roman road and the co-linear county boundary runs along the extreme left-hand side of the picture, abutting Norton Covert and running up to Little Iverley Covert in the middle distance. The Three Fields, Wollaston Ridge and New Wood can be seen beyond that. The 1733 perambulation ran (arcing from left to right) along the far edges of Norton Covert and the Stourbridge Golf Course (formerly 'Pedmore Common') before bisecting what is now Big Moor playing field on the far-right of the picture.[91]

13. and Crossing that along the Green trig to Chapman's Gate:

The *Green trig* probably denoted a route westwards over the triangle of slightly higher ground that extends into the confluence of the *Slough Ditch* and the principal arm of the Withybrook's head-waters (fig. 12a). It is likely that *Chapman's Gate* also lay on this higher ground. What archaeological evidence we have for this area points to the existence of a large medieval common field just south of the Oldswinford-Pedmore parish boundary. Ridge and furrow plough marks can be seen in LiDAR images of Stourbridge Golf Course (fig. 13a), and aerial photographs of land south of Racecourse Lane show crop-marks left by an early unmapped field system.[92]

During the Norman period, much of this region had been within Kinver forest, perhaps formerly (i.e. in the Anglo-Saxon period) being a manorial hay, an enclosed space where the manor's livestock would have been kept.[93] Some time after about 1300 the area which ultimately developed into Stourbridge Golf Course was disafforested to become part of Pedmore's common land. It is probably then that the people of Pedmore were able to cultivate it as an open field, resulting in the aforementioned ridge and furrow plough marks. This large common field seems to have occupied both sides of the later Racecourse Lane. Indeed, that road may well have started out as an access track through the middle of the field, dividing it into two or more sets of cultivated strips or selions. A nearby field-name, 'Chapman Common Field', shown on the 1846 Pedmore tithe plan (fig. 13b) seems to recall the name of the original, much larger, common field. This evidently extended up to the Oldswinford parish boundary where *Chapman's Gate* must have stood in, or prior to, 1733. There is no evidence to tell us exactly how far along the parish boundary *Chapman's Gate* was located, but sections 13 and 14 suggest that it must have been west of the main arm of the Withybrook, which marked the beginning of *the Moor*.
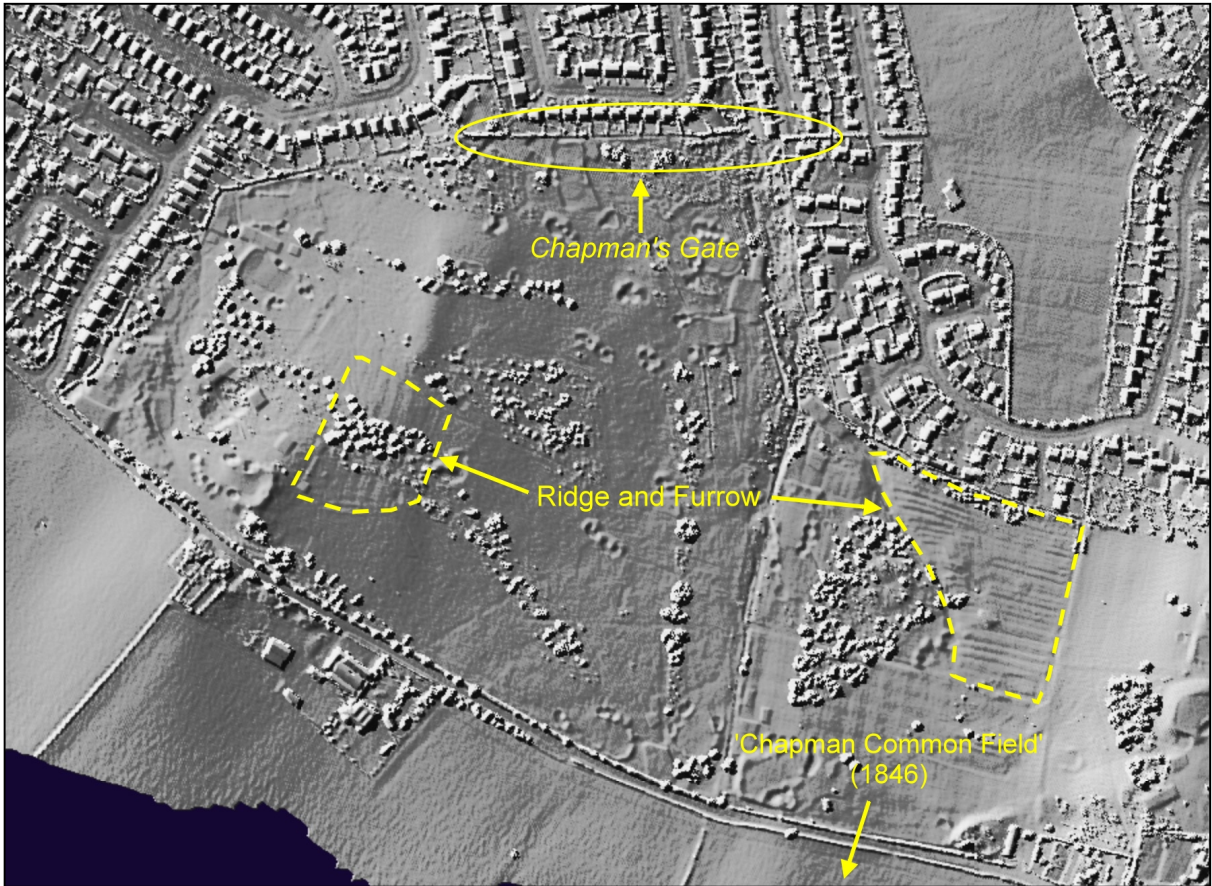
Figure 13a. - *LiDAR image of Stourbridge Golf Course (formerly Pedmore Common), showing medieval ridge and furrow plough marks delineated by dashed yellow lines.*[94]
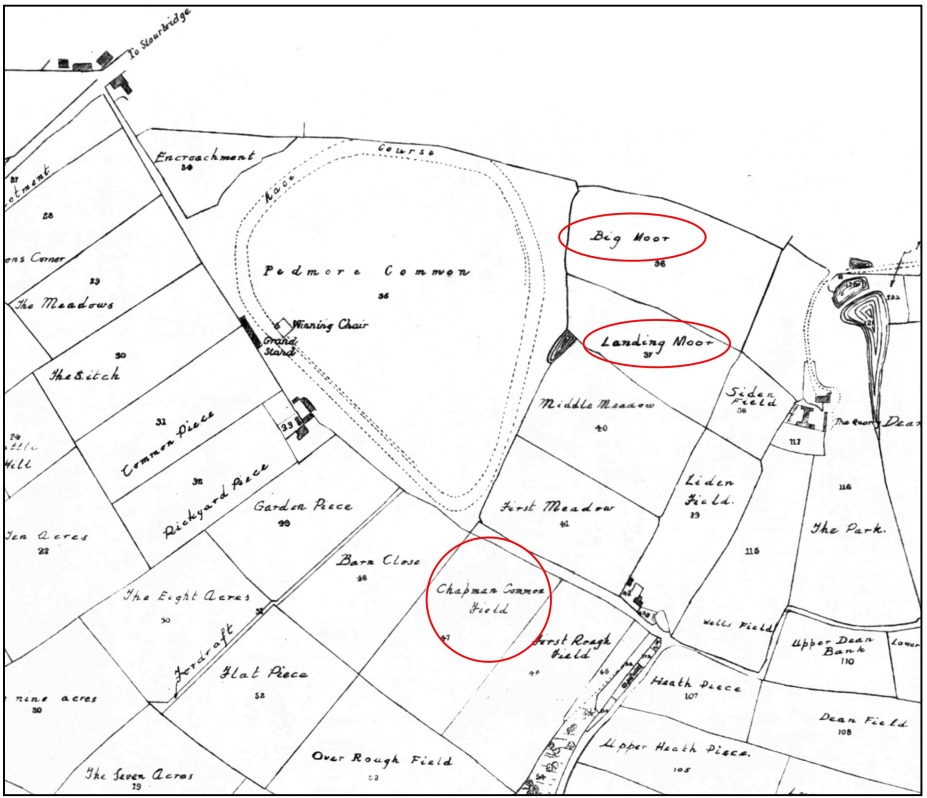

Figure 13b. Extract from the 1846 Pedmore tithe map[95] *showing 'Chapman Common Field', 'Big Moor' and 'Little Moor' fields. The latter two ultimately became incorporated into today's Bigmoor Playing Field.*

14. *and then across the Moor and up Hobson's Meadow to the Lane over against the South Hedge of Job Raby's Garden in Upper Swinford: there was a Dispute many years Between the inhabitants of Old Swinford and Pedmore Concerning their Bounds upon the Hill before Parr's Farm. The Old Swinford Parishioners made a x at Blews Corner over against Porters or Halls House, those of Pedmore made their x at Parr's Corner. But in the year 1730 it was agreed Between the Rectors and some inhabitants of the two Parishes that the bounds should be as they are above Described:*

That we are now in the area known as *the Moor* is clear from the 1846 field-names *Big Moor* and *Landing* Moor. *The Moor* extended northwards around the Withybrook and its numerous tributaries (which joined it near the present-day Peartree Drive, Lea Vale Road, Fredericks Close and Poole Street), reaching as far west as Gig Mill near Swan Pool Park. *The Moor*'s existence is also evidenced by the nineteenth-century street-name 'Moor Street' that was used for the northern portion of Clark Street, presumably because it led towards *the Moor* around Poole (formerly Pool) Street.[96]

Passing a fish pond (named *stiranmere*, 'Sturgeon's Pool', in the tenth century[97]) on the eastern-most tributary of the Withybrook, we begin to ascend from *the Moor*, along the south edge of *Hobson's Meadow* (shown on extreme right-hand side of fig. 12a, and in fig. 14a). Today this meadow is occupied by Peartree Drive and the south-east extremity of Love Lane. The parish boundary continues east-north-east towards the cluster of buildings on the corner of Worcester Street (B4187) and Hagley Road (A491); and it seems to have been here that the boundary line had been in dispute until 1730.

There is no independent evidence to help us locate *Job Raby's Garden* other than the fact that it lay in *Upper Swinford*. By the mid-nineteenth century, the place-name 'Lower Swinford' had come to be used for the area around Oldswinford village's original core, i.e. on the low ground around the Swinford Brook, St. Mary's Church, Church Road, Rectory Road and Chawn Hill. The term 'Upper Swinford' was used for the large area in the south-west of the parish, including Love Lane, Mary Stevens Park and the whole of the region we now call Norton. This is illustrated in fig. 14a. The division between 'Upper Swinford' and 'Lower Swinford' ran along the centre-line of Hagley Road (A491), thus *Job Raby's Garden* must have lain to the west of this road. The fact that it was thought

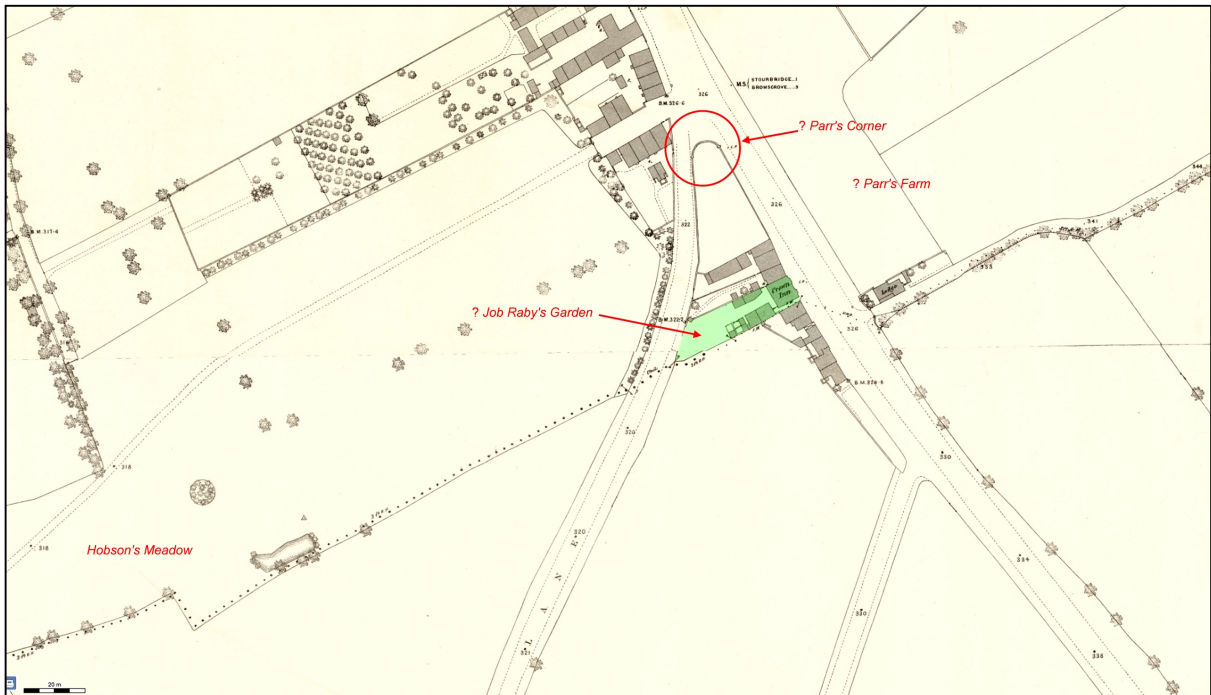*Figure 14a. Location of Upper and Lower Swinford revealed on a Stourbridge water-board map for 1857.[98]*

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Figure 14b. *Extract from OS 1-500 sheets dated 1884[99] showing the likely location of Job Raby's Garden and other landmarks referenced in the perambulation*

necessary to mention *Upper Swinford* in the perambulation suggests that *Job Raby's Garden* lay close to the dividing line.

Fig. 14b shows the Oldswinford parish boundary in detail here, as it was recorded in 1884. Again, we don't know the precise locations of the various buildings and *corner*s referenced in this waypoint, but the only geography that would be consistent with the perambulation's wording is one in which Parr's Farm had lain immediately to the east of Hagley Road (i.e. in 'Lower Swinford') and that *Job Raby's Garden* had occupied the land of the Crown Inn. Presumably *Parr's Corner* lay north of the parish boundary that had been agreed in 1730, possibly at the very junction of Worcester Lane and Hagley Road; and *Blews Corner over against Porters or Halls House* was a reference to one of the buildings further south, perhaps even to the Lodge or an earlier building on the opposite side of Hagley Road.

It is possible that the boundary dispute noted in the perambulation had arisen only two or three decades beforehand. Bach's 1699 plan of Oldswinford parish shows the area between Worcester Lane and Hagley road to have been a wide expanse of unoccupied roadway at that time,[100] in which case there would have been little need for parishioners to establish an accurate boundary line across it. As private landholdings (and buildings) sprang up here over the next few decades, it would have become necessary to specify whether each one lay within Oldswinford or Pedmore parish in order to determine their financial and other liabilities. That matter seems only to have been resolved with the boundary agreement of 1730.

15. *then we go from the South Hedge of Job Raby's Garden and Cross the Road, and a Long the Lane to Mr. Spencer's Ground and Down by the South Hedge to James Boucher's meadow and so to John Orford's Meadow: and a Long by the West Hedge to the Ground called Noman's Land: thence up to Longcraft*

In this part of the boundary it is necessary to examine several landmarks together because we have no independent evidence of where some of the places mentioned actually lay. However we do know the end-points — *the Lane* and *Longcraft* — and, by means of other clues in the perambulation, it is
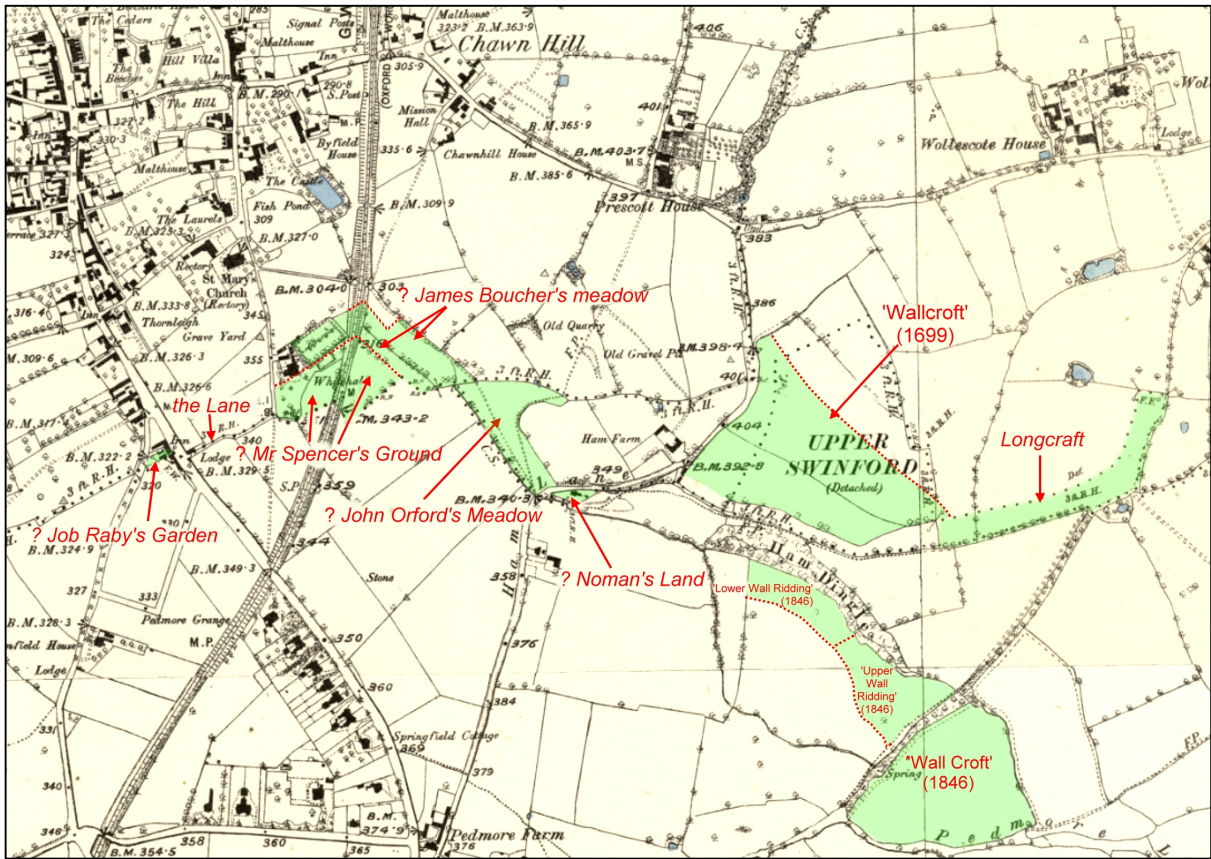
Figure 15a. *Extract from OS 6-inch maps of 1884 and 1885[101], showing the places mentioned in the 1733 perambulation and elsewhere in the present text.*

possible to work out, by elimination, where the specified landholdings would have been located. Fortunately, we are helped by the fact that the pattern of fields in this vicinity was mapped in 1699 and that later maps (1782[102], 1827[103] and 1885[104]) exhibit only very minor differences.

Fig. 15a shows where the various places were probably located. *The Lane* started at what later became the drive-way of Mary Stevens Maternity Home. The 1885 map shows it leading towards the grounds of the earliest incarnation of that building, then known as Whitehall; and this course appears to be identical with the 1733 parish boundary. *Mr Spencer's Ground* seems to have later become the grounds of Whitehall. *James Boucher's meadow* must have lain immediately to the east abutting a stream which is probably best referred to as Swinford Brook. Other names for this stream have been used in the past: 'Swin Brook' is an eighteenth-century contrivance of the Rev Dr Treadway Russell Nash based upon a misconception of the origin of the Anglo-Saxon estate-name 'Swinford'. Other names, 'Kowbatch' and 'Clatterbatch' suggested by John Hemingway, the former Dudley Borough Archaeological Officer, are incorrect for a combination of reasons.[105] (Despite my best efforts and the fact that the name is demonstrably wrong, 'Kowback' has been adopted for this stream by Google Maps who have a very bad record for their labelling of watercourses.)

Since the 1733 boundary is described as lying along its *West Hedge, John Orford's Meadow* is very likely to have been that running almost south towards what is now the junction of Ham Lane and Old Ham Lane (SO 912828).

It is not clear where *Noman's Land* lay, but there are a couple of candidates. Place-names such as this are not uncommon and often appear in historical records as field-names. Generally, they refer to 'boundary land claimed by more than one parish or private owner, or abandoned as useless'.[106] The first candidate for such land is a small 'island' in the middle of Ham Lane at SO 913828 which was
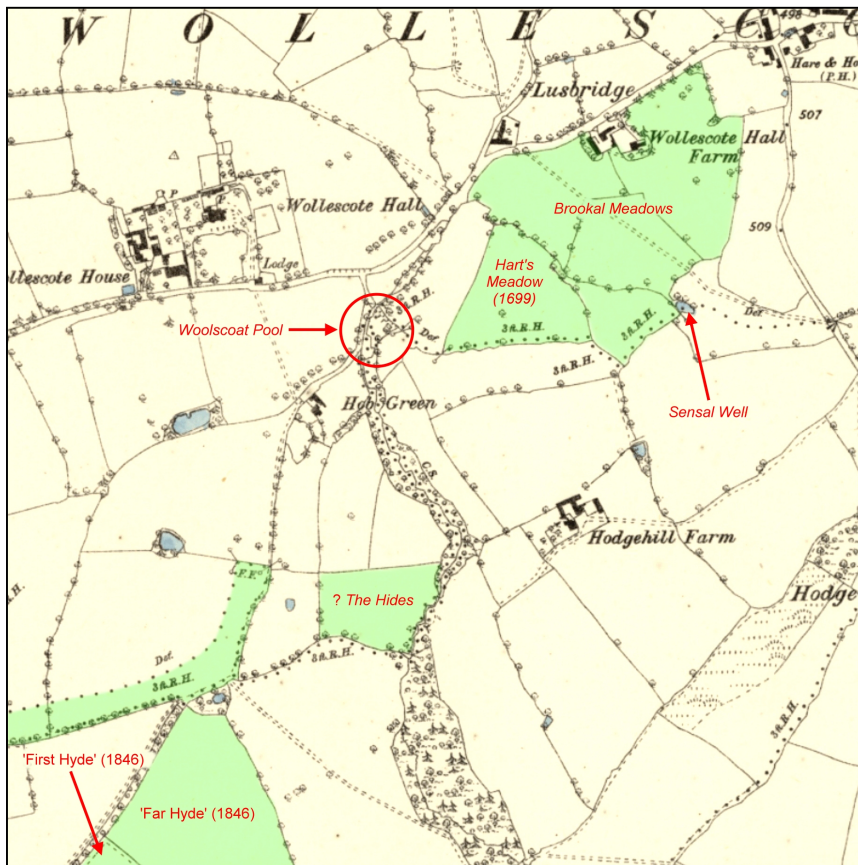
Figure 16a. *Extract from OS 6-inch maps dated 1884-5,[107] showing the locations of places mentioned in the text.*

mapped as part of Oldswinford in 1782 and part of Pedmore in 1846. A second possibility is that *Noman's Land* lay a little further west along the boundary, abutting the southern edge of the detached portion of Upper Swinford shown in fig. 15a. The latter seems a less likely possibility for *Noman's Land*, as Bach's 1699 plan clearly attributes an owner, Mr Wheeler, to this strip. In any event, we finally move a little further west along well-defined field boundaries to a field named 'Longcroft' in 1699. 'Longcroft' lay in the vicinity of the present-day Dorchester Road and Walker Avenue, and is undoubtedly to be identified with the perambulation's *Longcraft*.

16. and a Long by the East side of the Hides, which leads to the top of Hob Green:

The location of *the Hides* is not clear. The Pedmore tithe plan of 1846 shows fields named 'First Hyde', 'Second Hyde' and 'Far Hyde' a short distance south of *Longcraft*, in the vicinity of the modern Gauden Road and Powlers Close, but these fields were, of course, in Pedmore parish whereas the perambulation seems to reference only landmarks that lay *within* Oldswinford parish. It is possible that, in antiquity, there had been some connection between these Pedmore fields and others also bearing the designation 'Hyde', or 'Hide' within Oldswinford's bounds. It may be relevant that, in the mid-tenth century, Pedmore's 'Hyde' fields seem to have been within an estate which became the forerunner of Oldswinford manor.[108] The fields named 'Wallcroft' at SO 916828 in Oldswinford parish, and 'Wall Croft' (SO 919824) as well as 'Wall Ridding' (SO916826) in Pedmore parish (fig. 15a) also suggest a landholding in this area that antedated the division of land between Oldswinford and Pedmore.

Unfortunately, *the Hides* is not named on the 1699 or 1782 plans of Oldswinford parish. However, we do know that the parish boundary remained largely unchanged between 1699 and 1782, so the 1733 perambulation must have followed the same course. The fact that, from *Longcraft*, it then proceeds *by the east side of the Hides* suggests that the latter must have been the field, or fields, indicated in fig.16a.

17. So down by the Water Course of Hob Green Dingle to the Tayle of Woolscoat Pool, and along
by the South Hedge of Brookal or Hart's Meadows to Sensal Well:

From the east side of *the Hides* we must proceed northward (downstream) along the wooded valley of Ludgbridge (formerly spelled 'Lusbridge', 'Lessebrugge') Brook. *Woolscoat Pool* (Wollescote Pool) lay at Hob Green (SO 923833) immediately to the west of the modern residential road Central Avenue. The pool seems to have served as a mill-pond (presumably associated with the nearby Wollescote Hall) and must have been filled in some time between 1846 and 1882. When functional, the pool's *Tayle* (tail) would have been its outflow stream which lay at its north end.

The perambulation then turns westwards, ascending along the south side of a broader valley to join another brook which flows from the west flank of the high ground around Foxcote. Immediately to the north lay 'Wollescote Hall Farm'. This belonged to the Wollescote Hall estate and was named 'Brockhall Farm' in 1861 and 'The Brook' in 1910.[109] Court and Blackden's 1782 map of Oldswinford parish record fields named 'Nether Brockhill', 'Barn Brockhill', 'Long Brockhill, 'Sideland Brockhill' and 'Brockhill Meadow' here. Place-name scholars have debated the meaning of 'Brockhill' with some assuming that it came from the OE words *brocc* 'badger and *hyll* 'hill'.[110] However, Bach's 1699 plan of Oldswinford parish identifies these fields as 'Brockall'. This, and the 1861 'Brockall Farm' spelling suggest that the name's second element actually came from the OE word *halh*, 'a nook, a corner of land' sometimes used for a 'hollow in a hill-side'.[111] That would seem to be supported by the spelling used in this 1733 perambulation, i.e. *Brookal*. Moreover, the latter form also suggests that the first element of the name is really from OE *brōc(e)* 'brook', rather than from OE *brocc*, 'badger'. Thus, the field-name would seem to mean 'brook hollow' which, of course, would be consistent with the nearby modern road-name Brook Holloway.

Fig. 16a depicts a small pool a short distance south-east of the *Brookal* fields, on the parish boundary. It lay within a field straddling the parish boundary, that was named 'part of Sinsalls' on the Pedmore side.[112] A spring at this pool, or very close by, was most probably the *Sensal Well* referenced in the perambulation. The name *Sensal*, and thus the modern form 'Sensall', probably comes from the OE words *scenc + halh*. As we have just seen, the last element may be used for a hollow, and the first

Figure 17a. *Extract from Court and Blackden's 1782 plan of Oldswinford parish,[113] showing the five 'Brockhill' fields.*

referred to a drinking vessel and was used for streams that provided a supply of clean drinking water.[114] No doubt this was why *Sensal Well* was considered important enough to help define the course of the parish boundary, both in 1733 and when the boundary here was first laid out (probably between *c*. 955 and 1086).

18. thence up the Vally of Sensal Close to the x ten or twelve yards on the North-West of the Stile leading to Fosent, and by the Hedge Side, then a Long the Path-way of Newbrough's Sensal to Fosent:

As we proceed further westwards, the presumed 'brook hollow' narrows, to form *the Vally of Sensal Close* just before we reach what is now the junction of Sensall Road and Wynall Lane. The *Vally* (valley) seems to have straddled the parish boundary and been occupied, at least to the south of the boundary, by the aforementioned 'Sinsalls' fields.

Without earlier forms of the name to hand, it is difficult to be sure about the meaning of *Fosent*. Its first element may have derived from OE *foss*, 'a ditch' or 'an artificially made water channel'[115] or, in view of its location near the ancient settlement of Foxcote (*foxcotun* in c. 955), it may have been a corruption of 'fox'. The second element, *-ent*, could have come from OE *ende*, 'the end of something, the end of an estate, a district or quarter of a village or town'.[116] Thus, we might be dealing with either the end of a ditch or the eastern edge (end) of Foxcote's lands. The former interpretation seems to be the most probable, and if we are, indeed, dealing with the end of a ditch, it would most likely have been that lying along the parish boundary on the south side of a field owned by William Pargeter in 1782 (fig. 19a). This field was known as 'Sinsall' in 1699[117] and is probably identical with the
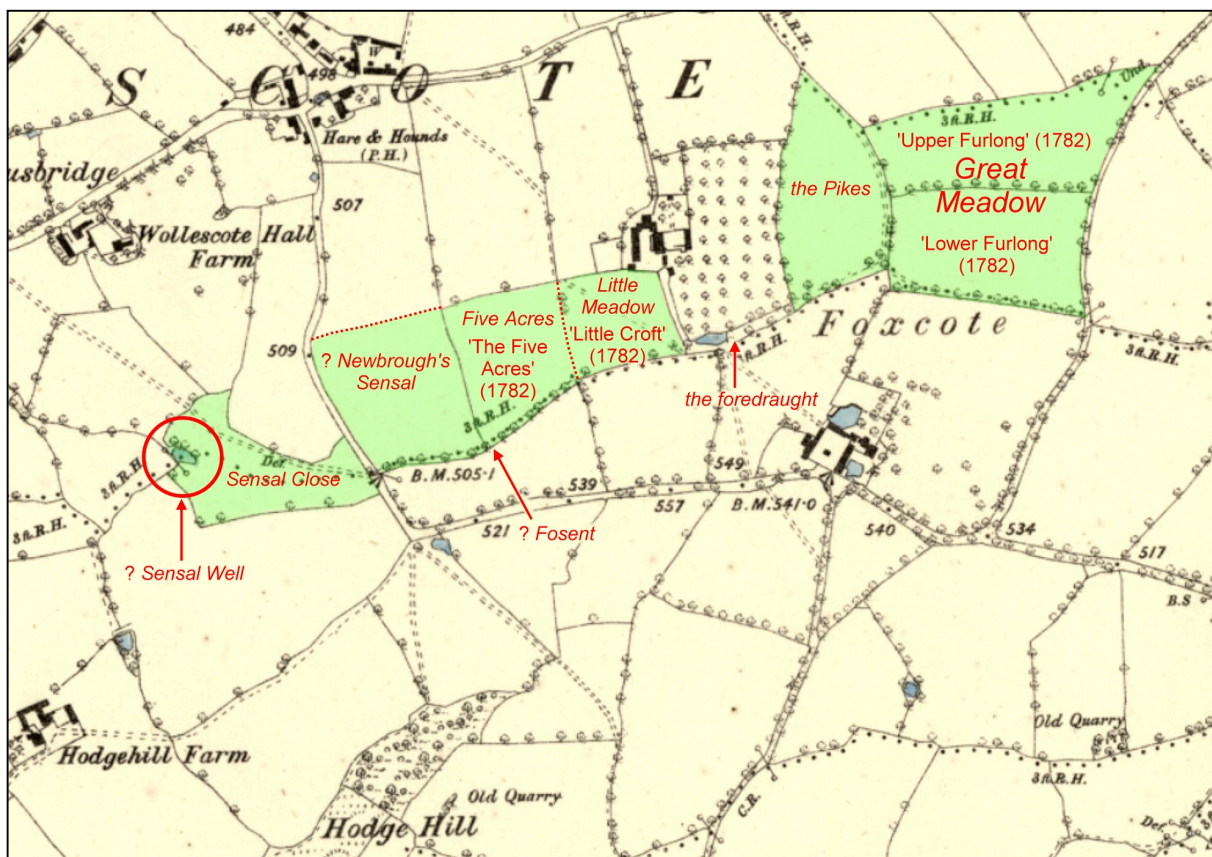

Figure 18a. Extract from OS 6-inch maps dated 1884–5,[118] showing the probable locations of places mentioned in the perambulation.

perambulation's *Newbrough's Sensal*. The ditch assumed to be *Fosent* would have carried water from fields further west, such as *Mr Hill's five Acres* (see section 19), and eventually drained through *Sensal Close* into Ludgbridge Brook.

The *Stile leading to Fosent* probably lay on the west side of Wynall Lane, about 10 metres on the Pedmore side of the parish boundary. The *Hedge Side* referenced immediately thereafter most likely ran along the south edge of *Newbrough's Sensal* to the west of Wynall Lane. Clearly there was a *Path-way* in the same field which brings us to the presumed terminus of the boundary ditch, *Fosent*.

19. and a Long Mr. Hill's five Acres to the Little Meadow, and Down the foredraught to the Great Meadow, and a Cross Ludlee Road to the Lower Meadow,

We can be more certain about first two of these fields as they are named on maps of Oldswinford parish compiled in 1699 and 1782, the latter as 'Little Close'.[119] Their locations are shown in figs. 18a and 19a below.

The *foredraught* was clearly the farm track leading east from Foxcote Farm, along the parish boundary, towards Foxcote Lane. *The Great Meadow* must have lain immediately to the east of Foxcote Lane (*Ludlee Road* in the perambulation), although the field here is not identified as such on either the 1699 or 1782 plans of Oldswinford parish. Both maps name the field as 'Lower Furlong'; it is possible that it, together with the adjacent 'Upper Furlong', were collectively known as *the Great Meadow*, apparently signifying a prior change of use from ploughed arable to meadow-land.
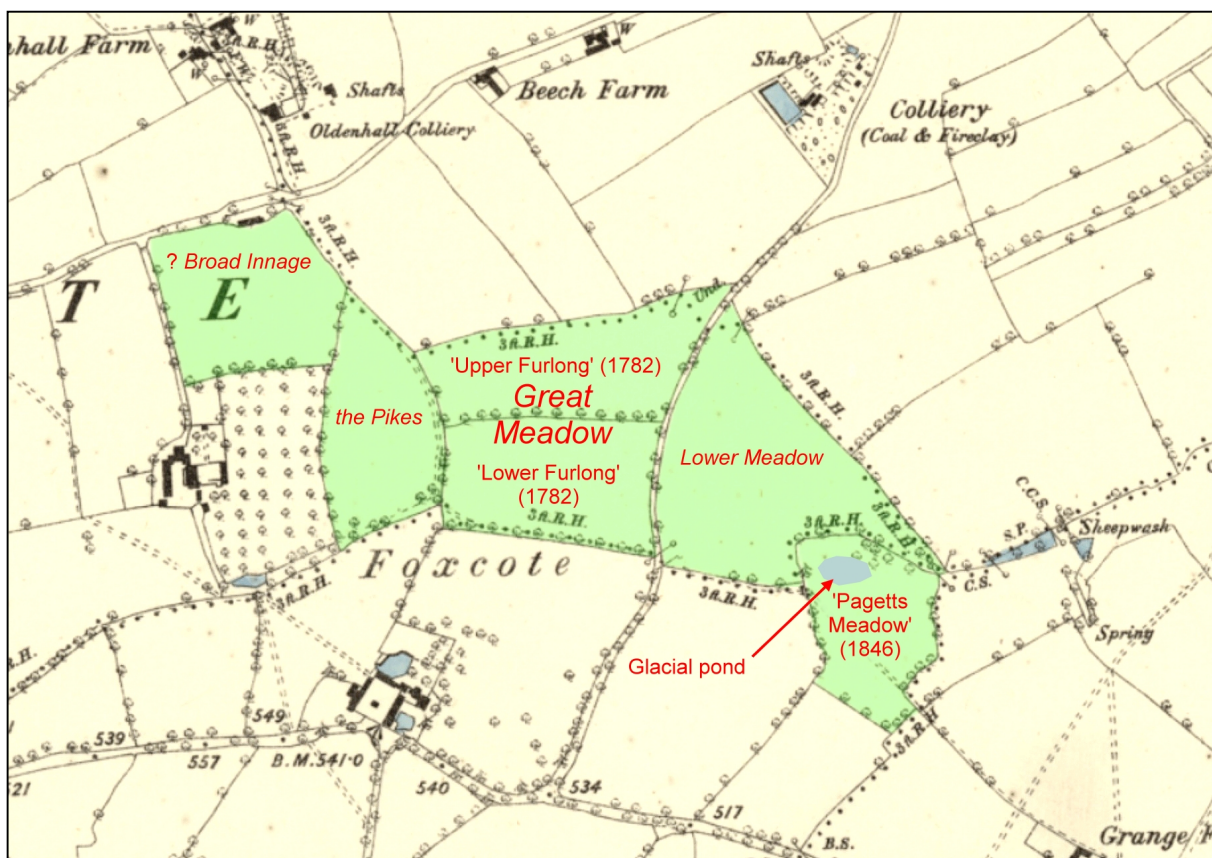

***Figure 19a**. Extract from OS 6-inch map of 1885,[120] showing the locations of places mentioned in the text.*

20. *and from the Gate Straight a Long the foot Path to the Corner of Pargiter's Meadow Hedge, and down to the Lower Corner of that Piece, where we Make the x against Halesowen Parish:*

Presumably *the Gate* is the entrance-way into *Lower Meadow* from Foxcote Lane (*Ludlee Road*). If, as seems to be the case in the remainder of the perambulation, all of the fields named fall inside Oldswinford parish, we have obviously made a mistake at this point because it is not possible to identify a *Pargiter's Meadow* within Oldswinford parish before we reach the Halesowen boundary. However, only the *Corner of Pargiter's Meadow Hedge* is referenced and it seems likely that this hedge is that surrounding a small glacial pond (a so-called kettle-hole pond) which belonged to Pedmore yet projects into Oldswinford parish. On the 1846 Pedmore tithe map, the projection is part of a field named 'Pagetts Meadow'. The surnames *Pargiter* (1733) and 'Pagett' (1846) come from different roots,[121] but they do have a superficial similarity. It is conceivable that they represent one and the same field and that the differences between them arose from natural verbal place-name evolution or as a result a single transcription error occurring some time in the intervening 113 years.

A very large number of archaeological artefacts have been discovered in, and around, the glacial pond. Flint items dating from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age — including Bronze Age barbed-and-tanged arrowheads and a flint spearhead — have been found. Prehistoric and Roman settlement at several nearby locations (Hodge Hill, Oldnall and Lutley) is suggested by artefact spreads and crop marks visible in aerial photographs. It appears that this area has been occupied for millennia. The fact that the fertile land here was shared out between five separate manors and townships (Oldswinford, Pedmore, Hagley, Cradley, and Lutley) suggests that the area was of great importance to medieval farmers.[122]

21. *and go up the North Side to the x in the upper furlong:*

From the lower (i.e. south-east) corner of *Lower Meadow*, we turn north-west along the field boundary to re-join Foxcote Lane (previously referenced as *Ludlee Road*). We then proceed westwards along the north edge of *upper furlong* until we reach *the Pikes* which were labelled on both the 1699 and 1782 maps (fig 19a).[123]

22. *so into the Pikes and up the foot Path into the Broad Innage, and to the x at Oldnal Gate:*

Following the eastern edge of *Broad Innage,* which must have been the field labelled 'Fox Field' on Court and Blackden's 1782 map[124] (fig 19a), we come to Oldnall Road where *Oldnal Gate* was located.[125] It seems that gates were a feature of the hill-top around Oldnall; the place-name 'Two Gates', about a kilometre to the east, appears to recall the gates at the top of Tanhouse Lane and Toys Lane which were recorded on OS maps as late as 1884.[126]

23. *and a Long the Lane to Mr. Hill's House:*

Crossing Oldnall Road, we enter the south end of *the Lane*. It is likely that *Mr Hill's House* was Oldnall Farm; the lane leading down to it from Oldnall road still exists as a footpath.

24. *so down the Well leasow and down the dingle of the Oldnal leasow which is Mr. Edward Badger's to the Brickill Close,*

We have little evidence to help identify *Well leasow, the dingle of the Oldnal leasow*, or *Brickill Close*, other than the course of the parish boundary plotted by the OS.[127] The mapping suggests that these fields were located south of the Lye-to-Cradley road as shown in fig. 23a. The *Well* referenced in the first name was almost certainly a spring feeding the principal (western-most) headwater of the Salt Brook and is likely to have been quite near to Oldnall Farm. Its outflow was probably directed through ditches along the edge of *Well leasow* before flowing down the hill-side through *the dingle of*
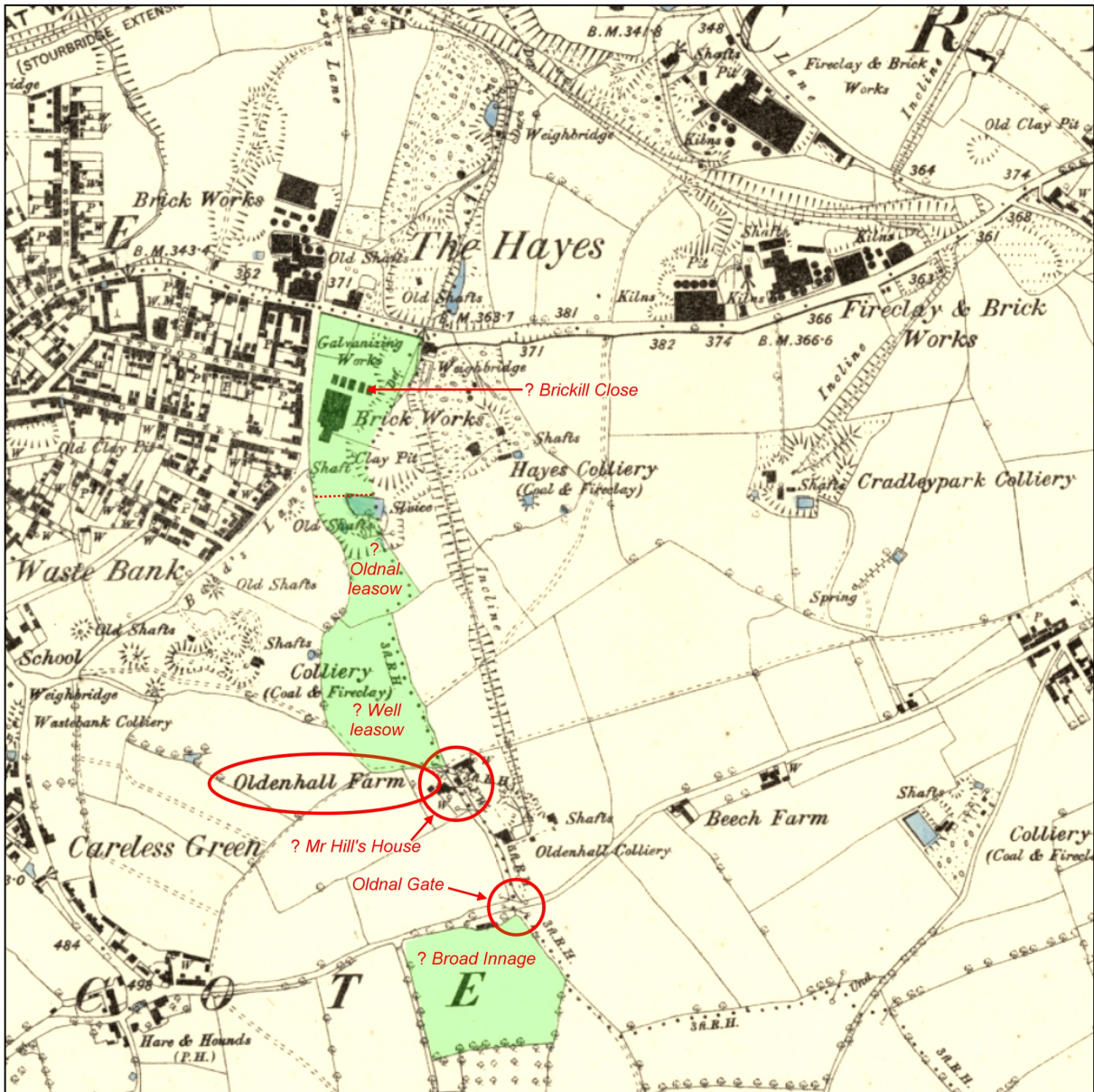
Figure 23a. *Extract from OS 6-inch map dated 1885,[128] showing the probable locations of places mentioned in the perambulation.*

the Oldnal leasow. The name Oldnall (*Oldnal* in 1733) comes from the OE personal name *Ealda* and *halh*, meaning '*Ealda*'s nook, or corner of land, or hollow'. The nook or hollow may have been the broad depression through which the *dingle of Oldnal leasow* ran, although it it worth noting that Isaac Taylor's 1782 map of Worcestershire suggests that 'Oldenhall' actually lay further to the west near the later Bank Street and Crabb Street.[129] The 1733 *Brickill Close* must have been near the bottom of the slope, below *Oldnal leasow*, where a 'Brick Works' is shown in fig. 23a. Evidently the clay mined here has been deemed suitable for brick-making for many centuries. Indeed, an Anglo-Saxon estate perambulation of *c*. 955 AD notes a place named *tigwellan*, 'tile or potsherd spring', near this locality, suggesting that the very same clays have been fired here for over a millennium.[130]

25. and down by the dingle side to Saltbrook:

It appears that, after a short break to accommodate a brick manufacturing facility, the dingle (wooded stream valley) resumed on the north side of the Lye-to-Cradley road. The line of the dingle was
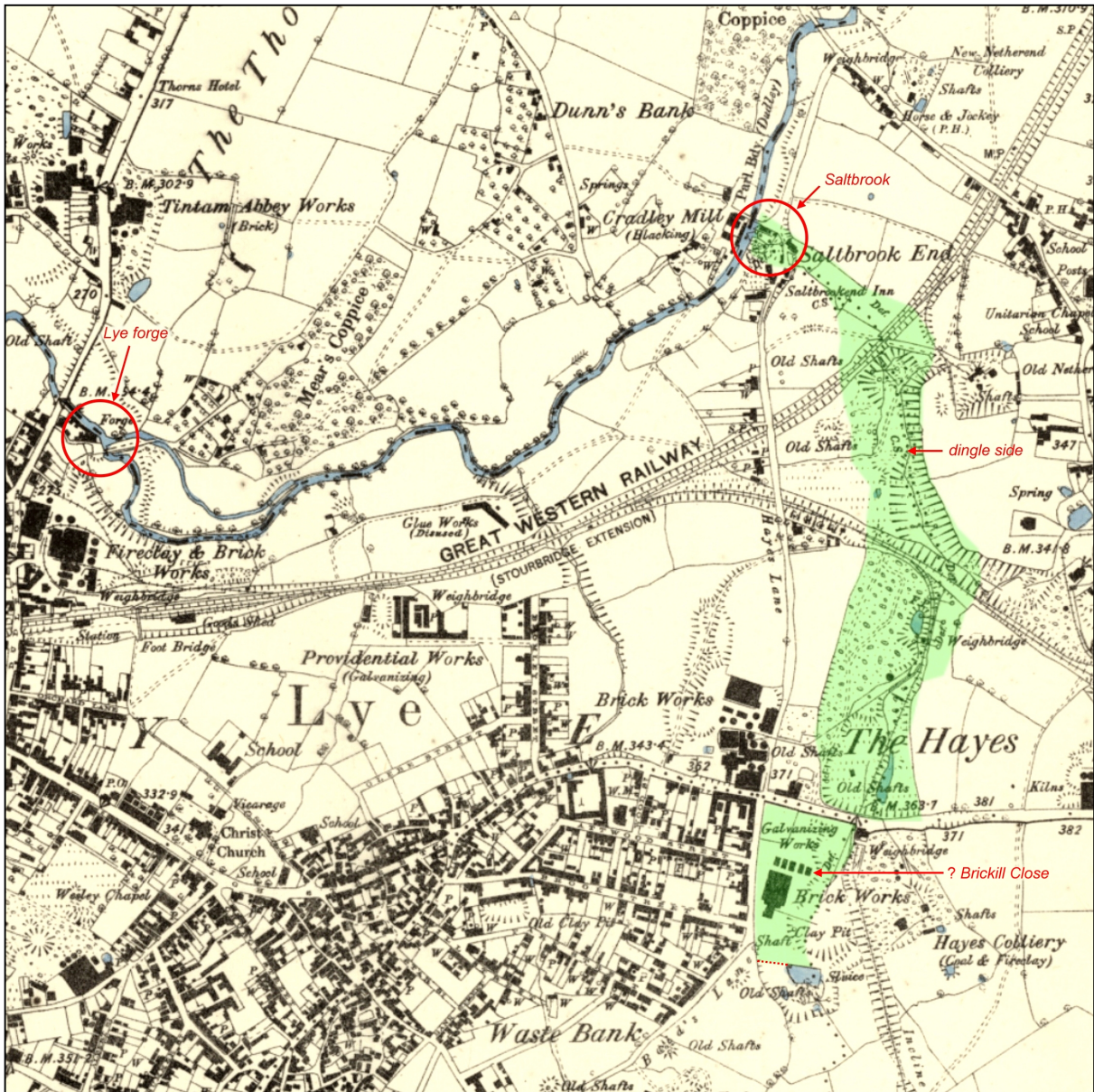
Figure 25a. *Extract from OS 6-inch map dated 1885,[131] showing the probable locations of places mentioned in the perambulation.*

marked by a series of pools running through The Hayes. These are shown in fig. 25a (i.e. part of a map dated 1885) but today almost all of this ancient landscape has been obliterated by intensive development and industry. The only reminder of the course of the Salt Brook's dingle is the ancient parish boundary line which we see drawn on maps dated 1699, 1782 and 1827.[132] Eventually, the Salt Brook, its dingle and the parish boundary join the river Stour at SO 931851. Today, the area around this confluence is occupied by a small settlement named Saltbrook End, most probably the 1733 perambulation's *Saltbrook*.

26. *from thence a Long by the Stower side to the Lye forge: from thence to the first Place in the Bounds above mention'd.*

From Saltbrook End we follow the Stour westwards past Lye Forge (fig. 25a) and on to our starting place, *Mr Dudley Brittle's meadow over against Low Lunt* (section 1 above).

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