

FWP 11

Saxon Land Boundary Charter - From Grundy, 1921? Arch Journal lxxvi, 240-244 & H. C. Brentnall, 1938, *Report of The Marlborough College Natural History Society*, 87.

SAXON BOUNDARY OF EAST OVERTON 939AD

VCH vol. III ? - in the section on Domesday Book and the Geld Rolls in VCH there is mention of East Overton on p. 85. It quotes 15 *hides* at EOv in Domesday, but 15 *mansae* given by King Athelstan in 939 to 'a pious lady Wulfswyth' (see below). This, VCH says, is deceptive as the 15 *mansae* included land in East Kennet. There is also mention in this section of VCH of 4 *mansae* at Overton which King Eadred gave in 949 to a thegn Frytheric which is also part of EOv - BCS 875 TO CHECK. Four of these nineteen *mansae*, VCH concludes, must be covered by the Domesday *Chenete*, divided amongst three tenants-in-chief. Naturally, this is of great interest as it points to a closer link between the settlement of East Kennet and the original East Overton settlement than previously appreciated.

The Geld Rolls give Walchelin, Bishop of Winchester, 15 hides at EOv where his *demesne* was of 8¼ (8½ in Domesday Book- VCH, 120). By 1086 the estate of EOv had been assigned to the bishop for the support of the monks of the Old Minster. The Prior of St. Swithun's later held the land until the Dissolution.

From Grundy,

The East Overton charter is dated AD 939 and is granted by King Aethelstan to Wulfswyth, a nun. Either she or a predecessor bequeathed it to the Bishop of Winchester at a later date. It covers 15 hides and the land is described as being

'juxta dirivativis fluentium successibus *aet cynetan* in illo loco ubi ruricoli antiquo usu nomen indiderunt *uferan tun*'

Brentnall translates this as; 'by the series of offtakes from the Kennet in the place known of old to the local inhabitants as *Bank Farm*', possibly 'Higher' or 'Upper Farm' *i.e.* away from the flood plains. This charter comes from a transcription of the original carried out in the 11th or 12th century? CHECK

1. *Of Cynetan to thon Ellene* - 'From the Kennet to the elder tree'.

Naturally, **the** elder is no longer there. The starting point could be more or less anywhere along this stretch of the Kennet, yet Saxon boundary landmarks are usually visible from the previous and proceeding landmarks. If obvious landscape features are not mentioned, then the boundary follows a line, either natural or manmade, obvious on the ground (at the time). The elder, wherever it was then, had to be visible from the Kennet and also

from *Wodnes Dene* (see below, 2). In turn, *Hole Weg* ('Hollow Way', see below, 24), the landmark immediately before reaching the *Cynetan*, was also probably visible.

1.1. The starting point may be around SU141684 where, after an interesting straight(ened?) stretch of the Kennet, the river takes its first 'natural' bend for some time. This straight section may be due to canalisation work (when?) and is situated just south of the Roman road which passed 10 metres to the north and may well be the *Hole Weg* referred to. (Are there any parallels with straight section south of North Farm?). Indeed, the Roman road was indicated until recently by a depression (see XX) in the fields N of this point. The road joins up to the W with the present A4 at SU138685 (144m OD) and to the E with a ditch *c.* SU147684 (see below 1.2. & 24).

1.2. On the other hand, the starting point could lie at the 90° bend in the river at SU145679, and the *Hole Weg* is the eastern extension of the Roman road mentioned above which today is evinced by a depression S of the present village of Fyfield - what Crawford referred to as a 'deep trench' (Crawford's map, 1925). This hollow way once crossed the old village of Fyfield, visible remain of which survive today as earthworks. This ditch is now part of the parish boundary between West Overton and Fyfield and, coupled with the fact that it remains a 'Hollow Way', the river bend directly south would appear a more likely candidate for the starting point (see also 23 & 24).

Either way, the elder tree would have had to have been somewhere on the line from the Kennet to the top of the spur of land just to the W of Lockeridge village, otherwise it would not have been visible from both the river and the Dene as the land rises from the river making the Dene invisible until almost the top of the hill. From this hillock a clear length of the river can be seen and the starting point could therefore be really at either of, or anywhere between, the two points mentioned above. The boundary line may well be reflected in a curve in the woodland fence on the banks of the Kennet at the 90° point and, 15m further N, with the eastern part of the garden of Lockeridge Cottage. The present-day footpath up to the West Ov. road W of the row of houses is due to re-routing when those houses were built in the 1930s? (see 1925 map) and not, therefore, a remnant of the boundary. From the junction with the lane to WOv, a fence line, W of Dene Farm in Lockeridge, may illustrate the boundary down to the Dene itself.

2. *Thonne on Wodnes Dene* - to Woden's Dene, now owned by the National Trust and called Lockeridge Dene.

The boundary, according to Brentnall, goes down the east side of the Dene. We are not, Brentnall agrees, at Hursley Bottom as Grundy believes us to be (241). If the boundary went from the lane to the west of Dene Farm and then SSE towards the Dene, as suggested above and by the current hedge line, then it seems probable that the boundary continued straight down to the Manton road, opposite where the bridleway mentioned below begins. In effect, where the hedge today bends to the SE before the Dene, the boundary continued in a straight line onwards.

3. *Thonne to Wuda on Maer Wege* - the wood on the boundary way - check translation of 'Maer'.

A track, which becomes a bridleway, climbs the hill across the lane from the eastern end of Lockeridge Dene. This is a possible candidate for boundary way and it does go up to the NE corner of Wools Grove, the 'Wuda'? The translation needs checking - Grundy says this boundary way was 'probably a way along the balk of a ploughland', a credible origin of footpaths and bridleways across open land today, but in Bosworth there is no 'Maer'. Although Bosworth has no 'Maer', he has 'Mæra'; great, noble or illustrious, and more probable, 'Mearh' a horse (mare) or 'Mear' a field (NB 'horse way'; bridleway today).

4. *Thonne on Hyrs Leage up to Wodens Dic on Titferthes Geat* - to Hursley (Bottom) then to Titferthes Gate on Wansdyke. Various possibilities are evident here.

4.1. One is that the boundary carried along the course of the present bridleway and thus crossed Hursley Bottom at SU148662, carrying on to the Gate at SU147654 at the SE corner of Pickrudge. Check whether this is a gate.

4.2. The other sees the boundary going through Wools Grove to the west of Fosbury Cottages (Forest Lodge now) and continuing to the eastern end of Hursley Bottom at the NE corner of Wells Copse. It then goes along the track between Wells' Copse and Little Wood to the gate at SU154656 at the western corner of Barrow Copse, as Brentnall argues. Again check gate.

4.3. A further possibility is that, as with 2 & 3, the boundary continues in a straight line, crossing Hursley Bottom at SU149662, continuing more or less directly S through the woods (Brickkiln Copse on 1925 map - where is kiln? and why bricks?) to the SW corner of Strawberry Ground where it crosses Wansdyke. The 1926 map notes a 'Stone' at this gap in Wansdyke - to check (could be HM estate or earlier). Although 4.2. seems more probable, this option has certain advantages over the previous two:

4.3.1 it is in a straight line (typically Saxon/Roman?)

4.3.2. it fits in well with 5.3 below

4.3.3. there is a boundary stone (BM 712.1, 1925 map)

4.3.4. it is the highest point along this stretch of Wansdyke and may therefore mark a ridge division and/or watershed line.

5. *Thonne on Withigmeres Hege easte weardne* - east side of hedge at Willow? Pond.

5.1. If at 4.2., then there is a pond next to the Long Barrow at SE corner of Barrow Copse. Brentnall believes that 'this point is exactly determinable. The pond lies beside the lane at

the south end of Barrow Copse'. Check date and charter of Huish if poss. to see where their by. went.

5.2. If at 4.1., 4.2. or 4.3., then the pond could well be the one 200m up the track at SU152652 near the ?? tree. The 1926 map shows this track to have been a belt of trees which went of at right-angles at the pond and what appears to be a building. I am inclined to believe the boundary follows the route 4.2. and continues to this pond and not from 4.2. to Barrow Copse pond as Brentnall believes.

6. *Suth on butan Aethelferthes setle on thone Stanihtan Weg* - South about (round) Aethelferthes dwelling to the stony way.

There is a clear possibility that Aethelferthes place is to the S or SW of the pond at SU152652. By going round it, we join up with the present parish boundary, which has a kink in it at this point. If one follows the boundary from Bayardo Farm, it is more or less straight and would join up nicely with the boundary line going NE from the road at SU1486652. This southern boundary may here be uneven, when around it the lines are straight, because it is following a much earlier land boundary and is taking in Aethelferthes place - the same Aethelferthe of *Aethelferthes Stane?* (see 19).

The stony way may well, if this is the right place, be the road to Gopher Hill (as Brentnall says). Whether coming from 4.1., 4.2. or 4.3., they all seem to end up at this same point and all could take the same route roughly following the present southern edge of the parish boundary.

7. *Thonne on Smalan Leage* - to Small/Narrow Lea.

I would be inclined to agree with Brentnall and say that the Narrow Lea is the extension southwestwards of *Hurs Lea* (Hursley Bottom), ending around the area at the SW corner of Pickrudge, near where that wood meets Wansdyke. The enclosure map clearly shows that there was a narrow stretch of land between *Upper* and *Lower Chichangles* (called *Chichangles Ground*). This now dry valley, Brentnall notes, in fact once had a pond at this SW point (noted on 1925 & SMR maps, but not Enclosure) and this also adds credence to believing this is the Pond Grove (*Mere Grafe*) mentioned in the WOv charter (note 13). *Smalan Leage* is probably therefore around the area of SU147662. The boundary therefore follows the track from Gopher Hill, crossing Wansdyke at SU147654 and, continuing along the lane, goes to the east of Pickrudge to the east of the narrow valley known in 17?? as *Chichangles Ground*. This follows Brentnall.

8. *Thonne thurh Scyt Hangran and lang thaes Weges to them Hlince* - through Hangran Woods (sloping woods), along the path to the lynch.

This is a continuation of 7 and takes us north-west through Pumphrey Woods which, before being associated with the family of Edward Pumphrey at the end of the 18th century, was known as *Cheecheangles* (1542 Survey, G. M. Young, WPNS, 306), and as *Upper Chichangles* and *Lower Chichangles* on the enclosure award map. *Cheecheangles/Chichangles* may well be derived from *Scyt Hangran*. One is therefore following the track between Pumphrey Wood and Wools Grove and from here to a lynchet or baulk.

As the boundary follows a 'path to the lynch' through woodland let us look firstly at the path and secondly at the lynch.

The '*Wege*' in question would seem to be the hollow which skirts the northern edge of Pumphrey Wood and which is now a public footpath. Signs of the path's position as a boundary are evident by the HM (Henry Meux) stones along its south-western side and its rôle as the tithing boundary.

Following this path, one reaches open pasture today at SU143666, but in the 10th century it would have been where the Saxons encountered ploughland (SMR, 18 'field system ploughed out'). Here, a thin strip of hedge, baulk and trees remains today (visited 24/3/95 - shown as the northern edge of *Allen's Higher Ground* on 1794 map).

The origins of the field south of this hedge (*Allen's Higher Ground*) are of a later date and shows where an inroad has been made into Savernake to bring the land into cultivation. The fields of *Allen's Lower Ground* and *Allen's Higher Ground* show a partially wooded, curvi-linear northern edge (the hedge mentioned above) and this would indicate where the original edge of Savernake lay. The straightness of the woodland limits on the Enclosure map and today also seem to point the organised tree-felling of this area in the post-medieval period. The two *Allen's Grounds*, therefore, reflect a fairly new incursion into Savernake. The *Hlince* would therefore appear to be this hedge.

It should be noted, however, that the previous footpath did not follow this hedge line but cut directly across the field (1925 map). This path through the field, although no longer apparent on the ground, would seem, on cartographic evidence, to be a clear continuation southwards of the lane coming down from West Overton and may well be the central section linking the road with the droveway. The charter thus stops at the *Hlince* as it now turns along the hedge and not straight down the hill as the '*Wege*' would have gone.

The likeliest route is therefore from 7, along the path to the pit noted on our visit through *Upper Chichangles/Pumphrey Wood* (see WOV. 11) and, still following the tithing boundary, along the droveway to the hedge. This is as Brentnall

9. *Thonne to West Heafnod* - to West Headlands.

The boundary is likely to have followed the hedge, turned at right-angles as the hedge does, and followed the baulk down the hill to the road. This hedge demarcates the tithing boundary line and the western limits of the ploughland of East Overton (*West Heafnod*). The right-angled, yet curved, almost semi-circular turn it takes northwestwards down the hill to the Manton road is, as Brentnall notes, where 'the modern boundary makes an extraordinary loop round a hole' (134). Indeed it could be the *Crundel*, Brentnall continues, mentioned in the West Overton charter (note 11). Unfortunately, during our visit we saw no sign of a pond, pit or quarry, nor is one apparent on any of the maps studied. However, as Brentnall rightly says, this is the tithing boundary (marked on the ground with another HM stone at the 'loop' and with stones in the hedge down to the road) and probably therefore descended from the Saxon boundary.

10. *Thonne north ofer Dune on thaet Riht Gemaere* - north over the down, to the straight balk/boundary.

The clear candidate for a headland marking the western boundary would be the one at SU132668, marking the tithing boundary and the northern edge of the strip called '*Lewis's Ground*' on the Enclosure map. The boundary thus follows the hedgeline down Boreham Down, across the Manton road and (north-east) up the hill to this other distinctive hedge. Follows Brentnall.

11. *Thaer to Tune* - then to town.

This boundary now goes down to the village of East Overton (modern West Overton) and presumably enters the *Tune* at SU13167677 where a stone (1938 map, but not on any later ones) may mark the village entrance from the south. Indeed this stone could be the South Gate equivalent to the *Dunnan Stan with foran tham Burg Gete* of West Overton (note 9) which once possibly marked the Northern Gate. On the other hand, it may be the same stone being referred to in both charters.

12. *Thonne on Cynetan on Sealt Ham* - to the Salt House by the Kennet.

To the E of the stone one follows the path marked on the SMR map at SU132677 (through the housing estate!), passing west of South Farm and across what is now the main street E-W through West Overton. Here one joins the modern footpath which follows the side of the wall (demarcating the land belonging to the Vicarage), down to a foot-bridge over the Kennet, referred to as '*Four bridges*' on the 1794 map and marked on the new Pathfinder map as '*The Withy Bed*'. The Salt House would probably have been in the area called '*Home Mead*' on the 1794 map, around SU131682 CHECK.

This is the western boundary of East Overton, and by taking this route through the modern day village of West Overton, it illustrates how the village of East Overton must

have lain to the east, undoubtedly around the church of (West) Overton. Indeed, an RCHME survey of 1975 noted the village remains visible on the ground to the south and south-east of St. Michaels (Fig. 3).

13. *up betweox tha Twegen Beorgas* - up between the two barrows.

From the Salt House, in a north-easterly line and following the present hedge, the boundary crosses the A4, then the Roman road and carries on between barrows A and B of the SMR map (no. 30; two of the grouping referred to as 'six ring ditches'). The cause of the unusual bend in the hedge at SU129685, 300m W of North Farm, is probably due to this early land division. A footpath also follows this line.

14. *Of tham ...on thaes Furlanges West Heafde* - to the West Headlands of the ploughland.

This could be where the hedge line curves slightly as it divides the 'Headlands' Iron Age site in two, around about SU129687, on the western edges of the south-facing ploughland of East Overton. This is significant for at least two reasons. Firstly the boundary makers were obviously well-aware that their decision would cut a LIA? settlement exactly in half. This may point to the land being divided between two sons, with them, and their kin, settling elsewhere (West Overton and East Overton?). The nature of the division does, I believe, show a forced division and resettlement and may therefore date from the arrival of the Romans in the valley. As Bonney argues (185), in an area of considerable pre-Roman Iron Age settlements, the Roman road does not seem to demarcate land divisions. It may, especially if following an earlier route, have further stimulated colonization and development, but in such relatively densely settled areas it appears not to have acted as a boundary. This would, Bonney believes, indicate that the area had clear divisions already in existence in some form or another and that the road, although 'an intrusive feature, ...[would] appear to have been absorbed' (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, it could be argued that the road, especially in the Kennet valley, was the central point off which the land was allotted. The northern tip of East Overton, at *Aethelfethres Stane*, as mentioned below, is 6.2km from *Aethelferthes Setle* at the southern tip (if note 6 is correct). St. Michaels church, built on the site of the Roman villa, is at an **exact** equidistant point (3.1 km from the two ends). This would indicate a precise division of land, based on the Roman mile?, centred on the villa and may explain why the boundaries follow straight lines.

That this seems more than a coincidence can be illustrated by measuring the northern and southern ends of the tithings of West Overton. Again the central point is the site of the church (and thus possible villa) of the West Overton charter (now part of East Kennet village). Here the northern point, Colta's barrow, is 3km from the *Chiricstede* along the Ridgeway. The southernmost point of West Overton, where the boundary leaves the

Wansdyke, somewhere around the 'heathen burial place' (see WOv. note 17), is also exactly 3km from the *Chiricstede*. In Fyfield, another villa lies under the church. Here the northern point at SU135729 is 4.6km from Fyfield church and the southern point, near Yew Tree Cottage, is also 4.6km from St. Nicholas. In Lockeridge, one may wish to look for a villa, if one believes all this about measuring maps, at an equidistant point between the two furthest ends of the tithing. Strangely enough, this point is **exactly** where the Roman road crosses the field at *c.* SU145685, but it would seem that Lockeridge is probably not of Roman origin (see 24.2. below).

Secondly, it is clear that the edges of the cultivated land in Saxon times were important as boundary markers (see 9., WOv. ??). Whether this is evidence of the importance of the division and distribution of agricultural land between settlements and farmsteads is unclear. It does, however, clearly indicate that arable farming was fairly widespread on the valley sides during the early 10th century, and probably had been for some time if headlands and prominent hedges have become landscape features.

15. *Thonne on Scropes Pyt* - then to Scrope's Pit (shrub pit?)

This pit is probably around SU128689 where the hedge takes a right-angled turn west. The pit could, however, be at the Iron Age 'Headlands' site where depressions may have been evident (and overgrown with bushes) in the tenth century. If this is the case, then the headlands of the ploughed fields of 14 would be a little further south. The name of Scrope's Pit is clearly reflected in a reference in 1312 to Northfield at Scrufeleput (Hare).

16. *Thonne on thone ...pan Crundel midde werdne* - then on to the middle of the quarry

The probable location of this quarry would appear to be at SU124694, where the tithing boundary (see also Enclosure map) makes a loop around some feature, although nothing is evident today nor anything noted on the SMR map. CHECK. It is worth noting that only half this quarry is in East Overton, the other being in West Overton, which would indicate that the quarry was shared equally by the two villages. This quarry could well be similar in function and nature to the one across the valley in the north-facing fields (see 8 above & WOv. 11).

17. *Thonne on Coltan Beorh* - to Colta's Barrow

This barrow, now ploughed out, is shown on the Enclosure and SMR maps as being at SU120693 (SMR no. 68 'Bowl Barrow - site of') at the point where the hedge line meets the Ridgeway.

18. *Oth thaene Herpoth an Hacan Penne* - along the army path on Hack Pen (the gated penning?)

The *Herpoth* is the Ridgeway and thus the *Herepath* shown on the OS maps coming from the east entrance of Avebury up over the Downs (aka Green Street) is wrongly named. This army path, called the *Ealden Herepath* (NB. already an **Old** Army-path) in the Alton Priors charter of 825AD, marks the boundary of several tithings and/or parishes. Brentnall notes (124) that 'herepaths led to the meeting-places of the various hundreds, for it was there that the levies gathered when the army was mobilised. [The Herepoth/Ridgeway] was the nearest way from Overton to the point on the Marlborough-Broad Hinton road called Man's Head (SU140739) [which, G. M. Young suggests,] was probably the meeting-place of the Hundred of Selkley in Saxon times.'

That the *Herpoth* is on *Hacan Penne* is of interest as today Hackpen Hill is 5km. further north along the Ridgeway in Winterbourne Bassett. This clearly indicates a shift in name, probably due to successive mapmakers moving the name and the general usage of 'Hackpen' to denote the whole hill, therefore pushing it further and further north.

The name itself, Grundy believes, denotes a cattlepen in the area and this is reflected in the name 'Cow Down' on the Enclosure award map. The *Penne* is mirrored in the modern name for the area of land north of the hedge to Colta's Barrow; 'Parson's Penning' and in the two smaller enclosed areas on the Enclosure map called 'Higher Penning' and 'Lower Penning' (the former on 'Farm Down', the latter on 'The Cow Down'). It would seem certain, therefore, that in the early 900s this land, whether relating to a northern parcel of land in the tithing of East Overton or a southern one in the tithing of West Overton, maybe both, was an enclosed area, most probably for cattle grazing or at least for some sort of livestock (you don't need a 'penning' for crops!), possibly for sheep. It probably also served as an area where the animals could counted, marked, sold or made ready for moving, as well as being allowed to graze.

19. *Thonne andlang Herpathes on tha Dic with suthan Aethelferthes Stane* - along the Herepath to the Ditch south of Aethelferthes Stone.

The Herepath, or Ridgeway, crosses a ditch 2.2 km further up this track at SU127714, just after a point where the Ridgeway turns true north. This ditch is marked on the Pathfinder map as 'Earthwork'. When visited (24/3/95), a ditch and bank were clearly evident running in an East-West direction.

19.1 Aethelferthes Stone could, I believe, be the *polissoir* 20m to the north of this ditch (see Misc. Excavations, esp. ODII, p??). Although 'found' in 19?? by ?? (see WAM ???), such an unusual? stone would have been known to a community with much closer ties to, and more frequent contacts with the land than today.

19.2. O. G. S. Crawford, quoted in Brentnall (124), identifies *Aethelferthes Stane* with a large sarsen 'near the junction of the parishes of Overton, Avebury and Winterbourne Monkton' (WAM xlii, 57) which Brentnall presumes is 'the one that lies on the east edge of the Ridgeway beside the fence of an enclosed field' (*ibid.*). CHECK

19.3. As 19.1. could be considered slightly too far east and 19.2. slightly too far north to be stones north of the ditch, it could be that the stone is/was situated just on the other side of the ditch on the Herepath. CHECK

It is also interesting to note, as Brentnall does (128), that *Aethelferthes Stane* is four miles (6.2 km.) from *Aethelferthes Setl* (see 6 above).

20. *Thonne suth andlang Hric Weges on thone Dunnan Stan* - South along the Ridgeway to the Downland Stone.

From the ditch the boundary headed south (probably SSE) along a recognisable track to a stone. There are several points to make here:

20.1. The ridgeway track of 939 is therefore not the Ridgeway of 1995 and it would appear that one has again encountered 'name slippage'. Could it be that the modern word 'Ridgeway' has obtained its name from a 'ridge way' which was once situated to its east? It is clear from the Tithe award Map for East Overton, that in ??? what they called the '*Ridgeway*' was this Saxon one and not the '*Ridgeway*' of today (which should, therefore, be called the '*Herepath*').

20.2. This ridgeway no doubt followed the ridge of Overton Down and, if coming from 19.1. or 19.2., then this track is now to the east of the gallops.

20.3. If, on the other hand, one is coming from 19.3., then one may be following the track between another *Ditch/Earthwork* (this one going in a southeasterly direction from the Green Street), and the western side of the gallops. This path is closely reflected today by the track and footpath which descend the hill towards the pond at SU132705, and could therefore be the *Hric Weges*. Although human activity on Overton Down over the years has meant tracks are constantly being redefined, the *Hric Weges* would have come this way.

20.4. *Aethelferthes Stane* is not in East Overton, but in Lockeridge. (NB. The ditch is south of the stone and then the boundary turns south, so it cannot incorporate the *Stane*).

20.5. In an area of hundreds of large sarsens, the *Dunnan Stan* must have stood out. This stone may well be referring to a standing stone, I believe, as the *Twegen Dunne Stanas* in WOv. note 5 and the *Dunnan Stan* of WOv. note 9 appear to apply to erect stones. No such stone is, however, visible today, but due east Long Tom still marks the eastern edge of Fyfield parish. CHECK. *Dunnan* may possibly refer to the darkness (brown, tan, black

etc.) of the stone, as Brentnall argues. As he says (125), 'brown stones are by no means rare'.

By considering the next feature, the stone ought to be/ have been in an area centred on SU135702, which is not far from a possible stone-circle or round barrow (SMR no. 50). Whether this feature is natural or manmade, it is certainly an fairly unusual association of stones and is therefore a possible candidate for the *Dunnan Stan* (unfortunately there are several stones, not just one, but here again the plural ending of *Stan* may have been lost in the transcription).

20.6. Of great interest here is that the boundary (*Hric Weges*) passes close to ODXI. Does it, like at Headlands, dissect it, thus giving us the fence under the lynchet? And is this a further indication of settlement division and resettlement ? Or does the boundary skirt ODXI, either west or east ? CHECK

21. *Thonne west and south ofer thaet Yrdland on Pyttel Dene* - then West and South over the Plough (Ard) land to Pickledean.

As Grundy (243-4) and Brentnall (125) point out, one should read **east** for west. The boundary now, therefore, zigzags south and east over the ploughed area north of Pickledean Barn. These apparently erratic changes in direction are probably because the boundary is respecting the baulks at the edges of the fields. Indeed, headlands of fields were visible on the ground in the shape of banks or lynchets until recently (e.g. SMR no. 86 'strip lynchets, field systems - ploughed out'). The East Overton boundary may well respect the lynchets of ODXII before continuing down to reach Pickledean.

The modern boundary between the parishes of West Overton and Fyfield, further to the east of the Saxon East Overton one, takes similar right-angled turns. One could assume that the eastern boundary of the Saxon charter of Fyfield, if it existed, would contain a similar description to its neighbour at this point.

That this area of ploughland north of Pickledean Barn was under cultivation in the early 10th century raises the following questions:

- i) was the land more fertile than today, or at least made so?
- ii) at some point, early 14th?C, did the pressures on the land, decisions from Winchester and/or the weather mean it became unviable as arable and so became land for grazing sheep?
- iii) what were the pressures on tenants and farmers to bring land into cultivation, *i.e.* why were the land lower down the valley slope, the meadowland and the ploughland on the north facing slopes opposite (see 8, 9 & 10 above) not sufficient?

iv) does the area of land under plough give us a hint to the population of the tithing?

v) could land across Pickledean valley to the west (the area to the west and south of Down Barn, on the same latitude as the *Pyttel Dene Yrdland*) also have been under cultivation at this time? CHECK

vi) how long had this land been under cultivation? how long is the gap between the ardmarks of ODXI and the ridge-and-furrow on *Pyttel Dene Yrdland*? how much of the ridge-and-furrow in this area can be considered contemporaneous?

vii) has the cultivation of this higher ground been brought about by the introduction of Roman rule and the Roman villa at EOv.??

viii) is cultivation restarted c. 400 AD (ODXII) after the abandonment of the villa and Roman road (food more scarce?)? (Bonney 1972, 181).

22. *Thonne up Lamba Paeth* - up to Lambs' Path

From the Pickledean Barn area the boundary goes up (not down, as one might imagine) to a sheep path, or, if poorly transcribed, possibly to the *Lámes* path or loam/clay path. Either one seems appropriate.

22.1. Pickledean forms a natural valley through which animals could be driven from the higher downland area where sheep grazing has been evident from at least the 12th century. The Lambs' Path could therefore be the trackway, possibly of Romano-British origin (noted again 24/3/95), which comes down the eastern edge of Pickledean, slightly up the slope from the plain of the valley bottom. This track is visible 10m to the north of the Down Barn Enclosure, marked as a RB Enclosure on the SMR map (no. 31 - see also pp.??), where it stretches up and down the valley for at least 100m in either direction. This track may have been constructed just higher than the highest line reached by the river or possibly to avoid a marshy area. On the other hand, further south, it may go along the eastern edge of the Dean so as to avoid the large sarsens in the valley bottom CHECK - today a dry valley, water scarce, calyey soil soaks it up well, but can get marshy with heavy rains. But why *lamba* and not *Sceáp*?

22.2. The other possibility is that of a *Lámes* Path, or loamy/muddy path. Although the valley is dry, the path from it to the *Hlinc uferweardne* (see 23) may have been across fields and therefore be muddy.

23. *Suth on thone Hlinc ufewardne* - south to the upper side of the lynch.

23.1. The boundary now seems to follow the eastern side of Pickledean to the southern limits of the ploughland on this south-facing down.

23.2. If it does go up, eastwards across the fields (22.2), then the Saxon boundary would now go directly south (following the straight section of the West Overton/Fyfield parish boundary).

24. *On Hole Weg* to the Hollow Way

24.1 If coming down from Pickldean (crossing the Marlborough road), one arrives at the Roman road which crosses the land here (SU142685 - see SMR note 53 'Roman pavement').

24.2. If at 23.2., then the Hollow Way could be the ditch which is visible today in the centre of the shrunken village remains of Fyfield, south of the present village. This is the eastern extension of the Roman road mentioned above. If this is the boundary of East Overton, and Fyfield's western one has not changed, then this would mean the land at Lockeridge is blocked to the north.

Lockeridge could well have grown thanks to influx from the southern end of Fyfield village. There are references to the original village of Fyfield burning down (VCH ???) and so settlement moved south to the settlement of Lockeridge and north to the, what once was, the northern part of the village of Fyfield (where the village and church today are to be found). Both Lockeridge and Fyfield are mentioned in Domesday as separate lands, although *Locherige* is noted as being 'in Overton' (VCH II, 148). In 1086 it was held by Durand of Gloucester and paid geld for 2 hides, had land for one plough, had one acre of meadow, twelve of pasture and six of woodland. It had one villein, and two borders with one serf and one hide in the demense. It was worth 40s, but only 30s at Domesday. Compared to three acres of meadow and 30 of pasture if Fyfield (*ibid.* 120) and 15 acres of meadow in East Overton (*ibid.*), Lockeridge is small.

The most important thing to suggest a close relationship between land holdings in Lockeridge and East Overton is that the Bishop of Winchester holds 15 hides in 1086 (corresponds to 939 charter) in East Overton and '***Of the same land Durand (of Gloucester) holds 2 hides all but ½ virgate. He who held it in the time of King Edward could not be separated from the church. It was and is worth 20s. The demense (of West Overton) is worth £8***' (*ibid.*, 121). This makes the Bishop's holdings to be 12 hides and ½ virgate, not 15.

These separate entries for two parcels of land clearly refer to Lockeridge, or at least Durand's holdings in Lockeridge and East Overton. Durand's 2 hides at Lockeridge, including one acre of demense land, is worth 30s, with 2½ in East Overton worth 20s. This being so, I would be inclined to believe that these two references are for the different piece of land; that is 2 hides (one in demense) in *Locherige* worth 30s is not the same as 2 hides and ½ virgate in East Overton worth 20s.

Durand's total would be about 4½ hides, less than half of the West Overton tithing and less than a third of East Overton. Both conclusions, coupled with the fact that *Locherige* had 6 acres of wood and only one of meadow, point to the land lying mainly to the south of Lockeridge village with the meadow being around the Kennet to the north and the woodland being around Fosbury Cottage (Forest Lodge), Henley and Little Woods and Barow, Pig-trough and Broom Copses in the south. If Lockeridge's land is south of the village, then the eastern boundary of East Overton could well follow 24.2.

If Durand's two separate pieces of land are not joined, as I have presumed above, then the survey of a separate piece of land at the end of the 939 charter could be that of the two and a half hides Durand held in Overton a century and a half later. This part of the 939 survey seems to refer to an area of Overton or Fyfield Down which demarcates the boundaries of four dairy farms and an area of downland.