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THE MEDIEVAL PARKS OF BERKSHIRE

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The park was a common feature of the medieval landscape and was to be found in substantial numbers in every county in England[1]. It was part of the demesne lands of the lord of the manor and typically consisted of "unimproved land", almost invariably well-wooded to provide covert for the deer, and usually containing pasture. It was normally situated on the edge of the manor and, as a result, the park boundary frequently coincided with the manorial and parish boundaries. The medieval park varied considerably in size; examples in Berkshire at Enborne and Hagbourne were no more than 30 acres in size but in general they tended to average close to 300 acres although Windsor Park probably extended to several thousand acres. In the later Middle Ages some parks were extended at the expense of arable land (for example Hamstead Marshall before 1341); later imparkments were increasingly for ornamental purposes and were often large, as at Chamberhouse (344 acres) and Yattendon (600 acres) both dating from the fifteenth century.

The main purposes of the park were to provide the lord of the manor with a private hunting ground and with a ready source of meat. It was, therefore, stocked with deer, of the red, fallow and roe varieties. In order to retain the deer, the park had to be securely enclosed, usually by a combination of substantial earth bank, topped by a wooden paling fence and with an inside ditch, which together made an impassable barrier. Occasionally, the wooden fence might be replaced by a quickset hedge, or by a stone wall, and where the topography was suitable, for example just below the crest of a steep slope, the paling fence only might serve. Water seems to have been an effective barrier to the passage of deer and some parks were partly circumscribed by rivers and marshy areas, as at Sonning and Hamstead Marshall. The circumference of the park was broken by gates and, occasionally, by "deer-leaps" which were special devices which allowed deer to enter the park from outside but, once in, prevented their escape.

The medieval park was therefore a securely enclosed hunting ground of a generally wooded nature and was quite different from its modern successor, the landscaped amenity park. It often contained a lodge, sometimes moated, which housed the keeper or parker, who was an important manorial official. Its secure enclosure also distinguished it from the other medieval hunting grounds — the forest, chase and warren. The forest was a large tract of country, usually though not necessarily wooded, which belonged to the Crown, had its own Forest Laws and came under the jurisdiction of royal officials. However, forest areas often contained village communities and extensive cultivated lands. The whole of the county was subject to this law at various times. In 1221 Windsor Forest occupied all of East Berkshire and apart from a small corner around Hungerford, which was part of Savernake Forest, the remainder of the county was known as the Forest of Berkshire (See Figure 1). In 1227 there was extensive disafforestation in west, north and central Berkshire, and after that date only a reduced Windsor Forest and a small part of Saver-

nake remained. The relationship between forests and parks is a rather complex one. However, when the restrictive Forest Laws were enforced by the Crown officials they generally excluded the creation of parks, except where licences were granted. Once an area was "disafforested", that is the land was freed from the Forest Laws on the payment of usually quite considerable sums of money to the Crown, then its wooded nature often favoured the creation of parks. Certainly, in Berkshire almost all the parks in these areas were created after 1227. Windsor Forest was a special case since most parks there belonged to the Crown and the strict enforcement of the law meant that only 4 of the 13 examples remained in private hands throughout the Middle Ages.

The chase was a private forest or hunting-ground which a few great nobles and ecclesiastical lords were allowed to create in their estates. The land-owners appointed their own officials and introduced their own laws so that for ordinary people there was often little to choose between living in a forest or a chase. There were no chases in the county.

The right of free warren was granted to lords of the manor by the Crown, thereby enabling them to hunt the smaller game — the fox and the hare, the rabbit and the wild-cat, and the pheasants and partridges — over their estates. By the middle of the fourteenth century, such grants had become so common throughout the country that the great majority of manorial lords seemed to have enjoyed them.

During the Middle Ages, which is here taken to be the period of 400 years from the Domesday Survey to the accession of Henry VII in 1485, Berkshire contained at least 42 parks for which one or more documentary references exist.[2] These are listed in the Appendix. However, it is almost certain that others were in existence during this period of which no traces, documentary or topographical exist. These parks, not all of which co-existed at any one time, were distributed unevenly over the face of the county (Figure 1). There is a marked concentration in certain regions, in particular in the Kennet Valley in the south and also in Windsor Forest in the east. According to Professor H. C. Darby's work on the Domesday Survey these parts were generally poor and less adaptable to cultivation than the more fertile vales of the north. Ripplesmere Hundred in the east supported only one ploughteam per square mile in 1086, whereas the average in the Vale of the White Horse was three. This pattern was broadly repeated in 1334, based on tax returns for that year, with the important exception of the district around Newbury which prospered from the wool trade. The Forest of Windsor contained a high concentration of deer parks with an average of one to every 8,500 acres compared to the general average for the county of one to every 11,000 acres. Even within such an area most of the parks are situated in the least fertile areas; in the Windsor Forest, for example, the northern parishes contained few parks and only a light woodland cover, whereas the district south of Windsor, which is underlain by infertile light sands contained many enclosures. Likewise in the Kennet Valley there are extensive belts of sands and gravels which are unsuitable for agriculture; these were often commons and were also subject to considerable imparkment. In contrast the Vale of the White Horse contained few woods or parks in the Middle Ages but was intensively cultivated; there are relatively few areas of poor soil which would have only been fit for pasture. It is likely therefore that the uneven distribution of parks in the county is a reflection of the practice of restricting them to lands unsuitable for arable farming, but later enlargements spread over into more fertile soils.

There is no evidence for the existence of specific parks in Berkshire before about 1100, although hunting would have taken place in the extensive woodland areas. It is likely that a park at Windsor was enclosed in the early 12th century when Windsor Castle

became a royal residence and two others were in existence by 1200, at Sonning and Whitley. 31 parks were either formed or mentioned for the first time in the period 1200-1350. This accords with the pattern elsewhere, for instance in Buckinghamshire 40 out of 51 examples occur in the same period. The 13th century was an age of rapid population growth and consequent heavy pressure on land resources. The construction of a hunting enclosure would represent a considerable sign of prestige for a local lord, whose wealth had been built on the expanding agriculture which in turn threatened to overwhelm the remaining woodland and other more marginal land. After the Black Death in the mid 14th century pressure on agricultural resources abated, there was a lack of labour available to keep the enclosure in good order, and the pace of imparkment slackened. In Berkshire only 2 new enclosures were made by private citizens after 1350 — at Wadley and Chamberhouse although the substantial expansion at Yattendon in 1448 probably amounted to a new park. The Crown was very active in the late Middle Ages; the adverse economic tide did not prevent the creation of such parks as Sunninghill and Windsor Little Park in the 15th century. In fact the development of the royal parks continued throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, without interruption, although they were unlikely to have been as securely enclosed as before.

Generally there were strict conditions in force restricting the formation of hunting enclosures and lords who wanted to impark were frequently required to secure a licence from the Crown. Apart from royal examples, which naturally needed no authorisation, a total of 17 licences to impark have been found in the county together with 2 granted for expansion of existing enclosures. Berkshire is fortunate in this respect, since these licences give valuable details of acreage and type of land to be enclosed. 11 of them were granted in the years 1300-50 which may reflect both the popularity of hunting in the period as well as the ability of Edward III to enforce the royal writ in his Kingdom. After 1350 the number of licences falls to a trickle, only 3 new licences plus two at Sheepridge and Yattendon for expansion. Amounts of land mentioned in the grants were usually specified. For instance, in 1336 Alice de Lisle was permitted to enclose 300 acres of wood and 100 acres of waste, at Hardwell (by the same grant she also made parks in 4 other places). These grants related to the lords demesne lands, especially his woods. Enclosure of woodland is mentioned in most of the grants and forms by far the largest part of the terrain for which the King awarded licences. In some cases, as at Remenham and Shaw in 1248, the park consisted solely of a lord's wood, to be surrounded by a dike and hedge. 'Land' presumably arable or pasture is specified in only six cases as part of new enclosures presumably reflecting the general reluctance of either the King or the lord to see ground well suited to agricultural use lost from the manor. The few cases where arable land was enclosed mostly occurred well into the 14th century, at a time when there was evidence, e.g. in the Inquisitiones Nonarum of 1341, of receding cultivation. The extension to the royal parks at Windsor were at the expense of farmland in 1359-61 (Wychmere) and 1467 (Little Park).

We have already outlined the main features of the medieval park but it is worth discussing the documentary material relating to the subject. The initial reference, the licence to impark, is generally most important but it is useful to find other material relating to the subsequent history. In many cases this takes the form of complaints by lords against intruders who hunted in their demesnes without permission, for instance in Ashridge in 1319, or Hungerford in 1342. Differing topics are also revealed such as the destruction and restocking of a park, as at Hamstead Marshall in 1233-34. Grants of deer from royal forests are relatively common, the King granted 6 does from

Marlborough Forest in 1228 to the owner of Leckhampstead Park, and in 1234 he granted deer from Chippenham Forest to Hamstead Marshall. Inquisitions post mortem, inventories of property left by deceased landowners, often contain references to the park, as an integral part of the Manor. As one would expect there is far more evidence for the life of royal parks, especially for the appointment of parkers by the Crown. We have a fairly comprehensive list of parkers for the royal parks of Windsor, and in one case at Sunninghill the appointment of a keeper in 1484 is the first reference to it. Other individual features occur; in 1347 the King had stud farms in his enclosures at Leckhampstead and Hamstead Marshall. There are references to wild cattle in Windsor Great Park and at Radley in the 15th century to wood sold from the park for fuel and hedges. This gives just a glimpse of the active life of the park but it shows clearly that they were an essential part of the lord's demesne and that they were adaptable to a variety of uses throughout their history.

The Crown was by far the largest single holder of parks in Berkshire. Successive monarchs created five (all near Windsor) and at least a further seven were at some time under royal control. The Church was well represented, with a total of six. The Bishops of Winchester and Salisbury each had one — Billingbear and Sonning respectively, together with hunting rights in the forest. The other four were monastic possessions; Radley belonged to Abingdon Abbey, Whitley to Reading, whilst Cirencester held Hagbourne and Glastonbury Abbey owned Ashdown. The great nobles were relatively poorly represented in Berkshire since they probably held only six examples. Hamstead Marshall and Hungerford were formed by the Earls of Pembroke and Leicester respectively, but both later passed to the Crown. The Earl of Salisbury held both parks at Crookham and the Mortimers held enclosures at Stratfield Mortimer and Wokefield. Local land owners, usually with only one park, played an active role, especially in the former Forest of Berkshire. Multiple ownership did occur notably with Alice de Lisle, who created three parks in 1336, and the de la Beche family which was responsible for two imparkments (at La Beche and Yattendon) and probably held two others in the county.

There is no set pattern to the life and eventual fate of the medieval hunting enclosure. Many were shortlived and may not have survived the life of their founders; at Beedon and Hardwell for example we have not so far found any reference to parks after their initial formation, but this may well reflect a lack of documentary evidence. Generally the enclosed hunting enclosure was becoming less common by about 1500 and former examples were being adapted to serve as amenity grounds near the Manor house or were gradually disparked and converted to agricultural use. Saxton's map of 1574 still depicts twelve parks in Berkshire and others were probably still in use if his usual understatement is to be assumed. However, many of these would have been ornamental. In this revised form some enclosures proved to be very long lived; for example in 1867 at Hungerford and Hamstead Marshall deer were still kept in enclosures which dated originally from before 1250. The process of disparkment is seldom easy to follow in each case, although, for example we know that it took place at Radley and Swallowfield before 1540. At Swallowfield a small part of the original area, close to the Manor house, continued in ornamental use and kept the name of 'park'. Otherwise our first accurate view of the topography of the county comes with Rocque's Map in 1761, which shows many ornamental parks which have a medieval origin. Much detailed work remains to be done on the fate of the parks but it is likely that disparkment took place quite commonly in the 16th and 17th centuries, especially during the Civil War period. The royal parks were an exception to this picture although they only survived in an

ornamental form. The Great Park at Windsor grew to its present size by absorbing other, smaller enclosures. Several royal parks, notably Easthampstead, suffered badly from neglect during the Civil War.

Detailed investigation of the history and contribution of the medieval deer park to the modern landscape is still in its infancy. It offers great scope to the local historian who wishes to concentrate on one or a few examples. The detailed mapping of parks, for example by the authors in Buckinghamshire and Leicestershire and by Christopher Taylor in Northamptonshire could usefully be followed in other parts of England[3]. It would certainly result in combining fieldwork with documentary evidence in the discovery of additional parks and add to our knowledge of the distribution and extent. There is extensive documentary reference material especially in estate surveys, nineteenth century Tithe Maps and modern OS maps which have yet to be used to the full. Such features as 'park names' especially where applied to areas of woodland may indicate the site of a medieval enclosure. The Tithe Maps, which show field boundaries before the extensive destruction of recent years, may show field patterns and hedge lines which might follow the former park boundary. A surprising amount can still be discovered on the ground by diligent fieldwork, especially if combined with work on documentary material. Sometimes the boundary banks and parks pales survive, as at Ashdown, especially where they were not ploughed out after disparkment. The outline of a former park may often be picked out on the ground and the existence of other earthworks, such as the moats of hunting lodges can confirm the origin of the site.

NOTES

1. For lists and descriptions of medieval parks in Dorset, Buckinghamshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire, for example, see L. M. Cantor and J. D. Wilson. 'The Medieval Deer Parks of Dorset, I-IX', Proceedings Dorset Nat. Hist. and Arch. Soc. 83-91, (1961-70); L. M. Cantor and J. M. Hatherly 'The Medieval Deer Parks of Bucks'. Records of Bucks (forthcoming); L. M. Cantor, 'The Medieval Deer-Parks of North Staffordshire I and II', N. Staffs. Journals of Field Studies 2 (1962); L. M. Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of South Staffordshire', Trans. Birmingham Arch. Soc. 80, (1965) pp. 1-9; and L. M. Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', Trans. Leics. Arch. and Hist. Soc., 66 (1970-1), pp. 9-24.
2. For the purpose of this article, we take the boundaries of the county to be those that existed before local government reorganisation in 1974.
3. For Leicestershire and Buckinghamshire see note I. For Northants, C. C. Taylor in 'Archaeological Sites in the North East', RCHM County of Northampton, I, 1975.

THE MEDIEVAL DEER PARKS OF BERKSHIRE

1. Aldermaston
2. Ashdown
3. Ashridge
4. Beedon
5. Benham
6. Billingbear
7. Bradfield
8. Chamberhouse
9. Crookham Great Park
10. Crookham Little Park
11. Earley
12. East Hampstead
13. Enborne
14. Foliejohn
15. Hagbourne
16. Hamstead Marshall
17. Hardwell
18. Hungerford
19. Kingston Lisle
20. La Beche
21. La Lee
22. Leckhampstead

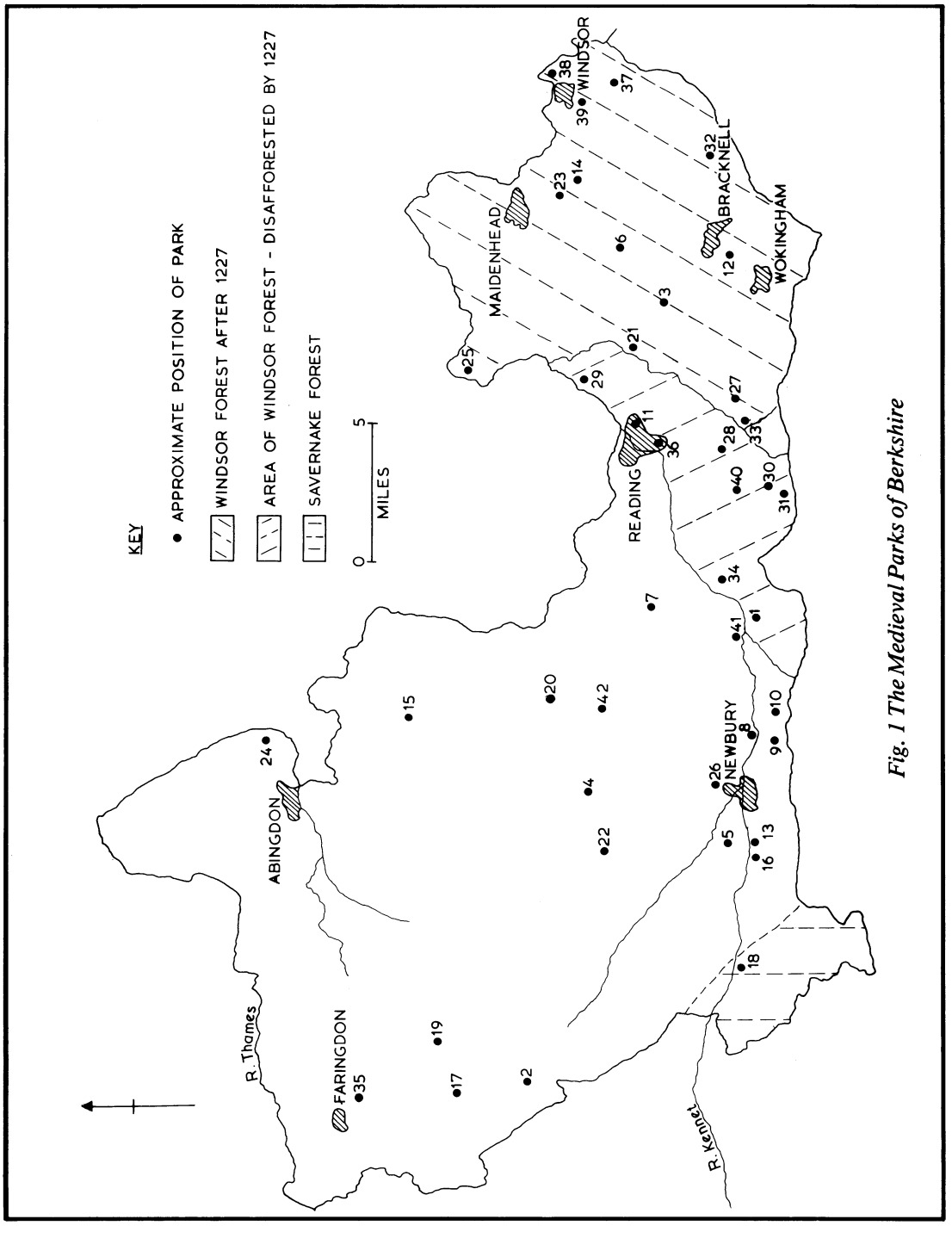

Fig. 1 The Medieval Parks of Berkshire

23. Puckmere
24. Radley
25. Remenham
26. Shaw
27. Sheepridge
28. Shinfield
29. Sonning
30. Stratfield Mortimer — Great Park
31. Stratfield Mortimer — Little Park
32. Sunninghill
33. Swallowfield
34. Ufton Robert
35. Wadley/Wicklesham
36. Whitley

WINDSOR PARKS

37. Great Park
38. Little Park
39. Moat Park
40. Wokefield
41. Woolhampton
42. Yattendon

THE MEDIEVAL DEER PARKS OF BERKSHIRE

1. **Aldermaston** dates from 1202 when William Achard obtained royal permission to impark his thicket in return for the payment of 100 shillings and one palfrey (P.R.S. NS 15, 82). In 1299 the widow of Robert Achard was assigned one third of a pasture in the park. (Cal Close 1296-1302, 231). Saxton depicted a park here in his county map of 1574 and as late as 1666 the Provost of Queen's College Oxford was presented with a buck from Aldermaston. The Manor remained with the descendants of the Achards until the eighteenth century and the park was adopted for ornamental purposes. Rocque's map of 1761 shows a park of about 800 acres lying south of the church and manor house and stretching towards Aldermaston Common.

2. The earliest reference to a park at **Ashdown** (in Ashbury) occurs in a survey of 1519 which describes 'Ayssham Park' as being 275 acres in size; it contained woods and pasture (VCH IV 506). Taylor in 'Fieldwork in Medieval Archaeology' suggests that Ashdown was a medieval deer park, in which case it would probably have been created by the abbot of Glastonbury, who held the manor until the Dissolution. Ashdown Park was expanded by Lord Craven in the seventeenth century and the enclosure and mansion are still marked on modern maps. The Ordnance Survey map specifically outlines the remains of a 'park pale', consisting of an earthern embankment enclosing an area of approximately 300 acres.

3. There was a park at **Ashridge** (in Wokingham) in 1319 when the Earl of Lancaster complained that intruders had broken in and trampled down his corn growing there. (Cal Pat 1317-21, 302). Ashridge originated as an assart in Windsor Forest and reverted to the Crown in the fifteenth century. There is still an Ashridge wood marked at OS 175/815710.

4. **Beedon** originated from a royal grant of 1336 to Alice de Lisle which allowed her to impark 300 acres of wood and 100 acres of waste (Cal Chart 1327-41, 357). The 1841 Tithe map shows substantial evidence of the presence of the park. South West of the church is 'Park Copse' and close to it lay fields with names like Grubbings and South Stubbs which indicate former woodland.

5. A park with deer was included in the manor of William de Hastings at **Benham** (in Speen) in 1349. (Cal IPM IX, 260). Saxton's map of 1574 marks a park in Benham (Close to the river) but it is generally said to have represented nearby Shaw park.

6. **Billingbear.** This belonged to the Bishop of Winchester's Manor of Waltham St. Lawrence, in Windsor Forest. An 'enclosure' is first mentioned in 1208 and was enlarged several times by successive bishops (VCH 111, 179). The Neville family

acquired control in the mid sixteenth century and built a mansion inside the park. Rocque shows an ornamental park of about 400 acres in his map of 1761 and it continues to be shown as such on modern maps.

7. **Bradfield** probably dates from 1240 when Roger de Somery granted the right of free chase to William Englefield in return for permission to enclose his wood (VCH 111, 397). A park was among the appurtenances of the manor assigned to the widow of Roger de Somery in 1291 (Cal Close 1288-96, 208). John Langford inclosed 4 acres of land in 1509 and added them to his park, which was still in existence at the time of Saxton's survey.

8. **Chamberhouse** (in Thatcham) is of relatively late creation since it was formed in 1446 when John Pury was granted a licence to enclose 300 acres of land, 40 acres of wood and 4 acres of meadows. (Cal Chart 1427-1516, 727). At the same time he secured permission to crenellate his manor house. The park was named in 1547 as forming part of the boundary of the neighbouring Manor of Greenham. Chamberhouse Farm (OS 174/520 655) may mark the site of the manor house and the park probably lay in the wooded area to the south of the river Kennet. It was not shown on Saxton's map and it may have been disparked by that date (1574).

9 & 10. There were two parks at **Crookham** (in Thatcham). The **Little** or **Old Park** is first mentioned in 1298 when it belonged to John Fitz Reynold; it was probably situated in the south east part of the manor, close to the modern Little Park House (OS 174/546 644). There are records relating to the appointment of parkers up to the sixteenth century. The **Great** or **West Park** dates from 1337 when the Earl of Salisbury secured a licence to enclose his wood at Crookham and 400 acres of land, meadows, moor and pasture adjoining it (Cal Pat 1334-8, 529). The Great Park lay in the western park of the manor, close to Crookham Heath. After 1337 both parks continued in use, although one parker supervised activities in them. In 1479, for example, Robert Hyde was appointed bailif and parker of the 'old' and the 'West Park' (Cal Pat 1476-85, 157). Although Saxton does not mark a park in 1574, the Great Park, at least, was still in existence in 1598, when the Earl of Worcester leased it out for 21 years (VCH 111 316). Parts of both parks still continue in ornamental use in modern times.

11. In 1276 Richard de Earley's Manor at **Earley** included a 'park of 40 acres'. (Cal Pat 1272-81, 367). A reference to a close named 'Le Park' occurs in 1308 and there was also a 'fishpond near the hedge of the park'; but it is difficult to determine whether this is the same park as the one mentioned in 1276 (Cal Close 1307-13, 146). A Terrier of 1669 mentions a 'park field'. White Knights Park, the ornamental grounds belonging to the Englefield family and still in existence in modern times, may represent the original site.

12. **Easthampstead**. This was a royal park in Windsor Forest, conveniently close to Windsor Castle and first mentioned in 1365 as a park surrounded by palings. (Cal Pat 1364-7, 99). There was a royal residence or hunting lodge and the park became a favourite royal hunting ground. It is shown by both Saxton (1574) and by Norden (1607) in their maps of the area. In Norden's time it contained a mansion and inclosed 265 acres of land described as 'very mean, well timbered and stocked with 200-300 fallow deer' (VCH 111, 77). James I enlarged the park but it had begun to decline by 1629 when his son granted out the rights of Chase of the Keeper, William Trunbell. According to a petition of 1660 all the deer had been destroyed in the Civil War and it was impossible to replace them. Nevertheless, Easthampstead survived as an ornamental park.

13. The only reference to a park at **Enborne** occurs in 1342 when Walter Wodelok had an

enclosure of 30 acres attached to his Manor (Cal IPM VIII, 246). Walter held the Manor of West Enborne and the wood known as Enborne Copse, lying next to Hamstead Marshall may mark the site of the park.

14. **Foliejohn** (in Winkfield) originated in 1317 when Oliver de Bordeaux was granted a licence to enclose his wood and make a park (Cal Pat 1313-17, 246). This manor began as an assart within Windsor Forest and was returned to the Crown in 1359. There are frequent references to the appointment of parkers, a position usually combined with some other forest office. In Norden's map of 1607 Foliejohn is depicted as a substantial impaled enclosure, containing a moated house. It had become an ornamental park by 1761 and is still shown as such in modern maps.

15. The park at East **Hagbourne** was created in 1330 when the Abbot of Cirencester received a licence to impark his wood of 24 acres (Cal Pat 1327-30, 491). In 1670 it was described as 'overgrown with briars' and by the early eighteenth century it had been converted to arable and pasture (VCH III, 478).

16. **Hamstead Marshall** is first referred to in 1229 when the King granted William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, 20 does from Clarendon Forest to stock his park (Cal Close 1227-31, 151). Temporary dispark-ment seems to have taken place in 1233 when Richard Marshall rebelled against the Crown, but by 1234 the family fortunes had been restored and Gilbert Marshall was granted 20 does and 5 bucks from Chippenham Forest to restock the park (Cal Close 1231-4, 543). The Hundred Rolls for 1275-6 record that the park had again been laid waste, following the death of the Earl of Norfolk, who had acquired the Manor. The Earl of Salisbury, who received a grant in 1333, appears to have imparked cultivated land since a reduction of tax was claimed on this account in the Nonarum Inquisitiones of 1341. The Crown gained control shortly after that date and held the Manor for much of the Later Middle Ages, as numerous grants of keeperships confirm. The park contained a stud farm, supervised by William de Fremelesworth, in 1347 (Cal Close 1346-9, 316). Saxton shows Hamstead Park as still functioning in 1574 and it still contained deer in the twentieth century. Hamstead seems to be both the most long lived and the best preserved of medieval deer parks in the county. According to Crawford most of the banks of the original circuit survive, inclosing a quadrilateral of about 300 acres.

17. **Hardwell.** (in Compton Beauchamp). Alice de Lisle secured a licence in 1336 to impark 300 acres of wood and 100 acres of waste (Cal Chart 1327-41, 357). No further mention has been found but there is a moated site near Hardwell Farm (OS 174/265 876) which may be close to the former park.

18. **Hungerford** dates from 1246 when Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, received a licence to enclose with a dike and hedge his wood of Bauteley and make a park (Cal Chart 1226-57, 293). The Earls of Lancaster were owners of the Manor by 1265 and it became a royal possession as part of the Duchy of Lancaster with the accession of Henry IV in 1399. The Earl of Lancaster frequently complained of intruders who broke into his park and hunted his deer, as in 1342 (Cal Pat. 1340-42, 449). It was still in existence in 1574 when Saxton drew his map of Berkshire and a survey of 1591 recorded that it consisted of 300 acres and contained 140 deer. Maps, dating from 1742 and 1761, still show the park but by that time its purpose was probably largely ornamental. Hungerford Park, is still shown on modern maps and lies east of the town.

19. **Kingston Lisle** owes its existence to Alice de Lisle, who in 1336 obtained a licence to impark 200 acres of wood and 100 acres of land in Kingston, and the neighbouring manors of Balking and Fawler (Cal Chart 1327-41, 357). This park pro-

bably lay on the north west edge of the parish, away from the village, and several patches of woodland which survive may mark the site.

20. In 1335 Philip de la Beche and his son Nicholas received a licence to impark their woods at **'La Beche'** (in Aldworth) (Cal Pat 1334-8, 190). Nicholas also received permission to crenellate his house in 1338 and the modern Beche Farm, situated just to the south of the village, probably marks the site. About a mile south of Beche Farm, and in Ashampstead parish, there is still a Beche Park Wood, which was certainly in existence when Rocque was here in 1761. It is very likely that this is the site of the park.

21. **Leckhampstead.** A park is first mentioned here in 1228 when the King granted six does from Marlborough Forest to Peter Fitz Herbert. (Cal Close 1227-31, 33). The manor passed in 1336 to Sir Nicholas de la Beche, who also had parks at La Beche and Yattendon but the Crown also seems to have exercised control for some time in the fourteenth century. In 1347 the keeper of the manor was ordered to deliver Leckhampstead park to the custody of the keeper of the King's stud at Hamstead Marshall (Cal Close 1346-9, 316). No further references have been found.

22. **La Lee** (In Hurst) dates from 1346 when Ralph de Rastwold obtained a licence to enclose and make a park of a piece of land, meadow and wood containing 100 acres (Cal Chart 1341-1417, 54). The major remained with the family until the sixteenth century but no further references to the park have been found. Lea farm, on modern maps may give a clue to the site.

23. **Puckmere** (in Bray). In 1321 John de Foxley and his wife received a licence to 'impark a plot of land, pasture and spiney in a place which is called 'Pokemere' (Cal Pat 1317-21, 562). It contained deer in 1344 when Thomas de Foxley complained of intruders. (Cal Pat 1343-5, 295). There were place names in Bray in 1639 such as great and Little Park, which may relate to Puckmere (Place names of Berks Pt I). No park is shown by Rocque in 1761 and disparkment had probably taken place well before that. There is a moated enclosure near Foxley's Farm (OS 175/880 770) which may give a clue to the site of the manor and park.

24. There was a park, belonging to Abingdon Abbey, at **Radley** at least as early as 1262 (VCH IV, 411). The Abbot appears to have leased the park to secular tenants, for instance, in 1316 to Alexander le Parker. Fifteenth century records of the Abbey include payments for wood sold from the park for hedges and fuel; there was also a house in the park (VCH IV, 411). The Crown acquired the Manor in 1538 and Shirley claims that disparkment had already taken place before 1540. A scaled drum ornamental enclosure seems to have survived, since. Hearne writing in the 18th century, refers to the 'old park' as being large and having contained fine woods, which had been destroyed.

25. **Remenham.** In 1248 Peter de Montfort was granted a licence to enclose his wood of Reinenham with a dike and hedge and to hold it as a park (Cal Chart 1226-57, 330). Further evidence for the site of the park appears in the Tithe Map of 1840. The large wood (½ mile south of the church) is named Remenham Park Wood and nearby field names (Parkwood and Park Piece) are given to land which is now arable.

26. **Shaw.** The park dates from 1248 when Philip de Columbers was granted a licence to impark part of his demesne lands with a dike and hedge (Cal Chart 1226-57, 330). The Manor passed to Winchester College in 1428. It was probably still in existence in 1574 at the time of Saxton's map.

27. **Sheepridge** (in Swallowfield) was a detached part of Ashridge Hundred in Wiltshire. In 1368 Adam de Hertyngdon was allowed to enlarge his enclosure, called Bluntespark, by taking in 60 acres of adja-

cent land (Cal Chart 1341-1417, 215). The Blunt family, which had probably created the park, were undertenants to the Earl of Salisbury as early as 1240. No later references to the park have been found.

28. **Shinfield.** In the thirteenth century a park called Moregaston formed part of the boundaries of a moor held of Amys de Pellitot. Garston manor was occupied by the More family in the thirteenth century and the park may have been named after them. The only other reference occurs in 1319 when Roger Mortimer, who claimed the manor, spoke out against intruders who broke into his park of Shenyngfield (Cal Pat. 1317-21, 474).

29. In the Middle Ages **Sonning** was held by the Bishops of Salisbury and a park was mentioned there as early as the 1180's when the bishop exchanged 2 virgates with John de Earley for land held in the park. (VCH 111 211). There were extensive hunting rights in the Forest of Windsor, especially in the part known as Bishopsbear. In 1227 the bounds of the Forest were defined and part of the circuit was the river Loddon which fell into the Thames under (below) Sonning Park. (Cal Chart 1227-37, 25). The Crown acquired Sonning in 1574 and in 1628 leased it out, with the exception of Holme and East Parks. Holme Park (or Home Park) surrounded the former episcopal residence and the name survives on modern maps where it can be found just west of the church (OS 174/754755). Crawford believes that the river Thames formed the northern boundary of the park and extensive earthen banks can be found close to the river, which may be remains of the park pale.

30 & 31 **Stratfield Mortimer.** There was a park here as early as 1239 when Ralph Mortimer was granted 3 bucks and 5 does from Savernake Forest (Cal Close 1237-41, 151). An Inquisition Post Mortem of 1304 mentions two enclosures with deer, **Great Park** or Chalvegrove and **Little Park** (Cal IPM IV 157). The Crown acquired the Manor in 1461 and it formed part of the dowry of several of Henry VIII's wives. There were still two parks in existence in 1574, according to Saxton but they were apparently in decline, since 520 acres were disparked in 1609 (VCH II 426). Rocque, in his county map of 1761, names only Mortimer Great Park which he depicts as an oval area of about 600 acres, surrounding a mansion. Little Park may have been disparked by that time since its site (about 1 mile south of Great Park) is not named, although its probable southern boundary (also the county boundary) is marked as 'Park Lane'. There is still a Great Park Farm on modern maps at OS 175/682648 but the park has been converted to agricultural use; there is also a Little Park Farm to the south.

32. The royal park of **Sunninghill**, south of Windsor, was first mentioned in 1484 when William Bolton was made parker for life (Cal Pat 1476-85, 429). It contained deer in 1599 and Norden's maps of the Forest in 1607 shows it still surrounded by a pale and containing a lodge or house and probably amounting to about 400 acres. Charles I granted it out to Thomas Cory in 1630 and it may have been disparked soon afterwards.

33. **Swallowfield** is first mentioned in 1316 when it belonged to John de St. John and contained pasture and pannage worth 30 shillings per annum (Cal IPM VI, 246). The Crown acquired it from the St. Johns by about 1353 and in 1354 Edward III sent in workmen to 'repair the mansion and to enclose the park' (Cal Pat 1354-8, 36). There was also a stud farm there at that time. Numerous grants of keeperships can be found stretching into the reign of Henry VIII. Disparkment had taken place before 1542 since in that year the King leased out 'a mansion and certain lands called Swallowfield, lately disparked' (L & P Henry VIII, 264). These former park lands amounted to over 50 acres of pasture and meadows and retained such names as Newlands and Park Meadow. By 1776 these lands were in arable

use. The rump of the medieval enclosure is still marked on modern maps as Swallowfield park, an ornamental area of about 500 acres.

34. **Ufton.** The park originated in a grant of 1338 to Richard Paynel to enclose and make a park of 300 acres of pasture and wood in his manor of Ufton Robert (Cal Chart 1327-41, 444). 'Ufton Park' is still marked on modern maps as a wooded site lying south of Ufton Court in an area of very poor gravel land (OS 174/625665).

35. **Wadley/Wicklesham** (in Faringdon). Richard de Pembridge was granted a licence to impark 200 acres in his manors here in 1365 (Catalogue of Ancient Deeds I, 17). The Crown acquired the manors in 1375 and by 1440 Oriel College Oxford had possession. Although no further park references can be found there is still a Wicklesham Lodge Farm south east of the Town of Faringdon which may give a clue to the park site.

36. **Whitley** (Reading) dates from the 1160's when the Abbot of Reading was granted permission to enclose a park in a place called Coombe. (Pipe Roll Soc. NS 36, 235-46). This involved the enclosure of productive land since at the same time the abbot excused one of his tenants part of the rent on a tenement so enclosed. In 1539 the herbage of the park was worth £3, it was still a park in 1574 according to Saxton. Lower Whitley Park Farm is still marked about 2 miles south of Reading, likewise Whitley Park Farm near Christchurch Road.

37. **Windsor Great Park.** A Park at **Windsor** is first mentioned in 1132 when the King paid five shillings to his parker for feeding the birds there (VCH 11, 345). It may have originated shortly before in 1110 when Windsor Castle became a royal residence. There were deer there in 1202, some of which were granted to stock Langley Park in Buckinghamshire and in 1275 the King ordered that deer be taken in Chute Forest to stock Windsor Park (VCH 11, 345). In 1246 a 'great Manor House' was constructed for Henry III in the park which seems to have increased the pace of hunting activities there (Elliott, 3). In 1275 the King ordered that oaks and beeches be felled to enclose his park and there were considerable enlargements to the northwest of the original enclosed area in 1313, 1328 and 1335 (Elliott, 5). A major extension to the east and north east, known as Wychmere Park, was made for Edward III between 1359 and 1361 at a cost of £184. It was surrounded by a ditch and fence but these northward enlargements were evidently disturbing existing agricultural land since in 1365 the King, had to settle with the Abbot of Waltham (in Essex) for lands which 'were lately tilled and sown and which are now enclosed in Wychmere Park' (Cal Pat 1364 95). In the same year the terms **'Great or Old'** park and New Park are first listed, presumably to distinguish the original from recent enclosures. Hunting continued throughout the Tudor period and in 1607, at the time of the first survey by Norden, the Great Park measured 10¼ miles in circumference, enclosed 3650 acres and contained 1800 deer; it extended southwards into Surrey but presumably reflected mainly medieval enlargements. The Great Park still continues to serve an amenity use but in the 18th and 19th centuries it was greatly enlarged by the absorption of smaller parks.

38. **Moat Park**, lying just south of the town of Windsor, is probably a late enclosure and is said to date from the time of Edward IV (VCH III, 52). There are 15th century place names in the area, like 'Le Mote' and 'Le Moteland' which hint at the development of a park around one of the King's hunting lodges in the forest. There was a chief lodge mentioned in 1650. In 1599 Queen Elizabeth wrote to Henry Neville about deer in the Moat Park (VCH 11, 348). Norden's 1607 Survey shows Moat Park as surrounded by a pale of 3½ miles and containing 390 acres. The Parliamentary Survey of 1649-50 shows

the park to have expanded to 650 acres but by that time there were no deer there nor pigeons in the dove house. In 1701 the park lost its identity and was absorbed into the Great Park.

39. **The Little Park** dates from 1467 when Edward IV ordered that 200 acres of land adjoining the town of New Windsor be enclosed for use as a park. (Tighe & Davis, I, 361). This land, conveniently situated on the eastern side of the castle, formed part of a common field called Underore Field, and its enclosure (as the King acknowledged) involved severe deprivation to the inhabitants who had held common and pasture rights there. In 1535-6 Henry Norrys was paid 3 pence per day as keeper of Windsor Little Park (VCH 11 348). Norden's 1607 map of the Forest shows the park lying immediately east of the town, enclosed by a pale but still distance from the Great Park. At the same time its 2 3/8 miles circuit enclosed 280 acres and contained 240 fallow deer. The Parliamentary Survey of 1652 describes the park as still fenced with a pale and amounting to 241 acres, of which 168 acres was pasture and wood. Cromwell seems to have taken a close interest since after its use as a headquarters for the New Model Army during the Civil War he eventually re-purchased it in the 1650's. Deer were kept here until 1807 and the Little or Home Park remained distinct until 1846 when it was joined to the Great Park which lies to the South.

40. **Wokefield** (in Stratfield Mortimer) is first mentioned in 1319 when Roger Mortimer complained of intruders who had broken into his park there (Cal Pat 1317-21, 474). It appears to have become ornamental since in 1761 Rocque depicts 'Oakfield House' within an oval park of about 500 acres. It is still marked as such today, laying about one mile north of Stratfield Mortimer Village.

41. There was a park at **Woolhampton** in 1304 when John de Drokensford (later Bishop of Bath and Wells) complained that intruders broke in and took away his deer, while he was away in Scotland on the Kings service. (Cal Pat 1301-7, 221). The 1842 Tithe Map refers to Woolhampton Park which was probably the ornamental ground lying just south of the Church.

42. **Yattendon.** This came into existance in 1335 at the same time as La Beche park when Philip de la Beche and his son were granted a licence to impark their woods. (Cal Pat 1334-8, 190). In 1441-2 the Norys family acquired the Manor and in 1448 John Norys was granted power to inclose 600 acres of land and wood of his Manors of Yattendon, Wele and Frilsham and make a park (Cal Close 1427-1516, 100). It is difficult to decide whether this grant represented a new venture or whether it was simply an expansion of the La Beche park. Rocque's map of 1761 depicts an oval enclosure of about 300 acres just east of the village and which may represent a park site. Modern maps mark an 'Old Park' in the wooded area just north east of Yattendon Court.

POSSIBLE PARKS

Donnington. A park is first mentioned in 1509 when Wiston Browne was appointed keeper of the Manor and park (L & P, Henry VIII, I, 1, 55). There was an important castle here, dating from the late fourteenth century, and there may have been a park associated with it. The crown held the manor from 1503 until 1553.

APPENDIX

List of Abbreviations

CAL CHART *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (Public Record Office)

CAL CLOSE *Calendar of Close Rolls* (Public Record Office)

CAL IPM *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* (Public Record Office)

CAL PAT *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (Public Record Office)

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L & P HENRY VIII *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* (Public Record Office)

P.R.S. N.S. *Publications of the Pipe Roll Society,* New Series.

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VCH Victoria County History of Berkshire.