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Perambulation of Whittlewood Forest, 1299-1300 (annotated)

This document is printed in G. Baker, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton* (2 vols, London, 1822-41), II, p. 75.

A perambulation of the boundaries of Whittlewood Forest was conducted in 1299-1300 as a result of concessions exacted from Edward I in 1297 prior to the grant of taxation.

The Northamptonshire part of the perambulation (*m. 11*) begins on the county boundary at the bridge of Stony Stratford, the point at which the road between Old Stratford and Stony Stratford crosses the river Great Ouse. The boundary of the forest then follows the course of the Ouse southwards and specifically includes within the forest the village of Passenham. This must represent the southern boundary of the modern civil parish of Old Stratford.

Having included Passenham and *Kyngesham* within the forest, the Whittlewood perambulation proceeds to *Salewere*, and then to *Kyngham Mere*, and then between the fields of Great Deanshanger and Little Deanshanger to the *Portwey*. The *Portwey* is almost certainly the present A422 Buckingham Road, across which the boundary continues between *Kyngesbarwe* and *Wykebarwe* by *Wytricheswey*, between the fees of Passenham and *Wykedylve* (Wicken) to the garden of Elias de Tyngwyk. This suggests a route not far removed from the present boundary between the civil parishes of Deanshanger and Wicken, thereby excluding much of Wicken from the forest.

Having included the garden of Elias de Tyngwyk, by following a certain ditch, as well as his manor and vill of Great Deanshanger, the Whittlewood perambulation advances by *Kyngsbrook* to *Bournwell*, between the king's demesne wood and the wood of John Dyve, excluding this *Dyveswood*, to *Byrchenegrene*.

Then the boundary continues between the king's demesne wood and *Heywood* to *Westmedyke*, and then between the wood of *Norton* and *Heywood* to *Ferthynger*, including *Norton* wood only. *Ferthynger* has been identified by Baker as 'Farthing corner'. Farthing Copse is shown on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey maps at the point at which the county boundary meets the road running westwards towards the A413. It seems likely that the latter part of the perambulation described above follows the present county boundary separating the modern civil parishes of Whittlebury and Lillingstone Lovell.

The perambulation then proceeds to *Stonifordhacche*, and then to *Alynewodbrok*, and then to *Chapelhacche*, or Chapel Green, the site of the chapel of St Thomas à Becket in Lillingstone Dayrell. Again this suggests a route along the county boundary, and conforms to the limits of the forest as shown on the 1608 map now in Northamptonshire Record Office (Map 4210).

This supposition of a route along the county boundary is confirmed by the next clause in the perambulation: by the middle of the priory of Luffield, between the counties of Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, and then to *Wolmeresty* between *Hynewod* and *Haselberwe*, or Hazelborough. 'Woolmere Stile' (as spelt in 1608) marks the point at which the boundaries of the modern civil parishes of Silverstone, Luffield Abbey and Syresham meet.

The perambulation then continues along the county boundary by *Hynewode Ruydyng*, excluding *Hynewode* (presumably the modern Henhood Farm), and by *Langelesyks* between *Marywode* (Mary Wood, in Syresham CP) and *Haselberwe* to *Litelheybrigge*. This appears to be a point on the modern A43 close to Brackley Hatch, from where the boundary seems to proceed along the road, between the king's demesne wood and the fee of Winchester by a certain ditch to *Lurtebrokbrigge*, the vill of *Wyteveld* remaining in the forest as before. Presumably *Lurtebrokbrigge* is the modern King's Hill Bridge. It is unclear how Whitfield is

supposed to fit within the boundaries described, unless a detached portion of the parish was located within the present Syresham CP.

The perambulation then heads north, including the grange of *Kyngeshull* (the modern Kingshill Farm, in Syresham CP), to *Stakeswell*. Then between *Sydesmor* and *Bittenho* to *Warpennamwode*. Baker identifies this with Priesthay, a wood now in Wappenham CP. The perambulation then follows *Le Rede Weye*, between the wood of the monks of St Andrew of Northampton and the king's demesne wood to *Haselberwemor*. Monk's Wood lies at the westernmost tip of Silverstone CP, from where the perambulation may follow the boundary between the civil parishes of Silverstone and Abthorpe to *Tonebrigge*, which Baker identifies as the watergate in Silverstone, which is marked on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey maps.

Then to *Heggesmulne*, including the park of *Hanle* within the old ditch, and then by a certain way to *Newebrigge*, excluding *Docwellehay* and the vill of Towcester with the parish thereof, and then to *Pavelyshegg*. The boundary of the forest at this point is by no means clear but evidently cuts through the modern civil parishes of Abthorpe, Towcester and Paulerspury.

Then to *Wodekespath* by the fee of Norton, and between the fees of *Pavely* (Paulerspury) and Norton (presumably Whittlebury) to *Odewell* and Watling Street.

From there the boundary proceeds below the park of Potterspury, along Watling Street to the head of the vill of Potterspury, opposite to *Wetelehurn*. Baker identifies this place as close to The Gullet, on the boundary between the civil parishes of Whittlebury and Yardley Gobion.

The perambulation continues by a certain way to *Roule*, and then below the king's demesne wood by *Redebrok* to *Bernylleswode*, excluding the woods of Cosgrove, Furtho, the prior of Snelshall, Elias de Tyngwyk, John fitz John and John de Bernewyll, and thus to *Bernewylleshacche*. This section of the forest boundary clearly passes through the modern civil parish of Potterspury.

Then by a certain path to *Santpittes*, and excluding the fee of Leicester to *Wyckewell*, then across to *Tripenheg* in the [north] field of Puxley, and so between the fees of Leicester and Passenham, including only the fee of Passenham.

From *Tripenheg* the perambulation continues below the cover of Puxley and of Shrobb by *Alwynesfeld* to *Keteleshull*, and on to *Fassislescrofteshurn*, and then rising beyond Watling Street by a certain way which leads to the field gate of the rector of Furtho, including all the wood called *Nottescokest*. This last is presumably represented by the modern Knotwood.

Finally, the boundary of Whittlewood follows the course of Watling Street back to the bridge of Stony Stratford.

Since this perambulation was conducted at a time when Edward I was under pressure to allow some degree of disafforestation, it is likely that these boundaries mark the minimum rather than the maximum extent of the Northamptonshire part of Whittlewood in medieval times.

Other copies of the 1299 perambulation also exist; it remained in force until Charles I attempted to extend the boundaries of Whittlewood in 1639 to those recorded in a regard roll of 1286 (printed in M. Page, 'The Extent of Whittlewood Forest and the Impact of Disafforestation in the Later Middle Ages', *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 56 (2003), p. 34).

The Oxfordshire part of the perambulation (*m.7*) is in two parts. The first is concerned with Boycott in the parish of Stowe, a detached portion of Oxfordshire from before the Norman Conquest. It begins at *Buggerode* beside *Stowehach'* between the wood of the abbot of Oseney and the wood of Boycott. It then proceeds to *Foulmere*, then to *Blakeputtes Slade*, then to *Holeweye*, and then along the quickhedge back to *Stowehacch*. And so the vill of

Boycott with its fields, woods and all appurtenances belonging to the abbot of Biddlesden is disafforested.

The second part of the perambulation is concerned with another detached portion of Oxfordshire: the parish of Lillingstone Lovell. It begins at the *Alienwoodbrook*, at the point where the boundaries of the three counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire meet. The perambulation then proceeds clockwise around the parish, including within the forest everything on the left and excluding everything on the right. From the *Alienwoodbrook*, the boundary of the forest follows the county boundary to *Wytleburyrode*, then to *le Cokschuteweve* (a celebrated place for netting woodcocks), then to the quickhedge between the wood and the field at *le Brode of the Lesewe*, then along the quickhedge to the ditch at *le Stertestile*, then descending between the field of Heybarne and the field of Lillingstone to *le Hertstrete* at the headland above *Throkelemede*, then along *le Hertstrete* to the boundary between the field of Lillingstone and Heybarne, then ascending to *Wakerfeldrode*, then along the quickhedge to *le Blakeputte* (otherwise known as Briary Coppice), then to *Hardesleygrene*, then to *Byrchenegrene* (otherwise known as Sutfield Green), then to *Southfelderode*, then to *le Thistelgrene*, then to *Leychehamrode*, then across to *Stottesdich*, then to *Torenhaterhawe*, then to the stream which comes from *Alienwoodbrook*, and then along the stream to *Magna* Lillingstone. And so *Magna* Lillingstone with its fields, woods and other appurtenances is outside the forest.

Both Boycott and Lillingstone Lovell were disafforested because they were only afforested after the coronation of Henry II.