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A note on a “grant by Aethelbald, king of Mercia, to Ealdorman Cyneberht, of land at Stour in Ismere, Worcs.” (no. 154 in Birch)

Deborah Ford (pp. 66–69)

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ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

Co	Cornwall
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Nb	Northumberland
Sf	Suffolk
So	Somerset
Wt	Isle of Wight
CPNE	<i>Cornish Place-Name Elements.</i>
EPNE	<i>English Place-Name Elements, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN BdHu	<i>The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire.</i>
PN Brk	<i>The Place-Names of Berkshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Bu	<i>The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire.</i>
PN Ca	<i>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.</i>
PN Ch	<i>The Place-Names of Cheshire, Parts 1–5.</i>
PN Cu	<i>The Place-Names of Cumberland, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN D	<i>The Place-Names of Devon, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Db	<i>The Place-Names of Derbyshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Do	<i>The Place-Names of Dorset, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Du	<i>The Place-Names of County Durham, Part 1.</i>
PN Ess	<i>The Place-Names of Essex.</i>
PN ERY	<i>The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.</i>
PN Gl	<i>The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Hrt	<i>The Place-Names of Hertfordshire.</i>
PN Le	<i>The Place-Names of Leicestershire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Li	<i>The Place-Names of Lincolnshire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Mx	<i>The Place-Names of Middlesex (apart from the City of London).</i>
PN Nf	<i>The Place-Names of Norfolk, Parts 1–3.</i>
PN Nt	<i>The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire.</i>
PN NRY	<i>The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire.</i>
PN Nth	<i>The Place-Names of Northamptonshire.</i>
PN O	<i>The Place-Names of Oxfordshire, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN R	<i>The Place-Names of Rutland.</i>
PN Sa	<i>The Place-Names of Shropshire, Parts 1–9.</i>
PN Sr	<i>The Place-Names of Surrey.</i>
PN St	<i>The Place-Names of Staffordshire, Part 1.</i>
PN Sx	<i>The Place-Names of Sussex, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN W	<i>The Place-Names of Wiltshire.</i>
PN Wa	<i>The Place-Names of Warwickshire.</i>
PN We	<i>The Place-Names of Westmorland, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Wo	<i>The Place-Names of Worcestershire.</i>
PN WRY	<i>The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Parts 1–8.</i>

A note on a "grant by Aethelbald, king of Mercia, to Ealdorman Cyneberht, of land at Stour in Ismere, Worcs." (no. 154 in Birch)

The main body of the text (Whitelock, pp. 453-4) refers to the establishment of a monastic estate at Ismere, an area which lies in Cookley, Staffordshire, on the east bank of the River Stour, about 15 miles west of Birmingham.

Cookley's Saxon charter of AD964 (no. 1134 in Birch) includes "usmere" as a boundary point. There is a modern name survival in Ismere House NGR SO 865795, just west of the A451, the Stourbridge to Kidderminster road.

The perambulations of Kinver Forest in AD1300 (Trans. W. Salt Soc.) reveal that, in this area, the eastern edge of the forest lay in the parishes of Oldswinford, Pedmore and Hagley, and the western edge was west of the River Stour, in Kinver, Wolverley and Arley. The southern limit was provided by Chaddesley Corbett and Kidderminster. (fig. 1). Thus Cookley (and Ismere) in 1300 lay within the Kinver Forest.

The perambulations claim this area had been "affor-ested since the coronation of King Henry, the great-grandfather of the present king." The king in 1300 was Edward I, his great-grandfather was Henry II, crowned in 1154. It thus seems that there had been little or no change in the area covered by the forest in 150 years. The woodland may have respected much the same limits in AD736.

The Ismere grant, however, states that the:
"estate is bounded on two sides by the above-named river (Stour) and has on its northern side the wood which they call Kinver, but on the west another of which the name is Morfe."

This is confused. The estate was obviously a clearing within Kinver Wood. Kinver village lay just to the northwest, across the River Stour, which bounded the estate immediately to the west, and more distantly to the north.

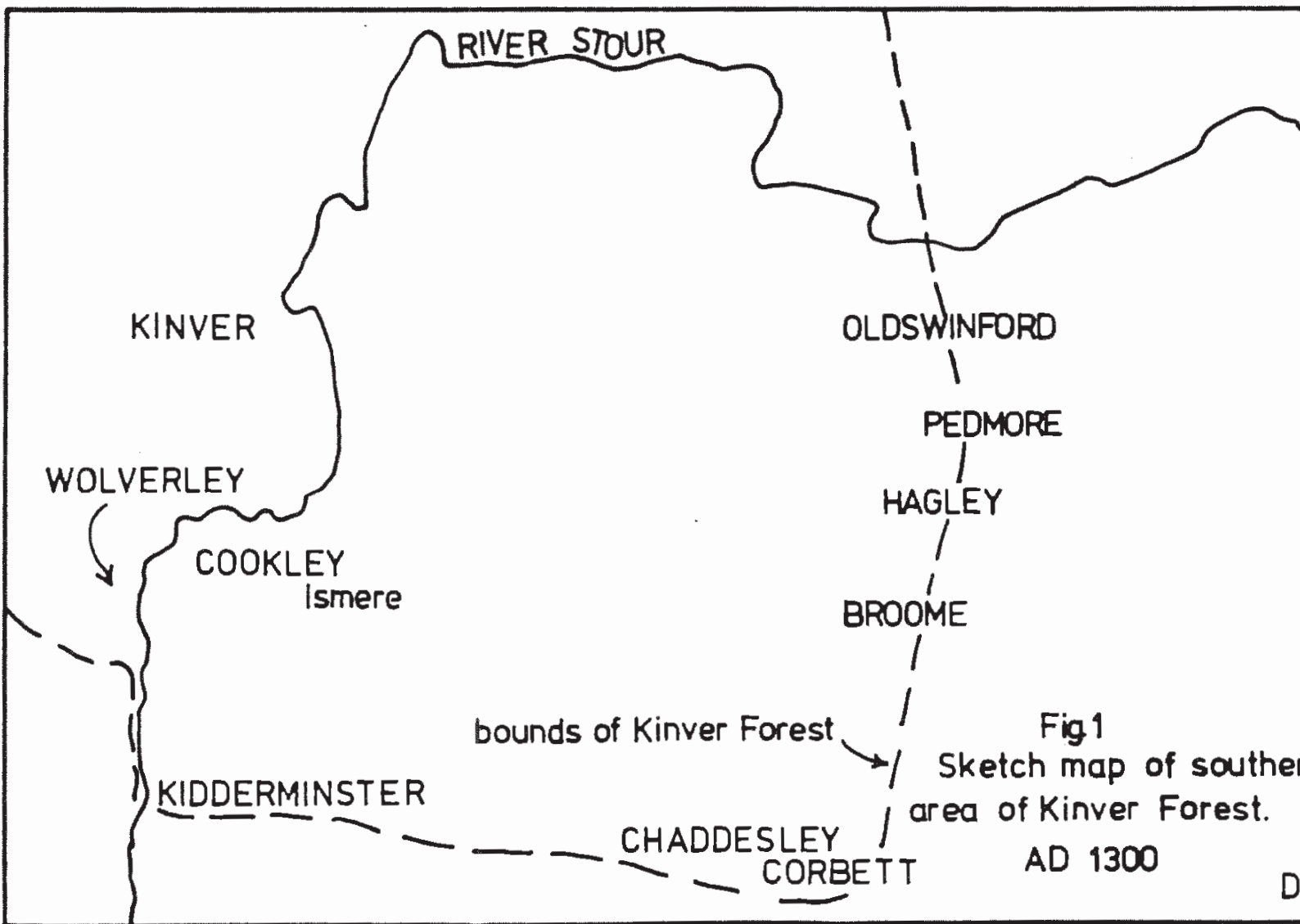
It is likely that Morfe and Kinver Woods were part of the same forest.

A note at the end of the text of the Ismere grant mentions another estate:

"There is, moreover, an estate in the above-mentioned wood of Morfe which is called Brochyl. This I, Aethelbald, king of the South English, have granted, conferring it on my faithful ealdorman and companion Cyneberht with the above-mentioned estate (Ismere) into ecclesiastical right."

Brochyl thus also lay in Kinver Wood. Dorothy Whitelock notes (Whitelock p. 454) that 'Brockhill' occurs three times in Worcestershire place-names, but not within the required area.'

Newly recovered evidence shows that this estate lay within Oldswinford, a parish about 3 miles to the northeast of Cookley (fig. 1), whose western area lay within Kinver Forest. The 'Brochyl' estate name survives in six field names in the parish. Five of them are shown on Harry Court's map of 1782 (fig. 2). These are:



Nether Brockhill, Brockhill Meadow, Sideland Brockhill, Long Brockhill and Barn Brockhill. On Josiah Bache's plan of 1699, Brockhill Meadow is divided west - east, the southern part being called Little Brockall. (Note the different spelling, the above field names appearing on Bache's plan ending in -all or -al.) Sideland Brockhill on Bache is called Swan Brockal.

These fields lay in Woliescote, the southeastern part of the parish, around Wollescote Hall Farm, later Brook Farm, now demolished. NGR SO 926835.

The area is now covered by modern housing development, but in the eighth century the many streams which had their source on the small hill of the estate ensured good pastureland. There may also have been a mill - Lusbridge Stream, to the west of the estate, emerges with some force from Hob Green Dingle. Game could be obtained from the forest. Altogether, a picture of a self contained community.

However, two hundred years later, when the Saxon bounds were recorded (AD 951-955, no. 1023 in Birch), *Brochyl* is not mentioned, although Little Brockall field is on the southern limits of the parish. One must assume that *Brochyl* as an ecclesiastical estate was no more.

There are two possibilities for the meaning of the name 'Brochyl' - Badgers' hill or Brook hill. Two of the other Brockhill names in Worcestershire are shown on the 1 : 10 000 OS map:

Tardebigge, Brockhill Farm SP 019693

Brockhill Wood SP 025687

Shelsley Beauchamp, Brockhill Court SO 728636
These appear to support 'Brookhill' as the meaning, as
like the Oldswinford estate they are located on small
rises with streams in the surrounding area.

The Brockhill place-name is peculiar to this part of
Worcestershire.

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