THE BOUNDARIES OF MEDIEVAL CHARNWOOD FOREST THROUGH THE LENS OF THE *LONGUE DURÉE*

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Abstract

Ann Stones, The Boundaries of Medieval Charnwood Forest Through the Lens of the *Longue Durée*

Charnwood Forest is an upland area in north-west Leicestershire characterised by areas of woodland and distinctive outcrops of pre-Cambrian rocks. The literature to date suggests that medieval Charnwood Forest was a marginal and inhospitable environment which discouraged human interaction with the landscape. This study challenges those perceptions. It identifies the boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest and explores the ways in which boundaries reflected relationships between people and place. A range of landscape, archaeological, place-name, documentary, and cartographical sources are examined. Many of the sources are post-medieval in origin; they reveal the location of medieval boundaries and the continuing significance of medieval boundaries in later periods. In this way, the boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest are seen through the lens of the *longue durée*. Findings indicate that medieval Charnwood Forest was itself a boundary, but a permissive boundary which facilitated cultural interaction. The external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest are seen as a broad band formed by concentric circles of human activity surrounding an inner core of valued resources. Two foci of medieval encroachment are identified, one in the north of the study area, and one in the south. Encroachment was facilitated by the forest's status as a seigneurial hunting ground or chase. Internal administrative divisions converged upon the two foci of encroachment. Other internal spatial divisions, such as those between elite and peasant space, private and public space, religious and secular space, and economic and recreational space, are less clearly defined. This study reveals that medieval Charnwood Forest was a familiar and utilised landscape demarcated by boundaries that were often broad bands of intercultural activity. The finding that many of Charnwood's medieval boundaries were spatial rather than linear units is one that might have implications for the study of similar medieval landscapes.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

List of figures

Note: Unless otherwise stated, all photographs are by the author and all maps are by the author and Rachael Sycamore.

List of tables

List of abbreviations

ADS	Archaeological Data Service
AgHR	Agricultural History Review
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
ASTER	Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection
BL	British Library
BWAS	Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society
CIPM	Calendar of Inquisition *post-mortem*
EPNE, 1	A.H. Smith *English Place-Name Elements* 1 (London, 1956)
EPNE, 2	A.H. Smith *English Place-Name Elements* 2 (London, 1956)
GDEM	Global Digital Elevation Models
HER	Historic Environment Record
HL	Huntington Library
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HMC	Historic Manuscripts Commission
I*PM*	Inquisition *post-mortem*
LAHS	Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
LCC	Leicestershire County Council
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LRHER	Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record
LVCHT	Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust
ME	Middle English
MED	Middle English Dictionary
OE	Old English
OFr	Old French
ON	Old Norse
OS	Ordnance Survey
OSc	Old Scandinavian
ROLLR	Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
TNA	The National Archives
ULAS	University of Leicester Archaeological Services

| U.S.G.S. | United States Geological Survey |
| VCH | Victoria County History |

Chapter 1   Introduction: drawing the circle

We sense that we are reaching the edge of our world when we run out of stories to tell about the places we see.[1]

Boundaries are about edges and Kent Ryden's perceptive words, cited above, are particularly relevant to the boundaries of Charnwood Forest in north-west Leicestershire. Ryden's words are apposite because Charnwood's landscape is the subject of many stories. They are stories that are told in the shape of Charnwood's woodlands and fields, in the nature of Charnwood's hedgerows, in the form and distribution of Charnwood's settlements, in Charnwood's place-names, in Charnwood's architecture, in Charnwood's archaeology, and in Charnwood's manorial records. Many of Charnwood's stories can be traced to the medieval period. It was a period which generated numerous tales about the creation and movement of boundaries and about conflict over them. This thesis explores some of those stories and, in doing so, reveals not only something of the boundaries of medieval Charnwood, but also of the people who interacted with them. Through the study of boundaries, we can begin to understand contemporary notions of marginality and centrality and meanings that were attached to the landscape. We can appreciate the subjective nature of space and the ways in which space was socially constructed. We can gain insights into the ways in which resources were divided and society was ordered. In this way, the study of boundaries is a useful means of tracing the gradual transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Charnwood Forest is a predominantly upland area which rises to a height of 278 metres.[2] It is a mix of farmland, woodland, heathland and parkland characterised by outcrops of Precambrian rocks and relatively poor soils. The nature of much of the

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[1] K.C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993), p. 68.
[2] Charnwood's highest point is Bardon Hill which lies to the west of the study area at SK 460 132.

Charnwood landscape is reflected in its name. First recorded in 1129 as *cernwoda*, the name is derived from the Primitive Welsh term *carn*, meaning 'a heap of stones' and the Old English term *wudu*, meaning 'a wood'.[3] Charnwood's geological profile includes Precambrian sedimentary rocks belonging to the Charnian Supergroup exposed today at sites such as Ives Head, Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill (figs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).[4]

Figure 1.1 Ives Head

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[3] B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2005), p. 24.
[4] See fold-out map in K. Ambrose, J. Carney, G. Lott, G. Weightman, A. McGrath, *Exploring the Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel: A Walker's Guide to the Rocks and Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel* (Nottingham, 2007).

Figure 1.2 Bradgate Park

Figure 1.3 Beacon Hill

The horseshoe-shaped pattern of exposure reflects the effects of faulting and erosion on

an anticline which tilts towards the south east (fig. 1.4).[5] The western side of the

horseshoe is formed by volcanic rocks such as the Grimley Andesite and andesitic

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[5] J. B. Moseley, 'Geology and Mineral Extraction' in J. Crocker, ed. *Charnwood Forest, a Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981), p. 132.

breccias at Bardon and Whitwick. On the outer edges of the horseshoe are younger rocks. These include Swithland slate to the south and east of the forest, the igneous rocks of the Mountsorrel complex in the east, Jurassic limestone around the Barrow upon Soar area, and Carboniferous limestone and coal measures in the west.[6]

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[6] Ambrose et al, *Exploring the Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel*, fold-out map.
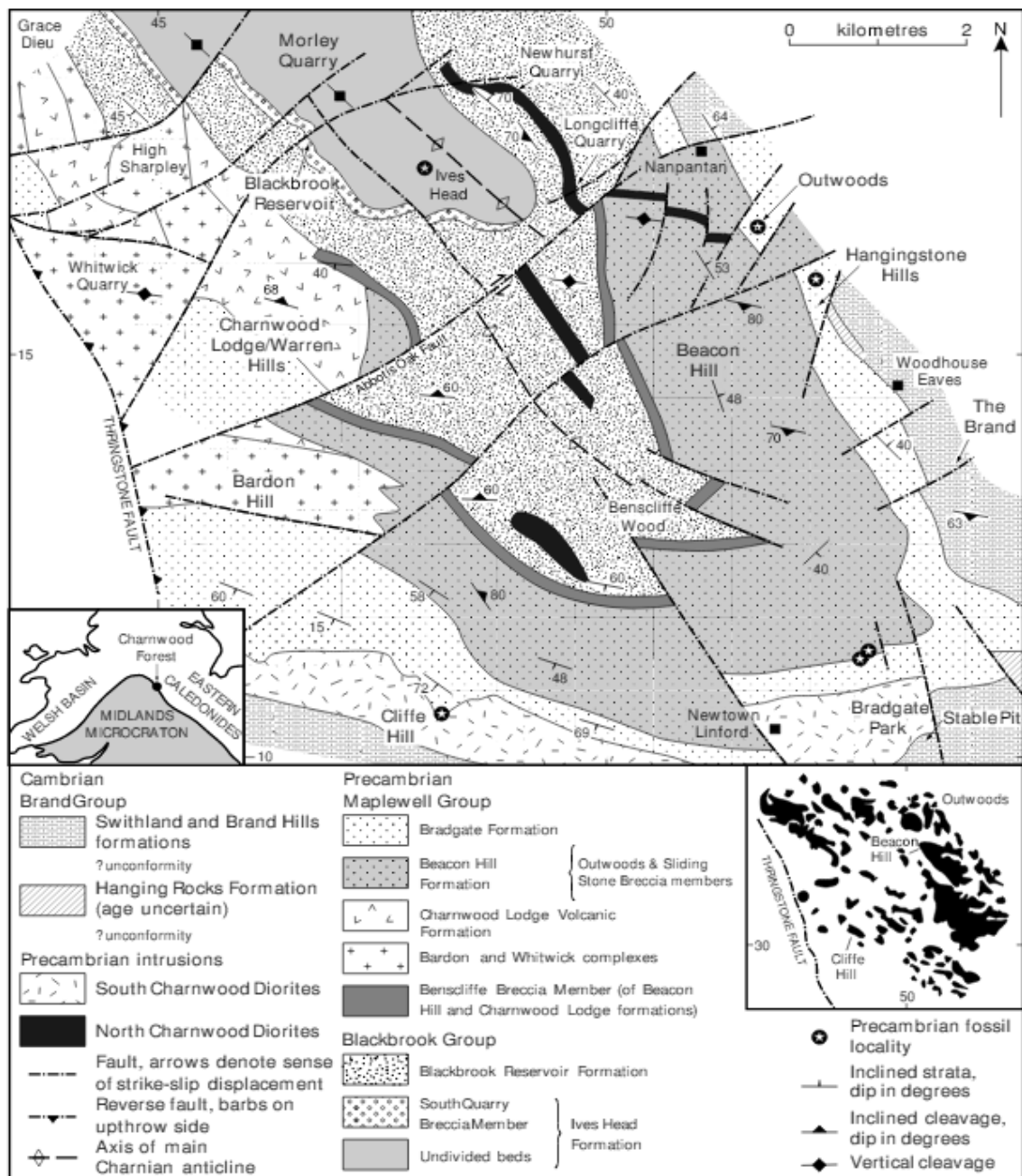
Figure 1.4 Horseshoe-shape formed by Charnwood's Geology.

Source: J.Carney, 'Revisiting the Charnian Supergroup: new advances in understanding old rocks', *Geology Today*, 15, 6 (1999), p.222. Reproduced with permission of John Wiley and Sons.

The forest is encircled by nucleated settlements and inhabitants of those settlements have exploited forest resources - its woodland, its pasture, its rocks, and its minerals -

for centuries. If we include the surrounding settlements, as we must if we want to consider medieval human interaction with the forest, the study area encompasses approximately 100 square miles (25900 hectares) (fig. 1.5).
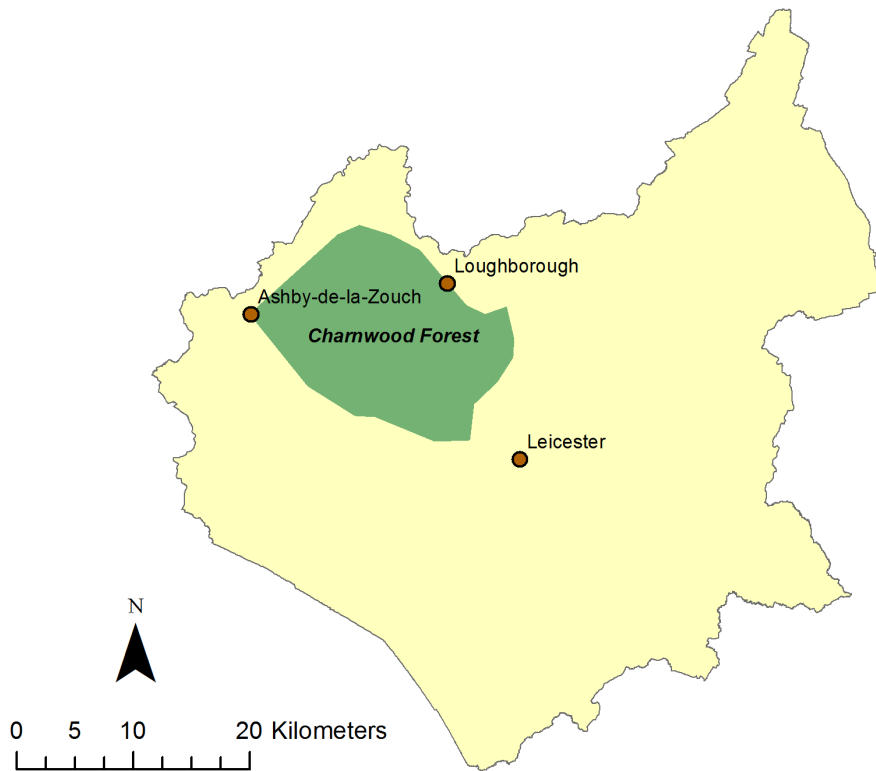
Figure 1.5 Study Area

This thesis arises from a collaborative doctoral award granted by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) in association with Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust (LVCHT). The thesis benefits greatly from research carried out collaboratively with the LVCHT's 'Charnwood Roots Project', a Heritage Lottery funded community history project exploring the history of Charnwood Forest with the help of local volunteers and community groups. Whilst the Charnwood Roots Project has explored the history of Charnwood in terms of the '*longue durée*', from prehistory

to the present day, the particular aims and objectives of this thesis are to trace the history of Charnwood Forest in the medieval period through the lens of the *longue durée*. Sources are drawn from the medieval period and beyond in order to explore the complex relationships between those who inhabited and utilised the forest's medieval landscape, and to examine the impact of medieval boundaries on human interaction with Charnwood Forest in later periods.

The thesis differs significantly from previous studies of the forest in four ways. First, it addresses the history of medieval Charnwood specifically through consideration and analysis of forest boundaries. A broad definition of the term 'boundaries' is adopted here, one which encompasses the topographical, administrative, cultural and economic bounds and divisions of the forest. Secondly, the study takes a comparative approach which considers the boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest alongside those of other medieval landscapes such as Dartmoor (Devon), Ashdown Forest (Sussex), Cannock Chase (Staffordshire) and Whittlewood (Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire). Thirdly, it looks at the modern landscape of Charnwood Forest as a 'memory palace' in which memories of medieval boundaries are seen to be preserved in settlement patterns, landscape features, archaeological features and place-names.[7] And finally, as well as looking at medieval documentary sources, the study looks to post-medieval documentary sources, such as those relating to tithe and enclosure disputes, for traces of the forest's medieval past. This thesis addresses some of the questions about medieval Charnwood Forest that remain unasked, unanswered or insufficiently considered in the current literature.

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[7] The suggestion that landscape is a 'memory palace' in which collective memory can be stored is one made by D. Rollison, *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire 1500 – 1800* (London and New York, 1992), p. 70.

1.1 Research questions

Five main research questions are asked:

- Did the landscape of medieval Charnwood itself represent a boundary?

- What were the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest?

- What were the internal boundaries and divisions of Charnwood Forest?

- What was the significance of boundaries for those who inhabited and utilised the medieval Charnwood Forest landscape?

- What was the significance of Charnwood's medieval boundaries in later periods?

For the purposes of this study 'the medieval period' is defined as that between the fifth and the sixteenth centuries, the period between the end of Roman occupation and the Reformation. This is a definition commonly employed by academics in Western Europe. It is also the definition adopted by British scholars such as Wager who, in her study of the woodlands of medieval Warwickshire, refers to the post-conquest period as the 'later medieval period' and the pre-conquest period as the 'early medieval period'. She does so because such terminology avoids the 'ethnic connotations' and 'historical assumptions' implicit in terms such as the 'Migration Period' for the 'fifth, sixth and seventh centuries' and 'Anglo-Saxon' for the 'rest of the period up until the Norman Conquest'.[8] This is the template which will be followed in the following chapters. The timescale, although rather daunting, is considered to be the most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis because it encompasses the formation of Charnwood's first

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[8] S.J. Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves: The Woodland of Medieval Warwickshire* (Oxford, 1998), p. 3.

known nucleated settlements and facilitates consideration of continuities in woodland culture. A summary of the existing literature indicates that the approach taken in this thesis is an innovative one. It is an approach which yields important new insights into human interactions with the forest's medieval landscape.

1.2   Literature review

The following review is divided into three sections. The first section is a broad review of literature related to landscape, settlement and boundaries. The second considers theories of space and place, whilst the third is a more specific examination of the historiography of medieval Charnwood Forest.

The tradition of landscape history in England can be traced to W.G. Hoskins who, in his 1955 publication *The Making of the English Landscape,*[9] suggested that centuries of human agency in the landscape could be revealed by careful observation in the field. His work was empirically based, locally focused and extremely influential. Subsequent British landscape historians have developed and refined the methods and analysis used by Hoskins.[10] Some of his thinking has been rejected; his proposal that landscape is a palimpsest akin to a written document that is repeatedly wiped clean and re-written has been challenged.[11] However, a 'boots on' phase in which investigators walk and observe the landscape of their study area in a manner similar to that of Hoskins, remains a fundamental constituent of most British landscape studies. Even Matthew Johnson's theoretical work, *Ideas of Landscape*, which considers different ways of looking at

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[9] W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955; Sevenoaks, 1992).
[10] See for example: C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (1983; London, 1984); M. Beresford and J. Hurst, *Book of Wharram Percy: Deserted Medieval Village* (London, 1990); C. Lewis, P. Mitchell Fox, and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (1997; Macclesfield 2001).
[11] M. Gardiner and S. Rippon, 'Introduction: The Medieval Landscapes of Britain' in M. Gardiner and S. Rippon, eds, *Medieval Landscapes: Landscape History After Hoskins, 2* (Macclesfield, 2007), p. 1.

landscape and landscape archaeology, begins with a personal account of a journey through Swaledale (Yorkshire).[12] Johnson discusses an English landscape tradition, inherited from Hoskins, which utilises an historical approach replete with meaning, one associated with the local, the particular, the empirical, and with Romanticism. He suggests that the English approach focuses on the *genius loci* or 'spirit of a particular place'.[13] Johnson contrasts this English tradition with North American ways of looking at landscape which, with a few notable exceptions, utilise an anthropological approach associated with the general and the theoretical.[14] Johnson's aim was to bridge the gap between the two traditions; this thesis shares those ambitions and so examines a particular historic landscape, that of medieval Charnwood Forest, in a wider theoretical context.

Charnwood Forest lies in the broad 'central province' of England, running north-east to south-west across the country, identified by Roberts and Wrathmell. They describe this zone as a primarily lowland 'champion region' characterised in the medieval period by nucleated villages and open field systems.[15] Charnwood Forest is one of the upland, wooded, pastoral areas within the central province which do not conform to these general characteristics and this thesis explores the topographical and cultural differences between the forest and surrounding areas. In the medieval period, very much like today, the core of the forest was an area of dispersed settlement, but one that was surrounded by nucleated settlements. There is a considerable body of literature on nucleated settlements in England, much of it focused on the desertion of some of those settlements

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[12] M. Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape* (Oxford, 2007), pp xiii-xxii.
[13] Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, pp. 193, 204.
[14] Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, pp. xx – xi, 193-198. The exceptions noted by Johnson include North American humanistic studies and citations of 'folklife' in North American historical archaeology, p. 196.
[15] B.K. Roberts and S. Wrathmell, *Region and Place: A Study of English Rural Settlement* (London, 2002), pp. 1-3.

in the later medieval period.[16] Archaeological evidence from deserted villages has, however, revealed something about their origins, discrediting early theories that nucleation was imposed by Germanic invasion.[17] In the late 1990s, Lewis *et al* undertook an interdisciplinary study of the settlement history of Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire.[18] They concluded that nucleation occurred between 850 and 1200 and that it may have occurred for a variety of different reasons in a variety of different circumstances. They consider factors such as the role of lords, both secular and ecclesiastic, the role of state and that of community, population growth and urbanisation, farming methods and soil type.[19] They go on to suggest that nucleation was an evolutionary process in which one or more of these factors gave rise to a 'village moment' in which a nucleated settlement might have been created.[20] Whilst Lewis *et al* challenge the views of Hoskins on a lack of continuity with pre-history,[21] and those of Bartlett on environmental or ethnic explanations for the distribution of villages,[22] their theories accommodate those of Christopher Taylor on village formation. In the 1980s Taylor had examined the ways in which a medieval village might have come into existence: by growth from a single place, by the agglomeration or collapse of dispersed settlements or by being deliberately planned. The work of Lewis *et al* gave rise to a more detailed examination of a particular part of their study area in 'the Whittlewood Project', an interdisciplinary

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[16] See for example, R. Muir, *The Lost Villages of Britain* (London, 1982); Beresford and Hurst, *Book of Wharram Percy*.

[17] Muir, *The Lost Villages of Britain*, p. 266 ; Beresford and Hurst, *Book of Wharram Percy*, p. 84. The theory that nucleation was imposed by the Saxons had been a view favoured by Hoskins, see Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape,* p. 46.

[18] Lewis et al, *Village Hamlet and Field*.

[19] Lewis et al, *Village Hamlet and Field*, pp. 188, 191.

[20] Lewis et al, *Village Hamlet and Field*, p. 191.

[21] Lewis et al, *Village Hamlet and Field*, pp. 67, 73.

[22] Lewis et al, *Village Hamlet and Field*, pp. 194. See also, R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350* (1993; London, 1994), pp. 107-132.

study of medieval settlement in Whittlewood Forest

(Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire). The findings of the Whittlewood Project were

recorded by Jones and Page who highlight the 'randomness' of English settlement

patterns.[23] This apparent 'randomness' may, however, be a feature of the 'multiple

explanations' offered by Lewis *et al* rather than an alternative model entirely.

The studies by Taylor, Lewis *et al*, and Jones and Page have focused on cultural factors

and human decision making in the form and distribution of medieval settlement. More

recently, however, Williamson has shifted the focus back to consideration of

environmental factors in that decision making process.[24] Williamson does not discard

cultural influences on settlement patterns,[25] but he highlights the significance of

physical geography; of topography, climate, hydrology and soils in the establishment

and morphology of medieval rural settlement.[26] The role of physical geography in

settlement patterns can be associated with concepts of marginality. High, rocky

landscapes with poor soils, like Charnwood, were not the most conducive to medieval

cultivation and settlement. However the association between a lack of settlement and

marginality has been challenged by several commentators who incorporate any

resources that a landscape might have possessed, distance from markets, and extent of

technological knowledge into their deliberations about degrees and nature of

marginality.[27] In what he describes as an 'agenda for studying landscape' Stephen

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[23] R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends* (Macclesfield, 2006,) p. 222.
[24] T. Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environments* (Oxford, 2003); T. Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2012)
[25] Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes*, pp. 180-185; *Williamson, Environment, Society and Landscape*, pp. 6-35.
[26] Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape*, p. 35.
[27] M. Bailey, *A Marginal economy? East Anglian Breckland in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989); S. Burri, 'Reflections on the concept of marginal landscape through a study of late medieval incultum in Provence', *European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeology*, 4 (2014), pp.7-38; K. Altenberg,

Rippon advocates going 'beyond the traditional focus of landscape archaeologists' and to 'explore facets of landscape character such as how it was perceived in the past';[28] nowhere is this advice more important than in consideration of medieval understandings of marginality. Fox's study seasonal transhumance of cattle in Dartmoor (Devon) has, for example, brought the 'marginality' of the moor into question by highlighting the importance of its role in the pastoral economy of surrounding communities.[29] In her doctoral research on space and identity in marginal areas of medieval Britain and Scandinavia, Altenberg suggests that concepts of marginality can vary according to the perspectives adopted, and that some landscapes may 'carry aspects of marginality and centrality at the same time'.[30] This thesis investigates the extent to which this is the case in medieval Charnwood Forest.

The value of resources that a landscape might possess became increasingly apparent in the later medieval period when, across England, the ownership of land, its resources and rights associated with them, became the subject of recorded contest. McDonagh has utilised Star Chamber records in her study of such disputes across sixteenth-century England. She argues that, during this period, property became a 'spatially exclusive concept' when access to land was increasingly determined by legal ownership, and when attempts to access previously unenclosed common land were seen in cases of trespass coming before the courts.[31] Indeed, commentators like Johnson and Biddick have traced the roots of modern capitalism to the later medieval period. Johnson

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'Experiencing Landscape: A Study of Space and Identity in Three Marginal Areas of Britain and Scandinavia', PhD thesis (University of Reading 2001).
[28] S. Rippon, *Making Sense of an Historic Landscape* (Oxford, 2012), p. 4.
[29] H. Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands: Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages* (Exeter, 2012).
[30] Altenberg, 'Experiencing Landscape', p. 10.
[31] B. McDonagh, 'Making and Breaking Property: Negotiating Enclosure and Common Rights in Sixteenth-Century England', *History Workshop Journal*, 76 (2013), pp. 32-56.

suggests that enclosure represented a 're-ordering of space and people' and that it 'opened the way to a commodification of the landscape'.[32] Biddick argues that new 'technologies of power' emerging in the twelfth century, including literacy, accounting, and credit contributed to this process.[33] Biddick also suggests that late medieval enclosures were a means of 'partitioning space'.[34]

The 'places' that were created by such partitioning were defined and delineated by boundaries. In his 1957 publication, *History on the Ground,*[35] Maurice Beresford argued that boundaries only became necessary when space was contested.

> So long as there were no claims to a stretch of heath, moorland, sand dune or marsh, it was literally no man's land and, for that reason, any man's land. When there was only one squatter on a piece of newly cleared forest land, the question of bounds was academic.[36]

However, he also argued that the very earliest 'clashes' were not over land cleared for tillage but probably involved swineherds and shepherds in areas of pasture. He argued that the subsequent emergence of parish boundaries (around the ninth century), accommodated rights of grazing 'too strong to be denied' already established by the resolution of such clashes and represented an acknowledgement that neighbouring communities needed access to pasture. Beresford argued that maintenance of that access is reflected in the rather unusual long, thin, projections of land seen in the shapes of some parishes.[37] His argument highlights the importance of negotiation in the development of boundaries. More recently, Reynolds has highlighted the role that

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[32] M. Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford, 1996) pp. 2-3, 206.
[33] K. Biddick,' People and Things: Power in Early English Development', *Comparative Studies in society and History*, 32, 1, (Jan1990), pp. 3-23.

[34] K. Biddick, 'Decolonising the English Past: Readings in Medieval Archaeology and History', *Journal of British Studies*, 32, (1993), pp 1-23.
[35] M. Beresford, *History on the Ground: Six Studies in Maps and Landscapes* (London, 1957).
[36] Beresford, *History on the Ground*, p. 31.
[37] Beresford, *History on the Ground*, pp. 312-34.

medieval boundaries played in the maintenance of social order.[38] His suggestion that

boundaries emerged as a result of competition between early English kingdoms as they

expanded in size 'at the expense of each other'[39] supports the notion that medieval

boundaries were the result of both conflict and negotiation. These are themes that are

explored in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Both Beresford and Ryden have highlighted the narrative and experiential nature of

medieval boundaries.[40] Beresford described how, in a pre-cartographic society,

boundaries were remembered and expressed in words.[41] Those words were recorded in

written documents, such as charters, perambulations and surveys, but also passed down

orally from generation to generation. Ryden suggests that boundaries in medieval

England were 'more than abstract lines' and that they were replete with meaning.[42] He

highlights ritual and religious meanings attached to boundaries which, he suggests, were

firmly 'grounded in the facts of experience'.[43] However, we should not confine

ourselves to the meanings attached to boundaries, we must also consider the meanings

attached to the spaces and places that they enclosed and delineated.

'Space' and 'place' are complex terms; they are intimately entwined with 'landscape', a

term itself open to many understandings.[44] Phenomenological understandings of the

subtle distinctions between 'space and place' and 'place and landscape' have been

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[38] A. Reynolds, 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth to Eleventh Century England' in D. Griffiths, A. Reynolds and S. Semple, eds, *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology,* 12 (Oxford, 2003), p. 98.
[39] A. Reynolds, 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth to Eleventh Century England', p. 98.
[40] Beresford, *History on the Ground*, p. 25; Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, p. 26.
[41] Beresford, *History on the Ground*, p. 25.
[42] Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, p. 26.
[43] Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, p. 26
[44] B. Bender, 'Place and Landscape', in C. Tiley, W. Keane, S. Kuechler-Fogden, M. Rowlands, P. Spyer, eds. *Handbook of Material Culture* (London, 2006), p. 303.

defined by Bender. Space is said to 'derive its meaning from particular places' and to only exist in the context of 'the events and activities within which it is implicated'; landscape is defined as a 'series of named locales, a set of relational places, linked by paths, movements and narratives'.[45] This is consistent with the views expressed by Ryden who sees 'space' as 'sterile and theoretical' and 'place' as 'emotion laden' and as a 'centre of meaning constructed by experience'.[46] Such understandings have been influenced by the theories of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre as expressed in *The Production of Space*.[47] Lefebvre's work refined and qualified the earlier views of landscape historians like Hoskins, who had suggested that landscape was a palimpsest, or layered text, in which earlier human interactions with that landscape could be read.[48] It is largely as a result of Lefebvre's work that 'space' and 'place' are now considered to be social constructs which may have a multiplicity of meanings. Lefebvre distinguishes between spatial practice (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space) and representational spaces (lived space).[49] He suggests that 'spatial practice'

> embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private life' and leisure).[50]

Lefebvre describes 'representations of space' as 'conceptualised space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers', he suggests that representations of space are 'the most dominant space in any society'.[51]

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[45] Bender, 'Place and Landscape', p. 306.
[46] Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, pp. 36-37.
[47] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, English translation by D. Nicholson Smith (1974; Oxford, 1991).
[48] W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, p. 19.
[49] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 38-39.
[50] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38.
[51] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 38-39.

Perhaps, the most fascinating of the spaces described by Lefebvre, and the ones which might be most closely associated with the concept of 'place', are the 'representational spaces' or

> space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' but also of some artists and writers.[52]

It is this aspect of spatiality that may be most relevant to this study of medieval Charnwood Forest. The study does not seek to look at the modern landscape and read just one particular story of the medieval past. It looks for the many different stories that arise from the identification of spatial divisions as they were experienced by contemporary inhabitants and users of the forest. This is an approach which has been come to be accepted and used to advantage by modern landscape historians. The full impact of spatial theory on landscape studies can be seen in a wealth of subsequent literature on topics such as gendered space, religious space, enclosure, and notions of privacy.[53] The experiential nature of space and spatial divisions is discussed by Whyte in her study of late medieval and early modern Norfolk. Whyte focuses on the perspectives of ordinary people as they passed through the landscape and highlights the 'indivisilibility of the physical experience of landscape and the demarcation of local and social space'.[54]

Lefebvre's work on spatiality can be associated with the notion of 'sense of place', a concept that has been further explored by more recent commentators such as Clark,

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[52] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 39.
[53] See for example: R.Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past* (London and New York, 1999); N. Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 2009); D.A. Hinton, ''Closing' and the Later Middle Ages', *Medieval Archaeology*, 43 (1999); McDonagh, *Making and Breaking Property*; B. Mcdonagh and C.J. Griffin 'Occupy! Historical Geographies of Property, Protest and the Commons, 1500-1850' *Journal of historical Geography*, 53 (2016); M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance* (Abingdon, 2002).
[54] N. Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory,* p. 2.

Corsane and Bowers, and Pierre Bordieu.[55] The subjective nature of sense of place is a common theme of their work.

For Clark, sense of place is 'the relationship between people and place' and

> an important source of individual and community identity, a profound centre of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties, part of complex processes by which individuals and groups define themselves and bound up in people's sources and meanings of experience.[56]

For Corsane and Bowers sense of place is 'a human construct which we develop as individuals and/or as groups as we relate to particular physical spaces or sites that we live in or move through'.[57] They suggest that

> different individuals or groups which come into contact with the same space or site will construct a new sense of place dependant on their world views, temporal context and their specific associations with environmental factors.[58]

This may lead to a 'layering of senses of place'. However, within those layers, there may be 'points of vertical continuity where perceptions of certain characteristics of the space or site are very similar or shared'.[59] In many ways, this view is consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in which 'a determinate person or group of persons occupying a similar or neighbouring position in social space share a system of dispositions'.[60]

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[55] A summary of the work of these commentators appears in A. Stones, 'Estate Mentalities: Changing Sense of Place on a Post-War Council Estate in Leicester, 1947-2012' unpublished MA dissertation, Centre for English Local History (University of Leicester, 2013).

[56] M. Clarke, 'Achieving Memorable Places ... 'Urban Sense of Place' for successful Urban Planning and Renewal?' in Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane and Peter Davis, eds, *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 120.

[57] G. Corsane and D. J. Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study in the Rainforest and Savannahs of Guyana' in I. Convery, G. Corsane and P. Davis, eds, *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 250.

[58] Corsane and Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism', p. 250.

[59] Corsane and Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism', p. 250.

[60] P. Bourdieu, 'Habitus', in J. Hillier and E. Rooksby, *Habitus: A Sense of Place* (1998; Surrey, 2005), pp. 43-44.

Identification of 'vertical continuities' and 'shared dispositions', particularly where they relate to spatial divisions within a medieval woodland environment and a pre-capitalist, non-cartographic society, is not an easy task. Whilst most theories and understandings of space and place have been arrived at in modernity, often in association with research conducted in urban environments, there has been a growing acceptance of their relevance to the spatiality of the pre-modern world. Cassidy-Welsh highlights the importance of space in the playing out of human social relationships in both medieval and modern contexts; she suggests that delineation of geographic space has always been used to 'separate, identify, include and exclude individuals and groups'.[61] However, such views are qualified by Whyte who contends that compartmentalisation of various strands of everyday life was not a part of the medieval mind-set in the way that it is today.[62] If Whyte is correct, binary oppositions, such as those between elite and non-elite space, private and public space, religious and secular space, and economic and recreational space, may have played very little part in medieval concepts of spatiality. This thesis examines such notions and explores how delineations of space were expressed, perceived, lived, and transgressed in medieval Charnwood Forest.

The current literature on medieval Charnwood Forest is not extensive, and none of it specifically addresses the question of the forest's boundaries and internal divisions in the terms described above. The history of the forest was considered in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century by the antiquarian John Nichols in his volumes on the *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*.[63] In his volumes, Nichols transcribes numerous medieval documents relating to Leicestershire, including many

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[61] M. Cassidy-Welch, 'Space and Place in Medieval Contexts', *Parergon*, 27, 2 (2010), pp. 1-12.
[62] Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape,* p. 39.
[63] J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, I – IV (1795- 1815; Wakefield, 1971).

which relate to Charnwood. However, Charnwood Forest is not really considered as an entity in itself. Information about Charnwood is scattered throughout the volumes but appears primarily in volumes relating to the West Goscote and Sparkenhoe hundreds.[64] Charnwood Forest lay on the boundary between the two. The West Goscote hundred formed the western part of the larger Domesday wapentake of Goscote, whilst the Sparkenhoe hundred formed the north-western part of the larger Domesday wapentake of Guthlaxton. Nichols fails to address the many ambiguities which surround Charnwood's wapentake boundaries, particularly those involving the manor of Barrow to the east of the forest. Such ambiguities are explored in chapter 5 of this thesis. Nichol's transcriptions are an impressive and useful resource, but he draws few conclusions from the sources he transcribes. Whilst some of his transcriptions highlight boundary disputes and disputes over common rights, overall, Nichols adopts a narrative rather than analytical approach which focuses very much on manorial descents and on Charnwood's medieval elite. This thesis looks beyond the narratives of Charnwood's noble families and seeks to explore the significance of forest boundaries for all sections of its society.

The later nineteenth century saw the publication of several texts devoted specifically to Charnwood Forest.[65] The reliability of the information they contain is rather variable. For example, Potter's plan of earthworks at the Bronze-Age hill fort site at Beacon Hill shows a remarkable level of accuracy.[66] This is confirmed by the consistency of features

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[64] Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, II (1804, Wakefield, 1971) and IV, II (1811, London, 1971).

[65] See T.R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, (London, 1842); John Spanton, *A Companion to Charnwood Forest* (Loughborough, 1856); R. Allen, *An Illustrated Handbook to Charnwood Forest* (Leicester, 1857); Frederick T. Mott *Charnwood Forest: its Air, its Scenery, its Natural Curiosities*, *Antiquities and Legends* (London, 1868).

[66] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, p. 49.

shown on Potter's plan with the features revealed by modern LiDAR analysis.[67] Much

of the nineteenth-century literature, however, imbues the history of Charnwood Forest

with a sense of mystery and romance which comes at the cost of historical accuracy.

This is evident, as will be discussed in chapter 3, in the erroneous suggestion by many

nineteenth-century commentators, including Potter, that Charnwood was once a Royal

Forest.[68] Potter's is the most notable of the nineteenth-century publications and his work

is replete with his obvious fascination with the area. Potter's stated desire to 'capture

Charnwood's fading glories ere they fade' is typical of the tone of the text and indicates

a certain lack of objectivity.[69] Furthermore some of the documentary evidence that

Potter cites, although potentially useful, is inadequately referenced and, therefore, not

always verifiable. The effects of nineteenth-century romanticism on perceptions of

Charnwood Forest have been discussed by Davis.[70] However, his focus is on

environmental perceptions of Charnwood between 1775 and 1914 rather than on sense

of place in medieval Charnwood or on the effects of nineteenth-century representations

of the medieval Charnwood landscape on later literature.

Moving into the early twentieth century, Charnwood became the subject of extensive

historical research, notably by George Farnham who, like Nichols before him,

transcribed numerous medieval documents, including account rolls, court rolls and

inquisitions *post-mortem*.[71] Farnham adopts a more analytical approach than Nichols.

His discussion of evidence relating to the forest's status, in which he argues

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[67] N. Hannon, 'An Archaeological LiDAR Study of Charnwood', Leicestershire, ULAS report no. 2014-092 (unpublished draft report, 2014), p. 18.
[68] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, p. 2.
[69] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, introduction.
[70] Vernon Davis, 'Charnwood Forest: Population, Landownership and Environmental Perception c. 1775-1914', PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 2004).
[71] G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930), and G.F. Farnham *Medieval Village Notes with Further Evidences Concerning Charnwood and the Surrounding Villages,*VI, (Leicester, 1933) and G.F. Farnham, *Quorndon Records* (London, 1912).

persuasively and correctly that Charnwood was not a Royal Forest, is particularly impressive.[72] Farnham also defines the boundaries of the four Charnwood manors whose waste made up the core of Charnwood Forest.[73] However, many of Farnham's transcriptions are unaccompanied by comment or discussion. His transcription of a thirteenth-century account of the bounds of Charnwood Forest is just one of many examples.[74] Nevertheless, comparison with original documents indicates that Farnham's translations are generally accurate and that they can be regarded as a reliable source. Sometimes, however, they are incomplete. In some cases, Farnham only transcribed that part of a document that he considered most relevant to his own research interests. For example, those interests evidently did not include payment made for the making of a ditch around the manor of Beaumanor in 1277. Although his transcription of the relevant Beaumanor account roll is quite detailed,[75] it does not include the 'costs of ditches' which appear in the original.[76] Such evidence is clearly relevant for the consideration of Charnwood's medieval boundaries and its omission from Farnham's transcription illustrates the benefits of going back to original sources when transcriptions, no matter how accurate, are merely extracts. Writing in the 1930s, Farnham lamented the fact that, whilst he had found considerable documentary evidence relating to the medieval manors of Charnwood, that there was relatively little concerning the wastes of those manors.[77] However, despite his misgivings, he was able to chart reclamations from the waste, particularly in the manors of Barrow and Groby,

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[72] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 8.
[73] A. Herbert and G.F. Farnham 'The Manors of Charnwood' in Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 2-3.
[74] Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 367.
[75] The Account of Thomas Hemeri, sergeant of Beaumanor, 1277, transcribed by Farnham, *Quorndon Records*, pp. 47-51.
[76] ROLLR, DG9/1954, The Account of Thomas Hemeri, steward of Beaumanor, 1277.
[77] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 14.

from the early twelfth century.[78] Furthermore, he was able to identify internal

boundaries, and conflict over boundaries, within the waste. In one example, he cites the

Barrow manor court roll of 1581 which records a dispute over the boundary between

Barrow and Groby.[79] Farnham uses this source to clarify ambiguities over boundaries

and tenure. However, he pays little attention to 'the brook', the landscape feature which,

according to the document, divides Barrow and Groby. Natural landscape features such

as this characterise medieval and later descriptions of Charnwood's internal divisions;

they are important factors in local memory and act as points of reference for parish and

manorial boundaries. The nature of the landscape features which characterised

contemporary understandings of Charnwood's medieval administrative boundaries

would seem worthy of further analysis.

The twentieth century also saw the publication of the Victoria County History volumes

for Leicestershire, most of them published in the 1950s.[80] These include detailed

religious, economic and social histories of the county. Much of the evidence relating to

Charnwood Forest in the volumes is drawn from the earlier work of Nichols and

Farnham. Again the evidence is generally presented in a narrative rather than analytical

manner. The section on Leicestershire's agrarian history presents medieval Charnwood

Forest as a rather inhospitable landscape and, whilst details of medieval utilisation of

the forest and its resources are provided, the volumes focus rather more on the relative

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[78] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp.15-16.
[79] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 18-19.
[80] W. Page, ed., *A History of the County of Leicester*, I (London, 1907); W.G. Hoskins and R. A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, II (London, 1954); W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, III (London, 1955); R.A. McKinley, ed., *A History of the County of Leicester*, IV (London, 1958); J.M. Lee and R.A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, V (London, 1964).

absence of settlement and cultivation in the forest.[81] In this way the volumes perpetuate the notion that medieval Charnwood Forest was a somewhat marginal and mysterious environment. The sense that medieval Charnwood Forest was a liminal landscape existing on the very edges of contemporary consciousness is one that is challenged in this thesis.

That challenge is informed by the work of Squires and Jeeves who have written about the very early history of Charnwood's woodlands. Any study of medieval woodland must incorporate some consideration of what came before - the tapestry of landscape and culture into which those who interacted with medieval woodlands wove their contribution. Squires and Jeeves describe the development of woodland in Leicestershire from prehistory up until and including the Roman period. They draw on palaeoenvironmental evidence from ancient river channels to suggest that the development of vegetation in prehistoric times was similar to that in neighbouring counties and describe the establishment of primary woodland or 'wildwood' after the final glacial retreat.[82] They draw on further palaeoenvironmental, and some archaeological evidence, to describe the subsequent and gradual decline of woodland in Leicestershire. Squires and Jeeves suggest that this process commenced during the Neolithic period and continued into the Bronze and Iron Ages.[83] Based on this work, it would seem that woodland on the fertile and easily worked soils to the east of the county was the first to be cleared.[84] It would seem, however, that woodland in the relatively inhospitable Charnwood may have survived longer. Squires and Jeeves

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[81] See particularly, R.H. Hilton, 'Medieval Agrarian History', in Hoskins and Mckinley eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, II, pp.145-198.

[82] A. Squires and M. Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands Past and Present* (Loughborough, 1994), p. 17.

[83] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 18.

[84] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 18.

consider the possibility that sites of Iron Age hill forts, like that at Beacon Hill in

Charnwood, may have been preserved because of the presence of former woodland and

that such settlements may even have been initially established because of that wooded

environment.[85] They state that, during the Roman period, Leicestershire was a

predominantly woodless county, one that was mostly utilised for agricultural and

industrial purposes;[86] the woodland which survived was an important source of both

timber and fuel and was, therefore, generally both well-managed and well-defined.[87] As

Roman structures were imposed onto an existing Iron Age landscape, it seems likely

that one of the remaining areas of woodland in Leicestershire was Charnwood. This is

supported by the discovery of Roman pottery kilns, which would have required a ready

supply of wood, on its southern margins at Cropston, Groby and Markfield.[88] This

thesis explores the continuing significance of Charnwood's woodland in the medieval

period and the ways in which that woodland shaped, and was shaped by, medieval

boundaries.

Squires has written extensively about the utilisation of Charnwood's medieval

woodlands. He emphasizes the importance of wood and timber to 'all medieval

households', and how exploitation of Charnwood Forest's resources eventually led to

scarcities and hence to changing attitudes to woodland management.[89] Squires also

discusses encroachment on the forest in the form of assarting, both from the manors

which surrounded the forest and from the religious houses within it.[90] To a very limited

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[85] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 19.
[86] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 20.
[87] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 20.
[88] P. Liddle, 'The Roman Countryside of Leicestershire and Rutland' in P. Bowman and P. Liddle, *Leicestershire Landscapes* (Leicester, 2004), p. 78.
[89] A.E. Squires, 'A History of the Charnwood Landscape' in J. Crocker, ed., *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981) pp 44-50.
[90] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', pp. 38-42.

extent, Squires reviews the subsequent return of some of that assarted land to woodland after the Black Death.[91] However, he makes no detailed analysis of variations in degrees of encroachment and retraction around the forest nor does he relate such variations to demographic changes in surrounding communities. These are among the issues that are explored in this thesis. In collaboration with Humphrey, Squires has written extensively about a particular form of encroachment on Charnwood Forest, that of emparkment.[92] Squires and Humphrey adopt an interdisciplinary approach to their very extensive research which, in many cases, confirms the existence, location and boundaries of the parks. However, they do not fully explore the recreational and economic functions of Charnwood's medieval deer parks, nor any spatial divisions within parks which such functions may have necessitated.

The compartmentalisation of Charnwood's parks has been partially addressed by Kirkland in an article on the parks of Loughborough, Beaumanor, and Burley, three adjacent parks which lie to the east of the study area.[93] Kirkland sees the three parks as different sections of one earlier and much larger park. There may, however, have been up to sixteen deer parks in medieval Charnwood,[94] and in the majority of cases, spatial divisions within them have not been explored in the literature to date. This thesis explores the nature, boundaries and divisions of Charnwood's deer parks alongside the

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[91] Squires, 'A History of the Charnwood Landscape' p.56.

[92] A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* (Wymondham, 1986).

[93] A. Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley: New Archaeology and a Reassessment of the Historical Evidence', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 85, (2011), pp. 107-121.

[94] Estimated from parks identified by Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* and by L.M Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire' *Transactions of the LAHS*, 46 (1970-71), pp. 9-24.

literature on medieval deer parks across England by writers such as Cantor, Liddiard and Mileson.[95]

Kirkland's article is one of a number of texts which have looked specifically at particular parts of Charnwood Forest, others include Woodward's study of Swithland Wood and Stephenson and Squire's study of Bradgate Park.[96] Woodward's landscape survey of Swithland Wood is particularly useful because LiDAR data is not currently available for that part of the forest. The value of such localised studies is, however, rather limited. Whilst they can provide a great deal of very detailed evidence for a particular site, it is not always possible to draw conclusions from that evidence for the forest as a whole.

The woodland which exists in Leicestershire today has been described and, to some extent analysed, by the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation project. It divides woodland into 'eleven Historic Landscape Character Types'.[97] The distributions of these woodlands across Leicestershire and Rutland can be seen in fig. 1.6, with a concentration of woodlands, particularly those described as 'ancient', at the junction of the modern boroughs of Charnwood, North-West

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[95] L.M Cantor,'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire' p. 13; R. Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book', *Landscapes* 4 , 1, (2003), pp. 4; S.A. Mileson, *Parks in Medieval England* (Oxford and New York, 2009); S.A. Mileson,'The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society'in L.Clarke, ed., *The Fifteenth Century, V, of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 31.

[96] S. Woodward, *Swithland Wood: A Study of its History and Vegetation* (Leicester, 1992); J. Stevenson and A. Squires, *Bradgate Park: Childhood Home of Lady Jane Grey* (Newtown Linford, 1999).

[97] Woodland is divided into 'eleven Historic Landscape Character Types: broadleaved ancient woodland, replanted ancient woodland, mixed ancient woodlands, broadleaved woods with sinuous boundaries, mixed woods with sinuous boundaries, coniferous woodland with sinuous boundaries, other woods with sinuous boundaries, broadleaved plantation, coniferous plantation, mixed plantation and other plantation. Leicestershire County Council, *The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project: Woodland Analysis*, pp. 349-350 at http://www.leics.gov.uk/6_leicestershire_hlc_woodland_analysis.pdf [accessed 18th May 2013].

Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth, the area we know today as 'Charnwood

Forest'.
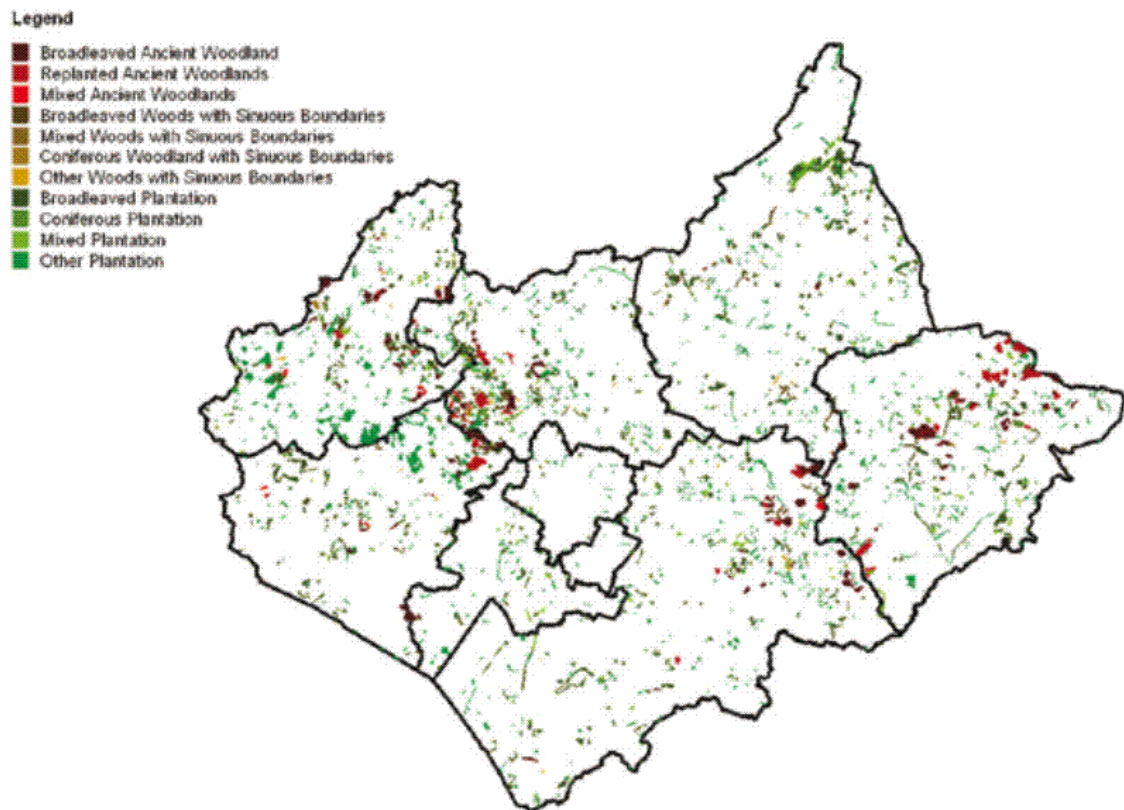
Figure 1.6 Leicestershire Woodlands

Source: LCC, The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project: Woodland Analysis, p.349 at http://www.leics.gov.uk/6_leicestershire_hlc_woodland_analysis.pdf [accessed 18th May 2013]. Reproduced with permission of Richard Knox, LCC.

It has been suggested that 'formal HLCs do not equate to a complete and definitive

historic landscape characterisation'.[98] They focus, for instance, on woodland which has

survived and not on that which may have been lost. Furthermore HLCs are very much

managerial, rather than scholarly tools. However, despite such concerns, the ancient

woodlands identified in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland HLC, bear some

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[98] Rippon, *Making Sense of an Historic Landscape*, p. 111.

general similarity to medieval woodlands identified in scholarly works, such as that by Squires and Jeeves.[99] This is possibly because the HLC makes extensive use of such scholarly works as secondary sources.

A great deal of research on medieval woodland landscapes in other parts of England has adopted an interdisciplinary approach similar to the one adopted in this thesis.[100] None of them, however, has considered human interaction with those woodland landscapes by looking at their boundaries in the widest possible sense. This historiographical review has established that there is an existing but rather modest body of literature on the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest. Current literature on medieval Charnwood Forest focuses very much on the marginality of the landscape. This thesis offers an alternative perspective, one that highlights the subjective nature of marginality and questions assumed associations between uncultivated landscapes and liminality. Such assumptions have also been questioned by recent commentators on the marginality of landscapes across Britain and Europe,[101] but have not, to date, been questioned in the context of medieval Charnwood Forest. Many previous commentators on the Charnwood landscape have adopted a textual approach to landscape history. It is an approach which is systematic, and often fruitful, but which assumes a definitive text and sometimes fails to integrate all that is 'read'. The literature to date has failed to explore the many different meanings which can be attached to the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest and to its boundaries. This thesis is informed, but not driven, by that literature. Whilst existing literature provides a good foundation for the current project, it

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[99] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands,* p. 40.
[100] Including research on Whittlewood (Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire) in R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape*; on Wychwood (Oxfordshire) in B. Schumer: *The Evolution of a Wooded Landscape* (Charlbury, 1999); and on Warwickshire in Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves*.
[101] See for example, K. Altenberg, 'Experiencing Landscapes'; Burri, 'Reflections on the Concept of Marginal Landscape through a Study of Late Medieval Incultum in Provence', pp. 7-8, 31.

does not incorporate modern methods of landscape analysis seen in the work of writers like Rippon, Whyte, McDonagh and Johnson. Such commentators utilise a comparative and interpretative approach which, significantly, seeks to explain rather than merely describe. This thesis extends the current empirically based historiography of medieval Charnwood and embeds it in a theoretical context. The thesis acknowledges the *genius loci* reflected in Charnwood's current literature, but argues that that *genius loci* may have been perceived and experienced differently by different people at different times.

1.3 Sources and methodology

The study area is based on places mentioned in Samual Wylde's 1754 plan and perambulation of Charnwood Forest.[102] Samual Wylde was schoolmaster at Woodhouse Eaves, part of the manor of Beaumanor which lay to the east of the forest. It is thought that the plan was made for the lord of Beaumanor prior to parliamentary enclosure.[103] The pre-enclosure perceptions of the forest, as expressed in Wylde's 1754 plan, would seem to reflect something of Charnwood's medieval past. Medieval features like religious houses, deer parks and enclosures appear in the plan and it seems likely that the accompanying perambulation reveals something of the forest's medieval limits and relationships with surrounding communities. The boundaries of the study area have been superimposed onto a modern map in fig. 1.7. The study area encompasses Charnwood's upland interior, surrounding settlements, parks and quarries, the town of Loughborough, lowland areas towards the River Soar in the east, and the edge of the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire coal field in the north-west. The designated study area is, therefore, one which facilitates exploration of relationships between industry

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[102] ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/1, Samual Wylde, Perambulation and Plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754.
[103] Davis, 'Charnwood Forest, Population, Landownership and Environmental Perceptions', p. 69.

and agriculture, between highland and lowland, between woodland and heath, between

lord and tenant and between neighbouring and more distant manors.
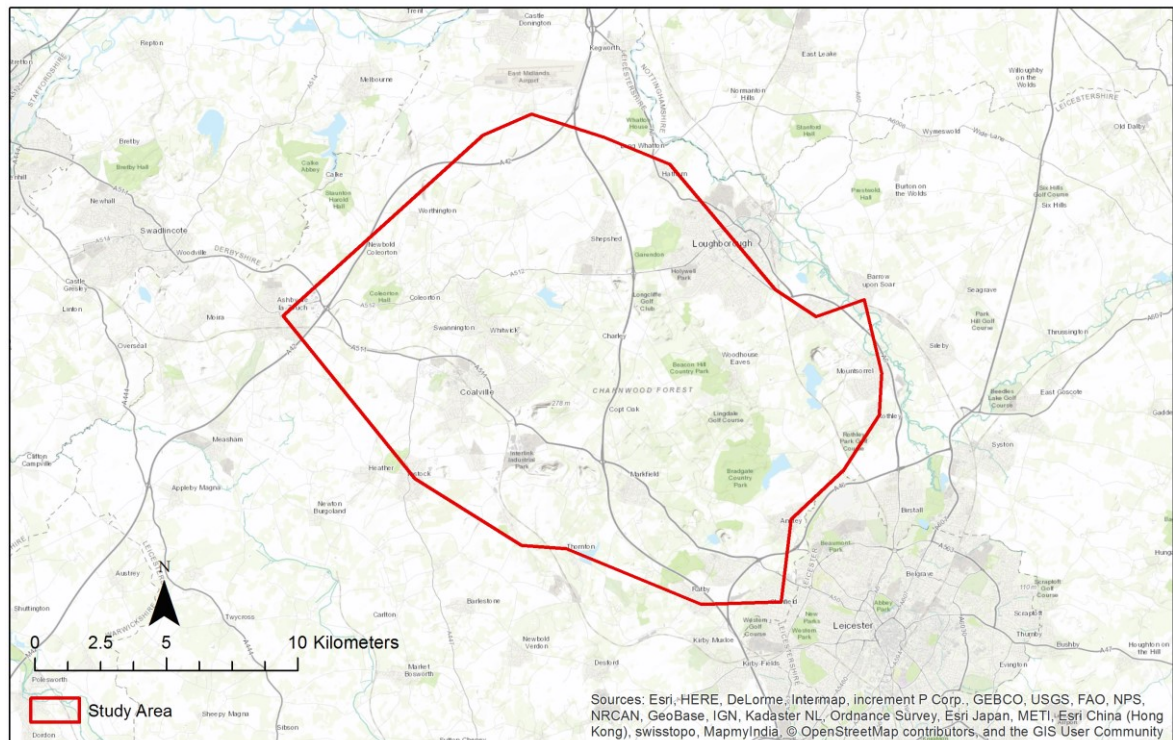
Figure 1.7 Outline of Study Area on Modern Map

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 An interdisciplinary approach has been adopted throughout the research process.

Whilst the thesis utilises a wide range of documentary and cartographical evidence,

such evidence alone does not provide a complete picture. Much of it is written from

elite and/or economic perspectives and consideration of landscape,

palaeoenvironmental, archaeological and place-name evidence is also required in order

to inform debates about medieval Charnwood. This is in line with the views of many

other landscape historians. Rackham, for instance, has suggested that relying solely on

documentary evidence 'shortens perspectives, and precludes what was happening at

times when people were not writing'.[104] He contends that, 'even in the best documented sites, the fieldworker discovers things that are not in the written record'.[105] Rippon has used a similar interdisciplinary approach in his study of the Blackdown Hills (Devon/Somerset).[106] Rippon utilises a range of sources, but he takes the landscape of his study area as the starting point for his research, a policy which has been followed in this study of Charnwood Forest.

1.3.1   Landscape sources

We start with Charnwood's landscape because much can be made of the association between landscape and boundaries. In terms of its topography and geology, Charnwood is undoubtedly different to surrounding areas. A geological map of Leicestershire (fig. 1.8) shows the slates and granites of Charnwood distinctively marked in black to the north west of the county and a relief map of the county (fig.1.9) indicates that much of the same area is high ground lying above 200m. Indeed, there is a case to be made for the forest itself to be considered a boundary and/or for the forest's external boundaries to be defined by its topography and geology. These are themes which are explored in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis. Charnwood's landscape can also tell us about boundaries and divisions within the forest. Modern Ordnance Survey maps reveal Charnwood Forest to be a landscape dominated by the effects of nineteenth-century parliamentary enclosure and by the twentieth-century M1 motorway. Closer inspection, however, reveals elements of Charnwood's medieval past set within that modern landscape.

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[104] Rackham, *Woodlands* (London, 2006) p. 184.
[105] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 184.
[106] Rippon, *Making Sense of an Historic Landscape*, p. 8
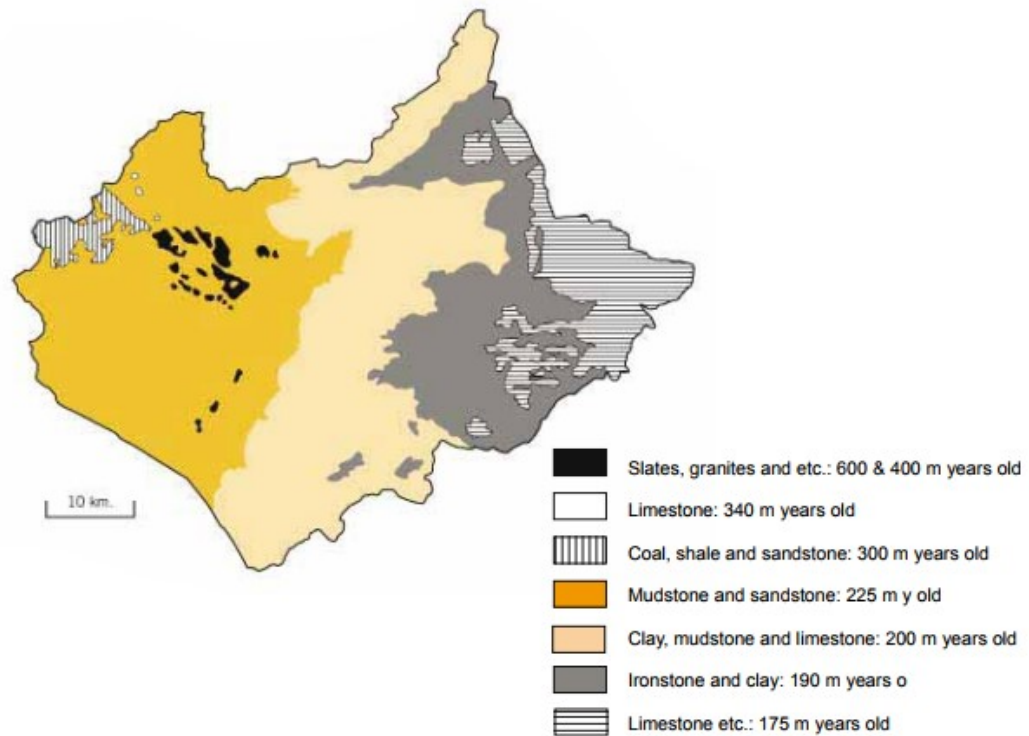
Figure 1.8 Geological Map of Leicestershire

Source: LCC, The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (2010), p.10 at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report_introduction.pdf [accessed 1st March 2013].Reproduced with permission of Richard Knox, LCC.
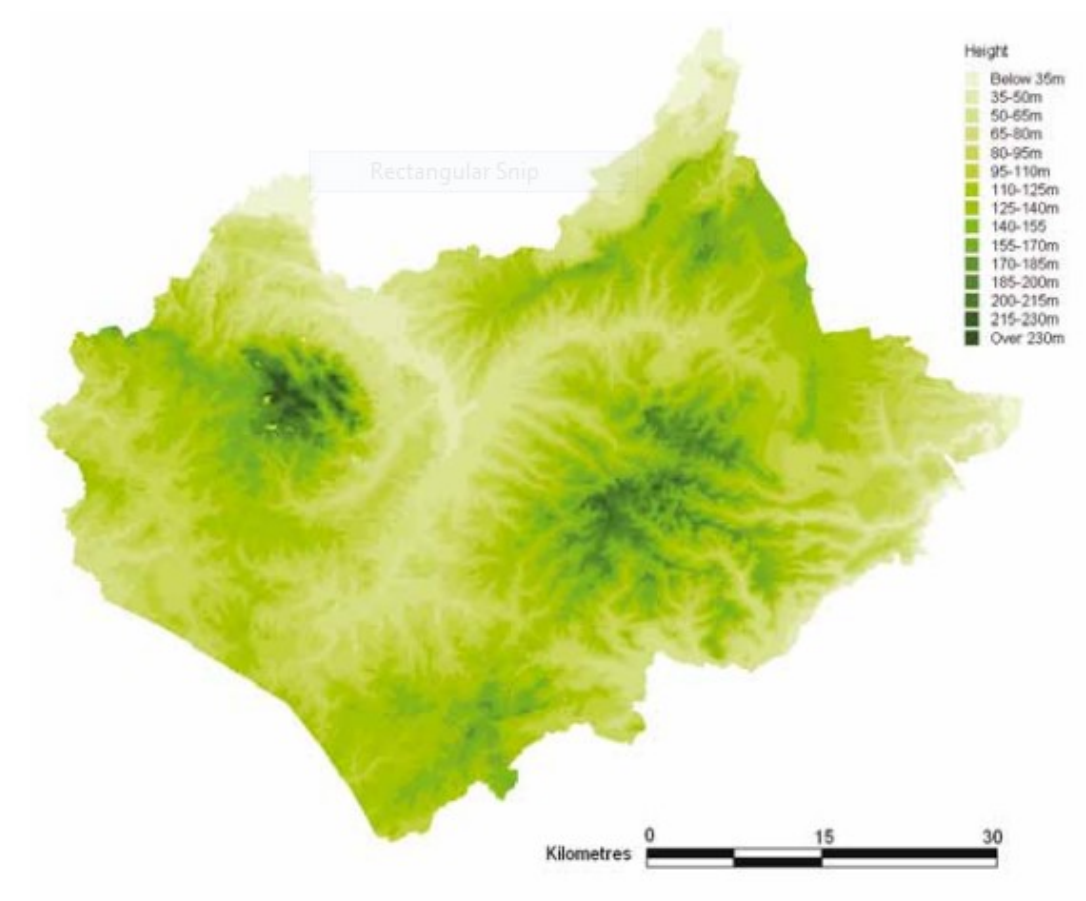
Figure 1.9 Relief Map of Leicestershire

Source: LCC, The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (2010), p.10 at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report_introduction.pdf [accessed 1st March 2013]. Reproduced with permission of Richard Knox, LCC.

Field boundaries reveal the extent to which surrounding medieval manors encroached upon the forest's core, patterns formed by Charnwood's modern parish boundaries indicate the ways in which its medieval resources were accessed and divided, and many of the footpaths which cross the forest are routeways which survive from the medieval period.

Other features in the modern landscape which indicate the extent and nature of medieval human activity include earthworks and/or standing remains of castles at Groby (SK524077), Whitwick (SK437163), and Mountsorrel (SK582149) and of ecclesiastical houses at Grace Dieu (SK435183), Ulverscroft (SK501128), and Garendon (SK501198). There is evidence of emparkment at Bradgate (SK532107) and Garendon (SK505195). Deer parks have been described as 'a specialised form of wood pasture'[107] and the landscape at Bradgate today provides us with an example of that landscape (fig. 1.10).

Figure 1.10 Deer in Bradgate Park

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[107] Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves,* p. 146.

The modern Ordnance Survey map shows several areas of woodland in Charnwood, many of which seem to be associated with former parks or ecclesiastical houses. Two areas of present day woodland which may be associated with a former medieval deer park are Piper Wood (SK477215) and Oakley Wood (SK485215) to the north of Shepshed. To the south-east of Shepshed, and to the north of Whitwick, the name of Swannymote Wood (SK442172), points to the possible location of a swanimote court. Swanimote courts were ancient outdoor courts associated with Royal Forests. Both medieval and post-medieval documentary sources point to the presence of such courts in Charnwood.[108] Charnwood was not a Royal Forest, but the presence of swanimote courts in the area indicates that seigniorial, rather than royal control, may have led to the establishment of something very similar. Some sense of medieval seigneurial presence can still be felt in the form and architecture of the forest's surrounding settlements. Groby to the south of the study area is still dominated by Groby Old Hall, site of Groby Castle and the original manorial complex. Similarly, the village of Belton, a former ecclesiastic manor to the north of the study area is dominated by its medieval church which overlooks its central medieval market place.

1.3.2 Archaeological sources

This study has examined a range of archaeological sources. A detailed analysis has been made of archaeological evidence held by the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record relating to the medieval manors whose wastes were associated with the core of the forest, the manors of Groby, Whitwick, Shepshed and Barrow. Attention has been paid to historic settlement cores and to the relationship between those cores and manorial complexes and churches. Archaeological reports that have been re-examined

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[108] TNA, E 134/6Geo3/east1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766, f. 5.

in particular detail include those for Grace Dieu Priory to the north-west of study area and the manorial complex at Groby to the south of the study area. This study also takes a fresh look at the feature known as Earls Dyke (SK 488158),[109] an important medieval boundary which seems to have retained its significance into the modern period. Another set of archaeological features which have been re-examined for this thesis are the medieval floor tiles at Ulverscroft Priory. Existing literature on the tiles has largely been descriptive, or has looked at the provenance and manufacture of the tiles.[110] In the current study, however, the symbolism of images on the tiles forms part of an analysis of divisions between religious and secular space.

The current study also benefits from new archaeological research carried out by LVCHT's 'Charnwood Roots Project'. This includes analysis of LiDAR data and subsequent landscape surveys carried out to verify the nature of any potential features suggested by that analysis. LiDAR analysis was specifically requested for a previously unrecorded feature of the Charnwood landscape, identified through examination of aerial photography conducted for this thesis. The feature is a circle formed by field and woodland boundaries and apparently centred on Ratby to the south of the study area. The possible origins of the circle are discussed in chapter 4. The results of community test pitting, carried out by Charnwood Roots, at three of Charnwood's villages have been less informative. Thirty tests pits were dug at each of the villages of Anstey, Whitwick and Rothley. Results have added little new information to our knowledge of the three villages. The general paucity in finds of both early and late medieval pottery, particularly at Rothley and Whitwick, was disappointing. The lack of finds may be

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[109] LRHER, MLE7991.
[110] See W. Keay and M. Keay, 'Ulverscroft Priory', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 18 (1933-4) p. 93 and N.R. Whitcomb, *The Medieval Floor Tiles of Leicestershire* (Leicester, 1956).

related to methodology, however, it has also been suggested that Charnwood's relatively poor soils may have required a great deal more manuring than was necessary in more fertile areas. If this is the case, it is possible that medieval pottery sherds are not found to any great extent within Charnwood's settlements because of their deposition in surrounding fields as manuring scatters.[111] Further research, including field-walking, will be necessary to confirm this theory.

1.3.3   Cartographical sources

The only cartographical source for Charnwood which may possibly date to the medieval period is a map of the parish of Shepshed.[112] The origins of this map are unclear; it is included in a set of eighteenth-century copies of undated original documents, but text on the map dated 1246-7 suggests that it could be based on medieval sources. The map is particularly useful for the consideration of Shepshed's medieval administrative boundaries and for locating the site of one of Charnwood's least documented deer parks, Oakley Park. There appears to be no other extant medieval cartographical sources for Charnwood. Later cartographical evidence can, however, be particularly revealing, and can illuminate earlier documentary sources. We may be able to locate the sites of places and landscape features mentioned in medieval documents by examination of post-medieval maps. Place-names mentioned in the cartographical sources themselves reveal a great deal about earlier industrial, agricultural, ecclesiastical and seigniorial utilisation of the Charnwood landscape. The cartographical source which has proved to be most valuable is Wylde's 1754 plan and perambulation of Charnwood (fig. 1.11 and appendix 1). It provides one of the first detailed maps of the whole area.

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[111] Mathew Morris, 'It's all in a hole …Community Test Pitting with the Charnwood Roots Project' (unpublished paper given at L.V.C.H.T's 'Charnwood Roots Heritage Festival', Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire, 21st May 2017).
[112] ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest, 1246-7, transcribed c. 1760, f. 4. (Note described in ROLLR catalogue as bounds *of* Charnwood Forest).

Figure 1.11 Samual Wylde's Plan and Perambulation of Charnwood, 1754

Note: Perambulation is written down either side of plan

Source: ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/1. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

 Amongst many other things, it reveals the location and extent of medieval emparkment.
The motivations behind the creation of such lordly hunting grounds are complex and
will be explored later in this thesis. The parks were fenced areas of 'unimproved'
woodland usually containing pasture.[113] Many of the parks that were created in
Leicestershire between 1066 and 1530 were concentrated around Charnwood Forest.[114]
Bardon Park to the north west of the forest, Grace Dieu park to the north, Beaumanor
Park to the south, and Loughborough Old Park to the south east, are shown on the 1754
plan, but are said to be disparq'd (disparked). Bradgate Park to the south west also
appears, but had clearly retained its status. Wylde's 1754 plan also seems to locate the

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[113] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire' p. 9.
[114] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', p.10

centre of Charnwood Forest at Charley. This former monastic site, and the associated

Charley Hall, are shown roughly at the centre of the 1754 plan which also indicates that

the area had undergone significant clearance. Charley is the only place-name from

within the core of Charnwood to be mentioned in Domesday and is likely to have been

one of the first centres within the forest from which assarting took place.[115] The

majority of the assarting of Charnwood Forest, however, appears to have been inwards.

This is also reflected in Wylde's plan, for example in the 'enclosures belonging to

Newtown' which appear at the south western edge of the plan. Other post-medieval

cartographical sources include John Pryor's 1779 of Leicestershire.[116] This map reveals

a considerable number of tracks crossing Charnwood and, therefore, might indicate the

utilisation of the area as wood pasture. On a more local scale, Leo Bell's 1796 map of

Ulverscroft reveals the pattern of medieval assarting and is said to 'provide an

invaluable link between medieval and modern times'.[117] Similarly, a map made in 1757

by John Doherty shows the manor of Groby and reveals the pattern of medieval field

systems and the layout of the village.[118] Doherty's map is a very useful source for the

spatial analysis of medieval Groby and for consideration of divisions between elite and

peasant space and private and public space. Eighteenth-century estate maps which have

been drawn upon to compile field-name surveys can reveal something of medieval

utilisation of the landscape and of encroachment on the waste. Field-name surveys

compiled for Groby and Newton Linford have been considered in earlier work by the

author and highlight the significance of the element *hay* as an indicator of medieval

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[115] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', p. 32.

[116] J.Pryor, Map showing Charnwood, 1779, reprinted in Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 51.

[117] L.Bell, Map of Ulverscroft, 1796, reprinted in Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', p. 59, and discussed by Squires on p. 58.

[118] Enville Collection, J. Doherty, 'An Exact Map of all the inclos'd lands woods and waster together with the parks and Bradgate, Ratby and Leicester common fields in the Manor of Grooby in the parish of Ratby in the County of Leicester' 1757.

assarting.[119] Several studies of medieval landscape in other areas of the country have

drawn upon the evidence of first-edition Ordnance Survey maps.[120] The 1880s

Ordnance Survey map of Charnwood is shown in fig. 1.12.
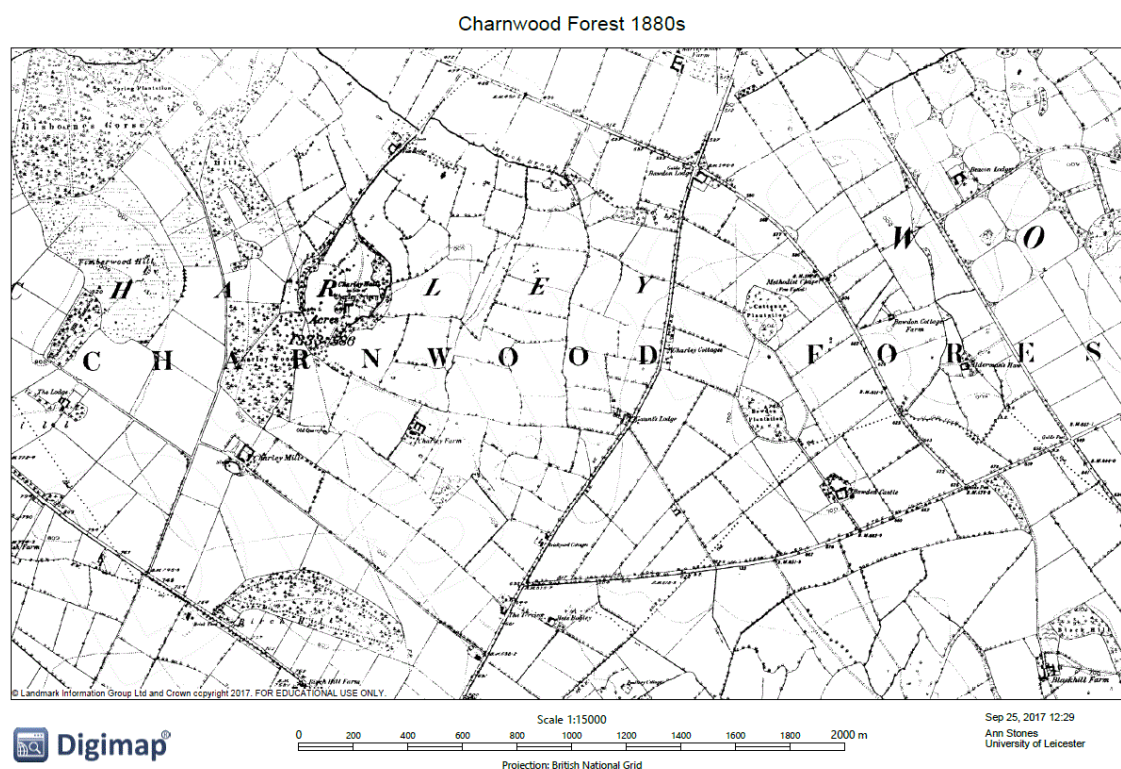
Figure 1.12 Ordnance Survey Map of Charnwood Forest, 1880s.

Source: Historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 25th Seotember, 2017] © Crown
Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1880).

 Its value in comparison to earlier cartographical sources may be rather limited because

of the impact of parliamentary enclosure on the landscape. However, nineteenth-century

Ordnance Survey maps were very accurately made, and were particularly detailed with

regard to woodland, often revealing its shape, density and nature. As such, the

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[119] A. Stones, 'Landscape and Memory in Eighteenth Century Charnwood Forest', unpublished M.A.
project, University of Leicester, 2012, p. 9, using information from Groby Field-Name Survey, ROLLR,
FNS/132/1-2 and Newtown Linford Field- Name Survey, ROLLR, FNS/236/1A, 2, 3.
[120] See for example, C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox, C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field*, pp. 5, 17, 26, 49.

nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey map of Charnwood can provide a template against which we can compare earlier cartographic and documentary evidence.

1.3.4   Documentary sources

This thesis considers a wide range of documentary evidence including that provided by Domesday Book, by the Leicestershire survey of *c.* 1130, by later medieval documentary sources such as manorial and estate records, by the records of Charnwood's religious houses, by inquisitions *post-mortem* and by the poll tax returns of 1371, 1379 and 1381. It also considers post-medieval documentary sources, such as those relating to tithe and enclosure disputes, and diaries written by individuals who visited Charnwood in the post-medieval period.

There would seem to be almost no extant pre-conquest charters relating to Charnwood. Apart from a fairly uninformative charter of *c.* 972 relating to the village of Diseworth,[121] the earliest documentary evidence relating to the area is that provided by the Domesday Book of 1086. Domesday Book is a very accessible source and many printed transcriptions are available. The transcription which is considered in this thesis is the Phillimore edition.[122] Some care is needed when dealing with transcriptions because mistakes and confusion can occur. However, comparison with a facsimile of the original Domesday Book indicates that the Phillimore edition is a very reliable source. Charnwood now lies wholly within Leicestershire. That has not, however, always been the case, and some of the Domesday entries for Charnwood, such as those

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[121] University of Michigan, 'Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters' at http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/749.html# [accessed 6th April, 2016]. The charter records lands, including some in Diseworth, which were given by King Edgar to the Church at Breedon-on-the-Hill, but no boundary clause, nor any description of the lands, other than that they comprised a total 13 hides, is provided.
[122] P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester, 1979).

for Thringstone, appear in the Derbyshire volume.[123] Domesday records for Derbyshire are generally not as detailed as those for Leicestershire.

Domesday was primarily an economic rather than topographical survey; it does, however, reveal cultural differences between Charnwood and other parts of Leicestershire which we may be able to relate to topographical features. Domesday reveals Charnwood Forest to have been a less populated and less densely settled area than the Soar Valley and areas to the east of the Soar. Estimates of the Charnwood population which have been based on Domesday figures may be far from accurate because actual population figures are likely to have been greater than recorded figures.[124] However, that is true of the whole of the county and, whilst Domesday evidence may not reveal exact numbers of individuals living in various parts of the county, it does reveal relative differences in population densities between Charnwood and other areas.

For the purposes of this thesis Domesday data relating to Charnwood's populations, valuations, number of mills, and extent of woodland have been extracted and tabulated in appendices 2-6. This data has been utilised in chapter 2 in order to aid identification of cultural boundaries and differences in perceptions of the Charnwood landscape between settlers from the Soar and Trent valleys. Some difficulties were encountered because of inconsistencies in methods of recording, but it has been possible to tabulate and map the data in a way in which we can compare not only individual vills but also look at differences between different geographical areas of the forest. In the case of the entries for ploughs, plough teams and plough lands, inconsistencies in methods of

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[123] P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Derbyshire* (Chichester, 1978).
[124] D. Holly, 'Leicestershire' in H.C. Darby and I.B. Terrett, *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (1971; Cambridge 2009), p. 336.

recording were insurmountable for the purposes of tabulating data for the whole of the forest.[125] However some analysis of numbers of ploughs/plough teams/plough lands held 'in lordship' has been made in the discussion of divisions between elite and non-elite space in chapter 6.

It has been suggested that evaluation of Domesday records for Leicestershire can be greatly enhanced by consideration of the Leicestershire survey of *c.* 1130.[126] Because the information in the Leicestershire Survey is arranged geographically and not tenurially it is said to 'help in the identification of a number of holdings'.[127] The original document has been lost and the information considered in the current research is based on later transcripts.[128] One of these transcripts is held by the National Archives and is thought to be derived directly from the original official version; the other transcripts, referred to as the 'Sloan Roll' extracts, are thought to have been taken for private use from the official version, and are held by the British Museum.[129] Both sets of transcripts are thought to date from the thirteenth century.[130] Some concern has been expressed that parts of the survey have been lost.[131] For the purposes of the current research the main concern is the omission or loss of information on the Goscote wapentake around the Barrow area. It would also appear that the survey did not cover the southern part of Charnwood. Nevertheless, some interesting comparisons can be made between this survey and Domesday. For example in the Leicestershire Survey, the adjacent vills of Thurcaston and Cropston together form a 12 carucate unit, of 8

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[125] These terms seem to have been used interchangeably in Domesday, precise meanings are often unclear.
[126] Holly, 'Leicestershire', p.313.
[127] Holly, 'Leicestershire', p. 313.
[128] C.F. Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey c. 1130* (Leicester, 1956).
[129] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey,* p. 10.
[130] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 10.
[131] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 11.

carucates and 4 carucates respectively.[132] Slade has highlighted the fact that whilst Thurcaston is assessed at 9 carucates in Domesday, Cropston does not appear at all. He states that 'its assessment cannot be traced to any surrounding vill', and that it was 'probably omitted' from Domesday.[133] Such comparisons highlight the dangers of focusing exclusively on one particular source.

Later medieval documentary sources, such as manorial and estate records have been used widely in the study of medieval wooded landscapes. One of the main primary sources considered for this research is the collection of Hastings manuscripts held in the Huntington library in California, many of which have been transcribed by Farnham in the 1930s and more recently by Professor Christopher Dyer fot LVCHT's Charnwood Roots Project.[134] The manuscripts cover a period from the twelfth to the nineteenth century.[135] They belonged to the Hastings family of Ashby de la Zouch who, at various periods, owned lands in many parts of the country including Charnwood.[136] The manuscripts can be divided into four main categories: correspondence, deeds, estate papers including manorial documents and maps, and family papers. Whilst there is some material from the twelfth century, most dates from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A number of individual houses are mentioned in the deeds, making them a very useful source of information on settlement. They are also a very useful source for the place-name analysis which forms an integral part of this research.

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[132] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 41.
[133] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 41.
[134] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians Manors* ; Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes,* VI; C.Dyer, 'Notes on the Hastings Manuscripts held by the Huntington library, California' (unpublished transcriptions and notes 2013).
[135] M.C. Cross, 'The Hastings Manuscripts: Sources for Leicestershire History in California' in *Transactions of the LAHS*, 38 (1962-3), p. 21.
[136] Cross, 'The Hastings Manuscripts', p. 21.

Estate and manorial accounts in the Hastings collection provide another important set of primary sources. Sadly, although some form of book keeping is likely to have occurred earlier, such records generally only survive from the thirteenth century onwards.[137] Rackham suggests such manorial accounts provide valuable insights into the workings of medieval woodland economies because they record income and expenditure and include extensive lists of stock 'live and dead, from swans to tree trunks'.[138] He suggests that specific details, under a heading covering a wood, may include 'sales of faggots and the cost of making and carting them and sales of timber'.[139] Records of monetary transactions may, for example, record 'trees felled for the lord's barn under the cost of felling, or from sales of the resulting branches and bark'.[140] The documents in the Hastings collection endorse Rackham's views on the value of manorial accounts. They include the accounts of Loughborough and Shepshed which reveal some detail about the exploitation of woodland. There are, for example, references to fees paid for pannage for pigs, and the sale of wood, underwood and faggots within the parks of Loughborough and Burley.[141]

The Hastings manuscripts are not, however, the only set of medieval documents relating to Charnwood. Many others are held in collections at the Record Office for Leicestershire and Rutland (ROLLR), the National Archives (TNA), and the British Library (BL). These documents have been transcribed and translated by Dr Susan Kilby and Dr Matt Tompkins for LVCHT's Charnwood Roots Project and details entered onto a database. The transcriptions have proved to be an invaluable set of sources for this

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[137] Rackham, *Woodlands* , p. 173.
[138] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 173.
[139] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 173.
[140] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 173.
[141] HL, 'Hastings Manuscripts', outsize box 6, 'Account of William Parker, bailiff and collector of rents, Richard Parker warrener, Tom Marshall seller of wood and underwood, and John Blagge miller there', 1468 – 1469, (p. 3 of Dyer's unpublished transcriptions and notes).

thesis. They include collections relating, or formally belonging to other land owning families in Charnwood such as the Herricks and the Greys. One document of particular interest is a parchment roll headed '*Evidencie tangents Charnewode et aliis*' which contains extracts from Groby Court Rolls and copies of deeds relating to Charnwood Forest dated 1275- 1350. It is of interest because, on the dorse, boundaries, including a perambulation of the forest and of the boundaries of the manors of Shepshed and Whitwick are given.[142] There is an apparent paucity of medieval perambulations of Charnwood Forest. This document is, therefore, particularly useful. The document reveals a number of interesting place-names and something about the nature and location of medieval woodland. [143] However, when this perambulation is considered alongside the far more detailed boundaries revealed by documents relating to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century enclosure disputes, we can begin to build up an even better picture of this part of medieval Charnwood. This is because the evidence given in modern enclosure disputes focused specifically on the antiquity of boundaries in order to validate the claims of competing landowners.

In a pre-cartographic society like medieval Charnwood, boundaries were not drawn on maps. Where there was a need to describe spaces, for example in a manorial extent or survey, spaces were described in terms of other spaces, land or landscape features which they abutted. Whilst there can be certain ambiguities regarding units of measurement, particularly the term *acra* (acre),[144] extents and surveys can be very useful sources for the examination of medieval boundaries. Such sources often reveal the ownership or

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[142] ROLLR, DE40/29, 'Evidencie tangents Charnewode et alliis', 1275-1350.
[143] It mentions, for example, the place-name *birchewode* and locates it in the vicinity of Charley. An area of woodland known as Birch Hill is shown on the modern ordnance survey map, south of Charley (SK476137).
[144] For discussion of different definitions of 'acre' see P.D.A. Harvey, *Manorial Records*, (1884; London, 1999), p. 16.

tenancy of the lands concerned. This is evident in fifteenth-century surveys from the manors of Barrow, Shepshed and Long Whatton which have been considered for this thesis. [145] The surveys inform the discussion in chapter 6 on boundaries between elite and peasant space. That discussion is also informed by evidence given in cases of trespass heard in the forest's manorial courts. Charnwood's manorial court rolls record many such cases. They include records of illicit incursions into elite spaces, such as deer parks and fisheries, and into non-elite spaces such as cottages and gardens. Analysis of such cases, therefore, allows us to examine contemporary notions of privacy and their spatial expression.

Another set of documents which have been put to many uses in this thesis are inquisitions *post-mortem* (I*PM*s)*.* Such inquisitions were carried out on the death of wealthy individuals. Lands held by the deceased were identified and valued in order to establish any income and rights due to the Crown and who would inherit the land.[146] As in any situation where potential payments to the Crown were based on valuations made locally, some caution is advised because underestimation and omissions were likely to occur. Many such undervaluations have been identified by historians.[147] Some undervaluations were deliberately misleading. Others, however, were the result of 'uneducated guesswork' or simply the reproduction of earlier inquisitions. This

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[145] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, ff. 87,114, 172-3, surveys of Barrow, Shepshed and Long Whatton, surveys are undated but the British Library Catalogue dates them to second half of fifteenth century.
[146] 'Inquisitions Post-Mortem: Land Ownership and Inheritance in the Medieval and Early Modern periods' at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/inquisitions-post-mortem/ [accessed 29th June, 2017].
[147] See for example, C. Dyer, 'The Value of Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions *Post-Mortem* for Economic and Social History' in M. Hicks, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post-Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp 97-115; M. Holford, ''Notoriously Unreliable':The Valuations and Extents' in M. Hicks, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post-Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge,2012), pp. 117-144.

sometimes led to an overestimation.[148] Inaccuracies could also occur because of a lack

of standardisation in units of measurement such as bovates, virgates and acres.[149]

Nevertheless, particularly when they are used alongside other sources, I*PM*s can yield a

wealth of information. In Charnwood they have, for example, indicated the presence,

location and ownership of parks, assarts, and quarries.[150]

Consideration of Charnwood's medieval boundaries cannot be restricted to those

associated with secular lords. The landscape of medieval Charnwood was dotted with

ecclesiastical houses, they were, in fact, the major settlements within the core of the

forest and had a major impact on the landscape. There were religious houses at Charley,

Ulverscroft, Grace Dieu, Aldermans Haw, Rothley and Langley. It has been suggested

that most of the monastic houses assarted and enclosed large areas of the waste and that

they 'ran flocks and herds on the unprotected areas where there was common

grazing'.[151] The accounts of religious houses are, therefore, as valuable as those of the

secular manors. They are especially valuable because most of the religious houses lay at

the core of Charnwood. Identification of business conducted with settlements on the

periphery of the forest would indicate that the more marginal parts of Charnwood were

not culturally isolated from surrounding areas. The draft accounts of Grace Dieu Priory,

1414-18, have recently been published and have been evaluated for this thesis.[152]

Examination of the accounts reveals that the nuns at Grace Dieu interacted significantly

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[148] Hoford, 'Notoriously Unreliable', pp. 122, 132, 134.
[149] C. Dyer, 'Landscape, Farming and Society in an English Region: The Inquisitions *Post-Mortem* for the West Midlands, 1250-1509' in M. Hicks, *The Later Medieval Inqisitions Post-Mortem: Mapping the Medieval Countryside and Rural Society* (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 65.
[150] See for example, I*PM* , Roger de Somery, 1273, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 49 - 50; I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby taken on 20th March 1288 translated and transcribed by Farnham *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. 100; I*PM* of Henry de Ferrariis, 1343, Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, pp. 362-363.
[151] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 55.
[152] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory, Leicestershire 1414 – 1418: The Draft Account Book of the Treasureresses* (Ashby-de-la Zouch, 2013).

with surrounding communities, employing labour, collecting rents and buying and selling goods from their neighbours. Another valuable source of information about Charnwood's monastic landscape is provided by surveys taken at the time of the dissolution in the 1530s. These surveys are useful in the consideration of medieval woodland boundaries because they provide details of woods and commons belonging to Charnwood's religious houses and include acreage and age of woodlands. [153]

A further set of medieval documents considered in this study are the poll tax returns for 1377, 1379 and 1381 as transcribed by Carolyn Fenwick. [154] The many difficulties encountered in charting demographic changes in medieval Charnwood are fully discussed in chapter 4. Population statistics for Charnwood villages have been estimated from the returns and the data tabulated in order to identify variations in population density around the study area.

Many of the medieval documentary sources used in this study are transcriptions. They are however, reliable transcriptions made by Farnham in the 1930s, by Fenwick, or more recently, by historians working for LVCHT's Charnwood Roots Project. Where any doubts have arisen during the course of this research, originals have been consulted. The transcriptions are, for the most part, of documents which have not been analysed, or utilised in conjunction with other sources, to any great extent before. The use of transcriptions has facilitated access to a huge range of source material that it would not have been feasible to study as originals in the time available.

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[153] See for example, TNA, E36/154, 'The breiff certificatt for the viewe and survey of all and singular abbes priores monastrez sett lieng and being withyn the Countie of Leicestre', 24th June, 1536, ff. 49-54. Note: this document is transcribed but incorrectly dated in *Associated Architectural Society Reports and Papers*, 10, (Lincoln 1869-1870) p. 331.
[154] C.C. Fenwick, *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, 1, Bedfordshire – Leicestershire* (Oxford, 1998).

Documentary sources utilised in this research are not, however, confined to those from the medieval period. Sources from the immediate post-medieval period can reveal details of the customary rights held by commoners on the forest. Many of those rights are described as 'ancient' or 'long held' and date back to the medieval period. A particularly good example is a medieval customary book from the manor of Beaumanor (originally part of the manor of Barrow). The book describes the rights of commoners to pasture their animals and gather estovers.[155]

The case for using early modern and modern documentary evidence to understand the interaction between people and place in earlier periods has been made eloquently by Nicola Whyte. She discusses the value placed on notions of antiquity and continuity in modern customary and enclosure disputes. She argues that, in the absence of written records about rights and boundaries associated with a landscape, knowledge about that landscape passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth and 'presented as having existed since time out of mind' was given a great deal of credence.[156] Even when documentary evidence was available, local memory and information passed down by word of mouth was used to support it. In earlier work, this author has discussed such cases in Charnwood.[157] One case was a 1776 tithe dispute between the rector of Loughborough and some of his parishioners.[158] Another was an 1806 enclosure dispute between the lords of the manors of Shepshed and Beaumanor.[159] In both cases a range of witnesses were called to support the conflicting claims of the parties involved. Many

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[155] ROLLR, DG9/1952/3, Beaumanor customary book 1586.
[156] Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape,* p. 6.
[157] Stones, 'A Study of Landscape and Memory in Eighteenth Century Charnwood Forest'.
[158] TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766.
[159] ROLLR, DG9/2037/2, 'Evidence given to Charnwood Forest Inclosure Commisissioners Respecting the Manor Boundaries of Beaumanor Sheepshed and Other Places', 1806.

of the witnesses highlighted their long association and familiarity with the forest, its boundaries and its ancient customs. It might be suggested that the drawback of using evidence given in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century legal cases as a primary source is that they invariably reveal conflicting perceptions of earlier landscapes and the boundaries and rights associated with them. This is certainly true of the two cases discussed above. However, whilst we cannot discount the fact that a great deal of evidence may have been influenced by personal allegiances to landlords or employers, or by grudges against them, such sources may indicate a real multiplicity of meanings associated with the landscape, possibly dating back to medieval times. Such a notion may not find favour with those historians whose research is founded on empirically based evidence, but it may be useful for exploring sense of place in medieval Charnwood. Amongst the most significant factors in sense of place are the boundaries of that place and how they are expressed and recognised. Sense of place is, almost by definition, a very subjective concept, and perceptions of boundaries are equally subjective. This might be particularly so in expanses of shared, common land such as medieval Charnwood Forest.

Other sources considered in this thesis are the records and diaries of those who travelled through the forest in the post-medieval period; they include the works of John Leland and Viscount Torrington.[160] These sources can be useful in the consideration of boundaries because they can include estimations of area and distance and often describe the author's perceptions of the landscape as they entered or left the forest. Such descriptions of the Charnwood landscape are clearly subjective, and are written from the perspectives of elite outsiders. Nevertheless, such insights into the perceived character

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[160] C. Bruyn Andrews, ed., *The Torrington Diaries,* 2 (London 1935); J. Chandler, ed. *John Leland's Itinerary: Travels in Tudor England* (Stroud, 1993).

of the Charnwood landscape prior to enclosure, when remnants of the medieval landscape are likely to have been more evident than they are today, should not be entirely dismissed. One of the most fascinating aspects of the current research is the identification of differences and consistencies in medieval understandings of the landscape of Charnwood Forest. In their number, their detail, and their variety, post-medieval documentary sources are an invaluable means of accessing those understandings.

1.3.5   Place-name sources

During the course of this study over eight hundred of Charnwood's minor place-names have been gathered from medieval documentary sources and recorded in a spread sheet. The sources include manorial account rolls, court rolls, surveys and inquisition *post-mortems*. The place-names have been analysed in terms of the meanings of their generic and qualifying elements.[161] Elements referring to topography, flora and fauna, utilisation of the landscape, habitation, the super-natural, and individual personal names were identified and recorded. Where possible, the dates of the documents in which the place-names appear have been recorded in the spread sheet. In this way it has been possible to note the variations in form which occur in a particular place-name over the period. The context in which the place-name appears in each document was also recorded. This is particularly useful when two or more possible etymologies are suggested by consideration of an element alone but, when considered alongside

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[161] Etymologies gathered from A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements,* 1 (London, 1956) and 2 (London 1956); Barrie Cox, *The Place Names of Leicestershire*, 6 (Nottingham, 2014) and 7 (Nottingham, 2016); Barrie Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2005); John Field, *English Field Names: A Dictionary* (Newton Abbot, 1972); David Parsons and Tania Styles, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names*: *Á-Box* (Nottingham, 1997), *Brace-Cæster* (Nottingham, 2000), *Ceafor-Cock-pit* (Nottingham 2004); *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* at http://www.pase.ac.uk/ [accessed multiple times]; University of Michigan, *Middle English Dictionary* at https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/ [accessed multiple times].

additional contextual data, a more certain meaning can be derived. Whilst place-names have been gathered from documents relating to medieval manors throughout the study area, analysis has focused on place-names associated with the manors of Groby, Whitwick, Shepshed and Barrow, chosen because they are the four manors whose wastes made up the core of the forest. Place-name elements for which consideration has been particularly useful in the study of Charnwood's boundaries are generic elements relating to woodland (for example *leah* and *wudu*), woodland clearance (for example *stocking* and, again, *leah*), and enclosure (for example *haga*/*hays*). The etymologies of these elements can, however, be complex and analysis benefits from further consideration of qualifying elements of the place-names in which they appear.

1.3.6 Palaeoenvironmental sources

Palaeoenvironmental sources, such as the investigation of pollen sequences, can reveal a great deal about earlier utilisation of the landscape. They can indicate areas of woodland, type of woodland and the nature of any crops once grown in the area. Unfortunately few such studies have been carried out in Charnwood, probably because Charnwood largely lacks the sort of natural peaty ground that is best for such analysis. The findings of a paelaeoenvironmental study carried out at Groby Pool, [162] to the south of the study area, failed to reveal any new information about medieval Charnwood and seems merely to have confirmed that more crops were grown in the area after nineteenth-century parliamentary enclosure.

The primary sources utilised in this thesis have been described above in terms of the individual categories into which they fall. However, for research, analytical and

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[162] C.A.David, 'Contemporary and Historical Pollen Recruitment to a Small Lowland English Lake'. PhD thesis (University of Technology, Loughborough, 1991).

presentational purposes they are most informative when utilised collectively. The
following chapters reveal the value of such an interdisciplinary approach. In chapter 4,
for example, place-name evidence is examined in conjunction with fourteenth century-
poll tax returns and Domesday population estimates in order to explore correlations
between shifts in Charnwood's external boundaries and its changing demography. This
is an approach which can take us into the landscape of medieval Charnwood rather than
viewing it as an outsider.

1.4   Thesis outline

The subsequent chapters in this thesis consider the boundaries of medieval Charnwood
Forest in a variety of ways. Chapter 2 considers whether or not the forest was itself a
boundary, one between settlers from the Soar and Trent valleys, one between Mercia
and the Danelaw and one between later medieval manors. Chapter 3 considers the
external boundaries of the forest and the effect that Charnwood's status as a 'chase'
might have had on those external boundaries. Chapter 4 considers the ways in which the
forest's external boundaries changed over the medieval period. Two opposing processes
are considered, encroachment on the core via assarting, purpresture and emparkment;
and retraction from the core via an apparent return to woodland. The chapter
investigates relationships between shifts in the forest's external boundaries and
demographic changes during the period. Chapter 5 considers the internal administrative
divisions of medieval Charnwood, the degree of correspondence between manorial and
parish boundaries, and the conflicts which sometimes occurred over those boundaries.
There is an examination of the relationship between the forest's internal divisions and
its topography, particularly that between administrative divisions and areas of
woodland. Chapter 6 looks at the more nebulous internal divisions of medieval

Charnwood: the divisions between elite and non-elite space, between public and private space, between religious and secular space and between recreational and economic space. The thesis as a whole considers the boundaries of medieval Charnwood alongside those of similar areas in medieval England and concepts such as marginality and centrality are explored in a comparative manner. In all of the main chapters there is consideration of the ways in which Charnwood's boundaries were expressed, the nature, permeability and persistence of those boundaries and the significance of those boundaries for those who lived in and utilised the forest in the medieval period and beyond. A concluding chapter brings the themes discussed throughout the thesis together, it summarises and evaluates the findings of the study, and identifies areas for further research.

Chapter 2 No man's or every man's land?
Was Charnwood Forest itself a boundary?

'the lofty and abrupt termination of a ridge of rocky hills which extends upwards through Charnwood Forest to Derbyshire'[1]

2.1 Introduction

The words cited above are taken from a nineteenth-century description of the view towards Charnwood Forest from the Soar Valley at Mountsorrel on the eastern edge of the forest. They illustrate the rather abrupt change in landscape between the Soar Valley and Charnwood. In this chapter, there is analysis of the notion that this sudden change in landscape meant that Charnwood Forest formed a boundary in the medieval period. The nature, permeability, and consistency of that boundary are investigated in order to determine whether the forest represented a cultural barrier or a cultural gateway. The chapter discusses the centrality and marginality of the Charnwood Forest landscape with particular consideration of the relationships between Charnwood Forest and the Soar Valley and between Charnwood Forest and the Trent Valley.

A range of sources are utilised. Eighteenth-century cartographical sources are examined for evidence of medieval settlement and enclosure. Archaeological records held in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record are studied for evidence of medieval occupation, land use and communication networks. Recently analysed LiDAR evidence is examined for evidence of medieval human agency in areas of present-day woodland. Place-name evidence is used in order to determine chronology and nature of settlement and utilisation of the medieval Charnwood landscape. Domesday evidence for Charnwood is analysed in order to discover any patterns in settlement and

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[1] W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland* (Sheffield, 1877), p. 552.

population. Manorial documents, ecclesiastical and secular, medieval and post-medieval, are considered in order to discover the relationship between people and place in medieval Charnwood and any cultural or social boundaries that they reflect. All of these sources are considered in an interdisciplinary manner alongside the evidence of the present day Charnwood landscape.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first discusses Charnwood's status as a boundary in general terms. The subsequent sections consider the ways in which Charnwood may have constituted a boundary during the time period with which this study is concerned. There is discussion of evidence suggesting that Charnwood was settled earlier and more readily in the north-west than in the east – possibly because of the relatively subtle changes in the landscape faced by settlers in the north-west as opposed to the dramatic landscape changes encountered by those in the east. There is also a brief consideration of Charnwood Forest's role in the relationship between Mercia and the Danelaw. This is followed by an exploration of the ways in which Charnwood's status as a boundary may have persisted into the later medieval period.

2.2   Charnwood's status as a boundary

Charnwood's status as a boundary, as being on the very edge of surrounding settlements and lying between them, is intimately entwined with perceptions of its marginality and relatively inhospitable landscape. Charnwood is undoubtedly higher, rockier and woodier than surrounding areas and has poorer soils. The historiography of Charnwood Forest is littered with references to that 'marginality'. The Tudor scholar Leland, travelling through the forest in the immediate post-medieval period wrote that 'there

was no decent town in this forest, nor hardly a village'.[2] In the seventeenth century, the Leicestershire antiquarian William Burton described the 'vast and decayed Forest of Charnwood'[3] and, upon entering the forest in the eighteenth century, John Bing, later the fifth Viscount Torrington, described 'steepy ground, bare of wood on this quarter, and with many rocky cliffs'.[4] Such descriptions represent contemporary 'ways of seeing' in which landscape was viewed from without, very much as one would view a landscape painting, and onto which the viewer, here members of a wealthy elite, imposed their own interpretations.[5]

Perceptions of the distinctive nature of Charnwood's landscape persisted into the nineteenth century and may have been influenced by a degree of contemporary romanticism and a landscape aesthetic which placed great value on the picturesque and sublime.[6] Writing just after parliamentary enclosure and Charnwood's transformation into a modern landscape, commentators were preoccupied with the distinctiveness of the landscape.[7] Potter, for example, presented the forest as a rather romantic, mysterious place to be visited, studied and explored. He was concerned that Charnwood was losing many of its 'nobler features' and wanted to 'catch their passing glories ere they fade'.[8] Twentieth-century commentators continued to describe the historic Charnwood

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[2] J. Chandler, *John Leland's Itinerary: Travels in Tudor England*, (Stroud, 1993), p. 280.

[3] W. Burton, *Description of Leicestershire*: *Containing Matters of Antiquity, History, Armoury and Genealogy* (1622; London, 1777), p.2.

[4] C. Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries*, 2 (London, 1935), p. 82.

[5] For discussion of the ways in which post-medieval landscapes may have been experienced see N. Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory*, 1500-1800 (Oxford, 2009) pp. 3-5.

[6] Descriptions similar in tone to those on Charnwood were made of the English Lake District by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commentators. See, C. Donaldson, I.N. Gregory, J.E. Taylor, 'Locating the Beautiful, Picturesque, Sublime and Majestic: Spatially Analysing the Application of Aesthetic Terminology in Descriptions of the English Lake District' in *Journal of Historical Geography*, 56 (2017), pp. 43-60.

[7] V. Davis, *Charnwood Forest: Population, Landownership and Environmental Perceptions c. 1775-1914*, PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 2004), p. 1.

[8] T.R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, (London, 1842), introduction.

landscape in terms of its marginality, as a 'miniature mountainous area',[9] as a 'rugged wilderness' and 'vast barren tract'.[10] The Victoria County History volumes for Leicestershire, published in the 1950s, suggested that the poor quality, stony and badly drained soils of Charnwood 'repelled all but a few settlers throughout the Middle Ages;[11] whilst in a more recent example, Miller and Squires describe the location of the village of Newtown Linford on the river Lin as 'as good a choice for settlement as pioneers were likely to find in the inhospitable environment of thirteenth-century Charnwood Forest'.[12] In a study of Domesday Leicestershire, Holly asserted that the influence of Charnwood's physical features and soils 'are reflected in the fact that this was the only really negative area in the county' with 'the lowest densities of population and plough teams, scarcely any meadows and no mills.[13] Holly also produced a map of those Leicestershire place-names which featured in Domesday (fig. 2.1). This map graphically indicates an apparent absence of place-names in Charnwood Forest. Indeed, a forest-shaped space appears to have been left in an otherwise heavily colonised county. However, the image of a marginal environment with environmentally determined settlement patterns which these images of Domesday Charnwood evoke requires further exploration.

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[9] G.F. Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes, with Further Evidences Concerning Charnwood and the Surrounding Villages*, VI (Leicester, 1933), p. 343.

[10] A. Everitt, 'Common Land' in J. Thirsk, ed. *Rural England: An Illustrated History of the Landscape* (Oxford 2000), pp. 223, 230.

[11] R.H. Hilton, 'Medieval Agrarian History' in W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, II (London, 1954),p. 145.

[12] E. Miller and A. Squires, 'The Leicestershire Lin: A River Through Time' *Transacations of the LAHS*, 83 (2009) , p.141.

[13] D. Holly, 'Leicestershire' in H.C. Darby and I.B. Terrett, *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (1954; 1971; 1978; Cambridge, 2009), p. 357.
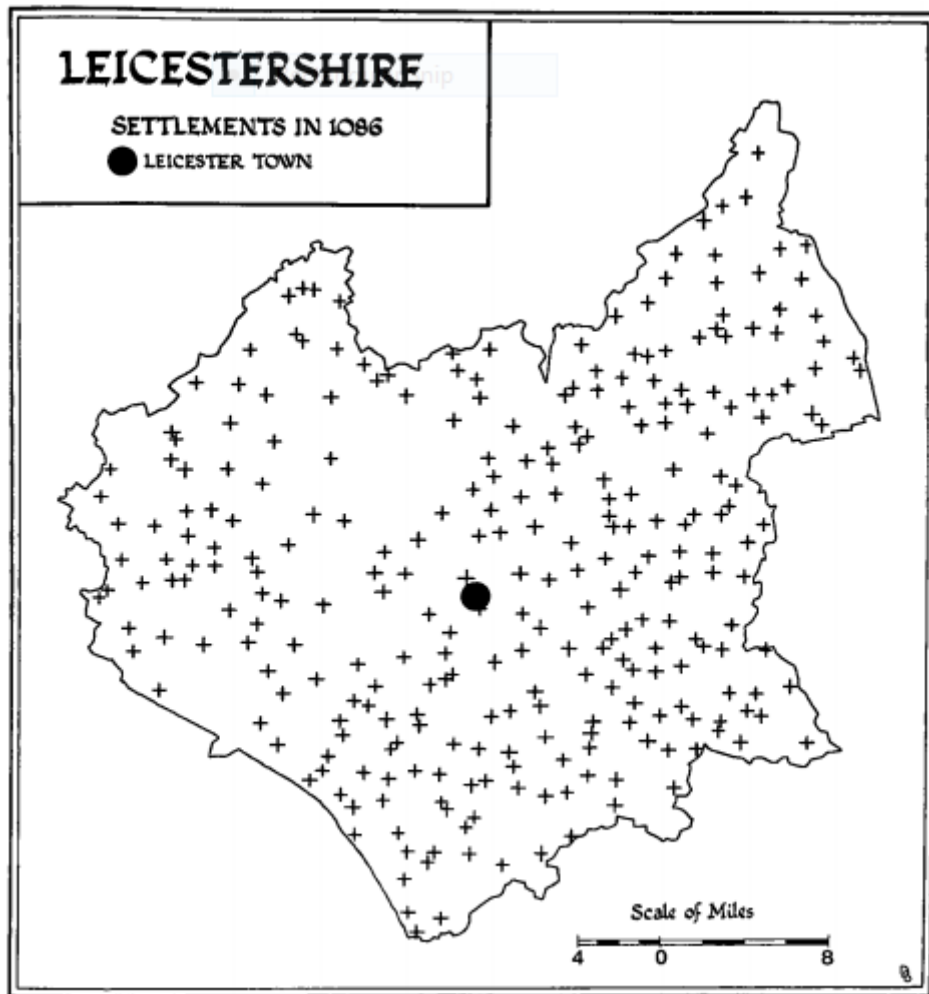
Figure 2.1 Leicestershire Domesday Settlements

Source: D. Holly, Domesday Geography of Leicestershire, *Transactions of LAHS*, 20, 1 (1938), p. 173. Reproduced with permission of Richard Buckley.

The suggestion that woodland and other non-cultivated medieval landscapes were

necessarily 'marginal landscapes' has been the subject of recent academic scrutiny.[14] In

a study on the concept of the marginality of the *incultum* in late medieval Provence,

Burri highlights the complementary and co-dependent nature of the relationship

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[14] See K. Altenberg, 'Experiencing Landscapes: A Study of Space and Identity in Three Marginal Areas of Medieval Britain and Scandinavia', PhD thesis (University of Reading, 2001); M. Bailey, *A Marginal Economy*: *East Anglian Breckland in the Later Middle Ages*, (Cambridge 1989); S. Burri, 'Reflections on the Concept of Marginal Landscape through a Study of Late Medieval Incultum in Provence', *European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies* 4 (2014), pp. 7-8, 31; C.M. Mills and G. Coles, eds, *Life on the Edge: Human Settlement and Marginality* (Oxford, 1998).

between cultivated and uncultivated areas. [15] He notes the subjective nature of marginality and also 'the influence of medieval historiography and the supremacy of agriculture over other rural products'.[16] Whilst it may be a little unfair of Burri to dismiss 'medieval historiography' in quite such generalised and sweeping terms, his discussion of 'agro-pastoralism' and economically integrated landscapes as a reservoir of resources may be particularly relevant to Charnwood.[17] Charnwood's resources included wood, timber, pasture, slate, granite, coal and lime - resources that, far from constituting a margin, may have characterised a centre. In his study of another 'upland island', Harold Fox highlighted extensive utilisation of the medieval Dartmoor landscape by surrounding communities in Devon.[18] One of the main ways in which medieval Dartmoor was utilised was in the seasonal transhumance (movement of animals) from vills surrounding the moor to the central core of the moor.[19] If a landscape as 'marginal' as Dartmoor can be shown to have been economically significant in the medieval period, then surely the economic potential of the relatively hospitable Charnwood landscape is even more likely to have been exploited.

Concepts of marginality, and certainly those of medieval Charnwood's marginality, have generally been imposed by outsiders. The perceptions of those who lived and worked in and around medieval Charnwood suggest, however, that this woodland landscape occupied a rather more central position in their lives.

One way in which we can access those perceptions is the way in which the inhabitants of medieval Charnwood named their surroundings and in the folk tales that they told. In

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[15] Burri, 'Reflections on the Concept of Marginal Landscape', p. 31.
[16] Burri, 'Reflections on the Concept of Marginal Landscape', pp. 7-8.
[17] Burri, 'Reflections on the Concept of Marginal Landscape', pp. 11-31.
[18] H. Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands: Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages* (Exeter, 2012).
[19] Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands*, pp. 46-159.

this context, Charnwood's 'inhospitable landscape' does not seem to have engendered fear and mistrust amongst early settlers. Place-name and field-name evidence seems to show a remarkable lack of place-name elements associated with the supernatural in the area. Such names have been identified in other upland and/or woody areas such as Cumbria and often relate to elves, goblins, witches or the devil.[20] The OE term *ælf* (elf or fairy), for example, appears in several Cumbrian field-names said to mean 'elf hill'(*elnehull, elvehull, elfhow, elvinhowe, elfe hill*).[21] There are just a few similar place-names in Charnwood which may possibly reflect medieval perceptions of supernatural presence. Such meanings can be suspected when the places are associated with liminal spaces. One example is *Scrathouses* field (first attested in the late sixteenth century),[22] which lies close to the parish boundary of Newtown Linford and may be associated with the ON *skratti* meaning 'devil-haunted mound'.[23] Another example may be that of *le pockysike* (*pokere*, ME, 'a hobgoblin' + *sīc,* OE, a small stream, often a boundary stream, or ditch).[24] It is a minor place-name which appears in a fourteenth century survey of Loughborough to the north-east of the forest.[25] It has not been possible to precisely locate *le pockysike*, but the survey describes it as an area of waste. This indicates that *le pockysike* may have lain on the edges of Loughborough and possibly within the forest. Similarly, Gelling has suggested that the etymology of the qualifiying element *grīm* in the place-name *grimyston*, a lost village on the eastern edge of Charnwood Forest, may be associated with the devil. Gelling also suggests that such

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[20] For discussion of place-name evidence for relationship between non- Christian supernatural beings and topography see A. Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 64-66.
[21] A.M. Armstrong, A. Mawr, F.M. Stenton, B. Dickins, *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, III (Cambridge, 1952), p. 459.
[22] B. Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire,* 7 (Nottingham, 2016) pp. 161, 240.
[23] J. Field, *English Field Names: a Dictionary* (London, 1972), p. 194.
[24] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements,* 2 (London, 1956), pp. 68, 121-122.
[25] HL, HAD Box 20 (4), part 2, Loughborough survey, fourteenth century.

supernatural origins may have led to the term being used to describe a 'particularly depressing place'.[26] Various etymologies have been ascribed to the element. They include OE *grĩma* (a spectre or goblin) and ON *grímr* (a masked person who conceals his identity); the latter may be related to ON *gríma* (a mark or blaze on a tree to denote a boundary).[27] However, *grímr* was also a popular ON personal name which appears frequently as a place-name element within the Danelaw;[28] and 'supernatural' elements actually account for very few of the qualifying elements identified in analysis of Charnwood's minor place-names.[29]

The general paucity of 'supernatural' place-name elements in the area, then, indicates that medieval Charnwood was not regarded as an especially mysterious, frightening, or marginal landscape. A 1985 study of the folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland incorporates some tales which relate to Charnwood. However, of these, very few would seem to depict Charnwood as a marginal or fearsome landscape. There is one tale in which seven monks from Charnwood were said to have been led into sinful ways by the devil and turned into birds, devlins or swifts, whose approach was thought to be a portent of death and disease.[30] It is difficult to establish the dates from which folk tales originate. Most of Charnwood's folk tales, however, relate to the area's association with prominent medieval families such as the Ferrers and the Greys, whilst others are post-

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[26] M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (1978; Chichester 1997), p. 235.
[27] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 1 (London, 1956), p. 210.
[28] Smith, *EPNE,* 1, p. 210.
[29] Equivalent to 1.3 percent of the qualifying elements in minor place-names appearing in a range of medieval sources examined for this thesis. However, this figure may actually overestimate the proportion of 'supernatural' qualifiers because it does not reflect the number of times any of the qualifiers appear in different place-names. 'Supernatural' qualifiers usually appear only once, whilst others, such as those relating to topography often appear frequently.
[30] R. Palmer, *The Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Wymondham, 1985), p. 61.

medieval in origin and relate to conflict over rights associated with the landscape or to cautionary tales about the perils of poaching.[31]

Place-name and folk-lore evidence indicates that medieval Charnwood was not perceived as a marginal encirnoment by those who lived in or utilised the landscape. Whilst, in many ways, the commentators mentioned in the beginning of this section were right to highlight the distinctive nature of the Charnwood Forest landscape, they may have overemphasized its marginality. Although Charnwood lay between neighbouring landscapes, the evidence suggests that, as a boundary, it had a cohesive rather than divisive role to play in cultural relationships. The next sections in this chapter will explore those relationships in more detail by looking at the nature of the forest as three particular cultural boundaries.

2.3   A boundary between settlers from the Soar and the Trent?

The modern Ordnance Survey map of Charnwood Forest reveals it to be an 'upland island' characterised by dispersed settlement and woodland, surrounded by nucleated settlements and set amidst a 'sea' of lowland farmland. However, the medieval 'island' of Charnwood Forest may have been characterised by a degree of variation in its 'coastline'. Furthermore, it is argued here that this variation is reflected in Charnwood's settlement patterns. Whilst the region was utilised and settled in pre-historic and Roman times, this section focuses on settlements associated with the arrival of English speakers, and the new name-forms that they brought. Landscape, Domesday and place-

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[31] Palmer, *The Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland*, see for example p. 29 for the story of Lady Agnes Ferrers, said to have become 'lost in the forest' whilst fleeing the pursuit of Lord Comyn of Whitwick; p. 203 for tales of the haunting of Bradgate by Lady Jane Grey; p. 26 for the legend of John of Oxley, said to have accidently hung himself by catching the deer that he was carrying on the 'hanging stone' between the hills of Lubcloud and Ives head, about two miles from Shepshed.

name evidence examined in this study suggests that the nucleated settlements which surrounded and utilised medieval Charnwood Forest may have been formed at different times with different incentives for and constraints upon development. This section examines these subtleties with particular reference to the variations in the process of encroachment upon the forest between settlers from the Trent and Soar valleys from the fifth century onwards.

In order to establish the chronology of settlement in and around Charnwood, the place-names mentioned in Samuel Wylde's 1754 perambulation of Charnwood Forest have been compared with the places named in the Domesday survey of 1086.[32] Figs. 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the band of settlements which surround the forest.

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[32] ROLLR DG9/Ma/66/1, S. Wylde,'Perambulation and Plan of Charnwood Forest', 1754, and P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester,1979).

Figure 2.2 Places named in Wylde's 1754 Perambulation of Charnwood
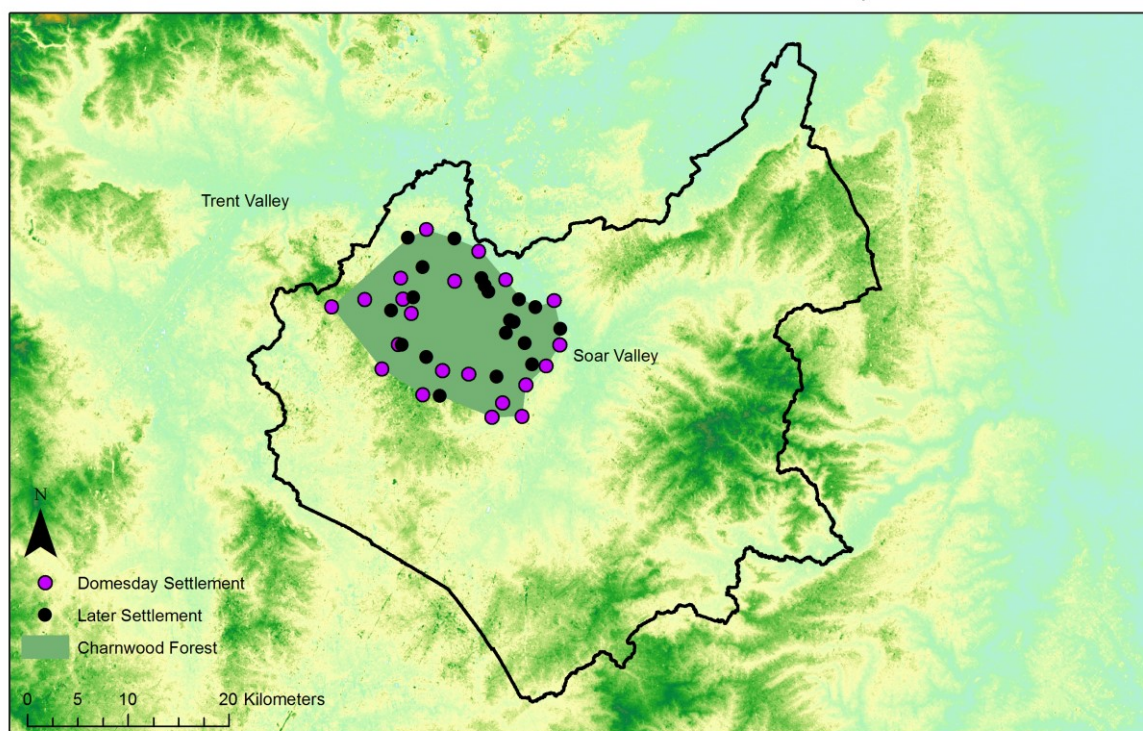
Figure 2.3 Places named in Wylde's 1754 Perambulation and their Relationship to the Soar and Trent Valleys.

Source: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017). Also contains ASTER GDEM data available from the U.S.G.S.

All of the settlements appear in Wylde's plan; the settlements marked by purple dots represent those which are mentioned in Domesday, and those marked by black dots are those which are not. The outer edge of the band is characterised by a mix of Domesday and later settlements; the inner edge shows a concentration of Domesday settlements in the north-west and a concentration of latter established settlements in the east. We cannot, of course, assume that all of the settlements which go unrecorded in Domesday did not exist in 1086. The village of Cropston, for example, is one possible Domesday

omission, another is Belton.[33] However, a general pattern can be observed which, on the basis of first documentary record, seems to indicate earlier settlement to the north-west of Charnwood Forest, at places like Coleorton, Thringstone and Osgathorpe, and latter settlement in the east at places like Woodthorpe, Woodhouse, and Woodhouse Eaves.

When this pattern is compared with geological and relief maps of Leicestershire (see chapter 1, figs 1.8 and 1.9), it is apparent that the eastern part of Charnwood Forest is far more densely marked by outcrops of Precambrian volcanic rocks than the north-west. It would seem possible that settlers arriving at Charnwood from the Soar valley encountered a Charnwood offering a rather less appealing prospect for settlement than the Charnwood encountered by those arriving from the Trent.

Such perceptions seem to have been reflected in the dates at which settlements were established. Analysis indicates that place-names on the east of the inner edge have a number of Middle English elements, whilst those to the west, north west and south feature predominantly Old English elements. This is also consistent with the date of first documentary reference. Places in the east, like Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves do not generally appear in the records until the thirteenth or fourteenth-century (tables 2.1 and 2.2).[34] Some doubts have been expressed about the late establishment of Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. Kilby suggests that, along with Quorn and

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[33] Although not mentioned in Domesday, both Cropston and Belton are mentioned in the Leicestershire survey of *c.* 1130 and are assessed at 4 carucates and 6 carucates respectively; see also C.F. Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, (Leicester, 1956), pp. 17, 18, 41, 45.
[34] Dates of first reference for Leicestershire and Rutland place-names are included in each entry in B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2005), p. 116.

Woodthorpe, they may have existed in 1086, but were not named in Domesday because they lay within the manor of Barrow.[35]

Settlement	Date of first documentary reference	Origins and meaning of place name
Beaumanor	1265	OFr *beau* + *manor* 'The beautiful manor'.
Woodhouse	1225	ME *wode* + *hous* 'the house by or in the wood'.
Woodhouse Eaves	1481	Originally *lez eves* relating to edge or border, later prefixed with Woodhouse.
Woodthorpe	1244	ME *wode* + OScand *thorp* 'the outlying farmstead or secondary settlement by the wood.

Table 2.1 Place-name Data for 'Inner Edge' of Band of Settlements to the East of Charnwood Forest

Source: Data taken from Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names,* (Nottingham, 2005).

Settlement	Date of first documentary reference	Origins and meaning of place name
Coleorton	1086	Originally *Overtone* OE *ofer* + *tūn* 'the farmstead or village on the ridge'. Later affix ME *cald, cold* 'bleak or exposed'
Osgathorpe	1086	Anglo-Scand personal name *Osgod* + OScand *thorp* 'the outlying farmstead of a man called Osgod'
Thringstone	1086	Originally *Trangesby* OScand personl name *Thræing* + OE *tūn* (replacing OScand *bý)* 'The farmstead or village of a man called Thræing'

Table 2.2 Place-name Data for 'Inner Edge' of Band of Settlements to the North-West of Charnwood Forest

Source: Data taken from Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names,* (Nottingham, 2005).

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[35] S. Kilby, 'What have the Normans (and the Plantagenets) ever done for us? A brief look at the medieval documents of Charnwood Forest' (unpublished paper given at LVCHT's Charnwood Roots Heritage Festival, 21st May 2017).

Kilby bases this on the close correlation between Domesday entries for the number of villeins at Barrow with the number of 'customers' recorded in a Beaumanor account roll of 1277. Beaumanor was a manor that, by the thirteenth century, had been carved out of the Domesday manor of Barrow.[36] The number of villeins recorded for Barrow in 1086 was 40.[37] The number of servile tenants recorded for Beaumanor in 1277 was very nearly the same at 41; made up of 10 for Barrow and Quorn, 18 for Woodthorpe and 13 for Woodhouse.[38] However, whilst the number of villeins in Barrow in 1086 and the number of 'customers' recorded for Beaumanor in 1277 are almost identical, this may just be coincidence. We cannot assume that we are dealing with exactly the same tenements, nor that all villein holdings were passed down intact through the generations. Furthermore, if we look at instances of the place-name 'Woodhouse' in other parts of England we find that none of them appear in Domesday and that all have later dates of first documentary reference, the earliest being Annesley Woodhouse (Nottinghamshire), which was first recorded in 1190.[39] Many of the other Woodhouses seem to be associated with nearby older settlements that are recorded in Domesday and it is possible that the Woodhouses represented desmesne leases in which peasants were creating housing plots in waste and woodland. This may be the case in Charnwood; the Woodhouse entries in the 1277 Beaumanor account are all for *les wodehousis*, which might indicate a scatter of houses rather than a formal or nucleated settlement. Those

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[36] M. Tompkins, 'Barrow on Soar, Manors and Estates', compiled for LVCHT's Charnwood Roots Project, (unpublished draft, 2016).
[37] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 237a.
[38] ROLLR, DG9/1954, Account of Thomas Hemeri, streward of Beaumanor, 1277.
[39] V. Watts, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-names* (Cambridge2004), p. 696.

houses might have been associated with assarts recorded at Woodhouse in the early thirteenth century.[40]

In any case, it would seem that we have a relatively cautious approach to settlement in the east of Charnwood. This can be contrasted with the north-west where we have the earliest documentary evidence for any of the settlements mentioned in the 1754 perambulation, and the only pre-Domesday documentary evidence for Charnwood, a charter of *c.* 972 relating to land at Diseworth, lying just within the study area, granted to the church at Breedon, lying just outside it.[41]

In his discussion of boundaries and borders Ryden suggests that,

> in a subtle and totally subjective way each side of a border feels different. In the space of a few feet we pass from one geographical entity to another.[42]

If medieval Charnwood Forest did represent a boundary, the experience of crossing from 'one geographical entity to another' may have been much more subtle in the north-west than it was in the east. Thus, the landscape of the forest may have engendered a different 'sense of place' in the north-west to that that it did in the east. This may be an example of the subjectivity of sense of place highlighted by theorists such as

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[40] Charter of Ranulph, sixth earl of Chester granting 128 acres of his assarts between the park of Quorndon and Woodhouse to William, son of Gerard, 1209-1228, cited by G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930), p. 15.
[41] 'Carta Eaddari Regis de Breodune facta cuidam Episcope' transcribed by W.de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum: Collection of Charters relating to Anglo-Saxon history,* iii b, (London, 1885) p. 592 and 'Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters' at http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/749.html# [accessed 6th April, 2016].
[42] K.C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisable Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993), p. 1.

Lefebrve,[43] and the horizontal layering in sense of place highlighted by Corsane and Bowers.[44]

In the east, the abrupt change between the fertile lowlands of the Soar valley and the rocky upland of Charnwood is illustrated by the landscape today at Mountsorrel (fig. 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Landscape at Mountsorrel Looking East Towards the Soar Valley.

The contrast was also remarked upon in White's directory of 1877, from which the header to this chapter was taken, and in which Mountsorrel was described as

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[43] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, English translation by D. Nicholson Smith (1974; Oxford, 1991), pp. 38-39.

[44] G. Corsane and D.J. Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study in the Rainforests and Savannahs of Guyana' in I. Convery, G. Corsane, P. Davis, eds, *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 250.

picturesquely seated on the west side of the River Soar at the foot of the lofty and abrupt termination of a ridge of rocky hills which extends upwards through Charnwood Forest to Derbyshire.[45]

As well as highlighting the sudden change in the landscape to the east of Charnwood, the extract from White's directory also hints at the relative continuity in landscape character between Charnwood Forest and Derbyshire to the north-west (fig 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Landscape of Charnwood Forest in the North-west, Looking South-East Across the Forest from Belton.

It is this continuity which may have facilitated earlier settlement. Charnwood Forest is simply further away from the Trent than it is from the Soar. One might expect a reduction in the number of settlements with increasing distance from river valleys. This

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[45] White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland*, p. 552.

is consistent the views of Everitt who, in his research on the rivers and wolds of Kent, found that settlements gradually spread inland from river valleys into the wooded wolds. Everitt suggested that the woodland settlements were originally sites of outlying summer pasture for the valley estates, but ones which eventually developed into permanent settlements.[46] However, the change in landscape between the Trent and Charnwood is rather more gradual, and therefore rather less discouraging, than that between the Soar and the forest.This may be why the first settlements on the inner edge of the band of settlements surrounding Charnwood were those established in the north-west.

Analysis of Charnwood's medieval minor place-names reveals that the greatest proportion of place-names elements which refer to a hill appear in documents relating to the east of the forest. A number of Charnwood's hills appear in Wylde's 1754 plan of the forest and might reflect different perceptions of the forest's topography. Hills to the north and west include Green Hill, Birch Hill and Timberwood Hill, names which seem to reflect perceptions of a rather benevolent topography. In contrast, hills to the east of the map include Hunger Hill and Breakback Hill; both lie close to Woodhouse Eaves, and both might reflect perceptions of an inhospitable landscape by those who named them. Whilst Hunger Hill is first recorded in 1543,[47] and Breakback is first recorded in 1754,[48] the attitudes which their names represent may have dated back for centuries.

Charnwood Forest did represent a boundary between settlers from the Trent and Soar valleys, but it seems that it was a boundary which may have been viewed differently

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[46] A. Everitt, 'Reflections on the Historical Origins of Rivers and Pays', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3, 1, 1977, pp. 1-19.
[47] B. Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire,* 7, p. 248.
[48] Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire,* 7, p. 248.

from either side. Although the forest was a permeable boundary, that permeability may have been somewhat unidirectional in nature.

Such interpretation would seem to support an environmentally determined chronology and pattern of settlement in Charnwood. This is consistent with the views of Tom Williamson who, whilst acknowledging cultural and social elements in the formation of settlements in the English landscape, considers that environmental concerns were the predominant factor.[49] Of course, settlement in Charnwood from the Soar Valley may have happened later than that from the Trent simply if the Soar Valley was itself later settled than the Trent Valley.[50] However, environmental factors may also explain the virtual absence of Domesday settlements at the core of the forest and enhance its status as a boundary.

The apparently liminal nature of medieval Charnwood Forest is illustrated by the location of dependencies of its Domesday settlements. Holly has highlighted the difficulties that dependencies of manors like Barrow and Rothley present in the interpretation of Domesday evidence because 'information about two or more places is sometimes combined in one statement'.[51] However, analysis of the location of those dependencies is useful to this study because it highlights an apparent avoidance of Charnwood Forest by its easternmost settlements. Rothley had holdings in twenty-two vills and Barrow had holdings in twelve. With one notable exception, to be discussed presently, all of these holdings lie to the further to the east, away from the forest (figs

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[49] T.Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes: Settlement, Society, Environment* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 180 -185.
[50] For discussion of the difficulties in analysing place-name and archaeological evidence in establishing whether Leicestershire was settled from the north or the south in the early middle ages see, W.G. Hoskins, 'Further notes on the Anglian and Scandinavian Settlement of Leicestershire' *Transactions of the LAHS*, 19, part 1, 1936-37, pp. 96-97.
[51] Holly, 'Leicestershire', p. 315.

2.6 and 2.7). Although not so great in number, a similar pattern can be discerned in the

settlements in the jurisdiction of Ratby to the south of the study area (fig. 2.8). All of

these connections appear to be outwards, away from the forest. In contrast, to the west

of Charnwood, connections appear to be along the edge of the forest; Ibstock, for

example, lay within the jurisdiction of Bagworth (fig. 2.9).
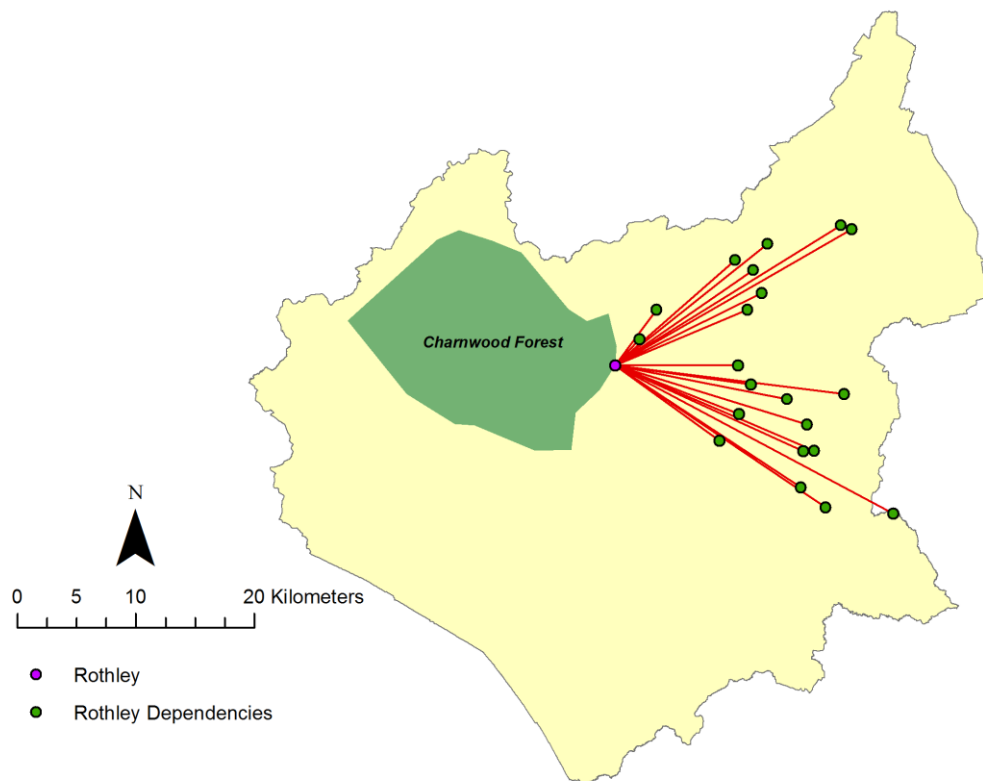
Figure 2.6 Domesday Dependencies of Rothley

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979).
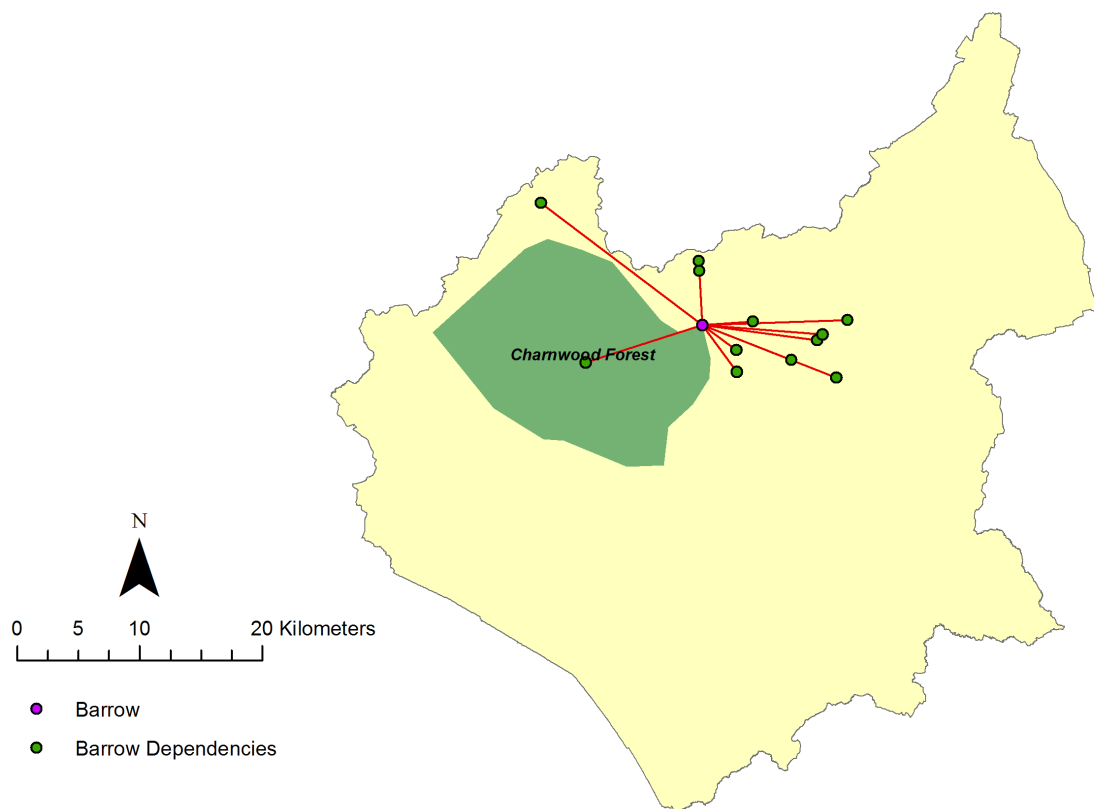
Figure 2.7 Domesday Dependencies of Barrow

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979).
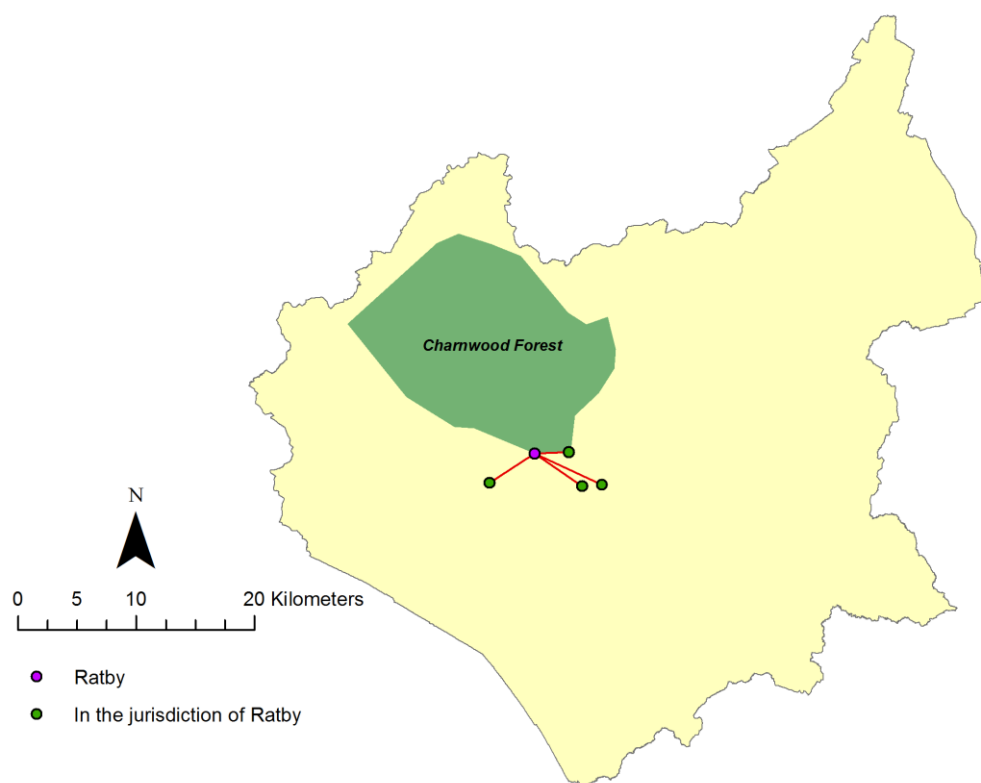
Figure 2.8 Places in the Jurisdiction of Ratby at Domesday

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979).
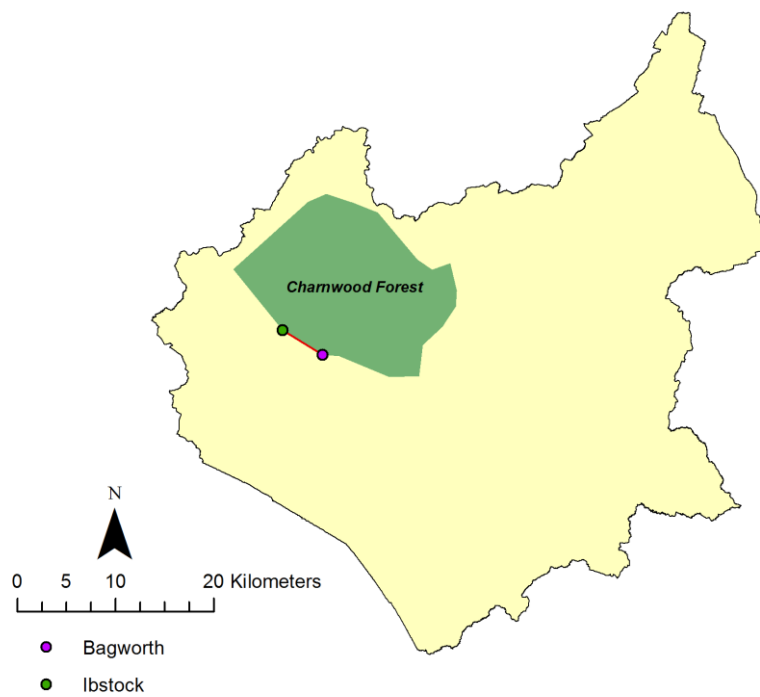
Figure 2.9 Ibstock in the Jurisdiction of Bagworth at Domesday

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979).

We must be cautious, however, in using such administrative connections to mark Charnwood out as an impenetrable boundary. It is likely that, in 1086, Charnwood Forest was a landscape which was utilised by consensus and shared by surrounding communities but one that had little need for more formal administrative control or for documentary record. The only Domesday settlement within the core of the forest was Charley. John Burges' 1702 map of Charley (fig 2.10) illustrates the dispersed nature of that settlement at this time.[52]

Figure 2.10 John Burges' Map of Charley, 1702

Source: ROLLR, 14D65. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

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[52] ROLLR, 14D65, J.Burges, Map of Charley, 1702.

This can be contrasted with the nucleated settlements shown to be surrounding the forest in other eighteenth-century cartographical sources.[53] Such evidence emphasises the 'boundary status' of the forest, perhaps at the expense of the 'boundary status' of the rivers. This is supported by the work of Phythian-Adams who, in a study of English 'frontier valleys' such as the Tees, the Wellend, and the Suffolk Stour, argued that whilst rivers often formed administrative boundaries, that cultural boundaries were generally along watershed zones.[54]

Comparison of the settlement patterns of Charnwood Forest and those areas to the east of the Soar, may be informed by research on medieval settlement in the Arden and Feldon areas of Warwickshire conducted by Dyer. Dyer suggests that

> attention should not be focused too narrowly on the houses, out-buildings, roads and boundaries of the settlements themselves, but also on the whole territory from which inhabitants drew their livelihood.[55]

Dyer's work reveals the distinctive nature of *pays* on either side of the River Avon. His contention that the inhabitants of Arden 'found their resources better suited to a mixed use of land', and that they were 'not so pressurised as their Feldon contemporaries by high densities of population' may have parallels in the areas divided by the Soar. However, whilst the Soar can be described as the easternmost edge of Charnwood Forest, it is the forest itself which seems to create the boundary.

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[53] For example see J.Prior, part of 1777 map of Leicestershire showing Charnwood reproduced by A.E. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981) p. 51.
[54] C. Phythan-Adams, 'Frontier valleys' in J. Thirsk in *Rural England: an Illustrated History of Landscape* (Oxford, 2000), p. 254.
[55] C. Dyer, 'Rural Settlements in Medieval Warwickshire', *Transactions of the BWAS,* 100, 1996, p. 118.

Domesday reveals that on the eastern side of the forest settlements had larger

populations and greater numbers of mills than those to the north-west (see figs 2.11 and

2.12 and appendices 2 and 3).
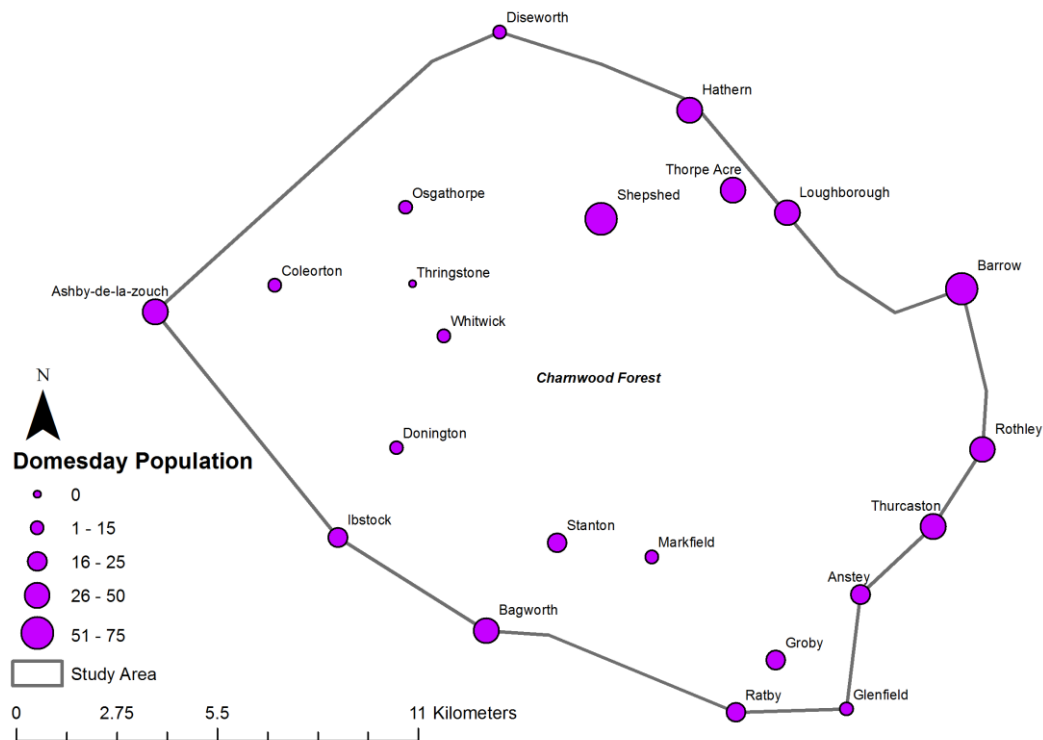
Figure 2.11 Population Recorded for Charnwood at Domesday

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) and from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1978).
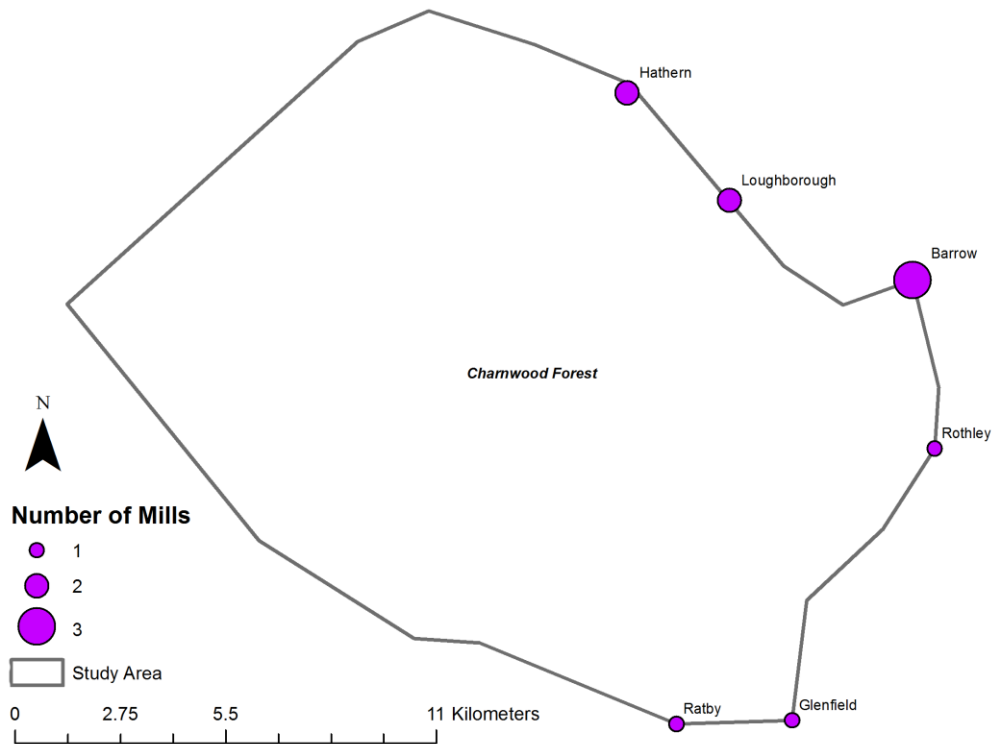
Figure 2.12 Mills Recorded for Charnwood at Domesday

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) and from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1978).

Furthermore, settlements to the east appear to have been more prosperous, with higher valuations. This was in contrast to the north-west where valuations seem to have been generally lower and in some cases falling (see fig. 2.13 and appendix 5).
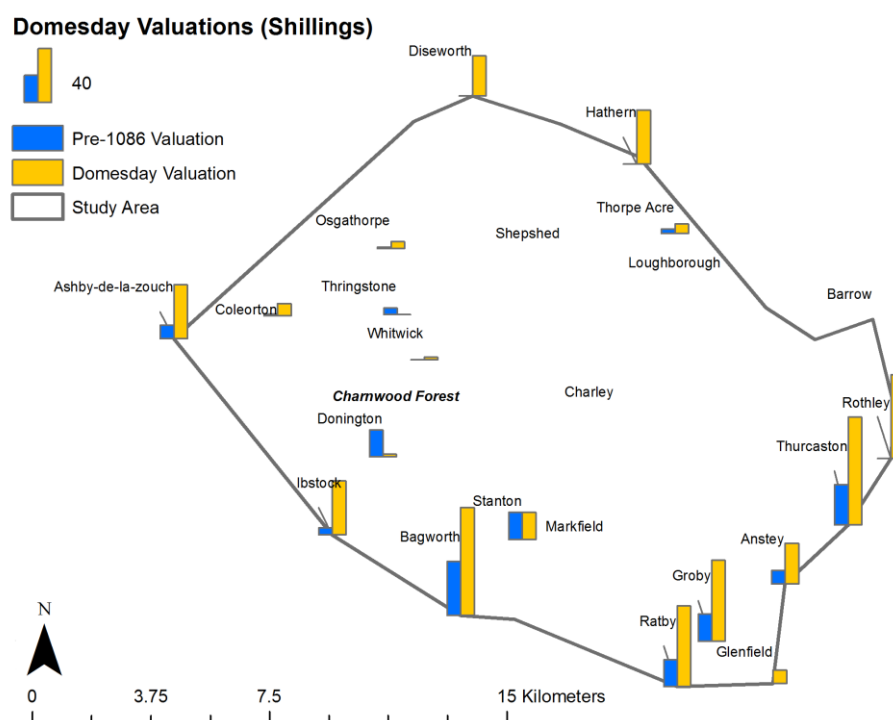
Figure 2.13 Valuations Recorded for Charnwood at Domesday

Source: Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) and from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1978).

The apparent reluctance by settlers from the Soar to create nucleated settlements within the forest does seem to reflect environmental conditions. If marginality is defined as simply distance from a centre, and if the Trent and Soar valleys represent centres, then Charnwood should have been regarded as more marginal by settlers from the Trent. As we have seen, settlement evidence seems to suggest the opposite, that Charnwood was deemed more inhospitable by settlers from the Soar. One wonders if the abrupt change in landscape was even less appealing to those in the east because of their relatively comfortable circumstances. However, despite the apparent avoidance of the forest by Soar Valley dwellers, the only Domesday evidence linking anywhere on the periphery of the forest to its core is that between the Soar and the core. Charley was a dependency

of Barrow and lies at the very centre of the forest. [56] Whilst it was recorded as waste, we must consider the nature of that waste and the uses to which it was put. The Domesday commissioners made a specific note to 'find out the assessment' for the 4 carucates of land recorded for Charley indicating that some value had been attached to it at some stage. Certainly, many of the tracks on John Prior's 1779 map (fig. 2.14), tracks from all directions, are shown to meet at Charley.

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[56] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 237a.

Figure 2.14 Part of John Pryor's 1779 Map of Leicestershire showing Charnwood

Source: A.E Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, *Charnwood Forest, a Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981), p. 51. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

Furthermore both John Burges' 1702 map of Charley (fig. 2.10),[57] and Leo Bell's 1796 map of nearby Ulverscroft (fig. 2.15),[58] provide examples of medieval assarting and enclosure at Charnwood's core.

It would seem, then, that we cannot measure perceptions of marginality in terms of settlement patterns alone. Charnwood Forest did represent a cultural boundary between settlers from the Soar and Trent. However, although that boundary may have been viewed differently from either side, it was an extremely permeable boundary.

2.4   A boundary between Mercia and the Danelaw?

Another way in which the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest may have represented a cultural boundary is as a sort of 'no man's land' between Mercia and the Danelaw. Whilst Watling Street is often referred to as the boundary between the two, and may have been the formal boundary in the late ninth-century agreement between King Alfred and the Danish King Guthrum,[59] it is possible that the Charnwood landscape represented a more informal, natural and yet very practical boundary. It is unlikely that the boundary established by Alfred and Guthrum was firmly adhered to, but that the actual boundary was some form of 'zone' in which cultural interaction between Mercia and the Danelaw was common practice. In Leicestershire, Charnwood Forest may have formed part of that zone.

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[57] Burges, Map of Charley, 1702.
[58] Bell, Map of Ulverscroft, 1796 , reproduced by Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', in Crocker, *Charnwood Forest: a Changing Landscape*, p. 59.
[59] D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society and Culture* (Manchester,2006), p. 31, Hadley outlines the difficulties associated with dating the Guthrum Treaty precisely from evidence in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, but suggests that it was between 886 and 890.

Figure 2.15 Leo Bell's 1796 Map of Ulverscroft

Source: A. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, *Charnwood Forest, a Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981), p. 59. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

The place-name evidence for this suggestion is not conclusive. Analysis of the place-names mentioned in Wylde's 1754 perambulation reveals a marked incidence of Old Scandinavian place-name elements in a reverse 'c' shape around the north, east and south of Charnwood (fig. 2.16).
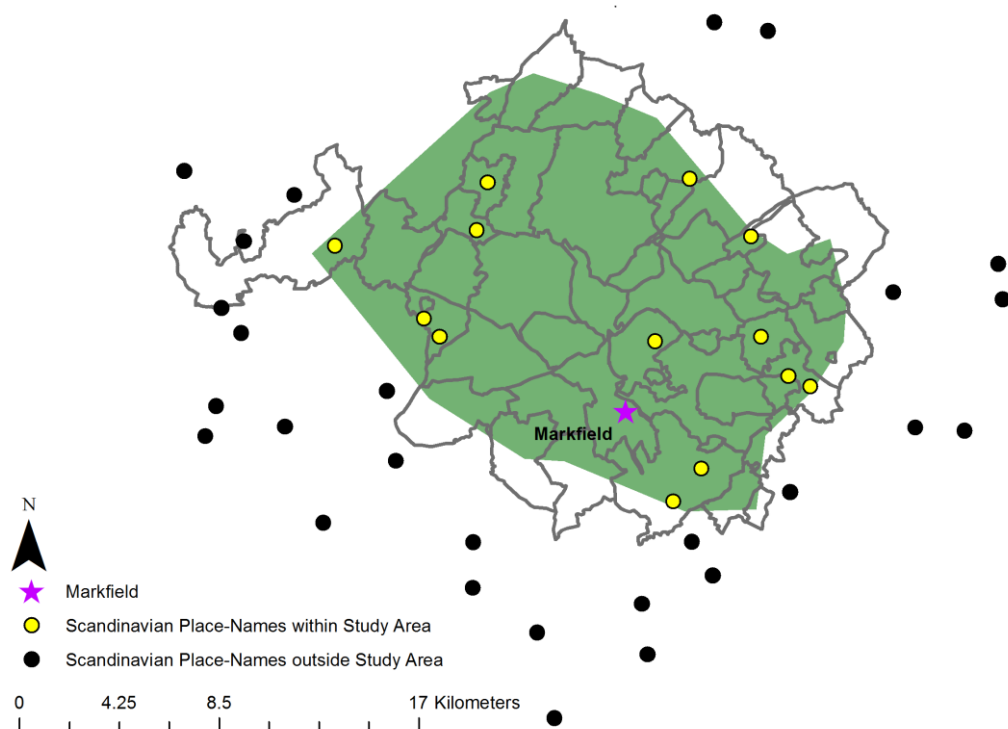
Figure 2.16 Scandinavian Place-names in and around the Study Area.

These are intermingled with place-names of Old English origin. On the south-western edge of Charnwood, there would seem to be a complete absence of Old Scandinavian elements. However, further to the west, away from the forest and closer to Watling Street, Scandinavian place-names seem to reappear, only to disappear fairly abruptly again at Watling Street.[60] It may be that we are looking at an avoidance of the forest, on the part of the Scandinavians, that is similar to that of earlier settlers. What we do have on the western side of Charnwood, however, is the village of Markfield, said to be derived from the OE *Merce* and to mean 'open land of the Mercians'.[61] The need to express ownership of the land in this way may reflect Markfield's position on the very edge of Mercian territory.

 Markfield lies just north of the villages of Ratby and Groby. Ratby combines the Old Scandinavian elements *rot* and *bý* and is said to mean 'farmstead among the tree-stumps'.[62] Similarly, Groby is a combination of Old Scandinavian *grof* and *bý* and is said to mean 'the farmstead near the pit or hollow' (the pit or hollow may refer to Groby Pool).[63] Such place-names are thought to 'represent the earliest period of Danish settlement in the last quarter of the ninth century'.[64]

It is generally accepted that speakers of Old Scandinavian and Old English did understand each other's language.[65] The presence of both Old Scandinavian and Old English place-name elements in and around Charnwood may not, therefore, reflect a

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[60] The British Museum, 'Discover Norse Place-Names Near You', interactive map at http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/vikings/vikings_live/old_norse_origins.aspx#spittle gate [accessed 17th July, 2017].

[61] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names* p. 67.

[62] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 84.

[63] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 44.

[64] B. Cox, *The Place-names of Leicestershire and Rutland*, PhD thesis, (University of Nottingham, May 1971).

[65] M. Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society' in D. M. Hadley and J. D. Richards, eds, *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout, 2000), p. 90.

changing language, but rather a relationship between two different cultures. This is consistent with the views of Matthew Townend who sees Viking England as a 'bilingual society in which two vernacular languages were spoken', and in which 'two speech communities were in close and persistant contact'.[66]

This image of cultural integration is, perhaps, a little too cosy and contrasts sharply with that suggested by the possible establishment of Viking fortifications in Leicestershire. In the 1950s Hoskins suggested that Danish occupation of Leicester was followed by the establishment of a circle of fortified sites or *burhs* around the town and that those fortifications were reflected in the place-name element *burh*. It is noticeable that the *burhs* identified by Hoskins are mainly in the south and east of the county, and not within Charnwood.[67] Despite a number of settlements around Charnwood, such as Ratby and Groby, whose names can be said to contain Scandinavian elements*,* few are fortified sites. It may be that the Charnwood landscape was considered to provide sufficient deterrent to potential attackers. However, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about Scandinavian perceptions of Charnwood from the location of *burhs* because more recent studies have cast doubt on the Scandinavian origins of such sites.[68]

There is very little archaeological evidence of Scandinavian occupation in Leicestershire as a whole, but that which has been discovered in Charnwood includes an Irish harness fitting, thought to be brought in by the Vikings and found at Newtown Linford, a 'Thors hammer' worn as a pendant around the neck, found at Cropston, and

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[66] Townend, 'Viking Age England as a Bilingual Society', p. 90.
[67] W.G. Hoskins, 'Further Notes on the Anglian and Scandinavian Settlement of Leicestershire', pp.104-106.
[68] J.D. Richards, *Viking Age England* (1991, Stroud, 2000), p.75

the 'Thurcaston Hoard' a collection of coins from Viking York found at Thurcaston.[69]

It is rather interesting, in view of the theory that Charnwood Forest may have been a boundary between Mercia and the Danelaw, that these finds were all made to the east of the forest. This supports the notion that Charnwood Forest may have been a shared, or at least an uncontested, 'fuzzy' zone between two different social and ethnic groups.

2.5 A boundary in the later medieval period?

The status of Charnwood as a cultural boundary between its surrounding manors in the later medieval period was, perhaps, even more complex. Charnwood's woodland distinguished the area from the landscape of surrounding champion regions, but it also brought surrounding communities together as they shared and increasingly competed for forest resources. Charnwood's woodland was exploited in two main ways. The first was in the practice of 'woodmanship' and the production of wood and timber. The second focused on the grazing of animals in areas of wood-pasture.[70] Wager has suggested that the ways in which woodland is referred to in Domesday may indicate the nature of that woodland. She argues that *silva* is the most common term used for woodland, but that in some counties it is qualified by the adjective *pastilis* (pasture) or *minuta* (small).[71] Sadly, the entries for woodland in Leicestershire are not so informative, although they do provide dimensions of woodland for some Charnwood settlements, including, Rothley, Shepshed, Groby, Thurcaston, Anstey, Whitwick, Markfield, Loughborough and Barrow (appendix 6).

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[69] P.Liddle, 'Vikings in Leicestershire and Rutland' one of a series of talks given at Ashby Library (2014). See also LRHER, MLE6107, MLE 6121 and MLE 1042.
[70] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' p. 36.
[71] Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves:The Woodlands of Medieval Warwickshire* (Oxford, 1998) p. 2.

The limitations of Domesday evidence, and the likely under reporting of woodland is considered in chapter 5 in which the internal boundaries of Charnwood Forest are discussed. There is, however, a wealth of later documentary evidence, including grants of pasture, to support the notion that much of Charnwood was wood pasture utilised by surrounding manors during the medieval period.[72] A particularly intriguing source is a thirteenth-century deed relating to Quorndon, to the north east of the study area, allowing pasture of 'animals without number' in Charnwood Forest.[73] This is significant because it indicates not only that Charnwood was an area with considerable capacity for pasture but also that it was an economically important landscape.

Later medieval Charnwood Forest was also a religious landscape. It might be suggested that the medieval period was an age in which all landscapes held some religious significance. However, later medieval Charnwood can be associated with a number of specific religious sites. There were holy wells at Ratby, Nanpantan and Garendon.[74] Holywell Wood remains a feature of the modern landscape and there are documentary references to a *Haliwellehage*, near Loughborough, from the late twelfth century.[75] Charnwood was also a monastic landscape with religious houses at Garendon (founded 1133), Ulverscroft (first recorded 1174), Charley (first recorded 1190), Langley

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[72] For example, grant of pasture on the whole forest 'to as great an extent as was enjoyed by the homagers resident in the forest' by Margaret de Quincey to Stephen de Seagrave in 1220; grant of pasture in the lordship of Barrow by the Earl of Arundle to the Abbott of Garendon in 1243; both transcribed by J.Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, I (1800; Wakefield, 1971), pp.128, 129; both cited by Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p.48. See also, I.*P.M.* of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1445, in which value of 'underwood' is recorded for 'a pasture called Stwordsheye' translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 107. See also cases of pasture 'without license' in Charnwood's woodland, for example the 3 men accused of pasturing oxen without license at Oakley in 1489, BL Add Ch 26843, Shepshed Court Roll, 1431-1490, m. 17a, recto.
[73] HL, HAD1751, Box 112, Quorndon Deed, 13th century.
[74] Palmer, *Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland*, pp. 26-27.
[75] Palmer, *The Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland*, pp. 27 -29 and Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 50.

(founded mid twelfth century), Aldermans Haw (first recorded 1220), Rothley (established *c.* 1231), and Grace Dieu (founded 1235-1241) (fig. 2.17).[76]
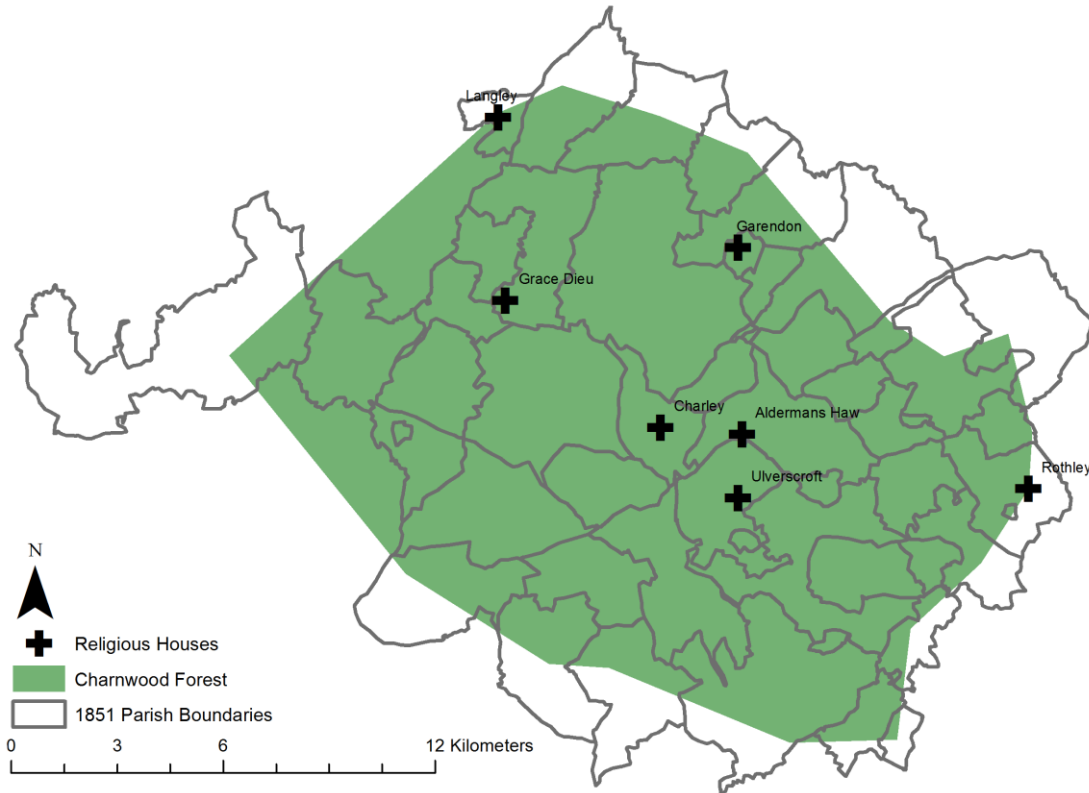
Figure 2.17 Religious Houses in Charnwood

The ruins of Ulverscroft Priory can be seen in fig. 2.18; like most of the ecclesiastical sites it lies within the core of Charnwood and enjoys a relatively secluded location. The

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[76] Dates of foundation or first record as given in R.A McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire' in W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley eds, *A History of the County of Leicester,* II, (London, 1954) pp. 3, 5-6, 19-21, 23-24, 27-28, 31; except for date of first reference for Alderman's Haw which is taken from LRHER, MLE4483.

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hedgerows surrounding the site contain a wide variety of flora, including dog's

mercury, consistent with the presence of ancient woodland.[77]

Figure 2.18 Ulverscroft Priory

Valuations taken at the time of the Dissolution reveal that religious houses in

Charnwood held and managed a great deal of woodland, and that much of that

woodland was wood pasture. In the valuations, woodland at Ulverscroft, Garendon and

Grace Dieu is described in terms of its maturity. For example, the details of woods of

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[77] For discussion of indicators of ancient woodland, for distinction between 'ancient hedges' and 'ancient woodland' and also for discussion of 'ghost' hedges which Rackham suggests are the edges of woodland that have been destroyed see O. Rackham, *Woodlands* (2006; London, 2012), pp. 27, 246-261.

one, four and 'upwards of thirty years' growth are given.[78] Such evidence indicates that woodland was being actively managed at these sites in the sixteenth century and brings into question the concept of an uncultivated late medieval Charnwood Forest. Such sources do distinguish Charnwood from the more secular unwooded landscape of the Soar Valley. However, the distinction is not so evident in the north-west where both the religious and topographic landscape of Charnwood blends into that of the area around Breedon, a monastic site since *c.* 675.[79] This is, perhaps, a reflection of the more porous nature of the cultural boundary formed by the landscape to the north-west of Charnwood Forest as noted earlier in settlement patterns.

The significant interaction between Charnwood's religious houses and surrounding communities is revealed in the recently published draft accounts of Grace Dieu Priory, 1414-18.[80] The nuns at Grace-Dieu employed local labour, collected rents and bought and sold goods from their neighbours and from further afield. Sales included, lime, wood products, skins, wool, pigs, cattle and sheep. Purchases included fish from Hull, Leicester, Nottingham and Loughborough. Rents were collected from the nearby villages of Osgathorpe, Thringstone and Diseworth. As a reflection of marginality, this evidence is at odds with landscape and archaeological surveys of Grace Dieu which reveal an 'almost complete absence of ridge and furrow' and indicates that Grace Dieu was 'mainly outside the area of medieval arable cultivation'.[81] Taken together, however, these sources provide a more balanced picture in which notions of marginality and

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[78] TNA, E36/154, 'Viewe and Survey of all syngler abbes priores monastrez sett lieng and being withyn the Countie of Leicestre' (1536) ff. 49-54.
[79] LRHER, MLE4403.
[80] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory, Leicestershire 1414-18: The Draft Account Book of the Treasuresses* (Ashby-de-la Zouche, 2013).
[81] P. Liddle and R.F. Hartley, *An Archaeological Survey of Grace Dieu* (Leicester, 1995) pp. 15,18.

centrality can be combined to reveal the complex nature of the relationship between people and place in medieval Charnwood.

As well as being a landscape with a concentration of religious places, medieval Charnwood's cultural distinction from surrounding areas was evident in the presence of a number of deer parks. Indeed, much of Charnwood's medieval woodland was associated with such parks. Landscape evidence, modern Ordnance Survey and eighteenth-century cartographical sources reveal evidence of medieval deer parks at Ashby, Bardon, Barrow, Beaumanor, Bradgate, Coleorton, Garendon, Groby, Loughborough, Shepshed and Whitwick. Explanations for the heavy concentration of parks in Charnwood vary. The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland HLC depicts Charnwood as an 'ideal location' for deer parks because of the area's 'shallow, stoney and infertile soils'.[82] In contrast, Cantor relates the number of deer parks in Charnwood to land holdings rather than to geographical or geological features. He suggests that because the 'great territorial lords of Leicestershire' held manors in the area, that is where they created their parks.[83] Cantor also argues that, within manors, it is 'possible to deduce reasons for the position of parks' on the wooded, uncultivated areas towards the edges.[84] Deer parks needed woodland as covert for the deer. However, the woodland within parks was used for other purposes, for example, as a source of timber and as a source of pannage for pigs.[85]

It is evident that the woodland which characterised the medieval Charnwood landscape was an integral part of its cultural landscape or *pays*, and that identification of that *pays*

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[82] LCC, *The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project: Introduction* at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report_introduction.pdf [accessed 18th May 2013], p.33.
[83] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 46 (1970-71), p. 10.
[84] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', p. 12.
[85] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', p. 14.

helps to establish the nature of any boundary that Charnwood Forest may have formed. However, broad categorisations of *pays*, such as 'woodland' or 'champion' may be insufficient. Indeed different types of woodland *pays* may exist. Lewis *et al.* have highlighted the contrast between the dispersed settlements of Charnwood and the nucleated settlements of other woodland areas like Rockingham and Wychwood.[86] One of the aims of this chapter is to identify the *pays* of medieval Charnwood, and to discover if and how it can be distinguished from the *pays* of surrounding areas like the Soar and Trent valleys.

The evidence points to the fact that Charnwood Forest was different to surrounding areas. The forest was different in terms of settlement, topography and land use. This distinction was highlighted nearly four hundred years ago by Burton. In one of the first descriptions of Charnwood to be written in the post-medieval period, Burton describes the south east of Leicestershire as 'almost all champain and yields great delight and profit' with the only disadvantage

> the want for fuel for fire for which the inhabitants are constrained far to fetch it, or else to make use of those small helps which they have, as straw, cowshern and such like.[87]

In contrast he describes the north-west of the county, including Charnwood Forest as

> almost contrary to this, for the ground is hard and barren, and in some places rocky and stoney yielding fruit not without great labour and expenses.[88]

Whilst Burton acknowledges that Charnwood had a 'good store of wood and pit coal',[89] he seems to place greater value on arable capacity and draws particular attention to the contrast between Charnwood and the

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[86] C.Lewis, P. Mitchell Fox, C. Dyer, *Village Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (1997; Macclesfield 2001), p. 187.
[87] Burton, *Description of Leicestershire*, p. 2.
[88] Burton, *Description of Leicestershire*, p. 2.

'very good fertile soil as those which lie upon the tracts and vallies of the Rivers Trent and Sore'.[90]

However, if the forest did represent a boundary in later medieval Leicestershire, then it remained a permissive one. Many of the tracks which criss-cross Charnwood in John Prior's map of Leicestershire are likely to reflect routeways taken by people crossing Charnwood during the later medieval period. Medieval documentary evidence describes many such routes. For example in a 1242 agreement between the abbot of Gerwedon and Roger de Quency, Earl of Winchester, the Earl

> granted for himself and his heirs as pertains to them that the said abbot and his successors and all his men and their servants may freely go, ride and chase by all the ways and paths leading by the middle of his forest of Charnewode where his other men are wont to make their way without any impediment of the said earl or of his heirs for ever.[91]

Similarly, early seventeenth-century sources support the notion that there had been regular earlier medieval passage across the forest. Exchequer depositions of 1604 relating to an enclosure dispute and to arguments about the legitimacy of the building of cottages on the forest include references to 'ancient highways'. One deponent, Nicholas Standley, a fifty-year old labourer from Shepshed had his credentials as a witness established by his long personal, working and family association with the forest. He had

> known the forest or waste called Charnewood forest for forty years and that the commoners have only a running common there. He was bred and bought up under his father, a commoner in the said forest, and he himself has been a commoner during all his lifetime, and continually from time to time hath been employed in falling and lopping of wood and making charcoal in the said forest.[92]

The deposition goes on to state that Standley knew that the

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[89] Burton, *Description of Leicestershire*, p. 2.
[90] Burton, *Description of Leicestershire*, p. 2.
[91] Fine, between the abbot of Gerwedon, plaintiff, and Roger de Quency, earl of Winchester defendant, 1242 transcribed by G.F. Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes*, VI, pp. 350-351.
[92] Exchequer depositions by Commission, Leicester, No. 4`, Mich., 2 James I, 1604 transcibed by G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest , Historians and Manors*, p. 141.

cottage and inclosure are great nuisances, decayes and hindrances to the said common and commoners for want of 'bytt and passage to their water and the rest of their common' and also for their passage for carts and carriages in the ancient ways.[93]

Landscape and archaeological evidence of medieval route ways within the forest has also been discovered. This includes a track leading from Thurcaston towards Cropston which is 'visible as hollow way at its Thurcaston end'[94] (figs 2.19 and 2.20) and a possible medieval road at Newtown Linford. Excavations at Newtown Linford in 1985 'revealed a road surface of water-worn pebbles with real ruts' and three sherds of fifteenth century Midland Purple pottery 'apparently embedded in the surface'. [95]

[93] Exchequer depositions by Commission, Leicester, No. 4`, Mich., 2 James I, 1604 tanscribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 141 -142.
[94] LRHER, MLE 20877.
[95] LRHER, MLE 732.

Figure 2.19 Medieval Routeway between Thurcaston and Cropston at the Thurcaston End

Figure 2.20 Medieval Bridge on Routeway between Thurcaston and Cropston

New archaeological research carried out on behalf of the Charnwood Roots Project supports the view that the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest may not have been considered marginal by those who interacted with it . Analysis of LiDAR data reveals that 31% of woodland when considered by unit, and 58% when considered by area, shows evidence of earlier pre-woodland human activity. [96] Although some of the evidence may relate to Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity, much of the evidence, for example that at Martinshaw Wood and Ratby Burroughs, seems to be in the form of ridge and furrow indicating that a great deal of supposed ancient woodland was cultivated at some stage during the medieval period. Unfortunately LiDAR has not

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[96] N. Hannon, 'An Archaeological LiDAR Study of Charnwood', Leicestershire, U.L.A.S. report no. 2014-092 (unpublished draft report, 2014), p. 9.

been carried out on the whole of the study area. The raw data analysed by the Charnwood Roots Project was made available by the Environment Agency. The agency focuses on those areas most at risk of flooding and not the highland areas at the core of the forest. Nevertheless, we do have coverage for 57 % of the study area,[97] including much of the area which lies close to the Soar. Furthermore, ground-based landscape surveys of woodlands not covered by LiDAR have revealed similar results. Extensive patterns of ridge and furrow consistent with medieval patterns have, for example, been identified by Woodward in Swithland Wood (fig. 2.21).[98] Woodward notes that, despite 'poor soils', ploughs were brought 'right up to the very edge' of rocky outcrops.[99] This is may be a reflection of early fourteenth-century optimism engendered by favourable climatic and demographic circumstances, but it does support the notion that Charnwood's marginality may have been overemphasized.

2.6 Conclusion

The evidence discussed in this chapter brings into question the perceived marginality of the medieval Charnwood Forest landscape as emphasised in much of the literature to date. Charnwood Forest, a largely uncultivated medieval landscape, seems to have formed an integral part of a wider economy, one which was socially and economically as significant as the cultivated landscapes around it. It seems that we may be able to correlate Charnwood's relatively low population with its relatively inhospitable landscape. However, although medieval Charnwood was not an extensively settled landscape, it was a utilised landscape, familiar to surrounding communities and integral to the economies of a wider area.

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[97] Hannon, 'An Archaeological LiDAR study of Charnwood, Leicestershire', p. 9.
[98] Woodward, *Swithland Wood: A Study of its History and Vegetation* (Leicester, 1992), pp.21-24.
[99] Woodward, *Swithland Wood*, p. 24.
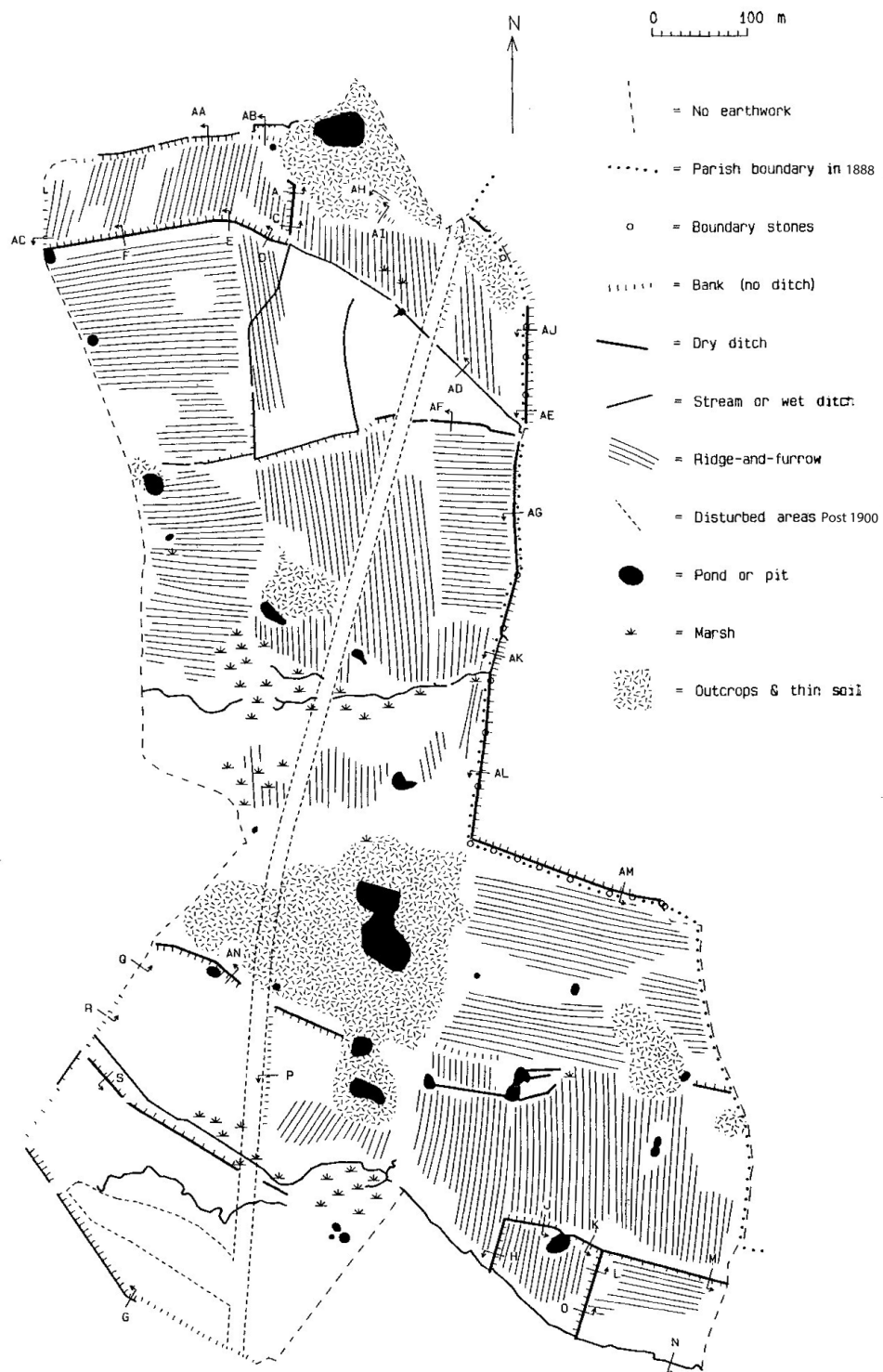
Figure 2.21 Earthworks in Swithland Wood

Source: S. Woodward, *Swithland Wood: A Study of its History and Vegetation* (Leicester, 1992), p. 22.
Reproduced with permission of Richard Knox, LCC.

Charnwood forest did form a boundary, one between settlers from the Soar and the Trent, one between Mercia and the Danelaw and one between later medieval manors. It was a boundary which was experienced subjectively and seems to have been at its most distinctive as a division between the east and the north-west. However, despite its status as a topographic, social, cultural and economic boundary, the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest does not seem to have acted as a barrier to cultural integration.

This chapter has focused on the nature of Charnwood Forest *as* a boundary; in the following chapters similar methods are employed to consider the nature *of* the forest's boundaries, commencing with an examination of its external boundaries.

Chapter 3   Forest or chase? The external boundaries of Charnwood Forest

Be it remembered concerning the bounds of Charnewode….[1]

3.1 Introduction

The nature and extent of medieval Charnwood Forest's external boundaries are a matter of some ambiguity. They are entwined with the nature of the Forest's status and with differing understandings of what should and should not be included within Forest bounds. The documentary sources which landscape historians commonly utilise to define medieval forest boundaries are sadly lacking for Charnwood. The area boasts just one rather unsatisfactory Anglo-Saxon charter which provides little information relating to Charnwood's boundaries.[2] The paucity of documentation relating to the boundaries of medieval Charnwood may be related to the forest's status as a chase rather than as a Royal Forest.

Chases were similar in many ways to Royal Forests, but fell under the jurisdiction of manorial lords rather than the Crown.[3] Forests and chases were both areas under the authority of officers, laws, and courts whose main concern was to protect deer and their

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[1] Taken from ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis', 1275 -1350, transcribed in G.F. Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1933) p. 367.

[2] Grant dated c. 972 by King Eadgar to Bishop Æthelwald (of Winchester) of land at Breodune or Æbredone with perpetuity to Breodun Church, mentions Diseworth (Digtheswyrthe), W. de. G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 1283, vol iii B (London 1893), p. 592. Note – Birch speculates that this document refers to Abberton, nr. Bredon in Worcestershire. However, B. Cox, in *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names* (Nottingham, 2005), p. 30 associates this same document with Diseworth to the north of Charnwood Forest. To the north west of Charnwood's Diseworth, of course, lies the monastic site of Breedon. The charter is attributed to Leicestershire by 'Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters' at http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/749.html# [acessesed 6th April, 2016]. In any case, this document provides almost no topographical detail.

[3] J. Langton, 'Medieval Forests and Chases: Another Realm?' in J. Langton and G. Jones, eds, *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales c. 1000-1500* (Oxford, 2010) p. 28.

habitat (venison and vert).[4] Charnwood's status has been the subject of much academic debate. Some nineteenth century commentators were of the opinion that Charnwood was a Royal Forest. Potter, for example, was persuaded of Charnwood's Royal Forest status by what he understood to be documentary evidence of Charnwood's disafforestation by Henry III.[5] The work of subsequent commentators reveals a gradual shift in understandings of Charnwood's status. Whilst Spanton, writing in 1858, concurred with Potter's views;[6] Mott, writing on Charnwood a decade later, avoided the subject of Charnwood's medieval status altogether.[7] This omission perhaps reflected the beginnings of academic uncertainty on the subject. Cox, writing in 1905, suggested that whilst the Forest may have been a royal hunting ground in the pre-conquest period, it did not hold that status after 1086.[8] In 1907, Everard expressed similar views, attributing Charnwood's open air swanimote courts to the Anglo-Saxons, but highlighting the fact that Charnwood was not mentioned in Domesday and was, therefore, not likely to have been appropriated.[9] Charnwood was not included in Bazeley's 1921 list of thirteenth-century English Forests,[10] and, in 1925 Dare declared that Charnwood's Royal Forest status was a 'widespread fallacy'.[11] Dare's view was comprehensively endorsed in the 1930s by Farnham who agreed that the documentary evidence of disafforestation, which Potter had associated with Charnwood, actually

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[4] J. Langton and G. Jones, 'Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Forests: Some Preliminary Matters' in J. Langton and G. Jones, eds, *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales c. 1000-1500,* p. 11.
[5] T.R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest* (London, 1842) p. 2.
[6] J. Spanton, *A Companion to Charnwood Forest* (Loughborough, 1858), pp. 6 -8.
[7] F.T. Mott, *Charnwood Forest: its Air, its Scenery, its Natural Curiosities, Antiquities and Legends* (London, 1868), pp. 46-49.
[8] J.C. Cox, *The Royal Forests of England* (London, 1905), pp. 231-232.
[9] J. B. Everard, *Charnwood Forest* (Leicester, 1907) pp. 7-9.
[10] M.L. Bazeley, 'The Extent of the English Forest in the Thirteenth Century', *TRHS*, 4 (1921), pp. 140 - 172.
[11] M.P. Dare, *Charnwood Forest and its Environs* (Leicester, 1925), p. 4.

referred to a forest to the east of Leicestershire.[12] The Royal Forest for which

Charnwood had been mistaken by Potter is likely to have been the Royal Forest of

Leicestershire which lay on the borders of Leicestershire and Rutland.[13] Furthermore,

whilst Potter had suggested that the presence of ancient outdoor swanimote courts in

Charnwood might be associated with Royal Forest status, Farnham argued that such an

association could not necessarily be made.[14] Several sites have been suggested as

locations of swanimote courts in Charnwood; these include Copt Oak, close to Groby,

and Ives Head close to Shepshed.[15] A further swanimote site, and possibly the oldest of

the sites in Charnwood, is said to be the Swanimote Rock, close to Whitwick.[16] The

memory of these courts is preserved today in minor names such as Swannymote Road,

Swannymote Wood and Swannymote Farm, all of which appear on the modern

Ordnance Survey map between Shepshed and Whitwick. Farnham acknowledged the

presence of swanimote courts in three of the Charnwood manors and also that they

existed 'in some form for five hundred or more years after the conquest'.[17] However, he

argued that swanimote courts in Charnwood served a different purpose to those in royal

forests, dealing with issues such as encroachments on the waste rather than offences

concerning deer and the greenery on which they fed (venison and vert).[18]

Farnham's assessment of Charnwood's status was supported by Squires who claimed in

1981 that

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[12] G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930) p. 8.

[13] The extent and history of the Royal Forest of Leicestershire has been described by D. Crook, 'The Royal Forest of Leicestershire' *c.* 1122-1235' *Transactions of the LAHS*, 87 (2013), pp.137-159.

[14] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 6.

[15] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, p. 3.

[16] B.H. Cox, 'Leicestershire Moot- Sites the Place Name Evidence', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 47 (1971-72), p. 20.

[17] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 6.

[18] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 6.

'opinion is almost unanimous in the belief that Charnwood was never a Royal Forest. Moreover, it was never a Chase'.[19]

Later however, in collaboration with Jeeves, Squires modified his view of Charnwood's status, stating that Charnwood was a chase in the Middle Ages, one 'composed of the wastes of surrounding manors'.[20] Langton and Jones include Charnwood in their list of forests and chases of England and Wales.[21] Jones identifies a number of characteristics which he suggests are common to both forests and chases. They include the presence of swanimote courts, and customary renders of Christmas hens and Easter eggs.[22] Documentary evidence of both in the north of Charnwood can be found in a fifteenth-century Shepshed account roll. It records the accounts of Robert Staunton, bailiff, of a 'swanimote held at Chernwode' and moveable rents of

> 10s. 4d. the value of 62 hens arising from the rents of the customary tenants in Shepshede and Hathern, besides a hen (value) 2d payable at the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord.[23]

Langton and Jones struggle to discern categorical differences between forests and chases in terms of the social and economic impact of each status on local populations. However, the implications of Charnwood's status for its external boundaries might be considerable. Chases were less likely to be perambulated and were not dissafforested under the Charter of the Forest.[24] Documentary evidence regarding the boundaries of chases is consequentially sparse. Little such evidence has been found for Charnwood.

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[19] A. E. Squires 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', in J. Crocker, ed. *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape (*Loughborough, 1981) p. 38.

[20] A. Squires and M. Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands Past and Present* (Loughborough, 1994) p. 55.

[21] J. Langton and G. Jones, eds., *Forests and Chases of England and Wales c. 1500 – c. 1850* (Oxford, 2005), p. viii.

[22] G. Jones, 'A Common of Hunting? Forests, Lordship and Community Before and After the Conquest' in Langton and Jones, eds, *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales c. 1000-1500*, pp. 40-41.

[23] Minister's Accounts, Shepshed,1474, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes, VI*, pp. 368-9.

[24] Langton, 'Medieval Forests and Chases: Another Realm', p. 27.

Charnwood Forest is, however, described in several documentary sources as 'Charley Chase'.[25] The term 'chase' indicates that Charnwood was a seigniorial rather than royal hunting ground. Charnwood's status as a chase despite its usual appellation of 'forest' is similar to that of Ashdown Forest in East Sussex. Ashdown's status is complicated by several changes of ownership between Crown and nobility and the retention of close ties with the Crown throughout the later medieval period.[26] Nevertheless, Ashdown was not subject to Forest Law and, therefore, is regarded as a chase.[27]

Perambulations of Royal Forests can be rich in topographical detail and facilitate mapping of boundaries. The lack of such evidence for Charnwood Forest means that its medieval external boundaries are rather more elusive. They also appear to have been a 'moveable feast'. Charnwood was free of the restrictions that royal authority imposed and was, therefore, subject to encroachment from surrounding manors. Consideration of Charnwood's external boundaries must, therefore, incorporate the ways in which surrounding settlements utilised, encroached upon, and sometimes withdrew from, its inner core. In order to identify those boundaries, an interdisciplinary approach must be adopted.

The Tudor scholar Leland, travelling through Charnwood Forest, appears to describe the bounds of Charnwood's inner core:

> … and leaving Bradgate Park I rode into Charnwood Forest, which is usually called the Waste. It is some twenty miles in circumference, and has abundant

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[25] See for example, I.*P.M.*, Matilda wife of John Lovell, chivaler, 1422, translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p.165; and TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766, f. 2.

[26] Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute, 1876-1882: Environmental Politics and Custom', *Sussex Record Society*, 80, (Lewes, 1997), pp. 20-21.

[27] B. Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute', p. 20.

woodlands….. Ashby de la Zouch and Loughborough (which are market towns), Whitwick Castle and village, and Ulverscroft Priory all lie right on its borders.[28]

Leland's apparent exclusion of Bradgate Park from the confines of Charnwood Forest, the positioning of Ulverscroft Priory on the forest's border, and the use of the term 'waste' indicates that Leland was describing that part of Charnwood which remained unenclosed at the time of his travels in the late 1530s and early 1540s. However, Leland's description of Charnwood's boundaries took no account of areas that had been carved out of the forest, in the form of assarts and emparkment, in earlier centuries. Bradgate was one of a number of medieval deer parks which encircled the forest. For social, cultural, economic, and topographic purposes, these parks must be considered as part of Charnwood Forest. Similarly, Ulverscroft Priory was one of several religious houses within the forest which were responsible for early enclosure, but, rather than lying on a border, Ulverscroft lies towards a geographical centre as defined by surrounding settlements.

This chapter goes on to consider the nature of the external boundaries of Charnwood Forest and how they were defined and expressed throughout the medieval period. There is discussion of the ways in which the external boundaries of Charnwood Forest are perceived today and of how they have been described in the literature to date. Subsequent sections consider archaeological evidence, and medieval and post-medieval documentary evidence, in order to provide a more detailed picture of Charnwood's medieval boundaries. In order to identify characteristics which may be common to the external boundaries of chases, comparisons are drawn between the external boundaries of Charnwood Forest and the external boundaries of the chases of Ashdown Forest (East Sussex) and Cannock Chase (Staffordshire). These characteristics are differentiated

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[28] J. Chandler, ed., *John Leland's Itinery: Travels in Tudor England* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 280 -281.

from those of the external boundaries of Royal Forests by further comparison with the

Royal Forests of Dartmoor (Devon) and Whittlewood (Northamptonshire /

Buckinghamshire). The chapter includes discussion of the role and significance of

Charnwood's medieval external boundaries in land disputes of later periods.

3.2   Medieval Charnwood's external boundaries and their many forms

Historic landscape characterisation supports general descriptions of the nature and

location of Charnwood Forest as a rocky, upland area to the north-west of

Leicestershire.[29]   Indeed, it might be suggested that *The Leicestershire, Leicester and*

Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project defines the external boundaries of

Charnwood Forest simply in terms of its geological and topographical features. The

project describes the Precambrian sedimentary rocks which lie at the heart of

Charnwood Forest as 'some of the oldest in the country' and as making 'a particular

contribution to the distinctiveness and character of the Charnwood Forest area'.

Significantly, younger and extensively quarried igneous rocks are described as lying

'around the edges' of the forest.[30] Rippon has highlighted the need for 'inclusivity' in

historic landscape analysis, where 'analysis is applied evenly and systematically to

every part of a pre-determined study area'.[31] One of the aims of historic landscape

characterisation is to adopt a 'broad, integrated and holistic approach to landscape

issues'.[32] That the Leicestershire project should define Charnwood's boundaries in such

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[29] LCC, *The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project* (2010), pp. 9, 13, at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report_.pdf [accessed 1st March 2013].
[30] LCC, *The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project* (2010), p.9, at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report pdf [accessed 1st March 2013].
[31] S. Rippon, *Historic Landscape Analysis: Deciphering the Countryside* (York, 2004), p. 3.
[32] LCC, *The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Project* (2010), p.1 at http://www.leics.gov.uk/1_leicestershire_hlc_report_introduction.pdf [accessed 16th February 2013].

terms indicates the significance of Charnwood's geology in the utilisation of its landscape.

Whilst Charnwood's geology is one of its defining features, another is its topography. Wylde's 1754 plan shows a number of hills at the core of the forest. The elevation of the highest point, at Bardon Hill to the west of the study area, is 278m. We should, however, be wary of defining Charnwood Forest on a topographical basis as many commentators consider the lowland area of Rothley Plain to be a 'natural extension' of the forest. For example, the nineteenth-century historian Potter divided medieval Charnwood Forest into four parts under the lordships of Barrow, Groby, Whitwick and Shepshed. He did not, 'through want of space', include Rothley. However, he suggests that 'by its plain' Rothley formed 'an extension of the Forest'.[33] Similarly, Crocker states that the boundaries established in a field by field survey of land use in Charnwood Forest, conducted by the Loughborough Naturalist's Club in 1973, included a six and a half mile section of the River Soar (fig. 3.1). Crocker suggests that the reason for this was that the Soar is

> the main drain for the Charnwood Forest watershed and is a natural extension of the habitat sequence from the high tops of Bardon, Beacon, Bradgate and Buddon to the lowland water meadows of Barrow'.[34]

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[33] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, (London, 1842), p. vi.
[34] J. Crocker ed., *Charnwood Forest, A Changing Landscape*, (Loughborough, 1981), p. 14.
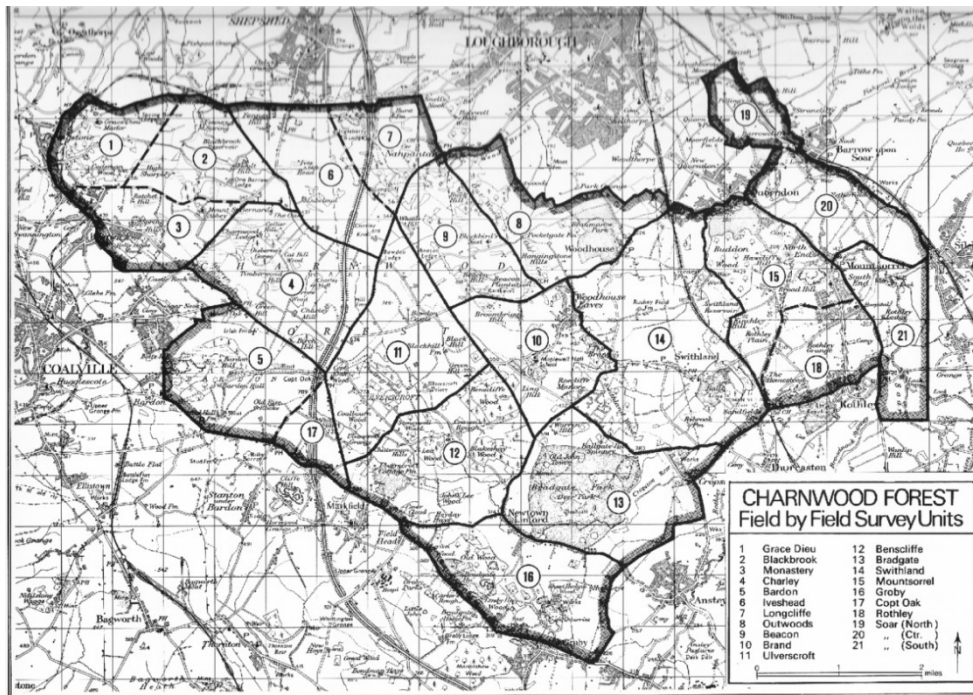
Figure 3.1 Charnwood Forest: Field by Field Survey Units

Source: J. Crocker, ed., *Charnwood Forest, A Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981) p. 13. Crown copyright reserved.

Whilst Crocker was exploring the ecological boundaries of Charnwood, historic cultural

and economic boundaries of Charnwood Forest would also seem to extend to the Soar.

Consideration of various types of boundary indicates that each influences, and is

influenced by, the others. Documentation relating to nineteenth-century enclosure

describes about thirty towns and villages claiming right of common on the forest.[35]

These included Rothley and Barrow on Soar to the east. Using the same means to

denote the forest's economic boundaries in other directions, the villages of Swannington

and Donington le Heath marked its western perimeter, the village of Ratby marked its

southern-most tip and the villages of Belton, and Shepshed and the town of

Loughborough delineated its northern edge. Such a boundary encircled an area of

approximately 42600 acres (17239.6 hectares), an area larger than merely that which

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[35] HL, HAM Box 46/9 letter addressed from Mr Claridge to Lord Moira – report of the benefits to result from the Inclosure of Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, 31st December 1804.

remained unenclosed prior to parliamentary enclosure. Farnham has suggested that, at the time of parliamentary enclosure in 1812, Charnwood Forest encompassed some 10726 acres (4340.7 hectares).[36] More recently, Squires has proposed that parliamentary enclosure annexed 16000 acres (6475 hectares) of common land to that of surrounding landowners.[37] Fig. 3.2 shows unenclosed Charnwood Forest, as defined by Squires, prior to the Inclosure Act of 1808.
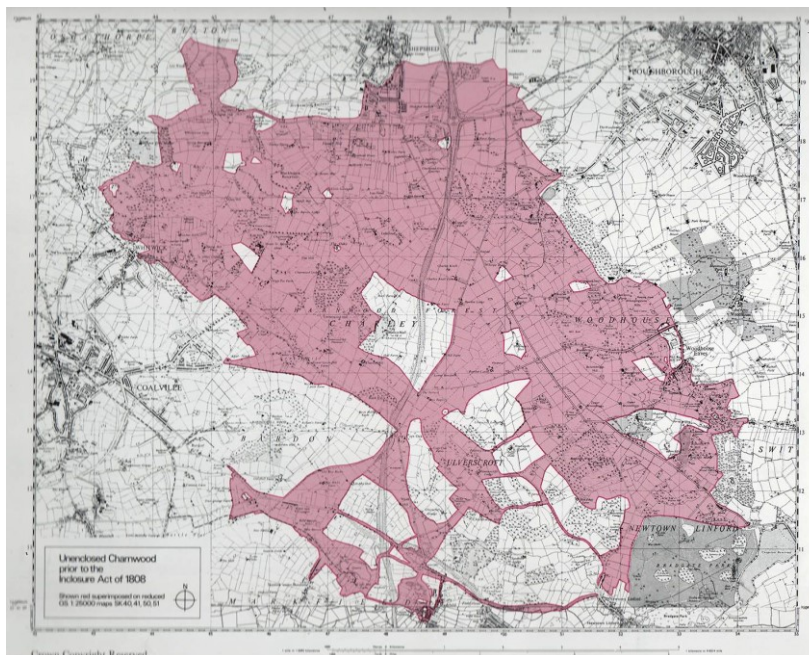
Figure 3.2 Charnwood Forest Prior to Parliamentary Enclosure

Source: A.E. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, ed., Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape (Loughborough, 1981) p. 55. Crown copyright reserved.

This map appears to correspond to the boundaries of Charnwood as described in a contemporary perambulation of the Forest (appendix 7).

This perambulation gives some indication of earlier encroachment on the forest. It mentions medieval deer parks at Bradgate, Grace Dieu, and Garendon, as well several

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[36] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest:Historians and Manors,* p. 1.
[37] A. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape'in J. Crocker, ed. *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape*, p. 54.

'old enclosures' which may date to the medieval period, they include those at Belton, Holywell Wood, Garendon, Stanton and Whitwick.

Whatever the exact acreage awarded to claimants at the time of parliamentary enclosure, it would seem to encompass a much smaller area than the Charnwood defined today as a 'character area' by Natural England (fig. 3.3).
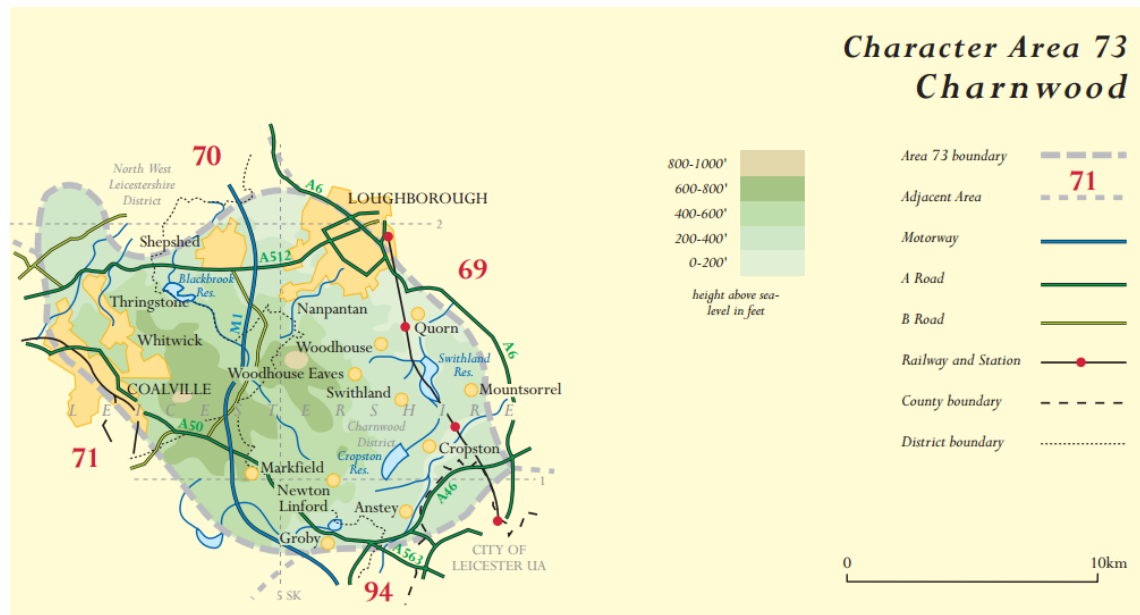
Figure 3.3 Charnwood: Character Area as defined by Natural England

Source: Natural England, Charnwood, p.119 at http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/jca73_tcm6-4950.pdf [accessed 25th January 2013] Reproduced under terms of Open Government License.

It also encompasses a smaller area than that which might have been ascribed to medieval Charnwood Forest. In their study of the forests and chases of England and Wales, Langton and Jones have mapped the external boundaries of Charnwood Forest at what they describe as its 'fullest extent' (fig. 3.4).[38] The boundary that they have drawn, however, may underestimate Charnwood's western extent because it appears to exclude the area encroached upon by Bardon Park.

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[38] J. Langton and G. Jones, *Forests and Chases of Medieval England and Wales c. 1000- c. 1500*, p. xii.
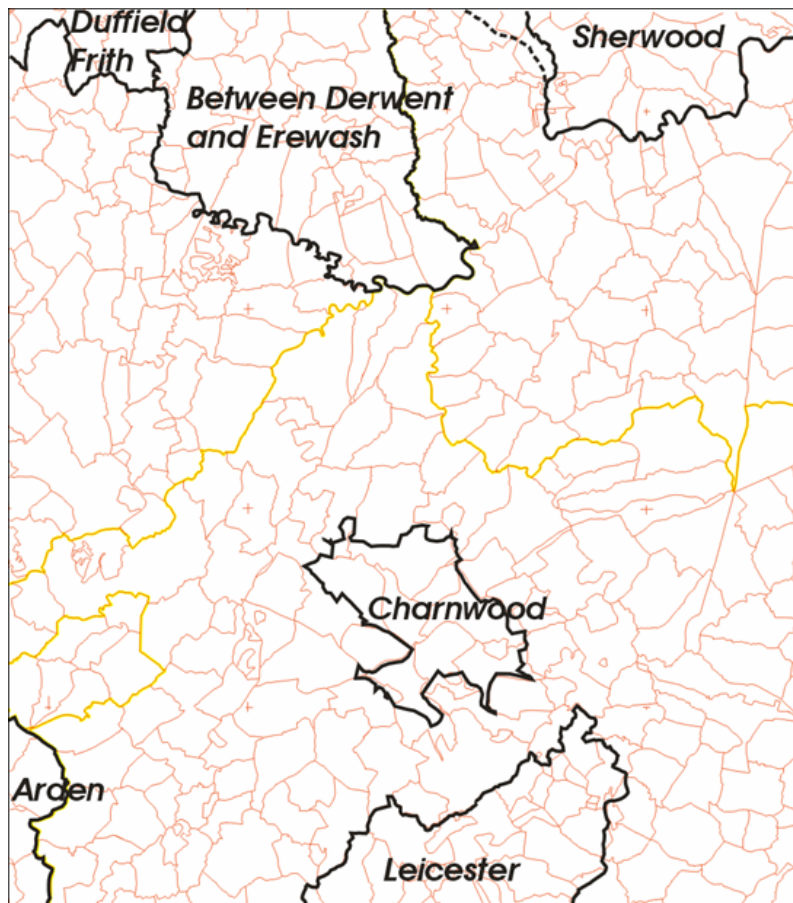
Figure 3.4 Boundaries of Charnwood Forest and Position in Relation to Nearby Forests.

Source: J. Langton and G. Jones, 'Forests and Chases of England and Wales *c*. 1000 to 1850' at http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/forests/ForestsMapTileSheet121.html [accessed 30th September 2016].

It is argued below that the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest were

likely to have been consistent with Wylde's 1754 plan (fig.3.5) and, more particularly,

with places mentioned in the accompanying perambulation (appendix 1).[39]

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[39] ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/1, S. Wylde, Perambulation and Plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754.

Figure 3.5 Later Engraving of Wylde's 1754 Plan of Charnwood.

Source: ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/2a. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

The boundaries suggested by the towns and villages mentioned in the perambulation are consistent with the boundaries suggested by towns and villages claiming rights of common in the forest at the time of enclosure in the south and east. However, they extend further to the north and west, incorporating Bagworth and Ibstock in the west and Ashby, Hathern, Long Whatton and Diseworth in the north, a boundary consistent with that of the study area for this thesis. Support for this definition of Charnwood's

northern boundary is provided in the 1429-31 accounts of William Walker, parker of Breedon.[40] These include receipts for agistment of pigs in Breedon Park from nine men of Sutton Bonington. Neither Breedon nor Sutton Bonington fall within the study area, but a route between them, a distance of over eight miles, would have closely followed the northern edge of Charnwood Forest as defined by Whyte's perambulation. There are geographically closer places within Charnwood where the men from Sutton Bonington could have taken their animals. Their apparent avoidance of the forest might, therefore, indicate a lack of right or permission to do so.

Another way in which the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest can be described is in terms of the features which encircled it. These features represent circles of human activity, many of which are evident in modern Ordnance Survey maps; they include settlements, quarries, and deer parks. Most of the nucleated settlements which surround Charnwood date from the medieval period. Fairly evenly distributed amongst those settlements are medieval castles, or what remains of them, at Ashby, Mountsorrel, Groby, Bagworth and Whitwick. Also distributed around Charnwood are sites of medieval markets and fairs at, Ashby, Belton, Loughborough, Rothley, Mountsorrel, Groby, Bagworth and Whitwick.[41] Medieval Charnwood was also encircled by activity in the extractive industries. To the south, remains of slate workings are still evident at Groby and Swithland (fig 3.6), and there are records of slate tiles from Swithland being used on the reroofing of Leicester Castle in 1377-78.[42]

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[40] TNA, SC 6/908/10, Account of William Walker, parker of Breedon, 1429-1431.
[41] Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516, updated 16th December 3013, at http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html [accessed 8th January 2016].
[42] L. Fox, 'Leicester Castle', *Transactions of LAHS*, 2, 2 (1941-42), p. 143.

Figure 3.6 Slate Workings at Martinshaw Woods, Groby.

Source: Photograph by Julie Attard. Reproduced with permission of Julie Attard.

Such activity is documented in an inquisition *post-mortem* of 1343 which records 'the quarry of sclates of Swythelond and Groby Park'.[43] The north-western edge of the forest is marked by coalfields, with documentary evidence of mining at Coleorton from 1498,[44] and at Swannington from 1320.[45] Limestone quarrying was taking place in the medieval period at Grace Dieu in the north-west,[46] and at Barrow in the east.[47] Also in the east, archaeological evidence has revealed possible exploitation of Mountsorrel granodiorite as pottery temper in the early medieval period.[48] Jones has suggested that

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[43] I*PM* of Henry de Ferrariis, 1343, transcribed by G.F. Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, pp. 362-363.

[44] C. Owen, *The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield*, 1200 -1900 (Ashbourne, 1984), p. 22.

[45] A. Hamilton Thompson, *A Calendar of Charters and Other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester*, no. 831 (Leicester, 1933), p. 436.

[46] P. Liddle and R.F. Hartley, *An Archaeological Survey of Grace Dieu* (Leicester,1995), p. 16.

[47] J.B. Moseley, 'Geology and Mineral Extraction' in Crocker, *Charnwood Forest: a Changing Landscape*, p. 140.

[48] For discussion of Mountsorrel granodiorite- tempered pottery (Charnwood ware), including widespread distribution of finds see D. Williams and A. Vince, 'The Characterisation and Interpretation of Early to Middle Saxon Granitic Tempered Pottery in England', *Medieval Archaeology*, 41, 1997, pp. 214 -220. Evidence for the possible use of local granodiorite in prehistoric pottery industry at Mountsorrel is discussed by D. Knight, P. Marsden and J. Carney, 'Local or Non-Local? Prehistoric Grandiorite-

such proto-industrial activity is often associated with forests and chases.[49] Certainly, when such cultural and economic circles dating from medieval Charnwood are considered alongside Wylde's 1754 perambulation, a great deal of correlation is evident.

The complexity of human activity on medieval Charnwood's margins did not, however, mean that its centre was a cultural and economic void. It was a shared and multifunctional space, not extensively settled, but one in which deer were hunted, animals were pastured, estovers were gathered and religious houses were founded.[50] Charnwood Forest is an area which lies at the junction of the modern boroughs of Charnwood and Hinckley and Bosworth and the district of North-West Leicestershire.[51] Although precise medieval manorial boundaries are difficult to define, Farnham argued in the 1930s that Charnwood Forest also lay at the junction of the medieval manors of Groby, Whitwick, Shepshed and Barrow. Farnham made extensive use of medieval documentary sources to compile, in conjunction with Herbert, the map shown in fig. 3.7. The map 'indicates the relative positions and boundaries of the four manors whose wastes were included in the forest'.[52]

Tempered Pottery in the East Midlands' in A. Gibson, *Prehistoric Pottery: People, Pattern and Purpose* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 111- 126.

[49] G. Jones, 'A Common of Hunting?' p. 38.

[50] See for example, thirteenth century plea roll references to hunting and rights of fuel gathering in Charnwood in Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp.26-27; see also feet of fines, 1240, for details of dispute between Hugh de Albiniaco, Earl of Arundel and Roger de Quency, Earl of Winchester about rights of hunting and gathering of estovers in the forest in Farnham, *Medival Village Notes*, VI, p. 349.

[51] These local authorities were created in 1974 as a result of the Local Government Act 1972 see https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/contents [acessed 25th November, 2017].

[52] R.E. Martin, 'introduction' to Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. xvi.
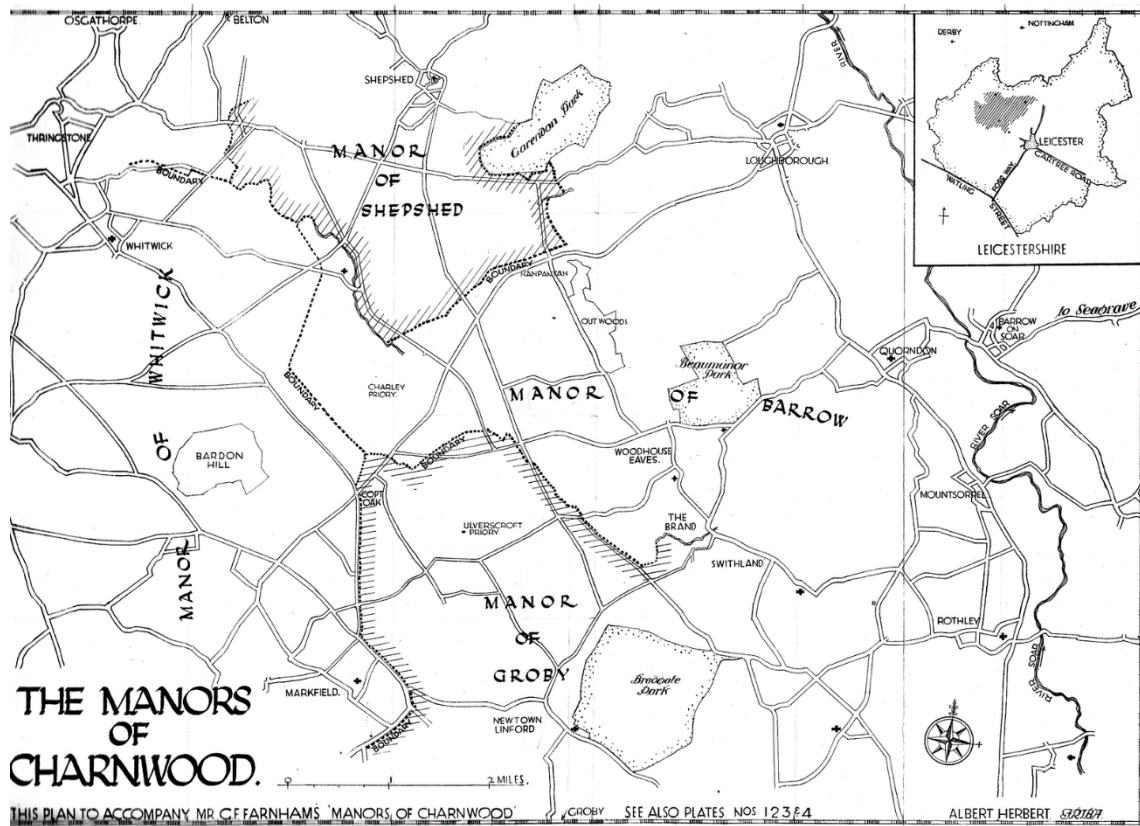
Figure 3.7 The Manors of Charnwood

Source: A. Herbert and G.F. Farnham, 'The Manors of Charnwood', in G.F. Farnham, Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors (Leicester 1930), pp. 2-3. Reproduced with permission of Richard Buckley, LAHS.

The internal divisions of Charnwood Forest will be considered in chapter 5; however, it would seem that the bands of human activity that represented the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest did surround an inner core. Consideration of Charnwood's external boundaries will now focus on this inner core, the rights associated with it, and how the vulnerability and permeability of its boundaries led to dispute and conflict.

3.3 Charnwood's Inner Core: perambulations, gates and fences

The inner core of Charnwood Forest can be compared to that of Ashdown Forest. Both are areas of elevated topography with soils considered to be difficult to cultivate.[53] Like

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[53] For discussion of Ashdown's topography, soils and vegetation see Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute' p. 15- 17.

Charnwood, medieval Ashdown was 'an intercommoning space between settlement nuclei' with rights of common including the grazing of cattle, pannage for pigs and the taking of wood for hedgebote and housebote.[54] Short has proposed that Forests and chases were places where rights to hunt were 'superimposed onto this older lineage of community usage'.[55]

Glimpses of the resources which may have been enjoyed in medieval Charnwood's inner core are captured in a Beaumanor customary book from the immediate post-medieval period. The book stated that the tenant,

> by the custme of this manner may loppe, toppe, and shred all the trees growing vpon or aboute his Tenyment

And that he

> may have all manor of cattall goynge and depasturinge within the Towneshipp where his copiholde lyeth and in the forrest of Charnewodd without number, and may chose a convenient place to sett a picke in for to lay his fother for provision of his cattall agaynste winter in the forest within this Manor, and there by assignment of the Lordes Bailyf may get Tynsell for to fence the same. And also to take in seasonable tyme of the years gorse furres and ferne in any parte of the same for este.[56]

Further insights into community utilisation of Charnwood Forest are seen in other post-medieval documentary sources such as exchequer depositions. One such case dealt with the implications for commoners of the building of a cottage and the enclosure of land in the manor of Whitwick. Several deponents, all claiming long association with the forest, described it as a 'running common'. One deponent, John Whatton, aged 50, of Swannington

> knows the forest or waste called Charnewood forest, and that the commoners there have a running common in every part of the said forest without herding of

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[54] Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute', p. 21.

[55] Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute', p. 24.

[56] ROLLR, DG9/1952/3 Beaumanor customary book 1586.

any cattle, and has known the same for 40 years, as he was born and brought up at Thorp, a neighbour town to the said forest, where divers of his neighbours of Swannington are commoners in the said forest.'[57]

Another deponent, Nicholas Standley, of Shepshed, a labourer aged 50 years had known

the forest or waste called Charnewood forest for 40 years and that the commoners have only a running common there. He was bred and brought up under his father, a commoner in the said forest, and he himself has been a commoner during all his lifetime, and continually from time to time hath been in employed in the falling and lopping of wood and making of charcoal in the said forest.[58]

Such testimony from post-medieval sources highlights clear associations with Charnwood's medieval past and indicates that inhabitants of surrounding settlements enjoyed considerable customary rights in the forest.

The cultural links between the holding of customary rights and Charnwood Forest's external boundaries are not, however, precisely defined. It is difficult to determine, in spatial and tenurial terms, where they began and ended. In his work on Dartmoor (Devon), Fox has demonstrated distinct links between common rights and the external boundaries of the moor. He identifies a hierarchy of rights associated with concentric circles of settlements which surrounded the moor. Fox suggests that settlements on the inner circle enjoyed the most generous rights and that such rights gradually diminished with greater distance from Dartmoor.[59] Whilst the settlement pattern around Charnwood does appear to be one of a broad band, clear distinctions in levels of rights associated with concentric circles of settlements within the band are more difficult to establish

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[57] Interrogatories to be ministered to certain witnesses produced to be examined on the part of Thomas Wynadd, complainant, against William Everton and John Slighe, defendants, concerning a cottage lately built on the waste, 1604, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 140-142.

[58] Interrogatories to be ministered to certain witnesses produced to be examined on the part of Thomas Wynadd, complainant, against William Everton and John Slighe, defendants, concerning a cottage lately built on the waste, 1604, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 140-142.

[59] H. Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands: Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages* (Exeter, 2012), pp. 47-55.

here. Furthermore, whilst inhabitants of medieval Dartmoor seem to have used a

number of terms, like 'countrymen', 'foreigners' and 'strangers' to describe those they

considered to be outsiders,[60] there is little evidence in sources relating to medieval

Charnwood of the use of such terms for those living beyond the region. [61] However,

Dartmoor was a Royal Forest, and the lack of such evidence in Charnwood may be a

further example of characteristic uncertainties about the external boundaries of chases.

Perambulations of chases were uncommon. A rare example is a twelfth-century

perambulation of Cranborne Chase (Dorset/Wiltshire) which was used to settle disputes

in later periods.[62] However, the ambiguities associated with the outer edges of many

other chases were reflected in intense conflict over land and associated rights in the

medieval period and beyond. Many disputes have been recorded for Charnwood and

for medieval chases such as Ashdown Forest (Sussex) and Cannock Chase

(Staffordshire). Disputes arose at Cannock even though the rights of free tenants had

been protected when that chase was confirmed to the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield

in 1290.[63] Birrell provides a detailed account of allegations of disseisation of common

wood and pasture, fence breaking and the taking away of trees in thirteenth-century

Cannock.[64] Similar allegations were made in medieval Charnwood. For example,

uncertainties about rights associated with the parish of Ratby on Charnwood's southern

boundary were highlighted in a customary dispute of 1279. In this particular case,

William le Butiller and his wife Angereta, of Narborough, claimed rights of common on

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[60] Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands*, p. 15.
[61] A rare reference to 'a stranger' discovered during this research is 'received for skins of sheep slaughtered in the kitchen sold to a stranger - 7d' Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory, Leicestershire, 1414-18 The Draft Account Book of the Treasuresses,* (Ashby, 2013) p. 13.
[62] E.H. Lane Poole, 'Cranborne Chase' in E. Crittall, ed. *A History of Wiltshire*, IV, (London, 1959) pp. 458-460.
[63] J. Birrell, 'Common Rights in the Medieval Forest: Disputes and Conflicts in the Thirteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 117 (1987), p. 46.
[64] Birrell, 'Common Rights in the Medieval Forest', pp.46-47.

the forest. These rights were disputed by Alexander Comyn, Earl of Boghan, lord of the

manor of Whitwick and his wife Elizabeth. The manor of Whitwick included parts of

Ratby. William and Angerata claimed 'common of pasture in 200 acres of wood, heath

and waste, where they are wont to common always with their stock'. The Earl's bailiff,

Richard of Colshull responded that 'the communa (common) of Charnewode is neither

'villa' nor hamlet'and that

> the common placed in view is in the parish of Roteby (Ratby) … the vicar of the
> church of Rotteby takes all the small tithes arising from the said 200 acres, of
> which William complains that he has been disseised, and he asks for judgement
> and whether it is in the parish of Rotteby.

However, William and Angareta's contention was that the

> Communa de Chanewode is a great waste and is not in the parish of Rotteby but
> that the prior of Ware takes the tithes arising from the said Communa de
> Charnewode as of the gift and grant of the earls.

In response to this, the bailiff suggested that the question of the disputed area's

inclusion in the parish of Ratby was not even relevant because

> if it is decided by the assize that the communa de Charnewode is not in the
> parish of Rotteby, that William and Angareta were never in seisin of the said
> common as of a free tenement so that they could be disseised.[65]

In this case there seems to have been conflicting understandings about the nature of the

disputed land and where, and under whose jurisdiction, it lay. The contested land was

described by both parties as the '*communa de Charnewode'*, but they could not agree on

whether or not the land lay within the parish of Ratby. If the '*communa de*

Charnewode' did lie within the parish of Ratby it would seem that Earl, as the local

lord, felt able to deny William and Agnetha the right to pasture their animals there.

However, the Earl also argues that if the land did not lie within his jurisdiction, then

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[65] Assize Roll no.1245, Leicestershire, 1279, Transcribed by Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes*, VI, pp. 353-354.

William and Agnetha, as his tenants, were not entitled to pasture their animals there anyway. The case highlights the complex relationships between the holding of common rights, the locatability of common rights, and Charnwood's external boundaries, relationships which were to generate conflict beyond the medieval period.

Chases across the country seem to have been the subject of continuing controversy well into the modern period. Short's account of the particularly long running 1876 -1882 'Ashdown Forest dispute' between the lord of the manor of Duddleswell and local landowners concerning the nature of ancient rights in Ashdown Forest provides one example.[66] There were similar problems in modern Charnwood where the eighteenth century saw an escalation in social unrest caused by the perceived threat to privileges enjoyed by commoners in what one of their number described as 'our maker's manor'.[67] Fears that rights considered to be sacrosanct and inalienable were about to be lost were manifested in fence-breaking, the digging up of rabbit warrens and outbreaks of fighting.[68]

A particularly revealing source is a 1776 tithe dispute between the rector of the parish of Loughborough and owners and occupiers of certain lands known as the Parks or Park Closes and the Parks or Widenbrook Closes in that parish.[69] The case revolved around whether or not the owners or occupiers of said lands had rights of common upon Charnwood Forest. Deponents for both sides gave compelling evidence based on their long term associations with the area. Significantly they were asked to

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[66] Short, 'The Ashdown Forest Dispute', pp. 9-50.
[67]. Here Potter, writing in the early nineteenth-century recalls the words of a commoner who he had apparently spoken to and who he describes as 'a very old forester', Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest,* pp. 23-24.
[68] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest,* pp. 23-24.
[69] TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766.

set forth what you know and have heard from Ancient persons who are Dead relating to such Custom and the reputation / concerning the same.[70]

One witness, William Whittley, 48, a farmer of Beaumanor recalled the words of his uncle, Robert Whittley who had died twenty years earlier aged 102. Robert had 'been born and lived the greatest part of his lifetime in Charley Forest' and had frequently spoken of

> When the said forest was driven of cattle therein at the Swain Mote Court there held That in case any cattle were found there in the said forest belonging to the occupier of Loughborough Parks they were Impounded, as trespassing in the said forest / or the owners paid an Acknowledgement for such cattle trespassing therein. And that one Mr Oldershaw who was the Owner and occupier of a considerable part of the said park was obliged to rent a little house on the said forest, called the Goathouse of the then Lord Huntingdon / in order to give him a common right for his cattle on said forest.[71]

However another deponent contested this view. William Brewin a shepherd who had driven sheep from the said lands to pasture on the forest, supported the landowners or occupiers claim to common rights. He stated that he

> Doth believe that the owners and occupiers of Lands within the said Parish of Loughborough have as appendant appurtenant or belonging thereunto a Right of Common for their cattle on the said forest called Charnwood or Charley Chase.[72]

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which personal loyalties or ties to each side affected these testimonies. However, such differing understandings may reflect a lack of clarity and definition over customary rights that had persisted for centuries and represent a legacy of the equivocal nature of medieval chase boundaries.

The external boundaries of Charnwood were not extensively documented in the medieval period itself. Except for a copy of a badly damaged, speculatively dated and

[70] TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766, f.4.
[71] TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766, f.5.
[72] TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766, f. 2.

erroneously recorded 'description of Charnwood's bounds',[73] the only documentary

evidence for a medieval perambulation of Charnwood is that found on the verso of

extracts of Groby Court Rolls dated 1275-1350. The perambulation is reproduced

below.

> Be it remembered concerning the bounds of Charnewode, viz., of the purparty of William de Ferrers, namely del Bromymyre by Nayleston and he takes there the rent as far as Bataylewonge this side of Swynfen on the road which leads from Coventry, from which side if the men of Nailston or of Ibestoke drive slowly the said William de Ferrers can impound them. Item, the said William will hold a Swanymot on le Coppudoke and will drive thence as far as Rediske. And from there as far as Neuton on the other side of Coppudoke as far as the king's highway at the head of the vill of Merkefeld as far as Whiteclyf. And from there by a path as far as the angle of Brounnesheye. Item, all the wood of Tymberwod and all as far as Constonlegh as far as Taberdoke, together with the third part of Tynnemedowe. Item, from the spring by Aldermanhawe through the middle of Lousiker as far as the wood of Loughburgh called Outewode. And from there as far as the shhepfold of Loughburgh. And from there as far as the rates of Halywellehawe. And from there as far as the head of the vill of Thorpebrend and so by Mounkeswod to Blakebroc, and from thereas far as Blakeford, and the said William will hold a Swanymot on Beltonlyghtes, and from the spring of Aldermanhawe all the little castle and the whole close of Charleigh as far as Birchewode. [74]

The western-most place mentioned in the document is Nailstone, close to Bagworth.

This suggests that medieval Charnwood did indeed extend much further west than it did

at the time of parliamentary enclosure. However, the place-name Nailstone appears not

as part of the perambulation itself but as a preliminary note regarding the properties of

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[73] ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries of Charnwood Forest, 1246-7, transcribed c. 1760. The reference given here is that given in the R.O.L.L.R catalogue, however, examination of the document reveals it is actually entitled 'description of boundaries *on* Charnwood Forest rather than *of* Charnwood Forest, and that it comprises copies of the bounds of Loughborough, Shepshed, Whitwick and Markfield. With the document is a copy of a map with text that relates to the thirteenth century and it is from this text that the 1246-47 date is taken. This map, although fascinating and useful for consideration of Charnwood's internal divisions, is a map of the bounds of Shepshed, not of the bounds of Charnwood Forest. Whilst some information about Charnwood's external bounds can be gleaned from this document, it provides no information on the forest's southern and eastern margins, perhaps because of the damage to the original(s) from which this document was copied.
[74] ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis',1275-1350, transcribed in G.F. Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 367.

William de Ferrers and apparent restrictions imposed on the 'men of Nailstone and

Ibestoke (Ibstock)'. Places mentioned in the document, where they can be located, are

shown in fig.3.8.
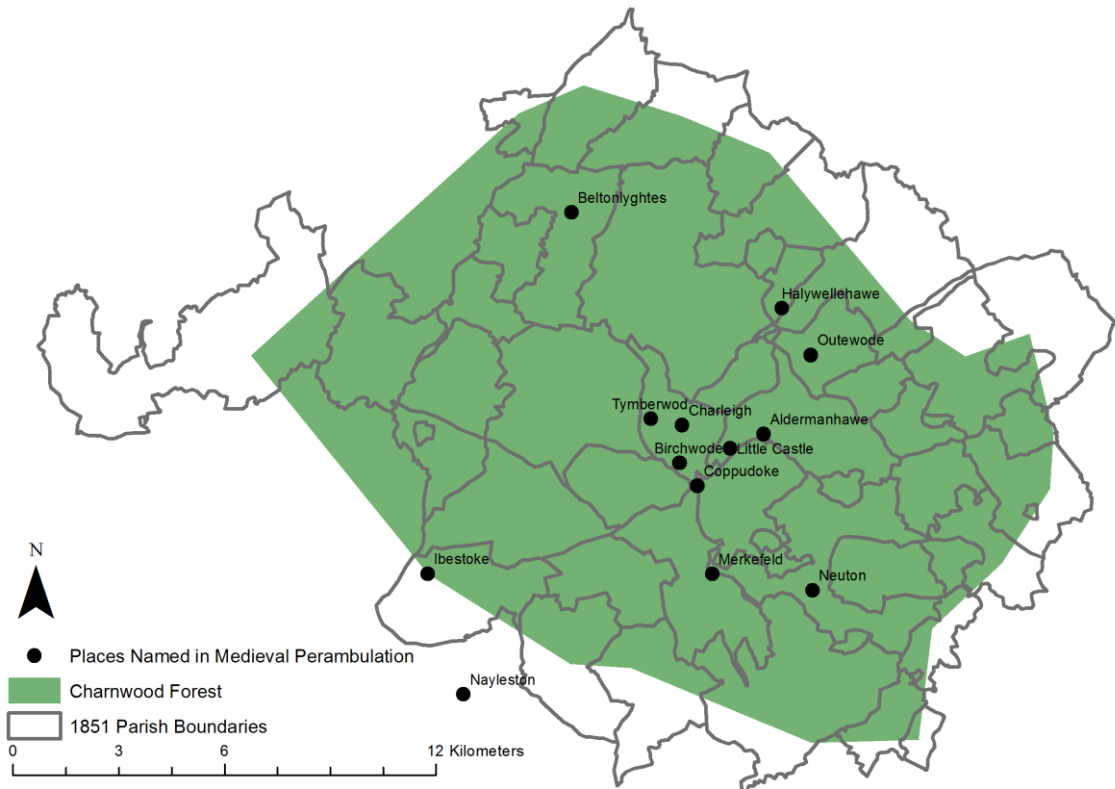
Figure 3.8 Places Named in Medieval Perambulation of Charnwood Forest (1275-1350).

Source: Data obtained from ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis',1275-1350. Map also contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

This perambulation of Charnwood would appear to differ significantly from

contemporary perambulations of Royal Forests. For example, whilst the 1299 -1300

perambulation of Whittlewood Forest,[75] situated on the border of Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, appears to be a fairly straightforward definition of its boundaries as described from one landscape feature to another, Charnwood's perambulation includes details of rights associated with the forest and penalties for those illicitly crossing its bounds. The fact that it appears on the verse of a court roll written at apparently the same time, probably in the same hand, and containing copies of a number of deeds, indicates that it was intended to support and clarify local land ownership agreements. It is possible, however, that this perambulation also represented evidence of a route through which animals could be driven within Charnwood. The extract below, for example, provides a possible reference to transhumance.

> if the men of Nailston or of Ibestoke drive slowly the said William de Ferrers can impound them.

The extract emphasises the authority of William de Ferrers, lord of the manor of Groby, and also indicates that the men of Nailstone and Ibstock were considered to be 'outsiders'. Whilst this brings into question the inclusion of Nailstone and Ibstock within the bounds of Charnwood Forest, the forest would still seem to be of economic significance to those places. In his study of the Royal Forest of Leicestershire, located in the south east of the county, Crook has suggested that the geographical extent of the area economically and culturally affected by that forest may have been far greater than the area of the forest itself. Crook bases this suggestion on the liability of men living outside the royal forest of Leicestershire to attend forest eyres.[76] Forest eyres were courts held in Royal Forests and none were held in Charnwood. There is, however,

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[75] TNA, C67/6A, Perambulation of Whittlewood Forest, 1299 -1300, (annotated), C.Dyer, R.Jones and M. Page, 'The Whittlewood Project: Medieval Settlements and Landscapes in the Whittlewood Area' 2005, at http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-458-1/dissemination/PDF/Reports/Historical_Reports/Documents/H_-_Documents_-_Whittlewood_perambulation_1299-1300.pdf [accessed 6th April 2016].
[76] Crook, 'The Royal Forest of Leicestershire *c*.1122-1235', p. 144.

considerable documentary evidence that other outdoor courts associated with Royal

Forests, the Swanimote courts, were held in Charnwood.[77] Attendance at these may

have had similar implications. The perambulation describes swanimote courts held at

Copudoke and at Beltonlyhtes.

> Item, the said William [de Ferrers] will hold a Swanymot on le Coppudoke and
> will drive thence as far as Rediske….
>
> …. And from there as far as the head of the vill of Thorpebrend and so by
> Mounkeswod to Blakebroc, and from thereas far as Blakeford, and the said
> William will hold a Swanymot on Beltonlyghtes…

These swanimote courts may have represented 'gateways' to Charnwood's core, places

where administrative checks were made on the ownership of animals entering and

leaving the forest. Ryden has suggested that borders are traditionally places where

guards are posted.[78] Perhaps, then, the borders of Charnwood Forest's inner core were

'guarded' by its swanimote courts.

Whilst swanimote courts might have represented administrative gateways to medieval

Charnwood, there may also have been a number of physical gateways to the forest.

These were identified in the nineteenth century by Potter who described

> a number of ancient entrances to the forest, still known by the name of Forest
> Gates, which will show that not only were its boundaries formally known, but
> that it was enclosed by some kind of wall or fence.[79]

Potter specifically identified Forest Gate, near Loughborough; Pocket Gate; Forest Gate

near Woodhouse Brand; the Hall Gates; Horsepool Lane Gate; Meadow Lane Gate;

Belton Low Wood Gate; Tickow Lane Gate; Sheepshed Forest Gate and Snell's Lane

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[77] See, ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis',1275-1350, transcribed in G.F. Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 367; Minister's Accounts, 1474, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes, VI*, pp. 368-9; TNA, E 134/6Geo3/east1. Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766.

[78] K.C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993)

[79] Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest*, p. 27.

Gate. Modern place-name analysis suggests that the element *gate* is likely to derive from ON *gata* and refer to 'a way, a path, a road or a street' rather than to an actual gateway through some form of physical barrier.[80] Furthermore, forests and chases are generally considered to be unenclosed spaces to be distinguished from deer parks which were enclosed by pales.[81] However, Langton has recently challenged the assumption that forests and chases were unenclosed areas whose bounds were understood only in terms of natural features, roads, tracks or crosses. He states that all forests were at least partially enclosed and cites Charnwood Forest as an example.[82] The evidence he uses to support this is a view of frankpledge held at Barrow in 1546,

> It is ordered that all inhabitants there make the 'forest hedge' and ditches before the next court, under pain of each of them offending, 12d.[83]

Langton suggests the forest hedge was intended to protect surrounding cultivated areas from animals pasturing on the forest.[84] Langton is correct; crops would have needed protection from invasion by commoners' animals. The forest hedge may, however, have had another purpose, the prevention of illicit exploitation of forest resources by those considered to be 'outsiders'. Documentary evidence from Woodhouse, for example,

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[80] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 1, (London, 1956) pp. 196-7.
[81] J.C. Cox, *The Royal Forests of England*, p. 2.
[82] J. Langton, 'Forest Fences: Enclosures in a Pre-Enclosure Landscape', *Landscape History*, 35:1 (2014), p. 8.
[83] View of Frankpledge held at Barrow, 16th October, 1545, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors* p. 63.
[84] Langton, 'Forest Fences', p. 8. Here Langton is citing Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. xiv. Page xiv is, however, part of the introduction to Farnham's work which was written by R.E. Martin. Martin appears to have drawn his conclusions from sources other than the document itself. These sources include a personal account, given to Martin by a Mr Thomas Hodges, parish clerk of Swithland, *c.* 1900. Hodges could remember 'when there was a gate across the road at the upper end of the village, to prevent stock on the open forest from coming down into the street', R.E. Martin, 'Introduction' in Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. xiv.

provides a possible link between upkeep of the forest fence and concerns about forest

resources such as holly, thorns and acorns.

> Item that the forest fense bye kepte a cording to the ollde custom in payne of evearye defowlt 12d.
>
> Item that yf there bye anye that dothe breke any hegges in payne of everye defowlt 12d.
>
> Item that the[y] felle no holye nor thornes with in my lodes lybertye without a lyssenes, in peyne of every defalte 6s. 8d.
>
> Item that the[y] felle nor gedres no aKornes within the forest in peyne of euere defowlt 2d.[85]

The last item appears to refer to the prohibition of the felling and gathering of acorns

within the forest and indicates that such forest resources were highly valued. A physical

barrier of some sort might then, have been deemed appropriate.

The nature of that physical boundary may have varied around the forest, the

documentary evidence discussed so far, for example, has mentioned hedges, fences and

ditches, and often a combination of a hedge or fence with a ditch alongside. Hedges

may have been 'dead hedges', composed of cut brushwood, or live hedges.[86] Live

hedges took a long time to mature and to become effective barriers. Langton associates

live hedges with assarts and contemporary intentions that assarts were to become

permanent features of the landscape.[87] Examples of such hedges might survive today in

the Ulverscroft area of Charnwood (fig. 3.9) where eighteenth-century cartographical

sources reveal the extent of medieval encroachment (see chapter 2, fig. 2.15).

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[85] ROLLR, DE 169/92, Pains, Woodhouse, 8th October, Elizabeth 10 (1568).
[86] Langton, 'Forest Fences', pp. 13-17.
[87] Langton, 'Forest Fences', pp. 13-14.

The process of encroachment was the main threat to the stability of the boundaries of Charnwood's inner core. Much of that encroachment, both from religious houses within the forest and from settlements surrounding it, took place in the later medieval period. Encroachment left Charnwood's inner core with the very much reduced extents described by post-medieval commentators like Leland. It was, however, a complex, inconsistent, varied and sometimes reversible process which is given more detailed attention and analysis in chapter 4.

Figure 3.9 Hedgerow near Ulverscroft Priory

3.4   Conclusion

This chapter has explored the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest. The most defining feature of those boundaries would seem to be their ambiguity. The few

medieval perambulations that we have of Charnwood are rather unsatisfactory and the forest cannot simply defined by the edges of its upland rocky interior, or by the area which remained unenclosed at any particular time in the medieval period or beyond. However, it has been argued here that Charnwood Forest's external boundaries were expressed in landscape features such as the settlements, castles, markets, fairs, quarries and deer parks which surrounded and interacted with it. There is evidence that at least some of the forest was fenced and that swanimote courts may have regulated entry to the forest. The forest's external cultural boundaries can be seen, to a limited extent, in a range of contemporary documentary sources which seem to include or exclude groups and individuals from enjoyment of forest resources. However, examination of documentary sources has not revealed clearly defined diminishing levels of customary rights associated with increasing distance from the core of Charnwood such as those identified by Fox in his study of Dartmoor (Devon).

Some of the most useful sources are post-medieval in date, particularly Wylde's 1754 plan and perambulation of Charnwood. The boundaries suggested by Wylde's perambulation appear to represent the cultural and economic periphery of the forest, not only in the eighteenth century, but also a legacy of those in the medieval period. This periphery appears to have remained fairly constant. The edges of the largely unenclosed core of woodland and pasture which it surrounded are, however, more difficult to define.

Much of the uncertainty can be associated with Charnwood's status as a chase under the jurisdiction of the Earls of Leicester and Chester, an area in which seigniorial, rather than royal, jurisdiction prevailed. In this respect, Charnwood was similar to other chases, such as Ashdown Forest (East Sussex) and Cannock Chase (Staffordshire). All

three were subject to conflict and social unrest in the medieval period and beyond. This may have been due to the ill-defined nature of their external boundaries. This chapter has highlighted the differences in the expression and definition of external boundaries between Charnwood Forest and the Royal Forests of Dartmoor (Devon) and Whittlewood (Northamptonshire/ Buckinghamshire). It is interesting to note that status, rather than topography, seems to have dictated the similarities and differences between Charnwood Forest and other areas.

The ill-defined nature of the boundaries of Charnwood's inner core made them vulnerable to the effects of encroachment. However, encroachment on Charnwood was a complex, varied and not always irreversible process, and it is to such issues that the next chapter now turns.

Chapter 4   Cuts to the chase: the process of encroachment on Charnwood Forest

...there is there waste newly assarted[1]

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 identified the ambiguities in medieval Charnwood Forest's external boundaries and related that ambiguity to the forest's status as a chase. It was a status which facilitated the gradual and piecemeal erosion of forest boundaries by various forms of enclosure. John Leland described one such enclosure, encountered during his journey through the forest in the 1540s:

> A little further on I rode past Beaumanor Park, which contains an attractive lodge and is enclosed by stone walls.[2]

Leland was describing one of the many medieval deer parks which characterised the Charnwood landscape. Emparkment took vast chunks out of the edges of Charnwood's inner core, but encroachment on the forest also took place through the processes of assarting and purpresture. Assarting has been defined as the 'clearing and digging up of land for the cultivation of grain' and purpresture as 'the enclosure of land for any other purpose'.[3] This chapter considers how enclosure in all its forms changed the extent and nature of forest boundaries and explores the reasons for those changes. Using archaeological, place-name, cartographic and documentary evidence, it examines the ways in which surrounding settlements encroached upon, and sometimes withdrew from, the forest's core. There is analysis of patterns of medieval emparkment and a

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[1] TNA, E 199/44/2, Inquest lands of John Comyn, 1296.
[2] J. Chandler, *John Leland's Itinerary* (Stroud, 1993), p. 280.
[3] J. Langton, 'Forest Fences: Enclosures in a Pre-Enclosure Landscape', *Landscape History*, 35:1(2014), p. 6.

discussion of the role of manorial wealth in the chronology of that process. Two centres of encroachment are identified, one to the north of the study area at Oakley Wood, another, to the south of the study area at Charley. These were the foci of encroachment by the manors which surrounded the forest and took small bites out of forest edges. This is particularly evident in the post-conquest period to the south and west of the forest. However, futher isolated areas of assarting are identified within the forest at sites of religious houses.

A correlation between shifts in forest boundaries and demographic pressures has been identified by Smith in the Leicestershire VCH volumes.[4] In this chapter, Smith's theories are considered alongside population estimates for four Charnwood manors (in the years 1086 and 1379) and patterns of medieval assarting and purpresture. The chapter explores and challenges the notion that assarting and cultivation of Charnwood's relatively poor soils was necessitated by the need to provide for the demands of an increasing population in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but that the process was reversed in subsequent periods of population decline. The chapter builds on the work of Mark Bailey who has questioned the emphasis placed on cultivation of 'marginal' areas at times of demographic change.[5] The chapter concludes with a case study of Charnwood's southern boundary, a boundary which may itself have been created by a process of assarting, but which is characterised by an intriguing archaeological feature which appears to link landscapes within and beyond the forest.

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[4] A correlation suggested by C.T. Smith, 'Population', W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, III (London, 1955), p. 133.
[5] M. Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin in the Medieval English Economy', *Economic History Review*, second series, 42, 1 (1989), pp. 1-17.

4.2 Encroachment by emparkment

A major form of encroachment on Charnwood Forest was that of emparkment, a process facilitated by Charnwood's lack of Royal Forest status. Had Charnwood Forest been a Royal Forest, its boundaries would have been subject to a greater degree of control and protection. The degree of emparkment around Charnwood is not reflected in a plethora of extant medieval licences to enclose, however, such licenses may not have been considered necessary where the king's forest rights were not threatened.[6] The boundaries of many of Charnwood's medieval deer parks can be seen today in modern field boundaries and/or in surviving park pales. Surviving park pales recorded by the Leicestershire and Rutland HER include those at Ashby (SK 370 193); Anstey (SK 551 074); Bardon (SK 4587 1127); Bradgate (SK 5290 1007, SK 5332 1101, SK 5394 1098); Coleorton (SK 39 18, SK 393 179, SK 394 183); Quorndon (SK 564 157); and Ratby (SK 492 062).[7]

A number of questions can be asked about Charnwood's medieval deer parks; these include their number, their location, their extent, the date of their creation and their purpose. There would appear to be no easy or simple answers to these questions. Estimation of the number of medieval deer parks surrounding Charnwood vary. In 1970 Cantor compiled a list of the medieval parks of Leicestershire.[8] However, he acknowledged that his list may not have been exhaustive, and possible omissions from the Charnwood area are Burgh Park at Whitwick, and parks at Belton, Grace-Dieu, Rothley, Little Haw and Anstey. In a later study of the medieval parks of Charnwood Forest, Squires and Humphrey describe eleven parks in considerable detail, and four

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[6] L.M Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 46 (1970-71), p. 13.
[7] LRHER, MLE 4283; MLE 397; MLE 21836; MLE 21914; MLE 1922; MLE 2194; MLE 4507; MLE 4525; MLE 18780; MLE 820; MLE 3098.
[8] Cantor 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', pp. 18-24.

others in rather less detail.[9] They do not, however, include the parks of Ashby de la Zouche or Bagworth. This might be a reflection of their understanding of Charnwood's boundaries, the deer parks associated with Ashby de la Zouche and Bagworth can only be included if those places are considered to be part of Charnwood, and, as discussed above, there is no consensus on that.

Parks that fall within the bounds of Charnwood Forest, as defined by the study area for this thesis, are shown in table 4.1 in chronological order of date of first documentary reference as cited by Cantor and/or Squires and Humphreys.

Park	Date of First Documentary Reference
Barrow upon Soar, also known as Quorndon or Budden	pre-1135
Loughborough	1229
Shepshed, also known as Oakley	first half of thirteenth century
Belton	pre-1231
Bradgate	1241
Nailstone	1266
Whitwick, later known as Bardon	1270
Beaumanor	1277/8
Bagworth	1279
Groby	1279
Dishley, perhaps later Garendon	1282
Coleorton	1300
Rothley	1331
Ashby-de-la-Zouch	1337

Table 4.1 Showing Dates of First Documentary Reference for Charnwood's Medieval Deer Parks

Source: Data collated from Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, pp. 27, 52, 68, 86, 104, 140, 144, 148-9; and Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', pp. 18 -23. The date of first documentary evidence for Shepshed should, perhaps, be treated with some caution, the reference cited by Squires in 'Shepshed Manor- Shepshed Park' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 140 is W. P. W. Phillimore, ed. *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles, Episcopi Lincolniensis*, I (London, 1909), p. 250, this refers to 'the deanary' but not 'the park' of Ocle. The existence of a park at Shepshed in the mid thirteenth-century is, however, supported by evidence that will be discussed below.

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[9] A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* (Wymondham, 1986).

Other parks have been associated with Charnwood, but dates of first reference are hard to establish. There are physical remains of a park close to Grace Dieu Priory to the north west of Charnwood, but little documentary evidence associated with it.[10] Similarly, there is very little documentary evidence relating to Burgh Park to the south of the forest,[11] and the only documentary evidence for a park at Little Haw in the north may have been a clerical error.[12] The presence of a park at Anstey is indicated by a rental of William Charyte, who was prior of Leicester Abbey in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. One of the Abbey's assets is described as that of '*de tenenitibus sacriste inter magnum parietem borealem & parcum de Ansty*', or that of 'the tenants of the sacristy between the great northern wall and the park at Anstey'.[13] This is, however, a rather late date of first reference for a medieval deer park. The location of the park at Anstey is also unclear because the document does not specify which building the 'great northern wall' refers to.[14] Examination of the modern Ordnance Survey map does reveal a 'park pale' at Anstey but the nature and origins of the feature are unclear. The Leicestershire and Rutland HER states that, whilst the feature is 'generally considered to be a park pale, it has been suggested that it might be a prehistoric triple ditch'.[15] This uncertainty is shared by Squires and Humphrey who are 'not convinced' that the feature is a remnant of a park pale.[16] They are correct to question the nature of this feature as it

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[10] A.E. Squires 'The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest,* p. 144.

[11] A.E. Squires, 'Whitwick Manor – The Park of Burgh (Borough)' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest,* p. 130.

[12] For discussion of possible clerical error in a 1285 enquiry by Leicester Abbey into its holdings in Shepshed which mentions a park at Little Haw, see Squires and Humphreys, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 149.

[13] Rental of William Charyte, prior of Leicester Abbey, transcribed in J. Nichols, *History and Antiquity of the County of Leicester*, I, II (1815;Wakefield, 1971) appendix p. 76.

[14] Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 149.

[15] LRHER MLE397.

[16] Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 149.

forms part of the mysterious 'Ratby Circle' discussed below in the case study of Charnwood's southern boundary.

Anstey is by no means the only Charnwood park whose location remains somewhat of a mystery. Whilst the location of some parks, like those at Groby and Grace Dieu are revealed by the shape of present-day field boundaries or by park pales, others have left no obvious physical mark. Significant among these is the park of Shepshed, variously known as Okeley, Okley or Akle or Okle. In his study of the evidence relating to Shepshed, Squires is unable to locate the park precisely, but concludes that the park's most likely location was somewhere in the vicinity of Oakley and Piper Woods, two areas of almost adjacent woodland to the north of Shepshed which look very much as if they were once one.[17] A map of 1700 indicates that Piper Wood was then known as 'West Oakley' and Oakley Wood as 'East Oakley'.[18] Squires refers to the two areas of woodland and the space between them collectively as 'the Oakley unit'.[19] Fig. 4.1 indicates that there may have been a continuity of boundaries between the two. Both woods feature banks which are apparently of 'typical medieval construction'.[20] Fig. 4.2 shows the bank to the west of Piper Wood. The overall shape of 'the Oakley Unit', a rectangle with rounded corners, is consistant with one associated with medieval deer parks.[21] If Squires is correct in his association of Shepshed Park with 'the Oakley unit', the park at Shepshed did not encroach upon what is usually considered to be

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[17] Squires, 'Shepshed Manor – Shepshed (Oakley) Park' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood*, pp. 141-143.

[18] Map of Manors of Shepshed and Garendon, *c.* 1700 reproduced in Squires, A.E. and Humphrey, W., *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 121.

[19] Squires, 'Shepshed Manor – Shepshed Park', p. 141.

[20] Squires, 'Shepshed Manor – Shepshed Park' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood*, pp. 141.

[21] M. Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology and Local History* (London and New York, 1985), p. 113 and O. Rackham, *Woodlands* (London, 2006), pp. 188 – 191.

Charnwood's inner core, but was created outside the inner circle of settlements which surround the forest.
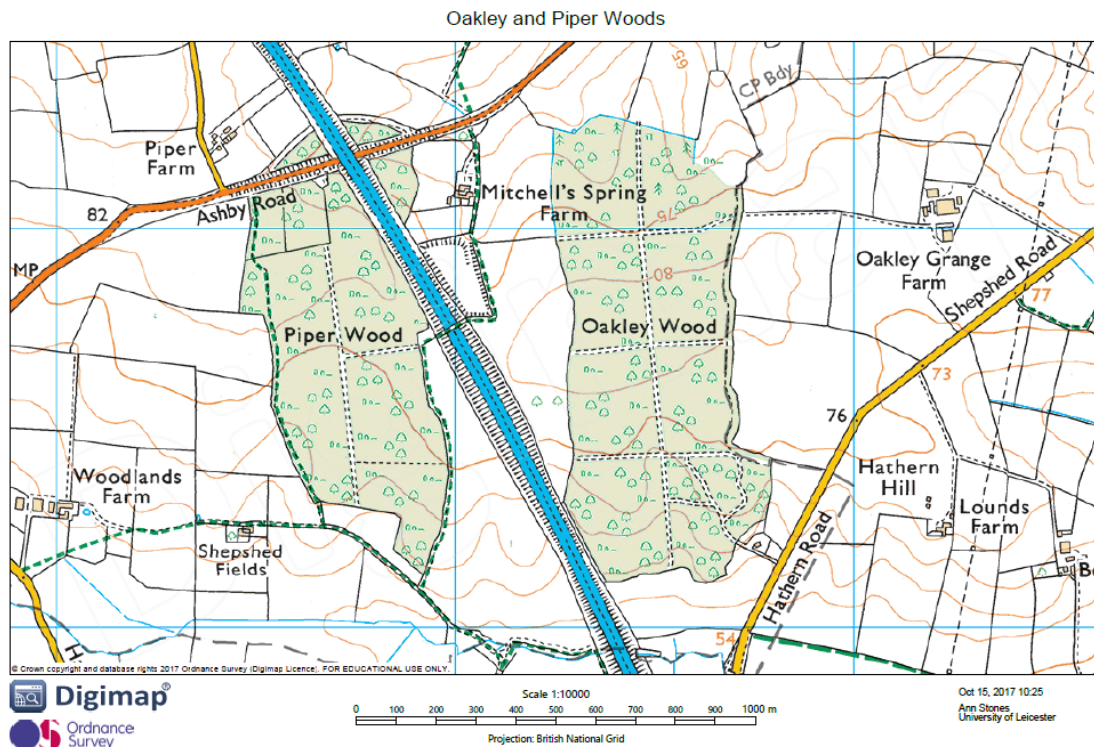
Figure 4.1 Oakley Wood and Piper Wood on Modern Ordnance Survey

Source: digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 15th October 2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).

Figure 4.2 Bank to the West of Piper Wood

A further set of documents sheds some light on the matter. The documents are a

collection of transcriptions and historical notes gathered between 1760 and 1810 as

evidence of title of the Grey family before parliamentary enclosure. One of the

documents is a transcription of an inquisition held at Whitwick in 1280 over

> the tithe of corn and the sale of wood from the wood of Schepeheuid and the
> park of Acle, and the tithes and pannage belonging to them…[witnesses listed:
> all neifs] who say upon their oath that the tithes, sales of wood, pannage and
> corn from the wood of Shepshed and the park of Acle [Oakley] with strays,
> loppings of any kind usually taken from the park of Acle pertain to the abbot of
> Leicester, through the fee of the Earl of Leicester.[22]

Whilst the document does not describe the boundaries of the park, it does go on to

provide a description of the boundaries of the wood of Shepshed which locates that

wood to the south of Blake Brook. The document seems to draw a distinction between

the wood of Shepshed and the park of Acle which indicates that we can exclude the area

---

[22] ROLLR, DE5742/2, Transcription [Latin] of extracts from inquisitions held at Whitwick, 29 Nov 1280
re tithes of corn and sales of wood; and held at Newtown Linford on 8 Jul 1285 concerning the limits of
the parish churches of the Abbot of Leicester. Made *c*. 1760.

which comprised the wood of Shepshed from our consideration of the possible location of the park.

This theory is supported by the evidence of a map discovered in the same collection of documents. The map forms folio 4 of a 'description of the bounds on Charnwood Forest' and appears to be a map of the parish of Shepshed.[23] There is significant correlation between place-names which appear on the map and those which appear in the description of the bounds and metes of the parish of Shepshed on folio 3 of the same document (Fig. 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Map of the Parish of Shepshed, Possible Thirteenth-century Origin.

Note: Map is orientated to the west.

Source: ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest,1246-7, f. 4, transcribed c. 1760. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

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[23]ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest, 1246-7, transcribed c. 1760. (Note described in ROLLR catalogue as bounds *of* Charnwood Forest).

The map, like the whole document, is on paper. It may be a copy of a thirteenth-century

original or, alternatively, drawn from thirteenth-century documentary sources. The text

on the map dates it at 1246-7.[24] The diagrammatic nature of the map is similar in many

ways to extant medieval maps from other areas. The earliest known map of Sherwood

Forest (fig. 4.4), for example, depicts the enclosures of Bestwood and Clipstone Parks

in a schematic manner.[25]

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[24] The text on the map does not mention the park. The text relates to a grant of land, which is indicated to be an enclosure, called Deryntonhawe. The location of Deryntonhawe is described as 'between Blakebrok and the wood of Belton and in length from the *haya* of the field of Belton up to the south *ripe'* (slope) of Crophurst up to Whitwyk, just as the Earl there *boscum fecit ampateres* (reference to woodland clearance).

[25] The 'Belvoir Map' of Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire, late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, reproduced and discussed in R.A. Skelton and P.D.A. Harvey, *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England* (Oxford, 1986) pp. 131 – 139.
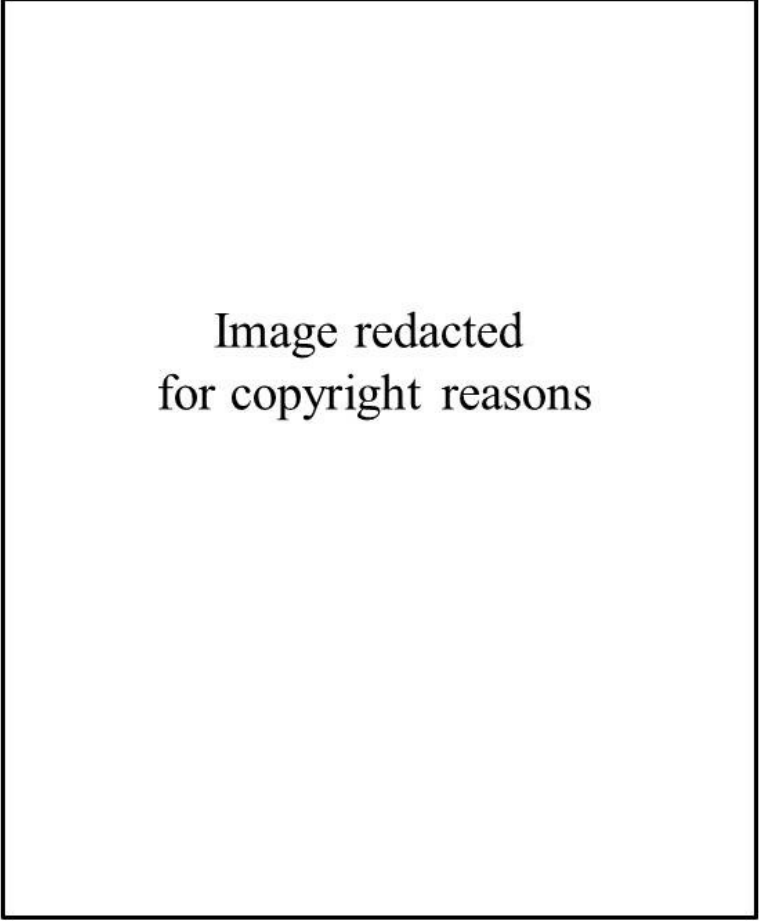
Image redacted
for copyright reasons

Figure 4.4 'The Belvoir map' of Sherwood Forest, Late Fourteenth- or Early Fifteenth-century.

Source: R.A. Skelton and P.D.A. Harvey, *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England* (Oxford, 1986) pp. 131.

The Sherwood map is believed to depict the relative difference in size between Bestwood Park and Clipstone Park in a reasonably accurate manner.[26] Whilst we cannot assume that the Shepshed map is equally reliable, it does depict Shepshed Park (Parcus de Okele) as a rounded enclosure, slightly larger in size than Shepshed itself, lying to the north east of Shepshed, and on the northern side of Blake Brook. In many ways its size, shape and location are consistent with those surmised by Squires. Such conclusions can only be tentative, the map is unlikely to be entirely accurate and the park's position on the map may have been affected by the need to accommodate the text. However, it would also seem unlikely that the park has been drawn on completely the wrong side of Blake Brook, thus illustrating that the park did not encroach upon what is generally considered to be the inner core of Charnwood Forest. Wylde's 1754 plan of Charnwood indicates that the forest's core was the area around Charley to the south of Shepshed. However, the suggested location of Shepshed Park indicates that 'the Oakley unit' was the centre of a second focus of encroachment to the north of the study area, one encircled by the settlements of Shepshed, Loughborough, Hathern, Dishley, Long Whatton, Diseworth and Belton (fig. 4.5).

Documentary evidence reveals that this group of settlements had a complex relationship with 'the Oakley unit' which in some ways was similar to the relationship between the parks which encroached upon Charnwood's main (southern) core and its surrounding settlements.

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[26] Skelton and Harvey, *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England*, p. 137.
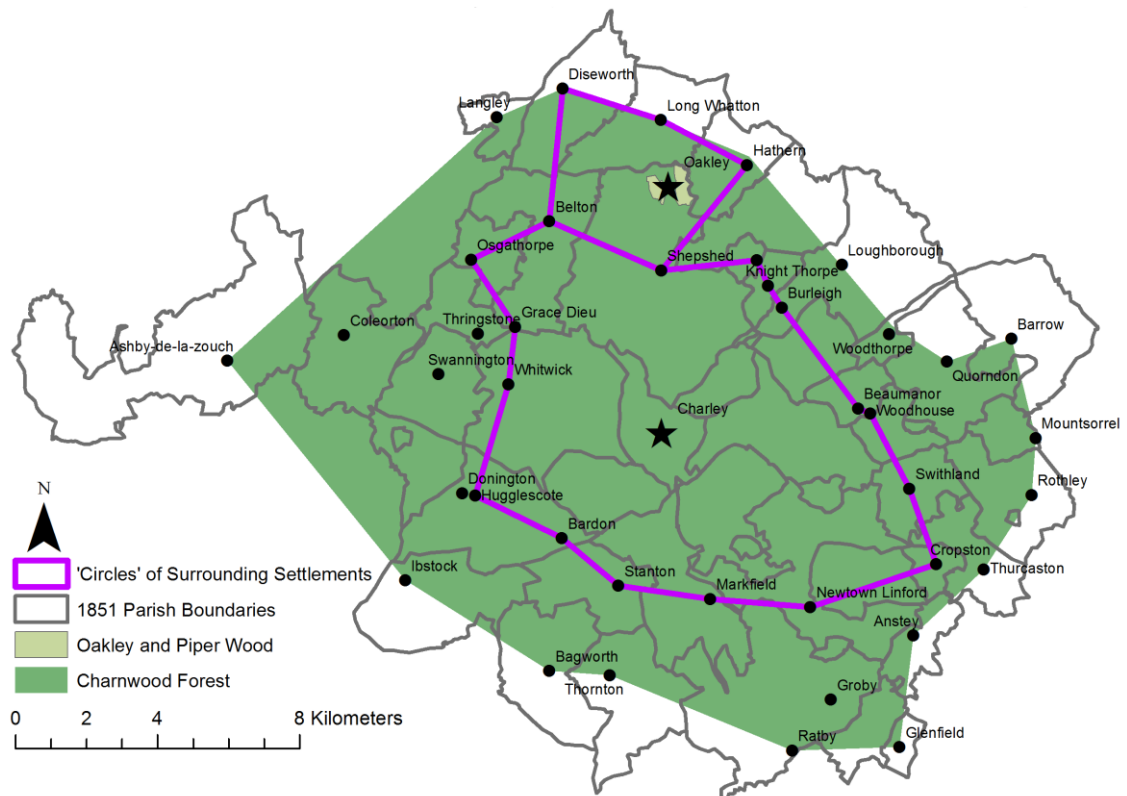
Figure 4.5 Two Foci of Encroachment on Charnwood Forest

Source: contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

Okeley produced timber and underwood for sale and provided pannage for pigs.[27]

Payments were made for the upkeep of Okeley's hedges.[28] Sometimes, however, the

boundaries formed by those hedges were transgressed by local people.   For example,

Shepshed court rolls of 1431 reveal that Ralph Chaumberleyn, keeper of Okeley

presented five men, three of them from Hatherne, who had broken the hedges of Okeley

and taken away poles without licence. Two men were also accused of collecting acorns

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[27] See for example, HL, HAM Box 21, no.1, Loughborough Court Rolls 1411-12, re: debt for timber bought in Okeley. See also BL Add Ch26840 Shepshed Account Roll 1434-35 re: pannage for swine in Okeley.

[28] ROLLR, DE 2242/6/72, Shepshed Account roll, 1430.

without licence.[29] Although none of the documentary references cited above specifically describe Okeley as a park, in many ways the exploitation of Okeley's resources, both legitimate and illicit, are similar to that which occurred in parks named in other parts of the forest. The accounts of Ralph Fox, palemaker at the park of Groby, for example, records receipts for agistment of animals and pannage of pigs, and payments for the repair and upkeep of the palisade,[30] whilst illicit use of Charnwood parks and their resources has been recorded at the parks of Budden and Whitwick.[31]

The earliest documentary record of emparkment in Charnwood pertains to a park created at Barrow, to the east of the forest, sometime before 1135. A park at Barrow is first mentioned in two charters from the reign of Henry I relating to the division of Charnwood between the Earls of Leicester and Chester.[32] An inquisition *post-mortem* of 1273 indicated that its extent by that time was some 360 acres (146 hectares).[33] Barrow is the only Charnwood park to appear in twelfth-century documentary sources; most others first appear in a cluster between 1230 and 1288, with just two first appearing in the early fourteenth century and one in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. This is consistent with the national expansion of park ownership believed to have occurred in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[34] Landscape and cartographic evidence reveals a fairly even geographical pattern of emparkment around Charnwood Forest.

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[29] BL, Add Ch 26843, Shepshed Court Roll, 1431.

[30] Account of Ralph Fox, palemaker at the park of Groby, 1512, Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930), p. 113.

[31] Coram Rege Roll 476, 1379, re: breaking of the park at Budden and the taking away of trees and underwood to the value of £10, Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 56; De Banco Roll 80, 1289 re: breaking of park at Whitwick, Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes* VI, p.355.

[32] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 17-19; and A.E. Squires, 'Barrow Manor – The Park of Barrow (Quorndon)' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest,* p. 68.

[33] I.*P.M*, Roger de Somery, 1273, transcribed and translated by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* pp. 49-50.

[34] S.A. Mileson, 'The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society' in L.Clarke, ed., *The Fifteenth Century, V, of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge), 2005, p. 31.

There may, however, be some correlation between manorial wealth and early emparkment. Domesday valuations of Charnwood manors are inconsistently recorded, but if we were to treat Domesday records of populations, ploughs, mills and meadows as indicators of wealth then some tentative associations between wealth and early emparkment can be made (see appendices 2- 5). Later valuations of Charnwood towns and villages are more revealing (see table 4.2).

Manor /vill	Date of first record for associated park	Valuation in 1334 assessment for tenths and fifteenths
Barrow	1135	£6 16*s*
Loughborough	1229	£6 10*s*
Shepshed	First half of thirteenth century	£3 14*s*
Belton	Pre 1231	£1 19*s*
Groby	1241 (Bradgate) 1279 (Groby)	15*s* 6*d*
Nailstone	1266	Not known
Whitwick	1270	17*s* 6*d*
Beaumanor	1277	Not Known
Bagworth	1279	£1 7*s*
Dishley	1282	Not known
Coleorton	1300	Not known
Rothley	1331	£4 11*s* 6*d*
Ashby-de-la-Zouch	1377	£7 5*s*
Anstey	?late 15th century	£1 7*s*

Table 4.2 Dates of First Reference of Deer Parks and 1334 Assessment for Tenths and Fifteenths of Associated Manor/Vill.

Sources: Dates of first reference from A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* (Wymondham, 1986) pp. 27, 52, 68, 86, 104, 140, 144, 148-9; and L.M.Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 46, (1970-71), pp 18 -23. Assessments for tenths and fifteenths, 1334, transcribed in Nichols, *History and Antiquity of the County of Leicester*, I, I (1795; Wakefield, 1971), p. lxxxix – xci.

 In the 1334 assessments for tenths and fifteenths, Barrow, Loughborough and Shepshed, sites of the three earliest recorded parks, are valued highly at £6 16*s*, £6 10*s*

and £3 5*s* respectively.[35] This compares with the relatively paltry valuations of 15*s* 6*d*
assigned to Groby, and 17*s* 6*d* assigned to Whitwick where parks were established
slightly later. Whether manorial wealth was a predisposing factor in early emparkment,
or an effect of it, is difficult to judge. A further qualification is that Ashby, site of one of
the latest recorded parks in the study area, is valued highly at £7 5*s* in the 1334
assessment. Such evidence highlights the difficulties associated with comparing the
wealth of towns and villages but might indicate that the park at Ashby was established
earlier then the date revealed so far by documentary evidence. Ashby lies on the outer
edge of the study area, in terms of Charnwood's external boundaries, therefore, the
apparent anomaly presented by Ashby, may weaken the case for the town's inclusion
within forest bounds.

The parks which intruded upon Charnwood's inner core represented the innermost of
the concentric circles of human activity which encircled medieval Charnwood. Wylde's
1754 map indicates that the largest of these was Bardon Park, to the west of the forest,
in the manor of Whitwick. It is a significant intrusion and its extent has been estimated
at 1260 acres (510 hectares).[36] Wylde's plan indicates that the parks of Loughborough
and Beaumanor to the east of the forest were much smaller. However, recent work by
Kirkland suggests that these two parks, together with the adjacent Burley Park,
originally formed one very large park of approximately 1552 acres (629 hectares).[37]
Kirkland bases his suggestion on cartographic and archaeological evidence which

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[35] Assessments for tenths and fifteenths, 1334, transcribed in Nichols, *History and Antiquity of the County of Leicester*, 1, 1, pp. lxxxix – xci.
[36] A. Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley: new archaeology and a reassessment of the historical evidence', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 85 (2011), pp. 119.
[37] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley', pp. 107-121.

appear to show continuity in the boundaries of the three parks (fig 4.6)[38] He argues that

the three parks were under the same ownership from just after the Conquest until the

fourteenth century and that the maintenance of separate financial accounts for each may

reflect compartmentalisation of one large park rather than the existence of three separate

entities.[39]
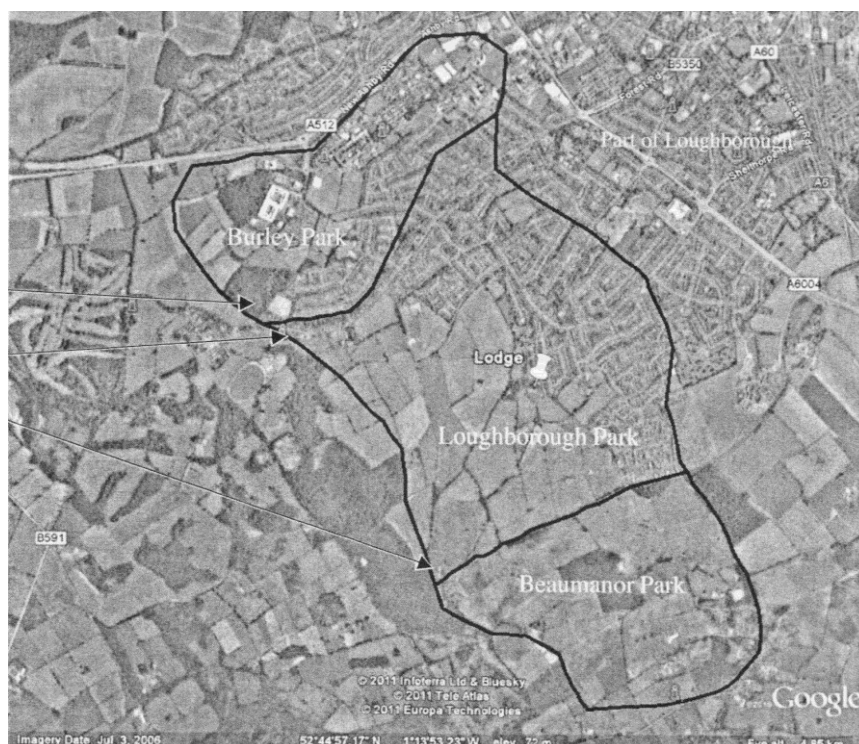
Figure 4.6 Boundaries of Loughborough Park, Burley Park and Beaumanor Park

Source: A. Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley: new archaeology and a reassessment of the historical evidence', in *Transactions of the LAHS*, 85, (2011) p.108. Reproduced with permission of Richard Buckley.

Accounts relating to Loughborough Park survive from the thirteenth century and to

Beaumanor and Burley from the fourteenth.[40] From these accounts, Kirkland has

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[38] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley', pp. 110-114.
[39] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley', pp. 110, 118.
[40] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' p. 118 – here Kirkland collates evidence cited in a range of secondary sources including Crocker, *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape*; W. Humphrey 'Loughborough Manor- Loughborough Park', 'Loughborough

155

attempted to discern specialised functions for each unit. Whilst all units seem to have been multifunctional, Kirkland has identified some differences in emphasis. Deer were grazed in all of them but only hunted in Beaumanor and Loughborough. Similarly, the grazing of other animals took place in all three, but was the main activity at Beaumanor. Woodland products were also a common feature, but their production seems to have been the main function of Burley.[41] Such internal compartmentalisation may have taken place in line with the economic development of parks in the post-Conquest period. However, Kirkland suggests that the original single park formed by the three units may have been created much earlier.[42]

There has been some academic debate about the origins of medieval deer parks and a gradual move away from the traditional view that deer parks were post-Conquest creations.[43] Liddiard in particular has challenged this assumption and argued that some 'pre-Conquest deer enclosures survived as parks in the Anglo-Norman landscape'.[44] One such example is Ongar Great Park in Essex where a *derhage* was recorded in 1045.[45] Kirkland suggests that pre-Norman parks were widespread across England and cites examples in Cambridgeshire, Shropshire, Cornwall and Suffolk. He suggests that several of these are examples of adjacent parks which, like Loughborough, Beaumanor and Burley, may once have been one.[46] The area comprised by the three Charnwood parks shares certain characteristics with such examples. These include continuous

Manor - Burley Park' and 'Beaumanor - Beaumanor Park' in Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, pp. 27-40, 41-51, 52-67; A. Squires and M. Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands Past and Present* (Newtown Linford, 1994).

[41] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' p. 118.

[42] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' pp. 110.

[43] For the argument that 'the medieval deer park was essentially a creation of the Norman kings and barons' see L. Cantor, 'Forests, Chases, Parks and Warrens' in L. Cantor, ed., *The English Medieval Landscape* (London, 1982) p. 76.

[44] R. Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book', *Landscapes*, 4, 1 (2003) pp. 4.

[45] Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book' p. 6.

[46] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' p. 114

boundaries, common features such as roads passing through them, and different dates of first record.[47] The combined extent of Loughborough, Burley and Beaumanor might also be consistent with early creation. Liddiard has noted that parks which appear in Domesday tend to be larger than those created in the later medieval period.[48] The notion that Loughborough, Beaumanor and Burley were once one large early park can be further supported by comparison with Benington and Walkern parks in Hertfordshire. The Domesday entry for Benington includes 'a park for woodland beasts'.[49] Walkern Park lies immediately to the northeast of Bennington, divided from it by the parish boundary. There is no mention of a park in the Domesday entry for Walkern,[50] but considered together, the two parks form a classic oval shape, similar to that formed by the parks of Loughborough, Beaumanor and Burley. Domesday Book provides details of thirty-seven parks in England, usually recorded as *parcus* or *haia*;[51] none are recorded for Charnwood, or indeed for the whole of Leicestershire. This may not, however, be significant. Deer parks are among a range of features, including vineyards, mills and fishponds which are recorded inconsistently in Domesday.[52]

If Charnwood Forest was a lordly hunting ground in the pre-Conquest period then emparkment, whether it commenced in the pre-Conquest period or later, would seem to reflect a growing identification of individual hunting rights, for particular lords in particular parts of the forest. Emparkment was a privatisation process which encroached upon Charnwood's core rather than one which radiated from it. Mileson suggests that park making had 'a profound impact on local society' including reducing

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[47] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' p. 115.
[48] Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book' p. 11.
[49] J. Morris, *Domesday Book: Hertfordshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester1976), f. 141a.
[50] J. Morris, *Domesday Book: Hertfordshire*, f. 142 b.
[51] Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book', pp. 6-7.
[52] Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book' p. 9.

access to traditional rights and resources.[53] In this, the effects of emparkment were similar to those of other forms of enclosure around the forest's edges. However, as seigniorial hunting activity focused on designated areas on Charnwood's edges, ancient rights of common may once again have emerged from the imposition of rights to hunt in what remained of Charnwood's core. Access to that core was maintained by a system of routeways which seem to have been respected into the post-medieval period when they began to come under threat from later enclosure.[54]

Consideration of changes in Charnwood's medieval deer park boundaries over the later medieval period reveals some inconsistencies. The boundary of Grace Dieu Park to the north-west of Charnwood, where it bordered the waste of Charnwood, seems to have remained unchanged for centuries.[55] Other parks, however, expanded. Bradgate Park was expanded by Thomas Grey, Earl of Dorset *c*. 1500, possibly depopulating the village of Bradgate in the process.[56] There is some debate about the location and even the existence of the village of Bradgate but Kiddiar's 1746 map of Bradgate Park reveals a Cotthers Close(fig 4.7) (cŏtẹ̄r – ME one who holds a cottage).[57] Furthermore, there is evidence of ridge and furrow within the modern bounds of the park (fig 4.8).

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[53] Mileson, 'The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society' p. 21.

[54] See for example Exchequer deposition, 1604, relating to the manor of Whitwick, translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 141. This document refers to a cottage and inclosure built and created c. 1587 which were 'great nuisances, decayes and hindrances to the said common and commoners for want of bytt and passage to their water and the rest of their common and also for their passage for carts and carriages in the ancient ways.'

[55] For discussion of the place-name and archaeological evidence relating to the boundaries of Grace Dieu, See A.E. Squires, 'the Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', Squires and Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, pp. 144-148.

[56] J. Stephenson and A. Squires, *Bradgate Park: Childhood Home of Lady Jane Grey* (Newtown Linford, 1999), pp. 7-15.

[57] Enville Collection, Kiddiar, Map of Bradgate, 1746. Definition taken from MED online at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/lookup.html [accessed 12th May 2016].

Figure 4.7 Kiddiar's Map of Bradgate, 1746

Source: Enville collection. Reproduced with permission of Mrs Diana Williams, Enville Estate Archives.

Figure 4.8 Ridge and Furrow in Bradgate Park

LiDAR evidence has recently revealed the possible location of a lost village within Bradgate Park, to the east of Bradgate House between the house and the area referred to as Cotthers Close on Kiddiar's map.[58] Further investigation, in the form of excavation, is necessary to establish the nature of this feature. It is clear, however, that Bradgate Park did expand towards the end of the fifteenth century as evidenced by the 803 m continuous stretch of original pale which remains within the park today (fig. 4.9).[59]

Figure 4.9 Early Park Pale Passing through Elder Spinney, Bradgate Park

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[58] N. Hannon, 'An Archeological Study of Charnwood, Leicestershire', ULAS report no. 2014-092, (unpublished draft 2014), pp. 21-22.
[59] LRHER, MLE21914.

Similarly, Groby Park expanded from an original small hunting park to one of some 'six miles in circumference' noted by Leland on his travels *c.* 1540.[60] The expansion of Groby Park has been charted by Squires who suggests that, at its fullest extent, the park reached and possibly incorporated parts of Martinshaw Wood (fig 4.10).[61]
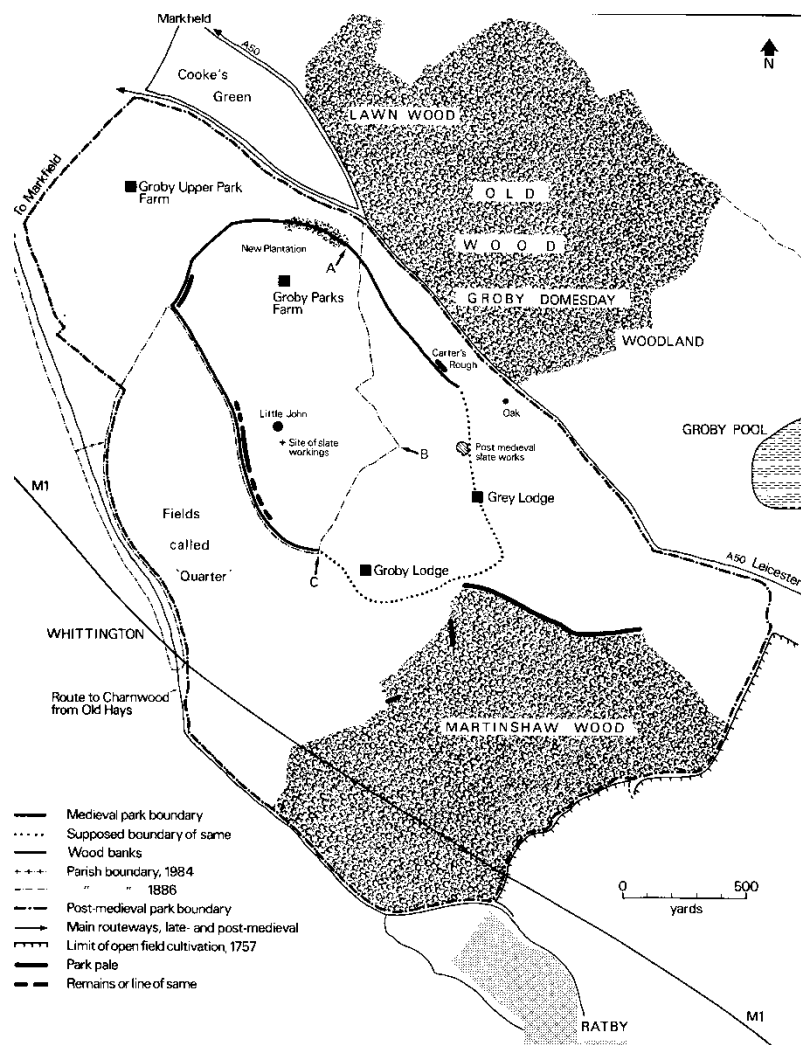
Figure 4.10 Map Showing Boundaries of Groby Park

Source: A.E. Squires, 'Groby Park' in A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest (*Wymondham, 1986), p. 91. Reproduced with permission of Anthony Squires.

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[60] Chandler, *John Leland's Itinerary*, p. 280
[61] Landscape survey of Martinshaw Wood, currently being carried out by Leicestershire VCHT's Charnwood Roots Project, may reveal further details of the expansion of Groby Park. The aim of the survey is to verify LiDAR results which indicate the possible presence of a system of banks and ditches within the wood, this work is ongoing at the time of writing.

Doherty's 1757 map of Groby shown in fig. 4.11 shows the proximity of Groby Park to

Martinshaw Wood. Doherty's map also reveals the expansion of Groby Park to the

north-west of the original medieval park as illustrated by Squires.

Figure 4.11 Part of Doherty's 1757 Map of Groby

Source: Enville Collection. Reproduced with permission of Mrs Diana Williams, Enville Estate Archives.

Squires suggests that much of this expansion was post-medieval in date. However, the

expanded bounds which he describes have a circumference of approximately six miles,

equivalent to the circumference of the park as described by Leland in the 1540s. It

would seem therefore, that if the expansion of the park did occur in the post-medieval

period, that it did so in the sixteenth century. This view is supported by the

Leicestershire HER which dates the later extent of the park as 'medieval or early post-

medieval'.[62] The present-day Ordnance Survey (figs 4.12 and 4.13) reveals that the

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[62] LRHER, MLE2779.

boundaries of both the original and the expanded Groby Park, as shown in Doherty's

map, are reflected in modern field boundaries.
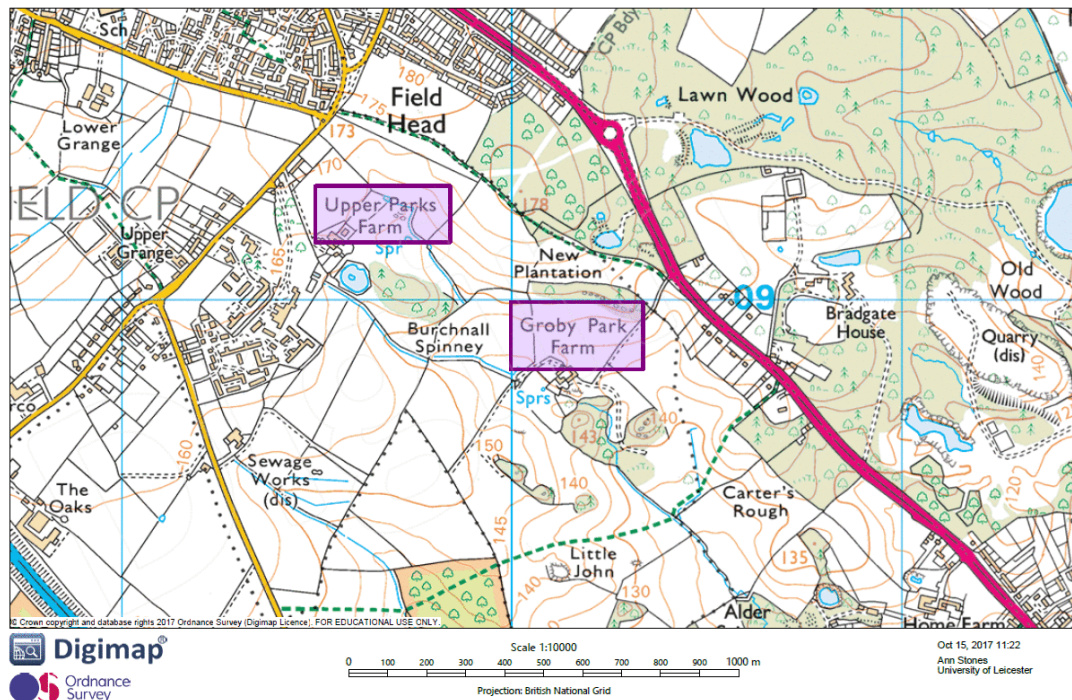
Figure 4.12 Modern Field Boundaries, Groby (a)

Source: digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 15th October 2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017). Annotations by the author.
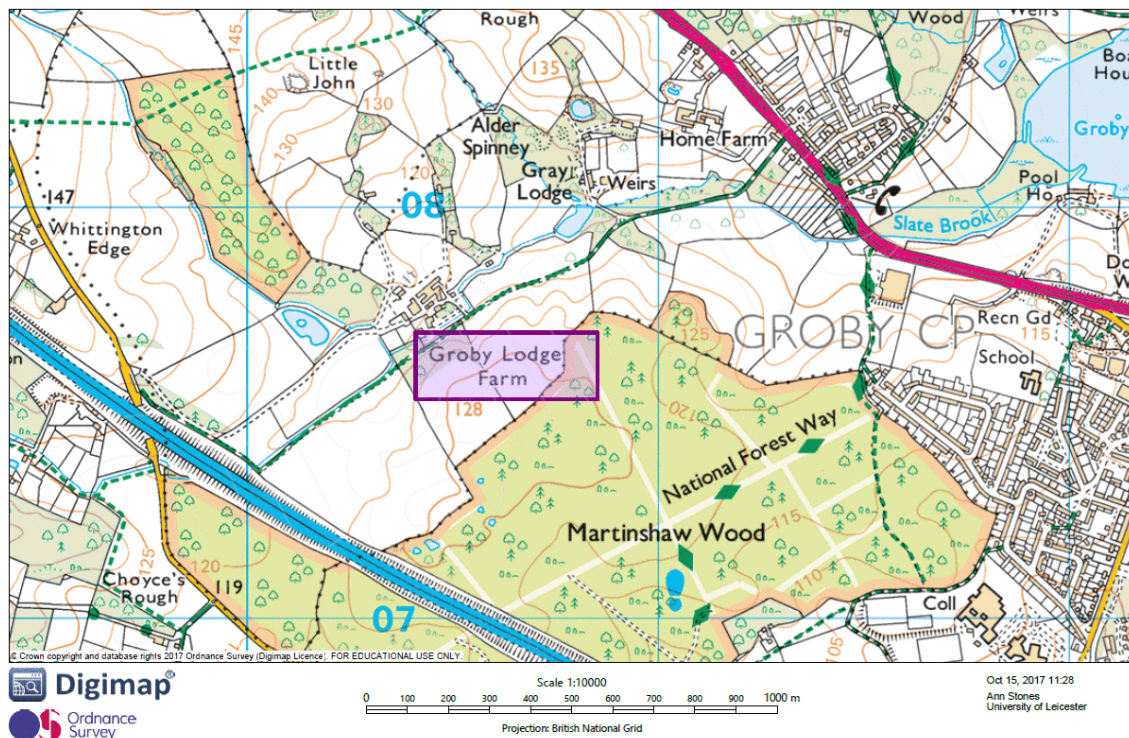
Figure 4.13 Modern Field Boundaries, Groby (b)

Source: digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 15th October 2017]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017). Annotations by the author.

The names of modern farms within those boundaries, Upper Parks Farm, Groby Park Farm and Groby Lodge Farm, give further indication of earlier utilisation of the landscape and of encroachment on the forest by emparkment.

4.3 Encroachment by assarting and purpresture.

A second form of encroachment on Charnwood was the combined effect of the processes of assarting and purpresture. The extent of both in Charnwood, like that of emparkment, confirms that those encroaching upon the forest were free of the constraints which would have been imposed by Royal Forest status. Indeed, assarting was facilitated by the 1236 Statute of Merton which recognised the rights of manorial

lords to enclose manorial wastes 'providing they left sufficient pasture for the requirements of free tenants'.[63]

Wylde's 1754 plan shows some early enclosure within the forest at ecclesiastical sites such as Charley, Ulverscroft and Alderman's Haw (see chapter 3, fig. 3.5).[64] Particularly detailed evidence of medieval assarting from within the waste, around the priory of Ulverscroft, can be seen in Leo Bell's map of 1796 (see chapter 2, fig. 2.15). Modern aerial photography reveals some continuity with Bell's map (fig.4.14).

Figure 4.14 Aerial Photograph, Ulverscroft, 1976

Source: A.E. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, ed. Charnwood Forest:a Changing Landscape (Loughborough, 1981) p. 99. Reproduced with permission of Loughborough Naturalists' Club.

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[63] T. Williamson and L. Bellamy, *Property and Landscape: A Social History of Land Ownership and the English Countryside* (London, 1987), p. 78.
[64] A. E. Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J.Crocker, ed. *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981), p. 54.

The ruins of the priory can be seen towards the top left of the photograph. Nowell Spring Wood, just above centre right of the photograph, is part of the assarted area shown as 'the Nowells' on Bell's map.[65] However, Samual Wylde's 1754 plan of Charnwood Forest reveals that most encroachment was not from religious sites at the centre of the forest, but from the manors which surrounded the forest. For example, the 'enclosures belonging to Newtown Linford' which appear to the south western edge of Wylde's plan (fig. 4.15) clearly belong to the 'new town' which had been created in the manor of Groby.

Figure 4.15 Section of Wylde's 1754 Plan Showing Enclosures at Newtown Linford

Source: ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/2a .Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

The gradual encroachment on Charnwood Forest from surrounding manors in the later medieval period is also revealed by contemporary sources. Indication of the extent of

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[65] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', p. 98.

assarting taking place at Groby towards the end of the thirteenth century is provided by the 1288 inquisition *post-mortem* of William de Ferrers of Groby which records that 'the assized rents in the forest of Charnwod of the new assarts are worth £7 6s 4d'.[66] A particularly prominent feature on the modern OS map, and on modern aerial photography, is the elliptical shape formed by Lea Wood and Lea Meadow to the north-west of Newtown Linford, but within the medieval manor of Groby (figs 4.16 and 4.17).
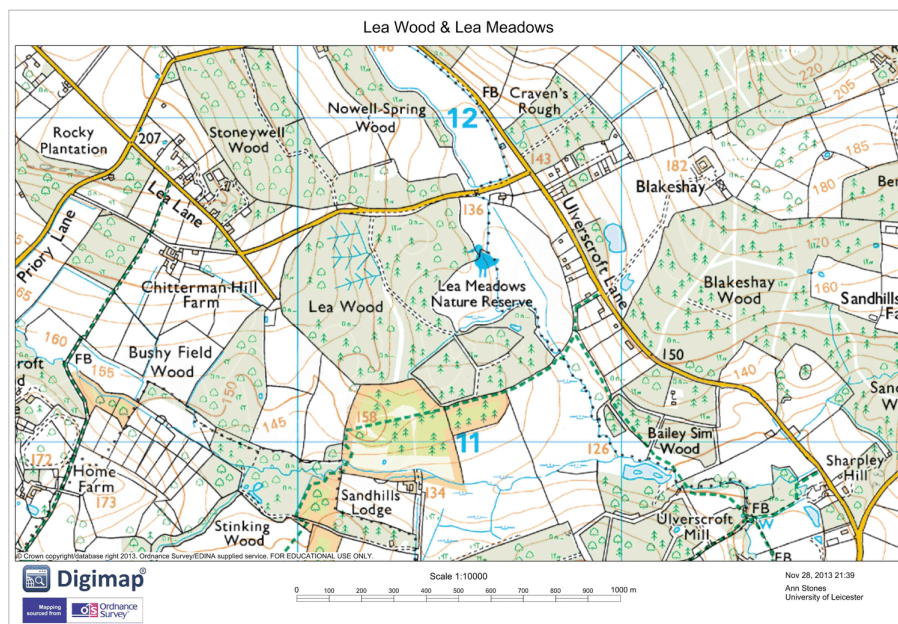
Figure 4.16 Lea Meadow and Lea Wood, Modern Ordnance Survey

Source: digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 28th November 2013]. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).

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[66] I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby taken on 20th March 1288 translated and transcribed by Farnham *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. 100.

Figure 4.17 Lea Meadow and Lea Wood, Satellite Image

Source: Google maps at https://maps.google.co.uk/ [accessed 28th November, 2013]

The area looks suspiciously like a medieval deer park, with a characteristic shape and areas of covert. However, the Leicestershire and Rutland HER identifies this area as a medieval assart and states that the medieval bank and ditch which surround the site appear to have been constructed to keep out the animals grazing on the open forest. [67] The land concerned may be 'the piece of meadow called the *leyfeld*' which was valued at 40 shillings in the 1288 inquisition post-mortem of William de Ferrers.[68] If this is the case, the term purpresture, rather than assart, would seem to be a more appropriate description of this site.

Assarting was, however, taking place at plenty of other locations around the forest. Medieval assarting is recorded between Quordon and Woodhouse in the early thirteenth

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[67] LRHER, MLE19920.
[68] I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby taken on 20th March 1288 translated and transcribed by Farnham *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. 100.

century.[69] Similarly, evidence of assarting at Whitwick is provided by a 1300 licence awarded to John de Bar to 'assart and arrent the soil and waste of that manor'.[70] An extent of the manor of Whitwick, dated 1296 mentions both 'ancient assarts' at Ratby,

> divers tenants who hold waste of ancient assart by parcels in villeinage (*qui tenent de vasto de antiquo frussato per particulas in vilenagium*) and render £11 6d. yearly.

and 'new assarts' at Markfield.

> there is there waste newly assarted (*de vasto de noue frussato*) for a yearly rent of 70s. 3d.[71]

A number of assarts in the manor of Barrow are recorded in the 1273 Inquisition *post-mortem* of Roger de Somery,[72] assarts are recorded and probable new assarts in thirteenth-century Shepshed are revealed by the '*duo clausi novit assert*' shown in the map of Shepshed discussed earlier in this chapter (fig.4.3).[73]

Analysis of the appearance of the element *hay* in Charnwood place-names also reveals evidence of changing land use. Squires has suggested that the first appearance of the element *hay* in the place-names around Ratby, Groby and Newtown Linford 'gives some indication of the pattern of colonisation' in that part of the forest.[74] However, the term 'colonisation' may be too general here; the term 'enclosure', a particular and not necessarily initial utilisation of the landscape, may be more appropriate. The etymology of the element *hay* is rather complicated. It may derive from OE *hæg* or OE *haga,* two

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[69] Charter of Ranulph, sixth earl of Chester granting 128 acres of his assarts between the park of Quorndon and Woodhouse to William, son of Gerard, 1209-1228, cited by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 15.

[70] Licence to assart and arrent soil and waste of the manor of Whitwick, 1300, transcribed by *Farnham, Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 135.

[71] TNA, E 199/44/2, Inquest lands of John Comyn, 1296.

[72] I*PM,* of Roger de Somery, Barrow, 1273, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* pp. 49-50.

[73] ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest, 1246-7, transcribed *c.* 1760, map on f. 4.

[74] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape', p. 40.

elements which can be difficult to distinguish both from each other and from OE *hagen*,

OE *hege,* ON *hegn,* and ON *hegning.*[75] All of these elements have been associated with

enclosure and refer variously to fencing, hedging, hawthorn used in hedging, or to land

enclosed by such means.[76] Hooke suggests that *hay* may also have been a term for a 'net

spread across a hole in a fence' used to trap game animals such as rabbit and deer. [77]

This view is supported by Wiltshire and Woore who, in their study of Derbyshire *hays*,

conclude that *haga* and *hæg* were used for specifically different purposes, *haga* for the

trapping of deer and other wild game, and *hæg* for the 'enclosure of assets of which deer

might be one'.[78] To complicate matters further, in medieval Cannock Chase, the term

hays was used to describe administrative districts.[79] However, in Charnwood, analysis

of medieval *hays* reveals that many of them were enclosures, at least at the time of the

documentary sources in which they first appear. A 1343 Inquisition *post-mortem*

mentions three, and possibly four, *hays* in the Groby area.[80] Table 4.3 shows the *hays*

mentioned in the document together with the etymology of the qualifying elements.

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[75] M. Wiltshire and S. Woore, ''Hays', Possible Early Enclosures in Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 131 (2011), p. 195.

[76] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 1 (London, 1956) pp. 215, 221-2, 241. See also Wiltshire and Woore, ''Hays', Possible Early Enclosures in Derbyshire', p. 195.

[77] D. Hooke, 'Pre-Conquest Woodland: Its Distribution and Usage', *AgHR*, 37, 2 (1989), pp. 123-125.

[78] Wiltshire and Woore, ''Hays', Possible Early Enclosures in Derbyshire', p. 207.

[79] Wiltshire and Woore, ''Hays', Possible Early Enclosures in Derbyshire', p. 197.

[80] I*PM* of Henry de Ferrariis, 1343, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1933), pp. 362-363.

Name	Qualifier	Etymology of Qualifier
pakehannesheye	*pakehanne*	Personal name, *Pakeman*.
blake-heye	*blake*	OE *blæc*, 'black', in early ME place-names black is associated with fertility.
bondmanhey*	*bondman*	ME *bondeman*, 'an unfree peasant'
stewardesheye	*stewarde*	ME *stiward* 'a steward'

Table 4.3 *Hay* Place-Names, Groby, Appearing in I.*P.M* of Henry de Ferrariis, 1343

Source: Etymologies taken from B. Cox, *Place-names of Leicestershire,* 6 (Nottingham, 2014), pp. 102,103,222,339,394; and B. Cox, *Place-names of Leicestershire*, 7, (Nottingham, 2016), pp. 157, 296;(*name implied, but not stated in document).

In the inquisition post-mortem, *pakehannesheye* and *blake-heye* are both described as meadow, they may, therefore, be examples of purpresture rather than assarting. A further possible *hay* mentioned in the document is the 'third part of the assart of Roteby which the bondman held'. This may well be the area close to Ratby which is described in latter documents as *bondmanhey*.[81] *Stewardesheye* is mentioned in the 1343 Inquisition *post-mortem*, but its function is not specified. A century later, however, *Stewardsheye* was described as,

> a pasture called 'Stywordsheye' worth 10s yearly and they say that the underwood is worth 3s 4d a year.[82]

This suggests that this particular *hay* was wood pasture, it is a further example of purpresture, and highlights the fact that not all of the encroachment on the forest was for the purpose of cultivation. Whatever the motive for individual enclosures, the effects

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[81] First documentary reference to *Bondmanhey* is in grant of manor of Whitwick to Elizabeth, wife of Henry de Beaumont, 1427, transcribed by Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, vol III, II, (1804; Wakefield, 1971), p. 1114.
[82] I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1445, transcribed in Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 106-107.

were similar – the exclusion of commoners from space which they had formally been free to enter.

If we turn to post-medieval sources, examination of field-name surveys of Groby and Newtown Linford, compiled from eighteenth-century sources, supports the view that the distribution of *hays* reflects a pattern and chronology of enclosure. The Groby field-name survey identifies just one field-name incorporating the element *hay* – Bakers Hays Close. However, the survey of the later established Newtown Linford lists many; these include Ruskins Hay, Nether Browns Hay, Far Browns Hay, and Warrent Hay (fig. 4.18).[83] Newtown Linford was created within the manor of Groby and is first recorded as *Neuton* in 1325.[84] Many of Newton Linford's newer *hays* lie in close proximity to its older *hays*. Furthermore, the frequency with which *hay* occurs in combination with a personal name in the area indicates that we are looking at individual and piecemeal enclosure and the gradual erosion of forest boundaries (table 4).

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[83] A. Stones, *A Study of Landscape and Memory in Eighteenth Century Charnwood Forest*, unpublished MA project (University of Leicester, 2012), p. 9. – based on information from ROLLR , FNS/132/1-2, 'Groby Field-Name Survey', and ROLLR, FNS/236/ 1, 1A, 2, 3, 'Newtown Linford Field-Name Survey'.

[84]TNA, C134/90/8, I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1325.
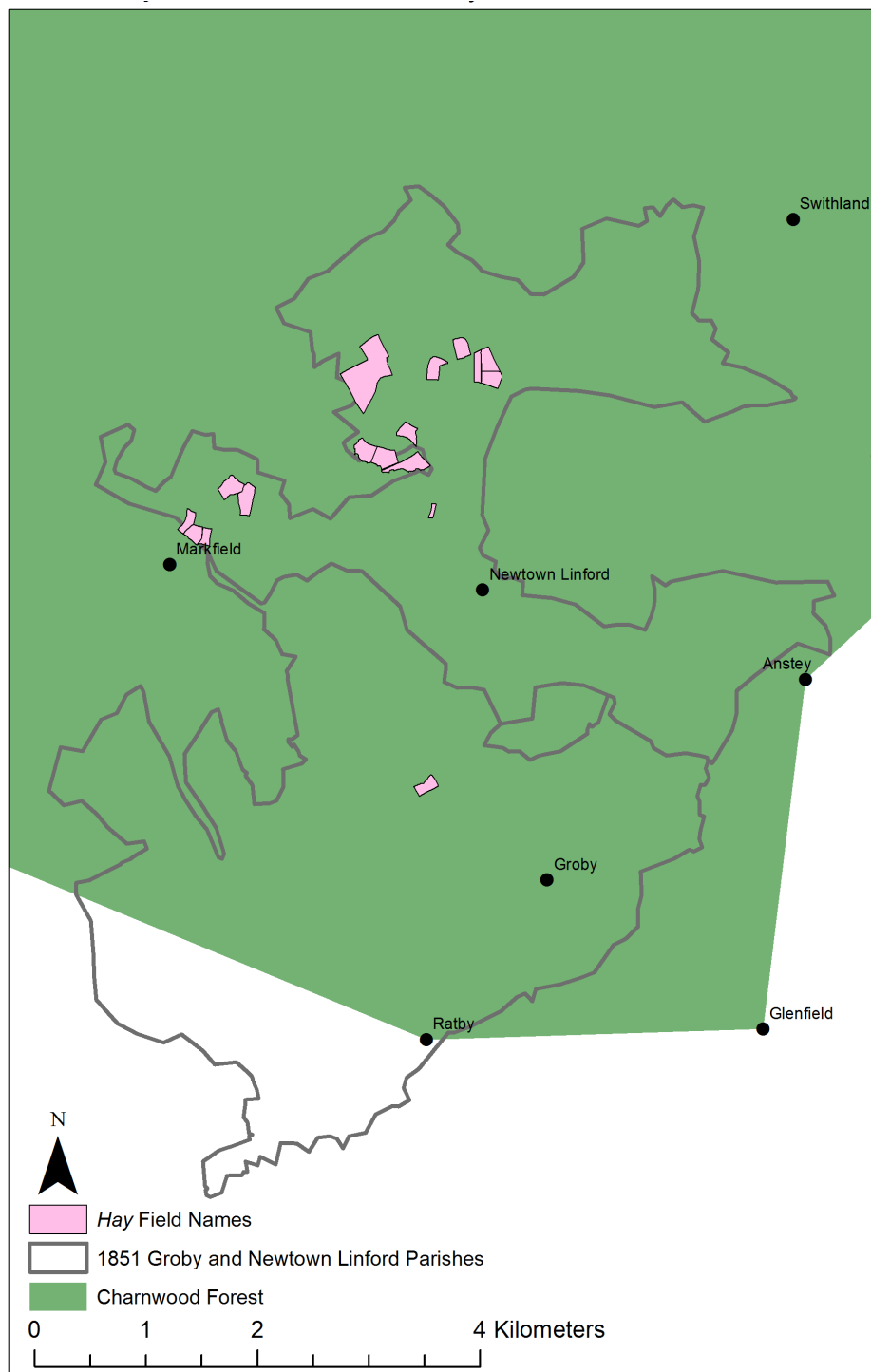
Figure 4.18 *Hay* **Field-Names in Groby and Newtown Linford**

Source: contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/   © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

Name and date of first reference.	Modern parish	Etymology of Qualifier
Bakers Hays Close (*barkers hey 1513.*)	Groby	*Barker* either surname or ME *barker* 'a tanner'.
Nether Browns Hay (*brounnesheye* 1350, *Nether Browns Hay*,1773)	Newtown Linford	Near + either surname *Brown* or OE masc. pers. n *Brūn* or ON *Brúnn*
Far Browns Hay(*brounnesheye* 1350, *Far Browns Hay* 1838)	Newtown Linford	Far + either surname *Brown* or OE masc. pers. n. *Brūn* or ON *Brúnn*
Rusken Hay (*Rusken Hey, 1838*)*and Ruskens Hay Meadow* (*Rusken hay meadow,* 1773)	Newtown Linford	Either surname Ruskin or *ryseen* 'growing with reeds - with *sk* due to Scandinavian influence'. NB There is a stream adjacent to these fields.
Warrant Hay, (Warrant Hey, 1838)	Newtown Linford	Either ME wareine 'a warren', or the surname *Warrant*.
Foxley Hay Close (*Foxley Hay Wood,* 1838)	Newtown Linford	Fox + *leys* 'Mod.E. pasture, meadow.'
Benscliffe Hay (*Benchcliff,* 1558;*Benchliff hay,*1773)	Newtown Linford	OE *benc* 'a bench, topographically a shelf of land' + OE *clif* 'a cliff'.
Benscliffe Hay Close (*Benscliffe Hey Close* 1838) (3 fields with this name)	Newtown Linford	OE *benc* 'a bench, topographically a shelf of land' + OE *clif* 'a cliff'.

Table 4.4 *Hay* Field-Names Appearing in Modern Field-Name Surveys of Groby and Newtown Linford

Source: B. Cox, *Place-names of Leicestershire*, 6 (Nottingham, 2014), p. 99; and B. Cox, *Place-names of Leicestershire*, 7 (Nottingham, 2016) pp. 156, 158, 161, 295, 303, 329, 355.

It would seem then, that if we were to define the boundaries of Charnwood Forest merely in terms of the wastes of surrounding manors, then those boundaries were subject to a great deal of change.

Although a lack of documentary evidence does not necessarily indicate that there was little change in Forest boundaries in the early medieval period, archaeological evidence suggests encroachment was a particular feature of the later medieval period and that, prior to this, the boundaries of the forest may have been unchanged since Roman times. Liddle has compared evidence of Roman activity around Charnwood Forest with that around the nearby Leicester Forest. He suggests that the location of Roman pottery kilns found around the edge of Leicester Forest reveal former woodland margins because kilns would have required timber for their fuel. Liddle goes on to suggest that there may be a similar pattern around the southern edges of Charnwood where kilns have been discovered at Cropston, Groby and Markfield.[85] As discussed above, documentary evidence suggests that assarting was taking place at Groby and Markfield in the post-Conquest period; so if, as Liddle suggests, the kilns discovered at these sites are a reflection of Charnwood's woodland margins in the Roman period, it would seem that the margins of Charnwood's inner core, at least at Groby and Markfield, remained relatively stable between the Roman and the post-Conquest periods.

Early medieval continuity of Charnwood's external boundaries may explain why later medieval encroachments did not diminish perceptions of the forest as a particular 'place'. The appearance of the name 'Charnwood Forest' in later sources indicates that

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[85] P. Liddle, 'The Roman Countryside of Leicester' in P. Bowman and P. Liddle, *Leicestershire Landscapes* (Leicester, 2004), p. 78.

it was still regarded as a discrete entity. For example, a thirteenth-century deed relating to Quorndon, allows pasture of 'animals without number' in Charnwood Forest.[86] Furthermore, seventeenth-century sources reveal that Charnwood continued to be regarded as a distinct area in the post-medieval period as indicated by a fine of 1621 which details a dispute about

> common of pasture in Horsepoole, Bagworthe, Thornton, Markefield Whittington and the Forest of Charnwood.[87]

Ryden argues that a defining characteristic of 'place' is the attribution of meaning.[88] Charnwood Forest was, it seems, always 'a place', a place replete with a variety of meanings, but the size and shape of that place, the space that it occupied, was subject to change.

4.4   Population changes and assarting

Whilst Charnwood does seem to have retained an identity and sense of place throughout the medieval period and beyond, it is suggested here that Charnwood's status as a chase allowed Charnwood's external boundaries to shift in the later medieval period. These shifts can be considered in relation to population changes in surrounding settlements and to rising and falling demands for agricultural land. Population changes in late medieval Charnwood were charted in the 1950s in the Victoria County History volumes for Leicestershire, drawing on sources such as the Domesday Book of 1086, returns of an inquisition dated 1279, assessment for tenths and fifteenths dated 1334, poll tax returns of 1377 and lay subsidies of 1524 and 1525.[89] The volumes highlight

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[86] HL, HAD1751, Box 112, Quorndon Deed, 13th century.
[87] Fine, 1621, Robert Peshell esq., plaintiff and Lisle Cave, esq., Judith his wife, John Gobert, esq. , Lucy his wife, defendants, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes,* VI, p.383.
[88] K. C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisable Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993), pp. 36-7.
[89] C.T.Smith, 'Population', pp. 129- 217.

Charnwood's relatively low population when compared with the rest of Leicestershire in 1086, an increase in Charnwood's population in the twelfth, thirteenth and early fourteenth century, a fall in Charnwood's population after the Black Death and then a gradual rise in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These demographic changes are generally consistent with national trends as outlined by Bailey.[90] Nationally, fourteenth-century population decline may have begun before the Black Death as population 'outstripped the ability of agriculture to maintain it'.[91] Bailey, however, considers and challenges the notion that economic development of 'marginal areas' was 'determined solely by changes in demographic pressure'.[92] Charnwood provides a good testing ground for his theories. Assarting and cultivation of Charnwood's 'inhospitable soils' has been considered by many to be a response to the needs of rising populations and something of a last resort.[93] In this chapter the population data utilised by the VCH is re-examined in order to identify variations around Charnwood. These variations are considered alongside field-name, documentary, archaeological and landscape evidence relating to assarting and enclosure.

There are a number of issues to address in the VCH's analysis of medieval Charnwood's population. There is some discrepancy, for instance between Domesday statistics cited by Smith in the VCH volumes and those given in the Domesday Book.[94] It is also difficult to draw conclusions from comparisons made between different types of data, compiled by different people, at different times and for different reasons. One of the sources cited in the VCH volumes is the 1334 assessment for tenths and

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[90] Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin' pp. 1-2.
[91] Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin', p. 1.
[92] Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin', p. 2.
[93] See for example, Smith, 'Population', p. 133
[94] This is in regard to Domesday poulation figures for Barrow. Smith, 'Population' cites a population figure of 27, whilst the figure is 56 in P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, (Chichester, 1979), f. 237a.

fifteenths, an assessment of wealth, from which conclusions about comparative

populations around Charnwood were drawn. Correlation between wealth and population

is likely but should not be assumed. Another potential difficulty, one acknowledged in

the VCH volumes,[95] is that several of the sources utilised are taxation records and that

some account must be made for levels of evasion. Fenwick has made a strong case for

fairly minimal levels of evasion in the poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381 across the

country, suggesting that evasion was 'virtually impossible without the connivance of

local taxers'[96] However, avoidance of taxation may have been easier in a woodland,

upland landscape with dispersed settlement patterns such as that of Charnwood Forest.

This would be consistent with the difficulties associated with tax collection identified in

other areas of dispersed settlement.[97] There are, perhaps, two more significant problems

in charting demographic changes over time in Charnwood. One is that, because the

period between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries was a period of redistribution of

territories,[98] the geographic area of a named place in one source is not necessarily the

same as the geographic area of the same named place in another. A second problem is

that many of the sources only recorded heads of household, and none were likely to

record everybody. Whilst each source is useful as a comparison between different

places at a given time, it is necessary to apply some form of multiplier to the raw data in

order to look at population changes over time. However, each source will require a

specific multiplier and, for many sources, there is a lack of consensus over which

multiplier should be used. Multipliers utilised for Domesday population figures, for

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[95] Smith, 'Population' p. 134.
[96] C. C. Fenwick, *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, 1, Bedfordshire – Leicestershire* (Oxford, 1998), p. xxvi.
[97] See for example, H. Fox 'Taxation and Settlement in Medieval Devon' in M. Prestwich, R. Britnell, R. Frame, eds, *Thirteenth Century England X, Proceedings of the Durham Conference 2003* (Woodbridge 2005), p. 172.
[98] To be discussed below in chapter 5 on Charnwood's internal boundaries.

example, range from 3.5 – 5.[99] A particular anomaly has been identified in the VCH's consideration of fourteenth-century poll tax records for Leicestershire. The volumes consider fourteenth-century poll tax receipts which are inaccurately attributed to the 1377 poll tax rather than the 1379 poll tax.[100] The former taxed 'every lay man or woman, married or single of fourteen years or over', whilst the latter taxed all 'lay married and single men and single women of sixteen years or over'.[101] The two taxes, therefore, require different calculations in order to estimate total populations.

Despite these considerable qualifications the population data utilised by the VCH volumes does seem to reveal some variation in rates of population growth around Charnwood. Raw population figures for Barrow, in the east, show a less than threefold increase, from 56 recorded in 1086,[102] to 144 recorded in 1273.[103] The rate of growth seems to be rather greater in the south where a combined recorded population of 35 for the villages of Markfield, Botcheston, Ratby and Groby in 1086, rises to 131 in 1279.[104] The most dramatic increase, however, appears to be at Whitwick, in the west, where just 1 villein was recorded in 1086 but 40 villeins and an unstated number of free and customary tenants are recorded in an Inquisition *post-mortem* of 1340.[105] Whilst Domesday figures are used as a base line for all vills in these comparisons, latter estimates are based on a variety of sources which may not be comparable with each other. Sadly, there is no uniform, reasonably reliable source which we can apply to

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[99] Smith, 'Population' p. 130.
[100] Fenwick, *Poll taxes*, p. 479.
[101] Fenwick, *Poll taxes*, p. xiv.
[102] P. Morgan, *Domesday Book : Leicestershire*, f. 237a,(but note this is correcting Smith's mistake in 'Population' which has Barrow's recorded pop as 27 in 1086)
[103] Barrow extant 1273, cited by Smith, 'Population' p. 133.
[104] Domesday Book, 1086, and Inquisition, 1279 both cited by Smith, 'Population' p. 133. (but note Morgan's Phillimore edition of *Domesday Book* has no record for Botcheston, a total of 35 individuals are, however, recorded for Groby, Ratby and Markfield).
[105] Domesday Book, 1086, and Inquisition post mortem, 1273, both cited by Smith, 'Population', p. 133.

Charnwood between Domesday and the poll tax returns of 1379. Table 4.5 summarises the 1086 and 1379 data for four manors which can be broadly categorised as lying to the north, south, east and west of the forest.

	Estimated population 1086 (from domesday data after application of multiplier x4)	Estimated population1379 (from poll tax returns after application of multiplier x3)
Shepshed (north)	296	183
Groby (south)	64	186
Barrow (east)	224	450
Whitwick (west)	4	117

Table 4.5 Population Estimates for Shepshed, Groby, Barrow and Whitwick in 1086 and 1379

Source: P.Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979)
C. C. Fenwick, *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, 1, Bedfordshire – Leicestershire* (Oxford, 1998).
Multiplier for Domesday data as suggested by Holly, 'Leicestershire' in H.C. Darby and I.B. Terrett, eds. *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (1954; 1971; 1978; Cambridge, 2009), p.236. Multiplier for poll tax data as suggested by C. Dyer, 'Small Towns 1270-1540' in D.M. Palliser, ed. *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 1 (Cambridge, 2000), p. 536.

It is difficult to judge the extent to which the Black Death affected Charnwood's population, and certainly to identify variations around the forest. Clerical evidence indicates overall losses of between thirty and forty percent, the register of Garendon abbey enumerating outbreaks in 1348-9, 1369-70, 1375-6 and 1390.[106] Table 4.5 does seem to confirm a disproportionate increase in populations to the south and west of the forest between 1086 and 1379. It also indicates an apparent decrease in population at Shepshed to the north. It would seem likely that the whole of Charnwood was affected by the Black Death. However, disproportionate increases in population prior to the outbreaks, rather than disproportionate effects of them, may be responsible for the figures seen in table 4.5.

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[106] Smith, 'Population', p. 136.

In the light of the difficulties associated with population estimates alone, consideration of place-name and archaeological evidence can be illuminating. Examination of the etymology of minor place-names in Charnwood reveals evidence of changing land use and possible shifts in the boundaries of Charnwood's inner core related to population changes. To the west, at Swannington and Whitwick, the area identified as that of most significant population growth, we have the appearance of the place-name element ME *brēche* (land broken up for cultivation).[107] Here the etymology suggests that the forest edges were gradually being eaten away. Similar evidence at Whitwick is provided by the minor place-name *stokesyke* [108] which incorporates the qualifier element OE *stoccing*, - 'a clearing of stumps, a piece of ground cleared of stumps'[109]. The etymology of the generic element may be ON *sik* 'a ditch or trench' or, alternatively, OE *sīc* 'a stream, in place-names often a boundary stream'.[110] In either case, we may be looking at place-name evidence for tree clearance on the margins of the manor. Many of the OE elements such *stocking* and *sīc* continue in use, with slight variations in spelling and/or meaning, into the later medieval period. For example OE *stocking* becomes ME *stocking.*[111] In the case of *sīc,* the association with boundaries is a ME development.[112] It can therefore be difficult to know whether we are looking at early clearance or later use of the OE terms. However, the combination of evidence provided by documentation relating to later medieval assarting, by estimates of later medieval demographic

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[107] See undated charter, no. 828, relating to Swannington, 'lying upon the tillage called Newbreche', and charter, no.835, dated 1344, also relating to Swannington, 'lying upon a tillage called Le Breche', both charters listed in A. Hamilton Thompson, *A Calendar of Charters and other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester* (Leicester, 1933), pp. 434, 437; See also Account of Robert Vyncent, bailiff at Whitwick, by Ralph Whalley, his deputy, 1512, '16d increase of rent of a pasture called Whitewike Breche', transcribed in Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 115. Etymology from Smith, *EPNE,* 1, p. 47.
[108] ROLLR, DE66/Box 134/1, Whitwick Account Roll, 1433-4, '26s. 8d. for herbage from *Stokesyke Berondonsyke'*
[109] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2, (London, 1956) p. 156.
[110] Smith, *EPNE*, 2, pp. 121-122.
[111] Smith *EPNE* 2, p. 156-157
[112] Smith *EPNE*, 2, pp. 121-122.

changes, and by place-name evidence supports the notion that much of the

encroachment on Charnwood's inner core took place in the post-Conquest period. It did

not, however, take place uniformly around the forest, and the process could sometimes

be reversed.

Closer analysis of the occurance of *stoccing* around Charnwood is particularly

revealing. As in the west, evidence to the south and east of the forest also suggests that

woodland was cleared to make way for cultivation. This is reflected in the survival of

the element *stoccing* in modern field-names at Rothley and Groby.[113] It is interesting to

note that the Rothley *stoccings* all lie to the west of the village encroaching on Rothley

Plain, an area which we have already established should be considered part of the forest

(fig. 4.19). However, at Shepshed, to the north of the forest, where the appearance of the

element *stoccing* does indicate woodland clearance at the time of naming, the context

provided by documentary evidence suggests that those places returned to woodland at a

later date. For example, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Shepshed Court Rolls describe

cases against individuals accused of taking wood from *Le Stokkyng* or *Stokkyng*.

> 1 man felled and lead away branches of small oaks (*ramorum quercul'*) in *le Stokkyng* without licence.[114]

And

> 1 man felled, took and lead away 1 cartload of wood without licence in *Stokkyng.*[115]

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[113] ROLLR, FNS/132/1-2, Groby Field-Name Survey; ROLLR, FNS/269/1-2, Rothley Field-Name Survey.
[114] BL, Add Ch 26842, Shepshed Court roll 1398.
[115] BL, Add Ch 26843, Shepshed Court Roll, 1489.
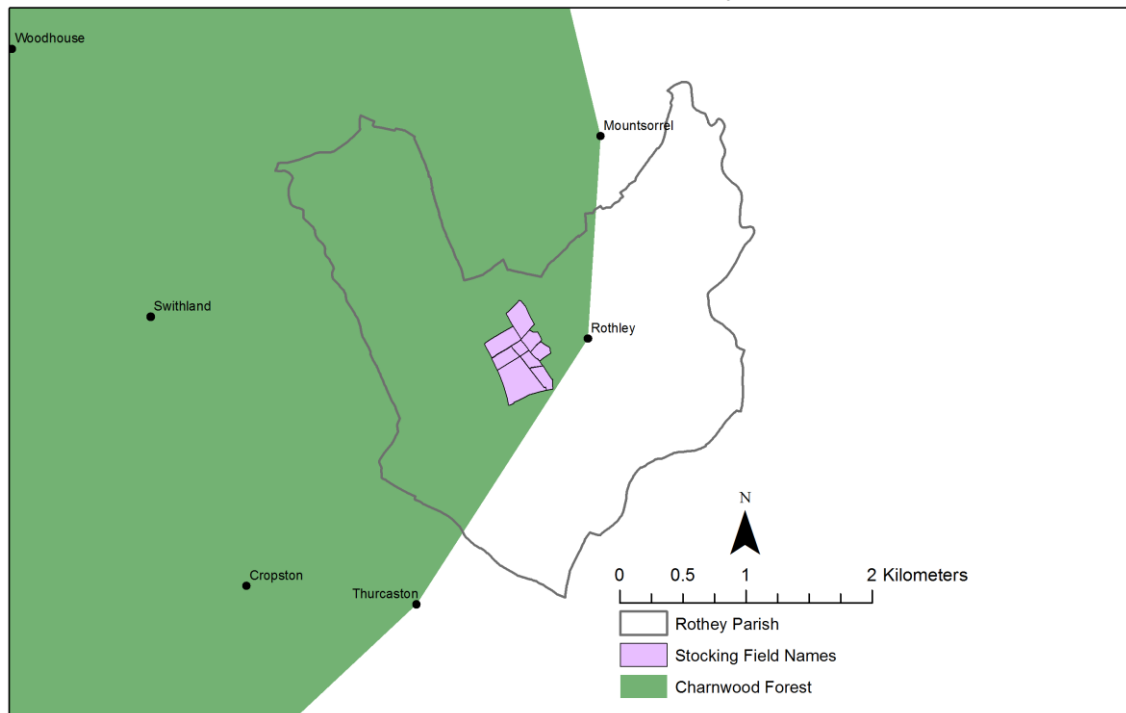
Figure 4.19 Stocking Field-Names in Rothley

Source: contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).

That cultivation at the Rothley and Groby *stoccings* seems to have persisted, whilst the *stoccings* of Shepshed seem to have reverted to woodland, may reflect the variations in the rates of population growth noted above. It is also interesting to note that parts of both Oakley and Piper Woods, just to the north of Shepshed feature areas of ridge-and-furrow,[116] indicating a period of earlier cultivation and changing land use. The presence of ridge-and-furrow under Charnwood's woodland is not, however, limited to the north of the study area; the feature has also been found in Martinshaw Wood and Swithland Wood to the south.[117]

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[116] Squires, Shepshed Manor- Shepshed (Oakley) Park, Squires and Humphreys, *TheMedieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, p. 141.

[117] N. Hannon, 'An Archaeological LiDAR Study of Charnwood', Leicestershire, ULAS report no. 2014-092, (unpublished draft report, 2014), p. 35; and S.Woodward, *Swithland Wood: a Study of its History and Vegetation* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 21-24.

Further complexity is added by place-name evidence from Long Whatton, to the north of Shepshed, which appears to show land that had been considered to be particularly inhospitable when it was named, was later under the plough. An undated survey describes *dad mor* within the open field of Long Whatton's *Northfelde*.[118] Incorporation of *dad mor* into the open fields of Long Whatton indicates that, at the time of the survey, this was arable land. However, the etymology of the generic element suggests that this had not always been the case (OE *mōr*, ON *mór* – 'a moor, a high tract of barren uncultivated ground').[119] Etymology of the qualifier may also indicate that those who named *dad mor* thought little of its potential for cultivation (OE *dēad*).[120] Whilst this place-name element usually refers to dead people,[121] it may, in Long Whatton, have reflected perceptions of soil quality.

Such evidence shows that changing land use in Charnwood Forest was far from 'a one way street' but rather a complex and constantly evolving process. Mark Bailey suggests that 'most historians' believe that 'demographic decline of the fourteenth century resulted in a fall in land values and an abandonment of some arable' and that 'this contraction was most evident at the margin'.[122] Bailey's contention that this view is too simplistic is supported by the evidence in Charnwood. Bailey argues that concepts of the margin should not solely focus on soil quality but incorporate considerations of technological advances in agriculture, distance from markets, and an economy wider than just the agricultural. Whilst the evidence of ridge and furrow under woodland in Charnwood indicates that there was some reduction in the acreage under plough, the

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[118] BL Cotton MS Galba E lll, Long Whatton survey, undated.
[119] Smith, *E.P.N.E*, 2, pp. 42-43.
[120] A.H. Smith, *EPNE*, I, pp. 127-8.
[121] Smith, *EPNE*, I, pp. 127-8.
[122] M. Bailey, *A Marginal Economy? East Anglian Breckland in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1989), p. 4.

forest seems to have relatively few deserted or shrunken settlements. Of the seventeen Leicestershire deserted medieval settlements lying to the west of the Soar identified by Hoskins in the 1940s, only two can be associated with Charnwood, they are Whittington and Bradgate. In the more hospitable landscape to the east of the Soar, Hoskins identified thirty-one such sites.[123] Later work by Beresford and Hurst identified 67 lost or deserted medieval villages in Leicestershire (fig. 4.20),[124] a figure equivalent to that currently recorded by Leicestershire and Rutland HER. [125] Again the majority of sites lie to the east of the Soar. Whittington and Bradgate remain the only two within the core of Charnwood, although there seem to be small clusters of sites around the towns of Ashby to the north-west of the study area and Loughborough to the north-east. The relatively low percentage of Leicestershire deserted villages located in and around Charnwood Forest might be associated with the relatively lower number, or the nature, of settlements established there in the first place. However, the general resilience and survival Charnwood's settlements supports Bailey's suggestion that, if an area produced specialised products and offered alternative employments, then this could be 'a compelling reason for continued occupation of a poor soil region in the later Middle Ages'. [126]

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[123] W.G. Hoskins, 'The Deserted Villages of Leicestershire', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 22, part 4 (1941-2), p. 242.
[124] University of Hull, 'Beresfords Lost Villages' at https://www.dmv.hull.ac.uk/countyMap.cfm?clatitude=52.666&clongitude=-1.114&county=Leicestershire [accessed 3rd August 2017].
[125] LRHER, data obtained by searching for 'deserted medieval villages' via Heritage Gateway at https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/historic-environment-record [accessed 2nd August 2017].
[126] M. Bailey, 'The Concept of the Margin' p. 13-14.
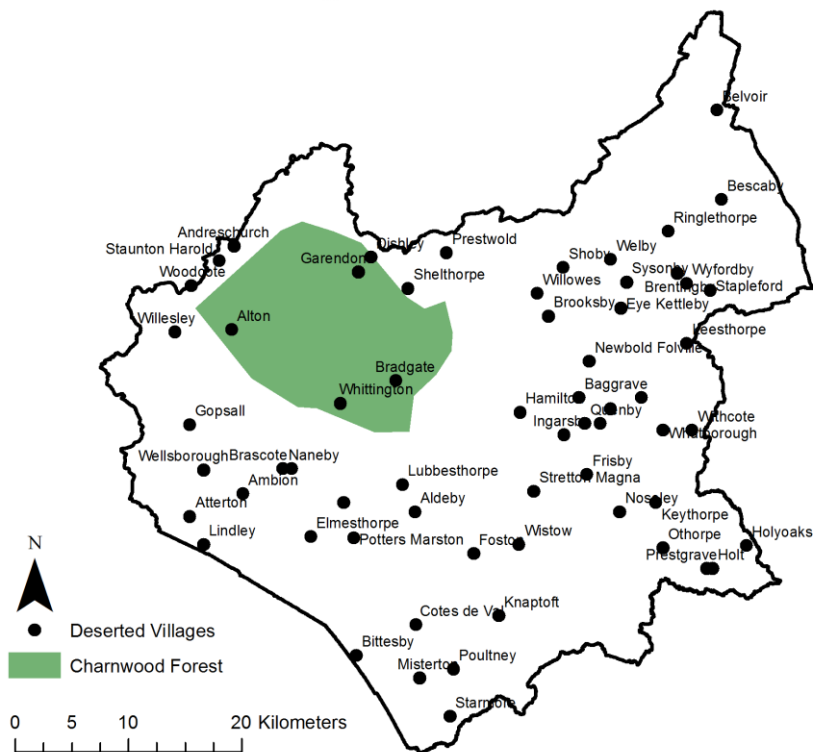
Figure 4.20 Leicestershire Deserted Villages

Source: Data from University of Hull, 'Beresfords Lost Villages' at https://www.dmv.hull.ac.uk/countyMap.cfm?clatitude=52.666&clongitude=-1.114&county=Leicestershire [accessed 3rd August 2017].

4.5 Case Study - Charnwood's southern boundary

The relationship to be considered here is the southern part of Charnwood's external boundary, that between Charnwood Forest and Leicester Forest. Several settlements on the southern edge of Charnwood Forest, for example the villages of Ratby, Groby and Anstey, also lay on the northern edge of the medieval Leicester Forest. It has been suggested that, in the early medieval period, the two forests formed a single stretch of woodland.[127] It is difficult to reconcile this theory with the argument presented above that the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest may have remained stable

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[127] P. Courtney, 'Between Two Forests: the Social and Topographic Evolution of Medieval Anstey', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 77 (2003), p. 37.

in the early medieval period. Courtney has argued that the village of Anstey was assarted from that single stretch of woodland and that this was reflected in the 'elongated shape' of the parish and in the names of two of its open fields, 'Stocking' and 'Horserood'.[128] Both names incorporate elements which have been associated with clearance (OE *stoccing*, ME *Stocking* = 'land cleared of tree stumps' and OE *rod* = 'clearing').[129] Similar field-names have been recorded in Groby, Nether Stocking Close and Upper Stocking Close, fields which lie fairly close to a field named Town End Close.[130] However, Courtney has also suggested that Anstey may have developed along an existing routeway or droveway, and it is possible that the two forests may have been separated by such routeways from Roman times or earlier. There is evidence of Roman settlement at Groby and at Anstey and of prehistoric human activity at Ratby. The 'corridor' between Charnwood Forest and Leicester Forest may, therefore, have been a pre-medieval creation, but one that was widened in the early medieval period without significantly affecting forest boundaries. However, the boundary between Charnwood and Leicester Forest seems to have remained somewhat blurred into the post-medieval period. Twelfth-century documentary evidence indicates some degree of continuity or overlap between Leicester Forest and Charnwood Forest. A deed dated between 1139 and 1147 details a grant by Rannulf, second Earl of Chester, to Robert, Earl of Leicester of 'Charley and all his woods adjoining the grantee's Forest of Leicester, except Barrow Park'.[131] Whilst doubts have been expressed that this grant was ever put into effect,[132] the document does appear to associate Leicester Forest to the south of Charnwood with

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[128] P. Courtney, 'Between Two forests: the Social and Topographic Evolution of Medieval Anstey' p.37.
[129] Smith, *EPNE*, 2, pp. 86, 156-7.
[130] ROLLR, FNS/132/1-2, Groby Field Name Survey.
[131] HMC *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq. of the Manor House, Ashby de la Zouch*, 1 (London, 1928) p.66.
[132] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 17-18.

Charley at Charnwood's centre and Barrow Park to Charnwood's east. By the time this document was written, however, this apparent continuity was perceptual and administrative rather than physical because the two forests had been physically separated by settlements such as Ratby, Groby, Glenfield and Anstey since at least 1086. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that such invisible spatial continuities are as significant as invisible boundaries in concepts of Charnwood's edges.

The continuity between Leicester Forest and Charnwood Forest may, however, be reflected in an apparent physical boundary which appears to link the two. Modern Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photography reveal a large semi-circle, formed by field boundaries and centred on Ratby (figs 4.21 and 4.22). The semi-circle would seem to fall between Charnwood and Leicester Forests and to incorporate parts of both of them. Part of this circle aligns with a portion of an earthwork identified as Burgh Park pale at Ratby.[133] Furthermore, a small part of the circle, close to Anstey, is formed by a known earthwork which has also been recorded as a medieval park pale. However, as noted above, it has been suggested that this feature may be a prehistoric triple ditch.[134] Whilst the Leicestershire HER does describe some continuation of the line from the Anstey earthwork in the form of modern local boundaries, the continuity with the larger semi-circle does not appear to have been noted.

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[133] The Burgh Park earthwork was identified by M.T. Ball and reported in P. Liddle, 'Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1984', *Transactions of the L.H.A.S*, 59 (1984), pp. 89-91.
[134] LRHER, MLE397.
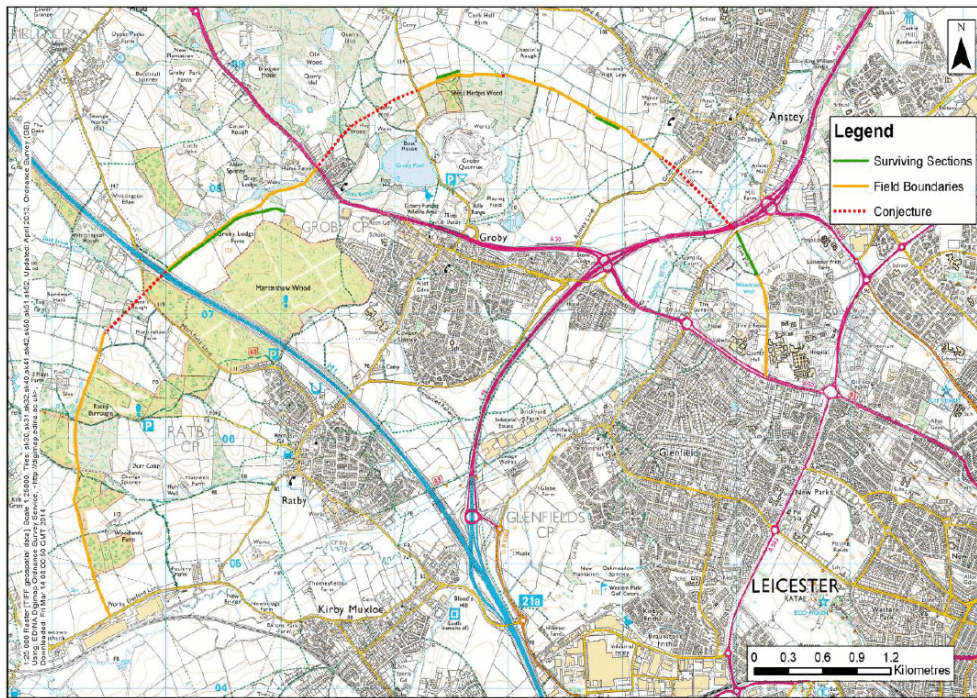
Figure 4.21 Possible Ancient Boundary, Modern Ordnance Survey

Source: Hannon, N. 'An archaeological LiDAR Study of Charnwood', Leicestershire, ULAS report no. 2014-092 (unpublished draft report, 2014), p.16. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017). Reproduced with permission of ULAS, University of Leicester.
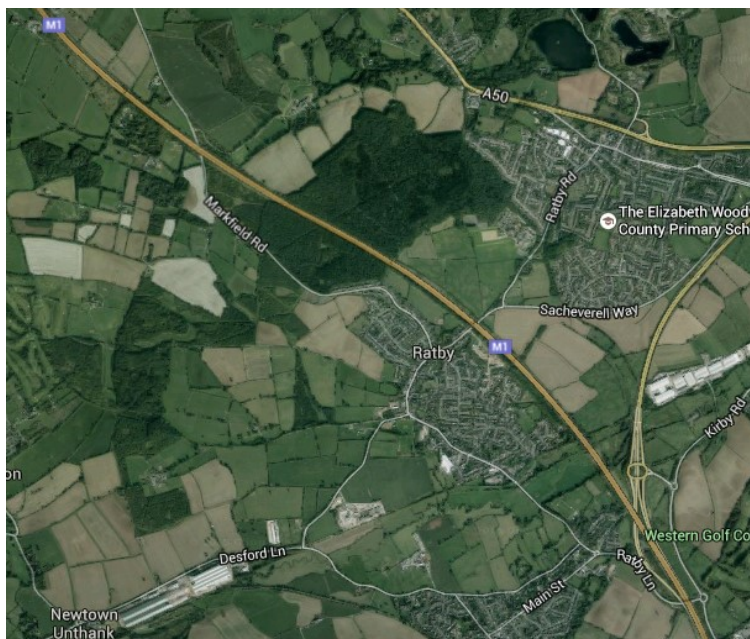
Figure 4.22 Possible Ancient Boundary, Satellite Image

Source: Google Maps https://maps.google.co.uk/ [accessed 15th November 2013]

Examination of nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps reveals some continuation of the apparent circle into areas which are now built up in the Glenfield and New Parks areas on the county/city boundary and indicate that the semi-circle was once a more complete circle(fig.4. 23).
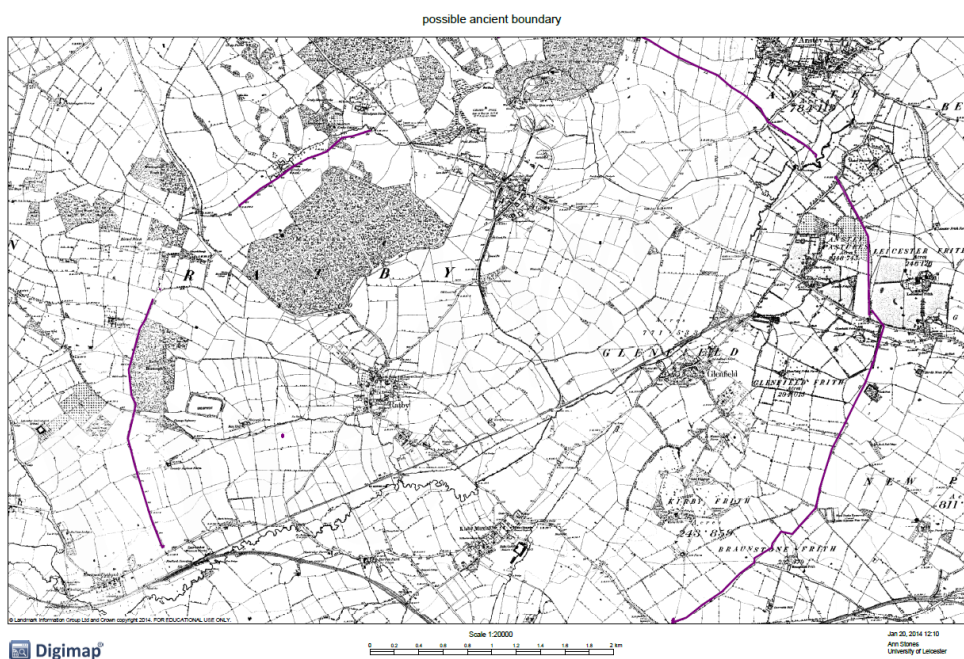
Figure 4.23 Possible Ancient Boundary, 1880s Ordnance Survey

Source: historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed January 20th 2014] © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017).All rights reserved (1880). Note – 'Ratby circle' marked in purple - annotated by the author.

LiDAR analysis commissioned by the Charnwood Roots Project has identified three further areas, in addition to the known earthworks at Anstey and Ratby, where there may be physical remains on the circle. Landscape surveys carried out to verify the LiDAR data have yielded mixed results. Whilst a bank has been identified at one of the sections suggested by LiDAR analysis, the two largest sections seem to have been 'false features', one a tractor track, the other the line of an underground drainage pipe. Nevertheless the circle seen in field boundaries is still very clear. There is also some

190

continuity in the profiles of the archaeological features that survive on the circle,

although different in size, they are all banks and they all feature ditches which lie on the

exterior of the circle (fig 4.24).

Figure 4.24 Bank on Possible Ancient Boundary at Ratby

The hypothesis formed by those analysing the LiDAR data has been that this unusual

curving field pattern follows the line of a medieval deer park.[135] The profile of the

surviving earthworks does not support this view because the boundaries of deer parks

are characterised by internal rather than external ditches which encouraged deer to enter

the park but prevented them from leaving.[136] There is, however, an alternative to the

'deer park' theory. Another possible explanation for our 'Ratby circle' is that it

represents the landscape evidence for the boundary of a large Anglo- Saxon royal or

aristocratic estate based at Ratby. Cain has speculatively proposed the existence of such

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[135] N.Hannon, 'An Archaeological LiDAR study of Charnwood, Leicestershire', p. 15.
[136] Aston, Interpreting the Landscape, pp. 111- 112.

191

an estate because of an apparent association between Ratby and the vills of Glenfield, Braunstone, Desford, Groby, Kirby Muxloe and Bronskinsthorpe in the Domesday survey.[137] With the exception of Bromkinsthorpe, these places fall neatly within or very close to the Ratby circle. The location of Bromkinsthorpe and its distance from a core may, however, be explained by its place-name. The name is said to mean 'the outlying farmstead of a man called Bruncyng, OE personal *Brucyng* + OScand *thorp*'[138]

On initial examination there seems to be little relationship between the 'Ratby circle' and parish boundaries. This is unfortunate because there is known to be a significant correlation between the boundaries of English ecclesiastical parishes and Anglo-Saxon land use. [139] Evidence of continuity between the 'Ratby circle' and latter boundaries would have supported the argument that the circle represented the boundaries of an Anglo-Saxon estate. However, in the case of Charnwood Forest there may have been rather less continuity because of encroachment on the forest in the later medieval period. Furthermore, continuity has been noted between the portion of the circle recorded as a park pale at Anstey and the boundary between the extra-parochial areas of Anstey Pastures and Leicester Frith.[140] Analysis of field-names adjacent or close to the 'Ratby circle', in the parishes of Ratby, Groby, Newtown Linford and Anstey, reveal further clues. In Groby there is a field called Meerhill Close, recorded in an estate map of 1790. [141]The name may stem from the OE *maere* meaning 'land by a boundary'.[142] Sadly, the field does not lie particularly close to the Ratby circle, but is adjacent to the parish boundary! Much closer to the 'Ratby Circle' however, and also in Groby, is a

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[137] T.D.Cain, 'An Introduction to the Leicestershire Domesday' in A. Williams, ed., *The Leicestershire Domesday*, Alecto Historical Edition (London, 1990), p. 21.
[138] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2005), p. 16.
[139] Gelling, *Signposts to the Past*, p. 193.
[140] LRHER, MLE397.
[141] ROLLR, FNS/132/1-2, Groby Field Name Survey.
[142] J.Field, *English Field Names:A Dictionary* (Newton Abbot, 1972), p.136.

field called Double Dykes.[143] This field is also recorded in the 1790 estate map and may

possibly refer to embankment on the circle. Even more intriguing are a number of

fields, all known locally as 'Sheet Hedges', in the parish of Newtown Linford.[144] These

fields lie immediately adjacent to the circle and to Sheet Hedges Wood (fig.4.25).
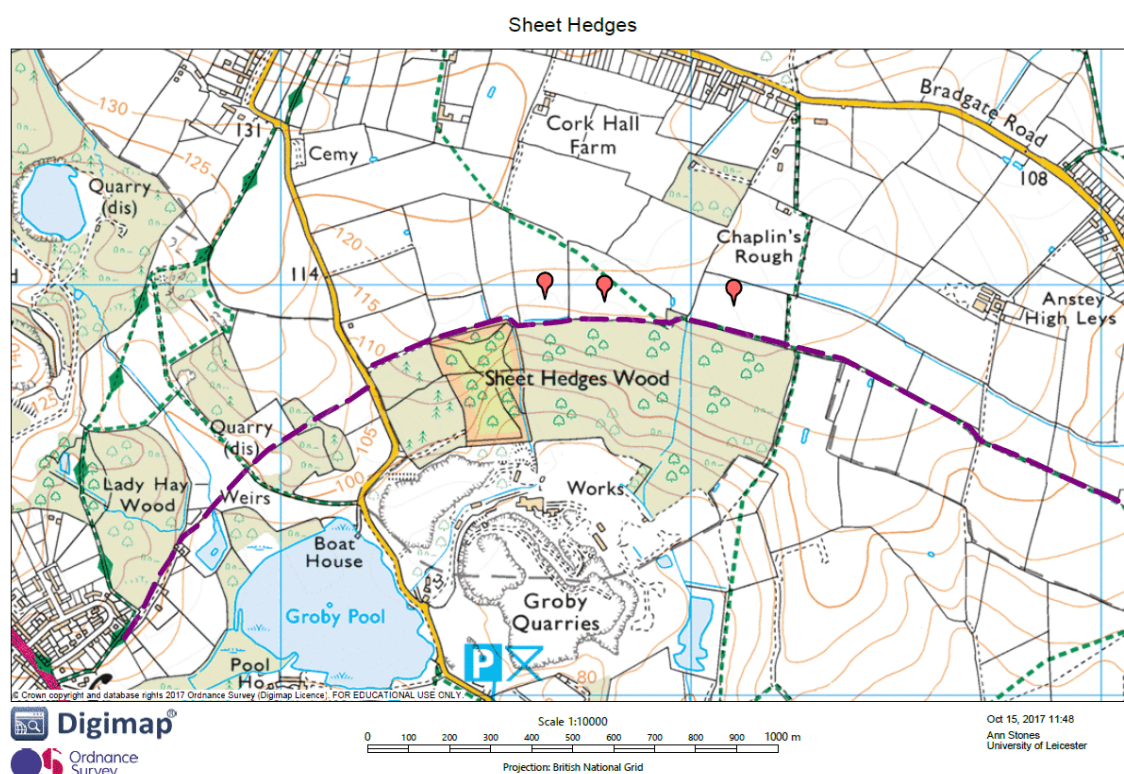
Figure 4.25 'Sheet Hedges' and the Ratby Circle

Note: purple dashed line = 'the Ratby circle', red markers are fields called 'sheet hedges'

Source: digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed October 15th, 2017]. Annotated by the author.
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).

Sheet Hedges Wood is first recorded as Shitehegges in 1344.[145] The name is derived

from OE *Sceat*, meaning 'projecting piece of land' and ME *hegge* meaning hedge or

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[143] ROLLR, FNS /132/1-2, Groby Field Name Survey.
[144] ROLLR, FNS/236/1A, 2,3, Newtown Linford Field Name Survey.
[145] B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names*, p.92.

enclosure.[146] Whilst the area occupied by Sheet Hedges fields and Sheet Hedges Wood does represent a projection of the parish of Newtown Linford into the parish of Groby, it also represents a significant projection through the Ratby Circle.

There is no evidence to suggest that the boundaries of Anglo-Saxon royal estates were generally circular or, indeed, designated by systems of banks and ditches. However, in view of the suggestion that the earthwork identified on the 'Ratby circle' at Anstey may be prehistoric in origin, we have to consider the possibility that the Ratby circle was an even earlier creation which continued to represent a boundary in the Anglo-Saxon period. There is probable evidence of prehistoric activity in Ratby at Bury Camp. This is described in the Leicestershire and Rutland HER as a rectangular univallate hillfort which is 'likely to be Iron-Age'.[147] If the Ratby circle could be shown to be prehistoric in origin, it would support Cain's very speculative theory that Ratby may be 'the relic not just of a Mercian, but of a Romano-British (or even Iron-Age Celtic) estate belonging to the owner of Bury Camp'.[148] There would, therefore, seem to be ample justification for further investigation of this feature and of possible continuities between prehistoric and medieval boundaries.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the complex, inconsistent and sometimes reversible nature of encroachment on the inner core of Charnwood Forest. One of the main forms of encroachment on Charnwood's medieval core was that of emparkment. Whilst a degree of uncertainty remains about whether this process commenced in the pre-Conquest period or the post-Conquest period, comparison between valuations attached to

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[146] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names*, pp. 92,151.
[147] LRHER, MLE 3100.
[148] Cain, 'An Introduction to the Leicestershire Domesday', p. 21.

Charnwood settlements and dates of first documentary record for associated parks, indicates that chronology of emparkment correlates to manorial wealth. The emparkment process in Charnwood had two focal points. The first of these, as seen in Wylde's plan, was centred on Charley in the south of the study area. The second, as suggested by cartographical evidence originating in the thirteenth century, seems to have focused on Oakley Wood to the north. Ryden has suggested that boundaries can be expressed in terms of where the stories about an area end.[149] This may be true for the edges of Charnwood's two areas of encroachment as told in the stories revealed by manorial account and court rolls. Whilst the stories are very similar, indicating that a similar process was at play in both the north and south of the forest, they would seem to be tales of two distinct places.

Further forms of encroachment on medieval Charnwood were those of assarting and purpresture. A wealth of landscape, cartographical, documentary and place-name evidence has revealed significant levels of such enclosures both from ecclesiastical sites within the forest, and from settlements surrounding it. However, place-name and archaeological evidence suggests that these forms of encroachment were not a one way or uniform process. It seems that Charnwood was subject to both encroachment on and retraction from its inner core. Some land that had been cleared and cultivated, for example, may have returned to woodland at a later date. Such changes in land use have been examined in relation to changing population figures for Charnwood settlements. It would seem that the greatest amount of assarting took place in the areas of probable greatest population growth, to the south and west of the forest. However, evidence relating to the field-name element *stoccing* indicates a particular return to woodland

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[149] K.Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa,1993), p. 68.

relating to later population decline to the north of the study area. Sadly, this evidence is far from conclusive. Evidence of ridge and furrow under woodland at Groby and Swithland in the south, as well as at Shepshed in the north, combined with the paucity of deserted medieval villages in Charnwood, suggests that simple correlations between demographic pressures and changing land use cannot be made.

A case study of Charnwood's southern boundary does, however, suggest that assarting played a role in the formation of the corridor of settlements and field systems which separated medieval Charnwood Forest from Leicester Forest. These two forests once formed one stretch of woodland and this study has revealed evidence of visible and invisible continuities between them. A prominently visible continuity linking the two forests is the feature referred to in this chapter as 'the Ratby circle'. The feature is a significant discovery, its origins remain obscure and further investigation is required.

This chapter, and the one preceding it, have looked at the nature of medieval Charnwood's external boundaries and how they were expressed. At times, consideration of the forest's external boundaries has touched on concepts of the forest's internal divisions. These divisions include administrative boundaries and divisions between the forest's woodland and non-woodland landscapes. They also include more nebulous spatial divisions such as those between the public and the private, the religious and the secular, and the recreational and the economic. Such matters will be addressed more fully in the following chapters.

Chapter 5   Minding the manors:

administrative divisions of Charnwood Forest

by the Est side of the saide P[ar]ke decsendynge by the North side of Birchwod [1]

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between the administrative and topographic

internal divisions of medieval Charnwood Forest. The interwoven nature of that

relationship is evident in contemporary documentary sources which reveal that

boundaries were expressed in terms of the landscape features through which they

passed. We generally have much better documentary evidence of the internal divisions

of medieval Charnwood than we have for its external bounds. In an example from the

west of the study area, an eighteenth-century transcription of a thirteenth-century

perambulation of the parish of Markfield, bounds are said to:

> First hit begynneth at a ston[e] called Ant[er]ston stondinge upon the endeof
> Ravenscliffe from thens down
> <fro thens downe a brode Lane to Benleyker & fro[m] Benleyker forth by
> anno[ther] brode Lane to Horsepole yate and>
> Throwe a Lane called the Foul Slough and so forth thorough a brode Lane to a
> place called Whytyngton Grene <&> fro[m] thens to
> a Hill called the Clyffe on the North syde of Horsepole and from the saide Hill
> up to Bardon P[ar]ke and by the Est side
> of the saide P[ar]ke decsendynge by the North side of Birchwod <downe> to
> Charley Sprynge and thorough Charley

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[1] ROLLR, DE 5742/1, Transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest with rough plan of forest 31 Hen III (1246-47), made from an original 'in the procession of Lord Moira' n.d. c.1760.

Sprynge to the entrie of the Court of Charley where as dividen the Fees and the
P[ar]ishes of Barowe & Shepeshed
and from that entrie ascendynge by a Dyke levynge Charley Sprynge on the
Right Hande fol[o]wynge that same
Dyke unto a Closs[e] called Sabthorne Hill and so by the Dyke dep[ar]tinge the
same clos and the olde Felde of Charley[2]

The extract mentions roads, hills, dykes, a stone, a park, a spring, a field and a wood.

Such features were visible, recognisable, unequivocal and relatively permanent features

of the landscape and were, therefore, particularly useful as boundary markers. Such

markers were important because the forest was never held in its entirety by a single

lord. At Domesday, major landholders in the forest were the King, the Earl of Chester,

and Hugh de Grandmesnil. The latter was the biggest landholder in the county and also

held the town of Leicester. By the time of the Leicestershire survey, *c.* 1129, the forest

was divided between the Earls of Leicester and Chester. In the early thirteenth century

various parts of the forest were held by the King; Hugh, Earl of Arundle; Saer de

Quency, Earl of Winchester; and families such as the Ferrers and the Despensers. The

later thirteenth century and the fourteenth century saw further subdivision of manors

and the addition of names such as Erdington, Comyn and Beaumont to the list of

Charnwood lords. By the fifteenth century, much of the forest was held by the Greys

(descendents of the Ferrers) and the Beaumonts whilst the large manor of Barrow had

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[2] ROLLR, DE 5742/1, Transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest with
rough plan of forest 31 Hen III (1246-47), n.d., *c.*1760.

been granted to Lord Hastings who was steward, on behalf of the Crown and the Duchy of Lancaster, of the town of Leicester.[3]

Evidently, the later medieval was a time of change in the Forest's administrative boundaries.This chapter considers such changes and the relationship between manorial and parish boundaries. There is consideration of the significance of Charnwood's internal administrative boundaries, for whom they were significant, and of their significance in later periods. The chapter includes a case study of the manor of Shepshed to the north of the study area. This gives particular consideration to documentary and cartographical evidence of thirteenth-century origin which delineates Shepshed's bounds. The origins and significance of the archaeological feature known as Earl's Dyke, which separated the medieval manors of Shepshed and Beaumanor, are discussed. There is also an examination of the role that Earl's Dyke, as an apparently unequivocal boundary, played in disputes of later periods. The chapter concludes with consideration of the relationship between Charnwood's administrative boundaries and the boundaries of areas of woodland. Much of Charnwood's medieval woodland was located at the junction of parish boundaries and the role of woodland in the formation of parish boundaries would, therefore, seem worthy of investigation. Documentary, cartographical, place-name, archaeological and paleoenvironmental evidence is utilised in order to determine the extent to which patterns formed by administrative boundaries reflect the division of woodland resources amongst Charnwood's medieval communities.

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[3], G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors*, (Leicester, 1930) pp. 35-48, 89- 99, 124-133, 149-156; A.M. Erskine, 'Political and Administrative History 1066- 1509' in R.A. McKinley, ed., *A History of the County of Leicester*, IV (London, 1958), pp. 1-30.

5.2 Charnwood's administrative divisions in 1086

The question of Charnwood Forest's internal divisions prior to the Norman Conquest is one that has rarely been addressed. Potter, Farnham, and Squires all commence their discussions of the forest's administrative divisions with the evidence provided by Domesday Book.[4] This may be because of the paucity of earlier documentation for Charnwood and, indeed, for Leicestershire generally. Whilst local groups may have arrived at territorial understandings with regard to the forest in the early medieval period, it has been suggested that fixed boundaries within such 'frontier areas' tended to be established rather later.[5] Certainly, the paucity of Anglo-Saxon charters for Charnwood means that it is difficult to relate Charnwood's Domesday geography to earlier Anglo-Saxon estate structures.

At Domesday, Charnwood Forest was divided between the wapentakes of Guthlaxton and Goscote. 'Wapentake' was the term of Scandinavian origin used in the north-east of England to describe the administrative and judicial units which were known as 'hundreds' in the rest of England.[6] It is thought that they emerged from earlier territorial units in the tenth century but that their boundaries may have been rather fluid.[7] The forest, or at least parts of it, was also likely to have been divided into ecclesiastical units, or parishes, by 1086. Parishes are not recorded in Domesday but priests were recorded at Rothley, Ratby, and Ashby.[8] Domesday was a record of landholdings, but entries for Leicestershire usually included the wapentake in which the landholdings lay.

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[4] T.R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest* (London, 1942), pp. 11-12, G. F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 1; A.E Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Forest Landscape' in J. Crocker, ed. *Charnwood Forest: A Changing Landscape* (Loughborough, 1981), pp. 28-36.
[5] D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (London and New York, 1998), p. 62.
[6] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 68.
[7] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 68.
[8] P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester, 1979), ff.230c, 232a, 232d,

In very general terms, Domesday evidence, as well as that of the *c.* 1130 Leicestershire Survey,[9] indicates that the south-western corner of the forest lay in the wapentake of Guthlaxton, with the remainder lying in the wapentake of Goscote (fig. 5.1).

N
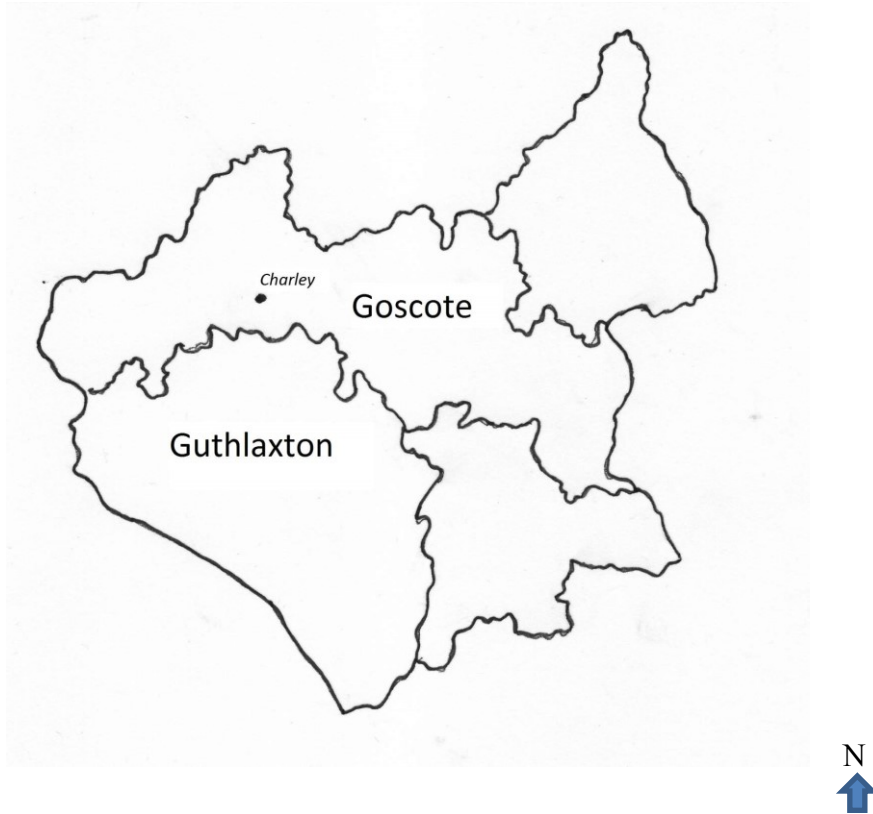
Figure 5.1 Leicestershire Wapentakes of Guthlaxton and Goscote

Source: Adapted from C.F. Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey, c AD 1130* (Leicester, 1956).

Domesday evidence does, however, raise questions over the administrative positions of the vills of Loughborough and Barrow. Whilst both lie within the area considered the Goscote wapentake by commentators such as Thorn,[10] Domesday Book places them under the jurisdiction of Guthlaxton. This may have been a scribal error, and seems to have been judged as such by Morgan in the Phillimore edition of Domesday.[11] The *c.* 1130 Leicestershire Survey does not really resolve the matter. The Leicestershire

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[9] C.F. Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey, c. AD 1130* (Leicester, 1956).
[10] F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes' in A. Williams, ed., *The Leicestershire Domesday*, Alecto Historical Editions (London, 1990) pp. 22-30.
[11] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 237a. Morgan transcribes the 'Land of Earl Hugh' as 'Guthlaxton' but puts 'Goscote' in brackets immediately afterwards.

Survey provides evidence of the subdivision of Leicestershire wapentakes into hundreds.[12] The boundaries of the Leicestershire hundreds do not appear to cross the boundaries of the wapentakes.[13] Whilst the Survey clearly places Loughborough in its hundred within the wapentake of Goscote, the administrative position of Barrow remains uncertain because it does not appear in the Survey. The entries for Goscote in the Leicestershire Survey appear to be quite detailed, whilst the entries for Guthlaxton are incomplete. Indeed, the extant survey provides hardly any evidence for the wapentake of Guthlaxton. Stenton, in the Leicestershire VCH volumes, concludes that Barrow on Soar would appear in the survey if it had been in Goscote but that, because it does not, it is more likely to have been one of the places associated with Guthlaxton for which records have not survived. He suggests that Barrow may have been annexed, possibly 'temporarily and for fiscal purposes only', to the wapentake of Guthlaxton.[14] Similarly, in his analysis of the Leicestershire Survey, Slade judged Barrow to be one of the vills 'seeming to belong to hundred groups other than those in which the Survey places them'.[15] Neither Stenton nor Slade offer any other evidence in support of their suggestions. However, it is possible that the administrative jurisdiction of Guthlaxton did extend into the area generally associated with Goscote in both 1086 and 1130.

Such ambiguities may have persisted into the later medieval period. This might be indicated by the place-name *cuth* which appears in a description of the bounds of 'Shepshed and Whitwick in Charnwood' dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

[12] Note: the Leicestershire hundreds are not, therefore, the same as the hundreds in the south of England which are equivalent to Leicestershire wapentakes in the hierarchy of territorial divisions.
[13] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 68.
[14] F.M. Stenton, 'Introduction to the Leicestershire Domesday Survey' in W. Page, ed. *A History of the County of Leicestershire, 1* (London, 1907), p. 297.
[15] Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 73.

And so to Hathern as far as Gerwdon. And from Gerwdon as far as Cuth, and from Cuth as far as Heiweyside.[16]

It is possible that *cuth* is an abbreviated and misspelt form of Guthlaxton. It does appear that the place-name has been abbreviated in the document (fig. 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Extract from the '*Cuth* document'

Source: ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis', 1275 -1350. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

Fig. 5.3 shows the other places mentioned in this document where they can be identified.

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[16] ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis', 1275 -1350, transcribed in G.F. Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1933), p. 367. This description of the bounds and divisions of the manors of Shepshed appear on the same document, and just above, the perambulation of Charnwood Forest which was discussed in chapter 3.
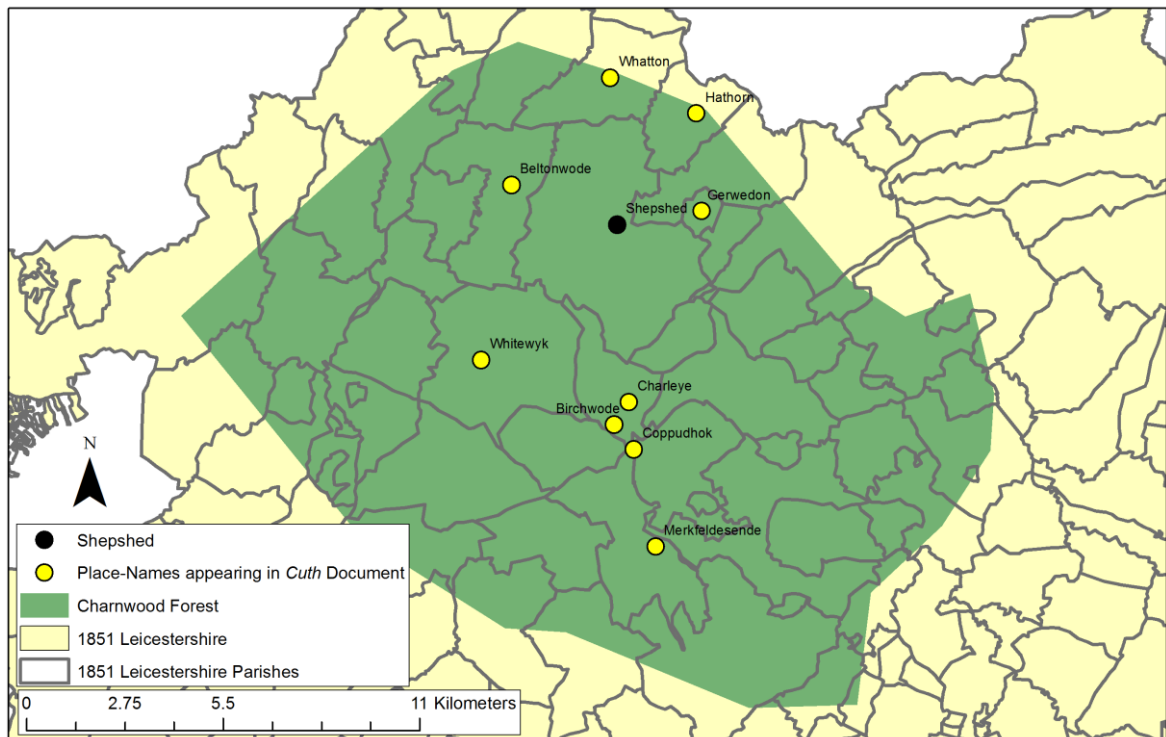
Figure 5.3 Place-names which appear in medieval perambulation of Shepshed and Whitwick (*Cuth* document)

If we follow the line apparently taken by the perambulation, *cuth* must be located somewhere between Garendon and Charley. Examination of medieval and post-medieval documentary sources related to Shepshed and Whitwick has revealed no other references to *cuth* or any place-name from which it might have been abbreviated. Furthermore, *cuth* does not appear in the entries for Shepshed or Whitwick in Cox's survey of Leicestershire place-names.[17] It is unusual for the name of a wapentake to appear in manorial or parish perambulations, but if the *cuth* which appears in the document is indeed Guthlaxton, and not merely a lost place-name, it would indicate that

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[17] B. Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7 (Nottingham, 2016), pp. 71-76 and193-205.

the perceived boundaries of the wapentake of Guthlaxton may have lain further to the

north-east than the boundary suggested by Thorn. Thorn's boundary largely corresponds

with the line suggested by parish boundaries (fig 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Detail from Thorn's Map of Boundary between Guthlaxton and Goscote

Note: Solid brown line = wapentake boundary where consistant with parish boundaries. Dashed brown
line = wapentake boundary where inconsistent with parish boundaries. Cernelega = Charley. Stantone =
Stanton.

Source: F.R. Thorne, 'The County of Leicestershire According to Domeday Book, 1086-87', map
referred to by F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes' in A. Williams, ed., *The Leicestershire Domesday*,
Alecto Historical Editions (London, 1990) pp. 22-30.

However, rather than a linear boundary, the boundary between the wapentakes of

Guthlaxton and Goscote may have been the broad band formed by Charnwood Forest

itself. Thorn does qualify his hypothesised boundary by saying that 'strictly speaking'

the boundaries of eleventh-century hundreds (and wapentakes) are 'impossible to

define' because such entities represented 'the sum of exploited land and woodland' and

did not include land classified as waste.[18] Uncertainties over wapentake and hundred boundaries have also been noted at other woodland sites such as Whittlewood Forest (Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire) where, it has been suggested, 'boundaries may not have been closely defined'.[19] At Domesday, Charnwood Forest was composed of the waste of surrounding manors and so could well have been regarded, by contemporary users of the forest, as a landscape which was free of internal divisions.

However, Domesday evidence for Charley, a dispersed settlement which lay within Goscote but very close to the boundary proposed by Thorn, casts some doubt on this argument. As noted in chapter 2, Charley, a dependency of Barrow, was recorded as waste in 1086, but the assessors sought to 'find out the assessment' for the 4 carucates of land recorded there.[20] This indicates that the area around Charley had not always been waste and that Barrow may have had closer administrative, economic and geographical links to Guthlaxton than Thorn's boundary suggests. If, therefore, the allocation of Barrow to the wapentake of Guthlaxton in the Domesday Book was a scribal error, it may have been one which resulted from contemporary uncertainties over Charnwood's internal divisions. These uncertainties may, in turn, have arisen from the forest's nature as a shared landscape in the pre-Conquest period.

5.3 The Charnwood parishes and manors

In the post-Conquest period, Charnwood Forest continued to be a shared landscape, but one which became increasingly regulated. In contrast to the lack of evidence from the early medieval period, the post-Conquest period saw a huge rise in the documentation

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[18] Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 22.
[19] R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends* (Macclesfield, 2006), pp. 73-78.
[20] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* f. 237a.

of the forest's administrative boundaries. This was a gradual process which can be related to increased regulation of the landscape as the large manors which had existed at Domesday were subdivided and as forest resources, such as woodland and pasture, became the source of dispute between individual manors. Ordnance Survey maps reveal that Charnwood Forest's modern civil parishes radiate from the junction of the parishes of Charley, Ulverscroft, Markfield, and Bardon (fig. 5.5 and 5.6).
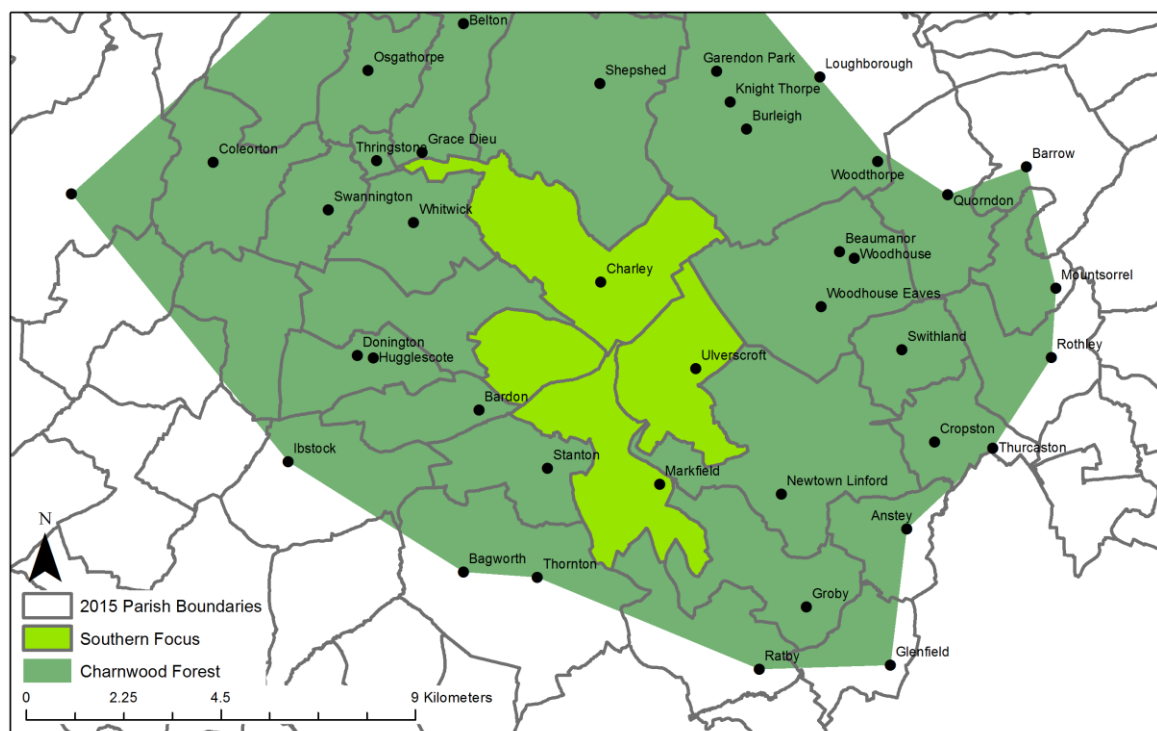
Figure 5.5 Parish Boundaries to South of the Study Area in 2015.

Note: Showing meeting point of boundaries at southern focus of encroachment (Charley).

Source: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).
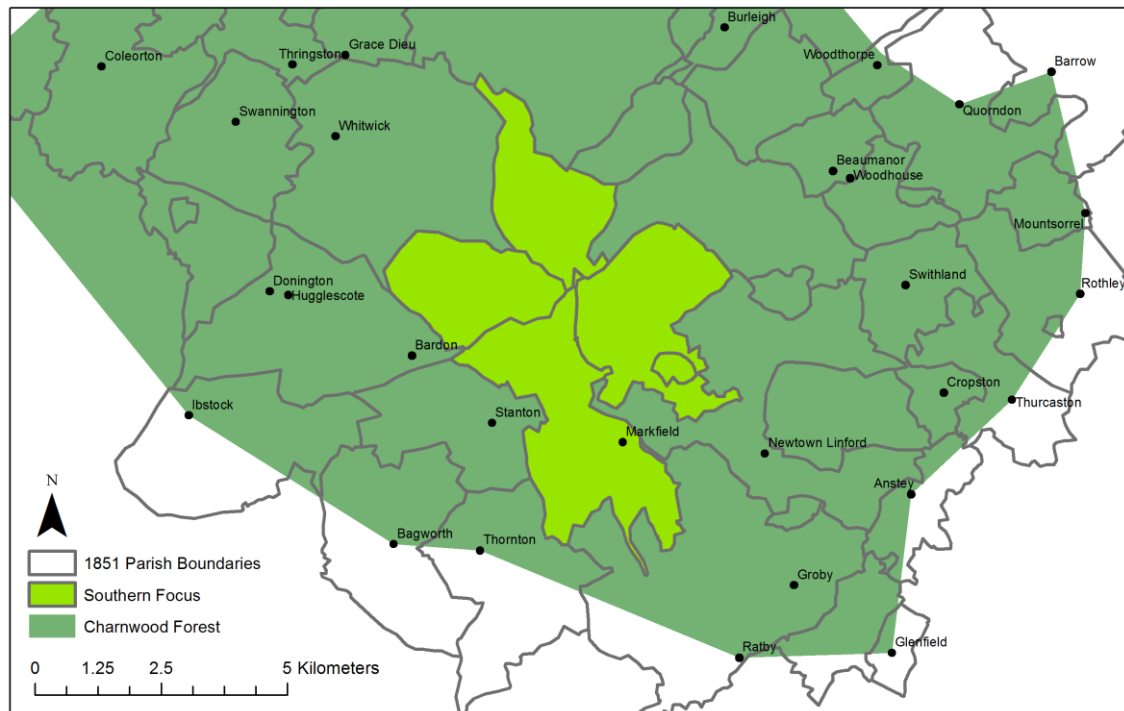
Figure 5.6 Parish Boundaries to the South of the Study Area in 1851

Source: contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

This point seems to correspond to the junction of the medieval manors of Barrow, Groby, and Whitwick in the map compiled by Farnham and Herbert, in the 1930s (see chapter 3, fig. 3.7). The junction lies remarkably close to the site of Groby's swanimote court at Copt Oak and may have formed a natural meeting point for people of different communities and for the purposes of an outdoor court. The map compiled by Farnham and Herbert 'indicates the relative positions and boundaries of the four manors (Groby, Whitwick, Shepshed, and Barrow) whose wastes were included in the forest'.[21] Ulverscroft was part of the manor of Groby, Bardon and Markfield belonged to Whitwick, and Charley belonged to Barrow.[22] Shepshed was the only one of the four medieval Charnwood manors whose boundary did not fully extend to the junction of the

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[21] R.E. Martin, 'Introduction' in G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. xvi.
[22] G. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 35, 89, 125.

other manors, although Shepshed's southern boundary, as drawn by Farnham and Herbert, did project in this general direction. The type of administrative boundary pattern seen in Charnwood is consistant with the 'star shape' which accommodates rights of access to communal resources described by Beresford.[23] The pattern may, therefore, reflect the communal nature of early medieval Charnwood Forest.

Some of Charnwood's parish boundaries, including Groby and Newtown Linford feature unusually thin projections of land towards the centre of the forest. These may represent routeways or droveways taken towards areas of common pasture in the medieval period. The projection of the Newtown Linford boundary into Ulverscroft is particularly striking; it appears to curl around Ulverscroft Wood and may represent a route that was taken to avoid land or woodland owned by Ulverscroft Priory (fig. 5.7). Modern parish boundaries shows that a thin strip of land projecting from the north-east of the parish of Charley (fig.5.8). It would be satisfying to think that this unusual shape is associated with a routeway taken by members of communities from the north-west of the forest towards its core, or, perhaps a routeway between Charley and sites to the north-west like Grace-Dieu priory or the swanimote court at Whitwick. Sadly, such theories are only partially supported by the evidence of 1851 parish boundaries which shows that the projection did not then extend as far as it does today. The northern edge of the projection of Charley shown in modern parish boundaries does, however, precisely correspond with the boundary between the parishes of Whitwick and Belton in 1851, running for a great deal of its course along, or close to, the road known as Warren Lane. This supports the notion that the line taken by the boundary was significant in earlier periods.

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[23] M. Beresford, *History on the Ground: Six Studies in Maps and Landscapes* (London, 1957), p. 34.
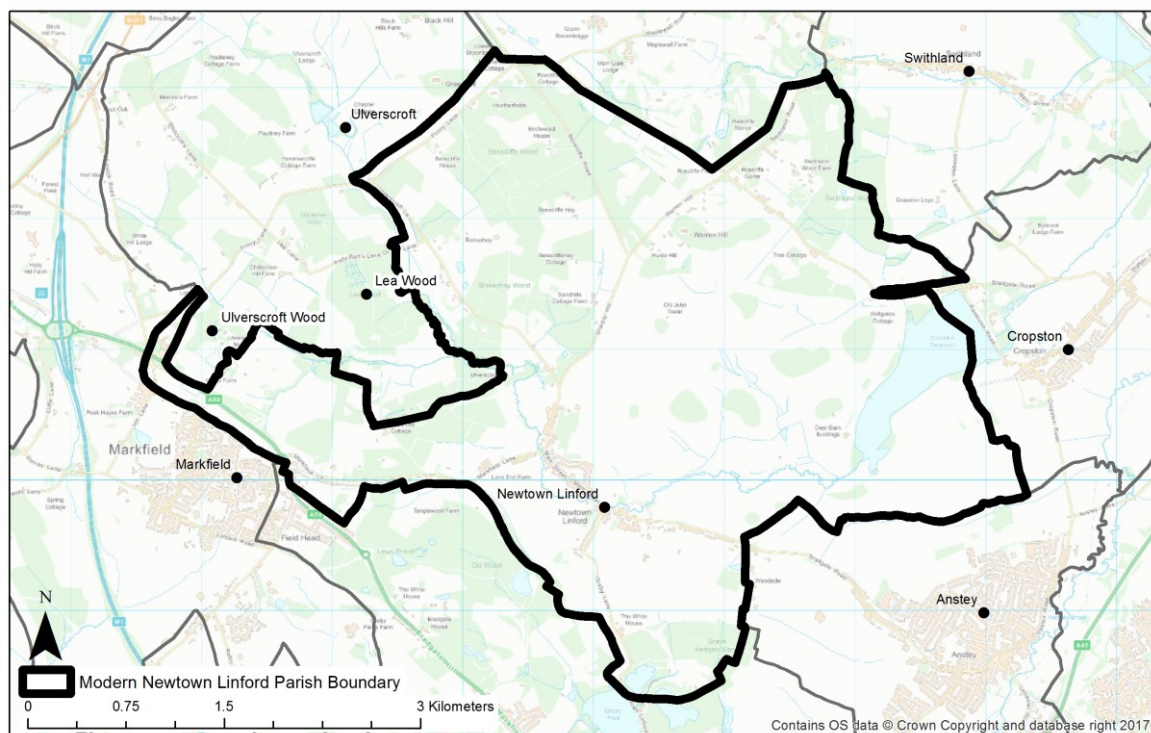
Figure 5.7 Newtown Linford Parish Boundary, 2015

Source: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017)
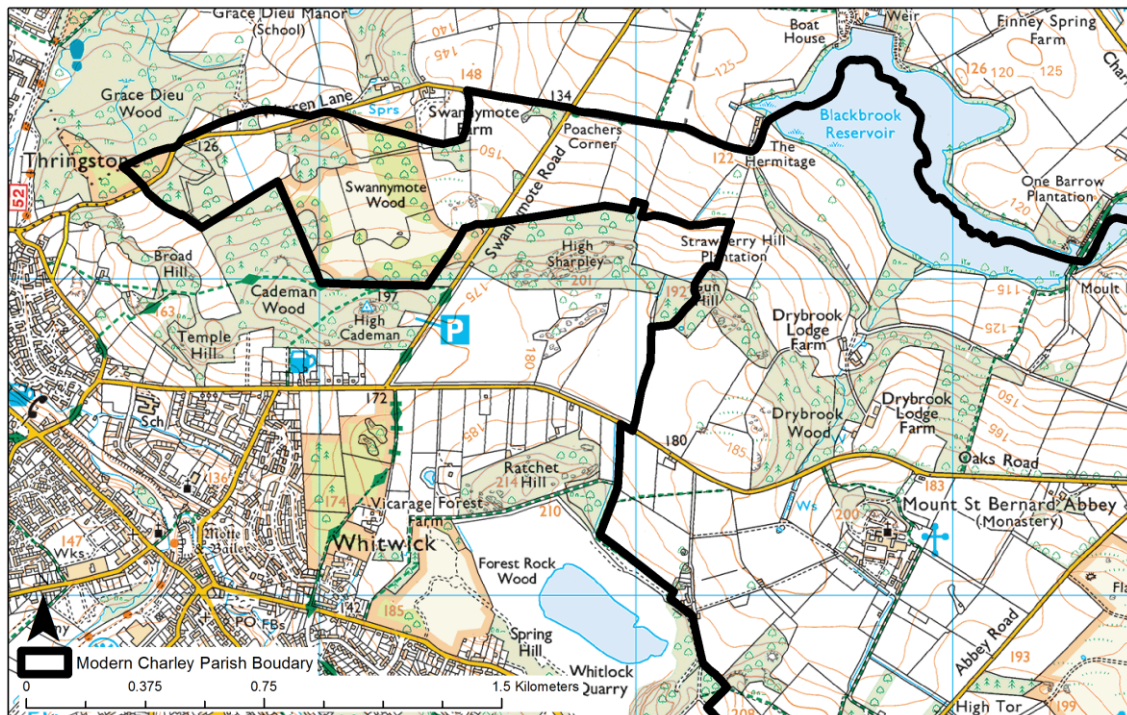
Figure 5.8 Charley Parish Boundary, 2015

Source: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017)

Central areas of early medieval intercommoning, shared by surrounding communities, have been associated with converging parish boundaries at Dunsmore Heath (Warwickshire), Wolford Heath (Warwickshire/Gloucestershire/Oxfordshire), and the Lizard Peninsular (Cornwall).[24] A similar pattern can be observed to the north of the study area centred on Oakley Wood, the area identified as the second focus of encroachment on the forest in chapter 2 (figs. 5.9 and 5.10).
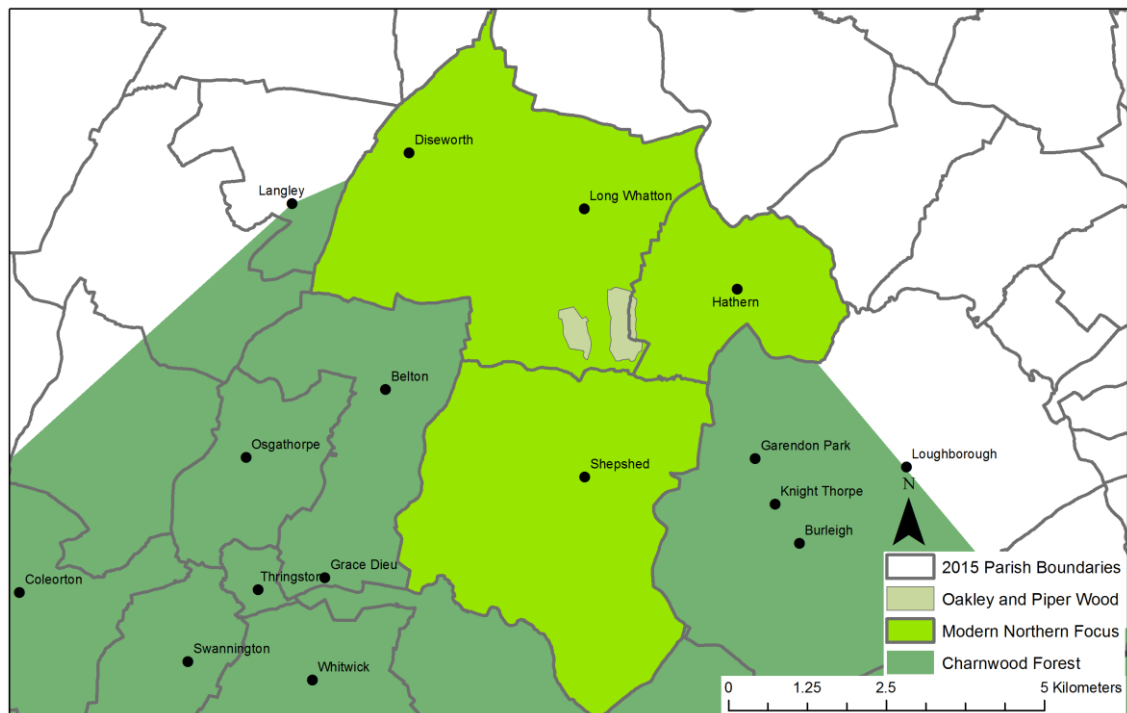
Figure 5.9 Parish Boundaries to the North of the Study Area in 2015

Note: Showing meeting point of parish boundaries at northern focus of encroachment (Oakley Wood).

Source: contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017)

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[24] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 76-77.
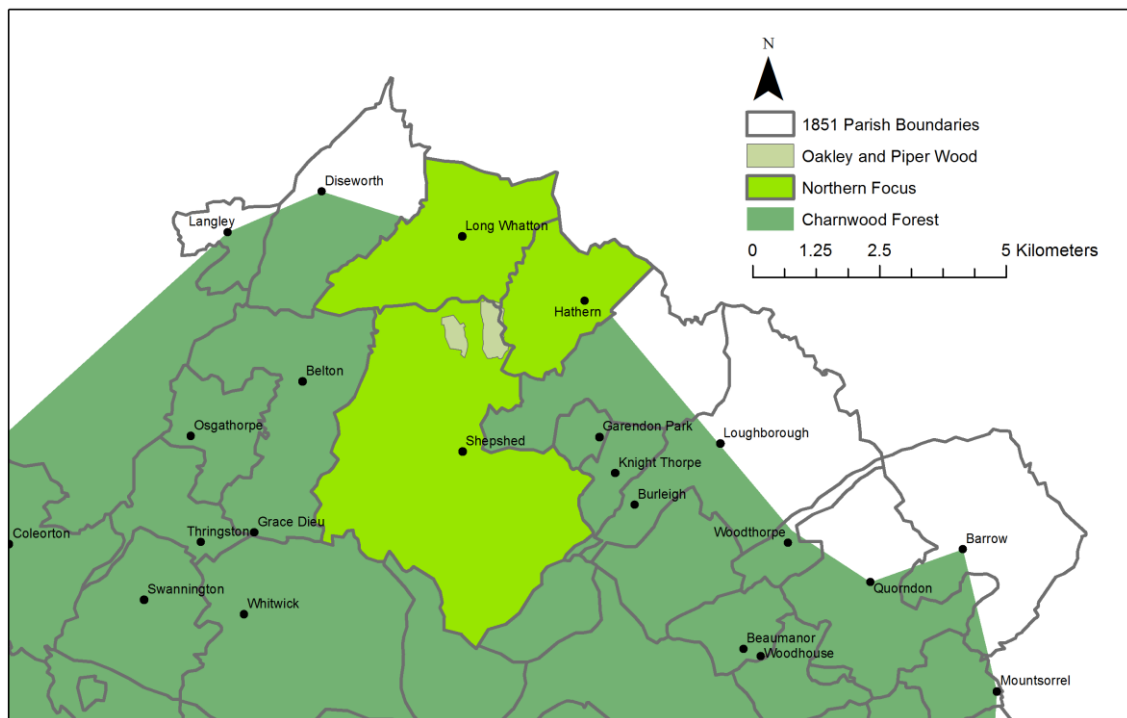
Figure 5.10 Parish Boundaries to the North of the Study Area in 1851.

Source: contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

The pattern is repeated again beyond the study area but in another area of medieval pasture, on the Leicestershire/Nottinghamshire border, north-east of Charnwood, at Six Hills (fig.5.11). However, the pattern in Charnwood is nowhere near as 'tidy' as the wheel and spoke pattern seen in the topographically similar landscape of Dartmoor, Devon (fig 5.12), [25] where boundaries converge not on a central point, but on a central parish. It may be that the relatively untidy internal administrative divisions of Charnwood Forest are, like its rather ambiguous external boundaries, a result of its 'chase' rather than 'forest status' in the medieval period - and that 'chase status'

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[25] H. Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands*, *Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages* (Exeter, 2012), p. 23.

213

facilitated a more random and piecemeal process of administrative boundary change than that seen in Royal Forest areas. However, this argument is too simplistic. First, parishes are likely to have existed before the establishment of forests or chases.[26] Secondly, some Royal Forests, such as Whittlewood (Northamptonshire/ Buckinghamshire), seem to have been characterised by the same 'messy' pattern of internal divisions as Charnwood, whilst some chases, like Cannock (Staffordshire), featured the more regular patterns associated with Dartmoor. Such differences were probably due to a combination of factors of which status was only one; other factors include topography, degree of marginality, and culture.
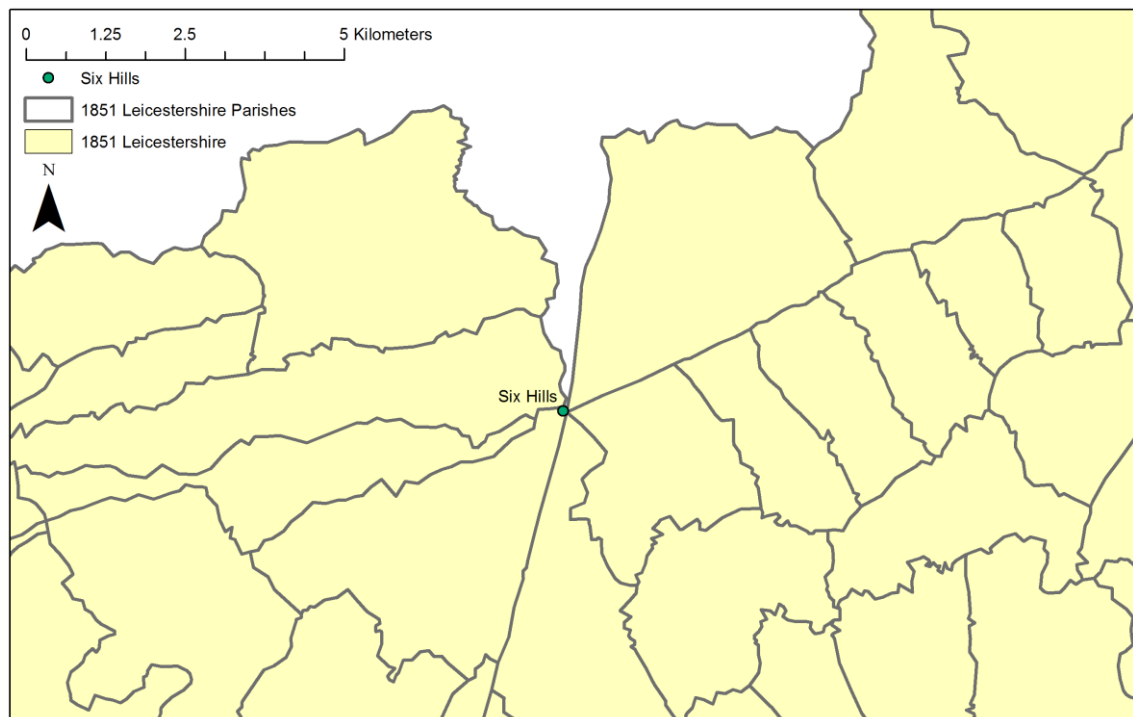
Figure 5.11 Parish Boundary Pattern at 'Six Hills', Leicestershire in 1851

Source: contains data from historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1851).

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[26] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 68-70.
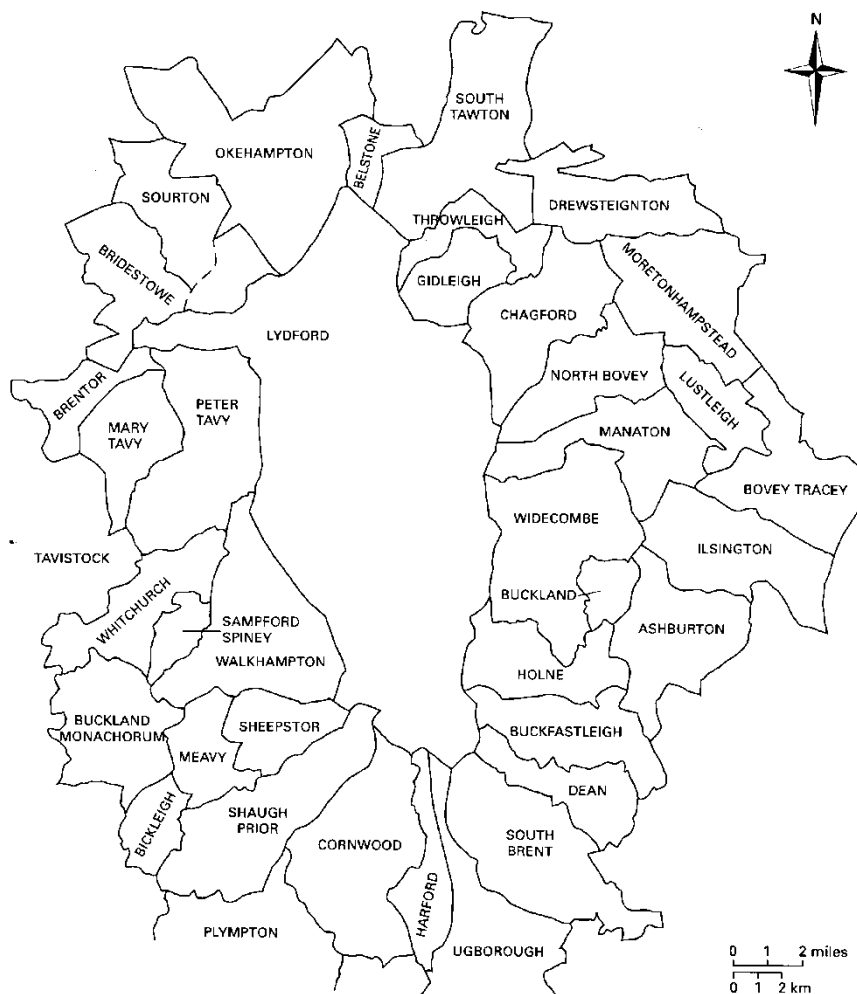
Figure 5.12 Parish Boundary Patterns at Dartmoor, Devon

Source: H. Fox, Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands, Transhumance and Pastoral Management in the Middle Ages (Exeter, 2012), p. 23. Reproduced with permission of University of Exeter Press.

The ways in which Charnwood's internal divisions were expressed are also worthy of

note. One way in which boundaries were marked across England in the medieval period

was by the positioning of boundary stones. Boundary stones were not, however, always

used in the same way. For example, in Devon, where boundaries crossed Dartmoor's

open moorland and could not be defined by fences, hedges or other features, boundary

stones were often the only way in which boundaries could be delineated.[27] Records of

boundary stones are also found in Charnwood Forest, but here they are used in

conjunction with landscape features rather than in the absence of them. An extract from

a 1556 description of the metes and bounds of Ulverscroft and Charley provides one

example.

> Proceeding towards the north and west by the exterior part of the ditch of the old
> spring aforesaid until you come to the south and east angle of the aforesaid close
> of the aforesaid Frediswide called Birchwood Leys (where near the ditch
> aforesaid the commissioners to review the mete aforesaid caused one stone to be
> set up) [28]

In this instance, the location of the boundary stone is precisely defined in terms of its

relationship to a corner of a named close (Birchwood Leys) and a particular ditch,

possibly to avoid any potential conflict that might ensue if the stone were to be moved.

In later medieval Charnwood, where administrative boundaries were changing in such a

complex manner, it seems that boundary stones were also used to emphasize and

reinforce the significance of landscape features as boundary markers.

Such administrative changes can be seen in the medieval descents of the Charnwood

manors which were described by Farnham in the 1930s.[29] More recently, the descents of

the Charnwood manors have been re-examined by Tompkins for LVCHT's Charnwood

Roots Project.[30] The descents reveal that, in the twelfth century, the core of Charnwood

Forest was held under the lordships of the Earl of Chester, who held Barrow, and the

Earl of Leicester who held Groby, Whitwick and Shepshed. However, the following

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[27] H. Fox, *Dartmoor's Alluring Uplands*, p. 23.

[28] See for example, ROLLR, DE5742/12, Extended copy of exemplification of a commission and inquisition as to the metes and bounds of Ulverscroft and Charley with translation of the commission in so much as the inquisition is related to Charley, p. 18.

[29] G. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, details given in sections for individual manors e.g., Barrow, pp. 34-48; Groby, pp. 89-99; Whitwick, pp. 124-133; Shepshed, pp. 149-156.

[30] M. Tompkins,' 'Barrow: Manors and Estates'; 'Beaumanor: Manors and Estates'; 'Loughborough: Manors and Estates'; 'Shepshed: Manors and Estates'; 'Whitwick: Manors and Estates'; (unpublished drafts, 2016).

three centuries featured several changes of lordship, often corresponding to the

changing fortunes of lords relating to national political events.[31] The descents also

reveal administrative boundary changes such as the creation of the manor of Beaumanor

from parts of the manors of Barrow and Loughborough in the early thirteenth century,[32]

the subdivision of Shepshed in 1264,[33] and the subdivision of Whitwick in 1312.[34]

Manorial boundaries and their relationship to parish boundaries are often difficult to

determine. However, in Charnwood, post-medieval documentary sources reveal

significant correlation between the two. For example evidence pertaining to the

manorial and parish boundaries are found in Barrow court rolls of 1581. One particular

extract provides an excellent example of the ways in which manorial boundaries were

expressed, the significance of such divisions and the coincidence between manorial and

parish boundaries.

> And be it remembered that the Jurors aforesaid say on their oath that that piece
> of ground in the Forest of Charnwood called "Little Baldwyn's Castell" lies
> within the precincts of the lordship and Manor of Barrow, and that John Haskey
> and George Cademan, vendors of wood for the now lord of the Manor of
> Barrow, sold "Le Brush" and "Le Topwood" growing and being in the same
> place to William Rawlyns for 53*s* and 4*d*, and that the same William cut the tops
> off the trees and cut down and peaceably carried away the underwood and "Lez
> Brambles", and further that all that part of the ground in the Forest aforesaid
> called "Maplewell", lying on that side of the little brook there towards
> Woodhouse Eaves is within the Lordship, Manor and Parish of Barrow, and that
> the Rector of Barrow received tithes-of all cattle there. And further that that
> brook before its entry into Maplewell separates and divides those two lordships

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[31] See individual unpublished draft manorial descents compiled by M. Tompkins, 2016. Examples include
the forfeiture of Beaumanor in 1265 by John Despenser for his part in rebellion against the King at the
siege of Kenilworth and the forfeiture of John Comyn's lands at Whitwick for his part in rebellion
between 1296 and 1304.
[32] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 37.
[33] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 150 and Tompkins, 'Shepshed:Manors and
Estates' pp. 1-2.
[34] Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, pp. 126-127 and Tompkins, 'Whitwick: Manors
and Estates' p. 2.

of Barrow and Groby and runs across one side of Maplewell. When beyond Maplewell it runs down again, dividing the aforesaid two lordships[35]

The extract includes an apparently diverse range of statements about the manor of Barrow. However, closer examination reveals their relevance to each other and to the continuity of Barrow's boundaries. The extract delineates the manorial boundary with respect to the manor of Groby. This boundary is said to have been formed by a brook and is consistent with that shown on Farnham and Herbert's map of Charnwood's medieval manors (see chapter 3, fig. 3.7); it bears a close relationship with modern parish boundaries (fig. 5.13).The modern parish boundary lies on the boundary between Newtown Linford, formally part of Groby, and Woodhouse, formally part of Barrow. It falls along a road known today as Jo Moore's Lane. The road lies adjacent and parallel to a brook which must be the one to which the document refers. This indicates that the manorial boundary was determined before the construction of the road but also that it was closely related to the parish boundary at this point. However, the extract also indicates that manorial and parish boundaries did not corresponded entirely. Whilst the extract highlights seignorial rights associated with land known as 'Little Baldwin's Castell' lying 'within the precincts of the lordship and manor of Barrow', the extract also highlights parochial rights in the 'ground in the forest called Mapplewell' which was said to lie within the 'lordship, manor and parish of Barrow'. The exclusion of the term 'parish' from the 'Little Baldwin's Castell' clause, and the inclusion of the term in the 'Mapplewell' clause, suggests that Little Baldwin's Castell, whilst being part of the manor of Barrow, was not part of the parish of Barrow. Little Baldwin's Castell was likely to be the area which appears as Bawdon Castle Farm on modern Ordnance

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[35] ROLLR, DE169/15-16, Barrow Court Roll, 1581, transcribed in G. Farnham, *Quorndon Records* (London, 1912), p. 277.

Survey maps (SK 497 142).[36] Today it lies in the modern civil parish of Ulverscroft. In the medieval period, Little Baldwin's Castell may have been an extra-parochial area; it seems to have formed part of lands belonging to Ulverscroft Priory, as indicated by the inquisition *post-mortem* of Robert Peshall who held the former priory and its lands at the time of his death in 1623.[37] This evidence supports the suggestion that, in the later medieval period, Little Baldwin's Castell lay within the manor, but not the parish of Barrow.
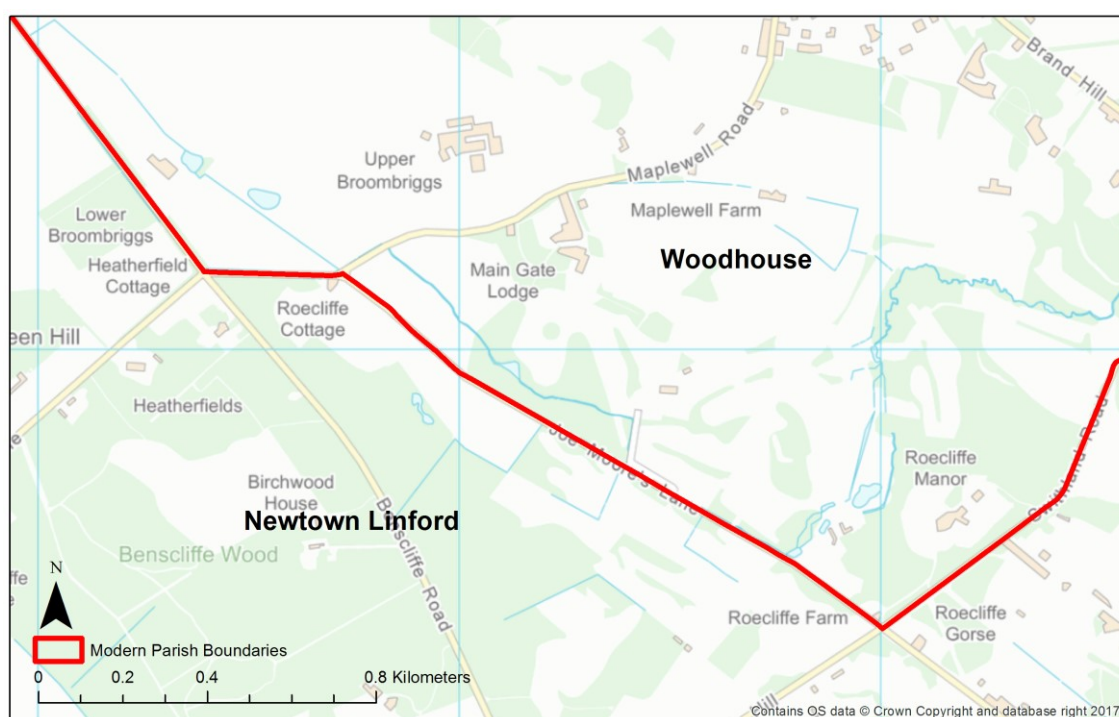
Figure 5.13 Modern Parish Boundary between Newtown Linford and Woodhouse

Source: Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2017).

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[36] B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershireand Rutland Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2005), p. 8.
[37] *IPM* of Robert Peshall, 1643, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. 122.

5.4 Shepshed case study

This case study will take a closer look at the relationship between manorial and parish boundaries in medieval Shepshed, which lies to the north of the study area, and at the significance of those boundaries in later periods. The evidence considered includes documents relating to Shepshed's manorial descent, medieval perambulations, medieval extents, post-medieval cartographical evidence, a post-medieval enclosure dispute, landscape, and place-name evidence.

At Domesday, Shepshed was one of the four main manors whose wastes made up Charnwood Forest. In 1086 it was a royal manor held by Godwin from the king.[38] In the early twelfth century it was granted to the Earls of Leicester and by the early thirteenth century it had passed to the Earls of Winchester.[39] The manor seems to have remained intact throughout this period. However, on the death of Roger de Quincy, Earl of Winchester in 1264, Shepshed appears to have been subdivided. Roger's inquisition *post-mortem* indicates that his lands were divided between his three daughters.[40] Whilst many of Roger's lands in other parts of the country are documented in the inquisition *post-mortem*, no specific mention is made of Shepshed. Later documentary sources, however, suggest that two thirds of the manor went to one daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan, and that the remaining third went to another daughter, Helen, wife of Alan la Zouche, effectively creating two manors.[41] There

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[38] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 230 d.

[39] Tompkins, 'Shepshed: Manors and Estates', p. 1.

[40] *Calendar of Inquisition Post-Mortem and Other Analogous Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office*, I, (London, 1904), no.s 587, 732, 776; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of Reginald Rawdon Hastings Esq.*, 1, (London 1928), pp. 323-331.

[41] See for example, TNA, E 199/44/2, Inquest, lands of John Comyn, 24 Edw I (1296), this document is an extent of the manor of Whitwick, held by John Comyn, earl of Buchan and son of Elizabeth and Alexander Comyn, it describes the two thirds of the 'vil of Schepesheuid' which pertain to Whitwick. See also I.*P.M.* of Robert De Holand, 1373, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and*

appears to be no record of any boundary line between Shepshed's two manors and it is, therefore, difficult to define. A 1296 extent of the 'two thirds' of Shepshed is not particularly informative. It provides details of area in terms of measurement and also in terms of value, but provides little topographical evidence. The 'two thirds' was, however said to include a 'meadow called *langwemede*, worth 20 *s* yearly' and '12½ acres of land in villeinage in the park of *Acle*, worth each acre 10 *d*.[42] A map which accompanies a 1247 perambulation of the parish of Shepshed locates the park of *Acle* (*parcus de okele*) to the north of Blake Brook (see chapter 4, fig 4.3).[43] As discussed in chapter 4, this park is likely to have been in the area today occupied by Oakley and Piper Woods. A 1700 estate map of Shepshed and Garendon has a 'long meadow' lying to the east of Oakley Wood on the southern bank of Blake Brook (fig. 5.14).[44] It is difficult, however, to draw conclusions about the line between the 'two thirds' and the 'one third' from such information alone, not least because we do not know if the lordship of Shepshed was divided into whole (contiguous) or fragmented portions.

Manors, p. 163, Robert who was a descendent of Helen la Zouche, 'held of the king in chief a third part of the manor of Shepeshed'.

[42] TNA, E 199/44/2, Inquest, lands of John Comyn, 24 Edw I (1296).
[43] ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest, 1246-7, transcribed *c*. 1760. The provenance and reliability of the document and the map was included in discussion of the Park of Shepshed in chapter 3.
[44] 'The Manor of Shepshed and Garendon', *c*. 1700, cartographer not named, as reproduced in A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest'* (Wymondham, 1986), p. 121. Squires and Humphrey suggest that this map may have been drawn in preparation for the purchase of the manors of Shepshed and Garendon by Ambrose Phillipps in 1683.
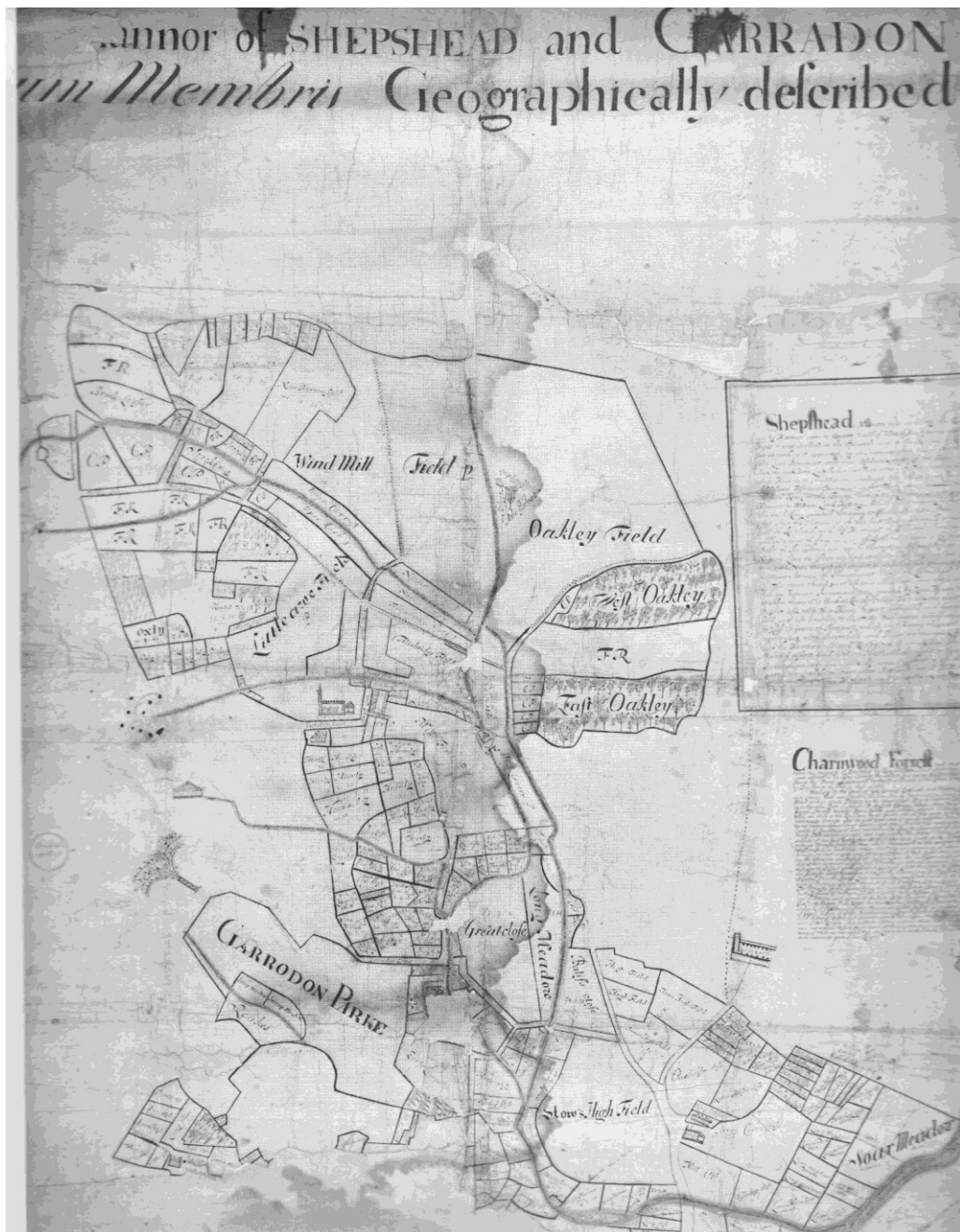
Figure 5.14 Map of Shepshed and Garendon *c.* 1700

Source: 'The Manor of Shepshed and Garendon', c. 1700, cartographer not named, as reproduced in A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* The (Wymondham, 1986), p. 121. Reproduced with permission of Anthony Squires and Squire de Lisle.

Early evidence relating to Shepshed's medieval boundaries can be found in the perambulation of the parish dated 1247; this seems to have been transcribed from medieval sources in the eighteenth century; it is the eighteenth-century transcription that has been examined here.

First hit begynneth in the Chirche of Shepeshed descendynge to Honyhill and from Honyhill bytwyne Henley and

Halough unto the Long Clos[e] and from the Long Clos[e] ascendynge to Cowhill without the ?Gothens and from the Cowhil

to the Breches and by the circuit of the Breches to Halywellhogh gate and from Halywellhagh gate ascend[in]g

to Nettilbush and from Nettilbush foll[o]wynge a Dyke called Countesse Dyke o[ther]wyse Wytherdyke unto a

wey goynge ov[er]thwerts by a Hill called Charleyston levynge all the said Hill on the lyft Hande down

to a Dyke the which descendeth into a Lane goyng into Charley called Redelane fol[o]wyng that Lane to

a Dyke the which descendeth from Charley by the West side of Charley Est Feld into the saide Lane and so

fol[o]wynge that Dyke levynge the saide Est feld on the lyft Hand unto an[oth]ere Dyke that ascendeth to Char…

fol[o]wynge that Dyke unto the West Kirk Dore of Charley and from thens to the Bap'tie of the Court

of Charley towards Charley sprynge where dep[ar]ten the Fees and the P[ar]ishes of Shepeshed and Barowe…

and so to a Hill called Cabtoke and from thens to Coulstongosse & so to Coulstonlyes and from thens…

Reynstones and from Reynstones to Tynmedowe levynge Tynmedowe on the left hand and so downe to…

Clepston & from Cleperston to Belton Wode fol[o]wynge the Erles Dyke unto Wathyrne & from Wathy…

To Ravensgote ascendynge unto Thynkyrne to William Crosse and so to Whatton Mere and by Whatton…

> Mere to a Wode called ?Orlyffe and by the circute of Orlyffe unto Shepeshed
> Broke & from…
>
> Shepeshed Broke to Honyhill and from Hony hill to Shepeshed Kirk *ubi
> incessi.*[45]

The perambulation, and map which accompanies it, can be compared with a description

of the metes and bounds of the manors of Shepshed and Whitwick which appear on the

verso of extracts from Groby Court rolls dated *c.* 1275-1350.

> The bounds and metes of the manors of Shepshed and Whitwyk in Charnwode
> beginning at Hieweyside as far as Charleyston, and so through the middle of
> Charleye as far as Birchewode, and so between Birchewod and wood of Barowe,
> and so byle Coppudhok and from le Cuppudhok as far as le Auterston and so by
> Westermanesweye as far as Merkfeldfeldesende, and so between the wood of
> Groby and Seuthwode as far as Lundereshey, and from Lundereshey as far
> asThortonweye, and so from Reuleymilne (or Beverleymilne) as far as Horepol,
> and so from Horepol as far as Ethengrene, and so to Sywordslade as far as
> Flauston, and so to Whitewyk as far as Swanyngtonforth, and so to Contestrosse
> as far as Whitewykpol, and so to Charnwodbrok, and so to Beltonwode as far as
> Bealslade, and so to Whatton in to Sore and so to Hathern as far as Gerwedon,
> and from Gerwedon as far as Cuth, and from Cuth as far as Horweyside.[46]

The latter document provides a much less detailed description than the former which

includes many minor place-names, including named woods, roads, hills, streams and

dykes. Landscape features and place-names that appear in both documents are

Charleyston and Coppudok (coppudhok, cabtoke), Beltonwode (wood of Belton), and

Whatton. However, there are a number of other minor names which only appear in one

or other of the documents. Given the supposedly relatively close dates of the

documents, and the fact that they pertain to the same general geographical area, this is

difficult to interpret, and may reflect differences between manorial and parish

boundaries. Although the later document states that it is a description of the metes and

bounds of the 'manors' of Shepshed and Whitwick, there is little indication that the

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[45] ROLLR, DE5742/1 transcription of ancient description of boundaries on Charnwood Forest, 1246-7,
transcribed *c.* 1760.
[46] ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis', 1275 -1350, transcribed in G.F. Farnham,
Medieval Village Notes, VI, p. 367.

manor of Shepshed had been subdivided. It is possible to interpret the words 'the bounds and divisions of the manors of Shepshed and Whitwick' as a description of more than just two manors. However, because they were under the same lordship, it is also possible that the document is simply a perambulation of Whitwick and the 'two thirds' of Shepshed.

There appears to be no record of two separate manors in Shepshed after the mid seventeenth century,[47] and no such division appears on the 1700 map of 'the manors of Shepshed and Garendon' (fig.5.14). Tompkins suggests that the two manors may have merged again *c*.1666.[48] In 1803, evidence given in an enclosure dispute between the lords of the manors of Beaumanor and Shepshed indicated that the manorial and parish boundaries of Shepshed were identical. The case regarded the disputed boundary between the two manors and saw the submission, by both sides, of ancient documents in support of their respective claims. Shepshed's evidence dated from the thirteenth century and Beaumanor's from the seventeenth century.[49] The Lord of Shepshed's claim was further enhanced by deponents who remembered perambulating the disputed bounds. William Lester who had been parish clerk of Shepshed for twenty-seven years said that he had been

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[47] Tompkins, 'Shepshed: Manors and Estates', p. 6.
[48] Tompkins, 'Shepshed: Estates and Manors', p. 6.
[49] ROLLR, DG9/2037/2, 'Evidence given to the Charnwood Forest Inclosure commissioners respecting the boundaries of Beaumanor, Shepshed and other places', 1806, ff. 1, 6. In this case Shepshed presented a paper entitled 'Limites parochea de Schepished' and two inquisitions, one taken in 1205, one in 1289 – first charytes rental in Bodleian Library, Oxford from velum manuscript', copy from the second copied from a manuscript in The Bodleian library purporting to be a rental and collection of all deeds relating to the Abbey of St Mary de Pratis, Leicester. Beaumanor presented a Court of Survey ruling from 1656 which had apparently awarded the disputed area to Beaumanor.

born there, has passed all his lifetime there has gone the /perambulation 40 years ago as a Parish Boundary – no difference / between the Manor and Parish boundary.[50]

A sketch map illustrating the dispute is included with the document (fig.5.15).
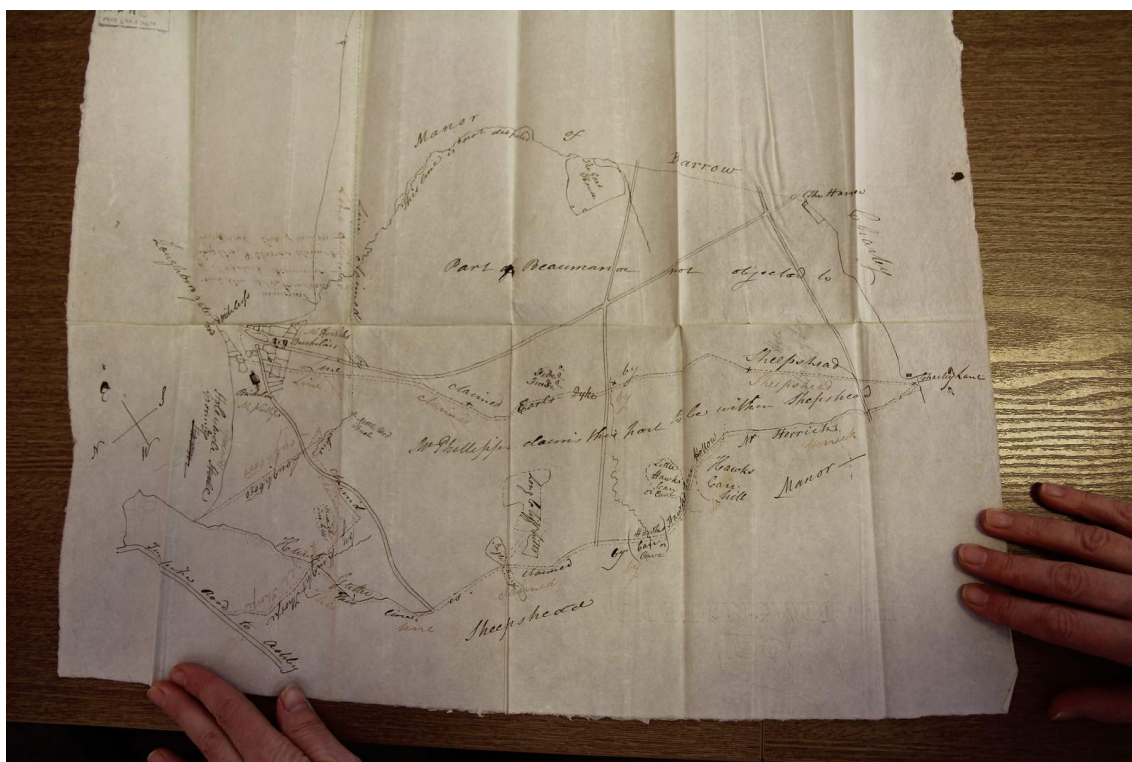
Figure 5.15 Map illustrating Enclosure Dispute between Beaumanor and Shepshed

Source: ROLLR DG9/2037/8. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

The line claimed by Shepshed was consistent with the line of the feature known as Earls Dyke. The dyke is mentioned on seven different occasions during the course of Lester's account of Shepshed's boundary. The importance which Lester gave to the dyke in his account was, of course, likely to be due to the fact that it was the focus of the dispute. Leicestershire's historic environment record describes Earls Dyke as a medieval

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[50]ROLLR, DG9/2037/2, 'Evidence given to the Charnwood Forest Inclosure commissioners respecting the boundaries of Beaumanor, Shepshed and other places', f. 1.

boundary constructed in the twelfth century to delineate hunting grounds of feuding

lords and which may have followed the line of an even earlier boundary.[51] The dyke is

also mentioned in the 1247 perambulation of Shepshed discussed above. The dyke is

one of the few place-names and landscape features in the 1247 perambulation which

survive in Lester's nineteenth-century account of the boundary.[52] Shepshed's arguments

seem to have persuaded the enclosure commissioners who agreed, when they drew up

the Charnwood Forest and Rothley Plain Enclosure Award, that Shepshed's manorial

boundary extended to Earls Dyke.[53] The case highlights the significance of

Charnwood's internal medieval divisions in the disputes of later periods. Adjudicators

seem to have placed great value on evidence relating to ancient boundaries, both on that

which was written and on that which was passed down through oral tradition. However,

in this case, documentary and anecdotal evidence was further supported by apparently

incontrovertible landscape evidence in the form of Earl's Dyke.

5.5   Charnwood's internal divisions and areas of woodland

The boundaries of the modern parish of Shepshed extend towards the two areas of

medieval encroachment on Charnwood Forest identified in this thesis. To the north, the

boundaries of Shepshed converge with those of Hathern and Long Whatton at Oakley

Wood. To the south, Shepshed boundaries extend towards the junction of parishes of

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[51] LRHER, MLE9791. In the twelfth century the dyke separated the lands of the Earls of Leicester and Chester.

[52] The account of Shepshed's Parish Boundary given in the 1806 enclosure dispute by William Lester, seems to describe the same geographical area as that described in the 1247 perambulation. However, whilst there is consistency in major place-names (Charley, Belton), there is little consistency in the minor place-names which appear in the two documents. Tin meadow (tynmedowe) is one exception, Earl's Dyke is another. The 1247 document is characterised by place-names that are predominantly topographical in nature. The 1806 document is characterised by a number of personal names and references to occupiers of the land. This change in emphasis may reflect a changing relationship over time between the inhabitants and the landscape of Charnwood Forest, a change from medieval perceptions of the forest as a shared landscape to modern perceptions of a more individualised landscape.

[53] ROLLR, QS47/2/4 Charnwood Forest and Rothley Plain Inclosure Award, 1829, Boundaries of Manors, Parishes, Hamlets and Districts, p. 5.

Charley, Ulverscroft, Markfield and Bardon. Documentary evidence indicates that both areas were areas of woodland in the medieval period. That around Charley is referred to as *Kalange* in contemporary sources.[54] It would seem then that much of Charnwood's woodland lay not only on the edges of manors and parishes, but also at the junction or meeting points of manorial and parish boundaries. Charnwood's woodland was paradoxically, both liminal and central; it would, therefore, seem pertinent to examine the relationship between Charnwood's internal divisions and the sites of medieval woodland.

Fortunately, when looking for answers to our questions about sites of medieval woodlands we have a wealth of sources to which we might turn. These include landscape, paelaeoenvironmental, documentary, and archaeological sources. The most accessible of these is the present day landscape. For example, the presence of certain types of ground vegetation, such as dog's mercury, bluebells and primroses, in present day woodland may indicate that woodland's antiquity. Such vegetation is found in many of Charnwood's present day woodlands, including Ratby Burroughs, Swithland Wood and Loughborough's Outwoods. Rackham has described how we might discern former woodland boundaries, and evidence of woodland management, in the earthworks belonging to woods, such as wood banks or ditches.[55] Such features, which do not always coincide with present day woodland boundaries, were created to protect woodland from grazing animals. Amongst the medieval wood banks surviving in Charnwood Forest today are those at Martinshaw Wood and Sheet Hedges Wood (fig. 5.16).

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[54] See for example, Groby Court Rolls, 1316-17, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 360.
[55] O. Rackham, *Woodlands* (London, 2006), p. 191.

Figure 5.16 Surveying Woodbank in Martinshaw Wood

Source: Photograph Julie Attard. Reproduced with permission of Julie Attard.

Martinshaw lies on the parish boundary between Groby and Ratby; Sheet Hedges lies

on that between Groby and Newtown Linford. They are amongst the thirty-two

woodlands in Charnwood Forest which Squires and Jeeves have traced to the medieval

period.[56] The list compiled by Squires and Jeeves is not exhaustive not least because

their study area does not extend, as perhaps it should, to the area north of Shepshed.

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[56] A. Squires and M. Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands Past and Present* (Newtown Linford, 1994), pp. 58-59.

However, many of the medieval woodlands that they do identify lie on or adjacent to modern parish boundaries. To the north of Shepshed, Oakley Wood, identified in this study as an area of medieval woodland, lies on the parish boundary between Long Whatton and Hathern.

Another potential source of information about the location of Charnwood's medieval woodland is palaeoenvironmental sequences. These can reveal something of the changing patterns of land use, and have, for example, pointed to woodland regeneration in Whittlewood, Northamptonshire between AD 400 and 600.[57] Similarly, pollen analysis has suggested that sites in Northumberland, County Durham, Yorkshire and the Lake District reverted to woodland in the late Anglo-Saxon period as the 'more intensive land use which had characterised Iron Age and Romano British periods diminished'.[58] In Charnwood, however, such evidence is rather sparse because the area lacks 'the natural lakes and peat bogs which best accumulate pollen'.[59] David's 1991 palaeoenvironmental study of Groby Pool, an ancient, but probably man-made, lake close to Groby yielded little new information about the history of Charnwood's medieval woodlands.[60] This may be because the pool is not a particularly good site for such studies. David herself acknowledges that Groby Pool 'represented a worst case site for palaeovegetation studies because it is so shallow and has inflow streams'. [61]

The earliest documentary evidence that we have of woodland in Charnwood is that recorded in Domesday (appendix 6). Domesday evidence is, however, of limited value because, although woodland is recorded in terms of area, for most manors the location

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[57] R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape*, pp. 8-9.
[58] D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 145.
[59] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands* p. 17.
[60] C.A. David, 'Contemporary and Historical Pollen Recruitment to a Small Lowland English Lake', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Technology, Loughborough, 1991), pp. 212-213.
[61] David, 'Contemporary and Historical Pollen Recruitment to a Small Lowland English lake', p. 213.

and nature of that woodland is not described. Other areas of woodland may have been completely unrecorded. Another way, however, in which we might determine the extent of Charnwood's medieval woodland is by analysis of the location of moated sites within the forest. Moats were a very particular form of internal boundary and there would seem to be an association between such sites and medieval woodlands.[62] Fig. 5.17 is a map of the moated sites in Leicestershire identified in a recent study by Coveney.[63]
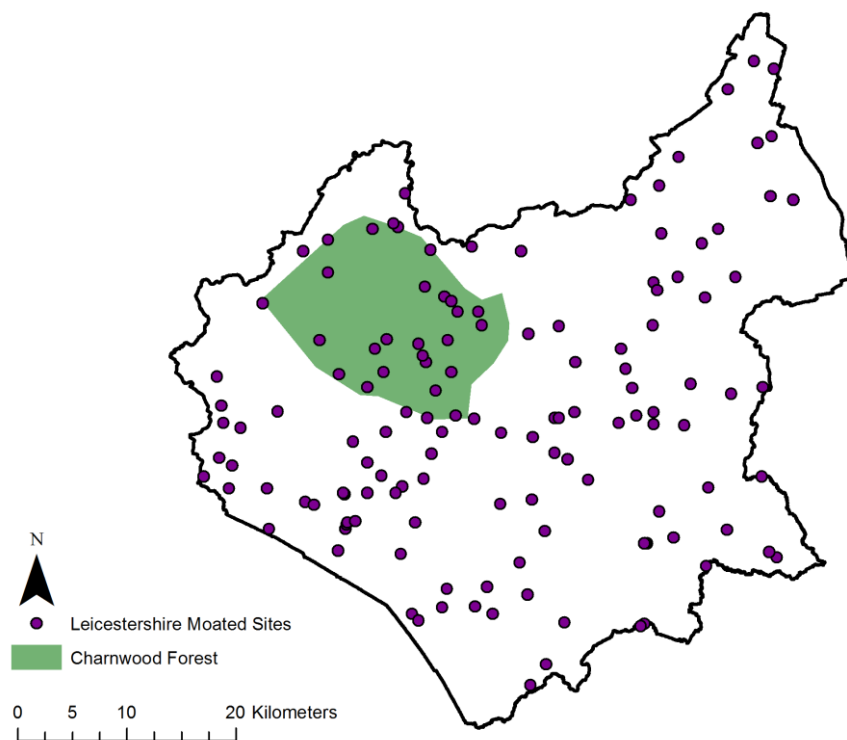
Figure 5.17 Leicestershire Moated Sites

Source: Data from N. Coveney, 'Moated Sites in Medieval England: A Reassessment', PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 2014), pp. 361-366, 535.

Charnwood Forest is shown in green on the map and reveals that the forest's moated sites appear to form a horse-shoe pattern which is consistent with the pattern of

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[62] C. Dyer, 'Rural Settlements in Medieval Warwickshire', *Transactions of the BWAS*, 100, 1996, p.122; Rackham, *Woodlands*, pp. 219- 220; B. Roberts, 'Moats and Mottes', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8 (1964), p. 219-222.
[63] N. Coveney, 'Moated Sites in Medieval England: A Reassessment', PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 2014), pp. 361-366, 535.

Charnwood's underlying geology (see chapter 1, fig. 1.4). Charnwood's moated sites appear to occupy the much same area as the rocky out crops of the pre-Cambrian Beacon Hill formation. Most of Charnwood's moated sites appear in a cluster to the south and west of the study area. This is also the part of the forest which has been associated with greatest amount of medieval woodland.[64] It remains that part of the forest with most woodland cover today.

None of Leicestershire's surviving woodland, including that of Charnwood Forest, is primary woodland, or wildwood.[65] Indeed, Squires and Jeeves contend that some woodlands in the county are clearly 'recent or secondary woodland' or 'trees that are growing on land which was once used for another purpose'.[66] However, if we accept their definition of 'ancient woodland' as that growing before 1600 AD,[67] a great deal of that secondary woodland can also be described as 'ancient'. One such example is Swithland Wood, on the boundary between the parishes of Newtown Linford and Swithland, much of which overlies ridge-and-furrow (see chapter 2, fig 2.21).[68] The presence of ridge and furrow in a landscape indicates that the area was formally utilised for arable purposes and may be associated with medieval open field cultivation.[69] Where ridge and furrow exists in ancient woodland, it is clear that that the area could not always have been wooded.[70] Rackham suggests that, in the case of Swithland Wood, fields created on poor soils when woodland was 'grubbed out' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were the 'first to be abandoned' and 'to tumble down to woodland' after the Black Death. It might be suggested that in such circumstances, where

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[64] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, pp. 58-59.
[65] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 15
[66] Squires and Jeeves, *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p. 15.
[67] Squires and Jeeves , *Leicestershire and Rutland Woodlands*, p.15.
[68] S. Woodward, *Swithland Wood: A Study of its History and Vegetation* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 21-22.
[69] M. Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape: Landscape Archaeology and Local History* (London and New York, 1985) p. 120.
[70] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 215.

vegetation in the landscape is merely returning to an earlier state, that the term 'secondary woodland' may not be the most appropriate.

The sense that Swithland, left to its own devices, 'tumbled down' to woodland is one that depicts woodland as an unmanaged wilderness with little human input. It would, however, be entirely wrong to suggest that human activity in the woodland of medieval Charnwood was confined to woodland clearance. As discussed in chapter 4, there is certainly a great deal of documentary evidence relating to the clearance of land in the form of the assarting which took place on the edges of Charnwood manors. However, the nature of the landscape being assarted is not always clear, and many other sources indicate that woodland was a valuable and actively managed resource. Evidence of woodland management in Charnwood is provided, for example, by the 1273 Inquisition *post-mortem* of Robert de Holand, holder of one third of the manor of Shepshed, which records

> 'a third part of two little woods of which the underwood was cut last year, and only a fifth part cut every ninth year'[71]

Similarly, the accounts of John Somerfield, seller of the woods of the lord of Groby in 1512 record,

> 112s, 7d for the value of divers trees called 'polls' sold to divers persons at different prices out of the wood called 'shete hedges'
>
> 21s value of 7 cartloads of cordwood sold there to John Bird and others
>
> £1 11s, and 9d value of 15200 kiddiz sold there in this year at a price of 15s 3d per 1000 less 4s 9d for the making
>
> And for £8 6s 7d value of divers 'polls' sold to divers persons out of the wood of the lord called 'Magna Lyndes'.[72]

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[71] I*PM* of Robert de Holand, 1373, transcribed and translated by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manor*s, p. 163.

The evidence of the seller of woods at Groby might be interpreted as merely 'exploitation', rather than 'management' of woodland in Charnwood in 1512. However, evidence of active management, similar to that indicated in the I*PM* of Robert de Holand, can be found in surveys of religious houses taken at the time of their dissolution. As discussed in chapter 2, these surveys record areas of woodland with a variety of different year's growth.[73] Evidence of woodland management in Charnwood supports the views of Schumer who, in her study of Wychwood in Oxfordshire, states that medieval woodland was not an

> 'unwanted remnant of primeval woodland, but rather a carefully husbanded asset, subject to jealously guarded rights held not only by vills within or adjacent to woodland, but by others sometimes many miles distant from it'.[74]

Whilst documentary sources can provide evidence of the utilisation of Charnwood's woodlands, sometimes place-name evidence can be more revealing about the location of those woodlands. Examination of the relationship within a landscape, between the Old English place-name elements *tūn* and *lēah* is particularly helpful. In her study of the place-names of Warwickshire, Gelling highlighted the significance of the two elements, associating *tūn* with open land and *lēah* with woodland. She contends that *tūn* refers to enclosure, farmstead, estate or village and suggests that the 'avoidance of forest areas' by *tūn* is so marked, that where *tūn* elements and *wudu* (wood) elements are combined,

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[72] Account of John Somerfield, seller of woods, Groby, 1512, transcribed and translated by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 115.
[73] TNA, E36/154, 'Viewe and Survey of all syngler abbes priores monastrez sett lieng and being withyn the Countie of Leicestre', 1536, ff. 49-54.
[74] B. Schumer, *Wychwood: The Evolution of a Wooded Landscape* (Charlbury, 1999), pp. 1-2.

such as in Wootton, then the place is 'more likely to have been a farm or estate on the boundary between forest and open land than a farm in a woodland setting'.[75]

The term *wudu* is fairly ubiquitous in Charnwood, we have, for example Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Woodthorpe, and Timberwood Hill. In her study of Warwickshire, Wager has suggested that *wudu* has been used so commonly, both in medieval and subsequent periods, that it might be difficult to derive precise meanings or the age of woodland from the term.[76] In Charnwood, as discussed in chapter 2, places like Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves are likely to have been later settlements incorporating a ME *wudu* in their name. Some of Charnwood's less common place-name elements might be more informative. For example, Swithland incorporates the Old Norse *svitha*, meaning 'land cleared by burning' and reveals something of the Scandinavian influence on the Charnwood landscape.[77]

Analysis of the element *lēah*, whilst potentially very useful, is rather more complex. Although the element generally concerns woodland, it is not invariably so, and the precise association with woodland can vary. It may mean wood, a rough uncultivated natural space within a wood, a rough clearing in a wood, a cultivated or developed woodland glade or clearing especially one used for pasture or animals, and, in later times a piece of open land or meadow.[78] It might be difficult to determine, in a particular instance, which of these meanings is most appropriate and we should not assume that analysis of *lēah*s found in other areas of the country can necessarily be applied directly to Charnwood Forest. Gelling suggests, however, that the earliest

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[75] M. Gelling, 'Some notes on Warwickshire Place-Names', *Transactions of the BWAS,* 86 (1974), pp. 66-67.
[76] S.J. Wager*, Woods, Wolds and Groves: the Woodland of Medieval Warwickshire* (Oxford, 1998), p. 163.
[77] B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 101
[78] Gelling, 'Some notes on Warwickshire Place-Names, p. 67.

meaning of *lēah* was wood, and that where a *lēah* occurs in isolation, the earliest

meaning might be most likely.[79]

There seems to be surprisingly few *lēah*s in Charnwood, and rather more *tūns* (fig.

5.18), but if Gelling is correct in her analysis of Warwickshire, and if that analysis can

be applied to Charnwood, then the *lēahs* may be particularly significant.
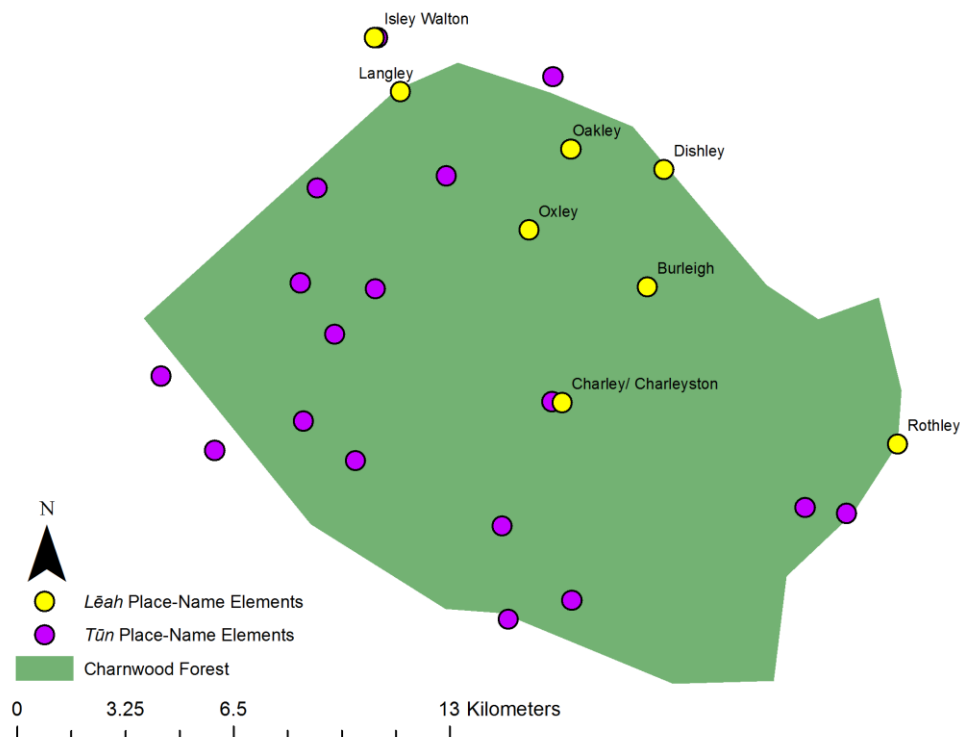
Figure 5.18 *Lēah* and *Tūn* Place-name Elements in Charnwood

The current study has identified seven Charnwood *lēahs* forming a band running

diagonally across the study area from Isley Walton, Langley, Oxley, Oakley Wood, and

Burleigh, which lie fairly close to each other in the north of the study area, through

Charley which lies in the centre of the study area, to Rothley which lies in the east

Charley and Rothley are the most isolated, in terms of their distance from other *lēahs*.

[79] Gelling, 'Some notes on Warwickshire Place-Names', p. 67.

There are fourteen *tūns* within the study area lying in the north, the west and the south.[80]

There are no *tūns* in the very east of the study area although there are several just

outside the study area to the east of the River Soar. The relative isolation of Charley and

Rothley might suggest that, when they were named, they were areas of woodland.

Some clues to the etymology and chronology of Charnwood *lēahs* are found in analysis

of the qualifying elements and dates of first reference of the place-names, (table 5.1).

Place-name	Form and date of first reference	Qualifier	Etymology of qualifier
Isley Walton	Isly Walton - 1327 (Waletona- 1185)	OE *Īsa*	personal name
Langley	Langeleia c. - 1185	OE *lang*	long
Oakley Wood	Hacle - 1228	OE *āc*	oak
Oxley	Oxele - 1285	OE oxa	An ox
Burleigh	Burley - 1510	OE *burh*	Fortified place
Charley	Cernelega - 1086	PrW *carn*; (Brit *carno, carnā*)	a heap of stones
Rothley	Rodelei – 1086	OE *roth*	woodland

Table 5.1 *Lēah*s in Charnwood

Source: Data (except that for Oxley) taken from B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names* (Nottingham, 2005) pp. 18, 23,53,60,75,86. Data for Oxley taken from B. Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7 (Nottingham, 2016) pp. 196, 334.

Isley Walton is a combination of the elements *tūn* and *lēah*, it first appeared as Isly

Walton in 1327, but previously as just Waltona in 1185.[81] The addition of 'Isley' may

have been to distinquish it from other Waltons such as Walton on the Wolds. Cox

proposes that the etymology of Isley Walton is 'the farmstead or village of the British

(at Isley)' and that Isley is an independent place-name meaning 'the woodland of a man

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[80] The wapentake of Guthlaxton is not included in this number because it was not a *tūn*. The wapentake name first appears in Domesday as *Guthlasitan*. B. Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 45 gives the etymology as OE pers. name *Gūthlāc* + OE *stān* – 'the stone of a man called Guthlac'.

[81] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 53.

called Isa'.[82] The etymology of the adjacent Langley is said to be 'the long clearing in woodland'.[83] Langley was the site of a Benedictine priory founded *c.* 1150.[84] The etymology of Oakley is, simply, 'the oak wood'.[85] Burley is said to be 'woodland belonging to the fortified place';[86] the proximity of Burley to Loughborough indicates that it may have been woodland belonging to that town. Oxley may be an example of one of the many woodland names in *lēah* which Gelling associates with domestic animals.[87] The earliest recorded of Charnwood's *lēahs* are Charley and Rothley. Charley is said to mean 'the woodland called charn' or 'the woodland in rocky country'.[88] Cox describes the etymology of Rothley as 'woodland with clearings' and seems to interpret the *lēah* element here as clearing.[89] Charley and Rothley were both recorded in Domesday. However, place-names were likely to have been coined before they were first recorded and Domesday does not, in any case, record woodlands by name. Gelling and Cole suggest that *lēah* is an indicator of ancient woodland which may have been in existence when English speakers first arrived in a region.[90] Hooke agrees that *lēah* was one of the earliest of place-name elements but further suggests that, when it was first coined, it was commonly associated with wood pasture.[91] She also identifies a relationship between the element *lēah* and the pushing back of woodland to estate and parish boundaries in Berkshire and Worcestershire.[92] This may be comparable with the situation in Charnwood. Oakley Wood lies close to the meeting

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[82] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 53.
[83] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 60.
[84] Mckinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire', W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, *The Victoria History of the County of Leicester*, 2 (London, 1954), p. 3.
[85] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p.75.
[86] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 18.
[87] M.Gelling and A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-names* (2000; Donnington, 2014), p. 241.
[88] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 23.
[89] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicstershire and Rutland Place-names*, p. 86.
[90] Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 237.
[91] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp.145- 148.
[92] Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 153.

point of modern parish boundaries. Furthermore, Charley lies particularly close to Earls

Dyke, the medieval boundary discussed in the Shepshed case study above. There is no

distinct correlation between the band formed by the *lēahs* in Charnwood and the line of

the dyke. The former runs generally north-west to south-east, whilst the latter runs

generally north-east to south-west. The location of Charley at the meeting point of these

lines may, however, be significant.

In addition to these major *lēahs*, a small number of minor place-names in Charnwood

also contain the element. Although it is difficult to precisely locate all of these minor

place-names, and in some cases there are difficulties distinguishing between *lēah* and

lǣs (OE pasture or meadow), they seem to follow a generally similar line to the major

lēahs. They have, for example, been identified in Long Whatton (*wokleysyke*),

Shepshed (*risschiley*), and Charley (*milneleghes*). [93]

Some of the minor *lēahs* can be associated with nearby major *lēahs*. For example,

wokleysyke appears as a furlong name in an undated survey of Long Whatton,[94] it lay

within one of Long Whatton's open fields, Ocleyfelde, which in turn can be associated

with the nearby Oakley Wood. *Wokley*, may even be a variant of Oakley, with the

generic element *sīc* (OE stream, often boundary stream),[95] perhaps reflecting the

relationship between the extent of Long Whatton's medieval cultivation and woodland

boundaries. Similarly, *milneleges* can be associated with the major place-name of

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[93] BL,Cotton MS Galba E lll, undated survey of Long Whatton, ff.172-3; BL, Cotton MS Galba E lll, undated survey of Shepshed, f.114; Cox, *Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7, p. 60.
[94] BL,Cotton MS Galba E lll, undated survey of Long Whatton.
[95] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 (London, 1956), pp. 121-122.

Charley; first recorded in 1306,[96] it appears as a field name in Burges' 1702 map of Charley as *milne leays* (fig.5.19).[97]

Figure 5.19 Section of Burges' 1702 Map of Charley

Source: ROLLR, 14D65. Reproduced with permission of ROLLR.

Cox argues that, despite the doubts which might arise from the qualifier *myln* (OE, mill), early forms of the name indicate that *milneleges* is indeed a *lēah* rather than *a lǣs*.[98] Furthermore, Burges' map places *milne leays* on the very edge of Charley's enclosures which supports the notion that it was an area of woodland clearance.

 A particularly intriguing place-name which can also be associated with Charley in the analysis of Charnwood's woodlands is *charleyston*. The name appears in a grant of land by William de Ferrers, lord of the manor of Groby, to the priory of Charley.[99] The document indicates that *charleyston* lay within the area of woodland known as *kalange* (later known as *le challenge*). The name *charleyston* incorporates the elements *lēah* and

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[96] Cox, *Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7, p. 60.

[97] ROLLR,14D65, John Burges, Map of Charley, 1702.

[98] Cox, *Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7, pp. 60, 333.

[99] Groby Court Rolls, 1316-17, transcribed and translated by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, V1, p. 360.

tūn, elements which Gelling seems to suggest are mutually exclusive. However, here they appear together. Faith has analysed the relationship between *tūns* and *lēahs* and suggests that the former can be associated with specific places whilst the latter can be associated with larger regions. She argues that whether a *tūn* was the seat of an important person or merely an isolated farmstead, a common factor was their 'buildedness', meaning that 'when you arrived at a *tūn*, you knew you were there'.[100] Faith draws a firm distinction between the landscapes, cultures and economies of *tūns* and *lēahs*, suggesting that 'the countryside of a *lēah* supported a much less arable-orientated husbandry than the countryside of a *tūn*'.[101] However, in Charnwood Forest we may have a blending of the two in which Charleyston was a settlement of mixed culture, within and surrounded by woodland. This is consistent with Gelling and Cole's suggestion that although *lēah* is 'technically a topographical term', it could also be 'quasi-habitative'.[102] To complicate matters further, Cox has offered two interpretations of the etymology of Charleyston.[103] In 2005, he suggested that its meaning was 'the village in the woodland called Charley'. However, by 2016, he seems to have revised his opinion, suggesting that Charleyston was not a *tūn* but instead a *stān* (OE a stone), a stone which he suggests was 'evidently a Charnwood boundary marker'.[104] For the purposes of this analysis the distinction may not be important because, whether Charleyston was a *tūn* or a *stān*, it does seem to have represented a boundary. This is supported by the name given to the woodland which surrounded Charleyston, *kalange*,

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[100] R. Faith, '*Tūn* and *Lēah* in the Rural Economy' in R. Jones and S. Semple, eds. *Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England* (Donington, 2012), pp. 239-240.
[101] Faith, '*Tūn* and *Lēah* in the Rural Economy', p. 240.
[102] Gelling and Cole, *The Landscape of Place-names*, p. 237.
[103] Cox, *A Dictionary of Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names*, p. 23.
[104] Cox, *The Place-Names of Leicestershire*, 7, pp. 59, 346.

a name which reflects the perceived nature of that landscape as an area of disputed ownership (OFr *challenge* = dispute).[105]

Disputes over former communal land were not unusual in woodland areas, and have been identified, for example at Silverstone (Northamptonshire).[106] In Charnwood, the woodland known as *kalange* or *le challenge*, seems to have been the source of dispute and legal challenge between the manors of Groby and Barrow in the later medieval period. A feet of fines held at Leicester in 1240 records a case between Hugh de Albiniaco, Earl of Arundel, lord of the manor of Barrow, and Roger de Quency, Earl of Winchester, lord of the manor of Groby. [107] The case highlights disagreements over the boundary between the two manors. Hugh complained that he was not being allowed to enjoyed rights associated with le Challenge that had been enjoyed by previous lords of Barrow and that Roger had

> hindered him from having free entry and exit in the wood which is called 'le Challenge' to take therein his estover and that he hindered him from coursing with his hounds in the aforesaid wood, and which liberty Ranulph, formally earl of Chester, used as appertaining to the manor of Barrow.

An agreement does, however, seem to have been reached in which le Challenge and its resources were effectively shared between the two manors. Hugh and his heirs were granted

> A moiety of the estover of the aforesaid wood 'del Chalenge' towards Barwe within the metes and bounds underwritten, that is to say,
>
> From the Heywey south as far as the rock of Cerlega
>
> And from the rock of Cerlega unto Dunethornhull

[105] A.H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements,* 1 (London, 1956) p. 92.
[106] Jones and Page, *Medieval Villages in the English Landscape*, p. 147
[107] Feet of Fines held at Leicester, 1240, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 349.

> And from Dunethornehill through the middle of Birchwode as far as la Hore Croye.

Charley was recorded as *cernelega* in 1086 and as *cherlega* in c. 1130,[108] so we might associate the 'rock of Cerlega', mentioned in the document above, with the interpretation of the generic element of Charleyston as *stān*, or boundary stone. However, the boundary created by this particular agreement was a permissive boundary. Whilst the lord of Barrow and his heirs were allowed 'to sell and do their will with the estovers' in their part of the forest, the lord of Groby and his heirs were given access to the area for the purposes of hunting. They had

> The liberty to hunt in that part of the wood 'del chalenge' belonging to the earl of Arundle and his heirs, and likewise in all the other woods of the said earl appertaining to the manor of Barwe, except the park of Querrendon.

This agreement highlights not only the significance of woodland as medieval boundary markers, but also continuity in the shared nature of the Charnwood Forest landscape between the pre- and post-Conquest periods. There is a wealth of documentary evidence, such as grants of pasture, to support the notion that much of the way in which it was shared was as wood pasture.[109] There is also evidence to suggest that attitudes to woodland in Charnwood changed considerably over the medieval period. Although timber, wood and wood products were central to the lives of all, there seems, at first, to have been little attempt to conserve woodland. Squires has described the widespread exploitation of woodland in Charnwood in the early medieval period, as 'amounting to

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[108] Morgan, *Leicestershire*, f. 237a; Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey*, p. 44.
[109] HL, HAD1751, Box 112, Quorndon Deed, 13th century; Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 48.

plunder'.[110] It appears, however, that by the late thirteenth century the effects of this

poor management and exploitation were beginning to be felt by local people.

Documentary evidence suggests that by 1281, woodland at 'Barwe' and 'Querendon'

had diminished to such an extent that the Prior 'could not reasonably have his estovers

in those woods for Housbot (burning) and Hedgebot (fencing)'.[111] It has been suggested

that the appearance of named woods in documentary sources from this period onwards

may reflect concerns about diminishing tree cover.[112] The name of a wood may have

been passed down through oral tradition, but the name may only have been recorded in

documentary sources when it had particular value and significance. Many of these

sources have been charted by Squires and refer to the fencing or enclosure of woodland.

Named woodlands include Birchwode which appeared as a place-name in 1227,

Holywell Wood in 1240 , Cat Hill Wood in 1260, and Timberwood Hill in 1316.[113]

Medieval boundary disputes such as that relating to the Wood of Challenge between the

lords of Barrow and Groby may then, not simply have been a reflection of seignorial

rivalry, but also of 'the elephant in the room', contemporary concerns about diminishing

woodland resources.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the internal administrative divisions of Charnwood Forest. In

keeping with the approach taken throughout the thesis, the nature, expression and

significance of those divisions has been investigated. Particular consideration has been

given to the relationship between administrative and woodland boundaries, and to the

relationship between administrative divisions and the encroachment on the forest

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[110] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 44.
[111] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 44.
[112] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 44.
[113] Squires, 'History of the Charnwood Landscape', p. 44.

identified in chapter 4. Some boundaries were hard to establish because of the limitations of documentary evidence. I*PM*s, for example, recorded valuations, measurements and names of lands concerned with varying degrees of acuracy, but rarely defined boundaries precisely. Nevertheless, the combination of documentary, cartographical, place-name, landscape and archaeological evidence considered in this chapter has provided new insights into the ways in which medieval Charnwood was administered and its resources divided.

The lack of Anglo-Saxon charters for Charnwood makes identification of pre-Conquest boundaries particularly difficult. The paucity of such documentary evidence reflects the fact that pre-conquest Charnwood was a shared landscape with few formal divisions. At Domesday, Charnwood was divided between the wapentakes of Guthlaxton and Goscote, however, the boundary between the two was indistinct and may have been formed by the broad band of the forest itself. This is reflected in the confusion surrounding the jurisdictional position of Barrow. Barrow lay within the area generally associated with Goscote, but Domesday placed it under the jurisdiction of Guthlaxton. Charley, a Domesday dependency of Barrow lay at the centre of the forest and thus brought Barrow geographically closer to the area associated with Guthlaxton. It seems reasonable to suggest that it also brought Barrow administratively and economically closer to Guthlaxton. Furthermore, if the place-name *cuth*, which appears in a later medieval description of the metes and bounds of the manors of Shepshed and Whitwick, is actually a reference to Guthlaxton, then we may have confirmation that Guthlaxton's territories, or at least perceptions of them, extended towards the centre of the forest well into the post-Conquest period.

The post-Conquest period saw an increase in documentary evidence relating to medieval boundaries. Boundaries were expressed in terms of topographical features through which they passed. In Charnwood the significance of landscape features was emphasised by the positioning of boundary stones. Such precise delineations were intended to establish common understandings or 'vertical continuities' in sense of place between different inhabitants and users of the forest. Such evidence reveals a great deal of correlation between medieval and modern boundaries. The junctions of Charnwood's medieval manors, for example, clearly correspond to the junction of modern parish boundaries. Modern parish boundaries form two distinct 'star shape' patterns in Charnwood, one focused on Charley to the south of the study area, the other on Oakley Wood to the north of the study area. Similar patterns of parish boundaries have been identified in other areas of medieval woodland and/or pasture such as Six Hills (Leicestershire), Whittlewood (Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire), Cannock Chase (Staffordshire) and Dartmoor (Devon). Such patterns may represent the apportionment and allocation of central, formally communal, resources to surrounding communities. Some of the patterns identified in these areas are, however, far neater than others. The 'tidyness' or otherwise of the patterns does not seem to be related to one particular factor but would seem to be influenced by a combination of factors such as status, topography, perceptions of marginality and culture.

The relationship between medieval and parish boundaries is not always clear. Evidence considered in this chapter has, however, identified both consistencies and inconsistencies between the two at Barrow where the manor seems to have incorporated extra-parochial areas. A case study of the manor of Shepshed has revealed that the manor was divided into two, essentially new, manors in 1264. It has not, however, been

possible to define a distinct boundary between the two. The case study has, however, revealed that medieval boundaries played a significant role in the outcome of post-medieval boundary disputes. This is illustrated by evidence relating to the medieval boundary and landscape feature known as Earls Dyke, a feature which seems to have been the determining factor in the settlement of an 1803 enclosure dispute between the lords of Shepshed and Beaumanor.

The complex relationship between Charnwood's medieval administrative and woodland boundaries has been a recurring and important theme in this study. Clues to the location and extent of Charnwood's medieval woodland are found in the present day landscape, in the remains of wood-banks, the presence of vegetation associated with ancient woodland, in the distribution of moated sites, and in documentary, cartographical and place-name evidence. These sources suggest a particular, but not exclusive, concentration of woodland to the south and west of the study area. Palaeoenvironmental evidence relating to Charnwood Forest is, to date, scanty and not particularly useful for these purposes.

The analysis of the place-name elements *tūn* and *lēah* is more informative. *Tūn* is generally associated with open space whilst *lēah* is associated with woodland. Place-name evidence is not an exact science, and *lēah* presents particularly challenges. Nevertheless, it would seem that the pattern presented by *lēahs* in Charnwood Forest may be significant. Particularly significant is Charley and, to a lesser extent, Oakley, both areas of medieval woodland, both foci of encroachment and both meeting points of manorial and parish boundaries. Charley can be associated with the intersection of two possible medieval boundaries, first with that represented by the band of *lēahs* which runs through the forest, and second with the boundary known as Earls Dyke.

Charleyston must have been located close to this intersection and its name may incorporate both *tūn* and *lēah*, elements usually considered to be mutually exclusive. This may reflect the nature of the site as place where different cultural practices and economies met. However, rather than *tūn*, the generic element here may be *stān* (OE stone). Such an interpretation does not diminish the status of Charleyston as a boundary because the 'rock of Cerlega' (rock of Charley) features as a boundary marker in documentary evidence relating to the division of land and rights in the area.

The evidence discussed in this chapter points to the fact that Charley and/or Charleyston and the woodland in that area formed part of a significant boundary in both the pre- and post-Conquest periods. It was, however, a place for which ownership and rights were contested. In the later medieval period the lords of Barrow and Groby seem to have been at particular odds over the area, although it is difficult to determine whether this was a result of seigniorial rivalry, the result of competition over diminishing woodland resources or a combination of both.

This chapter has focused on Charnwood's administrative divisions. They were complex and subject to change. It is clear, however, that these were not the only internal divisions within the forest. The following chapter will continue the analysis by focusing on rather more ill-defined, but equally significant spatial divisions such as those between religious and secular space, public and private space, and economic and recreational space.

Chapter 6   Over the edge: spatial divisions of Charnwood Forest

One man broke the common pinfald and led away his beasts[1]

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the ways in which space was understood in medieval Charnwood, at how those understandings came about, and at how they changed over time. It looks at the forest's spatial divisions including those between elite and peasant space, between public and private space, between secular and religious space, and between economic and recreational space. Such boundaries are nebulous not only because they are rarely precisely documented but also because boundaries may not have been thought about in such categorised terms in the medieval period itself.

Spatial ambiguities between apparently disparate areas of everyday life in Charnwood Forest are illustrated by the man who 'broke the common *pinfald* and led away his beasts' at Shepshed in 1478.[2] The man was taking his animals away from a shared and arguably public space. However, he was also breaking the boundaries of an enclosure associated with a particular group of individuals, those of a local community, and this bestows elements of exclusivity and privacy on the space. Although the *pinfald* was primarily a judicial space, under the jurisdiction of the local lord, it would have been a space with which peasants were very familiar and might therefore be described as both an elite and a peasant space. The *pinfald* was a secular space, but one that was encountered in a deeply religious age in which every space may have been experienced and understood in terms of religious belief. Finally, the *pinfald* was an economic space

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[1] BL, Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919, Court Roll, Shepeshed, 1478-9, View of Frankpledge, Lord de Hastyngs, Knt; 19th October, 1478.
[2] BL, Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919, Court Roll, Shepeshed, 1478-9, View of Frankpledge,Lord de Hastyngs, Knt; 19th October, 1478.

– one in which beasts were held, and in this, at least, we can be more confident of our definition. However, in other areas of Charnwood Forest, such as deer parks, the division between economic and recreational space was more ambiguous. Charnwood's medieval deer parks were not only recreational spaces in which hunting was enjoyed by the elite, but also sites of considerable economic activity where woodland was managed and animals were pastured.

It is perhaps within Charnwood's churches that binary spatial oppositions can be most easily identified. For example, divisions between the religious and the secular, the sacred and the profane were apparent in the division between chancel and nave. Such divisions were expressed in chancel screens such as the one at the church of St John the Baptist in Belton (fig 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Chancel Screen, Church of St John the Baptist, Belton

Understandings of such spaces were likely to have been universal, and may have represented some of the 'vertical continuities' in sense of place identified by Corsane

and Bowers.[3] Whilst such divisions would have been understood by all orders of society, other understandings of religious and secular space were less clearly defined. In a study of place, custom and memory in late and post-medieval Norfolk, Whyte has found that 'cognitive maps of the spiritual world existed far beyond parochial bounds' and were influenced by day to day movement through the landscape.[4] Similarly, in Charnwood, the forest's 'obvious' religious places: the churches, the chapels, and the monastic sites were not experienced in isolation, but as part of a wider medieval landscape and society. It is likely that the way in which groups and individuals interacted with religious places in medieval Charnwood affected their perceptions of spatial boundaries.

Medieval understandings of such spatial divisions can be hard to establish. Particular difficulties are encountered when trying to untangle the spatial ambiguities created by notions of privacy and notions of status. There might seem obvious correlations to be made between 'elite spaces' and the concept of privacy, and between non-elite spaces and an apparent lack of it. Elite spaces, such as parks and manor houses were often bounded by walls, ditches or moats which restricted access. On the other hand peasant spaces, such as wastes and fields, were notionally relatively easy to access. However, this is far too a simplistic a view. Structures surrounding elite spaces might have been created for public display of wealth, power, and status rather than simply to preserve the privacy of the elite. Furthermore, when a manor house was the venue for the manorial court, a market, or a fair, it became a communal space. This suggests some variation in the degree of privacy attached to the manor house and that the building was considered more 'private' on some days, or times of day, than others. Equally, however, records of

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[3] G. Corsane and D. J. Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study in the Rainforest and Savannahs of Guyana' in I Convery, G. Corsane and P. Davis, eds, *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 250.

[4] N. Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 2009) p. 28.

trespass on peasant lands indicate that notions of privacy could also be attached to non-elite spaces.

We should be cautious about correlating notions of elite and non-elite space with concepts of 'social class'. Medieval people lived in a hierarchical society and undoubtedly had an awareness of 'the unequal distribution of wealth and status'.[5] However, it seems unlikely that such understanding incorporated modern notions of 'social class'.[6] Instead, it was an understanding, based on Christian theology, of a temporal world in which 'some ruled and others were ruled' but in which all were part of a whole.[7] Underlying this was the belief that, 'whilst the mighty ruled in this world, the humble were raised in the next'.[8] Such understandings should be borne in mind when attempting to identify medieval perceptions of elite and non-elite space. However, in a world in which 'everyone knew their place', the nature and extent of spatial associations with those places seems worthy of investigation in order to identify any 'horizontal layers' in understandings of spatial divisions. Such understandings can then be considered in relation to modern theories of space and place such as the 'shared dispositions of those occupying neighbouring positions in social space' described by Bordieu and the 'layering of senses of place' described by Corsane and Bowers.[9]

This chapter looks closely at spatial divisions in medieval Charnwood, at how they were expressed in contemporary documentary sources, and at how the memory of them is encapsulated in place-names and in the modern landscape. Here, it is worth noting again

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[5] D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900-1300* (Harlow, 2005), p.222.
[6] Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, p. 223.
[7] Crouch, *Birth of Nobility*, p. 222.
[8] Crouch, '*Birth of Nobility*, p. 222.
[9] P. Bourdieu, 'Habitus' in J. Hillier and E. Rooksby, *Habitus: A Sense of Place* (1998; Surrey, 2005) pp. 43-45; G. Corsane and D.J. Bowers, 'Sense of Place in Sustainable Tourism' A Case Study in the Rainforest and Savannahs of Guyana' in I. Convery, G. Corsane and P. Davis, eds, *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 250.

distinctions between the terms 'space' and 'place'. Place is said to concern the particular and experiential, whilst space concerns the general and theoretical.[10] As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, many commentators have highlighted the extent to which perceptions of space are socially constructed and influenced by experiences and activities associated with particular places.[11] In this chapter, therefore, the perceptions of those who inhabited and used medieval Charnwood Forest are sought in the places or settings with which they would have been familiar. These include Charnwood's woodlands, wastes and fields, manor houses, manorial complexes, settlements, religious houses, and deer parks. These settings are considered alongside theories relating to space and place espoused by geographers and social scientists in order to identify ways in which space was socially constructed in medieval Charnwood. As in previous chapters, there is a focus on the shapes formed by Charnwood's boundaries. However, rather than the concentric circles identified in Charnwood's external boundaries, or the star-shaped patterns identified in the forest's internal administrative boundaries, Charnwood's internal spatial divisions are shown to be a series of interlocking , overlapping, and shifting 'circles'. There is discussion of both the cultural integration and the cultural conflict that arose in those overlapping areas and consideration of the extent to which such harmony or unrest persisted into the post-medieval period.

6.2 Fields, Woodlands and Wastes

The earliest documentary source that we have for Charnwood Forest is the Domesday Survey. Domesday provides some limited insights into contemporary concepts of elite

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[10] B. Bender, 'Place and Landscape', in C. Tiley, W. Keane, S. Kuechler-Fogden, M. Rowlands, P. Spyer, eds. *Handbook of Material Culture* (London, 2006), p. 306; K. Ryden *, Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993), pp. 36-37.
[11] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, English translation by D. Nicholson Smith (1974; Oxford, 1991); Bender, 'Place and Landscape' p. 306; P. Bourdieu, 'Habitus' pp. 43-45.

and peasant space. In some cases the survey records lands, ploughlands, and/or ploughs that were 'in lordship', which we can compare with lands, ploughlands and/or ploughs which were not, and thus estimate the proportion of the manor that made up the demesne. There is little consistency, however, in the way in which such entries were recorded across the study area. Some entries, like those for Thorpe Acre, Dishley and Whitwick reveal no distinction between lordly and peasant space and, for places where such a distinction was made, the distinction was expressed in subtly different ways.

Table 6.1 compares the Domesday entries relating to land, ploughland and ploughs for Rothley, Groby, Shepshed and Barrow.

Manor	Domesday entry re: land/ploughland/ploughs.
Rothley	5 carucates of land. In lordship 2 of them and 2 ploughs. 29 villagers with a priest and 18 smallholders have 6 ploughs.
Groby	6 carucates of land less 3 bovates. Land for 4 ploughs. In lordship 2. 10 villagers with 1 freeman and 5 smallholders have 3 ploughs.
Shepshed	2 ½ hides and 4 carucates of land. In lordship 2 ploughs. 30 villagers with 12 smallholders have 15 ploughs. 20 freemen with 2 men-at arms, 6 villagers and 4 smallholders have 21 ploughs.
Barrow	15 carucates of land. In lordship he has 4 ½ ploughs. 40 villagers with 13 smallholders have 11 ploughs.

Table 6.1 Domesday Land, Ploughland, and Ploughs in Four Charnwood Manors

Source: P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester, 1979) ff. 230b, 230d, 232a, 237a.

The data contained within table 6.1 suggests that divisions between elite and peasant space could be expressed in terms of land (Rothley), and/or in terms of plough teams (Rothley, Shepshed and Barrow). In Groby, although the entry is rather ambiguous, it

seems that the division may have been expressed in terms of 'land for ploughs' or plough lands.

A particularly unique expression of the distinction between lordly and peasant space is provided by the Domesday entry for woodland in Rothley. Two separate areas of woodland were recorded; 'the lord's woodland' was said to be 1 league long by 1/2 a league wide, whilst 'the villagers woodland' was said to be 4 furlongs long by 3 furlongs wide.[12] Although the 'lord's woodland' evidently covers a larger area than that of the villagers, no indication was given of the shape, location or nature of either woodland. Domesday records that Rothley had holdings in 22 vills scattered across a wide area to the east of the River Soar. Whilst no individual records of population or plough teams were made for these holdings, individual areas of woodland were recorded for several.[13] This indicates that the two areas of woodland recorded for Rothley itself were located close to the main manor. There is little woodland in the immediate area of Rothley today, although, as discussed in chapter 4, the appearance of the field-name element *stoccing* (OE 'a clearing of stumps, a piece of ground cleared of stumps')[14] in nine adjacent fields to the north-west of the village indicates that the area may once have been woodland (see chapter 4, fig.4.19). Whether that woodland was one of those mentioned in Domesday is, however, difficult to determine. No clues are provided by the qualifying elements of the *stoccing* field-names.[15] The distinction recorded by the Domesday assessors between elite and peasant woodland in Rothley is intriguing. Such a distinction is not made in other parts of Charnwood or, indeed,

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[12] P. Morgan, *Domesday Book, Leicestershire* (Chichester, 1979), f. 230b.
[13] Woodland is recorded for Rothley holdings in Tugby, Skeffington, Halstead, and Tilton, see Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 230c.
[14] A.H.Smith, *English Place-name Elements*, 2 (London, 1956), p. 156
[15] ROLLR, FNS/269/1-2, Rothley Field-Name Survey, 1967-69. *Stoccings* which survived in the field name survey were mainly qualified in terms of direction/dimension. Three of the fields are simply called 'stocking', two are called 'stocking close', the others are called 'north stocking', 'stocking sod', 'small stocking close', and 'south-west stocking close'.

anywhere else in Leicestershire and it seems reasonable to assume that Domesday assessors were recording particularly local perceptions and understandings of the status of Rothley's woodlands. This is perhaps an example of a 'shared disposition' towards those spaces within the local community. If divisions in the status of woodland existed in other Charnwood manors, they do not seem to have been considered worthy of mention. Rothley, however, was held by the king, and this fact might have some bearing on the rather unusual entry. Domesday entries for the three other royal manors in the study area reveal no distinction between elite and peasant woodland. However, one of them, Thorpe Acre, had no recorded woodland, and the others, Shepshed and Dishley, were held by Godwin 'from the king' rather than directly by the king himself.[16]

With the exception of the entry for Rothley, Domesday reveals very little about proprietary attitudes of lords to woodland in Charnwood. This is not to say that they did not exist, merely that none were expressed in the survey. Seigniorial concerns about woodland territories in Charnwood are, however, more fully expressed in later medieval sources. A view of frankpledge held at Loughborough in 1478, for example, records that Thomas Burton of Loughborough was accused of 'felling and carrying away underwood' from 'the lord's ground' at Thorp' (Thorpe Acre).[17] In the same year, John Harrys was accused of taking 'divers trees in several places in the lord's woods' at Shepshed.[18]

Expressions of seigniorial space in Charnwood's manorial records are by no means confined to woodland. Shepshed court rolls reveal examples of transgressions into other lordly spaces; for example, two men were accused of ploughing the 'lords *ferera*'

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[16] Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, f. 230d.
[17] BL, Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919 Court Roll, Shepshed, 1478-9, Shepeshede, View of Frankpledge of William, lord de Hastyngs, knt., 19th October, 1478, m. 1.
[18] BL, Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919 Court Roll, Shepshed,1478-9, Shepeshede, Court of William, lord de Hastyngez, knt., 2nd November, 1478, m. 3.

(headland) at *le Wallehirne* in 1392.[19] Similarly, at the same Shepshed petty court, the 'farmer of the fishery of the Sore' presented two men from Normanton, one man from Whatton and one man from Hatherne; all of the men were accused of fishing 'in the lord's several waters without licence'.[20] Here, whilst the fishery is evidently considered to be a lordly space, there is an indication that 'the waters' might be open to other sections of society if they held an appropriate 'license'.

The distinction between seigniorial and peasant space within manors was, however, somewhat blurred by the symbiotic relationship between lord and tenant, a mutual dependency in which the lord provided land for his tenants and tenants provided labour for the lord. If 'peasant space' can be described as the environment in which a peasant lived and worked, then that space must have included the demesne and labour dues. In late thirteenth-century Charnwood, for example, peasants were required to

> mow and collect the demesne lands of the lord in Groby which are estimated to contain 186 acres.[21]

Furthermore, if 'lordly space' can be described as the area over which the lord had jurisdiction, then that space must include peasant holdings. Later medieval documentary sources, such as manorial account and court rolls, can reveal details of that relationship. For example a land transaction recorded in a view of frankpledge held at Shepshed in 1431 illustrates a complex blending of elite and peasant space.

> John Chapman of Shepeshed and wife Elizabeth came in court and took from the lord 1 cottage in Shepeshed to hold for their lives at the will of the lord according to the custom of the manor, rendering 4s. yearly at the usual terms and the yearly rent should be only 18d., 1 hen, 1 work and 5 eggs by ancient custom. They will maintain and repair the cottage at their own cost throughout their lives

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[19] BL, Add Ch 26842 Shepshed Court Roll, Shepshed Petty Court, 12th October, 1392, m. 3.
[20] BL, Add Ch 26842 Shepshed Court Roll, Shepshed Petty Court, 12th October, 1392, m. 3.
[21] *IPM*, William de Ferrers of Groby, 1288, translated and transcribed by G.F. Farnham, *Charnwood Forest its Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester,1930), p. 100.

and if they depart from the lordship will leave it in good repair. No entry fine because increased rent.[22]

In this transaction the lord is granting a new tenancy to John and Elizabeth Chapman and setting out the terms of that tenancy. An 'entry fine' appears to have been waived, but mention of the fine, and the implication that such a payment would normally be required, brings a spatial context to the transaction, one which casts John and Elizabeth not only as new tenants but, perhaps, as former outsiders. John and Elizabeth were allowed to enter, have their cottage, their 'space', but it was a space in which seigniorial presence was very evident. They were paying rent to the lord. The rent included the contribution of '1 work', presumably in the form of labour in the seigniorial space of the demesne. John and Elizabeth had clear responsibilities towards the maintenance of 'their space' which they had to fulfil at their own expense. If they left the lordship, they had to leave the particular space that they had occupied within the lordship in a good state of repair. This document is all about peasant responsibilities towards a particular space, but emphasizes seigniorial ownership of that space. There is little mention, however, of lordly responsibilities towards the space or towards those who occupied it. The particularity of the space occupied by the cottage, and the meanings attached to it, indicate that the cottage was a place, but one that was likely to have engendered a different 'sense of place' for lord and tenant.

Such differences were not confined to those between the elite and non-elite. The spaces occupied by Charnwood's peasantry cannot be described in generic terms. Servile peasants had less control and influence over their space than free peasants, a distinction which may have influenced the perceptions of that space by both peasant and lord. This

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[22] BL, Add Ch 26843 Court Roll, Shepshed, 1431-2, 1454-5, 1488-90 , Shepeshede, View of Frankpledge of John d Bello Monte, chivaler, 3rd October, 1431, m. 10a, recto.

highlights the subjective nature of space in the forest. However, peasant space, even

when it was held freely, could revert to the lord when laws were transgressed by the

peasant. This is illustrated by an entry listed under 'issues of land in lord's hand with

sale of hay' in a 1435 Shepshed account roll.

> 6d. from 1 garden seized by the lord at court held 16 Nov 2 Henry VI [1423]
> which Thomas Netham formally held freely because he was outlawed by royal
> justices of the peace at Leicester for diverse felonies.[23]

Manorial records such as this were written for elite purposes, and generally tell us most

about elite perceptions of elite and peasant space. However, it is possible that such

sources, when examined more closely, can reveal glimpses of peasant understandings of

the spatial environment.[24]

Such understandings are apparent in Charnwood's manorial surveys. Amongst the

documents relating to medieval Charnwood they are, perhaps, the ones which can be

most closely associated with the 'representations of space' or 'conceived spaces'

described by philosopher Henri Lefebvre.[25] Surveys often included description of

individual furlongs lying within the open fields of settlements surrounding the forest.

Whilst surveys were a record of manorial holdings, it is thought that furlongs were

named not by manorial lords, but by the peasants who worked the land.[26] This study has

looked at medieval surveys relating to Barrow, Shepshed, and Long Whatton.[27] Many

furlongs in these Charnwood surveys are described in terms of their relationship to other

landscape features which they 'abutted' or 'lay beyond'. Frequently they are described

in relationship to spaces associated with individual named peasants. The Shepshed

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[23] BL, Add Ch 26840, Shepeshed Account of Thomas Colton, bailiff of John de Bello Monte, knight, from Michaelmas 13 Henry VI until Michaelmas 14 Henry VI for one whole year [1434-5], m. 1, recto.
[24] S. Kilby, 'Encountering the Environment: Rural Communities in England, 1086-1348' unpublished PhD thesis, Centre for English Local History (University of Leicester, 2013), p. 72.
[25] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 38-39.
[26] R. Jones, 'Directional Names in the Early Medieval Landscape' in R. Jones and S. Semple, *Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England* (Donington, 2012), p. 198.
[27] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, ff. 87,114, 172-3, surveys of Barrow, Shepshed and Long Whatton, surveys are undated but the British Library Catalogue dates them to second half of fifteenth century.

survey, for example, mentions '2 acres which extend themselves onto the toft of Elias le Swyn'.[28] Many of the minor names mentioned in the surveys incorporated elements which can be associated with boundaries. These include the element *mære* (OE, 'a boundary, a border'), also said to occur in many ME field names.[29] It is sometimes confused with *mere* (OE, 'pool').[30] However, the qualifying elements which appear in the Charnwood surveys indicate that here they pertained to parish boundaries. At Long Whatton, within *ryfelde*, we have '1 rood abutting into *schepisheyd meyr'*, and within *northfelde* we have 1 rood 'abutting in *keygworth meyr'*.[31] These examples seem to indicate a spatial relationship between the lands concerned and the boundaries of Shepshed and Kegworth. Another element which appears in the Charnwood surveys is *Þorn* (OE, 'thorn-tree', hawthorn).[32] When *Þorn* appears as the final element, it often refers to a single thorn tree, a tree which may have been used as a boundary marker.[33] The Shepshed and Barrow surveys would seem to support this argument. At Shepshed, the survey mentions 2 acres at *Gerondonthornes*;[34] this may refer to the boundary between Shepshed and Gerondon. At Barrow, we have '2 half acres upon *copthorn* next to the land of lord hasty[n]ges'.[35] *Copthorn* lay within the great open field of *brokfelde* at Barrow. In the survey, most of the lands mentioned within *brokfelde* seem to be described in relationship to the 'land of lord hasty[n]ges' indicating a proximity to, but distinction from, the land of that lord. In two cases entries for land within *brokfelde*, land is described as being 'next to the land of lord hasy[n]ges on both sides'. This indicates that the land of Lord Hastings was almost certainly intermingled with peasant holdings. The manor of Barrow had been divided in 1273; Lord Hastings acquired part

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[28] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, Shepshed survey, f.114.
[29] Smith, *EPNE.,* 2, pp. 33-34.
[30] Smith, *EPNE,* 2, p. 38.
[31] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, Long Whatton survey, ff. 172-3.
[32] Smith, *EPNE,* 2, p. 204.
[33] Smith, *EPNE,* 2, p. 204-205.
[34] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, Shepshed survey, f. 114.
[35] BL, Cotton MS Galba E III, Barrow survey, f. 87.

of it in 1471 and the whole of it in 1482.[36] It is possible, therefore, that this survey dates from the period between 1471 and 1482 when the division between the two parts of Barrow may have been particularly significant. Such examples indicate a high degree of spatial awareness on the part of the lower orders that named and described the landscape, an awareness that was utilised by the upper orders under whose jurisdiction the landscape lay. The surveys highlight continuity between different levels of society in perceptions of these particular spatial boundaries.

Perhaps the most obvious written records of spatial boundaries in medieval Charnwood are those which relate to cases of trespass. McDonagh and Griffin have charted the 'progressive spatialization' of the concept of trespass during the medieval period, from thirteenth-century associations with 'general wrongs', to more specific fifteenth-century associations with property and the transgression of spatial boundaries.[37] There are many examples from Charnwood's court rolls of cases of trespass occurring in parks, woodlands, and watercourses.[38] Many cases of intentional trespass were committed with a purpose in mind, and such cases often involved other offences such as poaching, theft of wood or timber or fishing without license. These were often cases of trespass into elite spaces. There were, however, also many cases of illicit incursion into non-elite spaces in Charnwood. [39]

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[36] M. Tompkins, 'Barrow on Soar: Manors and Estates' (unpublished draft, 2016).

[37] B. McDonagh and C.J. Griffin, 'Occupy! Historical Geographies of Property, Protest and the Commons, 1500-1850', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 53, (2016), p. 3.

[38] For example, occupation of the lord's land and the taking of wood from Thorp Brand, BL,Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919 , Court Roll, Shepshed, 1478-9, View of Frankpledge of William, lord de Hastyngs, knt., 19 Oct, 147]. m.1 recto; trespass and fishing in the fishery of Elisabeth de Erdington at Barrow, De Banco roll 421, 1365, translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 56; and Commission of oyer and terminer to Roger de Brabazun and Gilbert Roubury re: breaking the park of John Comyn, earl of Buchan, at Whitwick, 1291, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 134.

[39] See several cases recorded HL, HAM Box 20, no.5, court rolls, including court held at Loughborough 13th February, 1403, case of trespass into peasant space; and court held at Loughborough 11th September (year unclear, but probably 1403), seven cases of trespass into peasant space and four cases of trespass into lordly space.

If the term *vnus mear'* can be translated as 'boundary marker', possible transgression of non-elite private space is illustrated by a case recorded at Shepshed in 1478, when

> the wives of William Plomer and Robert Stretton took and carried off a boundary marker (*vnus mear'*) of a cottage late in the tenure of William Wodewarde.[40]

A more definite and common example, however, occurred in 1403, when John Taylor sought damages in plea of trespass from William de Stanton, claiming that de Stanton had destroyed 'flax, onions and other herbs' growing in Taylor's garden with his pigs.[41] Stanton acknowledged the claim, and the trespass may have been accidental. The case does, however, indicate that concepts of spatial privacy were as important in non-elite spaces as they were in elite spaces, particularly where any collateral loss or damage was incurred.

Cases of trespass focus on areas regarded as 'private space'. However, manorial records also reveal evidence relating to land regarded as public space. There was a concern that public spaces such as roads and route ways were kept clear, and fines were imposed on persons causing any form of obstruction. In 1398, for example, the Abbot of Garendon was held responsible for an uncleaned ditch between Hungerhill and Henley and the poor state of a bridge called le Milnebrigge.[42] Similarly, at Loughborough in 1412, eight men were fined 2*d* each for blocking 'places and common ways' with dung heaps - 'to the nuisance of the whole community'.[43] Whilst such evidence highlights an expectation of communal responsibility for communal space in medieval Charnwood, it also reveals an apparent disregard for that responsibility on the part some Charnwood inhabitants.

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[40] BL, Add Ch 7917, 7918, 7919 Court Roll, Shepeshede, Court of William, lord de Hastyngez, knt., 2 Nov, 1478, m. 3, recto.

[41] HL, HAM Box 20, no.5, Loughborough court held 2nd January, 4, 1403.

[42] BL, Add Ch 26842 Court Roll, Shepshed, View of Frankpledge with Court of Katherine lady de Bello Monte, Saturday 5th October, 1398.

[43] HL, HAM Box 21-23, Loughborough, View of Frankpledge with Court, 12th April, 1412.

Perhaps the most communal of public spaces in Charnwood were the areas of waste. These were areas of common pasture and reservoirs of communal resources. However, it has been argued that English commons should not be regarded as unregulated spaces which 'belonged to the people'.[44] In Charnwood, as in other areas, the resources of the waste could only be utilised by those with the rights or permission to do so. This is illustrated by a list of fines issued in Shepshed court rolls of 1385. They included a fine of 6d. issued to a man of Belton who took *heth* in the waste 'without license'; a fine of 3d. issued to a man of Ibstoke who took *heth* and 'had no common'; and a fine of 2d. issued to each of five men of Belton who took *ferne* and 'had no common'.[45] Sometimes, a particular space was considered 'open' to members of one Charnwood community, but 'closed' to members of another. In 1399, for example a whole vill was accused of transgressing spatial boundaries. Shepshed court rolls of 1399 state that

> the whole vill of Belton occupied the pasture in the waste without license and have no common.[46]

McDonagh and Griffin have described such 'occupations' as a means of expressing and defending what were considered to be rights to resources.[47] Certainly, the people of Belton seem to have held fairly strong proprietary attitudes towards the space concerned and were accused of the same offence again in 1432.[48] The conflict between Shepshed and Belton seems to have resulted from different understandings of rights associated with the waste, a 'horizontal layering' in sense of place which seems to have been a feature of the forest. The wastes of Charnwood Forest remained contested places well into the post-medieval period and disagreements about who exactly held rights of common on the forest occurred frequently up until the time of nineteenth-century

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[44] McDonagh and Griffin, 'Occupy!', p. 2.
[45] BL, Add Ch 26842 Court Roll, Shepshed, Parva Curia, 4th October 1485, m.1, recto.
[46] BL, Add Ch 26842 Court Roll, Shepshed, Wednesday 9th April, 1399, rot. 5, m.1, dorse.
[47] McDonagh and Griffin, 'Occupy!', p. 3.
[48] BL, Add ch 26843, Court Roll, Shepshed, 1431-2, 1454-5, 1488-90, Shepshed View of Frankpledge, 6th May, 1432, m.12a, recto.

parliamentary enclosure.[49] It might be suggested that, in the case of common rights, we are dealing with infringement of use rather than transgressions of the boundaries of private space. The people of Belton stood accused of 'pasturing their animals' on the land concerned. Merely entering the space, or travelling through it, may not have been considered an offence. Nevertheless, it seems that a form of exclusion was being practised. The persistence of such spatial ambiguities into the modern period reflects the fact that medieval spatial divisions between private and public space within the waste of medieval Charnwood were rather indistinct, and that privacy was a matter of degree. This highlights a weakness in binary analysis of public and private space.

Perhaps the most obvious of private or closed spaces within medieval Charnwood were the moated sites. The distribution of moated sites and their relationship to Charnwood's geology and medieval woodland was discussed in chapter 5. Moats served a variety of purposes including drainage, sewage disposal, and fishing but were, perhaps, primarily a status symbol. Rackham describes many such sites in the woodlands of Cambridgeshire and East Anglia,[50] and wonders if ditched enclosures, 'like mini moats' may have reflected the aspirations of woodwards' cottages.[51] Dyer expresses similar views regarding moated sites in Warwickshire. He contends that whilst some such sites must have 'represented a step towards taming a previously wild landscape', that they should be seen as 'a product of woodland society rather than simply as homesteads'.[52] He states that moated sites were a 'specialised type of homestead for people of superior rank'.[53] A number of moated sites have been identified in Charnwood and are thought to

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[49] See for example, TNA, E134/6Geo3/east/1, Interrogatories, Depositions taken at Loughborough, 1766.

[50] Rackham, *Woodlands* (London, 2006) p. 219.
[51] Rackham, *Woodlands*, p. 220.
[52] C. Dyer, 'Rural Settlements in Medieval Warwickshire', *Transactions of the BWAS*, 100 (1996), p. 122.
[53] Dyer, Rural Settlements in Medieval Warwickshire' pp. 122.

surround isolated medieval lodges or farmsteads. They include one at Lady Hay Wood
in Groby (fig. 6.2).
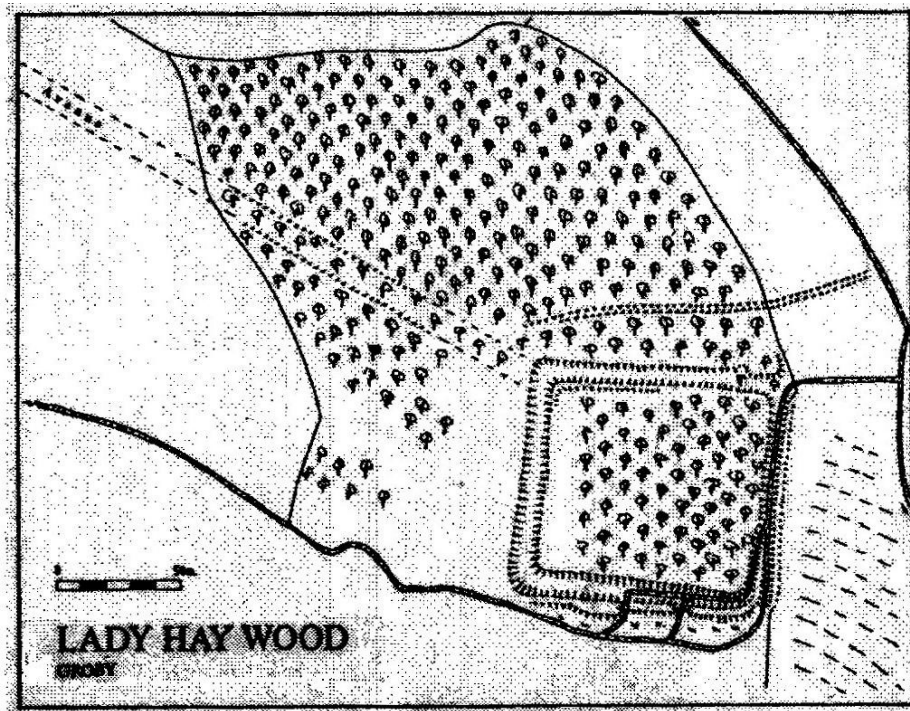
Figure 6.2 Moated Site, Lady Hay Wood, Groby

Source: Plan taken from R.F. Hartley, Medieval Earthworks of South West Leicestershire, Hinckley and
Bosworth (Leicester, 2008) fig.18. Reproduced with permission of Peter Liddle, Leicestershire
Fieldworkers.

Sometimes, however, the former function of a moated site is unclear. One such

example is a moated site beside the River Lin, in an area referred to as Barne Leys on

Leo Bells 1796 map of Ulverscroft[54] (see chapter 2, fig. 2.15). Miller and Squires are

unsure of the origins of this site and speculate that it may never have contained

buildings. [55] Coveney suggests that the moat at Barne Leys may have surrounded

agricultural buildings and stock enclosures.[56] If she is correct, the primary purpose of

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[54] E. Miller and A. Squires, 'The Leicestershire Lin: A River Through Time', *Transactions of the LAHS,*
83 (2009), p. 139.
[55] Miller and Squires, 'The Leicestershire Lin: A River Through Time', p. 139.
[56] N. Coveney, 'Moated Sites in Medieval England: A Reassessment', PhD thesis, (University of
Leicester, 2014), p. 168.

the moat would have been to contain and protect animals rather than any particular desire to express the privacy or superior status of that space.

Many of the moated sites discussed above remain features of the Charnwood landscape today. It is difficult to estimate how many others were created in Charnwood Forest but were subsequently erased from the landscape. However, with the proviso that moated sites could serve a variety of functions, the proximity of the sites which have been identified to areas of Charnwood's medieval woodland[57] would seem to indicate some correlation between woodland and medieval notions of privacy and individuality.

There is some association between notions of privacy in the medieval period and notions of gendered space. Gilchrist has identified but played down such correlations.[58] She suggests that spatial segregation of the sexes was most evident in 'sacred public contexts of churches, hospitals and religious houses', but that gendered domains in medieval England were generally 'reasonably fluid'.[59] This fluidity became more apparent, for example, at harvest time when peasant women left their usual realm of the house and toft to help in the fields.[60] Similar examples can be found in Charnwood's medieval woodlands, usually places of male employment, but where women's labour was utilised when necessary. Many of the items entered under 'costs of folds and faggots' in a Shepshed account roll of 1396, for example, represent payments made to men. Just one entry is different.

> And in the expenses of the lord's men and women from the park (*ex parce*) carrying ?34 folds remaining from divers places outside the wood into one place within the wood for safe keeping.[61]

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[57] Discussed above in chapter 5.
[58] R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 111 - 113.
[59] Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology*, p. 143.
[60] Gilchrist, *Gender and Archaeology*, p. 116.
[61] BL, Add ch 13604, Shepshed Account Roll, 1396.

The content and tone of the entry suggests that this was an 'all hands on deck' situation, similar to harvest time, in which the boundaries of gendered domains tended to dissolve. This is one of many examples of the blurring of spatial boundaries in medieval Charnwood Forest.

6.3   Manor Houses and Manorial Complexes

Ambiguity of medieval spatial boundaries is not confined to the forest's fields, woodlands and wastes. Charnwood's manor houses and manorial complexes were also sites in which distinct categories of space are hard to define. As sites of manorial courts they were experienced as communal, public spaces, judicial spaces and, as such, both elite and non-elite spaces. As sites of markets and fairs they could be understood as communal, non-elite, economic, recreational, and secular spaces. Often incorporating private chapels, manor houses could be considered religious spaces. And finally, as homes and residences of the lord of the manor they were experienced as private and elite spaces. Using archaeological, cartographical and documentary evidence relating to two of Charnwood's medieval manors, the manors of Groby and Beaumanor, this section considers such spatial overlaps and the nature and expression of spatial divisions.

An eighteenth century map of the village of Groby, to the south of the study area, shows the manorial complex in 1757. It is located within the oval enclosed area around Grooby

Hall. (Fig 6.3)
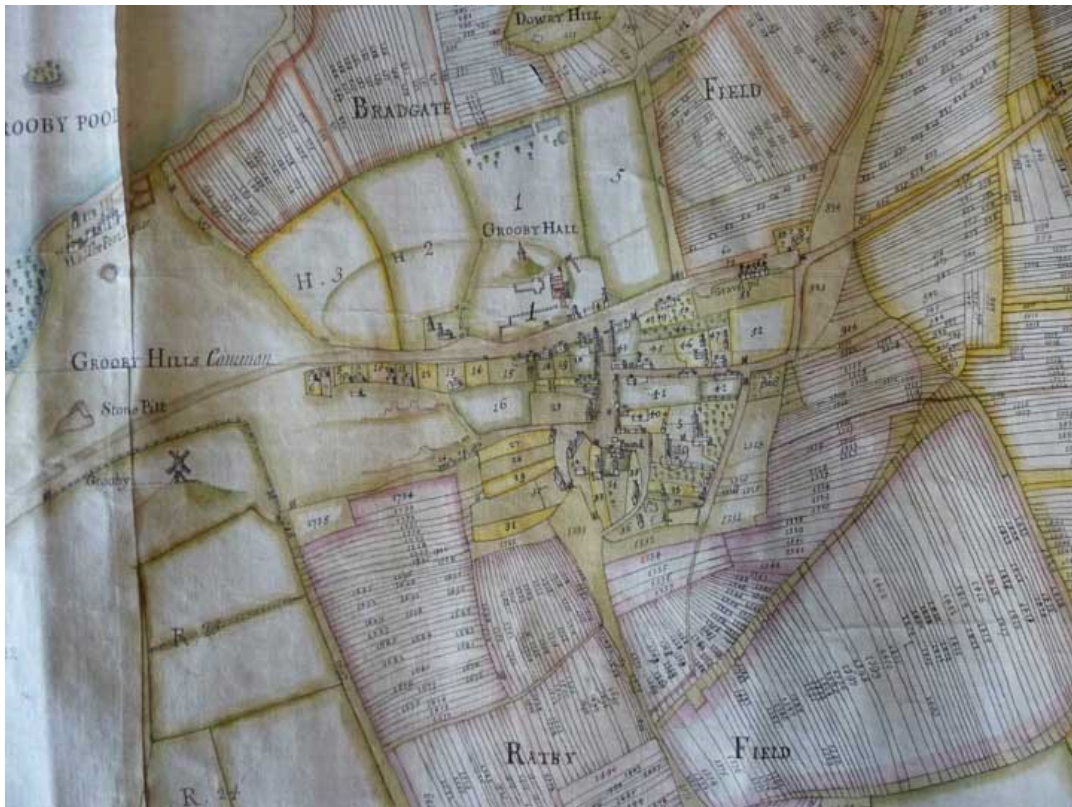
Figure 6.3 Part of Doherty's 1757 Map of Groby, Showing Village Core.

Source: Enville collection. Reproduced with permission of Mrs Diana Williams, Enville Estate Archives.

Doherty's map shows the site after many changes had been made to it. Archaeological

evidence, however, indicates that the complex was an elite site in the medieval period.

Finds from the site include sherds of Martincamp ware dated *c.* 1475 -1550.[62]

Martincamp ware was imported from France and is most commonly found in the towns

and ports of Eastern England.[63] Inland finds are comparatively rare and are usually

associated with high status sites such as castles or abbeys.[64] The finds on the site of

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[62] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall, Groby, Leicestershire: Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results', archaeological report (2011), p. 18 at
http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/reports/74151/groby-old-hall [accessed 12th May 2017].
[63] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall', p. 18.
[64] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall', p. 18-19.

Groby's manorial complex reflect a certain degree of prosperity and prestige.[65] This evidently elite space was located close to the centre of the township, in close proximity to peasant holdings and to the site of the local market and fair.[66] Fig 6.4 is a photograph of 'the Old Hall' in Groby; it stands on the site of the original manorial complex and close to the historic settlement core of Groby as identified by Leicestershire HER (fig. 6.5).[67]

Figure 6.4 Groby Old Hall

[65] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall', p.19.
[66] Charters for a market and a fair at Groby, both to be held 'at the manor' were granted by Edward III to Henry de Ferariss in 1338, data taken from 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516, last updated 16th December 2013', at http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html, [accessed 11th April 2017].
[67] LRHER, MLE5991.

Figure 6.5 Groby Historic Settlement Core

Source: Historic digimapat https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 15th October 2017] © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1880). Note: Historic core indicated by red marker (annotated by the author).

The geographical relationships between manor houses, settlements and churches have been addressed by McDonagh. In her study of such relationships in the Yorkshire Wolds, McDonagh identifies three types of manor house location - those positioned within an associated settlement, those positioned on the periphery of the settlement and those positioned at some distance from the settlement.[68] McDonagh identifies a great deal of diversity in manor, church, settlement relationships.[69] She also questions the view, proposed by Willamson and Bellamy,[70] that there was chronological progression in manorial site location from the integrated, to the peripheral, to the isolated, by

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[68] B.A.K. McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements: Historical Geographies of the Yorkshire Wolds before 1600', PhD thesis (University of Nottingham, 2007) pp.101-114.
[69] McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p. 154.
[70] T. Williamson and L. Bellamy, *Property and Landscape: A Social History of Land Ownership and the English Countryside* (London, 1987), p. 62.

showing that few manor houses moved away from settlements and, indeed, that some previously isolated ones moved in.[71]

This does not, however, appear to have been the case at Groby when , *c.* 1500, Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset and lord of the manor, commenced construction of a new mansion in a far more secluded location within the nearby Bradgate Park.[72] In seigniorial terms, the original site declined in importance from the early sixteenth century when it was let out as a tenant farm,[73] presumably upon the completion of the house at Bradgate. Fig 6.6 shows the ruins of the new mansion built in Bradgate Park, still enjoying relative isolation today. Settings in parks have been associated with expressions of splendour.[74] Whilst such isolation may have limited the occasions on which individuals were able to experience that splendour, it would have intensified the experience when they did. As discussed in chapter 4, the new building at Bradgate may have involved the displacement of peasants from a village adjacent to the site of the new mansion. If this interpretation is correct, it is an example of a shift in both seigniorial space and peasant space towards the end of the medieval period, shifts which seem to have been precipitated by the elite, controlled by the elite, and designed to differentiate and widen boundaries between elite and non-elite space. Such an observation is in line with a more general increase in the separation of lordly space, and in the segregation of medieval society's orders, that has been identified in England in the later medieval period.[75]

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[71] McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p. 147.

[72] J. Stephenson and A. Squires, *Bradgate Park: Childhood Home of Lady Jane Grey* (Newtown Linford, 1999), pp. 7-15.

[73] LRHER, MLE11722.

[74] C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven, Connecticut and London, 1999), p. 68.

[75] Kilby, 'Encountering the Environment: Rural Communities in England, 1086-1348' pp. 53-54.

Figure 6.6 Bradgate House, Bradgate

Such segregation can be associated with a decline in the itinerant lifestyle of the elite from the end of the thirteenth century. Woolgar describes changes in medieval buildings in response to this decline and suggests that continuous occupation led to greater emphasis on display, comfort and order.[76] Signs of that order can be seen in the manorial complex at Groby. Archaeological surveys suggest that the complex incorporated ranges of buildings which surrounded a courtyard.[77] The westernmost range seems to have contained a hall.[78] The hall would have been one of the most public spaces within the complex. The increased segregation of the social order in the later medieval period was not necessarily accompanied by the decline of the hall as a communal space.[79] Indeed, it has been suggested that halls built in the later medieval period tended to be elongated in order to bring people together, but in a way which

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[76] C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 47.
[77] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall', p. 10.
[78] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall', p. 10.
[79] B.A.K. McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p. 163.

facilitated and highlighted social segregation.[80] The 'high ends' of such halls were often illuminated by elaborate oriel or bay windows.[81] This may be the case at Groby where a 'large canted bay window' was revealed by excavation at the site in 2011.[82] Doherty's map indicates that the Groby's manorial complex was contained within an oval enclosure. It is possible that the enclosure was formed by a double ditch, perhaps originally a bailey ditch, associated with the castle that had previously stood on the site.[83] Evidence of a double ditch at Groby is found in archaeological and place-name sources.[84] Such an enclosure might have ensured that access to spaces and structures within the manorial complex was regulated. Manorial complexes were often enclosed by such structures and sometimes by several such structures.[85]

A possible example of concentric features encircling a manorial complex can be found at Beaumanor, a manor to the east of the forest. Here access to the complex was regulated by a two surrounding features, referred to in an extent of 1330.

Item at Beaumanor there is a certain motte [with a] ditch around it [86]

The extent indicates that the two features may have been a water filled moat and a dry ditch. Any suggestion that the 'motte' referred to in this document may be evidence of a motte and bailey castle or other residence built on a man-made mound at Beaumanor can be refuted by earlier documentary evidence indicating that it is probably a reference to a moated site. There have been several manor houses at Beaumanor, the latest constructed in 1847.[87] However the 1277/8 accounts of Thomas Humerus, steward of

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[80] McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p. 163.

[81] McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p.164.

[82] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall' pp. 33-34.

[83] LRHER, MLE2758.

[84] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall' pp. 12-14. 'Double dykes' field appears in ROLLR, FNS/132/1-2, Groby Field Name survey.

[85] Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 47.

[86] TNA, C 145/113/7 Inquisitions Misc. Chancery File, Extent of Loughborough, 1330.

[87] R. F. Hartley, *The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire* (Leicester, 1989) p. 12.

Beaumanor may provide us with details of the earliest. It includes payments made for

the repair of a drawbridge; this indicates that Beaumanor was indeed a moated site.[88]

Earthworks which may indicate the location of a moat at Beaumanor have been

identified by Hartley (fig 6.7).[89]
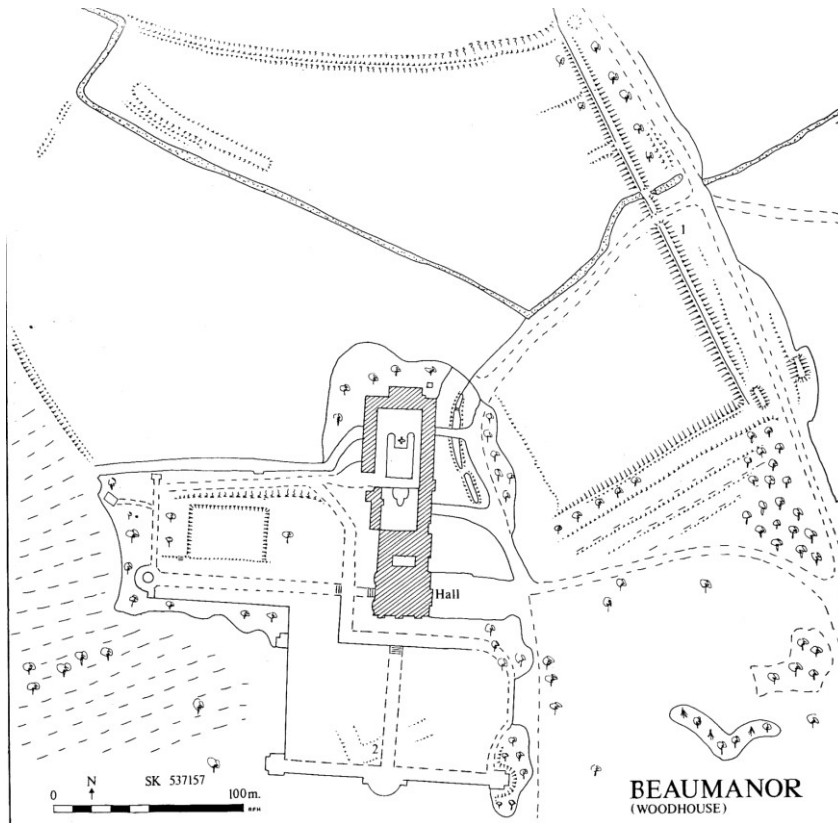
Figure 6.7 Moated Site, Beaumanor

Source: R.F. Hartley, *The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire* (Leicester, 1989), fig. 37.
Reproduced with permission of Richard Knox, LCC.

The 1277/8 Beaumanor account roll is of the same date as that ascribed to a description

of Beaumanor quoted, but not clearly referenced, by Hartley.

> Within a moated enclosure of considerable dimensions, surrounded by a thick
> hedge or stockade, stood a hall, a great chamber each of stone, with slate roofs,
> an inner chamber, and a Knights chamber (where Sir Hugh Despenser the son
> slept).[90]

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[88] ROLLR, DG/1954 Accounts of Thomas Humerus, Steward at Beaumanor, 1277-8.
[89] R. F. Hartley, *The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire*, p. 32.
[90] This is a 1277-8 description of the manor house at Beaumanor cited but not referenced by Hartley, *The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire* p. 13.

It is possible, however, that the description quoted by Hartley is an interpretation of details given in the 1277/78 account roll. There are certainly a number of similarities including mention of a 'great hall', an 'inner chamber' and a 'knights chamber'. Both the account roll and the description cited by Hartley are replete with elements of privacy. At Beaumanor, the moat would seem to be one of a number of features designed to protect seigniorial privacy, others included gates and hedges. The account roll also itemises payments for the purchase and/or repair of several locks. These include

> 1lock mended for the door of the chamber outside the bridge.
> 1lock bought for the middle gate.
> 1lock bought for the door of the inner chamber.[91]

The number of individual 'chambers' mentioned in the Beaumanor account rolls can be associated with an increase in the number of chambers in great households and a 'remarkable transformation in domestic space between 1200 and 1500' identified by Woolgar.[92] Medieval chambers were likely to be multifunctional and Woolgar suggests that the space within them was 'used and reused'.[93] Whilst this may have been the case with the chambers at Beaumanor, the use of locks on the doors of some of those chambers indicates that they were, for at least some of the time, considered to be private spaces.

Movement around the manorial complex at Beaumamanor was evidently regulated. Johnson suggests that, by affecting patterns of movement, moats were part of a system of 'stratified accessibility' to social spaces.[94] The Beaumamor account roll gives us an

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[91] ROLLR, DG/1954 Accounts of Thomas Humerus, Steward at Beaumanor, 1277-8.
[92] Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 48.
[93] Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 50.
[94] E. D. Johnson, 'Moated Sites and the Production of Authority in the Eastern Weald of England', *Medieval Archaeology*, 59, 1 (2015), pp. 233.

insight into the system at this particular complex and indicates that, although the moated site at Beaumanor was a symbol of status, it was one which focused on privacy as much as display.

Another example of privacy within Charnwood's manorial complexes is found in the private chapels which they sometimes contained. Secular space such as that occupied by the manorial complex at Groby, often had a religious space at its very core. This is revealed in Doherty's 1757 map of Groby which shows the site of an apparently large chapel close to the Old Hall and Groby Castle (fig. 6.3).[95] Mertes suggests that such chapels were often comparable in size to parish churches. However, rather than focusing on the privacy of such spaces, Mertes highlights the communality of such spaces and the nature of the household as a religious community.[96] The chapel at Groby is likely to be the 'chapel called the *oldechapele'* which appears, in the middle of a detailed description of 'a third part of the manor house of Groby' in fourteenth-century documentary sources.[97] An extract from that description reveals something of the close association of religious and secular space at Groby.

> … a chamber with a wardrobe below the said two chambers where Robert Bradenham used to lie, two chambers at the end of the whit chamber above the door of the wine celer, two chambers called the 'taxleryes' extending to the chamber called Sir Thomas de Ferrers' chamber, a chapel called the 'oldechapele' with the cloister by the same towards the south, one house called the 'culnhous' with the double gate, all the piece of ground bewteen the 'culnhou's and garden called the Tourhulle towards the south with the great gate called the chapelsgate …[98]

[95] Enville Collection, Doherty, J., 'An Exact Map of all the inclos'd lands woods and waster together with the parks and Bradgate, Ratby and Leicester common fields in the Manor of Grooby in the parish of Ratby in the County of Leicester', 1757.

[96] K. Mertes, *The English Noble Household, 1250-1600: Good Governance and Politic Rule* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 139-160.

[97] Assignment of dower to Margaret, who was the wife of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1371, from Calendar of Close Rolls, 1369-1374, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 104.

[98] Assignment of dower to Margaret, who was the wife of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1371, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 104.

The use of the word 'cloister', usually associated with religious buildings, in the context of a secular manorial complex reflects the ambiguity of spatial divisions at Groby. The 'great gate towards the south called the chapelsgate' may have been situated at the apparent entrance to the complex indicated on the 1757 map. The 'memory' of that gateway may be preserved today in the location and shape of the entrance to the grounds of the nineteenth-century Groby parish church (fig. 6.8). An historic building survey of Groby Old Hall, completed in 2009, suggests that some elements of the chapel still survive in a garden wall and part of a former stable (fig. 6.9).[99] The presence of modern debris meant that any potential evidence relating to the chapel was obscured in a ground penetrating radar survey carried out in 2011.[100] However, the apparent centrality of the chapel within the manorial complex at Groby reflects the significance of a place of worship at the heart of secular life and the permeability of boundaries between religious and secular space.

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[99]N. Finn, J. Coward and S. Clarke, 'Groby Old Hall, Markfield Road, Groby, Leicestershire: Historic Building Assessment' (2009), p. 2, at
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-416-1/dissemination/pdf/universi1-112723_1.pdf [accessed 12th March 2017].
[100] Wessex Archaeology, 'Groby Old Hall' p. 9.

Figure 6.8 Gateway to Groby Parish Church

Figure 6.9 Possible Site of Medieval Chapel Wall, Groby

Permeability of spatial boundaries in Charnwoods manor houses are also seen in the boundaries of gendered spaces within them. Women may have found privacy in hedged gardens, in inner chambers, or perhaps in one end of the great hall. However, in certain circumstances, for instance if a woman inherited or was granted a manor, or if she held the wardship of a lord who was a minor, a women could preside, very publically, over manorial courts held in that same great hall.[101] At various times over the medieval period women held the lordships of several Charnwood manors. They included Katherine Beaumont who held Beaumanor and part of Shepshed, at the end of the fourteenth century. Manorial courts are recorded in Katherine's name for 1399/1400,[102] they provide further evidence of the complexity of spatial relationships within manorial complexes.

6.4 Settlements

The complex spatial relationships within Charnwoods manor houses extended to Charnwood's settlements. Work by McDonagh and by Jones and Page on settlements in the Yorkshire Wolds and in Whittlewood Forest (Northamptonshire) respectively, has shown that spatial relationships between church, manor house and village can reflect expressions of power and authority.[103] Jones and Page suggest that a linear arrangement of peripheral manor, church and village core may be a reflection of strong lordship. This may be the case in the Charnwood village of Groby which did not have a parish church, but which did have a private chapel within the manorial complex that may have taken the place of a parish church in this sequence.

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[101] See for example BL, Add Ch 26842,View of Framkpledge with Katherine lady de Belle Monte, Wednesday 9th April 1399, rot.5, m.1, recto and dorse. Katherine held the wardship of Henry Beaumont, a minor who had inherited Beaumanor and two thirds of Shepshed on the death of his father in 1396, see M. Tomkins, 'Beaumanor: Manors and Estates' and M. Tompkins, 'Shepshed Manors and Estates', (unpublished drafts, 2016).

[102] M. Tompkins, 'Shepshed Manors and Estates', see BL add Ch 26842,View of Frankpledge with Katherine lady de Belle Monte, Wednesday 9th April 1399, rot.5, m.1, recto and dorse.

[103] McDonagh, 'Manor Houses, Churches and Settlements', p. i; R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval villages in an English Landscape: Beginnings and Ends* (Macclesfield, 2006) pp.196- 200.

Strong lordship, however, can not necessarily be associated with a strong desire for privacy on the part of the lord. Degrees of privacy within medieval settlements might be considered in terms of how 'open' they were. We might consider a village 'closed' if it was owned by a single manor and 'open' if it was divided between two or more.[104] Alternatively, we might consider the 'openness' of a village to be related to the extent of opportunities available there, irrespective of the ownership of the village.[105] We might do this by consideration of the numbers of servile and free peasants living within a settlement or by consideration of degrees of exclusion of the lower orders from manor houses or lordly hunting grounds.[106] However, another way in which we can look at the 'openness' of a settlement is by the way in which spaces within it are arranged.

Doherty's eighteenth-century map of Groby (fig. 6.3) provides some insight into the spatiality and 'openness' of the village in earlier periods.[107] Groby was a nucleated settlement, which seems to have developed in a linear fashion alongside the manorial complex. It was surrounded by open fields. Inhabitants of nucleated settlements, whilst possibly subject to more rigorous seigniorial controls, are said to have experienced a greater sense of community and cohesion than the inhabitants of dispersed settlements.[108] Smith argues that daily activity and movement within a nucleated settlement would have involved regular contact between individuals residing in adjacent houses and working closely together in the open fields. Those living in dispersed

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[104] In these terms, the village of Groby might be described as 'closed' , whilst Shepshed, for much of the later medieval period, might be described as 'open'.
[105] D.A. Hinton, ''Closing' and the Later Middle Ages', *Medieval Archaeology*, 43 (1999), pp. 172-173.
[106] Hinton, ''Closing' and the Later Middle Ages', p. 173.
[107] Enville Collection, Doherty, J., 'An Exact Map of all the inclos'd lands woods and waster together with the parks and Bradgate, Ratby and Leicester common fields in the Manor of Grooby in the parish of Ratby in the County of Leicester', 1757.
[108] S. Smith, 'Houses and Communities: Archaeological Evidence for Variation in Medieval Peasant Experience' in Christopher Dyer and Richard Jones, *Deserted Medieval Villages Revisited* (Hatfield, 2010), pp. 65-68.

settlements, Smith argues, would have had a rather different experience involving more limited contact with others.[109] This is a view recently supported by Mileson in his discussion of 'openness and closure' in medieval villages.[110] In this sense, nucleated settlements like Groby, lying around the edge of the forest, might be described as 'public' spaces contrasting with more 'private', dispersed settlements at the core. Hillier *et al* have proposed a method of syntactic analysis which looks at spatial relationships within a settlement, those between locals and those between locals and outsiders.[111] When considered from this perspective, Doherty's map indicates that Groby developed mainly on the route between Leicester to the south-west and Markfield to the north-east with some development in the direction of Ratby to the west. Whilst all routes through the settlement pass by and through spaces which might have had significance for local inhabitants, it would seem that visitors to medieval Groby would have encountered a very 'open' settlement which brought them directly to the manorial complex on the edge of the village.

At Belton, to the north-west of the study area, a similar openness can be identified, but rather than one in which roads lead to a peripheral manor house, it is one in which roads converged on the centre of the village, on its church and on its market place. The Church of St John the Baptist occupies a particularly commanding position overlooking the site of the medieval market (figs 6.10 and 6.11). The church lies on a raised site to the east of the market place (fig. 6.12). The prominence of its location may be related to the close medieval ties between the settlement and Grace Dieu priory. The earliest parts of the church which stands on the site today date from the fourteenth century,[112]

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[109] Smith, 'Houses and Communities', p. 68.
[110] S. Mileson, 'Openness and Closure in the Later Medieval Village', *Past & Present*, 234, 1 (2017), pp. 3-37.
[111] Bill Hillier, Julienne Hanson and John Peponis, 'Syntactic Analysis of Settlements', *Archaeology and Behaviour*, 3, 3, (1987), p.217.
[112] LRHER, MLE 11325.

however, the church at Belton was appropriated to Grace Dieu Priory sometime before 1270.[113] The close and overlapping relationships between Grace-Dieu and Belton, and between the religious, the secular and the economic, are further highlighted by charters for a market and fair to be held at Belton which were granted to the prioress and convent of Grace Dieu in 1244.[114] Spatial relationships which can be associated with Grace Dieu and with Charnwood's other religious houses are considered in the next section of this chapter.

Figure 6.10 Belton Market Place viewed from the Church

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[113] R.A. McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire' in W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley, eds, *A History of the County of Leicester*, 2 (London, 1954) , pp. 27-28.
[114] Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516, updated 16th December 2013, at http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html [accessed 1st May 2017].

Figure 6.11 Belton Church viewed from the Market Place
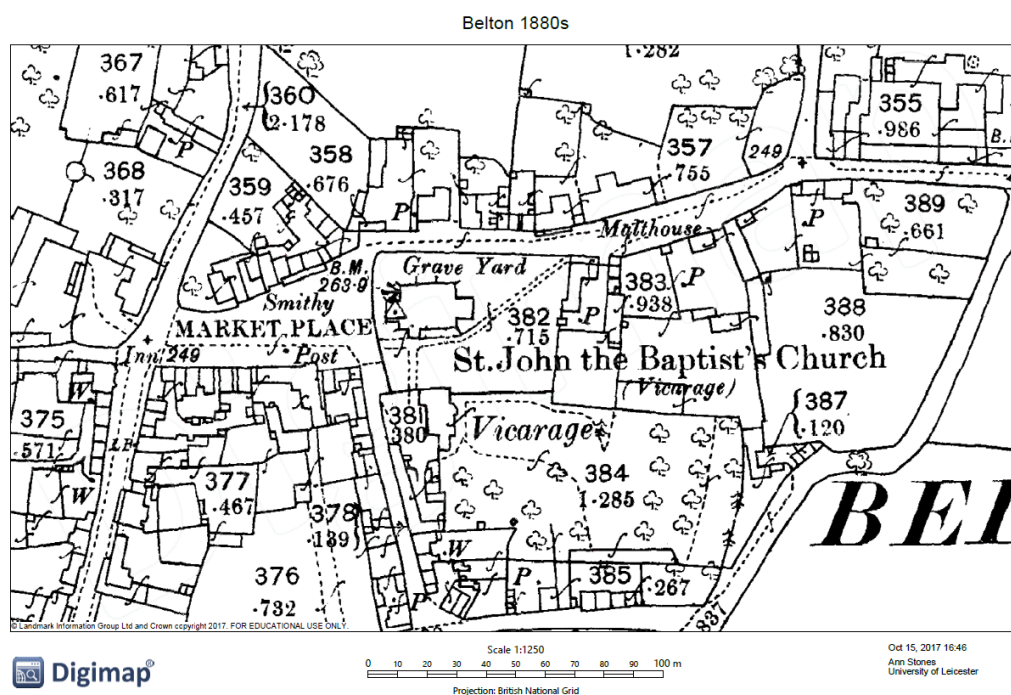
Figure 6.12 Map of Belton, 1880s

Source: Historic digimap at https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed 15th October 2017]. © Crown
Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved (1880).

283

6.5 Religious Houses

Grace Dieu was one of several religious houses in Charnwood which, along with their surrounding lands, were sites of merger between different spatial categories. Those categories include the religious, the secular, the recreational, the economic and the gendered.

Whilst gendered space in Charnwood's manor houses was not always clearly defined, segregation of men and women was far more pronounced in the forest's religious spaces. Charnwood Forest was the location of male religious houses at Charley, Ulverscroft, Aldermans Haw and Garendon, and female religious houses at Grace Dieu and Langley. The correlation and merger between private space, gendered space and religious space was evident at Grace Dieu where nuns were prohibited from leaving the precincts of the priory.[115] It is not at all certain, however, that nuns at Grace Dieu occupied a distinct social space with impermeable boundaries. The confinement of nuns to a particular space did not ensure their complete privacy; this is indicated by a suggestion made in 1441 that the celleress had been 'too familiar' with the priory's chaplain. [116] It would seem that, even within the gendered domains of a nunnery, boundaries of several sorts may have been transgressed!

The term 'transgression' implies a sense of firm boundaries being crossed. However, this was not true of all spatial divisions associated with Charnwood's religious houses. The divisions between religious and secular space were particularly ambiguous. The spaces occupied by religious houses were often gifts bestowed by Charnwood's secular lords. Whilst Charnwood's soils are relatively poor compared to the rest of

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[115] McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire', p. 27.
[116] McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire', pp. 27-28.

Leicestershire, some of the forest's better soils are found at the sites of religious houses. Whilst the soil fertility in much of the forest is described as 'low', the fertility of the soils around Charley and Ulverscroft are described as 'moderate', and that around Langley, Rothley, Garendon and Grace Dieu is described as 'moderate to high'.[117] These are modern assessments of fertility which we cannot assume would have been made in the medieval period, nevertheless, the fact that secular lords were willing to give up these holdings indicates the value which secular lords placed on the establishment, endowment and patronage of religious houses.

Documentary records provide many examples of grants of land by local lords to religious houses. In 1306, John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, sought permission to grant 100 acres (40.5 hectares) of waste in the manors of Shepshed and Whitwick to the priory of Grace Dieu for the purposes of enclosure and improvement.[118] Similarly, in 1307, William de Ferrers was given licence to 'alienate in mortmain' 67 acres (27 hectares) of waste in the manor of Groby to the priory of Ulverscroft.[119] William de Ferrers also granted land to the prior and canons of Charley. Groby court rolls of 1316-17 reveal details of the grant:

> In increase of their court outside the wall by the sheepfold, in width of 5 acres and in length from Birchewod down to le Blakebrok according to the said measurement, and outside le Blakebrok towards Charleyston in Kalange 50 perches in length, each of which contains in itself 25 feet, and in width from the waste of Sir Robert Holand as far as the waste of Barrow, and all the land by us formally given to them. To have and to hold inclosed.[120]

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[117] Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, 'Soilscapes', at http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ [accessed 21st November, 2017].

[118] TNA, C 143/60/13, *Inq ad quod Dampnum* John Comyn to Gracedieu 34 Edw I [1306].

[119] Licence for the alienation in mortmain by William de Ferrariis to the prior and convent of Ulverscroft, 1307 in *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, AD 1301-1307* (London, 1898), p. 534.

[120] Groby Court Rolls, 1316-17, transcribed and translated by G.F. Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes, with further evidences concerning Charnwood and the surrounding villages*, V1 (Leicester,1933) p. 360.

This document, transcribed by Farnham in the 1930s, is interesting for several reasons. It seems to refer to two separate areas of land, one on either side of Blakebrook. It provides measurements including, somewhat bizarrely, and perhaps by error, linear distance measured in 'acres'. Re-examination of the original document confirms the accuracy of Farnham's transcription. The document also utilises landscape features as sources of reference for the boundaries of the lands granted. These include a brook (Blakebrok), the settlement of Charleyston and woodland (Birchwod and Kalange).

Whyte has highlighted 'recurrent connections' between sites of religious houses and particular environments broadly defined as 'the remote, the marginal and the liminal'.[121] However, she suggests that, in Norfolk, such sites were integrated into a 'wider topography' and were part of 'everyday life'. An analogy can be made with sites of religious houses in medieval Charnwood Forest. Charnwood's religious houses were all, to various degrees, 'remote', often lay on manorial boundaries, and were situated within the forest, itself a topographical boundary. However, they were also located within a utilised landscape, one which was exploited for its woodland and pasture by surrounding communities. Although medieval Charnwood Forest was largely devoid of settlements, it was crisscrossed by a network of routes and tracks which not only facilitated utilisation of forest resources, but also brought together 'the religious' and 'the secular'. The necessary movement through the landscape associated with everyday life made religious spaces familiar spaces. Sometimes that familiarity involved the need to avoid religious spaces, for example when driving animals around the edges of monastic enclosures.[122] In such instances, everyday life may have reinforced notions of secular and religious spatiality. This does not mean that monastic enclosures were

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[121] Whyte, *Inhabiting the Landscape*, p. 25-26.
[122] See for example ROLLR, DE40/29 'Evidencie tangents Charnwood et alliis',1275-1350, transcribed in Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 367, this perambulation appears to be a route around unenclosed areas of forest through which animals could be driven.

regarded as sacred places, any division between the sacred and the mundane was more likely to lie within the actual precinct. Nevertheless, the requirement to avoid monastic enclosures at the core of the forest, particularly as they were amongst the earliest forms of enclosure there, would have highlighted the ecclesiastical ownership of those spaces. In other instances however, mundane activities saw the merger of secular and religious topographies.

At Grace Dieu, this was evident in the relationship between the priory and the local community. As discussed in chapter 2, there was considerable economic interaction between Grace Dieu and surrounding communities in the form of the buying and selling of goods, the renting of land and the hiring of labour. Priory account rolls, for example, suggest that 'reapers' of nearby Belton carried out 'boon work' on priory lands during harvest time.[123] Charnwood's religious houses played a significant role in local and wider economies thereby facilitating a degree of permeability in the boundaries between religious and secular space. There was a significant wool industry based at Garendon Abbey with export of wool from the abbey to Flanders recorded in 1225.[124] Furthermore, Charnwood's religious houses established a number of agricultural granges in and beyond the forest.[125] Merril Grange lay to the north of Belton and belonged to Grace Dieu Priory. The priory account rolls of 1414-18 reveal numerous items relating to employment of local labour at Merril. They include items relating to general repairs, the threshing of grain, and the cultivation of peas.[126] The accounts also record that tenants at Diseworth were paid in ale for their efforts in the sowing of barley at Merril.

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[123] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory Leicestershire, 1414-1418: The Draft Account Book of the Treasuresses* (Ashby-de-la-Zouche, 2013) f. 16.
[124] McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire', p. 5.
[125] P. Courtney, 'The Monastic Granges of Leicestershire', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 56 (1980-81) pp. 33, 36, 43.
[126] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory Leicestershire, 1414-1418*, ff. 49, 55, 69, 79.

> Likewise paid for [20 gallons] of ale bought for the tenants of Dyseworth helping the lady at Mererhyll in the time of the sowing of barley   1*s*. 8*d*.[127]

Such employment, and the rewards for it, brought local people into the secular and economic spheres of Charnwood's religious establishments.

A particularly fine example of the merger of religious and secular space in Charnwood can be found in surviving medieval floor tiles in the ruins of Ulverscroft Priory. Today, exposure to the elements has resulted in the deterioration of many of the tiles. Fortunately, in the 1930s, the priory and the tiles were surveyed in some detail by William Keay (fig. 6.13).
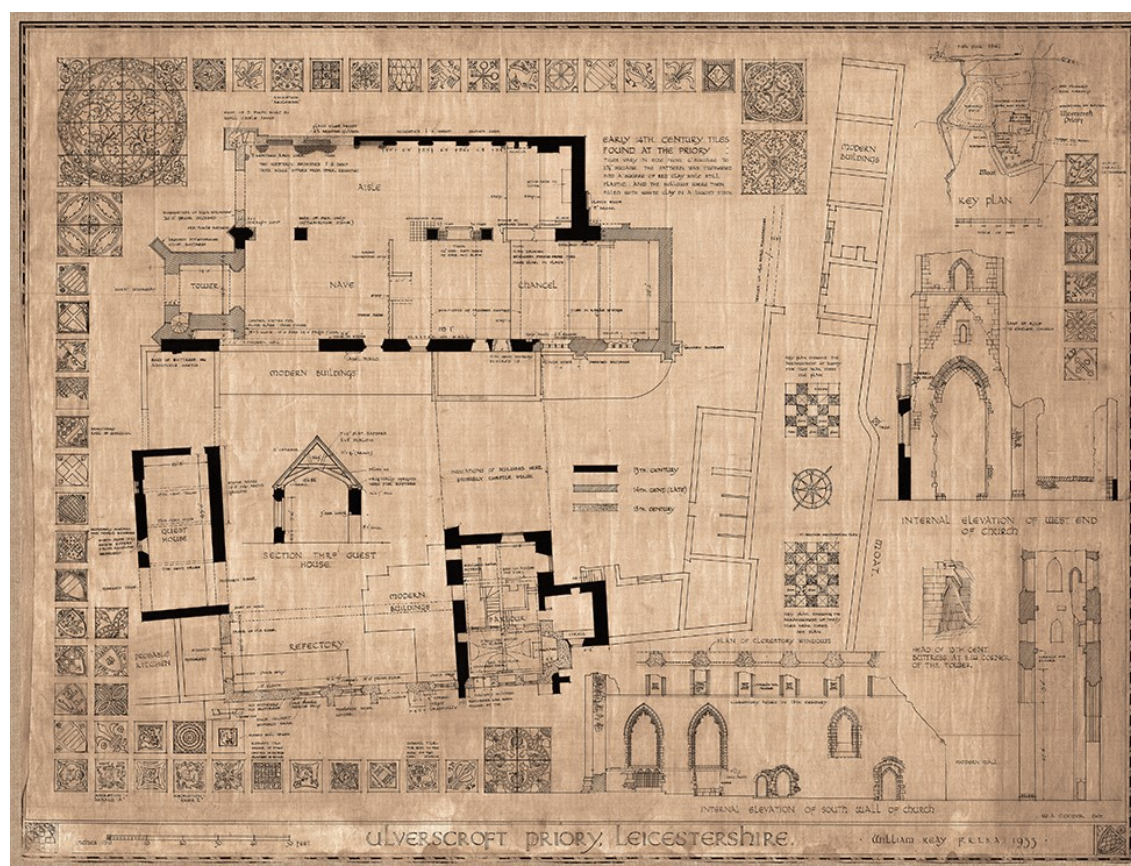
Figure 6.13 Keay's Plan of Ulverscroft Priory, Including Sketches of Floor Tiles

Source: W. Keay, diagram of Ulverscroft tiles in W. Keay and M. Keay, 'Ulverscroft Priory', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 18 (1933-4),p. 93. Originals of Keay's drawings are held by Pick Everard, Leicester. Reproduced with permission of Richard Buckley and Pick Everard.

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[127] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory Leicestershire, 1414-1418,* f. 99v.

Descriptions and provenance of the tiles are also provided in Whitcomb's 1956 work on Leicestershire's medieval floor tiles.[128] Many of the Ulverscroft floor tiles are preserved and/or catalogued by the British Museum.[129] The analysis of the tiles carried out by Keays, Whitcomb and the British Museum is however, largely concerned with manufacturing processes and/or very basic descriptions of the images. Whilst there is some consideration of the heraldry depicted on the tiles, there is little analysis of other forms of symbolism and the relationship between religious and secular space. The Ulverscroft floor tiles appear to be individually designed and to reveal a mix of secular and religious images. Most of the designs are not, however unique to Ulverscroft and appear in other religious buildings in Leicestershire such as Leicester Abbey and Belvoir Priory.[130] Within Charnwood Forest they have been found in the chapel of Bradgate House and the church at Whitwick.[131] Amongst the religious images depicted on the Ulverscroft tiles are the crossed keys - symbols of St Peter (fig.6.14).[132] There are also several tiles bearing the image of a *fleur de lis*, an image often associated with the French royal family but adopted by the Catholic Church in the medieval period as an image of purity and of the Virgin Mary. [133] This may be particularly significant for the church at Ulverscroft Priory which was dedicated to St Mary. Other tiles at Ulverscroft that can be described as religious in nature are the zodiacal tiles (fig. 6.15).

Tiles which can be described as secular in nature include alphabet tiles (fig. 6.16) and those bearing personal names such as 'Emma E' and 'Gerald A'(figs 6.17 and 6.18); it

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[128] N.R. Whitcomb, *The Medieval Floor Tiles of Leicestershire*, (Leicester, 1956).
[129] The British Museum, 'Collection Online' at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx?searchText=tile+ulverscroft+priory&images=true&page=1 [accessed 10th March 2017]
[130] Whitcomb, *The Medieval Floor Tiles of Leicestershire*, pp. 45, 46, 56, 57, 62, 63, – these are just some of many examples.
[131] Whitcomb, *The Medieval Floor Tiles of Leicestershire*, pp. 41, 42, 43, 44.
[132] P. Murray and L. Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (Oxford, 1998), pp.537-538.
[133] Murray and Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, p. 276.

has not, however, been possible to identify these individuals as local inhabitants of Charnwood. One tile depicts the name 'Redlington' (fig. 6.19). It is unclear whether this is a personal name or a place name, although it may possibly be a corruption of the name of a John Ruydyngton who was elected prior at Ulverscroft in 1387.[134] Other secular tiles depict images associated with the flora and fauna of Charnwood such as butterflies, oak leaves, acorns and stags (fig. 6.20). Some apparently secular images may, however, have been imbued with religious significance. For example, the stag could also be a symbol of Christ and/or a Gentile convert to Christianity, whilst the image of a butterfly may not have been a simple representation of local fauna but also a symbol of the resurrection.[135] Many of the tiles which can be described as 'secular' are the heraldic tiles. These include the coat of arms of England, the coat of arms of Lancaster, and the coat of arms of the Ferrers, lords of Groby (fig. 6.21). The presence of the Lancaster coat of arms on floor tiles at Ulverscroft reflects links between the forest and the town of Leicester, parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster for much of the later medieval period. The Ferrers coat of arms is the one which appears most frequently at Ulverscroft, and the lords of Groby, as we have seen, were major benefactors of the priory. Keay recorded several tiles bearing the Ferrers' coat of arms in two areas on either side of a tomb situated on the north side of the nave of the church. This may be the tomb of William, third lord Ferrers of Groby, who, in accordance with his will, was buried at Ulverscroft.[136] Fig. 6.22 is a diagram representing the location of the 'Ferrers' tiles in relation to other tiles in the same area. Many of the other tiles bear images of the grotesque (figs. 6.23 and 6.24), perhaps intended to protect the soul(s) of the departed from evil spirits or from the devil. Such tiles are, however, interspersed with the more

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[134] McKinley, 'The Religious Houses of Leicestershire', p. 21. A record of 'John Rudyngton, the prior of Ulverscroft' also appears in De Banco Roll 538, 1395, m. 8d, transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 120.
[135] Murray and Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, pp. 69, 225.
[136] W. Keay and M. Keay, 'Ulverscroft Priory', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 18, (1933-4) p. 89.

benign images of the Charnwood landscape. The Ulverscroft floor tiles represent not only a fine and rather beautiful example of the overlap between religious and secular space in medieval Charnwood, they also convey contemporary perceptions of continuities between 'this life and the next'.
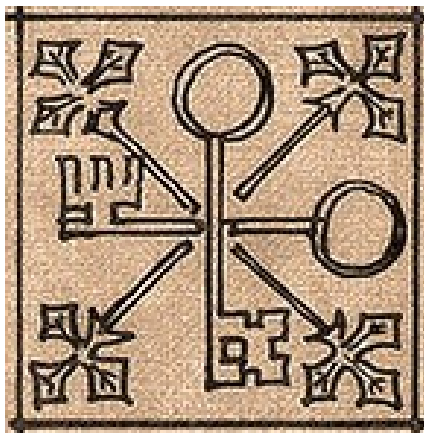
Figure 6.14 Tile: Keys of St Peter

Figure 6.15 Tile: Zodiac
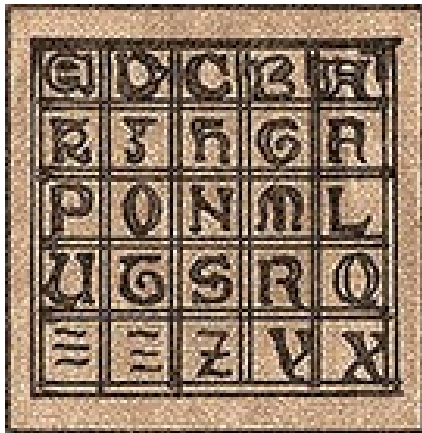
Figure 6.16 Tile: Alphabet

Figure 6.17 Tile: Emma

Figure 6.18 Tile: Gerald
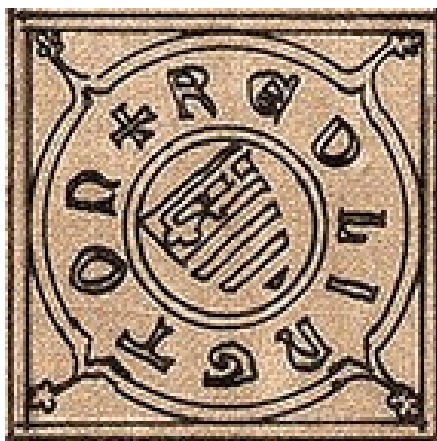
Figure 6.19 Tile: Redlington

Figure 6.20 Tile: Stag
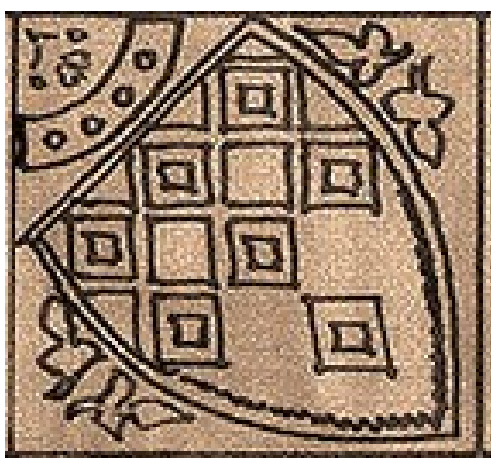
Figure 6.21 Tile: Ferrers Coat of Arms
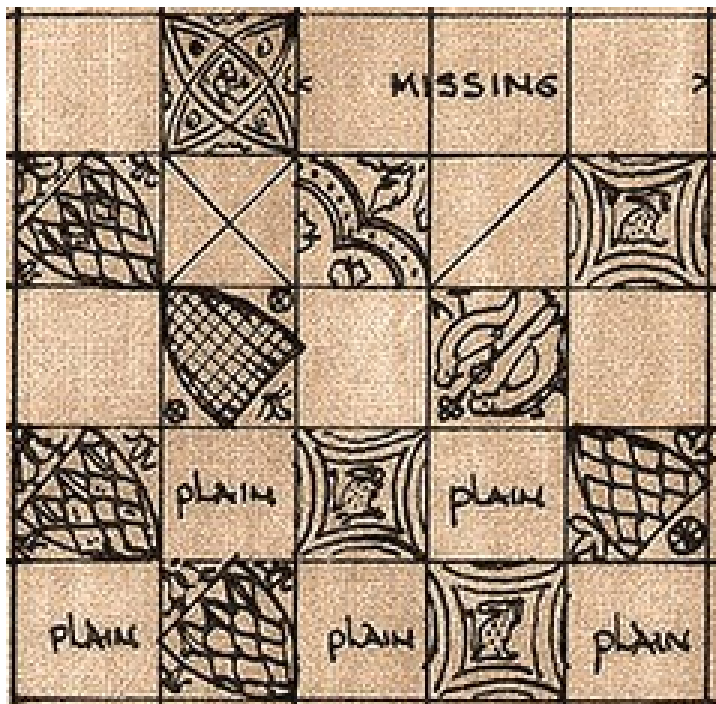
Figure 6.22 Arrangement of 'Ferrers' and Other Tiles

Figure 6.23 Tile: Grotesque (a)

Figure 6.24 Tile: Grotesque (b)

Source for figs 6.9 to 6.19 W. Keays, diagram of Ulverscroft tiles in W. Keay and M. Keay, 'Ulverscroft Priory', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 18, p. 93. Reproduced with permission of Richard Buckley and Pick Everard.

6.6 Deer Parks

Charnwood's religious houses were evidently sites of a great deal of spatial overlap. Some of those overlaps may have existed in the spaces occupied by the deer parks associated with one of those houses, Grace Dieu Priory. These include overlaps between perceptions of religious, economic and recreational space. However such a merger of spatialities would only have occurred if those parks were not only owned by Grace Dieu, but were also economically productive and the sites of recreational activity such as hunting. It is by no means clear that this was the case. Squires has identified two deer parks at Grace Dieu. He suggests that one, Belton Park, lay to the north of Belton close to the site of Merril Grange and that the other, Grace Dieu Park, lay close to the priory itself. [137] Squires cites documentary evidence utilised by the nineteenth-century

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[137] A.E. Squires, 'The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood* (Wymondham, 1986), pp. 144-148.

commentator Potter to support the notion that Grace Dieu Park was established *c.*
1306.[138] However, the documentary evidence concerned may have been misinterpreted
by Potter. It is likely that it is the document relating to the grant of land by John Comyn,
earl of Buchan, discussed above.[139] In the document, the earl sought permission to grant
lands in the wastes of Shepshed and Whitwick to Grace Dieu for the purposes of
improvement. The improvements mentioned in the document included 'enclosure' and
'hedging', but not, as stated by Potter and cited by Squires, to 'make a park there upon'.
Nonetheless, 'Grace Dieu Park' does appear in Wylde's 1754 plan of Charnwood and
field names bearing the element 'park' appear in a rental of 1777.[140] Furthermore,
Squires has identified possible physical evidence of a short length of park pale to the
south-east of the priory.[141] He suggests that the pale extended along a line consistent
with the field boundaries of fields containing the element 'park' in the 1777 rental
(fig.6.25).[142]

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[138] Squires, 'The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', p. 144, citing T.R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest* (London, 1842), p. 172.
[139] TNA, C 143/60/13, *Inq ad quod Dampnum* John Comyn to Gracedieu, 1306.
[140] Squires, The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', p. 146.
[141] See chapter 4.
[142] Squires, 'The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', p.146.
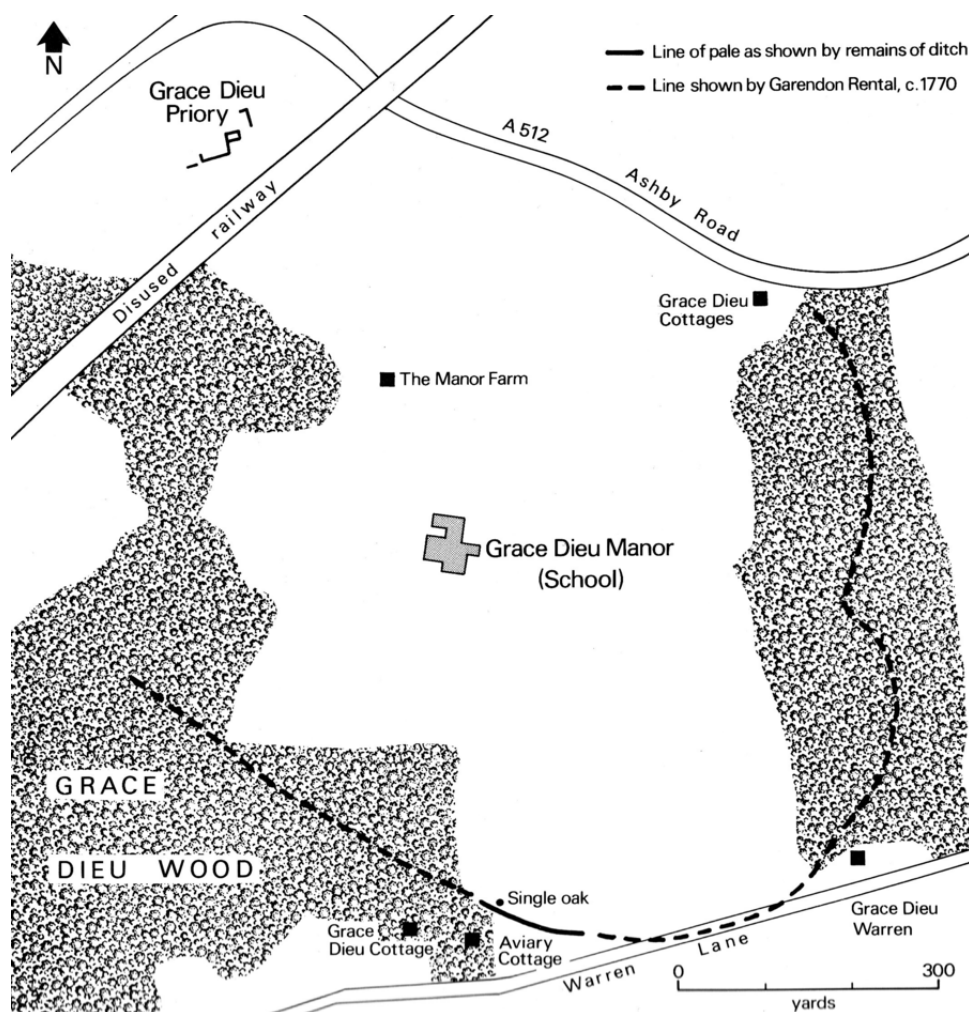
Figure 6.25 Squires' Map of Conjectured Bounds of Grace Dieu Park

Source: A.E. Squires, 'The Parks of Belton and Grace Dieu', A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood* (Wymondham, 1986), p.145. Reproduced with permission of Anthony Squires.

The feature identified by Squires, although not the conjectured extension of it, corresponds to modern parish boundaries. This indicates that the feature was the pale of an early park, one possibly created before the land was granted to the priory.[143] There is, however, no similar physical evidence of the existence of a park at Belton. Whilst Squires devotes considerable attention to the existence and possible location of the parks associated with Grace Dieu, he gives little consideration to the nature or function of either space. These particular parks may not have been recreational spaces at all

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[143] Liddiard has suggested that where such banks are followed by a parish boundary, it is an indicator of an early park, R. Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book', *Landscapes*, 4, 1 (2003), p. 19.

during the period in which they were associated with the priory. As we know, the nuns at Grace Dieu were forbidden to leave the confines of the priory and were unlikely to have been involved in hunting. It would seem particularly improbable that a hunting park would have specifically created for the nuns. Grace Dieu's parks may then have merely been 'deer farms'. There is no mention, however, in the 1414-18 priory accounts, of deer, their upkeep, or of the maintenance of either park. The only mention of a park in the accounts is to 'the sale of established wood in the park of Myrihyll'.[144] The 'park of Myrihyll' may be that referred to as Belton Park by Squires. This park may also have pre-dated the foundation of the priory as indicated by specific mention of 'the park' in the charter of its founder, Roesia de Verdun, granting the manor of Belton to Grace Dieu in 1242.[145] It would seem however, that by 1414-18, Belton Park had lost any 'recreational status' it may once have held and to have become an economic space, one that may have been devoid of deer.

Whilst Grace Dieu's parks may simply have been 'economic spaces', the parks associated with Charnwood's secular lords do seem to have enjoyed a mix of recreational and economic activity and also to have represented some overlaps between elite, peasant, private and public space. Such overlaps are seen in a moated site at Bradgate Park, in the manor of Groby. This particular site has recently been excavated as part of a five-year field study of the park currently being carried out by the University of Leicester. The former presence of a 'base-cruck' frame building within the moated site is indicated by the discovery of regularly spaced padstones which are presumed to have supported large timber posts. It is thought that the building included

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[144] Grace Dieu Priory Trust, *Grace Dieu Priory: 1414-18*, f. 62v.
[145] Charter cited by Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, II (1804; Wakefield, 1971), p. 651. See also Latin text of the charter in R. Dodsworth and W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum, sive, Pandectæ coenobiorum Benedictinorum, Cluniacensium, Cisterciensium, Carthusianorum a primordiis ad eorum usque dissolutionem* (London, 1665), p. 933.

an open hall, one in which a degree of privacy, and/or an opportunity to express power

and status, may have been provided by a private chamber, or parlour, at the high end.[146]

Divisions between recreational and economic space within Charnwood's parks may

have been marked by shifts in emphasis between the two over time. Furthermore, the

types of recreational and economic activity involved could vary from park to park or

even within a park. Recreation could take the form of hunting or, towards the end of the

period, the more aesthetic pleasures of the 'amenity' park. Economic activity could take

the form of cultivation of crops, the agistment of animals, pannage of pigs, and sale of

wood and timber. Commentators have drawn different, sometimes conflicting,

conclusions about the nature of England's medieval parks. Kirkland distinguishes

between pre- and post-Conquest parks suggesting that the former were purely

recreational hunting spaces but that the latter were also important economic spaces.[147]

Liddiard qualifies this view somewhat by suggesting that a shift in deer management in

the twelfth century, with the introduction of fallow deer and new hunting rituals,

brought about a swath of emparkment for hunting purposes.[148] Cantor, however,

suggests that medieval deer parks were an important part of the manorial economy, but

highlights the costs of their maintenance. He suggests that shortage of labour meant

that, by the middle of the fourteenth century, many hunting parks had been leased

out.[149] Cantor goes on to say that any new parks created after this were most likely to be

'amenity parks', such as the one created in 1475 by lord Hastings at Bagworth, on the

western edge of the present study area.[150] In contrast, Mileson has claimed that few late

medieval parks were solely 'amenity parks' and that game and hunting remained

[146] J. Browning, J. Harvey, R. Thomas, 'Newtown Linford, Bradgate Field School', (unpublished interim report, ULAS, 2016), pages unnumbered.
[147] A. Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley', *Transactions of the LAHS*, 85 (2011), p. 119.
[148] Liddiard, 'The Deer Parks of Domesday Book', p. 20.
[149] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire' *Transactions of the LAHS*, 46 (1970-71), p. 12.
[150] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire', p. 12.

significant activities in such spaces.[151] Mileson has played down the economic

significance of parks; he highlights the elite nature of late medieval deer parks,

suggesting that they were primarily status symbols where any economic exploitation

was a 'secondary concern'.[152] It is possible however, that medieval Charnwood Forest

was one of the few 'favoured regions' described by Mileson in which profits could be

made from parks and in which the divisions between recreational and economic space

were blurred.

Oakley Wood, to the north of the study area, may have been one of the spaces within

medieval Charnwood where such overlaps occurred. Cartographical and documentary

evidence considered above in Chapter 4 indicates that the wood was part of the

medieval Shepshed Park. However, there is also evidence suggesting that Oakley Wood

came to be a commercially exploited space. Although the extant document is partly

illegible, 1396 Shepshed account rolls do seem to record a considerable amount of

economic activity at Oakley,

> from 20 folds *clat'*[153] sold at *Okeley* this year at 3s. 1[illeg] per fold. And 34s.
> 6d. from 11 folds *clat'* and a half sold there this year at 3s. per fold. And [illeg]
> xv s. from 7 folds and a half sold there this year at 2s. per fold. And from £13
> from ?x 2000 faggots sold there at 2s. per thousand. And 22s. from 11 folds sold
> this year at 2s. per fold…[and] ?57?s. [quite illeg] 11d from 23 folds sold this
> year to John de Burton at 2s. 1d. per fold.[154]

It is possible, however, that the nature of this space had changed over time, that

recreational activities and large scale economic activities never occurred simultaneously

at Oakley, but that economic activities replaced those of earlier recreational hunting.

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[151] S.A. Mileson, 'The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society' in L.Clarke, ed., *The Fifteenth Century, V, of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 25.
[152] Mileson, 'The Importance of Parks in Fifteenth-Century Society', p. 33.
[153] *Clat* – possibly *cleta* = hurdles, J. L. Fisher, *A Medieval Farming Glossary of Latin and English Words* (Chelmsford, 1997), p. 10. However, R. Jones, personal comment, has suggested that *clat*, in Scottish dialect, and possibly others, means dung, and this might fit with something being taken from a fold.
[154] BL, Add Ch 13604, Account Roll, Shepshed, 1396.

In the east of the study area however, recreational activity and economic activity may have occurred simultaneously. It has been suggested that here, the parks of Loughborough, Beaumanor and Burley may have represented separate areas of one larger park which had been divided for specific recreational and economic purposes.[155] Similarly, to the south of the study area, the evidence suggests that there was a degree of concurrent recreational and economic activity in two parks associated with the manor of Groby, Groby Park and Bradgate Park. This is revealed in a number of documents including inquisition *post-mortems* of 1288, 1325, and 1388, and account rolls of 1512.[156] These documents considered here place an economic valuation on such things as pasture, agistment, pannage and underwood in the two parks as shown in table 6.2. It would seem that the economic values attached to the two parks were somewhat lower in the fourteenth century than in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. This may be related to the more general fourteenth-century economic and population decline mentioned by Cantor.[157] We should be cautious about drawing firm conclusions about fluctuations which were based on valuations made at different times by different people and for different purposes. The reliability of valuations made for I*PMs* are a particular cause for concern because historians often find them to be subject to undervaluation, estimation and guesswork.[158]

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[155] Kirkland, 'The Medieval Parks of Beaumanor, Loughborough and Burley' pp. 110, 118. Kirkland's work is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 of this thesis.
[156] I*PM* of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1288, translated and described by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 100.
TNA, C 134/90/8, I*PM* William de Ferrers, 1325
TNA, C 136/50/1, I*PM* Henry de Ferrers, 1388, mm. 5-6
Accounts of Ralph Fox, palemaker of the park at Groby and Richard Kenersley, perambulator of the park of Bradgate, 1512, translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors*, p. 113.
[157] Cantor, 'The Medieval Parks of Leicestershire' p. 12.
[158] See for example, C. Dyer, 'The Value of Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions *Post-Mortem* for Economic and Social History' in M. Hicks, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post-Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge,2012) pp 97-115; M. Holford, ''Notoriously Unreliable':The Valuations and Extents' in M. Hicks, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post-Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge,2012), pp. 117-144.

Document	Entries relating to Groby Park(s)	Entries relating to Bradgate Park
BL *IPM* of William de Ferrers, 1288	• a park at Groby with pasture and pannage is worth 66*s*. 8*d*. yearly and the underwood, worth 40*s*. yearly	• A certain park at Bradgate with herbage, pannage and pasture and underwood worth 40s yearly.
IPM of William de Ferrers, 1325 (this document is partly illegible)	• 2 Small parks, of which the underwood ……but in one park the agistment is worth yearly 3*s*. 4*d*. and in the other nil …. worth nil yearly, because it was ?broken and ?destroyed the year before.	(Bradgate not specifically mentioned – likely to be one of the '2 parks' recorded for Groby.)
IPM of Henry de Ferrers, 1388	• 2 parks of which the herbage and agistment are worth yearly, beyond the sustenance of the game, 30*s*.	(Bradgate not specifically mentioned – likely to be one of the '2 parks' recorded for Groby.)
Accounts of Ralph Fox, palemaker of the park at Groby and Richard Kenersley, perambulator of the park of Bradgate, 1512	• 33*s*. 8*d*. of agistment of the animals within the park • 10*s*. and 10 ½ *d*. pannage of pigs within said park	• 60*s*. 8*d*. agistment of the animals within the park

Table 6.2 Values of Pasture, Agistment, Pannage and Underwood at the Groby Parks, 1288, 1325, 1388 and 1512.

Source: *IPM* of William de Ferrers of Groby, 1288, translated and described by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, It's Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930)p. 100; TNA, C 134/90/8, *IPM* William de Ferrers, 1325; TNA, C 136/50/1, *IPM* Henry de Ferrers, 1388, mm. 5-6; Accounts of Ralph Fox, palemaker of the park at Groby and Richard Kenersley, perambulator of the park of Bradgate, 1512, translated and transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, It's Historians and the Charnwood Manors* (Leicester, 1930) p. 113.

Nevertheless, all of the sources considered here indicate that there was an economic element to the recreational spaces of the Groby parks. The 1388 inquisition *post-mortem* is particularly useful in that it highlights the value of herbage and agistment 'beyond the sustenance of the game'. This entry, whilst apparently prioritising the requirements of deer and the hunt, does draw attention to the economic activities of the park which seem to have occurred alongside it.A hundred years earlier, the inquisition *post-mortem* of William de Ferrers of Groby taken in 1288, had indicated that deer parks were as much working spaces for the non-elite classes of Charnwood society as they were recreational hunting spaces for the elite. It stated that

> customers will reap, lift and carry the hay of the lord from 15 acres in the park of Groby, these works being worth 6*s*. 8*d*.[159]

Such evidence again highlights the subjective nature of sense of place and perceptions of spatial boundaries. Recreational activity by the non-elite in Charnwood's parks is likely to have been limited. Hunting by the non-elite in the parks of Charnwood was often associated with trespass and poaching. However, it seems unlikely that such activity was carried out for recreational purposes and more likely that perpetrators were motivated by the prospect of illicit economic advantage, or by the simple need to secure a food supply.

Deer were protected from the attentions of poachers in the 1240 agreement regarding the wood 'del Chalenge' (wood of Challenge) between the Earl of Arundle and Earl of Winchester. The agreement stated that foresters of the Earl of Arundle were allowed to 'guard' the woods with

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[159] I*PM* William de Ferrers of Groby, 1288, transcribed by Farnham*, Charnwood Forest, Historians and Manors,* p. 100.

bows, arrows *genderez*, darts and shafts without the arrow being barbed, so , nevertheless, that the foresters, whoever they shall be, shall come every year within the octaves of Saint Michael to the ford at the park at the summons of the said Earl of Winchester and of his heirs or their bailiffs of Groby, and swear that they will faithfully keep the venison and all other things which appertain to the forest.[160]

Despite such precautions, however, well-organised and coordinated cases of poaching sometimes occurred. In 1289 a number of individuals, including the parsons of several churches, were accused by John Comyn, lord of the manor of Whitwick, of 'breaking his park' where

with swords, sticks, bows and arrows, they hunted 15 stags and does and took and carried away other goods and chattels in his said manor within his park, to wit £20 in pennies and gold and silver utensils of his house, brooches and rings, bread and ale and cheese to the value of £20.[161]

In this case defendants were not only accused of trespass into a park for the purposes of poaching, but also for the theft of other items. There are records of similar illicit incursions into the parks of Charnwood. In 1379, for example, six men were accused of breaking the park of Ralph Basset at Budden with 'force of arms' and to have

cut down and carried away oaks, ash, beech, elms, willows and thorns and 20 cartloads of underwood there growing, to his damage of £100.[162]

This document gives some indication of the variety of trees growing at Budden in 1379; it also indicates their economic significance. It would seem then, that the overlap between recreational and economic space in Charnwood's parks could take two forms. It could take the form of legal exploitation of a parks economic resources taking place harmoniously alongside traditional recreational pursuits, or it could take the more adversarial form of trespass, poaching and theft. Poaching was an activity which highlights many spatial overlaps within medieval Charnwood, the recreational, the

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[160] Feet of Fines, Leicester, 1240, transcribed by Farnham, *Medieval Village Notes*, V1, p. 349.
[161] De Banco Roll 80, 1289, m. 120, translated and transcribed Farnham, *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes*, VI, p. 355.
[162] Coram Rege Roll 476, Hilary, 2 Richard II, 1379 m. 66 Leyc.', transcribed by Farnham, *Charnwood Forest, Historians andManors*, p. 56.

economic, the public and the private. It was an activity which continued into the post-medieval period and became so much a part of the culture of the forest that it became embedded in its folk lore. The anonymous 'tale of the hangman's stone' is a long and cautionary tale about the perils of poaching; it recounts the fate of a poacher who slips and catches a deer which he has slung around his shoulders on one of Charnwood's rocks, thereby hanging himself.[163] The origins of this tale are unclear, but it is a morality tale about the perils involved in the illicit crossing of spatial divisions, and such transgressions can be traced to the medieval period.

6.7 Conclusion

In order to understand contemporary perceptions of space in medieval Charnwood, this chapter has focused on four sets of spatial divisions: those between elite and peasant space, between public and private space, between religious and secular space and between economic and recreational space. However, no distinct dichotomies have been identified and all of four sets of divisions were found to be entwined with each other in a complex pattern of overlapping 'cultural circles'.

Whilst both Domesday and later documentary sources make reference to 'lordly spaces', the symbiotic relationship between lord and peasant meant that there could be a high degree of familiarity on the part of lords with 'peasant spaces', and on the part of peasants with 'lordly spaces'. Some 'vertical continuities' and 'shared dispositions' in the spatial understandings of elite and non-elite inhabitants of medieval Charnwood is evident in manorial surveys considered for this study. In such surveys, boundaries were clearly defined in order to reflect the rewards and responsibilities associated with ownership of space by the lord and tenancy of space by the peasant. However, the

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[163] Anon, 'The Tale of the Hangman's Stone', A. J. Lacey, S. Smith, D. Jowett, C. Smith, *A History of Shepshed, 1086 – 1969* (1965, Shepshed, 1969), pp. 9-10.

'sense of place' associated with spaces delineated in the surveys is likely to have been more 'layered', with the lord's perceptions of the nature and character of a particular space being very different to that of the peasant, and those of the free peasant different again to that of the servile peasant. The widespread merger of elite and peasant space in medieval Charnwood was evident in the close proximity of the original manorial complex and peasant holdings at Groby. However, towards the end of the medieval period, the lords of Groby seem to have followed a more general trend for increased social segregation by the construction of a new house, away from the village, at Bradgate. The motivations behind such segregation seem to have been a complex mix of the desires for greater privacy and greater display.

Despite the apparent motivations behind the building of a new house at Bradgate, it would be unwise to make simple correlations between elite and private space on the one hand and peasant and public space on the other. Cases of trespass recorded in Charnwood's manor court rolls feature as many illicit incursions into private peasant space as they do into private elite space, furthermore manor courts themselves were very public events held in 'elite' spaces. Privacy in medieval Charnwood seems to have been a matter of degree. This was evident in spaces considered to be 'waste', traditionally public spaces, but spaces which could only be utilised by those with the right to do so. The evidence from Charnwood suggests that areas of waste were often contested areas. This is indicated by the belief apparently held by the people of Belton that they had rights of common on the waste claimed by Shepshed. This may be an example of 'layering' in perceptions of public and private space. Another might be found in the different perceptions of the inhabitants of, and strangers to, Charnwood's medieval settlements. Such perceptions can be glimpsed through syntactic analysis of settlements. Syntactic analysis suggests that medieval Groby was a fairly public space

which gave visitors direct access to the main gateway of the manorial complex. The gateway, however, seems to have been part of a system of controlled and stratified access to a private space. The lords of Groby were not alone in restricting access to private spaces in medieval Charnwood. Moats, such as that at Beaumanor, clearly defined the boundaries of some private spaces and also regulated access to them. Moats served a variety of functions in medieval Charnwood, most significantly perhaps to display status and preserve privacy. At Beaumanor, archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that the focus was at least as much on the preservation of privacy as it was on public display. However, the site was also the location of manorial courts indicating that Beaumanor was a private space with regulated public access to certain areas. The court at Beaumanor was presided over at certain times in its history by women. This brings into the question any correlation of 'female space' and 'private space'. Such a correlation can be identified in medieval Charnwood but only to a limited extent. It was most evident in the gendered segregation of the forest's 'religious spaces'.

Charnwood's 'religious spaces' included churches, chapels and religious houses. The centrality of religious belief in the lives of those who lived and worked in medieval Charnwood is reflected in the particular ambiguity of divisions between religious and secular space. Much of the land occupied by Charnwood's religious houses was granted by secular lords and religious houses played a significant part in the lives of local communities, not least by acting as manorial lords. Religious spaces were sites of the depiction of both religious and secular symbolism, as seen in the floor tiles of Ulverscroft Priory. Secular spaces, such as the manorial complex at Groby, often had a religious building at its core. Religious buildings, such as the church at Belton, dominated the settlements in which they stood. Day-to-day secular life in medieval

Charnwood brought its people into direct contact with religious spaces, either because of the need to circumnavigate them, or in order to work within them, in either case religious spaces were very familiar spaces. Spaces associated with Charnwood's religious houses, including woodland and granges, were also economic spaces where local people were employed and resources were utilised. The evidence suggests that economic spaces exploited by Grace Dieu Priory included two small former deer parks. It seems unlikely, however, that these parks were used as recreational hunting spaces during the time in which they were held by the priory.

In contrast, the deer parks associated with Charnwood's seigniorial lords seem to have been both recreational and economic spaces. Deer parks were clearly bounded by the park pales which sometimes survive today in the modern landscape. The divisions of space within parks, however, are less easy to identify. Such divisions were necessary to organise grazing and protect woodland, and functional compartmentalisation may have been a particular feature of the forest's larger parks. The divisions between economic and recreational space in most of Charnwood's parks remains rather blurred. The evidence gathered from manorial account rolls and court rolls does, however, reveal something of the relationship between the economic and recreational activity in the parks. In many cases that relationship was harmonious and legitimate, in others it was adversarial and illicit. Illicit economic activity in Charnwood's recreational spaces, in the form of 'breaking of parks' and poaching, was also a feature of relationships between public and private space and elite and non-elite space, during the medieval period and beyond.

The evidence considered in this chapter indicates that spatial divisions in medieval Charnwood were fluid, interwoven, overlain, and permeable; they were frequently transgressed and often existed in the mind rather than on the ground. Spatial divisions

were subjective and could change over time. They could change with the time of the agricultural year and with the dates and timings of manorial courts. The evidence also indicates that many of the spatial theories developed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can be applied to medieval Charnwood Forest. However, they must be applied with caution. We can talk about 'spatialities'. We can agree that such spaces were socially constructed. We can see how space was represented. We can identify certain 'vertical continuities', 'horizontal layers' and 'shared dispositions' in medieval perceptions of some of those spaces. And sometimes we can identify the divisions between spaces. However, in many more cases, no clear distinctions can be drawn, the overlaps are too great. Furthermore, the inhabitants of medieval Charnwood Forest lived much of their lives within such overlaps. They simply may not have thought, nor may they have had the need to think, about spatial divisions in the ways in which we think about them today.

Chapter 7   Conclusion: closing the circle

Borders and boundaries carry a certain mystery and fascination. They imply a transition between realms of experience, states of being; they draw an ineffable line between life as lived in one place and life as lived in another.[1]

This thesis ends, as it began, with the thoughts of Kent Ryden on the subject of boundaries. His suggestion that boundaries represent a 'transition between realms of experience' is supported by the research conducted here. However, the notion that boundaries 'draw an ineffable line between life as lived in one place and life as lived in another' is brought into question by the study.

This thesis has taken a very eclectic look at the demarcation of place and space in medieval Charnwood Forest. It has explored the topographic, administrative, cultural and economic bounds and divisions of the forest and findings indicate that, rather than distinct lines, many of Charnwood's medieval boundaries were rather broad and indistinct transitional zones. However, this study has also shown that many of Charnwoods boundaries were permissive or restrictive in nature. This meant that boundaries, and the spaces that they defined, also provided a degree of structure for human activity, interaction and experience within and around the forest. The thesis demonstrates that the study of boundaries is a very appropriate means of exploring relationships between those who inhabited and utilised the forest and between the forest and the wider world. Furthermore, it is a methodology which might be usefully employed in the study of other landscapes.

An interdisciplinary approach has been adopted in the study, one designed to explore the multiplicity of meanings which were attached to the landscape of Charnwood Forest. The study has utilised a wide range of primary sources which, when considered

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[1] K.C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisable Landscape: Folklore, Writing and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1993), p. 1.

alone, yield an incomplete picture. However, considered together they allow us to experience medieval Charnwood in a rather unique way, one in which we can catch a glimpse of the many ways in which forest inhabitants may have conceptualised and appropriated the landscape. Thus, a minor place-name might record a solitary hawthorn bush marking a parish boundary; a floor-tile in a priory might illustrate the merger of religious and secular space; a hedgerow might indicate the presence of ancient woodland; a field boundary might mark the edges of a medieval enclosure; or a manorial court roll might reveal cases of trespass into private space.

As set out in the introduction, the study considered five main research questions.

- Did the landscape of medieval Charnwood itself represent a boundary?

- What were the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest?

- What were the internal boundaries and divisions of medieval Charnwood Forest?

- What was the significance of boundaries for those who inhabited and utilised the medieval Charnwood Forest landscape?

- What was the significance of Charnwood's medieval boundaries in later periods?

This conclusion looks at each of these questions in turn, evaluates the research conducted, and considers the extent to which answers have been found. There is an examination of the contribution that this study makes to current knowledge of medieval Charnwood Forest, consideration of the relevance of this study to the study of other landscapes, and identification of areas for further research.

7.1 Did the landscape of medieval Charnwood Forest itself represent a boundary?

The answer to this question would seem to be 'yes'. Findings indicate that medieval Charnwood Forest was a boundary between settlers from the Soar and Trent valleys, between Mercia and the Danelaw and between later medieval manors. It was a boundary which may have been viewed differently from different sides. This is supported by apparently later settlement to the east of the forest where the topographical contrast with the adjacent Soar Valley is most acute. However, the forest seems to have been a very porous boundary which facilitated, and was facilitated by, cultural interaction. Far from being a marginal landscape, the study highlights the centrality of the forest's role in the life of surrounding communities. Medieval Charnwood was different to surrounding areas in many ways, not only in terms of topography, soil quality and settlement patterns, but also in the number of deer parks and religious houses at its core. However, the forest landscape was exploited by inhabitants of surrounding areas for its wood, timber, rocks, minerals, and pasture. It was a landscape which does not seem to have been regarded as particularly mysterious in the medieval period. The familiarity of those who lived in and around the forest with the forest terrain is indicated by the paucity of supernatural place-names which they bestowed upon the landscape, by the relatively few folk tales which they told about it, and by the large number of tracks and pathways which they took across it.

Whilst these are evidence-based findings, some caution is advised. Findings are based on the author's interpretation of the evidence and it is sometimes possible to draw different conclusions from the same evidence. Some of the evidence, such as Domesday and place-name evidence can be rather imprecise and conclusions drawn, particularly about the chronology of settlement in and around the forest, might be challenged. What

seems incontrovertible, however, is that whilst the medieval forest was different, in terms of its *pays*, to surrounding areas, it was not a particularly marginal landscape. The focus on the marginality of Charnwood's landscape which has featured in much of the literature to date may be related to the romanticism of nineteenth-century commentators and/or to the pre-occupation of more recent historians with settlement patterns and arable capacity.

7.2 What were the external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest?

Medieval Charnwood's external boundaries are seen here to have extended further than the bounds of its unenclosed core and beyond those described in the literature to date. They are shown to have incorporated surrounding settlements via a process of cultural and economic interaction. These boundaries would seem to extend beyond the high rocky areas of the forest interior as far as the River Soar in the east, and the settlements of Ibstock in the west, Ashby and Loughborough in the north and Glenfield in the south. It is a boundary which, particularly to the north and west, extends further than the boundary suggested by places claiming right of common on the forest at the time of nineteenth-century parliamentary enclosure. The bounds do, however, correlate with those described in a medieval perambulation dated 1275 -1350 and with a later 1754 perambulation of the forest.[2] This study has also shown that the forest's external boundaries can be seen as a series of concentric circles of human activity, surrounding a central core of valuable resources. Whilst there would seem to be a degree of consistency in the outermost of these circles, Charnwood Forest was vulnerable to encroachment on the core. This seems to have been because of Charnwood's status as a

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[2] ROLLR, DE40/29, 'Evidencie tangents Charnewode et alliis', 1275-1350; ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/1, Samual Wylde, Perambulation and plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754.

chase. This study has identified similarities in the external boundaries of Charnwood

Forest and the external boundaries of medieval chases such as Cannock Chase

(Staffordshire) and Ashdown Forest (Sussex). Similarities are evident in the nature of

medieval encroachment and in conflicts associated with rights upon a core.

 Medieval encroachment on the core of Charnwood Forest took the form of

emparkment, assarting and purpresture. There were two foci of encroachment, a

northern one at Oakley Wood, and a southern one at Charley. Both foci of

encroachment enjoyed relationships with surrounding communities which were evident

in the gathering of estovers and licences to pannage and pasture. The settlement of

Shepshed, geographically situated between the two, seems to have had a complex

relationship with both foci of encroachment.

Evidence of encroachment, in the form of extensive medieval emparkment, remains in

the landscape of Charnwood today. It is seen in field boundaries, field names and

remains of park pales. Where landscape evidence is inconclusive, evidence of

emparkment is often found in documentary evidence such as that pertaining to the park

of Shepshed (Oakley Park).[3] This study has not answered all of the questions relating to

the location, nature, purpose, and chronology of emparkment in Charnwood. It has not

been possible, for example, to definitively identify or rule out any pre-Conquest

emparkment of the forest. However, the study has identified some correlation between

early emparkment and manorial wealth. Emparkment in medieval Charnwood Forest

can be associated with increasing identification of individual hunting rights in the later

medieval period. Emparkment was a privatisation process which undoubtedly affected

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[3] ROLLR, DE5742/2, Transcription [Latin] of extracts from inquisitions held at Whitwick, 29 Nov 1280 re tithes of corn and sales of wood; and held at Newtown Linford on 8 Jul 1285 concerning the limits of the parish churches of the Abbot of Leicester. Made *c*.1760.

the amount of common land available. However, it may also have led to the re-emergence of common rights such as pasture and the gathering of estovers as the primary activities at the unenclosed core.

Documentary, cartographical, landscape and place-name evidence reveals that encroachment by assarting and purpresture on Charnwood's core took place from within the forest, at the sites of religious houses, but also from the manors surrounding the forest. Again, they seem to be processes that were facilitated by the forest's chase status. This study has identified a correlation between assarting and post-Conquest population growth and between population reduction and a return to woodland after the Black Death. Population figures across many centuries are difficult to estimate accurately because the documentary evidence is sparse, sometimes inaccurately or inconsistently recorded and often not comparable. This study has, therefore, utilised documentary sources in conjunction with place-name and archaeological evidence to identify patterns of encroachment on and retraction from Charnwood's core. The evidence, whilst difficult to interpret, suggests that greatest encroachment related to population growth in the later medieval period took place to the south and west of the study area and that the greatest return to woodland related to later population loss may have taken place in the north. However, had Charnwood Forest been a truly 'marginal' area we could perhaps have expected an even greater return to woodland and rather more desertion of villages after the Black Death than we actually have. It would seem that occupation of the forest and its surrounding settlements may have persisted in order to continue the exploitation of valued resources.

Assarting and purpresture seem to have been processes primarily associated with the later medieval period. They may, however, have been responsible for an earlier 'corridor' of clearance, formed by the settlements of Ratby, Groby, Glenfield and

Anstey, to the south of the study area. This corridor represents the division between Charnwood Forest and Leicester Forest. Straddling that corridor there appears to be a semi-circular feature which has been identified as a complete entity for the first time during the course of this research. Examination of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photography reveal that previously recorded park pales at Anstey and Ratby and banks at Sheet Hedges Wood, Groby are continuous with, and linked by, field boundaries. Subsequent LiDAR analysis and field survey has yielded mixed results, with some previously unrecorded extant archaeological features and some apparently 'false' features on the circle. Nevertheless, there does seem to be some consistency in the profiles of the extant features. It would seem that the semi-circle is a genuine feature. It is suggested here that the feature may represent the boundaries of an Anglo-Saxon multiple estate based at Ratby, possibly one which utilised the boundaries of an existing prehistoric feature. However, the origins of this feature remain largely a mystery, and further investigation is required.

7.3 What were the internal boundaries and divisions of medieval Charnwood Forest?

The internal divisions of medieval Charnwood Forest are seen here to be administrative divisions, such as manorial and parish boundaries; topographic divisions such as those between woodland and non-woodland areas; and the more nebulous spatial divisions such as those between elite and peasant space, public and private space, religious and secular space and economic and recreational space. This study has considered all of these divisions in an attempt to understand contemporary differentiation of space within the forest.

The findings of this study indicate that early medieval wapentake boundaries in Charnwood Forest were not clearly defined. Domesday and later documentary sources

reveal considerable uncertainties about the jurisdiction of the forest and indicate that the boundary between the wapentake of Guthlaxton and the wapentake of Goscote may have been a broad band which stretched across the forest. This may have been because much of the forest's core was communally utilised 'waste' where no fixed boundary was needed.

Although some of the forest's parish boundaries could have been formed in the early medieval period, they are not recorded in Domesday and records of them do not appear until the later medieval period. The forest's parish boundaries are shown to be intimately entwined with its topographical features. Boundaries were described in terms of the landscape features which they abutted or through which they passed. Those features included roads, hills, rocks, streams and areas of woodland. Such features are important constituents of the 'memory palace', formed by the landscape of Charnwood; the features helped to ensure that information about boundaries was passed from one generation to the next.

Documentary, landscape and place-name evidence reveals a particularly important relationship between later medieval Charnwood's administrative divisions and Charnwood's woodlands. The divisions are shown to form two star-shaped patterns, in which the centre of the stars coincided with the two foci of encroachment described above. Both foci were areas of woodland. Administrative divisions seem to be related to the utilisation of medieval woodland and to the apportionment of woodland resources. Whilst parish boundary patterns in Charnwood are similar to those found in other areas of medieval intercommoning, comparison with other chases and Royal Forests has shown that, unlike the forest's external boundaries, no definite correlation can be made between parish boundary patterns and Charnwood's status as a chase. The study has identified a large degree of correlation between the forest's parish boundaries and its

manorial boundaries, but it has also highlighted inconsistencies between the two, particularly in relation to extra-parochial areas. The later medieval period saw the subdivision of some Charnwood manors and this study looked particularly at the subdivision of the manor of Shepshed. It is clear that the manor of Shepshed was subdivided sometime after 1264 and some of parts of the apportioned lands have been successfully identified in this thesis. However, it has not been possible to precisely define any distinct linear boundary between the two Shepshed manors.

Documentary, landscape and archaeological evidence considered for this study has revealed that many of the forest's more nebulous internal spatial divisions, those between elite and non-elite space, private and public space, religious and secular space and economic and recreational space are not so clearly defined and might be described as a series of overlapping spaces. Those overlaps occurred in the forest's settlements, manorial complexes, deer parks, wastes and religious enclosures. The overlaps were not static and were subject to change. The overlap between elite and peasant space, for example, tended to diminish as social segregation increased towards the end of the medieval period. It is not entirely clear however, whether spatial overlaps reflect contemporary understandings of spatial divisions, contemporary ambivalence about them, or merely the imposition of modern spatial theories onto an unsuspecting medieval landscape.

7.4   What was the significance of boundaries for those who inhabited and utilised the medieval Charnwood Forest landscape?

This thesis has highlighted the ambiguity of the external boundaries of Charnwood Forest. The main significance of that ambiguity is that it facilitated encroachment on the forest. However, encroachment also resulted in the creation and proliferation of internal divisions within the forest, divisions which seem to have become more significant as the

medieval period progressed. This was in line with the gradual privatisation of previously commonly held resources and marked by an increase in the associated documentary record. Those documentary records were generally produced by the elite for elite purposes, but the boundaries described were significant for all sections of society. Whilst the elite were concerned with ownership of land, jurisdiction over it, and revenue from it; peasants were concerned with the boundaries of their allocated living and working spaces and the rights and responsibilities associated with them. Individuals and communities were also affected by the boundaries of areas of waste, woodland, and waterways. These were areas to which access was often limited. This is supported by the plethora of cases of trespass and of illicit transgression 'without license' of such boundaries identified in this thesis.

Many of medieval Charnwood's internal divisions are revealed, by the nature of the documentary record, to have been disputed boundaries. Conflicts arose from the shared nature of the landscape and lack of fixed boundaries in the early medieval period and the increasing demand for woodland resources in the later medieval period. Research conducted for this thesis indicates that Charnwood's woodlands were often contested spaces associated with the edges of medieval manors and parishes. However, woodlands were also foci of encroachment and the meeting points of administrative divisions. The forest's later medieval administrative divisions can, therefore, be seen not only as conflict zones, but also as attempts to resolve such conflicts by an agreed distribution of resources.

Whilst we can ascribe contemporary significance to medieval Charnwood's administrative and topographic divisions, the significance of other spatial divisions are more difficult to interpret. This is partly due to the likely subjectivity of contemporary understandings of such spaces, and partly due to uncertainties over whether 'space' was

319

even thought about in the terms outlined in this study by medieval inhabitants and users of the forest. Despite such concerns, clear divisions, such as the division between public and private space in cases of trespass, and between the sacred and the profane in the architecture of Charnwood's churches, have been identified. However, perhaps of greater significance, and certainly of greater interest, are the many areas of spatial overlap identified in this study. They are significant because they highlight the multiplicity of meanings which may have been attached to the medieval Charnwood landscape. Overlaps are evident in the indistinct divisions between elite and non-elite space within Charnwood manors where the co-dependant nature of the relationship between lord and peasant tended to blur the boundaries; in divisions between public and private space in Charnwood's manorial complexes and moated sites where stratification of access resulted in varying degrees of privacy; in divisions between religious and secular space at the core of the forest where everyday life frequently involved contact with both; and in divisions between recreational and economic space where spaces such as deer parks could serve multiple purposes. Whilst modern theories of space and place can be successfully applied to the medieval period, they can only be done so retrospectively, and it is far from certain that those who inhabited and utilised medieval Charnwood Forest would have recognised spatial divisions in the categorised manner of modern academics. It is likely, however, that they would have had some 'sense' of the places with which they interacted and this study has utilised a number of sources to identify both continuities and discontinuities in sense of place, and in the perceived boundaries of the space that places occupied. Consistency in the recognition of boundaries across all levels of society has been identified, for instance, in manorial surveys. In contrast inconsistencies between different vills have been seen in attitudes towards areas of waste. However, even where boundaries were universally recognised,

they were likely to have been subjectively experienced. For example, whilst the division between elite and peasant space in a great hall were apparent to everybody present, the view of that divide is likely to have depended on which end of the hall an individual was sat.

7.5 What was the significance of Charnwood's medieval boundaries in later periods?

The phrase 'driving across the forest' is one frequently used by modern commuters driving from one side of the forest to the other. The phrase allows the forest to be seen as both a barrier and a bridge, a concept that has been traced in this thesis to the medieval period. Just as in the medieval period, the forest today is a distinct topographical area, but one that both divides and links surrounding communities. Many of the footpaths which crisscross the forest date from the medieval period and illustrate those cultural links. Utilisation of forest resources did not end with the end of the medieval period, and they continue to be utilised today. This is particularly evident in the continued activity in the forest's extractive industries.

Apart from the effects of the dissolution of Charnwood's religious houses, the end of the medieval period saw few immediate or sudden changes in the utilisation of the Charnwood Forest landscape, and many of the forest's medieval boundaries and common rights were respected and recognised into the post-medieval period and beyond. Examination of post-medieval sources has been a significant feature of this study, revealing a great deal about medieval boundaries, associated rights, and their continued importance in the post-medieval period. This study has considered evidence pertaining to medieval boundaries which were called upon in post-medieval land disputes right up until the time of nineteenth-century enclosure. That evidence illustrates the value attached to medieval documentary record but also to local memory

as expressed in the depositions of those who lived in and utilised the forest. Much of that local memory was based on 'knowledge' passed down through the generations. It would seem that there were considerable differences in understandings of Charnwoods's boundaries, differences that also seem to have been passed down through the generations. Differences in post-medieval perceptions of the forest's boundaries have been related in this study to the ambiguities and conflicts associated with medieval boundary disputes. However, whilst Charnwood's medieval boundaries could be sources of tension and conflict, they could also be places of harmony and cultural interaction. The very nature of 'common land' is replete with notions of cooperation and sharing and, despite frequent disagreements, surrounding communities continued to share rights of common on the forest until it became subject to parliamentary enclosure in the nineteenth century. The landscape of Charnwood Forest continues to bring people together today. In 1928 the former medieval deer park of Bradgate was gifted to the city and county of Leicester 'to be preserved in its natural state for the quiet enjoyment of the people of Leicestershire'.[4] It is pleasing to note that Bradgate Park, and the small slice of medieval Charnwood Forest which it preserves, continues to be a landscape shared and enjoyed by surrounding communities.

7.6 Final reflections

This thesis is not, nor was it ever intended to be, the definitive text on medieval Charnwood Forest. It has, however, established some key foci of investigation where useful conclusions can be drawn and highlighted areas where further research is needed. It is needed, for instance, on the origins of the 'Ratby circle', and on the role of Charnwood Forest in the relationship between Mercia and the Danelaw. More detailed analysis of medieval demographic changes is also needed in order to further explore the

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[4] J. Stevenson and A. Squires, *Bradgate Park: Childhood Home of Lady Jane Grey* (Newtown Linford, 1999), p.73.

relationship between demographic changes and the boundaries of the forest's core. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this thesis has made a significant contribution to understandings of the role of boundaries in the relationship between people and place in medieval Charnwood Forest with wider implications for this type of medieval landscape.

As a result of this investigation, the forest can be seen in a rather different light, one in which it is neither marginal nor inhospitable but, instead, a utilised and familiar landscape. Settlement patterns have been re-examined and a chronology and pattern of settlement based on environmental factors proposed. The external boundaries of medieval Charnwood Forest have been shown to extend further than previously suggested and the forest's swanimote courts presented as gateways to the forest's core. Whilst previous studies have identified a focus of medieval encroachment at Charley, this study has identified a second focus at Oakley Wood. A previously unrecorded archaeological feature, described here as 'the Ratby Circle', has been identified and investigated. However, perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that the boundaries of Charnwood forest cannot be defined too narrowly. In many cases, they should be considered not in terms of linear features, but, instead, in terms of spatial units, broad bands or zones with indistinct edges. Hence, the forest itself is revealed to be a boundary; the external bounds of Charnwood Forest are seen not as a distinct line, but as a broad band whose outer edge remained fairly constant but whose inner edge was subject to a great deal of change; one of Charnwood's earliest internal administrative boundaries, that between the wapentakes of Guthlaxton and Gosgote, is seen as a broad band stretching across the forest; and spatial divisions based on degrees of status, privacy, religion, economics and recreation are seen to be overlapping areas of blended experience.

Many similarities have been identified between Charnwood Forest and other medieval chases during the course of this research and it is possible that consideration of boundaries as spatial areas, rather than simply as spatial divisions, is a notion which can be productively investigated in those areas too. This study might, however, be pertinent to a wider research agenda. The concepts considered, and the methodology utilised, in this thesis need not be confined to medieval chases; there seems to be no reason why they could not be successfully applied to other landscapes and other time periods.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Wylde's 1754 Perambulation of Charnwood[1]

Beginning at the Forest Lane next to Beaumanor Park

Woodhouse, Barrow, Quorndon, Wood Thorpe

Round Woodhouse Eaves and Hungerhill Wood to Swithland Field

Swithland, Mountsorrel, Rothley

To north-east corner of Swithland Woods

Newtown, Thurcaston, Cropston, Anstey, Groby, Glenfield, Ratby

To Cropston Gate

Round Bradgate Park

Round Blake Hayes and Stoney Wells north-west

To the Toll house

Markfield

From the Toll House on the road to Leicester

To the corner of Markfield intakes near the Toll House

Round Markfield Knoll

To the bottom of Washpit Lane

To the corner of Washpit Lane under Cliff Hill

To the top of Stoney Lane

To Broad Lane

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[1] ROLLR, DG9/Ma/66/1, S. Wylde, Perambulation and Plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754.

Stanton, Bagworth, Thornton

To Stanton Street

To Battleflat Lane

Hugglescote, Ibstock, Donnington

To Beggary Lane

Bardon Park

To the corner of Bardon Park near Copt Oak

To Judys Lane

Whitwick, Cole-orton, Swanningtom, Ashby-de-la- Zouch

To Judys Corner

To Whitwick Strret

To the dumps

Thrinkston

To Thackers Lane

Gracedieu, Osgathorpe

To north-west corner of Grace-Dieu Park

To lane leading to Osgathorpe

Belton, Diseworth, Long Whatton, Langley

To north—west corner of Belton Long Wood

To the fish pool

Shepshed, Hathern

To Gelders Hall

To Shepshed Nook

Garendon Park

Round the same

Knight Thorpe, Burleigh

To South-west corner of Thorpr Brand

To Loughborough Lane

Loughborough

To Beaumanor Park

Beaumanor Park

Round the same

Circuit

Appendix 2: Charnwood - Domesday Data: Population[2]

To the north of the forest

Shepshed

Villagers (villeins)	36
Smallholders (borders)	16
Freemen (sokemen)	20
Slaves (serfs)	2
TOTAL	**74**

Hathern and Dishley

No population figures

Diseworth

Villagers (villeins)	6
Smallholders (borders)	6
TOTAL	**12**

Totals for the north

Villagers (villeins)	42
Smallholders (borders)	22
Freemen (sokemen)	20
Serfs (slaves)	2
TOTAL	**86**

Averages for the north

Villagers (villeins)	21
Smallholders (borders)	11
Freemen (sokemen)	10
Serfs (slaves)	1
TOTAL	**43**

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[2] Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) except where marked * when data is taken from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1978).

To the north-east of the forest

Thorpe Acre

Villagers (villeins)	16
Smallholders (borders)	8
Freemen (sokemen)	3
TOTAL	**27**

Loughborough

Villagers (villeins)	8
Smallholders (borders)	16
Freemen (sokemen)	15
TOTAL	**39**

Totals for the north-east

Villagers (villeins)	24
Smallholders (borders)	24
Freemen (sokemen)	18
Serfs (slaves)	0
TOTAL	**66**

Averages for the north-east

Villagers (villeins)	12
Smallholders (borders)	12
Freemen (sokemen)	9
Serfs (slaves)	0
TOTAL	**33**

To the east of the forest

Rothley

Villagers (villeins)	29
Smallholders (borders)	18
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Priest	1
TOTAL	**48**

Barrow

Villagers (villeins)	40
Smallholders (borders)	13
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	3 (2 male + 1 female)
TOTAL	**56**

Totals for the east

Villagers (villeins)	69
Smallholders (borders)	31
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	3
Priests	1
TOTAL	**104**

Averages for the east

Villagers (villeins)	34.5
Smallholders	15.5
Freemen	0
Slaves (serfs)	0.5
Priests	1.5
TOTAL	**52**

To the south-east of the forest

Thurcaston

Villagers (villeins)	22
Smallholders (borders)	4
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves	0
TOTAL	**26**

Anstey

Villagers (villeins)	13
Smallholders (borders)	4
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves	4
TOTAL	**21**

Totals for the south-east

Villagers (villeins)	35
Smallholders (borders)	8
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	4
TOTAL	47

Averages for the south-east

Villagers (villeins)	17.5
Smallholders (borders)	4
Freemen	0
Slaves (serfs)	2
TOTAL	**23.5**

To the south of the forest

Glenfield

Villagers (villeins)	3
Smallholders (borders)	2
Freemen (sokemen)	4
Slaves (serfs)	2
Priest	1
TOTAL	**12**

Groby

Villagers (villeins)	10
Smallholders (borders)	5
Freemen (sokemen)	1
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**16**

Ratby

Villagers (villeins)	10
Smallholders (borders)	5
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	1
Priest	1
TOTAL	**17**

Markfield

Villagers (villeins)	0
Smallholders (borders)	2
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**2**

Totals for the South

Villagers (villeins)	23
Smallholders (borders)	14
Freemen (sokemen)	5
Slaves (serfs)	3
Priest	2
TOTAL	**47**

Averages for the south

Villagers (villeins)	5.75
Smallholders (borders)	3.5
Freemen (sokemen)	1.25
Slaves (serfs)	0.75
Priest	0.5
TOTAL	**11.75**

To the south-west of the forest

Ibstock

Villagers (villeins)	0
Smallholders (borders)	11
Freemen (sokemen)	10
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**21**

Bagworth

Villagers (villeins)	24
Smallholders (borders)	7
Freemen (sokemen)	3
Slaves (serfs)	1
TOTAL	**35**

Stanton under Bardon

Villagers (villeins)	13
Smallholders (borders)	5
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**18**

Totals for the south-west

Villagers (villeins)	37
Smallholders (borders)	23
Freemen (sokemen)	13
Slaves (serfs)	1
TOTAL	74

Averages for the south-west

Villagers (villeins)	12.3
Smallholders (borders)	7.6
Freemen (sokemen)	4.3
Slaves (serfs)	0.3
TOTAL	**24.6**

To the west of the forest

Donnington le Heath

Villagers (villeins)	1
Smallholders (borders)	0
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**1**

Whitwick

Villagers (villeins)	0
Smallholders (borders)	1
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**1**

Totals for the west

Villagers (villeins)	1
Smallholders(borders)	1
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**2**

Averages for the west

Villagers (villeins)	0.5
Smallholders (borders)	0.5
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**1**

To the north-west of the forest

Ashby

Villagers (villeins)	18
Smallholders (borders)	4
Freemen (Sokemen)	4
Slaves (serfs)	4
TOTAL	**30**

Coleorton

Villagers (villeins)	3
Smallholders (borders)	3
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**6**

*Thringstone** (in Derbyshire Domesday – no population figures for Thringstone)

Osgathorpe

Villagers (villeins)	3
Smallholders (borders)	5
Freemen (sokemen)	0
Slaves (serfs)	0
TOTAL	**8**

Totals for the north-west

Villagers (villeins)	24
Smallholders (borders)	12
Freemen (sokemen)	4
Slaves (serfs)	4
TOTAL	**44**

Averages for the north-west

Villagers (villeins)	8
Smallholders (borders)	4
Freemen (sokemen)	1.3
Slaves (serfs)	1.3
TOTAL	**14.6**

Average Domesday population figures for Charnwood forest by 'region' of the forest

	North	North-east	East	South-east	South	South-west	West	North-west
Villagers	21	12	34.5	17.5	5.75	12.3	0.5	8
Smallholders	11	12	15.5	4	3.5	7.6	0.5	4
Freemen	10	9	0	0	1.25	4.3	0	1.3
Slaves	1	0	0.5	2	0.75	0.3	0	1.3
Others (e.g priests)	0	0	1.5	0	0.5	0	0	0
Total	**43**	**33**	**52**	**23.5**	**11.75**	**24.6**	**1**	**14.6**

Appendix 3: Charnwood - Domesday Data: Mills[3]

To the north of the forest

Settlement	No. of mills	Valuation of mills
Shepshed	0	
Hathern and Dishley	2	5 *s.*
Diseworth	0	
TOTAL	**2**	**5 *s.***

To the north-east of the forest

Settlement	No. of mills	Valuation of mills
Thorpe Acre	0	
Loughborough	2	10 *s.*
TOTAL	**2**	**10 *s.***

To the east of the forest

Settlement	Number of mills	Valuation of mills
Rothley	1	4 *s.*
Barrow	3	30 *s.*
TOTAL	**4**	**34 *s.***

To the south-east of the forest

Settlement	No. of mills	Valuation of mills
Thurcaston	0	
Anstey	0	
TOTAL	**0**	**nil**

To the south of the forest

Settlement	No. of mills	Valuation of mills
Glenfield	1	16 *d.*
Groby	0	
Ratby	1	28 *d.*
Markfield	0	
TOTAL	**2**	**3 s. 8*d.***

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[3] Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) except where marked * when data is taken from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1978).

To the south-west of the forest

Settlement	Number of mills	Valuation of mills
Ibstock	0	
Bagworth	0	
Stanton under Bardon	0	
TOTAL	**0**	**nil**

To the west

Settlements	No. of mills	Value of mills
Donnington le Heath	0	
Whitwick	0	
TOTAL	**0**	**nil**

To the north-west

Settlement	No. of Mills	Valuation of Mills
Ashby	0	
Thringstone*	0	
Osgathorpe	0	
Coleorton	0	
TOTAL	**0**	**nil**

Appendix 4: Charnwood - Domesday Data: Meadows[4]

To the north of the forest

Settlement	Description of Meadow	Valuation of meadow
Shepshed	50 acres	Not recorded
Hathern and Dishley	10 acres (+ 20?)[5]	Not recorded
Diseworth	none	
TOTAL	**60 – 80 acres**	**Not recorded**

To the north-east of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of meadow
Thorpe Acre	30 acres	Not recorded
Loughborough	45 acres	Not recorded
TOTAL	**75 acres**	**Not recorded**

To the east of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of meadow
Rothley (excluding dependencies)	37 acres	Not recorded
Barrow (excluding dependencies)	0	
TOTAL	37 acres	**Not recorded**

To the south-east of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of meadow
Thurcaston	None given	
Anstey	8 acres	Not recorded
TOTAL	**8 acres**	**Not recorded**

To the south of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of Meadow
Glenfield	8 acres	Not recorded
Groby	None given	
Ratby	None given	
Markfield	None given	
TOTAL	**8 acres**	**Not recorded**

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[4] All data from P. Morgan, *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester 1979), Except for * where data is From *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition.
[5] Multiple entries – unclear extent of meadow.

To the south-west of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of meadow
Ibstock	None given	
Bagworth	None given	
Stanton under Bardon	None given	
TOTAL	**0**	

To the west of the forest

Settlements	Description of meadow	Value of meadow
Donnington le Heath	4 acres	Not recorded
Whitwick	None given	
TOTAL	**4 acres**	**Not recorded**

To the north-west of the forest

Settlement	Description of meadow	Valuation of Meadow
Ashby	None given	
Thringstone*	None given	
Osgathorpe	None given	
Coleorton	None given	
TOTAL	**0**	

Appendix 5: Charnwood - Domesday Data: Valuations[6]

To the north of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation	Notes
Shepshed	'waste'		'From this land came £6 at a revenue by command of the Bishop of Bayeux, for the service of the Isle of Wight'
Hathern and Dishley	40 *s.*	'was waste'	
Diseworth	30 *s.*	'was 10 *s.*'	

To the north-east of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Thorpe Acre	7 *s.*	'was 3 *s.*'
Loughborough	Not given	Not Given

To the east of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Rothley	62 *s.*	Not given
Barrow	Not given	Not given

To the south-east of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Thurcaston	£4	'was 30 *s.*'
Anstey	30 *s.*	'was 10 *s.*'

To the south of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Glenfield	10 *s.*	Not given
Groby	60 *s.*	20 *s.*
Ratby	60 *s.*	20 *s.*
Markfield	Not given	Not given

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[6] Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (Chichester, 1979) except where marked * where data is taken from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition.

To the south-west of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Ibstock	40 *s.*	5 *s.*
Bagworth	£ 4	40 *s.*
Stanton under Bardon	20 *s.*	20 *s.*

To the west of the forest

Settlements	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Donnington le Heath	2 *s.*	20 *s.*
Whitwick	2 *s.*	Not given

To the north-west of the forest

Settlement	Valuation 1086	Earlier valuation
Ashby	40 *s.*	10 *s.*
Thringstone*	2 *d.*	5 s
Osgathorpe	5 *s.*	12 *d.*
Coleorton	2 entries 4 *s.* 5 *s.*	2 entries 12 *d.* 6 *d.*

Appendix 6: Charnwood - Domesday Data: Woodland[7]

To the north of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Shepshed	1league long x 4 furlongs wide.
Hathern and Dishley	4 furlongs long x 4 furlongs wide
Diseworth	None recorded

To the north-east of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Thorpe Acre	None recorded
Loughborough	7 furlongs long x 3 furlongs wide.

To the east of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Rothley	The lord's woodland 1 league long x ½ league wide. The villagers' woodland 4 furlongs long x 3 furlongs wide.
Barrow	Woodland 1 league long x 4 furlongs wide.

To the south-east of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Thurcaston	2 leagues long x ½ league wide
Anstey	1 league long x ½ league wide Additional woodland 2 furlongs long x 1 furlong wide.

To the south of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Glenfield	8 furlongs long x 4 furlongs wide
Groby	2 leagues long x ½ league wide
Ratby	None recorded
Markfield	6 furlongs long x 4 furlongs wide

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[7] Data taken from P. Morgan, ed. *Domesday Book: Leicestershire*, Phillimore edition (London and Chichester, 1979) except where marked * when data is taken from *Domesday Book: Derbyshire*, Phillimore edition.

To the south-west of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Ibstock	None recorded
Bagworth	1 league long x ½ league wide
Stanton under Bardon	1 league long x ½ league wide

To the west of the forest

Settlements	Description of Woodland
Donnington le Heath	½ league long x 4 furlongs wide
Whitwick	1 furlong long x ½ furlong wide

To the north-west of the forest

Settlement	Description of woodland
Ashby	1 league long x 4 furlong wide for 100 pigs.
Thringstone*	None recorded
Osgathorpe	None recorded
Coleorton	2 entries: 1 furlong long x 1 furlong wide 2 furlong long x 1 furlong wide

Appendix 7: 1803 Perambulation of Charnwood

Beginning at the west end with Gracedieu royally on by the north west by Gracedieu Park, by the Old Inclosures into Belton Nook,and then on by Belton Old Inclosures to a dike a little below the Gate where Belton royally begins passing on by the old inclosures to the fishpool corner at the parish cross + where the boundary of Sheepshed royally commences, going round by Brotherhoods corner and along by the old fence across Blackbrook to Gelders Hall corner passing on by by Charley Gate to the forrest Gate, on by Garrendon old inclosures to Garendon park Gate along by the park to Snells Nookon by Snells closes into Goose nest by Thorp old inclosures to Holywell Wood corner, to the Sheepshed parish cross, round Holywell closes to about the middle of Brooks wood to Earl Dyke where Beaumanor royally begins, which passing along by the said wood on by Loughborough Lane end and Websters wall to Lousy Brook, at the parish cross where Barrow, Quorndon, Woodhouse and the North-end of Mountsorrel royally begins and passes on by Outwoods side to Pocket Gate (where Beaumanor Park begins) to Woodhouse Eaveson to Mr Farnham's Wood into Woodhouse hand [?land] round Swithland ffield side to the Town End where the hon[era]ble A. B. Danvers has a small Royally, on by the slate pits to the parish crosses where Broadgate and Newtown Linford royally begins and goes on by the wood wall and by the Earl of Stamfords woods to Hoggarts corner on by Broadgate park by old John in the said park to Newtown Linford from thence on by the old inclosures to Benscliff corner at the parish cross where Ulverscroft royally begins passing round by Lord Greys Wood bordering against Newtown Linford on by Pilgrims Wood corner to the Gutter where at the parish cross begins again Broadgate and Newtown Linford royally and goes on to Markfield Turnpike Gate where Markfield royally beginson by the Windmill Hill across Shaw Lane into Stanton under Bardon royalty which passes on by Markfield to Stanton Old Inclosures by Horsepoolto Billa- barrow at the ffinger post where Markfield royally commences again and goes on by Stanton old enclosures to Beggary nook at the parish crosses where Hugglescote & Donnington royally begins and goes round by Beggary nook on by Bardon Meeting to the top corner where at the parish crosses Markfield royally again begins and goes around Bardon Wall to the top corner over against Copt Oak and on by Bardon wall by Birch wood to a gate where at the parish crosses Whitwick royally commences and passes on by the Irish House down by Bardon Wall to Agar Nook on by Whitwick old inclosures and on by Long Lane and to the Town thense on by Mr Shinson's to Thringstone Town End up by Gracedieu park to top corner where Thringstone royally begins and passes on by Gracedieu park wall to the three parish crosses where the perambulation commences. [8]

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[8] HL, HAM Box 46/8, Perambulation of Charnwood carried out by Nathaniel Berrington on behalf of Mr John Claridge, December 4th 1803.

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