

## The Bounds of Pyrianforda

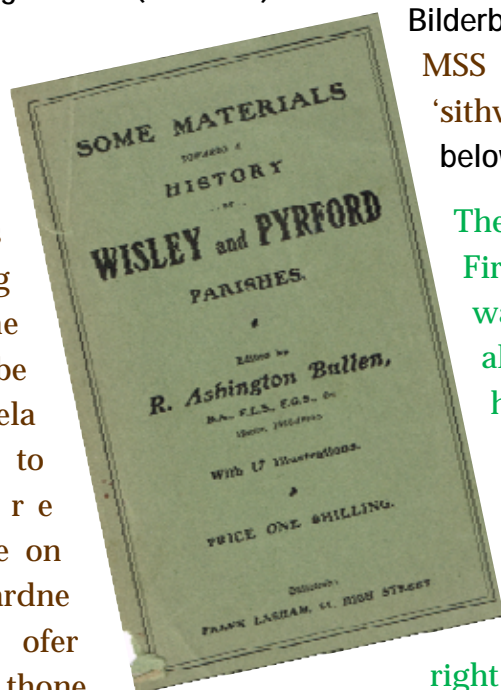
Whilst I have seen many examples of scholars attempting to identify the bounds of Chertsey Abbey (as recorded in the charters assigned to c.675 and 889), I am aware of only one attempt to study the bounds of Pyrford as listed in King Eadwig's charter of 956. Even then it is mainly just a translation of the original text, with little explanation as to where the various places that are listed relate to on a modern map.



The translation was the work of 'Mr A Bilderbeck of Oxford', who is credited for the 'translations of the deeds relating to Pyrford at the Bodleian Library' by R. Ashington Bullen in his wonderful little booklet on 'Some Material towards a History of Wisley & Pyrford Parishes' (Frank Lasham, Guildford, c.1905).

As well as reproducing the translation (below in green), I have also included Ashington Bullen's reproduction of the original text (in brown).

This sind tha land ge mearo to Pyrianforda. Aerest, of Pyrianforda & land wægan on fises burnan, & lang burnan on thone meare hagan, up be hagan oth tha gedela west on gerihta to snawes mere westwardan, thonne on thone ho forewardne thonne on gerihta ofer ufandune, thonne on thone gyrd weg, & land weg on thone meare hagan, up be hagan on weorthe hege, forth be than hege on weorth apeldre, thonne on per leage, thonne suth to efes on thone ealan hrunn [ or "hriman" in some of the MSS] thaet to hagan op be hagan to Eccles hamme, thonne a be hagan to mylen felda, thonne a be



hagan to mint felda, thonon on gerihta on mint byrge, thaer to burnan, & land burnan on tha flex waran on thone hagan, thonon ut on thone felde, thonon ut mil gemete thonon tha ferh the forwearde, thonon to thaere twicene & lang twicene on weahles fen, thonon ut on wegan & land wegan on Pyrianford & si th wuda hyrthsum into pyruanforda.

Bilderbeck then inserts a puzzling note - 'Other MSS have "Sith wuda hyrth Sum", and 'sithwuda hyrth sum". But his translation, below, does not appear to acknowledge this.

These are the boundaries of Pyrianford: First from Pyrian's ford and along the water to fishes burn (or "fishbrook") then along the said brook to the boundary hedge, up along the said hedge (or "fencing-in," or possibly a hawthorn hedge) to the partitions (or "the dividing lines" ) and due west to snawes-mere westward, thence to the spit (or tongue) of land, and thence right across ufane-dune ("hill from above"?) thence on to the grid-way ("fenced in road") and along the said grid-way to the boundary haw (or "hawthorn hedge") up along the said hedge to Worthy (or "Worth-Hay or "Worthey" or "Worthy-hedge") and so along until you come to the big apple tree, thence to Purley (or Per-Lea or Pir-Lea), thence south to

the spot near the old watercourse and back to the boundary 'haw', then up by the said haw to Ecclesham [or Eccles' home] and thence along the haw to Mylenfields (or the "mill-fields"), and thence along the haw to Mint-fields, thence on the right to mint-btrge (or "mint-hills"), thence to the brook and along the brook to the flax-lands near the haw, thence out on to the fields, thence on to the mile measure (or "mile-stone"), thence on and on till you get to a place where two roads meet, and along this said place to marshes-fen, thence on to the high road, and along the high-road (towards or) to Pyrian's ford and so through the wood until you come once more to Pyrian's ford.

Some of the places can be clearly identified, it is then perhaps just a matter of joining up the features in between. The 'Pyrianford' (the ford by a pear tree) is presumably the ford that used to be through the Bourne, below St Nicholas' church. The 'fishes burn' would then be the Bourne. The problem then is where was the 'Snawes-mere' as the only 'mere' or pond that I can think of in the area is the lakes by Roundbridge Farm. That could work if the 'ho' (or tongue of land) is the Hoe as in the hill of the Hoe Bridge Golf Club, but is that taking us too much into the land of Woking Park (i.e. the deer park of Woking Palace)? Having said that we should remember that the deer park was not created until at least the late 12th century— about 300 years later.

From the 'ho' the boundary goes to the 'ufandune' which could be Maybury Hill or Frailey Hill (which would certainly tie in with the later boundary between Woking and Pyrford that ran along what is now Sandy Lane at Maybury), but I wonder whether the original boundary took a more direct route across the common land (or along the edge of it) with the 'fenced in road' being on the edge the common in the White Rose Lane or Park Road area (the blue dotted line on the map below)? That would tie the Horsell area in with Pyrford much more, rather than have them just 'touching' as they were by the time of the 1790's map, below.

The 'worthy' is almost certainly the worthy of Goldsworth (bought by Alan Basset into the lands of Woking Manor in the late 12th century), so that after the big apple tree we come to the 'pear clearing' at Parley on Littlewick Road—more or less along the line of the later boundary.

'Eceles hamme' as has already been discussed, could be the site of St John the Baptist Church or Well at Bisley (rather than the 'home' of someone called Eccles), with the 'Mylenfields' in the area of Millbrook Farm (where the R.S.P.C.A Animal Centre is today).

The 'Mint Fields' have been identified as being by Mimbridge (byrge being interpreted as 'bridge' rather than 'hills') with the book therefore being the Bourne that is still the boundary between Horsell and Chobham north of Horsell Common.

The 'flax-lands' need not be confused with the old Flexlands School (on Station Road, Chobham), which is modern, but must be somewhere along the stream heading towards the Young Strout area.

Where the 'mile-stone' is after this is another mystery, unless there was one on the postulated Roman Road in the area (based on the thought that at bridge at Mimbridge cannot have been constructed in Saxon times). This could make the 'place where two roads meet' as being at what is now the Six Crossroads—



St John the Baptist Church, Bisley – the site of the Eceles Hamme (or church enclosure) of the Pyrford Bounds?

Woodham Road definitely being a modern addition to the junction).

But 'twicene' has also been interpreted as 'the meeting of the ways' rather than the 'meeting of two roads' and was associated with a later 'sub-manor' of the Horsell area based more or less on the lands of Scotcher's and Bonsey's (or Mizens) Farms—where MacLarens factory is today. Perhaps it is not 'roads' that are meeting at this point, but 'streams' as the Bourne from Mimbridge joins the Bourne from Chobham at this point – the stream being a natural boundary between Chertsey Abbey's lands to the north and Horsell (or Pyrford) to the south.

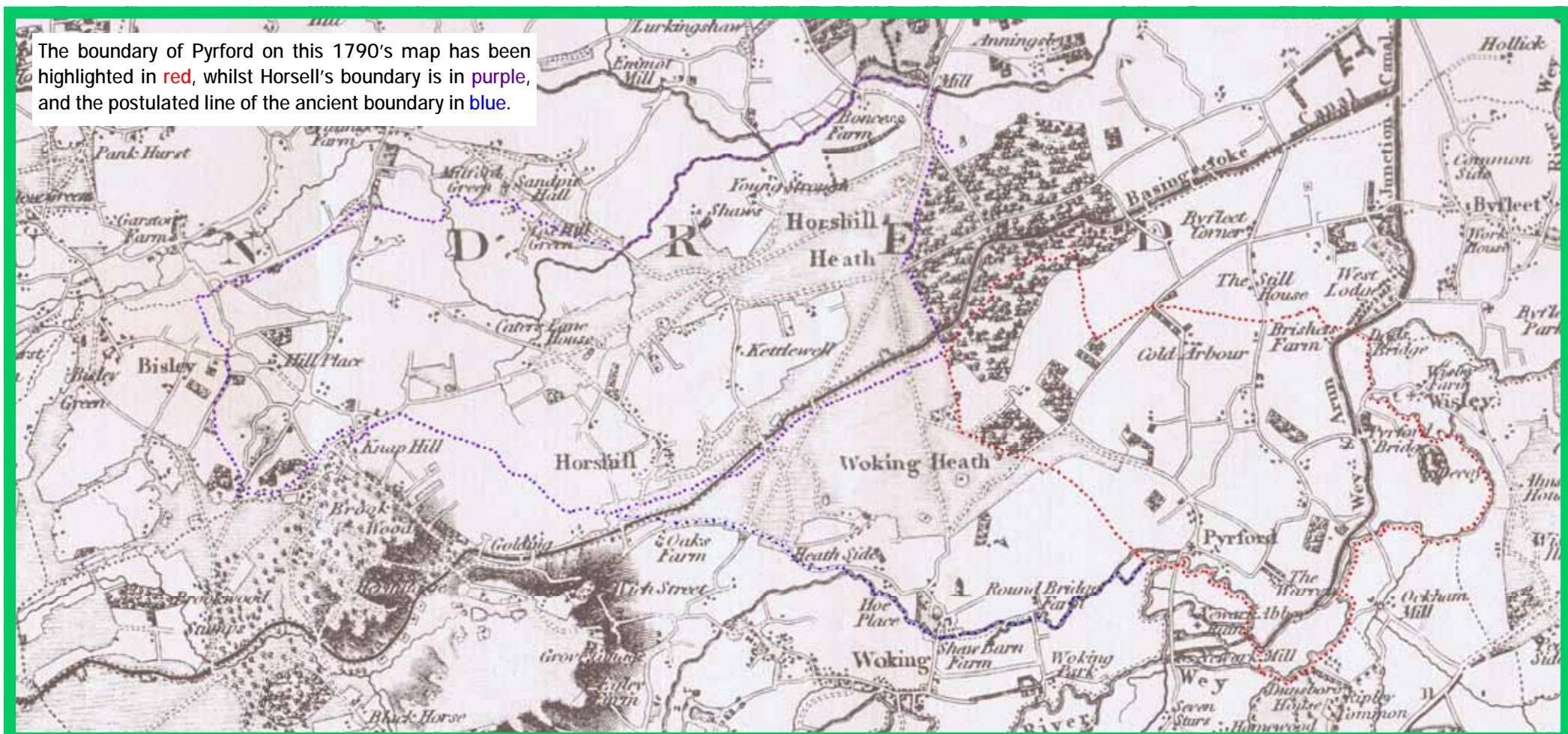
After twicene the bounds move on to the 'weahhes fen' or 'marshes-fen', recorded in some manuscripts I believe as 'wexfenne'. This should not be confused with the current Wexfen Gardens off Pyrford Road, but may possibly be an earlier name for Sheerwater (not recorded

until the 17th century) which some believe to be a man-made lake (or lakes) in the marshy valley of the Rive Ditch.

The 'high road' to Pyrford could be the Old Woking Road, but it could also be the ancient route from Old Woking to Byfleet along what is now the footpaths known as the Sheepwalk, Sandy Lane and Dodds Lane (and then via the Navigation towpath) to Murray's Lane.

From Dodds Lane the boundary follows the River Wey upstream back to the Pyrianford below the church.

There is obviously still a lot of work to be done interpreting the places mentioned in the 10th century charter, but hopefully the above will help start the debate, and prompt someone more knowledgeable than I to properly research this fascinating period of Pyrford's past (and Horsell's history).



The boundary of Pyrford on this 1790's map has been highlighted in red, whilst Horsell's boundary is in purple, and the postulated line of the ancient boundary in blue.