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**The Origin and the Geographical extent of the Hundred of
St. Briavels in Gloucestershire**

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THE ORIGIN AND THE GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT OF THE HUNDRED OF ST. BRIAVELS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

by CYRIL E. HART

'Do you know the Forest of Dean, and the Castle of St. Briavels situate within the said Forest? And are you acquainted with or do you know the hundred of the said Castle of St. Briavels? And is not the said hundred for the greatest of it situate within the bounds and perambulation of the said Forest?' (1) 'Do you know and are you acquainted with the parishes of St. Briavels, Newland, Staunton, English Bicknor, Ruardean, Micheldean, Abenhall, Flaxley, Littledean, part of the parish of Awre and of the Lea, and are not these parishes within the bounds and perambulations of the Forest of Dean?' (2)

SO far as is known, no previous attempt has been made to fix the bounds of the hundred of St. Briavels. Mr O. S. Anderson (3) collated and recorded useful information on the hundred but did not attempt a map. Miss H. M. Cam (4) touched only briefly on this hundred, while Mr J. G. Wood (5) went no further than to give a list of the parishes comprising the hundred in 1878. He added:

¹ Exch. Deps. by Coms. 27 Chas. II, 1675, Mich. 28 P.R.O.: Interrogatory No. II, 'Administered to witnesses on the part of James Yerworth and others'. (For depositions to this interrogatory, see p. 156).

² *ibid.*, Interrogatory No. III (For depositions to this interrogatory, see p. 156).

³ *The English Hundred-Names: the South-Western Counties* (1939), pp. 6, 7.

⁴ *The Hundred and The Hundred Rolls*, 1930, p. 266; see also *Studies in the Hundred Rolls* (1921) and *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England* (1944).

⁵ *The Laws of the Dean Forest and Hundred of St. Briavels* (1878), pp. 4, 5.

' the boundaries of the hundred are traditional only, and, so far as the writer is aware, have not been the subject of any variation '.

I have had occasion to investigate the subject during my research on the Free Miners of Dean Forest, for the hundred of St. Briavels is the statutory area over which the rights of the Free Miners as to coal, iron-ore and ochre (but not stone (6)) now extend.

In the 10th century England was already being divided into shires, which were subdivided into a number of smaller districts known as ' hundreds ' in the south and midlands. The number of hundreds in a shire varied very much in different parts of England. The extant Saxon Charters of Gloucestershire do not mention the hundreds with which we are concerned.

The hundred of St. Briavels is not mentioned as such in Domesday. The area it now represents was then approximately coterminous with the Forest of Dean, and in any case the place now known as St. Briavels was at that time known as *Ledenci* (later known as Little Lydney). However, the records of this survey must be used in our quest for knowledge on the subject.

Taking the district defined by the confluence of the Severn and Wye at Beachley, and a line from Ross to Gloucester, we can, from Domesday account for approximately the whole area by named hundreds, except for a large section in the west and centre which was no doubt omitted from the survey on account of its being royal demesne forest. This forest was the Forest of Dean, and subject to slight boundary adjustments of the hundreds on the south, southeast and northeast, the section thus defined became, later, the hundred of St. Briavels. Possibly the origin of the hundred is to be found in the liberty of the manor of St. Briavels, the term hundred being later applied to all that land which came under the

⁶ Their rights as regards stone, extend to the 1838 perambulation of the Forest.

administration of the Constable of St. Briavels Castle. The hundred seems to have arisen from the area of the Forest as at Domesday—before the extensions of the late 11th, 12th or early 13th centuries. It may have kept this form as the area contracted, no notice being taken of the arbitrary extensions and the subsequent disafforestations. In any case the extent of the hundred was dependent upon the extent of the hundreds on the south, southeast and northeast.

The named hundreds referred to above are :

Westberie (Westbury on Severn) comprising part of *Westberie* (Westbury on Severn), *Hamme* (Churcham) (7), *Hope* (Longhope), *Dene* (Modern Micheldean, Littledean and Abenhall), *Newnham* (Newnham), *Dury* (in Minsterworth), *Bulcleye* (Bulley), *Rodele* (Ruddle) and *Staure* (Stears, near Newnham). *Bicanofre* (English Bicknor) was also included under this hundred. Its geographical position shows that its inclusion was possibly an error.

Bliteslau (Bledisloe) comprising *Avre* (Awre), *Peritone* (Pirton), *Eteslau* (Etloe), *Bliteslau* (Bledisloe), *Nest* or *Nesse* (Nass), *Pontune* (Pomerton in Awre), and *Lindence* (Lydney).

Tedenham (Tidenham) comprising *Tedenham* (Tidenham, except perhaps for a portion in *Twiferde* hundred). It appears to have included Lancaut.

Ledenei (Lydney) comprising *Aluredestone* (Allaston) (8), *Ledenei* (Little Lydney, later St. Briavels), *Hiwoldestone* (Hewelsfield)—‘ In the Forest by command ’.

Twiferde (Twyford) comprising *Modiete* (Madget, opposite Tintern), and *Odelaveston* (Woolaston). It also possibly comprised a portion of Tidenham.

⁷ Another Hamme (believed to be Highnam) is given under ‘ Tolangebridges ’ hundred. Rev. C. S. Taylor (*Dom. Surv. of Glouc.*, p. 205) thought this to be Minsterworth.

⁸ Taylor, op. cit., pp. 109, 207, Dr George Ormerod (*Strigulensia*, p. 94, note 1) says it is more likely to be High Plusterwine, the ‘ Alwoods Grange ’ of the Ord. Map.

Botelau (Botloe) comprising *inter alia* *Tetinton* (Taynton), *Tatinton*, (Little Taynton and Little Oakley)—‘ In the same place one virgate of land lies in the Forest ’—*Huntelei* (Huntley), *Tebriston* (Tibberton), *Noent* (Newent), and *Dimoch* (Dymock).

In addition to the above, the following points must be noted :—

Staunton (Staunton) is included under *Brooms Ash* hundred in Herefordshire. It is stated to be in the king’s wood.

Lalege (Probably Ley, near Westbury) is not included under any hundred. It is not to be confused with *Lecce* (Lea) which is included in Herefordshire Domesday.

Wighciete (Wyegate) is not included under any hundred. ‘ Now in the Forest by command ’.

Rwirdin (Ruardean) is included in Herefordshire Domesday, the reason being that it was then, and for many centuries later, a chapelry of Walford in that county.

It will have been seen that Lydney was in Bledisloe hundred, and that *Ledenci* (which is believed to have been the chapelry of Lydney (9)) was the place later known as Little Lydney and then as St. Briavels (10). *Ledenci* was important enough to give its name to the hundred in which it was included along with Allaston and Hewelsfield. Domesday says that Hewelsfield was now in the Forest by the King’s command, and a reference to the geographical position of St. Briavels will make it clear that the same must have applied to *Ledenci*.

Domesday does not mention the Forest of Dean by name, but there are several allusions to a forest which could be none other than Dean. The lands of Dene (modern Micheldean, Littledean and Abenhall) are stated to have been granted ‘ quit of geld (tax) for the custody

⁹ It drew tithes from the ‘ *Dominium de Lideneia Parva* ’.

¹⁰ This seems to be borne out by the statement in Domesday that it had rights of fishery in the Wye.

of the Forest'. From information in Domesday it can be inferred that the official Forest included at least the area of the present Forest as there is no mention of cultivated land within the area. In addition there is a large area of woodland attributed by Domesday to some of the manors on the outer fringe of the official Forest which could not possibly have lain within the limits of the present relative parishes or even the hundreds. All this I have discussed in a separate paper (11).

It will be seen that the 'named hundreds' include no mention of the bulk of the area now approximately represented by the Forest of Dean and hundred of St. Briavels. We can, therefore, by a process of elimination, prepare a map showing approximately the area which later became known as the hundred of St. Briavels (12). This has been done in Map 1 (13).

We may now consider some of the post-Domesday records which throw light on the evolution of the hundred of St. Briavels:—

The first mention of St. Briavels is in 1131 (14), a record of the *Castellum de Sancto Briavel*. At the time of the building of the castle previous to 1131 the 'Villa Regia' was known as *Ledeneia Parva* (Little Lydney) (15). By 1166 (16) the name had changed to St. Briavels although the old name continued to be used on occasions.

¹¹ 'The Metes and Bounds of the Forest of Dean'. (*Trans. B.G.A.S.*, vol. 66).

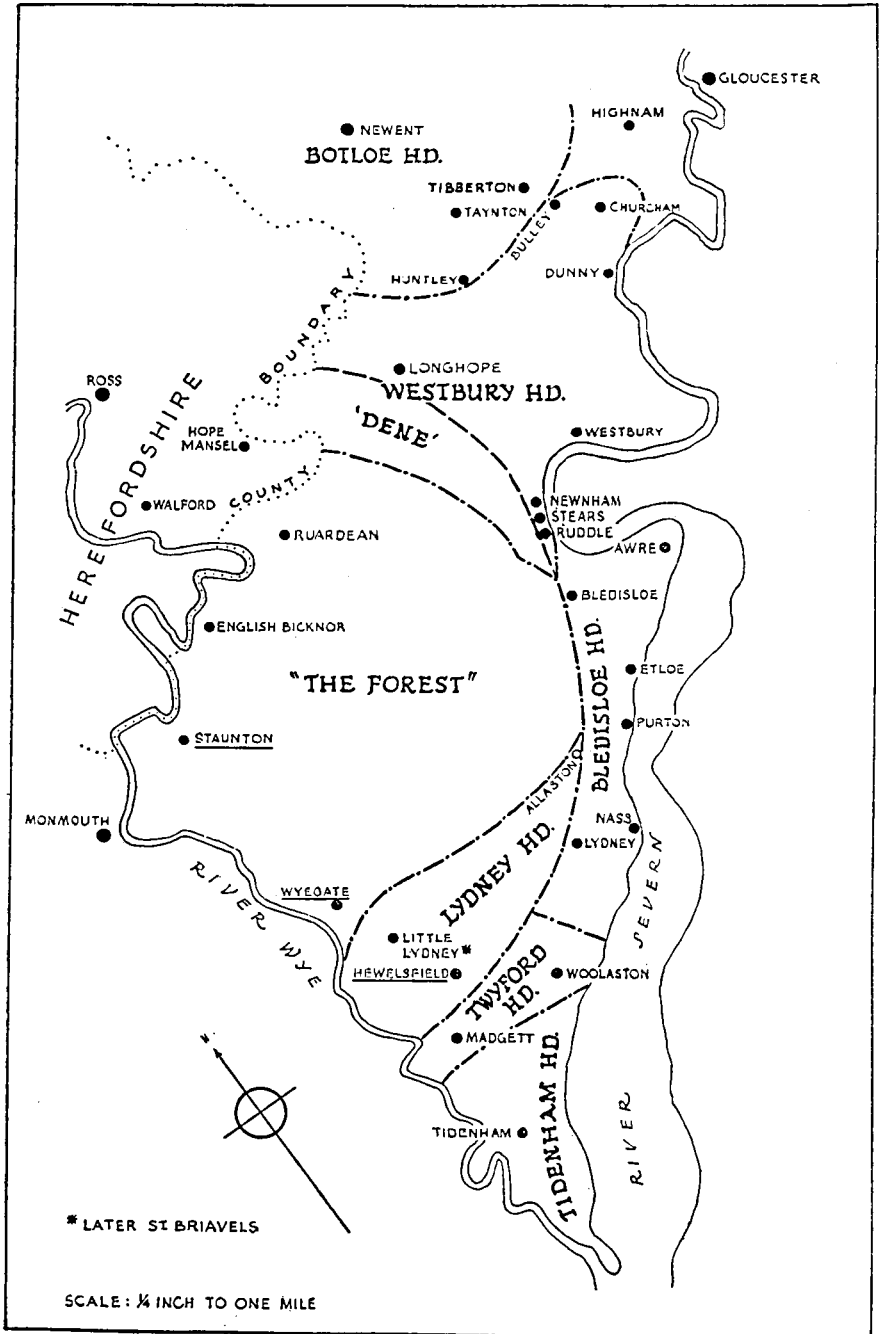
¹² A map of the official Forest of Dean at Domesday has also been drawn up in the same way (see note 11).

¹³ It is difficult to say how the boundary between Gloucestershire and Herefordshire ran in ancient times. I have, therefore, been obliged to use throughout this paper the present boundary between the two counties.

¹⁴ Pipe Roll, 31 Hen. 1.

¹⁵ *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, vol. 3, 1878-9, p. 325; G. Ormerod, *Strigulensia*, 1861, p. 112.

¹⁶ *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, vol. 3, 1878-9, p. 326; G. Ormerod, *Strigulensia*, 1861, pp. 109, 112.



Map 1. Domesday Hundreds

(A) *The Book of Fees* (commonly known as 'Testa de Nevill') :

This record shows that by 1220 (17) the following hundreds comprised at least the places named :—

Hundredum de Westbir' (Westbury on Severn) : *Staure* (Stears), *Parva Dene* (Littledean), *Eluinton* (Elton, near Westbury), *Redleg* (Ruddle or (?) Rodley), *Eddeseta* (Adsett), *Chakeshill* (Chaxhill), *Westbir'* (Westbury on Severn), *Blechsdon* (Blaisdon), *Villa de Hope* (Longhope), *Bulleg'* (Bulley), *Morcota* (Morcott) and *Munstre-werth* (Minsterworth).

Hundredum de Blycheslawe (Bledisloe) : *villa de Aura* (Awre), *Boxilme* (Boxclive), *Blicheslawe* (Bledisloe), *Pulton* (? Plusterwine), *Ettclowe* (Etloe), *Pcriton* (? Purton), *Lydeneya* (Lydney), and *Elbrichtona* (Aylburton).

Hundredum de Bottelawe (Botloe) : *inter alia*, *Tyberton* (*Tibberton*), *Magna Teinton* (Great Taynton), *Parva Teintona* (Little Taynton), and *Hunteleg'* (Huntley).

Under no stated hundred, but obviously attributable to the area with which are we particularly concerned, we find :—

villa Sancti Briavelli (St. Briavels), *Bykenture* (English Bicknor), *Stanton* (Staunton), *Roworthin* (Ruardean), *Dena* (18), *Abbenhal* (Abenhall), *Lacu* (Lea), and *Wellenton* (later Clearwell).

(B) *Pleas of the Crown at the Gloucestershire Eyre of 1221* (19). From this record we have confirmation of the following constituents of the hundreds mentioned : *Hundredum de Westbiria* (Westbury on Severn) : *Munstre-wurthe* (Minsterworth), *Dunic* or *Dunyc* (near Minsterworth), *Bullec* (Bulley), *Radlee* (Rodley), *Wesbiria* (Westbury on Severn), *Addesete* (Adsett), *Walemore*

¹⁷ Part I, pp. 306-8.

¹⁸ Note that 'Dena' is included with Abbenhal, but that Parva Dene, possibly in error, is included under Westbury on Severn hundred.

¹⁹ F. W. Maitland, *Pleas of the Crown for the County of Gloucestershire, 1221* (1884), pp. 47-9, 76-85, 91-5, 125, 129-31.

(Walmore), *Lega* (Ley), *Elhitone* (Elton), and *Blechsdune* (Blaisdon).

Hundredum de Blideslauwe (Bledisloe): *Aura* or *Aure* (Awre), *Alwintone* (Alvington), *Lidencie* (Lydney), *Blitheslauwe* (Bledisloe), *Nesse* (Nass), *Wclanestone* (Woolaston), and *Ettelauwe* (Etloe).

The *Foresta de Dene* is mentioned under *amerciamenta* as *Hundredum Foreste de Dene*, showing that the Forest area was at least becoming thought of, and administered, as a hundred. It included *Stanton* (Staunton), *Bikenoure* (English Bicknor), *Dene* (comprising *Magna Dene*, *Parva Dene* and *Abenhale*), *S. Briavello* (St. Briavels), *Nova Terra* (Newland), *Lacu* (Lea). The *villa de Newnham* (Newnham) was not included within any hundred (20).

It will be seen that by 1221:—

- (a) Newnham had been divorced from Westbury on Severn hundred.
- (b) English Bicknor had been divorced from Westbury on Severn hundred, and was in the Forest hundred.
- (c) Lydney hundred (including St. Briavels) had been incorporated in the Forest hundred.
- (d) Twyford hundred and Tidenham hundred had ceased to exist as such. They now formed part of the marchership and were alienated from Gloucestershire (21).
- (e) Staunton and Ruardean were in the Forest hundred.
- (f) *Dene* is confirmed as in the Forest, and had become split up into what are now Micheldean, Littledean and Abenhall.
- (g) Assarts were appearing in the Forest hundred, e.g. Newland.

It will also be noted that the Forest was referred to, at least on one occasion, as the 'hundred of the Forest of Dean'. With the coming importance of St. Briavels

²⁰ Maitland, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 76.

²¹ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, p. 38. It was rejoined to Gloucestershire in 1536 (see p. 152).

Castle as an administrative centre, it is understandable how the name of this hundred changed in due course to the 'hundred of St. Briavels', even though the name 'Forest of Dean' continued to be used for other than hundredal purposes. Nevertheless the study of the evolution of the area to the 'hundred of St. Briavels' is fraught with uncertainty. It is additionally complicated by the fact that Dean Forest was on at least two occasions referred to as a 'liberty' (22), as was also St. Briavels (23); we also find a reference to the 'Honour of St. Briavels' in 1332 (24).

(C) *The Verdict of the Three Foreign Hundreds*, c. 1244 (25):

It is necessary to mention this interesting document for completeness, but its full implications are not yet agreed. It is hoped to print it *in extenso* at a later date.

(D) *Placita Coronae* 32 Hen. III (1247-48) rot. 16, 16*d* and 17 (26):

From this record we learn that Botloe hundred included the usual places and Westbury on Severn hundred included *Chakeshill* (Chaxhill) and *Blechesson* (Blaisdon). Also that the *Hundredum de Blytheswicke* (meant for Bledisloe) included Awre and Bledisloe. The *Villa de Newenham* is given separately, while the *Libertas de Foresta de Dene* included *Dene*, *Lacu*, Blakeney and *Kotiford* (? Ketford).

(E) *The Hundred Rolls*, 4 Edw. I (1274-5) (27):

Under *Burnetre* hundred we find the entry: 'the vill of St. *Brevells* with the castle and forest of *Dene* are held

²² In 1248 (*Trans. B.G.A.S.*, x, p. 301) and 1259 (*ibid.*, vi, pp. 123-209).

²³ In 1289 (*Chanc. I.P.M.*, 17 Edw. I, No. 29) and 1331 (*Close Roll*, 5 Edw. III, m. 8).

²⁴ *Close Roll*, 6 Edw. III, m. 18).

²⁵ For Proc. Exch. K.R. bd. I, No. 25 P.R.O.

²⁶ Part printed in *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, x, pp. 293-303.

²⁷ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, vol I, p. 176 *et seq.*

by the king'. The castle and Forest are also included under *Sc'us Briavellus*.

Mention is made that the hundred of *Blitheslawe* (Bledisloe) was given by Henry III to William Marshall the younger and was now held by W. de Valenc' and the Countess of Gloucester. Also, that the (lapsed) hundred of Twyford was held by the Earl Marshall; he was trying to increase his land in the Tidenham area by the inclusion of Alvington and Hewelsfield. Nevertheless Hewelsfield was still technically within the Forest hundred, and Alvington within Bledisloe hundred. *Hodenac* (Hadnock) on the Wye had by this time become 'severed' from the Forest.

Other relevant notes from the Hundred Rolls are given below :

Westbury on Severn hundred (28) included the manors of *Rodeleye* (Rodley) and *Munstreworth* (Minsterworth), and possibly *Chexhull* (Chaxhill), *Humelmores* (at the Minsterworth end of Rodley) and *Garne* (? garden cliff).

Bledisloe hundred (29) : 'They say that the hundred of Twyford . . . now is of the Earl Marshall and nothing is answered for the county'. The same earl 'has his freedom of Cone to the bridge of Strigull (30)'. Alvington 'that ought to do suit at this hundred [Bledisloe] now does not and is of the prior of Lantony by Gloucester'. The manor of Awre was still within the hundred, as were Bledisloe, Lydney and *Frompton* (Frampton).

Borough of Newnham : this was still outside any hundred. It included *Northemedes* used as a market.

Thus by 1274-5 we find that the hundred of St. Briavels had not as yet been called by that name, and that it was represented by the Forest hundred or Forest of Dean, bounded on the west by the Wye (except for Hadnock),

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 180.

²⁹ *ibid*, p. 181.

³⁰ A short distance north of the present Chepstow bridge.

on the north by Herefordshire, on the northeast by Westbury hundred, and on the east by the borough of Newnham, and Bledisloe hundred. Twyford hundred had now been attached to the Tidenham manors, and the old Lydney hundred had been incorporated in the Forest. The borough of Newnham was, as in 1221, still outside any hundred.

Map II has been drawn to show the approximate boundaries of the hundreds during 1220-1275.

(F) *The Regard of 1282 (31)* :

We find in 1282 the first definite mention of the hundred of St. Briavels. Included within it are St. Briavels, *Estbech* (Eastbach, near English Bicknor), English Bicknor, Micheldean, and Ruardean. Under Westbury on Severn hundred appear *Rodele* (Ruddle), Newnham, Westbury on Severn, *Boseley* (in Westbury), *Blechesdon* (Blaisdon), Longhope, *Boleleye* (Bulley) and Elton. Bledisloe hundred included Aylburton, Nass, Awre, Lydney and Boxe. Thus little change is shown from the position in 1275.

(G) *Feudal Aids, 1284-1431 (32)* :

In 1284-5 (33) we find Bledisloe hundred including Bledisloe, Lydney, Alvington, Nass, Aylburton, Boxe, *manerium de Lydene* and Hewelsfield. The correctness of the inclusion of Hewelsfield is doubtful.

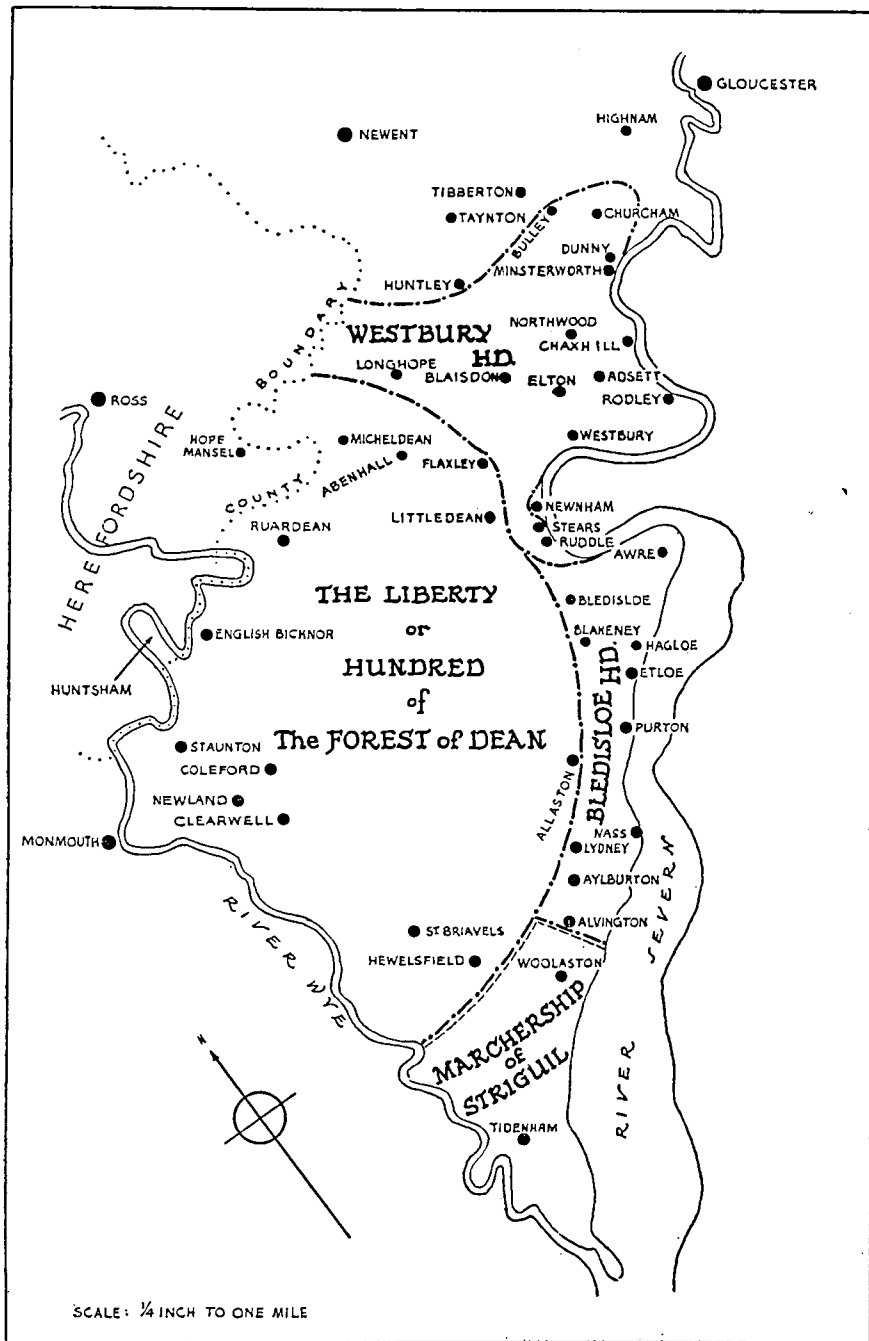
In 1303 (34) Westbury on Severn hundred included Westbury on Severn and Blaisdon. Botloe hundred included the usual manors, etc., but there are significant notes in connexion with Tibberton and Huntley. The former has *Lancastria* added to it, and the last *De ducatu Lancastrie*. These two manors were held by the Earl of Lancaster (the earldom having been founded in 1265), and

³¹ For. Proc. Tr. of Rec., No. 31, P.R.O.

³² Vol. II (Part printed in *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, x, pp. 280-92).

³³ *ibid*, pp. 240, 243.

³⁴ *ibid*, pp. 250, 251.



Map II. Hundreds at 1220-1275 [and as approximately confirmed by (G) and (H)]

formed part of the Duchy of Lancaster when it was founded in 1351. Bledisloe hundred in 1303 included Box, Polton, Bledisloe, Piriton, Lydney, Aylburton, Yerdeshull (35) and Tokenhale (36).

In 1316 (37) Bledisloe hundred contained the usual manors, etc., as did also Westbury on Severn hundred with the addition of the borough of Newnham. Under *Hundredum de Sancto Briavello cum La Nwelande* we find Staunton, English Bicknor, Ruardean, Micheldean, Littledean, Abenhall, St. Briavels and Newland. St. Briavels hundred had by this time become definitely established as an administrative unit, although the retention at the same time of the Forest of Dean as a similar unit in various matters must at times have caused confusion. Nevertheless the hundred was a useful unit on account of it being more or less static in extent, whereas the official Forest was subject to extension and contraction from time to time.

In 1330 (38) the Duchy of Lancaster is stated as including Longhope and Tibberton.

In 1346 (39) Westbury on Severn, Botloe and Bledisloe hundreds showed no change. The same can be said in 1402 (40), although Westbury on Severn hundred now included *manerium de Burghull*.

(H) *The Rolls of the Glouc. Sessions of peace, 1361-98* (41):

These rolls are confusing over the question of hundreds. In many cases the hundred is not given, while in other cases certain places are obviously included under the wrong hundred (42).

³⁵ *Zerdeshulle* in 1346. (I think this must be Chaxhill).

³⁶ *Thokehale* in 1346.

³⁷ *Feudal Aids*, vol. 2, pp. 265, 268, 273, 275.

³⁸ *ibid*, p. 576. ³⁹ *ibid*, pp. 284, 285. ⁴⁰ *ibid*, pp. 298, 299.

⁴¹ Miss E. G. Kimball, *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, LXII (1940), pp. 1-185.

⁴² e.g. Newland, Bream and English Bicknor are included on at least one occasion under Bledisloe hundred, and Lydney, Newland and Ruardean under Westbury on Severn hundred.

Nevertheless the following can be noted from the rolls :—

- (a) The 'hundred of Lancaster' is mentioned—no doubt that portion of the Duchy of Lancaster which was in Gloucestershire. No idea is given of place-names within it. The Duchy lands included a quite large portion of Westbury hundred and to a lesser extent at the expense of a portion of Botloe and Bledisloe hundreds (43).
 - (b) There is no information to imply that there had been any material alteration in the boundaries or extent of Bledisloe hundred (in fact it is more or less confirmed by the inclusion of Awre, Bledisloe, Lydney, Blakeney and Aylburton).
 - (c) Westbury hundred was now reduced in extent by the formation of the Duchy of Lancaster.
 - (d) St. Briavels hundred appears to be coterminous with the Forest and included Micheldean, Littledean and Abenhall, Newland, St. Briavels, Staunton, Ruardean, Clearwell, Highmeadow and Whitecliff.
 - (e) It is uncertain whether the borough of Newnham was by now within any hundred.
- (i) *Musters of 1539 (44), 1542 (45) and 1546 (46) :*

Excellent records of these musters are available and they are a useful source of information in connexion with the study of the hundreds with which we are concerned. From them it is possible to deduce the following grouping (the three musters agree in this respect to a great extent ; where they do not, is indicated) :—

St. Briavels hundred : English Bicknor, Staunton, Northwood, Bream, Flaxley, Micheldean, Littledean,

⁴³ In 1361 Henry, Duke of Lancaster, held the manor of *Rodel* (Rodley), certain tenements in *Eccolowe* (Etloe), part of Minsterworth, one knight's fee in Longhope, and half a fee in Huntley (Chanc. Inq.p.m. Edw. III, file 161).

⁴⁴ *Cal. L. & P.*, Hen. VIII, vol. 14, p. 271, No. 632.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 499, No. 882.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 205, No. 436.

Abenhall, Coleford, Ruardean, St. Briavels, Lea, Clearwell, *Churchyn Bem*, Hewelsfield, Brockweir, Newland, Redbrook (47).

Bledisloe hundred: Etloe, Nass, Hagloe, Bledisloe, Awre, Pirton, Lydney, Aylburton, Alvington, Blakeney (48).

Westbury on Severn hundred: Churcham, Blaisdon, Newnham, Ruddle, Westbury on Severn, Overley, Netherley, Elton (49).

Duchy of Lancaster: Minsterworth, Tibberton, Huntley, Rodley, Bulley, Longhope, Adsett, and Etloe Duchy (50). It will be noted that—

(a) Tidenham and district, and Woolaston, are not included, but they were now within Westbury hundred for, by 1536 (statute 27 Hen. VIII, c. 26 s.13) “ ‘ Wollastone, Tidnam and Bechley ’ with all Honours, etc., lying in the peninsula were joined to the county of Gloucester, without any “ Liberty, Franchise or Privilege but as Parcel of the Hundred of Westbury ” ’ (51).

(b) Newnham was now in Westbury on Severn hundred.

⁴⁷ M.1539 and M.1546 include Blakeney in error; M.1542 includes Newnham in error, and puts Hewelsfield under Bledisloe hundred in error.

⁴⁸ M.1539 and M.1546 put Blakeney under St. Briavels hundred in error; M.1542 puts Hewelsfield under Bledisloe hundred in error.

⁴⁹ M.1542 puts Newnham under St. Briavels hundred in error. M.1546 omits Newnham altogether. M.1542 includes Elton in Duchy of Lancaster in error. M.1539 includes Adsett in Westbury on Severn hundred.

⁵⁰ M.1546 alone mentions Duchy of Etloe (N.B.—the remainder of Etloe is in Bledisloe hundred). M.1542 includes Elton in Duchy of Lancaster in error. M.1539 includes Adsett in Westbury on Severn hundred in error.

⁵¹ Ormerod, op. cit., p. 92. See also Mem. Roll, 17 Eliz. rot. 67 :— ‘ *Tudenham. De Willielmo Comite Wigorniae occasionato ad ostendendum quo Titulo, Jure sive Warranto clamat habere Bona & Catalla Felonum & Fugitivorum & alia, infra Maneria sua de Tudenham, Wollaston, Brokwire & Bettesley* [near southern tip of area] *infra Hundredum de Westbury, in com. Glos.* ’ This implies that the four places named were in Westbury on Severn hundred, although it is known that Brockweir was in St. Briavels hundred.

(c) The Duchy of Lancaster was now clearly defined.

(d) Westbury on Severn hundred was now in two sections (possibly connected by a neck of land).

(J) *Saxton's map* (1577): this map is useful for a few place-names, but does not give the boundaries of the Forest or hundreds.

(K) *John Smith of Nibley*, MSS 1608 (52): useful information is available for the year 1608. We learn from him that the following places were within the hundreds stated:—

St. Briavels hundred: Micheldean, Littledean, Abenhall, Staunton, Coleford, Clearwell, Bream, St. Briavels, *Churchends Beame*, Flaxley, English Bicknor, Hewelsfield, Ruardean, Lea, Northwood in Westbury on Severn parish. ('Part of the said parish of Westbury is in the Duchy of Lancaster and part in Westbury hundred').

Westbury on Severn hundred: *Newnham Burrowe* (borough of Newnham), Ruddle, Churcham, Blaisdon, Woolaston, Tidenham, Bulley, Netherley, Overley, part Westbury on Severn parish ('part of the said parish of Westbury is in St. Briavels hundred and part in the Duchy of Lancaster').

Bledisloe hundred: Lydney, Allaston, Nass tithing, Purton tithing, Aylburton, Awre, Hagloe, part Etloe, Bledisloe, Blakeney, Alvington.

Duchy of Lancaster: Longhope, Minsterworth, Huntley, Tibberton, part Etloe, Rodley, Elton, Adsett (the last three were part of Westbury parish).

Bledisloe hundred appears correct, as does also St. Briavels hundred except for the inclusion of Northwood which was part of Westbury on Severn parish. The northern part of Westbury on Severn hundred, and the Duchy of Lancaster, are doubtful in places, as will be seen when a comparison is made with more modern maps.

⁵² *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608*, pp. 31-76 (printed 1902).

For instance Bulley should be in the Duchy. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a strip of Westbury on Severn hundred running from southwest to northeast between St. Briavels hundred and Bledisloe hundreds, as in the case of Speede's map of 1610 (see below). From Smith's records it will be seen that :

- (a) Westbury on Severn hundred was now in three sections.
- (b) The Forest of Dean had remained approximately static in extent and was now approximately coterminous with St. Briavels hundred.

Map III has been approximately based on (I), (J) and (K).

(L) *Speede's map* (1610) :

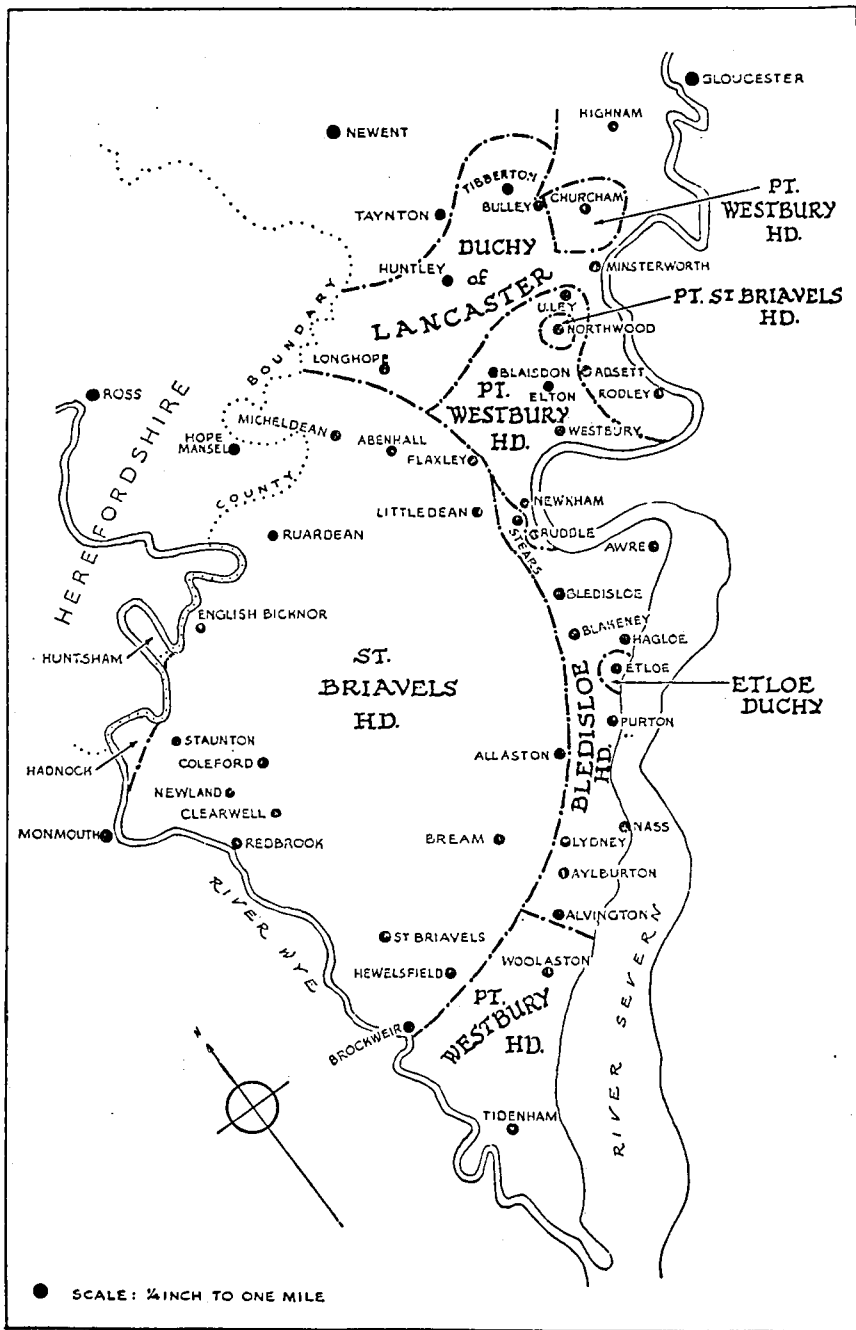
In using this map one must remember the limitations of all early maps as regards cartographical accuracy. Speede's map was no exception. He did not attempt to portray the Duchy of Lancaster, thus his map in the northeast is confusing. Compared with map III, he omits Newnham and Ruddle from Westbury on Severn hundred but includes Bulley, correctly, in what should be the Duchy of Lancaster. His hundred of St. Briavels is remarkably accurate except that he includes Hadnock. His hundred of Bledisloe would also be correct but for the fact that he excludes a wide strip on its southwest to northeast boundary. This strip he attaches to Westbury on Severn hundred. It appears that he has done this in error, for no place-names occur within the strip, and later cartographers do not (except for a few 'copyists' (53)) follow him in this respect. Thus it is believed that map III is more accurate than Speede's map.

In 1675 (54) we find witnesses in a lawsuit being asked to define the extent of the hundred of St. Briavels (55). One witness (Hawkins) deposed

⁵³ Blaeu (1648), Blome (1673) and Morden (1704) all follow Speede, and also make no attempt to define the Duchy of Lancaster.

⁵⁴ Exch. Deps. by Coms. 27 Chas. II, Mich. 28 P.R.O.

⁵⁵ See Interrogatories Nos. II and III on first page of this paper.



Map III. Hundreds at 1539-46 and 1608

‘ that he very well knoweth the hundred and castle of St. Briavels and the greatest part of the bounds thereof, also all the parishes named ; and that the parishes of St. Briavels, Newland, Staunton, English Bicknor, Ruardean, Micheldean, Abenhall, Flaxley, Littledean and also part of the parish of Awre and the Lea are within the hundred of St. Briavels as also within the perambulation of the Forest of Dean ’.

Another witness (West) confirmed the above adding that ‘ this he well knows being the foreman of the Regard of the Forest ’.

These depositions confirm what we already know.

Other records, which it is thought unnecessary to consider in detail, are available for the 17th century (56).

A map made by Bowen in 1762 more or less confirms that made by Speede in 1610, but makes no attempt to delineate the Duchy of Lancaster. The map is, however, unreliable for it includes Rodley and its surrounds in Whiston hundred.

The year 1777 brings us to Taylor’s map of Gloucestershire which is the first of any accuracy as far as the hundreds are concerned. It confirms that St. Briavels hundred included Staunton, Newland, Coleford, St. Briavels, Hewelsfield, Bream, Moseley Green, Littledean, Flaxley, Abenhall, Micheldean, part of the Lea, Ruardean and English Bicknor, as well as the area enclosed by those townships, etc.

Rudder (57) writing in 1779 gives the composition of St. Briavels hundred as Abenhall, Bicknor, Micheldean, Littledean, Flaxley, Hewelsfield, Lea, Ruardean, St. Briavels, Staunton, Newland (and its tithings: Bream, Clearwell, Coleford and Lea Bailly).

⁵⁶ Exchequer K.R. Subsidy Rolls, vol. III (E.179 P.R.O.), gives numerous details, by hundreds, of the various assessments; Cal. S.P.D., Chas. I, 1636-37, vol. 347, p. 452, No. 51, gives account rendered by the Sheriff of Gloucestershire of the assessment to ship-money of the hundreds of that shire.

⁵⁷ *A New History of Gloucestershire*, p. 41.

Twenty-four years later, Rudge (58) gives the following particulars of the hundred :—

	acres		acres
Abenhall	500	Lea	(not given)
English Bicknor	1600	Newland	10000
Micheldean	600	Ruardean	800
Littledean	300	St. Briavels	4000
Flaxley	700	Staunton	2885
Hewelsfield	1200		

In addition to part of Westbury on Severn, and the hamlets of Clearwell, Coleford, Bream and Lea Baily.

Rudge gives the composition of the Duchy of Lancaster as Bulley (500 acres), Huntley, Longhope (2000 acres), Tibberton (1337 acres), Minsterworth (1850 acres) with the hamlets of Morcote (or Boyfield), Hampton and Dunny.

A map made by Smith in 1801 follows approximately that of Taylor, while Thomas Dix's map of 1816 did the same, except that he showed Bledisloe hundred severed by a neck of land from St. Briavels hundred near Blakeney and Haglow. Map iv has been based approximately on the maps of Taylor and Smith.

During an official inquiry in the Forest in 1834 the question of the extent of the hundred of St. Briavels was often referred to ; no one could speak with any certainty but the following assertions (for what they are worth) were made by different witnesses (59) :—

- (a) That the tithing of Northwood was in St. Briavels hundred.
- (b) That one room in the Ship Inn at Newnham was in St. Briavels hundred.
- (c) That the part of Lea in Gloucestershire was in St. Briavels hundred.

⁵⁸ Vol. II, p. 51.

⁵⁹ 5th Rpt. of 1835, App. I.

(d) That St. Briavels hundred extends nearly to the chapel in Blakeney, and constables for that hundred were appointed in respect of part of Blakeney.

We now come to the important Census of 1841 from which the following particulars of the composition of the hundred of St. Briavels have been extracted :—

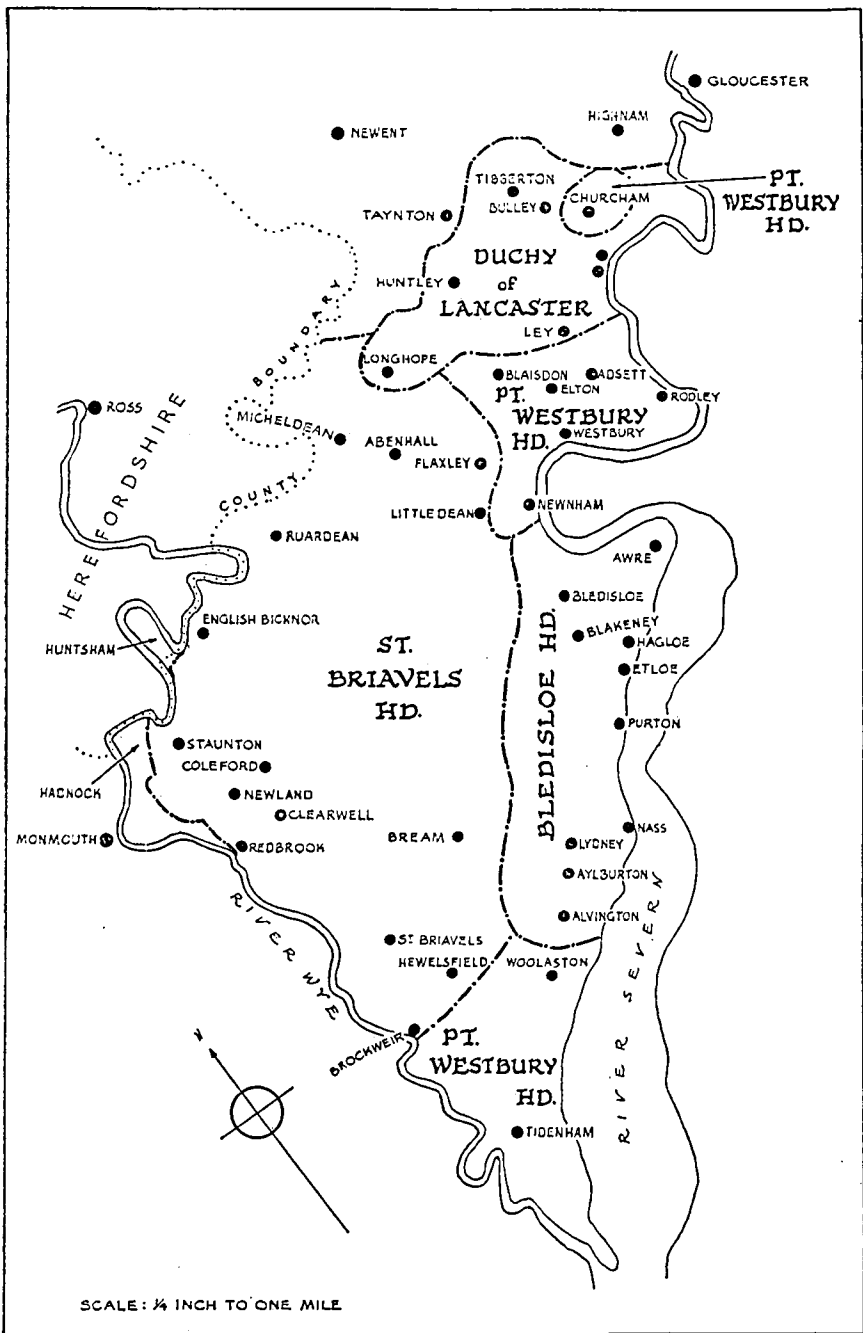
CIVIL PARISH							acres	
Abenhall	..	..	..	..	..	..	860
English Bicknor	..	..	..	..	..	..	2440
St. Briavels	..	..	..	..	..	..	} 4710
St. Briavels Common, including Lower Mean and Hudnells and Brockweir Common*	..	..	..	..	..	..
The Fence*	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dean Forest (6 Walks)*	..	..	..	..	..	..	26320
Littledean	..	..	..	..	..	..	780
Newland (including Bream, Clearwell, Coleford, Lea Bailey and Newland)	..	..	..	..	..	..	6840
Flaxley	..	..	..	..	..	..	1980
Hewelsfield	..	..	..	..	..	..	1580
Part Lea (60)	..	..	..	..	..	..	150
Micheldean	..	..	..	..	..	..	680
Ruardean	..	..	..	..	..	..	1670
Staunton	..	..	..	..	..	..	2090
*Extra-parochial							Total	50100

The following year, by the Dean Forest (Poor) Act, 1842 (61), Hudnolls, The Barse, The Fence and Mawkins Hazells (all part of St. Briavels hundred) were joined partly to St. Briavels parish and partly to Hewelsfield parish. By the same Act, Mailscot and a place near New Weir were joined to English Bicknor parish, and Walmore and Northwoods Green to Westbury on Severn parish.

The next Census, that of 1851, disclosed the hundred as comprising :—

⁶⁰ Remainder (380 acres) in Greytree hundred in Herefordshire (total 530 acres).

⁶¹ 5 and 6 Vict. c. 48, sect. 6.



Map IV. Hundreds at 1777 and 1801

CIVIL PARISH							acres
Abenhall	..	..	..	..	..	..	751
East Dean township (Herbert, Littledean, Pt. Danby and Pt. Speech House Walks)	..	..	..	..	..	..	12487
English Bicknor	..	..	..	..	..	..	2377
Flaxley	..	..	..	..	..	..	1375
Hewelsfield	..	..	..	..	..	..	1189
Littledean	..	..	..	..	..	..	510
Micheldean	..	..	..	..	..	..	680
Newland	..	..	..	..	..	..	8797
Ruardean	..	..	..	..	..	..	1590
Staunton	..	..	..	..	..	..	1517
St. Briavels	..	..	..	..	..	..	5104
West Dean township (Worcester, York, Pt. Danby and Pt. Speech House Walks)	..	..	..	..	..	..	10035
Total (62)							<u>46412</u>

I am informed by the Census Office that the reason for the difference in acreage between the 1841 and 1851 Censuses is that the 1851 figures are those of the then newly created Ordnance Survey Office, the 1841 and earlier figures being based on local records which were in many cases misleading. Up to the inception of the Ordnance Survey Department in 1845 the boundaries of parishes were liquid, depending solely on local knowledge which was in very many cases misleading and amounted to guessing. Gloucestershire was first surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in 1879-83, after which a series of revisions took place, the results of which are reflected in the figures given in the table at the end of this paper. For statistical purposes the 'hundred' as a Unit fell into disuse after the 1851 Census; the constituent parishes being grouped into Poor Law Unions, and later into Rural Districts.

It is, however, possible to trace the history of the constituent parishes and extra-parochial places from 1851 to 1939. The acreages in the Census of 1861 and of 1871 showed no change from those of 1851. Those for the

⁶² The acreages were the same in the years 1861 and 1871.

years 1881 (63), 1891 (64), 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931 are given in the table at the end of this paper. Unpublished figures supplied to me by the Census Office show that on 1 April 1935, the hundred of St. Briavels was represented by an area of 45,860 acres made up as follows:—

CIVIL PARISH	acres
Micheldean (including the old Abenhall parish) (65)	1342
East Dean	12864
West Dean	10480
English Bicknor	2954
Pt. Blaisdon (i.e. the old Flaxley parish) (66)	1066
Hewelsfield	1592
Littledean	718
Newland }	5825
Coleford (67) }	
Ruardean	1488
Staunton	1531
St. Briavels	4777
Lydbrook (68)	1223
	Total 45860

⁶³ As a comparison to the census figures of this period, it is interesting to note that Wood (op. cit., p. 4), writing in 1878, stated that the hundred comprised 'the whole of the Dean Forest and the following surrounding parishes, viz., Hewelsfield, Saint Briavels, Newland, Staunton, English Bicknor, Ruardean, Micheldean, Abenhall, Flaxley and Littledean, parts of the parishes of Westbury on Severn and Lea, the manor of Rodley, a small detached area in the parish of Newnham, and the district, formerly extra-parochial, called Hinder's Lane and Dockham'. The inclusion of Rodley, at least, seems an error.

⁶⁴ The uncertainty of the extent of the hundred about this time is shown in the Report of a Select Committee of 1889. George Culley, gaveler, on being asked by the Committee (Q.322) 'What is the extent of this "Hundred" in which . . . free miners must be born; is it a series of parishes?' replied: 'Yes, it is a series of parishes, but I believe the boundaries are not very well defined. It is much larger, for example, than the Forest of Dean itself. The acreage of the Forest of Dean is about 18,000 acres, and I believe the other is more like 30,000 or 40,000 acres'.

⁶⁵ Dissolved on 1 April 1935.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Created out of Newland parish on 1 April 1894.

⁶⁸ Created on 1 January 1935, out of parts of the parishes of East Dean, West Dean, English Bicknor and Ruardean.

The Census Office has also supplied me with the acreages of parishes as existing in 1939, explaining that owing to the war the acreages were not computed until recently. Thus the hundred of St. Briavels, based on the latest official figures available, is now represented by the following :—

CIVIL PARISH	acres
Micheldean (including the old Abenhall Parish) ..	1448
East Dean	12860
West Dean	11596
English Bicknor	2974
Pt. Blaisdon (i.e. the old Flaxley parish) ..	1066
Hewelsfield	1811
Littledean	718
Newland	4771
Coleford	2060
Ruardean	1492
Staunton	1531
St. Briavels	4777
Lydbrook	1223
	<hr/>
Total	48327

Map v has been drawn to show the approximate present-day boundary of the hundred (69).

It is hoped that this paper will in some measure help to solve the difficult problem of the extent of the hundred of St Briavels, and thus indicate the area over which the Free Miners' rights extend to this day, with the exception of certain 'Exempted Lands', chiefly comprising the Highmeadow and Clearwell Estates (see note to map v on p. 165).

⁶⁹ I have made no mention of the courts of the hundred and castle of St. Briavels: these might well be the subject of a separate paper. In this connexion reference might be made *inter alia* to (a) Pat. Roll, 3 Edw. vi, pt. 4, m. 24, 1549; (b) 'The Rules of St. Briavels Court', (c) First Report of the Coms. of 1831, (d) St. Briavels (Court of Requests) Act, 1842 (5 & 6 Vict., c. 83); (e) Exch. Dep. by Com. 25 & 26 Eliz. Mich. 17 P.R.O.



Map v. The present Hundred of St. Briavels

Based by permission on Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office

APPENDIX I

ACREAGES OF THE CONSTITUENT PARISHES OF THE HUNDRED OF
ST. BRIAVELS, 1881-1931

Parishes	Census Years				
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921 and 1931
(b) Abenhall ..	(e) 770	(c) 763	763	763	(b) 763
East Dean ..	12487	(c) 13265	13265	13265	13265
English Bicknor ..	2377	(f) 3209	3209	3209	3209
(a) Flaxley ..	(f) 1749	(c) 1066	1066	1066	(a) 1066
Hewelsfield	(f) 1592	1592	1592	1592	1592
Littledean ..	(e) 495	(c) 718	718	718	718
Micheldean	(e) 627	(c) 579	579	579	579
Newland ..	(e) 8743	(c) 7885	(d) 5818	5825	5825
Ruardean ..	(e) 1593	(c) 1630	1630	1630	1630
(e) Staunton ..	1517	(e) 1530	1530	1530	(e) 1531
St. Briavels	(f) 4796	4796	4796	(e) 4777	4777
West Dean	10035	(c) 10904	10904	(e) 10905	10905
Totals	46781	47937	45870	45859	45860

NOTES

- (a) The Parish of Flaxley was dissolved and its area added to Blaisdon C.P. (not a parish included in the hundred) on 1 April, 1935.
- (b) The parish of Abenhall was dissolved and its area added to Micheldean C.P. (one of the parishes included in the hundred) on 1 April, 1935.
- (c) The area of these parishes was altered by the operation of the Divided Parishes Acts of 1876-9 and 1882.
- (d) A new parish viz. Coleford was created out of Newland on the 1 April, 1894.
- (e) The slight variations in acreage is due to survey revisions.
- (f) The differences in these four areas are accounted for by the earlier figures being estimated figures against the actual computation in the field by the Ordnance Survey Department. It must be borne in mind that the earlier estimates of acreage did not always take into consideration large bodies of inland water. The Ordnance Survey includes these areas in their totals.

APPENDIX II

NOTES ON MAPS

General : With the exception of Map v (which has been based by permission on the Ordnance Survey) the maps are intended to give a general picture only and not to convey cartographical accuracy.

Map I :

- (a) The three place-names *underlined* are stated in Domesday as being 'in the Forest'.
- (b) Only place names given in Domesday have been included.
- (c) Staunton and Ruardean are included in Domesday under Herefordshire, while English Bicknor is included under Westbury Hundred.

Map III :

- (a) Note how Northwood is detached from the remainder of St. Briavels Hundred.
- (b) Note how Churcham is detached from the other two main portions of Westbury Hundred.

Map V :

As indicated on p. 162, the hundred of St. Briavels is the area over which the rights of the Dean Free Miners normally extended. However, under the authority of the Dean Forest Mines Act, 1838, certain parts of the hundred were exempted from the rights of the Free Miners. A list of these areas, now known as 'Exempted Lands', is given by Wood (*op. cit.*, App. E).