

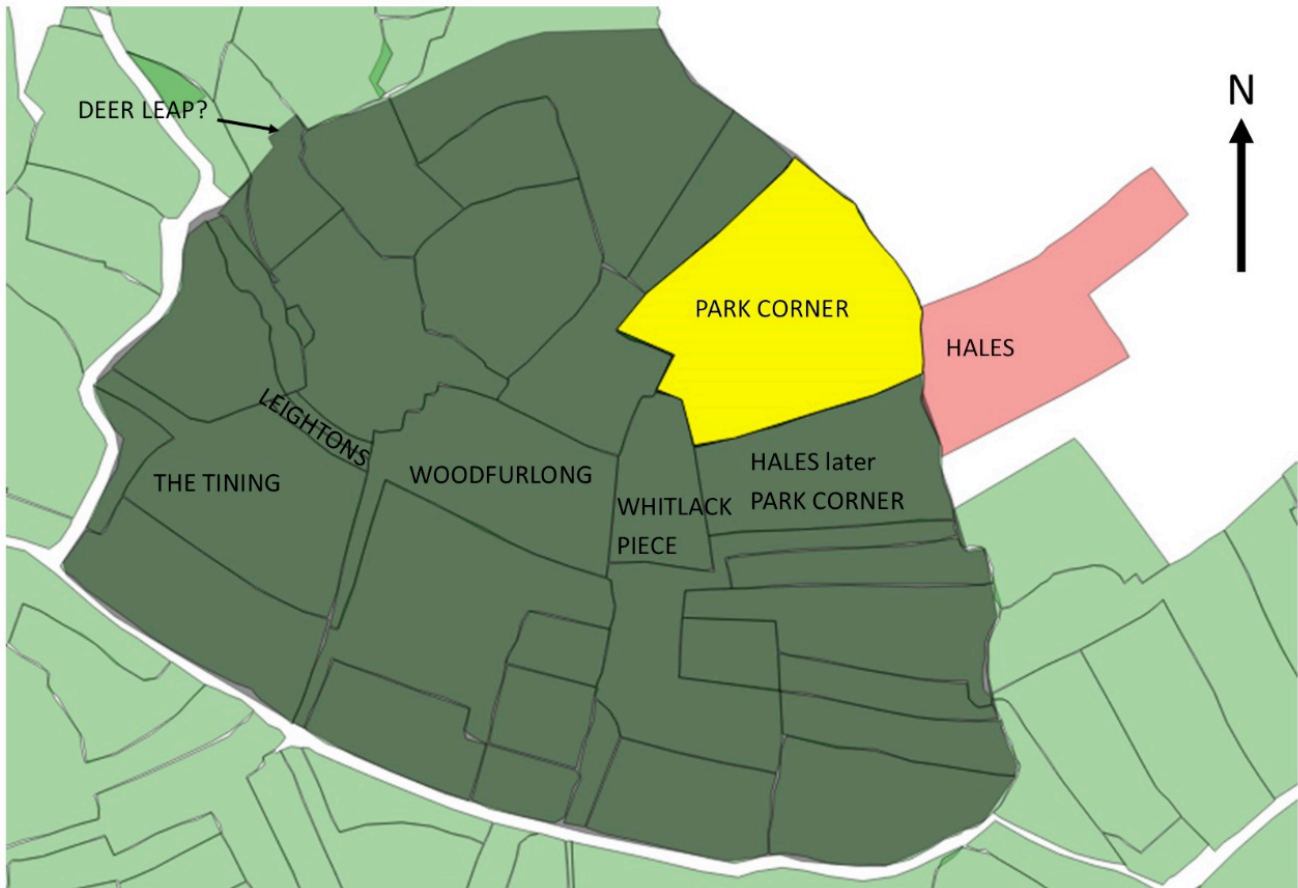
*Rob Arkell, Bradford on Avon Museum Research Group*

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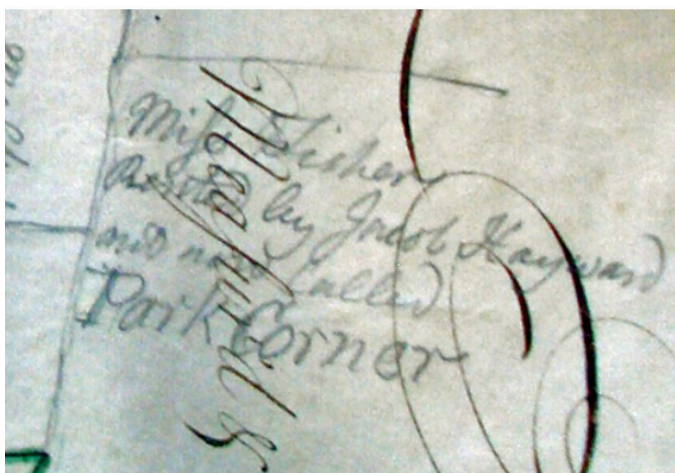
Land in Broughton Gifford near a 'Parkestile' is recorded in the Tropenell Cartulary in 1397 and 1408. A Parkestile is another name for a deer leap or leap-gate. Two fields called Park Corner as well as a Lippiatt's (leap-gate's) Elme are recorded in 1672 in Broughton Gifford as well as Park Corner Legger (narrow strip of land) recorded in 1757. These all point to a park somewhere in Broughton Gifford.

Broughton Gifford has a tithe map with only 19 named fields which are in Broughton Monkton in the south of the parish but the location of one of the 'park indicator' fields, Park Corner, can be deduced by working from a known mapped field location linked with information given in leases. The Tining and Leightons (Figure 2) are shown on a 19<sup>th</sup> century sale map. The spatial relationships in leases place The Tining and Leightons relative to Woodfurlong, Whitlack Piece and Hales, and finally Park Corner which is north of Hales.



*Broughton Gifford fields used to locate Park Corner field*

This deduction can be confirmed in two ways. Firstly the Broughton Gifford field 'Hales' is placed next to 'Hales' (pink) shown on a Shurnhold (Melksham) Estate map made in 1724. Secondly, a pencilled comment on the Shurnhold map records that the Broughton Gifford Hales field was renamed Park Corner.



*Miss Fisher  
Rented by Jacob Hayward  
and now called Park Corner*



This all points to the existence of a park within Broughton Gifford as the nearest park in the Melksham Hundred is Seend Park 3.75 km to the south-east between Melksham and Seend.

The park area shown is bounded by a stream to the north-east, roads to the south and west, and field boundaries to the north-west. This gives a park of 81 hectares. Figure 2 shows what may be a deer leap (the Parkestile or Leap-gate) on the north west boundary of the park. This unexplained depression approximately 35 m long running parallel to the proposed park boundary could be the ditch of the deer leap since a common length for a deer leap was 100 ft (30.5 m). The feature is shown below.



*Possible deer leap ditch on the boundary of Broughton Gifford park*

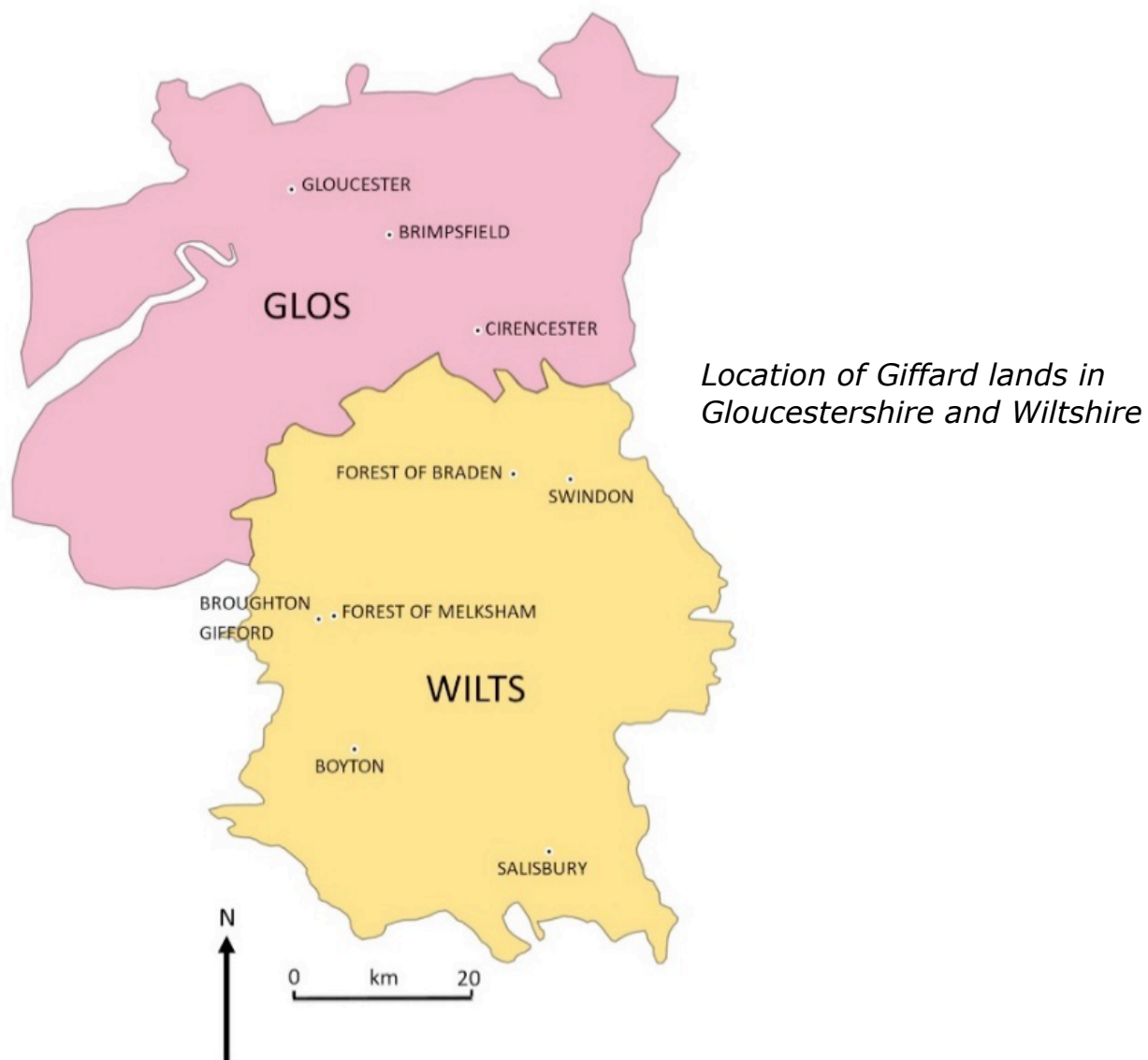
### **Who would have created a park in Broughton Gifford?**

A park is most likely to have been established by John Giffard [*sic*], 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Giffard of Brimpsfield who, with his wife, held Broughton Gifford from 1268 until her death in 1338. Broughton Gifford is on the route between Brimpsfield, which lies between Gloucester and Cirencester, and the Giffords' Wiltshire estate at Boyton and Sherington (Sernton) in the Wylve valley.

Sir John's tenure of Broughton Gifford was obviously significant enough for him to have given his name to the tithing and village. He was a nationally known figure, a leading figure in the Second Barons' War of the 1260s, and founder of Gloucester Hall in Oxford which was refounded in 1714 as Worcester College.

John Giffard was also a noted huntsman who held a chase (private forest) on the Clee Hills in Shropshire and after 1281 had a licence to hunt wolves 'in all the royal forests of England as long as he took no deer'.

The Giffards already had a 200 acre (81 hectare) park in Brimpsfield which was first recorded in 1227. This was restocked with a royal grant of ten does and five bucks from the Forest of Braden (now Braydon) in 1261.



A possible link between John Giffard's huntsman, Walter Balle, and a park in Broughton Gifford is provided by an entry in State Records of 1276 as follows, *Sept 22, Bristol. To the constable of Devizes Castle. Order to cause Walter Balle, the huntsman of John Giffard, to have six oaks fit for timber in the forest of Melksham, of the king's gift.* Oak was used to make park palings and Broughton Gifford's Park lay only 4 km from the edge of Melksham Forest. Had the oak been required for Brimpsfield Park then it could have been sourced from the Forest of Braden, which is nearer to Brimpsfield as can be seen in the map. If, as seems likely, the oak was destined for Broughton Gifford Park then it gives a date when the park was functional. Oak paling could be erected quickly for the establishment, repair or division of the park and was underplanted with hawthorn which could take over as a hedge when the oak rotted away.

John Giffard's third wife held Broughton Gifford until 1338, and after her death there were six claimants to the estate. This resulted in its division, first into halves, and then into even smaller fractions, and it was only reunited under John Horton in 1627. It therefore seems unlikely that the park would have been maintained after 1338.