

Lastly in the story, following miracles with crowds of sick people being cured at the site of Freomund's tomb, the Bishop of Dorchester, together with our pilgrim and the priests, try to carry the coffin to the nearest monastery, but can get no further than Cropredy. There they build a shrine and chapel to Saint Freomund. This is a little confusing and perhaps hints at a late foundation of the Minster itself at Cropredy around the relics of Freomund, since references to the Minster at Cropredy are from the eleventh century. There is now no trace of a chapel to Freomund at Cropredy but it is thought the parish church once had one.

The antiquarian William Camden recorded one version of the story of the death of Prince Freomund and noted he was buried at his father's palace at Offchurch near Leamington Spa. He placed Freomund's death at place called Wydford. Whilst there is no local place today with this name, at an earlier date it could simply have implied a wide ford or one where willows grow. Taken together with the specific location in the legend of where Freomund became inanimate – between Harbury and Itchen – this could encourage the romanticist to seek a place where Freomund might have been martyred.¹⁷

The village of Bishops Itchington was moved to its present location in the sixteenth century from its previous and more remote location a mile to the south at Old Town. There is a strong possibility that an old road once existed running along several parish boundaries from the upper Cherwell valley close to Kings Sutton, then on past Prescott to cross the present county boundary close to Wormleighton, ultimately going past Harbury as far as Warwick.¹⁸ There is reference to such a track certainly from Wormleighton to Warwick, once described as "*regia via inter castra de Warr' et eccl. Sci Petri de Wilmesleyton*". The evidence for its existence south of Wormleighton is less robust but cannot be discounted. This track would have crossed the river Itchen by a ford at the point where four parish boundaries meet, namely those of Bishops Itchington, Ladbroke, Chapel Ascot and Harbury, where a water mill is thought to have existed at the time of Domesday. Although no Mercian Law Codes

¹⁷ The suggested location for *Wydford* is OS 399588 which also appears to correspond roughly with J. Blair's diagram in *Anglo Saxon Oxfordshire*, p.74.

See also *Historic Warwickshire* by T. Burgess, published in 1893, in which he states Camden was in turn quoting an un-named "*old chronicle*" as his source.

¹⁸ See Appendix, page 248.