

particularly along the Avon Terrace Belt but also along the line of a great road like the Fosse. Their expansion southward from the Avon valley, with its numerous Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, towards the Cotswold scarp was both early and vigorous, and was associated with the establishment of strongly nucleated villages with distinctive Anglo-Saxon place-names, many having characteristic endings in *-ton* and *-ham*. Regional differentiation within Warwickshire was now becoming marked, for whereas the Avon Terrace Belt and the Feldon to the south were to be closely settled, the Forest of Arden to the north contained relatively few major settlements and the scattered hamlets, with distinctive clearing names ending in *-ley*, *-worth*, and *-field*, so typical of the region today, were to come into being only later as small groups of venturesome settlers spread north into the dense oak wood making individual hedged clearings.<sup>1</sup> This distinction was deemed worthy of comment by topographers such as Leland and Dugdale centuries later and still remains strong today.<sup>2</sup>

Anglo-Saxon settlement at Wormleighton appears to have been associated with a small group of colonists, one of whom, called *Wilma* or *Wilmund*, gave his name not only to the present village but, as we shall see, also to other topographic features in the vicinity. The earliest form of the name *Wilman lehttune* (Wilma's kitchen-garden) appears in a charter<sup>3</sup> of King Eadwy dated 956, granting an estate to Earl Ælfhere. The ancient boundaries of the land-holding, which are very carefully recorded in this and other charters,<sup>4</sup> can still be identified within reasonable limits on the ground today and have been plotted on Fig. 2. The perambulation begins at *Cranmere* (presumably Crane Mere), which almost certainly occupied a small depression in the clays of the Fenny Compton gap since utilized as a reservoir to provide water for the Oxford Canal. The mere was actually larger than the reservoir, as the extent of alluvium plotted from field-work and also shown on the unpublished 6-in. sheets of the Geological Survey<sup>5</sup> confirms. Further support for its location is provided by the current place-name Granmore Hill for the rising ground south of the depression, while the stream issuing from the mere in 956 was called *Cranmeres broc* or *Claeihama broc* (Clayhome Brook) which today flows by the village of Claydon.<sup>6</sup> From the mere the boundary ran along 'the street', which appears to be the road from Southam to Banbury, to a 'hore pit' (mud hole) and a 'black pit' which presumably were pools on or adjoining the little stream flowing west. Thereafter the boundary followed the

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the colonization of Arden and Feldon *vide* H. Thorpe, 'The Growth of Settlement before the Norman Conquest', *Birmingham and its Regional Setting: A Scientific Survey* (British Association Handbook, 1950), 87-112.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland* (1906-10), ii, 47-51, and v, 155-6 for an account of Arden and Feldon, c. 1540; also William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), Preface b3.

<sup>3</sup> W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum* (1885-93), nos. 946-7. See also A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Warwickshire* (English Place-Name Society, xiii, 1936), 275, and *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, v (1949), 218. E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn.

(1960), considers that the first element may be a river-name *Wilme* or *Wielme* from O.E. *wielm* meaning 'flowing', and that the second element is O.E. *lēactūn* signifying 'tūn where leeks grow'.

<sup>4</sup> A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson, *The Crawford Collection of Early Charters* (1895), 19-20, give details of grants of land at Ladbrooke and Radbourn, adjoining Wormleighton, by King Æthelred to Ealdorman Leofwine around 998.

<sup>5</sup> Photostat copies of 6-in. sheets SP.45.SW and SP.45.SE. can be obtained from the Geological Survey, London.

<sup>6</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* (English Place-Name Society, vols. 23, 24, 1953-4), 418; E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn. (1960), 110.