

**AREA 8: PARISH OF STONELEIGH: BERICOTE WOOD 34/36,  
THE GROVE & LUNCHES 24/37, BRICK KILN, DECOY & COTTON MILL SPINNEYS 45/37,  
HARE'S PARLOUR 45/37, BLACK SPINNEY AND CHANTRY HEATH 5/37  
STONELEIGH OLD PARKLAND, MOTSLOWHILL and GILBERTS SPINNEYS 6/37,  
TICKNELL SPINNEY 51/37, THE ROUGH 50/37 AND B4115 WOOD  
**CHECK Westley Bridge Spinney...****

**Sources of information are:**

1. Ecosite notes (HBA)
3. Local Record Office 2017/8 (RM)
4. Wager 1998 Woods, Wolds & Groves (Ph.D thesis)
13. Our Warwickshire (WCC website)

**ECOLOGY (source 1)**

**Stoneleigh Old Parkland, Gilberts and Motslow Hill Spinney:** old parkland with a number of ancient oaks. Important for fungi, inverts, bats and birds.

**Chantry Heath Wood:** mainly coniferous plantation with border of beech/oak (**Black Spinney** once perhaps part?)

**Ticknell spinney:** ancient woodland (HBA) **NOT**. Pedunculate oak and lime, with small area of conifer, willow, poplar.

**The Rough:** mainly planted oak with variable drainage due to hummocks and hollows??? Dogs mercury.

**Bericote Wood:** semi-natural ancient woodland dominated by oak with 20yr. old central coniferous plantations. Bluebell, dog's mercury, wood anemone, dogwood.

**The Grove:** estate woodland, mature oak, sycamore, yew, planted conifers.

**Brick Kiln Spinney:** ancient woodland (HBA) **NOT**. Mixed deciduous; dog's mercury and bluebells

**Decoy Spinney:** ancient woodland (HBA) mixed deciduous; dog's mercury and bluebells

**Hare's Parlour:** ancient woodland (HA) **NOT**. Mixed deciduous; dog's mercury and bluebells

**Cotton Mill Spinney:** ancient woodland (HBA) **NOT**. mixed deciduous; dog's mercury and bluebells.

**HISTORY**

**1086: Domesday survey** records two priests in the parish, though nothing now remains of their church. The manor then possessed two mills and 4 miles of woodland. **In the middle of the 12th C.** the arrival of Cistercian monks founded Stoneleigh Abbey (**Source 13**).

**Source 4:** the foundation charter of Stoneleigh Abbey gave the monks easements in the king's forest, woods and *bruillis*, for firewood and building timber. The **wood of Echells is shown on the map of the Stoneleigh estate dated 1597**, presumably the wood of *Aceles* recorded in 1245, although its exact size and shape might well have changed over the centuries. The Stoneleigh Leger Book names fields brought into cultivation from the *bruillum* of Echells and the estate map of 1597 enables these fields, and therefore at least part of the *bruillum*, to be located. The term *bruillum* is rare (found only in the SE of Warwickshire), distinct from *boscum* and given three meanings - thicket, covert and game-park. Together with the *bruillum* of **Wetherley**, perhaps an Anglo Saxon game park distinct from woods (*boscum*).

**Source 13:** The estate and the woodland remained the property of the church until the Dissolution of the Monasteries, between 1536 and 1539, by Henry VIII, after which the Abbey became a ruin until in 1538 the estate was granted to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. 400m west of Bericote Wood is the site of Bericote deserted settlement, known to have existed in the medieval period. **By 1542 Bericote had been reduced to a grange of Stoneleigh**, of which it had once been a hamlet, with sixteen persons in Edward I's time.

**In 1561, the estate was sold in part to the then Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Leigh. By 1873, the Leigh family was the largest landowner in Warwickshire with over 20,000 acres;** with each acquisition of land, title deeds and

other papers were added to the family archives, in some cases reaching back to the twelfth century. Those which came with the purchase of the Stoneleigh estate included cartularies. **In 1926, almost 2500 acres were purchased by Coventry Corporation**, including approximately 350 acres of woodland.

### Source 3:

**1597** two Leigh Estates maps show but difficult to read most of writing:

- **the Parc** 329 acres,
- **How Grove** = the Grove
- **Buricott / Berycoate Wood**.
- the maps vary over **Eachills Wood**: on one it is shown as two inclosures called 'wood' totaling 31 acres and the rest as 4 named inclosures totaling 103 acres. Other map shows all wood of 118 acres.

**A survey of 1683** lists **Ticknell** meadow 4 acre and pitted 3 acre (*name Thomas Russell*), also **nether and over Ticknell** 13 acres (*Joseph Hemings*) and again 14 acres (*Francis Cathmore*)

**1682-1833**: several terriers mention Bericote, How Grove and Hirons Rough (was Beech Hill) as non - titheable woods.

**Map 1766 of Leigh estates in Stoneleigh = 717 acres of woods:**

- **How Grove**: 29 acres and **Lunches** west along the river,
- **Bericote**: 72 acres ?
- **Decoy Wood**: 4 acres,
- **Brick Kiln Piece**: 1 acre with Rushy Close = current wood, (both **IN HAND** i.e part of Leigh 'homeground')
- **Eachells Wood**: now shown as woodland but only 31 acres, (**IN HAND**, i.e part of Leigh 'homeground') and where the Showground is now. **Victorian map only shows tiny Echills Wood Copse** so most of wood gone by 1880.
- **Parc**: 321 acres of parkland, now not discrete – Lord Leigh paid the Vicar for the use of it!
- **Rough Close**: 13 acres = The Rough
- **Chantry Heath Wood**: 61 acres, reaching the parish border. The site of a gravel pit, marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1886, and situated in the SW corner. A flint scatter, comprising flint artefacts of Prehistoric date, was found 500m north of Chantry Heath Wood.
- **Lawles Grove**: 4 acres (George Russell) west of **Parc** is now **Motslow Hill Spinney**, SW of Motslow Hill which is mentioned in 1260 and later. Bronze Age features have been identified close by, and the name of Motslow Hill echoes the old word "moot" or "meeting place" ; it was the site of a Hundred Court in medieval times. It is possible that the hilltop was a fortified place long before people moved into the valley below, and stone from its quarry was used to build the church and almshouses.

**1777: Stoneleigh Estate map** shows strip off Bericote called **Beech Hill**.

**Parish of Stoneleigh enclosed in 1816 and Titheable map of 1843** shows **Bericote** 57 acres, **How Grove** 31 acres and **Hirons Rough** belonging to Leigh Chandos. Many other woods and spinneys are mentioned in the Tithe apportionment of 1846, presumably gone now???

**Other woods in 2018 WWT records in relation to maps are:**

- **Ticknell** = Oxclose + the Lane (Henry Jackson)...**seems not ancient woodland**. It is substantially the same as it was mapped circa 1830, a triangular spinney with one face bordering the road from Stoneleigh to Cubbington. In the 1830 map, it is shown with a track running exactly the length of the spinney on the Cubbington side face. The spinney has grown over a number of pits of varying shapes which are only separated by narrow banks, these have the appearance of man-made features. The only area not pitted is the edge facing Cubbington which is level and even, and corresponds with the track marked in early mapping. **Suppositions:** The site may have been for clay extraction and brick / tile making; it resembles other Stoneleigh sites associated by name with brick working. Other explanations might be fishponds or retting pits. **The site must predate the spinney marked in 1830s mapping, with the track allowing an area for access and working.** It is worth remembering that bricks were still until recently sometimes fired in clamps which would leave very little to observe on the surface and that spinney can not only mean a small wooded area but an area of immature trees such as would naturally grow (or be planted)
- **Black Spinney: not named** but could be part of Chantry Heath as this is now smaller.

- **B4115 wood** : not marked so **not an old woodland**.
- **Gilberts Spinney**: not marked. It is where there was meadow around the east edge of Echills Wood on earlier maps so it is **not an old woodland**.
- The area of **Hare's Parlour** is not woodland = 2 meadows, House Ground, Lammas and Croft