

Kingsclere: A Stream and Four Mills

Chris Watkins 2020

The hills to the South of Kingsclere are made of chalk (hence the name White Hill?). In the same line Inkpen Hill rises to the height of 1011 feet, the greatest elevation which chalk attains in England¹.

Water flows down through chalk but when it meets the strata below, Greensand clay, “exquisite springs of clear-water rise”².

Just west of Winchester Road, Wells Head is fed by springs and is the source of the village stream and has never dried up³.

Sluices were used for the training of racehorses. One manager said “Cold water therapy: the best type, in my experience, is the local chalk stream, Gaily Brook, fed by Wells Head springs. We lead the horses against the current, which is excellent therapy for their legs.”⁴

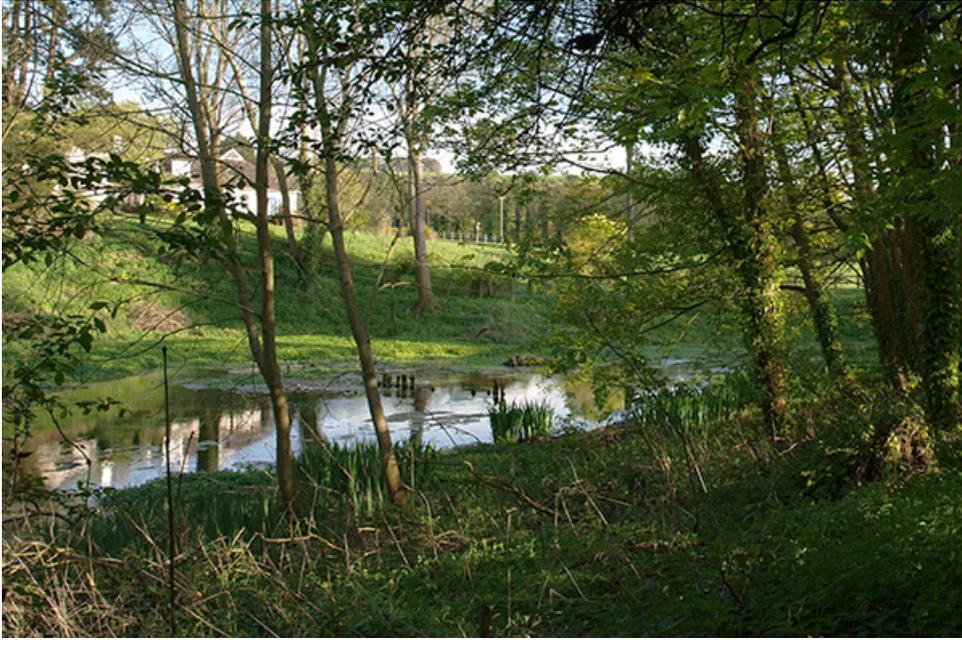
The stream flows almost due north through the village. Seven kilometres later it empties itself into the River Enborne, which forms the boundary between Hampshire and Berkshire, and joins the River Kennet at Aldermaston, which in turn joins the River Thames at Reading.

¹ Rev. W. Buckland (1826) On the Formation of the Valley of Kingsclere and other Valleys by the Elevation of the Strata that enclose them

² Herbert L Hawkins, (1918) “Notes on the Geological Structure of the Vale of Kingsclere” Proceedings of Hampshire Field Club

³ Hampshire County Council (1979) Hampshire Treasures Volume 2, Basingstoke and Deane

⁴ William Huntingdon (2013) “William Huntingdon on Kingsclere” Financial Times April 5



Wells Head



Near Gaily Mill



Near Gaily Mill



Near Gaily Mill



4 Winchester Road



View from Bear Hill
bridge
(rear of 70 Swan
Street)



Rear of 34 Swan Street



Kingsclere House
circa 1976



“The Lake” from the
public footpath

towards Clanna,
Popes Hill



View from Lake House



St Mary's Church



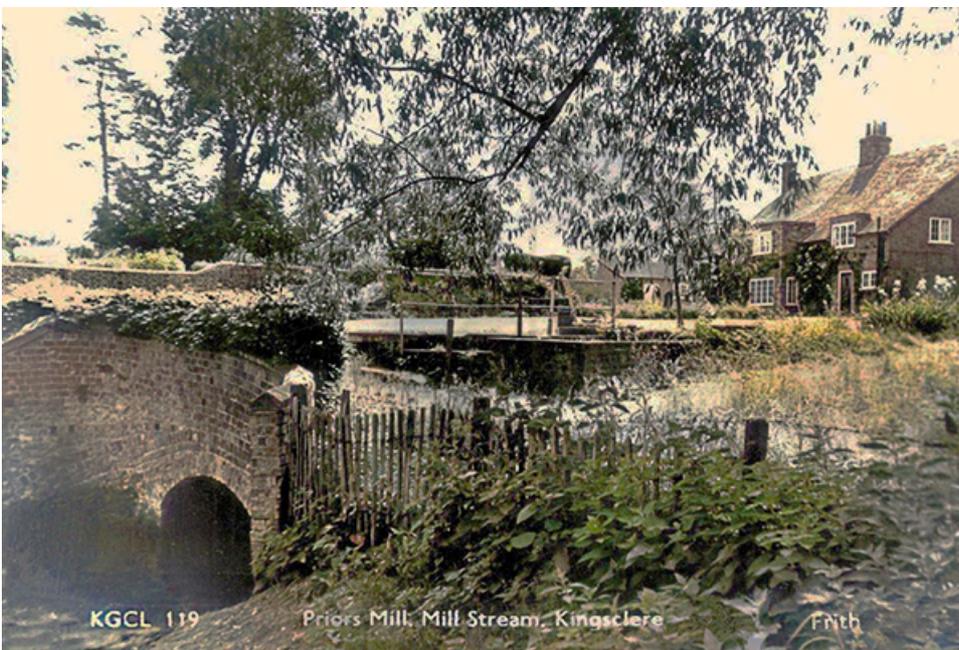
Brook House,
Popes Hill



Town Mill rear,
from Popes Hill



Exit from Town Mill
plus Brewery



“Blue Bridge” and
Priors Mill

Mills since Domesday

In a survey of 1066 ("Domesday Book") Kingsclere had a recorded population of 113 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded in Domesday, larger than both Basingstoke and Andover.

How many mills were there in Kingsclere? Some say two, but those are mills which were in royal hands. There were five according to *An Extensive Urban Survey of Hampshire's Historic Towns: Historic Kingsclere: Archaeological Assessment Document*⁵ "The Clere estates in Domesday Book that have been identified as Kingsclere had a total of five mills, two of which were in royal hands".

One was a windmill according to records of 1544: the site of the windmill is perhaps marked by Mill Green, near River Enborne.

So here are four watermills:

Galiesmull / Galymille / Gaily Mill / Upper Mill

Known as *Galiesmull* in 1296 and *Galymille* in 1480⁶, the mill belonged to the manor of Sandford. Gaily Mill was also known as Upper Mill. Water-powered for grinding grain, then in 1850-60 added power from steam and its chimney survives although all the machinery has been removed. Used until recent times for grinding cattle and horse food. The existing building dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Pope's Mill / Town Mill

This was the mill belonging to the Canons of St Mary's, Rouen who were granted the demesne manor in 1107. The mill may have been one of the two mills recorded on the king's estate in the Domesday Book. The mill was known as Town Mill by 1444. Town Mill was also known during the mid-nineteenth century as Pope's Mill⁷. In 1868 when James Pope resided here his oven caught fire and the blaze spread to the roof (it happened again in 1987). The mill was no longer in use by 1911. After 1911 it was used for storing grain.

Hogesmull / Sweynesmill / Victoria Mill / Priors Mill

A grant of a tenement dated 1311 had the water running from the mill of the Dean and Chapter of the church of Rouen to a mill called *Hogesmull*⁸, which may have been the mill called *Sweynesmill* in 1323 (*ibid*). *Hogesmull* may have been on the site of Victoria Mill. Victoria Mill was demolished post-1911 but the mill house, an eighteenth century building, still stands, renamed Priors Mill.

Northmulle / Lower Mill / Island Mill

A grant of land was made to *William at Northmulle*, miller, in 1331 (Himsworth 1984, 12250). It is uncertain whether this reference to a Northmill refers to Lower Mill or Victoria Mill, both of which lie to the north of Kingsclere. *Lower Mill*, to the north (Union Lane), is marked on modern OS maps as Island Mill. The building dates from the eighteenth century.

Who owned these mills in later years? Two people. In 1875 James Bradfield of Fox Grove (became Kingsclere House in 1911) was the proprietor of Upper and Lower Mills, and William Prior of Victoria and Town Mills.

⁵ Edwards, B. 1999, Hampshire County Council & English Heritage
<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/archaeology/28321-KingsclereExtensiveUrbanSurvey.pdf>
citing Munby, J. [Ed] 1982 *Domesday Book Hampshire* Phillimore Chichester

⁶ Himsworth, S. 1984 *Winchester College Muniments 2*, Estates Phillimore Chichester

⁷ Page, W. [Ed] 1911 *Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight 4*, Archibald Constable.

⁸ Himsworth, S. 1984 *op cit*



Gailey Mill late 1930s



Town Mill/Popes Mill
1960



Victoria Mill 1910
demolished in 1911



Priors Mill

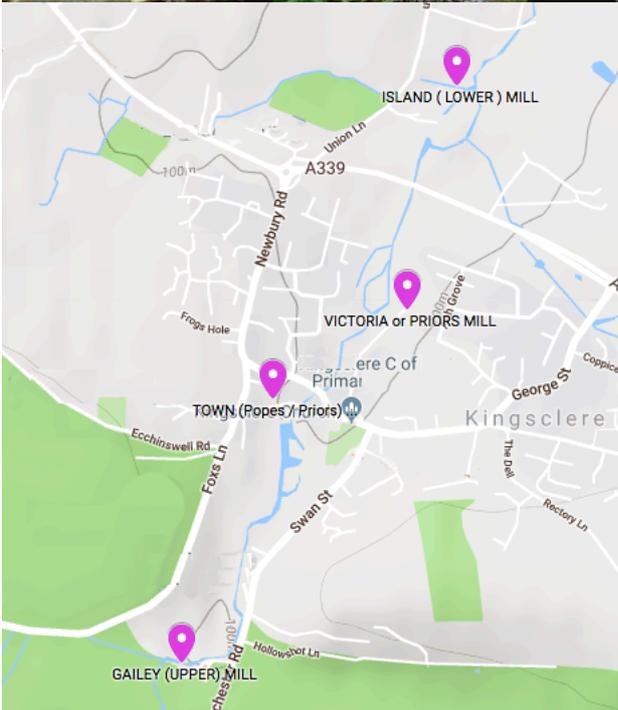
named in 1940 when William Prior owned



Island Mill 2012

A.k.a. Lower Mill

working mill until 1960s



Map of four mills