

Kingsclere



Millennium Trail

The Village of Kingsclere

Kingsclere has been a flourishing village for centuries. The first time it was recorded by name was about 1228. Once described as "a place too healthy to die in and too poor to live in" the village is surrounded by farmland and is located at the crossing point between the Newbury/Basingstoke road and the Andover/Reading road. Over the years the village has accommodated four mills, numerous inns, and its own brewery

It has had many royal visitors including Henry 11, King John, Queen Elizabeth and James 1. In recent years the village has grown considerably as several hundred houses have been built although the atmosphere has in no way been diminished by this expansion. Following the Millennium Trail will take you through some of the most interesting and beautiful parts of the village.

The Market Place or the Village Square. The start of Trail A.

The trail is in two parts: trail A approximately 1.5 miles and trail B is 2 miles. Each trail starts and returns to the Market Place.

For centuries this has been the focal point of the village. Years ago buildings covered the area which is now the churchyard. One of these, The Vyne Inn, was there until 1885. At one time the square held a whipping post and stocks! There has even been a workhouse on this site. On the east of the square you will see a house which was once a C17 malting shop and later the post office until about 1950.

The northern part of the square houses the **Jubilee Lamp** erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Originally it was a gas lamp and tended by Mr. Beaver. When he died, his son erected the lamp in his garden in Basingstoke but on his death it was returned to the village. To the west of the square is **St. Mary's Church**.* This late Norman style church was completed between 1130 and 1270 AD. The church was originally built of limestone from the Isle of Wight but by 1848 most of the exterior was replaced by the flint you see today, The building shows traces of many periods. Much of the mediaeval evidence has been removed and only a few monuments are left



Walk south to the junction with Anchor road.

The weathervane on top of the church tower has evoked much controversy over the years. The most popular legend is that King John, staying overnight at a local inn, possibly The Swan, was plagued with bed bugs! To warn all future travellers he ordered the erection of the weathervane in the form of a bed bug.

Continue south along Swan Street -formerly called South Street.

The lane on the left, next to the chemist's shop, housed the early motorised fire-engine. 15 Swan Street was once a **Cobblers** shop and has an interesting timber frame end wall dating back to the C16. On the right, 18 Swan Street, **The Old Miller's House** was a bakery and produced flour and animal feed. During the First World War it supplied horse feed to the garrison at Aldershot.

There has been a house on the site of **20 Swan Street** for centuries. An archaeological dig revealed metal and ceramic work dating back to the Roman era. The house that now stands on the site is one of the oldest in the village and was originally a two bay **Hall House** with central fire -a flint hearth below the fire is dated C9. The building was converted in Elizabethan times.

The **Swan Hotel*** is one of the oldest inns in the village. Its timbers and Queen Anne porch suggest an C18 date although there has been a public house on this site since C16. Beyond the Swan is **Warham House**, built around C15 and owned by William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor. It is thought to have been built as a college and subsequently housed a Victorian girls' boarding school.

The **Albert Hall**, 1886, constructed by a company of local people, as a community hall at the cost of £800, was used for a variety of village, social, business and political activities and occasionally housed the overspill classes from the Kingsclere Secondary School. In the 1960s the hall was sold to the Catholic Church and currently accommodates the Church and social club of St. Peter and Paul.

Walk along Swan Street noting the mix of old and new properties. Just before the road forks right is:

The **Bolton Arms**, now 46 Swan Street. This was a coaching inn and was owned by Lord Bolton, Marquis of Winchester.

Continue south into Winchester Road passing on the right the junction of Bear Hill and Pound Green.

Stray animals were held in the village pound until a payment was made for their release.

Proceed along Winchester Road taking the footpath 100 yards after the last cottage on the right. This goes alongside the drive to Gailey Mill. If we had continued further south from the village we should have come to:

Park House Stables. An innovative stables, this was built for John Porter in the 1880's with a well designed stabling quadrangle and good dormitory accommodation, with hot and cold water laid on for the apprentices. The stable has trained no fewer than 10 Derby winners.

Cottington Hill: King Henry had a hunting lodge and stables known as "Freemantle" built here about 1160. The house was also used by King Richard and frequently by King John. In 1205 the Crown Jewels were brought from Windsor to "Freemantle". There is now a large communications mast at the top of the hill. **Cannon Hill Down and Watership Down:** An area, which was used for centuries to graze cattle and sheep, has also been the site for civil war battles and the famous fantasy story of the rabbits. It is now used mainly for gallops for the training of racehorses.

Continuing our village trail:

Gailey Mill*, the southernmost of the village mills, was once owned by the monks of Bisham Abbey who worked it as a corn mill. It was later a fulling mill before again reverting to corn. When powered by water, the mill had a 10-foot diameter overshot water wheel. The mill was rebuilt about 1880 and converted to a steam mill.

After passing Gailey Mill and crossing the Gailey Brook near its source at Wells Head continue along the footpath to the junction with the Sydmonton Road, turn right and continue straight on into Fox's Lane. About 200 yards on the right take the footpath through the kissing gate which will lead past the gardens of Kingsclere House, over the footbridge crossing the lake and Gailey Brook, alongside the churchyard and return you to the Market Place.

Kingsclere House: Earlier buildings on this site include Foxgrove Farm built around C17. The present building was enlarged around 1890 by the family of Lord Portal and became the centre of the horse racing fraternity. During this time Edward VII was a frequent visitor. In World War One it was used as a hospital and in 1950 became two houses. *End of Trail A.*

To follow Trail B:; Leave the Market Place with the church on your left and turn left into Newbury Road.

On your left you will see **The Falcons*** thought to be one of the oldest inns in Hampshire. In 1510 the building was given to Winchester College to help in the financial support of scholars. By 1628 it had become known as The Golden Falcon and continued as a coaching inn, hospice and inn until it closed in 1950.

Turn left into Pope's Hill through the bollards:

The building on the right is **The Brewery**. On the site of a previous timber framed brewery the Drake family established and rebuilt the brewery in 1742. It remained in the ownership of the Drake family until the early C20. During its lifetime, you could either purchase its fine beer by having 5 gallon casks delivered by horse drawn dray or collect your beer in a jug!

On the left is the **Old Malt House** where locally grown grain was malted and hops were grown to supply Drake's Brewery. As the Gailey Brook passed under Pope's Hill it drove the wheel of **Town Mill** now The Old Mill House. Town or Pope's Mill produced flour and animal feed and also operated as a bakery.

Arriving at the top of Pope's Hill turn right into Fox's Lane.

You will see the **Old Rectory** on the right and then having rejoined Newbury Road, **The Old House** on the left. Built in the early 1500s the house is thought to be mediaeval in origin. At one time a farm it is rumoured that Charles 1 stayed here.

Crossing the road and returning to the village, via the Newbury road, will take you past Cedar Drive, the site of **Tower Hill House**, a Queen Anne period building demolished to make way for the Cedar Drive development.

Turn left, at the children crossing sign, onto a footpath following the western edge of Gailey Brook. Follow this footpath to a T junction and turn right along this path which will recross Gailey Brook before emerging into North Street. Turn right:

The row of cottages, on the right, 15-21 North Street, was constructed in 1750 and housed a **Tannery** where animal skins were tanned by immersing them in water from the Gailey Brook to which bark was added. In the C15, 3 North Street was at right angles to number 5 which was a **Laundry**. The upper storey of 5 used to jut out over the street by about a metre.

Priory House, on the right of the junction of North Street with Newbury Road, still retains the significant features of a Mediaeval Hall House. It is thought to have been a dwelling house in the C12 when it housed the Canons of Rouen whilst the church opposite was being built and was used as their administrative centre.

The **Crown Inn**, built in 1853 was the scene of a local tragedy during World War 11 when American soldiers from the nearby base at Sydmonton Court opened fire on the inn fatally wounding the landlady Mrs. Napper and a military policeman. The small building adjacent to the inn has served as a courthouse.

Pass the florists and continue up the main thoroughfare - George Street:

On the left is the **Methodist Chapel***, built in 1812 and originally of Wesleyan determination. Following the amalgamation with the Primitive Methodists in 1934 it was renamed a Methodist Chapel.

Next to the Chapel is **Phoenix House** the former home of the Chance family. Originally of Huguenot descent, they established a general store in the adjoining building in 1760 and this continued until 197..... The local Horse drawn Fire-engine was in the yard at the side. 8 George Street, on the right, dates from the C16 and was a **Blacksmiths and Farriers Forge*** operated by the Garrett family.

Parts of 13 George Street are known to date from 1585. During major excavation in 1998 an earlier façade was exposed indicating that the building had previously been known as the **New Inn** -Producer of Home-Brewed Beer! On the right, in the building that now houses Sasso's restaurant, sacks and twine were made and the site included a **Rope walk**.



At the top of George Street, on the left you will find the **Village Club***, easily distinguished by its pillared porticos. Built before 1832, when the new frontage to the cottages was added, the building was given to the village by the Holding Family, as a club and reading room. It was extended in the 1880s and now houses a library, the police office, Parish Council Office and a flourishing club.

Next to the club are the **Almshouses** (Brown's Bungalows). In 1586 the Rev. Thomas Brown, Vicar of Kingsclere 1565-1587, endowed an almshouse to accommodate 8 men. The present almshouse dates back to 1853. **The George and Horn**. This public house was originally called The Crown and may date back as far as 1611. It was an old coaching inn. Note the attractive windows.

Opposite the George and Horn and next to the post box, is the footpath entrance south to **The Dell**, formerly a chalk pit from which chalk was supplied to local farmers and builders. Those collecting chalk were charged sixpence for a cart hauled by two horses. *Having walked through The Dell, turn right at the junction, up a flight of steps and to the recreation ground, turn right and follow the footpath which borders the rear of a row of houses. Once through the gate at the western end of the field turn right down a footpath and road until you are once again in the Village Square*

Acknowledgements:

Watercolours by: Tracey-Anne Stich, Kingsclere

Monochromes by: Tim Garrett, Kingsclere

Cover image courtesy of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council


The Royal School of Military Survey gave invaluable help with digital image preparation

Anthony Smith, a senior pupil at The Clere School, assisted with the textual content.



FUNDLED BY

Hampshire County Council

ST  AGE 2000

Items marked with * are depicted on the tapestry in the church.

The information in this leaflet is as correct as we have been able to make it, having consulted many sources.