

Temple. Look for the representation in the east window of John Porter's most celebrated horse, Ormonde, regarded as one of the finest in English racing history.

THE SOUTH TRANSEPT has a 15th century window with 19th century glass depicting the Ascension. Since being furnished with an altar and the Book of Remembrance it has been called the **Memorial Chapel**. It now contains the fine monument to Sir Henry Kingsmill (d 1625) and Lady Bridget (d 1672), moved from the Kingsmill Chapel when that was converted to become the School Room (now Kingsmill Room) in 1978.

THE CHANCEL was rebuilt by the Lord of the Manor, Lord Bolton, of the Orde-Powlett family, at the time of the 1848 restoration. The height of the roof and of the east window were increased, and new glass provided. The grisaille glass is a copy of some windows in Salisbury Cathedral. Note some excellent needlework, especially the High Altar runner. The 'key' to the other kneelers, which were the gift of various local organisations and individuals, can be seen in a frame hanging on the north wall. The stalls and woodwork were the gift of the Orde-Powlett family, which provided several Vicars with cricketing enthusiasms for the parish in the 19th century.

THE KINGSMILL ROOM to the south of the chancel is kept locked when not in use these days (although open every Saturday between 10am—12 noon while coffee, tea and cakes are served for the general public). Formerly the Kingsmill Chapel, added to the church in the late 15th century to house the Kingsmill Tomb now in the North Transept, it was converted in 1978 to provide a meeting room for the Sunday School and other parish groups. On the walls are monuments from the 17th to 20th centuries. Also mounted on the wall are brasses of the 16th century. The south windows contain glass depicting the Wedding at Cana and the Transfiguration. The east window is modern, by Lawrence Lee, commemorating Capt Peter Hastings-Bass, former churchwarden and owner of Park House Stables, and father-in-law of the present owner. His various interests can be detected in the window. If you look carefully, a line of etched racehorses on the brow of the hill, the White Horse of Uffington, a Rugby football and two birds can also be made out.

Based on an original guide authored by  
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## ST MARY'S CHURCH KINGSCLERE

### BRIEF GUIDE

#### BACKGROUND

The church's size and shape, together with its dominant position in the community, show that it is no ordinary village church. The original church was shown in King Alfred's will (AD 899) as a 'Minster' serving as a centre of worship for a very extensive royal estate, and the seat of a community engaged in pastoral and educational mission, associated with a place of occasional residence for the highly mobile royal household.

The Norman kings continued this arrangement, but donated the church and part of the royal estate to the Augustinian Canons of St Mary at Rouen in Normandy, who erected the present cruciform church about 1130-40. For themselves, the Norman kings, notably King John (1199-1216) erected a series of hunting lodges and a small castle on the crest of Cottington's Hill overlooking Kingsclere, where the Radio and TV mast now stands.

Almost all the visible external features of the church today, however, result from a rebuilding in 1848-9. These included the raising of the central tower and the facing of the walls with split flints. Only the circular staircase to the tower retains the original facing of limestone from the Isle of Wight in its lower part.

The Churchyard was extended northwards in the 19th century, but the former Golden Falcon Inn, now a private house, 'Falcons', still remains to the NW. It would have been used as a lodging for royal messengers since Kingsclere lay on the normal road from London to Winchester and Southampton, and was important for industry, where woollen cloth and glove manufacture, rope-making, and brewing took place.

It is said that deep scratches made on the beams of the storehouse at the inn were made by falcons' claws. The Fawconers, whose arms showed three falcons with bells and jesses of gold, were a leading local family from 1400-1700, and donors of much of the church plate, now to be seen on display at the Treasury in Winchester Cathedral. Across the road from the church and Falcons is Priory House, probably on the site of the administrative centre (curia) mentioned in Domesday Book (1066).

## THE EXTERIOR

The "BUG" The most celebrated feature is the weather vane! Local tradition asserts that King John prevented by fog from reaching his downland hunting lodge at Freemantle, stayed at the village inn and was troubled during the night by bed-bugs. He ordered that the church should evermore display on its tower a representation of a dreaded bug. The present vane dates from 1751, but may well be a copy of its predecessor, and perhaps the line goes faithfully back to King John! Other theories are that it represents a tortoise or a dragon.



NORTH DOOR The blocked Norman door, together with a similar one to the south no longer to be seen, used to have a porch, and these were the principal entrances before 1848.

WEST FRONT The old Norman door had been replaced by a Tudor one, with a perpendicular window above. The village fire-engine was kept inside, and over the years, much damage was done to the doorway. The whole West front was replaced in 1848 when the present door with its 12th century design with arch enriched by chevrons and billets was made.

## THE INTERIOR

THE NAVE The size (67'x21') and austerity of the nave will be noted. It is basically Norman, rebuilt after a fire in 1402, and then remodelled in 1848, when several larger windows previously inserted to admit more light were replaced by small ones to match the remaining Norman windows. The memorials were removed to the Kingsmill Chapel. The tie-beams of 1402 were cut short in 1848 in order to produce a hammer-beam effect, but the walls started to bulge, and so the unsightly metal tie-bars had to be added!

The Font is 12th century of Purbeck marble ornamented with rosettes, blank arches, arrows and roundels, and a 4 petalled flower. The elegant wooden cover dates from the 17th century from the time when Archbishop Laud required the covering of all fonts. The base is modern.

The West Gallery, smaller than the one it replaced in 1848, now contains the organ, moved from the Kingsmill Chapel in 1978, just 100 years after its installation by Bevington & Sons of London. It originally cost £190, and contains some excellent pipe-work.

The Pulpit is Jacobean, with a kind of tree of life in the main panels. Every available space is carved with shallow arabesque patterns, including Tudor roses and egg and dart motifs.

The Corbels, supporting the brackets of the roof timbers at the easternmost end of the nave, are said to represent, on the left, the crowned head of the bearded King Henry IV, and the right, his second wife, Queen Joan of Brittany, wearing a long cap. At the time the nave was rebuilt by William of Wykeham in 1402, King Henry IV and his entourage awaited the delayed arrival of his bride-to-be in the Kingsclere area prior to the wedding at Winchester.

THE CROSSING, 20ft square, is flanked by plain Norman arches, except for the chancel arch, which has chevron and zig-zag ornament, restored in 1848. The Nave Altar was made by the children of the secondary school which used to be in Kingsclere on the site of the Health Centre, and was consecrated in 1966.

The Candelabrum is dated 1713 and was the gift of Amey Higham of Beenham Court (now Cheam School). This family was intimately associated with the parish for more than two centuries. It hangs from a ceiling emblazoned with stars, which was the gift of Sir Wyndham Spenser Portal in 1848, whose initials and family motto appear on the shields in the corners.

The Bells were formerly rung from a room below the line of this ceiling, but now the ringers ring from a chamber that has no window and precious little ventilation! The 6 bells of 1664 with a Tenor of 15cwt were augmented to 8 in 1962.

THE NORTH TRANSEPT was dedicated 'The Chapel of the Annunciation' in 1948, but today is often called The Lady Chapel. The perpendicular north window replaced a plain lancet in 1848, and the west window was newly created as a copy of the east one after that. The glass is the gift of the family of John Porter who owned Park House Stables, and shows the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Presentation of Christ in the