

# The Water Mills of Kingston Winslow, Berks

The history known so far – By Neil B. Maw

The layout of the two mills at Kingston Winslow is typical of man's ingenuity to get double use out of the same water course whilst being relatively close together. The map below shows just how close Upper Mill and Lower Mill are to each other. This fact can also present a problem for the researcher with identification of which miller was occupying which mill. In the earlier years we can only suggest who may have occupied which mill and hope that future research can produce more clarity.



The census of 1841 was recorded separately for Ashbury and Kingston Winslow and within the names of those listed are two Millers, George Palmer, aged 20 and William Ford also aged 20. There is no indication as to which mill they were operating, but it may be safe to suggest that both mills were operational at that period. However, a newspaper advertisement of 1845, showed a Kingstone Mill for sale. (Wilts & Glos Standard 4<sup>th</sup> March 1845). The description of it shown below describes a large mill and therefore it must be referring to the Upper Mill.

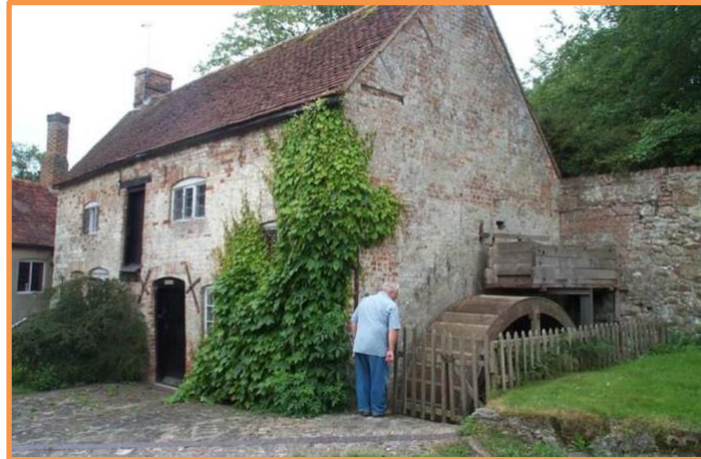
**GARDEN & JOINTING.**  
- The **KINGSTONE MILL** is Freehold, Land Tax Redeemed; it is very substantially Built, and drives three pair of Stones, with good supply of waters. The Dwelling House has recently been re-built, containing Eight Rooms with underground Cellars. There is also a commodious Waggon Shed, Stable, Wood House, Piggeries, with about Two Acres of Orchard and Garden Land, in the occupation of Mr. **JOSEPH SPENDLOVE**, at the Annual Rent of £80.

The next census of 1851 provided three names, William Chivers, aged 37; John Spindloe, aged 24 and Joseph Spindloe, aged 50. The surname is consistent with the 1845 newspaper advertisement, apart from the spelling difference, and we also learn that Joseph was operating Upper Mill. There is no evidence to suggest that the Spindloes were related; Joseph came from the Newbury area, Berks and John from Northleach, Glos. The third miller could be explained by the existence close by of North Mill, about half a mile to the north. (see separate listing SHS N158).



Location of North Mill - from Ashbury looking towards Shrivenham. Photo by Neil B. Maw

The census of 1861 also listed three millers, William Chivers, aged 47; Henry Pound, aged 28, Miller & Corn Factor and Joseph Spindloe, aged 56. Joseph Spindloe died a few months after the census and was buried in St Mary's churchyard, Ashbury on 28th October 1861.



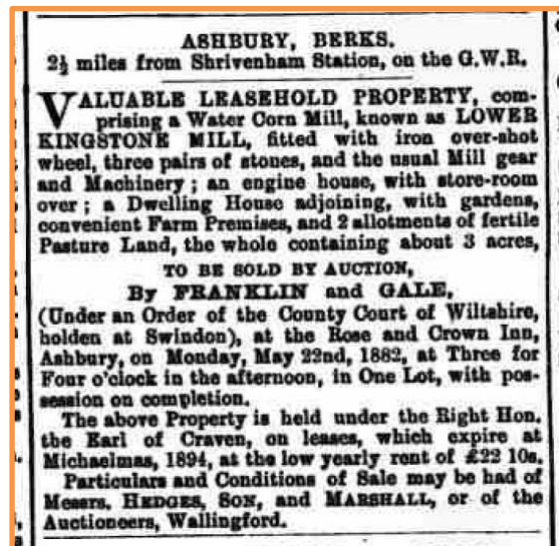
Lower Mill at Kingston Winslow.



Upper Mill circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams

There was only one miller listed in the census of 1881, Henry Pound. A local newspaper reported that Henry Pound of Kingstone Mills, Miller and Corndealet, had been made

bankrupt on 30th August 1881. (Swindon Adver 12th Sept 1881). The following year a newspaper article appeared offering the, 'Water Corn Mill known as Lower Kingstone Mill,' for auction by the order of the County Court of Wiltshire. (*Wilts & Glos Standard* 13th May 1882). The advertisement gave a more detailed description of the mill and how it was equipped (see below). This information also confirmed that Henry Pound was operating Lower Mill at this time.



A concise description of Lower Mill when the lease was offered for sale. *Wilts & Glos Standard* 13th May 1882

At the subsequent auction it would seem that the lease was purchased by George Ellis, but he wasn't particularly successful and by June 1887, he was declared bankrupt. The newspaper article that announced it, also stated that he was from, 'Lower Kingston Mill.' (*Bucks Herald* 4th June 1887). Another article noted that George Ellis, when he was a Draper in London in May 1885, was also declared bankrupt there too, and furthermore, he had done the same in December 1886 at Ashbury. (*North Wilts Herald* 3rd June 1887). Perhaps he was exploiting the relatively new Bankrupts Act of 1883 as a way of lowering the cost of his debts. He was released from bankruptcy in June 1888. (*Bucks Herald* 30th June 1888). But by 1891 he had moved on when the census listed the miller at Lower Mill as John Youens, aged 46, with his wife Jane, also 46, and three children.

The census of 1891 listed that Henry Pound was then the miller at Upper Mill. He must have been released from bankruptcy upon settling his debts and had arranged with the leaseholder to take the mill over. We learn who that leaseholder was two years later, when



on the 28th September 1893, Mr. P.A.V Le Lubee Esq, put the lease up for auction. (Swindon Adver 23rd Sept 1893).

**KINGSTON MILL, ASHBURY, BERKS**  
2 Miles from Strivenham Station, Great Western  
Railway.

**SALE OF VALUABLE PROPERTY,**  
COMPRISING

**FREEHOLD 4-Floor WATER GRIST MILL,**  
**MILL PLANT, and MACHINERY,**

Consisting of 2 pairs of French Burr Stones, 1 pair of  
Barley Burr Stones, Long Silk Flour Machine,  
Bolter Flour Machine, Cockle Machine, Purifier,  
Iron Water Wheel, 18ft. in diameter, Iron Pit  
Wheel, &c.

Also, DWELLING-HOUSE, adjoining Mill, con-  
taining 2 front sitting-rooms, kitchen and out-houses  
on ground floor, 4 bedrooms and attics; large Garden  
well-stocked with fruit trees, small Orchard, Stable,  
capital Coach-house, &c.

**MR. T. HOOPER DEACON** is  
favoured with instructions from P. A. V. LE  
LUBEE, Esq., to SELL the above by AUCTION, on  
THURSDAY NEXT 28th SEPTEMBER, at the Crown  
Hotel, Ashbury, at 4-30 o'clock in the Afternoon, in one  
Lot.

The whole is Let on Lease for a term of 9 years, at  
£60 per annum, expiring Dec. 25th, 1894, but arrange-  
ments can be made for possession to be had on comple-  
tion of the purchase.

For further particulars apply to  
**Messrs. HARPER & BATTCOCK,**  
Solicitors,  
23, Rood Lane, London, E.C.

or **T. HOOPER DEACON,** Auctioneer and Valuer,  
Swindon.

However, it didn't meet the reserve price and wasn't sold. (Swindon Adver 30th Sept 1893). The census of 1901 showed that at age 68, Henry Pound was probably going into retirement as his son Alfred was listed as the Miller, but it doesn't state which mill. We can assume that it was very likely to have been Upper Mill, but cannot confirm it yet. Perhaps Henry had taken over the lease when it failed to sell at the auction in 1893. By the census of 1911, Henry was listed as a, 'Retired Miller,' and young Alfred was then 27 and running the business, but again we can only assume that it was at Upper Mill.

It is unclear what was happening at Lower Mill. The census listed two other millers in Ashbury, Robert Pound, aged 47 and Richard Simpson, aged 56, but neither entries gave any indication of what mill they may have been operating.

It was during this period of the early 20th century that water mills in general had reached the end of their natural lives. Large, mechanised industrial mills were growing ever bigger

and more efficient using steam for power, rendering the numerous little water mills redundant. A huge number of these mills ceased operating around this period.



Upper Mill from across the Mill Pond circa 1920s. Photo courtesy of Paul Williams

If any reader has any further information on any of the mills mentioned in this article, please get in touch with us: [info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk](mailto:info@shrivenhamheritagesociety.co.uk)