

KIMBERWELL more than just a Toddington Road off Bradford Way

A fascinating history research on the history of KIMBERWELL which dates as far back to the year 926 from the Saxon Boundary Charter. All research done before by Gurney in 1919 and later by Blundell. Using Bedfordshire Archive records we are able to reassemble this history using the fantastic computer graphics now available.

It is proved this is just in Toddington Parish and back in the day folk travelled long distances to collect the water in bottles because it was good for weak eyes.

It had many old names; Cynburge Well, Kymberwelle, Cumberwell and finally Kimberwell.

It appears on the Bedfordshire Myths and Legends site as under:

<https://fantasticbritain.weebly.com/myths-and-legends/category/bedfordshire>

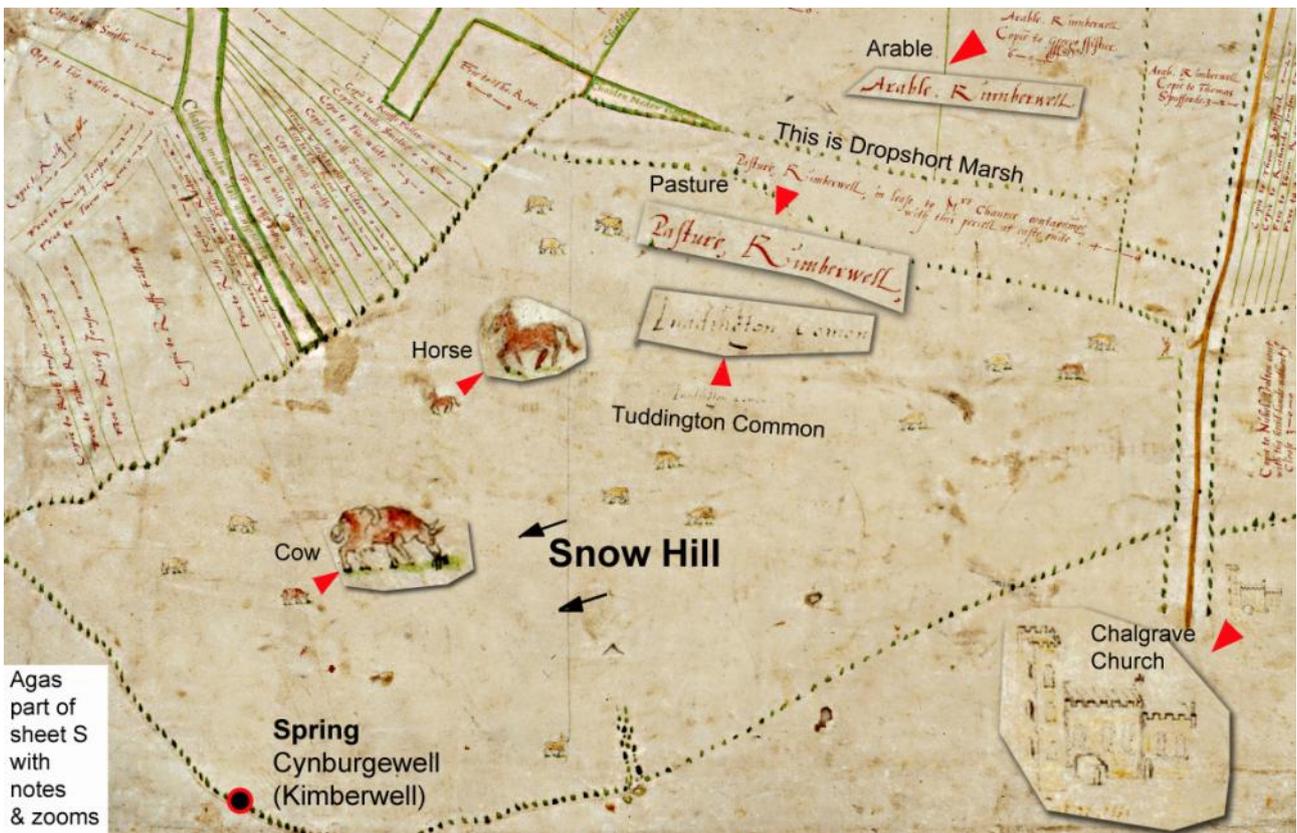
The Holy Well Of St Cyneburg, Abbess Of Castor

21/6/2018



In Chalgrave, there is a place called Kimberwell. This is an adaptation of its old name, recorded since 926. Cynburge Wellan became Cynburge Well and was eventually named Kimberwell in recent times. The well in question is most likely dedicated to St Cyneburg who is thought to have been born in Chargrave. The daughter of a Pagan king called Penda of Mercia, Cyneburg married the son of the Northumbrian king. They lived together in chastity until her husband died or relinquished her as his wife. Cyneburg then returned to her home lands in Mercia where she established convents in Castor, Peterborough, and Huntingdonshire. In Castor, Cyneburg is remembered as Lady Coneyburrow and Lady Ketilborough.

Many magical and spiritual rituals are based around wells, and no doubt the one at Kimberwell has been the centrepiece for many ceremonies. Water has always been a vital part of a community and when wells were its only source, their presence has always been revered.



Agas part of sheet S with notes & zooms

On this 1581 map (with enlarged sections) the land above Dropshort Marsh is marked as arable, Dropshort Marsh is marked as pasture & the land where the present day slurry pit is marked as Tuddington Comon (Toddington Common). On this common Agas depicted cows, horses and even a little figure entering the land on right hand top.

seq no.	REMARKS and NOTES
1	"Kimberwell" (G.T.) at Tl 0005 2735
2	[Tracing Chalgrave boundary]. 30 Mar 1919. I was even able to identify "Cynburg well". It is a good spring in the dip N of the Tebworth - Chalgrave road, c 1/2 mile W of Chalgrave church, below the hill which is called Snow Hill.
	26 Apr 1919 "Cynburg well" in Chalgrave is now Kimberwell. It really lies just within Toddington parish.
3	Spring at Kimberwell - Cynburg well, 1926 bounds. The water was formerly valued locally as a cure for weak eyes. Today there is little to denote a definite site of this spring; the ground from which this supply seems to emanate is mostly waterlogged and covered with vegetation.

4. Saxon Boundary Charter of 926 for Chalgrave includes :-
"From the brook to Cynburg well."

Gurney traces bounds and mentions :-
"a well which rises in the spring called 'Cynbuge well'. This, I found and identified long before I knew that neither its name nor its character as a holy or healing well is forgotten. It is now called Kimberwell and lies in a large oblong basin near the turn of the hedge eastward. The saint whose name it bears is... St. Cyneburh, daughter of the 'fierce old Sheather' Rench of Mercia. Within memory the spring of Kimberwell was much resorted to for the cure of weak eyes, people coming, I am told, from considerable distances to carry away the water in bottles."

5. Before enclosure a furlong in

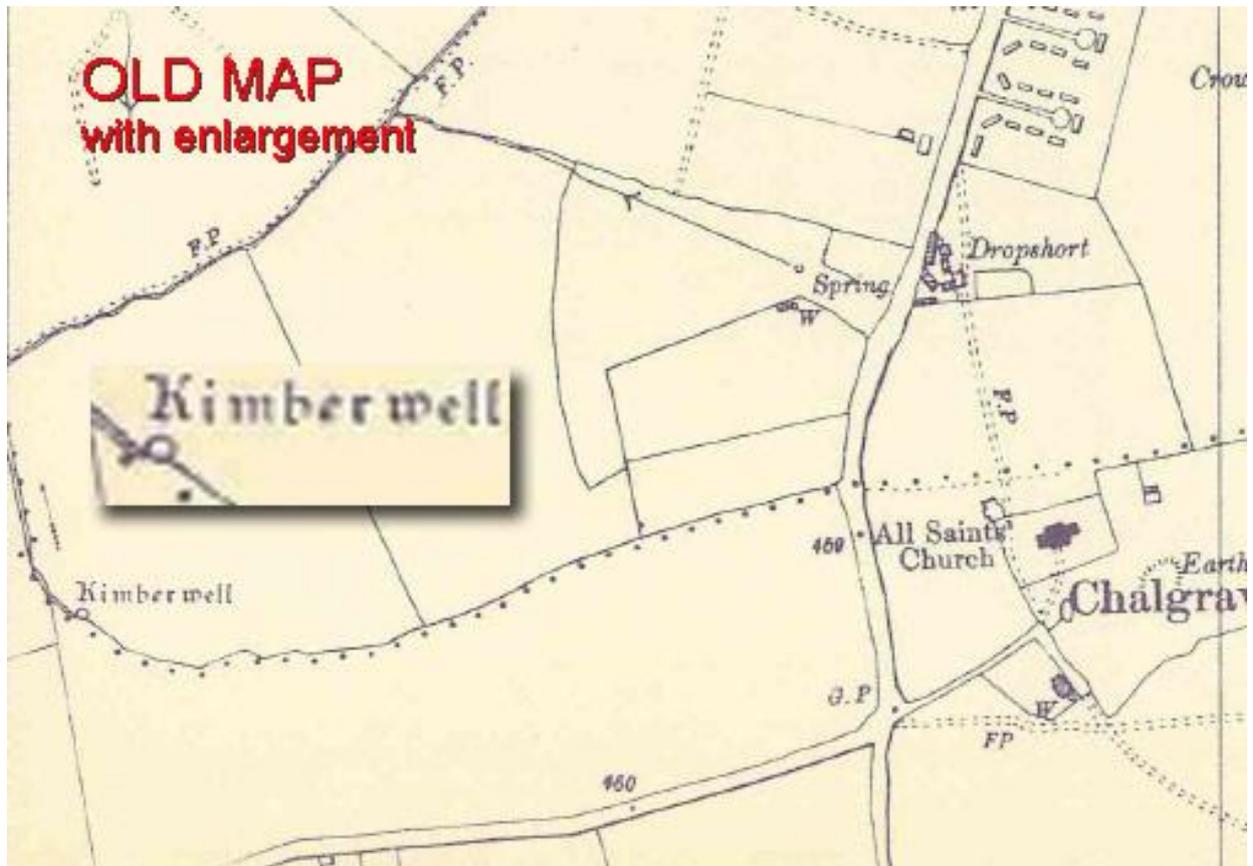
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REMARKS and NOTES

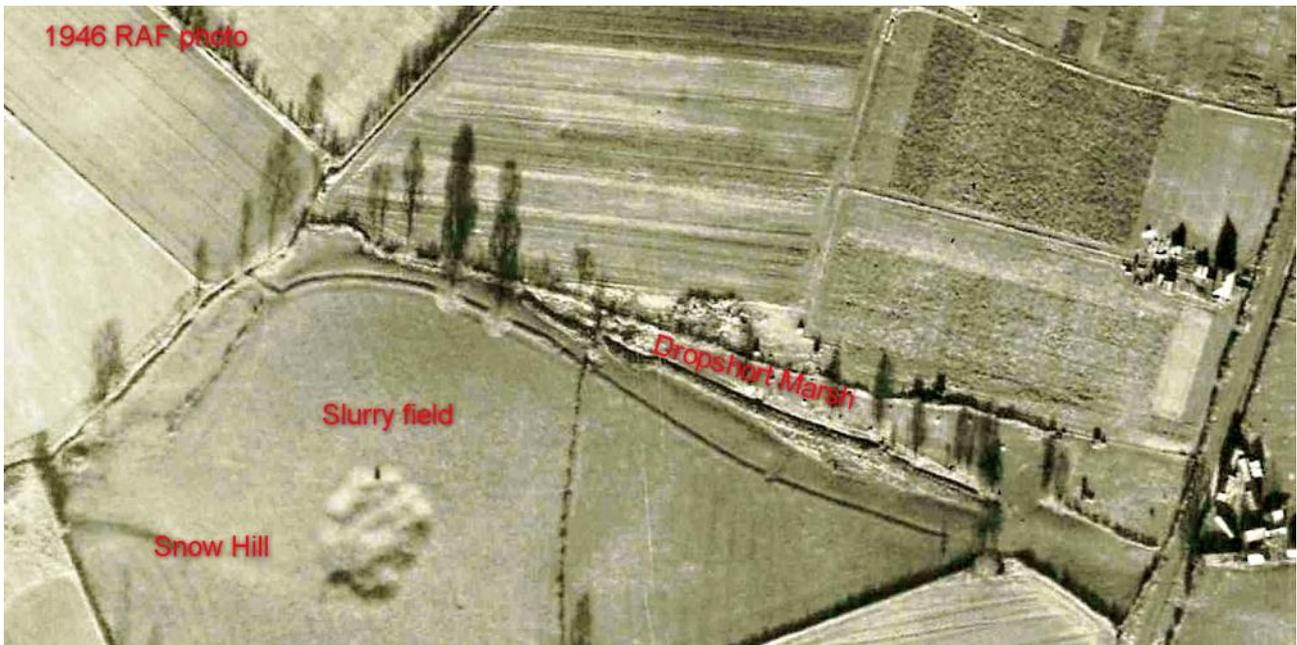
to the south and south east was known as Kymberwelle (1568, MC 4, Court Roll), Kimberwell Furlong (1647, BH UNCAT Bundle 373, Deed; 1757, X21/649, 650, Conveyance) or Kimberlake Furlong (1797, BH UNCAT Bundle 367, Conveyance). This was in Chalgrave parish and probably lay between the site of Kimberwell to the north and Chalgrave Church Road to the south.

6. Court Roll of Chalgrave Manor for 11th June 1313 mentions land at Cumberwell.

The previous 3 handwritten sheets come from Bedfordshire County Council, sites and monuments record. Secondary Record Sheet 6986.



The old map is the only one discovered marking Kimberwell Spring. It must date from the 1940 's because The Avenues were there also.



On the 1946 RAF reconnaissance photo it stops short of showing the spring. But the area is unchanged today.



Snow Hill is a hay meadow



Water still runs at the bottom of the ditch but unknown if this is just land drainage or the spring is still working.

Compiled by Alan Higgs, 2018

Toddington is first mentioned by name in a charter of 926 in which King Athelstan granted land at [Chalgrave](#) and Tebworth which he had bought from a Dane. Toddington was very close to the boundary between English lands and the Danelaw agreed between King Alfred and Guthrum in the Peace of Wedmore of 886, and this document suggests that for a time at least it may have been included within Danish territory. The charter refers to a holy well dedicated to St. Cyneburh. This can be identified as the Kimberwell, a natural spring on the parish boundary to the south west [HER6986].