

# Rutland Local History & Record Society

Registered Charity No. 700273



## Preston Village Walk September 2013 (updated 2020)

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### INTRODUCTION

Preston, Prestetona in 1130, means priest's *tun* (farmstead, village or estate) in Old English. The manor of Preston is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and it was probably a berewick (outlying estate) of Ridlington at that date.

The parish is some 1200 acres (1.9 square miles) in extent, sitting at the eastern end of an east-west ridge. It is bounded to the north by the River Chater and by a small stream to the south. The A6003 trunk road from Kettering to Oakham on the east side of the village is on the line of the Kettering to Nottingham Turnpike which was created by Act of Parliament in 1754. The nearest tollbars were at Uppingham, Ayston and Egleton. Prior to the turnpike, the main north-south route through Rutland was via Langham, Oakham, Manton, Glaston and Seaton, crossing the River Welland at Harringworth, and the route from Preston to Oakham was a packhorse trail through Martinsthorpe and Gunthorpe. The original packhorse bridges across the rivers Chater and Gwash still survive.

Preston is a typical nucleated village, with the homesteads and farmsteads of the parish collected together in a compact settlement adjacent to the church which is dedicated to St Peter & St Paul and located on the western edge of the village.

### THE VILLAGE MAP

The map attached to this walk is based on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25 inch to one-mile map of 1904. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, [12] for example, refer to locations shown on the map.

#### Please:

**Respect private property.**

**Use pavements and footpaths where available.**

**Take great care when walking alongside or crossing roads, particularly the very busy A6003.**

**Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.**

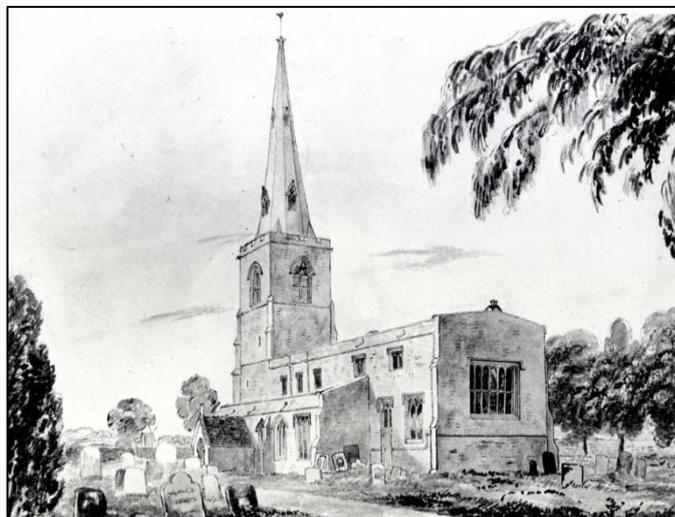
### THE WALK

The walk starts at the village hall [1] which is in Church Lane off Main Street.

On leaving the hall, which was built in 1929 at a cost of £1100 on the site of derelict cottages, turn right and walk along Church Lane towards the church [2]. On entering the churchyard, the village war memorial to the men of the parish who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars can be seen on the right. It is made of Clipsham stone and was dedicated by the Bishop of Leicester in May 1920. The unveiling ceremony was performed by General Sir Alfred Codrington of

Preston Hall and the 'Last Post' was sounded by a bugler of the Coldstream Guards.

From near here it is worth comparing the present church with the following photograph of a watercolour of 1839, ascribed to Alicia Wilkins, the daughter of the then Rector of Wing.



The church was restored in 1856 and the main change was the replacement of the square 17th century east window with a more ornate decorated window. Other work carried out in 1856 included the repair of the chancel with a new roof, new windows to the porch, the addition of a vestry, and the removal of all internal plaster.

Walk along the path to the south porch. Above the porch is an early scientific sundial which is still capable of indicating the time reasonably accurately. It was probably erected originally as a means of regulating the church clock which was installed in 1656-7, but which has not survived. The last record of it is in the Churchwardens' Accounts in 1848.

Continuing with the time theme, on the left-hand side of the first window to the east of the porch is a well-preserved mass dial, or medieval sundial. With the addition of a horizontal stick gnomon, it was used by priests to indicate the time when bells should be rung to call villagers to mass. There is a further mass dial inside the porch, to the right of the door, which must pre-date the 14th century porch.

Inside the Church there are many interesting features and it is worth spending a little time here to look at some of them. They include:

- The Norman arcade of *circa* 1150 with its two arches of rich zigzag decoration.
- The slender coupled shafts of the chancel arch with waterleaf capitals.
- The 18th century sedilia in the south chancel wall, shortened from a triple sedilia when a door was inserted.
- The pieces of mosaic either side of the entrance to the chancel from the church of St John Studion, Constantinople (Istanbul), brought here in 1925.

There is a guide available in the Church which describes these and other features.

On leaving the church, walk almost straight ahead along the footpath to the entrance gate on the west side of the churchyard [3]. Pass through this gate on to a public footpath. Turn right and walk to the fence (approximately 200 metres) on the horizon. From here there is a magnificent view across the Chater valley. To the right, among the trees, is Preston Hall, and ahead, on the next ridge, is Martinsthorpe. In the late 1960s there was a proposal to

flood this area to create Manton Reservoir, and it was to be built at the same time as Rutland Water.

Walk back to the churchyard gate. From here, look due west. Prominent on the horizon, just beyond the end of the first field, was Preston windmill until it was demolished about 1926. It was owned by William Belgrave of Preston and the last miller was John Scott, the village baker.



*Preston windmill from a postcard of c1910. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Continue along the public footpath towards Ridlington Road. Looking through the trees on the left there are glimpses of the early 19th century Grade II listed Preston Rectory [4], now a private dwelling.

On reaching Ridlington Road, turn left and walk towards its junction with Main Street. On the left is the former entrance to the crew yard of Glebe Farm. Immediately ahead is the late 19th century Cobbler's Cottage [5]. Note the 'Yorkshire' style sash windows. In the early 1900s, the cobbler was Charles Manton. One of his invoices of 1907 survives and shows that he charged 4s 10d (about 25p) for a year's boot and legging repairs, 3 buckles, 5 pairs of laces and various straps. Earlier cobblers include William Robinson and William Sharpe who are recorded in a Directory of 1861.



*The New Inn in the 1960s. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Turn right and then almost immediately left. You should now be on a short length of footpath on the left-hand side of which is the location of a former blacksmith's workshop, now demolished [6]. A little further along, at the side of Uppingham Road is the site of the former New Inn (1846 -1967), later

renamed The Karozzin (1967-1975), and more recently The Kingfisher (1975-c2006) [7]. It was demolished for a small housing development in 2014.

On the other side of the main road from this location, on the right-hand corner of the road to Glaston, the house behind the high hedge is the former police house [8], and the field behind was the village cricket field in the early 1900s.

Retrace your steps back to Main Street. On the right is 4 Main Street [9], the former village butchers' shop. William Wells was the butcher in 1900. In 1861 there were four butchers in the village: Samuel Clarke, John Fryer, John Robinson and Joseph Robinson.

Next of interest is 10 and 12 Main Street [10], a pair of 17th century Grade II listed cottages. In 1835 they were the Wheel Inn which closed about 1862, a few years after the New Inn opened at the side of the turnpike.

On the other side, at [11], is the Grade II listed Glebe Farmhouse, dated 1722, and opposite is the early 19th century Regency style Yew Tree Farmhouse [12].

Continuing along Main Street, passing The Mullions [13] on the right with its interesting bay window. The stone garden wall, also on the right, is all that remains of the line of cottages [14] shown on the walk map.

Turn right into Cross Lane. The first property on the right is the former Fox and Hounds public house [15]. Built towards the end of the 17th century, it opened as a public house in 1855 and eventually closed in the 1990s. Next, at 4 Cross Lane [16] is an early 18th century cottage which was the village Post Office in the 1950s.

Towards the end of Cross Lane, on the same side is Yew Tree Farm [17] and opposite is Manor Farm [18], both sites now re-developed as private dwellings.

Return along Cross Lane towards Main Street. On the right is the very impressive Manor House [19]. Built in the late 16th century by the Sheild family, it retains many of its original features. Note, in particular, its symmetry, the range of original stone mullion windows, the heavily studded door and the sundial.



*Preston Manor House in 1930. Note the Independent Chapel to the left. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Adjacent to Manor House is the site of the former Independent Chapel [20], built in 1830 and demolished in 1981. Its datestone is preserved in the wall at the side of the entrance to the Manor House.

Next on the right is 3A Cross Lane, The Woolburn [21], formerly an outbuilding belonging to the Manor House. On the

corner of Cross Lane and Main Street is a house [22] which is shown on a circa 1905 photograph as a shop.

Turn right and walk down Main Street to The Old Bakehouse [23]. Formerly a line of four cottages (as shown on the walk map), the two northern cottages have been demolished to provide an entrance drive to The Maltings [24]. The remaining two are now a single dwelling. The bakehouse was probably the building shown on the map behind the cottages.

The last baker here was John Scott who was also the miller at Preston windmill when it was last used in 1924. In 1861 the bakers were Jonathan Pateman and John Pitts, suggesting that there may then have been two bakehouses in the village. A 1595 survey of the manor of Preston notes that there was then a bakehouse and Bakehouse Yard in the village<sup>1</sup>.

The following photograph of circa 1910 shows the two cottages at the bakehouse which have now been demolished. The Maltings [24] can be seen behind.



*Photograph of c1910 of the two cottages at the bakehouse which have now been demolished. The Maltings can be seen behind. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Today, the Maltings is partly obscured by trees when viewed from Main Street. The long two storey striped stone malting barn is behind the main house, but the ventilated malting floor has been replaced by solid timber.

Many villages had a malt house in the 18th and early 19th century, supplying malted barley to local brewers. They usually only operated after the harvest thus providing winter employment for agricultural workers. In 1851 Mary Needham, a widow aged 64, and her son Francis are recorded as maltsters, farmers and graziers of 103 acres employing 3 men. Mary is also recorded as a maltster in 1861. The 1595 survey of the manor of Preston also mentions a malt mill and a 'kylnehouse' (kiln house)<sup>11</sup>.

Continue to walk along Main Street, passing on the right 34 Main Street [25], a thatched cottage with H S 1807 on a date stone. H S is probably the Reverend Henry Sheild (1757 – 1840), Rector of Preston and Stoke Dry. The Sheild family were prominent in Preston from about 1450 to the end of the 19th century.

On the right, at the end of Main Street, is Preston House [26]. It is a large Grade II listed dwelling with 17th, 18th and 19th century elements and a range of cow sheds (now converted to dwellings), barns and stables round a courtyard at the rear. The original part of Preston House was built by William Sheild (1651 – 1695).

Returning along Main Street, on the right are Lodge Cottage and the gates to Preston Hall [27]. Preston Hall [28], a large 19th century house with traces of 17th century work, is not included in this walk. To the left of Preston Hall gates is Bay House [29], a 17th century cottage with attached 17th and 19th century service buildings, some now converted to dwellings.

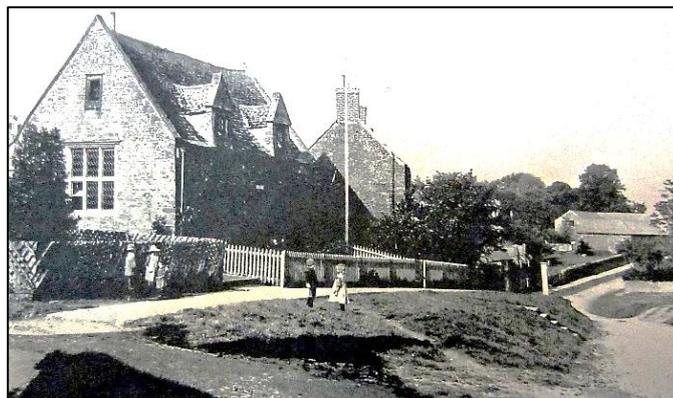
Continue to return along Main Street towards the Village Hall, passing four 18th century cottages on the right.

13 Main Street [30] has lost its thatch, front door and a chimney, although it is substantially unchanged.



*13 Main Street in 1910. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Continue along Main Street to School House [31], formerly the village school. The National School was established by the Reverend William Belgrave in 1854 in a converted 17th century cottage. In 1872, alterations, costing £100, were put in hand to comply with the 1870 Education Act. The attendance at this time was 57. The school closed in 1957 and School House is now a private dwelling.



*Preston National School in 1912 by George Henton. (ROLLR)*

Behind School House is Holly Farmhouse [32] which has a date stone of 1694 in the south gable. [33] is Hazel Farmhouse, a late 18th century building with four bays.

The last house on this walk is 5 Main Street [34]. This late 17th century cottage has early painted wall decorations in one of its bedrooms the preservation of which was funded by a grant from this Society some years ago.

Now continue to the Village Hall and the end of the walk.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Robert Ovens

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<sup>1 & 11</sup> Rogers, A. 'The Manor of Preston cum Uppingham in 1595'; *Rutland Record* 40, p433

Based on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" to 1 mile map of 1904

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# Preston

