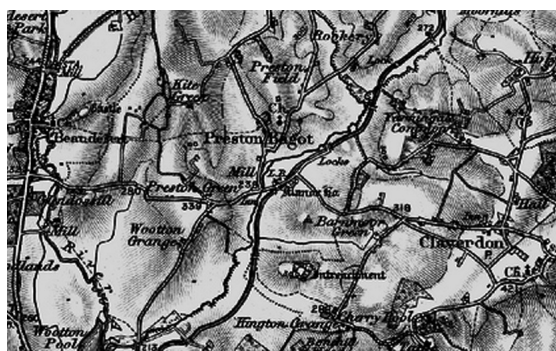


History of Preston Bagot and The Crabmill

Preston Bagot

Preston Bagot lies about 1½ miles east of Henley-in-Arden in the county of Warwickshire. The boundaries are at least as old as 1822. In the 17th and early 18th centuries Preston Bagot was a hamlet or liberty in the large constabulary of Claverdon.

Preston Bagot Brook, a tributary of the Alne, runs south-west across the parish. The Birmingham-Stratford canal runs through the parish, following approximately the course of the brook. This section, from Lapworth to Stratford, was opened in 1816 and there was a coal wharf here until about sixty years ago. Today, however, the canal is disused.



Old map of Preston Bagot in 1898

Manors

At the time of the Domesday Survey and earlier, Preston consisted of 10 hides. Five of these were held by Turbern and the other by Britnod. Britnod's five hides subsequently formed the manor of Beaudesert; whilst Turbern's portion is said to have passed from the count to his younger brother Henry, afterwards Earl of Warwick. The overlordship descended with the earldom of Warwick at least until 1315–16.

It is supposed that this land was given to Ingeram Bagot by William de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, possibly in about 1170 and from this family the name of Preston Bagot was derived.

In 1231 Simon Bagot gave the monks of Bordesley a curtilage with a croft and alder-grove in Preston. After the dissolution, Preston Bagot was for the first time called a manor and sold in 1553 to Edward Aglionby of Balsall and Henry Higforde of Solihull, along with other manors and lordships formerly held by the Knight's Hospitaller. They sold it to Clement Throckmorton of Haseley who in February 1556 settled in the manor himself. The manor then passed on to his son Job on Clements death in 1573.

The current manor house, dates from about this time, 1570–80. It is built almost entirely of close-set framing, on stone foundations, with herringbone brick infilling, and is of two stories, plus attics and cellars, with some modern brick additions.

The manor frequently passed from family to family over the next few hundreds of years, never really enjoying any length of time belonging to one family until 1749 when it was conveyed to Francis Holyoake, apothecary, of Henley-in-Arden. He was still holding it in 1785 and his eldest son, William, appears as lord between 1791 and 1819. The manor remained in the family until 1900, when the Rev. Cecil Mills sold it to Francis Mitchell of Edgbaston, from whom it passed in 1917 to the present owner.



Church

The parish church of All Saints is situated on a high spur enjoying views towards the Cotswolds. It is a long rectangular structure divided by a 'modern' chancel arch.

The nave dates from the 12th century. The chancel is probably an addition of the early 13th century and it is doubtful if there was any masonry between chancel and nave before its addition. At some period, perhaps in the 15th century, the nave was lengthened to the west some 10 or 12 ft, probably for a bell-cote or turret. The church was altered and restored in 1879 to look as you now see it. We are quite sure that the church is the pillar of the community now, but the vicar at the time of the Puritan Survei of the Ministrie in Warwickshire of 1586 was described thus "Thomas Crocket parson no precher nor learned in religion he seemeth to be zealous but yet suspected of drunkenenes."

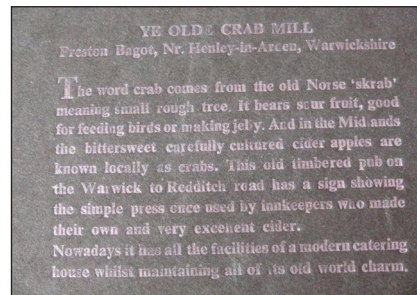


Our Pub

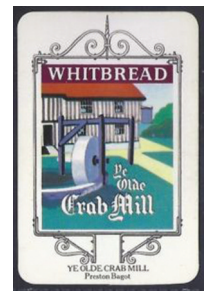
The Old Crab Mill Inn dates back to the 17th century. It was a one-story building with an attic and gabled dormers made out of wooden framing with brick infilling. We believe it is so named as it is a renovated rural mill where crab apples were mashed for making into cider.



The Old Crabmill Inn in around 1910.



Signage from 1974



Cider

Cider was consumed in the Roman empire, ancient Greece and the Middle East and the name itself probably derives from the Hebrew shekar or Greek sikera meaning 'strong drink'. There is evidence that Celts in Britain made cider from crab apples as long ago as 3000 BC, but the Roman invasion introduced apple cultivars and orcharding techniques to England.

After the end of Roman occupation and once the Dark Ages began, there is little information about cider in Britain, although cider-drinking Vikings and Anglo-Saxons colonised in this period so we can assume apples were still being pressed and the juice fermented.

After the Normans invaded in 1066, they improved cider-making in this land forever by introducing tannic and acidic cider apples. They planted orchards and very importantly, brought advanced pressing technology with them to make the extraction of juice from apples more efficient.



During the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) British farmers were pressured into producing grain and livestock to ensure a domestic supply. Consequently, cider orchards were neglected. As nineteenth-century commercial cider producers increased in size, small farmers started selling their apple-growing land to those powerful businesses. Ancient orchards were destroyed and with them old cider apple cultivars. Perhaps it was at this time that our mill turned its hand to the hospitality business?