

WELLAND HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter February 2024

The history of Marlbank Farm - Chris Mesley

**Friday 23 February, Welland Village Hall 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm,
entry £1**

When the new owners of Marlbank Farm approached Welland History Group they had some specific questions that they hoped we might be able to answer. 18 months later we have made good progress and have picked up some exciting new sources of information about Welland along the way. The research has also uncovered a couple of mysteries related to this delightful farm. Do come along and hear what we have discovered about the farm itself and the additional source material for uncovering more about the history of houses in Welland. It would also be great to hear any stories that you have to share regarding the more recent history of Marlbank Farm and its owners.

Writeup of Landscape History of Welland - Beverley Ramsden, November 2023

Beverley explained that Landscape History is the study of history at the wider level, using the landscape itself as the primary source of information rather than historical documents. It considers the human processes and influences that created the landscape we see and inhabit today. Thus, landscape history uses tools such as maps, placenames, aerial photography, paintings, landscape character assessments and LIDAR (a method for detecting ranges using a laser) to provide clues to the past. The value of simply walking the footpaths of the parish should not be underestimated.

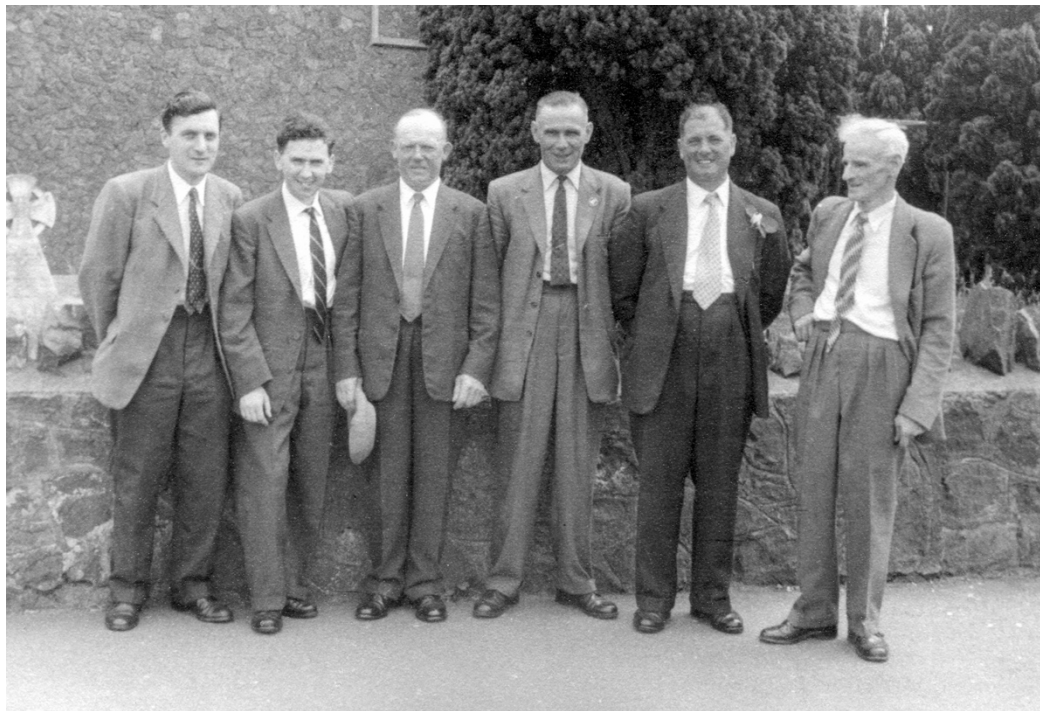
The earliest map containing any level of detail for Welland is the 1628 survey of Malvern Chase, though that is only where the village meets the boundaries of the chase. A few intriguing details can be seen, such as the now deserted settlement in Quabb Meadow (still visible on aerial photography and LIDAR) and what appears to be Woodside Farm. But from 1772 onwards maps increase in detail and more elements of the village's landscape can be seen - the main water courses and human management of them, the development of roads and streets, and details of rural life such as water mills, a windmill, farms, and housing along streets such as Drake Street and Woodside Lane. The changing appearance and focus of the village can be followed over time, e.g. the loss of Welland Common and the remnants of the three common fields in the middle of the nineteenth century, the huge growth and then loss of orchards following enclosure as land use changed, the change from a dispersed settlement strung out mainly along Drake Street to a crossroads village focussed on the new church and school (built in 1875/6.)

Marks of the past still remain on the landscape of the present. In Welland, some of these are obvious, such as British Camp iron age hillfort towering over the village, and Marlbank and Woodside Farms. Others are less so, such as hints of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing, the site of the old mill, pond and leat, the deserted settlement in Quabb Meadow. We are slowly building up a picture of the village's history at both the landscape level and individual sites of interest on the Welland history website - see wellandhistory.uk.

Volunteers to help with meeting refreshments

Can you help us provide refreshments at meetings? We buy all supplies out of our funds but need volunteers to make drinks, serve and wash up afterwards. You don't have to volunteer for every meeting.

The bellringers of St James Church, 1950s



Can you identify any of the men in this photo belonging to Roger Wood? The names suggested so far are 2nd from left Southwell Elms, 3rd Frank(?) Lawrence, 4th Harry Wagstaff, 5th Mr Price, but these may not be correct. Please email me if you can help.

Council houses

Welland's first council houses were built on Marlbank Road in the 1920s. Do you have any information about the first generation of tenants or family stories about what they were like to live in compared with previous accommodation? Please get in touch if so.

Behind the Scenes at The Hive

The Archive and Archaeology Service at The Hive in Worcester offer a 'behind the scenes' tour for groups. Attendees have a chance to handle archaeological artefacts and meet the archaeologists and the staff involved in the conservation of artefacts. The tour includes a visit to the archive strongrooms to see a selection of historical photographs and documents, including Shakespeare's marriage bond, a letter sent from the Titanic and a charter from King Stephen. Tours last about 1 hr 20 mins and are on Mondays.

If you think you might be interested, please let me know. The cost for a group is £70 so the cost per person depends on the number of people involved, i.e. £7 each if we have ten people; the maximum allowed is 20. I attended one of these tours with some of our members in 2018 and it was very enjoyable. But note you will be standing most of the time and bags/coats have to be left in the lockers provided. June will probably be the earliest month for which we can arrange a tour.

Next newsletter & meeting

I shall send out the next newsletter in early April and the next meeting is scheduled for Friday 26 April. Contributions for the newsletter welcome.

Exploring Welland

wellandhistory.uk

Contact

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If you no longer wish to be on this emailing list please email me, phone me, or put a note through my door.