

WELLAND HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter June 2024

Friday 28 June - Madresfield Court Welland Village Hall, 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm, £1 per person

Mike Street will be giving a virtual tour of Madresfield Court encompassing the history of this lovely, ancient house and highlighting members of the Lygon family, who have owned it for nearly six centuries.

For future reference: tours of the house are available from April - June each year. See Madresfield's website:

<https://www.madresfield.co.uk/>



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Madresfield Court by Tim Crump - geograph.org.uk/p/4002210

Tim Crump, geograph.org.uk

Write-up of Mary Weaver's talk on Meriel Hodgetts, 26 April

Meriel Hodgetts (1918 - 2004) was born in Hexham, Northumberland, to parents with Worcestershire origins. She and her mother, Minnie, arrived in Upper Welland in the mid-1930s, taking Little Orchard Cottage (between Benton Close and Watery Lane) and this was when Mary Weaver got to know them.

Meriel was an artist, who painted and sculpted, but had other talents and interests as well. She had a brief spell working for Royal Worcester but disliked the daily travel. Instead, she worked with her mother growing fruit and vegetables and she taught. In the 1939 National Register she described herself as a 'daily governess'. Mary (then Mary Hughes of Mayalls Farm) was taught by her for three years in place of school and particularly remembers the nature

walks they went on every day, learning about the trees, birds and insects. Meriel later gave art classes to the local children.

Meriel was well known in the area for riding or walking everywhere. She rode with the local hunt and was a member of the Malvern Naturalists Field Club, later in life writing a history of the club. She was knowledgeable about local history and was a contributor to Ronald Bryer's 1993 book, *Not the Least - The story of Little Malvern*. In the 1970s she renovated the elaborate 19th century decoration in the summerhouse at Dell House, Green Lane, which can still be seen. She was also active at Upper Welland methodist church.

Mary's lively account of Meriel conveyed the impression of an intelligent, capable countrywoman who made the best of the circumstances of her life.

After her talk, Mary showed photos of Meriel, her house and her artworks, some of which were made as personal gifts to friends and their children. There were several people in the audience who had affectionate memories of Meriel and added their contributions to the meeting.

Thanks to Gwyneth Gill for a number of the photographs included in the presentation.



Two horses by Meriel Hodgetts: Mary Weaver

Photo quiz - Where was this photo taken?



Mary Purser

Wendy Jones writes: This is one of the photographs that came to us from the late Mary Purser. It shows a Welland cricket team, taken circa 1900s, in front of what appears to be a newly built structure of wood with possibly a corrugated iron roof. Could this be on land then belonging to Church Villa (now Pursers Orchard) or in the grounds behind the then vicarage, now Welland House Care Home?

On the front row from the left: the 3rd man has a cricket bat, 4th man is holding the ball, 5th man has wicket keeper's gloves on and 6th man could be keeping a score card. One might hazard a guess that the 2nd man, holding what looks like a small croquet mallet, could be in charge of hammering the stumps in the ground.

Why are they dressed like that? It is understandable they might not have a specific cricketing outfit, but they are dressed so formally and the chap on the top row, 6th from left, looks like he's in a livery uniform. Perhaps this is an official photo before they got changed for the game?

Joseph Hartill Purser (son of James and Mary Purser née Edwards) is wearing the striped jacket, left end of the row.

Do you have this photo in your family album? Can you tell us any more about it? Contact Wendy Gillespie if so.

Sunday 23 June, 11:00 am - 4:00pm, Welland Summer Bash

There will be a **Welland History Group** stand amongst the community groups at this year's version of the village fete. Please drop by and say hello if you are attending.

<https://littlemalvernandwelland-pc.gov.uk/events-list/event/welland-summer-bash>

Remaining meetings in 2024

Friday 27 September
Friday 29 November

Details will be in the next newsletter due out in early September.

Wendy Gillespie
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<https://wellandhistory.uk/>

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