

WELLAND HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter November 2024

Next meeting: Friday 29 November, 3:00 pm, Welland Village Hall

Highways and Byways: the story of routes through and within the parish of Welland

How old are the roads through Welland, and how have they developed over time? What routes have been lost or added, and why? How were roads maintained and managed before the modern era? Bev Ramsden and Wendy Jones will try to answer these questions in their joint presentation.

All welcome, entry £1 at the door, refreshments.

This milestone on Marlbank Road (A4104) survives from the time of the Upton-upon-Severn Turnpike Trust, which took over responsibility for the main road from Upton to Little Malvern in the 1750s as well as other routes.



Write-up of the 27 September meeting

Boundaries: creating them, beating them, arguing over them and sustaining them

Bev Ramsden introduced the subject, taking us back to the Iron Age when the Dobunni tribe's area of control was bordered by the Malvern Hills on the west and the Cotswold hills on the east. Welland is first referenced in 889, when an Anglo-Saxon charter transferred Welland and Upton from the Mercian lords to the Bishop of Worcester. 10th century charters for Upton and Longdon describe those parishes' boundaries with Welland and these are the first indication we have of at least a section of Welland's boundary, stated in terms of landscape

features including ridges, streams and trees. The northern boundary is not mentioned but it is likely to have been the Mere Brook as it still is today.

Wendy Jones explained that the purpose of perambulating the parish boundary or 'beating the bounds' was to reinforce the parishioners' knowledge of where the boundaries were and to check that adjacent parishes had not encroached on its land. At certain points on the route trees would be marked with a cross. Perambulations were also social occasions and the walkers enjoyed food and drink along the way. There are three detailed written descriptions of the route taken around Welland's boundary. Wendy read out a few examples from the May 1828 account, which as well as detailing hedge lines followed, fields crossed, lanes walked and trees marked, took in the passage through Bakehouse Farmhouse, built across the Welland-Castlemorton boundary.

Chris Mesley noted it was quite unusual for perambulations to be written down and they have survived for only a small number of parishes. We are fortunate that we have a collection of three for Welland and twelve for Little Malvern from the 18th and 19th centuries. The fact that they were written down is indicative that something was amiss. A comparison of the perambulations shows that a considerable portion of what we now know as Little Malvern was disputed with Welland and Castlemorton. Those on the perambulations were accused of breaking down fences and trampling crops. Many of the issues can be traced to the earliest description of the boundary of Welland in 1648, produced during the turmoil of the civil war. It excluded any access to the hills, which seems to have been an ancient rite. There were numerous efforts to resolve the dispute which cost the respective parishes a considerable sum and were only finally settled in 1850. In retrospect the unstated intention seems to have been formalising access to the hills for extracting the stone; Berington Quarry is the legacy of this. Prior to the detailed Ordnance Survey maps being produced in the 1880s a variety of posts and boundary stones were used to delineate the boundary where it did not follow a stream. A few of these have survived. Perhaps you know of some?

Bev highlighted the importance of making accurate maps to record boundaries. The earliest for Welland is the 1822 map by Christopher Greenwood. Boundaries are not permanent. The 1894 Local Government Act created civil parishes with parish councils to manage governance, leaving the ecclesiastical parishes to deal with church matters, but civil and ecclesiastical parishes do not necessarily align. Also, development along the Wells Road prompted the creation of the parish of Malvern Wells, necessitating more changes to the borders of Little Malvern and Welland, including the transfer of Upper Welland to Malvern Wells.

Overseers' Accounts

I am about halfway through the transcription of the Welland overseers' accounts book held at The Hive, which covers 1792 - 1815. At Easter each year an overseer was elected whose job it was to administer the parish poor relief and keep records of the funds collected and spent. Individuals could be awarded cash and the parish would pay for coal, rent, clothes, shoes, medical expenses and funeral expenses. Overseers sometimes had to arrange the transfer of an individual to their 'home' parish for relief, which meant negotiating with overseers elsewhere. Money was provided for illegitimate children and often the father's name is included in the entries - information that may not survive elsewhere. When the project is completed, these records will give us a detailed picture of parish relief for Welland during this period.

Restoration of Castlemorton War Memorial

Mary Watts of the BCH Archive writes:

*A coffee morning to help raise funds for the restoration of the Castlemorton War Memorial is being held on **Saturday 9th November at Castlemorton Parish Hall, 10am - 12 noon**. The Parish Council and St Gregory's Parochial Church Council have launched this appeal for the 102 year old memorial, so that it can be cleaned, repointed and the names re-cut so it may honour the fallen for another 100 years.*

Entry and coffee will be free. It is an opportunity to reminisce about memories of World War 2, either yours or your parents and grandparents.

The BCH Archive will have a small display about the era and its impact on the area.

Birtsmorton Castlemorton and Hollybush Archive <http://bcharchive.org.uk/>

Exploring Welland

<https://wellandhistory.uk/>

Meetings in 2025

Our first meeting in 2025 will be on **Friday 28 February**, topic to be confirmed.

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