

WELLAND HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter February 2025

Next meeting: Friday 28 February, Welland Village Hall, 3:00 pm

**Old St James, New St James and the artefacts that link them
Wendy Gillespie and Wendy Jones**

The current St James Church was consecrated on 2 April 1875. We will look back at what we know about the preceding church in Welland Court Lane, explain how and why the new church came to be built and what artefacts were moved from the old church to the new. All welcome, entry £1 at the door, refreshments.

St James celebrates 150 years

Amongst the other events being planned to mark this year's 150th anniversary of the consecration of St James, we shall be organising a display of information on the history of both churches between 14 June and 22 June. The February talk will also be repeated by Wendy Jones and myself on Saturday 14 June. Both these events will be in the church.

If anyone has memories of special events connected with the church, I would be glad to hear from you. Could you write a few lines about it for us to use in the display or provide a photo? Were you in the choir or a bellringer? Did you attend the youth club?

Write-up of the meeting on 29 November 2024

Highways and Byways: the story of routes through and within the parish of Welland by Bev Ramsden and Wendy Jones

In early maps rivers are more prominent than roads, sometimes with only bridges and settlements to indicate the presence of roads. An east-west routeway must have existed between Bredon and Welland to enable the movement of animals and timber between the settlements and from Welland over the Malverns into Herefordshire. LIDAR images show clearly that Welland lies in a gap between two ridges. Roadworks to create the roundabout on the A38 outside Upton have led to archaeological evidence of iron age grain stores. The track that now goes down the west side of Little Malvern Priory and leads onto Castlemorton Common was once the road to Gloucester, coming from Malvern, and could be driven on within living memory - Gwyneth Gill remembers using this road. The modern OS map showing footpaths in and around Welland gives clues to the routes people took. Byefield Lane, for instance, led to Westfield, one of the three common fields of the village. Fields enclosed from the common only in the mid-19th century are conspicuously larger than the earlier fields and have no footpaths across them. The enclosures were also responsible for the appearance of the road from Danemoor Farm across to the Hook. Access to the newly enclosed land required a proper road.

Parishes were supposed to repair their own roads in the past. One of the Welland properties was responsible for maintaining the bridge at Brookend, for

example. Sometimes private landowners looked after a particular section but generally roads were not good before the modern era. The advent of turnpike trusts starting from the late 17th century aimed to improve specified sections of road by installing gates at either end and charging travellers to pass through them. This brought about the appearance of tollhouses, where the gatekeepers lived. Little Malvern had one on the top section of the A4104, now re-built at Avoncroft. Another was nearby on the west side of the A449, Twelve-Mile Cottage, and a third just over the boundary in Herefordshire on the A449 to Ledbury. This one still exists. The positioning was to catch people travelling to and from Malvern, Ledbury and Upton. Eventually the turnpikes lost out as rail transport spread in the mid-19th century and the gates were eventually removed and charges lifted. By the end of the century county councils had taken over road maintenance.

Housing developed gradually along the north-south road through Welland after enclosure and the importance of this road grew, becoming the 'Gloucester Road' in time. Growth on this side of the parish was natural, the land being flat and with only a few properties there already. The appearance of Welland as being centred on the crossroads of the A4104 and the B4208 is therefore modern.

Coming soon - Welland, Little Malvern and the 1921 Census

If you have any queries about what your family in Welland or Little Malvern were doing at the time of the 1921 census please let me know. Likewise, if you had family in either parish and you know which house they lived in, I'd be glad to have confirmation from you. I can tell from the records roughly whereabouts a particular household was but often not the exact house. I am planning a talk on this census for later in the year and it would be useful to have some input from you.

Suggestions for meeting topics

If there is a particular topic you would like to see covered in our meetings, please let me know.

Remember to check our website or subscribe so that you are notified of new articles as they appear. Exploring Welland <https://wellandhistory.uk/>

Next meeting

Friday 30 May, subject to be confirmed.

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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.