

WELLAND HISTORY GROUP

Newsletter September 2025

Friday 26 September, Welland Village Hall, 3:00 pm

Come and talk to us!

- * Review of our research to date *We want your comments and feedback.*
- * What do we investigate next? *We want your ideas.*
- * What else can you tell us? *We want your knowledge.*

The aim of this session is to take stock of what we have done and look ahead. In the seven and a half years since Welland History Group started we have covered quite a lot. The research group consists of Wendy Jones, Chris Mesley, Beverley Ramsden, and me. We use original archive material, publications and online resources to reveal Welland's history but you, our members, are also very important as a source of information. We couldn't have got this far without you.

You might like to have a look at our website before the meeting to remind yourselves of what we have published to date.

The research group will be considering the topic of the Malvern quarries for a future presentation, so if you have any photos of quarries, their workmen, or any anecdotes and information on family members who were quarry workers, please let us know. You can email us if you are unable to attend the meeting.

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

Write-up of the meeting on 30 May

1. Welland and Little Malvern in the 1921 Census - Wendy Gillespie

The 1921 census has been available on Findmypast since January 2022 and Ancestry since January this year. This census took place on 19 June, postponed from 24 April because of disruption caused by industrial action. In this short presentation I highlighted individual families to give a picture of working life in this area at the time.

Welland's enumerator was William George Phelps of Malthouse Farm, a milk recorder by profession so used to handling and processing information. I was unable to discover the identity of Little Malvern's enumerator, his initials being C E D or C E W.

The Welland returns recorded 116 households in 120 properties and Little Malvern listed 19 households in 19 properties. Matching the census data to known buildings was easy for Little Malvern as all the houses were named on the forms. But Welland was more difficult and I could only match about two thirds of the houses recorded to buildings known to have existed then. This is due to the lack of house names or numbers and addresses just given as 'Drake Steet' or 'Marlbank'.

About 42% of jobs were farming-related, including smallholders and nurserymen. One innovation in this census were the questions as to who people worked for and where they worked. This meant it was possible to work out, for instance, the employees of any particular farm. George Jones of Wood Farm employed his two sons Harley and Henry as farm assistants and also four men and three part-time women who all lived in Welland.

New jobs for this census were quarrying and the motor trade. Four men were or had been in the motor trade, three of them for the Morgan company. There were 12 men from Welland and Little Malvern employed by the Pyx Granite Company, their nearest quarry being that owned by William Berington on the hillside near the top of Upper Welland Road. This was leased to Alfred Creed of the Pyx company. One of those employed was George Gill, a quarry foreman. One of his sons was a quarryman and another three sons worked on the traction engines that transported the stone. The Gill family were from Devon.

Most of the married women did not record any employment outside the home although farmers' and publicans' wives no doubt had their particular responsibilities within the family business. Amongst the unmarried women were two female teachers at Welland School plus postal clerks, shop assistants, servants and a laundress. Also notable was Elsie Fellows, a dispenser in a chemist's in Malvern, Josephine Roxburgh - a draper's apprentice at Cox and Painters (Warwick House), Lucie Racster, district nurse and midwife, and Winifred Mills, matron of a nursing home in Birmingham.

A number of men were out of work when the census was taken. Even a few coal miners were recorded as present in Welland, presumably returned home because of the strikes affecting the pits.

2. Research update - Wendy Gillespie, Wendy Jones, Chris Mesley

Each of us gave brief details of ongoing work. Wendy J and I were preparing for the talk at St James' Church on 14 June and the information panels showing the history of old and new St James on display in the church from 14 - 22 June. Wendy J's additional research into church related subjects resulted in several articles about the old church artefacts being published on our website. She also talked about ongoing research into Myrtle Cottage and Westfield Cottage and old documents relating to The Pheasant Inn and Holly Cottage.

Chris had been working through all the surviving wills of Welland people up to the end of the 18th century. He made the surprising discovery of a school being run in one end of Robert Randle's house in the late 17th century, long before formal schooling was provided in Welland. What is even more significant for this period is that this appears to have included girls.

Next meeting

On **Friday 28 November** Alan Wadsworth of the Worcestershire Farmsteads Project will give a talk titled *Farm buildings: recording and researching the past for the future*.

<https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/2020/06/worcestershire-farmsteads-project/>

Our website

Exploring Welland

<https://wellandhistory.uk/>

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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.