

Welford and Weston Local History Society
www.welfordandweston.org.uk

Newsletter 51 – January 4th 2019

Welcome to this Newsletter, which gives you information about our next meeting in January. But before that a quick word about our last meeting scheduled for the 30th November. As you may be aware this meeting did not take place as planned, because of the untimely death of the speaker's father just three days before the scheduled date. That meeting has now been re-scheduled, and will take place on Friday 22nd February.

So back on November 30th, instead of the scheduled meeting we held an impromptu local quiz, which we had put together about 5 years ago, just in case anything like this should befall us. I think it's fair to say that all those who stayed for the quizzes (there were two) enjoyed them, despite there being no alcohol available, unlike the April AGM Quiz.

*Our first meeting of 2019 is on Friday, 25th January at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall, when the subject is **Warwickshire Churches**. Our speaker on this occasion is Tim Bridges.*

The January talk will explore in words and pictures the history, architecture and decoration of the Churches of Warwickshire. Our speaker Tim Bridges works part time as Church Buildings Support Officer in Hereford Diocese. He also works for the Victorian Society covering casework in the Birmingham area including much of Warwickshire, which is his home county. Tim knows the churches of Warwickshire well, and will take us on a pictorial journey exploring the buildings from earliest times through to the 21st century.

*Anglo-Saxon church architecture includes the remarkable tower at Wootton Wawen and the humble masonry of Loxley, but the county is rich in Norman work as the churches at Berkswell and Beaudesert testify. The crypt beneath St Mary's Warwick is a Norman surprise under the later Gothic church. Warwickshire's agricultural prosperity in the Middle Ages is reflected in the wealth of medieval church buildings in towns such as Stratford or Coventry, or village churches including **Welford and Weston**. There are impressive survivals from medieval interiors in the stalls at Astley, stained glass at Merevale or wall paintings in the Guild Chapel in Stratford.*

The reformation saw the destruction of monastic churches such as Maxstoke and indeed Coventry's first cathedral, but there was a new phase of church building in the post-medieval period ranging in style from Gothic Baddesley Clinton to Classical Billesley. The Gothic Revival of the 19th century was used extensively in growing industrial towns, and Birmingham is particularly rich in Victorian and Arts and Crafts churches. St Augustine's Edgbaston and St Agatha's Sparkbrook contrast with the restored and rebuilt smaller country churches of the 19th century such as Exhall or Wasperton. The 21st century has seen much restoration of historic churches together with the introduction of modern facilities to ensure these buildings can have a relevant future. The recent interior work at Long Compton is a good example of this. It is to be hoped that the impressive, atmospheric medieval churches of the county such as Burton Dassett or Barcheston can remain special places for local people and visitors alike.

*Do come along and join us for this really well illustrated talk.
Mike Banning-Lover*