

The Welford & Weston Local History Society

www.welfordandweston.org.uk

‘What was Welford like in the early 1900s?’

Newsletter 101 – 4 November, 2025

An illustrated talk given by Brad Plimmer & the late Alec Bryan

28th November 2025, at 7.30 in the Memorial Hall, Welford

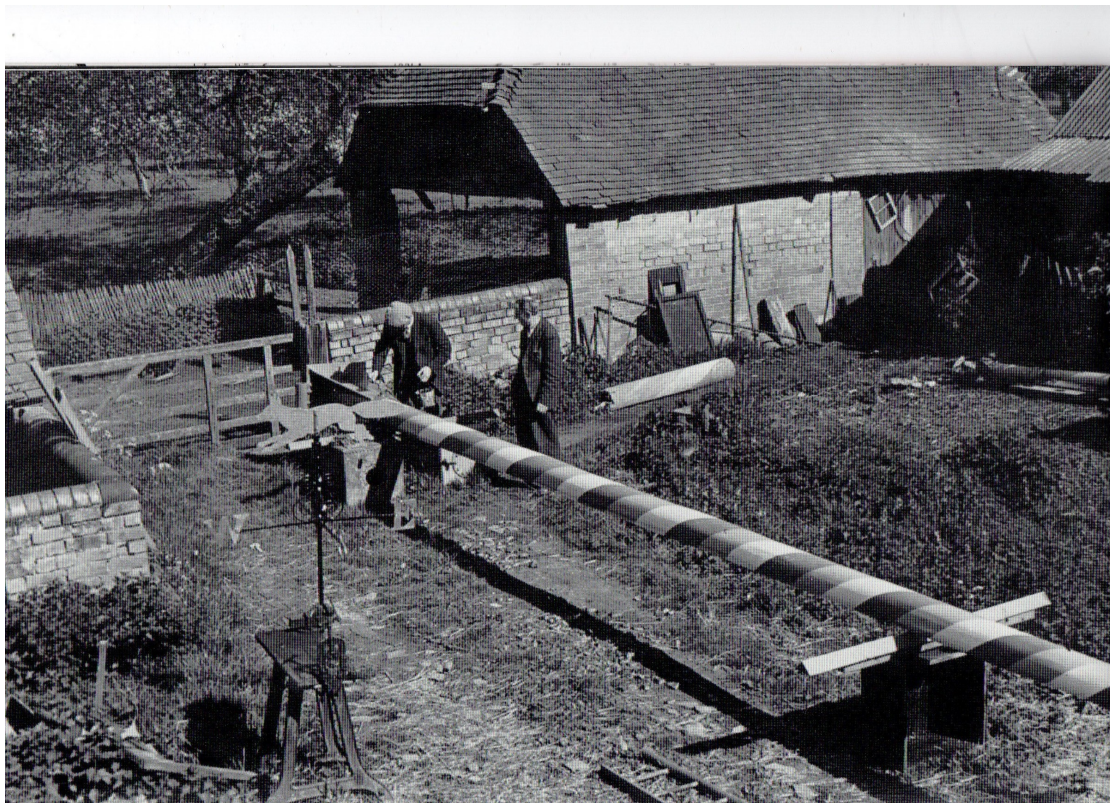
Were you already living in Welford in 2012? If so, you may have gone to the History Society meeting given in January that year. That talk was given by Paul & Sue Young. You might recognise their names. They are the couple who have produced and run the annual general knowledge quiz, which started in April 2012.

The title of their talk was ‘Welford and Weston in the new 20th Century’. It was a great talk. They had clearly done masses of research. They traced their way through the village identifying the people who were living there at the time. What occupation they had, how many children etc. They didn’t of course personally know any of these people. How could they? All the people described were long since dead. But what they were able to do was sift through the records and give us all a window on Welford in the early 1900’s. They excelled in doing that.

At our meeting in November, we will also be taking a look at the early 1900’s, but in this case, we will be depending on the memory and words of a single individual who was himself a child at that time.

You may be wondering how we could do that, and thinking, has Brad Plimmer finally lost the plot? Surely that individual would need to be aged about 125 now for that to happen?

Well as luck would have it, the individual, a man named Alec Bryan was interviewed by the BBC back in 1974. He was in his mid-sixties at the time. The interview took place in Alec’s home, Thorn Cottage, on the High Street.



The maypole being painted beside the LBG, late 1930's

Alec Bryan (centre), Sam Bryan (right) and a lady from a BBC Radio programme, beside the LBG, late 1930's



I was completely unaware of this event until we were contacted out of the blue by the chap who'd carried out the interview and done the recording. His name is Michael Gandon. It was one of his early interviews, and he was so impressed with what Alec Bryan had to say to him, and the way he talked, almost non-stop from memory, about what Welford was like during the first 15 to 20 years of the 20th Century, that he decided to keep a transcript and a recording of what was said.



The eagerly awaited new
maypole being unwrapped
by Alec Bryan, 1967

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With thanks to Gary Beard for allowing us to use these 3 photographs.

Michael contacted us in November 2023 and talked about what had happened almost 50 years earlier. I got very excited and we made plans to meet up. For various reasons this didn't happen until June 2024. However, he sent me the transcript in advance so that I became familiar with the content. On the day we met, after lunch we sat - Anne & myself, with Mike and his wife also an Anne – in our sitting room and listened to this unique recording. Mike most generously offered the Local History Society a copy of both, and the idea behind November's meeting was born.

It's not often that one gets the chance to hear at first-hand what our village was like over 100 years ago, from somebody who was there at the time. The recording of Alec's interview with Mike lasts for about 30 minutes. I will be saying a bit more about this understated gentleman as an introduction to his interview. The whole presentation will last for almost 60 minutes, after which there will be an opportunity to ask questions. I'm delighted to say that Mike & Anne will be attending this talk, so will also be available for any questions you may have.

If you happen to have known Alec Bryan and would like to share your memories of him with me, please contact me on 07890 866952 or 01789 750716, or via email bradplimmer@btinternet.com. I'd also welcome any photographs you may have.

Brad Plimmer, Archivist, Welford & Weston Local History Society.

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, it would be great if you can do it now to save us time at the start of the meeting.

To renew your membership for the 2025 – 2026 season, please go to the Society website, and click on Membership under Quick Links or click on this link <https://welfordandweston.org.uk/Membership/> and you will be taken to the Renewal / Application Form.

You can also renew your membership at the meeting on 28th November, 2025. We hope to be offering the easy to use 'Square' technology for these face-to-face payments, should you find this more convenient or you can pay in cash.

Thank you for your continued support.

We're looking forward to seeing you on 28th November.

*Kind regards,
Karen & the Team*