

Welford and Weston Local History Society

www.welfordandweston.org.uk

Newsletter 56 – August 30th 2019

Thank you for joining (or re-joining) the Local History Society. Our membership as we move into the 2019/2020 season is in the mid 90s (that's the total number, not the average age!), which is very encouraging. From the membership card and the website you'll have seen we have another varied and interesting programme for the year ahead.

Back on Wednesday, 5th June, which seems a long time ago now, we had our visit to Deerhurst and Tewkesbury. Forty four people bought tickets for this event, and as far as I can tell from comments received, everyone had a good day out. Those of you who live in Welford will have seen some of the photographs taken on the day, which were included in the most recent Welford Matters. The two venues were fascinating and the various guides we had were excellent. Thanks to Sue Hook and John Read for making the arrangements for this visit.

We're currently looking at where we could visit in June 2020. If you have been on an interesting visit or know of any good places to visit, please let one of the Committee know.

*The first meeting of this our 50th season will be on **Friday, 27th September** at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall, when the subject is **Welford 500 years ago: the village, its people and the land**. This illustrated talk will be given by **Professor Chris Dyer**, himself a former resident of this village. Below is a synopsis of his talk, by the speaker.*

Although we can learn something about Welford's history before 1400, only a limited range of evidence is available. However by accidents of survival a combination of vivid sources shed light on the years around 1500. The lords of the manor had limited influence so not much will be said about them. Instead the focus will be on the ordinary villagers, like Thomas Holtam and William Welles. The documents tell us about a group of peasant farmers who adapted to changing times, were outward looking, and achieved considerable prosperity. Their good fortunes at this time can be compared with the people of nearby villages which shrank in size and look sickly; others like Hillborough and Willicote were abandoned. Why were Welford people so successful?

Christopher Dyer was born and brought up in Welford, in the house opposite the school. He attended the primary school, and then King Edward VI Stratford upon Avon. He did history degrees at Birmingham University, and has taught at Birmingham, after a time at the University of Edinburgh (where one of his students was the future prime minister, Gordon Brown). In 2001 he moved to become head of the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester. He became involved in archaeological excavations at Alcester in 1956, and has continued ever since to combine archaeological with written evidence.



His several books include *Making a Living in the Middle Ages*, *the People of Britain 850-1520*, *An Age of Transition?*, and *A Country Merchant*. He has published many articles and contributions to books on social, economic and landscape history, and archaeology. He has edited learned journals, and has served as chairman and president of various historical and archaeological societies. He has written for widely circulated journals such as *History Today*, and has appeared on TV (recently with Michael Wood) and has ambitions to communicate with a non-specialist audience.

Looking forward to seeing you at the first meeting of our 50th anniversary season on 27th September.

Brad Plimmer

