

Local History Cafe



Sir John Moore Foundation, Appleby Magna



Horse Power

The horse was the main transport in Appleby up until 100 years ago



Night driving

Appleby only had one street lamp ...
Page 2



The Biscuit Bus
Page 4.

Blacksmithing ...
a look back at horse transport
on Page 5

The train 'not' standing ...

Alan Condie details the demise of railway links to Appleby Magna

The nearest railway stations to Appleby were Snarestone and Measham on the Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway. The line opened on 1st August 1873. It left the Leicester to Burton line at Moira by way of a triangular connection, with passenger facilities being provided at Donisthorpe, Measham, Snarestone, Shackerstone, Market Bosworth, Shenton, Stoke Golding and Higham on the Hill, with connections to both Stations at Nuneaton.

By the turn of the 19th Century most of the Appleby Farmers were sending milk to London via Snarestone Station. In addition goods facilities there provided means of transport for livestock, produce, grain, and coal in bulk was often purchased and delivered, farmers



Snarestone Station 1890's

© The Battlefield Line

collecting their own supplies expressly for use by the threshing contractor when visiting their farms with the traction engine.

Passenger services on the Joint Railway line had never really caught on and it was no surprise when these were discontinued on 12th April 1931. In the meantime the Road Traffic Acts and the interest, financial and otherwise, taken in the major bus Companies by the Railways paved the way for the easy replacement of those passenger trains by buses.

© Alan Condie

1

HISTORY MYSTERY

Last months object was a gas fire "brick" from around 1910 ...

2

MOTORWAY VIEWS

A farmer's view of motorway construction

3

HISTORY CAFE

Next Months meeting is at 10.00 a.m. on 16th February

Driving in the dark ...

Memories of Aubury Moore

Lights on vehicles were a real dim affair in the early 20th century. All they could do was to show that a vehicle was present. Carriages had a light, powered by a candle, and even then just one on the right hand side only. Bicycles had an oil lamp, using Golza oil, no rear light. The oil lamp gave off very little light and it was often safer to go cycling in the dark by the light of the moon. For the summer months it was not necessary for horse drawn vehicles to have a light, and that was often true in the darker winter months too.



Cars soon had acetylene lamps. The gas being formed by water dripping on to carbide. This gave a white light and with the aid of suitable reflectors gave a good beam well in front of the car. At the beginning of the 20th century bicycles had small acetylene lamps. The main trouble was putting on too much water and ending up with no light and a sloppy white mess in the carbine chamber. Paraffin lamps were also used on cars, mainly for side lights and to give a glimmer when the carbide failed.

Appleby in the early 20th century ..

Reggie Eyres memories of horse drawn drays ...



© Gail Thornton

Most of the milk from the village had to be taken to Snarestone station for the morning train to the dairy. Other milk was collected by dray for the Swebstone dairy. Edkins, an Austrey farmer contracted for this transport and the driver of the dray was Billy Hall whose brother John later became my brother in law. The dray was a part double decked affair pulled by three horses abreast, Bonnie, Prince and Striver. Three good horses, a rusty dray and a rotten driver. Bonnie was the dam of the other two and ran in the shafts in the centre with her sons in the side chains. The outfit probably carried thirty to forty seventeen-gallon milk churns and coming down the country lanes at a canter it was a pretty awesome sight to meet on a bike. These horses were a cross between Carthorses and Carriage horses and could go at a fair lick, especially when the churns were empty. The noise of their passing was appalling.

History mystery ???

This month's History Mystery Object is something Group Member Andrew Moore's great grandfather used. He was wheel wright In Newton Regis ...

The answer will be in our March Newsletter



The road ahead: Appleby has its first street lamp ...

It's not always quiet in the countryside ...

Become a newsletter contributor

We always welcome stories and memories to feature in our newsletter. Our topics for the next three months are: School memories, Farming and Countryside Rituals. We especially love your family stories and we value input from our readers.

We also invite comments and suggestions about our content and format

Send your thoughts memories and stories to the Editor.

The email is:

awmoore702@gmail.com

We think of village roads as relatively quiet and safe but as these extracts show even before the rise in motor vehicles all was not peaceful, even in Appleby Magna. On more than one occasion if a person was seriously ill, even dying, it became the concern of everybody. Straw would be strewn thickly in the road outside the house to dampen any vibration. In some cases larger vehicles like traction engines travelling through the village with threshing or cultivating machinery would be asked to go another route to avoid passing the sick person's house. Early roads in Appleby were little more than cobble stones pressed into mud, which left them brick hard in summer and muddy quagmires in the winter months.

As if that wasn't enough, there was very little street lighting and things were made worse by inadequately lit vehicles. There was no electricity in country places and not much in towns. It was only just emerging. There was one street lamp, outside Bates' shop at the corner of Bowleys

Lane and Church Street. It was run on paraffin which meant it had to be filled and trimmed on a regular basis. Each evening a man from the village was charged with lighting the flame and extinguishing it early each morning. It wasn't until electricity came to the village in the early 20th

century that the street light was replaced and Church Street had a lamp fitted by the Church gate.



Trapped ... 1948 was a testing year for public transport ..

Getting away from Appleby ...

Early days of caravan holidays ...



You can trace the origin of caravans back to the time of Charles Dickens (there is a reference in "The Old Curiosity Shop"), although they really started to gain popularity in the early twentieth century.

Residents of Appleby Magna, their village being situated pretty much equidistant from any coastline in the United Kingdom, were probably some of the earliest users of personal caravans. There being two fairly local manufacturers based in Birmingham. Of course this was at first a pursuit for the more well off of the village. A caravan in 1930 cost up to £150 !

The Caravan Club was formed in 1907 and by 1912 it boasted 267 members. Initially the preserve of the well-off, by the start of the 1920s mass production had made them cheaper and more accessible and cars were becoming better at towing them too.

By 1947 the first static caravans started to appear. They were made from hardboard and not the most robust of things and after a few seasons they had a tendency to warp! They were also pretty basic, fitted with gas lighting, a coal fire for heating and a single gas burner to cook on but no bathroom or running water.

Daily transport around Appleby in the 1950's ...

Duncan Saunders has his memories of the village ...

On the early 1950s Appleby was served by two bus timetables. The Midland Red No 722 went from Ashby to Snarestone, Appleby, Measham and then back to Ashby and would stop to pick up wherever it was needed; two examples being at Lodge farm, Snarestone and Whitehouse farm at the top of Birds Hill. First thing in the morning and then at about 4.15 from Ashby, the service was perfect for pupils going to and from Ashby. For more adventurous trips there was the X99 hourly service from Nottingham through to Birmingham along the old A453. For Appleby folk this meant a walk along Rectory Lane or Measham road; the pull in and bus stop at the end of Measham Road can still be seen. I remember that , when on the Parish council, we asked for the X99 to come through Appleby but nothing happened.

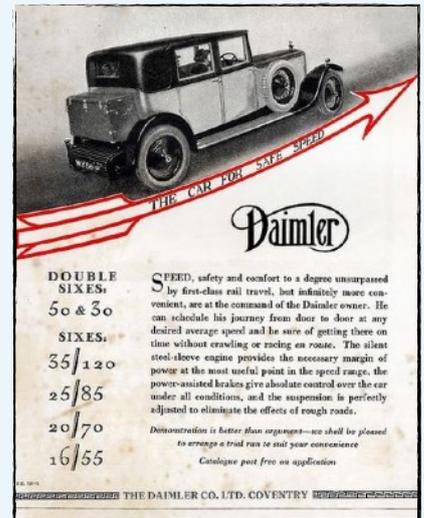
If you needed goods transported then small lorry transport was serviced by Fowkes on Top Street, Jones 'the coal' on Rectory Lane and Nixons at the Old Hall walled gardens off New Road. Nixons also ran a vehicle scrap yard. Mark Nixon ran the village car repair garage at the same site.

If a taxi service was required then Horace or his father, Aubrey would oblige, unofficially I think.

When in the 1960s the winters were much harder it was often necessary to light a fire under the lorries to try to unfreeze the diesel; there was no additive in the fuel in those days. Also, if a lorry would not start then Peter Fowkes from Jubilee Farm was called upon to bring tractor and chains to give a lorry a tow start down Top Street. This would always happen very early in the



Duncan's early daily transport was a Daimler EL24 1937



A vintage Daimler advertisement that appeared in magazines and newspapers

morning and living at Eastgate House we would hear and see the activity.

Very few residents had motor transport but several of the workmen had motorbikes or scooters. Reliant three wheelers were popular because they could be driven on a motorcycle licence.

My daily transport was a large Daimler from the 1930s whilst my wife had, at various times, a Morris Traveller, and Austin A35 or a Fiat 500.

As farm diversification grew and Barnsheath Farm developed there was a real increase in heavy traffic going along Top Street and New Road and it was sterling and persistent work by the Appleby Heritage and Environment Movement, that eventually prevented much of this transport from going through the village and passing Sir John Moore School; all heavy transport had to leave Barnsheath via Snarestone.

The biscuit bus ...

Taken from Allan Condie's study of Appleby Magna

The Biscuit factory at Ashby de la Zouch, owned by Meredith & Drew, who later became part of the United Biscuits empire, relied on a workforce drawn from a wide area. Transport was provided initially by Midland "Red" as part of the normal service pattern, taking into account workers' journeys. Appleby Magna was one of the many villages that were on the pick up circuit. When at its height, the first bus to the village was around 5:30 am. However, as demand changed there was an inevitable reduction in service. The need to attract a workforce from a wider area resulted in works transport being contracted to Machins of Ashby and at certain times their vehicles operated via Appleby Village according to demand. However, sometimes those requiring transport to work had to walk to the main A453 to avail themselves of the facility. Clutsam & Kemp also provided buses at one time for their workforce and Brown's Blue provided these on a private hire basis.



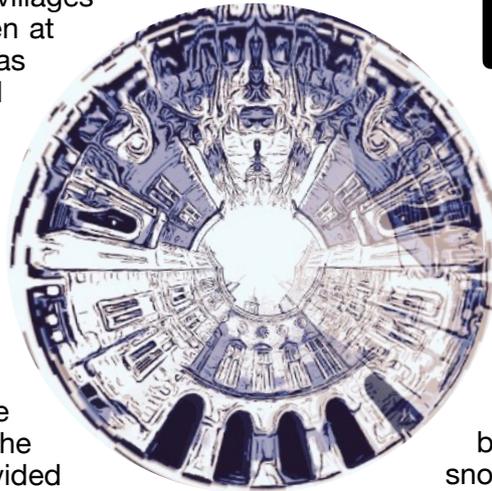
This is a S 14 saloon 4340 on the 4.31pm departure for Ashby via Snarestone - the blinds have yet to be reset. This was Swadlincote duty and the bus was built in 1954

Lambing ... Appleby Magna fields would be filled with the bleating of new born lambs around this time of year ...



Spring comes knocking ...

Anne Silins' Country Diary



It wasn't until after the middle of February that we got the first promise of Spring. It usually came without warning, like a thief in the night. The magic of it crept through the windows one morning, telling me Spring was waiting outside. As I trudged down the driveway to catch the bus, I would see the first snowdrops, gleaming white among the dead leaves. All the hedgerow birds were busily intent upon their Spring business; - mating, flirting, building nests and just singing songs. The earth was awakening from her winter sleep. I would stand and wait for the bus with my face turned up to the sky, rejoicing that spring was near and the sun had returned. There were many long days and evenings spent supervising the ewes and sometimes searching for lambs in the fields.

That bad winter of 1947 - 48 brought even more concerns than usual for Grandpa. He had some sheep out in the meadows by the Snarestone brook. As the snow drifted higher he knew he had to bring them to the barns, a chore he had postponed too long. The snow had increased to such a depth and he could wait no longer. I was the only person free to help and off we set, an older man and a ten year old girl.

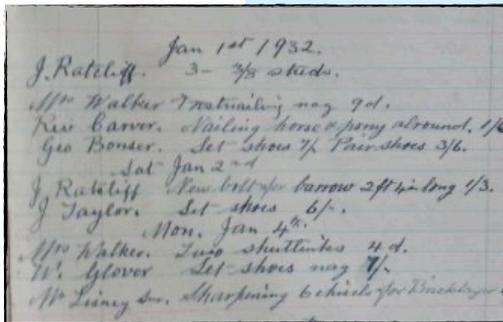


The village Blacksmith ...

Duncan Saunders recalls his years as the village blacksmith in Appleby Magna

It was when I was about 7 or 8 I had the great privilege of being invited to work the hand bellows for a man called Percy Clamp when he was working at Snarestone village forge, and I am certain that peaked a lifelong interest in blacksmithing.

When I went to Loughborough University to train as, what was called in those days, a Handicraft Teacher I spent many hours in the the engineering and forge areas as well as the silversmithing shop: with such skilled instructors these were three years of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.



Snarestone Forge daybook 1932

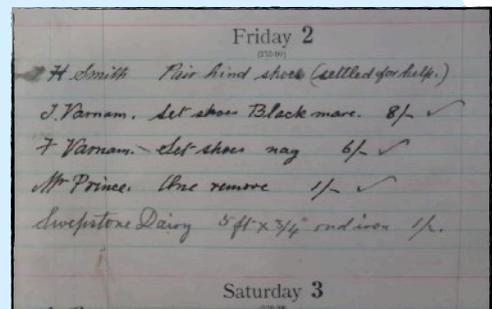
In the early 1970's I was working at Ashby Grammar School and the new Design Centre there allowed me to develop skills in forging and casting and my interest in manipulating hot iron was confirmed. Teaching was a far more relaxed occupation in these days and I was able to attend courses in decorative ironworking, instructed by master craftsmen.

During that time I had moved to Eastgate House in Appleby Magna and was able to set up my own forge in part of the old gig house. I started principally making wrought iron gates and large weather vanes. I am proud to say all these items were bespoke.

A few years later my wife decided she would like to have a horse as she had ridden extensively as a youngster. The purchase was made and stables built, but naturally the horse needed shoes. At first we used Jack Wheatley from Twycross, but as I had a forge the shoeing was done on site as it were. At the end of one of these shoeing sessions Jack gave me a length of shoeing iron to make a shoe and to bring it along to the forge at Twycross the following week.

The "not very good" shoe was duly taken along and was inspected. That same day I was made to make another shoe under Jacks instruction with a much better result. Eventually I would go along on Saturday mornings and during school holidays and I made several sets of shoes for him.

The next stage I had to learn was to actually shoe a horse. Jack was due to shoe a horse belonging to a lady on Blackhorse Hill. He made it clear that this particular animal had feet like dinner plates and it would be hard to make the nails go the wrong way! In the event the shoeing went well and so began my unofficial apprenticeship. I made good progress.



Snarestone Forge daybook

It was sometime during the 1980's that The Farriers Registration Bill came into being and I managed to get on the register. From that point onwards I was able to shoe horses as well as more general blacksmithing work. I worked evenings, Saturdays and school holidays for a discreet number of clients and many a time there would be a horse box pulled up outside Eastgate House I was privileged to shoe shire horses, race horses, hunters and ponies until I retired from my farrier work in 2005.



I must add that as the very nature of teaching changed, with much more administration and written planning added to the workload, there was nothing like heating up a piece of iron to white heat and hammering it hard, to relieve the weeks stress.

The trouble with motorways

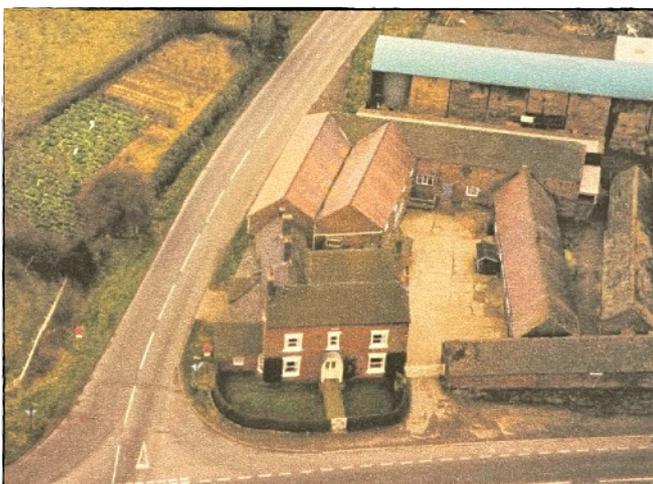
The M42 and the Phizackaleas' Farm

We first heard rumours of a proposed motorway which might have to come through our land in the late 1960's. It was to take traffic from Appleby Magna to the south of Birmingham. At that time there were five possible routes, and we all travelled to the first public enquiry at Warton Orton in 1971. We discovered it was going to be built, but not until 1984, which left our farm blighted by the proposal for the next 13 years.



Before the start and during the building of the motorway my life seemed to be an endless series of meetings to haggle with land agents and motorway engineers.

In the summer of 1984 fleets of yellow earth moving machines arrived and a line was cleared for one and half miles through our land. Hedges



and trees being felled as if they were matchsticks. It was another two frustrating years until the motorway finally opened in 1986. In these intervening years it meant some milking times had to be carried out without water and at one point a barn fire caused by workmen sleeping in the building. I think one of the more sad events I can recall is when my much beloved

sheep dog was killed on the newly opened road. The workmen who had been feeding her sandwiches had been replaced by cars ... she wasn't to know.



This image was taken from horseback by Duncan Saunders and shows the construction of Salt Street Bridle Path bridge over the M42

In 1989 we realised that the farm house, which had once been a former coaching inn, was marooned by the motorway and we could no longer stay there.

It was sold along with its impressive gardens only to be demolished

without ceremony to make way for a McDonalds and a service station

The art of the Blacksmith ...

Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;



And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.
His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 1807-1882

Leaking away ...

Marina Sketchley reports on a transport story she came across.

I went to Snarestone canal this afternoon and had a shock. Part of the canal wall had collapsed this morning and thousands of gallons have flooded into the lower field. Volunteers were just finishing as I arrived. They had managed to block one section but the water was just a few inches deep, with some barges proud of the water.

A section of a canal drained sweeping the towpath away with it after it sprang a leak.

A huge hole emerged in the side of the Ashby Canal, washing away the towpath and leaving boats sat on the muddy bottom of a watercourse.



By the 10th December 2020 work had already begun to repair the hole.

The Road to Morocco ...

Things didn't quite go according to plan !

Jean Turnbull, who is a current member of Appleby's local history cafe, recalls a road trip that almost happened not soon after she was married ...

"Bob and I were married when I finished at university. That was at the tender age of 21! Bob was a mature student doing A levels at Kettering Tech., so we were in rented accommodation in Corby.

I'd managed to get a job in the British Steel Works computer Dept. but didn't like the job.

Then Bob magnanimously suggested that I went out to Spain for a year to brush up my Spanish and then go into teaching.



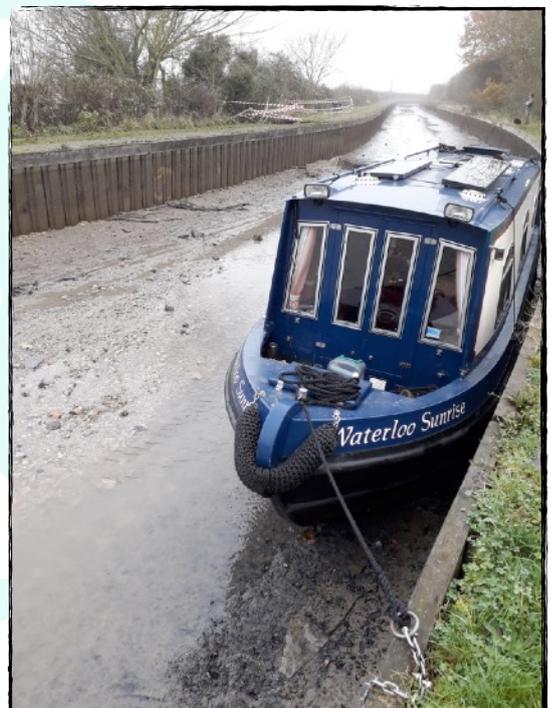
© Light Straw

While I was in Madrid he bought an old J2 ex post office diesel van with a plan to convert it into a camper van, come out to Spain and drive down to Morocco. After a lot of setbacks and delays, he set off and promptly broke down at the first roundabout outside Corby!

He did finally make it to Madrid but we had to call off our plans to go to Morocco. The experience certainly brushed up my technical Spanish for car parts!

This gaping hole in Snarestone canal is

many feet deep and right through the canal bed. When I was there the water still running but a barrier had been put in place I think a lot of fish have been lost, including some pike.

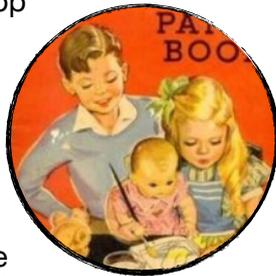


Lets Face it ...

Last months favourite
FaceBook postings ...

Every month the SJMF Heritage Facebook posts around 15 different topics. They are all based around some part of the museum's archive and items the children who went to school there may have used.

This month our top post reaching some 35,500 people was about a childhood memory of Paintless Paint Books that were popular in the 1960's.



This was closely followed by 23,500 folk reading about how the desks in our classroom still have inkwells.

There were lots of memories of those being used and misused. It seems there was a particular habit of dipping the pigtails of the girl in front into the deep blue inky murk of the inkwell.

One post in particular though brought back fond memories to many who read it. It was that of how as children we used to have to cover text books with paper at the start of the school year. The choices were many and varied from wallpaper to pop posters of favourite bands at the time.

In this month

1971 ... Pennies, bobs and half-crowns all disappear as Britain goes decimal.

1804 ... British engineer Richard Trevithick demonstrated the first steam engine to run on rails.

Convoys in the village ...

Taken from Anne Silins' memories of village life ...

Convoys came through the village with lorries full of American soldiers. It was said that they all had pockets full of chewing gum. We children had been warned repeatedly not to go near to the Twycross-Burton road to watch the convoys but we made our way to watch them in spite of the warnings. We would hide ourselves in the hedges and watch lorry after lorry go by. Some of the braver children would yell, "got any gum, chum!". None was ever thrown our way, but then we didn't really know what "gum" was, anyway. My Grandma never heard about these escapades thank goodness, or I would have been forbidden to leave the farm.



© Daily Express

Catch the bus from Appleby to Tamworth in 1963 to see 'The Beatles' ...



More Church affairs ..

Martin Jarvis adds more to last months front page story.

You may recall in last months newsletter Martin remembered a story about some grafetti his mother in law had been able to carve at the top Appleby's church. There was however more to that story.

Martin continues:

"As promised here's a little bit more information about Sally Hicks and the church spire.

Anne, Sally's daughter and my wife, recalls how when she was a young child her mother used to tell her that she'd 'jumped over the weathervane' on the church. Anne was always fascinated at how she'd done that not realising until she was older that it happened when the renovations were taking place to the spire and the weathervane had been removed and placed on the ground! "



Peelings ..”

It was reported in the Tamworth Herald in February 1937, that a car driven by Dennis Tooth swerved off the road by Appleby Magna pond, narrowly missing a metal signpost. Although the car did two somersaults and landed on its side, Mr Tooth and his passenger were not injured and crawled to safety through the roof of their vehicle. They did not need to go to hospital ..



© Northcliffe Publications

In the days before seat belts that seems a very lucky escape

Look & Learn Transport Special

From our archives ...

We have been delving into our archives looking for transport related items. One we didn't expect to find was a copy of Look and Learn. This was a children's weekly magazine was filled with facts and printed in full colour which was rare for the time. At the end of last year we published it on our Facebook page. It seems it was very a popular magazine and many people who were children at the time had fond memories of it:

I remember this magazine - full of useful and not so useful information. Each edition was eagerly awaited.

Lionel Kay

I had that every week loved it. So interesting different things every week perfect for the young inquiring mind. **Steve Randon**



Absolutely adored Look and Learn. Particularly, reading it at The Milestone House on Melbourne Road as long as I put it back with the other publications carefully. Grandad's instructions. **Helen Newbold**

Introducing Basil

Who is Basil? Basil is Sir John Moore Foundations school mouse ...

He has the run of the whole school when no one else is there: No children ... No teachers ... No cleaners. Watch out for Basil, he's going to be telling tales very soon!



www.sirjohnmoore.org.uk



SirJohn Moore Foundation Heritage

NEXT ISSUE

Education
Education
Education

THE NEWSLETTER IS EDITED BY

Andrew Moore

awmoore702@gmail.com

