

Local History Cafe



Sir John Moore Foundation, Appleby Magna

An Appleby Penitent

An awesome sight in Appleby Magna in 1741

Today, despite public concern about teenage pregnancies and unmarried mothers, most would be shocked by the sight of a seventeen-year old girl standing in church on Sunday morning draped in white robes and carrying a white wand, “openly and publicly” confessing to the “grievous crime” of fornication. This was the sight that greeted the parishioners after morning prayers in Appleby parish church on Sunday 19th April, 1741.

The ghostly figure draped in a white sheet was one of the local girls. The villagers were witnessing a comparatively rare event even for those times, an ancient ritual act of penitence legally set out and sanctioned by the Established Church in atonement for sexual impropriety.



In a sworn statement read aloud to the congregation the penitent Mary confessed to an illicit sexual liaison with Thomas Parker, describing her actions as a breach of God’s “sacred laws”, an “evil example” to others that threatened her immortal soul. Mary humbly acknowledged her scandalous behaviour, begging her neighbours to forgive her and asking for Christ’s grace “to avoid all such sinful wickedness”, so that she might live a sober and righteous life in the years to come. She ended her confession by asking the congregation to join her in reciting the Lord’s Prayer.



Rituals

Old Wives Tales

Ceremonies



School
Assembly

Memories of that
daily ritual ...



‘Ne’er cast a
clout ‘til (the)
May is out’

Basil’s Bit is
on Page 5 !

HISTORY MYSTERY

The tiny object that
was the mystery
object last month
was a cleave!
There is a fuller
explanation on
Page 8

THE ANNUAL RITUAL OF ROGATIONTIDE

Starting in the 7th
Century
Rogationtide has
been celebrated in
Appleby ever since
Page 4

HISTORY CAFE

Next Month’s
meeting is at
10.00m
on
18th May

Whitsuntide Walks ...

Taken from High Days and Holidays by
Richard Dunmore

To encourage the sense of society and mutual support amongst the members, as well as to have an enjoyable day's holiday, an annual event took place in the village on *Whit Monday*. This involved a processional walk by the Old Friendly Society's members behind the lodge banner, a service in the church and a shared meal at one of the pubs. The banner-bearer wore special ceremonial robes which were kept at the Crown Inn. Whit Monday was obviously a special annual holiday to which the villagers looked forward with keen anticipation.

The Appleby Parish Magazine recorded the celebrations at Whitsun 1890:

Whit-Monday was observed as a general holiday in our village, the weather proving very fine, which added to the hilarity of those bent on making the most of Bank Holiday. The Original Friendly Society this year united with the Loyal George Moore Lodge of Oddfellows in holding their Club Feasts on Whit-Monday. The two Clubs walked in procession to attend Divine Service at the Parish Church, where an eloquent Sermon was preached by Rev. W. S. Bamber. Mr Bamber was Headmaster of Appleby Grammar School.

After the service the procession was again formed, and the Clubs, headed by the Band, walked to the Moore Arms Inn, where a substantial dinner was provided by Mr. J. W. Bowley. After dinner the usual loyal toasts were given from the Chair; then the principal toast, "Prosperity to the two Clubs," was duly submitted and responded to, and a pleasant day was spent.

Tales from the Old Wife ...

There are many Midland and Appleby beliefs and sayings.

In days gone by food preparation was surrounded by so many taboos it is amazing anyone got anything to eat. Many housewives believed that food would be spoilt if it was stirred 'widdershins' – that is, in the opposite direction to that of the sun.

Everyone knows that 'a watched pot never boils' and in Appleby it is common knowledge that a slow-boiling kettle is bewitched and may contain a toad!



© Eriks Kitchen



© Mels Kitchen Cafe

In Yorkshire, housewives used to believe that bread would not rise if there was a corpse in the vicinity, and to cut off both ends of the loaf would make the Devil fly over the house

Ne'er cast a clout 'til (the) May is out'

Another one of the popular weather tales from old wives is based on the old adage that you shouldn't take your vest off until the Hawthorn plants are flowering! The first written form dates back to 1732 but probably was handed along verbally long before then.

History mystery ???

This months object was found in a back garden In Groby.
The question is what could it have been used for?

The answer will be in our June Newsletter



Appleby Carnival and Tug of War ...

Remembering the Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1977

Become a newsletter contributor

We always welcome stories and memories to feature in our newsletter. Our topics for the next three months are: Mining, Being In service and Summer Holidays . 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:
SJMFHeritage@post.com

A jubilant burst of celebrations in London and all over the country officially marks the start of Jubilee Week revelries,” the souvenir 12p edition of the Radio Times of June 4 to 10, 1977, declared.

More than 4,000 street parties were held in London alone with 12,000 in Britain as a whole. Appleby Magna was not going to miss out on the national celebrations either.

Duncan Saunders remembers that it all started with a parade through the village lead by the Scout Band from Donisthorpe. As the parade came down the narrow village streets it gathered more and more folk, most of them dressed in some shade of red, white or blue.

The parade led everyone to the Village Recreation Ground where many events had been set up for the crowd to try their hand at. One in particular Duncan remembers was “Bat the Rat” where the skill was to hit an object shooting out of a drainpipe. Not such an easy task as it sounds.

An event for the stronger members of the public was heaving a heavy straw bale over a pole vault rail just using a pitch fork. This was popular with the young men of the village trying to prove their strength to their on looking girlfriends.



Another popular event was the “Tug of War” which pitted two teams from the village against one another. It seems the name of the winning team has been lost in the mists of time.

All this took place before the advent of ‘Health and Safety’ allowing events such as knocking your opponent off a telegraph pole with a sack of straw to take place, and was another highlight of the afternoon events.

Although the day had begun quite wet and damp by the afternoon the sun had come out and everyone was able to enjoy the refreshments and later on the beer tent. It was a great success and still remembered in the village some 40 plus years later.



Rogationtide in Appleby ...

Rogation Sunday in Appleby was a splendid affair

The Rogation Day ceremonies are thought to have arrived in Appleby in the 7th century. The oldest known text regarding Rogation Days is dated from around 1173 to 1220. At the head of the procession was the dragon, representing Pontius Pilate, which would be followed by a lion, representing Christ. After this there would be images of saints carried by the rest of the congregation.

In Appleby this annual procession was especially used for the blessing of the crops at Rogation-tide. It is not clear whether this was a continuous tradition or whether there was a revival when it took place after the Second World War.

It is known that in 1946 the visiting Bishop of Leicester gave the blessings. The procession started from the church and made its way to the top of Rectory Lane and called at the (old) Rectory to bless the rectory fields. The allotments would have been another stop for the newly sown crops to be blessed.

Anne Silins remembers that particular Rogation Sunday in 1946 "I would have been eight or nine years of age when I took part in the Rogation Day in Appleby Magna. As you can see in the photograph I was a Brownie. Miss. Knight was our leader both for the Brownies and later when I was in the Girl Guides. I went to North Wales (Barmouth) with Miss. Knight for one summer camping trip. Miss. Knight came from Ibstock and she would pick me up from the end of the drive of Lower Rectory Farm where I lived, and afterwards she delivered me home, driving down the driveway right to the farm



house. She was quite an amazing woman who gave me a lot of inspiration and instruction.

You will see Sally (Stevenson) Hicks in the photograph. Sally lived in a newish bungalow in Church Street when I visited her some years ago. I believe their plot of land was where the old Baptist Chapel once stood. I attended Infants School in this building for my first school year. I see Emily Pointon also in the photograph - I do not remember her married name. Also Mrs. Spencer who was a great friend of my Grandma Bates and she lived in one of the houses between the old Bates Shop and the Church in Church Street. I visited her often and sometimes was invited to stay over night. My Uncle John Bates (who lives in Broomley Road, Coalville now) was a great friend of her son John Spencer. As a child I followed these 'two Johns' around the village like a little puppy dog and I am sure I became a pest with my continual questions to them."



Rogation Sunday 1946

This is the whole congregation outside the Old Rectory during the village procession

Ghostly Goings on ...

Taken from "Appleby Peelings" by Joan Noble

My friend, Bill Taylor, who was the village butcher for many years, told me this tale, which is of great interest, I think.

On a particular evening, probably in the 1930's or 1940's, as it was growing dusk, he was walking along the New Road, together with his friend, Herbert Garton, their destination being the Moore Arms, now The Appleby Inn. To reach this they had to pass the Lodge on the left. This had once served Appleby Hall, a Georgian manor house demolished in the 1920's. Herbert had evidently walked a little ahead of Bill, who had just reached the drive. gateway to the Hall.

The latter was suddenly aware of a man approaching him from the drive dressed in a long coat, top hat and white scarf. Bill moved to one side and then to the other several times but could not pass the man. His friend, Herbert, who had gone on before, called him to hurry up. Bill answered that he "was trying to pass this fellow"



© Clean PNG

With the sound of their voices the figure vanished, "like a pricked balloon," as Bill said. He hurried to catch up with Herbert, who had seen nothing of the incident.

They said nothing to each other until they reached their chosen destination.

They arrived at the Moore Arms Bill told his story to the others whilst drawing the likeness of the man he had seen on a slate with a piece of chalk. He was something of an artist.

However one of the villagers, after a few minutes, remarked that he recognised it as being the late squire, Mr. George Moore, who had died in 1916.

"Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing"



Basil's Bit

Basil's South African cousin has been telling him tales ...

You will have heard of "old wives tales", well we mice have "old mice tales" and it's nothing to do with our real tails either.

I remember my cousin from South Africa telling me about "The Tooth Mouse". It is said in that part of the world if a child loses a tooth, he must put it in a slipper under the bed before going to sleep.

During the night the Tooth Mouse will swap the tooth for money. There are stories of mice building new homes for themselves entirely out of children's teeth. Eewwwww !



May Day Superstitions

First thing in the morning on May 1st, young girls in Appleby Magna used to rush out into the garden to wash their faces in the May dew.

There is an old tale that says that May dew has magic properties and that anyone who has washed their face in it will have a beautiful complexion all through the year. This dew was supposed to be able to remove freckles and also spots and pimples.



The School Assembly ...

We asked our FaceBook friends to tell us their memories of school assembly time.
We had a lot of differing views

I liked taking Assembly with primary school children. Hymn "He's got the whole world in his hands" - children clapped in time to the music.



There was always one child who clapped after everyone else., but did not seem to know they were out of time Always made me smile. Happy days.

Margaret Brailsford

Our Grammar School assemblies were very formal. Aged 11 I found them strange, miserable and terrifying. No coughing was allowed and no one was allowed to take her eyes off the platform or to fidget. It all seemed robotic, cold and impersonal.

The whole school fell silent when a bell was rung at 5 to 9. The silence remained until we reached our first lesson after assembly. We lined up in our form rooms, always in the same order and walked in single file to the assembly hall and were guided to exactly the same floor space by prefects.

The music teacher played sombre classical music on the grand piano. The prefects and house captains would take their seats on the stage. As the headmistress approached, led by the head girl we were ordered to stand.

There were two readings. For which we sat, a hymn, for which we stood, prayers and silent prayers for which we remained standing and finally notices from the headmistress, (which often included a severe telling off) and head girl for which we sat! We stood as the headmistress left the stage and proceeded down the centre of the assembly hall. At that point cheerier classical music would be played on the piano and we word leave in our usual order in single file.

Linda Rose

Indeed at Primary School we were all quiet and sitting cross legged on the floor, then the Headmistress would walk down from her office off the back of the hall and say 'Good Morning Children' and we would all chorus in a rather 'affected way 'Good Morning Miss Duckney' (that was her name !) Then she would say 'This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice , and be glad in it' . We'd then sing a hymn, she would say a prayer and we'd all say the Lords Prayer. One day a small lad let out a loud fart just after the 'Amen'

which everyone heard. She was furious, and demanded who was it, No one owned up so she threatened to keep the whole school in late. I think a little girl standing next to him dubbed him in, cos we weren't kept in.

Brian Moate

I remember it... like it was yesterday.

All of the kids marching in eldest at the back going down to first years at front and teachers stood to each side of hall . The Head teacher and deputy head on stage, And Mrs Hall a tiny elderly teacher that did her best at playing the up right piano. Singing hymns... like Onward Christian Soldiers or All things bright and beautiful our Lord God made them all .

Evelyn Peart



The school Hall at Sir John Moore Foundation

I grew up in Liverpool. One day a class went on a school trip over to the Birkenhead side of the river using the ferry. In that morning's assembly we all thought it was way over the top when we had to sing the hymn, 'For those in peril on the sea'!

Irene Crowe

What is wrong?

Taken from the archives and dated 1964. The answer will be in our June Newsletter.



Its a basket case ...

Last month's mystery object was used to make baskets.

The small wooden object is called a cleave and is used by basket-makers for splitting osier rods.

Osiers grew along the Trent, part of Leicestershire's northern boundary. The earliest surviving example of early basketry is a well-preserved eel trap, made in the 9th or 10th century, which was discovered by archaeologists in the paleochannels of the Trent at Castle Donnington.

Osiers were cultivated here by at least the 14th century, and basket-making had become an important occupation by the 17th century.

Different parts of the country have their own particular superstitions designed to bring good fortune, health and wealth to their house and occupants. In the Midlands and Appleby Magna, there were superstitions surrounding even the outside of the home. Before a house was completed certain things had to be done first. For example, to protect the house from witches a rowan tree had to be planted.

In Leicestershire in particular, under no circumstances must hawthorn be brought into the house before May Day as it belonged to the Woodland God and would bring bad luck!



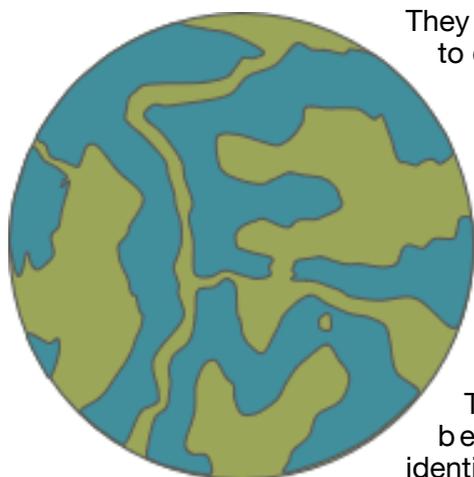
Osier Cutting ... an engraving by H R Robinson 1875

The Earth Museum

A mapping project connecting Appleby Magna to the rest of the world

What is The Earth Museum and what is its connection to Appleby? Earlier this year we were invited to take part in a unique resource.

The Earth Museum is an experimental not-for-profit enterprise, with a vision to create a virtual learning resource used in every home, classroom, museum and place, sharing and connecting the world's cultural and natural heritage with people and places; empowering the world to understand each other and look after the planet in a better way.



They constantly strive to be true to our values:

To inspire compassion and solidarity

To be trustworthy and act with integrity

To respect and value diverse experiences

To promote a sense of belonging, emphasising identity and accessibility

To become climate positive and champion sustainability in others

Not a bad set of values to be associated with I'm sure you would agree. With the help of a small grant the Heritage Centre is going to upload 50 of its artefacts to this world wide resource which will allow them to be studied anywhere on the planet.

We will report back as this exciting new project develops, but meanwhile do investigate The Earth Museum website:

<https://theearthmuseum.co.uk>

Whitsunday ...

Transcript from Appleby Parish Magazine of 1890

Whit-Monday was observed as a general holiday in our village, the weather proving very fine, which added to the hilarity of those bent on making the most of Bank Holiday. The Original Friendly Society this year united with the Loyal George Moore Lodge of Oddfellows in holding their Club Feasts on Whit-Monday. The two clubs walked in procession to attend Divine Service at the Parish Church, where an eloquent Sermon was preached by the Rev W. S. Bamber, the preacher selecting his text from Galatians vi. 2.

After Service the procession was again formed, and the Clubs, headed by the Band, walked to the Moore Arms Inn, where a substantial dinner was provided by Mr J. W. Bowley. A special feature in the procession this year was the admission of a number of the very Juvenile Members of the Oddfellows, and we commend this step as being one in quite the right direction.

After dinner the usual loyal toasts were given from the Chair; then the principal toast, "Prosperity to the two Clubs", was duly submitted and responded to, and a pleasant day was spent.

Janet Owen is the founder and executive director of The Earth Museum, a project inspired by her 30 years working in the museum and cultural heritage environment; and through research into the collecting journeys of Alfred Russel Wallace and Charles Darwin, amongst others.



In this month

1707 ... Great Britain was formed from a union between England and Scotland.

1954 ... Roger Bannister was the first man to run a mile in under 4 minutes.

1894 ... Queen Victoria opened The Manchester Ship Canal

Peelings ..”



With the enclosure of the whole parish, including the heaths and commons, these rights were swept away. The earlier ‘ancient’ enclosures were confirmed and the remaining land divided up afresh and awarded to individual landholders. The larger farmers wanted to divide up the common land and incorporate it into their farms. This would enable them to work more land with increased efficiency; and so improve their output and profits.

Common rights were of greatest value to the poorer sections of society and their loss was a devastating blow. It became impossible to support a few cows which could hitherto be kept on the commons.



The Witches demise ...

A 17th Century local Witch trials

It was in 1616 that nine women in Husbands Bosworth were executed on suspicion of being witches in what became known as the Leicester Boy Trial. A 13 year old boy named John Smith began suffering fits and accused nine local women of bewitching him, describing in detail how they would send animal spirits to possess him. The women were hanged on the same day as their trial.

Later in October Smith accused a further 6 women of witchcraft. By coincidence King James I was in the area and having a keen interest in witch-hunting decided to take a personal look at the case. He was appalled to discover that the trials rested on the testimony of a child, and cross-examination quickly determined that Smith had been lying for attention.



The six women were acquitted, but only five freed as the sixth had since died in prison. The collapse of the case caused considerable fallout on English law, with judges becoming reluctant to accept testimony from children as evidence. It's only in the past few decades that this attitude has started to change.

From our archives, Nichols' seminal 1798 History Of Leicester books contains a copy of a letter written by Robert Heyrick on the day of the women's execution, with followups about the October trials. Even Nichols comments that it is 'scarcely credible in these enlightened times' what happened on that day 403 years ago. It was a dark day in Leicestershire's history, and we can only hope that we can learn from the mistakes of the past.



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NEXT ISSUE

Coal.
Miners.
Going
underground

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