

NEWSLETTER

April 2024

Local History Cafe



Wash Day blues ...

Anne Silins recalls Wash Day in Appleby Magna .

When I was a little girl we children of Appleby were allowed to wander the streets, lanes and foot paths on our own. We wouldn't have an adult with us, and didn't seem to need adult supervision, this is not the way children are allowed to explore these days. And so it was that Eunice, Emily, Sally and I, all of Church Street, found ourselves exploring our village. One such area which was of great fascination was the wash houses. We watched the women at work, we listened to their conversations. Somehow we knew not to share what we had heard, but we did learn some of the secrets of a women's life.

Behind the row of Victorian cottages in Church Street, Appleby Magna, was one of these village wash houses. It stood up against the back wall, at the end of the garden of number 43. It was a brick building, and inside in one corner was a brick 'copper' which was mortared with fire cement. It had an opening at ground level where the fire was located to heat the water. The water was brought down from the rain barrel or the pump, both close to that house. As you can see, carrying pails of water first to fill the copper, then for the rinse water and later to empty it all again,



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added to the work of these women when doing their weekly laundry. Along one other wall in this wash house and under a small window which faced the back of the cottages was a brick work bench with a stone sink, both at waist height.

Women from this row of houses took turns using this wash house. With some men in the village working at the pits in Measham, Donisthorpe and Swadlincote Collieries the wash house was a busy place and all the housewives wanted full use of the wash house on their assigned wash day. Without a fuss or much ado the days were shared amicably. The built-in cauldron of copper was used to heat water to wash the clothes. Many 'coppers' were made of copper but later they were made of zinc. To heat the wash water the fire hole at

ground level had an ash pan, a door and a flue chimney. This fire was usually started using newspaper and wood kindling and then coal was added to get the water good and hot.

Towards the end of the 19th century there came wrapped bars of soap which were sold at moderate prices. Women would grate flakes off a bar of hard soap to use for their loads of laundry. Some years later ready-made soap flakes came sold in a box.



April Blossoms



A visit from the High Sheriff

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All your Easter Eggs in one basket



A change of seasonal wear for school

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The next History Cafe meeting will be at 10.00 am on April 16th

Hi! Sheriff ...

Sonia Liff tells of a visit from the High Sheriff of Leicestershire

On January 15th our museum and primary school were delighted to receive a visit from the High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Henrietta Chub. First, she met the headteacher Daniel Wright and the School Council – those pupils who have been elected by their peers to represent them – who showed her around the hall and classrooms. The High Sheriff then led an assembly in the hall.



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After an enthusiastic rendition of a song with the punch line “We need a **reminder** to be **kinder**”, a sentiment we can all get behind, the High Sheriff explained her role and how it differed from the Sheriff of Nottingham of Robin Hood fame.

The High Sheriff wore her ceremonial dress and, as she stood under the statue of Sir John Moore we noted a striking similarity of appearance. She took questions from the children. They were most interested in whether she had met the King. Not yet, but she had met his sister Anne and brother Edward. They also wanted to know how old you had to be to be a High Sheriff. She said the best part of her job was getting to thank people, particularly volunteers, for the work they did.

The High Sheriff then met with Foundation Trustees and volunteers from the Local History Café group. As well as her High Sheriff role she is also a member of the Court (governing body) of the Grocers’ Livery Company. This is a strong link with Sir John Moore who started his career as an

apprentice to the Grocers’ company and rose to be its Master in 1671. Fred Steward explained the way our school embodied John Moore and Christopher Wren’s commitment to commercial education.

We explained that we wanted to rethink our museum focus so it could tell the story of Sir John Moore’s business career and the way education changed over this period. Sally Lowe, museum manager, explained our developing ideas and the challenges of engaging with schools and other visitors in our multi-use site.

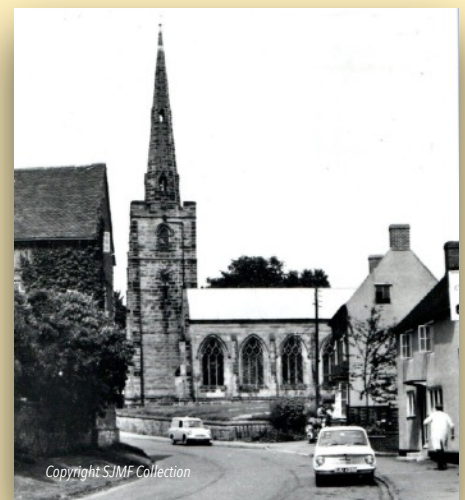
Finally, we showed her around the museum. We look forward to keeping in touch and building wider networks to help us deliver our new look museum.

Tamworth Herald

Chris Bee researched articles about Appleby from the local press

This article was taken from a 1932 edition of the Tamworth Herald

“Are houses wanted? When Ashby Rural Council on Saturday, discussed the question of providing houses at Appleby, Rector of Appleby (the Reverend D J. Davis) declared that there was no demand for houses there, and said that a meeting of villagers decided by 50 votes to 10 against houses being built. He urged that houses should be built in areas where they were wanted. Mr T Varnham, who represents Appleby on the council, said he objected to paying a five penny rate for houses if Appleby was left out, and eventually, the council decided to erect 12 houses in the village.”



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April showers ...

Another opportunity to read an extract from
Anne Silins Country Diary ...

April was planting season. The fields had been rough-ploughed, sometimes a second time if we had a dry winter. Now the fields had to be worked down with the cultivator and the harrow to form a seed-bed. Barley, oats and wheat made up the chief cereal crops for spring sowing.. At Easter everything was just a little greener, a smiling landscape.

At Easter time there were few delights such as children in town had, but I usually received a small chocolate egg from my Grandparents. I attended the Good Friday and Easter Sunday services at Church. Spring flowers made a welcome sight on the altar for these special services. The two Mrs. Gothards had done their decorating well, as usual.



April, also brought April showers. I have always liked rain because of the good it does to the earth. I like the feel of it on my face and I love the sound of it on the window panes and, even when it soaks my clothes, I never get too upset.

One Spring morning I could see no reason why I should continue to wear white underwear as well as my navy blue bloomers to school. Grandma insisted it was too soon to discard the white woolen underwear, but I couldn't wait. It was a warm Spring morning, and I was going to try it. So when I reached the end of the drive I took off the white pair and pushed them into my Wellington boots. The day proceeded as usual, except that I felt a little lighter and very grown up with only one pair of knickers on. As I got off the Ashby bus at the end of the day, I was surprised to hear people on the bus chuckling and the young people laughing. When the bus drove away, I saw my white bloomers flying like a great white flag on top of the hedge.

Someone had found them and played a joke on me. I never found out who played that April trick, but that was because I also never asked!

Everyone smile ...

School pictures are fun ..

School photographs can be a stressful time for teachers and pupils alike. This one taken in the hall of Sir John Moore School, in Appleby Magna shows the 1959 infant class along with their teacher Mrs Lydia Evans.



BACK ROW:

Robert Grey, Ken Smith, John Cater, Linda Miller

MIDDLE ROW:

Pam Phillips, Susan Ensor, Marie Redfern, Sally Grey, Theresa Stone.

FRONT ROW:

Alan Verney, Charles Jones, Ron Jones, Barry Bowley

Biking it ...

Reginald Eyre recalls cycling
in the village

In Appleby Magna in the 1940's the most popular form of transport was the bicycle. Everyone rode a bike, even my mother!!! Children from the outlying farms went to school on their bikes from about the age of six.

Before that they would be taken to school by their mothers or by the farm boy on the milk float. If they were rich, they would be taken in a "tub", known in elevated circles as a "governess cart". The farm workers all used bicycles.

Dragon along ...

Ellie Williams looks into the history of this famous April date ...

On the 23rd of April, England comes alive with patriotic fervour and a sense of national pride as the country celebrates St George's Day. This annual commemoration honours England's patron saint, St George, while also celebrating the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the English people. In this article, we delve into the significance of St George's Day and how it is celebrated across the country.

St George is widely regarded as a symbol of courage, chivalry, and the triumph of good over evil. Legend has it that he killed a fearsome dragon to rescue a princess, becoming a revered figure in English folklore. St George's Day serves as a reminder of these noble virtues and the importance of upholding them in modern society.

St George's Day is marked by a range of festivities and customs that showcase the English spirit. Parades featuring traditional English costumes, including the iconic red and white St George's Cross, take place in towns and cities nationwide.

No St George's Day celebration is complete without indulging in traditional English fare. Roast beef, a quintessential English dish, is often enjoyed alongside Yorkshire pudding and a pint of ale. Other favourites include fish and chips, scones with clotted cream and jam, and the classic English tea. St George's Day is also a time to embrace English folklore and pageantry. Morris dancing, a traditional English folk dance, is performed in many villages and towns. Medieval reenactments and jousting tournaments bring history to life, captivating audiences with their colour and excitement.

St George's Day is a cherished occasion for the English people to honour their patron saint and celebrate the rich tapestry of English heritage. From parades and traditional costumes to mouthwatering food and captivating folklore, the day offers a glimpse into the spirit and traditions that define England.

Reg Eyre recalls that: *"Every St. Georges Day and every Empire Day two senior boys had to dig a hole in the school field in Appleby Magna and erect a flagpole, then after morning prayers everyone would go out on to the field and sing patriotic songs. I can remember to this day the words of "God Bless the Prince of Wales" and "Jerusalem"."*

Wish you were here ...

Postcards ... The craze that swept the world. Chris Gibson investigates

The late 19th to early 20th century marked a captivating era known as the Golden Age of Picture Postcards. This period witnessed a surge in the popularity of these small rectangular pieces of artwork, bridging communication and artistry in a unique and novel manner. Picture postcards provided a tangible and often picturesque connection between individuals, transporting them to faraway places, and immortalizing moments in time.



Emerging against the backdrop of a rapidly industrialising world, picture postcards became a medium of connection and expression. As technology advanced, the process of printing and distributing these cards became more affordable and accessible, allowing them to transcend societal boundaries and reach a diverse range of individuals. The postal system's efficiency further fuelled their popularity, enabling people to share glimpses of their lives and surroundings with unprecedented ease.

Travel and exploration were key themes within the world of picture postcards. The cards allowed recipients to embark on vicarious journeys, experiencing exotic locales, cultures, and landmarks from the comfort of their own homes. This not only satisfied the human desire for discovery but also served as an early form of armchair tourism.

Furthermore, the Golden Age of Picture Postcards became a tool for communication that transcended written language barriers. The images themselves conveyed emotions, stories, and experiences, making them universally understood. Whether it was a declaration of affection, a simple "wish you were here," or a message of familial connection, these cards carried sentiments across oceans and borders, forging emotional ties that were otherwise challenging to maintain.

The legacy of this era extends beyond sentimentality. Picture postcards offer valuable insights into historical events, architectural trends, and societal norms. They document the changing landscapes of cities, the evolution of fashion, and the pulse of everyday life during a transformative time in human history.

No school like an old school ...

At a recent History Cafe meeting Sally brought up the topic of boarding schools in children's fiction



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The history of children's stories about boarding schools in England is quite fascinating. These stories often depict the lives and adventures of young students attending boarding schools, providing readers with a glimpse into the traditional education system and social dynamics in England.

One of the earliest and most iconic examples is "Tom Brown's Schooldays," written by Thomas Hughes in 1857. This novel follows the experiences of Tom Brown at Rugby School, showcasing the challenges and character-building aspects of life in a boarding school.

However, it was the renowned author Enid Blyton who popularized the genre in the 20th century with her "Malory Towers" and "St. Clare's" series. These stories, published between the 1940s and 1950s, captured the imaginations of young readers with tales of friendship, mischief, and adventure in boarding school settings.

Another influential series is J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter." While not strictly focused on boarding school life, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry plays a significant role in the story. The Harry Potter series, which gained immense popularity worldwide, introduced a magical twist to the traditional boarding school narrative.

These stories, along with numerous others, have contributed to the enduring appeal of boarding school tales in children's literature. They offer readers a chance to explore themes of independence, friendship, personal

growth, and the challenges of navigating school life away from home. It's worth noting that while these stories may offer fictional portrayals of boarding school experiences, they often reflect societal values and educational practices prevalent during the time of their publication.

Jennings is a fictional character in the popular series of children's books called "Jennings" by Anthony Buckeridge. In the series, Jennings is a schoolboy who attends a boarding school called Linbury Court Preparatory School, along with his friend Darbishire (often referred to as "Darbi"). Jennings is known for his misadventures and his tendency to get into humorous and often chaotic situations. He has a vivid imagination and a knack for unintentionally causing trouble, which leads to comedic moments throughout the stories. Despite his frequent mishaps, Jennings is portrayed as a well-meaning and lovable character who is always eager to make the best of any situation.

The "Jennings" series, which was published between 1950 and 1994, consists of numerous books that chronicle the humorous escapades of Jennings and his friends at the boarding school. These stories have entertained generations of readers with their lighthearted and comical take on boarding school life.



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