

NEWSLETTER

Number 69

Rag Bone was the cry ...

Anne Silins recalls her memories early recycling in Appleby Magna

A few months ago for the Appleby Magna "Local History Cafe" I wrote about Travellers – these included Tramps, Peddlers, Hobos and Vagabonds. There was another travelling man who passed through Appleby and he didn't just drift quietly through our village.



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This travelling man's mode of transport was iconic, the clip clop of his horse's hooves and the crunching of the wheels of his dray, announced his arrival in the village. If that wasn't enough to alert housewives and us children then his loud cries did. Loud and echoing, he rang out "rag-and-bone, rag-and-bone, anything for the rag-and-bone man". That distinctive cry brought children away from play time, even if we were in the school playground, but never could we escape from the classroom to see his arrival. This man, rarely was there a woman, arrived with noise, clanging and drama as he entered the village. This man travelled alone and usually slept rough in a lane, if lucky, with permission, he bedded down in a barn.

Into Appleby he came, either entering our village via the Snarestone Road, and when from that direction his first stop would have been in the Bull Ring. If

coming from the A444 he entered our village from Top Street, or down Bowleys Lane to Church Street. Here he made a stop at a bulge in Church Street just outside the Queen Adelaide Inn or Bates Grocery Shop. But if coming from the direction of the Tamworth – Ashby Road, he turned at the petrol station 'White Gates' into Measham Lane or entered by Rectory Lane making his way into the village. Arriving from these last two directions he often stopped at where Measham Lane, Church Street and Rectory Lane all met. After stopping at these three places he conducted his business. He would know there were people who were unable to come him to him, so later he would slowly walk the lanes and streets, calling out 'rag and bone man' once again.

Out of houses came the elderly who were unable to walk far, or new Mothers who didn't wish to leave or wake a baby. He happily collected more items and added them to his dray.

There were also the odd 'rag and bone man' who had no horse and this man would push or pull a two wheel dray. This 'push



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me - pull me' type of dray had a single wooden leg which pulled down settling the leg securely on the road and so with his dray steady he took care of business.

Part two of this story will be in our April edition

Lenten Traditions in Victorian England

What are you giving up this Lenten Season?

For the Victorians, Lent was a period of profound solemnity and strict self-discipline. While we might struggle to give up chocolate or social media today, our 19th-century ancestors adhered to much more rigorous standards of abstinence.

In Victorian England, the most common sacrifice was dietary. Many households strictly avoided "rich" foods, including meat, butter, eggs, and fats. In more traditional or rural communities, families often survived on a meager diet of salt fish, plain bread, and water. Beyond the dinner table, the Victorians gave up social vanities. The "London Season" of balls and lavish parties came to a grinding halt; Theatres saw dwindling audiences, and weddings were rarely performed during these forty days.

For the wealthy, Lent was also a time for increased philanthropy, giving up personal luxuries to provide "Lenten alms" to the poor. This combination of physical fasting and moral reflection defined the Victorian spirit of devotion and restraint.



There was a tradition of keeping the ashes from the fire during Lent

Exhausted of Tregaian ...

Sally Lowe, Museum Manager, imagines how life could be with 43 children !

In the quiet graveyard of a tiny church in Tregaian, north Wales, lies an unassuming gravestone. However, read the inscription, and you'll find that the life of the man who lies in the grave was anything but ordinary.

William ap Howel died in 1581, at the ripe old age of 105. But here comes the interesting part – he left behind 43 children and around 250 grandchildren. At the time of his death, his oldest child was a mere 84 years old, whilst his youngest was two-and-a-half.



Howel's first wife, Elen Williams, bore him 22 children. His second wife, Katherine Richards, continued the trend and had 10 children. His third wife, also called Ellen (although spelled differently), was a little more canny, and only had four children. Out of wedlock, Jonet ferch William had two of Howel's children, whilst Lecky Lloyd had five.

Before Howel started his shenanigans, his parish of Llanfairpwll had a population of around 80.

Nationally, the average family had 4 surviving children in the 16th century. Bucking all trends and thumbing his nose at the alarming child mortality rates of the time, Howel was a small, happy man, by contemporary accounts. So what on earth made him able to father – and sustain – so many children across so many years?

Local gossip has it that he lived mostly on milk, and spent his days farming his land and fishing. He was also said to be one of the best poachers in Anglesey.

The Bayeux Tapestry

Sally once again gives us the benefit of her detailed studies

For the first time in almost 1,000 years, the Bayeux Tapestry is coming to England. It will be displayed in the British Museum from September 2026 to July 2027. Tickets are not on sale yet, but will be available from the British Museum in due course. (Volunteers and staff at the Sir John Moore Foundation Museum are very excited about this event. Well, actually, it's mainly Sally who is excited about this event). This is because she watched a drama about the Norman Conquest the other week and talked about a school trip she once went on to see the Bayeux Tapestry. Apparently, the rest of her classmates got 'lost' and were found in a French bar later that evening, but Sally gamely cracked on and went to the museum all by herself.

However, The British Museum's event is not without controversy. A petition with over 60,000 signatures calls for the tapestry to remain in France. Protestors are worried that the tapestry is too fragile to be moved; others claim that fragile artefacts should not be used for diplomatic purposes. Others point out how expensive the move is, at a time when museums around the country have closed their doors because of a lack of cash in the industry.

Widely considered to be one of the world's most important artefacts, the Bayeux tapestry is one of the few artefacts on the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register. Designed to tell the story of the Conquest to people who were largely illiterate, the tapestry has been called the world's first comic strip by some, and is a striking depiction of the war – as told by the conquerors.

Most modern scholars agree that it was commissioned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, William the Conqueror's half-brother. Bishop Odo was also the Earl of Kent, and Regent of England when William was absent in Normandy. Three of the Bishop's followers appear in the tapestry, and it may have been commissioned at the same time as the cathedral's construction in the 1070s. The Latin text contains hints of Anglo-Saxon, and vegetable dyes used can be found in other cloths woven in Canterbury at this time. The stitching was almost definitely carried out by women, who were famous throughout Europe for their Opus Anglicanum, a type of detailed needlework.

However, since early modern times, French legend has attributed the tapestry's creation to Queen Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror (not the Queen Matilda who waged a civil war against her cousin King Stephen, you English history nerds. That was much later!). Some scholars even suggest the tapestry was made in France. As if!

The first reference to the tapestry can be found in an inventory of the treasures of Bayeux Cathedral in 1476. In 1562, it survived the sack of Bayeux by the Huguenots. The next reference we have is in a letter from Antoine Lancelot, who sent a report to the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1724, concerning a sketch he had received about the tapestry. However, he could not find the original (did he have a proper look, though?). The Benedictine scholar Bernard de Montfaucon had more success

in 1729, when he published sketches and a complete description of the tapestry. He had found the tapestry in Bayeux Cathedral, where it had presumably been since it was first displayed by Bishop Odo. Records show that it was displayed yearly in Bayeux Cathedral for the Feast of St John the Baptist in June. This was still the case in 1728. When it wasn't being displayed, it was folded up and kept in a chest.

The next part of the tapestry's history is a little more challenging. Scholars, purists, and those people who like to keep their best dinner service in the top cupboard so no one touches it, look away now! In 1792, during the French Revolution, the tapestry was confiscated to be used for covering military wagons. The very thought of it! One of the volunteers at the Sir John Moore Foundation Museum nearly fainted when she heard this story. Luckily, a lawyer from Bayeux, the grandly named Leonard Lambert-Leforestier, saved it from being cut up into pieces by soldiers, and kept it at his home until the Revolution was over.

It was displayed in Paris at the Musée Napoléon in 1803, but when Napoleon abandoned his plans to invade Britain, it was returned to Bayeux, where it was displayed by the council, rather than in the cathedral. Public appreciation of it at that time was for its history and antiquity. The embroidery itself was



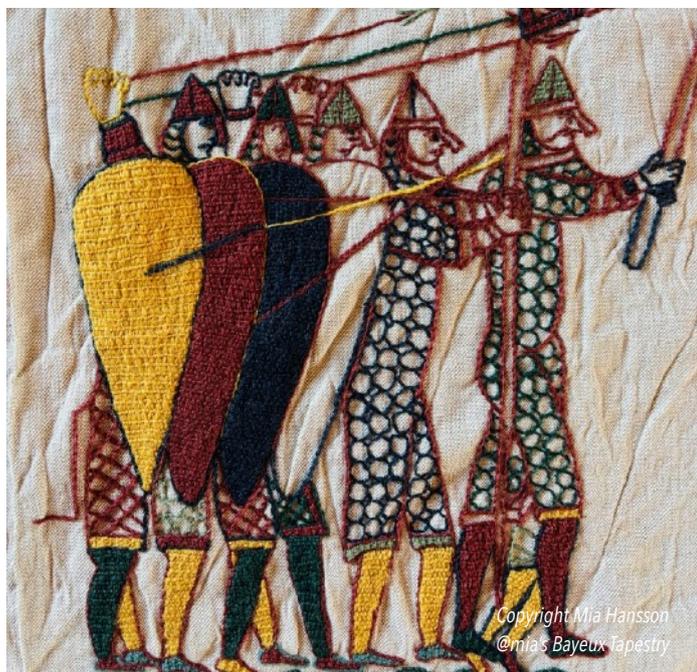
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thought to be very crude, and possibly unfinished, because the whole material wasn't covered entirely in needlework. In fact, some visitors were quite offended by the red colours of some of the thread. Goodness only knows what they would have made of some of the current exhibits at the Tate Modern.

By 1842, a special-purpose room had been built in the Bibliothèque Publique, where the tapestry could be displayed and stored in a fitting manner, which did not harm the by-then fragile material. Many people complained about the queues which formed



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@mia's Bayeux Tapestry

to see it. When Normandy threatened to invade in 1870, it was moved to a place of safety.

During the Second World War, it was probably taken to Berlin. In 1945 it was returned to Bayeux, where it is still exhibited in the Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux.

It will be displayed in the British Museum next year, as part of a loan agreement between the UK and France. In exchange, treasures representing all four nations of the UK will be on display in Normandy, including the Lewis chess pieces, and some of the Sutton Hoo hoard.

The tapestry will be taken back to Bayeux in time for the reopening of the refurbished museum in 2027.

Come and join us ...

Local History Café in Appleby Magna ...

This is your personal invite to come and join us , every third Tuesday each month throughout the year.

If you have an interest in history and especially local history, then this is the place for you. We are a friendly bunch of folk who just love to get together and share stories as well as learn from experts.

Come along and enjoy a cuppa and a cake whilst in the company of like minded friends.



Local History Café

Discover. Share. Connect.

-  Tuesday, Every Third Tuesday
-  10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
-  Gallery Room,
Sir John Moore Foundation

Join a community of local history enthusiasts!
Share stories, explore our heritage, and
meet like-minded friends.

£3 contribution towards refreshments

All welcome! Bring your curiosity and love of local history.

Dola AI

New email to get in touch with us ...



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