



Ebor Ruggers

www.eborruggers.com

February 2014

MEETING NEWS

1st February: Working Meeting

1st March: AGM and Working Meeting. Silent auction of old and antique rugging tools.

Our annual subscriptions of £12 will be due on or before the AGM. If you can't attend the AGM but would like to remain a member, please contact our treasurer Kay Tester with your subscription. For Kay's address please either email me, or phone any of the contacts listed on the back of last year's diary.

Diaries giving programme details for 2014 will be handed out or posted upon receipt of your subscription.

Don't forget that two committee members will be standing down this time, so please consider if you could help Ebor Ruggers by becoming a committee member yourself. No experience required, just enthusiasm and a love of rugging and our club!



An inspiring message for 2014! This is the work of Deanne Fitzgerald - read more about her on page 2.

MEETING REPORT FROM JANUARY

Our first Ebor Ruggers meeting of 2014 took place on 4th January, and there was an excellent turnout. We were delighted to see John Humpleby who very kindly donated lots of large bagfuls of wool which had belonged to his late wife Dorothy. This was hugely popular with nearly everyone present making a dive for the table where it was all arrayed.

As there was such a quantity we decided to take donations towards club funds and this raised a whopping £60. We also held a post-Christmas "super-raffle" which raised another £40, so it was a very successful afternoon for fund-raising. Many thanks to John and to all who brought raffle prizes. John has also donated some wonderful old rugging tools collected by Dorothy over the years and we will be auctioning these at the AGM.

Correction....

Penny Godfrey of West Riding Ruggers has asked me to point out that the 2006 "Glad Rags" exhibition at Wakefield mentioned in the December 2013 newsletter was purely the work of the West Riding Ruggers, and not a joint effort with West Yorkshire Rugmakers as I stated. My apologies to West Riding Ruggers: I took my information from the Wakefield Council website - a reminder, if one were needed, that we shouldn't believe all we read on the internet!

Hooked Rugs

Remember the large kitchen

In our homes so long ago

When the house was heated by a woodstove

And lit by the kerosene lamp's glow?

Then hooked rugs were made by our mothers

From garments cut into shreds

The hooked rugs covered the bare floors

Like quilts that covered the beds.

Remember how these hooked rugs

So beautiful in design

Were patterned with flowers and ships and trees

And worked with a hand so fine?

The hook was made from a nail,

A half-arrow notch at the tip

And fitted into a handle of wood –

Mother worked that hook at a clip.

Remember how when the spring came

And the days got warm once more,

Mother would gather up the rugs

And lug them to the shore.

She's scrub them in the landwash

Till they were good and clean,

Salt water, she said, held the colours fast

And made them as bright as they ever had been.

Rugs of so many bright colours,

Dreams of a half-century ago,

Made and designed by mothers

'neath the kerosene lamp's soft glow.

Old rugs, artistic and beautiful,

Cost scarcely a penny to do,

But how they brightened the kitchens,

The bedrooms and hallways too!

*From Still More Poems from a Newfoundland Village,
by Mabel Avery*

Just recently I have been enjoying looking at the rug hooking work, and reading about the life of, Deanne Fitzgerald who grew up in Newfoundland. Coincidentally I came across this month's poem at the same time. This made me wonder why the craft was, and indeed is today, so popular on the Atlantic seacoast of Canada.

Deanne now lives in Nova Scotia where she writes her books and creates her rug hooking kits and patterns, hosts workshops, and sells supplies. Both on her website and in her books she writes movingly and poetically of her life and childhood in which her family all hooked rugs as a "chore of necessity". As she grew up she came to regard hooking as old-fashioned, as most people had by then abandoned the craft. Little did she know that in later life she would be spending many years making wonderful rugs and hangings and make it her livelihood. Do have a look at her website www.hookingrugs.com which contains examples of her beautiful and colourful work. Ebor Ruggers also have one of her books in our library: "Hooking Mats and Rugs".

In the above book Deanne states that the craft of rug hooking is indigenous to North America, having sprung up somewhere along the eastern seaboard or in Quebec in the early to mid-nineteenth century. She believes that it may have derived from the proddy technique which presumably was introduced by early settlers to the area. It seems that this is a popular view in America and Canada; another theory there holds that hooking developed from the marlin-spike hooked "thrum mats" made by sailors in the Atlantic coastal provinces where these hooked rugs are first found. In this version of rugging history the craft then spread to Europe.

This theory is quite different to that posited by Ann Macbeth and other British ruggers (see December 2013 newsletter) who believed that the hooking technique was brought to the British Isles by Scandinavian settlers, perhaps via the Orkneys and Shetland Islands and possibly in the 8th and 9th centuries. The craft was then taken to North America by settlers from England and Scotland.

All most interesting, and we'll never know for sure, but however and wherever rug hooking developed it is good to think that on both sides of the Atlantic it has survived down through the centuries, both in times of poverty and times of plenty, to give us so much pleasure today.



Frances's lovely Willow Pattern hanging displayed with the plate that inspired it.

Cilla Cameron and Heather Ritchie have released full details of this year's Reeth Rug Retreat to be held September 12th-15th at Grinton Lodge, Grinton, Richmond.

This year's exciting event includes two new classes that have never been taught at Reeth before and also a trip to the Wensleydale Wool shop.

The guest teachers are Ingrid Hieronimus from Ontario, Canada, and Amy Oxford from Vermont USA. It all looks very tempting!

I'll attach the course leaflet with the newsletter for those of you who receive it by email. Alternatively you can contact Cilla on 07752772474 or Heather on 01748 884435.

Whilst having a mooch round one day in Selby, Gill Barker came across a couple of shops which she thought might be of interest to us. The first is called The Wonky Stitch at 16a The Ironworks, Ousegate, Selby. They sell lots of quilting materials, trimmings, fleece and fabric and also run workshops. You can read more about them at www.thewonkystitch.co.uk and www.facebook.com/TheWonkyStitch

If you are into furniture painting then there is also Autentico North, a chalk paint shop at 17 New Street, Selby. More details at www.autenticonorth.co.uk

Thanks Gill!

WANTED...

Frances Owen is on the lookout for a grey marl army blanket for clipping. If you have one to spare please contact Frances on 01904 768366

Date for your diary....

Ebor Ruggers are invited on a trip by coach to Yarndale in Skipton on Saturday 28th September. More details to follow - make a note of the date now! It was a wonderful day out last year.

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