

# Newcastle U3A General History Summary of Meeting

October 2018

Welcome/ £1/Programme 2018/ News/ What's on? /Challenge

## Whose Tapestry – The Bayeux Tapestry Part 2 led by Catherine

This was an exploration into the people who may have been behind the making of the tapestry( embroidery)

We began the presentation with a review of Part1.

### Who was the audience?

We read a checklist of skills needed to produce it and who the audience might have been. These were developed by looking at how it may have been displayed in Bayeux Cathedral at its consecration in 1077. In 1025, French bishops decided that to educate the illiterate, cloth hangings depicting biblical or battles scenes would be used so this may have been the reason for the tapestry.

### Who commissioned it?

The possible candidates and their reasons were explored e.g. Odo, Edith, Mathilde and even William himself. Members began to decide as most likely candidate.

Who was the designer?

There was not a lot of evidence for the actual designer but as to the embroiderers there was more evidence.

### Who embroidered it?

From an Anglo - Saxon view point, some historians believe it was embroidered by a team of Canterbury nuns. Their reputation for excellent embroidery was

well known so they may have been asked to do this. Also, some of scenes depicted may only have been known to Anglo Saxons.

However, close examination of the embroidery revealed that it could have been women in France.

Frank Rede Fowke, writing in 1913:

Norman in origin because:

the tapestry is stitched in a worsted yarn characteristic of the Bessin district of Normandy.



### Was there bias?

Bias appeared to be evident and evidence lay in the tapestry and its propaganda e.g Norman superiority and war prowess such a scene may be found in

However, the even handed quality underlines the sense that the

embroiderers were English such as in the battle scenes where both sides were depicted as having heavy losses.

It was also evident from these scenes that whoever made it wanted to emphasize an anti - war message.

Although there are many reservations, the Tapestry remains a vital, eyewitness source for contemporary life and warfare in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and may even have been a collaborative effort.

Now, it is a world - famous tourist attraction with copies in several countries. Its history and depictions remain fascinating and exciting to explore.

Members finished with a plenary reflecting on the meeting's information and discussing so many possibilities and speculations about this intriguing Bayeux Tapestry.



Members once again made this a great history meeting with probing questions and weighing up evidence.

**Our next meeting:**

**November 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Neil will be presenting**

**'A Personal History of the British Tank'  
with an exciting programme for this  
centenary year commemorating the  
day the 'guns fell silent'.**