



The Apple Tree Initiative – local heritage

Project outline – Ellen Lillywhite

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My project idea is about the heritage of wool production and knitting in and around Appledore.

One aspect of heritage it would cover is social history. It would look at changing attitudes towards and perceptions of knitting, from being a necessary chore to becoming a leisure pursuit. This could provide opportunities for cross-generational interaction, as adults of various ages can share stories and experiences with children and vice versa. This could also tie in with gender roles and expectations, as at one time knitting was seen as a feminine activity, whereas today it is being increasingly embraced by men.

My project would look at the cycle of production, from shearing the sheep, spinning and dyeing the wool, to finished knitted items. This can help promote ideas of sustainability. Research could be done into local farming throughout several hundred years, and if any connections with children's family members can be traced. There are opportunities for practical activities, where children could card and spin their own yarn from sheep's wool. There is also the chance for learning about natural dyes, which could link in with the Apple Tree Initiative's gardening projects by using plants grown in the garden. The end result could be an exhibition of artistic pieces representing the history and cycle of production of wool and knitting.

Research and discussions could be had around the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, and the impact that this had on local businesses and individuals. It would be an opportunity for those affected by it to talk about their experiences and could lead into an oral history research project.

There is a lot of scope and potential for other activities and learning opportunities to be added to this project, and for it to be shaped by the children taking part.