

The Bayeux Tapestry: Its Creation & Interpretation

A Study Day on Friday 18th September 2026 at Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon

Speaker – Imogen Corrigan

There is far more to be revealed about the Bayeux Tapestry than could ever be covered in a single study day. Who made it, where and why are the most frequently asked questions – although they might also be seen as less important beside the information the tapestry itself offers us. It is not just a narrative of the most famous battle in English history, but also of the build-up to it. It is a moral story showing that good cannot come to those who break their word. It is a story of kings, chivalry and ambition. Intriguingly, many crucial events are omitted, and we can only speculate as to why. The tapestry itself is not a tapestry, but an embroidery woven from only ten different colours on linen which remains as vibrant today as it must have been nine and a half centuries ago. The study day will look at many of the scenes in detail and explore what might be learned from this depiction of a turning point in our history. Perhaps the preeminent turning point in our national history. We note that the British Museum will display the Bayeux Tapestry from September 2026 to June 2027.

Programme

- 9.30 Registration – Water available but not Coffee / Tea
- 10.00 **The Runners & Riders** – The build up to the Battle of Hastings.
- 11.00 Coffee / Tea
- 11.30 **English Antecedents & Marginalia** – Origins and commissioners.
- 12.30 Lunch – Bring-Your-Own – Tea / Coffee available
- 1.30 **The Oath & Subsequent Fall-out from It** – Harold's Coronation and William's response.
- 2.30 Tea / Coffee
- 3.00 **The Battle, The Outcome & The Enduring Myths** – Foundations of our national history.
- 4.00 Departure

To Book – Send the slip below by 15th September with a cheque for Member £12, Guest £15, View Online £7, payable to Surrey u3a Network, to Denise Dobbs – u3a, 5 Aldridge Rise, New Malden KT3 5RJ, Phone 07964 798791. Enclose an SAE or an email address for confirmation. **Or make a bank transfer** to HSBC Account No. 11519018 Sort Code 40-27-07, Event Ref. Sepr2026, and send an email to surreyu3astudyday@outlook.com with the booking information below. **Or on day pay at door £15.**

BAYEUX TAPESTRY Member £12 Guest £15 At Door £15 View Online £7 18th Sept 2026

Please Tick – Hall or View Online ; Email or SAE ; Cheque or Bank Transfer

Title First Name Surname Name of u3a

House Number/Name. Post Code Phone.

E-mail Address

If you need disabled parking, tick and give a car registration number

If you need a wheelchair space in the hall, tick or a step-free seat, tick .

If you would like to receive details about future study days by email, please tick here .

The Bayeux Tapestry: Fuller Descriptions of the Four Sessions

Session One: The Runners & Riders – The build up to the Battle of Hastings.

We begin with the events leading up to one of the most memorable dates in English history; the motivation for the invasion is often overlooked; it was more than just Harold possibly breaking his word to William. Of course, William of Normandy wanted to command England as well, but why that country and not another? In this first session, we will meet the main players on both sides, including Odo who probably commissioned it. Before getting down to the main subject we should consider the colours. Have they faded over the years or not? There has been research that suggests it might have been a great deal brighter when it was first made. Is that true or likely? As far as we know the tapestry has always been held in Bayeux with a break for safe keeping during World War 2 when it was removed to the Louvre, but it disappeared from sight for centuries. We can explore some of the history of the actual tapestry, albeit not as much as we might like.

Session Two: English Antecedents & Marginalia – Origins and commissioners.

That said, I hope to convince you that the tapestry was either made in England or at least by English workers even though it was probably commissioned by a Norman. Some of the evidence is found in the images on the edges which we can enjoy in some detail: centaurs, Pegasus, donkeys, camels and even naked people romp in the top and bottom margins. Perhaps surprisingly, Aesop's Fables make an appearance. A lot of the tapestry is given over to the diplomatic mission of 1064 when Harold Godwin went to Normandy and all the subsequent drama: Harold's arrest by Guy of Ponthieu and his later participation in William's campaign against Duke Conan of Brittany. As part of this we will consider the mystery of Ælfgyva to see what we make of it.

Session Three: The Oath & Subsequent Fall-out – Harold's Coronation and William's response.

Harold returns to England and to King Edward who died on 5th January 1066. Was Harold crowned immediately or perhaps in April when Halley's Comet was seen and is shown above the coronation scene? William cannot ignore this event and so we see the fleet being built and preparations for battle culminating in the armada arriving at Pevensey on 28th September 1066.

Session Four: The Battle, The Outcome & The Enduring Myths – Foundations of our history.

The story on the tapestry ends with that last strenuous and bitter struggle for England. Myths come out of this: Harold was killed by an arrow in his eye – or was he? Before this last fight Harold marched his exhausted army from York to Battle – or did he? We all know the outcome of the battle, but how did William achieve his victory – and did the designer of the tapestry show that to us early on?

Biographical Information about our Speaker

Imogen Corrigan spent over nineteen years in the army, retiring in the rank of Major at the end of 1994. She subsequently went to the University of Kent to study Anglo-Saxon and Medieval History, graduating with 1st Class Honours. Later she gained an MPhil from the University of Birmingham. She is now a freelance lecturer for the Arts Society, u3as, ACE Cultural Tours and numerous other agencies. Her first book was published in 2019 (*Stone on Stone: the men who built the cathedrals*). Followed by *The Green Man: myth and reality* in 2025. She is a Freeman of the Company of Communicators having the Freedom of the City of London as well as being the monuments and memorials advisor for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for Canterbury.

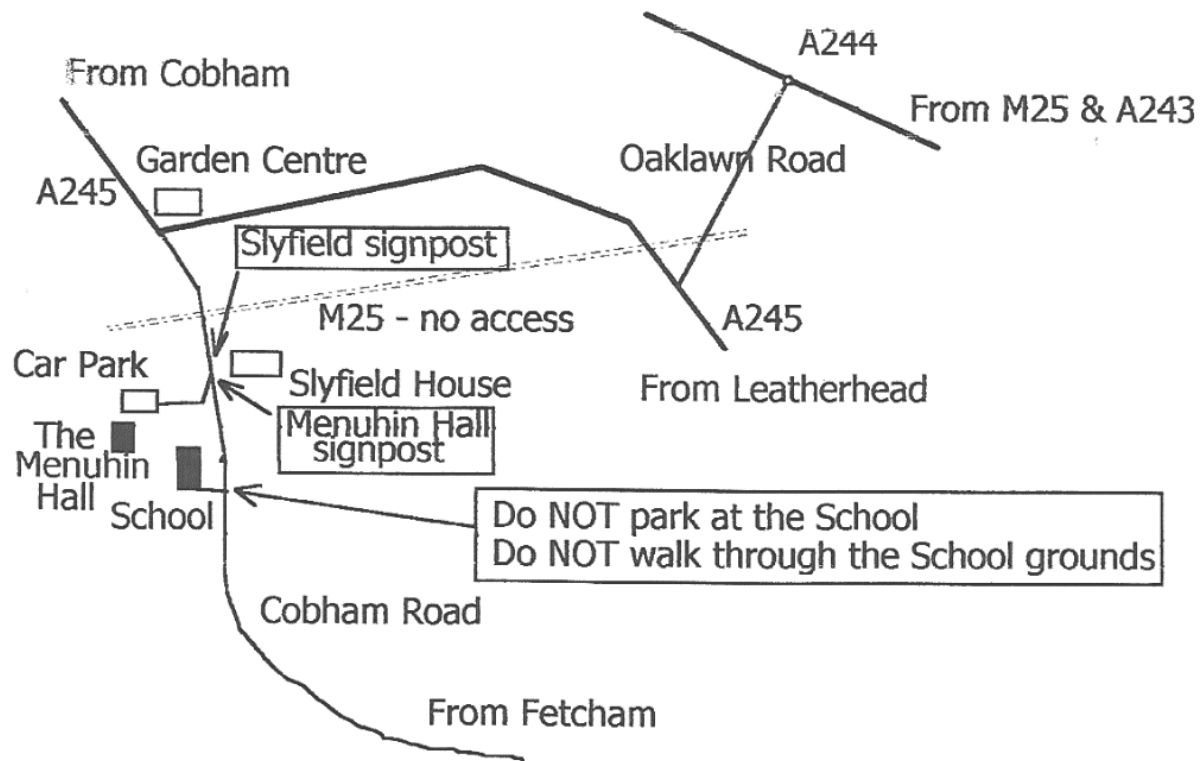
Location & Contact Details for Study Day

The Menuhin Hall, Cobham Road, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey KT11 3QQ

Map Ref: TQ 132 579 on Landranger 187 & Explorer 146

Telephone 07763 805046 (Emergency - On-Day-Only) or Menuhin Hall Office 08700 842020

There is a Garden Centre (01932 862530), about 800 metres to the north of the Menuhin Hall where light lunches are available. Reservations are not required.



The Menuhin School was founded in 1963 in London and moved to its present site in 1964. It has around one hundred gifted pupils studying stringed instruments including piano and is financed, in part, by the DfE. Lord Menuhin was born in New York on 22nd April 1916 and died on 12th March 1999 in Berlin. His parents had come from Russia. His first public concert was in March 1924 and his first in Europe, was in Paris, in 1927. His performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto was recorded at the Abbey Road Studios in 1932. The Hall, designed by Mark Foley, was conceived as a memorial to Yehudi and was handed over to the school on 5th August 2005. The official opening was on 7th January 2006. Yehudi is buried by the stone pillar in front of the Hall. Nearby is an oak which he planted on his 80th birthday. The Hall was first used for a Surrey Network Study Day on 14th October 2005.

Recently a sister school, Yehudi Menuhin School Qingdao (YMSQ), was opened in China. The Yehudi Menuhin School has long held a close connection to China, dating back to the 1980s, when Yehudi Menuhin led the school orchestra on a tour to the country. The decision to establish YMS's first overseas branch in China was therefore driven by both a special emotional attachment to the country and a long-standing desire to contribute to the development of classical music education in the Far East. Partnering with the Qingdao Urban Construction Group, an organisation which demonstrated a common vision for music education, YMSQ was officially opened in September 2022. In time, the school is expected to grow to around 850 pupils, with first-study options covering the entire range of orchestral instruments. YMSQ is located in Qingdao, a beautiful coastal city in Shandong Province in North-East China,

Study Days at the Menuhin Hall

Surrey Network Study Days – We welcome members and guests to our study days in the Menuhin Hall, while since the pandemic also making it possible to view the study days remotely.

Advertising & Booking – The practice of applying by post or by email continues, with booking responses being sent as members chose, while payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer. We advertise the study days with full details and booking forms on our website – [Surrey Network](#) and circulate the information electronically to all u3as in Surrey Network and surrounding areas. We also electronically circulate a poster suitable for advertising the future programme on display boards or websites.

Nut Allergies – The Menuhin School has pupils who have an allergic reaction to nuts and the staff have taken the decision to make the school and the Menuhin Hall a nut-free environment. Please ensure that your lunch does not contain any trace of nuts.

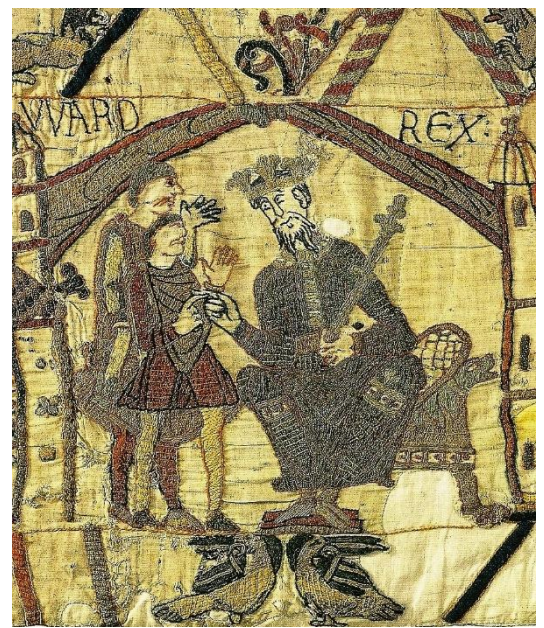
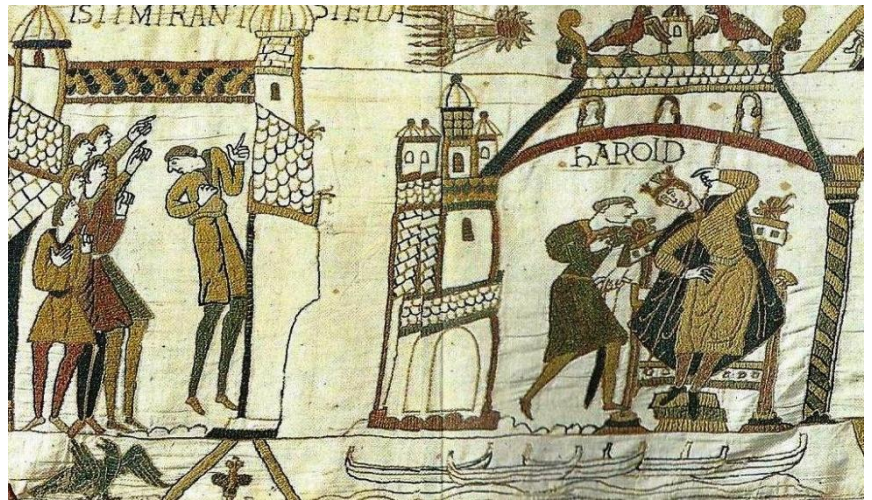
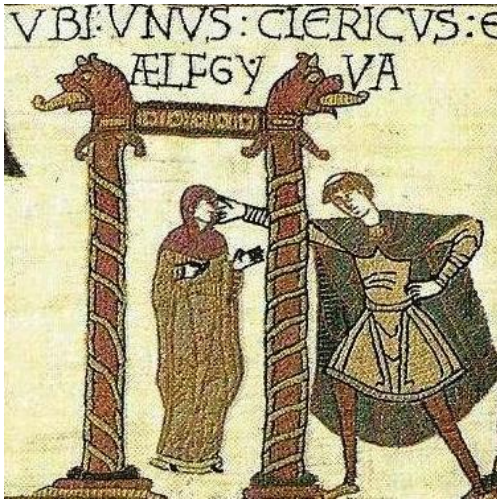
Disabled Parking – There are six spaces behind the hall and there are more in the main car park. If you have a blue badge and need level access to the hall, then tick Disabled Parking on the booking slip; you will then be allocated a space at the back of the hall and sent a permit. There is a drop-off space where disabled members have level access to the hall.

Wheelchair Spaces – If you need a seat removed in the hall to accommodate a wheelchair then tick Wheelchair on the booking slip.

Support for Network Committee – The study days have been running successfully for over twenty years. New volunteers with ideas for the future programme and the commitment to help run future study days will be made very welcome. Please contact Surrey Network Chairman, Mike Brigden, on 07766 331642 with offers of help.

Surrey u3a Network Study Day

The Bayeux Tapestry: Its Creation & Interpretation



Presented by Imogen Corrigan

Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon on Friday 18th September '26

9.30am Registration for 10am Start

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