

Local. 2305-

Jedburgh Hand-Ba"

3rd February 1956

In the border town of Jedburgh, "coming events cast their shadows before" as the shopkeepers prepare for the annual street game known as "Candlemass hand-ba!"

With canny forethought, nothing is left to chance, or should we say, ^{to} the leather ~~xxxxx~~ missiles of Mr Andrew Gray, the local saddler, who has been making the balls ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ - for the past twenty-five years.

This year, the opening gambit was made by fourteen year-old John Bathgate, the Vice-Captain of Jedburgh Grammar School.

~~And~~! As for the sides, well, the townsfolk are divided territorially, by the old market - and the object of all the pushing and shoving is to get the ball to the extreme boundary of your opponent's territory.

In former days, anyone lucky enough - or strong enough - to capture the ball was given a small nugget of pure gold in exchange. Then they found that the local saddlers had too many ~~apprentices~~ apprentices...

So there it is - a game that has been handed down from generation to generation. Nobody knows exactly how long and nobody seems to care - so long as the fun ~~of the thing~~ survives. Anyway, at least it's one way of keeping warm!