

## NEWSLETTER

Number 65

## Sadness from two World Wars ...

Anne Silins recalls deep sadness in the village ...

The 1st World War, the Great War of 1914 to 1918, was full of sadness and horror. A war of unprecedented levels of carnage and destruction due to new technologies and trench warfare. This war resulted in the deaths of about nine million soldiers and an estimated twenty million civilians.

What many of us do not know or even think about is the great sadness not only of those fighting and the killing, but the great sadness that followed this war for many people who were in it or were at home waiting for it to be over. As we approach Remembrance Day once more I remember and think about two Appleby village stories, and ask why?

As a young girl I never really understood why certain villagers and for me two special relatives were always sad even 20 to 25 years after the Great War ended. I had a Great Uncle who was married to my Grandmother's sister, Edith. Grandma and I visited them in Desford quite frequently and I was always warned to be a good girl, be very quiet and not to do as I usually did, run around asking far too many questions in a loud voice. This Great Uncle suffered from what was then called 'shell shock'. Now of course we all know it as P.T.S.D. Post Traumatic Shock Disorder. Many men and women who return from war zones suffer the remainder of their lives from P.T.S.D. My Uncle spent a lot of time in his room alone. His room would be dark with curtains covering the windows. Often it would be for just a few days, but sometimes it would be for weeks. When he was downstairs with his family he spoke in a quiet voice, nearly a whisper. I quickly learned to not ask questions and for sure not to yell or bang my books and toys about as I played. In World War Two there was a Royal Air Force Base close to their home in Desford. Even after W.W.2. ended air craft would still be practising take offs and landings there. I knew that the air craft noise caused Great Uncle Oliver distress and he became very nervous. Years passed, but he never completely recovered from what he had experienced during his war service so long ago, perhaps it became a little easier to bear.

Another special relative also suffered the effects of the Great War. This was another great sadness brought about by World War 1. Another of my Grandmother's sisters Great

Auntie Lizzie Rowland also lived with sadness. Lizzie, Elizabeth, and my Great Grandmother Agnes Rowland lived in the Medieval portion of Hill House just opposite the Black Horse Inn. This house was at that time two houses, the Medieval side and the adjoining one side there was likely a Victorian home. It was the usual Appleby type of brick building. The Medieval portion had the four front windows bricked up when I was a young girl and of course I had a lot of questions about, why? This bricking up of windows was done long ago to save paying the 'the window tax'. This 'window tax' was imposed by William 3rd. in 1696. I see now that the bricks have gone and there are two top and two bottom glass windows. There was one front door which was used by both homes and a central hallway with one winding stair case to the second floor in the back part. When visiting we often used this central front door but when wearing our dirty wellington boots, we were urged to use the back door. Great Uncle Tom Rowland and his wife Great Aunt Annie lived in the Victorian half of this building. Being an inquisitive young girl, and enjoying lots of attention, I liked visiting these elderly family members. Great Auntie Annie was a school teacher and often taught at the Ashby Girl's School in North Street, and she would be my teacher there sometimes, which I enjoyed.

Great Auntie Lizzie had been engaged to be married to a village man when the Great War began. As money was short they decided that he would enlist and off he went to war. With money they both saved they would marry on his return. Everyone thought and believed this war would be over quickly. Lizzie's young man was killed in that war and she lived a quiet and often sad life ever after. Lizzie never married anyone else, he was her one love. Lizzie kept a few chickens, she had a large garden and a field with a cow. This and looking after her Mother, my Great Grandmother Rowland, was her life for the rest of her time on earth. This was such a waste of a life. She was not the only woman left alone because of the deaths in the Great War. She loved Appleby Magna and never wanted to live anywhere else. But she lost her one love and missed him always.

This is only a 'tale' of two village people, generations older than I am, whose lives were made sad and sometimes difficult because of that war. They were not alone by any means, by any age or any generation. This is still happening and it happens all over the world. It makes me wonder - why? Can the world not solve differences by talking, by meetings, by discussions and stop the forever wars of fighting and killing. There has to be another way.

# The Appleby Huskissons

Sonia Liff has made a study of one of the more famous attendees at Sir John Moore School and his family ties ... In part two of a four part series we look at the life of Dorothy Grundy

**D**orothy Grundy (1707-1749) was the daughter of Ann (Swinfen) and Thomas Grundy.

She was born and died in Appleby. Her brother Samuel was the heir to Samuel Swinfen's considerable fortune (worth over £1 million in current prices) in 1748.

One of his first acts was to purchase Oxley Manor, near Wolverhampton, which he had rebuilt intending it for his sister Dorothy. Sadly, she died later the same year. Dorothy married William Huskisson in 1736, when she was 29. William was the eldest child of his parents, Sarah and William, and was to become the grandfather of William Huskisson, the statesman.

As discussed in part 1 of this series, the Huskisson family were small scale farmers at this point. Dorothy and William had six children, two sons and four daughters.

Samuel (Grundy) Swinfen did not marry and when he died, in 1770, most of his estate passed to his brother Thomas. However, in apparent memory of his intention to share his good fortune with his sister, he left Oxley Manor to Dorothy's sons Samuel and William Huskisson (the father of William, statesman), under condition that it stayed in the family (a legal process known as entailment).

This was the first part of the Huskisson family's inherited wealth. Dorothy's gravestone can still be seen in Appleby. It has been relocated close to the church entrance. It reads "In memory of Dorothy the wife of WILLIAM HUSKISSON who departed this life October the 25th 1749 Aged 41. Left issue two sons and four daughters Saml, Willm, Elizth, Ann, Sarah & Mary. God grant we all Arrive to Happiness as we do hope that our dear Mother is".

This is the only Huskisson gravestone which still exists in Appleby although we know from burial records that, at least, her father-in-law and his two wives were buried there. Dorothy's husband, William, married again six years after her death and was buried in Bushbury in 1781.

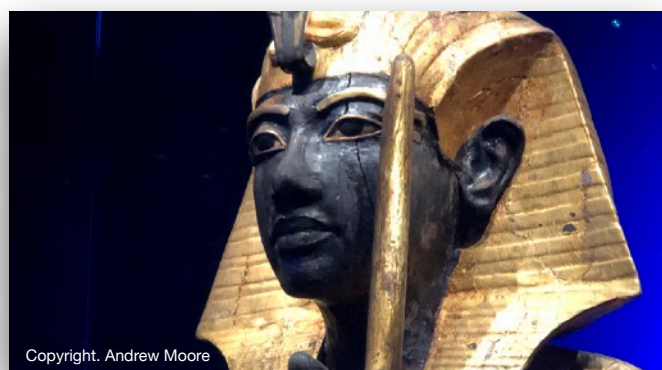
Four Grundy graves recorded in the Appleby Graveyard Survey of 1981 (carried out by the Women's Institute) but the earliest is 1832, so they are much later generations.



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## Howard Carter's Discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb: A November Miracle

**O**n November 4, 1922, British archaeologist Howard Carter unearthed the entrance to Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, funded by Lord Carnarvon.



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After years of fruitless digging, the discovery stunned the world: the tomb, untouched for 3,300 years, brimmed with gold treasures, alabaster vessels, and the boy king's sarcophagus. Carter's diary entry—"At last, have made wonderful discovery"—captured history's thrill. The find ignited global Egyptomania, revealing insights into ancient rituals and artistry. Though rumors of a "pharaoh's curse" followed Carnarvon's 1923 death, the tomb's legacy endures as a pinnacle of archaeological wonder.



# Whispers in the Mist: November Superstitions and the Victorian Psyche

As the last golden leaves fell across Victorian Britain, November arrived as a month cloaked in mystery—a time when fading light, encroaching frost, and the spectral legacy of Halloween stirred a potent blend of fear and fascination. In an age straddling scientific progress and deep-rooted folklore, November's superstitions reveal much about the Victorian soul, where Christian piety coexisted with pagan instinct, and rural traditions endured amid urban modernity.

The first week of November centred on All Hallow Tide, a triduum encompassing All Saints' Eve (October 31), All Saints' Day (November 1), and All Souls' Day (November 2). While Halloween's revelry was more muted than today, rural communities upheld ancient customs to honour—and appease—the dead. Families baked “soul cakes,” spiced buns left on doorsteps to nourish wandering spirits, a practice echoing the pagan Dumb Supper.

In homes, mirrors were draped with black cloth to prevent souls from lingering in reflections, and clocks stopped at midnight to “freeze” time, allowing mourners to commune with lost loved ones. The Victorians' obsession with death, amplified by high mortality rates and Queen Victoria's perpetual mourning, made these rituals both personal and communal acts of solace.

Guy Fawkes Night (November 5) evolved from political commemoration into a spectacle of fire symbolism. Beyond burning effigies of Fawkes, villagers added tokens to bonfires: old shoes to ward off poverty, horse skulls to deter witches, and sheaves of wheat to ensure a fruitful spring. The flames' crackle was thought to purify the air of malevolent forces, while children collected charred sticks as talismans against nightmares.

Regional quirks abounded. In Kent, the direction of smoke determined luck: blowing east promised prosperity, while westward smoke urged families to delay journeys. In Yorkshire, ashes were sprinkled on doorsteps to repel “hob-thrusts,” mischievous spirits said to sour milk and tangle yarn.

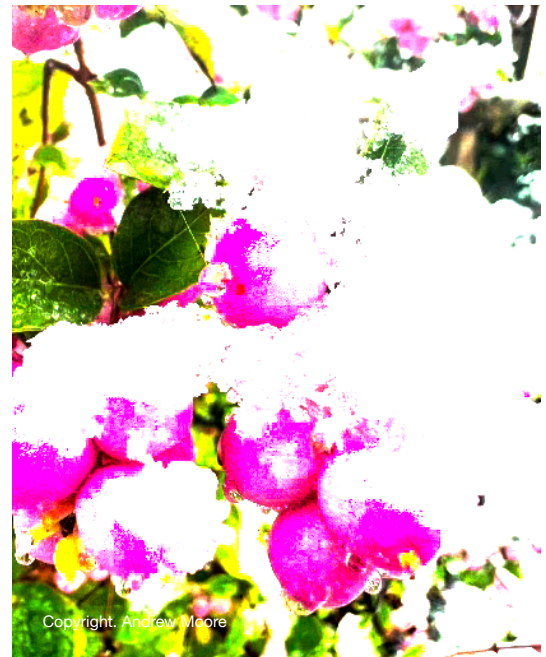
November weddings were vehemently discouraged. Folklorists attributed this to the ancient Celtic Samhain, which deemed the month a “liminal” period unfit for new beginnings. Rural wisdom claimed that couples marrying in November would “share a coffin before a cradle,” linking the month's decaying landscape to barrenness. Even urban middle-class couples heeded the rhyme:

“Marry when the year's new, always loving, kind, and true;  
But wed when leaves are thin, and sorrow shall be true.”

Clergymen reinforced this stigma, as November marked the start of Advent—a somber season of penance. For servants and labourers, however, practicalities also played a role: with harvests over and estates shuttered, weddings disrupted the strict rhythms of service.

Victorians scrutinised November's weather as a divine almanac. A frost on St. Martin's Day (November 11) signalled a mild winter, while morning fog foretold sickness. Farmers relied on rhymes:

“November's ice and snow, bless the barn with corn to show.”



Animals held symbolic weight. A robin tapping at a window warned of a death in the family, while finding a spider in candlelit corners meant money was near. Hedgehogs, badgers, and squirrels fattening early hinted at a harsh winter—a belief later validated by the brutal winter of 1895, dubbed “The Hedgehog's Reckoning” in rural press.

Though the Industrial Revolution diluted many traditions, November's superstitions persisted in subtle ways. The popularity of mourning jewellery, infused with hair of the deceased, echoed All Souls' rituals. Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (1843) immortalised the Victorians' spectral anxieties, with Marley's ghost embodying the season's preoccupation with redemption and the unseen.

Even today, Guy Fawkes bonfires and harvest festivals nod to this heritage. November's superstitions, born of mortality and mystery, remind us how the Victorians sought meaning in the darkness—a dance between dread and hope, as timeless as winter itself.

## A Flicker of Tomorrow

### The dawn of regular Television Broadcasts ...

On November 2, 1936, a new era crackled to life in a modest studio at Alexandra Palace, North London. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched the world's first regular high-definition television service, marking a revolutionary leap into the future of mass communication. Though televised experiments had flickered since the 1920s, this date heralded the birth of scheduled programming—a novelty that would reshape culture, politics, and daily life.

We can not be sure of which homes, if any, were ready to receive these broadcasts in Appleby Magna, but let's hope at least one or two would be ahead of the times with this most modern technology.



These early adopters, wealthy enough to afford the £100 receiver sets (equivalent to £8,000 today), gathered around small, glowing screens to witness a new era. The BBC alternated weekly between two competing technologies: the EMI-Marconi electronic system, offering 405-line resolution, and John Logie Baird's mechanical system, using a spinning disk to produce 240-line images. By February 1937, EMI-Marconi's superior clarity won out, relegating Baird's invention to obsolescence.

The inaugural program opened with a brief speech by BBC executive Cecil Graves, followed by a variety show featuring singer Adele Dixon, who performed "Television"—a song penned for the occasion. "Magic rays of light / They bring romance and cheer," she crooned, embodying the era's awe.

The 90-minute broadcast also included comedy sketches, dance routines, and a newsreel, though no



recordings survive. Viewers marvelled at the immediacy of "live" images, a stark contrast to radio's disembodied voices.

Yet challenges loomed. The service was suspended for nearly seven years during World War II, resuming in 1946. Early programs, limited to two hours daily, catered to elite audiences, but post-war expansion democratized the medium. By 1953, over 20 million Britons watched Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, cementing television's cultural dominance.

November 1936's flickering screens foreshadowed a global transformation. Alexandra Palace, dubbed "the birthplace of television," became a symbol of innovation, bridging Victorian ingenuity and the digital age. Today, as streaming services dominate, the humble beginnings of scheduled broadcasting remind us how a single November day sparked a revolution—one frame at a time.

