

NEWSLETTER

Number 73

Appleby Magna, Churchyard, Cemetery and the village children.

Anne Silins playing in the village churchyard ...

The Appleby churchyard and cemetery were places of great fascination for we village children. The churchyard is located immediately around the walls of the church. When I grew up there were many headstones in the churchyard, both slate and carved stone, all standing upright to mark a grave. I found it sad to see on a visit back to Appleby that now the headstones and slates lie flat. Some even are placed to form walkways and others are broken. The verger told us that some stones and slates are stolen and they end up as a hearth stone in front of a new fireplace. The stones were moved, I understand, to aid the grass cutting machines doing their work faster, necessary I think because we all live such busy lives.

The cemetery was across the road from the church, adjoining Mr. Parker's meadow and the Church School playground. Mr. Parker's Grandfather had given these five acres to the village church for this cemetery about 80 years earlier. I remember the cemetery as only half filled. The hedges that surrounded it had lots of blackberry bushes. It was a good place in late summer to have a feast of berries if the birds had not beaten us to them. Here in the cemetery the headstones still remain upright. To have taken these and laid them flat to aid mowing equipment would have caused an outcry, as relatives of those interned there were still very much alive.

We children played in this cemetery, the game of tag. The home base, where you were 'safe', was the headstone of any person who had been a member of your family. I stood a good chance of winning, even though I was the youngest and couldn't run as fast as the others. I had a lot of ancestors in the cemetery and I quickly learned the location of all their graves. Disputes arose from time to time over the name of an aunt, cousins or

other distant family members. Some playmates were not above inventing a few relations in order to be 'safe' and so not 'out' of the game. For justice to be done we would all march off to the mother of that playmate. The mother would counsel us and verify names. Many mothers were amazed at our interest in family history, until they realized that our games involved family headstones. We were never forbidden to play in the cemetery, they only asked that we never step on a grave as this was disrespectful. We ran in the space between the graves, the paths which made a grid or checkerboard pattern.



The words we use to-day for death and dying would have been foreign to the children of Appleby. Euphemisms never got in the way of our understanding. Adults never attempted to disguise reality with fantasy, and so we didn't hear the words that are used today such as; passed on, passed over, passed away, gone away, expired, lost, taken, departed or even 'snuffed it'.

Today this would be considered morbid, but it was a part of our daily lives, we all knew that someone died and went to heaven.



The Black Horse at Appleby Magna ...

Part one of Gerald Box's look at the history of a village favourite ...

The exposed architecture of the Black Horse suggests that part of it at least dates from late in the Sixteenth Century. Work is in progress to try to find out more about this period of the village's history in general. This may shed light on the pub's earlier days. Meanwhile, due to the generous co-

The purchaser was George Wright, possibly John's son. The fact that John signed the document and George did not may suggest some measure of trust existed between the parties. John had a new wife but her right of dower was extinguished in the document. One exception was

made in the sale of the property, that of the right to a pew or seat in the church, belonging to the message. We know from the description in a later document dated 1827 that this was : "The first pew on the right on entering the church from the South door thereof."

The purchase money for the Black Horse in 1789 was £30. Despite that it was a transaction from Wright to Wright, we must not assume that it was from father to son. The name Wright

occurs in many Seventeenth Century Hearth Tax Returns and Probate Inventories in both Applebys, Magna and Parva. In these documents , some of the deceased are described as yeoman and some not. But the study of Appleby families must be the subject of further work.

We cannot yet say that the building was then regarded as a public house. But at some stage before 1818 the property became "...known by the sign of the Black Horse."

Part two will explain more in our August Edition.



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operation of the brewers, Marstons, it has been possible to compile a part history from 1789.

There was a house on the site of the pub before 1789 and we know that it had been owned by one John Parr and that there had been two other previous owners.

So far, we do not know their names but these three generations would take occupation of the site back to circa 1700. We know of Parr from an Indenture dated 1789 when the house changed hands. By this legal transaction the owner John Wright, a carrier of Ashby, sold the house "...together with outhouses, edifices, Barns, stables and orchards, gardens, ways, watercourses, commons and commons of pasture and commodities..." The longwinded phrase does not necessarily indicate that the property included all these additional features, however. Eighteenth Century lawyers were just as adept as those of today in trying to cover every possible contingency, inflating their fees in doing so. John Wright is also referred to as a yeoman which indicates him as a man having a landed status above that of many in the community of Ashby.

HISTORY NOTE FOR JULY



In July 1100 King William II (Rufus) killed by a crossbow bolt in mysterious circumstances while hunting in the New Forest, his ghost is still said to haunt the woods.

The Pony that came to school

Jan Tallack recalls her pony Blaze



A lovely memory shared by **Jan Tallack** takes us back to days when horses were a familiar sight around the village and school. Jan's father was headteacher here at Sir John Moore and she well remembers how her pony would trot around the school grounds and stand right in front of the building.

She also recalls her own pony, **Blaze**, stabled beside their house and often grazing just down the road behind Bateman House. One well-known rider was **Rosamond Salmon**, daughter of the local doctor. Though she was a weekly boarder at a Catholic school and did not attend Appleby School, she was often seen out on Blaze.

Stood next to Blaze and always ready to lend a hand was young **Charles Nichols**, who greatly enjoyed helping care for the pony whenever he could.

These gentle scenes remind us how closely village life and the keeping of animals were woven together, even close to the school gates.

If you have any school memories please let us know.

Back in store

Duncan Saunders recalls a different way of shopping

Following last month's feature on old-fashioned shop technology, we received this delightful recollection from Duncan, who grew up in the area.

He writes: *"Another very interesting newsletter from Andy. When I was a lad, there was a general store in Moira. Travelling from Donisthorpe towards Moira, it stood on the left-hand side, halfway down the last gentle slope as you entered the village. Though a branch of a larger business based in Swadlincote, it was fitted with the very same pneumatic tube system described previously. I was always fascinated by it – especially the distinctive suction sound – and it never seemed to fail. I often went there with my father in our little Morris 8."*

Duncan asks: **Can anyone recall exactly when this well-remembered shop finally closed its doors?**

Please share your memories with us – every detail helps build our local story.



In mid-20th century UK shops, pneumatic tube systems were a marvel. Metal canisters carrying cash and receipts whizzed along overhead pipes, propelled by air suction, often with a distinctive rushing sound. Popular in larger stores and branches, they moved money quickly between counters and central offices – a clever, reliable technology well-remembered by generations of local shoppers.

School Days in 1890s Appleby Magna: The English School Year

A Rediscovered leaflet from Sir John Moore Foundation Museum

For a nine-year-old boy in Appleby Magna in the 1890s, attending the English School was a very different experience from schooling today. While the Latin School continued as a grammar school, the English School served as the village's day school for boys aged roughly eight upwards — regulated by the state, school governors and the Church of England, and equivalent to National or Board Schools found across the country. Girls and infants were taught separately elsewhere in the village. Attendance was compulsory, and from 1891 elementary education was free.

At around 210 days annually, the school year was slightly longer than today's 190-day requirement, and its rhythm was shaped by the church calendar and the farming year rather than fixed half-term breaks.

Autumn Term usually began in early September or late August and ran right through to Christmas Eve — often 23 December — with no regular half-term breaks at all.

Relief came only in small doses: occasional half-days for the village Wake fair, when the hounds met nearby, or while the schoolmaster was unwell. In 1894 the boys worked eighteen weeks straight with only two half-days off. More serious disruptions could reshape the whole schedule: in October 1891 scarlet fever forced closure for a month, and the lost days were recovered by shortening the Christmas break to just a few days. Normally the holiday lasted two weeks, but in 1897 measles meant the school broke up on 13 December and did not reopen until mid-January.

Spring Term length shifted with Easter, but was similarly long and unbroken — the longest ran fifteen weeks in 1892.

Reliable highlights included a half-day holiday every Shrove Tuesday, plus occasional extra time off: when the building served as a polling station, ahead of school concerts, if the hounds passed through, or immediately after state or diocesan inspections. The Easter break itself was one week and one day.

Summer Term brought longer days but still no mid-term rest — save for a fixed week-long Whitsuntide holiday. The longest recorded term was in 1891, lasting nineteen weeks including that break. May Day was rarely observed: only once in the decade, in fine weather in 1896, was a half-day granted. More common were half-days for the rector's annual tea party, or after inspections. The summer holiday was always four weeks, termed "harvest holiday", starting in mid-August early in the decade and creeping back to late July by 1899.

Extra holidays marked local or national events: a trip to Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1893, village flower shows, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 — which added both a day off and an extra week in summer — and choir outings to Blackpool or Llandudno from 1897 onwards.

Illness kept many away, from common colds to scarlet fever, measles or diphtheria, though whole-school closures were rare. Farm work — potato picking, haymaking or gleaning — also pulled boys away.

Through every change, the school logbook records a system that was stricter, longer-running and far more tightly woven into Appleby's church and agricultural life than anything pupils would recognise now.



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