

## Thomas Appleby and his memorials

If you leave the St. Andrew's churchyard and cross the bridge that spans the Leeds to Liverpool canal, your attention will be drawn to the stone-built gate that forms the entrance to the church's extension graveyard.



**The Appleby Memorial gate at the entrance to the Kildwick extension graveyard.  
The original oak gates were replaced in the 1990s.**

This gate is one of no less than three memorials erected in the village to Thomas Appleby who, for 26 years up until his death in June 1926, was the headmaster of Kildwick School.

This article looks at the life of Thomas Appleby and the impact he had on village life that made people to want his contribution to be remembered.

## Thomas Appleby, the teacher

Thomas Appleby was born in Keighley in 1876. After qualifying as a teacher, Appleby worked at the school in Birkenhead before coming to Kildwick as headmaster in 1900.

For all of his time in the village Appleby lived at the Schoolhouse attached to the school and the census returns for 1901, 1911 and 1921 provide snap-shots of the Appleby household.

**1901:** Thomas (aged 24, unmarried) living with his mother, Sarah, (aged 61, a widow). She is recorded as "living on her own means"; he is a "Certified Schoolmaster".

**1911:** Thomas (aged 34) living with his widowed mother (aged 71). Also part of the family: Thomas's wife, Lizzie Marian (aged 36), and their 8 month old son, Benjamin William. Thomas had married Lizzie Marian Smith, the daughter of a local farmer, at the end of 1909.

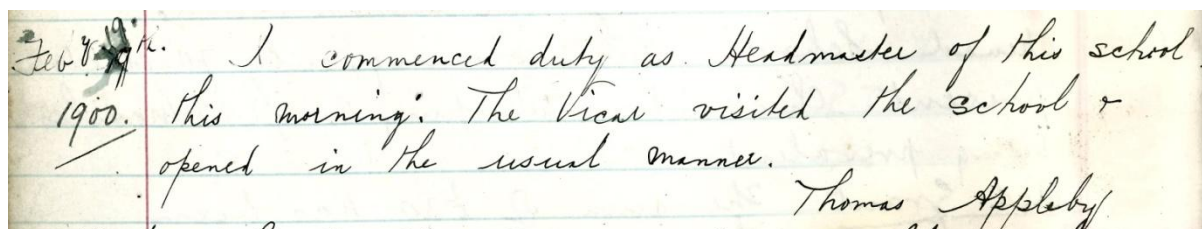


**Thomas Appleby with his son Benjamin William (c. 1912)**

**1921:** Thomas (aged 44), Lizzie Marian (aged 47), Benjamin William (aged almost 11); and Annie Cressey (aged 44), a servant from Lincolnshire. Sarah Appleby had died in 1913.



Appleby took up his post at Kildwick School on February 19th 1900, following the departure of the previous headmaster at the end of January.

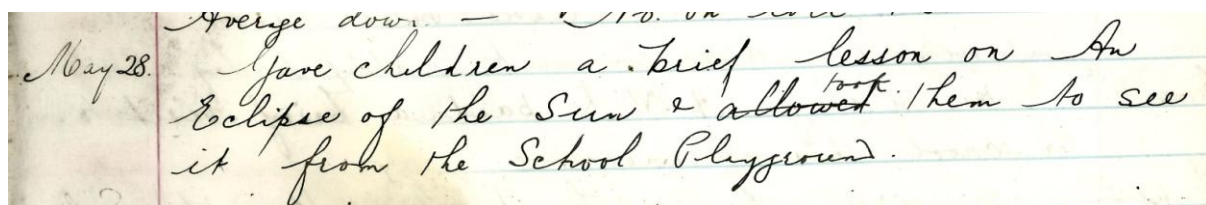


Feb 19<sup>th</sup>. I commenced duty as Headmaster of this school this morning. The Vicar visited the school & opened in the usual manner. Thomas Appleby

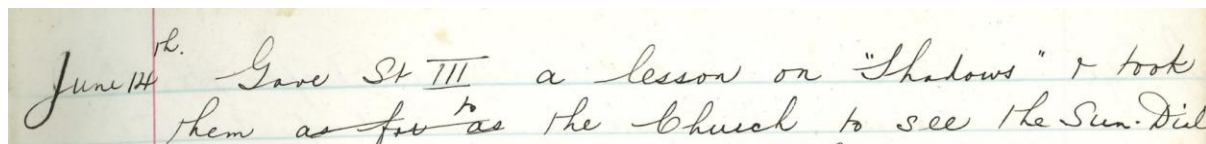
Thomas Appleby's first entry in the Kildwick School log book – February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1900

Almost immediately he demonstrated that his teaching methods would not rely simply on the rote-learning that was prevalent at the time.

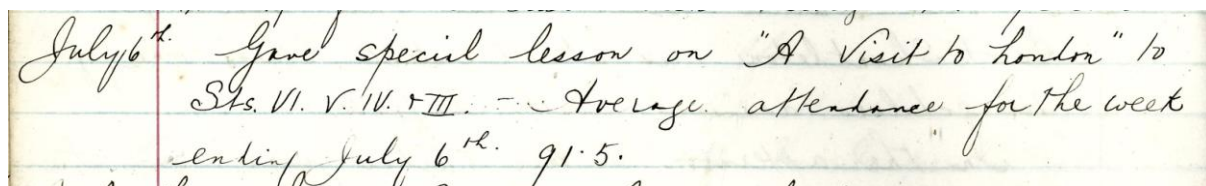
On March 1st 1900 he took over one of the regular lessons in order to read to the class a newspaper article on the Relief of Ladysmith (a major event in the Boer War), which he then discussed with them. From then, variations on the phrase "Gave a special lesson ..." would appear regularly in Kildwick School log book, as the pupils became as well educated in national and international current events, and general knowledge, as they were in the traditional 3-Rs. Some of the other log book entries from Appleby's first few months at Kildwick give a flavour of these lessons.



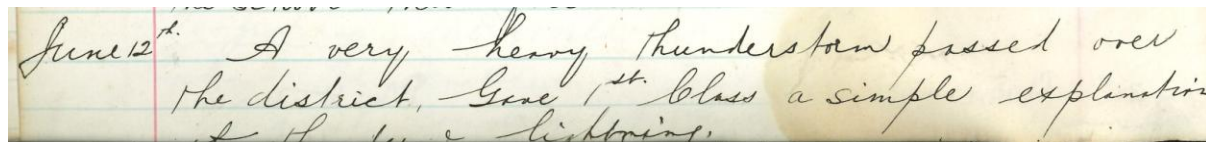
May 28<sup>th</sup>. Gave down - gave children a brief lesson on An Eclipse of the Sun & allowed <sup>took</sup> them to see it from the School Playground.



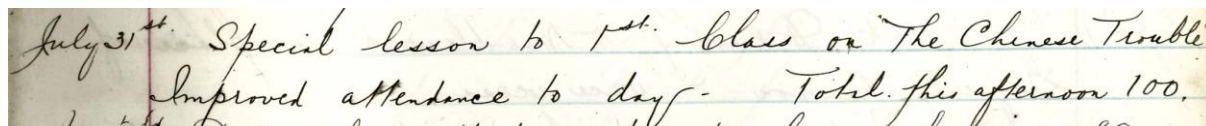
June 14<sup>th</sup>. Gave St III a lesson on "Shadows" & took them as far as the Church to see the Sun. Did



July 6<sup>th</sup>. Gave special lesson on "A Visit to London" to Sts. VI. V. IV. & III. - Average attendance for the week ending July 6<sup>th</sup>. 91.5.



June 12<sup>th</sup>. A very heavy thunderstorm passed over the district. Gave 1<sup>st</sup> class a simple explanation of the cause lightning.



July 31<sup>st</sup>. Special lesson to 1<sup>st</sup> class on 'The Chinese Trouble'. Improved attendance to day - Total this afternoon 100.

Some of Appleby's early entries in the School log book; May – July 1900

In addition to innovations within the classroom, Thomas helped pupils broaden their horizons by taking them on school trips - to local places of interest and museums – and far beyond.

For example, in 1912 he established a "twinning" arrangement with a school in Stepney, east London. In that year and again in 1914, pupils from Kildwick paid a two-day visit to Stepney; and pupils from the London school came to Kildwick in 1913. This arrangement, although curtailed by the onset of WW1 nevertheless gave the pupils from both schools a glimpse of lives totally different to their own and, in at least one case, resulted in a life-long friendship.

Following his own keen interest in sport, Appleby encouraged pupils in a wide range of outdoor activities including: swimming lessons for both boys and girls, netball (again, for both sexes), and tennis - actively campaigning for a tennis court to be built on land close to the school. After WW1 he was involved in establishing a football league for elementary schools in the local area – carefully recording the Kildwick results in the school log book.

None of this encouragement of extra-curricular activity appears to have detracted from the more formal aspects of education at the school. The pupils thrived, with an increasing number (including Appleby's own son) receiving County Scholarships to go on to further education.

" 29. B. Appleby, H. Syden & Emma have been requested to submit birth certificates to W.R.C.C. They have submitted in compliance with conditions of award. been granted Minor Scholarships. In honour of these children passing the examination. Children were released from school at 3.45 pm.

**Ben Appleby wins County Minor scholarship; Kildwick School log, June 29<sup>th</sup> 1922.**

**Note:** Ben Appleby would subsequently go on to become head of music education for Doncaster schools and was, from the late 1940s until 1970, presenter of the BBC radio schools' music programme "Singing Together".



Reports by His Majesty's Inspectors also attest to the quality of Appleby's work.

13. Copy of Report on Kildwick C.E. School  
(No. 449) Inspected on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> April 1922  
Report by H. M. Ins. Mr. T. J. M. Moore  
Inspected:  
"The last report describes the present condition.  
There is no falling off, but rather an advance,  
which is especially noticeable in the Arithmetic  
and Poetry.  
The Head Master still makes his business his  
pleasure and is indefatigable in thinking out his  
work. Among his more ambitious schemes is  
that in History, which will probably prove to be  
more valuable when the details come to be  
associated with the chief landmarks of English  
History:  
Infants' Class:  
"The Infants have been well taught. All the  
work inspected was pleasing, enjoyment and  
restlessness in the story work. being especially  
so"  
C. E. V. Hodge  
Correspondent.

Praise for Thomas Appleby from a schools' inspector, April 1922

## Appleby's community work

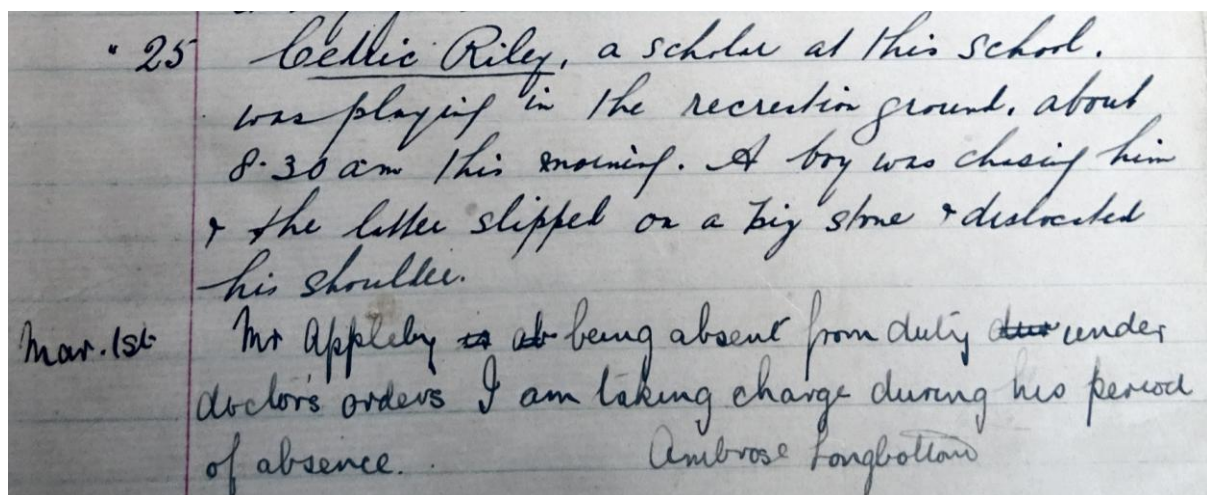
In addition to his full time job at the school Appleby became involved with an extremely large number of local organisations. Those mentioned in his obituaries, which are unlikely to provide a comprehensive list include:

- Skipton Rural District Council
- Skipton Board of Guardians
- Clerk to Kildwick Parish Meeting
- Clerk to Farnhill Parish Council
- Secretary to St. Andrew's Parochial Church Council
- President of the West Yorkshire Branch of the NUT
- President of the Skipton NUT
- Member of the Co-operative Holidays Association
- Special Constable (WW1)
- Member of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute (Secretary during WW1)
- Member of Kildwick Albion Cricket Club
- Member of Kildwick Old Boys Football Club
- Member of Crosshills and District Naturalists Society
- Manager of the Kildwick branch of the Yorkshire Penny Bank

Indeed, the almost ubiquitous presence of Thomas Appleby in local affairs caused some unexpected extra work for his successor – as he was expected to continue in some of these roles simply because he had been appointed as headmaster.

## Illness and death

Thomas Appleby was always very precise in noting staff absences, including his own, in the school log book, and he appears to have been in good health until the end of February 1926, when the log book was suddenly taken over by Ambrose Longbottom.



Thomas Appleby begins a long period of absence; February 1926



Appleby returned to school on April 19th and immediately recorded his absence of 27 working days.

72  
1926. this afternoon  
April 19<sup>th</sup>. The Head Teacher (T. Appleby) returned to school  
to-day after an absence of 27 working days  
Years of service 26.  
" 27. In place of usual Geography Lesson this  
morning. Class I had a special lesson  
on The Budget Proposals.  
" 30. The Head Teacher was absent to-day  
owing to a cut-throat & acting under doctor's orders.  
Previous absence 27. working days. Years of service 26.

#### Appleby's brief return to work at the end of April 1926

But he was not a well man.

As shown above, on the 1st May he (retrospectively) recorded his absence the previous day, and then made just one further entry in the log.

Thomas Appleby died, of a heart condition, on the evening of Friday 24th, 1926; he was aged 49.

June 25 The death occurred last evening of Mr  
T. Appleby. Headmaster of this school for the  
last 26 years. Mr B. Thornton. Divisional Clerk

1926. has been notified  
June 28<sup>th</sup> School closed this afternoon. in order that  
the teachers & scholars. may attend the  
funeral of their headmaster. Mr T. Appleby.

#### Thomas Appleby's death and funeral as reported in the Kildwick School log, June 1926

The funeral took place on the 28th, in St. Andrew's Church, which was "well nigh filled with friends, associates and former pupils of the deceased ..." with people lining the path from the schoolhouse to the church. In his eulogy, the vicar referenced the large part that Thomas Appleby had played in many people's lives; he also mentioned the interest and enthusiasm for both his work and social activities that he maintained throughout his 26 years in the village.

Thomas Appleby was buried in the recently consecrated extension to St. Andrew's graveyard.



Thomas Appleby's gravestone, near the entrance to the Kildwick extension graveyard

### Early calls for a memorial

Very soon after the funeral people started to think about providing a memorial to Thomas Appleby, and a public meeting was held on 19th July 1926.

This meeting made four suggestions as to the form such a memorial might take:

- A scholarship, to enable pupils from Kildwick to attend Secondary School
- An additional classroom for Kildwick School
- A memorial in St. Andrew's church
- Cups or medals for school competitions

The first two of these were the preferred options and, although it was decided to delay making any final decision until after any fund-raising had been completed, a target of £1000 was set in order to accomplish one or other of them. This target would prove to be hopelessly optimistic.



## Why the fund failed to reach its target

There seem to have been two principal reasons why the fund failed to achieve anything like its proposed target; one to do with general economic conditions, and the other to do with the specific way in which donations were collected.

1. Although the 17 people that made up the Memorial Committee came from across the social spectrum, the leading members were, to say the least, well off and perhaps not as aware as they might have been of the financial difficulties felt by many local people in 1926. Farnhill in particular, Kildwick's larger conjoined twin village, had struggled to provide employment since the loss of two of its mills in 1905/6.



**Two mills destroyed in less than three months.**

The fires cost many local people their livelihoods and the proportion of residents employed within the village never recovered.

This, and the increasing mechanisation of the agricultural work still available, meant that Kildwick/Farnhill were no longer held many prospects of employment.

After WW1 and throughout the 1920s, young families increasingly moved away from their childhood homes in Kildwick/Farnhill, to places where employment opportunities were more secure.

In 2017/8 the Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group carried out an Heritage Lottery Fund funded project to research the lives of the 68 men from Farnhill and Kildwick who volunteered to serve in WW1 prior to the introduction of compulsory conscription in 1916. Of these men, 58 were alive in 1919 and the table below shows how the vast majority subsequently left the village in the 10 years following the end of the war.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total # of households</b>	<b>Living in Farnhill / Kildwick</b>	<b>Living elsewhere</b>
1919	58	50 (86%)	8
1921	58	42 (72%)	16
1924	58	32 (55%)	26
1926	58	28 (48%)	30
1928	55	18 (33%)	37

**Where the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers were living after the end of the war**

2. A conscious decision was made not to put on any fund-raising events or to actively solicit donations. Instead, the fund would be advertised in the local press and leaflets distributed.

This was supposedly to allow donations to be freely given, but was a rather perverse given that Appleby himself often organised and even performed in fund-raising events for the organisations with which he was associated.

A fund-raiser that had already been organised before the Memorial Committee came into being did go ahead, in October 1926. Despite bad weather the event was a great success, and this single evening generated 25% of the total amount that would be raised by the fund.

The fund continued to accept donations until July 1927.



# Appleby Memorial Fund.

## —An Appeal.—

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In response to many requests that due recognition should be given to the work of the late Mr. THOMAS APPLEBY, who was for more than a quarter of a century the greatly respected Headmaster of the Kildwick National School, a Public Meeting was called by advertisement for the 19th July last, at which a representative body of persons attended.

That meeting decided to open a Public Memorial Fund, and duly elected a Committee with a view to the issuing of a general appeal.

Mr. Appleby's sterling qualities were shown in all his work, and he laboured unceasingly for the welfare of his scholars and those with whom he came in contact. His energy and interest extended far beyond Kildwick and his School, although it can be truly stated that it was there that his life's work was centred. It is then to his memory that we are asked and are asking that tribute worthy of his name be given, and with this end in view a fund is opened with the object of providing a suitable memorial. Among the suggestions are :—

- (i). The founding of an annual scholarship to be known as "The Appleby Scholarship," open to scholars at Kildwick National School, tenable at either Keighley or Skipton for four years.
- (ii). The provision of an "Appleby Memorial Hall," either as a separate hall or attached to the Kildwick School for use as an extra class-room.
- (iii). A Memorial in Kildwick Church.

It will be realised that the fulfilment of either of the first two suggestions will necessitate the raising of £1,000.

At the inaugural meeting it was felt that, whilst it was desirous to give a lead in the matter of a memorial, it was really impossible to determine at that stage the final character that such a memorial should take. This was therefore left for decision to a full meeting of subscribers, to be duly called on the closing of the fund. Meanwhile other suggestions may arise and will have due consideration.

We ask for your kindly help and co-operation. Subscriptions will be received by any of the undermentioned Members of the Committee :—

C. E. V. HODGE, Chairman.

J. W. B. PEACOCK, Secretary.

BRADLEY—Mr. George S. Green

FARNHILL—Mr. Eddie Green, Main Street

CONONLEY—Mr. Green, Butcher, Main St.

KILDWICK—Mr. C. R. Snowden, Post Office

CROSS HILLS—Mr. J. Peacock, Station Rd.

SUTTON—Mr. Hutt, Wright Street.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Secretary, Appleby Memorial Fund," and crossed

Amongst the donors were pupils from the school, who gave a total of more than £10. Their names and the amounts donated were recorded by the committee.

Name	Amount
Willie Atkinson	1s-0d
Kenneth Barker	2s-6d
Leslie Barker	2s-0d
Margaret Barrett	2s-0d
Edith Blakesley	6d
Emily Booth	4s-9d
Edith Bracken	5s-0d
Jessie Bracken	4s-1d
John Bracken	3s-0d
Teddy Bracken	2s-6d
Bessie Crossley	1s-10d
Mary Crossley	1s-10d

Evelyn Davies	10s-0d
Winnie Day	1s-6d
Marion Dixon	2s-0d
Muriel Dixon	3s-6d
Doreen Farnell	1s-0d
Venice Feather	5s-0d
Edith Fort	1s-0d
Jack Foster	6s-0d
Margaret Foster	1s-0d
Muriel Foster	1s-10d
Albert Gill	13s-0d
Harry Greenwood	2s-6d

Donald Hargreaves	1s-0d
Janet Hargreaves	5s-0d
Elsie Hartley	11s-0d
Annie Heaton	1s-6d
Dorothy Heaton	6s-7d
John Heaton	2s-6d
Bob Hill	1s-0d
Kenneth Howarth	2s-5d
Joe Hutchinson	2s-0d
Willie Martin	3s-3d
Vera Mosley	2s-6d
Gladys Overend	1s-0d

Name	Amount
Hilda Page	£1-0s-0d
Cedric Riley	3s-10d
Kenneth Sharpe	2s-7½d
Eunice Shuttleworth	1s-6d
Kenneth Simpson	4s-0d
Christopher Smith	1s-0d
John Smith	1s-0d
Tom Smith	£1-0s-0d
Anabel Stewart	10s-0d
Marion Sugden	1s-6d
Elsie Thornton	7s-6d
Barbara Throup	2s-6d

Brian Throup	2s-6d
Jim Tillotson	2s-0d
Eileen Walmsley	4s-0d
Edna Ward	1s-7d
Agnes Wellock	1s-3d
Edith Whitaker	1s-3d
Elsie Whitaker	6d
Jennie Whitaker	1s-3d
Kathleen Whitaker	1s-0d
Tom Whitaker	6d
William Whitaker	5s-0d
Harold Wilcock	6d
Jim Wilcock	1s-0d

**Donations to the Appleby Memorial Fund from Kildwick School pupils**



## Scaled-back plans

At a committee meeting held on 27th May 1927 it was reported that the total amount donated to the fund at that time was just £95. It was decided that the fund should be closed in July, and that a public meeting would then be held to decide what memorial could be provided with the final amount raised.

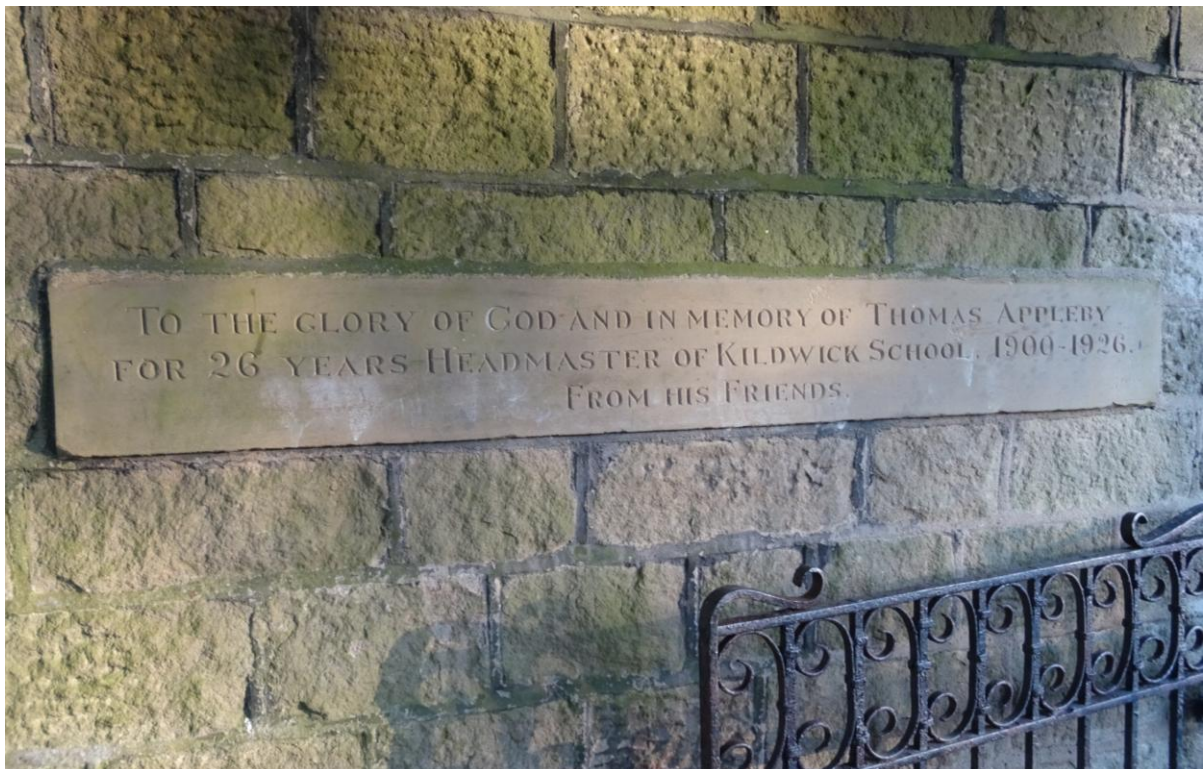
At a public meeting held on 8th July 1927 it was announced that the total for the memorial fund was likely to be around £150. It quickly became clear that neither of the original preferences - a scholarship or a new classroom - were achievable and, after some discussion it was decided that 2/3rds of the money raised should be used to erect a lych-gate at the entrance to the new graveyard with the remaining 1/3rd used to provide commemorative tablets for the church and school.

A sub-committee was then formed to carry the plans for the three memorials through to completion.

## Creation and unveiling of the memorials

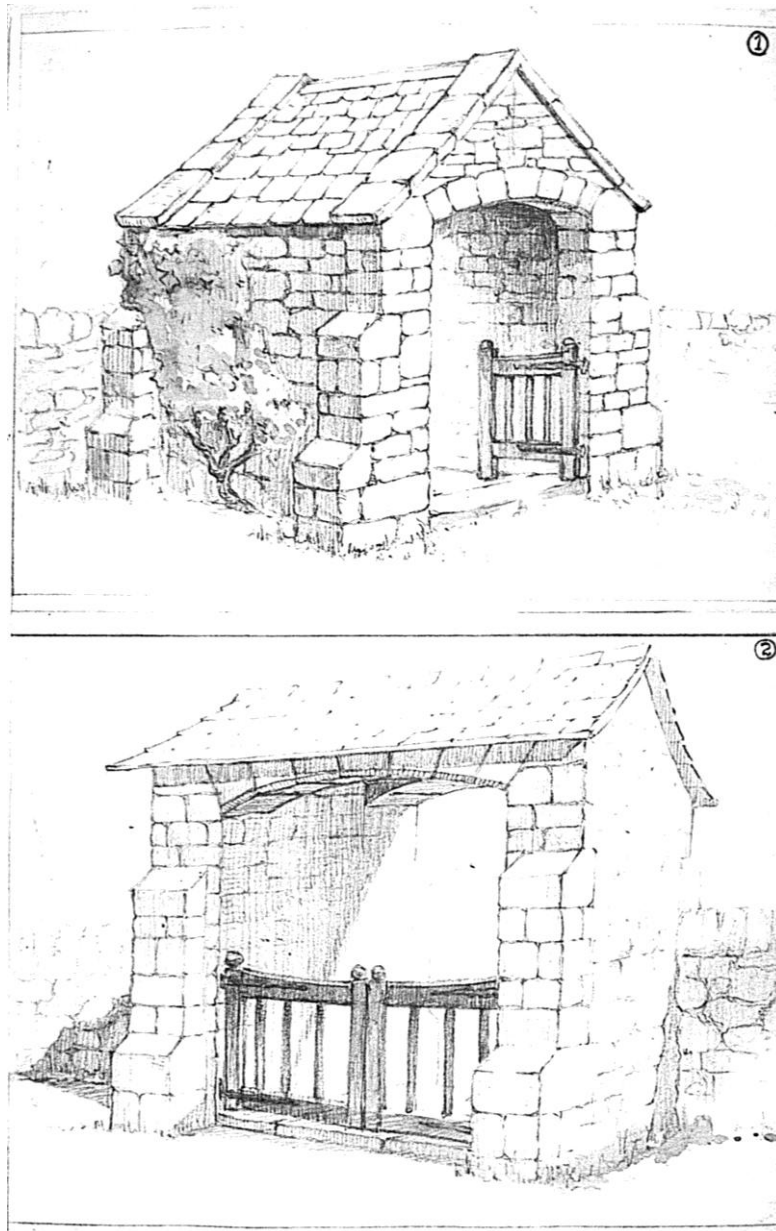
By the time the sub-committee met on 20th July, they had sought and obtained two possible designs for a gateway from John Barritt's of Crosshills.

It was also decided to have two inscriptions carved on the inside of the gate.



**Inscription on the west side of the Appleby Gate.**

**There is a biblical quotation, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills", on the opposite wall.**



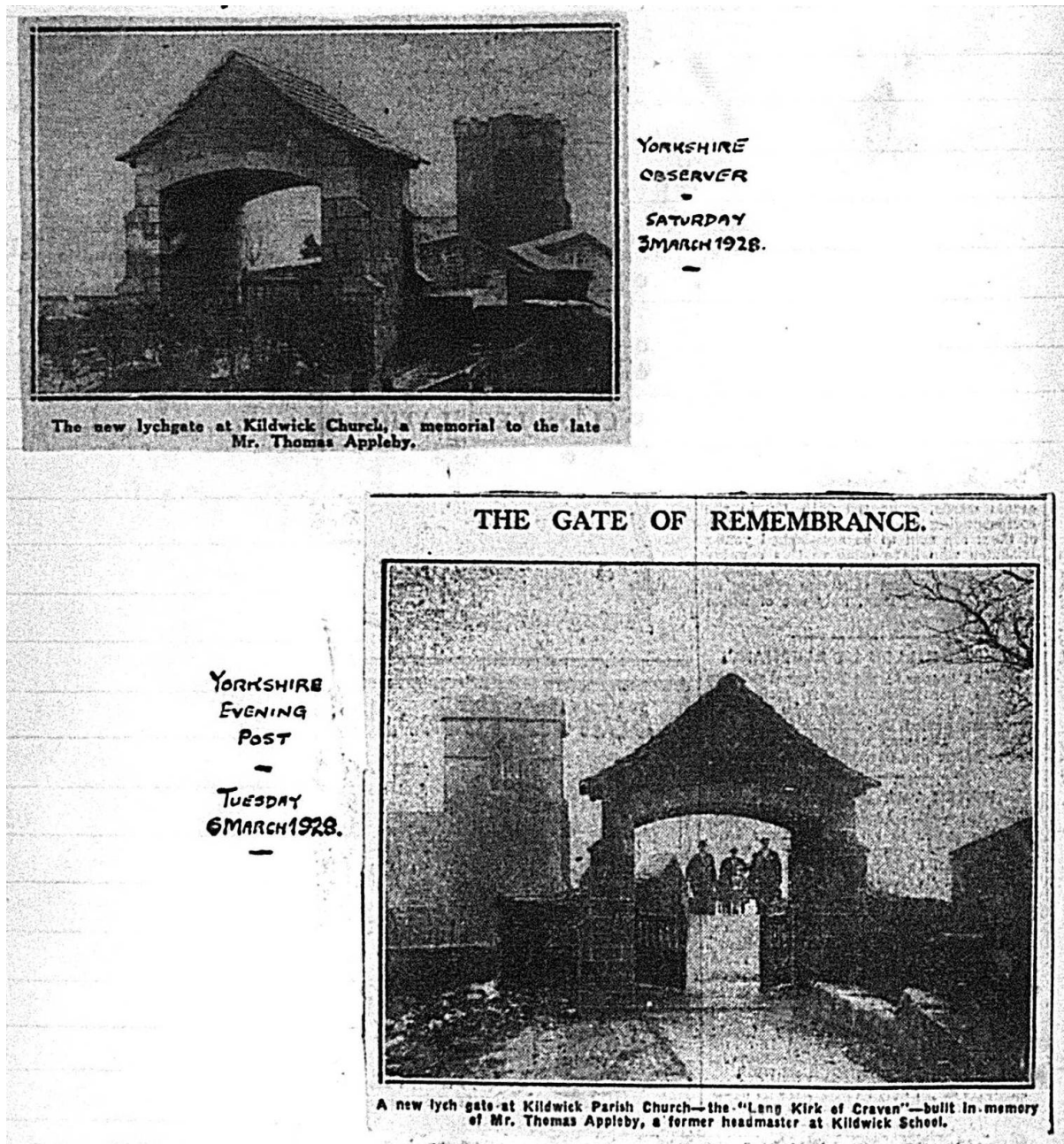
**Possible designs for the Appleby Memorial Gate submitted by John Barritt's, builder  
Option 1 was selected**

The plaques for the church and school were discussed and a decision taken to seek designs from an artist based in Hertfordshire and a company in Keighley.

On the 19th September, the committee accepted Barritt's quotation for the gate (around £115) and agreed to commission Miss Woodward of Bushey to produce a plaque in bronze and enamel for the church, at a cost of £17. Instructions for the school plaque, in brass on an oak frame, were passed on to Smith & Boothman of Keighley.



By the time of the next meeting, on 15th March 1928, the gateway had been completed.



Two photographs of the Appleby Gate, taken before the official dedication.

The plaque for the church had also been received; however, work on the one for the school was yet to be started.

The committee discussed what to do with the small amount of money that would remain in the fund after all expenses had been paid. It was decided that a hedge should be planted bordering the pathway from the gate to the graveyard. (This hawthorn hedge is still in place and was recently "laid" in the traditional fashion, to encourage new growth, by Farnhill resident, the late Ken Ideson.)

The final item on the agenda was to agree that a dedication service for the gate and church memorial would take place on Sunday 15th April 1928.

## The dedications

The dedication of the church plaque and the gate began with an inter-denominational service in the Church.



**The bronze and enamel memorial plaque to Thomas Appleby, in St. Andrew's church, Kildwick.**

**The work of Miss E.W. Woodward of Bushey, Hertfordshire**

The gathering then moved on to the canal bridge where the inscribed stones on the insides of the memorial gate were unveiled by Rural District Councillor J.J. Brigg of Kildwick Hall.

The dedication speech was reported in the local press.



The formal unveiling of the tablets was performed by Mr. J. J. Brigg, of Kildwick Hall. It was only a few years ago, said Mr. Brigg, that they erected a memorial to those who gave their lives in the Great War, and they had now erected a memorial to one who did his duty in another sphere of life. In the walk of life which Thomas Appleby traversed he did that duty nobly and well. He filled for 26 years a position—perhaps in the eyes of some a humble one—as village schoolmaster, and, in the opportunity it had afforded him, had left the impress of his personality upon the whole of the community in which he dwelt. Mr. Brigg said he had been a member of Mr. Appleby's School Management Committee, and he could witness to the wonderful degree of personality he had imbued into all his teaching. The esteem he had earned was indeed reflected in the enthusiasm and readiness with which all had subscribed towards the erection of that memorial. In his public life he entered into everything that was good, and his services would not lightly be forgotten. His was indeed an example of a life well spent.

Speech given by J.J. Brigg at the dedication of the Appleby Memorial Gate.

From the "Craven Herald", 27/4/1928

The plaque in the school was unveiled on 18th May, in a service for the pupils led by the vicar Rev. Hodge.



The brass and oak memorial plaque in Kildwick School.

It is the work of Smith and Boothman Foundry, Dalton Lane, Keighley.

Originally mounted in the lobby of the main entrance to the school, the plaque was recently taken down during rebuilding work and is due to be cleaned and re-mounted in the main hall.

## 100 years on

Almost 100 years after the death of Thomas Appleby it is still easy to understand why the village would want to commemorate a man who had been so prominent in local affairs for so many years.

However the loss of Appleby himself may have had an adverse effect on the fund-raising carried out by the committee. It is a reasonable assumption that if the committee had had someone of Appleby's enthusiasm and organisational skills at the helm, the amount raised for his memorial would have been significantly higher.

The decision not to hold fund-raising events was clearly an error, as demonstrated by the financial success of the one event that did happen. Not only would additional fund-raisers have generated more money themselves, but they would have kept the "idea" of the memorial fund in the forefront of people's minds. As it was the fund more or less went to sleep for 8 months, until the announcement that it was about to close resulted in another up-tick in donations.

That said, the resulting memorials remain worthy tributes. All are still there for people to see. The gateway is a village landmark; the bronze plaque in the church is still prominent on one of the stone arches; and the school plaque will soon, after cleaning, be re-mounted on a wall in the main hall.

In retrospect the memorials represent success born out of failure. The reduced amount raised by the fund meant that the two preferred options had to be abandoned. This was likely a blessing in disguise - as it is quite possible that the value of any "Appleby Scholarship" would have been eroded by inflation, and an "Appleby Classroom" fall victim to remodelling of the school interior.