Extract from **Ghost Trails of the Lake District and Cumbria** By Clive Kristen

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Hollow Creek Farm was built in 1760. The first owner of the new farm, Roger Appleyard, had prospered allegedly through owning and operating an illicit still. His new wealth encouraged him to install a suitably upmarket wife at the farm.

The lady of his desire was the youngest daughter of the local squire – a Miss Patience Orton. By all accounts she was a rare beauty with black hair so long “that it covered her derriere”.

At first the marriage was a success. A child was born in 1762 and another the following year. But Roger had a eye for other ladies and when he became involved with a seamstress his wife ran out of the virtue after which she had been named. She informed the authorities of her husband’s moonshine operation and he was duly apprehended.

Roger maintained that the still was entirely his wife’s enterprise. She however was able to provide witnesses to indicate that the bootleg brew operation had existed long before her marriage; indeed it had been the source of revenue which had financed the building of the fine new farmhouse.

The court believed her. On the morning of his execution Roger was allowed to speak from the scaffold to the assembled crowd. He admitted his guilt but declared that his enterprise had essentially been for the benefit of the overtaxed community. It was therefore a philanthropic gesture for which his punishment was richly undeserved. And, as he had led an otherwise blameless life, the person to blame for his appointment with the hangman was his wife. He would therefore, once dead, see that terrible retribution fell upon her.

At first it did not seem that he would be able to immediately plot his revenge. When he was taken down from the gallows he was evidently so very much still alive that he was able to further curse his wife. The hangman however borrowed a hammer - conveniently still placed nearby for the erection of the gallows – to terminate his existence with three or four powerful blows to the skull.

Patience married again a few months later – her new husband being a swarthy chap called Henry Shaw, who has won many prizes in Cumbrian wrestling competitions. This sport which, it is said, arrived in Britain with the Vikings, was seen as the ultimate in manly skill and prowess. In Henry’s case however it was perhaps better described as b=victory gained through the art of inflicting gratuitous pain.

So Patience may have though she was well protected. From the grave however Roger had other ideas.

The phantom must have been a grisly site. The skull bore the indentations of the hammer whilst putrefying corpse was entirely naked. When the spectre appeared at the front door Henry attacked it with plough shears. When it entered the marital bedroom, he set about it with a poker. Even Henry’s legendary sadistic strength had no effect whatsoever. The ghost could not be distracted from its reign of terror.

It is said that Patience and Henry tried all the usual remedies. Exorcism had no effect. The incantation of a witch only seemed to make the hauntings more regular. The solution came from an unexpected source.

One night the kerfuffle most have been great enough to wake Patience’s older child – a girl now aged about four years. The child climbed from her bed, entered her mother’s bedchamber, and saw Henry fruitlessly attacking the ghost with an axe.

The girt stood and looked up at the grisly ghost of her father, and then, in a calm tone, demanded that he should depart forever. The phantom faded into nothingness and was never seen again.