



by Lucy Williams

WOOLSTHORPE MANOR

One of the most enduring stories associated with science, culture and even humanity, is that of Newton's falling apple. According to the accounts of friends and acquaintances, most notably William Stukeley and John Conduitt, Newton observed an apple drop from a tree in the orchard of Woolsthorpe Manor, a view that led him to contemplate the force that pulls objects toward the Earth.



Of course, this revelation is one held proudly within Grantham; mainly due to Isaac Newton attending The King's School from 1655 to 1660, as well as his family home and manor house still standing only a 15-minute drive away. Woolsthorpe Manor stands as a Grade I listed building, and was initially built in the early 17th century, acting as a working farm and family home. Newton was born within the home prematurely on Christmas Day in 1642, spending most of his childhood there and returning in 1665 from Cambridge to live due to the Great Plague of London. This unfortunate situation, of course, led to his *annus mirabilis*, also known as his 'year of wonders', although this period notably extended from 1665-1667.

During this time, Newton developed his most renowned foundational ideas in calculus, optics and gravity; concepts that as we know would later revolutionize science.

Newton's life and contribution to humanity can still be experienced and is reflected within the walls of Woolsthorpe Manor, as it's been transformed into a visitable historical house by the National Trust. The house offers numerous ways to experience Newton's life and bask in his scientific contributions, from being able to enter the house to visiting the hands-on Science Centre.

The most notable attraction that the Manor offers is, incredibly, the apple tree. Yes, the original Flower of Kent apple tree that supposedly inspired Newton still stands

on the grounds of Woolsthorpe Manor. Despite being blown down in a storm, the tree survived by re-rooting and as such has lived to be over 350 years old. The tree is protected by a low barrier, but otherwise, visitors are able to walk up close to the tree in the orchard by the Manor and truly be transported back in time. The grounds are free to visit for National Trust members and have varying times at which their numerous attractions are open.

In many ways, Woolsthorpe Manor stands as a symbolic reminder of the power in quiet environments to nurture profound ideas. The Manor therefore stands today not only as a historical landmark, but as a testament to the impact of human curiosity and what it can yield.