# Couple uncover Victorian home’s spooky secrets and apotropaic charms during renovation



A couple from Plymouth, Millie Molloy and Brad Worth, were left astounded during their renovation of a Victorian property they purchased in July 2023 for £175,000. What they presumed would be a straightforward project soon morphed into a series of eerie discoveries, revealing remnants of the building's past, including animal bones, teeth, and even a woman's high heel.

As they delved into the house's 175-year history, the couple unearthed unexpected items like a wrapped pigeon carcass, a hammer, and the aforementioned shoe. Initially taken aback, they found reassurance when a local historian informed them of the superstitious practices associated with these finds. It was explained that animal bones were often deliberately hidden within walls to ward off malevolent spirits, a tradition rooted in apotropaic magic that has long existed in British culture. Objects such as shoes were similarly placed as good luck charms, with historical precedence stretching to the medieval period when various items were concealed to protect inhabitants from harm.

In a delightful twist, the couple also discovered a vintage postcard from 1952, which led them to learn that their residence once functioned as a butcher's shop more than a century ago. They further stumbled upon an old packet of Magic Stars, a nostalgic find that harked back to a past where the sweet treat cost just 31p, a stark contrast to today's price tag of £1.65.

Millie and Brad are committed to embracing the historic charm of their home while navigating through their renovation budget of £30,000 to £40,000. Both have expressed a fondness for the Victorian elements that define their property, aiming to blend modern aesthetics with traditional features. Their journey has been marked by a mixture of curiosity and spookiness, yet they remain excited to create a space that reflects both history and their future aspirations—especially as they choose to keep the woman’s shoe as a symbol of their hopes for children.

The couple’s experiences resonate with a broader trend wherein new homeowners stumble upon unsettling discoveries hidden within the walls of their properties. Just a few years prior, a couple in Houston found human bones in their 1930s bungalow, raising questions about the previous occupant's mysterious disappearance. This instance underscores the sometimes dark history that can linger in older homes, where previous uses and untold stories remain embedded within the bricks.

Moreover, the emergence of odd but significant finds continues to fascinate. In another case, co-owner Emmie Brookman and her partner faced their own unsettling moment when renovating a three-bedroom house in Lancashire. After discovering various bones in the walls, including what appeared to be a human finger bone, their renovation turned from a simple outfitting exercise into an exploration of the house’s hidden past.

Ultimately, these peculiar discoveries are more than just surprising anecdotes; they reflect historical practices and cultural beliefs that intertwine the past and present. Millie and Brad's renovation story serves as a reminder of the rich tapestry of history that can be found lurking behind the walls of seemingly ordinary homes, shaping both the physical space and the narratives of those who come to inhabit them. As they eagerly await the completion of their home, with hopes for no further eerie finds, the couple remains steadfast in their quest to honour the layers of history while making it their own.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://daily.jstor.org/hidden-charms/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apotropaic_magic), [[6]](https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/12358/9-crazy-things-people-found-inside-their-walls)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/07/new-homeowners-found-an-unpleasant-surprise-in-wall-of-400000-houston-bungalow-bones/), [[4]](https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/mystery-of-the-childs-bones-hidden-in-edinburgh-castle-walls-part-1-3074182)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/walls-made-of-ancient-human-leg-bones-unearthed-beneath-church-belgium-180974255/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://daily.jstor.org/hidden-charms/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/07/new-homeowners-found-an-unpleasant-surprise-in-wall-of-400000-houston-bungalow-bones/), [[6]](https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/12358/9-crazy-things-people-found-inside-their-walls)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14740609/renovating-Victorian-home-eerie-discovery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/07/new-homeowners-found-an-unpleasant-surprise-in-wall-of-400000-houston-bungalow-bones/> - In 2017, new homeowners in Houston discovered human bones hidden within the walls of their 1930s bungalow. The previous owner, Mary Cerruti, had been missing since 2015. The remains were found alongside personal items, including red eyeglasses, leading authorities to investigate the circumstances surrounding her disappearance and the presence of the bones in the house.
3. <https://daily.jstor.org/hidden-charms/> - This article explores the historical practice of concealing objects, such as shoes, within the walls of buildings to ward off evil spirits. The tradition, prevalent in Great Britain from the medieval period into the twentieth century, involved placing items like shoes, witch bottles, and even dead cats in walls as protective charms.
4. <https://www.scotsman.com/heritage-and-retro/heritage/mystery-of-the-childs-bones-hidden-in-edinburgh-castle-walls-part-1-3074182> - In 1830, a coffin containing the skeleton of a newborn babe was discovered immured in a wall of Edinburgh Castle's Royal Palace. The shroud was embroidered with the letters 'JR,' leading to speculation about the true parentage of Mary Queen of Scots' son, James VI, and the possibility of a changeling being introduced into the royal crib.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apotropaic_magic> - Apotropaic magic refers to practices intended to ward off evil or harmful influences. In early modern Europe, objects like witch bottles, horse skulls, and the bodies of dried cats were placed in walls to protect households from witchcraft. These practices were part of a broader tradition of using symbols and objects to avert misfortune.
6. <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/12358/9-crazy-things-people-found-inside-their-walls> - This article highlights unusual discoveries made within the walls of homes, including mummified infants and cats. Such findings often relate to historical practices where objects were concealed in walls to protect inhabitants from evil spirits or misfortune, reflecting cultural beliefs and superstitions prevalent in various societies.
7. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/walls-made-of-ancient-human-leg-bones-unearthed-beneath-church-belgium-180974255/> - Archaeologists uncovered nine walls constructed from human leg bones beneath Saint Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium. These ossuary walls, dating back to the 15th century, were likely built to accommodate the remains of individuals exhumed from overcrowded cemeteries, reflecting historical practices of reusing human remains in architectural structures.