

## THE CONTRASTING FORTUNES OF TWO ARMITSTEAD FAMILIES:

### JOHN ARMITSTEAD, RAGS TO RICHES

*D4 In memory of Mary, daughter of William and Isabella Armitstead of Settle who died June 16th 1839 aged 12 years. Also of Elizabeth their daughter who died June 26th 1847 aged 21 years.*



William Armitstead and his wife Isabella Robinson married in 1824. They lived at Halton Gill and had four children, Jane, John, Mary and Elizabeth. William and Isabella both died in the 1830s leaving the four young children orphaned. Isabella's dad, John Robinson worked in Settle as an agricultural labourer, living on Constitution Hill, and he brought up the children.

Son John Armitstead, born in 1831, was educated at Giggleswick School, probably taking advantage of the endowment scheme. Sisters Mary and Elizabeth died in their early years and are buried in this grave. John Robinson died in the 1840s leaving sister Jane housekeeping for John who worked as a solicitor's clerk. Jane married William Bell, a Scottish linen draper who worked in Skipton. 18 months after the wedding, upon the birth of her second child, (yes, do the maths!) Jane died. William remarried and moved to Darlington.

In the meantime brother John found work in the Craven Bank, also in Skipton. John became a director of the Ben Rhydding Hydropathic Establishment which provided leisure facilities for 160 residential visitors wishing to use spa waters. John was promoted to Bank Manager of the Craven Bank in Ilkley where he served for another 20 years before he died in 1891 [1]. Well done John.

**DEATH OF MR. JOHN ARMITSTEAD.**  
The death of Mr. John Armitstead, for 20 years the manager of the Craven Bank, Ilkley, took place on Thursday morning, after a short illness of five days, from hemorrhage and heart failure. The deceased gentleman was 60 years of age, and was a native of Halton Gill, in Ribblesdale, near Kettlewell. He was educated at the Giggleswick Grammar School, and was articled to the law in Settle, but left that profession and became connected with the Craven Bank. As manager at the Ilkley branch he won by his unfailing courtesy and genial disposition the goodwill of all with whom he came in contact, and the news of his death cast a gloom over the whole neighbourhood, where he was well known, as throughout all the Craven district. The deceased gentleman was a Conservative in politics and a member of the Church of England. The funeral will take place on Monday next, at twelve o'clock, at Ilkley.

### CHRISTOPHER ARMITSTEAD'S FAMILY — WHEN THE WORKHOUSE IS JUST TOO LATE

At the time of the May 1841 census, Christopher Armitstead, born in 1794, was in Langcliffe working as a labourer with four children and his mum Ann Armitstead. After the death of two infant daughters, Christopher had moved the family to Langcliffe from Horton-in-Ribblesdale, presumably to find work. Christopher's dad had died the previous year in Giggleswick workhouse, and was buried at Giggleswick.

Christopher's wife Martha Hesleden had died a few weeks before and was buried in Ancient grave DX8. (Holy Ascension buried those from Langcliffe until St John's church was built.) Son William died on 28th July the same year, 1841, in grave BX11.

Christopher Armitstead	45	Labourer	4
Mary	15	Child	4
William	10		4
Robert	7		4
John Armitstead	4		4
Ann Armitstead	70	Widow	4

### Settle Graveyard Project

Christopher himself died on 2nd September the same year, buried in *grave BX11* with son William leaving John, Mary and Betty orphaned. Perhaps mum Ann in her 70s was able to look after the children?

Daughter Mary died in January 1842. Mum Ann died in January 1845. Daughter Betty died in Giggleswick workhouse in April 1849 aged 14, and is buried at Giggleswick.

There are no further records for son John. There are no burial records for daughter Mary, or mum Ann, so what happened to their bodies? There are no gravestones, newspaper cuttings or obituaries for families like these, but they are just as an important part of Settle's heritage.

Infections were the cause of more than 50% of deaths in those years, and tuberculosis killed most. It's possible that disease, linked to poverty, wiped out this whole family.

In the nineteenth century there was no welfare state. The Poor Law of 1834 decreed that workhouses should be established and run as a deterrent to the poor. So the Giggleswick workhouse was built to provide for the poor of the 'Settle Union' of seven local districts, housing 150 inmates. There was a high mortality rate and Christopher Armitstead's family demonstrate.



*This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project. The project has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) includes all the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing, and always welcomes queries, information and family knowledge on [setteresearch@gmail.com](mailto:setteresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page Settle Graveyard Project.*

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