

The Handby family, pillars of Settle society

James Handby, born in 1816, was the youngest of four sons born to William Handby and Nanny Jackson. James' three brothers were tailors so it's likely their father was a tailor too. James married Ann Tomlinson in 1840 in Preston and described his occupation at that time as a police constable, so would have probably been tall and strong. Later, he was a quarryman in Bentham before moving to Settle as a gardener in the 1850s [5C]. James and Ann lived in Rock House Cottage, behind Rock House on Castle Hill, otherwise known in those days as Back Lane. Unsurprisingly James won numerous awards at the North Craven Horticultural Shows, usually for his flowers.

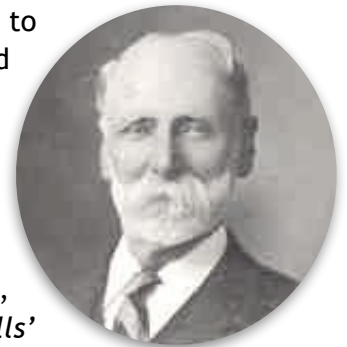


James appeared to have a bit of a temper! In 1856 he assaulted Charles Duckett who ran the King William beerhouse on High Street. After James 'became very submissive' and promised to run over a new leaf the case was dropped, James paying the costs [6]. Then, in 1864, aged 48, James took John Dodgson, a cattle drover, to court for assault in the Market Place after being 'beaten with a stick several times on the head and shoulders'. However witnesses claimed James had used 'very bad language' towards Mr Dodgson and so he was provoked [1] and the charges were dropped. James and Ann stayed in the same house until their deaths in the 1870s.

ASSAULT.—Mr. James Handby of Settle, was summoned for assaulting Mr. Charles Duckett, of the same place: Mr. Duckett said that as the defendant had become very submissive, and was "going to turn over a new leaf" he was wishful to withdraw the information. The defendant agreed to pay the costs. The magistrates consented, and the information was withdrawn accordingly.

had used very abusive language towards the defendant, and that he (defendant) retaliated by striking the complainant with his stick several times on the head and shoulders. Witnesses were called for the defence, and they all agreed in saying that the complainant had used very bad language towards the defendant. The Bench intimated that from the evidence given they had no doubt the defendant had received great provocation, and they unanimously agreed to dismiss the case.

James and Ann had three sons whose lives evolved in diverse directions! Eldest son, John Handby, became a plumber having been apprenticed to neighbour, plumber and cave explorer, **Joseph Jackson**. John married Hannah Lord, a stonemason's daughter who died giving birth to her second daughter, Hannah Handby. So, John married Mary Slinger who also died soon after the birth of her second son Joseph. Her first son William had died aged just ten days old. John then married Mary Barns who had another two children and survived, thank goodness. Such were the consequences of midwifery in the 19th century. As well as plumbing,



glazing and fitting 'gas and electric bells'

[LSA], John invested in the Settle Market Buildings Co. Ltd. which had been set up in 1887 to build an additional storey on to the Shambles buildings in Market Place and John probably generated some more trade as part of the project. John was a foundation governor of the National School in Settle and the manager of Settle Gas Company from 1875, taking over from Joseph Jackson, his previous boss and later business partner [ph1].



Local press reported that 59 year old John fractured his leg whilst mounting his bicycle [LSA].

7. Death of Mr. Thomas Fryer, of Long Preston, at the age of ninety years.—Accident to Mr. John Handby, of Settle, while mounting his bicycle, with the result that he was thrown violently to the ground and sustained a fracture in the leg.

John was elected by the pew-renters to be the 'People's Churchwarden' and served for over 40 years[1]. For many years he worked alongside Thomas Clark, the vicar's churchwarden. Churchwardens were the vicar's right hand men (yes, they were always men!) who managed the

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day to day life of the church. Churchwardens had to be 'fit and proper persons' and tended to be well respected tradesmen. Vestry records list their responsibilities: 'to perform and execute all lawful acts, matters and things necessary and requisite for and concerning the repairs, management, good order and decency of behaviour to be kept and observed in the church by the congregation. In the case of non-payment of Pew Rent, to enter upon and sell the same or else to sue for and recover the same by Action in the names of the Churchwardens of the church'. There was plenty of controversy over pew rents in Anglican churches throughout the nineteenth century, especially as nonconformist churches were free to all.

John regularly organised day trips for the choristers and bell ringers. When John died, in 1918, he was described as a 'stalwart worker for the church,' and a memorial fund raised sufficient to purchase two silver mounted churchwardens' wands, inscribed with his name. His widow Mary was presented with a gold wristlet watch. A popular man indeed.

John is the only person named on this memorial stone, but his family are probably buried with him: his parents James and Ann, first two wives Hannah and Mary, and infant son William.



In loving memory of John Handby died August 27th 1918 age 77 years. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, D5.

What happened to John's children? First wife Hannah's eldest daughter **Annie Handby** married **Richard Coates**, a travelling draper whose grandfather was **John Preston**, the innkeeper at the Joiner's Arms for decades. They emigrated to Canada. Hannah's second daughter, **Hannah** worked as a dressmaker in Ulverston, Lancashire before marrying **John Mackenzie Law** who made billiard tables. Third wife **Mary Barns'** children **James** and **Mary** both emigrated to New South Wales, Australia and it's possible their mother joined them after John had died. Mary became the second wife of **Walter Hermann Stone Leaney** who was involved in a successful family photography business. Walter's previous wife, **Levinia Edith Kitch**, had taken him to a divorce court after 13 years 'on certain grounds'[4]. A later article explained the grounds were that the wedding had not been consummated. The divorce was approved even though Walter did not appear for a medical examination! Walter and Mary had a daughter, **Mary Betty**, but she died aged 23.

Respondent did not appear. The petitioner stated that she went through the ceremony of marriage with Leaney on November 12, 1900, at St. Mary's Church of England, Katoomba. She was 23 years of age and he was 26. She had known him for about two years before. She lived with him first at Darlington and then at Katoomba. They were on quite friendly terms, but he never made any advances to her. He left her in August last year. They had lived together for thirteen years.

When he was 13, the Parish Magazine [PM] recorded that Mary Slinger's surviving son **Joseph** won a scholarship to Giggleswick School, together with **Cicero Clark**, son of fellow churchwarden **Thomas Clark**. Joseph continued the plumbing business and even had named taps [ph2]. Joseph is buried with wife **Edith Richardson** in the unmarked grave **New HX12**.



Joseph Handby and Cicero S. Clark, scholars attending the Settle National School, have been awarded Shute Exhibitions, at the Giggleswick Grammar School, after competitive examination open to all boys attending the Schools in the ancient Parish of Giggleswick. Herbert Victor Maudsley, another candidate from our School, did so well in the examination that he has been admitted to Giggleswick School on payment of half the usual fees.

Going back a generation, James and Ann's second son **James Tomlinson Handby**, born in 1846, had an unhappy life. James followed his three uncles into the tailoring business with an apprenticeship with **Thomas Walker** in the Market Place in Settle. James ran his business on

REMOVAL of BUSINESS.
J. T. HANDBY
In thanking his customers for their patronage during the time he has been in business in Castle Hill, he has the pleasure to announce that early in the New Year he will
OPEN HIS NEW SHOP
In the **MARKET PLACE**,
Adjoining Mr. Thomas Clark's, where he will keep a first-class stock of
WOOLLEN CLOTHS,
Ready-Made Clothes,

The oldest Shop in the Town.

J. T. Handby,
Tailor,
DRAPER & HOSIER,
Castle Hill,
Juvenile Suits made to order.
FLANNEL & LINEN SHIRTS MADE TO MEASURE.

Castle Hill 'the oldest shop in town' (which is quite unlikely!) and then, in 1875, next to **Thomas Clark** on Cheapside the Market Place [LSA].

James married **Margaret Walling** in 1871 and son **James Walling Handby** followed. James T Handby took on an apprentice, John Jackson, a stone mason's son – families would invest a reasonable sum for a trade employer to train their son, and provide board and lodging, usually for a period of seven years. In 1876, when John was 16, 'the lad, it appears, had refused to do the work allotted to him and had since absconded.' As the employer, James claimed 7 shillings compensation plus costs from John's father and the agreement was cancelled [7]. There are no further records for apprentice John after that. He may well have changed his name and/or left the country

AN ABSCONDING APPRENTICE.—Mr James T Handby, tailor and draper, appeared in support of an information laid by him against his apprentice, John Jackson, and also against the father, James Jackson. The lad, it appears, had refused to do the work allotted to him, and had since absconded. Mr. Handby now claimed 7s. damages and applied to have the indenture of apprenticeship cancelled. The Bench made an order against the father for the payment of the 7s. and costs, and ordered the indenture to be cancelled.

In the mid 1880s the family travelled to Blenheim, New Zealand with James still working as a tailor, but returned to Settle in 1895 for some reason. James was now a vocal teetotaler and a Wesleyan local preacher who had suggested: 'the sale of intoxicating liquors on a Sunday is a special service of intemperance, immorality and crime' [1].

James died in March 1897, aged 51, in the midst of a 'spate of suicides' in the area [CH]. After the inquest the coroner gave a verdict that James had killed himself with a pistol shot 'whilst temporarily insane'. He was found by the family housekeeper and was declared dead by **Dr Edgar**. He had been 'low in spirits, in bad health'. 'This sad close of an exemplary career has cast quite a gloom over the town and district. This is the fourth suicide in this locality within a few months.'

Widow Margaret and son James, now a commercial clerk, lived in Austwick until Margaret died in 1907. She is buried with husband James in the unmarked *Old grave CX28*. Vicars were able to use their discretion to bury victims of suicide in consecrated ground and, at Holy Ascension, all such graves are amidst other more regular burials. Son James immediately left for New Zealand where he married and worked in the armed services until he died aged 55. You can't blame him really.

seven and eight a.m. on Friday morning.—Emma Bryning, domestic servant and housekeeper to the deceased, said that he rose about the usual time and lit his workroom fire, and then went into the vinery. She came down at 7 a.m. and made the breakfast, and then called the deceased to his breakfast, but there was no answer. She went upstairs and could not find him. On looking in the boiler house attached to the greenhouse she found him there in a sitting position. She then went for help.—Dr Edgar said he saw the body on Friday morning and deceased appeared to have been dead about half an hour. He

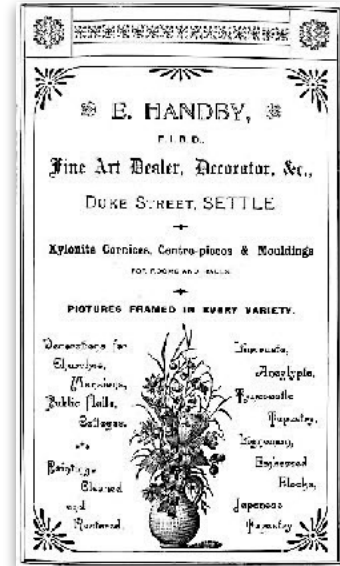
James and Ann's third son could not have been more different to his brothers. **Edmund Handby** was born in 1850. When he was 16, he was seriously injured about the head whilst on an excursion train to Windermere [2], but there was no lasting damage. Edmund married **Jane Holmes**, daughter of neighbour and plumber, **Thomas Holmes**, and they had three sons and two daughters. They lived on Castle Hill and then Duke Street. Edmund was a talented artist – portraits, landscapes, stage decor and paper hangings. [3, WSA, LSA].

its return to learn the truth. Then, and not till then, it was ascertained with certainty that no Settle persons had been seriously injured, except a young man of the name of Edmund Handby, who got badly hurt about the head, and was brought home by an earlier train and placed under medical care Very

ARCHERY BALL AT SETTLE.
The North Ribblesdale Archers gave a ball at the Lion Hotel, Settle, on Monday evening, the event proving an unqualified success. The ball-room had been decorated in Mr. Edmund Handby's best style. The walls of the room were made gay with trophies of banners, the Royal Arms, targets and arrows, whilst plants and ferns of splendid foliage appeared on every hand. Across the room was suspended the appropriate motto, "Stout arm, strong bow, and steady eye; Union, true hearts, and courtesy." Some very pretty dresses were worn by the ladies. Mr. Law, of Leeds, supplied the excellent dance music. The supper, provided by Mr. Alfred Simpson,

FINE ART EXHIBITION.—Mr. Edmund Handby's exhibition of oil-paintings, water-colour drawings, hand painted mirrors, and screens and other works of art which was opened in the Assembly Room at the Ashfield Hotel on Tuesday the 2nd instant and continued until Wednesday last has afforded genuine pleasure to the many visitors who have inspected the collection. The display of valuable oil-paintings and water-colour drawings comprise several meritorious works which did infinite credit to the respective artists. The mirrors and screens exhibited deserve more than a passing notice, not only on account of their artistic merit but as being the work of a native of Settle. It is to Mrs. McClelland that we owe the revival of this art, which was formerly practised by the early Italians.

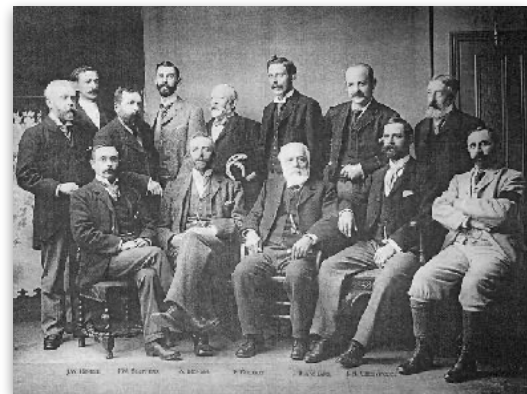
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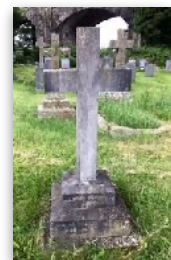
Edmund could thank Mrs **Epsy (Robinson) McClelland** for organising a fine art exhibition at the Ashfield Hotel in 1887[1]. Edmund was a Founder and lead player for the Dramatic and Operatic Societies and starred in numerous productions. Edmund was described as *'the portly Mr Handby'* especially in photos of his dramatic personae (right of photo ph3]. His fellow stars were **Charles Edward Bygrave** and **Frank Charles Stanley**. Edmund is credited with painting the fire screen at Victoria Hall which is still in use today.



In 1897 Edmund was honoured to be invited to be on a photo of twelve *'Settle Worthies'* brought together for a photograph to mark the visit of Edward Duckett [ph7, middle of back row]. This was a particular achievement as Edmund's father assaulted Edward's father back in 1856! Edward Duckett had left Settle in 1848, at the age of 21, to make his fortune in the emerging gold rush in Australia. Edward was successful and became a multi-millionaire, not by digging for gold but by establishing an ironmongery business, called the *'Golden Horseshoe'* — a clever idea as everyone digging for gold used horses!



Edmund, an excellent singer, was a chorister for 60 years at the church and was also a churchwarden. He died six months before his brother John in 1918, aged 67, being described by the vicar as *"the oldest member of the choir, and a most highly respected parishioner"*. Edmund and Jane are buried in Old graveyard G28.



In loving memory of Jane wife of Edmund Handby died Feb 17 1909 aged 62. Also Edmund Handby died (?) Feb 1918, aged 67. Also Edmund ...their son died Sept 10 1935 aged 57 years. Also of John their son died at Germiston South Africa March (?) 1904 aged 28 years, Old G28

The gravestone commemorates the lives of two of their sons. Son **Edmund**, another painter, had married **Elizabeth Rigg** from the Penrith area. Elizabeth was one of her mother, **Mary Hunter's** four children all from different fathers, two of whom were husbands. Two years before Elizabeth and Edmund's wedding, Elizabeth's mum, aged 57, had taken her own life following an argument about money with her second husband of 21 years, **William Atkinson** [5]. A verdict of *'suicide during temporary insanity'* was given — she had no previous history of depression and rarely argued with her husband. *'She was a very steady woman, but rather passionate. She was insured'*. She may have been insured but it could have been invalid in the case of suicide.

Settle Graveyard Project

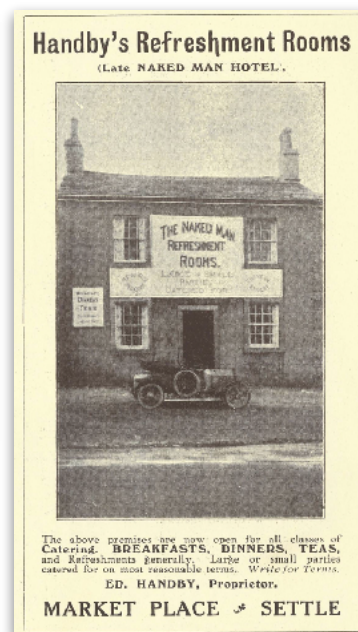
Edmund and Elizabeth ran the refreshment rooms on the site of the old Crown Inn, and then next door at the Old Naked Man [LSA, ph4]. Elizabeth is buried in the same grave and her husband and in-laws although not commemorated on the stone.

All three of Edmund and Jane's sons were educated at Giggleswick School. Their third son **Bertram** started life as a journalist in Bradford and then, after marrying, worked as a clerk for a petroleum works in London. At the time of the 1939 pre-war register he described his occupation as '*commercial clerk and postal censorship examiner and interpreter*'. Interesting.

Edmund and Jane's daughters **Bessie** and **Annie** ran confectionery businesses before marrying [LSA]. Bessie married **Anthony Wilson Howson**, a blacksmith and **Annie** married **James Metcalfe** son of **Foster Metcalfe** who ran the huge farm at Neal's Ing behind PenYgent. James worked as a bank clerk in Duke Street. James and Annie are buried in the grave *New J48*.

In loving memory of Annie Metcalfe died March 23rd 1972, aged 85 years and James Metcalfe, died May 24th 1973, aged 85 years.

Edmund's business was taken over by J & H Cowgill [ph6].



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 includes all the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing, and always welcomes queries, information and family knowledge on setteresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page Settle Graveyard Project.

Illustrations by Teresa Gordon. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1,7 – Lancaster Gazette, 2,6 – Lancaster Guardian, 3 – Yorkshire Post, 4 – Sydney Morning Herald Apr 1914 trove.nla.gov.au, 5 – Cumberland and Westmorland Herald

PM - Parish Magazine with kind permission of Mike Howarth, CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

SC – Settle Chronicle, WSA/LSA - Wildman's/Lambert's Settle Almanac, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust

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ph1 – photo with the kind permission of Tom Lord, ph2 – with the kind permission of Sandra Cowin. ph3 – with the kind permission of John Reid and the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, ph4 – credited to the Facebook Back in Settle site, ph5 – credited to relations on ancestry.co.uk, username gjbanham, ph6 – with thanks to John Reid, ph7 – Credited to The Golden Horseshoe, Edward Duckett and sons, a Victorian Pioneer Hardware Firm, thanks to North Craven Heritage Trust wltth kind permissions from descendant John Maidment