

Thomas Hardacre, draper, the first churchwarden (and bankrupt)

Thomas Hardacre, born in 1803, was the eldest son of Turner Hardacre and Elizabeth Dodgson. Turner was a successful Settle businessman, and a 'tax assessor' in the town. Turner died, aged just 40, in 1815. In 1834 Thomas married Sarah Littlewood from Birmingham and they had two daughters and two sons. The daughters survived but the sons died in infancy - George in 1844, and Charlie in 1853. Sarah died at the birth of Charlie when she was 44 and they are all buried together in the same grave.



C23 In memorial of Sarah Hardacre Obit 22nd February AD 1853, AET 44

In April 1839 Thomas became the first 'vicar's churchwarden' of Holy Ascension Church and remained in post until February 1844. His retirement may have been linked to son George's death. Like his dad, Thomas was a successful business man. In 1844 he owned several properties on Castle Hill and in the Market Place backing onto Castle Hill where his drapery business was located.

Unfortunately the death of Sarah and the children seems to have affected business. In 1857 Thomas applied for bankruptcy due to the depreciation of his property. Mr Commissioner made a point of Thomas' good character [1]. As a result, Thomas sold his property to John Johnson Hartley [SC].

MR. THOMAS HARDACRE'S BANKRUPTCY.—At the Leeds Court of Bankruptcy, before Mr. Commissioner West, on Friday, the 10th inst., an application was made by Thomas Hardacre, draper, of Settle, for a certificate. Mr. Nelson, of Leeds, appeared for the assignees, and supported the application. He remarked that the bankruptcy had arisen through a supposed depreciation of property. The bankrupt, believing that his affairs were becoming insolvent, had immediately and most honourably brought his affairs into that court, and the consequence was that a surplus would remain after 20s. in the pound had been paid to all the creditors. His Honor said he was pleased to bear testimony to the high character of the bankrupt, and there could be no objection to an immediate first-class certificate, which was granted.—*Leeds Mercury.*

HIGHLY VALUABLE PREMISES TO LET,
WITH IMMEDIATE POSSESSION.

1. THE SHOP AND HOUSE
Lately occupied by Mr. Thomas Hardacre, Draper. Those eligible premises, a first-rate Shop and House, are situated in the Market Place, in Settle, and have been occupied as a Drapery establishment, combined with a Lucrative Undertaking Trade, established nearly a century, and offer an opportunity to an enterprising individual seldom to be met with.

2. THE HOUSE AND SHOP
Lately occupied by the undersigned as a Dwelling House and Ironmongery Store. May be converted into an extensive and commodious dwelling house with every convenience for the comfort of a respectable family. Adjoining No. 1.

3. & 4. Two very roomy and convenient COTTAGES,
Situate opposite Rock House, commanding a view worthy a mansion of some pretensions.

For terms apply to the purchaser,
J. J. HARTLEY,
Ironmonger, Settle.

Two years later, aged 56, Thomas married 36 year old **Eliza Josine Robinson** who was the daughter of the Settle surgeon **Thomas Robinson** and cousin to the church verger **William Perkin**. In July 1860, Thomas Hardacre advertised that he was giving up business [SC] In the 1861 census he was still working as a linen draper in the Market Place in Settle, perhaps selling off the remains of his stock. Thomas may well have rented his rooms from Mr Hartley. Thomas' two remaining (adult) daughters were boarding with aunts in Leeds.

GIVING UP BUSINESS.

THOMAS HARDACRE,
MERCER AND DRAPER, MARKET PLACE, SETTLE,

Begs to inform the Public of Settle and the neighbourhood that he is giving up Business, and that he has reduced the whole of his Stock to Cost Prices in order to insure a clearance.

N.B. An early call is respectfully solicited as the Stock is well assorted and must be cleared out immediately.

Settle, July 2nd, 1860.

It appears that Thomas may have attempted entrepreneurial success by taking over the castleberg leisure park underneath Castleberg Rock [SC].

During the 1860s, Thomas and Eliza moved to Liverpool to try their luck but Thomas died there in 1867, leaving an estate of under £100.

CASTLEBERGH.—This capital place of amusement and recreation is likely to become more popular than ever under the spirited management of Mr Hardacre. The last addition to the stock of amusements is a hobby horse with seats and horses for a dozen young Jehus who 'keep the mill going' with great zest. We also noticed a neat little hut in which the more staid frequenters of the place may enjoy a quiet game at Draughts, Steeple chase, Dominoes, Fox and Geese, or Whist. The terms for admission are within reach of the poorest. A key to admit a Family for a whole year may be had for 5s., or a monthly ticket to admit one person may be had for 6d. and the single admission is only one penny. As the year dates from the 1st of May, we urge upon every head of a family to procure a key at once, and thus be able to take frequent advantage of such a healthy place of resort.



In 1871 Eliza was 'housekeeper' to her elderly uncle and retired surgeon John Marshall in the incredibly imposing Wray House in Wray. When Eliza died in 1876, she left an amazing £30,000 which would be worth several million today. How is this possible? Well, Eliza was from a wealthy family. Her widowed mum and aged uncle John died earlier in the 1870s and may well have left her a legacy.

What happened to the daughters? Emily died a wealthy spinster in Derbyshire in 1906. Poor Lucy married an insurance agent but died at the birth of her first child in 1873.



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

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 – Leeds Mercury

SC – Settle Chronicle, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust

