

There are over 50 people with the surname Towler buried in the graveyard. Many of these descend from families in Rathmell. This is one of the more incredible Towler life stories.

## Rev'd William Towler, Wesleyan missionary in the West Indies

Holy Ascension graveyard of the 'established church' was also the burial place for Catholics and Methodists. The Zion church and Quakers had their own graveyards. There are several Methodist ministers in the churchyard but none had lives quite like that of William Towler.

**William Towler** was born in 1811 in Lincolnshire, the son of **Edward Towler**, another Wesleyan Minister who may well have come from this area. In 1837 William, working as a draper, married **Sophia Wainwright** whose family were originally from Kent but came to work in Leeds for the woollen trade. Straight after William and Sophia's wedding a Wesleyan mission called them to Haiti. William died in 1853, aged 41, in Haiti. His Wesleyan Ministry obituary tells us:

*At the (Wesleyan) conference of 1837, William received an appointment to Haiti, and for nearly sixteen years faithfully and zealously laboured in Haiti and St Domingo. For the greater part of that time he was resident in the town of Puerto Plata, and, in consequence of the hostilities subsisting between the empire and the republic, was cut off from all personal intercourse with his brethren, and subjected to many and grievous privations, both personal and domestic. But, notwithstanding all, he fulfilled his course with diligence; his work was his delight. His death was a fitting sequel to a holy and devoted life. For him death had no terrors. He died on the 25th August 1853, in the forty-second year of his age, and the sixteenth of his ministry.*

Letters tell of natural and man-made destruction with reports of earthquakes and ongoing wars. In the midst of those horrendous conditions, William and Sophia brought up at least four children: **Eliza**, **Sophia**, **Emily** and **Mary Ann**. After William's death, Sophia and the girls returned to England.

By 1871 Sophia and the girls were running a 'school for ladies' in Station Road in Settle. Two of the daughters married good methodist men; in 1874 Eliza married **Thomas Dixon** and in 1877 Emily married **William Walker**. Mum Sophia died just a month after Eliza's wedding. This left Mary Ann and Sophia running the school, now in the Market Place and with enough money to have a servant.

The first week of October 1885 turned out to be unbelievably tragic as three of the four sisters died [1]. Sophia died on the 1st October, followed by Eliza (Dixon) on the 5th, both dying of pneumonia. Sister Mary Ann followed on the 9th October, dying of typhoid. 'As marking the high esteem in which they were held it may be stated that their graves — in

*Ascension churchyard — have been obscured by wreaths of flowers, forwarded by persons of almost every Christian denomination.'*



*In memory of Sophia, widow of the Revd William Towler, Wesleyan Missionary who died 23rd February 1874 aged 60 years. Also of Sophia Louisa daughter of the above who died 1 Oct 1885 aged 43. Also of Mary Ann daughter of the above who died 9th Oct 1885 Aged 37, D26*

**OBITUARY.**—A reference to our obituary columns reveal in one family a blank which is truly agonizing. On the 1st inst. Miss S. L. Towler died, followed on the 5th by her sister, Mrs. Dixon, and on the 9th by her sister, Miss M. A. Towler, also died. The cause of death of the two first-named is stated to have been pleuro-pneumonia, and typhoid pneumonia is stated as causing the death of Miss M. A. Towler. For many years the Misses Towler have been associated with the ladies' school at Settle, and their untimely deaths called forth expressions of profound regret from all classes of society. As marking the high esteem in which they were held it may be stated that their graves—in Ascension churchyard—have been obscured by wreaths of flowers, forwarded by members of almost every Christian denomination.

## Settle Graveyard Project

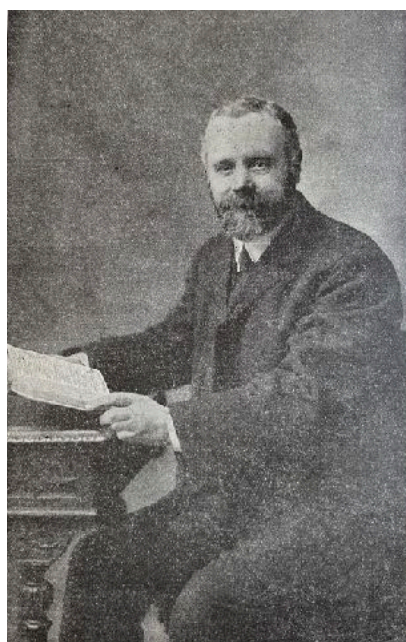
The 'new' St John's Methodist Church was built in 1893 [ph1]. The chancel window was the gift of Thomas Dixon, Sophia's widower in memory of the three sisters and their mother [A].



### 42 ON FOOT ROUND SETTLE.

The chancel window is in stained glass, and is very handsome, being the gift of Mr. T. Dixon, in memory of the late Mrs. Dixon, and the Misses Towler.

The only surviving sister Emily Towler and her husband **William Walker** [ph5] lived in Ribble Terrace in Settle with their three children, **William Towler Walker**, **Alice Emily Walker** and **John Fraser Walker** [ph6] William and Emily arranged for the Horners to take their photo in 1885, perhaps inspired to do so by the deaths of the Towler sisters.



#### BRITISH WOMEN'S TEMPERANCE ASSOCIATION.

President .. .. .	Mrs. Walker.
Secretary .. .. .	Mrs. Marlor.
Assistant Secretary .. .. .	Mrs. Best.
Treasurer .. .. .	Mrs. Whiteley.
Literary Secretary .. .. .	Miss G. Harger.

Walker Children , photograph by the Horner Studio.  
Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

William was the eldest son of a 'post messenger' **John Walker** and **Sarah Vaughan**. This was in the days of transport by foot or horse and cart. John's daily run, which he worked for decades, was between Settle and Ingleton. John won awards for the length of his service with the Post Office. John and Sarah are buried together in the unmarked grave *Old BX11*.

William was educated and served an apprenticeship with chemist **William Shepherd**. William Shepherd died in 1871, aged just 46, so William Walker held the reins of the business until William Shepherd's son **John William Shepherd** qualified in 1880. In this way, William Walker went into business with the Shepherd family. William and Emily's son William Towler Walker continued the business and his descendants ensured that 'Shepherd and Walker' was a successful business, trading until 1978, 135 years later [ph1]. In the meantime, Emily was the President of



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the Women's Temperance Association in 1901 [LSA].

William and Emily's daughter **Alice Emily Walker** remained a spinster and spent a while working as a nurse back in the West Indies before retiring to Ribble Terrace in Settle. Son **John Fraser Walker** [ph7] also remained in the business with brother William, working as a travelling salesman, selling chemists' products. Emily lived until she was 89 and is buried in the *Old grave L36*, with William and daughter Alice Emily. William's brother Henry had quite a different life - *below*



*In loving memory of William Walker who entered into rest June 13th 1927 aged 76 years. The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory Isaiah chap 60 ver 19. Also of Emily wife of the above who entered into rest Nov 11th 1933 aged 89 years. Also of their daughter Alice Emily 13th Sept 1880 - 14th Nov 1974, Old L36*

18. Mr. T. Dixon read an excellent paper on "John Wesley" to the members of the Settle Wesley Guild.

Emily's sister Eliza had married **Thomas Dixon**, a banker's clerk from Halifax. At the time of the 1861 census he worked at the bank in the Market Place with fellow clerk **John Hargreaves Greenwood**, son of **Edward Greenwood**. Thomas was promoted to become the manager of Craven Bank in Settle, serving there for 51 years. He took over from **Frank Ellis**. Eliza died just a year after their third child was born. Thomas brought up the children with a niece, **Emma Louise Dixon**, who had been born in the West Indies. They lived in Duke Street and Thomas could afford a servant to help.

Thomas and his brother-in-law William Walker were active members of the Methodist church [LSA, ph1] and the Settle Gospel Temperance Union. In 1915, they were together honoured for their services to the Sunday School in 1915 [LSA]. They had taken over from **Joseph Harger** in 1886 [B]. *'They fulfilled the office with fidelity and efficiency.'*

On **MONDAY NEXT, Dec. 2nd, 1895,**  
THE ANNUAL  
**Missionary Meeting**  
Will be held, when ADDRESSES will be delivered by the  
**REV. JOSEPH CROWTHER,**  
Messrs. J. V. HARGER & W. WALKER.

31. Mr. Thomas Dixon retired from the management of the local branch of the Bank of Liverpool at Settle, after 51 years service. Mr. Dixon had seen many changes in the bank, as in 1873 it became known as Birkbeck, Robinson & Co.; in 1880 the Craven Bank Limited was formed; in 1906 the Craven Bank was merged in the Bank of Liverpool, and during the period which has elapsed since that date Mr. Dixon had earned high praise from the Board of Directors and the General Manager.—A party of about sixty Geological Students from

### MAY.

2. A memorable Tea and Meeting, at Settle, for the purpose of chronicleing 105 years of history, and unveiling the enlarged photographs of the two honoured superintendents of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, Mr. William Walker and Mr. Thomas Dixon.

### MR. T. DIXON, OF GIGGLESWICK.

Mr. Thomas Dixon, of The Mains, Giggleswick, near Settle, died yesterday, in a Leeds nursing home, in his 69th year, after an operation for appendicitis. Mr. Dixon went to Settle 54 years ago, from Halifax, and entered the Settle branch of the present Bank of Liverpool (Limited), which was then known as Alcock, Birkbeck, and Co., afterwards as Birkbeck, Robinson, and Co., and later as the Craven Bank (Limited). He became manager on the retirement of Mr. Francis Ellis, in 1862, and himself retired in March, 1913, after an unbroken period of 51 years' service. The staff of the Settle branch of the bank, having been greatly depleted by enlistment, Mr. Dixon offered his services again, and they were gladly accepted, so that it may be said that he died in harness.

When the war broke out, and the Settle and District War Relief Committee was formed, Mr. Dixon was appointed treasurer, and he did much good work. He was a man who was ever wishful to do good, and was greatly respected by rich and poor alike. In his quiet way, he took a great interest in local affairs, and for a long time he had been one of the most prominent supporters of the Wesleyan community in the district. In temperance and other work, as well as in musical circles, he was most enthusiastic. In sport he took the greatest interest in bowling, being the treasurer of the local club, and he also was a keen follower of the local cricket club.

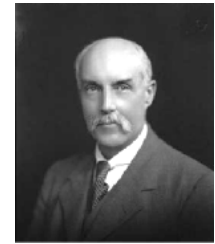
Thomas retired in 1914 [LSA] but died two years later after an appendicitis operation. Thomas had a glowing obituary – he was a good man [2]. Thomas and Eliza and their niece **Emma Louise Dixon** are buried in the grave next to **Sophia Towler** and her two daughters.

Settle Graveyard Project



In memory of Eliza the beloved wife of Thomas Dixon born 26th Sept 1840 died 5th Oct 1885. Also Thomas Dixon who died May 15th 1916 aged 68 years. Also their niece Emma Louise Dixon who died March 17th 1975 in her 90th year, D27

Daughter Annie Fraser Dixon married the dashing Sidney Reginald Daniels [ph2]. Sidney was a graduate of Oxford and worked for the Indian Civil Service, later becoming a high ranking judicial commissioner. After retiring in 1928, he stood for parliament four times for the Liberal Party between 1929 and 1935, but was unsuccessful each time. Sydney became the deputy president of the executive committee for proportional representation.



In the late 1890s [ph4] the family visited the Giggleswick Ebbing and Flowing Well. R–L, Annie Fraser Dixon, Emily Walker, William Walker, Alice Emily Walker, Edith Mary Dixon and friend Margaret Ann Kirkby Harger.



William Walker's younger brother was Henry Vaughan Walker . . . .



Henry Vaughan Walker was born on 5th November 1860, a potentially explosive event. Henry trained as an accountant and soon afterwards married Elizabeth Cheffins from Lincolnshire who had been working in Bradford. They lived near Bridge End in Settle. Henry threw himself into life in Settle. While he worked as an accountant he was also the Deputy to the Registrar John Lister and was the secretary of the Gospel Temperance Union – the Temperance group for non conformists. In April 1889, Henry submitted a paper on 'Political Work' to the Liberal club [LSA]. Meanwhile Elizabeth occupied herself as a milliner and dressmaker [LSA] and was also on the ladies' committee of the Gospel Temperance Union. They didn't have children.

MRS. H. V. WALKER,  
**Milliner & Dressmaker,**  
 DUKE STREET, SETTLE,  
 Respectfully solicits the attention of the general public to her well assorted stock of  
**MILLINERY MATERIALS**  
 Fancy and other Goods in the latest styles.  
 SPECIAL SHOWS IN SPRING AND AUTUMN.  
 Mourning Materials always on hand.  
 ORDERS EXECUTED ON THE SHORTEST NOTICE.



On the back of the photo [ph3], entitled 'Slogger Henry Vaughan Walker' there is a note telling us of one of Henry's greatest achievements. At the age of 19, Henry was the first man to score a century at the new Marshfield Cricket Ground in 1880. The cricket ground had moved from Edward Hartley's land at Barrel Sykes and Northfield because of the building of the railway. In 1887, Henry was still top of the cricket bowling records, and high up in the batsman records [LSA].

BOWLING AVERAGE				
	Matches	runs	wickets	average
H. V. Walker	14	325	42	7.8
E. Peake	5	69	18	3.8
J. Ralph	5	71	12	6
H. M. L. Williamson	7	133	15	9
J. Silverwood	5	144	8	18
C. Baldwin	6	72	7	10.3
C. O. Swale	7	97	7	14
W. Overing	3	56	3	18.7

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BATTING AVERAGES.—1887.					
	Innings	not out	runs	most in an in'gs	average
Rev. J. A. Burrow	3	0	158	89	52.2
R. T. Wildman	2	0	96	63	48
E. Peake	5	0	137	85	27.2
W. Mason	4	1	78	30	26
F. C. Stanley	10	1	205	63	22.7
H. V. Walker	14	0	266	100	19
J. Holmes	4	0	74	46	18.2
W. Overing	7	2	66	36	13.1
J. Silverwood	8	2	74	31†	12.2
H. M. L. Williamson	10	0	92	18	9.2
B. J. Hall	4	2	19	8†	9.1
C. O. Swale	8	0	54	34	6.6
L. Brewin	4	1	13	7†	6.1
E. Wilkinson	5	1	22	11	5.2
M. Whittam	7	0	33	15	4.5
J. W. Shepherd	16	4	46	13†	3.10
J. Ralph	16	0	47	13	2.16

## Settle Graveyard Project

In 1890, Henry was re-elected Treasurer for the cricket club and awarded a bat for the best batting averages in the first XI [2]. In 1894, Henry resigned his position as Treasurer of the Settle Liberal Committee citing 'the pressure of other work', but was selected as a delegate for the Committee in Skipton [3].

However, something went wrong after this. By the time of the 1901 census, Henry and Elizabeth had moved to Prestwich to lodge with Elizabeth's mum. Henry was working as a journalist and author. By 1911 Henry, Elizabeth and her mum had returned to Elizabeth's homeland where Henry worked as a librarian for Stamford Public Library. Unfortunately Henry was declared bankrupt, a victim of 1913 style Pay Day Lenders. He had problems paying off debts after being disinherited by his mum. Sarah had stayed in Settle with older brother William and family and had died in 1912. Henry was obviously not in favour with his mum.

However Henry survived and made a living as a freelance journalist in Louth. He died in 1946, aged 85, with just £52 to his name which he mysteriously gave to a spinster shopkeeper in Louth, Alice Rebecca Flower – he clearly didn't make up with his family.

**SETTLE POLLING DISTRICT. — ANNUAL LIBERAL MEETING.**—The annual meeting of this association was held at the Liberal Club, on Monday evening, Mr. Thos. Harger presiding. Mr. J. A. Farrer was elected chairman, Mr. John Roberts vice-chairman, and Mr. Charles J. Lord was elected hon. secretary and treasurer, in the place of Mr. H. V. Walker, who resigned on account of pressure of other work. A local Executive Committee was appointed for the general management of ordinary local political affairs. The Rev. G. H. Brown and Messrs. Thomas Harger, Francois B. Holmes, Charles J. Lord, John Lord (Victoria Square), Henry Skirrow, H. V. Walker, and Thomas Yeadon were selected as delegates upon the Central General Committee at Skipton.

### **PETERBOROUGH BANKRUPTCIES**

#### **EX LIBRARIAN'S FAILURE.**

At Peterborough Bankruptcy Court, on Friday, Henry Vaughan Walker, now of no occupation, came up for his public examination—Debtor's statement showed liabilities estimated at £122 15s 6d, and assets (life policy, watch, bicycle, camera, and negatives) £2 12s 6d. He attributed his position to inadequate salary received for the time occupied as public librarian during a portion of his engagement at Stamford, and payment of excessive interest to money-lenders. Debtor added that he had anticipated receiving some benefit under his mother's will, which would have enabled him to meet his indebtedness. She died in spring this year, but left her assets to her grandchildren.—In reply to



*This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Yorkshire Post, 3 – Lancaster Guardian*

*LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*

*A - On Foot Round Settle, George H Brown, 1896, B – Memories of my ministry by Rev John Woolerton, Superintendent Minister 1891 - 3*

*ph1 – credited to the 'Back in Settle' Facebook site, ph2 – credit Wikipedia, ph3 – with the kind permission of Jeanne Carr and Eric Mitchell, ph4 – with the kind permission of Allan Gould, ph5 – credited to Ebbing and Flowing by Stephen Wooler, ph6 – Image 2022.1.68.25 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life, ph7 – photo with thanks to John Reid*

Settle Graveyard Project



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