

## Thomas Leeming, clock and watchmaker

Watch and clockmaking were specialist trades, usually the preserve of the rich until the industrial revolution enabled greater scale production. The need for accurate clocks became more critical with the introduction of railway timetables. Greenwich Mean Time and a nationwide railway timetable were eventually introduced during the 1880s.



Thomas Leeming, born in 1822 in Fockerby on the coast of East Yorkshire, was the son of John Leeming and his wife Jane Quinton. By 1826 the family had moved to Bentham, for some reason. There are several Leeming families in Bentham, perhaps including John's ancestors? Thomas was working as a clockmaker by the age of 19 – maybe his father was a clockmaker?

Thomas met Hannah Gardner, an innkeeper's daughter from Thornton-in-Lonsdale. They married in Bentham in 1848, just before just before the birth of their daughter, Jane Leeming, who died as a toddler. They moved to Settle in 1853 and lived in Kirkgate and then Duke Street, opposite the bank [SC]. Thomas was in the Order of Rechabites, believing in total abstinence [1,2] and in 1855 played the Clerk of the Court in the annual performance of

'The Trial of John Barleycorn, alias Strong Drink' at the Mechanics Hall. It was very crowded and so was repeated in the evening. It raised £7, despite over 200 juvenile members of the Band of Hope who were admitted free of charge. Thomas performed alongside other well know Temperance characters such as *Darius Ineson*, *John Lord*, *Anthony Sharp*, *Peter Skirrow*, *Thomas Bordley* and *Francis Twisleton*.

**THOMAS LEEMING**  
**R**ESPECTFULLY invites the attention of the public to his  
 Stock of English, Paris, and American  
**CLOCKS,**  
 In a great variety of cases; first class Patent Lever, Swiss and  
 Verge WATCHES, new & second-hand Spectacles, Jewellery, &c.

**T. LEEMING,**  
**WATCH AND CLOCK MAKER**  
 (Opposite the Bank,)  
**DUKE STREET, SETTLE.**  
 Begs respectfully to return thanks for the very great support  
 he has received since he commenced business in Settle, and to  
 assure his friends and the public generally that no exertions shall  
 be wanting on his part to merit a continuance of their favours.  
 T. L. has always on hand a good Stock of the best made  
**English GOLD and SILVER WATCHES**  
 Eight days and thirty hour Clocks in Oak and Mahogany Cases  
**GOLD WEDDING RINGS,**  
 Gold and Silver Guards, &c., &c. *Settle. 1st March. 1854.*

**ORDER OF RECHABITES.**—With the object of furthering the contemplated formation of a juvenile tent in connection with the above order a public meeting was held in the Music Hall, on Saturday evening last. Bro. T. Leeming presiding. Mr. H. Roper, of Manchester (High Chief Ruler of the Order), gave an interesting address setting forth the advantages to young folk being enrolled members of the Rechabite Society.

sent. The principal characters represented were as follow:—Chief Justice, Mr. F. Twisleton; Associate Judges, Messrs. D. Ineson and John Lord; Counsel for the people (M. Scrutiny, Esq.), Mr. John Wood; Counsel for the defence (H. Sensual, Esq.), Roger Bateson; Sheriff, Peter Skirrow; Deputy-Sheriff (Mr. C. Holdfast), T. Bordley; Clerk of the Court, Mr. T. Leeming; Prisoner, **Anthony Sharp**. Several wit-

In 1862 Thomas had to make a brief court appearance to help in the conviction of Christopher Reid, 'a returned convict'[2] alongside *PC Thomas Whincup*. Christopher had stolen a watch belonging to *Jane Hornby*, the daughter of William Hornby, the innkeeper of the Golden Lion in Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Thomas was able to prove the watch belonged to Jane because of the markings on the shell when he had repaired it. Jane Hornby's sister, Esther Hornby married *John Kitchener*.

**STEALING A WATCH.**—Police-Sergeant Thomas Whincop, of Settle, charged Christopher Reid, returned convict, formerly of Arkholmo, with stealing a watch, the property of Jane Hornby, of Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Jane Hornby, mother of the above, stated that she was the wife of William Hornby, innkeeper, Horton-in-Ribblesdale. She saw the watch (which was her daugh-

ter before J. W. Farrer and C. Ingleby, Esqrs., when Thos. Leeming, watch and clock maker, Settle, deposed: The watch produced he had repaired for Jane Hornby five or six times, and that he knew it by certain marks upon the shell.—Committed for trial at the sessions at Wakefield, to be held on the 28th inst.

Later that year Thomas spent even longer in court, this time on the opposite side of the law, accused of perjury – lying in court, along with *PC Lindsay* and *Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson* [2]. Two year before, *Mrs Ellen (Haythornthwaite) Duckett* had fallen and broken her leg at the station because, she claimed, the station lights were unlit. Thomas, PC Lindsay and Joseph HO Wilson all gave evidence that the lights were not lit and Mrs Duckett received compensation of £25. However a local solicitor, *John Cowburn*, later proved that Mr Wilson could not have been at the station that night as he was collecting paperwork for his bankruptcy case from Gargrave. Mr Wilson was imprisoned for 18 months with hard labour but, fortunately, Thomas and PC Lindsay were let off. By then Mrs Duckett had taken her money and moved to Blackburn!

**SETTLE PETTY SESSIONS—SATURDAY, AUG. 23.**  
(Before G. Stansfeld, Esq., chairman, and W. Robinson, Esq.)  
**PERJURY AT YORK ASSIZES.**  
Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson, of Rathmell, was brought up in custody, and charged with having committed perjury on giving evidence in the trial of the cause *Duckett v. the Midland Railway Company*, at the last York assizes. Thomas Leeming, of Settle, and William Lindsay, police constable, of Giggleswick, who were also witnesses in the same cause, appeared in answer to summonses charging them with the same offence.

In 1878 Thomas and Hannah had to bury a fourth child, *Henry Leeming*, aged 22 who had started working as a clockmaker. Soon afterward Thomas had a protracted altercation with a neighbour, *John Atkinson*, resulting in several other court appearances. Reports [1] in 1881 and 1882, explain that Thomas was ordered not to touch John's property after an argument over where to place a water butt. The judge said that if ever there was a case where there ought to be an amicable arrangement, this was it.

**ATKINSON v. LEEMING.**—John Atkinson, confectioner, Settle, sued Thomas Leeming, watchmaker, his neighbour, for £5 1s. being damages for trespass on the 2nd, 6th, and 7th December last. The plaintiff

**COUNTY COURT.—Tuesday.—Before T. H. Ingham, Esq., judge.—Atkinson v. Leeming:** In this case Mr. F. F. Pearson, of Kirkby Lonsdale, appeared for the plaintiff, John Atkinson, confectioner, Settle, who claimed from Thomas Leeming, watchmaker, Settle, £4 for damages to a slopstone pipe, and also claimed an injunction to restrain defendant from injuring his property in future. Mr. Pearson was proceeding to

hour. On his resuming his seat he said that if ever there was a case where there ought to be an amicable arrangement it was the present one. He thought the tub was a very objectionable thing to be opposite the defendant's window. Both parties having expressed their willingness to abide by any suggestion his lordship might make he said he thought another cistern might be placed underneath the ground where the tub stood. It was therefore agreed that a cistern to hold 250 gallons should be put in, and any question arising hereafter relative to the property should be referred to the Judge.

This seems to have been the final straw as Hannah and Thomas retired to Hornby and died at the ripe old ages of 74 and 80. Thomas and Hannah's daughter, *Margaret Leeming*, worked as a schoolmistress in Skipton until she died aged 38. Son *John Leeming* became a successful bank manager in Kendal but there were no children to his marriage to *Agnes Beadle*. Daughter *Elizabeth Leeming* remained single, in each census describing herself as a 'gentlewoman' visiting well-to-do ladies. She lived until she was 78. So there were no heirs to this family.

This gravestone commemorates the lives of five of the siblings although two were buried elsewhere. The grave is very close to that of their close neighbours in Duke Street, *George Johnson* and family.

*In memory of Jane Leeming, who died March 12th, 1850 aged 1 yr and 10 mo, and was interred at Bentham. Also of Mary Jane Leeming who died June 15th 1855 aged 10mo. Also of Richard Leeming who died Nov 10th 1860 aged 5mo. Also Henry Gardner Leeming Born 17th April 1856, died 27th April 1878. Also of Margaret Leeming who died at Skipton Nov 28th 1890, aged 38 years and was interred at Waltonwrays cemetery, E6*



## *Settle Graveyard Project*

*This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk](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'.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project*

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