

The Shepherd family, astonishingly successful chemists

William Shepherd, born in 1825 in Horton-in-Ribblesdale, was the only son of another William Shepherd, a farmer and his wife Hannah Cork. William (Snr) died when William (Jnr) was 14. By 1841 William, aged just 16, and his sister Jane Shepherd had moved to Settle as William had obtained an apprenticeship to druggist and grocer John Hayhurst in Settle Town Hall, along with William Armistead. John Hayhurst died in 1843 and the two Williams continued the business in the Town Hall [SC]. They would have been in direct competition with John Tatham who ran his business on Cheapside, just over the road.

Settle Market (Sheep Market), photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)



In 1853 William [ph1] married Mary Slinger and they had eight daughters and two sons. Mary's father, John Slinger was a wealthy, well respected man, owning Studfold estate near Horton-in-Ribblesdale and this probably gave William's career a boost. Mary had a cousin, William Slinger, who was another successful chemist, in York. During the 1850s, William Armistead moved away from Settle to Kendal but William Shepherd carried on the business here. It obviously went well – having lived on Church Street they moved to the large houses at The Terrace on Duke Street. William and Mary could afford servants to look after them in each census, one of whom was Elizabeth Poole who later ran a boarding house for wealthy bachelors. At the time of the 1861 census, William's apprentice was John Jonathan Briscoe who would later marry Agnes Ralph, the daughter of blacksmith Luke Ralph and become a successful, international chemist in his own right.

Outside work William was a busy man. He was an active member of the Temperance Society and a teacher in the Sunday School for over 30 years. In the 1850s William was a Director of the Settle Gas Company. In 1855 William 'delivered a very interesting

settleresearch@gmail.

ARMISTEAD & SHEPHERD,
Wholesale and Retail
**Chemists, Druggists, Grocers, Tea
Dealers, Oil Merchants, &c.,**

Reg to inform the Gentry and Public generally of Settle and neighbourhood, that in addition to every article in Drugs, Chemicals, and Groceries of first quality, they have always in Stock a great variety of

FAMILY ARTICLES,
Consisting of Cloths, Hair, Nail, Tooth, and Plate Brushes, Shell Side and Dressing Combs, Perfumery, Fancy Soaps, Pickles, Spices, Sauces, Vinegars, &c., &c.

SUPERIOR COFFEES,
Always fresh being roasted on the premises.

FINE FLAVOURED TEAS,
From 3s. per lb. and upwards.

N. B. A reduction of 3d. per lb. on taking 6 lbs.

MARKET PLACE, SETTLE.

MESMERISM—On Friday Evening, March 30th, Mr. Wm. Shepherd delivered a very interesting Lecture on this subject, to the Members of the Settle Mechanics' Institute. He had a good subject for his practical illustrations. He put him in the somnolent condition in 2 minutes, and catalepsed his arm and leg. He was not quite successful in some experiments. A Public Room is not a favourable place for a first appearance. We witnessed a private exhibition before the Lecture, in which the experiments were decidedly successful. However in the Room he put his subject into the mesmeric state, the Lecturer being outside the door. There were upwards of 40 Members present who were all highly gratified by the evenings instruction and amusement. We hope Mr. Shepherd may be induced to bring the subject before the people, as well as the Members of the Institute.

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lecture' on 'Mesmerism' (hypnotism) [SC] which was very fashionable at the time.

William became a churchwarden at Settle church in 1870, but died a year later, aged just 46. His cause of death was 'congestion of the liver' from which he had been suffering for four weeks and was probably brought about by heart trouble. Dr James Hartley was with him as he died. 'Mr Shepherd's varied knowledge of scientific and medical subjects, which he was always ready to impart to every inquirer made his advice very much sought after. His loss will be very deeply regretted, as he was held in very great esteem by all classes.' [1] He left an estate of £6,000, a fortune in those days and so, unsurprisingly, William's gravestone is amidst those of the most wealthy in the south east corner of the church.

Of the ten children, three died in infancy and are buried with William and Mary. Daughter Edith Alice died just a week after her dad, aged 4. Poor Mary.

In memory of William Shepherd of Settle, who died February 5th 1871 aged 46 years. Also Mary Shepherd, who died 27th April 1915 aged 87 years. Also children of the above, Elizabeth Eleanor Shepherd who died January 24th 1863, aged 5 years. Francis Slinger Shepherd who died February 4th 1863 aged 11 days. Edith Alice Slinger Shepherd who died February 13th 1871 aged 4 years. Ernest Shepherd who died at Bloemfontein January 24th 1897 aged 26 years. E22

William died when his youngest son, Ernest Shepherd, was just six months old. In 1872 Mary had her photo taken [ph5] with young Ernest and, if you look carefully you can see youngest daughter Lilian Shepherd sneaking in the left hand side. Sons Ernest and John William Shepherd went to Giggleswick School. Ernest, a doctor, died in Bloemfontein unmarried aged 27, after being advised to go there on account of his health [LSA]. Daughters Clara Jane Shepherd and Helena Frances Shepherd used their share of the inheritance to set up a school in Devon and later retired together to Gloucestershire.

24. Death of Mr. Ernest Shepherd (youngest son of the late William Shepherd, The Terrace, Settle), at Bloemfontein, Orange Free State. He had been advised, on account of his health, to go to the Cape.

Mary outlived William by some 45 years. Her sight and memory had been fading for a while [ph4]. She had kept the business going with the help of another apprentice, **William Walker**, until son John William [ph2] qualified as a pharmacist in 1880.

John bought the premises at the corner of the Market Square in 1893 [LSA, ph3].

settleresearch@gmail.com

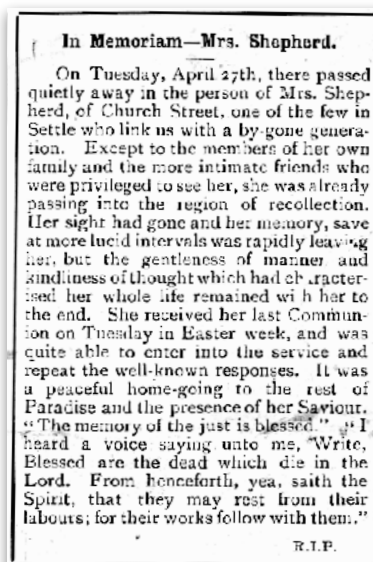
DEATH OF MR. W. SHEPHERD. - In our obituary of to-day, we record the death of Mr. W. Shepherd, druggist and grocer, of this town. Deceased had been upwards of 30 years a Sunday School teacher in the Settle Sunday School; he had also taken an active part in the proceedings of the Settle Temperance Society for many years, besides being closely connected with most of the institutions of the town. His funeral took place on Wednesday last, and as a mark of respect to his memory the shops and places of business were closed during the passing through the streets of the funeral cortege. The principal officers and members of the Temperance Society and many of the inhabitants joined the mournful procession. Mr. Shepherd's varied

knowledge of scientific and medical subjects, which he was always ready to impart to every inquirer made his advice very much sought after. His loss will be very deeply regretted, as he was held in very great esteem by all classes.



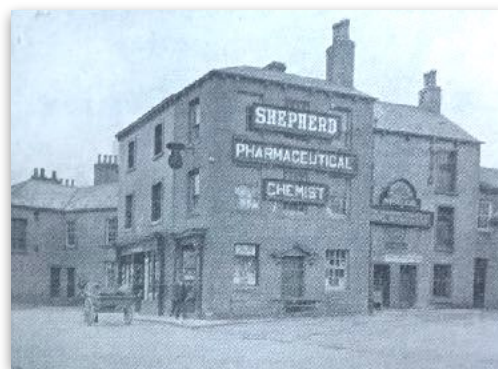
Mrs Shepherd and little boy 1872, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

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Fellow apprentice William Walker married **Emily Towler**, and had a son **William Towler Walker**, also a chemist. Their descendants ensured that ‘Shepherd and Walker’ remained successful, trading until 1978, 135 years later [ph3]. At some point Shepherd and Walker bought out some of the Tathams’ property on Cheapside too.

Son **John William Shepherd** was the only one of the ten children to marry and he married twice. His first wife, **Eliza Julian**, two years after the birth of their son, **William Shepherd**. Despite living in Settle, young William boarded at Giggleswick school and then went into banking, eventually managing a bank in Bath. John William’s second wife was **Mary Ellis**, daughter of the banker **Frank Ellis**. John William was a JP, a poor law Guardian [ph3] and a fellow of the meteorological society. He was a bellringer at Holy Ascension church and replaced **John Handby** as churchwarden in 1918. John William was the Chair of Settle Gas Works in 1906 and Vice President of the cricket club.



John William and his remaining sisters lived extraordinarily long lives, all living into their 80s or 90s, seeing out their last years together in Helwith Bridge. John William and both wives are buried in *Old grave C76*. John William was not a man disposed to heartfelt commemoration inscriptions, clearly.



Eliza Shepherd born March 2nd 1864 died April 21st 1891. **Mary Shepherd** born June 13th 1858 died Dec 24th 1953. **John William Shepherd** born Sep 2nd 1855 died April 16th 1945, *Old C76*



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. The ‘Old Settle’ family tree on Ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on 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

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ph1 – photo with the kind permission of Tom Lord, ph2 – photo with the kind permission of Mike Howarth, ph3 – kindly provided by John Reid, ph4 – from the Parish Magazine, kindly provided by Roger Taylor, ph5 – 2022.1.68.26, ph6 – Image 2022.1.57.9 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life



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LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, SC – Settle Chronicle with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life