

Castle Hill in Settle

Castle Hill hasn't always been the quaint cobbled back street that it is today. If you had walked up there during the 19th century you would have faced a vibrant, bustling, colourful cacophony of sounds, smells and sights as you entered a hub of Settle's finest skilled tradesmen. Amidst the grinding of the corn mill and clanking of blacksmiths, the plumbers, glaziers, clog makers, tanners and tailors were busy preparing their wares. To escape the acrid smells of the candle maker, a butcher (and the horses) you look would up to the grand gates at the top leading to Townhead and Constitution Hill where some of Settle's wealthiest folk could be seen, with their servants, of course. Above the mill there were houses and shops on both sides of Castle Hill (until the 1960s) [ph1]. Behind, the Bowskills Yard cottages (built by blacksmith William Bowskill) housed numerous labourers and their families.



Some of Settle's most successful tradesmen were based in Castle Hill, several living there for generations. Peter Skirrow was one of them.



Peter Skirrow, a tallow chandler

Tallow chandlers (candle makers) needed fat to make candles, conveniently provided by the butchers who were based in the Shambles in the Market Place. Candle making was a really unpleasant, caustic and smelly job but someone had to do it [CH]. 'As I write these lines I can almost catch a whiff of the rancid odour that rose from the vats in which the wicks were dipped.'

There have been many changes in the business life of Settle during the past sixty years. Some of the industries have died out entirely. I can remember the old chandlery business run by Mr. Skirrow on Castle Hill, where he manufactured the old-fashioned tallow candles. These have since been supplanted by the wax candle, but there was a considerable local demand for the "dips" in those days. As I write these lines I can almost catch a whiff of the rancid odour that rose from the vats in which the wicks were dipped, and re-dipped until they reached the proper consistency.

Candles came - Peter Skirrow used to make Tallow Dips where Mr Thornbers Warehouse is and it was of great interest to children to see the strands of wick being dipped into the melted fat & dried before another coat was put on. This would be in the late Fifties (more)



Generations later Peter was remembered 'Peter Skirrow used to make tallow dips where Mr Thornbers warehouse is and it was of great interest to children to see the strands of wick being dipped into the melted fat and dried before another coat was put on. This would be in the late fifties The great difficulty was producing a flame and our grandparents had to use flint and steel. The lucifer match came here about 1820.' [ph2]

So, who was Peter Skirrow? Peter Skirrow was born in 1797 in Carnforth and came to live in Settle by 1828 to marry his wife Ellen Harrison who had four sons and a daughter. Peter's business was based in Castle Hill and he is included in the deeds of Rock House Cottage 'at the north side of the archway' [A]. He also had a shop in Kirkgate, renting from the Calvert family. William Lodge Paley's diaries suggest Peter

April 10.—Peter Skirrow walked with me to Austwick for the sale of late Mr. Scott's books and bo't 2 pieces of his penmanship in frames. Fear Mrs. S. will have little left as they say there is a deal of debt. Saw Mrs. Baxter, who

struggled with money. In the 1844 Tithe Survey Peter rented nine houses, cottages, stables, meadows and barns in Kirkgate, Castle Hill, in the Back Stables behind Cheapside and in Upper Settle which is quite ambitious. Perhaps Peter was stretched a little beyond his means. Peter had a lingering illness before his death in 1853 'advanced in years' aged just 57!^[1] and second son William, a plumber, died just over a year later, aged 23. Widow Ellen and third son Henry kept the business going [SC].

On Wednesday, the 23rd inst., after a lingering illness Mr Peter Skirrow, tallow chandler, Settle, advanced in years.

In 1861 Rock House was put up for sale after the death of *Stephen* and *Isabella Hargraves*. Henry Skirrow lived in front of the chandler's shop, near the residence of *James Handby*, *Joseph Jackson* and a pig yard. Pooh! Rock House was described as a suitable residence for a respectable family with five bedrooms, cellars and attics [SC].

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

ON WEDNESDAY, the 11th day of DECEMBER, next,
At the Lion Hotel, in Settle, at 6 o'clock in the evening,
subject to such conditions as will be then produced,

ALL THAT DESIRABLE

MESSAGE,

Or Dwelling-House, situate in Settle, in the County of York, called ROCK HOUSE, with the Yard, Garden, Outbuildings and appurtenances to the same belonging, as lately occupied by Mr. Stephen Hargraves, and afterwards by his widow, but now unoccupied, together with the STABLE adjoining, now in Mr. Jackson's occupation, the CHANDLER'S SHOP behind in Mr. Henry Skirrow's occupation, and the TWO COTTAGES adjoining, in the occupations of James Handby and James Ingham, and the PIG YARD and PIG COAT in the occupation of Richard Foster.

Rock House has been recently improved and embellished throughout, and is in an excellent state of repair, and suitable for the residence of a respectable family.

The House consists of an excellent Drawing and Dining Room, large Kitchen and Pantry on the ground floor, Cellars underneath, Five Bedrooms on the first floor, and excellent Attics above; and is within five minutes walk of the Church.

ELLEN SKIRROW & SON, TALLOW CHANDLERS, SETTLE.

E. Skirrow begs to return thanks for past favours during the long period of thirty years in which the business was conducted by her late husband, and to solicit a continuation of those favours, the business being now carried on by herself and Son, who hope by strict attention and a good article to merit a share of the public patronage and support.

Moulds and Rushlights always kept in Stock.

FIRE. - On Sunday morning, about seven o'clock, a fire was found to have broken out on the premises occupied by Messrs Skirrow and Son, tallow chandlers, in Back-lane, but for the timely discovery of which the consequences might have been very disastrous indeed to other buildings in the same street. As it was the damage done to stock-in-trade on the premises must amount at least to £100, and the building is supposed to have sustained about half that amount of damage. Both were insured in the Liverpool and London and Globe Office. The fire was first discovered by Mr. Stephen Dawson, who quickly roused the neighbours, and as there was fortunately plenty of water at hand, the fire was extinguished in the course of an hour or so. How it originated is a mystery, all having been left apparently safe when the premises were locked up on Saturday night.

Hill next to Rock House [1]. The fire was discovered by *Stephen Dawson* who was brother-in-law of *William Towler* who was the corn merchant who lived at Rock House at the time. Fortunately the property and contents were insured. Perhaps it was just an accident.

Ellen outlived Peter by nearly 20 years and daughter Ann died the year after Ellen, aged 33.

In memory of Peter Skirrow of Settle who died November 23rd 1853 aged 55 years. Also William son of the above who died January 15th 1855 aged 23. Also Ellen Skirrow wife of the above Peter Skirrow who died Augst 28th 1872 aged 71 years. Also of Ann Skirrow daughter of the above who died May 25th 1873 aged 33 years, Anc B14.



Daughter Ann had given birth to a son, *Henry*, when she was 20. More than one in five women were pregnant when they married but there was no marriage proposal to Ann from Henry's father. So Henry was brought up by Ann and grandmother Ellen. He found work on the railways as a clerk in Blackburn but then became the stationmaster at Newsholme and Paythorne near Gisburn. There he met *Mary Jane Parker*, originally from Long Preston, who was working a farm with her brother *George Parker*. Henry was 46 and Mary Jane was 43 when they married. After

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retiring Henry and Mary Jane moved to 'Cragfield' on Whelpstone Grove in Settle. Henry died, aged 64 and Mary Jane lived to the age of 90. They are buried together with Mary Jane's bachelor brother George in *Old K31*. George died in 1934, aged 72 but is not commemorated on the stone.



In loving remembrance of Henry Skirrow of Cragfield who died July 7th 1925, aged 64 years. Thy will be done. Also Margaret Jane the beloved wife of the above who died May 10th 1954, aged 90 years, Old K31.

Peter and Ellen's eldest son Robert enjoyed life on the railways as a stationmaster at Wennington, just beyond Bentham. After marrying Margaret Aldren Robert moved to Matlock, Derbyshire to work as a coal merchant. He also dabbled rather sloppily in the building trade in 1868 [2]. Robert had erected six cottages, five of which were occupied by 38 people, yes 38! However there was no water close or ash pit for any of them so waste was just thrown in the street. Lovely. Robert had also left mortar, stones and rubble on site and failed to remove them, despite formal notices. He was fined £10 and costs.

ult....Robert Skirrow, coal dealer, of Matlock, was summoned by Mr. Edward Jones, clerk to the Darley Local Board of Health, for erecting a house at Darley without sufficient accommodation.—John Wildgoose, surveyor and inspector to the Board, said the defendant had recently erected six cottages at Darley, five of which are now occupied by thirty-eight persons, and there is not a water-closet, petty, or ash-pit on the premises for their accommodation. All the ashes, rubbish, and refuse are thrown into the street. A quantity of mortar, stones, and other rubbish had been left in the street since the houses were built some six months ago. Notices had been served on the defendant to remove the nuisance, and provide the requisite accommodation, but he had not attended to them.—Fined £10 and costs.—Witness asked the Bench if

Peter's son Henry had the honour of being apprenticed to saddler James Waugh, father of Benjamin Waugh, the founder of the NSPCC. Henry took over his dad's tallow Chandler business. He was the chair of the Liberal Club in his latter years [6]. He married a shoemaker's daughter, Hannah Bowerbank, over 20 years younger than him and they had a daughter Jane Ellen who remained a spinster. Henry and Hannah are buried in *Old grave D29*.

LIBERAL CLUB—The annual meeting of this club was held at the Club yesterday evening week, Mr Henry Skirrow in the chair. There was only a moderate attendance. J. A. Farrer, Esq., J.P. was



In Loving Memory of Henry Skirrow died Aug 28th 1898 in his 65th year Also of Hannah his wife died May 26th 1909 in her 53rd year, Old D29

Youngest son Peter Bainbridge Skirrow began his working life in Settle as a draper's assistant. In 1854 he formed part of a cricket team although was bowled out for just five runs over two innings! [3C].

CRICKET.—The Members of the Settle Cricket Club, despairing of finding antagonists from any other town willing to play them, determined not to let the season slip without displaying their efficiency, and accordingly they determined to play a Match between two elevens of their own Club. On the 13th this Match came off, on their ground at Cammock. The Teetotal Brass Band, was in attendance, and two Tents, were erected on the ground. The day was a most favourable one. Below we give the score. Where all played well, it would be invidious to select, but we must not omit the batting of Messrs. Hayes and Armistead, who surpassed themselves.

When his father died, Peter travelled up to Sunderland which was developing into a thriving port. It was known for its shipbuilding but also exported two million tons of coal each year in the late 1800s. Peter continued to work as a draper. He married a girl from Cambridgeshire who died, and married another, Susanna Turner. They moved to Jarrow to bring up three daughters with Peter describing himself as a 'hatter and men's mercer' in Ellison Street in the centre of the town. Reports of his death [3], aged 51, and funeral [4] in 1887 suggest he died of a heart attack and was very well respected. His early death could have been linked to the use of mercury in his hatting business as mercury vapours are poisonous. Peter was an active Wesleyan Methodist and earlier in the day had been an instrumentalist at the Knight Street Wesleyan anniversary service.

FIRST INNINGS.		SECOND INNINGS.	
Allan Brown, not out	9	c. by Armistead, b. by Lister	16
H. C. Berkley, b. by Barnett	15	b. by R. Cowburn	10
John Cowburn, Jun., b. by Lister	0	b. by R. Cowburn	4
Joseph Birkbeck, b. R. Cowburn	2	b. by Lister	1
William Marriner, b. by Lister	3	b. by R. Cowburn	0
Matthew Whittam, b. by J. Lister	1	b. by R. Cowburn	0
Haynes Robinson, b. by Cowburn	0	c. by Tomlinson, b. by Lister	0
Thomas Bilton, b. by Lister	0	c. by Cowburn, b. by Cowburn	1
Tomlinson P., hit wicket	0	not out	6
Peter Skirrow, b. by Cowburn	0	b. by Cowburn	5
John Snell, b. Cowburn	0	b. by Cowburn	0
H. Robinson, b. Cowb, c. Copper	0	c. by Hodgson, b. by Lister	0
Byes	0		7
Wides	2		0
	37		30

FUNERAL OF THE LATE MR SKIRROW, JARROW.

The mortal remains of the late Peter Bainbridge Skirrow, general draper and hatter, Ormonde Street, Jarrow, who died suddenly on Sunday, at noon, under melancholy circumstances, were interred at the Jarrow Cemetery, yesterday. In the very large funeral procession were members of the Town Council and almost all the principal tradesmen in the town. Gentlemen belonging to South Shields, Hebburn, Howdon, Willington Quay and other places were present to show their respect for the deceased tradesman. The body was taken from the residence in Ellison Street to the Wesleyan Chapel, St. John's Terrace, where a short and appropriate service was held.

each other. Both were members of the Wesleyan Church in St. John's-terrace, Jarrow. They will be greatly missed by all who knew them, but by none more so than the struggling poor, who had warm and sympathetic friends in the two ladies. The loss is a severe one, and will be felt for a long time to come.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A JARROW TRADESMAN.

Mr Peter Bainbridge Skirrow, one of the principal Ormonde Street tradesmen at Jarrow, died suddenly at his house in Ellison Street shortly after noon yesterday. In the morning he was one of the instrumentalists at the Knight Street Wesleyan anniversary, and at the conclusion of the morning service went to his own home, along with Mr George Joplin, Percy Mann, who had preached the morning sermon. They entered the front room, and sitting down, prepared to have a short talk before dinner. Mr Skirrow then appeared to be in his usual health. He, however, fell suddenly backwards, and immediately became unconscious. Medical assistance was at once sought, and Dr Wilson was speedily in the room. Mr Skirrow, died, however, as that gentleman was crossing the threshold. Deceased leaves a widow and three daughters. He was a trustee of St. John's Wesleyan Chapel, and was widely known and much respected in the town and district. He was one of the oldest tradesmen, and for many years took a very great amount of interest in the affairs of the town.

Peter's wife, Susanna, died in 1910 and her death was also reported, along with that of a good friend of hers [5].



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. 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.

Life stories 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 settlerearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

Artwork by Teresa Gordon

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

ph1 – credited to the Back in Settle Facebook site, ph2 – with thanks to Giggleswick church archives

CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

A – with thanks to Jeanne Carr

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal, 3 – Shields Daily News, 4 – Shields Daily Gazette, 5 – Jarrow Express, 6 – Lancaster Guardian

SC – Settle Chronicle and William Lodge Paley's diary with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life

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