

John Slinger, a pauper with a gravestone?

John Slinger, born in 1816, was the eldest son of **John Slinger (Snr)** and his wife, **Margaret Lord**. John (Snr) died in 1820, aged just 29, when John (Jnr) was just four and was buried in Giggleswick churchyard. Margaret married again a year later. Her new husband was **Samuel Ralph** who described his occupation as a pauper/agricultural labourer. John (Snr) Slinger, Samuel Ralph and Margaret were all buried at Giggleswick church. John was a half-brother to the immensely successful blue flag merchant **William Ralph** who married his cousin **Mary Lord** — Settle families, huh?

John Slinger (Jnr) started his working life as a cotton weaver at Runley Bridge Mill. In December 1842 he got into a spot of trouble, OK, a riot with assault, at the Spread Eagle Inn with **Joseph Hudson** and **Joseph Hardacre** [1]. The landlord was

The following entered into recognizances to appear to receive judgment when called on—John Monk, weaver, Giggleswick; Joseph Hardacre, wheelwright, do.; Joseph Hudson, labourer, do.; and John Slinger, weaver, Settle, p. g. to rioting at Settle, and to assaulting Mr. Seed, the constable, in the discharge of his duty.

67 year old **Robert Atkinson**. John was let off and bound over to keep the peace. In 1845 he married a local lass **Mary Hargreaves** and they had ten children. By the 1851 census John was described as a 'pauper weaver' living in Upper Settle. Just like his parents, they would have lived hand to mouth. John liked fishing, a cheap hobby which helped to supplement a meagre diet. However, he drew the attention of the rather officious **Superintendent Cockshott** for poaching and fishing illegally on more than one occasion, this one in 1865 [SC]. In consequence of his large family Mr Cockshott decided not to press charges if John gave up his fishing tackle which he agreed to do. John died four years later, aged 53, when his youngest surviving son was just nine.

FISHING CASE.—John Slinger, of Settle, was charged with having on the 3rd ult., used fish roe for the purpose of catching fish in the river Ribble.—The defendant pleaded guilty, but said he was not aware he was doing wrong, the roe he used was trout roe, which he thought he could legally fish.—Mr. Superintendent Cockshott, who proved the charge, said the defendant was previously convicted for fishing on the 2nd June, 1858, but he (Mr. Cockshott) did not, in consequence of the defendant's large family, wish to press the present charge if the defendant would give up all his fishing tackle, nets, &c., to be destroyed, and this the defendant agreed to



Fortunately Mary survived for another nine years to bring the children up. They were buried and had an impressive and large memorial stone which is surprising for a pauper family.

In memory of John Slinger who died August 3rd 1869, aged 53 years. Also Mary wife of the above who died Nov 2nd 1878 aged 59 years. Also of Thomas their son who died Dec 2nd 1902. (Interred at Warton) Aged 53, Anc D16.

Unfortunately, six of John and Mary's ten children died in infancy or childhood. Three are buried in Giggleswick churchyard and three are in Settle graveyard, hopefully in John and Mary's plot. Of those that survived all but one moved away. Two sons worked on the railways at Carnforth and Warton.

In 1873 daughter **Harriet** married **David Plank** who was a railway labourer from Monmouthshire. David was the youngest of nine children and his whole family made a living from the railways. His father, **William Plank**, began life as a blacksmith but, at the time of each census from 1851, was found with his wife **Sarah Weston** living in a navvy hut, working as a labourer and then as a 'horsekeeper' for horses used on the railway construction, with Sarah providing board and lodging for other railway navvies alongside their family. The birth locations of their children indicate they moved around railway developments in Wiltshire, Glamorgan, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. At the time of the 1871 census they and their children were working as railway labourers, or were married to railway labourers in Lazonby and Armathwaite (both on the Settle-Carlisle line), Rochdale and Nottinghamshire. Eldest son **George** had emigrated to the States when he was 18.

Navvies were very well paid, compared to other working class occupations, but this came with risk as it was a dangerous occupation. In 1861 David's brother **Alfred Plank** became another statistic on the navy fatality list. The whole family were living in a 'sod hut' at Rowsley,

Settle Graveyard Project

Derbyshire. Alfred had been working with 17 other navvies to build a tunnel just beyond Haddon Hall, between Rowsley and Bakewell. Haddon Hall has a 500 acre estate, known as the ‘Medieval Park’, and a two acre 17th century garden. The tunnel was built underneath the grounds of Haddon Hall so that it didn’t disrupt the land owner’s view of his estate. ‘The boy Alfred’, was just 15 although reported to be 17 – perhaps he lied to get the job? He was driving a horse into the tunnel to the other workers when, for some reason the tunnel supports collapsed killing five of the men, including Alfred



and a horse. ‘The contractors had only just completed about twelve yards of the tunnel, about nine yards of which has fallen.’ They were ‘fearfully mutilated, their limbs broken in numerous parts’ [3]. A further report indicated that there was no engineering explanation for the collapse.

James Clark No. 36. Labourer on Railway killed at Haddon Tunnel P. Corate	Rowsley	July 21	J. Jones P. Corate
Alfred Plank No. 37. Labourer on Railway killed at Haddon Tunnel P. Corate	Rowsley	July 16	J. Jones P. Corate
Robert Halliday No. 38.	Rowsley	August 3	J. Jones P. Corate
John Bishop No. 39. killed on Railway	Rowsley	Sept. 22	J. Jones P. Corate
Thomas Jones No. 40. Labourer on Railway	Rowsley	October 15	J. Jones P. Corate

facts of the case are as follow :—A tunnel is being formed about 200 yards beyond the ancient Hall of Hadon, in Derbyshire, and between three and four o’clock on Tuesday afternoon about 17 men were at work in it, when the centres, upon which the stone arch had been formed, gave way, causing the massive stone-work to fall down into the tunnel, and burying under it several of the workmen. Four of the men were dead when taken out, and the fifth lingered until one o’clock on Wednesday morning. The

The workers were an experienced team, one of whom said, ‘I don’t know how it happened no more than the man in the moon’ [4] – not very reassuring. Alfred was buried at Rowsley with James Clark who died in the same accident. The burial records show the deaths of two more young railway labourers in subsequent months – a very dangerous job.

David Plank, also a railway labourer, will have met Harriet Slinger through working in Settle on the Settle to Carlisle railway. Once married, they lived in Twisleton’s Yard in Upper Settle with Harriet’s widowed mum Mary. Neighbours in Twisleton’s Yard had included **Joseph Uttley** and **William Henry Spencer**, both of whom were Settle navvies who died working on the railway in the early 1870s.

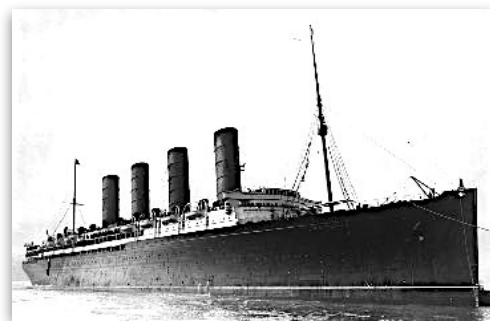
It was a rough life. In 1875 David upset a fellow navvy, John Duggan, by assaulting him in a railway truck at Willy Wood (now known as Willowwood) near Langcliffe. David said that ‘some larking was being carried on’. ‘The Bench, however, intimated that the larking indulged in was very dangerous’ and fined David 10 shillings plus 12 shillings costs [2]. John Duggan later appeared in court sessions for assault and selling alcohol without a license. However, in 1874 David made a name for himself as a successful bowler in a Settle v Ribblesdale navy cricket match and also reaching double figures for runs. By the time of the next census David and Harriet had moved to Warton, near Carnforth, where David worked as a railway goods guard and Harriet began the production of ten children.

appeared that some “larking” was being carried on with the complainant, but that there was no intention of injuring the complainant. The Bench, however, intimated that the “larking” indulged in was very dangerous, and ordered the defendant to pay a fine of 10s. and 12s. costs.

In 1913, with war looming and perhaps inspired by David’s brother George, most of the family emigrated to Toronto Canada [ph1]. In May 1915, Harriet booked a trip back to Lancaster (New York to Liverpool) to see her remaining children, travelling second class. The ship was called *The Lusitania* [ph5]. The Lusitania Resource website tells us: ‘Her son, Hargreaves Plank, residing in

Settle Graveyard Project

England was a disabled naval seaman, and was the first violinist at Loew's Winter Garden. He strongly advised his mother not to travel until the war was over.' The Lusitania sank on 5th May 1915 taking nearly 2000 people with it – just over 760 people survived. Amazingly Harriet was one of the survivors and gave an interview to the Lancaster Guardian which provides a fascinating account of the incident:



'Mrs. Harriet Plank is a good natured English grandmother whose opinions of the old country are refreshing after her life in Toronto for a couple of years. She was recovering from her shock (of the Lusitania sinking) at the home of her son-in-law, Mr. Weston, 19, Baker-street, Skerton. Mrs. Plank is the wife of Mr. David Plank, of 65, Silverthorn-avenue, Toronto, and formerly of 1, Lord-street, Skerton. He now holds the position of gateman on the Grand Trunk Railway. Several members of the family are on the other side of the Atlantic - four sons and three daughters - other branches are at Skerton. Mrs. Plank was paying a surprise visit to her married daughters in Baker-street and Myndon-street.

She left her Canadian home on Friday April 30th, for New York, and left the city in the Lusitania on May 1st. Her son saw her off, and there being rumours that the ship would be sunk, her son said "Mother, if they sink the ship you are on I will come and fight the Germans." He will have to come to the aid of the Canadian contingent.

Continuing her story the good lady said: We had a beautiful voyage till just after lunch on Friday. I was travelling second class, and after lunch I thought I would go and lie down awhile. I went down to my cabin, and just threw myself down thinking I would have an hour's sleep. Had I done so I should have been drowned. As it was the last day I altered my mind, and decided to go and have a last chat with some of the people on deck whose acquaintance I had made. I had just sat down when there came an awful crash. It shook the whole vessel. I picked up my coat, and just then a lady rushed past, with clothes all wet. I found I could not stand, but someone said the vessel would right herself, and I went back. I felt uneasy when the men began to lower the boats, as I did not like the idea of risking myself in one.

I made myself ready to go down with the vessel, as I could see nothing else for it. But a man shouted, "come along, mother," and that just fetched me, or else I don't think I should have stirred. The boat was hanging so far from the side I hardly dared to go. "Now, jump, mother," the sailor said, and so I jumped. I fell athwart the boat, and bruised myself, but I was lucky, after all. Not more than two or three minutes elapsed after the vessel was hit by the torpedo before I was in the boat. The vessel steadily sank, and before our boatmen began to pull away, our deck was awash, and portmanteaux, wraps, perambulators, and deck chairs were floating. Our boat was crammed full, but we picked up whom we could, and eventually came up with another boat in which were two men. One of them was completely naked, and was given clothes by different people to cover him. I was one of those transferred to the second boat. We still continued to hover about. Among those picked up was a gentleman first-class passenger who was pulled into the boat with his face towards me and laid on my lap. The gentleman had only just been pulled into the boat when he turned his glassy eyes upon me and passed away. He continued laid with his head on my lap till we came up with a fishing smack an hour later. Meanwhile other passengers, feeling the effect of exposure, imploringly asked, "Hit me, hit me hard," and others begged water.

A woman on coming round screamed, "Oh, I have lost my baby!" I knew she had, but could not tell her. From the fishing smack we were transferred to a steam trawler, and thence to a steamer which took us to Queenstown. I changed boats four times after leaving the Lusitania. It was 20 minutes past two when I was taken off the Lusitania, and half-past nine when I got into Queenstown wet and shivering. At Queenstown sailors and soldiers lent us their greatcoats and

escorted us to the hotel. There were lots of anxious inquiries at Queenstown. One little girl had lost father and mother, and began to cry. Another poor woman whose legs were black and blue had lost her husband. There was a man with one arm broken and one leg.

I sent a telegram to Skerton from Queenstown to tell them I was safe. "We had just received the letter telling us she was coming when we heard the boat had gone down," added her daughter. "My brother, Hargreaves, went to Liverpool to meet her, but she came via Chester from Holyhead."

Mrs. Plank reached Lancaster at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Asked when she was going back, she replied: "I do not think ever. That trip will be enough for me. The golden West has lost its glamour for many more besides myself. There are thousands out of work in Toronto and other places."

Tragically, at the end of July, Harriet had to undergo an

Mrs. Harriet Plank, a Lancaster lady who was rescued from the Lusitania, has died from an operation which the doctors feared would prove fatal owing to the shock she had already experienced. She was about to return to Canada.

operation 'which the doctors feared would prove fatal owing to the shock she had already experienced' and, indeed, it was. [5].

A newspaper article back in Canada got her death date wrong, a whole month late indicating the problems with transatlantic communication at that time [ph4].

Harriet was buried in Skerton, north of Lancaster and is commemorated with a fine memorial stone. David is also remembered on that stone but spent the rest of his life in Michigan USA, living to the fine age of 90, dying on 18 November 1943 and was buried on 22nd.

In remembrance of Harriet Plank, the beloved wife of David Plank, of Toronto who died July 31st 1915, aged 61 years. Also of David Plank, beloved husband of the above who entered into abby Nov 22nd 1943, aged 90, at Drayton Plains, Michigan, USA.



During the war son Hargreaves (named after his maternal grandmother) served with the Heavy Armoured Mechanical Transport, Royal Army Service Corps but died of pneumonia in France in 8 November 1918, leaving a widow Ada and a son Charles David. Ada ran the Post Office in Handley, south of Chester for the rest of her life.

Meanwhile John and Mary Slinger's daughter Margaret stayed in Settle and married Thomas Bulcock who became gamekeeper to Charles Swale, the grandson of the first vicar of Holy Ascension who lived at Ingfield Lodge and was a Trustee at Holy Ascension Church. Margaret and Thomas' daughter Mary Jane showed her support by compiling a recipe book to raise money for the Church Organ Fund in 1912. Mary Jane was obviously an excellent cook – in 1909 she won a silver medal at the Food and Cookery Exhibition in London [LSA].

4. Miss Bulcock, of Ingfield Lodge, Settle, obtained a silver medal for chocolate bon-bons and other sweets, at the Food and Cookery Exhibition held at London.

"LUSITANIA" SURVIVOR DEAD

Mrs. Harriet Plank, Former Resident of Silverthorn Avenue. SILVERTHORN, Sept. 21.—Following an operation at the home of her sister in Lancaster, Eng. Mrs. Harriet Plank, late of 69 Silverthorn avenue, and a survivor of the Lusitania disaster, died on August 31. Notification to that effect has been received by Mr. Plank, and his daughter, Mrs. Bailey. The late Mrs. Plank leaves a family of eight, five sons and three daughters, three of whom are in the United States, two in Canada, and three in England. Deceased was 61 years of age, and had been in Canada two years.



"Settle Church Organ Fund."



鳴謝

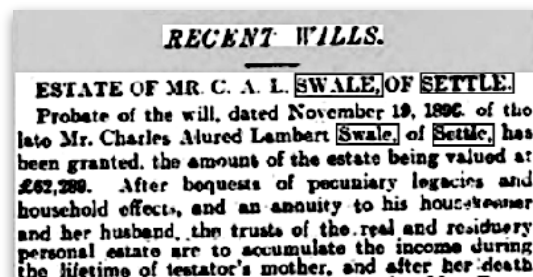
Miss Bulcock presents her compliments and very best thanks to all the Ladies and Gentlemen who have in any way assisted her in compiling this little Cookery Book, also for their good wishes for its success. . . .

She trusts the recipes will be found useful. . . .

Dec, 1912

Ingfield Lodge, Settle.

Mary Jane, centre front [ph2], was the captain of the women's cricket team put together for a one-off match against tradesmen. Charles Swale was the umpire, left and dad Thomas is on the right. Mary Jane's dog takes centre stage! When she was 49, Mary



Jane became the second wife of **Fred Harrison**, a brewer in Leeds. Margaret and Thomas' son **Thomas Bulcock** became a printer and worked in Lancaster.

Charles Swale died under tragic circumstances and Thomas Bulcock was the unlucky man who discovered his body. Charles left an annuity to Margaret and Thomas [6], some of which may have paid for John and Mary's gravestone. Thomas died six months after Charles. Margaret spent the rest of her life residing in East View, Settle with her daughter Mary Jane. Thomas and Margaret are buried in *Old grave G14*.



In loving memory of Thomas Bulcock of Ingfield Lodge died April 20th 1914 aged 61 years. Also of Margaret his wife died July 15th 1933 aged 76 years, Old G14



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](http://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'. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

This account uses information from the Lusitania Resource Website, with thanks

Newspaper cutting with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Bradford Observer, 2 – Lancaster Gazette, 3 – Western Morning News, 4 – Derby Mercury, 5 – Birmingham Gazette, 6 – Yorkshire Post

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

ph1 – photo credited to the descendants of Harriet Plank on ancestry.co.uk, username JonesKingsley, ph2 – photo with the kind permission of Jeanne Carr, ph4 – Operation Picture Me, via findagrave.com, ph5 – credited to Wikipedia