

The tragic tale of the Stewarts

It all started so well. We begin way back with **Robert Cundall**, born in 1771 from the wonderfully named village Nun Monkton, west of York. In 1796, he married **Ann Simpson** from Menwith Hill, just west of Harrogate and now an RAF base. They married in Ripley near Harrogate and, very soon afterwards, they set up house in Shaw Mills where they had ten children. Shaw Mills is an interesting little village within the Bishop Thornton Parish. It was constructed and named, unimaginatively, after **Thomas** and **William Shaw** who established the local mill in the 17th century. There were only around 500 people in 19th century village. By then the mills worked with silk and village had four shops, a Post Office and an Inn called the Nelson's Arms which also sold milk through the hatch before bottles invented. The Nelsons Arms, at the end of the road, [ph1,4] was built in the mid 18th century as the village expanded. It's likely the inn was renamed to acknowledge Horatio Nelson after the Napoleonic wars. It finally closed in 1994 and is now a listed building.



We know Robert and Ann Cundall ran the Nelson's Arms as soon as they married and it became a family concern for generations. Descendants have found evidence that, in 1798, Robert repaired the letters over the door of Burnt Yates School, which was half a mile south of Shaw Mills. In 1800 Robert supplied ale to Burnt Yates School trustees. Robert would have farmed alongside running the inn and Ann had her hands full bringing up the children.

Robert died in 1816, aged just 45 when their youngest child, son **John Cundall**, was just three. Despite a houseful of children to look after Ann continued to run the inn which was also the ideal place to hold auctions [1] and coroners' inquests. Newspaper reports suggest Ann ran the inn until 1829 which was the same year that her eldest daughter, 32 year old **Mary Cundall**, married 52 year old **George Hutchinson**. George was just three years younger than his mother-in-law Ann! They wasted no time in having six children and it seems they took over the Nelson's Arms when they married. Ann went to live with her youngest son, John Cundall until she died in 1848, aged 74.

SHAW MILLS NEAR RIPLEY.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Mr. THOMAS ROBINSON, Jun., at the House of
Mrs. Ann Cundall, the Sign of the Nelson's
Arms, at Shaw Mills, in the Township of Bishop
Thornton, in the Parish of Ripon, in the County
of York, on Tuesday, the 17th Day of March,
1829, between the Hours of 4 and 5 in the After-
noon, in Lots, and subject to such Conditions as
shall be then produced (unless previously disposed
of by Private Contract, of which due Notice will
be given)

Unfortunately George and Mary's memorial stone [ph2] in All Saints churchyard in Ripley describes that three of their sons died as infants. Mary died in 1845, aged 47 and George followed in 1846, aged 68. The inscription includes a typical early 19th century celebration of their passing into the hands of Jesus and, as man of the house, put George's name before Mary's even though she died before him.

In memory of Bryan, son of George and Mary Hutchinson of Shaw Mills who died Oct 11th 1832 aged 2 years. Also John, their son who died in his infancy. Our lovely babes is early blessed secur'd from all impending harms, why should we mourn. They be now at rest for ever, safe in Jesus' arms. Likewise Peter their son who died Dec 28th 1834, aged 13 months. Also the above named George Hutchinson who died April 8th 1846, aged 68 years. Also Mary, wife of the above who died Sep 21st 1845, aged 47 years.

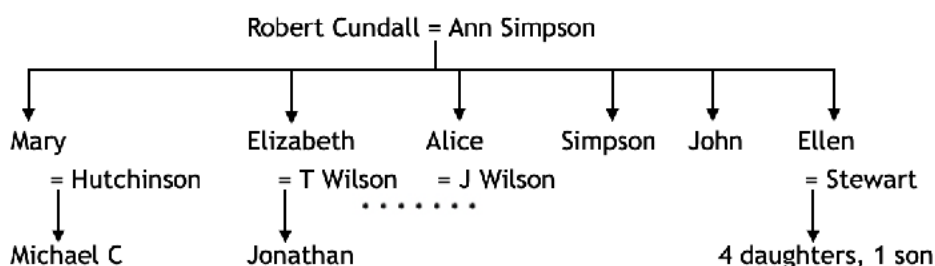


One of their remaining sons, **Benjamin Hutchinson**, who had been brought up by aunts and uncles after his parents died, passed away aged 24 but son **Michael Cundall Hutchinson** [ph3], a tailor, with piercing eyes and a stunning beard, lived to the ripe old age of 95!



What had happened to the Nelson's Arms? It appears that, by 1847 it was being run by **John Cundall**, Robert and Ann's youngest son [ph4] perhaps with his aged mother joining him.

The Stewarts



Two of Robert and Ann Cundall's daughters married brothers. Second daughter **Elizabeth Cundall** married **Thomas Wilson** and youngest daughter **Alice Cundall** married **John Wilson**. The Wilsons were born in Pateley Bridge where their father, **Roger Wilson**, was a stonemason. Unfortunately Roger died in 1810, around the time of John's birth so their mother, **Jenny Hardcastle** brought the family to Shaw Mill where her elder children found work in the mill. John secured an apprenticeship as a millwright and then married Alice [ph5] in Knaresborough in 1835. They remained in Knaresborough to began their family of eight children. In 1841, the family was living on a narrow lane under the castle rock, right by the River Nidd and close to the Castle Mill. Later they moved to Hull where John [centre below, ph6] became an engine fitter. John would have known Hull as raw flax was imported via Hull en route to Shaw Mills. They worshipped in the Primitive Methodist faith.



Meanwhile John's brother **Thomas Wilson** had married Alice's sister **Elizabeth Cundall** in 1831, at Ripon Cathedral. Thomas was a cordwainer (shoemaker) and lived a couple of doors down from the Nelson's Arms. At some point between 1847 and 1851 Thomas and Elizabeth took over the tenancy of the Nelson's Arms, still continuing the cordwaining business, and started their family of five children. Thomas died in 1878 and son **Jonathan Wilson**, [right, ph4] who had never left home despite marrying and having his own family, was ideally placed to continue the tenancy, probably alongside mum Elizabeth until she died in 1888. Jonathan also worked as a cordwainer between customers. Jonathan's only child, **Alfred Wilson** became a postman and so Jonathan's death in 1905 marked the end of this family's tenancy of the Nelson's Arms, spanning over a century.

What happened to Robert and Ann Cundall's other children? Youngest son **John Cundall**, who had obviously decided that running an inn was not for him, spent the rest of his life working as an agricultural labourer and lived at Pateley Bridge with his family. Robert and Ann Cundall's son **Simpson Cundall**, a great name, had itchy feet and a wanderlust! By 1830 he lived in Chester and was working as a stonemason when he married **Ann Lewis**. Within two years Simpson and Ann emigrated to Illinois in the United States where Simpson made a living as a farmer and they had six children.

Robert and Ann Cundall's daughter **Ellen Cundall, Nelly**, brings our interest to Settle. In 1835 Nelly married **Thomas Stewart**, the son of a Knaresborough flax weaver and they came straight to Settle. This was probably so that Thomas could begin a post as a servant for **Betty Lund** at Stackhouse Hall. By the time of the 1861 Thomas was a butler and the family were living at Ashfield on Duke Street which was **Thomas Birkbeck's** residence. Thomas Birkbeck, a magistrate, JP and banker, was living in his Devon residence with his wife, children and several servants, some of whom had travelled with him from Settle, including widow **Susannah Forrester**. These were both highly respected posts and Thomas must have been a good employee. In return he will have earned a respectable salary and respect from the community. Thomas Birkbeck died in 1863 and the Stewarts moved to live at Rose Cottage at the junction of Bond Street and Station Road with Thomas earning a living from farming. He won numerous awards at the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Show for his pigs, fruit and veg. Rose cottage had been part of the Ashfield estate, also owned by the Birkbecks, but the newly constructed Settle to Carlisle Railway bisected the Ashfield grounds. The Stewarts stayed at Rose Cottage for the rest of their lives.

Thomas and Nelly had four daughters and a son but were predeceased by three of the daughters and their son, **George Stewart**, who was just five when he died in 1849. The cause of death of all the daughters was phthisis, tuberculosis. The first to die, on 18 June 1866, was third daughter **Martha Stewart**, aged 24 [ph8], who had been suffering from phthisis for 18 months. Her death was registered by **Elizabeth Towler** who was in attendance at Martha's death. Reviewing all the possible Elizabeth Towlers in Settle at that time it's possible that this was 26 year old **Eliza Towler** who lived just round the corner



Miss M Stuart, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

Brighton June 1866 Rose Cottage Settle	Martha Stewart	Female 24 years	Daughter of Thomas Stewart Farmer	Phthisis Pulmonalis 18 months continued	The mark of Elizabeth Towler In Attendance Settle
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on New Road (now Station Road). Eliza's widowed mother, **Sophia (Wainwright Towler)**, brought her four daughters to Settle to run a Methodist school for girls after the death of her husband, a missionary, **William Towler**, who had died in the West Indies. Eliza Towler had a tragic end to her life too. Within one week in October 1885 Eliza and two of her sisters died of lung related diseases. Martha's life is remembered on her's parents' memorial stone (with an incorrect date) and she also has her own stone.

Martha's death was followed by that of second daughter **Maria Stewart** [ph8]. In 1861 she worked as a 'nurse' for the second vicar of Settle Church, **Rev William Pierson** who, at that time, had a toddler **John Ernest Pierson** at the parsonage, just round the corner on Station Road. Maria died in on 26 August 1870, aged 30. Martha and Maria had photos taken at the Horner studios not long before they died. Suffering from tuberculosis they will have



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

known they were dying. They certainly bear a resemblance to aunt Alice (Cundall) Wilson.

Daughter Thomas and Nelly's eldest daughter **Annie Eliza Stewart** advertised her dressmaking business in 1862 [SC], from New Road but died on 30 May

A. E. STEWART,
DRESSMAKER,
Begg to offer her sincere thanks to the ladies who have given her their patronage since commencing the above business, and to assure her employers that it shall be her diligent effort to execute all orders entrusted to her in such a manner as to gain their approval and continued favour.
New Road, Settle, October 31st, 1862.

Settle Graveyard Project

1871, aged 34. She had been suffering from tuberculosis for six months — the girls probably infected each other. Poor mum Nelly died four years later on 14 December 1876, aged 67 followed by Thomas on 9 February 1884, aged 83.

Youngest daughter **Eleanor Stewart** was left by herself after both her parents and all of her siblings had died. So, in her late thirties, perhaps inspired by uncle Simpson Cundall, Eleanor emigrated to Canada. There, aged 40, she met married Scot **Samuel Jamison**. Unfortunately she died 2 years later, perhaps with issues related to childbirth. Somehow, someone organised the inscription of her name on her parents' stone.

Maria Stewart, Born Sept 29th 1849, died August 6th 1870, B22

In memory of George Stewart born November 15th 1843, died Nov 12th 1849, Annie Eliza Stewart born Sep 6th 1836 died May 30th 1871, Martha Stewart died June 18th 1865, Maria Stewart died August 26th 1870, B21

B20 In memory of Nelly Stewart died 14th December 1876 aged 67 years. Also of Thomas Stewart husband of the above who died February 9th 1885 aged 73 years. Also of Eleanor daughter of the above died at Collingwood Ontario Jan 15th 1890 At Rest, B20

Martha Stewart, Born Novbr 30th 1841, Died June 18th 1866, B18



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'.

Information and some photos for this account are from descendants via via Ancestry.co.uk, username JMRo4

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Yorkshire Gazette

ph1 – credited to the Facebook page 'You know when you're a Harrogonian when . . . ', submitted by Ian McGregor, ph2 – credited to findagrave.com, ph3 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username LindaHarper24, ph4 – username jmw42_1, ph5 – username David Price, ph6 – username daveroy36, ph7 – username JMRo4, ph8 – Image 2022.1.68.7 and Image 2022.1.68.19/20 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life.



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