

John Turner, a hatter and property investor

Settle has had a market charter since 1249. In the 19th century, believe it or not, Settle markets were well known for their hat trade, with **John Turner** doing his fair share of business. John Turner, born in 1805, was the only child of **William Turner** and his wife **Elizabeth Blackburn**. Elizabeth died when John was just three, possibly with issues related to childbirth, and dad brought him up alone. William and son John were both hatters and ran their business from a shop in the Market Place just at the bottom of Constitution Hill, on the site of the current Coop Store [ph1]. They also owned and rented out the cottages in **Turner's Yard** behind the shop fronts of the Market Place.



In 1835, John married **Betsy Wilman**, the girl next door, and they had five children. Betsy was the illegitimate daughter of **Margaret Wilman**, who ran a lodging house at the lower roofed **Jessamine Cottage**, with her spinster sister **Mary Wilman**. They provided comfortable lodgings for several well-to-do residents including surgeon **Edward Harrison** and solicitor **George Dudgeon-Hartley**. John and Betsy had five children over the next ten years. The Wilmans were well known in Settle as butchers and as innkeepers, of the **Black Bull** (on the site of the bike shop) **Joiner's Arms** (on the site of Wholesome Bee) and the **Talbot Arms**.

John Turner died, aged just 47, after four days of the horrendous condition called haematomesis – vomiting blood. **John Lister** was the registrar and **Elizabeth Houghton** was present at his

Twenty second December 1852 Settle	John Turner	Male 47 years	Hatter	Haematomesis 4 days Certified	The Messrs. of Elizabeth Houghton Present at the death Settle	Twenty fourth December 1852	John Lister Registrar
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death. Elizabeth (Monkhouse) Houghton was a 66 year old carpenter's widow who lived in Upper Settle making a living as a nurse. The expression 'mad as a hatter' is based on fact – the mercury vapours produced in hat manufacture were poisonous and caused many a premature end of life, possibly including John's.



In memory of John Turner who died Decr 22nd 1852 aged 47 years. For here have we no continuing city. Betsy beloved wife of the above who died Jan'y 11th 1901 aged 87 years. He giveth his beloved sleep, C14.

Betsy sold off the hatting business in 1854 [SC] and let out the house and shop to raise a bit of income. The advert tells us their house had 'a parlour, kitchen, scullery with hard and soft water(!), 2 good cellars, 5 lodging rooms and a good garden behind'. Betsy helped her mum run the lodging house business next door. They must have run it well as they had the luxury of a servant at the time of each census return. Betsy outlived her husband by 49 years and died with an estate worth £50,000 today. Well done Betsy! Their properties were eventually sold off to the Graham grocery business, based further along the row.

HATS, CAPS, &c.
MRS. TURNER, MARKET PLACE, SETTLE,
 Begs to announce that she has commenced
SELLING OFF
 THE WHOLE OF HER
STOCK - IN - TRADE,
 Comprising Silk and Stuff HATS, CAPS, and Umbrellas.
ALSO, TO BE LET,
THE DWELLING HOUSE AND SHOP,
 With or without the Workshops.
 The House contains front Parlour, Kitchen, Scullery with hard and soft water, 2 good Cellars, and 5 Lodging Rooms; there is also a good Garden behind.
 To be entered upon at Martinmas.
 For particulars apply to **MRS. TURNER.**

(An unrelated *Robert Turner* ran a hatting business in the market square during the 1890s – see *Johnson*)

John and Betsy's youngest son **Joseph Turner** went to Giggleswick School and then worked as a 'druggist' – chemist. He married **Hannah Wetherell**, the daughter of *Thomas Wetherell*, the innkeeper of the Golden Lion – the paper got it wrong! [1]

Giggleswick.—Recently, at the Parish Church, by the Rev. T. Mc.Intyre, Mr. Joseph Turner, chemist and druggist, Settle, to Miss Hannah Wetherell, third daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Wetherell, of the Red Lion Hotel, Settle.

THE QUEEN'S RINK.
DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW BUILDING.

There were several very strong women in the Wetherell family. Joseph learnt Thomas' trade. They moved to Keighley with their five children and Joseph worked as an innkeeper and auctioneer. Joseph and Hannah's eldest son, **Fred Wetherell Turner**, became an architect, celebrated in Hartlepool. One of his proudest achievements could have been the Queen's Rink which opened 1909. At this time roller skating was popular – who knew that?! Up to 2000 people could skate in the rink with 3000 spectators! *'For some considerable time it has naturally attracted considerable attention, and as a building it promises to be one of the features of the town'*. After the war, during which troops were billeted there, it became a garage and was later reopened in 1932 for skating and boxing and was converted into a dance hall in 1940 [ph2]. It closed in 1968, 30 years after Fred's death and was demolished some years later. Not bad for the son of innkeepers!

in the country. A skater will naturally ask, "What will be the skating surface?" The answer is at once forthcoming: 25,000 feet. The length of the building is 300 feet, and it is 100 feet wide. Whilst any number between 1,000 and 2,000 people can skate comfortably, there is also splendid accommodation for 3,000 spectators. It is impossible almost to convey in words what the magnitude of the building is. For some time past it has naturally attracted considerable attention, and as a building it promises to be one of the features of the town. The idea of erect-



John and Betsy's eldest daughter, **Elizabeth Turner**, was the first child to be baptised in the new Holy Ascension Church on 4th November 1838. Elizabeth took the plunge and went to find work in Manchester where she met **Joseph Taylor**, a hotel proprietor. They married, back in Settle and their witnesses included the family lodger, *Dr Edward Harrison*. A few generations later, one of Elizabeth's descendants came back to spend his last years in Settle. John and Betsy's daughter, **Margaret Turner**, married a grocer, **James Bentham** and they brought up their family in Lancashire.

John and Betsy's son, **William Turner**, died when he was just 29 [3]. He had been working as the cook on board a sailing ship 'Celerity', (possibly 'Celebrity'?) but fell into the dock in Port Talbot when returning on board. It's quite possible he couldn't swim. William was buried at Taibach, in the east of Port Talbot. It's unlikely his mother would have received word of his death by then, never mind having time to get to his funeral. This was just two years after Betsy's mother's death. Poor Betsy.

PORT TALBOT—Nov. 24. On Monday night last **William Turner**, a native of Settle, Yorkshire, cook on board the schooner *Celerity*, of London, whilst returning on board fell into the dock and was drowned. His body was picked up next morning, and was buried on Thursday afternoon in the churchyard near Taibach.



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.

Settle Graveyard Project

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 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.

With thanks to Rodney Hooper, a descendant for his help with the compilation of this account.

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, submitted by John Hodgson, ph2 – credited to stanlaundon.com

SC – Settle Chronicle, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust

Newspaper cutting with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Hartlepool Daily Mail, 3 – Liverpool Shipping Telegraph and Daily Commercial Advertiser