

Mark Beresford, a notorious man

Mark was a farmer born in 1798 in Langstrothdale. By 1827 he was in Horton in Ribblesdale and married Jennie Mitton - for better or worse, richer or poorer . . .

Jenny fulfilled her wifely duty and gave Mark five children, so Mark had to earn the income. By 1851, Mark had taken over Mearbeck Farm on the road to Long Preston which was a good sized farm. However he also found himself featuring in numerous newspaper reports showing that he lost a good chunk of his hard earned cash in alcohol and court fees. It started in 1851 with the assault of James Ellison, a bookbinder who rented his property from Mark [1]. Mark was fined 40 shillings plus costs. After that, he regularly appeared in court for being drunk and disorderly and 'profane swearing' [1, 2]. Over time the reports became ever more despairing about his habits.

ASSAULTS.—At the Court-house on Tuesday last, before Thomas Clapham and William Robinson, Esqrs., James Ellison, of Settle, bookbinder, charged **Mark Beresford**, of the township of Long Preston, farmer, (who was defended by Mr. Cowburn,) with assaulting and beating him, the complainant, on the 6th instant. From the evidence adduced it appeared that the defendant, on that day, met the complainant and his mother at the Crown Inn, in Settle, for the purpose of paying them some rent. The defendant paid the rent, and pressed for a return of a payment which he had made in respect of tithes, and which he considered he ought not to pay. Complainant gave him 4s., which the defendant very quickly returned by throwing it at complainant. The latter thereupon stooped to pick up the money, and in doing so was struck by the defendant with his stick, who also seized the complainant by the throat. The defendant was fined 40s. and costs, and in default of payment was ordered to be committed to Wakefield House of Correction for a month. It was understood that the fine and costs would be paid.—John

defendant cheerfully paid.—**Mark Beresford** was again charged with the two offences so habitual to him—drunkenness and profane swearing. To the charge of being drunk (Mr. Berkeley, who appeared for Beresford) on defendant's behalf pleaded guilty. The other charge was proved by Mr. Wilkinson, the constable, and was uncontradicted, the defendant producing no witnesses, and having himself been so full of beer, as to have no recollection of the blasphemous language he had uttered. For being drunk he had to pay the usual fine of 5s., and for swearing 2s., including costs in both cases, making a total of £1 1s.—The unfortu-

costs —*Profane Swearing*—Mr. **Mark Beresford**, who has become notorious for his drinking propensities, was charged with profanely cursing and swearing in the public streets of Settle. The old charge of drunkenness was one with which he is quite familiar, and he has often been fined for that offence, but he has not always paid the penalty, and there has been no alternative, but sitting in the stocks for it. It was therefore on this occasion determined to bring him on the charge of profane swearing—a habit which he always indulges in, whenever he gets drunk—so that he might be committed to the House of Correction, in default of payment of the fine inflicted. He was convicted in the penalty of 20s., and costs, and if not paid within a week, he was to be sent to Wakefield for 10 days. A month or two there should we think really do him good, and nobody would be the worse for it.—*Proposed addition of another*

SETTLE.

PROFANE SWEARING.—For this offence, **Mark Beresford**, who apparently loses all control over himself when he gets a sup of beer, was fined 2s. and costs: total 10s. 6d.

Drunk again.—**Mark Beresford**, who has, nobody knows how many times, had to pay for his favorite indulgence, was again fined 5s. and costs, for being drunk on the showfield on the occasion of the last meeting of the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Society.

Mark died in 1858 aged 60, and the long suffering Jenny died in 1860.

Mark and Jenny's daughter Barbara married into the Ayrton family, and ran several inns in Clitheroe. Son Peter also got into a few scrapes before he died in the workhouse aged 58 — he's buried at Giggleswick.



Settle Graveyard Project

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

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