

Accidental deaths, 1872, in chronological order

Henry Caswell, labourer, died March 1872

Henry, born in 1843 in Powick, between Worcester and Malvern. He was the seventh out of nine children of **William Caswell**, a shoemaker and his wife **Mary Anne Pride**. Mary Anne died after the birth of a daughter Elizabeth who also died a few weeks later. Henry was just six. William continued to work and bring up the family.

At the time of the 1861 census Henry was working as a labourer in Malvern. In 1867 William married **Mary Ann Whiting**, a labourer's daughter from Norfolk. They married in London. William described his occupation as an excavator which made him a valuable asset for building railways.

At the time of the 1871 census they were found in Smethwick in the Black Country. Henry worked as a platelayer. They had an 11 month old son called **George Henry Caswell**. They were in Settle by March 1872. He died on 7th March 1872, aged 28, from 'injuries received from a wagon laden with earth accidentally passing over him on the new Settle to Carlisle Line'. An inquest was held the following day.

When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
Settle March 1872	Henry Caswell	Male	28 years	labourer	Died from injuries received from a wagon laden with earth accidentally passing over him on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway	Information received from Mr. T. Brown, Deputy Coroner for Yorkshire Inquest held 8 th March 1872	March 1872	Wm. Cowburn Registrar

The report of the inquest avoided giving too many gruesome details as they had been given the previous week [1]. That edition explained that Henry had been working at the number 1 cutting in Settle, the Anley cutting. This cutting was long and deep and tons of 'very hard grit' were excavated for use on other parts of the railway. Henry was 'accidentally killed by four loaded wagons passing over

INQUEST.—An inquest was held on Saturday last at Settle, before Mr. Thomas P. Brown, deputy coroner, on the body of Henry Caswell, railway labourer, particulars of whose death was given in our last Saturday's issue. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased's death was caused from injuries received from a waggon laden with earth accidentally passing over him, on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway.

FATAL ACCIDENT.—A laborer employed in the construction of the Settle and Carlisle Railway whilst at work in the No. 1 Cutting, at Settle, on Thursday, was accidentally killed by four loaded waggons passing over him. As soon as the accident was discovered the man was conveyed to the hospital close by, where, on examination it was found his thigh was badly smashed, and it was deemed necessary to amputate the injured limb, which was accordingly done. The poor fellow did not, however, long survive the operation. Information has been given to the coroner, who, it is expected, will shortly hold an inquest.



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him'. 'As soon as the accident was discovered', with no indication of how long that took, Henry was taken to the hospital close by and his thigh was amputated. Henry didn't survive the operation. It was probably widow Mary Ann who put a death notice in the paper. Henry is buried in an unmarked grave in the Ancient graveyard.

Settle.—On the 7th inst., Mr. Henry Caswell, railway laborer, aged 28 years.

By 1875 Mary Ann had moved to Wakefield and married Henry Peaker, a miner and they had at least four more children. In 1884 son George Henry Caswell was baptised again, this time as George Robert Peaker. He retained the name Peaker for the rest of his life and worked as a miner with a family of his own.

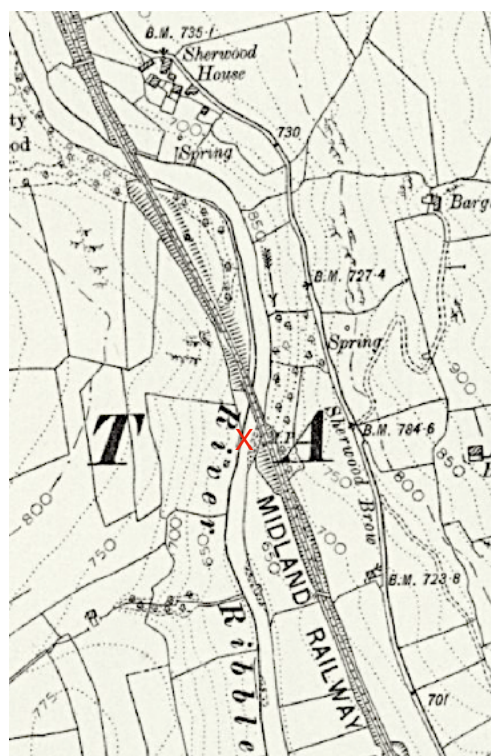


William Peacock, labourer, died April 1872

William, born in 1846 in the centre of St Albans, was the fourth son of James Peacock, a gardener and his first wife Louisa Brown who died at the time of William's birth. William was brought up by his stepmother Hannah Brown, unrelated to Louisa. Two older brothers had died in infancy. His brother Joseph worked as a bricklayer's labourer in St Albans.

William, now a labourer, had arrived in Settle by 1872. He died on 23 April 1872, aged 25, 'accidentally killed by a crane falling on him and knocking him off a bridge into the River Ribble'.

No.	When Died	Name and Surname	Sex	Age	Rank or Profession	Cause of Death	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar
328	Twenty third April 1872 Settle	William Peacock	Male	25 years	labourer	Accidentally killed by a crane falling and knocking him off a bridge into the River Ribble	Information received from Thomas Parkmen Brown Deputy Coroner for Yorkshire Inquest held 25 April 1872	Twenty 3rd April 1872	John Robinson Registrar



The report of the Coroner's inquest [2] explained that William was working with others lowering some timber with a crane at the bridge at Sherwood Brow, Stainforth. The railway crosses the river at two points at Sherwood Brow, quite an engineering challenge. The bridge 'near Stainforth' is marked. As the chains around the timber were loosened, the crane overturned and fell into the River Ribble, taking William with it. William was the only unlucky casualty. Incredibly in this case, there were no recommendations about health and safety.

William is buried in an unmarked grave in the Ancient graveyard.

An accident, which terminated fatally to a man named William Peacock, employed on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway, happened on Tuesday. The deceased, along with others, was on the bridge at Sherwood Brow, near Stainforth, engaged in lowering some timber. Whilst the chain was being loosed from the timber the crane overturned and fell into the river below, taking with it the man Peacock and another. The rest of the men succeeded in getting clear of the crane before it fell. Peacock was found much crushed, and was at once conveyed to the hospital, where he died the same night. The other man was not much injured. Deceased was 25 years of age, and a native of St. Albans.

Thomas Burton, railway labourer, died June 1872

Unfortunately, we know very little about the life of Thomas Burton, except that he had reached the age of 36 when he died. With such a common name, we have no idea where he came from, nor whether he was married. As there was a coroner's inquest upon his particularly unpleasant death, the informant for his death was the coroner so the death certificate doesn't provide any clues as to his address or potential relatives.

No.	When Died	Name and Surname	Sex	Age	Rank or Profession	Cause of Death	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar
355	18th June 1872 Settle	Thomas Burton	Male	36 years	Labourer	Accidentally crushed and mortally injured between two wagons bound 3 days	Information received from Thomas Brown Coroner for Yorkshire Inquest held by him 18/7/72	June 1872	John C. Brown Registrar

However, the newspaper report of coroners' inquest gives more details of his death. The inquest was held at the Commercial Hotel which was on the site currently occupied by the Wholesome Bee in Settle. The inquest took place the day after Thomas' death.

Thomas died on 18th June 1872, aged 36. He was an employee of the 'new Settle and Carlisle railway' working at number seven cutting at 'Elworth bridge', now known as Helwith Bridge. Even the inn was known as the 'Elworth Bridge Inn' in those days. The actual bridge at Helwith Bridge was completely rebuilt to allow room for the railway underneath. Thomas was probably living in the 'Elworth Bridge' navy huts. Thomas hid behind some wagons to protect himself when a blast went off, unaware that a train was approaching and so was crushed between the wagons. He survived for three agonising days [2].

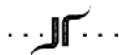
FATAL ACCIDENT.—An accident happened on Saturday last, to a man named Thomas Burton, an employee on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway. The accident occurred at number seven cutting at Elworth Bridge, near to Settle. It appeared Burton had got behind some earth wagons to protect himself whilst a blast was being let off, and about the same time an engine with wagons attached came up, and before the poor fellow was aware of his dangerous position, he was jammed between the wagons and sadly crushed. He was immediately conveyed to the Hospital, but with very little hope that he would survive, he lingered, however, until Tuesday last, when he died. An inquest was held on Wednesday at the Commercial Hotel, Settle, before Mr Brown, coroner, when a verdict to the effect that the deceased accidentally met with his death under the above circumstances was returned. The jury, sitting in the above inquest resolved to send the following recommendation to the directors of the Midland Railway Company:—"The body of Thomas Burton, 26 hours after death being in an advanced state of decomposition, the effluvia offensive and sickening to the jury, cannot but be detrimental to the health of the patients confined in the Hospital, and to the Master and matron of the establishment, and during the hot weather is likely to be a prolific source of disease in the locality; and the jury therefore urgently recommend the erection of a dead house detached from the Hospital as a means of remedying the present unsatisfactory state of things.



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In a telling insight into conditions, medical procedure and health and safety in 1872, the report concluded, *'The body of Thomas Burton, 26 hours after death being in an advanced state of decomposition, the effluvia offensive and sickening to the jury, cannot but be detrimental to the health of the patients confined in the Hospital, and the master and matron of the establishment, and during the hot weather is likely to be a prolific source of disease in the locality; and the jury therefore urgently recommended the erection of a dead house detached from the hospital as a means of remedying the present unsatisfactory state of things'*.

Thomas is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Ancient Graveyard.

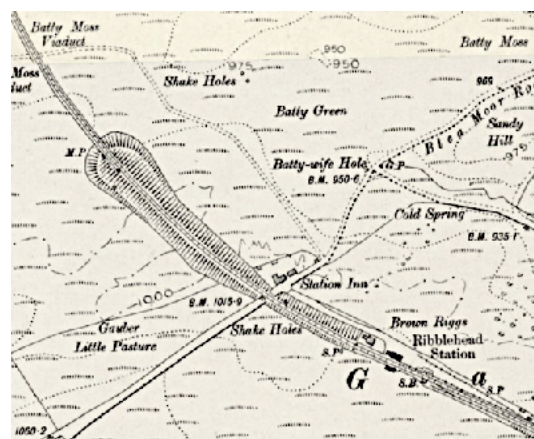


John Jones, stoker, died July 1872

John's search for work on the railways led to his death when he was just 17. He had been working as an engine stoker at Batty Wife, feeding coal into the engines getting supplies to the railway building project.

It's possible that at the time of the 1871 census, John was a lodger with fellow navy Thomas Cooper at the house of Herbert Hastings Sturdy in Chapel Square. However, John Jones was a very common name.

John died on 27 July 1872, aged 17, after falling off his engine and injuring his arm and thigh [1]. *'He was conveyed the same night to the hospital in Settle'* which is quite a trek even today, never mind with broken bones and no pain relief. An inquest was held into his death, also at the Commercial Hotel in Settle. The verdict of *'accidentally killed by falling from a railway engine'* was returned [1].



INQUEST. - An inquest was held on Monday last, at the Commercial Hotel, before Mr. J. P. Brown, Deputy Coroner, respecting the death of John Jones, a young man, aged 17 years, who at the time of the accident was employed as a stoker, at Batty Wife, near Ingleton, on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway. The deceased met with his accident on Saturday last. Whilst in the act of doing something in connection with his engine he fell off, coming in contact with the abutment on the side, causing injuries to his arm and thigh. He was conveyed the same night to the hospital at Settle, but died shortly afterwards. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased was accidentally killed by falling from a railway engine.

When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
Locality Settle July 1872 Settle.	John Jones	Male	17 years	Stoker on a Railway Engine	Accidentally killed by falling from a Railway Engine	Information received from Thomas Parkinson Deputy Coroner for Yorkshire Inquest held 29 July 1872	Thirty first July 1872	John Corbridge Registrar

In memory of John Jones of Ingleton Fells who died on the 27th of July 1872, Aged 17 years. "Affliction seized my dear son and snatched him from my sight, but Jesus took him to his breast and claimed him as his right", A1



John's gravestone inscription suggests that his mother arranged for the gravestone. Unfortunately, with no other information and a name as common as John Jones we don't know anything else about the poor boy.



Abraham Cooling, carpenter, died August 1872

Abraham was born in 1841 in Southwell, near Newark, Nottinghamshire, the youngest of eight children of **George Cooling** and **Elizabeth Blatts**. George Cooling was, along with many Nottinghamshire men, a framework knitter, producing tights and stockings which were sold across the country.

Abraham began his working life as an agricultural labourer in Winkburn, not too far from Southwell. In 1863 he married **Sarah Sellers** (no relation to navy Richard Cartmell's mother) from Tideswell in Derbyshire. By the time of the 1871 census they lived in the south of Mansfield with three young children. Abraham worked as carpenter, a great skill for finding work on the railway.

Within the year the family had moved to Settle. Abraham died on 21 August 1872, aged 33, with '*mortal injuries from a piece of timber accidentally falling on his head*' [1]. Abraham survived one hour. The coroner held an inquest two days later.

SETTLE.
FATAL ACCIDENT.—Abraham Colling, a carpenter employed on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway, was accidentally killed on the 21st instant by a piece of timber falling upon his head. An inquest was held on the 23d inst. before Mr. T. Brown, coroner, when a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
Twenty first August 1872 Settle	Abraham Colling	Male	33 years	Carpenter	Mortal injuries from a piece of timber accidentally falling upon his head & caused one hour.	Information received from Thomas Brown, Coroner for Yorkshire. Inquest held 23 August 1872	Twenty first August 1872	John Cowburn Registrar

Meanwhile Sarah gave birth to a daughter **Mary Jane** who was baptised in Settle on 1 September 1872, 'father deceased'. Did Abraham ever see his daughter? Did his death prompt her arrival? We shall never know. Abraham was buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Ancient graveyard

Sarah took her four children to Oldham where they stayed for the rest of their lives. Youngest daughter Mary Jane married **Samuel Bottomly Worrell**, a labourer, but died soon afterwards, presumably due to childbirth complications.

Abraham and his family were named 'Cooling' on all documentation apart from his death – perhaps a regional accent issue.



William Potterton, railway labourer, died December 1872

William was born in 1843 in Timberland, a small market town in rural Lincolnshire. He was the third of eight children of **Frank Potterton** and **Mary Green**. As with just about all other working men in the area, Frank was an agricultural labourer. William's brothers all became agricultural labourers in Lincolnshire and his sisters married agricultural labourers in Lincolnshire. For some reason, William was tempted away to work on the railways.

William died on 6 December 1872, aged 29, in 'Settle' suffering from pyaemia after a compound fracture of the right leg. Pyaemia is a type of sepsis infection causing abscesses and, in those days before antibiotics, was almost always fatal. Despite a compound fracture of right leg there

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was no inquest into his death so we don't know whether his accident was related to work on the railway.

No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
418	Settle December 1871 Settle	William Potterton	Male	29 years	Railway labourer	Compound fracture of right leg by accident injected	X Mr. Monk of Peter Day Present at the death Settle	Settle December 1871	Richardson Registrar

William's death was registered by **Peter Day**, another railway labourer. Peter and his wife **Lucy Randall** were from Cambridgeshire but spent their lives moving around the country to work. Peter had previously worked in Barnsley as an 'excavator'. At the time of the 1871 census they lived in one of the five navy hosts at Runley Bridge looking after six other railway labourers who were from Norfolk, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Dorset and Derbyshire. So it's probable that William worked with Peter or even boarded with him. Someone put a death notice in the paper for Mr William Potterton [1].

Settle.—On the 6th inst, Mr. William Potterton, railway laborer, aged 29 years.

William is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Ancient graveyard.



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'.

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

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Yorkshire Post