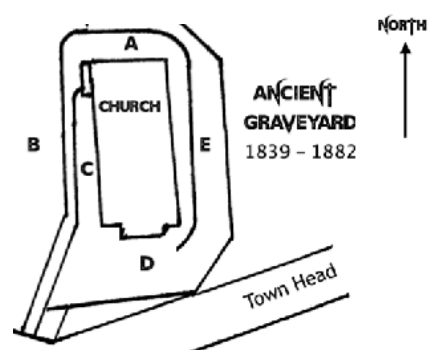


## Rev'd William Frederick Pierson, the second vicar

Despite his wealthy background, the first vicar of the church, *Rev'd Hogarth Swale*, ran the church along simple lines. In contrast, his successor Reverend Pierson preferred a bit of ceremony. He donated the very ornate font: *'William Frederick Pierson and Margaret Pierson dedicate this font to the glory of God'*. Originally this was at the back of the church to welcome infants into the church when baptised, however it was moved forward when space at the back was required for church functions. A plaque at the back of the church explains William was responsible for setting up the endowment fund to eliminate pew rents.



William also had opinions about graveyard burials. Due to the limited size of the plot on which the church was built, the altar was at the south end rather than at the traditional east. It was felt that a second coming of Christ would be from the east and so gravestones traditionally faced east, except those of vicars which tended to face west so that they would face their parishioners, space permitting. As the church was built north south, that presented a dilemma for the direction of gravestone erection. The gravestones in the Ancient graveyard area B and E faced the church. Those in area C look out over the path to the church. There are only two gravestones in area A, one facing east, one facing west. In area D graves face both east and west. Gravestones erected during the ministry of Reverend Swale faced east, including the stone of the Rev'd Swale himself. For some reason, once William became incumbent, gravestones were erected to face west except for those of his family which faced east. Most graves in the Old and New graveyard face east.



William was born in 1821 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. By 1848 he had moved to Holy Ascension. In 1850 he married *Margaret Birkbeck* and lived with her family at Anley. They had two daughters and three sons. In 1856, the new Vicarage on Station Road was completed for them to live in – William had contributed a quarter of the cost [SC]. Along with his brother-in-law *John Birkbeck* and predecessor *Reverend Swale*, William was a Trustee of the Craven Savings Bank.

William had a bad mood one day in 1876. He refused to bury the infant daughter of Mr and Mrs Burton who lived at Giggleswick Station because she had not been baptised and so she was buried at the Zion church [ph1]. There are no birth or death records for the infant but she is likely to be the daughter of **William Burton**, a corn dealer and **Mary Ann Pierson** (no relation) who lived in Clapham at the time of the following census return.

SETTLE PARSONAGE.			
THE following Subscriptions have been already received towards the purchase of a site, and building of a Parsonage House for this town. The amount subscribed is still below the estimated cost, and further subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Churchwardens, Mr. Richard Greenwood, and Mr. Thomas Stackhouse, or at the Craven Bank.			
	£		£
The Craven Bank . . . . .	100	Miss Robinson . . . . .	10
Wm. Robinson, Esq. . . . .	100	Rev. J. Robinson . . . . .	10
John Birkbeck, Esq. . . . .	100	Miss Bolland . . . . .	10
Rev. W. F. Pierson . . . . .	200	S. Hargraves, Esq. . . . .	10
Miss Lambert . . . . .	50	Mrs. Henlock, Ousburn . . . . .	10
John Preston, Esq. . . . .	40	F. Dawson, Esq. . . . .	10
Thomas Birkbeck, Esq. . . . .	30	Rev. H. Dawson . . . . .	10
Thomas Clapham, Esq. . . . .	25	A. Stackhouse, Esq., (Stainforth) . . . . .	10
Miss Dawson . . . . .	20	Anonymous . . . . .	5
George Hartley, Esq. . . . .	20	Mr. Geo. Wilkinson . . . . .	1
Wm. Robinson, Junior, Esq. . . . .	20	Rev. E. Procter . . . . .	1

*The infant daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Burton, old Station, was interred at Zion Chapel, Feb. 11, 1876. Christian burial had been refused at the Parish Church, the child not having been baptised.*

William died in 1883, after 35 years' service. A brass lectern was dedicated to his memory. Wife Margaret had died in 1871, aged 46, and was buried with their son *John Ernest*, aged 53, after a distinguished military career, most appropriate for a family of this standing [1]. John Ernest 'saw service in Egypt in 1882 and was with the Nile Expedition in 1884-5. He was Adjutant (senior administrative officer) of the 1st Royal Sussex Brigade and Major in the 3rd Brigade at Aldershot. He was also a JP for the Worthing Division.' He was brought back to Settle from Worthing for burial. Their daughter *Mary Emily* had her own gravestone. She was just two and a half days old.

Major John Ernest Pierson died at Worthing on Saturday, aged 54. He saw service in Egypt in 1882, and was with the Nile Expedition in 1884-5. He was Adjutant of the 1st Royal Sussex Brigade and Major in the 3rd Brigade at Aldershot. He was also a J.P. for the Worthing Division.

**E26 William Frederick Pierson priest, interred into rest August 18 1883. Vicar of Settle 1848 - 1883. Faithful until death**

**E27 Margaret Pierson died Feb 27 1871. Rest in the Lord. And her son John Ernest Pierson Late major of the Royal Sussex Regiment, died at Worthing May 18 1912. Then are they glad because they are at rest**

**E28 Mary Emily Pierson, July 2nd 1853 X**



Daughter *Lucy Margaret* married a vicar, *Henry John Bulkeley*. Henry had been the vicar at Giggleswick church and his efforts in establishing the Giggleswick reading room were appreciated by *David Taylor* and other Giggleswick folk in 1872 [1]. Henry and Lucy had six children in Morpeth. Son *William Birkbeck Pierson* also became a vicar, but met a sudden death aged 52 [2].

**CLERGYMAN'S SUDDEN DEATH.**  
A FORMER CREWE VICAR.  
The Rev. William Birkbeck Pierson, Vicar of Rothwell, died suddenly yesterday while attending a meeting of the Leeds Day School Association. The business had just about concluded when the rev. gentleman was noticed to be breathing rather heavily. He at once collapsed, and lost consciousness, expiring within five minutes. Mr. Pierson, who was fifty-one years of age, was from about 1862 for eight years curate at the Leeds Parish Church, after which he was appointed to the living of St. Barnabas's, Crewe, where he remained for nearly five years. In 1884 he was appointed to Rothwell, and for the past two years had acted as Rural Dean of Whitkirk. He was an excellent preacher, was possessed of remarkable powers of organisation, and had taken great interest in education. At the inquest held at night a verdict of "death from apoplexy" was returned.

"Normandy Maid." The entertainment, which was in every respect a successful one, was fittingly wound up by Mr. David Taylor, one of the most active supporters of the Reading-room, who in very creditable original rhymes told the story of the room from its commencement, paying a high compliment both to the former secretary and originator, the Rev. H. J. Bulkeley, and to his worthy successor, Mr. Brewin, and also thanking on behalf of the committee the numerous ladies and gentlemen who by music, lectures, and readings had contributed so much to their enjoyment and to the funds

So far, all very respectable.

However, not all children follow their father's footsteps and youngest son *Alfred Graeme Pierson* certainly didn't. It's quite hard being the youngest child of a successful, respectable family isn't it? It's quite possible that Alfred's misdemeanours could have contributed to his father's demise.

Born on 7 March 1862, Alfred had a good education at Giggleswick School and went to Cambridge, but the school register tells us that an accident to one of his eyes prevented him from finishing his degree. This cruel twist of fate must have been frustrating for Alfred and may account for some of his later behaviours.

Pierson, Alfred Graeme (Town). Son of Rev. W. F. Pierson, The Vicarage, Settle. Left Christmas, 1874. Went to Cambridge, but an accident to one of his eyes prevented his going in for a degree. Died at Botches, Sussex, on the 15th March, 1896.

Alfred lived in London, describing himself as a 'gentleman of no occupation'. When he was 25,

he married **Beatrice Lonsdale Bing**. She was a stage singer with the stage name of **Minnie Palmerstone**. Minnie specialised in acting and burlesque dancing, singing and comedy and performed all over the country to rave reviews [3].

**Minnie Palmerston,**  
Burlesque Actress. Speciality Dancer.  
Disengaged. Pantomime, Principal Boy or  
Girl. Address, 108, Holly Street, Dalston.

Five years later, after finding letters delivered to her in several names, Alfred discovered she was already married at least twice before, and both husbands were still alive. She had married **James Bardsley** in 1878 and then **Charles Couzens** in 1882, much to the amusement of the journalists [4]. Alfred's dad, Rev'd William Frederick Pierson, who had died in 1883, would be quite justified in turning in his grave.

The marriage was annulled. Beatrice, or Minnie, provided completely different details on each of the three wedding certificates so we have no idea who she really was, but she carried on performing until her death of typhoid in 1904 [3].

**W. CROSS.—Miss Minnie Palmerston, a well-known variety artist of her day, died on November 1, 1904. She was taken ill with typhoid fever, and died within a few days.**

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER

### A WOMAN WITH THREE HUSBANDS.

In the Divorce Division, yesterday—before Justice Butt—two suits for nullity of marriage were heard in

heard. Mr. Deane appeared for the petitioner, Mr. Alfred Green Pierson, who, he said, was married to the respondent on September 9, 1885, she being the same respondent as in the previous case. The petitioner asked for a decree of nullity of his marriage with Beatrice Lonsdale Bing, otherwise Couzens, otherwise Bardsley, on the ground that at the time of the marriage she had husbands living of the name of Bardsley and Couzens. Mr. Pierson made the acquaintance of the respondent at Boulogne in 1884. She was then engaged as a public singer at a public entertainment, under the name of Minnie Palmerston. His Lordship: She had a good many names one way or the other. (Laughter.) Mr. Deane said she informed his client that she was well connected, and that she had run away from home and adopted the musical profession as a means of livelihood. So far as he could tell she was a person of perfect propriety, and her behaviour all that could be desired. Eventually he married her at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. Since the

Two years after the annulment, Alfred married **Lucia Kathleen D'Esterre**. Lucia was the daughter of Henry Vassall D'Esterre and Mary Elisabeth Sandes from Sixmilebridge, Limerick in Ireland. The D'Esterres were a Huguenot family who had arrived in Ireland in the late 17th century. They were granted 3000 acres of land, and made their fortune as French Protestants renting out land to the Catholic working classes during a tumultuous period of Irish history. Henry had a shocking reputation as a landlord. There are numerous newspaper reports of unrealistically high rents, evictions and local protests.

One report said, *“As seen throughout this study the D'Esterre family was never far from controversy within Sixmilebridge. Far from investing in the local economy and supporting their tenants, they chose to do the opposite. From when the family first arrived and built Rossmanagher Bridge and basically cut all nautical traffic to Sixmilebridge and killed trading just so the family could benefit themselves with extra traffic through their lands despite the consequences for the village. The D'Esterre family further blackened their name in Sixmilebridge when making headlines over the eviction of the Frost family in 1887 which was heard across the county for all the wrong reasons and to this day when the D'Esterre name is mentioned it is still remembered for all the wrong reasons without many positives if any at all.”*

The private life of Lucia's parents was also fraught. In 1884 Mary took Henry to court to force him to pay maintenance as part of a deed of separation. Ironically, to avoid social embarrassment, Mary had requested this as an alternative to divorce. Her social standing must have been very important to her but it all came out in the end. The divorce claim would have been on the basis of Henry's *‘criminal misconduct’* and also because of bringing their 13 year

This is an action instituted by Mrs D'Esterre, of Rossmanagher, county Clare, against her husband and another, to have the trusts of a certain deed of separation, dated 30th May, 1876, carried out. By the deed in question, it was provided that Mr D'Esterre should pay his wife and annuity of £500, and £100 a year for the maintenance of their daughter; and the statement of claim alleged that there was due on foot of that £250 and £200, respectively.

old son into 'evil associations' [5]. Mary spent the rest of her life living in a selection of fine English hotels.

So this was the background of Alfred's second wife Lucia. They had plenty to share with each other. What would Reverend Pierson have thought? Did they live happily ever after? Sadly not. Lucia

managed to have a son and a daughter before Alfred died, aged just 34, in Sussex. Lucia spent the rest of her life in Dublin with her children and servants, of course.

writing or otherwise, to do so. She explained that in 1870 she instituted a suit in the Divorce Court against her husband on account of his criminal misconduct, and, through the influence of friends, litigation was stopped, and the deed of May 30th, 1876, was executed. In April, 1877, she was obliged to file a bill in the Court of Chancery for an account of the moneys due under the deed, and in 1882, having discovered that her husband was bringing their son, then in his thirteenth year, into evil associations, she took steps to have him made a ward of court.



*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](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk), 'settle graveyard project'. The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto: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*

*SC – Settle Chronicle, ph1 – with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Manchester Courier, 3 – The Era, 4 – Hull Daily Mail, 5 – Dublin Daily Express*