

## The Twisletons

The Twisletons are found in Giggleswick Parish records back to the 16th century, probably originating in the Ingleton area. The history and photos of the Twisletons are provided by the North Craven Heritage Trust and on [twisleton.co.uk](http://twisleton.co.uk) amongst others. The Twisletons in Settle graveyard all descend from **Robert Twisleton**, born in 1753 and his wife **Isabel Carr**.

### James Twisleton

Robert's son **James Twisleton** was born in 1787 in Stainforth. In November 1828 he married 35 year old **Mary Lofthouse**, most likely a widow from Cold Cotes near Ingleton, the daughter of **Thomas Ellison**. The diaries of **William Lodge Paley** suggest this was the third attempt at marrying [WLP]. Banns had previously been read in November 1826 and in July 1827. This wedding was by license, possibly to remove the three week window for one of them to change their minds.

Pim with him. I engaged Thos. Ellison to take 85 after mill loosed—chiefly Old Moore's to Stainforth. Was glad he was sober tho' his daughter Lofthouse was married to-day to James Twisleton, wh: should have been twice before.

James and Mary settled in Settle and had three children – **James (Jnr)**, **Alice** and little **Mary Isabella** who died in infancy and is buried in Giggleswick graveyard. Initially James described himself as a butcher but by 1861 was a '*proprietor of houses*' having been responsible for the development of Twisleton's Yard on Albert Hill, having bought the land in 1832. James ran the May Pole sports in Upper Settle in 1857 [SC].

Daughter **Alice**, born in 1829, found herself pregnant at the age of 16 and gave birth to son **Gregory**, a good Twisleton family name. **Alice** died in 1851, aged 21, and **Gregory** died nine years later, aged 13. They are buried in the unmarked *grave CX7* in the Ancient graveyard. **James** died in 1861, aged 74, and **Mary** died in 1876, aged 80 and are probably buried with **Alice** and **Gregory**. It's surprising a gravestone was not erected by son **James** – he should have been able to afford it, but had other distractions.

**James (Jnr)**, born in 1825, went to Giggleswick School and helpfully inherited his dad's business sense – he was described as an 'accountant' in the census at the age of 15. He was actually a clerk at **Geldard's** solicitors and, incredibly, worked there for over 50 years! **James** contributed to life in Settle as secretary for the newly formed Co-op in 1864 [4], taking over from **William Moorby**. He was also secretary to the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Association for over 20 years and treasurer for Settle Conservative club.

Meanwhile **Annie Amy Sanderson** was born in 1834 in Bolton-by-Bowland to grocer, labourer and innkeeper **John Sanderson**. In 1853 she married a salesman **Robert Hamilton** who died just after the birth of their son, another **Robert**. **Annie** came to Settle where her dad **John** had bought her the licence for **The Naked Man Inn** and so she became the landlady. It was here that she caught the eye of **James Twisleton (Jnr)** and they married in 1859 [6].

On the 31st ultimo, at the Ascension Church, Settle, by the Rev. W. F. Pearson, vicar, Mr. James Twisleton, lord clerk in the office of C. J. Geldard, Esq., to Mrs. Ambleton, landlady of the Naked Man Inn, Settle.

After their wedding, the license for the Naked Man was transferred to **James**. However, they put on a tea party and dance for **Hector Christie's** employees in 1861 and '*all passed off pleasantly*' [6]. In contrast **James** and **Annie Amy** had the usual problems with drunk and disorderlies. On this occasion in 1862 [4] the offenders included **David Threlfall** and **Luke Ralph**, nephew to the blacksmith **Luke Ralph** who were both fined after a brawl in the dancing room.

SETTLE.  
PETTY SESSIONS, JUNE 24.—(Before Mr. C. Ingleby and Mr. R. W. Wathman.)—David Threlfall, of Giggleswick, and Luke Ralph, of Settle, were summoned at the instance of police-constable Lindsay for being drunk and refusing to quit the house of Mr. J. Twisleton, the landlord of the Naked Man Inn, Settle, on the night of Whit-Tuesday. Thomas Taylor, of Giggleswick, and Thomas Taylor, of Settle, were also charged by the same officer with obstructing him in the execution of his duty at the same place and time. It appeared from the police-constable's statement that there was fighting going on in the dancing room, and that the parties were conducting themselves so singularly that the landlord had had to call in his assistance to get rid of them, and that whilst doing so both of the Taylor's interfered with him. They denied this, and called a witness, who gave evidence tending rather to corroborate the policeman's statement than assist them in disproving the charge. The defendants, Threlfall and Ralph, admitted that they were drunk, but denied that they refused to leave the premises. The bench inflicted fines varying from 6d. to 1s. 6d. in each case with costs.—Henry Res-

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James still worked as a solicitor's clerk and one has to wonder how well James was able to reconcile these two roles? James and Annie had their four children in the next five years which takes some doing. So far so good. A couple of reminiscences in the *Craven Herald* suggest that James 'Twizzy' was a boisterous but genial and caring man, if a little gullible.

Old Mary Wilson, too, was one of the best known of Settle characters of that period. She lived by begging, and a good living she made. If she visited any of the houses of those who were in the habit of helping her and she found them out she would often sit down on their door steps awaiting their return. She lived in a small house the property of a well-known lawyer's clerk named James Twisleton, himself quite one of the characters of the town. Now old Mary could not be prevailed upon to pay her rent and was so far in arrears that her landlord decided to apply for an ejectment order and so get rid of her as notices to quit were of no use at all. On Monday he attended the Magistrates' Court to apply for the order; old Mary put in her appearance to oppose it. After the landlord had stated his

old fool in my life." He, however, obtained an order but old Mary withstood it for a long time, keeping her door always locked except when she slipped out on her begging expeditions. In the end, however, she was obliged to settle down in the Workhouse on account of old age and other infirmities. I think her old landlord felt he would only bring further ridicule upon himself if he took steps to carry out the order.

and takes snuff intemperately?; or James Twisleton ("Twizzy"), the lawyer's clerk, boisterous but genial always?; Mary Wilson,

Many people will remember Mr. James Twisleton, commonly known as "Spinney," and how one Sunday he went along the beck in the Ings with a friend.

Seeing a trout hide in the wall he prostrated himself and put his hand in saying "I can just touch his tail but if you'll sit on my feet I may reach further and get it." This was done when suddenly the poacher sang out, "By Jove, he's gone." "Eh! where?" says the watcher jumping up, but before a reply could be obtained Spinney had rolled into the beck in his Sunday best, as his friend had forgotten the law of leverage.

This may have caused a few problems for the seemingly vivacious Annie. Unfortunately, James and Annie were living apart at the time of the next two census returns – James lived with his widowed mum and a son or two in Settle, Annie was in Surrey with another son and near her brother **Robert William Sanderson**, a 'government clerk for the Crown Agents for the Colonies'. Perhaps he knew **John Lambert** who also secured a post with them?

Reports from the early 1870s indicated that all was not well between James and Annie[4]. James was taken to court twice for refusing to pay Annie's rent and expenses. They had separated and James had commenced divorce proceedings against her. Despite this James 'was in the habit of meeting her at her house and cohabited with her'. The divorce went no further at this point.

amount from his assignees.—*Harrison v. Twisleton*.— This was an action brought by the plaintiff, a tailor and draper, at Settle, against Mr. James Twisleton, of the same place, Attorney's Clerk, for £3 16s. for goods supplied to defendant's wife and children. At the time a portion of the goods were supplied it appeared the defendant's wife and children were living apart from him, who allowed her £1 per week for maintenance, but he was in the habit of meeting her at her house, and cohabited with her. His Honour gave a verdict for £1 16s. 6d., being the value of the goods supplied during this cohabitation, disallowing the remainder of the plaintiff's claim. Mr. Robinson appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr. Vant for the defendant.

Around this time James was the corresponding secretary of the 'honourable order of druids', a social and benevolent society with a motto of 'Justice, Philanthropy and Brotherly Love'. In 1874, at a public dinner and ball at the White Horse, James was presented with a handsome gold locket in acknowledgement of his valuable services over the past year [4]. Perhaps they were aware things were not good for James at home? James' thanked them with 'his well known felicitous expression' – quite a character.

In 1884, from Surrey, Annie took James to the divorce courts on the grounds that he 'hath refused and still refuses to render her conjugal rights' – clearly he wasn't doing his fair share of washing up. The divorce courts could be used as an extreme measure to force a spouse to accept conjugal demands, although it was almost always initiated by the man. James and Annie couldn't live together, yet couldn't live apart – in the next census in 1891, they were back together in Settle, but apart again by 1901.

In February 1902 Settle Rural District Council issued James with a 'Notice to provide Privy' [ph2], formally warning James that the eight houses he rented to residents in Upper Settle were 'without sufficient water closet and ash pit accommodation'. He was given 28 days to install 'water closets with separate service or flushing cisterns and three ashpits furnished with proper doors and coverings.'

That the said James Twisleton without any just cause whatsoever hath refused and still refuses to render to your Petitioner her conjugal rights.

Local Government Act, 1894.

§ 5 & 57 (1894), c. 71.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875.

§ 8 & 39 (1875), c. 55 & 36.

Notice to provide Privy, &c.

Form 30a.



### Notice.

To: James Twisleton of High Road, Settle,  
the Owner (and occupier) of dwellinghouses situate in  
Twisleton's Wood, Settle  
in the Rural District of Settle, and occupying

This was really the last thing that James needed and we have no idea if they were completed as he died three months later June 1902, aged 79, living in the very modest Well Hill, having been ill for some months. His obituary mentioned that he had been the secretary of the district branch of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows for many years, for which he had been presented with a gold watch and chain. He had also organised an Oddfellows Ball for 'upwards of 80', at the Joiner's Arms, in a very 'spirited' manner. He was '*probably the most versatile and authentic living narrator of life in Settle as presented 709 years ago.*' [7]

James' properties were sold. Jabez Dugdale ran the auction at the Conservative Club Assembly Room. He sold six cottages in Church Street in Giggleswick to Dr *Charles William Buck* for £355. A cottage and the common lodging house in Upper Settle were sold to *James Foster*, butcher for £321. The 12 cottages in Twisleton's Yard were sold to *John Moore* for £295. A cottage with warehouse, gig-house and stable adjoining Twisleton's yard was sold to *John Bell*, the joiner, for £92. This generated £1263 [7]. James' probate documentation lists an estate of some £7117, worth nearly £1 million today's value. Wow.

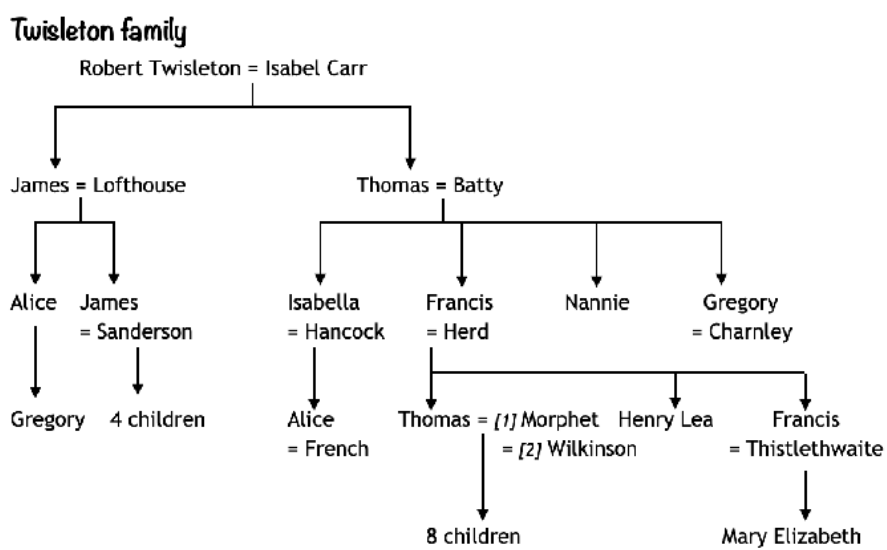
**DEATH OF MR. JAMES TWISLETON.**—On Tuesday morning last, at his residence at Well Hill, Settle, Mr. James Twisleton passed away at the ripe age of 78 years. He had been in failing health for some months. During his long life he was for upwards of fifty years managing clerk, first under the late Mr. C. Geldard, solicitor, Settle, and afterwards, when the firm became Messrs. Geldard and Charlesworth. Mr. Twisleton retired soon after the firm joined with Skipton, and formed what is now known as Messrs. Charlesworth and Co. Although content not to aspire to a higher legal position than that of a solicitor's confidential clerk, it is understood that his shrewd business capabilities have resulted in the accumulation of a large fortune. Deceased was for many years secretary of the district branch of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, and in the year 1868, in recognition of his services he was presented at Gisburn Park with a gold watch and chain. For upwards of 20 years he held the position of secretary of the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Society, and was also for several years treasurer for the Settle and District Conservative Club. The deceased was probably the most versatile and authentic living narrator of the life of Settle as presented seventy years ago. He leaves a widow, and two sons and a daughter to lament his loss. The interment takes place at Ascension Church, Settle, on Saturday afternoon.

Annie died in 1905, aged 72 in Kent but was remembered on James' stone. James is buried in *Old E66*. Despite all this, James and Annie's children had successful lives in military and professional careers in the South of England.

*In affectionate memory of James Twisleton who died on the 18th day of June 1902 aged 79 years and of Amy his wife who died on the 6th day of May 1905 aged 72 years, and is interred in Plumstead Cemetery, Kent, Old E66*

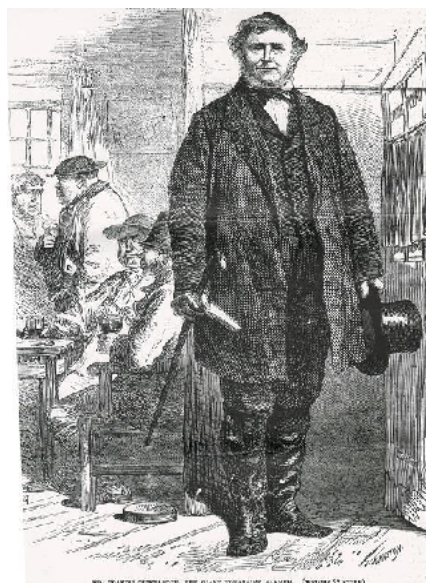


James Twisleton (Snr) had a brother Thomas Twisleton . . . .



## Francis Twisleton

James Twisleton (Snr) had a brother Thomas Twisleton who married Nannie Batty. Their daughter Isabella Twisleton married agricultural labourer Joseph Hancock but she died at the birth of their daughter Alice Hancock having already given birth to a son, a daughter and triplets (who didn't survive) in the previous five years. Alice later married John French and provided us with a cracking tale from the Quaker graveyard. Thomas's son Francis Twisleton was a larger than life Craven character who farmed at Winskill [ph4]. He was known as the 'Craven Giant' on account of his 22 stones and impressive character. He became an immensely successful farmer and cattle dealer and also extolled the virtues of life 'without pot and pipe' – he was well known as a speaker at Temperance events in Sedbergh, Leeds [1] and Kirkby Lonsdale [2] amongst others.



After this necessary interval, there was a public meeting; the room was crowded to excess, and Mr. Frank Twisleton, the "Craven Giant," whose features are familiar to the readers of the *British Workman*, occupied the chair. The gallant chairman was in the happiest mood; and while he was on his legs, he kept the company in convulsions of mirth. Mr. Smithard, of Derby,

In 1866 Francis provided his land for a Wesleyan Sunday School Treat [SC] which provides a wonderful description of the times.

Francis's wife Mary Herd had four sons and a daughter. Francis died in 1875, aged 63 and is buried just inside the church gate in Stainforth churchyard. After Francis died Mary went back to her homeland, Sedbergh to be looked after by daughter Nannie until she died, aged 70, in 1887 but was brought back for burial with Francis.

*In affectionate memory of Francis Twisleton (late of Winskill) who died Sep 19th 1875, aged 63 years. Also of Mary his wife who died April 8th 1887, aged 70 years.*

Francis and Mary's sons were educated at Giggleswick School. Thomas Twisleton [ph4] and Henry Lea Twisleton became known as the 'Craven Poets'. Thomas (Tom) is known for his Yorkshire dialect poems, 'hewn out of Winskill Rock' [CH]. One of his few exceptions was the poem written about the death of navy John Griffiths Owen who was killed when a crane fell upon him in 1872. It was first published in 1876 in Poems in the Craven Dialect [CH] and includes the verses:

*He hath greeted his mates at the cutting of rock  
And to work they have gone with a will.  
Whilst he, humming a tune, kept time to the stroke  
Of the rattling hammer and drill*

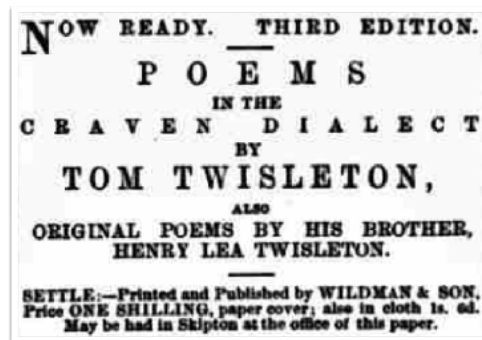
SUNDAY SCHOOL TREAT.—On Saturday last, the scholars of the Settle Wesleyan Sunday School accompanied by their teachers and several friends, had a picnic tea-party to the neighbourhood of Catterick Foss. The scholars assembled at the schoolroom at one o'clock, and were marshalled for the expedition. Four carts were engaged to carry the younger scholars, and a cart conveying the well-known temperance kettle and provisions preceded them. After visiting the pretty waterfall, Catterick Foss, the party returned to a field kindly lent by Mr Twisleton, on the hill to the south of Winskill, when the tea, smoking hot, and abundant substantial fare, awaited their attack. The limestone rock formed convenient tables. After tea the young people amused themselves with various out-door games for a couple of hours, when the heavy rain which came down towards evening abruptly broke up the happy party. The return journey to Settle was accomplished under difficulties;—strip and off to bed would be the general order when the youngsters were given back to the maternal sway. The buns, spice, nuts, &c, which had been reserved for the close of the amusements were distributed amongst the scholars on the following Monday evening. The cost of the trip was defrayed by the special subscriptions of the friends of the school.

Settle has not played a very important part in literature, but its older inhabitants hailed with delight the quaint and beautiful dialect poems, hewn out of Winskill Rock, by Tom Twisleton; and I remember, too, that writ-



*But hark! a strange sound for a moment is heard  
The crane that overhangs them is broken  
And the heavy jib falls ere a hand call be stirred  
Or a sentence of warning be spoken*

*In a breath, in an instant, it falls down the rock  
And the workmen are scattered below  
But all, except one, have escaped from the shock  
He, alone, have received the fell blow.*



Thomas continued to farm whilst writing poetry, initially at Winskill and then settling at Crow Trees, Burley in Wharfedale. Thomas' first wife was **Mary Ann Morphet**, the granddaughter of **Henry Snell** and daughter of coal agent **Thomas Atkinson Morphet**. Mary Ann had at least eight children. Their son **Major Francis Morphet Twisleton** was killed in 1915 in the war whilst serving with the Auckland Mounted Rifles. He was 44 [ph1].

Francis and Mary's second son **Henry Lea Twisleton**, born in 1848, began his career as a clerk at the Yorkshire Bank in Wetherby but emigrated to New Zealand in 1875, aged 27, and continued to be a prolific poet. Francis and Mary's third son was **Francis Twisleton**, born in 1851, whose career took a very different direction – he was a butcher [WSA]. In 1878 he married **Elizabeth Thistlethwaite**, the daughter of **Miles Thistlethwaite**, an Austwick timber merchant. They had one daughter **Mary Elizabeth Twisleton**. Francis ran his business in High Street, next to the Talbot Inn. At the time of the 1881 census, Francis' apprentice was **Robert Wills Garner**.



Later that year, Francis was declared bankrupt [3]. However, he still took an active life in Settle. He was elected to the committee of the Conservative club in 1885 [4]. Francis was in the good company of other notable residents including **John Birkbeck**, **Thomas Holmes**, **John Winskill** and great uncle **James Twisleton**.

Francis died in 1887, aged just 36, and his wife **Elizabeth** died in 1890, aged 45. Daughter **Mary Elizabeth** was only 11 when her mother died. At the time of the 1891 census **Mary Elizabeth** was visiting her aunt **Mary (Thistlethwaite) Hunt** and her husband, hairdresser **James Hunt** in the Town Hall. **Mary Elizabeth** remained a spinster and later lived with her aunt **Nannie Twisleton** running a confectionery shop in Lancashire.

*In loving memory of Francis Twisleton died Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 1887 aged 36 years. Also of Elizabeth wife of the above died Dec 28<sup>th</sup> 1890 aged 45 years. Thy will be done. Also Nannie Twisleton sister of the above died Feb 29<sup>th</sup> 1924 aged 69 years. Mary Elizabeth Twisleton died June 4<sup>th</sup> 1931 aged 52 years only daughter of the above Francis and Elizabeth Twisleton, Old A33*

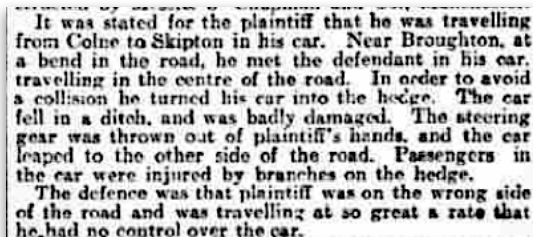
SETTLE.  
SETTLE AND DISTRICT CONSERVATIVE CLUB.—The annual general meeting of the members of this club was held in the billiard-room, on Tuesday evening last, John Birkbeck, jnr. Esq., of Bankwell, the president, occupying the chair. The meeting was numerously attended. The treasurer's account for the past year having been adopted, the Rev. A. W. M. Close, and Messrs. John Winskill, junr., Richard Hardacre, John Henry Greenwood, Thomas Holmes, and Francis Twisleton were elected committee-men for two years in conjunction with an equal number of gentlemen who were elected twelve months ago, and who retire in April, 1886. Mr. John Hargreaves was re-elected auditor, and Mr. M. Mason was elected treasurer and secretary. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. James Twisleton, the retiring treasurer, for his past services on behalf of the club. Other routine business having been transacted, the meeting closed with the usual compliment to the chairman.



## Settle Graveyard Project

Francis, Elizabeth and sister Nannie Twisleton are buried in this grave. Daughter Mary Elizabeth was commemorated on this stone but was buried with her aunt **Annie (Thistlethwaite) Knowles** and her husband in *Old G32* – see *Thistlethwaite*.

Francis and Mary's youngest son was **Frederick Fiennes Twisleton**, born in 1858, also a farmer. In 1915 Frederick was taken to court for the negligent driving of his motor car but was let off as the other driver was also driving badly, being on the wrong side of the road! [5]. He married **Sarah Annie Pratt** when he was 56 in 1916. Later that year They lived at Manor Farm in Guiseley.



It was stated for the plaintiff that he was travelling from Colne to Skipton in his car. Near Broughton, at a bend in the road, he met the defendant in his car, travelling in the centre of the road. In order to avoid a collision he turned his car into the hedge. The car fell in a ditch, and was badly damaged. The steering gear was thrown out of plaintiff's hands, and the car leaped to the other side of the road. Passengers in the car were injured by branches on the hedge. The defence was that plaintiff was on the wrong side of the road and was travelling at so great a rate that he had no control over the car.

Craven Giant Francis Twisleton had a brother **Gregory Twisleton** who was an agricultural labourer in Haslingden and had married **Jemima Charnley**. Gregory's eldest son, another **Gregory**, born in 1863, was brought up by his maternal grandparents in Stainforth whilst his parents brought up three younger sisters. Gregory (Jnr) married **Jane Holmes**, one of the 11 children of **Thomas Holmes** and his first wife **Isabella Johnson**. Gregory (Jnr) and Jane ran a grocery business was in the Market Place, right next to the site of the current Coop. They stayed in business there for nearly 50 years. Gregory, aged 73, and Jane, aged 77 are buried in the unmarked grave *New KX27*.

Their sons went to Giggleswick School. **Gregory Francis Twisleton** born in 1900 served in WW1 as a Wireless Operator in Leeds and then went into banking. He died aged 73 and is buried with his son Anthony Francis with a small commemorative stone in the grave *New I58*. School records note that son **Thomas Holmes Twisleton** was in the first XV football team. He became a schoolteacher in Bradford. Thomas died aged 63 and is buried in the grave *New J59* with his wife **Marjorie Burton**.



*In Loving Memory of Thomas Holmes Twisleton Died 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1966 Aged 63 years Marjorie Twisleton His Beloved Wife Died 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1995 Aged 86 years. At Rest*



*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](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'.*

*Illustrations by Teresa Gordon. 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 – Westmorland Gazette, 2 – Lancaster Guardian, 3 – Huddersfield Chronicle, 4 – Lancaster Gazette, 5 – Yorkshire Evening Post, 6 – Kendal Mercury, 7 – Lancaster Standard*

*WLP – the diaries of William Lodge Paley, SC– Settle Chronicle, WSA – Wildman's Settle Almanac with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*

*CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer*

*Settle Graveyard Project*

*ph1 credited to Craven's Part in the Great War, ph2 – with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust, ph3 – with the kind permission of Tom Lord, ph4 – from 'Poems in the Craven Dialect' by Tom Twisleton*