

Richard Hardacre, 'Sexton Dicky' and 'Tubber Dick'

At Christmas time during the 1830s you may well have looked forward to Richard Hardacre's annual broadsheet of witty ditties on numerous themes from multiplication tables to local and national events. *'A gentle timid old creature who came round at Xmas tide with his fiddle. He would then announce to my grandmother that he had composed a new poem which he would sing and accompany on his lute.'*[ph2] As a result Richard made his name in local history as the *'Ribblesdale Poet'*. *'Dick was a bard of the 'Primitive Order', chanting effusions of his brain to his lyre, he has for the greater part of the last two decades delighted, amused, edified and astonished not merely the inhabitants of Ribblesdale but a large circle of friends and acquaintances.'*[7] He was born around 1773 in Long Preston and was also known as *'Sexton Dicky'* – he was an agricultural labourer but also served as the church sexton for 30 years, overseeing graveyard burials and caretaking.

I would fain mention the last of our local Troubadours—Dicky Hardacre who I believe died in solitude in Long Preston. A gentle timid old creature who came round at 'Xmas Tide with his fiddle. He would then announce to my Grandmother that he had composed a new poem which he would sing and accompany on his lute.

In 1832 the Town Hall had just been built so his broadsheet included:

There is one thing I have to tell, Settle's Town hall looks very well, It sets the town out I do declare, Useful for market or for fair	It's ornamental to the town, It's usefulness is yet unknown; The architect must be clever, In planning it altogether	It's topping, gallant, noble, fine & has been building 2 years time; About it now I'll say no more, I ne'er saw such a place before
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In 1834 the new Giggleswick workhouse had been built, revealed through some *'Reminiscences of Giggleswick'* [ph2] The Reminiscences also describe one of the many horrendous *'pranks'* of the day in which *'some thoughtless lads'* put him in a sack and held him over Stainforth bridge *'until, half choked, he begged for mercy. So terrified was the old chap that he never got over the heartless joke.'* Poor old Dicky. Such was *'entertainment'* in the early 19th century.

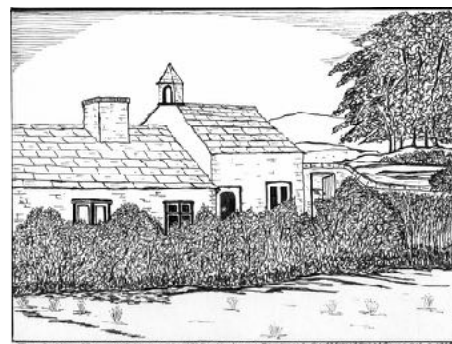
I now amuse my friends once more
With rhyming as I've done before;
I'll strive to please you if I can,
But happen not please every man.
God save the King, likewise the Queen,
Any may their peace be still serene;
May Parliament be of one mind,
To peace and happiness inclin'd.
If Parliament cannot agree,
'Twill spoil the peace of country;
Hoping they'll order all for best,
And be all of one mind possess'd.
At London a great fire there's been,
The largest that's been lately seen;
But how it did originate,
To you I cannot now relate.

By reading in the news I find
Men to bad actions are inclined;
Incendiaries in many parts
Show that men have very bad hearts.
A Poor-house built at Giggleswick,
And everything likewise made fit;
It is intended for the poor;
I thought there was plenty before.
It is designed for good ends,
As poor people have but few friends;
So then I hope that none will rue,
If all accounts I hear be true.
Please to excuse what here is penned,
And what is wrong I leave to mend;
That England then may smile and sing,
God save us all, God save the King.

On his last visit some thoughtless lads laid in wait for him as he went from Great Stainforth and put him into a sack which they had brought.
Then threatening to drop him into the river they held him over the bridge battlement until half choked he cried for mercy. So terrified was the old chap that he never got over the heartless joke, and might have said like the frog in the fable—"What is sport to you is death to me."

Richard seems to have had at least ten children with two or more wives. Richard spent his last years in the Long Preston almshouses which were partially managed by the church, so he was in a prime position to earn his place! The distinctive Long Preston almshouses/hospital just beyond Bridge End had been founded from a bequest in the will of James Knowles who died in 1615. James was a merchant who had roots at Mearbeck, north of Long Preston. James had worked his way up from being a penniless apprentice to a wool merchant in Wakefield and eventually became a very wealthy businessman in London. After all that, he wanted to give something back to his home town. He gave precise instructions for a high quality construction for the almshouses and for a central chapel for daily readings [ph3]. They housed ten *'deserving poor,'* elderly men or women, native to Long Preston, Hellifield or Halton West who were elected for life by the Trustees of the charity. James insisted the Trustees

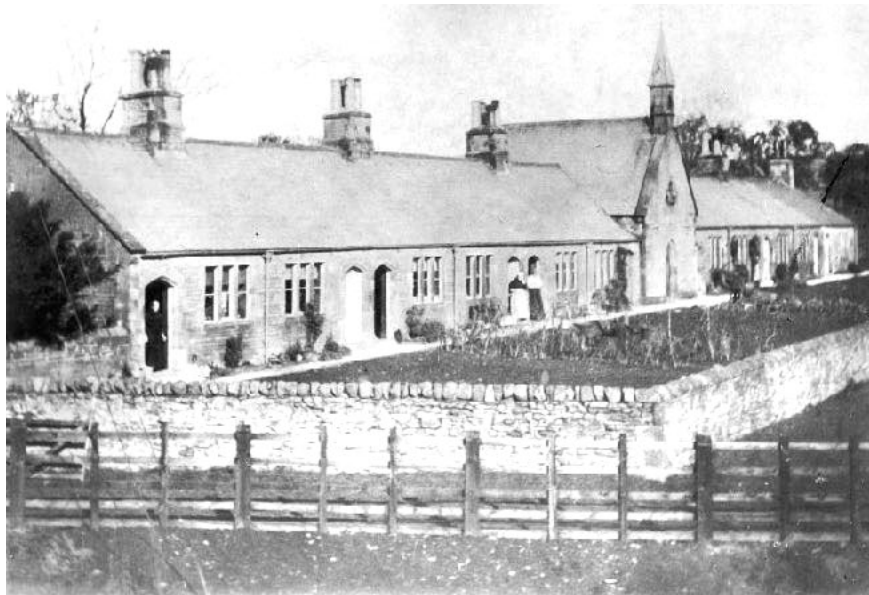
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THE CHAPEL OF THE OLD ALMSHOUSES, 1667-1671, LONG PRESTON, SW. VIEW BY H. COCKERILL, C.1840.

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must include the vicar of Long Preston Church. The 'inmates' received six shillings per week. James also left money to pay for staff, for other poor folk, a house of correction and money for flax and wool so that the poor could be given work to do. The almshouse/hospital was rebuilt in 1859 and renovated in 1895 [ph3]. Plaques tell us, 'Long Preston Hospital founded by James Knowles AD 1613, Rebuilt AD 1859 by bequest from the Rev'd Henry Kempson, donations from other parishioners, and the reserve fund of the Hospital.' James would be pleased that it still provides social housing to this day.



Richard was buried in Long Preston graveyard with his wife, **Alice Moon**, and their daughter **Isabella Hardacre** when he died, aged 67 in 1840.

In Memory of Alice Hardacre who departed this life November 18th 1811 aged 37 years also Isabella her daughter died July 27th 1817 aged 16 years. Richard Hardacre died February 4th 1840 aged 67 years. SM A128

Richard and Alice's son, **Thomas Hardacre**, took over as church sexton and, between them, Richard and Thomas served for 74 years. Thomas was presented with a purse of 20 sovereigns when he retired from the role. Thomas and his wife **Eleanor Hargreaves** 'Old Tommy and Ellen'[ph4], also spent their last 25 years in the almshouses and were reported to be 'some of the most cheerful inhabitants of the almshouses' [CH]. Ellen was 89, 'in her 90th year', when she died in 1891 and Thomas was 88 when he followed in 1894 and they were buried in unmarked graves.



In Affectionate Remembrance of
ELEANOR,
The beloved wife of Thomas Hardacre, of Longpreston.
Who entered into rest, May 4th, 1891,
IN THE 90th YEAR OF HER AGE,
And was Interred at St. Mary's Church,
Longpreston, May 7th.



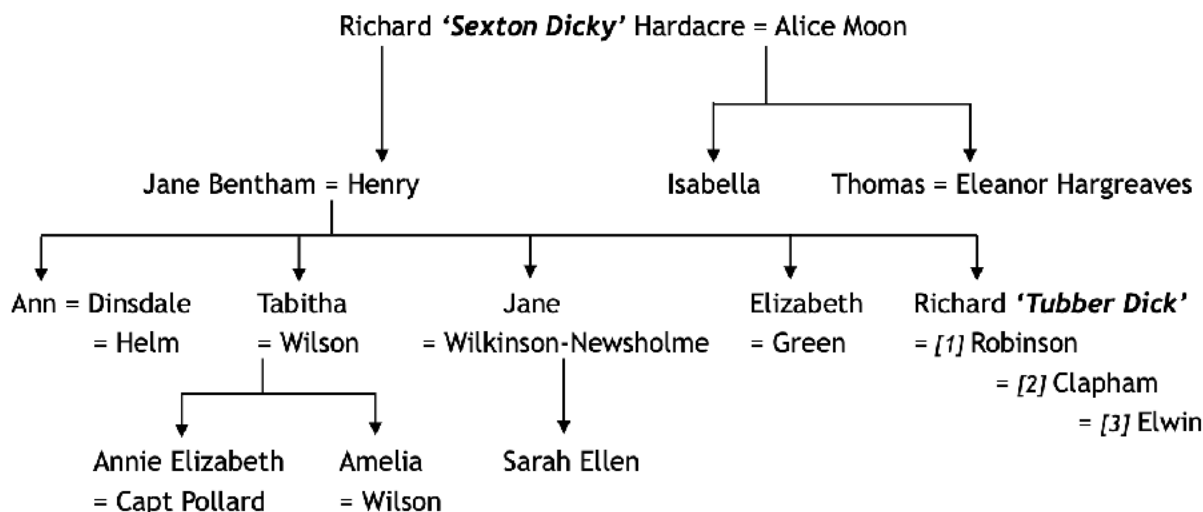
Henry Hardacre was born in Long Preston in 1794, 'the son of Richard Hardacre' and so it's possible that he was Sexton Dicky's son. Henry became a farmer and cooper, married **Jane Bentham** from Thornton-in-Lonsdale and had at least six children living in Rathmell. They moved to Horton-in-Ribblesdale for a while and then retired to run the Craven Heifer Inn at Stainforth. They were buried back in Long Preston with their youngest son, **Robert Hardacre**

who had worked as a draper in Carnforth. They have a fabulous memorial stone – no almshouses for them!



In Memory of Henry Hardacre of Stainforth, who died December 20th 1864, aged 70 years. Also Jane Hardacre wife of the above who died July 2nd 1864, aged 66 years. Also Robert Hardacre, son of the above, died at Carnforth Aug 23 1896, aged 56 years. SM D53

Hardacres of Long Preston



Henry and Jane’s children did pretty well for themselves too. Their eldest daughter, Ann **Hardacre**, worked as a milliner in Settle until, in 1857, aged 37, she married farmer **Alexander Dinsdale**, one of the many Dinsdales originating in the Horton-in-Ribblesdale area. Unfortunately, Alexander died, aged 42 in 1871. But Ann’s luck was to improve. She returned to Settle where, aged 58, she met and married a wealthy widower, **Robert Helm**, aged 70. Robert came from Wigglesworth. His first wife was **Jane Towler** from one of the Rathmell Towler families and it was there, at Swainstead farm, that he made his fortune. After Jane died in 1874, Robert, aged 69, bought Salt Pie cottage on the Green in Upper Settle and Ann (Hardacre) Dinsdale joined him there when they married 1878. Robert died three years later on 27 December 1881 and was buried with his first wife in Rathmell graveyard. He left an enormous estate of over £1200 and, having had no children, Ann probably benefited considerably from this. As if to prove a point Ann had her photo take at the Horner studios in 1883, when she was 63 [ph5]. Ann moved to Bentham to be near her youngest sister **Tabitha Hardacre**, earning an income from renting out Salt Pie.



Mrs Helm, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

So who was Tabitha? In 1851 Tabitha married **John Wilson** who had come from Middlesborough to teach at Rathmell School, lodging at the Cross Keys Inn. They moved to Bentham where John became the headmaster of the Grammar School, a post he held for 16 years until he died [8]. They lived at Mount Pleasant.

The death has occurred at Nurse Kirkpatrick's private Nursing Home, Caton, of Mrs. Annie Pollard, widow of Sea Captain William Pollard, in her seventy-eighth year. Mrs. Pollard was a native of Bentham, where she had resided at Winstay, and Ashville. She was the only surviving member of the family of the late Mr John Wilson, who was head master of Bentham Grammar School, when it was situated at the School Hill. He resided at Mount Pleasant and held that position for 16 years. His elder daughter, Miss Amelia Wilson, kept a private school for girls for many years at the Friends Schoolroom.

At the time of the 1871 census the Wilsons had several scholars boarding with them, including **William Henry Pollard** from Wigan. When John Wilson died in 1874 William Henry was sent to King William's College on the Isle of Man where he developed a desire to work on the sea. So, he was apprenticed with Messrs T&J Harrison ship owners in Liverpool and obtained a master's certificate when he was just 24 years of age. Two years later, in 1886, William Henry married Tabitha and John's youngest daughter **Annie Elizabeth Hardacre**. As William Henry was away at sea for most of the time Annie Elizabeth lived with her mum in Bentham until Tabitha died and then with sister **Amelia Hardacre**.

As war approached Sea Captain Pollard became an essential to the war effort. At one point his ship, *SS Steelville*, became icebound at Archangel in north-west Russia for the best part of 12 months but then sailed round North Africa and India as part of a convoy. Unfortunately, Sea Captain Pollard became ill and died of dysentery on 9 October 1917 and was, appropriately, buried at sea – he was 57 and had spent over 35 years on the seas. At his death the newspapers reported 'He was of a quiet disposition and respected by all who knew him.' [CH] His life is commemorated on the Bentham war memorial. Annie died in 1940, aged 78, the last of the siblings to pass away [8].

Tabitha and John's eldest daughter, **Amelia Hardacre**, ran a private school for girls at the Friends Schoolroom in Bentham for a number of years until she married an engineer from Durham, **William Wilson**, confusingly..

Henry and Jane's second daughter, **Jane Hardacre**, moved to Settle to work as a milliner's assistant to **Mary Wildman** on Duke Street with her sister **Elizabeth Hardacre**. She fell on her feet when she married **George Wilkinson-Newsholme**, the son of a Settle cabinet maker but whose elder brother inherited the enormous Hellifield Green estate and so had a very generous existence. George [ph6] had a 'spinal injury from childhood' but this didn't stop him having a successful life. He worked as a book keeper and they lived on High Street, next to the Talbot Inn. They had a daughter **Sarah Ellen Wilkinson-Newsholme** who continued book keeping in the same house until she also died, aged 86. As they chose not to inscribe the gravestone with details, I can tell you that George died in 1893, aged 62, and Jane died in 1899 aged 77.



In loving memory of George Wilkinson Newsholme. Jane Wilkinson Newsholme wife of the above. Their end was peace. S. E. Wilkinson Newsholme died April 30th 1950, Old C13



Henry and Jane's third daughter, **Elizabeth Hardacre**, married **Thomas Green**, born in Gargrave but brought up in Rathmell, his family living next door to Robert Helm (above). Thomas was apprenticed to tailor **Henry Snell** in Settle and, when he married Elizabeth in 1860, they moved to Stainforth. They took over the running of the Craven Heifer Inn when Elizabeth's father Henry Hardacre retired, just before he died, in 1864. While they were there **William Parker**, an 'artful dodger' of Bolton-by-Bowland stole Henry's coat and put it in the safekeeping of **Oliver Carr**, landlord of the Naked Man in Settle. William left the

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Naked Man without paying and had also asked **John Overing**, Settle tailor, to make him a pair of wedding trousers but also refused to pay for them. William had been due to marry his sweetheart in a few days' time. *'The inhabitants of this neighbourhood rejoice that the prisoner, for his cheaterly, has at last received the punishment he deserves and that the sentence of six calendar months hard labour, instead of spending a honeymoon with his bride will lead him to shape his future course in what is honest and honourable.'*[9]

AN ARTFUL DODGER CAUGHT AT LAST.—LARCENY AT STAINFORTH, NEAR SETTLE.—On Friday, the 2nd of

this neighbourhood rejoice that the prisoner, for his cheaterly, has at last received the punishment he deserves, and that the sentence of six calendar months hard labour, instead of spending a honeymoon with his bride, will on his release from prison lead him to shape his future course in what is honest and honourable.

Henry and Jane's son, another **Richard Hardacre**, began his working life in domestic service for **John Hartley** of the solicitors' firm in Giggleswick. In 1850 he married **Margaret Robinson**, a farmer's daughter from Rathmell. By then, Richard had become a cooper, making and repairing vessels casks, barrels and tubs, usually for breweries, hence his nickname *'Tubber Dick'*. Coopering is an ancient trade dating back to 2600BC and providing many families with the surname Cooper. With the exception of skilled craftsmen working for Scottish whisky distilleries technology has taken over the job now.



Richard and Margaret lived in a house opposite what is now the Post Office on Duke Street but Richard's business was in the basement of the Shambles, underneath all those smelly and messy butchers' shops [CH]. His neighbours were clogger **John Taylor** and tinner **Anthony (Tant) Rowlandson** who *'made the welkin ring'* (made a very loud noise). Unfortunately, Margaret died in 1856 at the birth of their first child, a daughter **Elizabeth Ann Hardacre**, who also died.

I recall the quaint little workshops in the basement of The Shambles. There was John Taylor's clog shop, which did a flourishing trade when clogs were a more common foot-gear than they are to-day. The boys and girls of my day nearly all wore clogs, and we often paid visits to the clog shop. Next came Richard Hardacre (more familiarly known as "Tubber Dick"), who had a cooper's shop, and Tant Rowlandson, who made the welkin ring in his tinner's shop.

A year later Richard married **Mary Clapham** from Lawkland. She was the eldest child of farmer **Lawrence Clapham** and **Sarah Wilson**. Sarah had died in 1849 and so Mary brought her dad with her to the marital home. Lawrence lived with Richard and Mary for at least 41 years describing himself in each census return as *'formerly farmer'*. Richard must have been a patient man, especially as Lawrence seemed to be a bit of a liability. In 1854, in a somewhat complicated case, it seems Lawrence had become insolvent and then slandered someone to whom he was indebted [2]. **PC Thomas Blanshard** also accused him of hiding his furniture with his children to avoid it being taken away. After all this it's perhaps no surprise that in 1856 Lawrence was fined 5 shillings for being drunk [3].

Despite her father's antics Mary gave birth to five children but died in 1884, aged 54, six years before her father, Lawrence. Not a man to live on his own, a year

SETTLE.
SETTLE PETTY SESSIONS.—On Tuesday last, **Lawrence Clapham** was fined 5s. and costs, for being drunk. This.

later, Richard, aged 61, married 51 year old spinster, **Eleanor Elwin**, a gardener's daughter from Gargrave. Eleanor had spent her adult life working in domestic service for **Jane Sutcliffe** in the large house at the top of Belle Hill. Richard died in six years later, in the same year as Lawrence Clapham. He was buried in the *Old graveyard B12* with all three wives and a son. Lawrence spent his last days in the workhouse, the only medical provision available for the poor. He was 85 when he died and was buried back in Clapham with his wife.

Richard Hardacre of Settle who died Feb 18th 1890 aged 66 years. Also Margaret his wife who died July 20th 1856 aged 33 years. Also Mary his second wife who died March 10th 1884 aged 54 years. Also Richard son of Rd & Mary Hardacre who died Dec 15th 1874 aged 8 years. Also Eleanor widow of the above who departed this life Feb 12th 1917 aged 83 years, Old B12.



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This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister 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.

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

Some of the material in this account has been published by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in the book 'Meandering down the Ribble, Born and Bred in the Long Preston Floodplain' who have given permission for it to be included in this account. Illustrations kindly provided by Teresa Gordon.

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

ph1 – photo credited to descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Bernie Hudson, ph2 – Reminiscences of Giggleswick, published in the Craven Herald in 1924, with thanks to Giggleswick Church archives, ph3 – with thanks to Long Preston Heritage Group, ph4 – photo credited to descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Robin Johnston Carder, ph5 – Image 2022.1.68.23 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life, ph6 – with the kind permission of descendant Paul Wiltshire



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