

## William Moorby & sons, extraordinary teachers

William Moorby, born in 1815, was the fourth of five children of a Tatham labourer, Thomas Moorby and his wife Margaret Leech. In Settle in 1838 he married Elizabeth Boothman, a weaver's daughter from Long Preston. A year later Elizabeth gave birth to the first of an amazing nine sons and five daughters over 23 years – yes, 14 children: Margaret, Ann, Fanny, Thomas, John, Sarah Mary, William, Mary Ann, Cleopas, James Boothman, Robert, Joseph Benjamin, Arthur Bradley and Christopher Charles Allen Moorby. Just three died in infancy, and sons Cleopas and James Boothman Moorby were buried in the *Ancient grave CX2*. Eldest daughter Margaret died aged 18 months but there are no burial records for her which is sad but not uncommon. William and Margaret had little income at that stage and a burial, albeit for an infant, was expensive. She may have been buried 'unofficially' with someone else. Elizabeth was already pregnant with her next daughter, Ann.

With all these mouths to feed, William needed money. He found a job at the church; Vestry records for 1843 say he was asked to 'to keep the whole of the church well swept and the pews and choir washed out once a month or so as often as occasion shall require at the yearly salary of five pounds.' Later he became the church clerk and choirmaster earning £7 per year, a good sum.

Somehow, William managed to become an infant schoolteacher and, by all accounts, was especially talented in teaching music. Upon his death it emerged that he pioneered the use of the 'tonic sol-fa' teaching method in Craven, more familiarly known to us as Julie Andrews' 'Do-re-mi' song in the film 'The Sound of Music'[2]. Wow! William's son, Thomas, in his old age, reminisced 'at the age of 10 (as far back as 1854) he was leading choir boy at Settle Church and "was often taken by my father to adjacent village churches where he introduced the Tonic Sol Fa system to show how easy it was to read the ordinary music . . . which he had learnt direct from Rev John Curwen whilst at the Home and Colonial College in London." [3]. What a legacy!

The death has occurred at Newland, near Hull, at the residence of one of his sons of Mr William Moorby, formerly of Settle. Mr Moorby thoroughly mastered the details of the tonic-sol-fa method of teaching music, and he may fairly be said to have been the father of this method so far as the Craven district was concerned. \* \* \*

Unfortunately, the other aspects of the profession did not go quite as well and discipline appeared to be the problem. Extracts from the headmaster's school log book tell us that he first problems arose in 1867 when he was still working as an assistant (unqualified) teacher. During the Annual School Inspection the inspector said, 'Mr Moorby must make further improvement during the current year.' The following year 'Unless Mr Moorby improves greatly during the current year My Lords will be unable to recommend him as an Assistant Teacher at the completion of his engagement under Act 91'[ph3]. Later that year the headteacher recorded in his diary that 'Mr Moorby was ordered to confine his attentions to the girls in standard 1' which is not as creepy as it sounds, just that standard 1 girls would have probably been regarded as the easiest class for him.

Unless Mr Moorby improves greatly during the current year My Lords will be unable to recommend him as an Assistant Teacher at the completion of his engagement under Act 91.

On November 26th 1869, 'The headteacher gave William Moorby leave to take his aunt home'. Then, on 6 January 1870, 'Letter from the education department: I am directed to state that if Mr Moorby does not intend to enter a training school he must return and complete his apprenticeship in your school and pass the examination fixed for the end of the 5th year. Upon receiving that examination report Their Lordships will decide if they can grant a nominal statement.' And finally on 10 Jan 1870 'Commenced school this morning after Xmas holidays. Mr Moorby has

Jan 10<sup>th</sup> Commenced school this morning after Xmas holidays. Mr Moorby has gone to Hull. Mrs Moorby resided.

gone to Hull' However, William was recorded as a pupil teacher back in Settle at the time of the 1871 census but was a schoolmaster 'out of employment' at the time of the 1881 census. Oh dear.

William and Elizabeth lived in Upper Settle, the cheaper part of town, and later on Castle Hill. William was the secretary of Settle Co-op in its early days, with **James Twisleton** taking over from him in 1864 [1]. William and Elizabeth retired back to her roots in Long Preston. After Elizabeth died William moved to Hull (again) where most of his surviving children had moved. Most families who left Settle moved to Lancashire for work in the industrial towns and cities but the Moorbys went east. William died in Hull but was brought back to Settle for burial in *Old A28*, with Elizabeth and their unmarried children John, aged 28 and Fanny, 32.

*Erected by their surviving children to the memory of William and Elizabeth Moorby. The former died March 16<sup>th</sup> 1895 aged 80 years. The latter Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 1888 aged 71 yrs. Also the following children of the above. John died Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 1874 aged 28yrs. Fanny died Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 1870 aged 32 yrs. Also 3 others who died in infancy, Old A28.*



John and Fanny and the three infants are commemorated on this stone. However, the children were buried in the Ancient graveyard, hopefully together. William's death merited a mention in *Lambert's Settle Almanac* indicating that he was a respected man, even though they got his name wrong.

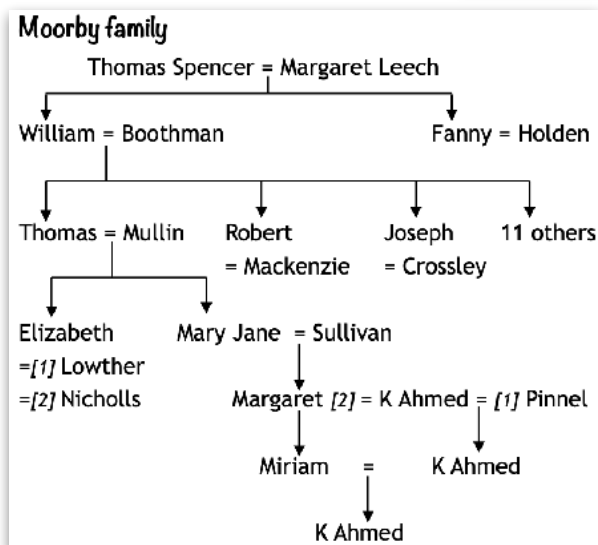
16. Mr. Thomas Moorby, an old native of Settle, died at Hull, in the 81st year of his age. He was for many years school-master at Settle, and choir-master of Ascension Church.

William's eldest sister, **Fanny Moorby**, married **William Holden** who was the cousin of **Thomas Spencer** who features in our project having been the subject in a Horner studio photo. Instead of having their own children, Fanny and William both worked as assistant schoolteachers in Horton-in-Ribblesdale and also raised a couple of brother William Moorby's many children. They are buried with a memorial stone in Horton-in-Ribblesdale churchyard. After William died, Fanny moved to Newland, Hull near her nieces and nephews, most of them also school teacher. Presumably they looked after Aunt Fanny during the end of her life but she was brought back to Horton for burial with her husband.

*In loving memory of William Holden, died April 21st 1873, aged 73 years. Also of Fanny, wife of the above, who died at Newland, Hull, January 16th 1889, aged 81 years.*



What happened to the surviving children? Well, they did rather well, some remaining in education. Eldest son **Thomas Moorby**, born in 1844, was treated to an education at Giggleswick School for two years. Perhaps Thomas was awarded a subsidised place as money would have been tight with so many other siblings by then. Initially, Thomas worked with his father as a schoolmaster but by 1865 had moved to Hull with four of his siblings. Three other siblings followed later. It's no surprise that the siblings were all musical and active members of the church. The brothers were keen cricketers. In 1865 Thomas started teaching at the newly established Newlands School, in north Hull, and then worked as a shipping clerk. His career was to change again when he met widow **Annie (Read) Mullin**, the daughter of an 'Inspector of Slaughterhouses' from Liverpool who was almost ten years his senior. After the death of her husband **George Mullin**, a plumber, at the age of 31, Annie made her way to Hull and took a post as 'Senior Mistress' at the 'Seamens Spring Bank Asylum and Orphanage' known as the 'Newland Homes'.



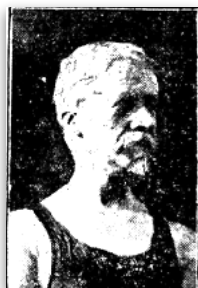
## Settle Graveyard Project

This charitable organisation had been established as an alternative to the workhouses in 1853. Spring Bank was a four storey red brick building was opened in 1866 with running costs paid by subscriptions from local businessmen, wills and legacies [ph1]. It provided a home, education and family support for over 200 orphans of seamen in the area. In 1885 it was extended to include a reading room, bathroom, kitchen and a steam heating system! It operated until 1920 when it moved to new, more modern premises in nearby Hessle.



After their marriage Annie took over the running of the orphanage, despite bringing up two daughters, and Thomas joined her, working as an assistant secretary and accountant. Annie must have been a strong woman, even listing herself as the Head of Household in census returns – most unusual. Thomas died aged 91 and Annie lived to the age of 96!

Annie's son by her first marriage, **George Frederick Mullin**, also followed her lead becoming the an officer and first schoolmaster at the huge Worsley Industrial School in West Manchester [ph2]. This had been set up to provide a home and education for over 1000 neglected, orphaned and abandoned children between the ages of 7 and 14. It aimed to reduce problems of vagrancy and better prepare children for a working life. The 1857 Industrial Schools Act allowed magistrates to send disorderly children to these schools. Charles Dickens visited the Worsley school and wrote, '*The stranger gazing upon the splendid brick edifice, with its surrounding territory, is surprised when he is told that it is not the seat of an ancient dukedom; but that it is a modern palace for pauper children.*' Some of these children were sent to Canada for adoption. George Frederick later came over to Hull to become a headteacher for the East Riding Education Authority.



Upon his death in 1935, aged 91 [2,5] it was revealed that Thomas was an '*all-the-year-round swimmer, mainly at the Victoria Dock basin on 7,777 consecutive mornings*' which is over 23 years. '*He never shivers even when he has had to break the ice, and dispenses with the hat, scout pants and singlets.*' During the process he narrowly escaped drowning in a stormy sea at

Aberystwyth in 1914 and had also had three serious accidents on land. It also said that he never dried his hair after a bath, abstained from alcohol and smoking and was a well regarded amateur photographer and cyclist. What an interesting man! He had been the assistant secretary at the Spring Bank Orphanage for 42 years.

**DEATH OF MR. T. MOORBY.**

**All-the-Year-Round Swimmer Who Lived to 91.**

Mr. **Thomas Moorby**, Spring Street, Hull, who died yesterday, was 91. He was born at **Settle** and educated at Giggleswick Grammar School. He was the first certificated head master appointed to the Newland Church of England School, Hull.

He received the appointment 70 years ago, and later he became associated with the Seamen's and General Orphanage. - He was a member of Holy Trinity Church Choir for about 40 years.

He was an all-the-year-round swimmer, and bathed in the open air, mainly at the entrance to Victoria Dock basin, on 7,777 consecutive mornings. He had not worn a hat for many years. He enjoyed a wide reputation as an amateur photographer.

Thomas and Annie's daughter, **Elizabeth Ethel Moorby**, became a teacher of art. In 1901 Elizabeth Ethel married **Charles Grange Lowther**, an artist. Charles had won two silver and two bronze medals for his design and decorative painting and a modelled design for a book cover, whatever that is [2]. Unfortunately, these two artistic temperaments didn't work well together. In March 1912, Ethel had found Charles in Buckinghamshire '*with a lady living in a kind of bungalow. It was a wooden structure with one room and she belied it had been a hen-coop*' [6,7] Charles refused to return to Elizabeth Ethel and so the divorce



was finalised in June 1912 on the grounds of Charles' adultery with **Alice Richardson**, desertion and failure to comply with a decree of restitution of conjugal rights.

**LIVED IN A HEN HOUSE:  
Remarkable Story in the Divorce  
Court.**

It transpired that Elizabeth may not have known the half of it. At the same time, Charles was involved in another divorce hearing – he was named as the co-conspirator in the case between **John Sibley Richardson**, and electrical engineer, and his wife **Alice Ella Burton Richardson**. Charles had been living in London under the name of *Carlos Lowther*, very arty, when he began his affair with Alice. Their divorce was eventually finalised in July 1913. In September 1912 Charles (Carlos) was found on board the ship '*Tunisian*' heading for Canada with a 'wife' Alice and there are no further records for them. Elizabeth Ellen remarried in 1919 but her second husband, **Richard Nicholls**, a paper bag manufacturer, died two years later. She was an unlucky woman.

Thomas and Annie's daughter **Mary Jane Moorby** became a teacher of dance and then married an engineer, **Maurice Carroll Sullivan**. Their daughter, **Margaret Mary (Nora) Sullivan** had a daughter, **Miriam Sullivan**, before becoming the second wife of **Kair Ahmed** from Saudi Arabia in 1939, three years after he was given citizenship of the UK. Daughter Miriam married Kair's son by his first wife, another **Kair Ahmed (Jnr)** and they lived in the heart of Hull in a relatively mixed race area, unusual for the time. Most of these families were working on the docks of the thriving port which was badly damaged during the war. Miriam and Kair moved to Cardiff and had a son, a third **Kair Ahmed**, born in 1965. Yes, it's complicated – see the family tree! This Kair had a tragic end at the age of 25. He had been a '*promising jockey*' and had spent four



seasons in India riding for a Sikh millionaire. A year before his death Kair had been found guilty of stabbing and killing a friend of the family after an argument and was sent to prison but, within weeks was transferred to a mental health hospital. Upon his release Kair moved back with his parents but went missing. Two weeks later his body was found at the bottom of a 100ft cliff in a quarry. His mother '*Mrs Miriam Ahmed said, 'if he had been a real killer do you think 700 people would have turned up for his funeral?'*[8]. How tragic – you couldn't make it up, could you?

**The 'killer' tag that  
haunted young jockey**  
**Quarry-plunge  
victim's tragic  
final months**  
HORSE-MAD [Ahmed] Kair would, as a child,  
spend all his spare time practising riding in the  
fields of Wennoe. By Jim Clarke

Going back a couple of generations William and Elizabeth's son **Robert Moorby**, aged 15, lived with his brother Thomas in Hull working as a telegraph clerk. Robert worked his way up in the shipping business as a clerk, then a shipping manager and then a coal exporter at the new docks at Hull and Immingham, near Grimsby. Robert was a Liberal member, and for several years, the Chair of Cottingham Urban District Council. He married **Margaret Adelaide Mackenzie** from Ireland. They didn't have children and were joined by Robert's sister Ann, a schoolteacher, in later years.

Robert's younger brother **Joseph Benjamin Moorby** followed his siblings to Hull and began work as a clerk to a wine and spirit merchant. He soon took a qualification in book-keeping and joined Robert to become a clerk to a ship owner and eventually a shipowner's manager. Joseph was a member of the Masons at the Rose of Hull Lodge alongside his musical and church interests. In 1888, when he was 31, Joseph Benjamin married **Fanny Elizabeth Mary Cooksey**. Fanny was the eldest of 11 children of **Thomas and Deborah Cooksey** from Staffordshire. Thomas variously described himself as an auctioneer, land and mineral surveyor and mining engineer. In 1888, soon after Fanny's wedding, Thomas and Dorothy took their remaining children to Massachusetts, USA. After Thomas died in 1907, Dorothy returned to England and lived with a daughter **Emily Ada Cooksey** in Hull, not far from Fanny and Joseph Benjamin Moorby. At the time of the pre-war census in September 1939 and September 1940 Fanny's 76 year old sister



Emily Ada came to Settle. Hull was nearly destroyed in the blitz bombings so Settle was a safe place for the lucky ones who had relations here. Emily Ada died soon afterwards and is buried in the same grave as William and Elizabeth in C28.

William and Elizabeth's sons **William**, **Arthur Bradley** and **Christopher Charles Allen Moorby** all become schoolmasters and all, at some time, worked in the Newlands School where eldest brother Thomas had begun his career. William took over as headmaster in 1870. William didn't marry and died in 1910, aged 61, having served the school, with the help of sister Ann for 40 years [2].

Youngest brother **Christopher Charles Allen Moorby** took over as headmaster at Newlands from William but died six years later, aged 55 [4, left]. The brothers had run the school for 55 years. **Arthur Bradley Moorby** was a pupil teacher at Newlands School. In 1885 he became the headmaster of Cottingham Board School in the north-west of Hull, a post he held for nearly 40 years. His wife, **Annie Kirkham**, also taught at the school. Arthur's glowing obituary explained he was a member of the Executive of the National Union of Teachers representing Yorkshire [2, right]. He was



also secretary of the Cottingham reading room, Captain of the Cricket Club, President of the Horticultural Society and a member of the central Hull Conservative Bicycle and Motor Club.

William and Elizabeth's daughter **Sarah Mary Moorby** chose not to live in Hull. She married **Thomas Andrews** and they ran a grocery business together in Burley, Leeds. Daughter **Mary Ann Moorby** had a life in domestic service in Lancashire but spent her last days in Hull.



Another William Moorby had quite a different life. Born in 1853, William was the eldest child of stonemason **George Moorby**, from Long Preston and his wife **Jane Gawith**. The Gawith family moved to this area from Westmorland where dad Joseph ran the Wenning Bridge beerhouse. Jane's sister **Mary Gawith** married **George Huthersall** who ran a number of local hostelries including the Talbot Inn. George and Jane Moorby had seven children in the Wray/Newby areas before Jane died in 1867 at the birth of young **Anthony Moorby**. George moved the family back to Settle to work at King's Mill but died in 1876 when Anthony was nine.



William and Jane's eldest son, **William Moorby**, married **Elizabeth Bulcock**, the daughter of a King's Mill overlooker (foreman), **William Bulcock**. Over the next 22 years Elizabeth had ten children, including twins **Rose** and **Daisy**. Unfortunately Daisy died, aged eight. William and Elizabeth spent their whole lives living in the 2-up2-down houses on Proctor's Row in Settle. William found labouring work on the new Settle and Carlisle Railway and later in the quarries. William had a couple of 'petty' misdemeanours in his twenties [1], stealing potatoes from the Royal Oak Inn and being drunk and disorderly for which he was fined £1 8s. William and Elizabeth both died in 1918 in their early sixties and are buried with young Daisy and spinster daughter **Rachel** in *Old C9*.



*Daisy Moorby aged 8 years who died July 31<sup>st</sup> 1893. William Moorby died July 14<sup>th</sup> 1918 aged 63 years. Elizabeth his wife died Jan 11<sup>th</sup> 1918 aged 62 years. Rachel Moorby who died Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 1916 aged 26 years, Old C9.*

Son **John**, his wife, **Jane Ann (Harrison)** and son **Edward** are buried in the unmarked New KX43. Daughters **Nellie**, **Lettice** and **Annie (Moorby) Simpson** are buried together in the unmarked New IX16. Annie had married **Holburn Simpson** who was the landlord of the Talbot Inn during the 1940s. Daughter **Mary Jane** and her husband **Thomas Eastwood Riddiough** lived in

## Settle Graveyard Project

Barnoldswick but were buried back in Settle in the unmarked New GX17. Son Eric, his son Bernard and wife Annie Elizabeth (Clay) and her second husband Fred Marson and are in the grave New C32



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

*With thanks to Teresa Gordon for the sketches.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Hull Daily Mail, 3 – Yorkshire Post, 4 – The Mail, 5 – Leeds Mercury, 6 – Westminster Gazette, 7 – Leicester Evening News, 8 – South Wales Echo*

*ph1 – credited to Hull Daily Mail, ph2 – credited to [lizzieslocalhistory.weebly.com](http://lizzieslocalhistory.weebly.com), ph3 – with thanks to Settle Primary School for the use of their archives*