

The Thomsons, pillars of the Zion Chapel

James Thomson was born in 1777 in Hawick just north of the Scottish border. He had arrived in Settle by 1802 to marry **Isabella Atkinson** who came from Bowland Bridge, near Kendal.

When James died, aged 83, his obituary [SC] describes that he worked as a gardener and 'land steward' for three generations of the **Birkbeck family** at Anley and Ingfield (Falcon Manor) for 61 years. That's some achievement!

James was an active member of the Zion church from its commencement in 1816 (built with the help of the Birkbecks). He was the clerk and deacon during that time and was given a fitting ceremony upon his death in 1861, attended by the Birkbecks. Isabella had died in 1854 and they are buried with their eldest daughter **Elizabeth**, aged 22. The gravestone is now badly worn but reads:



Isabella wife of James Thomson sleepeth here in Jesus having finished her course with joy. She exchanged immortality for life Oct 13 1854, aged 73 years. Elizabeth the beloved daughter of the above departed this life with . . . immortality . . . Aug 1832 aged 22 years. Also of James Thomson who died on 20 March 1861 aged 83 years.

James and Isabella would have been proud of the successful lives of their three sons and five daughters, featured on a beautiful family sampler [ph1]. Eldest son **Robert Thomson** capitalised on the thriving industries of the day, being a canal agent in Liverpool and then Stourbridge.

Third son **James Thomson**, born in 1807, was quite a character. Initially he worked as an ironmonger in the central section of the 'Naked Man' building. He spent the rest of his life in Wray beyond Bentham, described as a Justice of the Peace and, later, a magistrate. Wow! The Birkbecks may have had a hand in his career.

James had, helpfully, written a detailed description of his life to be used upon his death which was in 1885 when he was 78. It took up two whole columns of the *Lancaster Gazette*. James was educated at Giggleswick School and then apprenticed to an ironmonger. He worked independently in Kirkby Lonsdale for six years but returned to Settle at the request of his friends when 'his old master failed'. Trade directories indicate that his 'old master' was **Christopher Redmayne** who had moved from Settle to Rathmell by 1837 as he had been

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FUNERAL OF THE LATE MR. JAMES THOMSON.—On Sunday, March 21th, a large number of persons assembled to witness the funeral of one their oldest fellow townsmen, Mr. James Thomson. He was born at New Mills, near Hawick, in Scotland, in 1777, and died on the 20th ult., aged 83 years, having been in the service of the Birkbeck family 61 years, and during that time had served three generations. He had been connected with the Independent Chapel from its foundation, nearly half a century, and had fulfilled the office of deacon and also that of clerk for almost an equal length of time, and to that place his earthly remains were borne, followed by the mourning family, children and grandchildren, and a highly respectable circle of friends, at three o'clock p.m. on the day above named. In the procession it was pleasing to see some of the principal surviving members of the family with which he had been connected so long.



SUICIDE.—An inquest was held on Wednesday before P. F. Curry, Esq., respecting the death of Christopher Redmayne, who committed suicide by hanging himself in his bedroom on the evening of Tuesday last. It appeared from the evidence of his wife that the deceased was an ironmonger, but had been unfortunate in business. On Tuesday evening he came home rather the worse for liquor. He undressed one of the children and took it up stairs to bed, previously requesting some supper. She called him to his supper, but no answer being returned, she lighted a candle and went up stairs, when she found the deceased hanging by his neckerchief, which was fastened to the bed-post. She ran down stairs directly and called a neighbour in, who cut him down. Deceased had been ill last summer with inflammation in the bowels, and ever since then he had been very low in spirits, and more reserved than he used to be. Witness never saw anything in his manner to lead her to think that he was out of his mind. He often said he was tired of his life, as nothing thrived with him. Verdict—Temporary insanity.

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'unfortunate in business'. Tragically Christopher ended his own life in 1841 and after suffering 'inflammation in the bowels' [2]. He had returned home 'the worse for liquor' and had just taken one of his children to bed and asked his wife for supper.

James purchased the ironmongery business in partnership with future brother-in-law **Thomas Anderson Harvey** and they worked together until 1846. James was elected chair of the Board of Guardians of the Settle Union overseeing the distribution of support for the poor. He moved to Wray during the 1840s and became chair of the Board of Guardians there too. In Wray he found people most receptive to '*advanced political principles*' (Liberal) and there was plenty of scope for his '*bold and combative spirit*'. James and his supporters sympathised with local Wesleyans and Quakers and quickly brought about the elimination of 'church rates' in the established churches of Melling and Hornby. James was a leader in the 1840 Anti-Corn Law League and established Free Trade principles to reduce the price of food in the Lune Valley and Settle areas. James was amongst 200 activists who visited Lord Melbourne to state their case. He was a magistrate, regularly sitting in Hornby Petty Sessions, Lancaster County Sessions and the County Asylum Sessions.

In the last paragraph of the two column article James is described as '*a gentleman of the most kindly nature*', and also that he had been thrice married. James' first wife, **Elizabeth Bateson**, died soon after their marriage in 1832. James spent most of his life with **Phebe Varley** who died in 1877. After she died, James retired to Morecambe where he lived with his third wife. Aged 73, James married 45 year old, **Elizabeth Holgate** the niece of Isabella Holgate who had married the incredibly successful Stockdale farmer **Stephen Hargraves**. James is buried at the Zion church with Phebe. James didn't have children with any of his wives although descendants of the family suspect there were one or more illegitimate children.

In loving memory of Phebe the wife of James Thomson, JP of Wray, who fell in sleep July 1st 1877 aged 62 years. Also of the above James Thomson born July 31st 1807 died Jan 26th 1885.



However, James' story did not finish there. Magistrates with '*a bold and combative spirit*' are unlikely to be popular with everyone! Someone wrote a slanderous letter to the Lancaster Observer '*while his remains were still unburied*' detailing unhappy domestic affairs and describing him as a '*licentious miscreant*' [3]. Ouch. The following week, James' nephew **William Thomson**, a newspaper editor and several others complained in the strongest terms about the cowardly attack, although there is often no smoke without fire! [3] It transpired that, way back in 1855, James Townson of Wray, was brought to court for two

was held. It is true that there has arisen a cloud on his fair fame which was likely to occupy the attention of a court of law. But let it be observed that whatever the charge might have been against him, the gentleman assailed was prepared to defend himself.	If he was a "licentious miscreant," as you declared him to be, he was not a fit coadjutor or companion for the magistrates of North Lancashire, or worthy to share the free hospitality and friendship of the best families. Yet these Mr. Thomson enjoyed, as well as the cordial respect and appreciation of his colleagues in magisterial, parochial, political, and religious work.
righting; everybody knew him in town, village and hamlet; the whole body of the public—with one overwhelming lament — says "he was one of the nicest and best men that ever breathed, and you will never find another James Thomson if you travel England through; and yet the editor of the <i>Lancaster Observer</i> has fetched his muck rake, and, almost before the poor man's body was cold, heaped upon him the most licentious, disgusting, and villainous character that could possibly be imagined! Well, any ass can kick a dead lion."	on the spot. There was nobody who did more good in a quiet way, considering his means, than our late neighbour and friend; his second wife was a "ministering angel" among the poor, and her efforts to alleviate distress and suffering were cordially supported by her husband; and everyone here feels that a cruel wrong had been done to the memory of one who served the public well and faithfully.—Yours truly, AN OLD RESIDENT OF WRAY.

offences – assaulting his wife and drunkenness. PC Bull was asked to give evidence on both counts but made it clear he had brought the charges on the orders of James Thomson who had

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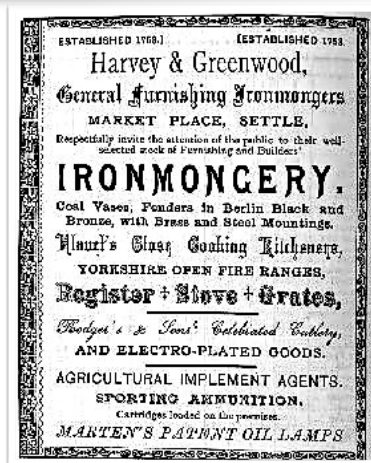
'received information of a murderous attack'[3]. The evidence provided by witnesses, including Mr Townson's wife and the postman suggested the butcher had had a few drinks, a common occurrence, and there was a lot of shouting but no violence.

The paper reminded readers that James Thomson had clashed with Mr Townson in court on two previous occasions with the result that he had been fined for shooting without a certificate. Mr Townson's solicitor 'expressed his astonishment that any one of the magistrates should mix themselves up with such mean, disgraceful transactions, and dwelt at some length upon the vindictive spirit displayed by Mr Thomason towards the defendant.'[3]. The case was dismissed and someone paid the costs for poor Mr Townson. People don't forget incidents like that and so it's easy to see where those comments about Mr Thomson came from.

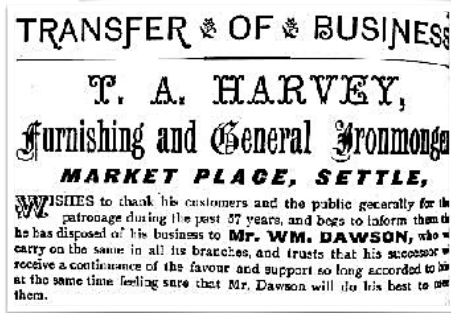
the fact of the two parties, Mr. Thomson and the defendant, having come so prominently before the public on two previous occasions, we are tempted to give the case *in extensio*, as it tends to show that anything but a friendly feeling exists in the breast of Mr. Thomson towards the defendant, who it will be remembered, laid an information against, and got that gentleman fined for shooting without

astonishment that any one of the magistrates should mix themselves up with such mean, disgraceful transactions, and dwelt at some length upon the vindictive spirit displayed by Mr. Thomson towards the defendant. It was eventually agreed to allow the information to be withdrawn on the informant paying costs.

James (Snr) Thomson and Isabella's second daughter Isabella, born in 1812, married James (Jnr)'s business partner Thomas Anderson Harvey in 1843 and they had two children, Mary Isabella and James. Thomas, born in 1820, was also a Scotsman. By the time of the 1841 census he was working with James Thomson (Jnr) as an ironmonger in the Naked Man row of buildings. When James left for Wray, Thomas went into business with *Richard Greenwood [SC]*. This partnership ceased in 1866 soon after Richard's daughter and wife both died. Thomas continued to work as an ironmonger in the same property until he died, aged 77, in 1898. An obituary described he was 'one of the oldest teetotallers in town.' Just a year before his death Thomas sold his business to *William Dawson [LSA]*.



Thomas's gravestones tells us he was a Deacon of the Zion church for 36 years and was also being remembered as 'a stalwart' in the Temperance movement. Isabella died in 1878, aged 66. Their son James, also an ironmonger, died, unmarried, just six years after his father and is buried with them at the Zion Chapel, of course.



In loving memory of Thomas Anderson Harvey of Settle born Aug 12th 1820, died May 8th 1898, for 60 years associated with this Chapel. Deacon 36 years. Also Isabella his wife born June 28th 1811, died April 24th 1878. Also James their son born June 21st 1851, died June 2nd 1904.

Thomas and Isabella Harvey's daughter *Mary Isabella* became the first wife of *Robert Harger* but died in Lancaster just 18 months after their wedding after the birth of a daughter. She was buried at the Zion Chapel and has a now partially illegible memorial stone which also commemorates her daughter who was buried in Lancaster.

In memory of Mary Isabella the beloved wife of Robert Harger of Lancaster and daughter of Thomas A and Isabella Harvey of this town who died May 5th 1869 aged 24 years. Also and infant daughter of the above R and MI Harger interred at the cemetery Lancaster. To him that overcometh will I give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God, Rev. Chap 2, Verse 7.



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After Isabella died Thomas Anderson Harvey married again, this time to **Ellen Dawson**, a local dressmaker and daughter of a cattle dealer (unrelated to the William Dawson he sold his business to). Ellen outlived him by 14 years and is buried in Settle church graveyard in *OLD E16* with her sister **Catherine Chamley**.



William Chamley Banks View, Settle (Late of Brackenbottom) who died March 26th 1899 in his 71st year. Also Catherine wife of the above Born March 1st 1828 Died Octr 26th 1901. Also Ellen sister of the above and widow of the late Thomas Harvey, Died June 2nd 1912 aged 74 years, Old E16.

Meanwhile back with James (Snr) Thomson and Isabella, their third daughter **Margaret** married **Thomas Wildman**, a shoemaker and Methodist Preacher and they had at least seven children and lived in Leeds. Thomas was the son of Settle's shoemaker **Matthias Wildman**. Thomas' brother **John Wildman** was well known in Settle as the Postmaster who also produced the yearly Settle Almanac.

James and Isabella Thomson's fourth daughter **Mary Thomson** remained a spinster and lived with their fifth daughter **Susanna**, born in 1820, and her younger husband **John Preston**. John's father **William Preston**, a shoemaker, ran his business in Duke Street in Settle. John spent his whole life working as a solicitor's clerk. They brought up two daughters in Blackburn before returning to Settle during the 1870s. Susanna died in 1890, aged 70. John retired in 1904, aged 70 to live with his two spinster daughters in number 1, Goldielands. He died in 1908 and is buried with Susanna and her sister Mary Thomson in the surprisingly unmarked grave in Settle church graveyard *Old BX58*.

Their eldest daughter **Jane Isabella Preston** was exceptionally good at spelling and won prizes along with **Arthur Overing** [3]. Jane and her sister **Margaret Amy** lived together for the rest of their lives in Goldielands. They died within a week of each other in April 1942, perhaps sharing a fatal infection. They are buried in the unmarked grave at Settle church *New JX27*.

SPELLING BEE.—A numerous company gathered in the Music Hall on Saturday last to enjoy the second public appearance in Settle of the ubiquitous spelling bee. The first bee buzzed in the Mechanics Hall some

above 20 entries in each tournament, and the two first prizes were won by Miss Jane Isabella Preston and Mr. **Arthur Overing**, and the two second by Miss **Mary Harger** and Mr. **Dixon**. Much amusement was

James (Snr) Thomson and Isabella's second son **William Thomson**, born in 1805, became a bank cashier for Messrs Wakefield Crewdson and Co. in Kendal. On 1st January 1866 he was presented with a 'richly embossed silver tea and coffee service' as a mark of their esteem after 40 years' service [5]. Ten years later, still working at the bank, William was presented with a silver salver and a Bank of England note for £500.

PRESENTATION.—On Tuesday last, Messrs Wakefield, Crewdson, and Co., of this town, bankers, presented their cashier, Mr William Thomson, with an elegant richly-embossed silver tea and coffee service, comprising the following articles, viz:—Kettle with stand, teapot, coffee-pot, cream ewer, and sugar basin. The following inscription was tastefully engraved upon the kettle:—"The service, of which this forms part, was presented to Mr William Thomson, by Messrs Wakefield, Crewdson, and Co., on the completion of the fortieth year of his connection with the Kendal Bank, as a mark of their regard and esteem. Kendal, January 1st, 1866."



Settle Graveyard Project

On December 31st 1881, aged 76, William was presented with a beautiful address, signed by 12 members of the bank which read, *'Dear Sir, We take this opportunity of expressing our admiration of your unexampled services in the Kendal Bank during more than Half a Century. Those who worked with you, when you first joined the Bank have all passed away, and it remains to us to testify that, during the time which has exceeded half the existence of the Bank you have set an example of services which will always remain conspicuous for their fidelity. We cannot forget the kindness and courtesy which you have extended to us: and we trust that you will long enjoy your well earned repose'*. It also included a further cheque for £521. Long service awards these days don't quite match those standards!

William had also been the treasurer for the Kendal School Board. In 1889, aged 84, upon his resignation from it, William was presented with *'an easy chair'* which was probably a good idea. He was too infirm to attend a ceremony so the presentation was made at his home. Another article mentioned that he had been replaced as treasurer by a young **Thomas Bateson** – remember that name.

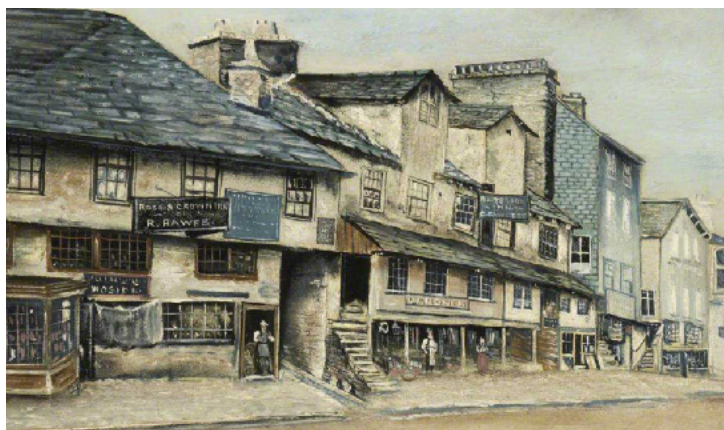
William was the treasurer for the team who built the 'new' Wesleyan Church in Kendal and was asked to lay the Memorial Stone for it. He was presented with a silver trowel with ivory handle and this is still held by the family. His 90th birthday card puts a face to this good man's name [ph1].



Incredibly William reached the magnificent age of 94 [1]. I bet that chair helped. The executors of William's will were his son **James Thomson**, **Joseph Severs**, nephew, and (the same) **Thomas Bateson**. Sarah had died in 1885 aged a mere 77! Son James Thomson was a composer and music teacher who ended his days in Saffron Walden, sadly losing his sight in his later years.

THE death of Mr William Thomson, Kendal, took place on Wednesday at his residence, Airethwaite, at the advanced age of 94 years. Mr Thomson had been connected with the town for nearly three-quarters of a century. He was born at Settle, and secured an appointment as a clerk at Wakefield's Bank, and came to Kendal when about 20 years of age. He rose to the high position of cashier of the bank, and altogether completed a service with the bank of half a century, when he retired into private life.

William had married **Sarah Gardner**, daughter of **Christopher Gardner**, a successful tinnier and brazier whose shop was at the top of Stricklandgate in Kendal. Descendants of the family have photos and artists impressions of the shop [ph1,2] (centre front to the right of the steps). Sarah gave birth to two sons and two daughters. Son **Christopher Gardner Thomson** became the County Coroner for Westmorland. Christopher had a son **Lewis Gardner Thomson**, a successful solicitor.



Settle Graveyard Project

Sarah's sister **Agnes Gardner** had married **Joseph Severs**, also a successful chemist in Kendal. He was elected to the Pharmaceutical Society in 1843. They had six children, two of whom died in infancy. Joseph became ill and died, aged 50, '*in the prime of his life*' [8,3].

Joseph had visited Settle to convalesce, residing with Mr Hardacre, which would probably be *Thomas Hardacre*, the draper. Joseph was buried in the Zion Chapel graveyard.

Settle.—On Tuesday, the 10th instant, at the house of Mr Hardacre, Settle, Yorkshire, where he was residing for the benefit of his health, Mr Joseph Severs, chemist, &c., of Kendal, aged 50 years.

At a private asylum, Mr. Joseph Severs, druggist, of Kendal, in the prime of life.

In memory of Joseph Severs of Kendal who died at Settle November 10th 1857 in the fiftieth year of his age. But our God is in the heavens. He hath done what so ever He hath pleased. 115th psalm 3rd verse



Joseph and Agnes Sever's son, another **Joseph Severs** took over the business in partnership with another chemist who had previously been apprenticed to Joseph (Snr) Severs, none other than **Thomas Bateson** [5]. They also had a shop in Stricklandgate, Kendal.

Thomas Bateson was a very successful man despite a difficult start in life. Both his parents, **Thomas Bateson (Snr)**, a Settle stonemason and **Nancy Harger** died of typhoid in September 1849 leaving nine orphaned children. Thomas and Nancy are buried in an unmarked grave in Settle *AncCX3*. Incredibly, even though the youngest, **Joseph Harger Bateson**, died two weeks later, aged four, the remaining children had successful lives. Most moved to Lancashire, with several, including Thomas, to Kendal.

It's no surprise that Joseph and Agnes' daughter **Sarah Severs** married Thomas Bateson and they had three sons. Son **Alfred** was a chemist and son **Joseph Harger Bateson** (who was probably named after his deceased uncle) was a Wesleyan Minister who spent his life in India.

The deeds of a Giggleswick cottage suggest that a property in Parker's Yard, Giggleswick were purchased by **Alice Rhodes**. Alice was the daughter of Joseph and Agnes's daughter **Ann Severs** and her husband **William Rhodes**, a Kendal draper. She bought the property after her parents died in the early 1890s. She later sold the properties to her cousins **James Thomson**, **Joseph Severs**, **Thomas Bateson** and their nephew **Lewis Gardner Thomson**. There were probably many business transactions, such as these, undertaken by the wider family.

Thomas Bateson (Jnr)'s sister **Agnes Bateson** married **John Wilkinson Newsholme** whose family had the most extraordinary lives. Family diaries record that Thomas Bateson was the inspiration for their son **George Thomas (Tom) Wilkinson Newsholme** to take up pharmacy as a profession rather than medicine. Tom was an incredibly successful pharmacist in Sheffield, President of the Pharmaceutical Society and Justice of the Peace for the City of Sheffield.

In a further link with Settle, Agnes and Sarah Gardner's younger brother **John Postlethwaite Gardner** married **Ann Harger** who was the daughter of **Robert Harger** and Agnes Hallpike. John was a tinnier and brazier and also had a shop in Stricklandgate. They had seven children, four of

MESSRS. SEVERS & BATESON
Having succeeded to the business of a Chemist and Druggist so long carried on by the late Mr. Severs, and for the last Twelve Years by the Trustees appointed under his will, hope by attention to business, and by bestowing that care for which the Establishment is famous, to merit a continuance of the favours so liberally bestowed on their predecessors.

JOSEPH SEVERS
Served a Six Years apprenticeship with Harvey and Reynolds, the well-know Chemists, in Leeds, and afterwards passed a year in study at the House of the Pharmaceutical Society in London.

THOMAS BATESON
Has had the actual management of the business since the death of the late Mr. Severs, and is on that account well-known to most of the persons frequenting the Shop. They have both passed the examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society.
Besides offering this guarantee, they hope by their conduct and management, to give practical proof of their business abilities.
The business will in future be carried on under the style of

SEVERS & BATESON,
PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMISTS,
KENDAL.

Kendal, September 10th 1869.

Settle Graveyard Project

whom died in infancy. John and Ann's son Christopher was a chiropodist. Ann Harger was the sister of Nancy Harger, Thomas Bateson's mother and also sister to Maria Harger who married plumber **Joseph Jackson** and Catherine Harger who married builder **Lawrence Hodgson**. Ann's brother was **Joseph Harger** who ran the successful furnishing empire in Settle and was the father of Robert Harger who married Mary Isabella Harvey (above).



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 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'.

With thanks to descendant Peter Thomson for his help with this account and also to Teresa Gordon for illustrations. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project

SC – Settle Chronicle, LSA - Lambert'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

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – The Chronicle, 2 – Liverpool Standard, 3 – Lancaster Gazette, 4 – Preston Herald, 5 – Kendal Times, 6 – Westmorland Gazette, 7 – Kendal Mercury, 8 – Lancaster Guardian

ph1 – photo with the kind permission of descendant Peter Thomson, ph2 – picture credited to descendants of the family on ancestry.co.uk, username parkesgk,