

The Wilmans, at the heart of the community

The Wilmans were part of Settle's backbone for generations, running inns, butchers and other businesses. The earlier generations are buried in Giggleswick of course, but a few more recent burials are in Settle graveyard.

The Wilmans originated in Bolton-by-Bowland but were in Giggleswick by the first half of the 18th century. All these local Wilmans descended from William Wilman and Alice Holgate. A characteristic of this family is the number of children who remained unmarried while others made up for this by having numerous children.

William and Alice's son James had a son John who married Betty Dawson and had three children James, Stephen and Nanny. James and his younger brother Stephen remained single and at the time of the 1841 census worked together as joiners, living at Castlekell, the tiny row of houses alongside the well near the Folly, now demolished.

The Tithe survey of 1844 tells us that by then Stephen had acquired a significant amount of property including the Talbot Inn and adjacent yards, several cottages in Upper Settle behind the Talbot and land around Watery Lane.

James was the landlord at the Talbot Inn until 1853. Whilst he was there an inquest was held into the death of poor Matthew Wilson, a 16 year old orphan, who worked at the mill and had been beaten by the manager/overlooker (foreman). The graphic article gives some indication of the harsh conditions for children working in the mill and how inquests were run in those days [3].



INQUEST.

An inquest was held at the Talbot Inn, in Settle, before T. Browne, Esq., coroner, on Friday, the 24th October, on the body of Matthew Wilson, aged 16 years. It was rumoured that the deceased became ill and he died from injuries received from a man named Sanderson, an overlooker at Mr Bashall's shed, where deceased was employed as a weaver. The medical attendants of the deceased were clearly of opinion, however, that the cause of death was typhus and diarrhoea; and the jury, after hearing their evidence and the evidence adduced at the inquest, unhesitatingly concurred in that opinion, and returned a verdict accordingly. The witnesses deposed as follows:—

Matthew Wilson, of Settle, weaver, being sworn said— I am a distant relation of the deceased. He was turned 16. He was a weaver, and lived in the same house with me at Margaret Ralph's. I saw him die. Six weeks ago to-day he came home crying, and stated the manager had kicked his backside and struck his head, both in and out of the mill. His face on the right side was red, and inflamed; ten days afterwards I saw the wound; his bottom was all bruises; the boy was in the house a week, and then took his bed; he continued in the house. The doctor attended him daily until he died.

By a Juror.—The boy complained daily of the injury. [Here John Sanderson, the manager alluded to, who had desired and gained admittance to the jury room, began to question the witness, but discontinued on the Coroner recommending him to be silent.]

James and Stephen returned to their joinery businesses and let out the Talbot Inn to a number of landlords including William Cork, Phineas Butler, Thomas Hodgson, Thomas Preston (who had trouble keeping order) and brother-in-law William Leech. William Leech, a farmer, had married Stephen and James' sister Nanny Wilman.

When Stephen died in 1879, aged 78, William Leech arranged for the sale of the inn, 16 acres of land and a house/shop [4]. James and Nanny died in 1881. *George Huthersall* was the next landlord at the Talbot.

Stephen's grave was not commemorated with an inscription on a stone, however James, Nanny and her husband William Leech were buried and commemorated with the Wilman parents on a flat tombstone which now forms part of a path.

John Wilman of Settle died XXI October MDCCCXXXVII (1837) aged LXXI (71) years. Here also lie the remains of Betty Wilman widow of the above named John Wilman, who died XVII June MDCCCXXXIX (1839) aged LXXX (80) years. Also of James Wilman, their son who died March 1881 aged 87 years. Also of Nanny Leech their daughter who died May 3rd 1881 aged 86 years. Also William Leech her husband died June 7th 1883 aged 89 years. A1j/11

James was the elder brother yet it was Stephen who was the landowner. James ran the inn although Stephen owned it. Was there a reason that Stephen took a back seat and was omitted from the gravestone inscription? Well possibly.

In 1843 Stephen hit the headlines of numerous national newspapers. In 1 May 1839, aged 40, he became the father of a child called **William Redshaw**. The mother was **Mary Ann Redshaw**, one of ten children of **Luke Redshaw**, a shoemaker and his wife **Winifred Cook** both from Kirkby Lonsdale. 16 year old Mary Ann had gone to work in service with the Wilmans and in those days that meant living-in with them. Stephen's father, James, had recently died and his mother, Betty, was ill and nearing the end of her life. Reports said that Stephen '*succeeded in triumphing over the poor girl's chastity*' and '*completed her ruin*'.

Stephen promised to marry Mary Ann and the wedding was arranged for Christmas Day, 1838 but a fortnight before he put it off because, he said, of his mother's health. He repeatedly claimed he did not want the child to be born a bastard but kept finding excuses to delay the wedding [5,3]. After William's birth Stephen paid expenses but these eventually stopped.

Mary Ann's father eventually went to solicitors to intervene. The Kirkby Lonsdale solicitor **Francis Pearson** and his apprentice **Henry Robinson** negotiated a down-payment of £20 plus 3 shillings per week for the support of the child. However,

TO BE LET,
And may be entered upon on the 12th of May next, all that valuable and well frequented INN called the
TALBOT INN,
In Settle, with Stables, Barn, Shippens, and other premises adjoining. TWO PASTURES containing about 16 acres may be taken with the above.
Also a HOUSE AND SHOP, now occupied by Mr. James Ellison, Bookseller. The present tenants will show the premises.
For particulars apply to Mr. WILLIAM LEACH, Swabock, near Settle.



BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE.
REDSHAW v. WILMAN.
Mr. BAINES and Mr. PASHLEY were for the plaintiff, and Mr. WILKINS and Mr. MONTGOMERY for the defendant. In this case Mary Ann Redshaw was the plaintiff, and Stephen Wilman the defendant. The action was for breach of promise of marriage. The defendant pleaded that he never made a promise.

Stephen refused to pay up and so the matter was referred to local solicitor *John Cowburn* who charged Stephen with a breach of promise of marriage. Solicitors Francis Pearson and Henry Robinson appeared as witnesses against Stephen. Stephen was fined £150 – a considerable sum. The national newspaper reports and the severity of the fine are indications of how poorly a breach of promise of marriage was regarded in those days and so Stephen may have been shunned by Settle society.

At York assizes an action for a breach of promise of marriage was brought by Mary Ann Redshaw against Stephen Wilman, a builder at Settle, when a verdict for the plaintiff was found: damages 150*l*. The plaintiff is the daughter of poor parents, and when 16 years of age (in 1838) she went to live with the defendant, who was then 40 years old, as servant. Wilman succeeded in triumphing over the poor girl's chastity, and she became pregnant. He promised to marry her before the confinement took place; the wedding-day was fixed, and the dinner actually ordered for the occasion, but it was put off in consequence of the alleged illness of the defendant's mother. From that time till the present, promise after promise had been made, until at length he had refused even to contribute towards the maintenance of his victim's offspring.

upon her. The defendant was at that time about 40 years of age; he was a joiner and builder in the town of Settle, and a man of considerable property. This young girl went from her parents' roof to reside in his house—for he was the master, and his mother lived with him—and, therefore, it was his duty to have been her protector, but instead of that he triumphed over her chastity—he completed her ruin—and she returned home to her parents in a state of pregnancy. The defendant appeared at that time anxious to do all in his power to give reparation for the injury he had done. On the very night on which she went home, and before her parents knew of her condition, he visited her at their house and stated his anxiety to make her his wife. In consequence of these professions, and notwithstanding the disparity in their years, the parents were induced to permit his visits, no doubt looking forward to their daughter being comfortably settled in life. By and bye, her pregnancy was discovered by

Understandably, the Redshaw family left Settle after this, with a fresh start in Liverpool. Mary Ann died, aged 34, in 1855 in Liverpool and son William had a military career. As for Stephen? Stephen lived with his brother James at the Talbot Inn for a few years and then moved to the outskirts of Upper Settle with a servant, Isabella Newhouse, from Long Preston who kept him company for over 20 years.

Going back a generation, William and Alice Holgate's son, another William Wilman, born in 1734, married Alice Bell in Giggleswick in 1766 and they had at least eight children. By 1773 William was recorded paying for an alcohol licence in Settle – he was known to run the newly erected Joiner's Arms in 1779. He may also have run the Black Bull which was located in the Market Place. In 1774 the Black Bull was used to host a number of bankruptcy cases including those of William Austin the younger of Middlesex, a velvet weaver and Thomas Hall of Settle, Hostler (looking after horses in the hostelryes) [1].

After William died in 1796, Alice carried on the business at the Black Bull. In those days inns provided the few large meeting spaces and so much of the town's administrative and judiciary business was conducted in them, such as this 'Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Township of Settle' in 1798 [A]. The Black Bull was the venue for Settle's first Freemasons Lodge in 1774, known as the 'Black Bull Lodge'. It was rather shortlived – after 15 years it collapsed and took another 95 years to be revived as Castleberg Lodge (which later took premises in Chapel Street).

Alice died in 1814 and is buried in Giggleswick with William with a flat tombstone, now rather overgrown.

William Austin the Younger, now or late of Hoxton in the County of Middlesex, Velvet-weaver; to appear Dec. 13, 19, and Jan. 7, at the Black Bull, in Settle. Attorney, Mr. Samuel Bourn, Horse-court, Temple.
Thomas Hall, of Settle in the County of York, Hostler; to appear Dec. 22, 23, and Jan. 14, at the Black Bull, in Settle. Attorney, Mr. William Carr, in Sett e.

At a Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Township of Settle "at the house of Alice Wilman."

SETTLE 24TH APRIL 1798.

We consider it would be an advantage not only to the town but an ease to the Overseers to have a Meeting once a month. We therefore adjourne this Meeting to the 10th day of June next at the Folly at Six o'clock in the Evening And continue such Meeting on the second Sunday [sic] in each succeeding Month at the time and place aforesaid.

The Jurors at the Court Leet having understood Wm. Clementson was continued Constable did not appoint one. We therefore appoint Christopher Procter Constable for the ensuing year.

JOHN BIRKBECK "
(and others).



Here lieth the remains of William Wilman of Settle who departed this life the 2nd day of September 1796 in the 62nd year of his age. Also Alice Wilman his wife who departed this life the 5th day of February 1814 in the 71st year of her age. B2/32

By the time of the 1841 census William and Alice's grandson, another **William**, son of **William**, owned the same property but it no longer operated as the Black Bull Inn. William had married **Agnes Gifford** whose family were well established butchers, so William joined the trade with his shop alongside several other butchers in the Shambles in Settle. Streets named 'the Shambles' are found in several towns and cities – it derives from the Saxon 'fleashammels' meaning 'the street of the butchers'. William and Agnes remained at the Shambles until they died and are buried in an unmarked grave in Giggleswick graveyard.



William and Agnes' son **John** continued working as a butcher with his shop in the Shambles and may well be one of the 'Shambles butchers' in the photo [ph1]. A veteran remembers the conditions for slaughtering and selling meat vividly and had already considered the other traders who worked on the floor below [CH]. Let's hope there were no leaks in the floor.



John married **Elizabeth Cornthwaite**, a Westmorland farmer's daughter, in 1866, just a year after his father had died. Elizabeth had come to Settle for work and had been a housemaid to Lorenzo Christie at Langcliffe Place. Lorenzo and his son Hector ran the Langcliffe Mills for decades. By the time of the next census John and Elizabeth and their expanding family lived in the Market Place but in a different building. The premises of the old Black Bull Inn and a couple of houses and outhouses were destroyed in 1871 to make room for the new Bank Building behind the Shambles and the Townhall.

ABOVE, beneath the arches, were the butcher's shops, kept by Robert and John Calvert, John Wilman, George Beardall, etc., where, at that period, the animals were slaughtered, and the meat sold in the same room. In those days, regulations for the safeguarding of the public well-being were conspicuous by their absence, but we got along very well without them, and I must confess I regard many of the restrictions of to-day as more irritating than helpful.

John and Elizabeth had five daughters and a son, none of whom married. **Jane** and **Ellen** died in infancy and are buried in the Ancient graveyard. In 1894 two of the daughters entertained at the Church of England Temperance Society meeting.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.—A moderately attended meeting of the members of the above Society was held at the Church House, on Thursday, the 13th inst. Mr. Henry Ingham presided. Pianoforte solos were played by Misses Wilman and Grime. Songs were rendered by Misses Brewin and Procter, and Mr. T. Foster. The Misses Wilman gave a duo, and Mr. Brewin supplied a couple of readings.

Miss Grime and **Mr Brewin** also performed [2]. In 1871 'Mr Wilman' performed with **Miss Ellis** at the Ribbleshead navy settlements to provide an alternative to other 'potentially corrupting activities'. John died in 1891, aged 61 and Elizabeth died in 1910, aged 72. The children continued to live together in Church Street.



Youngest daughter, another **Jane**, [ph2] worked as a headmistress of an elementary school. She was the honorary secretary to the Settle Coronation Committee which organised the town's celebrations for the



coronation of Edward VIII before his abdication and then that of George VI a year later. Eldest daughter Agnes was a dressmaker. Rachel became the housekeeper.

Son William continued in the butchery business. In 1946, aged 74, William resigned a position of Market Tolls collector *'and other appointments which he held'* [2]. He was the longest lived of the siblings being 92 when he died in 1964 after a long illness. This was the end of this line of Wilmans.

John and Elizabeth are buried with daughters Agnes and Rachel in *Old B18* and William and Jane are next to them in *Old B19*.

RETIREMENT.

At a meeting of the Settle Parish Council on Monday, Mr. William Wilman, who for 35 years has been Market Tolls Collector, resigned this position, and the other appointments which he held. Mr. Wilman is known over a wide area by amusement fair caterers and market traders who visit the town. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman (Mr. R. Nicholls), expressed their regret at Mr. Wilman's impending departure, and the Clerk was instructed to forward a letter of appreciation to him for his services.



In affectionate remembrance of John Wilman born August 24th 1829 entered into rest July 14th 1891. Also of Elizabeth wife of the above born Decr 18th 1837 entered into rest June 2nd 1910. He giveth his beloved sleep also of Agnes eldest daughter of the above who passed away on April 18th 1920. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. Also of Rachel daughter of the above who passed away on May 26th 1944, Old B18

In loving memory of William Wilman 1872-1954 also Jane Wilman 1880-1962, Old B19

The grave of William and Jane also contains the bodies of infants **Clarissa Hannah** and **Joseph Cox** who died during the 1890s. They were children of **Henry Marsden Cox** and **Mary Agnes Clapham** who later emigrated to Canada.

William and Alice Bell who ran the Black Bull had two spinster daughters, **Margaret** and **Mary**. They ran a boarding house at Jessamine Cottage at the foot of Constitution Hill. This was not any old boarding house but one for professional gentlemen. Long standing tenants were surgeon **Edward Harrison** and solicitor **George Dudgeon** who later married **Mary Hartley** who lived at at Whitefriars in Settle. **Mary** was part of the **Hartley** family of solicitors and **George** was obliged to change his name to **Hartley** as part of the marriage deal. At the time of the 1841 census **Margaret** and **Mary** employed a servant **Susannah Robinson** who married into the **Forrester** and then **Ambler** families. **Margaret** and **Mary** also ran a daily carrier (transport) service to Gisburn from the house. **Margaret** had an illegitimate daughter **Betsy** who married the boy next door, hatter **John Turner**.



...JR...

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. 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'.

Illustrations kindly provided 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 – Manchester Mercury, 2 – Lancaster Guardian, 3 – Kendal Mercury, 4 – Lancaster Gazette, 5 – Stamford Mercury

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

ph1 with the kind permission of Paul Cochrane, ph2 – credited to the Back in Settle Facebook site, contributed by Jeanne Carr.

A – The History of the Ancient Parish of Giggleswick, Bradshaw and Robinson