

## Elias Dickinson, who knew a thing or two about ferns

Elias Dickinson, born in 1799, was the son of farmer John Dickinson and his wife Ann Hardacre of Long Preston. In February 1822 Elias married Mary Woodworth in Bolton-by-Bowland and, within three months, his brother Thomas, a weaver and grocer in Chatburn, married Mary's sister Jane Woodworth. Elias, a labourer and Mary had at least three children, Elizabeth, John and Thomas in Wigglesworth, Mearbeck and Langcliffe respectively. Elias was probably attracted to Langcliffe by the opportunities at Claytons' cotton mills.



Work began to decline at the mill during the 1840s, but, somehow, Elias managed to secure a job as a gardener working for Thomas Clapham at the Old Hall in Stackhouse. This wonderful house had been built in 1695 by a previous Thomas Clapham and had been in the family ever since.

In 1857, Elias won particular praise and several prizes for his ferns at the North Ribblesdale Horticultural Show [1]. In 1888, Thomas Clapham's son's obituary included, 'Abraham Clapham was a keen naturalist and horticulturalist specialising in the rearing of ferns.' So, who did Abraham get his expertise from?

in the plant department. Several of the plants in the gentlemen's class would not have disgraced any exhibition. We may mention, as particularly worthy of notice, a noble collection of ferns, exhibited by Elias Dickinson, gardener to Thos. Clapham, Esq., and some



Elias stayed at Stackhouse for nearly 30 years and, in their 70s, Elias and Mary retired to live with daughter Elizabeth and her family in Settle. Mary died in 1872, aged 77 and was buried somewhere in the Ancient graveyard. It's possible she was buried in one of the two graves with a weathered gravestone. The use of RTI technology clearly identifies 'Mary' as part of the inscription.



Elias was 74 when Mary died. In 1887 he was seen as part of 'a remarkable group of four persons, whose united ages reached 340' [2]. They included Joseph Garner. In November 1888, Elias, aged 90!, was

knocked down by a butcher's cart and broke his thigh, ouch [LSA]. He eventually died in 1891, aged 93.

**LONGEVITY IN THE SETTLE DISTRICT.**—A remarkable group of men was formed by chance on the Town Hall steps, Settle, yesterday. It was composed of four persons, whose united ages reached 340 years, or an average of 85 years. The names and ages are as follows:—Elias Dickinson, 88; Joseph Garner, 88; Thomas Hardacre, 82; Thomas Hawtorn, Long Preston, 82.

6—Accident to Elias Dickinson, of Settle, who was knocked down by a butcher's cart and had his thigh broken.—Entertainment for the benefit of the Mechanics' Institute at Long Preston

Elias was buried with daughter Elizabeth and her husband John Davis [ph1], in Old B47. It was not possible to bury Elias with Mary as the Ancient graveyard had shut in 1882, being 'dangerously full'. John Davis worked as a labourer, light porter and warehouseman.



Settle Graveyard Project

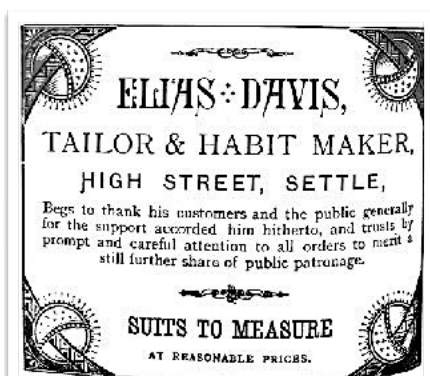
In Loving Memory of Elias Dickinson Born Feb 25th 1799 died April 24th 1891. Also of Elizabeth (his daughter) wife of John Davis Born March 24th 1823 died June 9th 1897. Also of John Davis Born July 26th 1829. Died Feb 7th 1904. Their Children Rise Up and Call them Blessed, Old B47



This fantastic photo [ph1] was given to the family following the erection of the stone, showing Elias' gravestone in front of a quite empty Old graveyard in front of the railway embankment.

In 1878 John and Elizabeth Davis' son **William Thomas Davis** married **Eliza Jane Gilbert**, one of many Cornish folk who had moved to Settle to find work in the mills as the mining industry declined. The following year William Thomas signed up to the police force. From his documentation we know he was a tall 5 foot 10 inches (as expected for police constables) and had sandy hair and hazel eyes. Unfortunately, he was dismissed within six months. Police were expected to be a role model 24 hours each day, on and off duty. A high proportion of constables were dismissed for being drunk and this may have been the case for William Thomas. William Thomas, Eliza Jane and son Thomas moved to the north-east where William Thomas worked as a foreman in a paint factory.

John and Elizabeth's son **Elias Davis**, born in 1859, was a fine looking man [ph1] who bought his tailoring business at the corner of High Street and Chapel Street from **John Snell** in the early 1900s [LSA]. James F Riley recalls '*keeping an eye on the slim silhouette and side whiskers of his neighbour, Elias Davis the tailor, still the model of the well-dressed Edwardian*' [A]. Elias was a sidesman at Holy Ascension for many years and an active participant and teacher in the Settle St John's Ambulance, alongside **Dr Buck**, helping to deliver a talk on 'Restoration from Drowning, by Silvester's Method' with **Thomas Henry Holden** [ph2].



"It is Policy to Dress well."

**Elias Davis,**

MILITARY, CIVIL, AND  
CLERICAL TAILOR : :  
: : : AND COSTUMIER

**Best Materials.**

Cut and Fit Guaranteed.

**HIGH STREET, SETTLE.**

**PROGRAMME:**

Introductory Address on Ambulance Work ..... **Dr. BUCK.**

Restoration from Drowning, by Silvester's Method, adopted by the Royal Humane Society,  
Messrs. T. H. HOLDEN and E. DAVIS.



Elias Davis had married the daughter of a market gardener, **Ellen Marshall**. They are buried close to Elias' parents in *Old C49* with their five year old daughter **Mildred Davis**.



*In Loving Memory of Elias Davis who departed this life Dec 18th 1933 aged 74 years. Also of Ellen beloved wife of the above died May 19th 1948 aged 92 years. Also of Mildred daughter of the above died May 25th 1898 in her fifth year, Old C49*

Elias and Ellen Davis' other daughter **Ellen Davis** married **Richard Mason Tomlinson**, son of **William Tomlinson** and **Ann Mason** [ph1]. William worked as the coachman to the **Edgar family** at Townhead for 45 years, living at Townhead Cottage. They celebrated their diamond (60th) wedding anniversary in 1937 and received a telegram from King George and Queen Elizabeth [4]. The newspaper report tells us they married at Cowgill church near Dent which is where Ann's parents farmed. William and Ann lived very long lives and were buried in the grave *New G23*. Richard and Ellen were buried in *New D2*



#### DIAMOND WEDDING.

Mr. and Mrs. William Tomlinson, of Town Head, Settle, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary on Monday with a family re-union held in the Conservative Club Assembly Rooms, Settle. Mr. and Mrs. Tomlinson were married at Cowgill Church, Dent, on May 24th, 1877, and for a short time resided at Embsay, near Skipton. They went to Settle over 50 years ago. Mr. Tomlinson being in the service of the late Dr. and Mrs. Edgar, of Town Head, Settle, as coachman for about 45 years until his retirement about five years ago. Amongst the congratulatory telegrams was one from their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth.



*In loving memory of Ann Tomlinson who passed away Oct 19th 1945 aged 87 years. Also William beloved husband of the above who passed away May 15th 1951 aged 96 years. In God's keeping, New G23*

*In Loving Memory of Ellen Tomlinson who died Dec 6th 1964 aged 73 years. And Richard Mason Tomlinson, husband of the above who died Mar 22 1972 Aged 82 years, New D2*

Elias and Mary Dickinson's eldest son **John Dickinson** married **Ann (Todd) Waterhouse**, a widow and eldest daughter of **Henry Todd**, who also worked at Townhead, as a gardener. Obviously, John Dickinson was the ideal son-in-law for Henry, being perfectly experienced to take over gardening duties at Townhead when Henry died.



**John Dickinson** had previously been married to **Margaret Fletcher**, a Clapham farmer's daughter. She had been working in Settle as a housekeeper to an 86 year old widow and clogger, **John Reed**, in Duke Street. John and Margaret had a joint wedding with Margaret's sister **Mary Fletcher** in 1852 [3]. Mary married **James Mansergh**, who ran the Rathmell sawmill for decades and gave him seven children.

On Saturday last, by the Rev. T. Haswell, at the Wesleyan Chapel, Settle, Mr John Dickenson, of Stainforth, to Miss Margaret Fletcher, dressmaker, of Settle; and at the same time and place, Mr James Mansergh, of Rathmell, joiner, to Miss Mary Fletcher, of Settle. The brides are sisters, and the two marriages being the first solemnized in the above chapel, each party was presented with a copy of the Scriptures and a Wesleyan Hymn Book.



Poor Margaret died four years after her wedding to John. It was another ten years before John married Ann. In the meantime, he worked as a servant for **George Dudgeon**

**Hartley** at Whitefriars in Church Street, probably doing a bit of gardening?

John was a good man. When wife Ann died, aged 48, John continued to bring up his six children and Sarah's nieces, nephews and grandchildren from her first marriage. Amongst other things, John was the groundsman for Settle Tennis Club from its formation, but resigned in 1900, aged 75, because of 'poor health'. He died in 1902 and is buried in the same grave as both his wives on the back wall of the Ancient churchyard.

*In loving memory of Margaret, wife of John Dickinson who died Oct 5th 1856 aged 32 years. Also of Ann, his second wife who died Sept 19th 1887, aged 48 years. Also of the above John Dickinson who died June 4th 1902 aged 77 years, Anc E2.*



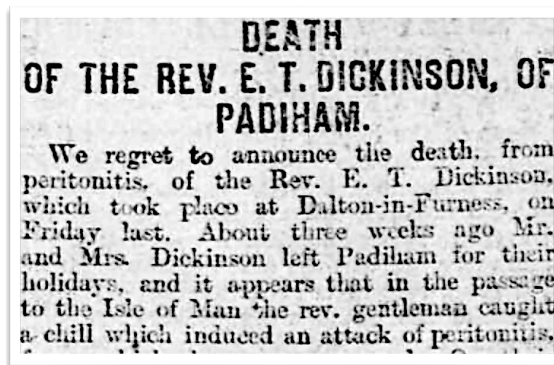
Elias Dickinson's son **Thomas Dickinson**, born in 1827, married **Hannah Farrer** and they had two children. Thomas worked as an innkeeper, policeman and insurance salesman in Liverpool and Cheshire [ph1] and they retired to Settle. They are buried with their spinster daughter Mary Ann in *Old C50* next to Elias and Ellen Davis.

*In Loving Memory of Hannah wife of Thomas Dickinson who entered into rest June 19th 1899 aged 70 years. Also of the above Thomas Dickinson died June 27th 1908 aged 80 years. Also May Ann daughter of the above died May 20th 1938 aged 77 years, Old C50*



Thomas and Hannah's son **Elias Thomas Dickinson** became a Wesleyan Minister in Cheshire. In 1885 he married a farmer's daughter, **Sarah Clark** and they had one child who died in infancy.

Ten years later Elias Thomas died of an attack of peritonitis which he appears to have contracted after a chill picked up on a ferry to the Isle of Man for a holiday. He was just 39 [5].



*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 [settlresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settlresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*Thanks to descendant Mike Howarth for his help in the compilation of this account. Illustrations kindly provided by Teresa Gordon.*

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

*Settle Graveyard Project*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Bradford Daily Telegraph, 3 – Kendal Mercury, 4 – Lancaster Guardian, 5 – Burnley Express*

*LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*

*ph1 – photo with the kind permission of Mike Howarth, ph2 – photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook Page*

*A – Listening and Remembering, Memoirs of a Settle Boy by James F Riley*