

The railway officers

After the Settle and Carlisle railway was built by the Midland Railway they needed railway maintenance men, signalmen and inspectors to run it. The signalmen and inspectors tended to be recruited from elsewhere and were provided with accommodation in the Railway Cottages on Cammock Lane. These had been built at the same time as the railway with the same corporate style of architecture. At the time it was felt that *'The erection of such structures shows a wise policy, as unless the men are comfortably housed, it will be a difficult task to keep them at their various posts, in the solitary and dreary places through which the line passes.'*[WSA]. Here is another of its residents – see also *Silcock, Bolt, Beckerton, Moore and Dilley*



Henry Freeman, unlucky railway signalman

Henry, born in 1843 in Draughton, near Kettering in Northamptonshire, was one of 13 children of **William Freeman**, an agricultural labourer and his wife **Jane Marlow**. The family had lived in Draughton for generations, however most of the children found employment elsewhere, from London and Kent to Wales and Barnsley. A few found work in Leicestershire nearby. Henry and his brother George found work on the railways. **George Freeman** (NOT the Yorkshire cricketer) was a stationmaster in Dewsbury and Henry started out as a pointsman at Rowsley, Derbyshire. Somehow along the line he met and married **Annie Smith** from near Kirkby Lonsdale, in 1867. By 1877, for the birth of their third child **Elizabeth Annie Freeman**, they were living at 3 Railway cottages, with Henry working as a railway signalman.

Both Annie, aged 62 and Elizabeth Annie, aged 19 died within two months of each other in 1895, probably from the same disease and are buried in the unmarked grave *Old DX8*. Henry retired to live with his sister **Ruth** and her husband **Mansell Sturges**, a shepherd, back in Leicestershire.

Henry and Annie's son **James Smith Freeman** began to work as a lamp lighter for the railway in Burton-upon-Trent but gave up after two years. Then he returned to Settle and worked for a short while as a printer with **James Wilcock Lambert** until he joined the West Riding Police Constabulary. His records describe him as a tall, brown haired man with a scar above his right eye. He was sent to serve in Dewsbury, Pontefract and then promoted to work in Harrogate and York. In 1907 he was *'commended by Chief Constable for efficiency rendered to John Harrison (first aid) who had attempted to drown himself. 14 Nov 1907'*. James remained a bachelor and died in York.

Commended by Chief Constable for efficiency rendered to John Harrison (first aid) who had attempted to drown himself. 14 Nov 1907

Henry and Annie's eldest son **William Henry Freeman** followed his father to work on the railway, from the age of 18, as a number taker. When he was 25 he married **Ann Ransley/Rawnsley** whose family had moved to Settle to work in the mills. Ann's sister **Amy Louisa Ransley** married into the **Brassington family**.

William Henry found work as a railway signalman in Settle, living in Craven Cottages near Ann's parents and then as an inspector in Hellifield. Ann had four children. Tragically William Henry was killed, aged 44, in a gale on the railway by a passing train, thought to be the 6.52pm from

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Morecambe to Bradford [1]. The Coroner's verdict was 'Death by misadventure - accidentally fell from the platform onto the main line where he was caught and knocked down by a passing train receiving injuries causing almost immediate death'. Thank goodness for small mercies.

William Henry was brought back to Settle and buried with his mother and sister in the unmarked grave *Old DX8*. The rest of the family lived in Skipton.

THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN BLOWN ON TO THE RAILWAY AT HELLIFIELD..

*William Freeman (44), a signalman inspector, of 25, Upper Sackville Street, Skipton, who was found at Hellifield station last evening, lying with his face partly on the metals and bleeding from a wound on the head, is believed to be a victim of the gale. He was unconscious when found, and though Dr. Marsh, of Long Preston, was called, the unfortunate man passed away before anything could be done for him.

At eight o'clock Freeman visited a signalman named Thomas H. Bentham, at his Hellifield box, and remained with him until 8.30 when he left to catch the 8.36 train to Skipton. A strong wind was blowing at the time. Bentham saw the deceased reach the Skipton platform. At 8.45 p.m., Arthur Fairbrother, passenger shunter at Hellifield, was riding in his van on the loop line going to the South Bay platform, when he found the body of Freeman in the four foot of the upper main line.

It is supposed that the deceased was blown from the platform on to the line, and caught by the dust shield and life guard of the 8.52 p.m. train from Morecambe to Bradford.

<p><i>Railway Signalman's Inspector of 25, Upper Sackville Street Skipton</i></p>	<p><i>Accidentally fell from the platform on to the main line where he was caught and knocked down by a passing train receiving injuries causing almost immediate death</i></p>	<p><i>Certificate received from Edgar Wood Coroner for the Craven's District of Yorkshire W.R. Inquest held twenty seventh December 1912</i></p>
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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'.

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