

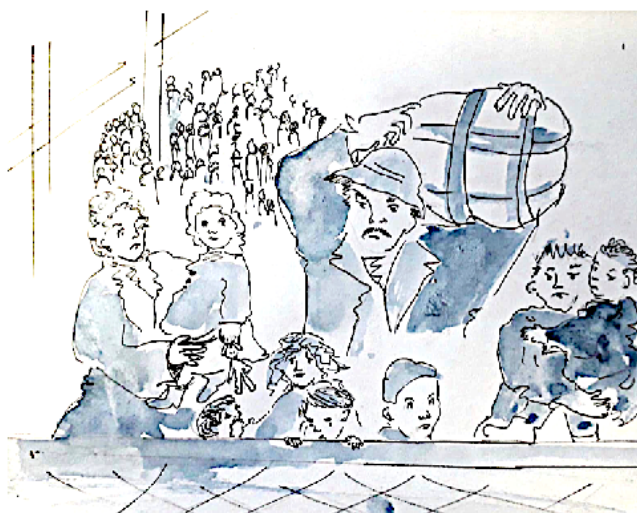
The Thistlethwaites

The Thistlethwaite families of Clapham date back centuries – **Johannes**, son of **Guilliam** was born in 1677 in Clapham parish. Being a fertile family there are numerous descendants who married into other established families such as Carr, Parker, Taylor, Dixon, Waller, Knowles and Twisleton. In the early days the family was recorded as *'Thistlewood'* but, for some reason during the 1850s, became Thistlethwaite which is harder to both say and spell. One branch of Thistlethwaites found their way to Holy Ascension graveyard.

When census records began in 1841 **James Thistlewood**, an agricultural labourer, lived in the village of Austwick with some of his sons. His first wife, **Nancy Morley**, had died in 1807 at the birth of a daughter, **Sally**, who also died. His second wife **Elizabeth Fothergill** had at least nine children before she died in 1828.

Most of James and Elizabeth's children worked in farming or weaving, most locally. However, in 1854, son **Henry Thistlethwaite** emigrated to Canada with his wife **Jane Tate** and seven children – Jane's brother had already emigrated and Henry was able to work for him at his farm until he found his feet. In an incredible letter to his family he describes a perilous six week Atlantic voyage, ridden with disease. *'We continued against head-winds and calms for more than six weeks. All went well on board for near on five weeks, when an illness commonly called ship-fever broke out. It resembled the cholera as well as the measles. One child was taken on one side of us, and in a few days two on the other side next to us. Then our children and my wife had them, and were reduced to a weak state. My wife was given up by all, and there was a time when I did not expect her living many hours. The measles attacked the two youngest children, who had been very sick all the way.'*

This was followed by a 300 mile rail journey during which their youngest child, infant **Clara**, died in their arms. Finally they travelled by steam boat to Lake Ontario. Once in Canada Henry's 50 acres of land was uncultivated *'The uncleared land is a thick wood of long oak, maple and pine. The valleys are shallow but soft and watery and are a thick wood of spruce or larch, cedar and black ash.'* Henry must have liked a challenge and was optimistic about their future. Jane had four more children, including another Clara. Canada appeared to suit them well. Henry lived until he was 87 dying of *'old age and prostation disease'* and Jane was 78 when she died [ph3].



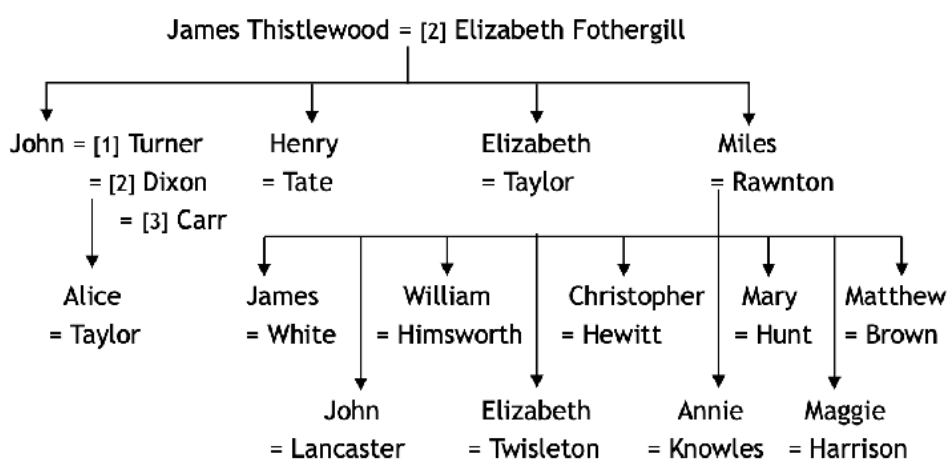
James and Elizabeth's daughter **Elizabeth Thistlethwaite** married **David Taylor**, a Settle clogger, but they didn't have any children. David later became the sub postmaster in Giggleswick. James and Elizabeth's son **John Thistlethwaite** was a farmer who worked from Bark House, Wharfe, near Austwick. He was unlucky in marriage. His first wife, **Bridget Turner**, died at the birth of their first child, **Ann**, who was brought up by her Turner relations. John's

second wife was **Mary Dixon** had John five children but died, aged 45, a few years after the birth of her fifth child, **Alfred**. Alfred took over Bark House farm until deciding to follow his uncle Henry to Ontario, Canada. Wife Mary's sister, **Isabella Dixon**, married **Robert Garstang** who was responsible for Garstangs Yard and the Harts Head (old and new) in Giggleswick. Isabella's grandson was **Dr Charles William Buck**.

John and Mary's daughter **Alice Thistlethwaite** married **William Taylor** from Croft Closes Farm up the hill from Giggleswick. This fertile pairing produced plenty of offspring to maintain the local population for years to come. Their daughter **Elsie Taylor** married 'rotter' **Jack Bradley** who left her after 'bedding the servant girl'. Fabulously Elsie took revenge on her wedding photo, the shape of her husband neatly cut out! [ph3] Family suggest Elsie died of a broken heart just a few years later when the youngest of three children, **Betty**, was just eight.



The Thistlethwaites



John's third wife was **Ellen Carr** who, according to family records was not too popular as a stepmother to Mary's children. John was buried in Clapham graveyard.

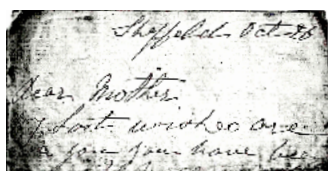
Going back a generation, this left James and Elizabeth's son **Miles**, born in 1817, who married **Elizabeth (Betty) Rawnton** from Tatham in 1838 and this was the branch that found their way to Settle under unfortunate circumstances. Miles worked as a timber merchant and carrier for **Robert Ingleby**, the Clapham land owner, a lucrative job. At the time of the 1841 census Miles lived with his father James and a young son James. The reason that he wasn't with Elizabeth is that she had given birth to their second son John just five days before. Elizabeth's sister was helping with the birth. Miles died in 1858, aged 40, just six months after the birth of the youngest of nine children, **Matthew**, which is an interesting name when combined with the surname Thistlethwaite. Miles was buried in Clapham graveyard right next to his brother John.



This left Elizabeth with nine children to bring up. Without an inheritance, survival of widowed mothers was precarious but Miles left Elizabeth a healthy £800 which would be worth thousands of pounds in today's value. Elizabeth moved the family to Settle and, with the help of her elder children, ran a shop (on the site of the current Coop) specialising in earthenware and later, confectionery. Elizabeth died, aged 78, some 48 years after Miles.

JAMES THISTLETHWAITE,
COAL DEALER, SETTLE STATION,
 Begs to announce that he has begun to deal in the under-mentioned articles which he will be happy to supply upon the best terms, and on the shortest notice.
HAY, STRAW, TURNIPS, MANGOLD WURTZEL, CARROTS, and POTATOES.
 Orders received at the Railway Station or at the residence of Mrs. Thistlethwaite, Market Place, Settle, will receive prompt attention.

Miles and Elizabeth's children? Eldest son **James** was a coal merchant [SC]. In 1866 he married **Sarah White**, a labourer's daughter, in Sheffield and brought her up to Settle in 1867 to have a photo taken by the Horner family [ph4]. Unfortunately James died of 'pneumonia and congestion of the brain' in Sheffield in 1873, aged just 34 with his brother **William Thistlethwaite** in attendance. He was buried with his father at Clapham. An incredible letter from a descendant of the family indicated this



was an unhappy marriage. Unfortunately the year is not provided but appears to have been written sometime after James died and, seemingly, soon before her own death:

'Sheffield Oct 26. Dear Mother, My last wishes are for you, you have been a good mother and when I am gone think that your unhappy child is happen better off. I will never tell it to the world the cause of my unhappiness. I know I am unhappy and very unhappy and I know I have seen him for the last. I will forgive him and I hope the almighty will say to us both 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'.. . I will now conclude my dearest mother with your oldest daughter best live I remain your unhappy child. S Thistlethwaite.'



Mrs Thistlethwaite, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

It was dated 'October 26th' and Sarah died in Sheffield in September 1876, aged 40. So, the letter was written at least 11 months before her death. Sadly, Sarah died of phthisis, known as the 'slow death' because sufferers knew they were dying several months and sometimes years before the actual death. She died in the workhouse, the only medical provision (of sorts) for the working classes. Miles and Elizabeth's on **John** worked on the railways, being a stationmaster in Keighley and Lancaster while bringing up his children with wife **Olive Lancaster**.

Son **William** started work as a railway clerk. He married **Alice Himsworth**, the daughter of **John Himsworth** and **Alice Bowskill**. John was a solicitor's clerk in Settle who ended his own life in 1860 leaving his wife with nine children [SC]. William's wife Alice was 15 when her father died. Alice was seven months pregnant with their son James when they married. This was not unusual – one in five women were pregnant at the time of marriage at that time. Eight more children followed. William and Alice followed several of her siblings to work in the new iron industry in Workington in Cumbria.

Daughter **Elizabeth** married **Francis Twisleton**, a butcher and they had a daughter **Mary Elizabeth**. Francis was the younger brother of **Thomas Twisleton** and **Henry Lea Twisleton**, the 'Craven Poets'. Francis ran his business in the High Street next to the Talbot Inn. At the time of the 1881 census Francis' apprentice was **Robert Wills Garner**, the son of **Robert Garner**. Later that year Francis was declared bankrupt [3]. Despite this, Francis still took an active life in Settle. He was elected to the committee of the Conservative club in 1885 [2]. Francis was in the good company of other notable residents including **John**



Birkbeck, Thomas Holmes, John Winskill and great uncle **James Twisleton**. Francis was only 34 when he died in 1887 and Elizabeth followed in 1890, aged 42. Their daughter Mary Elizabeth was only 11 when her mother died so lived with her aunt **Mary (Thistlethwaite) Hunt** and then with spinster aunt **Nanny Twisleton**, running a confectionery shop. Mary Elizabeth also remained a spinster. Elizabeth and Francis are buried together in *Old A33* with Francis' sister **Nannie**. The gravestone also commemorates the life of daughter **Mary Elizabeth**, but she is not buried in this grave.

past year having been adopted, the Rev. A. W. M. Close, and Messrs. John Winskil, junr., Richard Hardacre, John Henry Greenwood, Thomas Holmes, and Francis Twisleton were elected committee-men for two years in conjunction with an equal number of gentlemen who were elected twelve month ago, and who retire in April, 1886. Mr. John Har-



In loving memory of Francis Twisleton died Feb 21st 1887 aged 36 (34) years. Also of Elizabeth wife of the above died Dec 28th 1890 aged 45 years. Thy will be done. Also Nannie Twisleton sister of the above died Feb 29th 1924 aged 69 years. Mary Elizabeth Twisleton died June 4th 1931 aged 52 years only daughter of the above Francis and Elizabeth Twisleton, Old A33.

Miles and Elizabeth's son **Christopher** spent his career in retail. From running the Coop in Bentham he became a hat and cap manufacturer in Manchester. His wife **Sarah Ann Hewitt** had two daughters, **Bertha** and **Maude**, and two sons, **Ernest** and **Claude**. Both sons died in infancy and this may have been too much for Christopher. Aged 42, in 1891, Christopher took his own life in the Ribble whilst visiting his poor mother Elizabeth [1]. His body was discovered by **George Towler** of Hollin Hall, Rathmell. Christopher was buried in *Old CX33* and this is where his mother and spinster daughter **Maude** later joined him. It's not clear what happened to Christopher's widow **Sarah Ann**, but daughters **Maude** and **Bertha** were brought up by Elizabeth suggesting she remarried, or died. Daughter **Bertha** married **Robert Wilkinson**, a Gargrave timber merchant.

supper and retired to rest. During the night he appears to have got up and left the house by a sitting-room window on the ground floor, the plants being removed to enable him to get out. He had no clothing on except his shirt. The body was not found until Friday evening, when Mr. George Towler, of Hollin Hall, discovered it standing in an upright position in the back water of the river Ribble at a distance of over two miles from Settle, to which place he must

Miles and Elizabeth's daughter **Annie** married **John Knowles**, the eldest of ten children of **William Knowles** and **Esther Gifford**. John worked as a tanner in Upper Settle [ph1], out of sight and smell from the rest of the town (subject to the wind direction). John and Annie are buried in *Old G32* with son **William** and also their niece **Mary Elizabeth Twisleton** who was commemorated on her parents' stone.



In affectionate remembrance of Annie wife of John Knowles of the tannery born Sep 28th 1850 died Feb 15th 1908. Also of the above John Knowles died July 6th 1920 aged 78 years. Also William their son died May 22nd 1961 aged 89 years, Old G32.



In 1876, Miles and Elizabeth's daughter **Mary Thistlethwaite** [ph4] married **James Hunt**, the well known hairdresser cum jeweller, optician, perfumer and even dentist based in the Town Hall [LSA, ph1]. Like so many others during the 1860s, James's father **Benjamin Hunt** had moved his family to **Langcliffe** from **Norfolk** as the East Anglian agricultural depression took root. James started work at the mills and became an overlooker



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Miss Mary Thistlethwaite, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

(floor manager), however after his marriage to Mary turned to hairdressing. They had two sons, **John** and **Benjamin** who carried on the business and daughter **Emma Ethel** who remained a spinster and worked as a music and singing teacher. The family are buried in the Quaker graveyard.

James' brother **John Hunt** [ph1] was a mechanic at the cotton mill and also made money selling the new fashion of bicycles. The Hunt brothers were excellent local photographers – the Back in Settle facebook page has numerous examples of their work. James' sister **Mary Ann Hunt** married **George Marshall Robinson** the son and partner of the immensely successful solicitor **Henry Robinson**. They lived in Leeds and Keighley.



Miles and Elizabeth's daughter, **Maggie Thistlethwaite** had her photo taken at the Horner studios in 1876 [ph4]. Three years later she married **William Harrison**, a joiner from Clapham and they moved to Bolton where they had two children.

Miles and Elizabeth's youngest son, **Matthew Thistlethwaite** worked as a grocer in High Street [LSA]. During the 1890s Matthew ran a Temperance Hotel in the Market Place [LSA]. The advert suggesting it had been established for 38 years was obviously not reported to the trading



Miss Maggie Thistlethwaite, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)



Settle Graveyard Project

standard commission. There were several Temperance Hotels and Bars in Settle during the 1890s but none from the previous decades. Matthew married Isabel Brown and they had three children. Son Miles died in infancy in 1885 and is buried in Giggleswick graveyard as Settle graveyard was closed due to being full at that stage. Matthew retired in 1907 and the business was taken over by John Clayton.

Matthew and Isabel named their daughters Mabel and (incredibly) Phyllis Thistlethwaite. Mabel regularly performed for the Settle Amateur Operatic Society before marrying a surveyor Arthur Kilner. She was photographed (on the right) with her relation Hilda Hunt, daughter of John Hunt [ph2]. Phyllis, a very friendly and popular teacher at Settle Primary School, remained a spinster.



Mrs Hilda Hunt.

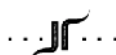


Miss Mabel Thistlethwaite.



Matthew and Isabel are buried in grave Old J25.

In Loving Memory of Matthew Thistlethwaite who died 26th November 1924 aged 67 years. Also of Isabel, the beloved wife of the above who died 24th March 1950 aged 88 years



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.

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 settlerearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

With thanks to descendant Jim Parker (who is related to many people in this graveyard!) for his help in the compilation of this story, photos and the letter from Henry Thistlethwaite. Illustration kindly provided by Teresa Gordon. 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

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ph1 – photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook site, ph2 – with the kind permission of the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, ph3 – with the kind permission of Jim Parker, relation, ph4 – Image 2022.1.68.4, Mrs Thistlethwaite, Image 2022.1.68.3, Miss Mary Thistlethwaite, Image 2022.1.68.34 Miss Maggie Thistlethwaite from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life



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