

Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson, who could not help himself. . .

Joseph was born on 19 January 1823, in Burton in Lonsdale, to **William Wilson**, a stonemason and **Jane Oddie**. Joseph's parents may have died when he was young and this might have contributed to his unusual decision making later in life. In August 1848 Joseph, now a draper, married **Mary Ann Clarkson** who had worked as a servant for an innkeeper in Thornton-in-Lonsdale and they settled there. Despite the incredible events that the lottery of life threw up for Joseph, Mary Ann dutifully gave birth to and brought up six daughters and two sons.

Unfortunately, just three years after their marriage, in November 1851, Joseph was declared bankrupt [1].

Thomas Wilson, Lancelin, York, draper and stone-mason.
Joseph Harrison Wilson, Burton-in-Lonsdale, York, draper.
Charles Read. Great Grimsby. Lincoln. wine and spirit

Joseph took the path of many other bankrupts in deciding to move the family away and have a fresh start. The 1857 trade directory listed Joseph as a schoolmaster in Rathmell. Unfortunately, this didn't work out too well either. In June 1859 a legal notice appeared explaining that Joseph's finances were being taken into administration under the watchful eye of **Josias Atkinson**, registrar [2]. Sadly, this was followed by a bankruptcy declaration in February 1862 very soon after the Bankruptcy Act of 1861 [3]. This act removed the distinction between traders and non-traders so that Joseph, a schoolmaster, could apply. Joseph was the first ever case of bankruptcy dealt with by the local court and the only hearing during 1862. His name is in the history books! As well as being a schoolmaster Joseph provided occasional board for scholars (probably attending Giggleswick School) and was an agent to the Provincial Fire and Life Insurance Company [3].

Legal Notices.

WHEREAS a Petition of **JOSEPH HARRISON ODDIE WILSON**, formerly of Burton in Lonsdale, in the West Riding of the county of York, schoolmaster and milliner, but afterwards and now of Rathmell, in the said county, schoolmaster, sometimes providing board for the scholars, and agent to the Provincial Welsh Fire and Life Insurance Company, an Insolvent Debtor, having been filed in the County Court of Yorkshire, holden at Settle, in the said county, and an interim order for protection from process having been given to the said Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson under the provisions of the statutes in that behalf made and provided, the said Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson is hereby required to appear in the said Court to be holden at Settle aforesaid, before the Judge of the said Court, on the *Thirtieth day of June next*, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon precisely, for his first Examination touching his debts, estate, and effects, and to be further dealt with according to the provision of the said statutes; and Notice is hereby given that the Choice of Assignees is to take place at the time so appointed.

All persons indebted to the said Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson, or who have any of his effects, are not to pay or deliver the same but to Mr. Josias Atkinson, Registrar of the said Court, at his office at Settle, in the said county.—May 25, 1859. B7715

THE BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1861.

In the County Court of Yorkshire holden at Settle, in the matter of **JOSEPH HARRISON ODDIE WILSON**, of Rathmell, in the County of York, Schoolmaster, Copyist, and Insurance Agent, Bankrupt.

WHEREAS, at a public sitting of the Court held on the Sixth day of February instant, the Court granted an Order of Discharge to the said Bankrupt;

Notice is hereby given, that an Order of Discharge will be delivered to the Bankrupt at the expiration of thirty days from this date, unless, in the meantime, an Appeal be entered against the judgment of the said Court.

Dated this Sixth day of February, 1862.
JOSIAS ATKINSON, Registrar.

As if the bankruptcies weren't enough Joseph got himself into much more self-inflicted trouble. At the time of the census in April 1861 Joseph was still working as a schoolmaster, living at the school house in Rathmell. However in October that year he was recorded living on the south side of Constitution Hill with a neighbour, Mrs Ellen (Haythornthwaite) Duckett, the widow of **Charles Duckett**, a farmer. Joseph and Mrs Duckett were both moving out, typically, at the end of a 6 month lease.

Just a month after this, on 25th November 1861, neighbour Mrs Duckett had a terrible accident when crossing the line at Settle Station (which we

TO BE LET,

And entered upon on the 12th day of November next,
TWO DWELLING-HOUSES,

Pleasantly situated on the south side of Constitution Hill, Settle, in the several occupations of Mr J H O Wilson and Mrs Ellen Duckett. Also a Room, situate at the top of Constitution Hill.

The respective tenants will show the premises, and for further particulars apply to Mr E T Foster, Settle, the owner.
Settle, 1st October, 1861.

have known as Giggleswick Station since the Settle and Carlisle railway was built). In those days there was no bridge between platforms so passengers had to cross over the track [ph2]. Ellen fell and broke her leg because it was dark, rainy and windy. Mrs Duckett claimed the station lights were not illuminated and three witnesses supported her claim. The witnesses were *Thomas Leeming*, watchmaker, *PC Lindsay* from Giggleswick and her old neighbour Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson. The railway claimed the lights were on but in the end Ellen was awarded £25 damages. Ellen moved away to Lancashire with her £25, probably being very grateful to Joseph and the other witnesses.



However a year later, in August 1862, there was another court case about the accident. The three witnesses who supported Mrs Duckett in her claims that the station lights were not illuminated were taken to court for perjury [4]. Joseph was represented by the successful solicitor *Henry Robinson* who, it transpired, had previously employed Joseph. However, Henry walked out of the hearing very soon after the start on the grounds that he had not had enough time to read information from the original case. Perhaps he had cold feet about the case too? As a result, Joseph was unrepresented.

CROWN COURT.—FRIDAY.
 Before Mr. Justice KEATING.
PERJURY IN AN ASSIZE TRIAL.
JOSEPH HARRISON ODDIE WILSON (on bail) was charged with perjury. Mr. PRICE, Q.C., and Mr. BRUCE prosecuted; Mr. SHAW and Mr. HANNAY defended the prisoner.
 At the York assizes, in July last, the prisoner appeared as an important witness in a cause in which a Mrs. Ellen Duckett sued the Midland Railway Company for damages for breaking her leg as she crossed the Company's line at Settle. It was alleged that the cause of the accident was a want of light at the station, a fact to which the prisoner swore; whilst it was now proved that all the night of the accident he was at East Markham, thirteen miles distant from its scene. Guilty.—Eighteen months' imprisonment.

It transpired that John Harrison Oddie Wilson was not even at the station at the time. Registrar and high bailiff *John Cowburn* had sent Joseph away on that night, at his own request, to collect a signature from Mr Ingham, a Judge, on his bankruptcy notice. This would prevent *John Cragg*, the county bailiff in Skipton from executing his warrant to obtain goods from him. Mr Ingham lived in East Marton near Gargrave so Joseph took the train to see him. John Cowburn

most important. The charge against Wilson was that he had given evidence which was not true at the trial of a cause at York, in which Mrs. Duckett, a dressmaker residing at Settle, was plaintiff, and the Midland Railway Company were defendants. The action was brought by the plaintiff to recover damages she had sustained through having broken her leg at the Settle Station on the night of the 25th November last, which she alleged was caused by the Company not having provided adequate platform accommodation, and not having the platform properly lighted. In this action Mrs. Duckett got damages £25. The real question at the trial was, was there negligence on the part of the servants of the Railway Company—were there lights or no lights? Three servants of the Railway Company swore that the lamps in the Station were all lighted at the time of the accident. Wilson and two others swore that there were no lamps lighted. In sup-

John Cowburn. I am high bailiff of the County Court, at Settle. I know the prisoner; Wilson was formerly schoolmaster at Rathmell. I believe he has worked for Mr. H. Robinson, Solicitor. On the 25th Nov. 1861 I saw Wilson at the County Court Office in Settle, he came to file a petition of adjudication as bankrupt. Wilson said he expected there would be a warrant in the hands of the sheriff's officer, Mr. Cragg of Skipton. He desired me to take possession of his furniture, so as to supersede Mr. Cragg's warrant. I told Wilson he must get Mr. Ingham's signature to the warrant. Mr. Ingham resides at East Marton, about three miles from Gargrave. The warrant was filled up ready for the judge's signature. It was arranged that Wilson should go down by the noon train from Settle, and that he should return by the last train, and that I should meet him at the Settle Station and go on with him to Rathmell that night. He expressed a

train. The train from Leeds then came up, the 7-48 train. I watched that train particularly for Wilson. He did not come out of that train; I did not see him. That was the only train Wilson could come by from Mr. Ingham's. There was no train later. I saw Mrs Duckett laid on the rails, and went up to her. Two or three of the porters and several other persons went up to her. Wilson was not among those people.

jury. But there was a more serious charge against the prisoner, that he was not at the Settle Station at all on the night in question. He should prove by the evidence of Mr. Josias Atkinson, Registrar of the County Court, Settle, Mr. John Cowburn, the high bailiff, and Mr. S. Widdup, an innkeeper, that the prisoner was at East Marton, sixteen miles from Settle on that night.

Leeds train. I should think not more than half a dozen. I did not see Wilson at all on the night of the 25th. I saw him on the morning of the 26th; and asked him why he had not met me according to appointment. Wilson said he had been detained at Marton, and had come by the train from Gargrave that morning. I produce the warrant. It is dated 25th November. I executed it on the 26th. Wilson brought it to me signed by the Judge.

Settle Graveyard Project

was at the station waiting for Joseph's return from East Marton at the time the accident occurred. Joseph was nowhere to be seen and told John Cowburn that he did not return until the following morning [SC, 3]. So, Joseph had lied at the original hearing and was found guilty of perjury. He was imprisoned for 18 months with hard labour. The charges against Thomas Leeming and PC Lindsay were dropped.

This was not Joseph's smartest move. Poor Mary Ann would have had a difficult time with six children, the eldest of whom was 12. She would not have been eligible for any parish relief as she was the wife of a bankrupt, regarded as the 'undeserving poor'. But she did have somewhere to live . . .

While working as schoolmaster at Rathmell School Joseph was allowed to live in the schoolhouse. However when he resigned, due to bankruptcy, he continued to live in the house, as did his family while he was in prison. Despite giving a written promise to leave, following a court appearance, Joseph still outstayed his welcome and even had the cheek to ask for money to make him leave. The court finally gave the owners permission to repossess the property [SC].

At the time of the following census Joseph was, unsurprisingly, an 'unemployed schoolmaster' living in Wilman's building next to the Folly in Settle with the family including another two children. Joseph must have decided on another fresh start and found himself in Leeds, working as a book-keeper for a fishmonger, **Mr Newby**. Joseph took it upon himself to obtain some shirts saying he had been sent by Mr Newby. The shop assistant **Cecilia Sarah Jane Anderton** suspected mischief and Joseph was caught red handed the next time he came to the shop [4].

Despite being 'a respectably dressed man', Joseph was found guilty of obtaining goods under false pretences and imprisoned with hard labour in the Leeds House of Correction for four months. Oh dear.

Unlawfully obtaining by false pretences from Cecilia Sarah Jane Anderton, two flannel shirts, the property of Leonard Hicks, with intent to defraud, at Leeds, on the 6th May, 1873.

Imprisonment with hard labour in the House of Correction at Leeds, for four calendar months.

YORKSHIRE SUMMER ASSIZES.—C. J. Geldard and Rev. W. H. Coulthurst v. J. H. O. Wilson.—This was an action of ejectment brought for recovery of possession of the school-house at Rathmell, wrongfully retained by the defendant, (the former schoolmaster) and his family. The defendant resigned his office of schoolmaster at Christmas 1861, but having a large family and no situation to go to he was permitted to remain for a short time longer in the house on his giving a written promise to leave it in the course of two or three months. This promise when the time came, and in answer to repeated applications since, he refused to fulfil unless the plaintiffs would give him money, which they declined to do. Defendant was convicted at the last spring assizes of perjury committed in a cause of *Duckett v. the Midland Railway Company* tried at a previous assizes, and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, but his wife and family have retained possession of the school-house—hence this action was commenced. No defence was attempted on the part of the defendant. Judgment was given for the plaintiff, with costs and possession of the house in fourteen days.

FRAUD UPON A BRIGGATE TRADESMAN.—At the Leeds Borough Court, on Thursday, a respectably dressed man, who gave the name of Joseph Harrison Oddy Wilson, and who was formerly in the service of Mr. Newby, fishmonger, Bear-lane, was charged with obtaining goods by false pretences from Mr. L. Hicks, hatter, Briggate. On Tuesday he went to the shop of the prosecutor and stated that he had been sent by Mr. Newby, his master, for some woollen shirts. Miss Anderton, who assists in the shop, knowing that he had been in Mr. Newby's service, gave him two shirts as patterns, and in a short time he returned, and stated that Mr. Newby would take two of one pattern. These were given to him. Shortly afterwards prisoner returned and asked if he could have some articles of clothing for himself, adding that he would pay for them on Friday when he received his wages. On this representation, he was supplied with goods to the value of about £3, but Miss Anderton suspected that all was not right. Mr. Hicks made inquiries respecting the prisoner, and found that the representations he had made were false, and on his coming back to the shop on Wednesday for some more goods Wilson was given into custody. Prisoner now admitted he was guilty of using Mr. Newby's name improperly, and asked that the charge against him might be disposed of without delay, but that could not be, as Mr. Newby was not then in Leeds, and his evidence was necessary to complete the case for the prosecution. The prisoner was consequently remanded until Monday next.

The family returned to Settle. At the time of the 1881 census they lived in Twisletons Yard, next to **James Twisleton**, with Joseph working as a schoolmaster again. By the late 1880s Joseph had reinvented himself again, advertising as an accountant, operating from Victoria Street [LSA]. His services included buying debts from tradesmen with a fair commission, of course, auditing books and 'private arrangements instead of bankruptcy or assignment'. Well he knew a thing or two about that! He was still an

settleresearch@gmail.co

J. H. O. Wilson,
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT,
VICTORIA STREET, SETTLE.

Examines Book Debts Bought or Collected on fair commission.
(Security when necessary and Settlements as desired.)

Books Audited, Balance Sheets prepared, and "Private Arrangements" (instead of Bankruptcy or Assignment) made with Creditors.

TERMS + REASONABLE.

Agent to, & Collector for, the 'Atlas' Fire, Life, and Accident Assurance Company.

Business respectfully solicited.

agent for the 'Atlas' fire, life and accident assurance company. Would you have trusted this man?

Some people did trust Joseph, or were desperate. In 1889 **William Charnley**, the innkeeper of the Craven Inn at Giggleswick Station had borrowed capital but was not keeping up with repayments, racking up debts of over £450. Incredibly William's estate was assigned to our Joseph Wilson and Richard Hardacre [CH]. Was that really a good idea?

An insight into the mind of Joseph Harrison Oddie Wilson is provided through a letter he wrote to a paper in 1894. It seems there had been an exchange of letters from 'MP' when there had been problems repaying Joseph's debt and something to do with a portrait in a gold frame [3]. Joseph was trying to claim he had done nothing wrong, despite his reputation, quoting, *'The man that is without fault take care to shun'* and *'Let him that is without sin cast the first stone'*. The editor was outraged saying *'It may not be wrong to borrow money, but it is decidedly wrong to get your living by writing impudent fictions to strangers with the view of getting money out of them. Let Wilson abandon this and other evil courses and people will cease to throw stones at him. In the meanwhile, I would advise all benevolent persons not only to shun 'the man that is without fault' but also to avoid begging imposters with such shady records as this individual'*.

Ouch! As we know, the editor definitely had a point and we probably all know someone who reminds us of Joseph. Joseph was obviously intelligent and must have had charisma and charm to continue to operate despite his chequered past.

Joseph, still an accountant and the family continued to live in Victoria Street until Joseph died in April 1901, aged 78. Poor Mary Ann died on 3 December later that year, aged 74 but merited an inclusion in the Settle Almanac [LSA]. They are buried in an unmarked grave *Old CX63* with their youngest child **John Clarkson Wilson** who was 28 when he died.

From what we can find out, the remaining son, Richard, and the six daughters did incredibly and surprisingly well considering all this was going on.

Daughter **Mary Annie Wilson** travelled to Nelson to have an illegitimate daughter **Daisy**. Mary Annie brought Daisy up in her a boarding house at 2 Halsteads in Settle. 19 year old Daisy married 37 year old plumber **Joseph Milroy** and they settled in Preston, Lancashire. Their son **Joseph Milroy** was suffocated in his parents' bed when he was just a week old [5]. Joseph (Snr)

FAILURES.

FAILURE OF AN INNKEEPER AT SETTLE.—Yesterday a meeting of the creditors of Mr. William Charnley, late landlord of the Craven Inn, Giggleswick Station, near Settle, was held at that hotel, the representative of Messrs. William Peates & Co., Manchester, presiding. A statement of the debtor's affairs, presented to the meeting, showed liabilities amounting to £577 11s. 11d., and assets £107 6s. 5d. Mr. Charnley attributes his failure to the fact that he had conducted his business upon borrowed capital. The Chairman examined him as to his having continued to carry on the business when he knew that he was hopelessly insolvent. The creditors present decided to assign the estate of the debtor to Messrs. J. H. O. Wilson, accountant, and Richard Hardacre, general dealer, Settle.

J. H. O. WILSON AND "TRUTH."

The following appears in this week's issue of "Truth":—

I have received the following interesting communication from J. H. O. Wilson, of Settle, the begging-letter writer on whom I had some remarks in "Truth" of September 13:—

SIR,—Will you have the kindness to give the name of the gentleman who sent a letter to you purporting to be from me? It is surely not wrong to borrow money, as hundreds of good men borrow from each other.

As to my past life, may I ask are your correspondent's antecedents pure and free from blame?

If every man's past life was raked up, what an exhibition of secular folly would be seen.

"The man that is without fault take care to shun."

"Let him that is without sin cast the first stone."

Please insert this in your next issue.—Your obedient servant,
J. H. O. WILSON.

Settle, September 18, 1894.

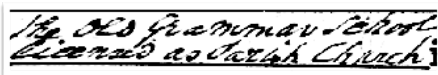
The request that I will publish the name of the late M.P. to whom he wrote the letter that appeared in "Truth" is a piece of impudence on a par with the original communication, the object apparently being that Wilson may make insinuations against a gentleman whose money he has failed to obtain, and whose portrait he lately desired to have set in a gold frame. It may not be wrong to borrow money, but it is decidedly wrong to get your living by writing impudent fictions to strangers with the view of getting money out of them. Let Wilson abandon this and other evil courses, and people will cease to throw stones at him. In the meanwhile, I would advise all benevolent persons not only to shun "the man that is without fault," but also to avoid begging imposters with such shady records as this individual.

DECEMBER.

3. Death, at Ingleton, of Mary Ann, widow of the late Mr. J. H. O. Wilson, of Settle, aged 74 years.

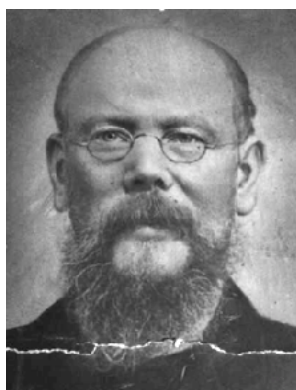
got a good telling off when he queried the coroner, Colonel H Parker, about the cause of death, being told, 'Keep your mouth shut until you are asked to speak. I am warning you. Let this case be a warning to you'. The coroner obviously missed the training on bed side manner.

In 1891 Joseph and Mary Ann's daughter Fanny Emily Wilson married a butcher, Samuel Henry Riley. They were married in the 'Old Grammar School' at Giggleswick and printer *James Wilcock Lambert* was a witness to their wedding. The Old Grammar School was on a site north of the church from 1851 but was demolished in 1960. Between 1890 and 1892 it was licensed for use by the church whilst the church itself was closed for extensive restoration work and all church services, including weddings, were held there.



Fanny and Samuel settled in Blackpool and their son Joseph Riley came an accountant. Joseph and Mary Ann's daughter Jane Wilson married Alfred William Wilkinson, a bookbinder and they lived in Bradford with their family. Daughter Mary Elizabeth married Stephen West, an accountant in Haslingden, Lancashire.

Eldest child Richard Wilson [ph1] became a solicitor in Skipton. He married a widow Annie Elizabeth (Bland) Hird and had six sons and a daughter to add to those from Annie's previous marriage. At the time of each census they had servants living with them so were comfortably off. Richard's obituary suggests his methods were far more scrupulous than his father's, being a very prominent figure in the public life of the Skipton district. Richard was clerk to the Skipton Local Council for 33 years, deputy Returning Officer for the Skipton Parliamentary Division,



MR. R. WILSON, SKIPTON.

The death took place at his residence in West Bank Road, Skipton, yesterday, of Mr. Richard Wilson, aged 83, at one time a very prominent figure in the public life of the Skipton district.

Mr. Wilson was head of the firm of Messrs. Richard Wilson and Son, solicitors, of Skipton. He was Clerk to the old Skipton Local Board from 1890 to 1893, and its successor, the Skipton Urban Council, from 1893 to 1923. He was also the deputy Returning Officer for the Skipton Parliamentary Division for

PRESTON WEEK-OLD BABY'S DEATH.

CORONER'S WARNING TO PARENTS AGAINST SLEEPING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.

A warning to parents against the practice of sleeping with young children was uttered by the Preston Coroner (Colonel H. Parker) at Preston Police Station, this afternoon, when he inquired into the death of Joseph Milroy, the week-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Milroy, 129, Ribbleson-lane, Preston. The father, a plumber, said he and his wife found the child dead in bed on Tuesday morning. A doctor said the baby had probably died from convulsions.

Dr. Mary Lowry who made a post-mortem, said the child had died from asphyxia, probably through being overlaid.

Recording a verdict of "Misadventure" in accordance with medical evidence, the Coroner said at one time there used to be many such cases, but now that people were beginning to appreciate the inadvisability of sleeping with young children they were not quite so frequent. The baby had been suffocated. He had been a perfectly healthy child, and if he had been kept in a cot he would probably have been alive to-day.

Milroy: Why did the doctor say it was convulsions?

The Coroner: Don't ask me questions. Keep your mouth shut until you are asked to speak. I am warning you. Let this case be a warning to you.

a great number of years, and other offices he held were secretary of the Craven Agricultural Society for over 50 years, secretary of the Yorkshire Dales Railway Co. until it was taken over by the Midland Railway Co., and secretary to the Governors of the Girls' High School, Skipton, for over 30 years. He was also a prominent Freemason. He is survived by a widow, one daughter and five sons.

secretary to the Craven Agricultural Society, secretary to the Yorkshire Dales Railway Company and to the governors of Settle Girls' High School for over 30 years [6]. Richard and Annie's son Frederick was a founder of Skipton Golf Club and a keen skater and rock climber.

Richard left over £3000 to his second wife Margaret Twigg when he died, aged 82, still in Skipton. Margaret was more than 30 years younger than Richard and after he died, she stayed in 75 Gargrave Road, opposite the Girls' school, running a boarding house.



Settle Graveyard Project

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

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 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Leeds Mercury, 3 – Lancaster Guardian, 4 – Leeds Times, 5 – Lancashire Evening Post, 6 – Yorkshire Post

ph1 – credited to descendants via ancestry.co.uk, username Kevin Hendricks, ph2 – photo kindly provided by Roger Taylor

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

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