

Elizabeth (Slinger) Howson, a very special widow

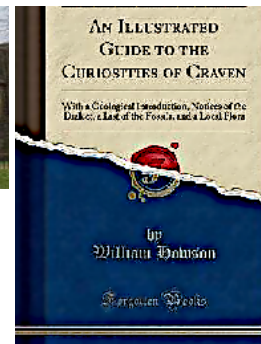
Elizabeth Howson born May 16th 1821, died June 24th 1893, Old C75

This understated gravestone rests upon the grave of a woman with an incredible story to tell. **Elizabeth Slinger** was born in 1821 at Studfold, near Horton in Ribblesdale to land owner **John Slinger** and his wife **Mary Lawson**. Her sister, **Mary Slinger**, was the wife of Settle's successful chemist, **William Shepherd**. Her uncle was the fascinating farmer **Matthew Procter Slinger**.



Elizabeth's family had extraordinary lives. Even her first job, in domestic service, was no ordinary post – she worked for **John Geldard** at Cappleside, Rathmell. The Geldards were the most significant landowners in the area in the 19th century. When she was 30, Elizabeth married **William Howson**, the second and very eligible son of **Reverend John Howson**, the second master at Giggleswick School, and his wife **Margaret Saul**. Over the next 12 years Elizabeth and William had four sons and two daughters.

William was a schoolmaster. Like his brothers, William had been educated at Giggleswick School. From there he studied at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, one of the smaller, more classical colleges. For some reason he didn't graduate, but this didn't prevent him being a schoolmaster at Horton-in-Ribblesdale School just down the road from the Slinger family farm. After marrying, William worked at Alston, Cumberland and, for around seven years, they lived in part of Corby Gates [ph1], a wonderful 11th century homestead. They moved to Woods House in Dobcross [ph1], Saddleworth where William ran a residential school for 12 pupils. A few years later William became Master of Penrith Grammar School. In his spare time he wrote '*An Illustrated Guide to the Curiosities of Craven, with a geological introduction*'



Unfortunately, William died, aged 66, just two years after the birth of their youngest daughter and was buried in Penrith. Elizabeth's father, John Slinger, died at Studfold a couple of years later. By the time of the 1871 census Elizabeth described herself as a landowner, living in Church Street in Settle, near Whitefriars, with the younger children. Elizabeth stayed there until she died in 1893, aged 72.

William and Elizabeth's third son **George William Saul Howson** followed in his father's footsteps with even more success. George left Giggleswick School to go to Merton College, Oxford to qualify with a first class degree in Natural Science, then a BA and MA. He also served as the 'Postmaster', responsible for day-to-day general discipline in the college. His responsibilities included reciting grace before formal dinners in the Hall. From there he obtained a post as a Science teacher at Uppingham School in Rutland. Uppingham, founded in the 16th century, had been known for the highest musical standards and is thought to have the greatest area of playing fields in any school in England. George's spinster sisters **Rosa Margaret** and **Mary Ann Magdelene** kept house for him, with a servant of course.

Having learned the skills for over 14 years, George landed a huge post, as Headmaster of Gresham School in Holt, Norfolk. When he took over, the school provided for around 40 scholars with just seven boarders. However, George undertook a massive programme of fundraising and

construction to establish new buildings, a swimming pool and Chapel to accommodate over 200 boys and this soon became 250. He developed facilities to focus on science and modern languages to develop skills for commercial careers. However, he was also known to give particular attention to the boys' welfare, so that school felt more like home [1].

But Mr. Howson's influence in the school has been shown not merely by the number of scholarships gained at the universities, which has been considerable, but even more by the personal influence which he exercised over the boys. He devoted himself entirely to their welfare, and sought to give them high ideals of life, and of their duties to one another and to the State. The result was apparent in the high tone that prevailed throughout the school, and in the courteous attitude of the boys towards visitors and strangers, to whom they gave a friendly welcome, which was as noticeable as it is rare. There was nothing which he believed to be for the good of the school into which he did not wholeheartedly throw himself, and to which he did not contribute with a generosity which would have been great in a man possessed of far more ample means. In a very unusual degree Mr. Howson took a personal interest in the boys, and made them feel that after they had left it was a real pleasure for him to see them back: so that the school became a home and centre to old boys in a way which is certainly unusual, and in the writer's experience unique.

The headmaster of Gresham's School, Holt, on Sunday unveiled in the Howson Memorial Library a bronze bust of "Howson of Holt," or Mr. G. W. S. Howson, who was headmaster of the school from 1880 to 1919. Mr. Eccles spoke of George Howson as one of the great headmasters of our generation. His greatness lay in the pioneer character of his work, for it demanded greatness of vision to initiate new lines of educational advance and a high degree of courage to pursue them unflinchingly. He showed his greatness, also, by breaking away from public school conventionalism and employing new and original methods of education and discipline. Mr. Howson was the elder brother of Mr. C. J. Howson, J.P., of Fairfield, Chesterfield.

George was distressed that 106 'Old Greshamians' were killed during WW1. He died soon after, in 1919, aged 58. He was buried in the school Chapel grounds. Years later, in 1932, a bronze bust of 'Howson of Holt' was placed in the library in recognition of his achievements, courage and original methods [2]. Gresham provided the education for some inspirational figures including composer Benjamin Britten, poet W.H. Auden (both during George's tenure), Sir James Dyson, the founder of the Dyson Company, international rugby players Tom and Ben Youngs and actor Olivia Colman. After George's death his sisters Rosa Margaret and Mary Ann Magdelene retired to London and are buried in Putney.

William and Elizabeth's fourth son Charles James Howson, born in 1862, made his mark in a different way. After his education at Giggleswick School he worked for the Craven Bank in Ilkley. From there, in 1892, he was promoted to Manager of the newly built branch in Nelson. This was a boom time for the Craven Bank with 'a somewhat extensive series of fine buildings at Skipton, Settle, Ilkley, Otley, Keighley, Burnley, Clitheroe and Colne'. The building is relatively unchanged today, recently inhabited by Santander [ph2]. The article described Charles James as an 'energetic manager'[3].



The above is an illustration of the new Craven Bank which has recently been built and opened at Nelson. It is an additional structure to a somewhat extensive series of fine buildings which the Craven Bank, Limited, have at Skipton, Settle, Keighley, Ilkley, Otley, Burnley, Clitheroe, and Colne, and it is intended shortly to erect similar premises at Padiham. It may be stated here that the capital of the

After 11 years Charles James became Bank Manager of the Crompton & Evans Union Bank in Chesterfield. He established himself in the town and became a magistrate and JP. Charles James lived a long life reaching the age of 95. In 1895 he had married Lucy Blakey, a corn miller's daughter from Keighley. Unsurprisingly, he outlived his wife and son and daughter. Charles James and Lucy's son Hubert Blakey Howson, met a tragic end, aged 21, in 1921 whilst studying at Cambridge. He died in an accident

YOUNG STUDENT'S TRAGIC DEATH.

Fatal Motor-Cycle Accident near Barton Mills.

A Burst Tyre?

from a burst tyre on his motor bike [4]. He was an experienced rider who had even ridden in competitions.

At the time of the 1939 pre-war register Charles James had 11 year old **Jeremy Dealty Howson** living with him, a descendant of Charles James Howson's uncle John Saul Howson. Sadly, Jeremy died when he was just 19 in India where his father **Geoffrey Howson** was a military Colonel.

William and Elizabeth's eldest son **John Joseph Howson**, born in 1852, moved to London and worked as a clerk. He married a widow, **Annie Elizabeth (Robinson) Grigs**, who came with four children from her first marriage and they had two more daughters. Unfortunately, both daughters died prematurely, aged 13 and 29, of Friedereich's Ataxia, a rare inherited disease that causes progressive nervous system and movement problems.

William and Elizabeth's second son, **Hubert Howson**, born in 1857, left the country straight after his education at Giggleswick School to live with his uncle **Henry Howson** who was a solicitor in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania running '*Howson and Howson Solicitors and Patent Agents*'. After training with uncle Henry, Hubert established the New York branch of the company which still operates today. He married and had two daughters and a son.

Considering the successful careers of the children, it's surprising that the sons gave Elizabeth such a small, understated gravestone. However, this leads us nicely onto William's family. Well, you could write a full story about most of them.

Only 22 years of age, Hubert Blake Howson, a Cambridge undergraduate, of King's College, met his death with tragic suddenness on Sunday evening at the Barton Mills cross roads. It appears that he was in company with a friend, both being on motor-cycles, and on the friend looking round he noticed that Howson had been thrown from his machine, and was lying unconscious on the road. The unfortunate man was conveyed to Mildenhall Cottage Hospital, but expired at 5 o'clock in the morning. The accident was attributed to a burst tyre. Howson, whose home is at Brampton, Chesterfield, was a third-year student, and was expected to proceed to his degree very soon.



Reverend John Howson [ph3], born in 1787, came from humble roots, his father being a shoemaker in Clapham. John was the eldest son of **Thomas Howson** and his first wife **Elizabeth Hulderay** and attended Giggleswick School winning prizes for his achievements from the age of 11. From there he studied at Trinity College, Dublin, became an MA and was ordained. He was appointed as an 'Usher' or Second Master back at Giggleswick School in 1814, a post which he held for 44 years. He worked with the junior boys, teaching, providing board and pastoral care for several scholars. He had to '*whip them into shape*' training them in appropriate behaviour and academia rigour. At the time of the 1851 census one of his boarding scholars was Settle's **George Stansfeld**.

Rev John Howson was good friends with the diarist, schoolteacher and bookseller **William Lodge Paley** who resided at the Black Horse at Giggleswick. William recorded frequent social interactions with John giving an indication of the measures he went to to provide for his students. In October 1814 William described John and **Dr Robinson** as his only intimate friends in Giggleswick after '*a convivial meeting in my school consisting of his Reverence Dr Robinson and myself with sober glee and I hope harmless jests. We spent a few hours after the arduous fag and toil of teaching*' [WLP].

Oct. 28.—An impromptu by the Rev J. Howson at a convivial meeting in my school consisting of his Reverence, Dr. Robinson and myself with sober glee and I hope harmless jests. We spent a few hours after the arduous fag and toil of teaching. These two gents are my only intimate friends here—
 "To tell the various squalls
 And every hap that falls
 Within these learned walls
 What muse shall dare,
 Where magisterial state
 Rules over the sad fate
 Of many a stupid pate
 That rattles there."

Settle Graveyard Project

On 1st September 1826, a Saturday, William walked to Malham Tarn with a friend and met Rev John Howson with 18 of his boys – this was not a Monday to Friday 9-5 job! They all walked to Malham Cove. They *'left at half past six by moonlight for Settle in 1¾ hours.*

Sept. 1st.—Mr. Bailey and I had a fine walk to Malham Tarn, a beautiful lake I was never near before; took our lunch beside it and returned by Gordale, highly gratified with the awful grandeur of the impending rocks. I took care he should enjoy the surprise of turning the corner, but neither of us attempted to scale it. Called upon Mrs. Hargraves, my country woman, and had some ale. I missed Miss Cragg as she and party were at the High Inn, but saw Miss Varley. Met Rev. J. Howson with 18 boys and we all went into Harrisons, Low Inn

The Buck; boys had bread and butter. Mr. Wm. Howson, of Settle, also there. We all walked to the Cove and then had tea wh. Mr. Bailey would pay for as I had for his pleasure, then on to Kirby where the Revd. Wilson shewed us the Oliver Cromwell register in the church as witness to 2 marriages. Think that in 1855 Mr. Procter was Curate. I could not but treat the old gent with a glass for his civility. Left at half past six by moonlight for Settle in 1¾ hours.

John provided accommodation for students from all over the world, including Master Gilpin from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1824. There were quite a few family links with Pennsylvania over the years.

In June 1825 William reported that Rev John Howson's sister Hannah Howson was to marry a Moravian Missionary, Daniel Gillman Hague, working for a Protestant church that had established itself in Pennsylvania in 1740. They were going to Jamaica. The same entry mentioned that the new parson at Horton was going to board at John Slinger's at Studfold, Elizabeth (Slinger) Howson's home. On 1 November that year William's diaries recorded that Hannah and Daniel had both died of yellow fever within two days of each other. *'They had a most beautiful letter from a friend who was with them in their last moments.'* Such were the perils of international travel in the 19th century.

Aug. 20.—Mr. Howson bro't his new boarder, Master Gilpin from Philadelphia, for an outfit of books. Heard a good

route.—Rev. J. Howsons sister is to marry a Moravian missionary on Monday and they are going to Jamaica—The new parson at Horton is going to board at J. Slingers Shedfold.

the Burnese War. Mr. Howson has had the painful news that his sister and her husband (Kayne) are both dead of Yellow Fever within 2 days—they had a most beautiful letter from a friend who was with them in their last moments. ...

In 1815, aged 28, Rev John Howson married Margaret Saul, the daughter of Joseph Saul who had been a Writing Master at Giggleswick School while John attended as a scholar. Margaret was six years older than John. They had six sons and a daughter. Unfortunately, in March 1829 we are informed that Margaret had gone to Leeds to have a cancer cut out. This probably contributed to her death in 1834, aged 53, although credited as 50 on her gravestone.

Mrs. Howson is at Leeds, where she has had a cancer cut out. 1829

John died 25 years later in 1859, aged 71, just a few days after resigning his post. His obituary describes that John was a good botanist and was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society. He contributed to Settle Auxiliary Bible Society and gave lectures and was secretary to Settle's Mechanics Institute. He was the minister for the workhouse and, at his death, aged 71, at his request, was carried by '12 poor men' to his final resting place – an interesting choice. He also paid for those 12 men, and the elderly from the workhouse, to have a meal at the Black Horse with landlord **Mr Waller** [SC].



OBITUARY.—The Rev. J. Howson, M.A., F.L.S., for upwards of 44 years second master of Giggleswick School, departed this life in great tranquility, on Sunday morning, the 23rd ult., aged 71 years. Mr. Howson was a native of Giggleswick, of humble parentage, and received his education at the school in which he afterwards became so usefully and successfully second master for the long period of 44 years. He had a hard life of it. His department being amongst the

vacation. He was carried under-hand to his last resting place by 12 poor men (according to instructions left by himself) of his native village, for whom he had ordered a dinner to be provided at Mr. John Waller's, not forgetting some of the elderly men of the Workhouse who were to partake of the dinner. He was buried behind the church, near the centre of the yard he had so often crossed as a youth to school. The new masters and the whole of the pupils met the corpse at the church and followed it to the grave, with some few former pupils. We purpose to give a mere lengthened account of Mr. H. in a future number.

Bearing in mind John's empathy for the less fortunate it is perhaps surprising to find that his father Thomas' second wife, Mary Procter, once widowed, lived as a pauper in one of the small cottages next to the Black Horse Inn whilst bringing up her younger children. Thomas and Mary had five daughters who were John's half sisters, although two died in infancy. Thomas and Mary's daughter Elizabeth Howson had an illegitimate son, James (Jimmy) Howson who spent his whole life working as an errand boy. He was remembered as 'What a funny little chap Jimmy Howson was with his crossed eyes and pincer toes which in his clogs caused him to walk like a crab going to Ireland. He was also a bit of a poet! [ph6]

What a funny little chap Jimmy Howson was with his crossed eyes and pincer toes which in his clogs caused him to walk like a crab going to Ireland. He lived near the Black Horse Inn where one or two cottages stood in what is now added to the Church Yard, and rejoiced in the name of "OOnas Housas," the derivation of which I leave to more learned heads; and he used to impress on us how the great Dean Howson, who wrote on the journeyings of St. Paul, was a near relation and whose father, the Rev. John Howson, was a master of the School. The lads used to shout "Skew-ee" after him when he was filled with the Barley Bree, and then Jimmy would whip out of his pocket a short rope with an iron nut at the end and lay into them without mercy. At one time before there was a public supply, he used to carry large milking cans of water from the Bank Well to all and sundry who were willing to contract for a half-penny a bucket. But it was as a poet I should like to celebrate his memory and put into print for the first time his Cantos on the Ebbing and Flowing Well. His scansion and rhyme may not appeal to all, but as Swinburne and other moderns have introduced new measures, his may be looked on as their forerunner.

LINES ON SETTLE & GIGGLESWICK & DISTRICT.

If trees could tell tales, for well they might
On Settle road on Sunday night,
Loving and crowing like turtle doves
Fondly embracing till they lose their gloves.
Corus.

It's every night strange sights you will see,
Couples you will meet twenty-three,
If you cannot believe what I say
Please take a walk yourself that way.

At Giggleswick Fair on the twelfth of March
There you will see a few young upstarts,
Running, jumping, singing, and dancing
Like young stags that's fond of prancing,
Whilst others are taking ale, porter and rum
Till they have no more room.
Corus.

At Ebbs and Flows on Easter Fair
You will see lads and lassies so nice and fair,
Linked together both hand and heart
As if they were never more to part.
Some get married, so they say,
Whilst others turn another way.
Corus.

On Castleberg Grounds at Whitsuntide
There you will see partners dancing side by side,

Whilst others are promanding on the walks
Then they sits down and 'as a talk.
Cherruping like little birds stuck in a tree
Never dreaming that people can see.
Corus.

In ancient times in years of yore
Yorkshire caves and woods was haunted
by the wild boar.

On Giggleswick Sears holes in the rocks
Provided shelter for bold Renard the fox.
But destruction by killing the fox
Cattle feed there instead of fox.
Corus.

BY JAMES HOWSON.



Reverend John and Margaret are buried in the centre of Giggleswick graveyard with another understated stone which also commemorates three children.

In memory of the Rev. John Howson for 44 years Second Master of Giggleswick Grammar School who died January 26th 1859 aged 71 years, and of Margaret his wife who died September 13th 1834 aged 50 years. Also of their children Thomas who died in Jamaica 1843, George who died at Cambridge December 2nd 1852, Elizabeth who died at Taunton July 16th 1864.

Rev John and Margaret's third son Thomas Howson was just 15 and died in Jamaica nine years after John's sister Hannah had died out there. Daughter Elizabeth Howson died in Taunton, aged 40, whilst visiting *Thomas Birkbeck*, the Settle banker and West Yorkshire magistrate who had retired to Devon. Youngest son, George Howson, had been working as a second master at his brother's school, the Liverpool Collegiate Institute. He had recently qualified with a degree and MA from Christ's College Cambridge. He died of concussion, aged 27, after striking a tree whilst on his (usually quiet) horse in Parker's Piece [5,6]. Parker's Piece is a 245 acre green common

Mr. George Howson, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, a young man but a ripe scholar, who was much esteemed in his College, has come by his death from an accident while riding in Parker's Piece. His horse, usually a quiet one, started off, dashed close by a tree, and Mr. Howson's head struck against the trunk: the unfortunate gentleman died next day, of concussion of the brain.

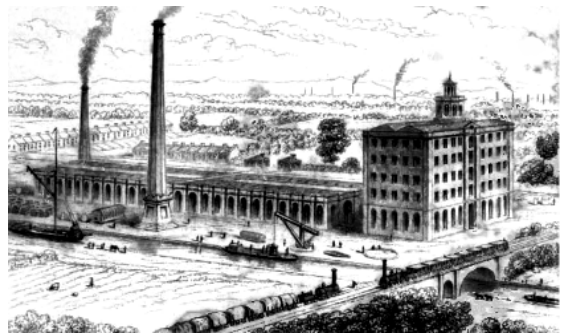
DEATH OF THE REV. G. HOWSON.—We regret to hear of the sudden death of the Rev. George Howson, M.A., Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and lately Vice-Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool. He died at two o'clock on the morning of December 1st, in consequence of injuries received the day before by a fall from his horse; and he is interred in the chapel of his college. He was a scholar of high attainments; and both in Cambridge and Liverpool he was much and justly beloved by all who knew him.

near the centre of Cambridge, allegedly the birthplace of the rules of Association Football in 1863.



John and Margaret's eldest son **John Saul Howson**, [ph4] born in 1816 was awarded a first class degree in Classics at Trinity College Cambridge and an MA and won several awards along the way. He was ordained in 1845 and became Principal of Liverpool Collegiate Institute, Vicar of Wisbech and, later, Dean of Chester. He was also a prolific author. He married **Mary Cropper**, a merchant's daughter and they had five children.

John Saul Howson and his father Reverend John Howson were involved in a peculiar series of events surrounding the will of **Francis Ellis**. Francis had written his will and young John Saul Howson, a clerk was a witness. Francis later changed his will but fraudulently asked an 81 year old clerk, **George Fletcher**, to state that the changes were made at the time the will was written. John and his father had to make George retract his statement once Francis died. John Saul Howson died in Dorset, aged 69.



Henry Howson, Sr.
Mr. Henry Howson, Sr., who for a week past had been suffering from both heart disease and a carbuncle, died on Thursday afternoon at his residence in this city.
He was born in the year 1822, in Giggleswick, Little Yorkshire, Eng., and was educated at the grammar school there, which was one of the

Fourth son **Richard Howson**, born in 1821, went from Giggleswick School to an apprenticeship with Nasmyth and Gaskell at the Bridgewater Foundry at Salford [ph2]. Richard worked with them on the invention of a steam hammer and the development of an assembly line for the production of steam engines. He spent some time working in Sweden and travelled the world researching best practice. He spent the Crimean War making projectiles. Back in England he managed the Canal Foundry in Preston and then became a consultant engineer to Middlesborough's Newport Iron works designing new efficient blast furnaces [ph5]. This work very quickly changed Middlesborough from being a primarily coal town to an iron town. Richard married a curate's daughter, **Mary Sarah Reed**, 28 years his junior, but she died without children 13 years later. Richard was 90 when he died, still in Middlesborough.

John and Margaret's fifth son **Henry Howson**, born in 1822, had left Giggleswick School and also worked for Nasmyth engineers in Lancashire. His first wife, **Louisa (Hart) Howson** died in 1849 after the birth of a son **Charles Howson**. Henry emigrated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and set up as a Patent Solicitor, one of his own designs being a Stand Pipe. Son Charles, after an education at Giggleswick School, of course, joined Henry's business together with nephew Hubert, William's son, becoming Howson and Howson Solicitors and Patent Agents. Henry married again in Pennsylvania and had two more children. Henry died, aged 63, in 1885 from 'both heart disease and a carbuncle' (infected hair follicle under the skin) [7]. Son Charles continued in the business until 1923 followed by nephew Hubert until 1943.

That's an unexpectedly huge set of life stores from such a small gravestone!



Settle Graveyard Project

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 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 – Evening Mail, 2 – Derbyshire Times, 3 – Nelson Chronicle, 4 – Bury Free Press, 5 – Worcester Journal, 6 – Blackburn Standard, 7 – Philadelphia Enquirer

ph1 – photo credited to Google Maps, ph2 – credited to Wikipedia, ph3 – credited to descendants on Ancestry.co.uk, username ColinWells13, ph4 – username yhowson_kidd, ph5 – credited to billyscarrow.co.uk, ph6 – with thanks to Giggleswick Church archives.

SC – Settle Chronicle. WLP – the diaries of William Lodge Paley with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust