

## James Metcalfe, schoolmaster at the National School

*'Deus, propitius esto mini peccatori'* Sacred to the memory of James Metcalfe, late schoolmaster of Settle who died July 22nd 1844 age 40 years. Also of 4 of his children who died in their infancy. 'Death is as necessary to our constitution as sleep we shall rise refreshed in the morning.'

*'God forgive me'* from a Gregorian motet first written in 1639.

The church in Settle was consecrated in 1838 and was one of several built in the area around that time – Langcliffe, Rathmell etc partially to address an increasing population (with the pressing need being primarily graveyard space). It was also as part of the Victorian Restoration which (unsuccessfully) aimed to turn around declining attendance in the Church of England, especially to combat the rise attendance at non-conformist churches which provided worship free of charge. Hundreds of churches were built with ornate decorated architecture and more traditional 'high church' services were practised. In 1840 the church appointed William Henry Barnett as organist. He was a classical musician of high standing who even visited the Conservatoire in Leipzig, been founded by the composer Felix Mendelssohn [CH]. It would not be at all surprising if chants such that on James' stone was inspired by William Henry Barnett' influence.



Mr. Barnett and Mr. George Stansfeld (just returned from the Conservatoire of Music, Leipsic) organised an Orchestra and gave the Settle folk their first taste of theatrical venture on a grand scale, which provided a handsome sum for the benefit of the Lancashire sufferers during the great cotton famine.

James was born in 1804 in Stallingbusk, Bainbridge, near Askrigg in Wensleydale, one of at least ten children of William Metcalfe and Ann Tomlin. William died when James was 14.

James managed to get an education and by 1826 became a school master in Malham. William Lodge Paley, our resident diest visited him on June 10 1826. In 1828, he married Sarah Pullan. Sarah was one of six children of William Pullan and his wife Sarah Fox. William was the son of Thomas Pullan, a successful brewer and had been a woollen worsted manufacturer in Bradford. In the late 1830s he retired from the mills and brought the family to the substantial Cowper Coate Farm between Airton and Winterburn behind Gargrave. This would have been a 'good marriage' between a promising young teacher and the daughter of a wealthy businessman.

treated Rev. Wilson, the new minister, who seems a pious nice man, also Metcalf the schoolmaster. Had tea with Mr. M. on our return home.

James and Sarah had at least six children. In 1840, they moved across to Settle where James continued to be a schoolmaster at the National School on Kirkgate (on the site of the Victoria Hall) before the new school was built in Upper Settle in 1853. They lived in Upper Settle. The four infant children who are commemorated in this grave included John, 1832, Thomas Pullan Metcalfe, 1835, (both while they were in Kirkby Malham), and Sarah who died in the 1840s.

Daughter Margaret married Henry Gratton Cook, a draper and son of James Cook, an Irish draper. Henry's (half) brother was John Cook whose son John, a choir boy, was drowned. Son William Metcalfe also became a draper and lived with the Cooks at the time of the 1851 census. The Cooks emigrated to America and James and Sarah's son James Metcalfe may have joined them.

## Settle Graveyard Project

James died two years after Sarah's mother and just two months after her father. Poor Sarah. She returned to Gargrave to join her sisters Ellen and Eliza to run Gargrave National School. Sarah was the only one of her siblings to marry and they all died with a reasonable estate. James and Sarah's son William, a draper in Tachbrook Street, Pimlico, was a lucky beneficiary but may also have emigrated to the States.



Sarah's parents and sisters Mary, Eliza and Ellen are buried together in Kirkby Malham graveyard in an impressive family tomb. Hopefully Sarah joined them there when she died in 1863, aged 61.

Sarah's brother, **Thomas Pullan**, farmed in Winterburn, near Eshton and Gargrave with the help of sisters and servants. He didn't marry, but, at the age of 63 fathered a child with one of his servants, **Jane Banks**, aged 41. The resulting daughter, **Margaret Banks**, was brought up by Jane until she married **William Knowles Lord** [ph1] of Settle and they lived in Nelson, Lancashire. William died at the age of just 33, after which Margaret and the family emigrated to Utah, USA where descendants still live today. Thomas died in 1875, aged 62.



James was replaced at the National School by *William Peterkin*.



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

*The diaries of William Lodge Paley with the kind permission of North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust.*

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

*ph1 – kindly provided by Twin Lord, descendant*