

# Ann Simpson, widow of James Simpson

In affectionate remembrance of Ann wife of the late James Simpson of Liverpool who died April 29<sup>th</sup> 1889 aged 53 years, B23



This spectacular gravestone celebrates the life of poor old Ann Simpson, the widow of 'James Simpson of Liverpool'. The gravestone did not give many clues as to her identity but her death certificate was a little more forthcoming.

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Settle</i>									
Registrar's Sub-District <i>Settle</i>									
18 <i>89</i> . DEATHS in the Sub-District of <i>Settle</i> in the County of <i>York West Riding</i>									
Columns	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
<i>111</i>	<i>Twenty ninth April 1889 Settle R. S.</i>	<i>Ann Simpson</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>53 years</i>	<i>Widow of James Simpson Farmer</i>	<i>Senile Anæmia Exhaustion Certified by Dr. Scarborough</i>	<i>James Simpson second son resident at death Settle</i>	<i>May 1889</i>	<i>William Field Hook Registrar</i>

Ann was born in 1836 as Ann Harrison in Gisburn. She was one of six daughters (and one son, Stephen) of Stephen Harrison, a farmer and his wife Mary Wooler. This was a relatively wealthy farming family. Son Stephen continued on the same farm, Hindley Head in Gisburn, and so did his son, another Stephen.



Ann would have been expected to marry a farmer and she did, sort of. In 1866 she married James Simpson from Over Wyresdale on the west of the Forest of Bowland. The Simpsons were also a family of farmers but three of them, including James were cow keepers in Liverpool.

During the 19th century Liverpool became the 'Empire's second capital' and its largest port. Thousands of people moved into the city to take advantage of the extra work, a third of them Irish. There was a huge demand for food and milk, providing good business opportunities for traditional farmers from Yorkshire who responded to adverts like this [SC]. The cowmen kept their animals in yards and common ground (allegedly including the site of Everton football pitch) and sold milk in their shops. They began to do deliveries and hence the 'milkman' was born. This was quite a lucrative occupation. At the time of one census sister Susannah and her husband William Owen, a cowman from Wales, even had servants.

A CAPITAL LIVING FOR A FAMILY FOR £350,  
NEAR LIVERPOOL.

**TO BE SOLD**

**A**

**MILK HOUSE,**

With 9 Cows, Pony, Shandry, Cans, and all complete, with a connection established 12 years, in the best part of the north end of Liverpool.

Apply, without delay, for full particulars to Mr JOHN BATTERSBY, Duke Street, Settle; or to Mr BROWN-CAVE, Farm Stock Auctioneer and Valuer, Bootle Village, near Liverpool.



## Settle Graveyard Project

The huge numbers of people living close together in inadequate and insanitary accommodation provided ideal conditions for disease and epidemics were frequent. James died just under two years after their wedding, aged just 34, and was buried back in Over Wyresdale with his parents. John left Ann £200 which was a good sum in those days.



*Sacred to the memory of James, the beloved husband of Ann Simpson who died at Liverpool on October 17th 1868 in the 36th year of his act.*

During their brief marriage Ann had given birth to a daughter, **Sarah** and was three months pregnant with son **James** when husband James died. Sarah was 32 and had limited options. The children were brought up by Ann's parents in Gisburn while Ann worked in domestic service. At the time of the next censuses, she worked for wine and spirit dealer **George Holden** in Settle and then for **Sutcliffe Garnett**, a farmer near Skipton.

Ann died on 29 April 1889, aged 53, of pernicious anaemia (lack of Vitamin B12) and exhaustion which was probably related. Her death was certified by **Oliver Scattergood** (see **John Lister**) and the registrar was **William Field Hook**. Son James was present at her death. This was a very impressive gravestone for a domestic servant which someone from their families paid for. What happened to their children?

After Ann's death, Sarah moved to Morecambe with a friend from Settle, **Annie Eliza Clark**, and they ran a dressmaking business together. They both found husbands with successful careers. Sarah married **Joseph Brown** a wheelwright and carriage builder.

Son James became a joiner, perhaps using some of his father's inheritance for an apprenticeship. He boarded with **Elizabeth Horner** in the Market Place. In 1899, aged 30, he married **Maud Elizabeth Silcock**. A year after their marriage James set up his own business on Church Street [LSA] having been in partnership with the Harger family as '**Harger and Simpson**' [ph2]. He must have been very well regarded to have been in partnership with the Harger empire – they were the leading joinery business in Settle at the time. James and Maud lived with her parents in the railway cottages on Cammock Lane until her parents died.



James Riley remembers that James was one of the first people in Settle to build a radio aerial in his garden using poles and a wire hammock. His '*window usually had a home-made two or three valve receiver on display. These, of course were all battery sets since most of the houses in Settle were still lit by gas, and all the farms by oil-lamps and candles*' [A]. James and Maud retired to Debenham, Suffolk.

Maud Elizabeth Silcock was the daughter of **James Silcock**. Born in 1838, was the third out of nine children of **Thomas Silcock**, a railway inspector and his wife **Martha Woodhouse**. Being a railway inspector Thomas took his family around Lancashire and then to Holbeck, Leeds. At the time of the 1851 census the family were living close to Clapham Station.

## Settle Graveyard Project

James followed in his father's footsteps and became a railway guard and then inspector. At the age of 19 he married **Betsey Walker** in Leeds. Betsey and their two infant children, **Mary Jane** and **Thomas**, died within few years. At the time of the 1871 census James lived with a widow **Mary Ann (Littlewood) Thornley**, still in Leeds. Mary Ann had married John Thornley who also worked on the railway.



Three years later, in 1874, James and Mary Ann's daughter Maud Elizabeth was born in Hornby, and after another 13 years they married in Leeds. In the meantime they had moved to 1 Railway Cottages near Cammock Lane in Settle and John was now a Permanent Way Inspector for the line between Settle and Hawes. Fellow residents of the Railway Cottages included Messrs **Bolt, Freeman, Beckerton, Moore and Dilley**. James died suddenly in 1901, just a couple of years after their daughter had married James Simpson and soon after stepping off a train [2]. He had a fabulous gravestone.

**SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. SILCOCK.**—The many friends of Mr. Silcock, who resided at the Railway Cottages, will be grieved to hear of his death, which took place under painfully sudden circumstances on Wednesday morning. The deceased alighted from the train at **Settle Station** shortly after eleven, and proceeded to his home in apparent good health, but on reaching home he died immediately. Mr. Silcock was in the employ of the Midland Railway Company, being the inspector of the Permanent way between **Settle** and **Hawes**, and has resided in **Settle** upwards of twenty years.

*In Loving Memory of James Silcock who died May 8th 1901 aged 63 years. Also of Mary Ann wife of the above died August 20th 1918 aged 83 year. Thy Will Be Done, Old E31*



The Silcock family obviously had an attachment to this area. James' niece **Catherine Silcock**, the daughter of his brother **Aaron Silcock** married in Settle in 1885 even though neither she nor her husband, **Arthur Edward Clements**, had ever lived here.



During the 1950s, the name Silcock on the front of part of the Naked Man buildings. This is no relation — this part of the building was run by the Settle and District Trading Association who were the agents for Silcocks cattle, pig and poultry foods [ph2]. Employee Norman Kilburn (see *John Moore*) is standing outside. They had a workshop in the old railway sidings too.

James Simpson and Ann (Harrison) Simpson's siblings stayed in farming. Ann's nephew, **Stephen Harrison** [ph1], took part in several debates for the Young Farmer's Club. He was successful in presenting the case that 'farmers should marry farmer's daughters' [1]. It certainly was the case in the Simpson and Harrison families.



### Bolton-by-Bowland

**Y.F.C.**—The fortnightly meeting of the Young Farmers' Club was held on Tuesday week. The company included members from **Gisburn** and **Slaidburn** who took part in a debate: "Should farmers marry farmers' daughters?" The **Slaidburn** members who spoke in favour were **Godfrey Williams** and **Stephen Harrison**, and **Geoffrey Clegg**, **Gisburn**, opposed. At the close of an interesting debate the **Bolton-by-Bowland** members showed by vote that they supported the **Slaidburn** speakers. Refreshments were provided, and a social hour brought a happy evening to an end. **Bolton** members were thanked by **Stephen Harrison** and **Connie Harrison**, of the **Slaidburn** Club.

## 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](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settlerearch@gmail.com](mailto:settlerearch@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 – Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, 2 – Lancaster Standard*

*A – Listening and Remembering, Memoirs of a Settle Boy by James F Riley*

*ph1 – photo credited to the descendants of the family on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk), username Lizzie\_58,  
ph2 – with the kind permission of John Reid via [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk)*

*SC – Settle Chronicle with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*