

## James and Nanny Wilcock and a shocked enumerator

James Wilcock was born in September 1821, the illegitimate son of **Judith Wilcock** who later married a farmer, **Thomas Ayrton**. As a young man James worked as a farm servant for **Christopher Wildman** and his wife **Mary Weaving** at Rouser farm behind Wham, near Giggleswick. Christopher's fifth child was **Nanny Wildman** born in 1833. When she was 24, in 1857 Nanny and James married. Almost all of this branch of the Wildmans went into farming. They were distant cousins of **John Wildman**, the Settle printer. Two of Nanny's siblings married into the **Earnshaw** family. Nanny's parents were buried at Giggleswick with a fine, well preserved stone – Christopher was a wealthy farmer.



*In memory of the late Christopher Wildman of Mossbank who departed this life on the 30th day of May 1872 aged 78 years. Also of Mary Wildman wife of the above who died November 30th 1872 aged 79 years. Also of Jane Johnson daughter of the above who died April 8th 1870 aged 44 years. B2/18*

James and Nanny lived in the Shambles in Settle's Market Place and James worked as an 'ostler' looking after the horses at one of the inns (hostelries). Two sons, **William** and **Christopher**, followed. During the 1870s the family moved to live in Church Street and had a number of boarders living with them to help with the bills. James died, aged 78 in October 1899 and Nanny died a couple of months later, aged 67.



*In Remembrance of James Wilcock of Settle who died Oct 22nd 1899 aged 78 years also of Nanny his wife who died Dec 4th 1899 aged 67 years, Old D45.*

Eldest son **William**, born in 1859, became a tailor and found employment in Darlington. He married a joiner's daughter, **Elizabeth Tate**. They didn't have children. For some reason **William's** wife **Elizabeth** died in Settle in 1917, aged 57 but was not buried locally. **William** then moved to **Ulverston**, Lancashire and lived to the grand old age of 80.

Second son **Christopher**, born in 1861, undertook an apprenticeship in tailoring with **John Earnshaw** (who could have been a relation) in **Skipton**. When he was 20, in 1881, he married **Annie Smith**, the daughter of a **Skipton** engineer. They had three daughters in the next five years although the eldest, **Hannah** died an infant.

Then something happened. There are no further records for **Annie** until her death in 1919. At the time of the next census daughter **Nelly Wilcock** lived with grandparents James and Nanny in Settle and **Martha Hannah Wilcock** lived with her mum's sister, **Catherine (Smith) Chew**. **Nelly** spent a life in domestic service in Lancashire. **Martha Hannah** died in **Skipton** soon after her marriage to **Charlie Miles**, a textile worker, presumably with issues related to childbirth.

What about Christopher? At the time of the 1891 census Christopher was boarding in a house with several other tailors. Across town **Bridget Tosney**, the daughter of an Irish cattle dealer was boarding with an illegitimate son called James Wilcock Tosney who transpired to be the first of nine children with Christopher, all with the middle name Wilcock. By the time of the 1901 census they lived together. In case of any confusion, the shocked 1911 census enumerator wrote a note on the return *'these people are not married but live together and the children are illegitimate to this man C Wilcock'*. This illustrates some of the conflicting values during the Victorian era. Without contraception, illegitimacy was common across all classes, including royalty, but was still frowned upon by the well-to-do middle classes.



*These people are not married but live together  
and the children are all illegitimate to this man C. Wilcock*

Christopher eventually married Bridget in October 1919 just months after first wife Annie had died within the Leeds registration district. We can only assume that Annie really didn't get on with Christopher and the children so lived elsewhere or had suffered some disastrous disability after the birth of the third daughter and was institutionalised.

In 1897 Christopher was sued for shoddy workmanship when George Simpson received a dresser with a heart shaped insert which had broken, making a great headline, *'A dresser with a broken heart'* [CH]. Christopher was fined 8 shillings.

**A DRESSER WITH A "BROKEN HEART."**  
George Simpson, cabinetmaker, Newmarket Street, Skipton, sued Christopher Wilcock, tailor, Skipton, for £1 balance owing on the purchase of a dresser, and the defendant counter-claimed for 15s. Mr Thompson was for the defendant, and admitted the sale and delivery of the dresser. His client's contention was that he was supplied with a defective article.

Christopher died in 1931, aged 70 and Bridget followed six years later, aged 68.

Two daughters died in infancy/childhood. Their other children stayed in Skipton and Keighley. Son **Harold Wilcock Tosney** made the headlines. He was an iron moulder and married **Edith Alice Horner** in 1923. But in 1934 Edith took him to the divorce courts for adultery with **Gertrude Ellen Nellie (Ralph) Carr**, also married, at hotels in Nottingham and Leeds [1]. The divorce was approved and a year later Harold and Gertrude married, after her divorce was also approved. The other spouses also remarried. Edith Alice, a hotel manageress, married **Leon Pawlacyzk**.

Edith Alice Tosney, dressmaker, St. George's Esplanade, Guernsey, misconduct of Harold Wilcock Tosney, ironmoulder, Woodman Terrace, Skipton, with Gertrude Ellen Nellie Carr at hotels in Nottingham and Leeds.

Bridget's brother **John Tosney**, set up a cotton dying business in Skipton. Bridget and James' son **John Wilcock Tosney** and his cousin **Christopher Tosney** were joint managers of the company after John Tosney died. Cousin Christopher was a Rugby Union Stalwart, *'one of the best forwards Skipton ever produced'* and *'captained Skipton when they last won the Yorkshire Cup'*[2].

**Rugby Union stalwart dies at Skipton**  
Mr. Christopher Tosney, of Keighley-road, Skipton, who made over 30 appearances with the Yorkshire Rugby Union team as a forward between 1908 and 1920, died suddenly on Saturday. He was 59.  
He was one of the best forwards Skipton ever produced. In 1912 he captained Skipton when they last won the Yorkshire Cup, defeating Otley by 7 points to nil in the final at Ilkley. Until a few weeks ago he was on the committee of the Skipton club.  
One of his sons, Mr. J. Tosney, still plays for Skipton, and is the club's membership secretary. His younger son, Mr. E. V. Tosney, now in the Metropolitan Police Force, won his Yorkshire cap before the war.  
Mr. Tosney was head of the family business of John Tosney dyers, Alexandra Shed, Skipton

*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.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and 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'.*

*Illustrations kindly provided by Teresa Gordon*

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