

## Calvers and Woodcrafts, Norfolk folk

The East Anglian agricultural depression in the late 19th century resulted in a surplus of hundreds of workers, particularly in the area south of Norwich, who had to find employment elsewhere. Hector Christie had bought and renovated the Settle cotton mills in 1861 after they collapsed during the 1850s. At that time, the majority of Settle's cotton workforce moved to Lancashire and so hundreds of new workers were recruited from Norfolk to Settle. Some brought families with them, and others started families here.

**William Calver**, a shoemaker, was one such man. William was born in 1823 in New Buckenham, south of Norwich. William had nine children with his two wives, Ann Garrod and Mary Ann Woodcraft. During the 1880s, William, in his 60s, brought the family to Settle and they lived on Victoria Street in Upper Settle.

There are a couple of incidents that may have encouraged him to leave for Settle. In 1878 William was forced to destroy his '*unmuzzled ferocious dog*' and pay a fine of 26 shillings (or a week in prison) after '*four witnesses conclusively proved the savage nature of the animal, having been bitten in the leg by it.*'[1] In 1882 he was taken to court for the assault of Mrs Maria Dunn after her niece left a pram outside his shop. He '*seized her arm and then spat in her face, making use of some very bad language*'. In retaliation Mrs Dunn '*seized him by the whiskers*' [2]. Ouch! The case was dismissed but may have been sufficient motivation for the family to move to Settle.

William's children came to Settle with him but most dispersed across Yorkshire and Lancashire to lead their own lives. William died in 1904, aged 81 and Mary Ann and a couple of their sons continued the business for a while [LSA]. Mary Ann died in 1918, aged 76 – as a second wife she was much younger than William. They are buried in the unmarked OldCX52 together with John William Calver, the infant son of son Harry Calver and his wife Ada Avery. Harry moved away to become a Labour District Councillor in Guiseley near Leeds.

William and Mary Ann's eldest son, Herbert William Calver, got into quite a bit of trouble in 1898 when he was a 27 year old bachelor. He was accused of abducting 17 year old Gertrude Towlson when he tried to run away to London with her – she was too afraid to tell her father. It transpired Herbert William had previously worked for the Metropolitan Police Force and was of '*good character*'[3]. However, he was still imprisoned for six months with hard labour. Herbert's criminal record

William Calver, shoemaker, Ber Street, was summoned for allowing to be at large a certain unmuzzled ferocious dog, contrary to the Towns Police Clauses Act, 1847. The Town Clerk supported the information. Four witnesses conclusively proved the savage nature of the animal, two of them having been bitten in the leg by it. Calver endeavored to show that the animal was of a docile disposition; but the Bench thinking otherwise, made an order for its destruction, for which purpose the

force and dispersed them. Mrs. Dunn's mother immediately came out and replaced the perambulator quite in front of the door. He went out to remove it again, when Mrs. Dunn's mother and Mrs. Dunn herself "flew" at him, the latter seizing him by the whiskers. William Calver, a son of the defendant, supported his father's version of the affair, and in the end the case was dismissed.

294 LAMBERT'S SETTLE ALMANAC

Established 50 Years.

**CALVER, Boot Repairer,**  
High St., Settle (nr. The Folly).

Cheapest and best firm in the town for any description of boot repairs.

### HUDDERSFIELD ABDUCTION CASE.

#### VERDICT AND SENTENCE.

At the West Riding Assizes, at Leeds, on Monday, Herbert William Calver (27), clerk, of Settle, was indicted for the abduction, on October 16th last, of Gertrude Towlson, aged 17 years and 10 months, daughter of Allan Towlson, fish and game dealer, of Huddersfield. Mr. G. Banks prosecuted, and Mr. H. T. Waddy defended.

The evidence for the prosecution went to show that the prisoner was formerly in a coal merchant's office opposite to Mr. Towlson's shop in Market-street. He and Miss Towlson picked up an acquaintance, and prisoner visited pretty frequently at her father's house. Prisoner one day told her he

at her father's house. Prisoner one day told her he had got her a situation in London, where he intended removing to, and he asked her to go. She said she would, but that she had better ask her father. He said her father would not let her go, and she had better not ask him. On Sunday, the 16th October, after the prisoner had passed the evening at Mr. Towlson's house, he and the girl left Huddersfield for London by the 11.5 train. The girl, Gertrude Towlson, narrated how the prisoner induced her to let him have some of the 15s. she possessed in order to buy her ticket to London and a portion of her jewellery which he disposed of for money in London. She repeated the evidence as to his conduct towards her during the short time they were together in the capital, and said prisoner knew her age. In cross-examination she said that when prisoner suggested she should earn money by living a loose life she did not think that he was in earnest. He was laughing and joking at the time he spoke of it.

tells us he was 5 feet 8 inches tall, with brown hair. He worked as a clerk and had a flesh lump under his right ear.

Abduction of Gertrude to London. Row 24 Clerk fresh lump bl under it, settle  
578  
Blown in

gave evidence. He had been in the Metropolitan Police Force, and left with a good character. On October 4th the girl said that if he was going away she would go with him. He denied that he suggested she should lead an immoral life. When he went away with her he believed she was 19 years of age. She had told him so. After further evidence the jury found the prisoner guilty, and he was committed to gaol for six months with hard labour.

Gertrude survived unscathed, probably a little wiser and soon married William Henry Holloway, a draper's salesman. Herbert William married Maud Frederica Pellican which sounds quite an exotic name and, indeed, she had an interesting background. Her father, John Julius Pellican (anglicised to John Albert Pelicann) came from Pappenheim in Germany. He arrived in London in his 20s and worked as a waiter. He married Julia Louisa Berguer who came from Paris.



In 1884, aged 40, and just after the birth of their sixth and youngest child, John Pelicann took over as Hotel Manager of the 'Hotel Continental' in Regent Street having previously worked as assistant Hotel Manager at the Langham Hotel [4, ph2].

**HOTEL CONTINENTAL,**  
LIMITED.  
1, Regent Street, London, W.

This Hotel, comprising numerous Suites of Apartments for Families and also Single Rooms, celebrated for its  
"CONTINENTAL DINNERS,"  
General Cuisine, Wines and Appointments, with  
Dinners at fixed prices and à la Carte,  
Special Déjeuners à la Fourchette (to which particular attention is called), from 12 until 3, is now under the management of  
**JOHN A. PELICANN**  
(Late of the Langham Hotel).  
Tables or Private Rooms for Dinner may be secured in advance by Letter, Telegram, or Telephone No. 3686.

Unfortunately, after his wife's death in 1885 there are admission records for John to the workhouse. He died of liver cancer in 1904, aged 63 in Pentonville Prison, serving what was his third three month sentence for begging. The newspaper reported 'a very able man, but drink had been his ruin' [5]. According to the report, after working at the Hotel Continental John managed the Savoy Hotel although census returns don't provide further evidence of that. Five of John's children lived in London during the 1900s but, seemingly, were unable to help him.



**Death in Prison.**  
Yesterday Dr. Danford Thomas held an inquest in Pentonville Prison touching the death of John Pelicann, 63, of no fixed abode, who was undergoing a sentence of three months' imprisonment for begging.  
Dr. Wilson, medical officer of the prison, stated that the prisoner had been twice previously convicted, and on each occasion he had been sent immediately to the hospital. The witness understood that prisoner was formerly manager of the Hotel Continental, Waterloo-place, and after that of the Savoy. He was a very able man, but drink had been his ruin.  
Death was shown to be due to cancer of the liver, and the jury returned a verdict to that effect.

## Settle Graveyard Project

Herbert William and Maud Frederica Calver made a living as 'club managers' in Nottingham and Lancashire whilst bringing up their children. In Nottingham they managed a Conservative Club, in contrast to Herbert John's brother Harry.

William Calver's second wife, Mary Ann Woodcraft, had a brother, **Robert James Woodcraft**. Robert James died, aged 23, just three years after his marriage to **Matilda Harper**. They had a daughter, **Anna Maria Woodcraft** and a son, **James George Woodcraft**, who was born just before Robert James died. Incredibly, Matilda had another two children by herself before marrying **Thomas Love** in 1866 and having another seven with him. Incidentally, Robert James' sister **Susan Woodcraft** had an illegitimate daughter **Charlotte Woodcraft** before she died, aged 21. In turn Charlotte had an illegitimate son **Albert Arthur Woodcraft** before she died aged 26. Albert Arthur was brought up in New Buckenham by his great grandparents, William and Mary Ann Woodcraft, Robert James' parents. However, in 1887 Albert Arthur married **Anne Buck**, a cousin of **Dr Charles William Buck** via his uncle William Buck. Albert Arthur was an engine fitter and they lived in Grimsby.

It was Thomas Love and Matilda and their large number of children who first made the move to the north during the 1870s, with Thomas working as an overlooker in the Langcliffe Mills. They probably inspired William and Mary Ann Calver to move to Settle too.

Robert James and Matilda Woodcraft's daughter Anna Maria married **Charles Segger**, a quarryman who had come up to Langcliffe from Suffolk. Charles and Anna Maria's son **Alfred Charles Segger**, and his son Charles became the manager of the Harger Brothers furniture business located on Station Road, with a shop just opposite the station and works on the site of today's 'Goldielands'. Eventually Charles became a director alongside Joseph Harger [ph5].



Alf bought several properties along the north side of Station Road, selling the courthouse to the Settle Amateur Operatic Society for £500 in 1966. Alf was on the committee for the 1937 coronation of George VI [ph3]. Son **Robert** served in the West Riding Regiment from 1900 to 1919 [ph4]. Robert, his wife, **Jane Bradley**, son and daughter-in-law are buried in the Old graveyard F48 with an infant **William Douglas Segger** in the unmarked KX39.

*In loving memory of mum and dad, Geoffrey Weston Segger, 1912 - 1999, Ivy Segger 1916 - 2000, also Robert Segger 1881 - 1954, Jane Segger 1881 - 1962*



Robert James Woodcraft's son James George Woodcraft also came up north with the family and worked in the limeworks after a stint in the Navy. When he was 31 he married **Cecilia Riley** in Settle but was tragically killed by

settlers

**Mr. T. Brown, Coroner for Craven, at Settle yesterday resumed the inquiry, which had been adjourned from the 21st inst., into the circumstances attending the death on the 20th inst. of James Woodcraft (26), a workman at the Craven Lime Works near Settle. Mr. Frank N. Wardell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Mines for Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, was present on behalf and by direction of the Secretary of State, and Mr. Cooke Taylor, Her Majesty's Inspector of Factories, also attended the inquiry. After hearing the evidence the jury came to the conclusion that deceased met with his death through misadventure, and they gave their allowance to the widow of Woodcraft.**

## Settle Graveyard Project

'misadventure' two years later after a blast at the limeworks [6,LSA]. The coroner was **Thomas Brown**. Cecilia died nearly 50 years later in 1939 and was buried with James in an unmarked grave OldBX43 with Cecelia's father **Joseph Riley**.

20—Annual general meeting of the members of the Church of England Temperance Society at Settle.—Whilst some blasting operations were in progress at the Craven Limeworks, Settle, a shot exploded sooner than expected, and a man named James Woodcraft was killed; a second workman named Edward Lester, was seriously injured.



*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 [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'. The life stories of people with **bold italicised** names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.*

*Illustrations kindly provided by Teresa Gordon.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Eastern Daily Press, 2 – Norfolk News, 3 – Huddersfield Daily Chronicle, 4 – Truth, 5 – London Daily News, 6 – Dundee Courier*

*ph1 – photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook page, ph2 – credited to Wikipedia, ph3, 4 – photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook page, contributed by Sue Needham, Julia Evans, ph4 – kindly provided by descendant of the Hargers, Allan Gould*

*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*